

GENERATIONAL CHANGES IN TERRORIST MOVEMENTS: THE TURKISH CASE

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## Introduction

More than 4500 people lost their lives in Turkey during the late 1970s in one of the most intensive terrorist campaigns of recent times. In comparison with several other European democracies confronted with the terrorist threat (e.g. Italy, West Germany, Spain), political terrorism in Turkey claimed far more fatalities, involved much larger numbers of terrorists, and had significantly greater destabilizing effects on Turkish politics and society. In mid-1980, the terrorist campaign launched by the revolutionary Left, neo-Fascist Right, and the Kurdish separatist groups reached its zenith: political violence claimed an average daily toll of 25 victims, terrorist provocations brought several Anatolian towns to the brink of large-scale communal strife, and the "Beirutization" of the country's major cities appeared to be fast in the making.

Turkey's probable drift toward total terrorism was checked by the military takeover of September 1980. The coup, which replaced democratic processes with military rule, succeeded in drastically reducing the level of violence. Operations launched against the variety of leftist, rightist, and Kurdish separatist terrorist organizations by the military netted large numbers of suspected terrorists. For months following the military takeover, the evening television news reports in Turkey showed scenes which were to become all too familiar to the viewers: groups of young people, mostly in their early twenties, standing next to the displays of their captured weapons, propaganda leaflets and posters, looking at the camera with blank expressions. Night after night, this routine display continued with a seemingly unchanging cast of characters. Despite their membership in ideologically different terrorist organizations, the scores of young men and women looked strikingly similar. Dressed almost uniformly in jeans and army fatigues, they presented disquieting group portraits from a generation which had become heavily involved in the use of deadly violence.

Who were these young terrorists ? The purpose of this paper is to provide some information concerning the composition of the terrorist movement in Turkey, with special emphasis on the generational changes among the terrorists, and the implications of these changes for the behavior of the armed extremists.

### **The First Generation Terrorists: Radical Students and Guerrillas**

The young men and women who received the extensive media coverage described above represented, in large part, second and third generations of Turkish terrorists. Their predecessors, or first-generation terrorists, burst on to the political scene with the rise of Turkey's first urban guerrilla groups in 1970. This older generation of armed extremists came almost exclusively from the ranks of university students. By the time they had become involved in leftist terrorism against the state, some had already dropped out from the universities. Nevertheless, they continued to maintain close ties with the radical student circles in Ankara and Istanbul.

The urban guerrillas whose activities created shock waves in Turkey between 1970 and 1972 were the products of left-wing student radicalism. The biographies of the prominent terrorist leaders such as Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Cayan, or Ertugrul Kurkcu display striking similarities in terms of the step-by-step process by which they moved from student activism to organized terrorism. Almost all of them had become politicized in the ideologically charged atmosphere of Turkish politics in the latter half of the 1960s. As university campuses turned into sites of violent confrontations between the extremists on the Left and the Right, the future terrorist leaders became absorbed in the radical politics of the *DEV-GENC*, the main left-wing student organization. During the late 1960s, the *DEV-GENC* became a magnet for radical Turkish university students. It played a prominent role in disseminating revolutionary ideologies among the students as well as organizing demonstrations and rallies against the perceived "enemies" of the far Left: the center-Right government of Prime Minister Demirel, the militants of the extreme Right, U.S. military presence in Turkey, and Turkey's membership in NATO.

Along with their involvement in radical student organizations, some of the left-wing extremist leaders initially maintained close ties with the Marxist Turkish Labor Party (TLP). However, the TLP's political strategy of pursuing the parliamentary road to socialism and its declining electoral fortunes in the 1969 elections soon led these radical students to search for other alternatives. By 1969-70, several had travelled to the PLO camps in Jordan where they received training in guerrilla warfare tactics. Upon their return to Turkey, they became instrumental in the formation of the two principal urban guerrilla organizations--the Turkish People's Liberation Army (TPLA) and the Turkish People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Both of these groups were quite small and had no more than a few hundred active terrorists in their ranks. There was, however, a larger support organization which provided assistance to the TPLA and the TPLF members with respect to safe houses, transportation, etc.

The first generation leftist terrorists in Turkey were generally well educated by Turkish standards. Many of them were affiliated with some of the country's more prestigious campuses, such as the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara and Ankara University's School of Political Science. A number of prominent names of the 1970-72 terrorist campaign appeared to be headed for attaining distinction in their studies. For example, Mahir Cayan, the leader of the TPLF and a key figure in the development of terrorism in Turkey, was a scholarship student during his first two years at the School of Political Science. Sinan Cemgil, reputed to be the leading theoretician of the TPLA, had a successful academic record at METU. Ilkay Demir, a female member of Cayan's group, had graduated from Turkey's top-ranking high-school, the American Girl's College in Istanbul, and had enrolled in the Medical School of Istanbul University after scoring very high on the nationwide university entrance examinations.

As a group, the first generation left-wing Turkish terrorists displayed several additional characteristics. First of all, there were very few female activists in the urban guerrilla movement of the early 1970s. The only female terrorist who received some prominence during this period was Ilkay Demir. Along with her husband Necmi Demir, she

was in the leadership ranks of the TPLF. Secondly, several of the prominent terrorist leaders of the first generation came from Kurdish ethnic origins. This was especially true for the TPLA which initially embarked on a rural guerrilla strategy and established its headquarters in Malatya--a province in Southeastern Turkey with a sizable Kurdish population. Both Deniz Gezmiş and Yusuf Aslan, two of TPLA's leading activists, were members of Turkey's Kurdish ethnic minority. Thirdly, the ranks of the terrorist organizations included a small number of military officers and former military cadets. Some of them appear to have become involved in terrorist groups through family ties, as in the case of Army Captain Orhan Savasçı who was Cayan's brother-in-law. Others, such as Lieutenant Saffet Alp, were recruited by the terrorists primarily due to their expertise in the use of explosives. In addition, the officers were expected to play a useful role in the terrorists' attempts to infiltrate the ranks of the armed forces. Finally, the social backgrounds of the first generation Turkish terrorists varied considerably. Some came from middle- or upper-middle-class families who lived in Istanbul and Ankara. However, quite a number of the terrorists had rural and small-town backgrounds. This was the case, for example, with both Gezmiş and Cayan, the leaders of the TPLA and the TPLF, respectively. Despite these differences in their social origins, Turkey's first generation of armed extremists belonged to the same political and social subcultures of left-wing radicalism in the universities. These subcultures of radicalism, built on friendship networks, family ties, political committees, and commune-type living arrangements were far more important in the political socialization of the extremist students into terrorism than their family backgrounds.

Although several leaders of Turkey's guerrilla movement gained prominence, two of them emerged as the major figures among the first generation terrorists. They were Deniz Gezmiş of the TPLA and Mahir Cayan of the TPLF. Before embarking on terrorism, Gezmiş had already attracted wide publicity in the Turkish press as one of the most militant activists of the leftist youth. Between 1965, when he became a member of the Turkish Labor Party, and late 1969, when he travelled to a PLO training camp in Jordan, Gezmiş was busy carrying out a variety of radical activities on and off the university campuses. During this

period, he was arrested by the police in several incidents, spent some time in prison, and was expelled from Istanbul University's law school in 1969. After his return from Jordan, Gezmis gained renewed publicity as a result of his participation in a spree of terrorist activities, including the political kidnapping of several American servicemen. Captured along with several other TPLA terrorists, Gezmis received the death penalty and he was executed in 1972.

By all accounts, Gezmis was far more interested in action than in theories of revolutionary change. His appeal to the radical leftist youth was based primarily on his demonstrated ability to challenge those in positions of authority, whether these be the university administrators, high-level government functionaries (Gezmis was arrested by the police on one occasion when he disrupted the speech given by a cabinet minister at the university), or the judges at his trial. His bold manners and daring personality established him as a charismatic figure for the first generation terrorists in Turkey. His execution by hanging, during which Gezmis reportedly chanted revolutionary slogans to the end, undoubtedly contributed to his legacy as a martyr among Turkey's armed extremists.

Mahir Cayan, who led the TPLF, followed a similar route as that of Gezmis in moving toward terrorism. Like so many others, Cayan started out in radical politics in the ranks of the Turkish Labor Party and in leftist student organizations. After his break with the TLP, Cayan emerged as one of the central figures of the *DEV-GENC*. By 1970, Cayan had left behind his promising student career at the university and had become totally immersed in "revolutionary" activities. Under his leadership, the newly-formed Turkish People's Liberation Front engaged in a series of operations during 1971 and 1972. Wanted for the murder of the Israeli Consul General following his kidnapping, Cayan was wounded and captured by the security forces after a massive manhunt. However, Cayan subsequently managed to escape from a military prison and resumed his terrorist activities. His final operation, designed to secure the release of Gezmis and two other terrorists who had received the death penalty, involved the kidnapping of three foreign hostages. Cayan and eight other terrorists as well as their hostages were killed in a shoot-out with the security forces during this incident in May 1972.

Two factors contributed to Cayan's prominence among the first generation Turkish terrorists. First, unlike Gezmis, Cayan had an intellectual bent. Implacably committed to the destruction of Turkish democracy, Turkey's socio-economic system, and its close ties with the United States, Cayan contributed numerous articles to radical journals on these and related topics. In addition, he expounded his theories on revolutionary change in Turkey in several books. Secondly, Cayan combined this intellectual orientation with a strong penchant for suicidal violence. Described by one perceptive observer as "dangerously egocentric and tormented by his own fears of pacifism,"<sup>1</sup> Cayan displayed a passion for weapons and a deep commitment to violent action. His death in a bloody hostage incident--in which he urged his fellow terrorists to fight until the bitter end despite the fact that they were surrounded by a large military contingent in a remote farm house--was typical of Cayan's quest for violent tactics.

Interestingly enough, Cayan became the major cult figure for later generations of leftist political terrorists in Turkey. Like Gezmis, his death at the hands of the representatives of the state elevated him to the position of a martyr among the armed extremists; but he attracted much more admiration than Gezmis because of his ability to combine an intellectual orientation with suicidal violence. As a result, most of the leftist terrorist groups which emerged on the political scene during the late 1970s vied for recognition as the "true" heirs of Cayan's views and legacy. In this sense, Mahir Cayan proved to be the most important and influential personality of the leftist terrorist movement in Turkey. His wife, who moved to Paris following Cayan's death, subsequently became a major figure among the Turkish left-wing extremists by virtue of her relationship to Mahir Cayan.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmet Samim, "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left," *New Left Review*, March-April 1981, p. 72.



## The Second and Third Generations: Leaders and Followers

Leftist terrorist activities during the early 1970s contributed significantly to the crisis of Turkish democracy and to the military's intervention in politics in March 1971. During the military interregnum in politics from 1971 to 1973, a major anti-terrorist campaign was launched under the overall aegis of the armed forces. The security forces managed to either kill or capture almost the whole of the leadership cadres of both the TPLA and the TPLF. Sinan Cemgil and several other TPLA activists were killed in April 1971 in an exchange of gunfire with the gendarmes in Southeastern Turkey. Deniz Gezmis, along with two of his principal lieutenants, was executed by the authorities in early 1972.

The TPLF's leadership was similarly decimated. A member of Cayan's inner circle, Ulas Bardakci, was killed by the police in a shoot-out after escaping from prison in February 1972. Two months later, Mahir Cayan, six TPLF, and two TPLA terrorists were killed in the previously mentioned kidnapping incident. A number of leading terrorists, such as Ertugrul Kurkcu, Yusuf Kupeli, and the husband-wife team of Necmi and Ilkay Demir, were captured alive and imprisoned. Scores of lesser-known activists and supporters of the terrorist groups were similarly rounded up by the military and put on trial.

As a result, when the second cycle of political violence got under way in the mid-1970s, most of the best-known names among the first generation Turkish leftist terrorists were no longer on the political scene.<sup>2</sup> However, the government's decision to declare an amnesty in late 1974 enabled the less prominent of the captured left-wing militants to get out of prison. Upon their release, some of them resumed involvement in political terrorism. The leadership ranks of the two principal leftist terrorist groups of the second cycle of violence, the *DEV-YOL* and the *DEV-SOL*, included several first generation radical activists such as Oguzhan Muftuoglu, Akin Dirik, Ali Alfatli, Tayfun

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<sup>2</sup> One major exception to this general trend was Teslim Tore who had been a leading activist in the TPLA. Tore has remained an active participant in Turkey's terrorist movement. According to various reports, he has been living in Syria where he directs the trafficking of terrorists to and from Turkey.

Mater (all of the *DEV-YOL*), and Pasa Guven (of the *DEV-SOL*). By and large, this was a group of radical activists who had played only a secondary role in the terrorism of the 1970-72 period. However, with the death or the imprisonment of the earlier terrorist leaders, they moved up to the leadership ranks of the newly-restructured leftist groups.

Along with these experienced activists, new generations of leftist terrorist leaders emerged from among younger militants who had remained outside of prison and who, for the most part, continued to be fully committed to Cayan's ideas and actions. As the scope and the intensity of political violence increased rapidly between 1975 and 1980, factional splits among the far-Left armed extremists propelled many of these younger terrorists to the leadership of the numerous splinter groups.

The terrorism of the late 1970s also witnessed the emergence of terrorist leaders who headed the neo-Fascist and the Kurdish separatist organizations. The leadership ranks of these groups were generally staffed by a mixture of older activists and younger militants. In the case of the neo-Fascists, some of the leaders appeared to be the seasoned veterans of the right-wing extremist student groups of the late 1960s. Their involvement in extremist politics had usually started out in the paramilitary groups organized by the extreme right-wing National Action Party (NAP). Later, they continued to work in a number of interrelated groups such as the Idealist Clubs Association (*Ulku Ocaklari Dernegi*), the Idealist Path Association (*Ulku Yolu Dernegi*), and the Idealist Youth Organization (*Ulku Genc Dernegi*), all of which maintained close ties with the NAP. The leadership of the Kurdish militant organizations varied considerably with respect to the prominence of the older and younger generations. For example, both the PKK (Labor Party of Kurdistan, known as the "*Apocular*" in Turkey) and the KUK (National Liberation of Kurdistan), were led by a group of younger militants. Other Kurdish organizations, however, such as the DDKD (Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Associations), had sizable numbers of older radicals in their leadership cadres.

The emergence of new generations produced some significant changes in the leadership profiles of the terrorist movement in Turkey. Students still constituted the largest group among the leaders of the

revolutionary, neo-Fascist, and ethnic separatist terrorist organizations.<sup>3</sup> However, unlike the previous generation of terrorists, the majority of these students were dropouts from the universities and tended to be less educated than their predecessors. Another significant difference pertained to the fact that during the late 1970s, terrorism ceased to be an exclusively student phenomenon. The leadership ranks of many terrorist groups included some non-students along with student dropouts. The largest number of the non-students were elementary and high school teachers. Teachers were particularly prominent in the leadership of the leftist and the Kurdish groups. The non-student category also included government employees, free professionals, and the unemployed. The slightly older age profile of the newer generation terrorist leadership was largely due to the entry of the non-students into the top hierarchy of the terrorist organizations.

Another important characteristic of terrorist leadership during this second wave of political violence was the absence of major cult figures among the armed extremists. Although quite a number of terrorists gained publicity as a result of their participation in major acts of violence, none of them acquired the prominence of a Cayan or a Gezmis. Possibly the best-known of the newer generation terrorists was Mehmet Ali Agca. A member of the neo-Fascist terrorist movement, Agca remained unknown to the Turkish public until his assassination of Turkey's most influential journalist, Abdi Ipekci, in 1979. His arrest and subsequent escape from a maximum-security prison attracted much publicity and brought Agca to the political limelight in Turkey. However, this was basically due to Agca's role as the assassin of a very prominent public figure. Otherwise, Agca did not display the type of leadership traits which had elevated Cayan and Gezmis to the status of major cult figures among the leftist armed extremists.

Undoubtedly, however, the most significant difference between the terrorist movements of the 1970-72 and 1975-80 periods concerned the "followers" who joined the terrorist organizations. As pointed out earlier, the number of terrorists during the first wave of political

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<sup>3</sup> For some preliminary information on the social backgrounds of the terrorist leadership, see Rusen Keles and Artun Unsal, *Kent ve Siyasal Sıddet*, Ankara, 1982, pp. 60-61.

violence was relatively small. Both the leaders and the followers in those terrorist groups tended to come from similar subcultures of university student radicalism. With the re-emergence of terrorism in the late 1970s, however, there was a new trend in the composition of the terrorist organizations. As the terrorist groups proliferated on the political scene, thousands of young people were recruited into the organizations of the revolutionary Left, neo-Fascist Right, and Kurdish separatism. Most of the followers came from backgrounds quite different from those who headed these groups. According to the statistics compiled by the General Command of the Turkish Armed Forces, only one-fifth of the suspected terrorists imprisoned following the 1980 coup were students or dropouts.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the students, there were several other occupational categories--free professionals (16 percent of the total), workers (14 percent), government employees (10 percent), teachers (7 percent), etc. But fully one-fifth of the remaining suspected terrorists were classified as unemployed prior to their arrest. The fact that the unemployed young people constituted as large a group as the students among the imprisoned terrorists is indicative of a major qualitative change--in addition to a vast quantitative change -- which took place in the terrorist organizations of the late 1970s.

This qualitative change becomes even more notable when the educational levels of the thousands of the followers are taken into consideration.<sup>5</sup> Again, according to the same statistical source, one-fifth of the suspected terrorists had no formal education. Close to one-third had not advanced beyond elementary school. Quite clearly, these barely literate and possibly even illiterate young armed extremists were a far cry from the highly educated first generation terrorists, and from the leaders of the second and third generation. The partial findings of a major personality and psychometric examination of the imprisoned terrorists similarly underscore the very low cultural and educational level of the followers.<sup>6</sup> According to this study, the majority of these young people have low IQs, some display symptoms of minimal brain

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<sup>4</sup> See, *Teror ve Terorle Mucadelede Durum Degerlendirmesi*, Ankara, 1983, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> For a brief discussion of the findings from the study carried out by Professor Turan Itil of the New York Medical College, see *Medical Tribune*, March 21, 1984.

dysfunction, and most are subject to "herd psychology." The results from this and several other studies also show that the rank-and-file terrorists came from the poorer sectors of rural Turkish society, that their parents were either illiterate or had very little education, and that the social backgrounds of the terrorists who joined the ideologically rival groups were remarkably similar to one another.<sup>7</sup>

The differences between the leaders and the followers, and the social profile of the latter, would seem to suggest the following: as the scope of Turkey's second terrorist cycle expanded in the late 1970s, large numbers of non-students were recruited into the terrorist movement. A sizable segment of these new recruits were young people whose families had recently moved to the cities from the countryside. Generally uneducated and without any significant job prospects, they formed a large pool of potential recruits for the leftist, rightist, and Kurdish terrorist organizations. When later recounting their terrorist acts during their trials, some of them revealed distinctly criminal and masochistic personality orientations. Mehmet Ali Agca's characterization of his fellow neo-Fascist terrorists as being "mainly adventurist and criminal"<sup>8</sup> would seem to be applicable to most of the followers in the ranks of the far-Left and the Kurdish terrorist groups as well. Quite clearly, of the three terrorist types proposed by Jenkins--"the ideologue," "the soldier," and "the thug"--a considerable number of these young people belonged to the last category.<sup>9</sup>

A final observation about the changing social composition of the terrorist movement in Turkey in the late 1970s concerns the increased participation of females in terrorism. Statistics on the male-female ratio among Turkish terrorists are not available. However, in comparison with the first wave of terrorism, there was a significant rise in the number of women who were members of terrorist groups during

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Emin Colasan, "Eylemcilerin Sinifsal Kokeni," *Milliyet*, April 18-21, 1979, and Keles and Unsal, *Kent ve Siyasal Siddet*, pp. 58-65.

<sup>8</sup> *The New York Times*, June 6, 1985.

<sup>9</sup> See, Brian M. Jenkins, *The Terrorist Mindset and Terrorist Decisionmaking: Two Areas of Ignorance*, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, P-6340, June 1979.

the 1975-80 period. The largest female participation was in the leftist terrorist organizations. Some of the Kurdish militant groups also had a sizable number of women terrorists in their ranks. In contrast, there were few female activists among the neo-Fascists.

Although no terrorist group was dominated by women, several female terrorists appear to have risen to leadership levels. In general, these women terrorists gained a reputation for being extremely dangerous in the use of deadly violence. The most prominent of them was Nalan Gurates--also known as "Scorpion Nalan" since she used an automatic weapon called "Scorpion"--who took part in most of the brutal assassinations carried out by the Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Union (MLAPU). Her recruitment into terrorism was quite typical of many other women terrorists. Nalan fell in love and subsequently married a school teacher who was the local cell leader of the MLAPU in a provincial town. Her two brothers were similarly recruited into this terrorist unit by Nalan's husband. During a spree of terrorist acts in the southern city of Adana, her husband was killed by the security forces. Following his death, Nalan became one of the principal figures of her group and participated both in the decision-making and the implementation of numerous operations, including the murders of several American servicemen in Istanbul in 1979. Like Nalan, many of Turkey's female terrorists appear to have started out in the use of deadly violence through their husbands, lovers, sisters and brothers.

### **The Consequences of Generational Changes**

Studies on the terrorist phenomenon in Western Europe have emphasized the nature and the significance of the generational changes which the terrorist movements undergo over the years.<sup>10</sup> The Italian and the German experiences with terrorism suggest, for instance, that newer generations replace older terrorist leaders approximately every four years. These generational changes are largely due to the death or the imprisonment of the preceding generation of terrorists. The replacement of the first generation leadership, in turn, exercises

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the excellent discussion of this issue in Brian M. Jenkins (ed.), *Terrorism and Beyond: An International Conference on Terrorism and Low-Level Conflict*, R-2714-DOE/DOJ/DOS/RC, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, December 1982, especially pp. 63-66.

strong influence on the behavior of the terrorist groups. While the first generation terrorist leaders are likely to be well-versed in ideology and theory, later generations turn out to be progressively less interested in ideology and more inclined to be action-oriented. They also tend to be less scrupulous in the employment of violent, and often ruthless, terrorist tactics against their perceived enemies.<sup>11</sup>

The Turkish case displays broad similarities as well as some differences in comparison with these trends. They include the following:

1. The replacement of first generation terrorist leadership in Turkey followed a pattern that was quite similar to the one observed in Western Europe. The death or the imprisonment of Turkey's first urban guerrilla activists enabled a new group of terrorists to take a dominant role. In the case of the leftist terrorist organizations, the new leadership hierarchy included some of the former "soldiers" who had been initially recruited into terrorist groups by the first generation leaders.

2. The recruitment of thousands of young people into the terrorist movement during the second wave of violence in the late 1970s contrasts sharply with the development of terrorism in Western Europe. In addition to sheer numbers, the low educational and cultural level of most of these young people makes the Turkish case somewhat unique in comparison with terrorism elsewhere in Western Europe.

3. Like their Italian and West German counterparts, the second and third generation Turkish terrorists displayed less interest in ideological issues and more commitment to action. This trend was especially pronounced among the thousands of followers in the terrorist groups who, due to their low cultural level, were not able to articulate ideology in a meaningful way. As a result, for the majority of the Turkish terrorists, simple-minded sloganeering, couched in the rhetoric of anti-fascism or anti-communism, became a substitute for more substantive "intellectual" discussions.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

Similar tendencies, though expressed in more subtle forms, were also evident among the leaders of the armed extremists. The first generation leftist militants had generally sought to justify their tactics in accordance with Marxist tenets, theories of revolutionary change, and propaganda books on guerrilla warfare. To be sure, the level of their ideological knowledge and theoretical sophistication fared poorly in comparison with that of the Italian or the West German terrorist leaders. Nevertheless, they did show considerable concern for ideology and for step-by-step strategies. Their successors, however, increasingly moved away from ideological concerns and toward "urgent" action, "total" struggle, and "immediate" power. Several factors--the fact that they were not as well educated as the first generation, the presence of the non-students in their ranks, and their growing alienation from the theoretical discussions that were written in the nearly unintelligible technical jargon of the radical journals--all contributed to this trend.<sup>12</sup>

4. The increased primacy which was given to violent acts by the Turkish terrorists also resembled the behavioral traits of the newer generations in Western Europe's terrorist movement. It should be noted, however, that the element of violence had been an important component of Turkish terrorism from the beginning. This was true even for the pre-terrorist phase of Turkey's student radicalism in the late 1960s. Unlike the Western European or the American student protest movements, student radicalism in Turkey claimed several fatalities as a result of bloody confrontations between the militants of the extreme Left and the far Right.<sup>13</sup>

Despite this tradition of violence, the use of deadly violence apparently posed a moral dilemma for some of the first generation leftist terrorists. For example, the earliest incident of political kidnapping involving the U.S. servicemen by the TPLA members in 1971 ended without the hostages suffering any physical violence. However,

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<sup>12</sup> See Samim, "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left," pp. 80-83.

<sup>13</sup> For a perceptive discussion of this problem, see Serif Mardin, "Youth and Violence in Turkey," *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie* (Paris), Vol. 19, 1979.



the emergence of Mahir Cayan as a dominant figure in this early phase of terrorism marked a critical change in the terrorists' attitude toward the employment of violence. Cayan's enormous impact on both his contemporaries and the succeeding generations of leftist terrorists thus proved to be an extremely significant factor in bringing about this attitudinal change.

The degeneration of Turkey's terrorist movement, as reflected in the changing composition of the players, also contributed significantly to the greater ease with which newer generations employed violence. For many of the young men and women who joined the numerous leftist, neo-Fascist, and Kurdish separatist groups, the use of ruthless tactics involving murder, armed assault, bombing, etc. seemed to present no significant moral problems. As a result, violence was employed with increasing frequency for a variety of interrelated motives, ranging from ideology and political goals to self-pitying masochism and imitative behavior. The deaths of nearly 4500 people from terrorist violence between 1975 and 1980 was indicative of the pervasiveness and the intensity of these motives among the terrorists in Turkey.

## Conclusion

As had been the case with the first wave of terrorist activities during the early 1970s, the escalation of political violence was an important catalyst for the 1980 military coup in Turkey. Following the establishment of military rule, large numbers of second and third generation terrorist leaders and followers were imprisoned. In addition, several hundred terrorists were killed in armed confrontations with the security forces. Some of the leading terrorist figures, however, managed to escape to Western Europe and the Arab countries.

Although terrorist activities have been held under control in the 1980s, the problem of armed extremism continues to be a major concern for Turkish governments. There is little indication at present which would suggest that the young men and women who turned to terrorism have changed their attitudes toward the use violent tactics.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, if the past is to be a guide for the future, prisons are

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the interview with a *DEV-SOL* leader in Germany by the West Berlin *Tageszeitung*, reprinted in *JPRS Worldwide Report: Terrorism*, 1 June 1984, pp. 126-131.

likely to produce more hardened terrorists. They are also likely to be the breeding grounds for terrorism through the recruitment of ordinary criminals into terrorist organizations. So far, the efforts by Turkish authorities to reverse this trend and to "rehabilitate" the nearly 15,000 imprisoned terrorists have not produced any significant results. Consequently, despite the alienation of their perceived sympathizers and the pervasiveness of the strong anti-terrorist feelings among the broader Turkish public, it is quite probable that Turkey's present and forthcoming generations of terrorists will try to follow the path of violent action in their quest to change "the system."

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