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JUNE 2025

Voice of  
**TKP**  
Monthly international magazine



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DEVLET BAHÇELI: MORE  
THAN JUST THE LEADER  
OF A FASCIST PARTY

# THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AND TKP





# Republic of Turkey and the Party, TKP

Kemal Okuyan - TKP General Secretary



The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923, marking a new phase in Turkey's long-interrupted bourgeois revolutionary process. This momentum had gathered during the struggle against imperialist occupation in the aftermath of World War I and against the reactionary rule of the Ottoman Palace. The establishment of the Republic dealt a second major blow to the imperialist plans of Britain and France—chief among the victors of the war. The success of the armed resistance in Anatolia from 1919 to 1922 posed a serious threat to imperialism, already grappling with the rise of workers' movements at home and seeking to crush the Bolsheviks, who had





ignited global anxieties by establishing the rule of the working class through the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917.

The Treaty of Sèvres, accepted by the Ottoman administration after the war, granted the imperialist powers direct control over the Straits and carved Anatolia into “zones of influence.” In contrast, the Treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923 with the new government in Ankara, marked a historic reversal that reshaped not only Anatolia, but also the international balance of power.

The British were forced to relinquish control over the Straits—and thus Istanbul—which had played a vital role in their strategic encirclement of Soviet Russia. The borders of today’s Republic of Turkey were largely consolidated, and the boundaries in the Caucasus—already shaped through earlier Bolshevik-Kemalist agreements—were formally recognized by the imperialist bloc.

Following the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, a series of reforms removed obstacles to the development of capitalism in Turkey. Progressive measures such as the declaration of secularism in a Muslim-majority

society, early suffrage and candidacy rights for women (1930), and educational reform were accompanied by systematic repression of workers' organizations and the Communist Party of Turkey, whose leading cadres were murdered in January 1921, just four months after its founding.

Nevertheless, relations between Ankara and Moscow remained cordial until the Second World War. Both sides clearly understood each other's class and ideological character and knew the limits of their alliance. Though the Soviet leadership recognized Turkey's increasing rapprochement with the imperialist world, it refrained from accelerating this trend. In fact, the Soviet government maintained a level of engagement with Turkey that was rare even among its closest diplomatic partners. Remarkably, Moscow continued efforts to sustain ties even after Turkey joined NATO following WWII.

What, then, was the fundamental logic behind the early Bolshevik–Kemalist alliance?

We know that certain Bolshevik elements believed in the possibility of a Socialist Revolution sweeping Asia—beginning

in Anatolia and extending through Iran, Afghanistan, India, and China. Some were inspired by Pan-Turkist or Pan-Islamist visions. Yet the Bolshevik Party's leading cadres—most notably Lenin and Stalin—deemed such ambitions wholly unrealistic, arguing that Soviet Russia lacked the economic and military means to support such a campaign, especially due to the scarcity of organized proletarian forces and Marxist cadres across this vast geography.

Others sought territorial expansion. Ottoman pashas in contact with Mustafa Kemal, aiming to exploit the weakened Bolsheviks—who were beset by British interventions and Menshevik collaborators—sought to advance into Armenia, Georgia, and especially Azerbaijan.

After the Bolshevikization of the Caucasus—particularly Baku, vital for its oil, and Batumi, a strategic port on the Black Sea—Lenin and Stalin chose to consolidate. Mustafa Kemal, for his part, agreed to leave the Caucasus to Soviet Russia.

This effectively removed British influence from the region.

Throughout the War of Independence, the Bolsheviks supported the Kemalists with gold, arms, and considerable political backing—a position well documented in Comintern archives.

In the end, the alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists during the great revolutionary wave of 1917–1924 was temporary, yet revolutionary. Today, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) evaluates this period dialectically, with all its contradictions, and embraces the founding of the Republic as a historical gain of that era.

Unlike those so-called leftists who seek solutions within the current bourgeois order and court alliances among capitalists, TKP maintains that acknowledging the bourgeois revolution that occurred over a century ago as a progressive step is critical in today's struggle against the dictatorship of capital. In this context, the issue of the Republic has once again become urgent—this time, for another reason.

That reason is the growing discourse around the very existence and borders of the Republic of Turkey.

British influence in the region is often downplayed. Yet, as we saw most recently in Syria, British imperialism—armed with deep historical experience—remains active in the region, often in cooperation with the United States, and at times even overtaking them in initiative.

It must be clearly stated: Britain is still seeking to undo the regional reality it was forced to accept a century ago. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, they have—for now—been relieved of their greatest historical challenge. And today, it comes as no surprise to hear open discussions in London about whether Turkey, which controls the Straits and sits at the intersection of strategic zones, has outlived its geopolitical purpose.

The U.S., Israel, and the U.K. now move more freely in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. The pressure on Iran has escalated into outright military aggression. We now live in a region where redrawing borders is openly debated and the proliferation of autonomous administrations is treated as a given.

Some Kurdish parties today question Turkey's current borders and the validity of the Lausanne Treaty.





At the same time, similar sentiments are spreading within Turkish ruling circles—albeit from a different perspective. They argue that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk acted with excessive caution and settled for too little in the south, in the Caucasus, and in the Aegean. This revisionist outlook inherently questions the historical alliance with Soviet Russia.

This ideological posture—referred to as Neo-İttihatism<sup>1</sup>—finds supporters even within the opposition. In this era of upheaval, some are openly advocating for a “Greater Turkey” that would include Iranian Azerbaijan. Others speak of a neo-Ottoman project, one that aims to expand Turkey’s presence in Syria and Iraq and redraw its southern borders—possibly through arrangements with Kurdish actors.

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<sup>1</sup> TN. Neo-İttihatism refers to a modern revival or reinterpretation of the political mindset and strategic vision associated with the *Committee of Union and Progress* (CUP), the ruling force in the late Ottoman Empire. In the context of expansionist ideology, neo-İttihatism reflects a nationalist and state-centric outlook that seeks to restore or extend Turkey’s influence beyond its current borders, often by invoking historical or geopolitical claims.



During the “peace process,” initiated by the AKP government and PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, both sides claimed their goal was to transform the Kurdish issue from a threat to Turkey’s territorial integrity into a springboard for regional power.

Recently published transcripts reveal Öcalan telling both DEM Party representatives and state officials that the PKK leadership in Iraq is aligned with Iran, while the leadership in Syria(Rojava) leans toward Israel.

Thus, Turkey faces the quintessential dilemma of all semi-peripheral capitalist countries: to expand or to contract.

TKP rejects both options.

The Republic of Turkey, founded in 1923, is our terrain of struggle. Within its existing borders, we will build socialism. And we will demonstrate that even in a world governed by the law of the jungle, a foreign policy grounded in principles, values, and moral integrity is still possible.

The future is ours—sooner or later.





# What Do Turkey-Azerbaijan Relations Tell Us About the Middle East?

**Ayhan Keser**

*Member of TKP Party Council*

The Middle East, a region that is always dynamic due to imperialist wars (and the imperialist peace as well), military aggression, massacres, and the resistance of the peoples, has witnessed extraordinary developments in recent years.

Starting with the announcement of the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) at the 2023 G20 Summit in India and followed by dramatic developments—particularly in



Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria—imperialist-Zionist aggression has intensified, paving the way for a complete transformation of the region’s map and alliance systems.

It is therefore possible to say that the current trajectory will deepen in the coming months and that we are on the verge of major upheavals. The resistance axis that Iran has worked for decades to build has sustained heavy losses, and this process appears likely to escalate further. In fact, while this article was being written, a significant new phase unfolded: Israel launched an attack on Iran, and Iran retaliated by striking Israel.

## A New Alliance Is Taking Shape

The recent turmoil in the Middle East goes beyond routine imperialist and Zionist aggression—it signals the formation of a new alliance. Centered on “securing Israel” and pressuring Iran, this bloc is also aligned with broader U.S. strategy against China.

This alliance, expected to include Turkey, Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, prioritizes strategic roles over internal cohesion. Its goals include reshaping regional borders and creating a low-cost labor zone to offset China’s



production advantage.

This emerging front, part of a U.S.-UK political-economic agenda, also appears to involve Azerbaijan in a future key role, aiming to preempt resistance and facilitate regional restructuring.

## The Role of Azerbaijan in Deepening the Process

Azerbaijan, which maintains close ties with both Turkey and Israel, plays a “facilitating” role in strengthening the emerging alliance—particularly in the seemingly problematic area of Turkey-Israel relations—due to its clear stances on key issues.

Following developments in Syria, Turkey and Israel—while publicly employing rhetoric that suggests conflicting interests—met on April 10 in Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital, to lay the technical groundwork for continued intervention in Syria without stepping on each other’s toes.

Azerbaijan’s mediation in this context offers clues about what might unfold in the coming months (or even days). Despite Israel’s ongoing crimes against humanity in the region,



especially in Gaza and Palestine, Azerbaijan remains one of Israel's key partners.

Following the October 7 Palestinian resistance operation and the subsequent destruction of Gaza, Azeri oil continued to flow to Israel via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline. At the time, Turkish government refrained from taking any concrete steps to halt the oil shipments to Israel, despite widespread public outrage and while trying to present an anti-Israel image regarding Gaza. Azeri oil meets around 40% of Israel's needs. Moreover, SOCAR, Azerbaijan's state-owned oil company, has been granted exploration licenses off the Israeli coast and holds a 10% stake in the Tamar gas field.

However, Azerbaijan's ties with Israel are not limited to energy cooperation. In addition to purchasing a significant number of drones from Israel, military technology and intelligence collaboration played a decisive role in Azerbaijan's victory in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War.

Partnership in the Imperialist Threat towards Iran

One of the main issues drawing Turkey,



Azerbaijan, and Israel closer together is their hostile stance toward Iran.

Israel's long-standing aggression toward Iran is well known. As for Turkey, it appears that with the dissolution of the PKK, it has shifted its focus to Iran, preparing to fill the vacuum that may result from the weakening of Iranian influence in the region. Although PKK (The Kurdistan Workers' Party) has laid down its arms and announced its dissolution, its Iranian branch, PJAK (The Kurdistan Free Life Party), has stated that the developments do not compel it to disarm. The Kurdish population in Iran, comprising around 10% of the country, is seen by imperialist powers as a potential internal destabilizing force, and the crimes of the Iranian mullahs regime against its own people are increasingly being exploited as justification for intervention.

Azerbaijan, too, represents significant potential in this regard. With the Azeri population in Iran approaching 25%, and taking into account Aliyev's overtly pro-Israel stance, it is highly likely that tensions between the two countries will be deliberately inflamed, and that intervention against Iran will be bolstered not only through direct Israeli attacks but also



via pressure from Azerbaijan.

Turkish capitalism hopes to emerge from this process as a primary beneficiary alongside Israel. Considering Azerbaijan's openly pro-Israel stance throughout the Gaza massacres over the past two years, the increasingly normalized Arab hostility and pro-Israel sentiment in Turkey have grown stronger.

## From Corridor Conflicts to a New Production Hub: Turkey and Azerbaijan

The U.S., seeking to counter the logistical advantage China has secured through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and India, which has identified China as a strategic rival, have launched a major project through the IMEC





corridor aiming to connect India to the U.S. via the Gulf countries and Europe.

When IMEC was first announced, Turkey was deliberately excluded from the plan to increase the Middle East's significance as a global trade route. In fact, during this period—before the PKK announced its dissolution—some of its leaders warned that “if Turkey doesn't come to an agreement with us, it will be completely excluded from the region's energy picture,” directly threatening the Erdoğan government.

While Turkey has been trying to revitalize the Middle Corridor within China's BRI framework to strengthen its regional leverage, it is also attempting to reverse the consequences of being sidelined from IMEC.

Azerbaijan, like Turkey, is part of the Middle Corridor and has been reinforcing its presence there through agreements with China. However, being essentially a part of the U.S.- and Israel-led new alliance system, Azerbaijan is also rapidly expanding trade with India.

At this point, the strategic alliance discussed above becomes a lifeline for the Turkish bourgeoisie. As the issue shifts from trade route competition to establishing a

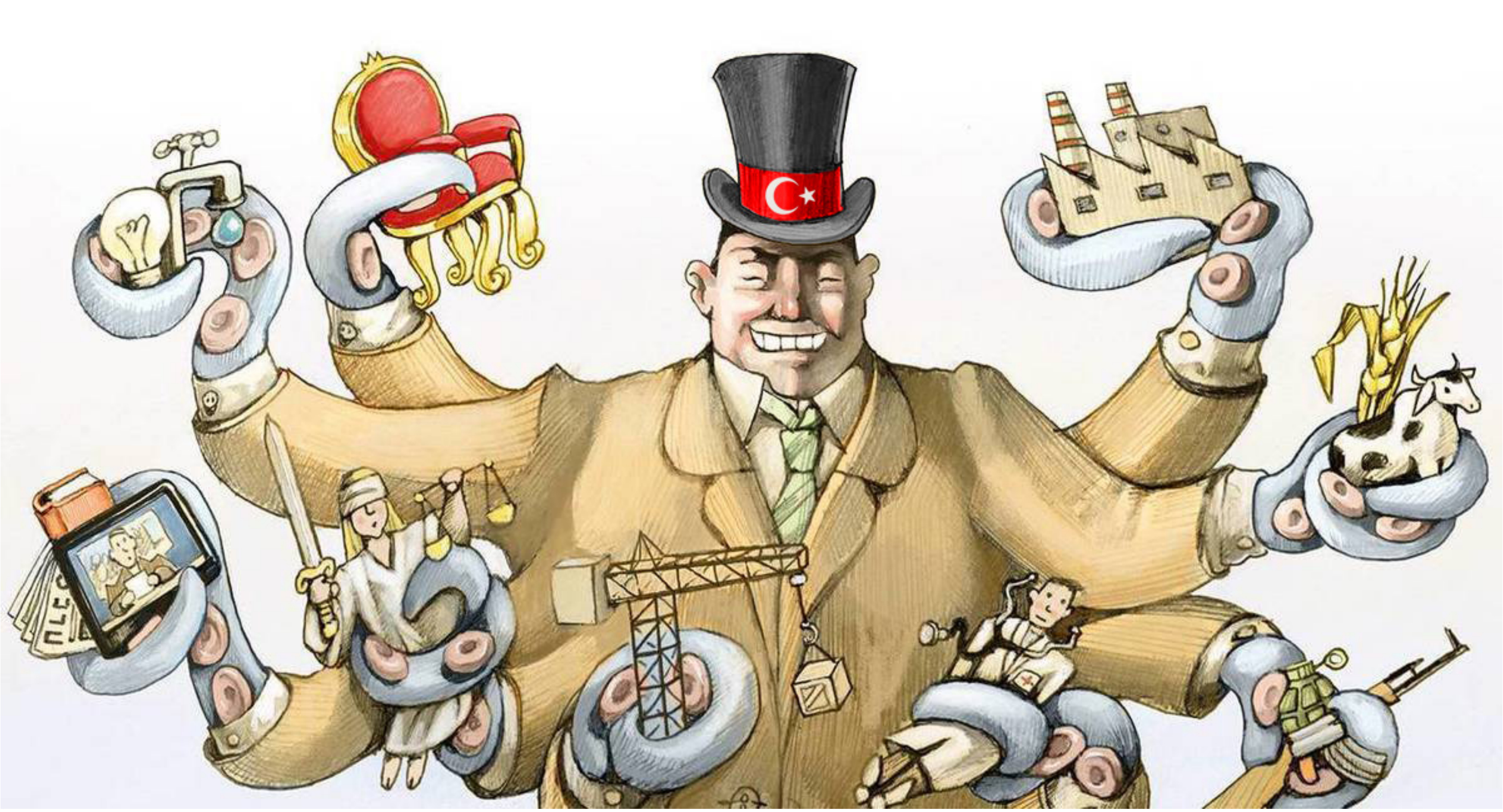


low-cost labor-based production hub to rival China, Turkish bourgeoisie is striving to take a central role in this new production hub with its relatively advanced production and technological capacity.

This new strategy in the US-China rivalry—focused not on distribution but on the production side of the issue—requires a new game plan in the region. For this plan to succeed, friction between Turkey and Israel must be brought under control, and the interests of both countries' capitalist classes must become part of a mutually reinforcing alignment. Azerbaijan's key mission within this alliance appears to be mediating between Turkey and Israel, preventing potential diplomatic setbacks, and persuading both parties of the mutual benefits of cooperation.

For the Turkish bourgeoisie and the Erdoğan administration, the struggle of the Palestinian resistance and the interests of Middle Eastern peoples are not even considered. Even during the darkest days in Gaza, the Erdoğan government continued trading with Israel under various pretexts. Its primary focus remains turning this realignment into a neo-Ottoman leap—one that would elevate the Turkish bourgeoisie to a higher global status.





# Is Turkish Capitalism Developed?

**Gülay Dinçel,**

*Member of TKP Party Council*

Turkish capitalism ranks among the upper tier of the moderately developed countries. In 2024, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Turkey surpassed 1.3 trillion USD, while per capita GDP approached 15,500 USD. Based on the lower figures from 2023, the World Bank classified Turkey as an upper-middle-income country<sup>1</sup>. And it was expected to maintain this status in 2024.

A classification based solely on GDP is, of course, insufficient. However, the sophistication of manufacturing infrastructure in Turkey,



the development level of productive capital and related economic activities also reinforce this categorization. Turkish capitalism stands ahead of many other similar capitalist countries in terms of the quantitative and qualitative development of exploitation mechanisms, the extent of capital accumulation, the structure of the capitalist class, and the scale of the working class—especially the industrial proletariat. Among the world’s 20 largest economies, excluding the main imperialist countries, Turkey is one of the few countries that falls into the tier following South Korea.

The early establishment of heavy industrial production capacity —partly due to the unique character of the Republic during the founding years— and the resulting high sectoral diversity of manufacturing industry production compared to similar countries have been among the advantages of Turkish capitalism. The increasing integration with international capital—particularly into European Union-centered value chains— has deepened dependence on imperialist countries, but at the same time has led to accelerating development of the manufacturing industry and related infrastructure in a particular direction. While medium-technology sectors still hold a significant share in production and exports,

the fact that the main market is Europe and the main export product categories consist of durable consumer goods, intermediate goods for European industry, and to a lesser extent capital goods, has made possible not only quantitative but also strong qualitative development. In particular, the manufacturing industry sectors that have become an important part of the German automotive industry's supply chain have found opportunities to shift towards other markets and higher value-added sectors. For instance, one of the key pillars supporting the development in the arms industry and aerospace manufacturing has been the accumulated capabilities in the metals and materials sectors.

The opening of Turkey's relatively large and dynamic domestic market has also played an important role in the deepening integration of Turkish capitalism into international capital. For example, Turkey produces around 1.5 million vehicles annually in the automotive sector, exports about 1 million of them, and imports around 800,000. It exports economy segment cars and light commercial vehicles—mainly to the European market—while importing higher-end vehicles. A similar pattern applies to the production and trade of capital goods:



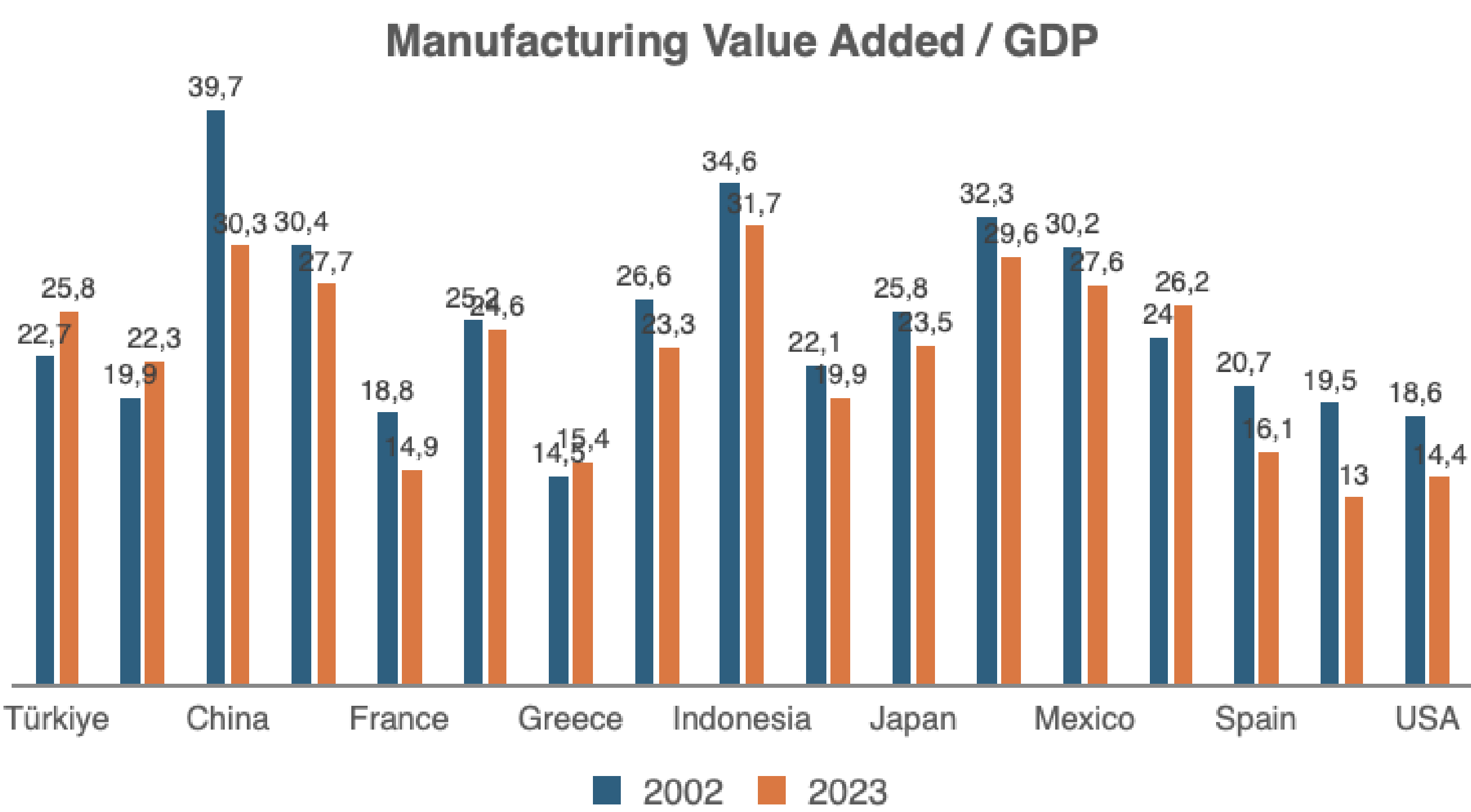
lower-tech machinery is exported, while more advanced machinery is imported. Although external dependence has deepened due to reliance on foreign financing and imports, production capacity has significantly expanded over the past 20-25 years. Product diversity has increased. As an indicator of the development level of capitalism, the capacity for exploitation has grown, accompanied by a notable rise in both overall employment and industrial employment.

Between 2002-2024, GDP in Turkey rose from around \$240 billion to \$1.3 trillion, with the largest contribution to this growth coming from the manufacturing sector and related industries. During this period, the domestic market expanded rapidly due to population growth, accelerated urbanization, and increased access to credit. At the same time, the volume of foreign trade also grew significantly, particularly following the Customs Union Agreement with the European Union.

In the 2000s, large-scale privatizations took place in key sectors such as energy and telecommunications, including major heavy industrial facilities such as refineries, petrochemicals, iron and steel, chromium, and aluminum plants. These privatizations led to

the plundering of public assets and a massive transfer of wealth to the capitalist class. Marked by growing monopolization and intensified private capital accumulation, this process also led to the growth of the period—clearly in favor of capital.

Despite the rapid growth in services, the manufacturing industry in Turkey has continued to remain strong. Compared to developed capitalist countries and the medium-developed capitalist countries with a strong manufacturing industry base, the share of manufacturing industry in Turkey’s GDP remains above average. Whereas the share of manufacturing declined in most countries during the 2002-2023 period, Turkey was among the few—along with Brazil and Poland—where this share increased.



Source: TurkSTAT, OECD



<i>USD billion</i>	<b>GDP</b>	<b>GDP per capita</b>
2002	238	3.608
2003	317	4.739
2004	407	6.021
2005	505	7.376
2006	552	7.971
2007	683	9.735
2008	783	11.018
2009	652	9.044
2010	777	10.629
2011	838	11.289
2012	878	11.675
2013	958	12.582
2014	940	12.178
2015	867	11.085
2016	869	10.964
2017	859	10.696
2018	798	9.799
2019	760	9.208
2020	717	8.600
2021	808	9.601
2022	906	10.659
2023	1.130	13.243
2024	1.322	15.463
2024/2022	<b>455,5%</b>	<b>328,6%</b>

Source: TurkSTAT

Another significant development in Turkish capitalism has been the rise in capital exports. Since the 1980s, construction and contracting

capital has been actively engaged in regions such as Africa, the Middle East, and former socialist countries. Particularly in infrastructure and industrial facility projects, Turkey's contractors—often in collaboration with international construction monopolies—have undertaken projects worth tens of billions of dollars. As an extension of these activities, Turkey's capital began to make some industrial and commercial investments. However, a more notable increase in capital exports has been observed in sectors such as electrical equipment, ceramics, glass, and automotive—particularly in investments directed toward EU countries, post-Soviet territories, and parts of Asia, following Turkey's deepening integration with the EU market. Meanwhile, investments in textiles and apparel have been shifted to countries with lower-wage such as Egypt and India.

Although Turkish capitalism has reached a level of development that merits the label of “upper-middle,” the expansion of exploitation has gone hand in hand with the growth of the working class and a parallel rise in poverty rates of exploitation have soared. The expansion of capital accumulation, and regional opportunities that have emerged in parallel with international uncertainties is now fueling the imperial ambitions of the capitalist class of Turkey.



# Learning Love of Homeland from Nâzım Hikmet

**Ulvi İçil,**

*TKP Member, Researcher and Author*

Nâzım Hikmet believed that “the concept of homeland includes the spirit of its people, everything from their smallest dreams to their greatest goals.” From this, he arrived at a distinctive understanding of patriotism, working class patriotism: “Being part of the people’s movement and accelerating the process between their smallest dreams and their greatest goals.”<sup>1</sup>



From this perspective, three key features emerge in Nâzım’s conception of love for the homeland. First, his working-class patriotism is remarkably inclusive—it embraces the full range of the working people’s dreams and aspirations. Second, it emphasizes the dimension of time,

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<sup>1</sup> *Tulyakova, Vera. Nâzım’la Son Söyleşi. İstanbul: Cem Publishing, 1989.*



viewing historical progress as essential. Third, it insists on being an active participant in the people's movement toward those dreams and goals. Nâzım is a poet who expresses this profound love for his country with exceptional power.

*You're a cry for help – I mean, you are my  
country;  
the footsteps running toward you are mine. <sup>2</sup>*  
\*

*I am sixty years old,  
And since I was nineteen  
I have had a dream*

...

*In prison, it was the light of my freedom,  
In exile, the flavor to my bread.  
It was there in every ending evening,  
In every breaking dawn:  
The great dream of my homeland's liberation. <sup>3</sup>*

In other words, for Nâzım, working-class patriotism is the struggle to emancipate the working people and their country from the suffering and injustices imposed by capitalism and imperialism—and to do so as swiftly as possible. It is a love for the homeland that is

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**2** *Poems of Nazim Hikmet*, Trans. Randy Blasing & Mutlu Konuk, Persea Books, New York, 2002.

**3** *Hikmet, Nâzım. Bütün Şiirleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018. (All Poems, in Turkish)

restless and impatient, driven by an urgent desire to help the people realize their dreams, aspirations, and goals without delay.

Nâzım's love for his homeland took its root during the period of imperialist war and occupation—a time he would later recall from the age of sixteen, saying, "I was fiercely patriotic." The presence of imperialist armies and battleships occupying İstanbul and the Bosphorus left a profound impression on his consciousness, awakening a deep and enduring anti-imperialist fury.

*My city with sky-blue eyes  
like my sister's,  
my İstanbul—  
I'm thinking of you.*

*You are sitting by the sea,  
watching the American warship enter the  
harbour.*

*You are sick, hungry, angry.  
And it is watching you too—  
oh, how it watches—  
as if it were your master,  
your boss,  
your owner,  
that bastard. <sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Hikmet, Nâzım. *Bütün Şiirleri, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018.*  
(All Poems, in Turkish)



Nâzım's love for his homeland took on a profoundly pro-people and humanist character when he left İstanbul for Anatolia to join the War of Independence at the front—where he came to know the land and its people through their poverty and suffering. The misery he witnessed in Anatolia, which persisted as a systemic condition under capitalist Turkey, would become a central theme in the poetry of this lifelong communist poet.

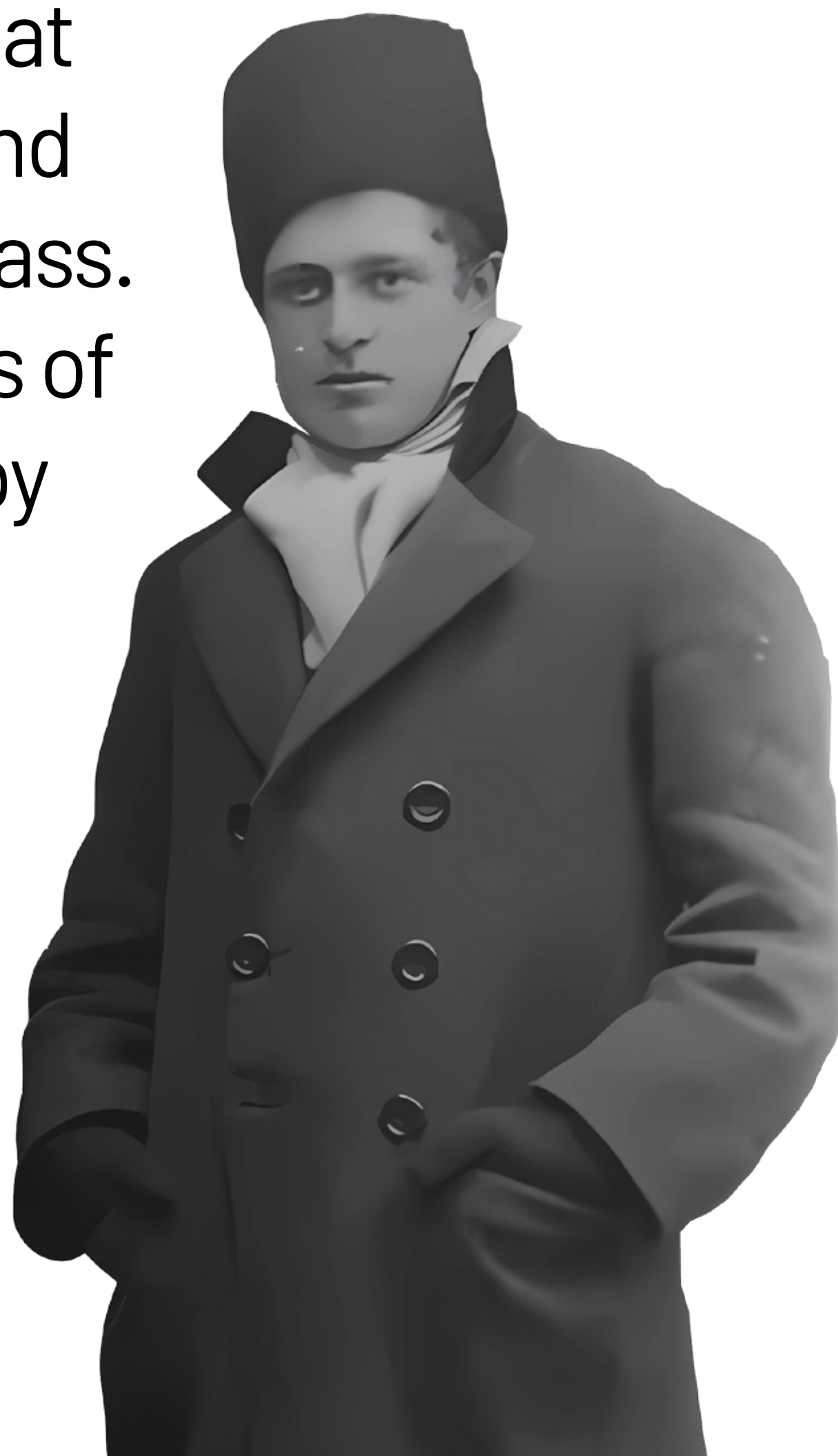
Yet, Nâzım's working-class patriotism found its true direction when, at the age of nineteen in Anatolia, he learned of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) and its founding cadres. These early leaders of the TKP—and the depth of their love for the homeland—left a lasting mark on Nâzım's consciousness. He would later write of them with great admiration:

"They were the best our people had raised—the smartest, most courageous, most Turkish. Our land, the people who live in it, half-hungry, shivering with malaria, going blind with trachoma, dressed in rags, plowing their stony fields with their starving oxen, and after four years of spilling their blood, covered with lice, still going back to fight on new fronts; who loved these, my people, as much as they did? Who

among us believed in all that's beautiful, good, and hopeful in people more than they did?"<sup>5</sup>

In this context, what ultimately shaped Nâzım's love for his homeland was his involvement in the ranks of the Communist Party of Turkey, along with his ability to study, internalize, and creatively reinterpret Marxism and Leninism in a sophisticated way. This intellectual depth and creative engagement enabled Nâzım to root his understanding of working-class patriotism within a revolutionary socialist perspective.

Nâzım's love for his country was inseparable from his rejection of the capitalist system and the mentality it imposed—one that sought to limit the dreams and aspirations of the working class. In line with this, the concepts of "struggle" and "enemy" occupy a central and enduring place in both his vision of working-class patriotism and the body of poetry that gives expression to it.



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<sup>5</sup> *Life's good, brother, Nazim Hikmet, Trans. Mutlu Konuk Blasing, Persea Books, New York, 2013*



Me, one man,  
me, the Turkish poet communist Nâzım Hikmet  
me,  
I'm faith from head to toe,  
from head to toe, struggle, longing and hope... <sup>6</sup>  
\*

Friends — though we've never even exchanged  
a greeting —  
we could die  
for the same bread,  
the same freedom,  
the same longing.  
And enemies — I thirst for their sneers,  
as they thirst for my blood.

...

In the great struggle,  
open and unafraid,  
I took my place in the ranks... <sup>7</sup>

The enemy in question is a class enemy—the bourgeoisie—in all its forms and actions within the capitalist/imperialist system, whether direct or indirect, overt and covert. With this class enemy, only a life-and-death struggle, tooth and nail, can take place.

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<sup>6</sup> Hikmet, Nâzım. *Bütün Şiirleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018.  
(All Poems, in Turkish)

<sup>7</sup> Hikmet, Nâzım. *Bütün Şiirleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018.  
(All Poems, in Turkish)

*The enemy is brutal,  
cruel,  
and cunning.  
Our people are dying in battle—  
Though how they deserved to live  
...  
The destination will be  
reached in blood,  
And the victory—  
wrenched with bare nails—  
will forgive nothing  
anymore.<sup>8</sup>*

In Nâzım's conception of working-class patriotism, the role of the bourgeoisie as the enemy of the people and the homeland is never obscured or forgotten. His love for the homeland is as inclusive of the working masses as it is uncompromisingly opposed to their class enemy—the bourgeoisie. Nâzım consistently rejected any attempt by the exploiting class to present itself as patriotic. Confronted by a bourgeoisie that smeared him as a "traitor to the homeland," the communist poet responded by boldly revealing what the notion of "homeland" truly meant to that exploiting class—exposing them to their face.

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<sup>8</sup> Hikmet, Nâzım. *Bütün Şiirleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018. (All Poems, in Turkish)



*If the homeland is your farms,  
if what you keep in your safes and checkbooks  
is the homeland,*

*...*

*if drinking our red blood in your factories is the  
homeland,*

*...*

*if your allowances and salaries are the  
homeland,*

*if the homeland is American bases, American  
bombs, American navy and cannons,  
if the homeland is not getting rid of our stinking  
darkness,  
I am a traitor. <sup>9</sup>*

Nâzım's love for the homeland always exists alongside an emphasis on a future that points to the emancipation of working people from capitalist exploitation. This future, in Nâzım's poetry, is the "great longing" —nothing other than socialism.

*Comrades, if I don't live to see that day  
I mean, if I die before freedom comes,  
take me away  
and bury me in a village cemetery in Anatolia  
...*

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<sup>9</sup> Hikmet, Nâzım. *Bütün Şiirleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018.  
(All Poems, in Turkish)

*As for my neighbors,  
the worker Osman and the martyr Aysha,  
they felt the great longing while alive,  
maybe without even knowing it. <sup>10</sup>*

The working class can achieve true freedom  
only through the destruction of this enemy.

And the homeland will become even more  
lovable and worth living when the working class  
paves the way for this freedom.

### *The Enemy*

*I*

*They are the enemies of hope, my love,  
of the stream,*

*and the fruitful tree  
of life growing and unfolding.*

*Death has branded them,*

*-rotting teeth, decaying flesh-*

*and soon they will be dead and  
gone for good.*

*And yes, my love,  
freedom will walk around swinging its arms  
in its Sunday best – workers' overalls –  
yes, freedom in this beautiful country... <sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Hikmet, Nâzım. *Bütün Şiirleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018.  
(All Poems, in Turkish)

<sup>11</sup> *Poems of Nazim Hikmet*, Trans. Randy Blasing & Mutlu Konuk,  
Persea Books, New York, 2002.



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*When my son  
came into the world,  
children were born in Anatolia,  
blue-eyed, black-eyed, hazel-eyed babies.  
They got lice the minute they were born.  
Who knows how many of them will survive by  
some miracle?*

*When my son  
came into the world,  
children were born in the largest country of the  
world,  
and they were happy as soon as they were  
born. <sup>12</sup>*

Nâzım Hikmet's love for his homeland is a profound longing for his country to become socialist, for its working people to live in a socialist homeland. Throughout his life, the communist poet always sought to "accelerate this process" and bring "that day" closer.

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**12** Hikmet, Nâzım. *Bütün Şiirleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing, 2018. (All Poems, in Turkish)

# Capitalist Development and the State of the Labor Force

32.6 M

SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT EXPANSION OVER 20 YEARS



Between 2005 and 2024, while the population increased by 27%, the total number of people in employment increased by nearly 70%. In 2005, the number of people employed stood at 19.4 million, reaching 32.6 million in 2024. Despite longer working hours, intensified flexible employment practices, and a decline in agricultural employment, the growth in industry and services played a decisive role in this 70% increase in employment. Data for the period in question also reveal a rise in the rate of exploitation. Indeed, the fact that GDP growth during the same period increased by 162%—far exceeding employment growth—also demonstrates an expansion in the capacity for exploitation.

65%

INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT INCREASED BY 65%, INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION BY 142%



Between 2005 and 2024, the share of agriculture in total employment declined from 25.5% to 13.1%, while non-agricultural employment increased from 74.5% to 86.9% of the total. Industrial employment expanded by 65%, with the number of people employed in industry rising from 4.1 million to 6.8 million. Industrial production grew by 142%, indicating a significant increase in exploitation rates over the 20-year span. This rise was driven not only by the suppression of real wages and longer working hours, but also by structural changes in the composition of industrial production. The share of higher-tech, more capital-intensive sectors within manufacturing industry production increased. Growth in both the domestic market and exports further supported this increase in production.



54.2%

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION  
RATE: RISING BUT STILL AMONG THE LOWEST IN THE OECD

Between 2005 and 2024, the labor force participation rate in Turkey increased by more than 10 percentage points—from 44.1% to 54.2%. Despite the increase, it remains among the lowest in the OECD countries after Italy and Greece. The primary reason for this low rate is the limited participation of women in the labor force. While the male labor force participation rate stands at 71.4%, above both the OECD and Eurozone averages, the female rate remains very low at 36.3%. This figure has risen from 27.9% in 2002, driven by urbanization, improvements in women’s educational attainment, and the economic pressures of recent years. A key factor behind the low female labor force participation is the lack of socialization of childcare and eldercare.



13 M

A HISTORICAL  
RECORD IN THE  
REAL NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

According to April 2025 data, the narrowly defined number of unemployed people stands at 3 million, while the narrowly defined unemployment rate is 8.6%. This rate includes only those actively seeking work. In the same period, the broadly defined number of unemployed reached nearly 13 million, while the broadly defined unemployment rate was 32.2%. Notably, this figure surpasses the previous record of 29.4% observed during the pandemic. (The broadly defined unemployment includes those working less than 40 hours per week, who are willing to work more if they had the opportunity, and the potential labor force—referring to those who are able to work but are not actively seeking employment due to discouragement or other reasons.)



48.1%

THE RICHEST 20% SEIZE  
NEARLY HALF OF TOTAL  
INCOME

According to 2024 data, the top 20% of the population by income hold 48.1% of total household disposable income. This share, which was around 45% a decade ago, has risen—particularly between 2018 and 2023—alongside rapid industrial growth and increasing rates of exploitation. Meanwhile, the share of the poorest 20% declined from 6.5% to 5.9% over the past 10 years. When combining the lowest three income quintiles, which make up 60% of the population, their total share of income remains at just 30.7%—far below that of the top 20%.





# **Devlet Bahçeli: More Than Just the Leader of a Fascist Party**



In Turkey, the leader of the ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has been the primary decision-maker in the country's administration for many years, first as prime minister and then as president.

On the other hand, while examining Turkey's political landscape over the past 25 years—starting slightly before the AKP's rise to power—we see another political figure coming to the fore at key turning points and making decisive interventions that have shaped the country's



political trajectory. This person is Devlet Bahçeli, the chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

Born in 1948, Bahçeli graduated from the Foreign Trade Department of the Ankara Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences in 1971, which later became part of today's Gazi University. After graduating, he worked here as an academic until 1987.

During his student years in the late 1960s, Bahçeli began his political activity in the Republican Peasants' Nation Party, which would soon be renamed the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). At the same time, he served as a founder and leader of the party's youth organization the Grey Wolves (Ülkü Ocakları). He never took a break from active politics.

In 1987, under the directive of Alparslan Türkeş, the leader of the party and the fascist movement in the country, he left academia and assumed the position of party secretary-general. Following Türkeş's death in 1997, Bahçeli was elected as party chairman and has held this position continuously ever since. Although he was not a well-known public figure at the time of his election, he already held a certain amount of influence within the party.

Until the 1990s, MHP held its place on the political spectrum as the country's "ultra-nationalist, far-right" party—in short, its fascist party. In particular, during the 1970s, it became a central actor in the fascist terror campaign waged against the leftist and revolutionary movement in the country. The Grey Wolves formed the backbone of the counter-guerrilla organization operating in connection with NATO. In this respect, it became a "state-affiliated" party, but resided on the extreme fringes.

Before Bahçeli became chairman, MHP began moving closer to the "center" in bourgeois politics. This repositioning can be evaluated in parallel with the "neo-fascist" parties that are now widespread in Europe. Bahçeli continued to take strong steps to reinforce this position. During this period, the MHP's discourse adopted a more secular tone. On the other hand, Turkism, which constitutes the ideological source of the fascist current in Turkey, began to take on a more prominent, albeit symbolic, place in the party's discourse.

While the MHP increasingly adopted a position and discourse parallel to the official politics of the state, it moved from the fringes toward the very center of the state as a "state-affiliated" party. The party base did not lose its fascist



character, but the extremes were somewhat trimmed “by instruction.” Bahçeli gave MHP the character of a party that aspired to power. He claimed that it was not the party that had moved to the center, but rather the center that had moved toward the party. This was a discourse that matched the fact that the political center in Turkey was shifting to the right at that time.

The 1999 elections became a turning point for the MHP. The party received 18% of the vote—its highest ever—and moved from the margins to the center of politics. Only the social democratic DSP received a higher share (22%). A center-right party, the Motherland Party (ANAP), joined these two, and together they formed a tripartite coalition government. Bahçeli became deputy prime minister.

One of the main agenda items of this government, which was in power during a time of crises, was the process that began with the capture of Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya and his extradition to Turkey. Having always taken a hard stance on this issue, MHP demanded Öcalan’s execution. However, Bahçeli declared that they would comply with the “state policy” and stepped back from the demand for execution, at least at that time.

In 2002, Bahçeli declared that the coalition government had run its course and called for elections. This demand became the symbolic closure of a political era in Turkey. In the elections held the same year, MHP received more than 8% of the vote but failed to pass the 10% electoral threshold and did not get into the parliament. The recently established AKP became the leading party and formed a government on its own. It has remained in power ever since.

In the period that followed, MHP performed better in general and local elections. It passed the threshold each time and won many municipalities. It continued to oppose the AKP for a long time. It followed a strict nationalist line especially on the Kurdish issue and again demanded the execution of Öcalan. During the reconciliation process that the government conducted with the Kurdish movement in the mid-2010s, it took a similar stance.

Although Bahçeli experienced various tremors within the party, he did not lose the leadership. After the general elections in 2015, the party experienced a serious split. Some prominent figures tried to convene a party congress and remove Bahçeli from the leadership. However, Bahçeli retained his





position and managed to purge the intra-party opposition.

During this period, the AKP had abandoned a “solution” to the Kurdish issue and adopted a more nationalist discourse. On the other hand, it had begun to feel the need for an ally to gain a stronger position in politics. In 2018, such an alliance was formed under the name “People’s Alliance” (Cumhur İttifakı). The other major partner was MHP. Thus, Bahçeli once again took a position close to the center of the state. In fact, he had always been close to at least one wing of the state. But the People’s Alliance brought the party back to power, even though the MHP was not a member of the government. This alliance, due to this very feature, became an unprecedented



phenomenon in Turkish political history. MHP never joined the government. But because of parliamentary arithmetic, AKP needed MHP votes. And all parliamentary decisions were made in accordance with the alliance's stance. As an important part of the ruling alliance, MHP naturally benefited in various ways. It re-established its presence in state institutions, especially in security institutions. Bahçeli consolidated his determining role in politics.

Bahçeli's determining role became even more evident with the recent "resolution process" that emerged in the past few months. As a leader with strong nationalist reflexes who had always used the Kurdish issue as a tool of manipulation and taken a harsh stance even toward political parties representing the Kurdish movement in the legal political sphere, Bahçeli suddenly made a move toward reconciliation with the Kurdish movement. Since this statement in October 2024, he has acted more decisively than the AKP, which appeared hesitant and internally divided. In a sense, he became the forerunner of the process.

This approach strengthened the "statesman" identity he had long embodied. Even Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK,



referred to Bahçeli, whom he once described as “the Turk who did everything for my execution,” as “the most authoritative voice and hand of the state in the new process” during a speech at a PKK congress.

Thus, Bahçeli effectively pioneered the implementation of a political strategy aligned with the “Neo-Ottomanist” goals of the ruling People’s Alliance. For the “resolution process” in the Kurdish issue implies including the Kurds in Turkey’s expansionist ambitions. In this way, the government, seeking a stronger position in imperialism’s plans to reshape the Middle East, is attempting to implement this within a framework of “capitalist peace.”

Of course, neither “capitalist peace” nor the interventions of imperialism will bring peace to Turks, Kurds, or other peoples of the Middle East. New wars will dominate the region. And Bahçeli will take his place in history as one of the key architects of this new process in Turkey.



# Highlights from Turkish Foreign Policy



## **Peace Talks as Preludes to Imperialist Conflict**

The recent reopening of İstanbul-based negotiations between Russian and Ukrainian delegations, though yielding no concrete progress, has significantly deepened Turkey's regional entanglement. From the NATO Foreign Ministers' summit in Antalya, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan described the İstanbul meeting as an "opportunity window" for restoring peace through compromise—attributing the



initiative in part to the U.S. President Donald Trump's earlier diplomatic efforts. Shortly thereafter, Fidan visited Moscow, holding a joint press conference with Sergey Lavrov. Both sides emphasized expanding bilateral cooperation and investment, particularly in contested geographies such as Ukraine, the Southern Caucasus, the Black Sea, and Africa.

This raises a pressing question: What does peace mean under imperialist conditions? What is emerging is not a genuine peace, but a reconfiguration of property rights, land control, and spheres of influence. Trump's public suggestion that Ukraine might have to cede territory illustrates the kind of "compromise" envisioned. Behind the rhetoric, concrete arrangements over control of key mining resources are already underway—laying the groundwork for future resource conflicts and possibly broader wars.

European countries have likewise intensified their commitments, particularly through the recently approved Security Action for Europe (SAFE)—a €150 billion "loans-for-arms" scheme that bypasses the European Parliament. The program

is open not only to EU members but also to allies such as the UK, Canada, and Turkey, especially via “coalitions of the willing.” These developments signal clear preparation for new forms of militarized conflict under the guise of collective security.

## **Turkey and the Rearmament of Europe**

Turkey’s growing role in Europe’s defense architecture has met resistance. During SAFE negotiations, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus voiced strong opposition to Turkey’s inclusion in funding mechanisms—demanding at minimum the revocation of Ankara’s *casus belli* over the Aegean continental shelf. Yet these demands were blocked, most notably by Germany.

At the recent meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Hakan Fidan criticized what he called Europe’s “underestimation of evolving security needs.” Turkish Defense Ministry officials echoed this sentiment, warning that “those who ignore Turkey’s strategic value to Europe’s security will fail.” They emphasized Turkey’s defense industry, NATO membership, and crisis management role, aligning Turkey’s position



with European interests in security, counterterrorism, and migration control.

With the Black Sea increasingly viewed as a strategic hotspot, Turkey is poised to expand its military presence—not just in geographical terms (via the Bosphorus) but also through active deployment.

European actors have begun pushing for a Turkish military role in Ukraine. Simultaneously, defense-industrial cooperation is accelerating: Baykar, a drone manufacturer owned by President Erdoğan's son-in-law, recently acquired Italy's Piaggio Aerospace, while Turkey's Hürjet jet program is being developed in partnership with Spain. On the U.S. side, a \$304 million missile sale to Turkey was approved, reinforcing Ankara's position as a top American arms recipient since 2021.

However, this outward defense expansion contrasts sharply with domestic efforts to break into other strategic sectors. Turkey's attempt to establish TOGG—the national electric car brand—has struggled under the weight of international monopolies, revealing the constraints of industrial autonomy under capitalism.



## **Commitments and Investments in Syria**

The U.S.–Turkey Syria Working Group issued a joint statement reiterating that both countries are “committed to increasing cooperation and coordination on stability and security in Syria as outlined by President Trump and President Erdoğan.” The statement emphasizes Syria’s territorial integrity and rejects its use as a haven for terrorism—rhetoric that masks deeper strategic designs.

Given that a terrorist organization can be swiftly rebranded as an interim government—exemplified by the rapid, almost Cinderella-like transformation from Julani to Sharaa—these official statements merely obscure the reality that, much like in Ukraine, processes of territorial and political redivision are already underway in Syria.



Ahmed al-Sharaa recently visited Istanbul, meeting with President Erdoğan to discuss enhanced cooperation between Syria and Turkey, particularly in the energy, defense, and transportation sectors. The visit included a “field trip” to a tank track factory, symbolizing the tangible deepening of Turkey’s influence in Syria. This engagement further facilitates the expansion of Turkish investments in construction, energy, and commerce—an expansion already accelerated by visits from Turkey’s Ministers of Trade and Transport and Infrastructure to Damascus in March. The involvement of Turkish capital alongside Gulf and Western firms is accelerating Syria’s integration into the global web of international capital, effectively subordinating the Syrian population to a new regime reconciled with imperialist interests and reliant on “moderate” Islamist factions serving Western agendas.

## **Fallout from the India-Pakistan Tensions**

The relationship between Pakistan and Turkey has deepened significantly under the AKP government, with Turkey’s influence in Pakistan visibly growing. This was underscored by Pakistan’s newly





elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif making Turkey his first official foreign visit following a contested change of government. Despite Erdoğan's public calls for neutrality and restraint during the recent India-Pakistan conflict, India has not overlooked this growing closeness. As a result, India has imposed sanctions including revoking security clearances for Çelebi Aviation Holding—whose Indian operations accounted for one-third of the company's revenue last year—and denying access to TRT World, Turkey's international public broadcaster, accusing it of spreading disinformation.

At the same time, Indian farmers have officially requested a complete halt on fruit imports from Turkey, with Turkish apples



alone previously accounting for a quarter of India's imports. Conversely, Turkey sources around 10% of its arms imports from Pakistan.

During the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit in Baku, Erdoğan affirmed Turkey's readiness to support a lasting truce, providing another avenue for advancing neo-Ottomanist policies into the region—a development that has drawn Iran's concern, as it views this alliance as a shared adversary.



## TKP Condemns Israeli Strikes on Iran

**TKP condemned Israel's latest attack**, calling it part of a broader imperialist plan backed by the U.S., Western imperialist powers, and regional allies like Turkey. TKP warned that the goal is to crush regional resistance and turn the Middle East into a zone of intensified exploitation.

TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan has also shared his **analyses via his X account**. He has warned that recent developments in Syria and Iran reflect a broader imperialist agenda led by the U.S., Israel, and their allies. According to Okuyan, the regime change in Syria served Western and Israeli interests from the outset, and the ongoing aggression against Iran is part of the same strategic design to dominate the region.



He criticized Turkey's role in supporting or enabling these actions, arguing that while some Turkish corporations may profit, the people as a whole stand to lose. Okuyan further noted that China and Russia have been reluctant to take a firm stand against Israeli aggression due to their own strategic and economic ties with Tel Aviv.

Describing the current geopolitical order as a system of exploitation driven by multinational capital and imperialist rivalries, Okuyan emphasized that genuine resistance must come from the people themselves—beyond alliances of states. Without challenging capitalism, he argued, no meaningful anti-imperialist struggle is possible.

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## **'We must raise the anti-NATO voice in our country'**

NATO forces conducted a military exercise just beyond Turkey's borders in the Balkans between May 26 and June 9. TKP Central Committee, **in its relevant statement**, questioned who the military exercise was truly targeting and underscored that the greatest threat is aimed at the working class.

In the statement it is asserted that NATO should not be considered merely a foreign policy matter, but as an internal issue. Highlighting NATO's deep institutional presence in Turkey and alignment with capitalist interests, it is emphasized that NATO poses a threat to the people's security. The party called for Turkey's immediate withdrawal from the alliance and the complete removal of NATO troops and bases from Turkish territory.



The Communist Youth of Turkey and the Communist Youth of Greece also prepared **a joint statement on this issue**. In the statement it is emphasized that despite the tensions between the bourgeois classes of Turkey and Greece and war threats they use to suppress the workers; they are deepening their collaboration by discussing the terms of co-exploitation of the Aegean Sea.

TKP Organization in the Netherlands is meeting in Koekamp, Den Haag; for a World without NATO on June 22 against the NATO Summit.





## On the 12th Anniversary of Gezi Resistance

12 years ago, on May 31, one of the greatest uprisings in our country's history erupted in Taksim Gezi Park, in İstanbul. The June Resistance, started in Gezi and spread across the country, creating hope in the darkest times.

In the heart of the city, the TKP Organization in İstanbul gathered at Taksim Tunnel Square, overcame police barricades, and saluted the Gezi Resistance with the slogan, 'Our people will not kneel, will not bow!'

Later that day, a 'Do Not Bow Down' banner, a significant slogan and symbol from



the Gezi Resistance, was once again hung in Istanbul.

TKP also made **a statement** saluting the 12th anniversary of the Gezi Resistance. Statement emphasized the important lesson: “a united and organized people can achieve far more than what was revealed in June, they can put an end to this entire corrupt system.”

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## **The interaction between republicans and communists continues to deepen steadily**

The Republican Congress, convened at the invitation of the People's Representatives Assembly of Turkey, provided a strong foundation for this



engagement. The congress, attended by numerous intellectuals, journalists, and academics representing the republican tradition, explored the class-based causes behind the republic's current condition and debated the crucial role of the struggle against capital in its revival. In his speech, TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan stressed that a revolutionary transformation that fails to challenge the property-owning classes has no chance of success.

In the meanwhile, TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan's interview book, *The Republic and the Communists*, continues to attract significant interest from readers. The book, which will be published in English soon, reached its fourth edition shortly after publication.

The event organized by the TKP Organization in İstanbul on the book with the participation of Okuyan drew a large and engaged audience.

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*This publication is the monthly international magazine of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP).*



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