

**IMPACT OF MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT IN TURKEY
(1966-1977)**

**ÇAĞDAŞ ÜNGÖR
101611007**

FERHAT KENTEL: Ferhat Kentel

BÜLENT SOMAY: Bülent Somay

ÖMER MADRA: Ömer Madra

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the impact of Mao Zedong Thought –its ideological formation and origins in China, how it positioned itself within (and outside) Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and its impact on Turkish left during 1966-1977. Maoism became influential particularly in the underdeveloped countries, which had experienced colonization/ semi-colonization. Marxisms developed in non-European countries carried forward a twofold task at once: modernisation and its critique. Turkey, which from 19th century onwards struggled to Westernise its state apparatus and society similar to China, encountered popular Marxism during 1960s. By then, there were two interpretations of Marxism: Chinese and Russian. Maoism, which reached its peak popularity by mid 1960s presented itself as the leading ideology of the underdeveloped countries. In Turkey, National Democratic Revolution (Milli Demokratik Devrim- MDD) group, whose offshoot Proletarian Revolutionary Illumination (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık- PDA) was particularly inspired by the Chinese experience. This research aims to understand the impact of Mao Zedong Thought in Turkey through PDA experience, which I argue to be an attempt to "localise" Marxism in the Turkish cultural space, against the long-held assumption that it was just a political mimicry.

Abbreviations

AP	Adalet Partisi (Justice Party)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
CPSU	Communist Party of Soviet Union
Dev-Genç	Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu (Revolutionary Youth Federation)
DP	Demokrat Parti
DİSK	Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Syndicates)
EU	European Union
FKF	Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu (Federation of Idea Clubs)
MBK	Milli Birlik Komitesi (Committee of National Union)
MDD	Milli Demokratik Devrim (National Democratic Revolution)
MİT	Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı (National Intelligence Agency)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PDA	Proleter Devrimci Aydınlik (Proletarian Revolutionary Illumination)
PRC	People's Republic of China
SD	Sosyalist Devrim (Socialist Revolution)
TİİKP	Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi-Köylü Partisi (Turkish Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants)
TİP	Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Turkish Labour Party)
TKP	Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Turkish Communist Party)

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1. Introduction

It could well be a mistake to start a dissertation with a problematic generalization like this one: "Chinese and Turkish people are awkwardly similar." As it would be obvious to the critical reader, I neither refer to any common ethnic bond, nor to eating habits, religious practices or any other particularity that would bind one culture, nation or geography to another. Yet, when it comes to their ambivalent relationship with the West, people in China and Turkey bear important similarities. TV commercials displaying a quite "Westernized" cast rather than more typical Chinese, Buddhist couples who more and more prefer to get married in churches, discos full of youngsters—desperately trying to express themselves through Britney Spears lyrics, popularity of Western style magazines introducing "trendy" lifestyles, exaggerated importance given to English instruction in China are among the examples which have their equivalents in Turkey. Against the argument that such similarities could be found between any two countries today, due to the accelerated 'globalization' process, a more specific similarity would help to elaborate the matter: Turkey's attitude towards its future membership in the European Union and China's recent membership in World Trade Organization are both taken as cultural phenomena rather than economic. In China, membership in WTO is regarded as an issue of national pride; something that would lessen her infelt difference, make her more "global"—if not more Western. It is no coincidence that Turkey's future membership in the EU is discussed in a similar fashion. In both countries, the will to be/to look more modern/Westernized, accompanies the will to be recognized in their unique cultural dispositions.

Another important similarity that China and Turkey bear transcends their borders to reach Europe. In the Western literature, both Turkey and China had long been illustrated as an 'exotic (albeit impoverished) fantasyland'¹ or the 'Asiatic despot' which was not touched by historical progress. While China and Turkey had long been admired and hated for their "Oriental" differences in tandem, what constituted their difference was rarely made subject to debate. Surely, contemporary China's infelt difference was twice as hard as there was an additional "communist" element to it.

¹ For a supporting view on the perception of China by the Western media, See Christansen et al. (1996) *Chinese Politics and Society: An Introduction*. p.32; Also See J.D. Spence's *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* for a brilliant survey of Western literature concerning China. As to Turkey, See. Selim Deringil (1999) *The Well-Protected Domains*. p.4

Today, in the Western media, China is widely illustrated as a global threat for world trade and Turkey's membership in EU –with its poor and large Muslim population- is often regarded as a potential threat, especially when “circulation of people” rather than goods becomes the issue. At the very beginning of my research, such similarities (in both the Chinese/Turkish perception of the West and the Western perception of China/Turkey) drew me closer to my subject matter, which necessitated a genuine curiosity regarding both geographical/cultural spaces.

I consider Turkey and China's ambivalent relationship with the West as resulting from a will to overcome their infelt difference by a strong commitment to modernity without abandoning their own cultural traits. Autonomy –both political and cultural- had been a significant element in the shaping of Chinese and Turkish state traditions. Both Ottoman Empire and Chinese Dynasty have succeeded in maintaining their territorial and cultural autonomy until mid-19th century. The imperial state traditions they inherited (which once put these dynasties at the centre of the world²) caused them to ignore certain developments and changes at the global level. Not after continuous military defeats against Western powers signaled their decline, they became aware of the urgent necessity to modernize (and in many instances to Westernize) the state structure. This necessity stirred up various forms of reactionary attitude towards West (or being Westernized) among the state elites and the society in general.³ The reactions were channeled into three main ideological domains: religion, nationalism and from 1920s onwards, socialism.

In China, modernization process reached a radical phase in 1911 as nationalist forces abolished the Qing Dynasty. After long and strife civil wars and a decade-long resistance against Japan, the process evolved into a different phase in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party. Not much later, Ottomans' final collapse and the foundation of the Turkish Republic took place in 1923, after country's participation and defeat in

² Zhong Guo (China) means Middle or Central Kingdom. World maps produced in China still illustrates China at the centre of the world. China and Ottoman Empire shared a similar attitude towards foreign (and especially Western) culture, which they deemed inferior.

³ Modernization process in China was primarily inspired by Japanese Meiji Restoration. However reactionary elements were never non-existent. Secret communities and religious sects set up protests. Railways were bombed as they were not found compatible with *fengshui*, which literally means wind and water and lies on the orderly positioning of things in harmony with the nature. In Turkey too, modernization process was guided by military defeats. It began with Hatt-ı Humayun (Tanzimat Bill), which was signed with European countries. It continued all through 20th century by the policies pursued by Committee of Union and Progress and came to a radical phase with the establishment of republic in 1923.

the First World War. 1917 Soviet Revolution was a guiding spirit for both today's Turkey and China, although the latter inferred more ideology from it whereas the former was rather moved by its anti-imperialistic content. Certainly Marxism as a political ideology gained much stronger ground in China than Turkey, albeit as most of the authors in the field would argue, in a *sinified* form. After 1949, as ideology of the Communist Party became the ruling state doctrine, it penetrated into every corner of Chinese political and social life. More important still, it brought Maoism –an original, a "Made in China" version of Marxism- into world's attention, which did not remain without its Turkish supporters.

Today, an intellectual consensus on the nature of Mao's Marxism does not exist. On some occasions, Mao is still taken as an important contributor to Marxism, especially in its implementation into the Chinese context while on the others he is simply dismissed as a 'peasant revolutionary'. A prominent dictionary of Marxist thought indicates that his "mass line" introduced an element of democratic participation, which previously did not exist in the Leninist Soviet tradition. Also, prior to him, the emphasis on "human change" as an accompanying and supporting element of economic and technical progress (not merely as its by-product) was also absent from orthodox Marxism⁴.

The impact of Mao Zedong Thought in Turkey was probably the second most important cultural interaction between these geographically distant communities since Turks moved from Central Asia to settle permanently in Anatolia by the 11th century. Nor in the modern period was there an attempt to make a cultural exchange –mostly due to Turkey's recognition of Taiwan, instead of People's Republic of China as the sole representative of Chinese people until 1971. However, during 1960s, Maoism sidestepped diplomatic means and its popularity dispersed through unofficial channels. Probably the most important reason why Mao Zedong had been so appealing to youth was his emphasis on superstructural change,⁵ as was characterized in his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

⁴ See Bottomore 1983; p.300

⁵ In the classical Marxist terminology, superstructure (arts, education, culture, religion etc.) is closely connected with (or determined by) infrastructure (economic means of production) Mao Zedong's line of thought differed slightly from classical Marxism -Leninism as he increased this emphasis. Mao offered continuous intervention to the superstructural realm even after the establishment of socialist state, in order to prevent the return of power to the bourgeoisie.

During 1970s, Third World in general (and East Asia in particular) was the focus of inspiration for radical groups around the world, regardless of geographical distinctions. Yet, in the economically underdeveloped parts of the world, the leftist movements grew up in an especially hostile environment vis-à-vis the West (or the “developed world” which sometimes included Soviet Union as well). For the ‘Third World revolutionary’ the issue of underdevelopment necessitated a double task –further complicated by the logic of ‘anti-imperialism’: the first was to accelerate modernization in their countries and second, to fight against the modernizing motor, capitalism- now interpreted as an imposition of the Western powers. As these countries did not undergo successful ‘national-bourgeois revolutions’ the task of modernization lied with the revolutionary, unlike their European counterparts.

Hence the objective of the revolutionary was not limited to propaganda and organization alone. Especially in the cultural realm, his position also necessitated the relationship of a “modernizer” to its “subjects”.⁶ Here lied the dilemma for the Turkish Maoist as well. He, who tried to refrain from his upper class origins to be closer to ‘people’ and believed in the virtues of the peasant life, was also bound by the ideological motto of progress and development. Another dilemma stemmed from their attempt to ‘localize’ Marxism in the Turkish cultural space, which also served for their own departure from it, leaning more and more on to concepts like people’s morality, virtues of physical labor or love of the people. But they were hardly alone in making that mistake. Asia, a continent, which never abandoned moral concerns, was undergoing a similar trend.

1.1. Aim of the Study

By mid-1960s, when socialist ideology met large audiences in Turkey, Chinese example was being discussed in depth and came to be a more sympathetic example than that of Soviet Union for four groups⁷, of which Proletarian Revolutionary Illumination (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlik or PDA) was the initial and the predominant one.

⁶ For a significant example, “Sarper Özsan, with two of his friends from the opera, recorded a cassette where he sang the revolutionary songs in opera style and we tried to spread this “modern style” through or organization, in order to raise the cultural level of our people. Yet, this music was found quite alien by the young people, who were raised with folkloric music culture.” See. Zileli “Havariler” p. 377

⁷ The initial group which gathered around “Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought” was PDA in late 1969. The other groups were effected by Maoism only after 1973. Throughour, their affiliation with China did not remain as strong as PDA and after the death of Mao Zedong, they leaned towards the Albanian Communist Party. The names of the other three groups were People’s Way (Halkın Yolu), People’s Union (Halkın Birliği), People’s Liberation (Halkın Kurtuluşu).

Throughout this work, I will try to discuss the formation of Maoism and its Turkish interpretation in the decade following the launch of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. I will argue that the perspective, which attributed PDA a political role that was completely devoid of creative and original substance, is ungrounded. The accusations of PDA's being a Chinese mimicry or 'a phony version of Maoism' is largely formed in the post-1978 environment due to the personal/political struggles between members of PDA and other groups, and most importantly by the former's attempt to issue a list of leftist militants.⁸ However as I will try to discuss below, this happened long after the movement had left its initial guidelines, and established a legal party in 1978, which pursued quite different objectives thereafter. I propose, instead, that the Maoist movement in Turkey had been a genuine effort to 'localize' Marxism in Turkish cultural space without abandoning its internationalist spirit until 1977.

1.2. Sources and Methodology

Throughout the conduct of this study -which on the one hand tries to situate Turkish Maoism within the larger framework of Asian Marxism and to portray its particular aspects on the other- I followed a twofold categorical research. In China, where my aim was 'understanding Maoism from within' I have accessed original copies of Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) of 1966-1969 period -the most violent stage of the Cultural Revolution and made use of several books on Mao Zedong Thought, which would have been very difficult to find in Turkish libraries. Although these works were generally written in English by Western scholars, I believe I made equal use of 'sympathetic' accounts as well as 'critical' ones -the former proving the popularity of the Chinese experience in Western minds at the time. Understanding the origins and international implications of Maoism was important to comprehend the political events in China 'as they happened' and 'perceived' at their own historical moment. Moreover, the political discourse employed by the Turkish Maoists in the journals was strongly linked to the events in China and their prompt theoretical/strategic implications.

⁸ In 1979, daily *Aydınlık* published series called "Kurtarılmış Bölgeler" and "49 Sol Fraksiyon." The hostile attitude of the party towards other leftist groups is still not forgotten today. These series also signaled the beginning of a skeptical attitude on *Aydınlık* group's affiliation with the secret service (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı or MİT) and the police. In his memoirs, Gün Zileli confirms that the group established ties with the 'leftist wing' of MİT. See, "Havariler", p. 336

While studying the Turkish context, my most precious sources have been memoirs, written specifically on the Turkish Maoist movement. Unfortunately, there did not exist many. One other setback was the common nature of the works regarding the history of the Turkish Left, which generally lacked cohesive arguments or critical accounts, mostly unable to provide the reader with the general picture. Most of the authors were still touched by the memories of personal/ideological struggles at the time of writing –making their works mere reflections of the pain and disappointment they suffered because of ‘this person’ or ‘that group’. Hence I relied more heavily on the journals I found in the archives of the Labor Party (İşçi Partisi or İP), which claims to be the political heir of the PDA movement. The journals *Aydınlık*, *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık*, *Halkın Sesi* and *İşçi-Köylü* provided me with the general insight on the topics discussed by the Turkish Maoists and often challenged me intellectually for the highly abstract theoretical language they employed. As my topic was related to a political movement whose members were still alive, I had the chance to conduct interviews with some of ex-members of the PDA group. Among my interviewees, there were people with no current interest in any political movement or party. Still, they provided me with valuable details that I could never have encountered in a written document.

In the writing phase of my thesis, although I was well aware of the post-structuralist and subaltern critique of ‘Eurocentric’ language employed in the academia and the ‘totalizing notions of modernity’, I did not avoid using ‘Eurocentric’ or ‘totalizing’ terms like “underdeveloped”, “East”, “Third World” or “Asian Marxism”. This was not simply to refrain from the ambiguous conceptualizations offered by the contemporary academic elite in the West, but also because I believe, as Arif Dirlik argues in his monumental work *Postmodernity's Histories*, that Eurocentricism does not deserve the status of Devil that should be chased by the radical intellectuals:

...without an account of the relationship between Eurocentricism and the enormous power of capitalism that enabled Euro-American expansion, the criticism of Eurocentricism may not only perpetuate Eurocentricism in new guises but also disguise the ways in which globalism itself is imbued with a Eurocentric worldview. (Dirlik;p.74)

As Dirlik argues, as long as capitalism (or industrial ‘developmentalism’ in the socialist countries, which was the opposite half of the same preoccupation with modernity) prevails in the historical scenery of the world (and it does at least since 19th century); it shapes the political imagination of the Third World elites, intellectuals and radicals; and

rules the one-way flow of poverty-stricken people from some regions of the world to the others, fighting social/economic inequalities on the academic battleground, by simply employing “this term” over “another” would probably bear no fruitful results.

As a final statement, this dissertation is composed of two main chapters, the former aiming to make a general introduction on the political scenery of the world in 1960s and supply the reader with the origins and fundamentals of Mao Zedong Thought (or “maozedong zixiang” as it is called in Chinese language) The chapter also elaborates the background of Sino-Soviet dispute, which resulted in a global division in Marxism, with its repercussions in Turkey. The second chapter aims to give a general picture of Turkish modernization -focusing on the role of Kemalism as a legitimating ideology, which influenced the Turkish Left in the formation process of its ‘anti-imperialistic’ discourse. Before portraying Turkish Maoism, I found it necessary to give a brief account of the general paradigm within which the Turkish Left operated and PDA movement grew as its offshoot. Throughout my ‘conceptual analysis of PDA discourse’ I gave particular attention to elaborate attempts to ‘localize’ Marxism –or its Chinese version, Maoism- in the Turkish cultural space, such as specific campaigns, theoretical reformulations regarding Ottoman history, propaganda in the rural areas and adoption of concepts like ‘people’s morality’. Although I did not intend to write a chronological history of the Maoist movement in Turkey, which would be well beyond the limited size of this research, I tried to supply the reader with the details of inner-divisions and personal struggles within PDA when necessary.

The reason I limited my study to the year 1977 is, it both signaled the decline of Maoism as a ruling ideology in China- and gradually in the rest of the world. In the Turkish context, it stands for the date that PDA movement turned into a more conservative political movement, both ideologically and institutionally, with the establishment of the legal Turkish Workers and Peasants Party (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi or TİKP) by early 1978.

2. Development of Mao Zedong Thought

1960's had been a significant decade in world history as it put an end to the remains of Western colonial legacy in Asia and Africa. This very process also signaled the establishment of many newly independent states⁹ adding to the number of "underdeveloped" countries in the world. Anti-colonial struggles and national independence movements made a huge impact not only in the host countries where these revolutions took place, but also in the domestic politics of the "developed" world. According to Eric Hobsbawm, during 1960's, Third World became the centre of attraction, not only for the countries that were undergoing a similar process of decolonization, but also in Europe:

"The entire Left, including humanitarian liberals and moderate social democrats needed something more than social security legislation and rising real wages. The Third World could preserve its ideals; and parties belonging to the great tradition of Enlightenment need ideals as well as practical politics...it led European liberals to support or sustain Third World revolutionaries and revolutions." (Hobsbawm 1994; p.437)

The era was characterized by youth movements, student protests and social unrest of various kinds. United States and France had been particularly important in this respect, as both governments –and to a lesser extent, political systems were challenged by wide scale student protests. During 1960's, if there was a general emphasis on the transformation of the Third World, East Asia represented its specific core. The Vietnam War -where American troops fought to undermine the "global communist threat"- was undoubtedly the major reason for this geographical shift of attention. In US, anti-Vietnam sentiment became the cornerstone (bringing blacks, feminists, socialists and hippies together) in challenging the ruling ideology in different aspects and scales. Yet, as I will try to discuss below, the developments in China were equally important as a factor in drawing the Western gaze at Eastern Asia.

⁹ These countries were Algeria, Angola, Burundi, French Cameroon, Madagascar, Congo, Somalia, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Chad, Central African Republic, Cyprus, Dahomey, Jamaica, Mali, Niger, Kenya, Nigeria, Mauritania, Malawi, Malta, Maldives, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Togo, Uganda and Western Samoa.

A socialist people's republic from 1949 onwards, China was the pioneer in turning East into "red" with her by then five hundred million people. However, for the radical masses in the West, her uniqueness did not stem from her being "red" as much as from her being "red in her own fashion"- a "critical redness" which later served for her own isolation within the communist bloc.¹⁰ Especially after the launch of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, Chinese experience was being cited for its creativity and dynamism by leftist groups in the West, who increasingly felt disappointed with the domestic and foreign policies of the initial avant garde –the Communist Party of Soviet Union.¹¹ The Sino-Soviet disagreement, which intensified after Khrushchev's famous critique of Stalin in 1956, was officially proclaimed by 1960, with the suspension of Soviet aid to China. In the following years, the discord between China and Soviet Union grew in its momentum and resulted in a worldwide ideological division. As one commentator aptly puts:

Although the **content** of the split was national differences (the interests of the Chinese bureaucracy as opposed to the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy), the **form** was a struggle over differences in political perspective (the political line of Mao Zedong as opposed to the political line of Khrushchev). Consequently, the Sino-Soviet split spawned splits over **political perspective** in the national CPs around the world, ultimately leading to the formation of two rival international formations adhering to rival programs and rival international centres¹².

Hence Maoism created its own sphere of influence among hundreds of political parties around the world, which all followed its own path towards communism. The violent stage of the Cultural Revolution, which lasted three years from 1966 to 1969, marked the peak popularity of Chinese socialism. The difference between the Chinese and Soviet interpretation of socialism resulted partly from the different societal and economic preoccupations in these countries, and partly due to their cleavages in the national foreign policy-making. Although a certain degree of variance between two models was already apparent since Stalin's time, it was not until Khrushchev and Brezhnev period that it resulted in a major split. Through 1970's, the tone of Chinese

¹⁰ In 1972, when Cold War was at its peak, China signed Shanghai Communiqué with US. Rapprochement with China to counter Soviet Union was an innovative idea of Henry Kissinger, who served as national security adviser under Nixon government. Agreement cleared major problems between two countries and served to balance Soviet Union at the global level, whose dominance was perceived as a strategic threat not only by US but China as well.

¹¹ Soviet Union's intervention in 1956 Hungary and 1968 Czechoslovakia led to fierce discussions. Growing bureaucratization in CPSU and Khrushchev's economic policies and "peaceful co-existence" caused fierce debates among Western radicals.

¹² See, Blunden, A. (1993) Stalinism: Its Origins and Future. on-line book, <http://home.mira.net/~andy/bs/>

critique of Soviet governance sharpened - from targeting its bureaucratization to calling it 'social imperialist'. The "Three Worlds Theory", which analyzed the world as a contest area of two superpowers, and named Soviet Union 'a greater threat than United States', persisted long after Mao Zedong's death in 1976. The two neighbors achieved normalization and avoided further skepticism only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union by late 1980s. Now, let me briefly turn to the long and multi-faceted background of the Sino-Soviet relations, which -more than any other single factor alone- influenced Mao Zedong's global appeal during 1960s.

2.1. Sino-Soviet Split

It was October 1917 Revolution, which brought Marxism into China. Before the establishment of the Soviet Union, Chinese intelligentsia did not consider Marxism as a relevant emancipatory doctrine as Marx's writings referred to highly industrialized countries with a strong industrial proletariat class. Chinese intellectuals as well as government officials, who were well aware of the urgent necessity for structural reform, rather sought it in modernization and its nearest example Japan, which underwent the successful Meiji Restoration in the 19th century.¹³ Yet, Westernization had strong critics in China and reactionary circles regarded it incompatible with the basic tenets of the Chinese civilization.¹⁴ Moreover, after the 1842 Opium War, China had become a country of commercial (if not political) semi-colonization with uninterrupted French and British presence. Hence, her ambivalence towards Western modernity had well-rooted cause. There was an evident desire to re-establish national pride, accompanied by the deep-rooted hostility towards the West and any doctrine associated with it¹⁵. Later on, Chinese Communist Party became successful in channeling this strange blend into a non-Western form of government, adapting an internationalist doctrine to fit in the Chinese context without abandoning the basic tenets of Chinese civilization.

¹³ The Westernization process in China started with Kang Youwei's substantial reforms at the governmental level, which involved educational and military reform and abolishment of the governmental examination system based on reciting of Confucian classics.

¹⁴ The reactionary attitude was based especially on cultural issues. Western education was not deemed appropriate for the Chinese youth. "Chinese education for essence, Western education for practice" was the wide-acclaimed principle. Yet, there was substantial criticism against this naïvite by stating that Western culture has an essence of its own, which would ultimately replace the Chinese essence.

¹⁵ For the long-lasting impact of anti-Western sentiment in the modern Chinese historiography See, Edward Wang Encountering the World: China and its Other(s) in Historical Narratives, 1949--89." *Journal of World History*; Fall 2003, Vol. 14 Issue 3

If nationalism could be cited as an integral element of modernity, China was undoubtedly touched by it by the end of 19th century. After China's defeat in the Opium War in 1842, the country was being continuously shaken by peasant uprisings and protests organized by secret societies against foreigners, which were sometimes backed by the ruling Qing Dynasty.¹⁶ The decade leading to the establishment of the Nationalist Party (Guomindang¹⁷) and the foundation of the republic in 1911 was also characterized by political and social turmoil. Not until the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949 subsequent to a long-lasting civil war -against warlords, Guomindang and Japanese army- did the chaos come to a permanent end.¹⁸

Marxism, which was not familiar to the Chinese intelligentsia in 19th century, became increasingly popular as Russia -a weak economy with a huge peasant population similar to China -declared the establishment of the first socialist state in the world. In this respect, it could well be argued that China was initially introduced the Russian interpretation of Marxism (Lenin's theory of "imperialism" and his strategy to "build class coalitions with the bourgeoisie when necessary") - a *derivative* from which Mao Zedong's CCP made a second derivation. As a prominent commentator once put, "there was no doubt that Lenin had already taken the first steps in a direction, which ultimately led to Mao Tse-Tung's peasant communism as its logical conclusion." (Schram 1969; p. 30) Hence China was introduced a theory, which she could adapt to its own context more easily, as the original writings of Karl Marx left little room for its adaptation into an underdeveloped agrarian society.

The impact of the Russian revolution was combined with the humiliation China felt after the end of the First World War. In 1919, thousands of students gathered in Beijing to boycott foreign goods and protest the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, which granted the Japanese rights over China's Shandong province. Soon, it turned into

¹⁶ 1900 Boxer Rebellion is a particular example for the rebellions supported by the Qing Dynasty. It was ultimately suppressed by Western powers. Although it is believed to be guided by anti-imperialism, the line between xenophobia and nationalism was very much blurred.

¹⁷ Chinese Nationalist Party: founded right after 1911 revolution, which established the short-lived republic and abolished the dynasty. Guomindang was established by Sun Yat Sen and was under the leadership of Chiang Kai Shek from mid-1920s onwards. It remained the most important political and military challenge against CCP until its defeat in 1949.

¹⁸ The war against warlords was fought by a coalition of Guomindang and CCP forces. After 1927 Shanghai massacre, leftist elements were expelled from Guomindang and coalition came to an end. Another coalition was formed again in 1937, against the total Japanese invasion. The period from the Japanese defeat in 1945 to the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949 was again characterized by civil war between Guomindang and CCP. Guomindang and its supporters fled to Taiwan and founded Republic of China in 1949 taking a considerable part of Chinese bourgeois class

an overall attempt against foreign domination in China and the anti-imperialist sentiment embedded in what was later called the "May Fourth Movement" became rather influential in the establishment of the CCP two years later. Shortly after its foundation, CCP had contacts with Soviet Union and it very much developed under its guidance and support in the years of revolutionary upheaval. Throughout 1920s, Comintern's general strategy for the revolutionary movements in other parts of the world was one and the same: urging new-built communist parties to make coalitions with the nationalist bourgeois parties, which meant Guomindang in the Chinese case. The CCP adopted this strategy until the Shanghai massacre in 1927, when Guomindang killed thousands of communists and expelled the leftist elements from the party. Comintern's coalition strategy was destined for bankruptcy in China. From the beginning onwards, Chinese communism utilized the nationalist sentiment to an extent that it would be detrimental to the internationalist ideal of socialism in the years that followed. Yet, nationalism was already embedded in the Leninist tradition and hardly original to China:

Already Leninist theory conferred certain legitimacy on the exploitation of nationalist sentiments. Called as they were to apply it in the framework of the alliance with the Kuomintang, the Chinese Communists interpreted it in such a way as to give priority more and more to the national factor over the class factor. (Schram; p.53)

The CCP was not under Mao Zedong's direct command until 1931 when he was elected as the president of the newly founded Chinese Soviets in Yanan¹⁹. In this period, pro-Soviet members of the CCP and Stalin criticized the chairman's policies for being overtly based on peasantry and the countryside. Not until his strategy finally proved to be victorious did the criticisms come to an end. Hence, from the start onwards, political actors and determining elements in the Chinese revolution developed differently from 1917 Revolution. While the Russian revolution was based in the city, Chinese revolution was rural-based and although proletariat²⁰ was the leading force in both, the role attributed to the peasantry was much larger in the latter. As put by a leading Maoist author, "the main problematic in the long struggle between the socialist and revisionist

¹⁹ Yanan Soviets illustrated a model for the future undertakings of the CCP. Mao regarded Yanan as a microcosm of China. It was also the most productive period on the part of Mao Zedong, as he wrote several pieces in Yanan, based on his theoretical readings and practical knowledge.

lines had always been the alliance of proletariat and peasantry...Maoism represented a historical development that transcended Bolshevism for it correctly analyzed and solved this contradiction." (Amin 1993; p.131) Hence, as different from the Russian experience, "Maoist emphasis on eliminating the inequality between rural and urban areas has given the concrete practice to the process of transition from capitalism to socialism." (Amin *ibid.*, p. 131)

In China, guerilla warfare or its oft-mentioned method "encircling cities from the countryside" was an important feature of the party's military strategy. The guerilla strategy in the Chinese Revolution developed partly due to obligatory reasons. Red Army (which was later called People's Liberation Army) came into being as the communists were forced to run from the expedition campaign led by Guomindang forces in 1928. Long March, which served to emphasize the "voluntarist aspect" of the revolutionary struggle long after the foundation of the PRC, a retreat in that sense, which enabled CCP to reach the masses in the countryside, to make its self-propaganda on its advocacy of an egalitarian and moral attitude²¹. By contrast, the general conviction held by the masses vis-à-vis the forces of the nationalist Guomindang army was its corruption and cruelty.

During the period of Japanese invasion, although there were previous frictions between the party leaderships of Soviet Union and China, Mao Zedong never challenged Stalin theoretically in his basic premises like "revolution in one country" or "national democratic revolution²²". As argued above, substantial frictions between CCP and CPSU came into play only after the change of government and Khrushchev's famous critique of Stalin in the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956. Khrushchev's unexpected move put the Chinese communists in defense of Stalin. As one party document²³ put it:

²⁰ Here, it is also important to note that the word proletariat "wuchangjieji" means "propertyless class" in Chinese language and rather than signifying the working class, it refers to the lower segments of the society without being specific.

²¹ The Party forbade the soldiers to take any goods from the people without paying its price. Throughout the Long March, they have participated in the agricultural field work, shared their materials with the villagers. The egalitarianism was also evident as The People's Liberation Army abolished military ranks and held the hierarchy among the soldiers at its minimum.

²² For a collection of Stalin's thoughts on "national democratic revolution" in Turkish, See, Stalin (1992) "Milli Demokratik Devrim" Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları

²³ Communist Party of China On the Question of Stalin, Second Comment on the Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU by the Editorial Departments of Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) and Hongqi (Red Flag) (September 13, 1963) The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement, Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1965, p. 120

The Communist Party of China has consistently held that Stalin did commit errors, which had their ideological as well as social and historical roots. It is necessary to criticize the errors Stalin actually committed, not those groundlessly attributed to him, and to do so from a correct stand and with correct methods. But we have consistently opposed improper criticism of Stalin, made from a wrong stand and with wrong methods.

Stalin fought tsarism and propagated Marxism during Lenin's lifetime; after he became a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party headed by Lenin he took part in the struggle to pave the way for the 1917 Revolution; after the October Revolution he fought to defend the fruits of the proletarian revolution. (...) Stalin led the CPSU, the Soviet people and the Soviet army in an arduous and bitter struggle to the great victory of the anti-fascist war. (...) Stalin made an indelible contribution to the international communist movement in a number of theoretical writings, which are immortal Marxist-Leninist works (...) Stalin's life was that of a great Marxist-Leninist, a great proletarian revolutionary.

In 1956, soon after Khrushchev's critique of Stalin, Mao Zedong wrote his piece, "On the Ten Great Relationships" which was followed by his complementary speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Amongst People" in 1957. In these works, Mao made a detailed analysis of the dialectical class relations in the Chinese society and argued that had the contradictions within Russian society been handled correctly by Stalin, it could have prevented the future mistakes of the CPSU's policy formulation and implementation. As Stalin could not perceive and analyze the contradictions within Russian society correctly, the serious negative consequences Soviet socialism experienced were inevitable.²⁴

As Soviet Union withdrew its long-established aid and assistance from China in 1960, Sino-Soviet split became globally apparent. Unlike Titoism, Maoism grew to become an equal rival of Moscow Stalinism and caused an international divide. Although CPSU was also undergoing a transformation after Khrushchev's famous critique of Stalin in 1956, Soviet Union was still in favor of a universal coalition of socialist states under its direct guidance.

The immediate impact of Sino-Soviet split was the development of a new discourse to differentiate between certain Marxist groups, policies and even countries within the socialist bloc. After the division, "bourgeois socialist", "revisionist", "fascist", "left or right opportunist" became frequently used adjectives exchanged between pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese lines. The 'socialist bloc' remained divided until the end of the Cold War. As Knight and Mackerras pointed out, "differentiation of Marxism along national lines and the hostility, which has resulted between rival national

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interpretations of its political implications is one of the great ironies of history." (Mackerras; p.1) Ironic it may be, these differences constituted the sole ideological truth for hundreds of leftist groups in the world, which fought against each other for twenty years until 1980s, when in most countries the capitalist system restored itself so successfully that there hardly remained anything to struggle for.

On the economic spectrum, the communist parties in China and Soviet Union were following different policies as early as mid-1950s²⁵. In the economic realm too, Mao Zedong was keen on emphasizing China's uniqueness which he summarized in the words "socialism with Chinese characteristics". Yet, the structural differences were hardly indebted to Mao's personal obsession on China's uniqueness; the economic infrastructure of the two countries was at great variance. As Chinese revolution owed its success to the countryside and the CCP had a greater knowledge of the rural areas than their Soviet counterparts, the party avoided the forceful collectivization of land (as in the case of Soviet Gulags) and mechanization of land, and gave the priority to the social aspects of collectivization. Secondly, China had huge labor power and suffered excesses, unlike Soviet Union, where urbanization and industrialization gathered greater pace after the revolution. Although both sides knew that heavy industry was the most important component in the socialist development, Chinese preferred to build a less-centralized and more balanced development between the urban and rural areas. Chinese model aimed at closing the gap between the regions by relying on smaller production units and accelerating the establishment of light industry in various parts of the country. However, it is hard to argue that the central planning measures produced better results in China. The most tragic example is probably Mao Zedong's personal initiative "Great Leap Forward" of 1957. Being a huge economic mass mobilization campaign, Great Leap relied on the assumption that the only comparative advantage China had was her enormous labor power. Hence, Mao Zedong depended heavily on people's "voluntarism" in the establishment of the production quotas, which resulted in one of the greatest man-made famines in human history. Yet, even after the disastrous Great Leap Forward attempt, the Chinese avoided employing Soviet-guided economic policies, which they found excessively mechanistic.

²⁴ Knight "Chinese Road to Socialism" in Mackerras, C. (ed.) (1985) *Marxism in Asia*. London: Groom Helm, p.97

²⁵ For a detailed analysis of Communist China's economic model, as different from the Soviet Union, See Martinet pp.155-215 and Amin pp.78-107

The critique of Soviet Union played a significant role in foreign policy-making as well. Soviet theory of 'peaceful co-existence' (which basically meant mutual recognition of the two super powers of their respective 'sphere of influences') became the core of this debate. In China, these policies were interpreted as 'giving in to the imperialist threat' and accepting the limitations on the enlargement of the socialist bloc. The term 'social imperialism' largely owed to the foreign policy of Soviet Union during the decade, which countered American power, only as far as it challenged the status quo previously agreed. China's anti-Soviet stance also had important repercussions in the realm of domestic politics. When Mao Zedong accused CPSU and Khrushchev with the charge of revisionism (or making secret plans to restore capitalism in Russia) he simultaneously blamed the managing cadres of CCP as "capitalist roaders" by which he simply referred to their being "pro-Soviet". Hence, Chinese Cultural Revolution, which was introduced under the banner of "uninterrupted/continuous revolution" against growing bureaucratization in the country, was by the same token directed against these party elites. Being an enormous mass mobilization campaign that bears no match in world history, Cultural Revolution had long-lasting impact in both domestic and foreign politics. As it fostered change through culture and took the conscious struggle of human beings as the primary condition for change, it was regarded as an original undertaking and made a significant imprint in the sphere of radical politics. It also signaled the coming of an era, which signaled the peak popularity of China and her Maoism.

2.2. Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

"It is not clear when, if ever, Mao took a decision to launch an attack of the scale of the Cultural Revolution on the CCP leadership." (Goodman 1994; p. 73) By the early 1960s, especially after the disastrous consequences of the Great Leap Forward for which he was personally responsible, Mao had resigned from daily politics. In 1966, he was undoubtedly an isolated political figure with little influence upon the party. This isolation is believed by many scholars to be the main reason underlying the cause of events that led to the launch of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This line of thought also presumes that the leading party members²⁶ whom Mao opposed at the time did not necessarily aim at any ideological deviance from socialism. As Anita Chen puts:

²⁶ Leading party members, who were opposed by Mao during the Cultural Revolution were Liu Shaoqi - the president of the PRC (or China's Khrushchev as the Red Guards called him), Deng Xiaoping - a Long March veteran and the second most important 'capitalist roader' during the 1960s, who took over in 1978

With the advantage of hindsight, knowing what happened after 1968 in the wake of the Cultural Revolution, when the Thought of Mao Zedong dominated policy-making, the meaning of the thought of Mao Zedong becomes clearer. 'Capitalist-roaders' were those who envisaged a different strategy of development for the country, who advocated a step by step modernization of the economy under a routinized bureaucracy. (Chen 1985; p.130)

There is good evidence concerning the disagreement between Mao Zedong with the leading party cadres of the day, particularly Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who were later purged in the campaigns. Yet it would be misleading to reduce such a mass mobilization campaign to Mao Zedong's personal dislike of certain party members. Such an assumption raises a very simple question: "If Mao was engaged in a Stalinist purge of his opponents, why did he not use Stalinist means rather than resorting to mass mobilization, which made considerable sense in terms of the legacy of the Chinese revolution?" (Dirlik; p. 35) Mao Zedong might have lost prestige during the Great Leap attempt, but he still enjoyed an uncontested position as the founding father of the state and held high esteem in the army. Therefore, a more truthful interpretation would be accepting that the elite conflict always existed in the party and basic reason for the elite split was the Cultural Revolution itself and not vice versa. The root of the problem was the campaign, which Liu Shaoqi and most other members of his generation of senior officials strongly opposed until Mao reprimanded them. (Dittmer 1996; p.255)

The Cultural Revolution, in its simplest definition, was a comprehensive struggle within socialist China, initiated by its very founder: a struggle waged among its people to strengthen the country and to reach ideological purity. Defined in this way, its difference from a civil war lied in the "moral" objectives sought by its initiator. Hence, above any other consideration, Mao Zedong's main motive lied in the ideological realm, from the gap between his and others' envisions regarding the future of the country. In the official Chinese historiography, the marked date of the campaign is brought back to November 1965, when a young official from Shanghai named Yao Wenyuan published an article, which attacked a historian- play writer Wu Han for "using the past to ridicule the present." (Dreyer; p. 101) His intention was to criticize "the play that attacked Mao and his article was a warning to 'revisionists' within the party that they should not dare to oppose him". (Christiansen et al; p.132) Hence "unresolved problem" with the intellectuals and party's implicit support for the reactionaries became the initial

and Lin Biao, who was the primary supporter of Mao during the Cultural Revolution but later became

justification of the movement. Thereafter the concept of 'continuous revolution', which was born in Chinese soil, was put into practice.

By the spring of 1966, Mao, having granted support of the army and Lin Biao, launched the campaign. The campaign sought to achieve a number of targets: "to delink China from the capitalist world system in order to guarantee progress toward socialism", "to move China in a direction of socialism that broke with the example of the Soviet Union, to minimize material and intellectual dependence on advanced countries". It also "addressed the question of creating a new culture appropriate to a new, socialist mode of production." (Dirlik; pp. 28-29) As put by its supporters, it was the struggle between the "proletarian revolutionary line²⁷" and the "bourgeois revolutionary line" within the masses and the party as its vanguard.

In the making of the new culture, Mao Zedong saw in the masses -particularly the youth to whom he made his famous call to "bomb the headquarters"- a pure revolutionary potential. The youth was the primary force alongside the army, which could counter the threat posed by the 'capitalist roaders'. Hence Chinese youth - organized in small groups under the organizational banner of Red Guards- was mobilized against an ambiguous "capitalist threat". Soon, wave of violence erupted in whole China, which proved to reach beyond Mao's original intentions and expectations. As a sympathetic observer puts:

The Red Guards were not allowed to carry weapons, or to arrest or try anyone, or to arbitrarily replace any administrative cadre. They were to 'criticize and repudiate', combat the 'four olds,' proselytize the masses; arouse them into a climate of total involvement. And this they did, spreading into every corner of every city and town, taking down old street names, pointing out how much feudalism still existed. Some of their actions were naïve, and some were brutal, especially when they began to conduct house researches among former capitalists, landlords, and counterrevolutionaries refugeed in the cities. But out of thirty million young people it would be unbelievable not to have a percentage of delinquents. (Suyin 1976; p. 336)

Today, what Han Suyin cited as the acts of "a percentage of delinquents" forms the mainstream line of thought concerning the Cultural Revolution. While the era is wholly

subject to similar accusations from the Chairman. He died fleeing to the Soviet Union in 1971.

²⁷ "Proletarian Revolutionary Line" is also the name Turkish Maoists took as the defining feature of their allegiance to Mao Zedong.

repudiated as Mao Zedong's political mistake²⁸ in the post-1978 Chinese historiography, Western academia adopts the same interpretation almost unanimously. As Dirlik puts:

What we make of the Cultural Revolution depends on how we view it, and this view is not just a matter of evidence as it involves considerations of our perceptions of China and the world. There was always enough evidence of silliness and cruelty, if only in the language of the Cultural Revolution, and yet it was ignored so long as the positive assessments prevailed. On the other hand evidence of silliness and cruelty now seems to be the only kind of evidence that counts, ignoring the concerns that had justified earlier positive assessments. (Dirlik; p.27)

The ambiguous aim of the Cultural Revolution, namely to counter the vaguely defined 'capitalist threat' also makes it unique in world history. Mao Zedong gave the crowds that loose definition on what he saw dangerous for the future of the country and expected an outright- but non violent- criticism to nourish. Yet, the terms 'bourgeois proletarian line', 'capitalist roaders' or 'neo-Confucians' were received and interpreted on an individual basis by the millions who responded to Mao's call. They had no prior experience on political issues and when everyone in the country was waving the Red Flag against another Red Flag, his words was of little help. "His statements were so general that everybody, even those who opposed him, could find something to justify his own position."²⁹(Karnow; p.8) In fact, few of his comrades seemed to know what was so essential to Mao Zedong: "Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is the chief question for the revolution. It is also the main question for the Cultural Revolution." (People's Daily, 1st June 1967) It was particularly difficult in an atmosphere, where the CCP employed a vague definition of class structure, which could easily be understood in terms of family ties, relations, etc. This particular aspect was not ignored by Dirlik in his analysis:

Throughout, there was a tendency to reduce all social relations to class relations, which are but one manifestation of social relations in general. To make matters worse, the leadership was unable to provide a convincing class analysis of Chinese society that could serve as a guide to action, beyond clichés about socialist and capitalist roaders. The question of class was complicated in China by an interaction between prerevolutionary social and ideological relationships that persisted into the new regime, the new caste system of rankings imposed

²⁸ See Çin -Qin Shi (1997) Beijing: Yeni Yıldız Yayınevi (Elit Yayıncılık) official publication of People's Republic of China government in Turkish p. 39

²⁹ Also See Dittmer in Kallgren p.34; Suyin p.338

upon the population after 1949 in terms of their relationship to the revolution, and the structure of power created by the Communist regime itself. Given this situation, it was not at all clear against whom class struggle was to be conducted. (Dirlik; p. 30-31)

If we leave aside its ambiguities, which certainly has produced excessively negative results, Cultural Revolution also had a global remembrance for its advocacy of profound egalitarianism. The party's emphasis on equality, which was shelved by its cadres since the revolutionary war of 40s, made a second comeback during the Cultural Revolution. "This was evident both from the appearance (modesty of clothes, abolition of ranks in the army, cut in the official receptions expenditure etc.) and the system of income. (Income schemes of workers were reorganized from 1 to 3 scales down to 1 to 2). Managing cadres were obliged to get involved in physical labor at least once a week." (Martinet; p.201)

Throughout the period, Mao Zedong Thought, which existed in the party program since 1945, was made almost a religion during the Cultural Revolution, Little Red Book being its holy book. The book, which compiled quotations from Mao Zedong, was introduced as an all-inclusive guide book having all kinds of possible answers to the problems suffered by the Chinese masses. Overall, Mao Zedong Thought was made a dogma. This tendency is illustrated in the self-celebrating headlines of the regime's newspaper People's Daily: "Long Live Ever-Victorious Mao Zedong Thought", (28th January 1967), "Our Red Guards are the Masters of the New World" (30th August 1966), "World Loves Mao Zedong Endlessly." (18th February 1968, 13th March 1968), "Read Leader Mao's Book, Listen to Leader Mao's Words, Go in the Direction which Leader Mao Points At." (6th August 1966) and "Take Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the End" (1st January 1967). In the contemporary literature regarding modern China, there is a consensus on the construction of Mao Zedong personality cult in the period 1966-1969.³⁰ An alternative view offers that it was Lin Biao's attempt rather than Mao

³⁰ For a critique of Mao Zedong cult See, Anita Chan, p. 143 and Knight, p. 119 and for a critique of Mao Zedong-centered party history See, K.K. Shum "Recent Interpretations on Party History in the People's Republic of China" in Yahuda M. ed. *New Directions in the Social Sciences and Humanities in China*. pp. 47-61 Also see G. Martinet p. 208 and Karnow p. for a similar view.

Zedong's own initiative -a leader who is known for his dislike for all kinds of dogmatism³¹. (Bouc; p.61)

In December 1966, Mao Zedong extended the criticism campaign to the agricultural and industrial sectors. As complaints began to be heard on the decrease of the production figures due to the violent nature of the campaign, the titles in People's Daily changed into warnings that production should not get effected by the campaign: "Grasp the Revolution, Promote Production" (20th January 1967) or "Grasp Revolution, Increase Production, Work Better, Increase War Preparedness." (14th July 1968)

Mao believed that the persistence of the Chinese revolution is possible, only if the masses undergo a 'spiritual' change. "The word 'culture' more closely approximated the German 'Kultur' or the French 'civilization' in signifying that Mao's broader ambition was to alter China's whole way of life." (Karnow; p.159) But the means to achieve this cultural change and to promote participation was highly problematic, as there was also a tendency to "turn the country into a big school of Mao Zedong Thought". People's Daily advised the masses to "handle classes on Mao Zedong thought energetically" and published pictures from rural and urban segments of the society on how this is likely to be achieved: pictures of soldiers, workers, students and farmers all studying Little Red Book. (25th December 1967)

The Cultural Revolution had its most serious consequences in the sphere of arts - the narrowest definition of culture. 'Social realism' became the uncontested official arts policy. People's Daily explicitly referred to the objective sought by the arts policy in its 21st June 1966 issue: "painting pictures is for serving politics." In theatre and opera, revolutionary hero and heroines dominated the scene. They were the pure embodiment of the best virtues of humankind: courage, industriousness and modesty. This was the "Great victory of the Chinese Opera revolution" (10.5.1967)

The violent phase of the Cultural Revolution came to a halt in 1969, after when Mao Zedong no longer issued instructions for the masses and thereafter tried to influence the campaigns indirectly by granting a special license to the Four³² who used

³¹ This view is also shared by Doğu Perinçek, the leader of the Turkish Maoist group PDA. During our interview he said he believed that the creation of Mao cult was Lin Biao's fault rather than Mao Zedong and he justified his argument with the letter, which Mao wrote to his wife in July 1966.

³² Cultural Revolution Small Group (or the Gang of Four as they were named in 1978) was composed of four prominent radicals of the Cultural Revolution, based in Shanghai. Headed by Mao's wife Jiang Qing, it included the former Shanghai cultural affairs official Zhang Chunqiao, former editor Yao Wenyuan, and former labour organiser Wang Hongwen.

his unpublished statements instead. (Dittmer in Kallgren; p.35) The official Chinese periodization spares a decade to the Cultural Revolution (its end being no sooner than Mao Zedong's death in 1976) and defines the period as "ten years of disaster." Right after Mao Zedong's death, The Cultural Revolution Small Group was arrested and put before the court. The Third Plenum of the CCP's Eleventh Central Committee held in 1978 announced the end of "large scale turbulent class struggles of a mass kind". (Townsend in Kallgren p.2)

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong Thought was not only used to mobilize a popular urge against bureaucratization but it gradually evolved into a global doctrine, which was designed to shape the struggles in the whole Third World. Its impact was not comparable to the previous campaigns of rectification, socialist education and ideological purification³³ which all had local consequences at best. The external factor, namely the deterioration of the relations with Soviet Union was an important factor in the globalization of Maoism. Throughout the period, although China was almost completely isolated from the rest of the world,³⁴ the CCP leadership did not seem to be threatened by this factor. Rather, China displayed its willingness to be an alternative model for the underdeveloped countries above which, she would act as a natural leader.

Prior to the Cultural Revolution Mao himself laid no claim to having added to the universal laws of Marxism; he had admonished visiting revolutionaries not to mechanically apply the experience of the Chinese revolution in their own countries, for even though it had been successful, the specific nature of Chinese society and the Chinese revolution precluded its exact replication in another context. (Knight, p. 118)

Hence Cultural Revolution played an important role in the transformation of Maoism from the national to the international level and universalization of its claims brought Maoism to a higher level of ideological importance, namely besides Marxism-Leninism. A considerable number of people in the world now regarded him as a major contributor

³³ Ideological purification and self-criticism campaigns made another distinctive characteristic of the Chinese revolution. From early 1940s onwards, the party underwent several campaigns which ultimately resulted in the purge of certain party members. However, as Marc Blecher argues in his "China Against the Tides: Restructuring through Revolution, Radicalism and Reform" p. 52, these were not purges in the Stalinist sense. In both 'the three-anti (san fan) campaign' (against corruption, waste and elitism) and 'five-anti (wu fan) campaigns' (against bribery, tax evasion, fraud and theft of government property-economic secrets) mass line methods of persuasion and discreet solicitation of information along with public mass criticism were employed.

to the socialist theory. China's pride of her ideological export could also be followed from People's Daily, which started to publish pictures of foreign students studying Mao quotations. The titles "Mao Zedong Thought is a guide for peoples of the World." (7th July 1966), "World's peoples love leader Mao Zedong" (22nd January 1967) or "Mao Zedong is the red sun in the hearts of world's people" illustrates the awareness concerning the newly developing global interest in Maoism. In 1967, Mao Zedong and Lin Biao met hundreds of "writers and friends" from different parts of the world, who seemed glad to be received by the Chairman in the pictures. (10 June 1967) In one of its headlines, People's Daily announced the "celebration of world's entrance into the new era of Mao Zedong Thought" which accompanied the pictures of foreigners reading Little Red Book. (14 January 1968) As to how and why did Maoism become popular in (or relevant for) Turkey deserves a long analysis, which I will try to provide in the next chapter, now let me turn to define the basic concepts of Mao Zedong Thought and the discursive field in which it operated.

2.3. Fundamentals of Mao Zedong Thought

Whether one puts Mao Zedong subsequent to Lenin in the hierarchy of socialist thinkers or dismisses him altogether as a peasant revolutionary, it is clear that Maoism created its own discursive field within the socialist paradigm. Again, either Mao's interpretation of Marxism represented its "degeneration" or its "creative adaptation"; it is at least clear that it posed a serious political challenge vis-à-vis Moscow and found its own supporters both in the West and the Third World countries. "All the organizations, which claimed kinship with Marxism-Leninism (and challenge the line followed by the Soviet Party without identifying themselves with the Trotskyite trend) were more or less influenced by the Maoist doctrine." (Bouc; p.219) Therefore in analyzing Maoism's global impact, our initial point of departure should be the very nature of this doctrine and how it positioned itself within (and outside) the Marxist orthodoxy. In this sense, an interesting question to start with is the following: "Was Maoism more Chinese than it was Marxist?" Although the answers to this question may vary significantly, few could deny that the process of 'sinification' (or making Chinese) changed certain aspects of this international philosophy and added 'national' overtones to it. However, it might

³⁴ People's Republic of China was not recognized by any nation from Western hemisphere until 1971 with the sole exception of France, which recognized PRC only as late as 1964.

equally be misleading to take Mao as the foremost Marxist to move along the sprit of 'nationalism' as the ideological content of Marxism had already been subject to change since Lenin, the first socialist leader to see a revolutionary potential in nationalism. Being one of the best known works in the field of political science, Lenin's study of imperialism (*Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*) shifted the Marxist emphasis from 'class struggle' to the 'struggle of the dominated countries against imperialism.' After him, the Pandora box of nationalism remained wide open and inflicted itself upon the future generations of socialist movement. In the underdeveloped countries, the notion of 'anti-imperialist struggle' blended with xenophobia towards West and hostility towards capitalism. The socialist movements in these countries tended to ignore the very core of Marx's analysis, which praised the progressive role of the bourgeoisie and the emancipatory role of capitalistic forces vis-à-vis the restrictions imposed by previous economic systems such as feudalism. The controversy is put by a critical commentator as follows:

Today we encounter among revolutionaries in Asia, Africa and Latin America not only a total hostility towards the 'imperialists' and all those who profit from imperialist exploitation of the non-European countries, but a virtual denial that the capitalist and imperialist phase in world history has contributed anything positive either economically, scientifically, culturally or otherwise. This involves in fact the complete abandonment of the whole logic of Marxism, which implies that, while the proletariat will smash the bourgeois state machine, it will at the same time build upon the cultural and technical heritage of the bourgeoisie. (Schram et al 1969; pp. 110-111)

Hence the problems involved in Mao's attempt to nationalize Marxism must be understood within the general framework of this post-Leninist tendency. The close affinity of Chinese Marxism with nationalism could also be explained with regard to the practical concerns of the CCP during the Japanese invasion. As the "anti-imperialist front" had a better chance than a "communist front" in organizing the masses and winning the war, Chinese communists leaned towards exploiting the nationalist sentiment, which was already at its peak due to a devastating war. In the catastrophic atmosphere of an upheaval such as Long March, it is not hard to guess why the original writings of Karl Marx make little sense to Mao. The Chinese experience with communism necessitated the ideology to produce immediate solutions. Hence revolutionary practice in China always prevailed over the theory.

However, the problem with Mao Zedong Thought was not only the gap between Marxist theory and its practice in China. The very process of theorization itself gave birth to certain concepts that challenged the materialistic notions in Marxism. As Mao frequently raised the question of morality, he approached the romantic notions of Rousseau and the Jacobins that Marx had rejected in the mid-nineteenth century." Thus "they represented the regression rather than the advancement of Marxist doctrine." (Karnow; p.6) In contrast to Lenin, "who acknowledged the need for intensive industrialization, Mao focused on transforming the Chinese 'soul' as a prerequisite to modernization. Hence he aligned himself less with Marx than with the romantic utopians who interpreted history as a moral drama in which virtue rather than material progress was to be promoted." (Karnow; p.7) As he praised the virtues of poverty, voluntarism and physical labor, he was found more similar to Christian morality than Marxism. (Martinet; p. 215) An alternative view is put forward by Dirlik, who counters the question on several aspects:

The terms 'sinicization' or 'sinification' suggests the assimilation of others to Chinese ways, biasing interpretation to a culturalism that has long been nourished by the dehistoricized notions of Chineseness, with a long-established tradition that swallows up all challengers in a Chinese cultural space...What is at issue here is not assimilation of the Other to the culture of the self, but the transformation of the self in process, launching a new trajectory... (Dirlik; pp.100-101)

Therefore, as indicated above, the critique of Mao's nationalization attempt must first be divorced from any parochialism, which favors a static notion of Chinese identity. The paradigm, which interprets Chinese history as a continuous reign of authoritarian leaders, from the Yellow Emperor to Mao Zedong, is not only ahistorical but also essentialist. One should not ignore the fact that, whether successful or not, the CCP aimed at the complete transformation of society along socialist principles. If one finds references in Mao Zedong Thought to classical Chinese thought, it was because he tried to equip the masses with a theory whose guiding principles -he believed- existed in the Chinese national culture. Hence he found no difficulty in explaining dialectics with reference to China's good old *yin* and *yang*: male and female principle whose combination formed the elements which made the entire world. (Bouc; p.111)

Yet, still, Mao Zedong's sinification attempt involved several handicaps and posed a challenge vis-à-vis the theory of Marxism. It still raises an epistemological question on whether a Europe-originated Marxism was applicable in an

unindustrialized, rural country like China at all. Perhaps, if we only take into account the fact that Mao's nationalization attempt was not a one-way process or the realm of *real politics* always necessitates a certain level of demarcation from theory, could we develop a more sympathetic account of Chinese Marxism. As long as Maoism did not rely upon the legacy of Karl Marx, it represented a deviation. But one should not ignore the fact that, in China –one of the oldest civilizations of the world- that degree of deviation was necessary in order to make an otherwise foreign theory understandable and valuable in the eyes of the masses. Let us now focus on the fundamental concepts of Mao Zedong Thought, which also helped to determine the jargon of various groups that aligned themselves with the CCP.

2.3. A) New Democracy

Mao Zedong's formulation of the concept "new democracy" was closely linked with his assessment of the economic and social structure of China. As early as 1927, in his "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan"³⁵ (Mao's home province, where he spent three months to study its class relations) Mao had declared the rural character of the Chinese revolution. According to him, China was previously an agrarian society, which after the intervention of the Western imperialism, gained a semi-feudal, semi-colonial character. Hence now, its economic structure involved a variety of class formations, over which feudalism was dominant. Following the orthodox Marxist teleology, he concluded that as China did not fully enter the stage of modern capitalism, a 'bourgeois-democratic revolution' was necessary in order to wipe away the feudal and colonial elements in the country. "Between 1840 and 1919, the revolution that was led by the bourgeoisie, constituted the period of 'Old Democracy'. With the May Fourth Movement, leadership of the 'bourgeois-democratic' revolution had passed from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat and its vanguard party, the CCP." (Nick Knight; p.77) Mao put the basis of his argument as follows: "the Chinese bourgeoisie and proletariat are new-born and never existed before in Chinese history...they are twins born of China's old (feudal) society at once linked to each other and antagonistic to each other"³⁶. Thus as China did not undergo a social change similar to Europe, where the bourgeoisie was

³⁵ See "Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-Tung" pp.20-32

³⁶ Mao Zedong quoted in Fairbank (1998), p. 322-323

the vanguard in bringing about the revolutions of the 18th century, the task of revolutionary change in China lied with the proletariat.

In his "On the New Democracy" published in 1939, Mao made a more explicit definition of the new democratic republic. It was a transitional form of state under the joint dictatorship of several classes, among which the primary were the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and the workers. (Zarakol: p. 1357) In order to bring about social change, a united front doctrine should be adopted: first in defeating the Japanese forces and then in creating the "new democracy". This new state would not alienate the 'national bourgeoisie' -defined in sharp distinction with the 'comprador bourgeoisie', which sold out the country to the imperialist exploiters. The "new democratic republic" will work as a central authority, which would complete the tasks of a 'bourgeois-democratic' revolution. Only after the fulfillment of these tasks will this democratic dictatorship be followed by the socialist state.

2.3. B) Contradiction

The term "contradiction" was certainly not used only by Mao Zedong alone, but several Marxist thinkers, who referred to "dialectics" as a means of explanation in their work. However, Mao Zedong's usage of the term was still significant for its detailed and complex setting. For Mao, there existed many contradictions; primary and secondary, antagonistic and non-antagonistic, permanent and temporary. "He did not confine himself to demonstrating the unity of opposites in all things; he classified contradictions as primary and secondary; he made them dynamic by showing that one of the opposed elements is always predominant; he made them flexible by showing that *in different circumstances the primary aspect of the contradiction may become secondary, and contradictions which were secondary before may become primary.*" (Bouc; p.112)

Firstly, Mao differentiates between the principle contradiction and the other contradictions of lesser importance. He made an elaboration of this perspective in the articles "On Contradiction"³⁷ (1937), "On the Ten Great Relationships" and his complementary speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Amongst People"³⁸ (1957). "Mao's conception of 'the people' presumed a category which was necessarily driven by class cleavages -between the various strata of the peasantry, between landlords

³⁷ See "Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-Tung" pp.70-108

³⁸ See "Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-Tung" pp.350-387

and the peasants, between working class and peasantry, between bourgeoisie and workers, and so on." (Knight; p.66) However, the interests of peasantry and proletariat were not conflictual in character and could be resolved after the establishment of socialist dictatorship. He argued for a similar solution on the part of the petty bourgeoisie (comprising intellectuals and students) and the 'national bourgeoisie' – classes, which could take their place in the formation of the dictatorship.

Mao's complex formulation of dialectics -the primacy of one contradiction over another- was important as it gave the party with the flexibility it sought in various situations. As Mao never believed in an abstract Marxism, he did not trust any theory divorced from the specific needs that a specific situation required. Hence the "principle contradiction" changed according to new situations and it determined the ultimate strategy of the party at a given historical moment:

During the early stages of the anti-Japanese war, Mao argued on many occasions that the principal contradiction of Chinese society was not that between the CCP and the GMD, but between the Chinese society and the forces of Japanese imperialism...on the cessation of anti-Japanese war, the principle contradiction once again became the antagonism between the CCP and GMD, and this laid the theoretical basis for the civil war of 1946-49.

(Mackerras and Knight: p.74)

If the concept of contradiction was not original to Mao Zedong, his argument that the class contradictions in a given society are not resolved even after the establishment of socialism definitely was. This assumption formed the basis of his critique of the Soviet Union and also the 'revisionists' in China. Following his flexible definition of contradiction, the principle contradiction during the Cultural Revolution period was different from the 1930s. Now the antagonism between the 'bourgeois proletarian line' and the 'proletarian revolutionary line' constituted the predominant contradiction, and could only be resolved through the struggle of the 'revolutionary masses' against the 'capitalist-roaders.'

2.3. c) Mass Line

The most important defining characteristic of most of the Asian revolutions was "the size of the peasant population [which] necessitated certain innovative theoretical formulations to specify the role of the peasantry vis-à-vis the working class in the process of revolution and socialist construction in a largely peasant society." (Knight et al; p.7) However, what seemed like a disadvantage for his predecessors, turned into an

advantage in the hands of Mao Zedong. As he regarded 'voluntarism' to be the core issue in politics, "China's backwardness [did not become] a handicap but an advantage, its poverty a spur to activism, its vastness important for the communist strategy, and its 'semi-colonial' status leading to anti-imperialist struggles that would bring down the structures of not only colonialism but also dependent capitalism." (Christiansen et al; p.66)

According to Mao, the mind of Chinese people was a 'blank sheet', which must be filled with correct ideas. Yet, the 'mass line' introduced a theoretical limitation over the modernizing role of the party. "In comparison to Lenin, Mao's ideas of the party involved a far greater degree of interdependence with the masses..." (Womack; p.198) The doctrine of 'mass line' was a double-ended and ambiguous concept, like many of Mao's theoretical formulations. (Fairbank; p.325) On the one hand, it necessitated the party to consult the masses in the decision-making process, while on the other it re-established central authority as the indispensable element of socialism. In its initial stage, mass line was a means to combat bureaucratization. By 1933, the concept was enlarged to include "the education of masses and the leaders, open channels of communications between the two groups, the elimination of bad habits and poor style of functioning and continuing consultation between the masses and the leaders, and for justice not only to be done but to be seen to be done." (Christiansen et al; p. 57) Mao's 'mass line' as an urge to go to masses for inspiration remained as an important part of Chinese politics until his death in 1976.

2.3. D) Anti-Intellectualism

It is hard to distinguish the 'anti-intellectualism' embedded in the Chinese Revolution from Mao Zedong's personal hostility towards the intellectuals in China. Mao was a self-made man of peasant origin who did not enjoy the privileged college education and did not particularly believe in the virtues the intelligentsia had. In an article he wrote in 1930, titled "Oppose Book Worship"³⁹ he warned the communists against any kind of knowledge that is divorced from the actual conditions. In this article, he asserted that "When we say Marxism is correct, it is certainly not because Marx was a "prophet" but because his theory has been proved correct in our practice and our struggle...Many who have read Marxist books have become renegades from the

revolution, whereas illiterate workers often grasp Marxism very well.”⁴⁰ Mao always put practice over theory and the masses over intellectuals. In a speech he delivered at Hanlin Academy in 1964, he warned the students against the harmful aspects of reading too much. (Zarakol; p.1366) As illustrated in his slogan "Oppose Book Worship" the justification of theory was its usefulness. (Womack; p.201) In his own works as well, "he considered theoretical problems only insofar as the situation demanded". (Womack; p.198)

The institutionalization of the anti-intellectualism was achieved primarily in two episodes: first, in 1957, with the launch of Hundred Flowers Campaign and second, with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966. In the first episode, the campaign and its slogan "*let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred ideas contend*" was aimed at enlarging the revolutionary consensus among the intelligentsia. However, in a one-year time span, the government decided that the criticisms were excessive and critiques were counter-revolutionary. "The Scholars who dared to criticize the government were forced to join in 'collective work'. A professor had to clean the water bin in the university he taught. The intellectuals were forced to confess their conceited attitude." (Zarakol, p.1361) The moral supremacy of physical labor vis-à-vis intellectual labor became an established norm, which was repeated during the Cultural Revolution⁴¹ from 1966 to 1976, not only scholars were forced to make self-criticism and join collective work, but millions of students were placed in rural areas to 'learn from the masses' and close the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge.

The fundamental aspects of Mao Zedong Thought elaborated above disseminated globally in 1960's and helped to form the jargon of the groups in other countries, which saw China as the leader of world socialist movement. Although Soviet critique was hardly exclusive to Maoist groups in these years, it is a reality that the Chinese experience intensified this criticism as it illustrated an alternative socialist model for the rest of the world. As we will shortly see, Turkish Maoists followed the political developments and ideological shifts in China closely. Thanks to the international broadcast of Beijing Radio and theoretical journals like Peking Review and

³⁹ See "Oppose Book Worship" in Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-Tung, pp.33-41

⁴⁰ *ibid.* p. 35

⁴¹ For a critique of the educational reforms in the period of Cultural Revolution, See Wan, G. (2001) "The Educational Reforms in the Cultural Revolution in China: A Postmodern Critique" *Education*; Fall 2001, Vol. 122 Issue 1, p21-33

Hongqi (Red Flag) they found little difficulty in catching up with the recent Maoist jargon and its adaptation in their daily political struggle.

3. Turkish Maoism

Before the end of 1969, when Proletarian Revolutionary Illumination (Proleter Devrimci Aydınlik or PDA) emerged as the first Maoist⁴² faction in Turkey, Mao Zedong was perceived as an enigmatic but respectable figure by the Turkish Left in general; the enigma being due to the small size of information available on China at the time. At the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, there was just one book available in Turkey on the nature of the Sino-Soviet split⁴³ and most of Mao's writings were not yet fully translated. Yet, there was a general tendency to regard him as a great leader who turned China into a socialist country⁴⁴ and the Cultural Revolution a positive step taken in order to strengthen Chinese socialism. By contrast, a critical approach vis-à-vis Soviet bureaucratization (read "revisionism") was widespread. In 1967, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, an influential figure and a previous member of the abolished Turkish Communist Party (Türkiye Komünist Partisi; TKP) who had no particular adherence to Maoism whatsoever, referred to Cultural Revolution with below remarks:⁴⁵

"China is removing two (Soviet) sicknesses of power that plagued the cadres of intelligentsia. Who was supposed to heal a party machine, which had been paralyzed by personality cult in Soviet socialism? (...) China is mobilizing the dynamism and enterprising spirit of the youth (the least corrupted, cleanest, self-sacrificing, most energetic segment of the masses) against the corruption of the (communist) party and (socialist) state and cultured "high persons"(men of party-state-culture).

As on the part of the revolutionary, it was hard to defend Soviet thesis such as "peaceful co existence" or "peaceful passage into socialism", sympathy for China always existed even among the oldest ranks of the Turkish Left. (Aydınöglü 1994, p.164) After the emergence of the PDA by 1969, a controversy –still remembered and not completely settled- took place on the nature of real and phony Maoism, which explicitly placed PDA liners in the latter category. It is interesting to note that the dispute was rather

⁴² Here, it is important to note that Turkish Maoists did not call their group ideology as Maoism but rather "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought". I avoided using such a long and ambiguous concept for simplicity.

⁴³ See, Zileli "Yarılma" p.184

⁴⁴ Ömer Laçiner, interview, 1st July 2003; also See Zileli, "Yarılma" p.339

⁴⁵ Hikmet Kıvılcımlı "Halk Cumhuriyeti: Kızıl Bekçiler" February 1967

aimed at dissociating PDA from "genuine" Mao Zedong Thought,⁴⁶ rather than attacking Mao Zedong Thought *per se*. Until today, their so-called "phony Maoism" formed the mainstream line of critique directed against the Turkish Maoists.⁴⁷ Criticisms ranged from their "importing" Chinese strategies (which were made only for China) to their doing nothing more than publishing theoretical journals, which generally employed a rather abstract language. One other source of dislike stemmed from the Turkish Maoists' bourgeois/intellectual class origins. As the main figures of the PDA group were graduates of prominent schools, they spoke foreign languages and were engaged in translation and publication activities, they were not regarded as sufficiently "revolutionary" in a political atmosphere, where the dominant aim became overthrowing the regime by means of armed struggle. Yet Chinese experience itself was subject to little criticism in Turkey until the Sino-Soviet conflict moved into a radical phase by mid-1970s. Until then Turkish Maoists enjoyed relative popularity and influence over the other groups, especially through their journals *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlik*, *Halkın Sesi* and *İşçi-Köylü*.

But what has made Maoism attractive to the Turkish intelligentsia, especially to the founders of PDA, or with its undisclosed name Turkish Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants (*Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi, THİKPP*)? Why did they look to Asia rather than Europe in order to discover a revolutionary ideology? After all, seeking answers in the West had been the norm for the Turkish intelligentsia at least for two centuries. Perhaps the paradox above could best be resolved by recalling the journey of traditional Chinese food, which first traveled from China to New York and only then was made available in every major city of the world in 1990s. Maoism followed a similar route before it arrived in Turkey, i.e., it came via West, by the help of figures like Halil Berktaş and Şahin Alpay who owed their affiliation with Maoism to the intellectual environment in the American and European campuses⁴⁸. Besides, a considerable number of the initial PDA members were graduates of the Robert College or Galatasaray Lycée -two prominent institutions established in Istanbul by American and French governments respectively- a fact that explains their close attention towards the ideological changes taking place in the West⁴⁹. In the initial years of the movement

⁴⁶ See. Çayan, M. (1970) "Yeni Oportünizmin Niteliği Üzerine" *Aydınlik*, Mayıs 1970: 127-159

⁴⁷ Similar views could be found even in the most recent studies and memoirs published on the era. For an example, See Öztürk (1994) "1971 Muhtırasından Portreler II" p.163, P.170

Alpay and Berktaş wrote several articles in *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık*, the journal which shaped the theoretical orientation of the party.

However, the affiliation of PDA members with Western high schools and universities does not undermine the fact that in mid-1960s, there was already a suitable political environment (i.e., radicalization of the youth) and sufficient sympathy for Mao Zedong in Turkey. After its initial foundation, Turkish Maoism operated in its unique cultural context, putting its own interpretation of the Chinese experience into practice. In this sense, Turkish historical conscience regarding Russia fit nicely in the agenda of the PDA-liners. On the part of the Maoists, it was easier to add on to the good old anti-Russian sentiment in Turkey, which made Soviet Union a source of fear and hostility due to its physical proximity and its proven record of interventionism. By contrast, China's geographical distance enabled its perception as a "far and friendly country." As PDA liners put it in 1973 TİİKP Court Defense:

We are internationalists. People's Republic of China and Albanian People's Republic are our people's friends. They support our people's struggle without pursuing an interest and demanding anything in exchange: neither a base nor a military facility.⁵⁰

As a second reason for its particular attraction, China's being an underdeveloped country like Turkey should be cited: the semi- feudal nature of Chinese countryside was found similar to Turkish periphery in certain aspects, and as both countries lacked a strong industry, peasantry gained an equally important role as that of proletariat. Revolutionaries in both countries were trying to find their own, "original" solutions to the question of modernization and sought development through autonomy. Thirdly, Mao Zedong was a charismatic revolutionary leader, who turned China into "red" and the strong language he employed against US played an important role in his appeal to the youth whereas Brezhnev was a third generation leader in his country and a tame figure in international politics. Mao frequently referred to the topics of underdevelopment,

⁴⁸ Oral Çalışlar stated in our interview that Halil Berktaş and Şahin Alpay supplied the group with foreign language brochures, books and other sources on Mao's Cultural Revolution.

⁴⁹ Ragıp Duran, a graduate of Galatasaray Lycée, remembers that the students used to read brochures on Chinese Cultural Revolution at the school. According to him, sympathy for Cultural Revolution was evident at the time. He remembers discussing revolutions within a hierarchy of importance: first came the Chinese Cultural Revolution, second the Kemalist Revolution and third the French Revolution.

⁵⁰ Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi Davası Savunma, p. 85

anti-imperialist movements in Third World and challenged US on many occasions⁵¹. In Turkey, there was a general conviction that radicalism, revolutionary purity and uncompromising attitude against imperialism was represented by the CCP. (Aydinoğlu, 1994: p.165)

It was not until 1972, when Nixon made his famous visit to China, that the Sino-American relations started to relax gradually. A few years later CCP (and subsequently the Turkish Maoists) radicalized its discourse concerning Soviet Union, by declaring it as the greatest threat vis-à-vis world peace and Third World development. Placing Soviet Union in the opposite camp was a Chinese political maneuver at best, guided by a change in national foreign policy considerations. Yet, the friction subsequent to this change in emphasis not only caused a split between the Albanian Communist Party and the CCP, but also weakened the global popularity of Maoism. Towards the end of 1970s, Maoists all over the world were confused on maintaining their future strategies. This confusion was partly the result of Mao Zedong's death in 1976, which brought in an additional succession problem in China. As Berktaş points out, global Maoism died in a relatively short time:

While classical Stalinism preserved its existence half a century or more in Soviet Union and 30-40 years in other Eastern European countries, the Maoist variant of Stalinism lasted only for 10-12 years...Almost none of the Maoist parties, which saw themselves as products of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" could unify with the laboring masses in their countries and by the second half of the 1970s, 99 percent of these small cells disappeared. (Berktaş 1988: p.1175)

In the two years following Mao's death until Deng Xiaoping's coming to power in 1978, global Maoism shook in its very foundations. In Turkey, by the second half of 1970's, other than PDA, there were three groups which were influenced by Maoism: People's Way (Halkın Yolu), People's Liberation (Halkın Kurtuluşu) and People's Union (Halkın Birliği). However, their affiliation with Mao Zedong Thought remained limited in comparison to the PDA and towards the end of 1970s they left Chinese model altogether to follow the Albanian.

⁵¹ It is not hard to imagine the influence of phrases like "American imperialism and nuclear threat is a paper tiger" or "Imperialism and its running dogs" on the youth. See Zileli, "Yarılma" p. 262

After the bloody May Day of 1977, which was blamed on the Maoists⁵² by the widely read journal *Günaydın*, Halkın Yolu disintegrated and its most of its members joined PDA.⁵³ According to Zileli, Turkish Maoism reached its peak popularity in 1977, the very year, which it also began to decline. The decline was partly due to the global weakening of Maoism and partly to the growing discontent of the regime with the Turkish left in general, which ultimately resulted in an oppressive military coup, three years after the bloody May Day.

In 1980, fifteen years after it gained popular support and nine years after the first blow from the regime in 1971, Turkish left was extinguished. The military coup swept away all the ideological groups, trade unions, associations and legal political parties. 1980 was also the beginning of a new era for Turkish economy and politics, after when capitalism was entirely institutionalized and collective political identities no longer made sense, perhaps only except for the Islamic movement. In China too, a great transformation took place after Deng Xiaoping's coming to power in 1978 –an old party veteran, who criticized Mao Zedong for overemphasizing the 'bourgeois threat' in his greatest mistake, namely the launch of the Cultural Revolution. By 1980's Maoism seemed to have completed its historical cycle both in China and abroad, after when it remained a marginal ideology⁵⁴. Yet, for almost two decades, Maoism became one of the important sources of lively theoretical debates and bitter political struggles both in Turkey and abroad. In the hands of the 'proletarian revolutionaries' Maoism served to be an international guideline in their attempt to 'localize' Marxism in Turkey by adopting it 'creatively'. Throughout this process, PDA endeavor was by no means divorced from the needs of political agitation, propaganda and organization –a process, which produced its own eccentricities. Nevertheless, Maoist movement had a long-lasting mark on the Turkish political life in general and the leftist politics in particular. Now, let me make a brief introduction on the political atmosphere of the 1960s and the general characteristics of the Turkish Left, in which PDA movement flourished as a part.

⁵² My ex-Halkın Kurtuluşu member interviewee, who has joined the May Day March in 1977, stated that all the Maoists were far from the center (Taksim) when the guns were fired. Today, it is still not clear whether Maoists –or any other political group- was responsible for the 1977 May Day, which resulted in the death of 34 people.

⁵³ See Zileli "Havariler", p. 275-278

⁵⁴ Today, Maoist guerilla groups exist in Nepal, ...

3.1. Turkish Left in 1960's.

In his memoir, Gün Zileli notes that Turkish Left was influenced more by the Eastern revolution -which was culturally closer to it in terms of its authoritative tendencies and embodiment of traditional practices- rather than the Western one.⁵⁵ If we look back to the socialist movement, whose popular support grew after the foundation of the Turkish Labor Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP) in 1961, one could discern his point. Turkish Left never questioned traditional sexual roles or institutions such as marriage, nor attempted to make a substantial critique of Kemalism, especially in the period until the 1971 military intervention. On the other hand, while it is a widely held presumption that European Marxism during 1970's offered a more emancipatory model, the dichotomy of Eastern/Western socialism becomes problematic if one recalls the general tendency of the European leftist groups to regard their own countries too "developed" to let a revolutionary upheaval come about. (Fraser: 1988, pp. 75-76) Even the legendary French May 1968 movement lacked such potential. "It had no political aim itself, though it used political phraseology. Without profound social and cultural discontents, ready to emerge at a relatively slight impetus, there can be no major social revolutions." (Hobsbawm 1999; p. 288) In this sense, one should not overlook the fact that Europe has also looked upon the Third World for inspiration and as European radicals did not see any possibility of change in their home countries, the focus remained on changing the conservative middle-class culture. Unlike their European counterparts, Marxist groups in Turkey (perhaps naively) held faith in the possibility of a revolutionary change and made their strategy accordingly. Therefore, whereas in the West, the emphasis was on cultural transformation -USA representing the peak of this tendency as it developed completely independent of worker class- Turkish leftists were always more concerned with the political and ideological issues. It was more so in 1970s, as propaganda and organization work demanded closer ties with the masses, a process during which urban intellectualism was completely abandoned in favor of an ambiguous "people's culture". Consequently, the social composition of the leftist movement evolved from students in 60s to militants in 70s and cultural change remained subordinate to the 'urgent needs' of political change.

⁵⁵ See Zileli, G. (2000) *Yarıлма (1954-1972)* Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, p.

As the aim of the Turkish Left was the ultimate seizure of state power, leftists sought to build coalitions with different segments of social strata. In addition to workers, peasants, bureaucrats and intelligentsia, the army was also taken into consideration as a potential ally. A considerable number believed that a progressive military coup that would side itself with the masses was not only probable but also likely. In order to clarify the reasons behind this particular account, which is perhaps the most significant distinction of the Turkish Left from its Western counterparts, it is necessary to comment briefly on the Kemalist vision of history –which was by then (and still is) the dominant one in the high school curricula in Turkey.

The Turkish official historiography is a state-centered one and it emphasizes the fundamental importance of the army as both the founder and the protector of the state. According to the Kemalist historiography, Ottoman Empire had been a declining power at least since 17th century and it was ruled by corrupt *sultans* and statesmen who could not adapt to international changes until the First World War brought about the inevitable end of the dynasty. This self-legitimizing narrative continues with Kemalists' saving the country from the English, French, Italian and Greeks army during the "National War of Independence" in the early 1920s. Recent studies also point to the fact that the construction of a purely Kemalist vision of the war (and previous historical developments) was made possible only after Mustafa Kemal eliminated his political rivals in the country by 1926⁵⁶. His *Speech* (Nutuk) which was published one year later is the canonic text around which a whole Kemalist vision of the recent past was institutionalized. Although at the end of this text, Atatürk entrusts the duty of preserving and defending national independence to the youth (not the army) his personal conviction that the army and politics should remain in separate realms did not undermine the former's role in the shaping of country's future. Even today, Turkish Armed Forces "perceives itself as the guardian of the republic and its Kemalist legacy". (Ahmad 1993; p.213)

Another major problem with the Kemalist historiography is its placing the establishment of the republic at the point-zero of Turkish modernization process. In fact, Turkey had at least a hundred years old history of reforms, beginning with the Ottoman statesmen, who largely focused on the rehabilitation of the military to avoid further defeats. But the role of the Young Turk generation, which brought in the 1876

Constitution and restored constitutional monarchy in 1908, illustrated major steps towards the building of a modern nation-state. What Atatürk made differently (or more radically) from them was the fast and wholesale adoption of Western way of life. The path Turkey should follow, according to Kemal was trying to "catch up with the modern world and reach the level of modern civilizations." The changes introduced by him -the adoption of Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic, the adoption of Italian Civil Code instead of *mecelle* or the new obligation to wear a Western style hat rather than the Ottoman *fez*- were each named as 'revolutions'. As Belge brilliantly shows, even the concept 'revolutionary' which was made wide currency in 1960s had something to do with his legacy:

(If a concept like "revolutionary" [devrimci] spread quickly and became a more comfortably pronounced word than "socialist", it was partly because of the trustworthiness this word gained as the modern translation of the Kemalist "inkilapçılık". (Belge: 1989 p. 43)

These 'revolutions' were carried out by Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) founded by Atatürk in his lifetime until his trusted colleague and war veteran İsmet İnönü took over in 1930s. CHP enjoyed a one-party rule whose certain policies bore close similarities with the Italian and German fascism, until the end of the Second World War⁵⁷. In the economic sphere, CHP aimed at creating a national bourgeoisie, which it did not become quite successful with the relatively liberal policies it pursued during 1920s. The subsequent etatist period that began in early 1930s, was due to the impact of the Great Depression and resulted in increasing state control in both economic and social life. A comprehensive land reform never took place in the early republican years, although Kemalists were careful in paying lip service to the miserable status of small peasantry. Overall, Kemalist economic policies were eclectic and pragmatic. But Kemalists were self-consistent in one aspect. Even only in discourse, they never made an attempt towards the creation of a fully egalitarian society based on socialist principles. They were inspired by the Soviets only in so far as their strong centralized government was concerned. The economic ideology of the Kemalists was more along the lines of corporatism, which refused the existence of conflicting class interests and understood society with the metaphor of a living organism -unable to

⁵⁶ See Zurcher, E. (1983) p.238

function if one part ceases to work. However, Turkish Left in 1960s praised the period for its central economic planning measures and independent foreign policy. "The history of Turkey's war of liberation was re-interpreted and presented as a struggle against imperialism with the Kemalists bent on establishing an independent, non-aligned state while their opponents were willing to accept foreign tutelage." (Ahmad; p. 141)

By the end of the Second World War, which Turkey joined as a political gesture after the final defeat of Germany, global context increasingly pushed the transformation of one-party rule into parliamentary democracy. Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) under Adnan Menderes, which later became CHP's long-lasting political rival, emerged in this context. As early as 1950, it successfully channeled the discontent of the strengthening bourgeoisie, landlords and the rural conservatives into a political victory. But despite its electoral support, DP government was not fully comfortable, as it – rightly guessed- that the military and bureaucracy remained traditional allies of its political rival, CHP. However, as the beginning of 50s became the years of economic boom thanks to the enormous need for food in war-torn Europe, DP confirmed its popular support in the next elections held in 1954. Contrary to what is connoted by its very name, 'democratic' period did not become an era of political liberalism as it happened to be in the economic realm. "Menderes's tightening of an already draconian penal code, his measures against the press, the confiscation of the opposition's assets, and attacks on university autonomy, all suggested that he had abandoned his promises of making Turkey more free and democratic." (Ahmad; p. 112) What has later made the 1930s a golden age in the Turkish leftist discourse - in addition to the DP's alliance with landlord and bourgeois classes- was the new foreign policy of the country. DP's pro-Americanism, which was accelerated by the full participation of the country in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952, aligned the country with the Western powers, replacing traditional 'non alignment' strategy, which kept Turkey away from the Second World War. Besides, throughout 1950s, American connection started to be felt in every aspect of urban culture. Consumerism was promoted through Hollywood pictures and colored magazines and "creating a small America out of Turkey" remained among the declared priorities in DP's agenda.

By the end of 1950s, DP had lost its support within the intelligentsia, who was disappointed with the authoritarian policies of the government. The army, on the other

⁵⁷ 1942 Varlık Vergisi (Capital Tax) illustrates an important example.

hand, regarded DP's economic policies (particularly concerning the status of the officers and the military budget) as incompatible with the norms of the 'social state'. The 1960 junta, which later named itself the National Unity Committee, consisted of 38 members, most of whom held junior ranks in the army. 1960 was the first military coup⁵⁸ in the republican history and it paradoxically helped to create a more "civic" political and social environment with its introduction of the new constitution. Hence the sympathetic relation of the Turkish Left to the army in the 60s owed much to the legacy of this extraordinary historical occasion. For years to come, 1960 served as an example of "progressive" military coups, which made a good deal of people optimistic on the subsequent ones⁵⁹. In fact, it took thirty years for the Left to reach a consensus on the anti-democratic nature of all the coups that took place in republican history. The late consensus reached in 1990s on this issue partly owes to the fact that a leftist coup never materialized in Turkish history and partly to the post-1980 intellectual environment, which prioritized the ideal of democracy vis-à-vis revolutionary politics.⁶⁰ Until then, 1960 coup was cited as nostalgia -compared and contrasted with the subsequent two, which were much more conservative in their consequences than most would have expected.

As early as 1961, thanks to the new liberties introduced by the new constitution, a new legal party was built along socialist principles, which soon exerted its influence on the general political scenery in Turkey. Founded by trade-unionists, Turkish Labor Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi; TİP) was the most radical party that was ever going to be represented in Turkish Grand National Assembly. By its very founding date, TİP was in favor of a parliamentary struggle⁶¹ and a gradual transformation of the political system into socialism. 1965 general elections won TİP 15 members of parliament -among whom there were well-known writers, journalists and scholars, who undoubtedly increased the party's appeal to the youth and the masses in general. Overall, TİP's

⁵⁸ Coups in Turkey are rather named as *mudahale* (intervention) in order to soften the tone. First of these subsequent interventions was in 1971, an open letter from the Army to the government, followed by a change in political leadership and imprisonment of dissidents. In 1980, under the leadership of Head of the General Staff Kenan Evren, a conservative coup resulted in the imprisonment of thousands of leftists, extreme nationalists and pro-Islamists, changed the constitution in a more radical way and deprived citizens of the fundamental rights of demonstration, association and union.

⁵⁹ For a specific example, See Zileli "Yarıma" p.88.

⁶⁰ See Kentel (1989) for a detailed study of the transformation of the Islamic and Marxist intellectuals in the post-1980 political environment.

⁶¹ TİP's insistence on parliamentary struggle was criticized under the popular title of authorized socialism (*icazetli sosyalizm*) by the hardliner leftist groups, which included PDA as well.

political impact went well beyond its modest representation in the parliament. Soon the party's ideals became widely popular among student circles and the intelligentsia. A youth foundation called Federation of Idea Clubs (Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu: FKF) was particularly influential in this process as it worked as TİP's by-party organization in the universities.

TİP's leader Mehmet Ali Aybar regarded Turkey to be a capitalist country with a relatively developed working class. According to his analysis, the next step the country ought to undertake was a socialist transformation. As Turkey had an established democratic system, socialism could be achieved by parliamentary struggle with TİP as its umbrella organization, under which should unite the forces of all the leftist elements in the country. There might not have been any problems with this strategy –only if TİP had been alone in analyzing the situation of the country and formulating the strategies to be followed. However, as Turkey was already touched by the global tendencies and Marxist writings had become available to thousands in cheap translations, Aybar had to face serious challenges from various positions. Among his primary challengers, Doğan Avcıoğlu⁶² and Mihri Belli -an ex member of the abolished Turkish Communist Party (Türkiye Komünist Partisi, TKP), who currently wrote theoretical pieces in the journals *Yön*, *Türk Solu* and *Aydınlık* were the most significant ones.

In the two decades following the 1960 coup, political journals became enormously important in generating public opinion and support for the leftist groups. Often, the theoretical arguments were first elaborated in these journals, later to be discussed not only among their specific audiences but also by rival groups, who followed them carefully and answered duly when necessary. For persons like Mihri Belli, editorial board yet served another purpose. As he was a representative of the former TKP generation and he was legally prohibited from any further political engagement, he remained excluded from the TİP experience from the beginning. Hence, Belli tried to influence the party from outside -a process that produced more harm than good as we will shortly see. During 1960s, as the 'correct' analysis of the situation was

⁶² Although Doğan Avcıoğlu was not a Marxist he made use of the Marxian methods in his analysis. He wished to create a non-aligned, industrialized and fully independent Turkey and he gave the vanguard role to the military-civil bureaucrats, intelligentsia and the youth. His journal *Yön* (Direction) was first published in 1961. In its first issue, *Yön* published a Statement, which was signed by a heterogenous group of intellectuals. In a way, *Yön* was the continuation of *Kadro* journal of 1930s, which aimed at finding an appropriate ideological framework for Kemalist policies. *Yön* tried to bring socialism and

crucial in order to pursue a 'correct' strategy to reach the revolutionary end, theoretical debates were taken into close consideration. The first major disagreement of this kind originated in 1966 on the current economic and social structure of the country. It was called "The Debate on Socialist Revolution vs. National Democratic Revolution (Sosyalist Devrim or SD vs. Milli Demokratik Devrim or MDD) Debate". The SD/MDD debate marked a serious division and had long-lasting consequences on the part of the leftist bloc, which unanimously supported TİP until 1965 general elections.

The first open criticism vis-à-vis TİP appeared in *Yön* on 17th June 1966 in the head article written by Doğan Avcıoğlu. (Belge 1983, p.1955) The article declared Turkey to be a semi-feudal, semi-independent Asiatic country, which lacked bourgeois democracy in its real sense. Its semi-independent structure made Turkey dependent upon imperialism and the next step should be followed was a 'national democratic revolution' which would sweep away the feudal remnants, as well as the comprador bourgeoisie and its ties with imperialism. This view was largely shared by Mihri Belli in an article published two months later⁶³, although with a slightly different emphasis with regard to the role of the military in the MDD strategy. In their subsequent arguments, while Avcıoğlu explicitly referred to the necessity of a progressive military coup, Belli -being no less hopeful on such a coup himself- insisted on the vanguard role of the proletarian party. MDD strategy necessitated a coalition of 'national forces' vis-à-vis imperialist powers and their local collaborators. Hence a revolution (not a parliamentary struggle as advocated by TİP) was necessary to overthrow the regime. "MDD-SD debate" became a major factor in TİP's losing its previous charm and support in the radical youth circles. (Ünsal: 2002, p.280)

Seen in retrospect, although both sides defended their arguments in an exaggerated manner, today, it seems that TİP's analysis of the national conditions was closer to reality. "By the end of the 1960s, the character of Turkish economy and society had changed almost beyond recognition." (Ahmad; p.134) The country was undergoing a rapid industrialization and urbanization process and the contribution of industrial sector to the Grand National Product overtook the agrarian sector in 1973. Although the existence of feudal elements (especially in Eastern Anatolia) was undeniably clear, the

Kemalism together in theory. For the perception of *Yön* as the journal of military socialism See, Zileli Yarılma p.99

⁶³ See "Demokratik Devrim: Kime Karşı? Kimle Birlikte?" (published in *Yön*, sayı 175, 5 Ağustos 1966) in Mihri Belli "Yazılar" pp.9-22

capitalistic transformation was predominant. Yet of course, the main reason why MDD gained a popular ground while TİP lost it was not the precision of the former's theoretical arguments. What made MDD thesis attractive was rather the strategy it proposed, as the radicalized youth could no longer put up with the idea of a long-term parliamentary struggle, and leaned towards the idea of a revolutionary takeover. Another important factor in MDD's popularity was the global tendency to regard Third World as the centre of revolutionary potential and the popularity of "anti-imperialism" vis-à-vis "anti-capitalism". If Turkey was to be placed among the Eastern nations (and not taken as a developed country as TİP argued it to be) it could be part of the Third World, which was by then the victorious realm of anti-imperialist struggles.

Analyzed at the discursive level, it is clear that the MDD and SD liners had more in common than they thought: they both advocated developmentalism and entrusted the emancipatory role of a 'genuine' Kemalism. They also shared a common discursive field, as the jargon they employed predominantly remained inside the modernization paradigm (i.e., reactionary forces vs. progressive forces). As Murat Belge puts:

It [MDD thesis] exaggeratedly emphasized Turkey's economic underdevelopment. Hence it made a resonance to the "developmentalist" tendency in the society. Yet it can not be argued that TİP was out of this ideological structure. While MDD regarded Kemalism as a weapon of struggle, TİP could not develop a serious critique of Kemalism either....

(Belge: 1989 p. 43)

The year 1968 had been significant for Turkish Left at least for two reasons. Firstly, because the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia caused another major dispute among its cadres and second, because the global rise of student movements found its echo in urban campuses in various forms of mass protests and boycotts⁶⁴. TİP's permanent decline after 1969 was related to both of these occasions. On the occasion of Czechoslovak invasion, Aybar harshly criticized Soviet Union and argued for the indispensable right of countries to national self-determination. "Yet his arguments went beyond targeting Soviet Union and there were times that the line between his critique and the anti-communist discourse almost disappeared." (Aydınoğlu, p.129) Belli's line, on the other hand, (due to his previous TKP experience) proposed a more internationalist attitude, which tried to analyze the issue in its global context, namely in its relation to American hegemony. According to Belli, if the invasion was against US global power (which he

⁶⁴ Most important among these were the Milli Mücadele Yürüyüşü (National Independence March) and 6. Filoyu Protesto Mitingi (Protest)

interpreted it to be) then, in the final analysis, it served for the well-being of the socialist world. It is interesting to note that PDA liners (they did not constitute a separate group under the banner of Mao Zedong Thought until the beginning of 1970) also supported the invasion of Czechoslovakia, later to make a self-criticism on the issue⁶⁵.

A more radical break occurred between the SD and MDD lines due to TİP's attitude vis-à-vis student activism. The party's declared attitude was against any kind of adventurism, which they thought would lead the country into nowhere but chaos. However, the FKF generation, which would rename itself as Revolutionary Youth (Devrimci Gençlik, Dev-Genç) by 1969, became more militant in only a few years. Consequently, TİP was isolated from the youth circles and was permanently labeled as 'passivist' in the eyes of the latter. In the same period Aybar attempted a new formulation called 'emancipatory socialism', by which he severely criticized the current Soviet administration and reversed the common presumptions regarding classes in Turkish society⁶⁶. Although he was protested by the pro-Soviet wing of the party, he guaranteed his position in the two party congresses held in late 1968 and early 1969⁶⁷. However Aybar's "socialism with a human face" did not survive at the polls as the 1969 election results remained far below the expected levels⁶⁸. Aybar resigned from his posts in November 1969, leaving TİP in chaos⁶⁹.

By mid-1970s, almost all the leftist groups in Turkey had been more or less influenced by the premises of National Democratic Revolution. (Aydınöglü, p.99) MDD line constituted such a populous and heterogeneous group that itself had to undergo major divisions and splits –a process whose legacy is still apparent in Turkish Left. Ironically, Mihri Belli –a person who is one of the initiators of the “SD/MDD Debate” and his group gathered around the journal *Aydınlık*, was the foremost to take its share

⁶⁵ In his memoir, Zileli tells they did not believe that Mao Zedong was against the invasion, although they heard it on the radio: “How could Mao Zedong be against an invasion that weakened the power of American imperialism? After a little while in hesitation we made ourselves believe that this was another lie of the bourgeois media and radio. We were satisfied.” See Zileli, “Yarılma” p. 263

⁶⁶ Aybar was influenced by the non-orthodox Marxist intellectuals İdris Küçükömer and Sencer Divitiçioğlu in this formulation. According to his thesis, the real contradiction in Turkish history lied between oppression and emancipation.. It reversed the entrusted belief in the ‘progressive’ role of the Kemalists and militray-civil bureaucrat elites. This thesis also represented a break with the previous TİP thesis that Turkey is a Westernised capitalist country.

⁶⁷ See Mutlu, pp.255-258

⁶⁸ Before the 1969 general elections, Aybar had to struggle on a number of fronts: the MDD liners, pro-Soviet line in the party and the conservatives in the country. Aybar's new formulation was the last blow to an already weak party organization. For a detailed study of these years, See Artun Ünsal pp.292-343

⁶⁹ TİP has changed three presidents within one following Aybar's resignation. See Mutlu, p. 259

from the wave of ideological splits. The reasons behind these splits were less ideological than they were personal –a fact which is also an indication of the poor ideological formation of the young leftist cadres at the time. The initial split from Mihri Belli's *Aydınlık* (the split of Doğu Perinçek group, which is later named as the PDA-liners) illustrates a good example in this sense. The founders of the PDA⁷⁰, who were in the 'against' camp of a dispute on the determining role of feudalism in Turkish economy, changed their position right after the split and employed the Maoist jargon with all its identifying elements. (Belge 1983; p. 1957) Now let us turn to examine the fundamental characteristics of the Turkish Maoists and how their ideological formation has evolved since the foundation of the PDA (or Turkish Revolutionary Party of Peasants and Workers) in late 1969 until the establishment of the legal Turkish Workers and Peasants Party (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi) in 1978.

3.2. A Critical Analysis of Turkish Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants

3.2. A) A Short History of PDA Movement

As noted in the previous part, the group which later named itself as "proletarian revolutionaries" (PDA liners) constituted a part of 'national democratic revolutionary' front until late 1969. From its beginning onwards, MDD line in general⁷¹ and Mihri Belli's *Aydınlık* group in particular, has shown great interest in Mao Zedong Thought. Mao's concept of "new democracy" (read national democratic revolution), his analysis of China as a semi-capitalistic, semi-feudal country and his formulation of anti-imperialistic "people's war", fit nicely in the MDD agenda during 1960s. Mao's theoretical pieces appeared frequently in *Aydınlık*⁷² and Chinese revolution was cited as a model for its strategy of building class coalitions to overthrow the 'reactionary' regime in Turkey. Belli's understanding of "nationalism as the prerequisite of true

⁷⁰ Doğu Perinçek, Gün Zileli, Ömer Özerturgut, Erdoğan Güçbilmez, Şahin Alpay, Atıl Ant, Cengiz Çandar, who also constitute the editorial board of Proleter Devrimci *Aydınlık*.

⁷¹ Doğan Avcıoğlu group proposed a "populist,etatist, revolutionary and nationalist way to development". What Mao formulated as "democratic revolution before socialist revolution" is put by Yön liners as "Kemalism before socialism." See Aydın, S. (1998) "MDD ve Türk Solunda Özgücülük" in *Toplum ve Bilim*, 78, Güz 1998, p.67

⁷² See Mao Tse-Tung (1969) "4 Mayıs Hareketi" *Aydınlık*, Şubat 1969: 321-323, Mao Tse-Tung (1969) "Gençlik Hareketinin Hedefi" *Aydınlık*, Şubat 1969: 314-321, Mao Tse-Tung (1969) "Liberalizmle Mücadele", *Aydınlık*, Ekim 1969, s. 482-484, Mao Tse-Tung (1969) "Şansi-Suiyan Günlüğü" Yazı Kuruluna bir Konuşma", Ekim 1969: 478-481

internationalism” also bore close similarities with Mao Zedong, as he put it in his 1938 piece “The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War”.⁷³

The affiliation of *Aydınlık* group with Chinese Revolution was so evident that, Belli soon became the target of accusations of being a committed Maoist⁷⁴. Beyond its literal meaning, the accusation meant that Belli was unable to analyze the situation of his country and produce solutions for its unique problems. An experienced communist from the former TKP generation, he gave a cautious but an equally profound reply:

In China, a social revolution took place, which determined the faith of 750 million people, took place. This revolution was realized through the adaptation of a practical guide called "scientific socialism" to the specific conditions of China, introducing a series of original solutions, without imitating the past. We, as the proletarian revolutionaries, are obliged to observe those. And the ones that know the problems of the Chinese revolution best, are undoubtedly those who have made that revolution. For this reason, we read, analyze and make use of Mao's work as well. But this is not "Maoism". Nor is it an unscientific attitude like seeking the solutions of the problems that we face in Turkey by employing the ready-made prescriptions that come from China). (Belli, *ibid.* p.362)

Mihri Belli, undoubtedly, was not a Maoist *per se*. Still, he was one of the leading socialists in his time, who tried to use global Marxist theory in interpreting Turkey's situation. As he regarded Maoism as an important contribution to Marxism -both in theory and practice- he had no hesitation in making use of it as well. Mihri Belli liners were 'internationalist' as they sought their theoretical roots abroad and 'nationalist' as they believed in the peculiarity of the Turkish case, perhaps in an exaggerated sense as we discern from their attitude *vis-à-vis* the army⁷⁵. Overall, Belli was instrumental in passing the theoretical knowledge of the previous generation on to the next, who was by then ready to take the lead.

In a retrospective article concerning PDA movement, its leader Perinçek cites the origins of the group ideology as follows: “TİİKP took its basic program from the ‘proletarian revolutionary movement’ under Mihri Belli’s guidance: an ideological line

⁷³ For the similarities in the perspectives of Mao Zedong and Mihri Belli, compare “Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse Tung” p. 113 for the former and Mihri Belli “Yazılar” p. 307

⁷⁴ See “Proleter Devrimci Hareketimizin Çizgisi Açıktır: Milli Demokratik Devrim ve İyütüzü Broşürüne Cevap” in “Yazılar” p.350- 389 for Belli’s answer to the accusations printed in the brochure “The Real Face of the National Democratic Revolution”.

⁷⁵ Although PDA liners developed a more critical stance *vis-a-vis* the army in their future course, they were undoubtedly touched by the idea of a ‘national coalition’, which involved the army. Zileli asserts that

independent of Soviet modern revisionism, strategy of two-staged revolution, front-building (*cephecilik*), importance of the peasantry, a continuation of the line represented by Şefik Hüsnü and Reşat Fuat in the former Turkish Communist Party, recognizing the valuable aspects of the Kemalist Revolution and employ them the benefit of the proletarian movement with a revolutionary mind which does not limit itself to the parliamentary struggle.” (Perinçek 1988; p.2186) Hence, the PDA movement owed its basic program to Belli’s MDD line. However, the split, which was caused by a generational rather than theoretical dispute, soon came to the fore.

The foremost split within the MDD front emerged in 1969, during the Congress of the Federation of Idea Clubs –the youth organization, which changed its name into “Revolutionary Youth” (Devrimci Gençlik; Dev-Genç⁷⁶) in the same congress. Dev Genç predominantly supported the MDD line, at least since the beginning of 1969⁷⁷. Yet it by no means was a monolithic bloc: there were different cliques personified in student leaders like Mahir Çayan, Deniz Gezmiş and Doğu Perinçek. The younger generation was against TİP parliamentarism (read “opportunism”) but was also critical of Belli, especially for his sympathetic account of the army and his unwillingness to take role in the establishment of a revolutionary party. In the 1969 Congress, which was gathered to elect a new leadership, the differences between Belli and Doğu Perinçek group came to the fore. Mahir Çayan group did not display its reservations vis-à-vis Belli immediately and supported him during the congress, to take a permanent step away from *Aydınlık* only a year after the congress.

As a result of the Congress, *Aydınlık* group split into two, each making it public in their respective journals with the adjectives used before the initial name *Aydınlık*. While Mihri Belli and Mahir Çayan line called their group as *Aydınlık SD* (or *Socialist Revolutionary Illumination*) Doğu Perinçek group, which leaned on the “feudalism” thesis and thereafter held on to Mao Zedong Thought called themselves Proleter

PDA was not against adventurist moves that would ease the realization of the coup, but the ones that (PDA liners thought) would weaken the pro-coup (*cuntacı*) front. See, “Yarılma” p. 308

⁷⁶ “Dev” in Turkish is both the short form of “Devrimci” (Revolutionary) and a word with the meaning of “giant” in Turkish. Zileli notes that this short form soon became popular beyond original intention. According to him, this was due to the desire of the Turkish peasantry to imagine the “revolutionary youth” as a single person who is a giant. (“Yarılma” p.333)

⁷⁷ From 1968 onwards, FKF leadership had been a contest area between SD and MDD liners. It was headed by Doğu Perinçek in a short period between March and July 1968, after when TİP removed Perinçek and other MDD liners from top management.

Devrimci Aydınlık (or *Proletarian Revolutionary Illumination*)⁷⁸. In the preliminary Aydınlık SD published right after the split, Belli clarified his position on Maoism and criticized the PDA group on their dogmatism:

The two factors alone could prove that the socialist line (at least in this respect) which Turkey should follow must be different from that of China.

In pre-revolutionary China, which had been an area of exploitation under imperialism, feudalism (which shared a common destiny with the foreign exploiter) was an important factor. In Turkey –although one mission of democratic revolution is to clear the country of its feudal remnants- the feudal lord does not represent a big power base either in number or dominance. Besides, in colonized China, Chinese society faced imperialism with its bare face, whereas in Turkey American imperialism sustains its dominance under the guise of "NATO ally" instead of presenting itself as such.⁷⁹

Subsequent to the split, PDA was attacked on various occasions and from different perspectives in Aydınlık SD. In an article published in 1970⁸⁰, Çayan attacked PDA's dogmatism and passivism, calling them 'campus Maoists' and 'so-called Maoists' but never attempted to degrade the doctrine itself. Following a Maoist mindset himself, he emphasized the determining status of the countryside and declared that the 'primary contradiction' in the world to be the struggle between imperialism and the dominated nations. Çayan line, which declared its independence from Belli shortly after the PDA, leaned on to the Latin American guerilla model, with a slight Maoist emphasis of "encircling cities from the countryside." The PDA-liners dismissed Çayan line as 'adventurist' for they saw him as being driven away from the masses by using the methods of individual terror. What PDA argued instead was the launch of a 'people's war' [supported by the masses] and the building of a 'national front', which should be united under the leadership of the proletariat against the feudal lords, imperialists and their local collaborators.

In September 1970, Mihri Belli asserted that none of the important revolutionary parties in the world employed a purely Beijing line and warned the PDA-liners once again against their 'dogmatism.' Belli's harshest criticism in the same article was perhaps his statement on the 'irresponsibility of the campus Maoists who regarded revolution as an intellectual masturbation –a product of their leisure time, which

⁷⁸ Another name given to those journals were White (Ak) Aydınlık and Kızıl (Red) Aydınlık due to the red and white covers of Aydınlık SD and PD Aydınlık respectively. Laçiner and Zileli stated that the red/white analogy referred to the October Revolution and PDA was found similar to the Russian White Army vis-à-vis Red Army.

⁷⁹ See Belli, "Proleter Devrimci Hareketimizin Çizgisi Açıktır", Aydınlık SD, Ocak 1970 in "Yazılar" p.363

⁸⁰ See Çayan, M. "Yeni Oportünizmin Niteliği Üzerine" Aydınlık SD, Mayıs 1970: pp. 127-159

remained between an assistantship exam and a doctoral thesis.⁸¹ PDA on the other hand, attacked Mihri Belli for his sympathetic account of the army, his petty bourgeois nationalism and his hopes for a 'progressive coup'. The conflictual relation between two lines remained still until the 1971 coup.

Once Maoism was adopted as the guideline of the party, organization of the peasants gained a central value in its strategy. As the leading members of the PDA group were previous members of TİP and had the basic experience in the countryside through its legal organization, they soon established their own links in the villages and got involved in propaganda activities⁸². Their work in the villages was sometimes inspired directly by Mao's work: they studied the class relations and the economic structures in their respective villages as Mao did in his hometown Hunan.⁸³ As the 'mass line' necessitated close consultation with the masses, and not patronizing them, the organizers had to be careful with their manners. However, as understood from the self-criticism campaigns held by PDA, it was not always the case⁸⁴. The 'mass line' principle also stimulated the publication of *İşçi-Köylü* in 1969. The journal aimed at informing the workers and peasants on issues that would be to their concern, like prices of agricultural products, tax increases or situation of relevant cooperatives and trade-unions. It refrained from the abstract theoretical language used in the *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık* and aimed at both organizing the masses and raise their consciousness on the public issues. As Ömer Özerturgut wrote in May 1970 the aim of the PDA was to "spread *İşçi-Köylü* –the weapon of mass struggle- all over the country⁸⁵". In the same article he also stated that the journal succeeded in pioneering the masses without giving in to mass populism (*kitle kuyrukçuluğu*) as they always asserted that the ultimate aim of this movement was to achieve the national democratic revolution. However, the role of the PDA in the countryside remained marginal and limited to the poor functioning *İşçi-Köylü* bureaus.

⁸¹ See Mihri Belli "Devrimci Milliyetçilik ile Proleter Enternasyonalizmi Birbirini Tamamlar" *Aydınlık*, Eylül 1970, pp. 357-372

⁸² PDA activities in the countryside was limited to the 'bases' in Aydın, Germencik and Kahramanmaraş, Pazarcık. Though members of the group paid visits to several regions, PDA's relation to peasantry remained predominantly in the Aegean Region, where the rural economy was relatively developed and "feudal remnants" were almost non-existent.

⁸³ See "Köy Çalışmalarından Çıkan Sonuçlar" *Trakya, Aydın, Tunceli, Çukurova, Ankara, Konya*, pp.212-241, Also See İbrahim Kaypakkaya "Çorum İlinde Sınıfların Tahlili" PDA, 6 Nisan 1971

⁸⁴ "Program Çalışma Komitesi –Emperyalizm, üretim tarzı, sınıflar ve baş çelişme" Also See "İşçi Köylü gazetesi İstanbul İşçi Bürosu Raporu" P.127

⁸⁵ PDA: Mayıs 1970 Ömer Özerturgut, "Kitle silahımız işçi köylü gazetesini bütün yurda yayalım" p.68

Certainly, PDA's transformation was closely related to the general political developments in Turkey. The impact of 1969 general elections had been an important factor in this sense. The elections wiped away TİP⁸⁶ (due to the new "winner takes all" electoral law) and brought pro-American AP (Justice Party) to power. In 1970, the law proposed by Süleyman Demirel's AP, which aimed at curbing the power of DİSK (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu; Confederation of Revolutionary Trade-Unionists) in favor of the pro-government Türk-İş triggered social tension. In 15th-16th July 1970, trade-unions opposed the new labor law by mass demonstrations in Istanbul, Kocaeli, İzmir, Ankara and Adana –a significant event, which intensified the concerns of the government vis-à-vis the 'communist threat'. Subsequent to the demonstrations, martial law was declared in İstanbul and Kocaeli, and the pressure on all the leftist groups increased. 15th-16th June also signaled a change in MDD's assumptions concerning the strength of the industrial proletariat. "The youth segment, which understood the power of the movement in an exaggerated sense and regarded it to be a part of a serious power struggle, confirmed their belief that the masses were ready to take the government. The weird result of this belief came out to be the departure of the militants away from the workers class towards suburban and urban guerilla movements". (Belge; p.1958) The coup of 12th March 1971 toppled AP government under Süleyman Demirel. The coup was partly a response of the military to the government's weakness in checking the political violence, which exacerbated after the 15th-16th June 1970. The event had serious consequences for the Turkish Left in general; not only for groups like PDA which sought 'revolutionary' goals, but also for legal parties such as TİP. The members of several legal and illegal parties were tried by military courts and accused with the heaviest charges of 'offenses against the state'.

On the part of the PDA, the coup also signaled a radicalization among its cadres, which in turn resulted in further splits. As Oral Çalışlar, one of the leading members of the PDA movement put in a retrospective article:

During the 12th March period, two groups split from TİİKP. The first group was headed by Garbis Altınoğlu, which later took the name People's Union (**Halkın Birliği**), the other was

⁸⁶ Here it is important that although PDA members accused TİP with passivism, opportunism and parliamentarism, they called for a unification of the revolutionary front when the TİP's decline was evident. In April 1970, PDA announced that "their weapon against the pressures is the revolutionary unification of power." p.417, "to surrender TİP as a gift to imperialism could not be our perspective" p.424. PDA has confirmed this position and called for a united front vis-à-vis the rising threat of fascism in its subsequent issues. Yet such efforts went unnoticed.

Turkish Communist Party, Marxist-Leninist TKP/ML (Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marksist Leninist) headed by İbrahim Kaypakkaya. Both movements gave more importance to the peasantry as compared with TİİKP and both regarded the party leadership as passivist and rightist.⁸⁷

Initially, Garbis Altınoğlu group was attracted to the Indian Maoist leader, Charu Mazumdar, who was original in refusing to use the means of struggle (armed weaponry) used by the enemy. He was also a radical critique of school education and believed in the power of the human beings as the determining element in the making of history⁸⁸. However, the impact of Mazumdar line led by Altınoğlu remained marginal as compared with the İbrahim Kaypakkaya split. Kaypakkaya was of peasant origin and a tame figure within the group⁸⁹ until he started to criticize the mainstream PDA line for not carrying out a 'people's war' in the countryside. Kaypakkaya line became more influential in the future course of the party, especially for its critical attitude towards Kemalism.⁹⁰ Kaypakkaya group soon turned into a Maoist guerilla band which entrusted Little Red Book as the most important 'weapon' of struggle⁹¹ besides conventional arms. The group (TKP-ML) continued to exert its marginal influence in the Alavi populated regions of Anatolia, long after the execution of Kaypakkaya by the security forces in Tunceli in 1973.

Until the 1974 amnesty, most of the PDA leaders remained in prison. During their imprisonment right after the 1971 military intervention, the group worked on a 600 page manifesto, which came into being as a co-product of four hundred PDA members. *1973 Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi: Savunma* (Turkish Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants: 1973 Court Defense) was published as a comprehensive book one year later. The book, which included all the main arguments of the PDA line, begins with the condemnation of torture and mistreatment of the prisoners by the military courts and goes on with an historical analysis of the Ottoman Empire and previous Turkish states. The text elaborates the past rebellions in Anatolia and celebrates the 'rebellious' nature

⁸⁷ Çalışlar, O. (1988) "Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi-Köylü Partisi" in Murat Belge (ed.) *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, pp. 2194-2195

⁸⁸ See, "Çaru Mazumdar, 1970'leri kurtuluş yılları yapalım" p.335

⁸⁹ In his article "İşçi Köylü Hareketleri ve Proleter Devrimci Politika" in PDA: Mayıs 1970, İbrahim Kaypakkaya argues that socialism is transmitted through bourgeois intellectuals.p.27 his critique of "trade unionism", "parliamentarism" and "terrorism" p.30. He made a self-criticism of this article two years later. This example is important as it shows how fast the ideological shifts occurred among the youth.

⁹⁰ As Doğu Perinçek confirmed in the interview, substantial critique of Kemalism embedded in the "TİİKP Defense" was the result of a compromise between the Kaypakkaya liners and the mainstream PDA perspective. In Gün Zileli's memoirs, the impact of Kaypakkaya is cited in

of the masses in Turkey. It also analyses the contemporary situation in Turkey and attacks the army, AP government, feudal lords and comprador bourgeoisie. Towards the end of the *Defense*, the right of national self-determination for the Kurdish people is recognized and a 'people's war' is called for. The *Defense*, with its anti-militarist essence, critique of Kemalism and the definition of the Kurdish problem is the masterpiece document of the PDA group ideology.

Not long after the release of the political prisoners in 1974, the 'primary contradiction' changed on the part of the Turkish Maoists from targeting American imperialism towards the equally dangerous Soviet threat. Likewise, the anti-militarist, anti-Kemalist and internationalist discourse of the 'court defense' was abandoned in the name of 'national defense'. Seen in retrospect, the years 1971 and 1975 were the most significant dates in the transformation of group ideology, former, because it drew the proletarian revolutionaries away from Kemalism and placed them strictly against the army, the latter because it signaled the adoption of a more radical approach vis-à-vis Soviet Union. Çalışlar in his chronological periodization of the PDA movement states that from 1969 to the coup in 1971, the movement proposed a mixture of Kemalism and socialism, while from 1971 to 1975 it advocated socialism and in 1975-1978 it entered its 'reactionary' phase, which led into its alliance with the conservatives in the country⁹². Here, it is interesting to note that Perinçek, former leader of the PDA, classifies the 1968-71 period as "extreme Maoism", 1970-73 era as the years of "leftist errors", 1973-78 as the "self-criticism and renovation period". Yet, from both accounts, it is clear that by mid-1970s, with the change of the 'primary contradiction' into "anti-Sovietism" from the previously held "anti-Americanism" transformed PDA into a quite distinct political formation within the Turkish Left.

After mid-1970's, fierce competition of PDA with the other groups and the former's understanding of the pro-Soviet groups as 'agent provocateur', 'fascist' or 'tools of Soviet social imperialism' resulted in its ultimate isolation from the rest of the Left. After the 1977 May Day, which PDA abstained and warned the other three groups closer to Chinese line ('Triple Bloc') against the imminent danger of provocation that proved right, Halkın Yolu dissolved and joined PDA. By 1977, Aydınlık movement enjoyed its peak popularity. Yet, paradoxically, its popularization also signaled its end,

⁹¹ See for a detailed of Kaypakkaya's ideas. İbrahim Kaypakkaya, p.34

⁹² Interview with Oral Çalışlar, 10th March 2004

as the established the legal Turkish Workers and Peasants Party in 1978, revealed the names of the leftist militants in daily *Aydınlık* in 1979 and declared its alliance with NATO one year later.

3.2. B) Maoist Jargon

The discursive field, which PDA movement operated, could best be observed through their theoretical journal *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık* and relatively more popular *Halkın Sesi* and *İşçi-Köylü*. From the first day of its publication⁹³ in December 1969, *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık* employed a defensive language in order to disidentify itself from various other leftist groups proposing different alternatives on the future of the country. The defensive attitude sometimes showed itself under an offensive guise in the language employed vis-à-vis other groups. Thus, while the former *Aydınlık* (now called *Aydınlık SD*) labeled PDA as the "opportunist union", PDA counterstroke employing phrases such as "petty bourgeois radicals", "adventurists" and "revisionists" interchangeably.

In the early years of its publication⁹⁴, theoretical articles dominated the content of the journal. These articles helped to clarify the ideological position of the PDA group on various issues. In most of them, the authors addressed another political journal and discussed PDA's position in a hostile manner. In these discussions they aimed to address a wider audience by proving that their line is the "revolutionary" line, while *Aydınlık SD* or another group is "less or counter-revolutionary". The journals were also instrumental in using Mao Zedong's conceptual framework to define the situation in Turkey. Halil Berktaş's article (which was published shortly before PDA's split from Belli) "The Scientific Understanding of Socialist Revolution" illustrates a major example. The article clarified the current state of Turkey in its global context and analyzed the global contradictions in three parts: a) between socialist countries and capitalist-imperialist countries. b) among the imperialist countries themselves. c) between proletariat and bourgeoisie. d) between the imperialist countries and monopoly groups⁹⁵.

⁹³ The initial Editorial Board of PDA composed of Vahap Erdoğan, Erdoğan Güçbilmez, Doğu Perinçek, Şahin Alpay, Seyhan Erdoğan, Gün Zileli, Cengiz Çandar, Atıl Ant, Ömer Özürturgut

⁹⁴ Publication of PDA was forbidden during the 1971 military intervention. *Halkın Sesi* replaced it until after 1973 it was allowed to be published again (though it remained subject to frequent interventions from the regime.) *Aydınlık* started to be published again in 1975. In 1978, it was turned into a daily newspaper in accordance with the establishment of the legal party in 1978.

⁹⁵ Berktaş, H. (1969) "Bilimsel Sosyalist Devrim Anlayışı" *Aydınlık*, Sayı 14, Aralık 1969: 134-153

PDA adapted Mao's "primary contradiction" into the Turkish context as the "contradiction between the peoples of Turkey with the American imperialists and their supporters". The complex usage of 'contradiction' as a defining characteristic of Maoist jargon always determined the main point of the articles⁹⁶. In the early years of its formation, the internationalist agenda of the party was apparent through the language used in these articles: PDA journals criticized 'bourgeois nationalism' and advocated 'proletarian internationalism', adopted a critical stance vis-à-vis 'Aybar Aren opportunism'.⁹⁷ There was an emphasis on 'anti-militarism'⁹⁸ and opposition to Belli's thesis "every revolution follows a national path"⁹⁹. "Mass line" was probably the most frequently used phrase vis-à-vis TİP parliamentarism, Belli's 'petty-bourgeois radicalism' and also the Latin American model, advocated by Mahir Çayan¹⁰⁰. As Cuban model depended heavily on the military struggle of the *foco*, it was divorced from the initiative of the masses and hence classified as petty bourgeois adventurism. According to PDA, the struggle between socialism and petty bourgeois radicalism always existed in the history of Marxist thought: during the International between Marx and Engels vs. Bakunin, Proudhon, Blanqui and Lasalle, later between Lenin and Menshevism/Trotskyism, and currently between Mao Zedong Thought and modern revisionism.¹⁰¹ 'Modern revisionism' is represented by Soviet Union and its managing cadres act no different then Tsars:

New Tsars follow the aggressive and expansionist strategy of the old tsars to dominate the world. They invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, in Poland they supported the suppression of the rebellion of the proletariat by the revisionist bourgeoisie. (Defense, p.325)

Following the Maoist strategy, PDA defined the vanguard as the proletariat and main power as the peasantry. The 'national coalition' would be composed of the alliance

⁹⁶ For a specific example See, "Program Çalışma Komitesi -Emperyalizm, üretim tarzı, sınıflar ve baş çelişme" in Aydınlik

⁹⁷ See the critique of TİP Program. "TİP Tüzük ve Programının Eleştirisi" for a significant example. The PDA criticizes the content of TİP's program as too complex to be understood by the workers and peasants. p. 21, "Let's bombard the Opportunist headquarters" p.29

⁹⁸ For a substantial anti-militarism, See Savunma p. 439

⁹⁹ See Şubat 1970: PDA Atilla Sarp "Gençliğin Proleter Devrimci Kavradaki Yeri" for a critique of Belli's nationalism and militarism. p. 270 Also see Şubat 1970: PDA Halil Bertay "Proleter Devrimci Çizgi ve Bazı Yanlış Eğilimler" p. 315 for the distinction of xenophobia and anti-imperialism, socialism and hostility towards upper classes, Mart 1970: PDA Şahin Alpay "İşçi Sınıfı ve Milli Demokratik Devrim" and "Kurtuluş gazetesinin eleştirisi" p.306

¹⁰⁰ See Şubat 1970: PDA Halil Bertay "Proleter Devrimci Çizgi ve Bazı Yanlış Eğilimler" for a detailed critique of Debrayism and the Latin American revolutionaries, pp. 301-305, pp. 320-321, pp. 325-328 Also see Mart 1970: PDA Şahin Alpay "İşçi Sınıfı ve Milli Demokratik Devrim"

¹⁰¹ Mart 1970: PDA Şahin Alpay "İşçi Sınıfı ve Milli Demokratik Devrim"

between peasantry and proletariat and the first target of the revolution will be the 'land reform'.¹⁰² This strategy necessitated a more in-depth knowledge of the country and leaning more on to practice than 'dogmatic theory' in the propaganda activities. It also necessitated avoiding mimicry and random adaptation of other countries' models¹⁰³. However, PDA's success in putting the theory into practice remained limited.

Maoists regarded Mao Zedong as Lenin's immediate follower in socialist theory and what they called "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought" became their guide in seeking solutions to Turkish countryside. They had no particular problem with Stalin era either. Since the 1917 October Revolution and Lenin's formulation of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, national struggles had been an indispensable part of Marxist internationalism. What Mao Zedong achieved, according to PDA liners, was to bring this struggle to an upper stage. His Little Red Book had a symbolic meaning in this context. Zileli also tells that in their propaganda work, they'd make frequent use of Mao's quotations¹⁰⁴. As Nuhrat and Perinçek also confirmed, Maoists also believed that Little Red Book would increase agricultural production¹⁰⁵. During 1960's, aura of the Little Red Book was hardly peculiar to Turkey:

In the West (...) many on the extreme Left bought the Little Red Book and singled out those passages which supported their opinions of the moment. In October 1969 the New China News Agency reported with some pride that there existed "according to incomplete statistics, more than 1.100 editions of the works of Mao published in seventy languages in sixty countries and territories."¹⁰⁶

Little Red Book was not the only source that PDA liners made use: Chinese novels which glorified the revolution, recent speeches from Mao Zedong and other leading members of the CCP, theoretical pieces in Peking Review and Hongqi (Red Flag) all had their place in group's journals. When almost all the members of the PDA were in prison due to the 1971 coup, militants listened to the Beijing Radio and typed the content of the broadcast later to spread it to other party members. Such a close follow-

¹⁰² "Program Çalışma Komitesi -Emperyalizm, üretim tarzı, sınıflar ve baş çelişme"p .111

¹⁰³ ibid. p. 117-120

¹⁰⁴ Zileli, "Yarılma" p.434

¹⁰⁵ Interviews with Doğu Perinçek and Cenap Nuhrat. Here, it might be interesting to note that while Nuhrat referred to the influence of Little Red Book as a past phenomenon, Perinçek said that he still believes that reading and understanding the Little Red Book in its true sense could lead to an increase in production and the betterment of certain aspects of life.

¹⁰⁶ See Bouc, A. (1977) p.63

up was problematic as the PDA members often discussed the inner party struggles of the Chinese Communist Party, which in fact had no direct relevance in Turkey. This resulted in an unconscious support for 'this wing' over 'that wing' in China and Turkish Maoists always tried to adopt their own strategy in theoretical consistency with the triumphant Chinese line. Hence by mid-1970s it was natural for the party to shift away from anti-Americanism towards anti-Sovietism, as the CCP followed a similar pattern.

As PDA operated in the Turkish cultural space, the 'anti-Russian' sentiment embedded in Maoist doctrine functioned through 'local' issues. Cyprus issue illustrates one such example. In 1974, Turkey invaded north Cyprus – based on its rights as a guarantor power in Zurich Peace Accords, which granted Turks in the island equal status as with the Greeks and which seemed to cease working due to the erupting violence vis-à-vis the Turkish minority in the island. PDA's interpretation of the Cyprus issue was significant as it proposed that Turkish invasion of the island served the interests of the two super powers. In 19th November 1974, *Halkın Sesi* called for the removal of all the foreign troops from the island and Turkey's implementation of UN resolutions. 10th December 1974, the same journal announced that the inevitable consequence of the invasion will be the surrender of the island to American domination. Similarly, on 17th December, *Halkın Sesi* declared that 'dominant classes and revisionists cheat on the rest of the peoples in full cooperation'. In 26th December, *Halkın Sesi* declared the imperialist and reactionary nature of all the armed struggles. Likewise, on 17th February 1975, the unification of Turkish, Greek and Cyprus people with the Third World countries was called for.

The Maoist jargon in Turkey borrowed its theoretical guidelines from Chinese Marxism, as we have seen in the frequent usage of the concepts primary and secondary contradiction, mass line and new democracy (read MDD). Though PDA movement lacked the fundamental means or experience to launch a Chinese style "people's war" and was only poorly organized in the countryside, it did not remain as a Chinese mimicry either. Rather PDA members tried to adapt the Maoist formulations to understand and solve the problems in Turkey, as their perspective on the Cyprus issue clearly demonstrates.

3.2. C) A Maoist Vision of Turkish History?

During 1960s, Turkish Left developed a novel interest in Turkish history -especially the Ottoman past. Sureyya Faroqui puts the origins of this curiosity as follows:

In 1971 Sencer Divitçioğlu inaugurated the Turkish discussion with an essay in which he attempted to demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire was a representative of the Asiatic Mode, with a free peasantry in villages largely isolated from the market, cultivating lands belonging to the state. Several discussions of this issue in Turkey were, however, motivated more by political than by scholarly considerations. Thus, if Ottoman society was feudal, and feudalism not totally abolished with the founding of the Turkish Republic, then it made sense for 'revolutionary' elements to seek bourgeois allies in the struggle to complete the destruction of feudalism. (Berktaş et al 1992; pp. 5-6)

Therefore, on the part of the Turkish revolutionary, history was instrumental in the formulation of the correct analysis of the current situation. In other words, this curiosity was guided by practical rather than intellectual concerns. Had the political groups believed that the Asiatic Mode of Production prevailed in their country, they would have been in a position to accept that 'socialism' made little sense as an alternative. As the Asiatic Mode of Production presumed a non-European and pre-capitalistic economic model, such countries would have remained out of the linear logic of Marxist history. In Turkey, just like in the other societies which fit in the general economic picture of Asiatic landscape, the premises of Marx's Asiatic Mode of Production was dismissed on political grounds.¹⁰⁷

Similar to other groups in MDD line, PDA leaned on to the classical Marxist interpretation of history, which drew a hierarchy of development from feudalism to capitalism, capitalism to socialism and finally from socialism to communism. In PDA's most comprehensive study of Turkish history, *1973 Defense*, Turkish Maoists brought Turkish feudalism back to the 7th century. Their chronological account of feudalism began with Islamic feudalism, which gave way to a feudal state under Seljuk rule,

¹⁰⁷ Chinese Communist Party and Russian Bolsheviks also rejected the application of Asiatic Mode of Production in their countries right away. In Turkey, İdris Küçükömer was sympathetic with the idea. For a significant example, which criticizes Aybar and İdris Küçükömer for their sympathy of Asiatic Mode and argues that private property existed in the Ottoman period, See Aydınlık SD: Ağustos 1970 Muzaffer Erdost, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda üretim ilişkileri ve Asya üretim tarzı" pp. 276-317

intensified with Anatolian Seljuks and reached its peak with the Ottomans. In this historical account, peasant (or people's) rebellions were given special emphasis and Turkish history was turned into "the history of struggles fought by the progressive peasantry against the repressive central government." Needless to say, PDA's rewriting of the history involved various anachronisms¹⁰⁸, which were perhaps inevitable as the political message it was supposed to derive necessitated a radical account.

In *1973 Defense*, when Turkish Maoists elaborated their perspective on the late Ottoman period, it surprisingly fit in the Kemalist historiography. The domination of the foreigners in the national economy, capitulations imposed by Western powers, wrong policies pursued by Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) and the myth of War of National Independence were taken as historical facts without any reservations¹⁰⁹. However, as the text approaches towards its end, PDA begins to settle its own account with the army and the MDD line, from which it has originated. Neither MDD line, nor the parliamentary SD line represented by TIP escapes from PDA's criticism:

"In the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, the anti-fascist powers had considerable mistakes. The illusions that the army was beyond classes or it was "revolutionary" served to taint the awareness of the masses against the plans of fascist dictatorship. Instead of organizing the struggle of the people against the fascist dictatorship, reformist and parliamentary views pacified and benumbed the people. Again the parliamentary perspectives helped the coming of the fascism as they hindered people's struggle by saying that it would accelerate fascism. (*Defense*, p. 275)

But if we examine the evolution of the TİİK line from 1969 to 1978, it is also evident that the group's overall attitude towards Kemalism remained to be ambivalent. As Perinçek also confirmed¹¹⁰, the *1973 Defense* illustrated the reconciliation between the Kaypakkaya influence and the mainstream party line, which was inclined to see the positive aspects of Kemalism more. Just before the coup, one headline of *İşçi-Köylü*, even declared Mustafa Kemal as the commander of PDA's National Independence Front.¹¹¹ As the MDD line emphasized anti-imperialism more than socialism and

¹⁰⁸ See Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi Savunma, p.110 for the interpretation of Baba İshak as a 13th century rebel, who "tried to disperse the idea of equality and freedom". Also see, p. 113 for "Turkic tribal democracy", p. 119 for a comparison of "revolutionary and reformist cults" and p.129 for "16th century peasant rebels' "longing of democracy".

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pp.131-155

¹¹⁰ Interview with Perinçek, 11th March 2004

¹¹¹ For a critique of this headline and PDA's positive attitude towards Kemalism, See Aydınlık SD: Temmuz 1970, Tanju Üner, "Yeni Oportunizm ve örgüt anlayışı", p.208 Here it is important to note that Üner's attitude towards the army is also ambivalent as he starts with the following sentence: "Who wouldn't like to see the Turkish army in the national front?" Then he asserts that particular character of

offered a coalition strategy in which Kemalists were understood as among the 'progressive forces' of the country, PDA liners never abandoned Kemalism altogether, even after the 1971 coup. Yet surely, the coup, which was accomplished by the 'Kemalist' army in defense of the 'Kemalist' state, radicalized the perspective of PDA liners.

In the *Defense*, the legacy of Kemal was questioned in its relation with the workers movement, his hostility towards the initial Turkish Communist Party¹¹² and ideals of socialism.¹¹³ In its later years, Kemalism was analyzed through the writings of Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong¹¹⁴. The main theme in these writings was that Kemalist revolution is an unfinished task as it was not finalized with a social revolution.

The *Defense* also elaborated group's perspective on Turkey's recent past. According to PDA, the coming of Democrat Party in 1950 was neither a social revolution, nor a counter-revolution. It was the transition of power from one collaborator clique to another.¹¹⁵ 1960 coup on the other hand, was a move against a 'fascist dictatorship' and hence had a progressive role.¹¹⁶ As PDA always emphasized anti-imperialism, the group ideology was always touched by a degree of nationalism. Yet, the recognition of Kurdish people's right to self-determination and its critique of early republican history, especially with regard to the "Turkish History Thesis" and "Sun-Language Theory"¹¹⁷ presents a limitation on PDA's nationalist image. Yet, it is also clear that, towards the end of 1970's, when 'national defense' thesis was adopted and the Soviet invasion was regarded to be an imminent danger, the party lost its original characteristics. By 1978, previously advocated internationalism and anti-militarism, was no more than nostalgia for the 'proletarian revolutionaries'.

the Turkish army is its progressive and Kemalist nature. Yet he warns the readers that petty bourgeois radicals and PDA as well sees the army only with its particular character, disregarding its universal character which makes it a tool of dominant classes. See p. 210

¹¹² PDA's interest in the recent past also enabled the construction of a 'party heritage'. In this sense, the group found its roots in the Şefik Hüsnü line (of the initial TKP generation). See Hüsnü, Ş. (1995) *Komintern Belgelerinde Türkiye-5: Yazı ve Konuşmalar*. İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları

¹¹³ For the role of Turkish Communists in the national struggle see, p. 177, *Kemalist bourgeoisie vs. workers class* p.198

¹¹⁴ For a significant example, See the series "Kemalist revolution through the light of Marxist mentors" (*Marxist ustlaların ışığında Kemalist Devrim*) in *Halkın Sesi*, 26 Ağustos 1975: *Milli burjuvazi önderliğinde anti-emperyalist devrim*", 16 Eylül 1975 "Milli devrim niçin cılız kaldı?", 30 Eylül 1975 "Türkiye'nin adım adım yeniden yarı sömürge oluşu", 28 Ekim 1975 "Devrimci tarihin mirasçısı proletaryadır." 18 Kasım 1975 "Kurtuluş savaşına rağmen hala milli demokratik devrim aşamasındayız"

¹¹⁵ See *Defense*, p.218

¹¹⁶ *ibid.* p.229

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* p.207

3.2. D) 'People's Morality': Revolutionary's Way of Life

As Maoism was closely related with the countryside, organization and propaganda in the villages had been an important part of PDA strategy. As initial members of the PDA group were of middle/upper class origins and the party was mainly composed of urban intellectuals, the party launched campaigns in order to encourage its members to settle in poor districts, to work and live as laborers, to leave their bourgeois habits, and in some cases, to sell their own possessions to raise finances for the sake of the party. As Zileli puts in his memoirs:

With PDA's adoption of "from countryside to the cities" strategy, work to get organized in villages began and a few village working group cells were sent to work for long run results. Again, as a result of this leaning more to the countryside and to the left, a "Proletarianization Campaign", which imitated the Cultural Revolution in China, was launched. Supporters were encouraged to move into *gecekondu*. Moreover, there was an inclination towards "dispossession".¹¹⁸

According to Nuhrat, the aim of working as a laborer was to enable one to live and think as a laborer. It was also the way of refraining from one's 'petty bourgeois' habits and to get a closer look to the problems workers have. As put in the previous part, Mao believed in the wisdom of the masses, far more than he entrusted the intellectuals. Whether Mao's personal dislike for the intellectuals played a part on his praising the merits of physical labor or not, the practice of 'living like a worker' was the rising trend in 1960's, not only within Turkish Left but the radical groups in other countries as well.¹¹⁹

Unlike Western Marxism, which put aside moral considerations, Chinese socialism was interwoven with ethic values such as 'love of the people', 'self-denial', 'modesty' and 'voluntarism'¹²⁰, which bore close resemblances with ancient Chinese thought and Christian morality. (Bouc: p.108) In Turkey too, Left has created its own moral foundations, which usually did not correspond to any materialist notion of

¹¹⁸ Zileli, "Yarıma" p. 369

¹¹⁹ See Fraser, p. 172 for French and American youth groups.

¹²⁰ Mao Zedong particularly believed that masses could change everything. See, *Halkın Sesi* headline "İnsan tabiatı fethedebilir." 10 Ağustos 1976

Marxism. Sometimes due to a pragmatic concern of not losing touch with the masses, on which PDA depended politically, but mostly, due to the internalized themes of national culture, it remained dependent on the given structures.¹²¹ 'Martyrdom' as the highest degree of honor that a soldier could enjoy -with its roots in Islamic tradition- was applied by the Turkish Left in the revolutionary struggle. 'People's morality' emerged as a term, which referred to personal traits like industriousness, modesty and asceticism. As illustrated in PDA's "Proletarianization Campaign"¹²² (and as part of a general trend on the part of all the other groups) refraining from luxury goods and petty bourgeois habits was a common practice. Zileli cites the popular (though ungrounded) belief held by the Turkish Maoists that Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai rejected to employ a chambermaid and served the tea himself, while Soviet 'revisionists' were no different from bourgeois in their basic manners.¹²³

'People's morality' applied to sexual issues and private life as well. Unlike 1960s, when love affairs were understood in a relatively liberal fashion¹²⁴, 1970s introduced absurdities like "revolutionary police of sexual ethics" (*devrimci ahlak zabıtası*) which was in charge of checking if the 'revolutionaries' were going too far in their love affairs. Such measures, more than signifying their conservatism, have stemmed from the need to refute the right wing propaganda that leftists advocated rampant sex. This was used by the right wing groups as the most common method to evoke the well-known conservatism of the Turkish countryside vis-à-vis the socialists. In *1973 Court Defense*, Turkish Maoists gave a harsh reply to similar accusations:

The ones who promote and exploit the moral corruption in Turkey is the current fascist government. In none of the Marxist-Leninist publications, sex, opium or immorality was promoted. Yet the bourgeois publications, cinema, photo-stories all promote this. They do want to pacify our people by creating a youth that is addicted to sex and drugs. (...) Our revolutionary women friends have the purest morality. (Defense, p. 86)

Marriage was regarded as the only form of legitimate sexual relationship and although some of the party members got into such affairs they had to be careful in not publicizing

¹²¹ Nuhurat expressed this as "Marxist cover over a feudal culture." Also See, Oktay, A. (1998) "Türk Solu ve Kültür" in *Toplum ve Bilim*, 78, Güz 1998, pp.38-58 for a critical analysis of Turkish Left's relation with cultural matters.

¹²² See Zileli, "Yarılma", p. 371

¹²³ See Zileli, "Yarılma" p. 422

¹²⁴ Ömer Laçiner told me in our interview that the young people who defined themselves as 'leftist' in the 1960s, used to listen to rock music and engage in love affairs freely as compared to 1970s, when leftist movement attracted large numbers of people from different social strata. Hence, in the 1970s, revolutionary groups started to wear modest dresses (and sometimes what they regarded as country

it. Overall, in the Turkish Left, the expression of "love" was being found as a petty bourgeois habit and contrary to revolutionary seriousness¹²⁵. In this sense, little problem is involved in employing Mackerras's concept "Asian Marxism" in the Turkish context, though he aims to refer more to East and South Asia, with his below remarks:

"Asian Marxists may wish to shatter the bonds which the feudal family system was inflicted upon society, especially women. But very few indeed have tried seriously to abolish the family. Nationalism may have ruined Rome or Greece, but every Asian Marxist knows that to ignore it is tantamount to political suicide. P.19

The concept of 'people's morality' was hardly a unique characteristic of PDA liners alone. All the major groups in Turkey had patriarchal patterns of behavior when it came to the sexual issues. Yet, on the part of the Turkish Maoists, 'people's morality' was also indebted to Mao Zedong's idea that "humble people are the most intelligent and prominent people the most idiotic."¹²⁶ 'Mass line' dictated Turkish Maoists to construct closer relations with the masses. According to this principle, "communists should be the voluntary students of the masses, they should dissolve themselves within the masses and they should closely watch the principle 'from the masses to the masses [and] should learn from the masses and spread their superior experiences¹²⁷.'" Although PDA's penetration to the countryside was limited, there was a degree of success in reaching and transforming the peasants¹²⁸. In other words, while original members of PDA tried to refrain from their class origins (by holding on to concepts like 'people's morality' and 'mass line') peasants and workers who joined the group also changed into more 'politicized' subjects in the process. I regard this attempt itself as the valuable aspect of the movement.

dresses, although it was evident both from the dress itself and the person who wears it that he was not a country folk) and became much conservative in their attitude towards sexual issues.

¹²⁵ See Zileli, "Havariler" p. 114 for militant's marriage necessity, p.117 for limits to expressions of love.

¹²⁶ Alain Bouc, p.96

¹²⁷ See "Çin Komünist Partisinin Kuruluşunun 49. Yıldönümü" *Aydinlik*: p.367

¹²⁸ The life of Durmuş Uyanık, a peasant from Söke, illustrates a valuable example in this case. For how his life changed after he joined TİİKP, See his "Aşılı Zeytin: Devrimci Köylünün 12 Mart Anıları". İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2003

3.2. E) Maoist Critique of Superstructure: Law, Culture & Arts

A defining characteristic of Maoism both in China and abroad was its special emphasis on superstructure. PDA group, following the Chinese experience closely, developed a critique of legal, educational, artistic and cultural structures in Turkey. The *1973 Court Defense* is an important document in this sense, as the PDA laid down its program concerning the superstructure in Turkey.

In terms of legal structures, they advocated a complete transformation of the system into the establishment of people's courts and people's law. In this new legal structure the traitors and the 'enemies of the people' would be charged on people's free will and they would be the sole determinant in the decision of relevant punishment. Educational system was also made subject to debate for it fostered inequality right from the start and relied far more on abstract knowledge. Needless to say, the gap between intellectual and practical knowledge had been an important concern in Mao Zedong Thought.

PDA's critique of art also derived its inspiration from class politics, as the party regarded the current art as the art of the dominant classes.¹²⁹ China's social realism, which introduced one-dimensional revolutionary hero and heroines, was the main source of inspiration for PDA. By the same token, Maoists have differentiated between progressive art and reactionary art, which in the Turkish context meant opera and *arabesque* music respectively. However, it was difficult to reconcile this dichotomy with the principle of mass line as a considerable percentage of the Turkish masses preferred *arabesque* to the rather alien opera music.¹³⁰

The approach of the Maoist towards national culture was selective at best. As Perinçek puts in his "On Revolutionary Culture and Arts", (*Devrimci Kültür ve Sanat Üzerine*), he makes a distinction between the cultural legacy that should be defended and rejected. "We will not adopt the mystical, socially peaceful (*sosyal barışçı*), sometimes destiny-driven aspects of our people, but its rebellious, warrior aspects, the aspects that it defends the proletarian values of the people that has lived for hundreds of years." With respect to degenerate culture that the revolutionaries should refrain, he

¹²⁹ See Defense, pp.483-493

¹³⁰ See Zileli, "Havariler" p.377, p.434

does not see any difference between the imperialist culture and revisionist culture as both has the evils of individualism, depression and loneliness, pessimism, sex addiction and rejection of every kind of value, which (unfortunately) exists in Turkish arts as well.¹³¹ The cultural field was not independent of political struggle.¹³²

3.2. F) Three Worlds Theory and Isolation

The death of Mao Zedong in 1976 had been tragic for the Turkish Maoists at least for two reasons. First, for he was the revolutionary father of the political center, to whom PDA had particular allegiance. They mourned him in their journals¹³³ and organized ceremonies in Istanbul. Second, it led PDA into confusion with regard to their future course in Maoism. As Zileli puts in a self-critical piece:

As if we were not the same people who supported the campaign against the "rightist Deng Xiaoping, we supported the campaign for the removal of "Gang Four" as well and this time we started to praise Deng Xiaoping. Moreover, we also started a new debate within leftist circles by adopting the "Three Worlds Theory" which was Deng Xiaoping's formulation of Mao Zedong's thoughts on "contradictions in the world". "Three Worlds Theory" was not more than the theoretical explanation of CCP's national foreign policy which was a continuation of "people's front" policy derived from Stalin. According to this theory, the world was split into three parts. Two super powers -United States and Soviet Union- were the main enemies of world revolution. In order to further revolution, one should make use of the contradictions between them, even neutralize US and should isolate Soviet Union, which was a more dangerous super power, in maximum¹³⁴

Hence with the implementation of Three Worlds Theory, which shifted the emphasis from the critique of party cadres in the Soviet Union to declaring it as 'a dangerous

¹³¹ See PDA: Mart 1977, "Sovyetler Birliđi'nde Revizyonist Sanat ve Edebiyat" for a critique of contemporary Soviet art and culture. It might be interesting to note that the authors regard Andrei Tarkovsky's movie "Solaris" as a representation of Soviet imperialistic desire to reach the outer space.

¹³² Ragıp Duran asserted in our interview that the party also issued a list of forbidden books, which would enter into force once the revolution is realized. The list involved leftist authors like Adalet Ağaođlu as well.

¹³³ See PDA: Ekim 1976, Mao Zedung Yoldaş Mücadelemizde, düşüncemizde ve yüreğimizde sonsuza kadar yaşayacak!", "Acımızı Kuvvete dönüştürelim -Başkan Mao çağımızın en büyük Marksistidir. p.5", Halkın Sesi 14 eylül 1976, "Marxism ve Leninizmin Büyük Ustası Dünya Proletaryası ve Ezilen Halkların Büyük Öğretmeni Emperyalizme ve Revizyonizme Karşı Mücadelenin Büyük Önderi Mao Zedung Yoldaş Türkiye Proletaryası ve Halkının Devrimci Mücadelesinde Yaşayacak", Also See, "Bütün Ülkelerin Proletaryasının ve Ezilen Halklarının Büyük Öğretmeni Mao Zedung Yoldaş Ölümsüzdür" in Halkın Sesi, 17 Eylül 1976 and Halkın Sesi 21 eylül 1976 "Türkiye Halkı Mao Zedung'u Anıyor." (Five thousand people in Istanbul paid tribute to Mao Zedong.)

¹³⁴ See Zileli, Havariler, pp.195-196

threat', anti-Soviet sentiment became the cornerstone of PDA's political agenda. On 12th October 1976, *Halkın Sesi* announced that the revolutionary foreign policy of Mao Zedong, namely the Third World Theory, should be followed. In December, the same journal warned its readers against the imminent threat of Soviet social imperialism against Turkish people. Overall, the language employed vis-à-vis Soviet Union gradually changed from revisionism/social imperialism to regarding USSR as an equally dangerous global threat as that of America. As Zileli puts:

Until then, the "main contradiction" that the party put forward was the contradiction between the American imperialism and its collaborators against the peoples in Turkey. According to the Maoist understanding, we could form an alliance with anyone in a "common front" except the ones that were in the enemy camp of the basic contradiction, including Soviet supporters.¹³⁵

Yet, the circumstances changed as:

The movement now emphasized the "two super powers" and especially the "more dangerous" social imperialism instead of "American imperialism and its collaborators." This was a very important change. In this case whole strategy was changed. Even more so, this meant that the "main contradiction" was not the same either.¹³⁶

In 1975, PDA held the "Neither US, Nor USSR, Independent Turkey Campaign", which reached beyond its designed success. The struggle against 'social imperialism' was made public in the periodicals with the following titles: "Why is it necessary to struggle with social imperialism?", "The primary enemies of the peoples of the world are US and USSR." "Neither American, Nor Russian Tanks: Long Live Free People of the World!"¹³⁷ The growing anti-Soviet attitude also led way to the pro-Soviet groups in Turkey¹³⁸.

In September 1975, when *Aydınlık* was reissued after a four years long break, the PDA group stated its task as the 'building of a proletarian party' and declared that the two super powers and their 'collaborators' as its target. According to PDA, Soviet

¹³⁵ See Zileli, "Havariler" p.137

¹³⁶ *ibid.* p.143

¹³⁷ See *Halkın Sesi*, 15 July 1975 and 22th July 1975

¹³⁸ See, *Halkın Sesi* 13 ocak 1976 **Sosyal Emperyalist uşağı "TKP" revizyonistlerini tanıyın" (Get to know the TKP revisionists –the servants of Soviet Imperialists.) Also See the preface of PDA September 1975, for the critique of 'Brezhnev followers' and PDA October 1975 "Marksizmi reziyonizmden ayıran öz şiddet midir?" p. 2 for the charge of pro-Soviet parties with agent provocateur, p.5 for the absurdity of seeking help from the Social Imperialists. Also see the warning of Turkish Maoists on the necessity of the struggle towards fascism supported by America on the one hand, the pro-Soviet groups and Social Imperialism on the other, PDA: Mayıs 1976, P. 6

Union was not only a military threat but also aimed at economic exploitation of the underdeveloped countries attached to it¹³⁹.

The PDA-liners, following their analysis of Soviet Union as the greater threat, developed a theory of 'national defense' in early 1977. In an article called "On National Defense", the Soviet leaders were called as the 'New Tsars' and the party reinstated the historical assumption that Turkey has a key importance as a transpassage on Russia's desire to reach the overseas. PDA set the priority as 'national defense' and called for a preparation of war¹⁴⁰. The content of the national defense was "1. to defend Turkey's political independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity vis-à-vis two super powers and especially Russian social imperialism; to counter super power hegemonism, 2. to end all kinds of relations with the two superpowers, which curbs our economic, political, military, cultural etc. independence; to pursue our independence in all areas vis-à-vis super powers, 3. to make preparations, strengthen national defense and organize people's independent powers vis-à-vis a probable war between the two super powers and an attack especially from Russian social imperialists"¹⁴¹. The thesis of "national defense" also meant that previous emphasis on 'anti-militarism' has changed. By 1977, PDA put forward the importance of armament against two superpowers instead of disarmament and suggested to "struggle for a national defense based on the armament of people and the local resources of the country."¹⁴²

The self-criticism campaigns had been a part of the movement at least since 1970. The benefits of criticism were various: "it was the revolutionary weapon, which helped to correct the errors of the party and led it into the rightful path." "It was good to find the errors, but it was better to find its source."¹⁴³ Following the analogy of the Chinese 'Hundred Flowers Campaign', the party aimed at gathering different thoughts, infer lessons from its past mistakes to the end of reforming itself.

¹³⁹ For a significant example See, PDA November 1975 issue, "Üçüncü dünya ülkelerinin iktisadi alanda hegemonyacılığa karşı mücadelesi" p. 9 Also see Chiao Kuan Hua's speech in UN General Assembly quoted in PDA Ocak 1976, "Sovyet Sosyal Emperyalizmi Kendine Bağımlı ülkeleri azgınca yağmalıyor." Pp. 24-28 Halkın Sesi 4 kasım 1975 ** Tatlı dilli bir Cani: Sovyetlerin Mısıra yaptığı sözümona "yardım" sosyal emperyalizmin gerçek yüzünü ortaya koyuyor."

¹⁴⁰ PDA, Şubat 1977, "Yurt Savunması Üzerine" p. 6. A similar attitude is elaborated also in March 1977 issue, "Aydınlık'ın tezleri: Savaş ve Yurt Savunması" As the national defense gained a primary importance, the party's attitude towards militarization, armamament and even NATO has changed.

¹⁴¹ "Yoldaş Dergisinin Eleştirisi" p.33

¹⁴² PDA: Mayıs 1977, p.15

¹⁴³ PDA: Eylül 1970, "İşçi-Köylü Çalışma Komiteleri Kuralım!" p.337 and p. 341

In 1975, PDA's previous support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was made a subject of self-criticism¹⁴⁴. One year later, party leadership was accused of being unable to lead the ideological struggle of the masses in a mass self-criticism campaign. Besides, they erred in seeking 'super revolutionaries', who are without any private life concerns, dedicated to the struggle alone. PDA members were also aware of the fact that they blamed many groups with being 'servants of Russia' or 'collaborators of social imperialism'.¹⁴⁵ However, it is hard to conclude that PDA movement benefited greatly from these campaigns. Towards the end of the 1970's, the party's isolation from the rest of the Left was apparent.

4. Conclusion

A quarter century after the disappearance of Maoism from world scene, its legacy is often recalled with that of Stalinism. The extreme egalitarianism of the Chinese Revolution (exemplified in the abolishment of the military ranks or upper class privileges in education) the 'voluntarism' that failed in the Great Leap Forward attempt and the violent phase of the Cultural Revolution, are all cited among the greatest mistakes of Mao Zedong, quite the same way in China as abroad. Today, we are living in a world, where the question of 'social egalitarianism' is dropped off the political agenda as an old-fashioned utopia. Besides, the age of information we are living in, takes the superiority of intellectual labor over physical labor as an almost natural fact. In an age like this, Mao's sending intellectuals to the countryside, to live and work like laborers, might look like something meaningless and unrealistic. True, such attempts during the Cultural Revolution were symbolic gestures of egalitarianism and did not result in the closure of the gap between the countryside and the city. But this by no means should let us overlook the fact that Mao Zedong did not err in his very aim. 'The Chairman's aim was "changing China's whole way of life" by abolishing all the privileges that existed for the upper classes until then. The Cultural Revolution abolished all the hierarchies previously established and gave the crowds the right to

¹⁴⁴ See, Halkın Sesi 19 ağustos 1975 "Çekoslovakyanın işgali konusunda Aydınlikın özeleştirisi"

¹⁴⁵ See Mehmet Durmaz, "Dar Kapıcılığa ve Subjektivizme Karşı Mücadele: Dogmatizmi, Subjektivizmi, Aceleciliği ve Dar-Kapıcılığı Yenmek için Köklü Bir Düzeltme Hareketine Girişelim" PDA: Ağustos 1976

question what they regard wrong in governance for three years. If we recall the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989, we could see that contemporary Chinese regime is far from tolerating any such criticism, let alone something comparable to 1960's.

Mao did not err in his desire to remove dogmatism and oppose 'book worship' in politics either. As I tried to show in the previous chapter, Turkish Left suffered greatly from relying on abstract theoretical formulations, rather than actual conditions of their country. In Turkey, theoretical disputes resulted in hundreds of splits, which in turn weakened the overall socialist movement. Turkish Maoists, who constituted the 'proletarian revolutionary line' until the establishment of the Turkish Workers and Peasants Party in 1978, were by no means exempted from this general process of fragmentation. As early as 1971, two splits represented by Garbis Altınoğlu and İbrahim Kaypakkaya were already under way. PDA relied more on theory than practice, although party's various self-criticism campaigns dictated the contrary. Turkish Maoists advocated the mass line, but their organization in the urban factories and rural areas was poor; they followed China closely but could not see the nature of 1971 military coup in their own country till its realization; they supported Cultural Revolution but they also applauded Deng Xiaoping who purged the initiators of Cultural Revolution by the end of 1970's. They adopted 'Three Worlds Theory' as part of Mao's heritage but used its 'anti-Soviet' sentiment to judge, accuse and degrade other groups in the Turkish Left. At the end, a party which owed its ideological premises to Mao's Cultural Revolution was turned into an ally of NATO—a coalition led by US to fight global communism.

Turkish Maoism could not be classified as an original political movement. Not for it borrowed its terminology, a number of strategies and practices from China as many in the contemporary literature argue, but because it was just another local group which was shaped by a global Marxism with the post-1945 concerns of economic development, agricultural reform, independence, non-alignment, progress and anti-imperialism. But nor was Mehmet Ali Aybar original, being frustrated with the Turkish youth for not being like their European counterparts, who were much critical in their attitude towards the CPSU. He adopted the despotic state (*ceberrut devlet*) thesis, which was a variation of Wittfogel's Oriental Despotism and he was undoubtedly inspired by European Marxism in his conceptualization of "socialism with a human face." Nor was

Mihri Belli original in trying to adapt the semi-Stalinist, semi-Maoist thesis of National Democratic Revolution into the Turkish context. Simply put, we could not name any thinker or political leader in the Turkish leftist movement, who was completely original in his/her thesis concerning the future of the country. Here, rather than trying to prove the banality of the Turkish intelligentsia, I am trying to refer to a broader epistemological question: "Is theory, especially Marxism, which is a product of a given cultural and geographical space (as also put by its own founder) adaptable to any place at all?" The answer may vary according to one's perspective. So is mine.

Capitalism has been the major force that shaped the modern age and is still the predominant economic system in the world. In other words, we are still living in an age where –as once Karl Marx put it- "all that is solid melts into air". The fact that Iran, Indonesia, Belgium or Mexico relies on different cultural matrices does not change this very principle. Yet, here enters the problematic nature of political theory. A cultural relativist would probably argue that a "totalizing" theory like Marxism could never have been relevant in any other cultural realm, under any circumstance. But if we ask the same question –just by replacing Marxism with the Enlightenment slogan "*equality, brotherhood and liberty*" the matter could seem a little more complicated. Believing that emancipatory theories could and should be made resonant in different cultural spaces, I spare the dangers of answering the above question negatively, to the cultural relativist him/herself.

Therefore, Turkish Maoism should not be evaluated via its originality but its modest attempt to "localize" Marxism in Turkish political life, especially until 1977, when global Maoism entered a deadly crisis. The Chinese dislike of Soviet Union, which was the final output of a variety of historical reasons on the part of the CCP, fitted perfectly in a cultural space, which had a historically hostile and fearsome relationship with Russia. Soviet threat over the Bosphorus and the most celebrated idea of 'independence' in Turkey played an instrumental role in the popularity of Maoism. The final stages of the Turkish Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants, shows that the sentiment it trumpeted made a resonance in the nationalist minds. Yet, PDA movement should not be reduced to its final outcome.

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In the ten years of its political life, PDA channeled Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West into a cultural blend of its own. In this sense, PDA operated both within the modernizationist discourse but it also tried to break that chain, by dealing with the masses, trying to establish a different kind of relationship with peasantry in compliance with the Maoist principles. They were not quite different from their European counterparts in following Mao Zedong, reading Little Red Book and criticizing artistic, educational, legal and cultural institutions of their country. But they were undoubtedly touched by the local paradigms, namely the Kemalist legacy, whose substantial critique they did only after their imprisonment in the name of Kemalism in 1971. However, they never intended to reject it altogether and their stance on Kemalism remained ambivalent.

In Turkish political literature, Turkish Maoism has generally been examined under a negative light. This particular dislike could be understood when two significant events in party history are recalled: PDA's revealing the names of the leftist militants (which were 'terrorists' in their eyes) in 1979 and by its declaration of NATO as an ally vis-à-vis the growing Soviet threat. Both of these events were quite unusual occurrences when a leftist group is taken into consideration. Moreover, today's Labor Party, which stands to be the political heir of PDA movement, is a political entity which proposes a pro-military, radical Kemalist and nationalist line. However, it is still obscure to me, why PDA members were blamed for their class origins when they tried to renounce it with dispossession and proleterianization campaigns in early 1970's. The accusation of 'passivism' is even more ungrounded than their class origins. Today, student leaders like İbrahim Kaypakkaya and Mahir Çayan, who lost their lives in clashes with the security forces in early 1970s, are taken as revolutionary heroes. But few dare to discuss their overall contribution to the well being of the Turkish socialist movement in the long-term. If people in the Turkish Left did not declare 'passivism' as the worst of all sins and saw more hope in the masses, we could have been living in a more balanced political atmosphere in Turkey today.

Since 1980's, ex-PDA members have been influential in shaping the intellectual life of Turkey. A considerable number currently hold important posts in universities, newspapers, televisions, private companies and non-governmental organizations. However, it is difficult to say Labor Party and its leader Perinçek treats its fellow ex-members better than others in the Turkish Left did. The ex-members are often called

traitors (*dönek*s) for they quit radical politics after the 1980 military coup.¹⁴⁶ Yet, it is very difficult to say that today's Labor Party abides by the same ideological content as it did in the beginning of 1970's. Nevertheless, Labor Party and its official publication *Aydınlık* still exert a considerable influence in shaping public opinion in Turkey, despite its marginal existence in Turkish political life. Although its leader Perinçek occasionally refers to Mao Zedong in his speeches, both current and former members of the party is fully aware that the turn Turkey took in early 1980's proved to be long-lasting.

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¹⁴⁶For a significant example, See Yalçın, H. (2003) *Dönekler*. İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları

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