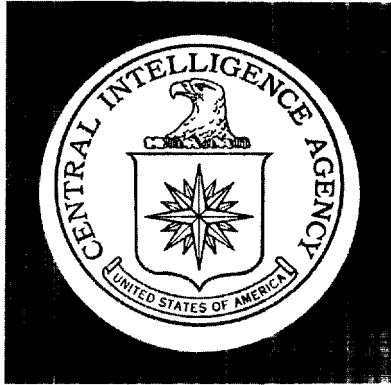


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

Leftism in Turkey

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40

31 March 1967
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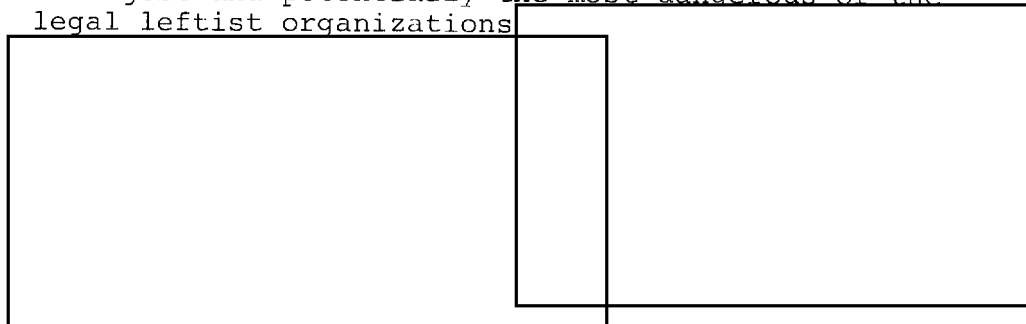
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LEFTISM IN TURKEY

Leftism has become an increasingly strong political force in Turkey since the military revolution in 1960. The Marxist Turkish Labor Party (TLP) is the strongest and potentially the most dangerous of the legal leftist organizations



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The Left Defined

The political left in Turkey consists of several parallel forces embodied in a number of cooperating and sometimes competing organizations with varying degrees of leftist orientation. The clandestine Turkish Communist Party (TKP), headed by a central committee in exile in Europe, represents the most extreme left, and potentially the greatest threat to Turkey. In Turkey proper, the TLP, headed by suspected Communist Mehmet Ali Aybar, is the most vocal leftist force and offers an umbrella to Communists who are proscribed by law. At the other end of the spectrum is the "left-of-center" wing of the opposition Republican Peoples Party (RPP), headed by Ismet Inonu, the venerable "fox" of Turkish politics.

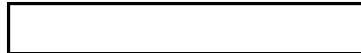
The Leftist Movement

Leftism in Turkey appears to be primarily a socialist movement with Communist overtones. Outside strictly political circles, numerous groups and individuals contribute to the spread of leftism. These include Socialist Cultural Association (SCA), the recently organized labor federation sponsored by the TLP, the Socialist Club of Ankara, segments of the press, and university student and faculty groups. Despite some cooperation and a parallel outlook and goals, these groups do not appear to be under central direction.

The members of the "left" range from those who claim to be socialists but have little apparent understanding of the meaning of the term to the

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self-styled "revolutionary" socialists and theoretical socialists. In general, there is a strong interest in socialist ideas among educators, students, artists, entertainers, the press, and some junior officers which has increased markedly since the 1960 military revolution.

Given one definition of Communism as an extreme authoritarian form of socialism, some of the self-styled leftists are probably crypto-Communists. Others talk a great deal but are not prepared to become actively involved in the movement.

The reappearance of an overt leftist movement in recent years can be attributed in part to dissatisfaction, especially among the military, with both political parties. The educated urban elite, which has always regarded itself as providing the rightful rulers of Turkey and has traditionally been represented by the RPP, is frustrated by its inability to maintain itself in power through democratic processes and, therefore, has become vulnerable to political exploitation by the left. On the other hand, the RPP left looks to the generation now in school to vote the RPP into office sometime in the 1970s.

The Turkish Communist Party

Organized Communism first appeared in Turkey in competition with Ataturk's nationalist movement in the 1920s. In an attempt to gain control of the

budding alien-supported Communist movement, Ataturk even organized his own "official" Communist Party in October 1920, but soon realized the potential threat of Communism and dissolved all Communist groups, jailing many known leaders. Remnant leaders of one faction then organized the Turkiye Komunist Partisi (TKP) as a clandestine conspiratorial band, which, particularly after March 1925 when all Communist activity was banned by law, went underground or into exile.

In 1931 the TKP in exile, which had focused its efforts on worker and peasant groups, shifted its tactics to an attempt to split off the "progressive" wing of Ataturk's followers, focusing on the educated elite and the military establishment itself in a major propaganda campaign. This, however, attracted little overt popular support. During World War II, when Turkey was oriented toward Germany, the government tried to eradicate completely the Communist Party, but only drove it further underground, where it continued to function through front organizations.

After the war, when the USSR demanded territory in eastern Turkey and a voice in controlling the strategic Turkish Straits, Turkish public opinion turned even more against the Soviet Union and the Turkish security forces launched a new drive to suppress all domestic Communist activity. Unable to function in this atmosphere,

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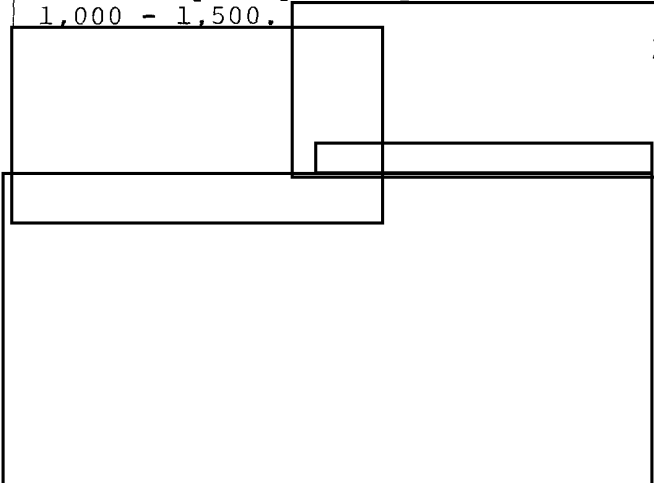
the Turkish Communists shifted their activity outside Turkey, and a central committee in exile, [redacted] spoke from time to time in the name of the TKP. A clandestine Communist apparatus remained in Turkey, especially during the regime of President Bayar and Prime Minister Menderes (1950-1960). In 1952 it was badly shattered by a major roundup. Of 184 suspects arrested, 133 were sentenced to terms up to ten years with additional probation in provincial exile. Some managed to escape from the country. The terms of those convicted have now expired, however, and many have returned to political life.

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Strength of the TKP

No membership figures have been published by the TKP since 1924 when it claimed 600 members. Estimates of party membership range from 600 to 5,000. Actual membership is probably around 1,000 - 1,500.

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The TKP in Exile

The TKP in exile, allegedly headed by Yakup Demir (apparently a pseudonym), continues to broadcast propaganda [redacted]

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[redacted] calling itself Bizim Radyo (Our Radio)

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The TKP is also usually represented at all major Communist Party congresses. At the 23rd Congress of the Soviet party in 1966, Brezhnev introduced a person alleged to be Yakup Demir as head of the central committee of the external bureau of the Turkish Communist Party.

A Turkish newspaper claims that Yakup Demir is Zeki Bastimar, a Turkish Communist who fled to Moscow in 1960. Bastimar is further alleged to be the head of Bizim Radyo.

spectrum of beliefs held by advocates of socialism make it increasingly difficult to identify confirmed Communists, the Demirel government, with the strong support of the military leadership, has publicly charged that socialism in Turkey is merely the mask for Communism. The government finds it difficult to move against socialist groups, however, because even the major opposition RPP publicly espouses a program which borders closely on socialism. Moreover, no postrevolutionary government has declared the TLP to be a Communist front, even though it describes itself as Marxist and harbors many known and suspected Communists.

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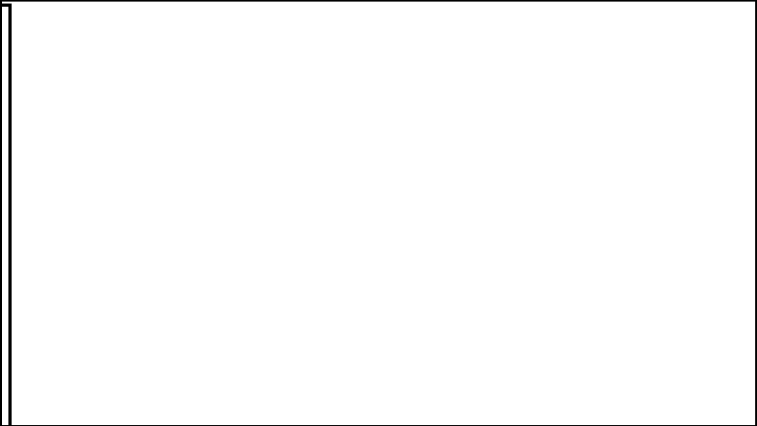
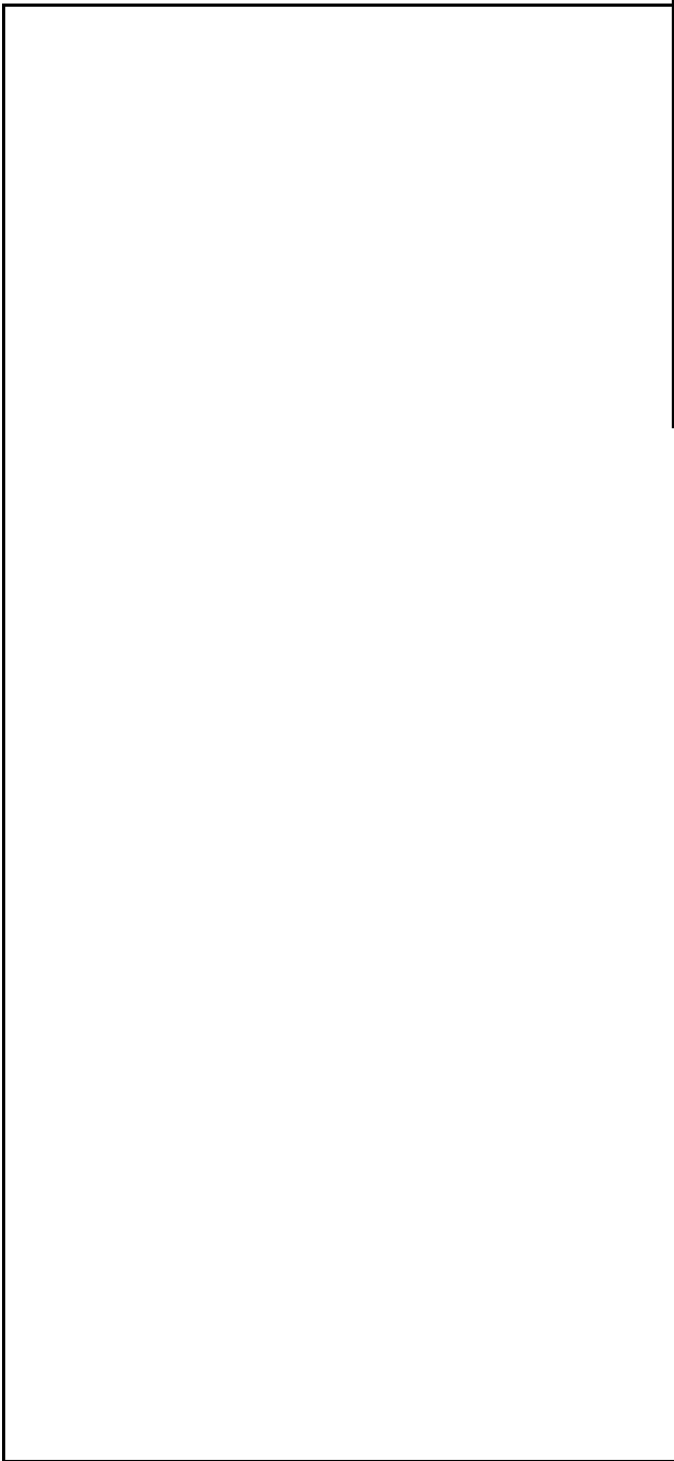
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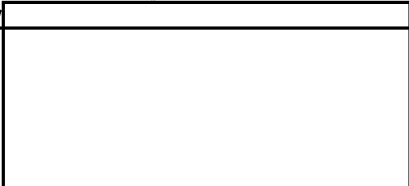
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Party President Aybar has taken pains to rebut publicly Prime Minister Demirel's charge that socialism in Turkey is merely a "mask for Communism." Party leaders realize that the TLP would be suppressed if it could be convicted of Communist activities. They therefore take great precautions to operate within the law



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