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Ismail Beşikçi:

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For many years, Ismail Beşikçi was the only non-Kurdish person in Turkey to speak out loud and clearly in defense of the rights of the Kurds. No other writer in Turkish history has had to face such an endless series of trials and prison sentences for almost every public utterance as Beşikçi has. The odyssey of Beşikçi's encounters with Turkey's legal system shows, more eloquently than any abstract political or legal analysis could, what is wrong with the system, and it demonstrates effectively how the officially proclaimed human rights and democratic values become null and void where the Kurdish question is involved. Continuing to write and speak in spite of all attempts to silence him, Beşikçi has become a powerful and important symbol for the Kurds and for the human rights movement of Turkey. In the eyes of many Kurds he has acquired almost super-human qualities, as the only Turk who has never left them alone and who has, at great risk to himself, always stood up for them and single-handedly challenged an oppressive and brutal state.

Beşikçi's role as a symbol of Turkey's oppression of the Kurds and of the general decline of human rights has tended to draw attention away from the content of his writings — especially from his earlier and most scholarly work. Since the 1980s, Beşikçi's writings have become increasingly polemical and less scholarly, if only because his imprisonment has prevented him from doing serious new research. Some of his more recent public statements — quoted enthusiastically by radical Kurdish nationalists, who considered them as support for their own political views — have been so polemical that western colleagues may be reluctant to identify too directly with him. The polemical tone and bitterness of some of his recent work is also one reason why very few Turkish intellectuals have come out in his defense — quite unlike the wide support given to the famous novelist Yaşar Kemal when he was put on trial for a critical article published in *Der Spiegel*. (But even before Beşikçi became polemical, his colleagues failed to defend him because then it was simply the fact that he mentioned the Kurds that frightened them.)

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference "Kemalismus als Herrschafts- und Staatsideologie", Kampagne "Freiheit für Ismail Beşikçi", Berlin, Humboldt-Universität, 24-25 Oktober 1997.

Beşikçi's bitterness and apparent radicalism have their reasons, which are not difficult to discern. They reflect the increasing bitterness and anger of Turkey's Kurds, their growing despair of the possibility of gradual reform and the widespread conviction that only violent action can lead to the attainment of some rights. One does not have to agree with every word that Beşikçi says in order to defend his right to say it. But Beşikçi's present struggle with the legal system and his present radical positions risk preventing us seeing his real greatness and his place in the intellectual history of Turkey and Kurdistan. Beşikçi embodies Turkey's encounter with the Kurdish question. His intellectual development is not only a radical variant of the path by which some other Turkish intellectuals gradually freed themselves of the Kemalist mind-set, but it also shows striking parallels with the development of the Kurdish movement in Turkey since the 1960s.

Beşikçi discovers the Kurds

Beşikçi, as has often been observed, is not a Kurd himself. He was born in the central Anatolian town of İskilip (in the province of Çorum) in 1939 and attended secondary school in the provincial capital.² Çorum is an ethnically mixed region. Sunni Turks constitute the majority here, but there are dozens of Turkish and Kurdish Alevi as well as Circassian (Çerkes) villages.³ In such mixed regions there was always a matter-of-fact awareness of ethnic difference, even though the official view that everyone in Turkey is a Turk was not challenged. While considering himself as a Turk, Beşikçi must in his youth have realized that some of his neighbours were more Turkish than others.

² It is interesting to note that another person born in İskilip, around the same time as Beşikçi, also became a prominent author on the Kurds, though of a very different persuasion than Beşikçi. M. Abdulhalûk Çay is the most serious among the right-wing, pan-Turk ideologists lecturing and writing on the Kurds. In the early 1980s, when leftist academics were purged from the universities, he was made a lecturer and later a professor at Hacettepe University in Ankara. He has long been associated with Turkey's extremist Nationalist Action Party (MHP), of which he presently is a board member. His best known book is *Türk Ergenekon bayramı: Nevruz (Newroz, the Turkish festival of Ergenekon)*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1988; numerous reprints), in which he attempts to prove that the Iranian spring festival of Newroz, which the Kurds claim as their national holiday, is really an ancient Turkish celebration associated with the Grey Wolf legend. A later work, *Her yönüyle Kürt dosyası (The Kurdish file, with all its aspects)*, Istanbul: Turan Kültür Vakfı, 1994), is a study of the Kurdish threat to Turkey and attempts to deflate that threat by denying that the Kurds are a people. His most interesting book is a study, with Yaşar Kalafat, of the Kurdish participation in Turkey's War of Independence: *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Kuvay-ı Millîye hareketleri (The National Resistance movements in East and Southeast Anatolia)*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1990).

³ Long but incomplete lists of Turkish Alevi, Kurdish Alevi and Circassian villages in Çorum province are given in: Peter A. Andrews, *Ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989), pp. 253-4, 342-3 and 396-8.

Beşikçi went on to study at the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University, the institute that has produced many of Turkey's highest bureaucrats and a considerable proportion of the country's political elite. He graduated in 1962; the other students of his generation must have reached the zeniths of their careers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the years when Beşikçi was moving in and out of jail. After fulfilling his military service he became an assistant professor at Atatürk University in Erzurum (1964). Here he prepared his first serious anthropological study, an investigation of one of the last nomadic Kurdish tribes, the Alikan, which he submitted in 1967 to the Ankara Faculty of Political Sciences.

Beşikçi's first interest in the Kurds was aroused when as a student he did a spell of job training in the field, working in the eastern districts of Elazığ province. He was much impressed by his observation that the district governors could not communicate directly with the villagers but needed interpreters. The experience of witnessing two different cultures facing one another in Eastern Turkey was hard to reconcile with lessons in the university, where the orthodox doctrine of Turkey's indivisible unity was preached and the existence of the Kurds as a distinct people and of Kurdish as a distinct language were systematically denied. "It was said that the Kurds were Turks by origin and their language derived from Turkish, that Kurdish was a Turkish dialect. But in Elazığ I was confronted, in various districts, with different social and cultural realities: a different language, a different culture... [I saw that] realities on the ground and what was claimed by the universities and the press were at variance with one another. This planted in me the seed of fundamental doubts that were later to come to flourish..."⁴

His second encounter with the Kurds was during his military service, when he served in Bitlis and Hakkâri. Here he must first have seen nomads; the Alikan tribe, about whom he was to write his doctoral thesis, passing through Bitlis on their migrations from winter to summer pastures and back. In Hakkari too he must have seen nomads and semi-nomads (as did Muzaffer Erdost, the only other Turkish intellectual serving as a soldier in Kurdistan who wrote analytically on his observations).⁵ More important perhaps is that as a soldier in Hakkari, which borders on Iraq, he must have become aware of the Kurdish guerrilla fought under the leadership of Mulla Mustafa Barzani against Iraq's central government. In the course of the 1960s, this movement was going to have a great impact on the ethnic awareness of Turkey's Kurds. Hakkari was the region first and most intensely affected. An

⁴ Beşikçi relates this explanation of how he became interested in the Kurdish question in the new preface to the 1992 reprint of his thesis: İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğu'da değişim ve yapısal sorunlar (göçebe Alikan aşireti)* (*Problems of structure and change in the East: the nomadic Alikan tribe*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1992), p. 23.

⁵ M. Erdost published his attempts at a Marxist analysis of Kurdish tribal society in the left journals *Yön* and *Türk Solu* in 1966 and 1968. Two decades later they were reprinted as a book: Muzaffer İlhan Erdost, *Şemdinli röportajı* (Ankara: Onur Yayınları, 1987).

awareness of this movement is already apparent in an otherwise perfectly standard questionnaire delivered by Beşikçi in the course of his doctoral research. In his second, more explicitly political book it is acknowledged as an important factor.

The subject Beşikçi chose for his doctoral thesis, the social structure of a Kurdish nomadic tribe and the changes affecting it, may have been unconventional, but he approached the subject with the methodology and within the intellectual framework then current among Turkey's progressive social scientists. The teachers who had most influenced him, İbrahim Yasa and Mübeccel Kıray, were sociologists of a strong social commitment, with a profound interest in social and economic development and the roots of inequality, and they had published landmark monographs on villages and small towns.⁶ Their work breathed a spirit of confidence that social scientists could contribute to the construction of a better society and a conviction that they should devote their skills to the good of the people.

The intellectual climate of the 1960s in Turkey

Turkey in the 1960s was a country that had to come to terms with rapid social and economic change. After more than two decades of state-controlled economic development and moderate industrialization, the Democratic Party government (1950-60) had given a strong boost to the private sector, favouring especially the mechanization of agriculture. The rapid economic growth that took place resulted in economic polarization within Turkey and massive migration from the countryside to the cities. Because it depended much on foreign loans, it also caused rapidly increasing foreign debts, which in turn led to high inflation and a decline of living standards for an important part of the population. A military coup by radical young officers in 1960 temporarily interrupted this first phase of untrammelled capitalist growth and polarization.

Two major reforms that the military undertook in order to safeguard the Kemalist heritage were to have a great impact on developments of the following decade. One of these was a new constitution, drawn up by a committee of Kemalist legal scholars. This document guaranteed unprecedented civil liberties and that was to allow the emergence of radical trade unions and a socialist political party. The other major reform was a return to economic planning, with the establishment of the State Planning Organization in 1960 that was to prepare the new Five Year Development Plans, the first of which was initiated in 1963. When in 1965 the Democratic Party, renamed Justice Party, returned to power, the authority of the State Planning Organization over economic policy was reduced, but it remained an influential

⁶ İbrahim Yasa, *Hasanoğlan köyü* (Ankara, 1955); İbrahim Yasa, *Sindel köyü* (Ankara, 1960); Mübeccel Kıray, *Ereğli: ağır sanayiden önce bir sahil kasabası* (*Ereğli: a coastal town before the arrival of heavy industry*, Ankara, 1964).

institution, highly respected in Kemalist and more left circles. It showed from the beginning a great concern with the economic disparities — especially regional inequalities — that critics associated with the type of development fostered by the Democratic Party. The causes of inequality and the search for remedies became a major preoccupation of Turkish intellectuals in the 1960s.⁷ In the course of the decade, many of them came to adopt Marxism in one form or another as a framework for explanation.

As a prelude to future regional development projects, the Ministry of Village Affairs had a detailed survey made of the socio-economic conditions of all villages in the country. This survey, the Village Inventory Studies, not only gave information on landholding and the degree of mechanization of agriculture in each village but also, though less systematically, on its ethnic composition.⁸ The results of the survey were not made public, for the subject of ethnicity was too politically sensitive, but scholars nevertheless had access to them and thus the survey had an indirect impact on public debate.

The first legal socialist party since the 1920s, the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP), made a remarkably successful showing in the 1965 elections, winning seats not only from the industrial centres but also, surprisingly, from some Kurdish districts. The TİP, and in its wake the left student movement, discovered the Kurdish question or, as it was then called, the "question of the East." The terms "Kurd" and "Kurdistan" were taboo then, and even Kurdish nationalists refrained from using them in public. *Doğu*, "the East," was a neutral term that was used to evade explicit reference to the Kurds and Kurdish "separatism."⁹ The Kurds were referred to as *Doğulu*, "Easterners," a term that conveniently also included Turks, Arabs and Syrian Christians living in the region.

The TİP and other left movements saw the Kurdish question primarily in terms of regional underdevelopment due to oppression and exploitation. They recognized that the government

⁷ A typical, and influential, example of empirical research on inequality is the study of Mübeccel Kiray (one of Beşikçi's teachers) on the processes of economic polarization due to the mechanization of agriculture in villages in the Adana region: see Jan Hinderink and Mübeccel B. Kiray, *Social stratification as an obstacle to development: a study of four Turkish villages* (New York: Praeger, 1970) and Mübeccel B. Kiray, "Social change in Çukurova: a comparison of four villages", in: Peter Benedict et al. (ed.), *Turkey: geographic and social perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 179-203.

⁸ This latter aspect of the Village Inventory Studies is evaluated for eastern Turkey by L. Nestmann, "Die ethnische Differenzierung der Bevölkerung der Osttürkei in ihren sozialen Bezügen: Auswertung der "Köy Envanter Etüdüleri" des Ministeriums für Dorfangelegenheiten", in: Peter A. Andrews, *Ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989), pp. 543-81.

⁹ The term "Kurdistan" occurs in the name of the clandestine Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey (KDP-T), that was established in 1965, but in public utterances it was always replaced by "Doğu." KDP-T members played leading parts in organizing the "Doğu mitingleri" of 1967, the first Kurdish mass rallies, where the underdevelopment of "the East" was protested.

had done its share of oppression, and that the Turkish bourgeoisie exploited the East as a sort of colony, but like earlier generations of Kemalists they identified the Kurdish aghas and sheikhs (tribal and religious leaders) as the worst oppressors and impediments to progress. They strongly disapproved of a Kurdish nationalism that was led by the stratum of aghas and sheikhs. The TİP gradually came to accept, however, that the "question of the East" was also a national question. At its 1970 congress, the party adopted a resolution stating that "the East" was inhabited by the Kurds, a people distinct from the Turks, and that its underdevelopment was not simply the natural consequence of capitalism's unequal development but at least in part due to deliberate government policies. This resolution was the reason why the party was banned immediately after the military intervention of 1971. Since then, the Turkish left has been reluctant to be associated with Kurdish demands and points of view, and in the 1970s we shall see a Kurdish left developing beside, and no longer in the same organizations with, the Turkish left.

An important part of the Kurdish movement in Turkey emerged within Turkey's socialist movement of the 1960s, and its emergence was possible because the number of Kurds studying at universities in Istanbul and Ankara had been increasing. There was also a relatively small but devoted circle of nationalist intellectuals who remained outside the left movement and who were generally more concerned with Kurdish history and culture and with national oppression than with the analysis of economic oppression and exploitation from a Kemalist or Marxist point of view.¹⁰ A number of short-lived cultural and political journals were published (and, in most cases, immediately banned): *İleri Yurt* (1958), *Dicle-Fırat* (1962-63), *Deng* (1963), *Roja Newê* (1963), *Yeni Akış* (1966).¹¹ Inspired by the Kurdish movement in Iraq, where Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the KDP were leading a successful guerrilla struggle against the central government, young members of the Kurdish traditional elite founded in 1965 the clandestine Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey (KDP-T).

The nationalist and the left wing of the movement worked together in organizing the *Doğu Mitingleri* ("Rallies of the East"), a series of mass rallies in Kurdish towns in 1967, at which cultural oppression and economic backwardness were protested. Both were also represented in the first Kurdish association that became publicly active, the "Revolutionary Cultural Societies of the East" (DDKO), the first of which were established in Ankara and Istanbul in 1969, soon to be followed by branches in Diyarbakır and other Kurdish towns. DDKO's

¹⁰ Two recent memoirs by members of this circle give an insight into the debates of those days and the instinctively repressive response by the authorities to the least expression of Kurdish sentiment: Naci Kutlay, *49'lar dosyası (The file of the 49)*, Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1994) and Yaşar Kaya, *23 Kürt aydını (23 Kurdish intellectuals)*, Köln: Mezopotamya Yayınları, 1998).

¹¹ A more complete survey of the journals published by Kurds in Turkey is: Malmîsanij & Mahmûd Lewendî, *Li Kurdistanê Bakur û li Tirkiyê rojnamegeriya Kurdî (1908-1992) (Kurdish journalism in northern Kurdistan and in Turkey, 1908-1992)*, Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1992).

monthly bulletins¹² addressed questions of cultural oppression and economic backwardness and denounced as major causes American imperialism and its local collaborators, the large landholders and capitalists. They called for efforts to protect and develop Kurdish language and culture, to establish libraries and folklore collections. Later issues reported human rights violations and regional events and analyzed the government's policies in "the East" as "cultural imperialism". Reports on the Vietnam war and on the Basque national movement indicated that the DDKO were beginning to think of themselves as a national liberation movement.

On March 12, 1971, Turkey's military carried through a coup, proclaimed martial law in the provinces that had seen much political activity, detained large numbers of left and Kurdish activists. The TİP and DDKO were banned, their leaders tried and sentenced. Following the return to civilian rule and a partial amnesty in 1974, both the left and the Kurdish movement reemerged, but both were fractionalized, and the Turkish left no longer openly supported Kurdish demands. The Kurdish movement radicalized, its aims came to include national self-determination besides cultural and economic demands. By the late seventies, several Kurdish organizations were to proclaim the armed liberation struggle.

Beşikçi's works of the 1960s

1. Ethnography of the nomadic Alikan tribe

Beşikçi's doctoral dissertation is in many respects a work in the progressive Kemalist tradition, scholarship committed to the development and the uplifting of the backward population of Anatolia.¹³ The indicators by which the young Beşikçi measured progress and development all were measures of the degree of integration into Turkish society and clearly show what Beşikçi then thought was in the nomads' interest: they had to learn Turkish and go to school, settle and give up many of their old traditions in order to take part in the modern world. Beşikçi still shared the attitudes and presumptions of the Kemalist intellectual elite, and he published parts of the thesis in the magazine *Forum* that was read by this elite.¹⁴

¹² The bulletins (1970-71) are reprinted alongside the files of the post-1971 trials against the DDKO in *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları dava dosyası* (Ankara: Komal, 1974), pp. 477-630.

¹³ *Doğu'da değişim ve yapısal sorunları (Göçebe Alikan aşireti)*, submitted in Ankara, 1967; published by Doğan Yayınevi, Ankara, 1969, and reprinted with a new preface by Yurt Kitap-Yayın, Ankara, 1992.

¹⁴ "Göçebe aşiretlerde yenileşme" ("Renewal among nomadic tribes"), "Doğu Anadolu'da göçebe Kürtler" ("Nomadic Kurds in eastern Anatolia") and "Göçebelerde modernleşme ve üç hipotez" ("Modernization among nomads: three hypotheses"), *Forum* 15-9, 1-10 and 15-10-1967.

The thesis is a serious, though somewhat schematic, anthropological study of the Alikan tribe. Following a lengthy introduction on concepts and methodology, it describes and analyzes successively:

- the geology and (physical) ecology of the environment;
- the social organization of the tribe and the social ecology, i.e. the Alikan's social and economic interactions with the sedentary populations among which they move;
- data pertaining to demography: composition by age groups, sex, marital status, etc.
- property relations within the tribe;
- economic activities and an analysis of production relations;
- family structure, division of labour within the family, and the position of woman;
- religion, world view and knowledge of the world.

Beşikçi's data were collected — as is usual in Turkish studies of the countryside — by means of long questionnaires, submitted by Beşikçi himself and a number of schoolteachers who assisted him. This method inevitably resulted in a somewhat dry, technical study, in which the individual and the human dimension of society are sometimes hard to discern. (Participant observation as a method was virtually unknown in Turkey, and for lively descriptions of everyday life one has to turn to the novels written by village teachers on the basis of their experiences.) By the standards of Turkish social science, Beşikçi's was a competent and interesting study, which will retain its value as a unique piece of ethnography. It is his only work that has won the acclaim of his Turkish colleagues.

Rereading this work after thirty years, it is striking how much not only Beşikçi has changed but also mainstream discourse in Turkey. One of my Kurdish students, whom I had asked to study this book and compare the Alikan tribe with other social formations in Kurdistan, was quite offended by it and called Beşikçi just such a racist as the other Kemalists, identifying with the state and denying or at least hiding that the Kurds have a separate ethnic identity. In his 1992 preface, Beşikçi apologizes for the biases that have now become so much more visible; his whole analysis, he says, was still very much influenced by the official ideology of the state.

Closer reading of the text shows, however, that Beşikçi was aware of the ethnic dimension and not afraid to ask questions that deviated from what the universities then considered as politically correct. To measure knowledge of the outside world, for instance, he presented his respondents with a brief list of well-known personalities, asking them whom of these they knew and what they were known for. The names on this list were: Sultan Abdulhamid II (who ruled until 1909!), Atatürk, Barzani, Koçero (a famous social bandit, who was killed in 1964), Sheikh Sa'id (leader of the Kurdish rebellion of 1925), Cemal Gürsel (figurehead of the 1960 coup and Turkey's president at the time of research) and Sa'id-i Nursi (a Kurdish religious reformer, progenitor of the *Nurcu* movement). This obviously was an indirect way of asking to what extent the Alikan identified themselves with the Kurdish movement, with

Republican Turkey or with religion. The responses were significant: only Koçero was known by all, Sa'id-i Nursi by none. Barzani was second, known by 33 out of 37 respondents. Gürsel and Atatürk scored considerably lower, with 22 and 20. Only eight respondents knew Sheikh Sa'id, indicating that the large Kurdish rebellion was not part of the Alikan's remembered history. Even Sultan Abdulhamid II, who had made many Kurdish tribes into privileged militias in the late 19th century and who was deposed in 1909, scored better, being remembered by fourteen.¹⁵

Another question that captured an important development was "which radio station do you listen to most frequently?" Transistor radios had only recently become available, and they were to have a great impact on the Kurds' awareness of the world around them and of their national identity.¹⁶ All of the respondents listened to the radio, but none of them mentioned a Turkish radio station. In fact, half of them listened most often to radio Yerevan (which broadcast programs in Kurmanci, the Kurdish dialect closest to that of the Alikan themselves); another third mentioned Tehran, which also transmitted programs in several Kurdish dialects.¹⁷ The answers show to what extent language, and perhaps sympathies, separated these nomadic Kurds from Turkey.

2. Observations on the emergence of a Kurdish movement

Beşikçi was a close observer of the gradual politicization of the Kurds. In the wake of the first "Rallies of the East", at which the emerging Kurdish national movement had manifested itself, he wrote a long paper offering a sociological explanation for the emergence of this movement and the nature of its demands.¹⁸ The dominant theme of the speeches at these rallies was the underdevelopment of Eastern Turkey. Many attributed this to the indifference that the successive Ankara governments had shown towards this region; the "feudal" relations existing in the region also came in for much blame. Beşikçi begins his analysis by producing evidence supporting the speakers' claims.

¹⁵ Beşikçi, *Doğu'da değişim ve yapısal sorunlar*, p. 242-4 (1992 edition).

¹⁶ On the effects of modern communication media on Kurdish ethnicity, see: Martin van Bruinessen, "Shifting national and ethnic identities: the Kurds in Turkey and the European diaspora", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18 (1998), pp. 39-52, esp. 47-9.

¹⁷ Beşikçi, *Doğu'da değişim ve yapısal sorunlar*, pp. 246-7.

¹⁸ This paper was serialized in the progressive Kemalist magazine *Forum* in the first months of 1968 under the title "Doğu'da şeyhlik, agalık" ("Religious and tribal authority in the East"). It was reprinted 25 years later as *Doğu Mitingleri'nin analizi (1967) (An analysis of the Rallies of the East)*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1992).

Using statistics from various official sources, he adduced simple but convincing indicators of regional underdevelopment and neglect. Whereas the region comprised 22% of Turkey's surface and 13% of the population, it had only 3.3% of the tractors and 4.7% of the harvesting machines. Savings in the region accounted for only 3.2% of national savings. In public health facilities and schools — an indicator of government concern with the region — the East lagged incomparably far behind the rest of the country. Such secondary schools as there were in the East scored very low in the national ranking of examination results.¹⁹

"Feudal" relations — large landholdings, share-cropping, complete dependence of peasants on religious or tribal leaders — were still widespread in Eastern Turkey, and Beşikçi shows that instead of weakening the position of the "feudal" lords had been strengthened since 1950. Turkey's transition to multi-party democracy with general elections had turned these lords into vote-getters for the rival parties, for which they received various forms of patronage and influence in exchange. Such economic development as there was worked in the direction of greater inequality at the local as well as national level. So far, Beşikçi's analysis corresponds with that by other progressive and committed scholars, and he in fact states his indebtedness to his teachers Mübeccel Kiray and Fehmi Yavuz.

Beşikçi goes a step further, however, and shows that Kemalist anti-"feudal" rhetoric has not been matched by serious anti-"feudal" policies. Measures that were presented as aiming at the abolishment of "feudalism", such as the deportations of tribal chieftains (*agha*) in the wake of the Kurdish rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s, did not do anything to change the nature of the relations of production in the region. The deported aghas could return to their villages years later and resume their old functions, because alternative institutions had not come into existence.²⁰ The most recent deportation, involving 55 chieftains, took place following the 1960 coup. Beşikçi notes that the deportees all happened to be Democratic Party vote-getters and suggests that the measure was directed at the Democratic Party and at Kurdish national sentiment rather than at "feudalism".²¹ The forced exile of these 55 aghas was a frequently recurring theme at the Rallies. Beşikçi quotes one of the 55, Faik Bucak (who also

¹⁹ Judged by the results of the 1962 examinations, the top 18 of the then 147 secondary schools were all in western towns, and 12 of the bottom 21 were in the East (Table 6 in Beşikçi, *Doğu Mitingleri'nin analizi*).

²⁰ Beşikçi was not the first to make such a heretical comment. The liberal Turkish monthly *Barış Dünyası* had devoted its second issue (May 1962) to the problem of "development of the East" in which it questioned the wisdom of removing aghas, who "under the prevailing primitive conditions perform social functions. Unless modern institutions were put into place that could perform the same functions, and without a development appropriate to the people's material and spiritual needs, the removal of the aghas will have harmful rather than beneficial effects." (quoted in the article on the Kurdish movement of the 1960s in the *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, Istanbul: İletişim, 1990, vol. 7, p. 2121).

²¹ Beşikçi, *Doğu Mitingleri'nin analizi*, p. 54. To be precise, 54 belonged to the DP, one to a small right-wing party.

was one of the founders, in 1965, of the clandestine Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey) as asking why much richer landlords who were less politically obnoxious were left at peace.²²

Beşikçi was to return repeatedly to the theme that the deportation of the aghas was part of an anti-Kurdish, not an anti-feudal policy, and he came to emphasize ever more strongly that the "Question of the East" (as the Kurdish problem continued to be called) was to a large extent a *product* of government policies. In a paper presented at a conference at Hacettepe University in 1970, to an audience composed of Turkey's leading social scientists, he wove this theme together with several others.²³ Mustafa Kemal's independence movement had been anti-imperialist but never anti-feudal. It is a mistake to attribute the "Question of the East" to the prevailing feudal relations. Rather, "feudalism" persists precisely due to government policies partly inspired by fears of Kurdish separatism. The poverty of the East was exacerbated by deliberate neglect and by some aspects of the assimilation policies; state lands in the region, for instance, were given to immigrants from the Balkans rather than to poor Kurdish peasants. Beşikçi sharply criticized, in this paper, the Kemalist scholars who had established the official truths about "the East" and had defined the ethnic dimension out of existence. It was the last time he was invited to speak at an official scholarly conference in Turkey.

We find here already elements of what was to become the central thrust of Beşikçi's later work, a systematic critique of Kemalist ideology and practice. From a scholar studying the Kurds he gradually evolved into an advocate of the Kurds. But in 1968 he was still very much the sympathetic observer who, in Kemalist style, wished to solve problems by reforms from above. The kernel of the entire question, he wrote, was that "the East" had a high birth rate but no corresponding expansion of employment and food production. Land reform was therefore urgently needed but not sufficient; an integrated development plan for the region had to be drawn up.²⁴ With these recommendations, Beşikçi found himself in agreement with Kemalist mainstream sociologists and economists of those years.

²² Beşikçi, *Doğu Mitingleri'nin analizi*, p. 65.

²³ This paper was published a quarter century later as "Türkiye'de sosyal araştırmalarda öncelikler ve sorunlar" ("Priorities and questions in social research in Turkey") in his *Kürt toplumu üzerine (On Kurdish society)*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1993).

²⁴ Beşikçi, *Doğu Mitingleri'nin analizi*, pp. 73-81.

3. The anatomy of Eastern Anatolia

Beşikçi's most ambitious and, in my view, most interesting work is *Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni (The order of East Anatolia)*, which was first published in 1969.²⁵ In this book he tries to adapt and apply Marxist concepts to the analysis of Kurdish society and to the processes of socio-economic and political change taking place. He attempts to analyze the nomadic tribe and peasant society in terms of mode of production and studies the unequal penetration of capitalism into the various parts of Turkish Kurdistan. Beşikçi clearly intended this study to constitute a major contribution to the debate that was then going on among the Turkish left as to the nature of Turkey's economy: was it feudal, semi-feudal or capitalist, or was the Asian mode of production dominant? The question had obvious consequences for revolutionary strategy to be followed, and it loomed large over the splits that were to occur in the left.

The theoretical framework for the analysis of social and economic evolution that Beşikçi presents in the introduction to his work was not very sophisticated. He depended on the Marxist theoretical literature then available, which was as yet very limited and generally of the most deterministic type of historical materialism. In this respect, Beşikçi was not different from his contemporaries; where he differed from them was in his effort to explain the subjected position of the Kurds in Turkey within a frame of social evolution, from feudalism through mercantile, industrial and financial capitalism to socialism. Nations began to emerge, in his scheme, under mercantile capitalism and came into their own under industrial capitalism, whereas financial capitalism was associated with the emergence of dominant nations and colonial states. Only under socialism would equal relations between nations become possible.²⁶ Without saying so explicitly, Beşikçi referred here to the thesis, developed by Kurdish leftists, that Turkey was a colonial state and the Kurds a colonized nation. The oppression of the Kurds, in this scheme, was a consequence of unequal capitalist development and would at best end with the transition to socialism.

More interesting than the theoretical considerations, however, was the empirical part of the study. A summary of Beşikçi's earlier analysis of the nomadic Alikan tribe is here juxtaposed with descriptions of other socio-economic formations in Kurdistan and especially of the regions where changes in the relations of production are observable. Regions with various types of landholding and various types of division of labour and resources among ethnic groups are compared in order to explain why, for instance, Kars is predominantly progressive and Erzurum staunchly conservative in politics. Diyarbakır is described as a region where,

²⁵ Ismail Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni: sosyo-ekonomik ve etnik temeller (The order of East Anatolia: socio-economic and ethnic foundations)*, Istanbul: E Yayınları, 1969; second, revised edition: E Yayınları, 1970; reprint in two volumes Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1992).

²⁶ Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni*, 1970 edition, p. 28-9.

due to the mechanization of agriculture, the "feudal" relations between landlord and peasant have changed into employer-worker relations without traditional social obligations. In Urfa, the province with the largest landholdings, mechanization has not turned the peasants into workers but left them unemployed. In Gaziantep and Siirt, Beşikçi observes a transition in manufacture (weaving) from production at home looms (for an urban entrepreneur who provides the inputs and buys the products) to atelier production by wage-earning (though underpaid) workers. The vital role of smuggling in the economy of the districts along the Syrian and Iranian borders is analyzed, followed by a brief excursus on social banditry, endemic in Kurdistan, which Beşikçi also associated with the pattern of landholding.

Unlike the thesis, this book was not based interviews with questionnaires but on a wide variety of oral and written sources (including numerous newspaper articles), besides direct personal observations. Though at places sketchy, it is generally very rich in descriptive detail, and it deserves credit for being the first study to bring out the great heterogeneity of the region, the wide range of social structures in it, and the complexity of its social dynamics. The socio-economic survey is complemented with a few brief chapters on the political economy of religion. Beşikçi brings no original research to bear on this subject, nor does he offer new interpretations, but he usefully compiles data on Sunni-Alevi relations, on the role of the sheikhs of Sufi orders, and on religious movements and sects in the region.

The second half of the book deals with the emergence of the Kurdish question in Turkey as a *national* question. Beşikçi investigates the development of the relations between tribe and state in the late Ottoman Empire and during the Republican period. In this context he analyzes, *inter alia*, the Kurdish rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s, the central government's assimilation policies, the strengthening of the aghas' positions following the transition to a multi-party system, and the stirrings of Kurdish nationalism in the 1960s. This was the first serious attempt to write a social and political history of the Kurds in Turkey, and it was long to remain unsurpassed.

In this book Beşikçi has left the Kemalist perspective of his doctoral thesis behind, and though he stays close to the dominant Marxist discourse of the period, he does not reduce the Kurdish question to one of backwardness and feudalism. To the contrary, he associates the spread of Kurdish national awareness (among other strata than the traditional elite) with the decline of feudal ties and the emergence of capitalist production relations in the region. He puts the Kemalist presumption on its head, as it were, that modernization will necessarily do away with ethnic heterogeneity and result in one strong Turkish nation. In Beşikçi's view, the Kurds, not yet a nation, will inevitably become one once the feudal relations are dissolved.

Beşikçi's book did not have the impact that it deserved. The subjects that he discussed were too sensitive, and the book did not cause much debate either in academic or left intellectual circles. Beşikçi's most direct academic environment, Erzurum's Atatürk University where he

still was an assistant professor, was appalled by his choice of subject and took disciplinary measures. After an administrative investigation, he was dismissed on the grounds that by publishing this book he had violated Turkey's Constitution (the paragraph on the indivisibility of the country). Beşikçi successfully appealed to the Council of State, which declared his dismissal invalid, but the university refused to accept him again. Following the military intervention of March 12, 1971 and the proclamation of emergency law, the rector and deans of Atatürk University denounced Beşikçi to the military commanders. Not much later, Beşikçi was detained and put on trial for communist and anti-national propaganda. His superiors and colleagues were witnesses for the prosecution, accusing him of communist and Kurdish propaganda in his lectures. The only material evidence presented at the trial was his book and a few articles summarizing the book's argument. The court sentenced Beşikçi to 13 years imprisonment for violating the indivisibility of the Turkish nation.²⁷

Beşikçi's works of the 1970s: a systematic critique of Kemalism

Beşikçi did not have to serve his full 13 years. He benefited from the amnesty proclaimed by the Ecevit-Erbakan government and was freed in late 1974. He unsuccessfully applied for a position at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Ankara, which in 1970 had appeared willing to employ him. He never found academic employment again and was henceforth to do his research as an independent scholar, in economically precarious circumstances. Colleagues showed him little or no solidarity and avoided him, afraid of being also associated with Kurdish "separatism." He had, on the other hand, become famous in Kurdish circles, and Kurds made efforts to help him in his research, giving access to unpublished information and helping him find rare documents. It was a Kurdish publishing house, Komal, that published the first few of his studies of the 1970s.

The isolation which the academic establishment, and even left-leaning Turkish colleagues, imposed on Beşikçi after he had published *Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni* was not simply caused by fear and anxiety over their own academic careers, although this certainly played a part. Academics active in Marxist movements also represented career risks to their closest friends, but none suffered the same degree of isolation as Beşikçi did. Many intellectuals strongly disapproved of Beşikçi's apparent commitment to the Kurdish cause, which violated their

²⁷ Beşikçi described the difficulties he encountered in publishing his book, and the response of the university authorities at Erzurum in an encyclopaedia article published two decades later: "*Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni*"nin başına gelenler" ("The fate of *Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni*"), in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Hareketlerinin Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1990), vol. 7, pp. 2124-25. Documents of his trial (the indictment, Beşikçi's elaborate defense plea and the verdict) were published with a long introduction by Beşikçi as *Bilimsel yöntem, üniversite özerkliği, ve demokratik toplum ilişkileri açısından İsmail Beşikçi davası* (*The trial of İsmail Beşikçi in the light of scientific method, university autonomy, and democratic social relations*, Ankara: Komal, 1975).

own ideological convictions. By emphasizing that ethnicity was a relevant fact of social life, by treating Kurdish nationalism as just as self-evident a social phenomenon as Turkish nationalism and by questioning the anti-feudal and therefore progressive character of Kemalism, Beşikçi struck at the roots of the worldview of Kemalists as well as Turkish socialists. Both saw Kurdish nationalism, especially when represented by aghas and sheikhs, as a reactionary force, that potentially might serve the imperialist enemy by dividing the Turkish nation, or the working class, or all progressive forces (as the case might be), and that had at all costs to be overcome. By simply admitting that Kurdish ethnicity was relevant and that Kurdish nationalism was inevitably on the rise, Beşikçi came to be associated with the enemy.²⁸

Much of Beşikçi's intellectual output of the 1970s is directed against the implicit premises and selective blindness of such colleagues, which he in turn criticized as unscientific. All his writings of the decade refer in their titles to "scientific method" and had the express purpose of contributing to a systematic critique of Kemalist policies, Kemalist ideology and, especially, the Kemalist historiography of Turkey. Beşikçi's series of studies of Kemalist policies towards the Kurds constitutes one of the first systematic efforts at a serious revision of republican history to appear in Turkey.²⁹ The series came to consist of seven volumes, but only the first three were published during the 1970s; the other four were also completed then but could not be published until the 1990s. Even so, not only the first three but also the latter four were banned almost at once upon appearance, and Beşikçi was prosecuted and sentenced for each new volume.³⁰

²⁸ The denial of all that Beşikçi represented, without explicitly mentioning his name, long remained a habit in academic circles. As much as 15 years later, a member of the rural sociology research team at Ankara University, who did fieldwork in two Kurdish villages near Elazığ, wrote in the preface of his book that ethnicity is irrelevant to the important issues of development with which he dealt and that he therefore would not pay attention to it: Zülküf Aydın, *Underdevelopment and rural structures in Southeastern Turkey: the household economy in Gısgıs and Kalhana* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986). Most Turkish academics discovered only after 1991, when ethnicity could be openly discussed, that it was a relevant factor after all.

²⁹ Similar efforts were undertaken by Islamist writers such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and especially Sadık Albayrak, but their work is more a documentation of oppression than an analysis of Kemalist ideology. Important later contributions to a critique of Kemalism — which however only tangentially deal with the Kurdish question — are Mete Tunçay's *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti yönetimi'nin kurulması (1923-1931)* (*The establishment of one-party rule in the Republic of Turkey*, Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1981), Taha Parla's three volume *Türkiye'de siyasal kültürün resmî kaynakları* (*The official sources of political culture in Turkey*, İstanbul: İletişim, 1992), and Baskın Oran's *Atatürk milliyetçiliği: resmî ideoloji dışı bir inceleme* (*Atatürk's nationalism: an investigation not in line with official ideology*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1988).

³⁰ The books were all reprinted in the early 1990s by Yurt Kitap-Yayın in Ankara, whose owner courageously (but in vain) fought all banning orders and appealed to have the bans lifted.

Beşikçi gave the series the collective title of *Scientific method: Practice in Turkey*. The volume titles are:

1. *Kürtlerin 'mecburi iskân'ı (The forced resettlement of the Kurds)*, Ankara: Komal, 1977.
2. *'Türk-tarih tezi', 'Güneş-dil teorisi' ve Kürt sorunu (The 'Turkish History Thesis', the 'Sun-language theory' and the Kurdish question)*, Ankara: Komal, 1977.
3. *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası'nın tüzüğü (1927) ve Kürt sorunu (The 1927 bylaws of the Republican People's Party and the Kurdish question)*, Ankara: Komal, 1978.
4. *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim jenosidi (The 1935 law concerning Tunceli and the genocide of Dersim)*, İstanbul: Belge, 1990.
5. *Orgeneral Muğlalı olayı: otuzüç kurşun (The affair of General Muğlalı: thirty-three bullets)*, İstanbul: Belge, 1991.
6. *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası'nın programı (1931) ve Kürt sorunu (The 1931 program of the Republican People's Party and the Kurdish question)*, İstanbul: Belge, 1991.
7. *Kürdistan üzerinde emperyalist bölüşüm mücadelesi 1915-1925 (The imperialist war for the division of Kurdistan, 1915-1925)*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1992.

These works made important historical materials available that had so far been hard to find and had been, deliberately or not, neglected by most historians. In each of them, Beşikçi attempts to refute Kemalist received ideas through a critical re-reading of original documents from within the Kemalist movement and the Kemalist regime.

The first volume discusses the resettlement law of 1932, which constituted the legal framework for mass deportations of Kurds as a means of assimilation. Beşikçi gives not only the text of the law and the government's explanations but also quotes extensively from the deliberations in parliament and the opinions of contemporary academic experts. The law envisaged the mass transfer of Kurdish population from sensitive zones where these constituted the majority to Turkish-majority regions and the resettlement of "persons of Turkish culture" in the evacuated zones.

The only region of Kurdistan where the resettlement law has been systematically put into practice is Dersim, the region that longest retained some form of de facto autonomy. In volume 4, Beşikçi details what happened to this unfortunate province. A special law in 1935 placed it under military rule, preparations for pacification were made, and a minor incident provided the excuse for brutal military campaigns in 1937 and 1938, in the course of which a considerable part of the population was killed. Many of the survivors were deported to western Turkey. Beşikçi's volume made important material for the first time available in print. There previously existed a Kurdish account of what had happened in Dersim, written by a

leading Kurdish personality from the region, and a military history of the Dersim campaigns prepared by the history section of the general staff.³¹ As an important complement to these, Beşikçi documents the attitudes, motivations and deliberations on the government side, essential to the question as to whether the massacres constituted genocide — a question that Beşikçi answers in the positive.³²

The volumes 3 and 6 critically evaluate key documents of the Kemalist state party, the Republican People's Party and its policies. Beşikçi here emphasizes the influence of Italian fascism on Kemalist thought of the period, and he elaborates upon his earlier thesis that Kemalism never was anti-feudal by analyzing whom the party (i.e., Mustafa Kemal or the provincial party bosses) appointed as deputies for the Kurdish provinces.

The Turkish History Thesis and the Sun-Language Theory, two pseudo-scientific theories favoured by Atatürk in the last years of his life, which proclaimed the Turks and their language to have been the source of all great civilizations, are critically evaluated in volume 2. Although many Turkish intellectuals privately believed these theories to be nonsense, Beşikçi probably was the first to expose them as such.³³ Part of the book consists of an anthology of racist Turkist ideas expressed by the adherents of these official theories. Beşikçi shows that the denial of Kurdish ethnicity in official Kemalist discourse is directly related to these historical and linguistic "theories"; it was authors of this school who constructed "proof" that the Kurds by racial and linguistic origins are pure Turks.³⁴

"Thirty-three bullets" is the title of a famous and moving poem by the Turkish-Kurdish poet

³¹ M. Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim (Dersim in the history of Kurdistan, Aleppo, 1952)*; Reşat Hallı, *Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde ayaklanmalar (1924-1938 (Rebellions in the Republic of Turkey, 1924-1938, Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1972)*. The latter work was printed in a limited edition and soon after publication withdrawn. It only became publicly available two decades later in a non-authorized reprint (Istanbul, Kaynak Yayınları, 1992).

³² For a summary discussion in English of the available evidence, which is obviously indebted to Beşikçi's work, see: Martin van Bruinessen, "Genocide in Kurdistan? The suppression of the Dersim rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) and the chemical war against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)", in: George J. Andreopoulos (ed), *Conceptual and historical dimensions of genocide* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 141-170.

³³ It took another 15 years for a more encompassing critical study to be written: Büşra Ersanli Behar, *Iktidar ve tarih: Türkiye'de "Resmî tarih" tezinin oluşumu (1929-1937) (Political power and history: the emergence of the "official history" thesis in Turkey, Istanbul: AFA, 1992)*. Interesting documents by one of the fathers of the Sun-language theory, Hasan Reşit Tankut, are published in: Mehmet Bayrak, *Açık-gizli / resmi-gayriresmî kürdoloji belgeleri (Public and secret, official and unofficial kurdological documents, Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1994)*.

³⁴ Ridiculous though its ideas are, this school of thought is not dead. In the wake of the military coup of 1980, the semi-official Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü (Institute for Research on Turkish Culture) brought out numerous old and new books purporting to prove that the Kurds are authentic Turks.

Ahmet Arif. It refers to the summary execution by soldiers, in 1943, of thirty-two Kurdish villagers for alleged brigandage.³⁵ A military court posthumously declared the villagers innocent. Muğlalı was the commander of the Third Army, who gave the orders that led to the execution. The first parliamentary questions about the incident were asked in 1948, and a more extensive debate took place in 1956. Beşikçi reconstructs the event and the public debate as it developed, showing the massacre to have been a consequence of political conditions and anti-Kurdish attitudes in the period of one-party dictatorship.

Volume 7, the most ambitious of the series, offers a revision of a crucial period in the history of the Middle East. The First World War, Turkey's War of Independence, and the struggle between Turkey and Britain over the vilayet Mosul (approximating southern Kurdistan) are described from the Kurdish (and, to some extent, Armenian) point of view as a single continuing war resulting in the division of Kurdistan. Judiciously using Turkish sources — most of them in fact Kemalist — Beşikçi succeeds in documenting an interpretation of this period that radically differs from Kemalist official history.

Soon after publication of the first volumes, Beşikçi was arrested and put on trial again. A separate case was opened for the second volume. Both ended in prison sentences, which prevented Beşikçi from continuing his research.³⁶ The fourth volume was already ready in manuscript in 1977, and the following ones were completed in the course of 1978 and 1979, but Komal, to Beşikçi's great irritation, postponed publication indefinitely. In 1980 he was released from prison, but the military coup of September 12 that year ensured that nothing could be published for more than a decade. New charges were brought against Beşikçi, this time for various letters that he had written from prison (to UNESCO, to the Swedish Writers' Union, etc.). In March 1982 he was sentenced to another 10 years imprisonment. The second period of his scholarly career was ended.

Conclusion

In the 1960s and 1970s, Beşikçi made scholarly contributions to the sociology and history of the Kurds that will remain valuable and will continue to be read by students of Kurdish

³⁵ Thirty-three villagers were arrested but one, a woman, was released. Years later, when the political climate changed, the incident became a *cause célèbre*, that made much ink flow in the 1950s and 1960s. The young Kurdish journalist Günay Aslan wrote a prize-winning essay on the incident: *Yas tutan tarih: 33 kurşun (History mourns: 33 bullets)*, Istanbul: Pencere Yayınları, 1989). It was written after, but published before Beşikçi's study.

³⁶ Beşikçi's trials of this period are documented in *Kürdistan üzerinde örgütlü devlet terörü ve İsmail Beşikçi: biyografi, savunmalar, mektuplar (The state terror established over Kurdistan and İsmail Beşikçi: biography, defense pleas and letters)*, Ankara: Komal, 1980).

society. He was modern Turkey's pioneer of Kurdish studies, and all later scholars studying Kurdish history and society will remain indebted to him. His works of the 1970s are important not only as studies of Kurdish history but also, or even especially, as one of the all too rare critiques of the Kemalist ideology and associated prejudices that not only dominated mainstream academic discourse but also loomed large over debates on the left. Beşikçi was a committed scholar, who wished his scholarship to be relevant and useful to the oppressed — an attitude that was widespread among students and young scholars in the West in the late sixties and early seventies, although few would risk what Beşikçi did.

It is tragic that so much of Beşikçi's scholarly work could only be published with much delay or (as happened to *Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni*) was published in very unsatisfactory form, and therefore contributed less to public debate than he had intended. By the time *Kürdistan üzerinde emperyalist bölüşüm mücadelesi 1915-1925* finally appeared in print (1992), much relevant new material on that period had been published, partially superseding that work. Beşikçi, intermittently out of prison, announced that he was preparing several more volumes to complete this study, but the focus of his attention had clearly shifted elsewhere.

The Kurdish movement by the early 1990s had reached a different stage, characterized by the PKK's guerrilla offensives, grassroots mobilization, and efforts to establish legal Kurdish parties. The questions of ethnic identity, underdevelopment and national oppression, that had been so central to the discourse of the 1960s and the 1970s appeared less pressing now. Beşikçi devoted his efforts to what he perceived as the present needs of the movement, writing numerous brief articles and long essays polemically criticizing official ideology, Turkish government policies and prominent personalities.³⁷ He also wrote analyses of the PKK that were widely seen as legitimization and an expression of support for the movement.³⁸ The transition from scholar studying the Kurds through sympathetic observer explaining the Kurds to ideologist of the Kurdish revolution — the Kurds' Frantz Fanon — was complete.

³⁷ The most important of these essays were *Bilim, resmi ideoloji, devlet, demokrasi ve Kürt sorunu* (Science, official ideology, state, democracy and the Kurdish question, Istanbul: Alan, 1990); *Devletlerarası sömürge Kürdistan* (Kurdistan, an international colony, Istanbul: Alan, 1990), and *Bir aydın, bir örgüt ve Kürt sorunu: belgeler* (An intellectual, an organization, and the Kurdish question: documents, Istanbul: Melsa, 1990).

³⁸ *PKK üzerine düşünceler: özgürlüğün bedeli* (Thoughts on the PKK: the price of freedom, Istanbul: Melsa, 1992).