“FEMINISM *GURBETTE* [ABROAD]”:

A Political and Transnational History of Two Generations of Turkish Migrant Left-Feminist Women and Their Organizations in the United Kingdom, West Germany, and the Netherlands (1974-1990)

By

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A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation offers a political and transnational history of Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizations established in three west-European countries in 1974-1975, in particular, the Union of Turkish Women in Britain (ITKB), the Union of Turkish Women in the Netherlands (HTKB), the Union of Turkish Women in West Berlin (BTKB), and the Women's Union in Gelsenkirchen (GKB); as well as of two related organizations, established in and/or operating from Denmark in the early 1980s: the Progressive Women's Association (IKD)'s Office Abroad, and the Women's Bureau of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP). The latter two were set up by former IKD cadres and TKP members who had become political refugees after the 1980 military coup in Turkey, and maintained transnational connections and collaborations between the various organizations across national borders.

The research was based on archival sources—mainly located in Amsterdam, Berlin, and Istanbul—and eight oral history interviews, and guided by these questions: How, when, and why did Turkish leftist migrant women in the three countries involved create their organizations? How did local and national conditions and international contexts, such as UN-proclaimed International Women's Year, the UN Decade for Women, and the Cold War, influence their political organizing? In what ways did Turkish migrant women's organizations attempt to contribute to women's activism in their host countries, Turkey, and the international domain of women's rights? Lastly, how do my findings contribute to the history of Turkish migrant women's activism in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands and beyond, the history of communist women's activism in Turkey and transnationally, and the history of the women's movement in Turkey?

Structured in six chapters, this dissertation uses the term left feminism as an analytical concept to examine the political agendas and activities of Turkish leftist migrant women's organizations across two generations. It investigates their efforts to enhance Turkish migrant women's rights, participate in transnational migrant politics on their own terms, and contribute to the global struggle for women's rights—particularly through their engagement with the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).

This dissertation contributes to scholarship in several major ways. It offers the first comprehensive historical analysis of the ITKB, the IKD's Office Abroad, and the TKP's Women's Bureau, none of which have received prior academic attention. Also, beyond discussing the ITKB, HTKB, BTKB, and GKB's community feminism, it reveals the transnational dimensions of their activism, including homeland-oriented initiatives and

participation in a dynamic network of interconnections in western Europe—an aspect neglected in existing literature. Secondly, the study situates Turkish migrant left-feminism within the growing historiography on communist women's activism during the Cold War and the WIDF, highlighting the roles and contributions of migrant and refugee women.

Thirdly, it challenges the dominant waves-based narrative in the historiography of women's movements in Turkey, which presumes a clear rupture between the pre- and post-1980 periods. It does so by shedding light on the resilience of the second generation's activism for women's rights beyond Turkey after 1980, as demonstrated through their continued political organizing and transnational initiatives.

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List of Abbreviations

ABC	*Advies-en Begeleidings-Centrum voor het Onderwijs* (Advisory and Guidance Center for Education)
ABOK	*Avrupa Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi* (European Committee for Peace and Freedom)
ATKF	*Avrupa Türkiye Kadınlar Federasyonu* (European Federation of Turkish Women)
ATTF	*Avrupa Türkiyeli Toplumcular Federasyonu* (European Federation of Turkish Socialists)
AP	*Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party)
AWO	*Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (the Workers' Welfare Association)
BTKB	*Batı Berlin Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in West Berlin)
BTTO	*Batı Berlin Türk Toplumcular Ocağı* (Turkish Socialist Community in West Berlin)
CHP	*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party)
CPN	*Communistische Partij Nederland* (Communist Party of the Netherlands)
DFB	*Demokratischer Frauenbund Berlin* (Democratic Women's League Berlin)
DFI	*Demokratische Fraueninitiative* (Democratic Women's Initiative)
DGB	*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (German Trade Union Confederation)
DISK	*Devrimci Işçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey)
DKP	*Deutsche Kommunistische Partei* (German Communist Party)
DSF	*Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaftsgesellschaft* West Berlin (German-Soviet Friendship Society in West Berlin)
FIDEF	*Federal Almanya Işçi Dernekleri Federasyonu* (Federation of Turkish Workers in Federal Germany)
GE-TID	*Gelsenkirchen ve Çevresi Türk İşçi Derneği* (The Turkish Workers' Association in Gelsenkirchen and its Surroundings)
GEW	*Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft* (Education and Science Workers' Union)
GKB	*Gelsenkirchen Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in Gelsenkirchen)
HTIB	*Hollanda Türkiyeli İşçiler Birliği* (Union of Turkish Workers in the Netherlands)
HTKB	*Hollanda Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the Netherlands)
IBOK	*Ingiltere Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi* (the Turkish Committee for Peace and Freedom in the UK)
IKD	*Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği* (Progressive Women's Association)
ITIB	*Ingiltere Türkiyeli İlericiler Birliği* (Union of Turkish Progressives in the UK)
ITKB	*Ingiltere Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the UK)
ITOF	*Ingiltere Türk Öğrenci Federasyonu* (the Federation of Turkish Students in the UK)
IWY	International Women's Year
KZV	*Komitee Zelfstandig Verblijfsrecht Migrantenvrouwen* (Committee for Independent Residence Rights for Migrant Women)
MHP	*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party)
MSP	*Millî Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party)
MVVN	*Marokkaanse Vrouwen Vereniging* Nederland (Moroccan Women's Association in the Netherlands)

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAW	National Assembly of Women
NCB	*Nederlands Centrum Buitenlanders* (Dutch Center for Foreigners)
NUTGW	National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers
NVB	*Nederlandse Vrouwenbeweging* (Dutch Women's Movement)
NVR	*Nederlandse Vrouwenraad* (Dutch Women's Council)
SCWRT	Solidarity Committee for Women's Rights in Turkey (UK)
SEW	*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Westberlins* (Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin)
SWBW	*Stichting Welzijn Buitenlandse Werknemers* (Foundation for the Welfare of Foreign Workers)
TBKP	*Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi* (United Communist Party of Turkey)
TBOK	*Türkiye Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi- Avrupa* (Turkish European Committee for Peace and Freedom)
TGKK	*Köln Türk Gençliği Kültür Kulübü* (Turkish Youth Culture Club in Cologne)
TIO	*Treffen- und Informationspunkt für die Frauen aus der Türkei* (Meeting and Information Center for Women from Turkey)
TIP	Türkiye Işçi Partisi (Workers' Party of Turkey)
TKB	*Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (Turkish Women's Union)
TKP	*Türkiye Komünist Partisi* (Communist Party of Turkey)
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UN	United Nations
WIDF	Women's International Democratic Federation
WKRF	*Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau* (West Berlin Committee for Women's Rights)

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INTRODUCTION

Turkish director and screenwriter Korhan Yurtsever's second movie, *Kara Kafa* (Black Head), filmed largely in 1979 across the Rhine-Ruhr region, with additional scenes shot in West Berlin,[1] tells the story of Cafer, a Turkish migrant worker who brings his family from their rural village in Turkey to West Germany in pursuit of better economic prospects.[2] Distinct among the era's German-Turkish migration cinema films, which focused primarily on the sorrowful realities faced by migrant working-class families, *Kara Kafa* stood apart for its left-wing view of migration and its open social criticism as an explicitly agit-prop piece, utterly devoted to political themes that included both women's movements and labor struggles.[3] Unlike any other film of its kind, it celebrates the agency and individuality of its central female character, Hacer, while capturing West Germany in 1979 through the lens of Turkish migrants, providing ethnographic, documentary-like glimpses of schools, factories, and streets, as well as the everyday experiences of its inhabitants.

Beyond its thematic significance regarding Turkish migrant women's activism in West Germany, *Kara Kafa* has a backstory that is especially pertinent to my dissertation. Once its production concluded in 1979, director Korhan Yurtsever returned to Turkey to complete the film's post-production. However, the Turkish authorities immediately banned the screening of *Kara Kafa*, both domestically and internationally, on grounds of "communist propaganda" and "defaming a friendly country."[4] They also filed criminal charges against Yurtsever, with prosecutors seeking a 32-year-sentence for "communist propaganda."[5] All the film's negatives, posters, and related materials were confiscated.[6] *Kara Kafa* spent decades locked away, its screening copies gathering dust and never being seen by audiences—an apt metaphor for the broader disregard for its central theme, Turkish leftist migrant women's activism, within the historiography on women's movements in Turkey and in western Europe. Indeed, no comprehensive study to date has examined Turkish leftist migrant women's activism in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands. Instead, the scarce scholarship that

[1] Can Sangu, "A Conversation with Korhan Yurtsever," *Arsenal-Institute for Film and Video Art E.V* (blog), 2023, https://www.arsenal-berlin.de/en/forum-forum-expanded/archive/program-arch
[2] *Kara Kafa.* Directed by Korhan Yurtsever, featuring Betül Aşçıoğlu, Savaş Yurttaş, Cüneyt Kaymak, Özlem Güler, Macit Flordun, Gülsen Tuncer, Ercan Demirel, Bülent Oran, Wolfgang Esch, and Bahri Ateş, Korhan Film, 1979.
[3] Müge Turan, "Kara Kafa: 'Böyle Gelmiş Böyle Gitmez,'" *Altyazı Sinema Dergisi* (blog), November 7, 2023, https://altyazi.net/yazilar/elestiriler/kara-kafa/.
[4] Sangu, "A Conversation with Korhan Yurtsever"; Turan, "Kara Kafa."
[5] Sangu, "A Conversation with Korhan Yurtsever."
[6] Ibid.

exists focuses on one organization at a time in a single national context, thereby failing to address Turkish leftist migrant women's activism as a cross-border phenomenon that unfolded in different parts of western European during the same period.

Amid the earliest wave of Turkish leftist migrant activism flourishing in western Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Turkish migrant women became increasingly politicized and mobilized. Turkish migrant women's initial political socialization, developed through activism in leftist migrant organizations starting in the late 1960s, not only intensified but also changed in character in the 1970s. Women active in mixed-gender organizations increasingly embraced the idea of forming a separate socialist women's movement for the struggle for women's rights—mirroring parallel initiatives in Turkey and drawing influence and legitimacy from United Nations-proclaimed International Women's Year's global impetus. This process culminated around 1974–1975 in the founding of the first Turkish migrant women's organizations in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands.

The organizations I selected for my study are the *Ingiltere Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the UK, ITKB) in the UK; the *Batı Berlin Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in West Berlin, BTKB) and the *Gelsenkirchen Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in Gelsenkirchen, GKB) in West Germany; and the *Hollanda Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the Netherlands, HTKB) in the Netherlands. The rationale behind choosing these organizations—rather than those in other western European countries such as Austria, Belgium, France, and Switzerland, which also saw a significant migration from Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s (see Table 1 in Section 1.2)—is grounded in the findings of my preliminary research for this doctoral project. It showed that no comparable Turkish leftist migrant women's organizations existed elsewhere in western Europe, i.e., as large, active, or transnational in character, as in the three countries I focus on.

The organizations I concentrate on were also among the most prominent in international left feminism. They played a leading role in the formation and transnational activities of the *Avrupa Türkiye Kadınlar Federasyonu* (European Federation of Turkish Women, ATKF), were active participants in the activities of the global left-feminist organization, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), and transnationally connected to the *Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği* (Progressive Women's Association, IKD) in Turkey during the 1970s. Following the military coup of 12 September 1980 in Turkey, many IKD cadres became political refugees in various western European countries. All leading figures in the organizations examined in this study were also affiliated with the *Türkiye Komünist*

Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey, TKP). The exiled activists established the *IKD Dış Bürosu* (IKD's Office Abroad) in Denmark, and some among them also worked within the TKP's Women's Bureau. Both IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau are included here as part of the history of Turkish migrant left feminism in the post-1980 period, as they were connected to the Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizations in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands, and engaged in transnational cooperation.

The objective of this dissertation is to construct a political history of the British ITKB, the West-German BTKB and GKB, and the Dutch HTKB between 1974 and 1990 and from a transnational perspective. By doing so, I aim to offer insights into the public roles migrant women assumed in transnational migrant politics through the women-only organizations they established in their host countries. Realizing this goal requires situating Turkish migrant left-feminist activism, first, within the broader transnational politics of Turkish migrants in western Europe, and second, within the global milieu of socialist and communist women's activism during the Cold War. Accordingly, it involves analyzing Turkish migrant left-feminists' relationships with other actors (a) in migrant politics—such as mixed-gender Turkish leftist organizations, (b) with like-minded migrant and native women's groups and organizations in the host states, and homeland-based political actors—and (c) with the international left-wing women's movement, including international women's organizations and global initiatives for women's rights organized around the 1975 International Women's Year (IWY) and the UN Decade for Women (1976–1985).

To investigate these relationships, I draw on that an approach that Francisca de Haan et al. describe as an intersectional, de-centered, and global perspective on women's activism (to be developed further in the section below on my theoretical-conceptual framework).[7]

From this perspective, writing a political history of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe does more than merely fill a gap in the literature on migrant women's transnational activism and the feminist historiography of women's movements in western Europe and Turkey. It also critically engages with and problematizes dominant approaches within these fields, which tend to exclude Turkish migrant women's left-feminist activism from the broader history of women's movements. This exclusion derives its theoretical foundations from dominant western feminist perspectives on women's activism, which "held [a] gender-only agenda, woman-only organizing and autonomy from the state [and the party]

[7] Francisca de Haan et al., "Introduction," in *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present*, ed. Francisca de Haan et al. (London: Routledge, 2013), 1–12.

as feminisms' imperatives," combined with an overarching assumption that socialism and feminism are inherently incompatible.[8] Socialist or communist women's historical rejection of the feminist label—as in the case of Turkish migrant women's leftist activism—and their critique of "the contemporary women's movement as primarily a bourgeois movement," based on a critical political analysis of its gender-only agenda, have often been mistakenly interpreted by historians as evidence of socialist or communist women's lack of interest in improving women's lives.[9]

By illuminating the forms of activism undertaken by Turkish leftist migrant women and the demands they articulated in the context of migration, I propose a rewriting of the history of Turkish women's activism from a broader, more inclusive perspective. This perspective foregrounds the interconnectedness of activism across these spaces, and beyond into the international level, from 1974 to 1990, moving beyond the common typologies anchored in the territorial duality between host and homeland nation-states. It will demonstrate that Turkish women's activism abroad constituted a significant transnational political space where certain forms of activism persisted beyond Turkey's borders.

This introductory chapter is further organized in three sections. The first is a historiographical overview, itself divided into three parts, and leading into the presentation of the core research questions that guide my analysis in this dissertation. Then I present the theoretical-conceptual framework underpinning my analysis of Turkish migrant women's leftist activism. Finally, I discuss the sources upon which this dissertation is based and provide an outline of the dissertation.

Historiography

(1) Turkish Migrant Left Feminism and the Limits of Migration Studies and Western European Histories of Women's Movements and Feminisms

Since the 1990s, migration studies have increasingly come to understand migration as a dynamic and gendered process. This shift is evident in the fact that, as early as 2006, *The International Migration Review*, one of the leading academic journals in the field, published a special issue dedicated to gender and migration.[10] Another key change in migration studies

[8] Selin Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender and the Making of Kemalist Feminist Activism in Contemporary Turkey (1946–2011)" (PhD diss., Central European University, 2017), 41.
[9] Francisca de Haan, "Introduction: Toward a Global History of Communist Women," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World*, ed. Francisca de Haan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 2.
[10] The International Migration Review: IMR special issue: Gender and Migration Revisited (2006). 40(1).

has been the proliferation of approaches aimed at overcoming forms of methodological nationalism—the assumption that, in the words of Wimmer and Glick Schiller, "the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world."[11] These new approaches seek to capture cross-border relations and interactions that transcend nation-state boundaries. Also, migration has started to be seen as a process "in which migrants, to varying degrees, are simultaneously embedded in the multiple sites and layers of the transnational social fields in which they live."[12] In their insightful and pioneering 1994 work, Basch et al. define transnationalism as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement."[13] By deterritorialized nation-states, Basch et al. refer to a contemporary condition in which the nation-state "stretches beyond its geographic boundaries [and in which] the nation's people may live anywhere in the world and still not live outside the state. By this logic, there is no longer a diaspora because wherever its people go, their states go too."[14]

As a result of the combined impact of these converging trends in these two related fields, gender has more recently begun to be integrated into social scientific and historical studies of diaspora, transnationalism, and migrant politics, particularly "as female migrants are increasingly recognized as actors in today's global landscape,"[15] and not merely as playing an important role in informal networks of family and friends, typically associated with the 'private sphere.'[16] Describing gender as a "lacuna in diaspora, transnational, and migrant politics scholarship," Dutch feminist political scientist Liza Mügge in 2013 highlighted the need for more nuanced accounts of migrant women's experiences in transnational migrant politics—accounts that move beyond the simplistic public–private dichotomy and give serious attention to women's political organizing and activism.[17] Mügge, along with other scholars,

[11] Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation–State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 2, no. 4 (2002): 302.
[12] Peggy Levitt and B. Nadya Jaworsky, "Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends," *Annual Review of Sociology* 33, no. 1 (2007): 130.
[13] Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach, 1994), 6.
[14] Basch, Glick Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton, 269.
[15] Subha Xavier, *Migrant Text: Making and Marketing a Global French Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 159.
[16] For example, Carla De Tona and Ronit Lentin, "Networking Sisterhood, from the Informal to the Global: AkiDwA, the African and Migrant Women's Network, Ireland," *Global Networks* 11, no. 2 (2011): 242–61; Georges Fouron and Nina Glick Schiller, "All in the Family: Gender, Transnational Migration, and the Nation-State," *Identities* 7, no. 4 (2001): 539–82; Jacqueline Maria Hagan, "Social Networks, Gender, and Immigrant Incorporation: Resources and Constraints," *American Sociological Review* 63, no. 1 (1998): 55–67.
[17] Liza Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism: Supporting Social Justice Claims of Homeland Political Organizations," *Studies in Social Justice* 7, no. 1 (2013): 66–67.

has since contributed to a growing body of research that examines migrant women's activism more holistically, providing both epistemological and empirical foundations for what can be conceptualized under the broader term migrant feminisms. Researchers representing this contemporary direction in the study of migrant women's transnational activism investigate two things: first, how the intersections of the national and the international carried a potential for creating transnational space for migrant feminists, and secondly, how and in what ways the national contexts of both their host and home countries contributed to the construction of the political subjectivities and standpoints of migrant women activists abroad and/or in exile.[18] Waldron Merithew's and Moya's chapters in a 2002 edited volume are particularly noteworthy for providing compelling historical evidence that migrant women's transnational activism is not a new phenomenon.[19]

At the same time, efforts to integrate this direction into the historiography of women's movements and feminisms have lagged somewhat behind. This has happened although attempts to make feminist historical scholarship less westocentric and more inclusive began as early as the mid-1980s, thus preceding the more recent inclusion of migrant women's activism in diaspora, transnational, and migrant politics scholarship.[20] Although the term "feminism" was first coined in the West, growing research on women's activism in non-western contexts has shown that feminism was never a uniquely or exclusively western phenomenon; rather, feminist ideas and movements emerged across diverse regions, under different conditions and in varying contexts, often as part of the entangled histories of colonialism and anti-colonial struggles throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[21] As part of the broader effort to historicize and problematize western hegemonic definitions of feminism, scholars have advocated for a more inclusive definition—one that recognizes "women's activisms that seek women's strategic (alongside practical) gender interests (…) within a broad terrain of

[18] Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism"; Caroline Waldron Merithew, "Anarchist Motherhood: Toward the Making of a Revolutionary Proletariat in Illinois' Coal Towns," in *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World*, ed. Donna R. Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 217–46; Jose Moya, "Italians in Buenos Aires's Anarchist Movement: Gender Ideology and Women's Participation, 1890-1910," in Gabaccia and Iacovetta, *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives,* 189–215.
[19] Waldron Merithew, "Anarchist Motherhood"; Moya, "Italians in Buenos Aires's Anarchist Movement."
[20] Francisca de Haan, "Writing Inter/Transnational History: The Case of Women's Movements and Feminisms," in *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis: Traditionen Und Perspektiven/International History in Theory and Practice: Traditions and Perspectives*, ed. B. Haider-Wilson, W. Mueller, and W.D. Godsey (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016), 551.
[21] Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (London: Zed Books, 1986); Maitrayee Chaudhuri, *Feminism in India* (London: Zed Books, 2005); De Haan et al., eds., *Women's Activism*; Rita Kaur Dhamoon, "Feminisms," in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, ed. Georgina Waylen et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 88–110.

'feminisms.'"[22] A considerable body of scholarship now demonstrates the varied forms of feminism in non-western contexts and the broad range of agendas and organizational strategies through which women have been politically mobilized. It provides important epistemological foundations for recognizing diverse forms of feminisms and continues to inform and inspire analyses of the activism of women from non-dominant groups within western national contexts, particularly migrant and refugee women. Edited volumes by Nancy Naples, Alena Heitlinger, Donna Gabaccia, and Franca Iacovetta, along with Rumi Yasutake's monograph, are some of the earliest examples of a growing scholarly interest in incorporating migrant feminisms into the history of women's movements and feminisms.[23] These historical accounts commonly adopt an intersectional perspective, resonating with the growing scholarship in women's and gender studies since the late 1980s that underscores how gender, sexuality, class, race, nation/ethnicity, age, disability, and so forth are deeply intertwined, and cannot be analyzed in isolation from each other for individuals occupy interlocking positions of privilege and subordination simultaneously.[24]

Within these emerging literatures, Turkish migrant women's activism in general, and Turkish migrant left feminism in particular—the subject of this dissertation—have remained surprisingly underrepresented. Among the limited scholarship, two notable examples are *Caleidoscopische Visies* (Kaleidoscopic Visions), a Dutch-language volume on the Netherlands, originally published in 2001 and republished in 2024, edited by Nancy Jouwe, Maayke Botman, and Gloria Wekker,[25] and the 2023 *Migrantischer Feminismus: In der Frauen:Bewegung in Deutschland* (1985–2000) (Migrant Feminism in the Women's Movement in Germany, 1985–2000), edited by Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Pınar

[22] Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender," 59.
[23] Nancy A. Naples, ed., *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Alena Heitlinger, ed., *Émigré Feminism: Transnational Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Donna R. Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, *Women, Gender and Transnational Lives*; Rumi Yasutake, *Transnational Women's Activism : The United States, Japan, and Japanese Immigrant Communities in California, 1859-1920* (New York: NYU Press, 2004).
[24] Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Woman, Nation, State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989); Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Baukje Prins, "Narrative Accounts of Origins: A Blind Spot in the Intersectional Approach?," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 277–90; Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 193–209; Lynn Weber, *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Nira Yuval-Davis, *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* (London: SAGE, 2011); Brittney Cooper, "Intersectionality," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, ed. Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 385–406.
[25] Nancy Jouwe, Maayke Botman, and Gloria Wekker, eds., *Caleidoscopische Visies: De zwarte, migranten- en vluchtelingenvrouwenbeweging in Nederland* (Zutphen: Mazirel Pers, 2024).

Tuzcu.[26] These Dutch and German volumes include articles that document, analyze, and affirm the roles, critical interventions, and transformative contributions of women of color, migrant, and refugee women in the national histories of feminism and women's movements in their respective contexts, including discussions of Turkish migrant women's activism. However, neither volume offers a political history of Turkish migrant women, nationally or transnationally.

This broader observation invites a more detailed discussion of the absence or limited representation of Turkish migrant left feminism in the historiographies of women's movements and feminisms within the national contexts of Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK—the three case studies of this dissertation. In the German case, the earliest inquiries into migrant women's political organizing in Germany construct and rely on a chronology that designates the 1980s and 1990s as decisive for migrant women's political self-organizing, and does not recognize Turkish migrant left feminism as an independent, transnational phenomenon with its own chronology and extending beyond the host-country context into homeland dynamics and the global women's movement. This line of periodization persists in recent scholarship, such as the 2023 edited volume *Migrantischer Feminismus*.[27]

Unsurprisingly, then, the political history of the organizations that constituted this movement in the 1970s and 1980s, such as the *Batı Berlin Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in West Berlin, BTKB) in West Berlin and the *Gelsenkirchen Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in Gelsenkirchen, GKB)–cases that I focus on in this dissertation–has yet to be comprehensively documented and analyzed. In the existing scholarship, BTKB has received only cursory attention (for a detailed discussion on the existing scholarship, see Section 3.1).[28] However, some recent studies on Turkish migrant left feminism in West Germany are enhancing our knowledge on these organizations in new ways. The most significant example is Elisabeth Kimmerle's recent doctoral dissertation, *Frauen in Bewegung: migrantische Aushandlungsräume des Politischen zwischen West-Berlin und der*

[26] Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Pınar Tuzcu, eds., *Migrantischer Feminismus: in der Frauen: bewegung in Deutschland (1985-2000)* (Münster: edition assemblage, 2023).
[27] Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Tuzcu, *Migrantischer Feminismus*.
[28] Helen Schwenken, "Frauen-Bewegungen in der Migration: Zur Selbstorganisierung von Migrantinnen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Frauenbewegungen Weltweit: Aufbrüche, Kontinuitäten, Veränderungen*, ed. Ilse Lenz, Michiko Mae, and Karin Klose (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2000), 133–66; Esra Erdem, "Organisationen Anatolisch-Deutscher Frauen," *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen* 16, no. 2 (2003): 136–40; Hanife Aliefendioğlu, "Transnational Space Between Women's NGOs in Germany and Turkey: Current Situation and Future Expectations," in *Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks and Institutions*, ed. Thomas Faist and Eyüp Özveren (New York: Routledge, 2004), 59–90; Mustafa Demir and Ergün Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland: Der lange Weg der Migranten aus der Türkei: Ihre Kämpfe und Organisationen für Integration und Gleichberechtigung* (Berlin: VWB, 2015), 136, 138.

Türkei (1961–1990) (Women on the move: Migrant Spaces of Political Negotiation between West Berlin and Turkey), successfully defended in December 2024,[29] which significantly deepens our understanding of BTKB by providing a detailed political history of the organization, grounded in extensive archival research and oral history interviews with former members. Elisabeth Kimmerle and I began our doctoral journeys around the same time, and our shared interests fostered an ongoing dialogue that enriched our research processes. Together, our dissertations aim to contribute to the recovery and construction of the political history of Turkish migrant left feminism and the BTKB in West Berlin as an integral component of the history of women's movements and feminisms in Germany. With regard to the GKB in the Ruhr region, the only existing work on the organization is my 2020 book chapter, in which I analyzed GKB's activities within the broader context of Turkish leftist migrant politics in the Ruhr and the shifting local and transnational dynamics from the late 1970s into the 1980s.[30]

Turkish migrant left feminism in the Netherlands has drawn relatively more scholarly attention than in Germany, particularly regarding the history of the *Hollanda Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the Netherlands, HTKB), which has recently also inspired artistic production. Notably, Turkish-Dutch visual artist and photographer Çiğdem Yüksel's first major solo exhibition, *Je moest eens weten* (If Only You Knew), debuted in 2024. Accompanied by a photobook of the same name, the project features the stories of 22 first-generation migrant women in the Netherlands—including prominent HTKB members—through a combination of family album photographs, video interviews, and new portraits created by Yüksel, with information on the history of Turkish female migration to the Netherlands and the HTKB.[31] When examining existing literature on HTKB and its history, we can largely identify two strands of research that emerged at the intersection of multiple disciplines. The first is rooted in Dutch migration history and the social scientific study of Turkish women's migration and political experiences, focusing on migrant women's political participation, activism, and transnational migrant politics within the Dutch context from a

[29] Elisabeth Kimmerle, "Frauen in Bewegung: Migrantische Aushandlungsräume des Politischen Zwischen West-Berlin und der Türkei (1961-1990)" (PhD diss., Universität Potsdam, 2024). Kimmerle's dissertation will be published as *Frauen in Bewegung: Politische Räume von Migrantinnen Aus Der Türkei in West-Berlin, 1961-1989* (Göttingen: Wallstein, forthcoming in 2025).
[30] Sercan Çınar, "The Making of Turkish Migrant Left Feminism and Political Generations in the Ruhr, West Germany (1975–90)," in *Gender, Generations, and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond*, ed. Anna Artwińska and Agnieszka Mrozik (New York: Routledge, 2020), 102–21.
[31] Çiğdem Yüksel, *Je moest eens weten: De eerste generatie vrouwen uit Turkije in Nederland* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2024).

critical gender perspective. Dating back to the 1980s, this scholarship includes contributions such as Lenie Brouwer and Marijke Priester's (1983) book chapter, Ece Öztan's 2009 dissertation (followed by her 2013 article), Liza Mügge's 2010 monograph and 2013 article, and Marlou Schrover's 2013 chapter.[32] Broadly speaking, this line of research represents attempts to bring gender into the study of diaspora, transnational and migrant politics in the Netherlands. However, within this body of work, the political history of HTKB itself remains at the margins of social scientific perspectives on migrant transnationalism, often functioning only as an entity that provides empirical data. What is missing from this literature is an analysis of Turkish women's migration and political experiences in the Netherlands as part of the interconnected histories of Turkish migrant left-feminist activism in the UK and West Germany.

The second line of research on Turkish migrant women's activism and the HTKB is more firmly grounded in the fields of women's and gender history, as well as the history of women's movements and feminisms in the Netherlands. This body of work includes Pieternel Onderwater's 2008 Bachelor's thesis, Jerney Robert's 2009 Master's thesis, Ece Öztan's 2010 article, Margaretha A. van Es's 2016 book, and Andrew DJ Shield's 2017 book,[33] which shed light on the intersectional alliances Turkish migrant women forged with Black, migrant, and refugee women, and critically examine the dynamics of cooperation and conflict between these women and key local and national actors, including Dutch feminists and state institutions. Within this body of literature, the edited volume *Caleidoscopische Visies* (introduced above) stands out as the first of its kind and is now considered a classic.[34] The

[32] Lenie Brouwer and Marijke Priester, "Living in Between: Turkish Women in Their Homeland and in the Netherlands," in *One Way Ticket: Migration and Female Labour*, ed. Annie Phizacklea (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 113–30; Ece Öztan, "Göç Bağlamında Yurttaşlık ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet: Türkiye Kökenli Amsterdamlı Kadınlarin Yurttaşlık Deneyimleri" (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2009); Ece Öztan, "Türkiye Kökenli Göçmen Kadınların Hollanda'daki Örgütlenme Deneyimleri ve Feminist Siyaset," *Alternatif Politika* 5, no. 3 (2013): 214–41; Liza Mügge, *Beyond Dutch Borders: Transnational Politics Among Colonial Migrants, Guest Workers and the Second Generation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism"; Marlou Schrover, "Multiculturalism, Dependent Residence Status and Honour Killings: Explaining Current Dutch Intolerance Towards Ethnic Minorities," in *Gender, Migration and Categorisation: Making Distinctions Between Migrants in Western Countries, 1945-2010*, ed. Marlou Schrover and Deirdre M. Moloney, IMISCOE Research (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 231–53.

[33] Pieternel Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'! Een onderzoek naar de houding van de Turkse vrouwenbeweging in Nederland ten opzichte van het seksedebat tussen 1970-2008" (bachelor's thesis, Utrecht University, 2008); Jerney Robert, "De opkomst en ondergang van Hollanda Türkiyeli Kadinlar Birligi (Turkse Vrouwenvereniging in Nederland) 1974-1995: Ruim dertig jaar strijd om mondigheid! Waar ging het mis?" (master's thesis, Leiden University, 2009); Ece Öztan, "Unutulan Bir Göç ve Yurttaşlık Deneyimi: İlk Kuşak Göçmen Kadınlar ve Hollanda Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği," *Fe Dergi* 2, no. 2 (2010): 31–49; Margaretha A. Van Es, *Stereotypes and Self-Representations of Women with a Muslim Background: The Stigma of Being Oppressed* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Andrew DJ Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution: Perceptions and Participation in Northwest Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[34] Jouwe, Botman, and Wekker, *Caleidoscopische visies*.

volume includes two chapters that directly address HTKB and offer preliminary investigations into its history. The first, by the influential feminist scholar and activist Troetje Loewenthal, analyzes Black, migrant, and refugee women's criticisms of the Dutch education system, exploring how these women as political actors framed their views on emancipation, integration, and the role of education.[35] The second chapter, co-authored by Amalia Deekman and Mariëtte Hermans, focuses on the organizational formation and landscape of Black, migrant, and refugee women's movements in the Netherlands.[36] Deekman and Hermans offered a preliminary investigation into HTKB and its organizational history and examine the dynamics of cooperation among women from diverse backgrounds—including Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean, and Moluccan communities—as well as the ways these organizations engaged with questions of gender and ethnicity.

Subsequently, studies by Onderwater, Robert, and Öztan have taken HTKB as the central subject of their research,[37] and come closest to presenting a full-fledged political history of HTKB. Each is based on extensive primary archival research, supplemented by oral history interviews, and has provided valuable insights for my own dissertation. However, due to their limited focus on the Dutch national context, they miss the role of formal or informal interorganizational relations between HTKB and other Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in the UK and West Germany. Although Andrew DJ Shield did not limit his research to the Dutch context, he did not consider HTKB as part of a broader movement and organizational network that extended into West Germany and the UK.[38] Thus, the political histories in the existing literature on HTKB have overlooked the dynamics of transnational cooperation among Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in western Europe.

Another overlooked dimension of the HTKB history is its position and involvement in global left feminism. In particular, the scholarship has largely neglected HTKB's collaboration with the left-feminist *Nederlandse Vrouwenbeweging* (Dutch Women's Movement, NVB), the Dutch national affiliate of the WIDF. Onderwater acknowledged the ties between HTKB and NVB, but her analysis is confined to the Dutch national context and does not sufficiently address the transnational links between HTKB, global left feminism, and

[35] Troetje Loewenthal, "Er Ontbreekt Altijd een Stuk van de Puzzel: Een Inclusief Curriculum Gewenst," in *Caleidoscopische Visies*, 115–66.
[36] Amalia Deekman and Mariëtte Hermans, "Heilig Vuur: Bezieling en Kracht in de Organisatievorming van zmv-vrouwenbeweging in Nederland," in *Caleidoscopische Visies*, 167–230.
[37] Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!"; Robert, "De opkomst en ondergang van Hollanda Türkiyeli Kadinlar Birligi"; Öztan, "Unutulan Bir Göç ve Yurttaşlık Deneyimi."
[38] Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution*, Chapter 6.

the WIDF.[39] Any analysis that fails to account for HTKB's politics of forming alliances with both migrant and Dutch women's organizations—particularly those based on ideological convergence and shared political worldviews—risks reducing HTKB to a primarily ethnically organized entity. A comprehensive understanding of HTKB's political agenda, as well as Turkish migrant women's activism more broadly, requires a transnational perspective that considers not only HTKB's interaction with the NVB in the Netherlands, but also the exchanges and collaborations between Turkish left-feminist organizations in West Germany and the UK and their respective national WIDF affiliates.

I conclude my historiographical survey of Turkish migrant left feminism by turning to the UK context. The British organization, *Ingiltere Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the UK, ITKB), is entirely absent from the literature on Turkish transnational migrant politics and Turkish migrant women's activism in the UK.[40] So far, the only publication that briefly addresses ITKB's history and includes short biographical profiles of some the founders is London-based Turkish journalist Faruk Eskioğlu's 2019 three-volume work, *The Community from Turkey and North Cyprus in the UK*, though in a very limited manner.[41] This lacuna in the existing academic literature regarding ITKB is especially striking since the UK—alongside the US—has been a major location for theorizing and applying intersectionality in gender studies, epitomized by the work of Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis.[42]

Building on the literature on Turkish migrant left feminism in Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK—and having identified its gaps, I aim to construct a transnational political history of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe. My goal is to connect the histories of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in the three national contexts, which so far been examined in isolation from one another (if at all), and from the wider international left-feminist movement, thus offering an integrated, transnational perspective.

[39] Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!," 42–45. One of the reasons for this oversight might be the lack of a broader left-feminist history of the Netherlands, and the acceptance of Jolande Withuis's perspective on the NVB as a communist front organization, and consequently less irrelevant for the history of feminisms and women's movements in the Netherlands. Jolande Withuis, *Opoffering En Heroïek: De mentale wereld van een Communistische Vrouwenorganisatie in Naoorlogs Nederland, 1946-1976* (Amsterdam: Boom, 1990).

[40] For example, Umut Erel, *Migrant Women Transforming Citizenship: Life Stories from Britain and Germany* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Eleni Hatzidimitriadou and Sakine Çakir, "Community Activism and Empowerment of Turkish-Speaking Migrant Women in London," *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 5, no. 1 (2009): 34–46.

[41] Faruk Eskioğlu, *Londra'da Bizim'kiler-The Community From Turkey and North Cyprus in the UK* (Istanbul: Faruk Eskioğlu, 2019).

[42] Prins, "Narrative Accounts of Origins," 278; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, eds., *Woman, Nation, State*; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, eds., *Racialized Boundaries*; Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics"; Yuval-Davis, *The Politics of Belonging*.

(2) Displaced in History: Reassessing the Place of Leftist Migrant Women in the Historiography of Socialist and Communist Women's Activism during the Cold War

The second body of scholarship in which I situate my research and hope to contribute to is the feminist historiography of socialist and communist women's activism during the Cold War. This expanding body of research intends to restore the largely neglected contributions of socialist and communist women in the global struggle for women's rights, and in doing so, challenges western historiography of women's movements and feminisms. In this section, I will reflect on the place of *leftist migrant women* in this scholarship.

In her 2010 study on Cold War legacies in western historiography of transnational women's organizations, Francisca de Haan argued that there is "a state of 'not knowing' about the WIDF" within the western historiography of transnational women's organizations, although the Federation was "the biggest post-1945 international women's organization."[43] She attributed this lack of knowledge to Cold War assumptions on communist women, who have been framed as a homogenous category located in the Second World, the Soviet bloc or an "oppressed Eastern Bloc," and were assumed to lack agency, thus, the possibility of becoming autonomous subjects according to the western liberal framework.[44] De Haan's critical challenge to the Cold War assumptions about communist women's activism, leading to their omission from the global history of women's movements and feminism, formed part of a broader scholarly endeavor. In 2007, *Aspasia*, a journal in the field of women's and gender history of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, started a debate on communism and feminism which has continued to date.[45] An increasing body of research uses a historical, de-centered and transnational perspective to challenge the conventional view that communism and feminism are inherently incompatible, and that socialist and communist women during the Cold War lacked meaningful political agency.

I refer to this expanding field as "feminist-revisionist" scholarship—a term originally used by US philosopher Nanette Funk in a critical sense to describe feminist historians whose work on state-socialist women's mass organizations, and also the WIDF, she considered "too

[43] Francisca de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: The Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 4 (2010): 547.
[44] de Haan, 556.
[45] "Forum: Is 'Communist Feminism' A Contradictio in Terminis," *Aspasia* 1 (2007): 197–246. For the most recent piece on the debate, "Ten Years After: Communism and Feminism Revisited," *Aspasia* 10 (2016).

positive," especially in their framing of these organizations as feminist.[46] I reappropriate this term to describe scholars—myself included—who challenge Cold War assumptions on communist women and reassess the ideological and political complexity of their organizations, proposing a more inclusive and integrated perspective on left-wing women's movements and seeing the relationship between communism and feminism as not necessarily a contradiction in terms.[47] This scholarship is foundational in exposing and critically engaging with the philosophical bias embedded in western hegemonic definitions of women's political agency, which have universalized a particular strand of women's activism as feminism—one that equates meaningful agency solely with the liberal political goal of individual emancipation.[48] By contrast, feminist-revisionist historians have demonstrated that self-identified communist women—who were "concerned more with improving the material conditions of women's lives than with a specifically liberal conception of political freedoms"—made fundamental contributions to advancing women's status, both within their own countries and on a global scale.[49]

Within this rich body of literature, feminist historians such as Kristen Ghodsee, Wang Zheng, Michelle Chase, Agnieszka Mrozik, and Alexandra Talaver—through their work on countries such as Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Poland, and the Soviet Union—have offered nuanced analyses of decision-making processes within communist parties and discussed the complexities communist women experienced when navigating internal party politics.[50] Their

[46] Nanette Funk, "A Very Tangled Knot: Official State Socialist Women's Organizations, Women's Agency and Feminism in Eastern European State Socialism," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21, no. 4 (2014): 345.
[47] Examples of feminist-revisionist work include Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Revolutionary Networks: Women's Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945–1957)" (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2012); Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Cold War Internationalisms, Nationalisms and the Yugoslav–Soviet Split: The Union of Italian Women and the Antifascist Women's Front of Yugoslavia," in de Haan et al., *Women's Activism*, 59–76; Alexandra Ghit, "Mobilizing Gender for Socialist Modernity: The Work of One Transylvanian Chapter of the Union of Antifascist Women in Romania and the Union of Democratic Women of Romania. 1945 to 1953" (master's thesis, Central European University, 2011); Kristen Ghodsee, "Revisiting the United Nations Decade for Women: Brief Reflections on Feminism, Capitalism and Cold War Politics in the Early Years of the International Women's Movement," *Women's Studies International Forum* 33, no. 1 (2010): 3–12; Kristen Ghodsee, "Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women's Organizations: The Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement and the United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985," *Journal of Women's History* 24, no. 4 (2012): 49–73; de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms"; Raluca Maria Popa, "Translating Equality Between Women and Men across Cold War Divides: Women Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of International Women's Year," in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Shana Penn and Jill Massino (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 59–74; Wang Zheng, "'State Feminism'? Gender and Socialist State Formation in Maoist China," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 3 (2005): 519–51.
[48] Kristen Ghodsee, "Untangling the Knot: A Response to Nanette Funk," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015): 249–251.
[49] Ghodsee, 252; Francisca de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s: From Copenhagen to Moscow and New York," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*, ed. Jian Chen et al. (New York: Routledge, 2018), 230–42.
[50] Kristen Ghodsee, "Pressuring the Politburo: The Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement and State Socialist Feminism," *Slavic Review* 73, no. 3 (2014): 538–62; Wang Zheng, *Finding Women in the State: A*

research demonstrates how these women exerted political agency by negotiating women's rights vis-à-vis party leadership and achieving significant progress in advancing what Krassimira Daskalova has termed "women-friendly" politics.[51] There is also a growing number of studies that examine communist women's activism across the Cold War divides of the First, Second, and Third Worlds.[52] These works have broadened the geographical scope of earlier research by exploring WIDF member organizations and their joint efforts—through the WIDF—to support women's struggles against colonialism and imperialism, as well as their fight for peace. Lastly, feminist-revisionist scholars have shown that the most fundamental and long-lasting changes for women across the globe were initiated by socialist or left-feminist women at the transnational level, particularly through the WIDF's efforts at the UN to advance women's rights.[53] These insights change our understanding of the histories of

Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1964 (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016); Michelle Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952–1962* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Agnieszka Mrozik, *Architektki PRL-u. Komunistki, Literatura i Emancypacja Kobiet w Powojennej Polsce* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2022); Alexandra Talaver, "'A Woman Should Be Given the Right to Decide Herself': The Role of the Soviet Women's Committee in Gender Policymaking in the Soviet Union (1945-1992)" (PhD diss., Central European University Private University, to be defended in 2025).

[51] Krassimira Daskalova, "How Should We Name the 'Women-Friendly' Actions of State Socialism?," *Aspasia* 1 (2007): 214–19.

[52] This scholarship includes, but is not limited to, Elisabeth Armstrong, "Before Bandung: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation," *Signs* 41, no. 2 (2016): 305–31; Michelle Chase, "'Hands Off Korea!': Women's Internationalist Solidarity and Peace Activism in Early Cold War Cuba," *Journal of Women's History* 32, no. 3 (2020): 64–88; Sercan Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey (1974-1979): Relations and Exchanges between the IKD and the WIDF," *Diyâr Journal for Ottoman, Turkish, and Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 1 (2023): 72–99; Francisca de Haan, "La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres (FDIM) y América Latina, de 1945 a Los Años 70," in *Queridas Camaradas: Historias Iberoamericanas de Mujeres Comunistas*, ed. Adriana Valobra and Mercedes Yusta (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2017), 17–44; Francisca de Haan, "The Vietnam Activities of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)," in *Protest in the Vietnam War Era*, ed. Alexander Sedlmaier (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 51–82"; Kristen Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity During the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019); Yulia Gradskova, "Women's International Democratic Federation, the 'Third World' and the Global Cold War from the Late-1950s to the Mid-1960s," *Women's History Review* 29, no. 2 (2020): 270–88; Yulia Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation, the Global South and the Cold War: Defending the Rights of Women of the 'Whole World'?* (London: Routledge, 2021); Suzy Kim, *Among Women Across Worlds: North Korea in the Global Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023); Katharine McGregor, "Opposing Colonialism: The Women's International Democratic Federation and Decolonisation Struggles in Vietnam and Algeria 1945–1965," *Women's History Review* 25, no. 6 (2016): 925–44; Lisa Milner, "'The Most Important Event in IWY': Freda Brown and the World Congress for International Women's Year," *History Australia* 17, no. 1 (2020): 172–89; Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, "Fighting Fascism and Forging New Political Activism: The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in the Cold War," in *De-Centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change*, ed. Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza (London: Routledge, 2013), 52–72; Mallarika Sinha Roy, "'The Call of the World': Women's Memories of Global Socialist Feminism in India," *International Review of Social History* 67, no. S30 (2022): 237–62; Rachel Sandwell, "The Travels of Florence Mophosho: The African National Congress and Left Internationalism, 1948–1985," *Journal of Women's History* 30, no. 4 (2018): 84–108.

[53] de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms"; de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s"; Ghodsee, "Revisiting the United Nations Decade for Women"; Ghodsee, "Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women's Organizations"; Popa, "Translating Equality Between Women and Men across Cold War Divides."

global feminism and of the Cold War, moving beyond earlier western accounts that approached the WIDF under the shadow of "the layered assumptions that the Cold War placed on such categories as 'communist,' 'feminist,' and 'anti-feminist.'"[54]

However, most of the studies mentioned above place nation-states and citizenship regimes at the center of their analytical frameworks, without critically engaging with the nation-state as the dominant-configuring form of the politics of belonging and exclusion. An example of such perspective can be seen in the centrality given to the UN and its bodies for enhancing women's rights on the global stage, in which nation-states are the primary actors. This tendency leads away from critical engagement with the nation-state as a historically contingent and exclusionary structure of political belonging. As a result, migrant women's left-feminist activism has remained largely invisible within this scholarship, which concentrates primarily on national WIDF affiliates and on women whose citizenship is assumed given as the pre-condition of their involvement in left feminist politics.

The points I raise here about the lingering presence of methodological nationalism in feminist-revisionist scholarship have been briefly addressed by Francisca de Haan, who observed that "the international careers of leading WIDF women or the transnational dimensions of national WIDF organizations often remained above scholars' national radars," as in the case of Swedish Dr. Andrea Andreen (1888–1972), long recognized as a leading feminist within Sweden but only recently acknowledged for her decades-long prominent role in the WIDF.[55] In her 2022 monograph and a 2023 review article, Polish feminist historian Agnieszka Mrozik made a similar point regarding the neglect of the inter/national work and networks of Polish communist women[56] There have also been studies—albeit still marginal—that address the role of migrant women in the WIDF, particularly those in exile. These studies demonstrated the WIDF's central role in organizing and participating in international campaigns against the Francoist dictatorship in Spain, established after the Republican defeat in the Spanish Civil War in 1939, and against Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile following the 1973 military coup, with a focus on supporting women political dissidents and exiles.[57]

[54] Pieper Mooney, "Fighting Fascism and Forging New Political Activism," 54; de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s."
[55] Francisca de Haan, "Left Feminism: Rediscovering the Women's International Democratic Federation," in *Living Concepts: Forty Years of Engaging Gender and History. Yearbook of Women's History/ Jaarboek Voor Vrouwengeschiedenis*, 40 (Hilversum: Verloren, 2021), 108.
[56] Mrozik, *Architektki PRL-u. Komunistki, Literatura i Emancypacja Kobiet w Powojennej Polsce*, 158–63; Agnieszka Mrozik, "'An Unexpectedly Transgressive Subject of Twentieth-Century History': How to Write (and Why to Read) about Communist Women Today," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 128 (2023): 298.
[57] Mercedes Yusta Rodrigo, *Madres Coraje Contra Franco: La Unión de Mujeres Españolas En Francia, Del Antifascismo a La Guerra Fría* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2009); Mercedes Yusta Rodrigo, "The Mobilization of Women in Exile: The Case of the Unión de Mujeres Antifascistas Españolas in France (1944–1950)," *Journal of*

Among the most notable migrant women who played significant roles in the WIDF were Dolores Ibárruri—one of the most prominent women in the history of communism—who participated in the founding of the WIDF in 1945 in Paris while in exile and became one of its four initial Vice Presidents.[58] Another key figure was Hortensia Bussi de Allende, the widow of Chilean socialist president Salvador Allende and an eminent campaigner for human rights, who served as a WIDF's Honorary President from early 1974 onward.[59]

One objective of this dissertation is to extend the decentering perspective that previous studies have adopted by examining the history of Turkish migrant left feminism. Exploring migrant women's involvement in and contributions to global left feminism and the WIDF—as well as the WIDF's impetus on the political organizing of migrant women—may deepen our understanding of the transnational dimensions of communist women's activism during the Cold War. In particular, it highlights the transnational politics of migrant women, which tends to remain invisible not only in nationally bounded frameworks but also in analyses that focus exclusively on national WIDF affiliates and their transnational connections. Looking at these women's dual engagement with political actors in both contexts, combined with their ongoing negotiation of positionality within international organizations such as the WIDF, may reveal a complex political landscape marked by resistance to territorially bounded and exclusionary citizenship regimes.

By displacing ethnicized and nationally confined narratives that have long framed communist women as a monolithic group of state or party agents within the confines of the Second World, this perspective may offer a critical intervention into Cold War historiography. Foregrounding the transnational and cross-border activism of migrant left-feminist actors, such as Turkish migrant women, may further destabilize Cold War-era epistemologies and their rigid division between the First, Second, or Third Worlds, since Turkish migrant women, in my opinion, do not fit neatly into any of these world categories, revealing the need for alternative approaches that recognize the shifting trans-localities, and cross-border activities

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Spanish Cultural Studies 6, no. 1 (2005): 43–58; Mercedes Yusta Rodrigo, "Dolores Ibárruri, Pasionaria (1895–1989): Communist Woman of Steel, Global Icon," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists*, 167–92; de Haan, "La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres"; María Fernanda Lanfranco González, "Between National and International: Women's Transnational Activism in Twentieth-Century Chile," *International Review of Social History* 67, no. S30 (2022): 49–74; María Fernanda Lanfranco González, "Women, Gender and Human Rights: Women's International Organisations and Solidarity with Chile," *Gender & History* 35, no. 3 (2023): 830–45; Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Exile, International Feminist Encounters, and Women's Empowerment under Military Rule in Chile, 1973–1990," in *Projections of Power in the Americas*, ed. Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, Helene Balslev Clausen, and Juan Gustafsson (New York: Routledge, 2012), 154–79.

[58] Yusta Rodrigo, "Dolores Ibárruri, Pasionaria (1895–1989)," 179.

[59] de Haan, "La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres," 17, 43.

of migrant left-feminist actors. Lastly, recovering the histories of migrant women's left-feminist activism can offer valuable insight into the broader history of global feminism and the Cold War. This recovery is particularly important in tracing how global left feminism and the WIDF contributed to the recognition of migrant and refugee women's rights as an integral part of women's rights in the international domain, especially during the UN Decade for Women.

(3) Feminist Historiography on Women's Movements in Turkey: Can Turkish Migrant Left Feminism Provide New Insights Beyond Dominant Narratives?

Feminist historiography on women's activism in Turkey has long been dominated by a "grand narrative of waves" that identifies two major 'waves' of women's movements (frequently used interchangeably with 'feminism').[60] Under this approach, a so-called "first wave" took root with Ottoman women's organizing in the late nineteenth century and ended in 1935, when the *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (Turkish Women's Union, TKB) was dissolved under the Republican single-party regime (founded in 1923), and a "second wave" emerged in the 1980s. The intervening decades have been labeled "barren years" for women's activism—effectively excluding Kemalist and socialist women's movements of the 1950s–1970s from the history of women's movements in Turkey on the grounds that they did not self-identify as 'feminist' and were not 'independent' from the state or parties, nor confined themselves to a gender-specific agenda.[61] In this part of the Historiography section, I especially discuss the literature that emerged in the past decade that has challenged and destabilized the waves-reading of the women's movement in Turkey, including the period of alleged silence/stagnation in between these waves.

In the last decade, a younger generation of feminist researchers (and I count myself among them) has produced a body of research that has complicated the waves-based reading of women's movements in Turkey. These studies have uncovered diverse forms of activism that were already taking shape between the 1950s and 1970s, at both local and transnational levels, with particular attention to Kemalist women, women in leftist and socialist politics, and women in labor activism.[62] This body of work was synthesized and expanded upon by

[60] Sevgi Adak and Selin Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography on Women's Activism in Turkey: Beyond the Grand Narrative of Waves," *Women's History Review* 32, no. 5 (2023): 724.
[61] Şirin Tekeli, "Birinci ve İkinci Dalga Kadın Hareketlerinin Karşılaştırmalı İncelemesi Üzerine Bir Deneme," in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. Ayşe Berktay (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 337.
[62]For example, Umut Azak and Henk de Smaele, "National and Transnational Dynamics of Women's Activism in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s: The Story of the ICW Branch in Ankara," *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (2016): 41–65; Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender"; Yelda Şahin and Ezgi Sarıtaş, "Altmışlı Yıllarda Kadın

Sevgi Adak and Selin Çağatay in their influential 2023 article, which offers a comprehensive theoretical and historiographical critique of the dominant waves-based narrative and may be considered the first to provide a foundational conceptual framework for a potential paradigm shift in feminist scholarship on the history of women's movements in Turkey.[63]

Adak and Çağatay identified the late 1990s as the period when feminist scholars began referring to the feminist movement of early-1980s Turkey as the "second wave," and pointed to two principal dynamics driving this adoption of a wave-based analysis: the influence of western feminist scholarship and the ideological debates of post-1980 Turkey.[64] Feminists in 1980s Turkey were in dialogue with—and influenced by—activists and scholars from Europe and North America concerning questions of women's political autonomy in the political conjuncture shaped by the 1980 military coup and the military regime (1980–1983) that suppressed left-wing activism.[65] Emergent feminist literature at the time stressed the need for women's independent organizing, an idea that resonated deeply with feminists in 1980s Turkey, many of whom with left-socialist backgrounds in the 1970s.[66]

As part of the broader ideological realignment and debates that emerged in Turkey's post-1980 political landscape—marked by a search for alternative ideological and political visions in the wake of the tragic defeat of the 1970s socialist left following the military coup—feminists in the 1980s and early 1990s began to critically reflect on their earlier political experiences.[67] Familiar with 'second wave' western feminist literature, many of these feminists used this new perspective to reinterpret their past involvement in the socialist movements; they argued, in a teleological way, that the male-dominated organizations of the

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Hareketi: Süreklilikler, Kopuşlar ve Çeşitlenme," in *Türkiye'nin 1960'lı Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2017), 727–58; Sevil Çakır-Kılınçoğlu, "The Radicalization of the Left in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s and a Comparative Analysis the Activist Women's Experiences" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2019); Yelda Şahin and Ezgi Sarıtaş, "Ellili Yıllarda Kadın Hareketi," in *Türkiye'nin 1950'li Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2019), 627–66; Sevgi Adak, "Yetmişli Yıllarda Kadın Hareketi: Yeni Bir Feminizmin Ayak Sesleri," in *Türkiye'nin 1970'li Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2020), 609–29; Büşra Satı, "Working-Class Women, Gender, and Union Politics in Turkey, 1965–1980," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 100 (2021): 87–108; Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography"; Elife Biçer-Deveci and Selin Çağatay, eds., "A Century of Gender Equality Struggles in Turkey: Feminist History Revisited," *Diyâr Journal for Ottoman, Turkish, and Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 1 (2023); Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey"; Selin Çağatay, "Women Workers' Education at the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions: Excavating Histories of Transnational Collaboration with the ICFTU," *Labor History* 65, no. 2 (2023): 273–87.

[63] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography."

[64] Ibid., 727.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Fatmagül Berktay, "Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?," in *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (London: Zed Books, 1995), 250–62; Şirin Tekeli, "Introduction: Women in Turkey in the 1980s," in Tekeli, *Women in Modern Turkish Society*, 13.

Turkish left, as well the dominance of socialist women's activism in women's activism in the 1970s, had delayed the development of a feminist movement in Turkey alongside those in the West. Therefore, it was only in the 1980s, following the military regime's suppression of all other oppositional movements, that feminist activism could fully emerge.[68] In this way, waves-based analyses reconstructed the socialist movements of the pre-1980 period, along with socialist women's activism, as the historical antithesis to the emergence of 'second wave' feminism in 1980s Turkey. The vacuum left by the forced disintegration of mass mobilization of women led by socialist women following the 1980 military coup further strengthened the narrative about a clear rupture and contrast between the pre- and post-1980s periods in women's activism.

Adak and Çağatay's point that the periodization imposed by dominant waves-based analyses has resulted in a history of women's movements in Turkey "characterized more by ruptures, discontinuities, and silences than by continuities, overlaps, and a 'wavy' yet ongoing resilience" is particularly relevant for my dissertation.[69] One of the most salient examples of this perception of discontinuity or rupture in feminist history can be found in a 2011 article co-authored by Saime Özçürümez and Feyda Sayan Cengiz, in which they analyzed the transformation of the women's movement in Turkey in the post-1980 period through the lens of New Social Movement theory.[70] They selected two organizations as case studies from a comparative perspective, representing what they viewed as emblematic forms of women's activism before and after 1980. The first is the left-feminist *Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği* (Progressive Women's Association, IKD), which became the largest women's organization in Turkey during its official existence from 1975 to 1979, and also the first and only WIDF member organization in Turkey (introduced in detail in Section 1.4). The second is the *Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfi* (Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation, *Mor Çatı*), founded in 1990, which they identified as "one of the first institutionalization attempts" of the 'second wave' feminism of the 1980s, rooted in the feminist consciousness-raising groups of the early 1980s and grassroots activism against domestic violence.[71] In their comparative analysis of these two organizations, Özçürümez and Sayan Cengiz argued that the resilience of the

[68] Nükhet Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A Short History," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 3 (1989): 1–34; Şirin Tekeli, "Europe, European Feminism, and Women in Turkey," *Women's Studies International Forum*, Special Issue A Continent in Transition: Issues for Women in Europe in the 1990s, 15, no. 1 (1992): 139–43.
[69] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 738.
[70] Saime Özçürümez and Feyda Sayan-Cengiz, "On Resilience and Response beyond Value Change: Transformation of Women's Movement in Post-1980 Turkey," *Women's Studies International Forum* 34, no. 1 (2011): 20–30.
[71] Özçürümez and Sayan-Cengiz, 21.

women's movement in Turkey was achieved through its complete transformation, thanks to its capacity for "new struggles, strategies of survival, and the adoption of new values."[72] They claimed that this transformation marked a departure from the pre-1980 forms of women's organizations, agendas, and activism—represented by IKD, which they described as "characterized by hierarchy" and a political agenda that was "class-based rather than feminist"—toward "a more feminist 'new social" movement' in the post-1980 period.[73] This shift, they argued, was embodied by *Mor Çatı*, seen as emblematic of the 'second wave': "a grassroots organization, distancing itself from political institutions, maintaining a decentralized style of organization, and perpetuating a rationale for action based on gender identity rather than class."[74]

However, this reading of resilience is fundamentally rooted in a waves-based analysis and a narrow and homogenized definition of 'feminism'—one that privileges gender-specific agendas and excludes activisms of women who politicized the intersections of gender with class, nation, ethnicity, and religion, as reflected in the rationale behind the selection of Özçürümez and Sayan Cengiz's case studies. In this framework, IKD—and socialist women's activism more broadly—is confined to the 1970s, based on the assumption that "one movement [IKD] disappeared entirely after the coup, whereas the seeds of the other movement [*Mor Çatı*] were sown in the immediate post-1980 era, as there existed consciousness-raising activities on women's issues among women in semi-organized informal groups."[75] Within this perception of a historical rupture between the pre- and post-1980 periods, socialist women's activism in Turkey is seen as confined strictly to the pre-1980 era and deemed absent in the political landscape of the 1980s. At best, socialist women have occasionally been acknowledged as "former leftist activists," primarily to highlight their contributions to the 'second-wave' feminism of the 1980s, serving as evidence of the transformation the women's movement in Turkey underwent during that period.[76]

However, the assumption that "IKD disappeared entirely after the coup" can be challenged from a transnational perspective, particularly through the case of the IKD's Office Abroad, established by IKD cadres who fled Turkey to escape persecution (to be discussed in detail in Chapter 5).[77] Elements that are overlooked are the activism of Turkish migrant left-

[72] Ibid., 28.
[73] Ibid., 21.
[74] Ibid., 28.
[75] Ibid., 21.
[76] Ibid., 28.
[77] Ibid., 21.

feminist women in western Europe; the possibility that some women sustained their political work in different contexts to avoid persecution; and the possibility that the struggle for gender equality may have been carried on by their counterparts abroad, who engaged in transnational initiatives aimed at the homeland. By revisiting the problematic and incomplete account of the fate of socialist women's activism in the post-1980 period, my dissertation sheds light on Turkish migrant left feminism as a case of organizational continuity and the agenda building and resilience of socialist women's activism beyond Turkey within transnational spaces, both those of Turkish migrant left feminism and global left feminism. Therefore, I hope that my findings will contribute to the contemporary direction in feminist history writing that moves beyond the grand narrative of two main waves in Ottoman/Turkish history and toward a more politically and geographically inclusive history of Turkish women's activism.

Research Questions

In light of the above, my dissertation is guided by the following overarching research questions:

How, when, and why did Turkish leftist migrant women in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands create their organizations? How did local and national conditions and international contexts, such as the IWY, the UN Decade for Women and the Cold War influence their political organizing? *In what ways did Turkish migrant women's organizations attempt to contribute to women's activism in their host countries, Turkey, and the international domain of women's rights? Lastly, how do my findings contribute to the history of Turkish migrant women's activism in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands, the history of communist women's activism in Turkey and transnationally, and the history of the women's movement in Turkey?*

Theoretical-Conceptual Framework and Working Definitions

Since this is a dissertation on the history of Turkish migrant women's activism from a transnational perspective, I will start with what I mean by Turkish migrants. With that term, I refer to communities in western European countries broadly composed of three main groups:

(1) Turkish-speaking Turkish nationals and Turkish passport-holders (often referred to as "Turks");

(2) Kurds from Turkey—individuals who hold Turkish passports but are ethnically Kurdish and speak Kurdish and/or Turkish;

(3) other Turkish passport-holders belonging to ethnic minority groups from Turkey, including Armenians, Arabs, Assyrians, Albanians, Bosniaks, Circassians, Chechens, Georgians, Pomaks, Romani, and Laz. I use the term Turkish migrant specifically for Turkish-speaking migrants who were Turkish nationals or Turkish passport-holders. Regarding the indeterminacy in terms of ethnical boundaries between Turkish passport-holders and Turkish speaking migrants, I am aware of the complexities of the usage of the term due to the fact that 'Turkishness' has been a loaded term, both historically and politically.

The key conceptualization in my work is that of transnational migrant left feminism. I start with Ellen DuBois's definition of **left feminism**, which I will subsequently expand on. According to her, left feminism is

> a perspective which fuses a recognition of the systematic oppression of women with an appreciation of other structures of power underlying [...] society (what we now most often call 'the intersections of race, class, and gender'). Therefore [...], by left feminism, I also mean an understanding that the attainment of genuine equality for women – all women – requires a radical challenge to […] society, the mobilization of masses of people, and fundamental social change.[78]

This analytical intervention broadens the frame of the concept of feminism by allowing the inclusion of migrant, socialist and working-class women into it, allowing me to speak of "migrant left feminism."

Specifically with regard to the concept of **feminism**, I further draw on the framework proposed by Valerie Sterling et al., who define feminist action as "as that in which the participants explicitly place value on challenging gender hierarchy and changing women's social status, whether they adopt or reject the feminist label."[79] This also applies to the Turkish leftist migrant women activists and organizations I study, as they did not self-identify

[78] Ellen C. DuBois, "Eleanor Flexner and the History of American Feminism," *Gender & History* 3, no. 1 (1991): 84. Francisca de Haan first applied this concept to the WIDF in a 2009 article. See, Francisca de Haan, "Hoffnungen Auf Eine Bessere Welt: Die Frühen Jahre Der Internationalen Demokratischen Frauenföderation (IDFF/WIDF) (1945-1950)," *Feministische Studien* 27, no. 2 (2009): 241–57. I want to highlight that I do not use the term left feminism as a synonym of socialist feminism. Socialist feminist is a theoretical-political position within the feminist critical theory which critically engages with the Marxist framework in terms of shifting its focus to women's unpaid domestic labor as the material basis for women's subordination. While reassessing the political economy of women's oppression, socialist feminism proposes a materialist-feminist framework in order to go beyond the limitations of both classical Marxist theory and radical feminism. See Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women toward a Unitary Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Heidi I. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," *Capital & Class* 3, no. 2 (1979): 1–33.

[79] Valerie Sperling, Myra Marx Ferree, and Barbara Risman, "Constructing Global Feminism: Transnational Advocacy Networks and Russian Women's Activism," *Signs* 26, no. 4 (2001): 1158. See also Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 50.

as feminist. Across various contexts, women engaged in political struggles have often refrained from using the feminist label for a range of reasons.[80] In non-western contexts, feminism's perceived imperialist connotations and its association with the West have acted as significant deterrents.[81] For communist women also, the emphasis has historically been placed on women's political, social, and economic rights instead of focusing on "gender equality" in the narrower, liberal feminist sense commonly associated with mainstream western women's organizations.[82] I uphold a broad and inclusive definition of feminist action in order to better understand Turkish migrant women's leftist activism, as it allows us not only to question the western-centric criteria through which scholars have historically recognized and categorized women's movements, but also to contribute to a more inclusive history of women's activism.

Next, I add two theoretical positions that have informed my definition of migrant left feminism. The first is **post-colonial feminist theory**; the second is **feminist revisionist scholarship** about communist women's political agency, as introduced above in the Historiography section.

Post-colonial feminist theory occupies a central place in my working definition of migrant left feminism in terms of defining "the complex ground for the emergence and consolidation of Third World women's politics" and locating "this particular cartography of Third World feminisms," as propounded by Chandra Mohanty.[83] Post-colonial feminist theory primarily problematizes generalizations that western feminist theory often has made about "'third-world' women, in particular by assuming a homogeneity amongst very diverse groups of women."[84] Such generalizations are laying the analytical and ideological basis for a "one-sided emphasis on the difference" that entails the construction of Third World women as essentially different from western subjects.[85]

In her definition of Third World women, Mohanty uses the term Third World "to designate geographical location and sociohistorical conjunctures," including "minority populations in Europe," such as Turkish migrants.[86] I take **Turkish migrant women** as

[80] Sperling, Marx Ferree, and Risman, "Constructing Global Feminism," 1158; Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp, eds., *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights* (New York: NYU Press, 2006).
[81] Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism*; Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 726.
[82] de Haan, "Introduction: Toward a Global History of Communist Women," 2.
[83] Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders*, 44.
[84] Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, eds., "Introduction," in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 9.
[85] Amalia Sa'ar, "Postcolonial Feminism, the Politics of Identification, and the Liberal Bargain," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 5 (2005): 686.
[86] Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders*, 44.

complex and historically situated agents whose subjectivities cannot be merely understood through the separate categories of ethnicity, race, or religion. My work engages with these categories from an intersectional perspective and offers a complex view into the lives of Turkish migrant activist women who 'belong' somewhere between the uneven categories of First and Third world/global North and South.[87]

Sharing common ground with postcolonial feminist critiques of western feminist scholarship on Third World women—i.e., the reductive analysis of agency based on the liberal conception of individual emancipation—feminist-revisionist scholarship, as introduced above, focuses on rethinking the political organizing and agency of socialist women, arguing that our knowledge of these women and their organizations has been negatively influenced by Cold War paradigms. It challenges one of the major assumptions of western feminist scholarship, according to which members of left-wing women's organizations were "gullible, manipulated women" who were tools or dupes of states or communist parties, without political agency.[88]

According to Francisca de Haan in her 2010 article, feminist historians' lack of knowledge about the WIDF was based on Cold War assumptions on communist women who have been framed as a homogenous category located in the Second World, "the Soviet bloc" or an "oppressed Eastern Bloc," and assumed to be characterized by a lack of agency, thus, lacking the possibility to become autonomous subjects according to the western liberal framework.[89] Such Cold War assumptions tend to converge in the case of leftist and communist women in non-western contexts, as well as those from non-dominant groups in western contexts—such as leftist migrant women activists—where entangled dynamics of class, race, and ethnicity intersect with dominant understandings of feminism shaped by western notions of superiority and victimization discourses that often strip leftist migrant women of political agency.

In order to go beyond such east/west geographical binarism and the homogenization of women who took part in left-wing women's movements, I apply the perspective offered by feminist-revisionist scholarship, which incorporates a different approach on left-wing women's movements and reconsiders the relationship between communism and feminism by taking account of

[87] Anthias and Yuval-Davis, *Woman, Nation, State*; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, *Racialized Boundaries*; Prins, "Narrative Accounts of Origins"; Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics"; Weber, *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality*; Yuval-Davis, *The Politics of Belonging*; Cooper, "Intersectionality."
[88] Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Women's Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era: The Case of Yugoslavia," *Aspasia* 8 (2014): 1; Ghodsee, "Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women's Organizations," 49.
[89] de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 556.

> the existence of communist women, Party members or not, who dedicated themselves (in some cases their whole lives) to the fight for social justice, including women's liberation or emancipation (both terms were used) for which they believed communism was the best route (even when they also knew of, or had gained ample experience with, male communists' resistance to women's liberation […].[90]

In this vein, feminist-revisionist scholarship's efforts to expand the definition of 'feminism' by going beyond the liberal political goal of individual emancipation contributes a great deal to my definition of migrant left feminism that articulates an agency, or acting, to promote a specific vision of equality based on communist ideals.

In my view, Turkish migrant left feminism further encompassed two key components: it was **transnational**—bridging three forms of transnational political activity, namely homeland-directed politics, country-of-residence-directed politics and involvement with global left feminism and its organizations at the transnational level—and it maintained a strong **community focus** within the context of its engagement in country-of-residence politics. Regarding the first, I understand transnationalism as "a process by which migrants, through their daily activities and social, economic, and political relations, create social fields that cross national boundaries."[91] My inquiry into Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizations starts from the premise that this mobilization embodied migrant transnationalism—encompassing both homeland- and host country-directed activities. This aligns with Eva Østergaard-Nielsen's definition of transnational political activity as "direct cross-border participation in the politics of their country of origin by both migrants and refugees […] as well as their indirect participation via the political institutions of the host country."[92] However, an analysis of Turkish migrant left-feminism's transnational dimension should also consider their—still underexplored—involvement with global left-feminist movement and transnational women's organizations, which may have served, first as source of political inspiration for Turkish migrant women in initiating and grounding their political organizing, then as sister organizations in their endeavors to stimulate the emancipation of migrant women.

Referring back to Mohanty's work, transnational migrant politics also raises fundamental questions about the prevailing notions of oppression and agency that are

[90] de Haan et al., "Ten Years After," 104.
[91] Basch, Glick Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound*, 22; Martin Sökefeld, "Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora," *Global Networks* 6, no. 3 (2006): 265-284, 270.
[92] Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, "The Politics of Migrants' Transnational Political Practices," *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 762.

hegemonic within the western imaginaries of migrant women. In that regard, migrant women and their assumed victim-position come to operate as an over-determined signifier of patriarchal relations within the migrant community. However, considering the "diverse modes of thinking, knowing, and behaving" among the members of the migrant community, especially among migrant women, multiple categories and cartographies have to be addressed to allow us to capture the ways in which migrant women struggled inside a matrix of domination.[93] Through acknowledging different cartographies and locations of the formation of migrant feminisms, I adopt a more nuanced analysis of transnational migrant politics and reconsider the relationship between homeland-directed practices and migrant women's political participation within the host state, and intra-community dynamics.

To better understand the transnational dimensions of Turkish migrant left feminism—particularly its homeland-directed initiatives to advance women's rights—I introduce the concept of "**long-distance feminism**." In formulating this concept, I draw inspiration from Benedict Anderson's 1992 "long-distance nationalism," a term he coined to describe the crucial role that migrants and exiles play in shaping nationalist movements.[94] Long-distance nationalism diverges from conventional nationalism in that it is "a product of transnationalism, that is, of the keeping of a transnational field of social relations between those who migrated and those who stayed."[95] In much of the literature on long-distance nationalism, scholars point out that "while the population of a nation is understood to extend beyond the territorial boundaries of an ancestral land, the political focus and center of identity of this dispersed population continue to be the territory of the homeland."[96]

I set aside the ideological content associated with long-distance nationalism and instead embrace the transnational perspective it fosters. Thus, my concept of long-distance feminism highlights the cross-border ties that migrant women, as political agents, formed to sustain a certain loyalty to their homeland—and on that basis, undertook a variety of political actions their "sisters" in the homeland called for. Actions undertaken by migrant left-feminist

[93] Amalia Sa'ar, "Postcolonial Feminism, the Politics of Identification, and the Liberal Bargain," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 5 (2005): 682.
[94] Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London: Verso, 1998), 58–74.
[95] José Manuel Sobral, "Long-Distance Nationalism, Boundaries and the Experience of Racism among Santomean Migrants in Portugal," in *Changing Societies: Legacies and Challenges. Vol. I. Ambiguous Inclusions: Inside Out, Inside In*, ed. Sofia Aboim, Paulo Granjo, and Alice Ramos (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2018), 50.
[96] Nina Glick Schiller, "Long-Distance Nationalism," in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, ed. Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember, and Ian Skoggard (Boston: Springer, 2005), 571.

activists on behalf of their counterparts in the homeland could include voting, protesting, lobbying, and financial contributions—all driven by a genuine commitment to advancing women's rights in the homeland. These initiatives were closely tied to their ongoing negotiations around the possibility of return versus remaining abroad—negotiations that were not merely personal, but deeply political, shaped their evolving political imaginaries of the homeland in the course of their activism.

When analyzing the host-country dimensions of Turkish migrant left-feminism, I identify community activism as its formative component. In doing so, I engage with Ula Taylor's notion of **community feminism** to illuminate the grassroots, locally embedded practices of Turkish migrant left-feminist activists. In Taylor's definition, community feminists are

> women who focus their activism on assisting both the men and women in their lives- whether sisters or husbands, mothers or fathers, sons or daughters- along with initiating and participating in activities to uplift communities. Despite this 'helpmate' focus, community feminists are undeniably feminist, in that their activism reveals an acknowledgement of oppressive power relations, shatters masculinist claims of women as intellectually inferior, and seeks to empower women by expanding their roles and options.[97]

This concept helps me to explore how Turkish women's experiences of migration and activism influenced their understandings of themselves in terms of gender and feminist politics in relation to the formation of Turkish migrant communities. Specifically, it allows me to overcome the liberal individualist approach and to bring in the community focus of Turkish migrant left feminism.

Another concept relevant for my analysis of Turkish migrant left-feminist activism is that of **politicized motherhood**, which I borrow from Tuba Demirci-Yılmaz's 2017 study on mothers' human rights activism in Turkey from the 1970s to the 1990s.[98] Historically, motherhood has served as a powerful rhetorical tool for female activists and women's organizations to demand political rights for women, as evidenced for example in the writings of suffragists from the first half of the twentieth century.[99] The notion of motherhood was adopted by peace movements and by Catholic and other religiously affiliated women's

[97] Ula Y. Taylor, "Archival Thinking and the Wives of Marcus Garvey," in *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, and Mary Elizabeth Perry (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2010), 128.
[98] Tuba Demirci-Yılmaz, "On the Margins of Politicized Motherhood: Mothers' Human Rights Activism in Turkey from the 1970s to the 1990s," in *Mothers in Public and Political Life*, ed. Simone Bohn and Pınar Melis Yelsalı Parmaksız (Bradford: Demeter Press, 2017), 215–50.
[99] Marian van der Klein et al., eds., *Maternalism Reconsidered: Motherhood, Welfare and Social Policy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

organizations, particularly in the Americas.[100] According to Maxine Molyneux, motherhood was politicized in early twentieth-century Latin America, with women increasingly invoking their roles as mothers to demand civil rights.[101] The strategic use of motherhood by women activists was also evident in the early twentieth-century anarchist and socialist women's movements, as well as in the maternal politics of Black women in the US, who challenged the racist violence and injustice they and their children faced.[102]

Another major historical example of the use of motherhood by women's rights activists—one directly relevant to the subject of this dissertation—can be found in the international left-feminist agenda of the WIDF. The Federation mobilized motherhood as an experience that unified women globally, centering women's roles as peacemakers as one of the core elements of its foundational political activities—including anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, and anti-colonialism.[103] These efforts expanded into broader political goals such ending wars, controlling the arms race, and banning nuclear weapons.[104] According to Francisca de Haan, "although WIDF women sometimes spoke of mothers or motherhood in an essentializing manner—suggesting women's natural capacity for motherhood and related innate interest in peace—they also invoked an experiential rather than an inborn difference between women and men (and) fundamentally argued for mothers' social, economic and political rights."[105] As well, de Haan highlighted that the WIDF primarily constructed "mothers" as a political category, a key analytical point that informs my understanding of politicized motherhood.[106] I also find that characterizing the WIDF's discourse as uniformly essentialist[107] oversimplifies the diverse perspectives of communist and left-feminist women activists worldwide; the WIDF and its member organizations had varying positions on, and

[100] Maxine Molyneux, *Women's Movements in International Perspective: Latin America and Beyond* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).
[101] Ibid., 168–69.
[102] Alexis Jetter, Annelise Orleck, and Diana Taylor, eds., *The Politics of Motherhood : Activist Voices From Left to Right* (London: University Press of New England, 1997); Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989); Waldron Merithew, "Anarchist Motherhood"; Erica S. Lawson, "Bereaved Black Mothers and Maternal Activism in the Racial State," *Feminist Studies* 44, no. 3 (2018): 713–35.
[103] McGregor, "Opposing Colonialism," 932; Pieper Mooney, "Fighting Fascism and Forging New Political Activism," 63.
[104] Lisa Milner, "'The Unbreakable Solidarity of Women throughout the World with Heroic Vietnam': Freda Brown, Women's Organisations and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement," *History Australia* 15, no. 2 (2018): 263.
[105] de Haan, "La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres," 25.
[106] Ibid.
[107] See e.g., Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation*, 70.

used the discourse of maternalism differently, across time and place.[108] Therefore, my working definition of politicized motherhood is informed by the WIDF's historical use of motherhood within global left feminist politics—an especially relevant framework given that the Turkish migrant women and organizations I study aligned themselves with global left feminism and were involved in the WIDF's transnational networks.

Alongside the historical context of the use of motherhood in global left feminism and its historiographical assessment in studies on the WIDF, the analytical component of my working definition of politicized motherhood is largely informed by Demirci-Yılmaz's 2017 study on the use of motherhood in women's activism in Turkey.[109] In her formulation of politicized motherhood with reference to women's human rights activism, Demirci-Yılmaz argued that politicized motherhood "surpasses the ideal of 'absorbed and apolitical' motherhood because, first, it is an activism that transcends child-centered motherhood perfection by reversing its long acclaimed 'calming impact' over women's political potentials."[110] Secondly, Demirci-Yılmaz argued that politicized motherhood in the context of women's human rights activism in Turkey shows that "defending human rights does not have to be an extension of maternal duties."[111] Rather, as she argued, this activism "has been contributed by women who were politicized prior to becoming mothers," showing that motherhood does not necessarily lead women to adopt the role of suffering maternal icons or rely on traditional discourses of motherhood in their political engagement.[112]

Demirci-Yılmaz's formulation of politicized motherhood as a distinct form of activism enacted by women "who were politicized prior to becoming mothers"—is central to my understanding of this concept. For the Turkish migrant left-feminist women, politicized motherhood emerged as a strategic notion within the specific context of anti-fascist mobilization in response to the rise of far-right violence, both in Turkey and abroad, and as a continuation of their engagement in left-feminist activism. I conceptualize politicized motherhood as embedded in a broader continuum of left-feminist activism encompassing migrant women's rights, community uplift, the defense of peace, and children's well-being—all within an integrated left-feminist agenda. Politicized motherhood helps illuminate the

[108] For a study showcasing such diversity, see Vera Mackie, "From Hiroshima to Lausanne: The World Congress of Mothers and the Hahaoya Taikai in the 1950s," *Women's History Review* 23, no. 4 (2016): 1–25, particularly pages 3, 8, and 15.
[109] Demirci-Yılmaz, "On the Margins of Politicized Motherhood," 215–50.
[110] Ibid., 216.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 216-217.

strategic frameworks through which left-feminist women publicly supported their assaulted children, husbands, and brothers—they articulated maternal suffering in women's anti-fascist mobilization through non-essentializing forms of maternal activism in a continuum of political identities they articulated not only as mothers, but also as workers, women's rights activists and anti-fascists, as well as nonconventional ways of reclaiming motherhood through activism.

In building my theoretical framework, the last analytical term is that of **political generation**.[113] I find this concept especially fitting for interpreting changes and convergences in the organizational strategies and actions of Turkish migrant left-feminist women in western Europe after 1980—particularly in the face of the surge of political refugees from Turkey following the 1980 coup, including many left-feminist women. In my analysis, I draw on Karl Mannheim's formulation of generations, which contributes to our historical understanding by offering a categorical distinction between "generation as actuality" and "generation unit."[114] According to Mannheim, "we shall therefore speak of a generation of actuality only where a concrete bond is created between members of generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of de-stabilization."[115] In this formulation, "generation units" are understood as horizontal differentials that reflect the multiplicity of historical experiences among members of the same generation. I propose the concept of political generations to account for such horizontal variation—recognizing how different generation units within migrant politics mobilized diverse trajectories and political imaginaries across local, national, and transnational levels.[116]

The concept of political generations proves particularly useful in analyzing Turkish migrant left-feminist activism in western Europe, as it captures the political implications of women's differentiated migration experiences on their strategies and practices of political organizing. The literature on Turkish migrant women lacks a discussion of how varying chronologies of migration influenced the divergent or overlapping agendas and forms of organizations among them in the post-1980 period. Some may argue that this distinction can

[113] I first used this in Çınar, "The Making of Turkish Migrant Left Feminism." See also Nancy Whittier, *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women's Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Artwińska and Mrozik, *Gender, Generations, and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond*; Isidora Grubački, "Political Transformations of Interwar Feminisms: The Case of Yugoslavia" (PhD diss., Central European University, defended in 2024).
[114] Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (New York: Routledge, 1952), 303.
[115] Mannheim, 303.
[116] In Çınar, "The Making of Turkish Migrant Left Feminism," I discuss further theoretical issues around this concept.

be reduced to a simple differentiation between migrant and refugee women. However, I find this reductive, as it risks collapsing political agency into narrowly defined migration experiences. It also reinforces the exclusionary logic of state-centered migration regimes by privileging legal categories over the lived political subjectivities of migrants. My aim is to move beyond such categorizations and foreground how political agency emerges not only from legal status or migratory phase, but also through broader ideological, organizational, and historical contexts.

Sources and Methodology

This thesis is based on a wide range of primary sources, including periodicals, archival materials, and other published documents, as well as eight oral history interviews.

Among the organizations I studied, HTKB in the Netherlands is the only one whose organizational archive has been fully preserved and is held in a single location. This archive, housed at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam, is organized into 448 folders and includes approximately 200 photographs, with a total shelf length of 10.5 meters, containing materials for 1975 to 1995.[117] The documents I found and used from the HTKB Archive are mainly in Dutch and Turkish. The IISH also holds issues of HTKB's magazines, *Kadınların Birliği* (Unity of Women) in Turkish and *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* (Turkish Women's Newspaper) in Dutch, published between 1979 and 1987, with only a few issues missing from the collection. Throughout my dissertation, all translations from Dutch, German, and Turkish are mine, unless stated otherwise.

I was able to locate and utilize valuable sources on the West-Berlin BTKB within the holdings of the *Frauenforschungs-, -bildungs- und -informationszentrum* (Women's Research, Education, and Information Center, the Feminist Archive FFBIZ), one of the oldest and most significant archives of women's movements in Germany. They include brochures, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and correspondence between BTKB and other women's organizations in West Berlin, most notably the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Berlin* (Democratic Women's League Berlin, DFB), which was the WIDF affiliate in West Berlin, as well as documents related to the *Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau* (West Berlin Committee for Women's Rights, WKRF), of which BTKB was a member. The archival materials on BTKB at FFBIZ are in German and Turkish.

[117] https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH02025

For the GKB in the Ruhr region, Fatma Çelik, a prominent member of GKB, has preserved materials, which were subsequently compiled into an GKB archival fond at the *Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı* (Social History Research Foundation of Turkey, TUSTAV) in Istanbul.[118] The GKB archival fond at TUSTAV includes meeting minutes, administrative records, and various printed materials produced by the organization, in both Turkish and German. It also contains some documents related to the *Avrupa Türkiye Kadınlar Federasyonu* (European Federation of Turkish Women, ATKF), the umbrella organization of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations, which was headquartered in West Berlin. Documents produced by or related to ATKF appear to be the least preserved compared to those on HTKB, BTKB, and GKB, and are scattered across multiple archival collections. Among the few sources I was able to locate are some issues of ATKF's magazine *Emekçi Kadın* (Working Women), at the IISH and some at *Atria, kennisinstituut voor emancipatie en vrouwengeschiedenis* (Atria. Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History) in Amsterdam.

For the activities of Turkish migrant left-feminists in the post-1980 period, I studied the documents of two organizations—the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau—housed in the archival fond of Zülal Kılıç at TUSTAV. Zülal Kılıç was the IKD's general-secretary and served as the secretary of IKD's Office Abroad in exile during the post-1980 period. These materials, published in 2016 as a printed collection under the editorship of Erden Akbulut, constitute my core sources for my analysis of transnational political activities of Turkish left-feminist refugee women in the 1980s.[119]

To reveal and analyze Turkish migrant left-feminist women's engagement with global left feminism and the WIDF, I consulted a range of surviving WIDF archival materials and printed sources.[120] Among these are issues of *Women of the Whole World*, the WIDF's main journal, available at the IISH, and the official reports of WIDF-convened World Congresses of Women, accessed through the *Women and Social Movements International—1840 to Present* (WASI) online archive. The WASI online archive also includes valuable documents on Turkish migrant left-feminist women's participation in the NGO Forum at the Third UN World Conference on Women, held in July 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya.

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[118] https://www.tustav.org/e-arsiv/tkp-arsiv-fonu/gelsenkirschen-kadinlar-birligi-gkb-arsiv-fonu/

[119] Erden Akbulut, ed., *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan: TKP Kadın Bürosu 1984-1986* [From the Archival Fond of Zülal Kılıç: TKP's Women's Bureau 1984-1986] (Istanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, 2016).

[120] For the WIDF main archive, see Francisca de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF): History, Main Agenda and Contributions, 1945–1991," in *Women and Social Movements International—1840 to Present* (WASI) online archive, eds. T. Dublin and K. Kish Sklar, accessed through https://library.ceu.edu.

The most challenging task was locating primary sources by and about ITKB in the UK. The whereabouts of ITKB's organizational archive remain virtually unknown, and no archival materials or printed sources are currently available in any accessible archival collection. According to Merih Kudsal, a leading ITKB member, a significant portion of the ITKB's records was either taken to unknown locations or possibly destroyed.[121] According to Kudsal, this loss resulted from internal factional rivalries among Turkish socialist groups in the UK, with one faction reportedly seizing the ITKB's archive and library—after which the materials disappeared.[122] The only primary sources by ITKB members that I used in my dissertation are drawn from Merih Kudsal's personal collection of letters at TUSTAV. This includes her correspondence with fellow ITKB members between 1974 and 1976, which TUSTAV compiled and published in 2003.[123]

In cases where comprehensive organizational archives are lacking, I have supplemented my analysis with a second layer of sources: records and periodicals from Turkish left-wing migrant organizations in western Europe. While these organizations were mixed-gender and often deprioritized the "woman question," they formed part of the broader political context in which these women worked. In employing feminist historical methods to uncover the personal and organizational papers of the women I study, I also draw on the approach of "researching around"—a strategy developed by US feminist historian Sherry Katz in her work on early-twentieth-century women's left-wing activism in California.[124] According to Katz, "researching around" utilizes different kinds of materials and involves mining the collections the women in question, oral histories of those women, and "then working outward in concentric circles of related sources" which, in my case, are the varied materials of the Turkish migrant organizations; to the collections of the local left-feminist movement; to the reports in the local, national, and international press.[125]

In addition, my analysis is informed by a major trend in women's history "that reconceptualizes both the document and the archive (…) for finding new meanings by reading documents 'against the grain,'" by which I mean working with the limited number of documents left by the women I study and looking beneath surface meanings for subtexts and

[121] Faruk Eskioğlu, "İşçinin Sesi'nin Kurucusu ve 70/80'lerin Tanığı: Merih Kudsal," in *Londra'da Bizim'kiler*, 227.
[122] Eskioğlu, 227.
[123] *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar 1974-1976* (Istanbul: TUSTAV, 2003).
[124] Sherry J. Katz, "Excavating Radical Women in Progressive-Era California," in Chaudhuri, Katz, and Perry, *Contesting Archives*, 89–106.
[125] Katz, 90.

silences that may reveal more than what is explicitly recorded.[126] This approach involves contextualizing the documents and recovering some of the missing evidence by drawing on insights from scholars in migration studies and the history of communist women's activism. To identify particular moments and stages of the development of Turkish migrant women's activisms vis-à-vis global Cold War politics and its influences on international women's movements, and to scrutinize discursive formations of the left-feminist agenda of migrant women's organizations in western Europe in the Cold War context, I employ a 'discourse-historical method' as developed by Ruth Wodak and her colleagues.[127] As Fairclough and Wodak have argued, the distinctive feature of a discourse-historical approach is the emphasis on "all available background information in the analysis" along with acknowledgment and "interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text."[128]

Lastly, I conducted oral history interviews with six women from the organizations I focus on and also made use of two existing interviews—one publicly available online, and the other a group interview with three women from the Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr region (GKB), recorded by Mehmet Ayas for his research and shared with me. I obtained consent from all three women to use their accounts from this interview; one of them requested anonymity, and I have used a pseudonym for her in this dissertation. Two of my interviewees are from the Netherlands (HTKB), one is from West Berlin (BTKB), one from Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr region (GKB), one from the UK (ITKB), and one woman was a political refugee in the 1980s and now lives in Turkey (a list of names and details about the interviews are provided at in the Bibliography). To find my interviewees, I used the snowball sampling technique in each country, trying to locate as many women as possible. I managed to contact approximately twenty women. Some explained that they were not directly involved in the Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations I study, but rather in mixed-gender Turkish leftist migrant organizations. They declined my interview request but were nonetheless helpful by suggesting other contacts.

My oral history interviews took the form of semi-structured, open-ended and topical/auto-biographical interviews. My main purpose in conducting oral history interviews was to recover the histories of Turkish migrant women's organizations through narratives about the experiences of migrant left-feminist activism as told by the former members of the

[126] Chaudhuri, Katz, and Perry, "Introduction," in *Contesting Archives*, xiii.
[127] Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis," in *Discourse as Social Interaction*, ed. Teun A. van Dijk (London: Sage, 1997), 266.
[128] Fairclough and Wodak, 266.

organizations that I study. Keeping in mind that experience "is always contested, always therefore political," as Joan Scott has argued, I did not take oral history as a method to "essentialize identity and reify" my subjects "by giving experience an originary status."[129] I designed the interviews and examined the stories that I hear in the oral history interviews to look for narratives of migrant activism and for their constructions and reconstructions of 'experience' and memory. In that regard, my research is informed by a post-positivist approach to memory and subjectivity that situates historical practices "within […] 'the social production of memory'" and argues that "public struggles over the construction of the past are profoundly significant both in contemporary politics and for individual remembering."[130]

Going back to my snowball method, other women I contacted did not respond to my repeated messages or emails. A few who initially agreed to be interviewed eventually 'ghosted' me, even cancelling on the day we had arranged to meet. My overall experience in organizing and conducting these oral history interviews proved to be highly informative. As a researcher of the history of communist women's activism, I began to understand just how deeply the end of the Cold War continues to shape the ways these women remember—or choose not to remember—their pasts. This hesitation may be shaped by the post-Cold War political climate, in which communism is often framed as a 'defeated evil.' As Francisca de Haan has noted, "the current climate is so negative that such nuances get lost and that many people are reticent to remember and talk about their former engagement or beliefs"—a phenomenon she aptly described as "the silence of communists," with reference to Vittorio Foa, Miriam Mafai and Alfredo Reichlin's book with that title.[131] I also occasionally shared how difficult it had been to reach out and convince former activists to speak about their pasts. A few responded with understanding, confirming that for many—especially those affiliated with the TKP, a party that spent nearly its entire existence between 1920 and 1988 outlawed in Turkey, with its members and sympathizers persistently facing persecution—there remains a lingering sense of secrecy and caution. The long-standing culture of repression and their experiences, directly and indirectly, of violence, they explained, still make it difficult for them to speak freely, even decades later. Conducting these interviews necessitated an ethically informed approach,

[129] Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 779.
[130] Alistair Thomson, "Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History," *The Oral History Review* 34, no. 1 (2007): 56.
[131] Francisca de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation"; Vittorio Foa, Miriam Mafai, and Alfredo Reichlin, *Le Silence des Communistes* (Paris: L'Arche, 2007).

wherein I hope I have positioned myself as a researcher attuned to the lasting impact of political persecution, aiming to prevent any re-traumatization of my interviewees.[132]

In terms of the subjectivity of oral history, the relationships between the interviewer and narrator, and the researcher's positionality, I have adopted an approach that, following a feminist understanding of reflexivity, "permits awareness and use of the interactive process of interviewer and narrator, of interviewer and content."[133] This also means that my subject position as a young male researcher, who conducted interviews in Turkish and sympathizes with the political agenda of Turkish migrant left feminism, had a constitutive effect on the content of the interviews. In my prior conversations with the interviewees—whether by message or email to arrange an interview—I informed them about all aspects of my doctoral project, including that it would become public as a PhD dissertation. When we met for the interview, I explained beforehand that I would record the conversation, transcribe it, store both the audio and the transcript as digital materials, and obtained their oral consent before beginning. I also informed them that if they later changed their mind, I would refrain from using the material in my research and permanently delete it. Fortunately, this did not happen.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is divided into six chapters, excluding the Introduction and Conclusion. **Chapter One** sets the stage for the analysis of Turkish migrant left feminism in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands by examining the broader historical context in which it emerged. It traces Turkish migration to these countries focusing on the demographic and characteristics of the migrant communities that would later form the base for left-feminist organizing. The chapter examines the development of Turkish leftist migrant activism between the mid-1960s and early 1970s, which I refer to as the formative phase of Turkish leftist migrant politics in western Europe. Lastly, I introduce the WIDF and overview its activities in shaping a global left-feminist movement from the 1950s through the 1970s. **Chapter Two** focuses on the founding and development of the ITKB in the UK, established on 11 February 1974. By constructing a political history of the organization between 1974 and 1980, I demonstrate that the ITKB was the first Turkish migrant left-feminist organization founded in western Europe. Through an analysis of its activism and connections to the WIDF

[132] Alistair Thomson, "Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia," *in The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perk, Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), 302-3.
[133] Valerie Yow, "'Do I Like Them Too Much?': Effects of the Oral History Interview on the Interviewer and Vice-Versa," *The Oral History Review* 24, no. 1 (July 1, 1997): 55–79.

and the TKP, this chapter shows that the ITKB not only inspired other Turkish migrant women activists to establish their own associations but also played a central role in facilitating communication and exchange among activists, offering guidance and support for the founding of Turkish migrant women's organizations during the IWY. I further argue that the ITKB took a leading role in developing a Europe-wide network of Turkish migrant left feminism.

Chapter Three examines the development of Turkish migrant women's left-feminist political organizing in West Germany by focusing on the BTKB in West Berlin and the GKB in the Ruhr region. It analyzes the activities and ideas of the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists in West Germany between 1975 and 1980, exploring how their gender agendas intersected with broader political and ideological commitments, and how they navigated simultaneous engagements in both homeland-directed and country of residence-directed politics. I situate these organizations within the broader history of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe and Turkish transnational migrant activism and show that the momentum generated by the IWY served as a catalyst for the formation of the BTKB and GKB.

Chapter Four explores the history of Turkish migrant left feminism and the origins and development of the HTKB in the Netherlands during the second half of the 1970s, situating these developments within the broader transnational history of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe—particularly in relation to the UK and West Germany—and within the wider context of Turkish migrant transnational politics. In addition to establishing a clear timeline for the founding of the HTKB, the chapter analyzes its political trajectory, the ideas articulated in its publications, and the ideological and political practices that shaped its left-feminist praxis.

Chapter Five investigates the emergence of the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup in Turkey. It examines the impact of the coup on Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe, providing a historical account of the process through which many IKD cadres and TKP women fled Turkey and resettled as political refugees in western Europe—whom I refer to as the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists. I show that this second generation collectively sought to sustain their activism within a diasporic context and maintained transnational political engagements by establishing the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau, participating in the international activities of the WIDF, and collaborating with Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations founded by the first generation.

Chapter Six analyzes the collaboration between two generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists between 1984 and 1987 in their international activities for migrant and refugee women's rights. To trace their converged international engagements, I focus on three key events: the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants, co-organized by both generations in June 1985 in Amsterdam; the 1985 Third UN World Conference on Women and its NGO Forum in Nairobi; and the WIDF-convened Ninth World Congress of Women in June 1987 in Moscow. Following this analysis, I examine the subsequent retreat of transnational collaboration within Turkish migrant left feminism and the broader decline of left feminism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, by analyzing the trajectories and transformations of the organizations studied in this dissertation.

The **Conclusion** of this dissertation answers my overarching research questions.

Chapter 1: Historical Background

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the historical context for my analysis of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe in the subsequent chapters. I include three main elements of this context to better understand the conditions in which Turkish migrant left feminism emerged. First, I outline Turkish migration to West Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, shedding light on the scale and characteristics of Turkish migrant communities there, from which the left-feminist organizations drew their constituencies. Second, I examine the development of Turkish leftist migrant activism in these three countries from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s—which I refer to as the formative period of Turkish leftist migrant politics in western Europe. I also introduce the WIDF and trace its activities in shaping a global left-feminist movement from the 1950s into the 1970s. Whereas Sections 1.2 and 1.3 are largely descriptive and based on secondary literature, the part in Section 1.4 on the early involvement of Turkish communist women in WIDF activities during the 1950s and 1960s draws on my original research.

This chapter comprises three sections. In Section 1.2, I provide a concise overview of the first wave of Turkish migration to West Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK from the 1960s into the early 1970s. I describe the patterns of Turkish migration to western Europe and the composition of the Turkish migrant groups. Section 1.3 focuses on the development of Turkish leftist migrant politics in these three countries between 1964 and 1974. I assess the impact of significant political developments in Turkey during the 1960s—in particular, the rise of socialist and working-class movements—on Turkish migrant politics abroad. I introduce the most prominent Turkish leftist migrant organizations established in West Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands, from which Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations emerged, following a chronological presentation of their founding. Section 1.4 begins by introducing the WIDF, the chief international actor in global left feminism, and reviews the early involvement of Turkish communist women in WIDF activities. From there, it outlines the importance of the IWY, paving the way for the IWY's influence on Turkish migrant left feminism. Concluding this section, I introduce the *Ilerici Kadınlar Derneği* (Progressive Women's Association, IKD)—a left-feminist women's organization founded in 1975, and Turkey's first and only WIDF member organization. In the following chapters I will analyze how IKD became the main homeland-based actor behind the transnational political endeavors of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in western Europe.

1.2. Turkish Migration to West Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, 1960s to early 1970s

Migration from Turkey to European countries began in the late 1950s, but a larger migratory wave from Turkey to Europe, notably to West Germany and the Netherlands, took place from 1961 to 1972 on the basis of bilateral agreements between the governments of Turkey and a number of European countries.[134] This wave of 'labor migration to Europe' "institutionalized and expanded the extent of the movement of labor from Turkey" to western Europe.[135]

The aftermath of World War II, which marks the beginning of the Cold War, had a major transformative impact on Turkey on various levels, socially, economically, and politically.[136] The country sided with the western bloc and the US against the Soviet Union and the so-called 'communist threat.' This shift accelerated Turkey's integration into the capitalist market economy and went hand in hand with its designation by the USA as a "buffer state" between the Soviet Union and the Middle East—an integral component of the US containment policy aimed at protecting the political and economic interests of the "Free World."[137] After Turkey signed the Marshall Plan in 1948, its economy was restructured in accordance with the international political economy and Turkey received financial aid from the US to fulfill its duties against "a Soviet invasion." In addition to the economic restructuring, anti-communism started to occupy a central place in cultural, ideological, and political fields in Turkey, which culminated in the military coup of September 1980 that brutally suppressed the socialist movement in Turkey. This coup had been plotted by military officers trained and supported by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency).[138]

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[134] The first bilateral agreement was signed between Turkey and West Germany in 1961, in 1964 Turkey signed an agreement with Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. Nermin Abadan-Unat, "Turkish Migration to Europe," in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, ed. Robin Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 279–84.

[135] Kemal Kirişçi, "Migration and Turkey: The Dynamics of State, Society and Politics," in *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba, vol. 4, The Cambridge History of Turkey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 192. It is important to note that the difference between 'labor migrants' and 'refugees' is an issue within the fields of history of migration and migration studies. This analytical distinction derives from the difference between forced and voluntary moves. "Although the motivations of refugees and labor migrants undeniably differ in principle", I do not prefer such clear-cut distinctions because of the fact that "the disparities are less obvious in practice than is commonly assumed." Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, eds., *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, International and Comparative Social History 4 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), 14.

[136] Cangül Örnek and Çağdaş Üngör, eds., *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[137] Emin Fuat Keyman, "Globalization, Modernity and Democracy: In Search of a Viable Domestic Polity for a Sustainable Turkish Foreign Policy," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 40 (2009): 9.

[138] Desmond Fernandes and Iskender Özden, "United States and NATO Inspired' psychological Warfare Operations' against the 'Kurdish Communist Threat'in Turkey," *Variant: Cross-Currents in Culture* 2, no. 12

According to Kemal Kirişci, a prominent migration scholar in Turkey, there were three important factors that caused Turkish migration to western Europe. The first factor was the new Turkish constitution of 1961 that liberalized the complicated and strict regulations on travelling abroad. The second factor were the Turkish government's plans for transition to a state-planned economy and import-substitution industrialization during the early 1960s, which "envisaged the 'export of labor'" a way to facilitate the acquisition of technical skills from western Europe. [139] The export of labor was conceived as a source of foreign currency too, "of which the country [Turkey] suffered a shortage."[140] The third factor was the shortage of low-skilled workers in western Europe, particularly West Germany, which resulted from West Germany's rebuilding of its industry in the post-WWII era and the economic boom due to these efforts.

This wave of migration was framed by guest-worker regimes that were significant outcomes of the formal policies of labor recruitment in Europe in the 1960s.[141] About 805,000 people were sent to western Europe through the Turkish Employment Service (IIBK) between 1961 and 1975.[142] The bureaucratic criteria in this process were based on gendered stereotypes in which the guest worker was imagined as 'a family man' who was capable of leaving his home, facing a new life, and was expected at a certain point to return to his country where his family would be waiting for him.[143] This gendered image of the guest worker also influenced studies on migration from Turkey to western Europe, which tend to treat the migrant woman as a 'dependent' and 'passive' category within the migration process.[144] Table 1 shows the number of IIKB-processed migrants from Turkey. It also shows that there was a limited number of Turkish women who migrated to Europe as guest workers.

(2001): 14; S. Aay, "Paul Henze: Scholar or Ethiopian Propagandist?," 27 April 1999, http://www.dehai.org/conflict/articles/henze_sal.html.

[139] Kirişçi, "Migration and Turkey," 192.

[140] Ibid..

[141] Eleonore Kofman, *Gender and International Migration in Europe: Employment, Welfare, and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2010), 49.

[142]According to Martin et al, "it is estimated that 1.5 to 2 million Turks went abroad for employment between 1961 and 1973, equivalent to 10 to 12 percent of Turkey's 1970 work force and 40 percent of Turkish men aged 20-39 in the Turkish work force in 1970." Philip L. Martin, Elizabeth Midgley, and Michael S. Teitelbaum, "Migration and Development: Focus on Turkey," *The International Migration Review* 35, no. 2 (2001): 600.

[143] Levent Soysal, "The Migration Story of Turks in Germany: From the Beginning to the End," in Kasaba, *Turkey in the Modern World*, 200.

[144] Öztan, "Türkiye Kökenli Göçmen Kadınların Hollanda'daki Örgütlenme Deneyimleri," 219.

Table 1: Workers sent from Turkey to West Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, Austria, Belgium and France through IIBK 1961-1974, by country of destination, year and gender.

Year	Germany		Netherlands		United Kingdom		Austria		Belgium		France	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
1961	1,430	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1962	10,493	532	-	-	-	-	160	-	-	-	-	-
1963	20,908	2,528	251	-	-	-	901	36	5,605	-	63	-
1964	50,818	4,084	2,950	8	-	-	1,384	50	6,651	-	25	-
1965	34,456	11,196	2,178	3	-	-	1,937	36	1,661	-	-	-
1966	22,865	9,715	1,207	1	-	-	435	34	-	-	-	-
1967	3,715	3,484	48	-	-	-	1,031	12	-	-	-	-
1968	30,099	11,310	874	1	-	-	668	5	-	-	-	-
1969	77,472	20,670	3,404	-	-	4	918	55	-	-	184	7
1970	76,556	20,380	4,840	3	512	51	10,511	111	430	1	8,992	44
1971	52,162	13,522	4,790	63	1,232	57	4,285	335	578	5	7,856	41
1972	48,911	16,964	670	74	69	13	3,291	1,181	111	2	10,572	38
1973	79,526	24,267	1,980	14	106	10	4,943	2,140	256	9	17,467	77
1974	1,187	41	1,487	16	104	9	1,939	562	539	16	10,544	33
1961-1974	**510,598**	**138,739**	**24,679**	**183**	**2,023**	**144**	**32,403**	**4,557**	**15,831**	**33**	**55,703**	**240**

Source: This table is taken from a larger table in *Ahmet Akgündüz, Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960-1974: A Multidisciplinary Analysis (Ashgate, 2016), 79.*

From the mid-1960s, and in the years following the economic recession of 1966-'67 in West Germany, many Turkish women came as workers since that was the least complicated way to enter the country before the German government adopted a policy of family reunion.[145] With the end of the migrant labor recruitment policies in 1973, family reunion became the only possible and legal option for Turkish migrant women to enter West Germany, but this policy did not allow them to enter the labor market.[146]According to Rita Chin, West Germans "remained largely untroubled" by the guest worker regime during the early phase of active recruitment, mainly due to the common perception that guest workers "would

[145] Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
[146] Kofman, *Gender and International Migration in Europe*, 51.

inevitably return home."[147] However, the economic and demographical changes that took place in the first quarter of the 1970s changed West Germans' reactions to the guest worker regime in a negative way. The government halted foreign labor recruitment right after the oil crisis of 1973, yet this measure did not suspend the increase in the number of migrants.[148] Instead, male guest workers, who had been assumed to return home, brought their spouses and children. In 1979 the West German state decided to recognize guest workers as long-term residents.[149]

The first wave of migration from Turkey to the Netherlands took place between 1964 and 1974 through a bilateral labor recruitment agreement between the two countries.[150] However, according to migration scholar Eleonore Kofman, the Dutch migration regime differed from the West German case in terms of its *hybridity*, which "combined colonial migrants (who had relatively easy rights of entry until the late 1960s and early 1970s) with non-colonial migrants who had to apply for work permits and guest worker migrants, usually from Mediterranean countries."[151] In accordance with the Dutch-Turkish agreement, it was mainly men who migrated to the Netherlands (see Table 1).

Women's migration from Turkey to the Netherlands was also based on a different pattern in comparison to the West German case. In the early years of the Dutch guest-worker regime, only single women were legally recruited as guest workers, whereas in West Germany, the recruitment of single women was a preference rather than a legal requirement—though the ideal female guest worker, from the perspective of German employers, was still unmarried, childless, and not pregnant.[152] Also in the early years of the Dutch guest-worker regime, contracts explicitly prohibited guest workers from bringing their families, in contrast to West Germany, where guest workers were permitted to do so.[153] These constraints at first kept the number of Turkish female migrants in the Netherlands relatively low. When the

[147] Rita Chin, "Turkish Women, West German Feminists, and the Gendered Discourse on Muslim Cultural Difference," *Public Culture* 22, no. 3 (2010): 559.
[148] Ibid., 560.
[149] Ibid., 561.
[150] Ahmet Akgündüz, "Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe (1960–1974): An Analytical Review," *Capital & Class* 17, no. 3 (1993): 155. Along with some other western European countries, the Netherlands had also admitted a number of workers from Turkey before signing an official agreement with the Turkish government. Akgündüz, *Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960-1974*, 60.
[151] Kofman, *Gender and International Migration in Europe*, 48.
[152] Öztan, "Türkiye Kökenli Göçmen Kadınların Hollanda'daki Örgütlenme Deneyimleri," 219; Monika Mattes, "'Gastarbeiterinnen' in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Bpb.de: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung* (blog), April 8, 2019, https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/kurzdossiers/289051/gastarbeiterinnen-in-der-bundesrepublik-deutschland/.
[153] Marlou Schrover, "Family in Dutch Migration Policy 1945–2005," *The History of the Family* 14, no. 2 (2009): 196.

government in 1967 lifted the ban on bringing family members, the number of Turkish migrant women increased swiftly.[154] Consequently, by 1972, almost half of the Turkish migrants living in the Netherlands were women.[155]

Scholars label the Dutch citizenship regime from the early 1980s as a multicultural model in which so-called integration seems to have been the primary policy objective, and in which the preservation of minority cultures was a policy objective.[156] This changed in 1994 with a new policy document expressing that "the preservation of minority cultures was a responsibility of the communities themselves, not a public responsibility."[157] Thus, the focus of the integration policy shifted to individual integration.

The United Kingdom's migrant regime of the time had been shaped through colonial patterns in which "migrants from outside the Commonwealth and Ireland were in a minority."[158] The migration from Turkey to the UK started in the mid-1960s. A small number of university students, professionals and workers entered the country, although there was no labor recruitment agreement between the Turkish and British governments.[159] Larger-scale migration from Turkey took place in the early 1970s, mostly consisting of male workers. Because there was no migrant labor recruitment, they came at their own initiative as 'foreign workers' or 'tourist' migrants.[160]

The economic downturn after the oil crisis of 1973 led to the end of the west-European migrant labor recruitment policies.[161] My dissertation focuses on the phase of migration from 1970 onwards, the period following the approval of family reunification and the drastic increase in asylum requests from Turkey due to the growing oppression of the oppositional movement there, especially after the 1980 military coup d'état.[162]

[154] Öztan, "Türkiye Kökenli Göçmen Kadınların Hollanda'daki Örgütlenme Deneyimleri," 219.
[155] Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism," 67; Lenie Brouwer and Priester Marijke, "Living in between; Turkish Women in Their Homeland and in the Netherlands," in *One Way Ticket: Migration and Female Labour*, ed. Annie Phizacklea (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 113–30.
[156] Sawitri Saharso, "Headscarves: A Comparison of Public Thought and Public Policy in Germany and the Netherlands," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 10, no. 4 (2007): 517.
[157] Saharso, 517.
[158] Kofman, *Gender and International Migration in Europe*, 48.
[159] Akgündüz, *Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960-1974*, 60.
[160] Russell King et al., "'Turks' in the UK: Problems of Definition and the Partial Relevance of Policy," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 6, no. 3 (2008): 276.
[161] Kirişçi, "Migration and Turkey," 192.
[162] Abadan-Unat, "Turkish Migration to Europe," 280.

1.3. The Formative Phase of Turkish Left-Wing Migrant Politics in Western Europe (1964–1974)

As previously discussed, West Germany took the lead among European countries in recruiting Turkish workers under its 'guest worker' program. As early as September 1961—before formalizing a bilateral agreement with Turkey in October that same year—West Germany welcomed its first Turkish guest-workers at the Ford factory premises in Cologne-Niehl, North Rhine-Westphalia.[163] Unsurprisingly, Cologne soon became the site of the first Turkish migrant organization in western Europe, the *Köln ve Çevresi Türk İşçileri Cemiyeti* (Society of Turkish Workers in Cologne and Surroundings), established in 1962 by a cadre of skilled Turkish workers from the Ford plant who sought communal bonds beyond the confines of factory and dormitory life.[164] Earlier, Turkish university students at West German universities were already forming groups, including the *Münih Türk Talebe Cemiyeti* (Turkish Students' Association in Munich) in 1954 and the *Berlin Türk Öğrenci Birliği* (Turkish Students' Union in Berlin) in 1957.[165] From these early stages, the first years of Turkish labor recruitment in West Germany witnessed the emergence of migrant labor activism, beginning with a strike in Essen on April 30, 1962, over unpaid *Kindergeld* (child benefit payments).[166] The labor militancy continued throughout the period of migrant labor recruitment policies, climaxing in the summer of 1973 with Turkish workers' influential wildcat strikes at the Ford plant in Cologne and the Pierburg strikes in Neuss, North Rhine-Westphalia, "spearheaded by foreign women [and] achieving full participation by all employees."[167]

Dutch political scientist and migration scholar Floris Vermeulen characterizes the earliest stage of the migrant settlement process as "a period of orientation and adjustment," during which migrants were "confident that they [would] return home after a certain period of

[163] Jennifer A. Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany: Hidden Lives and Contested Borders, 1960s to 1980s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 59.
[164] Gür, *Diyardan Diyara TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları* (Istanbul: Günizi Yayıncılık, 2002), 21; Mathilde Jamin and Aytaç Eryılmaz, eds., *Fremde Heimat: eine Geschichte der Einwanderung aus der Türkei* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1998), 391. Turkish workers, pre-dominantly men, were initially restricted to employer-managed or state-provided dormitories (*Heims* in German) near the factories where they were employed. According to Nermin Abadan-Unat, who conducted the earliest extensive study of Turkish migrant workers in West Germany, eight-five percentage of Turkish workers were residing in dormitories. Nermin Abadan-Unat, *Batı Almanya'daki Türk İşçileri ve Sorunları* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1964), 103.
[165] Ertekin Özcan, *Türkische Immigrantenorganisationen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: die Entwicklung Politischer Organisationen und Politischer Orientierung unter Türkischen Arbeitsimmigranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin West* (Berlin: Hitit, 1992), 69.
[166] Jennifer Miller, "Her Fight Is Your Fight: 'Guest Worker' Labor Activism in the Early 1970s West Germany," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 84 (2013): 229.
[167] Miller, 233.

earning money," and often left their families behind in the country of origin.[168] The centrality of return and an overall sense of temporariness in the host country thus characterized this settlement phase, in line with the official policies that explicitly framed the Turkish migrants 'guest workers.' Below I examine how this collective sense of temporariness influenced the development of Turkish leftist migrant politics, shaping both the agendas of their organizations and their transnational orientations. The subsequent chapters build on this foundation to explore in greater depth how these earlier organizations set the stage for the emergence of left-feminist activism within Turkish migrant communities.

West Germany became the earliest hub for Turkish migrant organizations in western Europe, with the *Köln ve Çevresi Türk İşçileri Cemiyeti* serving as a notable pioneer.[169] In its founding declaration, the Society defined itself as open to anyone "holding a Turkish passport."[170] It successfully organized Turkish workers employed at the Ford factory in Cologne, which had recruited large numbers of Turkish workers at the beginning of the guest-worker program. Although a Turkish occupational community was coalescing at the time, the Society maintained a strictly impartial, non-political approach, prioritizing the creation of a community space and offering practical support to those arriving in West Germany. Accordingly, it mainly operated in non-political spheres, mediating between West German companies and the Turkish Embassy and Consulate—particularly the labor attaché. Following the establishment of the Cologne Society, similar associations emerged across West Germany with comparable goals. These included the *Berlin Türk İşçileri Derneği* (Association of Turkish Workers in Berlin), founded in 1964 at the Siemens factory in West Berlin, and the *Frankfurt Türk Halkevi* (Turkish People's House) in Frankfurt am Main in 1965, which still exists today.[171] Among the founders of *Frankfurt Türk Halkevi* was Ülkü Gürkan-Schneider, a renowned Turkish communist woman in West Germany affiliated with the TKP. She arrived in West Germany in 1957 as a university student and later worked as a consultant at *Türk-Danış*, the first institutional network providing social services for Turkish migrant workers in West Germany, established by *Die Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (Workers' Welfare Association,

[168] Floris Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process: Turkish Organisations in Amsterdam and Berlin and Surinamese Organisations in Amsterdam, 1960-2000* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 156.
[169] Its co-founders included Selahattin Sözer, a Turkish lawyer and the chief-translator at Ford factory, Salih Güldiken, a later member of the Ford Works Council, and Yılmaz Karahasan, the first and so far only migrant of Turkish origin to be elected to the federal executive board of the West German metalworkers' union IG Metall Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*, 21; Murat Çakır, "Eine deutsch-deutsch-türkische Geschichte," in *Der lange Marsch der Migration: die Anfänge migrantischer Selbstorganisation im Nachkriegsdeutschland*, ed. Albert Scharenberg (Berlin: Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, 2020), 53.
[170] Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*, 21.
[171] Gür, 57; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 25.

AWO).[172] From the mid-1960s onward, Gürkan-Schneider played a pioneering role in organizing Turkish migrants and, through her involvement in the *Avrupa Türk Toplumcular Federasyonu* (European Federation of Turkish Socialists, ATTF), an umbrella organization founded on October 27, 1968, in Cologne, later helped to extend the TKP's influence in Turkish transnational migrant politics across western Europe. Although Ülkü Gürkan-Schneider recalled that she "was not directly involved in Turkish migrant women's organizations" but "primarily worked within [mixed-sex] Turkish migrant organizations," she did participate in the European Conference of Turkish Women Migrants, held in Amsterdam in July 1985 (see Chapter 6) as a member of the conference board.[173]

Until the mid-1960s, these early organizations largely avoided political or ideological agendas, instead serving as meeting points for Turkish migrants of diverse worldviews and focusing on improving Turkish workers' social conditions.[174] However, developments in Turkey—most notably the upsurge of revolutionary activism among the working class and university students during the 1960s—spurred some younger, left-leaning members to challenge these early organizations' non-political stance and their ties to Turkish authorities in West Germany, such as embassies, consulates and labor attaches of Turkey. Mustafa Demir and Ergün Sönmez, in their 2015 book on the history of Turkish migrants' political organizing in Germany, described this juncture as the emergence of politically oriented "*kampforganizationen* (struggle organizations)" within the Turkish migrant milieu, reflecting a radical left-leaning shift and militancy.[175] Demir and Sönmez explained this transformation in activists' mindset as follows:

> Workers and students witnessed firsthand how thousands of people arrived in Germany on overcrowded trains, working under inhumane conditions in factories and living in cramped barracks or dormitories. They felt that these dire circumstances could only end if Turkey developed economically, allowing those who emigrated to find work back home.[176]

[172] *Ülkü Gürkan-Schneider*, E-mail to Sercan Çınar, 25 February 2017; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 25.
[173] *Gürkan-Schneider.*
[174] Karin Hunn, *"Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück ...": Die geschichte der Türkischen "Gastarbeiter" in der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005); Çakır, "Eine deutsch-deutsch-türkische Geschichte," 53.
[175] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 22.
[176] Ibid., 21.

Therefore, in what Vermeulen has called the early settlement phase, in the evolving Turkish leftist migrant activist milieu, the desire for a quick return took on a political dimension, as leaving West Germany depended upon Turkey's political and economic transformation.[177] Consequently, these migrants increasingly came to see themselves as part of the revolutionary forces in Turkey, underscoring that their ultimate goal of returning home depended on the success of the socialist and revolutionary struggle there. Hence, the rise of "politically oriented 'combat organizations'" within the Turkish migrant community in West Germany emerged from the combined impact of migrants' sense of temporariness and concurrent political developments in Turkey during this early stage of settlement.

The first manifestation of this transformation appeared through internal disputes within the Society of Turkish Workers in Cologne, culminating in the departure of its younger, left-inclined members—workers, teachers, and university students—who established the *Türk Gençliği Kültür Kulübü* (Turkish Youth Culture Club, TGKK) in Cologne in 1966.[178] TGKK became the first Turkish migrant entity in West Germany—and more broadly in western Europe—to adopt a socialist perspective aimed at challenging Turkey's ruling government, promoting social justice, and advocating for migrants' rights in West Germany. Although TGKK publicly presented itself as a "cultural organization of Turkish youth in Germany," it quickly attracted a diverse group of Turkish migrants, including guest workers, teachers, and University of Cologne students, through its events and community gatherings within its first year.[179]

TGKK drew inspiration from the expanding working-class and socialist movements in Turkey. In 1967, TGKK members participated in the May 1 rally organized by the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (German Trade Union Confederation, DGB) in Cologne, carrying a banner in support of the newly founded left-wing *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey, DISK).[180] This event marked TGKK's emergence as a key mobilizing structure in Turkish left-wing migrant politics in West Germany. Central to TGKK's activities was its Turkish-language newspaper, *İşçi Postası* (Workers' Mail), first published in October 1967 in Cologne and distributed across West Germany and Turkey. *İşçi Postası* informed the migrant community about TGKK events, the

[177] Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process*, 156.
[178] Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*, 25; Caner Tekin, "Die erste linke Migrantenorganisation aus der Türkei: Europäische Föderation türkischer Sozialisten (1968–1977)," *Arbeit – Bewegung – Geschichte. Zeitschrift Für Historische Studien* 20, no. 1 (2021): 114. I was not able to determine the exact founding date.
[179] Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*, 27.
[180] Ibid.

economic and social challenges facing Turkish guest workers, and political developments in Turkey.[181] It thus functioned as a transnational platform for exchanging knowledge, information, and political experiences between the homeland and the host society.

Alongside the organizations that emerged in North Rhine-Westphalia, a group of younger Turkish migrants, consisting of both university students and guest workers, founded the *Berlin Türk Toplumcular Ocağı* (Turkish Socialist Community in Berlin, BTTO) on 11 June 1967 in West Berlin, which became another significant political organization dedicated to uniting Turkish workers and students in West Berlin with a socialist worldview.[182] According to Demir and Ergün (with Demir among the founding members), the BTTO called itself a "socialist community" at its inception, but did not yet fully embody socialism in the Marxist sense; rather, its chosen name was intended "to reflect a loosely affiliated group of people who were socially conscious, committed to justice, equality, and advocated progressive values."[183] Of the eighteen founding members, eight were women, including Emine Sevgi Özdamar (1946-), a Turkish-German novelist, director, and actress, nowadays known as a leading figure in what is often called "Turkish-German literature."[184] Her 1998 autobiographical novel *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (The Bridge of the Golden Horn,) includes an anonymized portrait of West Berlin's 1960s Turkish migrants' leftist politics and the founding of the BTTO.[185] In April 1969, the BTTO launched *Kurtuluş* (Liberation), a monthly magazine that served as the voice of "progressive Turks" in West Berlin, rallying Turkish-origin residents to support the struggle in Turkey to "replace foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism."[186] Notably, the name *Kurtuluş* referenced an earlier journal, published in May 1919 by Turkish students and workers residing in Berlin after WWI, known as "Turkish Spartakists," who had embraced Marxism and participated in the Spartacist uprising of January 1919.[187] With *Kurtuluş*, the BTTO became a leading organization in Turkish leftist

[181] The right-wing AP government banned its distribution in Turkey in July 1968. "A.P. Iktidarının Keyfî Bir Kararı ile İşçi Postası Yurda Giremiyor," *İşçi Postası*, September 1968.
[182] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland* 51; Özcan, *Türkische Immigrantenorganisationen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 223.
[183] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 51–52.
[184] Statute of Berlin Türk Toplumcular Ocağı, 26 November 1967, ATTF Archive, TUSTAV; Lizzie Stewart and Frauke Matthes, "Introduction: Emine Sevgi Özdamar at 70," *Oxford German Studies* 45, no. 3 (2016): 237–359.
[185] Beverly M. Weber, "Work, Sex, and Socialism: Reading Beyond Cultural Hybridity in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn," *German Life and Letters* 63, no. 1 (2010): 37–53.
[186] "Kurtuluş," *Kurtuluş*, April 1969.
[187] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 154–55; Loren Goldner, *Revolution, Defeat and Theoretical Underdevelopment: Russia, Turkey, Spain, Bolivia* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 75; Erden Akbulut and Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Komünist Partisi'nin Kuruluşu, 1919-1925* (Istanbul: Yordam, 2020), 62–63.

migrant activism in West Germany.[188] Similar organizations soon followed in cities such as Braunschweig and Dachau, while leftist political organizing among Turkish migrant workers also spread to European cities like London, Paris, and Stockholm. These organizations not only mirrored political developments in Turkey but also engaged in community activism, offering educational initiatives such as language classes, seminars on labor and migration laws, and discussions on ideological and political divisions among Turkish socialists.[189]

Turkish progressive and socialist migrant organizations in Cologne and West Berlin also played key roles in forging and coordinating ties among like-minded Turkish migrant organizations emerging across western Europe. These efforts culminated in the establishment of ATTF at a congress in Cologne on October 28, 1968, bringing together representatives from Braunschweig, Cologne, Dachau, Munich, Paris, Stockholm, Stuttgart, and West Berlin.[190]

In its founding declaration, the ATTF described itself as an organization representing Turkish migrants in Europe who saw themselves as victims of US imperialism, arguing that imperialist control over the world economy, the unequal division of labor of global capitalism and Turkey's resulting underdevelopment had forced many Turks to leave their homeland in search of work.[191] In this context, the ATTF articulated a vision that linked imperialism, underdevelopment, dependency, and Turkish labor migration to western Europe. However, the ATTF's vision was largely framed in relation to the idea of return, positioning migrant activism as contingent on political achievements in Turkey that would ultimately end migrants' victimization as 'guest workers.' It is noteworthy that ATTF's founding congress chose to include the ethnic term "Türk" in its name, in alignment with the Turkish state's official discourse, which denies other ethnic groups within Turkey. According to Metin Gür, rather than using "Türkiyeli"—which underscores a more inclusive notion of national belonging based on Turkish citizenship—this preference for "Türk" reflected the enduring strength of Turkish nationalist sentiments among Turkish migrants.[192] Additionally, using "Türkiyeli" could have exposed the ATTF to accusations of separatism by Turkish authorities intent on discrediting the organization.[193] However, by the 1970s, with anti-fascism becoming

[188] Similar to what happened with *İşçi Postası,* the Turkish government banned the distribution of the monthly *Kurtuluş* in Turkey after its April 1969 issue Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*, 90.
[189] Çakır, "Eine deutsch-deutsch-türkische Geschichte," 55.
[190] "Avrupa Türk Toplumcular Federasyonu Kuruldu," *İşçi Postası*, December 1968; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland*, 33; Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları,* 41.
[191] "A.T.T.F.'nin Bildirisi," *İşçi Postası*, December 1968.
[192] Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*, 90.
[193] Ibid.

a central focus of the socialist movement in both Turkey and abroad, the ATTF changed its name, replacing "Türk" with "Türkiyeli" to confront the growing influence of the far-right *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party, MHP).

One of ATTF's earliest political efforts involved orchestrating protests and demonstrations across major western European cities against the steep rise in passport renewal fees imposed by Turkish consulates.[194] In line with the ATTF's political vision, the slogan "We won't pay for it. We are returning soon, find us a job there" became the defining message of these protests.[195] As a carrier of the anti-imperialist political culture of 1968, the ATTF also launched a political campaign calling for Turkey's withdrawal from NATO, which it viewed as a "threat to Turkey's national security and independence."[196] Furthermore, the ATTF consistently publicized and supported strikes in Turkey, particularly in an atmosphere of increasing, often spontaneous, worker militancy and radicalization following the establishment of DISK. One of ATTF's largest solidarity actions took place on July 5, 1970, in Cologne, in response to the June 15–16, 1970, workers' resistance in Turkey and the violent state crackdown that followed, with hundreds of people attending the solidarity rally in Cologne, demanding the release of arrested workers and the lifting of martial law in Turkey.[197]

At the ATTF's second congress, held in West Berlin on December 13–14, 1969, the emergent factional schisms within Turkey's socialist circles manifested themselves for the first time in western Europe. Specifically, a divergence of viewpoints arose concerning strategy: how best to unite all leftist, democratic, socialist, and revolutionary forces in pursuit of an anti-imperialist, democratic, and socialist agenda? Conflicting ideas about the right revolutionary strategy for Turkey mirrored the broader tensions unfolding within the Turkey's political left in the late 1960s—most notably, over who should take the lead in the soon-anticipated revolution.[198] On one side, the TIP stood for a democratic-socialist agenda, positing a strategy that identified the working class as the vanguard of leading Turkey's revolutionary transformation. On the other side, *Millî Demokratik Devrim* (the National Democratic Revolution, MDD) and *Yön-Devrim* (the Direction-Revolution) movements united around a strategy prioritizing a revolutionary coalition of all "nationalist-progressive" forces, contending that Turkey's "semi-feudal, semi-colonial" conditions hindered the

[194] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 90–92.
[195] "69 Markı Vermeyiz Size Yakında Geliyoruz, İŞ Bulun Bize!," *Kurtuluş*, June 1969.
[196] "NATO Kampanyası," *Türkiye'de Kurtuluş*, March 1970.
[197] "ATTF'nin Kölnde Dayanışma Mitingi," *Türkiye'de Kurtuluş*, July 1970.
[198] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 34.

working class from immediately taking the lead.[199] While TIP embraced an "ouvrierist" perspective, MDD and Yön-Devrim movements endorsed a "national-democratic revolution" rather than a socialist one in a country where the principal conflict was not capital versus labor, but "in the nature of a colonial conflict with the people against a comprador bourgeoisie and landlords."[200] Gathering supporters of these divergent views on true revolutionary strategy for the revolution in Turkey, the ATTF's second congress, in 1969, turned out to be decisive: TIP supporters, who believed that socialism would be realized under the working class's leadership, clearly outnumbered the MDD-aligned contingent within the Federation.[201] As a result, the congress resolved to reinforce its ideological cohesion against MDD and other rival groups, signifying a turning point in the ATTF's early evolution.[202] Thus, the ideological rifts in Turkey's socialist scene over how to achieve socialism in Turkey were seamlessly replicated in Turkish migrants' transnational political involvement and in their political agendas in western Europe—arguably, I would say, overshadowing any commitments they held toward country of residence-directed politics.

In the late 1960s, another pivotal factor and force entered the picture of Turkish migrant politics: the growing influence of the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* (Communist Party of Turkey, TKP), especially among Turkish leftist migrants in West Germany. Founded in September 1920, the TKP was "one of the oldest political parties in Turkey and among the oldest communist parties in the Middle East."[203] From 1925 to 1990, it remained committed to the Soviet-aligned international communist movement, forced to function clandestinely due to the intense anti-communist state repression in Turkey.[204] A series of mass arrests, prosecutions, and imprisonments—especially between 1951 and 1953—relegated the Party to an outsider role in the evolving political scene in Turkey during the 1960s; it conducted its activities from Leipzig in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) via an External Bureau and a group of its members exiled in Eastern Bloc countries. Apparently, the TKP was the only Moscow-oriented communist party in the world whose leadership lived and operated in

[199] Mustafa Şener, "Left Movements and the Army in Turkey (1961–71): The Case of the Yön-Devrim Movement," *Turkish Historical Review* 12, no. 2–3 (2021): 200.
[200] Çağlar Keyder, "Social Change and Political Mobilization in the 1960s," in *Turkey in Turmoil: Social Change and Political Radicalization during the 1960s*, ed. Berna Pekesen (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2020), 18.
[201] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 37.
[202] Tekin, "Die erste linke Migrantenorganisation aus der Türkei," 121.
[203] Bülent Gökay, "The Communist Party of Turkey: An Instrument of 'Soviet Eastern Policy'?," in *Communist Parties in the Middle East: 100 Years of History*, ed. Laura Feliu and Ferran Izquierdo-Brich (London: Routledge, 2019), 62.
[204] Ibid., 70–72.

exile in the GDR for an extended period.[205] Being based in the GDR during the 1960s provided the TKP with a rare advantage in shaping Turkish leftist migrant activism in West Germany. It began with cadres in the GDR establishing contacts with Turkish migrants living in the divided city of Berlin, who could travel to East Berlin and meet exiled TKP members. Notably, the earliest direct contact between the TKP's headquarters in Leipzig and Turkish leftist migrant activists occurred in West Berlin through Mugaffer Erdoğan. A founding member of the *Berlin Türk İşçileri Derneği* (Association of Turkish Workers in Berlin, established in 1964), Erdoğan traveled to East Berlin to meet TKP General Secretary Zeki Baştımar.[206] Subsequently admitted to the Party, Erdoğan became the TKP's point of contact in West Berlin. He was tasked with transporting TKP publications from East to West Berlin and distributing them among Turkish migrants throughout West Germany.[207]

In addition to the TKP's proximity to West Germany, another key factor behind its expanding influence on Turkish leftist migrant activism was its effective use of Turkish-language radio broadcasting as a cross-border communication medium for reaching out to the Turkish migrant community in western Europe. Chief among these stations were *Bizim Radyo* (Our Radio), which began on April 1, 1958, and *TKP'nin Sesi Radyosu* (Voice of the TKP), launched in May 1967; both operated out of Leipzig with technical and financial support from the East German *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany, SED).[208] Alongside these TKP-run radio stations, Turkish-language services from Budapest Radio, Radio Moscow, Radio Sofia, and Radio Warsaw—where TKP members were employed—also enjoyed large audiences among Turkish migrants across western Europe, largely because Turkish-language programs were scarce, often hard to tune in to, and news from the homeland was difficult to come by.[209] Furthermore, Turkish leftist migrants viewed these radio stations as potential gateways for finding and contacting The Party; indeed, many traveled to East Berlin through West Berlin in hopes of establishing direct contact with the TKP.[210]

By the end of the 1960s, the expanding network of contacts between Turkish leftist migrants and the TKP extended across West Germany and eventually throughout western

[205] Nelli Tügel, "Das Land ihrer Träume? Türkeistämmige politische Emigrant_innen in der DDR" (master's thesis, Freie Universität Berlin, 2014), 22.
[206] Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*, 59–60.
[207] Ibid., 60.
[208] Hayk Açıkgöz, *Anadolulu Bir Ermeni Komünistin Anıları* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2006), 488; Ersin Tosun, "Sunu," in *TKP'nin Sesi Radyosu: Mayıs 1967- Aralık 1973*, ed. Erden Akbulut and Ersin Tosun (Istanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, 2017), 7.
[209] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 33.
[210] Gür, *TKP'nin Avrupa Yılları*; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 32–33.

Europe, culminating in a growing TKP influence among senior figures in the ATTF. At that juncture, the TKP remained firmly in support of the TIP's democratic-socialist program in Turkey, dismissing rival socialist factions as anti-Soviet.[211] This transformation was solidified at the ATTF's third congress convened in December 1970 in West Berlin, where delegates adopted "democratic centralism" as the Federation's principal organizing model.[212] The newly elected executive committee defended this move by asserting: "The more decisive our struggle against all kinds of deviations in our member organizations, against all forms of bourgeois ideology, the more successful we will be in directing the broadest masses into the struggle in the right direction."[213] Strengthened by their majority, the TIP–TKP faction soon moved to expel MDD adherents and other socialist factions they classified as anti-Soviet.[214]

At the Federation's Fourth Congress, held in Lauterbach, West Germany on December 24–26, 1971, widening political divides emerged but TKP members took control of the ATTF's central governing body. In the years that followed, the TKP solidified its control over the Federation, directing its political stance ever more decisively, ultimately prompting TIP sympathizers to withdraw completely by 1974.

In the early 1970s, the considerably smaller Turkish migrant population in London comprised roughly 2,000 migrant workers (see Table 1), alongside Turkish university students and about a hundred leftist political activists.[215] Leftist mobilization among Turkish migrants in the UK first took shape through the initiatives of left-leaning university students, many of whom were TIP sympathizers. Inspired by the global eruption of student protests of 1968, these students invigorated their political involvement and took over the *Ingiltere Türk Öğrenci Federasyonu* (Federation of Turkish Students in England, ITOF), an umbrella organization of Turkish students in the UK.[216] Although its precise founding date is unclear, ITOF had been inactive for some time, and the leftist university students aimed to steer it in a socialist direction. Their efforts culminated in 1969 with the election of Cavlı Çulfaz, who would become a leading TKP figure in the 1970s and 1980s—as chair of ITOF.[217] ITOF forged links

[211] Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasî İdeolojiler* (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2017), 640; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 36.
[212] "ATTF 3. Kurultayı Toplandı," *Türkiye'de Kurtuluş*, December 31, 1970.
[213] "ATTF Basın Bülteni: Yaşasın Sosyalizm," *Türkiye'de Kurtuluş*, January 15, 1971.
[214] Tekin, "Die erste linke Migrantenorganisation aus der Türkei," 121.
[215] Eskioğlu, *Londra'da Bizim'kiler*, 185, 195. The exact number of university students from Turkey in London is difficult to determine. Nonetheless, according to Cavlı Çulfaz, who himself migrated to London in the late 1960s as a university student and later chaired the ITOF, Turkish university students' association in the UK, there were approximately 1,500 Turkish students across Britain in 1969, with the majority concentrated in London. Cavlı Çulfaz, *Hayatta Aklımda Kalanın Özeti* (Istanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, 2023), 62.
[216] Çulfaz, *Hayatta Aklımda Kalanın Özeti*, 61.
[217] Ibid., 62.

with Turkey's socialist youth groups, in particular the *Sosyalist Gençlik Örgütü* (Socialist Youth Organization, SGO) based in Ankara and composed of university students who were loyal TIP supporters and opposed rival socialist factions that had splintered away from it.[218]

Meanwhile, several SGO activists decided to seek out the clandestine TKP, driven by their conviction that a communist party was essential for leading a revolutionary struggle in Turkey.[219] The monthly periodical *Kardaş* (Sibling), mailed from London to Ankara, helped steer their search, openly disseminating the TKP's views.[220] *Kardaş* was published in London by Selma Ashworth, a Turkish communist woman living in the UK since 1960, who was acting as TKP's intermediary there and regularly shipped issues of *Kardaş* to various addresses in Turkey in hopes of widening TKP influence.[221] Among the young socialists in Ankara influenced by *Kardaş* were Nihat Akseymen and Merih Kudsal, who in 1971 would be instrumental in establishing the *Ingiltere Türkiyeli Ilericiler Birliği* (Union of Turkish Progressives in the UK, ITIB), and, in Kudsal's case, co-founding the *Ingiltere Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the UK, ITKB) in 1974.[222] Encouraged by what they had read, they went to London in the summer of 1970 aiming to make direct contact with the TKP, where they met Selma Ashworth and some ITOF members.[223] This choice of London, rather than West Berlin—the more typical path for Turkish migrants hoping to contact the TKP—stemmed directly from the Ankara group's exposure to the Party's ideas through *Kardaş*. In the end, their pursuit paid off: Selma Ashworth accompanied Nihat Akseymen on a short trip to West Berlin, arranging a meeting with the TKP's General Secretary Zeki Baştımar, during which Akseymen was accepted into the TKP's ranks.[224]

Initially, Akseymen's and his comrades' contact with the TKP in London did not directly influence Turkish leftist migrant politics in the UK, nor was that their goal. Instead, they returned to Ankara, eager to intensify their political engagement there. However, Turkey just entered a new era of authoritarian consolidation, ushering in heightened state repression and violence against leftist activists.[225] In response, Nihat Akseymen and Merih Kudsal decided to flee to London, ultimately resettling there as university students in January 1971.[226] Together with Turkish leftist university students from ITOF, they initiated the founding of

[218] Ibid., 66–67; Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar 1974-1976* (Istanbul: TUSTAV, 2003), 14.
[219] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 15.
[220] Ibid., 16.
[221] Eskioğlu, *Londra'da Bizim'kiler*, 191.
[222] Eskioğlu, "İşçinin Sesi'nin Kurucusu ve 70/80'lerin Tanığı: Merih Kudsal," in *Londra'da Bizim'kiler*, 225.
[223] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 16.
[224] Eskioğlu, "Merih Kudsal," 225.
[225] Merih Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 16–19.
[226] Eskioğlu, "Merih Kudsal," 225.

ITIB on December 4, 1971, in Birmingham, creating the UK's first openly left-wing Turkish migrants' organization.[227] [228] The organization's open hostility to divergent socialist viewpoints and its political rhetoric signal the strong influence of TKP's pro-Soviet line of Marxism-Leninism. Yet, the ITIB's repertoire of transnational activism was not confined to efforts aimed at transforming the home country. Its members also took part in strikes initiated by Turkish migrant workers in London, and it launched campaigns against Turkish migrant workers' "tourist" status and their deportations.[229] In January 1974, the ITIB began publishing *İşçinin Sesi* (Worker's Voice), which provided informational bulletins and commentary on the challenges Turkish migrant workers faced in the UK.[230] Additionally, the ITIB endeavored to inform the British public, in a critical manner, about the human rights violations perpetrated during Turkey semi-military rule from 1971 to 1974 with its English publications such as *Turkey Today*.[231]

The ITIB played a crucial role in extending the TKP's political reach beyond West Germany into the Turkish migrant community in the UK.[232] Shortly after its founding, the ITIB joined the ATTF network, providing vital support for the TKP's efforts to consolidate its influence within the ATTF's executive body.[233] Notably, it was through the initiatives of a handful of Turkish migrant women activists within the ITIB that the first Turkish migrant women's organization in western Europe—the ITKB—was established, a topic explored in depth in Chapter 2.

The Netherlands is the final country I discuss here. Approximately 25,000 Turkish migrants arrived in the Netherlands as guest workers between 1963 and 1974 (see Table 1). Perhaps because of this relatively small Turkish community, the Netherlands became the last link in the formative phase of Turkish leftist migrant politics in western Europe. This phase reached its culmination with the founding of the *Hollanda Türkiyeli İşçiler Birliği* (Union of Turkish Workers in the Netherlands, HTIB) on June 7, 1974, in Utrecht, by Turkish migrant workers and political refugees who had fled Turkey following the 1971 military coup.[234]

Among the HTIB founders were activists with diverse political and migration backgrounds. Political refugees included Ahmet Kardam—once a prominent socialist activist

[227] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 22.
[228] "İTİB 5 Yaşına Bastı," *İşçinin Sesi*, December 12, 1975.
[229] "Wimpy Grevi ve İTİB," *Wimpy Grev*, January 1974.
[230] Eskioğlu, "Merih Kudsal," 225.
[231] Çulfaz, *Hayatta Aklımda Kalanın Özeti*, 84.
[232] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 22.
[233] Akseymen Kudsal, 23; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 42, 45.
[234] Murat Can and Hatice Can-Engin, *De Zwarte Tulp: de positie van Turken in Nederland* (Utrecht: Jan van Arkel, 1997), 66.

in the MDD movement of the 1960s, which rivaled both the TIP and TKP—who fled to the Netherlands in 1973 on a forged passport, settled in Utrecht, and applied for asylum.[235] Other political refugee co-founders were Melek Ulagay, a feminist activist and documentary filmmaker, and Cengiz Çandar, currently a member of the Turkish parliament for the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), both of whom had been members of the Maoist *Türkiye İhtilâlci İşçi Köylü Partisi* (Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Party of Turkey, TIIKP).[236] After the 1971 coup in Turkey they went to Lebanon and Palestine to join the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) as guerillas in its fight against Israel, but in 1973 they moved to Amsterdam as asylum seekers.[237] Once Çandar and Ulagay had become settled in Amsterdam, they moved on to organize Turkish migrants in the Netherlands, together with Utrecht-based Ahmet Kardam. In her autobiography, Ulagay describes that moment as one where "we could not stay back and lay low" because their political convictions held firm.[238] In 1974, this group of political refugees set out to form a Turkish migrants' organization in the Netherlands. Among those who supported and joined their initiative were two influential Turkish migrants: Nihat Karaman—who served as HTIB's inaugural secretary general and chaired the organization from 1976 until he was murdered in 1988—and his spouse, Maviye Karaman, a renowned left-feminist activist and co-founder (and long-time chair) of the *Hollanda Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the Netherlands, HTKB) (see Chapter 4).[239] Their sustained commitment and leadership shaped HTIB's ideological and political orientation, as well as its advocacy for Turkish migrants' rights.[240] Notably, both Nihat Karaman and Maviye Karaman were also members of the TKP.[241]

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[235] Hüseyin Çakır, *Solda Yenilenme Deneyimi: TİP-TKP Birliği ve Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2017), 113.
[236] Doğan Özgüden, *"Vatansız Gazeteci": Cilt II (Sürgün Yılları, 1971-2011)* (Brussels: Info-Turk, 2011), 170; Oya Baydar and Melek Ulagay, *Bir Dönem İki Kadın: Birbirimizin Aynasında* (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2011), 260–61.
[237] Baydar and Ulagay, *Bir Dönem İki Kadın*, 261.
[238] Ibid., 263.
[239] Baydar and Ulagay, *Bir Dönem İki Kadın*, 263; Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process*, 103; Pieternel Onderwater, "Maviye Karaman: Een Turks-Nederlandse Marxistische Feministe," in *Zenobia, Khadîja En Dolle Amina's Gender En Macht in de Islamitische Geschiedenis: Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis 29*, ed. Maaike van Berkel et al. (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2009), 183–84.
[240] Baydar and Ulagay, *Bir Dönem İki Kadın*, 265; Çakır, *Solda Yenilenme Deneyimi*, 120–21.
[241] Maviye Karaman, Inteview by Sercan Çınar, Muğla, 19 August 2019. In the speech delivered on behalf of the TKP's Central Committee at Nihat Karaman's memorial service, held after his murder on 27 June 1988, he was commemorated as "one of the rare workers' leaders raised by the Turkish migrant movement in Western Europe [and] a communist [who] was always honored to be a member of the TKP and to fight in its ranks." "Türkiyeli Göçmen Hareketinin Yetiştirdiği Ender İşçi Önderlerinden Nihat Karaman'ı Kaybettik," *Yeni Yol*, no. 18 (July 15, 1988): 6.

Founded in Utrecht, the HTIB relocated to Amsterdam in October 1974, evolving into a national umbrella organization with branches across the country.[242] The HTIB emerged through collaboration among Turkish political refugees who had set aside their previous affiliations with rival groups within Turkey's socialist milieu, underscoring the founders' diversity, their initial goal being "to include migrant workers living in the Netherlands in the 'Turkish people's struggle' for a democratic Turkey."[243] Despite this diversity, from its founding onward, HTIB members attended the TKP-affiliated ATTF's annual congresses, first participating in its Seventh Congress held in December 1974 in Gelsenkirchen.[244] However, it took some time before the organization officially joined the ATTF. It was at its second congress—held on January 17–18, 1976, in Amsterdam—the HTIB made its formal alignment with the ATTF.[245] Delegates voted for the HTIB to join the ATTF and to launch a campaign entitled "Freedom for TKP in Turkey."[246] At this congress, Nihat Karaman, a TKP member, was elected as the HTIB's new chair. Through the HTIB's membership in the ATTF, the Netherlands had joined the network of Turkish leftist migrants in western Europe.

1.4. The Global Left-Feminist Milieu of the 1970s as the Transnational Historical Backdrop of Turkish Migrant Left Feminism

To lay the groundwork for my further analysis, this section will construct a historical framework that I call the global left-feminist milieu of the 1970s, which served as a primary catalyst for the development of Turkish migrant left feminism in mid-1970s western Europe.

The WIDF was founded on December 1, 1945, following its constitutive congress held in Paris on November 26–30, and attended by approximately 850 women from forty countries.[247] At its founding congress, the WIDF positioned itself as a historical successor of the international socialist women's movement, distinguishing itself from 'mainstream' international women's organizations of the time—such as the International Council of Women (ICW) and the International Alliance of Women (IAW)—by promoting an anti-fascist and socialist worldview.[248] The Federation's main foci were anti-fascism, peace, women's rights,

[242] Can and Can-Engin, *De zwarte tulp*, 66.
[243] Mügge, *Beyond Dutch Borders*, 165.
[244] "ATTF 7. Kurultayına 8 Ülkeden Katılan İşçiler Kendi Sorunlarına Sahip Çıktılar," *Kurtuluş*, no. 120 (January 10, 1975): 1; "ATTF 7. Kurultayı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 23 (January 16, 1975): 2.
[245] "HTIB 2. Olağan Kongresi Yapıldı," *Gerçek*, January 1976, 4.
[246] "HTIB 2. Olağan Kongresi Yapıldı," 4. "Hollanda Türkiyeli İşçiler Birliği ATTF'ye Katılma Kararı Aldı," *Kurtuluş*, January 23, 1976, 4; "Hollanda Türkiyeli İşçiler Birliği ATTF'ye Katılma Kararı Aldı," *İşçinin Sesi*, January 23, 1976, 4.
[247] de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation."
[248] de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s," 231.

children's wellbeing, anti-colonialism, and anti-racism— "issues they always explicitly understood as interrelated."[249] In this way, the WIDF emerged as "a Popular Front women's rights group that understood women's issues as central to the international Left's agenda."[250] Within the bi-polar context of Cold War rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union over women's status and rights, the WIDF was a prominent international non-governmental force shaping global left-feminism, largely siding with the Soviet Union.[251] Although the WIDF's membership and sympathizers often included supporters of socialist and communist parties, it encompassed a variety of perspectives—from left-liberal to communist—and saw ongoing debates about the organization's direction.[252] Beyond its appeal to socialist women in the Eastern Bloc, the WIDF played a critical role in promoting women's rights worldwide. By 1985, it had 135 member organizations in 117 countries across the so-called First, Second, and Third Worlds, and in terms of official membership, the WIDF was the largest international women's organization of the post-1945 period.[253] Functioning as a "transnational advocacy network," the WIDF provided "political and material support, inspiration, and legitimacy to its national member organizations, while also facilitating crucial international connections across and beyond continents."[254]

Some of the most fundamental and long-lasting changes for women across the globe were set in motion by WIDF members at the transnational level, beginning in the 1950s.[255] Notably, during its 1953 Copenhagen World Congress of Women, the WIDF adopted a "Declaration on the Rights of Women," which influenced women and women's organizations across different parts of the world, and which the WIDF itself would later characterize as a precursor to the 1967 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (DEDAW).[256] The WIDF's 1963 Moscow World Congress of Women, may have served as a catalyst—according to Francisca de Haan—for the process that ultimately gave rise to DEDAW.[257] These endeavors culminated in the WIDF's 1972 proposal to the UN to hold an International Women's Year, which became realized in 1975, as well as the Federation's leading role in proposing and contributing to the drafting of the 1979 Convention on the

[249] de Haan, "Left Feminism," 107.
[250] Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 155.
[251] de Haan, "Left Feminism," 108.
[252] de Haan, 108.
[253] de Haan, 107; Francisca de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 548.
[254] de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s," 231; de Haan, "Left Feminism," 107.
[255] de Haan, "Left Feminism," 109.
[256] de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s," 237.
[257] de Haan, 234.

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).[258] These milestones underline the WIDF's far-reaching contributions to advancing women's rights at the transnational level.

Building on the scholarship about the WIDF, my own research has established that the earliest known interactions between Turkish women and the WIDF date back to the 1950s. These engagements were limited, given the high risks Turkish women faced due to the systematic anti-communism in Turkey—an outlook that had also pervaded the established women's movement of the time.[259] During the 1950s, the right-wing, pro-US *Demokrat Parti* (Democrat Party, DP) government closely monitored, policed, and regulated international ties forged by women's organizations in Turkey to prevent any affiliation with left-feminist women's international groups, particularly the WIDF. On December 30, 1952, the DP government issued a cabinet decree banning the import and circulation of all WIDF publications, allegedly "to protect Turkish women from communist influence," and to extent state control over the international activities of women's organizations in Turkey.[260] Six months after the decree, a woman named Alice Hamparsamian attended the WIDF's 1953 Copenhagen Congress as a delegate from Turkey, introduced in the Congress Report as a student (with an excerpt of her speech included).[261] My research did not reveal any details about who Hamparsamian was, from where she attended the WIDF Congress, or whether she had any affiliation with the TKP. Her participation in the Congress was condemned by the *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (Turkish Women's Union, TKB)—one of Turkey's oldest and most prominent women's organizations, originally founded in 1924, dissolved in 1935, and re-established in 1949 by Kemalist women whose primary aim was to preserve the rights women had gained during the early Republican period.[262] The condemnation came in the form of an official resolution ratified at TKB's 1954 Congress, stating that "a Turkish woman cannot be a communist."[263]

In the stifling climate of 1950s Turkey, characterized by rampant anti-communism, exchanges between Turkish women and the WIDF were largely enabled through the efforts of

[258] de Haan, "Left Feminism," 108.
[259] Ezgi Sarıtaş and Yelda Şahin Akıllı, "Rethinking the 'Barren' Decades of Women's Movement in Turkey: Collective Memory and Intergenerational Conflicts," *Diyâr Journal for Ottoman, Turkish, and Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 1 (2023): 60.
[260] Abdullah Aydin and Murat Yildiz, "1950-1960 Döneminde Türkiye'de Kadın Hareketlerinin Niteliği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," *Yasama Dergisi*, no. 33 (2016): 59.
[261] *As One! For Equality, For Happiness, For Peace: World Congress of Women, Copenhagen, June 5–10*, 1953 (Berlin: Women's International Democratic Federation, 1953), 79-80, accessed through WASI.
[262] Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender," 113–14.
[263] Sarıtaş and Şahin Akıllı, "Rethinking the 'Barren' Decades," 62.

TKP women who had sought refuge in Eastern Bloc countries since the early 1950s. Foremost among these was Yıldız Sertel, a TKP activist, left-feminist intellectual, and journalist. Yıldız Sertel was the daughter of Sabiha Sertel (1895–1968), one of Turkey's first professional women journalists, a left-feminist author, and a TKP member, and Zekeriya Sertel (1890–1980), one of the most influential journalists in Turkey over nearly half a century, from the Second Constitutional Era in the Ottoman Empire into the early Cold War years.[264] Confronted by the anti-communist witch hunts starting in 1950, the Sertel family sought refuge in Paris, only to relocate again in 1952—this time to Budapest, as instructed by the TKP.[265] Over the next twenty years, they lived as political refugees in multiple Eastern Bloc countries, including Hungary, East Germany, and the Soviet Union. In autumn 1951, Yıldız Sertel first engaged in WIDF activities at its new Secretariat in East Berlin, to which it had relocated in early 1951 after being forced out of France. Sertel served for several weeks as a visiting TKP representative. In fact, she had traveled from Paris to East Berlin in August 1951—together with other young TKP members—to attend the Third World Festival of Youth and Students, organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY).[266] Among the festival's honorary guests was Nâzım Hikmet—Turkey's eminent communist poet and TKP member—who had managed to flee Turkey to Romania in June 1951, and from there to the Soviet Union. In their meeting during the festival, Nâzım Hikmet instructed Sertel to remain in East Berlin for a short period to participate in the WIDF's work as a TKP representative.[267] She did so for several weeks and also delivered a talk on "the woman question in Turkey," which, according to her memoirs published in 1990, "attracted considerable interest among the WIDF staff, who, until then, had limited contact with Turkish women."[268]

After Yıldız Sertel completed her brief mission at the WIDF headquarters, the TKP looked to place a permanent Turkish representative there. As part of this effort, Nâzım Hikmet leveraged his personal contacts within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU),

[264] For Sabiha Sertel, see Inci Özkan Kerestecioğlu, "Sertel, Sabiha (Born Nazmi) (1895-1968)," in *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms in Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe: 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (New York: Central European University Press, 2006), 494–97; Kathryn Libal, "Transatlantic Connections in the Making of a Socialist–Feminist Framework for Social Welfare in Turkey: The Legacy of Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel," *Affilia* 27, no. 3 (2012): 328–37. For the English translation of her memoirs, see Sabiha Sertel, *The Struggle for Modern Turkey: Justice, Activism and a Revolutionary Female Journalist*, ed. Tia O'Brien and Nur Deriş, trans. David Selim Sayers and Evrim Emir-Sayers (London: I.B.Tauris, 2019).
[265] Korhan Atay, *Serteller* (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2021), 293, 318.
[266] Ibid., 305.
[267] Yıldız Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1990), 150.
[268] Ibid., 151.

submitting a report to Moscow in which he recommended that Yıldız's mother, Sabiha Sertel (then in Paris), either join the staff at the WIDF's East Berlin offices or be invited to Moscow to work on Turkish radio broadcasts as a senior correspondent.[269] Nevertheless, in 1952, the TKP instructed Sabiha Sertel to go to Budapest, where, with her husband Zekeriya Sertel, she joined the Turkish service of Budapest Radio.[270] Meanwhile, the TKP selected Yıldız Sertel to become the Turkish representative at the WIDF headquarters in East Berlin.[271] According to her party autobiography dated September 2, 1954—retrieved by historian James H. Meyer from the TKP personal files housed at the Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (RGASPI) in Moscow and cited in his 2023 book—she noted that she had gone to East Berlin "with the Party's permission" in order to work for the WIDF.[272] It remains unclear exactly when she started her second, longer mission at the WIDF headquarters as TKP representative, but chronological clues in her 1990 memoir suggest it was around 1952–1953. In her memoir, she vividly recounted hearing of Stalin's death in the morning of March 5, 1953, just as she was preparing to head to the WIDF offices at Unter den Linden. She describes the reaction among her colleagues, recalling "many crying and mourning (…) women at the Federation made their way to the Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park to pay their respects to Stalin."[273] Apart from this anecdote, she opted not to reveal much about her extended mission at the WIDF. In part, this silence might reflect her circumspection; although she was a communist, her memoir is dominated by critical observations of the state-socialist regimes of the Eastern Bloc, potentially accounting for this omission. Nevertheless, Yıldız Sertel was the first and only Turkish communist woman to serve at the WIDF's East Berlin headquarters between 1951 and 1991. Further inquiry into the scope of her work might shed light not only on her personal role but also enrich our understanding of the WIDF itself, as the international careers of WIDF women "often remained above scholars' national radars."[274]

Another key moment to highlight in Turkish women's early engagements with the WIDF is the 1963 Moscow Congress, whose official Congress Report mentioned Turkey as one of the countries represented.[275] Although this implies that Turkish women attended, we

[269] Atay, *Serteller*, 313.
[270] Ibid., 318.
[271] Gün Benderli, *Su Başında Durmuşuz* (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2022), 205.
[272] James H. Meyer, *Red Star over the Black Sea: Nâzim Hikmet and His Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 279.
[273] Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, 183.
[274] de Haan, "Left Feminism," 108.
[275] *World Congress of Women, Moscow, June 1963: Convened by the Women's International Democratic Federation* (Berlin: WIDF, 1963), 86, accessed through WASI.

have no access to a record detailing who or how many, nor have I been able to find any document or personal testimony identifying the Turkish woman (or women) present. Nevertheless, a reconstruction of the data we do have suggests that Yıldız Sertel may have been among the 1,543 delegates from 113 countries who attended. This Congress, held from June 24 to 29 in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, coincided with a period in which we know from Sertel's memoirs that she was in Moscow. She had initially traveled there for the funeral of Nâzım Hikmet, who passed away on June 3, 1963, and afterward decided to stay longer to conduct research at the Institute of Asian Peoples under the Soviet Academy of Sciences, working on Turkish history alongside Soviet Turkologists.[276] Considering her standing as a prominent TKP woman involved in the WIDF's work—particularly as the only Turkish woman having worked at the WIDF's East Berlin office—and the fact that she was in Moscow when the 1963 Congress took place, it is quite possible she was the Turkish representative (or among those) at the Congress.

These initial instances of Turkish women's engagement with the WIDF appear to have emerged under, and been molded by, the anti-communist repression prevalent in early Cold War Turkey. Indeed, the central implication here is that the earliest forms of Turkish women's involvement with the WIDF occurred in a context of migration and exile. Consequently, my findings presented here suggest—and this relates directly to my dissertation's focus—that migration and exile were constitutive dimensions in Turkish women's historical connections with the WIDF. This situation changed with the establishment of the IKD in 1975, which became the first and only WIDF member organization in Turkey, as will be discussed below. However, in the 1980s, the pattern reverted to what we observed in the 1950s and 1960s, as I will elaborate in Chapters 5 and 6.

While global left feminism was gaining momentum in the 1960s, between 1961 and 1974, Turkey's political scene was marked not only by growing radicalization but also by an increased presence of women—particularly university students—within socialist politics, along with their rapidly diversifying engagement in left-wing activism.[277] With the proliferation in women's activism that had begun in the 1960s not only intensifying but also transforming in nature, many leftist women embraced "the idea that 'mainstream' women's organizations, marked by the women's rights discourse of the Kemalist women's movement,

[276] Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, 252–55.
[277] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 734.

were insufficient and inadequate to address the social and political problems of women in Turkish society."[278]

Among the various socialist women's organizations founded in 1970s Turkey, the largest and most politically influential was IKD, established on June 3, 1975 in Istanbul by a group of women affiliated with the TKP.[279] These women had been active in the socialist movement since the 1960s, maintaining a dynamic women's group within the TIP during the late 1960s and early 1970s, then forging a new path after the 1971 military coup by joining the clandestine TKP to rebuild the socialist movement.[280] Their move, along with similar decisions by many others, marked the onset of the TKP's so-called *Atılım* (Leap Forward) era, during which it reactivated its membership in Turkey and reemerged as a major political force in the socialist milieu—thanks, in large part, to the contributions of a younger generation of communist activists.[281] Numerous accounts— including that of Emel Akal, who was the first to study the history of the IKD in her 1996 master's thesis, later published as a book in 2011, and a 1996 book collectively authored by a group of IKD founders and executives to document the organization's history—assert that the global appeal of the IWY served as the decisive factor behind the TKP's growing focus on "the woman question," ultimately leading to the creation of the IKD at the convergence of global and domestic dynamics.[282] One of the transnational dynamics that shaped the TKP's increasing familiarity with the IWY was the WIDF's influence, through its communication with prominent TKP cadres, encouraging them to motivate Party members to establish women's organizations not only in Turkey but also in western Europe. This was achieved through the involvement of women members based in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands, who were active in Turkish leftist migrant organizations within the TKP-affiliated ATTF network, as will be discussed in Chapter 2. Over the four years it officially existed (1975–1979) before the Martial Law Command shut it down, IKD achieved nationwide prominence, establishing 33 branches and 35 representative offices, and drawing some fifteen thousand active members.[283] The organization operated its own news agency and published a monthly magazine titled *Kadınların Sesi* (Women's Voice), which was issued uninterruptedly from August 1975 to August 1980, with a total of 61 issues,

[278] Ibid., 735.
[279] Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey," 80.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid., 80–81.
[282] Adak, "Yetmişli Yıllarda Kadın Hareketi," 614; Şeyda Talu, "Tarih Bilinciyle Kazanılan Bir Arşiv," in *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (1975-80): 'Kırmızı Çatkılı Kadınlar'ın Tarihi*, ed. Muazzez Pervan (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2013), xii; Emel Akal, *Kızıl Feministler: Bir Sözlü Tarih Çalışması* (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2011), 127–28; Saadet Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk* (Istanbul: Açı Yayınları, 1996), 15.
[283] Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 238.

whose circulation, by the late 1970s, had reached thirty thousand copies per issue.[284] This unprecedented and remarkable mass mobilization of women was made possible by the initial efforts by leading IKD members "to create as broad-based and independent a women's organization as possible."[285] Although IKD never attained full autonomy, in large part owing to its complex relationship with the TKP, it "succeeded in carving out a political presence for itself that went beyond being simply an offshoot extension of the Party."[286]

IKD in Turkey marked a significant transition in Turkish women's ties with the WIDF, evolving from earlier, largely individual-level participation to an organizational one. From its inception, IKD openly embraced the WIDF's agenda and saw itself as an integral part of the broader international progressive women's movement, and the WIDF in particular. On May 13, 1977, IKD submitted an official application for WIDF membership, aspiring to become the WIDF's national affiliate in Turkey.[287] At the WIDF Council Meeting held on May 15–19 1978 in Moscow, IKD's application was approved, making it the first and only WIDF member organization from Turkey.[288]

By ushering in a systematic transnational engagement with the WIDF and sustaining ties between Turkish and international left-feminist movements, IKD represented a decisive transformation in the history of left feminism in Turkey. Crucially, IKD also played a central part in shaping the transnational politics of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe, where it served as the principal homeland-based actor for the Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations founded around the same time in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands. In the forthcoming chapters, I will analyze the formation of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe by situating the global impetus provided by the IWY and the WIDF, as well as the role and standing of IKD in Turkey, as interconnected elements of the broader transnational historical backdrop that contributed to the shaping of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe in the mid-1970s.

1.5 Conclusion

Between 1964 and the early 1970s—a period I call the formative phase of Turkish leftist migrant activism—Turkish migrants carried out and took part in a variety of community organizing and labor activism. Beginning in the mid-1960s, these efforts evolved in scale,

[284] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 137; Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 176.
[285] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 735.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey," 85.
[288] "WIDF Council Meeting in Moscow," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 3 (1978): 26.

pace, and direction, energized by the rise of working-class and socialist movements in Turkey. The earliest politically oriented Turkish migrant organizations emerged in West Germany, home to the largest Turkish migrant community in western Europe. These organizations also helped expand Turkish leftist migrant activism beyond in West Germany, especially through the founding of ATTF, an umbrella organization uniting Turkish leftist migrant groups across Europe and playing a prominent role as a transnational network well into the 1970s. The first and most prominent politically oriented Turkish migrant organizations during this formative phase were BTTO in West Berlin, established on June 11, 1967; ITIB in the UK, founded on December 4, 1971; and HTIB in the Netherlands, established on June 7, 1974, in Utrecht, and later relocating to Amsterdam. It was from these pioneering organizations that the Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations I analyze in this dissertation originated.

In each of these three countries, Turkish migrants' political organizing was largely driven by Turkish leftist workers and university students, many of whom had been active in left-wing political circles in Turkey during the 1960s and retained ties to the TIP—or forged connections with the TKP upon their arrival abroad. Turkish migrants developed a political identity shaped by their transnational links to Turkey and by their overlapping experiences as migrants, guest workers, women, students, and political actors in societies that perceived them as "foreigners." In the formative years of Turkish leftist migrant activism in western Europe, their endeavors directed toward Turkey became a political channel responding both to political developments in the homeland and to the debates, conflicts, and ideological divisions that emerged within the socialist scene in Turkey in the 1960s and early 1970s—divisions that these leftist migrant organizations inevitably took a stand on. As evidenced by my findings for this formative period, socialism was by no means a narrow sectarian current but rather a substantive political force within one of western Europe's largest migrant populations.

The formative phase of Turkish migrants' left-wing political organizing in western Europe was shaped by their continuous negotiation of trans-local connections with their homeland. Occurring in the earliest stage of the migrant settlement process, during which most migrants remained confident about returning home after a certain time—this period placed the idea of return at the core of Turkish migrant politics and the shaping of the Turkish political community in western Europe. In this setting, guest-worker regimes treated Turkish migrants as temporary, and in the activists' political imaginations, Turkey was not distant or inaccessible in a diasporic sense. Therefore, Turkish migrants' left-wing organizations in Europe served as catalysts for collective action and community building, establishing networks that channeled the anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, and anti-capitalist ethos of the

global sixties between Turkey and their host countries. The circulation of these ideas in transnational space reinforced Turkish leftist migrants' ties with actors in Turkey, giving rise to transplanted homeland politics that were central to this formative phase.

By the late 1960s into the 1970s, the TKP's increasing influence among Turkish leftist migrants in western Europe reached its peak, allowing it to act as a central transnational force behind the rise of Turkish migrant left feminism in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands. The TKP coordinated Turkish leftist migrant women's initiatives almost concurrently in these countries and in Turkey itself, a process of which the subsequent chapters will offer an in-depth analysis.

Lastly, the global left-feminist milieu of the 1970s was a key transnational historical backdrop to the rise of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe. Occupying a central role in that milieu was the WIDF, whose extensive activity from the 1950s onward, coupled with its transnational initiatives in the UN, boosted the global struggle for women's rights and paved the way for the UN's 1975 proclamation of 1975 as IWY. My research reveals that Turkish women were not entirely detached from these developments, even though their involvement was initially limited. IWY's broad influence on global women's movements helped drive TKP women to form a left-feminist women's organization in Turkey, resulting in the establishment of IKD in June 1975 in Istanbul. IKD's emergence—and its robust presence within the women's movement in Turkey in the 1970s—can be viewed as a crucial homeland factor in the transnational development of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe, as I will explore in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 for the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands, respectively.

Chapter 2: The First Link in the Chain: The ITKB (1974-1980)

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will examine the founding and development of the *Ingiltere Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in the UK, ITKB), the only Turkish migrant left feminist organization in the UK, which existed from 1974 to 1980. The ITKB's history has been entirely neglected in the scholarly literature. There are no scholarly works on the ITKB, and the historiography on Turkish transnational migrant politics and Turkish migrant women's activism in Europe does not mention the ITKB at all.[289]

Reconstructing the ITKB's political history has presented significant challenges because of the scarcity of documentation left by the first generation of Turkish left-feminist women in the UK (see Sources and Methodology section). This contrasts with the more robust archival sources available for their counterparts in the Netherlands and West Germany, and the post-1980 activism of exiled IKD cadres and TKP women. In the absence of preserved ITKB's organizational records or personal archives, I adopt what Sherry Katz has called "researching around our subjects"—detailed in my methodology section—to trace the paths of these first-generation activists and interpret the ITKB's history.[290] My starting point here is the collection of personal letters Merih Kudsal exchanged with fellow ITKB activists in London during her 1974–1976 stay in Moscow. [291] From this collection, I worked outward in concentric circles to related materials: from ITIB's bi-weekly Turkish journal *İşçinin Sesi* (Worker'd Voice) and the few remaining issues of ITKB's magazine *Emekçi Kadın* (Working Women) available at the IISH and Atria in Amsterdam, to the varied materials of Turkish migrant organizations in western Europe in which ITKB members took part, their appearance in the WIDF's magazine *Women of the Whole World*, as well as an oral history interview I conducted with ITKB founder Akgül Baylav.[292] Integrating these layers of materials has allowed me to outline the political trajectory of the UK's first generation Turkish migrant left-feminists, but the portrait remains marked by omissions and unanswered questions.

The chapter is structured into four sections. In Section 2.2, I analyze the emergence of ITKB by exploring how the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminist women in the UK became politically active in the early 1970s, and then examine ITKB's founding in 1974. In

[289] For example, Hatzidimitriadou and Çakir, "Community Activism and Empowerment of Turkish-Speaking Migrant Women in London"; Erel, *Migrant Women Transforming Citizenship*.
[290] Katz, "Excavating Radical Women in Progressive-Era California."
[291] *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*.
[292] Akgül Baylav, Interview by Sercan Çınar, Online, February 18, 2024.

Section 2.3, I explore how International Women's Year (IWY) influenced the ITKB's political direction, particularly regarding the transnational efforts in advocating Turkish migrant women's rights and the homeland-oriented endeavors to enhance women's status in Turkey. I investigate which initiatives ITKB members pursued within the TKP-affiliated ATTF network to promote independent organizing among Turkish migrant women and discuss their contributions to the shaping of organized Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe during IWY. In Section 2.4, I analyze the ITKB cadres' role in and contribution to forming a transnational network of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in western Europe and assess how the WIDF's investment in the UN-sponsored IWY program and its own congress in East Berlin may have supported Turkish left-feminist women's networking through the founding of the ATKF, including a closer look at Turkish migrant women's participation in the 1975 East Berlin Congress.

Lastly, Section 2.5 briefly explores the consequences of an internal conflict within TKP, which emerged in 1978, for Turkish migrant left-feminist activism in western Europe, focusing on how the ITKB positioned itself against the split and the factional struggle that unfolded among male TKP members in western Europe. In 2.6, I answer this Chapter's main research questions on how the ITKB originated and developed between 1971 and 1980, and what was its position in international Turkish migrant women's left feminism.

2.2. "Before Going Public": The Founding of the ITKB and Early Tactics of Community Activism

The UK holds the distinction of hosting the first Turkish migrant women's organization created in western Europe. Founded on February 11, 1974, in London's Stoke Newington, ITKB emerged from a small but politically active Turkish community of migrant workers and university students.[293] By examining the social, political, and migration backgrounds of the leading female figures within ITIB, as well as their prior political socialization and experiences in mixed-sex Turkish left-wing organizations, I will asks two key questions: First, who were those women who initiated the founding of the ITKB, how did their lives and contexts shape the emergence of Turkish migrant left-feminist activism in the UK? Second, how did their previous gendered and political experiences within ITIB and the broader Turkish migrant community influence their activism and in which ways were they rooted in communist-inspired political work?

[293] "İTKB Kuruldu," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 2 (February 15, 1974): 2.

In the early 1970s, when Turkish migrant left-wing activism in the UK was still in its formative stages, only a handful of women were actively engaged in the political work of ITIB. Among them were Merih Kudsal, Akgül Baylav, and Yıldız Biray Çulfaz, who would later play crucial roles in founding ITKB. Merih Kudsal (1948–) was born in Ankara and graduated from TED Ankara College, the first private Turkish school established after the founding of the Republic of Turkey whose instruction language is English, in 1966.[294] She then enrolled in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, a campus known as a stronghold for revolutionary student mobilization throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In her accounts, Kudsal credited her friend Nihat Akseymen, whom she knew from her college years and whom she married in 1970, with influencing her decision to join the *Türkiye İşçi Partisi* (Workers' Party of Turkey, TIP) in 1967.[295] While working in TIP's youth branch in Ankara alongside N. Akseymen, Merih Kudsal and Akseymen travelled to the UK in the summer of 1970 to establish contact with the TKP, which was based in Leipzig, East Germany, and had ceased operations in Turkey since the 1950s (for why they chose London over West Germany to establish contact with the TKP, see Section 1.3).[296] They successfully contacted the TKP and were admitted as members by the Party's general secretary, Zeki Baştırmar, during a meeting in East Berlin in the summer of 1970.[297] They returned to Turkey as new TKP members, but their stay there was short-lived. Due to security threats from far-right groups in Ankara, Kudsal and Akseymen were forced to flee to the UK temporarily in January 1971, an exodus that interrupted Kudsal's university studies.[298] Together with N. Akseymen, Kudsal made significant contributions to the formation of ITIB in 1971, before going on to pioneer Turkish migrant women's political organizing as a co-founder of ITKB in 1974. Five months after ITKB was founded, in July 1974, Merih Kudsal moved to Moscow with her husband, N. Akseymen, following the TKP's directive to attend the International Lenin School, staying in Moscow from 1974 to 1976.[299]

Akgül Baylav (1945–), born in Istanbul, graduated from *Deutsche Schule Istanbul* (German School of Istanbul), a private international high school established in 1868 that

[294] Eskioğlu, "İşçinin Sesi'nin Kurucusu ve 70/80'lerin Tanığı: Merih Kudsal," 225.
[295] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 11.
[296] Eskioğlu, "İşçinin Sesi'nin Kurucusu ve 70/80'lerin Tanığı: Merih Kudsal," 225; Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 15–16.
[297] Eskioğlu, 225.
[298] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 18–20.
[299] Ibid., 27–28.

offers instruction in German, English, and Turkish.[300] She then pursued a degree in psychology at Istanbul University, where she became involved in the revolutionary student movement and embraced socialist politics.[301] In 1969, after finishing her bachelor's degree, Akgül Baylav moved to the UK to pursue a master's in pharmacology at the University of London. As a graduate student there, her initial involvement in Turkish left-wing migrant activism occurred through her membership in ITOF, where she connected with Turkish and Turkish Cypriot leftist students who would form ITIB in 1971, as well as the women who went on to establish **ITKB** in **1974**.[302] Baylav joined the TKP in 1973.[303] After completing her master's, she stayed in London and pursued a PhD in clinical psychopharmacology at the Institute of Psychiatry (IoP), graduating in 1977.

Yıldız Biray Çulfaz (1949–2015), another prominent female figure in ITIB and a co-founder of ITKB, was born in Ankara. In 1968, her final year of high school, she attended Talawanda High School in Ohio under the American Field Service (AFS) exchange program.[304] There, she witnessed the peak of the US Anti-Vietnam War Movement and youth mobilizations of 1968, an experience shaping her anti-imperialist and anti-US views.[305] These sentiments propelled her into joining to TIP and active participation in the anti-imperialist student movement in Ankara, where she was arrested multiple times and subjected to police violence. Alarmed by the mounting repression, her parents, concerned that their "militant daughter" might be at risk, encouraged her to continue her university education abroad.[306] Heeding their advice, in 1969, she applied for and then earned a scholarship by the Turkish Atomic Energy Administration to study metallurgy and material science at Imperial College London.[307] Once there, Çulfaz continued her activism and actively supported TIP by selling its monthly publication *Emek* (Labour) among Turkish students and sending the proceeds to TIP in Turkey.[308] Later she became a TKP member and worked for The Party's printing press, publishing its central organ *Atılım*.[309] After completing her master's degree, Çulfaz travelled

[300] Faruk Eskioğlu, "Toplumun Son Yarım Asrının Tanıkları: Cahit ve Akgül Baylav," in *Londra'da Bizim'kiler, Cilt 3: Toplumun Yüzü* (Istanbul: Faruk Eskioğlu, 2019), 41.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Baylav, Interview by Sercan Çınar.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Cavlı Çulfaz, *Hayatta Aklımda Kalanın Özeti* (Istanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, 2023), 219.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid., 91; Cavli Culfaz, "Yildiz Culfaz Obituary," *The Guardian*, September 20, 2015, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/20/yildiz-culfaz-obituary.
[308] Fergül Yücel and Cavlı Çulfaz, "Bizim Radyo'nun cızırtısı," *Kent Yaşam* (blog), September 25, 2023, https://kentyasam.com.tr/wp/2023/09/25/bizim-radyonun-cizirtisi/.
[309] Yücel and Çulfaz.

to Moscow in September 1975 with a group from TKP's UK branch to attend the International Lenin School for a year.[310] Following her cadre training, she returned to Turkey in 1976 and played an active part in organizing the IKD in Istanbul. In 1980, three months before the 12 September military coup, she moved to Prague with her husband, Cavlı Çulfaz, also a TKP member, to serve as the TKP representative for the monthly *Problems of Peace and Socialism* (commonly known as *World Marxist Review*, the name of its English-language edition).[311]

As the principal figures among the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists in the UK, Merih Kudsal, Akgül Baylav, and Yıldız Biray Çulfaz were young, well-educated, and middle-class. Sharing a similar background and perspective—and drawn together by a common political direction—they participated in Turkish left-wing migrant politics in the UK, joining ITIB in its formative phase during the early 1970s. Starting from 1971, these women started to perform a triple role in left-wing migrant politics in the UK. First and foremost, they actively took part in ITIB's homeland directed practices and public initiatives, such as the long-term solidarity campaigns with political prisoners and with those affected by state repression in Turkey under the semi-military rule installed after the 12 March 1971 military coup. Among other things, they contributed to the publishing and dissemination of magazines, information bulletins, leaflets, and briefs such as *Turkey Today* for the promotion of democracy and human rights in Turkey.[312] It was in this setting that the first generation of Turkish migrant women activists took up their initial roles in transnational migrant politics in the UK.

Second, they were active in socialist agitation among Turkish migrant workers in London. Beginning in late 1973, left-wing political organizing among Turkish workers and leading them into actions for better working conditions became a central issue on the ITIB's agenda, in parallel to the growing discontent among Turkish migrants and Turkish Cypriots working in the clothing and restaurant sectors that used migrant labor intensively.[313] A major turning point for Turkish migrants' labor organizing occurred in October 1973 during the so-called Wimpy Strike, in which Turkish and Turkish Cypriot workers at Wimpy fast-food restaurants across London went on strike, the first one in that sector.[314] The 1973 Wimpy Strike was declared by the Turkish Workers' Committee under the International Workers' Branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) and involved demands for

[310] Çulfaz, *Hayatta Aklımda Kalanın Özeti*, 91.
[311] Yücel and Çulfaz, "Bizim Radyo'nun cızırtısı."
[312] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 23.
[313] Eskioğlu, *Londra'da Bizim'kiler*, 195–209.
[314] "Hak Verilmez Alınır," *Wimpy Grev*, no. 1 (Jauary 1974): 1.

unionism and collective bargaining for better wages and working conditions.[315] The strikers were able to successfully pressure Salih Ali, a Turkish Cypriot running the Wimpy fast-food chain in London, to raise wages and recognize their union, galvanizing support from English, Greek, Spanish and Portuguese workers in London.[316] The Wimpy Strike was led by young Turkish university students and socialist activists who were affiliated with the ITIB, including Merih Kudsal, mentioned above.[317] It led to a surge in the ITIB's political organizing efforts among Turkish migrant workers. On February 1974, the ITIB initiated its Turkish bi-weekly *İşçinin Sesi* (Worker's Voice), which would become the most widely read and influential Turkish political magazine among Turkish migrants, not only in the UK but also across western Europe, with its content at the interplay of developments in Turkey, migrant workers' everyday experience, socialist agitation, and the circulation of socialist ideas among Turkish migrants.[318]

However, the ITIB did not attract a substantial number of women, likely due to the fact that its male members, who abided to patriarchal norms within the Turkish migrant community, believed that their direct involvement in women's politics would be frowned upon. Consequently, the ITIB's capacity for broader mobilization was notably compromised. In this context, ITIB women seized the opportunity to expand their own scope of action among Turkish women and migrant workers in the garment sector. This endeavor culminated in the creation of the ITKB on 11 February 1974, an initiative led by Merih Kudsal, Akgül Baylav, and Yıldız Çulfaz, two additional founders whom we know by name, Gülşen Azkan and Şule Bucak, as well as several Turkish migrant women workers.[319] At its founding, the ITKB described itself as a "non-political" organization "seeking to strengthen ties and build relationships in [their] lives in the UK."[320] In a February 2024 interview I conducted with Akgül Baylav, she recalled that the ITKB founders took great care not to have ITKB perceived as the women's auxiliary of the ITIB, an organization, according to Baylav, "already branded" by the Turkish migrant community as socialist or even as "the TKP's local extension in the UK."[321] Such a reputation, Baylav explained, "could provoke opposition from […] husbands," leading them to "restrain women from going to ITKB."[322] In the ITKB

[315] "İngiltere Basını Grevi Anlatıyor," *Wimpy Grev*, no. 1 (January 1974): 3.
[316] "İşçilerin Dayanışması," *Wimpy Grev*, no. 1 (January 1974): 1.
[317] Eskioğlu, *Londra'da Bizim'kiler*, 195.
[318] Eskioğlu, "İşçinin Sesi'nin Kurucusu ve 70/80'lerin Tanığı: Merih Kudsal," 225.
[319] Ibid.
[320] "Türkiyeli Kadınlar Birliği Duyurusu," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 3 (March 1, 1974): 4.
[321] Baylav, Interview by Sercan Çınar.
[322] Ibid.

founders' view, migrant women's tendency of non-participation in politics due to patriarchal arrangements and internalization of patriarchal cultural norms dominant in Turkish migrant community were detrimental factors for Turkish migrant women's political participation.

Despite ITKB's self-description as "non-political," an anonymous report in the TKP's *Atılım* (Leap Forward) of September 1974 instead emphasized the ITKB's connection to the TKP, stating: "Our women workers in London have established an organization called ITKB."[323] The report also confronted the sexist expression in Turkish "*elinin hamuruyla*," literally "[to be involved in men's jobs] with dough in her hands," denoting women's supposed exclusion from the political/public sphere. It clarified that these women would "defy that saying and come together to discuss the issues of our country and political matters."[324] The report described ITKB as "a good example for women workers and housewives in Turkey as well as for women workers in West Germany and other countries (…) The political organizing of women and their entry into the revolutionary fight, is the first step to their liberation."[325] With these words, the TKP validated ITKB's pioneering status in Turkish women's left-feminist organizing—not only in western Europe but also in Turkey, and did so on the eve of the IWY.

In an interview I conducted with IKD co-founder Zülal Kılıç, she agreed with this analysis. While addressing the historical significance of IWY in the global women's movement and its serving as a transnational backdrop to the formation of the IKD in Turkey, Kılıç recounted that the TKP-affiliated women were aware that "Turkish women abroad had launched their organizations much earlier than we had."[326] Consequently, well before the IKD formally emerged in Turkey, Turkish women's left-feminist activism evolved via mutual inspiration and cooperation between Turkey and migrant communities in western Europe, with ITKB leading the way.

In 1974, the ITKB largely limited its activities to non-political and woman-only practices and community-building efforts among Turkish women in the UK through organizing family gatherings, museum tours and picnics that I see as a strategy to address traditional socialization patterns.[327] Through these activities, the ITKB sought to attract Turkish migrant women who had arrived in the UK as spouses of the male migrant workers

[323] "Kadınların Örgütlenmesi," *Atılım*, no. 9 (September 1974): 6.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Zülal Kılıç, Interview by Sercan Çınar, Istanbul, 22 December 2015.
[327] "Kadınlar Birliği Çiğköfte Günü Yaptı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 12 (July 15, 1974): 4; "Kadınlar Birliği Gezi Yaptı," *İşçinin Sesi*, October 17, 1974, 4; "Kadınlar Birliği Çalışmaları Başarılı Bir Şekilde Sürüyor," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 20 (November 14, 1974): 4.

and were restricted to household chores, thus offering them an opportunity to acquaint themselves with Turkish migrant politics and going out into the public sphere. Yet, none of this was easy, as correspondence between the ITKB's three most prominent figures, Yıldız Çulfaz, Merih Kudsal and Akgül Baylav, shows. In the autumn of 1974, Yıldız Çulfaz wrote to Merih Kudsal, then in Moscow: "it is very difficult to separate women from their families and husbands and to keep them away from housework for even three hours every other week, and even the ones who made it find themselves in distress."[328]

Likewise, Baylav, in the interview I conducted with her, recounted the challenges of "taking women out of their homes" in a situation where, as she described it: "They were mostly confined to their houses, had no English, and many could not read or write in their native language [Turkish]. They didn't even know how to take a bus or buy a ticket, so they feared and avoided the outside world."[329] Baylav further recalled the personal effort she invested in bringing women to ITKB:

> The university where I was studying and working at as a research assistant was in South London and almost every day, I spent my evenings traveling from South to North London [where the Turkish migrant community lived] to pick up women, bring them to ITKB for activities or just to spend time together, and then accompany them back home, often arriving at my own home around midnight.[330]

Reflecting on this daily routine and the immense time and effort she devoted to community work, Baylav described it as "an insanity," but quickly added, "I never once found it burdensome, and I have no regrets because I believed wholeheartedly in what I was doing."[331] Alongside organizing woman-only gatherings, ITKB members supplemented their community activism with the task of organizing home visits to Turkish migrant women residing in the North London Boroughs of Islington, Hackney, Haringey, and Enfield as a community outreach strategy.

Soon, the ITKB started offering English-language courses and literacy courses for Turkish migrant women. These were, on the same day, followed by social gatherings involving conversations about the everyday problems that Turkish migrant women were

[328] Yıldız Çulfaz to Merih Kudsal, November-December 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 157–59.
[329] Baylav, Interview by Sercan Çınar.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid.

facing, and drawing attention to the importance of unity among migrant women.[332] ITKB women's early forms of community activism also included preliminary forms of consciousness-raising activities such as reading group for Turkish women, where they could meet to read and discuss "short stories about women."[333] Alongside the reading groups, ITKB members established a small library stocked with books collected by the community; they also prepared a scrapbook with news clippings from English and Turkish newspaper used for conversations during social gatherings, which highlighted migrant women's needs and informed them about their rights.[334] In addition, the ITKB gave assistance for those facing housing problems in London and helped Turkish migrant women with their applications to the city councils, which were providing affordable accommodation for migrants in council and social housing around London.[335] For this purpose, the ITKB also prepared a brochure in Turkish, "Our Housing Problem (Council Applications)," with all important information regarding housing applications to the city councils.[336]

Important as all of this was, according to active ITKB women the organization should be more than a service provider for migrant women. In the same letter to Merih Kudsal mentioned above, Yıldız Çulfaz wrote that it was crucial for the ITKB activists to make women embrace the ITKB as their own self-organization and "to make them more attached to it, to make them trust it more strongly (…) otherwise [the active ITKB women would] continue to work like an emergency service."[337]

Despite these concerns, the ITKB did take part in labor organizing efforts among garment workers, many of whom were women, and sought to facilitate Turkish migrant women's participation in labor activism. In keeping with this goal, Hasibe Tunç, Güler Yılmaz and Menekşe Babataş—working-class members who joined the ITKB following its establishment—attempted to organize groups of women workers in the garment sector around London by focusing their efforts on the interstices of work, home and community.[338] They concentrated their organizing work on smaller textile factories in London that were actively recruiting Turkish migrant women such as Nadir Models, Kensa Fashions, Lido and Feris

[332] "Kadınlar Birliği İngilizce Dersleri Düzenliyor," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 19 (October 31, 1974): 4; "Kadınlar Birliği Okuma-Yazma Kursu Açtı," *İşçinin Sesi*, December 19, 1974, 4.
[333] Yıldız Çulfaz to Merih Kudsal, November-December 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 157–59.
[334] Akgül Baylav to Merih Kudsal, 6 December 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 160–64.
[335] "İTKB Kansıl'a Nasıl Başvurmak Gerektiği Konusunda Yardımcı Oluyor," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 17 (October 1, 1974): 4.
[336] "Kadınlar Birliği Çalışmaları Başarılı Bir Şekilde Sürüyor," 4.
[337] Yıldız Çulfaz to Merih Kudsal, November-December 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 157–59.
[338] Eskioğlu, *Londra'da Bizim'kiler*, 225.

Fashions, and the Calwin Tailoring Workshop.[339] Their organizing efforts led to two successful strike actions—with demands for increased weekly wages and 25 days of paid annual leave—during the autumn of 1974, first at Lido (1 October 1974) and then at Feris Fashions (25 November 1974).[340] In collaboration with the ITIB, the ITKB women played a significant role in the unionization of Turkish women workers under the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers (NUTGW), which would lead several subsequent strikes in the garment sector.[341]

To ITKB's extensive efforts to organize Turkish migrant women in the garment sector, factory owners responded with heightened surveillance, focusing on the women workers' profiles and their ties to the ITKB. Evidence of this can be found in the letter from Yıldız Çulfaz (written November–December 1974) to Merih Kudsal, who had recently departed for the International Lenin School in Moscow after leaving her position at the Calwin Tailoring Workshop. In the letter, Çulfaz recounted rumors allegedly disseminated by the Workshop's owner in an attempt to weaken the ITKB's influence following Kudsal's departure, claiming that "Merih [Kudsal] is gone, and the Women's Union [ITKB] will now disband."[342] However, Çulfaz clarified that the active ITKB women managed to expand their contacts and membership base among Turkish migrant women workers in the absence of Merih Kudsal.[343] This letter demonstrates that Merih Kudsal—a TKP member—was widely recognized as the most prominent figure in the ITKB and in the early phase of Turkish migrant left-feminist activism in the UK.

The expansion of ITKB's membership base can only be traced through personal correspondence exchanged between key ITKB figures in Moscow and London. In her November–December 1974 letter, Yıldız Çulfaz informed Merih Kudsal that ITKB's membership had grown to approximately forty women.[344] Similarly, in her letter dated 6 December 1974 to Kudsal, Akgül Baylav expressed her excitement about the growth and diversification of ITKB's membership. Recalling a recent ITKB meeting, she noted that around twenty women had been present, of whom only three—including herself and Yıldız

[339] "İşçiler Konuşuyor: İrfan Nadir'in İç Yüzü," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 8 (May 15, 1974): 3–4; Menekşe Babataş, "Kensa Korkuyor," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 10 (June 15, 1974): 2.
[340] "Lido'da İşçiler Grev Yaptı 24 Saatte Haklar Alındı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 17 (October 1, 1974): 1; "Feris İşçileri Haklarını Söke Söke Aldı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 21 (December 5, 1974): 1.
[341] "Saadet Dikimevi'nde Grev Zaferle Bitti: Patronların Bacakları Titriyor," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 24 (January 30, 1975): 1.
[342] Yıldız Çulfaz to Merih Kudsal, November-December 1974, 157.
[343] Ibid., 158.
[344] Ibid.

Çulfaz—were "university students," while "the remainder were working-class women."[345] She emphasized the novelty of this development, writing to Kudsal: "If you had been there, I'm sure you would have been very pleased."[346]

At the outset of 1975, the ITKB had a diverse membership base, consisting of women workers together with young, well-educated and socialist university students, who had initiated the founding of the ITKB. Baylav's letter, mentioned above, also conveys her enthusiasm about their achievements in consciousness-raising among Turkish migrant women. Recalling a discussion held during the same meeting about organizing an International Women's Day celebration in 1975, she wrote: "Everyone participated in the discussions with great interest and said something. They said so many things: from saying that we are part of the international women's movement to the fact that our Union is the only Union of Turkish working-class women in Europe."[347] The ITKB's origins were both socialist and feminist in nature, shaped by the socialist worldview of its founders, who were members of the TKP. Their leading roles in organizing Turkish migrant women in the UK are unsurprising, given that "women's liberation, after all, was a key tenet of socialism."[348] From its earliest phase, a defining feature of the ITKB's political work was its strong focus on working women. The organization's activists made deliberate efforts to reach out to and include as many working-class women as possible in their ranks.

2.3. Deeper Engagement in the Global Women's Movement and Transnational Migrant Politics

In this section, I investigate how the ITKB capitalized on the momentum generated by IWY to expand its political trajectory. Before doing so, it is essential to examine how the TKP—the key actor connecting Turkish left-feminist activists in western Europe (including the UK) with those in Turkey—became aware of IWY and designated it as a central point on its agenda for women.[349] Identifying the actors, as well as the channels of communication and exchange that shaped the TKP's familiarity with IWY, clarifies the role of UK-based TKP members in bringing IWY into the Party's political work.

[345] Akgül Baylav to Merih Kudsal, 6 December 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 160.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid., 161.
[348] de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s," 238.
[349] Notably, from the mid-1970s until the Party's Fifth Congress in November 1983, the TKP had only one woman on its Central Committee: Gönül Dinçer, who was among the founders of IKD in Turkey and responsible for the Party's work among women. The exact year of her co-option to the Central Committee by the Politburo remains unknown. Hüseyin Çakır, *Solda Yenilenme Deneyimi*, 135-136.

First among these actors was the WIDF, which informed the TKP leadership about its IWY planning. An exchange of letters between TKP leader İsmail Bilen, who was based in both Bulgaria and East Germany, and two UK-based TKP members—ITKB co-founder Merih Kudsal and her husband Nihat Akseymen—who both had been in Moscow at the International Lenin School since July 1974, substantiates this connection. A 16 October 1974 letter from Nihat Akseymen and Merih Kudsal to İsmail Bilen informed the TKP leader about Akseymen's encounter with a WIDF official—whose name and nationality were not disclosed—at a conference.[350] While the location of the conference was not specified in the letter, Kudsal later stated in the Introduction to the published collection of her letters that it took place in Samarkand.[351] In the same letter, it was mentioned that Kudsal was unable to attend the conference due to being hospitalized in Moscow for appendicitis.[352] At the conference, the WIDF official informed Nihat Akseymen about IWY and the procedure for the attendance of ATTF- and TKP-affiliated women in Europe at the WIDF's World Congress of Women in East Berlin in October 1975.[353] For this, the WIDF official suggested Turkish migrant women activists from West Berlin and London to form a Europe-wide federation of Turkish women's organizations, for which they could designate up to three delegates to attend the East Berlin Congress, representing both Turkish migrant women in Europe and women in Turkey.[354] Akseymen and Kudsal highlighted the importance of Turkish women's participation in the East Berlin Congress, stating "it would probably be worthwhile to urge TKP women in West Berlin and London to work more firmly on women's issues" as part of their preparations for IWY and the East Berlin Congress, also adding that Merih Kudsal was "personally overseeing this effort."[355] This idea would soon be taken up by ITKB members, who took the initiative for establishing a European umbrella organization for Turkish migrant women's organizations, founded on 4-5 October 1975 in Frankfurt, West Germany under the name of *Avrupa Türkiye Kadınlar Federasyonu* (European Federation of Turkish Women, ATKF).

Furthermore, one can trace the TKP's expanding awareness of the IWY in the decisions made at the ATTF's Seventh Annual Congress, convened in Gelsenkirchen, West Germany on 27–29 December 1974. The Congress was attended by around two hundred

[350] Nihat Akseymen and Merih Kudsal to İsmail Bilen, 16 October 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar,* 56–57.
[351] Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," 31.
[352] Nihat Akseymen and Merih Kudsal to İsmail Bilen, 16 October 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar,* 56.
[353] Ibid.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Ibid.

representatives from eight countries, including West Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands.[356] In a noteworthy development, the ATTF for the first time passed a resolution related to the forthcoming IWY, advocating "the elimination of gender-based inequality, the right to equal pay for equal work, and the enactment of protective legislation for women workers during maternity and pregnancy," and calling on its membership "to work for the realization of these demands."[357] This resolution was proposed by ITKB members.[358] Letters sent by members of the UK-ATTF delegation—composed of ITIB and ITKB representatives—to Merih Kudsal and Nihat Akseymen in Moscow detail the UK's delegation's influence on this resolution. Among this correspondence is a 5 January 1975 letter from leading ITIB figure Adnan Bucak to Nihat Akseymen, recounting that half of the eighteen-member-strong UK delegation were ITKB women, distinguishing them from other [male-dominated] delegations, and leaving "a markedly positive impression" on the congress attendees.[359] Bucak went on to describe how the UK delegation, which included ITKB members, proposed and facilitated the resolution on IWY and women's organizing among migrants, and lamented other ATTF organizations' dismissive stance on the issue and lack of any initiative for women's political organizing.[360] Bucak also mentioned a prior meeting of *Batı Berlin Türk Toplumcular Ocağı* (Turkish Socialist Community in West Berlin, BTTO), which had decided that there was no need to form a Turkish migrant women's union in West Berlin. Expressing frustration, Bucak commented that "[t]hem's the breaks," by which he referred to BTTO.[361] Despite BTTO's apparent reluctance in late 1974, on 8 March 1975, women from BTTO did in fact establish the *Batı Berlin Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in West Berlin, BTKB), which I will examine in Chapter 3. Besides sharing insights about the ATTF Congress, Bucak also updated Akseymen on ITKB's activities in the UK, highlighting preparations for the WIDF's 1975 East Berlin Congress as the major component of ITKB's work.

The most detailed perspective from ITKB members themselves concerning their IWY preparations can be found in letters exchanged between Akgül Baylav and Merih Kudsal, likewise focused on the ATTF's Seventh Congress. On 1 January 1975, shortly after returning

[356] "ATTF 7. Kurultayına 8 Ülkeden Katılan İşçiler Kendi Sorunlarına Sahip Çıktılar," *Kurtuluş*, no. 120 (January 10, 1975): 1; "ATTF 7. Kurultayı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 23 (January 16, 1975): 2.
[357] "ATTF 7. Kurultay Kararları," December 1974, 5. Avrupa Türkiyeli Toplumcular Federasyonu (ATTF) Kitaplığı, TUSTAV.
[358] Adnan Bucak to Nihat Akseymen, 5 January 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 171.
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ibid.

to London from Gelsenkirchen, Baylav wrote to Kudsal (in Moscow) to share her impressions.[362] In her letter, Baylav confirmed many points raised by Adnan Bucak about the ATTF's congress overall, but also added specifics about ITKB members' engagement with other women delegates attending to the congress without specifying the countries they came from.[363] She specifically recounted her opening-day address, introducing ITKB and discussing IWY, which she noted generated marked interest among the attending women.[364] Baylav further explained that women participants from other countries—again without specifying which ones—approached women members of the UK delegation, seeking guidance on fostering Turkish migrant women's organizing and looking for advice on how to replicate ITKB's efforts.[365]

ITKB members within the UK delegation proposed a special session for women delegates centered on migrant women's political organizing, a request that the congress board subsequently accommodated.[366] Baylav recounted the atmosphere at this meeting to Kudsal as follows: "oh, sweetheart, girls are seething with enthusiasm," describing the extensive eagerness among the attendees for forming women's organizations modeled on ITKB.[367] Participants at the ATTF meeting initially suggested founding auxiliary women's groups within mixed-sex Turkish migrant organizations, as in the example Baylav mentioned in her letter about a women's auxiliary of BTTO in West Berlin.[368] However, ITKB members argued in favor of "independent women's unions," and this proposal ultimately gained consensus among the delegates.[369] ITKB members pledged to forward their organizational statutes and guidance to Turkish migrant women activists in ATTF member organizations to support and inspire their own organizing efforts.[370]

It is clear, therefore, that ITKB, from September 1974 onwards, took the principal steps for channeling the TKP's growing interest in IWY into Turkish transnational migrant politics. ITKB members' IWY-related efforts resulted in a major achievement at the ATTF's Seventh Congress in Gelsenkirchen in December 1974: the adoption, for the first time, of a women's rights resolution, one proposed by ITKB members and referencing IWY. At the same event, ITKB members also held the first women's activist meeting in ATTF's history,

[362] Akgül Baylav to Merih Kudsal, 1 January 1975, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 168-169.
[363] Ibid., 168.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ibid.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Ibid., 169.
[369] Ibid.
[370] "ATTF 7. Kurultayı," 2.

advocating the establishment of migrant women's organizations throughout western Europe. These findings underscore ITKB's role in fostering Turkish migrant women's organizations and laying the groundwork for organized Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe.

Right after the December 1974 ATTF Congress, in January 1975, the ITKB published a pamphlet celebrating IWY and highlighting the fact that the idea had been initially brought up by the WIDF.[371] In this pamphlet, the ITKB, for the first time articulated a clear vision on women's emancipation, addressing the "double exploitation of women" under capitalism through both the labor market and household labor, together with broader issues of global peace as well as national independence and economic development in their home country, issues intricately linked to women's emancipation.[372] The ITKB's declaration on IWY and women's emancipation hints at a shift in its political and ideological discourse; it was the early stage of the formation of its left-feminist agenda, the one promoted by the WIDF with its ongoing international advocacy efforts since 1945.

Fostered by IWY, the synchronization of ITKB's deeper engagement in both the global women's movement and Turkish transnational migrant politics led to Turkish migrant left-feminists' increasing involvement in migrant women's labor activism in London. The earliest and most significant example of Turkish migrant women's political practices in the field of labor activism was the migrant women workers' successful strike at Saadet Tailoring Workshop in London in January 1975.[373] With the support of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers (NUTGW), which had also supported migrant women's earlier strikes at Lido (1 October 1974) and Feris Fashions (25 November 1974), migrant women workers were on strike for nine full days at Saadet Tailoring Workshop, demanding equal pay for equal work. The strike was a product of efforts made not merely by the strikers and their union, but also by their many supporters across London, thanks to solidarity campaigns initiated by the ITKB and the ITIB.[374] ITKB members also picketed with strikers outside of the Workshop and organized a food drive to assist the strikers.[375]

[371] "Dünya Kadınlar Yılı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 23 (January 16, 1975): 3.
[372] "Dünya Kadınlar Yılı," 3.
[373] "Saadet Dikimevi'nde Grev Zaferle Bitti: Patronların Bacakları Titriyor," 1.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Ibid.

Figure 2.1 Women Strikers at Saadet Tailoring Workshop, London, January 1975. On the placards: "We are workers, we are right, we are strong" and "There is a strike at this workplace." Source: İşçinin Sesi, no. 24 (January 30, 1975), 1.

In the aftermath of the strike at Saadet Tailoring Workshop, the ITKB started a unionizing campaign among Turkish women workers in London, with a particular focus on the garment industry. It hosted a series of union gatherings in collaboration with NUTGW and its International Workers' Branch, which had been maintaining close and regular relations with the ITKB since 1974, including information sessions for Turkish migrant women workers, meant to raise their awareness about laws and services that protected workers' rights.[376]

The ITKB held its first annual congress on 15 February 1975 in London, where ITKB women discussed issues related to the working conditions of Turkish migrant women and planned their activities for IWY and the upcoming March 8 celebration.[377] The ITKB organized its first International Women's Day (IWD) celebration as an indoor evening gathering on 8 March 1975 in London, bringing together women and men from the Turkish migrant community who listened to women speakers and music by the Women's Choir of the ITKB and a folk music ensemble from Chile.[378] On the occasion of International Women's Day during IWY, the ITKB also published the first issue of its magazine *Emekçi Kadın*

[376] "Kadınlar Birliği: Sendikalara Üye Olalım," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 29 (April 24, 1975): 4.
[377] "İTKB Kongresi," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 25 (February 20, 1975): 4.
[378] "Kadınlar Birliği'nin 8 Mart'ı Kutlama Gecesi Muhteşem Oldu," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 27 (March 20, 1975): 4.

(Working Woman), which provided news and features about ITKB activities, the problems of Turkish migrant women in the UK—with interviews made with some of those women, as well as a section that introduced the WIDF to Turkish migrant women and a short biography of IWD initiator Clara Zetkin.[379] Although published in irregular intervals, the ITKB's magazine *Emekçi Kadın* was the first left-feminist magazine directed exclusively to a readership of Turkish migrant women in western Europe.

[379] "Emekçi Kadın," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 28 (April 3, 1975): 2.

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Emekçi Kadın

BU GAZETE, İNGİLTERE TÜRKİYELİ KADINLAR BİRLİĞİ TARAFINDAN 1975 ULUSLARARASI KADINLAR YILI VE 8 MART EMEKÇİ KADINLAR GÜNÜ DOLAYISIYLA HAZIRLANMIŞTIR.

YAZIŞMA ADRESİ: 81, Eldon Road, LONDON N.22

ULUSLARARASI KADINLAR YILI KUTLU OLSUN!

Eşitlik, Toplumsal İlerleme ve Barış İçin İleri!

BİRLİĞİMİZ 1 YAŞINDA

KURTULUŞ YOLU NEDİR?

KADINLARIMIZ...

Nâzım Hikmet

BİTMEYEN ÇİLE

Almanya'da Kadınlar Birliği Kuruluyor

Uluslararası "Kadınlar Yılı" nın kutlanmasına öncülük eden:

Dünya Demokratik Kadınlar Federasyonu Nedir?

AMAÇLARI

NASIL ÇALIŞIR?

Figure 2.2. *Front page of the first issue of Emekçi Kadın, the ITKB's magazine, dated March 1975. The primary headline announces: "Happy International Women's Year! Forward for equality, social progress, and peace!" On the left, a subheading reads, "Our union is 1 year old." In the upper right corner, there is a poem by Nâzım Hikmet, titled "Our Women." At the lower left, the text proclaims, "Women's Union to be founded in Germany," and at the lower right is a brief overview of the WIDF, titled, "What is the Women's International Democratic Federation that initiated holding of the International Women's Year?" Source: IISH.*

Regarding IWY, many of the 1975 events in London marked the beginning of a close collaboration between the ITKB and national political actors in the UK. These events represent the earliest examples of the ITKB's country-of-residence-directed politics, as outlined in the Theoretical-Conceptual Framework and Working Definitions section of the Introduction chapter. This form of activism was one of three modes of transnational political

engagement enacted by Turkish migrant left feminism—alongside homeland-directed politics and engagement with global left feminism and its transnational organizations. Within the context of their engagement in country-of-residence politics, Turkish left-feminist women mobilized to defend the rights and interests of Turkish migrant women within their country of settlement. During this period, Turkish migrant women began participating in demonstrations and protests, gaining public visibility through grassroots and street-level social mobilizations. Beginning on 1 May 1975, International Workers' Day became a key occasion for the ITKB's activism. That year, its members participated for the first time with their own banners in the May Day Rally organized by British trade unions, alongside socialist, communist, and anarchist groups in London.[380] Together with several hundreds of Turkish migrants and Turkish Cypriots, ITKB women took to the street, holding up banners combining homeland-directed and country of residence-directed demands such as permanent work permits in the UK, better job opportunities in their homeland and equal voting rights for all, regardless of 'legal capacity' and migrant status in the UK, and the right for Turkish citizens abroad to vote in Turkish elections. As Figure 2.3 shows, ITKB women also participated in the nation-wide IWY rally organized by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) that took place on 25 May 1975 and went from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square in London.[381]

[380] "1 Mayıs'ta Bütün Wimpyler Kapandı: Yürüyüşe 300'ü Aşkın İşçimiz Vatanda İş İsteriz, Permi İsteriz Pankartlarıyla Katıldı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 30 (May 8, 1975): 1.
[381] "Kadınlar Yılı Yürüyüşü," *İşçinin Sesi*, May 8, 1975, 1; "Kadınlar Yılı Yürüyüşü," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 31 (May 29, 1975): 4.

Figure 2.3. *ITKB members taking part in the 25 May 1975 nation-wide IWY rally organized by the TUC, marching from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square in London. Their Turkish-language placards read, from left to right: "Our strength is our union," "We demand the right to vote," "We want jobs in our homeland," and "End to fascist oppression." Source: Emekçi Kadın, March 1976, 3.*

In the ITKB's heightened engagement in transnational politics, its relationship with the National Assembly of Women (NAW), the WIDF affiliate in the UK, proved critical. The earliest interactions between ITKB and NAW developed in early 1975, under the auspices of IWY, as the correspondence between Akgül Balyav in the UK and Merih Kudsal in Moscow shows. In a letter dated 11 March 1975, Akgül Baylav informed Kudsal of both ITKB's first annual congress (held on 15 February 1975) and its celebration of 8 March.[382] Alongside describing ITKB's activities, she sought Kudsal's input regarding their plan for attending the WIDF's 1975 East Berlin Congress, wondering if their Turkish-language magazine, *Emekçi Kadın*, "would suffice or whether a separate brochure should be produced for the congress," to be brought with them.[383] For this, she solicited Kudsal's feedback on the first issue of *Emekçi Kadın*, recently mailed to her in Moscow, to clarify its appropriateness for East Berlin. Baylav also mentioned ITKB's overall preparation for the 1975 East Berlin Congress and whether ITKB might join the WIDF by then, considering the fact that NAW was the only

[382] Akgül Baylav to Merih Kudsal, 11 March 1975, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 209–11.
[383] Ibid., 211.

WIDF member organization in the UK.[384] She noted NAW's plan to send a delegation of forty women from the UK and expressed the ITKB's determination "to deepen relations with NAW" ahead of the congress, potentially through joining that delegation.[385]

ITKB women participated in the July 4–5, 1975 international seminar co-organized by NAW and the WIDF at the Graduate School of Business Studies in Regent's Park, London. Titled the "European Seminar for International Women's Year," this event formed part of the WIDF's IWY program, which included four seminars in different continents, and was also part of the preparation for the 1975 East Berlin Congress, supported by UNESCO and Dorothy Hodgkin, the Nobel Prize–winning English chemist.[386] According to a report in *Women of the Whole World*, twenty-four delegates from nineteen countries across the globe attended this Seminar, including representatives from Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Cyprus, France, GDR, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sweden, Spain, the Soviet Union, and West Berlin.[387] Prominent WIDF members like Freda Brown (WIDF President) and Fanny Edelman (WIDF General Secretary) were also present. The same report mentioned participation by "an organization of Turkish women working in Britain," referring to the ITKB.[388] An ITKB member delivered a speech on the development of the progressive Turkish women's movement both in Turkey and abroad, and its ties to the labor movement and pro-democracy forces.[389] At this seminar, ITKB women also conducted an interview with the East German representative Prof. Dr. Helga Hörz, a prominent a Marxist scholar and left-feminist activist, which appeared in ITIB's magazine *İşçinin Sesi.*[390] The Seminar constituted the first face-to-face encounter between members of the ITKB and WIDF women.

[384] Akgül Baylav to Merih Kudsal, 11 March 1975, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 211.
[385] Ibid.
[386] National Assembly of Women, Great Britain, "European Seminar for International Women's Year, London, 4-6 July, 1975," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 4 (1975): 12; Norma Bramley, "Sisters in Solidarity: A History of the First 60 Campaigning Years of the NAW 1952-2012" (National Assembly of Women, April 2012), 5, http://sisters.org.uk/nawhistory.pdf.
[387] National Assembly of Women, Great Britain, "European Seminar for International Women's Year, London, 4-6 July, 1975," 12.
[388] Ibid.
[389] "Kadınlar Birliği Uluslararası Seminere Katıldı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 33 (July 17, 1975): 4.
[390] "ADC'den Helga Hörz'le Bir Konuşma," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 36 (October 9, 1975): 4. Helga Hörz (1935) was a full-time professor, who chaired the Department of Ethics she founded at the Humboldt University in Berlin. As a left-feminist activist and scholar, Hörz was a deputy council member for the WIDF, attending its congresses in Helsinki, Berlin, Prague, and Moscow, as well as numerous international consultation meetings and seminars. In 1975 Helga Hörz became a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In 1970, Hörz received Clara Zetkin Medal for her exemplary career in the field of philosophy and contributions to women's rights. For her memoirs, see Helga E. Hörz, *Zwischen Uni und UNO: Erfahrungen einer Ethikerin* (Berlin: Trafo, 2009).

2.4. The ITKB's Role in the Founding of ATKF and its Participation in the 1975 East Berlin Congress

This section further explores how IWY, combined with ITKB's contributions, shaped organized Turkish migrant left-feminism throughout western Europe and explains the process by which it gained a transnational character.

New Turkish migrant women's organizations emerged in West Germany and the Netherlands in March 1975, including BTKB in West Berlin, GKB in the Ruhr region, and HTKB in the Netherlands. Delegates from these newly established organizations, along with representatives from ITKB, gathered in Frankfurt on July 5–6, 1975, for a meeting of the *Türkiye Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi–Avrupa* (Turkish European Committee for Peace and Freedom, initially ABOK, later TBOK). ABOK/TBOK was a protest initiative of Turkish migrants, socialist workers, and students' organizations around western Europe to draw attention to the growing authoritarianism and militarism in Turkey.[391] During the ABOK meeting, the delegates from migrant women's organizations met in a parallel session, where ITKB representatives proposed founding a European umbrella organization for Turkish migrant women's organizations.[392] The participants agreed on the importance of actively furthering and deepening their cooperation and to coordinate their efforts in "the struggle for women's liberation," centered on "achieving equal rights for women in economic, political and social spheres in Europe and Turkey"—while recognizing that this struggle "cannot be separated from the global struggle against capitalism and imperialism."[393] In the closing session of the ABOK meeting, Turkish migrant left-feminist women were celebrated for their decision to enhance cooperation among themselves and collaborate with other Turkish migrant organizations, and the women's organizations represented at the meeting were

[391] The ABOK (then TBOK) was the successor of *Avrupa Af Komitesi* (European Committee for Amnesty), initially created around Europe for the release of political prisoners in Turkey under the semi-military regime between 1971-1973. When the Turkish parliament issued a large-scale amnesty in 1974, Turkish amnesty committees in Europe developed into ABÖK. Tekin, "Die erste linke Migrantenorganisation aus der Türkei,"109–24.

[392] The reports on that meeting do not mention any names."Avrupa Türkiyeli Kadın Örgütleri Biraraya Geliyor," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 32 (June 19, 1975): 1; "Frankfurt'ta Toplanan Avrupa Türkiyeli Kadın Örgütleri Birleşme Yolunda Yeni Kararlar Aldı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 33 (July 17, 1975): 1.

[393] "Frankfurt'ta Toplanan Avrupa Türkiyeli Kadın Örgütleri Birleşme Yolunda Yeni Kararlar Aldı," 1, 4.

officially admitted into ABOK.[394] Moreover, the July 1975 ABOK gathering also decided to join the World Peace Council (WPC), because they shared its perspective.[395]

So, the idea for establishing a European umbrella organization for Turkish migrant women's organizations was taken up by the ITKB in the summer of 1975, in accordance with the suggestion the WIDF made to the TKP leadership as part of their IWY planning.[396] The ATKF was founded on 4-5 October 1975 in Frankfurt.[397] In its founding declaration, which lacks a precise date, the ATKF described itself as a Federation committed to "defending the rights of working women in Europe, uniting them, advocating for equality between women and men in working and social life, and cooperating with all organizations supporting social progress, democracy, peace, and freedom."[398] Headquartered in West Berlin, the ATKF served as the transnational organizational network for Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in western Europe, of which the organizations I focus on in this dissertation were members. The Federation published a magazine titled *Emekçi Kadın* (Working Women)—not to be confused with the magazine of the same name the ITKB issued previously. The ATKF's *Emekçi Kadın* was launched in January 1976. It was intended as a bimonthly publication, but after 12 January 1977 appeared at irregular intervals. The final issue I was able to locate is the eleventh, dated 12 February 1979, which was held at Atria together with issues 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10; the second and third issues were located separately at the IISH.[399] During my archival research, I was unable to find any documents from the 1980s either produced by, or referencing the ATKF. This may suggest that the ATKF ceased its operations in or around 1980.

The ATKF's first and most urgent task was to form a delegation to represent Turkish women at the WIDF's World Congress of Women in East Berlin. This objective was explicitly stated in its founding declaration under the subheading titled "*Dünya Kadınlar Konferansına Katılalım*" (Let's Participate in the International Women's Conference).[400] The declaration noted that during the ATKF's founding meeting, delegates had agreed on the Federation's

[394] "ABÖK'e Üye Örgütlerin Sayısı 37'ye Yükseldi: Avrupa Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi Dünya Barış Konseyi'ne Girme Kararı Aldı," *Kurtuluş*, no. 133 (July 11, 1975): 1; "Avrupa Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi'ne Üye Örgütlerin Sayısı 37'ye Yükseldi: Avrupa'da Barış ve Özgürlük Savaşımı Yığınları Sarıyor," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 33 (July 17, 1975): 1.
[395] "ABÖK'e Üye Örgütlerin Sayısı 37'ye Yükseldi: Avrupa Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi Dünya Barış Konseyi'ne Girme Kararı Aldı," 1; de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation. "
[396] Nihat Akseymen and Merih Kudsal to İsmail Bilen, 16 October 1974, in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 56–57.
[397] "Avrupa Türkiye Kadınlar Federasyonu Kuruldu," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 36 (October 9, 1975): 1.
[398] ATKF, Press Release, 1975, File 124, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV, Istanbul.
[399] The issues available at Atria can be accessed at: https://hdl.handle.net/11653/per601960; those available at the IISH can be found at: https://hdl.handle.net/10622/435BE417-37BF-4FEB-B620-E31C4E19C981 .
[400]Ibid.

participation in the East Berlin Congress and issued the following appeal: "Our Federation hopes that our sisters representing women in our country will attend this international women's congress and calls on women's organizations and progressive women leaders in Turkey to participate in this congress."[401]

There are two intriguing elements regarding Turkish women's participation in the WIDF's East Berlin Congress. The first is that, despite the ATKF's appeal to their "sisters" in Turkey, the IKD did not attend, for reasons that I have not been able to clarify. The second is that there *were* members of the Kemalist women's organization *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (Turkish Women's Union, TKB), which had "observer" status. Afterward, the IKD took issue with TKB's presence at the East Berlin Congress, folding it into a wider critique of Turkey's superficial official engagement with IWY as well as the limited interest shown by the established women's movement[402]—of which TKB was part—in the international conferences held in 1975:

> In 1975, women from all over the world came together in international conferences, seminars, and meetings to discuss their problems, yet the voices of working women in Turkey were missing from all these events. The Turkish delegation at the Mexico City Conference in no way represented the women of our country. Likewise, TKB, which went to the Berlin Congress as an observer, took no steps to disseminate or implement the decisions passed there, just like those in Mexico City. Instead, it was ATKF, our working women's organization in Europe, that took part in the congress and worked to promote its resolutions and have them implemented.[403]

At the East Berlin Congress, in the words of historian Celia Donert, "the legacy of socialist internationalism influenced the varying forms of activism, exile, emigration, and international solidarity," thus connecting Turkish migrant women and left-feminist women from around the world.[404] The Congress worked for three days through nine commissions.[405]

[401] ATKF, Press Release, 1975, File 124, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV; "1975-Dünya Kadınlar Yılı: ATKF Dünya Kadınlar Kongresinde," *Emekçi Kadın*, no. 1 (December 19, 1975): 1.
[402] With the term "established women's movement," I draw on Ezgi Sarıtaş and Yelda Şahin Akıllı's conceptualization, which describes the women's organizations and magazines founded in Turkey during the late 1940s and 1950s—such as the TKB—and analytically distinguishes them from the women's political groups that emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s, particularly those within the strand of left feminism. This concept underscores their high institutionalization alongside their inability to adapt to the anti-system demands of the younger generation of socialist women. Sarıtaş and Şahin Akıllı, "Rethinking the 'Barren' Decades"; Yelda Şahin and Ezgi Sarıtaş, "Altmışlı Yıllarda Kadın Hareketi".
[403] *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği Birinci Olağan Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu* (Ankara: Ilerici Kadınları Derneği Yayınları, 1977), 8–9.
[404] Celia Donert, "Whose Utopia? Gender, Ideology, and Human Rights at the 1975 World Congress of Women in East Berlin," in *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, ed. Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 81.
[405] "The Commissions," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 1 (1976): 26–32.

Members of the ATKF delegation participated in two of them: "Commission 2: Women and Work in Industry and Agriculture" and "Commission 7: Women and the Struggle for National Independence and International Solidarity."[406] In Commission 2, the Turkish delegates mentioned issues such as unemployment and illiteracy among Turkish migrant women.[407] In Commission 7, they voiced strong opposition to Turkey's NATO membership and to the militarist and interventionist policies of the US.[408] According to the report from Commission 7, presented at the Congress's final plenary session, the delegates also "unanimously expressed their solidarity with the Cypriot people's aspirations to sovereignty."[409] This statement is particularly relevant in the context of Turkish migrant left-feminist women, as their home country was a key actor in escalating the Cyprus conflict. As reported in ITIB's magazine *İşçinin Sesi*, Turkish delegates at the Congress expressed their support for the statement by Commission 7 on solidarity with the Cypriot people's aspirations to sovereignty.[410] The report emphasized that Turkish delegates "pledged to advocate lasting peace in the Middle East and Mediterranean region, especially in Cyprus," and explicitly protested the 1974 Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus and the establishment of the de facto Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.[411] This stance taken by Turkish migrant left-feminists aligned with the WIDF's position on the Cyprus conflict, as expressed in an official 1975 statement.[412] In that declaration, the WIDF called for the implementation of UN resolutions on Cyprus, advocated for a unified and independent Cyprus, and demanded the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the island, including the Turkish military.[413]

Another significant aspect of the ATKF delegation's participation in the East Berlin Congress was their visit to the WIDF headquarters, during which they formally submitted ATKF's application for membership. This visit and the submission are documented in the annual activity report of the ATKF Executive Committee, presented at its second congress held on 6–7 November 1976 in Gelsenkirchen.[414] According to the report, the delegation delivered translated versions of the ATKF's program and statute to the WIDF secretariat. It was also noted that the ATKF headquarters and its member organizations subscribed to

[406] "Dünya Kadınları Berlin'de Toplandı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 37 (November 6, 1975): 3. "The Commissions," 26–32.
[407] "Dünya Kadınları Berlin'de Toplandı," 3.
[408] Ibid.
[409] "The Commissions," 31.
[410] "Dünya Kadınları Berlin'de Toplandı," 3.
[411] Ibid.
[412] "Solidarity with the Cyprian People: WIDF Statement," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 1 (1975): 42.
[413] Ibid.
[414] ATKF Executive Committee, Working Report, 6 November 1978, File 126, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.

Women of the Whole World. The report emphasized that "the internationalist solidarity of the WIDF strengthens our work."[415] Therefore, the ATKF holds the distinction of being the first Turkish women's organization to apply for WIDF membership, doing so in October 1975—predating the IKD's application, which was submitted on May 13, 1977 and approved in 1978 (see Section 1.4). I was unable to find any sources indicating the outcome of the ATKF's application. Therefore, until more sources become available, the IKD, ATKF's counterpart in Turkey, remains the first—and only—Turkish women's organization whose membership in the WIDF was officially approved.

The first issue of *Women of the Whole World* published after the East Berlin Congress provided extensive coverage of the event and included a feature on ITKB's *Emekçi Kadın*.[416] This issue also introduced ITKB to an international left-feminist audience, with the following overview of *Emekçi Kadın*:

> '(It) is the first women's paper in the history of the working class of Turkey. The voice of the one-year-old Union of Turkish Women in Britain (the organization of women from Turkey working in Britain), its aim is to involve women in working to solve their problems as workers, as women, mothers and citizens. This first edition of their paper, which carries an editorial article entitled 'Forward for Equality, Social Progress and Peace', was brought out to mark International Women's Year and to celebrate the first anniversary of their organization.
> It ends by listing the following demands for International Year: Employment in our home country; equal pay for equal work; social security and health services for all working women, free of charge; land to peasant families; better housing conditions, cheap houses for all working people; free education for our children and ourselves (there is still 60 percent illiteracy in Turkey); an end to the oppression and exploitation of ALL WORKING PEOPLE-MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE. Also included are articles on 'Who is Klara Zetkin,' 'What is the WIDF,' and 8th March - International Women's Day.[417]

The English used in this text—marked by grammatical inconsistencies, in contrast to the otherwise polished English in *Women of the Whole World*—suggests it was written by a non-native speaker, likely ITKB women themselves. Building on this premise, the piece offers valuable insights into how ITKB women situated themselves and their actions within the broader history of Turkish women's activism. Their claim that their publication was "the first women's paper in the history of the working class of Turkey" seems historically valid: *Emekçi Kadın* predated the IKD's *Kadınların Sesi* (Women's Voice), which debuted in Turkey in

[415] ATKF Executive Committee, Working Report, 6 November 1978, File 126, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV, Istanbul.
[416] "Emekçi Kadın, the Working Woman," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 4 (1975): 32–33; "Dünya Demokratik Kadınları Federasyonu'nun Dergisi Emekçi Kadın'ı Tanıttı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 40 (January 12, 1976): 4.
[417] "Emekçi Kadın, the Working Woman."

August 1975. Moreover, the WIDF's decision to feature ITKB and its publication in *Women of the Whole World* further affirmed their significance in the history of Turkish women's activism, as ITKB became the first Turkish women's group to appear in a WIDF publication, gaining visibility and recognition in the ranks of global left feminism.

ITKB and NAW members maintained their mutual involvement in each other's campaigns and events. The ITKB's 1976 International Women's Day meeting was attended by a group of women from the NAW and the Women's Section of the African National Congress (ANC) in the UK; reciprocally, ITKB women took part in the NAW's 8 March 1976 celebration. The ITKB representative gave a speech there in which she acknowledged the importance of IWY, in which "the women's movement gained further momentum and the political organizing among Turkish women in Turkey and Europe grew rapidly," adding that "women from Turkey became increasingly involved in the struggle against the ongoing fascist repression in Turkey."[418]

A few weeks later, some ITKB members, again unnamed in the source, had the chance to meet WIDF president Freda Brown, who was in London on the way back from her visit to Angola upon the invitation by the Organization of Angolan Women (AMO). They conducted an interview with Freda Brown for the ITIB's magazine *İşçinin Sesi*.[419] In the interview, Brown reiterated the WIDF's support for African women's struggle against racial discrimination and colonialism, and greeted the women of Angola who were participating in the reconstruction of their countries. She also emphasized the left-feminist women of Turkey as courageous women and as victims of the imperialism:

> As WIDF, we extend our greetings to our women comrades from Turkey and wish them success in their struggles under difficult conditions. We are proud to see the women from Turkey in the organized struggle and to fight alongside them who are an integral part of the international women's movement. Our sisters from Turkey must firmly believe that the warm and close solidarity of the WIDF will always be with them. We stand with women from Turkey in their fight for an independent Turkey, freed from imperialism.[420]

Through these WIDF connections, ITKB women became increasingly involved in supporting the South African women's fight against Apartheid. On 9 August 1976, ITKB women attended a meeting of the Women's Section of the African National Congress (ANC)

[418] "Kadınlar Birliği 8 Mart'ı Kutladı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 45 (March 19, 1976): 4; "İTKB, Britanya Kadınlar Birliği'nin 8 Mart Gecesine de Katıldı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 45 (March 19, 1976): 4.
[419] "Uluslararası Kadınlar Federasyonu Başkanı Freda Brown ile Bir Röportaj: 'UDKF, Bağımsız Bir Türkiye Kavgasında Türkiyeli Kadınların Yanındadır,'" *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 47 (April 16, 1976): 3.
[420] Ibid.

in the UK, to celebrate South African Women's Day. One of their representatives delivered a speech, declaring that "women from Turkey are in fully solidarity with women of South Africa in their fight for independence and freedom."[421]

Beginning in 1976, the ITKB increasingly aligned its political agenda with developments in Turkey and launched initiatives that can be understood as examples of homeland-directed politics. The period 1976–1980 in Turkey was marked by the consolidation of left-wing political activism and mass-based political mobilization of workers, women, and university youth—accompanied by an escalation of violent attacks against them by the far-right paramilitary group *Grey Wolves* (Bozkurtlar), the youth wing of the pan-Turkist ultranationalist *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party, MHP).[422] Under consecutive *Milliyetçi Cephe* (Nationalist Front) coalitions (1976–1980), formed by the right-wing *Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party, AP), the Islamist *Millî Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party, MSP), and the MHP, political violence between leftists and fascists grew so severe that it closely resembled civil war.[423]

Between 1976 and 1978, the ITKB waged a vigorous campaign against Turkey's Nationalist Front rule, simultaneously supporting and publicizing socialist and anti-fascist women's cause of advocating for political freedoms in Turkey. In May 1976, a larger protest initiative emerged via the *Ingiltere Barış ve Özgürlük Komitesi* (Turkish Committee for Peace and Freedom in the UK, IBOK), of which ITKB was a member. IBOK spearheaded a campaign against the Nationalist Front government, also backed by Liberation, a civil rights advocacy group in the UK.[424] As part of IBOK's efforts, ITKB activists consistently rallied outside the Turkish Embassy in London, protesting against the Nationalist Front government's push for a State Security Courts law that would establish an extraordinary jurisdiction to repress and persecute left-wing activists.[425] Additionally, ITKB declared its solidarity with left-feminist women and the IKD in Turkey, supporting their *Evlat Acısına Son* ("Stop Killing Our Children") campaign—jointly initiated by IKD and the women's auxiliary of *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party, CHP) in a February 1976 rally in Ankara, to protest the intensifying assaults by far-right militants and Islamists on socialists.[426] The ITKB

[421] "İngiltere'de 9 Ağustos," *Emekçi Kadın*, no. 5 (August 31, 1976): 2. No names are mentioned.
[422] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 263.
[423] Meral Ugur Cinar, "When Defense Becomes Offense: The Role of Threat Narratives in the Turkish Civil War of the 1970s," *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 1 (2014): 3.
[424] "Katil Hükümet Yıkılmalıdır!," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 49 (May 21, 1976): 1. On Liberation, see SOAS Library, "The Movement for Colonial Freedom & Liberation Archive," May 1, 2014, https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/archives/2014/05/01/the-movement-for-colonial-freedom-liberation-archive/.
[425] "Londra Elçiliği'nin Önünde MC Hükümeti Protesto Edildi," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 55 (October 30, 1976): 1.
[426] For IKD's *Evlat Acısına Son* campaing, see Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 227-38.

organized a series of events, gatherings, and protests aimed at securing the support of British women, upon what I refer to as politicized motherhood against "the fascist terror in Turkey," in alignment with the IKD's "Stop Killing Our Children" campaign in the homeland.[427] Under the main slogan "*Analar Doğurur, Faşistler Öldürür* (Mothers Give Birth, Fascists Kill)," IKD sought to initiate a mass anti-fascist mobilization of women in Turkey by appealing to their roles as mothers, urging them to protect their children from the escalating violence perpetrated by the far-right, anti-communist paramilitary group, the *Grey Wolves*, between 1976 and 1980.[428] In a statement the ITKB released in May 1976 and published in *İşçinin Sesi*, the organization declared: "Every day our young people are shot and killed in the streets by fascist bullets. Therefore, we must take our place in the anti-fascist struggle in our country—as mothers and as an integral part of the working people targeted by these attacks."[429] By invoking motherhood as an anti-fascist stance, the ITKB called for political freedom in response to the Nationalist Front government's increasing reliance on authoritarian methods to suppress the political left in Turkey—a government that, in the ITKB's view, was complicit in the escalation of far-right violence.[430] In this manner, ITKB members positioned themselves as long-distance participants in the anti-fascist mobilization in Turkey, supporting homeland-based actors such as the IKD. Thus, the relationship between ITKB and the IKD in Turkey became a crucial dimension of Turkish migrant left-feminism in the UK.

2.5. Factional-Ideological Conflicts within the TKP and Their Impact on the ITKB

As shown above, ITKB's founding and most active members, such as Merih Kudsal, Akgül Baylav and Yıldız Çulfaz, were TKP members and closely connected with the ITIB in the UK, where adherence to the TKP was predominant. This section briefly examines how a factional conflict and subsequent split within the TKP, which began in 1978, may have impacted the ITKB. Vehbi Ersan's 2013 book and Tanıl Bora's 2017 book are among the few sources in the existing historiography on the political left and communism in Turkey that briefly address this split, and they form the basis of my analysis.[431]

This episode began when Nihat Akseymen, a member of the TKP Central Committee and head of the Party's UK branch—as well as a leading figure in the ITIB, authored a

[427] "Kadınlar Birliği, 19 Mayıs'ta Faşist Cinayetleri Kınadı," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 49 (May 21, 1976): 4.
[428] Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 228.
[429] "Kadınlar Birliği, 19 Mayıs'ta Faşist Cinayetleri Kınadı," 4.
[430] Ibid. For more on this, see Selin Bengi Gümrükçü, "Ideology, Discourse, and Alliance Structures: Explaining Far-Right Political Violence in Turkey in the 1970s," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35, no. 1 (2023): 210–24.
[431] Vehbi Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu* (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2013), 142–44; Bora, *Cereyanlar*, 643–44.

pamphlet under his party pseudonym, R. Yürükoğlu, titled *Emperyalizmin Zayıf Halkası Türkiye* (Turkey: The Weak Link of Imperialism).[432] Akseymen argued herein that "the growing threat of fascism in Turkey" had created "the historical and objective conditions for an imminent revolution—one in which the working class has lost all confidence in the system, and the ruling classes could no longer govern."[433] According to him, there was "no middle ground between authoritarian rule (manifesting as overt or covert fascism) and a democratic revolution that would ultimately lead Turkey toward socialism."[434] Based on retrospective accounts from both factions, historians Ersan and Bora have established that TKP leader İsmail Bilen had commissioned Akseymen to write the text, and that the ideas therein largely aligned with the TKP's ideological line.[435] However, the TKP leadership soon accused Akseymen of advocating armed insurgency.[436] According to Tanıl Bora, this was because the TKP leadership had become more inclined toward a political strategy focused on defending the existing regime in Turkey against a potential fascist takeover, rather than pursuing revolutionary insurrection.[437] This shift, Bora argued, in turn was related to the CPSU's discomfort with the "excessive" growth of the TKP, which could complicate diplomatic ties between the Soviet Union and Turkey.[438] In the summer of 1979, Akseymen was expelled from the Central Committee—his views having been deemed a "leftist deviation" by the majority.[439]

Akseymen's expulsion from the Central Committee leadership triggered factional hostilities that extended to the broader sphere of Turkish migrant left-wing politics in western Europe. In the UK, most members of the TKP's UK branch sided with Akseymen and established a faction based in London to continue their opposition to the Party leadership.[440] This oppositional faction came to be known as the *İşçinin Sesi* (Worker's Voice) group, named after the ITIB's magazine, because it used that magazine as a platform for criticism against the TKP's leadership.[441] The ITIB's magazine's transformation suggests that the ITIB remained under the control of this oppositional faction. As a result of the factional conflict

[432] R. Yürükoğlu, *Emperyalizmin Zayıf Halkası Türkiye* (İşçinin Sesi Yayınları, 1978).
[433] Ibid, 5.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu*, 143; Bora, *Cereyanlar*, 643–44.
[436] Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu*, 143.
[437] Bora, *Cereyanlar*, 644.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu*, 143; Bora, *Cereyanlar*, 644.
[440] Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu*, 243.
[441] Ibid.

and their exclusion from TKP-affiliated joint activities, members of the *İşçinin Sesi* group ultimately broke away from the TKP.[442]

At the moment there no documents available to exactly identify the reverberating impacts of the factional conflict and the subsequent TKP split on the ITKB or on its position within the broader transnational network of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in western Europe. However, both chronology and other elements suggest that the ITKB may have become distanced from this network and its constituent organizations—such as the BTKB and GKB in West Germany, and the HTKB in the Netherlands—which collaborated in the ATKF during the latter half of the 1970s. The first element is that Merih Kudsal, one of ITKB's founders and most active members, joined the *İşçinin Sesi* group, left the TKP, and went on to become one of the most prominent figures in *İşçinin Sesi* throughout the 1980s.[443]

Second, among the resolutions the opposition faction adopted during a February 1980 meeting, one specifically targeted the IKD in Turkey. Long regarded by the ITKB as its counterpart in the homeland, the IKD was now denounced as "a failed movement (…) in the hands of opportunists"—despite having previously been praised multiple times in the pages of *İşçinin Sesi*.[444] In contrast, as will be further elaborated in Chapters 5 and 6, the IKD and its cadres continued to be recognized as counterparts by BTKB, GKB, and HTKB members, particularly through their collaborative efforts in the 1980s.

Third, in my research of documents from the 1980s related to the BTKB, GKB, HTKB, and the IKD's Office Abroad, I did not come across a single reference to the ITKB. Instead, two other women's organizations appear to have taken ITKB's place as UK-based counterparts: *the Solidarity Committee for Women's Rights in Turkey* (SCWRT) and the *Londra Halkevi Kadın Merkezi* (Women's Center of People's House London). My further investigation into the origins of these organizations revealed that both were established in 1983 in London through the initiatives of TKP-affiliated women, including Akgül Baylav, who, as shown earlier, was one of the founders and most active early members of the ITKB.[445] After the 1980 coup in Turkey, she was forced into exile again and returned to the UK, where she became one of the founders of the SCWRT and the *Londra Halkevi Kadın Merkezi*.[446] With this in mind, during the oral history interview I conducted with Baylav, I asked her why she did not resume her involvement in the ITKB, an organization she had

[442] "Konferans Kararları," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 126 (April 7, 1980): 8–14.
[443] Eskioğlu, "İşçinin Sesi'nin Kurucusu ve 70/80'lerin Tanığı: Merih Kudsal," 225.
[444] "Konferans Kararları," 13.
[445] Nevzat Yıldırım, "İngiltere'den Dayanışma Sesleri Geliyor!," *Gerçeğin Sesi*, October 1, 1983, 4.
[446] Eskioğlu, "Toplumun Son Yarım Asrının Tanıkları: Cahit ve Akgül Baylav,", 41.

helped establish. She explained that she had remained loyal to the TKP and supported the Party against the *İşçinin Sesi* faction; upon her return, she "found the ITKB in their hands" and therefore felt unable to rejoin the organization.[447]

Within the SCWRT, Akgül Baylav worked to reestablish her earlier contacts within the UK women's rights movement—most notably with the National Assembly of Women (NAW)—to mobilize support for women in Turkey. From 1984 onward, the SCWRT took part in various international initiatives led by Turkish left-feminist women advocating for the rights of Turkish migrant and refugee women in western Europe. These included preparations for the 1985 European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants in Amsterdam, participation in the 1985 Nairobi Conference, and involvement in the WIDF's 1987 World Congress of Women in Moscow—all of which will be examined in detail in Chapter 6.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter constitutes the first scholarly attempt to recover the history of Turkish migrant left feminism in the UK in the 1970s. I paid particular attention to the ITKB, established in 1974 as the first Turkish migrant women's organization in western Europe, but wholly overlooked in the scholarship on Turkish women's activism and migrant women's movements in the UK. The chapter has shown that the founding of the ITKB was driven by the pioneering efforts of young, educated, middle-class women from the first generation of Turkish migrant women in the UK, with the support of several Turkish migrant women workers. Furthermore, it has demonstrated that ITKB's impact extended beyond the UK, as these same women also advanced Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizing elsewhere in western Europe through their work within ATTF, a TKP-affiliated network of Turkish migrant organizations, first by serving as a source of inspiration and second by actively placing the idea of Turkish migrant women's independent organizing on the agenda of Turkish left-wing migrant politics, built on the impetus provided by IWY.

The chapter has advanced five arguments. First, to answer the question what inspired this generation of Turkish migrant left-feminist women in the UK to create the ITKB in 1974, what was the organization's preliminary political orientation, and the tactics employed by its founding cadres, my analysis revealed that, even though the ITKB founders were members of the ITIB and the TKP. ITKB initially positioned itself as a non-political, women-only organization that prioritized fostering community-building among Turkish women in the UK.

[447] Baylav, Interview.

In the ITKB cadres' political imagination, community activism was vital for responding to Turkish migrant women's needs, but could also lay the groundwork for broader political mobilization around their rights. A second component in the early trajectory were ITKB's commitment and contributions to labor organizing among Turkish women, particularly in the garment industry. ITKB played a leading role in organizing Turkish women workers and facilitating their unionization in the NUTGW, marking the earliest documented examples of Turkish women's labor organizing in British labor history. Notably, these endeavors culminated in the first strikes by Turkish migrant women in 1974 and 1975, in which they demanded equal pay for equal work.

Secondly, in answering my second main question, this chapter demonstrated that IWY served as the principal catalyst in transforming ITKB's outlook and political trajectory in 1975, during which the ITKB evolved from a non-political entity into an openly political organization. Particularly after ITKB's first annual congress in February 1975, it rebranded itself as a fully-fledged left-feminist organization by adopting a political agenda that affirmed its commitment to women's rights, defence of peace, anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, and anti-fascism, in line with the global left feminism's agenda and with a transnational orientation integrating both homeland and host-country aspirations. Linked to this development, 1975 also saw ITKB strengthen its involvement in the global women's movement, primarily by forging new ties with the WIDF and its national affiliate in the UK, the NAW. Simultaneously, ITKB's role in Turkish transnational migrant politics expanded within the UK and western Europe, as members enhanced their engagement with the TKP-affiliated ATTF network. In doing so, ITKB emerged as a frontrunner in advocating for Turkish migrant women's independent political organizing—separate from mixed-sex Turkish migrant organizations—in western Europe, while also emphasizing IWY and its significance for Turkish migrant women's rights in Turkish left-wing migrant politics under ATTF.

Thirdly, I showed that the ITKB within the ATTF's transnational network inspired other Turkish migrant women activists to create their own associations, and also facilitated communication and exchange, offering guidance and support in founding Turkish migrant women's organizations. Built on this momentum, Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizations were simultaneously founded on 8 March 1975 in West Germany and the Netherlands, as I will develop in the next chapters.

Fourthly, ITKB women took the lead in developing a Europe-wide network of Turkish migrant left feminism, rooted in their ambition to attend the WIDF's 1975 World Congress of Women in East Berlin as a combined delegation of Turkish migrant women from around

western Europe. This aspiration was realized with the birth of the ATKF on 4–5 October 1975 in Frankfurt, enabling Turkish left-feminist women from the UK and West Germany to join the 1975 East Berlin Congress as the ATKF delegation. That event marked the inaugural participation of Turkish migrant women in a WIDF congress, ushering in ongoing involvement in the WIDF.

Lastly, as the first organizational link in the formation of Turkish migrant left-feminism in western Europe during the 1970s, the ITKB likely distanced itself from other Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in West Germany and the Netherlands from around the summer of 1979 to 1980, due to internal conflict within the TKP. As a result, the ITKB appears to have been replaced by the SCWRT, founded by 1983 through the initiative of TKP-affiliated women—including at least one former ITKB member. The SCWRT took up the role the ITKB had played in the 1970s in the UK, especially in collaborative efforts with BTKB, GKB, HTKB, and the IKD's Office Abroad during the second half of the UN Decade for Women, to advance the rights of Turkish migrant women at the international level.

Chapter 3: The Making of Turkish Migrant Left Feminism in West Berlin and the Ruhr Region (1975-1980)

3.1. Introduction

Mein Name ist Revolution (My Name is Revolution, 2011), the debut novel of Berlin-based German-Turkish novelist İmran Ayata, focuses on the life of *Devrim* (Revolution), a typical Berliner of Kurdish origin from Turkey in his mid-thirties.[448] Devrim's communist parents came to West Germany in the 1970s and became millionaires overnight by winning the lottery. However, they passed away when Devrim was still a small child, and he was raised by his uncle Ahmet and aunt-in-law Gül, who were also communists. Narrated in the first person, the novel shows us Devrim's childhood memories associated with his uncle and aunt's involvement in Turkish migrants' left-wing politics in West Berlin, as members of a migrants' organization whose name is not mentioned.

Among Devrim's childhood memories, a poignant one stands out, about him being very annoyed because their house became crowded with people staying until late at night. These visitors, mainly "bearded men and ponytailed women," were comrades of his uncle and aunt. It especially annoyed Devrim that his aunt Gül had to spend most of her time alone in the kitchen cooking and brewing tea for the men, including his uncle, who "had to be served" during their heated debates about building "a better world." This particular memory exemplified his frustration with those visitors' search for a 'better world' at the expense of his aunt's exhaustion at their home, which he expressed as follows: "I just hoped that in a better world, my aunt would no longer have to serve guests all the time and everyone around me would cease their endless talk about the junta and fascism."[449]

With semi-autobiographical allusions, such fictional representation and portrayal of Turkish leftist migrant women in Ayata's novel captures the gendered division of labor and the prevailing sexist practices in Turkish migrant politics, which prevented the recognition of women as equal participants in migrant activism, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, Devrim's disillusionment with and doubts about his uncle's and his fellow comrades' anti-authoritarian and egalitarian visions for a "better world" stemmed from his aunt's experience as a communist woman, in which the women constantly had to serve the men. The novel's representation of Turkish migrant women successfully captures certain aspects of the social and political realities within the Turkish migrant activist scene. It is clear

[448] Imran Ayata, *Mein Name ist Revolution* (Berlin: Blumenbar Verlag, 2011).
[449] Ayata, 273.

that Turkish left-wing migrants' organizations, formed from the mid-1960s to early 1970s, were male-dominated and generally deprioritized the woman question. Nevertheless, although the novel is critical, it also gives rise to a series of questions that inform my investigation here: is it indeed the case that women's contributions were limited to "kitchen cooking and brewing tea" for the cause? To what extent did activism on migrant women's issues beyond the so-called "typical female spaces" enable Turkish migrant women to gain public roles in migrant politics, and how did their activism have a gendered and/or intersectional focus?

Based on these questions, we can now focus on the existing scholarship on the role of Turkish migrant women in leftist migrant politics in West Germany during the 1960s and 1970s. In last two decades, the political activity by and for Turkish migrants in West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s has moved from the fringes of the historical scholarship to a more central position, or, as the German historian Simon Goeke aptly puts it, to "its right place: at the center of West German history."[450] Most of these historical studies situate the establishment of Turkish migrant organizations and their activities in the context of labor activism, as well as their homeland directed politics. In addition to bringing an important part of German social history to the fore, this work also enables scholars to challenge problematic assumptions about Turkish migrants, in particular the notion that, as temporary "guest workers" or "family migrants," they would have had little interest in altering the political conditions in the country where they worked and lived.[451]

However, the dominant assumption in this field of research is that the first generation of guest workers in West Germany predominantly consisted of men who later sent for their wives and children.[452] Based on that assumption, scholars have ignored the role of the first generation of Turkish migrant women in labor activism and migrant politics.

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[450] Simon Goeke, "The Multinational Working Class? Political Activism and Labour Migration in West Germany During the 1960s and 1970s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (2014): 161.

[451] Karin Hunn, *"Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück ..."*; Monika Mattes, *'Gastarbeiterinnen' in der Bundesrepublik. Anwerbepolitik, Migration und Geschlecht in den 50er bis 70er Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2005); Dieter Rucht and Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Mobilisierungen von und für Migranten," in *Die Sozialen Bewegungen in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008), 572–92; Goeke, "The Multinational Working Class?"; Nihat Öztürk and Oliver Trede, "Migrations- und Integrationsarbeit – wie 'Gastarbeite' Gleichberechtigte Kolleg*innen Wurden," in *Geschichte der IG Metall: Zur Entwicklung von Autonomie und Gestaltungskraft*, ed. Jörg Hofmann and Christiane Benner (Frankfurt am Main: Bund-Verlag, 2019), 465–84; Maria Alexopoulou, *Deutschland und die Migration: Geschichte einer Einwanderungsgesellschaft wider Willen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2020); Nihat Öztürk, *Etappen, Konflikte und Anerkennungskämpfe der Migration* (Berlin: Die Buchmacherei, 2022).

[452] For studies challenging this assumption, see Esra Erdem and Monika Mattes, "Gendered Policies - Gendered Patterns: Female Labour Migration from Turkey to Germany from the 1960s to the 1990s," in *European Encounters: Migrants, Migration and European Societies Since 1945*, ed. Rainer Ohliger, Karen Schönwälder, and Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos (London: Routledge, 2003), 165–85; Mattes, *'Gastarbeiterinnen' in der Bundesrepublik*; Jennifer Miller, "Postwar Negotiations: The First Generation of Turkish 'Guest Workers' in West Germany, 1961-1973" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2008); Jennifer Miller, "Her Fight Is Your Fight."

Similarly, gender largely still goes unnoticed in historical studies on Turkish transnational migrant politics, particularly those on the political organizing of left-wing Turkish migrants in 1970s West Germany.[453] As Umut Erel, a UK-based sociologist and a prominent gender and migration scholar, has pointed out, women are absent in much of the research on migrants from Muslim countries because scholars have uncritically replicated the historically existing male dominance and "maleness as (…) the norm" within migration studies, which consequently either ignored women migrants or constructed them as the "Other Other."[454] Erel's perspective is similar to what historian Brigitte Studer has referred to as the problem of "historical mimetism" in communism studies, further elaborated by Victor Strazzeri in his work on communist women in the post-1968 Italian context.[455]

Confirming this pattern, as Liza Mügge showed, research on transnational migrant activism tends to see migrant women as passive victims of the process of migration and the strict patriarchal control by the men of their ethnic group, limiting the women to so-called "typical female spaces;" thus, they supposedly did not get a public role in migrant political activism.[456] However, this chapter aims to show that in the 1970s, Turkish migrant women played an important role in the public sphere, that they institutionalized domestic networks of Turkish left-wing migrant organizations, and had transnational ties with homeland-based actors.

A similar omission of Turkish migrant left feminism can be found in the historiography on women's movements and feminisms in West Germany and in Turkey in the 1970s.[457] The feminist sociologist Pınar Tuzcu has observed that "intellectual, activist and artistic contributions of migrant, Black, and exiled women tend to be left out [from] histories of feminism in Germany."[458] As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, the few existing studies on migrant women's political organizing in Germany rely on a problematic

[453] Özcan, *Türkische Immigrantenorganisationen*; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland*; Çakır, "Eine deutsch-deutsch-türkische Geschichte"; Öztürk, *Etappen*; Tekin, "Die erste linke Migrantenorganisation aus der Türkei"; Caner Tekin, "'Foreign Worker' Perspectives between German Trade Unions and Turkish Worker Organisations after the Recruitment Ban: Evidence from the Migrant Activism in Frankfurt," *Migration Letters* 20, no. 1 (2023): 11–24.
[454] Umut Erel, *Migrant Women Transforming Citizenship*, 11.
[455] Brigitte Studer, *Travellers of the World Revolution: A Global History of the Communist International*, trans. Dafydd Rees Roberts (London: Verso, 2023), 24; Victor Strazzeri, "Beyond the Double Blind Spot: Relocating Communist Women as Transgressive Subjects in Contemporary Historiography," *Gender & History* 36, no. 2 (2024): 762.
[456] Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism," 66.
[457] This, too, is similar to what Victor Strazzeri has recently discussed for the historiography on communist women. Strazzeri, "Beyond the Double Blind Spot."
[458] Pınar Tuzcu, *"Ich bin eine Kanackin:" Decolonizing Popfeminism-Transcultural Perspectives on Lady Bitch Ray* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2017), 40.

chronology.[459] They tend to frame migrant women's activism as historically relevant only in relation to their contestations with white German feminists during the 1980s and 1990s—rather than acknowledging Turkish migrant left feminism as an independent, transnational phenomenon with its own chronology that began in the 1970s.

It is therefore not surprising that the political history of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in West Germany, especially, BTKB and GKB, remains underexplored and insufficiently analyzed. In the existing literature, BTKB has received only superficial mention. For instance, Esra Erdem's brief survey of "Anatolian-German women's organizations" devoted only a few pages to BTKB.[460] Similarly, Hanife Aliefendioğlu's 2004 book chapter about the limited transnational connections between women's NGOs in Turkey and Germany, referenced BTKB only briefly.[461] And in Mustafa Demir and Ergün Sönmez's 2015 book on migrant organizations from Turkey, BTKB received one page, under the subtitle of "Women's, Children's and Youth Work."[462]

In this chapter, I examine the activities and ideas of the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists in West Germany between 1975 and 1980, exploring their gender agendas in relation to broader political and ideological commitments, as well as their simultaneous engagement in both homeland- and country of residence-directed politics. I also situate these organizations within the broader history of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe and Turkish transnational migrant activism, including the question how the momentum generated by the year 1975 may have catalyzed the formation of BTKB and GKB. In brief, I investigate the activities of Turkish left-feminists to understand how they confronted gendered and racialized structures of inequality and worked locally and transnationally to improve the status of Turkish migrant women in West Germany.

Sections 3.2 examines the process around the founding of BTKB in West Berlin and its earliest activities. In Section 3.3, I analyze how BTKB women incorporated the notion of motherhood into a left-feminist framework, both in their engagement with issues in the host country and in their homeland-directed activism. Section 3.4, the final part focusing on West

[459] For example, see Natascha Apostolidou, "Differenz und Gleichheit: Migrantinnen in der BRD und ihre Position in der Frauenbewegung," in *Frauen in der Defensive? Zur backlash-Debatte in Deutschland*, ed. Jansen Mechthild M., Sigrid Baringhorst, and Martina Ritter (Münster: LIT, 1995), 169–81; Schwenken, "Frauen-Bewegungen in der Migration"; Helen Schwenken, "Migrantinnenorganisationen: Zur Selbstorganisierung von Migrantinnen," in *Handbuch Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung: Theorie, Methoden, Empirie*, ed. Ruth Becker and Beate Kortendiek (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010; Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Tuzcu, *Migrantischer Feminismus*.

[460] Erdem, "Organisationen Anatolisch-Deutscher Frauen."

[461] Aliefendioğlu, "Transnational Space Between Women's NGOs in Germany and Turkey."

[462] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland*, 136, 138.

Berlin, examines forms of collaboration between the BTKB, left-feminist women from other migrant communities, and West German left-feminist activists, as well as political struggle with the self-styled autonomous women's movement. It also discusses BTKB's participation in transnational politics, particularly through the *Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau* (West Berlin Committee for Women's Rights, WKRF), within the broader context of Cold War divisions. In Section 3.5 I shift the focus from West Berlin to the Ruhr region. I examine the reasons why the first generation of Turkish migrant women in the Ruhr established the GKB, the transnational dimensions of this process, and the activities they undertook between 1975 and 1980.

3.2. Establishing the BTKB, Politicized Motherhood and Community Feminism

Since the start of the foreign labor recruitment program in West Germany in 1955, labor recruiters actively recruited migrant women, who made up between fifteen and thirty percent of the annual inflow of workers until the program ended in 1973.[463] Some women arrived as "guest workers," while others came as "family migrants," although the latter category was often used implicitly as a channel to recruit women for industrial labor.[464] By the early 1970s, a significant number of women workers from Turkey were employed in the electronics industry, and Turkish women formed the largest group of migrant workers in the textile and clothing sectors.[465] This gendered recruitment pattern also existed in West Berlin, though in a particularly distinctive form. Due to its electronics and textile industries, with many jobs deemed "women's work"—West Berlin had the highest proportion of migrant women workers of West Germany.[466]

Another key factor in the emergence of Turkish migrant left feminism in West Berlin was the presence of locally rooted Turkish migrant organizations, which laid the groundwork for women's political engagement.[467] In parallel with political developments in Turkey, numerous Turkish migrant organizations were established in West Berlin at the end of the 1960s, representing "almost the entire spectrum of political parties and currents in Turkey."[468]

[463] Lauren Stokes, *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 5.
[464] Stokes, 5.
[465] Erdem and Mattes, "Gendered Policies - Gendered Patterns," 172.
[466] Mattes, *'Gastarbeiterinnen' in der Bundesrepublik*, 159–82; Stokes, *Fear of the Family*, 39.
[467] Daniel Volkert, *Parteien und Migranten: Inkorporationsprozesse innerhalb der SPD und der französischen PS* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2017), 124.
[468] Özcan, *Türkische Immigrantenorganisationen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 66.

Among these was the *Berlin Türk Toplumcular Ocağı* (Turkish Socialist Community in Berlin, BTTO), founded in 1967 to bring together socialist-leaning Turkish students and workers (see Chapter 1). These demographic and political dynamics formed the socio-political context in which Turkish migrant women began to engage with migrant political activism in West Berlin.

According to historians Mustafa Demir and Ergün Sönmez, in the first half of the 1970s, a group of Turkish migrant women activists in the BTTO formed a working group aimed at bringing issues of women's rights and equality within society, the workplace, and the family onto the organization's agenda.[469] Demir and Sönmez also noted that these issues were "unfamiliar to many Turkish men" at the time; "even those who were left-wing often viewed the initiatives of their [BTTO] female comrades with discomfort."[470] The BTTO's women's working group included Azize Tank, Birsen Sargın, Mekbure Tezcan, Melehat Mümker, Melek Tulgan, Meral Uygun, Semra Isparta, Sevim Kesim, and Türkan Alp.[471] Following the ATTF's Seventh Annual Congress held in Gelsenkirchen, West Germany, in December 1974 (see Section 2.3), in early 1975, the BTTO's working group began preparing for the founding congress of a Turkish women's organization in West Berlin.

Speaking to a reporter from *Kurtuluş* (Liberation), the West-Berlin based bi-weekly progressive workers' magazine of the ATTF, the steering committee emphasized that the new Turkish migrant women's organization would be entirely different from "other so-called women's associations in which elite and rich ladies gathered for gossiping."[472] Instead, it would "aim to bring together working women to meet and find solutions together over their problems," and whose primary demand would be "women's right to equal pay for equal work with men."[473] The *Batı Berlin Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği – Türkischer Frauenverein Berlin (West)* (Union of Turkish Women in West Berlin, BTKB) was founded at a congress held on Saturday 8 March 1975, with the participation of around fifty women.[474] At this congress, Meral Uygun was elected the chairwoman of the BTKB. A 1982 booklet published by BTKB described the founding process of the organization as follows:

> Originally, the idea was not to establish a women's association; instead, a group of women gathered to discuss their shared problems. As they conversed, they discovered they were facing similar situations, with the same worries, fears, and insecurities. This realization prompted them to seek out other women, and they discovered that many

[469] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland*, 136.
[470] Ibid., 136.
[471] Ibid., 138.
[472] "Dünya Kadınlar Yılı: 8 Mart Dünya Kadınlar Günü," *Kurtuluş*, no. 124 (March 7, 1975): 4.
[473] Ibid., 4.
[474] "Dünya Kadınlar Yılı: Avrupa'da Kadın Emekçilerimiz Örgütleniyor," *Kurtuluş*, no. 125 (March 21, 1975): 2.

> others also wanted to discuss their problems. Over time, the number of women engaging in these conversations rapidly grew, leading to the recognition of the necessity to establish a women's association.[475]

Azize Tank, one of BTKB's founding members, recalled the preparatory process leading up to the founding congress in a 2018 interview I conducted with her:

> Those directly involved in the founding of the BTKB were not just activist women. The founding members came from diverse backgrounds and experiences, each with different political affiliations. So, the primary motivation for us to establish the BTKB was to include and encourage Turkish women from different backgrounds to interact with each other and contribute to broader political work.[476]

A common thread in these narratives from two distinct time periods and perspectives is the emphasis on a shared experiential foundation rooted in their identity as migrant women, which was presented as more tangible and immediate than homeland-oriented politics. The first generation of Turkish migrant women's involvement in founding a migrant women's organization reflects their strategies for constructing a collective political subjectivity. Azize Tank described the mid-1970s as a turning point, when Turkish leftist migrant women began to assert their own subject position within Turkish leftist migrant politics by challenging the marginalization of their perspectives as secondary or inauthentic:

> We, women [in the BTTO], gradually realized that the agenda there was limited to general problems, and that it was difficult to address issues specific to women. Additionally, in a male-dominated environment, women have less of a voice, men are more likely to put themselves forward. …. Moreover, we realized that even though we had received a certain level of education and improved our German a bit, we still had problems stemming from being immigrants and it was not so easy to deal with these problems. I mean, if even we were facing these problems, what about other women? It was our main aim to solve these problems women had, but as well, to raise their awareness about their own problems. Not that we can teach you everything, but we can only solve these problems together.[477]

Azize Tank identified two interrelated dynamics. First, the male-dominated nature of Turkish mixed-gender left-wing migrant organizations and their focus on "general problems," failing to adequately address migrant women's specific concerns. In this way, political engagement also became a means of constructing a sense of belonging rooted in the shared recognition of their gendered subject position within the West German society.

Second, as relatively better-educated women with German language proficiency, the BTKB founders saw themselves as particularly equipped to use their social capital in service

[475] BTKB, Booklet, 1982, A Rep. 400 Berlin 19.6c, Collection DFB, FFBIZ.
[476] Azize Tank, Interview by Sercan Çınar, Berlin, March 16, 2018.
[477] Ibid.

of political organizing for their fellow migrant women. The interplay between personal responsibility and commitment to collective political work formed a central element of the BTKB founders' approach to activism and consciousness-raising. Azize Tank's statement—"Not that we can teach you everything, but we can only solve these problems together"—captures the BTKB founders' rejection of vanguardist politics. Instead, their left-feminist vision aimed to forge a political subjectivity for themselves as well as for other migrant women—women who were seen not as passive recipients, but as co-participants in the shaping of Turkish migrant left feminism in West Berlin.

The founding of the BTKB also had a distinctly political dimension through the combined influence of IWY and the TKP's encouragement of its women members in western Europe to initiate migrant women's political organizing. This political dimension can be traced in how the TKP framed the BTKB in its official publications, as well as in retrospective accounts by BTKB's founders. In a manner similar to the ITKB's founding in 1974 (see Section 2.2), the establishment of the BTKB was announced and celebrated in an anonymous report published in *Atılım*, the central organ of the TKP Central Committee, under the title "*Kadınlarımız Örgütleniyor* (Our Women Are Getting Organized).[478] The report highlighted the importance of IWY, noting that it was designated by the UN at the initiative of the WIDF.[479] It stated that, on the occasion of IWY, the TKP had launched "new initiatives to encourage Turkish women's involvement in the struggle for women's rights, peace, democracy, and social progress in a more organized way."[480] It emphasized that, "as in Turkey, Turkish working women abroad have begun to organize," citing the BTKB as an example.[481] In her recent dissertation, Elisabeth Kimberle addressed this dimension based on the personal account of Türkan Alp, one of BTKB's founders. In an interview with Kimberle, Alp recalled that the TKP "commissioned Meral Uygun"—who had been living in West Berlin since 1963 and became the BTKB's first chairwoman— "to establish an association for Turkish women workers in Berlin."[482]

BTKB's commitment to community activism, evident from its founding, was grounded in a left-feminist perspective. As articulated in a statement by the founding steering committee, the BTKB aimed "to bring together working women to meet and find solutions to

[478] "Kadınlarımız Örgütleniyor," *Atılım*, no. 15 (March 1975): 2, 5.
[479] Ibid., 2.
[480] Ibid., 2.
[481] Ibid., 5.
[482] Kimmerle, "Frauen in Bewegung," 219.

their problems."[483] The BTKB identified "equal pay for equal work with men" as a core demand and referred to Turkish migrant women as "Turkish working women," reflecting a political understanding that firmly positioned them within the working class—an emphasis also reiterated in the aforementioned report in *Atılım* about BTKB's founding.[484] Therefore, the BTKB viewed the struggle for women's emancipation as inseparably linked to the broader fight of the working class against exploitation and oppression, which extended across the homeland and the host country. The organization maintained strong ties with other leftist Turkish migrant organizations in West Berlin, particularly the BTTO from which it had emerged, while it prioritized grassroots community activism aimed at seeking practical solutions to the everyday problems of Turkish migrant women.

BTKB's early work combined immediate support with long-term political advocacy, beginning with members assisting Turkish women in navigating bureaucratic challenges by helping them fill out tax forms and offering voluntary translation services, while also organizing social counseling, literacy, and German language classes.[485] The BTKB also advocated for migrant women's labor rights—addressing workplace discrimination and pushing for reforms such as the 35-hour workweek and improved job security.[486] Meanwhile, the BTKB organized social gatherings at its building for Turkish migrant women, which included educational sessions and seminars covering topics ranging from everyday challenges Turkish migrant women faced to trade union education as part of the organization's efforts to support unionization among Turkish migrant women workers.[487]

Iin the early phase of Turkish migrant left feminism in West Berlin, the seeds of community feminism also began to take root, with politicized motherhood playing a crucial role in challenging ethnic discrimination and injustice experienced by both women and their children, aligned with the political goals long championed by the WIDF.[488] A clear example of this type of activism emerged at the start of the 1975–1976 school year, when the West Berlin Senate passed a resolution abolishing mother-tongue education in primary schools, thereby mandating that Turkish children could only be educated in German.[489] In response to the West Berlin Senate's decision to restructure the primary education system, BTKB members, in collaboration with the West German *Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft* (Education

[483] "Dünya Kadınlar Yılı: 8 Mart Dünya Kadınlar Günü," 4.
[484] "Kadınlarımız Örgütleniyor," *Atılım*, no. 15 (March 1975): 5.
[485] "Dünya Kadınlar Yılı: Avrupa'da Kadın Emekçilerimiz Örgütleniyor," 2.
[486] Erdem, "Organisationen Anatolisch-Deutscher Frauen," 138.
[487] "Batı Berlin Türkiye Kadınlar Birliği Günü," *Kurtuluş*, no. 126 (April 5, 1975): 2.
[488] de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s," 261.
[489] "Çocuklarımıza Anadilde Eğitim İstiyoruz," *Kurtuluş*, no. 136 (September 19, 1975): 1.

and Science Workers' Union, GEW), launched a campaign in the schools in the Kreuzberg district of West Berlin and organized public discussions and demonstrations opposing the termination of bilingual education for migrant children.[490] A key moment in this campaign occurred on December 6, 1975, when BTKB, BTTO and GEW held a rally at Hermannplatz under the slogan: "First they cut the livelihood support for our children, and now they deprive them of education."[491]

Figure 3.1*. Rally march towards Hermannplatz against the West Berlin Senate's decision, co-organized by BTKB and GEW, 6 December 1975, West Berlin. Demands written on the placards, from left to right: "We want to live like human beings, not to be exploited and be victims"; "I want to learn my mother tongue too"; "A fundamental reform of vocational education"; "We demand education in the mother tongue for our children"; "Against unemployment." Source: Jürgen Henschel, 1975, Collection of FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum.*

[490] "Alman Öğretmenler Sendikası Veli-Öğretmenleri Destekleme Toplantısı Düzenledi," *Kurtuluş*, no. 140 (November 14, 1975): 4.
[491] "Batı Berlinde Çocuklarımızın Eğitimi İçin 6 Aralık'ta Yürüyüş," *Kurtuluş*, no. 141 (November 28, 1975): 1, 4.

Figure 3.2. *Rally march towards Hermannplatz against the West Berlin Senate's decision, co-organized by BTKB and GEW, 6 December 1975, West Berlin. Text on the banner: "Vocational education for our youth." Source: Jürgen Henschel, 1975, Collection of FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum.*

BTKB's efforts to secure educational equity for Turkish migrant children marked a key moment in the evolution of its community feminism, as it moved from support-oriented work into street-level mobilization grounded in the advocacy for migrant children's rights. These children's access to educational services and welfare benefits had largely been neglected under the guest-worker program, which "outsourced reproductive labor and [instead] set in motion a long-term process with which the state needed to grapple."[492] BTKB confronted the West German state's neglect head-on. Their mobilization challenged the idea that the "integration" of migrant children could be left to a gradual process or managed informally within families—especially by mothers. Instead, BTKB demanded immediate state accountability for ensuring that Turkish children had access to education, could remain in school, progress through grades, and complete their compulsory education without systemic obstacles.

Alongside the educational challenges they faced, Turkish children in West Berlin were also deprived of social welfare. As Turkish migrant families began moving out of company dormitories in the late 1960s, they settled in neighborhoods along the Berlin Wall, areas where

[492] Stokes, *Fear of the Family*, 6.

apartments were affordable but also marked by poor infrastructure.[493] The living conditions in these districts were comparatively worse, with an aging and deteriorating housing stock, a lack of public services, and the absence of playgrounds, which posed significant risks to children's safety and well-being. These unsafe conditions sometimes had deadly consequences. According to a report in ATTF's magazine *Kurtuluş* in May 1975, several Turkish migrant children had drowned in the canal dividing East and West Berlin.[494] An unnamed BTKB member spoke to the *Kurtuluş* reporter. She blamed the municipal authorities for their disregard of migrant lives and criticized the media for politicizing the tragedy through Cold War lenses, rather than confronting the state's failure to protect all children equally:

> The reactionary newspapers such as *BZ* and *Bild*, which have been inciting German workers against foreign workers for years, spreading a campaign of hatred against Turks, and slandering our children for creating unrest, gave this incident wide coverage this time. They are exploiting the incident for political purposes. The GDR's proposals to the West Berlin Senate on various dates to work together in the event of an accident have been rejected. That is why the kid could not be rescued in time. The reactionary press, on the other hand, is trying to turn the story around and spread the lie that the GDR was the cause of Çetin Mert's drowning. By shifting the blame to the other side, the reactionaries cover up the guilt of the West Berlin Senate and at the same time slander the GDR and the socialist system there.[495]

The account revealed a distinct political consciousness among BTKB members, as, at least some of them, interpreted Turkish children's deaths as the consequence of a state policy that prioritized Cold War rivalry over the safety and well-being of migrant communities. This criticism of the West Berlin authorities' inaction and its blame-shifting underscored a deeper recognition of how systemic racism, class inequality, and Cold War antagonisms converged on the bodies and lives of the most marginalized. Likewise, this statement suggests that part of the Turkish migrant left-feminist women living in the "West" rejected being used in the Cold War antagonisms produced from the "West," seeing them as a means through which the West German authorities justified their continued neglect of Turkish migrant women's and children's well-being.

[493] Sarah Thomsen Vierra, "Living in the Shadow of the Wall: Berlin's Turkish Community, 1961-89," in *Cold War Berlin: Confrontations, Cultures, and Identities*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch, Stefanie Eisenhuth, and Scott H. Krause (London: I.B. Tauris, 2021), 146.
[494] "Acı Bir Olay ve Ardında Yatan Gerçekler: Bir Türk Çocuğu Boğuldu," *Kurtuluş*, no. 129 (May 16, 1975): 4.
[495] Ibid.

3.3. Politicized Motherhood and Long-Distance Feminism

The previous section discussed the establishment of the BTKB and the meaning of politicized motherhood in its community feminism. In this section, I examine how a discourse of politicized motherhood became part of the BTKB's long-distance feminism, including its struggle against the attacks carried out by Turkish far-right groups, both in Turkey and West Germany.

From 1975 onwards, the BTKB increasingly employed a politicized notion of motherhood in its political discourse, making it a building block element of its activities—such as opposing war, combating fascism, and advocating for women's social and political rights. This approach aligned with the WIDF's effective use of the notion of motherhood in its peace initiatives, which emphasized the prevention of future wars and the fight against fascism for the sake of women and children.[496] The BTKB's 1975 Mother's Day celebration serves as a compelling example of how the organization mobilized motherhood—both a symbol of its political commitment to the homeland from a left-feminist perspective and as a vision for a better and more peaceful world for future generations. As part of the celebration, the BTKB named a "Mother of the Year," awarding the title to the "Women of Vietnam and Cambodia" in recognition of their decades-long struggle for independence against colonialism.[497] This selection was particularly significant since, as the BKTB statement in *Kurtuluş* shows, it was a political counterstatement to the *Türk Anneler Derneği* (Turkish Mothers' Association, TAD), which had named Sadıka Sabancı—the mother of prominent Turkish business tycoon Sakıp Sabancı—as Turkey's Mother of the Year 1975, in recognition of her philanthropic work.[498] In the same statement honoring the women of Vietnam and Cambodia, the BTKB also challenged the Kemalist discourse on women's rights in Turkey, arguing that it overlooked persistent gender inequalities and that the early Republican gender reforms had "remained more on paper than [having an impact] in practice."[499] By doing so, the BTKB linked its critique of the established women's movement in Turkey to a broader concern with the ongoing struggle for gender equality, which, in their view, needed to move beyond symbolic gestures and philanthropy to address deeper structural injustices.[500]

Second, between 1976 and 1980, BTKB members used a politicized notion of motherhood as part of a long-distance feminism that reacted to "transplanted homeland

[496] Pieper Mooney, "Fighting Fascism and Forging New Political Activism," 62.
[497] "Vietnamlı, Kamboçyalı Analar 'Yılın Anası'dır," *Kurtuluş*, no. 129 (May 16, 1975): 4.
[498] Ibid.
[499] Ibid.
[500] For "the established women's movement," see note 402 in Section 2.4.

politics." The latter concept refers to a situation in which "conflicts between ethnic or political groups in the homeland are transplanted to the immigrant community."[501] This occurred in West Berlin in the late 1970s, when members of the far-right, ultranationalist *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Movement Party, MHP) began carrying out violent attacks against Turkish left-wing migrants and their organizations, mirroring the actions of their counterparts in Turkey.[502]

Against the backdrop of these developments, the BTKB mobilized Turkish migrant women in opposition to the Nationalist Front governments and the attacks carried out by Turkish far-right groups in Turkey and West Germany. In collaboration with like-minded Turkish migrant organizations—such as the ATTF—the BTKB launched a sustained public campaign calling for the banning of the MHP and its youth wing, the Grey Wolves, in West Germany.[503][504] In response to growing concern over the Grey Wolves' violence, West German trade unions began pushing for a ban on the MHP and its European affiliate, the *Avrupa Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu* (Federation of Democratic Turkish Idealist Associations in Europe, ADÜTDF), lobbying both the Bundestag and the Ministry of the Interior.[505] Members of the BTKB took an active role in rallies organized in West Berlin to protest the intensifying "fascist terror" in Turkey, uniting under the slogan "*Evlatlarımızın Öldürülmesine Hayır* (End the Killing of Our Children)."[506]

[501] Ruud Koopmans et al., *Contested Citizenship: Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 126–27.
[502] Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, *Transnational Politics: Turks and Kurds in Germany* (London: Routledge, 2003), 126.
[503] "Faşist Tırmanışa Karşı Batı Berlin'de Yürüyüş," *Kurtuluş*, no. 151 (May 14, 1976): 1.
[504] "Avrupa'da İşçilerimiz Yürüyüşlerle İhanet Cephesine Karşı Direniyorlar," *Kurtuluş*, no. 152 (May 28, 1976): 1,3.
[505] "MHP'nin Yasaklanması Federal Almanya Meclisi'ne Getirildi," *Kurtuluş*, no. 149 (April 2, 1976): 1.
[506] "Faşist Tırmanışa Karşı Batı Berlin'de Yürüyüş," 1.

Figure 3.3*. BTKB women at the "Faşist Tırmanışa Karşı Yürüyüş (Rally Against the Escalation of Fascist Violence)," carrying the banner "Evlatlarımızın Öldürülmesine Hayır (End the Killing of Our Children)," 15 May 1976, Hermannplatz, West Berlin. Source: Jürgen Henschel, 1976, Collection of FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum.*

The BTKB was also targeted by organized violence directed at Turkish left-wing migrants and their organizations in West Berlin, as in an attack on its clubhouse by MHP supporters.[507] More tragically, Celalettin Kesim—a vocational schoolteacher, prominent Turkish socialist activist in West Berlin, member of the TKP and the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Westberlins* (Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin, SEW), and general secretary of the left-wing *Berliner Türkenzentrum* (Berlin Turkish Center)—was murdered by a group of Turkish far-right ultranationalists and Islamists. On the morning of January 5, 1980, while distributing leaflets at Kottbusser Tor with some friends, Kesim was attacked by a group who gathered from the nearby Mevlana Mosque armed with knives, clubs, and iron chains.[508] His assassination drew significant public attention and provoked widespread condemnation throughout West Germany, resulting in protests directed at Turkish far-right and Islamist groups.[509] At the time of his death, his wife, Sevim Kesim, an activist and founding member

[507] "Faşist Saldırganları Polise Teslim Edelim, Terör Yuvalarını Kapattıralım," *Kurtuluş*, no. 169 (April 12, 1977): 4.
[508] Deniz Yücel, "Der Vergessene Erste Islamistische Mord in Deutschland: In Erinnerung an Celalettin Kesim," *Die Tageszeitung: taz*, January 20, 2015.
[509] "Celalettin'in Savaş Bayrağını Yükselteceğiz!: Faşist Cinayeti Protesto Için 15 Binin Üstünde İnsan Yürüdü," *Kurtuluş*, no. 216 (January 16, 1980): 1.

of the BTKB, was pregnant with their second child. In her speech at his memorial service, she said:

> Let not the fascist murderers rejoice! One Celalettin dies, a thousand are born. Let these enemies of humanity come and shoot me too, as they are accustomed to from Kahramanmaraş[510], let them come and kill the baby in my womb. It will still be in vain. This fight will not stop! The fight for freedom will not be drowned in blood. Patriots in our country prove it every day.[511]

Sevim Kesim also criticized the West German authorities for "tolerating mosques, Quran courses, and associations run by reactionaries and fascists that harbor murderers," urging immediate action against Turkish far-right and Islamist groups "before more children are orphaned."[512] West German and migrant left-feminist women in West Berlin joined the protests and supported efforts to ban these groups. The SEW's newspaper *Die Wahrheit* (The Truth) reported that the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Berlin* (Democratic Women's League Berlin, DFB), the WIDF affiliate in West Berlin, and the WKRF organized solidarity stands in response to the BTKB's call for solidarity and financial assistance for Sevim Kesim and her family.[513]

My findings in this section suggest that a politicized notion of motherhood informed the BTKB's long-distance feminism in two ways. First, they awarded the new title of "Mother of the Year" to the "Women of Vietnam and Cambodia." This symbolic act challenged the established women's movement in Turkey by urging their sisters in the homeland to view the struggle for gender equality as inseparable from the broader goals of peace, anti-imperialism, and anti-colonialism, and emphasized the need for a sustained political struggle for the rights of mothers and children. Second, they politicized the notion of motherhood in their campaign against the MHP and affiliated far-right groups in West Germany; specifically, BTKB members reconceptualized maternal affect as a political resource, translating emotions of grief

[510] With Kahramanmaraş, Sevim Kesim referred to the massacre of more than one hundred leftists and Alevi Kurds in the south-eastern Turkish city of Kahramanmaraş, primarily by fascist Grey Wolves. In addition, 176 people were seriously wounded and 500 shops and homes destroyed. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2021), 414; Mehmet Orhan, *Political Violence and Kurds in Turkey: Fragmentations, Mobilizations, Participations and Repertoires* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 86. On the shocking violence used there, see further Özcan Öğüt, "An Unattended Wound: 'Maraş Massacre on Its 37th Anniversary,'" *Independent Turkey* (blog), December 29, 2015, http://researchturkey.org/?p=10309.
[511] "Mustafa Suphi'ler Gibi Aramızda Yaşayacak," *Kurtuluş*, no. 216 (January 16, 1980): 8.
[512] Ibid.
[513] Die Wahrheit, Report titled "Hitzige Debatte im DFB über Frauen in Nahost," 18 January 1980, A Rep. 400 BRD 19.1k (DKP) 1979-1980, FFBIZ.

and care into a discourse of collective resistance that reframed motherhood as a public, communal, and political commitment.[514]

3.4. The BTKB in Forms of Collaboration and Contestation in the West-Berlin Women's Movement

In the second half of the 1970s, the BTKB's politics were also shaped by transnational cooperation with left-feminist women from other migrant communities, as well as with the DFB, the West Berlin affiliate of the WIDF. Left-feminist women from diverse backgrounds in West Berlin joined forces through the WKRF, aiming to strengthen mutual solidarity and cooperation while representing women's interests both locally and internationally. In 1974, a group of left-feminist women in West Berlin formed a preparatory committee for the WIDF's 1975 East Berlin Congress. After the Congress, the women decided to continue their collaboration and renamed themselves the *Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau* (West Berlin Committee for Women's Rights, WKRF).[515] The WKRF was made up of the following organizations: DFB, BTKB, West Berlin branch of *Die Christliche Friedenskonferenz* (Christian Peace Conference, CFK), the *Finnische Fortschrittliche Gruppe in Westberlin* (Finnish Progressive Group in West Berlin, FINNFO), the *Griechische Bewegung Demokratischer Frauen in Westberlin* (Greek Movement of Democratic Women in West Berlin), the *Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern Verheirateten Deutschen Frauen* (Interest Group of German Women Married to Foreigners, IAF), the *Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes – Bund der Antifaschistinnen und Antifaschisten* (Association of Those Persecuted by the Nazi Regime – Federation of Antifascists, VVN-BdA).[516]

A particularly noteworthy member of the WKRF was the *Sozialistischer Frauenbund Westberlin* (Socialist Women's League West Berlin, SFB), an organization formed by socialist-feminist women around Frigga Haug and several smaller groups following a split from the West German feminist group *Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frauen* (Action Council for the Liberation of Women).[517] According to Haug, the SFB adopted "a more radical position than that of the women's organization on the periphery of the West Berlin

[514] Selma Sevenhuijsen, *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care: Feminist Considerations on Justice, Morality and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998), 18. Nisa Göksel, "Losing the One, Caring for the All: The Activism of the Peace Mothers in Turkey," *Social Sciences* 7, no. 10 (2018): 14.
[515] Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau to Arbeitsgruppe Sommeruniversität, 23 July 1979, A Rep. 400 BRD 19.1k (DKP) 1979-1980, FFBIZ; Frigga Haug, "The Women's Movement in West Germany," *New Left Review*, no. I/155 (1986): 66.
[516] Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, Pamphlet for International Women's Day, 8 March 1978, A Rep. 400 Berlin 21.12 International Women's Day 1973-1985, FFBIZ.
[517] Haug, "The Women's Movement in West Germany," 56.

Communist Party [SEW], the 'Democratic Women's League' [DFB]."[518] Drawing on both the political and material support of national actors with pro-Soviet stance—namely, the SEW, the DFB, and the *Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaftsgesellschaft Westberlin* (the German-Soviet Friendship Society in West Berlin, DSF)—the WKRF organized demonstrations and events throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, including International Women's Day celebrations, festivals, seminars, and public discussions.[519] According to BTKB member Azize Tank, who participated in the Committee's activities, BTKB women, along with their Greek counterparts, were always at the forefront of the Committee's actions from its inception to its later years.[520]

The WKRF initiated and participated in solidarity campaigns supporting women from the Global South who were victims of military dictatorships, as part of its broader anti-fascist agenda, with Chile holding a prominent place in the Committee's transnational solidarity efforts. These initiatives continued the WIDF's earlier work, which had begun immediately after the military coup in Chile in September 1973. The WIDF sent an international women's delegation to Chile, which included Margot Mrozinski, chairwoman of the DFB and a key figure in the WKRF.[521] The Committee's transnational solidarity efforts continued into the second half of the 1970s, with the aim of keeping public attention in West Berlin focused on Chile and to encourage ongoing action in support of Chilean women living under Pinochet's dictatorship. As part of its fundraising efforts for Chilean women exiles in West Berlin, the Committee organized women's solidarity bazaars, which included concerts by Chilean folk music groups and educational materials about the political situation in Chile.[522]

[518] Ibid.
[519] The headquarters of the WKRF and the DFB were located in the same building as the DSF, on 37 Westfälische Str. in West Berlin. Evidence that the WKRF and the DFB shared the same building as the DSF appears in: Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, Invitation to the Solidarity Festival for Foreign and West Berlin Women, 19 June 1976, A Rep. 400 BRD 19.6c, FFBIZ; Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, Pamphlet for International Women's Day, 8 March 1978, A Rep. 400 Berlin 21.12 International Women's Day 1973-1985, FFBIZ.
[520] Azize Tank, Interview by Sercan Çınar.
[521] Lanfranco González, "Women, Gender and Human Rights," 832; de Haan, "La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres."
[522] Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, Invitation to the Solidarity Festival for Foreign and West Berlin Women, 19 June 1976, A Rep. 400 BRD 19.6c, FFBIZ; Die Wahrheit, "Denkprozesse in Gangsetzen! Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau Führts Veranstaltung Durch," 8 March 1977, A Rep. 400 Berlin 21.12 International Women's Day 1973-1985, FFBIZ.

Figure 3.4. *From left, Ruth Neto, the national coordinator for the Organization of Angolan Women (OMA) and a WIDF vice president, Margot Mrozinski and Maria Mambo Café, an Angolan economist, political activist, and prominent OMA member, at an event organized by the WKRF, November 1976, West Berlin. Source: Jürgen Henschel, 1976, Collection of FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum.*

The WKRF demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting migrant women's rights from the outset of its existence. In June 1976, the Committee organized a solidarity festival for "Foreign and West Berlin Women," which featured a special screening of the documentary "Pierburg: Your Fight is Our Fight (1974–75)," by Edith Schmidt-Marcello and David Wittenberg. This film chronicled the renowned wildcat strikes at the Pierburg Auto Parts Factory in Neuss, North Rhine-Westphalia, led by migrant women.[523] The Committee collaborated with migrant women on International Women's Day events, producing multilingual flyers and leaflets to ensure inclusivity and visibility, and migrant women's demands—including equal pay for equal work, equal access to education and employment, adequate vocational training for migrant youth, and reduced working hours without loss of pay or increased workloads—were placed at the center of these events.[524]

In examining the gender politics and activism of the BTKB and the WKRF it is also important to analyze their stance on and relationship with the so-called new West German

[523] Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, Invitation to the Solidarity Festival for Foreign and West Berlin Women.
[524] Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, Pamphlet for International Women's Day, 8 March 1978, A Rep. 400 Berlin 21.12 International Women's Day 1973-1985, FFBIZ.

women's movement, which emerged in the late 1960s and grew into a significant force during the 1970s.[525] On the one hand, the emergence of the so-called new women's movement in West Germany was closely tied to the global phenomenon of so-called "second-wave feminism,"; on the other hand, it emerged "from the start against the grain of 'socialism' as then understood" with a peculiar dynamic that "has been determined by the country's peculiar relation to East Germany."[526] As the movement gained momentum in the early 1970s, many self-identified feminist groups began distancing themselves from other organizations, positioning themselves in opposition to women affiliated with different causes, especially those involved in mixed-gender organizations and socialist politics. As Frigga Haug noted, "with the word 'autonomous,' there had come onto the agenda something like a rejection of the organizations of the labor movement and of the women who had any connection with it."[527] Thus, the phase of pluralization and consolidation within the new women's movement in West Germany was marked by increasing polarization, most clearly seen in the ostracism of socialist women affiliated with political parties and trade unions. According to Frigga Haug, who experienced this period firsthand as a socialist-feminist activist in the SFB, this polarization was reflected in the exclusion of socialist women from so-called "autonomously planned" activities—an exclusion, she argued, which "can only be explained in terms of the virulent all-purpose anti-communism" that characterized West German political culture at the time.[528]

The exclusionary turn of the so-called "autonomous organizing" principle into an overt marker of the new women's movement's exclusion of socialist women—including migrant women—became particularly evident in the organization of the *Sommeruniversität für Frauen* (Women's Summer University). This event, which ran from 1976 to 1984 in West Berlin, was initiated by a group of feminist scholars from the Freie Universität (FU) and Technische Universität (TU), along with activists who sought to integrate the demands of the new women's movement into academic work through a critique of male-dominated scientific traditions.[529] In their quest for "autonomy as women," the organizers initially took it for

[525] Ilse Lenz, *Die Neue Frauenbewegung in Deutschland: Abschied vom kleinen Unterschied Eine Quellensammlung* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 45. It commonly agreed that Helke Sander's speech at the 23rd Delegate Conference of the League of German Socialist Students (SDS) in 1968 in Frankfurt was one spectacular event marking the beginning of the new West German women's movement. Haug, "The Women's Movement in West Germany"; Lenz, *Die Neue Frauenbewegung in Deutschland*.
[526] Haug, "The Women's Movement in West Germany," 51–52.
[527] Ibid., 58.
[528] Ibid.
[529] Martina Althoff, Mechthild Bereswill, and Birgit Riegraf, *Feministische Methodologien und Methoden: Traditionen, Konzepte, Erörterungenn* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2001), 19; Rebecca Hillauer, "Erste Sommeruniversität vor 40 Jahren: Als Frauen anfingen, den Mund aufzumachen,"

granted that the *Sommeruniversität für Frauen* "should not only be open to all women but should also offer something for all women."[530]

Despite these aspirations, polarization within the women's movement led to the immediate exclusion of left-feminist and migrant activist women from the summer universities. Frigga Haug recalled that her organization, the SFB, was not invited to the first Summer University in Berlin in 1976. When the second Summer University was being organized, SFB members decided to attend a meeting of the preparatory group at which workshop topics were allocated.[531] "To their surprise," Haug recounted, SFB members were assigned the topic of "sexuality and lesbianism," even though "at this time there was not a single lesbian in the SFB."[532] A more significant incident occurred during preparations for the Fourth Summer University, when the WKRF reached out to the organizers, expressing interest in participation and stating: "The shared experiences of discrimination faced by German and migrant women, along with their children and families, have united us in forming an alliance."[533] In its letter, the Committee also submitted a proposal for a presentation and discussion session on "theories and strategies of the women's movement," in which its members would "present and discuss how [they] have worked in the past and what [their] ideas are for the future" regarding cooperation between West German and migrant women. However, the Committee's request to participate in the Fourth Women's Summer University was rejected on the following grounds:

> The Women's Summer University is an event organized by the autonomous women's movement and is prepared by different groups from year to year. We, this year's group, are women from the autonomous women's movement. We welcome any women's group that would like to participate actively or with interest in the event. Excluded, however, are those women who, under the guise of commitment to women, want to sell us an ideology that relegates the oppression of women to second or lower place, and also those who do not see the contradiction between their committed women's work and the nature of their organization. We reject contributions, such as yours, which clearly show this.[534]

Deutschlandfunk Kultur, July 5, 2016, https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/erste-sommeruniversitaet-vor-40-jahren-als-frauen-anfingen-100.html.

[530] Althoff, Bereswill, and Riegraf, *Feministische Methodologien und Methoden*, 21.

[531] Quoted in Cristina Perincioli, "Revisiting Old Battles," *Berlin Goes Feminist* (blog), 1996, https://feministberlin1968ff.de/leftist-debates/leftist-debates1996-revisiting-old-battles/.

[532] Ibid.

[533] Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau to Arbeitsgruppe Sommeruniversität, 23 July 1979, A Rep. 400 BRD 19.1k (DKP) 1979-1980, FFBIZ.

[534] Arbeitsgruppe Sommeruni to Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, 19 September 1979, A Rep. 400 BRD 19.1k (DKP) 1979-1980, FFBIZ.

In response to the rejection, the WKRF—which included the BTKB—launched a campaign protesting the preparatory group's exclusionary practices. The Committee also issued a statement, declaring: "We do not accept that only a small group of four women decided who may or may not participate," and describing this decision as "a clear act of 'muzzling' women."[535] The exclusion led them to question "the true character of the event," which was "supposedly open to all women."[536] The Committee clarified their intention to participate in the summer university by stating: "[As] women representing the Committee, we aimed to demonstrate the political work and strategies of diverse foreign women's groups, particularly those of Turkish and Greek origin, within their own organizations and through collaborations with other groups in West Berlin."[537] In their protest against their exclusion, the Committee emphasized the importance of solidarity among women in building a movement that transcended class and ethnic boundaries, stating that "the various forms of discrimination in all areas of society cannot be eliminated by each group on its own."[538]

The exclusion of migrant left-feminist women from the Women's Summer University reveals the divisive impact of political polarization within the contemporary women's movement in West Berlin.[539] The condescending stance of the so-called new West German women's movement is evident in the aforementioned rejection letter from the Women's Summer University's preparatory group, which accused the women of the WKRF of failing to recognize "the contradiction between their committed women's work and the nature of their organization," even framing them as mere "sellers of an ideology." The contemptuous tone of this accusation encapsulated a broader ideological presumption—namely, that "autonomous" organizing and a gender-only political agenda were prerequisites for feminist activism.

The political polarization in the 1970s West German women's movement also resulted in divergent strategies for community activism within the Turkish migrant community. One project of the so-called "autonomous" women's movement for migrant women was the *Treffen- und Informationspunkt für die Frauen aus der Türkei* (Meeting and Information Center for Women from Turkey, TIO), opened in 1978 in West Berlin.[540] Although its staff included Turkish women linked to leftist migrant politics, TIO, unlike the BTKB, maintained

[535] Westberliner Komitee für die Rechte der Frau, Statement, 1979, A Rep. 400 BRD 19.1k (DKP) 1979-1980, FFBIZ.
[536] Ibid.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Ibid.
[539] Apostolidou, "Differenz und Gleichheit."
[540] Lea Nocera, *"Manikürlü Eller Almanya'da Elektrik Bobini Saracak": Toplumsal Cinsiyet Perspektifinden Batı Almanya'ya Türk Göçü (1961-1984)*, trans. Fazıla Mat (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2018), 259; Erdem, "Organisationen Anatolisch-Deutscher Frauen," 138.

what it regarded as its independence and political neutrality. TIO focused on providing direct social and legal support to Turkish migrant women in West Berlin, especially those subjected to domestic violence and who faced difficulties accessing women's shelters (*Frauenhäuser*) due to their migrant status.[541] Their self-proclaimed political neutrality did not protect the TIO from attacks by Turkish far-right groups, who perceived the TIO's emphasis on the prevention of domestic violence as an unwarranted intrusion into the private sphere. The BTKB was also a frequent target. One example is an undated leaflet distributed by the *Berlin Türk Kadın Derneği* (Berlin Turkish Women's Association), a far-right organization established in West Berlin in 1978 to counter the growing influence of BTKB and TIO in Turkish migrant women's organizing:

> The women's associations that have been founded so far, which supposedly defend women's rights and are dependent on 'outside' forces [communists and imperialists], were founded with the claim that [women's] rights and equality can eliminate the backwardness and oppression of our women. (…) They tried to degenerate our women with the material support of forces from outside.[542]

This hostile framing even culminated in a fatal attack on TIO's offices on September 25, 1984, when a Turkish man murdered one woman and seriously injured another.[543]

3.5. Turkish Migrant Women's Left-Feminist Organizing in the Ruhr and the GKB

In the early 1970s, the Ruhr region in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) emerged as the central hub of Turkish leftist migrant politics in western Europe. This development was driven by the presence of a sizeable Turkish migrant worker community employed in the Ruhr's expansive industrial sector and the near-simultaneous founding of several Turkish workers' organizations by leftist Turkish workers in cities close to each other: Bochum, Dortmund, Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Herne, and Wanne-Eickel.[544] Among the most prominent of these organizations were the *Herne/Wanne-Eickel İşçi Birliği* (Union of Turkish Workers in Herne/Wanne-Eickel) and the *Gelsenkirchen ve Çevresi Türk İşçi Derneği* (Turkish Workers' Association in Gelsenkirchen and its Surroundings, GE-TID). The exact founding date of these organizations is unknown, but they were members of the ATTF as early as 1971.[545]

[541] Kimmerle, "Frauen in Bewegung," 317.
[542] Berlin Türk Kadın Derneği, Leaflet, A Rep. 400 Berlin 6c 1976-1986, FFBIZ.
[543] Kimmerle, "Frauen in Bewegung," 322-23.
[544] Sercan Çınar, "The Making of Turkish Migrant Left Feminism," 107.
[545] Feridun Gürgöz, *Saat Geri Dönmüyor* (Istanbul: TUSTAV, 2007), 21.

There were a handful of Turkish leftist women who participated in these activities, including Beyhan Çolak, Fatma Çelik, and Tülin Tarakçıoğlu. I was not able to find sufficient information to construct biographical profiles of these women except for Beyhan Çolak, whose short biographical portrait is included in the *frauen/ruhr/geschichte* (women/ruhr/history) project.[546] Nevertheless, in a group interview Mehmet Ayas from the *Institut für Stadtgeschichte Gelsenkirchen* (Institute for Urban History Gelsenkirchen, ISG) conducted and recorded with the *Gelsenkirchen Kadınlar Birliği* (Union of Turkish Women in Gelsenkirchen, GKB) members Beyhan Çolak, Semra Teber, and another woman I refer to as "Nisan" (a pseudonym), they offered some personal recollections of women involved in Turkish leftist migrant organizations in the Ruhr in the early 1970s.[547] They described themselves and their peers as well-educated women, some having completed a university education before migrating to the Ruhr.[548] For instance, Beyhan Çolak studied physics, biology, and chemistry at Istanbul University; she arrived in West Germany in 1974 to do a doctoral degree at the Faculty of Biology at Ruhr University Bochum.[549] Tülin Tarakçıoğlu was a medical doctor, and Nisan was a teacher.[550] As Beyhan Çolak recounted, their political experiences in mixed-gender Turkish leftist migrant organizations had revealed how difficult it was to attract and engage Turkish migrant women, due to the male-dominated composition of these organizations.[551] This experience led them to realize the importance of creating a women-only space—both to mobilize Turkish women within migrant politics, and to respond to their specific needs: many Turkish migrant women, dispossessed by their social and cultural backgrounds, were "uneducated, unable to read or write in Turkish, or speak German, and were [therefore] largely confined to the household."[552]

These initial ideas found fertile ground within the TKP-affiliated Turkish leftist migrant network of the ATTF in western Europe, with the ATTF's Seventh Annual Congress, held in Gelsenkirchen in December 1974, as a key moment (discussed in Sections 2.3 and 3.2). There, women delegates from the UK and West Germany—including the Ruhr—held a meeting and resolved to form migrant women's organizations independent from the mixed-

[546] Susanne Abeck, "Beyhan Colak," *frauen/ruhr/geschichte* (blog), February 15, 2013, https://www.frauenruhrgeschichte.de/frg_biografie/beyhan-colak/.
[547] Interview by Mehmet Ayas with Beyhan Çolak, Semra Teber, and Nisan, undated, Gelsenkirchen. I kindly thank Ayas for sharing this with me.
[548] Ibid.
[549] Abeck, "Beyhan Colak."
[550] Tülin Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi* (Istanbul: Gerçek Sanat Yayınları, 1989); Ayas, Interview with Çolak, Teber, Nisan.
[551] Çolak, Teber, Nisan, Interview by Ayas.
[552] Ibid.

gender leftist organizations they were part of. Beyhan Çolak emphasized the meeting's significance, noting, "[t]hat was when it truly happened," and "the decision to establish a women's organization was made."[553] The GKB was established on 8 March 1975—the same day as the BTKB in West Berlin and the HTKB in the Netherlands.[554] Reflecting on this concurrent establishment of Turkish migrant women's organizations, Nisan underscored the transnational dimension of the GKB's founding, remarking that the global momentum of the IWY "affected us all, and all these organizations emerged around the same time, for example, the founding of IKD in Turkey, the GKB here, and the one in the Netherlands."[555]

A defining feature of Turkish migrant left feminism in the Ruhr was its strong community focus. After its establishment, GKB members began with the search for a temporary venue to host gatherings and offer community services for Turkish migrant women in the region. To this end, they approached the mayor of Gelsenkirchen, who responded positively and pledged municipal support.[556] In the interim, the GKB began using space provided by the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (German Trade Union Confederation, DGB) within its facilities to hold meetings.[557] Additionally, GKB members sought support from the Gelsenkirchen *Bildungszentrum* (Education Center) and *Schulamt* (School Authority) to initiate literacy courses, which GKB cadres identified as the most urgent need among Turkish migrant women.[558] Interviewee Semra Teber for example, emphasized the necessity for the literacy campaign.[559] According to the GKB's October–November 1975 report, GKB women sought support from local German institutions based on the strategic concern that "our fellow Turkish women would feel more comfortable attending courses held in these buildings."[560] Holding the literacy courses in locations not affiliated with the Turkish left, they believed, would make Turkish women feel more comfortable attending. And the initiative proved successful when the GKB launched a local literacy campaign in February 1976, supported by the *Gelsenkirchen Bildungszentrum* and Turkish schoolteachers in the region.[561]

In this way, from its inception, the GKB invested significantly in seemingly non-political activities—beginning with literacy classes, and later including German language

[553] Ibid.
[554] "Gelsenkirchen Kadınlar Birliği 10 Yaşında," *Kadın*, no. 1 (March 1985): 2.
[555] Çolak, Teber, Nisan, Interview by Ayas.
[556] GKB, Working Report on October-November 1975, December 1975, File 22, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[557] "Ruhr Bölgesi Kadınlar Birliği," *Kurtuluş*, no. 140 (November 14, 1975): 4; GKB, Working Report on December 1975-January 1976, February 1976, File 13, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[558] GKB, Working Report on October-November 1975, December 1975, File 22, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[559] Çolak, Teber, Nisan, Interview by Ayas.
[560] GKB, Working Report on October-November 1975, December 1975, File 22, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[561] GKB, Working Report on December 1975-January 1976, February 1976, November 1975, File 13, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.

instruction as well as sewing and tailoring courses. These initiatives demonstrate that community feminism and the commitment of its members to uplifting the Turkish migrant community in the Ruhr were not peripheral to political work, but rather central to the GKB's broader political agenda. Nisan also recalled how the GKB gained a strong reputation regarding its community feminism among its constituency in all its diversity, including those with conservative or apolitical leanings. When Turkish women faced challenges with West German authorities or their children's education, the GKB was widely regarded as the only reliable support; as Nisan noted, the prevailing sentiment was: "They may be leftists, but they can help you."[562] Thus, the GKB managed to transcend the ideological biases that might divide migrant communities.

The GKB's community focus can also be interpreted as an investment in the idea that both its members and the broader constituency were beginning to perceive their lives in Germany as more permanent. As the GKB expanded its community work, it strengthened its relationship with the Gelsenkirchen city administration and with *Türk-Danış*, the first institutional network of social services for Turkish migrant workers in West Germany, established by the AWO.[563] GKB members actively participated in the preparations for the establishment of the *Ausländerbeiräte* (Advisory Council for Foreign Nationals), seeking to ensure Turkish migrant women's representation in the Gelsenkirchen policy making bodies.[564] Two of their members were elected as substitute representatives in the *Ausländerbeiräte*.[565]

A key feature of GKB's community feminism was its commitment to intercultural work. These efforts aimed to confront and dismantle prevailing stereotypes about and prejudices against Turkish migrant women. It asserted the right of Turkish women to become equal members of society without being expected to abandon their cultural heritage. To this end, the GKB regarded self-representation by Turkish migrants as essential, and in late 1975, the organization decided to hold an exhibition that would feature traditional Turkish handicrafts and photographs of the lives of women in rural Turkey.[566] Held from 2 to 15 April 1976 at the *Gelsenkirchen Bildungszentrum*, this exhibition was the first of its kind among Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations, some of which went on to organize similar

[562] Çolak, Teber, Nisan, Interview by Ayas.
[563] Ibid.
[564] GKB, Working Report on October-November 1975, December 1975, File 22, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[565] GKB, Working Report on February-May 1976, 3 June 1976, File 21, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[566] GKB, Working Report on October-November 1975, December 1975, File 22, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.

exhibitions—most notably the photo exhibition *Kadınlar* (Women), opened by HTKB at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam between 27 February and 31 March 1981.[567]

One major example of the GKB's position in the politics of representations of Turkish migrant can be found in its response to the protests from right-wing circles in Turkey and West Germany following the first airing of the movie *Shirins Hochzeit* (Shirin's Wedding) on WDR television (West German Broadcasting Cologne) in February 1976.[568] Directed by Helma Sanders-Brahms, the film follows the story of Şirin, a young Turkish woman from rural Turkey who escapes an arranged marriage by fleeing to West Germany. Initially employed in a factory, she soon loses her job and social support, eventually becoming a victim of rape, coerced into prostitution, and in the end murdered. The film's broadcast on WDR television sparked protests by Turkish nationalists outside the television's building in Cologne, with demonstrators accusing WDR of being under the influence of "anarchists and communists."[569] Both the director, Helma Sanders-Brahms, and the lead actress, Ayten Erten, were subjected to public vilification and received death threats.[570] The controversy centered on the portrayal of a Turkish woman engaged in prostitution. Critics argued that such a representation was degrading and inappropriate, with the most vocal opponents asserting that a perceived stain on an individual woman's honor was, by extension, a stain on the honor of the entire Turkish society.[571]

The GKB, however, expressed support for the WDR, the film's director and the lead actress. They refuted the criticism by asserting that the film realistically captured "the vulnerability of Turkish women living in Turkey's underdeveloped rural regions" and illustrated "what might possibly happen to Turkish women workers, particularly those compelled to seek employment in Europe far away from their homeland and families due to the economic crisis and high unemployment in Turkey," further emphasizing that "it was not Turkish women whom the film depicted as immoral, but rather the capitalist system itself."[572] In its support of the film, the GKB asserted that the criticisms leveled by Turkish right-wing groups amounted to "distortions of reality masked as nationalism."[573]

The controversy around "Shirin's Wedding" reveals how the representation of Turkish women became a key site of negotiation and tension between West Germans and Turkish

[567] "HTKB Fotoğraf Sergisi Çok İlgi Gördü," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 9 (April 1981): 2; HTKB, Exhibition Booklet, 1981, Box: 143, Folder: 392, NVB Archive, IISH, Amsterdam.
[568] *Shirins Hochzeit*, Drama (Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), 1976), https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073704/.
[569] Nocera, *"Manikürlü Eller Almanya'da Elektrik Bobini Saracak,"* 242.
[570] Ibid.
[571] Ibid.
[572] "Şirin'in Düğünü Kapitalizmin Ahlâksızlığını Sergiliyor," *Kurtuluş*, no. 146 (February 20, 1976): 4.
[573] GKB, Working Report on February-May 1976, 3 June 1976, File 21, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.

migrants.[574] Crucially, it also illustrates how Turkish migrant left-feminists, particularly those involved in the GKB, engaged in the politics of representation by depicting their constituency as vulnerable and oppressed. From a contemporary critical gender perspective, this strategy might seem problematic, as it potentially reinforced dominant western discourses that depict women from non-western communities as a homogeneous group, "backward," "passive," and in need of rescue from their supposedly oppressive minority cultures. Such critiques have been reinforced by increasing attention in migration studies to the notion of "deservingness," which highlights how contemporary migration regimes frame and categorize migrants—especially so-called irregular migrants—through moralized and often exclusionary narratives of victimhood and vulnerability.[575] From these contemporary perspectives, the GKB's representation of Turkish migrant women as oppressed and vulnerable, while fostering intercultural dialogue to confront and dismantle prevailing stereotypes and prejudices against them, may seem paradoxical. However, as Margaretha A. van Es demonstrated in her 2006 book, in the 1970s, victimhood and being oppressed did not carry the same stigma as it does today, and both majority and minority women's organizations frequently employed notions of victimhood in their struggles for justice and equality.[576] In addition, the exhibitions they organized served to dismantle homogenizing views shaped by negative stereotypes that portrayed Turkish women collectively as "backward," "passive," and in need of rescue.

To conclude this section, I investigate the GKB's transnational agenda and dual commitment to community and long-distance feminism. Like its Berlin sister organization, the BTKB, the GKB's homeland-directed activities were shaped by a left-feminist perspective that linked the struggle for women's rights with broader political goals, such as peace, anti-imperialism, children's well-being, and most importantly anti-fascism, which would become central to the GKB's long-distance feminism, as its activities and publications show. Accordingly, the GKB supported the IKD in Turkey, which it recognized as its counterpart in the homeland and regarded as the primary actor genuinely advocating for Turkish women's rights.

[574] Nocera, *"Manikürlü Eller Almanya'da Elektrik Bobini Saracak,"* 242.
[575] Helen B. Marrow, "Deserving to a Point: Unauthorized Immigrants in San Francisco's Universal Access Healthcare Model," *Social Science & Medicine*, 74, no. 6 (2012): 846–54; Sébastien Chauvin and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas, "Becoming Less Illegal: Deservingness Frames and Undocumented Migrant Incorporation," *Sociology Compass* 8, no. 4 (2014): 422–32; Kristin Yarris and Heide Castañeda, "Special Issue Discourses of Displacement and Deservingness: Interrogating Distinctions between 'Economic' and 'Forced' Migration," *International Migration* 53, no. 3 (2015): 64–69; Nora Ratzmann and Nina Sahraoui, "Conceptualising the Role of Deservingness in Migrants' Access to Social Services," *Social Policy and Society* 20, no. 3 (2021): 440–51.
[576] Van Es, *Stereotypes and Self-Representations*, 84.

On 31 January 1976 in Ankara, the IKD, in collaboration with the women's auxiliary of the center-left *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party, CHP), held the march "*Evlat Acısına Son* (Put an End to Mothers' Pain of Child Loss)," in protest against the killing of leftist activists by far-right groups.[577] Günseli Özkaya, the TKB president, criticized the march on national radio. She claimed that "Turkish women do not take to the streets," accusing the organizers of being "a handful of anarchists seeking to exploit mothers' grief for their own ends."[578] In response to Günseli Özkaya's remarks, GKB members organized a letter-writing campaign calling for her resignation as president of the TKB.[579] They argued that the position should be held by a woman "actively fighting for women's rights in Turkey."[580]

At the intersection of community and long-distance feminism, the GKB prioritized regular meetings for Turkish migrant women, members or not, as a means to cultivate political awareness. These gatherings allowed participants to address the challenges they faced in the host society while staying attuned to developments in Turkey, facilitating both local engagement and transnational political connection. At these GKB meetings, participants engaged in reading and discussing articles from Turkish left-feminist publications such as ATKF's *Emekçi Kadın*, and IKD's *Kadınların Sesi*, to which the GKB subscribed.[581] In a 2018 interview I conducted with Fatma Çelik, one of the GKB founders and an active member from 1975 through the 1980s, she summed up that GKB women "followed developments in the global women's movement, the international work of the WIDF, and the activities of the IKD in Turkey."[582]

The GKB also produced multiple bilingual leaflets, brochures, and short books, including the first Turkish translations of the life stories of prominent communist women like Jenny Marx and Clara Zetkin, along with brochures on women's conditions in Turkey intended for German-speaking audiences, some of which I found in the *Kadın Hareketi Kitaplığı* (Women's Movement Library) collection at TUSTAV in Istanbul.[583] A particularly notable publication by the GKB is a short Turkish-language book released for International

[577] "Analar: Görev Başına!," *Kadınların Sesi*, no. 8 (March 1976): 1.
[578] Adak, "Yetmişli Yıllarda Kadın Hareketi," 618.
[579] GKB, Working Report on February-May 1976, 3 June 1976, File 21, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[580] Ibid.
[581] GKB, Working Report on December 1975-January 1976, February 1976, File 13, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[582] Fatma Çelik, Interview by Sercan Çınar, Essen, 22 March 2018.
[583] For the *Kadın Hareketi Kitaplığı* at TUSTAV, https://www.tustav.org/kutuphane/kadin-hareketi-kutuphanesi/. L. Dayddov and C. Serebriakova, *Clara Zetkin'in Kısa Yaşam Öyküsü* (Gelsenkirchen: GKB, 1977); *Über Die Frauen in Der Türkei* (Gelsenkirchen: Ruhrkomitee der Frauen aus der Türkei, 1978); Semra Teber, ed., *Jenny Marx'ın Kısa Yaşam Öyküsü* (Gelsenkirchen: GKB, 1983).

Women's Day in 1984, titled "*8 Mart 1984 Dünya Kadınlar Gününde Türkiyeli Kadınları ve Dünya Kadınlarını Selamlıyoruz* (On March 8, 1984, International Women's Day, We Extend Our Greetings to the Women of Turkey and the Women of the World)."[584] It was a gesture of solidarity with women suffering under the military regime in Turkey and included a message of solidarity from WIDF President Freda Brown to the GKB and extended to "women and girls in prison, mothers, wives, and siblings of prisoners in Turkey."[585]

Beginning in 1976, GKB members actively participated in IWD and International Workers' Day celebrations in two main ways. First, they organized their own events exclusively for Turkish women, creating a women-only political space to celebrate IWD and to address the specific issues Turkish migrant women faced in West Germany.[586] Secondly, they participated in and mobilized Turkish migrant women for street demonstrations and celebrations organized by West German political actors in the Ruhr region, including the DGB, the *Deutsche Kommunistische Partei* (German Communist Party, DKP), and the left-feminist *Demokratische Fraueninitiative* (Democratic Women's Initiative, DFI), the WIDF's West German affiliate.[587] Among these collaborations, the GKB's relationship with the DFI was particularly significant, as the GKB regarded the DFI as its counterpart in West Germany due to their shared commitment to a left-feminist agenda.[588]

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the formative phase of Turkish migrant left feminism in West Germany, focusing on two key organizations: the BTKB and the GKB, established on 8 March 1975 by Turkish migrant women in West Berlin and the Ruhr region respectively. The chapter has demonstrated that Turkish migrant women, far from being limited to "kitchen cooking and brewing tea" for the cause, organized themselves politically, driven by concerns over exclusionary citizenship regimes and intra-community dynamics that restricted migrant women's access to and participation in public-political life within the host societies. Situating this within the broader context of the Cold War and political developments in Turkey, the chapter showed how the BTKB and GKB also articulated transnational claims from a left-feminist perspective.

[584] GKB, *8 Mart 1984 Dünya Kadınlar Gününde Türkiyeli Kadınları ve Dünya Kadınlarını Selamlıyoruz* (Gelsenkirchen: GKB, 1984).
[585] Ibid., 2.
[586] GKB, Working Report on February-May 1976, 3 June 1976, File 21, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.
[587] "F. Almanya'da İşçilerimiz DGB'nin 1 Mayıs Yürüyüşlerine Katıldı," *Kurtuluş*, no. 151 (May 14, 1976): 4; "Ruhr Bölgesinde Enternasyonal 8 Mart Şenliği Yapıldı," *Kurtuluş*, no. 199 (March 21, 1979): 4.
[588] GKB, Working Report to TBOK, 30 September 1977, File 30, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.

The chapter has advanced five arguments. First, my analysis shows that organized left feminism among Turkish migrant women in West Germany emerged out of some women activists' earlier political involvement in mixed-gender Turkish leftist migrant organizations in West Berlin and the Ruhr. This led to a shared realization about the structural limitations of existing organizations, particularly their inability to meaningfully involve more Turkish migrant women or to prioritize their specific concerns, which were often treated as peripheral. Their engagement in the TKP-affiliated transnational network of the ATTF was equally significant, enabling them to capitalize on the momentum of the IWY to establish migrant women's organizations independent of the mixed-gender organizations they had previously been involved in. Therefore, my findings her reinforce those in Chapter 2 regarding the significance of the ATTF's Seventh Congress in December 1974.

Secondly, this chapter argued that community feminism played a central role in the political trajectories of the BTKB and the GBK. Both organizations identified the most immediate needs of their constituencies as stemming from the structural and ethnicized barriers that Turkish migrant women and children faced in accessing the public sphere and social services. In response, BTKB and GKB cadres initiated community-oriented activities to support Turkish migrant women, including voluntary translation services, social counselling, literacy and German-language courses aimed at helping them navigate everyday life with greater independence. In the case of the BTKB in West Berlin, the well-being of Turkish migrants, particularly children, emerged as a central issue due to discriminatory education policies enforced by the West Berlin Senate and the marginalization of Turkish communities in poorly serviced neighborhoods near the Berlin Wall. These spatial and political dynamics, rooted in the Cold War urban landscape, had profound consequences for Turkish children's welfare—including fatal ones. BTKB members responded to all these challenges by combining their community feminism with a politicized vision of motherhood, mobilizing Turkish migrant women as mothers to confront discriminatory practices that undermined the well-being of Turkish children. At the same time, they resisted Cold War antagonisms perpetuated by dominant West German public discourse and refused to be either complicit in or victims of this geopolitical antagonism.

Thirdly, BTKB and GKB members combined politicized motherhood and long-distance feminism in their homeland-directed initiatives in the 1976–1980 period, when organized far-right violence escalated in Turkey. They supported their homeland counterpart, the IKD, as they viewed the struggle for women's rights as intrinsically linked to the broader political goal of anti-fascism. This activism took on a unique dimension in West Berlin, where

Turkish far-right groups had gained enough traction within the migrant community to organize a series of violent attacks against Turkish leftist activists and organizations—including the BTKB, whose building was attacked, and most tragically, through the murder of Celalettin Kesim, the husband of BTKB co-founder Sevim Kesim. In this context of escalating transplanted homeland politics, the BTKB transformed maternal feelings of loss and care into a political instrument for anti-fascist mobilization, using a politicized notion of motherhood in their campaign against the MHP and affiliated far-right groups in West Germany.

Fourthly, BTKB and GKB found their closest allies within the West German women's movement in the WIDF's affiliates—namely the DFB in West Berlin and the DFI in the Ruhr region—similar to the ITKB's close relationship with the NAW in the UK. Turkish migrant left-feminists in West Germany collaborated with their West German counterparts in advancing migrant women's rights and women's anti-fascist mobilization, both locally and transnationally. In West Berlin, this happened through WKRF. The Committee can be understood as a localized extension of the WIDF's politics in the 1970s, and my analysis of its activities reveals a deeper rift and polarization between migrant women's organizations and the so-called new West German women's movement, particularly around the idea of women's "autonomous organizing." The disagreement resulted in the exclusion of socialist women—especially Turkish migrant women activists, who were predominantly socialist—from the activities of self-identified feminist groups, in particular those of the Women's Summer University.

Lastly—and perhaps most significantly—my findings indicate that the BTKB and GKB represent the earliest instances of political organizing by Turkish migrant women in West Germany.

Chapter 4: HTKB and Turkish Migrant Left Feminism in the Netherlands (1974-1980)

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will examine the origins and development of Turkish migrant women's left-feminist political organizing in the Netherlands between 1974 and the military coup in Turkey on September 12, 1980. In 4.2, through detailed biographical accounts and archival research, I identify the historical actors who participated in the founding of HTKB in Amsterdam, while also investigating the personal and organizational networks of those involved in both the local beginnings of HTKB and their transnational connections. In my discussion of the origins of HTKB, I adopt a transnational perspective, moving beyond earlier historical narratives that tend to depict HTKB as simply being an offshoot of HTIB. Instead, I examine the individual contributions and backgrounds of HTKB's founding members, the transnational impacts of the IWY, WIDF, and TKP on HTKB's founding, and the founders' connections to the cross-border network of Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe. I also explore the development, agenda and strategies HTKB employed from its early years, comparing them with those of its counterparts in the UK and West Germany.

Then, in 4.3, I discuss HTKB's role in Turkish migrant women's activism in the Netherlands. I explore the role that HTKB members played in demanding, defending, and promoting migrant women's rights, their interaction, negotiation, and conflict with local and national political structures over migrant women's interests and rights, and their efforts to influence the shaping of Dutch integration policy in the early 1980s. Section 4.4 closely examines the political ideas expressed in HTKB's magazines, *Kadınların Birliği* (Unity of Women) in Turkish and *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* (Turkish Women's Newspaper) in Dutch. Section 4.4 also explores the ideological underpinnings of HTKB's bilingual political communication strategies, focusing on the varying contents of these two publications. Lastly, in 4.5, I analyze and explore how HTKB's understanding of Turkish migrant women's oppression and experiences—at the intersections of class, gender, and ethnicity, both within the family and in the public sphere—informed its political work in the late 1970s, particularly through its initiatives for Turkish migrant women's rights and its political communication via its publications.

Taken together, these sections will allow me to answer the following questions: Which motivations and which factors played a role in the founding process of HTKB in the Netherlands? Who were the key historical actors involved in this process, what were their

backgrounds and prior experiences in activism, and what role did transnational connections and networks play in the founding of HTKB? What were the main agenda and strategies HTKB employed in its early years, and how did they compare to those of migrant left-feminist organizations in the UK and West Germany? What role did HTKB play in migrant women's activism in the Netherlands, and how did it engage with local and national political structures to promote Turkish migrant women's rights? What political ideas were expressed in HTKB's *Kadınların Birliği* and *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, and what ideological views informed HTKB members' activism? How did HTKB's bilingual political communication strategies vary between its Turkish and Dutch publications, and what were the implications of these differences for their activism and outreach?

4.2. The Formation of HTKB

Turkish migrant women's mid-1970s left-feminist political organizing in the Netherlands has its roots in Turkish left-wing migrant politics from the early 1970s, as was the case with its counterparts in the UK and West Germany.

As demonstrated in Section 1.2, Turkish migration to the Netherlands began in 1964 when the Dutch government signed a bilateral labor recruitment agreement with Turkey to address the country's labor shortage in the booming economy of the 1960s. The number of incoming migrant workers increased significantly until 1973, when the Netherlands, similar to West Germany, imposed an immigration ban for all guest worker countries.[589] During the recruitment period between 1964 and 1974, as many as 30,000 people migrated to the Netherlands from Turkey as guest-workers, around 2,700 of whom were women.[590] By 1975, the Turkish female migrant population in the Netherlands was estimated at around 56,000[591] (for more details, see Chapter 1).

Against this background, studies on the founding process of HTKB have largely explained this process with reference to the influence of group-related factors found in the host society, namely the migration process and the character of the migrant population. In this narrative, HTKB is described as "a spin-off of HTIB"[592] or "the women's organization of

[589] Jan Lucassen and Rinus Penninx, *Newcomers: Immigrants and Their Descendants in the Netherlands 1550-1995* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1997), 54–55; Akgündüz, *Labour Migration from Turkey*, 60.
[590] Ahmet Akgündüz, "Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe (1960–1974): An Analytical Review," *Capital & Class* 17, no. 3 (1993): 181.
[591] Mila Lemmens, "Van Turkije naar Nederland," in Yüksel, *Je moest eens weten*, 37.
[592] Schrover, "Multiculturalism, Dependent Residence Status and Honour Killings," 235.

HTIB,"[593] and was "co-founded and first run by Maviye Karaman Ince, the wife of the founder of HTIB (Nihat Karaman),"[594] or was an organization of "TKP women."[595] Although these depictions are largely accurate in terms of identifying the partnership between HTIB and HTKB, as well as the actors who took part in this process, they are incomplete, as my analysis will show.

In addition, all scholarly works that provide chronological information about the HTKB mention 1974 as its founding year.[596] However, we now know from the finding aid for the HTKB Archive at the IISH that in May 1974, HTIB women organized a Mother's Day celebration in Amsterdam where a plan for founding a Turkish women's organization was presented, and that HTKB was established in 1975.[597] The finding aid is likely based on two documents available at IISH. The first document is an invitation letter by the *Amsterdam Türk Kadınlar Birliği* to a Mother's Day Celebration to be held on 12 May 1974 in Amsterdam; the second is HTIB's bi-weekly magazine *Gerçek*'s (Truth) coverage of that Mother's Day celebration, both indicating that ***Amsterdam Türk*** *Kadınlar Birliği* (emphasis added, SÇ) was founded on 16 April 1974 as a local organization.[598]

Notably, the *Amsterdam Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (ATKB) founded in April 1974 had a different name than HTKB, in two ways. It was a local organization in Amsterdam that additionally used the ethnic term *Türk* (Turk) in its title, unlike HTKB, which uses *Türkiye* to refer to the Turkish national identity based on citizenship of the Republic of Turkey (as I do, see the Theoretical-Conceptual Framework section). The invitation letter includes a list of ATKB's founders, mentioning Maviye Karaman as the chair and Şükran Sevim Alpagot as the secretary of ATKB, both of whom became founders of HTKB the next year.[599] All this makes it likely that setting up *Amsterdam Türk Kadınlar Birliği* was a preliminary organizational step for the formation of HTKB.[600]

[593] Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism," 71.
[594] Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution*, 154.
[595] Öztan, "Unutulan Bir Göç ve Yurttaşlık Deneyimi," 39.
[596] Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!," 4; Öztan, "Unutulan Bir Göç ve Yurttaşlık Deneyimi," 33; Öztan, "Türkiye Kökenli Göçmen Kadınların Hollanda'daki Örgütlenme Deneyimleri," 220; Schrover, "Multiculturalism, Dependent Residence Status and Honour Killings," 235.
[597] "Op een bijeenkomst ter gelegenheid van moederdag in 1974 waarbij 500 vrouwen aanwezig waren, presenteerden Turkse vrouwen een plan voor de oprichting van een landelijke vrouwenorganisatie." https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH02025.
[598] Amsterdam Türk Kadınları Birliği, Announcement, 1974, Folder 148, Archive HTKB, IISH; "Kadınlar Birliği Kuruldu," *Gerçek*, no. 1 (June 1, 1974): 6.
[599] Amsterdam Türk Kadınları Birliği, Announcement, 1974, Folder 148, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[600] The IISH finding aid says: "In April 1974 was Türk Kadınlar Birliği, voorloper van de HTKB, door dezelfde Turkse vrouwen in Amsterdam als een plaatselijke werkgroep opgericht."

During my research, I had the opportunity to conduct an oral history interview with HTKB founder Maviye Karaman (whom I will introduce below) on 19 August 2019 in Turkey.[601] Maviye Karaman recalled 1974 as the year when she became a TKP member and they, as HTIB women, began preparations for setting up a women's organization in the Netherlands. She described this attempt as "one of the earliest ones across Europe, together with Turkish women in the UK."[602] Here, Maviye Karaman referred to the ITKB, which was founded in London on February 11, 1974, in London (see Chapter 2), explicitly recounting that she knew of its founding.[603]

Regarding the broader transnational background, both the IISH finding aid and Öztan's work mention that the TKP's decision to establish women's organizations in Turkey and western Europe to contribute to the IWY significantly influenced the founding of the HTKB in 1975; they also mention that the IKD, in Turkey was established in the same year.[604]

However, no existing scholarly accounts acknowledge, first, the WIDF's influence on the TKP's decision (see Chapter 2); and second, the likely impact of the TKP-affiliated ATTF's Seventh Congress, held in Gelsenkirchen in December 1974, on the founding of the HTKB. As detailed in Chapter 2, that Congress acted as a catalyst for Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizing in West Germany, with Chapter 3 showing that the BTKB in West Berlin and the GKB in the Ruhr region were founded on the same day as the HTKB, 8 March 1975. Although I have not found any documents in which these events were discussed by or related to women in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands, the connections seem almost certain. First, Maviye Karaman, the founding chairwoman of the HTKB, was a TKP member, as were the three prominent founding members of the ITKB—Merih Kudsal, Akgül Baylav, and Yıldız Çulfaz —along with the BTKB's founding chairwoman, Meral Uygun (see Chapters 2 and 3).[605] These women were among the TKP's members in western Europe to whom the TKP made its call to establish women's organizations so as to contribute to the

[601] Maviye Karaman, Interview by Sercan Çınar.
[602] Ibid.
[603] Ibid.
[604] The IISH finding aid says: "De oprichting van de HTKB in 1975 viel overigens samen met de oprichting van de zusterorganisatie İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (IKD), Vereniging van Progressieve Vrouwen) in Turkije. Daaraan lag een besluit en een oproep van de TKP (de Turkse Communistische Partij) uit 1975 ten grondslag om overal in de wereld waar Turken wonen, vrouwenorganisaties op te richten. Het jaar 1975 was door de Verenigde Naties uitgeroepen tot jaar van de Vrouw." Öztan, "Unutulan Bir Göç ve Yurttaşlık Deneyimi," 39; Öztan, "Türkiye Kökenli Göçmen Kadınların Hollanda'daki Örgütlenme Deneyimleri," 221.
[605] Karaman, Interview by Sercan Çınar; Akseymen Kudsal, "Giriş," in *Irmak Gibi Mektuplar*, 22–23; Baylav, Interview by Sercan Çınar; Kimmerle, "Frauen in Bewegung," 219. Based on these sources, I was able to determine the exact year in which some of the pioneering TKP women in Western Europe joined the Party. In the UK, Merih Kudsal became a TKP member in 1972, the earliest among them. Akgül Baylav joined in 1973, followed by Maviye Karaman in 1974.

IWY. Secondly, all these organizations —ITKB, BTKB, and GKB—emerged from mixed-gender Turkish leftist migrant organizations affiliated with the TKP-aligned ATTF. Although HTIB was not officially a member of the ATTF at the time of its Seventh Congress (see Section 1.3), HTIB representatives were present. We have no names, but it is possible that Dutch women attended the women's delegates meeting where the decision to create migrant women's organizations was taken, or that HTIB male members present in Gelsenkirchen conveyed the Congress's outcomes back to the Netherlands.

Based on what is currently known in the existing literature about the impact of the TKP's decision to establish women's organizations to contribute to the IWY, combined with what my research has added regarding the WIDF's influence on the TKP's decision and the way in which this decision was channeled into Turkish transnational politics through the ATTF's Seventh Congress in December 1974, it appears that these developments most likely have served as a catalyst for finalizing the HTIB women's preparations to create a national Turkish migrant women's organization, preparations that had begun in May 1974 and culminated in the establishment of the HTKB on March 8, 1975, in Amsterdam, on the same day that the BTKB in West Berlin and the GKB in the Ruhr region were founded.

Alongside this transnational dimension in the founding of the HTKB, a Dutch HTKB booklet from 1984 describes the organization's founding process, motivations, and objectives as follows:

> The organization was founded in 1975 by a number of Turkish women. This was necessary because the Dutch government offered no solutions to the problems Turkish women faced during their stay in the Netherlands (…) The objective of the HTKB is twofold: The HTKB strives to make Turkish women aware of their position and to organize them so that they can jointly defend their interests.[606]

A few words, then, about the founders. First, I could not find a complete list of HTKB founders. However, among those I could identify, I was able to gather varying degrees of information about their life stories in my research—namely, Maviye Karaman, Özden Yalım, and Şükran Sevim Alpagot. As was the case in West Germany and the UK, Maviye Karaman, Özden Yalım and Şükran Sevim Alpagot[607] were also better-educated migrant women with

[606] HTKB, Booklet, 1984, Folder 7, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[607] It was difficult to find detailed information about Şükran Sevim Alpagot's life story. Among the limited information available is an interview with her in the May-June 1982 issue of *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*. Here, Sevim

proficient language skills, who were engaged in Turkish left-wing politics and self-organized within HTIB. Born in 1949 in Erzurum in eastern Anatolia in Turkey, Maviye Karaman (born Maviye İnce) studied Turkish literature at Istanbul University, where she became acquainted with Marxism and joined the socialist movement in Turkey.[608] During her time in Istanbul, in 1972, she secretly married, Nihat Karaman, who would be her life-long partner. They had known each other in Erzurum, where they lived in the same neighborhood, but only fell in love in Istanbul, where they were engaged in political activities within the socialist student movement together.[609] Shortly after their marriage, Nihat Karman fled to the Netherlands. Maviye Karaman stayed another two years in Turkey to finish her studies. Upon her graduation, she joined her husband, and together they played a crucial role in organizing Turkish migrants within HTIB.

Another HTKB founder, Özden Yalım, was born in Kayseri in central Anatolia in Turkey in 1946. In 1970, she graduated from the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, which was a major hub for the rebellious milieu of revolutionary university youth in the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey.[610] Before moving to the Netherlands in 1973 to pursue her master's degree, Özden Yalım worked in the Family Planning Department of the Ministry of Health in Ankara.[611] This work made her realize the extent of the suffering and discrimination Turkish women faced, especially in rural areas, due their restricted access to contraception and abortion.[612] In 1980, she started to work at the *Nederlands Centrum Buitenlanders* (Dutch Center for Foreigners, NCB) in Utrecht, as the senior specialist for migrant women.[613]

The HTKB founders' prior political experiences in left-wing activism, both in Turkey and the Netherlands, along with their political socialization within HTIB, enabled them to

Alpagot mentioned that she was twenty-nine years old and had moved to the Netherlands in 1969. She also mentioned that she was one of the HTKB founders and had been working there as a paid employee since 1979 . "Wij zijn niet alleen een hulpverlenings organisatie," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 13 (June 1982): 10–11. The only secondary source that offers information about Şükran Sevim Alpagot is Ece Öztan's (2009) PhD dissertation, which includes a short excerpt from an undated interview Öztan conducted with Sevim Alpagot. There, Şükran Sevim Alpagot also identified herself as one of the founders of HTKB, emphasizing that very few women involved in its founding had earlier political experience in left-wing organizing among migrants, with Sevim Alpagot being one of them. Öztan, "Göç Bağlamında Yurttaşlık ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet," 254.

[608] "Harriet Freezering Ödülünü HTKB Başkanı Maviye Karaman Aldı," *Türkiye Postası*, no. 73 (January 3, 1986): 10; Onderwater, "Maviye Karaman," 181.

[609] Onderwater, "Maviye Karaman," 183.

[610] Özden Yalım, Interview by Sercan Çınar, Amsterdam, 27 July 2019.

[611] Özden Yalım, Interview by Gülay Orhan as part of the Oral History Project Levensverhalen, 2002, https://imagineic.openbeelden.nl/media/175334/Levensverhalen_Kutluer.nl.

[612] "Verbod op abortus in Turkije leidt tot wantoestanden," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 8 (January 1981): 2.

[613] "'FEM' Projeleri," *Kadınları Birliği*, no. 22 (March 1988): 18–20; Yalım, Interview by Orhan.

successfully navigate their way into the struggle to improve the status of Turkish migrant women in the Netherlands. Their social and activist capital, using Frédérique Matonti and Franck Poupeau's term, political convictions, and knowledge made them well-placed to engage in a transnational mode of life.[614] All this allowed them to travel, interact with fellow left-feminist activists in western Europe, as well as those in Turkey, engage in intellectual exchange and interorganizational relations, and establish new communication networks. Their transnational political work took place within cross-border networks and included interorganizational relationships, functioning as a route, through which successful routines were transferred, and communication networks were established.[615]

The HTKB's founding and its earliest activities took a similar path to their counterparts in the UK and West Germany regarding the local organizational formation of Turkish migrant left feminism in the Netherlands. At its inception, HTKB had the form of a women-only space seeking to provide a venue for migrant women's sociability outside the family and household. Similar to the situation in the UK and West Germany, the foremost challenge the organizers faced was to connect with Turkish migrant women to break their isolation connected to their status as migrants and their dependence on their spouses and other family members for social interaction. In an interview Pieternel Onderwater conducted with Karaman, the latter addressed the restraining impact of the dominance of "Islamic and traditional Turkish customs within the Turkish community," which "made it difficult for women to be in a room with men from outside their own family circle."[616] Eveline Schripsema, a Dutch woman volunteer who took part in the HTKB's Support Committee made a similar point: "The establishment [of HTKB] was a piece of cake, but working through and reaching the Turkish women was a very difficult task. There were many women made use of [gebruik maakten] the HTKB, but there was also a lot of mistrust from within their own community."[617] HTKB's initial objective was to create an alternative women-only space for migrant women's sociability, as their fathers and husbands would not object to them meeting with other women from the Turkish migrant community without men's presence. The HTKB founding cadres' intention to attract and bring out migrant women in a women-only public space can be seen as early as the Mother's Day celebration that took place in May

[614] Frédérique Matonti and Franck Poupeau, "Le Capital Militant: Essai de Définition," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 155, no. 5 (2004): 8.
[615] Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process*, 102.
[616] Onderwater, "Maviye Karaman," 184.
[617] Schripsema, *HTKB*, 25.

1974; the invitation letter explicitly requested in Turkish that "men do not attend the event."[618] In an undated interview with Ece Öztan, HTKB co-founder Şükran Sevim Alpagot stressed that, as HTKB members, "[we] never used HTIB's premises for our gatherings and activities," since using HTIB's facilities could have been perceived as inappropriate by some within the Turkish community.[619]

HTKB's earliest activities were self-organized educational activities, including language and literacy courses and sewing classes, in women-only spaces either at community centers in Amsterdam, including *Ons Huis*, *de Meerpaal*, and *de Tagerijn*, or at the place they rented from the *Stichting Welzijn Buitenlandse Werknemers* (Foundation for the Welfare of Foreign Workers, SWBW) at Andreas Bonnstraat 20 Amsterdam-East, which eventually became the permanent location of the HTKB clubhouse.[620] A HTKB booklet from 1984 explained that the primary goal of the literacy and language courses was "to end Turkish migrant women's (particularly the illiterate ones') dependence on their husbands" by equipping them with the necessary skills to independently manage their day-to-day activities and interactions, "to enable them to make contact with Dutch people and to stand up for their rights," fostering self-reliance and confidence through better language and literacy skills.[621] The same applied to the sewing classes HTKB offered: these were intended to improve migrant women's autonomy through enhancing their labor skills with the potential for later professionalization and income-earning.

In her 2024 dissertation on Turkish migrant women's activism in West Berlin, which included the BTKB, Elisabeth Kimmerle used the term "political sewing classes" to argue that these, as well as literacy and language courses, acted as a mobilization strategy, asserting that "sewing classes served as a form of camouflage to the outside world."[622] According to Kimmerle, in these classes Turkish migrant women became aware that they were not alone with their problems and learned what rights they were entitled to, and thus, became "involved in politics in a seemingly private, non-political context."[623] Similar strategies were also

[618] Amsterdam Türk Kadınları Birliği, Announcement, 1974, Folder 148, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[619] Öztan, "Göç Bağlamında Yurttaşlık ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet," 254.
[620] "Nederlandse taallessen en alfabetisatie & naailessen," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 2 (November 1979): 11; Öztan, "Göç Bağlamında Yurttaşlık ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet," 254.
[621] HTKB, Booklet, 1984, Folder 7, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[622] Kimmerle, "Frauen in Bewegung," 223.
[623] Ibid., 221. Kimmerle shares a letter of 19 January 1979 from Heinz Richter, head of the DGB's Foreign Workers Department, to the Workers' Welfare Association (AWO), addressing a complaint from Abdurrahman Karamanlıoğlu, a Turkish interpreter, about the AWO's cooperation with FIDEF, ATTF's successor in West Germany. "Now the question for me and others is—does the Workers' Welfare Association [...] actually not know that FIDEF is officially a front organization of the Communist Party of Turkey and that with the propaganda of sewing courses or language courses or other dubious things, propaganda is being made for the Communist Party

evident in HTKB's activities. The 1984 HTKB booklet mentioned above also stated that "husbands have less trouble with sewing classes than with other activities because sewing classes are typically something for women," allowing Turkish women to step out of their homes and break their isolation.[624] According to the booklet, in the sewing classes "all kinds of subjects are discussed, and the Turkish instructor tries to stimulate the women to take part in other activities organized by HTKB."[625] I conclude that the sewing classes were a significant instance of left-feminist space-making by HTKB women, aimed at eluding the oppressive socialization Turkish migrant women often experienced within the family and household, and constituting an important venue for their political socialization.

In his 2017 book, while defining HTKB's sewing classes as "a proactive strategy to reach out to women who risked isolation and possible abuse," Andrew Shield claimed that these efforts to create safe, women-only spaces for migrant women may have been inspired by "some European activism at the time," tracing it back to the "*Vrouwenhuis* (Women's House)" in Amsterdam (1972) and similar places in other Dutch cities, which "brought attention to the power of women's-only spaces."[626] Although the HTBK women must have known about the *Vrouwenhuis*, I find it more likely that they were influenced and/or inspired by the Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations affiliated with the ATKF, all of which offered sewing classes for Turkish migrant women as part of their agenda of community feminism. In an information letter of July 1, 1978, sent to its member organizations, the ATKF Executive Committee noted that "the political organizing of Turkish women, who had been subjugated for centuries, is not an easy task."[627] The ATKF Executive Committee indicated sewing classes as an effective strategy to reach out and mobilize Turkish migrant women, while also acknowledging that "each of our organizations establishes good relations with our women on its own terms."[628] They also cited the mobilization strategies employed by IKD in Turkey as "inspirational."[629] The letter shows that successful routines were shared through interorganizational communication and exchange. It is clear, therefore, that the HTKB's

of Turkey at the same time, because no one can check whether the sewing course is not just ¼ hour of sewing and 45 minutes of political lecture [...]," thus providing some insight into the strategies of their political adversaries. Quoted in Ibid., 216.

[624] HTKB, Booklet, 1984, Folder 7, Archive HTKB, IISH.

[625] Ibid.

[626] Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution*, 155.

[627] ATKF Executive Committee to its Members, 1 July 1978, File 113, GKB Archival Fond, TUSTAV.

[628] Ibid.

[629] Ibid.

political organizing of Turkish women in the Netherlands was influenced and shaped by transnational processes of exchange, communication and inspiration.

HTKB's literacy courses also had the additional goal of allowing Turkish women to step out of their homes, breaking their isolation and enabling undisturbed political exchange and awareness-raising among them. HTKB's founding president Maviye Karaman taught Turkish literacy courses at HTKB from the beginning and worked at *Advies-en Begeleidings-Centrum voor het Onderwijs* (Advisory and Guidance Center for Education, ABC) in Amsterdam, where she supervised teachers working with Turkish children and illiterate Turkish women. In an interview featured in the June-July 1981 issue of *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, Karaman pointed out the shortage of teaching materials for illiterate Turkish migrants in the Netherlands when HTKB began offering literacy courses. According to Karaman, this challenge was compounded by the assumption that "Turkish migrant women could begin their literacy journey in Dutch, rather than in their native language."[630] Therefore, HTKB prepared its own teaching materials for illiterate Turkish women, "supplemented with texts from the brochures by HTKB and Turkish newspapers about issues the participant women [could] relate to, such as the November 1 [1979] Law,[631] International Women's Day, health care, whether or not to go back to Turkey, etc." HTKB also devised its own teaching methods, emphasizing that "literacy education extends beyond technical skill acquisition to include sharing experiences and addressing the common problems of Turkish women."[632] Through its literacy courses, HTKB met the basic communicative needs of migrant women by teaching them to read and write in their mother language, and created a space where they could discuss their problems and raise awareness. This was achieved through a dialogical pedagogical practice that established a culture of dialogue, care, and trust in the classroom, making political discussions possible.

To sum up, HTKB's activities can be understood as a threefold strategy of community feminism: first as a community outreach strategy, bringing migrant women out of their homes and establishing contacts with other women, which were key for building a grassroots

[630] "Turks leren lezen en schrijven," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 10 (July 1981): 3–4.
[631] This I was the Labor of Foreign Workers Act, introduced by the Dutch government on November 1, 1979, which aimed to control and channel labor migration by making entrance more restrictive for nationals of non-EEC (European Economic Community) countries. It was meant to restrict the entrance of low-skilled foreign workers while channeling that of high-skilled migrants, often from highly industrialized countries. María Bruquetas-Callejo et al., "The Case of the Netherlands," in *Migration Policymaking in Europe: The Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in Past and Present*, ed. Giovanna Zincone, Maren Borkert, and Rinus Penninx (Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 135. The migrant self-organizations in the Netherlands opposed the law, arguing that it would negatively affect the position of foreign workers and institutionalize unequal treatment.
[632] "Turks leren lezen en schrijven."

constituency; secondly, furnishing them with communicative skills to independently manage their day-to-day activities and interactions, and labor and practical skills for later professionalization; and lastly, as a mobilization strategy through making use of seemingly private, non-political instances, thus, stimulating participant women to engage in political exchange and awareness-raising. My analysis has shown that the activities HTKB initially offered, such as sewing classes, were similar to those provided by its counterparts in West Germany and the UK. This indicates a level of interconnectedness in the organizational formation of Turkish migrant left feminism, with successful practices being transferred through interorganizational communication and exchange.

4.3. HTKB's Role in Turkish Migrant Women's Activism in the Netherlands

In this section, I will investigate how Dutch local and national dynamics influenced HTKB's activities, institutionalization, and development into a national organization of Turkish migrant women in the Netherlands.

In the years after its establishment in 1975 in Amsterdam, HTKB evolved into an umbrella organization with a national function, with chapters founded in the cities of The Hague, Leiden, Nijmegen, Rotterdam and Utrecht. The initial process of Turkish migrant women's political organizing from the local to the national level took place at a time when Dutch authorities had a policy for migrants and their organizations, but it was far from comprehensive, since the authorities sustained the idea that their stay would be temporarily.[633] Moreover, when it came to developing preliminary policies concerning welfare arrangements, the Dutch authorities treated colonial migrants in a far more inclusive manner than they did guest workers: "there were integration and absorption policies for newcomers from (ex-)colonies who were citizens but, for all other foreign newcomers, the non-integration and assumed temporariness of stay dominated policies."[634] This began to change in 1980, when they introduced a new policy framework that categorized the majority of migrants as "minority target groups" whose socioeconomic status needed improvement, and formulated the necessary steps to be taken to achieve the establishment of a tolerant multicultural

[633] Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process*, 71.
[634] Penninx, "Postwar Immigration and Integration Policies in the Netherlands," 100. See also Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, "Migration and Ethnic Relations as a Field of Political Contention: An Opportunity Structure Approach," in *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics: Comparative European Perspectives*, ed. Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 28–29; Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process*, 71.

society.[635] The activities the HTKB undertook from 1975 can also be seen as a response to the noncommittal character of Dutch minority policy.

The local minority policy in Amsterdam, where HTKB was founded and located, mirrored the Dutch national policy in the 1970s. While the authorities grappled with the social problems associated with the expanding guest worker communities in their city, they considered the presence of these communities to be temporary and therefore saw no need to develop a structural policy for them.[636] All social and cultural services for Turkish migrants in Amsterdam were provided by the Foundation for the Welfare of Foreign Workers (SWBW), which had been established in 1972 by the churches and "emerged from the private initiative of charities and associations from the pillarized civil society, whose primary concern was to ease the plight of the uprooted workers and smooth their relationship with the alien environment."[637] HTKB also used SWBW district offices and community centers, which SWBW opened in immigrant neighborhoods of Amsterdam with funding from the then Ministry of Culture, Recreation, and Social Work (in Dutch, CRM), to hold its activities, language and literacy courses, and sewing classes. One of the places was located at Andreas Bonnstraat 20 in Amsterdam-East, which it shared with the *Steunkomitee Marokkaanse Vrouwen* (Support Committee for Moroccan Women, SMV), formed in 1976 on the initiative of the *Komité Marokkaanse Arbeiders in Nederland* (Committee of Moroccan Workers in the Netherlands, KMAN).[638] In 1982, the *Steunkomitee Marokkaanse Vrouwen* evolved into the *Marokkaanse Vrouwen Vereniging Nederland* (Moroccan Women's Association in the Netherlands, MVVN).[639]

The story of Andreas Bonnstraat 20 is particularly significant in the development of HTKB for several reasons. Only three months after the opening of Bonnstreet 20, the SWBW board decided to close the office, claiming that the Ministry of CRM would no longer fund it. In protest against the SWBW's decision, on 16 August 1976, HTKB members occupied the office, as reported in the daily of the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) *De Waarheid*.[640] *De Waarheid*'s coverage of the occupation by Turkish migrant left-feminist activists includes a statement by HTKB's chair Maviye Karaman "in fairly clear Dutch," claiming that "for the Turkish women in Amsterdam it is very important that this district

[635] Lucassen and Penninx, *Newcomers*, 148; Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process*, 71.
[636] Vermeulen, *The Immigrant Organising Process*, 73.
[637] Walter Julio Nicholls and Justus Uitermark, *Cities and Social Movements: Immigrant Rights Activism in the United States, France, and the Netherlands, 1970-2015* (Chichester Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 78.
[638] Deekman and Hermans, "Heilig vuur," in *Caleidoscopische Visies*, 184.
[639] Ibid.
[640] Ibid.

office is preserved and that the lessons and courses that were given here can continue."[641] The occupation was also covered by the main Amsterdam daily, *Het Parool*, again featuring Maviye Karaman's remarks about the importance of the office in sustaining HTKB's activities, in which she claimed that "now that we finally have our own space, they cannot take that away from us."[642]

Neighborhood residents supported the occupation of Andreas Bonnstraat 20. They formed an "Action Committee for the Preservation of Andreas Bonnstraat 20," which involved local actors such as the Tenants Association Oosterpark, Oosterpark branches of the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) and the Labor Party (PvdA), as well as HTKB's natural partner HTIB.[643] The SWBW's East team also supported the occupation in opposition to the SBWB's board's decision to close Andreas Bonnstraat 20, so that the occupation stands out as an incident that reflects internal conflict within this organization in Amsterdam.[644] Drawing on the East team's support for the occupation, the SWBW acting director in Amsterdam, Ton Nijzink, declared that "the board of the foundation holds the East team responsible for the occupation,", even though HTKB members had initiated it.[645] This positioned SWBW employees as the main actors of this collective action, which may suggest a prevailing patronizing attitude among SWBW's executive cadres, as they might have perceived Turkish migrant women not as capable political actors who could initiate direct political actions such as occupation, but rather as a target group for welfare arrangements and passive recipients of social and cultural services provided to them.

With growing support in the neighborhood for the occupation, SWBW, on behalf of HTKB, had to submit a new subsidy application (for rent and other fixed costs) to the Ministry of CRM.[646] The new subsidy application was also supported by the *Wethouder Sociale Zaken van de gemeente Amsterdam* (Alderperson for social affairs in the municipality of Amsterdam). The HTKB women's occupation ended successfully with CRM granting a subsidy for the office at Andreas Bonnstraat 20 in early 1977, as reported in ATKF's magazine *Emekçi Kadın*.[647] HTKB used Andreas Bonnstraat 20 from 1976 until September 24, 1982, when it moved into Van Musschenbroekstraat in Amsterdam-East, "thanks to a

[641] Ibid.
[642] "Turkse vrouwen bezetten ruimte welzijnsstichting," *Het Parool*, August 20, 1976, 7.
[643] "Turkse vrouwen zetten bezetting voort," *De Waarheid*, October 7, 1976, 6.
[644] "Turkse vrouwen bezetten ruimte welzijnsstichting," *Het Parool*, August 20, 1976, 7.
[645] Ibid.
[646] "Turkse vrouwen zetten bezetting voort," *De Waarheid*, October 7, 1976, 6.
[647] "Hollanda Örgütümüzün Haklı Direnişi Başarıyla Sonuçlandı," *Emekçi Kadın*, no. 8 (April 12, 1977): 4.

subsidy from Emancipation Affairs [Emancipatiezaken] of the Municipality of Amsterdam."[648]

The story of Andreas Bonnstraat 20 encapsulates the organizing and mobilization strategies Turkish migrant left-feminist activists in the Netherlands employed during the early years of HTKB. They claimed active roles in the field of social and welfare work for the benefit of their migrant community during a period when migrant organizations had no structural position in the political system at local and national levels.

The occupation of Andreas Bonnstraat 20 by HTKB members can be seen as an early example of the broader opposition by migrant self-organizations—including migrant women's organizations—against the prevailing culture of paternalism in Dutch minority policy during the second half of the 1970s, through which they began formulating their critique of welfare policy toward migrants.[649] Demanding more inclusive mechanisms for migrant participation to ensure self-representation in decision-making, the discontent among migrant self-organizations culminated in another large-scale action: the occupation of the SWBW building at Weteringschans in Amsterdam on September 5, 1979. The occupation, carried out by eighteen migrant organizations including HTKB, later resulted in the formation of the *Platform van Democratische Organisaties van Buitenlandse Arbeid(st)ers* (Platform of Democratic Organizations of Foreign Workers).[650] HTKB's quarterly publication in Dutch described the occupation as "a protest against the years of patronizing by CRM, SWBW and the municipality [of Amsterdam], which ignore all demands for more participation, (…) for a new democratic structure of welfare work for foreign workers and recognition of the Platform and its demands."[651]

HTKB's involvement in the broader struggle of migrant organizations was accompanied by efforts to address the specific needs of migrant women, particularly when its local departments sought to expand their activities and requested assistance and subsidies from local institutions. HTKB in Amsterdam and its departments in Rotterdam, Nijmegen and the Hague did not face any major trouble in getting subsidies from the municipalities for their language, literacy and sewing classes. However, starting from 1979, HTKB added activities such as offering consultation hours and organizing regular information meetings on healthcare for Turkish migrant women to its agenda, which required more funding and more paid staff to

[648] "Binnenkort gaan wij verhuizen!," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 13 (June 1982): 2; "HTKB opent haar nieuwe gebouw," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 14 (November 1982): 3.
[649] Loewenthal, "Er ontbreekt altijd een stuk van de puzzel," 128.
[650] "Gastarbeiders protesteren," *Het Vrije Volk*, September 6, 1979, 10.
[651] "Buitenlanders zijn betuttenling zat," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 3 (November 1979): 7.

coordinate all these activities. At its Fourth Annual Congress, on 17 November 1979, HTKB criticized the government for "making insufficient provisions for their initiatives to empower Turkish migrant women," stating that the organization had been "chronically short of funds, as only a limited number of [its] activities are subsidized."[652]They explained that firstly, the public authorities "[did] not take migrant women seriously as a political group with rights;" and consequently, political institutions made a deliberate effort to "shift the costs of the crisis of capitalism onto migrant women."[653]

In this context, HTKB found itself in a "fight for welfare," a term used by Troetje Loewenthal, to depict how welfare arrangements had turned into a political battleground where migrant women activists endeavored to make their organizations beneficiaries of subsidies. [654] There were several obstacles for migrant women's organizations. First, as Marlou Schrover has pointed out, "subsidisers at the local level did not trust Turkish or Moroccan women when they applied for subsidies without the support of Dutch women, and their requests were turned down more often than those of Dutch women within joint organisations."[655] Second, the Dutch women "knew the institutions better, they had a better understanding of how to draft a proposal, and they knew the jargon."[656]

In this contested field, HTKB navigated its way with the help of a "Support Committee" formed within the organization, consisting of Dutch women volunteers with activist backgrounds who collaborated in joint actions with Turkish migrant left-feminists.[657] When compared to HTKB's counterparts in the UK and West Germany, where collaborations with non-migrant activist women were facilitated through external organizational ties, the existence of the Support Committee was a distinctive feature of Turkish migrant women's left-feminist political organizing in the Netherlands. Dutch women in the HTKB's Support Committee made invaluable contributions to HTKB's political work, particularly in securing funding and drafting subsidy applications, lobbying, establishing and sustaining contacts with Dutch women's organizations and public institutions, teaching Dutch language courses, and organizing volunteer meetings "to inform teachers and Dutch women, who in one way or

[652] "Algemene jaarvergadering HTKB," 6.
[653] Ibid.
[654] Loewenthal, "Er ontbreekt altijd een stuk van de puzzel," 126.
[655] Schrover, "Multiculturalism, Dependent Residence Status and Honour Killings," 236.
[656] Ibid.
[657] Marlou Schrover noted that such support groups were customary for many Turkish organizations and those of other migrant communities in the Netherlands at the time. Schrover, 235.

another deal with Turkish women, about the social background of Turkish women here and in Turkey."[658]

Annelies Jansen, Marijke Bierlaagh, Joséphine Dekker, Sabine Jansen, Regina Ligtenberg, Mia Pater and Eveline Schripsema were some of the Dutch women who actively participated in the Support Committee.[659] Of these, Annelies Jansen was the most prominent, remaining actively involved in HTKB from the Support Committee's establishment around 1976 into the 1980s. In an interview published in the May-June 1982 issue of HTKB's quarterly Dutch publication *Turkse Vrouwenkrant,* Annelies Jansen mentioned that she first met HTKB women in 1976, when she was a social worker for the SWBW.[660] Her name appeared frequently in the minutes of HTKB's General and Executive Board meetings between 1981 and 1984.[661] Turkish women present at these meetings often referred to Annelies Jansen as the person in charge of a variety of tasks, including drafting subsidy applications, attending meetings with Dutch women's organizations and institutions, such as the *Nederlandse Vrouwenbeweging* (Dutch Women's Movement, NVR), the Ministry of CRM and the municipality of Amsterdam, providing translation services, and assisting HTKB members in writing leaflets in Dutch.

Perhaps the most fundamental contribution the members of HTKB's Support Committee made to Turkish migrant left feminism in the Netherlands was in preparing and editing HTKB's quarterly in Dutch, the so-called *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*. *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* started at the beginning of 1979 as the Dutch version of HTKB's magazine in Turkish, *Kadınların Birliği* (Unity of Women), but with a different content so that it was not a direct translation. It began to be published as a separate magazine from *Kadınların Birliği.* in January 1982.

HTKB's commitment to a bilingual publication for the dissemination of knowledge and outreach to a broader audience for the political organizing of Turkish women stands out as another distinctive feature of its activist repertoire. Unlike its counterparts in the UK and

[658] The only information about the women in the Support Committee available in the primary sources are their names in the masthead of HTKB's magazine *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* in Dutch. "Verslag bijeenkomsten vrijwilligsters," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 10 (July 1981): 8.
[659] "Wie maken de krant," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 8 (January 1981): 3.
[660] "Annelies Jansen over werk HTKB: 'De houding om Turkse Vrouwen als onmondig af te schilderen is idioot,'" *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 13 (June 1982): 15.
[661] Agendas and minutes of the HTKB's General Board and the Executive Board meetings from 1981 to 1984 can be found in Folder 1, Archive HTKB, all in Turkish. The Support Committee, however, held its meetings separately and was often attended by a Turkish board member knowledgeable in Dutch.

West Germany, which made attempts but did not succeed in regularly and sustainably publishing magazines, HTKB managed to achieve this with notable success.[662]

4.4. HTKB's Publications as a Medium of Left-Feminist Praxis

HTKB's magazines serve as a central medium and an invaluable source for exploring and analyzing the political discourse and ideological positions of Turkish migrant left-feminists articulated in texts crafted to communicate with their intended audiences. In this section, I will examine the political ideas articulated by HTKB in these publications, broadly guided by the questions: What was the content, how did they write about developments in Turkey, and how does a content analysis of *Kadınların Birliği* helps us better see HTKB's political views? This section also pays attention to the differences between HTKB's publications in Turkish and Dutch, in order to interpret the logic of their bilingual political communication and the editors' discursive strategies.

The secondary literature on HTKB has loosely depicted *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* as a single bilingual publication, with each of its two parts being a translation of the other.[663] However, even during the period up to 1982, when *Kadınların Birliği* and *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* were published as a single magazine with two sections, each one was prepared and edited by different groups within HTKB. The *Kadınların Birliği* section was prepared by the Working Group for Publication within HTKB, consisting of Turkish women, while *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* was prepared by the Dutch Support Committee of HTKB. The editors of *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* noted that they "[did] not work independently of HTKB; instead, they determine[d] the positions taken in the magazine together with HTKB, and many articles [were] written collaboratively with the Turkish editors."[664] This demonstrates that both *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* as a combined magazine and the two separate magazines after 1982 followed a single editorial policy, consistent with HTKB's political agenda. Another significant characteristic of these two publications is their policy of collective authorship, which involved publishing all content anonymously, without using any

[662] As shown in Chapter 2, ITKB in the UK was the first Turkish migrant left-feminist organization in western Europe to have its own magazine, named *Emekçi Kadın* (Working Woman), which began publication in March 1975 on the occasion of International Women's Day during IWY. However, this magazine was destined to be very short-lived with an irregular publishing interval. In West Germany, BTKB in West Berlin did not have its own publication in the 1970s, and GKB in the Ruhr region only began publishing its own magazine as late as March 1985, which was also a short-lived attempt.

[663] For example, see Öztan, "Unutulan Bir Göç ve Yurttaşlık Deneyimi"; Deekman and Hermans, "Heilig vuur"; Loewenthal, "Er ontbreekt altijd een stuk van de puzzel."

[664] "Beste lezeressen," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 11 (December 1981): 2.

names, from the first issue in March 1979 to the final issue in March 1988, as was common at the time among Dutch feminists.

From issue twelve in January 1982, *Kadınların Birliği* and *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* were published as separate magazines. The editorial board explained their decision by saying that "it turns out that the readers of both parts [Turkish and Dutch] belong to very different target groups."[665] In their decision, the editorial board particularly addressed the need for separation and enrichment of the content of the Dutch part for its target audience, mainly consisting of "people working with foreigners in health care, welfare, etc., [who want] more in-depth information about the position of foreign women, because relatively little is known about this."[666] The editorial board announced that they would send the readers of *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* "a survey on what they think of our newspaper, what kind of information is desired, etc."; the content of the magazine would then be tailored to the feedback they received from the Dutch readers.[667] The mastheads of both *Kadınların Birliği* and *Turkse Vrouwenkrant* show that both magazines were published by the publishing house *De Bevrijding* (The Liberation), owned by the *Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij* (Pacifist Socialist Party, PSP).[668]

The secondary literature on HTKB has not only treated *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* as a single bilingual publication, it has also overlooked the intellectual work and ideas of Turkish migrant women articulated in Turkish.[669] Here, I will examine a series of articles published in *Kadınların Birliği* under the title "*Dünden Bugüne Kadın*" (Women from Past to Present), which appeared between May 1979 and April 1981 (issues 2–9).This series offers important insights into the theoretical foundations of HTKB's understanding of women's oppression through the ages, but particularly under capitalism. It analyzed the origins of women's oppression from a Marxist-feminist perspective, with concepts and formulations that appeared to be largely influenced by Friedrich Engels's seminal 1884 work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Each article focuses on a specific epoch of history—primitive communal society, slave society, feudalism, and capitalism—within the Marxist historical scheme. They incorporated Marxist categories like base and

[665] Ibid.
[666] Ibid.
[667] Ibid.
[668] "Turkse Vrouwenkrant," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 12 (February 1982): 2.
[669] For example, see Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism"; Schrover, "Multiculturalism, Dependent Residence Status and Honour Killings"; Van Es, *Stereotypes and Self-Representations of Women with a Muslim Background*; Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution*; Loewenthal, "Er ontbreekt altijd een etuk van de puzzel"; Deekman and Hermans, "Heilig vuur."

superstructure, productive forces, productive relations, and division of labor, with brief explanations provided for each.[670] In the series' second article, the status of women in primitive society was described as equal to men's, grounded in the idea of prehistoric matriarchy, where "the division of labor had not yet fully emerged."[671] Following Engels's arguments in *The Origin*, it was "the transition to class society—characterized by the domination of new forms of production, the creation of surplus, and the emergence of private property—that brought about the oppression of women."[672]

The series' concluding three articles discussed the oppression of women under capitalism, focusing on the status of "proletarian women" in the family, production, and society, based on their roles as "mothers, homemakers, and workers."[673] The arguments presented there adhered to the classical Marxist view on the dissolution of the traditional family household under capitalism. Hence, "the traditional family structure" was replaced by the "nuclear family" in proletarian households, where "the authority of the husband over the wife and children withered away" as a result of shifts in the relations of production, or the base, because "capitalism has taken the wife onto the labor market to work as cheap labor."[674] The arguments further suggested that "women's role as mothers and housewives forces them to work part-time in lower-skilled jobs than men," leading to their becoming "domestic slaves" who are "economically dependent on their husbands, deprived of freedom, and continuously despised and oppressed by the moral sentiments of society."[675]

Perhaps more striking in *Kadınların Birliği*'s analysis of the oppression of women under capitalism was its targeting of the family as the major institution for the ideological reproduction of "the exploitation and degrading of women" under capitalism. In a straightforward manner, the article referred to "the monogamous patriarchal family based on the supremacy of the father" as "the widespread form of family in the capitalist system," and, in what might be construed as contemporary new feminist language, defined its function as "upbringing people who comply with the system and inscribing the dominant oppressive values into their minds."[676] Although this aspect might seem contradictory given the earlier arguments about the withering away of the father's authority in the nuclear family and HTKB's strategies to circumvent patriarchal authority, such a vocal critique of the family in

[670] "Dünden Bugüne Kadın," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 2 (May 1979): 2.
[671] "Dünden Bugüne Kadın: İlkel Toplum ve Kadın," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 3 (October 1979): 2.
[672] "Dünden Bugüne Kadın: Köleci Toplum ve Kadın," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 4 (January 1980): 8.
[673] "Dünden Bugüne Kadın: Kapitalist Toplumda Kadın," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 8 (January 1981): 2.
[674] "Dünden Bugüne Kadın: Kapitalist Toplumda Kadın," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 6 (July 1980): 11.
[675] "Dünden Bugüne Kadın: Kapitalist Toplumda Kadın," *Kadınların Birliği,* no.8 (January 1981): 2.
[676] Ibid.

HTKB's publications stands out as a distinctive feature of HTKB's left-feminist political vision. HTKB adhered to the Marxist feminist framework in its critique of the institution of the family. Although no specific references to other authors were made in their writing, I see that their writing was in line with the Russian revolutionary and leading Marxist theorist on the woman question Alexandra Kollontai's (1872-1952) classic analysis, which depicted the family as a venue for the ideological reproduction of male supremacy under capitalism, where women are suffocated by household chores and the burden of maternity.[677]

Furthermore, according to HTKB, "the appraisal of domestic chores and maternity as a social function" was the primary condition for women's liberation "from the household chores that chain them to the kitchen and the children's room."[678] This statement was in line with the global left-feminist vision of the twentieth century, from Kollontai's thinking and practice in the early years of the socialist construction in the Soviet Union, which aimed at the communalization of domestic labor to free women from household drudgery, to the women's rights agenda of the WIDF, which urged states worldwide to recognize motherhood as a social function and take responsibility for creating the prerequisites necessary to enable women to combine their duties as mothers, working women, and citizens, and to become equal members of society, such as more and better social services and security for working women and protection of mothers, regardless of marital status.[679]

HTKB's criticism of the family should be analyzed in the broader context of the development of Turkish migrant left feminism in the UK and West Germany. In its earliest stages, Turkish migrant left-feminist activists designed strategies to manipulate traditional-patriarchal norms within Turkish families while avoiding direct confrontation and transgression of the boundaries of the private realm of family life. Eveline Schripsema's 1987 HTKB booklet addressed the challenges the organization faced in reaching out to Turkish migrant women and the suspicions it encountered, stating that there was "a lot of mistrust [against HTKB] from within [Turkish migrant women's] own community, as many men believed that the HTKB was trying to separate men from women, a rumor stubbornly perpetuated by reactionary Turks."[680]

[677] Natalia Novikova and Kristen Ghodsee, "Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952): Communism as the Only Way Toward Women's Liberation," in de Haan, *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World*, ed. Francisca de Haan, 73.
[678] "Dünden Bugüne Kadın: Kapitalist Toplumda Kadın," January 1981, 2.
[679] Francisca de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation"; Yulia Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation*, 70–72.
[680] Schripsema, *HTKB: Strijd om mondigheid*, 25.

For HTKB, an effective way to respond to such rumors against itself was to keep Turkish migrant women informed about developments in Turkey through *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant*. This was seen as "important to counterbalance the unity stamp [being labeled or perceived as a homogenous group], to counterbalance the regressive tendencies that arise in a closed community, and from which emancipation is so difficult."[681] With "regressive tendencies," Schripsema referred to the Grey Wolves' attacks on the women's rights movement—occurring not only in Turkey but also in the Netherlands, where HTKB became "a natural target of the Grey Wolves, [which] manifested itself in direct threats against the active members of the organization, and by spreading rumors and backbiting."[682] In this direct public communication, HTKB showed no hesitation in criticizing the patriarchal family, without fear that this would bolster accusations of inciting migrant women against their husbands and tearing families apart. This approach demonstrates that HTKB relied on the political and intellectual development of Turkish women and their capacities to "move on their own."[683]

To finalize this section, I briefly discuss the content variation between the Turkish and Dutch parts of HTKB's publication *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* between 1979 and 1982, which offers valuable insights into the political language HTKB employed to present its political ideas to different target groups. The primary difference in content between the two parts is the significant amount of political and ideological material in *Kadınların Birliği*, which is not or much less present in *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*. *Kadınların Birliği* intended to offer Turkish migrant women practical and intellectual political education on a range of subjects and themes, including the struggle for women's rights and children's well-being in the Netherlands, defense of peace, anti-imperialism, and anti-racism.[684] *Kadınların Birliği* also informed its Turkish audience on the political developments in Turkey, with political commentaries from a socialist perspective, covering the activities of IKD, strikes and mobilizations of the working class, and the growing anti-fascist resistance against the attacks and atrocities perpetrated by the Grey Wolves.[685]

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[681] Ibid.
[682] Ibid.
[683] Deekman and Hermans, "Heilig vuur," 217.
[684] For example, see "Sosyal Haklarımız: Deneme Devresinde Çıkış," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 2 (May 1979): 2; "21 Mart'ta Irkçılık Bir Kez Daha Lanetlendi," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 2 (May 1979): 6; "HTKB'den Temsilcilerin de Katıldığı Kreş-Yuva Kampanyası Başarılı Geçti," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 3 (October 1979): 4; "Barış Düşmanı ABD'nin Atom Başlıklı Füzelerine Karşı Kadınlarımız Alanlarda," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 4 (January 1980): 5; "Batı-Avrupa'da Yaşayan Gençlerimizin Sorunları Çözüm Bekliyor," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 4 (January 1980): 2.
[685] For example, see "HTKB'nin de Katıldığı Ülkemizdeki Faşist Katliamları Protesto Yürüyüşü Yığınsal Oldu," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 2 (May 1979): 1; "İlerici Kadın Hareketi Durdurulamaz," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 3

The political language used in the *Kadınların Birliği* commentaries displays a great deal of similarity with the TKP's rhetoric in its interpretation of developments in Turkey and the Netherlands. An illustrative example of this common rhetoric can be seen in the coverage of a symposium held on 22 September 1979 in Nijmegen, organized by the *Landelijk Aktiekomitee Anti-Fascisme* (National Action Anti-Fascist Committee, LAKAF) of which HTKB was a member, against the activities of the Grey Wolves in the Netherlands.[686] The event was reported in *Kadınların Birliği* under the title "*Antifaşist Sempozyum'a Faşist Maocular Saldırdı* (The Anti-Fascist Symposium was Attacked by the Fascist Maoists)," referring to the disruption of the symposium at its opening by two different groups: first a group of Turkish far-right nationalists, and then a group of Turkish Maoists. The latter disruption was driven by the heightened conflict between pro-Soviet TKP and Maoist groups in Turkey in the late 1970s.[687] The Turkish Maoists targeted the event organizers, HTIB and HTKB, which they correctly viewed as representatives of TKP politics in the Netherlands. *Kadınların Birliği'*s choice to highlight the Maoists' attack and label them as "fascist" in its report illustrates the HTKB's deliberate adoption of TKP's rhetoric, aligning the HTKB's political messaging with the pro-Soviet communist movement's narrative in its engagement with the Turkish audience. However, the *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, the Dutch part of the same publication, under the title "Symposium against Grey Wolves" emphasized the nature of the event rather than focusing on the Maoists' attempts to disrupt it or labeling them as "fascist."[688]

Another example of the content variation between the Turkish and Dutch sections of *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* is the significant amount of political commentary provided in the Turkish section, whereas the Dutch section offered more descriptive and

(October 1979): 6; "Haydi İKD ile Dayanışmaya!," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 5 (April 1980): 4; "Yeni Zorbalık Yasalarına Geçit Vermemek İçin Grevci İşçilerle Dayanışmayı Yükseltelim," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 5 (April 1980): 5; "Hollanda'daki Kadınlarımızdan Selam Yiğit Grevcilere!," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 6 (July 1980): 8; "Analar, Bacılar Nato'cu Cunta Yeni Doğan Bebelerimize Pranga Vuruyor," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 7 (October 1980): 3

[686] "Anti Faşist Sempozyuma Faşist Maocular Saldırdı," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 3 (October 1979): 3.

[687] For the Sino-Soviet split in international communism, see Sergey Radchenko, "The Rise and the Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance 1949–1989," in *The Cambridge History of Communism: Volume 2: The Socialist Camp and World Power 1941–1960s*, ed. Norman Naimark, Silvio Pons, and Sophie Quinn-Judge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 243–68; Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). During the latter half of the 1970s, the TKP focused its political agenda on the anti-fascist struggle against Nationalist Front governments in Turkey. In contrast, some Maoist groups, motivated by their fear of a Soviet invasion, went as far as to seek alliances with Turkish nationalist groups, aligning themselves in opposition to the TKP. In response, the TKP derogatorily referred to the Maoists as *Maocu Bozkurtlar* (Maoist Grey Wolves), drawing a parallel between their vicious anti-Soviet stance and their growing rapprochement with Turkish anti-communist nationalist groups. Bora, *Cereyanlar*, 643–67.

[688] "Symposium tegen Grijze Wolven," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 3 (November 1979): 10.

straightforward accounts of the same events. For instance, *Kadınların Birliği'*s coverage of HTKB's International Women's Day celebration for 1979 included an extensive description of the history of March 8 and its socialist origins, emphasizing its significance for "working women."[689] The coverage included a remark that "[i]n socialist countries, March 8 has been celebrated as a true women's holiday, while in other countries, it is observed as a day of unity, solidarity, and struggle for working women."[690] By contrast, the Dutch part of the publication described the same event in straightforward language, refraining from any political or ideological expressions.[691] *Kadınların Birliği*'s commentary that 8 March was "celebrated as a true women's holiday" in state-socialist countries also indicates that HTKB subscribed to the view that the woman question had already been solved there, in line with the views of TKP and IKD.[692] The political jargon and terminology HTKB used in these political commentaries in Turkish also shows a great deal similarity with the TKP's political discourse. The latter was distinguished by TKP's use of a unique romantic-revolutionary language, featuring expressions and words that were entirely new to the Turkish language, which historians such as Tanıl Bora attribute to Ismail Bilen, the leader of the TKP back then.[693] This distinct terminology, including terms such as "*ardıcıl*" (continuous), "*belgi*" (slogan), "*savaşım*" (fight), and "*yığınsal*" (mass based) were prominently used in the political commentaries of the Turkish part of *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant.*[694] Such examples of HTKB's explicit references to TKP's pro-Soviet rhetoric and views in *Kadınların Birliği* aimed at the Turkish audience are numerous, while no evidence can be found in its Dutch publications to indicate HTKB's political alignment with the TKP.

My analysis has demonstrated that *Kadınların Birliği* was designed to be the centerpiece of HTKB's ideological and political education work directed at Turkish migrant women, aiming to provide them with ideological incentives to contribute to the collective goals of Turkish migrant left feminism and to foster their political development. This led to more politicized coverage of events in Turkey in Turkish part of *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* than the Dutch part, in accordance with HTKB's left-feminist agenda, and

[689] "8 Mart Dünya Emekçi Kadınlar Günü Coşku ile Kutlandı," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 2 (May 1979): 5.
[690] Ibid.
[691] "8 Maart-Internationale Vrouwendag," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 2 (May 1979): 13.
[692] "İlerici Kadınlar Derneği," *Atılım*, no. 13 (January 1975): 5; "Sosyalist Ülkelerde," *Atılım*, no. 23 (November 1975): 5; "Devrimin 60. Yılında Sovyet Kadını," *Kadınların Sesi*, no. 27 (October 1977): 4–5; "Alman Faşizmi Zulüm Getirdi Sovyet Devrimi Mutluluk Getirdi," *Kadınların Sesi*, no. 28 (November 1977): 4; "Demokratik Alman Cumhuriyeti (DAC) ve Kadınları," *Kadınların Sesi*, no. 29 (December 1977): 4–5.
[693] Bora, *Cereyanlar*, 641.
[694] "HTKB'nin de Katıldığı Ülkemizdeki Faşist Katliamları Protesto Yürüyüşü Yığınsal Oldu," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 2 (May 1979): 1; "Analar, Bacılar Nato'cu Cunta Yeni Doğan Bebelerimize Pranga Vuruyor," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 7 (October 1980): 3.

reflected a deeper ideological commitment to socialism, utilizing the political vocabulary and rhetoric employed by the TKP.

4.5. HTKB's Left-Feminist Praxis

In this section, I will explore in which ways HTKB's formulation of Turkish migrant women's oppression and experiences at the intersections of class, gender, and ethnicity—both within the family and the public sphere—informed HTKB's political work in the late 1970s, particularly through its initiatives for Turkish migrant women's rights and its political communication via its publications.

HTKB's direct public communication with Turkish migrant women about their experiences within the family is evident in its campaign for married women's right to an independent residence permit. This campaign began in 1980 in collaboration with the foundation *Blijf-van-m'n-Lijf* (Stay Away From My Body), the leading women's organization in the Netherlands combating domestic violence and establishing women's shelters.[695] In *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, HTKB reported that women's shelters were seeing a growing number of requests from migrant women who had "run away after being abused [*mishandeling*] by their husbands."[696] The condition of especially Turkish and Moroccan women was described as "miserable" because "the current Dutch immigration policy imposes strict limitations, making it extremely difficult for them to obtain a residence permit independent of their husbands."[697] In its magazines *Kadınların Birliği* and *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, HTKB paid attention tothe work of *Blijf-van-m'n-Lijf* and its publications, such as the Black Book *Blijf-van-m'n-Lijf* prepared in 1981.[698] According to the article on the Black Book in *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, this book, addressed to Henk Molleman, the Director of Integration of Minorities at CRM, and Dick Dolman, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, documented the discrimination faced by migrant women under Dutch immigration policy and advocated for independent residence permits for married migrant women.[699] The article in *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* provided quantitative information and stories of these women, as well as legal and political considerations.[700] For

[695] Tjen-A-Tak Claudette H. and van den Broek Lida M., *Een wereld van cerschil: 40 Jaar wrouwenopvang in Nederland 1974-2014* (Leiden: Vrouwenopvang Rosa Manus, 2014).
[696] "Problemen Met Verblyfsvergunning: Afhankelijkheid Buitenlandse Vrouwen Aan de Kaak Gesteld," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 7 (November 1980): 5.
[697] Ibid.
[698] "Zwartboek van 'Blijf van m'n Lijf,'" *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 9 (April 1981): 5–7.
[699] Ibid.
[700] Ibid.

HTKB, it was crucial for migrant women to "receive a full, independent status and the [Dutch] immigration policy should guarantee equal rights to men and women."[701] In its struggle for independent residence permits for migrant women, HTKB referred to *Blijf-van-m'n-Lijf* as a partner that "will therefore continue to act to improve the legal status of foreign women," who were "victims of domestic violence and in need of a safe shelter and legal assistance (and) seeking the opportunity to build an independent existence in the Netherlands."[702] HTKB's cooperation with *Blijf-van-m'n-Lijf* from 1980 may have resulted in further collaboration among migrant women's organizations in the Netherlands throughout the 1980s, leading to the establishment in 1987 of the *Komitee Zelfstandig Verblijfsrecht Migrantenvrouwen* (Committee for Independent Residence Rights for Migrant Women, KZV)., initiated by HTKB and MVVN[703]

In addition to its focus on preventing domestic violence, HTKB also actively supported and participated in the pro-abortion rights mobilization in the Netherlands from the 1970s into the 1980s. In 1972, when religious parties came up with a proposal that abortion should only be permitted in case of specific indications determined by medical experts, the debate over the legalization of abortion intensified and led to a broad mobilization for the legalization.[704] In response to threats against abortion clinics, in October 1974, the committee *Wij Vrouwen Eisen* (We Women Demand, WVE) was established and soon became a leading force in the movement.[705] The group demanded that abortion be a woman's decision, be removed from the Criminal Code, and be covered by health insurance.[706] In December 1980, a compromise bill on abortion was introduced in the Lower House and the Upper House, proposing that abortion remain in the Penal Code, but that abortion in a licensed hospital or clinic would not be prosecuted.[707] The bill also introduced a mandatory five-day reflection period for women, during which they had to consult with a doctor about the procedure.[708] As reported in *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, HTKB women participated in the mass demonstration organized by WVE on 27 September 1980 in Amsterdam against the proposal.

[701] "Problemen met verblyfsvergunning," 5.
[702] Ibid.
[703] "Göçmen Kadına Bağımsız Oturum Hakkı Kampanyası Başladı," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 21 (June 1987): 4–5; Deekman and Hermans, "Heilig vuur," 204; Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!," 28.
[704] Jet van Swinderen, "Abortustijdlijn, 1972-1984: Demonstraties, informatieverstrekking en een wieuwe wet," *Atria, Kennisinstituut voor Emancipatie en Vrouwengeschiedenis* (blog), May 25, 2024, https://atria.nl/nieuwspublicaties/feminisme/zelfbeschikkingsrecht/tijdlijn-abortus/abortustijdlijn-1972-1984-massale-demonstratiesen-de-nieuwe-wet/.
[705] Ibid.
[706] Ibid.
[707] Marit Van der Bilt, "The Mad Mina's, a Victory, or a Failure?" (master's thesis, Leiden University, 2024), 7.
[708] Ibid., 8.

HTKB women joined the demonstration under the slogan: "We (Turkish) women demand free abortion included in the health insurance system."[709] When the bill was narrowly passed in the Lower House and then also in the Upper House in May 1981, HTKB called the passed abortion law "reactionary;" it accused the Dutch government of "trampling on women's rights" and demanded "the immediate repeal of the law, health insurance coverage for abortion, and the right for women to freely decide for themselves."[710] HTKB also joined the national women's strike on 30 March 1981 in favor of the legalization of abortion.[711] In its coverage of the women's strike, *Kadınların Birliği* reported that HTKB members joined "[their] Dutch sisters in the streets to fight for our rightful demand for the reversal of the proposed abortion law," while also raising their "own demands for independent residence status and equal voting rights for migrant women and the repeal of the November 1 Law (the Labor of Foreign Workers Act)."[712] This shows that HTKB women viewed their involvement in the struggle for the legalization of abortion as an integral part of their left-feminist praxis—one that incorporated Turkish migrant women's own themes and issues, such as the independent right of residence and equal political rights for Turkish migrant women, into the broader agenda for which Dutch women were mobilizing, including gender-based violence, abortion, and reproductive rights.

HTKB's vision of women's emancipation was inseparably linked to its theoretical formulation of migrant women's "triple exploitation" based on class, gender and ethnicity.[713] The resolutions adopted at HTKB's fourth annual congress, on 17 November 1979, began with the following declaration: "The triple exploitation of Turkish women must end. She is being discriminated against as a woman, as a foreigner, and as a worker. There must be realized: a) better working conditions, equal pay, equal rights; b) proper childcare."[714] *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant*'s report of the 1981 International Women's Day celebration quoted from the HTKB representative's speech: "We, the foreign women in the Netherlands, are aware that we must act together for our interests. We have a particular position in Dutch society. As foreign women, we are triple exploited: as foreigners, as workers, and as women. We work for the lowest wages, live in the worst houses, and the language barrier prevents us from knowing what our rights are."[715]

[709] "Wij (Turkse) vrouwen eisen abortus vrij!," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 7 (November 1980): 8.
[710] "Hollanda Hükümeti Kadın Haklarını Ayaklar Altına Alıyor," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 8 (January 1981): 4.
[711] "Vrouwenstakingsdag bracht tienduizenden in actie," *De Waarheid*, April 1, 1981, 1, 3.
[712] "Hollanda'da Kadınlar Haklı İstemleri İçin Direndi," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 9 (April 1981): 7.
[713] "HTKB 4. Olağan Kurulundan Daha da Güçlü Çıktı!," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 4 (January 1980): 3.
[714] "Algemene jaarvergadering HTKB," 7.
[715] "8 Maart: Internationale Vrouwendag," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 9 (April 1981): 1.

The concept of triple exploitation HTKB used to theorize migrant women's experiences based on class, gender, and ethnicity was a major expression of a paradigm synthesized and popularized by Claudia Jones (1915-1964), a Trinidad and Tobago-born black left-feminist activist, a leading communist woman and "a member of the Black radical intellectual tradition which includes both Caribbean and African American intellectual activities."[716] According to Eric McDuffie, a prominent historian of black left feminism in the US, Louise Thompson in 1936 coined the term "triple exploitation" to articulate the intertwined class, race, and gender oppression specific to black women.[717] Black women within the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) further developed and expanded this term into a paradigm from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, and throughout the 1940s and 1950s Claudia Jones was "the most significant contributor" to this paradigm "which identified Black women's raced, classed, and gendered position."[718] Francisca de Haan suggests that Claudia Jones should be recognized as the "third communist global foremother," following Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai, because of her significant contributions to Marxist theory.[719] De Haan highlights the global outreach of Jones's ideas through the WIDF, noting that Betty Millard, a member of the Women's Commission of the CPUSA and from 1949 to 1951 working at the WIDF's headquarters in Paris, attended the WIDF's second Congress in Budapest in December 1948.[720] In her speech, Millard used the expression "triple exploitation," further demonstrating the influence of Jones's ideas in the intellectual and political trajectories of global left feminism.[721]

Therefore, HTKB's use of the term "triple exploitation" to describe migrant women's status in the Netherlands shows its embeddedness in the intellectual and political trajectories of international communism and global left feminism. This enabled HTKB to incorporate a synthesis of views reflecting their multifaceted intersectional identities and experiences of discrimination. HTKB was not alone in using the expression "triple exploitation" to define migrant women's status in the Netherlands. Another example is Ana Rodriguez's speech at the Congress of Foreign Women held on September 27, 1981, in Amsterdam. The Congress was initiated by the WIDF national member organization *Nederlandse Vrouwenbeweging* (Dutch

[716] Carole Boyce Davies, "A Right to Be Radical: Claudia Jones (1915-1964) and the 'Super-Exploitation of the Black Woman,'" in de Haan, *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World*, 97.
[717] Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom*, 112.
[718] Boyce Davies, "A Right to Be Radical" 97.
[719] Francisca de Haan, "Introduction: Toward a Global History of Communist Women," in de Haan, *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World*.
[720] de Haan, 8; Elisabeth B. Armstrong, *Bury the Corpse of Colonialism: The Revolutionary Feminist Conference of 1949* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023), 126.
[721] de Haan, "Introduction: Toward a Global History of Communist Women," 8.

Women's Movement, NVB), in collaboration with migrant women's organizations in the Netherlands, including HTKB.[722] Rodriguez, a delegate from the *Movimento Democrático de Mulheres* (Democratic Movement of Women, MDM), stated: "As we all know, daily life is determined almost everywhere without the participation of women. We foreign women are being triply discriminated against as women, as foreigners, and as workers."[723]

While emphasizing the gender-specific experiences of migrant women as distinct from those of migrant men, HTKB also consistently asserted the shared interests of migrant women and men in the fight against racism and discrimination in the Netherlands, another reason to refer to their perspective as intersectional. The HTKB's new program, adopted at its fourth annual congress in November 1979, expressed this as follows: "We, as women contributing to society as workers and mothers, stand in solidarity, shoulder to shoulder with men, in addressing all the problems faced by foreigners in this country."[724] A similar point was made at the National Meeting of Foreign Women held on March 15, 1981, in Amsterdam, co-organized by the *Nederlands Centrum Buitenlanders* (Dutch Center for Foreigners, NCB) and migrant women's organizations, including HTKB. The HTKB representative stated: "We must work on our own to solve the problems. We must analyze our backgrounds and our problems. For this, it is important that we cooperate with the organizations of foreign men, because in the end we have common interests."[725]

Yet another example can be found in *Landelijke Congres van Organisaties van Buitenlandse Arbeiders* (National Congress of Foreign Workers' Organizations) held on June 5-7, 1980, in Helvoirt. At this congress, around eighty organizations of migrant workers in the Netherlands, including HTKB and HTIB, decided to "set up an umbrella organization for cooperation to improve the legal, economic, and social position of foreign workers."[726] *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* reported that "Turkish migrant men and women will be represented by HTIB."[727] Thus, HTKB considered left-wing migrant organizations, particularly HTIB, as allies with common interests in their struggle for equal rights for migrants.

[722] Kongres Buitenlandse Vrouwen, *Verschillende vrouwen uit verschillende landen: Verslag kongres buitenlandse vrouwen* (Utrecht: NCB, 1982), Call Number: IISG Bro 5006/15, IISH; "Kongres Opent Weg Naar Samenwerking," *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 11 (December 1981): 3–7.
[723] Kongres Buitenlandse Vrouwen, *Verschillende vrouwen uit verschillende landen*, 8.
[724] "HTKB 4. Olağan Kurulundan Daha da Güçlü Çıktı!," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 4 (January 1980): 3.
[725] "Landelijke bijeenkomst buitenlandse vrouwen: 'In onderlinge solidariteit willen wij nze problemen aanpakken,'" *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 9 (April 1981): 6.
[726] "Landelijke organisatie buitenlandse arbeiders," *De Waarheid*, June 10, 1980, 1.
[727] "Yabancı İşçi Örgütleri Konferansı Yapıldı," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 6 (July 1980): 7.

While HTKB publications emphasized comradeship with working-class men, their formulation of the triple exploitation of migrant women was not intended to mark a distinction from Dutch women, and even less so in light of their concerns about the broader Dutch political and public discourse of the 1980s in which "much emphasis was placed on cultural differences."[728] HTKB member Leyla İleri addressed this concern in her speech at the 1981 International Women's Day Celebration, co-organized by HTKB, the *Vrouwen van de Federatie van Griekse Verenigingen en Gemeenschappen in Nederland* (Women of the Federation of Greek Associations and Communities in the Netherlands), and the *Palestijnse Vrouwen Vereniging* (Palestinian Women's Association), as reported by *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant*.[729] İleri stressed that they were not seeking recognition through the visibility of cultural differences or claims of cultural uniqueness. Instead, they were "aware of their distinct social position in Dutch society as those subjected to triple exploitation: working for the lowest wages, living in the worst houses, and the language barrier preventing us from knowing what our rights are."[730] Leyla İleri also highlighted the risks of being recognized as a culturally distinct group in isolating migrant women from the rest of society and providing space for "racism to flourish, leaving [them] more vulnerable."[731] This isolation provided fertile ground for Turkish far-right groups to attract more people by promoting the notion of cultural uniqueness of the Turkish people. Migrant women's organizations, including HTKB and MVVN, condemned what they called "the abuse of our 'cultural identity' by undemocratic and fascist groups," most notably the Moroccan *Amicales* and the Turkish *Grey Wolves*.[732]

[728] "8 Maart: Internationale Vrouwendag," 1.
[729] Ibid.
[730] Ibid.
[731] Ibid.
[732] "Landelijke bijeenkomst buitenlandse vrouwen: 'In onderlinge solidariteit willen wij nze problemen aanpakken,'" *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*, no. 9 (April 1981): 6.

Figure 4.1 *HTKB members participating in the women's march held on 20 June 1981 in Amsterdam against the deployment of U.S. cruise missiles on Dutch soil, particularly those intended to carry nuclear warheads such as neutron bombs. Source: Folder 448, HTKB Archive, IISH. According to the coverage in Kadınların Birliği, the march was led by the NVB. See "Hollanda'da Kadınlar Barışı Korumak İçin Yürüdüler," Kadınların Birliği, no. 10 (July 1981): 5.*

In the efforts to expand HTKB's relations with Dutch women's organizations, the NVB stands out as the first and most notable organization that HTKB cooperated with. The earliest instances of the cooperation between HTKB and NVB that I know of took place during 1979. *Kadınların Birliği / Turkse Vrouwenkrant* reported that NVB was the only Dutch women's organization that attended HTKB's Fourth Annual Congress in November 1979.[733] At the congress, the NVB representative "expressed a solidarity statement, the desire to work together more, and stressed the importance of joint action for the recognition of the democratic organizations of foreigners and the banning by the Dutch government of the Turkish fascist groups acting in the Netherlands."[734] In return, HTKB representatives also

[733] "Algemene jaarvergadering HTKB," 6.
[734] Ibid.

attended the Eleventh Congress of NVB, which took place on February 11-13, 1980.[735] There, "the need to recognize the specific position of foreign women living and working in the country" was emphasized.[736] Similar to the close relationships between Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations and the WIDF's national organizations in the UK, West Berlin and the Ruhr region, HTKB viewed NVB as a sister organization with a shared left-feminist agenda.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the history of Turkish migrant left feminism and the origins and development of HTKB in the Netherlands in the second half of the 1970s, contextualizing these within the transnational history of Turkish migrant left feminism in the UK and West Germany, and the broader history of Turkish migrant transnational politics. The chapter has established a clear timeline for the founding process of HTKB, beginning in 1974, when Turkish migrant women active within HTIB and left-wing politics initiated preliminary efforts. Amid the global momentum created by IWY and the intensified political exchange and communication between Turkish left-feminist activists in the Netherlands and their counterparts in the UK and West Germany, the HTKB was officially founded in 1975, during IWY, coinciding with the establishment of BTKB and GKB in West Germany and IKD in Turkey.

This chapter has advanced four arguments. First, my analysis showed that the history of the HTKB cannot be understood without exploring the intertwined levels of the Turkish migrant women's political organizing process from the individual to the transnational. I adopted a biographical approach, albeit quite minimally, to explain HTKB founders' social and activist capital that enabled them to effectively participate in the struggle to improve the status of Turkish migrant women in the Netherlands by founding a women-only organization, separate from HTIB. Their social and activist capital also enabled them to engage in transnational political work within the cross-border networks of Turkish migrant left feminism between the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands.

Secondly, the chapter has shown that HTKB's initial focus, much like that of its counterparts in the UK and West Germany, centered around community engagement. Far from being a mere auxiliary of HTIB designed to funnel women into pre-existing leftist structures, HTKB's activities represented a genuine interest in uplifting Turkish migrant women

[735] "Elfde Congres van NVB begonnen: 'Vrouwenbeweging niet meer weg te cijferen,'" *De Waarheid*, February 11, 1980, 3.
[736] "Nieuwe deolstellingen op 11e NVB-Congres," *De Waarheid*, February 12, 1980, 1.

grounded in community feminism. HTKB employed a threefold strategy of community feminism: first, as outreach to encourage women to leave their domestic confines and build grassroots networks; second, as a tool for empowerment through communicative and practical skill-building; and third, as a mobilization strategy that used seemingly apolitical spaces—such as language or sewing classes—as safe venues for political dialogue and consciousness-raising. This mode of community feminism also reveals a shared repertoire of strategies and activities among Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands.

Thirdly, I argued that there were also differences between HTKB's political trajectory and that of its counterparts in the UK and West Germany during their formative phase. The main distinction lies in the fact that HTKB members were politically engaged in social and welfare work for Turkish migrant women at a time when there was no comprehensive national policy framework for integration, migrant incorporation, or institutionalized opportunity structures for migrant organizations in the Netherlands during the 1970s. The HTKB's active involvement in the organization of social and welfare services for migrant women, and its negotiations with the existing welfare structures, became a central element of the political trajectory of Turkish migrant left feminism in the Netherlands. I argued that HTKB's proactive approach to shaping opportunity structures for migrant organizations and welfare provision, as with the occupation of Bonnstraat 20, was supplemented by sustained advocacy from Dutch activist women, organized through the HTKB Support Committee. The contributions of these Dutch activists were invaluable, particularly in securing funding, drafting subsidy applications, lobbying, fostering ties with Dutch women's organizations and public institutions, and publishing HTKB's Dutch-language quarterly *Turkse Vrouwenkrant*. This publication played a crucial role in HTKB's bilingual outreach strategy and in mobilizing support for the political claims made for and by Turkish migrant women.

Lastly, my examination of the articles published in *Kadınların Birliği* showed that HTKB had a genuine interest in political and ideological education of the first generation of Turkish migrant women. They published articles in Turkish that offered an analysis of the origins of women's oppression from a Marxist-feminist perspective, with an increased emphasis on the notion of the triple exploitation of Turkish migrant women as women, workers and foreigners in the Dutch society. My analysis of these articles revealed that the HTKB was vocal in criticizing the patriarchal family, framing it ideologically as an obstacle to the equality and emancipation of women. This critique can be seen as the ideological underpinning of HTKB's left-feminist praxis, particularly in HTKB's collaboration with *Blijf-*

van-m'n-Lijf and Dutch feminists in combating domestic violence and campaigning for independent right of residence for migrant women. HTKB placed *Kadınların Birliği* at the core of its ideological and political education work, targeting Turkish migrant women. This led to more politicized coverage of events in Turkey, reflecting a deeper ideological commitment to socialism while utilizing the political vocabulary and rhetoric employed by the TKP.

Chapter 5: The Second Generation of Turkish Migrant Left Feminists (1980-1984)

5.1. Introduction

In its July 1980 issue, HTKB's magazine *Kadınların Birliği* wished Turkish migrant women in the Netherlands happy holidays, while announcing that the HTKB would suspend its activities until 15 September 1980. Summer vacations in the home country were very common in the Turkish migrant community across western Europe and can be conceived as "small seasonal remigrations." Both Turkish migrants and those in their home country typically used the Turkish word *izin*, which literally means permission or leave, to describe their seasonal remigration to Turkey.[737] HTKB also used the same phrase in the announcement published in its magazine.[738] However, that year, the vacation period coincided with one of the most important and tragic events in the history of Turkey: the military coup that took place on 12 September 1980, three days before HTKB would return from its "leave." As the third military coup since 1960, the military coup of 12 September 1980 heralded the darkest chapter in Turkey's modern history, marked by brutal suppression of political dissent and socialist opposition. Therefore, upon their return from the vacation period, the immediate task before HTKB and Turkish migrants' left-wing organizations all around western Europe was to fight against the military dictatorship established in their home country.

Besides its impact on the political agenda of Turkish migrants abroad, which I will discuss below, the 1980 Turkish military coup triggered a new wave of migration to western Europe by those fleeing the systemic suppression and persecution of leftists, which led to the imprisonment of tens of thousands of leftist activists.[739] The exiles were not able to return to their homeland even after the transition to restricted civilian rule in 1983, due to ongoing political repression and marginalization of the political left, which went on until the early 1990s.[740] The decade following the 1980 military coup has become ingrained in the collective political memory of the revolutionary left in Turkey as an episode of defeat and disengagement. Nonetheless, the same period also saw extensive efforts by Turkish migrant

[737] Michelle Lynn Kahn, "The Long Road Home: Vacations and the Making of the 'Germanized Turk' across Cold War Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 93, no. 1 (2021): 111.
[738] "İzine Giderken," *Kadınları Birliği*, no. 6 (July 1980): 2.
[739] Nermin Abadan-Unat, "Turkish Migration to Europe," in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, ed. Robin Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 280.
[740] Berna Pekesen, "The Left in Turkey: Emergence, Persecutions and Left-Wing Memory Work," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anti-Communist Persecutions*, ed. Christian Gerlach and Clemens Six (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 490.

left-wing activists in western Europe to recover from their counterparts' defeat in Turkey. With the arrival of political refugees from Turkey in the early 1980s, Turkish migrant transnational politics faced a critical crossroads. During this period, Turkish migrant left-wing activists sought to maintain close ties with the homeland to restart revolutionary efforts, while simultaneously sustaining their growing engagement in local and national politics in the host country.

Against this background, this chapter investigates the impact of the 1980 military coup in Turkey on Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe by providing a historical account of the process in which many IKD cadres and TKP affiliated women fled Turkey and resettled as political refugees in western Europe. It assesses how these exiled IKD cadres and TKP women—whom I refer to as the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists—collectively sought to keep their activism going within a diasporic setting and maintained transnational political engagements.

The central aim of this chapter is to challenge the prevailing assumption in the historiography of women's activism in Turkey that posits a definitive rupture, discontinuity, and contrast between the pre- and post-1980 periods. According to that narrative, the post-coup period was characterized by a complete disappearance of Turkish left-feminist women's activism, due to the military regime's crackdown on left-wing activism. In the Introduction, I suggested that this narrative of rupture was informed, first, by a methodological nationalism that overlooks the transnational aspects of Turkish women's activism beyond Turkey's national borders, and second, by the dominant metaphor of "feminist waves." In this chapter, I examine the initiatives the exiled IKD cadres and TKP women took in western Europe in the post-1980 period to rebuild their organizations abroad and continue their gender equality struggle, a history that challenges the dominant narrative.

With the recovery of this activism abroad, I aim to contribute to three bodies of historical research on women's activism, all of which have overlooked this phenomenon. The first is the recent yet expanding feminist scholarship on the history of women's activism in Turkey, which has demonstrated that agendas commonly attributed to the post-1980 "second wave" of feminism Kemalist and socialist women activists were already formulated in the decades prior to the 1980s. My research, conversely, explores leftist women's activism across the assumed 1980 rupture. The second body of literature consists of the limited scholarship on Turkish migrant women's activism in western Europe during the 1970s and 1980s. This includes a small set of studies focused on Turkish migrant left feminism—albeit not explicitly framed as left-feminist—in the Netherlands and West Germany. Although these works

acknowledge the 1980 coup in Turkey as a turning point in shaping the transnational orientation of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations, the contributions of IKD cadres and TKP women in exile to this process have largely remained unnoticed.[741] The third body of scholarship I aim to contribute to is the growing historiography on left-wing women's movements in the Cold War context, particularly on the WIDF. Within this historiography, left-feminist women's activism in exile within the WIDF's transnational advocacy network has not yet received sufficient attention. My aim is to build upon this emerging research by examining WIDF-affiliated IKD cadres and TKP women in exile, shedding light on how the WIDF served as a transnational support structure for the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists who aimed toto maintain their activism under diasporic conditions.

Given the absence of existing literature on the subject, this chapter aims to recover that period of their activism based on archival sources and oral history accounts by the second generation of activists, drawn both from printed collections and interviews I conducted myself. For the activities of Turkish migrant left-feminists in the post-1980 period, I studied the documents of two organizations—the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau—housed in the personal collections of Zülal Kılıç at the TUSTAV collections in Istanbul. Zülal Kılıç was the IKD's general-secretary and served as the secretary of IKD's Office Abroad in exile during the post-1980 period. These materials, published in 2016 as a printed collection under the editorship of Erden Akbulut, constitute my core sources for this chapter.[742] In addition, I also consulted the IKD's Office Abroad's newsletters, periodicals from Turkish migrant organizations in western Europe—likewise preserved at TUSTAV—and issues of the WIDF's *Women of the Whole World*.

This chapter is organized into four sections. In Section 5.2, I examine the impact of the 1978-1980 Martial Law and the new context that arose in Turkey following the 12 September 1980 military coup on the IKD. In Section 5.3, I zoom in on the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau, the two entities through which exiled Turkish left-feminists organized their activities abroad and coordinated their advocacy for women's rights, working both with the first generation and engaging transnationally with the WIDF in long-distance solidarity initiatives for persecuted women in Turkey under the military dictatorship. Finally, in Section 5.4, I discuss the second generation's relationship with the TKP leadership and the

[741] For example, regarding Turkish migrant left feminism in the Netherlands, see Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution*; Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism"; Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!."
[742] Erden Akbulut, ed., *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*.

negotiations within the Party's internal dynamics—factors that shaped their involvement in political organizing among Turkish migrant women and their collaborations with the first generation. In the concluding part of Section 5.4, I also reflect on how my findings regarding the second generation's relationship with the TKP leadership relate to the historiography of Turkish women's activism in the post-1980 period.

5.2. The IKD under Martial Law and the 1980 Military Coup

During the 1975–1980 period, the IKD was Turkey's largest and most influential left-feminist women's organization, mass mobilizing women across the country through 33 chapters and 35 representative offices and bringing together about fifteen thousand members (discussed in Section 1.4).[743] Although the IKD's relationship with the TKP was complicated—given that the IKD had been initiated by TKP women and featured numerous TKP members in its leadership—the IKD succeeded in forging a political presence for itself beyond simply functioning as the Party's auxiliary.[744] Notably, from its inception, the IKD sought to join the WIDF and become its national affiliate in Turkey, and it was admitted to membership during the WIDF's Council Meeting, held in Moscow on 15–19 May 1978, three years after its founding.[745] The momentum the IKD created for women's activism in Turkey during the latter half of the 1970s, state authorities began to counter in December 1978, when the government imposed Martial Law in thirteen provinces with the aim of dismantling both the mass mobilization of women and the broader left-wing movements.[746] The Martial Law, extended multiple times, set the stage for the 12 September 1980 military coup. On 28 April 1979, during the Martial Law period, the IKD was the first organization the Istanbul military governor closed.[747]

Notwithstanding its closure, IKD members persisted in their activism, mobilizing thousands of women nationwide to protest against the Martial Law and to demand the IKD's reinstatement. Their landmark action was the campaign launched in June 1979, *İlerici Kadın Hareketi Durdurulamaz* (Nothing Can Stop the Progressive Women's Movement), which quickly gained a transnational dimension.[748] This campaign was bolstered by the support of

[743] Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, "1970'lerin En Kitlesel Kadın Örgütü: İlerici Kadınlar Derneği," *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar*, no. 12 (October 2010): 72; Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 192.
[744] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 135; Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 137, 161–64.
[745] Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey," 81, 86.
[746] Ismet Akça, "Yetmişli Yıllarda Hegemonya Krizi, Ordu ve Militarizm," in Kaynar, *Türkiye'nin 1970'li Yılları*, 115–18.
[747] Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey," 90.
[748] Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 239.

Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in western Europe, as well as the WIDF and its national affiliates, who sent letters to the Turkish government demanding the reversal of the decision to close the IKD.[749] In the Netherlands, for example, HTKB, in collaboration with NVB, organized a solidarity campaign protesting the closure and banning of IKD in Turkey. As part of this effort, NVB sent a telegram to Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, demanding "on behalf of thousands of women in our country, the immediate withdrawal of this incorrect and undemocratic measure."[750] In April 1980, NVB and HTKB co-organized events in Amsterdam and The Hague under the theme *Vrouwen in Verzet Tegen Fascisme* (Women in Resistance Against Fascism).[751] The event in Amsterdam on 23 April 1980 symbolically linked the anti-fascist resistance of Dutch women during the Nazi occupation with the IKD's struggle against fascism in Turkey. The event featured two documentary screenings: *Voortzetting Van Ons Aller Werk* (Continuation of Our Shared Work), which told the story of Dutch communist woman and resistance fighter Hannie Schaft (1920-1945), and another film that documented the long march of IKD women from Istanbul and Izmir to Ankara, which had begun on 20 July 1979, as part of their *İlerici Kadın Hareketi Durdurulamaz* campaign.[752] This march of IKD women to Ankara, demanding the organization's reopening, also drew coverage in the WIDF's *Women of the Whole World*. In a two-page account that vividly captured the rally from the participants' viewpoint and outlined the IKD's mission, the article highlighted the IKD's success "in rallying large masses of women to the democratic struggle in Turkey, in the face of escalating fascist terror and the imminent threat of a fascist takeover," celebrating the march as "a milestone in the women's movement and the struggle against fascism."[753] These internationalist left-feminist solidarity efforts with women in Turkey amplified the IKD's campaign's reach and impact beyond Turkey.

From IKD's shutdown in April 1979 through 1980, its cadres adopted a range of semi-legal tactics to work around the ban on its formal operation. These tactics ranged from organizing low-profile home gatherings for members to meeting in exclusive women's venues such as the women's sections of public baths.[754] In this way, the IKD managed to continue its work, preserving—and in some cases even enhancing—its organizational network and

[749] Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey," 91.
[750] "NVB protesteert tegen verbod van Turkse Vrouwenorganisatie," *De Waarheid*, June 7, 1979, 8.
[751] "Tegen fascisme in Turkije," *De Waarheid*, May 3, 1980, 9.
[752] "NVB gewest Amsterdam organiseert in samenwerking met HTKB op 23 April een avond met als thema: Vrouwen in verzet tegen fascisme," *Amsterdams Vrouwennieuws*, 1980, 1, Atria.
[753] "Turkey: Women's Long March," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 1 (1980): 34–35.
[754] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 252.

membership base.[755] On the other hand, the year 1980 brought intensified repression and an escalation of far-right assaults on left-wing activists, including IKD members. Under these tense conditions celebrations of International Women's Day (IWD) became more fraught. Nevertheless, IKD members staged localized IWD demonstrations while wearing white headscarves—a direct reference to the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, who began to gather every Thursday from 1977, holding a vigil, using white headscarves as a symbol for the diapers of their forcibly disappeared children under the military regime (1976–1983).[756] Despite the state authorities' attempts to stifle these actions, evident in the arrests of around fifty women in Izmir and the Martial Law authorities' ban on wearing white headscarves in public in Istanbul, IKD members took to the streets across Turkey to celebrate IWD and protest against "oppression and fascist terror."[757]

During this period, the IKD also maintained its monthly magazine, *Kadınların Sesi* (Women's Voice), ceasing publication only after the 12 September 1980 coup; its last issue appeared in August 1980. Meanwhile, the surge in far-right violence claimed the lives of IKD members: in July 1980, Aytül Acar in Eskişehir and Meryem Karakız in Adana were both shot dead by fascists, as part of the broader trend of escalating assaults on left-wing activists.[758] Even within this climate of intensified oppression, the IKD upheld its commitment to the UN Decade for Women by engaging in international activities aimed at advancing women's rights. Illustrating this commitment, Zülal Kılıç, the IKD's general-secretary, took part in the NGO Forum at the Second UN World Conference on Women, convened in Copenhagen between 14 and 30 July 1980.[759] This was the first time an IKD representative from Turkey participated in a UN World Conference on Women.

As said, the military coup of 12 September 1980 fundamentally altering the course of events in Turkey. The junta cracked down on the political opposition, particularly targeting left-wing activism.[760] A 1996 book that a group of IKD founders and executives collectively wrote to document the organization's history, describes the immediate aftermath of the coup as a period of heightened repression, while also highlighting that leading IKD cadres—many

[755] Ibid.
[756] Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 219–219; "8 Mart 1980'de Beyaz Eşarp Kadınlarımızın, Pahalılığı, Zamları, İşsizliği, Baskı ve Terörü Protesto Bayrağı Oldu," *Kadınların Sesi*, no. 57 (April 1980): 8–13.
[757] "8 Mart 1980'de Beyaz Eşarp Kadınlarımızın, Pahalılığı, Zamları, İşsizliği, Baskı ve Terörü Protesto Bayrağı Oldu," 8–9.
[758] Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 233–34.
[759] "Kopenhag 1980 Eşitlik-Kalkınma-Barış Kadın Onyılı Konferans ve Forumu," *Kadınların Sesi*, no. 61 (August 1980): 11; Interview with Zülal Kılıç, Istanbul, December 22, 2015.
[760] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 278–80; Nikos Christofis, "Coups and State Formation in Turkey," in *The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Turkey*, ed. Joost Jongerden (New York: Routledge, 2022), 133.

of whom were also members of the TKP's Central Women's Unit—persisted in maintaining grassroots connections, relying on the alternative, horizontal networks they had developed during the Martial Law period.[761] On the other hand, anticipating a massive crackdown on TKP members in Turkey, the TKP's leadership recognized that those had been involved in legal organizations like the IKD would be particularly vulnerable, because they were known.[762] As a result, nearly two months after the military coup, the leadership instructed its women members active in the IKD to break off the horizontal ties they had formed with other IKD members at the grassroots level and to withdraw into underground activities to protect themselves from the impending repression.[763] In the introduction Erden Akbulut wrote for the 2016 edited collection of documents from the TKP's Women's Bureau and the IKD's Office Abroad, she cited an email correspondence with Şeyda Talu dated 26 July 2003.[764] According to Şeyda Talu, the Party's political work among women in Turkey prior to the 1980 military coup was directed by its Central Women's Unit, which was composed of fifty women.[765] This Unit remained operational until the TKP leadership made the decision to withdraw its members from IKD activities, after which the Central Women's Unit's membership decreased to just seven or eight women, leaving the unit to "exist only in name."[766]

However, as Emel Akal has documented in her history of the IKD, many IKD cadres, including TKP members such as Saadet Arıkan Özkal, Şeyda Talu, and Zülal Kılıç, claimed that the TKP's central decision to suspend communist women's grassroots activism was made against their will.[767] As previously noted, the IKD was never fully autonomous from the TKP, but nonetheless succeeded in establishing a distinct political presence that "went beyond being simply an offshoot extension of the party."[768] This dynamic persisted throughout the Martial Law period thanks to IKD's broad-based popularity, women's mass mobilization and an extensive organizational network built during the late 1970s that empowered the IKD cadres to claim a degree of independence from the TKP leadership. However, once the military regime broadened its crackdown on left-wing activism, the IKD cadres' room for semi-autonomous maneuvering shrank considerably, and its cadres were compelled to submit to the TKP leadership, even if doing so ran counter to their preferences. This shift eventually

[761] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 252.
[762] Nabi Yağcı, *Elele Özgürlüğe: Zarlar Atıldı Geri Dönüş Yok* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2018), 362.
[763] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 252; Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 240–41; Yağcı, *Elele Özgürlüğe*, 362.
[764] Akbulut, "Sunu," in *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 5-7.
[765] Ibid., 7.
[766] Ibid.
[767] Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 241.
[768] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 735.

led to IKD inaction within Turkey, as both the political conditions and the TKP's response to these conditions denied them the means to continue their activism. In the end, they had no choice but to go into hiding for their own protection, or, when that proved impossible, to flee the country.

In spite of the TKP's efforts to protect its cadres from the junta's crackdown, operations conducted by the internal security apparatus in April–May 1981 resulted in the arrest of many IKD members, with further waves of arrests targeting IKD members between 1982 and 1983.[769] Many of the arrested women faced brutal conditions, including torture, miscarriages, serious illnesses, and prolonged imprisonment. From 1981 onwards, the entire IKD Executive Committee, alongside members of the TKP's Central Women's Unit, fled Turkey and sought asylum in western European countries, including the Netherlands, West Germany and Denmark.[770]

Among them were Şeyda Talu, who moved to the Netherlands, later followed by Gönül Dinçer—an IKD founding member and the only woman on the TKP's Central Committee at the time—who had initially moved to Leipzig, GDR, where the TKP's center was located, to join the TKP's executive collective there; she relocated to the Netherlands after The Party's fifth congress in late 1983.[771] Yüksel Selek and Filiz Kardam fled to West Germany, while IKD president Bakiye Beria Onger, secretary-general Zülal Kılıç, and Ayşe Coşkun relocated to Copenhagen, Denmark, where they would establish the *İKD Dış Bürosu* (IKD's Office Abroad) in 1982.[772] In a 2015 interview I conducted with Zülal Kılıç, she highlighted the crucial assistance members of *Danmarks Demokratiske Kvindeforbund* (Denmark's Democratic Women's Federation, DDK), the Danish affiliate of the WIDF, provided in her resettlement in Copenhagen and in her obtaining political refugee status in Denmark.[773] As she mentioned, her acquaintance with DDK members stemmed from her involvement in WIDF-organized international events during the 1970s. This instance illustrates how prior international engagements could offer critical support during times of crisis and parallels other instances in WIDF history.[774]

[769] Çakır, *Solda Yenilenme Deneyimi*, 164.
[770] Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 250.
[771] Akbulut, "Sunu," in *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan,* 7; Yağcı, *Elele Özgürlüğe*, 452–53.
[772] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 253.
[773] Zülal Kılıç, interview by Sercan Çınar.
[774] For the WIDF's support—when its headquarters were based in Paris, France—and that of its French affiliate, *Union des Femmes Françaises* (Union of French Women, UFF), to exiled Spanish communist women in France after the Second World War, see Yusta Rodrigo, "The Mobilization of Women in Exile." On the material and political support that the WIDF extended to Chilean women in exile fleeing Pinochet's regime, see Fernanda Lanfranco González, "Women, Gender and Human Rights"; Fernanda Lanfranco González, "Between National and International"; María Fernanda Lanfranco González, "Women's Activism and Feminism in the Chile

It is clear, therefore, that the IKD's complicated relationship with the TKP was a defining factor in how IKD cadres responded to the intensified state repression from December 1978 through the post-1980 military coup period. This dynamic shaped both their resilience and their eventual decision to flee Turkey as political refugees in western Europe.

5.3. Initiatives in Exile: the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau

In this section, I examine the roles exiled IKD cadres and TKP women claimed and enacted in Turkish migrant left feminism and transnational migrant politics through the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau, the two entities they established abroad. I also explore the role the WIDF and its international activities played for the second generation of Turkish migrant left feminists. Lastly, I examine the relationship between the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau, asking how this relationship shaped both their activism and their involvement in Turkish migrant left feminism.

The post-1980 exodus was less a matter of deserting the political arena than a calculated step to keep their activism alive in safer environments. Determined to remain politically active, these cadres prioritized reorganizing themselves, and to extend assistance to and solidarity with IKD members who could not flee Turkey and thus faced imprisonment, or were at risk of persecution. This commitment was first realized in Denmark, where the *İKD Dış Bürosu* (IKD's Office Abroad) was founded in the summer of 1982 in Copenhagen at the initiative of those resettled there, including its first president Bakiye Beria Onger, secretary-general Zülal Kılıç, and Ayşe Coşkun. They were all former members of the IKD Executive Committee and had moved to Denmark to continue their work.[775]

The only available account of the founding of the IKD's Office Abroad comes from Şeyda Talu's email dated 26 July 2003 (introduced above), in which she shared her personal recollections regarding the founding process, function, and composition of the Office, albeit in a very limited manner, without a proper chronology or detailed information about who was involved.[776] According to Talu, IKD's Office Abroad had a dual mandate: it served as the official representative body for IKD members abroad, while also functioning as an "international unit" associated with the TKP.[777] The Office sought to raise awareness among

Solidarity Movement" (PhD diss., York University, 2020); de Haan, "La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres"; Pieper Mooney, "Women's Rights as Human Rights."

[775] Akbulut, "Sunu," 7.

[776] Akbulut, "Sunu," 6–7.

[777] Ibid., 7.

the European public about the Turkish regime's brutality by publishing a monthly bilingual newsletter in English and Turkish, beginning in January 1983. This newsletter provided detailed reports about the situation in Turkey, focusing particularly on the trials of left-wing activists, the death sentences issued by the junta, the harsh conditions in military jails, and the mass hunger strikes of political prisoners who demanded fair trials and improved conditions.[778]

Before the creation of IKD's Office Abroad, the task of organizing solidarity activities for IKD members in Turkey fell to members of TKP branches in Europe, involving both men and women. These efforts, though well-intentioned, sometimes led to an absurd situation. A particularly striking example occurred when Mahmut Değer, a male TKP member living in Paris, participated in the 1981 congress of the *Union des Femmes Françaises* (Union of French Women, UFF), the French WIDF affiliate, as the representative of IKD.[779] As an expression of solidarity, UFF sought to include the voice of Turkish left-feminist women at their congress by inviting a member from IKD. However, Mahmut Değer recounted that "due to the conditions of that day, it was not possible to find a representative from IKD," leading the TKP branch in France to assign him the task "due to his proficiency in French."[780] Thus he became the only male speaker at an all-women meeting, which he retrospectively characterized as "ludicrous," amid "sarcastic whistles from a crowd of more than a thousand women."[781]

While in exile, the former IKD Executive Committee members were committed to maintaining their involvement in global left feminism through participating in WIDF events, such as the eighth WIDF-convened World Congress of Women, which took place in Prague from 8–13 October 1981.[782] As reported in *Atılım* (Leap Forward), the TKP's Central Committee's magazine, IKD representatives used the congress platform to speak out against "the brutal repression of peace and of democracy forces in Turkey."[783] *Atılım* further reported that as an act of solidarity, the congress sent a telegram condemning the junta and protesting the detention of Berin Uyar, the editor-in-chief of the IKD's monthly *Kadınların Sesi* (Women's Voice), adding that "hundreds of women at the congress signed a petition demanding an end to the heavy repression and the torture of peace and democracy supporters

[778] "Resistance in Military Prisons," *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği Newsletter*, August 1983, 1–2.
[779] Fevzi Karadeniz, *Harlı Ateşte Yananlar Yanmadan Kül Olanlar* (Istanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, 2022), 278–79.
[780] Quoted in Karadeniz, 279.
[781] Ibid.
[782] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 253.
[783] "Barış ve Dayanışma," *Atılım*, November 1, 1981, 3, 7.

in Turkey, and the release of all democrats."[784] While the Prague 1981 Congress Report mentioned the developments in Turkey, declaring solidarity with those facing repression, the WIDF's magazine *Women of the Whole World* report of Prague Congress did not do so.[785] Instead, the magazine's second issue in 1982 published extracts from discussions of the Prague Congress's "Women and Work" commission, including an excerpt from BTKB's founder and president Meral Uygun's speech. The excerpt excluded any mention of the fascist junta, military dictatorship or repression in Turkey, instead providing a generalized depiction of Turkey as an "undeveloped capitalist country, which depends on imperialism and is closely connected with the NATO military pact," and linking "the poverty and misery prevailing in Turkey" to its "dependence on imperialism and the policy of the arms race" as "one of the reasons why [Turkish women] had to leave [their] country."[786]

Without access to the full text of Uygun's speech, it is unclear whether *Women of the Whole World* decided to publish only a portion of her speech, one that omitted mention of the military dictatorship in Turkey, or whether Uygun herself did not address it.[787] However, an examination of *Women of the Whole World*'s content after the September 1980 military coup in Turkey reveals a conspicuous silence on the events unfolding in Turkey and a lack of calls for solidarity with Turkish women. The lack of coverage of Turkey's military dictatorship stands in striking contrast to the WIDF's stated political mission, as declared in the appeal adopted by the WIDF Bureau at its East Berlin meeting from 9–11 April 1980, which pledged to combat US interference in the internal affairs of other nations—particularly through US support for coups and facilitating the establishment of dictatorial regimes overseas; it also contrasts with *Women of the Whole World'*s vivid and consistent focus on exposing dictatorial and fascist regimes in Latin America, especially Chile, which were frequently depicted as instances of US interference.[788] Considering that the 1980 Turkish coup, much like other cases the WIDF criticized, involved NATO generals and was orchestrated with US backing to suppress left-wing opposition, the absence of coverage about Turkey's military dictatorship in

[784] "Barış ve Dayanışma," 7.
[785] *Equality, National Independence, Peace: World Congress of Women*, Prague, October 8-13, 1981 (Berlin: Women's International Democratic Federation, 1981), 157-58, accessed through WASI.
[786] "Women and Work: From the Discussion at the World Congress of Women, Prague, 1981," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 2 (1982): 9.
[787] Another reason why we cannot establish this is the fact that the central WIDF archive, including that of the *Women of the Whole World*'s editorial work, is not accessible.
[788] "Appeal of the WIDF Bureau for Peace, Disarmament, Détente and Security," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 3 (1980): 7; for an analysis of the WIDF's prominent role during the 1970s in the international struggle against human rights abuses in Chile and contribution to strengthening international ties between women activists across and beyond the Latin American continent, see de Haan, "La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres."

the WIDF's main publication reveals a discrepancy that, I would argue, suggests a selective focus in the organization's solidarity efforts.[789]

One possible explanation for this silence lies in the shifting geopolitical climate of the late Cold War era. As discussed in Section 1.5, the growing body of research on the WIDF and its national affiliates has begun to explore them more seriously—challenging earlier Cold War assumptions that cast the WIDF as a mere pro-Soviet organization totally dependent on Moscow, and showing that the WIDF was more than simply an 'Eastern European' or 'Soviet bloc' organization. Nonetheless, as Yulia Gradskova has rightly emphasized, the question of Soviet and 'Eastern bloc' interests in the WIDF remains crucial, given that the Soviet Union had a strong position in the organization and attempted to control the WIDF's work—for instance, as she has shown, employees of the Soviet Women's Committee (SWC) assigned to the WIDF's office in Paris (and from 1951 in Berlin) had to inform Moscow about the WIDF's Secretariat's individual members' "political stances, intentions, and personal health;" also, the CPSU's leadership was vigilant in nominating "women who would be 'friendly' to the Soviet Union and would show open support to its, often very contradictory and frequently changing, foreign policy to these higher positions in the WIDF," especially from the late 1960s to the 1980s.[790] Several researchers have also indicated that countries under state socialism occupied a privileged place in the Federation.[791] Even so, the same Gradskova has also shown that the Soviet Union's attempts to control the WIDF's work "had different modalities and degrees of success in different periods of the WIDF's history."[792]

Considering the potential ramifications of Soviet interests in the WIDF, the Soviet stance on Turkey's 1980 military coup may help explain why the Federation's primary publication provided no coverage of Turkey's military dictatorship nor of the IKD members'

[789] Regarding the U.S. backing of the 12 September 1980 coup in Turkey, see Ömer Aslan, *The United States and Military Coups in Turkey and Pakistan: Between Conspiracy and Reality* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 177–87; Ömer Karasapan, "Turkey and US Strategy in the Age of Glasnost," *Middle East Report*, no. 160 (October 1989): 4–10; Mehmet Ali Birand, *The Generals' Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September 1980* (London: Brassey's, 1987), 185.

[790] Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation*, 62; Yulia Gradskova, "The WIDF's Work for Women's Rights," 157; de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 555.

[791] See Celia Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights: Gender, Violence and International Law in the Women's International Democratic Federation Mission to North Korea, 1951," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 313–33; Celia Donert, "Whose Utopia? Gender, Ideology, and Human Rights at the 1975 World Congress of Women in East Berlin," in *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, ed. Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 68–87; Mercedes Yusta Rodrigo, "The Strained Courtship between Antifascism and Feminism: From the Women's World Committee (1934) to the Women's International Democratic Federation (1945)," in *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present*, ed. Hugo García et al. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 167–86.

[792] Gradskova, "The WIDF's Work for Women's Rights," 157.

transnational initiatives to mobilize support for women persecuted in Turkey. It appears that Soviet foreign policy recognized Turkey's military regime as legitimate—arguably more so than many of Turkey's western allies in Europe did.[793] Part of this lenience stemmed from the Soviet Union being "embroiled in an unpopular occupation of Afghanistan," which led it to favor stability in Turkey, a neighboring capitalist country and a NATO member state, over the cost of supporting a revolution and installing a socialist regime there, actions that would also jeopardize the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence, especially in the Near East.[794] Consequently, the Soviet Union refrained from showing robust solidarity with the pro-Soviet factions of the Turkish Left, including the TKP—except for verbally rebuking pro-Chinese groups in Turkey, such as the *Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi* (Workers' and Peasants' Party of Turkey, TIKP).[795]

Although future research needs to further refine and validate these findings, it is plausible that the Soviet Union's position regarding Turkey's military regime may partially account for the marginalized focus on Turkey in WIDF publications, particularly relative to their extensive coverage of Latin American military dictatorships like Chile, typically portrayed as outcomes of US involvement. Considering the strong position of the Soviet Union in the WIDF, this framing, in turn, posed an additional challenge for exiled IKD members in a diasporic context, since the IKD sought broader international support for their struggle. They faced the challenge of illuminating the circumstances in their homeland, seeking to integrate Turkey in international left feminist solidarity politics, which turned out to have a selective focus.

Alongside *Kadınların Sesi*'s editor-in-chief Berin Uyar, who spent nearly three years in prison, Reha İsvan emerged as another symbol and public face of IKD's Office Abroad's international initiatives for the release of the imprisoned women activists in Turkey. Reha İsvan (1925-2013) was a prominent author, journalist, political activist, and IKD member, yet she is perhaps best known for her significant role in *Barış Derneği* (the Peace Association). IKD members, included Reha İsvan, were among *Barış Derneği'*s founders in April 1977, and

[793] Duygu B. Sezer, "Peaceful Coexistence: Turkey and the near East in Soviet Foreign Policy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 481 (1985): 120.
[794] Ghodsee, "Revisiting the United Nations Decade for Women," 7; Sezer, "Peaceful Coexistence," 120.
[795] The Soviet Union's stance toward Turkey's military regime also influenced the pro-Soviet TKP, prompting it to adopt an ambiguous position that avoided labeling the Turkish junta a 'fascist dictatorship,' unlike other factions in the Turkish Left. A striking manifestation of this ambiguity can be found in the 15 April 1981 edition of *Kurtuluş* (Liberation). The cover story, entitled "*Türk-Sovyet Dostluğu 60 Yaşında*" (60 Years of Turkish-Soviet Friendship), featured photos of Turkey's military ruler Kenan Evren and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev next to each other, celebrating "the strong neighborly ties between the Soviet and Turkish peoples." *Kurtuluş*, no. 237 (April 15, 1981): 1. See further Çakır, *Solda Yenilenme Deneyimi* , 156–64.

she served on its inaugural Executive Committee. [796] In 1979, *Barış Derneği* became the Turkish affiliate of the World Peace Council (WPC). Reha İsvan continued to serve on *Barış Derneği*'s Executive Committee until the association was dissolved by the military regime, when she was acting as its vice president.[797] Reha İsvan was arrested on 26 February 1982 and subsequently spent four years in prison, without a conviction, as the only woman among the executives of the Peace Association who were put on trial.[798] On January 1983, IKD's Office Abroad organized a solidarity campaign for the release of Berin Uyar, Reha İsvan, and all women political prisoners in Turkey.[799] Exiled IKD members worked to bring this issue on the agenda of the WIDF, utilizing every international platform they could attend to amplify their message. The WIDF supported these efforts by circulating a letter to its national affiliates in June 1983, calling for action for the release of imprisoned IKD members and women political prisoners in Turkey.[800] IKD's Office Abroad members also attended the WIDF Council Meeting in Budapest, 11-14 October 1983, where their presence contributed to the Council's decision to send a letter of solidarity to Reha İsvan and Berin Uyar.[801]

The exiled IKD cadres' transnational engagement with the WIDF's activities was not limited to their solidarity initiatives for imprisoned women in Turkey but also reflected their broader commitment to international left feminism and its political goals during the first half of the 1980s—particularly efforts to control the arms race and ban nuclear weapons, as the deployment of US cruise missiles in western Europe had become a major issue for the global women's struggle for peace and disarmament. It was within this context of the increasing threat of nuclear catastrophe that the WIDF convened an extraordinary consultative meeting with representatives from twenty-seven national women's organizations across twenty-four countries in Europe, the USA, and Canada, held on 28–29 January 1984 at the WIDF headquarters in East Berlin, as reported in the WIDF's magazine *Women of the Whole World.*[802] In her speech at the opening session of the consultative meeting, WIDF General-Secretary Mirjam Vire-Tuominen stated, "[w]e are in a decisive phase of the struggle between the forces of war and peace," adding, "that is why we called this meeting to discuss what we can do, what the difficulties are, and how to overcome them in order to intensify our struggle

[796] Zeynep Oral, *Direniş ve Umut: Reha İsvan* (Istanbul: Metis, 2013); Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey," 84–85.
[797] Doğan Görsev, *Türkiye'de Barış Savaşımı'nın Küçük Seyir Defteri*, ed. Ruhr Uluslararası Barış Yılı Girişimi (Duisburg: Infomedia, 1986), 90.
[798] Oral, *Direniş ve Umut*, 7.
[799] Karadeniz, *Harlı Ateşte Yananlar*, 42.
[800] "Dayanışmanın Sesi," *İKD Haber Bülteni*, July 1983, 4–6.
[801] "UDKF Konsey Toplantısı Yapıldı," *İKD Haber Bülteni*, November 1983, 4.
[802] "WIDF Consultative Meeting: Together We Are Strong," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 2 (1984): 3–5.

on this most urgent and vital issue."[803] According to the report, among the twenty-seven representatives was Zülal Kılıç from the IKD's Office Abroad, whose photograph delivering a speech was published alongside images of other women attending the meeting.[804]

From 1981, the political activities of the TKP and IKD became increasingly intertwined, as the majority of the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists who took on the political work of IKD in a diasporic context were also TKP members. Alongside their commitments to the IKD's Office Abroad, they simultaneously contributed to the TKP's efforts abroad—from engaging in local party branches at the grassroots level in their countries of residence to re-organization efforts at the central level—helping The Party rebound from the significant blow it incurred after the 1980 coup.[805]

These efforts by the TKP materialized in the lead-up to The Party's fifth congress, scheduled for the autumn of 1983. Earlier that year, TKP women members who were also carrying out the political work of IKD in exile, convened at the *TKP Kadın Aktivistler Konferansı* (Conference of TKP's Women Activists), although I was unable to determine where it was held.[806] The Conference's discussions were compiled into a report that offers a detailed overview of TKP's political engagement with women leading up to the 1980 military coup and includes a self-critical evaluation of its achievements and failures, along with proposals aimed at guiding future efforts.[807] What is noteworthy in terms of my dissertation is that the Conference Report mentioned the political mobilization of Turkish migrant women, addressing it briefly in the section on future strategies for TKP's work among women.[808] The Conference Report included a succinct evaluation of the current efforts, noting that the "TKP remains the only [Turkish] leftist organization engaging with migrant women in Western Europe."[809] However, the assessment acknowledged that these efforts were "far from being systematic (…) with many previously established groups having disbanded and the existing women's auxiliaries within migrant workers' organizations functioning more as casual gatherings than as mass-based women's organizations."[810]

The criticism regarding the lack of systematic efforts and the disbandment of left-feminist organizations is somewhat puzzling. As demonstrated in my Chapters 3 and 4, key

[803] Ibid., 3.
[804] Ibid., 4.
[805] Akbulut, "Sunu," 7.
[806] "TKP Kadın Aktivistler Konferansı Raporu, 1983," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 9-28.
[807] Ibid.
[808] Ibid., 18–21.
[809] Ibid., 22.
[810] Ibid., 22–23.

organizations like BTKB and GKB in West Germany and HTKB in the Netherlands remained operational and continued to play an active role in the early 1980s. The only exception was ITKB in the UK, which in the late 1970s had distanced itself from the TKP-affiliated transnational network due to intra-party conflicts (as discussed in Section 2.5). One plausible explanation for the limited and in my view inaccurate assessment of TKP's work among migrant women in western Europe could be the lack of participation of first-generation Turkish migrant left-feminist activists at the conference. No participant list from the conference is available, but the report's content suggests that the TKP women present were predominantly those who had served as IKD cadres, working under the Central Women's Unit of the TKP based in Turkey, which remained operational until 1981. As Şeyda Talu recalled in her abovementioned 2003 e-mail, prior to 1981, the TKP's Central Women's Unit "was composed of cadres who were active in organizing efforts within Turkey," with no participation from the first generation of migrant women members of TKP abroad.[811] Based on these findings, it appears that, during the early post-1980 period when the second generation resettled in western Europe and began organizing, no sustained channel existed within the TKP's organizational structure to connect them with the first generation of Turkish migrant left feminists. Also, the Conference Report's labeling migrant women's political organizing in western Europe as "far from being systematic"[812] might be interpreted as patronizing—suggesting that the second generation saw themselves as more capable of establishing a systematic model for Turkish migrant women's political organizing in western Europe. Lastly, the text also suggests their intention to strengthen connections with the first generation principally through the TKP's organizational network in western Europe, setting the stage for the eventual convergence of both generations' activism.

The 1983 Conference's principal recommendation was "the creation of a centralized party section to oversee and coordinate the political organizing of Turkish women" both in Turkey and abroad, "with a mandate to ensure that grassroots knowledge and experience inform and guide the party's work among women."[813] The recommendation was promptly implemented with the formation of the Women's Bureau under the Central Committee of TKP (hereafter the TKP's Women's Bureau) in 1984, with its first official meeting taking place in Copenhagen on 20-21 August of that year. Zülal Kılıç, who used The Party alias Fidan Durukan in party communications, was elected as the secretary of the Women's Bureau, while

[811] Akbulut, "Sunu," 7.
[812] "TKP Kadın Aktivistler Konferansı Raporu, 1983," 22.
[813] Ibid., 22–23.

also holding the position of general secretary of the IKD's Office Abroad.[814] Thus, the creation of the TKP's Women's Bureau served as the venue through which the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists could deepen their connections with the first generation and their established organizations.

The 1983 Conference of TKP's Women Activists identified two primary objectives for its members operating abroad. The first was to engage in "broader solidarity work with Turkey," focusing on raising awareness about issues such as "torture of women and the conditions faced by women political prisoners in Turkey," which were expected to garner "significant attention and support from the international community."[815] However, the conference report highlighted a significant challenge in this endeavor, noting that "one of the biggest obstacles in this task is the scarcity of concrete information from within Turkey," which illustrates how the limited connection to the homeland shaped the diasporic political experience of TKP women abroad.[816] The second primary objective the 1983 Conference of TKP's Women Activists established was the "political organizing of Turkish migrant women," pointing out that the Party was "the only [Turkish] political movement with cadres actively and effectively engaged in this field."[817] To advance this task, the conference introduced an important recommendation: "organizing a Europe-wide conference of Turkish migrant women (…) with as wide a participation as possible," with the "assistance from the WIDF and other international and national women's organizations."[818] The initiative to hold a Europe-wide conference of Turkish migrant women materialized with the *Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınlar Avrupa Konferansı* (European Conference of Turkish Women Migrants, hereafter the 1985 Amsterdam Conference), which took place on 6-8 June 1985 at Vrije Universiteit (Free University) in Amsterdam, hosted by HTKB.[819]

As decided at the 1983 Conference of TKP's Women Activists, solidarity initiatives with persecuted women in Turkey became the central focus of the transnational political activities of the TKP's political refugee women abroad. Former IKD executives, who were at the forefront of the TKP's Women's Bureau in a diasporic context, embraced a transnational mode of life in their political activities, traveling across Europe to attend events, rallies, and

[814] Fidan Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "TKP MK Kadın Bürosu Toplantısı Hakkında Rapor, August 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 34-35.
[815] "TKP Kadın Aktivistler Konferansı Raporu, 1983," 23.
[816] Ibid., 23.
[817] Ibid.
[818] Ibid., 24.
[819] European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants, *"Sesini Yükselt!" "Raise Your Voice!": Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınlar Avrupa Konferansı, European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants* (Amsterdam, 1985).

demonstrations to amplify the voices of women in Turkey and ensure they were heard on every available platform. International Women's Day celebrations for 1983 is an instance of such transnational engagements, as former IKD executives attended multiple events in different countries. Şeyda Talu was present at the international women's march in Brussels on 8 March 1983, organized by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in collaboration with the Conseil National des Femmes Belges (National Council of Belgian Women), as the conclusion of WILPF's well-known signature campaign, Stop the Arms Race (STAR), which called on NATO to cancel its decision to deploy cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in Europe, and at this event, signatures collected by WILPF Sections from around the world were presented to NATO leadership.[820] Bakiye Beria Önger, the IKD's last president, attended the IWD rally on March 8 in Athens, Greece, upon the invitation of the *Omospondia Gynaikōn Elladas* (Federation of Women of Greece, OGE), the WIDF's national affiliate in Greece.[821] Zülal Kılıç, the IKD's last serving secretary general, participated in a panel session in London as part of a four-day event organized by the National Assembly of Women (NAW) in celebration of IWD.[822] Kılıç addressed the audience on the conditions faced by women in Turkey and their resistance against the military junta. A delegation of former IKD executives took part in the event organized by the *Demokratischer Frauenbund Berlin* (Democratic Women's League Berlin, DFB) in West Berlin to mark its thirty-fifth anniversary and International Women's Day. The event also featured Yvonne Logan, president of the US branch of WILPF, and Galina Andrejewa, a member of the Presidium of the Soviet Women's Committee (SWC).[823] Notably, at each of these events, they participated and presented themselves as IKD members, an organization with a political agenda and function confined to Turkey.

IKD members' participation in public IWD celebrations, which had been forbidden by the authorities in Turkey since 1980, far away from their homeland and held in various countries, in my view reflects two dimensions of diasporic engagement of the second generation activists. Firstly, the exiled IKD members embraced this new diasporic context with a shared sense of belonging, which enabled them to keep their political aspirations alive even as they were dispersed far from their homeland. Secondly, their involvement in these

[820] "8 Mart Kutlamaları Barış ve Özgürlük Gösterileri Oldu," *Türkiye Postası*, no. 1 (March 25, 1983): 16; Catia Cecilia Confortini, "Intelligent Compassion: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Feminist Peace" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 125.
[821] "8 Mart Kutlamaları Barış ve Özgürlük Gösterileri Oldu," 16.
[822] Ibid.
[823] Ibid.

actions, where they consistently identified as IKD members, was key to maintaining solidarity with women in Turkey. Thus, the transnational activities of the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists were shaped by their self-identification as political actors in exile with a deep commitment to homeland-directed aspirations.

To further discuss these women's actor position, I engage with theoretical perspectives and models that address the dynamics of solidarity politics. First, US-based professor of philosophy Avery Kolers's analytical framework, as it encapsulates much of the recent scholarly accounts of solidarity.[824] Kolers' categorization identifies and distinguishes between two sets of actors: solidary objects and solidary agents. The former refers to the group to which solidarity is extended, typically assumed to be the victims of oppression, while the latter refers to the individuals who extend that solidarity—non-victims, often strangers to the oppression they oppose, but who act as agents of solidarity. However, as Ashwini Vasanthakumar correctly pointed out, some individuals do not fit easily into either category; in addition, individuals may move between these categories, and "there will be variability within these categories," especially concerning exiles.[825] In the case of former IKD members in exile, who took on the work of the IKD's Office Abroad and the Women's Bureau of the TKP in a diasporic setting, my findings suggest that they did not fit into either category. Though they had escaped direct oppression, they could not be fully regarded as non-victims or as strangers to the oppression against which they continued to mobilize.

Given this complexity, former IKD members' transnational solidarity with women in Turkey can be more appropriately understood through Vasanthakumar's concept of "solidary intermediaries."[826] In Vasanthakumar's formulation, the role of exiles as solidary intermediaries in solidarity politics involves "constituting the solidary object, deliberating with the solidary object, and enabling an appropriate relationship with solidary agents."[827] The role of IKD members in exile as solidary intermediaries is evident in their initial organizational strategy, particularly in their decision to create a new entity, IKD's Office Abroad, and designating it as the central body for coordinating solidarity campaigns for women in Turkey. This strategic choice, rather than joining already-established Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in their new countries of settlement, underscores their assertion of a distinct and autonomous actor position in the solidarity work, drawing on their

[824] Avery Kolers, *A Moral Theory of Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[825] Ashwini Vasanthakumar, *The Ethics of Exile: A Political Theory of Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 70.
[826] Vasanthakumar, 77–80.
[827] Vasanthakumar, 78.

epistemic privilege as prominent figures of the now-banned IKD and former victims of oppression; in other words, they saw their epistemic privilege vis-à-vis the first-generation activists as a natural extension and reiteration of their prior political engagements in their homeland, and allowing them to play a constitutive role as solidary intermediaries. [828] This actor position enabled them to instigate awareness, indignation, discussion, and hope, providing the solidary object—persecuted women in Turkey—not only with a platform to share their experiences but also linking them to appropriate solidary agents, namely left-feminist women of the world.

The TKP's Women's Bureau set forth a major task for 1985: to initiate a political campaign that combined the celebration of IKD's tenth anniversary with the preparations for the 1985 UN Nairobi Conference.[829] The 1985 brochure prepared by the IKD's Office Abroad to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the organization, intended for Turkish women living in Turkey and abroad, highlighted the interconnectedness of IKD's history with the UN Decade for Women:

> One should view the short but remarkable history of the IKD in conjunction with the Women's Decade. As we celebrate the IKD's tenth anniversary, the Women's Decade is drawing to a close. The IKD was closed down, its members scattered like marbles. There is dead-darkness over our country. Despite this, our women continue to uphold the tradition established by IKD. They are adding new experiences to the old ones.[830]

As part of linking IKD's tenth anniversary to the global women's movement, the IKD's Office Abroad also planned to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the WIDF on 1 December 1985. With this goal, its January–February 1985 newsletter contained a page featuring an abstract figure that varied across each copy, intending to form a larger image when assembled.[831] The newsletter asked readers to stitch the figure from their copy onto a piece of cloth and mail it to Copenhagen by 1 October 1985. After gathering all the patches, the IKD's Office Abroad

[828] Epistemic privilege is a concept initially envisaged by feminist standpoint theory, suggesting that for those who are marginalized, "the experiential basis of oppression may account for their noticing aspects of the world that are unlikely to be attended to by those who are not marginalized." Briana Toole, "Standpoint Epistemology and Epistemic Peerhood: A Defense of Epistemic Privilege," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 10, no. 3 (2024): 411.
[829] "TKP Merkez Komitesi Kadın Bürosu Çalışma Planı, 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 36-45.
[830] IKD Dış Bürosu, "İKD 10 Yaşında, 1985," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan* , 91.
[831] "10. Yıl Kampanyası," *İKD Haber Bülteni*, February 1985, 4.

planned to stitch them together into a single artifact, describing it as "a gift made of collective work of our friends living around various countries," to be offered to the WIDF for its fortieth anniversary.[832]

The report from the second meeting of the TKP's Women's Bureau, held on December 21-22, 1984, confirmed that TKP women would participate in the Nairobi Conference via the WIDF.[833] Nevertheless, it was noted that "the WIDF could only cover the travel expenses for one Turkish woman."[834] To maximize Turkish left-feminist women's participation, the TKP's Women's Bureau recommended the Central Committee to instruct all party sections in western European countries "to mobilize all means to send more delegates, actively search for funding, and organize fundraising efforts."[835] Because participation of Turkish women based in Turkey in the Nairobi Conference was highly, the campaign primarily concentrated on facilitating the participation of Turkish women from abroad, including both the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminist activists and the TKP and IKD members in exile.

The convergence of efforts to prepare for the Nairobi Conference from abroad with the campaign marking the tenth anniversary of the IKD as part of the solidarity work with persecuted left-feminist women in Turkey stands as a clear instance of their diaspora politics. With formal opportunities to engage in homeland politics severely restricted due to the inaccessibility of their homeland, the migration experiences of IKD women in exile seem to have shaped the extent of their transnational activities. This phenomenon can be understood as an instance of "forced transnationalism," as conceptualized by Al-Ali, Black, and Koser, which refers to the way migration motivations influence the transnational activities of migrants subjected to forced migration. [836]

The second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists associated with the IKD continued their diasporic engagement in long-distance feminism until 1988, when Turkish political refugees linked to the TKP began to voluntarily return to Turkey. This wave of return was orchestrated as a political campaign to support the unification of *Türkiye İşçi Partisi* (Workers' Party of Turkey, TIP) and the TKP under the name of the *Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi* (United Communist Party of Turkey, TBKP). Following the imprisonment of the TKP and TIP general secretaries, Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargın, who had returned from exile on

[832] Ibid., 4.
[833] Fidan Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "MK Kadın Bürosu Raporu, December 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 54.
[834] Ibid.
[835] Ibid.
[836] Nadje Al-Ali, Richard Black, and Khalid Koser, "Refugees and Transnationalism: The Experience of Bosnians and Eritreans in Europe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27, no. 4 (2001): 615–34.

16 November 1987, to legally establish the TBKP in Turkey, groups of Turkish political refugees from various European countries initiated their return journey.[837]

The possibility of voluntary return to Turkey also emerged as a topic of discussion among IKD members in exile after Turkish courts delivered a verdict of non-persecution at the end of the trial against IKD and its members—a trial that had commenced in the aftermath of the coup.[838] To discuss their potential return to Turkey and the prospects of reestablishing IKD, all former members of IKD's Executive Committee gathered in Amsterdam in March 1988, the first reunion of the former IKD executives in the post-1980 period.[839] It turned out that the participants were divided; half favored the idea of returning to Turkey and reopening IKD, while the other half contended that IKD had already lost its relevance and that reinstating it would be futile.[840] The meeting ended with a consensus that the decision regarding IKD's reopening or closure was not for the present group alone to decide; it was agreed that a follow-up meeting would be organized involving all IKD members abroad, and in the meantime, the opinions of members in Turkey would also be sought.[841] The follow-up meeting was held on 28-29 May 1988 in Essen, West Germany with the participation of around forty former members of IKD abroad.[842] Those present unanimously agreed that no collective actions would be pursued towards reopening IKD, while it was also decided that any former IKD executive or member retained the right to individually initiate the reopening if they so desired.[843] No initiatives were undertaken in the subsequent years, ultimately resulting in IKD's termination. Therefore, the meeting of IKD members on 28-29 May 1988 in Essen marked the practical end of IKD's existence both in Turkey and abroad.

5.4. Debates between TKP's Women's Bureau and TKP's Leadership on the Political Organizing of Turkish Migrant Women

This section focuses on the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminist women's attempts to influence the political organizing of Turkish migrant women, and the ways in which their idea of "independent" women's organizing sparked contention between exiled TKP women and the leadership. Addressing this issue is key to understanding how the second generation worked to reclaim the level of autonomy they had achieved in the IKD prior to

[837] Gökay, "The Communist Party of Turkey," 70.
[838] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 253.
[839] Ibid.;Yüksel Selek, *Özgürlüğün Peşinde* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2017), 151.
[840] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 254.
[841] Ibid.
[842] Selek, *Özgürlüğün Peşinde*, 152; Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 254.
[843] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 254.

1980 and how the second generation of activist would re-envision it under conditions of Turkish migrant left feminism. I discuss this against the overarching assumption in Cold War-influenced historiography of women's movements and, more particularly, in the waves-based feminist narrative in Turkey, that women's independent organizing, as well as their stance in opposition to party and state, are prerequisites for socialist women's activism to qualify as a meaningful political movement—and in their absence, depicting them as women who simply followed "Party orders" without individual agency.

At the 1983 Conference of TKP's Women Activists, the IKD cadres and TKP women in exile formulated three proposals for consideration by the Central Committee of TKP, considered effective means for integrating with the activities of the first generation. The first was that exiled IKD and TKP members could take the initiative to establish new organizations for Turkish migrant women in western European countries, specifically in locales where Turkish migrant workers' organizations existed without separate women's organizations.[844] The second suggestion was to launch a central European publication for Turkish migrant women, which would function as a means to "coordinate [their] work across Europe."[845] The third proposal was the organization of a Europe-wide conference on Turkish migrant women, for which "support from the WIDF could be sought."[846] By pursuing these initiatives, the exiled IKD cadres and TKP women sought to enhance communication, solidarity, and collective action among Turkish migrant women activists. All these three proposals were later combined in the working plan adopted at the first meeting of the Women's Bureau of the TKP held in Copenhagen on 20-21 August 1984 and submitted to the Central Committee of the TKP for its approval.[847]

The TKP's Central Committee, however, declined the first two proposals.[848] Regarding the plan to establish new migrant women's organizations independent from migrant workers' organizations in western Europe, the Central Committee insisted that "the priority should be to strengthen and support the activities of already existing migrant women's organizations, and to work together with The Party branches in the respective countries where women's organizations exist."[849] Similarly, the plan to launch a Europe-wide publication for Turkish migrant women was judged "unnecessary for today."[850] Instead, the Women's Bureau

[844] "TKP Kadın Aktivistler Konferansı Raporu, 1983," 23.
[845] Ibid., 24.
[846] Ibid., 24.
[847] "TKP Merkez Komitesi Kadın Bürosu Çalışma Planı, 1984."
[848] TKP MK Sekreterliği, "TKP MK Kadın Bürosuna, 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 46–48.
[849] Ibid., 46.
[850] Ibid.

was encouraged to "contribute to existing (TKP) publications (…) enriching them with content from women's perspectives and addressing women's issues."[851] The Central Committee of the TKP approved the proposal to organize a European conference/seminar for Turkish migrant women, considering it "appropriate," and determined that this should be the primary task undertaken by the Women's Bureau.[852]

The lack of approval for establishing new migrant women's organizations and launching a Europe-wide publication for Turkish migrant women continued to generate significant discontent among members of TKP's Women's Bureau in subsequent years. The extent of this discontent was evidenced in the ongoing communications between the leadership and the Women's Bureau, with TKP women persistently voicing their criticisms and finding this unjustifiable.[853] In their collective memoir published in 1996, the IKD cadres also cited "the TKP leadership's resistance to and preventing the IKD women from establishing new independent migrant women's organizations in their countries of settlement" as "the most spectacular incident" of their post-1980 activities abroad.[854]

As noted above, the idea for organizing an international conference on Turkish migrant women originated from the TKP's Women's Bureau and was later approved by The Party leadership. Once preparations were underway, the Women's Bureau and the TKP leadership also sought ways to shape the conference's content, particularly the workshops. The internal communication between the Women's Bureau and the TKP leadership shows that one proposed workshop—focusing on organizing Turkish migrant women—drew particular scrutiny from the Central Committee.[855] In the Women's Bureau's initial working agenda for the conference, the workshop description emphasized "the importance of women's self-organizations, and Turkish migrant women's and their organizations' relations with other women's organizations, professional associations, and NGOs."[856] However, the Central Committee asked to remove this section from the description, adding a directive that, at this workshop, "efforts must be made to ensure that no model endorsing women's independent organizing is adopted as a conclusion."[857] The Central Committee's request for the deletion of

[851] Ibid.
[852] Ibid., 47.
[853] Fidan Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "MK Kadın Bürosu Raporu, December 1984"; TKP MK Sekreterliği, "MK Kadın Bürosu'nun 2. ve 3. Toplantılarıyla İlgili Raporlar Hakkında, 1985," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 63–65; F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "Politbüro Tarafından Oluşturulan Komisyonca Istenen Rapordur, 1986," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 82–87.
[854] Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 253.
[855] TKP MK Sekreterliği, "TKP MK Kadın Bürosu'na, 1985," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 68–69.
[856] Ibid., 68.
[857] Ibid., 69.

that section and expressly barring the idea of "women's independent organizing" from the discussions demonstrated an enduring tension with the Women's Bureau—a tension that had persisted since the 1983 Conference of TKP's Women Activists and centered on how, or even whether, Turkish migrant women (including exiled TKP members) should pursue a more independent course.

Zülal Kılıç, serving as secretary for both the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau, was the most vocal critique of the TKP leadership's dismissive and obstructive approach toward the activities of IKD members and TKP women in exile. In 1986, Kılıç presented a report to the Politburo in which she accused the Central Committee of "dismissiveness and a lack of cooperation" concerning the initiatives that IKD and TKP women aimed to pursue, without providing any explanations.[858] A notable example she cited was the rejection of the Women's Bureau's proposal from its first meeting in August 1984 to initiate a campaign promoting the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in Turkey and urging its ratification.[859] Kılıç pointed out that the initiative had instead been "taken up by new feminist movements in Turkey as a more broader petition campaign" in 1986, after Turkey ratified CEDAW in 1985, which demanded its implementation. The predominant wave-based historiography of feminism and women's movements in Turkey later identified this campaign for CEDAW as the first public action of the post-1980 "second wave" feminism.[860] In brief, Kılıç accused the TKP leadership of "not paying attention to the [Women's] Bureau's work," thereby leaving TKP women and IKD members abroad in a predicament and without party support.[861] The contentious relationship between the leadership and the Women's Bureau culminated in the dissolution of the Bureau in 1986 and in Kılıç's estrangement from the TKP in 1987 after the WIDF's 1987 World Congress of Women in Moscow.[862]

This Chapter's Introduction announced as its central aim to challenge the prevailing assumption in the historiography of women's activism in Turkey that posits a definitive rupture, discontinuity, and contrast between the pre- and post-1980 periods. What can we now

[858] F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "Politbüro Tarafından Oluşturulan Komisyonca Istenen Rapordur, 1986," 82.
[859] F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), 82; For the working report adopted at the first meeting of the Women's Bureau of TKP held on 20–21 August 1984 that Kılıç referred, see TKP MK Kadın Bürosu, "TKP Merkez Komitesi Kadın Bürosu Çalışma Planı, 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 39, 41.
[860] Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A Short History"; Stella Ovadia, "Çok İmzalı ve Çok Öznel Bir Kronoloji Denemesi," *Birikim*, March 1994.
[861] F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "Politbüro Tarafından Oluşturulan Komisyonca Istenen Rapordur, 1986," 83.
[862] F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), 83; Zülal Kılıç, Interview by Sercan Çınar.

conclude, having discussed the exiled IKD cadres and TKP women's work abroad as well as their struggles with the TKP leadership?

In recent years, feminist historians have begun to discuss the complexities communist women experienced when navigating internal party politics.[863] Likewise, my work here demonstrates that the Women's Bureau occupied a complex position within The Party's organizational hierarchy, with its members having to argue for their plans and agendas—particularly their work in the political organizing of Turkish migrant women—in front of the TKP's Central Committee. I have shown that the Women's Bureau did not entirely acquiesce to the TKP leadership's continual attempts to disregard the idea of independent organizing for Turkish migrant women in the political endeavors of TKP women in exile. Instead, the Women's Bureau consistently upheld its advocacy for women's independent organizing in its communications and proposals to the Central Committee. Therefore, I conclude that these women were more than reactive agents controlled by state or Party apparatuses, lacking meaningful agency, as a part of western feminist historiography holds;[864] instead; their active advocacy illustrates their agency and ability to critique and, when necessary, oppose The Party leadership's dismissive stance toward the significance of their work.

As discussed in the Introduction of my thesis (Historiography, part 3), during the 1990s, feminist scholarship in Turkey adopted the women-as-Party-tools perspective, together with a wave-based analysis for periodizing feminisms in the Turkish context, wherein post-1980 feminisms were referred to as the "second-wave." In that view, socialist women's activism within mixed-gender organizations did not embody the 'independence' that became "emblematic of the post-1980 feminist movement,"[865] which in turn led to a historiographical neglect of these women's efforts during the post-1980 period.[866]

Within the grand narrative of "second-wave" feminism, the post-1980 period in Turkey was also often characterized as marked by the total defeat of the organized left-wing opposition and its forced withdrawal from the national political scene. Feminist historian Şirin Tekeli, for example, herself a prominent figure in the "second wave" and the first to employ the waves-based analysis in Turkey, wrote that "feminism could come to the forefront only

[863] Zheng, *Finding Women in the State*; Zheng, "'State Feminism'?"; Zsófia Lóránd, *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia: Genders and Sexualities in History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Talaver, "'A Woman Should Be Given the Right to Decide Herself.'"

[864] See for example, Funk, "A Very Tangled Knot"; Mihaela Miroiu, "'Not the Right Moment!' Women and the Politics of Endless Delay in Romania," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 4 (2010): 575–93; Mihaela Miroiu, "Communism Was a State Patriarchy, Not State Feminism," *Aspasia* 1 (2007): 197–201; Barbara Wolfe Jancar, *Women Under Communism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978).

[865] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 735; Berktay, "Has Anything Changed."

[866] Adak and Çağatay, "Revisiting Feminist Historiography," 727.

after the 1980 military coup, which banned all political activity and crushed left-wing movements."[867] Feminist scholars Saime Özçürümez and Feyda Sayan-Cengiz continued to validate this view in their 2011 comparative study of pre- and post-1980 women's movements in Turkey from a "new social movements" perspective.[868] They chose IKD as the representative sample of "the 1970s leftist women's organizations(…) characterized by hierarchy," discussing how "values defining feminism in Turkey" changed from the 1970s into the 1980s and underlining the limitations imposed by the 1980 coup, all starting from the premise that IKD "disappeared entirely after the coup."[869] They further proposed that the new women's movement that emerged in the 1980s "emphasized supporting women's issues by referring to feminism exclusively and underplaying references to the class-based ideology which was perceived to contribute to the elimination of the movement in the first place by the 1980 coup."[870] In this way, feminist scholars relying on the grand narrative of "second-wave" feminism attributed communist women's perceived incapacity to their continued affiliation with a narrow class-based ideology, hierarchical and archaic party structures in the post-1980 era and their status as exiles outside of Turkey.

At the core of this reification of communist women was the imposition of a top-down, static vision on communist women's initiatives within party frameworks and, secondly, an adherence to methodological nationalism that overlooked these women's diasporic engagements as exiles. As illustrated in Section 5.3, IKD and TKP women outside of Turkey were actively seeking ways for Turkish women to participate in transnational initiatives during the latter half of the UN Decade for Women, particularly through their preparations for the 1985 Nairobi Conference—as a direct continuation of their pre-1980 activities. The omission of Turkish left-feminist women's sustained activism during the 1980s—though conducted abroad—from feminist historiography has resulted in a perceived discontinuity or rupture within the feminist historical narrative.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the formation of the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists, situating it within the history of Turkish migrant left-feminism in the 1980s. I have shown how the political developments and climate in Turkey after the 12 September 1980

[867] Tekeli, "Introduction: Women in Turkey in the 1980s," 13.
[868] Özçürümez and Sayan-Cengiz, "On Resilience and Response."
[869] Ibid., 21.
[870] Ibid.

coup influenced the political trajectories of Turkish migrant left feminists in western Europe during that period.

The chapter has advanced three arguments. First and foremost, my historical reconstruction and analysis of the activities of the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists in the post-1980 period reveal that many cadres from the IKD and women affiliated with the TKP, who were forced to flee to western European countries following the 1980 military coup in Turkey, continued their struggle for women's rights and gender equality abroad. As highlighted, the efforts of these second-generation activists during the first half of the 1980s focused on recovery from the demobilization of organized left feminism in Turkey, which was facilitated through the creation of the IKD's Office Abroad and the formation of the Women's Bureau within the TKP.

Secondly, a key factor that contributed to the resilience of IKD cadres and TKP women activists in exile after the 1980 military coup were their enduring relationships with the WIDF at the international level and its national affiliates in the countries where they resettled. Within the transnational advocacy network of the WIDF, exiled IKD cadres and TKP women, were able to constitute themselves as what I defined as solidary intermediaries, by speaking up for the solidarity object—persecuted women in Turkey—and linking them to appropriate solidarity agents, namely left-feminist women of the world.

Finally, in this chapter, I argued that my findings regarding the activities of exiled IKD cadres and TKP women in the post-1980 period have significant implications for our understanding of the history of women's activism in Turkey. Feminist scholars have so far overlooked the transnational activities of these exiled activists, who, through the organizations they established abroad, sought to revitalize mobilization efforts centered on gender equality and opposition to the military dictatorship in Turkey. This omission in feminist historiography about Turkey can be attributed to two reasons. The first is the hegemony of the wave-based periodization, in which left-feminist activists of the 1970s were assumed to have simply disappeared, and "real," i.e. second-wave, "autonomous" feminism in Turkey began after 1980.

The second reason for the state of not knowing about the transnational activities of the exiled IKD cadres and TKP women in the post-1980 period is the prevalence of methodological nationalism within Turkish feminist historiography. Against the constraints imposed by methodological nationalism, adopting a transnational perspective has proven to be essential to recover the historical case of the activism of the exiled left-feminists in the post-1980 period, as I did in this chapter regarding the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's

Women's Bureau. My analysis has revealed that political refugee women who formed the second-generation of Turkish migrant left feminism in fact kept the gender equality struggle going in terms of organizational continuity and agenda building within a diasporic setting. By foregrounding their experiences, this chapter has underscored the necessity of revisiting and revising established historical narratives, which have so far confined post-1980 activism in Turkey to a "second wave," and neglect or trivialize left-feminist efforts.

Chapter 6: Two Generations of Turkish Migrant Left Feminists' International Activities for Migrant and Refugee Women's Rights (1984-1990)

6.1. Introduction

Continuing the story of Turkish migrant left-feminist activism in western Europe in the post-1980 period, this chapter focuses on the international and transnational political activities of Turkish migrant women in the domain of migrant and refugee women's rights, and collaborations between the two generations of activists from the IKD's Office Abroad and TKP's Women's Bureau, HTKB in the Netherlands, GKB and BTKB in West Germany, and the SCWRT in the UK. This chapter contextualizes their joint transnational endeavors to include migrant and refugee women's rights in the UN-led gender equality agenda within the broader backdrop of conclusion of the UN Decade for Women, and places special emphasis on three key international events they organized and/or participated in: the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants, in June 1985 in Amsterdam; the 1985 Third UN World Conference on Women and its NGO Forum in Nairobi; and the Ninth World Congress of Women convened by the WIDF in Moscow from 23 to 27 June 1987.

The existing scholarship on women's activism in Turkey and that on Turkish migrant women's activism in western Europe has overlooked the cooperation between the first and second generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists in the post-1980 period. Two key works on the history of socialist women's activism in Turkey—Emel Akal's 2011 book (based on her 1996 thesis) and Birsen Talay Keşoğlu's 2007 dissertation, along with her subsequent 2010 and 2023 articles—limited their analyses to the activities of IKD and TKP women up to the 1980 coup through the lens of mass mobilization led by IKD between 1975 and 1980.[871].

The few existing studies on Turkish migrant left-feminist activism in western Europe during the 1970s and 1980s—particularly those on HTKB in the Netherlands—have primarily confined their analysis to the host-country contexts of these organizations or, at best, to the homeland-oriented agendas within their transnational efforts. The HTKB in the Netherlands is the best studied Turkish migrant women's organization in western Europe. However, none of them have studied HTKB's international and transnational political activities in the domain of

[871] Emel Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*; Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, "Socialist Women's Organizations in Turkey, 1975-1980" (PhD diss., Bogazici University, 2007); Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, "1970'lerin En Kitlesel Kadın Örgütü"; Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, "İlerici Kadınlar Derneği ve 1970'lerde Türkiye'de Sosyalist Kadınların Politik Mücadelesi," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 351 (2023): 14–19.

migrant and refugee women's rights beyond the Dutch national context.[872] Ece Öztan, a feminist political scientist from Turkey, has been the first to mention the 1985 Amsterdam Conference and Turkish migrant women's involvement at the Nairobi 1985 UN World Conference on Women in her works, which are primarily in Turkish.[873] But she did not explore the systematic and collaborative efforts made by Turkish left-feminist women in western Europe and the actors directly involved, as I will do in this chapter.

The questions I will be asking are: Which international and transnational political activities did Turkish migrant women in western Europe organize in the1980s in the domain of migrant and refugee women's rights; what were the outcomes of their activism; and how did these organizations respond to the end of the Cold War and the demise of state socialism in Europe? My research in this chapter relies primarily on archival sources in Dutch, English and Turkish. These encompass eleven folders containing documents on the preparations and proceedings of the 1985 Amsterdam Conference, housed in the HTKB Archive at the IISH.[874] To delve into HTKB's collaborations with Dutch and other migrant women's groups in the Netherlands leading up to Nairobi, I also drew on other materials in the HTKB Archive.[875] While other scholars have used this same repository, my analysis focuses on less-consulted or previously unexamined documents among the HTKB papers. In addition, I explore documents produced by or concerning the IKD's Office Abroad and the TKP's Women's Bureau, housed in the TUSTAV Archive in Istanbul.[876] These documents offer valuable insights into the international and transnational political initiatives of exiled IKD cadres and TKP women, and their collaborations with the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists in advancing migrant and refugee women's rights in the mid-1980s. To explore Turkish migrant women's participation in the 1987 WIDF Moscow World Congress of Women, I draw extensively on a 1989 book devoted to that event, authored by Tülin Tarakçıoğlu of the GKB in the Ruhr region of West Germany, based on her observations in Moscow; this is a Turkish-language source unique in chronicling the sequence of events at the congress.[877]

[872] Loewenthal, "Er ontbreekt altijd een stuk van de puzzel"; Deekman and Hermans, "Heilig vuur"; Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!"; Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism"; Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution*.
[873] Öztan, "Türkiye Kökenli Göçmen Kadınların Hollanda'daki Örgütlenme Deneyimleri"; Öztan, "Unutulan Bir Göç ve Yurttaşlık Deneyimi"; Öztan, "Göç Bağlamında Yurttaşlık ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet."
[874] Participation in Conferences and Congresses, 1984-1985, Folders 244-254, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[875] Correspondence Concerning and Proceedings of the Third International Women's Conference in Nairobi, 1984-1986, Folder 243, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[876] Archival Fond of Zülal Kılıç, TUSTAV.
[877] Tülin Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi* (Istanbul: Gerçek Sanat Yayınları, 1989).

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section 6.2 examines the 1985 Amsterdam Conference, which I regard as the most important combined initiative of the two generations for Turkish migrant women's rights in the 1980s. I analyze what inspired it, what roles HTKB and the TKP's Women's Bureau played, and how local and transnational factors brought two generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists together around Turkish migrant women's rights at the close of the UN Decade for Women. Section 6.3 explores the participation of a delegation of Turkish migrant left-feminist women at the NGO Forum in Nairobi, part of the UN World Conference on Women that concluded the UN Decade on Women. I examine what issues they discussed, the extent of their partnerships with other migrant and refugee women's organizations formed during the preparatory stages, as well as how they amplified their voices internationally. In Section 6.4, I investigate Turkish migrant left-feminist women's engagement with international left feminism by focusing on the Ninth World Congress of Women, organized by the WIDF in Moscow from June 23 to 27, 1987—the final event in this chapter and illustrating the convergence of both generations. In 6.5, I examine how the post-1987 global political shifts—the TKP's transformation into TBKP in 1988 due to a merger with TIP, the TBKP's subsequent dissolution in 1991 and the conclusion of the Cold War, marked by the collapse of state socialism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991—led to the diminishing of transnational and left-feminist orientations within Turkish migrant women's organizations in the countries I study here and the subsequent phenomenon of the NGOization of feminism. In 6.6, I will answer this chapter's overarching questions of what Turkish migrant women's organizations' activism in this period consisted of, what were its outcomes, and how they responded to 1989/1991.

6.2. The 1985 European Conference on Turkish Woman Migrants in Amsterdam

It would be erroneous to assume that the lives of the first generation of Turkish migrant women in western Europe remained insulated from the repercussions of the 1980 Turkish military coup. The impact of the coup was particularly evident in the immediate imposition of generalized visa requirements for Turkish nationals by countries such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and West Germany, which hosted the largest Turkish migrant communities. The new visa requirements were implemented specifically to curb the influx of asylum seekers from Turkey to Europe, an influx driven by widespread human rights abuses committed by the

military regime in Turkey.[878] The imposition of visa requirements for Turkish nationals in Europe was met with opposition from Turkish migrant women's organizations, including HTKB, which condemned the policy as a "continuation and institutionalization of the racism and discrimination faced by Turkish migrants."[879] HTKB characterized the new visa regulations as an attempt to "separate us from our relatives in Turkey and intimidate us by restricting our freedom."[880] This led to the right to free movement becoming a prominent new agenda item for Turkish migrant women's organizations, who integrated it into their broader advocacy efforts for the rights of Turkish migrant women, together with demands for an independent residence status for married women in western European countries.

The most profound impact of the 1980 coup on Turkish migrant left feminism was the irrevocable altering of the political imagination of the first generation of Turkish migrant women concerning their homeland. During a fundraising campaign launched in March 1980 to support IKD's activities in Turkey, HTKB identified itself as the representative of "[Turkish] women forced to work and live in the Netherlands," and emphatically positioned itself, and by extension Turkish women in the Netherlands, as "an inseparable part of the women's movement in Turkey."[881] However, the 1980 military coup in Turkey dramatically undermined the novel political imagination that had been cultivated by the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists, with the brutal crackdown on the socialist opposition, including IKD, leading to a widespread retreat of revolutionary hopes both for the homeland and abroad.

Between 1981 and 1984, collaboration between the two generations remained minimal, but this changed due to the 1983 Conference of TKP's Women Activists—which designated the struggle for Turkish migrant women's rights as a priority, followed by the formation of the TKP's Women's Bureau in 1984.[882] As discussed in Section 5.4, it was exiled IKD cadres and TKP women who drafted proposals for consideration by the TKP Central Committee, which included the organization of a Europe-wide conference for Turkish migrant women, for which "support from the WIDF could be sought."[883] This proposal ultimately

[878] Zelal Özdemir and Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "Dynamics of Exclusion and Everyday Bordering through Schengen Visas," *Political Geography* 66 (2018): 182.
[879] "Vize Aileleri Bölüyor," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 8 (January 1981): 5.
[880] Ibid.
[881] "Haydi İKD Ile Dayanışmaya!," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 5 (April 1980): 4.
[882] The 1983 Conference of TKP's Women Activists date and location are not specified in the archival sources.
[883] "TKP Kadın Aktivistler Konferansı Raporu, 1983," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 24; TKP MK Sekreterliği, "TKP MK Kadın Bürosuna, 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 47.

materialized as the European Conference on Turkish Woman Migrants, held on 6–8 June 1985 in Amsterdam.

The conference's objectives, as outlined in the preliminary plan, included "gathering detailed information and insights about migrant women, formulating a joint program of demands, and initiating campaigns based on these demands to coordinate efforts among Turkish migrant women in different countries."[884] Furthermore, it was intended that "the documents produced at the conference […] be presented at the upcoming UN Conference in Nairobi in July 1985, thereby contributing to discussions on the issues of migrant women at the international level."[885] While West Germany was named as "the most appropriate place to hold the conference," the preliminary plan concluded that "the best locations for organizing the conference are Sweden, the Netherlands, and Denmark, given the better opportunities available in these countries."[886] In preparation for the European conference, the TKP's Women's Bureau proposed holding national conferences for Turkish migrant women in each host country, from which delegates would be selected to attend the European conference, facilitating a better understanding of the specific demands arising from different national contexts. They also appealed to the TKP's Central Committee to mobilize local party branches abroad in support of this initiative.[887]

From the outset, the Women's Bureau actively sought support and approval for the conference preparations, ensuring that each proposed action aligned with Party directives. The TKP's Central Committee largely approved the conference's objectives and initial plans, recommending Denmark as the venue since it housed the IKD's Office Abroad,[888] but upon its advice, no national conferences were held. The TKP's Women's Bureau held its second meeting on 21–22 December 1984 in Copenhagen, at which they determined the location of the conference as the Netherlands and decided to form a preparatory committee there with HTKB cadres involved.[889] As early as February 1985, the HTKB secured financial and material support from several Dutch institutions to organize the event. This included a subsidy of seven thousand guilders from the Ministry of Culture, Recreation, and Social Work (CRM), free use of facilities from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and the assistance of *Nederlands*

[884] TKP MK Kadın Bürosu, "Avrupa'daki Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınları Konferansı, 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 42.
[885] Ibid., 42.
[886] Ibid.
[887] Ibid., 43–44.
[888] TKP MK Sekreterliği, "TKP MK Kadın Bürosuna, 1984," 47.
[889] Fidan Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "MK Kadın Bürosu Raporu, December 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 51 and 55.

Centrum Buitenlanders (Dutch Center for Foreigners, NCB) for accounting and financial administration.[890]

The organizing of the 1985 Amsterdam Conference was carried out through a tripartite collaboration involving the TKP's Women's Bureau, the IKD's Office Abroad, and the HTKB, with the organizers' involvement in these entities often overlapping rather than being entirely separate. As the initiator of the idea, the TKP's Women's Bureau assumed responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the conference preparations. At its second meeting, in December 1984, four members of the Women's Bureau were appointed to undertake the formation of an initiative committee, decide on its composition, and facilitate communication between the committee and the Women's Bureau.[891] In early February 1985, the conference's "initiator committee" was formed, comprising five women based in the Netherlands—two Dutch and three Turkish.[892] The Dutch members of the committee were Hedy d'Ancona, a prominent feminist activist and social-democratic politician, co-founder of the national feminist magazine *Opzij* in 1972 and its first editor-in-chief, who later served as a Member of the European Parliament and Dutch State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment,[893] and Marijke de Jong-Brink, a feminist academic from the Emancipation Commission at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.[894] The Turkish members were Yasemin Tümer from HTKB, working as a social worker at the Foreign Women's Center in Utrecht, along with Maviye Karaman and Özden Yalım.[895] The committee's diverse composition reflected an intentional blending of political, academic, and grassroots perspectives to effectively grasp the complexities of Turkish migrant women's lives. The detailed information letter attached to the invitation from the Conference's initiator committee pointed out that "the problems of migrant women" had been largely overlooked at previous UN World Conferences on Women, stating that these issues were "not considered at all in the Plan of Action adopted at Mexico City in 1975 and

[890] Yasemin Tümer to Ms. Vigoers at Migrant Policy Department of European Economic Commission, 18 February 1985, Folder 245, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[891] TKP MK Kadın Bürosu, "2. Toplantı Tutanakları, 21 December 1984," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 58.
[892] "Initiator committee" is the term the organizers used. TKP MK Kadın Bürosu, "Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınlar Avrupa Konferansı, 10 February 1985," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 61.
[893] "Geschiedenis - Opzij," Opzij, accessed February 28, 2025, https://www.opzij.nl/over-opzij/geschiedenis/; Initiator Committee, "Information on the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants," 12 February 1985, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[894] Initiator Committee for European Conference for Immigrant Turkish Women, "Information on the European Conference of Turkish Women Migrants."
[895] Ibid.

were only mentioned for the first time in the mid-decade conference in Copenhagen," adding that efforts in this field were "still lacking or inadequate."[896]

The European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants (as conference documents often called it), after months of preparation, convened on Thursday, 6 June 1985, at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam under the slogan "Sesini Yükselt-Raise Your Voice!," with approximately two hundred women in attendance. The conference documentation, prepared and published as a booklet in Turkish by HTKB in 1986, recorded that ninety participants were registered delegates representing Turkish migrant women's organizations from across Europe.[897] West Germany had the highest representation with forty-three delegates (forty delegates from the Federal Republic and three from West Berlin), followed by the Netherlands with thirty-five delegates.[898] Other delegates were from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. While the conference was primarily European in focus, Neşe Benli—representing the Australian Turkish Cultural Association in Melbourne—also attended and her participation was highlighted in the final report of the conference, published shortly after the event in 1985 and available in the *Kadın Hareketi Kitaplığı* (Women's Movement Library) collection at TUSTAV in Istanbul, noting: "one delegate found it worthwhile to use up her savings of the last four years to come all the way from Australia."[899]

There were thirty-eight invited guests, from both the Netherlands and other countries. Among these distinguished attendees were Princess Irene of the Netherlands, and representatives from international organizations, such as the European Migrant Workers' Commission, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and the Preparatory Committee for the Nairobi Conference.[900] It is noteworthy that, despite the absence of a representative from the executive bodies of the WIDF at the conference, the organization still extended its support by sending a greeting letter through its General Secretary, Mirjam Tuominen.[901] The conference also benefited from the contributions of scholars invited as expert participants in workshop discussions. Prominent Turkish feminist

[896] Ibid.
[897] HTKB, *'Sesini Yükselt!' Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınlar Avrupa Konferansı Raporları ve Öneriler* (Amsterdam: HTKB, 1986), 83, Call Number: IISG 1998/1091, IISH.
[898] Ibid.
[899] "Foreword," in *'Raise Your Voice' European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants / 'Sesini Yükselt' Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınlar Avrupa Konferansı* (Amsterdam: Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınlar Avrupa Konferansı, 1985), 8.
[900] "6-8 June 1985 the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants," 1985, Folder 246, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[901] Mirjam Tuominen to HTKB, 4 June 1985, Folder 246, Archive HTKB, IISH.

scholars Deniz Kandiyoti and Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı presented research papers that delved into the socio-cultural and psychological dimensions of migration and its impact on Turkish women.[902]

In the opening address of the conference, initiative committee member Yasemin Tümer welcomed attendees with the proclamation, "Welcome to the first Turkish migrant women's conference in the world!"[903] Similarly, HTKB chair Maviye Karaman emphasized this landmark moment in her speech during the opening session: "This is not the first international conference about the problems of Turkish migrant women. However, it is the first one in which migrant women from Turkey are not just an object of discussion but are actually organizing themselves."[904] Karaman further highlighted the centrality of Turkish women as both the subjects and objects of the conference by distinguishing them from the researchers and experts present. She appealed directly to the delegates, asserting, "It will be, and it should be, you, the distinguished representatives of the Turkish migrants' movement, who will have the ultimate say at this conference."[905] Challenging existing power structures that often marginalized Turkish migrant women in policy discussions and academic research, the conference was the culmination of a decade of political activism and the lived experiences of Turkish migrant left-feminist women in western Europe that coincided with the UN Decade for Women.

As noted earlier, another key aspect of the conference was its function as a foundation for Turkish migrant left-feminists' involvement in the Nairobi Forum. Maviye Karaman stated this explicitly in her opening speech. She informed the audience that the initiative committee had "already completed the necessary formalities to make the voice of the conference heard at the Nairobi Forum."[906] Karaman continued: "A delegation from the Netherlands, representing our conference, will attend the Forum in Nairobi along with the final documents and a video film of the conference.[907] We have also made the necessary arrangements to organize a workshop to serve this purpose, and we are going to realize it."[908] HTKB's distinguished position and organizational capacity as the most active among its counterparts in western

[902] Deniz Kandiyoti's Paper, 7 June 1985, Folder 254, Archive HTKB, IISH; Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, "Dışarıdaki'nin Yabancılaşması," in *'Sesini Yükselt!,'* 58–60.
[903] Yasemin Tümer's Speech, 6 June 1985, Folder 246, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[904] Maviye Karaman's Speech, 6 June 1985, Idem.
[905] Ibid.
[906] Ibid.
[907] I was not able to find or see the video film mentioned by Maviye Karaman in her speech during my research.
[908] Maviye Karaman's Speech.

Europe positioned it as the epicenter of Turkish migrant left-feminism during the first half of the 1980s.

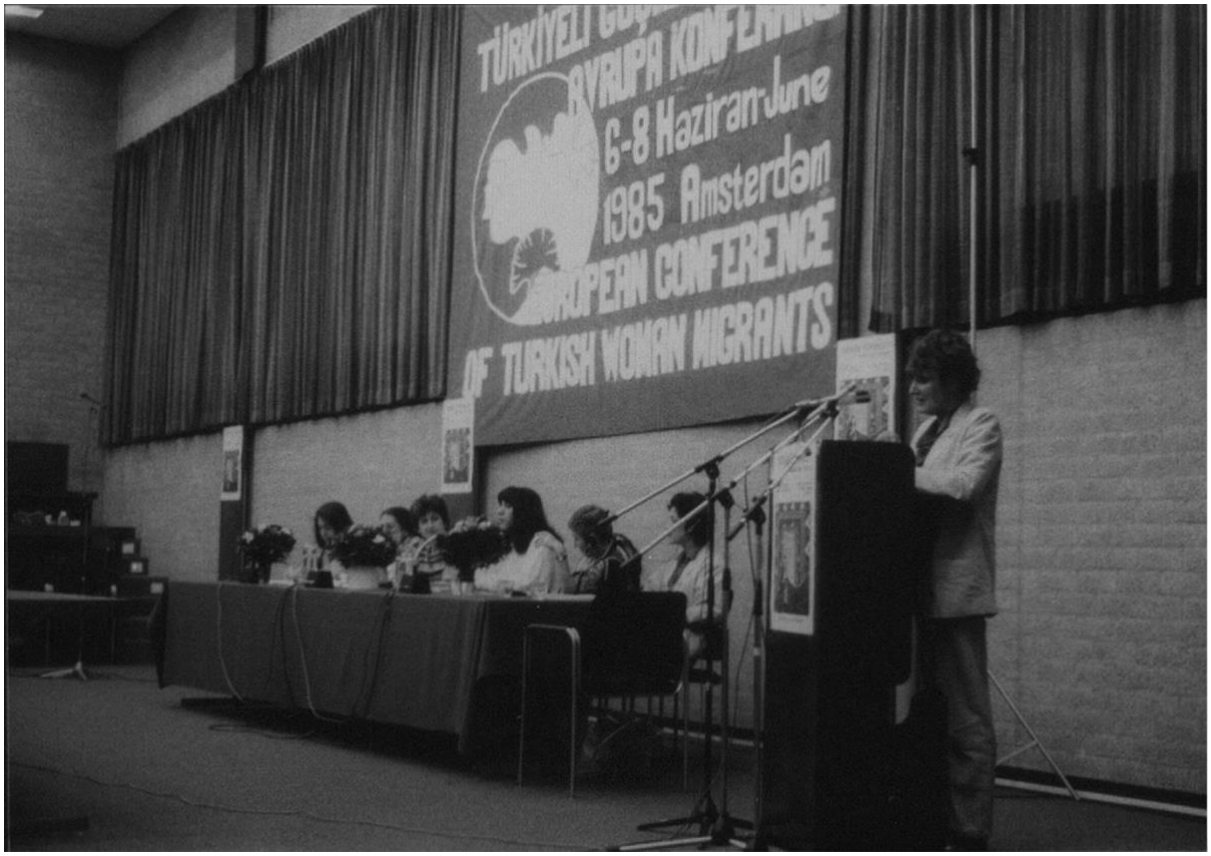

Figure 6.1. *Hedy d'Ancona delivering her opening speech at the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants, with the members of the conference board, from left to right, Rüksan Tuna, Bakiye Beria Onger, Özden Yalım, Ülkü Gürkan-Schneider, Tülay Çınar, 6 June 1985, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Source: Folder 448, Archive HTKB, IISH.*

At the conference's opening session, a seven-member board was elected: Marijke de Jong, Maviye Karaman, Bakiye Beria Onger, Ülkü Gürkan-Schneider, Rüksan Tuna, Tülay Çınar, and chairwoman Özden Yalım. De Jong, Karaman, and Yalım worked alongside Onger—who traveled from Denmark as the last serving president of the IKD—and three delegates from West Germany (Gürkan-Schneider, Tuna, and Çınar).[909] My research has confirmed that three of the board members were affiliated with the TKP; Karaman (chair of the HTKB), Onger (IKD president and member of its Office Abroad), and Gürkan-Schneider (a leading TKP activist in western Europe and founder of *Frankfurt Türk Halkevi* [Turkish People's House in Frankfurt]).[910] In addition to their roles on the official conference board,

[909] Yasemin Tümer's Speech, 2.
[910] Karaman, Interview by Sercan Çınar; Akbulut, "Sunu," in *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 7; Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland,* 25.

correspondence between the TKP's Women's Bureau and the Central Committee reveals that the Women's Bureau members attending the conference remained in session continuously throughout the event, acting as a parallel board.[911] Their mandate was "to closely monitor and deliberate on the conference's content, technical aspects, practical management, and the outcomes of workshops and the conference as a whole."[912] Thus, the TKP's Women's Bureau made a deliberate effort to exert influence over the conference proceedings, ensuring that their ideological perspectives were well represented and that the event's outcomes aligned with their broader political goals.

The core activities of the three-day conference revolved around eight thematic workshops: "Legal Rights and Government Policies," "Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism," "Education," "Employment," "Health," "Organization," "Culture," and "Young Girls." Each workshop commenced with an introductory research paper presented by invited scholars, setting the stage for in-depth discussions. At the conference's conclusion, the discussions from each workshop were compiled into working reports with formulated demands.[913] These working reports in turn formed the foundation for the final conference report and the set of demands agreed upon by the participants. The summaries of the introductory presentations and workshop reports and the full version of the conference report and demands were subsequently translated into English and immediately after the conference published as a book.[914] This publication was meant to be presented during the workshop(s) either organized or attended by the delegation of Turkish migrant left-feminist activists at the Nairobi Forum (see 6.3). Notably, the final conference report in English articulated the social, cultural, and political experiences of Turkish migrants through the concept of "three-fold exploitation and oppression," identifying it as the systemic root of the problems they faced in host countries "as migrants, workers, and women."[915] This formulation echoes HTKB's prior articulation of migrant women's "triple exploitation" based on class, gender, and ethnicity, as discussed in Section 4.4, in a continuity reflecting Turkish migrant left feminism's entanglements with the intellectual and political trajectories of international communism and global left feminism. In addition to addressing issues common to all migrants, the conference's final report highlighted specific problems Turkish migrant women faced. These

[911] TKP MK Sekreterliği, "TKP MK Kadın Bürosu'na, 1985," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 68.
[912] Ibid.
[913] Original versions of these working reports, written in Turkish, are preserved in Folder 254 of the Archive HTKB at the IISH.
[914] 'Raise Your Voice' European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants.
[915] "Final Report/Proposals and Demands," in *'Raise Your Voice' European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants,* 74.

included “dependent legal status, language barriers, insufficient access to education and training,” and “the oppression (stemming from) the patriarchal family system” that often led to “a lonely and isolated life.”[916] The notion of "three-fold oppression and exploitation" was used to frame these issues, situating them within the broader context of “unjust economic and social structure of the societies (Turkish migrant women) live both in their home and host countries.”[917] Additionally, the report criticized “the unfair and anti-democratic world economic order that makes possible the plunder of cheap labor from developing countries.”[918] It also addressed “the mounting arms race and increased arms expenditures in Western European countries and Turkey” as factors that “make the problems of Turkish migrant women heavier with its economic burden.” The conference called for “an end to the arms race and the promotion of détente,” emphasizing that such measures were “of vital importance to the solution of the problems of Turkish migrant women.”

Figure 6.2. *Participants of the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants, 6 June 1985, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Source: Kadınların Birliği, January-March 1986, 2.*

[916] Ibid.
[917] Ibid. The exact quote is as follows: “A considerable part of migrant Turkish womens’ problems is common with the problems of all migrants, with the problems of the working people and women in the host country and with the problems of the peoples of Turkey. But the Turkish migrant women experience these problems even more severely and are subject to a three-fold exploitation as migrants, as workers and as women. They have a dependent legal status, they have language problems, their training and education are insufficient and they cannot make use of information flow and services. Furthermore, they are oppressed within their patriarchal family system, they are discriminated both in individual life and society and they lead a lonely and isolated life.”
[918] Ibid. For the New International Economic Order (NIEO), see Parakash N. Agarwala, *The New International Economic Order: An Overview* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983); Nils Gilman, “The New International Economic Order: A Reintroduction,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 6, no. 1 (2015): 1–16.

Given this analysis, the conference defined their problems from a left-feminist perspective, evident in their critique of capitalist societal structures and their framing of migrant women's issues within the wider context of social injustice. Moreover, the political demands articulated in the final conference report—for a more just economic system and an end to the arms race—set out a clear agenda for Turkish migrant left-feminist women attending the Nairobi UN World Conference on Women.

My second question here was: What role did leftist Turkish women play in organizing the Nairobi Forum and planning workshops on migrant and refugee women, and with whom did they collaborate in this endeavor? As members of the IKD's Office Abroad, IKD and TKP women in exile contributed to the planning of the NGO Forum via the WIDF, which participated in the Planning Committee for NGO Activities in Preparation for Nairobi.[919] As part of these planning activities for the NGO Forum, a pre-conference consultative meeting was held from 22 to 25 October 1984 in Vienna, bringing together 250 delegates, including a WIDF delegation, as reported in *Women of the Whole World*.[920] During this meeting, the Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Women held a session titled "The Situation of Refugee and Migrant Women."[921] Zülal Kılıç, the then General Secretary of IKD's Office Abroad and a political refugee herself, participated in this session as the WIDF representative for migrant and refugee women.[922] The Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Women produced a report on the situation of refugee women and put forth recommendations for the 1985 Nairobi NGO Forum.[923] The Sub-Committee's final report was subsequently translated into Turkish and distributed to delegates prior to the 1985 Amsterdam Conference, serving as the general framework for the conference's discussions.[924] In a 2015 interview I conducted with Zülal Kılıç, she recounted her participation as the WIDF representative in the Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Women, explaining that the committee was composed of "ten to fifteen members from international NGOs."[925] The Sub-Committee was instrumental in organizing

[919] Freda Brown, "The United Nations Decade for Women: The Approaching World Conference," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 3 (1984): 3–4.
[920] "Consultative Meeting in Vienna," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 1 (1985): 8.
[921] Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Women, Report, 1984, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH; "Consultative Meeting in Vienna," 8.
[922] Kılıç, Interview by Sercan Çınar; Arıkan et al., *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*, 253.
[923] Erin K. Baines, "Becoming Visible: Transnational Advocacy and the UN Policy on Refugee Women, 1980-1990," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 21 (2002): 63.
[924] Both the original report of the sub-committee and its Turkish translation are available in the Archive HTKB at the IISH. See Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Women, Report, 1984; "BM Kadın On Yılı 1985 Dünya Konferansı Ön Toplantısı Viyana Uluslararası Merkez, 22-25 Ekim 1984," 1985, Folder 246, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[925] Kılıç, Interview by Sercan Çınar.

workshops at the NGO Forum for migrant and refugee women, during which the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) took on convening roles.[926]

At its second meeting, held on 21–22 December 1984 in Copenhagen, the Women's Bureau of the TKP—which included members from the IKD's Office Abroad—also decided to apply to the Planning Committee for NGO Activities in Preparation for Nairobi to host a workshop on "migrant women's organizing" during the NGO Forum.[927] It was noted that they planned to propose Turkish women for participation as designated "experts" and would request travel allowances on their behalf from the Planning Committee.[928] The women explicitly mentioned as proposed experts were Maviye Karaman, HTKB chair; Akgül Baylav of the Solidarity Committee for Women's Rights in Turkey (SCWRT) in the UK; and Şeyda Talu, a founding member of IKD and a prominent figure in the TKP's Women's Bureau —all of whom were TKP members.[929]

During the first half of 1985, HTKB members in the Netherlands joined exiled IKD and TKP women in planning the NGO Forum in Nairobi, aligning these efforts with organizing the 1985 Amsterdam Conference. They received an official invitation from the Planning Committee for NGO Activities in Preparation for Nairobi to attend the final planning meeting of the Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Women on 10 May 1985 in Geneva.[930] There, HTKB representatives joined the WIDF's refugee representative, Zülal Kılıç, bridging two generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists at the planning of the Nairobi Forum. HTKB documents, including correspondence related to the 1985 Amsterdam Conference, indicate that the NGOs with which HTKB established contact—and continued to engage with afterward towards Nairobi—included the Stockholm-based *Riksförbundet Internationella Föreningar för Invandrarkvinnor* (the Swedish National Federation of Immigrant Women's Associations, RIFFI), the Athens-based Mediterranean Women's Studies Institute (KEGME) and the Paris-based *Collectif Femmes Immigrées* (Immigrant Women Collective, CFI).[931] The principal concern driving the communication between HTKB and

[926] "40 Years of NGO CSW Geneva Advocacy for Women's Rights and Gender Equality" (Geneva: NGO Committee on the Status of Women, Geneva, 2015), 32, https://ngocsw-geneva.ch/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/NGO_CSW_Archives_Report_2015-195.pdf; Baines, "Becoming Visible," 63.
[927] Fidan Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "MK Kadın Bürosu Raporu, December 1984," 55.
[928] Ibid.
[929] Ibid.; Karaman, Interview by Sercan Çınar; Baylav, Interview by Sercan Çınar; Akbulut, "Sunu," in *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 6-7.
[930] Genevieve Camus Jacques and Ruud van Hoogevest, "Planning Committee: NGO Activities for the World Conference of the UN Decade for Women," 12 April 1985, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[931] Assia Haif to HTKB, 21 May 1985, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH; Maviye Karaman to Margarita Deeingos, 21 May 1985, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH; Mira Kakossaios and Isabella Elfwendahl to the

other NGOs engaged in the NGO Forum was exemplified by a letter from RIFFI president Mira Kakossaios to HTKB, advocating for joint efforts in organizing workshops and collaborating on migrant women's issues at Nairobi "to diminish schism."[932] And the 1985 Amsterdam Conference proved to be an essential platform for such cooperation and exchange, evidenced by the participation of international NGO representatives—including RIFFI president Mira Kakossaios from Stockholm and Margarita Deeingos of KEGME from Athens.[933] The participation and networking at the Amsterdam Conference highlight its role as a catalyst for building solidarity and strengthening the collective impact of migrant women's advocacy on the international stage.

6.3. Turkish Migrant Women at the 1985 Nairobi UN Conference

As noted above, except for brief mentions in the works of Öztan and Hendessi, historical research on Turkish women's activism has largely overlooked Turkish migrant left-feminists' participation in the Nairobi UN Conference on Women.[934] The existing literature on Nairobi in the context of Turkey has predominantly addressed Turkey's post-Nairobi engagement with the global gender equality regime, in particular the impetus Nairobi provided for Turkey's eventual ratification of CEDAW in 1985; it has also focused on Nairobi's implications for the interplay between state and feminist grassroots mobilization in the making of gender egalitarian legislation in Turkey.[935] To begin addressing the historiographical gap in our understanding of Turkish women's (and, more specifically, migrant women's) international activism in Nairobi, I will ask: who were the Turkish migrant left feminists in Nairobi? What

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Committee for European Conference of Turkish Women Migrants, 22 May 1985, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH; Mira Kakossaios, Nairobi Forum-85, 30 May 1985, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH. Among these organizations, KEGME contributed to the preparations for the Nairobi Conference by organizing a symposium titled "Mediterranean Women on the Move: The Employment, Health, and Education of Migrant Women" in Delphi from 5–8 April 1984, one of the few events specifically dedicated to addressing migrant women's issues in anticipation of Nairobi, alongside the 1985 Amsterdam Conference. Irene Kamberidou, "World Conference on Women in Nairobi: New Strategies for Women's Studies," *SPOTLIGHT, A Fortnightly Publication for Political Studies, Publication of the Institute of Political Studies (I.P.S)*, no. 17 (February 1, 1985): 8.

[932] Kakossaios, "Nairobi Forum-85."

[933] List of Invited International Organizations, 1985, Folder 244, Archive HTKB, IISH.

[934] Öztan, "Göç Bağlamında Yurttaşlık ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet," 255–56; Hendessi, "Fourteen Thousand Women Meet," 154.

[935] For example, Burcu Özdemir Sarıgil, "Understanding the Localization of International Norms: Women's Human Rights Norms in Turkey" (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, 2018); Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender"; Yakın Ertürk, "Turkey's Modern Paradoxes: Identity Politics, Women's Agency, and Universal Rights," in *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, ed. Myra Marx Ferre and Aili Mari Tripp (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 79–109; Nüket Kardam, *Turkey's Engagement with Global Women's Human Rights* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Nüket Kardam, "The State, Gender Policy, and Social Change: An Analysis from Turkey," in *Color, Class & Country: Experiences of Gender*, ed. Gay Young and Bette J. Dickerson (London: Zed Books, 1994), 152–67; Yeşim Arat, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: The Turkish Case," *Human Rights Review* 3, no. 1 (2001): 27–34.

activities did they undertake, and in which ways did they advance migrant/refugee women's viewpoints in the emerging global gender equality agenda at Nairobi? What was the extent of their involvement, how prominent was their role at the NGO Forum compared to other Turkish women from Turkey, and how did they position themselves vis-à-vis the official Turkish delegation at the UN Conference?

The official UN Conference on Women in Nairobi convened 15–26 July and brought together 1,900 official delegates, comprising more than 1,400 women and over 400 men.[936] The concomitant NGO Forum, which ran 10–19 July, drew about 14,000 NGO representatives (primarily women and some men) to Nairobi—evidence of a dramatic increase in comparison to the earlier UN World Conference Forums in Mexico City (6,000 attendees) and Copenhagen (7,200 attendees).[937] These unprecedented figures "strained hotel facilities and totally surprised the Kenyan government conference hosts and the NGO forum organizers."[938] Most of the Forum participants came from the Third World, making its composition "more representative of the world population than that of the previous conferences in Mexico City and Copenhagen."[939] This broader participation and diversity proved a major strength for Nairobi. "[T]he recognition and acceptance that women have diverse perspectives, issues, and priorities," a marked contrast from Copenhagen, according to Çağatay, Grown, and Santiago, was due in large part to women's groups' intensive preparations for the Nairobi Forum. This happened at a time when "researchers and activists all around the world began to integrate (both analytically and practically) gender, class, and race in more effective ways," leading to the "understanding among women's organizations (particularly those in the First World) that feminism must deal with survival issues if it is to be relevant to women's lives throughout the world."[940] According to Charlotte G. Patton, a US professor of political science, and Margaret Snyder, a US social scientist and the founding director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), this was a defining achievement of the Nairobi Conference and Forum, demonstrating the emergence of a truly global women's movement. In Snyder's words:

[936] Charlotte G. Patton, "Women and Power: The Nairobi Conference, 1985," in *Women, Politics, and the United Nations*, ed. Anne Winslow (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 61.
[937] Patton, "Women and Power," 61; Judith Zinsser, "Untold Stories: The United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985," in *Women and Social Movements International—1840 to Present* (WASI) online archive, ed. Thomas Dublin and Kathryn Sklar, 2012, accessed through https://library.ceu.edu.
[938] Patton, "Women and Power," 61.
[939] Nilüfer Çağatay, Caren Grown, and Aida Santiago, "The Nairobi Women's Conference: Toward a Global Feminism?," *Feminist Studies* 12, no. 2 (1986): 402.
[940] Çağatay, Grown, and Santiago, 403.

"despite, or perhaps because of, the earlier conflicts and confrontations, [Nairobi] witnessed a maturing of the global women's movement."[941]

Many commentators regard the fact that the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (FLS) were adopted by consensus as the Nairobi Conference's most notable success. This consensus was enabled by a new procedure permitting individual governments to record specific reservations about certain paragraphs, rather than rejecting the entire document.[942] According to prominent American feminist activist and scholar Arvonne Fraser, the massive turnout at the NGO Forum and the fact that, at Nairobi the NGO Forum preceded the official UN Conference, "helped create the political will" that enabled a consensus-based endorsement of the FLS, as it "showed the delegates and the world that a mass of women was willing and determined to work toward improvements in the status of women."[943] The FLS served as a blueprint for the global gender equality regime beyond 1985, based on goals set by the conference. As historians Judith Zinsser and Erin Baines have pointed out, a key feature of the FLS was its heightened specificity in conceptualizing women's rights, resulting in new categories and greater recognition of migrant and refugee women's status in at least seven paragraphs, under "areas of special concern" and "the most vulnerable groups."[944] This provided a legitimate foundation for migrant and refugee women's rights advocates to urge the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and host states to integrate gender considerations into policies addressing migrant and refugee women's safety, health, legal status, and economic empowerment.[945]

Turkish migrant left-feminist women in western Europe, who had also been involved in organizing the Nairobi NGO Forum, attended the event as a delegation. A working report from the TKP's Women's Bureau (23 June 1985, Copenhagen) mentions seven delegates—Zülal Kılıç and Ayşe Coşkun (Denmark), and Şeyda Talu, Gönül Dinçer, Maviye Karaman, Özden Yalım, and Yasemin Tümer (the Netherlands)—while *Türkiye Postası*, a weekly newspaper associated with the TKP and published in Europe, subsequently reported nine

[941] Patton, "Women and Power," 65; Margaret Snyder, "Unlikely Godmother: The UN and the Global Women's Movement," in *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, ed. Myra Marx Ferre and Aili Mari Tripp (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 36.
[942] Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 209.
[943] Arvonne S. Fraser, *The U.N. Decade for Women: Documents and Dialogue* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 172.
[944] Judith Zinsser, "From Mexico to Copenhagen to Nairobi: The United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002): 158; Erin K. Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis* (London: Routledge, 2004), 27.
[945] Susan F. Martin, "Gender and the Evolving Refugee Regime," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2010): 114.

delegates, adding two women from the UK.[946] Despite incomplete records on the UK delegates, these two sources confirm that Turkish women from Denmark, the Netherlands, and the UK collectively participated in Nairobi.

Other Turkish feminists also attended both the UN Conference and the NGO Forum in Nairobi. Notably, Tülin Akın, a 24-year-old US-based Turkish economist specializing in gender and development, played a pivotal role in organizing the workshops at the NGO Forum. Serving as the program organizer for the NGO Planning Committee Secretariat in New York, she was tasked with "coordinating all the activity requests and logistics of providing physical facilities for the programme."[947] Akın's contributions were instrumental in the success of the event. In her welcome address at the opening ceremony held at the Kenyatta Conference Centre, Dame Nita Barrow from Barbados, the NGO Forum chair, introduced Akın with high praise: "I would like everyone to offer a round of applause for the young woman I am about to introduce, as she is one of the individuals who contributed most significantly to the success of this Forum. She organized, arranged, and supervised the entire program for this ten-day event."[948]

Additionally, Turkish journalist Zeynep Oral was part of an international delegation the African Federation of Women Journalists had organized and funded through donor support. Oral wrote a book that provides the most detailed account of the events in Nairobi available in Turkish.[949] It includes an interview with Tülin Akın, who shared her experiences organizing the Forum and coordinating the workshops, including the fact that between January and the end of April 1985, she "received around 1,200 workshop proposals, but none were submitted by individual women or NGOs from Turkey."[950] By contrast, Akın received "numerous proposals from Turkish migrant women living abroad," which she found "surprising."[951] Despite not being involved in the organization of workshops, a distinguished delegation of Turkish women scholars was present at the NGO Forum. Among them were Mübeccel Kıray, a renowned sociologist and former member of the TKP, who served twenty

[946] TKP MK Kadın Bürosu, "MK Kadın Bürosu Raporu, 23 June 1985," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 70–71; "Dünya Kadınları BM Kadın Onyılının Sonunda Nairobi'de Toplandılar," *Türkiye Postası*, no. 1 (August 9, 1985): 6.
[947] *Forum '85: Final Report: Nairobi, Kenya* (New York, NY: Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. NGO Planning Committee, 1985), WASI online archive, 16.
[948] Quoted in Zeynep Oral, *Kadın Olmak* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1986), 39–40.
[949] Ibid.
[950] Ibid., 43.
[951] Ibid., 43.

months in prison during the well-known 1951 Trial of the TKP[952]; Yakut Irmak, a social scientist specializing in public health; Yeşim Arat, a pioneering feminist political scientist who played a foundational role in the establishment of women's and gender studies as an academic discipline in Turkey; and Nilüfer Çağatay, a notable name in the field of Marxist-feminist economics.[953]

The Nairobi Forum's relevance for making migrant and refugee women visible was evident in the scale of workshops and discussions: out of a total of 1,198 workshops on diverse themes, 4.9 percent focused specifically on migrant and refugee women's issues and rights advocacy.[954] Among these was a workshop on July 17 that appeared in the workshop program as "Self-Organization of Migrant Women" and was credited to the "Organization of Turkish Women in Holland."[955] During this session, they presented their findings on the challenges faced by Turkish migrants living in Europe, drawing on the final report of the Amsterdam Conference.[956] Unfortunately, the workshop's significance was overshadowed by logistical challenges and resulting frustration on the side of Turkish migrant women, as expressed by Özden Yalım and Yasemin Tümer in a letter published in the Forum's daily newspaper FORUM '85.[957] Yalım and Tümer complained that they "have worked as hell to put out the conclusions (…) formulated [at the Amsterdam] conference to bring in the Forum in a visible form," yet their allocated "time was cut half" and the workshop "was placed in a distant impossible spot which did not enable the potential participants to come by."[958] They added that "this is not new to us," even though they had hoped "things would be somehow different in the Forum '85 as the first Forum to be attended by migrant women themselves."[959]

Turkish migrant left-feminist women also actively participated in organizing the sessions titled "Women and Peace in the Mediterranean" and "Government Policies Concerning

[952] For the 1951 Trial of the TKP, see Gökay, "The Communist Party of Turkey," 65; Özgür Mutlu Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 132–33.
[953] "Dünya Kadınları BM Kadın Onyılının Sonunda Nairobi'de Toplandılar," 6. Nilüfer Çağatay further distinguished herself by co-authoring a commentary article on the Nairobi Conference for the academic journal *Feminist Studies*. Çağatay, Grown, and Santiago, "The Nairobi Women's Conference."
[954] *Forum '85: Final Report: Nairobi, Kenya*, 24; Hendessi, "Fourteen Thousand Women Meet," 154.
[955] *Forum '85: The 1985 Non-Governmental World Meeting for Women, Nairobi, Kenya. Workshop Programme, July 15-19,* 1985, WASI online archive, 36.
[956] Özden Kutluer-Yalım, "Türkiye Göçmen Kadınları Avrupa Konferansı'ndan Nairobi Dünya Kadınlar Konferansı'na...," in *"Sesini Yükselt!" Türkiyeli Göçmen Kadınlar Avrupa Konferansı Raporları ve Öneriler*, by Konferans Girişim Komitesi adına HTKB (Amsterdam: HTKB, 1986), 101.
[957] Ozden Kutluer and Yasemin Tumer, "Migrant Women," *FORUM '85*, July 23, 1985.
[958] Ibid., 5.
[959] Ibid.

Migrant Women in Scandinavia."[960] They did this in collaboration with other migrant and refugee women's organizations with whom they had established connections during the preparatory phase, such as RIFFI from Sweden, Women's Group of INDSam, a Danish umbrella organization for migrants and refugees, KEGME from Greece, CFI from France.[961]

Figure 6.3*. Turkish migrant women's invitation displayed at a workshop notice board during the Nairobi NGO Forum. The flyer that I highlighted reads "Migrant Women Invite," advertising three July 17 workshops at Chiromo Campus BLT-A: (1) Government Policies Concerning Migrant Women (14:00–15:30, organized by IND-sam, a migrant women's group in Denmark); (2) Self-Organization of Migrant Women (16:00–17:30, organized by the European Conference of Turkish Migrant Women/Union of Turkish Women in the Netherlands); and (3) Migrant Women, RIFFI/IWO: Future Strategies for a Future without Atomization (18:00–19:30). Photo by Anne S. Walker, 1985. Source: WASI online archive.*

Turkish left-feminist women at Nairobi, in their ongoing advocacy for migrant and refugee women's rights, emphasized the importance of peace, persistently urging for greater attention to disarmament and the ending of regional conflicts—themes that were major undercurrents at Nairobi and epitomized by the success of the so-called Peace Tent at the

[960] "Dünya Kadınları BM Kadın Onyılının Sonunda Nairobi'de Toplandılar," 6. The primary sources I was able to find regarding the delegation of Turkish left-feminist women at the Nairobi Forum do not specify which of the seven women named above participated wherein; therefore, I refer to them collectively as Turkish migrant left-feminist women without naming individuals.
[961] Özden Kutluer-Yalım, "Türkiye Göçmen Kadınları Avrupa Konferansı'ndan Nairobi Dünya Kadınlar Konferansı'na...," 100.

NGO Forum.[962] They also concentrated on linking these global issues to their homeland concerns, as part of their transnational agenda. For this, leveraging the vibrant atmosphere and women's crowd gathered around the Peace Tent, they amplified the voices of persecuted women peace activists in Turkey and sought to mobilize international attention and action.[963] As part of these efforts, they also initiated a petition calling for the release of Reha İsvan, the imprisoned vice president of *Barış Derneği* (the Peace Association) in Turkey I mentioned in Section 5.3.[964] The petition received substantial backing, with approximately a thousand women signing it during their visits to the Peace Tent. Among the signatories were notable activists such as Angela Davis, Betty Friedan, Hortensia Bussi de Allende, and Bella Abzug, a prominent US feminist and former congresswoman.

Mandan Hendessi, a member of a "Migrant, Immigrant and Refugee Women's delegation from Britain" in Nairobi, described a coalition of women campaigning for an end to the arms race, which she termed the "peace contingent."[965] She listed the IKD among the organizations supporting this contingent, alongside "the WIDF, the Democratic Leagues of Finnish, U.S., Swedish, and German Women, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the Democratic Organization of Iranian [Women] and [the Democratic Organization of] Afghan Women." Despite her skepticism—she found their "emphasis on the condemnation of the US as the one and only world imperialist power" to be "very controversial" and noted that "all of [them] had one important thing in common, and that was their affiliation to various communist (Soviet-backed) parties" [966]—Hendessi's account shows that Turkish left-feminist women, whom she referred to as the women of the IKD, achieved a notable degree of visibility at the NGO Forum, as she included them among notable left-feminist women's organizations.

Another dimension of the Nairobi Conference, including its NGO Forum, for Turkish migrant left-feminist women was their contentious relationship with the official Turkish delegation at the UN Conference. Led by a man, Hüseyin Çelem, Turkey's Ambassador to Kenya, the official delegation included four women: Sina Baydur, a diplomat; İlhan Dülger, a bureaucrat from the State Planning Organization; and two MPs, İmren Aykut of the military-backed Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP) and Göksel Kalaycıoğlu of the center-right

[962] "Eşitlik, İlerleme, Barış: NAIROBI 1985," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 18 (March 1986): 5; Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 210.
[963] "Dünya Kadınları BM Kadın Onyılının Sonunda Nairobi'de Toplandılar," 6.
[964] Ibid.
[965] "Fourteen Thousand Women Meet," 155.
[966] Ibid.

Motherland Party (ANAP).[967] The coverage of the Nairobi Conference and NGO Forum in the TKP-associated *Türkiye Postası* suggests that Turkish left-feminist women in Nairobi held unfavorable views of the official Turkish delegation. Its report of 9 August 1985, which claimed to be based on accounts of Turkish left-feminist women in Nairobi, described the official Turkish delegation as women who "are not even remotely interested in women's issues in Turkey, and in fact, supporters of decisions and practices that trample on women's and human rights."[968] The official delegation members were seen as emissaries of the authoritarian government and were believed to be present in Nairobi to defend or legitimize its policies. Even more, they were accused also of "being primarily occupied with taking photographs of and obtaining the names of progressive women participating the Forum."[969]

A significant point of dispute concerned the official Turkish delegation's promotion of the country's foreign policy towards Greece and Cyprus. Since 1974, Turkish left-feminists within IKD in Turkey and ATKF in western Europe had taken a clear position against the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus; they advocated for a peaceful solution for the Cyprus conflict based on a unified Cyprus as an independent, sovereign and non-aligned state with its territory free of foreign military bases and troops, including Turkish.[970] In the second half of the 1970s, the IKD collaborated with WIDF member organizations from Cyprus and Greece—the Federation of Greek Women (OGE) and the Pancyprian Federation of Women's Organizations (POGO) in supporting a unified, independent Cyprus. Central to their criticism of the official Turkish delegation in Nairobi was its inclusion of Latife Bilgen, who was presented as a representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)—a de facto state proclaimed after the 1974 invasion and recognized only by Turkey.[971] Her involvement in the NGO Forum culminated in one of its most heated incidents. Bilgen hosted a session titled "Cyprus: A Puzzle," during which she screened a film that depicted Turkish-occupied

[967] Oral, *Kadın Olmak*, 119. İmren Aykut would later play a pivotal role in Turkey's official engagement with the global gender equality regime, which started in 1985 with Turkey signing and ratifying CEDAW post-Nairobi, and continued into the 1990s. İmren Aykut, who had previously been associated with the military-backed Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP), joined the center-right ANAP after the Nairobi Conference. In 1987, she became Turkey's first female Minister of Labor and established *Kadına Yönelik Politikalar Danışma Kurulu* (Advisory Board for Policies Regarding Women) to promote gender awareness in public policy. This board evolved into the General Directorate of Women's Status and Problems (KSSGM) in 1990, placed under the Prime Ministry. As Selin Çağatay has highlighted, the KSSGM became a crucial platform in the 1990s for egalitarian and Kemalist feminists to lobby for gender equality, achieving notable successes. Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender," 209.

[968] "Dünya Kadınları BM Kadın Onyılının Sonunda Nairobi'de Toplandılar," *Türkiye Postası*, no. 1 (August 9, 1985): 6.

[969] Ibid.

[970] Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey," 87.

[971] "Dünya Kadınları BM Kadın Onyılının Sonunda Nairobi'de Toplandılar," 6.

Northern Cyprus favorably, even as "the best place on earth," in the words of Turkish journalist Zeynep Oral.[972] About forty minutes into the presentation, Greek Cypriot women and participants from Greece denounced the film as "a propaganda movie" and demanded its cessation.[973] They contended that "government propaganda [was] inappropriate for the Forum, which [was] intended for NGOs and individuals to engage in dialogue without government interference."[974] The situation swiftly escalated into what Oral described as a verbal brawl and physical confrontation between members of the official Turkish delegation and the protesting attendees. According to the Turkish left-feminist women involved, the official Turkish delegation's actions "incited enmity among women from Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey at a conference whose aim was to bring together the women of the world."[975]

Given their antagonistic relationship with the Turkish government and its delegation at the Nairobi UN Conference, Turkish migrant left-feminist women relied on their connections with other European delegations to have their voices heard at the official conference. As reported in HTKB's magazine *Kadınların Birliği*, the final report of the Amsterdam Conference and the demands formulated therein were submitted to the official conference discussions on migrant and refugee women through the Dutch delegation.[976]

The concerted efforts of migrant and refugee women's groups at the Nairobi Forum—including Turkish migrant left-feminists—to influence and shape international discourses, policies, and politics for the greater recognition and inclusion of migrant and refugee women's rights found tangible expression in the final declaration adopted at the conference, the FLS, which featured at least seven paragraphs dedicated to migrant women, specifically in Paragraphs 300 and 301.[977] The document acknowledged that migrant women face "double discrimination as women and as migrants," urging host governments to provide special attention in matters such as "protection and maintenance of family unity, employment opportunities and equal pay, equal conditions of work, health care, [and] benefits... in accordance with the existing social security rights in the host country," as well as addressing

[972] Oral, *Kadın Olmak*, 108–9.
[973] Ibid., 109.
[974] Ibid.
[975] "Dünya Kadınları BM Kadın Onyılının Sonunda Nairobi'de Toplandılar," 6.
[976] "Eşitlik, İlerleme, Barış: NAIROBI 1985," 5. They managed to do so by bringing copies of the final report from the 1985 Amsterdam Conference to Nairobi, submitting it to the official Dutch delegation, which helped introduce their demands into the conference debates.
[977] Martin, "Gender and the Evolving Refugee Regime," 114; Linda Basch and Gail Lerner, "'As a Woman I Have No Country. My Country Is the Whole World': The Spirit of Nairobi and the UN Decade for Women.," *Migration World Review*, no. 14 (1986): 1–2; Shirley Hune, "Migrant Women in the Context of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families," *The International Migration Review* 25, no. 4 (1991): 804.

"racial and other forms of discrimination."[978] Additionally, the FLS urgently called for the conclusion of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, a comprehensive UN treaty that was signed in December 1990.[979] Alongside these achievements, the Nairobi Conference marked a pivotal moment by acknowledging women refugees as a specific migrant category for the first time.[980]

Turkish migrant left-feminist women's involvement was not confined to the Forum's events; it also included significant contributions during the preparatory phase. As we have seen, Zülal Kılıç was WIDF representative in the Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Women, which was the central planning body for the NGO Forum in the shaping of the agenda for migrant and refugee women's rights. Özden Yalım belonged to the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists, was a prominent member of HTKB and had been from at the forefront of advocating for Turkish migrant women's rights in the Netherlands since the mid-1970s. [981]Their involvement in the Turkish migrant women's delegation at Nairobi illustrates how the elevated engagement of Turkish left-feminist women was facilitated by the convergence of pioneering activists from different generations and migration backgrounds, united by common ideological and political commitments. As a result, the Nairobi Conference and Forum stood as the most prolific moment in Turkish migrant left-feminist women's international initiatives in the post-1980 context.

In brief, the year 1985 marked a pivotal moment for Turkish migrant left feminism, characterized by the 1985 Amsterdam Conference and the Nairobi Conference and NGO Forum. The TKP's Women's Bureau at its fifth meeting, held in the summer of 1985, proposed that the HTKB become the hub of a communicative network to be established in Europe, recognizing "the significant work undertaken by comrades in the Netherlands and HTKB members and the proven organizational capacity demonstrated by them in organizing the 1985 Amsterdam Conference and preparing for the NGO Forum in Nairobi."[982] In 1985, the role of the HTKB as a pivotal actor in the struggle for Turkish migrant women's rights was also recognized within the Dutch women's movement. On 13 December 1985, Maviye

[978] United Nations, *The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* (New York: United Nations, 1985).
[979] Hune, "Migrant Women in the Context of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families," 807.
[980] Jessica M. Frazier and Johanna Leinonen, "Women's Migration and Transnational Solidarity in the Twentieth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Global Migrations: Volume 2: Migrations, 1800–Present*, ed. Madeline Y. Hsu and Marcelo J. Borges, vol. 2, The Cambridge History of Global Migrations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 398.
[981] Interview with Özden Yalım as part of the Oral History Project Levensverhalen, by Gülay Orhan, 2002, https://imagineic.openbeelden.nl/media/175334/Levensverhalen_Kutluer.nl.
[982] TKP MK Kadın Bürosu, 70-71.

Karaman, the HTKB chair, received the *Harriët Freezerring* award from *Opzij*, the leading Dutch feminist monthly.[983] It was the first time that this award went to a Turkish migrant woman; Karaman received it for her "selfless commitment to women and her awareness-raising and emancipating influence on Turkish women in the Netherlands."[984]

My findings here enrich our understanding of the history of migrant women's activism in the UN during the Decade for Women, particularly regarding migrant and refugee women's rights. Their issues gained new visibility in international discussions around women's rights and ultimately found tangible expression in the Nairobi Conference's FLS, the final declaration adopted by the conference. Turkish migrant left-feminist women's role in this process cannot be overestimated, as they effectively collaborated with other migrant and refugee women's organizations they had connected with during the preparatory phase for the Forum, to amplify migrant and refugee women's voices in an international platform to ensure their voices were heard.

6.4. Turkish Migrant Women at the 1987 WIDF World Congress of Women in Moscow

The World Congress of Women convened by the WIDF in Moscow from 23–27 June 1987 highlighted the sustained transnational engagement of Turkish migrant left feminists with global left feminism. Under the theme "Toward 2000—Without Nuclear Weapons: For Peace, Equality, Development," the congress attracted 2,823 women delegates from 154 countries, making it the largest gathering since the WIDF's inception at the 1945 Paris Congress.[985] The 1987 Moscow Congress, despite being the largest of the nine WIDF Congresses convened since 1945, has not been the focus of significant scholarly inquiry—nor have the WIDF's post-Nairobi activities during the second half of the 1980s.[986] This WIDF lacuna extends to

[983] Gaby Van Der Mee, "Turkse Feministe Maviye Karaman Krijgt Harriët Freezerring," *De Waarheid*, December 14, 1985, 6. The award is named after Harriët Freezer, a feminist writer and member of *Opzij*'s editorial team until her death in 1977.
[984] "Freezerring," *Trouw*, December 14, 1985, 4.
[985] "Women from All over the World in Dialogue," *Women of the Whole World*, no. 3 (1987): 2.
[986] One possible explanation is its relatively recency within the WIDF's chronology, thus, it has not yet attracted robust historical scrutiny. Within the broader historiography of the WIDF, several congresses have been analyzed to varying degrees: Francisca de Haan has examined its earlier years alongside the 1953 Copenhagen and 1963 Moscow Congresses, Melanie Ilic has provided some analysis of the 1963 Moscow and 1969 Helsinki Congresses, and Chiara Bonfiglioli and Wendy Pojmann have looked into the 1963 Moscow Congress. Anna Kadnikova's 2011 master's thesis also has undertaken a relatively comprehensive exploration of the 1963 Moscow Congress, yet overall, most WIDF Congresses remain insufficiently analyzed in the existing scholarship, with the notable exception of the 1975 East Berlin Congress, which Celia Donert, Lisa Milner, and Lea Börgerding have written about in more detail. De Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation; Francisca de Haan, "Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-Ae, and Claudia Jones: Rethinking Transnational Feminism and International Politics," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 174–89; de Haan, "The

Turkish left-feminist women's transnational engagements with the WIDF, a subject left unexamined aside from my 2023 study of the IKD's relations with the WIDF between 1974 and 1979.[987] Moreover, Turkish women's participation in the WIDF Congresses during the Cold War remains virtually unknown.

Addressing some of this void, this section briefly investigates the 1987 Congress with an emphasis on Turkish migrant left-feminist women from western Europe, examining what roles and activities they undertook, and the specific issues they prioritized in their advocacy. My objective here is to broaden our understanding of the WIDF's history through a transnational lens, moving away from the methodological nationalism that tends to take nation-states and national WIDF organizations as given. Such tendency, tied to the configurations of citizenship regimes, has often led to the marginalization of migrant and refugee women's contributions international left feminism and has understated the WIDF's genuinely transnational character.

Notably, the 1987 Moscow Congress featured substantial participation from Turkish women, with twenty-four delegates—the highest number since Turkish women's initial involvement with the WIDF in the 1950s. Among these delegates was Tülin Tarakçıoğlu, a prominent member of GKB in the Ruhr Region of West Germany since its founding in 1975, who, as mentioned above, authored a book about the congress, documenting her personal experiences and reflections.[988]

Tülin Tarakçıoğlu's book provides important insights into the preparations in West Germany for the 1987 Moscow Congress. A national preparatory committee was formed, led by Florence Hervé of the DFI—the WIDF's West German affiliate—and Dodo van Randenborgh, president of the West German chapter of the WILPF, whose mission was to

Global Left-Feminist 1960s"; Ilic Melanie, "Soviet Women, Cultural Exchange and the Women's International Democratic Federation," in *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, ed. Sari Autio and Katalin Miklóssy (New York: Routledge, 2011), 157–64; Bonfiglioli, "Revolutionary Networks"; Wendy Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944-1968* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013). Anna Kadnikova, "The Women's International Democratic Federation World Congress of Women, Moscow, 1963: Women's Rights and World Politics during the Cold War" (master's thesis, Central European University, 2011); Celia Donert, "Showcasing the Welfare Dictatorship: International Women's Year and the Weltkongress Der Frauen, East Berlin 1975," in *Sozialistische Staatlichkeit*, ed. Joachin Von Puttkamer and Jana Ostercamp (München: Oldenbourg, 2012), 143–60; Donert, "Whose Utopia?"; Milner, "'The Most Important Event in IWY'"; Lea Börgerding, "Der Kalte Krieg im Internationalen Jahr der Frau: Westdeutsche Fraueninitiativen und der Weltkongress in Ost-Berlin," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 69, no. 2 (2021): 109–24; Lea Börgerding, "Staging Emancipation and Its Limits: East German Cultural Diplomacy, the German Democratic Women's League, and the 1975 World Congress of Women in East Berlin," *Women's History Review* 34, no. 1 (2023): 8–26.

[987] Çınar, "A Transnational History of Left Feminism in Turkey."

[988] Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi*.

organize the West German delegation for the congress.[989] In January 1987, the committee launched a petition to support and disseminate the WIDF's call for participation, and Tarakçıoğlu was among the first to sign,. From its inception, the committee sought to ensure the inclusion of Turkish migrant women in the West German delegation to the Moscow Congress, and for this, Hervé and Van Randenborgh invited Tarakçıoğlu to join, acknowledging her "sustained efforts since 1975 as a member of the Turkish migrant women's movement."[990] Additionally, Nur Erkılıç, a Turkish migrant activist from Munich, was part of the West German delegation, representing FIDEF, the TKP-affiliated federation for Turkish left-wing migrant workers in West Germany, of which the GKB was a member.[991]

The West German delegation totaled ninety-nine women, making it the third-largest group at the Moscow Congress alongside the UK, after the US and Canada, and included two Turkish migrant women.[992] The IKD assumed the mandate of organizing Turkish women's participation from both within Turkey and abroad but was only able to organize a delegation composed of Turkish migrant left-feminist women. This group consisted of former IKD executives who had become political refugees after the coup, representing the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminist activists. Among them were Bakiye Beria Önger, Zülal Kılıç, and Ayşe Coşkun from Denmark; Şeyda Talu and Semra Ulusoy from the Netherlands; Yüksel Selek, Bilge Gömüç, Berin Uyar, and Filiz Kardam from West Germany; along with Akgül Baylav and Ayşe Bircan from the UK.[993] Additionally, first- generation activists joined the delegation as representatives of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations: Maviye Karaman of the HTKB from the Netherlands, Azize Tank of the BTKB from West Berlin, and Tülin Tarakçıoğlu of the GKB from West Germany.[994]

Although the IKD was unable to include left-feminist activist women from Turkey in its delegation, the 1987 Moscow Congress did see participation from women based in Turkey with diverse affiliations, from celebrities to the representatives of international organizations. These included Hale Soygazi, a famous Turkish actress; Oya Köymen, a distinguished professor of economics and historian; writers and journalists including Işıl Özgentürk, Nurten Tunç, and Füsun Baysan; and Serim Timur from UNESCO and Nüzhet Mengü, an honorary

[989] Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi*, 37.
[990] Ibid.
[991] Ibid., 38.
[992] *Toward 2000-Without Nuclear Weapons! For Peace, Equality, Development, Moscow, June 23-27, 1987: Convened by the Women's International Democratic Federation* (Berlin: WIDF, 1987), accessed through WASI.
[993] "154 Ülkeden 2800 Kadın Moskova'da Biraraya Geldi," *Türkiye Postası*, no. 113 (July 17, 1987): 7.
[994] Ibid.

vice president of the International Council of Women (ICW).[995] While most of the seven women from Turkey at the 1987 Moscow Congress were publicly known left-leaning figures, the participation of Nüzhet Mengü is particularly striking given her anti-WIDF stance during the 1960s. In her 2017 dissertation, Selin Çağatay referenced a presentation Mengü gave at the Kemalist women's Association for the Research and Study of Women's Social Life (KASAID) about her attendance at the seventeenth conference of the ICW, held in 1963 in Washington, D.C. Mengü "celebrated" the ICW for being "apolitical" and contrasted it with the WIDF, which she disapproved of for pursuing political aims in its activism.[996] Çağatay interpreted Mengü's anti-WIDF remarks as indicative of how Kemalist women's alliances with western women's organizations "also meant adopting an anti-communist agenda."[997] Although Çağatay does not mention Mengü's affiliation or formal position within the ICW in 1987, both Tarakçıoğlu in her book and the report on the Moscow Congress published in *Türkiye Postası* referred to her as an honorary vice president of the ICW.[998] Her participation in 1987 suggests that her strong anti-WIDF sentiments of the 1960s had dissipated by the late 1980s, but further research would be needed on this.

Similar to the situation in Nairobi, the majority of Turkish delegates at Moscow were migrant activists from western Europe—seventeen out of twenty-four women.[999] And again, Turkish migrant women were distinguished by their activist backgrounds and being present at the congress as left-feminist activists with their continued engagement in women's grassroots political organizing, whereas the attendees from Turkey were generally less involved in activism and more associated with professional or institutional backgrounds. Their ability to mobilize and actively participate in international platforms with a strong transnational orientation allowed them to support and amplify the claims of the women's movement in their homeland, despite the challenges faced there, while also advocating for the rights of Turkish migrant women in their host countries.

Turkish left-feminist women's dual focus is evident in commissions and discussions during the 1987 Moscow Congress. Migrant members of the Turkish delegation actively participated in the commission on "The Role and Cooperation of NGOs in Implementing the Forward-Looking Strategies Adopted in Nairobi," where they voiced criticisms against the

[995] Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi*, 38.
[996] Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender," 133.
[997] Ibid.
[998] Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi*, 38; "154 Ülkeden 2800 Kadın Moskova'da Biraraya Geldi," 7.
[999] Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi*, 38.

Turkish government's reluctance to implement CEDAW, which it had ratified in 1985.[1000] In two sessions dedicated to assessing the implementation of CEDAW by ratifying governments, Akgül Baylav from the UK delivered presentations highlighting Turkey's failure to make the necessary legislative and practical changes in its Civil Code and labor laws to ensure gender equality in compliance with the Convention. Baylav also brought attention to the *Kadınlar Dilekçesi* (Women's Petition), initiated by feminists in Turkey demanding the implementation of CEDAW, signed by around three thousand women and submitted to the Turkish Parliament on 7 March 1987. Feminist historiography that relies on a waves-based analysis often cites this petition as the first public manifestation of "second wave feminism" in Turkey, to posit a clear rupture and contrast between the agendas of Turkish women's activism in the pre-1980 period—associated with socialist women's activism—and the post-1980 period, marked by the emergence of "second wave feminism." However, Turkish migrant left-feminist women's efforts to publicize and garner support for feminists' initiatives in Turkey in international platforms as in the case of the 1987 Moscow Congress highlights the continuities and overlapping agendas of Turkish women's activism across generations, national borders and ideological backgrounds that contributed to building a gender equality agenda and raised feminist demands.

During the sessions of the commission titled "Women in Society" at the Moscow Congress, Turkish migrant women also raised the problems faced by women living in Turkey. They emphasized that while women in Turkey were experiencing "double oppression" based on their gender and class, Kurdish women were subjected to "triple oppression" due to their ethnic identity.[1001] Historically, from the mid-1920s until the end of the 1980s, the Turkish state had denied the very existence of the Kurds, and any claims for recognition were harshly suppressed.[1002] The Turkish women referred to this systemic marginalization as the "national oppression" to which Kurds were subjected in Turkey.[1003] This was likely the first occasion at a WIDF congress where the status of Kurdish women in Turkey was addressed from a position we might today call "intersectional." In the same commission, Tülin Tarakçıoğlu presented a report prepared by the GKB on the problems of migrant women and their unequal legal status in West Germany, drawing attention to the rising xenophobia there. The diverse issues raised by the Turkish migrant left-feminist women demonstrated their holistic approach

[1000] Ibid., 125.
[1001] Tarakçıoğlu, 128.
[1002] Mesut Yeğen, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 4 (1999): 555.
[1003] Tarakçıoğlu, *Moskova Dünya Kadınlar Kongresi*, 128.

to women's rights, addressing multiple dimensions of women's marginalization in Turkey and abroad. In this way, they advanced a gender agenda that transcended national boundaries through linking the struggle for the implementation of CEDAW and the ending of Kurdish women's oppression in Turkey with the fight against discrimination and xenophobia faced by migrant women in western Europe.

6.5. The Retreat of Transnational Collaboration within Left feminism and the Decline of Left feminism in the Late 1980s and Early 1990s

Having found that Turkish migrant left-feminist women's participation in the 1987 Moscow Congress was the last international event where activists from both generations collaborated for Turkish migrant women's rights within a shared transnational network, this section raises the key question of why this was the case. To answer it, I briefly explore the impact of the changing dynamics within TKP politics—as well as the evolving political situation in Turkey. For the HTKB, I also examine the changes unfolding in their own politics, as well as the consequences of the murder in 1988 of Nihat Karaman, the husband of Maviye Karaman and long-serving president of the HTIB. Lastly, I explore the impact the collapse of state socialism in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, culminating in the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991 and signifying the Cold War's end, had on Turkish migrant left feminism.

Throughout this dissertation, I have emphasized how from the mid-1970s onward the TKP served as a major force shaping Turkish migrant left-feminist women's organizing and agendas in western Europe. The significant developments within Turkish migrant left feminism in 1985 were met with a contradictory development from within the TKP in early 1986. From a letter of 11 March 1986, Zülal Kılıç addressed to the Central Committee of the TKP, we learn that in January 1986, the TKP leadership made a unilateral, top-down decision to dissolve the Women's Bureau.[1004] In this letter, Kılıç described the decision as having "come as a surprise" both to herself—as secretary of the TKP's Women's Bureau and the IKD's Office Abroad— and to the other members of the Women's Bureau.[1005] In fact, Zülal Kılıç found herself at the center of a significant dispute and shift within the Party. This thesis is not the place to unpack this conflict about the TKP's direction. However, as reported by Kılıç, her critical views on the TKP's approach to migrant politics led to her being denounced as a "right-wing deviant," which was likely a consequence of her active participation in

[1004] F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "Türkiye Komünist Partisi Merkez Komitesine, 11 March 1986," in Akbulut, *Zülal Kılıç Arşiv Fonu'ndan*, 77–79.
[1005] Ibid., 77.

Danmarks Demokratiske Kvindeforbund (DDK), where she was a member of the executive committee.[1006] From her perspective, engaging in political activities within the host country was a valid and necessary interpretation of the "one country, one party" principle[1007] corresponding to the objective conditions of Turkish migrant women's lives in the post-1980 context. However, her divergence from the Party's official line resulted in her increasing "isolation" within the TKP's activities abroad, as she was removed from her position as General Secretary of the IKD's Office Abroad through unilateral decisions and was deliberately prevented from attending meetings as an IKD representative.[1008]

Even in the face of the conflicts that emerged in 1986, Zülal Kılıç did not abandon her transnational engagement with global left feminism at the international platforms. Despite being removed from her role as general secretary of the IKD's Office Abroad, in June 1987, she attended the WIDF-convened World Congress of Women in Moscow as part of the delegation of Turkish migrant left-feminists arranged by the IKD. Nevertheless, Kılıç's estrangement from the TKP intensified following the 1987 Moscow Congress, particularly as the Party proceeded with its merger with the TIP under the name of *Türkiye Birleşik Komünist Partisi* (United Communist Party of Turkey, TBKP). This unification was proclaimed at a press conference in Brussels on 7 October 1987, with the TKP declaring the establishment of the TBKP as a legal communist party in Turkey—despite anti-communist prohibitions—as its immediate priority.[1009] Kılıç's strong opposition to this course of action severed the final link she had with the TKP, leading to the cessation of her involvement with the Party.

The 1987 Moscow Congress represented the last occasion on which Turkish left-feminist women from western Europe, across two generations, united their efforts around a common agenda with a dual focus on host country and homeland issues. In the aftermath of the congress, this double focus within Turkish left-wing migrant politics began to disintegrate. The TKP's decision to merge with the TIP under the banner of the TBKP and to establish this new party within Turkey, led the TKP to refocus its efforts exclusively on homeland-directed activities. For the second generation of activists, who were exiles during the 1980s, the

[1006] F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "Politbüro Tarafından Oluşturulan Komisyonca Istenen Rapordur, 1986," 86.
[1007] This traces back to the Comintern Charter adopted at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in June 1924, which stipulated that there must be only one Communist Party in each country, aligning with the policy of Bolshevization adopted during the same congress. Alexander Vatlin and Stephen A. Smith, "The Comintern," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephen A. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 190.
[1008] F. Durukan (Zülal Kılıç), "Politbüro Tarafından Oluşturulan Komisyonca Istenen Rapordur, 1986," 86.
[1009] Gökay, "The Communist Party of Turkey," 69–70.

aspiration to return to Turkey and contribute to the establishment of the TBKP became a central concern.

In this context, the potential of reestablishing the IKD in Turkey became an important topic for the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists. As mentioned in Section 5.3, IKD members abroad decided that no collective actions would be undertaken to reopen the IKD, a decision that marked the end of the IKD's activities and also led to the dissolution of the IKD's Office Abroad.[1010] Having served as the primary platform for the second generation of activists' diasporic engagement in Turkish migrant left feminism, the dissolution of the IKD's Office Abroad signified the second generation's broader disengagement from Turkish migrant left feminism.

The changing dynamics within Turkish transnational migrant politics also affected the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminist activists and the work in their respective organizations of HTKB in the Netherlands, BTKB in West Berlin and GKB in the Ruhr region in West Germany. Turkish migrant left-feminist women in the Netherlands sustained their commitment to the struggle for obtaining independent residence rights for migrant women into 1988 by continuing the campaign "Independent Residence Right for Migrant Women," launched in 1987 by *the Komitee Zelfstandig Verblijfsrecht Migrantenvrouwen* (Committee for Independent Residence Rights for Migrant Women, KZV), in whose formation the HTKB had played a pivotal role (see Section 4.5). The KZV's campaign efforts led to the centralization of the demand for independent residence rights during the 1988 IWD celebration in Amsterdam co-organized by Dutch and migrant women's organizations. This event, according to Maviye Karaman, was "the first occasion on March 8 where migrant and Dutch women collectively rallied around women's rights."[1011]

The efforts of the HTKB in the struggle for independent residence rights in 1988 were significantly marked by their intensified focus on combating domestic violence, then termed "*dayak*" (battering) in Turkish. The HTKB argued that the dependent residence status imposed on migrant women heightened their vulnerability to maltreatment and violence perpetrated by their husbands. This dependency created a precarious situation in which the threat of deportation prevented migrant women from ending abusive relationships, effectively silencing them and perpetuating the cycle of violence. What is particularly compelling is the HTKB's connection of their activism in the Netherlands to the women's movement in Turkey, as they drew transnational inspiration from the "*Dayağa Karşı Dayanışma Kampanyası*"

[1010] Ibid., 254.
[1011] "8 Mart Için Ne Dediler...," *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 22 (March 1988): 5.

(Solidarity Campaign Against Battering) launched in Turkey by the monthly journal *Feminist* at the landmark women's rally held in Istanbul on 17 May 1987.[1012] In its publication *Kadınların Birliği*, the HTKB informed their Turkish readers about this mobilization in their homeland, and declared their support to the campaign as follows:

> Our magazine supports the 'Women Against Battering' campaign launched by the Feminist Magazine and various women's groups in our country and wants to give space to and announce the work done on this issue as much as possible. With the belief that our voice will be stronger together, we call on Turkish migrant women living in the Netherlands and women's organizations to support this campaign together.[1013]

The same issue of *Kadınların Birliği* also published an excerpt from a speech delivered by Şirin Tekeli, a prominent feminist activist and scholar who was a pioneering figure in the "second wave" feminism of post-1980 Turkey, and among the initiators of the Solidarity Campaign Against Battering. In this speech delivered under the title "Violence within Family: Battering" at a panel held on 8 March 1988 in Istanbul Tekeli called for an understanding of domestic violence against women as "the most widespread, thereby sexualized form of torture in Turkey" and to be acknowledged as a central agenda item for the struggle for human rights.[1014] This was the first occasion where the HTKB explicitly cited self-identified feminists and their activities in Turkey in its political discourse as a source of transnational inspiration.

More generally, the first half of 1988 was a transformative period for the HTKB, during which the organization sought to adapt to the changing dynamics in Turkish transnational migrant politics. This adaptation involved a strategic shift towards initiatives directed at the host country, in Liza Mügge's terms, "when the political conflicts in Turkey cooled somewhat," and efforts to facilitate the integration of Turkish women in the Netherlands.[1015] Concurrently, the HTKB exhibited a newfound openness to alternative ideological-political perspectives, aiming to "catch up with the contemporary directions within the women's movements in the Netherlands," and began to see itself as an integral part

[1012] Şahika Yüksel, "Eş Dayağı ve Dayağa Karşı Dayanışma Kampanyası," in *1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (Istanbul: Iletişim, 1993), 348; Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, "Yalnızlıktan Meşruiyete...: 1980 Sonrası Kadın Hareketi ve Kurumsallaşma," in *Feminizm*, ed. Nacide Berber and Feryal Saygılıgil (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2020), 150.
[1013] "'İnsan' ve 'Dayak,'" *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 22 (March 1988): 16.
[1014] "Ailede Şiddet: 'Dayak,'" *Kadınların Birliği*, no. 22 (March 1988): 15–17, 23.
[1015] Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism," 72.

of this movement.[1016] This process likely began as early as 1985, when Hedy d'Ancona served as a member of the initiating committee for the 1985 Amsterdam Conference and Maviye Karaman, the HTKB chair, received the Harriët Freezerring award from the Dutch feminist monthly *Opzij* (see Section 6.4). To discuss the future prospects of the HTKB and determine what ideological stance and political agenda it should adopt, the HTKB organized a weekend dedicated to discussion and theoretical-political education on 19–20 March 1988, involving all members.[1017] The central question guiding this event was: "What will be the place of Turkish immigrant women and the HTKB in the Dutch women's movement in the future?"[1018]

As a theoretical ground for this discussion, the HTKB's board selected Anja Meulenbelt's 1976 book *Feminisme en Socialisme: Een Inleiding* (Feminism and Socialism: An Introduction)—an important text in Dutch socialist feminism.[1019] The choice of this text is particularly noteworthy as it represented the first time HTKB members' collectively engaged with a text from a self-identified feminist perspective for theoretical and political education, despite the organization neither identifying as "feminist" nor opposing feminism since its inception. This intellectual shift coincided with their strategic change of focus toward host-country initiatives and a pursuit of greater collaboration with leading organizations and individuals within the Dutch feminist movement.[1020] Additionally, around this time, as shown above, the HTKB began to cite self-identified feminists and their activities in Turkey as source of transnational inspiration within their political discourse. These developments suggest that 1988 was a critical turning point for the HTKB, reflecting a significant evolution in their ideological orientation and reinforcing their role within the feminist movement in the Netherlands.

The same year 1988 became tumultuous in its latter half with the tragic murder on 27 June 1988 of Nihat Karaman, the husband of Maviye Karaman and long-serving president of the HTIB.[1021] His death—allegedly at the hands of members of the Turkish far-right group Grey Wolves—had profound implications for the HTKB. In the wake of her husband's assassination, Maviye Karaman resigned from her position as HTKB president, a role she had held since its founding, and withdrew from involvement in the organization's activities.[1022]

[1016] HTKB, Memorandum, 12 March 1988, Archive HTKB, Folder 2, IISH.
[1017] Semra Çarkçıoğlu, HTKB Board's Invitation Letter, 6 March 1988, Folder 2, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[1018] Ibid.
[1019] Ibid.
[1020] Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism," 72.
[1021] "Türkiyeli Göçmen Hareketinin Yetiştirdiği Ender İşçi Önderlerinden Nihat Karaman'ı Kaybettik," *Yeni Yol*, no. 18 (July 15, 1988): 6; Gönül Dinçer, "Bir Haber, Bir İnsan," *Ekonomi ve Politikada Görüş*, no. 22 (September 1988): 15.
[1022] Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!," 20.

Her resignation constituted a major setback for the HTKB, leading to an immediate and significant decline in its activities, which is evident when examining the HTKB's board meeting documents at the IISH, which show a gap in records between 1988 and 1990.[1023] Mirroring this organizational decline, the HTKB's magazine *Kadınların Birliği* ceased publication after its twenty-second issue in March 1988. This turn of events illustrates that the effective functioning of the HTKB was heavily reliant on Maviye Karaman's active participation and leadership. Her departure led to a period of stagnation for the organization until the summer of 1990, when some members of the HTKB formed an interim board with a "temporary function" aimed at "either reviving the HTKB or developing a new Turkish women's organization."[1024]

Amid all these developments leading into the 1990s, the collapse of state socialism across Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, culminating in the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the end of the Cold War, profoundly affected the left-feminist agenda of Turkish migrant women's organizations and their transnational orientation. This monumental shift resulted in a substantial setback for socialist and communist movements and the weakening of class-based politics globally during the 1990s, as they faced a crisis of legitimacy following the ascendancy of the global capitalist system and the height of neoliberalism's intellectual and political hegemony. This shift also marked a transformation in the conception of social justice, as formulated by Nancy Fraser, a prominent US feminist and critical theorist: from a politics of redistribution—grounded in "egalitarian redistributive claims, which seek a more just distribution of resources and goods" and which "have supplied the paradigm case for most theorizing about social justice for the past 150 years," to a second type of social-justice claim, the "politics of recognition," within a neoliberal context, whose goal, "in its most plausible form, is a difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect."[1025] More importantly, according to Fraser, this shift introduced a new constellation in the post-Cold War context, where "the discourse of social justice, once centered on distribution, is now increasingly divided between claims for redistribution, on the one hand, and claims for recognition, on the other. In this new constellation, the two kinds of justice claims are often dissociated from one another. The

[1023] Onderwater, 20, footnote 63, makes a similar observation.
[1024] Mari and Aysel, Draft Proposal Work Program, August 1990, Folder 2, Archive HTKB, IISH.
[1025] Nancy Fraser, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation," The Tanner Lectures on Human Values (Lecture, Stanford University April 30–May 2, 1996), 3.

result is a widespread decoupling of the cultural politics of difference from the social politics of equality (…) the demise of communism, the surge of free-market ideology, the rise of "identity politics" in both its fundamentalist and progressive forms (…) have conspired to decenter, if not to extinguish, claims for egalitarian redistribution."[1026] This shift also affected the transnational migrant politics of Turkish women. The socialist emphasis on critiquing capitalist structures and framing women's issues within the broader context of social injustice—fundamental to Turkish migrant women's left-feminist gender agenda—began to dissipate.

Liza Mügge was the first to analyze this transformation through the lens of Turkish and Kurdish migrant women's transnational activism in the Netherlands, spanning the period from the 1980s to the 1990s. Adopting a comparative perspective, she selected the HTKB as a case representing Turkish migrant activism during the Cold War era, arguing that it supported "a narrow definition of the 'politics of redistribution,'" whereas Kurdish activists in the 1990s "combined classical features of the 'politics of redistribution' with those of traditional identity politics."[1027] Her study, therefore, juxtaposes two distinct forms of women's activism across two different periods, positioning the HTKB's 1980s activism as emblematic of a redistribution-oriented conception of social justice and Kurdish women's activism in the 1990s as a synthesis of both redistribution and recognition claims. However, her analysis does not examine the transformation that the HTKB itself might have undergone from the 1980s into the 1990s. Given that the 1990s fall outside the scope of this dissertation, I am unable to determine whether or to what extent HTKB's left-feminist gender agenda dissipated during this period. Nevertheless, it is clear that HTKB underwent a significant organizational transformation in the 1990s, particularly in 1993, when a conflict emerged between a large portion of the membership and the Executive Board.[1028] This conflict, which lasted for two years, ultimately resulted in the dissolution of the HTKB as a national organization in 1995, with its departments transformed into local and independent organizations.[1029]

Apart from these changes in the HTKB, the opening address of the GKB's twelfth congress, held on 28 January 1990 in Gelsenkirchen, provides a notable instance of self-reflection on the erosion of socialist ideological foundations among Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations. Delivered on behalf of the GKB's board, the speech began by noting

[1026] Ibid., 3-4.
[1027] Mügge, "Women in Transnational Migrant Activism," 77.
[1028] Onderwater, "Wij zijn geen 'zielige vrouwtjes'!," 20.
[1029] Ibid., 20-21.

that, “for the first time in its fifteen-year history,” the GKB was convening its congress “with significantly reduced participation,” observing that the GKB’s “works among women” in the Ruhr region were “gradually losing their impact.”[1030] And the speech proceeded with a political statement resembling a confession: “We believed, until recently, that women's emancipation would be achieved through a socialist society; this was what we read and heard. But it turned out that actually existing socialism could not realize women's emancipation.”[1031] This statement encapsulates the ideological disillusionment that suffused Turkish migrant left-feminism in the Ruhr region, leading to demobilization in the late 1980s. Correspondingly, the GKB's twelfth congress in January 1990 marked the end of the organization's fifteen years of existence and activity since 1975.

The other major Turkish migrant left-feminist organization in West Germany, the BTKB in West Berlin, faced a similar process and crises during this period, but navigated it differently. Unlike the GKB, the BTKB did not dissolve but instead underwent a transformation in its ideological and political outlook, agenda, and organizational structure. This process, which Elisabeth Kimmerle has described as the “deradicalization and depoliticization” of the BTKB, ended up in the organization’s redirecting its efforts from politically mobilizing Turkish migrant women to providing professionalized social counseling services.[1032] These services, funded by external sources including local and federal governments, aimed to enhance the effectiveness of the German state's integration policies by addressing the needs of Turkish migrant women within a framework of the politics of recognition replacing the earlier left-feminist vision conception of social justice based on the politics of redistribution.

The transformation the BTKB went through at the outset of the 1990s can be understood in the context of the “NGOization of feminism,” as defined by Sabine Lang, based on her findings regarding the institutionalization of German women’s movements or grass-roots groups after the German unification, a process wherein local feminisms were compelled to institutionalize and re-organize in the form of NGOs that were compatible with the accompanying neoliberalism that was promoted on both national and global levels.[1033] The political outcome of NGOization, as noted by Susanne Schultz, is that women's organizations

[1030] Opening Speech at GKB's 12. Congress, 28 January 1990, Folder 69, GKB Archive, TUSTAV.
[1031] Ibid.
[1032] Kimmerle, “Frauen in Bewegung,”224.
[1033] Sabine Lang, “The NGOization of Feminism: Institutionalization and Institution Building within the German Women’s Movements,” in *Transitions, Environments, Translations*, ed. Joan W. Scott, Cora Kaplan, and Debra Keates (New York: Routledge, 1997), 101–20.

> orient themselves toward a pragmatic shaping of state-oriented politics (to the neglect of protest or social movement politics). They tend to favor 'lobby' and 'dialogue politics' in so-called governance networks— integrating themselves or being integrated into the 'integral state' as experts, political consultants, or service providers.[1034]

This process, Çağatay argued, "problematically depoliticizes the radical concepts of 'empowerment' and 'liberation' by equating feminism with women's temporary access to resources without necessarily aiming at the structural transformation of gender relations."[1035] Therefore, the deradicalization and depoliticization of the BTKB resulted in its NGO-ization at the turn of the 1990s, as shown by Elisabeth Kimmerle, and BTKB re-institutionalized itself as an NGO focused on providing services to Turkish migrant women.[1036] The shift from political work to counseling and advisory services prompted many long-standing volunteer members to withdraw from the organization.[1037] Their marginalized position was connected to developments within the German context, particularly the gradual political demobilization of social movements at the end of the 1980s, both within the Turkish migrant community and German society at large. Another factor contributing to the marginalization of left-feminist politics within the BTKB was the diminishing of its transnational orientation following the transformation of the TKP into TBKP in 1988 and the subsequent dissolution of the TBKP in 1991.[1038] The collapse of these parties weakened the transnational ties that had previously bolstered the BTKB's political agenda, further contributing to its shift towards advisory and counselling work and away from left-feminist activism.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined two major developments regarding Turkish migrant women's transnational activism after 1984: their preparations for and participation in three big conferences (the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants in Amsterdam in June 1985; the NGO Forum as part of the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi in July

[1034] Susanne Schultz, "Redefining and Medicalizing Population Policies: NGOs and Their Innovative Contributions to the Post-Cairo Agenda," in *Markets and Malthus: Population, Gender, and Health in Neo-Liberal Times*, ed. Mohan Rao and Sarah Sexton (New Delhi: SAGE, 2010), 179.
[1035] Çağatay, "The Politics of Gender," 71.
[1036] Kimmerle, "Frauen in Bewegung,"224-26.
[1037] Erdem, "Organisationen Anatolisch-Deutscher Frauen," 138.
[1038] Demir and Sönmez, *Als Arbeiter zu "Gast" in Deutschland*, 246–47.

1985; and the WIDF's 1987 Moscow World Congress of Women); and the impact of the post-1987 global political shifts—the dissolution of the TKP in 1988 and the conclusion of the Cold War.

I established that the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants in Amsterdam in June 1985 was the earliest manifestation of the successful collaboration of the two generations of activists, and the first international conference on Turkish migrant women organized by Turkish migrant women themselves. Next, I provided an in-depth analysis of Turkish migrant left-feminist women's participation in the Nairobi NGO Forum. I showed that Turkish migrant women from both the two generations formed a joint delegation, in which they effectively collaborated with other migrant and refugee women's groups to advocate for the greater recognition and inclusion of migrant and refugee women's rights within the UN-led gender equality agenda at the conclusion of the UN Decade for Women. Furthermore, I examined their participation in the WIDF's 1987 Moscow World Congress of Women, which represented the culmination of their engagement in left-feminist women's international meetings. Then I discussed in some detail how the changing dynamics within Turkish transnational migrant politics affected the HTKB in the Netherlands, BTKB in West Berlin and GKB in the Ruhr region in West Germany.

This chapter has proposed four arguments. First, I argued that their preparations for the Nairobi Conference not only laid the groundwork for effective cooperation between the first and second generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists in Western Europe but also sustained their transnational engagement with the global struggle for women's rights. This collaboration began with the 1985 Amsterdam Conference, continued through their participation in the 1985 Nairobi Conference, and extended to the WIDF-convened World Congress of Women in Moscow from 23-27 June 1987. Given that the 1985 Amsterdam Conference has received limited scholarly attention, this chapter has provided new knowledge about the event, emphasizing that the initiative to organize an international conference on Turkish migrant women originated from the TKP's Women's Bureau. The realization of this initiative was made possible through the significant contributions of HTKB women, who undertook the practical organization and outreach necessary for the conference's success.

Secondly, I showed that Turkish migrant left-feminist women emerged as the most active and organized faction within Turkish women's movements engaged in the global advocacy for women's rights in the international domain. Their initiatives at the international level, as exemplified in their active participation to the NGO Forum in Nairobi, extended well beyond those of their home country-based actors, challenging the existing historiography on

Turkish women's activism both in Turkey and abroad, in which migrant women's roles and legacy have been largely overlooked.

Thirdly, I demonstrated that the momentum generated by the convergence of the first and second generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists reached its apex with their participation in the Ninth World Congress of Women convened by the WIDF in Moscow in June 1987, which witnessed the highest participation of Turkish women in any WIDF-organized event since the organization's inception in 1945. Turkish women's remarkable participation at the 1987 Moscow Congress was primarily achieved through the efforts of Turkish migrant left-feminist women who traveled from across Europe and even Australia. At the Moscow Congress, they raised the problems faced by Turkish migrant women in western Europe and those in Turkey—including Kurdish women—and worked to mobilize support for women's mobilization in Turkey for gender equality and the implementation of the CEDAW.

The 1987 Moscow World Congress of Women turned out to be the last international meeting where the two activist generations converged in advancing a shared agenda on women's rights initiatives directed at both their homeland and their host countries. In exploring the disintegration of activities between the two generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists, I addressed the impact of internal strife that emerged within the TKP in 1984 between its Women's Bureau and the TKP leadership regarding the degree of autonomy to be afforded to left-feminist women's initiatives; this internal strife was extended into the period following the Nairobi conference. I briefly indicated the dissolution of the TKP's Women's Bureau in 1986 by the TKP leadership, followed by the removal of influential figures like Zülal Kılıç, and her eventual estrangement from the Party, due to intra-party conflict These demobilizing events were coupled with the impact of changing dynamics within Turkish transnational migrant politics in western Europe, particularly following the TKP's decision in the final quarter of 1987 to merge with the TIP to form the TBKP in 1988 and to establish it legally in Turkey. This decision shifted the central focus of the second-generation TKP-affiliated activists towards the prospect of returning to Turkey.

I further showed that, by contrast, the first generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists and their organizations reacted to the evolving dynamics within Turkish transnational migrant politics by shifting their focus towards host country initiatives, moving away from their prior transnational engagements. This reorientation occurred against the backdrop of the disintegration of the socialist bloc. The collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe eroded the ideological underpinnings of Turkish migrant left feminism, leading to an ideological crisis and organizational challenges for the organizations in West Germany and the

Netherlands. In West Germany, the GKB in the Ruhr region disbanded, and the BTKB in West Berlin underwent deradicalization and depoliticization, transforming into an NGO that shifted its focus from political endeavors to providing counseling and advisory services for Turkish migrant women—one example of the broader process of NGO-ization occurring after 1989/1991.

The HTKB's situation in these years of transformation was particularly complex and likely needs further research, especially regarding the impact of the demise of communism in 1989/1991 on the organization. I could establish that in 1988 HTKB started to resituate itself ideologically within or vis-à-vis the Dutch women's movement. However this search was interrupted in the same year with the murder of Maviye Karaman's husband and her subsequent departure from the HTKB, which led HTKB into a period of stagnation of activities from 1988 through the early 1990s. I was unable to determine whether HTKB's left-feminist gender agenda dissipated during this period. Existing scholarship on HTKB in the 1990s suggests that HTKB underwent a significant organizational transformation in the 1990s as a result of internal conflict that led to the dissolution of the HTKB as a national organization in 1995, with its departments transformed into local and independent organizations.

Conclusion

Through a case study of the organizations the first generation of Turkish leftist migrant women established in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands around 1974-1975, and the activities of the second generation who arrived in western Europe as political refugees in the post-1980 period, this dissertation has examined the formation and development of Turkish migrant women's left-feminist activism in western Europe from 1974 to 1990. In each case, I also studied these organizations in their transnational context and connections, including their ties to homeland-based actors, and their positioning within international left feminism. Here, I will summarize the main findings and arguments of the dissertation by revisiting the overarching research questions outlined in the Introduction.

Regarding my first question, "*How, when, and why did Turkish leftist migrant women in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands establish their organizations?"* my findings can be summarized as follows: the organizations examined in this dissertation—the ITKB in the UK, the BTKB and GKB in West Germany, and the HTKB in the Netherlands—were founded by members of the first generation of Turkish leftist migrant women. These women had already been involved in Turkish leftist transnational migrant politics within mixed-gender organizations within these countries, all of which were interconnected through the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP)-affiliated transnational network of the European Federation of Turkish Socialists (ATTF). One major factor that motivated Turkish leftist migrant women to establish their own organizations were their political experiences within mixed-gender Turkish leftist migrant organizations, particularly the challenges they faced in bringing issues of women's rights and equality within society, the workplace, and the family onto these mixed-gender leftist organizations' agendas.

The first women-only organization they established was the ITKB on February 11, 1974 in London, initiated by women members of the Union of Turkish Progressives in the UK (ITIB), the most active among whom were also TKP members. That same year, similar initiatives began to emerge in the Netherlands and West Germany, though initially in preliminary forms, such as the creation of women's working groups within the Turkish Socialist Community in West Berlin (BTTO) in West Berlin and HTIB in the Netherlands. These preliminary initiatives were propelled into a new phase by an additional factor: the TKP's increasing engagement with United Nations-proclaimed International Women's Year (1975), significantly shaped by the influence of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), and the TKP's decision to encourage its women members to establish

women's organizations both in western Europe and in Turkey. This decision found its most significant expression within the TKP-affiliated transnational network of the ATTF, particularly during the ATTF's Seventh Annual Congress, held in Gelsenkirchen, West Germany, on 27–29 December 1974. There, Turkish leftist migrant women living in West Germany, and possibly one or more from the Netherlands, collectively decided to establish independent women's organizations, separate from mixed-gender leftist organizations. Their decision materialized on 8 March 1975 with the simultaneous founding of BTKB and GKB in West Germany and HTKB in the Netherlands, marking a significant milestone in the development of Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizing in western Europe. Parallel developments occurred in Turkey, where TKP women founded the Progressive Women's Association (IKD) on 3 June 1975. Recognized by the Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations explored in this dissertation as their homeland counterpart, the IKD became a major constituent actor of the transnational dimension of their struggle for Turkish women's rights through homeland-directed initiatives.

All these findings suggest that Turkish migrant women's left-feminist organizing in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands in 1974–1975 was shaped by trans-local dynamics, a combination of their prior local political socialization and experiences within mixed-gender Turkish leftist migrant organizations and the transnational process of mutual inspiration, collaboration, and interconnectedness, facilitated by the broader momentum generated by the IWY.

This brings me to my second question, "*How did local and national conditions and international contexts, such as the IWY, the UN Decade for Women and the Cold War influence their political organizing*?" I have mentioned the transnational component of the process in which they developed. Their ideological and political positioning was further influenced by the Cold War context, within which competing international women's organizations represented a spectrum of ideological perspectives. In this polarized setting, leftist women from the Global South forged strategic alliances with socialist women from Eastern European actors to amplify their demands in the international domain of women's rights. Their struggles there entered into a new stage with IWY and the succeeding United Nations Decade for Women. As leftist migrant women based in the capitalist West, they aligned early on with the WIDF, embracing a political agenda centered on Turkish migrant women's rights, anti-fascism, anti-racism, peace, and the well-being of migrant children—issues they saw as intrinsically linked and fully consonant with the WIDF's political goals.

In 1974, the WIDF suggested to the TKP leadership to enhance its focus on the woman question in the context of IWY. One aim was to facilitate Turkish migrant women's participation in the WIDF's 1975 East Berlin Congress through a joint delegation. This initiative was taken up by the ITKB in the summer of 1975 and culminated in the founding of the European Federation of Turkish Women (ATKF) on 4–5 October 1975 in Frankfurt. Setting up the ATKF, the umbrella organization of Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations, was a fruit of the WIDF's international activities related to IWY and is also the most important example of the transnational character of Turkish migrant left feminism. It had the intended result of participation of a delegation of Turkish migrant left-feminist women from West Germany and the UK in the WIDF's 1975 East Berlin Congress.

I have further shown that Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands translated the spirit of their international engagement for Turkish migrant women's rights in their local and national contexts by collaborating with WIDF-affiliated national organizations, in particular, the National Assembly of Women (NAW) in the UK, the Democratic Women's League Berlin (DFB) in West Berlin, the Democratic Women's Initiative (DFI) in the Ruhr region, and the Dutch Women's Movement (NVB) in the Netherlands. Among these local and national cases of collaboration, the case of West Berlin appears distinctive: based on my study of the West Berlin Committee for Women's Rights (WKRF), this Committee can be interpreted as a localized extension of the WIDF's politics in the 1970s in West Berlin, representing a coalition of left-feminist West German and migrant women's organizations, in which the BTKB played a prominent role. Thus, in their struggle for Turkish migrant women's rights, as well as for broader political goals such as anti-fascism and the defense of peace, Turkish migrant left-feminists forged the first substantive collaborations with women's movements in their host countries through WIDF-affiliated organizations.

Regarding my third question, "*In what ways did Turkish migrant women's organizations attempt to contribute to women's activism in their host countries, Turkey, and the international domain of women's rights?,"* I found the following. From the ITKB, BTKB, GKB and the HTKB's inception around 1974–1975, community feminism emerged as a central component of their activism, aimed at addressing the everyday needs of Turkish migrant women. They deployed a threefold strategy of community feminism: outreach to encourage women to break domestic isolation and establish grassroots networks; empowerment through communicative and practical skill-building; and mobilization by transforming seemingly apolitical spaces, such as language or sewing classes, into safe spaces

for political discussion and consciousness-raising. This mode of community feminism also reveals a shared repertoire of strategies and activities among Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands. These efforts represented pioneering self-organized initiatives by Turkish migrant women to uplift and empower their communities in their host countries.

In addition, Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands maintained a transnational orientation through homeland-directed activism. Between 1976 and 1980, they engaged in supporting anti-fascist women's mobilization in Turkey, responding to the intensifying far-right and anti-communist attacks against leftist movements. Their homeland-directed activism embodied what I defined as long-distance feminism: a form of political engagement through which Turkish migrant left-feminists participated from afar in the anti-fascist struggle in the homeland, primarily through solidarity with their counterpart in Turkey, the IKD. Informed by a political vision that the fight for women's rights could not be separated from the struggle against fascism, a vision that resonated with the WIDF's broader political goals, they organized protests, lobbying efforts, and solidarity campaigns, demonstrating a deep commitment to advancing women's rights in a period of severe political repression in Turkey.

In the context of their long-distance feminist activism, Turkish migrant left-feminist organizations in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands strategically mobilized forms of politicized motherhood within their anti-fascist campaigns in response to the escalation of Turkish far-right violence. I argued that their invocation of motherhood constituted part of a broader continuum of left-feminist activism, linking struggles for migrant women's rights, community uplift, peace, and children's welfare within an integrated political framework. Through politicized motherhood, Turkish migrant left-feminists publicly supported their assaulted children, husbands, and brothers, articulating maternal suffering within women's anti-fascist mobilization in non-essentialist ways. That is to say that they situated motherhood within a broader continuum of political identities, presenting themselves simultaneously as mothers, workers, women's rights activists, and anti-fascists.

The post-1980 period marked a distinct phase in the history of Turkish migrant left-feminism. One key development was the emergence of the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists, consisting of political refugee women from the IKD and TKP, who were forced to flee to western Europe following the military coup in Turkey on 12 September 1980. In the first half of the 1980s, the efforts of these second-generation activists largely focused on resilience building and recovering from the demobilization of organized left

feminism in Turkey, through initiatives such as the establishment of the IKD's Office Abroad and the creation of the Women's Bureau within the TKP. Despite the rupture caused by exile, IKD cadres and TKP women demonstrated remarkable resilience through their continued engagement with the WIDF at the international level and its national affiliates in the countries where they resettled.

My research further established that, starting in 1984, the two generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists affiliated with the TKP converged in collaborative international initiatives for Turkish migrant women's rights, particularly regarding preparations for the 1985 Third UN World Conference on Women and its NGO Forum in Nairobi. The most notable outcome of these efforts was the European Conference of Turkish Woman Migrants, convened in Amsterdam in June 1985, the first international conference organized by Turkish migrant women themselves—originating from the TKP's Women's Bureau. It was through the 1985 Amsterdam Conference and Turkish migrant left-feminist women's involvement in the planning for the Nairobi NGO Forum that Turkish migrant left-feminist women emerged as the most active and organized faction within the broader Turkish women's movements engaged in global advocacy for women's rights. Their international initiatives, particularly their role at the Nairobi NGO Forum, exceeded those of Turkey-based actors and contributed significantly to broader efforts in Nairobi to recognize and integrate migrant and refugee women's rights into the UN-led gender equality agenda at the conclusion of the UN Decade for Women.

The last case of cooperation of the two generations concerns their participation in the Ninth World Congress of Women, organized by the WIDF and held in Moscow in June 1987. This congress represented the peak of Turkish left-feminist women's engagement with the WIDF's international activities. At the Moscow Congress, Turkish migrant left-feminists raised issues Turkish migrant women in western Europe and women in Turkey, including Kurdish women, were facing, and worked to mobilize international support for the women's movement in Turkey for gender equality and the implementation of CEDAW. However, the subsequent developments leading into the 1990s rendered the 1987 Moscow World Congress of Women the last international meeting where two generations of Turkish migrant left-feminists advanced a shared agenda centered on both homeland-directed and host-country women's rights initiatives.

My last overarching question is: "*How do my findings contribute to the history of Turkish migrant women's activism in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands; the history*

of communist women's activism in Turkey and in transnational contexts; and the history of the women's movement in Turkey?"

My findings on Turkish migrant left feminism contribute to the existing historiography on Turkish migrant women's activism not only by having uncovered their large-scale and diverse political activities, but also by demonstrating that these organizations—their histories, political agenda, and activities—cannot be confined to national contexts or treated merely as additive components to the national histories of women's movements of their respective host countries, as the (in any case limited) existing literature tends to do. Turkish migrant left feminism has to be understood as an independent, transnational phenomenon, with its own chronology and political trajectory, transcending the national contexts of their host-countries to encompass both homeland dynamics and international left feminism.

Secondly, my findings on Turkish migrant left feminism in western Europe contribute to our existing knowledge of the history of communist women's activism both in Turkey and transnationally. I have demonstrated that communist women affiliated with the TKP in the UK, West Germany, and the Netherlands responded to the Party's call for the IWY and played key roles in the formation of Turkish migrant women's organizations in their respective host countries. This study reveals not only communist women's pioneering contributions to Turkish women's activism abroad but also their sustained engagement with the WIDF from the earliest stages of their organizing. Especially in the 1980s, Turkish migrant left-feminists played an active role in the WIDF's political work by advocating migrant and refugee women's rights.

The final contribution of this dissertation lies in its implications for the feminist historiography of the Turkish women's movement. My findings on the second generation of Turkish migrant left-feminists in western Europe challenge the dominant waves-based narrative of the history of the women's movement in Turkey, which assumes a rupture and discontinuity between pre- and post-1980 activism, grounded in the claim that the post-1980 era marked the silencing or disappearance of left-feminist organizing due to repression and disillusionment. In contrast, the second generation's efforts to reorganize in exile and pursue transnational initiatives that my research has uncovered reveal a resilience and political commitment that sustained Turkish left-feminist activism beyond national borders. My findings show that, even at a distance from their homeland and through diverse strategies, left-feminist women maintained the gender equality struggle by ensuring organizational continuity and agenda-building within a diasporic context—still constituting a part of the broader women's movement in Turkey. These findings complicate simplistic rupture

narratives and affirm that the post-1980 period was marked not by disappearance but by transformation and persistence in new transnational forms.

Among the many possible avenues of further research this thesis has opened, one of the most relevant in my view is that of more scholarly attention for the overlooked roles of migrant and refugee women in communist women's transnational activism from the 1970s onwards. Second, the transformation of the HTKB in the 1990s merits further investigation. The HTKB's transformation during this period appears particularly complex and underexplored, especially in relation to the broader political shifts following the collapse of communism in 1989–1991 and how these developments may have shaped its identity, strategies, and continued relevance.

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