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**WOMEN AND SOCIALISM IN TURKEY:
CASE OF
PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION
(ILERICI KADINLAR DERNEĐI)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
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BY

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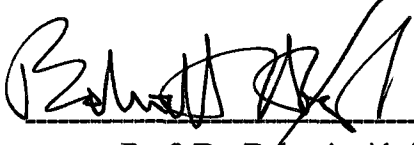
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MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
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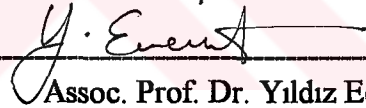
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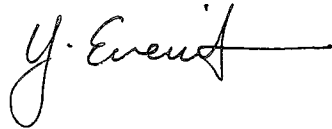
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ABSTRACT

WOMEN AND SOCIALISM IN TURKEY: CASE OF PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION (ILERICI KADINLAR DERNEGI)

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The aim of this thesis was to investigate the role of women in the Turkish socialist movement. Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği/IKD (Progressive Women's Organisation) was chosen as a case study. This organization had the largest number of actively engaged and organized women throughout the history of Turkish women's organizations. In this study, the main purpose was to make a counter-argument against the dominant socialist discourse, which ignored and disregarded the specific role of women within the Turkish socialist movement. While IKD has been approached in comparison to the international socialist women's movement, the primary focus has been on establishment of the organization; its activities and its main publication organ, *Kadınların Sesi*. Former members of IKD have been interviewed, their own interpretations and evaluations form the backbone of this study. Thus, *oral history* technique forms the methodological basis of this research. Additionally, a detailed investigation of the IKD archives and an extensive literature review have been conducted. The results of the thesis indicate that women played a significant role within the Turkish socialist movement.

Keywords: Feminism, Woman, Women's Organisation, Socialism, Marxism.

ÖZ

**TÜRKİYE’DE KADIN VE SOSYALİZM: ÖRNEK OLAY
İLERİCİ KADINLAR DERNEĞİ**

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Bu tezin amacı Türkiye sosyalist hareketi içinde kadınların rolünü incelemektir. *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği* (İKD) bu tezde örnek olay olarak seçilmiştir. İKD, Türkiye’de kurulmuş kadın dernekleri içinde en fazla üyeye sahip olan ve bu kadınları eylemli kılabilmiş olan bir örgüttür. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye sosyalist hareketinde kadınların rolünü ihmal ve gözardı eden baskın sosyalist söyleme, karşı-görüş geliştirmektir. İlerici Kadınlar Derneği’nin nasıl kurulduğu, faaliyetleri ve yayın organı olan *Kadınların Sesi* gazetesi, dünya sosyalist kadın hareketi ile paralellik kurularak incelenmiştir. Mülakat yapılan İKD üyelerinin özgün yorumları ve değerlendirmeleri bu çalışmanın belkemiği olmuştur. ‘Sözlü tarih’ tekniği, bu araştırmanın yöntemsel temelini oluşturmuştur. Mülakatlara ek olarak, İKD arşivi incelenmiş ve geniş bir kaynak araştırması da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırmanın sonucunda, kadınların Türkiye sosyalist hareketi içinde önemli bir rol oynadığını savunmak mümkündür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Feminizm, Kadın, Kadın Derneği Sosyalizm, Marksizm.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BEC Branch Executive Committee

CEC Central Executive Committee

CHP Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - Republican Peoples Party (RPP)

DP Democratic Party

DİSK Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu - Democratic Workers

DKÖ Demokratik Kitle Örgütü - Democratic Mass Organization

ERC Educational Research Commission

I. GAWR, 1977. First General Assembly Working Report

II. GAWR, 1978. Second General Assembly Working Report

İGD İlerici Gençler Derneği - Progressive Youth Organization

İKD İlerici Kadınlar Derneği - Progressive Women's Organization

MDD Milli Demokratik Devrim - National Democratic Revolution

MHP Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi - Nationalist Movement Party

RSDLP- Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party

USSR United Soviet Socialist Republic

SGÖ Sosyalist Gençlik Örgütü - Socialist Youth Organization

TDKP Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi - Turkey Revolutionary Communist Party

TEP Türkiye Emekçi Partisi - Turkey Labourer Party

THKO Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu - Peoples Liberation Army

THKP-C Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi - Cephesi: Peoples Liberation Party and Front

TİP Türkiye İşçi Partisi - Turkey Workers' Party

TİÜKP Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu - Turkey Revolutionary Worker

Peasant Communist Party

TİKP Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi - Turkey Worker and Peasant Party

TKP Türkiye Komünist Partisi - Turkish Communist Party

TKP-ML Türkiye Komünist Partisi - Marxist Leninist Turkey Communist Party

TMMOB Türkiye Mimar ve Mühendis Odaları Birliği - Union of Chambers
of Architects and Engineers of Turkey

TÖB-DER Teachers Association

TSEKP Türkiye Sosyalist Emekçi ve Köylü Partisi - Turkey Socialist
Labour and Peasant Party

TSİP Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi - Turkey Socialist Workers Party

TSP Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi - Turkey Socialist Party

TÜM-DER Civil Servants Association

TÜS-DER Health Service Association

TÜTED Technical Workers Association

ÜGD Ülkücü Gençler Derneği - Youth Organisation of MHP

ÜO Ülkü Ocakları - Youth Organisation of MHP



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Millions of women and men of all races, nationalities and religions have participated in the workers' and socialist movement, especially since the 19th century. These people, moving towards their dream of a society without class and exploitation, founded political parties and organisations; organised meetings, strikes, resistance, demonstrations, rallies and even carried out revolutions on all five continents. Many women participated in revolutionary struggle with the same desire for a society without class and exploitation. The women expressed their desire as follows in the women's magazine *La Voix des Femmes* issued on March 23-28, during the 1848 French Revolution which made havoc in Europe:

Women reply to men who ask "What do you want? What are you trying to do?" We want to reconstruct a new world with you, where peace and truth will reign, we want justice in every spirit, and love in every heart. (Rowbotham, 1974; 133)

During the rise of the second wave of the feminist movement in the West in the late 1960s, countless women's studies and research were carried out. These included many studies on the role of women in the socialist movement. Women social scientists studied the position and role of women in almost all revolutions (The French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the October Revolution, etc.); in almost all leftist parties (social democrat, socialist, communist, etc.); and the First, Second and Third

Internationals which were in a sense, the 'world parties' of the working class. In addition, biographical studies on several socialist woman leaders including Flora Tristan, Rosa Luxemburg, Eleanor Marx, Alexandra Kollontai etc. have been published*. As women social scientists rightly state, the role of women in history is rescued from invisibility by those studies.

It was not only bourgeois/official *male* historians, but communist *male* historians as well, who remained silent on women's role in history. This silence is not just a *claim* but a *reality*. "The major general historians of the Comintern, such as J. Braunhal and F. Claudin make no mention of the communist women's movement." states Elizabeth Walters (1989: 51) in her article on the women of the Comintern. The Soviet historian Sobolev also does not mention women in his book on the Comintern. Ingrid Strobl, the author of *Women in Armed Resistance against Fascism and German Occupation*, writes as follows:

Of the 17 books which analyse women's role in the French Resistance, 13 were published after 1971; that is after the first appearance of French feminism. (Strobl, 1992: 18)

Strobl states that almost all *male* historians ignore women's role in the socialist movement. During the Second World War, the resistance against the Germans was

* For example: Boxer, M.Q., 1975. *Socialism Faces Feminism in France: 1879-1913*. Ph.D. dissertation Uni. of California at Riverside; Boxer, M.Q., and J.H. Quataert, (ed) 1978. *Socialist Women. European Socialist Feminism in the Nineteen and Early Twentieth Centuries*. New York; Hackett, Amy K., 1976. *The Politics of Feminism in Wilhelmine Germany 1890-1918*. 2.vols. Ph.D. dissertation; Quataert, J.H., 1979. *Reluctant Feminist in German Social Democracy 1885-1917*. Princeton, N.J.; Slaughter, J., and R.Kern. 1981. *European Women and the Left Socialism, Feminism, and the Problems Faced by Political Women. 1880 to the Present*, Westport; Sowerwine, C., 1976. *The Organization of French Socialist Women. 1880-1914*; 1977a. *Women and the Origins of the French Socialist Party*; 1977b. *Women, Socialism and Feminism. 1872-1922: A Bibliography*. 1982. *Sisters or Citizens ? Women and Socialism in France Since 1876*; Evans, R., 1980. *Bourgeois Feminists and Women Socialists in Germany 1894-1914*; Nolan, M., 1977. *Proletarischer Antifeminismus*; Bobroff, A., 1974 *The Bolsheviks and Working Women, 1905-1920*; Clements, B., 1982. *Working-Class and Peasant Women in Russian Revolution, 1917-23*; Stites, R., 1978. *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*; Rowbotham, and Line Segal's several books can be added into the list.

almost everywhere led by communists and Jews, and so was also subjected to silence; a silence which was even more profound in the case of women. "Being a Jew or a communist was frequently sufficient cause to be ignored by the history of the Resistance. Being a woman, was sufficient cause alone to be ignored, even it was not an additional label." (Strobl, 1992: 22-23) She continues:

There is almost no information given about them (women in the resistance) because hardly any male historians even mention their existence. Male historians consider armed resistance to be inconsistent with womanhood and mentioning armed women members would malign the relevant underground team. (Strobl, 1992: 24)

Just like the women in the other countries of the world, the women of Turkey too took part in the workers' and communist movements. In the early days of the 20th century, they participated in the movement as members and sympathizers of parties such as: the People's Communist Party (*Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*) the Turkish Communist Party (TKP), and then the Turkish Workers and Farmers Socialist Party (*Türkiye İşçi Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası*) and Mainland Party (*Vatan Partisi*). Until the 1960s, a number of well-educated and intellectual women, some of whom had graduated from universities abroad and spoke a couple of languages, as well as women working in cigarette factories and textile industry joined the ranks of the communist and socialist parties. Some of the most noteworthy women members of the People's Communist Party, who walked the streets of 1920's Ankara unveiled and wearing western clothes were: *Cemile* (graduated from Darülmualimat -Women's Teachers' Training College- in Istanbul, party code name Halime, Comintern 4th Congress Delegate), *Rahime* (Selimova) and *Fatma Hanım; Naciye Hanım*, (studied pedagogy in Germany, spoke about women at the First Congress of People's

of Orient). TKP member poet *Yaşar Nezihe* (Bükülmez); journalist *Neriman Hikmet* (Öztekin, studied at Istanbul Law School), cigarette factory worker *Zehra Kosova*, *Zeliha Okyalaz*, *Mediha Özçelik*; writer and journalist *Suat Derviş* and *Sabiha Sertel*; doctor *Sevim Belli* and *Sevinç Özgüner*. The sociologist *Behice Boran*, leader of the Turkish Worker's Party (TIP), deserves special attention in this context.

Many women participated in the socialist political arena until the end of the 60s; however, it is not possible to talk of a mass movement. In fact, the socialist movement as a whole could not be considered a mass movement. Up to the 1960s, the growth of the socialist movement was hindered by many factors such as the socio-economic structure of Turkey, the limited numbers and consciousness of the working class, intensive police pressure on communists, illegal working conditions, among others.

From the end of the 1960s and in particular during the second half of the 1970s, tens of thousands of women joined the workers' and socialist movement, following these pioneers. At the end of the 60s and especially in the second half of the 70s, the politicisation of tens of thousands of women and men could be observed. Thousands of women, joined both illegal and legal workers' parties such as TKP, TIP and leftist organisations such as *Revolutionary-Way* (Devrimci Yol) and *Liberation* (Kurtuluş). The important thing was, while participating in such organisations on the one hand, women also established their own organisations named '*progressive*', '*revolutionary*', '*worker*'.

Turkey is going through a period in which the socialist and revolutionary movements of the 1970s are being condemned and maligned. In such a historical period, the tendency to ignore women and assign them to invisibility is heightened. The specificity and the originality of this study is that, the *Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği*, (*Progressive Women's Organisation*) a women's organization has been taken as the subject of a masters thesis for the first time. Thus, the modest aim of this study is to cast light on the role of women in the 1970's so that in future studies of this period and the history of the TKP, women will not be ignored. Our wish is that social scientists do not allow the role and position of women in the Turkish socialist movement to be neglected in historical studies that are being or will be carried out.

Some recently initiated studies, similar to the studies carried out by feminists and social scientists in Europe in the 1970s, have chosen socialist women and women's organisations in Turkey as their subject. Social scientists or political historians have so far attempted very few studies on women embracing the details of how they joined the ranks of the socialist parties and movements, what kind of activities they participated in, how they organised and what they faced*. There is no information on the role and position of women either in the books on the history of TKP or the Turkish socialist movement, which became a mass movement after 1960. The place and the role of socialist women need to be brought to light. There are no studies on the contributions of women to working class parties, trade unions and political organisations. The *Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği* - IKD (*Progressive Women's*

* There are very few details in the works of Mete Tuncay and the books of Darendelioğlu and Tevetoğlu about communist women on individual basis.

Organisation) the subject of this study which was active in the period 1975-80, has also not been studied before. Similar pioneering studies should be carried out on the *Revolutionary Women's Union (Devrimci Kadınlar Birliği)* which was established in 1969; and the *Revolutionary Women's Association (Devrimci Kadınlar Derneği)* the *Labouring Women's Association (Emekçi Kadınlar Derneği)*, *Black Sea Women's Association (Karadeniz Kadınlar Derneği)* which were established in 1970s as well as many others.

Therefore, it is quite important that socialist women are chosen as the subject of this study, since there are very few works in literature on socialist women in Turkey, let alone scientific studies - the vast majority of the literary works were written by women. A few notable examples are: '*Yıldırım Women's Block*' (*Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu*), by Sevgi Soysal which tells about the women's bloc in the Yıldırım military prison during the period of the 12/3/1971 military coup; Firuzan's '*The '47 Generation*' (*47'liler*) a story of revolutionary youth; '*Stages*' (*Aşamalar*) by Afet Ilgaz, telling of a woman's development; '*Night Classes*' (*Gece Dersleri*) by Latife Tekin who herself was a member of IKD; The memoirs of Sabiha Sertel; and a biography of Sabiha Sertel written by her daughter Yıldız Sertel. Another important book is Sevim Belli's autobiography. Sevim Belli was first on the list of the TKP mass arrests in 1951. She published her autobiography titled '*Was It All in Vain?*' (*Boşuna mı Çiğnedik?*) in 1995. It is quite pleasing to see in recent times some articles appearing in the newspapers and periodicals on communist women, especially since 1990.

The members of IKD, as though they knew that their history would be neglected, prepared a modest booklet in 1985 on the 10th anniversary of their foundation. Those members who were refugees in Europe came together and produced a booklet of 67 pages titled '*IKD is Ten Years Old*' (*IKD On Yaşında*) consisting of their memoirs. They published this booklet in an amateur way and distributed it by hand. *IKD On Yaşında* did not remain as the only study carried out by the members of the IKD. Some of the founders and members came together at the end of 1994 to prepare another booklet, with the name '*IKD is Twenty Years Old*' (*IKD Yirmi Yaşında*) which is yet to be published. For a year women from IKD have come together in various cities in Turkey to write the history that they themselves made. In these two collections we can see how seriously those women took their organisation and their work and the affection that they felt towards the organisation they had created.

Following the two studies, IKD has been chosen as the subject of this master's thesis and has been analyzed using scientific methods. The **main purpose** of choosing IKD as the subject of this thesis, is the fact that this organisation which was active between 1975-80, was the first and only organisation that embraced and activated thousands of women. During its four years of legal activity, IKD established 33 branches and 35 sub-branches throughout the country; the circulation of its journal *Kadınların Sesi* (Voice of Women) reached 35.000; and on events such as May Day and 8th of March, thousands of women marched under the banners of IKD. This case study of IKD, examines topics such as i) how women adopted socialist ideas, ii) which women became revolutionary and communist, why and how; iii)

how they founded the IKD; iv) how they viewed the 'women's question', v) what their demands for women were, vi) the organisational structure of IKD and militant women of IKD; viii) the actions of IKD; ix) the tools of agitation and propaganda used in organizing women; x) activities, campaigns; and the IKD journal *Kadınların Sesi* have been investigated. Members' own interpretations and evaluations form the backbone of this study.

This study does not discuss the theoretical proposals of Marxist theory of women's liberation/emancipation. It will attempt to analyse how women in various European countries who accepted this theoretical framework entered the historical stage by forming various women's organisation tied to social democrat, socialist and communist parties but organisationally autonomous. In addition it will examine in what way women in Turkey shared the experience of European women and in which ways they differed.

It is worthwhile to summarize the contents of the chapters included in this study. The **second chapter** will be about the method. The development of the world socialist movement will be covered in the **third chapter**, in a very general sense, with an emphasis especially on Europe. This short summary sets the context for the next chapter, which is about the world socialist women's movement. In the **fourth chapter**, the development of the socialist women's movement will be examined in the context of the history of the world socialist movement. It is necessary to know this history in order to understand the Turkish women's conceptualization of women's emancipation and their actions, because this history is part of IKD's inheritance. The

participation of women in socialist parties, their activities, their journals, the socialist women's Internationals, their role in anti-fascist struggles and revolutions, their activities before and after the Second World War will be examined in this chapter. This has been kept as brief as possible in accordance with the essence of the study. The **fifth chapter** will cover a short summary of the socialist movement in Turkey and the presence of women in the movement up to the 1970s. How and why did the IKD founders become socialist, has been examined in the light of Turkey's current socio-political situation. The **sixth chapter** will include how IKD was founded and developed to cover the whole of Turkey, its relation with TKP; evaluations made by the socialist left in Turkey on the women's question and women's organisations; how women established and developed an organisation which spread all over Turkey; organisational and ideological analysis of IKD; and *Kadınların Sesi* newspaper will be examined as the publication of this organisation. IKD's activities (campaigns, actions and various activities) will be examined in the **seventh chapter**. In this chapter, evaluations of the IKD members will also be included, according to their own views of today. What IKD gave to its ordinary and executive members, and their evaluations of IKD with their current viewpoints. The **conclusion** covers the similarities and differences of IKD and socialist women's organisations in Europe with similar ideological and political views. IKD's contribution as a 'Traditional Marxist Feminist' organisation to the women's movement, will be analyzed in this chapter as well.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

The following **method** and **data collection** tools have been utilized throughout this study, in accordance with the purpose explained in Chapter I.

This study adopted a **qualitative** investigation method with a **feminist view**, basically referring to the interviews with the founders and supervising members of the women's organisation called IKD to bring the experiences of the members to light.

Making the invisible visible, bringing the margin to the center, rendering the trivial important, putting the spotlight on women as competent actors, understanding women as subjects in their own right rather than objects for man -all continue to be elements of feminist research. Looking at the world through women's eyes and seeing how the lack of knowledge is constructed are themes running through feminist research. They reflect the fact that feminist research is grounded both in the disciplines and in a critique of them. (Reinharz, 1992; 248)

This study has *biased objectivity*; since the *subject women's organisation* and its *women members* has been analysed with a *feminist view* by a *woman researcher*. However, this attitude is in accordance with the core of the subject, as in most other feminist studies.

Feminist work has contributed to the questioning of scientifically based knowledge as absolute by providing numerous examples of work in different disciplines that both highlight the bias of previous work and provide alternative explanations that are more complete and more comprehensive, albeit from the feminist's own 'biased' perspective. (Nielsen, 1990:18)

During this study, *oral history* method has been used, which has a special importance in the concept of *feminist research methods*. 'Interview' and 'Oral History' concepts are interchangeably used throughout the study.

The following terms used interchangeably with "oral history": case studies, in-depth life history interviews, biographical interviews, life histories, and personal narratives. (Reinharz, 1992: 129)

Reinharz states the following, although feminist researchers have not yet come to a clear agreement on the subject:

Interviews and oral histories, too, are similar, but interviews focus typically on a particular experience or phenomenon, while oral histories deal more broadly with a persons past.

The oral history method has been used by historians, journalists, community groups, anthropologists, women's studies scholars, and sociologists who want to understand individual lives or social phenomena. (Reinharz, 1992: 132)

This method has been used by many social sciences for several purposes, but it has a special meaning and contents for feminist social scientists. Oral history has the potential of bringing women "into" history and making the female experience part of the written record. Feminist researchers prefer oral history methods for a variety of reasons: "... to contribute to social justice, facilitate understanding among social classes, and explore the meaning of events in the eyes of women." (Reinharz, 1992:

134) Furthermore:

- a) Oral history is not a unique method but draws on the methodologies of history, psychology, and sociology;
- b) it facilitates investigation of the lives of individuals;
- c) acknowledges the value of women's lives;
- d) the production of oral text may "right the injustice" of a particular person's (or groups) voice being unheard;
- e) oral history corrects the biased view of history that had not included her/their voice at the same time;
- f) it not only gives "a voice to the voiceless", but also allows a different voice within some person to emerge (eg. literate and highly educated

people who have some experience that has remained hidden.) (Reinharz, 1992)

Therefore, 'Oral history' method has been utilised in the interviews with the IKD members, taking into consideration the above mentioned properties and the value system which leads them. Kathryn Anderson asks: "Why have not historians, and especially historians of women, pursued the subjective experience of the past more rigorously?" and continues to ask why do historians stress only 'activities and facts' and do not pay attention to: "feelings, attitudes, values, and meaning" (Anderson, 1990; 98)

Traditional historical sources tell us more about what happened and how it happened than how people felt about it and what it meant to them. As historians, we are trained to interpret meaning from facts. But oral history gives us the unique opportunity to ask people directly, How did it feel? What did it mean? (Neilsen, 1990; 98)

Therefore, in addition to the actions and events that took place within that time frame, it was attempted to quote *how they felt* as well. Some of these women were founders of IKD. Others became members later and played leading roles. All of them were concerned not only about their own lives but also about politics in Turkey. How and why did they take these decisions? Why and how did they become revolutionary? Hence, based on Anderson's advice "Oral historians should explore emotional and subjective experience as well as facts and activities." (Neilsen, 1990: 101), it was tried to include the personal experiences of the women concerned.

Who were interviewed? Why were these women chosen? A total of eight women were interviewed; three of them were the founders and executive members of IKD; three were the branch chairs of the three major cities and the other

two took part in regional organisational activities in Istanbul, South (Mediterranean), Southeast Anatolia, Eastern Black Sea and Marmara Districts as Regional Secretaries. Major reasons why they were chosen are: a) being involved in IKD activities from the beginning; b) taking active responsibility in IKD; c) having continuing interest in women's question. Additionally, an article on the same subject, written by the founder and executive committee member Vahide Yılmaz was also evaluated and quoted in the study. It can be considered an advantage that the study is based on the experiences of the founders and executive members, as they were the people with the best first hand information on the subject. MP, who was a member of TIP and at first involved in the foundation of IKD, but left the process at the last moment was asked for her comments on the section on IKD foundation. Despite rejecting to grant an interview, MP confirmed the reality of the information quoted on the foundation process. The information received from the women interviewed was additionally supported by reviewing written documents on the IKD.

How were the interviews carried out? The interviews were carried out by having two or three meetings with each of the founders or members of IKD. Two of the interviews were carried out in Ankara, while six of them took place in Istanbul during a one year period (December 1994 to December 1995) Interviews were made at their homes, except for one which was carried out in her office. All interviews were recorded on tape, later to be transcribed. Then the texts of the interviews were shown to the interviewees for further comments. In accordance with the ethics of

feminist research method, conscious effort was made to avoid treating the women as “research objects” and abandoning them as soon as the research needs were fulfilled.

Those who have been researched have been treated as objects to be worked on. Researchers have also used those studied to serve the researchers’ purposes rather than to meet the needs and aspirations of the researched. Feminists have referred to this as the ‘research as rape’ model. (Abbott & Wallace, 1990; 206)

Therefore, the collaboration of the researcher with the women interviewees was ensured.

While using the *oral history technique*, some of the ‘important points to be careful’ underlined by the social scientists, were not experienced in the study. The points which appear during the interviews of the *elderly women, black and illiterate people* (Reinharz, 1992: 141) were not met due to the characteristics of the *interviewer* and the *interviewees*. Dana Jack states the importance of ‘asking the right question’ and specifies ‘to learn to listen’ as the critical step. (Jack, 1990; 101-102) The long life friendship of the *interviewer* and *interviewees* eliminated any confidence crisis, while it provided an advantage and made the interviews easy, due to the ease of sharing a common past and discourse (terminology, concept and jargon).

The position of the interviewer: One of the issues to be resolved during the study was how to incorporate the experiences of the *interviewer* into the subject, and the method to be utilized, while making the study.

The feminist investigator is able to locate herself as a subject in history so that her own vantage point arises from the same social relations that structure the everyday worlds of the experiences of those she studies. (Cook and Fonow, 1990; 73)

In this study, the researcher was a member and colleague, the producer and the product of the historical period and structure, facing the question if she should incorporate her experiences as well? The researcher joined IKD in 1975 at the time of its founding, starting her membership in Istanbul-Kartal Branch, carrying out her organisational work at Maltepe-Gülsuyu sub-branch, a squatter settlement district of Istanbul, later becoming a member of the Central Organisational Committee and working as 'Regional Secretary' in different regions of Turkey after 1977. What would be the correct position to take in such a study in which the researcher had played such a part? The researcher included herself in this study by extending the same questions asked during the interviews to herself with her own answers, utilizing the advantages of the *Feminist Research Method*. Therefore, the researcher realized an *autobiographical* study in addition to the study based on *oral history*, since she was also a part of the historical period and the social group under study. Therefore, a study had been carried out by incorporating the personal experiences of the researcher into the subject, perhaps for the first time in Turkey.

A literature survey and an archives' study were carried out in addition to the oral history technique. They were referred to with the conviction that IKD could not be understood without analyzing the history of the worldwide experience of communist women. The third and fourth chapters and the first part of the fifth chapter are the result of this conviction. It became also a necessity to quote at least the basic lines of the history of the socialist movement in Turkey, in order to locate IKD correctly in that movement, of which it was an integral part. Therefore, **extensive**

research of existing related literature and records was utilized for the study. In addition to the interviews, nearly all IKD publications, newspaper and opposition publications were analyzed and quoted as relevant sources for the sixth and seventh Chapters in which IKD was analyzed. These are:

- a) all 61 issues of the *Kadınların Sesi (Voice of Women)* newspaper;
- b) Press Releases of IKD;
- c) Central Exexutive Committee Reports of IKD prepared for the General Assembly Meetings in 1976 and 1978 -later published as books;
- d) IKD's Constitution;
- e) Trainings material of IKD;
- f) Press clippings about IKD activities in the period of 1975-80;
- g) Legal TKP publications during the period of IKD activities;
- h) *Kadın Dayanışması (Women Solidarity)* journal.

Basically, *all interviewees* saw no reason to make known their names in a study which tries to prevent neglect of the position and roles of women in history. However, due to the long-lasting anti-democratic climate of our country and scientific ethics, the names of the IKD members are *not mentioned*. The researcher had to take care and not underestimate the *possible situations the interviewees could face* as a result of this research. The country is governed with the Constitution of the military coup of 1980; people are being prosecuted in State Courts due to their ideas; and fundamentalists and racists are rapidly increasing their strength. N.G. Geiger writes about a similar situation after the study carried out by Maria Mies:

...informants run risk that may not be immediately recognizable or even preventable. For example, one women who became internationally

famous after telling a researcher about her life and her people's struggles "is now isolated...and has lost the contacts that she had earlier." This risk and that of endangerment in certain political situation are undoubtedly greatest for women who are already prominent in their own communities, but they can never be dismissed entirely. Nor can anonymity be guaranteed by changing names and places. (Geiger, 1986: 350)

Therefore, the 'interviewees' names were coded and sometimes names of cities and regions were avoided.

Concept and Categories: In this study the description '*Social democrat parties*' will refer to the Marxist working class parties that were members of the Second International and '*Social democrat women*' will refer to the members of the parties. The term '*Communist women*' will be used for the women who became members of the parties after the establishment of the Communist International, who used the name '*Communist Party*' even after the closure of the Comintern. The term '*Socialist Women*' will be used in the same way as the terms '*Communist/Socialist/Revolutionary Women*' in Turkey. In this study, İKD members who were also TKP members, regarded themselves as '*socialist*' and/or '*revolutionary*' women, instead of '*communist*' women because of the illegal conditions of TKP.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The 17th and the 18th centuries were a period of transition from a feudalistic economy to an industrialized economy. In this period, worldwide commercial activity began. Colonies constituted a market for the products of the newly established factories. The accumulation of wealth in one continent, Europe, depended on the pillage of human, mineral and agricultural resources of other continents while at the same time the surplus value was created by the labour of the European population which reached 12-14 hours a day. On the one hand there was a small group of people who owned the means of production, on the other hand there was the majority who had no other choice than to sell their labour in order to survive. As people in the colonies were enslaved, the great majority of the European population migrated to the cities and became wage slaves with very low pay.

In the 19th century, the capitalist mode of production reached universal dimensions and became the dominant mode of production. As capitalism went through the mercantile and colonialist stages and moved into the imperialist stage, the creators of wealth stopped being "a mass", "a mob", "sans culottes" and began to be called the "working class" (Swingwood, 1979; 45-47). It was natural that this new system which developed forces and relations of production, so different from those of

feudalism would be the subject of scientific research. This century was a period which was examined by numerous social scientists, economists, sociologists, utopians from Locke, Mill, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Bentham, Ricardo, Robert Owen, Fourier, to Marx and Engels who tried to understand and explain it. It was a century in which the causes and solutions of the problems which existed were analyzed and in which great works were created. As social scientists on the one hand analyzed the sources of the wealth of nations and tried to establish the principles of political economy, on the other hand they attempted to find solutions to the wretched conditions of the great majority of the population. From the beginning of the industrial revolution in England, the system met with many criticisms. Thinkers such as Robert Wallace (1679-1771), Thomas Spence, William Goldwin (1756-1836), Charles Hall (1740-1820), who are hardly remembered today, criticized the new society which had been turned inside out by the development of industry (Beer, 1974; 410).

First the Utopians, then Marx and Engels searched for ways to free the workers who started working at a young age and with poor wages, from the appalling conditions in which they lived. They also carried out theoretical studies. The idea of socialism had existed for a long time in the form of utopia. The concept of 'socialism' meant both a mode of production and a way of thinking. Before Marx, *socialism* was no more than a longing but this utopian goal was one desired by many people. Since the aim of the present study is not to analyze theoretical approaches, some ideas will be summarized and information on the trade union and political movements of the working class will be given.

3.1. The Utopians

The concept of "Utopian Socialists" was used by Marx and Engels for the first stage of the history of socialism represented by such thinkers as Charles Fourier, Saint Simon and Robert Owen. (Engels, 1975: 89) In this period, it was thought possible to destroy individualism, competition and private property and to make a social transformation. But no reference was made to the role of the proletariat. In France, Charles Fourier's (1772-1837) ideas are a product of the agitated period between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century when capitalistic production became dominant. He put forward the principles of his ideas in his work *The Theory of Four Movements* published in 1808. (Beer, 1974: 457) In this work he states that humanity has passed through six stages, and that a seventh one would bring people to harmony and happiness. In this stage people would reside in big buildings called phalanstre which are managed as a kind of cooperative partnership. Then would live in communities of 1600-1800 persons based on collective work under the influence of Fourier's ideas, several experimental phalanstre were set up, especially in England and North America. In North America over 100 phalansters (workers collectives) were established in the 1840s, 72 of which were set up with religious or humanistic aims; 14 of which were based on the theory of utopian socialism; and 40 of which were influenced by Fourier's doctrine.(Boulding, 1977; 644)

Count Henry de Saint Simon -again in France- accepted that large industrial complexes were inevitable. He saw all those who did not participate in

productive work as parasites and he wanted social planning to be in the hands of industrialists and workers. (Abendroth, 1974: 25) The reformist and liberal ideas of Saint Simon were developed by his successors and were interpreted as 'utopian socialist ideas'. One of his well known followers Enfantin, established collective farms.

Around the same time, Robert Owen (1771-1858) was laying the foundations of modern socialism in England. After working as a manager in a factory, he established his own textile factory and managed it according to his socialist ideas. For him, the reason for the daily increase in poverty was that wealth produced by the development of science and technology was not shared justly. Owen proposed communist communities as the means to alleviate the condition of workers but the communities he established did not live long. Nevertheless, socialist ideas started taking root among workers.

The worker's movement started with machine-breaking in reaction to unemployment and then in the 1800s, moved on to establish associations, cooperatives and trade unions. As the workers transformed from being a mob to being a class, their consciousness also evolved from trade unionism to party consciousness and the desire to take power. Many secret associations were established with this aim in Europe in the 1830s. *The society of the Friends of the People, The society of the Seasons, New Seasons, Families Society, and the Communist League* were the most well-known of these associations. Among the founders, there were many famous names such as: Flacon, Blanqui, Babeuf, Marx, Engels and Bauer. The leaders and

members of these organizations took leading roles in the 1839 and 1848 revolutions in France and Germany. (Beer, 1974; 509)

In the first half of the 1800s, the world was in a chaotic condition as a result of the economical, technological, and sociological changes of the last half-century. Old social institutions had been undermined but new ones that could create a balance in classes positions and in society had not yet been established. Injustice in the distribution of wealth caused tension throughout the continent. Europe had passed through second revolutionary periods in 1820-24 and 1830 and now as a result of economic crisis of 1841-42 everyone lived in expectation and fear from another revolution. And it took part in 1848. In this period, the fast-developing industrial production attracted an increasing proportion of the population from agriculture to industry; i.e. to the cities and factories. The working class started strikes demanding shorter working hours and higher wages and tried to prevent strike-breaking using the funds they had established. This strengthened their belief that the only way to win their demands was through organization and struggle.

3.2 Marx-Engels, the Social Democratic Parties and the Internationals:

The publication in 1848 of *Communist Manifesto* written by Marx and Engels, closed the period of utopian socialism and started a new age in which the proletariat came to the stage center. M. Beer states:

Before Marx, socialist ideas were powered by natural justice, humanistic ideas and social ethics. Since Marx, however socialism has become a political theory of a revolutionary proletariat striving for the socialization

of productive forces. Before Marx, socialism was a vague hope; a dream. With Marx, it became an action guide and ultimate aim of the working class struggling for social freedom. With Marx the concepts of socialism and proletariat become inseparable. (1974: 551)

Consequently the ideology and politics of the political party of the *proletariat*, that existed as a social class at the time of the industrial revolution, could not develop without the ideas of Marx. The idea of organizing the working class into a political party aiming to transform the economic system into a communist one by seizing power through revolution echoed throughout the world.

After the 1848-49 revolts, worker's organization in West and Central Europe, where the worker's movement accelerated, came together and established the *International Working Men's Association* in 1864. This association that was to be named the *First International* later dissolved itself in 1876. In this period, Marx and Engels' views matured debating to Proudhon and the Anarchists, and the world witnessed the *Paris Commune* in 1871. In the 1870's and 1880's, independent national parties of the working class were founded in all European countries. These parties called social democrat parties came together in 1889 and established the *Second International*.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the economy of the system which developed from competitive to monopoly capitalism was controlled in each sector by a few monopolies and banks. Becoming one of the industrialized states of the period, Germany wanted a re-distribution of the colonies which had already been shared between England and France; North America, on the other hand had caught up with these European giants in the industrialization race. This development corresponded to

a similar development of the parties and unions of the working class. Powerful workers' parties were established in all European countries, especially in France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia but the most perfect example among the parties of the *Second International* was the workers' movement in Germany. The German trade unions which had 300.000 members in 1882, reached a membership of 600.000 in 1899 and 2,5 millions in 1912. In 1912 the Social Democrat Party (SPD) in Germany had more than 1 million members; it had gathered 34% of all the votes in the elections and was represented by 110 members of parliament. (Cliff, 1981) Because of this success, the SPD played a determining role in the decisions taken by the *Second International*. However, unfortunately during the First World War, the social democrat parties, especially the SPD, supported the war policies of the bourgeois governments. This support demonstrated the lack of international consciousness of these parties and became the subject of heated discussions in the *Second International*.

3.3. The Communist Parties and the Comintern

At the beginning of the 20th century there existed at least two wings in the worker's parties. Having their origins far back in the past, these wings became known as *reformist* (right) and *revolutionary* (left) wings. Although the reformist wing has preserved its name as the *social democrat party* until today, it surrendered the thesis that the working class is to seize political power through a revolution and continued the *Second International* under the name of the *Socialist International*. The

revolutionary wing, on the other hand, gained prestige all over the world due to the *October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution* in Russia. In 1919, *communist parties* set up all over the world under influence of the Bolshevik Party, announced that the Second International had collapsed and they established the *Third International* with the name of the *Communist International/Comintern*. In this study, the development of the communist parties participating in the Comintern will be examined.

From South America to China; from India to Turkey, newly formed communist parties all over the world followed the example of the *Bolshevik Party* which changed its name to the *Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU)*. The Comintern declared itself a world party because of the international interest of the working class. The communist parties, that existed almost in all countries, were the national division of this world party. Decisions taken by the *Comintern* were binding for these national sections. Due to its inability to prevent the Second World War, the Comintern abolished itself in 1942. The union called *Communist Information Office (Cominform)* was established in 1947 after the Second World War. However it was short-lived and *Cominform* abolished itself in April 1955. No international organization that united communist parties was ever formed again. Workers' and communist parties of the world arranged *International Summits* in 1957, 1960 and 1969 and exchanged views. Also- the *Fourth International* established in 1938 by the efforts of Trotsky, continued its existence without being very effective.

After the revolution that took part in Soviet Union, all over the world, women and men workers struggled to get power. The revolutionary actions

undertaken by the working class in order to seize power in various countries, were unsuccessful because of the bloody repression of the bourgeoisie in most countries. The working classes of Spain and Greece were defeated in civil wars in the 1930's and 1940's. After the Second World War, Germany was divided and the DDR was established in the East. Other countries which took names such as Hungarian Peoples Republic, Yugoslavia Peoples Republic, Romanian Peoples Republic, Czechoslovakian Peoples Republic, Bulgarian Peoples Republic started to advance along the road to socialism. In subsequent years, countries such as China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Angola chose the socialist road. On this very difficult and painful way many countries were unsuccessful and at the end of the 1980's and beginning of the 1990's the re-construction of capitalism started in most of them. The working class once again didn't succeed in seizing power and establishing socialism just as it had failed to do so in the 1871 Paris Commune.

All over the world the working class carried out hundreds of strikes, general strikes and demonstrations. Women and men workers came out on the streets in support of their demands; although they won some economic and democratic rights within the system, all their attempts to change the system were boldly repressed by their national bourgeois's and international forces. For example, the socialist government that came to power in Chile by election, was overthrown by a military coup supported by the CIA. In most countries of South America and some European countries dictatorships and fascist regimes were established. Similar oppressive regimes continued to exist in Eastern Asia with the support of Western countries.

In spite of all this, specially in Western Europe, the working class through its struggle won many rights such as the shortening of the working day, health services and unemployment payments. In the 1990s, as the trade unions started to lose their power, the working class faced the danger of losing many of these rights obtained after long struggle. After the fall of USSR, the communist parties in many countries of the world, either changed their names or became insignificant parties that didn't have any influence in the political arena. Nevertheless, in these countries where unemployed and homeless people, hard drug addicts, prostitutes are numerous and the Mafia is powerful. (Kelner, 1989; 215) The dream of a world without classes and exploitation still exists. The downtrodden and exploited people of the 2000s will certainly strive to reach this dream, but with different methods from those of the past generation. Because, socialism continues to exist, just as it did yesterday, as a wish that people think and write about and are prepared to give their lives for. Just as Marx learned from the experience of the *Paris Commune* so today's communists will learn from the mistakes of the countries which attempted socialism. Classes, class conflicts, exploitation go on; grasp all the wealth of the poor ones; there is an abyss gaps between classes; nations hold each other by the throat. Humanity will continue to struggle to get out of this chaos and to enter a peaceful world for everyone.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIALISM AND WOMEN

How far back in time should one go in order to examine the history of the socialist women's movement ? From where should such a study start ? Possibly it should start from the development of capitalism, when women started or were forced to go out and sell their labour power as a commodity.

During the 18th century, women had to accept the heaviest jobs, like the ones in British manufacturing, with the lowest pay or they were forced into prostitution. Housewives, widows with children and unemployed women were in the front. Women participated in all mass rebellions for bread, milk for their children, jobs or more pay.

In order to understand this period, one should know the living and working conditions of these working women. Relying on doctors' reports and official statistics of the state, Engels described the living and working conditions of workers in his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* : 15-20 year old women were working on spinning machines and weaving tools in textile factories. There were very serious deformations in the bodies of children who started to work 12-14 hours per day when they were only 8-9 years old. (Engels, 1974: 225) Because of the hardness of the work, the long working hours and bad nutrition, they suffered spinal

deformation and other serious problems. They worked in very damp, hot, dirty and dusty places with no ventilation. Badly illuminated working places were also unhealthy for the eyes of the workers. Continuous weakness, frequent fainting, headaches, back pains, palpitations and nausea were among the usual complaints of workers. The lace makers who were young girls, sat in small damp rooms. Their still soft rib bones merged into each other as they leaned for 10-12 hours over their work. After suffering for years from acute indigestion caused by their work positions, they usually died of tuberculosis. The effect of factory work on women's body was harmful: insufficient development of the pelvis and hipbone deformation due to constant bending of the back were usual. These deformations caused pains during pregnancy and childbirth. Giving birth was more difficult for factory workers than for other women. On the other hand the breasts of working girls developed late or not at all. Under certain cases, menstruation started very late around 17-18 years old and was irregular. Menstruation of women who did heavy work on foot was longer and bleeding was heavier. Miscarriages at the workbench were usual. Pregnant women worked until the onset of labour, otherwise their wages were deducted. Also it was not uncommon to see women giving birth near machines. Although they had the legal right to rest 14 days during confinement, they could usually take only 3-4 or if they were lucky 8 days.

The difference between the demands of women who live in such different conditions, the working women and the aristocrat/bourgeois women, was very deep. In other words, the demands and the world views of the women who produced lace and those who wore it, were naturally different. Aristocrat/bourgeois women had to

launch a struggle against the men of their own class, while they were fighting for the right of free and independent control of property. On the other hand, because of their struggle against general exploitation, working women were fighting together with their men. (Vogel, 1990:111) This formulation of Zetkin's in 1896 formed the political strategy of both social democrat and later communist women. Working women demanded humane living conditions, shorter working hours and higher pay; before demanding the rights of inheritance, the vote and education. The IKD later inherited this position.

4.1 The Views of Utopians on the Subject of Women's Liberation

From Rousseau to Hegel women were seen as a part of nature. In spite of this, ideas about equality between women and men began to develop. During the 18th century doubts about the possibility of women's liberation in the existing social formation were increasing. In France, Fourier promised equal rights for women and guaranteed emancipation from domestic drudgery in a socialist society. And he said:

Women are guaranteed complete equal rights within the community, and freedom from domestic drudgery. Jobs like cooking, washing and heating rooms are distributed equally. The emancipation of women was now firmly linked to concepts of an alternative non-competitive society in which the means of production were not individually owned. (Rowbotham, 1974: 51)

Fourier, argued that general emancipation depends on women's emancipation and that men can not be free before women become emancipated. In

1844 Marx and Engels accepted these thoughts of Fourier's and showed this by using the following paragraph of his, in their book *Holly Family*:

The change in the historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women towards freedom, because in the relation of women to man, of the weak to the strong, the victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of women is the natural measure of general emancipation. (Rowbotham, 1974: 51)

Fourier supported women's right to a fuller life, not just in his writings but also in his cooperative communities or phalansteries where there was complete equality between the sexes. The Saint Simonians and Fourierists in France linked the woman question to the struggle of the proletariat. Among the utopians, **Susanne Voilquin**, **Claire Demar** and **Jeanne Deroin**, who were self-taught working women wrote about their ideas and their experiences. They believed that women's liberation was inseparable from the liberation of the working class. They dreamed a time of association, concord and harmony without industrial or sexual oppression. Utopian socialist **Flora Tristan**, who is accepted as the forerunner of socialist feminists, argued that the liberation of women and workers are dependent on each other. In the program of 'The Workers Union' (L'Union Quvrière) which was founded by her, Tristan wrote that "The liberty of both workers and women are two inseparable and basic problems." (Michel, 1984: 93) Tristan showed the necessity of this alliance even before Marx. In the 1840's it was not easy for a woman to struggle both against men and the regime. Tristan wrote the following statements in 1844 just before her death from typhoid fever:

I have nearly the whole world against me. Men because I demand the emancipation of women, the owners because I demand the emancipation of wage-earners. (Rowbotham, 1974: 54)

Again in the 19th century, in England Robert Owen said that: "Down with the kitchen. We shall destroy this little penitentiary!" and he continued:

We shall free millions of women from house-keeping. They want to work like the rest of us. In a factory-kitchen one person can prepare from fifty to one hundred dinners a day...We shall force machines to peel potatoes, wash the dishes, cut the bread, stir the soup, make ice cream. (Rowbotham, 1974: 190)

While Hegel and other thinkers of the Enlightenment were defining the home as the place of woman and childbirth as her duty; the approaches of Fourier, Owen, Marx and Engels to the subject are clearly revolutionary. With their interventions this argument was turned on its head: Thus, the liberty of women was not thought independent from the liberty of workers among the defenders of socialism. Women workers and Marxist women took their place in the working class socialist movement which was summarized in the third chapter.

4.2 Marx Engels and Emancipation of Women

By the 1840's people had understood that there was a link between social revolution and women's liberation. But the actual nature of the link was not yet clearly understood. Feminism not aligned to socialism was also beginning to develop at this time. These feminists spoke of freedom for themselves. They were not interested in workers' rights and sometimes even hostile to them.

The aim of this study is not to discuss Marx's and Engels's ideas about women in detail; it is to show the revolutionary difference of their ideas from their contemporaries. According to Marx the first human exploitation was of women by

men and had its roots in the sexual division of labour. However, resolving this exploitation, was not a central aim in his life. His priority was to resolve the exploitation in general terms.

Marx and Engels saw woman's role in the family and at work quite differently. Although Marx supported protective legislation for women he never accepted the view that it was unnatural for women to work. On the contrary he claimed that the dissolution of the family under capitalism was necessary and would lead to more advanced relationships between people. In *Capital* Marx wrote that "however terrible and disgusting" this seemed ultimately, "by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production outside the domestic sphere to women, young persons, and to children of both sexes, it creates a new economical foundation for a higher form of family and of relations between the sexes." (Rowbotham, 1974: 74)

Marxism's fundamental importance lies in the understanding of the relationship of the working class to capitalism and the means necessary to destroy it in order to create a communist society. The working class, struggling for its own liberation through its own efforts, would realize the emancipation of everyone as well. Marx never made a thorough analysis of women in the way that he analysed the exploitation of workers. His limited comments were later elaborated and developed by Engels, Bebel and other 19th century revolutionaries.

Both Marx and Engels wrote about the women question but their writing was not dogmatic or infallible. As Clara Zetkin pointed out, it was Marx's philosophy

rather than any specific guidelines that was his main contribution. "The materialist view of history did not, it is true, give us ready-made answers to the women question," Zetkin wrote, "but it gave us something better: the correct and precise method of studying and understanding the question." (Stites, 1990: 233)

Engels wrote *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State* in 1884, only one year after Marx's death. Among Marx's manuscripts, Engels found a detailed synopsis of Lewis Morgan's book, *Ancient Society*. This synopsis confirmed his and Marx's materialistic view of history and their analysis of "primitive" society. Engels decided to write a special book which would develop the idea that Marx have not had time to follow through, that the key to women's oppression was material and had to be seen historically. Quoted directly from *Origin*, without comment, due to Engels' clear expression of the ideas:

The first class opposition that occurs in history coincides with the development of antagonism between man and women in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male.

Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service; the wife became head servant, excluded from all participation in social production.

The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife.

..within the family he is the bourgeois and the wife represents the proletariat. (Engels, 1977: 237-45)

Marx and Engels both assumed that under communism the family as society's basic economic unit would disappear since the family was essential to the capitalist, not communist economies. Engels argued that:

With the passage of the means of production into common property, the individual family ceases to be unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children

becomes a public matter. Society takes care of all children, irrespective of whether they born in wedlock or not. (Buckley, 1989: 25)

Any investigation of the Marxist theory of the woman question should begin with August Bebel's (1840-1913) *Women in the Past, Present and Future* (later renamed *Woman and Socialism*). Bebel was the first Marxist to see the woman question within the framework of Marxist theory. His book went through 58 impressions in the German, of which 50 appeared between 1879 and 1909. (Heitlinger, 1979: 38). Bebel's work is probably the most widely read socialist classic of the late nineteenth century. Engels's book the *Origin* was published in 1884, five years after Bebel's book. In later editions of Bebel's book, he makes corrections based on his reading of the *Origin*. The first edition had 180 pages, the 1883 edition 220, the new edition of 1891 had 384 pages, while the final edition of 1895 had 472. This book became a classic. (Vogel, 1990: 101) Bebel wrote:

The woman must seek allies, and she will find them naturally in the proletarian movement. The conscious proletariat began a long time ago its storming of the fortress of the class state which shelters within its bastions the system of the domination of one sex over another. (Stites, 1990: 235)

Bebel described the struggles of middle-class women for emancipation and he compared the oppression of women's to that of the proletariat. "Class and gender thus rode in tandem." All women "can join the battle, marching in separate columns, but fighting together." (Stites, 1990: 235)

Marx's daughter, Eleanor and Edward Aveling reviewed Bebel's book in 1885. They agreed with Bebel that the oppression of women could be compared to class oppression: "Women are the creatures of an organized tyranny of man, as the workers are the creatures of an organized tyranny of the idlers." (Rowbotham;

1974:142) The review, which was later published as a pamphlet called *The Women Question*, argues for emancipation using the language of the revolutionary women of 1848 and the Paris Commune. Women are shown as an important force in the struggle for socialism.

4.3 Women in Social Democratic Parties and the Internationals

Even the last quarter of the 1800s was characterized by its darkness for women. In addition to the Bismarck's Germany, women were banned to hold and to participate in the meetings in France, according to the Convention decision in 1795. (Cliff, 1981: 36) While laws were keeping women away from membership to parties and participation to meetings, Labor Unions were demanding women's return to their homes, hence staying away from the factories. Although, the anti-woman attitude of the workers was caused by the vision of an ideal family and the traditional sexual division of labour, they saw women as competitors in the labour market as well. By prohibiting women from working they tried to eliminate women's competition. However, it had proved impossible in time to eliminate female competition and it became impossible to continue the working class struggle without the participation of women. The male labour movement was now therefore forced to organise women into trade unions.

Women's Liberation was among the topics discussed at the *First International**. Women's right to vote was not accepted in *First International*.

* Even the name of the organization was "International Working Men's Association."

However, Marx produced proposals which defend women's rights and which safeguard the interests and future of the whole working class. Marx also recommended the active participation of women in politics. In 1871 a rule, which was proposed by Marx and was accepted by the International was applied:

Women's groups will be formed in the International's organisations but organisations which contain men and women together will not be disregarded. (Vogel, 1990: 76)

The effective application of this proposal required the seriousness of all men at every level of this matter. However this proposal of Marx formed the first step to accepting the necessity of women's right to form independent organisations within the mass movement.

As mentioned before, until 1908, in most parts of the Germany there was a law which forbade women to join a political party. Therefore the SPD devised special techniques to reach the thousands of women joining the work force. They organised hundreds of educational societies for women, reading and discussion groups, or "mutual-help societies." These were autonomous, but aligned to the party. The members were either workers or the wives of SPD workers. These groups had their own conferences, sent delegates to SPD congresses, canvassed for SPD electoral candidates, raised money for the SPD and published articles in the party press.

The first ever women's meeting was held by the German Social Democrats and called Bebel's listeners to support the Social Democratic movement. (Stites, 1990: 234) In 1891 the SPD at its Erfurt Congress accepted a program which contained systematic demands about women. (Mahaim, 1992: 41) Besides this, the

Congress founded 'Women Agitation Commission' in order to centralize the women's movement and tie it to the SPD. In 1896 Clara Zetkin's pamphlet named *The Question of Women Workers and Women at the Present Time* was published.

In 1889, ten years after Bebel's *Women and Socialism* and hundred years after the French Revolution, the *Second International* held its founding Congress in Paris. Clara Zetkin who was one of the best known members of the SPD, delivered a major address on the women question. Thus a women social democrat made the *Second International* face the *women question*, during its opening Congress. All following congress* faced women's demands and made decisions about their problem. In this congress Zetkin carried her thesis of "the need for special organization of political work among women within the socialist movement" international meeting of the working class.

According to Zetkin, Bebel's book was "not just a book, but an event." However she rejected his sympathy to feminists. Zetkin's position influenced the leadership of the SPD who until then had held a tolerant attitude towards bourgeois feminists. (Stites, 1990: 237) The women's suffrage movement attained international recognition with the founding of the *International Women's Suffrage Alliance* in 1904. Zetkin labeled this a "ladies rights" movement, and called for "a class war" instead of "a battle of the sexes." (Stites, 1990: 237)

* Second International organised 8 congresses: 1891 Brussels, 1893 Zurich, 1896 London -a private meeting of 30 socialist women delegates took place- 1900 Paris, 1904 Amsterdam, 1907 Stuttgart, 1910 Copenhagen, 1912 Bale.

In 1890 at the Halle Congress of the German SPD, the publication of a newspaper, directed at women workers was discussed. In 1891 the first issue of the newspaper *Die Arbeiterin* (Working Women) which was edited by C. Zetkin was published. One year later the name was changed to *Die Gleichheit* (Equality). The sub heading was *In the Interest of Working Women*. The target mass of this newspaper with 2000 print in circulation were *advanced* women. It was not for the broad mass of working women, but for leaders. According to Zetkin the magazine was for the “more advanced women comrades”, in other words those who were organising among women. Its main role was “to provide an educational and promotional influence within the movement and its theoretical and organisational quality ought not to be sacrificed for some alleged mass attraction.” (Stites, 1990: 238)

The political conditions of Tsarist Russia were different from Germany. Both the *Russian Social Democratic Labour Party* (RSDLP) and membership of trade unions was prohibited. In spite of all this, the lives of Krupskaya and Kollontai are among the examples of how Marxist women participated in the workers socialist movement with the help of secret groups.

By the year 1900, the ideas of Bebel and Zetkin on women were widely known in social democratic circles in Russia. Nadejda Krupskaya’s book; *The Women Worker* which was published in 1900 and carried the effects of Bebel and Zetkin was the first original study related to the subject of women in Russia. In the 24 pages of this illegal booklet, first the lives and working conditions of Russian working

women are described and then the dependence of women's emancipation on the struggle of both men and women to destroy capitalism was explained. Until the publication of Alexandra Kollontai's *The Social Basis of the Women Question* in 1909, this book of Krupskaya's remained as the only book about working women in Russia. Alexandra Kollontai criticised the feminist *Women's Union* in her book for their narrow demands about education and rights. Kollontai claimed that as a result of their work "the bourgeois ideal that recognizes woman as a female rather than as a person has acquired a special halo of progressives." (Buckley, 1989: 54) Only the Social Democrats could provide a solution for women workers. Kollontai, Armand and other Bolshevik women discussed the theoretical and practical implications of work, marriage, divorce, and sexuality for women but they did this in a different context from the 'bourgeois feminists'. Kollontai rejected the narrow reformist goals of bourgeois feminists and argued that working-class women must be active as socialists in order to promote revolution. In response to the feminists' call for unity Kollontai stated "a sober examination of reality reveals that this unity does not and cannot exist." In Kollontai's view, the "victory of the women's cause depends on the victory of the common proletarian cause." (Buckley, 1989: 54)

The first demands about women in Russia did not appear in the RSDLP party program until 1903. The "proletarian women's movement" in Russia had two stages. The first (1905-1908) was led chiefly by A. Kollontai. In this period responses to the feminists were spontaneous while within the party itself there was disagreement about the value of political work among socialist women. The second period (1913-

1914) supervised from abroad was an official enterprise of the *Bolshevik Party* in exile and was led by Inessa Armand, Krupskaya and others. Bolsheviks rejected the idea of a separate women's organisation for a long time. Men and women had to take their places in the same party. Having separate organisations would have been divisive. "Their interests were the same and therefore separate organizations for socialist women were unnecessary. Theoretically it was class that defined interests, not gender. But in reality differences between the sexes were evident." (Buckley, 1989: 63) Consequently the backwardness of women made a separate organisation obligatory. Kollontai had first called for a special party apparatus to work among women in 1906. But this separate organisation became a women's section "totally under the control of the party." (Buckley, 1989: 64)

At the beginning of January 1913, Pravda which was the daily newspaper of the Bolshevik's, started to publish a special supplement which was called *Work and Life of Working Women*. The vast number of letters received in response to this supplement caused the decision of the Bolshevik Party to have a special publication for women. This was the first Russian Marxist Journal devoted to women. (Stites: 1990: 242) The name of this journal was *Rabotnitsa* (Women Worker). Many leading women like Krupskaya, I. Armand, A. Ulyanovna -Lenin's sister- worked in the editorial committee of this journal. The first issue of this journal, with a print run of 12,000, was ready on 8th of March 1914. *Rabotnitsa's* editorial policy was "to bring politically backward women into the socialist movement." (Cliff, 1981: 116) To explain to women that the only system that can liberate women workers is socialism

and to have them take their place beside revolutionary men comrades were the aims of this journal.

Besides all these developments women continued to face the attacks of male comrades. Both Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin showed great consistency in their criticisms of revisionist tendencies and as a result the leaders under attack used to malicious witticisms and sexist joking to 'put women in their place.' At the Stuttgart party conference in 1898, Zetkin attacked the party executive. In his reply, Ingaz Auer said in what was intended as a joke "If that is the oppressed sex, then what on the earth will happen when they are free and enjoy equal rights?"(Heitlinger, 1979: 41) Another strategy used by these men was to personally attack the women leaders. Auer did this at the Mainz party conference in 1900:

Of course the nervous excitement of our women is, regrettably, easy enough to understand if we remember that despite years of exhausting work they have only had minimal success... The trouble is that there are too few women comrades in the party. I wish there were many more. The few who are have to do all the work are overloaded and thus prone to become bad-tempered. So it comes about that they sometimes make life miserable for us, even though we are not to blame. (Heitlinger, 1979; 41)

This kind of attitude was to be found in all questions relating to sex equality. As a Ms. Kahler pointed out at the Gotha party conference in 1896, "many comrades make such a joke of the women question that we really have to ask ourselves: Are those really party comrades who advocate equal rights?" (Heitlinger, 1979; 41) It became an easy option for men to close an uncomfortable discussion with a woman comrade by making a sexist joke.

The European socialist women held their own conference during the Stuttgart congress of the Second International in August 1907. This meeting is known as the *First International Socialist Women's Conference*. 58 delegates from 15 countries participated in this conference. Clara Zetkin led the demand for women's suffrage and she became the secretary of the new *International Women's Bureau* which was set up. Two basic principles were endorsed at this conference: suffrage for all, and no co-operation with bourgeois feminists. However some socialists, both women and men were against these activities as they saw them as the beginnings of feminism in the labour movement.

The Second International Women's Socialist Conference took place in Copenhagen in 1910. Hundred women and men from 17 countries participated in this conference. Zetkin capped her victory with a resolution condemning any kind of limited suffrage campaign "as a falsification and humiliation of the very principle of political equality for women." Zetkin then proposed that **8th of March** should be celebrated as '**International Women's Day**' in the socialist movement. Zetkin's proposal was accepted with enthusiasm by the Conference. By 1911 International Women's Day was being celebrated in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, and the United States and in 1913, in Russia.

The Third International Socialist Women's Conference was planned to take place in Vienna in August 1914, but was not convened because of the outbreak of the First World War.

Until the 1917 October Revolution many Marxist/revolutionary women joined the ranks of the Social Democrat Parties. Some of them were accepted as leaders. Some famous ones were: **Clara Zetkin** who was one of the leading members of the SPD and founder member of the *Second International*; **Rosa Luxemburg** who shone like a star in the *Second International's* 1893 Zurich Congress when she was not more than 23; **Alexandra Kollontai** who was a member of the central committee of the *Bolshevik Party* during the *October Revolution* in Tsarist Russia; and **Angelica Balabanova** who was a member of both the *Italian Socialist Party* Central Committee (1912) and the *Second International's* 'International Socialist Bureau' and who worked for the 'Comintern Secretariat'. These women were not only important for the social democratic movements in their own countries, but also they were the leading women of the world social democrat movement.

The daily political lives of these women are out of the scope of this study. However, it is useful to see a few details from the lives of these women, who were struggling for socialism in Tsarist Russia:

The 'professional' Social Democratic women revolutionary were economically independent and educationally fit to carry on continuous revolutionary activity as a way of life full-time, or at least most of the time. As in the past, women played a variety of revolutionary roles. Wealthy dilettantes made donations; the well-connected established the necessary liaisons with society. Those who had a deeper commitment usually began political work as organizers and teachers. Some women went directly to communications, acting as couriers and smugglers and forming the links of the human chain which bound the labour centers together and to the emigration. When not on the move, they maintained conspiratorial flats where they hid weapons or literature. Those who displayed administrative talents were assigned by the émigré Party leaders to hold meetings, convey instructions, make appointments and transfers, purge undesirables, and plan operations. When armed violence was

scheduled, as in 1905, women gave medical and logistical support and when necessary fought on the barricades as well. Upon this pool of female administrative talent, the Bolsheviks were to draw heavily during the Civil War.

Most radical women married men of the same political faith. Weddings were often concluded behind bars or in Siberia. Children of underground couples had to be taught the virtues of secrecy and furtive ways and to help conceal incriminating materials when the gendarmes appeared. The little daughter of the Bolshevik agent, Drabkina, wondered why her mother sewed mercury caps and fuses into her brassiere and why she seemed to gain and lose weight as she traveled from flat to flat... Children were genuinely confused by the fact that their parents, who taught them always to be truthful, were forever lying about their comings and goings...In the end, these young women, who bore such strange underground code names as Bunny, Falcon, Gangster, and Beast, were important to the revolutionary movement. Again the men were in charge both of long-range policy and, in most cases, of everyday operations. Apart from the psychological advantages that their presence lent to the movement, the female cadres provided it with a significant reserve of talent, but at the second level of leadership. (Stites, 1990: 274-77)

4.4 The October Revolution, Comintern and Women

4.4.1 Lenin's Position

The 1917 *October Revolution* affected the whole world. Its most important effect was on the Social Democratic Worker Parties. As mentioned in Chapter III, Social Democratic Parties had been divided and *communist parties* were newly formed. These parties, formed after 1917, got together in 1919 and declared both the exhaustion of the *Second International* and the formation of the *Third International*, which is known as the *Communist International/Comintern*. It is worth exploring the views of V.I.U. Lenin on women, as the leader of the Bolshevik

party, which realized the first workers' revolution in October 1917, before explaining the views of those parties about the emancipation of women.

Lenin's position on women reflected the work of Marx, Engels and Bebel. He agreed that women were oppressed both at work and at home and believed that the path to their emancipation was through socialist revolution. He supported the organization of women mostly because of the value it would have for the revolution. Lenin wrote theoretical arguments on women and referred to practical policy goals, relating to the concrete task of agitating for revolution in Russia and then building socialism. Lenin encouraged women to participate in administrative jobs in the factories and the state, which was essential to equality. (Kadın Sorunu Üzerine, 1975: 61) Lenin believed that women should reflect their will to achieve equality which could not be guaranteed only by laws. He further stated that: "until working women conquered their oppressions and took advantage of their new rights, the proletariat could not enjoy its freedom." Although Lenin believed that socialism represented an advance for women, he cautioned that "it is far from equality in law to equality in life." (Buckley, 1989: 27)

Speaking at the 4th Moscow City Conference of Non-Party Working Women in 1919, Lenin argued that there was a "double task." The first was "relatively simple and easy" regarding the changing of "those old laws that kept women in a position of inequality." But the second task would be more difficult to accomplish.

Up to the present the position of women has been such that it is called a position of slavery. Women are crushed by their domestic dragger, when we shall pass on from small household economy to social economy and to social tilling of the soil. Only then will women be fully free and emancipated. It is a difficult task. (Bell & Offen, 1983: 228)

Laws alone would not abolish "household bondage." At the first All-Russian Women's Congress in 1918, Lenin said the following about housework:

Notwithstanding all the liberating laws that have been passed, women continues to be a **domestic slave**, because **petty** housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and wastes her labour on barbarously, unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real **emancipation of women**, real communism, will begin only when a mass struggle (led by the proletariat in power) is started against this petty domestic economy, or rather when it is **transformed on a mass scale** into large-scale socialist economy...Do we devote sufficient attention to this question which, theoretically, is indisputable for every communist? Of course not... (Bassnett, 1986: 64-65)

To bring women into 'common productive labour' Lenin supported the development of canteens, public dining rooms, nurseries and kindergartens, thus offering a public solution to private household tasks. Lenin supported easy divorce, access to abortion and the distribution of information on birth control, to ease the personal stresses of domestic life. Such measures, promoted by the workers' state, would bring women in the economy and in politics.

The promise of equality and emancipation in the new communist society was granted to women, but nobody knew how it would be realized. Every Marxist (Bebel, Zetkin, Lenin, Kollontai) suggested that women should join the struggle of the proletariat for emancipation, because women's emancipation would follow proletarian revolution. It was then the time to put those promises into practice. Many rights were gained with the laws passed in 1918, but these were 'bourgeois democratic' rights which could also be gained by the women in capitalist societies. According to Kollontai and Armand, the revolution would reach its socialist essence only after it had changed the daily life of women. Women like men had to participate in

production, they had to use their labour both for the development of society and their own emancipation from the slavery of housework. Women had to become workers and “mothers not only to your own children but to all children of the workers and peasants.” (Mullaney, 1983: 74) The promises given to women before the revolution would only be realized when women were freed from the unproductive, boring, stifling, enslaving, time-wasting work of the nuclear family, when this unproductive housework done by every women repeatedly was done away with.

4.4.2 Soviet Practice

The 1917 socialist revolution gave the Marxists the change to put their ideas to test. After the 1917 October revolution, A.Kollontai held the position of **Social Security People’s Commisar** in the first revolutionary government. I.Armand became the chairwomen of Zhenodel, which was a women’s organization, connected to the Bolshevik party set up in 1919. Both of them started to work with all their energy to bring about the emancipation of women in a workers’ state. In the meantime, Soviet Union took some precautionary measures to improve the conditions of the labour class as well as women in their lives and working condition. Soviet law had institutionalized some of the more controversial "dissenting" proposals of the last hundred years, intending to enhance the status of women through radical modification of the laws on labour, marriage, abortion, and education.

The new Marriage Code of 1918 eliminated the male discrimination under law and realized equality of both sexes against law. Restrictions on divorce were quickly lifted. Legal marriage procedures commenced in government offices ending church control. Women would not lose their legal identity after marriage and they could continue to use their name if they wished. Mothers and fathers had the same responsibility for upbringing their child. If the parents were not willing or able to do so, government would take care of the children. Children from non-registered marriages were also granted the same rights as children of registered ones. The status of "illegitimate" was removed by article 133 which instructed that, "actual descent is regarded as the basis of the family, without any difference between relationship established by legal or religious marriage or outside marriage." (Buckley, 1989: 36)

Abortion performed freely and without charge. Single parents received preferential treatment regarding housing and crèche places, and there was no social stigma attached to illegitimacy or living alone.

In 1936, Trotsky explained in his book "Revolution Betrayed", what they had planned after the revolution:

The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the so-called family hearth that archaic, stuffy, and stagnant institution in which the women of the toiling classes performs galley labour from childhood to death. The place of the family as a shut-in petty enterprise was to be occupied, according to the plans, by a finished system of social care and accommodation: communal kitchens, nurseries, legalized abortion, maternity houses, child-care centers, kinder gardens, schools, social dining room, social laundries, first-aid stations, hospitals, sanatoria. (Trotsky, 1991; 105)

In spite of the views of all the leaders of October Revolution that socialism could not become a reality without the emancipation of women; and in spite

of all their efforts in this direction, *emancipation* was very 'difficult' as Lenin stated. However the Soviet Union did succeed in bringing women out of their homes, into the *public sphere* and into the production process. It is even said that the reason for the survival of the Soviet Union, in spite of all the negative conditions, was the "Soviet women's miraculous creativity". George St. George wrote that "Women's cooperation was necessary and they gave it." (George, 1987: 46)

Nevertheless, emancipation of women was not as easy as the declaration of the principles. The colossal hardships of 1920s of starvation, disease and civil war, the precariousness of the new state, the conservative attitudes embedded in Russian society, and the lack of firm practical commitment on the part of many Bolshevik leaders to promote equality of sexes, the unreceptiveness of working women to it, as well as women's resistance to attacks on the family unit, worked against them.

4.5 The Comintern and Women

A new International came into existence in 1919 in Moscow. In June 1920, The **First Communist Women's Conference** was held in conjunction with Second Congress of the new *Third International*. Twenty one women representing nineteen countries met in Moscow. They elected Clara Zetkin as the Secretary and hence gained a representative on the women's movement on the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

A celebratory meeting in the Bolshoi Theater with an orchestra and an audience of local factory women was followed by two days of discussions

in the Kremlin. Delegates proclaimed their commitment to women's emancipation and socialist revolution. The victory of communism was expected to bring with it the liberation of women. A connection between the emancipation of female sex and the emancipation of labour had long been acknowledged by socialist theorists. (Waters, 1989: 33)

The Third International made a commitment to women's emancipation "not only on paper, but in reality, in actual fact" (Waters, 1989: 33) in the **Theses on the Communist Women's Movement**. This was a long document ratified by the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921.

During the Russian revolution there was a great deal of discussion of the issues of housework and the role it played in the subordination of women. These were the subjects for discussion: household, its economic function, social effects, and possible substitutes. An influential member of the Dutch Communist Party, Henriette Roland Holst, described the routine of household as follows:

Alone in her kitchen or in her small apartment, [the women] performs the work that is essential for the upkeep of the household. She stands in front of her stove or she sits and mends clothes, whatever she does, the work demands all her concentration. She is never free; there are always other jobs she could be doing. Even if she is lucky enough to have a husband who is good to her, she is still a slave to the polishing and cleaning and cooking and darning and can never say that her work is done. (Waters, 1989: 33)

Alexandra Kollontai argued that the work performed free of charge by the housewife for her family should become the responsibility of the community and that the 'socialization' of domestic life was an integral part of the creation of a communist society. Inessa Armand, the first head of the Bolsheviks' women's departments' (Zhenotdel), spoke to the 'All-Union Congress of Working and Peasant Women' in

November 1918. She argued that domestic servitude must cease at once and "not in some distant future."

The bourgeois system is being done away with. We have entered the period of socialist construction. Private, separate domestic economies have become harmful anachronisms which hold up and make more difficult the carrying out of new forms of distribution. They must be abolished. The tasks carried out earlier by the housewife for her family within her tiny domestic economy must become independent branches of social labour. We must replace the thousand and millions of tiny, individual economies with their primitive, unhealthy and badly-equipped kitchens and primitive wash tubs by clean and shining communal canteens, communal laundries, run not by working women/housewives but by people paid specially to do the job. (Waters, 1989: 33)

As we can see from the above, communist women were not only aware of the necessity to abolish domestic labour for their emancipation but also they held the necessary power to realize their demands. It was impossible for feminists in other European countries not to be affected by this extraordinary condition.

In France an independent feminist newspaper, *Voix des Femmes*, wrote enthusiastically about the aims and activities of the Bolsheviks and several of its contributors joined the fledgling French Communist Party. In September 1921, *Voix des Femmes* included a front-page article by C. Rappoport entitled "Why should women be communist?". Another feminist paper, *La Lutte Féministe* (The Feminist Struggle), changed its name to *La Lutte Féministe pour le Communisme* (The Feminist Struggle for Communism). (Waters, 1989: 36)

Returning to the First Communist Women's Conference, however we find that none of the delegates made any mention of Marx's claim that the family would 'wither away,' nor did they talk about how more egalitarian family structures could be achieved. In the section on work methods under capitalism, the **Theses** mentions:

...egoistic morality, condemned prostitution, and demand an end to the double morality; communists in precapitalist countries were instructed to eliminate superstitions, customs, moral values, religious and legal norms

which reduce the women to the role of domestic slave, working for her husband and serving his pleasure. (Waters, 1989: 36)

Although the **Theses** did not deal with the family and fertility, influential women in the Third International were concerned with these issues. A.Kollontai saw the family as an institution of bourgeois oppression and believed family relations between men and women and between parents and children would be transformed in the transition to socialism.

The **Theses** set out the organizational structure of communist women's movement. An **International Women's Secretariat (IWS)** would be set up with three to six members elected by the International Communist Women's Conference. The secretariat would be represented on the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). In addition women's agitational commission were to be set up at every level by national communist parties and these would also be represented on relevant party committees, where they would have a full vote on women's issues and a consultative vote on other issues.

The **Theses** set out in detail what the different levels of the organization would do. At locality level the agitational committees would bring women into party campaigns, give training (theoretical and practical) and produce a page for the local party paper. At district level their job was to distribute literature, and start campaigns. The national committees, in addition to the major duty of coordination of the activities described as above, would publish a journal. The International Women's Secretariat's duties were to maintain networks of national committees; collect information and agitational material; publish a journal; and organise international conferences.

Communist International continued the tradition inherited from the Second International which rejects the alliance of proletarian and bourgeois women.

Communism, the great emancipator of the female sex, can never be the result of the united struggle of women of all classes for the transformation of bourgeois society... It can be achieved only and exclusively by the united class struggle of women and men of the exploited against the privileges and power of the exploited classes. (Waters, 1989: 38)

The Theses also defined the relationship between the women's movement and the party in a couple of sentences: parties were obliged to organize the women's movement; the local and national women's commissions were to maintain close contact with the national party, and refer all decisions to the appropriate party committee for ratification. Due to parties not demonstrated sufficient attention for putting these resolutions into action, Clara Zetkin made the following criticisms at the Third Congress of Comintern in 1921, while 605 delegates of 103 organisation from 52 countries were listening:

The progress of communist women's movement in more countries was achieved without the support of the communist party, and yes, in some places even in spite of the communist party's open or secret resistance.

Women's action was seen as secondary to political or trade union action and not as an important part of the proletarian liberation struggle. (Kadın Sorunu Üzerine, Undated: 83-88)

These serious criticisms were stated at the highest level meeting of communists in Lenin's presence. Another delegate, Lucie Colliard who was member of the French Communist Party, made a similar evaluation:

Comrades, I am speaking on behalf of the women communists, but first of all I must make it clear that I have been sent here by a communists party which has never done anything to attract women to its rank. (Waters, 1989: 49)

In spite of criticisms made at Comintern Congresses, parties made no special efforts to recruit women to the party: in October 1922, *L'Ouvrière (Women Worker)*, the journal of the French Communist women, was not published because of the economic problems of the party and five year later it was closed. Another example of this lack of interest on women was the French Communist Party's 1925 meeting to commemorate Paris Commune which took place on 8th of March and the party recommended to the women "to move their celebration of International Women's Day to another date." (Waters, 1989: 50)

In the mid-1920s the fact that women like Clara Zetkin, Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai left the International Women's Secretariat was the biggest blow to the women's movement. Zetkin was too busy with the Comintern, Inessa Armand died of cholera in 1920, and Kollontai left active politics and was virtually exiled to a diplomatic job in Norway. The women who replaced them were not so committed to women's issues and not in such high positions in the party. The leaders changed, so did the policies. By the end of the decade the main thrust of their work was on the issues of access to paid employment and participation in factory struggles.

Despite the lack of interest of the national parties, the communist women's movement was well organised at an international level until the mid-1920s. They published journals and in 1921 opened a bureau in Berlin to co-ordinate work in Western Europe. However this was closed in 1924 and the official journal, *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*, stopped publication the following year. The

last international conference of the women's movement was held in 1926. During the Comintern's 1924 congress, it was decided that International Women's Secretariat (IWS) members would no longer be elected by the International Women's Conference, but appointed by Comintern's Executive Committee. In April 1926 the IWS lost its independence and became the women's department of the ECCL. The last international communist women's conference took place in 1926. (Waters, 1989: 53)

By the end of 1920's the shadow of fascism was being felt; party purges and farm collectivization in the USSR had started; and Zhenodel had been closed down and any special reference to women's subordination in communist propaganda or campaigning came to be regarded as a capitulation to bourgeois feminism. The women movement's aim was no longer the advancement of women but their mobilization for the advancement of the Comintern.

4.6 Women Against War and Fascism

The 1930s were the years during which *united popular front* politics was put on the agenda by Comintern and during the rise of fascism, the anti fascist struggle took stage center. The struggle against fascism took priority for women in all European countries, especially in Germany, Italy, France and Spain. The great Depression of the 1930s threatened women's employment both in industry and the professions which were gained during the 1920's. Communist women appealed to women and men to unite in the struggle for women's rights and against

unemployment, anti-feminism, fascism and war. At the *Second Reichskongress of Working Women* held in Berlin in 1930. The following declaration was issued end of the Congress:

The Second Reichskongress of Working Women summons all working women in city and countryside to fight with us for this great aim-and to struggle for the advancement of women, through:

- * full equality for women,
- * higher wages, equal wages for equal work,
- * a seven hour day at full wages,
- * adequate protection for mother and child,
- * revocation of the abortion restriction.

The Second Reichskongress calls upon working women to join the ranks of the army of millions of battle-ready proletarians:

- * for the offensive against fascism,
- * against the threatened danger of war,
- * against a government of hunger and slavery,
- * for a free Socialist Germany. (Bell & Offen, 1983: 365-66)

The document ended as follows:

Long live the struggle to liberate women from exploitation and slavery !
Long live the unified revolutionary struggle of workers in town and countryside !
Long live the struggle for liberation of the exploited of the world !
(Bell & Offen, 1983: 365-66)

These calls were quite interesting to demonstrate the understanding of communist women prior to second World War. Not only in Germany but in virtually all European countries organisations called *Anti-Fascist Women's Fronts* were set up. These organisations met in Paris at the World Women's Congress in August 1934. At this Congress *The Women's Committee Against War and Fascism* was formed. More than 1000 women -workers, housewives, intellectuals, office workers, peasants, leaders and students, both communist party members and non-members joined this committee. (Kovalski, Blinova, 1978:.55) (my own emphasis)

The Congress called the women of all countries to oppose fascism and war, to support the wars of liberation of exploited and oppressed peoples, to defend democratic freedoms and to struggle for women's liberation in full sense. The International Women's Committee, which was made up of women of **many different political and religious beliefs** of every age, did a lot of work for the shared struggle to support Republican Spain and in uniting in the fight against fascism both in Germany and in other countries. (Kovalski, Blinova, 1978: 55) (my own emphasis)

It is worth noting that the call was made to "**communist party and non-party members**" and women of "**different political and religious beliefs.**" Along with the Comintern's decisions of the *united-popular front*, the politics of the women's movement had also changed. With front politics the formation of women's organisations which were not just made up of communist women **but wider organisations attracting larger numbers of women came onto the agenda.**

As fascism and war enveloped the world communist women put all their energy into the fight against fascism, because fascism had erased all the gains that women had made up to that time.

In Nazi Germany, it was systematically doctrinized to treat women as a creature and a tool to supply manpower and soldiers to the national-socialist state by giving birth to children and dependence on husbands. Under the slogan of *3K (Kinder, Kirsche, Kitchen)*, Nazi Germany became the first state to dismiss married women from public positions. It was banned for the girls to enter into high schools and new institutions were established for them to become good housewives. Baccalaureate degree was limited to ten percent and medical doctorship was banned for women. Women were regarded as a kind of animal according to the Nazi doctrine and family was the only natural medium for them to live in. (Michel, 1984: 124)

Even this short paragraph provides sufficient explanation why women undertook the struggle against fascism. Just as women had fought for socialism for their own liberation, they fought fascism also for the same cause.

One of the most difficult struggles against fascism took place in Spain before the Second World War. Women played an important role in the fight against fascist general Franco, who assaulted an elected republican government in June 17, 1936. Spanish Communist Party leader Dolores Ibarruri's (*La Pasionaria*) rousing exhortations kept the resistance alive. She was on radio and speaking in mass public meetings and via countless loudspeakers installed on every street corner and public square; her words, burning with passionate intensity, gripping the imagination of the world. "Better to die on your feet than to live on your knees" she chanted, and she became a legend in words. (Mullaney, 1983: 212) *La Pasionaria's* speeches were geared specifically to women, and she taught women how to back up their husbands and sons at the front by actively participating in the defense of the city.

In one especially memorable speech, she encouraged women to fight with knives or any other weapons at their disposal, even to pour boiling water on their attackers, if necessary. The women of Madrid heeded *Pasionaria's* words, building barricades, digging trenches, organizing collective dining rooms and laundries, running soup kitchens for refugees and first aid stations for victims of fifth-column sniping. (Mullaney, 1983: 213)

Inspired by her speeches, more than 100,000 women joined into anti-fascist committees, and published a communist women's magazine: *Companera*. As the Spanish head of the *International Women's Committee Against War and Fascism*, Ibarruri's continued the work she had begun before the war, uniting women from all republican parties into a common anti-fascist front.

Many of her speeches and writings also praised women who had died while fighting the fascists, given blood to the victims of war, or followed dead husbands and sons to the front. Millions of Spanish women, as they sent their loved ones into battle, repeated another of Ibarruri's famous

battle cries: "It is better to be the widow of a hero than the wife of a coward" .” (Mullaney, 1983: 215)

In all the countries invaded by the Germans in the Second World War, (that is the Soviet Union, Poland, France, Greece, Holland and Yugoslavia, i.e.) women joined resistance organisations and partisan divisions. In Germany too, Jewish/ communist women fought against the Nazis. Although the fight against fascism carried on mostly by Jewish and communist women, hardly appeared in the official histories, yet this struggle continued even in the concentration camps. When the World reached 1945; after 50 million deaths, when the whole World was sick and tired of a bloody war, crippled, ill, and hungry, the communist and anti-fascist women founded the *International Democratic Women Federation (IDWF)*.

At the Congress of the *French Women's Union* held in June after the war, many anti-fascist women's organisations from different countries were present. The representatives of national women's organisations (such as: Women's Union of Belgium, All Greece Women's Federation, Spanish Women's Union, Luxembourg Women's Union, Anti-Fascist Soviet Women's Committee, i.e.) who participated in this Congress, took the decision to organise an international women's congress. A committee made up of representatives from various women's organisations drafted the principles and program of the international organisation which they planned to set up. "As a result of the call made by the Congress another congress was held in the Mutualite building in Paris in November 1945 in order to set up an international organisation." (Kovalski, Blinova, 1978:55) 850 women delegates and guests from 40

* Same statement was used by IKD in 1970s to stimulate women against fascist attacks.

countries participated in the Congress. These women came from concentration camps, resistance organisations and partisans divisions, in other words they came from the line of fire, from the front line. The pain they felt for the deaths of their husbands and lovers, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, had not yet faded. The psychology of these women is best shown in the *oath* that was passed at the IDWO:

...to defend the political, economic, civil and social rights of women, to fight for the establishment of conditions which are indispensable for the harmonious and happy development of our children and future generations, to fight untiringly for the destruction of fascism in whatever form it may appear, and for the establishment of a truly democratic order in every country, to fight untiringly to secure lasting peace in the world...
(IKD, I GAWR: 20)

For these women who had just emerged from the pain of war 'peace' was the most important desire.

Eugenie Cotton, a physicist and member of the French Resistance was elected the first chairwoman of the IDWO. She remained in this position until the end of her life. From June 1969 to March 1974, Hertta Kuusinen of Finland held the post. The Federation brought together women's organisation from countries with different socio-political systems. In 1976 the IDWF had 120 member organisations from 103 countries*.

According to the constitution of the IDWF, the highest authority of the organisation was the Congress which was to be held every 4 years. After the 1945 Paris Congress, congresses were held in Budapest in 1948, in Copenhagen in 1953, in

* In spite of this size, the IDWF was not mentioned in scores of sources that was searched in. This can be seen as another form of ignoring or being invisible.

Vienna in 1958, in Moscow in 1963, in Helsinki in 1969, in Berlin in 1975 and in Prague in 1985. It was the Secretariat's responsibility to carry at the decisions of the leadership. The Secretariat worked from the headquarters of the IDWF in Berlin from 1951 to 1989. After the GDR was erased from the scene of history the IDWF which no longer had any real function moved its headquarters to the French Women's Union in Paris. The IDWF received the *Peace Messenger Awards* from the United Nations for the year 1987-88 an account of its contribution to peace.

The IDWF also played a part in the declaration of 1975 as UN *International Women's Year* and *1975-85 as Women Decade*. It was among the organisers and participants of the World Women's Congress held in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and Moscow in 1987. (Tarakçioğlu, 1989: 23).

IKD inherited such a women's socialist movement experience when it was established in 1975. Adopting the principles of IDWF, IKD was accepted for membership to IDWF. How IKD was founded will be analyzed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN IN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

5.1 Brief History of the Socialist Movement in Turkey

The history of the socialist movement in Turkey merits a full-length study in its own right. Within the limits of this study only a short summary is possible. Every summary carries within itself the danger of oversimplification and the problems are even greater when the summary relates to a historical period. Bearing this in mind, it will be attempted to give an outline of the main events in the development of the socialist movement in Turkey.

In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire stretched from the Balkans to the Caucasus to the Middle East. It was inevitable that the rise of socialism and the working class movement would have an influence also in the lands of the Empire. It was known that socialist ideas were strongest in the Balkans, in the areas of Kavala, Thessalonika, and Macedonia. This is not surprising as these areas were the ones which first became industrialized.

Towards the end of the 19th century we see the formation of a number of political parties with names such as: *Ottoman Socialist Party* (Osmanlı Sosyalist

Fırkası), *Socialist Party of Turkey* (Türkiye Sosyalist Fırkası), *Social Democrat Party* (Sosyal Demokrat Fırkası), *Independent Socialist Party* (Müstakil Sosyalist Fırka) and *Ottoman Work Party* (Osmanlı Mesai Fırkası) etc. (Şahin: 1991) Many socialist journals and newspapers such as *Sosyalist* (*Socialist*), *İnsaniyet* (*Humanity*), *Medeniyet* (*Civilization*) were also published in this period. (Cerrahoğlu, 1975: 121) The *Turkish Workers and Peasants Party* (Türkiye İşçi Çiftçi Partisi) was founded in 1919. Another socialist party, the *People's Communist Party* (Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası) had representatives in the Turkish Parliament in 1920. Journals such as *Yoldaş* (*Comrade*), *Kurtuluş* (*Liberation*), *Aydınlık* (*Enlightenment*) also appeared at this time. (İleri, 1975: 11) One of the first strikes to take place in Ottoman lands was the shipbuilding strike in Istanbul in 1872.

As explained in some detail in the third Chapter, after the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, communist parties were formed all over the world. As part of this movement, the *Turkish Communist Party* (TKP) was founded in Baku within Soviet borders. "The proximity of the Russian revolution thus led to a Leninist organization before most other countries." (Belge, 1981: 62)

All those who have written about the history of the TKP, whether party members or other researchers, including those opposed to the party, agree on one point: between the years 1920-1951 the history of socialism in Turkey is synonymous with the history of the TKP. Another point is that the TKP was forged on in the fires of the October revolution and represented the Turkish Section in the Third International. The TKP's history is a history of repression, imprisonment and mass

arrests. Only five months after being formed (10th September 1920) Mustafa Suphi, the Secretary General and the members of the Central Committee were killed by being drowned in the Black Sea on their return to Turkey on 28-29th January 1921. After the founding of the Republic, adopting the code of laws from Mussolini's fascist Italy, an article was included in the Turkish Penal Code, forbidding the setting up of a communist party: because it was banned, members of the TKP were constantly arrested and it was impossible for the party to work legally. These mass arrests, which took place in 1922, 1925, 1927, 1929, 1932 and 1944, prevented TKP members from engaging in active opposition. (İleri, 1976)

At the end of the Second World War, as the winds of democracy blew across Turkey, it was possible to form trade unions and legal socialist parties. In spite of being mainly a peasant society, with an undersized working class, and intellectuals caved by repression and terror, Turkey was able to form two legal parties in the 1940s -*The Socialist Workers and Farmers Party of Turkey* (Türkiye Sosyalist Emekçi ve Çiftçi Partisi/ TSEKP) and *The Socialist Party of Turkey* (Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi/TSP). Both these parties were set up by ex-members of the TKP. (Topçuoğlu: 1976) These parties, whose priority was to organize the working class in trade unions, were closed down in 1946 and their members were arrested. The legal publications of the communists were constantly censored and confiscated thus preventing this kind of development. After 1951, the only remaining party was the *Mainland Party* (Vatan Partisi) set up by Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı. It was founded in 1954 and disbanded in 1958.

* People's Communist Party was banned, and its representatives in the Parliament were arrested. on the same day when Mustafa Suphi and his comrades were assassinated, (Yurtsever, 1992. 128)

After the arrest of 167 of its members in 1951, the TKP, which was unable to act legally, went into exile and continued its work in underground until 1973 from its bureau in exile (foreign bureau). Although the TKP was considered not to exist between 1951-1973 in some socialist circles, it was the only organization known and recognized as the representative of the Turkish working class in the international communist and workers' movement. It received the direct support of this movement and of the existing socialist countries. (Şahin, 1991:44) At the *International Summits of the Communist and Worker's Parties* in 1957, 1960 and 1969 the TKP represented Turkey. The return to Turkey in 1973 was the beginning of a new period of 'Advance'. (Atılım, 1974: 1)

With the military coup of 27th May 1960 a relatively democratic constitution was imposed and during the 1960s the working class organized many strikes and occupations. At the same time the *Turkish Workers' Party* (Türkiye İşçi Partisi/TİP) which was legally founded in 1961 won 15 seats in the Turkish Parliament in 1965. During this period TİP was able to openly carry out socialist agitation and propaganda and succeeded in becoming the first mass workers' party in Turkey. The widespread publication of socialist classics and original writings were realized in 1960s. In 1965 a leftist organization of university youth known as the *Intellectual Clubs Federation* (Fikir Klupleri Federasyonu/FKF) separated from the TİP and later took the name *Revolutionary Youth* (Dev-Genç). In 1967 some trade unions left the TÜRK-İŞ trade union confederation set up in 1962 and formed the *Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Union* (DISK).

At the beginning of the 1970s some youth leaders who had previously been members of TIP set up their own organizations: these new organizations - the TIHKP under the leadership of Doğu Perinçek, the THKO under the leadership of Deniz Gezmiş and the THKP-C under the leadership of Mahir Çayan were the first nuclei of a trend which later, throughout the 1970s divided into a large number of different fractions. During the same period, some Kurdish intellectuals set up by DDKO (Eastern Revolutionary Cultural Centers).

At the end of the 1960s rallies were held under the slogans "No to NATO!", "6th Fleet Go Home!" and expressions such as "urban guerrilla" and "rural guerrilla" entered everyday language. Young revolutionaries robbed banks, occupied embassies and captured English and American soldiers. The police and army carried out acts of bloody repression in the universities. (Belge, 1991) This active period in the workers and socialist movement in Turkey the workers' resistance of 15-16th June 1970, alarmed the Turkish ruling classes and on 12th March 1971 this period came to an end with another military coup. TIP, Dev-Genç, DDKO and other similar organizations were closed down; their leaders were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms. During this period of arrests, torture and terror the youth leaders were put to death. To give just a few examples: the THKO leader Deniz Gezmiş was executed; the leader of the THKP-C with eight friends were killed in a village house in Kızıldere; while Ibrahim Kaypakkaya was killed under torture. In spite of this, as result of the lobbying of the remaining democratic opposition, elections were held in 1973. The center left CHP under the leadership of Ecevit won 40 percent of the votes and formed a government. In 1974 the government granted a limited amnesty. It

seemed that Turkey had again reached a relatively democratic situation even though this did not last for long.

5.2 Women and Socialism in Turkey

Although in every period of the socialist and workers' movement in Turkey, women were also present, until the 1970s there was no mention of a 'socialist women's movement.' There were very few articles on women's issues or women's liberation in both the legal and illegal journals and magazines of the TKP. No women's organizations set up in Turkey, the kind of the social democrat and communist parties in Germany and Tsarist Russia, as described in Chapter III. Although from 1920-51 the TKP had its youth section called the 'Union of Communist Youth', no separate women's organization existed. So, women joined the socialist struggle, not via the kinds of women's organizations, which were common elsewhere before the Second World War, but directly as TKP members.

It is worth mentioning here the speech made by *Naciye Hanım* in the *The First Congress of People's of Orient* held in Baku in 1920. Naciye Hanım spoke "on behalf of women's interests". (The First Congress of People's of Orient, 1975: 229) She demanded the following in the name of women.

1. Total equality of rights.
2. Equal rights for women and men in marriage. An end to polygamy.
3. The right to the same level of education as men in all educational institutions whether general or vocational.
4. Acceptance of women in administrative positions and legislative functions without disadvantage.
5. The organization of committees for the defense of women's rights in all towns and villages. (Yaraman-Başbuğu, 1992: 146)

8th March, International Women's Day was first celebrated in Turkey by a group of women, in the vineyard of a TKP member, Süleyman Selim Yoldaş, on the outskirts of Ankara in 1921. (Tuncay, 1982: 196-97) In order to understand the place of the women of Turkey in the socialist struggle, it is worth looking briefly at the life of *Zehra Kosova*, a cigarette factory worker*:

Zehra was born on 1st July 1910 in Kavala. Her father was a cigarette factory worker and her mother was a housewife. In 1924 the family migrated to Turkey. After her father's death, Zehra started to work in the State Tobacco Industry at the age of 22. She soon participated in trade union activity and joined the TKP. She changed many jobs in order to carry out trade union and political work. Like other members of communist and workers' parties worldwide in the 1920s and 30s, she went to party school in Moscow. The TKP sent 50 people including Zehra to the party school in Moscow. In Moscow the group's teachers were the leading TKP executives, Dr. Şefik Hüsnü, Reşat Fuat Baraner and Ismail Hakkı. In 1935 Zehra married I. Mustafa Kosova, a communist like herself in Moscow and she had her first child in the Soviet Union. As fascism spread through Europe the Comintern took the decision that "everyone should return to their own country and evaluate their knowledge there", so Zehra left her daughter at the International School in Moscow and returned to Turkey with her husband, who entered Turkey secretly. The next decade passed with illegal activities, distribution of leaflets, trade union work, the birth and death of her second child and the detention of her husband. She herself was often

* The details about Z. Kosova's life are summarised from the article of Berat Günçikan, which was published in the 445th issue of Cumhuriyet Dergi in 2nd October 1994.

arrested (in 1942 and 1946), and in spite of torture, she did not disclose any details. In 1946 under the influence of the relatively democratic situation in Turkey, the Tobacco Workers Union was formed and Zehra Kosova became its chairwomen. The Union had 35,000 members, but it was closed shortly afterwards. Zehra was arrested in the 1951 TKP mass arrests and she went down in history as one of the ten people out of 167 defendants, who did not disclose any details. (Küçük, 1988: 372) She was detained for 17 months and when she was released she had neither a job nor a home. In 1954 she joined the newly formed Motherland Party and was an active member until the party closed, when she was again arrested. She was held for 17 months without trial and then released in the first court session. After prison she could no longer work in the tobacco industry so she started work in a lace factory. A year later all the factory workers joined the Textile Union as a result of which Zehra lost her job again. She worked in another lace factory until her retirement in 1970. It is said that today at the age of 80, Zehra Kosova's belief in socialism is as fresh and strong as on the first day. (Günçikan, 1994:1-4)

One of the best ways to get information about communist women in Turkey is to examine trial documents. According to Belli, in the mass TKP arrests of the 1951, of the 167 defendants, 18 were women communists. These were: Dr. *Sevim Tarı Belli*, Dr. *Faika Boratav*, Dentist Dr. *Sevinç Tanık Özgüner* (who refused to give even her name in the preparatory inquiry. She was shot dead by fascists in 1979), *Mübeccel Kiray*, *Nuran Bozer Akşit*, *Sıdıka Umut Su*, *Nuran Ertan Akşar*, *Güler Ördemir*, *Muzaffer Eren*, *Melahat Türksal*, *Zehra Kosova*, *Selçuk Uraz*, *Behice*

Boran, Yıldız Barkan, Suzan Terek, Solmaz Berktaş, Yıldız Baştınar, Merih Demirkan. (Belli, 1994: 315)

In the trials held after the 1971 military coup, there were 30 women defendants in the TIKP case. In another famous trial, that of the THKP-C, out of 380 defendants, 38 were women. *Hatice Alankuş*, an architect who was a defendant in this case died in prison from 'strangled intestines' due to lack of appropriate medical care. In the TIP trial, the only woman and number one defendant was *Behice Boran* the chairwoman of TIP. (*Fatma Hikmet İşmen* who was an elected TIP Senator, continued, in spite of the 12th March 1971 military coup, to speak out on behalf of TIP in Parliament.)

In 1969 socialist women founded the *Revolutionary Women's Union* (Devrimci Kadınlar Birliği) in Turkey. Among the founders were *Suat Derviş*, *Neriman Hikmet*, *Cemile Çerçel*, *Eflân Aytâç*, *Mediha Özçelik*, *Necla Özgür*, *Asiye Aliçin* and *Fikret Elbe*. The activities of the Union were cut short by the military coup. Suat Derviş (1905-1972), the chair of the organization a writer and communist takes her place in the history of the socialist movement in Turkey.

Since the socialist women's movement in Turkey is a subject for research in itself, after this short summary, we will move on to the 'International Situation in the 1970s.' However, the point that needs to be emphasized here is that the women who participated in the socialist movement in Turkey up to the end of the 1960s, were the forerunners of the thousands of women who joined socialist organizations in the 1970s.

5.3 A Brief Look at the 1970s

After the 12 March 1971 military coup, the heightened activity of workers, civil servants, technical personnel, youth and women coincided with the workers' and students' action which spread through Western Europe at the same period.

(the) long and tantalizing tradition (...) was finally becoming exhausted at the turn of seventies (...) the reawakening of mass revolts within Western Europe, where the great wave of student unrest in 1968 heralded the entry of massive contingents of the working class into new political insurgency, (...) the May explosion in France, (...) followed by the tide of industrial militancy in Italy in 1969, the decisive miners' strike in Britain which overthrew the conservative government in 1974, and then, a few months later, the upheaval in Portugal, with its rapid radicalization towards a revolutionary situation of the most classic type. (Anderson, 1984: 18)

Something was happening in the World... The continents of Asia, Europe, Africa and South America were being shaken up. In the 1970s, 40 years of Franco's fascism in Spain and Salazar's fascism in Portugal were overthrown as was the military coupe which had taken power in Greece in 1967. While the Portuguese fascist regime was being overturned the MPLA founded the *Angolan People's Republic* on 11th November 1975. On 30th April 1975 the Vietcong forces entered Saigon (later renamed Ho-Chi-Minh City) and the USA the most advanced capitalist country in the world withdrew from Vietnam in defeat. The victory of Vietnam was celebrated by socialists worldwide on 1st May 1975. After Vietnam, pro-socialist governments came to power in Laos and Cambodia. In the Middle East the 'progressive' Ba'ath parties took power. The resistance of the Palestinian people against Israel was strengthened and guerrilla activities continued in Latin America. On

11th September 1973 the socialist government which had been elected in Chile was overthrown by a coup supported by the CIA and it caused increased hostility towards the USA. (SBKP, 25. Kongre Raporu, 1976: 44) The anniversary of this coup, when protests were directed at the CIA and USA, became not a memory of defeat but a celebration of the belief in socialism. Thousands of miles away the resistance songs of Chile were sung by revolutionaries everywhere, including Turkey.

All leftist parties and movements found the conditions right for organizing after being terrorized in the period after the 1971 coup. The advance of the TKP came in these years. The party broke its silence of more than 20 years and returned to Turkey in 1973, again attempting mass organization.

The socialist movement named as the *Pro-Soviet* that was headed by the TKP -which also included the TIP and TSIP- had a lot of sympathy among the masses and the respect of Turkish youth. The attitudes of the Communist Parties of Cuba, Vietnam, Korea and Portugal, attending the 25th Congress of the C.P.S.U., hailing the "glorious CPSU"; and supporting the Soviet Union in the *Sino-Soviet dispute*, were ideologically strengthening the Soviet Wing. (SBKP Congress Report, 1976: 303-339)

In Turkey the legal socialist parties set up such as TSIP in 1974, Second TIP and TEP in 1975. At the same time, in parallel to the divisions in the international communist movement, illegal parties such as TKIP, TKP-ML and TDKP were set up following the ideological line of the Chinese Communist Party and/or the Albanian Labour Party. *Kurtuluş* (Liberation), which declared itself independent of both

socialist blocs and groups like *Devrimci-Yol* (Revolutionary-Youth), *Devrimci-Sol* (Revolutionary-Left), which defined themselves not as a party but as a *movement*, had no difficulty in finding supporters. (Belge, 1981: 76-77)

After the 1971 coup, DISK went on the attack, organized strikes and resistance and strengthened its position among the working class. Apart from political parties, many professional organizations with democratic and trade union demands were set up, e.g. the Civil Servants' Association TM-DER; the Teachers' Association TB-DER; Health Workers' Association TS-DER, Technical Personnel TTED and for and the University Lecturers' Association TMOD, etc. They all organized around the demand for the right to strike, to have collective bargaining and to set up a trade-union as well as economic and democratic rights. Even in such traditional organizations as TMMOB, the Medical Association and the Bar Association, progressive, democratic, pro-socialist elements were elected to the leadership. So the second half of the 1970s was a time when thousands of women and men joined the ranks of the socialist movement and the IKD was formed in 1975 in the midst of that upsurge.

5.4 Which Women became Socialists? Why and How?

The military government that came to power with the military coup of 12th March 1971 "sentenced, suppressed and crushed" all left-wing ideas and "using martial law arrested thousands of revolutionary students and workers and brought torture to a previously unheard of level of application." (Kongar, 1994: 189) "In spite

of this when young revolutionaries were released after the amnesty “the militants found themselves released into a situation where the mass youth following of the left had grown enormously, despite the debacle of its actions.” (Belge, 1981:73) The repression, injustice and torture that had been implemented, made many of the women and men who wanted to follow the socialist path, even more determined. Of the people who were politically active before the coup, some retreated into a corner afterwards but the opposite was also true. Yet it was not socialist agitation and propaganda that achieved this. It was the repression and terror implemented by the military that made the new generation stand up against the injustice committed and align themselves to socialist principles.

In the 1970s we find a large number of women, sympathetic to socialism. Communist/Socialist/Revolutionary women were active in politics. The fact that the promised ‘contemporary civilization’ had not been achieved in Turkey was a disappointment not just for intellectual men, but also for women. The number of women who wanted to change the appalling state of the country was growing with time. These women did not want individual liberation just for themselves, they were ready to devote themselves for the sake of total social liberation. These women, and especially the young students among them could see the obvious poverty, lack of education and ignorance in the country and the rapid growth of squatter settlements in cities.

The following points can be made about socialist women in Turkey. **First**, looking at Turkey’s socio-economic conditions and class structure, we find that most

of these women were the daughters of army officers, teachers or civil servants. **Second**, these women were not subject to discrimination in relation to their brothers in the matter of education and were encouraged by their families. Their families often made great sacrifices to enable them to gain the best possible education. **Third**, these were intellectual women who before their engagement with socialism were familiar with other systems of thought such as Kemalism, Existentialism, Anarchism or Taoism. **Four**, starting from the schools where they studied, they began to reach an awareness of class contradictions. **Five**, some of them had been members of socialist parties and movements such as TIP or Dev-Genç at the end of the 1960s, others identified themselves as left-wing, but had not found an organization they wanted to join. **Finally**, those who were old enough had supported the military intervention of 1960, they had taken part in rallies and demonstrations that had been organized in opposition to the government in Turkey until the 12/3/1971 coup. Some of these women had been the friends of the student leaders of the time. The founders and first members of the IKD were all women who were asking for a solution to the terrible situation the country was in.

One of these women was **AB**. She was a founder member of the IKD, a member of the TKP Central Committee and the Deputy Chair of the IKD at the time of its closure. AB was born in 1942 in Bursa. Her mother was a teacher and her father was an army officer. She started primary school in Bursa, continued in Erzurum and finished in Kayseri. While she was in the third year of secondary school, her family were transferred to Istanbul where she went to Sarıyer Secondary School and Nişantaşı High School. She took Robert College entrance examination and passed,

but she needed a scholarship in order to study there. She succeeded in obtaining a grant from the MKE (Machinery and Chemical Industries) established for engineers.

While she was a sophomore, the 27th May 1960 military intervention took place. AB describes those days as follows:

I was still in the first year at Robert College when the military took power on 27th May. The College students had taken part in the 27-28th April 1960 events and marched from the College to Bebek. As a first year student, I still was not sure what was what. However, I understood the 27th May 1960 to be an action taken against the bourgeois who were using the country's resources for their own benefit, and we got a bit more freedom. Coming from an Kemalist tradition, it was natural for me to think like this.

Although it was claimed that Turkey had a "classless united society" AB, who spent her childhood in different Anatolian cities observed the huge gaps between classes.

I could see the difference between the propertied classes of the college and what I had witnessed in Anatolia ... that terrible polarisation of life styles. I was aware of the contradictions in this. Scholarship students like we were the poorest in school. The injustice was obvious. My classmates were the children of the upper class. I knew how they lived.

After completing the preparatory year AB studied four years for her first degree and then went on to do her Masters. Having finished her studies, in return for her scholarship she was obliged to work in Machinery and Chemicals Industries (MKE) in Ankara. She describes the Ankara period like this:

My political views were being formed at this time. I rented a house in Bahçelievler in Ankara and I lived by myself. My friends from the College who were doing military service often came to visit. My home became a place where people came to listen to music, to drink cognac, to read and discuss books. Later, people like O.T. (who had studied in Italy and been influenced by the ICP) started coming and I was influenced by them. I had already read Bernard Russell, Camus and Sartre. I loved people, I didn't look down on them. I met people like Ataul Behramoğlu, İsmet Özel, Abdullah Nefes and I became interested in the books they were reading and the subjects they were discussing.

She started to read the Marxist classics which had started to appear in Turkish.

I had read a lot of stuff like existentialism and anarchism. I wanted to do something, I wanted things to change in this country. At this time Marx's books were being translated into Turkish and I was reading them. I was thinking that things had to change. I was not happy with my own life or with the system. Gradually, I became convinced that the cause of this was imperialism.

As a result of her social environment and the friendships she had formed, she joined the Turkish Workers' Party (TIP).

I went to a few events organized by TIP's Çankaya Branch. I went to a couple of their meetings, I participated in TIP rallies, I became convinced and joined the Party in Ankara.

So, AB consciously took her place in the ranks of socialism and this path led her to the foundation of the IKD.

Another IKD founder, member of the Central Executive Committee and first General Secretary, CD was also the daughter of a civil servant. She was born in Ankara in 1948, attended Ankara College (TED) and then went on to study Political Science. It was 1967. She had already chosen her path and was even a member of TIP. She explains:

I was one of the most promising students both at TED and in the University. I was going to become a diplomat. I was an enthusiastic person. I started to question myself and didn't find it meaningful. I already understood how the system worked. I wanted to take on the system. I wanted my life to be meaningful. It was good to decide to be a communist and take part in social struggle.

Şirin Cemgil, wife of Sinan Cemgil who was a TIP member and one of the founders of the THKO, was in CD's class. So was Yusuf Aslan, another THKO

leader who was later executed with Deniz Gezmiş in 1972, was her comrades. She preferred to stay in TIP.

In 1968, I was a member of the Çankaya Branch of TIP. I worked in the committee with Şirin Cemgil and Yusuf Aslan. We were also active in the SGÖ. We were known at school and the TIP as the "Moscow Soviet." We ran training sessions and published a youth newspaper.

It was natural for these self-confident women to claim to be as good as or better than men in various aspects.

In those days, we, woman's members of TIP claimed that we could do any work better than the male members. One day a male friend said to me "do not come" on an early morning paper sale. I answered: "why shouldn't I come? You don't come!" I was at the front in every kind of activities.

In this way CD started to pave the way to becoming a founder member of the largest women's organization in Turkey.

Another founder member of the IKD, a Central Executive Committee Member and the last Secretary General of the IKD, EF, was born in 1945. Her father too was an army officer. She links the formation of her political ideas to the atmosphere at home: "My mother and father were children of the Republic generation and they were interested in politics. In the 1950s, they took the *Akis* newspaper, which I used to read at the early ages and I had political views. We were against the ruling party (DP), and supported their opponent (CHP)." While she was studying at Arnavutköy American Girls' College, she lived through the events of 27th May 1960.

I was 15 in 1960. My father became the press officer for the military government after 27th May 1960. At the high school, we organized a demonstration in protest at the events of 28th April 1960. This was the first time in the history of the school that such a thing had happened. When I was teenager I had a notebook in which I wrote my favorite poems. There were also passages from Marx in it. In other words, I was interested in politics.

EF chose a different route. She was interested in Eastern philosophy.

At that time, I was more bohemian and arty. For a time, I was interested in Eastern philosophy, Taoism, etc. I wondered if they could provide a solution.

She finished high school in 1963 and started to study in English at the Literature Faculty of Istanbul University, but she did not complete her studies. She married an artist and started to work for British Petrol (BP). EF explains what happened.

I separated from my husband and went to England in 1970. I learned a lot about Marxism there. I stayed for a year and mostly read Marx. In 1971, I returned to Turkey, run into a more political milieu. I was moving in TIP circles. We sat and discussed and helped people in prison.

EF, will became a founder member of the İKD too in 1975.

In contrast to the political development of AB, CD and EF; GH, one of the first members of the İKD, Chair of the Istanbul Şişli Branch until its closure and member of the Istanbul Regional Secretariat, had a different experience. GH was born in 1945 and in 1967, one year before the explosion of student activity in 1968, graduated from ITU with a master's degree in civil engineering. The famous student leader Harun Karadeniz was a classmate. However, on the subject of participation in student action, GH did not take the same position as CD.

We were only two girl students in my class in the civil engineering department at ITU. Harun Karadeniz was in our class. He was left-wing, but it didn't seem possible to participate in events with our male classmates. For example, in those years there was the case of the occupation of the TMTF. We wanted to go too, but they told us that they could not take responsibility of us. We were shocked and we did not know what to say. We should have said, "Who are you to take responsibility for us, we are responsible for ourselves," but we did not.

The most important thing about this time for GH, was that she read a lot of Marxist classics that were then being published in Turkey.

On the one hand, I was reading Simone de Beauvoir on the other hand Nazım Hikmet, Lenin and Marx. At that time, I was buying and reading every left-wing book that was published. I had socialist ideas, that was clear, but I was looking for a place for myself and I couldn't find one.

While AB and CD as we saw above, had taken their place in TIP, GH was still searching. This indicates that same women while they wanted to take part in socialist activity, did not feel comfortable in mixed sex organization. GH explains this situation.

After we graduated N., my classmate, and I used to go to the meetings at the Civil Engineers Association. We were delegates, they made us secretaries on the congress and we took the minutes of the meetings. Because we were well-organized girls Nobody could do it as well as us. We supported one side or other, but really we were outsiders there. At the beginning of the 1970s, the meetings became different. The association had its leaders now: Ahmet Kaçmaz, Sedat Özkol were there. In a male field, you are a woman and at the bottom of the hierarchy. We did not have much to say either. I got bored just sitting there. A man would get up and ask a question then go on and on for an hour. It did not make any sense to me. One day one of them even overturned a great walnut wood table while they were debate. It was ridiculous.

As a woman who was left-wing but did not join a political organization, GH explains the psychology of the times like this:

There was a search, a need to belong somewhere. We wanted to work in something outside our jobs. We wanted to show the presence of the growing democracy struggle in Turkey. There were progressive people at ENKA where I worked but the discussions we had were not enough. I traveled around; used to go to Europe, but this wasn't enough. There was an emptiness. We wanted to be active somewhere. We needed to channel our desires, our energy into something.

And later GH would find the IKD, which was the place where she could be herself, channel her energy and participate in actions.

One of the Chair of IKD's Branches, IK was born in Izmir in 1945. Her parents were lawyers and her father had studied at Galatasaray High School. He was

religious and very attached both to his traditions and the principles of Atatürk's Republic. As he was a state employee and couldn't enter into politics, but supported his wife in politics. IK explains:

My family were committed CHP supporters. Both my mother and father were lawyers. My father worked in a state bank and my mother was self-employed. Although my father was keen on politics, he couldn't get involved because he was a state employee. But he encouraged my mother. He supported her in her active work for the CHP. My mother went here and there and made speeches in villages. Me and my sister, both primary school children, were used to wait for her in the car.

IK knew the main figures of the CHP in the 1950s and the military intervention of 27th May 1960 was celebrated enthusiastically by her family.

At the time of İnönü, Kasım Gülek used to stay in our house when he came to Izmir. During the DP period, we felt we were under siege. Suddenly everyone supported DP and our house was like a little island in our neighbourhood. When 27th May came, our whole family were so happy that we turned it into a bayram. During the DP period, my mother got called to the police station and she was charged. We grew up in that kind of setting. Naturally enough, I also became a supporter of the CHP, consciously or not.

IK completed her secondary education at the Izmir American Girls College. One of her typical attitudes was her approach to other people full of love.

Probably from the values I learned from my father, I always wanted to be a teacher, serving villages. I never thought of working in the city. My dream was always to be a village school teacher or to help poor people.

She began to notice class differences in society while she was at the American College.

I finished primary school in a school with children of low-high income parents as mixed, where wealthy parents were in a minority. Whereas, my parents were among the wealthy ones. The College was a school attended mostly by the children of very rich families. To send me to a private school, my father had a lot of economic difficulties, never letting such problems known by me. I realized at the College that the lives and the spending modes of the rich people were quite different from ours. I can

not say that I was envious and raced with them. I tried to get myself accepted with other properties, such as my hard-working character.

IK entered and passed the American Field Service examination. Still little more than a child, she stayed away from her family for a year and studied in the United States of America. Her patriotic feelings strengthened there among her self-confidence.

In the USA, I saw that nobody knew about Turkey. Turkey needed to prove itself and that seemed to be my duty. I didn't think about it at the time, but it was difficult for a person coming from a poverty-stricken country to a much bigger country and wanting to prove herself to show that she too had a culture, and I should overcome many things that would undermine my self-esteem. This had a great impact on me. Perhaps, my anti-imperialist sentiments taking place so quickly, my taking part in the flood of '68, was partly due to my experience and getting close not to the American public, but to a great country like America.

She started studying sociology at METU. Yalçın Küçük, Nejat Erder, Mübeccel Kiray, Şerif Mardin and Atila Sönmez were her teachers. In her first year she was elected to the executive committee of the METU Students Union (from the Socialist Ideas Club list, as a candidate of the SIC)

Before I had a chance to work out the questions about what I was doing and if I were a socialist or not, I found myself in the midst of the '68 movement. I read the works of Marx and Lenin at the University. In some of our classes, we found a chance to study some underdeveloped countries' and Turkey's conditions. With everything that I had read and debated, I considered myself a socialist when I graduated. I supported the MDD in the TIP-MDD discussions. The MDD people were more lively and active. I wasn't very militant but I was in a crucial position... During that period I always found myself in between things or on the fringes.

After graduation, IK got a job on the editorial board of the *Kırmızı Aydınlık* (Red Enlightenment) journal, while working on her master's degree in Hacettepe Population Study Institute. She developed close relationships with the most famous revolutionaries of the period: Sevim-Mihri Belli, Seyhan-Vahap Erdoğan,

Muzaffer Erdost. Although she won a scholarship to study towards Doctorate Degree in the USA, she turned it down, and didn't go. She had made up her mind about her life. As 'scholar' and a 'socialist', she would defend her interests of the majority of people in her country and take her place with them. Then came the military coup of 12th March 1971. IK won a scholarship to go to England and started her post-graduate studies at the London School of Economics. While she was in England a warrant was issued for the arrest of herself and her husband. She returned home in 1974 at the time of the general amnesty. Life would bring her to the position of one of the Chair of IKD Branch.

One of the Chair of the IKD's Branches was LM. Born in the village of Kızılot in Samsun's province of Çarşamba district in 1945, she married a worker in 1963 and became a housewife. She was influenced by the socialist, revolutionary views of her husband and his family. Her husband was the kind of a man rarely found in Turkey and gave LM the opportunity to develop herself.

We used to get *Akşam* newspaper and he used to read me Çetin Altan and the other columnists. We listened to the news and discussed them. My husband was very different. Our own relationship was one of equals. He explained the contradictions at work to me, the relations between the workers, the boss and the exploitation. He was very respectful to women. He never tried to limit my activities and he was never jealous. I never heard him saying to me: "do not go there, do not do that," or "you do not know that." On the contrary he always encouraged me.

After reading Çetin Altan's column in *Akşam*, LM started to read novels and discovered the existence of a different world.

At that time I started to read a little. '*Les Miserables*,' 'The Grapes of Wrath' and 'Tobacco' were among the first novels I started. I was always encouraged at home and I realised: why shouldn't I learn? I should learn too. If I did not understand something when I read it the first time, I read it again. I sat and read "The Grapes of Wrath" and "*Les Miserables*" with

stubborn determination. Time and again I went back to the places I did not understand and read them over and over.

The events before and after the 1971 coup, the killings of Mahir Çayan, Deniz Gezmiş and their revolutionaries had a certain significance in shaping LM politicization.

I was deeply affected by the events of the 12th March 1971 coup. We followed everything the revolutionary youth did, in the papers and I felt tremendous sympathy towards them. It was a kind of solidarity. I kept thinking that: "these people are university students, they have a bright future ahead of them. They are rejecting that future at the expense of asking for a good life for the poor. So why shouldn't I want the same? The killings of Mahir and others and the hangings of Deniz and his comrades had a great impact on me. I was in a state of shock, lying in bed, crying. We weren't in an organization, we were just on the side of the revolution.

LM went on with her reading and in the period after the coup took a woman into her house who was in a difficult situation.

Those days I was reading every day with passion and determination. Then something very important happened in my life. In 1972 a visitor came to our house and stayed for a month. She was in a difficult situation. We weren't members of any organization, but we helped because we felt it that way. "These people are own people and we are one of them." She was the one who encouraged me to read socialist books. She told me: "Are you still reading novels? You should be reading something more serious by now" and she suggested *The Basic Principles of Philosophy*. I asked her if I would be able to read it and would have difficulty in understanding it. She told me that I could definitely read and understand it. I read the book and when I saw that I could understand it, I was as happy as a child. When my husband came home in the evening, I told him everything I understood. It was really a nice book, I liked it a lot and I understood it very well. After that I started reading Marx with determination and enthusiasm and I learned to work out 'surpluss value'. When I look back, I am astonished at myself. As I learned I was happy and my ideas were becoming clearer. I came to the understanding that things needed to change in Turkey.

LM says about the revolutionary woman who stayed in her house: the fact that a person with such a strong character was a revolutionary, influenced me a lot.

Then I was able to answer the question “How could Turkey be liberated?” by saying that “It could only be liberated by socialism.” Another important point in her development was the fact that her cousin was killed in the street in broad daylight.

My cousin was killed in the middle of the street by the MHP in 1977. Fascist attacks in started with Nurettin’s death. He was one of the leaders of *Halkın Kurtuluşu* (People’s Liberation). We were living in the same building and he was like my own child. I loved him very much. Nurettin’s killing sharpened my convictions. There were a lot of people at the funeral. My shouting and anger at the funeral was in the newspapers. I was shouting: “The Fascists will answer for this! We, the mothers demand an answer!” It wasn’t like the talk of an aunt, crying for the death of a loved one and it was an agitation speech. After this death, I really realized that we had to resist. A foundation had been laid. I felt a tremendous anger and hostility, I realized we were right. I started to ask people “Who is going to answer for this? We can’t send our children to school. The MHP might kill them. As mothers, we mustn’t stand here with our hands tied.”

Around this time, LM developed the idea that there was a need for a women’s organization. This led her to eventually become one of the Chair of the IKD’s Branches.

NO, who was first a Kartal Branch member and later one of the Regional Secretaries, was born in 1952. Her mother was a teacher and her father was an army officer. Her sister, four years older than herself and a university student played an important part in her politicization by taking her to rallies. Her story is interesting in that it shows how this period influenced the women and men who would later become socialists.

My mother was a strong supporter of the CHP. She was a Kemalist. I used to read Çetin Altan in *Akşam* and İlhan Selçuk in *Cumhuriyet*. In 1968 I read Nazım Hikmet’s poems among the books my sister had bought. They were being published for the first time in Turkey. Although I didn’t understand everything I read, I was very excited.

My sister started studying at Faculty of Political Sciences (*Mülkiye*). She used to take me to student rallies. These demonstrations at the end of the 60s always ended in Atatürk's Mausoleum (*Anıtkabir*). As a high school student with a pony tail, I was so excited to be among university students. In the middle of the march, someone would shout "Get down!" and all the marchers would sit down and shout as: "Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh/1-2-3-4/More Vietnams/A thousands greetings to Ernesto!" Then we would stand up and clap. Shouting of "Independent Turkey" resounded through Ankara as we continued on our way to *Anıtkabir*. Usually the marches started from *Mülkiye*, going through Ankara past University of Linguistics, History and Geography (*Dil Tarih*), Kızılay, Tandoğan to *Anıtkabir*. Then that huge square would fill up and people would overflow into the side streets.

We were the 'Kuvayı Milliyeci' (Nationalist Forces) We were against Imperialism. "All our country's fortresses have been seized, the shipyards occupied, the armies dispersed and every corner is under control by the enemies." How did this happen? "Those in power are guilty of carelessness, collaboration and even treason." Of course, we would liberate our country with the "noble blood in our veins."

The events that most influenced NO generation were the killing of Mahir Çayan and the execution of Deniz Gezmiş with their comrades.

My sister was a member of the SĞÖ and I joined Dev-Genç. I went to University in Istanbul in 1970. The military coup of 12th March 1971 happened while I was a student. Those heavy-handed actions, the searches, arrests, that incredible period of repression just made me more agitated and determined. When I found out that Mahir Çayan had been killed in Kızıldere I cried all night and I swore that I would live my life only for the socialist struggle. I was not yet 20 years old. Maybe Mahir was dead, but we were still there, don't let anybody forget that!

These women who had witnessed the military actions of 1960 and 1971, had chosen to be on the side of the working class, in the second half of the 1970s they participated in rallies, actions, trade unions, professional and democratic mass organizations, and joined communist, socialist, and revolutionary parties and movements. Nobody forced them, they chose socialism of their own free will. They brought dedication, the willingness to face martyrdom and their wealth of qualities, to

the socialist movement, to fight for a better world. Many different reasons and experiences brought these women to join the gathering wave of socialism. They were not satisfied with their own lives and the socio-economic conditions in which they lived and they believed that only a socialist revolution could make the fundamental changes necessary.

Common characteristics of the time were generosity, dedication, self-renunciation and readiness for death almost as an aim in itself. These women who claimed to be as good revolutionaries as men, were usually self-confident and independent. Some of them, who had had a university education were familiar with social and political theories. Those who had not had higher education had worked hard to educate themselves, to learn and to understand. These women were determined to have a say in the future of the country. They joined the revolutionary currents and organizations with the aim of taking action that would change the hated capitalist social structure.

These women, whether founders or ordinary members, joined the IKD not just because they wanted to take their place in the socialist movement but also because of their awareness of their subordination as women. GH explains it like this:

At that time we had the idea that as women we should resist being oppressed by men. Although this wasn't very clear or conscious, it existed at an initiative level. The desire to live our own lives existed; the desire to reject traditional values. A lot of women at that time had these desires.

EF was aware that women lived in unequal conditions to men and she illustrates that with examples from her own life.

I knew very well that women were oppressed. My maternal grandmother and her sister had lived through very difficult times. Their husbands died,

their brothers took their money and these women became destitute. They had no income or any other kind of support. This seemed to me a terrible thing.

My father wasn't a cruel man. However, the whole responsibility for the kids and the house was on my mother. After eating his dinner, my father used to command for a 'coffee'. I used to get angry with this. I remember as a child, I once got told off because I said to my father why he didn't go and get his own coffee.

I saw discrimination against women when I was working at BP. I should have been a director, the situation was obvious, but they didn't promote me. They made me a kind of supervisor. Men who started work at the same time as me, who weren't efficient and had a lower level of education than I did, were promoted to important positions. It was impossible not to see the discrimination against women.

AB saw the situation of women in the different Anatolian provinces where she lived, decided to study and chose the most masculine profession in order not to become like them. She explains:

When it came to choosing a university course, I decided to choose engineering. Why? When my family moved around Anatolia, I was deeply affected by women's situation. I saw a lot of women who were crushed, crying, battered. I remember very well that even as a child when I asked myself "does being a woman mean being crushed?" I told myself "I won't let anyone crush me!" My mother was a working woman and didn't let anyone put her down. My grandmother lived with us. When she died, my mother made my father share all the work, including cleaning the vegetables. I connected this to the fact that my mother worked.

Secondly, I wanted to prove that I was not worth less than any man. So I went and chose the most masculine profession of the time, engineering and within that I chose the department where there were fewest women, which was electrical engineering. I was measuring myself against men. There were only three or five girl students in all the engineering departments of Robert College.

The work of the second wave of feminism had not yet reached Turkey and writing about women's liberation was found only among socialist classics. As quoted in the 4th Chapter, Bebel's work *Woman and Socialism* had great

repercussions in Germany. In Turkey too, the book influenced a lot of people. AB explains:

I read Bebel in 1965. His solutions to the problems of women influenced me a lot at that time. This book persuaded me, that the woman question would be solved as predicted in socialist theory. I still had not read Engels.

NO, has this to say:

When I read Bebel and Engels, I remember I was astonished at what they wrote. I was amazed that such taboo subjects were examined so openly. I was even worried about whether our socialist organizations would accept Bebel's views. It was as though I had found in Bebel and Engels the reasons for the pain I had suffered in my own life. Uptil then I had always blamed myself. I thought that I had suffered because I had behaved wrongly. However Bebel said that the pain we suffered was an injustice. With socialism we would be liberated. So we had to work for socialism with all our strength. The socialist revolution was the first and most important step to mine and other women's liberation. This idea of liberation was an important factor in the commitment and dedication with which other women and I became revolutionaries. In fact what I discovered from these books was that with socialism, not only exploitation but other things would also cease.

The founders and members of the IKD came from such class and political pasts. In their own words the desire to intervene in the 'terrible fate of the country'; the need to 'stop injustice'; the idea of proving that 'they can compete with men and perform better than they' practically forced these women to take their place on the socialist political scene. In Chapter VI, we will examine the IKD set up by these women.

CHAPTER VI

A CASE STUDY: ILERICI KADINLAR DERNEĐI (IKD) (THE PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION)

6.1 The Founding of the Ilerici Kadınlar Derneđi/IKD (Progressive Women's Organization)

The Progressive Women's Organization (IKD) was legally founded on 3rd June 1975. It was indefinitely banned without any justification on 28th April 1979 by the Istanbul Martial Law Headquarters, during the period of martial law following Kahraman Maraş massacres. All its branches and local offices were unjustifiably closed. However, the IKD members continued their work despite the closures, until 12th September 1980, the date of the military coup. Because of this, of the total five years and three months active existence of the IKD, it was only able to work legally for the first four years. It continued its work for a period of one year and three months illegally.

Many factors were influential in the founding and successful work of the IKD. The first was, as explained in the previous chapter, the political atmosphere in Turkey and worldwide, while the second was surely the advance of the TKP. Thirdly the UN's declaration of 1975 as '*World Women's Year*' led to an increase in publications about women and an interest in the woman question.

The preparations for the founding of the IKD started in 1974. These preparations according to the IKD founders themselves:

...were not an initiative that started with a group of women coming together with the intention of setting up their own women's organization.. At that time the TKP was promoting the setting up of a women's organization in its publications and broadcasts. This was not done to the importance given to the woman question by TKP, but to the need for a women's organization as part of its 'advance' because the TKP, like all other communist parties, wanted a supporter women's organization. (IKD is 20 Years Old. Unpublished)

CD, one of the two TKP members who were founder members of IKD puts it like this:

I was involved in the work from the moment that the idea of setting up a women's organization first appeared. The TKP was in advance. The decision to set up a women's organization was taken in 1974. The TKP in Berlin didn't have time to think about the "woman question" or to work towards the setting up of a women's organization. We as female party members took on the responsibility of setting up a women's organization.

In this way a decision to set up a women's organization in Turkey by the leaders of the TKP and as a first step links were set up with the IDWF in Berlin. As explained in Chapter III the IDWF was founded in 1945 by anti-fascist, socialist and communist women and women's organizations. The women's organization members of the IDWF were organizations that identified with the ideological line of communist and socialist parties. CD who first made contact with the IDWF explains:

All over the world Communist Parties had women's organizations. These women's organizations functioned as women's sections of the party or as autonomous associations. Their organizational structures were independent but they were ideologically dependent on the party.

However, in Turkey there were 27 women's associations already in existence. To this range of organizations starting with the Union of Turkish Women, through the Philanthropists Foundation, to the American-Turkish Women Friendship

foundation, a new women's organization would now be added. CD explains how the

IKD women evaluated these women's organizations:

Women's organizations in Turkey were mostly philanthropists associations. They were associations of bourgeois women who came together to carry out charity work. We were completely against these kinds of organizations.

AB, another TKP member at the time of the setting up of the organization talks about how this work started:

I became a member of the party in 1974. My first duty was to form a women's organization. At the same time information on the subject reached CD, B. and EF by another channel. B. was previously a TIP member from Fatih branch. We started working together without ever mentioning the TKP. But we all knew that we had started this work because of a party directive.

No further directive, no new advice came from the party; both because they didn't give importance to the "woman question" and also because they didn't have the capacity to do anything on this subject. Apart from encouraging us, saying "let's develop, let's get stronger" they didn't have any input.

Some party women setting out to organize women started by developing contacts to see if it was possible to set up of a broad-based organization including women from TIP and other left groups." (IKD is 20 Years Old, Unpublished) Most of the women participating in the work of setting up the IKD were not TKP members or even sympathizers. It was therefore important that the political spectrum of the organization should be very broad. In IKD is 20 Years Old members tell of this period.

While the setting up of a women's organization was a new and surprising idea for the left in Turkey, it was not difficult to find women who met this idea with enthusiasm. The first meeting that was organized for the purpose of setting up a progressive, democratic women's organization brought together women such as Gönül Dinçer, Şeyda Talu, Zülal Kılıç, who later became founder members.... Later meetings drew an even wider participation. In addition to the majority of working class women

attending these meetings intellectual women from a TIP background such as Nermin Aksın, Zerrin Sakalsız, Neşe Bulut, Müzeyyen Kadayıfçılar also participated. (IKD is 20 Years Old, unpublished)

Like other left-wing groups, women from the TSIP which was formed in 1974, rejected the idea of a women's organization on the basis that it was divisive for the working class. In spite of this, the work which just started with the initiative of the TKP was carried on with left-wing trade union women who were not TKP members.

CD says:

First of all we looked for ex-TKP women and we found them. But we didn't manage to involve them in the IKD. We reached intellectual, democratic women. For example, our Chair Beria Onger had been the Chair of the IKD which she formed herself. The second TIP had not yet been formed. We wanted to form the IKD together with the TIP women. We talked to lots of TIP women. Lots of women workers participated in the founding work. We met Jale, the mother of Necmettin Giritlioğlu who was killed in Aliğa. She was the first candidate for Chair. She was not a member of any party. In 1975 there were in any case no more than five women who were the members of the TKP. While we were discussing how to set up a women's organization with at least 40 women.

EF talks about how she found out about the setting up of the IKD, how she joined the meetings, what was discussed at that time and which books they analyzed.

In the autumn of 1974 I met a man whom I later found out was a member of the TKP. He said to me "Some left-wing women are trying to get women organized; are you interested?" But, I didn't get involved, because it was a TKP initiative. I wasn't yet a party member. I joined because I liked the idea of working with women. I knew AB and B., we moved in the same circles. I met CD there. There were five of us at the first few meetings: AB, CD, B, Ç and me.

As I said, I liked the idea of the IKD. In those early meetings of the autumn of 1974, we debated whether to set up a women's organization or not, what kind of organization it would be, who we would reach and what we would do. We had read many books about woman before but now we looked at them again. What was there at that time: *Women and Socialism*, *The Origin of the Family, State and Private Property*, Lenin, Zetkin, etc. They were our reference books when we needed them, but I remember we discussed Simone de Beauvoir as well, we read her work, too. Sometimes other women came to the meetings. TIP members came.

During this period contact was made with a group of women workers through the trade unions. 15 years later, one of these women, Vahide Yılmaz, founder and executive committee member of the IKD writing in *Kaktüs* journal recalls:

The suggestion to form the IKD came to us, factory workers with no political identity or experience, but with a trade union consciousness from a group of intellectual women with political experience. We started working together. In the first place, while it was necessary to organize working class women, that is woman's position was also on the agenda to some extent. But, it was a question of class more than anything else. How we would draw working class women into the struggle for democracy was also tied in with this question. A group of trade unionists, lawyers, lecturers, TIP women, etc. were also involved in this work. (Yılmaz, 1990: 38)

8th March, International Women's Day was celebrated in Turkey for the first time in a mass meeting organized by these women. In April a meeting was organized in Ankara to finalize the constitution and choose the founder members. At this meeting the TIP women reported that the *Voice of TKP* had talked of "a women's organization being set up under the leadership of communist women" and that they considered this a provocation which might lead to their withdrawal from the work. The TKP women did not even know about this broadcast and did not agree with it. It was decided to have another meeting in Istanbul to rescue the relationship. However, the TIP women who came to the Istanbul meeting said that "they were not prepared to be led by the nose by the TKP and to suffer provocation of this kind, so they withdrew from the work of the organization." (IKD is 20 Years Old, unpublished)

While the decision to set up a broad-based women's organization was being carried out with great success, the Central Committee of the TKP created a negative situation with its radio broadcasts. AB tells it like this:

We wanted to set up the IKD with the TIP women. But by calling it "my organization" the TKP sabotaged the project for the sake of propaganda.

After the *Voice of TKP* stated "Communist Women are organizing" in a broadcast, the TIP women withdrew. But what was the point? Here we are getting things started, its been agreed that it should be broad-based, we're managed to do this so what are they interfering for all the time?

CD says same process:

At the last minute the TIP women were turned against the setting up of the IKD. "The Communists are in it and they will be doing illegal activities" they said, voicing their anxieties. The women workers disagreed. "Aren't strikes also against the Law?" they said and they took active part in the work. The TIP women left. On the 3rd June we formally announced the founding of the IKD.

So the TIP women withdrew but in spite of this the remaining women filled the necessary positions and founded the IKD. When we look at the list of the founder members we see 12 names: *Beria Onger, Nursel Üstün, Vahide Yılmaz, Fatma Günel, Zuhâl Meriç, Şeyda Talu, Dora Küçükyağın, Gönül Taylan (Dinçer), Saadet Sözal, Hamiyet Akkaya, Güner Dilsizoğlu* (Constitution, 1976: 6-7). Five of these were university graduates, one a teacher, one had graduated at the Arnavutköy American Girls High School, another had finished high school; that is out of twelve people, eight were women with a high level of education according to Turkish standards. They included a civil engineer (ITÜ graduate, Nursel Üstün), an electrical engineer (Robert College graduate, Gönül Dinçer), a lawyer (Beria Onger), a medical doctor (Dora Küçükyağın) and a political sciences graduate (Şeyda Talu). The other four founder members were workers. Of the workers, Vahide Yılmaz, Fatma Günel and Güner Dilsizoğlu worked in the metal work sector, while Saadet Sözal was in the textiles sector. The first Central Executive Committee (CEC) elected from the founder members was made up of nine people and included four women workers. Beria Onger was elected Chair while Şeyda Talu became Secretary General.

6.2 The IKD - TKP Relationship

The founders and executive committee members of the newly formed IKD argued the need for an “independent, democratic mass organization” in the *Working Report* submitted to its *First General Assembly* (I.GAWR, 1977) and defined it as the following:

The IKD is a mass movement of all women who work in the fields, factories, offices, and houses.

The IKD is the active supporter of women’s struggles for their everyday economic demands and their struggle for equality, democracy, progress and peace.

The IKD is the *INDEPENDENT* organization of all women in our country. The IKD has achieved important steps to becoming the *only* strong *mass democratic* and *independent* women’s organization in our country.

Although the IKD was set up under the leadership of TKP women, it carried out its claim to be an independent women’s organization until the day of its closure. Among the reasons for this were: *firstly*, the fact that there were many women in the IKD who were not members of any political party, *secondly*, that at the time of the founding of the IKD apart from the TKP women, there were other left-wing women with different views. Before starting mass membership registration to TKP, in the period when there were still very few members, the IKD Central Executive Committee (CEC) opened its doors to women with different political views.

TKP party propaganda was never carried out in the IKD. The TKP ideological line, political solutions, slogans (such as *social progress*, *national democratic front*) terminology was used but TKP propaganda was not openly carried out. CD clarifies:

As the IKD, we never made TKP propaganda. General socialist agitation and propaganda was carried out in the organization, but there was never any specific steering. It was not a condition that women should be members of the TKP, but we did not allow hostility towards the TKP. Even many women who were not socialists joined the IKD and even became Branch Executive Committee (BEC) members.

We believed that the independence of the IKD had to be maintained. For example, when on 1st May 1978 the other democratic mass organizations following the TKP line agreed their "Freedom for the TKP" banners, we in the IKD section of the march decided not to open them.

Even though the IKD was set up because of the initiative of TKP women they never wanted to be a party section in the way that the Progressive Youth Organization (IGD) was. For example, while the IGD branches were hung with TKP slogans, poster of Marx, Engels and Lenin and photos of the TKP Secretary General, İsmail Bilen with Fidel Castro, you would not find these on the walls of the IKD branches. Whereas legal TKP publications were sold in IGD branches, these sales were not carried out in IKD branches. AB explains why and how this position continued in spite of criticism from the party:

The IKD was relatively an independent organization. We could feel the stamp of the party in this or that way through the party leaders of the party cadres, but we opposed a whole lot of things. For example, we didn't sell magazines that were known to be publications of the party. Because of this, we were criticized by the party. But, we stuck to our decision. "We won't sell them, it's not right because we had criticized other left-wing women for selling their own political organizations' publications. We know it's harmful, so we won't do it ourselves," we said. You could see posters of Mustafa Suphi, Comrade Bilen with Castro in IGD branches, but there were no such posters on IKD walls. This in itself demonstrated our independence, showed that we were different.

In addition to the above, the IKD leadership was against the idea of the IKD being a section of the Party in theoretical terms. The reasons for this position included the fact that the TKP was an illegal organization, and the possibility that the IKD could be closed and its members arrested by the police. The idea that the effect

of open TKP propaganda would only be “to frighten off women who were in the first stages or had not yet reached political consciousness and make them leave the organization was also influential.” (Gören, 1977; 8).

Perhaps the most clearest incident demonstrating the position in relation to the TKP occurred at the 2nd General Assembly Meeting in 1978. At the Meeting, a message from the TKP Central Committee (CC) was read out. The message started: “The TKP CC sends the Congress its warmest greetings,” and continued “Women, especially labouring (emekçi) and proletarian women live their lives under double exploitation. Since a democratic revolution leading to socialism was not realized, women have not achieved real liberation. The IKD which is gathering a wide mass of women under the roof of the IKD is struggling for equal rights in every social area alongside the working class. Women want work, they want their rights, they want nurseries, they want peace, they want to live.” The TKP CC wishes the Congress “great success”. (ÜRÜN, 1978: 14-15) An IKD member who took part in the General Assembly Meeting describes the situation:

Everybody in the hall listened to the message from the TKP, an illegal party whose very name was banned, holding their breath. In those years, it was forbidden to say those three letters. When the name TKP was pronounced openly and more than once in that hall, the reaction was one of shock. Women’s eyes filled with tears, feelings ran high. More than one thousand women delegates and friends stood up quite spontaneously without any predetermined instructions, raising their fists and shouting slogans with the shrill voices: “Freedom for the TKP” and “No to 141-142” resounded through the hall. The long applause only ceased after the persistent intervention of the IKD central executive committee. (Appendix A)

As it can be seen, however much the IKD insists that it was an independent organization, the reading of the message from the TKP, an illegal party,

at the General Assembly Meeting is an admission that it was an organization controlled by the TKP. And in spite of the fact that the IKD insisted in all its documents that it was an independent and democratic organization, the TKP in its legal publications virtually declared its participation in the IKD. In 1979 at the international conference organized in Berlin, the capital of German Democratic Republic, to commemorate the *Centennial Anniversary* of the publication of August Bebel's *Women and Socialism*, the TKP representative said in his speech: "Comrades we can say with pride: in our country the TKP is the influential force in the democratic women's movement. This is due to the TKP's Leninist politics and the importance given to the woman question" and this statement was published in the TKP's legal publications (*Türkiye ve Dünya Olayları*, 1979: 12). These kind of publications brought no disclaimer from the IKD.

Did the women want to become members of the TKP? For those who were members, what did this mean? What was driving women to become members of the TKP? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to understand in what way the TKP was significant for women and men in the 1970s. In the second half of the 1970s, the TKP for the first time since the 1951 arrests, after decades of being seen only as a foreign bureau, was able to tread again on Turkish soil and it became a great center of attraction. The founder of the TKP, Mustafa Suphi and the story of the treacherous murder of his comrades were familiar in socialist/revolutionary circles since 1921. The songs about the old heroes were now passed on to a new generation by the veteran communists. Another legendary TKP member - Nazım Hikmet's books passed from hand to hand and his poems were on every revolutionary's lips. The TKP

once only a 'legendary' name now started to appear in trade unions, in the worker neighborhoods and the factories, among youth and women and in professional associations and at public rallies.

There were a number of other reasons which caused the TKP to become a center of attraction. EF explains how she saw the TKP:

As a more democratic environment came into being in 1974, we began to discuss "what will happen now, what kind of party does Turkey need?" Since the TIP had been closed at the time of the 12th March 1971 coup the view that "a proletarian/working class party needs to be illegal" gathered strength. In the circles I moved in, there were TIP and TKP sympathizers. I was among those who were closer to the TKP, from the theoretical/ideological point of view, not because I knew TKP very well. I had a very romanticized view of a communist party in my mind. Really I didn't know anything about the TKP. I never thought I would become a member myself. So when the call came to "join the party" I wondered whether I was worthy. The idea of being a member of the TKP seemed to me quite incredible.

From the 1960s onwards in addition to people who had never heard of the TKP, many 'revolutionary' women and men who considered themselves Marxist Leninist, joined the IKD and IGD in order to get close to the TKP. After 1975 many socialist and revolutionary groups who before 1970 had participated in Dev-Genç, joined the ranks of the TKP because of "the need for internationalism and the need for a single party in one country" (Kurtuluş, 1976: 52). Yet legal socialist parties were founded in Turkey such as TSIP in 1974, the second TIP and TEP in 1975. Sevim Belli explains the TKP's attraction:

But I think that during the period after the 12th March 1971 coup, taking advantage of the political vacuum or rather the intimidation created by the coup, the TKP developed a strong organizing capacity (...) According to socialist public opinion they had the support of glorious Soviet Union, the motherland of socialism, the first worker state. This support made them more viable as an organization. Of course, this was an attractive privilege in the eyes of these well meaning young people. (Belli, 1994: 53)

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DOKÜMANLARI

Before the İKD, women and men who adopted socialist ideas were not satisfied with membership of a democratic mass organization. They wanted to be members of a 'party' that was a working class political organization. Many women and men with no previous political consciousness who became members of the İKD or İGD did not have this kind of desire. It was extremely important for these politically conscious people to join the party of Mustafa Suphi and Nazım Hikmet which had been "formed in the fires of the Bolshevik revolution." For example, "the socialist organization known as GSB-ÖNCÜ dissolved itself at a meeting in June 1976 and directed its members and sympathizers to join the TKP." (Şahin, 1991: 44) NO explains how she became a member of the party and what membership of the party meant to her:

One of the İKD branch chairwomen brought me into the party. We had known each other for two years. I wasn't yet a party member and I dreamed of TKP membership by night and fantasized about it by day. One day this chairwomen invited me to her house. I didn't suspect anything as I used to visit her now and then. I'll never forget, it was a cold autumn evening: 30 Nov. 1977. First we had a short chat. Then she called me into a little inner room, used as a storage space. I felt that something was going to happen. Lowering her voice, she told me that she had known me for a long time, that they had taken the decision earlier, but since I was in Anatolia, she was only able to have this talk with me that day. She said to me "Comrade, I invite you to become a member of the TKP." For about a few seconds, I stood in bewilderment without comprehending what she had said. Then I suddenly realized. Yes, I was really being offered the membership of the Party. I had never thought before how and who could offer me membership. I don't recall how it happened, but a lump came into my throat and I began to cry, at first slowly, then bursting into tears. She stood up and touched my shoulder gently with her hand. "I'll leave you alone," she said. My sobbing intensified, after she left. I almost calmed down, after crying for a while, when she returned. She had a tiny brochure and a piece of paper in her hand. She said something like "This is the constitution of TKP. Read it carefully and then write your curriculum and application for membership on this paper." As I took the constitution into my hand, I started to cry again with even deeper sobs. I didn't want to cry, I didn't want to cry at all, I was ashamed, but I just couldn't help myself. She said to me "I understand you very well. The

same thing happened to us. Don't worry about it," and she went out again. You see, becoming a member to TKP was like this for us.

6.3 What kind of a Women's Organization?

In the second half of the 1970s the subject of the organization of women came onto the agenda of the socialist movement in Turkey as a result of the formation of the IKD and its rapid rise in influence. Is there a need for a separate women's organization? If there is, what should its character be? Should it be a Marxist-Leninist women's organization or a democratic mass organization? The IKD members answered these questions by claiming "a women's organization should be a structurally independent mass organization."

Two months after its foundation, the aims of the IKD appeared thus in the August 1975 issue of the IKD's newspaper *Kadınların Sesi*:

The IKD was established on 3rd June 1975 in Istanbul through the efforts of mainly women labourers. Greetings to all working women, children - our hope for the future, all progressive democratic, patriotic forces! The IKD outlines its aims to all women and our people as follows:

- * true equality must be achieved in education, employment opportunities and promotion.
- * motherhood must be seen as a social function.
- * equal pay must be given for equal pay.
- * existing legal rights and equalities must be put into practice and any laws humiliating women must be amended.
- * women must be conscious defenders of peace, democracy, national independence and social progress. (*Kadınların Sesi*, 1975: 3)

We can find the IKD's own justification for its foundation in the First General Assembly Working Report. After explaining why women need to organize and criticizing 'incorrect' organizational structures in the section titled "Why and what

kind of an organization?”, the subject is approached as follows in the section “The Founding of the IKD.”

In our country up to now, when we talked about a women’s organization, this meant only bourgeois women’s organization, and therefore working (emekçi) women’s organization was considered in the same category. That is why working class women’s desire to organize was met with suspicion in these circles. A lot of well meaning people responded to this initiative with unfair and irrelevant criticisms, such as “will you have tea parties?”, “organizing women is feminism.” Putting the case that a women’s organization was unnecessary and that the class struggle must be fought by women and men shoulder to shoulder, they claimed that a women’s organization would be divisive rather than strengthening the struggle. As a reaction to this, organizing women began to be seen only as the organizing of the socialist, revolutionary women. Some people however endeavored to attack the IKD to various parties or to make it function as a women’s section. But they were unable to reduce women’s organization to any party’s women’s section or to move a democratic mass organization from its independent mass principle. (First General Assembly Working Report, 1977: 44)

After stating that “the IKD achieved organization by overcoming incorrect positions and ideas about organizing women and about the women question,” the Report continued:

From the very beginning, the IKD made it a principle to organize *all women* and took great care that there should be no discrimination on the basis of language, religion, political view or anything else. The structure of the IKD makes it accessible to all women (...) Under the roof of an organization today, women of *every opinion and every social standing* had come together. The IKD was not satisfied with only recruiting women, but also appointed them to positions of responsibility without considering differences of opinion. Anybody who works according to the principles and aims of the organization is given a duty, while women workers get priority. (First General Assembly Working Report, 1977: 34-35)(my own emphasis)

The question of women’s organization was discussed in *Ürün* (Harvest), the TKP’s legal journal, just as it was discussed in all the other socialist publications. In the March 1977 issue of *Ürün*, an article written by AB titled **The Women**

Labours Movement in Turkey is Developing and Getting Stronger through Practice, appeared under the signature of Fatma Gören. This article discussed the relationship between the communist party and the mass women's organization. The main point of view presented was that women could be members of communist parties in equality with men and with full rights:

(...) In a proletarian party just as there are no differences in rights and duties between workers and intellectuals, so there is no difference, nor can there be, between women and men members.(...) the organization that will take place is definitely not the organisation of Marxist-Leninist women. (Gören, 1977: 6)

The IKD women considered the formation of a Marxist-Leninist women's organization to be wrong. Because, only communist parties are and can be Marxist-Leninist. They pointed out that for this reason a women's organization could not and should not be Marxist-Leninist. The IKD women defended this position and were criticized by other left-wing organizations for this position.

After establishing this position, Gören states that "a democratic women's organization must include **all women** (except a handful of the capitalist class)." (Gören, 1977: 6) (my own emphasis) This statement contradicts a previous quotation, because while there were no limits there, the limits were set in the **Ürün** article. In fact, by excluding "a handful of capitalist class" women, the organization admits being a 'women labours' organization. This position is really an answer to the critics that a women's organization should only include "workers and revolutionary/ socialist" women. In other words, the IKD women claiming to include all women, apart from bourgeois women, who at that time were considered to be very few in number, were defining a very broad base.

Just as a democratic and progressive women's movement can not be a movement only of Marxist-Leninist women, so it can not be a movement of only women workers.(...) To perceive mass democratic women's organization as a socialist party women's organization and to propose that it works in this way has a limiting and divisive function for a broad-based women's organization.(...) To try to persuade organization members of the views of political parties, to attempt to enroll party members from the organization is to misunderstand the meaning of a mass organization. In addition, if the few conscious women work in the organization only for such a purpose, it will benefit neither the women's movement as a whole nor the political parties that they support.(Gören, 1977: 7-8)

It was not just in the legal publications of the TKP that it was argued against the IKD being the women's section of the TKP. The argument appeared also in the documents of the 1977 TKP Conference. "Our party is aware that the women's movement in Turkey is a rich source for the TKP, of young women communists who have been tested in action."(...) However, all this does not mean that a mass women's organization has been brought to the **position of the party's women section** (Ürün, 1977: 26) (my own emphasis) In this way the TKP on the one hand supported the independence of the IKD, but on the other hand, it acknowledged that it saw the IKD as an organization that educated women as communists. How could this be? In her above mentioned article, Gören answers this question in her third point:

Naturally there will be Marxist-Leninist women in a mass women's organization. There must be. They will be the ones who will form and develop the women's organization in the light of Marxist-Leninist principles. The members of the political party of the working class in the women's organization, will take as their main duty to massification and development of the organization. Naturally, a working class party will, at the same time, independently organize within this broad mass women's organization (...) However, the fact that the working class party is gaining women members and organizing independently among women should not be at the expense of harming the massification of the women's organization. (Gören, 1977:8)

It was learned from the record of the 1977 Conference that women from the IKD were being enrolled as party members. It was stated: "Our party, our party organs have had successes in the women's organization which should not be underestimated. In the fertile soil of the women's movement in Turkey the young, bold, fighting women communists of the future, our party's new members are blossoming." (Ürün, 1977: 26) AB tells how she witnessed this period:

We didn't intend to turn the IKD into a revolutionary women's organization. We hoped that women would develop into revolutionaries. As women gained their confidence they would increase their skills. Women would turn into neighborhood and workplace leaders, but if they were not satisfied with this, they could search for something more. Membership period was considered as a process consisting of several stages leading to party membership. We regarded all IKD members in the same sense, for executive committee to ordinary members.

The other left-wing groups, who had previously condemned "a separate women's organization as divisive," began to join in the IKD, seeing the success of the IKD mostly not to leave women to the TKP. The women belonging to these left-wing groups did not see the IKD as sufficiently "revolutionary and socialist". AB explains:

In the 1970s the idea of setting up a women's organization was considered to be a feminist position on the left. The other left-wing groups first regarded this position as divisive: we were supposedly dividing the working class movement. But, after a while when the IKD came into existence and developed so fast, they were impressed. The left-wing groups wanted to take control of the IKD. We had no objections when they joined us, but we opposed their methods. We opposed their efforts to gain members and to distribute hard-line revolutionary publications. On the other hand, they considered our training efforts to be insufficient and argued that it was necessary to teach revolutionary theory. In our discussions, they said "if there is going to be a women's organization and if that organization is not going to be divisive, it can only be a revolutionary women's organization to draw more women into the revolutionary struggle" and they found us as insufficient. They criticized us saying "you are putting too much efforts into nurseries, literacy classes, district water and sewerage and not enough attention on class consciousness." They added "the IKD will only be valuable if you turned

it into a school that will bring out revolutionary women." We responded by saying that was not the proper direction.

Women belonging to other political organizations were in the IKD particularly in the first years of its existence. NO, one of such members, confirms the statement of AB as follows:

I became a member of the IKD as a result of a directive of the organization I belonged to (GSB - ÖNCÜ). Our aim was to gain control over some of the branches and to keep some of the women organized in IKD, otherwise be lost to TKP. The IKD was a organization set up by socialist women, but real control was with the TKP. This was never admitted openly, but everyone knew. Although they knew straight away that I was a revolutionary woman from another political organization, they didn't hesitate to accept me as a member. We did not consider the IKD as a sufficiently socialist organization and we never liked the official paper, Kadınların Sesi. It was not sufficiently revolutionary according to us.

After a while the IKD, which had previously been opposed and criticized, drew the attention of all left-wing groups, parties, organization. The women from the GSB-ÖNCÜ group took part in the foundation of the Izmir branch. They also began to work in the Ankara and Istanbul branches. Women members of the TSIP in spite of being opposed to the IKD at the time of its formation, later became members of the IKD and even played a significant role in the establishment of the IKD branches in Bursa and Mersin and took part in the branch executive committees.

The socialist group known as Kurtuluş formed the **Samsun Women's Association**, which was later to become the **Black Sea Women's Association (KKD)** and approached the executive committee of the IKD for affiliation.

The IKD's success impressed the left-wing groups so much that some wanted not to join IKD but set up their own women's organizations. For example,

Sevim Belli, one of the founders of TEP recalls in her memoirs, without specifying the date, that after 1975 they initiated the process of setting up a women's organization: "democratic women who were not aligned to any party were also called. The purpose was to set up a joint women's organization." (Belli, 1994: 575) Sevim Belli states that lawyer Gülçin Çaylıgil, lawyer Necla Fertan and Şirin Tekeli also took part in those meetings, but she adds that the initiative never came to anything. "We didn't achieve any success worth mentioning in this matter. In other words, we couldn't draw women from outside our circles into the women's movement." (Belli, 1994: 577)

The Women Labours Association (EKD); the Ankara Women's Association (AKD) later became the Federation of the Revolutionary Women's; the DDKaD which was set up in Diyarbakır were among the organizations set up at this time. During this period not only left-wing groups but even the fascist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) set up a women's organization called Ülkü-Han.

Until 1978 the IKD Executive Committee trained its own activists. In Turkey's four corners (except the East Anatolian Region) there were leaders who were TKP members or sympathisers or branches and local offices who sympathized with socialism and hundreds, even thousands of IKD members or **Kadınların Sesi** subscribers. From that point on, the operation of excluding different opinions from the organization started.

The period of excluding women with different political views can be followed in **Kadın Dayanışması** (Woman Solidarity) magazine, the paper of the TSIP women members. At the Ankara/Çankaya Branch Assembly in September 1977

the sale of the paper was prevented and *Kadın Dayanışması* was declared as a “divisive paper” (Kadın Dayanışması, 1977: 5) The speakers from the “Democratic Centralist” group were obstructed from speaking later in the Assembly. The paper says: “the speakers were cut off on account with a motion that was claimed to be out of order and the members registered their names for a speech before the motion were not given the right of speaking.” (Kadın Dayanışması, 1977: 5) It was also reported in the same issue that the IKD CEC was not satisfied only by dissolving the Bursa Branch and appointing a temporary “friendly” branch executive committee, but continued “expelling the activists beyond their political lines”. (Kadın Dayanışması, 1977: 7) On 12.12.1977, Fazilet Çulha, TSIP member and General Editor of Kadın Dayanışması magazine, was expelled from membership without asking for her written defense, due to reasons claimed as, “the paper’s destructive and divisive publications about the IKD.” That attitude was the result of the meaningless struggle between TKP and TSIP reflected on IKD.

The mistrust shown towards women with different political views was extended even to sympathisers of the TKP. Vahide Yılmaz relates how old GSB-ÖNCÜ women members, even after this organization had dissolved itself and identified with the TKP, were met with mistrust.

In the IKD, there was never a place among us for a different political direction. For example, after the GSB dissolved itself, for a long time we treated the women of this organization, who of their own accord had come to work in a women’s organization, with suspicion and we checked upon all their activities. In fact it took these very hard working women friends a very long time to prove to us that they had no ulterior motives (!). On the other hand, when the TSIP women came and said “we’ll join your organization but we want our own page in Kadınların Sesi” we didn’t even accept them as members. Gülten Kaçmaz became a member of the organization in her all sincerely, but just because she was the wife

of Ahmet Kaçmaz, the Chairman of TSIP, all her comings and goings were watched, she was given no work and finally she was forced to resign. In this way, we saved ourselves from this terrible danger (!) (Yılmaz, 1990: 41)

However it needs to be printed out that in the 1970s the IKD was not the only organization that having trained its own activists, expelled women with other political views, did not allocate them duties and forced them to resign. All political groups either set up organizations which totally upheld their political position or they took control of existing organizations and tried to impose their own views. This was even true for democratic mass organizations such as TÖB-DER, TÜM-DER, TÛTED which had members from all sorts of left-wing political organizations.

In short the IKD was an organization that had the same positive and negative aspects as all other organizations formed in the 1970s as “democratic mass organizations.” The fact that it was set up and led by women did not change this. It can be said that the 1970s were a period of unnecessarily divided communist/socialist/revolutionary organizations. This period will go down in history as a time when the members of left-wing organizations worked with incredible commitment to gain acceptance in the mass movements, while at the same time the people belonging to different groups did not work in solidarity but on the contrary were in unbelievable competition with each other which almost amounted to a war. Because of this, to say retrospectively that “these things should not have happened in a women’s organization” shows a lack of understanding of the spirit of the times. The IKD was not able to stay outside the politics of the TKP on this subject and they saw other women working for the same socialist aim as competitors and did not take them under

the umbrella of the IKD. It was obviously a contradictory position for the Central Executive Committee of the IKD claiming to be “an independent organization” on one hand, while allowing on the other hand only the TKP to recruit within the IKD. If the IKD had been able to continue with the policy of the first years of its existence, i.e. if it had retained its position as an organization which was open to all other political views, then it would have collected many more women under its roof. But especially after 1978 the IKD not only purged women from other political groups, but also virtually made the IKD into the TKP’s Women Section. In this way, it deviated from its founding idea, which had been so insistently argued, of gathering together women “of every opinion and every social sector” and refusing to become a party section.

6.3.1 IKD and the ‘Organizational Independence’

In spite of all this, the IKD was “organizationally independent.” Because the women who were the leaders of the IKD took their own decisions. These were women with strong characters and self-confidence. With their own competence and initiative they put into practice a loosely-defined political position. EF answers the question “how independent was the IKD” as follows:

The IKD was not independent of party policies but organizationally it was really independent. To give an example: at the Bursa Conference, we didn’t allow the TSIP men to come into the hall. Y.K., a TSIP woman who was extremely capable, kept going in and out of the hall to get the men’s advice. We never took advice from men and condemned this kind of behavior.

Let me mention another event: In 1978 we invited all the organizations to a meeting. Several came but only Emegın Bayrađı (Labour’s Flag) and Kurtuluş (Liberation) abstained. We set down and talked to the young women from these organizations, they accept a whole lot of things, then

they came to the next meeting and said "we've changed our minds." We agreed on slogans and the next day the same people came and said "our political organization criticized us, they asked how could you accept these?" We never did things like that. Nobody ever said to us "do this" or "why did you say that there" and anyway, we would not have accepted such an attitude.

CD makes a similar evaluation to EF. The IKD women did not give anyone a chance to interfere with them.

We succeeded in reaching housewives, women workers, working professional women and every women who participated was able to see the concrete results of her work. That's the kind of "women's" organization that we were, and this attracted so much attention, especially after 1978 that interventions and directives started at different levels. But we managed to retain our independence in the organizational sense. We, women made the decisions about all the campaigns. All actions were carried out with women's creativity. At first no one interfered, because they didn't consider it worthwhile. By 1978, they didn't dare to interfere, because by now there were well trained women in the executive committee, regional secretariats and branch executive committees, who were conscious political activists.

NO relates an event corresponding to the understanding of organizational independence.

In 1976, I worked on the organization of the Diyarbakır branch. After 3-4 months work I opened an IKD branch and the executive committee recalled me. Ş.Y., who was the TKP regional/district secretary, which I didn't know at the time but found out after the 1980 coup, said to me, "go to Istanbul and tell the IKD executive committee to send you back here. Tell them that I want this." When I said this to the General Secretary of IKD she looked at me knowingly, smiled and said nothing. Two days later, I was on my way in a completely different direction, to Trabzon, as the Secretary of the Eastern Black Sea Region. I didn't know if this example demonstrates the IKD's organizational independence from the TKP. But at least it shows that any influential party man in a position of authority could not interfere in the work of the IKD according to his own ideas. We IKD women showed our great displeasure to any men who tried to interfere with our work.

I was still secretary of the Diyarbakır region. News came that women in Van wanted to form an IKD branch. Even though setting up a branch in Van was not in my program, but I decided to go there. On the very day I was leaving, the Branch Chairman of the IGD said to me: "Don't go to

Van. You won't be able to set up a branch there and anyway it isn't necessary." I remember I became very angry and told him that only me and the IKD Executive Committee would decide in which cities IKD branches would or not would not be formed. And I set up an IKD branch in Van.

6.4 The Ideological Structure of the IKD and its Approach to Feminism

How did the IKD members see women's position in the 1970's? Actually the IKD women did not see women's position very differently from today's feminists.

By spending a large part of their day doing housework such as, cooking, washing, laundry which does not help develop a person's personality, women are left completely outside social production.

...(women) in addition to all their hard work and effort are, not appreciated and they meet only humiliation and contempt.

Women's centuries old passivity, distance from social life, withdrawal, silence, their life within the narrow confines of the family and the home, their inexperience, their narrow world revolving around the home and kitchen...

In addition the widespread traditions and blind beliefs which oppress women, the pressure exerted by husbands, fathers, fiancées, the lack of time and other hundreds of factors which are lived every day are a barrier to women getting organized. (First General Assembly W.Report, 1976: 6-37)

The IKD perceived the question of Women's Liberation in exactly the same way as their predecessors, the women of the Second International and the Comintern. According to communists, the major reason for women's oppression is the exclusion of women from public production and women's struggle for emancipation is an integral part of the struggle of the proletariat (working class) to overthrow capitalism. Women's liberation was impossible in the capitalist system in

which they lived and women would not be liberated while class system and exploitation existed. Since “they knew that women’s liberation was bound up with the liberation of the working class and labour” if they want to be liberated they should join the socialist struggle (II.GAWR, 1978: 25) This position was spelt out in the IKD documents.

The honorable but difficult duty of our women’s movement, which says *our path is the path of the working class, our liberation is tied to the liberation of labour* (...) is to ensure that an organized women’s movement along with all other sectors of the people joins in united action of the working class under the leadership. (II GAWR, 1978: 33)

Sadly, the IKD women either did not know the history of the communist women’s movement which they had inherited or they consciously only adopted the ideological positions which were based on the period from the 1930s onwards. They even fell behind the ideas that were discussed and accepted in the First Communist Women’s Conference referred to in the 4th Chapter. The IKD women do not even mention the very clearly stated principle to “abolish domestic labour.” And they continued the silence of communist women on the issue of family and fertility. Since they did not know Clara Zetkin’s criticism about the treatment of women as second class members in communist parties they were not prepared for the danger awaiting them. However, the IKD women adopted wholesale from the International the position “of not making alliances with feminists” they evaluated the period like this:

The IKD women’s knowledge of the feminist movement consisted of strong criticisms of the socialist countries. The radical feminist and socialist feminist publications which formed the theoretical principals of the second wave of feminism were just beginning to appear in the West. (IKD is 20 Years Old, Unpublished.)

Their analysis of feminism appeared in **Kadınların Sesi** and the First Report in the early years. It appears that the engagement with feminism was very brief and superficial. Because criticisms of the IKD of being "feminist" the IKD women had to keep repeating that they weren't feminist, that they were against feminism. In the first issue of **Kadınların Sesi**, the IKD's newspaper, their views of feminism were set out. Under the heading **A Subject: Wrong Views on Women**, they talked about two incorrect views: The first view that was criticized was the idea that women's place is in the home and that women are inferior beings. The second one was the feminist view which they presented as follows:

This view argues that women are oppressed by men and that they will be liberated from backwardness by struggling against men. Feminism is primarily about women's rights and it calls women to an active fight to win these rights. However, nowadays especially in advanced capitalist countries, many women who wrongly hold this view are fighting to use the same toilets as men, do not wear bras on the basis that they restrict freedom and to behave and dress like men, in the name of women's rights, freedom and equality. (**Kadınların Sesi**, 1975:3)

As it can be seen, the IKD women analyzed and interpreted feminism superficially. So, this interpretation reached the IKD members and the readers of **Kadınların Sesi**. This superficial approach also appeared in the I.GAWR report:

In the feminist women's movement and feminist organizing the understanding of equality between men and women has been reduced to the gross and simplistic level of women needing to do everything that men do. Instead of taking men as allies, feminists have set them up as targets or even as enemies. In this way, they distort women's desire to come together and organize for their social liberation, they show them wrong targets and they abstract this struggle from the struggle of other progressive and left-wing forces in society. That is why this kind of feminists organizing whether in our country or in the rest of the world has never gained anything of concrete value. In fact, women's struggle for liberation cannot be considered separately from the struggle for the liberation of society in general. (I.GAWR, 1976: 30-31)

In short, the IKD women accepted that women were oppressed but they remained tied to the solutions of Zetkin and Kollontai which stated that women would only be liberated from this oppression with the abolition of classes and exploitation. Although the concept “patriarchy” was widely used in Engel’s “The Origin of the Family”, which was a primary reference book for IKD women, this problem did not exist for them. For the IKD women, feminism was a current which would divide the workers movement on the basis of gender and weaken it. In a recent interview when asked “what did you know about the second wave of feminism?”; EF answered:

I didn’t know. I hadn’t read that kind of thing. We knew a bit about the first wave of feminism, the suffragettes, we read Beauvoir, but we didn’t know about the second wave of feminism. We were against feminism without thinking about it very much. I thought the Marxist commentaries were enough.

AB answered the question “what did you know about feminism in the 1970s?” by saying “virtually nothing” and she continued:

I knew the criticisms about feminism which appeared in the Progress Publishers publications printed in the Soviet Union. I didn’t read anything else. The most important books of the 2nd wave of feminism were only published in the West in 1974-75. When I went abroad, I brought back Progress publications, because at that time that’s where my interest lay.

GH answered the question “as an Istanbul woman Civil Engineer who frequently visited Europe weren’t you aware of the feminist movement which was terrorizing Europe” like this:

I didn’t know there was such a thing as feminism. I didn’t know that it was a movement that way creating havoc in Europe. It hadn’t reached us. Our feminism remained at the level of Simone de Beauvoir’s books. If the writers of the time had been translated* perhaps we would have been influenced differently. I don’t know what would have happened if the

* Feminist books published abroad in the 1970s were not usually translated into Turkish. The only one was Kate Millet’s Sexual Politics translated by Seçkin Selvi and published by Payel Yayinevi in 1973. But in the interviews IKD women said “no” books were published.

people who understood feminism at that time had explained it more effectively, but they didn't do this.

The important thing here is that no criticism reached the IKD women on account of their analysis of feminism. EF explains the situation like this:

There was no feminist voice criticising the IKD. Feminists like Şirin Tekeli and Stella Ovadia who after 1980 became important figures in the feminist movement, had been IKD members. None of them gave this kind of criticism when they left the IKD. I'm not saying that we would have accepted it if they had, but they didn't criticise us from a feminist perspective. Just as no criticism came to us from the women's front so not a single book of the 2nd wave of feminism was translated into Turkish in the 1970s. At that time we were more concerned about improving our knowledge of Marxist Theory. There was no milieu to bring us into the debate on women. If such a milieu had existed we would have at least read these in order to prepare a response and I didn't know what kind of impression they would have made on us.

AB said "the opposition to us came from the left. Those woman called us "feminist" and we were trying to show that we weren't" and then she went on:

No one said to us "what kind of women's movement is this. You don't know the first thing about feminism." Feminists first appeared in Turkey in the 1980s. Nobody denies this. Şirin Tekeli herself says that she didn't bother herself with feminism until after 1980. Stella came to IKD and became a member. we expelled her but she didn't write either to criticise the IKD or protest against her expulsion. She could have written a book or a pamphlet or even got a newspaper to write a short piece about it. In other words no criticisms from a feminist perspective were ever made to us by anybody.

This is not an excuse for the fact that we as people who read piles of books such as Progress Publishers or other left-wing publishers, did not read feminist books. Why didn't we read them? We had no motivation. In spite of this I always maintain a share of self-criticism here. On the other hand we didn't have time. I wonder how many novels I read in the last four years in the IKD. We didn't read anything except theoretical books. We didn't even go to the cinema at that time.

In the second half of the 1970s the other women organizations formed by socialist women in Turkey held the same attitudes. Ayşegül Devocioğlu, General

Secretary of the Federation of Revolutionary Women's Organizations (DKD/F) tells it like this:

Those were days of tremendous social struggle. We used to say that as socialists we had to work in every field (...) We knew that theoretical pieces that explained that women were doubly oppressed, by heart but I can't say that we really took this into account when we worked with women. I was reading Kate Millet and so on at that time. But those were very secondary things. We were in the socialist struggle. (Devecioğlu, 1988: 24-26)

During the same period the TSIP women who brought out the journal *Kadın Dayanışması* (*Woman Solidarity*) did not think differently. In the 3rd issue of *Kadın Dayanışması* TSIP women wrote the following in an article titled, "The Function of the IKD and Our Duties":

The primary function of an organization like this which gathers women from different sectors under roof is to educate them in the direction of participating in the struggle for democracy and raising their political awareness. The secondary function is to struggle for women's social rights and interests. When advising women from the organization in regard to social (the protection of motherhood, equal pay for equal work, nurseries and so on) women workers should be directed to the trade unions to defend their economic rights and interests and other working women should be directed to democratic professional organizations. (*Kadın Dayanışması*, 1977: 2)

Just as the IKD was opposed to feminism from an ideological point of view, as a "hierarchical and centralist" organization it was also in total opposition to feminists from the point of view of organizational structure. In spite of this were the IKD members able to form different, more "womanish" relations among themselves than other democratic mass organizations with hierarchical structures. EF says:

Actually we were feminists at that time. For first generation older women like us in the IKD it was accepted as a fact that women were completely independent from and equal to men. It didn't occur either to me or to AB to ask our husbands "shall I do this or that?" when we were doing something.

AB, on the other hand makes this evaluation in her article that was written in 1990:

In spite of everything the IKD was an organization where men were not directly involved where they could not directly impose their hegemony. In many organizations where men were directly involved, many rights and opportunities for women that were taken for granted in the IKD did not exist. In organizations and meetings where men were present, we know that women were often afraid to speak and when they did speak they endured ridicule and humiliation. "Important" jobs such as writing a leaflet, bringing out a newspaper, doing educational work were a male monopoly. Leadership at every level was like this. In the IKD, at every level, women naturally carried out these "important" duties and jobs such as leadership, leaflets, publication of papers, and education. What is more these women were able to do these at least as well as the men in similar organizations and usually with more creativity, commitment and responsibility. (Dinçer, 1990: 9)

In spite of its hierarchical structure the IKD developed its own style of making and carrying out decisions that were different from other organizations. In the IKD all work was done together without regard for organizational hierarchy. For example, when a mailing had to be done, stuffing envelopes was done as a joint task. No member was ever seen to serve or to be made to serve an CEC member. IKD's CEC members even did such jobs as making tea or cleaning the premises as a matter of course. NO, explains:

I never saw IKD members serve IKD Leaders. As a Regional Secretary, I was in the position of the leader of the highest rank in the places where I worked. In spite of this, when someone said, "Let's clean up the place" in any branch I would go and clean the toilets and leave the newest members to empty the ashtrays. I behaved like this because I thought that "comradely and communist relations" were relations between equals and that this could be demonstrated only in this way.

The hierarchy in the IKD could sometimes be reversed. A Member or Branch Chair could give orders to a Regional Secretary who was above her in the hierarchy. NO, explains:

One day I returned to Samsun after a meeting of the Central Organizing Bureau in Istanbul. I went to the Branch Chair's house and find four or

five IKD women with crochet hooks in their hands, broils crocheting away. Before I had a chance to say "What's going on?", Branch Chairwomen said to me: "Come and take this hook and get to work on this motif. We're making table cloths to pay for IKD's rent. Everybody has to do it." Although I had lots of other work that needed to be done and could have easily refused, I didn't say anything and I took the hook and made my first stitches that day. There would be no question of anybody giving an IGD Regional Secretary instructions in such a manner.

6.5 The Kadınların Sesi (Voice of Women) Newspaper

As explained in Chapter IV, the German Social Democrat Women published a paper called *Die Gleichheit* (Equality) while the Bolsheviks in Tsarist Russia published *Rabonitsa* (Women Workers). Both of these were aimed at women workers. In Turkey, *Kadınların Sesi* (Voice of Women), the official paper of the IKD began to be published in 1975. The women who made the decision about the paper's name did not know that their sisters in France in 1848 (*Voix de Femmes*) and in Great Britain in the 1960s (*Women's Voice*) had chosen the same name.

Kadınların Sesi (Voice of Women) was a publication which was entirely a product of women. From the owner (Beria Onger) to the editors (Zühal Meriç, Dora Küçükyalçın, and finally Berrin Uyar) from the correspondent to the columnist all were women. All the technical work, distribution and sales were also carried out by women. This paper was brought out by women who had no previous experience of this kind of work. Contributions to *Kadınların Sesi* were nearly always published anonymously. The paper was produced collectively. Each article committed the whole IKD. The 1970s was a time in Turkey when individual identities were not important,

where individuals merged into a collective and were assessed as part of a collective. In almost all the periodicals of left-wing groups, very few names appear. The ones that do appear are those of leaders who attract the attention of the masses. The IKD also followed this custom and generally the only articles that bore a name were reports of speeches made by Beria Onger at openings or press reports. Most of the speeches and articles were almost always prepared collectively by the Executive Committee of the IKD.

The IKD was founded on 3rd June 1975 and the first issue of *Kadınların Sesi* appeared in August. The paper continued to be published continually and 61 issues appeared until 12th September 1980. The first issue was a tabloid of four pages which were printed 5000 copies. (Appendix B) When the circulation reached 10,000 in June 1976 the number of the pages had increased to six. In the First General Assembly in 1976, it was planned to increase the number of pages and the circulation and this was achieved. In May 1977, the circulation reached 20,000 and in July 1977 there were eight pages. On the 8th March 1978, the circulation reached 25,000. From 1st November 1978 with its 40th issue, it changed from a tabloid to a 20x28 cm. format, with 29 pages. (Appendix C) In a special announcement in the 40th issue a target was set to reach a circulation of 50,000 with 15,000 subscribers by 1st May 1979. But this target was not reached even by September 1980. In the pamphlet "IKD is 10 years Old" it is stated that the last issue of the journal had a print run of 30,000 and there were 32 pages. (IKD is 10 Years Old, 1985:10)

Until May 1977 *Kadınların Sesi* appeared as the “Paper of the İlerici Kadınlar Derneği” but after this date it came out as an independent publication. In the first issues the words “Paper of the IKD” appeared under the logo, whereas later this was replaced by “for Equality, Social Progress and Peace.”

Many articles in *Kadınların Sesi* were aimed specifically at women workers. A lot of information was given about the situations of women taking part in the struggle against fascism and for democracy at an international level and about these struggles. Apart from political analysis there were interviews with workers, teachers, office workers, housewives, etc. In the last quarter of the 1970s when deaths were reaching more than 3 a day, women were called into the struggle for democracy and socialism. In addition high prices, the reasons for inflation, economic inequality, the absence of good working and health conditions, nurseries, pensions and other problems were dealt with. In the column, *Letters From Friend* letters from members or non-members from the four corners of Turkey were printed. In the health column information about women’s and children’s health was given. The lives of women from different classes and sections of society, their reactions to events and their behavior were presented in the form of photo-novels and drawings. Additionally a lot of space was given to the international women’s movement and the IDWF, the shared problem of disarmament and the peace movement and calls for solidarity with the peoples of Chile, Palestine, etc. and who were fighting against fascism. Women were also given detailed information in every issue, of IKD’s organizational work, literacy classes, health work, activities, newly started campaigns, demonstrations and other activities that had taken place and events celebrating 8th March International Women’s Day.

Although *Kadınların Sesi* defined itself as a paper which “approached the women’s question from a class position” and stated its editorial policy as presenting “solutions for women’s social economic problems in the system in which we live” (II.GAWR, 1978: 112), subjects of specific interest to women also appeared. In this sense *Kadınların Sesi* was truly a women’s paper. For example, in the 55th issue an article **Menopause** appeared while in the 57th issue there was an article titled “**Birth Control is up to you.**” When we remember that at that time sexuality was virtually a taboo subject in revolutionary/socialist circles, we realize how valuable these articles were. Abortion was advocated in an article titled “**What is Abortion?**” (Issue 41, p. 21) In the final issue in an article titled “**I’m expecting a baby**” information was given regarding the question “What kind of sexual relations during pregnancy?” (Appendix D)

From the first issues articles such as “What are your rights regarding breast feeding rooms and nurseries?” (Issue 3) or “maternity leave” (Issue 6) appeared as features in columns headed “Did you know this” and women were constantly made aware of how to put legal rights into practice in their lives. It’s interesting that from the 43rd Issue needlework patterns begin to appear. “You too can crochet a tablecloth” is followed by “let’s see a jump suit for our child”. In the “Handy Tips” column advice is offered on “How to get rid of biro stains?” or “What you can do to get rid of cockroaches?” As the number of IKD members reached the thousands, *Kadınların Sesi* began to publish such articles, from cooking recipes to knitting patterns with the intention of addressing a wider women’s audience. The point reached here reminds us of the path taken by Clara Zetkin’s *Equality*. *Equality* had a

print run of 2000 in 1891 and was directed at "advanced women's comrades." In 1914 however with a circulation of 125,000 it was writing about recipes and fashion. To argue on the one hand that women's liberation can only be achieved when "stupefying housework is done away with" and on the other hand to start columns on "Handy Hints" is surely proof of a tremendous confusion on the subject at where women's liberation lies.

In all four corners of Turkey on streets of cities large and small the sale of a paper only for women was an event which IKD members put on the agenda for the first time in Turkey. From 1968 it was common to see members and sympathisers of socialist/revolutionary groups selling their papers on the street. And the IKD women became a common sight as they stood in groups of five or fifteen with piles of papers in their hands at boat stations, train stations and city centers shouting "*Kadınların Sesi* for Equality Peace and Progress is out." The first sales started in big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir but later street sales went on in provincial capitals such as Bursa, Trabzon, Samsun, Antakya and Iskenderun. Paper selling often finished at the police station. An IKD member recalls:

After 1978 the political situation became quite harsh. In addition to the possibility of police arrests, attacks on women selling papers by fascists and so-called *Maoist* groups had also begun. So we started to plan paper sales very seriously. We made detailed plans: how many people would sell the paper, how many people would act as watch-outs, how long would sales last? Apart from attacks by fascists or Maoist, incidents of sexual harassment also occurred. Because of the possibility of arrests and attacks it was decided to limit a sale to 15-20 minutes and then to do another sale, half an hour later, for another 15-20 minutes in another part of the city. Before the police had time to act on information about a sale, the women would have left for another center. There was one woman responsible for each sale. In an emergency she would make the decisions. She knew who had gave out on a sale and who was acting as a watch-out. In case of arrest, she would inform the branch or center, would immediately send a

lawyer to the police station where women were held and do anything else that was necessary. Before going out on a sale there would be a meeting on the organizations premises where every possible situation was discussed, slogans were agreed and false addresses to give to the police were made up. Nobody took anything with them except their ID card. Clothes suitable for running were worn and to prevent expulsions from work. Women said they were housewives. In addition members data cards or subscribers lists were not kept out the branch to prevent them being taken in any kind of search. The women never took more than 10-15 papers each on a sale because in case of an arrest the police would confiscate the papers. For each woman selling there was a watch-out who would intervene in case of danger. The paper sellers carried small change. New members were also taken on sales. They watched from a safe distance to gain experience for future sales.

Women going out on their first sale spoke their slogans timidly and quietly but after the second and third time they became veterans and made the streets ring with their confident loud voices. "A nursery in every workplace and every neighborhood" "Milk for Our Children" "Equal pay for equal work" "Bread, peace and freedom" "Kadınların Sesi is out - 10 Lira" "Fascism shall not pass the shields of mothers" "Close down the MHP" Their shrill women's voices echoed in boat and train stations, streets and squares. All passers-by both women and men were interested in. Some showed their support and bought a paper, then approached out of curiosity. Some however took fright and quickened their step. There were some who made donations or didn't take their change.

A meeting place was established for after the sale. Everybody who had taken part in the sale came and an evaluation was carried out. How many papers had been sold and how much money collected was calculated. In addition to the propaganda aim the paper sales were also a source of income.

This work of the *Kadınların Sesi* sales is an excellent example of how the women became experts in organizational work.

6.6 The Organizational Structure of the IKD

At its founding the IKD constitution defined its organizational structure as General Assembly, Central Executive Committee, Auditing Committee, Disciplinary

Committee, Branches and Local Branches. This was a classical association work style, well established in law. The Executive Committee appointed branch and local office officers and determined the policies of the organization. The appointed branches called a conference within six months to elect officers. In the first constitution, the Central Executive Committee was to be elected every two years but at the General Assembly Meeting in 1978 this was changed to elections every three years.

Very soon after its foundation the IKD started to open branches in provincial cities 8 branches and 2 local offices sent delegates to the IKD's First General Members Meeting. The first branches to be set up in Istanbul were Fatih, Şişli and Kartal. Branches were easily opened in Turkey's largest cities, Ankara, Izmir and Bursa, before the First General Assembly. In addition branches in the mining center of Zonguldak and in Antakya with its large Arab population, were amongst the first.

At the First General Assembly Meeting which took place after the foundation of the IKD, the membership was 1,500. At the 2nd General Members Meeting held in 1978, it was announced that there were 22 branches, 26 local offices and that membership had reached 12,000. (II. GAWR, 1978: 66) The composition of members were as follows:

workers	21.7 %	housewives	32.2 %
teachers	17.3 %	office workers	10.0 %
students	8.1 %	health workers	6.5 %
peasants	1.0 %	self-employed	3.0 %

The IKD had been successful in reaching women workers, housewives, and office workers. But it had not been success full in attracting intellectual women. EF says:

The IKD had members who worked in the arts, there were many painters. They were all people who accepted socialist ideas. There were doctors.

We had Gülsen Dayıođlu, Sennur Sezer, Sümeyra, Özgöl Erten (a lawyer), Semra Özdamar (an actor), Meral Taygun and a couple of theatre actors as members. They were actively involved. We had contacts with Reha İsvan, Türkan Şoray, Sezen Aksu, and Deniz Türkali. The IKD was more open to attracting these kinds of women at the beginning but later during our hard-line period the recruitment of such women nearly stopped. At the beginning Şirin Tekeli, Stella Ovadia, Sibel Özbudun were all members.

The IKD had a centralist hierarchical structure or to use a more fashionable term - it was an *authoritarian* organization. It was one of several organizations in the 1970s defined as "democratic mass organizations." In educational notes prepared by the EC and titled: **The Place and Role of Democratic Mass Organizations and specifically of the IKD** the question "how should the principle of democratic centralism be put into practice?" was answered like this: "All leadership organs are elected from below. Elected are answerable to their own electors and the higher organs. Decisions taken by higher organs are binding for lower ones." In answer to the question "What defines centralism?" it is first stated that the decisions of the Executive Committee which is elected at conference must be binding. The answer continues: "decisions taken by higher organs are binding for lower ones and majority decisions are binding for the minorities.

The democratic aspect of democratic centralism, is the election of leaders from below and the answerability of these leaders to their electors and higher organs. This was not possible in practice. After the minorities were expelled from the organization, elections were carried out only with people approved by the center. No one with different views was left to question the decisions of the leaders. The anti-

democratic aspects of the mechanism reached as far as not informing those who were to be elected as officers. NO relates:

During the 2nd General Members Meeting the Secretary General CD handed over to me the 'Executive Committee Lists' before the election and told me to distribute them. (At that time I was a member of the Central Organizational Bureau and Eastern Black Sea Regional Secretary.) I handed out the lists. Soon after I'd finished the distribution some IKD women came to congratulate me. When I said "What's going on?" they looked at me oddly and told me that they were congratulating me "for being the 3rd reserve member of the Executive Committee." When I was distributing the lists I had not looked at the reserve list. They put me on the reserve list of the CEC, the highest organ of the organization; I am one of the 12 people to be announced to 12,000 members. They consider me worthy of this but they don't feel the need to call me and tell me this or ask me. This hurt me very much.

What PR says on this subject is also interesting:

I was Southern Regional Secretary. The IKD was going to have its congress and we didn't know who would be elected to the CEC. The IKD had big branches and regional secretaries in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. We went to the conference and suddenly found we were on the reserve list. Why were we on the reserve list? Is that what they considered appropriate? Why didn't they ask our opinion about the other executive members? If we ever did an evaluation of the IKD we would have to examine this. All the delegates who attended the 2nd Conference, the active members, the IKD officers are owed an apology by the party or the IKD CEC or whoever.

One way or another these women had lost their jobs or had given up their jobs, they stayed away from their families and children, some left their husbands. What's more at time there were arrests and these women also went to prison. You stay here and there for months at a time on behalf of the organization but you have no say in the leadership. This makes no sense. What's more if they'd asked us they would have got more or less the same results. But this tendency didn't exist.

Since the regional secretaries did not stay in Istanbul this could be used as a justification for their not being taken into the CEC. But how can we explain why highly competent and experienced members of branch executive committees in Istanbul did not take office in the CEC.

After the *Second General Assembly Meeting*, the Central Executive Committee was made up of 9 woman: **Beria Onger** (founder), **Gönül Dinçer** (founder), **Şeyda Talu** (founder), **Zühal Kılıç** (founder), **Vahide Yılmaz Esinsel** (founder), **Yüksel Selek**, **Ayşe Coşkun**, **Ayşe Vassaf**, **Çiçek Yağcı**. **Nurtan Bulutgil**, **Berrin Uyar**, **Handan Altıneller** were elected to the *Auditing Committee*, while **Dora Küçükyağcı**, **Sevinç Tekeli**, **Gönül Orbey** were elected to the *Disciplinary Committee*. Five people who had been members of the previous CEC and who were also founding members of the IKD, i.e. who had brought the IKD into existence, were on the CEC again. Of the women workers who were founder members only Vahide Yılmaz was able to keep her place.

6.1 Regional Organization and the Regional Secretariat

When the IKD was closed, it was made known that there were 33 branches and 35 local offices. How were these branches set up? The first Secretary General of the IKD was CD, a young woman of only 25. She was also responsible for organizational matters and in 1976 she traveled to four corners of Turkey doing the necessary preliminary work for setting up branches and then she authorized the opening of branches that were ready. As the number of branches and members increased, as requests for branches came from additional provinces, it became impossible for one person to carry out all organizational work. By now apart from the IKD CEC members there were newly trained activists especially in Istanbul. So it was proposed that these capable, experienced IKD members could help in the setting up of

new branches. Less than 14 months after the founding of the organization the work which had been done until then by CD alone, became the responsibility of a new organ named the 'Central Organizational Bureau.'

Turkey was divided for organizational purposes into ten regions: Istanbul, Thrace, Marmara, Aegean, Central Anatolia, South Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, Southeast Anatolia, West and East Black Sea and regional secretaries were sent to the priority regions. (II GAWR, 1978: 69)

Later another organ entered the organizational structure, the "Regional Secretariat" and this was included in the constitution after the 2nd GA. IKD's first Regional Secretary was PR from Istanbul's Kartal Branch. PR originally went to Adana for two weeks to set up a branch there, but as Adana became the center for the "Southern Region" she ended up staying there for 2,5 years. PR success gave the IKD's CEC the idea of appointing an IKD member to each region, to be responsible for that region. So a special section on Regional Secretaries appeared in the 2nd General Report and the "Regional Secretariat" was included in the Constitution as a level in the hierarchy. An article on the "rights, duties and responsibilities of the Regional Secretariat" was added. (Constitution, 1976, Article 33-34)

At first the work of Regional Secretaries was limited to opening branches in the provinces selected by the Central Organizational Bureau, and training activists to take office in these new branches. Later the work widened to include co-ordination between branches; organization of joint regional actions, and region-wide meetings; and working to ensure that the women's movement moved forward within the framework of women's common problems in an appropriate way. (II. GAWR, 1978: 69)

As the number of branches increased, in addition to joint branch executive committee meetings at regional level, joint national meetings were organized for officers of all the regions where organizational work was taking place. These meetings

achieved the aim of organizing joint demonstrations, and joint celebrations and more important: of allowing an intensive exchange of experiences and solidarity between branches. The creation of the post of Regional Secretary strengthened the internal organization of the IKD which was growing and spreading to every area of Turkey. It also strengthened communication between the executive committee and the branches.

PR, IKD's first Regional Secretary relates:

The IKD formed the central organizational bureau with one member from each member from each branch. This was a structure with authority. Usually the branch chairs attended the meetings but I came from Kartal Branch. Requests were coming to the IKD from different places in Turkey saying "We are a group of women have and we want to open an IKD branch." When the CEC looked at these, they wanted to know quite rightly, "Are there any political activists among these women? Are their views close to us or not? If we open a branch will they be able to manage it? What is the membership potential? Are they workers or intellectuals?" Previously CD used to go. I was one of the most active members of the Central Organizational Bureau. School had finished. It was suggested that I go to Adana. The Executive Committee gave me a certificate of authority and off I went.

PR tells how she set up the branch in Adana:

I went to Adana. Two male teachers met me at the bus station. We went to TÖB-DER. There I met a women who was teacher, she lived the same kind of revolutionary life as we did here. She was the daughter of teachers. I stayed their home for about a month.

While I was there we started having meetings every weekend at TÖB-DER in order to set up the IKD Adana Branch. The women's I met had contacts. We started meetings with 40-50 women. We talked about the IKD and the women's movement and we showed slides. In a short time word got about. Lots of different groups, from TIP, TSIP, Kurd's groups started to come to the meetings.

It was very easy to make contact with the women workers. They had problems and we were bringing the solutions to their problems: Socialism was the solution to everything. However in the end a group of women were left under own control. We elected them as branch executive committee members in a democratic manner.

NO, who set up the Diyarbakır and Van branches in Southeast Anatolia and the Trabzon, Beşikdüzü and Samsun branches in the Eastern Black Sea Region says:

After PR, Regional Secretaries were appointed to other places. I wanted to work in Anatolia. I longed to be Regional Secretary, I dreamed about it. It was not the kind of work you could do if you did not want to. I was 24 when I went to Diyarbakır. I stayed in the Southeast for six months and 2,5 years at Black Sea. Apart from meetings of the Central Organization Bureau that were held in Istanbul every 1,5 or 2 month, I did not leave the region. Staying away from Istanbul, that is from Executive Committee, for 1,5 to 2 months at a time I had to decide everything myself. When I first started working at the Black Sea, there was no party organization. Nobody interfered with me, nor was there anyone more experienced than me that I could ask for advice. Whatever we did was due with mutual solidarity among women. When I first went to a new place, I am not exaggerating, I went from door to door and met hundreds of women. Then I developed closer relationships with the ones who were most advanced, willing and committed and I set up the branch with those women within a month or two. I did not give anyone any privilege or make distinctions between them. I immediately gave work, responsibilities and authority to everyone who was willing. I organized meetings and training. Whatever I knew at a theoretical, ideological, political level, even songs and poems, I passed on, shared with them.

At the time of the 1980 coup I was still in Samsun. My life was spent moving around in Anatolia like a *wandering minstrel* with a political mission. I went from town to town and was a guest in a different house nearly every night. They gave me food and drink, washed and cleaned me. I was always tired with lack of sleep and had work to do. The IKD members whose homes I stayed in gave me clean underwear and even prepared my bath. They made my bed with clean sheets. After the evening meal the children and husbands would go to bed and we would talk and talk. I lost count of the nights we stayed up till dawn. Then they would go to work exhausted and I would crawl between the clean sheets. The next night I would be in another house, in another town with another women.

The CEC members, in their evaluation presented to the General Congress on the subject of the regional secretaries offered their highest praises.

The regional secretaries, living away from their homes and families for months or even as much as a year or a year and a half, have done exemplary work in difficult material and moral conditions. Apart from the cities where we have set up branches (...) they have carried out

organizational work in scores of other cities, small towns and even villages. The branches set up in this last period and the level of competence of the activists who have taken office there is the best proof of our regional secretaries' exemplary work. (II. GAWR, 1978: 85)

NO also describes what kind of problems the regional secretaries would meet, and some of their difficulties:

Of course everything was not always so romantic. Sometimes the husband or somebody else from the family of the IKD member would say something like "well, isn't that wonderful you just stay the night wherever you happen to be; don't you have a family? How do they allow this?" I met that kind of thing.

I think the situation of regional secretaries like PR and me were the most difficult. Other women, other regional secretaries were lucky enough to live out their revolutionary lives from their own homes, together with their husbands, friends and families. There were very few women in my situation, that is who didn't live in the area they worked in. It wasn't easy for a woman like me who was educated and had lived in Ankara and Istanbul to find herself suddenly in an Anatolian provincial town, in a small place full of gossip. I remember that in the last years I found it very hard. I realized that after all this time I didn't have any friends. Friendship and comrade relations are different. People form friendships with time but I moved around so much that I didn't stay in one place long enough to form friendships. In every place I went, because of my mission, I couldn't talk about my personal problems to anyone. When everybody hangs on your every word, when in that small Anatolian town you are the person who seems to know everything, when you are the one who has the authority, when what you say is measured as the words of a communist you don't become friends with people, you became comrades. Nobody thinks you might have weaknesses or longings, nobody asks about your problems. There is training to be done, branches to be set up, bodies to be buried, neighborhoods attacked by fascists. Nobody thinks that you are a young woman of 25-26."

Two years after its foundation, the IKD had militant members who did not have any job other than their revolutionary work. These women with a high level of theoretical training are called professional revolutionaries in Leninist terminology. These women did not need to look to male revolutionaries for an example because they had before them the example of the women leaders of the IKD: AB left electrical

engineering and her job as a lecturer at Bosphorus University and started to work in Maden-İş (the Miners Union) which was affiliated to DISK. EF also left her job and first went to work for DISK but after 1977 she gave all her time to IKD activities. Other women such as CD, PR, GH and many others, although they were university graduates were not employed anywhere. CD did not have a job from the time that the IKD was founded.

I decided not to work for any employer. While my husband was studying I worked for two and a half years and maintained the family. Then I told him, its your turn now. It was my own idea. If I had wanted to go to work, I don't know if anyone would have told me "don't", she says.

EF tells a similar story.

I left Alarko to go and work for DISK. At that time DISK was very small. There were only 5-6 people altogether. At that time, Ibrahim Güzelce had become the Secretary General of DISK. I joined DISK in June 1975 and became Office Manager. I had a very good job with a good salary at Alarko and I left them to join DISK with a very small wage. We got to the point when we couldn't pay the rent. Later I left DISK and didn't have a job at all. I loved working for the IKD. It soon took over my life.

GH tells how she left her job as a Civil Engineer with a Masters Degree in Enka.

I left my job in 1976. Nobody asked me to do this, it was my own decision. I used to get really fed up when I was going to work. It seemed like torture to be sitting in Enka, when there was so much work to be done for the IKD. While I was working there, I even started to quit from the job during office hours to visit neighborhoods. But, I didn't feel good about that. At that time we had started to work in the neighborhoods and there was plenty of work to be done in the daytime. I made myself a *professional*. I took my severance pay and I thought I'd be able to live on that for a while. I started to give my full time to work for the IKD. There weren't many people who could give a whole day to IKD work. There was a shortage of activists. I was very happy working for the IKD especially at the beginning.

The IKD militants like all other revolutionary women of the period gave up all kinds of careers and material possibilities offered by the system and joined the

revolutionary struggle. Everything in their lives became second to politics. When women took their place in politics, the most manly role of all public domains, they rejected the female role of enclosure in the private domain. AB explains:

I was never a very lady-like woman. I didn't like housework at all, and didn't go to pieces in front of men. I didn't have children. My husband wanted a child but I refused. Children imprison women. I realized as a child that one of the causes of women's oppression was child care. A child ties a woman to her home and her husband and puts her career or whatever work she is doing into second place. That's why whether I had been active in the IKD or not, I wouldn't have had children. At one time, me and people like me, created a negative atmosphere in the IKD. Later they said things like, "they wouldn't even let us have children." Of course, we didn't force anybody, but ...

PR tells in this way.

I went to Adana supposedly for two weeks. There was no question of my staying for years. I'd finished my studies but I still had no idea what I was going to do in the future. The only thing I could think about for the future was political work. I wasn't thinking that I would get to a certain level, be a chairperson or anything like that. I believed in socialism. That's all. And though I never planned for it, I stayed in Adana as the Regional Secretary for 2,5 years.

At the IKD's Second General Assembly, it was stated that there were 12,000 members. At the end of the 1970s when there were more than 3-5 political murders a day, who were the IKD activists and militants? How did they live? Some of these militant women were different from other IKD members and women in general. They were usually not married. If their parents prevented them from being involved in politics, they left home; if it was their husbands, they got divorced. It was not uncommon for these women to leave their university studies. They built their lives on politics. These women rebelled against all social values and institutions.

The ones who ran away from mothers and fathers married the first “revolutionary” man they fancied, and so they were able to create marriages based on comrade relations and generally they didn’t have children. Since the husband too was a professional revolutionary, there were no traditional roles of *daughter-in-law* and *sister-in-law*. So these women did not have to face the problems dealt with by most women. A lot of married IKD leaders had a very different married life from classical married women: they did not experienced the pressure of parents in law. They consciously did not have children. Usually these were couples that both had studied at university. Housework and cooking were of course done by women at the minimum level. These women often argued with their husbands about cooking, cleaning and washing because *revolutionary husbands* still expected *revolutionary wives* to do the housework. In some families, with a false justification, it was possible to interpret this as assisting to a comrade, instead of serving as a husband. But since the menu consisted of such things as scrambled eggs and pasta, the work was not too tiring. The financial situation and the lack of time did not permit anything more elaborate. Very little time was spent at home. Day and night, at any time, during weekends, holidays even Bayram’s, an IKD militant was out and sometimes even traveling from city to city, without the knowledge of her husband.

Inspite of all their self-development, their independence and positions as party members, they still had problems sometimes. EF explains these problems.

Although I was married I was independent enough to do any work I wanted, without asking my husband. In spite of this, of course there were sometimes problems. After leaving work in Merter, I went to IKD meetings night after night. There was never any food at home. I always came home late. My husband used to tell me: “You don’t plan properly, your work is chaotic. What do you do every god dam evening? Instead of working, you sit and chat. But there was never any question of him

interfering in my life. I wouldn't allow that. I always kept my independence.

The real problems came after a birth of the child. The care of the child was left completely to the woman by the "revolutionary" father. The militant women who were called IKD's "cadres" could no longer spend 24 hours a day on political activities once they had children. GH explains the problems that were born in Şişli branch.

We had problem of pregnancies in our branch. We had branch elections and the executive committee was elected. After the congress it turned out that out of seven women, four were pregnant. I was the chair and we were in the Executive Committee meeting. I don't recall if it was stated openly, but I was very angry. I said something like, "You shouldn't have joined the Executive Committee, then!" Because, it was wrong. There was so much work to do. Seven people are chosen out of nine hundred members and four of them are pregnant! Then the question of abortion came up. But, of course the final decision was left up to them. Two of them had abortions. One had a problem. On the one hand she wanted an abortion, while on the other she didn't. She wanted a political career, her husband wanted a child. I told her, "If you want a career a child is an obstacle." I am quite sure of this. I'm not saying it to show I was right. It really is like that. But still no one was forcing her. Four children at once! If it would have been only one, that wouldn't have been a problem. We had difficulties for a long time because of those children. Yet nobody was removed from executive. Because of the children, we had meetings in each others homes. We had meetings with babies. It was a disaster! of course, those revolutionary husbands who wanted children so much didn't look after the children. There were a lot of fights about child care. I remember very well that we said "let the husbands look after them!" Some of them did get their husbands to look after the babies.

All of the above demonstrates how the IKD activists got caught between their revolutionary and female identities and the contradictions they lived through. These women who wanted with their whole being to take part in the struggle for socialism had to be divided into two parts when they wanted to become mothers. Because of this situation some chose not to become mothers at all (AB, EF, PR, NO

and many others), otherwise they experienced tremendous difficulties in their efforts to combine motherhood with revolutionary activity.

In this Chapter, the IKD women have been described, both married or unmarried, mothers and childless, who wanted to have a say and a decision-making role in Turkey of the future. We have also examined how they set up the IKD, what they met with in the course of their work in the revolutionary struggle, how they approached the women's question and more. In the 7th Chapter, we will analyze the activities of the IKD which these women set up. In addition, 20 years after the founding and 15 years after the closure of the IKD, we will look at what these women gained from being an IKD member and what their criticisms of the organization are.



CHAPTER VII

ACTIVITIES OF THE IKD AND A BRIEF RETROSPECT

7.1 Activities of the IKD

IKD was active in a variety of different areas. IKD Branches organised common activities of the same kind in different parts of Turkey following the plans of the Headquarters. Among these activities, organisational work, i.e. reaching and recruiting new woman, was always a priority. Training sessions on various subjects were given to members. Campaigns initiated to collect signatures, petitions prepared for submission to the President of Parliament, government and municipalities, rallies, demonstrations, open air and closed area meetings, forums, interviews and panels were organised as a pressure group.

From the first day of its formation, 'commissions' were set up with responsibility for activities in the branches. For organisational purposes, each branch would set up commissions appropriate to its area characteristics, bringing together women with common problems; such as housewives, state employees, teachers or workers commissions. The members of the commissions determined target neighbourhoods or workplaces and worked there intensively. For example, if there was a factory or a chosen neighbourhood in a branch area, various methods would be

used to make contact with the factory workers or neighbourhood residents and to this aim leaflets were distributed and papers sold in front of the factory gates and the neighbourhood streets. The newly contacted women were usually invited to training meetings held every weekend at the branch premises. The training meetings which are detailed below were on subjects prepared by the Training Research Commission (TRC). Through these meetings, the newly recruited women learned about IKD and its aims.

7.1.1 The Educational - Research Commission

A rigid element of IKD's organisational activities were the regular training meetings prepared by the TRC and held in the branch premises. All branch members and newly recruited women came to these meetings which were usually held at the weekend. In the bigger branches which had 'slide projectors', the sessions were illustrated with slides. This was started in order to attract women's attention and proved to be very successful. Later IKD women carrying slide projectors would run training sessions in the houses of women they had made contact with in the neighbourhoods. These training sessions played an important part in the growth of the IKD and the increase in level of consciousness of its members.

The first two training sessions were called: 'Are women inferior beings?' and 'Why a Women's Organization?-A History of the Women's Movement'. They were the beginning of a series known as **Basic Training** and were followed by: 'Women and Training', 'The Need for Nurseries', 'Housing Problems', 'Nutritional

Problems', 'Family', 'Problems of Puberty', 'Unemployment, Inflation and Women', 'Women in the Fight for Peace', 'Women and Fascism', 'Women in Proverbs', 'Prostitution', 'Retirement Problems', 'Music Day', 'Poetry Day', 'Advertisements and Women', 'Women in Angola', 'Soviet Women', 'What do Photo-Novels Teach Us?' These were the first section of the training notes for the so-called 'mass training sessions'. These were presented in all IKD branches during weekend meetings.

Additionally, IKD members were recommended and encouraged to read certain books. These included such books as *Ana (Mother)*, *Faşizmi Ezeceğiz (We Will Crush Fascism)*, *Tırpan (Scythe)* (2nd General Assembly Report.) Another training series called 'Women in Literature', IKD's arts members, prepared and analysed the books: 'Kızım ve Aşkım' (My Daughter and My Passion) by Muazzez Tahsin Berkant; 'Sodom and Gomorra' by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu; 'Ay Büyürken Uyuyamam' (I Can't Sleep when the Moon is Rising) by Necati Cumalı; *Boynu Bükük Öldüler* (They Died with Bent Neck) by Yılmaz Güney; as well as the representation of women in Bekir Yıldız and Leyla Erbil's books. These books were examined from women's point of view and evaluated from a socialist perspective. Those which belittled women or showed them as decorative objects were criticised; those that showed women in the public domain and in the socialist struggle were praised.

These training notes show that from its foundation the IKD was sufficiently a *women's* organisation to draw strong criticisms from socialist/

revolutionary organisations. However as Turkey entered a near civil war situation, women were inevitably drawn into the anti-fascist struggle.

A few years after its formation, the IKD had a number of experienced, militant members. The training sessions which made up the **Basic Training Series** as listed above began to be insufficient for these experienced older members. So the IKD's **Central Training Commission** prepared a series called **Cadre Training** to train the leading cadres "who will work in organisational or other activities." Women who had being through the basic training series attended. **Cadre Training** could be accepted as an introduction to Marxism. The cadre training series was made up of the following subjects: 'The Struggle for Democracy'; 'Classes and Class Alliances'; 'National Democratic Front'; 'What are Trade Unions?'; 'Propaganda, Agitation and Organisational Work in Democratic Mass Organisations'; 'Deviating Trends and Why We Are Against Them?'; 'The Importance of International Solidarity'. This Cadre Training was given to executive committee members of branches from all over Turkey by members of the CEC.

Another commission, known as the 'Publications, Broadcasts and Propaganda Commission' and later as the 'Social Relations and Propaganda Commission' worked very closely with the CEC. The IKD press agency which informed the press of the IKD's activities produced press releases in Turkish and English until the IKD was disbanded. (Appendix E)

The IKD undertook many campaigns, panel discussions, informal meetings, seminars, questionnaires, press conferences, rallies, pickets and

demonstrations in the five years of its existence. It all organised concerts, theatre performances and film shows. As a Non-Governmental Organisation, in order to attract the attention of the press, it called signatures for its new campaigns, sent petitions to the President of the Parliament, the government or local government figures. In the next section some of the IKD's most important campaigns will be examined.

7.1.2 Campaigns

In the first years of its existence in accordance with its aims, the IKD organised actions in the interest of women factory workers and other working women. Since the IKD believed that women's liberation would be achieved by their entering social production, and since the greatest obstacle to this was the lack of child care facilities, they started activities with the aim of establishing social responsibility for child care. The understanding that 'the motherhood must be a social function', the IKD started campaigns with and slogans such as **A Child care Centre in Every Workplace and Every Neighbourhood** and **The Enforcement and Lengthening of Maternity Leaves.**

The 'Child care Centre in every workplace and every neighbourhood' campaign was launched by IKD's Chairwomen Beria Onger with an announcement to the press on 15th July 1976. Onger gave the names of 54 workplaces which, despite having more than 100 women workers were in breach of the law by not providing a workplace nursery and a nursing mothers room, and she made an official complaint

about them to the Regional Employment Office. In order to help women with children who had suffered from this situation to sue their employers for damages, a joint action was taken with the bar association and individual complaint forms were completed. The campaign was carried forward with 50,000 posters and 250,000 leaflets for distribution. Branches in different cities organised panel discussions, forums and public meetings on the subject. The Trade Union's affiliated to DISK added items on workplace crèches and nursing mothers rooms in their collective bargaining agreements. A letter campaign was launched to gain equal rights for women within the scope of the employment law and thousands of female state employees sent letters to the Turkish Parliament's Petition Commission. As a result of local petitions about crèches and kindergartens in the neighbourhoods, visits were made to neighbourhood and council leaders, and in Istanbul a council nursery was opened in Kartal, play groups were opened in Kuştepe and Kağıthane. Plans for council nurseries were also made in Gültepe, Istanbul and Izmir (II. GAWR, 1978:38)

So, as we can see, having raised the issue of child care, the IKD women tried to influence public opinion through press releases, forums, public meetings, posters and leaflets. On the other hand, they also decided to work as a pressure group, doing the necessary lobbying in order to put their demands into practice. Hence the letter campaigns, visits and petitions the IKD women approached each question from every possible angle. While they added demands for nurseries to collective bargaining agreements through the trade union's. They also managed to open nurseries through local actions. Campaigns were launched at a national level and all local branches worked to the same agenda.

All the IKD's activities from the formation of the idea, through the preparation of articles to the collection of signatures, were the product of the IKD members' labour. These kinds of activities were carried out with the participation of all the branches and all the members all over Turkey. The advantage of being a centralised organisation was that it could achieve co-ordination across Turkey and the IKD woman did this very well. From Trabzon to Adana, from Edirne to Diyarbakır, the members of all the branches worked for the same campaign on the same date. Other campaigns such as **'The Enforcement and Lengthening of Maternity Leaves'**, **'Daily Paid Cleaning Women Should be Covered by Social Security'**, **'Retirement for Women after 20 Years'**, **'Equal Pay for Equal Work'** were carried with similar intensity and breadth, shaping public opinion.

7.1.3 8th of March: International Women's Day

The IKD established 8 March, International Women's Day in Turkey. As mentioned in Chapter III, at the Socialist Women's Conference held in Copenhagen in 1910, Clara Zetkin's proposal that 8 March should be celebrated as 'International Working Women's Day' was accepted and since then it has been celebrated all over the World. Due to the initiative of IKD members it came to be celebrated not just in the cities of Turkey but also in the small towns and the villages. In 1975 and 1976, 8 March was celebrated at a large public meeting in Istanbul.

However, in 1977 it was celebrated in 16 towns and in 1978 in more than 30. In 1979 it was no longer celebrated as a day, but as a week. The week opened in

Istanbul with a press conference which was attended by foreign visitors. Iwanka Atanasova from Bulgaria, Raissa Smirnova from the Soviet Union and Katina Athanasiadu from Greece representing women's organisations from their own countries participated in the press conference and other activities. The week continued with a panel discussion about Bebel's book "Women and Socialism" which was first published exactly 100 years before. The public meetings to celebrate International Women's Day were attended by 7000 women in Istanbul, 2,000 in Ankara, 650 in Edirne, 500 in Trabzon and Adapazarı, 400 in Uzunköprü, 300 in Denizli, İzmir and Altındağ (Kadınların Sesi, 1978:12) (Appendix F-G). Meetings were also held in cities such as Mersin, Adana, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Çorum, Samandağ, Antakya, Burdur, Uşak, Manisa, and villages and small rural towns such as Söke, Salihli, Bergama, Aliğa, Karabağlar, Çamdibi, Yeşilova, and Bademler.

Thousands of women joined demonstrations held on 10th March in İzmir, Bursa, Eskişehir, Balıkesir, Edirne, İskenderun and Zonguldak. Posters were put up by women in neighbourhoods such as Karabağlar and Çimentepe in İzmir; in Taksim, Kağıthane, Beykoz, Kartal, Ümraniye, Cevizli in Istanbul; and in Edirne and Uzunköprü. The importance of the week was announced in 100,000 leaflets distributed around Turkey. A banner with the words, 'Long live the IDWF, long live the IKD' was hung in Heykel Meydanı (Square) in Bursa and when the fascists burned this, another banner appeared with the words, 'Long live International Women's Union, Struggle and Solidarity Day - 8th March.' In addition, the 8th March began to be celebrated in all the factories where IKD members worked. Women wore red carnations on the 8th March.

The 8th March celebrations of 1980, took on a completely different meaning after the IKD was closed in April 1979, all demonstrations and marches were banned in Istanbul under Martial Law and influenced by the mothers of the disappeared in Argentina who gathered in the *Plaza de Mayo* in white scarves, the IKD women organised *white scarf* protest demonstrations for 8th March 1980. 50 women were arrested in Izmir. In Istanbul the wearing of white scarves was forbidden under Martial Law. 8th March was celebrated in Ankara, Diyarbakır, Izmit, Antakya, Bursa, Bandırma, Batman, Eskişehir, Seydişehir, Tütünçiftlik, Zonguldak, Uzunköprü, Tarsus and many other cities, towns and villages. Stickers were thrown from the tops of buildings, illegal leaflets were distributed, illegal events were organised in neighbourhoods and markets. In Ordu, Mersin and Seydişehir at demonstrations organised by the *Action Union*, women wore white scarves and walked behind banners with 'the IKD Cannot be Disbanded' and 'the IKD will Live' written on them. (Appendix J-K) In Eskişehir the women visited political prisoners. All over Turkey, mothers, whose children had been killed, received visitors. IKD members who worked in telephone exchanges answered the phone by saying 'Happy 8th March.'

Since the 8th March was accepted by the UN as 'International Women's Day' in 1975, the IKD also celebrated 8th March with this name. When we consider that even at the end of the 1980s women were still discussing whether 8th March was 'International *Women's Day*' or '*Working Women's Day*.' It can be seen the importance of the activities they organised without getting stuck in these kinds of debates about names.

7.1.4 Literacy Classes - Health Work - and Various Activities

The IKD considered that the low level of literacy skills among women was another obstacle to them participating in social production and IKD gave this issue a lot of emphasis. Whenever a new IKD branch was opened, the first activity was to run literacy classes. The reason for the classes was explained in the second general report as follows: "Our aim is not just to enrol large numbers of women as members, but also to raise their consciousness about events in society and the real reasons for them." (II GAWR, 1978: 45) Literacy classes were held in IKD premises, in trade unions, and in work places. In the first General Report, it is stated that up to May 1976, 50 women had attended literacy classes, some of them had received diplomas and that crèches were run in IKD premises during the time of the classes (I.GAWR, 1977: 50)

Whenever possible, IKD members would also make the effort to arrange for women members and non-members from the places where branches and local offices existed, to receive health care, while IKD member nurses and doctors gave services. The real aim of these activities was to make life easier for women and increase their chances of finding work. At the same time these activities were also a means of reaching new groups of women.

From the day of its foundation, action for peace was always near the top of the IKD agenda. This agenda developed parallel to the politics of the IDWF. Zülal Kılıç who was a member of the IKD CEC was a founding member of the Peace

Association formed in April 1977. She also became an executive member of this new organisation. The IKD which argued that "real equality for women could not be achieved in a situation where there was a constant threat of war," took its place with the IDWF "in the front line of the fight to achieve a lasting peace in the World." (II. GAWR, 1978: 44)

For this reason the IKD became the first organisation to undertake the celebration of '1st September - International Peace Day' in Turkey. In 1976 for the first time an event was organised to celebrate 1st September at the Açık Hava Tiyatrosu (Open Air Theatre) in Istanbul. About 7,000 people were present. In later years these kinds of events were organised all over Turkey.

On the anniversaries of important days for women and communists such as '8 March - International Women's Day', 'the Foundation of the IKD', 'the Birthday of Nazım Hikmet', '1st September - International Peace Day', 'the Foundation of DISK', and '7th October Revolution', public meetings were held in large auditoriums that could hold 7-10 thousand people, such as the Spor ve Sergi Sarayı (Sport- Exhibition Hall) and the Açık Hava Tiyatrosu (Open Air Theatre) and thousands of women and men attended. How did the IKD members manage to organise these huge events? In order to arrange such events it was necessary for a designated committee to inform the governor and provide all the required documents. Halls were hired, and large sums of money were paid to them, thousands of invitations were printed well before the event, their distribution and sale was organised, the program was agreed, the hall arrangements were made and most important of all the

script for the evening was written by the IKD women themselves. The slogans for the night were decided and to ensure that these were used in an appropriate way a "slogan committee" was appointed, the banners to be hung in the hall were written, security was arranged with the co-operation of sibling organisations. Theatre actors, painters and artists, caricaturists and photographers participated in the realisation of the script. Sketches were prepared, slides were selected, poetry and music chosen and the evening was finalised with virtually no room for a mistake and no niches in the script. The choir and folk dancing groups of the IKD and the IGD rehearsed for months in advance. The slide projectionist, sound technician and presenters also had rehearsals. All this work was carried out by Saadet Arıkan Özkal, Zülal Kılıç, Gönül Dinçer and especially theatre actress Gönül Tuncer, with the participation of scores of other nameless women.

7.2 IKD and Solidarity with Working Class

Like all organisations the IKD was working to increase its membership size. But they made an effort to make the IKD "a working class women's organisation, not just in word but also in practice." "It is the duty of the IKD to organise all women working in fields or factories, in offices or at home." (II. GAWR, 1978: 66) Therefore, the IKD started its organisational work in Turkey's industrialised regions especially in regions with large numbers of women workers.

The IKD proclaimed itself a working class women's organisation in its first foundation report. An interesting example of their work in this direction is a

booklet published by DISK called "**Handbook for Mothers and Working Women.**"

It is stated in the introduction that the booklet was "prepared jointly by DISK and IKD." And on the very first page DISK 5th General Assembly resolution no. 1 is printed. In this resolution it was agreed by majority vote that in addition to the demand for "nurseries," everything possible would be done to **achieve women's equal rights and pay with men** whether within the family unit, the social system or in working life. The text of resolution includes the following statement:

It has been decided by majority vote that in order to liberate Anatolian women from their position in relation to men encapsulated in the saying, **a labourer in the field, a woman in bed** (tarlada ırgat, yatakta avrat) and in order to enable them to achieve their aims, seminars and round table discussions will be organised. Everything possible will be done to assist Turkish women to gain economic independence and the necessary social rights." (Handbook for Mothers and Working Women, 1976: 2)

This decision taken by a trade union confederation like DISK was one of the most advanced resolutions made in the name of women in trade union field in the 1970s, because it not only demanded equality for women in the family unit, it also demanded liberation from the position of woman as "labourer in the field" and more important "woman in bed." However the fact that programs were established to realise these demands is even more worthy of notice. It is of great importance that a *men's* confederation such as DISK should take such a decision on women's liberation as the first resolution of the General Assembly 20 years ago. There can be no doubt about the influence of IKD women working in DISK in bringing about this resolution. DISK consistently printed articles related to this decision in its publications and the doors of trade unions affiliated to DISK were always open to IKD activists. DISK's

position on women was instrumental in enabling 8th March, International Women's Day, to be celebrated in almost every factory.

IKD participated in all the activities on the day of "**Struggle, Unity and Solidarity of Working Class**" between 1976-1980, with ever increasing numbers of women. Members of IKD, with their red headscarfs and their children in their arms constituted the sections that attracted the most attention on the rallies.

The liberation of women can only be achieved after the victory of the working class. The IKD did not budge one millimetre from this idea which was a founding principle and strengthened its connections with the working class movement. (II.GAWR, 1978: 50)

Reasoning its collaboration with the working class with these words, IKD, supported the strikes started by the Maden-İş Union of DISK in 1977. During this strike which lasted for eight months, all the strike sites were visited by the members of IKD a number of times every week. At same sites, they undertook the task of cooking for the strikers. In markets and city squares and at every corner in Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Bursa, Adana, Zonguldak, İzmit and Çorum; and in many other cities, they sold their *trosseaus*. Furthermore, they made handicrafts and embroideries to be sold. (Appendix I) Some members donated a day's wage every month for solidarity. In Balıkesir, Edirne, Diyarbakır and Samandağ they visited villages to collect food. In the 'jam for the strikers' campaign, more than a tone of jam was prepared. On Bayram's and on New Year's Day, presents were given to the children of the strikers; notebooks and pencils were provided for them. Concerts for 'Solidarity with the Strikers' were organised and the fee collected was handed in to the Strike Co-operation Committee.

Furthermore, members of IKD visited the families of the strikers and held meetings in branch-offices. Close relationship with the women strikers were established and many of those workers became IKD members. Strikers' wives distributed leaflet together with IKD members and visited their husbands on strike sites with them. When the strike ended, *Maden-İş Union* President Kemal Türkler - who was murdered by fascists in 1980- sent the following message to IKD Headquarters:

...we will never forget the solidarity of our women workers under the leadership of IKD, in glorious fight of our workers for the 8 months of the strike. (II.GAWR, 1978: 50)

All this effort for support and solidarity depended on the enthusiasm and interest of IKD members in strikes. This interest led hundreds, and even thousands of women to visit strike sites. The initial aim was to support the workers but the strikes had another very important function: thousands of women, who had never heard of the word 'strike' previously, learned what it was; discussed, chatted and enjoyed folk dances together with the workers. For the 8 months of the strike these women stayed on the picket-line. There were times when the ordinary housewife gave her husband the strength to go on; housewives became part of this resistance. Today, no one remembers whether the decision to cook for the strikers was taken by IKD CEC or by the women who are always ready to work wherever they go ? What people remember is that there was a big strike and women could not remain out of this. They wanted to be in the tents on the picket-line and since they could not sit there doing nothing, they started cooking and washing the dishes. IKD members, who should have been against housework, cooked and washed up in strike tents and during the

discussions that took place after the strike was over could not figure out how this ever happened.

6.3 The Anti-Fascist Struggle and Activities

On the one hand, IKD organised campaigns related directly to women. On the other hand, it organised the 'End to Mothers' Grief' (Evlat Acısına Son) campaign to establish a public response against the murders perpetrated by the fascist members of UGD. Till the 12th September 1980 military intervention, these two issues were the most important items on the IKD agenda because a period of fascist attack had been started in Turkey, laying all other demands aside.

One of the first activities that the IKD organised to protest the political murders, was the 'End to Mothers' Grief' meeting in Ankara, in February 1976, attended by 5000 women. On *Mothers' Day*, in 1976, a poster on the subject "*Fascism's Gift to Mothers': Mother's Grief*" (Faşizmin Analara Hediyesi: Evlat Acısı) and a leaflet was prepared and distributed. In these years, the famous words of Dolares Ibarruri were cited in an article in *Kadınların Sesi*:

In 1936, Spanish women called their husbands and the people out to fight against fascism saying "It is better to be widow of a hero than the wife of a coward." Not only did they call out the men but they also fought shoulder to shoulder with their husbands and brothers. (*Kadınların Sesi*, 1976, 1)

On 26 February 1977, an "End to Mothers' Grief" demonstration was organised in Istanbul in co-operation with women of CHP. A poster with the words

"End to Mothers' Grief", "*Fascists Beware, Mothers are Coming!*" (Faşistler Savulun, Analar Geliyor) (Appendix L) has been flyposted in all the districts of Istanbul. Previous to this demonstration, in which about twenty thousand women walked, thousands of leaflets had been distributed; meeting in cafés had been organised; and posters had been put up. On 8 May 1977, IKD celebrated Mothers' Day by a "*The Most Beautiful Gift for Mothers': Safety*" (Analara En Güzel Hediye: Can Güvenliği) slogan. The increasing number of people murdered by the attacks of UGD and MHP was the reason that led to these activities. The report submitted to the IKD General Assembly in 1978 stated that Turkey was going through "the most bloody period" of its history and that "Mourning for our children, husbands and brothers has become our greatest pain."(II GAWR, 1978: 46) "*The Mothers Give Birth, Fascists Kill*" (Analar Doğurur, Faşistler Öldürür) slogan had become the inevitable cry of women all around Turkey. Up to 1980, the number of people killed political reasons rose continuously. Two people were killed in 1968; nine in 1969; 19 in 1970; 21 in 1971; 22 in 1972. In 1975 this number had risen to 37; 108 in 1976; 317 in 1977; and 849 in 1978 (105 of whom were killed in Kahraman Maraş) As for 1978, the following list, published in Women's Voice, may give an idea:

- 1 October: IGD Adana Branch office chair was shot to death in his house.
- 4 October: 3 progressive students were shot dead in a hi-jacked city bus.
- 7 October: 16 persons injured -3 seriously , in bombing of the IGD and ILD branches.
- 9 October: 7 TIP members shot dead by fascists in Ankara.
- 20 October: Dean of the Electrical Engineering Faculty at ITU Ord. Prof. Bedri Karafakioğlu killed by fascists. (Kadınların Sesi, 1978, no.40)

In November 1978, fascist attacks were reproached in demonstrations in the named of *Respect of Motherhood* (Analığa Saygı) in the Kağıthane and Hisarüstü districts of Istanbul. On 18th November 1978, other democratic women's organisations came together in response to the call by IKD, for a joint demonstration shouting: "*Mothers, Sisters, Take Your Place in the Struggle Against Fascism*" (Analar Bacılar, Faşizme Karşı Görev Başına) and "*Long Live United Action Against Fascism*" (Yaşasın Faşizme Karşı Eylem Birliği). In 1978, fundamentalists carried out a massacre of Alevis and leftists (including CHP members) in Malatya, Sivas, Kahraman Maraş. (Ağaoğlu; 1992) As a result of this, the Ecevit Government declared martial-law in several cities on 28 December 1978, Istanbul being the first.

Çağlar Keyder describes these days:

Together with the economic difficulties, the government had to confront an increasingly violence prone fascist movement, growing especially belligerent after MHP (NMP) partisans had to give up their positions within the state apparatus. During most of 1978 street clashes between the right and the left, and political assassinations mostly by the right, regularly claimed a toll of three or four deaths a day. The tense atmosphere finally erupted in a major massacre in Kahraman Maraş at the end of the year, in what seems to have been an MHP orchestrated clash, more than one hundred people died. Ecevit's government reluctantly declared martial law. (Keyder, 1979: 38)

It was under such conditions that IKD actively participated in demonstrations *Protesting Fascist Murderers* organised in İzmir, Zonguldak and Antalya. Diyarbakır witnessed women's demonstration for the first time in 16 December 1978 and Trabzon on 23 December 1978 respectively. Women walked under the banner of "*Fascism Shall Not Pass the Mothers' Barrier*" (Faşizm Anaların Siperini Aşamayacak) . Some leftist organisations announced the week 18-26 August 1979 as "*The Week of Struggle Against Fascism*" Among the actions of this week

were: wives and mothers whose husbands and children had been murdered, visited Minister Hikmet Çetin, and demanded the closure of MHP and UGD and the arrest of the fascist murderers; meetings and demonstrations organised in all Turkish cities where there was no martial Law. On 19 June 1980, mothers and the wives of the victims of terror, revolutionary young people who had been tortured, and political prisoners visited the Istanbul Bar Association and demanded safety on the streets.

Up to 12th September 1980, response to anti-democratic governmental action, the struggle against fascism and actions of the "End Mothers' Grief" campaign constituted the first items on the IKD agenda. Between 1975-80 fascist attacks were also directed towards IKD although it was a women's organisation. Some of these pressures and attacks can be listed as follows:

- * A number of women, who were member of IKD Kartal branch, were dismissed from her job because they read Kadınların Sesi and participated in May Day activities.
- * Three members of Fatih Branch were arrested while they were distributing "No Votes for MC" leaflets and were beaten.
- * IKD Ankara Çankaya Branch Office was searched by the police on 5 July 1977 and closed down
- * Members of Istanbul Fatih branch were attacked by persons from UGD/MHP while they were selling at Eyüp market to support strikers.
- * Eskişehir branch was searched by the police on every week.
- * Zonguldak branch was closed down in October 1977.
- * Istanbul branches were not given permission for meetings.
- * A picture of 'wolf' was drawn on the door of the Uzunköprü branch
- * Iskenderun branch was raided by the police.
- * Fatih branch was burnt down.
- * In Istanbul, Paşabahçe local office was bombed.
- * The husband of NY, member of the IKD Bursa branch, was murdered by fascists.
- * Trabzon branch was burnt down.
- * Aytül Acarbaş, a member of IKD Eskişehir Office died as a result of shooting by fascists, while she was going to 'Democratic Rights and Freedoms' meeting on 5 April 1980.
- * Efraim Elvan, husband of SE, who was a member of IKD Trabzon branch executive committee, was killed by fascists on 20 July 1980.

* Meryem Karakız, a member of IKD Adana branch and a SASA factories worker, and her two friends were shot dead on 24 July 1980. (Kadınların Sesi, 1977-1980)

Those members of IKD who state that IKD “shifted to the left”, “sharpened”, “narrowed” refer to this period in which IKD turned towards anti-fascist activities as a result of the never-ending-cycle that country was going through. It is essential that what happens in Turkey in the last quarter of 1970’s is carefully examined in order to truly understand the situation. Inflation had reached 100 % for the first time; vital consumer goods such as butane gas, oil, margarine, lightbulbs, coffee had disappeared from the market; poverty and unemployment had increased. But more important than this, the whole country had been divided into *fascists* and *revolutionaries*; all the cities and towns had been divided into separate districts controlled by fascists and revolutionaries; universities had become places where students could only enter with police protection; judges, university professor’s and trade union leaders had been murdered in public and the murderers had been caught in MHP offices but later had escaped from prison; and during this period the government stood by and watched.

NO tells about these days as follows:

In the Eastern Black Sea Region, almost all our activities were dominated by funerals. All the leaders of the socialist/revolutionary organisations in Trabzon were murdered. They attacked everyone who was not a fascist. Necdet Bulut, a lecturer at KTU, and a lawyer from CHP were only two of these. People were being killed while they were walking on the road, in the park, in their offices and associations by the members of MHP, the identities of whom were very well known and none of these murderers were being arrested. We were very well aware that the only association not been attacked was IKD; I don’t know whether this was because we were women or not. We thought of ways to protect the chair of IKD Branch, but we only thought about it. What else could we do? Efraim Elvan, the husband of SE, Trabzon Branch executive committee member, was murdered; YK, the husband of IKD Beşikdüzü Branch executive

committee member, was shot and wounded. I was running from one funeral to another between Trabzon, Ordu and Samsun. Every new day, I used to wake up with a deep sorrow in my heart; "whose death shall I hear about today?" And sure enough the news came...

LM tells about what they went through in Samsun:

We could only walk down 'Çiftlik Mah' and '56's' in Samsun. The fascists had taken control of all of Samsun. Mecidiye, Fuar, 88 Evler were the districts that revolutionaries couldn't enter. If you did, fascists would check your identity card and kill you. Revolutionaries were forced to defend themselves and 'liberated districts' were established. The members of MHP used to display their guns to us, and shoot at the ground in front of the eyes of the police and the police would arrest the person who was attached; not the fascists. Sedat and Adem were shot. When Adem's mother cried out, with her son's blood-soaked shirt in her hand, "You will answer for this!" she was beaten by the police. After Adem's funeral, the fascists shot at the house. There were at least 50 women inside, but none of them run away, there wasn't any place to escape because their houses were being fired at too. The neighbours embraced all the members of IKD; the women did not retreat; on the contrary they occupied the police stations and sometimes released the arrested revolutionaries.

LM explains what kind of actions the IKD took in this situation:

At that time we went as IKD members to visit each of the families whose children had been arrested, detained or killed. IKD members took trays, sacks, packets of pies and pastries to those detained in prison. Hundreds of us attended the funerals.

Looking at the social political situation of 1975-80 we can say that many women had no choice but to join the anti-fascist struggle. Ayşe Düzkan, the first woman to call herself a 'radical feminist' in Turkey also admits this. "I think there was a state of civil war in Turkey before 1980. In conditions of civil war, such things are difficult." (Düzkan, 1995: 146)

In those days when all this was happening, could the IKD avoid pushing women's demands and actions into second place? When asked: "Do you think that after 1978, when we saw the massacres of Malatya, Maraş and Çorum and all the

other political murders, that it would have been possible to behave differently ?” AB answered:

Of course it wasn't possible. If you look at the feminist movement that appeared after 1980, when deaths, the prisons and the Kurdish question came onto the agenda in Turkey, these events also determined the feminist agenda. What ever the burning issues in society are, they inevitably draw people. It is always like that.

However, looking back on the 1970s from the standpoint of 1995, AB asks “could we have brought a more womanish approach to the anti-fascist struggle?” and she answers the question like this:

If we had been in an organisation which looked at events from women's point of view, perhaps we could have seen those deaths and events from a women's point of view, perhaps we could have acted differently. But you couldn't ignore fascist massacres when they had reached those proportions. Perhaps we could have looked at the issues with a different viewpoint than IGD.

I don't mean the slogans that we used, the fact that we emphasised motherhood and used terms mothers and sisters. Perhaps we could have approached the matter in a more creative way then this, to influence a wider section of society and more women...Today I ask myself, if our approach, our evaluation, our methods could have been different ?

EF looks at another dimension. She assesses the issue of a women's organisation working illegally, that is a women's organisation which has been banned and driven into illegality.

Yes, inevitably the anti-fascist struggle took precedence over women's issues. Our newspaper began to look the same as the IGD newspaper and this made us feel uncomfortable. Just at that point, the IKD was banned.

The IKD was banned on 28th April 1979 by the Istanbul Martial Law Headquarters, during the period of martial law following Kahraman Maraş massacres. In spite of its closure, activities continued *illegally* until 12th September 1980. Could

a women's organisation with a membership of nearly 20,000 and a newspaper with a circulation of 30,000 go underground ? Apart from a few members of the TKP, the majority of the women were not party members.

The headquarters building was closed and officially sealed off and after this 33 branches and 35 local branches were also closed and sealed off. Women could not get in to take out the furniture, typewriters, files and archive. Due to the possibility of closure and to prevent any resulting negative effects on members IKD CEC had previously warned branches to not keep registration cards, membership records. EF says:

They drove us into illegality. The IKD became an illegal 'mass' organisation. Whoever heard of such things ? This made us narrower. In stead of working in our own premises we had our meetings at picnics or in the Turkish baths.

In spite of being banned, IKD women carried on their activities as before and 17th July 1979 they organised a women's march under the banners '*The Progressive Women's Movement Cannot be Stooped*', '*The IKD Must be Open*' (Appendix M) 500 women who walked from Istanbul and Izmir to Ankara were received in every town and city on the way at meetings and rallies attended by thousands of women. Women organised many actions to re-open the Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği. The idea of forming a new organisation with a different name was discussed. The IKD carried on its activities until the military coup of 12th September 1980 and its closure was only realised after a TKP decision. The TKP's decision "to stop work with women" was taken for security reasons but women party members working in the IKD were not consulted.

7.4 The Own Way of Turkish Women

In a letter that he wrote on 26th December 1886 to F Kelley Wischnewetzky in New York, Engels says: "There is no better road to theoretical clearness of comprehension than to learn by one's own mistakes, *durch Schaden klug werden*." Engels, 1977: 482) The same comment can be made about the women's movement in our country. The discussions and criticisms that women engaged in some western countries in the 1970s developed in Turkey in the 1980s. EF makes this evaluation.

When we look at the history of the second wave of feminism in the West we see that this movement was tied to the events of '68. when many young women joined the student movement and left-wing organisations. In the same way many feminists in the USA came from the civil rights movement. In these movements and organisations women got the jobs of typing, the secretarial jobs while the men were in the front line. This created anger in women. This same situation did not exist in Turkey. Since there was no mass left wing movement in Turkey, women did not know that they would face discrimination in socialist parties.

I think that the necessary conditions for the development of feminism had not yet appeared here. While there left wing women were setting up a feminist movement in response to male hegemony on the left, here we were setting up a traditional left wing women's organisation. In other words if we had lived through this kind of experience, and had this response, we would also have developed in this way.

Due to the specific conditions of the Turkish situation, women in Turkey followed their own specific road. The Turkey Communist Party which was set up in 1920 was not legal until 1988 when it transformed itself into the TBKP and it always worked illegally. Until the 'Advance' in 1973, the TKP could not reach the masses and remained marginal so that the problems that were encountered in communist

* To learn by bitter experience.

parties were not experienced by women in Turkey until the 1970s. At the time that women in other communist parties of the world were criticising the internal workings of the party, the situation in Turkey was not like this. In the 1970s a new wave of feminism engulfed the world and while within this wave many Marxist women were breaking the new ground of 'socialist feminism', women in Turkey were running to join socialist/communist/revolutionary organisations to get involved in political activity.

The coup of September 1980 interfered with the development of many processes in Turkey. This coup also affected the development of women's consciousness in a negative way. In the 1970s there were many other socialist women's organisations apart from the IKD. The women who joined revolutionary organisations or worked in these women's organisations were very young, mostly single, childless 'young girls.' They would face their 'social roles' after they got married and had children. These 'young girls' who were in their early 20's in the 1970s had reached their early 30's in the 1980s and had become 'women.' As these politicised women carried on their political activities on the one hand and found themselves dealing with housework and child care on the other hand, they began to realise that they were suffering injustice, that something was not working as it should be. Besides, these women who at the beginning had been very young and inexperienced, after for 4-5 years of political activity, had developed both theoretically and politically. These women who had never thought of such a thing before now demanded the right to a *political career*.

The IKD women also went through this process. When the TKP stopped the activities of the IKD after 12th September 1980 and called all party members working in the IKD directly into party employment, many IKD communist women realised that they had lost their place in the party hierarchy. But after the coup many women, especially founders and leaders of the IKD were forced to go into exile abroad so this process was lived out outside Turkey. If these women had stayed in Turkey perhaps the history of Turkish feminism would have been written differently. AB has this to say on the subject:

After 12th September, starting from the first years we began to understand only too well that as women we were pushed into second place, we received second class treatment whether in our own movement or in the left generally: women both in Turkey and in exile. Once we were in western countries where these debates were going on, and these books were plentiful, we read them and immediately understood the debates. What we read reflected our own experience. Since we could see the parallels between what we read and our own experience, our interest was immediately drawn. Perhaps our friends in Turkey did not have the same chance to develop this thinking. They felt angry about the treatment they received in their organisations, they responded as women but they were far from an environment which would allow them to develop this thinking. What's more Turkey was living through a fascist period. The IKD women in exile lost contact with the IKD women in Turkey until 1989. They could not make contact with us nor could we make contact with them.

The women who started the second wave of feminism in Turkey in the 1980s were not IKD women. We were not the ones who brought the new ideas. But when *Somut* magazine appeared as a late copy of the second wave of feminism, among the women who were attracted by the writing and the discussions there was an important section that came from the IKD. This is a fact.

* All IKD CEC Members, namely Gönül Dinçer, Beria Onger, Şeyda Talu, Zülal Kılıç, Ayşe Coşkun, Vahide Yılmaz Esinsel, Ayşe Vassaf, Çiçek Yağcı, Yüksel Selek went abroad and became refugees. Additionally, many Regional Secretaries and BCE Members became refugees in other countries.

Many women who were politically active within socialist organisations before the 12 September coup seriously criticised the working methods of those times. **Hatice Yaşar's** article "To be Kurdish, a Woman and a Socialist in Turkey" shows what kind of responsibilities were considered suitable for women comrades in socialist movements:

...shouting "we are mothers, we are sisters, we are against fascism" in the squares; joining in the fights in the neighbourhoods; agreeing to revolutionary marriages in order to find houses to rent to hide male comrades; fighting the socialist struggle together but accepting the need for a "natural division of labour": to help the ideological-political development of her husband or lover, while **he** reads or writes, she makes tea for **him**; when her old lover-comrade wakes up in the middle of the night and asks her to cook food, she cooks for her new **higher rank** husband; washing clothes; while her **higher rank** husband explains to the men in the neighbourhood how they will create "a world without exploitation," she, dressed in traditional baggy trousers (and what a hard time she had with her parents and neighbours when she stopped wearing them) and wearing a headscarf, is forced to have "womanly" chats with the woman of the house; and because of the danger of her **higher rank** husband's illegal position, she is forbidden any political activity and shut up at home; as a socialist woman, she is subjected to imprisonment and torture but on her release returns to her "natural" role; working with all her strength to make her **higher rank** husband's life easier; (while in prison herself) it never occurs to her to send her washing home for her husband but when her 'socialist' husband is imprisoned the revolutionary sister and revolutionary woman washes his clothes so that **he can think about the liberation struggle outside, while he is on the inside..** (Yaşar 1990: 46-47)

The most important point here is that the problems Hatice Yaşar writes about were not experienced in the IKD. IKD members explained their desire for "a world without class or exploitation" not only to the women in the neighbourhoods but also to the men. Instead of being "forbidden political activity" they were always encouraged to be active by the IKD leaders. In this sense the IKD performed a very important function in giving their members the chance to be politically active in their

own right. Today many IKD women consider themselves feminists. We also find among them, those who call themselves *socialist feminists* or *Marxist feminists*.

7.5 The IKD: A Conservative Women's Organisation

Although the IKD was a women's organisation it was sort of genderless. Just because the IKD members considered themselves equal to men, they couldn't realise some of the important 'specific women's issues.' For example the IKD never started a campaign about violence against women. GH points out that "our bodies did not exist." When she was asked "what kind of policies did the IKD develop against the subjects such as: domestic violence, divorce and abortion?" she answered as follows:

We didn't have any policies about domestic violence. We missed it just like we missed many other points. But we did say some good things about divorce: "Divorce should be easier and uncomplicated but women's rights should be protected." Even today we can't say anything better than that. We created solutions on the legal basis relating abortion not with our sex but as a problem of health. Our bodies were not on the agenda in the IKD's work, that was the source of the problem. We skirted the edges of the issues. We said "abortion should be free on demand, the state has no right to say how many children a women should have" and we left it at that.

IKD women today cannot understand how as a women's organisation they could have been silent on a subject such as domestic violence which is so widespread in our society. AB says: "We didn't start a campaign against domestic violence either at party level or in society as a whole." EF on the other hand describes how she was hardly aware that such a problem existed:

One of the reasons why we didn't have any policies about domestic violence was that women around us did not bring up this problem. Maybe

because we were central executive committee, we remained distant from some things. We went into most things at one level or another whether it was abortion, divorce, family, but this...Somehow we didn't see it was an important issue. Anyway people start from their own experiences. We, that is AB, CD, me, had never been anywhere near domestic violence and the subject was not raised by the branches. Some things did happen: a girl was beaten by her father because she came to a rally, women did get beaten for such reasons. But I don't even remember talking about battered wives.

We went into the question of abortion later. We talked about it and agreed that it was an important issue for women and we could have organised a stronger campaign earlier but we had political considerations such as "We have already been labelled communists; what if they start saying that communists are forcing women to have abortions.

One of the characteristics of the period and this was true for all the revolutionary/socialist organisations, was the fear of becoming isolated from society of "creating a negative response among the people."(halkımıza ters düşmek) In addition the increased fascist attacks and the declaration of martial law made it nearly impossible for the IKD to raise such issues. AB's approach is realistic:

In the early period, abortion was on the agenda. "Abortion should be legalised and it should be free." we said but we didn't turn this into a campaign. The fear of becoming isolated from society was characteristic. The propaganda about "communist women don't recognise the family, wife, husband, they hang the hat on the door" was already well-known so we were terrified that they would start saying "they are going to abort our babies." The fear that women in the neighbourhoods would withdraw from us under the influence of such propaganda became the deciding factor.

In addition, such vital and urgent issues as personal safety and fascist attacks came up so that in IKD's later period these took first place. Later with the closure of IKD we were driven into illegal activities. If the IKD had not been banned, if there had been less street violence, despite everything abortion would have been brought onto the agenda.

NO explains how she witnessed domestic violence even against women teachers who were members of IKD branch executive committees in Anatolia and

how she advised them “divorce immediately.” Because of being beaten by their husbands hurt their pride, therefore they didn’t want these cases to be known by others. They wouldn’t consider divorce and they have never wanted to talk about it.

I know of two cases of TKP’s *city committee members* who beat their teacher and IKD BEC member wives nearly to death. That is being a party member did not prevent a man from beating his wife. I don’t know if the party knew about this or if party had known, what they would have done. I told these women straightaway “to get a divorce.” But these women said “life in a small Anatolian city as divorced women with children would be even harder.” When I offered to talk to the husbands, to criticise them they said it would only make things worse and that they would get beaten even more. Because of this attitude of the women I didn’t pass this matter on to the party, maybe I didn’t even inform IKD CEC members because I didn’t believe we could do anything about it.

While the German Social Democrats and Bolsheviks discussed sexual freedom at length, in the 1970s in Turkey no socialist/revolutionary organisation dealt with these subjects seriously. The IKD like the other organisations of the period took an extremely conservative position on the subject of internal relations between sexes. AB states that “reactionary attitudes dominated the relationship between woman and man” and she goes on to give examples of how the institution of the family was protected in the IKD:

At that time ‘revolutionary matchmaking’ (*devrimci görücülük*) was taking place. Revolutionary marriages were arranged. We prevent divorces and worked to keep couples together who weren’t getting on. Women and men party members got married or divorced only with the permission of the party. General pressure was put on couples with problems to stay together and to prevent break-ups. The family was protected.

We have lived a kind of feudal tradition in a ‘revolutionary’ way. It was a feudal ethic which embraced all the political movements of the time. Free love was not permitted. Why? *One of the reasons* was secrecy; that mystical atmosphere that allowed everything to be swept under the carpet in the name of the revolution. *The second reason* was that the majority of people in our movement still carried the feudal traditions of peasant society. When the things, those are naturally exist in society, occurred in

the revolutionary movement, were forbidden. Women like us, who had lived with men without getting married before being TKP member, came to an agreement with the feudal values. Later on, for the sake of secrecy and the people's interest, and also not to be isolated from society, the life has gone with on the base of feudal values.

However, the large branches at the metropolis, where the membership base was different, women were able to form different kinds of relationships. GH, speaks about Istanbul/Şişli branch:

We never condemned flirts. But in the IKD generally there was the tendency of blaming that kind of relationship. We never condemned each other in our branch about sexual or emotional relationships. When it was necessary we became confidants and supported each other.

IK, the chair of the branch of the second big city in Turkey, said similar things about the issue.

Our members were generally the university graduated, professional women. In our branch no one put their nose into other's life.

7.6 What did Women Gain from IKD Membership?

Although some criticisms of the IKD appeared in the interviews and questionnaires, almost all the women stressed as though with one voice, that they felt that the IKD had taught them self-confidence. Many IKD women who today call themselves *feminists* remember their IKD experiences with fondness and happiness. GH answers the questions "What do you think IKD gave you?" "if you hadn't joined the IKD would you have been a different person?" in this way.

Of course. Because of the IKD I learned to speak confidently and to express myself and my ideas clearly. We all learned this. We had to talk wherever we went. The IKD developed our skills. We had to do everything in the IKD. We wrote training notes, leaflets, scripts and carried out research. I was always writing them. Of course everybody

The IKD contributed a lot to my own self-confidence. I gained a lot of practical experience. The IKD also contributed to my later development. I read a lot about feminism. If I hadn't been in the IKD I wouldn't have done this reading. If I hadn't been interested in women's issues I wouldn't have developed in other areas as well. I feel I gained a lot from the IKD and I don't think I lost anything. The other important feeling is that I liked working collectively. I really enjoyed it. That was very important for me. I still miss doing things together with other women.

The IKD founders and members said that they remembered the period of IKD by 'aspiration' despite certain criticisms. CD's answer to the question "Do you think the IKD blocked your development in any aspects?" was "Yes especially in terms of sophisticated thinking." NO agreed with her as well. EF on the other hand criticises that "when the IKD was formed, political considerations took first place." When asked "What do you think was the biggest omission or mistake? What is your main criticism of the IKD?"

My main criticism of the IKD is, why did we accept the authority of the men (I see the party as men.) They created obstacles for many of the actions we thought of and wanted to carry out. They directed us. "Give more weight to such and such," they said and we accepted. Because at that time I thought "the party is the real organisation" it wasn't a problem for me that they told us what to do. The party was our life. There wasn't a party pressure that I wanted to be free off, I didn't feel like that. I suspect that I was very uncompromising both in my appearance and my speech. Of course we can't see ourselves. But it would be wrong to evaluate all this without looking at the conditions and the atmosphere of the times. I didn't think we could have done it any other way. In the end AB, CD and me were very militant party members. We couldn't have done it any other way. Maybe somebody else could have done it differently. Under the conditions of the time, we were not the ones who could have lessened the pressure of the party or the men.

15 years after the closure of their organisations the IKD members and founders made the above evaluations of the organisation that they founded and led.

brought something with them. The IKD didn't form us from scratch but I believe it sharpened all our abilities. The IKD gave us the chance to develop our potential. In this sense I can say that the IKD helped me to develop myself in the area I was interested in. Now I work in publishing and I owe this to a large extent to the work I did in the IKD.

AB says: "we helped a lot of individual women to gain self-confidence, to realise what abilities they had. That is why after the September coup lots of IKD women joined the new currents that looked at the women's question in a broader way. Women had won self-confidence and developed their skills." When asked "Can you tell me what were the positive and negative aspects of being an IKD member?", "If you had not belonged to the IKD would you be a less developed person today?" AB replied without hesitation, "yes, I would be a less developed person," and continued:

The IKD gave me a lot. I lost nothing by joining the organisation. My IKD work developed me. First of all I learned to trust women. Starting with myself I began to have confidence in women. Today I trust women more than men. What's more, on every subject: that they will understand theory better and develop it better; I am sure that they will put it into practice in their lives with more determination, more creativity, commitment, enthusiasm and discipline.

The authority, initiative and responsibility given to IKD members played a major part in increasing their self-confidence. The central executive committee of the IKD never acted jealously in appointing branch officers and delegating authority and initiative to other women. Every woman who showed potential, -so long as she did not belong to another political group-, was immediately given duties and responsibilities. CD also stresses "gaining self-confidence" in the same words and she points out the importance of the encouragement given to each woman in the increase of their existing self-confidence.

The IKD taught women to trust themselves. We saw that we could do things and that we could do them very well and we gained confidence in ourselves. The IKD gave its members the confidence that they would be able to do things too. "Here", we said, "here's what has to be done, go on, get on with it, do it, solve it." Women in the IKD took responsibility. No obstacles were put in front of women who worked and contributed. These women held authority, used their initiative and took responsibility. Young girls came to a point where they could speak to male organisations in Anatolia and be listened to. IKD women developed themselves, their characters. Isn't this important? Women entered the political arena, a male domain. Previously they had something to say about the future of the country.

What's more, this encouragement was not only limited to IKD work.

Not only in the big cities but also in small towns women were encouraged to join democratic mass organisations. Especially in Anatolia IKD women were encouraged to join democratic mass organisations such as TÖB-DER and TUS-DER which worked with predominately female sectors and even to take leadership positions. This is an important function which must not be neglected but whose social impact needs to be analysed and evaluated. CD stresses this subject.

We directed women to participate in organised struggle at every level. We pushed women workers to play an active role in trade unions, teachers to be active in TÖB-DER, nurses in TUS-DER, engineers, doctors and lawyers in their professional associations. We encouraged them to stand for executive committees. IKD women became more developed, thinking women who could discuss well. After the 12th September coup many IKD women found the courage to end unhappy marriages because we had gained self-esteem.

On the subject of what the IKD achieved for itself and for its women members EF says this:

The IKD enabled women to gain confidence. Later these women were successful in many different jobs. We called women into an active role and opened up a whole new world for them. When we say that self-confidence is the most important, it includes all this. When people go into the outside world, they gain confidence. Self-confidence involves learning about many subjects, gaining experience, doing many different things.

While they all remember the IKD period “with a sense of longing”, they do not try to cover up the mistakes that they made.

From 1975 to 1980 IKD women worked night and day for *equality, peace, independence, democracy, social progress and socialism* first legally and then illegally. They set out on the road to a better world and a better Turkey. First their advance was made difficult by the attacks of the state supported MHP, who created an atmosphere of civil war in the country and who have not been acquitted of this crime either in law or by public opinion. Later their road was blocked by military coup of 12th September 1980. The IKD women shared the fate of millions of people after the coup: they lost their jobs; they were detained, arrested and tortured; they participated in hunger strikes in prison; some of them suffered long prison sentences and others were forced to leave their country and go into exile.

Today nearly all of them are happy and proud to have founded and been members of IKD. They feel self-satisfied to have proved what they could do as women and to have been on the side of a society without class and exploitation, in those painful days. Today they are practically involved in women’s issues. The IKD women have learned from their experiences. They want a world where women will not be humiliated and exploited and where all kind of oppression will be abolished, not just for themselves but for all women.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This thesis which has taken the **Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği/IKD** (Progressive Women's Organisation) as a case study has examined how the organisation was formed, how and when the women organised; how they understood women's position and what solutions they proposed; what demands they made for women; the organisational structure of the IKD; the campaigns launched and IKD actions. As the IKD shared the ideological formation of Marxist women worldwide since the 19th century, the development of the socialist movement and the position and role of women in this process was analysed in chapters 2 and 3, because it would not be possible to place the IKD in the correct framework without knowing the heritage of this history. We can draw the following conclusions from the international historical heritage which the women who founded the IKD took on.

Firstly, since the second half of the 19th century, women have joined both the feminist and socialist movement. While feminist women in the 19th century raised the demand for equal rights with men, socialist women joined social democrat/socialist/communist parties to create, alongside their male comrades, a world without class and exploitation. In opposition, especially to the suffragette movement which was part of the first wave of feminism, socialist women set out a

broader programme which did not want only equal rights with men in the existing social order, but the creation of a new world without class or exploitation. Feminist women and socialist women divided sharply on this point. Socialist women had as much role in this division as the feminists, because socialist women while strongly rejecting the idea that the woman question could be solved separately from the class question, at the same time avoided any possible joint action with feminist women. Socialist women took the position that their *aims and methods of struggle* were *completely different* from feminist women and this position was maintained without change throughout the period of struggle.

This is the main reason underlying the fact that the IKD took no notice of the rise of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. The IKD women were not aware that the second wave of feminism rising in the West had a rather different starting point than the first feminist wave. The second wave of feminism was set in motion primarily by highly educated professional and working Western women who declared that equal rights with men in law did not end women's oppression. The IKD women missed the point that these women began to question virtually every social institution and brought the question of women's liberation onto the agenda again. On the other hand, in spite of these developments in the West, in the 1970s when the IKD was set up and became active, there was no movement supporting feminist ideas in Turkey, nor any feminist criticisms directed at the IKD. During this period in Turkey it was only socialists and communists who recognized the fact of women's 'oppression' and brought the subject of 'liberation' onto the agenda. Thus, women

tended to work politically within socialist/communist/ revolutionary organisations as this seemed to be the only hope.

Secondly, socialist women accepted the fundamental principle of working class parties that women and men had to belong to the same party. However because of women's specific issues and their backward political consciousness, socialist women argued for organising women into separate women's organisations tied to the party and for special women's publications and they were able to persuade the party to accept their arguments. That is why since the 1890s, communist and workers' parties usually have a separate women's organisation. And so in Turkey also, following these views, women founded the IKD as an organisation ideologically tied to the working class but organisationally independent. This women's organisation, in accordance with post-second world war communist policies, could be regarded as a broad based 'democratic mass organisation' embracing both party and non-party women.

Thirdly, as shown in the relevant section Clara Zetkin of the SPD, Alexandra Kollontai of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, Dolores Ibarruri of the Spanish Communist Party were leaders of the women's movement and high level leaders of the party. This tradition continued in Turkey where we see a woman leader of the İlerici Kadınlar Derneği who was also a member of the TKP central committee.

Fourthly, İlerici Kadınlar followed the example of socialist women in publishing a women's paper. In Germany '*Equality*' had been the women's paper, in

Russia '*Woman Worker*,' and so in Turkey '*Kadınların Sesi*' (Voice of Women) was published. The writers and technical staff working on these papers were all women.

Fifthly, workers parties, especially in Germany and Russia, *always* defined the limits and politics of the women's movement. This also happened in Turkey. The IKD were obliged to act in accordance with national level political decisions of the TKP. For example, when the TKP decided to form a UDC (*National Democratic Front*) the IKD women also put a lot of effort in this direction. Just as the International Women's secretariat was dissolved by the *Communist International* in 1926, so after the military coup of 12th September 1980 in Turkey the TKP declared that the IKD's activities were over and this decision was taken without consulting the women party members who were active in the IKD.

Twenty years after its foundation and fifteen years after its closure, what kind of evaluation can be made of the IKD? Was the IKD a feminist organisation? Why was it formed and what did it achieve?

First of all, although in the 1970s it did not define itself as such, the IKD was, according to current terminology, a *Traditional Marxist Feminist* organisation. The IKD can be considered a feminist organisation because *firstly*, feminism is not a unified but a diverse movement; *secondly* feminism starts from the view that women are oppressed. According to P. Abbott and C. Wallace:

While all feminists are agreed that women are subordinated and that it is necessary to develop strategies to liberate them, there are fundamental disagreements about the causes of that oppression and strategies for achieving liberation." (Abbott & Wallace, 1990: xii)

There are “four major feminist perspectives”:

...“liberal/reformist, Marxist, radical/revolutionary, and socialist feminism.” *Liberal feminism* is concerned to uncover the immediate forms of discrimination against women and to fight for legal and other reforms to overcome them. *Marxist feminists* argue that the major reason for women’s oppression is the exclusion of women from public production and that women’s struggle for emancipation is an integral part of the fight of the proletariat (working class) to overthrow capitalism. *Radical feminists* see male control of women (patriarchy) as the main problem and argue that women must fight to free themselves from this control. *Socialist feminists* argue that women’s oppression is both an aspect of capitalism and of patriarchal relations. (Abbott & Wallace, 1990: 11-12)

According to Marxist feminists, women’s liberation from oppression can only be achieved after the overthrow of capitalism because women can only be liberated when classes and exploitation are abolished. In the capitalist system there are many obstacles to the socialisation of child care and housework and women’s participation in social production which are the objective basis of women’s liberation. Among the most important of these are:

- 1) In the capitalist system, women are used as a cheap reserve labour force. According to the needs of the system, this labour force is sometimes drawn into the market and at other times it is sent back into the home.
- 2) Services such as nurseries, crèches and child care centers are sold for a price as a result of which child care is still primarily women’s responsibility for the big proportion of the society.
- 3) The care of the sick and elderly will not become a public service due to its serious cost and this duty is also left to women.
- 4) The capitalist system which rationalises every business according to profit and is always ruled by the market has not found a cheaper and more profitable way of getting housework done, other than leaving it to women.
- 5) The capitalist system which breaks up and fragments society has not created a more profitable and developed way of raising the next generation than the family. (Naimen, 1988)

For these and many other reasons, traditional Marxist Feminist women argue that women's liberation cannot be realised in the existing social formation. However in *socialist experiments*, although certain steps have undoubtedly been taken in the socialisation of child care and the entry of women into social production, the fact that real liberation has not been achieved is a major weakness of Marxist Feminism.

The IKD women also claimed that women are doubly oppressed and they took action for women's liberation in the framework of their own ideological positions. According to the IKD, women's liberation would only be achieved with women's entry into social production and the socialisation of child care and housework. Because of these views, the IKD was a traditional Marxist Feminist women's organisation.

What were the reasons for IKD to be able to collect so many women into its structure in such a short time after its foundation ? One of the main reasons why thousands of women, not just TKP members or sympathizers, became members was that, they found an organisation in which they could express themselves. If such an organisation had not existed, thousands of women would not have found another place to channel their energies. The most important factor in the growth of the IKD membership to 1,500 after one year and 12,000 after 3 years, was that in the growing wave of socialism, women saw the IKD as an organisation that gave them an identity. The IKD offered these women the chance to be active in the *public and political* sphere which had virtually been closed to them. Many women only gained full rights,

influence and initiative in an organisation on account of the IKD. Women spoke out about Turkey's present and future through the IKD. With the IKD, women were trained not just to open the windows and look out but also to go out into squares, public places and shout out their demands. All this increased their self-confidence and personal development.

Women in the IKD were involved in the linked activities known in the political field as agitation-propaganda-organising. It was women who led the organisation, took decisions, wrote, planned and led training sessions, founded the organisation, did all the writing for *Kadınların Sesi* (Voice of Women) and carried out all the technical work on the paper. Due to the IKD women were not obliged to do the menial jobs in the course of political activity as was so often the case in Turkey and in other countries. The IKD members did not find themselves in the situation of many women in workers' parties in European countries who made tea and coffee and did the typing while the men worked in leadership roles. In the IKD all kinds of work: big and small, important or unimportant was done by women.

However in addition to all the above-mentioned advantages that the IKD as a structurally independent organisation gave to women, there was one important drawback. Because the IKD women did not climb the rungs of the party organisation, they did not have a voice or an input into decisions in party policies. Because in Turkey with the IKD it was as though there was a women's party (IKD) and a men's party (TKP.) The TKP was not backward in recruiting women into its membership. On the contrary, they put pressure on women members working in the IKD to recruit

women from within the organisation. However most of the women who became party members remained in the IKD and did not rise in the party hierarchy. The IKD Central Executive Committee offered all willing and able women broad responsibilities and authority. These women organised actions throughout Turkey as regional secretaries and branch executive committee members. But the party did not show the same confidence in women and did not appoint them to responsible positions in the party apparatus at the level of district or provincial committees. This has to be seen as quite open discrimination.

In the feminist women's movement in Turkey today there is a tendency to consider the IKD to be neither a women's movement nor a women's organisation. The IKD and other similar socialist women's organisations find themselves rejected and denied by the contemporary feminist movement. Yet it is quite obvious that the IKD was a women's organisation that raised demands for women and gained legitimacy for them in society. In the 1970s the IKD organised significant events among them is the celebration of 8th March - International Women's Day- with the participation of tens of thousands of women; and raised important demands such as "equal pay for equal work," "child care center in every workplace and every neighborhood," "maternity leave must be unified and extended," "retirement for women after 20 years," and advocated that "motherhood must be seen as a social function". To refuse to recognize the IKD which carried out these activities as a women's organisation, to fail to see it as part of the women's movement in Turkey, to attempt to exclude it, cannot be of benefit to women in Turkey. The IKD and other similar organisations are a part of the history of the women's movement. It must be

evaluated from the point of view of the continuity of the women's movement. It is particularly unfortunate that it is women who are making this mistake. Men in any case *attempt to ignore* and in addition when women *cancel* each other the situation becomes serious. This situation can only be prevented by studies that bring out the historical reality.

The IKD and other organisations with similar structures are criticised as 'hierarchical, authoritarian,' 'organisations which are contrary to women's nature.' The women who make these criticisms suppose that since no hierarchical structure has been formalised this means that hierarchical relations do not exist among 1990s feminists in Turkey. We know that in Turkey today comparisons such as "I am more feminist than you," "I became a feminist before you," "my feminism is stronger than yours, you are wrong or lacking," can occur between feminist women*. The 'sisterhood' that it is claimed should exist among women is still only an illusion. We need to bear in mind that the *hierarchy of knowledge* is an important aspect of hierarchical relations. In the existing social order the hegemony of male values has filtered everywhere and into everything and women should not claim to have purified themselves of these values.

It is inevitable that the women's movement should be influenced by the social and political atmosphere that it exists in. Those who reject the IKD by accusing it of "not working for women's liberation but being used to strengthen a political position of a party" have also taken up issues of injustice that have occurred in Turkey

* Look at the debate on *Kaktüs*, no 12, 1990.

since the 1980s. Feminists have protested the attacks on sentenced and detained prisoners, on Kurds and other ethnic groups. It is right that feminists in our country should protest and take action against oppression. Nothing could be more natural. But it is difficult to understand why women in the blood bath of 1970s Turkey who joined the anti-fascist struggle, should be criticised.

This study attempts to prevent the IKD which was active from 1975-80 from falling into oblivion. It is the first scientific study of the tens of thousands of women who became politically active through the IKD. No scientific study has yet been made, not only of the IKD but also of many other socialist women and their organisations which were active between 1975-80 as well as before or after this period. The place of Turkey's socialist women in history is buried in dense darkness and this study is the first small match flame held up to light up the darkness. Further studies should follow this first work towards the writing of the history of socialist women in Turkey. This dense darkness should be dispersed by studies that rely on the words of the thousands of women who joined socialist and communist parties, who belonged to revolutionary movements, who were members of the IKD and other socialist women's organisations, who participated in rallies and meetings. It is hoped that this study can be accepted as a first small step which will be followed by others.

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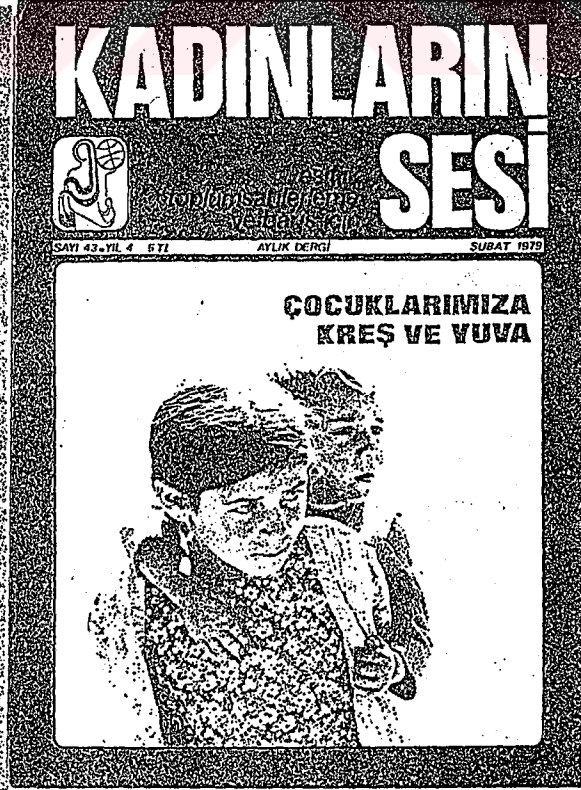
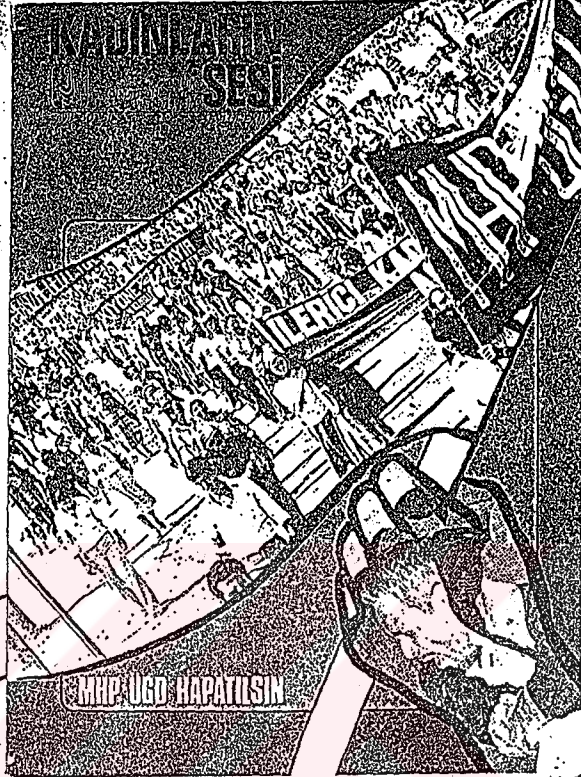
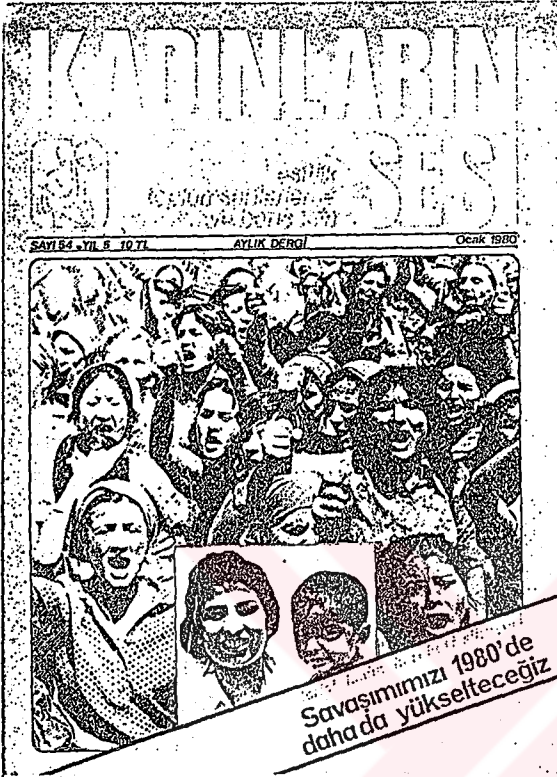
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APPENDIX A

The enthusiastic crowd cheering while the TKP message was read
at the Second General Assembly of IKD



APPENDIX C
Examples from Kadınların Sesi Magazine



APPENDIX E
"News Bulletin" in Turkish and English

Herici
kadınlar derneği **Haber Ajansı**



1 MAYIS 1MAYIS İLK DİLEĞİMİZ, YAŞAYACAK SENİ TÜNC BİLEĞİMİZ

İŞÇİ SINIFININ ULUSLARARASI BİRLİK-MÜCADELE-DAYANIŞMA GÜNÜ OLAN 1 MAYIS 1988'den beri, faaliyet gösteren bilimsel birimler, ülkeler dışında, tüm dünyada kutlanmaktadır.

1 MAYIS ULKENİZDE 51 YIL ENGELLENDİ AMA...

Yıl 1978 son bin köş, Kadın-erkek emekçiler bayraklarıyla pankartlarıyla, çocuklarılarıyla, kadınlarla Toksem 1 MAYIS ALANINI, Haykırıyor hep bir oğurdan:

FRANZİME SEÇİ TÜK

YAŞASIN 1 MAYIS

YAŞASIN İŞÇİ SINIFIMIZ.

KARDEŞLER-ANALAR-BACILAR HAYDI 1 MAYIS 1978'...

Emek cesareti son vermek için, işçilerle, partideki sen vermek için, hissece yarışmak için 1 MAYIS KATILALIM.

1 Mayıs 1977'de bu izlenimizi haykırarak için, paradedişimizi üşektin, eli kolu taşlıklar ve Mas-

cu bayraklarla tarafsızlıklarından, 35 herici, yurttan, kurtuluşunuzu, emekçilerin yanında onları başında olduk. Her gün

geçen 1 Mayıs'ta kendinizi de bayraklarınızla, emekçilerin yanında onları başında olduk. Her gün

emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz.

1 MAYIS'TA SAAT 11'DE BEŞİKTAŞ'TA İLERİ KADINLAR DERNEĞİ PLAKASINI ALTIYOR BULUSALIM.

Bayramınızda sofranızı daha da sıkılaşın. Fesahate koruy, hürriyete koruy. 1 Mayıs'ta kat-

ılın. Milyonlar olsun.

ESTİTK-BARIS-İLERİ KADINLAR DERNEĞİ PLAKASINI ALTIYOR BULUSALIM.

Her gün emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz.

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Her gün emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz. Kendi emektiriz, emektiriz.

1 MAYIS'TA SAAT 11'DE BEŞİKTAŞ'TA İLERİ KADINLAR DERNEĞİ PLAKASINI ALTIYOR BULUSALIM.

HERICİ KADINLAR DERNEĞİ
progressive
women's
organisation

NEWS BULLETIN

DATE: 30.6.1977
NUMBER: 3

CONTENTS

1. SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION.
2. WOMEN OF TURKEY ARE STRUGGLING TO DEFEND THEIR VOTES.
3. "LA DEMERALDA", THE TONGUE SHIP OF FASCIST FIMOCHEER JUNTA, COULD NOT SWAGE TURKISH FORMS.
4. UNITED FRONT AGAINST ATTACK OF MONOPOLY CAPITAL.
5. "NAZİM HİNNEN İS ALIYIZ, HE YİLLER İYİ VİTİM ÖS"

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

Two years have passed since the establishment of our Organisation. Originating from the proletarian & real mass movement cannot exist without the participation of women. P-40 was established to ensure the involvement of labouring women in the struggle for peace, democratic independence, social progress waged under the leadership of our working class.

Our Organisation has consistently defended that the problems of women, their secondary & underdeveloped, oppressed position is the result of the economic & political structure of the society and that women can only reach real equality in a society free of exploitation. We also believe that the struggle of the labouring women for their specific problems is an inseparable part of the struggle for a society without exploitation and that it will give strength to this struggle, that such a society cannot be established without the participation of women.

P-40 started with these objectives 2 years ago and it came a long way in being the real mass organisation of the labouring women of Turkey. Undoubtedly, a progressive women movement would not please the big capitalists, the oppressive P-40 establishment on all democratic fronts were directed against P-40 as well. But they could not frighten the masses of women workers for equality, peace and happiness and they will never be able to. Now when Father massively in P-40, women from all over Turkey, women who want to build a happy future for their children, with their creative hands, creating the wealth of society and creating life.

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Owner: Serife Onger
Editor: Dava KOCUVALICIN

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Sohbet: Berta ONGER
Yazı İşleri Müdürü: Dava KOCUVALICIN

APPENDIX F

A banner posted on a street in Diyarbakır on March 8th, 1978



APPENDIX G

'First Women March' in Trabzon on March 8th, 1979



APPENDIX I

Women selling trousseau at Kadıköy district in Istanbul
during 'The solidarity with the workers on strike'



APPENDIX J

'TKD Rally' in Ordu on July 23rd, 1979



APPENDIX K

"IKD cannot be silenced" banner carried in a march



THE PWO MARCHING SONG

Fighting brave and fearless
We hail thee, our PWO
In the struggle for
Independence and democracy.

Refrain: Progressive, revolutionary
All working women
Hail PWO! Hail PWO!
You will live on!

Children must not grow in hunger
They should not be killed unborn
End the pangs the mothers do feel
As they cry over their children's
corpse

Refrain:

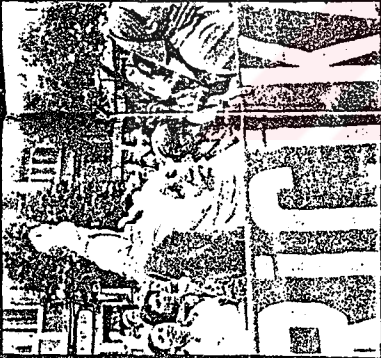
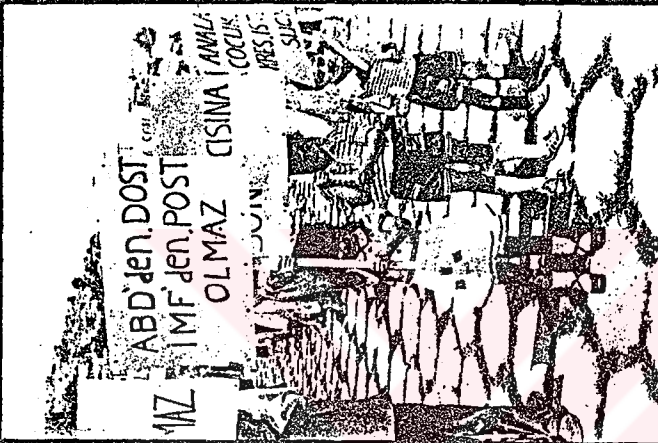
While education, seeking employment
At home, at work, everywhere
End the exploitation and the coercion
Of all working mothers

Refrain:

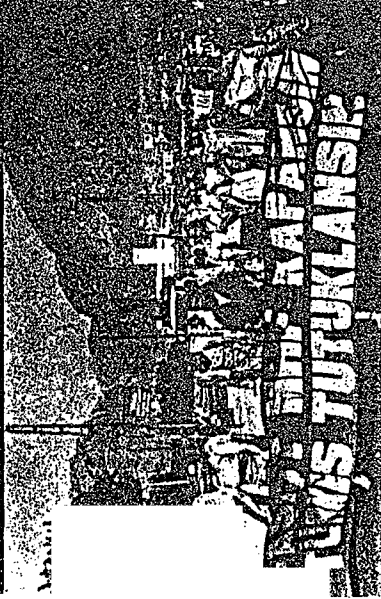
Don't remain where darkness reigns
Prefer to live in a sunny world
Rather than be a brave man's widow
Rather than the coward's wife

Refrain:

Say «Non Passerai» to fascism
Let this cruelty you suffer end
Join the ranks of the PWO
Take part in the struggle, my Ayeedül



PWO CANNOT BE SILENCED!



APPENDIX L

A view from the 'End to Mother's Grief' rally organized together with CHP



APPENDIX M

A view of 500 women marching from Istanbul and Izmir to Ankara
in protest of closing down IKD on April 24th, 1979

