

a revolutionary
**DURSUN
KARATAŞ**

volume 1



Boran

A Revolutionary

DURSUN KARATAŞ

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Volume-1

PREFACE

A leader who left his mark on the history of revolution in Turkey with his 38-year revolutionary life: **Dursun Karataş**.

In the words of his comrades and those who knew him personally, there was only revolution in his life: the problems of the revolution, the interests of the revolution, the future of the revolution. A relentless, uncompromising struggle for revolution...

His 38-year revolutionary life was filled with these.

We can see that this was so from the movement he created.

He identified himself so completely with the movement he created that his words, **“Revolutionary Left is my mother, my teacher, my comrade... my everything,”** are a clear expression of this.

He jealously protected this beauty he created from enemies within and without.

“We need to be people who are dynamic, courageous, who do what they say, who are disciplined, who feel the meaning of ‘WE’ with their entire being, who regard the slightest attack against their comrades and their movement as an attack against themselves, who feel honour and excitement in carrying the identity of REVOLUTIONARY LEFT¹; and we need to raise such people. Cadres must act with the consciousness that they are a part of the movement and must not regard the movement as something external to themselves. The movement is the sum total of all its people (its cadres, sympathisers and supporters), and of the values and traditions they have created...”

With these words, he was pointing to the type of cadre that was needed.

The revolutionary movement extending from Revolutionary Left to the Party-Front² and carried from the Party-Front to the present day, remained committed to revolutionary values and traditions while also becoming the creator of new values, traditions and firsts.

The 1990s were years in which the attacks of the counter-revolution intensified in our country and throughout the world, the imperialists became increasingly ruthless in their attacks against the peoples, the socialist bloc collapsed, and imperialism imposed its new world order upon the peoples in our “unipolar” world.

These were years in which organisations that called themselves revolutionary, socialist and patriotic entered into compromise with imperialism, laying down arms became fashionable, the hammer and sickle were removed from flags, and ideological deviations and uncertainties emerged...

In the period beginning with the fascist junta of 12 September 1980, while many once-renowned organisations came to an end and disappeared, in those dark years, under the leadership of our leader,

WE RECREATED OURSELVES.

“...A party, an organisation, together with its leadership, all its fighters and cadres, may be taken prisoner and may suffer great defeats. These are the testing grounds of revolutionaries. Those who successfully pass these tests will have no difficulty reaching the people.”

— **Dursun Karataş**

With this perspective of our leadership, we rose again stronger in this field.

What was fashionable was laying down arms and compromising with imperialism.

What was fashionable was removing the hammer and sickle from flags.

¹ **Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol):** A revolutionary organisation founded in Turkey in 1978 by Dursun Karataş and his comrades following their split from Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol). It developed on the political line of the THKP-C and later became the organisational current from which the Party-Front emerged.

² **Party-Front:** The term used for the revolutionary political and organisational structure that developed from Revolutionary Left and was later organised around the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party (DHKP) and its Front. In this conception, the **Party** provides political and ideological leadership, while the **Front** organises and conducts the broader revolutionary struggle. The two are understood as inseparable parts of a single revolutionary organisation and strategy.

What was fashionable was first submitting to imperialism and then discovering “progressiveness” in imperialism.

What was fashionable was getting through these periods without losses and waiting for more favourable conditions to arrive.

During this period, following assessments made under Dayı’s leadership, the brochure **“Where Are We on the Road?”** was written. In it, all these “fashionable” approaches were rejected, and the duties of revolutionaries were concretely defined as follows:

“The task facing Marxist-Leninists today must be to preserve the belief that, on a world scale and in individual countries, the revolutionary wave will rise again and that socialism will be rebuilt along a correct line upon the ruins of revisionism; principally, to work to develop the revolutions in their own countries; to defend the fundamental principles and ideas of Marxism against revisionism, reformism and every kind of deviation; to attach importance to relations of solidarity and support with the world’s socialist forces and national liberation movements; and to establish revolutionary fraternity on the basis of genuine internationalism. (...) The only force upon which liberation movements and socialist forces should rely in the face of imperialism must be the peoples and proletariat of the world. Socialists must now, more than ever, rely upon and trust in their own strength.”

ADVANCE, said our leader...

Under **HIS** leadership, we preserved and strengthened our ideological clarity.

During the years of “crisis”, our faith reached its peak.

We kept our hammer-and-sickle flag flying under siege.

We did not compromise; we would not compromise.

We did not surrender; we would not surrender.

With even greater determination and audacity, we **ADVANCED**.

As we fired our weapons of justice,

as we brought them down upon the heads of the enemies of the people,

as our barrels turned towards the imperialists,

as our hammer-and-sickle flag continued to fly under siege,

as our revolutionary units became legendary;

even our enemies, and those we had regarded as friends, were astonished enough to ask:

“What is happening? While these movements are coming to an end everywhere else, with us the exact opposite is happening.”

The movement extending from Revolutionary Left to the Party-Front became a source of confidence to friends and fear to enemies.

“...Powerful ideas, powerful people and powerful organisations are born from those who preserve their determination without straying from their path under difficult conditions, from those who are not afraid to fall and rise again, from those who know how to turn defeats into victories...”

“We fell, and when we fell, we knew how to rise. Even in the darkest periods, saying that there is no such thing as absolute darkness, we searched for the light. We always turned to ourselves. We confronted our own reality, and this is how we reached the present day. This is where our strength lies. It lies in the history we have lived. We wrote this history through our ideological steadfastness and through the epics of our martyrs who carried this ideology. And we demonstrated that this history cannot be changed; that the road to victory can only be travelled by enriching it and surpassing it. Our Congress, the Party-Front and the dozens of decisions we have taken are proof of this.”

— **Dursun Karataş**

With **HIM** we grew and became stronger,

With **HIM** we marched towards revolution,

With **HIM** we overcame the obstacles placed before us by our internal and external enemies,

Under **HIS** leadership, we were an unbreakable organisation worthy of envy and admiration.

Even if we do not want to accept it, our Dayı is no longer physically among us.

But through the values and traditions he created, through what he left us, he will always be beside us, within us and ahead of us.

We will not feel his absence!

That is why we say:

WITHOUT HIM, BUT WITH HIM

In morality, culture, ideology, thought and practice; in our confidence in the people, the revolution and ourselves, we drew thick lines between revolution and counter-revolution.

This was our greatest strength, our greatest weapon.

This was a force that no power in the world could defeat.

This was **Marxism-Leninism**.

WITHOUT HIM, BUT WITH HIM, we will carry our revolutionary march to victory.

This book contains the accounts of those who knew **HIM**.

This book contains the feelings and thoughts of those who fought under **HIS** leadership.

We leave it to the readers to decide how adequately what has been written and said here can describe him...

With our respects...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AÖS	Atatürk Student Complex	MAYÖD	School of Finance and Accounting Student Association, Beyazıt
BYÖD	Bursa Higher Education Association	MİT	National Intelligence Organisation (Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı)
CHP	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	PDA	Proleter Devrimci Aydınlik
DEMAKD	State Academy of Engineering and Architecture Association	PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê)
DEMKAD	Association of Women in Revolutionary Struggle (Devrimci Mücadelede Kadınlar Derneği)	RSDLP	Russian Social Democratic Labour Party
Dev-Genç	Revolutionary Youth (Devrimci Gençlik)	SAG	Indefinite Hunger Strike (Süresiz Açlık Grevi)
Dev-Sol	Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol)	SDB	Armed Revolutionary Units (Silahlı Devrimci Birlikler)
DHKP	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party (Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi)	SHP	Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti)
DHKP-C	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi)	TAYAD	Prisoners' and Convicts' Families Association
DKD	Revolutionary Women's Association (Devrimci Kadınlar Derneği)	TDKP	Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi)
DY	Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol)	THKP-C	People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi)
EYÖD	Elazığ Higher Education Association	TİKB	Union of Revolutionary Communists of Turkey (Türkiye İhtilalcı Komünistler Birliği)
FKB	Physics-Chemistry-Biology (Fizik-Kimya-Biyoloji)	TİP	Workers' Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi)
IMF	International Monetary Fund	TKP	Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Komünist Partisi)
İETT	Istanbul Electric Tramway and Tunnel Enterprises (İstanbul Elektrik Tramvay ve Tünel İşletmeleri)	TL	Turkish lira (Türk lirası)
İLK-SEN	Primary School Teachers' Union (İlkokul Öğretmenleri Sendikası)	TÖB-DER	Association for the Unity and Solidarity of All Teachers (Tüm Öğretmenler Birleşme ve Dayanışma Derneği)
İP	Workers' Party (İşçi Partisi)	TÖS	Teachers' Union of Turkey (Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası)
İTÜ	Istanbul Technical University (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi)	TSİP	Socialist Workers' Party of Turkey (Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi)
İTÜ-DER	Istanbul Technical University Students' Association	TTE	Single-Type Uniform (Tek Tip Elbise)
İYÖD	Istanbul Higher Education Association	USA	United States of America
İYÖKD	Istanbul Higher Education Cultural Association (İstanbul Yüksek Öğrenim Kültür Derneği)	USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
KSD	Kurtuluş Socialist Magazine Group (Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi)		

A 38-year life dedicated to the revolution...

A Leader Who Left His Mark on the History of Revolution in Turkey With His 38-Year Life:

DURSUN KARATAŞ

Dursun Karataş became acquainted with revolutionary ideas before 1970.

In 1970, he gained admission to the Faculty of Forestry at Istanbul University and went to Istanbul. Influenced by the struggle that Mahir and his comrades were waging in a radical, revolutionary manner, Karataş became a sympathiser of the THKP-C³ during his university years.

He experienced his first detention in 1974, during the protest campaign against the Republic of Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus. In Elazığ, together with Niyazi Aydın, who would later serve on the Revolutionary Left Central Committee, he was detained for writing the slogan **"Independent Cyprus"** on walls.

Dursun Karataş was one of the leading militants in organising Istanbul's student youth on an anti-imperialist, anti-fascist basis and was one of the founders of İYÖKD⁴. With his leadership qualities and militant character, he had by then become someone who was both trusted and whose proposals and ideas were listened to.

It was also during this period that he began to be known as **"Dayı"**. Both in İYÖKD and at the Elazığ Dormitory where he stayed, our comrade had many "nephews", and they naturally called him Dayı. But this form of address gradually became widespread and overtook his actual name. In his case, the word *Dayı* would cease to signify a family relationship and, beyond its literal meaning, become a title expressing comradeship, the respect felt for him and the trust placed in him.

The developing struggle of the Revolutionary Youth⁵, who wholeheartedly embraced the THKP-C, required new forms of organisation. The Kurtuluş (Liberation) Group, which took shape under Dayı's leadership, was one of the steps taken at that time to respond to this need. The Revolutionary Youth were now actively involved in every sphere of life: in strikes, resistance in the *gecekondu*⁶ neighbourhoods, actions by civil servants and, in some places, actions by peasants.

³ **THKP-C (People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey):** A revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organisation founded in 1970 under the leadership of Mahir Çayan. It advocated armed revolutionary struggle against imperialism, capitalism and the existing state order in Turkey, and developed the concept of the Party and Front as interconnected components of revolutionary organisation. The THKP-C was physically suppressed after the killing of Mahir Çayan and his comrades at Kızılder on 30 March 1972, but its political line and legacy continued to influence later revolutionary organisations, including Revolutionary Left.

⁴ **İYÖKD (Istanbul Higher Education Cultural Association):** A student organisation established in Istanbul in the 1970s. It became an important centre for the organisation of revolutionary university students and for anti-imperialist, anti-fascist student activity. Dursun Karataş was among its founders and played a leading role in its development and activities.

⁵ **Revolutionary Youth (Dev-Genç):** A revolutionary youth movement that played an important role in Turkey's student struggles from the late 1960s onwards. It organised university students around anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and revolutionary demands and became a major political school for a generation of militants. Many of the revolutionaries who later formed organisations such as the THKP-C emerged from the Revolutionary Youth movement.

⁶ **Gecekondu:** A Turkish term literally meaning "built overnight", referring to informal, usually self-built housing and working-class neighbourhoods that developed rapidly around major cities, particularly through rural-to-

During this period, the clash with the police at the funeral of two revolutionaries murdered by fascists was also the first street clash in the history of revolution in Turkey. It was Dayı who turned the funeral into a barricade battle against the fascist police and correctly directed the masses.

Dursun Karataş and his young militant comrades, conscious of the need to raise the struggle, became part of a new formation which took the name **Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol)** in 1977, in order to create the more advanced forms of organisation demanded by the process and to bring together the potential of the THKP-C. As those leading Revolutionary Path refused to abandon factionalism and liquidationism, Dayı declared that Revolutionary Path did not defend the THKP-C and had adopted a right-wing line. Subsequently, together with a broad mass and militant cadres sympathetic to the THKP-C line, he left Revolutionary Path in 1978 and founded **Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol)**.

Despite all its inexperience, weaknesses and shortcomings, and despite being exposed, Revolutionary Left created the organisational mechanisms and institutions of a new political movement without delay and put into practice a revolutionary policy appropriate to the conditions of the time. Revolutionary Left had continued its struggle under difficult conditions from the moment of its foundation. Although it was still a very young movement, it decided to fight against the American-backed fascist junta of 12 September 1980. At a time when the entire left chose exile, it sought to remain in the country and intensify the struggle against the American-backed junta. Dursun Karataş wrote a declaration entitled **“The American-Backed Fascist Junta Cannot Force 45 Million People to Surrender”**, announcing that Revolutionary Left would fight the fascist junta with all its strength.

During the first days of intensive preparations for the struggle against the fascist junta, Dursun Karataş was taken prisoner. He was subjected to torture for days. As a result of this torture, wounds opened on the soles of his feet and various parts of his body and did not heal for years. During the **“Campaign of Struggle Against the Fascist Junta”**, countless mass actions were carried out despite curfews.

Revolutionary Left very quickly attracted the full attention of the junta. Despite its leader and leading cadres being taken prisoner, it continued the struggle, while resistance was also taking place in the prisons.

The fascist junta pursued a policy aimed at stripping political prisoners of their revolutionary identity and turning them into traitors. Dursun Karataş once again demonstrated his leadership in defeating these policies, in creating a line of resistance to preserve the political identity of the prisoners, and in turning the prisons into arenas in which the class struggle continued. He became the initiator of a new tradition.

Revolutionary Left prisoners in Istanbul prisons resisted fascist practices by every means. In 1984, they crowned these resistances with a **Death Fast** demanding an end to the **“Uniform Clothing”** policy and the uninterrupted inhuman practices in the prisons. Dursun Karataş also participated in the Death Fast, which lasted 75 days. The resistance ended in victory, with four martyrs.

The **Revolutionary Left Main Trial** began on 15 March 1982. The main trial, in which 1,243 people were tried, became a trial not of the revolutionaries, but of the fascist junta. With the political defence they prepared under the title **“We Are Right, We Will Win”**, the Revolutionary Left prisoners put fascism, imperialism and the collaborationist oligarchy on trial.

Dayı brought his imprisonment, which had begun in 1980, to an end with a **freedom action** in October 1989. Following Dayı’s return to active struggle, a period of advance was launched in March 1990 under the slogan **“We Must Run Faster”**. Alongside the creation of widespread mass organisations on the democratic platform and the step-by-step development of armed practice, the movement became the target of intense attacks by the counter-revolution.

urban migration. In the political context of the book, *gecekondu neighbourhoods* often refers to poor and working-class districts that became important centres of social and political struggle.

In the blows suffered by the revolutionary movement during the operations of **12 July 1991** and **17 April 1992**, central committee members, leading cadres and fighters were martyred, including Niyazi Aydın, Sinan Kukul and Dursun Karataş's wife, Sabahat Karataş.

While the revolutionary movement continued to develop under Dayı's leadership, on **13 September 1992**, at the central base abroad, the coup-plotting gang of traitors treacherously attacked Dursun Karataş and took him prisoner. History was testing him once again. And once again, he would demonstrate his qualities as a leader; through his will and foresight, he would ensure that this betrayal was overcome and that our movement could continue its revolutionary march from where it had left off.

The coup betrayal, which had caused severe destruction within the revolutionary movement, was overcome under his leadership. Almost everything was recreated, and the revolutionary march continued. It was during this process that his strong will, unfailing foresight and accurate political decisions placed before the movement the task of becoming a party.

In order to fulfil this task, the **Founding Congress of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party** was convened on **30 March 1994**, with the participation of the leading cadres of the revolutionary movement. At the congress, Revolutionary Left decided to continue its revolutionary march as the **Revolutionary People's Liberation Party (DHKP)**, and Dursun Karataş was elected **General Secretary of the DHKP**. Throughout the years in which he carried out this duty, he initiated countless policies, actions and forms of organisation that increased the hopes of the peoples and advanced the revolution.

Shortly after the congress, before the establishment of the party had been publicly announced, Dayı was taken prisoner by French imperialism on **9 September 1994**. Immediately after the end of his imprisonment, he returned to conditions of illegality. Once again, he was at the head of his organisation.

And with the punishment of former Justice Minister **Mehmet Topaç**, whose signature was beneath the **1 August Circular**⁷, the establishment of the party was officially announced.

The revolutionary struggle that had continued since the THKP-C would now be carried forward under the banner of the **DHKP-C**. Its leader was Dursun Karataş.

Under siege, in conditions of illegality, and throughout the years in which he also struggled against his illness, he lived for the revolution in Turkey. As the leader of the revolutionary movement and its General Secretary, he fulfilled the duty he had undertaken without fail.

Dursun Karataş had held this responsibility for 14 years and continued to fulfil it until his final days.

A heart that had beaten for the revolution for 38 years, dedicated to the liberation of the peoples of the world, to the independence of our homeland and the freedom of our people, stopped beating on **11 August 2008**.

Dayı took his final breath in the arms of his comrades, with the peace of a leader who had fulfilled his duty to the peoples of the world and to his own people. Dursun Karataş, who had undergone cancer treatment for ten years, also knew how to set an example through his resistance against his illness.

His life was a life dedicated to an **independent, democratic, socialist Turkey**. This dedication determined every hour, every second, of those 38 years given to the revolution.

This dedication, this devotion to the cause, will always stand before us as a legacy reminding us of our goal.

Without ever deviating from the goal of an **independent, democratic, socialist Turkey**, we will continue our revolutionary march.

⁷ **1 August Circular:** A prison directive issued by the Turkish Ministry of Justice on **1 August 1988**, under Justice Minister **Mehmet Topaç**. It introduced stricter and more uniform rules for prisons, covering matters such as visits, lawyers' meetings, correspondence, possessions, exercise and disciplinary measures. It also treated collective actions by prisoners—including hunger strikes, refusing prison clothing, chanting political slogans and collective petitions—as disciplinary offences. The circular triggered widespread protests and hunger strikes by political prisoners and their families.

CHAPTER 1



The Land Where He Was Born and His Childhood Years... Dursun Karataş Is the Name of a Life Lived for the Revolution

Our comrade Dursun Karataş was born on 25 March 1952 in Kürdemlik (Cevizdere) village in Elazığ. His family was a working-class Kurdish family. He began to sympathise with revolutionary ideas before 1970. During his high-school years, he was part of a group, many of whose members would later take their place within Revolutionary Left. In 1970, he gained admission to the Faculty of Forestry at Istanbul University and came to Istanbul. These were the years when the path of the revolution in Turkey was being charted, revisionist and reformist traditions were being overcome, the status quo was being broken and new alignments were emerging. In this process of alignment, our comrade took his place on the side of the revolutionary line of Mahir and his comrades. He was now a THKP-C sympathiser.

Following the physical annihilation of Mahir and his comrades at Kızıldereⁱ on 30 March 1972, a great potential emerged among the youth who defended and embraced Mahir and his comrades and the THKP-C. As a Revolutionary Youth militant who defended the THKP-C line, our comrade Dursun Karataş also played an active role in developing this stance of embracing their legacy, both in Istanbul and Elazığ.

Our comrade was detained for the first time in 1974 in Elazığ, while writing the slogan **“Independent Cyprus”** on walls in protest against the oligarchic dictatorship’s occupation of Cyprus. He was carrying out this action together with Niyazi Aydın, who would later serve on the Revolutionary Left Central Committee. In the course of his subsequent revolutionary development, his comrades would sometimes see him providing security for the masses outside a school, and at other times fighting at the barricades of Kocamustafapaşa in Istanbul. And, as these examples show, his leadership was a leadership won step by step in the midst of life.

As has always been said: **leaders are not appointed; leadership is earned.**

To possess this quality means patiently and determinedly developing hundreds of ideas and forms of behaviour in the midst of life, bringing forth a revolutionary who makes history.

As our comrade did...

Dayı’s Childhood

The name of Dayı’s village was Kürdemlik. Later, however, the name of the village was changed to Cevizlidere. Kürdemlik village has a very old history. Long ago, it was one of the Armenian settlement areas. The family settled in Elazığ in 1952. They stayed in Elazığ during the winter and in the village during the summer.

At first, they lived in a single-storey mud-brick house on Bulut Street in the Rüstempaşa neighbourhood of Elazığ. This house was demolished in 1968. His elder brother had it demolished and an apartment building constructed in its place. Dayı, his mother and his father lived on the first floor of the four-storey building. Part of Dayı’s high-school years were spent in this house. However, most of his childhood and high-school years were spent in the original single-storey house.

Most of those living in the Rüstempaşa neighbourhood were people and families who had migrated there from villages. Some had come from Ova village in Elazığ, while others had moved to the Rüstempaşa neighbourhood from surrounding villages. Rüstempaşa was not a very crowded neighbourhood; it was a place where ordinary people lived. Those living in the neighbourhood earned their livelihoods as workers and tradespeople. The neighbourhood had roads, water and electricity. Relations between neighbours were very good. People visited one another and helped one another.

Dayı's mother and father knew Kurdish, and from time to time they would speak Kurdish with one another. The family was of Kurdish and Sunni background. They had information that their ancestors had come to Kürdemlik from Dersim three or four generations earlier.

Dayı's mother was not only an important figure within the family but was also well loved and respected by those around her. Among her children, she had a particular love and attachment towards Dayı. In the words of Dayı's sister-in-law, she was **"always the giving hand"**. If she was sitting outside and a child passed in front of her, she would stand up. She behaved in this way out of love and respect. His mother was hospitable. She would offer whatever she had in her home to those who visited.

She loved Dayı very much, shared things with him and spoke to him as though he were a friend. For example, while Dayı was at university, his mother would have her grandchildren write letters to him every week.

When one of her grandchildren, Ayfer, had just learnt to read and write, his mother said to her, **"Write a letter."** His mother would constantly have letters written to Dayı, and later regularly to him in prison. When her beloved brother-in-law, with whom she had shared many things, died, she gave his name to Dayı when he was born. For this reason, whenever his mother heard the name **"Dursun"**, her eyes would light up and she would become emotional.

Even when Dayı was in prison, his mother would collect the rent from the houses, save it and try to give or send it to Dayı.

When Dayı was a student, his mother would visit the home of her other son, Dayı's elder brother Reşat, in the hope of receiving news about Dayı. Before she died, Dayı's mother visited him in prison for the final time.

While his mother was lying ill in Elazığ, Dayı's sister-in-law went to visit her. When she went, she took with her a pillowcase that Dayı had used and told his mother, **"This is Dursun's pillowcase."** His mother took the pillowcase, smelled it and became very emotional. She died some time after this incident.

There is another memory concerning his mother. The score Dayı received in the university entrance examination was sufficient for admission to two faculties. One was the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Elazığ and the other was the Faculty of Forestry at Istanbul University.

His sister-in-law wanted Dayı to study in Elazığ. She therefore said to his mother, **"Mother, let's not send Dursun to Istanbul; let him study in Elazığ."** His sister-in-law was afraid of Dayı studying in Istanbul. But Dayı's mother said, **"No, he wants Istanbul. Let him go and study there."** His mother was such a valuable and far-sighted woman. Dayı's love for his mother was of a different kind. He shared more with his mother.

Dayı's father was a simple, sincere man who prayed five times a day and regularly went to the mosque. He owned land in the village. He would give his land to sharecroppers and receive rent from it. At that time, the family lived in the city.

His father was a quiet, calm person who did not interfere with anyone. He was known locally as **"İbrahim Dayı"**. He did not gamble, drink alcohol or smoke. He was known in the neighbourhood as a good person with a sense of humour.

One day, his father came to Istanbul to stay with his elder sons. On only his second day there, he said, **"I'm bored here; I'm going back,"** and returned to Elazığ. Even during that short stay, he went to the mosque. Coming out of the mosque, he said to his daughter-in-law, **"My daughter, nobody here even greets one another."** His father did not like Istanbul at all.

Dayı came from a large family. There were six children in the family: four girls and two boys. Dayı was the youngest. One of Dayı's most prominent characteristics during those years was that he had a side to him that stood up against **"injustice"**.

Dayı also loved his elder brother and sisters very much. There was a three-year age difference between Dayı and the sister immediately older than him. Her name was Asiye. Because they grew up together, he was closer to her. There was a thirteen-year age difference between Dayı and his elder brother Reşat.

Dayı was born in Kürdemlik, but the family actually lived in Elazığ. They stayed in Kürdemlik during the summers because they had a garden there. The garden in Kürdemlik was a little outside the village. There was a house in the garden where they could stay.

At that time, they travelled from Elazığ towards the village by bus. They would take the bus as far as Mollakendi, which was a larger place and is now a municipality, and then walk the two-kilometre village road to reach the village. They would remain there for three or four months and return to Elazığ in October.

While in the village, they worked in the vineyards and gardens. In September, they harvested the grapes. They made *bastık* (pestil)⁸, *orcik*⁹ and molasses from the grapes for the winter. The grapes in the vineyard were of the variety known as “**dana gözü**”. They were large, black grapes. Because the grapes were so large, local people thought they resembled a calf’s eye and gave them this name. There were also mulberry trees and other fruit trees in the garden.

Until he went to university, Dayı spent part of every summer in this village. During his high-school years, he worked in his elder brother’s carpentry workshop during the summers.

As a child, Dayı was very sensitive to influenza. He was badly affected by it and would become ill. Apart from this, his childhood passed peacefully and he had no other health problems.

Dayı attended Rüstempaşa Yücel Primary School. He began primary school in 1959. He attended Elazığ Atatürk Secondary School and completed his high-school education at Elazığ High School.

At primary school, Dayı was a bright child who got on very well with his friends. At that time, primary schools were given “powdered milk” as part of US Marshall “aid”. Dayı would not drink it. When he was a little older, he would tell his nephews and nieces who attended primary school, “*Don’t drink it; it causes mental retardation.*” Dayı’s mother kept a cow at home. They drank the milk produced at home and ate homemade yoghurt.

The family was economically self-sufficient. Under the conditions of the time, they had an economic position that could be considered middle class. His mother was very orderly and clean. Dayı acquired these characteristics from his mother during his childhood.

There was a peaceful atmosphere within the family. It was not an environment of quarrels. The children therefore grew up in a peaceful environment. His sisters’ marriages were also without problems.

Dayı was always a successful student at primary school. He studied regularly and did his schoolwork; nobody in the family ever had to tell him, “*Son, study.*” He studied on his own.

At primary school, Dayı’s sister-in-law used to sew his school smocks. From those days onwards, he was always clean, orderly and attentive to his appearance.

The relationship between Dayı and his sister-in-law was one of the warm and beautiful relationships within the family. His sister-in-law had contributed to his upbringing and had an influence on him. They shared the same home for ten years. Dayı did his schoolwork by himself, while his sister-in-law helped him when necessary. When Reşat Abi¹⁰ went into military service, his sister-in-law would have Dayı write letters to him. Dayı regularly wrote the letters sent to Reşat Abi.

There was never a hurtful exchange or argument between Dayı and his sister-in-law. Dayı, his mother and father lived on the first floor, while Reşat Abi and his family lived on the fourth floor. Although their flats were separate, his sister-in-law was constantly with them.

⁸ **Bastık (pestil):** A traditional Turkish fruit leather made by cooking and thickening fruit juice or purée—often grape, mulberry or apricot—and then spreading it into thin sheets to dry. *Bastık* is a regional name for this type of dried fruit preparation.

⁹ **Orcik**, popularly known as *cevizli sucuk* (“walnut sausage”) or, in some regions, *köme*, is a traditional Anatolian sweet made by threading walnut kernels onto a string and dipping them in thick molasses or grape must. It is particularly associated with the Elazığ region.

¹⁰ **Abi:** A Turkish term of address meaning “older brother”. It is also commonly used as a respectful or affectionate form of address for an older male comrade, friend, or acquaintance.

Dayı continued to study at the same pace during secondary school. He was also a hardworking student there. Dayı was the first child in the family to attend university. Later, nephews, nieces and many other relatives' children followed Dayı's example and went to university.

During his high-school years, Dayı held revolutionary ideas. His friends would come to the house, and they would shut themselves in a room and talk. Dayı's father would ask him, *"Why aren't you sleeping? What are you doing until so late?"* Dayı also knew Niyazi Aydın from those years. He had close friends during his high-school years.

When Dayı was in secondary school, he had a kite. It was a large, colourful kite that Dayı had made himself, and he would fly it from time to time. Dayı was skilled with his hands during secondary school. He would make various handmade toys for street games.

Whenever his father became angry, Dayı's mother would intervene and protect him.

After his secondary-school years, Dayı worked during the summers in his elder brother's carpentry workshop. He was good with his hands when it came to carpentry. He learnt how to do certain tasks and carried them out. For example, he would sand things and assist the craftsman. He would carry doors and windows and help load them. Sometimes he would also go to construction sites to help.

At that time, the carpentry workshop was in the area of Elazığ known as Şıra Pazarı. Six or seven people worked in the workshop, and it was very busy. His elder brother would give weekly wages to Dayı and to his nephews of the same age who worked there.

Dayı would gather together his nephews who were the same age as him and talk with them. Sometimes, speaking about his elder brother, he would say:

"He is a boss. We're not going to work too much."

During his high-school years, Dayı did not go to *kahvehane* (coffee house). He had no habits such as gambling or drinking alcohol. Apart from his schoolbooks, he read novels. He read Jack London's *The Iron Heel*. Yaşar Kemal and Orhan Kemal were also among the authors he read. When the fascist junta came to power, the family burned these books of Dayı's in the stove.

During his high-school years, Dayı went to the cinema more often. He was not particularly interested in football or matches. He did not attend matches; he read books and spent time with his friends.

After he began university, he watched Yılmaz Güneyⁱⁱ's film *Arkadaş* (Friend). When he returned to Elazığ for a holiday, he told people he knew:

"Watch the film Arkadaş."

Dayı's youth took shape in this environment.

He had a mature personality. His success in his studies, his work in the workshop during the summers and his hardworking character led people to love him even more and listen to what he said. Among the young people of his age within the family, he was someone who stood out because of his different characteristics.

He had a side to him that loved and protected his mother. His relations with people were positive. He was respectful towards his elders and did not unnecessarily interfere in other people's affairs. None of the neighbours ever had any complaints about Dayı. He did not quarrel with anyone and had no characteristic that disturbed others.

Then came his university years...

Dayı was naturally happy when he gained admission to university. He came to Istanbul and enrolled at the Faculty of Forestry by himself. Afterwards, for a long period, he stayed at the Elazığ Student Dormitory in Feriköy, Istanbul.

During those years, Elazığ's "left-wing" mayor came to inspect the dormitory. Dayı told him about the poor condition of the dormitory and became angry at the lack of attention given to it. When Mayor Şükrü Kaçar returned to Elazığ, he went to Dayı's elder brother and said:

"Your brother was very angry with us."

In 1973, Dayı was driving his elder brother's car from Elazığ to his sister's house in the village when he had an accident. The car rolled into a ditch. Dayı escaped the accident without injury.

In 1974, Dayı, Niyazi Aydın and two others — four people in total — were detained in Elazığ while writing slogans on walls to protest against the occupation of Cyprus. They were held in custody for one night and then released.

While studying at university, Dayı would occasionally return to Elazığ to visit his family, stay for a short period and then return. In the later period, however, he stopped coming altogether. On one occasion he came with Sabahat Abla¹¹, and on another he came alone.

“My Friend the King”

Elazığ High School was the only high school in Elazığ in those years. A considerable proportion of its students went on to university. For this reason, the school produced successful students. Dayı attended this high school.

Elazığ High School was next to Atatürk Secondary School. The high school was also adjacent to the railway station. It was in the lower part of the city. There were mainly schools in this part of the city. Atatürk Secondary School and the School of Arts were also located there. Although there were progressive teachers among the staff, the school generally had a more reactionary character. Unfortunately, there were also times when some lessons could not be held because of a shortage of teachers. In such cases, people from outside, who were not teachers, would come to our classes and teach us.

It was at this high school that I met Dayı. It was 1967–68, and we had just started the first year of high school. In our first lesson, our teacher seated us according to our height. We were in the middle row. There were three rows of desks in the classroom: one row by the windows, one in the middle and one by the door. We sat at the second desk from the front in the middle row. Dayı and I must have been about the same height, because we were seated at the same desk. There were three of us at the desk. That was how my friendship with Dayı, which would last for years, began.

There were 45 students in our class at the time. Once Dayı and I were seated at the same desk, we began talking. We discovered that we lived in the same neighbourhood. Both of our homes were in the Rüstem Paşa neighbourhood. So, we began going to and from school together.

From the first year of high school onwards, Dayı was always a successful and hardworking student. He studied his lessons regularly. He never had to repeat a year. He always passed his classes regularly. His relations with his friends were very strong. He had a special place in the relationships among the students. Dayı had a warm and engaging personality that made people accept him.

During his high-school years, Dayı had many friends, including me. And as his friends, we loved Dayı very much. He always knew how to make himself loved. He had a self-confident side to him.

For example, when we were in the third year of high school, during philosophy lessons it was always he who would talk to the teacher, ask questions and debate. Perhaps because he read so much, perhaps because he was always questioning things, perhaps because he was constantly thinking, he would talk to the teacher during philosophy lessons. He would debate. He would ask questions.

¹¹ **Abla:** A Turkish term of address meaning “older sister”. It is also commonly used as a respectful or affectionate form of address for an older female comrade, friend, or acquaintance.

While the entire class watched these discussions and conversations during philosophy lessons, Dayı would spend the lesson debating with our teacher. For this reason, we looked at him with admiration. I know that he loved philosophy lessons very much. Naturally, philosophy, by its very nature, brought with it many questions and debates. These conversations also had aspects relating to everyday life. That made the discussions enjoyable.

Dayı was not hesitant in debates. He knew how to share his thoughts with his friends. Dayı had a mind that was constantly thinking and capable of interpreting things.

In those years, the only luxury Dayı and I had outside school was walking around the city on holidays. At that time, Elazığ's only busy street was Gazi Street. It ran through the city centre. We would walk along Gazi Street talking, then continue out of the city until we reached a picnic area. There we would sit among the trees and talk about all kinds of things.

At that time, we did not yet have political consciousness, but even in those years Dayı read a great many books. He would save the money his family gave him and buy books from bookshops. He would read the books he bought without delay. After reading them himself, he sometimes gave them to me to read.

He gave me books, but I could not read continuously as he did. I was somewhat astonished by his habit of reading so many books. I would think, *I wish I could read like him*, and I admired him for it.

As far as I remember, Dayı read many novels during his high-school years. Among the novels that we might call classics, I remember *The Iron Heel*, *The Everlasting Struggle* and *Of Mice and Men*. *Of Mice and Men* was also among the books he gave me to read.

He had begun reading books in high school. Of course, he enjoyed reading. The fact that he had begun reading during these years broadened his horizons. In this respect, he always stood out among students of his own age.

Dayı matured at an early age.

We graduated from high school together in the 1969–70 academic year. He gained admission to the Faculty of Forestry at Istanbul University. I, on the other hand, could not get into the school I wanted. Later, I gained admission to the Faculty of Literature.

By the time we graduated from high school, the youth movements and the struggle had begun to grow. But in those years, we did not yet have a political position. We did not, but we would discuss certain things amongst ourselves.

Dayı and the Land Where He Was Born...

Recounted by his sister in Elazığ, Asiye Karataş:

There were three years between Dursun and me. Because the age difference was not very great, I witnessed his childhood and his youth up until the years when he finished high school. I could even say that when he was little, I was something of a mother to him. That is why we grew up together. And as sister and brother, we became very attached to one another. That is why we loved one another so much. As for me, I loved him so much that I would have given my life for him.

Actually, there is not very much that remains in my memory from those years. I also married at an early age. I experienced family problems. Because of this, I became very absent-minded. But I can say that we spent our childhood and the years that followed together. I played with him, laughed with him, cried with him and talked with him.

Perhaps I loved him so much because I had put so much effort into raising him. But my brother also loved me very much and thought about me.

He was always a person who was easy to love. He lived here for so many years and never once hurt a neighbour's feelings. No neighbour, relative or acquaintance could say:

"Dursun was a bad child. He hurt our feelings. He treated us badly. He upset us."

They could not say these things, because he was always a good person. He was someone who helped everyone. I am not saying this simply because he was my brother; genuinely, to this day, no one has ever said a bad word about him behind his back.

He was a good person. He always lived thinking of others.

I miss him enormously. I always longed to see him.

He was very thoughtful. He loved us very much.

Years later, when he was imprisoned, I went to visit him. While we were talking in the visiting area, after asking how I was, he said something to me that I have never forgotten. I was seeing him for the first time in years. I was sad because of this, and I was also experiencing family problems.

He looked at my face and said:

“Why are you so sad? You must be going through some problems. You must be having a problem arising from your marriage.”

I cried there. He tried to calm me down. He talked to me about it. He had looked after me. I was very happy. I listened carefully to what he told me. He was telling me things that were right and good. I felt relieved. I left him feeling at peace.

Although he himself was in prison, although he was the one in difficulty, he was giving us morale. He was telling us good things.

He was very thoughtful. There, simply by looking at my face, he understood that I was troubled. And instead of saying, *“What is it to me?”*, he helped me.

I want to say a little about the land where he was born and grew up.

He loved these places. He stayed in Elazığ until he finished high school. Then his university years began. After he went to Istanbul, he was not able to come here very often. The times he came were limited and few. When he could no longer come after leaving, our longing for him grew even greater. We missed him terribly.

The name of our village is Kürdemlik. Later, however, they changed its name to Cevizlidere. Of course, the state did not like the name Kürdemlik. They changed it because the name Kürdemlik evoked the Kurds. Nevertheless, among the people and in our own speech, we still call it Kürdemlik.

Kürdemlik is one of the central villages of Elazığ. It is approximately 15 kilometres from Elazığ. The distance between our village and Mollakendi, our township, is 4.7 kilometres. The distance between Elazığ and Mollakendi is 9.7 kilometres.

Leaving Elazığ, after the Diyarbakır junction, you take the Tunceli–Bingöl road. You follow the road until you reach the turn-off for Mollakendi. Beside the gendarmerie station, you take the turn marked Mollakendi.

Mollakendi is a township with its own municipality. Agriculture and livestock farming are practised there. If you continue without entering the centre of Mollakendi, you eventually reach our village after continuing along a dirt road.

Of course, the roads are better now. But in the past, getting there was a major problem.

Our village is at the foot of Hazar Baba Mountain. It is also called Hazar Mountain. Hazar Mountain is 2,347 metres high. On one side, behind us, we have Hazar Mountain. The other side is open. There are hills opposite us as well. Our village lies among them.

One of the most distinctive features of our village was the Hazar Power Station, which was located nearby. The power station was to one side of us. For a period, electricity was generated there. For this purpose, water was brought from Lake Hazar through large, thick pipes. Because Lake Hazar lay behind the mountain, water was taken from there through thick pipes. The pipes had been laid across the mountains.

Later, when a dam was built in Elazığ, water was drawn from the reservoir to the power station. For a long period, perhaps for years, this power station operated and generated electricity. It produced Elazığ’s electricity.

In our childhood world, this power station and the generation of electricity held a fascinating place. We were always curious about how electricity was generated. From our village, we could see the buildings of the power station.

The Hazar Power Station no longer operates. The place now looks like a pile of ruins, surrounded by barren and sandy land. It has become a deserted place.

In the past, it was very lively. It was crowded and noisy. You could hear people's voices.

The winters were very cold in those years. Hazar Baba was constantly covered in snow. The snow would settle. But we spent the winters in the city and came to the village during the summers.

In summer, the village was cool. It was very lively and cheerful. It was filled with the sound of people.

My brother was born there. He spent his childhood there, particularly the summer months.

Transport was difficult in those years. We would travel to our village in the village vehicle. Before that, there had been donkeys. We would travel by vehicle as far as Mollakendi. After Mollakendi, we would walk. On foot, it took 20 minutes; if we found a vehicle, the journey took only 10 minutes.

Today, there are only about 40–50 houses remaining in the village, each standing separately and scattered around. There was never a concentrated settlement in the village. Everyone built their house on their own land, inside their own garden. That is why the houses are separated from one another and scattered around. There are houses on the mountain ridge and even at the entrance to the village.

In the past, the village was more crowded.

The village always made its living from agriculture and livestock farming, although agriculture was more important. Livestock farming was carried out not so much commercially as to meet the villagers' needs for milk, yoghurt, butter and similar products.

We had vineyards and fruit trees such as apricot and mulberry trees in the village. Our land was a little way from the village and off to one side. At that time, we had a lot of land.

We had also built a house on our land. When we went there during the summer months, we would sit in the garden and stay in this house. We too were a large group when we were in the village. We picked fruit. We had a vineyard. We had animals. We kept a cow for our needs for milk, yoghurt and butter. My mother mainly looked after the animals.

Towards the end of the summer months, we would begin preparing our food for the winter. We made molasses from grapes. We dried certain vegetables for the winter. For this reason, our lives were active and spent working.

My brother and I were happy in the village.

My brother also led a very quiet life in the village. We played games. We wandered through the fields. We hardly ever went inside the house. Perhaps we would come home when we became hungry.

Because my father could not cultivate all our land, he gave some of it to others to cultivate. Where we came from, this was called "*yarıcı*". In other words, it meant sharing by halves. Wheat and barley were planted on the land we gave to the sharecroppers, and naturally we received half of the produce.

Because of this, our economic situation was good. In later years, we sold our land.

Kurdish was spoken in the village. My mother, father and elder brother knew Kurdish.

The village was crowded. It is said that Armenians also lived here at one time. Relations between neighbours in the village were highly developed. Mutual assistance was so good that it could serve as an example.

My mother was from Dere Boğazı. Their village was adjacent to ours. We were opposite one another. My father, meanwhile, was from Kürdemlik village. When my father and mother married, they first lived in Kürdemlik. Later, they moved to central Elazığ.

Our village is arid. It is not forested. The gardens are greener. In fact, the greenery of the village comes from the trees in the gardens.

There is no forest on Hazar Baba Mountain. It too is a bare mountain. Looking from the village, we always saw this barrenness. Perhaps that was why we were pleased when my brother gained admission to the Faculty of Forestry. We all loved forests, trees and greenery.

There was a stream running through the village. It passed through the middle of the village. At that time, there was water in this stream. Some people even went swimming there. Because of this stream running through the middle of the village, the village was also called "*Karanlık Dere*" (Dark Stream). In other words, there are also people who know our village by the name "*Karanlık Dere*".

There was a construction site in the village in those years. Villagers worked there. At the time, the project was laying pipes across the mountain and trying to carry water from Lake Hazar to the power station.

My brother and I would frequently go to the construction site. We were curious about how it worked and would watch the workers.

Dursun was a hardworking student during his school years. Everyone loved him very much. My family, my mother and father, very much wanted him to study at university. Naturally, he also wanted to attend university.

He always studied by himself. No one helped him while he studied.

During his high-school years, he had two or three friends. During the summers in high school, he worked with his elder brother in the carpentry workshop. He loved all the members of the family.

During his high-school years, he would sometimes play outside with his friends. I remember that one day, while flying a kite he had made from tin, it struck him in the eye.

While he was at university, my mother went and stayed with him for a while.

During his university years, he came back to his hometown three times on different occasions. On one occasion, he came with his wife, our daughter-in-law Sabahat.

My brother was born in Elazığ. They gave him our uncle's name. Our uncle had died at a young age. He had been a very good person. That was why they gave Dursun his name.

When he was in high school, he would sing folk songs while studying. Later, he also listened to folk songs from Elazığ. He listened to and liked local artists such as Abdullah Papur and Enver Demirbağ.

While working in the carpentry workshop, he made himself a desk. At home, he would study at that desk.

On one of his journeys back home, my brother had an accident while returning by taxi from Nusaybin. The car window was broken. He was not injured in the accident.

One day, his wife, Dursun and I went to a restaurant near Hozat Garage.

We had one of our best conversations there.

My brother loved our mother very much. When our mother died, he sent a letter and a carnation. The letter was very emotional. He wrote about how much he loved his mother and asked that a carnation be placed on her grave in Dursun's name.

My mother also loved Dursun very much. She took her final breath smelling his pillowcase.

My mother kept Dursun's pyjamas because she believed that he would return and wear them.

She was waiting for him.

My father was quiet, while my mother was the one who held the family together. My brother got on well with both my father and my mother.

He had always been someone who got on well with people.

And until the end of his life, this characteristic of his never changed.

A Friend from His High-School Years Recounts:

I attended Elazığ High School. I met Dursun in the 1969–70 school year. I was 15 years old at the time and was in the first year of high school. Dursun was in the third year. There were two years between us. That was when I first got to know him.

We met at school. Once we knew one another from high school, I would sometimes join them. One of Dursun's very close classmates was a relative of mine. I was younger than them, but because of this family connection I would also spend time with them.

One of the clearest things I remember about Dursun from those years is how much he read. That stayed in my mind. Yes, compared with others of his age, he read a great deal. He would also pass the books he had read on to friends around him so that they could read them too. There were some books he gave me to read.

At that time, Dursun was likeable, courageous and the most politically conscious among us. He was very hardworking and read a great many books. There were also times when we read books together. We did this while we were still at high school.

I want to relate an incident from our high-school years.

Dursun's closest friend in the class was called up for an oral examination in history. The teacher asked him the name of the third President of the United States. His friend could not answer the question.

Dursun then tried to help him. First, from his seat, he made a gesture with his hands as though holding a machine gun. Then he pretended to spray bullets with it.

The correct answer to the question was Thomas Jefferson. Dursun was making a sign referring to the Thompson, which was a well-known machine gun at the time.

His friend still did not understand.

Then the teacher said:

"Son, look, your friend is giving you the answer from over there. Watch him."

I want to tell of another incident from our high-school years.

We were at school. On 1 May 1969, we were going to celebrate May Day. In truth, we did not really know exactly how we were supposed to celebrate it.

So we went to Lake Hazar, about 20 kilometres from Elazığ. The lake is in Sivrice, a district of Elazığ. There were around ten or fifteen of us.

We had a picnic by the lake. Then we sang marches. Three or five fascists who heard us from nearby gathered around. Then a fight broke out. More precisely, when they saw us singing marches, they began shouting unspeakable insults at us.

During those school years, apart from lessons, we would also have conversations in places away from the school. We were never very crowded; usually three or four of us would walk together to a picnic area.

One day, while walking, we passed the building of the Teachers' Union of Turkey (TÖS)¹² in Elazığ. After we had passed, a bomb exploded outside TÖS.

In those years, TÖS was the mass organisation of progressive, democratic and revolutionary teachers. The government could not tolerate the organisation of TÖS and carried out attacks of this kind.

The bombing made us angry.

A bomb was being thrown at the association of left-wing teachers.

We would come to know fascism through examples like these.

¹² **Teachers' Union of Turkey (TÖS):** *Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası*, a progressive teachers' trade union founded in 1965. Led initially by the writer and teacher Fakir Baykurt, it became one of Turkey's largest and most influential public-sector unions and played a prominent role in struggles for teachers' rights and democratic education. TÖS, together with İLK-SEN, organised the nationwide four-day teachers' boycott of December 1969, involving around 109,000 education workers. It was closed down following the 12 March 1971 military intervention.

In those years, we read the daily newspaper *Yeni Ortam* (New Situation). *Yeni Ortam* was a progressive daily newspaper. Some of its writers had been detained and tortured during the fascism of 12 March. Because of this, and under the influence of the struggle of that period, good articles were published in the newspaper.



CHAPTER 2



**University Years,
From İYÖKD to Revolutionary Left...
A New Leader on the Path of Mahir and His Comrades...
Whether the THKP-C Would Have a Future Was the Question History Posed at That
Time:
The Answer Was Dursun Karataş!**

The process of establishing and developing the struggle of İYÖKD (Istanbul Higher Education Cultural Association), which would transform the academic-democratic struggle and the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist stance of Istanbul's student youth into an organised force, was at the same time the process through which our comrade Dursun Karataş rose to the position of leader of Istanbul's revolutionary youth.

With his qualities as an organiser and his militant character, he had become someone who was trusted and whose proposals and ideas were listened to.

It was also during this period that he began to be known as "Dayı".

Both within İYÖKD and at the Elazığ Dormitory where he stayed, he had many "nephews", and they naturally called our comrade Dayı. But this form of address gradually became widespread and overtook his own name.

In his case, the word *Dayı* would cease to signify a family relationship and, beyond its literal meaning, become a title expressing comradeship, the respect felt for him and the trust placed in him.

Dayı had now become a symbolic name: someone you could lean on under any conditions, someone you could trust under any circumstances, and someone whose target you could follow with your eyes closed.

The developing struggle of the Revolutionary Youth, who wholeheartedly embraced the THKP-C, required new forms of organisation. The **Kurtuluş Group**, which took shape under the leadership of our comrade Dursun Karataş, was one of the steps taken at that time to respond to this need.

From the formation of this group onwards, Karataş rose to the position of leader not only within the youth movement in Istanbul, but also in the anti-fascist struggle being waged in every sphere of life.

The Revolutionary Youth were now actively taking part in strikes, resistance in *gecekondu* neighbourhoods, actions by civil servants and, in some places, actions by peasants, and were trying to direct these struggles. Meanwhile, our comrade, as the organiser and leader of all these actions and activities, and as someone personally implementing them in practice, gradually began to develop his abilities, mature and learn the art of politics and leadership.

The unification of the Revolutionary Youth fighting throughout the country and of the THKP-C potential was the common desire of all the militants. The needs of the struggle also required such an organisation.

Within this framework, in 1977, **Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol)** was formed, with the participation of Dursun Karataş and his comrades.

The aim in uniting around the Revolutionary Path Declaration was to establish ideological clarity in line with the THKP-C and to create the party.

However, Revolutionary Path could not become the platform for these aims.

This was because the Ankara faction within this structure, while appearing to defend the THKP-C, did not in practice move towards forms of organisation appropriate to this. Instead, by imposing its own right-wing understanding on the cadres, it was building not the party but its own factional organisation.

During this process, the criticisms directed by Dursun Karataş at the leaders of the Ankara faction, concerning both their various writings and their practice, were generally brushed aside. Instead of discussing the process, plans were made to liquidate the militant revolutionary organisation in Istanbul, personified in Dursun Karataş.

The liquidation of THKP-C ideology and revolutionary organisation could not be permitted.

The liquidationistsⁱⁱⁱ had to be liquidated.

At that moment, the decision taken by our comrade Dursun Karataş became one of the most important decisions in the history of revolution in our country. At the same time, it determined the historical role he would play in shaping the revolution in Turkey for decades.

The task of continuing the ideology of the THKP-C and recreating the party could no longer be left to others.

It was at this historic turning point that our comrade Dursun Karataş took this heavy burden upon his shoulders.

Through his decisive initiative and leadership, cadres who defended the THKP-C condemned the liquidationism of Revolutionary Path and founded **Revolutionary Left** in 1978.

There was now a new political movement in the class struggle of our country.

By developing the revolutionary struggle along the THKP-C line, placing before itself the goal of creating the party, and following the path of the Kızıldere Manifesto in the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist struggle, this political movement would create new traditions and, within a short period of time, compel both friend and enemy to recognise it.

In the history of revolution in Turkey, there has been no other “split” that developed so rapidly in such a short period, stood on its own feet, and became so deeply rooted and permanent.

The leadership of our comrade Dursun Karataş lay in his audacity to carry out this revolutionary split, in his political understanding and foresight, and in his mastery in organising a new movement.

This was also one of the decisive processes that made his leadership an **earned leadership**.

(Taken from the Party’s Statement No. 39, dated 11 August 2008, issued following the martyrdom of Dayı.)

1970 – He gained admission to the Faculty of Forestry at Istanbul University and came to Istanbul. He began to continue his struggle there as a THKP-C sympathiser.

November 1973 – He took part in the founding of **İYÖKD (Istanbul Higher Education Cultural Association)**.

1974 – He was detained in Elazığ for writing slogans in protest against the occupation of Cyprus.

1975 – The **Kurtuluş Group** was formed in Istanbul under Dayı’s leadership.

2 December 1975 – The first major clash in Kocamustafapaşa, during which the revolutionary movement learned street fighting, took place. Dursun Karataş was both in the resistance and at its head.

April 1977 – Following discussions with Revolutionary Youth members in Ankara, a decision was taken to publish the **Revolutionary Path Declaration**.

August 1977 – He married his comrade **Sabahat Karataş**, with whom he had been carrying out the struggle.

February 1978 – Dayı went to Ankara one final time in an attempt to find solutions to the problems.

February 1978 – He led a meeting at the **İTÜ-DER premises** attended by 40 cadres from various areas. At the meeting, the cadres declared that they stood with him.

April 1978 – He was detained and arrested. He spent **1 May 1978** in prison.

Dayı, the Leader of Our Movement

In January 1986, at Metris prison (Istanbul), I was placed in the same ward as Dayı. From January 1986 until April 1988, we stayed sometimes in the same ward and sometimes in nearby wards. During this period, without exception, I had the opportunity to see and speak with him every day.

But I first came to know of Dayı earlier, in 1976. I first heard his name on one of the days when I visited the Istanbul Higher Education Association (İYÖD) in Istanbul. A friend I knew mentioned his name and asked me:

“Do you know Dursun Dayı?”

It was a name I had never heard before. After hearing it, I became curious about who he was and how I could find him. I learnt that he was someone who was loved, respected, a leader, and trustworthy.

I did not meet him immediately. From what I was told, I understood that he did not have a fixed place where he could be found. He might be at the Elazığ Dormitory in Feriköy, the Faculty of Forestry, the association, the dormitories, marches and similar places.

Then, towards the end of 1976, one day when I visited İYÖD, a friend introduced us. I realised that I had never seen him before. I fixed his face in my memory so that I would not forget it.

Dayı had previously been in the leadership of İYÖKD, the Istanbul Higher Education Cultural Association. Even while I was still in high school and living outside Istanbul, İYÖKD was a name I followed in the newspapers and admired. The actions of revolutionary university youth in Istanbul under the leadership of İYÖKD appeared in the press.

The protests following the killing of İYÖKD leader **Şahin Aydın**¹³, the occupation of Istanbul University and the funeral after the killing of **Kerim Yaman**¹⁴, and various other actions were reported in the daily press. From time to time, they could also be seen on the single television channel of the period.

While I was in high school, I would come to Istanbul during the summer holidays to work and earn money for my school expenses. Because I had great sympathy for İYÖKD, I almost considered it a duty to visit it, and I did so several times.

Sometimes, when I went there, I would come across discussions. Even though I did not understand very much, I listened with interest. I did not fully understand imperialism, but I had some knowledge of it. However, I first heard the term “social imperialism”^{iv} during discussions at İYÖKD.

The friend beside me said that the İYÖKD members considered the concept of “social imperialism” to be wrong and opposed it. I remember thinking, *Good, I’m glad they oppose it*. It was not because I knew anything; mine was more of a reaction along the lines of, *Where did this come from?*

Later, I would learn why some circles described imperialism as “social imperialism”.

Later, I encountered Dayı several more times.

On one occasion, we were sitting in another association in the evening, talking with friends. Suddenly, at a moment when no one expected it, Dayı entered together with a comrade. We stood up to greet him.

¹³ **Şahin Aydın (1961–1974)**: A revolutionary student and member of the executive board of the İstanbul Higher Education Culture Association (İYÖKD). Born in Gönen, Balıkesir, he became involved in revolutionary politics while attending teacher-training school and later studied law at Istanbul University. He was killed in Istanbul in December 1974 in an attack by fascist militants. His killing is widely described as the first major political killing of the post-12 March 1971 period, and his funeral became a large mobilisation of revolutionary youth.

¹⁴ **Kerim Yaman (1953–1975)**: A revolutionary student from Akhisar studying at Vatan Engineering Higher School in Istanbul. He was killed on 23 January 1975 during an armed attack by fascists outside his school. His killing provoked major student protests; tens of thousands joined demonstrations and his funeral procession in Istanbul.

A short while later, two people from other political circles arrived. As soon as they sat down, they began trying to discuss political issues. Those of us in the association, as though we had agreed among ourselves, all fell silent and began looking at Dayı.

When we remained silent, Dayı was forced to debate with the newcomers.

The other two had entered the discussion rather abruptly, without realising that they would be debating with someone far ahead of them politically. After a short while, they fell silent, giving answers such as:

“We don’t know these issues”, “We should ask about that issue”, and so on.

They drank their tea and quickly left.

Those of us who were there could see in one another’s eyes that we were overjoyed. But then we began hearing Dayı say things showing that he did not think as we did.

Dayı told us:

“You should have talked with those who came. There should have been no need for us to do it. Have confidence in yourselves on these matters. You saw that those who came did not know anything particularly impressive. Trust yourselves.”

We were pleased that he had confidence in us, but we also understood that what we had done was wrong.

Even though it lasted only a short time, what he did was to guide and educate us. As the years passed, I came to understand better the practical meaning of the confidence he showed in us that day in the association: it was a reflection of his approach of trusting young people.

He always trusted young people within the movement.

Afterwards, we would meet from time to time. At associations or marches, he would greet us and ask how we were. In truth, this modest approach was very pleasing and inspired respect for him.

We encountered comrades such as **Sinan Kukul^v** and **Fazıl Özdemir^{vi}** more often. Most often, it was Sinan. We would meet in associations, marches, dormitories and almost every environment.

Sinan and Fazıl were also among those who were very well liked.

In fact, when I began staying at Kadirga Student Dormitory, I preferred not to stay in my normal room but in the room where Sinan had stayed before me. We had arranged it that way with the comrades.

I would also meet **Sabo (Sabahat Karataş)^{vii}** around the association or at DKD, the Revolutionary Women’s Association. I did not know her closely; our acquaintance was only at the level of greeting one another.

Although I did not know Dayı closely enough in those days, I had learnt many things about him: his leadership, his seriousness, his determined role in the Kocamustafapaşa events...

During the Revolutionary Path period, there were differences between Istanbul and Ankara in the campaigns that were organised. At that time, many of us noticed these differences but did not fully understand them. I would understand them better after the split.

During the process leading to the split from Revolutionary Path, I generally knew about the role of Dayı and the other comrades because the relevant comrades kept us informed. In later years, I would learn in more detail about Dayı’s role.

One development in which the split clearly manifested itself in practice was **1 May 1978**.

Early in the morning, we went to Beşiktaş and joined the cortege on the road opposite Yıldız Engineering, at Yıldız Yokuşu. We were going to Taksim Square. The march had not yet begun.

A comrade on duty informed the relevant comrades in the cortege:

“There is a problem at the front with the comrades from Ankara over the banner. Discussions are continuing...”

The comrades from Ankara wanted the Revolutionary Path banner with the emblem to be carried at the front, while the comrades from Istanbul wanted the banner “***Our Path Is the Path of the Çayans***” to be at the front.

In the end, the position of Istanbul prevailed.

After 1 May, the split became definite and was formally established.

During the process of separation from Revolutionary Path, Dayı’s name was decisive for us. The militant cadres trusted Dayı’s foresight and determination.

Through the process experienced with Revolutionary Path itself, they had seen that defending the THKP-C tradition and walking on the path of Mahir and his comrades meant, under the conditions of that time, walking on Dayı’s path.

Dayı and Elazığ

In 1977, I was a student at the Faculty of Economics at Istanbul University. I am originally from Malatya.

When I finished high school, I had an interest in the revolutionary struggle. In 1977, I gained admission to a school in Istanbul that I very much wanted to attend.

I wanted to study in Istanbul because the revolutionary struggle there was intense.

I began the Faculty of Economics as a member of Revolutionary Youth. I took part in the intense anti-fascist struggle of that period.

I could see that the comrades were making efforts to develop me. After a short time, I began to take on various responsibilities.

It was during this period that I also began to encounter Dayı. I knew that he was responsible for our movement.

We would most often meet him at the Balıkesir Student Dormitory in Çemberlitaş and at a coffee house beneath the dormitory. Many of our comrades would be present during those conversations.

Dayı would also speak with some of our leading comrades who came there specifically to talk to him. Depending on the situation, current issues would become the subject of discussion.

The conversations there were educational and helped us develop.

One day, I was wearing a leather jacket. My moustache had also grown quite long. The year I am referring to was 1977. I was a university student at the time.

I was in the coffee house below Balıkesir Dormitory.

Dayı saw me dressed like that and seemed surprised at first. Then he said:

“What is this outfit? You look like an İETT¹⁵ bus driver.”

Despite all his work and how busy he was, Dayı never avoided taking an interest in us, his comrades. He was very careful and attentive in this respect.

Dayı knew which comrades were where. Even if he did not see certain comrades, he knew about them and would ask after them. I witnessed many times how he would ask in detail about particular comrades.

Although there was an intense anti-fascist struggle at that time, under Dayı’s guidance we did not neglect political education. We could not neglect it.

We carried out small-group study. We read in groups. We discussed what we read.

One of the subjects we studied was **Mahir Çayan^{viii}’s Collected Writings**. From there, we studied **Uninterrupted 1–2–3**. Through *Uninterrupted Revolution*, we tried to understand the revolution in our country.

¹⁵ İETT: *İstanbul Elektrik Tramvay ve Tünel İşletmeleri* (Istanbul Electric Tramway and Tunnel Enterprises), Istanbul’s long-established municipal public transport authority, historically responsible for services including buses, trams and the Tünel funicular.

We carried out these studies at MAYÖD, the student association of the School of Finance and Accounting in Beyazıt. These studies and discussions lasted a month. There were discussions on certain days of the week.

As far as I remember, Sinan Kukul, **İbrahim Erdoğan**^{ix} and **Niyazi Aydın**^x Abi also participated in these discussions.

Dayı had very warm relations with the comrades. Every time we met, he would ask how we were. He would enquire about us and talk with us.

During the period of separation, while the liquidationism of Revolutionary Path was being overcome, he would frequently talk with us. I can say that I partly owe the clarity I gained during that period to those conversations.

Those conversations genuinely strengthened us. They opened our minds and our consciousness.

In this respect too, Dayı had seen the future.

In later years, we would still meet from time to time. By then, Dayı had even more work to do and was constantly rushing from one place to another.

As our movement reorganised itself, it overcame some of the obstacles before it more easily through Dayı's will.

Balıkesir Dormitory, 1974

In 1974, 30–35 of us would come together for discussions at Balıkesir Dormitory. We mostly tried to find answers to some of the problems we were experiencing at the time.

We could see and observe that the youth represented enormous potential. This potential had to be utilised.

We were discussing: *"How do we organise the youth?"*

It was the kind of discussion in which everyone tried to contribute something. These studies continued for quite a while. Eventually, certain steps were taken towards organising the youth. Most importantly, it was from among this group that comrades who would later lead the youth struggle emerged.

Dayı always played an important role in this work.

Later, I was sent to Malatya to carry out work. It was the 1977–78 period.

There, while organising the anti-fascist struggle on the one hand, we were also thinking about and discussing certain things concerning the countryside and trying to take steps in that direction.

We were interested in the countryside and the mountains. We knew that the revolutionary process in our country also had to pass through these areas.

For this reason, we began travelling to certain villages.

Similarly, from that period onwards, the comrades in Elazığ began travelling to Hozat and to some villages.

The aim was both to expand into the villages and to get to know the villages and the peasantry.

During the Revolutionary Left period, this work became more conscious and systematic.

To explain our interest in the countryside and the mountains, I can also add this: we read books written about the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions.

We tried to draw certain lessons from these books. Guerrilla warfare especially attracted us.

We shared and discussed all of these things with Dayı.

I remember that Dayı came to Malatya once during those years. He came and we discussed certain matters.

Later, Dayı went on to Elazığ for his work. He was also going to meet the comrades there.

“I First Met Him in Elazığ”

I began the revolutionary struggle in Elazığ. And I also met Dayı there.

In later years, I became Chairman of Elazığ Revolutionary Youth.

I will mainly describe our encounters in Elazığ and some of our encounters in Istanbul, where I went for a period.

I first met Dayı in Elazığ in 1975.

I had only recently returned from military service. It was a period when I was only just beginning to become acquainted with the struggle.

I myself was going through a period of searching. Naturally, the struggle was affecting me.

At that time, there was the Elazığ Higher Education Association (EYÖD) in Elazığ. I used to visit the association.

Certain political tendencies were trying to take control of the association at that time. For example, the Aydınlık supporters were carrying out such work.

Likewise, the group known as the “THKP-C Acilciler”^{xi} was trying to organise in certain parts of Kurdistan.

During this period, three organisers from that group clashed with the police at Beylerderesi in Malatya. This group, which included İlker Akman, were martyred.

During the same period, Ömer Güven from the group calling themselves the “8’likçiler” was giving seminars and trying to organise in Elazığ. As Front sympathisers, we took a clear position against these efforts.

At a time when all these intense discussions were taking place, Dayı was also coming and going to Elazığ.

He came during the period when Ömer Güven was giving seminars.

Later, Dayı held a discussion meeting in Fevzi Çakmak.

That was where I first met Dayı, in the Fevzi Çakmak neighbourhood.

That day, we had a discussion lasting for hours.

Dayı explained to us the Acilciler, Ömer Güven and who he was. He explained the Front to us.

Naturally, these discussions by Dayı had a very strong influence on us.

Our minds opened.

Very few people went over to the *Acilciler* or to those calling themselves the *8’likçiler*.

At that time, Elazığ was a place regarded as important by everyone.

In 1975, fascists attacked the “**Protest Against High Prices, Unemployment and Fascism Rally**” organised by TÖB-DER¹⁶, the mass organisation of progressive-revolutionary teachers.

After that rally, a struggle lasting for months began in Elazığ between revolutionary forces and fascists.

It was under these conditions that Dayı continued coming to Elazığ.

When he came, he had brought Mahir’s **Uninterrupted Revolution** texts.

Alongside them, he also brought the Marxist-Leninist classics published by Sol Publications.

I can never forget Dayı’s efforts in discussing the *Uninterrupted* texts.

He played a very great role in helping us understand and learn them.

¹⁶ **TÖB-DER:** *Tüm Öğretmenler Birleşme ve Dayanışma Derneği* (Association for the Unity and Solidarity of All Teachers), a progressive teachers’ organisation founded in 1971 after the closure of TÖS. It became one of the most influential organisations of teachers and education workers in Turkey during the 1970s, campaigning for democratic education, teachers’ rights and broader social struggles. Its members were frequently targeted by fascist attacks and state repression. TÖB-DER was closed following the 12 September 1980 military coup.

When he came to Elazığ during those years, in terms of direct relations, he would mainly discuss certain matters with our martyr **Nurettin Güler^{xii}**, **Haydar Başbağ^{xiii}** and one person who later became a traitor.

Dayı invested a great deal of effort in our martyr Nurettin Güler and tried to prepare him for more serious responsibilities.

For that reason, he worked particularly closely with Nurettin.

Dayı also liked Nurettin very much as a person.

When Nurettin was martyred, Dayı was deeply saddened.

At that time, regarding retaliation for Nurettin's martyrdom, Dayı said:

"Do not harm the people, but apart from that you can carry out any kind of action.

You can even burn the place down."

Dayı was a leader who embraced his comrades in this way and who took such determined positions.

Nurettin's martyrdom had affected him.

It was 1976.

One morning, Dayı, Sabahat and I had breakfast together.

Dayı and Sabahat had come to our home.

My mother was baking bread. Our house was in Fevzi Çakmak. There was a stove in the kitchen.

Sabahat said to my mother:

"Mother, let me make the bread."

And she made the bread.

Dayı and Sabahat had only recently married at the time.

Dayı was wearing a suit. He later left the jacket with us.

Then they went to Nusaybin to visit Sabahat's family.

As they were leaving, I teased them:

"Are you going to kiss hands?"

Dayı and Sabahat returned separately from Nusaybin. They met again here in Elazığ.

I also want to write about one of the lesser-known sides of Dayı.

When he went to Nusaybin, he established relations with smugglers there and made a connection for weapons.

He brought the weapons to Elazığ by car.

Later, he sent some of them to Istanbul.

During the process in which the liquidationism of Revolutionary Path was overcome and the separation took place, important developments occurred here.

Dayı came and went from time to time. Various discussions took place here.

Elazığ was important.

For this reason, the liquidationists also tried very hard to win people away from here.

However, through Dayı's efforts and the efforts of our leading comrades here, liquidationism did not achieve what it had hoped for.

By 1 May 1978, the situation had become clear.

The first stand against liquidationism had been taken.

We were following this process from Elazığ as well.

At the beginning of 1978, Dayı visited Elazığ.

In discussions in Elazığ, Dayı placed particular emphasis on the national question.

He explained our perspective.

He emphasised fraternity in particular.

He would give examples from **Hüseyin Cevahir^{xiv}**'s writings.

A consistent stance could thus be taken here against Kurdish nationalism.

In May 1978, during preparations for an action, several people here were detained. Among them was also a comrade who held a leadership responsibility.

Those detained were being held at the Harput Gendarmerie Station.

Dayı was in Elazığ at the time.

When he learnt what had happened, he became very angry with the comrades and said:

“Come on, what are you waiting for? Get the weapons out; we’re going to go and get them out of there.”

However, when it became clear that we could resolve the matter bureaucratically, we brought in acquaintances and had the comrades released.

In the following months, I went to Istanbul.

We were at Balıkesir Dormitory.

Dayı and I discussed the Ethiopia and Eritrea question.

We also discussed the Guinea-Bissau question.

At that point, the issue had become focused to some extent on the national question.

The discussion remained unfinished because Dayı had to leave for some work.

At a later meeting, he reminded me of this discussion, and we completed it.

It was almost a year later when he reminded me.

When we met a year later, he said:

“We had a discussion. It was left unfinished. Let’s finish it.”

One day in Istanbul, we stayed at a house with comrades.

At midnight, Dayı also came to the house where we were staying.

He knocked on the door.

Everyone was still awake.

When Dayı saw the comrades still up, he asked:

“Why haven’t you gone to bed?”

This time I asked Dayı:

“Isn’t it dangerous for you to be outside at this hour?”

He explained that he had to inspect the houses and that they were trying to create a certain culture around this.

We then had a discussion about it.

In 1984, Dayı was in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison.

I was in Elazığ Military Prison.

He had written me a letter.

In the letter, he said:

“My friend Paula Condor says: ‘Pain cannot be described; pain is lived.’ We too will overcome oppression by living through it.”

This letter had been written before April 1984.

The Death Fast had not yet begun.

I was deeply affected by it.

Because of this, I was able to renew myself.

And when the day of the Death Fast came, I too began the Death Fast.

That short letter from Dayı had, so to speak, shaken me and brought me back to myself.

Dayı Never Had a “Cannot” or an “Impossible”

The year 1973 was a period in which the fascist junta of 12 March 1971 was still in power, and the leading cadres of the revolutionary movement had been physically annihilated or imprisoned. Following the physical defeat of 12 March 1971, the great majority of student dormitories and faculties were under the occupation of fascists supported by the police. The early 1970s were years when “left-wing” students froze their registrations and left the dormitories and faculties, while circles sympathetic to the left were demoralised by the defeat and were unable to take to the streets.

I met Dayı during this period, at the beginning of 1973. He was a second-year student at the Faculty of Forestry of Istanbul University. At that time, the Faculty of Forestry was a faculty that could only be entered by those with high science scores, and the state provided all students with a four-year non-repayable scholarship. Those who graduated and applied for work were appointed as “Regional Forestry Chiefs”, positions with considerable authority. They began work immediately and their salaries were higher than those of other university-graduate public employees.

While the students of the faculty were dreaming of a prosperous future for themselves and their families and making plans for the years ahead, Dayı had already pushed aside all these prospects and dedicated his body and heart to his people and to the liberation of the people.

At a time when everyone was running after lessons, books and notebooks, he was thinking about what kind of struggle and organisation could break the civilian fascist occupations in the faculties and dormitories. He made plans for this and, like digging a well with a needle, carried out one-to-one organising work and put in great effort. Many of the students Dayı organised at that time were perhaps encountering politics for the first time.

In a period when there was no organisation at all, Dayı said that a central organisation was needed for the organisation and struggle of student youth. For this reason, he became one of the founders of İYÖKD (Istanbul Higher Education Cultural Association). He also organised within the faculty so that students would join the association and take part in its work.

Without tiring, day or night, he explained what it meant to be “left-wing” and what “being on the left” should mean. He debated. Alongside reading the basic books, he ensured that Mahir Çayan’s writings on the path of the revolution in Turkey, the *Uninterrupted* texts, were duplicated and distributed in mimeographed form, read in groups and discussed.

After the leadership of İYÖKD passed to the Kurtuluş Group (Front supporters), from 1974 onwards left-wing students who had been unable to attend the faculties began going back to the faculties in groups. Security was provided for students entering and leaving the faculties, and in some faculties, security was maintained until the end of the day.

All this organisation and struggle was carried out by the Kurtuluş Group under Dayı’s leadership.

The “revolutionaries” of 1968 who came out of prison under the 1974 amnesty did not take part in the active struggle or in clashes against the fascists. Instead of passing on their knowledge and experience to the young revolutionaries involved in the struggle and helping to develop the struggle further, they sat in association premises and dormitory canteens theorising about defeatism.

Far from taking part in the struggle, they used all their strength to pull sections away from the masses who were struggling.

Through the theory of “social imperialism” that they put forward during this period, they declared the USSR, rather than US imperialism, to be the principal enemy. In this way, the path of the revolution in Turkey and the struggle against fascism were weakened.

They did this through writings published towards the end of 1974, taking advantage of the low theoretical level of young revolutionaries at that time.

The first of these was the group known as the “Eight-Pagers”, led by Ömer Güven, who had been released from prison in 1974 and later abandoned revolutionary activity after 1980. They were given this name because of an eight-page text they published. Later they took the name Halkın Yolu.

This group later split within itself, and the factions then split again. Although they continued to exist as small groups until 1980, after 1980 they either disappeared or joined the ranks of Doğu Perinçek’s Workers’ Party (İP).^{xv}

The real loss was suffered by the well-intentioned young revolutionaries who were pulled away from the struggle and alienated from revolutionary activity during that period.

After İYÖKD was closed, **İYÖD (Istanbul Higher Education Association)** was established under the leadership of Dayı and the young Front supporters.

Those among the “old generation” who argued that organising through “legal” associations was wrong did not participate in this mass student organisation. Later, however, ignoring the very theories they themselves had defended, they created associations for their own groups.

From 1975 onwards, under Dayı’s leadership, the young Front supporters fought on the one hand to break the fascist occupations of faculties and dormitories, and on the other to broaden organisation and mass participation. Unit student associations were established in faculties under the leadership of the Front supporters.

During this period, neighbourhoods were also being established to secure the housing rights of poor people, and homes were being built together with the people. There were clashes with mafia groups attempting to seize the areas where these houses were being built, and with security forces that came to demolish them.

Day and night, watches were kept so that these neighbourhoods would not be lost.

Alongside this, campaigns were organised around political and economic demands, and struggle and action continued in every field and every unit through organisation.

In the midst of this intensity, Dayı was a modest person who read until late at night and, during the day, was directly involved in the active struggle. From university occupations — Istanbul, İTÜ, Yıldız, Galatasaray, Yükseliş — to street clashes, and from street clashes to discussion forums, he was everywhere among the masses, giving them confidence and organising them.

In 1986, we were together in the same ward in Sağmalcılar Prison.

At that time, all left-wing political movements stayed in the same ward, and every political movement had its own commune. For the commune, three to five people would take turns carrying out daily tasks such as cleaning, cooking, washing dishes and making tea.

While ordinary militants would take over the duties of those in leadership positions from other political movements, Dayı would never allow this in his case. He always took his turn like everyone else, washed dishes, cleaned, served tea to his comrades, cooked food and cleaned the ward.

In 1977, there was a resistance by peasants organised in a cooperative in one region of one province.

A comrade with professional knowledge needed to go to the area in order to organise the resistance from a revolutionary perspective. But on the day he was expected to go, he was also due to be married. A wedding date had already been booked at the registry office.

Instead of sending somebody else in his place, Dayı persuaded the comrade and the person he was going to marry to cancel the wedding date and sent that comrade to the region.

Through this action, Dayı taught his comrades in practice that, whatever the conditions, nothing could be allowed to come before the struggle.

Dayı was a leader who was determined, who made no concessions from his ideology and who implemented decisions whatever the conditions.

The words “**cannot**” and “**impossible**” did not exist in his vocabulary.

Dayı never had a “cannot” or an “impossible”.

Like his other qualities, all his comrades knew this side of Dayı as well, and when they were given a task, they did not offer excuses.

Yet he would still choose the path of persuasion, discuss the matter and prefer the task to be carried out on a voluntary basis.

For Dayı, the organisation and the needs of the organisation came before everything else.

For this reason, he personally checked and supervised every kind of work on the spot. When he saw shortcomings or mistakes, he would initiate work to overcome and correct them, beginning with himself and his comrades.

Dayı determined in the finest detail the education of cadres, where and how they should be deployed, who could and could not do what, who should and should not enter certain places according to their situation, and who should and should not know particular things, all from the standpoint of security and preventing the struggle from being weakened.

He criticised those who violated these rules very harshly.

He left nothing to spontaneity and imposed conscious will in everything.

While we were together inside Revolutionary Path, Istanbul always followed a different practice from Ankara.

The difference was that Istanbul was more combative and more active.

Dayı's understanding of struggle, and the style of organisation based on this understanding, played an important role in this difference.

Dayı was a leader who defended unity to the very end.

But when that unity began to harm the struggle and the revolution, he did not hesitate to support separation either, and he possessed deep foresight on this question.

By 1978, the separation from Revolutionary Path had reached its final point and I was once again in prison.

He came to visit me, explained the developments and said that the separation was unavoidable.

I asked:

"Can't we push a little harder to remain together?"

He replied:

"You know the TKP (Communist Party of Turkey)^{xvi}. If the TKP did not exist now, these people would fill that space. They have no faith in revolution, and since they have no faith in revolution, they do not even have the courage to defend it. This will become very clear in the days ahead."

(The TKP of that period was a party we regarded as "revisionist". Yet the TKP of that time was still far ahead of today's legal "left" parties.)

At the time, I regarded Dayı's assessment as exaggerated. But 12 September 1980 and the situation we have reached today have more than confirmed it.

When I look back over the seven years, I spent with Dayı from the day I first met him, I realise how often we were together.

In none of the environments in which we were together did we ever have an "empty" conversation.

I genuinely search my memory, but there was never a subject of conversation outside organisation and struggle.

If such an environment had ever existed, believe me, I would recount that side of Dayı too, because everyone should know it.

But there was none.

Dayı was not someone who would allow such frivolous environments to develop in the first place.

This is what a leader who devoted all 24 hours of his day to the independence of his country and the liberation of his people was like.

Dayı was such a leader.

Dayı and Creativity in the Struggle

I first heard Dayı's name while staying at the Niğde Student Dormitory in Fındıkzade, Istanbul.

I was staying at Niğde Student Dormitory, but I was going to move to Kocaeli Dormitory, which was located in the area and had strategic importance.

The comrades wanted it that way.

We could not leave Kocaeli Student Dormitory to the fascists. For this reason, some of us would be sent from Niğde Student Dormitory as reinforcement.

I completed my paperwork and took the documents to the dormitory director.

While examining the documents, the director looked at the back of my photograph and saw the stamp of Niğde Student Dormitory.

When I went back later, the director said:

"We won't take you. You're not from Kocaeli."

And they did not admit me.

I returned to Niğde Dormitory and explained the situation to the responsible comrade. I told him that the arrangement had failed because of their own mistake.

The responsible comrade said to me:

"How am I going to explain this situation, this mistake we made, to Dayı now?"

That was the first time I heard Dayı's name.

Afterwards, this comrade would occasionally speak about Dayı.

He would say:

"Every word Dayı says is very important to me."

He had such devotion to and trust in Dayı that I too was influenced by what he said.

Later, in 1975, I encountered Dayı.

At that time, I was studying at the Faculty of Science.

There was a seminar at Kadirga Student Dormitory.

Some renegades who had come out of prison were trying to slander the Party-Front.

At the most heated point in these discussions, Dayı stood up and said to those giving the seminar:

"You cannot slander Mahir Çayan here. We will not allow you to do this."

I and many of our comrades who were there were deeply affected by this intervention by Dayı.

Later, I met him personally.

In the periods that followed, we always had close relations with Dayı.

Perhaps being close to Dayı was a privilege.

There were also many occasions when we stayed together.

Dayı attached particular importance to the development of women comrades within the struggle.

In those years, the **Revolutionary Women's Association (DKD)** had been established. Women comrades were carrying out various forms of work.

But some male comrades like me, who thought in a feudal way, looked down on these efforts.

One day Sabahat came and said:

"We want to go out and do wall-writing (graffiti) too."

In those days, we were a group of 10–15 people who provided armed security and rushed to wherever there were fascist attacks.

Our job was to provide security at school exits against fascist attacks.

For this reason, we were constantly present at certain critical places.

Whenever slogans were painted or posters put up, we always provided security.

Of course, with the mentality and culture we had at that time, the idea of women comrades going out to paint slogans or carry weapons seemed almost unthinkable.

For that reason, we did not accept Sabahat's proposal.

We had also looked down on it to some extent.

When Sabahat received a refusal from us, she went to Dayı.

Dayı called me and said:

"The women comrades will go out to paint slogans. Go with them."

When Dayı gave the instruction, I said:

“All right.”

I discussed the day of the wall-writing with Sabahat.

That evening, we went to an area around Bayrampaşa to paint slogans.

The strange thing was that the women comrades had taken off their normal clothes and put on old, worn-out clothes as though they were going to work on a construction site.

And none of them had brought identification with them.

We began painting.

The comrades painted while we provided security.

Hüseyin Solgun had also come to the wall-writing.

Solgun had come because of his fiancée and was staying close to her.

I became angry about this.

I did not know Solgun very well either.

A comrade providing security explained who he was to me.

At that moment, a police team arrived.

I said: “Everyone hide.”

Solgun was left exposed and the police detained him.

I told the women comrades to return to the association.

We had to get Solgun out of police custody.

At first, we said we should raid the police station.

Then we abandoned this idea.

Instead, we used bureaucratic connections and had Solgun released.

In later periods too, Dayı worked very hard to ensure that women comrades participated in the struggle.

He always fought against these kinds of feudal attitudes. He opened the way for women comrades. Later, he began giving them responsibilities as well.

Of course, in those days, we could not even imagine a woman comrade being in a leadership position over us. We simply did not have such a perspective.

One day, Dayı was holding a meeting with the youth leaders.

Sabahat arrived in a hurry. She said she wanted to see Dayı. The matter was urgent. She needed to discuss something.

I said:

“Dayı is in a meeting.”

At that time, they were engaged.

Sabahat did not go inside herself and call Dayı out.

She said to me: “Would you go in and call him?”

I went in and told Dayı. Dayı came outside and they spoke. That was how careful Sabahat was. It has often been said that Dayı “got very angry” or was “very bad-tempered”.

This is not true. When necessary, and when he was right, Dayı would become angry.

Once, he became very angry with me. I did not say a word.

If it had been someone else, perhaps I would have answered back, but it was Dayı who was angry.

And he was completely right.

This is what had happened:

We had ten weapons that we used for security duties. Dayı asked me for them. He was going to send some of them to Anatolia.

Naturally, he wanted to send the clean ones, those that had not been used in any clashes.

He asked:

“Which of these are clean?”

I replied:

“None of them are clean. We’ve used all of them.”

At that point, he became very angry.

He asked:

"Why did you use all of them? Why didn't you choose a few and keep using those?"

Yes, until that moment, I had never thought of this. Yet we could have done exactly that.

But it had not even occurred to us.

Dayı also attached particular importance to military matters.

In 1975, when I had only recently begun staying at Niğde Student Dormitory, we had an experience.

Niğde Student Dormitory was almost surrounded by fascist dormitories.

Directly opposite was Sakarya Student Dormitory, while Trabzon and Maraş dormitories were a little further behind.

For this reason, the fascists frequently opened harassing fire on our dormitory.

Clashes would break out. One day, another clash broke out.

First, three of our comrades opened fire on the fascists.

Then the fascists returned fire.

After our comrades fired, they immediately found me and said:

"Come, let us show you where the weapons are. The police will raid the place now. We're leaving."

I was rather surprised by this. I had only just arrived at the dormitory. And they were leaving while abandoning us there.

Later, I went and complained to Dayı about the situation. Dayı listened to me.

He asked some questions.

Then he said:

"All right."

Later, changes were made at the dormitory and those three people stopped staying there.

New comrades came in their place.

Another incident I will tell concerning this dormitory happened in 1976.

There were constant clashes with the fascist dormitories. The fascists also threw explosives at us. But I did not know how to make explosives.

So, I went to Dayı.

I said:

"Dayı, clashes are breaking out with the fascists. They use explosives, but I don't know how to make them."

One day after this conversation, Dayı sent a comrade to us to teach us how explosives were made.

That comrade taught us. In the days that followed, we too began using explosives.

Whenever something was requested from Dayı, or a demand was made of him, he always responded without delay.

That was one of his characteristics.

I can say that Niğde Student Dormitory was extremely important during that period. Among so many fascist dormitories and despite so much police pressure, through Niğde Dormitory we kept an entire area standing.

First, Niğde played a role in the anti-fascist struggle in the area.

Second, the dormitory and its practice were full of instructive lessons in terms of developing some of our cadres.

Without exaggeration, there were comrades who had to remain inside the dormitory for security reasons.

Sometimes these comrades did not leave the building for an entire month.

During the day, you could not simply step outside whenever you needed something.

Needs were dealt with collectively.

And no one ever went outside without security.

Armed security was maintained at the dormitory 24 hours a day, with constant guard duty. In a sense, it was a deprived area. For this reason, the heating was rarely on in winter. There was no possibility of bathing during winter.

Eating regular meals was itself a problem. In other words, meals were not provided.

Dayı concerned himself with all the problems of this dormitory, from its security to the people staying there.

At one point, a comrade from Dayı's hometown who held a leadership position in the dormitory drank heavily. Dayı spoke with this comrade many times about giving up alcohol.

He worked very hard on him. Sometimes he became very angry. At other times, he advised him.

Dayı had this kind of patience and invested effort in everyone.

After I became organised, for a long period I maintained my organisational relations directly through Dayı.

One day, Dayı called me.

We met at the coffee house near Balıkesir Dormitory. Dayı immediately came to the point.

He said to me:

"You're going to Bulgaria."

Then he explained the details. He said that they had reached an agreement with a weapons smuggler, but that the main thing was for us to learn the route ourselves.

The smuggler apparently went to Bulgaria and brought the weapons from there.

Dayı, however, wanted us to obtain the weapons directly from the original source, Bulgaria, instead of buying them from the smugglers.

For that reason, I would travel with the smuggler and learn the route and method.

We went to Bulgaria by motorboat. Some people came to the boat. They spoke with the smuggler.

When the smuggler was about to disembark, I tried to go ashore as well. They did not allow me. So, I had to remain on the boat.

Later, the smuggler completed his business. He obtained the weapons. He also bought cigarettes for himself.

We set off again.

As we approached Istanbul, we saw the coastguard. They were coming towards us.

The smuggler threw the cigarettes into the sea. The weapons had been hidden. Nothing was found in the search. We continued on our way.

Later, I discussed the situation with Dayı. I told him exactly what had happened. Dayı was angry about the trick the smugglers had played.

Naturally, if we learnt the route, we would no longer need to buy anything from them.

Dayı wanted to obtain the weapons from the source because it would be both cheaper and more reliable.

We had an armed group of around 10–15 people, including me. These comrades were always present wherever weapons might be used. They were directly under Dayı's authority.

Dayı would speak to the comrades in this group and personally assign tasks to them. And whenever there had been a clash or an action, he always asked about what had happened and about the conduct of each comrade individually.

He was closely concerned with the development of the comrades.

I will say something about myself here.

At that time, I had also fallen in love with someone.

I had spoken with Dayı about the woman who is now my wife and who was also a comrade in the struggle.

Dayı said:

"All right, we'll think about it."

But I was very impatient.

And because I was constantly together with Dayı, from time to time I would ask him again:
“Dayı, what happened with our matter?”

Eventually, and rightly, Dayı became angry with me.

He said:

“What’s the hurry? Is someone going to run away with the girl? We said we would think about it. This isn’t like buying something from the corner shop. All right, when we make a decision, I’ll speak to you.”

Naturally, I was very embarrassed.

Later, Dayı explained his actual approach to this question.

It was 1978.

He said that these kinds of relationships were very common at that time and that relationships established in an unhealthy way damaged the struggle.

He explained that if one of the two people fell back, both would leave the struggle; that when school ended, their revolutionary activity would also end; and that these kinds of relationships were being established, or at least that such examples were becoming noticeable.

By 1975–76, the youth struggle had begun to recover.

Dayı was one of the prominent people in it.

For that reason, it was genuinely difficult to find Dayı with any free time.

Think about it: when the large dormitory complex called Atatürk Student Site opened in Istanbul, Dayı was again concerned with everything there.

I also stayed in this dormitory for a period. There were clashes with fascists there too.

How these clashes developed was important for the future of the dormitory.

Dayı therefore attached particular importance to this place as well.

For a period, Dayı would determine and follow up which comrades would go to provide security at Şişli Political Sciences and at the School of Finance and Accounting in Beyazıt.

In reality, he was involved in every aspect of the anti-fascist struggle.

During the period when ideological struggle was being waged against opportunism, it was possible to see Dayı everywhere.

Particularly when it came to defending Mahir and his comrades, Dayı was uncompromising.

No one could break his will on this question.

Then student representative elections began.

Naturally, Dayı played the greatest role in defeating opportunism in this field.

As a result of his creativity and his ability to take correct policies to the youth, opportunism was wiped out in these elections.

Afterwards, they found the solution in leaving.

During this period, I was also often close to Dayı when he spoke with some leading comrades at the coffee house near Balıkesir Student Dormitory.

There were three or four tables outside the coffee house. There was a large tree in front of it. In summer, we sat outside. It was cool and pleasant outside during the summer.

The inside of the coffee house was also quite large. There were around ten tables inside. In front of the coffee house was a paid car park.

Sometimes comrades who wanted to speak with Dayı would wait for him there. Our comrades would occasionally sit separately at different tables.

Dayı would go to each table and speak to everyone one by one. Sometimes there were people who created unnecessary work.

Then Dayı would say to me:

“Go and ask what he wants.”

And I would go and ask.

During the period of separation, I had relations with other leading comrades.

I did not take part in those discussions with Dayı.

And with the new formation of our movement, I had also been connected to another organisational channel.

I would meet Dayı again later in Sultanahmet Military Prison.

In Bursa...

I came to Bursa in 1973 after being admitted to the Education Institute there. When I first arrived, I became involved with the left-wing circles of the time. Although I sympathised with the left and with revolutionaries, I was new to the struggle.

I can say that I was distant from many things. But over time, I began taking part in discussions. I started reading. And once I began participating in the struggle, I came to understand certain things much better. In a sense, we also learned by living through things.

Practical struggle also brought many committed comrades to the fore. As we came forward, we suddenly found a great burden on our shoulders, without even considering whether we were capable of carrying it. And we had to carry it.

Depending on developments, and perhaps somewhat by trial and error, we tried to organise an anti-fascist practice despite all its shortcomings.

At that time, there was no clarity on the left. There were many different ideas. There were defeatists, renegades and fraudsters. But the reality was that there was a broad potential among the youth. All the renegades and non-revolutionary currents attacked this potential.

I encountered many such debates around us.

Then BYÖD (Bursa Higher Education Association) was established. I used to go there as well. Debates also took place there.

At that time, Bursa had no central organisational relationship with any particular place. TKP and TSİP (Socialist Worker Party of Turkey)^{xvii} circles were trying to become active in the trade unions. The circle around Doğu Perinçek was trying to establish relations among the youth. They had also established the association.

None of these views appealed to me.

Around that time, the deniers of the Party-Front emerged. I followed those debates. I participated in them. Gradually, I began to sympathise with the Front. A group of Front supporters gradually formed around us.

Then I began travelling back and forth to Istanbul.

By 1974–75, our identity as Front supporters had become clear.

İbrahim Çenet would come to us from Istanbul. He had come from the Party-Front (THKP-C) period and had lost both arms when a bomb exploded in his hands during an action.

Through İbrahim Çenet's visits, our relations with Istanbul began to increase.

Sometimes İbrahim Çenet would come and stay in Gemlik, a district of Bursa, for 15 days. We had comrades there. He would stay with them. The possibilities there were broader, and we had greater potential there.

Because we were in Bursa, we could not go there very often. Still, we would occasionally visit.

I remember 1975 as the period when Dayı came.

The comrades told us that while İbrahim Çenet was in Gemlik, Dayı had also come there. It was even said that Dayı knew certain people there.

During the period when I was in Bursa, Dayı never came to Bursa itself. As I said, it was usually I who went to Istanbul. I would be in Istanbul almost every 15–20 days.

When I went to Istanbul, I mostly met comrades in leadership positions within the youth movement. I met Paşa Güven, Sinan Kukul and İbrahim Çenet.

I first met Dayı in 1975.

At that time, Dayı was trying to bring the youth movement together. We had entered a period in which the struggle and organisation had moved beyond the boundaries of individual cities.

For various reasons, Bursa always maintained its relations with Istanbul. When ideological closeness and feeling the same things in practice were added to this, such a situation emerged.

Naturally, Ankara later developed various methods to disrupt this relationship.

The youth movement was gradually beginning to centralise across the country. Later, *Devrimci Gençlik* magazine began publication.

That was why Dayı was always busy.

There was always something militant in the way he rushed from place to place and put in effort.

Naturally, we overcame that process step by step through Dayı's efforts.

Every time I returned from Istanbul, we too would throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the work in Bursa. Step by step, through what we knew, what had been explained to us, and the guiding practice of Istanbul, we intervened in the practical struggle in Bursa.

During that period, with our Front-oriented style, we carried out significant work in Bursa. We succeeded in creating a tradition in the anti-fascist struggle.

As the anti-fascist struggle intensified, we tried to create our own resources. Some of our needs, however, were met from Istanbul. The comrades there always helped us greatly in this respect.

In particular, we can never forget Dayı's help.

When I went to Istanbul, I would stay for two or three days with comrades from the youth movement. For this reason, I shared more with them.

When I stayed with them, naturally we discussed many subjects: current issues, theoretical questions, practical matters...

These discussions were very useful for me.

After all, Istanbul's practice was always considerably ahead of ours.

While we were carrying out the struggle in Bursa according to our perspective at the time, naturally it was the Front understanding that guided us.

But liquidationism began to emerge before us and obstruct us.

Apparently, our ideas and practice were considered incompatible, because in the following period Bursa too became a target of the liquidationists.

By the time criticisms of liquidationism had begun, Ankara made an appointment to Bursa.

They sent one of their central people, Halil İbrahim Arı, to Bursa.

After the split, this person would become Revolutionary Path's Marmara Regional Responsible.

Following the arrest of the Revolutionary Path Central Committee after 12 September, this person would take on even higher responsibilities.

So, this was the kind of person they sent us.

Naturally, we had not asked for him.

Nor had we requested such an appointment from Ankara.

And, of course, they had not sent him as a favour to us.

As though taking us for fools, they justified it by saying:

"Let this comrade come and help you. He knows the area."

How innocent it appeared!

But liquidationism always used dirty methods in politics.

There was no sincerity, comradeship or friendship in them. Everything was calculation.

Just as they had sent some of their advanced cadres to Istanbul to liquidate Dayı and his comrades, they made a similar appointment to our area.

Halil İbrahim would come, learn the contacts and, in his own mind, liquidate us. Liquidationism had already begun at that point. It was ridiculous, but at the same time pitiful.

The person supposedly sent to help us was trying to learn the contacts and establish himself there independently.

He never missed an opportunity to introduce liquidationist ideas among our cadres and our mass base. We saw this and prevented it.

Eventually, the banner was openly raised against liquidationism. Liquidationist ideas began to be exposed openly.

In Bursa, just as in Istanbul, we organised open debates. Comrades also came from Istanbul. The debates were very educational. Halil İbrahim participated on behalf of the liquidationists.

Naturally, they suffered a defeat in Bursa.

Love for People...

I am two years younger than Dayı.

I am also from Elazığ.

I knew some comrades from Elazığ. There was Hüseyin Solgun, for example. When I worked as a clerk at the vegetable market, Hüseyin Solgun worked for the commission agent next door.

I did not know Dayı from Elazığ.

But I wish I had.

When did I meet Dayı?

After I finished high school, I came to Istanbul with some friends to attend a preparatory course.

I did not know Dayı from Elazığ, but I knew his nephew from there. His nephew was my friend.

When we came to Istanbul, we began staying at the Elazığ Student Dormitory.

We attended the preparatory course for five or six months and then returned home.

As for what we did at the dormitory, we mostly studied. There were many friends from Elazığ. We met them and talked.

That was where I met Dayı.

During the five or six months we stayed there, Dayı, to his credit, took a great deal of interest in us.

Of course, he did not take an interest in me simply because I was his nephew's friend.

He would always call me **"Ali Gakko"**.

"Gakko" was an expression particular to our region. It was used in the sense of "Dayı", and people addressed those they loved in this way.

We had left home for the first time and were feeling homesick. I was looking for someone to talk to and share my troubles with.

Even though Dayı did not know me, he looked after me and looked after us.

In reality, this was Dayı's love for people.

Dayı loved people very much.

If he had not loved people, could he have become such a world-renowned leader?

He could not have.

He is now a great leader.

Unfortunately, I never met Dayı again afterwards.

I wish I had met him again and had been able to know him better.

A New Period with Dayı...

I first knew Dayı when I was a secondary-school student.

Dayı was a friend of my elder brother. At that time, they were high-school students. They sat at the same desk at school and were naturally very close friends.

For this reason, he often came to our house. They would sit, eat and talk together.

The friendship between my elder brother and Dayı continued in later years.

When I was at high school, they were university students. When my brother came home during the holidays, if Dayı was also there, they would again go out together. They would walk along Gazi Street and sometimes go to the wooded picnic areas.

On one occasion, my brother, Dayı and their friends were attacked by fascists on Gazi Street.

For this reason, my brother would carry a chain wrapped around his waist, to pull out and use in the event of a fight.

I know that Dayı also had such a chain. My brother told me so at the time.

Our entire family knew Dayı.

We also knew his family.

When Dayı stopped coming to Elazığ during the holidays, Dayı's mother and father would come to our house and ask my elder brother about him.

They would ask how he was, what he was doing and why he was not coming.

When my brother went to Istanbul, they would send their greetings to Dayı. They would write letters and give them to him. They would send food.

In this way, we also came to know Dayı's mother and father.

They loved Dayı very much.

They worried about him.

For these reasons, conversations about Dayı were always taking place in our home.

Even while they were university students in Istanbul, we would receive news about them.

In 1974, I gained admission to the Faculty of Pharmacy at Istanbul University.

I came to Istanbul to enrol.

At that time, Dayı and the others were not staying in a dormitory.

They had a house in Taksim.

When I say a house, it was not a large one. It was on the ground floor of a three-storey building. It had one bedroom, one living room, a small kitchen and a toilet.

Three people stayed in that room.

The house was on the side of Taksim overlooking Dolapdere.

Dayı, Niyazi Abi and Ali Rıza Koşar, who would later become a Kurdish nationalist, stayed there.

What struck me about the house was the large number of books they had.

They had a radio.

There was no luxury in the house.

I stayed only briefly, but they spent most of their time reading books.

Because I had come for enrolment, they hosted me in that house for one day.

Dayı treated me very sincerely and warmly.

Later, he assigned comrades to help me.

The comrades helped with my enrolment.

Once the enrolment was completed, I returned home.

When school opened, I came back.

I now stayed at the Elazığ Student Dormitory.

At that time, Dayı was not staying in the dormitory, but he would come when he had work there.

He would also come at weekends.

Whenever he came, he would always visit us and ask how we were.

Then he would go to the permanent rooms and talk with the comrades there.
Sometimes he would sit with comrades in the canteen under the dormitory or at the coffee house outside the dormitory and take care of his work there.

There were representative elections in Istanbul.

It was the İYÖKD period.

Delegates would be elected for İYÖKD and elections would take place.

For this reason, every political tendency and every circle was working for the representative elections.

The opportunists wanted to seize control of the İYÖKD leadership.

Dayı and his comrades were also preparing seriously for the elections.

In fact, the process was being led by the Front supporters, and an exemplary democratic stance was being demonstrated.

Everyone was being given a lesson in democracy.

It would be a fully democratic election.

At such a time, I was told that Dayı wanted to see me at Site Student Dormitory.

I practically ran there. Dayı was there. When he saw me, he greeted me.

Then he explained why he wanted to see me.

He spoke about İYÖKD and the elections.

He explained that they wanted to elect a delegate from every school.

He asked:

“Who is there at your school?”

I had only completed one term.

It was the 1974–75 academic year.

So I said:

“There is no one.”

He asked:

“Don’t you have any friends at all?”

Then:

“Is there no one you talk to or even greet?”

There was no one I knew at the school who was a member of Revolutionary Youth.

At that time, there were people at the school from the TKP, Aydınlık supporters whom we regarded as traitors, and some circles and groups that defended social imperialism.

In a sense, Dayı was also broadening my thinking on this question.

He explained that I needed to create a circle around myself.

He explained that this was important, that our school had to be represented and that this would be good for the school.

He asked whether there were people from earlier years who might still be attending.

I said I did not know.

Dayı explained that there was one delegate for every ten people and that I absolutely had to arrange ten people from the school.

He said these could even simply be people who greeted me or whom I talked with.

He added that I should speak with them and explain İYÖKD and the elections.

Dayı said:

“Think about what we have discussed and start working.”

At first I thought:

Will I really be able to find that many people?

But once I got involved, I realised it was not very difficult.

I spoke with some friends.

I explained the elections.

We formed a group of ten people.

And I participated in the elections as the delegate from my school.

Our school was represented as well.

Once I became a delegate, Dayı spoke with me again.

He said that the first step had been taken and that the next task was to form a Revolutionary Youth group at the school, and that we should begin organisational work there.

I did what Dayı said.

Everything Dayı said came true.

This gave me confidence.

Later, through successful work, we would establish a group in a school where previously we had had no presence at all, and we would become the strongest force in the school.

We would not leave the school to those who fled from the struggle or to a handful of counter-revolutionaries.

And we did not.

We had begun organising in the school upon Dayı's instruction.

This strengthened my self-confidence.

Naturally, it also led to my rapid development.

This period marked the beginning of the process in which I would take on new responsibilities in the struggle as a member of Revolutionary Youth.

I had various encounters with Dayı afterwards as well.

There was also a period when I worked with him.

I want to recount something I witnessed.

One day I went to see Dayı because I had something to ask him.

When I arrived, Dayı was at the distribution point.

At that moment, Dayı was angry with one of our comrades.

And he was seriously angry.

I asked:

"Dayı, what happened?"

Dayı replied:

"How can I not be angry? We put in enormous effort, spend enormous amounts of money, overcome a thousand and one obstacles and publish material, and our own comrades do not read what we publish?"

Then Dayı turned to the comrade he was angry with and said:

"Why aren't you reading it?"

The comrade claimed that he had read that issue.

Clearly, this was not true.

He had not read it.

He had lied because Dayı was angry.

Dayı must also have realised this, because he asked the comrade about an article contained in that issue.

The comrade could not answer.

It became clear that he had lied.

This time, Dayı became very angry with him for lying.

Dayı said:

"Look, you cannot be a revolutionary simply by acting like a gunman. You cannot just wait to be given a task, carry it out and then walk away. That is not how revolutionary activity is done. You will sit down and read. You will create work for yourself. Revolutionary activity is not wandering around doing nothing and occasionally carrying out a task."

In reality, Dayı was saying this at that time about certain comrades who thought in this kind of "left" way.

The comrade he was angry with was exactly such a person.

He went to bed with a weapon and got up with a weapon but did not renew himself politically.

Because he persisted in this attitude, he later became a problem.

As he emphasised there that day, Dayı was always a persistent defender of **POLITICAL EDUCATION**.

He always argued that cadres had to be well equipped.

Yes, this conversation took place that day at the point where publications and books were being distributed.

I want to recount another memory involving Dayı.

There was an anti-fascist action.

Once again, a fascist attack had taken place.

We were going to unite in Eminönü.

It was an anti-fascist demonstration attended by thousands of people.

The crowd coming from Beyazıt had reached Eminönü.

We were going to cross from Karaköy.

To prevent the two groups from joining, they opened Galata Bridge.

And we were left on the other side.

The crowd was divided in two.

At that moment, Dayı climbed onto a higher place and began speaking to the crowd.

He gave a very good speech there...

I also want to relate a memory we shared with Dayı concerning 16 March.

The fascist attack against Istanbul University students took place on **16 March 1978**^{xviii}.

The massacre created enormous anger.

One day after the massacre, Dayı called me again.

He said that what we were going to discuss was important and had to remain between us.

Without hesitation, I said:

"All right."

He told me that there would be retaliation against the fascists for the 16 March massacre and that for 15 days I should monitor the routes used by the fascists of Istanbul University when coming to and leaving the school and gather intelligence.

For 15 days, from an upper floor of the school, I monitored the times when the fascist killers arrived and left.

I had carried out very detailed intelligence work.

I reported the results to Dayı.

Preparations for the action had been made.

Even the day had been determined.

However, the liquidationists refused to allow the action, saying:

"It will be a provocation; we cannot handle it."

Thus, no retaliation was carried out for the 16 March massacre.

Again, in a period before the split, when the debates had not yet become widespread, Dayı and his comrades organised a picnic.

We went to Büyükada.

There were 30–40 comrades.

Among them were Niyazi Abi, İbrahim Erdoğan Abi, Ahmet Fazıl and Sinan Kukul.

It was presented as a picnic, but in reality, an assessment of the situation was carried out.

Dayı spoke at that meeting.

He explained the relations with Ankara.

With examples, he explained that it had become impossible to continue with Ankara, that their understanding had become an obstacle to the struggle, that they had a right-wing perspective and that their approach to the anti-fascist struggle was one of submission.

Then he gave the floor to every comrade present, one by one.

Every comrade who spoke expressed their views.

Every comrade who spoke condemned the understanding of the Ankara faction.

These kinds of discussions and exchanges of views continued afterwards.
After the split, another similar meeting took place.
This time we held a meeting in Şişli.
One of our contacts had a large tea garden.
We used the garden and no outside customers were admitted during the meeting.
The new process was discussed, and we focused on what path we should follow.
In a sense, we drew up a programme.
Later, I would meet Dayı at Balıkesir Dormitory and at a coffee house near the dormitory and we would talk.
Dayı held some of his discussions with comrades there.
With the emergence of our movement, some comrades withdrew from school.
New areas of work were opened.
Professional revolutionary activity was now being created.
The understanding that “revolutionary activity ends when school ends” was also being ideologically condemned.
A new understanding was to be established.
A considerable number of comrades withdrew from school.
I was among those who left school.
And I was given new responsibilities.
I would now work in the neighbourhoods.
During this period, I would no longer maintain organisational relations with Dayı.
That was what saddened me most.
During this period, I would maintain relations through H. Solgun.
At the meeting where they gave me my new responsibility, Dayı, Solgun, another comrade and I were present.
Dayı explained neighbourhood work to us.
He explained how we should work, how we should enter people’s homes, how we should establish relations with the people and so on.
He also spoke about the anti-fascist struggle.
That was the discussion we had at the time.
Around that period, I finished school.
And I became engaged to a woman who was within our circle.
Naturally, I had not asked any comrade about this.
I had not informed Dayı either.
Later, it became known that I had become engaged.
One day, when I met Dayı, he said:
“I heard you have become engaged. First, let me congratulate you. But you know that on matters like this you are supposed to inform us. You inform us and obtain approval. But you did not do that. Nevertheless, we looked into it. There is nothing there that we would object to...”
I never saw Dayı again after that.

Dayı and Gemlik

I first met Dayı during the İYÖKD period in Laleli, Istanbul.
I would come from Gemlik from time to time.
Whenever I came, I stayed at Balıkesir Student Dormitory.
At that time, İbrahim Çenet was staying at Balıkesir Student Dormitory.
The comrades did not particularly want information concerning Gemlik to be shared with İbrahim Çenet.

For that reason, I only had ordinary conversations with İbrahim Çenet.
He liked those kinds of conversations anyway.
Çenet would occasionally come to Gemlik.
He would come and stay for 15–20 days.
While he stayed, we met his needs.
In the early period, we spoke mostly with Dayı.
Later, we maintained relations through another comrade.
While I was there, Dayı came and went to Gemlik.
He must have come six or seven times in total.
Sometimes he would also swim in the sea.
At that time in Gemlik, after 1975, there was also a local man involved in smuggling.
Whenever Dayı came, he would meet this man and have materials brought in through him.
I want to explain a problem involving this smuggler.
Apart from us, this man also sold materials to other left-wing groups.
Because of one such transaction, a circle with a left deviation called **Eylem Birliği** (Unity of Action)^{xix} took action against him.
Their claim was that this man had **“given them incomplete material”**.
They abducted him.
They took him away, interrogated him and beat him.
When he returned, he was in a terrible condition.
He then asked us for help.
Dayı knew this man well.
Dayı did not leave his request for help unanswered.
And we helped him.
At Dayı’s suggestion, we began keeping comrades at this man’s workplace.
In a sense, we began protecting him.
Of course, he was not merely an ordinary smuggler.
He was also someone who defended our ideas.
He was someone who helped us.
That was why we helped him.
Whenever Dayı came to Gemlik, he would visit this man.
We had considerable mass potential in Gemlik.
We had established significant relations there in those years.
We also had a union called the **Independent Mine Workers’ Union**.
On one of his visits, Dayı took an interest in this union.
In 1977, Dayı and the comrades with him went with us to Küçükkumla, a town in Gemlik.
The comrades had a tent there.
Dayı and the others stayed there for two days.
They also went swimming in the sea.
On another occasion, before the split, Dayı came with Paşa Güven.
The discussions were mainly focused on the process and the struggle.
Some comrades had questions at that time.
They asked Dayı those questions.
On another occasion, Dayı came only for the day.
He was accompanied by a comrade who later left the struggle.
He met certain people and returned.
When I came to Istanbul, I saw Dayı at the coffee house near Balıkesir Student Dormitory.
I spoke with him for a while.
By virtue of his character, Dayı was someone who could establish relations very easily with all kinds of people.
Perhaps Dayı did not come to Gemlik very frequently, but he knew Gemlik very well.

He would remind us that Gemlik had many possibilities and wanted us to make use of them.

I do not know exactly how successfully we managed this, but it was true that we had many possibilities.

The Right Initiative at the Right Time

Despite all the years that have passed, the events piled one on top of another and the people who played leading roles in them are not forgotten.

But I realise that I have difficulty remembering the dates of the events.

In this respect, I think chronological errors should be regarded as natural.

After all, what is important is the period we lived through, and the striking events and people of that period, is it not?

I think it was towards the end of 1974.

It was a period when the dark clouds of the 12 March period — or, more accurately, the terror of 12 March — had begun to disperse, and when the pain of the massacres at Nurhak^{xx}, Kızildere and on 6 May^{xxi} had begun to give way to a desire and determination to struggle.

These were days when the heroic stories of our elder comrades encouraged us and when our desire to prove that the struggle had not ended, but would continue at an even higher level, had reached its peak.

At the same time, the CHP^{xxii} was trying to absorb and tame the left-wing potential by producing slogans that appeared to side with the people.

Left-sounding slogans such as **“Neither oppressor nor oppressed; a humane and just order”** and **“The land belongs to those who cultivate it, the water to those who use it”** were being used as official CHP slogans.

Within İYÖKD, we were trying to organise the youth and were resisting fascist attacks at the universities.

Hundreds of thousands would gather at protest rallies and funerals, while a narrow group of 15–20 people tried to confront the armed attacks of civilian and official fascist forces.

My dear Dursun and I were both part of this small group.

When we woke in the mornings in a dormitory room or in student houses rented cheaply on ground or basement floors, the happiness of being alive was overshadowed by fear of the clashes we might experience during the day.

When evening came, we experienced the joy of having survived another day, of having breathed for one more day within the revolutionary struggle.

To a certain extent, we were able to cope with the conditions around us and their problems.

At least we were not crushed.

But the problems we experienced with those who had come out of prison after the amnesty weighed very heavily on us.

There were even days when we felt there was no solution.

Yet we had placed great hopes in those who had been inside.

We had believed that through them we could resolve the question of leadership.

Now, however, we were faced with the problem of protecting ourselves and our organisation from them.

Those who remained from the 12 March period had spent their time in prison reading.

They had absorbed Lenin and Marx to the point where they could turn them into quotations.

We, on the other hand, were so immersed in the struggle that we could hardly find time to read.

We claimed to be the continuation of Mahir Çayan's views, but we did not fully know Mahir Çayan's views either.

During the first days of the discussion meetings held in the student dormitories, our ideological shortcomings were exposed in all their nakedness.

We had one or two comrades among us who had read something, but it seemed impossible to compete with people who had had the opportunity to read extensively in prison.

The large canteen at Kadirga Dormitory was packed.

The hall was so full of young people from various universities that there was no room to move.

Mahir Çayan's former comrades were presenting the new path they had drawn.

More accurately, they were trying to denigrate their own past.

They also made sure to decorate their arguments with quotations from Lenin and Mao.

Book titles, page numbers and paragraph numbers never left their lips.

The comrade speaking on our behalf was, by our standards, very knowledgeable.

But compared with those opposite us, his knowledge was very limited.

The fact that he was a good agitator and used Turkish very beautifully and emphatically had some effect, but it was not enough.

I suppose he too realised this, because he continued his speech by giving book titles, page numbers and paragraph numbers from Lenin and Marx.

When it was the other side's turn to speak, Dursun, with an anxious expression, quietly asked our speaker:

"How did you memorise all that detail?"

When Dursun asked this, he was very proud, while at the same time smiling towards the other side.

Meanwhile, the people opposite us were turning through the pages of the books from which our comrade had quoted.

Then Dursun's expression changed.

He became worried.

I remember him asking our speaker:

"The page numbers are correct, aren't they?"

I could not hear the answer he received, but it was not difficult to guess.

Judging by Dursun's growing anxiety and tense face, the answer was obvious.

Dursun quickly removed the scarf wrapped tightly around his neck and waved it in the air.

Until that day, we had never seen him break his silence and adopt a combative tone.

He said:

"Comrades, we will not allow renegades, opportunists and deserters from the struggle any more freedom here. We will not allow Mahir Çayan to be insulted."

He did not have the opportunity to finish his words.

A brief scuffle broke out between the two groups.

The meeting ended.

But the other side never had the opportunity to explain that the page and paragraph numbers in the quotations were incorrect.

Naturally, our dear speaker continued giving page numbers in later meetings.

But from then on, all of them were correct.

I thought a great deal about Dursun's intervention that day.

And I thought this:

He had made exactly the right intervention at exactly the right moment and had saved all of us from falling into a situation that would have been very difficult to escape from.

Had he not made such an intervention, the revolutionary youth movement would have suffered a serious blow right at the beginning and its credibility would have become questionable.

In those years, Dursun was not yet the foremost person.

But the moment he felt that he had to move to the front, he never hesitated to take the initiative.

I had another opportunity to observe this attitude of his closely in an incident in 1975.

We were walking towards Sümbülefendi Mosque in Kocamustafapaşa.

The previous day, two of our comrades had been ambushed and killed by fascists.

Dursun and I were walking side by side.

We were deeply saddened and hardly spoke.

As we approached the mosque, he stopped and looked around.

He said:

“Let’s not go any further. Let the comrades arrive and then we’ll enter the mosque as a group.”

His face had become worried.

Dursun was a courageous person.

Until that day, I had never witnessed a moment when his courage failed.

I asked:

“What happened? Why are you worried?”

He replied:

“This area is like a rat hole. There are too many armoured police vehicles. It looks as though the police are going to attack.”

I did not think the same way.

Everything seemed normal to me.

We waited for two or three minutes at the beginning of the street.

Our comrades arrived.

Everyone thought the situation was normal.

In such situations — when the majority did not think as he did — Dursun would not insist stubbornly.

He would not go to excessive lengths to prove that his view was correct.

He would remain silent.

As we walked towards the mosque as a group, he remained silent.

I noticed him put his hand to his waist and check his weapon.

When he noticed me looking, he asked:

“Is there a round in the chamber?”

I said:

“I don’t remember. We probably won’t need it anyway.”

At that moment, there was pushing and shoving around the coffins.

Those at the front began running backwards.

The armoured police vehicles advanced towards us.

Dursun’s voice rang in our ears:

“Don’t run! Don’t retreat! Let’s build barricades!”

Seven or eight of us were trying to overturn a car and establish the first barricade.

When Dursun and I looked at one another, we had succeeded in blocking the narrow street with the overturned car.

Dursun was smiling despite the hail of police bullets.

His happiness came from the fact that resistance had begun.

Within a very short time, dozens of barricades followed the first one.

Hundreds of young people, as though they had been experienced street fighters for years, were building barricades one after another and setting them alight.

We moved behind the barricades and fought without knowing what fear was.

At the time, we called this event the **“Kocamustafapaşa Resistance”**.

This was the first collective resistance against the police.

The masses and the narrow cadre force resisted together.

Instead of chasing the young people, the armoured vehicles were forced to struggle to reverse in the narrow streets.

As early as 1975, in the Kocamustafapaşa Resistance, dear Dursun seemed to be sending a message to the years ahead.

He was not yet a leader in those years.

But it was as though he was already giving signs of what he would become...

I believe that the many years that have passed have caused us to forget events that might be important in terms of Dursun's human relationships.

I suppose there are also things I have forgotten but feel the need to remember.

For example:

Had Dursun ever fallen in love?

Had he ever cried?

Had he ever had fits of anger?

More accurately, was it possible to see in him the kinds of behaviour that can be seen in every human being?

Without hesitation, I can answer:

Yes, it was.

It was the beginning of 1976.

Dear Sabahat was one of my closest friends.

More accurately, an incident that developed spontaneously had brought us very close.

Fascists had cornered me on one of the upper floors of the Faculty of Literature.

I quickly ran up one floor.

I remember firing one or two shots.

The fascists withdrew.

But hundreds of police belonging to the fascist Nationalist Front government poured into the school.

Somehow, I had to get rid of the weapon I was carrying.

But I was completely alone.

There was no one left around me.

I remember being very frightened at that moment.

I felt helpless.

Suddenly, a young woman appeared behind me.

I had seen her several times before and was certain that she was one of our revolutionary comrades.

She said:

"Quickly, give me what you have on you."

She must have realised that I was hesitating, because she whispered:

"Hurry up. You can get it back at Site Dormitory."

I immediately handed her the weapon.

She quickly tucked it into her waistband and disappeared.

By the time the police reached the floor I was on, I was clean.

After this incident, we became almost like brother and sister.

Dear Sabahat was very maternal.

Whenever we met, the first thing she asked was whether I was hungry.

When the weather was cold, her first question was whether I was feeling cold.

Sabahat and I would often sit in a tea garden on the Kumkapı seafront and talk for hours.

She knew about the woman I loved.

She often asked when I was going to tell the woman how I felt.

One day, when she was pressing me about it again, I could not resist and asked:

"Well, Sabo, isn't there anyone you love? Are you just going to keep bothering me?"

She remained silent for a while.

Her face went red.
 She looked at me shyly.
 Then she lowered her head and moved her finger around inside the tea glass.
 I remember laughing and asking:
“Since when did you start thinking your finger was a spoon?”
 She tried but could not laugh.
 She said:
“But you have to promise. This stays between us, all right?”
 I nodded.
 She asked me to guess.
 But I had more than a guess; from my observations, I was certain.
 And I said it.
 She told me:
“Dayı wants to become engaged to me. I’m going to give him my answer today.”
 I told her how happy I was.
 I even told her that I had been afraid it might be someone else.
 Yet Dursun had never mentioned Sabahat to me until that day.
 There was never anything noticeable when they were together.
 Although once, I thought I had noticed Sabahat looking at him in a different way.
 The next day, I met Dursun.
 For lunch, we had chickpeas over rice from the limited menu of a restaurant in the back streets of Aksaray.
 Dursun seemed troubled.
 He was avoiding looking at me.
 I thought:
Sabahat must have told him that she confessed everything to me.
 But had Sabahat not been the one who wanted our conversation to remain between us and had even made me promise?
 When I started talking, Dursun looked nervously down in front of him and moved the fork beside his empty plate along the edge of the table.
 I asked:
“Has something bad happened?”
 He raised his head slightly, made a gesture meaning no, and lowered his head again.
 He remained like that for a while.
 I stared at him as though saying:
Come on, whatever you have to say, say it and get it over with.
 Then he raised his head and said:
“I got engaged.”
 Suddenly, he seemed relieved.
 There was no trace left of the anxious and nervous state he had been in moments earlier.
 I was smiling as I looked at him.
 He said:
“You already know who it is. Sabahat.”
 He leaned back.
 He had said he was very hungry, but he was unaware of the rice placed in front of him.
 He lit a cigarette, although he did not like smoking on an empty stomach.
 He took a deep drag and, before exhaling the smoke filling his lungs, took another.
 He stared directly at my face.
 It was as though he were saying:
Right, I’m relieved now. Come on, you talk.
 I told him how happy I was and that I loved both of them very much.

I was in the middle of explaining what a good person Sabahat was when he interrupted:

“So, she’s good, but we’re bad, are we?”

Dursun was very happy.

But he had not said that he loved her.

He had not said anything like **“I’m in love.”**

He expressed that he loved her and was in love in just one sentence:

“We got engaged.”

It was September 1976.

A large proportion of our comrades had returned to their hometowns at the beginning of the summer.

For this reason, the shortage of cadres that was always felt had now turned into a crisis.

It was a period when we were exhausted from running all over Istanbul with a very small number of cadres.

One evening, after a day spent rushing around, I think we were in a student house.

The kidney pains I had been suffering from for some time became extremely severe that evening.

I had not been able to pass the stone that was causing me to writhe in pain.

The pain became increasingly intense.

I was writhing and punching the walls in an attempt to reduce the pain.

At that moment, Dursun came to the house.

I remember him shouting at the other comrades:

“What kind of bloody situation is this? Let’s do something! Are we just going to stand here and watch?”

At that moment, I began vomiting violently.

I must have been embarrassed by vomiting, because while standing at the sink I tried to push everyone away from me.

Two comrades moved back, afraid of the fists I was swinging around.

Dursun, however, paid no attention to my fists flying uncontrollably through the air.

With one arm, he held me tightly, while with the other he tried to wash my face.

Apparently, I then fainted.

For reasons connected with the police, it was not considered appropriate to take me to hospital.

What our comrades later told me was very interesting.

Dursun stayed beside me for a long time, rubbing my hands with cologne.

Then he suddenly rushed out of the house.

As he left the door, he said:

“I’ll be back in an hour.”

He travelled from Şişli to Bakırköy — from one end of Istanbul to the other.

He found a comrade who was in the final year of medical school.

In the middle of the night, they found a pharmacy on duty and obtained painkilling injections.

I do not remember the later part of that night.

But according to the comrades, Dursun remained at my bedside until morning.

He repeatedly refused offers from other comrades to take over the watch.

In the early hours of the morning, he left the house.

As he left, he did not forget to give the comrades strict instructions.

He wanted someone to remain beside me at all times.

The painkilling injections helped greatly.

I remember waking in the morning without pain.

I spent the day at home reading books.

When evening came, Dursun returned.

When I told him that I was well, he seemed overjoyed.

A childlike happiness filled his face.

We talked until midnight.

Just as we had decided to go to sleep, he said with a sincere expression:

“Comrade, you’ve been very tired lately and you’ve become very weak. You really need to rest. Come with us tomorrow to my hometown, Elazığ. We’ll stay for a few days and come back. And if your pain comes back there, it won’t be a problem; we can go to hospital.”

In truth, it was a very attractive offer.

I do not remember exactly now, but I think his mother was also unwell, and he wanted to see her.

In other words, Dursun had to go anyway.

He repeated his invitation several more times, but each time I explained that it was impossible and refused.

When he realised that he could not persuade me, his face became sad and worried.

He said:

“Look, then until this stone passes, don’t go in and out of places and don’t take part in actions, all right? I’ll explain your situation to the comrades too. Agreed?”

In the early morning, Dursun left for the bus station with another comrade to travel to Elazığ.

Before he left through the door, we embraced several times.

It was as though both of us sensed something.

Yes, it was our final embrace outside in 1976.

The following morning, early in the day, news came that a group of revolutionaries had been surrounded by fascists.

With the little money I had in my pocket, I took a taxi and remember reaching the area very quickly.

And suddenly I found myself in the middle of the clash.

Afterwards, I was captured.

Years later, a comrade who is still alive told me what happened next.

In Elazığ, Dursun and the comrade with him learnt from the evening news that I had been captured.

Dursun said:

“Come on, we’re going straight back to Istanbul. We can’t sit here while Fatih is being tortured there.”

And they hurriedly returned to Istanbul.

Throughout the journey, he smoked constantly.

He repeatedly asked the comrade beside him the same question:

“What if he gets the pain in the cell and dies? And now they’re going to torture him in this condition. We cannot allow this. We’ll raid police headquarters and get him out. We’ll get him out, all right?”

In reality, Dursun was someone who always behaved in a measured way.

He could distinguish very clearly between what our strength was capable of and what it was not.

By the time they reached Istanbul, his reason had become strong enough to overcome his emotions.

Events followed exactly the course Dursun had feared.

With the first blows of falaka¹⁷, my kidney pains began again.

I writhed in pain for hours.

¹⁷ **Falaka:** A form of torture and corporal punishment in which the soles of a person’s feet are repeatedly beaten, usually with a stick, baton or similar object. It has historically been used in Turkey and elsewhere as a method of punishment, interrogation and intimidation.

On the morning of the second day, I passed a stone the size of a lentil.
On visiting day at the prison, my first visitor was Dursun.
Both of us found it very strange that there was a glass partition between us.
While asking:

“What happens now?”

he was also using gestures to find out whether escape might be possible.

At the same time, he pointed at the strange object resembling a microphone on the glass partition between us.

Under the conditions of that period, it would have been very difficult for an organisation operating under the roof of an association to absorb people who had escaped from prison.

Dear Dursun was also aware of this.

He expressed his reaction by saying:

“I’ve been saying for a long time that these things cannot be carried out through association work alone.”

Yes, Dursun had expressed his opposition before.

But at that time, no one else had supported this view.

The final moments of our first meeting in the prison visiting booth had arrived.

The announcement that visiting time was over was being repeated.

Our comrades who had come to visit stood on the side of the glass partition that embraced the outside world, while we stood on the side where the glass partition met the musty smell of the wards.

We waved to one another.

Even today, I can still hear that voice in my ears.

Dursun’s voice.

His voice echoing through the place as he waved at us:

“Comrades, look after Fatih well. He’s lost a lot of weight. Look after him properly, all right?”

Months passed.

After one or two more hearings, it was considered almost certain that I would be released.

Those were days when I deeply missed our comrades and our struggle.

If I remember correctly, it was March 1977 when news came that Dursun had been caught with a weapon.

According to the information given by our lawyer, his arrest was certain.

Naturally, when we first heard the news, we were very upset.

Every increase in the number of us inside meant one person fewer in the active struggle outside.

Dursun’s arrest would mean a very serious loss for the struggle outside.

Yet my initial sadness eased as I thought that, even if only for one or two months, we would be together.

It even turned into a joy that is difficult to describe.

New prisoners were brought in during the evening.

Dursun was among those who would arrive that evening.

I waited by the entrance with another comrade.

As soon as he got out of the prison vehicle, he saw us and smiled.

Dursun was a very friendly person.

I remember that we embraced each other for a long time there at the entrance.

Dursun stayed in prison for two months.

He spent most of his days reading books.

Perhaps because he had been unable to find time to read for years, he wanted to use his time reading until midnight and often did not sleep until morning.

Before the evening meal, he loved walking around the prison yard.

While walking, he would bring up for discussion what he had read during the day and ask those around him about passages he had not understood.

He never abandoned his modesty.

He would say:

“We are only just learning Marxism-Leninism.”

When the number of people walking in the yard increased, he would call out:

“Come on comrades, let’s sing marches.”

He loved forming a marching column, linking arms and singing marches.

His faith in the revolution could be seen in every expression on his face.

As far as I remember, he often sang **“Comrade Mahir Is Freezing at Kızıldere”** and the **Revolutionary Youth march**. (See Appendix section)

Perhaps prison is the only place where a person can truly be known at close quarters.

It is very difficult for people who spend 24 hours a day together to hide their personalities from one another.

For two months, I lived in the same environment as Dursun.

During this period, I saw nothing negative in his personality.

I remember that he took a close interest in every comrade in our commune, even dealing with their personal problems.

Dursun’s adaptation to communal life was also excellent.

In those years, our daily cigarette allowance was seven cigarettes.

Yet outside, Dursun smoked almost two packets a day.

He never objected.

He had no intention of taking advantage of his senior position within the movement.

In the first days, I sensed that he was struggling greatly with the seven-cigarette limit and offered him some from my own share.

I remember that he took a very firm position, frowned and refused.

He also had stomach problems at the time, but I remember that he refused our offer to prepare special food for him as well.

Dear Dursun always tried to set a good example.

His life was full of sacrifices consistent with this aim.

This is how dear Dursun has remained in my memories.

And this is how he will continue to live...

There Was No “Impossible” for Dayı

I cannot remember exactly, but I think it was either 1976 or 1977, on a cold winter’s day in Istanbul just before the Feast of Sacrifice...¹⁸

These were days when events moved rapidly, when the anti-fascist struggle continued at full speed in schools, neighbourhoods, avenues, streets — in short, in every sphere of life. Days of struggle... Hardly a day passed without police-backed fascist attacks growing increasingly bold, despite all the impossibilities and destruction they caused.

Under these conditions, one day the comrades told me that Dayı wanted to speak with me.

I set off for the office in Çemberlitaş, in a building a little way down the slope below Balıkesir Dormitory, on the second or third floor of an apartment block in one of the streets on the right.

¹⁸ **Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice):** One of the two major Islamic festivals, commemorating the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son in obedience to God. It is marked by communal prayers, the sacrifice of an animal by those able to do so, and the distribution of meat among family, neighbours and people in need.

I climbed the stairs in one breath and knocked on the door. A comrade opened it and let me in. Dayı immediately entered the room. We took our tea and moved into another room.

He told me that during the Feast of Sacrifice we too would organise to collect the hides of sacrificed animals, that Gaziantep Dormitory would be used as the base for this work, and that he wanted me to take responsibility for collecting and marketing the hides.

He asked what I thought.

I think the reason for choosing me was that the elder brother of a sympathiser from our school, A.K., had an important place in this market.

We agreed that if we organised the work seriously and in a planned way, it could also bring in significant financial resources.

Naturally, I told him that I would gladly accept the task.

He was pleased and said:

“You’ve earned another tea.”

Then he brought me another tea with his own hands.

By then, we had also shared between us the full packet of cigarettes.

After talking about the school, the areas of work and the general situation we were in, I said goodbye and left the office.

The office was illegal and disguised as a commercial company. There were also TDKP^{xxiii} offices on the floor below. I think, however, both “companies” knew perfectly well what kind of “business” the other was actually conducting.

After this meeting, we began making the necessary preparations.

At that time, Antep Dormitory had been opened in a rather spectacular manner, resisting repeated fascist attacks and establishing itself with great prestige.

It was very close to Edirnekapı Dormitory, one of the important fascist bases.

So, its location was also extremely important.

At that time, the collection of sacrificial hides was particularly organised by reactionary circles operating under the name *İlim Yayma Cemiyeti*^{xxiv}

Naturally, our intervention and counter-efforts did not suit them at all.

Across Istanbul, vehicles organised from different areas brought a heavy flow of sacrificial hides to Antep Dormitory.

Because we had organised the transport and transfer work well, we were able to move them to Zeytinburnu without problems.

We also distributed the meat that came in fairly among the people in the neighbourhood.

I can say that on that day, the entire neighbourhood and Antep Dormitory had their fill of meat.

Meanwhile, the collection of hides was also taking place in different ways.

All over Istanbul, empty and abandoned vans and cars belonging to İlim Yayma Cemiyeti began to appear frequently.

Colourful scenes emerged in the streets.

There were even raids in some places in which large and small animals waiting to be slaughtered were saved.

The actions were completed successfully.

There had been no problems with transport or dispatch either.

Although there had been small clashes in some places, we suffered no losses.

We received part of the money from the hides, and the remaining substantial amount was due to reach us within two weeks.

Meanwhile, Dayı called me back to the office.

He stressed that the remaining money had to be in our hands within four days at the latest.

Some plans had changed, and because of this, in order to meet the movement’s logistical needs, the money had to be secured within no more than four days.

He explained at length that he knew this would put me in a difficult position and that he was sorry about that, but that, taking into account the creativity and abilities of the cadres, he had been obliged to accept such a proposal.

For us and for the development of the struggle, this money absolutely had to be obtained.

He also made it very clear that although he knew I would be put under pressure by the situation, he did not have the slightest doubt that I would manage to overcome it.

When I went outside, I did not feel very good.

In one sense, I was demoralised.

On the other hand, I also felt greatly honoured.

Every cell in my brain had begun working.

My mind was like a beehive, concentrated on finding a solution to the situation.

One of our comrades from school worked as an accountant for a large shipping and import-export company in Karaköy.

He also knew very well the comrades to whom we had sold the hides and had good relations with them.

First, I met M.K. and asked whether he could make the payment early.

He said this was not possible, because according to the plan we had previously agreed they had arranged themselves around a two-week period.

Since they were right, I did not press them too much.

After our discussions, we agreed that because we urgently needed the money and our payment plans had changed, the remaining amount would be paid within one week.

Then I went to the office of accountant E., at the company where he worked in Karaköy Port.

E. and I had good relations, and he was a consistent sympathiser.

I explained the situation to him.

When I told him the amount of money we needed, I could almost see his eyes bulge.

To be honest, I do not remember the exact amount now, but for that period it was a very large sum — let us say the equivalent of around 1,000,000 TL today.

But when he saw my determination, we put our heads together to look for a solution.

He did not have that much money himself, but he said it could be collected by the end of the week.

I guaranteed that M.K. would return the money to him by Monday.

M.K. confirmed this.

E. seemed much more relieved.

Otherwise, he risked losing his job or coming under suspicion.

E. and I talked at length.

I also presented him with various alternatives regarding the money.

At times he would burst out laughing and make jokes while complaining, but in every respect, he was an extremely reliable and decent comrade.

Around midday on Friday, I went to see E.

He said:

“You troublemaker — all right, your money is ready.”

At that, I relaxed considerably.

He walked towards the enormous safe beside his chair.

After setting the combination, he slowly opened the door and took out a paper bag from inside.

He pushed it across the table towards me.

He said:

“I counted it twice. You count it once as well.”

I looked inside.

It was a mixture of dollars and marks.

Because we had already calculated the amount according to the exchange rate of the day, we knew exactly how much there should be.

The money had been counted carefully and bundled into packets.

I said:

“If you counted it, that’s enough.”

I embraced him, took a plastic bag from him, carefully placed the paper bag inside it, thanked him and left.

I walked from there towards Tophane.

I crossed the road, checked the money in my wallet and, with my elbow, checked the weapon at my waist.

Then I hailed the first taxi and told the driver to go to Çemberlitaş.

We were barely moving towards Karaköy because the traffic was extremely heavy.

As we approached the bridge, the area was full of police.

I later learnt there was a funeral for HK^{xxv} members.

The bridge had also been closed to traffic.

I had certainly chosen the perfect day for such a job.

Anyway, I told the driver I would get out and paid him a few hundred metres before the bridge.

I began walking slowly towards the bridge.

From the Eminönü side, occasional gunshots and slogans could be heard.

I carefully reached the shore of the Golden Horn.

There were motorboats there.

I hired one and told the boatman to take me to the opposite shore.

I remember he asked for a large sum, but I accepted without bargaining.

We slowly moved away from the shore.

At that moment, I saw that the middle pontoon of the bridge had been separated, cutting off traffic.

On the Eminönü side there was a large funeral crowd.

After the HK members had collected their dead from the morgue in Saraçhane, a clash with the police had broken out while they were crossing the bridge.

Meanwhile, we reached the opposite shore.

I quickly got out of the boat.

Trying not to attract attention, I moved with slow, steady steps behind the Spice Bazaar, through Tahtakale, and then uphill towards Çemberlitaş.

Once I entered the side streets, I increased my pace slightly.

My aim was to reach the office as quickly as possible.

In truth, there was nothing about me that should attract much attention.

My clothes were tidy.

I could even be considered smartly dressed.

While passing through Eminönü, I narrowly avoided being searched once or twice.

But once I had reached the back of the Spice Bazaar, I felt safer.

Then suddenly I realised that I was already in front of Balıkesir Dormitory, beside Çemberlitaş Girls’ High School, and at the office.

I rang the bell.

A comrade opened the door and welcomed me.

At that moment, Dayı came out of the inner room into the hall.

I was still gripping the plastic bag tightly in my hand.

I had been holding it so hard that I noticed the handles had reddened my hand.

Dayı said:

“Welcome. How are you? You look tired.”

I hung the bag on the side of a chair beside the table in the hall.

I took off my sheepskin coat and placed it on the chair.
 Then I noticed how much I had sweated.
 I immediately went to the washbasin, washed and dried my hands and face.
 When I returned to the hall, my tea was already waiting on the table.
 I lit a cigarette.
 Then, taking my tea and the bag, I went into Dayi's room.
 I told him everything that had happened in one breath.
 Judging from the bag in my hand and how relaxed I appeared, I sensed that he had already understood that the money problem had been solved.
 He had a very intelligent and perceptive character.
 He would ask detailed questions and try to understand the situation fully.
 He was pleased that the money question had been resolved.
 This money was going to be used to solve the movement's logistical problems, which at that time were extremely important for us.
 Since entering the room, we had drunk countless cups of tea and smoked countless cigarettes.
 Meanwhile, we counted and checked the money together.
 It was complete down to the last penny.
 He spoke to me at length about the creativity of cadres and said:
"I gave this job to you because I knew you would organise it in the best possible way."
 I have never forgotten that.
 He also acknowledged that he had put me under pressure because of the timing.
 But he explained that an important opportunity had arisen and that resolving it depended on time and money.
 In a way, he also managed to make me feel better about the pressure he had put me under.
 I left the office with peace of mind, though I was not yet completely relaxed about the matter.
 I practically spent the whole weekend together with M.K.
 On Monday, after confirming that E's money had been transferred back to him, I relaxed even more, with the satisfaction of having fulfilled my task properly.
 Dayi was very modest and humorous.
 His appearance could be stern and politically he was uncompromising, but within him there was also love and friendship.

"Reber Xalo"¹⁹ Is Revolution, Is Socialism

Following Dayi's death, in a condolence fax, a revolutionary prisoner expressed his rebellion in these words:

"Do you know, for the first time I cursed the dialectics of nature... because it gave such strength to Dayi's spirit but denied it to his body. Because it took from us a wise person who brought beauty to this old world and who was a source of hope and morale for humanity."

He was not wrong.
 Nor are we.
 However much we rebel, it is still not enough.
 Because **HE** was our Dayi — a monument of courage whose place is difficult to fill, a will of steel.

¹⁹ Uncle, our leader

He was our confidant, our comrade, our pioneer, our leader, our source of light illuminating our path in the darkest darkness, and our chief teacher.

In all our eyes and hearts, he was a beautiful human being who had established a throne there, a rare master in creating beauty.

Everyone called him Dayî in their own language.

In my own language, Kurdish, I called him **"Xalo."**

I know that his physical absence is a reality.

But I still do not want to believe that we have lost him.

My heart cannot accept it.

Because more than anyone else, it was his right to witness and live through the victory of the revolution and socialism that he had dreamed of and nurtured for 38 years with patience, labour and all his strength.

But it did not happen.

Nature did not even allow our beloved Xalo, who embroidered beauty onto this old world, to grow old.

We did not expect him to leave us so early.

Nor did he deserve to.

Because he still had so much to give to the peoples, so much to contribute to the struggle.

We still had so many dreams about the future of our country, the peoples and the world to create, share and realise with him.

We still had so much to learn from **HIM**.

This was the main reason for our rebellion.

The other reason may seem selfish, but the happiest moments of my life were the moments when I was beside him and shared things with **HIM**.

Even hearing his voice filled me with great enthusiasm.

When I saw his face and embraced him, I felt as though I could fly with happiness.

And now never again, with my own eyes, would I see and embrace our Xalo — the owner of that wise and reassuring powerful voice, that gaze, that limitless compassion, that warmth of a friend and comrade.

Never again would we sit alone and speak Kurdish together, joke, and burst into laughter that would make the enemy furious.

I know and have witnessed dozens of examples of how our Dayî left deep and indelible marks on every person with whom he spoke and shared life, just as he did in the class struggle of our country and in our people's liberation war.

Just as every aspect of us, from head to toe, took flesh and form through him, just as every stage of our people's liberation war and our hope were shaped through his extraordinary effort and labour, I too was shaped through his labour.

Yes, I know the magnitude of our loss.

My pain, like our pain, is immense.

But I am equally honoured and proud.

Like all my comrades, I consider myself one of the luckiest revolutionaries in the world because I was his student and comrade.

I regard having known him personally as a great honour.

And I regard the dreams we created together as my reason for living.

I had first known Xalo simply as the uncle of a school friend.

My first political and comradely acquaintance with him took place while I was of high-school age in Elazığ.

We had a broadly attended discussion meeting with the PKK^{xxvi} leader on the national question that lasted eight or nine hours.

During the meeting, the mocking and crushing manner in which the comrade conducting the debate approached and belittled him had, so to speak, delighted all of us.

When the discussion ended, our feet barely touched the ground.

We practically flew back to the association with joy.

As soon as we arrived, we began enthusiastically explaining how we had checkmated and silenced him.

Dayı arrived and sat beside Haydar Başbağ at the table.

He immediately intervened:

“You did not do the right thing. What you did was shameful. What you did does not serve the revolution or revolutionary friendship...”

We began grumbling.

But Dayı continued in a firmer voice:

“Every action and every form of behaviour of ours must be guided by the consciousness that we are advancing towards revolution and democratic people’s power. For it to serve this aim, the distinction between friend and enemy must be clear and just.

“You tried to satisfy your own emotions. You debated with the mentality of checkmating or being checkmated. You allowed the leader of a movement that we regard as being within the ranks of revolution to be humiliated by a petty-bourgeois intellectual whose own choice is not even clear yet. You should be ashamed of this, yet you have come here boasting about it.

“Struggle between revolutionaries is ideological. It is carried out in order to make people understand the truth, to understand it ourselves, to increase the points we have in common within the struggle, to strengthen the revolutionary front and bring the goal closer.

“None of this existed in the discussion you conducted. Instead, there was the weakening of the revolutionary ranks, the damaging and degeneration of relations of friendship, and the encouragement of hostility...”

With those words, we were, so to speak, shaken back to our senses.

That was also the first lesson I received from Xalo when I first came to know him as a comrade.

In 1977, I had the opportunity to meet Dayı in Istanbul.

I was working at the shipyard and saw him once a week when I went to Balıkesir Dormitory.

I would talk with him and listen to what he said.

There too, although we had many people whom I knew much more closely and with whom I had long-standing, almost feudal ties of friendship, Dayı’s place, his manner and his warmth were different.

He drew people towards him like a magnet.

He explained events so convincingly and clearly that no unanswered questions remained in your mind.

If **HE** was speaking, even if you did not want to, you could not prevent what he said from becoming engraved in your mind.

Because **HE** was not like others.

When he began explaining something, you could also see his heart.

The warmth, love and sincerity of a modest teacher who did not act superior and did not see himself as different from you would surround you.

These were the qualities that made him so attractive and sought after, and that deepened the admiration, respect and love felt for him.

“Be Worthy of Who You Are”

I met Dayı in 1977, when I was a student at the Faculty of Law at Istanbul University.

Although I did not know his exact position, I guessed that he was responsible for our movement.

I had never asked anyone about it, but that was what I concluded from my observations.
 For one thing, all the comrades treated him with great respect.
 Anyone who found themselves in difficulty would go to him.
 Dayı discussed many problems with comrades in leadership positions.
 And it was Dayı who solved the most complicated problems.
 Let me mention another characteristic of Dayı here.
 Dayı knew almost all the comrades in the youth movement by name.
 Even if he had never spoken face to face with many of our comrades, he knew about them
 and knew who they were.
 He knew their characteristics.
 He took a particular interest in comrades who showed potential for development.
 I think that was partly why he took an interest in me as well.
 I had attended high school in Elazığ.
 While at school, I had sympathy for the struggle.
 By the time I gained admission to the Faculty of Law, I was already a member of
 Revolutionary Youth.
 I had militant qualities.
 My physical build was also suitable.
 I knew how to use a weapon.
 I was in a position to fulfil the requirements of the anti-fascist struggle of that time.
 These characteristics must have attracted attention, because the comrades began taking
 a particular interest in me.
 Before long, I began taking part in school and dormitory security.
 I participated in several armed clashes with fascists.
 Because of these qualities, I began to be given other responsibilities as well.
 It was during this period that I met Dayı.
 Dayı would come to Balıkesir Student Dormitory in Çemberlitaş.
 He would also come to a coffee house a little beyond the dormitory.
 The coffee house was on the ground floor of a five-storey commercial building.
 It was a fairly large place.
 Whenever Dayı was there, he would meet with comrades responsible for various areas.
 He would discuss and deal with certain problems with them.
 I never saw Dayı simply sitting there with nothing to do.
 Dayı also had nephews and nieces studying at higher-education institutions.
 He loved them.
 He would talk and joke with them about matters from their hometown or about everyday
 life.
 He would genuinely be their Dayı as well.
 And they loved Dayı very much.
 It was impossible for Dayı to pass someone without asking how they were.
 He was full of love for people and love for his comrades.
 In such encounters, you would see his smiling face.
 I used to go to this coffee house when I was not at school.
 I also went partly because Dayı and the leading comrades were there.
 Most of all, I went there to see Dayı.
 When Dayı had no immediate work or there was a gap between tasks, he would hold group
 conversations with the comrades there.
 He would conduct discussions on current issues and political questions.
 I benefited greatly from these discussions.
 They educated me and broadened my horizons.
 During the first period, our school was under fascist occupation.

Because of this, revolutionaries could not enter.
 The comrades gave me a special task.
 I would enter the school without revealing my identity.
 I would go in and continuously observe the fascists.
 Who was who?
 What kind of policy were the fascists pursuing?
 What were they doing?
 What were their relations with the students like?
 I was to investigate and observe many such things.
 At the same time, Revolutionary Youth was preparing to break the fascist occupation.
 I entered the school every day and watched the fascists.
 It was not known that I was a revolutionary, let alone a member of Revolutionary Youth.
 I concealed this.
 In some situations, I would even appear close to the fascists and enter their circles in order to identify their leaders.
 Even though this was a special task, the comrades' trust in me was complete.
 One day, while we were at the coffee house, Dayı spoke with me.
 He said:
"You're going to Elazığ..."
 Apparently, the comrades there needed ammunition.
 He wanted me to take it to them.
 There was about half a sack of ammunition.
 It was the first time I had ever been given such a task.
 And Dayı himself had given it to me.
 For that reason, I was very excited.
 Whatever the cost, I was going to fulfil this task.
 I set off with those feelings.
 And I took the ammunition safely to Elazığ.
 But on the day, I arrived, there were intense security measures in Elazığ.
 Clashes with fascists were continuing.
 I was supposed to hand the ammunition over to our martyr Haydar Başbağ.
 But Haydar Başbağ was in the middle of those clashes with a weapon in his hand.
 There was also a large police presence.
 I asked Haydar how I should deliver the ammunition.
 We worked out a way.
 Later, at an appropriate moment, I delivered it to him.
 When I returned to Istanbul, I told Dayı what had happened.
 Dayı was openly pleased that the ammunition had been delivered safely to its destination.
 I want to relate another incident we experienced.
 At the same time, I was active within Beyazıt Revolutionary Youth.
 A new person responsible for our area had been appointed.
 But neither I nor the other comrades in the area had managed to establish a common understanding with this new responsible comrade.
 We were finding it difficult to get used to him.
 There was active conflict with fascists in our area.
 The new comrade did not appear capable of carrying this burden.
 Or at least that was how it seemed to us.
 In short, we could not bring ourselves to trust him.
 Naturally, problems began to arise.
 When we could not establish a common language, relations deteriorated.

And partly because I raised the banner of opposition, prejudices also developed against the responsible comrade.

We first discussed the matter with Sinan Kukul.

With his usual smiling face and logic, Sinan tried to persuade us.

We, on the other hand, seemed almost determined not to be persuaded.

Then, behaving somewhat outside the rules, we discussed these issues openly and loudly.

Eventually, the problem was discussed at a meeting.

Sinan Kukul also attended.

I had no intention of being persuaded.

Whatever happened, I wanted this responsible comrade removed from the area.

Someone else had to replace him.

While these discussions were taking place, I learnt that Dayı was angry with us.

In reality, Dayı was angry at our method and at what we were trying to do.

He explained that our behaviour and method were wrong, that through such a method we were interfering with organisational will, and that from this standpoint what we wanted was also wrong.

I heard that he had said:

“We cannot encourage this kind of behaviour.”

After learning Dayı’s approach to the matter, I pulled myself together.

And the first thing I did was withdraw from those discussions.

Only then did I understand better what I had been doing.

Dayı had these kinds of educational and developmental assessments that could shake a person and force them to think.

In later years, I encountered Dayı in Sultanahmet Military Prison.

We had various forms of contact there as well.

Dayı had considerable influence and respect among the prisoners there.

For example, Yalçın Küçük²⁰, who was there at the time, had experienced problems with criminal prisoners.

Dayı sent word to Yalçın Küçük and asked him to come to the political section.

There were criminal prisoners there, including mafia figures.

In one way or another, everyone had relations with everyone else.

One of the “famous” mafia figures of the period, İdris Özbir, would always speak respectfully of Dayı whenever his name was mentioned.

One day, together with comrades from our cell, we washed the rice from the food given by the prison administration and, under those conditions, made rice pudding.

We invited Dayı as well.

He ate it and liked it.

Then he thanked us.

But for us in the cell, the most important thing was being together with Dayı.

Sitting and talking with him was what we wanted most.

My legal situation was not very bad.

For that reason, there was a possibility that I would be released.

I was released from Sultanahmet.

As I was leaving, Dayı spoke with me.

Naturally, I felt ashamed in front of Dayı.

Because I was not in a position to continue the struggle.

Dayı said to me:

²⁰ **Yalçın Küçük (1938–2026):** Turkish Marxist intellectual, economist and writer known for his analyses of Turkish politics, history and socialism, as well as several controversial political and historical theses.

“You must be worthy of who you are.”

And for years I never forgot those words.

I suppose I was not worthy of who I was.

My Relations with “the Old Man” ...

The reason I call him that is because of the relationship we had.

I began this way because of the closeness between us.

I always called him **“the Old Man.”**

Of course, it was not because he was much older than us.

There were only two years between us.

He was two years older than me.

I loved **HIM** very much, and my respect for **HIM** was limitless.

From those years onwards, I trusted **HIM** completely in every respect.

Even then, he had a character that gave us confidence.

For that reason, I will continue to call **HIM** “the Old Man”.

In reality, he was never old.

He always defended new ideas.

He always organised things that went further.

In that respect, perhaps the expression “the Old Man” does not describe him at all.

He was always energetic and lively.

He was enthusiastic.

He was a member of Revolutionary Youth.

The real reason I called him “the Old Man” was his wise character.

At that time, he was more commonly addressed as “Dayı”.

But there were also people like me who called him “the Old Man”.

I always preferred “the Old Man”.

I became deeply attached to him.

I loved **HIM**.

I am from Elazığ.

I come from a family that could be regarded as progressive.

Before 1970, the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* came into our home.

In the neighbourhood where I lived, there were people who had come from Dersim and from Palu, a district of Elazığ.

At one time, Armenian families also lived in the neighbourhood.

We even had such a neighbour.

Structurally, our neighbourhood had a democratic character.

While I was at secondary school and high school, there were many occasions when we fought with fascists at school.

A person named Ali Rıza Koşar first tried to organise us.

At that time, he was broadly left-wing.

During his university years, he even stayed in the same room as Dayı.

Later, he reached a position known as the “five-partitionist” line, defending the independence of Kurdistan in five countries and describing the Soviet Union as social-imperialist.

In line with this position, he repeatedly engaged in provocation and during one rally even drew a weapon on our comrades.

At the time, Ali Rıza told us about the association that had been established in Elazığ.

The left had not yet divided into separate groups in those years.

Ali Rıza was staying with Dayı at the Elazığ Student Dormitory in Feriköy.

The main problems were with the Aydınlık circle.

Everyone called them PDA supporters, after *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık* magazine. At that time, at the congress, we won the majority from the PDA supporters who had established the Elazığ Revolutionary Cultural Association and took over the leadership.

The leadership had now passed to us.

We had taken Mahir Çayan as our guide.

We defended Mahir Çayan's ideas.

We were sympathisers of Mahir Çayan.

One year later, at the second congress, I became chairman of the association.

Gavur Ali, our martyr Haydar Başbağ and I were among the people who came to the fore there at the time.

One day, we were told that a seminar would be held.

Ömer Güven, a former THKP-C member who had come out of prison, was travelling around the provinces trying to organise a new political current.

They denied the ideas of the THKP-C.

They had an eight-page text.

In this text, they denigrated the past struggle.

Because of this eight-page text, they were called the **"Eight-Pagers"**.

Some of us already knew that Ömer Güven no longer had any relation with the THKP-C and was trying to establish a new political current.

The day of the meeting arrived.

Our members and the youth attended the seminar.

When Ömer Güven began criticising Mahir Çayan, all the members of our association immediately reacted.

For this reason, Ömer Güven could not openly criticise Mahir Çayan.

After this meeting, Ömer Güven was able to influence only three or four people.

Two days after this seminar, we met the "Old Man".

Gavur Ali told me:

"A comrade has come from Istanbul. He wants to speak with us. Let's talk with him together."

That was the first time I met the Old Man, in Elazığ, on that day.

Our relationship continued in the years that followed.

There were five or six of us at the meeting with the Old Man.

The subject was Ömer Güven and what was being attempted.

The Old Man gave us detailed information about Ömer Güven.

All the comrades in our group who attended the meeting were Çayan sympathisers.

For this reason, the Old Man was trying to organise us.

Our relations with him continued after this meeting.

A woman comrade was martyred in Ankara as a result of a fascist attack.

For the first time since the 1970s, a woman revolutionary had been killed by fascists.

Her funeral would be held in Bursa.

We were in Istanbul at the time.

On the Old Man's instruction, we were going to Bursa to attend the funeral.

We met in the morning.

There were 20–25 of us.

We were going to cross to Yalova by ferry.

The Old Man told the comrades there:

"No one will carry any material. If we have material on us, we may be caught in a search. We absolutely have to attend the funeral."

Our martyr İbrahim Erdoğan was also among the group.

After we boarded the ferry, the Old Man saw that some comrades were carrying weapons and knives.

He said:

“Why did you bring the material with you? I told you to board without any material. Then everyone should empty what they have and hide it somewhere suitable on the ship. We’ll collect it all on the return journey.”

We disembarked together at Yalova and boarded vehicles for Bursa.

Before the vehicle moved, some comrades said:

“It would be better if we went separately.”

But one of the leaders of that period said:

“There is no need. We’ll all go together.”

When we reached the entrance to Bursa, we encountered a large police presence.

The police were checking buses and taking students and young people off.

When it was our bus’s turn, they saw that we were all young.

They asked why we had come to Bursa.

We said:

“We came for our friend’s funeral.”

Then they searched the bus and found a chain.

The police later beat many of our comrades with that chain.

They also took the driver and his assistant to the police station.

The driver and assistant said the chain belonged to them.

At that point, the police stopped beating our comrades.

They kept us together at the police station.

When it came time to take statements, on the Old Man’s instruction we said:

“We came from Istanbul to Bursa to attend a funeral.”

They kept us at the police station until evening.

While we were there, we joked among ourselves.

We would say:

“If they keep us here for another few days, the fascists will be walking around freely.”

In the evening, the police put us back on the bus and sent us towards Yalova.

But when we stopped for a meal break and were eating, our bus drove off and left us behind.

So, we were stranded somewhere between Bursa and Yalova.

We boarded passing buses in smaller groups and eventually reached Yalova.

We were very angry with the bus driver and intended to find him in Yalova and speak with him.

We spent that night in Yalova.

We passed the time in coffee houses and walking along the coast.

One of the comrades said:

“We found the bus driver.”

We spoke with him and expressed our anger.

He said he had been very frightened, that the police had threatened him, and that this was why he had fled.

I was staying at the Elazığ Student Dormitory in Feriköy, Istanbul.

One day, the Old Man told me:

“From now on, you’ll stay at Niğde Student Dormitory in Fındıkzade.”

And I moved there.

Relations among the comrades at Niğde Student Dormitory were exemplary.

Everyone trusted one another.

We had very good times there.

Niğde Student Dormitory was surrounded by five different fascist dormitories in the area.

For that reason, the Old Man gathered there comrades who were solid, good with weapons and had certain practical experience.

If that dormitory remained standing, the entire area remained standing.

After coming to Istanbul, we saw Dayı every day.

And we often had conversations.

But usually, it was he who spoke more.

These conversations took place at the coffee house near Balıkesir Student Dormitory in Çemberlitaş, which our comrades called **“the Kremlin”**.

When the split began, I acted more emotionally than politically.

I said:

“I don’t want to fight with old comrades.”

And I asked for a task outside Istanbul.

The Old Man told me:

“Instead of going somewhere else, stay in Istanbul and go to Kumburgaz. You can stay there. We’ll come in the summer too.”

There was a camp by the sea in Kumburgaz belonging to an association in which our public-sector workers were influential.

In reality, the camp was for İETT employees.

But its administration was in our hands.

I went there as an administrator and stayed for six months.

Ten or fifteen comrades who knew I was there would come to the camp on holidays.

They would swim and rest.

They would stay for one or two days.

We would talk and ease our longing for one another.

The reason I stayed there was that it was close to Istanbul.

In reality, I had gone there because I did not want to experience the tensions of the split directly.

Even so, when the comrades called me or when we had work in Istanbul, I would travel back and forth.

The split had begun.

But it had not yet spread widely.

Revolutionary Path liquidationism was under pressure.

It was during those days that Dayı called me to Istanbul.

We met.

He said:

“You’re going to Elazığ.”

In truth, I had no intention of going.

But when the Old Man said it and gave me the task, I had to go.

The split was now beginning to be discussed among the masses.

The Ankara faction was placing its own people everywhere.

When I reached Elazığ, in accordance with Dayı’s instruction, I found Gavur Ali and Haydar Başbağ.

Later, we held a meeting together at the association.

I stayed in Elazığ for three or four days.

The Ankara faction learnt that I was in Elazığ and that we had held a meeting.

For this reason, they called us to Ankara.

From Elazığ, they called me, Gavur Ali and our martyr Haydar Başbağ to Ankara.

Among those going to Ankara there was also one comrade from Diyarbakır, two from Tunceli and two from Malatya.

The Ankara faction was so calculating that they had even arranged who we would travel with.

For this reason, they bought our tickets themselves.
Throughout the journey, they placed beside us people who supported them.
The three of us from Elazığ travelled in separate seats beside these people all the way to Ankara.

I travelled to Ankara beside a person who boarded in Malatya and supported the Ankara faction.

Haydar Başbağ sat with the comrade from Diyarbakır.

After the bus left Malatya, the person beside me said:

“We need to talk.”

I replied:

“Then let’s talk.”

And he began.

That conversation affected me so negatively that I lost all the love and respect I had previously felt for those people from the past who were now within the Ankara faction.

Previously, we had competed for the chance to be students beside people who had taken part in the '71 Movement.

We hung on their every word, hoping to learn something from them.

In short, we regarded them as almost unreachable figures.

But we learnt that they were not such people.

We argued on the bus.

The discussion reached such a point that I became angry and said:

“I used to respect all of you. While there were so many young people outside wanting to struggle, when you came out of prison you did nothing. You withdrew into your shells. Then, for your careers and your own interests, you divided the struggle. You did not even manage to be martyred as revolutionaries. If you could not become martyrs, at least behave like revolutionaries. You could not even manage that. At the very least, you should have thrown yourselves off somewhere for the revolution; then we could have remembered you as martyrs of the revolution.”

Then I got up and moved away.

Later, I went to sit beside Gavur Ali, moving the person who had been sitting next to him.

The three of us from Elazığ agreed among ourselves that we would act together with Dayı.

We stayed in Ankara for two days.

The Ankara faction wanted to speak with me.

I said:

“I will not speak with you before I speak with Dayı.”

When I telephoned the comrades in Istanbul, they told me Dayı was in Ankara.

I tried to reach Dayı in Ankara, but I could not.

I asked the Ankara faction.

They said:

“Dayı isn’t here.”

Everyone except me attended the meeting.

Later, we from Elazığ returned to Istanbul.

In Ankara, the Ankara faction had prevented us from meeting Dayı.

At least, that was what they thought they had achieved.

It turned out that Dayı and the others had also returned from Ankara to Istanbul, only an hour before us.

One day after returning to Istanbul, I met the Old Man.

He immediately asked what position we had taken.

I explained what had happened.

I told him that I had not attended the meeting.

He listened and said:

“I wish you had attended the meetings, held discussions and debated.”

I said:

“We looked everywhere for you, but we couldn’t reach you.”

He told me he had been in Ankara for three days.

They had not told Dayı that we were there and had hidden us from him.

While the arguments with the Ankara faction continued, the liquidationists carried out provocative acts here and there.

In situations like these, Dayı would always say:

“We must behave in a way worthy of us. We must be careful.”

During the same period, Dayı and I decided to go to Elazığ.

We would stay for two or three days, see our families and meet the comrades.

Elections were also on the agenda at the time.

On the second day, Ecevit^{xxvii} had a rally.

We decided not to go and sat somewhere outside the city.

Gavur Ali and one or two others were with us.

But fascists attacked the rally and fired one or two shots at Ecevit.

When we heard the news, we went together to the rally area.

The association was also informed, and those there came as well.

When the youth arrived, Ecevit became even more enthusiastic.

He tried to encourage us in his own way:

“My brave Revolutionary Youth, the homeland will be saved through you.”

We had not gone there to protect him.

We had gone because we were thinking of the people there and wanted to defend them.

Anyway, the rally ended.

Ecevit was going from there to Tunceli to hold another rally on the same day.

As we were heading back to the association, Dayı said:

“Look at this man. Here he suddenly became a revolutionary, embraced us, called us ‘brave ones’, called us ‘revolutionaries’, said ‘the homeland will be saved through you’. Let’s go to the rally in Tunceli as well and see what he says about revolutionaries there.”

So, four or five of us went to the rally.

Ecevit had begun speaking.

When the youth shouted slogans and political groups opened banners, Ecevit called on his party members:

“Stop them.”

Then, immediately afterwards, he referred to the rally in Elazığ.

From the platform he said:

“In Elazığ, I lifted the lid off the pot and red communists came out.”

Towards the end of the rally, he told the people:

“Silence those children.”

Then he came down from the platform.

Naturally, the older people there did not understand what was happening.

Fathers and children found themselves confronting one another.

Together with the comrades in Tunceli, we formed a large group.

We told Dayı:

“You should climb onto the wall, say something and calm the people down.”

We helped Dayı climb onto the wall.

I have never forgotten his first words.

Referring to Ecevit, he said:

“This ... called us ‘my brothers, my dear ones, my brave revolutionaries’ in Elazığ. Here, he is complaining about us to the people.”

Then we brought Dayı down from the wall.

He must have been very angry, because he said:

“This one and other two-faced men like him always do this. When they are cornered, they start talking about ‘brave ones’, ‘revolutionaries’ and ‘leftists’.”

At meetings, Dayı spoke with such clarity that he could persuade everyone.

This side of him was highly developed and he had a great influence on people.

There is another Elazığ memory I have with Dayı.

We arrived in Elazığ from Istanbul.

That evening, we went to see Dayı’s mother and father.

Both were old by then.

We slept in a room used as a storeroom, where food for the winter was kept.

They spread bedding on the floor for us.

Dayı and I slept together on the floor mattress.

In the room there were sacks of flour, sacks of winter provisions and other materials.

We woke at a normal hour in the morning.

We all had breakfast together.

Then we went to their village to visit Dayı’s sister.

At that time, she lived in Kürdemlik village, one of the central villages of Elazığ.

We stayed at his sister’s house for one or two hours.

Then we returned to the city.

I was planning to go home that evening to see my own mother.

After returning to the city, we went to our association in Fevzi Çakmak.

We were talking with the comrades.

At one point, Dayı said:

“It’s time for the television news. Turn it on so we can watch.”

At that time, we never missed the news.

If our situation allowed, we generally watched it.

The news mentioned an incident in Istanbul.

One of our comrades had been captured in a clash.

Dayı immediately said:

“We have to return to Istanbul straight away.”

We had come for a week.

But we stayed only one night and returned to Istanbul.

When this comrade, whom Dayı knew and loved very much, was taken prisoner, he did not remain there for another minute.

He was that sensitive about such matters.

And throughout the journey to Istanbul, he lamented the capture of that comrade.

Dayı was someone who would do anything for his comrades.

He thought about everyone.

Whenever something happened somewhere, he would ask about it, learn the details and take an interest.

Even if there was a disagreement between two people, he would call those involved within the organisation and explain how they should behave towards one another.

University Years...

The university years had now begun. In the 1970–71 academic year, Dayı began studying at the Faculty of Forestry. The school was in Sarıyer. However, during the first year, teaching took place at Istanbul University’s Faculty of Science.

In the first year, they received faculty education. Dayı attended university during that first year. He studied. However, as he became increasingly integrated with the struggle, he began to distance himself from university. University no longer played a decisive role in his life.

During his first year at university, he came to Elazığ twice. In our conversations, he frequently spoke of an **“Independent Turkey”**. At that time, he took me to Elazığ Revolutionary Youth, located beside the Covered Bazaar (Grand Bazaar) in Elazığ. We sat and talked with the comrades at the association.

Later, I passed the entrance examination and enrolled at the Faculty of Literature. And I began staying in the same dormitory as Dayı. At first, our rooms were separate. I had said to Dayı: “If a place becomes available in your room, take me in with you.”

Indeed, within two or three months, a place became available in their room. And Dayı took me into Room 406.

During the 1971–72 academic year, I too was living in the dormitory. We stayed with Dayı and the others in Room 406. Our room was for six people, and we were on the fourth floor. The dormitory had five floors. The floor above us was a study floor where the study hall was located.

There were three bunk beds in the room, each sleeping two people. Altogether, 250–300 students stayed in the dormitory.

At a time when repression was intense in Istanbul, attacks against all sections of society also increased under the fascist junta of 12 March. During a general search in Istanbul which they called **“Storm 1 Exercise”**, the student dormitory where we were staying was raided and searched.

During the search, soldiers detained Dayı. They took him away and later handed him over to the police. Dayı remained in custody for 11 days.

After this detention, I saw that Dayı had become even more hardened and determined.

In those years, we held various conversations and discussions in our dormitory room. Our martyr Niyazi Aydın was also staying in the dormitory. He too stayed on our floor.

In the mornings, we would have breakfast together in the room. Each day, one of us would prepare breakfast. Dayı was also very friendly and warm during this period. He liked sharing whatever means he had with all his comrades. And he did this willingly.

During their second year, they travelled back and forth to Sarıyer. Their school was there.

In fact, Dayı had rented a house there at the time. He sometimes stayed there and read the Marxist-Leninist classics. His reading had now shifted towards the Marxist-Leninist classics.

Later, Dayı stopped attending university. He suspended his studies.

For Dayı, this period was a process of learning and teaching revolutionary practice. There was no one to show the way or provide guidance. Everything was learnt through trial and error.

In 1975, Dayı came to Elazığ. When he came, he brought **Mahir Çayan’s Uninterrupted Revolution writings**^{xxviii} with him. He gave me a copy to read as well.

This was the period when the *Uninterrupted Revolution* writings had begun to be read. It was a period when the Party-Front was beginning to be studied and understood.

When Dayı came to Elazığ, we used to sit in a coffee house near Hozat Garage. Its name was Club 23. Our comrades would also drop by there. We would talk and discuss various subjects.

There was also a coffee house with a garden in Fevzi Çakmak, at the place that would later become Elazığ Revolutionary Youth. We would sit and talk with comrades there.

Dayı would tell us about the struggle in Istanbul and the problems of that period.

Besides **“Dayı”**, some comrades also addressed him as **“the Old Man”**. Of course, this was not because Dayı was “old”. It came from the respect they had for him and from his wise personality.

The Elazığ Student Dormitory housed, during those years, prospective cadres who would later lead the struggle. Those who would become the future staff officers of the struggle began learning revolutionary practice in the dormitory and through life itself.

The dormitories, particularly Elazığ Student Dormitory, played a major role in this struggle.

When Kızıldere took place on 30 March, and when Deniz and his comrades were executed, we were all deeply affected. And we became even more committed to the struggle.

As time passed, Dayı's qualities as a leader developed. His revolutionary commitment grew. He began reading and discussing more.

During these years, they also rented another house in Tarlabası. This house was below İstiklal Avenue. There were no bunk beds. They slept on mattresses on the floor. There was very little furniture in the house.

Dayı stayed in that house for five or six months. Throughout those five or six months, he studied together with one or two comrades.

There was no opportunity for regular study in the dormitory. Those who read constantly attracted attention, and it was not a comfortable environment. Moreover, the dormitory administration and the police did not particularly want Dayı staying there.

The books they read were Marxist-Leninist classics.

They worked at the house in order to carry out research.

Then İYÖKD was established. A practical process had begun. The association was in Aksaray.

With the establishment of the association, the youth began to regroup, and the struggle began to rise.

What I will relate from this point onwards will be fragmented. Because after that period, I saw Dayı only from time to time.

Dayı was extremely loyal in his relations with his comrades. He never forgot his old friends.

We used to address one another as:

"My king of a friend."

In one or two letters he wrote to me from prison in later years, he used the same form of address:

"My king of a friend."

After I finished university, I saw him at Balıkesir Dormitory in 1978.

We talked for a while, but he had something to attend to. So we arranged to meet that evening and had a meal together somewhere.

We had a wonderful conversation about the past years and the things we had experienced.

I have never forgotten that conversation.

Unfortunately, I was unable to preserve those letters of his. I no longer have them.

I wish I had kept them.

Dayı would attend the funerals of revolutionaries killed in Istanbul. He attended the funerals of Kerim Yaman and Şahin Aydın.

There was a fascist occupation of the main building of Istanbul University.

A group of us were sent into the main building. Fascists attacked us at the entrance. We entered the section where the academic staff were and occupied it.

Then the police surrounded the university.

Comrades outside sent us word. They wanted us to leave.

We came out, but there was nobody there to meet us.

This became a matter of discussion.

I became angry with the youth leaders of the time and went to complain about them to Dayı.

Dayı listened to me.

And he tried to explain the situation to me.

Later, those people who posed as leaders, the ones with whom I had argued, abandoned the struggle.

Dayı was very farsighted about such matters.

Elazığ Student Dormitory

They became university students. Dursun gained admission to Istanbul University's Faculty of Forestry. My relative later entered the Faculty of Literature. I, meanwhile, was continuing my high-school education.

Whenever Dursun came to Elazığ during the holidays, we would meet again.

We would meet on Gazi Avenue, our only busy street, and from there walk together towards the recreation area.

A large part of that wooded area is today within the grounds of Fırat University in Elazığ.

At the time, there was a large area beside it where horse races were held. I can say that this area was both Elazığ's picnic area and, in those years, effectively "outside" the city.

Today, those places are part of the centre.

In those years, the recreation area was one of the places where we used to sit and talk. I have beautiful and pleasant memories of that place.

We talked about everything.

I looked at them with admiration. They were university students and, most importantly, they were students in Istanbul, **"the city of our dreams"**.

Sometimes I would ask about Istanbul. We also talked about student-youth actions. We had conversations there about Elazığ as well.

Then I finished high school too.

And I joined them.

In 1971, we travelled to Istanbul by train. We were on the Eastern Express. The train was coming from Van, and we boarded at Yolçatı railway station, 25 kilometres from Elazığ.

We had bought couchette tickets.

In our compartment there was an elderly man and a young woman. We stayed in the corridor so that we would not disturb them. We thought that if the three of us young men entered the compartment, the young woman might feel uncomfortable.

Night was approaching.

When we went inside to sleep, Dursun saw the elderly man behaving improperly towards the young woman.

He became angry and warned the man.

In 1971, I too began staying with them at Elazığ Student Dormitory in Feriköy, Istanbul.

Directly opposite the dormitory was the Erim Chocolate factory. It was a chocolate factory where mainly young women workers were employed.

It became crowded at the beginning and end of shifts.

Below our dormitory was Konya Student Dormitory, where reactionaries and fascists stayed. Naturally, we had problems with them from time to time.

Konya Dormitory was larger and had greater facilities than ours.

Although we were side by side, there was very little that we shared with them.

Our dormitory had five floors. It was affiliated with Elazığ Municipality and the Special Provincial Administration.

The dormitory was full.

The director was a fascist retired colonel who collaborated with the police.

We stayed in Room 406 on the fourth floor.

Near the dormitory was İdil Cinema. From time to time, we went there to watch films. Perhaps watching films had a particular beauty within our social lives at that time.

People from Elazığ, Tunceli, Erzincan and Maraş stayed in the dormitory.

The left dominated.

For a period, there were also right-wing students staying there. Later, those with right-wing views left the dormitory.

Although the number of students staying there varied, at one point there were 350 of us.

The dormitory did not provide meals. Initially, there was a restaurant on the ground floor. Later, a canteen was operated and then closed.

There was a dormitory administration representing the students. More accurately, it was a committee.

I remember people travelling to Elazığ to meet Elazığ Municipality in order to improve dormitory conditions and reduce food prices.

They met Elazığ Mayor Şükrü Kaçar.

The daily newspaper *Turan* reported the meeting under the headline:

“Two communists threatened the mayor.”

More accurately, the mayor had the story published himself.

Dursun was not at the meeting, but he was guiding the committee.

The mayor himself had previously come to inspect the dormitory.

During this inspection, Dursun argued with the mayor.

In fact, when the mayor returned to Elazığ, he complained about Dursun to Dursun’s elder brother.

When we travelled from Elazığ to Istanbul in 1972, there were again ten of us.

This time we travelled by railcar.

It was a journey full of jokes and laughter.

We got off the train in Ankara.

After Ankara, we were going to continue by bus, so we went to the bus station.

There, we were attacked by people from the bus companies.

They swore at us for no reason.

Dursun tried to calm the fight.

At New Year in 1972, we were in the dormitory.

An attendant came to us and said that the director had ordered the books in our room to be collected.

He had also informed the police.

The police were apparently coming to take Dursun and the comrades on the committee.

The books were in the director’s office.

The office was locked.

We wanted to retrieve the books.

We sat down and discussed it among ourselves.

Then we made a plan and entered the office.

We took out a suitcase full of books.

Then we took them away and buried them in the ground.

The police chased us then as well.

In those years, we read a great deal.

The Marxist-Leninist classics were among the books we read. The *Communist Manifesto* and *Capital* were among them.

The cultural level was high.

Dursun was among those who read the most.

Because Dursun stood out in the dormitory, he became a target of the police.

When the police came to take him away, the dormitory director was protested against.

The dormitory director fired into the air and then fled.

When Dursun was expelled from the dormitory in 1972, he moved into a house in Tarlabası.

It was a two-storey but dilapidated house.

It had two rooms and a small garden.

By those years, certain ideas had begun to take shape in Dursun’s mind.

He had an enquiring, questioning and debating character.

He would say:

“I am looking for a conscious person.”

I remember him calling students in Beyazıt during the establishment of İYÖKD.

And there he wrote on the ground:

“LONG LIVE A FULLY INDEPENDENT TURKEY”

He also wrote:

“LONG LIVE İYÖKD”

With the opening of Atatürk Student Complex (AÖS), Elazığ Student Dormitory split into two in 1973.

Some of the students went to AÖS.

This time, the struggle was there.

In 1973, following the introduction of new laws, Yılmaz Güney and some political prisoners were released from prison.

A celebration was organised for this.

Âşık Mahsuni^{xxix} was also there.

We asked Âşık Mahsuni to perform **“Erim Erim Eriyesin”**²¹.

This song had been written as a criticism of the fascism of 12 March and condemned the Prime Minister of the period, Nihat Erim.

Because Erim had inflicted considerable oppression upon the people.

Âşık Mahsuni did not want to sing the song because he feared that there would be trouble and that he would be detained.

We insisted.

He sang it.

And afterwards, he was detained.

There were three double bunk beds in Room 406.

The room had a small balcony.

We lived communally.

We were happy.

We would talk.

We read plenty of books.

Our evenings in the dormitory were very lively.

During the 1973 elections, the position to be taken towards the CHP was one subject of discussion.

The national question was another subject of debate.

Dursun was one of those who expressed views on these questions.

I participated in demonstrations against NATO together with Dursun.

One day, he sent me to distribute leaflets at the Grundig television factory in Gayrettepe, Istanbul.

The police came and tried to intervene, but the workers stood by us and protected us.

In those years, imperialism and NATO were among the subjects we discussed most frequently.

Dursun always made logical points in these discussions.

And as the days passed, I could see his knowledge increasing.

²¹ **“Erim Erim Eriyesin”**: A well-known protest song by Âşık Mahzuni Şerif directed against Prime Minister Nihat Erim. The title is a wordplay on Erim’s surname and literally means **“May you melt away, bit by bit”**, with the sense of **“May you waste away gradually.”** The song became associated with opposition to the repression of the 12 March 1971 period.

I Have Never Forgotten What He Said That Day for 32 Years

Apart from the few occasions when I attended hearings in the Devrimci Sol Main Trial, it has been exactly 30 years since I last saw Dayı.

Yet in the years 1975–78, we would go mad if we did not see him, if we went for a long time without seeing him.

In those years, we were only beginning to learn.

We were more involved in practice.

For that reason, in order to understand a book, we had read, we absolutely had to discuss it with someone.

Some subjects are difficult to understand.

The performance of the teacher or student can be just as decisive as the complexity of the subject itself.

Not everyone can explain every subject.

And even if they explain it, they cannot necessarily make others understand it.

Sometimes hours of explanation, hours of listening or making someone read thick books achieves nothing.

You know the story.

There is a conference in Russia, and a Menshevik is speaking from the platform.

But when the workers have difficulty understanding what is being said, they approach Lenin and ask:

“Comrade Lenin, isn’t there a way of explaining this in more understandable language?”

Lenin says:

“There is.”

And the moment he says:

“Look, comrade, there are two classes. One is the bourgeoisie and the other is the working class...”

the workers do not even allow Lenin to finish:

“All right, Comrade Lenin, we understand the issue.”

Well, Mensheviks were not unique to Russia.

We had plenty of Mensheviks too.

Especially in the 1970s, there was no shortage of those rediscovering theory or of theoretical polemics.

We had almost felt our way forward through ideological speculation and thousands of pages of writings.

That is why the question, **“How can the most complicated subject be explained in the shortest possible way — or can it be?”**, always reminds me of Dayı.

The skill does not lie in speaking about a subject for hours, engaging in intellectual gymnastics or using bookish words and expressions.

It lies in enabling people to understand the most complicated subjects in the most concise way and by the shortest route.

It must have been the 1975–76 academic year.

We were at Balıkesir Student Dormitory in Çemberlitaş.

We had gathered around Dayı.

We were drinking tea and talking about what had happened at the schools that morning.

There were comrades from every school.

In a sense, a daily report was being given to Dayı.

Everyone also learnt from everyone else’s experience, creating a collective consciousness.

Whatever had happened, wherever it had happened, was being related first-hand by those directly involved.

It is worth remembering that there were no computers then.

There were no fax machines.

There were no mobile phones.

There was no email.

Even ordinary home telephones were not widespread.

You could not send a message or a fax.

The schools were under fascist occupation.

In the mornings, people went to the schools collectively and left collectively at midday.

In the afternoons, meetings and discussions were held in dormitory halls, where assessments were made.

It was one such day.

In the middle of our conversation, a comrade entered and said to Dayı:

“Dayı, a comrade wants to speak with you.”

“Who is he? Why does he want to speak with me? Why don’t you ask him?”

“A comrade named Çetin. He says he has come from Diyarbakır. He wants to talk about the National Question.”

At that time, the national question — that is, the Kurdish Question — was referred to as the **National Question**. For example, instead of asking someone, “What do you think about the Kurdish Question?”, people would ask, “What do you think about the National Question?”

Dayı said:

“Fine, you speak with him. You know our views on the National Question.”

“But he said he wants to speak with you. He says, ‘I want to speak with Dursun Dayı.’”

“All right, then. Let him come.”

They must have known one another before, because Dayı greeted him with a smile, shook his hand and embraced him.

They went into the next room.

We went in as well.

After exchanging greetings, the tea arrived.

Çetin said he had only recently returned from Diyarbakır and that he had travelled around Batman, Siirt and Van.

He kept telling us what he had seen and heard.

He explained who was doing what and what each political group defended.

Whenever Dayı expressed surprise at certain things by saying:

“Really?” or “Is that so?”

Çetin would begin talking even more.

Over more than two hours, Dayı spoke for perhaps only 15 or 20 minutes.

Çetin did almost all the talking.

In general, Dayı did not speak at great length.

At least, I never saw him do so.

He spoke briefly and to the point and made people understand an issue through examples from everyday life.

There too, he spoke only briefly.

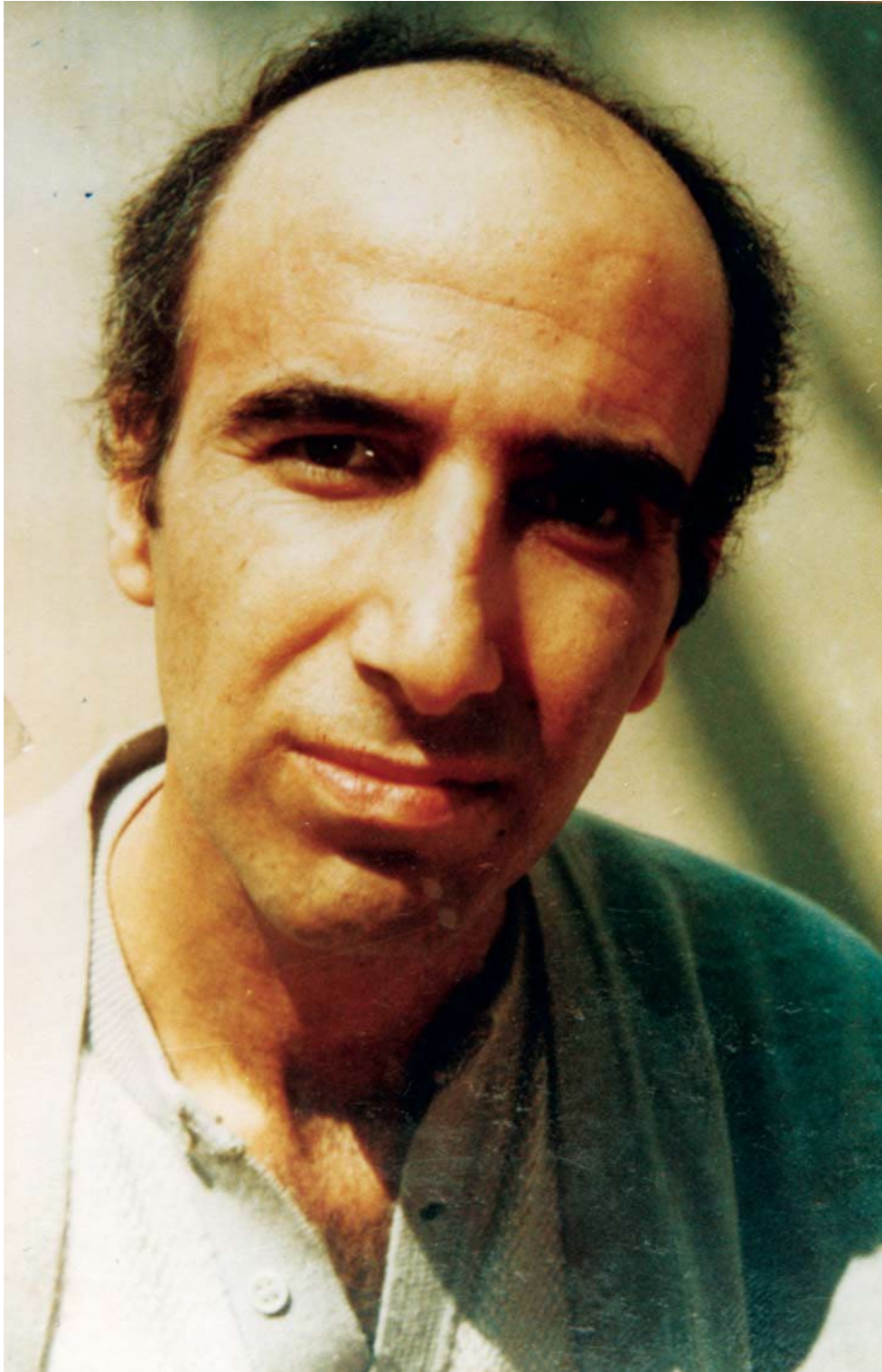
But I have never forgotten what he said that day for 32 years.

The subject was the National Question and organisation.

He said:

“We are Marxist-Leninists. Therefore, we base organisation not on nationalities but on classes. And we believe that the National Question can only be resolved under people’s power.”

CHAPTER 3



From the Founding of Revolutionary Left to Imprisonment...

To Be Dursun Karataş Is to Be Able to Turn a Movement into “the Name of Hope”

“The year 1978, when Revolutionary Left entered the political arena, was a period in which official and civilian fascist terror had reached enormous proportions. Shortly after the establishment of Revolutionary Left, martial law would also be declared, and the movement would be forced to organise under these conditions.

It was under these difficult conditions, under his leadership, that clear dividing lines were drawn against revisionism, opportunism, and right- and left-wing deviations from the THKP-C line.

This was one of the most important characteristics of our comrade, our Dayı. Throughout his life, the lines of distinction were always clear and firm. There was no ambiguity in him on any issue. He was the enemy of every idea and every practice that blurred the revolutionary line.

The militant revolutionary line shaped under his leadership against fascist terror was also an expression of this. Under conditions in which revisionism and opportunism organised passivity against fascist terror, and cities and areas were surrendered to fascist terror through theories of provocation, Revolutionary Left rose to become the leader of the anti-fascist struggle through retaliatory actions and a militant line aimed at demanding accountability and deterring fascist terror.

Against official state terror, it also developed a new understanding within the left through a line of actions directed immediately against state institutions.

This audacity, which emerged as one of the most fundamental characteristics of Revolutionary Left practice, was undoubtedly, first and foremost, the political audacity of our leadership.

Revolutionary Left and the DHKP-C under his leadership have been known throughout every historical period for their audacity.

Audacity was inseparable from our claim to revolution and power, and throughout his life our leading comrade sought to equip the cadres with this claim.

Within a short period of approximately two years, Revolutionary Left had become one of the significant political movements in our country, had begun to create hope among the masses and to give direction to the left through its practice, when our country entered a new period with the fascist coup of 12 September 1980.”

(Taken from Statement No. 39 issued by the Party on 11 August 2008 following the martyrdom of Dayı.)

1978 — Revolutionary Left was founded. He was the political leader of the three-member Central Committee that was formed.

July–August 1978 — The Revolutionary Youth Federation was established. The first issue of *Revolutionary Youth* magazine, the publication organ of the revolutionary movement, was published under the supervision of Dursun Karataş.

December 1978 — Martial law was declared. A decision was taken to continue the actions. The organisation was restructured under his leadership.

12 September 1980 — The fascist junta seized power. Dursun Karataş announced the movement’s decision to resist the junta in the declaration he personally wrote, entitled: **“The Americanist Fascist Junta Cannot Make 45 Million People Surrender.”**

The Days When Dayı Was Captured

I also encountered Dayı during the Revolutionary Left period following the split with DY. I remember a large meeting held during the formation of Revolutionary Left in Istanbul.

I think it was held in Tepebaşı.

People who had come from Anatolia also attended and spoke at the meeting.

I saw him there as well.

I also encountered him on other occasions around the association, Balıkesir Dormitory or at demonstrations.

I later heard an account from Lütfiye Kaçar^{xxx}, who was subsequently disappeared by fascism, illustrating how seriously Dayı took his work and his disciplined character.

This happened shortly after the split.

Lütfiye had apparently been assigned to a place where Dayı and the others were holding a meeting.

After Dayı and the others entered and began the meeting, someone who was a popular figure at the time, but who later changed sides, arrived late.

In a panic, he asked Lütfiye:

“Has Dayı arrived? Is he inside?”

Lütfiye replied:

“Yes, he’s inside.”

Within Lütfiye’s hearing, the person muttered:

“I’m late again. What am I going to say now?”

And he entered the meeting room where Dayı and the others were.

Lütfiye later spoke excitedly of how impressed she had been by Dayı’s punctuality and seriousness about such matters.

After the split and the formation of Revolutionary Left, we saw in practice that many things had changed.

Previously, students generally went back to their hometowns during the summer.

There had almost been a kind of **“school-time revolutionism”**.

That changed.

Now there was continuous revolutionary activity.

The period of “school-time revolutionism” had ended.

The period when everyone knew everything about everyone, when anyone could go wherever they wanted and empty chatter was widespread, also ended.

Order was imposed.

Everyone worked within their own area of responsibility.

Empty talk, unnecessary explanations that could expose the organisation, were no longer permitted.

The principle was established that everyone should know only as much about the organisation as they needed to know.

It began to be understood that this had nothing to do with mistrust but was an organisational necessity.

Discipline and seriousness emerged.

Throughout the formation of this process, we always felt Dayı’s presence.

Then came the days of the fascist junta of 12 September.

Revolutionary Left’s resistance against the junta continued.

It was conducted in stages.

I know that the declaration **“The Americanist Fascist Junta Cannot Make 45 Million People Surrender”**, which I later learnt had been written by Dayı, was distributed extremely widely everywhere.

It was a declaration that explained the reality of the junta very well.

I learnt of a development concerning Dayı one evening during the days of the fascist junta. Those were days when the military fascist junta imposed heavy censorship on the press. Only news permitted by martial-law commanders appeared in newspapers. Some Istanbul newspapers also published evening editions. We bought evening editions to learn the next day's news. One evening, as I was thinking of buying such a newspaper, I suddenly heard someone shouting something like:

“The Erim people have been captured...”

It was a newspaper seller selling the evening editions. As he came towards me, I bought a newspaper. I looked at the photograph beside the headline. I immediately recognised Dayı among those in the photograph. I understood the seriousness of the situation. I hurried so that I could watch the television news where I was going. I had heard about some arrests, but I had not heard about Dayı. I discussed the operation with Selim Mehmet Yücel^{xxxi}, who was responsible for me at the time.

Mehmet said:

“I know how the other comrades were captured, but I don't know how Dayı was captured either.”

We would learn later. In those days, the fascist junta had extended the period of police custody to 90 days. It was not difficult to imagine the extent of the torture. Indeed, years later, when I stayed together with Dayı, I would see the obvious torture marks on the soles of his feet. Ahmet Karlanga^{xxxii}, who was detained in the same operation as Dayı and the others, was killed under torture.

My association with Selim Mehmet Yücel, who was responsible for me at the time, continued until April 1981.

Suddenly, Selim Mehmet stopped attending any of his appointments. It was something he had never done before. He attended neither my appointments nor those of other comrades I was seeing at the time.

All our attempts to find him were unsuccessful. We thought he must have been captured and detained. Then we encountered an even worse reality. The bullets of the junta's torturer and murderer police had taken him from us. I had known him for four years and had shared the same environments with him for months.

When I first met him, because he was from Çanakkale, we called him **“Çanakkale Mehmet”**.

He was an extremely determined comrade.

He was killed in Karaköy, Istanbul.

Mehmet was another comrade physically taken from among us, like İlhami Çavuşoğlu, Adil Can, Halil İbrahim Bayraktar and Rıdvan Sancar, whom I had known very closely until then.

Selçuk Küçükçiftçi, whom I had had the opportunity to know at the level of exchanging greetings, was also killed in the operation in which Selim Mehmet was killed.

My First Encounter with Dayı

I had begun university in Istanbul.

It was during my university years that I took my first steps into revolutionary activity.

It was during these years that I first encountered Dayı.

The year I first saw him was 1978.

I saw him on 1 May 1978, at the end of the split with DY, when the conditions for the emergence of our movement were being created — in what was almost a declaration of separation.

For us, 1 May 1978 was important.

Perhaps it was on that day that we gave the first public indication of our official emergence.

I saw him beneath the banner that covered the entire contingent and symbolised the emergence of our movement, with the words:

“OUR PATH IS THE PATH OF THE ÇAYANS”

written in red on a yellow background.

With all his determination and enthusiasm, he was speaking with the leading comrades.

He was explaining things to them and answering their questions.

Our leader, whom DY liquidationism appeared not to take seriously, whom it was almost trying to drown in a spoonful of water and render ineffective through all kinds of manoeuvres, was that day organising the first emergence that would leave its mark on history.

It was worth seeing.

There was a particular sense of responsibility and maturity among our leading comrades, especially Dayı.

Our masses, meanwhile, were extremely enthusiastic.

That day has a special place in our memory.

I had always been curious about Dayı.

Until that day, I had never encountered or seen him.

That day, I saw him beneath the banners for the first time and watched him with curiosity.

I had great respect for him.

In the days that followed, our movement organised rapidly.

We were now much busier.

We could hardly lift our heads from the work.

In those days, our movement established **Emek Dağıtım** in order to make its publication and printing work more systematic and to distribute our publications more regularly.

At that time, our relations with Dayı were conducted mainly through leading comrades.

For that reason, I did not meet him directly.

We would meet later.

Many of us were only just learning the struggle at that time.

The struggle did not wait for us, and the process was moving rapidly.

In truth, the struggle was intensifying.

At the time, we heard that Dayı had said of us:

“Are these children really ready for the struggle, for difficult times?”

Naturally, the fact that Dayı had made such an assessment about us made us think.

We thought we had to be ready for the struggle.

Every word Dayı spoke had a particular effect on us.

Our revolutionary work had now become more conscious and deliberate.

Intervention was being made in every sphere.

“Local work” in the gecekondu neighbourhoods became more deliberate and spread further.

For this purpose, youth cadres were transferred to local units and, alongside practical intervention in the process, theoretical education was also expanded considerably.

The newly established Emek Dağıtım played an important role in this.

Books and magazines were sent from there to neighbourhoods and Anatolia.

In this respect, I can say that Emek Dağıtım met a major need.

Emek Dağıtım was in Çemberlitaş.

It was located in one of those large commercial buildings characteristic of Çemberlitaş.

Its premises were narrow and long.

They were filled with books and magazines.

I saw Dayı there when I went to Emek Dağıtım to collect magazines.

And we had the opportunity to talk.

Dayı was wearing the black leather hunting waistcoat he always wore.

The hair at the front of his head had thinned slightly.

I saw him just as I entered, joking with comrades I knew there.

When I saw Dayı, I felt the need to compose myself.

Although he was extremely modest, he had a presence that inspired respect.

In a friendly manner, he asked how I was.

We talked about how the work was going.

More accurately, he did most of the talking and I listened.

His sincere manner put me at ease.

But even so, I behaved very carefully so that I would not make any mistake.

I took particular care not to do anything that could be regarded as disrespectful.

That was the setting in which I met Dayı.

In truth, seeing him and speaking with him made me extremely happy.

I still experience those feelings in exactly the same way today.

Through his personality, modesty and approach to people, Dayı was someone who would inspire respect in anyone.

In his presence, a person experienced many emotions at once.

His approach to problems and his explanations invariably opened our minds.

When you spoke with him, your mind and horizons broadened.

Dayı was the founder and leader of our movement.

But from what I observed, he was also militant and determined enough to run wherever necessary and intervene for the development of the struggle.

When necessary, he would run everywhere like a militant and fill whatever gaps existed.

In the later period, because of some of the tasks I undertook, my relationship with Dayı became indirect.

But I can say that Dayı had a special place for me and for hundreds of comrades like me who were developing in those years.

At the very least, Dayı always trusted us young people, the “young cadres”, and opened the way for us.

On one occasion, we were sitting and talking in our association in Esenler, Istanbul.

The association was in Çiftehavuzlar neighbourhood.

Suddenly, when nobody expected it, Dayı entered together with another comrade.

We stood up to greet them.

A short while later, two people from other political circles arrived.

No sooner had they sat down than they began trying to discuss various issues.

As though we had all agreed beforehand, everyone in the association fell silent and looked at Dayı.

Because we remained silent, Dayı was obliged to debate with the visitors.

The two visitors had charged into the subject without considering that they were going to debate with someone far ahead of them.

Before long, they fell silent, giving answers such as:

“We don’t know about these issues.”

“We’ll have to ask about that.”

They drank their tea and quickly left.

Those of us there could see in one another’s eyes how pleased we were with the result.

But our happiness did not last long.

Immediately after they left, Dayı began saying things that showed he did not think as we did.

He told us:

“You should have spoken with the people who came. There should have been nothing left for us to do. Have confidence in yourselves on this matter. You saw that the people who came didn’t know anything particularly extraordinary. Have confidence in yourselves.”

The Betrayal of Paşa Güven

During the process of the split with DY, Dayı’s name was at the forefront for us.

I would also learn from more advanced comrades that there was great admiration for Dayı’s foresight and determination.

I also encountered Dayı during the Revolutionary Left period following the DY split.

I remember a large meeting held during the formation of Revolutionary Left in Istanbul.

If I remember correctly, it was held at a place called Casablanca in Tepebaşı, Istanbul.

People from Anatolia also attended and spoke.

Mehmet Bıçkıcı^{xxxiii}, who was martyred in Adana, and Haydar Başbağ, who would later be martyred in the 1984 Death Fast, also spoke at the meeting.

I saw Dayı there as well.

Another of my encounters with Dayı took place in 1977 at a comrade’s house in Üsküdar, Istanbul.

We were within DY at the time.

These were the months when *DY* magazine had begun publication.

Before going to Üsküdar, I had stopped at our association in Beyazıt.

A declaration signed by DY had arrived from Ankara that day.

I took one copy with me, thinking I could give it to the comrade.

That evening, the comrade who owned the house arrived with Dayı.

I mentioned the declaration.

Dayı said:

“A declaration was supposed to arrive, but I couldn’t stop by the association. Give it to me and let’s read it.”

He read it together with the other comrade.

We stayed together that evening and parted the following day.

I also encountered Dayı on other occasions around the association, Balıkesir Dormitory or at demonstrations.

I had wondered how Dayı had been captured.

When we were in Metris Prison, I asked him about it.

Shortly after 12 September, there had been a number of detentions targeting us.

Dayı had made the necessary arrangements at an office of the movement with which he maintained contact and would telephone the office for daily checks.

One day, when he called again, the person responsible for the office gave him the agreed message indicating that there was no danger.

He then asked Dayı to come to the office.

Dayı did not want to go because he had things to do, but the person said what he wanted to tell him was important and would not take long.

So Dayı decided to stop by briefly.

It turned out that the office telephone had been identified during an operation and was being tapped by the police.

Neither Dayı nor the person who had called him to the office knew this.

Dayı later said:

“I went inside. It turned out he had a problem with his wife and had called me there to tell me about it. We hadn’t even been talking for ten minutes when the police raided the office.”

Aydın Barış, the head of the Revolutionary Left police team at the time, said to Dayı:

“You come with us. We need you.”

That was how the detention took place.

Because it happened so suddenly, the other comrades did not initially know how Dayı had been captured.

Because those in the office had also been detained.

If I remember correctly, the office where Dayı was captured was somewhere around Pangaltı in Şişli.

While in Metris, Dayı strongly criticised Paşa Güven.

He said that they had sent him abroad, but following the fascist junta he had neither returned to the country nor fulfilled his duties, and that the raid on the Cologne Consulate had only been carried out with great difficulty as a result of pressure from within the country.

Dayı also said that Paşa Güven had independently decided to take his wife Ayşen out of the country.

After his wife was released from Metris, Paşa Güven brought her abroad to join him.

Dayı said of Paşa:

“One day, we will certainly meet him.”

Some months later, he showed us the movement’s document announcing Paşa’s expulsion.

We were in the same ward at the time.

Rural Guerrilla...

After DY liquidationism was defeated in Malatya, a new period began in the struggle.

Naturally, DY liquidationism was in no position to convince anyone with its liquidationist views.

For that reason, during the split in Malatya, they did not achieve what they had hoped for.

We now had a strong perspective on the struggle, organisation and the intensification of the anti-fascist struggle.

We had now reached the point where we could put what we said into practice.

For that reason, we were extremely enthusiastic and confident.

With this confidence and enthusiasm, a serious anti-fascist action was planned following the split.

The fascist centres in Yeşiltepe, where the fascists were strong, would be dispersed.

Plans were made for this.

The action in Yeşiltepe was successful.

The fascist centres were dispersed.

The fascists had suffered a heavy blow at a moment they had never expected.

The impact of this action in Malatya was also considerable.

The action gave great confidence to anti-fascists and to the people.

The people’s confidence in the revolutionaries was strengthened.

Perhaps an action unlike anything carried out until then had taken place.

The action also had a psychological effect on the fascist movement.

Revolutionaries could carry out actions “whenever they wanted”, “wherever they wanted”, and under any conditions.

This created an effect that would push the fascist movement back.

Alongside these successes, however, we also suffered an organisational misfortune, a failure.

Following the action, because of our driver’s carelessness, the driver was captured.

As a result, three of us became wanted.

We could no longer remain in Malatya.

At the request of the comrades, we came to Istanbul.

I had never been to Istanbul before.

In truth, I was curious about Istanbul.

Moreover, Istanbul was an advanced centre of the struggle.

It was here that I first encountered Dayı.

Our first meeting was at Kadirga Student Dormitory.

Dayı first said:

“Welcome.”

He asked how we were.

He asked about the comrades.

Then he asked various questions about Malatya.

His questions concerned our organisation and the struggle.

We explained as much as we knew.

After this conversation, Dayı turned to the action because of which we were wanted:

“We need people at a time like this. We need to strengthen our organisation and intensify the struggle. For that reason, it is necessary to be very careful and disciplined and to follow the rules. You did well, you carried out an action, but there was also something you did inadequately. You had to organise the action more carefully and professionally. Look, at a time like this, three people have become wanted. At a time when we need you most, you are now wanted. How could you behave so carelessly?”

He then told us that we needed to carry false identity documents and that they would provide them.

He asked about our needs.

He explained that we would be placed in a house.

Then he took some folded money from his pocket and gave it to us for our needs.

Following this conversation, we were placed in a house.

We began staying in a house on the other side.

We no longer went to student dormitories.

We tried to avoid leaving the house as much as possible.

This continued for some time.

We met Dayı once more.

Dayı told us:

“We are going to send you to Dersim for rural work.”

We listened very carefully to what Dayı told us.

Then he asked what we thought.

We replied:

“Whatever task we are given, we will do it.”

Perhaps the most striking thing I remember from Dayı’s words that day was his confidence in us.

He openly expressed his confidence in us.

I thought that a great deal was expected of us.

And we had to work very hard to be worthy of that trust.

Naturally, we were going to a new field of work.

We had questions.

We knew nothing about the countryside.

We asked questions about rural work.

In response, Dayı said:

“There isn’t much we can tell you. This field is new and unknown to us as well.

Because the THKP-C has no experience in this field either.”

He explained that the Turkish leftist movement, and the revolutionary movement in particular, was new to this field and did not have much experience or accumulated knowledge.

He said:

“Whatever is to be done, you will do it. You will organise in this field and create new experiences. So do not expect ready-made prescriptions from us. We trust you in this matter. You will be the ones who teach us about this field.”

Our conversation continued along these lines.

We did not see Dayı again after that.

After remaining there for a while, we went to Dersim.

Naturally, during our period as rural guerrillas, we encountered many difficulties.

Whenever we faced such situations, Dayı’s words would always come to mind.

Dayı had foreseen what we would experience and had prepared us for it.

As a result of misfortune, I was captured before the fascist junta.

While I was in military prison, I learnt from the press one day that Dayı and the others had been captured.

I never saw Dayı again.

I only followed news about him in the press.

But having encountered him was a great privilege.

The Kağıthane Period

In those years, I was a student at the State Academy of Engineering and Architecture in Beşiktaş-Yıldız.

At the same time, I was on the executive committee of DEMAKD — the State Academy of Engineering and Architecture Association.

It was during this period that our relationship with Dayı began.

In those years, the Beşiktaş area was important in terms of cadre development, its mass base and the role it played in the struggle.

Our area carried considerable weight within the struggle.

It also provided cadres to various other areas.

Some of our comrades who were involved in the struggle at that time were martyred.

We had begun meeting Dayı before the split with DY.

By “we”, I mean the four of us who made up the DEMAKD executive committee at the time.

We used to meet Dayı in an office near Balıkesir Student Dormitory.

The office was on the second floor of an apartment building, on a street descending towards Kumkapı.

Apart from Dayı, there was a woman comrade studying at the Faculty of Architecture.

She arranged appointments for comrades who wanted to meet Dayı.

She also carried out some of the office work.

The office was busy.

Area leaders and responsible comrades who wanted to meet Dayı would come there.

We probably met Dayı there six or seven times.

There were two rooms in the office.

In the room where Dayı spoke with us, there was one table and two chairs.
There was nothing luxurious about the office.
The chairs were the ordinary kind found in any home.
They were covered in plastic.
Naturally, there were books in the office.
Despite going there repeatedly, I cannot remember ever eating anything or drinking even a cup of tea there.

So, one day I said to Dayı:

“We come here all the time, but we haven’t even had a glass of tea.”

Dayı laughed.

Then he said:

“What can we do? This is a poor office. We don’t have any tea.”

When Dayı spoke with us, he rarely sat down.

Usually, he remained standing.

And he spoke while standing.

The subjects we discussed concerned our area.

We talked about the anti-fascist struggle.

At one point, there was also a serious issue occupying us.

This was the situation:

Even before the split, DY liquidationism had begun its liquidationist practices.

With this mentality, they made an appointment in our area.

They brought in someone from our own area who was extremely passive and whom nobody liked and imposed him on us as the person responsible.

He was someone suited to their own mentality.

He was not someone capable of leading that area.

We all opposed the appointment.

We discussed it with Dayı as well.

The reaction in the area became so serious that the liquidationists withdrew the appointment.

This time, they appointed someone else.

Liquidationism had now become a serious problem.

Dayı began discussing this problem with us as well.

And we began discussing the matter narrowly within the area.

We had these discussions with Dayı before 1 May 1978, beginning early in 1978.

Then the period of struggle against liquidationism began.

Later, after I was assigned to the Kağıthane area, my relations with Dayı continued.

Following the split, a new period began with the formation of Revolutionary Left.

During this period, I took on new responsibilities.

I was assigned to the Kağıthane area.

Why was Kağıthane important?

Firstly, it was a large area inhabited by people living in gecekondu neighbourhoods.

We had begun taking up the housing problems of people who had come from Anatolia and organising them.

There were the gecekondu neighbourhoods and the people.

Secondly, it was an area with a high concentration of factories.

Kağıthane therefore had an important place in terms of organising the working class.

Revolutionary Left attached particular importance to organising in the neighbourhoods.

Although our area was referred to as Kağıthane, it covered a wide territory.

Kağıthane and Nuretepe were within our area of responsibility.

At the time, construction of gecekondu houses was continuing in Çayan neighbourhood in Nuretepe.

We provided houses to those who needed them.
 We were organising rapidly.
 We had a committee in the area.
 Dayı would meet with this committee and hold meetings.
 He had a milky-brown Renault 12.
 He drove the car himself.
 He often came to us accompanied by Sabahat.
 Sometimes Sabahat also attended the meetings.
 Dayı also held smaller meetings.
 Sometimes he would suddenly arrive in the evenings.
 We held our meetings in Çayan neighbourhood.
 We had established a People's Committee to administer the neighbourhood in Çayan.
 For this purpose, we had built an administrative house there.
 We held our meetings with Dayı in this house.
 Dayı contributed greatly to Çayan and Kağıthane.
 He concerned himself with every problem in these areas.
 During meetings, he would ask about everything in great detail.
 There are certain things from these meetings that remain in my mind.
 One day, we were again in a meeting with Dayı.
 One of the comrades on our committee kept drawing pictures of Kalashnikovs on the paper in front of him.
 Dayı saw what he was drawing.
 Addressing him by name, he asked:
"... have you ever used a weapon? Have you ever even seen a Kalashnikov?"
 Then he said:
"Look, we are discussing serious matters here. We are holding discussions. Why aren't you listening to them? Why are you occupying your mind with these kinds of things?"
 On another occasion, following a meeting, Dayı turned to us and said:
"You say that we exist in the area. But when we look around this enormous area, there isn't a single one of our posters or a single one of our slogans. Slogans and posters are important. They show the presence of a movement in an area. An area cannot exist without them."
 Naturally, we had not thought about it that way.
 After all, we already had influence in the area.
 We had thought: why was there any need to write slogans or put up posters?
 Following Dayı's warning, one evening we went out and wrote slogans throughout the entire area.
 Almost everywhere was covered.
 In fact, our comrades became so enthusiastic that they even wrote slogans on the gendarmerie station.
 The gendarmerie station had been pursuing a policy of maintaining good relations with us.
 After the slogan was written, the station commander sent us word.
 He asked:
"Why did you write it?"
 He even asked for permission to remove it.
 Looking back from today, this may seem exaggerated, but it was not.
 Our influence and psychological impact were considerable.
 Çayan neighbourhood had prestige.
 Following the split, DY liquidationism once attempted to raid the neighbourhood.
 They gathered DY supporters from across Istanbul and tried to enter the neighbourhood.

We prevented them.
We did not let them in.
In fact, after that incident, they were never able to enter the neighbourhood again.
There was nobody else there apart from us.
The neighbourhood remained under our control.
Naturally, we reported everything that happened to Dayı.
Meanwhile, construction of houses continued.
At the same time, comrades responsible for other areas sent poor families to us.
Comrades responsible particularly for Gültepe and Küçükköy had sent us some families.
They wanted houses.
But when we investigated them, we discovered that they already owned houses elsewhere.
For that reason, we did not give them houses.
This led to arguments with comrades in those areas.
They asked:
“Why aren’t you giving houses to the families we sent?”
We explained that we had investigated the matter and had found title deeds showing that these people owned houses in other areas.
At this point, Dayı intervened.
He intervened in the arguments and said that we were right.
I was only able to remain in the area for eight months. I was imprisoned before the fascist junta.

A New Period Began with Revolutionary Left

From this period until February 1980, when we were imprisoned, we maintained our relationship with Dayı. And naturally, we were very happy in this new period. For one thing, we experienced comradeship and friendship. We were extremely enthusiastic. We developed very rapidly in Bursa...

With Dayı and the new period, certain organisational arrangements were made in the area. Our martyr Necdet Pişmişler^{xxxiv} was assigned to the area from Istanbul. Our field of work was expanded. Attempts were made to intervene in certain provinces and districts from our area. And most importantly, great enthusiasm and confidence were created in the struggle.

The anti-fascist struggle expanded. Correct steps began to be taken in terms of developing cadres. Naturally, this was reflected in the struggle there.

As a result of the relations we maintained with Dayı, we began to experience relations of comradeship, the relations of a movement. For example, when we said that we needed weapons, this need was met within a short time. Dayı met almost all such needs without delay.

Indeed, I cannot describe my happiness when I was given weapons in a bag. My happiness was not simply because the weapons had arrived. Naturally, it was because such relations, relations of comradeship and revolutionary relations, were being experienced.

We experienced the same thing regarding publications and books.

We already had a distribution company in Istanbul. We obtained books and publications from there. We needed money. Dayı provided that too.

Naturally, our needs were met. But over time, as our organisation there became established, we too began to provide certain means to the movement.

I used to meet Dayı in Istanbul. We had appointments. We met according to those appointments. If something urgent happened, I knew how to find Dayı.

As far as I remember, I once met Dayı at the İTÜ Sports Club. Once we met in an office in Şişhane, and once at a workplace. We sometimes met in different places.

During these meetings with Dayı, we discussed organisational problems. I would ask about certain issues. We discussed certain theoretical questions and certain things the Movement expected from us.

He would determine the objectives.

We tried to understand them.

Our relations with Dayı always continued in this way. And, of course, Dayı carried a particular weight with us. For that reason, these relations continued with their instructive and educational aspects.

I can say that listening to Dayı's discussions and gaining his perspective opened one's mind.

After we were imprisoned, the fact that Dayı and the others were still involved in the struggle was a separate source of strength for us.

While we were being held in Sultanahmet Military Prison, we received the news that they had been imprisoned.

Then they brought them to where we were.

It was November 1980.

Dayı and the comrades who had been imprisoned with him were held in Blocks A and B of Sultanahmet. In the cells of Block A, Dayı and the others were held four people to a cell.

At that time, Hüseyin Solgun, Bora Bayoğlu and Murat Karabulut were staying with Dayı.

The imprisonment of Dayı and the others, and particularly Dayı himself, virtually shocked us.

I cannot describe what we experienced at that time.

All our comrades were deeply saddened.

We were all virtually saying:

"How could this happen?"

We could not accept the situation.

Our comrades had come from the Political Branch.

There were signs of torture on their bodies.

There were also certain conversations and discussions concerning their capture and what had happened at the Political Branch.

For that reason, we did not particularly want to become involved in this process.

This continued for some time.

At that point, Sultanahmet Military Prison had not yet directly experienced the junta's attacks.

The main attacks would begin in December.

Operations to forcibly cut prisoners' hair would begin, and prisoners would be forced to wear the **Single-Type Uniform**, accompanied by mock executions.

After Dayı and the others had remained under those conditions for some time, they were divided into small groups and sent away in forced transfers.

Later, the Murat Karabulut problem emerged.

In fact, Murat Karabulut had already begun grumbling while in Sultanahmet.

He was assigning different missions to himself.

And this problem came into the open in Metris when discussions about a Death Fast arose.

The next time we encountered Dayı at Sultanahmet was when they were transferred there from Metris Prison during the **Indefinite Hunger Strike (SAG) of July 1982**.

Again, they were held in isolation.

They were staying in a separate block.

We communicated with one another, but we were not physically together.

Our pressure eventually produced results, and in February 1983 we finally succeeded in having Dayı and the others transferred to our block.

Later, I served as a representative for a period.

For that reason, I spent more time with Dayı.

I can say that a new period began in terms of intervening in daily life and educating our comrades.

At that time, under the junta generals' decision of **"indefinite detention"** and **"indefinite torture"**, the police could take any prisoner they wanted out of prison again for torture.

The prison administration also took advantage of this and turned it into collective torture sessions.

Cells were attacked with wooden clubs and batons, and torture sessions were carried out.

And we resisted.

For me, perhaps one of the memories that remains a bad one was the argument I experienced after the 1983 SAG was broken, during the process of turning the resistance into a Death Fast in order to prevent this.

At that stage, I had opposed the Death Fast.

Two other comrades opposed it alongside me.

Regarding Dayı's leadership and foresight, I can say this:

Naturally, it was difficult to foresee from the very beginning that the SAG of July 1983 would be broken.

But at that time, we had not discussed the question of a Death Fast either.

As the action was being broken, when it was broken, nobody proposed turning it into a Death Fast.

Nor did it occur to us.

Dayı alone saw this.

He saw that the consequences of the action being broken would be extremely serious and would damage the resistance, and he took this step.

Dayı made such historic decisions.

Indeed, this was one of the qualities that made him a leader.

As early as 1980, during the first period after he arrived, and increasingly by 1983, Dayı had developed the idea of a Death Fast in his mind.

The fact that, particularly at the Political Branch, the kind of test that had been envisaged against the junta had not been given, together with the tasks of the period and the need to create a line of struggle against the junta to the death, led him to instil the idea of the Death Fast among the cadres.

In some of his conversations, Dayı would say:

"Our cadres must prove themselves through resistance."

Indeed, with the **1984 Death Fast**, a new stage was entered in the resistance.

At that time, I was also being held in a solitary cell in M Block of Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison, where Dayı and the others were being held.

My trial had concluded and I had received a heavy sentence.

For that reason, I was in a solitary cell.

Dayı was also in our corridor.

He too was in a solitary cell.

Because there was no exercise period, no visits and no meetings with lawyers, we could not see one another, but we would call out to each other through the doors.

I would ask how Dayı was.

Hasan Telci^{xxxv}, who was martyred in that resistance, was also in our corridor.

On the 50th day of the resistance, they took Dayı from his cell and transferred him to Haydarpaşa Military Hospital.

After that, I never encountered Dayı again.

Before Dayı and the others were imprisoned, I had also experienced a problem.

There had been a major operation in Bursa in February 1980.
I too was detained at that time.
Later, I was released.
After I was released, the comrades in Bursa did not meet with me.
For that reason, I came to Istanbul and tried to meet Dayı.
I also remember the time when Dayı was imprisoned before 12 September.
At the time, we had an older woman comrade. Her husband was a trade unionist.
The news of Dayı's imprisonment was being shown on television.
She was watching the news at home.
Another trade unionist, a friend of her husband, was also in the house.
When she saw the news on television, she shouted to the trade unionist:
"Come quickly, brother! They've captured a revolutionary like Mahir Çayan!"
The trade unionist ran over and learnt that Dayı and the others had been imprisoned.

The Process Developed as He Had Predicted

I first saw him towards the end of 1977 at the İTÜ Sports Club. There were people from the Istanbul Revolutionary Youth leadership with me at the time. One comrade pointed Dayı out from a distance, told me who he was and began explaining what he knew about him.

Another day, while I was on duty in the canteen at the club, I saw him from close up when he bought cheese and bread. Naturally, I was excited.

From the autumn of 1978 onwards, I began staying at Balıkesir Student Dormitory. At that time, we were a young movement that had only recently separated from the liquidationist DY.

Every two or three days, Dayı would stop by the coffee houses beneath the dormitory where we were staying. Sometimes he was accompanied by older comrades we knew from Istanbul — İbrahim Erdoğan, Sinan Kukul — or people coming from Anatolia. Most of the time, I saw Dayı explaining things to those around him.

Some time after I was imprisoned, I was transferred from Hasdal Military Prison, where we were being held, to Sultanahmet Prison.

It was there that I met and spoke with Dayı for the first time. Naturally, it was a great happiness for me.

In May 1981, I was transferred from Sultanahmet to Metris. More accurately, we were being taken to Metris, which had been established with the aim of forcing the revolutionary prisoners in Istanbul to surrender.

During that period, Dayı and I ended up sharing the same exercise yard.

We were staying in Ward C-18. The comrades in the Erim-Dikler case were in Ward C-17, and Dayı was in Ward C-10.^{xxxvi}

Every time we went out into the exercise yard, our eyes searched the window of C-10 for Dayı.

If he had nothing else to do, he would come to the window and talk.

At that time in particular, the junta had separated the Erim-Dikler case from the Main Trial and wanted to conclude it as quickly as possible in order to carry out executions.

For this reason, Dayı would often spend almost the entire exercise period talking with Fazıl Abi, virtually instilling morale in them.

During this period, the administration frequently punished us by refusing to let us into the exercise yard, trying to break our morale.

Sometimes these punishments were imposed for the most trivial excuses.

Often spontaneously, and sometimes deliberately, entertainment would be organised during exercise periods.

Sometimes entire wards would sing as choirs; sometimes comrades with good voices would sing folk songs.

There was a comrade in Ward D-3 opposite us who had a very beautiful voice.

Sometimes he would act reluctant and say he did not want to sing.

But when Dayı asked, he would sing.

During this period, almost no books were allowed in from outside.

The entry of books was prevented on various pretexts.

Even *Cumhuriyet*, and sometimes *Milliyet*, were refused because they were supposedly “left-wing” newspapers.

It was under these conditions that an article appeared concerning events in Iran.

It was an article that explained very well the struggle for power in Iran, the positions of the classes, and the reasons behind what was happening.

All the comrades in the ward read the article together.

And we admired Dayı’s knowledge of history.

At this point, I should give an example of Dayı’s political foresight.

Following the 1984 Death Fast, the opportunists attacked the Death Fast from all sides.

They claimed that we had been defeated, that the action had achieved nothing, and they issued “fatwas” insisting that the Single-Type Uniform had to be worn.

At this time, Dayı was staying at Çamlica Military Hospital because he had contracted tuberculosis following the Death Fast.

But the Movement published a detailed assessment of the Death Fast.

It explained the period from 1981 to 1984, the hunger strikes, physical resistance and the existing situation.

The assessment stated that the Death Fast had achieved political success and that, although democratic rights had not been fully won, certain rights had nevertheless been gained, including ending torture and securing other improvements.

For this reason, it stated that the Death Fast had been ended consciously and deliberately.

Some time after Dayı returned to prison, two more documents — more accurately, booklets — were published.

One was an assessment of the Death Fast.

The other was an assessment concerning the PKK.

In the second assessment of the Death Fast, an even clearer conclusion was presented:

The Death Fast had been a great political victory, and its political consequences would reveal themselves over the course of time.

AND THE PROCESS DEVELOPED EXACTLY AS HE HAD PREDICTED.

Once again, the extent of his foresight became clear.

In December 1985, we were transferred from Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison to Metris.

After a period, we gathered in the exercise yard we called **Chernobyl**²², because the boiler room was there and smoke frequently filled the yard.

We were staying in Ward C-21 with Sinan Abi, İbrahim Abi and the other comrades.

Dayı was staying in Ward C-6.

²² **Chernobyl** — Site of the **26 April 1986 nuclear disaster** at Reactor No. 4 of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, near Pripyat in the Ukrainian SSR, then part of the Soviet Union. The explosion and fire released large amounts of radioactive material across Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and parts of Europe, leading to mass evacuations and long-term environmental and health consequences.

At that time, systematic educational work was begun, and the views of the Party-Front began to be discussed.

After a while, the subject of **“Relative Prosperity”** came onto the agenda.

And it can be said that everyone began saying something different.

The discussion in the ward continued for two or three days without producing a conclusion.

Then the discussion moved into the exercise yard.

Dayı settled the matter in the form presented in **We Are Right, We Will Win**^{xxxvii}.

So to speak, like Alexander’s sword, he cut through the Gordian knot.

Without exaggeration, almost everyone breathed a deep sigh of relief.

Dayı’s prison life was organised according to a programme.

I stayed together with Dayı in Wards C-22 and E-20.

The organised nature of his prison life was a programme that ran parallel to the communal life of the ward.

In this respect, he never asked for any special privilege for himself.

Because the nights were quiet, he would work until two or three in the morning.

But he would still get up with everyone else at around 7.30 or 8.00 in the morning.

He would carry out his daily cleaning, always shave, make his bed and arrange his pyjamas and other belongings.

Dayı always read two books at the same time.

One would generally be a novel and the other a scientific book.

He attached particular importance to the lives of revolutionary leaders.

He recommended the book **Three Who Made a Revolution**^{xxxviii} to all of us.

And he took notes from the books he read.

He kept those notes in his writing pad.

Yes, Dayı had a writing pad.

Everything he wrote in prison came from that pad.

A comrade made it for him, and Dayı always looked after it carefully.

The History of Metris, Resistance, Death and Life, various magazine articles and many other writings all came from that writing pad.

Just as Dayı organised his own life, he also organised the general life of the collective.

He divided up the subjects that needed to be discussed and the articles that needed to be written according to subject.

Once the raw material came in, he would check it himself.

Then, most often, he would tell Sinan Abi what needed to be added or removed and have him make the changes.

Afterwards, he would check it again himself and prepare the text in its final form.

If it was a book, after checking the raw material himself he would explain it to comrades with stronger literary skills and tell them what needed to be done.

He would say:

“This is organisation — being able to do the best with the people we have.”

Yes, we saw this with our own eyes.

The wards worked like beehives.

Everyone had a task to do and a book to read.

It was almost like a production workshop.

Dayı wrote by hand.

Sometimes, when he wrote very quickly, reading what he had written became a problem.

If Sinan Abi had not corrected it, the comrades who typed the texts had a difficult job.

To understand what was written, they would go to Dayı.

And he would say:

“Go on then, guess what I wrote.”

He would say that people had to think and produce.
Naturally, the typists lost their sleep on the days when texts had to be sent outside.
On the final night, they would stay awake until morning and finish everything.
Then they would tell Dayı:

“Everything is complete.”

And he would say:

“Procrastination is our petty-bourgeois weakness. We must cure ourselves of this weakness. But the fact that we succeed is our Revolutionary Youth side.”

Dayı lived together with the outside world.

Just as he lived as though he were in Turkey even while in exile, in prison too he lived together with the outside.

I remember that during that period he sent various proposals outside.

But he never spoke about these things.

I hardly remember him ever speaking unnecessarily.

Although he knew everything and everyone, he did not gossip about people.

He embraced all our comrades and concerned himself with their problems and troubles.

İbrahim Abi (Erdoğan) and Niyazi Abi (Aydın) addressed him as **Dursun**.

All the other comrades called him **Dayı**.

His relations with Sinan Abi and İbrahim Abi were particularly warm because of the many years of struggle they had shared.

Sometimes, during a conversation, Sinan Abi would try to take the floor from Dayı.

Dayı would say:

“Sinan, Sinan, don’t be impatient. Let me finish what I’m saying.”

At other times he would say:

“Go on then, speak.”

Most of the time, Sinan Abi already understood what Dayı was going to say.

We had a Dayı who embraced all people.

He attached particular importance to the prisons in Anatolia.

He would say that serving time in Istanbul prisons was very easy compared with Anatolia, that those comrades were alone and that we must not leave them alone.

He explained his thoughts on this to the TAYAD families.

As much as possible, he would also have letters written to prisoners in Anatolian prisons.

At New Year, on religious holidays, he always sent cards to his family, his sister-in-law and certain comrades.

He concerned himself with people’s strengths, mistakes, shortcomings and weaknesses.

He would say:

“They are our people. Knowing all these things, we will move forward by solving their mistakes, shortcomings, weaknesses and problems. That is how we will become an organisation.”

It can be said that he lived exactly as he wrote.

He concerned himself with people’s problems or appointed others to deal with them.

Indeed, the reason he was captured in 1980 was connected to this.

A comrade at the office where he had established organisational work had a problem with his wife.

When Dayı went back to the office he had already left in order to resolve this problem, he was captured by the police.

In short, we had a Dayı who lived among people, knew people, listened to them, solved their troubles and problems, loved and was loved, and was respected.

Even within the prison administration, officers generally approached Dayı with respect.

It is very difficult to describe him.

There is a sentence that has been repeated many times:

Thanks to Him, I Understood That I Was a Human Being

I met Dayı in July 1978.

Because of the work to establish Çayan neighbourhood, revolutionaries frequently came and went from my home.

My husband was a member of Revolutionary Youth at the time.

During the Revolutionary Youth members' work to establish this neighbourhood, many comrades came to our home.

Dayı was one of the revolutionaries who came.

At that time, Dayı had lost a lot of his hair, so I used to call him **"baldy"**.

At the time, we were living with three of my sisters-in-law in a rented flat in a two-storey apartment building in Gürsel neighbourhood.

My first meeting with Dayı took place one evening.

My husband arrived with Dayı and a woman comrade.

After briefly meeting Dayı and the comrades, I prepared food.

Then we sat together at the table.

I knew my husband was involved in revolutionary activity, but I did not know who the people coming to our home were.

During the meal, Dayı and my husband talked.

They were discussing how the neighbourhood would be established.

Naturally, because Dayı spoke logically and well, the conversation attracted my attention.

So, I listened more carefully.

He was talking with my husband about the expenses required to establish the neighbourhood.

Çayan neighbourhood was on Treasury land.

At that time, two migrant families were using this land as tomato and maize fields.

The fields were surrounded by wire fences.

The area was under gendarmerie jurisdiction.

A military station was also nearby.

One side was wooded, covered in forest and hilly.

Dayı told my husband that the families should be paid for the maize, tomatoes and fruit trees.

He said:

"The loss suffered by our people is our loss. We must compensate them for it."

So, they took over these fields from the families by paying their cultivation costs.

Then they levelled the sloping fields with bulldozers and divided them into plots.

The ground was marked with lime.

Each household was allocated 120 square metres.

The levelled fields were divided into three sections.

They called them:

Field 1, Field 2 and Field 3.

Once, when I came to Çayan with my husband, I personally saw Dayı marking the fields with bags of lime in his hands.

Dayı put enormous effort into establishing this neighbourhood.

At that time, the houses were being built as *gecekond* homes.

Dayı contributed to almost every aspect of these houses — from the breeze blocks and timber to the architecture.

One moment you would see him sitting with comrades drawing the layout of the neighbourhood on the ground.

The next moment you would see him carrying breeze blocks.

Dayı was one of those who both laboured physically and planned the neighbourhood.

Because my husband was participating in establishing the neighbourhood, every day I brought lunch to the comrades working there.

One day when I brought food, ten or fifteen comrades were working.

Dayı was among them.

During one of the conversations, he spoke about the committee building:

“First, let’s build a place where we can talk and meet. Let’s call it the committee building. Then the committee can carry out its work there.”

And that was how the location of the committee building was decided.

I knew nothing about right and left.

I had married when I was very young.

I was 13 when I married.

I had a child at 18.

My husband did not discuss politics with me.

I was always at home.

Nor did I know who the comrades my husband brought home were.

I came to know the visitors by seeing them come and go and listening to their conversations.

That was also how I came to know Dayı.

I grew very fond of him because of the beautiful conversations he had.

One evening, Dayı and my husband came home.

I had family problems.

I did not get on particularly well with my husband or his family.

In front of Dayı, I argued with my husband:

“Why don’t you come home?”

Then I turned to Dayı and said:

“When you come, my husband doesn’t come home. I have children.”

Then I left the room.

Dayı was looking at my face at the time.

He said nothing.

Dayı and my husband talked for a while.

Then Dayı called me into the room and began speaking:

“We aren’t doing anything bad. We’re going to build warm homes where people can put a roof over their heads. That is why your husband isn’t coming home.”

I replied:

“Do you have a farm of your own that you can give land to people?”

Dayı said:

“These lands have been unjustly seized. We’re going to take them and give them to you.”

I asked:

“It will be difficult. Will the state give up its land?”

Dayı replied:

“We know it is difficult. What matters is overcoming these difficulties and succeeding. First, you must make a decision. Then you must put that decision into practice. That is how you will achieve what is difficult. We will succeed.”

He continued:

“When your husband is with us, don’t be afraid. We are a family. Trust us in the same way that you trust your own family.”

Then he turned to my husband and said:

“You are the one who has brought this woman to this state. You need to pay attention to her. It isn’t the woman’s fault.”

After that conversation, I loved Dayı even more.

After this incident, I became even more fond of the revolutionaries.

Whenever they came to my home as guests, I began doing everything for them wholeheartedly.

When Dayı did not come, I would ask:

“Where is he? Why hasn’t he come?”

One day, I again took lunch to the comrades.

My eyes searched for Dayı.

I asked:

“Isn’t baldy here?”

The comrades replied:

“You’ve never asked about us until today, but you’re asking about Dayı. And don’t leave food for Dayı either; he isn’t here today.”

I told them:

“You never showed any interest in me. He did. He treats me like a human being. Thanks to him, I understood that I was a human being.”

Dayı loved the börek²³ made by people from Dersim.

One day, I made börek for Dayı.

My husband came home that evening.

Dayı was not with him.

My husband said that Dayı would not be coming that evening.

Fascists and the gendarmerie were attacking the neighbourhood.

For this reason, watches were being kept.

Dayı and my husband did not come home for four or five days.

Then Dayı, my husband and a woman comrade came.

The woman comrade had stomach pain.

It was night-time, and I went out searching among the neighbours for medicine.

Dayı was very pleased by this.

One day, fascists attacked the comrades working to establish our neighbourhood.

My husband sent word home:

“We’re coming. She should clean the house.”

A small child brought the message.

I wondered why he had said the house needed cleaning, because I always kept the house clean.

That evening, my husband came.

Dayı was not with him.

He asked me:

“Did you clean the house?”

I said:

“Yes.”

Then my husband went into the room where Dayı slept and brought out papers Dayı had written.

He said:

“When we tell you to clean, you are to burn these.”

I had not known those papers were there.

²³ **Börek** — A traditional savoury pastry common in Turkey, the Balkans and other parts of the former Ottoman region. It is usually made with thin layers of **yufka or filo-like dough** and filled with ingredients such as cheese, minced meat, spinach or potatoes.

One day, while talking with Dayı, he explained this matter to me.

He had created a hiding place for the papers.

He explained at length:

“Look, we put the papers we write here. When you receive word, or if the police come, take them out and burn them.”

He would say:

“Let us not allow the enemy to seize or obtain anything belonging to us.”

Dayı would wrap the papers he wrote in cigarette-cellophane and then seal them with chewing gum.

At the time, we did not have carpets.

We covered the floors with kilims and mats.

Dayı had made the hiding place beneath these mats.

Revolutionary Youth members contributed enormously to the establishment of the neighbourhood.

University students would come on Friday evenings and leave on Sundays.

They carried breeze blocks.

We had a hardware store.

All the materials for the houses were delivered there and distributed from there.

Each house was given a certain number of breeze blocks.

Then the Revolutionary Youth members would all carry the blocks together to whichever house was being built.

Unless Dayı had other work, he too would come and carry breeze blocks.

One day, while working in Field 3, I saw a woman crying in front of her house.

I went over and asked why she was crying.

She explained that she had sold her wedding ring to buy a wheelbarrow and timber, but thieves had come and stolen them.

I went to the committee building.

Dayı was there.

I told the comrades what had happened.

Then three comrades, including Dayı, went and brought the woman to the committee building.

There they solved her problem.

They gave the woman 300 breeze blocks, a wheelbarrow and timber.

A week later, the woman prepared food from her own region and brought it to the committee building.

She had also made *sac* bread.

Dayı loved *sac* bread very much.

While eating it, he said:

“When we help our people, we do not expect anything in return.”

The woman had brought the local dishes because they had solved her problem.

I did not see Dayı for about ten days.

Then one evening he came again.

I was quarrelling with my sister-in-law.

Dayı always observed his surroundings very carefully.

He watched what people did, what they said and how they behaved.

At breakfast, my sister-in-law asked me for something.

I refused and gave her a slightly hostile look.

Later, Dayı spoke with me about it.

He said:

“Do not hold grudges against your family. Approach problems not from the end of your nose, but with the warmth of your heart. Approach them that way so that you can solve them.”

What I experienced later showed me how right Dayı had been.

After Dayı began coming to our home, my relations with my family and my husband improved.

I had begun to look at many things differently.

I had known nothing about right and left.

Even though my husband was involved in revolutionary activity, he did not explain politics to me.

Thanks to Dayı, I began discussing politics with my husband.

Dayı's greatest influence on me was the effort he made to resolve family problems.

This effort was also one of the major factors that brought me into the struggle.

One day, Dayı came again.

He was very ill.

He had a fever and was vomiting.

As soon as he arrived, we put him to bed.

My husband immediately went and brought a doctor.

After examining him, the doctor said that Dayı had bronchitis.

He gave him medicine.

Every day, he took his tablets.

They also put him on an intravenous drip.

He remained bedridden for exactly five days.

Then he recovered.

Throughout his illness, every day he would get up and write the texts he had to write.

He was extremely disciplined about this.

Normally, a person with such a fever would not even be able to get out of bed.

Despite the fever, Dayı did not allow any of his work to be disrupted.

During martial law, Dayı sent word that he wanted to see me.

My husband and I went to a house in Sarıyer.

I had a child at the time.

Dayı loved my child very much.

My husband, Dayı and I were considering different names for my child.

Dayı said:

“The best thing is to draw lots. Whichever name comes out, we'll give that name to the child.”

So, we drew lots.

The name I wanted came out.

Both Dayı and I were very happy.

Later, one day I said to my husband:

“I'm very lucky. The name I wanted came out in the draw.”

My husband then told me what had actually happened.

It turned out that Dayı had written the name I wanted on all three pieces of paper.

Naturally, the name I wanted had to come out.

Dayı was modest enough to think about other people's happiness in this way.

At one point, there was an operation in Çayan neighbourhood.

A house had been raided, and our address was found in a note inside that house.

For that reason, one morning the police raided our home as well.

They took my husband away to police headquarters.

I did not know which police station they had taken him to.

Throughout the day, everywhere I went, they told me:

“He isn’t here.”

Finally, I found my husband at Gayrettepe Police Headquarters.

Five days after he had been detained, I came from Gürsel to Çayan to check on our own house that was under construction.

I finished what I had to do and was just about to leave when a young man handed me a piece of paper.

I became very frightened.

I did not know who the young man was.

I was so afraid that I went home without even looking at the paper.

At home, because I was so curious, I opened it and looked.

There was an address, a time and a day written on the paper.

The following day, I went to the address.

It was in front of a *dolmuş*²⁴ stop.

I began waiting.

Suddenly, someone linked their arm through mine and said:

“Walk.”

I turned and looked.

It was Dayı.

I had never been so happy in my life.

I hugged Dayı tightly.

We walked together and went to a park.

At the park, he asked detailed questions about the detentions and the house raid.

I explained everything I had experienced, one by one.

It was very beautiful that he asked about and looked after those who had been detained.

Then we drank tea.

Afterwards, I got up and returned home.

Later, they released my husband and the others.

The last time I saw Dayı was in December 1979.

A relative of mine had died.

When we held the funeral, Dayı came together with another comrade.

He stayed with us for two days.

Then he left.

²⁴ **Dolmuş** — A general term for a form of public transport in Turkey operated by minibuses or shared taxis along fixed or semi-fixed routes. The word *dolmuş* literally means “full”, referring to the traditional practice of departing once the vehicle had filled with passengers.

CHAPTER 4



The Junta Years, Imprisonment and From Imprisonment to Freedom...

“Everyone and Everything Would Be Tested Once Again”

“As Revolutionary Left became one of the significant political movements in our country, began creating hope among the masses and started giving direction to the left through its practice, our country entered a new period with the fascist coup of 12 September 1980.

Everyone and everything would be tested once again. History would once again put theories, strategies and leaders to the test. While some decided to retreat and others chose exile and abandoned the field of struggle, Revolutionary Left decided to resist the junta.

The declaration entitled ‘**The Americanist Fascist Junta Cannot Make 45 Million People Surrender**’ was a concrete and powerful expression of our determination to resist the junta.

This historic declaration came from the pen of our leading comrade, and the determination expressed in it would become, throughout the junta years, a manifesto of responsibility towards the people and resistance for Revolutionary Left cadres and militants.

Our leading comrade was imprisoned during the very first period of the struggle against the junta. While the struggle outside continued on the basis of the understanding he had shaped, He was now on a new front of the struggle.

And on the prison front too, he continued his leadership role in developing policies of resistance against the fascist junta of 12 September and in directly organising the resistance.

Under his leadership, the prisons of Turkey witnessed an unbowed practice of resistance and great acts of heroism.

While the celebrated leaders of many political movements used all their theoretical knowledge (!) to develop theories explaining why one should not resist, **HE**, together with his comrades, was developing both the theory and practice of resistance.

The Death Fast begun in 1984 against the imposition of the Single-Type Uniform was one of the high points of this resistance, and once again our leading comrade stood at that height.

He was among the first declared Death Fast team — among those who lay down to die with their comrades at the very front line of the struggle.

At the end of the 75-day Death Fast, three Revolutionary Left cadres and one trench comrade from TİKB^{xxxix} had been martyred. Dayı and the other resisters had been reduced to skin and bone, but they had written into history a resistance that was one of the first of its kind for the revolution in Turkey.

The epic that turned a movement into the name of hope was growing page by page under his leadership.

The history of leadership of our comrade Dursun Karataş shows us that he was the teacher and commander of ‘firsts’.

From the Armed Struggle Teams Against Fascist Terror to the Armed Revolutionary Units, from Death Fasts to the Defence delivered from the oligarchy’s own rostrums, and to the tradition of ‘not surrendering’ in surrounded bases, he was the political and practical leader of these firsts.

The Revolutionary Left Main Trial, which began on 15 March 1982 and in which 1,243 revolutionaries were tried, was another of these firsts and was historic.

The images of our comrade accusing the entire oligarchic order in that courtroom stand like a historic symbol summarising the political meaning of the trial. And that symbol became integrated with the defence entitled **WE ARE RIGHT, WE WILL WIN**, which was the product of collective work and to every line of which he contributed his labour.

When he took the floor with the 1,753-page defence entitled *We Are Right, We Will Win*, everyone was aware that they were witnessing a historic moment.

There, the path of the revolution in Turkey was once again explained, and the claim to revolution was reinforced before our people and before history.

The first signature beneath this claim and determination was **HIS**.

Our leading comrade ended his imprisonment in October 1989 through a freedom action and once again took up his duties in the midst of active struggle.

When leaving prison, Dayı left behind a petition to be read in the Revolutionary Left Trial. In it, he wrote:

‘Freedom is not bestowed upon anyone; it is won. We will be in the struggle to win freedom.’

Immediately after the escape, the oligarchy issued ‘shoot’ orders against him.

But while he was being sought under orders to shoot him, **HE** was occupied with preparations for a new period of advance in the country.”

(Taken from Statement No. 39 issued by the Party on 11 August 2008 following the martyrdom of Dayı.)

Chronology

30 September 1980 — He was detained and arrested shortly after the fascist junta of 12 September came to power.

1980–1989 — During his years of imprisonment, he was held in Davutpaşa Military Prison, Sultanahmet, Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison, Metris and Sağmalcılar Closed Prison. Between 1982 and 1987, he was repeatedly held in solitary confinement.

15 March 1982 — The Revolutionary Left Main Trial began, in which Dursun Karataş was listed as **Defendant No. 1**.

13 April 1984 — In the Death Fast begun against the imposition of the Single-Type Uniform, he lay down to die together with his comrades in the first Death Fast team.

26 June 1984 — The Death Fast was ended after certain political objectives had been achieved, at a point when four martyrs had been lost and Dayı and the other resisters were close to death.

27 October 1988 — The defence in the Revolutionary Left Main Trial began. At the Metris Baştabya courtroom, the defence opened with Dursun Karataş’s words:

“WE ARE RIGHT, WE WILL WIN.”

A Memory from Metris

The year was 1981.

We were living through a period in which the fascist junta of 12 September was using its most brutal methods in an attempt to destroy the Turkish left in general and Revolutionary Left, led by Dayı, in particular.

I was in Metris Military Prison and Detention Centre, where Dayı was also being held as a prisoner.

If I remember correctly, on 22 September 1981, I and a group of prisoners were transferred from Selimiye Military Barracks to Metris Military Prison.

There were people from our case and from different political movements in the transfer.

After the routine **“welcome”** beating at the entrance to Metris, intended to intimidate us, I eventually found myself in Ward D-4.

Dinner had arrived.

First, we ate.

Then we met the comrades staying in the ward.

The ward continued its ordinary routine.

At one point, one of the comrades said:

“Comrades, come to the windows. There’s an announcement.”

So, we went to the windows.

At that moment, a determined voice came from Ward C-10:

“Friends, comrades, as Revolutionary Left prisoners, in the prisons and detention centres that the junta has established as pilot institutions in order to destroy and force us revolutionaries — the leading force throughout Turkey and among the peoples of Turkey — to surrender, we will not compromise our ideals in the face of the junta’s attempt to strip us of our dignity.

“In an environment where the junta is trying to make us surrender, to force us to renounce Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism, and is using every means and method to achieve this, it is clear that we will not permit it.

“To protest these attacks, we are beginning an Indefinite Hunger Strike.

“There is no doubt that various left-wing groups will bombard you with severe and incorrect criticisms. But comrades, believe that history will vindicate us. Let no one have any doubt about that.”

That determined voice spoke these words slowly and clearly.

What he was saying was, in reality, an analysis of the process the prisoners were experiencing.

As that determined voice continued speaking, we listened with even greater enthusiasm.

It was Dayı himself, speaking while looking out towards the exercise yard as though he were reading from a book.

That was the first time I saw the Dayı I had been so curious about, there at that exercise-yard window.

In the days that followed, we would even walk together in the same exercise yard.

And so, the Indefinite Hunger Strike, which would last for 17 days, began.

It was the first time I had participated in such a hunger strike.

But Dayı’s presence there gave all of us an additional sense of confidence.

Dayı was with us.

Even when we were not allowed into the exercise yard, we would sometimes hear his voice.

He would call out to some of our leading comrades in the wards and speak with them.

The attitude of the Metris administration towards the hunger strike can be described in one word: **intolerance.**

Unable to tolerate it, the junta and prison administration added another act of brazenness to the history of Metris.

In order to present Dursun Karataş’s defence of Revolutionary Left at the Political Branch as though he had broken down, and to create confusion, they secretly pushed fabricated documents described as **“Political Branch statements”** under the cell doors.

The junta and prison administration hoped that by doing this Revolutionary Left prisoners would retreat, the Indefinite Hunger Strike would be weakened, and because the majority of prisoners were Revolutionary Left supporters, the hunger strike would end.

But it had exactly the opposite effect.

Among the comrades in our ward and exercise yard, discussions began about carrying out even more determined and audacious actions against the junta and the prison administration implementing its torture.

In any case, from its own point of view, the prison administration’s approach was understandable but futile.

Why?

Because in Metris Prison and Detention Centre, which held 1,100 people, there were around 600 determined Revolutionary Left cadres, militants and sympathisers.

And both outside and in prison, they possessed a tradition of uncompromising struggle that made no concessions and did not surrender.

Because at their head was a leader like Dursun Karataş, who never compromised his revolutionary identity.

The junta's calculation was that if the statements it secretly pushed under the doors demoralised Revolutionary Left prisoners, made them indecisive and created doubt, then the other groups would also submit.

A concrete example of this was seen in the history of Metris: during the hunger strike, the prison administration rejected requests for meetings submitted by representatives of various left-wing groups.

In the end, although the hunger strike did not conclude exactly as we had wanted, we had created a barricade against the attacks.

I want to say something about our daily lives after the hunger strike.

Dayı's relations with his comrades were extremely warm, sincere and affectionate.

He treated every comrade warmly without making distinctions between cadres and sympathisers.

It was a relationship like that between teacher and student.

Perhaps one of the things that made me happiest was being imprisoned together with Dayı.

I can say that this was one of the most beautiful periods of my life.

I had only recently been imprisoned.

I did not even know how long I would remain inside.

But Dayı's presence gave me a separate sense of confidence.

Whenever Dayı came out into the exercise yard, he would walk with our comrades and explain things to them in his calm, quiet manner.

This was a period in which the junta's systematic attacks continued.

On the one hand, policies against the enemy were being developed; on the other, ideological struggle against opportunism was being waged.

I can say that opportunism was an obstacle to the struggle during that period.

Dayı saw all of this and tried to educate us on these questions.

For that reason, our conversations in the exercise yard functioned like a school that developed us.

He spoke more frequently with Comrade Apo — Abdullah Meral^{xi} — who was staying in Ward C-9, and he tried to take decisions for the future by involving his comrades in the discussions.

One concrete example of this arose during the preparation of the political defences we would present before the junta courts.

Dayı spoke with many comrades.

Many comrades were given responsibilities in preparing the defences.

I too was given a task.

I was asked to prepare a text concerning the **24 January Decisions**^{xii}, based both on my own thoughts and on newspaper clippings.

So, I carried out research, wrote the piece and sent it.

At our next meeting, Dayı said it was a good piece of work, but explained so well that it was insufficient from the standpoint of the oppressed and exploited peoples, and that we, particularly as Revolutionary Left members, needed to read more and become better informed, that I understood I had to learn a lesson from it and at the same time felt proud.

In that conversation, Dayı also explained how much effort had to be put into every task and how careful we had to be when preparing a text.

Whatever the work, Dayı took it seriously and wanted labour to be invested in it.

For that reason, he was extremely careful and meticulous in everything he did.

Later, following a change of wards, I left that area.

Niyazi Abi was in the ward behind mine.

Dayı and Niyazi Abi were in constant communication.
I became an intermediary in their communications.
We communicated through a method we called “tap-tap”.
I would pass what Dayı communicated to Niyazi Abi and pass Niyazi Abi’s notes back to Dayı.
The days passed in this way.
Later, while they were still on hunger strike, Dayı and the others were transferred to Sultanahmet Military Prison.
During the period when we shared the same exercise yard, Dayı also put considerable effort into Abdullah Meral.
Apo was one of the comrades Dayı loved very much.
Apo also loved Dayı very much.
He behaved respectfully and carefully around him.
In truth, every kind of problem could be discussed with Dayı.
At that time, he would speak with our comrades about everything from family problems to legal problems.
We will not forget him.

The Junta Years

The struggle against the junta continued.
In one way or another, we learnt about the prison resistance of Dayı and the other imprisoned comrades.
On **15 March 1982**, the first collective trial of Revolutionary Left prisoners was due to take place in the large sports hall of Istanbul Atatürk Student Complex.
On the morning of the hearing, all four corners of Istanbul were covered with banners declaring:
“THE JUNTA CANNOT PUT REVOLUTIONARIES ON TRIAL.”
When we learnt that, at the very first hearing, Dayı had taken an unbowed stance in court, shouted out and transformed the courtroom into a revolutionary platform from the very first session, it gave us an enormous boost in morale.
We heard that because of the banners hung throughout the city; the junta authorities and prison administration had decided to bring the prisoners to court two or three hours late.
I was arrested towards the end of 1982 and placed in Metris Prison.
Dayı was in Sultanahmet Prison.
By the time I arrived at Metris, certain rights had been won through resistance.
Regarding prisons, both before I was imprisoned and from what I saw once inside, there was always resistance.
A clear stand was taken against policies aimed at stripping prisoners of their dignity and identity.
Whatever the conditions, there was never any hiding behind excuses.
Dayı’s decisive influence in creating the tradition of resistance in the prisons cannot be denied.
Under Dayı’s leadership, this culture became established and turned into a tradition throughout the prisons.
Yes, he was the principal person whose labour created and directed this spirit of resistance.
One of the people I encountered in prison was Metin Türker^{xlii} from our Bursa case.
Metin was a comrade who later died from an illness he contracted after his release.
As far as I remember, Metin had stayed together with Dayı in Davutpaşa Prison.

I heard about Dayı from Metin.

Whenever Metin spoke about him, he would virtually lose himself in emotion.

I can still remember him saying:

“Comrade, it was Dayı who made Revolutionary Left what it is. Dayı means Revolutionary Left.”

About three or four months after I arrived at Metris, the prison administration began taking steps to take back the rights prisoners had won and reintroduce repression.

Then transfers began.

This was followed by the 27-day hunger strike in 1983.

At the beginning of 1984, they launched a more extensive attempt to force surrender by imposing the Single-Type Uniform (TTE).

When I first learnt that Dayı too would participate in the 1984 Death Fast, I remember thinking: I wish Dayı were not going on the Death Fast.

Under the conditions of 1984, it was very clear that such a resistance would not end without losses.

Dayı's importance to the movement was obvious.

For that reason, I did not want it.

But there was nothing that could be done; a decision had been taken.

Indeed, during the Death Fast, Abdullah Meral, Haydar Başbağ and Hasan Telci from our case, and Fatih Öktülmüş^{xliii} from the TİKB case, were martyred.

Following the Death Fast, Dayı and İbrahim Erdoğan were diagnosed with tuberculosis and were temporarily transferred to another hospital for treatment.

Both recovered from tuberculosis.

I stayed in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison with Dayı for several months in 1984 and until the final days of 1985.

However, we were in separate blocks.

There was a possibility for communication among the prisoners.

At least in this way, we were able to receive news of Dayı and the other comrades more closely.

Following the Death Fast in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison, with a few exceptions, the rest of the left had put on the Single-Type Uniform.

In fact, even while the Death Fast was continuing, they had already begun discussing whether to “wear the TTE”.

In the middle of 1985, when they transferred me to another cell, they placed Dayı in the cell where I had stayed for nine months.

When we encountered one another at a court hearing, I asked Dayı:

“How did you find the cell when you first arrived? Did I leave it in good condition?”

He replied:

“It was clean. You left it well.”

Then came the Metris days again...

In 1985, martial law was lifted in Istanbul.

For this reason, it was announced that those in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison whose trials were still continuing would be transferred to Metris Prison.

The transfers began on 18 December 1985.

I think I was among the first group taken away early that morning.

Sinan Kukul was also in the prison transport vehicle with us.

In Metris too, most people had put on the Single-Type Uniform.

They took us out of the transport vehicles and placed us in the exercise yard.

We were walking around.

The infamous Metris torturer Major Muzaffer opened the door with the men accompanying him.

He began questioning, one by one, the leading prisoners from the various cases in the yard.

First, representing us, he asked Sinan whether we would wear the TTE.

Sinan replied firmly:

“No.”

His answer virtually transformed the expression on the torturer major’s face.

The small number of Revolutionary Left prisoners remaining in Metris were in the rear wards we called “Siberia”.

Because we opposed strip searches, they were dealing with us particularly harshly.

Because of this resistance at the entrance, they took me and four other comrades to cells that same day for one week.

Dayı was in a cell on our side.

Because we refused to wear the TTE, we could not go into the exercise yard and had no possibility of meeting face to face.

But we could communicate by shouting, and items were passed between the wards using ropes.

When we were taken to court, because we refused to wear the TTE, our clothes were forcibly removed, and we were transported in military prison vehicles to the Metris Baştabya court wearing only shorts and vests.

The court, however, refused to admit us because we were not properly dressed.

So, until the hearing ended, they kept us in a small room beside the courtroom.

Naturally, on days when Dayı was there, the conversations in that small room were much more meaningful.

After a short while, some of us were transferred to the wards around the exercise yard we called Chernobyl.

I ended up in the same ward as Dayı.

Sinan Kukul, İbrahim Erdoğan, Mete Nezihi Altınay^{xliv}, Cavit Özkaya^{xlv}, Faruk Ereren, Şaban Şen^{xlvi}, Mürsel Göleli^{xlvii}, Mehmet Doğan and many other comrades were also transferred to Chernobyl.

The prisoners had given it this name after the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

Some prisoners from other political cases were also brought to the Chernobyl wards.

The prison’s heating boilers were located there.

Because dense black soot from the boiler pipes constantly rained down into the exercise yard, prisoners had given those wards the name Chernobyl.

And so began the period in Metris during which I was together with Dayı from the beginning of 1986 until my release in April 1988.

Sometimes we stayed in the same ward; at other times we stayed in nearby wards sharing the same exercise yard.

But I could see him every day.

During this period, I shared the same ward with Dayı twice.

Shortly after we first ended up in the same ward, at the beginning of February, the compulsory wearing of the TTE was abolished.

Without putting it on, we won the right to go into the exercise yard and the other rights possessed by those who had worn the TTE.

Mete Nezihi Altınay was also released in 1986 during the days when we were staying together in the same ward in Chernobyl.

We saw him off.

During the periods when we stayed in the same ward as Dayı, we did not want him to take part in the ward’s daily chores.

But he would not accept this.

Once, I did one of the ward tasks that Dayı was supposed to do.

He became angry with me.

He said:

“I can do it myself.”

I know that he similarly became angry with other comrades about this.

These were tasks such as daily cleaning, wiping the tables and washing dishes.

He never adopted a privileged attitude.

They were things we could easily have done even without him.

But he would not allow it.

During this process, I came to know Dayı much more closely.

I saw his disciplined, organised and educational way of life, which set an example.

When we stayed in the same ward, he slept around four hours a day.

I hardly remember him sleeping for more than four hours.

He worked constantly, including during the night.

Outside his continuous work, he would also constantly talk with one or another of us and explain things.

He was not someone who demanded privileges, looked down on others or had a bureaucratic character.

He was one of us.

For that reason, reaching him and speaking with him was very easy.

For me too, speaking with him was never difficult.

Whatever I wanted to learn, whatever was on my mind, I could ask him and learn from him.

Dayı did not like empty chatter.

He attached importance to using time well.

Even during periods of attacks and constant ward changes, our work continued despite all the difficult conditions.

At one point, when the wards were constantly being rearranged, a comrade said during a conversation:

“They’ve turned our whole system upside down.”

Dayı replied:

“Don’t worry. We’ll put it back together.”

And indeed, within a short period, educational work, reading and lively discussions began again.

With so little sleep, his endless energy day and night, his extraordinary will, patience, work and guidance made him worthy of immense respect.

When the compulsory TTE was abolished, the prison administration began giving us the books sent from outside.

So, our number of books began to increase.

Dayı read a great many books.

I later heard from someone who had known him during his high-school years that this habit went back a long way.

He said that even in high school, Dayı read scientific, contemporary and necessary books extensively.

He was constantly reading, writing, explaining things to someone, educating people and correcting mistakes.

Whether in the Chernobyl wards or later when we were together, when we went into the exercise yard, walked around or stood somewhere talking, Dayı never had a chance to remain idle.

One of us would invariably catch him whenever he was available, ask something we wanted to learn, talk with him and listen to his explanations.

The conversations covered almost every subject and were extremely useful.

If Dayı had something to discuss with Sinan Kukul or another comrade in the exercise yard, people waited until they finished.

Once they had finished, the group around him would slowly begin to grow.

We had almost learnt to tell simply by looking which of Dayı's conversations while walking were private and which were general.

Sometimes, a walk that began with only one or two people beside Dayı would gradually turn into quite a large group.

They say that a revolutionary has no retirement age.

From what I saw, Dayı did not have the right to leave even one second empty.

Whenever we found a moment when we could speak with him, one of us would ask a question or a conversation would begin about various political issues.

We shared the same wards with Dayı.

He regularly read newly arrived books.

On the days when he was reading a new book, I thought of joining in.

Because I wanted to use that book during certain hours of the day when he was doing his other work.

I proposed this to him.

He said:

"All right."

To keep up with Dayı's reading speed, I sometimes stayed inside instead of going into the exercise yard and read in order to close the gap.

In the end, I managed to finish on time.

One day he teased me:

"I see we're reading the new books together now."

Once, during a one-to-one conversation, Dayı jokingly called me **"the Old Man."**

I replied:

"Oh, Dayı, forgive me, but that is one thing I will never accept. Besides, years ago I defended you on the question of being called old."

Laughing, Dayı asked what I meant.

So, I told him.

It was in 1977.

After meeting Dayı at İYÖD, on one occasion a comrade I knew well was talking with him and addressed him as **"the Old Man."**

He said it as though it were Dayı's name.

Dayı heard him but said nothing and continued the conversation.

I was very surprised.

After Dayı left, I said to the comrade, who was older than me:

"You called Dayı 'the Old Man'. But Dayı is still very young. I was very surprised that you called him that."

Seeing my surprise, the comrade burst out laughing and said:

"We're friends. Don't take it seriously."

I told Dayı this story.

He said:

"So, you defended me all those years ago."

And we laughed together.

He always read the daily newspapers.

He marked important articles.

We cut out the marked articles and archived them as clippings so that they could be used later when needed.

During the periods when we stayed in the same ward, Dayı also participated in our educational work.

These educational sessions involved very rich discussions and, because of Dayı's influence, were extremely useful.

Everyone expressed their views, whether correct, incomplete or wrong.

If a comrade did not express an opinion in a discussion, Dayı encouraged them to speak.

He tried to help his comrades on every issue.

At the same time, he was a very good observer.

Once, when we were in the same ward, I had become so absorbed in the work in front of me that I had almost cut myself off from the world.

He warned me about this.

He said:

"Concentrate on the work in front of you, but don't cut yourself off completely from your surroundings."

He explained that while doing my work, I also had to remain aware of developments around me.

He was careful about work being completed on time.

Let me give another example involving myself.

Dayı gave me an article to write.

I wrote some of it.

Then I began taking it slowly and started reading a book with another comrade.

Dayı asked whether the article was finished.

I said it was not.

He criticised me that day.

He explained that reading books was important, but that the work in my hands had to be completed urgently and I should read only after finishing it.

He said I should not insert other tasks into the middle of urgent work like that.

It was not an article requiring days of work.

It was something that could have been finished within a few hours.

One day while we were staying in the same ward, Dayı had a hearing at a civilian court.

As far as I remember, it concerned a case dating from the period when he was an İYÖKD leader.

When he returned to the ward, he told us that they had virtually deployed an army to Sultanahmet Courthouse.

The inside and outside of the courthouse were apparently full of police.

Dayı told us about an argument he had there with Aydın Barış, head of the Revolutionary Left police team.

Because Dayı had a court hearing, they had filled both the inside and outside of Sultanahmet Courthouse with police.

Security was enormously exaggerated.

It was as though the entire courthouse had been surrounded by police.

Around this time, a new military governor arrived at Metris.

He was extremely self-important and imagined that he was going to "straighten Metris out."

During these days, on some pretext, he attempted to put Dayı into a cell.

He did not come himself at first but had officers and soldiers attempt it.

We resisted together with Dayı.

Eventually, they raided the ward and carried Dayı, me and three other comrades bodily into the cells.

There were five of us.

After being held in the cells for about five days, all of us were returned to our ward.

This governor's swagger did not last long.

Resistance quickly blunted his edge.

I remember one day when this military governor received a severe dressing-down from Dayı.

Resistance in Metris continued in various forms in 1987.

We had demands that we wanted resolved.

It was a day when we were refusing visits.

First, a soldier told Dayı that he had visitors and had to go out.

Dayı said that he would not.

Then the major himself came.

He told Dayı that he had visitors and that he had to go.

This was the result of pressure from us inside and from the families outside.

Dayı gave the major a serious dressing-down.

The man would not leave.

In a calm voice he kept saying:

“Dursun, go out. Your visitors are waiting. Don’t keep them waiting.”

And he kept receiving a dressing-down.

Standing further back, I tried to glance through the hatch and see what was happening in the corridor.

As far as I could see, the soldiers were lined up rigidly at attention like statues.

Their major was being repeatedly reprimanded.

The soldiers watched in astonishment.

After all, the commander before whom they trembled had fallen silent and was being reprimanded continuously.

Later, there was a hunger strike lasting 30 days, carried out only by Revolutionary Left prisoners.

At a meeting attended by a TAYAD representative, the prison administration accepted our demands.

We gathered in the E Block exercise yard.

The other political groups were also brought together.

We assembled in wards around the same yard.

Thus, all the comrades from our case were together.

The ward doors were also open.

We were now under more favourable conditions.

Dayı and the other comrades had organised how the defence should be written.

Because there were few comrades who could type with all ten fingers, some people read the texts aloud to those typing in order to speed up the work.

Naturally, those who could touch-type carried a very heavy workload.

These were days when night and day merged into one another.

After my release, I heard that one touch-typist, under the effects of sleeplessness and exhaustion, had typed “political chickens” instead of “political prisoners”.

I laughed a great deal when I heard it.

Preparation of the Main Trial defence had begun earlier.

While we were still in Chernobyl, during a discussion between Dayı and several comrades about the defence, Dayı had said:

“We must finish the defence on time. If we leave it late, we’ll be under pressure and we won’t be able to produce the defence we want.”

I remember that during that period İbrahim Erdoğan asked me to help him with the section he was preparing for the defence.

I prepared the part he asked of me and gave it to him.

Individual and group educational work also continued in the wards.

But in many discussions, we sometimes reached a dead end.

Naturally, in such situations, we would find Dayı.

What did Dayı say about that issue?

How did Dayı look at that problem?

Each time, we received an answer.

Sometimes, when we returned to the ward, we would say to one another:

“We talked and debated for so long — how did that never occur to us? How did we fail to think of it?”

Wherever Dayı was, there was a lively atmosphere of discussion.

There were questions, his answers and his explanations.

One day, when we entered the ward, a comrade said:

“We should take Dayı as an example. We too should be able to maintain such lively discussion environments continuously. Why doesn’t it happen continuously with us? Wherever Dayı is, it always happens. We need to push ourselves on this.”

And indeed, however much we tried, we could never quite reproduce the same atmosphere.

Dayı was not interested in football.

But as long as those who played did not go to excess, he did not object.

One day, comrades were again playing a football match in the exercise yard.

A comrade who played very well was going to join the match after finishing some work with Dayı.

But because the work took a long time, he was only able to play towards the end of the match.

It turned out that Dayı knew how much that comrade loved football and, as a joke, had deliberately prolonged the work.

Then, towards the end of the match, he said:

“Go on, go and play for a bit.”

When we later learnt what he had done, we laughed.

On another occasion, three or four of us were talking with Dayı, I think about Revolutionary Youth.

As an example, Dayı mentioned Sinan Kukul.

He said Sinan made decisions very practically and possessed a typical Revolutionary Youth characteristic.

He said:

“Sinan doesn’t keep things waiting. Standing there, he makes the decision immediately — bang, bang.”

He was explaining this positive quality to us.

He loved Sinan very much.

Dayı put enormous effort into ensuring that his comrades read, discussed and understood.

I remember that he made the greatest possible effort to make people read books and magazines and understand them, and that he became angry with those who persisted in negative habits and pushed them to change.

I later learnt from various accounts that this characteristic went back a long way.

I also later heard an account from a comrade who had witnessed it in earlier years.

During the first months after the formation of Revolutionary Left, someone who presented himself as a militant sat down beside Dayı and the comrade who later told me this story.

During the conversation, Dayı asked this person whether he had read the latest issue of the magazine.

The person replied very casually:

“Yes, Dayı. I read all of it. I finished it.”

From the expression on his face, Dayı realised that he was not telling the truth.

So, he asked:

“All right then, what was written on the cover of the magazine?”

The person who had claimed to have read the whole issue fell silent.

Dayı then became angry and asked:

“Did you actually pick up the magazine and look at it at all?”

And he explained to him why he needed to read.

The person in question left our ranks before the fascist junta of 12 September came to power.

During the period when we were together, while the defence was being written and educational work and discussions continued, in one ward there were folk-dance and theatre activities.

Some comrades were also doing macramé work.

They used macramé materials brought in from outside.

I also participated in the folk-dance work.

At the end, a performance was organised in the exercise yard with folk dances, theatre and sketches.

On another day, the comrades doing theatre presented **The Epic of Sheikh Bedreddin**^{xlviii} at considerable length and very beautifully.

We carried out these kinds of activities.

Football and volleyball matches were also played in the exercise yard.

Dayı strongly embraced his comrades.

I even saw him look after someone who had no political connection with us at all.

This person was a prisoner with psychological problems.

He stayed in another ward.

He did not get on with anyone and preferred to stay alone in a cell.

From time to time, he would come to our section.

Dayı had asked two comrades to look after him.

They would hold long conversations with him and then he would leave.

In other words, rather than saying:

“He has problems, he’s mad, he isn’t one of us,”

Dayı took responsibility for him.

In the statement issued after Dayı was martyred, it was said that he knew the prisoners in the prisons by name.

During the days we were together in Metris, he was equally sensitive about our comrades in prisons throughout Anatolia.

Through this, I learnt about many of our prisoners.

Dayı created a culture aimed at preventing our people from going over to the enemy and even at winning back those who showed weakness at various levels.

Instead of immediately saying:

“Nothing will come of this person. If he’s gone, forget him,”

he would think in terms of:

“How can we win this person back?”

Let me give another example.

A prisoner being tried in our case had submitted an application to benefit from the informers’ law and had gone among the informers.

At that time, I did not know him personally.

But comrades such as Dayı and Sinan knew him.

As far as I remember, this person had been in a different prison, had fallen into depression there, and, unable to overcome it, had gone over to the informers.

A special effort was made to bring him back.

Eventually, this person withdrew his confession application and returned among us.

After he came back, particular attention was paid to him and over time he recovered.

Until the day I was released, he remained among us and had largely returned to his former normal state.

Later, I heard that he was released while still among us.

There was constant work to win back those who, unable to withstand the pressure for a period, had gone into independent wards.

On the evening, I was released, a celebration was organised.

Other comrades were also being released.

The following day, everyone gathered in the exercise yard to say goodbye.

At such moments, a person experiences two emotions at once.

On the one hand, there is the happiness of joining the struggle outside.

On the other, there is the sadness of leaving comrades behind inside.

When the moment came to leave, we said goodbye to all the comrades who were staying behind.

At the exercise-yard door, you waved one final time and left.

Just as I was leaving through the door, I waved, but for a moment I froze where I stood.

Suddenly, I came to myself when I heard Dayı laughing and saying:

“What are you standing there for? Go on!”

The other comrades were laughing together with Dayı.

I laughed too, waved and ran to catch up with the other comrades who were being released.

After my release, I attended court hearings three or four times as a defendant who was no longer in custody.

During the breaks, I talked with Dayı and the other comrades.

Some time after I came out, one of our comrades in Istanbul needed an operation.

It was a risky operation.

One day, while I was meeting Mete Nezihi Altınay, he told me:

“Dayı sent word. He listed me, you and the other comrades who could deal with it. He said: ‘There are this many of you outside who can look after this comrade. You will take this comrade’s situation very seriously. I don’t want to hear excuses about money, work or anything else. Whatever you have to do, you will treat the operation seriously and our comrade will come off that operating table alive.’”

And that was exactly what happened.

No effort was spared in looking after the comrade.

And our comrade came through the very risky operation safely.

Mete Nezihi was a comrade who understood many aspects of Dayı through practice.

With endless energy, he would rush around, explain, try to convince people and give direction.

He paid great attention to surveillance.

In one conversation we had about surveillance, while explaining how careful we had to be, he said that we must never bring surveillance to our comrades.

He said that even speaking of bringing surveillance to Niyazi Abi or Dayı was horrifying and should not even be contemplated.

He was that committed, acted with such a consciousness of protecting his comrades and, rightly, treated the matter with extreme seriousness.

Once, Mete and I were going to meet Niyazi Aydın.

Mete was the one taking me to Niyazi Abi.

Niyazi Abi arrived at the place after us.

As soon as we embraced and began speaking, he teased Mete and me:

“I thought I’d come and see the two old men waiting.”

I replied:

“You mean two Revolutionary Youth members, Niyazi Abi.”

And we laughed together.

Niyazi Abi was older than both of us, but he was teasing us.

In a conversation with a comrade in 1989, I remember what he told me about their work in the area before the junta of 12 September.

He and the comrade he worked with had written their regional report somewhat exaggeratedly.

When Dayı met them, he criticised them for exaggerating the report.

He told them:

“Don’t exaggerate. Write exactly what it is.”

The comrade later said:

“We were stunned. Dayı seemed to know the area better than we did. After that, we never again submitted an exaggerated report or spoke in an exaggerated way.”

When we heard that Dayı had escaped from prison in 1989, it had the effect of an enormous morale boost.

I remember celebrations of joy taking place everywhere.

“One Day We Will Break Through the Dungeons of the Oligarchy and Get Out...”

Fearlessness means confronting fear and paying the price. It is by being forged in extraordinary conditions, being tested again and again, becoming one with one’s comrades and showing the determination to reach the intended goals that people earn the right to become leaders.

There is no benefit, either to individuals or to peoples, in regarding as leaders those who have not paid this price and have not been tested.

Lenin, Thomas Sankara, Che, Castro and many others became leaders of their organisations and peoples by confronting fear and paying the price under the most difficult conditions.

Lenin returned to Russia in November 1905 and organised the armed December Uprising. Because the uprising did not spread throughout the country, it was suppressed, and with the period of Stolypin Reaction, massacres, attacks and a dark period prevailed throughout the country until 1912.

During this period, Lenin was wanted “dead or alive” throughout the country by the Tsar’s police organisation, the Okhrana. It was likely that he would be killed if he was seen. He had to be well protected and take care of himself.

Lenin and a comrade went to the railway station to meet Central Committee members arriving for a meeting of the Bolshevik Party Central Committee.

Lenin had to avoid drawing attention to himself and remain inconspicuous.

As the expected train entered the station, a little girl jumped onto the tracks.

It was only a matter of moments before the child would be crushed.

While those at the station stood stunned and afraid, Lenin jumped onto the tracks and pulled the little girl away from the front of the train at the last moment.

Lenin had saved the child despite placing himself in great danger.

At a later Central Committee meeting, the comrade who had been at the station recounted the incident and said:

“Our General Secretary is excessively emotional. Under conditions in which he is being hunted, he gave in to his emotions and took an action that could have exposed him. Therefore, because of the possibility that he may make emotional decisions under even

more important circumstances, I request that he be removed from the post of General Secretary.”

The Central Committee members asked Lenin to defend himself.

Lenin replied:

“If I had not done that, I would have been ashamed of my humanity.”

Leaders were human beings like us, made of flesh and blood, who became sad, happy, angry, furious, loved, became emotional and worried.

What made them leaders were simply the decisions they made and the steps they took under the conditions in which they lived.

Under normal circumstances, almost every healthy person can make decisions and put them into practice.

But when conditions change and circumstances arise in which fear becomes dominant, the steps taken and decisions made under those conditions reveal the line between an ordinary person and a leader.

It was under such conditions that I came to know Dayı.

His stance in the prisons during the darkest period of 12 September, the decisions he made and the “self-confidence” he instilled in us are among the main reasons why I and people like me can walk with our heads held high today.

I have always asked myself:

Why, in the same country, during the same period and under the same fascist administration, did different conditions of resistance or surrender emerge in different prisons?

In one prison there was complete surrender, while in another there were resistance and victories.

The circumstances were the same.

The conditions were the same.

And most importantly, the objective of the fascist junta was the same.

The only difference was that these prisons were in different provinces.

Yes, apart from the provinces, there was no difference.

Naturally, we heard of individual acts of resistance in prisons where surrender had taken place, and we saw examples of them.

But what matters is that, as revolutionaries and as a community, we are not brought under complete control.

At this point, the prisons of Istanbul come to the fore.

It is particularly important that prisons such as Metris, Sultanahmet and Sağmalcılar emerged from the 12 September period with honour.

The same conditions and the same country!

The same policies and the same attacks!

Resistance and victory on one side, surrender on the other!

This can have only one meaning:

On one side, an organised force with conscious will; on the other, a fragmented ideological structure lacking confidence in itself.

This is where an organised structure and an organised line of resistance come into play.

If the prisons that resisted had not created an organised line of resistance, if they had left individuals to themselves, the prisoners in those prisons would also have surrendered.

As I said at the beginning, the resistance of isolated individuals means little for the whole.

Who were the people who should have resisted in the prisons and refused to surrender?

They were people who had spent years within various “organised” structures and who called themselves “revolutionaries”, “socialists” and “patriots”.

In other words, they were people who had already been “organised” before entering prison.

Why were they unable to preserve this structure in prison?

In my view, this is the fundamental question.

Because the leaders of these “organised” structures were themselves not organised.

Not only were they incapable of leading their own organisations; they also produced the ideology of surrender, imposed it upon their people and created the basis for “protecting” themselves.

Before the Single-Type Uniform (TTE) was introduced in Istanbul prisons, “leaders” had written page after page saying:

“The TTE is a blue shroud.”

But when the TTE actually came onto the agenda and preparations for the attack began, with nonsense such as:

“The TTE can be worn,”

“One step forward, two steps back,”

and

“the Brest-Litovsk Treaty,”

they demonstrated what kind of leadership they practised and what kind of organised structure they had created.

Even today, they do not question this.

There is much more that could be said on this subject.

But if the Istanbul prisons emerged from 12 September without surrendering and left behind a positive tradition, the value of an organised force and of the leadership that enabled this force to remain standing even under the most difficult conditions — that is, the value of Dayı — cannot be forgotten.

The prison resistance was successfully carried out under Dayı’s leadership, and it crowned us with this pride.

I think the reason he was attacked not only by fascism but also by left-wing circles was precisely his leadership in these resistances.

Whenever I hear attacks against him by people who knew him or did not know him, I cannot help being astonished.

Are they perhaps talking about another “Dayı”?

I cannot see even the slightest resemblance between anything they say and the Dayı I knew and saw.

Perhaps they wanted a “Dayı” shaped according to the kind of “leadership” they had constructed in their own minds.

But Dayı was never what they wanted him to be.

He was the person who opened the way before us under every condition and showed us our path.

Yes, he was a human being!

He became sad, happy, worried, emotional and angry.

And he loved us.

In January 1989, we were in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison.

Our days were far from being routine winter days in prison.

At the first landing inside the main entrance door of E Block — or, as we called it, the *malta* — the first thing you encountered was our tables.

At one of those tables, with newspapers spread out before him, you would see our comrade Recai Dinçel^{xlix}, who would later become a martyr.

He constantly watched the door and provided security for the tunnel work.

Because at that time, day and night, we were digging a tunnel from the ground floor.

From time to time, you would also frequently see Dayı coming out of his cell and arriving there.

Dayı too would come to check security, find out how things were going, stay for a while and then return.

For months, we had devoted almost 24 hours of every day to reaching the end of the tunnel that would bring us freedom.

We went to sleep with it and woke up with it.

The first tunnel operation begun in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison had been discovered shortly before, in December 1988.

We had not forgotten the torturer officers and prison officials who attacked us with gas bombs, batons and wooden clubs after the tunnel was discovered.

Following this, security measures had been tightened to such an extent that we could hardly breathe.

The prison, however, had been built on two floors, with cells on both levels.

Six prisoners stayed in each cell.

After the first tunnel was discovered, the lower floors were emptied, and the political prisoners were placed on the upper floors.

In this way, by cutting the prisoners' contact with the ground, they supposedly intended to prevent another tunnel operation (!).

In addition, twice every day — during morning and evening counts — the floors and walls of the empty lower levels were struck with sticks, hammers and iron bars in an attempt to detect tunnel cavities.

To prevent prisoners from going downstairs, the two iron doors separating the levels were kept locked.

The prison consisted of a main central corridor with blocks connected to it.

To cut communication between the blocks, the iron doors at the block entrances were closed after the evening count.

It was under these conditions that we, the Revolutionary Left prisoners in E Block, began a new tunnel operation.

This work was carried out solely by those of us in E Block.

We kept it hidden even from the Revolutionary Left prisoners in F Block.

This was not an expression of distrust towards them.

The issue was that it was risky for people who were not directly involved in the work to have knowledge of it.

Our greatest weapon was secrecy.

At the initial stage, the fewer people who knew, the safer the tunnel would be.

From beginning to end, Dayı was the organiser of this work.

Everything had been calculated down to the smallest detail.

We were as orderly and disciplined as a functioning machine.

From the way we sat and stood, to the food we ate and the conversations we had, we behaved consciously, carefully and with discipline.

Dayı's efforts during that tunnel operation were unforgettable.

On the one hand, he organised daily tasks.

On the other, he personally supervised the organisation of life according to the new circumstances.

Dayı spoke with many of our comrades every day and personally dealt with shortcomings.

He would even concern himself with making sure water was heated so that comrades emerging muddy from the tunnel could bathe immediately and not become even colder.

The rest periods and nutrition of the comrades working in the tunnel, the state of the work itself, and problems arising inside the tunnel were all matters that Dayı tried to resolve through his efforts.

Dayı possessed an inexhaustible energy.

And through that tunnel operation, of course, I also witnessed his passion for freedom.

In Metris, despite the traditions in this area having been destroyed by opportunism acting in a narrow group-oriented manner, Dayı always insistently explained the correct position to us.

After opportunists in Metris carried out a freedom action without informing us and escaped, Dayı attached particular importance to freedom actions.

From that point onwards, Dayı played a special role in organising every freedom action.

The slightest carelessness could have brought such an extensive operation to an end and destroyed our dreams.

This discipline and working order expressed a will that we accepted and through which we even punished our own mistakes.

I was never disturbed by this discipline and work.

Because we were not playing at being “revolutionaries”.

We were not trying to satisfy ourselves.

Every wrong step or act could deprive us of our freedom.

In fact, through this work we were also getting to know ourselves.

We discovered whether we were capable, both materially and morally, of carrying such a heavy burden.

For example, despite all the physical exhaustion, I learnt that I could remain standing for months on no more than four hours of sleep a day.

Because we did it.

May 1989.

Spring was now making itself fully felt, and our hopes were growing.

We were counting the days until freedom.

It was one of those days when we were saying:

“This is going to work.”

That day, as usual, we were carrying out our tasks when we noticed that something unusual was happening in the prison.

Then we received the bad news from the section where the women prisoners were held.

Their section overlooked the prison administration and the exit.

The first news that worried us was:

“Construction machinery and an excavator are operating inside the prison.”

During previous tunnel operations, they had used construction machinery and excavators when tunnels were discovered.

This meant the administration had become suspicious of the tunnel operation and had begun searching.

We had reached the final stage of months of work.

But whatever had happened, the tunnel exit had been discovered, and the prison had gone into full alarm.

The administration was using every resource available to discover from which block the tunnel began — in other words, to find the tunnel entrance.

It was only a matter of time before the entrance was discovered.

We were stunned and furious.

Months of work had ended in failure.

What were we supposed to mourn — all our labour, or the freedom that had slipped from our hands?

This was where Dayı intervened.

We had to fill with earth the section connecting the main tunnel to our block and prevent the entrance from being discovered.

To do this, we had to take the risk of going down to the lower-floor wards in broad daylight and entering the tunnel.

The shortage of time was a nightmare.

We had only minutes.

With Dayı's encouragement, we had to take the risk.

And considering the possibility that the tunnel might be discovered, we also decided to write on a piece of cardboard:

"ONE DAY WE WILL BREAK THROUGH THE DUNGEONS OF THE OLIGARCHY AND GET OUT — REVOLUTIONARY LEFT"

and leave it inside the tunnel.

We quickly wrote the message and, together with three comrades, entered the lower-floor ward where the tunnel was located.

(How we managed to get downstairs was always a question that preoccupied the prison administration.)

We moved quickly and carefully.

While we were there, our section could have been raided.

They could have caught us at the tunnel entrance or inside the tunnel.

We had accepted the risk.

Whatever happened, we were not going to surrender easily.

We would not allow them the pleasure of the victory they wanted.

Once again, we would have the final word.

Three of us were supposed to go downstairs.

But there was a fourth person with us.

It was Dayı.

Despite our insistence, he had taken the risk and come with us because he wanted to be beside us.

In reality, there was nothing he needed to do physically.

Two people would open the tunnel cover.

The third would enter the tunnel, fill the other section with earth and leave behind our written cardboard message before coming back out.

Then we would close the cover and apply the necessary camouflage.

The sole reason the tunnel entrance had remained undiscovered despite twice-daily searches was the camouflage applied to this cover.

Every time we entered or left the tunnel, the cover was camouflaged so perfectly that, however carefully anyone looked, it could not be noticed.

This operation normally took around five or six minutes.

This was the part that cost us time.

Throughout it, Dayı stood over us, almost like a mother speaking to her children, encouraging us:

"This time, make the camouflage of your lives."

"Don't give them that pleasure."

"Let me see what you can do."

I could hardly believe it.

I had carried out this operation hundreds of times and had always been pressed for time.

But this time, we achieved camouflage that could be described as beyond perfect.

And the remarkable thing was that we did it in only two or three minutes.

When the work was finished, Dayı embraced us.

We left the area at full speed.

Now we would see whether our tunnel entrance could survive this meticulous search.

The operation we carried out succeeded.

The tunnel entrance remained undiscovered for days.

Dayı and the rest of us could smile again.

The officers would come to us and almost beg us to tell them where the tunnel entrance was.

Each time, Dayı would reply:

“If you tell us how you found the tunnel, we’ll tell you where the entrance is.”

They were only able to find the entrance by breaking up the floors of the lower level.

They were pleased when they found it.

But when they read the cardboard message, they became upset.

They could not accept it.

Despite the blockade and the raid, they had been shaken by our courage in entering the tunnel:

“While we were at the other end of the tunnel, you were at this end. How could you dare to do that?”

the officers said.

After the tunnel operation, Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison was closed on **13 May 1989**.

We Revolutionary Left prisoners were then sent to Sağmalcılar Closed Prison.

We would not remain there for very long either.

And the first person we would send to freedom would be Dayı.

I notice that whenever people speak of the “12 September Prisons”, they talk about the repression and torture in Diyarbakır and Mamak.

Stories and novels are written about those places.

Films are even made about them.

But in none of them is there resistance.

All I see is literature of lamentation.

Yet during this same period, there was resistance, refusal to surrender and victory on a scale almost without parallel anywhere in the world.

The left and those who call themselves “intellectuals” try to ignore this aspect of the prisons that resisted.

Because to tell the story of these prisons would mean denying themselves.

To write the story of resistance and victory would mean describing those who created that resistance and victory, and the will, thought and ideology behind that resistance.

And to speak of the resistance means to speak of Dayı.

But their intention is not to speak about Dayı.

It is to vilify him.

And they do this under every circumstance.

HOW LONG CAN THIS GO ON?!

He Was So Modest...

I came to know Dayı through what others told me about him. In 1980, when the torturers presented him to the media, I remember seeing photographs of him on the front pages of newspapers after he had been tortured. With headlines such as “Dev-Sol Leader Captured”, bourgeois journalists celebrated as though they had discovered a great treasure. They listed, one by one, the actions he was alleged to have carried out and made Dayı a target. False headlines such as “Dev-Sol Leader Breaks Down” were published. They tried to confuse the people with baseless reports claiming that a dishwasher had been found in the house where he was captured and that he had been living in luxury.

When I spoke with comrades who knew him, they would say:

“Even if Dayı had not one dishwasher but a hundred, he would still wash the dishes by hand and make others do the same. Because Dayı never liked laziness. He would not allow anything that involved no labour. The dishwasher is only there for appearances.”

These psychological attacks would continue afterwards.

During my imprisonment in 1982, soldiers would throw into the wards fabricated interrogation records they had prepared concerning Dayı. The junta's aim was to confuse the prisoners and undermine their belief in and confidence in the leadership.

All their efforts failed.

The prisoners repelled these attacks and stood by the leadership.

When the junta chiefs realised that they could not succeed in this way, they placed Dayı in solitary confinement.

Not content with this, they exiled him from Metris Prison to Sağmalcılar Prison.

In their minds, they had deprived the prisoners of their leader.

Towards the end of 1983, during a period when discussions about a Death Fast against the TTE had begun, I was released from Metris Prison.

Outside, a different policy was being tried against those who were released.

Through intimidation and pressure, they tried either to force us completely away from our beliefs or to turn us into informers.

It was during such a period that I had my final conversations with the torturers, standing against every form of pressure and informing.

Once again, they brought Dayı into the discussion.

They invented all kinds of slanderous stories, such as claiming that Dayı had caused Haydar Başbağ and the others to die during the Death Fast.

In 1985, I attended a hearing of the Main Trial at Metris Baştabya Sports Hall as a defendant who was not in custody.

It was there that I saw Dayı for the first time and had the opportunity to speak with him.

Naturally, I told him what the enemy had said to me about the things I had experienced.

During our first encounter, I felt as comfortable as though we had known one another for years.

I listened to him with complete attention and tried to understand what he was saying.

I had never imagined that I could feel so comfortable in front of Dayı.

Everyone shared the same view:

"We feel very comfortable in front of Dayı."

Yes, I felt the same way, because Dayı naturally gave people that sense of ease.

He was the leader of a movement, its staff officer, its administrator and its teacher, yet his approach towards us was so modest.

Our people say, **"A child with a child, an adult with an adult."**

Our Dayı possessed precisely this virtue.

Once I saw this quality in him, I could speak with him more comfortably and even joke with him.

In 1986, I again attended one of the Main Trial hearings.

As usual, he teased me.

He asked:

"When are you going to get married? Get married so we can see your wedding."

I replied:

"You are my father. If anyone comes to ask for me, they can come and ask you."

Sinan and one or two other comrades were beside him.

I could see the surprise on their faces at our conversation.

Dayı said very calmly:

"Where are you going to find me?"

I replied:

"As long as you are alive, I'll find you."

That was how we parted in court that day.

When I went to the next hearing, I took him invitations for the association that was going to open.

In every conversation, he would ask:

“When are you going to open that association?”

I thought to myself:

What better wedding invitation could there be than this?

As soon as the hearing was adjourned, Dayı came straight over to me and asked:

“How are you? What are you doing?”

I immediately handed him the association invitation I had with me.

I said:

“I brought the wedding invitation.”

As soon as Dayı took it, he said:

“Don’t go. I’m going to send a message.”

And he immediately moved away.

Meanwhile, Sinan came over and handed me the message.

He said:

“Sorry for keeping you waiting. Also, Dayı is humorous; he behaves warmly towards people he loves and feels close to.”

I was surprised by this unexpected explanation and replied:

“Why should I mind? Besides, Dayı is my spiritual father. He can joke with me, tease me or beat me however he wants.”

There was delicacy and sensitivity in Sinan’s manner of speaking.

But Dayı had won people’s hearts so completely that he embraced them with the affection of a father.

I never had conversations with him lasting months, years, weeks or days.

Our conversations lasted only a few minutes, or at most half an hour.

But in those conversations, I saw his immense love in human relations.

He never made the person before him feel his status.

What kind of person can lower himself to the level of a child?

Only a virtuous person filled with love for humanity can show such humility.

That was the kind of person Dayı was.

In 1986, at one of the Main Trial hearings I attended, an action case was being heard.

One of the fascists who had shot our comrade testified:

“His own comrades shot him.”

He then supposedly identified the people whom he claimed had done the shooting.

The prosecutor, Recep Sözen, accepted this testimony.

Our imprisoned comrades objected and protested by applauding.

We did not fully understand what was happening.

Those of us who were defendants but not in custody were listening intently from where we were sitting, trying to understand what the court was saying.

Because the hall was large, the sound echoed and it was difficult to understand what was being said.

The presiding judge asked the imprisoned comrades one by one whether they had participated in the applause protest.

Everyone answered:

“Yes, we did.”

At that moment, I made my decision.

If the presiding judge asked me as well, I would say that I had applauded.

Then it was our turn.

The presiding judge asked:

“Yes, you defendants who are not in custody, did you applaud?”

The moment I answered:

“Yes, I applauded,”

the imprisoned comrades turned their faces towards me.

I made eye contact with all of them at once.

Their expressions said a great deal.

The presiding judge announced his decision:

“Those who participated in the applause protest will be removed from the courtroom.”

And all of us were removed.

Following this incident, I received a message from Dayı:

“He should not come to court until we call him.”

I asked why.

Apparently, there were plain-clothes police officers in the courtroom and our comrades thought I might be detained.

So, I was to wait until I was called.

As the saying goes, orders cut through iron.

I did not attend court for a full year.

A year later, after I received word that I should come, I began attending the Main Trial hearings again.

Going to court was a beautiful feeling.

And I again had the opportunity to speak with Dayı.

He asked about the comrades outside.

“What are they doing?”

he asked.

I replied:

“They hang around the SHP and coffee houses.”

Before I could tell him, Dayı himself told me that one of them had developed an emotional attachment to a woman from the SHP.

I had heard a little from comrades about his sensitivity and approach concerning relations between women and men.

But this was the first time I witnessed it so closely and personally.

Dayı said:

“Our marriages are not like marriages within the system. When we love, we love to the death. Our comrade has accepted an emotional relationship with someone from the SHP whose character is unclear. Tomorrow, when he goes to prison or is killed, will she wait for him? Tell them: if they are going to do it, they should do it properly. If they are not, they should stay where they are. Besides, no work can be done by hanging around the SHP. We must be a flower in the swamp.”

For the first time, I saw Dayı’s expression harden and become serious.

Every word he spoke carried great meaning.

And Dayı was right.

Time confirmed what he said.

Everything he described unfolded exactly as he had said it would.

In 1988, as the Main Trial hearings continued, the court had reached the defence stage.

We were excited.

On the day the defence was to be presented, Metris Baştabya Sports Hall would witness a historic day for the first time in its history.

Security had been extraordinarily increased beyond the already heavy levels of ordinary hearings.

Hundreds of people, including foreign delegations, poured in to watch the hearing.

When the court panel took their places, they were visibly different from their usual manner.

The prisoners entered the courtroom carrying books and magazines.

Among them, Dayı entered carrying books in his hands.

He greeted everyone with a nod.

After the presiding judge spoke, it was Dayı's turn.

He began reading the defence with the words:

"Break your pens."

Apart from the voice of Dayı, Defendant No. 1 in the case, not a sound could be heard in the courtroom.

The thousands of people present held their breath and listened to him with complete attention.

During breaks, foreign delegations played cat and mouse with the soldiers in an attempt to speak with Dayı, even if only briefly.

They wanted to talk to Dayı, while the soldiers tried to prevent them.

Then Dayı's firm, decisive voice rang through the hall:

"Don't you have a commander? Call your commander."

We witnessed him angrily pushing against the iron barriers and arguing with the soldiers.

Even while Dayı argued, we could see that he commanded respect even from the enemy.

After Dayı escaped from Sağmalcılar Prison in 1989, it did not take long before we again began to feel his presence among us in the ranks of the struggle outside.

There Was Nowhere His Will Could Not Reach

When Dayı and the others were imprisoned, I was already a prisoner in Sultanahmet Prison.

When they were captured, the comrades who had been with him were brought to where we were.

Dayı, however, was placed somewhere else alone.

He was kept there in solitary confinement.

He remained there for two months.

Two months later, he was brought to us.

Dayı stayed in a cell with three comrades.

At the time, we were in A Block.

There was a cell system.

Naturally, because it was the junta period, various impositions existed.

We had repelled some of them.

For example, they wanted to force us to sing the Turkish national anthem.

As Revolutionary Left prisoners, we opposed this.

However, prisoners from the Partizan case said:

"Let's negotiate and agree to sing it at least once a week."

The administration then took a step in that direction:

"You don't have to sing it every day but sing it from time to time."

In the end, of course, we did not sing it.

The administration could do nothing about it.

During counts, we gave a formal report.

We did not say "Commander", but we did give the report.

There was also, for a short period, the TTE.

One day, in our cell, we decided:

"This evening a non-commissioned officer is coming for the count. Let's not give the formal report."

Naturally, Dayı and the others knew nothing about this.

We had not informed the comrades.

That evening, however, the prison's fascist torturer, Lieutenant Osman Laz, came for the count.

There were four of us in the cell.

Even so, we refused to give the formal report.

At first, the torturer lieutenant was surprised.

He made us repeat what we had said for the count.

Again, we refused.

Then they tried to take me outside.

The other three comrades in the cell said:

"Take us too. We think the same way."

So, they took all four of us out.

They beat us in the corridor.

After the torture, they threw us back into the cell.

We remained there for one day.

Then we came out.

We were in the exercise yard, and I was telling Dayı about the count and the torture inflicted on us.

The other prisoners gathered around and listened.

When I finished speaking, Dayı turned to me and asked:

"...Now, was what you did heroism or childishness?"

Embarrassed, I answered:

"Childishness."

Dayı was angry that we had acted alone on such an issue without informing anyone.

Because opportunists were standing around us, I was somewhat hurt by Dayı's anger.

For a while, I behaved coldly towards him.

There were no toilets or bathrooms inside the cells.

To use them, we had to have a soldier open the door and let us out.

The toilets were in the corridor.

Sometimes we used this as a pretext to leave the cells and hold discussions with prisoners from other cells.

One day, I encountered Dayı there.

He greeted me first.

Then he asked:

"...Are we not speaking? Why don't you talk to me at all?"

I could not say anything.

Then Dayı continued:

"These kinds of discussions happen. It is natural. Don't upset yourself over it."

Murat Karabulut, from the group detained together with Dayı and the others, was in our cell.

Before Dayı arrived, Murat often spoke with me, making assessments about the operation and saying that the organisation had been inadequate.

His comments were mainly directed against the movement.

When Dayı arrived, the situation became more coherent.

He spoke individually with every comrade about the period in which they had been captured.

His discussions focused mainly on organisation, struggle and the junta.

As a first step, the prison organisation was made functional again.

The junta's policies in the prison were also discussed.

At that stage, the administration abolished both the formal report at counts and the TTE.

During the period we remained there, attacks decreased somewhat.

The attacks intensified mainly after Metris opened.

During one conversation, Dayı told us:

“Only ten per cent of our prisoners in prison will struggle outside.”

At the time, I thought this percentage was very low.

Naturally, Dayı was also thinking about preparing our people for the active struggle.

It was a somewhat difficult period.

Murat Karabulut later caused certain problems in Metris Prison, where he was transferred.

During that period, Dayı also struggled against such attitudes.

In particular, the torturers at the Political Branch would propagandise to every comrade passing through their hands:

“Your real leader, the only one who resisted here, is Murat.”

Later, transfers from Sultanahmet Prison to Metris began.

Months later, Dayı and I were again in wards one above the other.

We communicated by shouting through the windows or writing notes.

It was a period of attacks and resistance.

We had many bitter and sweet memories.

For example, during that period, despite all our shortages, we celebrated New Year together in the exercise yard.

Later, we met again in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison.

But there we did not stay in the same cell.

For that reason, what I can say about that period is limited.

After a while, because we refused to wear the TTE, everything was forbidden.

At one point, Dayı was placed in the solitary cell of the block where we were staying.

We were staying in three-person cells.

Each block had two solitary cells, one downstairs and one upstairs.

I was responsible for the commune.

I organised the cigarettes.

Because I knew how much Dayı smoked, I gave him at least a minimum amount he could smoke.

All the opportunists in the exercise yard knew that Dayı smoked a great deal.

Whenever one of them ran out of cigarettes, thinking:

“He must have cigarettes; he’ll give me one,”

they would ask Dayı.

Dayı would never refuse anyone in this matter.

Whether he had cigarettes himself or not, he would always give one to anyone who asked.

This used to annoy me greatly.

Several times I complained to Dayı:

“Dayı, why do you give your cigarettes away? You don’t have enough yourself.”

Dayı replied:

“What can I do? I can’t turn anyone away on this matter. What am I supposed to say? He says he’s run out of cigarettes. You can’t just refuse him.”

Dayı was very sensitive about such matters.

He was thoughtful and considerate.

The cigarette issue was one example.

Many people were extremely selfish about cigarettes.

Especially under conditions of scarcity, they sometimes became a serious problem.

There were comrades who searched inside ordinary cleaning brooms for broom seeds, wrapped them in newspaper and smoked them as cigarettes.

These kinds of examples existed.

The administration deliberately either delayed giving cigarettes or sometimes imposed a cigarette ban.

Yes, Dayı smoked a great deal.

But both from what other comrades told me and from my own observations, I saw that if there were no cigarettes, Dayı simply did not smoke.

His will was very strong in this respect.

During the long interrogation period under torture, he did not ask for or smoke cigarettes at the Political Branch.

Likewise, in prison, during periods when there were no cigarettes, he did not go into a crisis like some comrades did.

In this respect too, Dayı's stance was exemplary.

During periods of repression and bans, Dayı was a source of strength and morale for us.

There was nowhere his will could not reach.

Somehow, he always reached everywhere.

They Always Found Dayı and Resistance Before Them

I can share several things I remember from the Sultanahmet period.

I think it was early 1983.

Dayı and the others were being held in isolation on the A Block side.

For this reason, we could not meet.

One day, while I was going out for a visit, I happened to look through the peephole into their section.

Dayı and the others were in the exercise yard.

He was very happy to see me.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, we began talking.

He asked how I was and then said:

“Speak with the comrades. We have heard something. Apparently three or four of us may be exiled to a newly opened place in Ümraniye. We urgently need to build public opinion around this.”

I replied:

“All right, Dayı. I’ll pass it on immediately.”

I discussed the matter with the comrades.

A statement was issued and the families were mobilised.

The enemy always pursued a policy of isolation against Dayı.

They even attempted this during the 1984 Death Fast.

Naturally, it was not enough simply for them to take steps towards isolation.

They always found Dayı and resistance before them.

Resistance always ruined their plans.

Later, they were forced to transfer Dayı and the others to our block.

Dayı was now with us.

At the time, Şaban Şen was our representative.

One day in the exercise yard, Dayı was speaking with Şaban.

Şaban was going to meet the administration.

Dayı said:

“Şaban, remind the administration about those windows as well. Tell them to widen them properly.”

Şaban replied:

“Dayı, they won’t accept it anyway. Besides, is there any need to bother with the windows?”

Dayı turned towards us and said:

“Look at this. We can’t even convince our own comrades. How are we going to convince the administration?”

Our days in Sultanahmet continued with resistance on the one hand and the recreation of life on the other.

Dayı's presence there, and his role as a teacher, always contributed to our development.

Another thing that remains in my memory concerns the July 1983 hunger strike, when the question arose of transforming the process into a Death Fast.

At that time, three comrades opposed it.

For that reason, the Death Fast was postponed.

“We Will Live by Our Own Revolutionary Values”

I was brought from Bursa to Sultanahmet Prison shortly after 12 September.

At that time, there were approximately 700 prisoners in the prison, nearly 600 of whom were our comrades.

Initially, we stayed in wards.

At the beginning of 1981, Dayı was brought from Davutpaşa Prison to Sultanahmet.

Some time after Dayı arrived, the ward system was abolished, and the prison was reorganised into cells.

Under this arrangement, Dayı, Bedri Yağan and I began staying in the same cell.

This continued for quite a long time.

With Dayı's arrival, the atmosphere of the prison itself changed.

Morale and enthusiasm increased.

At the same time, our lives became more disciplined and productive.

Before I had been imprisoned, I had dealt with food and similar work outside.

For that reason, in prison I was given responsibility for distributing meals.

At that time, I carried the food to all the wards, distributed it and then collected the empty containers.

This meant I entered every ward, including those of other left-wing groups, and had the opportunity to speak with everyone.

In the early period, each political movement stayed together with its own people.

After a while, however, the administration forced all the prisoners to live mixed together.

The prison director, a major, said:

“Outside, you were at each other's throats. Stay together here and continue tearing one another apart.”

Under this policy, they began placing political groups that had clashed with one another outside, and whose contradictions were deep, side by side.

Dayı immediately intervened.

He sent word to both our comrades and the other political movements, emphasising that the problems outside had to be set aside and that the present task was to defeat the enemy's attacks, which required acting together.

Dayı sent these and similar notes and declarations through me because, owing to my work, I went into every ward.

The administration then announced that, in order to change this situation, soldiers themselves would distribute the food.

Dayı immediately sent instructions to the wards saying that the food should not be accepted.

When nobody accepted the food, the administration abandoned the measure.

Dayı was extremely disciplined in cell life.

He read and wrote regularly.

Even on days when, as a punishment, we were not allowed into the exercise yard, he would exercise on his bunk and walk back and forth in the cell.

He paid great attention to physical exercise.
Under every condition, he insisted that we exercise and remain active.
At that time, the entire block went into the exercise yard together.
All Revolutionary Left prisoners exercised collectively.
Our exercises were very disciplined and demanding.
During exercise, we also trained with weapons made from cardboard.
The soldiers watched us.
One day, the prison director, Major Tevfik, watched our exercise and said:
“Dursun, if you gave me these men of yours, I could take Cyprus in an hour.”
He was impressed by our exercise.
At the same time, he told the soldiers:
“If they exercise like this, there must be something behind it.”
And he doubled security measures.
For example, whenever we exercised, he stationed soldiers around the exercise yard.
During this period, prisoners were frequently taken from prison back to the police and to torture.

Dayı said that a stand had to be taken against this and made the same proposal to the rest of the left.

The left replied:
“It is impossible for us to prevent this, so there is no point in resisting.”
Dayı, however, insisted that we absolutely had to resist this practice.
He said that if we did not defeat it, they would soon move the torture centres into the prison and conduct interrogations there.

Later, through me, he sent instructions to our prisoners:
Even if we were alone in a cell or ward, in such situations we had to build barricades and resist.

Following this instruction, we began refusing to hand over prisoners.
Some time after this decision, they came to take Dayı away for interrogation again.
The entire prison built barricades and began resisting.
More than twenty soldiers raided our cell — where Dayı, Bedri and I were staying — and forcibly took Dayı away while torturing us.

Alongside the barricade resistance, we began a Hunger Strike.
As a result, they brought Dayı back one day later.
At that time in Sultanahmet Prison, dishes were washed in the exercise yard.
One person from each ward or cell was allowed out for this purpose.
In reality, dishwashing also served as a kind of meeting between representatives.
The administration did not allow the representatives to meet directly.
So, they would come together while washing dishes and discuss developments.
Although Bedri was the representative, Dayı sometimes went out to wash dishes too and used the opportunity to speak both with our comrades and with representatives of other left-wing groups.

If an important issue needed to be discussed, Dayı would usually go.
One day, during one of these dishwashing “meetings”, Dayı was busy talking, so I washed the dishes in his place.
When we returned to the cell, Dayı became angry with me.
He said:
“If I am on duty today, I will make sure you receive food and clean plates. Don’t do my work for me again.”

I replied:
“You were busy, and I was standing there doing nothing. That’s why I washed them.”
He said:

“That may be so, but I would still have done it. There is no distinction among us. Everyone does every job. There is no superior and subordinate.”

Considering Dayı’s position and the intensity of his work, this behaviour affected me deeply.

Because I entered all the wards and saw people from other left-wing groups as well, and I had never encountered anything like it elsewhere.

With Dayı, the form of resistance also changed.

In those days, the prison director constantly came to Dayı and cited Ankara and Mamak as examples.

Using these examples, he said that from then on, in Sultanahmet, they would decide which books we could receive and would force us to sing the national anthem.

Dayı replied:

“Ankara and Mamak do not concern us. We will not bow to your torture or your impositions. We will live according to what we know — according to our own revolutionary values.”

During the same period, the administration stopped recognising our representatives and said that from then on representatives would be chosen by the administration itself.

We refused to accept this.

Until our own representatives were recognised, we refused to participate in counts.

At this time, prisoners — particularly Revolutionary Left prisoners — were to be taken to court with their hands cuffed behind their backs.

We refused.

Dayı said:

“We are not going to court. Let them come and take us by force.”

They tried once or twice.

When they failed, they abandoned that practice as well.

Another issue arose over smoking.

After one resistance, they refused to give the wards and cells lighters or anything else with which to light cigarettes.

To smoke, a prisoner would have to call a soldier **“Commander”** and ask for a light.

We refused.

Even though Dayı himself smoked, he said:

“We are all giving up cigarettes. Are we going to become their slaves for a cigarette?”

So, we stopped smoking.

We did not smoke for approximately one month.

The administration was eventually forced to abandon this measure too.

After torture and repression, declarations mentioning the prison director by name were distributed outside, saying in effect:

“The torturers will be held to account.”

The prison director, a major, came to the cell and said:

“Dursun, why are you distributing declarations about me? I’m not a fascist. I’m only this state’s dog. I do whatever they tell me. Tomorrow, if you come to power, I’ll do what you tell me.”

Before resistance actions, and on all important questions, Dayı always asked prisoners to submit their views in writing.

Yet in the exercise yard he spoke with prisoners one by one, took an interest in everyone and also asked for their views on developments during these conversations.

I did not understand why, despite this, he still wanted written opinions.

So, I asked him.

Using me as an example, he said:

“Our people are young and inexperienced. Often, they cannot speak or express themselves, especially in front of those responsible for them. These characteristics become even stronger. That is why it is always good to ask for written opinions. Our comrades can write many things that they cannot express verbally — and they do.”

When asking for proposals and views, Dayı also took the rest of the left seriously and considered their opinions important.

He did not think:

“We are the majority, so what we say should happen.”

He made great efforts to involve them in the process as well.

Apart from direct conversations, there was constant correspondence and discussion.

I know this because I carried the written notes.

He was very sensitive about the commune and similar matters.

He paid particular attention to ensuring that money and other belongings brought in were distributed equally and according to need.

He followed this closely.

He took a close interest in our entire prisoner population.

He spoke with every comrade and made no distinctions.

You never felt like a stranger beside Dayı.

He was someone with whom you could speak about everything and pour out all your troubles.

For example, I was very new and had a low cultural level.

But he never made me feel that.

He explained every subject in a way I could understand and made sure I grasped it.

For example, a comrade who had been arrested after me and had made a statement against me was in the same study group as I was.

I did not want to be in the same environment as this comrade.

I told Dayı.

He said:

“People among us also make mistakes and show weaknesses. We cannot behave as though nothing happened. We impose a punishment and sanction according to the harm caused. But we do not throw anyone into the enemy’s arms either. We make an effort to win that person back and educate them. Under the conditions in which we live, anyone who breaks from us will go to the enemy. We must prevent that.”

He asked me to evaluate the matter in this way rather than personalising it.

A lawyer handling my case had gone and found my family and taken some money from them for the case.

I told Dayı.

He became very angry.

One day, we went to see the lawyer together.

In front of me, Dayı said:

“How can you ask families for money? This comrade is our comrade, a prisoner in our case. We already make a collective payment to you for the case. What is this business of asking for additional money? Either you return the money you took, or you give up the case.”

During Hunger Strike periods, Dayı paid particular attention to the prisoners.

Before the resistance, he spoke with them individually and prepared them.

He did not include those in poor health in the Hunger Strike.

He did not even force those who did not want to take part.

This approach proved far more effective.

The rest of the left always underestimated our people, saying they were young and would not endure.

But in every resistance, we remained more vigorous and carried it through to the end.

Dayı made this possible.

Because beforehand, he spoke with the comrades and warned them:

“Do not leave us halfway.”

After a Hunger Strike, he was equally meticulous about food and diet and took precautions to ensure that no health problems arose.

Because I stayed with Dayı and observed him, I would also compare him with the representatives of other left-wing groups and with Bedri.

For example, I could not speak comfortably with Bedri.

I felt hesitant around him.

He was always distant.

He presented himself as somehow different.

One day, photographs were going to be taken.

Photographs were taken in all the wards.

Dayı told Bedri:

“You deal with it.”

When the photographs came back, it turned out that Bedri had had photographs containing himself printed in colour.

Colour photographs were extremely expensive at the time.

Dayı became very angry.

He criticised Bedri in front of me:

“How can you do that? You know our financial conditions. Besides, why this privilege?”

Another example occurred when I was being transferred to Bursa.

Notes needed to be taken to the comrades there.

They were properly concealed.

Before I left, Bedri turned to me and said:

“If they find these, say you got them from me.”

Dayı became very angry at this.

He said to Bedri:

“How can you speak to a comrade like that? We know and trust our comrade. If such a situation arises, he knows how he should behave.”

I stayed with Dayı for more than two years.

What remains most strongly in my mind is that he was different: modest, concerned with everyone and someone who devoted every moment of his life to the struggle.

He Never Asked for Any Privilege for Himself

After many years, I encountered Dayı again for the first time in 1989, in Sağmalcılar Prison, where I had been brought after being arrested following the Engin Kaya operation¹.

When the administration tried to place us in another ward, there was a brief disturbance and a strong reaction. After that, we were placed in Dayı's ward.

This time, after so many years, we were able to embrace in prison.

The Dayı I had seen years earlier seemed to me even more enthusiastic, wiser and more energetic.

All the torture he had endured, the Death Fast, the tuberculosis he had suffered, and the dozens of hunger strikes he had participated in had not exhausted his energy or diminished his enthusiasm. On the contrary, they had increased them.

We stayed together for almost a year.

Throughout that period, I always saw Dayı working and producing.

To tell the truth, we could hardly tell when he went to bed or when he got up. We saw him working day and night.

I never witnessed him sleeping more than four or five hours in total, and even that sleep was fragmented.

Despite the intensity of his work, and despite our objections and unwillingness to accept it, he also took his turn on commune duty like the rest of us.

He would become angry at our attempts to exempt him and reject our request, saying:

“No one becomes a revolutionary as a favour to anyone else. No one is different from anyone else. Like everything else, this too is a duty and a responsibility. Everyone has to fulfil their responsibilities without saying, ‘This job, that job.’ Doing these things is also a requirement of revolutionary responsibility. Privileged attitudes in such matters are incompatible with revolutionary principles and values. They degenerate and erode those values and encourage individualism. That is why we must set an example by becoming more sharing and more self-sacrificing.”

This was very difficult for us.

While we were sitting, we would try not to give him the opportunity to clean our table, bring our bread and water or fill our tea.

We would immediately grab the teapots ourselves, pour the tea and begin cleaning the tables.

But he would react even to this.

In reality, what we were doing was simply the same help, solidarity and consideration we showed to every person on duty.

It was only that when Dayı was on duty, this sensitivity increased.

That was all.

I had shared the same space with Dayı for periods at Balıkesir Dormitory, in prison, outside, and during the Congress process.

I witnessed his life.

An intense workload can cause some of us to lose our balance.

It can distance us from living cleanly, tidily, orderly and with discipline.

With Dayı, however, it was exactly the opposite.

He was an example of a steel will whose discipline increased as his workload increased.

Those who have been in prison have seen or experienced many examples of this.

Many of us frequently forgot where we had left our pens, notebooks and similar belongings and had to search for them.

We were criticised by those on duty because our worktables were chaotic or because we left our ashtrays dirty.

In such situations, our standard defence was always:

“I became absorbed in the work and forgot because I was rushing to finish it!”

Yet although Dayı did dozens of times more work than we did, always checked and supervised what we produced, and smoked more than all of us, I never once saw his ashtray dirty or his desk untidy, disorderly or disorganised.

He left no work for those on duty.

I never witnessed him leaving or forgetting any of his belongings anywhere.

None of us did.

He would always tell us:

“If you are doing a job, you will do it according to its rules and discipline. It makes no difference whether the job is big or small, simple or difficult. If a task is carried out according to its rules and discipline, it repays the labour invested in it and achieves the desired success. Otherwise, it means spoiling the work, disrespecting labour and betraying years of accumulated experience. What develops a task or an action is discipline. Discipline means wanting, concentrating, remaining alert; it means planning in order to enrich creativity,

achieve success and open the way to new successes; it means self-sacrifice and strength of will."

At every moment of his life, in everything he did, it was possible to see and feel his passion for revolution and socialism.

His only luxury was to work even harder for this cause.

Day and night, he struggled to expand the struggle and burned with impatience to return as quickly as possible to active, practical struggle.

The long years of imprisonment had not worn him down.

On the contrary, they had added enthusiasm to his enthusiasm, anger to his anger and experience to his experience.

They had been a process of development and transformation in which he became even more capable, enriched and strengthened by the **Politicised Military War Strategy**.

I had been imprisoned in many prisons in Anatolia outside Istanbul.

In some of them, I stayed with people who, at one time, seemed to us to be advanced leaders who were almost impossible to approach.

For example, when we were transferred from Samsun to Malatya, we were very happy because we thought we would share the same space and breathe the same atmosphere of resistance as comrades of Deniz Gezmiş and Mahir Çayan.

But we suffered a great disappointment.

It did not take long for us to see that they had become alienated from resistance and from the very idea of resisting.

Although they did everything they could not to clash with the system within the status of surrender they had created, they still could not escape the attacks of the junta.

It had reached such a point that even shouting a slogan such as:

"Human Dignity Will Defeat Torture"

against torture attacks was regarded as being excessively political.

With the vague status quo they had established, they also prevented prisoners from beginning resistance.

People's political organisation and identity had been pushed aside.

Individualism had effectively been organised.

Even the slightest reaction or demand was submitted to the approval of the entire prisoner population.

It would only be put into practice if the majority voted in favour.

Resistance and the preservation of political identity had been abandoned.

In other words, the revolutionary powder had been spent, and prison was being treated and assessed as a place in which to accumulate intellectual knowledge.

On the one hand, because they lacked the courage to take a stand, they could not become part of resistance.

On the other, because they feared that their own masses would gather around those who resisted, they tried to save the situation by distracting people with the theory:

"They are a quality minority; they should be respected."

Sağmalcılar Prison was completely different.

From the very first step you took inside, you could see the difference.

You could feel the strength of a resistance organised step by step against surrender.

You breathed an atmosphere of revolution and socialism.

You felt the enthusiasm to develop the struggle.

That alone demonstrated the presence there of a leader, a teacher, a commander-in-chief who had dedicated himself to the struggle.

This was the difference made by Dayı, who organised everything according to the revolution wherever he was.

One day, while we were talking over tea, Dayı pointed to a group of comrades near our table who were drinking tea while working and asked me:

“What do you think of our people?”

I replied:

“They are good, productive and sharing. You can clearly feel the warmth of work and comradeship. But I have the impression that they find everything ready in front of them. Food is prepared and brought to them, and they eat it with appetite.”

I then told him about some of the people from the '68 generation whom I had seen in Malatya, about the periods they had lived through with Mahir and Deniz and about where they had ended up.

Referring to our comrades, I said:

“When they are left alone in practical work in an area or a region, I doubt whether they will be able to show and develop the same resistance, enthusiasm and productivity they display here. Not all of them, of course, but many could become passive or lose their direction.”

Dayı replied:

“No, no. Our people are good. All of them are self-sacrificing, hardworking, conscious and valuable people.”

After we finished our tea and Dayı got up, those who later became the leaders of the coup reacted to me:

“How can you speak like that in front of Dayı? You speak far too recklessly in front of Dayı, without respecting the labour of the comrades. Know your limits when you speak. If Dayı said nothing and simply smiled while explaining things to you, that is because of his modesty.”

In their own way, they were warning me.

I told them that I had shown no disrespect.

I had simply answered the question he had asked sincerely and expressed what I genuinely thought.

I said that I would never fail to show respect and love towards the leadership, but that I also felt comfortable enough beside him to share every secret and every thought without anxiety or calculation, and that I believed this was the correct relationship.

I explained that our relationship was not one of superior and subordinate.

Therefore, what we were inside should also be what we showed outside.

I said that rather than behave deceptively or artificially towards the comrade I regarded as my responsible and my leader, I would prefer suicide.

I said that behaving in the way they were suggesting would mean distancing myself from Dayı and Dayı from me.

They became uncomfortable.

They said:

“You’re taking it too far.”

And they left.

That same evening, while walking in the exercise yard, I told Dayı:

“The comrades drew this conclusion from what I said to you during our tea conversation at midday.”

I related the entire discussion.

Then I said:

“I understand the comrades’ sensitivity and concern, but their logic seems distorted to me. Was I disrespectful? Not being able to explain my feelings or share my thoughts freely in front of you or another senior responsible comrade feels hypocritical to me, like becoming alienated from myself.”

Dayı replied:

“I don’t know why the comrades reached that conclusion. There was nothing negative in what you said or thought. You answered the question I asked within the framework of general truths and expressed your opinion. You gave the eastern prisons as an example. If we look at that difference comprehensively, we will see there is nothing strange or surprising about it. These are the natural behaviours of those whose determination to struggle has weakened and died away, who have entered into ideological deviation, and whose attachment to the system has strengthened. What makes us different from them, and what directs the arrows of the oligarchy towards us, is precisely our insistence on this struggle and on preserving our ideological line. That is why we and our people are different and valuable.”

He continued:

“Despite our shortcomings, the culture of Politicised Military War, consciousness of revolution and socialism, and class combativeness have become a culture. Naturally, when people belonging to the same organisation live together collectively, they find certain things already prepared for them. In such circumstances, it is true that the aspect of finding one’s direction through individual labour, effort and initiative can remain somewhat weak. But once a person with this cultural consciousness of being a fighter enters active practical struggle, this weakness is quickly eliminated in practice.

“We must look at events and phenomena as a whole. Nothing develops and becomes mature all at once. That is contrary to the nature of dialectics. Nothing in the world is completely flawless or perfect. Everything has a process through which it reaches maturity. According to the relations and contradictions within that process, it advances and retreats. The issue is to see and understand these relations and contradictions correctly.

“A person who understands this becomes a new person who has integrated with their values and fixed themselves upon their goal. Despite backward aspects and shortcomings, this culture of ours has become established. Our people are very valuable because they are products of this culture. Naturally, there will be people who retreat or lose their direction in practical struggle. But there will also be people you never expected who leap forward. This is what revolutionism and revolutionary struggle are like. Nothing remains as it is.

“But despite everything, we must trust our people. Naturally, we will always take scientific precautions. But we must never fail in trust. What causes harm is not people’s weaknesses or shortcomings. Fundamentally, it is our failure to organise ourselves against these weaknesses and shortcomings, our failure to recognise them in time and educate our people. It is our failure to see the future appropriate to the goal.

“To see the future means knowing the path to resolving the fundamental and principal contradiction. It is the consciousness of refusing to surrender to objectivity, of making the impossible possible, of achieving what is difficult.

“We are fighting for the power of labour and of the working people. We have to think rapidly and in many dimensions. We must not deviate even a millimetre from the ruthlessness of the class struggle and from the scientific values of socialism. We must remain uncompromising.

“Imperialism and the oligarchy maintain their power by relying on hundreds of years of experience accumulated by the bourgeoisie in exercising power. The only way to defeat this experience is belief, audacity and bold initiative. We must increase the power of the struggle until capitalism is brought to its knees, and we must never lose our determination to fight or our spirit of sacrifice.

“Our people, with both their positive and negative sides, possess this culture. As long as we hold tightly to this culture, no force can prevent our ideological solidity or our march towards revolution. All that matters is that we do not lose confidence in our people, our comrades and ourselves.”

Our Xalo spoke at length within this framework.

This was, after all, one of his fundamental characteristics.

Once he began explaining a subject, he would not let it go until he was sure you had understood it.

He never left a task unfinished.

He never postponed it.

Even if he was ill or facing a shortage of possibilities, he would make every personal sacrifice necessary and bring the work he had begun to a conclusion.

He became extremely angry when work was delayed or postponed.

He would always say:

“We must regard work that is not done on time as a weakness that fails to meet the need, does not serve the objective and causes the struggle to retreat.”

His meticulousness in work appeared as punctuality in appointments.

For example, if he told you on the telephone that he would call at a certain time, he would first make sure either that your watch was synchronised with his or that his was synchronised with yours.

Then he would call you at precisely that time, down to the second.

In Xalo's life, there was no place for excuses such as:

“I was late,”

“I forgot,”

“I got stuck in traffic,”

or

“My watch was fast or slow.”

I never witnessed such a thing.

Except during the coup period, he would not speak on the telephone for more than ten or fifteen minutes.

Even if the matter had not been completed, he would say:

“Call again at this time,”

or

“I'll call you,”

and hang up.

He was extremely meticulous, principled and particularly sensitive about such matters.

I must especially say that this punctuality and meticulousness, which he implemented without fail amid such an enormous workload, were among the most important lessons I learnt from him and among the sources of my respect and admiration for him.

Xalo was the symbol of scientific truths, harsh reality, loyalty to the values of the people and justice.

Again and again, he would say:

“An indispensable condition for success is to see reality; however harsh it may be; to put forward scientific truths and values without stretching them or bending them this way and that; and to stand against what is wrong. It means fighting not as ‘I’ but as ‘we’ and possessing the justice to give everyone the response and value they deserve.”

“Opportunism Cannot Be Explained; It Is Lived!”

The day I learnt that we had lost Dayi, amid all the complex emotions I was experiencing, I returned in my mind to the place where we first met and to those days.

At the same time, I was pacing back and forth, step by step, turning history backwards with every step...

Following the traces he had left behind, the pages of history he had created and whose writing he had led...

We are in Metris...

December 1985.

Until the previous week, the enemy had accepted the intermediate status of tracksuits.

This week, however, they did not allow us to go to lawyer visits wearing tracksuits. We had already been expecting for some time to be transferred to Sağmalcılar. Everyone else had put on the TTE.

Those of us who refused were divided into groups of fifteen and placed at opposite ends of E Block, which we called “Siberia”, in basement wards facing the outer wall, where we could barely hear one another’s voices.

Yet, just as with our comrades in Sağmalcılar, one of the demands of our 1984 Death Fast Resistance — the intermediate status of tracksuits — had been accepted.

While prisoners from the rest of the left went to the exercise yard, lawyer visits, family visits and court wearing the TTE, our comrades went into the exercise yard in pyjamas and went to see lawyers and attend court in tracksuits.

They were also allowed, although only to a limited extent, to attend family visits during religious holidays wearing tracksuits.

We expected similar measures — visits, exercise periods and so on — to be introduced gradually for us too.

But a few days earlier, we had been told that we would no longer be allowed to see our lawyers in tracksuits.

That meant they were not going to keep us there.

In a prison where everyone else wore the TTE, they would send away those who did not wear it, those who resisted, and then declare:

“We have completely forced Metris to surrender.”

That was what we thought in those days.

While we waited from one day to the next, suddenly loud slogans began coming from the corridor.

The clearest were:

“TORTURE IS DISHONOURABLE!”

and

“THIS IS NOT A SEARCH — IT IS TORTURE!”

These were slogans shouted when prisoners were subjected to degrading strip searches.

Those who had agreed to wear the TTE had also reached an agreement over how searches would be carried out.

Depending on the situation, sometimes only the belt button of the trousers would be opened, sometimes three additional buttons, and sometimes the TTE trousers could be lowered as far as the knees.

Had they violated this agreement and begun carrying out degrading strip searches again? Why would they?

Why would they break the protocol agreed only a month earlier at the negotiating table over coffee and Marlboro cigarettes?

As those being dragged through the corridors were brought closer to the corridor of our ward, we could hear their voices more clearly through the hatch.

From their slogans, from their voices and from their arguments with the officers, we realised that those arriving were our own people — our comrades from Sağmalcılar.

Once again, the enemy was attempting an attack aimed at forcing surrender.

It would try to take back the rights we had won and overcome its defeat through the game of:

“Different prison, different status.”

It was a futile effort.

Before long, it would once again be forced to give way before the resistance of our Revolutionary Left.

But until it gave way, of course, **“winter would behave like winter and a bastard like a bastard.”**

The soldiers carried out degrading strip searches accompanied by torture and then placed our comrades in the wards.

They took them from the exercise yard in groups.

The slogans did not stop until they entered the wards.

Afterwards, people called to one another from the windows to determine who had been placed in which ward and who was still left in the exercise yard.

There were fifteen of us in our ward, with one empty place.

The slogans gradually became fewer and then stopped completely.

Communication through the windows became frantic.

Someone called:

"Is he with you?"

Another ward replied:

"No. Our ward is complete. He isn't here."

Another said:

"We didn't see him in our group either. He isn't with us."

Another comrade said:

"We didn't see him in our group either. He isn't with us."

While this intense exchange of information continued through the windows, a slogan came from the corridor on the lower floor:

"TORTURE IS DISHONOURABLE!"

Almost every ward immediately joined in.

The whole of Siberia shouted the same slogan with enthusiasm and anger, like the most disciplined choir in the world:

"TOR-TURE IS DIS-HON-OUR-ABLE!"

Before long, the three bolts on the door of our ward were pulled back sharply and the heavy ward door opened.

Thinking that an operation might be carried out against our ward, we stood shoulder to shoulder and moved towards the door.

Someone was coming in.

He was naked, holding his clothes and belongings in his hands, and angrily shouting at the first lieutenant standing behind the soldiers:

"You immoral bastard! Torturers... Is what you're doing honourable?"

Yes, it was Dayı...

We forgot everything else.

We were simply happy and overjoyed to see our Dayı and to be in the same ward with him.

We gathered around him.

As he dressed, he told us about the officer's behaviour, what he had said and the answer Dayı had given him.

"Shameless, immoral... Without the slightest embarrassment he says, 'Mr Dursun, you're considered rather old. Before the soldiers strip you, you should undress yourself.'"

Dayı was furious.

Even the enemy, in this struggle, had to show courage and honour.

They should not resort to such degrading and immoral games or lower themselves in this way.

Our Dayı's answer had been clear and firm:

"Don't play games, First Lieutenant! Afterwards you're going to announce over the prison loudspeaker, 'Dursun Karataş undressed himself', aren't you? Come on, stop talking and do your job!"

At the first lieutenant's order, the soldiers attacked Dayı.

Then our conversation began.

With a smile in his eyes and on his face carrying the warmth and affection of a father, he asked:

“Well then, how are you all? How many of us are there here?”

He asked each of our names and where we had come from.

Until that day in Sağmalcılar, he had always been held in the farthest corner, in a solitary cell referred to as a **“blind cell”**.

Apart from Davutpaşa and Sultanahmet prisons, this was the first time he was staying in the same ward with us, together with his comrades.

After all those years, we were finally side by side and together.

The leader of our Revolutionary Left was with us.

He was the leader of a movement that had fought fascism street by street, broken fascist occupations in schools, neighbourhoods and factories, held torturers and murderers to account, stood beside the poor people, collectively exercised the right to housing, built neighbourhoods, kept watch against demolitions, become a nightmare for imperialist monopolies and their collaborators, and made revolutionary struggle a recognised name among the people.

Now we could ask him anything.

Anything that came into our minds...

We asked everything we were curious about; even questions whose answers we had never pushed ourselves to think through and discover.

Dayı listened to all our questions without dismissing them as scattered, relevant or irrelevant, necessary or unnecessary.

But he answered them according to an order of his own.

He would begin from the objectives of the campaigns we had carried out outside, the message and character of their actions, and answer through these.

He explained things very simply.

Starting from a single example, a single action, he would explain an entire campaign and, in relation to it, the approaches and culture of other political organisations.

He was educating us...

You could hardly notice when he ate.

We would all sit at the table together, but he would always be the first to get up and return to his work.

He would either read something or write.

Even while doing all this work, we always felt that one ear was listening to us or one eye was watching over us.

Sometimes he would interrupt his work, come into the dining section, talk with us, ask questions and make assessments according to our answers.

At that time, Dayı was explaining why a pamphlet had been prepared and published in Sağmalcılar and distributed throughout the cells.

The pamphlet had been written in response to the assessments of the KSD (Kurtuluş Socialist Magazine) Group, which had been formed by some of the liquidationist former THKP-C cadres who regarded themselves as theoretically sufficient, concerning the 1984 Death Fast.

The KSD Group, despite opposing our 1984 Death Fast resistance and having submitted petitions during the same period asking to wear the TTE, had attempted, under the pressure created by a resistance in which martyrs had fallen, to lecture us on **“Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder”**.

The pamphlet was entitled:

“Children’s Tales and the Proletariat Unable to Rid Itself of Capitalism’s Dirt and Filth”

and already at that time showed the point those liquidationists of yesterday would reach years later.

Until the publication of this pamphlet, these “brave” liquidationists had been going around the wards and cells trying to debate their own statements with our comrades.

After it was published, however, they prohibited all their own comrades from debating with ours.

The “old hands” who never brought their noses down from Mount Qaf withdrew to the side like cats that had spilt the milk.

Dayı explained this entire process to us in one sweep: the pamphlet, the character of those it addressed, their past and present, their intentions and their aims.

We listened without breathing.

Then he asked us again:

“What is opportunism?”

One by one, we gave incomplete or excessive answers.

We said things we remembered from books, somewhat clumsily and partly by rote:

“The distortion of Marxism-Leninism...”

“...ignoring the concepts of time and place...”

Dayı said:

“Opportunism cannot be explained. Opportunism is lived. It is difficult to give a textbook definition of opportunism in our country. For example...”

A bitter smile spread across his face as he continued:

“...while someone in the same cell is continuing a Death Fast resistance, opportunism is banging on the door and shouting to the soldier distributing the food: ‘Soldier! Give me the extra food!’”

We had not known about this example at the time.

He had both given us a concrete example and explained the character of the opportunists in our country.

Think of the mentality and distorted mind that wrote, when our Death Fast resistance began:

“They cannot carry this action through on their own. They will be defeated. So that the enemy does not attack us after their defeat, let us submit applications to wear the TTE. They will be defeated and disintegrate. Think about what comes afterwards...”

That was opportunism.

You know how, nowadays, on some television news programmes, when they reach an event for which no words are adequate, they say:

“This is where words end,”

and simply show the images, because what you are watching requires no further comment or explanation.

That moment was like that.

On one side was the path of Mahir and his comrades, who, for Deniz and his comrades, together with their own comrades Ömer and Cihan, walked towards death back-to-back and shoulder-to-shoulder, as friends, brothers and with courage.

On the other side was the “friendship” of these liquidationists, who were going to return to home, work and spouse, while trying to make revolutionary struggle rot away and disappear within the system on the soil of our country.

With the vivid examples he gave, Dayı painted the whole picture in a way that left no need for many words.

We talked about how foresight was an essential and indispensable condition of leadership.

Dayı knew opportunism from the days of demoralisation and flight following 1971.

He knew the liquidationist traders who tried to destroy the energy of the youth.

Only someone who intensely desires revolution can understand this.

To recognise liquidationism hidden among so much theoretical wordplay requires this kind of sensitivity and love for revolution, homeland and people.

When we see what some opportunist and reformist organisations have gone through, when we read what they write and witness how simplistic, narrow-minded and inadequate they are, I think we understand even better the level to which Dayı educated and brought us.

Our Dayı continues to educate us, and he will continue to do so.

As we go deeper into the details of his life, we will see this.

When he saw our successes, his eyes would smile.

At that time, we maintained communication inside the prison through a kind of Morse-code system using walls or water pipes, which we called **“Tap-Tap”**.

The original version of this method, devised by those who had first come to Metris, was extremely primitive and laborious.

It was so cumbersome that, for each letter, they would strike the wall as many times as that letter’s position in the alphabet.

Using this method, transmitting a half-page message or text could take four or five hours.

The commemoration of the **24 December Kahramanmaraş Massacre** was approaching, and correspondence was needed in order to organise a joint commemoration inside the prison.

Dayı gave us a half-page text to pass to the other left-wing political groups in the rear block who wore the TTE.

Our comrade took the paper and immediately went to the water pipe.

Using a pen, with the precision of a telegraph operator, he began tapping out the message.

Five minutes later, he finished and returned the text to Dayı, who was still talking with us.

At first, Dayı thought perhaps there was a part he had been unable to read.

But when our comrade asked no question, Dayı smiled and said:

“Finished?”

When our comrade said that he had finished, Dayı replied:

“I’d heard that you’d speeded it up, but I didn’t realise it was this fast.”

His eyes and his whole face were smiling.

I am certain that our Dayı always smiled like this at the victories we achieved.

What falls to us today is to achieve those successes, those small victories that each of us can win, which we believe would make him smile with the same enthusiasm, just as he taught us.

Come on, let us make our Dayı smile...

There Was No Emptiness at Any Point in His Life

For a while, I felt as though time itself had stopped, as though words and images were suspended in the air...

You want to say something, but you cannot. Your throat tightens.

For one brief moment, I felt completely alone and without anyone.

It was a very short moment. Then I imagined that **HE** would see me in that state and become very angry. I imagined him saying:

“Pull yourself together and be stronger. There is a great deal of work to be done. Do not make the enemy happy. Walk more upright, let your voices be louder. The enemy’s eyes are on you...”

And I pulled myself together.

While he was physically among us, feeling his eyes upon me, knowing that he was beside me in everything I did and feeling his strength gave me confidence.

In his absence, that feeling makes itself felt even more strongly.

So, this is what it means, and what it will mean emotionally, to **“walk without him, but with HIM...”**

Our Dayı, our wise one, whose every moment was will, labour and audacity...

Throughout the years we stayed together in Metris, I witnessed many of his discussions, his words and his relations with our comrades. I always observed them trying to understand them and continued trying to understand them.

Whether in prisons, visiting areas, open visits or courtrooms, whether in his relations and conversations with lawyers, the press or visitors, I always tried to understand this aspect of him.

I thought deeply about thinking like him, assessing like him, looking, seeing and understanding as he did.

And his confidence in, love for and belief in the people determined his approach.

During one open visit, a visitor who had formerly belonged to TİP (Worker Party of Turkey) said:

“Under these conditions, you would have to be mad still to talk about armed struggle and guerrilla warfare, let alone continue it.”

Dayı smiled and replied:

“Yes, you’re right. We are a little mad — but ours is a madness that knows what it wants.”

Dayı was always smiling and compassionate in his conversations with the people, with visitors and with his comrades.

As they say, **a child with a child, an adult with an adult.**

He had no moulds or rigid formulas.

As long as they did not contradict our principles, everything was directed towards developing and educating people and strengthening attachment and love.

There are some comrades who, to some of us, seem to laugh too much.

Those who knew İlginç (Özkeskin)ⁱⁱ will understand.

We had a comrade with a similar laugh.

It was the beginning of 1989, in Sağmalcılar Special-Type Prison.

We had been imprisoned after one of the actions during the struggle against the 1 August Circular, when we had blocked the Justice Minister’s car.

We encountered Dayı and had the opportunity to speak with him.

It was impossible to stop this comrade laughing; every couple of sentences, he would laugh.

At the time, this comrade was working in DEMKAD.

Both the women comrades she stayed with and the other comrades participating in the conversation tried, in an appropriate way, to warn her.

Dayı, however, told her:

“Don’t pay attention to them. You have a lovely laugh. You can laugh for us too...”

Just imagine the laughter of our comrade, whose face had become slightly sombre after the warnings, when Dayı said this.

Some of those who warned her are no longer among us; others later became coup plotters.

But the comrade who laughed continues to walk with him and remembers him whenever she laughs.

Our leader was farsighted, capable of seeing ahead, trying today to institutionalise tomorrow and the relationships and way of thinking of tomorrow.

He regarded the present as the projection of the future.

He always had many alternatives.

No limitation could stop him.

At the most unexpected moment, he could strike the enemy from a place and at a time they did not expect.

And his audacity in this respect inspired admiration in everyone who knew him.

There was no emptiness at any point in his life.

Every moment was directed towards education, understanding his comrades and developing them.

While he worked, read and took notes in the ward, you would not even notice that he was also watching and listening to us.

After the meal, during a conversation over tea, he would take some problem he had seen at that moment and connect it to something you would never have imagined was related.

Most importantly, he would make **us** speak.

In the end, he would enable us to understand the correct position by linking it to the parts of what we ourselves had said that were closest to the truth.

He was very proud of the successes of his comrades.

At such moments, his eyes shone differently.

Those eyes that shone with love and pride at such moments would, when confronted with a violation of principle or betrayal, fill instead with anger and rage.

While he was physically among us, we always had the opportunity and ease of going directly to him.

Perhaps many of our comrades working around him left too many things to him with the thought:

“Dayı will find some solution somehow. He will find a way.”

Thinking today about how much we may have exhausted him in this way troubles me.

Now we will turn to **HIM**—to his entire life, to the details of that life, his words, his writings, his reactions and his emotions...

He is illuminating the way again.

Again, he gathers us together and shows us the path through his exemplary life.

One of our prisoners said:

“...What can we say? It is the dialectics of nature.”

And then added:

“Even so, I am angry with the dialectics of nature. Because it gave such strength to his spirit but withheld it from his body...”

How right he was.

And the outcome was not fair at all...

One day, when we have defeated this curse of cancer, we will feel even greater anger towards capitalism for delaying that victory.

And once again, without allowing anyone to see, we will cry inwardly, even though we know HE would be angry with us for doing so...

“Without Him, But With Him...”

Our condolences to the peoples of Turkey and the world.

We have lost our Dayı.

We have suffered a loss whose pain and sorrow our words are inadequate to describe.

From now on, as the Party has stated, our march will continue:

“Without Him, But With Him.”

He will no longer be physically among us.

But that is all we mean by **“without him.”**

Beyond this, “without him” means his eternity within this march.

Without him, but with him...

Yes, **with him...**

This is such a clear and tangible reality.

Since hearing the news of his martyrdom, this is how we have tried to bind our wounds.
With the consciousness of the mark Dayı left upon the soil of Anatolia...
A mark so deep that we will drive the wheel of history towards revolution over that very mark.

Naturally, this is an enormous loss.

But for those of us who know how completely Dayı identified himself with the work he created over a lifetime, what will be decisive is not our pain but our anger.

Those who rejoice at his loss will eventually understand that they rejoiced in vain.

They will see that, even more powerfully than before, **“we will continue speaking in Dayı’s voice.”**

We have no doubt about this.

Because above all, Dayı taught us to have confidence in our own strength.

To say **“without him, but with him”** means precisely this confidence.

We trust ourselves because Dayı is **“we.”**

In his own words, Dayı is our consciousness that says:

“We are the people, we are one of the people, we are the vanguard of the people.”

He is our history.

But even more, he is our future.

From now on, his heart will beat in the heart of every marcher.

And throughout all time, his heart...

Time itself will become a marcher towards the future.

The Kurtuluş Group, the break with Revolutionary Path, Revolutionary Left...

A life defended with fire and steel...

And justice...

Then the junta, and the tests undergone in the junta’s torture centres and dungeons...

During torture in which their flesh was torn to pieces, on the *falaka* benches, they even forbade themselves to utter a single **“ah”**, so as not to give the enemy satisfaction.

They taught pride to their pain.

In that same hell of the dungeons, defeating death itself was regarded as a debt of honour.

Apo (Abdullah), Hasan and Haydar, alongside the leaders who lay down to die with them, conquered victory cell by cell.

The consciousness of leadership was strengthened in struggles entered into at the risk of death.

When their leader was forcibly taken away from them and placed in isolation, they answered their enemy by refusing even to drink water.

The days of resistance, death and life...

And was it not, above all, the leadership that died with every martyr and was reborn with every martyr, experiencing the pain of every death and the labour pains of every birth?

Within the tradition of the free prisoner that transformed the dungeons into centres of resistance lies the mortar of leadership mixed by our red-headbanded Dayı with his own life, blood and sweat.

Of course we are with him.

Metris Baştabya...

A military battalion.

On the grounds of the battalion, a sports hall...

That was where the hearings of the Main Trial took place.

The year was 1989.

We had joined the movement’s march from the youth, somewhere along its edge.

Our steps still possessed the lightness of a dream.

Without feeling the ground beneath our feet, we walked through spring-scented days opened before us by our enthusiasm and our unrestrained audacity.

Outside the schools, our first real action was attending the hearings of the Main Trial.
The action itself created its own consciousness.

Buying carnations from a street corner, embroidering red handkerchiefs, discussing what we would ask them — all this taught us the warmth of comradeship and what it meant to embrace our own.

Waiting among the mothers of prisoners who were pushed and shoved at the security gate...

The gendarmes turned entering the building into an ordeal.

What were we doing there?

The soldier of the oligarchy could not understand.

He frowned.

From his frown and his hostile gaze towards us, we learnt that our people had been pierced by the bayonet of ignorance and deeply wounded.

I remember them stepping down from the prison vehicle amid the clanking of chains, heads held high, their faces bright and honourable.

The hearing would begin.

In the silence, only whispers travelled around the hall as those who knew identified the prisoners to those who did not:

“That’s Sinan Abi.”

“That’s Mürsel, İbrahim...”

“That’s Dayı, in the front row, beside Şaban Abi...”

And then seeing Dayı at the lectern...

The defence was approaching its end.

They had read it in turn and, from the junta’s own rostrum, had judged and condemned the fascist junta.

Once again, Dayı would have the final word.

He would place the final full stop with:

“WE ARE RIGHT, WE WILL WIN.”

That photograph was taken on that day.

Dayı was demanding accountability from the junta from the junta’s own rostrum.

The direction in which he pointed and the truth he shouted — that single frozen moment — did not merely prove the defeat of the junta’s jailers.

That photograph was proof that no power could force the revolutionary leadership of the peoples of Turkey to bow its head.

The revolutionary march was continuing.

The **Reber**, at the front, was proclaiming the truth in his powerful voice.

That photograph was taken that day...

By the time that photograph was taken, they had already travelled a merciless and difficult road — not so much through space as through time.

They had passed through days woven with repression, persecution and blood.

Time itself had been inside the dungeon.

The doors of the seasons opened only onto torture.

Apparently, there was nobody there...

Only oppression.

Only pitch-black darkness.

They turned resistance into a folk song and marched under Dayı’s leadership.

They shattered the dreams of the martial-law judges.

They reduced them to nothing within their ranks and robes and walked over them.

It was always **they** who were judging.

It was **HE**.

And that was why we were there that day.

They had arranged their appointment with us in the battles of resistance.
They knew we would be there.
Yet when carnations and red handkerchiefs rained down upon them, they were still embarrassed.
And they never liked speaking about themselves.
That day I heard Dayı's first greeting to us — one I have never forgotten and never will:
"Hello, Revolutionary Youth!"
He did not remain with us for long.
He handed us over to the comrade responsible for that work and went towards the defendants who were not in custody.
I remember how attentively they listened to him.
He was the lighthouse on black seas.
Everyone walked by his light, both inside and outside.
As Revolutionary Youth members of that time, witnessing the moments when he rebuked and silenced the junta judges was something of which we always felt particular pride.
It remains so today.
That voice challenging the junta will never disappear from our ears.
We will continue walking on the path of revolution drawn by **We Are Right, We Will Win**, and we will certainly reach the horizon Dayı showed us.
From the emergence of the movement until today, we have left behind almost 35 years of history.
We came this far with him.
We will walk the rest of the road with him too.
There can be no such thing as being without him.
Because he is greater than himself.
He is revolution.
He is the movement.
He is the act of marching.
He is Mahir.
He is our blood in the red flag of Marxism-Leninism.
Our leader lives and fights.
We will remain loyal to his memory and march towards revolution with him.
WE ARE RIGHT, WE WILL WIN.

"Youth Should Be This Bold"

We watched the farewell to our Dayı on television.
Unfortunately, we were unable to read what was written about him.
Issues of the magazine that had been confiscated were not given to us.
So, we are thinking of preparing a special issue based on what we ourselves experienced and on our memories.
Let me immediately share one memory...
Our most important encounter took place at one of the Main Trial hearings.
The court was sitting in the sports hall in Metris.
We, the youth, came as a large group.
That day, they created problems at the entrance under the pretext of checking identification.
The time for the hearing arrived, but they were still refusing to admit anyone.
Together with Zeynep Arıkanⁱⁱⁱ, I began running towards the courtroom.
Ignoring the soldiers shouting at us, we went inside.

The comrades in the hall had apparently told the court:

“You cannot begin until the spectators are admitted.”

and were making the judges wait.

When they saw the two of us, they were pleased.

Dayı came over to us first.

He asked what had happened and why the spectators and families had still not been admitted.

Excitedly, I told him what had happened at the entrance.

He smiled and asked which school we attended.

Then he said:

“Well done. Youth should be this bold.”

And, naturally, he stroked our pride a little.

Soon afterwards, the other spectators began entering.

Of course, from then on, I no longer moved away from the part of the hall where Dayı was speaking.

Wherever he went, I would immediately blend in with the spectators around him and try to listen.

He was saying:

“...The struggle does not follow a perfectly straight line. There will be victories and defeats, successes and failures. What matters is knowing that failures and defeats are temporary and, with this consciousness and confidence in yourself, drawing lessons from defeats. This strengthens the struggle.

“If you lose sight of this reality, the successes you achieve can intoxicate you. If you win one success after another, you can exaggerate your own strength and begin to think that no one and nothing can ever defeat you. Everything begins to seem very easy, and with this ‘confidence’ you may even stop giving the necessary importance and attention to the work you are doing.

“And then, when you encounter failure while in such a state of mind, you may swing completely in the opposite direction. You lose the ability to think and assess realistically, and fear takes hold of you...”

He frequently stressed the importance of organisation.

He would say, in essence:

“There can be no revolutionism without organisation, and no revolutionary stands above the organisation.”

(I am, of course, relating this in my own words.)

It was also in those courtrooms that I first heard Mahir’s words:

“The road of revolution is rugged, steep and winding.”

If we study the history of world revolutions, we can see how true these words are.

Likewise, in our own country, the road of revolution does not follow a straight line; it is filled with countless obstacles.

Just as those obstacles are real, the necessity of overcoming them stands before us as an equally real historic duty.

Dayı taught us this. And the honour and pride of having had a guide like him will always remain with us.

Once again, our condolences.

We embrace you with the warmth of our Dayı.

You Were Always With Us!

I do not know where to begin or how to express what I feel. We are not from the generation that had the opportunity to see you.

Ever since I joined this struggle, seeing you and speaking with you was a dream I constantly imagined and believed would one day certainly come true.

I never regarded it as **“a dream that would never happen.”**

Perhaps it was a distant possibility. The conditions in which we lived were not suitable.

But when the day came, we would certainly meet and get to know you.

You were one of us. You were the one who taught, explained and showed the way.

The only reason we could not physically be close to you was that the conditions of fascism made this very difficult.

Once we removed those conditions, you would be beside us with the warmth of a father.

We would gather around you. You would listen to us, understand us, criticise us and teach us.

You were already doing all these things, but we would experience you with your whole physical presence.

It would certainly happen. That is what I always thought and believed.

Whenever I thought of revolution, the first image that came into my mind was of you in Taksim Square, making the first speech proclaiming our revolution, with millions gathered around you.

You were speaking from there like Lenin, Mao and Fidel. It suited you.

And you deserved it at least as much as they did.

As a leader, you had given so much labour to this country and loved this people so deeply that no one had a greater right than you to see that magnificent day.

Yes, it did not happen.

You will not physically be there. But millions, drawing strength from you, will carry you into that square.

I think about what you were to us.

You were the single-word expression of our dreams, our hopes, what we wanted to become and what we wanted to do.

In the days when we knew nothing, we found an identity through your name. We expressed ourselves through it. When our own sentences were inadequate, we put your name there instead.

Because we knew that in this country your name was the simplest expression and definition of revolution and revolutionary struggle.

I understood this more clearly as I grew closer to our great family. I saw how closely you concerned yourself with every single member of this family.

You were a leader.

Despite distance, impossibilities and the dozens of burdens and problems of the struggle, you concerned yourself with each of us individually.

How did we feel this?

We saw it whenever we found ourselves in what we read. We saw it when the things we were living inside ourselves appeared before us on paper.

Whatever concerned life, struggle or human beings, you always had a solution. You never took your eyes off us. I will never forget one day when a press statement was held at Istanbul University.

Zehra read the statement, and it appeared in the press. Later, Zehra was given a pair of trousers.

Why? Because the trousers she had been wearing were old and did not look appropriate for us.

She was representing us there and therefore had to look more presentable.

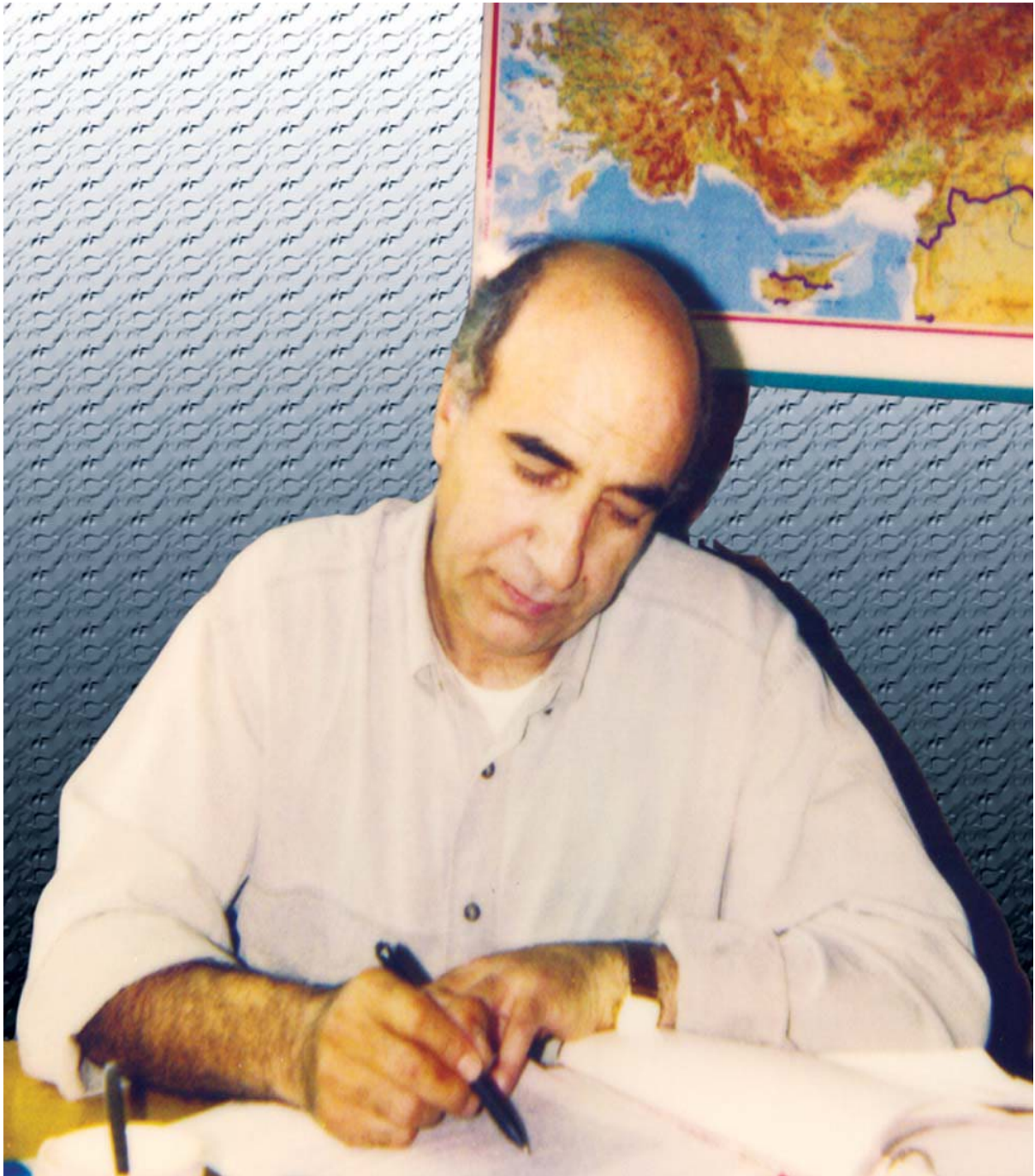
It was an instruction: a pair of trousers was to be bought for her. I was astonished. I knew that your eyes and ears were always upon us. I knew that you were concerned with every aspect of our lives. But amid so much work, I had never imagined that you would notice even this.

That is why I can say with complete conviction:

You were always with us, even though we never had the chance to meet you.

And you always will be.

CHAPTER 5



The Years of Advance and the Long Years in Illegality...

Among Martyrdoms and Betrayals, as We Reached Our First Objective — the Party — HE Was Again Our Guide

Once our comrade began actively leading our movement again, assessments were made in order to answer the question:

“Where Are We on the Road?”

New decisions were taken, and under his leadership the process that entered our history as the **Period of Advance** began.

This process, launched under the slogan “**We Must Run Faster**”, had political importance and influence on a world scale.

Against the reformism spreading throughout our country and the deepening swamp of legalism, the armed struggle was rising.

At a time when winds of counter-revolution were blowing throughout the world, the banner of socialism was being raised even higher.

Against the winds of counter-revolution unleashed by imperialism, and against the fashion for compromising with imperialism and its collaborationist oligarchic dictatorships and laying down arms, stood the Marxist-Leninist movement of Turkey.

The name of the leader of that movement was **Dursun Karataş**.

As the representative of this ideological resistance of worldwide significance against imperialism, and of the insistence upon revolution, from this period onwards he became an even greater target of imperialism and the oligarchy.

During approximately two and a half years in which we raised and spread the armed struggle and responded to the people’s longing for justice, our Movement reached the point where it could say:

“We are on the eve of the Party.”

During this period, we also paid heavy prices.

In the operations of **12 July 1991** and **16–17 April 1992**, we lost Central Committee members including Niyazi Aydın, Sinan Kukul and our leader’s wife, Sabahat Karataş.

These were enormous losses for us.

Our leading comrade himself faced danger during these operations.

Yet he continued to fulfil his duties with determination.

He confronted every possible negative consequence of the massacres, once again enabled our cadres and fighters to grasp the reality of war and succeeded in bringing our movement back to its feet even stronger.

While our movement continued to develop under his leadership, on **13 September 1992**, at our central base abroad, a coup-plotting gang of traitors treacherously attacked our leader and took him prisoner.^{liii}

History was testing him once again.

And **HE** would once more demonstrate his qualities of leadership.

Through his will and foresight, he would ensure that this betrayal was overcome and that our movement could continue its revolutionary march from where it had left off.

The treachery, together with its rotten actors, was thrown into the dustbin of history.

And **HE**, as a revolutionary leader whom no blow could force to surrender or corrupt, strengthened his historic place and mission.

The leadership was now stronger.

The consciousness of leadership was clearer.

The coup betrayal, which had caused serious destruction within our movement, was overcome under his leadership.

Almost everything was recreated, and our march continued.

It was during this process that his strong will, unfailing foresight and accurate political decisions placed before us the task of becoming a party.

In order to fulfil this task, the **Founding Congress of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party** was convened on **30 March 1994**, with the participation of the leading cadres of our movement.

At the congress, Revolutionary Left decided to continue its revolutionary march as the **Revolutionary People's Liberation Party (DHKP)**.

Our comrade Dursun Karataş was elected **General Secretary of the DHKP**.

As the leader who had brought us, through martyrdoms and betrayals, to our first objective — the Party — this duty and this honour were unquestionably his.

Our comrade held this responsibility for 14 years and continued carrying it until his final moment.

(Taken from Statement No. 39 issued by the Party on 11 August 2008 following the martyrdom of Dayı.)

Chronology

October 1989 — He ended his imprisonment through a freedom action from Sağmalcılar Prison. He returned to his duties in the midst of active struggle. Assessments were made with the cadres. In a first for the Turkish left, the cadres were asked to give their approval regarding the leadership, and under his leadership the **Period of Advance** began.

March 1990 — Decisions were taken to establish organisation, central functioning and the responsibility of membership among cadres properly. These decisions entered our history as the **March '90 Decisions**.

12 July 1991 — An operation was carried out against the revolutionary movement's central institutions in Istanbul. Ten Revolutionary Left members were killed. Dayı himself also faced danger during the operation.

1 November 1991 — The ten-year Revolutionary Left Main Trial involving 1,243 people was concluded in the Metris Baştabya courtroom. Dursun Karataş was among the prisoners upon whom the oligarchy imposed a "sentence", but he was no longer in that courtroom. He was outside, carrying out his duties.

Dayı went abroad with the approval of the organisation and its cadres.

13 September 1992 — At the central base abroad, a coup-plotting gang of traitors treacherously attacked Dursun Karataş and took him prisoner.

5 October 1992 — Dayı escaped from the place where he was being held by removing the bars from a window. He later returned to the base himself, where the conflict with the coup plotters continued. Following the intervention of the cadres, the coup attempt was defeated. Under those conditions of captivity, he wrote the historic texts *Diary of Being Defiled* and *A Black Comedy: The Coup in Our Movement*.

16 January 1993 — Through a declaration signed by all areas, coup plotting was publicly condemned and loyalty to the leadership was declared. After the coup attempt had been defeated, work to establish the Party resumed.

He Never Liked the Word “None”

I met Dayı during the coup period.

It was a time when our possibilities were limited.

I was going to take part in institutional work.

Meeting and speaking with him came as a surprise to me.

I had been told that I would be leaving the region for a task, but nobody had told me that I would meet Dayı or work alongside him.

When I saw **HIM**, I was astonished and very excited.

Naturally, that excitement and surprise came from our love and respect for him.

The anger and sense of ownership we felt during the coup process had further strengthened our respect for him and our conviction that there could be no organisation without him.

And there was Dayı, sitting in front of me.

He was very modest, humble and affectionate.

He constantly introduced different subjects to soften the atmosphere and make me feel comfortable.

I, meanwhile, listened almost in a daze to the conversations around me, unable to take my eyes off him.

The great leader, the leader of Revolutionary Left whom for years I had seen in magazines and on videotapes, was sitting in front of me.

I had to pull myself together and listen carefully to what was being said, because there was a very serious person in front of me and things were expected of me.

We drank our coffees and then all went to a restaurant to eat.

It was as though we had known one another for years.

I relaxed and answered everything very sincerely, receiving Dayı’s approval.

Within five minutes, he taught me a coded working method unlike anything I had ever seen or done before.

To make sure I had understood it, he tested me.

After the test, he said:

“All right.”

We parted that day.

A new period was beginning for me.

I could barely contain my excitement.

After our preparations, I spent an honourable six-month period with Dayı.

Our first meeting, my placement alongside him and our later meetings created a period that I will never forget for the rest of my life.

After our first meeting, I travelled in a minibus that had been given to me to the city where Dayı was staying.

Because it was late in the evening, Dayı said it would be better for us to remain there and set off the following day.

But the house was very small and, if I remember correctly, around five people were staying there.

There were not enough beds.

Dayı gave us his own bed and slept in an office chair himself.

Even though we objected, he refused to accept our objections.

He said:

“You’ll be travelling tomorrow. You need to rest.”

Dayı possessed the kind of personality we had imagined and searched for as an example of how one should live.

I understand him much better now.

His way of life was such that even friend and enemy could envy it.
 Like a teacher, he educated me within the work and relationships we were engaged in.
 He followed my practical work.
 He would place my mistakes before me almost like a programme, discuss them, explain them and patiently go into every detail.
 I was only 23 years old.
 I felt full of energy.
 Yet Dayı's way of life, philosophy and determination to work left us far, far behind.
 He rose before us, shaved, showered and always began the day completely clean and prepared.
 He worked until late at night, slept little and then carried out his daily work more energetically than we did.
 He could travel for hours without putting forward a single complaint and then continue at exactly the same pace.
 During the coup process, while I was with Dayı, I witnessed poverty and impossibility directly and personally.
 With two suitcases, a typewriter and a bag of stationery, we travelled around almost as though we were in exile.
 Problems arose in the places we found to stay.
 We would suddenly have to leave.
 Then, until we found somewhere else, we would move again.
 There was no money.
 No vehicle.
 No secure contact through which to establish institutions.
 We would find a contact, but it would not last.
 A police operation would take place in the region and the contacts would disappear.
 The coup plotters were everywhere, and we moved among them.
 We would find a house; the coup plotters would set an ambush.
 We would find a house; it would be unsuitable for work.
 We would find a suitable house; there would be no money.
 We would find the money; there would be no contact.
 In other words, amid constant **"nothings"**, I saw and witnessed how a guide behaved.
 I came to know a leader who was extremely calm, who behaved as though he had lived for years in regions we had only just entered, who advised us and explained how we should behave, who carried out his work without tiring or complaining, and who continued in the same rhythm and discipline according to a programme.
 I saw him with his bag in his hand, on the road day and night, calmly passing through border crossings despite all the checks.
 I will never forget one occasion at another border crossing.
 A police officer took Dayı's identity document and walked towards his office to inspect it.
 There was a moment of silence.
 Suddenly, Dayı opened the car door, got out and began walking behind the policeman.
 He told us to say:
"Tell him that if he doesn't want us, we won't enter his country. Why is he going to inspect our identity separately? Tell him to give me my identity back immediately. We're not going in; we're turning back."
 The customs officer was surprised and said:
"All right, don't be angry. Here you are."
 He handed back the identity document.
 We took Dayı's identification and turned back.

Our car, our movements, our clothing, the way we spoke and the way we drove — everything was under his attention.

He educated us constantly, trying to reduce our mistakes to the absolute minimum and prevent us from making mistakes.

The car we used always had to be clean.

The fuel tank had to be full.

The cigarette case and its interior had always to be clean and constantly checked.

He always said this and personally checked to make sure.

He even explained how we should watch behind us through the rear-view mirror.

Amid all these shortages, I saw his joys and sorrows and how he struggled over comrades who had been martyred or imprisoned.

The more I came to know Dayı, the greater my love and respect for him became.

He was a very patient teacher who listened very carefully, but who also became angry when necessary and at the appropriate time.

Like everyone else, I had imagined him to be someone almost impossible to reach.

I had imagined that he would be surrounded by bodyguards, have a special car, special staff and cadres protecting him.

But reality was nothing like that.

I became angry and sad that Dayı had to live amid such shortages.

During this period, visitors would also come to meet Dayı.

Some of those who came to these meetings were later martyred.

We would go to the meetings together.

When visitors saw us, they would first look at us in surprise and then ask Dayı:

“Are there only the two of you here?”

Dayı would laugh and joke:

“Of course. Were we supposed to travel around with an army? And what’s wrong — don’t you like my bodyguard?”

This happened many times.

Everyone who came to meet him apparently imagined Dayı living in very different surroundings.

When they saw the reality, they were surprised.

Yet amid all these restrictions and shortages, I never saw Dayı behave differently.

He behaved like one of the people.

He arranged his meetings in very ordinary places crowded with ordinary people and left without problems.

Those who came to meetings at our home were even more surprised.

Because they expected a very different environment, they almost recoiled at the reality they saw.

Dayı had a room of about **five square metres**.

Inside it was a work desk and a foam mattress.

The mattress did not even remain on the floor; it stood propped against the wall.

At night, he laid it on the floor and slept for a few hours.

We could not leave it permanently on the floor because there was no room.

Sometimes we had money weekly, sometimes only once every two weeks.

Everything was limited.

Instead of proper meals, we usually ate breakfast-type food.

It was both cheaper and more practical.

He had no luxury expenses.

We cut his hair at home, and afterwards he would stand in front of the mirror and tidy it himself.

He personally kept detailed records of all purchases and expenditure.

He had us account in detail for everything we bought and every expense we made.

Receipts had to be kept down to the last penny.

He checked the accounts.

We had to spend money sparingly.

Communication facilities such as telephones were very expensive.

During that period, Dayı was extremely busy with communications, meetings and discussions.

Despite all these restrictions, he still worked day and night, wrote, read, made telephone calls and attended meetings.

His telephone calls were always made from different telephone boxes.

He spoke briefly and immediately moved to another telephone box.

Although we were living in Europe, he knew better than we did what possibilities existed, what precautions had to be taken, where things could be found, how they should be researched and what methods we should use.

He **never liked the word “none.”**

For him, **“none” did not exist.**

He would not immediately make use of the possibilities offered by capitalism.

He would investigate them first and then carry out tests.

Because, he said:

“Capitalism does not shoot itself.”

He said that before capitalism placed a product on the market, it would first develop all the counter-techniques against it, take its precautions and only then put the product on sale.

He had all the information concerning communication equipment he researched translated.

He said:

“We must be able to provide our guerrillas with the most suitable and advanced means of communication.”

He had everything researched, from shoes to clothing.

He knew which countries had greater influence in which markets and which countries were more advanced in particular products.

And he evaluated what we needed accordingly.

During this period of shortages, Dayı also searched for alternatives so that we could evaluate our own possibilities and find permanent places suitable for ourselves.

Naturally, we continued giving negative answers.

Dayı would never accept an immediate **“no”**.

It genuinely made him angry.

He would say:

“I am not asking you for something impossible. Look around you. Do the possibilities I am talking about exist or not? If they exist, think about them. How have others managed it? Is it because we are illegal that this question of legitimacy creates ‘nothings’ in your minds?”

Discussions like this with Dayı could continue for hours, almost like an educational session.

In the end, exactly as Dayı had said and insisted, we worked and, through our own means, found permanent places suitable for ourselves that were by no means insignificant.

His persistence and his power of persuasion eventually meant that when we were asked a question, we no longer said:

“There is none.”

We reached the point where even **we** began becoming angry when we heard the word “none”.

After a while, I was exposed and returned to the region.

I continued my previous work there.

After our meetings during that period, Dayı later had me contacted and we met several more times.

When we parted, I understood the extent of Dayı's love, concern and sense of responsibility towards his people.

As our Dayı, he will always live among us!

He Lived Not for Himself, but for His Comrades

The year was 1989...

We were in a flat in Acıbadem, Kadıköy, Istanbul, in a building where relatively well-off families lived.

Our neighbours knew us as a harmonious, respectable family who kept to ourselves.

Every morning I would get up at a certain time, prepare breakfast and send my husband off to work. We presented ourselves to those around us as a family, with Niyazi Aydın as my husband.

Afterwards, I would do the things any housewife did: cleaning, shopping, cooking and, from time to time, chatting with the neighbours.

Then my tea conversations with my sister-in-law, Sabahat Karataş, would begin.

Our neighbours looked at the relationship between us as bride and sister-in-law with some surprise.

They would say:

"You get on very well. You're more like sisters than a bride and her sister-in-law."

I would reply:

"That's how we are. I married when I was very young. My sister-in-law taught me everything — cooking, cleaning, all of it."

These were my happiest hours at home, the hours I enjoyed most: our conversations over tea or coffee.

Sabo brewed tea very well.

She always drank smuggled tea. Even if there was none, she would make sure it was brought from somewhere. It was a habit that came from being from Mardin.

I, meanwhile, made good coffee.

A coffee with plenty of foam, little sugar, and a cigarette.

While drinking her coffee, Sabo would slowly begin explaining things.

During the first days, I thought what she told me was simply ordinary conversation.

How wrong I was.

Everything she said, every detail, was an education about life and the struggle.

These were conversations that would guide my life in later years.

That day appeared no different from any other.

Niyazi Abi came home.

We ate.

Later, Niyazi Abi went out.

Niyazi Abi's code name at home was **Halit**.

We called Sabo **Seher**.

Sabo called me over.

She said we needed to speak about something private.

She told me that a guest would be coming to the house, that I should go to my room and not come out until they called me.

For a moment, I was surprised.

We had been living together in that house for almost two years, yet apart from one or two neighbours, no guest had ever come to the house.

I pulled myself together.

I said:

“All right.”

I did not question it.

That was the first rule of illegal life: do what you are told and do not question it.

I went to my room and began reading a book.

I do not remember how much time passed before the doorbell rang.

I heard that someone had arrived.

After a while, Sabo came into my room.

She said:

“Aren’t you going to welcome our guest?”

and called me into the living room.

I went in.

I stretched out my hand to the guest and said:

“Welcome.”

Then I froze where I stood.

Dayı was standing in front of me.

So many thoughts went through my mind in those few seconds.

The first was:

“Wasn’t Dayı in prison? What is he doing here?”

Immediately, another answer overtook that question:

“Don’t make interpretations, not even in your own mind.”

Hesitantly, I smiled at the comrade who had arrived.

Dayı, however, was very warm at that moment.

He embraced and kissed me warmly and sincerely.

I was very happy.

After a brief exchange of:

“Hello, how are you?”

I looked at Sabo.

I needed to leave.

I left them alone.

Dayı, Niyazi Abi and Sabo talked until late that night.

That evening was the first time I had seen Dayı.

With Dayı’s arrival, our life at home changed completely.

From outside, nothing appeared different.

We still looked like the same quiet and happy family.

There were only one or two small changes in our lives.

Niyazi Abi worked until late at night.

He was very busy.

Sabo, meanwhile, frequently went to the doctor for physiotherapy.

That was how we explained their absences to the neighbours.

My supposed mother-in-law was ill, so I too would occasionally go out, supposedly to visit her.

Inside the house, however, we were literally racing against time.

These were the days before the Period of Advance.

At that time, I was not yet at a level where I could understand the process or recognise that all the rushing around inside our home was the sign of preparations for something.

Our lives, and we ourselves, were changing very rapidly.

I could feel this change being reflected in different places.

The first change was in our life at home.

A few days after Dayı arrived, Sabo had a long conversation with me.

It concerned the security of the house.
She said that she would constantly be outside and that I would remain alone at home with Dayı.

She told me:

“Dayı will stay inside all the time. He will never go out. Dayı is entrusted to you.”

At that moment, I felt two different emotions at once.

The honour of being given such a responsibility, and the fear of making a mistake.

The responsibility I had been given was enormous.

I was afraid of making a mistake.

Sabo reassured me.

One by one, she explained the rules I needed to follow while living in the house, going outside and walking in the street.

She said:

“As long as you follow these rules, you don’t need to be afraid. If you act with the consciousness of protecting your comrade, if you give direction to your emotions and thoughts, you will not make a mistake.”

As always, she had explained even the most difficult task in its simplest form.

Simply and clearly, in a way that created in me the feeling:

“I can manage this.”

From that day onwards, I was usually alone at home with Dayı.

Sabo and Niyazi Abi came home late in the evenings.

I lived in the same house with him for almost two years.

During the entire time we stayed together, he went outside only once, to see a doctor.

Apart from that, he never went out at all.

He did not even approach the window or balcony to get some fresh air.

Here was someone who had spent nine years in prison, at least two of those years in a cell.

Yet despite this, he showed no longing for the street or for the outside world.

Nor did he ever make the slightest complaint of this kind.

The only longing I noticed in Dayı was:

To intervene in the process. To run faster.

Even though he never went outside, he knew everything about the area where we lived, the neighbours, the caretaker and so on.

He kept everything under control.

And he did this very naturally.

For example, when the caretaker came to provide a service, Dayı would later talk with me about him.

He constantly asked questions:

“How old is he? Where is he from? What is his wife like? What is their relationship like?”

If there were gaps in my answers, I would fill them in later.

The same applied to our relationships with the neighbours.

He did all of this very naturally.

Sometimes Dayı’s ease and natural manner astonished me.

Two incidents we experienced while I was living with him are examples of this.

The daughter of our upstairs neighbour liked listening to loud music.

On some days, the music she played could be heard throughout the entire building and even in the neighbouring buildings.

One day after Dayı arrived, she again turned the stereo up as loud as possible.

Dayı was working in the living room.

When he heard the noise, he became angry and shouted:

“What is this music? Listening to music like this is disrespectful.”

I said nothing.

I stayed silent guiltily, as though I had been the one playing the music.

I said:

“That girl always listens to music like this.”

He asked:

“Why haven’t you warned her until now?”

I said nothing.

We had not warned her.

We had not wanted to create friction with the neighbour.

Dayı asked me to bring him a long stick or broom.

I brought what he asked for.

He began banging on the ceiling with the stick from downstairs.

He was angry.

He struck it so rapidly that paint was almost falling from the ceiling in the living room.

His reaction was natural, the kind of reaction any person should have.

But it was risky.

The upstairs neighbour could have come to our door asking what was happening.

All these thoughts were running through my mind at once.

But I said nothing.

After a while, the music stopped.

The problem had been solved.

For months, we had put up with the noise because we did not want friction with the neighbours.

His ease and naturalness had solved the problem.

One afternoon, the doorbell rang.

It was not the time when the caretaker normally came.

I called out:

“Who is it?”

The reply came:

“Open the door, madam. Police!”

I replied:

“One moment, I’m coming.”

There were two people in the living room: Dayı and Sinan Kukul.

I had to inform them.

I opened the living-room door.

Both were waiting with weapons in their hands.

I understood that they too had heard the word “police”.

I said:

“I’m opening the door.”

They replied:

“All right.”

With the natural manner of an ordinary housewife, I opened the door.

I asked:

“Yes, what do you want?”

At the door stood two uniformed police officers and the caretaker.

The caretaker stepped forward and said:

“Don’t be afraid, sister. The officers only want to ask something.”

The police were apparently looking for someone concerning a debt dispute.

They gave a first name and surname and asked whether we knew the person.

I said we did not.

They thanked me and left.

When I closed the door, the first thing I did was take a deep breath.

I went into the living room and told the others what had happened.

Both smiled and continued working.

Had they not remained calm and allowed me to open the door, a simple enquiry could have turned into a clash.

The days we spent with Dayı were the period immediately before the movement entered a new phase.

You could feel this in everything.

Dayı was organised and calm.

But he was very fast.

Niyazi Abi and Sabo were fast too.

To keep up with them, I began timing everything I did.

For example:

Breakfast dishes — 20 minutes.

Cleaning — two hours.

Writing — one hour.

And so on.

I would ask myself:

How can I shorten this time?

In this way, I became faster.

I tried to keep pace with them.

But keeping pace with Dayı was almost impossible.

Because with Dayı, the issue was not merely one of time.

While completely absorbed in one task, he could suddenly notice that something else was missing.

And at that moment, that missing thing had to be dealt with.

Nothing could be postponed.

One day, he and Sinan were working together.

I was reading a book.

Suddenly, he said to me:

“Give me black thread and a needle.”

I did not know why.

I noticed that he was irritated.

The thought passed through my mind:

I wonder what has made him angry?

While thinking this, I moved slowly.

He noticed that I was being slow.

He reminded me again, this time sharply.

I panicked.

Oh no!

I became completely flustered.

I could not find a needle or thread anywhere in the house.

Eventually, he genuinely became angry with me.

He said:

“What kind of house is this? How can there be no needle and thread in a house?”

I kept saying, perhaps partly because I was confused:

“Whatever needs sewing, give it to me and I’ll sew it.”

But he did not listen.

From that moment onwards, the issue was no longer the button that needed sewing.

The issue was whether I had checked that there was a needle and thread in the house, whether I knew the house and had command of it.

Eventually, I found the needle and thread and gave them to him.

He had also been angry because I did not know the house well enough and did not have command of it.

Naturally, there was something he was trying to teach me through this.

The daily working rhythm never changed throughout those two years.

We got up at 7.00 or 7.30 in the morning.

Breakfast was between 8.00 and 8.30.

Then the daily newspapers were read.

The daily news was followed on television.

Work continued until lunch.

At midday, they took a lunch break.

Then tea was drunk.

Afterwards, Dayı returned to work at the same pace.

Apart from one or two hours of sleep, there was no rest within this rhythm.

Dayı worked until two or three in the morning every night.

Later, after Sinan arrived, they carried out this work together.

During those two years, I never saw him set aside any private time for himself.

Only during the first days after Dayı arrived did we prepare a special table to celebrate his arrival.

That night was the only special occasion we had in our home during those two years.

Our house was in a quiet neighbourhood.

There were no workplaces or similar places nearby.

We were also far from the main road.

When we had searched for a rented house, we had worked very hard to find somewhere that combined all the necessary characteristics.

Dayı and Sinan slept in the living room.

They also worked there.

Without exaggeration, Dayı spent two years in that living room.

By day, it was a study.

By night, it was a bedroom.

There were sofas, small tables, an eight-person dining table and a display cabinet.

The only thing there for Dayı and Sinan to rest on was a rocking chair beside the window overlooking a wooded area.

On days when he was extremely tired, Niyazi Abi would rest in that chair.

After Dayı and Sinan arrived, both the display cabinet and the dining table began serving multiple purposes.

The plates, glasses and other items in the cabinet were moved into the kitchen.

In their place were now notes.

The dining table became a work desk.

Dayı and Sinan constantly read the notes and reports that arrived.

Sometimes they had long discussions.

These were discussions about the new, about moving forward.

Assessments before the Period of Advance, assignments, the state of the movement...

All of these were discussed.

Naturally, these discussions took place outside my involvement.

But I could feel that something was changing and that steps towards something new were being taken.

Their relations with one another also attracted my attention.

Sinan, Niyazi Abi and Sabo were extremely respectful towards Dayı.

Dayı's political weight could be felt in their relationships.

But whenever they debated an issue, the discussion did not end until one side had convinced the other.

Their relations were not feudal, nor was the respect his comrades showed Dayı a feudal form of respect.

The preparations and assessments before the Period of Advance, and the pamphlet **Where Are We on the Road?**

Sinan and Niyazi Abi were beside him from the beginning to the end of this entire process.

Dayı's working pace and discipline were very different.

He was uncompromising towards himself and towards the people with whom he worked.

But when it came to using the movement's resources, his general approach was to make do with the minimum.

During Dayı's first days in the house, I tried to provide the best of everything in shopping, food and similar matters.

I had begun spending considerably more than our normal average.

After a week, Dayı noticed.

He intervened.

He asked:

"Do you always spend like this?"

I said:

"No. We are spending extra because you are here. Normally, at lunchtime we eat whatever is left from the previous evening. And in the afternoon, we brew tea once a day."

Dayı replied:

"You are not going to spend anything extra because I am in the house. At lunchtime, we will eat together whatever is left from the evening before. You do not need to prepare special food. There is tea left over from breakfast in the morning. Heat that up and we will drink it."

Dayı never allowed the difference created by his position within the struggle to give him a separate status in everyday life.

His position was very different.

But he made a point of living under the same conditions as any other militant living illegally.

He was extremely sensitive and considerate towards his comrades.

Sabo possessed the same sensitivity and thoughtfulness.

During the years when I worked with Sabo, I saw that without my ever telling her, she could recognise my emotions, my longing and my sadness.

She noticed and felt them and intervened.

And she did so naturally and delicately.

Dayı had this characteristic too.

After the Period of Advance began, Dayı and I parted.

Until 16–17 April, I did not meet Dayı directly.

But I could feel that he was following my development.

I do not know how to define this characteristic.

Sabo had described it as **love for people**.

One day, during one of our tea-and-coffee conversations, she made this assessment:

"Leadership means loving people. Leadership is actually not such a difficult task. A person who loves people can become a good leader."

When I think about the qualities and sensitivity Dayı possessed, even the description **"love for people"** seems inadequate.

He lived not for himself, but for his comrades.

Only such a way of life could create such intensity of feeling.

This characteristic of his always gave me confidence.
It gave me confidence in this movement.
I lived those years to the full.
And I learnt a great deal from my leader.

He Was Our Source of Morale, Knowing No Limits in Creativity

After the freedom action, together with Xalo, I had the opportunity to breathe the air of practical struggle outside. However, during this period, apart from the Congress process, we never met or spoke face to face. Our relationship was always maintained either through notes or by telephone.

I had been released in the spring of 1990 and was in contact with Niyazi Abi. In a short time, many things had begun to change. The Period of Advance had begun.

In those days, Niyazi Abi would say:

“Nothing remains as it is. But when someone comes along and shows you what you cannot see and opens a new path, you see how much changes and how rapidly things develop. This is the strength of the leading comrade; the moral value he gives us.”

That was exactly how it was.

Because Xalo, who was a daring will in the struggle, was also our source of morale, knowing no limits in creativity.

I personally witnessed this during the 12 July massacre and during the coup period.

Following the martyrdom of Niyazi Abi and the others on 12 July, there was indecision and demoralisation within the SDBs, and an inability to immediately develop an attitude appropriate to the position of a fighter. Dayı immediately intervened, contacted all the SDBs individually and brought them together again in a short time.

At the same time, during this period when preparations for rural activity were under way, many of the people in the teams who were to go to the countryside had been taken prisoner in the hotels where they were staying before they had even reached their destinations.

Meanwhile, a body of fighters had accumulated in the Middle East, and they needed to be brought rapidly into the area of activity.

He immediately contacted us by note.

Following his instructions, we quickly began both securing contacts in the region and getting the fighters to their bases.

He established our contact with Haydar (Bedri Yağan) and instructed us:

“Determine meeting places and passwords between yourselves. The fighters are definitely not to be collected from hotels or similar places. As soon as they get out of the vehicles, they are to be collected from predetermined points at street meetings and taken directly to their bases in the countryside.”

Dayı had previously said that proceeding through the city organisations was risky and that the countryside itself should directly receive the fighters.

What Dayı proposed was a very practical and rapid solution.

Bedri gave us the telephone number where he would always be available and the password code, while we gave him the meeting point where the fighters would arrive.

We took the necessary precautions at the point where the fighters were due to arrive, completed our other preparations to get them to their bases as quickly and safely as possible, and began waiting.

But at the meeting time, nobody came to the point where we were waiting, even though we waited there for hours.

We called Haydar (Bedri Yağan) and asked:

“What happened? Nobody has come.”

He replied:

“The comrades have arrived. They’ve been waiting for you at the point for half an hour. There have been some suspicious developments. Pick them up immediately. The situation isn’t good; anything could happen at any moment.”

How could that be?

We were at the point, had made all the preparations and had been waiting for them for hours.

When we said:

“Make sure they haven’t gone to the wrong place,”

Haydar replied:

“I gave them the wrong point. Go immediately and pick them up within 15–30 minutes.”

But we were exactly 170 kilometres away from the place he had given.

Even if we had been missiles, we could not have reached there in 15–30 minutes.

We gave them a new point and collected the comrades from there two hours later.

The meeting had not been arranged properly, no alternative had been determined, and the meeting place had not been checked.

These were things Dayı would never accept.

Dayı arranged everything with alternatives, always made you double-check it, and before that he would ask and question you about your security.

If there was a gap or deficiency, he would suggest ways and methods of overcoming it.

He constantly warned us:

“Whatever happens, you must always have second and third alternatives for your meetings. Always double-check the telephone number, the meeting place, the time and the passwords, and make the other side check them too. Don’t simply say, ‘All right, I understand, I’ve written it down,’ and leave. Consider that the other side may also make mistakes or leave something incomplete. You must turn this into an indispensable habit, a natural reflex.

“Do not write down telephone numbers or names. Memorise them; write them into your memory. In every field where you work, always train alternative people to yourselves. Work in the style of a committee. Remember, working in the style of a committee develops both you and the struggle. It ensures continuity in developing cadres. It creates new possibilities for the revolution. The road from ‘I’ to ‘WE’ also passes through this.

“The opposite means refusing to succeed, not wanting the revolution, not trusting people and protecting oneself. And this is not revolutionary; it is the personality of a petty-bourgeois intellectual who is afraid of taking risks. A person who works with alternatives, who organises through committees with alternatives from top to bottom, is a revolutionary, a person who is not afraid of risk. It is only by working in the style of a committee that it is possible both to become and to train people who create possibilities for the revolution rather than consume them, who develop the struggle rather than obstruct it.”

Sometime after Sabo and the others were martyred on 16–17 April, the telephone through which contact had been maintained with us suddenly stopped answering.

More precisely, every time we called, someone answered in a foreign language and then hung up.

Once or twice, when the telephone was answered in a foreign language, we heard people speaking Turkish in the background. When we said:

“What is going on? There are people speaking Turkish there. Put them on,”

the telephone was immediately hung up.

We therefore thought the number had been exposed and that it would be dangerous to continue calling it, so for a long time we did not call again.

Our contact was broken for exactly eight months.

Until Dayı escaped from the hands of the coup plotters and exposed the coup, nobody called us or enquired about us.

Those who had failed to establish contact with us for eight months despite all our efforts, who had not called or asked about us even though we had suffered martyrs and experienced clashes, sent word to us in the winter conditions of the mountains, two days after Dayı informed the country about the coup:

“They should call the telephone number they used to call before.”

For months, through all our calls, we had never heard a single word of Turkish on that telephone, only things being said in a foreign language.

This time, we heard Haydar’s (Bedri’s) voice.

Before we even had the chance to ask what was going on, he said:

“We haven’t been able to call or ask about you for months. How are you? What are you eating and drinking? Do you need anything? Come to Istanbul immediately with Avni (Avni Turan^{liv}), within two days. Call this number and the comrades will collect you.”

Then, without even giving us the chance to ask a question, he hung up.

How we were supposed to travel safely from the summit of a mountain to Istanbul within two days did not concern him in the slightest.

Using our own means, it took us a week just to reach the place we had been told to go.

The journey was difficult, but we were very happy because we interpreted the summons as meaning that the work of the Party Congress was beginning.

But what we encountered turned that happiness into anger.

Taking advantage also of the absence of Niyazi, Sabo, Sinan and the others, the coup plotters had taken prisoner our leader, to whom all the cadres had entrusted initiative and who had been concentrating on Party work.

They had staged a coup and had run the organisation for months without the knowledge of the cadres.

When the leadership escaped from their hands and exposed the coup they had carried out, we learnt who was responsible for the martyrs who had been lost during this period and for contacts with the areas — particularly the countryside — having been broken and left unrestored for months.

When we also thought about the fact that they had been calculating how to find an opportunity to kill him, our anger grew even greater.

In the end, when all the areas and cadres once again gave initiative and authority to the leadership, we frustrated the counter-gang’s contemptible coup ambitions.

But during this process, we also did not forget what sections of the left had done by viewing the coup plotters as merely an issue “within the left” and taking them under their wing.

Had it not been for Dayı’s uncompromising attitude towards revolutionary justice and his principled outlook, in our anger we would have swept the counter-gang away.

At the very beginning, all the coup plotters in the country were within our reach.

When we proposed arresting all of them, despite everything they had done to the movement and to him personally, Dayı repeatedly said:

“No.”

He warned and instructed us:

“Under no circumstances will you surrender to your anger or engage in individual, impulsive attitudes or behaviour. We will operate according to our organisational law. Ultimately, there is no ideological difference; we are all still comrades. We will arrange a meeting of the cadres as soon as possible. Whoever is at fault, including me, will account for it before the cadres and will make their criticism and self-criticism. Absolutely no one will answer one wrong with the same wrong. There must be no disregard for organisational principles and rules.”

With these warnings and instructions, until the very last moment he directed us towards trying to persuade the coup plotters and make them turn back from what they had done.

He did not want a single drop of blood to be shed.

But what did it matter? The careerists, emboldened by the support they received from the left, could not be persuaded. Their eyes were filled with blood. They neither respected organisational law nor agreed to a meeting of the cadres or to putting the mechanism of criticism and self-criticism into operation.

They continued their counter activity and increased the damage they caused to the movement. They refused to hand over the resources and archives they had seized, which had been won at the cost of blood and lives. Their counter activity went as far as setting ambushes for our comrades, torturing and killing them, and carrying out raids on houses belonging to units.

The situation had reached such a point that the oligarchy, the left outside our movement and the coup plotters had converged on the same point in seeking to finish Dayı and Revolutionary Left.

They did not achieve their aims.

After all the areas and cadres gave Dayı authority and we decided to administer the necessary justice to the counter-gang, everyone returned to their own field of activity. Many of us believed that the attitude displayed by the left did not conform to the law and morality of the revolutionary front and had long exceeded the limits of tolerance.

When we proposed:

“We need to take a stand against them,”

Dayı said:

“No. We will definitely be patient. No attitude will be taken towards the left other than ideological struggle. Despite them, we will continue uncompromisingly to implement the decisions we have taken regarding the counter-gang.

“The left is the old left. Group interests have come before everything else. They have become unable to see reality or think about the interests of the struggle for revolution and socialism. Lacking the consciousness of power, they have become trapped in petty-bourgeois human-rights advocacy and entered the sphere of influence of bourgeois politics. Their attitudes should not surprise us.

“Yes, the left did not display the revolutionary attitude expected of it, the attitude it should have taken. We will continue on our path with our uncompromising revolutionary attitude both against the external and internal enemies of the revolution and against immorality and injustice, and in doing so we will educate the left along with ourselves. Responding to the left by methods other than ideological struggle brings nothing to the revolution or the struggle for power; on the contrary, it causes losses.

“We are not a movement that engages in organisational populism or pragmatism. We are a movement conscious of and claiming the struggle for power. Therefore, whatever happens, we will not deviate by a single millimetre from the scientific values, principles, morality and law of Marxism-Leninism.

“By embracing the coup plotters, the left is harming itself more than it is harming us, and above all it is harming the revolution. Because they are legitimising the immorality of disregarding law and carrying out coups. It is a pity. They have paid so many prices, given martyrs and, for better or worse, still have a claim. Within five or six months, their embracing of this immorality will begin to strike back at them.

“I know the coup plotters well too. Within a few months they will stage coups against one another. They can contribute nothing to the left or to the revolutionary struggle other than infecting them with the immorality they have committed. They will be of no benefit.

“We have shed our dirt and rust; we have purified ourselves. Now is the time to embrace the struggle with greater strength and determination and fulfil our promise to our martyrs. Remember: loyalty to the people, irreconcilability towards the enemies of the

revolution, and fighting with class hatred and consciousness strengthen a movement, whereas conciliatory and opportunistic approaches weaken it and, step by step, lead it away from the goal of revolution...”

Only months after Dayı said these things, they were confirmed one by one.

Breakaways began within the left. The coup plotters, whose names had gone down in history as counter-gang members and traitors, did not stop there; they staged coups against one another as well and turned into pigs wallowing in the swamp.

The left closed its eyes even to this and continued its aggression. There were even some among them who tried to stop their own fragmentation and division by attacking Dayı and us.

While those who chose to behave in this way concerned themselves with our dirt and rust and became even more covered in dirt themselves, under the leadership of our Dayı we accelerated our steps even further.

Among Dayı’s fundamental teachings was always this:

“Whatever the circumstances and conditions, in action, in thought and in war, you will be patient, cool-headed and just towards those around you. Remember that we are fighters of a movement struggling for revolution and socialism, claiming to take power and establish people’s power.

“With belief and confidence that, through the ideology and politics of this movement, our people will free themselves from the wheel of exploitation of imperialism and the oligarchy and achieve their independence, we have broken our ties with the system and voluntarily taken our place in these ranks. Because its principles, values, traditions and discipline also express who we are, we have confidently joined this structure and become an inseparable part of it.

“In other words, within this union of volunteers, of which we have consciously and willingly become part while accepting every kind of sacrifice, including dying and killing, everyone must behave in accordance with class consciousness and class justice and must abide by the traditions, values and discipline of the organisation. Those who do not think and behave in this way are not on the side of the working classes and us; they are on the side of the system.

“No one has the right to play with the movement’s law, discipline or perspective, to bend them or to degenerate its values. Whatever their position or duty, no one may attempt to stain our values or our justice. Those who do so become representatives of enemy activity that has infiltrated our ranks, and the punishment for this is severe. We must never permit it.

“There may, of course, be those who over time develop different ideas or experience deviations. We may not have been able to convince them, or they may not have been convinced. Nobody would object to such people leaving our ranks, provided they do so without engaging in factional or similar behaviour.

“Towards left-wing movements outside ourselves, too, we will insistently maintain our approach based on revolutionary friendship, remaining principled, staying within the limits of ideological struggle and not interfering in their internal organisational problems. We will continue mercilessly to criticise their ideological, political and practical mistakes that weaken the revolutionary struggle, clearly exposing them and demanding that they make self-criticism for their mistakes.

“Because criticism means valuing someone, and the weapon of criticism and self-criticism, whether within the revolutionary ranks generally or within our own ranks, is the most effective instrument of development and transformation when used at the right time, on the correct basis, without degeneration or abuse.

“Some people — petty-bourgeois intellectuals, selfish individuals, those obsessed with narrow pragmatism — take criticism as swearing or as a personal insult, and regard making self-criticism as ‘the end’. The distortion of regarding the naming of weaknesses and

the demand for self-criticism of them as ‘the end’ also exists within our ranks. The personality of the coup plotters is an example of this.

“What is decisive in such personalities is not revolution, the people, justice or conscience, but ‘I’. The weapon of criticism and self-criticism is the antidote to every kind of selfishness within the ranks of the revolution. It is the most effective instrument for directing people towards revolution by eliminating deficiencies, correcting distortions, cleansing weaknesses and giving people a new personality.

“Remember: those who love their weaknesses and reconcile themselves with them fear criticism and self-criticism as though it were a bogeyman and cannot use them. Let us fear not weaknesses, but living with weaknesses. Because those who love their weaknesses and fear having their mistakes and deficiencies exposed cannot fully perform their duties and cannot remain permanent in revolutionary life.”

This was what our Reber Xalo would say.

He attached great importance to the weapon of criticism and self-criticism and would insist:

“We neither criticise our enemies nor make self-criticism to them. We approach them with the revolutionary violence of the proletariat. We criticise only those whom we value and love, and it is to them that we make self-criticism. Because criticism and self-criticism mean embracing someone and valuing them. It is the science of developing the struggle. Use this science well.”

Just as with the enemy, he regarded reconciliation with weaknesses as an attitude hostile to revolution and socialism, an attitude from which counter-revolutionaries drew strength.

He would particularly emphasise:

“The revolutionary personality is the possibility of liberation for the working class and the most relentless enemy of the exploiting class. This personality does not reconcile itself either with the bourgeoisie or with ideas influenced by it. It does not enter the sphere of permission granted by them. It works to pull those who do out of that swamp, to disrupt the game of ‘democracy’ through which the people are deceived, and to raise the consciousness of the people by showing them the truth.

“As the representative of the proletariat, the one thing it does not withhold from the bourgeoisie is the revolutionary violence of the proletariat. And this will continue until the dictatorship of the proletariat is established throughout the world. We do not reconcile ourselves with the bourgeoisie, with bourgeois ideas or with weaknesses. Because we are Marxist-Leninists: enemies of what is wrong and friends of what is right.”

The strategist and commander of our Politicised Military War, an incomparable example of productivity, self-sacrifice and sharing, the bearer of an almost unattainable strength of will and class consciousness — Reber, Xalo — is revolution, is socialism.

I saw this much more clearly during the Congress process.

Because in his philosophy there was no hopelessness; there was hope.

There was no distrust; there was trust.

There was no uncertainty; there was consciousness.

In his life there were no excuses or mysteries; there was openness towards his people and his comrades, and commitment to the struggle.

There was no indiscipline, lack of principle or absence of rules; there was a disciplined, principled life governed by rules.

In his life there was no **I**; there was **we**.

There was the revolution, responsibility for meeting the needs of the revolution, the consciousness of being a rank-and-file fighter, unshakeable faith and limitless self-sacrifice.

Thanks to these qualities, he carried the banner of revolution that he had inherited from Mahir to the present day, breaking through every kind of enemy attack and the most insidious opportunist and revisionist encirclements.

Without allowing complacency in victories or despair in defeats, at every point where it was said, **“They are finished,” “We have finished them,”** he rose again with stronger steps, increased our speed and transformed hopelessness into hope.

He would say:

“Today, whoever holds high the glorious banner of Leninism, both in theory and in social practice, resisting the attacks of imperialism and opportunism, becomes a link in the historical chain of the Marxist movement in Turkey; becomes its continuation.”

Mahir and Dayı gave us precisely this honour after Kızıldere.

By virtually recreating the revolutionary movement from its ashes, they transformed it into the hope of liberation of our people and the undisputed vanguard of the struggle for independence, democracy and socialism in our country.

Although we will never become accustomed to his absence, our greatest consolation will be this unique legacy he left behind, what he created, his spotless life and what he taught us.

And just as he has until today, he will continue to be with us from now on, illuminating our path like a torch that never goes out.

Because he has become immortal, like all other leaders, as the vanguard and anger of our people; the fear and nightmare of imperialism and the collaborationist oligarchy; Mahir’s comrade and student; the close friend of the Denizs and the İbos; and a leader illuminating our future.

No power can confine him to the earth.

He will continue to be reborn in us, fuelling our struggle, remaining a source of faith and morale, our unerring guide, living on in our struggle.

Because leaders are the most political, the most scientific, the most combative and the most productive figures of the class struggle. They are creative people of initiative, self-confidence and will, capable of seeing what nobody else can see, of theorising what everyone senses but cannot define, and of defining and putting into practice, in the most correct and complete way, what others cannot put into practice.

What brings them to the forefront of the struggle is precisely this extraordinary will, audacity and ability.

Our Xalo, our teacher, possessed such a powerful will and incomparable ability.

Our people and the peoples of the world do not yet realise what a treasure they have lost. But I believe that as the class struggle advances, the importance of Dayı will be better understood and grasped both by the peoples of our country and by the peoples of the world.

I have no doubt that our Xalo too will be cherished by the peoples, and that they will walk towards freedom with his way of fighting and the legacy he left behind.

Our task now is to accelerate this process by understanding Xalo more completely and increasing the speed at which we learn from him.

Because to understand Xalo is to understand revolution.

To understand Xalo is to dedicate ourselves from head to toe to revolution and uproot everything belonging to the system.

It is to understand the struggle for independence, democracy and socialism more deeply and accelerate our march towards victory.

When the time came to part after the Congress, Dayı embraced us and said:

“If you are careful, fight in a principled and disciplined way and don’t die, we will meet again.”

This damned death, which we never expected, has taken away our hope of meeting physically again.

Yes, from now on we will never physically embrace again.

We will never again make jokes in our own language and laugh together.

But believe me, Xalo, we will continue walking the steep and winding roads of revolution with you and drawing strength from you, from the incomparable legacy you left behind.

We give you our word, Xalo:

We will come in a way worthy of you.

We swear that, although we are deprived of your physical presence, we will continue, just as we learnt from you, to enlarge hope, to dream, and one day to make reality of the world you always demanded of us and to which you devoted 38 years of your life — the dream of shaking the world once again, this time from Anatolia.

And having made that dream a reality, we will salute you.

He Was a School...

Again, the same excited waiting, a feeling difficult to describe pride, honour and excitement.

A great happiness.

And the doorbell rings.

He comes quickly up the stairs.

The sound of his footsteps can be heard.

There he is, appearing in the doorway.

He enters with quick, firm steps, planting his feet solidly on the ground.

His movements are agile and rapid.

What immediately draws attention is a strong body that stands and walks upright, just like his thoughts and his life.

His handshake and embrace are firm and sincere.

He immediately asks how everyone is.

It is impossible not to feel the proud privilege of addressing him with that word we love so much.

Simplicity dominates his appearance.

His clothes are simple, comfortable and sporty, mostly in shades of brown.

He has had his daily shave.

Even when sitting, he has the same strong, dynamic and upright posture he has when walking.

His eyes are very lively; they shine.

As he speaks, his facial expressions change in harmony with what he is explaining, with his thoughts and emotions.

His hands are constantly moving too.

When examining an object, he picks it up and studies every side of it from different angles.

He asks questions.

He gives answers.

Simplicity is also evident in his thought and language.

He expresses subjects and events in their simplest and most comprehensible form, without making them complicated.

His sentences are short and concise.

He does not use a single unnecessary word.

There is no exaggeration or ornamentation.

His manner of expression is direct, sharp and rapid.

His thoughts are alive; it is as though he is living what he describes at that very moment.

You can feel this in his eyes, his hands and his facial expression.

And he does not merely live it himself; he makes everyone around him experience it too.

He knows that listening is at least as important as speaking.

He asks questions.

He listens carefully to the answers.

He looks directly into your eyes.
 He is an excellent observer.
 His powers of comprehension are strong.
 He listens and thinks at the same time.
 You can feel it.
 It is not a silent kind of listening; he constantly asks new questions.
 He immediately breaks a problem that appears large and complicated into smaller parts and simplifies it, revealing its detailed and hidden aspects.
 Then he brings the pieces together again.
 Everything becomes clearer and simpler.
 He values thoughts and proposals.
 Especially when new methods and new ideas concerning practical struggle are put forward, he listens to them with great attention and enthusiasm.
 As always, he has his large map-method notebook beside him.
 He constantly takes notes.
 His notebook is always with him.
 His daily working programme is clear.
 Everything has its place and time.
 Everything is organised and orderly.
 Because of this order, nothing is overlooked or forgotten.
 A discipline like steel governs his life.
 When work has not been done or has been neglected, he never accepts the excuse:
"I forgot."
 He says:
"If revolution is in your head, you do not forget. If revolution is not in your head, then the system is there, and the weaknesses of the system are there..."
 The most important characteristic directing his life, and visible in his everyday work, is the strength of his will.
 This will is not momentary or limited to a particular period.
 It is a continuous state of conscious will, sustained at every moment and throughout a lifetime.
 To exercise will everywhere, in every task and at all times.
 Every word and every action is thought through and planned.
 Everything is calculated and under his control.
 Possible problems and setbacks are considered beforehand and precautions are taken.
 There is no uncertainty, no unknown, no spontaneity in his life.
 For him, everything is connected with will.
 Discipline too:
"Discipline comes through conscious will. And above all, everyone must exercise that will themselves. We cannot supervise one of our people for 24 hours a day. Everyone has to learn to supervise themselves. This happens through exercising will..."
 He knows the power of thought and of the brain.
 He insistently stresses that the real revolution must take place in people's minds:
"Everything begins in the brain: victories and defeats. The enemy knows this too. That is why it attacks our minds, tries to contaminate them and force them to surrender. We must not allow this..."
 There is always audacity in his life and struggle.
 Through it, he overcomes everything said to be impossible and every difficulty.
 For him, audacity means becoming revolutionary and constantly enlarging the revolutionary claim:

“Be bold. Trust yourselves. Our history is a history of audacity; draw strength from it. Do not regard weakness, ordinariness or helplessness as things that suit you...”

His love for the people can be felt at every moment.

He knows every section of the people down to their most detailed characteristics.

He knows the strength of the people and trusts them.

His face smiles when he speaks of the masses.

For him, the road to revolution passes through organising the masses and armed struggle:

“The fundamental task before us is to develop armed struggle and mass organisation. They are connected to one another. If one grows, the other grows too...”

He trusts his comrades and his students:

“...The authority of our cadres is broad. We share almost everything with you and ask for your thoughts. The policies that emerge and that we put into practice are essentially your thoughts. You are the organisation. We trust you. You must trust yourselves too...”

His comrades and students are like parts of himself: his hands, his feet, his eyes, his ears.

He lives with them at every moment.

In the factory, at school and in the neighbourhood, he organises the people alongside them.

He walks the mountain roads with them.

He evades surveillance with them in the streets of the cities.

He fights with them at the barricades.

He resists with them in the cells.

He is with them in every field of the struggle.

He knows his students individually and takes an interest in each of them.

All of them are valuable to him.

But our martyrs and prisoners always have a special place:

“First our martyrs, then our prisoners... They are our most precious. A movement that does not stand by its martyrs and prisoners has no future...”

He is always angry with those who abandon the path of revolution:

“It is understandable that ordinary people who do not know may not struggle, but to know and still not act is immoral...”

For him, being a revolutionary is also a question of morality and conscience:

“Physical pain and the wounds of torture pass and heal after a while. But the wound in the heart, the pain of betraying your comrades, never disappears for the rest of your life...”

His outlook on life is very simple:

Everything for the revolution.

Everything for the liberation of the people.

He constantly underlines revolutionism as a lifelong commitment.

His view of death is equally simple:

“Death is simple, natural and inevitable. There is no point in fearing death if you are a revolutionary. Fear diminishes a person, makes them pitiful; revolution enlarges them...”

Being with him gives a person confidence.

In him, you see the will and strength of the revolution.

And then the time comes to part.

There is no sadness, of course.

There is the enthusiasm and pride of sharing the same thoughts and feelings and walking the same road.

He says:

“You know everything you need to know. There is nothing more for us to teach you. The rest is labour. The rest is up to you. We trust you...”

After these words, we embrace.

Was this perhaps the final lesson?

No.
In his way, there is no final lesson.
Because **he was a school.**
And he will always continue to teach.
And we, as his students, will continue to teach his thoughts and his way.

We Will Carry Out His Instruction

The dominant feeling when I first met him was enthusiasm.
And afterwards it was always the same.
Every time we met him, I felt as though I were approaching a spring of enthusiasm.
Even today, whenever I think of him and review what he told us, I feel that enthusiasm in my heart.
Usually, when you finally meet someone, you have heard a great deal about, you experience some disappointment.
In our minds, we generally exaggerate either the positive or negative things we have been told.
Naturally, I had many positive thoughts about Dayi.
He was our teacher, our commander-in-chief, our leader.
At our first meeting, in our very first conversation, I realised that I had not exaggerated him at all.
No matter how tense we were because of our great excitement and respect, he knew how to put us at ease.
After a while, I felt as though I were speaking with someone I had known for years.
It was always like this.
Whenever we later discussed something, he created an atmosphere in which you could speak with great ease.
His explanations were clear, direct and concise.
He asked questions in a way that encouraged the other person to explain things in the same manner.
He listened extremely well.
The speed of his comprehension was always astonishing.
Even when a subject was entirely new to him, he would quickly understand and grasp it.
He would form ideas about it.
If he wanted us to learn about something, he wanted us to study it in depth.
He was someone who had understood very well the logic of capitalism and, more generally, the logic of life.
For him, something new was something that could be uncovered by asking the right questions.
On one occasion, we were searching for a technical device.
It was something we had never known or used before.
Despite long and detailed research, we had been unable to find it.
We were receiving negative and inconsistent answers such as:
“There is no such thing,”
or:
“It hasn’t reached here yet.”
We had almost given up hope of finding it.
We had even begun to doubt whether such a device existed.
We told Dayi that we could not find it and that it apparently had not yet reached our area.
He said:

“If capitalism has made these devices, then it has also made a device connected with them. Either we are looking in the wrong place, or we are looking for the wrong thing. Since we have looked everywhere it could be found, then we are looking for the wrong thing. Deepen your knowledge of the subject.”

He knew almost nothing about the technical details of the matter.

But the logic he applied was remarkably accurate and illuminating.

We were certain we had looked everywhere.

So, as he said, we immersed ourselves in every source we could find.

After a while, we discovered that such a device really did exist, but that it was different from what we had imagined.

Once we understood that, we found it quickly.

If I were asked what Dayı’s most distinctive characteristic was, I would say **depth**.

He was a person of depth in every subject.

Sometimes he would give such answers to our questions that we thought we had failed to explain ourselves properly and would begin explaining again.

After a while, we would realise that he had already understood what we had said and had gone much deeper into it.

His speed of comprehension and his ability to deepen a subject were extraordinary.

In his clothing, manner and speech, he was completely a man of the people.

In conditions of illegality, it would be difficult to imagine anyone observing the rules so strictly while at the same time remaining so natural.

The modesty in his thinking, his character as a man of the people and his wisdom were reflected in everything, he did.

I do not think he made any special effort to adapt himself to his surroundings or to the masses.

In his natural state, he was already part of the masses.

That was why, although the enemy searched for him throughout the world, they could not reach him.

Even during periods of intense campaigns against him, the secret of his ability to remain among the masses lay within himself.

In his thoughts and way of life, he was part of this people.

Every time we met him, I was once again astonished by his memory.

He had an exceptionally powerful memory.

Although he was not required to concern himself directly with our area, he knew everything about it.

Sometimes, when he mentioned matters we ourselves had forgotten, we would remember them.

When dealing with a problem, he considered very broadly the relationships, possibilities and other factors that could contribute to solving it.

He forgot almost nothing.

Once, jokingly, he reminded me of something that had happened between us:

“So, when someone is late calling, you give us a telling-off, do you?”

To tell the truth, at first, I could not remember what he meant.

And the feeling that I had once **“told Dayı off”** embarrassed me enormously.

Only after he explained a little did I remember.

Two or three years earlier, I had been on switchboard duty.

A comrade was due to call.

The owner of the workplace was going to arrive early that day, so we had little time.

The comrade who was supposed to call was slightly late.

When the telephone finally rang, I snapped:

“Comrade, why aren’t you calling on time?”

It turned out that the comrade I had snapped at was Dayı.

They too had been in a difficult situation that day and had therefore called slightly late.

Even though there were many people like me performing such duties in the movement, and so many years had passed, the fact that he remembered both the incident and me made a great impression on me.

Sevgi Erdoğan Abı once told us that when Dayı remembered the telephone number of a contact he had been given **16 years earlier**, she laughed and said:

“That’s a bit much!”

Yet we forgot countless things, large and small.

His struggle against forgetfulness was radical, just like every other struggle he waged.

He would say:

“Forgetfulness is the illness of our age. We need to examine it properly and solve it.”

He would pursue instances of forgetfulness, try to understand them and propose methods for overcoming them.

He was a person who had set himself the task of conquering and transforming life.

Often, I would understand the meaning and purpose of something he had explained, or of a struggle he had waged, only days later.

Those moments were striking.

It was then that I understood the depth of being a revolutionary.

I understood that revolutionism meant **understanding and transforming**.

He was, in the fullest sense, a master of revolution.

Events and life were like clay in the hands of a master.

He kneaded and shaped them.

During the brief periods I spent with him, although he spoke little, I felt that he entered deep inside me and propelled me forward.

He contributed greatly to my understanding both of the revolution and of myself.

He began transformation by enabling a person to know themselves.

He had knowledge about almost everything in life.

Partial or superficial knowledge did not satisfy him.

When he became interested in a new subject, he wanted to know everything about it.

For this purpose, he requested reports, read books and learnt.

He encouraged others.

Indeed, he pushed them:

“Are you following the magazines published on this subject? Have you obtained books? Are you studying it properly?”

There was no limit to his desire and effort to teach.

He was versatile.

Because he programmed his life with complete precision and used it efficiently, he had acquired knowledge about almost every subject.

When we asked the movement for something, there was no need to remind them again.

Because we knew that Dayı would persistently pursue whatever we had requested.

After the **1996 Death Fast**, we asked for footage from the prisons.

We thought it would be effective for propaganda in the area where we were working.

Some time passed, but the footage did not arrive.

Although we hesitated, we reminded them again.

A while later, it arrived.

We learnt from the relevant comrade that Dayı had asked for the footage to be edited into the form of a documentary before it was sent.

When the work was neglected, he warned them.

Then, when he saw that it would take too long, he had a mixing machine brought to where he was staying.

After obtaining the instruction manuals and translations, he sat down and learnt both how to operate the mixing equipment and how to prepare the film about the **1996 Death Fast**.

The film was shown at many seminars and panels, and extracts from it were also broadcast on international television channels such as **Al Jazeera**.

Through such practice, he was teaching at the same time.

For Dayi, there were no limits to learning or teaching.

He was both the leader of the revolution and its labourer.

We must ask ourselves whether we had the right to make him do such work.

And we must learn from him to rush to do whatever work is necessary.

We were young, inexperienced cadres with little knowledge.

We made many mistakes in almost every task we undertook.

Despite this, whenever we spoke with Dayi, we felt that he trusted us.

He openly expressed and demonstrated his confidence in young cadres.

As I said before, what remained with us after meeting him was always enthusiasm.

I remember walking through the streets for hours after one meeting with him, filled with tremendous enthusiasm, repeating to myself:

“Dayi trusts us.”

That trust gave us both morale and enthusiasm, while also increasing our confidence in ourselves and our sense of responsibility.

That was how we were able to accomplish even tasks that seemed impossible.

We had many proposals.

Almost every proposal in which he saw logic, labour and effort was accepted.

But anything in which no labour had been invested was definitely rejected.

In this way, he developed our hardworking side.

Thinking about it now, he could have rejected some of our proposals.

But because he saw labour in them, he approved them.

By bringing labour to the forefront, he enabled us to recognise our own shortcomings ourselves.

He wanted us to take responsibility.

He wanted us not to fear making mistakes and to learn from our mistakes.

When we parted, he said:

“You must grow. You must grow and shoulder greater responsibilities.”

Those were the last words he spoke to me face to face.

I will carry out this instruction until I die.

His Boundless Determination to Work Will Be an Example to Us

Whenever one of our people leaves us, one side of us fills with pride and the other with sorrow.

With **HIM**, it was different.

The pride was more intense, and so was the sorrow.

Naturally, that was how it had to be.

I think about what I experienced on that day and during the few days that followed.

I do not know whether it is the same for you, but whenever I experience intense joy or sorrow, similar moments from the past come back to my mind.

If it was a difficulty, I remember one by one how I overcame it at the time, where I struggled, and from whom I drew strength.

And naturally, I try to bring those experiences into the present and draw strength from them.

When his death was first confirmed, the moment that came to my mind was when I learnt that he had been imprisoned in France in 1994.

Almost all of us had the same thought then:

“Another psychological-warfare story.”

That was what I had thought on that day too.

But when the news was confirmed, I was devastated.

I was going to a meeting with a comrade.

There would be around 45–50 people there apart from the two of us.

Neither of us had the strength even to carry our own shoulders.

I remember as clearly as though it were today our journey to that meeting, the meeting itself, the decisions that were taken, and everything else.

We could hardly walk on the way there.

A few tears rolled from our eyes.

I was thinking:

“What an unlucky person Dayı is.”

Only two years earlier, he had been in the hands of the coup plotters.

Now he was in the hands of the imperialists...

That was what I was thinking.

At the same time, I was angry with myself.

In truth, I had no direct connection whatsoever with what had happened.

But I was angry.

I thought:

If we had worked hard enough, if we had created better conditions, if we had enlarged the revolution, what would he have been doing in these foreign lands?

Some of these thoughts came from a sense of responsibility and duty, others from childishness and sorrow.

We had to walk about 200 metres to reach the meeting place.

The comrade and I spoke about how **HE** would want us to be and what he would want us to do at that moment.

Without hesitation, both of us said that he would want us to fulfil our duty in the best possible way, and that if he saw us in such a state, he would become very angry.

I remember that we turned into a side street, slapped ourselves once or twice to bring ourselves round, took several deep breaths, checked our clothes and then continued on our way upright and vigorous.

In the end, although we experienced a shock lasting an hour or two at first, I think we behaved in a manner worthy of him.

When we received the news of his martyrdom, I remembered that day and thought that once again he would want us to behave in the same way.

I am certain that all of you thought the same.

Our comrades say that however much we describe him; it is not enough — that he cannot really be described.

That is very true.

I too want to recount some of what other comrades have told me about him.

One of the things I was curious about was **how, why and through which qualities Dayı became a leader.**

For that reason, whenever I met someone who had lived with him, at an appropriate moment I would ask this question.

I had the opportunity to ask three or four of our comrades, some of whom have since been martyred.

After the physical destruction of the THKP-C, Dayı was apparently one of the most militant people to come to the forefront among Istanbul's youth.

If a dormitory had to be guarded against fascist raids, Dayı would certainly be there, either with a stick in his hand or a weapon at his waist.

At the same time, he was among the leaders of Istanbul Revolutionary Youth.

Even before that, in Elazığ, he and Niyazi Abi had become known for what could be described as fearless raids on military barracks.

During the process of separation from DY, his knowledge, accumulated experience and militant way of thinking came even more strongly to the forefront.

And he was still very young at the time.

Yet even then, among both his political and ordinary friends, his nickname was **Dayı**.

As far as I understand, around Elazığ and Tunceli this was a name given to wise, dignified and respected people who solved problems.

Even before becoming more politically developed, Dayı had already established himself as **Dayı**.

When DY's liquidationism and flight from revolution became apparent, separation became unavoidable for the Istanbul Revolutionary Youth cadres.

Dayı was one of those at their head.

But it must also be remembered that ideological clarity had not yet been fully achieved at that time.

It was our people, under Dayı's direction, who first collected all of Mahir's writings and reproduced them by mimeograph.

But generally, there was still inexperience, an immaturity arising from youth.

It was in this atmosphere that a meeting attended by approximately 50 cadres took place.

At that meeting, Dayı's qualities of bringing people together and leading came to the forefront.

More accurately, these qualities had existed before, but at that meeting they were confirmed and accepted by everyone.

There were many people at the meeting whose names there is no need to mention here today.

Dayı was among the youngest and least experienced.

Yet within a short period, he became the one who came most strongly to the forefront.

Later, following the decision taken at that meeting, the road continued under the name Revolutionary Left.

We describe these periods in one or two sentences, but each of them was itself part of a great epic, and each was an epic in its own right.

Until 12 September, there was the organisation of the struggle against fascism, the struggle waged against opportunism, and the creation of a new illegal organisation within a network of relationships that had been exposed as a result of the split with DY.^{iv}

Dayı took these enormous responsibilities upon himself.

Afterwards came the creation of a tradition of resistance and refusal to surrender against torture and oppression in the prisons.

The Death Fast resistance...

The epic...

According to the accounts of comrades, the confirmation of Dayı's leadership occurred above all in the period after the Death Fast, when, as a gain of the resistance, the prisoners were brought together.

That was the period in which the Defence was written.

I remember one of our martyred leaders saying:

"For example, we would discuss the national question. If there were 25 people in the meeting, at least 20 different views would be put forward. As the meeting went on, there would be moments when I thought it would be impossible for us ever to reach agreement on the issue."

“Dayı would speak last. He would take up everything that had been said in such a way, show the shortcomings and mistakes so clearly, that even those who had defended their own views most strongly would say, ‘Dayı is right. How did we fail to see this side of the question?’”

He possessed such depth, breadth and analytical ability.

Believe me, I heard about this depth and intellectual power from everyone who knew Dayı.

And our line is there before us.

The proof of the movement’s predictions is there before us.

And **HE** was its principal architect.

At that point, Dayı was naturally a political, ideological and popular leader.

The many accounts I have heard only reinforce this conclusion.

I suppose I have gone on rather a long time.

But there is no end to what can be said.

I will try to address one more aspect of him.

Because I know Arabic, I have always been interested in foreign television channels.

We could receive many Arab channels.

It was 27 July, either in 1999 or 2000; I am not certain which.

I was watching **Al Jazeera** during breakfast.

They had a programme called *Today in History*, in which they chose a subject and discussed it for at least ten minutes.

Suddenly, I saw footage from our Death Fast.

I listened to the commentary.

They were explaining it in our language and perspective.

Even the sentences were almost the same.

Naturally, this filled me with tremendous happiness and enthusiasm.

They broadcast it four or five times during the day.

I informed the movement and asked how it had happened.

One of the comrades responsible for propaganda — press and publications — explained it to me.

After the **1996 Death Fast**, some comrades had asked for footage because they were planning to carry out work on the subject.

Dayı instructed the relevant comrade:

“Prepare a documentary film with these characteristics and send it.”

Days passed.

Then weeks.

Then months.

The film still had not reached the comrades who had requested it.

Dayı genuinely forgot nothing.

For this reason, when we asked the movement for something or raised a question, even if there was a delay, there was absolutely no need to ask again.

It was the same with large matters and small ones.

He knew every one of us by name.

That is exactly how it was.

I heard this from many comrades.

For this reason, although there had been a delay, the comrade who had asked for the film initially did not ask again.

Later, absolutely certain that Dayı had not forgotten, the comrade raised the matter again in an appropriate way.

Dayı had in fact been pursuing the film.

But the comrades who were supposed to prepare it had been putting it off, using their workload as an excuse.

In order to teach them a lesson, Dayı had a video-mixing machine brought to the place where he was staying.

He had never used such a machine in his life.

He obtained the instruction manual.

He asked comrades who knew how it worked.

And in his spare time, by working and working, within a short period — the comrade said about a week — he learnt how to use it.

And the comrades who claimed to be **“too busy”** already knew how to use the machine.

Dayı wrote the structure for a documentary, prepared the text, selected the appropriate music and footage, and sat down at the machine.

After some time, a 60-minute documentary film was ready.

And it was a good documentary by professional standards.

It was not an “amateur production.”

This was the film that was sent to the comrades who had requested it.

There, it was translated and distributed to more than fifty revolutionary organisations throughout the world and to the foreign press.

That was the story behind the film I watched on Al Jazeera that day.

Here too we can see that Dayı was the architect of the movement’s prestige in every sense, and that there were no limits either to his determination to teach or to his determination to work.

He Went to Sleep with the Revolution and Woke Up with the Revolution; That Is How He Led

The things we have heard about Dayı’s life, the memories that have been related — a person almost absorbs them.

They are extremely instructive.

There are lessons we can draw from them.

Let me also recount some of the things I have heard.

I too had heard examples of what an extraordinary memory Dayı possessed.

One comrade had also related conversations about telephone numbers.

This comrade apparently handled a great deal of telephone traffic.

Because of certain negative developments, an instruction was issued that everyone was to erase all written and recorded telephone numbers.

The comrade asked:

“Me too? Do I have to erase mine as well? But I have so many telephone numbers.”

Dayı replied:

“You too. You too...”

He said:

“It is simply a question of disciplining the brain.”

He instructed the comrade to erase them and know them all by heart.

In the end, those numbers were erased and memorised.

It was demonstrated that this was possible.

When we look at our history, there are periods in which we see very ordinary personalities occupying extraordinarily important positions or carrying out extraordinarily important tasks.

Sometimes that has happened.

At times, you find yourself wondering:

How could someone with such ordinary qualities take on such a responsibility? How could they carry it out?

I think the answer to this question must be Dayı.
Because yes, HE knew an area far better than the person responsible for that area did.
He knew the people, the relationships, the possibilities, the problems, the contradictions and the solutions.

He knew all of these much better.

Because that was his world.

He went to sleep with the revolution and woke up with the revolution.

That was how he led.

Under his leadership, even the most ordinary personalities and the most ordinary abilities could take on such duties and responsibilities.

There was apparently a house that Dayı and the comrades began visiting shortly after the prison escape.

A married couple lived there with their small child.

The husband was an indifferent man.

He was self-sacrificing and committed to us, but inattentive towards his home and did not value his wife enough.

One day, Dayı came to the house.

The taps were broken.

A screw had fallen out of the curtain rail, and it was hanging down.

There were various small repair jobs like these, but they had simply been left undone.

Dayı rebuked the man.

He said:

“What kind of man of the house are you? Can’t your hands hold a pair of pliers or a screwdriver?”

The man turned bright red with embarrassment.

And as soon as Dayı and the others left, he repaired everything.

Naturally, the woman of the house was delighted.

She had told her husband repeatedly, but he had never listened or taken any notice.

She was pleased that Dayı had noticed these things and warned her husband.

Many, many years passed.

Something later brought that family to mind, and Dayı sent them a small gift, saying it was in memory of those days.

I myself witnessed how that man sobbed uncontrollably even while telling this story, and how extraordinarily attached he was to Dayı.

Apparently Dayı never overlooked any deficiency, mistake or negative behaviour.

He would always stop over it, discuss it, persuade the person concerned and transform every negative point into an opportunity for education.

And in this respect, the movement’s educational style is already the same.

It was always said that Dayı was someone who made things easier.

Even the most complicated and difficult tasks, he would simplify, make clear and manageable, and convince people that they could be done.

And then there was his practicality.

One example was related concerning this.

It was during the coup period.

Possibilities in Europe were very limited.

Communication was mainly carried out by fax.

The fax machine used by Dayı and the comrades broke down.

The person beside him knew English, but for some reason simply could not take the fax machine to a repair shop and have it repaired.

Perhaps he considered carrying the fax beneath himself.

Perhaps in his mind he exaggerated the difficulty of explaining what was wrong.

Whatever the reason, he failed to have it repaired.

Dayı saw that nothing was going to happen.

Although he did not know English, he put the fax machine into a sack, threw it over his shoulder and went straight to a telephone repair shop.

With his broken English, using his hands and gestures to explain the problem, he made himself understood.

He had the machine repaired.

Then he picked it up and brought it back.

That was how practical and hardworking he was.

This History Was Written in Blood; It Is the History of Our Martyrs

“This history is, above all, the history of our martyrs, written in blood. Our martyrs may not physically be among us today. But they are here through their ideas, their struggle, their way of life and their dreams of fighting as members of the Party. They are with us.

“We are stronger through their ideas and struggles. Their eyes are always upon us with those qualities that never bowed before the enemy even under the most difficult conditions — qualities that died but were never defeated.

“They test us at every moment. Continuing their legacy depends upon our successfully passing these tests.”

— Dursun Karataş, from his speech at the Party Founding Congress



EPIC OF THE MARCH

Along a wall
A young man before the wall
On the wall there is writing, blood-red
 This is his first step,
his first brushstroke upon history
How many roads he will yet walk,
How many walls will bow before him
How much will be written,
How many walls will be embroidered
 The walls will speak
The crimson words finding their voice
Will tell the people of revolution
 But he is still at the beginning of the
road
Writing on the wall
Before the wall...
 There is revolution...
The future of the revolution.
 In the young man's gaze
there is an endless longing
an ambition
a hatred
a profound love
 all for the people
 Against imperialism and the
oligarchy
For independence,
democracy
and socialism
 The shoot that has sprouted in his
heart
A blazing passion in his eyes
An uncompromising struggle in his heart
 There will be revolution in his gaze
He will look upon the world
with Mahir's eyes
 He will walk the streets with him
 Now, at the beginning of that road
A young man before the wall:
 Dursun Karataş
 Writing on the wall:
 THE ONLY WAY IS REVOLUTION!

Time
Flows silently away
yet we all hear it
 It is invisible, yet we see it
It touches our skin and passes
 A wind
kisses our foreheads and moves on
 Takes the scent of our sweat
and scatters it across the mountains
 We are scattered into time
like stardust
Our hearts beat towards another season
 This is what struggle is like
Time carries us towards tomorrow
When our voice meets new lips.
 A heart that says
 "We came here not to return..."
Recreates itself
 When someone says
 "It is you who should surrender"...
 The traveller towards the sun
Finds new voices
When sent off with the words
 "There Is No Death for Us"
 The struggle
for labour
and for freedom for the peoples
Finds its voice in new hearts
 Time
Flows mightily
 From the Mahirs until today
His is an epic life
Bearing the struggle upon his shoulders
 Spitting in the face of betrayal
Marching against renegacy and desertion
Holding a mirror up to opportunism
And becoming the song of revolution
before the vampire face of denial
 His face always turned towards his
people
 Such is the life
We commemorate today
The legacy he left to the world as he
departed

And
 time flows
 When someone says
"You cannot love the people"
 It finds its echo in:
**"I have one life; let it be sacrificed
 for my people."**
 Time flows
 After so much hunger
 Tables are laid once again
 The *Karayilan* song is sung again
 Marches find their voices in new mouths
 And now, within those marches,
 we become a voice
 a rifle in the hand
 a bullet in the barrel
 fire in the heart
 Time flows
 That great wise one
 Turns eighteen
 From the flow of centuries
 To the Mahir of 30 March
 And now
 history will be written by his hand
 Time flows
 Today we are tomorrow
 Tomorrow we will be victory
 The pen of history is destined to
 march
 always across those pages
 Epics are written with that pen
 The thousands-of-years-long struggle of the
 peoples
 In defiance of slave owners, kings,
 lords and bosses
 Is an unbroken march towards tomorrow
 Only the hand holding the pen
 changes
 Prometheus reaches out to
 Spartacus
 Kisses those who remain upon the forehead
 They go towards the sun
 Those who rise and march like
 Bedreddin
 Those who fall struck down like İshak
 Pir Sultan,
 rising from the gallows of Hallaj al-Mansur,
 with his saz in his hand,
 plants roses in the breast of Anatolia
 Those who fight water them with
 their blood

The pen of history marches on
 The waves in which the Suphis were
 buried
 Beat against the shores with a pitch-black
 fury
 Occupation is a dagger
 driven into the breast of Anatolia
 Heroes tear it out and cast it away
"Independence or death!"
 This is the slogan of freedom.
 And history marches
 Our children are born
 into another captivity
 In the homeland of the Yankees
 Thick chains are forged
 The arms of the peoples are bound
 History marches
 Against all this captivity
 We march
 to break the shackles
 To march
 Is one of the most beautiful acts in the
 world
 We must march
 Not merely because marching is beautiful
 But because it is necessary
 Because it is indispensable
 We must march
 This world will not turn
 If there are no marchers
 It is the steps we take
 that turn it
 beneath our feet
 The twentieth century came with
 wars
 They could not finish dividing up the world
 among themselves
 And then they looked
 and saw that
 the Soviets
 had smiled upon history like a rose
 Those who regarded themselves
 as the masters of the world
 Ordered the White Armies
 to destroy that rose's smile
 When bullets struck
 the smile of the people and of life
 Once the people had raised their flags
 upon the ramparts

Lenin marched
 The Revolution marched
 They could only watch
 The uncontrollable appetite of the
 monopolies
 Is the rumbling stomach
 of their never-satisfied coffers
 “War!” “War!” they cried
 War again
 And once again
 imperialism’s disappointment
 While trying to divide the world
 They lost one-third of it
 Stalin stamped
 the seal of socialism’s victory
 upon the heart of Europe
 Turkey remained
 in the part held in imperialism’s embrace
 In desperation they rushed in
 They gave cannons and rifles
 Then scrap aeroplanes and tanks
 Boxes of powdered milk and tins of food...
 They called the bait
 they placed inside the trap
Marshall Aid
 The children of my country,
 growing and flourishing,
 were sold for a few cents
 They dressed them in American
 coats
 Put American rifles in their hands
 American underwear on their backsides
 They never asked:
 Whose army was this army?
 Yet this was the simplest question of
 life
 whose answer had been given in Korea
 Some left an arm in Korea
 Some left a comrade behind
 That was how the Mendereses
 earned the right
 to enter NATO!
 But questions accumulate
 They accumulate
 and one day overflow
 What strangled the Mendereses
 was not merely the greased rope
 but also accumulated questions
 that had never been answered
 Once questions begin to be asked
 more follow

That is why question marks
 are the first things
 lined up and shot
 against the walls of fascism
 There were always things being
 hidden
 Even the bilateral agreements
 did not contain everything
 We do not know what they sold
 Above and beneath the ground
 The soil kneaded by our sweat
 The sun scorching our skin
 Our seeds, our shoots, our fruits
 What has been left to us?
 What do we have apart from rebellion?
 We have no fields
 The factories belong to them
 A few figures on wage slips
 Carried from month to month
 as far as the grocer
 The paving stones in the streets
 The waves of the sea
 Mothers’ tears
 Snow in winter
 Leaves falling in autumn
 Number-three military haircuts
 Lies in the newspapers
 What else belongs to us?
 What do we possess apart from rebellion?
 Dowry chests?
 Photographs yellowing in albums?
 Gravestones
 left by our grandfathers?
 A history that has been plundered?
 Forests, rivers and seas
 sold for three pennies?
 Old memories
 of guard duty along the borders?
 Have only the children remained
 ours?
 Are those children even ours?
 But **“Our People”** remain!
 Our children
 They
 are always ours
 and will remain ours
 What remains with us
 What remains as hope
 Is rebellion
 And the streets...
Let us march.

Our steps
when they met the streets,
people smiled
their hearts filled with light
 “They are the students,” they said
“They are the hope
they are the future
Even if today is not ours
tomorrow will belong to them”
 And we marched
 We were the bridge of life
stretching from today into tomorrow
Our feet on the soil of today
Our hands in the dawn of the future
we were bridges of dreams
 Student halls
lecture theatres and canteens
the mouth of a volcano bubbling and boiling
 We were a burning mass
pouring into the streets
 We marched
with books in our pockets
 We marched
with heartfelt answers
to every question
 But we did not see imperialism in
books
We saw it in the blood left upon this black
soil
In plunder, pillage and devastation
In the many-starred flags
of the Sixth Fleet anchored at our docks
 We came to know it through the
bloody-booted GIs
whose very shadows polluted our streets
 Our answer to life’s question was:
**“LONG LIVE A FULLY
INDEPENDENT TURKEY!”**
 And before our slogans
America’s very smartly dressed sailors
were thrown into the sea
 We loved this country deeply
If we have a crime
that is our crime
 So that it might give life to our
people
we wanted a
**“Fully Independent
and Truly Democratic Turkey”**
 The answer of the oppressors
was once again blood and massacre...

The blood of Vedat Demircioğlu,
thrown from a window of Istanbul Technical
University
by the police,
has still not dried
 His flesh is warm
his heart still beats
in the struggle
 Because there is an account to be
settled
on that page of history
 Our noses were accustomed to the
smell of gunpowder
Our hands were not yet very familiar with
the trigger
 And one by one
the servants of imperialism massacred
them
 Speaking of God and scripture,
the round-bearded “Green Belts”
 They called the day
stained crimson in February ’69
“Glorious Sunday”
 We called it
“Bloody Sunday”
 Our people had called us
“the students”
 We called ourselves
**“Dev-Genç members” — Revolutionary
Youth**
 On 10 October 1969
When you say Dev-Genç
you must stop
 And then
you must bring your fist down upon the
table
 Because you cannot be Dev-Genç
without bringing down your fist
and tearing away the masks of the system
 If you call yourself Dev-Genç
you will look straight
into the faces of the oppressors
 When the fascists block the roads
you will let your fists speak
 When the time comes, the stick
When the time comes, your word will
become a bullet
 And you will march
without even looking behind you

However much the roads may twist
without stopping
without hesitation

Such were the times
But love the people to the fullest
and love the soil beneath your feet

Call the struggle
the very meaning of living
It is a time of struggle
Perhaps we will pass away
before there is even time
for our faces to wrinkle

A new human being is walking
through the streets
towards revolution

Marching
Breaking away
from the dirt of the old
cleansing himself of its dust

As though shaking history itself
He marches
His name
is Mahir

He is the master
of the hardest struggles
Marx's footprints are there
on the streets of Ankara
And Lenin and Mao...
He follows their trail

following Che
through the neo-colonial lands
Anatolia

is the threshing ground
of the greatest battles
Step by step
Mahir marches

He sees the dead-end roads
He marches
And he says:

**"The road of revolution
is rugged, winding and steep."**

Where those words are spoken
the asphalt roads end

When the road ends
our people take up picks and shovels
A new road is opened

in the Turkey of the world
Those who have given their hearts to
revolution
walk along that road
Their steps cross the swamps

A knife cuts through
the vines binding their feet

Legality for them
is now a tightening circle
And Mahir's pen
draws its own road
beyond all the lines

There is no time
A life in motion,
changing,
running

Tomorrow, shedding its shell,
slowly embraces today

Weapon in hand
from struggle to struggle
from action to action
history is written

Theory puts that history onto paper
A colour of revolution

distinct from every shade of red
takes shape in their hands

Flags wave in hearts
On smiling faces

in boycotts and strikes
at tobacco rallies
and in land occupations

A fire-red
song of revolution is sung

A life unlike any other
sprouts within those hearts

If its roots are there
its flowers are in tomorrow

In factories, in fields
At universities and in the streets

Those who surround us with their
bayonets
fear that flower

Their fear
means bloodshed,
pain and death for us

But when we roar
15-16 June becomes an uprising

That day in the streets
asking and questioning
seeking our rights
resisting

worker, student and unemployed
tradesman, peasant and civil servant
woman and man

we were the fist of the people

We were the battering ram
of the working people
that smashed every scheme
and struck against the palace gates
And even today they tremble
when we sing songs
of those days

Calm coves in little boats
may be safe and comfortable
but they take you nowhere

Gazing towards the horizons
waiting at the docks...

We,
with that luminous **"Island"** in our hearts,
must plunge into the struggle

The wind
is singing a song of revolution

And on the turbulent seas
storms
are waiting for us

Then hoist the sails!
Once we set out
the course will be drawn along the way...

And it is being drawn
Once we set out
loyalty will be tested along the way...

And it is being tested
In December 1970
this was how the Party was founded

This was how the seal
was stamped upon the struggle
The owner of that seal:

**People's Liberation Party-Front of
Turkey — THKP-C**

Party and Front
Flesh and nail

Brain and body
Heart and veins
Commander and fighters...

What is the Party?

The Party is Hope

The hope of liberation of the peoples
It is the mortar
that holds the building upright

If the people have been put to sleep
the Party is the needle

If the night is dark and cold
the Party is fire

If the flags have been lowered
the Party is rebellion

If the world has fallen silent
the Party is a cry

If hearts are under occupation
the Party is the free homeland

It is what points the barrel
at the brain of the oligarchy

It is what drives the bayonet
into imperialism's vulnerable belly

The Party is the defiance
of a will hardened into steel

A fearless call
to the whole world...

It is that which creates heroism
That which shakes thrones
That which gives hope to the peoples
and strikes fear into the oppressor

The Party is what opens the road
to revolution

A spark to tinder
tinder to brushwood
brushwood to timber

In the cities and countryside
the Party is the flame
that sets hearts alight.

A son to a mother
A comrade to the one who marches

A father who protects and watches
over

A mother who educates and raises

To the one who dedicates himself to
the struggle
the first teacher

and the commander at the front

It is a core of steel
that, when the day comes, becomes a
bullet in the barrel

And when the day comes
a shield before the heart
and the foundation of the factory

Let us march,
said Mahir

Now
what matters is to march

Our hope too
will take on flesh and bone
along this road

And they marched
In those days

the two ends of the civil servant's wage
still could not meet

And thousands of workers on strike
 had embraced the revolution
 The fire of the youth
 was igniting the hidden fuse
 inside hearts
 To extinguish it
 they declared **“martial law”**
 It was not enough
 They issued a memorandum
12 March 1971
 was engraved into history in this way
 The junta brought Erim
 to head the government.
 A motorbike was heading towards
 the mountains
 The Denizs
 were striking their waves against the
 mountains
 The roads had been blocked
 the manoeuvres were working relentlessly
 They say they saw Deniz in Ankara...
 They say he is in Palestine
 No, no,
 he is still in Istanbul
 Headlines in the newspapers
 bulletins every hour on the radio
 Time marches breathlessly
 Deniz and Yusuf
 with an immense longing for the mountains
 inside them
 and hands smelling of gunpowder
 are surrounded at Gemerek
 And in Kayseri
 Hüseyin İnönü is taken prisoner
 The **People’s Liberation Army of
 Turkey**
 continues to march
 even though they have been captured
 Something broke inside Mahir
 Because although they
 were walking on different paths
 they were climbing the same mountain
Let us march,
 said Mahir
Let us march, comrades
 They marched
 And wherever they passed
 they embroidered the land
 with their sweat
 and their blood

At the very centre of our hearts
 there is a country protected against sieges
 Its name is **Palestine**
 Its children, stones in their hands,
 defying tanks
 A country
 that turns struggle into hope
 that kneads struggle like bread
 amid deprivation and poverty
 That, under captivity,
 turns struggle into homeland
 A country that fights
 and demands an accounting
 Its name:
Palestine
 Whose dagger
 is driven into the heart of Palestine?
 The dagger is Israel
 its owner is imperialism
 Efraim Elrom
 is Israel’s envoy
 And in Istanbul
on 17 May 1971
 he saw the darkness
 in the eyes of the revolutionaries
**“There has never been armed
 resistance in Turkey
 against the attacks of the counter-
 revolution;
 we must begin it,
 we must create
 a tradition of resistance.
 In this resistance, many of us,
 perhaps all of us, may die,
 but we will leave
 a tradition of resistance
 to future generations.”**
 — Mahir Çayan
 A wind blew
 The hearts of those
 listening to the radio stirred
 Hear this:
 There are revolutionaries on these
 lands
 They march against imperialism
 and the oligarchy
 with weapons in their hands...
 They heard it
 The **“Sledgehammer Prime
 Minister”** heard it too

This was the first hammer-blow
 that struck his head
 In the hands of Mahir and his
 comrades
 a new human being was taking shape
 One who, even if the price is death,
 does not tire of marching
 Breaking through walls
 crossing the roads
 flowing into history
 like a cascading river
 A new human being
 flowing towards tomorrow
 The **Party-Front**
 is the proclamation of this flow
 And they call
 the people of Anatolia
 to revolution
 With words that awaken
 consciousness
 And they say to those in power:
**"Release all imprisoned
 revolutionaries"**
 in exchange for Elrom's life
 The answer:
 repression, persecution, torture
 And so
 Elrom returns to his country
 in a coffin
 The roads of Istanbul twist and turn
 The roads of Istanbul turn corner after
 corner
 The roads of Istanbul recognise
 these determined footsteps
 The streets bear witness
 to an honourable march
 Our people are marching
 to break through the sieges
 The Ziverbey torture mansion
 stands ready at the command of the
 counter-guerrilla
 Intellectuals and democrats are
 under interrogation
 and revolutionaries...
 Two dear comrades
 heart to heart
 They march
 What they walk through
 is not merely the streets of Maltepe

In their steps
 they see the tradition being created
 and the future
 ***"My cigarette is burning my hand
 In Maltepe
 surrounded by the dwarfs of darkness
 two Islanders sing a march
 In the singing of the two Islanders
 the guns fall silent
 A profound silence covers
 the heart of Maltepe
 The manly voices of the Islanders
 spread in waves all around
 At that moment
 everything disappears from the eyes
 of the two Islanders
 The dwarfs of darkness grow smaller
 smaller and smaller
 As though what had just been fired
 were not Thompson bullets
 but tiny arrows
 from the fingers of dwarfs
 At that moment neither thousands
 of security forces
 nor police, nor armoured brigades
 nor Thompsons, nor machine guns
 matter at all
 Everything is small, insignificant
 and powerless
 before the two Islanders
 The chorus of the Islanders
 creates panic among the dwarfs of
 darkness
 On their faces can be read
 humiliation, bewilderment
 and a little shame
 It is as though a divine force
 has bound their hands and arms
 Until
 the march of the two Islanders ends
 The Islanders, their left fists raised,
 stand before the window
 Even though they are exposed
 targets
 they cannot fire
 It is a strange moment
 This is the moment
 when the dwarfs of darkness
 become human
 The dwarfs do not even speak
 at that moment

They are bewitched
by the raised left fists
of the two Islanders
And they disappear
amid the melodies
of the two-man chorus
The chorus falls silent
the spell is broken
The dwarfs remember their duty
Fingers on triggers — rat-tat-tat...
And burying my Cevahir
in my heart
I return
to my treacherous cell.”**
— Mahir Çayan

Hüseyin Cevahir

A pair of dark eyes
a pair of fists
A red-hot iron in the furnace
As sharp as his anger
as bright as his steel
From the mountains of Dersim
cascading like the springs of Munzur
he flows
into the very heart of our struggle
The Nurhak Mountains
salute the dawn
Through the voices of
Sinan, Kadir and Alpaslan
Cevahir
rests his forehead...
Another sun rises.
From Maltepe
The world listens closely
to the voice of the Islanders
overflowing from the siege
As bullets rain
into Cevahir's body
And in his hand
an inextinguishable torch
A wounded heart
is what remains to Mahir
from the siege
He marches in captivity
from wall to wall
Carrying Cevahir in his mind
pressing his hand against the wound
Something aches deep inside
He presses his anger
against the pain
It becomes a fire

This time the courtrooms tremble
before the thunderous voice
of the Islanders
Those who, from the defendant's
dock,
judge tyranny
with the strength of that honourable
struggle
are written into history
Once the love of freedom
has entered your heart
Whether you are on a mountain or at
sea
Whether on a rooftop or in a cell
You find a way
and march
towards freedom
Hands work furiously in the tunnel
nail by nail,
breathlessly,
metres crossed centimetre by centimetre
The military detention centre
has now been pierced
right through its heart!
Their songs walk
from four walls
into the streets
And they march
through the darkness of the night
There is no sound
at the waiting place
The waiting place is empty
At the waiting place
there is nothing
but renegacy
They bury betrayal
in the rubbish heap of history
And there
they march
to become a rainbow
They organise the struggle
against renegacy
All the colours
are now in their eyes
Of hope
and struggle
First Ulaş falls
**“A Mauser in Ulaş's hand
his Mauser resembles a folk song
This is how our people die
This is how our people die”**

Ulaş fights like a folk song
 In Levent
 he breaks through the siege
 And in Fındıkzade
 Ulaş again speaks with his weapon
 Covered in blood
 he finally falls
 in Arnavutköy
 The date is
19 February 1972
 Ulaş lives
 where he fell
 And newly born babies
 become Ulaş
 Because Ulaş means revolution
 means not surrendering
 To resist to the death
 means Ulaş
 To say Ulaş
 means war
**“The body of every guerrilla
 who falls at every obstacle
 creates a storm of revolution.”**
 — Mahir Çayan
 Mahir’s chest
 is familiar with storms
 Once again he sets sail
 towards the place
 where struggle is forged
 And he marches
 from Ankara
 towards the Black Sea
 The pain of Ulaş
 was like a mountain
 And he buried Koray
 in his heart as well
 Yet he walks upright
 walks fearlessly
 He marches
 To march
 is one of the most beautiful acts in the
 world
 Especially to march towards
 revolution
 against the tyranny of the oppressor
 To give one’s life
 to an honourable march...
 It is beautiful
 Not merely because marching is
 beautiful
 But because it is necessary

One must march
 without hesitation
Kızıldere
 A tiny village
 in the Niksar district of Tokat
 no bigger than the palm of a hand
 Our people know
 where and how to die
 Where and how
 history is written
 Where and how
 to fight
 When the time comes
 a mud-brick house becomes a fortress
 Our marches wave
 from its battlements...
 Turkey
 is a place no larger than a palm
 within the world
 And the world
 is even smaller
 within the universe
 But if a fire
 is carried from heart to heart
 then it grows
 From a mud-brick house
 to Kızıldere
 Village by village
 street by street
 it grows
 Forest by forest
 house by house
 it marches
 Mountain by mountain
 valley by valley
 the fire is carried
 From hand to hand
 from heart to heart
 All the way to the stars
 it marches through the universe
 Hüseyin fell in Maltepe
 Ulaş in Arnavutköy
 Mahir marched
 all the way to Kızıldere
 Their dream
 was a march towards victory
 What is victory?
 If it means winning a battle
 the Versailles forces defeated the Paris
 Commune
 Spartacus was defeated

And the Three Hundred
 died at the Hot Gates
 So what is victory?
 Is it to wear a crown
 in ceremonies?
 To have enormous monuments
 erected in your name?
 Whose is victory?
 Those who die fighting
 cannot be regarded as defeated
 while their beliefs live on
 Struggle is such a thing
 If you are right
 on the road you walk
 Victory is yours
 under every condition
 What matters is to march
 And to say Mahir
 means being able to say:
**"We came here not to return
 but to die."**
 To say Mahir
 means victory
 Was it a dream
 to march towards revolution
 with weapons in hand?
 How many brave ones fell
 for the dream of revolution
 Victory
 means being able to die
 for your dreams
 Because dreams are immortal
 And victory
 means being able to leave behind
 a road leading to those dreams
 But those without dreams
 cannot understand this
 These green uniforms
 these black shadows
 The Mausers, the machine guns
 and those who own them
 They do not know
 what victory is
 What is right?
 What is truth?
 What is honesty?
 What is justice?
 But they know
 how to rain bullets
 inside tightening sieges
 Such is the siege taking place

The Islanders are singing marches
 and those surrounding them are afraid
 Loves find their voice
 war becomes a folk song in their hearts
 At the centre of the siege
 a table is laid
 At one end of the table
 Karayılan
 At another
 Vedat and Taylan
 Pir Sultan of Banaz
 joins Baba İshak and Bedreddin
 They sit cross-legged
 for the struggle
 On one side, them
 On the other
 those who carve blood
 onto the table of the poor
 There will be struggle
 at this table
 A merciless clash
 No hesitation
 No compromise
 There is no place
 for mercy at the table
 A brave voice is heard
 shattering the siege
 A crystal drop from that voice
 falls and mingles with the waters
 Kızıldere flows into history
 People may die
 But the river
 does not care
 about rains of bullets
 Mahir's voice
 mingles with eternity
 with the first burst of fire
 It is his flesh that is struck
 But his spirit is immortal
 and remains forever
 within our struggle
 The crackling
 of blazing gun barrels
 The smell of burning
 A thousand wounds opened
 in the breast of the mud-brick house
 Become anger on the trigger
 against those
 who cauterise pain with fire...
 Our people are fighting

Fire for fire,
 life for life.
 The voice of the Islanders
 flows into the waterfalls
 Now the bullets of justice speak
 And the British pay
 the price of being soldiers
 of imperialism
 The hands of the brave ones who
 resist
 stamp the seal of honour
 upon history
 And then
 the bombs explode
 Upon the bodies of the Islanders
 a crimson flag waves
 They are a bundle of lives
 a river overflowing
 from the mud-brick house...
 The barrels fall silent
 hands remain lifeless on the triggers
 Silence falls drop by drop
 For the executioner
 fear is worse than death
 Trembling black shadows
 touch the bodies of the Islanders
 And the bloodthirsty tyranny
 shoots even the wounded
 Mahir Çayan, Sinan Kazım
 Özüdoğru,
 Cihan Alptekin, Hüdai Arıkan,
 Ömer Ayna, Sabahattin Kurt,
 Nihat Yılmaz, Ahmet Atasoy,
 Ertan Saruhan, Saffet Alp...
THE TEN gave their lives at Kızıldere
 But they gave life
 to the revolution
 They,
 with their steps running towards revolution,
 became Hope
 in the hearts of the peoples
 Militant in actions
 heroic under siege
 They became
 a defiant smile
 on the faces of the peoples
 Distilled from suffering
 they became lament, folk song and march
 upon the tongue

Reborn in struggles
 they set out once more
 upon the road of revolution
 ...
 Deniz marches like a mountain
 boots on his feet
 parka on his back
 His executioners follow behind
 fearfully
 From the waves of Deniz
 Yusuf marches
 They go as though going to an action
 slogans on their lips
 An inextinguishable fire
 inside their chests
 As though they are not walking
 towards the gallows
 but towards revolution
 Hüseyin marches
 The greased rope
 in the executioner's hand
 Upon the scaffold
 their lives like an epic
 Three heroes
 with the hearts of leaders
 The meaning of their lives
 finds its voice
 in their final words
 The brotherhood of peoples
 Anger against imperialism
 Faith in revolution
 and determination...
 And the light in their eyes
 defeats the tyrant's darkness
 A branch of sunlight
 stretches out from them
 And İbrahim
 breathes life into the struggle
 from the mountains
 In a siege
 he sends Ali Haydar
 into eternity
 And leaning upon his Mauser
 he marches
 With a wounded heart
 towards the inferno of the struggle
 Handcuffs,
 shackles,
 bars,
 suspension,

falaka,
 electricity...
 İbrahim's eyes,
 longing for the green of the mountains,
 turn the pale walls blue
 If only they saw
 the spark of a Mauser
 they might ignite and flow
 might burn like embers
 But across the cold concrete
 pale shadows move
 Kaypakkaya under torture
 flesh torn to pieces
 nails pulled out
 a skeleton of skin and bone
 Yet those eyes remain
 defiantly blue
 defiantly steel
 Those who follow him
 travel through the passion
 inside those eyes
 Reaching their hands towards
 Munzur
 they leave his body
 in the Diyarbakır dungeon
 There was, of course,
 a reason for this bloodthirstiness
 this kingdom of oppression:
 Fear of revolution!
 And they are still afraid
 (Even of their dead)
 ...
 A wind blows
 scattering the leaves
 The soldiers of the revolution
 drive autumn
 from our hearts
 A rebellious and noble folk song
 travels across the captive lands
 It says **Independence:**
 Yankees, get out!
 It says **Democracy:**
 This country is ours,
the fascists will be defeated
 It says **Socialism:**
 Everything will belong to labour
the capitalists will be buried in history
 In Dayi's hands
 are the first pages of history
 The essence of the struggle
 the word of revolution

Mahir's **Collected Writings**
 They sow them like seeds
 The streets of Istanbul
 begin to swell
 What sprouts and flowers now
 is revolution
 The children of Hope
 begin healing the wounds again
 The struggle warms
 as the tea brews
 Everything is recreated
 in his hands
 The youth
 learn once again
 the road of the revolution in Turkey
 Someone asks:
 **"All right, but we have no
 weapons.
 And where are we going to begin the
 revolution?"**
 We are the weapon, comrades.
 And we will begin
 the revolution
 with ourselves
 Everywhere...
 We have no liberated zone
 And for a long time
 we will not have one
 First let us liberate our hearts
 from the siege of imperialism
 The greatest revolution
 will rise to the attack
 from there
 These are how
 the first steps are taken
 **"We are marching again,
 comrades,"**
 says the young teacher of revolution
 And from hand to hand
 goes **Collected Writings**
 Mahir Çayan smiles
 in his eyes
 They will come out!
 A wave of excitement
 a joy...
 They will come out of prison
 and once again
 arm themselves with struggle
 Those who call themselves
 the **"old rifles"**

will shine again
in the struggle...

Hearts are birds in love
captivated by the song of revolution

They are waiting for a light
an enthusiasm
a magical touch

Thousands of hearts stand ready
As though they will take them
before themselves
and flow towards revolution

And they came out!
In reality
they had already sifted their flour
and hung up the sieve

But when they saw that enthusiasm
they imagined sedan chairs
were waiting for them

They were wrong
What waits in ambush
is blood and wounds
if you wish to march towards revolution

And they
thought they could polish up desertion
and sell it beautifully

They were wrong
In this country
people fall asleep
with unanswered questions

And begin the day
with pains
for which they no longer
even seek a cure

Those whose actions
go no further than words
cannot find a remedy
for that pain

And so
those who imagined themselves
to be salvation
were left standing there
with their dreamlessness

The struggle waits for no one
Life does not listen
whatever you may say

That is why
the travellers of Hope
both march
and learn within the struggle

Sometimes crawling
feeling their way forward

Sometimes running breathlessly
With labour

audacity
and limitless commitment

Facing suffering
Sharing victories
They will march

through ambushes
Such is the law
of revolution

At the university gates
during the watches that are kept

On nights walked
with weapons at the waist
In forums

and in the struggle...
Slowly the face appears
of the leader who comes to the forefront

With eyes like steel
and words that shake

In action that gives substance to his
words

he carries unshakeable truths into life
Believing when no one believes

Working night and day
when no one else works

Fighting
when everyone else has withdrawn and
hidden

Giving strength
when others are exhausted

The new human being
takes shape in his face

At the very centre of the struggle
the iron becomes white-hot
between hammer and anvil

Gathering and organising
embracing and drawing people together

It is a heroic spirit
travelling from land to land

The "Frontists"
those brave leaders

Dayı and his comrades

They placed a whole world
inside hearts no bigger than a fist

They took the struggle upon their
shoulders

so that we might make real
that immortal dream:

the "Island"

Our fire never went out

Mahir and his comrades
 became fires
 from the bullets fired at Kızılder
 Fires throwing out sparks
 It caught flame
 from hand to hand
 from city to city
 And once again the youth marched
 with hearts as great as giants
 Now it is a spring
 green and smiling
 Blooming on the faces of students
 in the streets of the country
 and spreading among the working people...
 They were tempered
 in fascist sieges
 and overcame every one of them
 When these hearts
 once join the halay
 When they strike their fist
 upon the arena of struggle
 the dogs scatter and flee
 In December '74
 Şahin Aydın falls
 stretched out in blood
 Yıldız University is covered in blood
 the treacherous hands of the fascists
 are covered in blood
 The wave of our anger
 frightens those drooping moustaches
 And beneath the skirts of their
 uniforms
 they hide their fear
 We march
 These streets are ours
 this city is ours
 this homeland is ours
 We march against fascism
 Kerim Yaman is shot
 Tens of thousands of fists clench
 Tens of thousands of hands reach
 out
 Tens of thousands of hearts
 in his name
 set the streets ablaze
 with their footsteps
 We become an uprising
 We are kneaded
 with blood-red anger
 Fifty thousand hearts swear an oath

In our hands
 we rise
 with his vengeance
 And life goes on
 Life always goes on
 Whatever pain we have written
 upon its pages
 Whatever brave one
 we have wrapped in our arms
 and left in the embrace of the earth
 It does not even stop
 for a moment to catch its breath
 It marches
 in ceaseless movement
 And we march
 inside the struggle called life
 How does a seed split open?
 How does a dry branch sprout?
 How does a leaf turn green?
 How does a flower bloom?
 How does a mountain rise up and
 march?
 How does a waterfall roar?
 How do all the little creatures
 awaken?
 How does an ant carry its burden?
 How do birds find their way?
 How does the wind cross the seas?
 How do trees smile at spring?
 How do all these things
 in the universe live?
 Just like that
 Our struggle branches out
 and spreads
 Slowly multiplying
 and expanding
 Everything within its own nature
 Life moves
 Life carries itself towards tomorrow
 by renewing itself
 We run towards the struggle
 renewing ourselves
 Learning and organising
 We march
 armed with hope
 If to live is a war
 we do justice to it
 by fighting
 Turk, Kurd, Laz,
 Arab, Circassian and Georgian
 We march shoulder to shoulder

People grow
 in different languages
 different religions
 different colours
 One holds the spoon differently
 Does another laugh differently?
 Does another cry differently?
 Does the red-hot iron
 pressed against the breast of the people
 burn every heart differently?
 People united
 by pain and joy
 one in essence, one in word
 flow
 Born from springs
 into the river of struggle
 We have a common account
 to settle
 with those who steal our labour
 We have a common account
 to settle
 with those who have taken our homeland
 captive
 beneath occupying boots
 And this account
 will be settled
 weapon in hand
 In cities and countryside
 fighting like lions
 A call rises from Ankara:
We are one, comrades,
let us unite
 And hands reach out
 towards one another
 The old rifles
 of the deserters
 had not been worth five pennies
 This time betrayal is more insidious
 It markets itself
 as though it were militant
 Before the hands could unite
 they had already united
 to liquidate the weapons of revolution
 What was Mahir's first lesson?
Armed struggle is fundamental
all other forms are subordinate to it
 Yet these wiseacres
 turned the first lesson upside down
 They built a wall
 against criticism
 and buried themselves in silence

We are the ones
 who plough the land
 We are the ones
 who sow the seed
 And again, we are the ones
 who reap the crop
 We grind the wheat
 We make it into flour
 we sift it
 We mix and knead the dough
 And again
 we bake the bread
 But who eats the bread?
 Who takes the lion's share?
 We are the ones
 who graze the animal
 Who groom it, clean it
 Who, when necessary,
 share a roof with it
 Who watch over its health
 more carefully than our own lives
 Again, it is us
 Who eats its meat?
 Who wears its wool and skin?
 Who benefits from all this?
 Whose pockets are being filled?
 We are the ones
 who dig the foundations
 We mix the mortar
 We build the wall
 We put up the structure
 We build the chimney
 We fit the door
 We plaster the house
 and paint it
 But who lives inside it?
 We are the ones
 who make and create
 Whether it is bread, meat or a house
 a road, a dam, electricity,
 an engine, water, a factory...
 Our hands create them all
 And yet
 we are not the ones
 who share them
 Let us ask
 Who eats these things?
 Who wears them?
 Who lives in those places?
 For whom do the waters flow?
 For whom do the dams fill?

For whom do the factories work?
Where do all the roads lead?
Let us ask
Let us question
We are the ones who deserve them
Who steals our rights?
We are production itself
Who takes it from our hands?
Let us ask
Let us question
Let us go
and stand at their doors
Is the right not ours?
Let us strike them down
Let us take what is ours
Asking and questioning
the working people flow into the squares
A worker with arms outstretched
having broken his chains...
as though embracing the square
he greets his brothers and sisters
With five hundred thousand hearts
the heart of the city pounds
The footsteps of five hundred
thousand people
one million feet!
Do you know what kind of roar that
is?
From five hundred thousand mouths
a volcano thunders
What kind of fire is this
blazing in the square?
One million hands
locked together
One million eyes
looking at one another
with smiles
Millions of fingers
Those fingers
will soon become fists
The fists will rise
With that cry
the belly of the sky will split open
Let our oath be to this square
The oppression that thirsts for our
blood
now speaks
to silence our voices
A flash
a bullet
blood...

All voices fall silent
at that moment
A wounded seagull
cries out in the distance
A life is cut short
And the heart of the people
is riddled with holes
The Water Authority
The Intercontinental Hotel...
And from the vehicles raining bullets
the bloody hand of fascism reaches out
It grabs and wounds
grabs and smashes people into one
another
grabs and throws them to the ground
The degenerate gunmen
of imperialism and the oligarchy
create a crimson square
from our lives
A bullet
another...
Stop
Now those speaking
are the self-sacrificing fighters of the
revolution
calling people to struggle
**"Run, comrades, run...
Around the Monument, around the
Monument!"**
That giant heart
becomes a giant fist
Becomes a shield
for its people
Now it is the Dev-Genç members
who meet fascism
with burning gun barrels
Exactly where
and when they are needed
This is what leadership is
At the fiercest moment
of the struggle
Marching in front of the people
This is how lives are protected
Slowly the evening descends
The smell of gunpowder disperses
So great is the fear
of the oppressor
From every wound of the square
the blood of the people flows
Brows furrowed
teeth clenched

One by one
 the immortal soldiers of the revolution
 are lifted onto shoulders
 Thirty-five spears
 are driven into the centre of our hearts
 And from that day onwards
 Taksim Square
 becomes **1 May Square**
 We will come again, O square
 We will come again
 We will smile
 at your magnificent victory of millions
 Prepare yourself
 with every stone you possess
 for that great day
 Squares are the heart of a city
 the streets its arteries...
 And Beyazıt
 with its square, library, market
 and university
 is the encampment of the students
 The leaves of the plane tree
 carry the voices
 shouted across the square
 In the booksellers' bazaar
 steps grow heavier
 List in hand
 shop by shop
 people search
 sometimes for a person
 sometimes for a rebellion
 And in Beyazıt Square
 bombs explode
 On the sixteenth of March
 time stops
 Those who threw the bombs
 are the unadulterated enemy
 The uniformed and civilian
 executioners
 of the system
 What remains behind
 is blood and wounds
 Hatice Özen falls
 like a branch breaking from a tree
 Cypress branches lie across the
 square
 Seven lives
 covered in blood
 There is no revolutionism
 without a price

To those who think there is
 life asks its question like this
 The road of revolution
 is once again rugged, winding and steep
 A pit on the right
 a precipice on the left
 There is only one road
 Either you will fall behind life
 or you will shoulder this price
 Those who said
"Our road is one"
 were afraid to march like Mahir
 Those who had "eaten the bread of
 revolution"
 became a burden on the back of the people
 Are we really walking
 on the same "road"?
 Is this your
"Revolutionary" Path?
 Is our task
 not to organise the war
 but to caress the longings of millions
 with polished words?
 If this is your "road"
 our footsteps will not be on it
 Because:
**"Our Path Is the Path of the
 Çayans"**
 On **1 May 1978**
 history is written in this way
 The leadership of the revolution
 draws its own road
**"In today's world
 it is impossible to fight
 without being prepared
 to stand alone."**
 — Dursun Karataş
 Dayı
 once again shoulders the struggle
 Answering every question
 he shows the correct course
 And in this way
 he lifts from before us
 the curtain that obscures reality
 How are leaders born?
 Spartacus was a gladiator
 even his body did not belong to himself
 But Aristonicus was a prince!
 Sheikh Bedreddin was a scholar
 Pir Sultan
 a poet with his saz in his hand

Marx was an academic
 Mahir was a student
 at the Faculty of Political Sciences
 Lenin and Fidel were lawyers
 Kawa was a blacksmith
 Che Guevara a doctor
 Zapata a landowner
 Omar Mukhtar and Mao were
 teachers
 Dimitrov was a printing worker
 Dayı
 a forestry engineer
 In short
 their professions were different
 but their qualities were shared
 Spartacus
 could have died
 from a single sword blow
 Would the slaves not have risen?
 They hanged Sheikh Bedreddin
 in the marketplace of Serres
 Did the uprisings end?
 They hanged Omar Mukhtar too
 Who was the victor?
 Who was engraved into history?
 Lenin created the first revolution
 If he had not existed
 would socialism
 never have achieved victory?
 If Uncle Ho had not existed
 would the occupiers have been able
 to remain in the colonial lands?
 If Mahir had not drawn
 the road of revolution
 would there never have been
 another?
 They say:
**“Whatever happened in history
 happened because it could not have
 happened otherwise.”**
 It is the people who create leaders
 It is the people’s struggle with life
 Their hunger and misery
 their enslavement by the oppressors
 And, in defiance of these,
 their longing for liberation
 Their passion for freedom
 their love of equality and justice
 They are the ones who,
 without even being able to raise their heads

from the bloodiest massacres,
 still march on, staggering
 They are the ones who make
 and create
 but cannot possess
 They are the ones
 magnificent enough to make mountains
 tremble
 and more powerful than the seas
 They are the ones
 who carry countless babies in their womb
 and give birth to a country from deprivation
 They are the ones
**“who cannot be counted on fingers
 and cannot be exhausted by breaking”**
 From pure granite they mould
 From the finest iron they forge
 a fist like a sledgehammer
 And at its very centre
 a heart of fire
 The shining consciousness of history
 What the struggle has taught
 It is the people
 with their finest qualities...
 creating its own leader
 First it puts him forward
 into the arena of struggle
 It tests him,
 weighs him,
 strikes him in the chest
 and looks:
 can he endure the pain?
 It sends him onto the roads
 and looks:
 are his steps firm?
 It loads the struggle
 onto his shoulders
 and looks:
 can he carry such weight?
 And once it trusts him
 without even blinking
 it follows behind him
“What does Dayı say?”
“Dayı knows; let us ask him too...”
“If Dayı says it, then it is settled.”
**“Has there been any word from
 Dayı?”**
 Dayı...
 His comrades call him Dayı

In labour and audacity
 in undertaking the tasks of revolution
 he takes first place
 The brightest among the stars
 He deserves such respect
 A leader among leaders
 He takes the flag
 from Mahir's hands
 Imagine a person
 in whom revolution takes bodily form
 Love of the people and homeland
 Faith in socialism
 Persistence in struggle
 Courage and foresight
 An unbending will
 Historical consciousness
 A brilliant intelligence
 Creativity, mastery
 Labour and patience
 Political genius
 Audacity under every condition
 Endurance and determination
 Resolve to overcome difficulties
 Consciousness of power
 Mercilessness towards weaknesses
 Irreconcilability with the system
 Revolutionary enthusiasm
 The spirit of self-sacrifice
 Constantly renewing oneself
 And every beautiful quality
 of the human being...
 A flawless person?
 No.
 A perfect person?
 No.
 He knows
 that no such person exists
 on this world
 We may be unable
 to find a fault in him
 But he
 looks at his own face
 in the mirror of every day
 And renews himself every day
 Every day he grows a little more
 Every day he adds something
 to life
 The new human being
 comes to life in him

Now new people
 are marching
 on the road of revolution
 Shoulder to shoulder with him
 They reach their hands
 towards one another
 Some hear his name
 for the first time
 Some carry on their shoulders
 the memories of years
 Istanbul Technical University
 The stone building at Gümüşsuyu
 Bears witness
 to a history
 This time
 the name upon the seal
 is **Revolutionary Left**
 They call it Gültepe
 A neighbourhood in Istanbul
 Fascists wait
 on its corners
 One morning
 the fist of revolution
 explodes against their heads
 Gültepe is raided
 The streets come to know our songs
 Revolutionary Left salutes
 the peoples of Anatolia
 They say Maraş
 Maraş is burning
 In Maraş
 a thousand-year-old wound
 is bleeding
 With their dogs,
 their MİT,
 their hounds
 these murderers conduct
 a human hunt
 They spare neither mother
 nor baby
 Babies are bayoneted
 inside their mothers' wombs
 Street by street
 House by house
 death travels
 Fire in their hands
 hatchets,
 cleavers
 and rifles
 They marched
 and massacred

They contaminated
 everything they touched
 They were dishonourable
 They were heartless
 The walls are our blood
 Our lament remained
 in Maraş
 For those who thirsted
 so greatly for our blood
 of course
 we too had an answer
 We spoke with gun barrels
 We sang with bombs
 They understood
 and they learnt
 The fascists abandoned
 every street we entered
 The **FTKSMEs**
 made the world narrow for them
 We became skilled
 in struggle
 striking as we died,
 dying as we struck
 How many obstacles
 we overcame
 breaking down blind doors
 How many bloody murderers
 we reached
 one by one,
 in turn
 Our fiery breath
 touched the backs of their necks
 And our **Armed Revolutionary**
Units
 became an epic
 upon people's tongues
 As we struck them
 they would always hide like this
 But they had no escape
 Our hands
 would reach them all
 Look
 the fascist minister
 Gün Sazak was struck
 making the oppressors
 jump from their beds
 And Nihat Erim
 The **Sledgehammer Prime Minister**
 of 12 March
 about whom the folk song was sung:
"May you melt away, Erim by Erim"

paid the account
 for our dead
 There are periods
 when the meaning of time changes
 To live becomes
 a breathless run
 Nobody even thinks
 of tearing pages
 from the calendar
 There is no stopping
 even for the blink of an eye
 We march
 fighting as we go
 Again sieges
 again martial law
 We march
 Again blood
 again massacre
 We march
 Our fist shakes those in power
 All they have left in their hands
 are price rises
 and economic packages
 They cry out:
**"We cannot govern,
 we cannot govern!"**
 The struggle is heavy
 The struggle is hard
 The prices of struggle are great
 Some people's ears are deaf
 Some people's eyes are blind
 Some people's hearts tremble
 And they run away
 crying:
"The junta is coming!"
 We march
 shouldering every price
 One morning
 tanks are in the streets
 The season is autumn
**"In a theatre hall in America
 a CIA agent whispers
 into the President's ear:
 'Our boys have done it.'"**
 The day is
12 September 1980
 Some pack their suitcases
 Some turn on their heels
 and run
 We fight
 from land to land

What lies beyond death
 that should frighten us?
 The struggle is merciless
 yet spring is still
 inside the struggle
 Broken doors
 streets under arrest
 Torture overflows
 from the barracks
 With American boots
 and rifle butts...
 The handcuffs are ours now
 the suspension is ours
 electricity is ours
 the vice is ours
 the cold concrete is ours
 Broken bones
 bruised bodies are ours
 Hunger is ours
 death is ours
 always ours
 The shadows of military trucks
 guarding the street corners
 fall across
 the black face of September
 Doors are battered
 by rifle butts
 The wind
 howls with the voices
 of those resisting under torture
 Upon the white face of September
 there are brave revolutionaries
**(While some have long since
 taken their place
 on the black side of history,
 standing in queues
 outside police stations
 to surrender.
 September still remains
 a hump upon their backs.)**
 Such were the times
 After that day
 millions of people
 ate, drank,
 slept and woke...
 were born, grew up, studied, wrote
 but had never truly lived
 Those who feed on the blood of the
 people
 came so that no one would raise their voice

They took away the voice of the
 people
 someone from every house
 someone from every street
 They came
 so that those who cried out would fall silent
 so that the flowers would wither
 so that the imperialists and their
 collaborators
 could sleep peacefully
 And they took us away
 Now the handcuffs are ours
 the suspension is ours
 the truncheon is ours
 electricity is ours
 the vices
 in the torture chambers
 Sometimes
 brave ones like mountains
 are bent double
 bones are broken
 And sometimes
 at the sharpest point of pain
 an unbreakable resistance rises
 Leaders
 go at the front of the struggle
 They shoulder
 the greatest pain
 And we
 what tortures we have endured
 We have given our heads
 but never our secrets
 We have become one
 with the resisting vein of the people
 We remained silent
 silent and silent again
 We cursed
 and remained silent
 We vomited blood
 and remained silent
 silent and silent again
 Our flesh torn to pieces
 we urinated blood
 and remained silent
 We were kneaded with salt
 silent and silent again
 Cold, wet, filthy
 we exchanged days for nights
 We remained silent
 silent and silent again

Electricity...
trik, trik, trik...
Hours pass like this
For days and nights
Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick
silent and silent again
We were left without fingernails
but never without honour
The bitter cold entered us
from one side
we turned purple
we resisted
we defeated them
Does torture end?
The prison doors open
Selimiye is ours
Davutpaşa is ours
Alemdağ is ours
Metris is ours
Sağmalcılar is ours
The transfer chain is ours
falaka is ours
the truncheon is ours
attacks every other day are ours
isolation is ours
hunger is ours
thirst is ours
The walls have no tongue
Words are not enough
to tell it all
Everything is torture!
The leader of Hope
is in isolation
His eyebrows slowly rise
In his eyes
are Mahir's eyes
His forehead held high
Above his weakened body
black clouds
move
In the homeland
he loves more than his own life
executioners...
The cold penetrates
his lungs
The damp
quietly
secretly
A treacherous illness
settles into his lungs
Four walls

four steps
He walks...
He walks...
Now he walks
through the streets
He walks
taking stock
He walks
thinking of who has shouldered the struggle
Sometimes he smiles
as he walks
He sees familiar faces
in the streets
takes a deep breath
and walks
Perhaps the streets are deserted
Perhaps death roams the streets
But as long as he walks
he sees his comrades
So he walks
Four walls
four steps...
His eyelids
slowly close
Behind his eyelids
Mahir's eyes rest
Every time he opens his eyes
his consciousness scatters
the black clouds even more
It paints the sky blue
his hopes become brighter
Every time he closes his eyes
the horizons of the struggle
open before him
Hope may be wounded
may be battered
For years
walking the cell
in only vest and underpants
he falls ill
But he walks
always walks towards tomorrow
When no one knew these roads
they were walking them without stopping
If those who came behind them
found a clean path
it was because
so much blood and sweat
had been poured onto these roads

They tried to surround
 the hope of a people
 with nightmares
 The rap-rap of boots in the streets
 gallows in prison courtyards
 Going outside is forbidden
 speaking is forbidden
 remaining silent is forbidden
 laughing is forbidden
 Forbidden!
 There were those
 who buried their dreams in the earth
 Those whose light in their eyes
 went out under torture
 There were those who fled
 Those who stayed
 and then turned back
 Those who changed direction
 with every wind...
 They had never been
 so numerous
 They looked around themselves
 Separated out those
 who had turned back
 The indecisive
 the cowardly
 the surrenderists too...
 They had never been
 so alone
 At the quietest hour of the night
 the radiator pipes
 began to ring
 Against the **Single-Type Uniform**^{lv}
 the passwords of resistance:
 tap tap, tap tap tap
 The prison's telegraph mechanism
 is working now
 Their wrists, made thin by hunger
 seemed to be made of steel
 The inextinguishable light
 of their consciousness
 frightens the nightmares
 These wrists cannot be bent
 they are to be kissed
 The Pasha of oppression thought
 There were the **"Leftists"**
 and then there were
 the **"Revolutionary Leftists"**
 The **"clever Leftists"** were
 manageable

But the others
 were a hard nut to crack
 The people the Pasha called
"Leftists"
 were bewildered and helpless
 "What kind of people are these?"
 he said
 **"They understand nothing about
 politics
 all they know is hitting and breaking
 and when that fails, dying."**
 But there was something
 he had forgotten
 Whatever had been created
 had been created
 by those who fought to the death
 by those who died
 and those who remained
 There was much
 he had forgotten
 For them, life
 was an unsolvable confusion
 For us
 it was as simple as death
 Those frightened
 by the power of death
 withdrew from the stage
 one by one
 In defiance of those retreating
 Apo sprang one step further forward
 So did Haydar and Hasan
 Their brave friend Fatih
 in their arms
 For days
 the prison wards
 had carried a different smell
 The answer given
 to those who said **"Surrender"**
 was the honourable breath
 of hunger
 And there were some
 (they were the **"clever Leftists"**)
 They locked the doors of honour
 And while the leaders of the
 revolution
 were wasting away
 on the Death Fast
 they said to those distributing food:
"Bring us the bad ones."
 While we gave our lives
 for humanity

those soulless ones
 ate humanity
 plate after plate
 While we resisted
 the **Single-Type Uniform**
 they dressed their minds
 in blue uniforms
 The days passed
 kept passing
 Outside, İlginç
 was shivering
 in the summer heat...
 His eyes bloodshot
 from sleepless nights
 spent dreaming of a free country
 İlginç was fighting breathlessly
 Was it because he had thought
 about death
 for so long?
 Or because he had never thought
 about it at all?
 To say:
**"I too will become a self-
 sacrificing fighter of these roads!"**
 is not easy
 It is not something said
 in a single breath
 without thought
 Sabo too
 cannot swallow a single morsel
 She swallows hard
 her throat knots
 Death is always a guest
 at the table
 Their beloved comrades
 were walking towards death
 But patience
 was what fell to their share
 As the leader of the revolution
 was carried from exile to exile
 from oppression to oppression
 Hope is not something
 that can simply be swallowed
 Yet it fills a person
 Its face can be heard
 in pitch-black darkness
 And Apo carried enough hope
 in his bundle
 for an entire people

When they marched
 back to back
 comrade beside comrade
 what destination
 could withstand such footsteps?
 And they marched
 to the heights
 of hunger and honour
 Each of them
 was as unwavering as Haydar
 At the very front
 their Leader
 Our Leader
 Dayı
 Mudanya Port
 has long missed Hasan
 Hasan's eyes
 long for the sea...
 When longing strikes the walls
 with faith
 its end becomes reunion
 The sea of struggle foams
 And the hospital corridors
 begin to surge
 Fatih, just as he resisted torture,
 stood the same way
 against pain
 His honour
 became a flag
 upon the battlements of resistance
 If raised on the flagpole
 bands of honour
 in the crimson of their own blood
 how well they suit
 their foreheads now
 They were not
 a silent waiting
 They were cries
 in the squares
 A defiant lament
 torn from a mother's heart
 All that silence
 could not swallow their voices
 For even the smallest light
 tears through the night
 And they were
 fires of rebellion
 lit in the mountains
 Even in his final words
 Apo said:
"It is good, good."

And Haydar
 perhaps hurled
 a mighty curse at the enemy
 Fatih showed his comrades
 the course
 Hasan's longing
 for the sea came to an end
 And together
 they reached their hands
 towards the future
 There are days
 when either you surrender
 or you become a seed
 There is no middle ground
 And they
 took their hearts into their hands
 and scattered their own lives
 into life
 They passed through
 the darkest darkness
75 days of Death Fast
 And four heroes
 History has never seen
 a hand extended towards the future
 left hanging in the air
 First they took Apo's hand
 Then Fatih's
 Then Haydar's
 And Hasan's...
 The soil of Anatolia is fertile
 So long as you plough it
 let it swell
 let it open its embrace to you
 Even if you have
 no tractors or machines
 the black plough,
 pickaxe, shovel,
 hoe
 Split open its belly
 with whatever you have
 cast in the seed
 And it will give you
 its freshest shoots
 Against the darkness
 A new life sprouts
 from the seeds of resistance
 A radiant youth
 walks the roads
 of struggle
 Life sprouts
 with **New Solution**

The revolution gathers itself
 and regroupes
 Our voices
 from between four walls
 spread like water
 over cracked earth
 This time
 the leader of the revolution
 turns the court benches
 into steps
 There
 he now puts imperialism on trial
 He points his finger forward
 accuses the oligarchy
 The puppets are bewildered
 Who was judging whom?
 Who was the accused?
 A light spreads
 from the Baştabya sports hall
 Streams set out
 from İzmir, Ankara and Adana
 and flow
 into that sea of humanity
 There
 hopes come back to life
 some that had faded
 some that had been broken
 some newly planted
 The youth finds its spark
 and catches fire
 Those who were cold
 now warm themselves
 at the fire of revolution
 They say:
WE ARE RIGHT, WE WILL WIN
 not in whispers
 but with thunderous voices
WE ARE RIGHT, WE WILL WIN!
 Thousands carry this slogan
 from the universities
 to the factories
 And now the revolution
 once again throws its shoulder
 against the palace gates
 The year is **1989**
 On **1 May**
 thousands pour into the streets
 Our direction is Taksim
 That square is the arena of struggle
 That square is the square of victory
 Let us march, brothers and sisters

Even if oppression
surrounds us on every side
Let us march
Now is the time for struggle
They
have their armoured vehicles
their shields and weapons
But the revolution has
its Mehmet Akif Dalcı
Thousands of Mehments
The hands of the Mehments
are workers' hands
What is taking place
is a fierce clash
What they hold in their hands
is not stone
but heart
Bullets rain down
upon the Mehments
Against the tyranny
of the oppressor
an oppressed one sighs
One sigh pierces a thousand hearts
A thousand hearts bleed
A thousand streets burn
In every street a waterfall
From every waterfall
the square overflows
And a brave one
is shot in the forehead
Mehmet...
Mehmet, a young falcon
who dedicated his heart
to the struggle
And the blood
flowing slowly
from the wound on his forehead
becomes crimson anger
in the hands of the working people
reddening their flags
Everywhere becomes Taksim
Everyone who takes a stone
into their hand becomes Mehmet
And Mehmet becomes victory
in the heart of Taksim
The days pass
Mehmet's comrades
follow the trail
Kazım, who shot Mehmet
Justice, the flame of anger,
strikes

a lead bullet
into the back of his neck
Kazım Çakmakçı
is shot outside his door
This is the signal flare
of the years of the **Period of Advance**
October 1989
October is the time
to sow
Where?
Into the streets,
into the mountains,
everywhere your hand can reach!
And Hope walks
through the streets
Smiling
with Mahir's gaze
He walks
to sow the crop
His smile embroidered
with freedom
In the courtroom
his petition is read
The owner of the petition:
"Fugitive"!
The leadership of Hope
beats its wings
towards freedom
Daffodils break through
in the middle of winter
all across my homeland
With working people's hands
the seeds of victory
are scattered
How they burn, how they burn
How they cry out in despair
**"How did we let him slip from our
hands,
how?"** they say
Did he become a bird
and fly away?
Did he become a fish
and dive into the water?..
Those whose minds understand
nothing
but oppression
cannot comprehend
Dayı's freedom action
Now the hearts of the fighters
are pounding

One by one
they bring down
the notorious oppressors
SDB actions
in the headlines
These are not words
you glorious generals of the oligarchy!
And the gun barrels speak
MIT officers, CIA agents
listen to them
with their final breaths...
The SDB fighters
become an epic
Dayı
the commander-in-chief of our struggle
sees the heroism
and he also sees
the shortcomings,
the mistakes,
the weaknesses
He asks:
"Where Are We on the Road?"
And he explains
Stitch by stitch
he weaves
the principles of revolution
The struggle grows
We march
Wherever the revolution leaves a
vacuum
the murderers of the system appear
with weapons in their hands
Hatçe Woman
was walking barefoot
through the potato field
As the earth tickled her feet
she was thinking:
**"Can a person live
on potatoes alone?"**
If only she could live
all her troubles would be over!
At exactly that time
some people were raising
the flag of surrender
over the fortresses of revisionism
without hammer and sickle
Betrayal
covered by a curtain
of timid hypocrisy
with shameless words!

Master Haşim
sat at the machine
breaking down
its bloody gears
As he wiped
his oily hands with waste cloth
he cried for his comrade
whose arm had been torn off
Bahar Girl
watching the confusion in the street
from the balcony
was calculating
how she would manage
to pay her university fees
Bayram from Bostancı
walked among the tall ears of grain
crouched down, stood up
thought and thought again
calculating
how he would repay
his debt to the moneylender
He poured into the empty
and it would not fill
He poured into the full
and it would not take any more
Bayram's life
was fading away like this
At exactly that time
the imperialist masters
of the age of oppression
with their bombs and aeroplanes
their tanks and cannons
their whole breed and lineage
were embarking upon occupations
to feed
their insatiable monopolists
An unnamed child
on the street
looking for a quiet neighbourhood
without the "cops"
where he could spend the night
without fear
A bag of glue in his pocket
a cigarette in his mouth
hungry and thirsty
despair was surrounding his heart
The fisherman
was gathering his nets
empty again...
Each time he cast them
with hope

his blind fortune
 gave him nothing
 Even the fish
 had turned their backs on Istanbul
 News bulletins
 announced new price rises
 every other day
 oil, sugar, tobacco,
 electricity, bread
 The oil index
 was always rising
 The head of the IMF
 was issuing instructions again
 At exactly that time
 the American President
 was inviting
 his collaborationist servants
 as guests
 The commander of the gendarmerie
 of the entire world
 The President
 with thick bottle-bottom glasses
 was fawning upon
 the occupying Bush
 calculating
 how to **"put in one and get three back"**
 Some were saying
"fifty-fifty"
 Others:
**"We are neither right-wing nor left-
 wing,
 we are footballers, footballers."**
 The little officials
 of the big companies
 were calculating
 how to produce more goods
 with fewer workers
 drawing up statistics
 of labour and output
 The big-bellied bosses
 of the big companies
 were playing big again
 Building huge factories
 crushing all the small ones
 so that they could become bigger
 and then the biggest
 Those who cowered
 still cowered
 Those who remained silent
 still remained silent

Our people
 were marching again
 with firm steps
 Dayı
 and his comrades
 were organising
 the **Period of Advance**
 Those who had given their hearts
 to revolution
 were growing in number
 Curtains were opening
 ever so slightly
 dark shapes moved
 through the side streets
 Technical personnel
 were listening closely
 at the surveillance stations
 A gentle summer breeze
 lifted the hair
 of the young woman
 walking along the street
 Dogs lay stretched out
 in the shade from the heat
 The cats, lazy,
 left the square
 to the rats
 The rats sharpened their teeth
 waiting for an opportunity
 Istanbul was awakening
 to a hot summer day
 City of great loves
 and great struggles!
 Istanbul...
 Istanbul was ashamed of itself
 In its thousands of years of history
 how many fighters' blood
 had been spilled on its soil?
 How many soldiers
 how many commanders
 how many brave leaders?
 After Cevahir and Ulaş
 how many times
 had those who fought so bravely
 made you ashamed?
 How many times
 had you bowed in respect
 before them?
 Istanbul
 was preparing
 for a hot summer day

Dikilitaş,
 Balmumcu,
 Nişantaşı,
 Yeni Levent...
 Bodiless shadows
 were moving through the streets
 Masks
 that bore no human face
 surrounded the skilful hands
 embroidering Hope
 Because
 they knew!
 Hatçe Woman, Hasan Usta, Bahar
 Girl
 the nameless child,
 the fisherman
 to whom even the fish
 would not offer a greeting,
 Bayram from Bostancı
 did not have to live
 amid deprivation
 Everything
 could be different
 Socialism
 was capable of eliminating
 hunger, poverty, oppression
 and exploitation
 Those skilful hands
 would even give their lives
 for the Hope
 they were embroidering
 The owners
 of those skilful hands
 were revolutionaries
 Those revolutionaries
 were planting trees
 beneath whose shade
 they might never themselves lie
 They all knew
 they might have to feed
 their saplings with blood
 But that possibility—
 the possibility
 of seeing the revolution—
 was such a beautiful possibility
 And it drew them
 into this love
 After all,
 seeing the revolution
 was not something impossible

the country
 was pregnant with revolution
 Even if they themselves
 would never see it
 they all knew
 that one day
 those saplings would grow
 branch out
 and spread
 One day
 they would embrace
 Anatolia and the whole world
 The **“Forest of Bravery and
 Brotherhood”**
 would embrace
 all peoples
 Then one day
 classes too
 and borders too
 would disappear
 One day it would happen
 one day it would happen
 Istanbul was living
 through a hot summer day
 Dikilitaş,
 Balmumcu,
 Nişantaşı,
 Yeni Levent...
 Bodiless shadows
 were moving through the streets
 Masks
 that bore no human face...
 Istanbul was living
 through another day
 Istanbul was ashamed
 of itself...
 They surrounded
 the skilful hands
 embroidering Hope
 All so that an emperor
 could sit comfortably
 upon his golden toilet
 and relieve himself in peace
 upon the country
 All so that the emperor’s servants
 could peacefully clean up
 their master’s filth
 with their bloody hands...
 Those who thirst for our blood
 will drown in our blood
 Those under siege fought

Making shields
 of their chests
 before the peoples
 Those who fought
 became flags
**"If I exist, Revolutionary Left
 exists too."**
 — Niyazi Aydın
 They said
 Niyazi Aydın had fallen
 Will the streets
 be deserted now?
 The familiar paving stones
 The street corners
 accustomed to rendezvous
 That tea garden
 where one waited
 even with a broken leg...
 They tell us something
 They say to those
 who take up the struggle:
**If you exist,
 Niyazi Aydın exists too!**
 İbrahim Erdoğan passes
 with a band around his forehead
 Will the mountains
 fall silent now?
 Bow down, O Munzur Mountains,
 cradle of the struggle
 Another son of Pir Sultan
 has fallen
 His sharpened knife,
 his belt full of cartridges
 And leaving behind
 the immortal rebellion
 of the mountains
 You rise
 and march
 from where he fell
 İbrahim İlçi was martyred
 Will the workers
 be left orphaned now?
 The sweat upon their foreheads
 that feeds the factories
 The milling machines,
 the great boilers,
 the mines
 How do the machines
 hear of this death?
 A voice says:
Lower the switch

Hands clenched into fists
 raised in the air
 This is how
 workers' leaders are sent off
 Cavit Özkaya, Hasan Eliuygun
 and Nazmi Türkcan
 Three brave commanders
 fell in the struggle
 Will the weapons
 remain mute now?
 Along the line of
 eye, rear sight, foresight and target
 Will the people's justice
 not set out on campaign?
 How happy they are,
 those murderers
 whose necks tremble with fear
 beneath the shadow of our barrels
 Yet their sleep at night
 is still filled with nightmares
 their faces still hidden
 beneath armour
 Did you know
 Yücel Şimşek
 and Ömer Coşkunırmak?
 They were
 the engineers of revolution
 Their faces resembled one another
 they were handsome
 They laughed with their people
 and became angry with them
 Did you know them?
 They knew you
 While listening to lectures
 and taking notes at university
 During boycotts
 and while marching with banners
 And later, as engineers
 walking the roads
 They knew you
 they loved you
 and they died for you
 Did you know Bilal Karakaya?
 Perhaps you saw him
 at a street-vendor's stall
 Perhaps you passed through life
 without seeing him
 But he certainly saw you
 looked into your faces
 Saw your pain
 and your joy

and asked questions
He rubbed his heart
against the whetstone of anger
and sharpened it
You did not know it
but before he fell
he made the bombs
that shook your hearts
Look at the face
of Zeynep Eda Berk
Is she not your moon-faced bride?
Is she not your daughter,
your elder sister?
Is she not your own life,
closer than life itself?
Their smiles
warm the world
Look at the hands
of the working people
See how Hope
is embroidered in those hands
like lace
Fintöz Dikme
and Buluthan Kangalgil
With their deaths
they left a fearless mark
upon history
Even dying in Ankara
frightens those
who have established their throne
in the capital of oppression
Put on your bulletproof vests
hide yourselves
Look
the people's fighters
are moving about
following the trail of smoke
from your burning skirts
They
were the red-mounted cavalry
of the revolution
Fighter, commander and leader
They
embroidered
the ever-bright dreams
of revolution
with their smiles
When necessary
staff officers
when necessary
ordinary fighters

They sang their songs
with one voice
Masters in struggle
wise in life
They marched
victory after victory
Dayı
with twelve wounds
in his heart
marches
Marches
binding his wounds
as he goes
He feels the pain
of hundreds of bullets
in his own flesh
His anger
a wounded tiger
his anger
a heavy sledgehammer
his anger
deep darkness
hard
the claw of a falcon
circling among the rocks
His anger
runs through every vein
His anger
a ball of fire
Beneath his furrowed brows
darkening in his eyes
there is an unadulterated hatred
He is moving magma
The wall he strikes
with his fist
cracks
He takes a deep breath
and buries his pain
inside his heart
He marches
This time
Sabo and Sinan
at his shoulders
they march
Feeling in their wounds
the ache of those who have fallen
they march
Those who shoulder
the burden of revolution
become a new breath

Actions continue
 with a thunderous roar
 This is how
 the **Period of Advance** comes to life
 It was **16 April**
 The moment
 when daylight turned dark
 And in darkness
 the stars are seen most clearly
 And fire
 They...
 Those who shot us
 thought the fire would go out
 They believed
 their own lies
 And the Sabos,
 the Sinans,
 the Fazils
 in that darkness
 burned like flaming arrowheads
 driven into their targets
 A wave in the Black Sea
 trembled deep within
 A mountain sighed
 when Sinan Kukul fell
"Amcabey," said Sabo,
"how is Amcabey?"
 Far away
 a carnation wept
 no one saw its tears
 A wind blew
 A stream roared
 And into the middle of April
 a slogan exploded like a shell:
**"Come on then, if you have the
 courage!"**
 It was the voice
 of Sabo and his comrades
 So fresh
 so cool
 Commander Fazıl listened
 to the sound
 of the slowly growing fire
 When it was time to fight
 he never held back
 He marched
 against the darkness
 A young man
 with clenched fist
 when necessary a worker
 when necessary a neighbourhood resident

A heroic heart
 that shattered captivity
 with his own hands
 They fell
 one by one
 A street in Üstbostancı
 is bleeding
 That street now
 is partly Şadan
 partly Sinan
 A people grows
 through its sons and daughters
 shot down in the streets
 A people
 rising in rebellion
 They shot Arif too...
 Şadan and Arif
 had laid their heads
 upon the same pillow
 They gave their lives
 to the same struggle
 Neighbours, caretakers,
 shopkeepers
 honourable, decent people
 spoke afterwards
"They were very good people,"
 they said
**"They were like a drink of cool
 water."**
 One day
 Sinan had entered
 the hearts of those people
 smiling
 his jacket in his hand
 Saying:
"Let us sweat a little too,"
 he had put his shoulder
 beneath their burden
 He is still there
 inside those hearts
 The sweat from his back
 never stopped flowing
 He never left
 a single heart he entered
 He was Sinan Kukul
 A leader in struggle
 a porter under the load
 a servant of his people...
 Sahrayı Cedit
 Kılıçer Apartment...

The Ayşes
are a song of revolution
stretching from Buca
towards tomorrow
Perhaps you saw her
in a piece of street theatre
Perhaps in a market
With her furrowed brows
smiling Ayşe
She was
a wave of the Black Sea...
moving for her people
And she was one of the finest of
people
Ayşe Nil
The murderers
divided one death
between the two of them
Now within us
there are things about them
that are growing
and becoming whole
Death too
is part of life
Whatever we may say...
Sometimes the full stop
at the end of a sentence
is its most important part
Everyone knows
many lives are remembered
by their deaths
They are whole
in death and in life
They surrounded Erenköy too...
Commander Fazıl
**"If they saw my shadow,
they would run away."**
For how long
they walked
with their backs pressed to walls
Radio stations
buzzing constantly
They fled
street by street
And now
the vultures are firing bullets
at that thunderous voice of yours!
In vain
The corpses of the executioners
walk on
trembling with fear

They whistle
as they pass graveyards
Even though you fall
covered in blood
your students
demand an accounting
Sati could heal every wound
she had been a nurse
for years
She healed
the wounds of her people
With her immortal struggle
and shining eyes
Her husband,
her beloved comrade Hüseyin
lay stretched out beside her
After that
they were never separated
his blood mingled with hers
16 April
turns into 17 April
Day now collapses
into night
Çiftelavuzlar is on its feet
For hours
it has listened closely
Karasu Apartment
is silent
Even though it shields itself
against bombs, sledgehammers
and drills
Karasu Apartment
is helpless
But those inside it
are not helpless
From broken windows
from shattered walls
a rebellion overflows
Sabo's voice rings out
Sabo calls
from today towards tomorrow
Eda,
with sharpened anger
and rage
defends her words
like an arrow
shot from a bow
Taşkın's shoulders
are beneath the burden again
He does not spare his body
Death does not frighten him

just as living
never made him retreat
Time stops
Slogans drown out
the sound of bullets
From a window
a flag
gently, gently
salutes its homeland
The blackness of night
catches fire
with the bright faces
of those glorious fighters
with the star
of that crimson flag
with the sparks
from those burning barrels
Sabo's voice
calls the dawn
Rise, O sun!
Fall, O night!..
Now is the time
to fight
The brave ones of the revolution
salute the martyrs
"Flags on every side of anger"
**"Our comrades will demand an
accounting"**
they had said
And before the sounds of bullets
from the sieges
had even faded
their comrades
joined hands
Their fiery breath
is felt
on the necks of the executioners
Fire is met with fire
The account for a life
is settled with a life
The flag in the window
waves with honour
They
were leaders
They were
at the very front
of the struggle
They fought
at the very front
And one by one
they fell

But even as they died
they were oaths
engraved into history
If one day
you fall into despair
look at that flag
hanging from the window
There
the hammer and sickle
always yellow
always red
There
the flag
waving
against oppression
Fix your eyes upon it
do not look away
from the broken window
Soon
a gun barrel will appear
Listen to the epic
told by that barrel
Embrace the justice
shown by that barrel
Join the slogan
shouted through the broken window
and repeat it
inside your heart
Look at that flag
hanging from the window
Mahir's final words
shouted in his manner
"We came here not to return..."
That is the flag
that very flag
A flag to die for
and to live for
out of love
You will not turn around
and look behind
You will set out on the road
Onto the road
of those who fought like a folk song
for the gentle swaying
of that flag...
Hope is in that flag
honour and victory
are in that flag
the future
is that flag

Look
the barrels of justice
are speaking
And now it is
the treacherous breeds
hiding behind telephone poles
Crouching beside walls
stretching their necks out in fear
Packs of jackals
and hyenas
and bats
And those
spawned "one night suddenly"
by Manukyan and Bush
and endlessly praised
day and night
by men in navy-blue suits
those in navy-blue uniforms
those with maroon berets
those with green berets
and pimps
in red ties
Their dogs,
their MIT,
their sons of dogs
the whole clan
of blood-drinkers
all of them bastards
all of them traitors
all of them vile
They are the ones
trying to make bullets keep pace
with the melody of Hope
Their power rests
upon their treachery
And upon fear
Their courage
has been rotten
from the beginning
And their vile bullets
are fired
with imperialism's gunpowder
If oppression
is a rabid dog
bullets
and bayonet tips
are its steel teeth
When the shadow
of our bloodied shirts
that have become flags
falls upon them

the battlements
of their fortresses shatter
And against the shield
of our will
the tips of bayonets break
What remains behind us
is a gently waving flag
And look
that flag still waves
For you
for me
for us
In our hearts
and in our trenches
Our flag flows and waves
like rivers
Calm in its riverbed
peaceful
beautiful
still
happy
unceasing
When the water overflows
its riverbed
it becomes exuberant
flowing
fierce
merciless
angry
wild
When the water
bursts from its bed
muddy and turbid
full of stones
raging
dangerous
unrestrained
like a sudden flood
What feelings flow
the flag waves
the water moves
flags wave
glaciers melt
the homeland
is adorned
flag after flag
When the water
overflows its riverbed
it topples
the decaying throne
of the oppressors

And upon those old poles
our flags will wave
That time
has not yet come
but it will!...
It is the melody of Hope
spreading from the tongues
of revolutionaries
Wherever you are
you will hear it
In those mountains
in those factories
in a village house
at Kızıldere
in a guerrilla position
in the fire of a barricade
in a prison folk song
on the wing
of a snowstorm
Wherever you are
you will hear it
you need only listen
For it
is there
upon our hammer-and-sickle flag...
in the halay of a strike
or on a campus
In that shattered
enemy fortress
Or in a carnation lament
In the hunger of a fighter
inside a cell
in a shepherd's fire
on the mountain
in a heart full of rebellion
in the pin of self-sacrifice
Always and everywhere
again in the manner of Mahir
This is the melody of Hope
Wherever you are
you will hear it
you only have to want to
The flag waving in Çiftehavuzlar
tells this
There is something
being told in every street
to whoever listens
A moving shadow
a tree
stools in front of the grocer's
and the grocer's account books

they are always saying something
People's faces
tired faces
marks left by hard years...
If only they revealed their secrets
if only the pain found a voice
who knows what they would tell
All these people
whose pain we listened to
whose pain we shared
who shared our pain
One day
they will find common answers
to common pain
We will find them
This is a truth without secrets
written in the traces of every street
read in the eyes of every person
"Great pain is speechless."
A blunt knife
moves through his flesh
His love is smoke upon smoke
His love is flowered fields
His love embraced hearts
Slowly
it turns into a fist
A drop falls
from the sun
Fire moves
A fuse catches alight
in his eyes
centimetre by centimetre
A fire advances
through his veins
His vengeance is great
his pain is great
his anger is great
as great as his love
But beyond all of them
deeper than all of them
higher than all of them
there is something
inside his foaming, swelling heart
A volcano erupts within him
He cannot take
even one step backwards
With so much weight
upon his shoulders
he cannot stop
even for a moment
and put it down

He will march
 he must march
 And nothing else
 passes through his mind
 He is always thinking
 about that road
 He knows
 new faces in the squares
 will shout our voice
 We will have new weapons
 new hands
 will hold those weapons
 new targets
 will be struck
 The road twists and turns
 before his eyes
 He sees
 new shepherds' fires
 will burn
 on the mountains where we fought
 The hearts of the cities
 will grow warm
 And the roads
 will catch fire again
 He knows it all
 We have taken such deep root
 in this homeland
 that even if a bullet strikes
 every one of our branches
 new shoots
 will break out in spring...
 He knows
 but knowing is not enough
 A blunt knife
 moves through his flesh
 Knowing
 does not ease the pain...
 Burying his beloved comrade
 his comrades-in-arms
 inside his heart
 he marches
 through the homeland
 of struggle
 Our steps crossed
 days and nights
 We grew Hope
 with dreams of revolution
 With labour and patience
 our hands worked
 centimetre by centimetre
 as though digging a well

And then a day came
 when those we regarded as brothers
 wanted to draw a curtain
 across the sun
 Those who for years and years
 had accumulated
 a thick, filthy darkness
 Everything rotten
 inside their minds
 the residue
 of a decaying, degenerating system
 They came out
 from the bosom of the night
 trampling upon
 everything that had been created
 They were cowardly
 and wretched
 scheming, coup-making
 and treacherous
 The most dangerous enemy
 the owner of rusty betrayal
 upon our backs
 is the enemy within us
 We were trying
 to start a fire
 in the darkest part
 of the night
 They became willing servants
 of those who wanted
 to poison Hope
 Was their strength enough?
 It was not...
**"If necessary, I will divide this
 movement
 down to its atoms
 and create a new movement
 from its molecules."**
 — Dursun Karataş
 No matter how tight
 the siege
 no matter how difficult
 the road
 the one who is right
 marches
 Despite the poisonous vines
 wrapping around his body
 despite those digging pits
 while wearing the face of a friend
 and despite the enemy
 Hope marches
 leaving betrayal behind

With every step
becoming purer
it marches
Day! marches
straight ahead
He marches
trusting his comrades
shaking and jolting
teaching revolutionism
with every step
clarifying the lines
more and more
as he marches
That great master
even in the most difficult days
grows the revolution
in this way
Hope
under every condition
and despite everything
marches
It marches
when no one else marches
It marches
when the roads are closed
It does not care about hills
does not care about stones
does not care
if the road is foggy
It knows no stopping
knows no pause
It marches
If its feet are shackled
it breaks the chain
and marches
If obstacles block its road
it crosses the mountains
and marches
It marches steeply
marches hard
marches bravely
always marches
It passes beyond lies
and marches
It passes those
who spread fear among the people
It passes those
who fall behind in the struggle
and marches
It crushes poisonous snakes
and marches

It crosses years
and roads
and marches
It does not care about rain
does not care about snow
does not care about dust
does not care about ice
It marches
Stamping its feet
against the ground
breaking chains
as it marches
Its goal
is the independence of the homeland
the freedom of the peoples
Day! smiles
The sun shines
in his eyes
Today
he is embroidering
the most beautiful gift
into history
30 March 1994
The name of Hope
becomes
the Master's greatest work
The Party and the Front
once again salute the peoples
The Party
is a pure heart
forged in fire
and hardened into steel
The Party
is a tradition
that has taken root
in its soil
The Party
is the immortality of wisdom
the inextinguishable beacon
of history
lighting the future
The Party
means that there will be revolution!
Sooner or later
far or near
but inevitably
Spring
will smile
upon our mountains too
This is Hope

Hope becomes the first warmth of
spring

And wherever that warmth falls
a new shoot
slowly begins
to emerge into life
In the veins
there flows...

The Party
now flows through the veins

Fresher than spring
warmer than the sun
greener than the mountains
redder than blood
There is something

purified
renewed

upon these faces
White as snow
clear as mountain springs
something foaming

swelling

in the enthusiasm
overflowing from the day
Eyes shine differently
Steps are taken differently
lifting the whole burden of life

as lightly as a feather

The heart of a leader
creates a monument
embroidering Hope

with his hands

More indestructible
than mountains
and more magnificent
than them all

A knife
tearing through the darkness
falls upon the earth
like the first warmth of spring

And a voice rises
from the soil of the homeland:

**"We will shake the world
once again
from Turkey!"**

This means
there will be revolution
Perhaps not today
but tomorrow
tomorrow will be ours!
We will create the revolution

This is certain!

The Party and the Revolution!

It is what blossoms
upon people's faces
It is what flows
from banners into the squares

It is what echoes
through the mountains
It is what is spoken of
during shifts
and in strike tents

in university courtyards
and between the streets
It is what becomes an epic
upon people's tongues

It is the sage
who warms and illuminates

It becomes the sun
and rises over the country

A radiant Hope
Hope is our workers' hands
the sweat of our brows
the dark eyes

of our children

In the cry of the worker

in the square

it is an angry slogan
Hope is the yellow-red flame

of mothers in white headscarves
swaying in the wind
setting crystal palaces ablaze
And Hope hangs posters

at the faculty

saluting the songs of resistance

Hope is youth

with two left fists raised

It is the brush

that makes the walls speak

It is the rap-rap of footsteps

that sets enthusiasm ablaze

And above all

it is the shining eyes

of people

Hope

A branch to the fallen
red upon the flag

is Hope

It is a wind that blows
strength on the uphill road

is Hope

Sweat in the field

victory in the struggle
 is Hope
 Hope
 is the mountains of my country
 standing with heads held high
 its vineyards, its gardens
 and the strong, calloused hands
 of the people
 who cultivate all its lands
 A bullet fired from the barrel
 breaths labouring uphill
 A guerrilla cry
 aimed straight
 at the forehead of the right target
 is Hope
 Hope is in heads
 that do not bow
 in cries
 that do not fall silent
 in deaths
 and rebirths
 In the factory
 at school
 on the construction site
 in prison
 always in those who resist
 those who always resist
 are Hope
 Hope in the street
 and on the mountain
 everywhere
 under every condition
 always in those who fight
 those who always fight
 Is it as distant
 as the stars?
 When you look at them
 the stars appear
 inside your pupils
 Hope flows quietly
 into your heart
 Those who close their eyes
 are blind
 Hope
 in the seed
 in the soil
 and in the struggle
 Not from mother
 not from beloved
 never from one's own essence!

Those who, if necessary,
 give them up in an instant
 That is, **Us!**
 Those who have chosen Hope
 as their road...
 Hope is our Leader
 Hope is us...
 Before the streets
 could even groan
 with the name of Hope
 Before the fortresses
 could shake
 the Party receives
 its first wound
 with Bedii
 It sends
 the brave son
 of the Arab people
 towards the sun
 Dayı also takes up
 his vengeance
 Revolutionism
 in one sense
 means crossing borders
 Laws
 prison walls
 international frontiers...
 Who makes these rules?!
 Dayı
 crosses borders
 Crossing borders
 means paying a price
 The arrows of imperialism
 rain down upon you
 And this time
 in France
 the doors of free captivity open
 Hearts remain alert
 Days pass
 The tinder
 waits for a spark
 This time
 it will be Ankara
 that catches fire
 And the time
 to settle accounts arrives
 The gun barrels speak
 The former Minister of Justice
 falls silent forever
 Eyes are brighter now
 embraces more passionate

The comrades' faces smile
as they read
the Party's greeting
Hearts breathe easier
even if only a little
Thousands of lives cry out:
Dayı
is our Hope,
our Leader
For him
we would set the world ablaze
And a chain breaks
The streets catch fire
The Sage
is saluted magnificently
And another lock breaks
Dayı
defends the people's struggle
with honour
This time
he points his accusing finger
at imperialism
And a door opens
The will of the revolution
triumphs once again
Mahir's gaze
once again filled
with victory
once again with freedom
once again with hope
The leader of Hope
walks the streets
And once again
crosses borders
A pitch-black shadow
moves along the roads of Gazi
Suspicious eyes
scan the night
And gun barrels
like the mouths
of poisonous snakes
stretch from the car window
Death flickers
its red tongue
Halil Dede falls
covered in blood
The coffeehouse
becomes a marketplace of death
Bodies lie piled together
upon the ground
Their blood mingles

The executioners of the people
vomit out the poison
of the oppressor
and leave
Where is Maraş now?
Where is Çorum?
Our flesh still burns
in the fire of Sivas
This is an account
a thousand years old
still unsettled
A wound of a thousand years
still bleeding
From those wounds
anger flows
into the streets
In their hands
whatever they can find!
They
hundreds
become thousands
Haydar
and the Haydars
march
The revolution
gives the command
from Haydar's mouth:
"Target: the Police Station!"
The Front members
are at the very front
teaching the struggle
while learning
from the struggle
And as the anger grows
as the people march
the oppression of the tyrant
grows too
Bullets rain down
upon the Sezgins
What is taking place
is the age-old clash
between stones and bullets
On one side
those armoured in steel
On the other
furrowed brows
They have no bombs
no machine guns
no shields
They arm themselves
with anger

with stones
and wooden beams
Our people
have magnificent hands
Those hands
upon bodies of skin and bone
are astonishingly skilful
in struggle
Thick, bony, calloused hands...
angry hands
hands clenched into fists
hands covered in dust,
mud, blood
and grease
but never degraded
hands reaching
for the throats of the oppressors
So that our hands
would not unite
So that once again
our hands would not rise
like a clenched fist
so that they would not settle
inside people's hearts
they massacred
A bullet passes
through our hand
we bleed
we fall
stretched out upon the ground
we become Sezgin Engin
From the place
where Sezgin fell
we rise
hammer in hand
and enter into battle
with an armoured vehicle
Strike and strike
strike and strike
Our hands prevail
We become Ali Yldırım
We smile with victory
And we die
one by one
Our deaths
become rebellion
Our dead
demand justice
Our dead demand
blood for blood
life for life

They demand
that this oppression end
But it does not end!
And neither does rebellion!
Nurtepe, Armutlu, Güzeltepe
reach out their hands
to our bleeding bodies
İkitelli, Ümraniye
reach out their hands
Comrades come
to the Front
Hearts embrace
behind the barricades
The flag waving
upon the barricade
is our flag
Those streets
are our streets
The struggle woven
house by house
gecekondu by gecekondu
is our struggle
There are no longer
tired eyes
at the end of shifts
There are no longer
hopeless looks
towards children
being sent off to school
There is no longer despair
before shop windows
that crush our lives
There is struggle
struggle!
Now there is uprising
upon the flags
There is resistance
inside fighting hearts
Let the roads
catch fire now
Let the bullets rain
If it is death,
then death!
And the people march!
One Gazi
becomes a thousand Gazis
inside hearts in revolt
A greeting from lives
to Gazi
Ümraniye becomes
an echo

And our dead march
 crying:
Justice! Justice!
 Eighteen lives
 Sezgin at seventeen
 Halil Dede at seventy
 women and men together
 still marching
 through the streets
 Eighteen hearts
 still beating
 longing
 for the justice of the people...
 That is why
 the oppressors are afraid
 They say:
**"They will come from the
 gecekondü neighbourhoods
 and cut our throats."**
 They are right
 to be afraid
 Behind us
 there is a radiant tradition
 woven with unbreakable bonds
 stretching from 15–16 June
 to Kocamustafapaşa
 to the gecekondü resistances
 Trust that history
 trust the people
 trust your own strength
 This is how
 the anger of the people
 rose upright
 This is the history
 of the Gazi Uprising
 A fierce wind blows
 from Gazi
 making even the north-east wind
 jealous
 It sweeps volunteers
 towards the Front
 Roaring
 foaming
 A river flows
 into the city
 At the very front
 they march
 in their vests
 and star-bearing berets
 with steps worthy of Hope

carrying
 the enthusiasm of revolution
 We march
 to the rising rhythm
 of the struggle
 Kadıköy Ferry Square
 salutes our procession
 Flags, pennants
 songs upon their lips
 they say:
"Our children are coming."
 The steps of our people
 grow harder
 The slogans
 make the ground resound
 wherever they strike
Who teaches? The Party!
Who teaches? The Party!
Who teaches? The Party!
Who strikes? The Front!
Who strikes? The Front!
For whom? For the people!
 The enthusiasm
 of the militias
 overflows the square
Long Live the People's Justice!
 Thousands speak:
**"Tremble, Oligarchy —
 the Party-Front Is Coming!"**
 Fifteen thousand mouths
 carry the same name
 into the sky
 The name of Hope
 and Dayı
 On the wing of a bird
 the melody of Hope
 rises into the sky
 The Bosphorus
 in the heat of June
 the stars salute the night
 For the accounting
 of Ayşenur
 of the disappeared
 and of the massacres
 the sound of bullets
 moves through Şişli
Who strikes?
The Front!
 Street by street
 the justice of the people
 fights

Sibel shields
her comrades
with her body
A street in Okmeydanı
is bleeding
And Commander Sibel
becomes an epic
The flame
of the struggle rising again
is reflected
in Sibel's eyes
Our voice thunders
from new cartridge cases
gunpowder by gunpowder
bomb by bomb
it marches
A flash of anger
moves through the streets
The Front
speaks with a thunderous roar
Longings
brewed patiently
become a fire
Molotovs
from the squares
of the gecekondu neighbourhoods
from the roads
salute the mountains
Barricades
and flags
smile
upon the soot-stained faces
of children
The walls touched
by our shadow
begin to speak
All flowers
stand in salute
before the carnations
Fighting as they go
striking and dying
the children of Hope
march
towards revolution
Commander Ali Rıza
"Old Man" Bülent Pak
Tevfik Durdemir
and Celalettin Ali Güler
It had not been long
since they had broken through
the walls of Buca

and gone towards freedom
And under the rule of oppression
those who desire freedom
so greatly
are deemed worthy
of massacre
They massacred
Commander Ali Rıza
And when they could not find
the others
they said:
**"They became birds and flew
away."**
**"The earth split open
and swallowed them."**
It was true
They had become falcons
and beaten their wings
towards the mountains
What remained behind
were stone walls
And inside those walls
the people of Buca
heads held high
proud
dignified
If Uğur saw
someone smiling
perhaps he would say:
"How quickly our people left."
If there are those
who build these walls
then surely
there will also be those
who pierce them
Besides
freedom
is the first love
of revolutionaries
their indispensable passion
How could it be imprisoned
within four walls?!
We pierce them
and go
All these things
are our crime
that gives cause
for our massacre
Turan Abi knows this
just as he knows Bedreddin

and those who gave their lives
on Bedreddin's road...
And roads
meet somewhere
Once a person
has embraced
the warmth of Hope
even life itself
can be given up
Canan
is already Hope itself
Sitting face to face
with her own son
she shares
her cigarette with him...
before death comes
without an appointment
just as she shared
her longings,
her hopes,
her everything...
Yusuf wandered for years
through the streets of İzmir
Campus courtyards
and squares
bear witness to his slogans
And that is why Yusuf is
an "accused"
Because he did not lean his back
against walls
and cower in fear
because he took
the dream of freedom
from the sky
and placed it
into the palms
of dozens of young people
Yusuf is now imprisoned
In resistance
it is customary
to grow a beard
The people of Buca
are always bearded
Those who desire freedom
this much
are deemed worthy of death
And the decrees
have long since been written
The twenty-first day
of the month
the year ninety-five

the month
September of oppression
Who is the Minister of Justice?
Who was the Prime Minister?
None of this matters
except to record
their crimes in history
so that one day
the account can be demanded
The sad eyes
of Turan Abi
have seen many ministers
many prime ministers
There was no difference
between them
Erim went
Ecevit came
Demirel came
Özal went
Çiller came
They came
and one by one
they went
None of them
loved Turan Abi
Turan Abi
loved none of them
They always wanted
blood from his blood
life from his life
a morsel
from his morsel
Turan Abi
wanted justice
wanted bread
wanted freedom
They gave nothing
and always demanded
That is why
Turan Abi became the enemy
of every power
that was the enemy of his people
And now his enemy
has come to massacre them
even between four walls
Yusuf knows
these prison walls
He does not trust
their strength
Yusuf knows
his comrades

He leans his back
against them
And to protect
their rear
he offers
his own life
This is what struggle is
At that moment
who dies
does not depend
on who shields whom
with their body
but on which gap
the oppressor strikes through
Those resisting
are a bundle of bodies
embracing one another
And one part
of that bundle
is always destined
to close a gap
in the barricade
A breach opens
in the barricade
That breach
is closed with bodies
Another breach
and another...
Barricades are built
and torn down
We died like this
in Paris too
And just as
the Communards engraved Paris
into history
the name Buca
will be embroidered
in the same way
These boots
these uniforms
are not unfamiliar to us
How many times
has this American rifle
been aimed at our chests?
Who knows
how many hearts
it has pierced...
They say:
You will demand neither freedom
nor justice!
What is democracy?

And especially socialism?
This is all
the system offers
in this country
Love it
or leave it!
And so on
and so on...
We have heard these words
many times
And a thousand and one varieties
of your curses
Uğur has seen many
who hide their fear
and weakness
behind curses
Since his high-school years
his eyes have seen
every injustice
Now those eyes
search for something
to throw at the enemy
Take my heart, Uğur
hurl it
at the enemy
Hurl it
so that it explodes
where it lands
Take my anger
and hurl it
hurl it
strike
The human body
can endure only so much
gas
iron bars
and spears
The lungs
can no longer breathe
The body
torn to pieces
But the will
will not even let
a bullet pass through
if it has locked itself
onto protecting its ideals
Gas, spear and club
Uğur, Turan and Yusuf
The blood of our people
runs wildly
through their veins

when the struggle begins
Spear, club, gas
Yusuf, Turan, Uğur
This is a clash
whose result is known
from the beginning
victory is certain
And the barricades
held by pressing foreheads
against cold walls
carrying bunks together
upon their backs
will fall
One side of the barricade
was revolution
the other side
the oppressor
When the barricades fall
which hands
will reach one another?
Which eyes
will embrace
from afar?
Fists clash with iron
bare hands
with spears
The barricades collapse
Yusuf, Turan, Uğur
become
the crimson flags of Buca
One side of the barricade
was revolution
But every side of Buca
became Uğur
every side Yusuf
every side Turan
Light a cigarette, Usta
Light it
let life scatter away
like grey smoke
Let death sleep
against our chests
Either I live
with honour
or I die
with honour
Everything else
is our song of struggle
Buca was divided
into before and after

We had died
in prisons before
and what deaths they were
from hunger
from torture
from illness
But never before
had they come in mobs
to the ward doors
and massacred us like this
there had been no before...
And after...
Istanbul was burning
street by street
with the anger
of the brave ones
who fell in Buca
If our hearts
have been seared
then surely
there are hearts
that we too will sear
And with mountain-like fists
we strike
the fortresses of oppression
Bundles are tied
the final embraces now
hearts split in two
For years and years
how many convoys
set out like this
From Bayrampaşa
to Sultanahmet
to Metris
From Selimiye
to Alemdağ
to Davutpaşa
from barracks to barracks
from prison to prison
Preparation is complete
This time
the journey is
from Bayrampaşa
to Ümraniye...
Ümraniye
does not know us
Our cheerful arrival
surprises it
We will get acquainted...
To swallow us

the iron gates of Ümraniye
open
like a steel trap
 We will fight
 We will knock out
every tooth
of that trap
 If renegacy
is being imposed
 if surrender is imposed
 flight, weariness
and betrayal
 we will fight
tooth and nail!
 Entry into prison
 torture...
 and resistance!
 We fight
with our bare hands
 Our flesh may be battered
 Our honour
never!
 The days flow
through struggle
 There comes a moment
when patience overflows
 We go hungry
 thirsty too
 But only
when that hunger and thirst
make the struggle grow!
 Beyond that
it is not the time
 to remain silent
while being deprived...
 There comes a moment
when patience overflows...
 Once the roar
fills the corridors
 once the guard
trembles at the door
 Wait
 what you hear
are only our first footsteps
 And through broken locks
 through opened doors
 we pour out
 When you see us
in the corridor
 you flee into the darkness
like insects!

There comes a moment
when my anger explodes
 Its name is
13 December...
 And history records that day
like this:
 The enemy fled
with their heels striking behind them
 Defeat weighs heavily on a man
 especially when those
they call "prisoners"
rise up
and chase them like this...
 Like a tumour growing inside
it torments the executioner
 The incurable disease
of oppressors
 is to thirst for blood
the more they fear
and the more they are hurt
 So
 death will once again
come knocking at the door
 Before the blood of Buca
has even dried
 the wards of Ümraniye
will be painted crimson
 Date: 4 January 1996
 Rap-rap footsteps
in the corridor
 Men who become more frightened
the more noise they make
 By what command
does a human being
abandon humanity?
 One command: lie down
 one command: get up
 one command: run
 one command: stop
 one command...
 Strike!
 What they strike
is the hope
of a people's liberation
 By what command
does a human being
consume his humanity?
 "Five minutes,"
says a trembling voice
 "Five minutes,"
says the faceless voice

afraid
"Either you surrender..."
"Or..."
 No one listens
 to the rest
 There was no barricade
 There was no material
 with which to build one
 There were only people
 who could become a barricade
 And they
 became the barricade
 Arms linked
 fists swinging
 meeting every blow
 with their chests
 fighting,
 breaking, bleeding
 but impassable
 A living barricade
 of flesh
 and bone
 They could not be passed
 The oppressors
 could not pass them...
 Every siege
 has its Elmalı Bridge
 Mecit's bridge
 was nothing more
 than a half-open door
 and he smoked his cigarette
 with his back
 pressed against it
 Harder than rock
 as brave as Şahinbey
 The Munzur Mountains
 are like a stormy sea
 They are nothing
 like calm bays
 You never know
 from where the wind will strike
 You always live
 upon the back of a wave
 there is no room
 for losing breath
 It was such a mountain wind
 that swept Orhan up
 and brought him
 to Istanbul

And for eyes
 that have watched the stars
 from mountain summits
 four walls
 feel even narrower
 Especially if wounded
 especially if the heart
 bleeds even more
 than the wound...
 Gültekin does not say:
 ***"I have been left helpless
 in deserted deserts
 wherever death catches a person
 there I have fallen
 and remained."**
 He stands
 before Azrael
 After that
 whether a spring breeze
 comes and caresses one's hair
 or the executioner's axe
 strikes and takes one's head
 makes no difference
 What matters
 is standing upright
 The brave Azerbaijani
 does not deny his roots
 In what trough
 was Rıza's dough kneaded?
 With what
 was his mortar mixed?
 What heroes
 that soil has given birth to...
 Whichever way you turn
 there is the fire
 of struggle
 Rıza is the harvest
 of such a land
 He is the child
 of a people
 always regarded as an enemy
 by oppressors
 and an enemy
 of those oppressors
 The longing of centuries
 burns inside him
 in the manner of Bedreddin
 Right, truth, justice...
 in the manner of İshak
 He turns his face
 towards the Hubyar Hearth

says:
 "May it be granted."
 and clenches his fist
for justice
 In the people's struggle
 the fist of one
who knows
why he strikes
 is heavy
 But this is not
a fist fight
 Now once again
those who wear
human faces
 but carry hyenas
inside their hearts
 will charge
 The door will open
 And we
 will become Mecit
 And we will no longer
"talk for nothing, for nothing"
 Now is the time
to fight
 Even embraces
feel unnecessary
 Those who breathe
the air of resistance
 are already
inside an endless embrace
 The breed of the Mecits
is not made of those
 who spend their nights
on edge
 suffering at the thought
that death may knock
on the door
 They
 take death
into their embrace
 and sing lullabies
about life
 And if we have all
become Mecit
 then fists
find their voice
 Some people's arms
and wings are broken
when they are imprisoned
 Our people

even when surrounded
by four walls
 make the summits
their home
 And now we
 will become Orhan
of those mountains
 With our backs
against Dersim
 we will fight
like the Seyyid Rizas
 And even if
that treacherous breed
brings us down
covered in blood
 we will rise again
and again
 and die again
in the struggle
 It is known
that fighting is our nature
 And from time immemorial
our unbowed generation
 dies
and rises again
 The Rizas had no shields
 against the spears
that tore through their flesh
 against truncheons
and shields
 And they
 were never the kind
to remain behind cover anyway
 when it was time
for struggle
 And Mecit
 with his wings spread
in all his majesty
 was a mountain eagle
circling the summits
 And now
 the revolution gives the command
through his lips:
 "We are attacking, comrades!"
 To become
the jugular vein
of the struggle
 you must first
be prepared
 to stand
in the path of every blade

Only then
can you feel within yourself
the heartbeat of life
Now what is bleeding?
Mecit's body?
Rıza's body?
Or the heart
of a people?
With every blow received
whose pulse is this
that keeps beating
so defiantly?
Whoever resists
so fearlessly
for bread, justice
and freedom
is called
Hope
They are everywhere
and at all times
marching without stopping
towards tomorrow
They march
with footsteps
that shake history
Mecit, Rıza and Orhan
They marched like this
to the heights of honour
Gültekin's pulse
beat for the final time
As Mecit, Rıza and Orhan
were laid into the earth
those never satisfied
with blood
had turned everything
into a dungeon
and surrounded
the cemeteries
The executioners
were vomiting their hatred
upon Metin Göktepe
Those who called themselves
journalists
those who called themselves
intellectuals
remained silent
Those being sent
towards immortality
were children
of the people

They carried
their coffins
Cengiz and İlginç
were wrapped in bandages
but with their hearts
and consciousness
they remained
inside the struggle
No one kept the account
of broken bones
of flowing blood
We did
And the fire
of burning hearts
again
we cooled it
The heart cannot bear
the lives that are lost
But it was such a moment
that we forgot
our own pain
And this
before even
the mothers' tears
had dried
before our wounds
had formed a scab...
Was there
living in splendour
in the Atlı Köşk mansions
on the upper floors?
Was there
stealing the worker's sweat
and feeding fascist dogs?
When revolutionaries strike
this is how they strike
This is how
one surges on the spot
This is how
one overflows in struggle
This is how
one crosses boundaries
If Cengiz and İlginç
could hear now
if they could hear
that Sabancı...
if they could hear about the Twin
Towers
if our people could hear
oh, oh, oh!

Without looking
at their broken bones
they would stamp their feet
and join such a halay...
And Berdan
in Bayrampaşa
called everyone out
into the exercise yard
Hüseyin Çukurluöz
ran at the very front
**"Come on, comrades, to the
halay!"**
At the head of the halay
Georgian Mecit,
Turk Rıza,
Azerbaijani Gültekin,
Kurd Orhan
the four heroes of Ümraniye
The anger of the prisons
catches fire
in the blaze exploding
in the heart of the skyscrapers
The chests swell
of those whose hearts
are in the struggle
And towards Kadıköy
flow
thirty thousand travellers of Hope
Tens of thousands
march
with the Name of Hope
towards the place
where the seas surge
**Who strikes?
The Front!**
The Front
shakes the squares
And the Yalçın Levants
echo
in the voices
of tens of thousands
Dursun Odabaşı falls
and Hasan Albayrak
Our flags wave
along the road
The magnificence
of the Hope procession
makes the Bosphorus
surge in its breast
May Day is ours

our people
benefit May Day
The squares are ours again!
We are marching
towards freedom!
Some are imprisoned
inside their own freedom
Our people
create freedom
inside captivity
We were students
and shouted Hope
in the lecture halls
We were artists
of the revolution
and embroidered life
We became doctors
and caught the pulse
of hurried footsteps
We read
we wrote
We became teachers
of young hearts
We were falcons
beating their wings
towards the heights
of the mountains
We were the rising vein
of the people
That is why
we were imprisoned
They said:
**"We will build these prisons
wall upon wall."**
They said:
**"We will divide
one by one
those who oppose us..."**
They had not managed
to make the Apos wear
the Single-Type Uniform
Berdan is an efe
of the Aegean mountains
Could he fit
inside a three-step cell?
He kissed Apo
on the forehead
and walked
behind him
Bayrampaşa was shaking
with slogans

And Ümraniye, Çanakkale
 Aydın, Bursa, Ankara, Bartın
 There was not
 a single prison wall
 that did not shake
 if inside it
 there were prisoners
 whose hearts beat
 revolution, revolution
 In May
 our wheat-coloured skin
 writes greetings
 These are the first steps
 taken towards hunger
 On the first day
 no one believed
 except friends
 On the fifth day
 no one believed
 Nor on the twenty-fifth...
 Comrades took up arms
 Barricades caught fire
 June is hot
 In June
 Justice
 is a rebellious cry...
 Justice was
 the breath of Dersim
 And just as her ancestors
 fought in '38
 so too did
 the fierce daughter
 of the mountains
 fire her bullet
 A mountain song
 sung in the city
 embroidering our breast
 Our hearts
 struck by love
 for the mountains
 are roasted
 and tempered
 in their own heat
 and every piece of ember
 makes the fire grow
 What burns us
 is love for Justice
 The shelter of Justice
 is the dwelling place
 of the brave

We are not those
 who pour water
 upon fires
 We are flags
 that catch fire
 inside the flames
 As we melt away
 cell by cell
 we light the fuse
 of that great explosion
 Let the oppressors
 not think
 we die silently
 When we die
 we are buried
 with rivers of flags
 When we die
 with thousands marching
 behind us
 When we die
 with marches
 that give Hope
 Pressing the redness
 of our foreheads
 against the sun
 we stretch out
 with one hand
 towards the past
 with one hand
 towards the future
 We become
 a living bridge
 For whoever takes our hand
 the road from then on
 is to the stars
 July is hotter
 than June
 July is fire
 July is conflagration
 July is the crimson-embroidered
 epic
 written upon our hearts
 Let the Bolu Beys
 issue their decrees
 Are we not Köroğlu
 whether in the mountains
 or in the dungeon?
 When our foreheads
 catch fire
 with the light of that star
 we march

towards the heights
 of humanity
 Did we not write
 3 July like this
 into the pages of history
 with crimson bands
 upon our foreheads?..
 July is hot
 Very hot
 On another day
 Hasan Hüseyin, Emine
 Gülizar and Ali
 would have bent their knees
 around Hanım Abla's table
 and shared a morsel
 with smiles
 inside their eyes
 The heat of July
 is embroidered
 with the sweat
 of lives breathing through hunger
 And what was written
 in Gültepe
 is the epic
 of shielding them
 with oneself
 A shared morsel
 or a life
 the struggle
 is the same struggle
 the heart
 the same heart...
 The dead send a greeting
 by fighting
**"From eye, rear sight and
 foresight"**
 The streets of Gültepe
 had been silent
 for so long
 until the crack of gunfire
 tore through these roads
 They surrounded them
 ring upon ring
 navy-blue uniforms
 ski masks
 and American weapons
 This is what oppression is
 Wherever a call to struggle
 is made to the people

there you find
 the unleashed dogs
 of the system
 with weapons
 that vomit death
 in their hands
 Yet death
 is as precious as life
 And death too
 has a meaning
 If a person is to die
 they should die bravely
 fighting
 like our people...
 In Gültepe
 the brave ones wave
 becoming flags
 Levent is a young man
 from Sivas
 In the heat of July
 where is the fire?
 On the barricade?
 In the breath
 that sets the roads ablaze?
 Inside Levent's heart?
 Those rising again
 are once more
 the Levents
 of this people
 Mothers
 with their hearts
 in their hands
 take to the roads again
 raising their heads
 against the oppressor
 These mothers
 when the day comes
 can feed an entire country
 as though breastfeeding
 as though raising
 their delicate babies
 as though stroking
 their rosy cheeks
 with workers' hands
 they touch
 each one
 who has been left without...
 What they sing
 are not lullabies, no
 They say:
It is time to wake up now

Has this unbroken drunkenness
 not been enough?
 It is time now
 to wake to the screams
 O humanity!
 Has all this darkness
 not been enough?
 And what we see
 is not a nightmare
 It is the life
 offered by the merchants of hell
 The torment of hell
 is nothing beside it
 It is time to wake up!
 Lightning fills
 the pupils
 of the mothers
 And when they march
 their lips
 become volcanic craters
 spitting the lava
 of anger
 And when marching
 is no longer enough
 they too lie down
 towards death
 adding life
 to the lives
 of their children
 Aygün was the first bullet
 of the calls
 fired into minds
 And it struck
 the right target
 at exactly the right time
 On the first day
 no one had believed them
 And when Aygün died
 they still could not believe
 Was everything
 not supposed to be over?
 The global world,
 the global market...
 Was socialism
 not supposed
 to have been defeated?!
 Those who thought so
 were defeated by their own lack of dreams
 How can Aygün's jet-black gaze
 be described now?

How did Berdan,
 who said **"You're a lion"**
 in response to Aygün's greeting,
 run without stopping?
 How will we tell this?
 How will we describe
 İlginç's laughter?
 A way will surely be found
 we will find a way
 We will stand
 at Berdan's bedside
 and wipe his sweat
 Then we will make
 a little shade from cardboard
 so their bodies
 can cool a little
 We will give Yemo water
 with a dropper, for example
 We will take Müjdat by the arm
 and walk
 as though heading towards Karşıyaka
 We will be reborn
 with İlginç
 And about love of the homeland
 we will become a line of verse
 in İdil's gun barrel
 You all saw Berdan
 His body was so thin
 even as his consciousness
 came and went
 he was a teacher
 of revolution
 İdil was the first bride
 of the just cause
 With her blue bridal dress
 turned into a storm
 the fresh spring shoot
 of revolution
 She was so beautiful
 İlginç burst into laughter
 in Azrael's face
 As long as he laughed
 death could not come near him
 For him
 it fell silent
 Müjdat ran
 towards the shelter of the brave
 and returned
 with the same speed
 with stars
 against his chest

As Yemo drank his oath
carried away by enthusiasm
and mistakenly clenched
his right fist
he made no mistake
with his left fist
and smashed it
into the minds of the oppressors
And the comrades of the barricade
fell one by one
Life, like the sea,
always brings something
and leaves it upon our shore
while always taking
something away from us
This time
it brought victory
while taking them away
They were the ones
who called victory
Twelve rank-and-file fighters
Aygün, İdil, Berdan, İlginç
Osman, Hicabi, Müjdat, Hüseyin
Hayati, Ali, Yemliha, Tahsin
Twelve lives
Twelve commanders
They stretched out their hands
from that day
towards the future
And never once in history
had hands reaching towards that horizon
been left hanging
Where there are no roads
there are our footsteps
On the steep slopes
of the mountains
the wind sings rebellious melodies
Birds of prey circle
in the sky
The scent of our bodies
reaches the wolf's nose
It howls at night
into blood-soaked sleep
We walk
Grass is our makeshift bedding
the earth
our feather bed
the mountain
our gold-embroidered quilt
The mountain ranges
become our home

We take a bowl of water
from Munzur
mix it with Taurus yoghurt
to make ayran
With Tokat flatbread
we pair
an Aegean cheese
Our footsteps stretch
from year to year
as though crossing
from mountain to mountain
We walk
towards tomorrow
as though carrying fire
And we fall
upon its soil
in blazing sieges
There comes a day
when Haydar fires
cover the mountain
And in them
the heart of the people
warms itself
And the jackals
watch from afar
in fear
Anatolia catches fire
cluster by cluster
A spark from Dersim
leaps to the Amanos Mountains,
for example
In the Canik Mountains
it becomes Şerafettin
and catches fire
He takes Haydar of Gazi
by the arm
“Old Man” Bülent Pak of Buca
They come together
from Ordu
At İbrahim Erdoğan's camp
sitting cross-legged
with Kemal Askeri
they brew a tea
for comradeship
over the fire
of struggle
Cömert comes from Sivas
and Commander Mete
Zehra smiles at them
Commander Sabahattin
walks from Tokat

Gazi and Selhan
 from Çorum
 Anatolia
 is a bed for guerrillas
 They walk
 and come one by one
 They fall
 into the fertile embrace
 of Anatolia
 A person becomes brother
 to birds and flowers
 And falls in love
 with the crimson of the day
 while standing
 the dawn watch
 All the winds
 pass through
 the guerrilla's hair
 flowing down
 from the heights
 to the plains
 Does the rain not soak them?
 Does the snow not make them cold?
 The fire
 always remains hidden
 so that its smoke
 does not reach the plains
 so the jackals
 do not gather around it...
 It is hard
 to be a child of the mountains
 But the mountain
 embraces the brave one
 protects and hides them
 so long as you become
 its child
 The mountain does not want
 those who are strangers to it
 It recognises
 the smell of falseness
 and pushes it away
 Everything that lives—
 one's lineage,
 the insects,
 the birds—
 is there
 in its purest state
 The human being too
 the human being
 who becomes purified
 day by day

who becomes purer
 far from rotten rubbish
 far from relationships
 that have themselves become rubbish
 recreating oneself
 kneading oneself
 with the mountain
 with the earth
 with Anatolia
 becoming Selvi, Behiye, İpek, Songül
 becoming Halil İbrahim, Celalettin
 Erhan, Tarık and Besat
 becoming a forest
 upon the mountain
 a tree
 within the forest
 a branch
 upon the tree
 a leaf
 upon the branch
 the human being
 the guerrilla human being
 The brows of the falcons
 are furrowed
 their foreheads beret-covered
 (But when they smile
 suns rise
 upon their faces)
 Their eyes slightly narrowed
 they gaze sharply
 into the distance
 A spark suits
 their pupils
 a legacy
 of İnce Memed...
 When night descends
 like a luminous quilt
 the falcons count the stars
 And with their hopes
 they multiply
 their bodies leaning
 against the mountains
 By day and by night
 the guerrilla remains alert
 But death
 does not arrive
 with drum and zurna
 It hides
 behind stone, bush,
 tree and darkness

It comes as a bullet
 and takes
 comes as a bomb
 and takes
 from between the eyebrows
 It takes life
 from the body
 The heart-home of the mountains
 is plundered
 It comes as an ambush
 comes as a siege
 they come column by column
 eye by eye
 rifle by rifle
 They come
 step by step
 They come
 casting a noose
 around the body
 of the mountains
 Fierce mountain
 rebellious mountain
 steep mountain
 noble mountain
 sheer mountain
 unbowed mountain
 brave mountain
 honourable mountain
 It bleeds and bleeds
 deep within
 but does not surrender
 its children
 It burns and burns...
 but does not give them up
 Yet there comes a moment
 when the mountain's word
 does not prevail
 against the oppressor
 With their dark-green shadows
 they infiltrate
 its foothills
 The leaves turn against
 their own green
 the grass against the dew
 the poppy against the narcissus
 The mountain surges
 The blue of the sky
 is scratched line by line
 across its breast
 War's own song begins

The bullet of justice
 watching for its target
 drowns out
 the orchestra of oppression
 And the guerrillas' trilling cries
 flow like waters
 down the slope
 flow
 flow
 flow...
 with our blood
 towards tomorrow
 Day meets day
 The stars call
 through darkness
 where no eye can see another
 The roads we pass
 become tracks
 Along those roads
 walk the footsteps
 marching towards tomorrow
 And the guerrilla
 flows onward
 fire in their hands
 a ball of light
 upon their foreheads
 The small neighbourhood squares
 seem to grow narrower
 when our words arrive
 with candles and banners
 It shakes the streets
 the great road accident
 of the Counter-Guerrilla!
 And thousands
 become tens of thousands
 marching
 Once again
 Dayı shows
 the clearest truth:
 "Susurluk Is the State!"^{lvii}
 It grows
 echo upon echo
 From the squares
 it marches towards the mountains
 From schools
 our voice goes
 to the gecekondu neighbourhoods
 to the gecekondu neighbourhoods
 it marches...
 Süleyman
 marches

a machine gun
 in his hand
 the death squads of fascism
 behind him
 Hundreds of them
 rush towards him
 What does it matter
 if every door
 every street corner
 every street
 on the highways
 is a trap!
 Süleyman
 faces the enemy
 A helicopter
 like a vulture
 circles and circles
 above him
 Every door
 is open to Süleyman
 They know Süleyman
 They say:
**"Come, let me sacrifice myself for
 you."**
 He marches
 His fortress
 is now
 an old coal shed
 The one fighting
 is descended
 from those old fighters
 chest to chest
 upon the battlements
 But the enemy
 is treacherous
 Süleyman falls
 covered in blood
 before his fortress falls
 What remains behind
 is an eternal greeting
 to those fighting
 at the Front
 And carrying his greeting
 upon his back
 Erhan Efe
 marches
 we march
 our road
 is the Aegean
 The people of the Aegean
 have a special warmth

its air is pleasant
 its grapes are pleasant
 its figs are pleasant
 Its mountains
 are beds of the brave
 its water
 clear and cool
 Its people too
 are clear-hearted
 The Aegean
 is beautiful, in short
 And to fight
 in the Aegean
 safe as sitting
 at a brother's table
 bold as letting out
 a battle cry
 angry as throwing
 a fist at the enemy
 to walk
 through the Aegean mountains
 is beyond beautiful
 What creates
 that beyond
 is Erhan Efe
 and Mehmet Efe
 The Kurd of Kars
 the Turk of Diyarbakır
 sit cross-legged
 in the Aegean
 for war
 and fight fiercely
 It is Anatolia
 that rises in rebellion
 Speaking
 from their position
 Torlak Kemal
 and Börklüce Mustafa
 send greetings
 from burning gun barrels
 İriş Dede Sultan İriş!
 Dede Sultan bends down
 and kisses them
 upon their foreheads
 The Gölge Mountains
 are honourable
 The Gölge Mountains
 even more...
 The struggle
 that shakes consciousness
 roars

from the wounds
in its breast
June '99
Yugoslavia
covered in blood
Aeroplanes take off
from NATO headquarters
And every moment of life
becomes death
from bombs
stamped USA
Two revolutionaries
march
14-shot pistols
at their waists
a volcano
in their hands
They will spew
its lava
The target
the filthiest place
in the city!
Istanbul
Beyoğlu
Tarlabaşı
Here
the pimps of the system
pace about
Dealers sell pills
sell hashish
And some
sell their flesh
But their target
is filthier
than all of these
The centre of filth
the mother of them all!
The American Embassy
Selçuk smiles
Sadık smiles
The building
waits for them
as though time
has stopped
The world
waits for them
They march
time flows
They march
death lies in ambush
They march

towards imperialism
And they are still marching
We are marching
17 August...
While this land
that has endured so much pain
wept for forty thousand
of its children
the puppets
of imperialist monopolies
were passing new laws
to hand the country over
Our pain
meant nothing to them
Because those who died
were not their children
They live
in luxury housing
their homes
are earthquake-resistant
Contractors steal materials
from the lives of the poor
And in prison
at times like these
what pains a person most
is having their hands tied
And they think:
Are our hands really tied?
No!
Not unless
we tie our own hands
There must surely be
a way
to reach out
to those left
without homes
and without bread
Together
they take up their pens
"We want to donate blood..."
And one prisoner
sews up the tear
in his old trousers
with unskilled hands
puts them on
and places the new pair
into the sack
His comrade
hands over
his favourite jumper

And one by one
the sacks fill
From Istanbul, Ankara, Çanakkale
Bartın, Bursa, Malatya
The friendly hands
of free prisoners
reach out
to those rescued
from beneath the rubble
This country
mourns its children
while tending
the wounds
of those who survived
The blood-stained
collaborationist dignitaries
were preparing
new massacres
To rub his face
against his master's hem
the prime minister
in the blue shirt
searched for a gift
to present
on a golden platter
And he offered
the blood of ten revolutionaries
in a golden cup
upon a golden tray
It was the middle of the night
when they came
to the gates of Ulucanlar
The people of Ulucanlar
were not asleep
The people of Ümraniye
were not asleep
Those in Bayrampaşa, Bartın
the prisons
were not asleep
Because the enemy
was not asleep
And there they were
at their doors
with their uniformed murderers
They said:
**"Will you surrender,
or will you die?"**
The answer they received
was the same answer
we had given
for thirty years

They already knew very well
that this was the answer
they would receive
That is why
before words
the weapons spoke
With bullet-riddled bodies
they asked
the same question again
They received
the same answer
And even if they asked
a thousand times
İsmet Kavaklıoğlu
would not leave
even one unanswered
Those whose only weapons
are bullets, bombs, gas
and lies
may smash the doors
and the walls too
But never
our belief!
And whatever
they were able to smash
they smashed
They piled
the bullet-riddled bodies
to one side
and asked
those who remained:
"Who is İsmet Kavaklıoğlu?"
But at that hour
everyone was İsmet
everyone was Nevzat
everyone was Mahir
in Ulucanlar
If they had come
one by one
how Ahmet would have
grappled them
and pinned their backs
to the ground
They should have come
and seen
what it means
to be brave
what a brave one can do...
the rifle had been invented

They came
with their rifles
and their treachery
Aziz, nineteen years old
a young man
slender as a branch
still in the spring
of his life
A human being
cannot hide their face
behind masks
and thirst for blood
like this
They were not human
And they asked
one by one:
**"Will you surrender
or will you die?"**
Those who surrendered
had already said:
"We are not here, Major!"
and gone away
dragging their feet
like the dead
leaving their beliefs
behind as well
dragging their living corpses
they went
There were also
those who hesitated
they were the ones
who always swayed
from side to side
in the struggle
And now
those who would die
were always those
who resisted under torture
They took İsmet
to the bathhouse
Until that moment
perhaps he had never once
had the chance
to wash there
It turned out
he would wash
in his own blood
So be it
A person's own blood
is better
than milk baths

if betrayal
is being imposed upon them
And they asked İsmet
again and again
İsmet answered
They cut his body
and insisted:
"Either you surrender..."
İsmet never listened
to the second half
of that sentence
If betrayal
stands on one side
then everything else
is the price
and paying it
is our duty
"Either you surrender..."
they say
It is certain
that this will not happen
Whatever the cost
let it be exacted
And before
his cry can be cut off
the throat of my İsmet
is cut
This is how
they massacred ten of us
Their bodies
were shot
and cut
Their bones
were broken
Their wills
never!
İsmet, Ahmet and Aziz
pieces of our lives
lying stretched out
Beside them
Nevzat, Ümit, Halil, Abuzer
Beside them
Mahir, Önder and Zafer
They are
at the barricade of revolution
All together
they led
a halay unto death
Much remained
from Ulucanlar
one of them

is the faded photograph
 of the ward wall
 shot many times
 a red inscription:
**“History Written in Blood Cannot
 Be Erased”**
 And these words
 were not written
 with oil paint
 but in the struggle
 with blood
 hundreds of times
 Bullets cannot pierce them
 Much remained
 from Ulucanlar
 one of them
 is the account
 to be demanded
 which was demanded,
 is being demanded
 and will continue
 to be demanded
 Much remained
 from Ulucanlar
 all of it
 our legacy
 that swells our chests
 with pride
 Everything else
 is our song of struggle
 The pen of history
 is destined
 to keep moving
 And carrying with it
 everything from Ulucanlar
 Hope marches
 towards the horizon
 where the sun rises
 Somewhere far away
 pickaxes dig
 into the earth
 And construction machines
 cranes, bulldozers, graders
 the sounds of oppression
 — what were graves
 and torture centres yesterday
 that they should be anything else today?
 In dark tunnels
 the selected soldiers
 of the oligarchy
 are being trained

Somewhere far away
 cauldrons of tar
 are boiling
 Gravestones
 are being inscribed
 with our names
 To blacken
 the daylight
 of the people
 Far from humanity
 mountaintops
 are being excavated
 Concrete floors
 rise towards the sky
 Walls
 iron bars
 Cranes work
 three shifts
 Day
 with eyes
 that decipher the horizon
 that sense
 that see tomorrow
 sees the traps
 being laid for Hope
 Now before them
 stretches
 a road of Simurgh
 Who will march
 who will remain
 Who will take up
 self-sacrifice
 Who will turn
 their back on Hope
 who will smile
 to its face
 while digging its grave
 behind its back
 Everything will be tested
 on this road
 Those marching
 towards revolution
 the Phoenixes
 will remain with him
 Before oppression
 all those
 whose hearts tremble
 will separate away
 He sees all this
 And turns the page

This page
is now closed
Certain of himself
confident
certain
that his barricades are strong
upon the new page
of history
we will write
the revolution's new victory
And with his thunderous voice
at the first step
of the Road of Simurgh

he declares
his victory:
**"Do they want to frighten us
with death?
We showed in '84
that we are not afraid
We showed it in '96
We will show it again
They can kill all of us
But that would not be their victory
it would be the victory
of revolutionary will."**
— Dursun Karataş



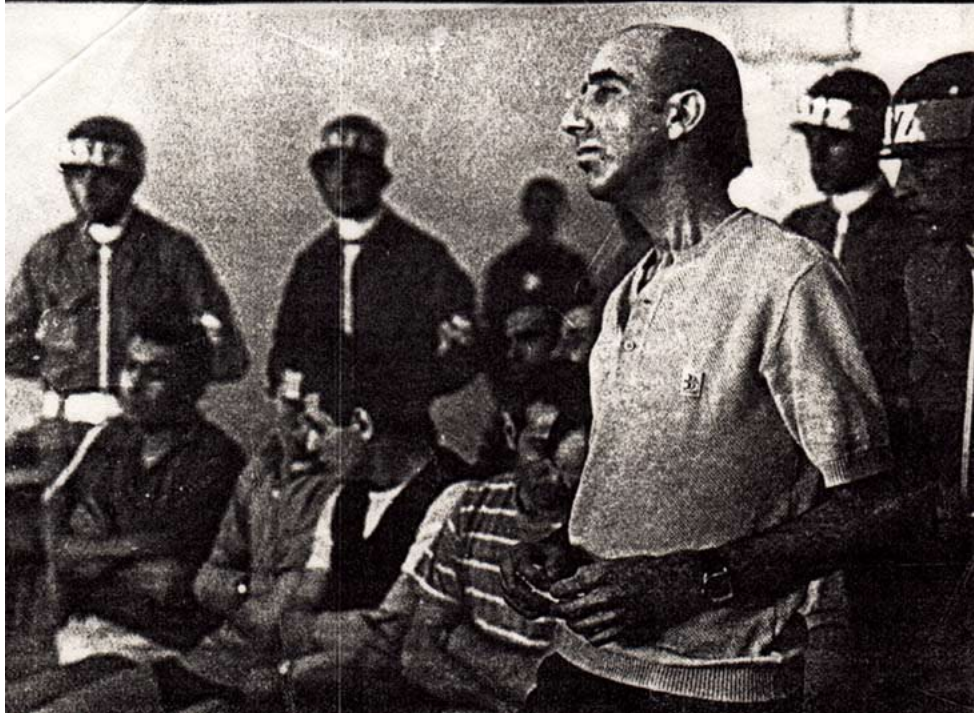


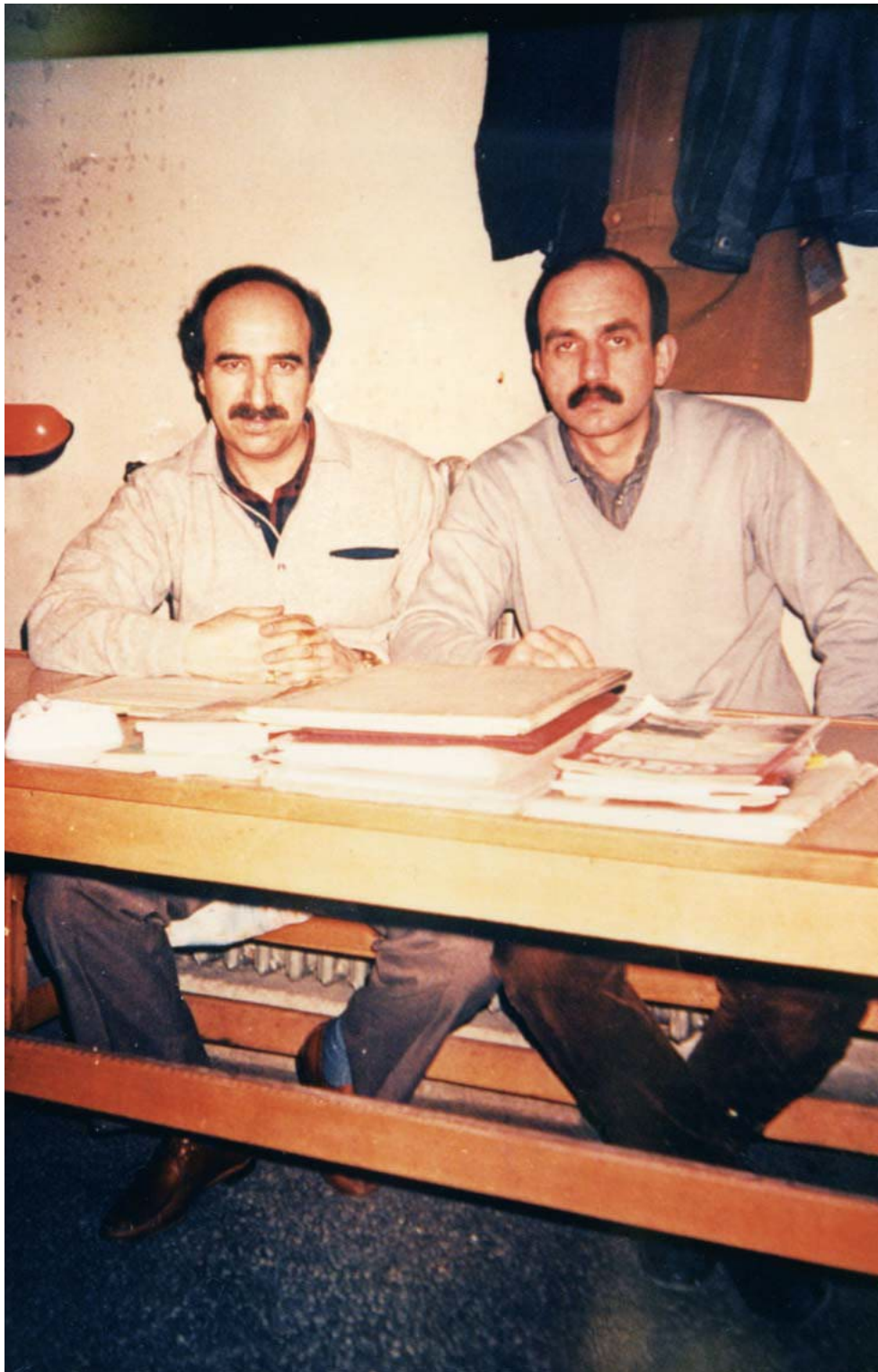






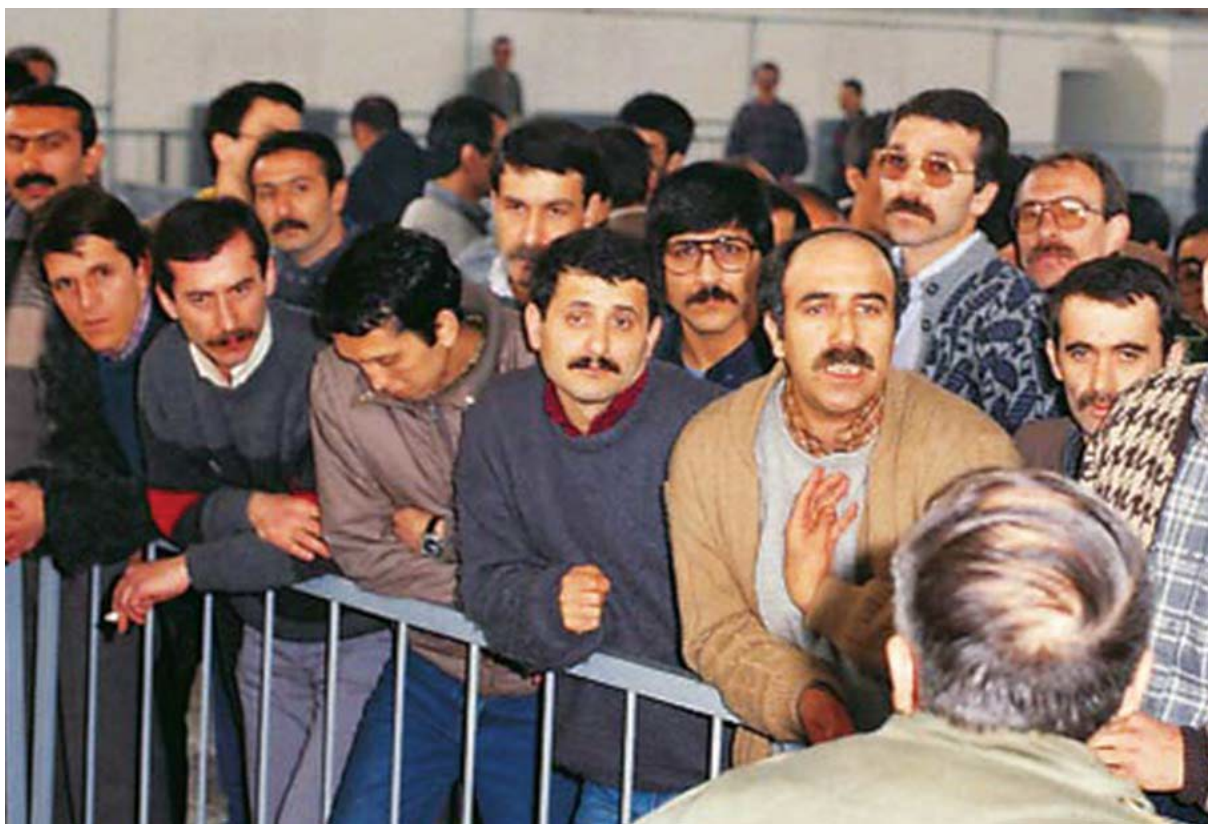












ENDNOTES

ⁱ **Kızıldere Massacre:** On 30 March 1972, state forces surrounded revolutionaries from the THKP-C and THKO in Kızıldere village, Tokat, during an action intended to prevent the executions of Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan. **Mahir Çayan, Cihan Alptekin, Ömer Ayna, Sinan Kazım Özudoğru, Hüdai Arıkan, Saffet Alp, Sabahattin Kurt, Ertan Saruhan, Nihat Yılmaz and Ahmet Atasoy were martyred.** Ertuğrul Kürkçü was the sole survivor.

ⁱⁱ **Yılmaz Güney (1937–1984):** Kurdish filmmaker, actor, screenwriter, novelist and political activist. A self-described Marxist-Leninist, he developed a strongly class-based and anti-imperialist outlook that shaped both his political activity and his cinema. His films frequently focused on poverty, exploitation, oppression and the lives of marginalised people in Turkey. Frequently imprisoned for his political activities, he escaped from prison in 1981 and went into exile in France. His best-known works include *Umut (Hope)*, *Sürü (Herd)*, *Yol (Road)* and *Duvar (Wall)*. *Yol* won the Palme d'Or at the 1982 Cannes Film Festival.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Liquidationist / Liquidationism:** A term used to describe a person or tendency accused of abandoning, dismantling or weakening a revolutionary organisation, its principles or its forms of struggle. In the context of Revolutionary Left, the term was used for the tendency within Revolutionary Path that was accused of abandoning Mahir Çayan's Party-Front line in favour of legalism, reformism and political passivity. The term also has a historical precedent in the Russian revolutionary movement, where Lenin and the Bolsheviks used it against those who sought to abandon the illegal revolutionary organisation in favour of exclusively legal political activity.

^{iv} **Social Imperialism:** A term used by political currents following the line of the Communist Party of China to describe the Soviet Union after the Khrushchev period. The dispute over this question created deep divisions within the left in Turkey. Groups opposing this view argued that US imperialism remained the principal enemy and rejected the description of the Soviet Union as "social imperialist".

^v **Sinan Kukul (1956–1992):** A revolutionary and one of the founders of Revolutionary Left (Dev-Sol). He became involved in revolutionary politics while studying at Istanbul Technical University and played an important role in the process through which Revolutionary Left separated from Revolutionary Path. Arrested in December 1980, he took part in the prison resistance and in preparing the political defence *We Are Right, We Will Win*. He escaped from prison on 2 January 1990 and was martyred on 16 April 1992 during a police operation in Çiftehavuzlar, Istanbul.

^{vi} **Ahmet Fazıl Özdemir (1954–1992):** A revolutionary who joined the struggle while studying at Istanbul Technical University. He took part in youth, workers' and neighbourhood organisation and later became a member of the Revolutionary Left Central Committee. He was sentenced to death in the Erim-Dikler Case and spent years in prison under the threat of execution. After regaining his freedom, he became General Commander of the Armed Revolutionary Units (SDB). He was martyred on 16 April 1992 in Erenköy, Istanbul.

^{vii} **Sabahat Karataş (1953–1992):** A revolutionary known as "Sabo". She was active in student, workers' and neighbourhood organisation and helped establish the Revolutionary Women's Association (DKD). She later became a member of the Revolutionary Left Central Committee and assumed responsibilities within the Armed Revolutionary Units (SDB). She was also Dursun Karataş's wife and comrade. She was martyred on 17 April 1992 during a police operation in Çiftehavuzlar, Istanbul.

^{viii} **Mahir Çayan (1946–1972):** A revolutionary theorist and one of the founders and leaders of the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (THKP-C). He played a leading role in developing the THKP-C's political and military strategy. On 30 March 1972, Çayan and nine comrades were martyred at Kızıldere after being surrounded by security forces during an action intended to prevent the executions of Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan. His writings and political line had a lasting influence on later revolutionary organisations in Turkey.

^{ix} **İbrahim Erdoğan (1950–1991):** A revolutionary who became involved in revolutionary politics in the late 1960s and later took part in the establishment of İYÖKD and Revolutionary Left. He was particularly involved in organising among workers. Arrested after the 12 September 1980 military coup, he later

escaped from prison and took part in developing Revolutionary Left's rural work. He was martyred on 12 July 1991 during coordinated police operations in Istanbul.

^x **Niyazi Aydın (1950–1991):** A founding cadre, senior organiser and theoretician of Revolutionary Left. He was active in İYÖKD and played an important role in the separation from Revolutionary Path and the formation of Revolutionary Left. He later became a member of the Revolutionary Left Central Committee and assumed responsibilities including rural organisation. He was martyred on 12 July 1991 during coordinated police operations in Istanbul.

^{xi} **THKP-C Acilciler:** A revolutionary organisation formed in 1974 by İlker Akman, Yüksel Eriş and Engin Erkiner within the political tradition of Mahir Çayan's THKP-C. It became known as the "Acilciler" ("Urgentists") after the 1975 publication of *Türkiye Devriminin Acil Sorunları* (*The Urgent Problems of the Turkish Revolution*). The group defended Çayan's revolutionary strategy, including the concept of Politicised Military War Strategy (PASS), and was active throughout the late 1970s.

^{xii} **Nurettin Güler (1956–1978):** A revolutionary from Hozat, Dersim, who took on leading responsibilities in Revolutionary Youth organisation in Elazığ and Dersim. He was involved in organising resistance against fascist attacks and developing neighbourhood organisation. He was martyred on 12 December 1978 during an armed clash in Elazığ.

^{xiii} **Haydar Başbağ (1956–1984):** A revolutionary from Dersim who grew up in Elazığ and became involved in the struggle at a young age. Arrested in 1982, he was imprisoned in Metris Prison and later joined the 1984 Death Fast against prison repression and the Single-Type Uniform. He was martyred on 17 June 1984 during the resistance.

^{xiv} **Hüseyin Cevahir (1945–1971):** A revolutionary from Dersim and one of the leading cadres of the THKP-C. He worked closely with Mahir Çayan in the development of the organisation. On 1 June 1971, after being surrounded together with Çayan in Maltepe, Istanbul, he was martyred during a police assault. Mahir Çayan was wounded and captured.

^{xv} **Workers' Party (İP – İşçi Partisi):** A Turkish political party led by Doğu Perinçek from 1992 to 2015. It emerged after the Constitutional Court closed the Socialist Party and had its roots in Perinçek's earlier Maoist and Aydınlik political tradition. Over time, the party increasingly combined socialist terminology with Kemalism, Turkish nationalism and Eurasianism. From the perspective of revolutionary organisations, Perinçek and his followers adopted a leftist appearance while lacking a consistent anti-fascist or anti-imperialist position and directing much of their political hostility against revolutionary movements. In February 2015, the Workers' Party changed its name to the **Patriotic Party (Vatan Partisi)**.

^{xvi} **TKP (Türkiye Komünist Partisi / Communist Party of Turkey):** Founded in 1920 under the leadership of Mustafa Suphi, the TKP was one of the earliest communist organisations in Turkey. It was banned for most of its history and operated largely underground. Over time, the party followed an increasingly reformist line, seeking political change through legal and parliamentary means rather than revolutionary struggle, while retaining influence within sections of the workers' movement, trade unions and the broader left.

^{xvii} **TSİP (Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi / Socialist Workers' Party of Turkey):** Founded in 1974, TSİP was a legal socialist party that became active within the workers' movement and the broader left in Turkey. It followed a reformist political line, placing emphasis on legal political activity, elections and parliamentary struggle rather than revolutionary methods, and sought social and political change within the existing constitutional and parliamentary system.

^{xviii} **16 March 1978 Massacre:** On 16 March 1978, a bomb was thrown and gunfire opened on left-wing students leaving Istanbul University in Beyazıt Square. Seven students were killed and dozens were wounded. Subsequent investigations and court proceedings raised allegations concerning links between the perpetrators, fascist organisations and elements within the state and security apparatus. The massacre became one of the most notorious political attacks of the 1970s in Turkey.

^{xix} **Eylem Birliği (Unity of Action):** A revolutionary organisation established in İzmir in 1976 and later active in other parts of Turkey, including Adana. It belonged to the political tradition influenced by Mahir Çayan and the THKP-C and advocated revolutionary armed struggle. Eylem Birliği carried out a number of actions during the second half of the 1970s and continued its activities until the 12 September 1980 military coup. At one stage it sought organisational unity with the MLSPB, but this attempt did not succeed.

^{xx} **Nurhak Massacre:** On 31 May 1971, members of the Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu (THKO – People's Liberation Army of Turkey), including **Sinan Cemgil, Alpaslan Özdoğan and Kadir Manga**, were surrounded by gendarmerie forces near İnekli village in the Nurhak Mountains while preparing an action against the US Kürecik Radar Base. The three revolutionaries were martyred in the ensuing clash. The event became known within Turkey's revolutionary movement as the Nurhak Massacre.

^{xxi} **6 May 1972 Massacre:** On 6 May 1972, revolutionary leaders **Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan**, members of the **THKO (People's Liberation Army of Turkey)**, were executed by hanging in Ankara Central Prison following death sentences imposed by the military regime after the 12 March 1971 coup memorandum. Their executions became one of the defining events of Turkey's revolutionary movement, and Deniz, Yusuf and Hüseyin are commemorated as the Three Saplings (Üç Fidan).

^{xxii} **CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican People's Party):** Founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the CHP was the founding party of the Republic of Turkey and governed during the single-party period until 1950. Rooted in Kemalism and the "Six Arrows," it later developed into a centre-left, social-democratic party and remains one of the main parties of the Turkish political establishment.

^{xxiii} **TDKP (Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi / Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey):** A clandestine Marxist-Leninist organisation founded in February 1980, emerging from the THKO tradition and the *Halkın Kurtuluşu* current. It adopted an anti-revisionist line influenced by the Albanian Party of Labour and regarded itself as a continuation of the revolutionary movement represented by the THKO.

^{xxiv} **İlim Yayma Cemiyeti (Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge):** A reactionary conservative Islamic educational and cultural organisation founded in Istanbul in 1951. It played an important role in the expansion of İmam-Hatip religious schools and has since developed an extensive nationwide network of student dormitories, scholarships, education centres and cultural activities.

^{xxv} **Halkın Kurtuluşu (HK – People's Liberation):** A revolutionary communist current that emerged from the THKO tradition after the 12 March period and organised around the journal *Halkın Kurtuluşu*, first published in 1976. It developed a Marxist-Leninist, anti-revisionist line, was influenced by Maoism and later by the Party of Labour of Albania, and became active in both student and workers' struggles in several regions of Turkey. The current later formed the organisational basis of the **TDKP (Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey)**, founded in 1980.

^{xxvi} **PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party / Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê):** A Kurdish nationalist political and armed organisation founded in 1978 under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan. Originally Marxist-Leninist and committed to establishing an independent Kurdish state, it later shifted towards demands for autonomy, political rights and democratic self-government.

^{xxvii} **Bülent Ecevit (1925–2006):** A Turkish politician, journalist and long-time leader of the CHP, associated with the party's "left of centre" and later "democratic left" orientation. From a revolutionary socialist perspective, Ecevit represented the interests of the bourgeois political order from a left-wing position, seeking to contain popular discontent within parliamentary and constitutional politics rather than challenge the capitalist system itself. He served several terms as prime minister, including during Turkey's 1974 military intervention in Cyprus, and later founded the Democratic Left Party (DSP).

^{xxviii} **Mahir Çayan's *Uninterrupted Revolution* writings:** A series of theoretical works written in 1971–72 in which Çayan developed the ideological and strategic foundations of the THKP-C. *Uninterrupted Revolution I* discusses Marxist-Leninist theories of revolution, while *Uninterrupted Revolution II–III* analyses imperialism, oligarchic rule and Turkey's social structure, and elaborates the strategy of **Politicized Military War Strategy (PASS)** for anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic revolution.

^{xxix} **Âşık Mahzuni Şerif (1940–2002):** Born Şerif Cırık in Berçenek, Kahramanmaraş, he was an Alevi folk poet, singer and bağlama player and one of the most influential figures of modern Turkish protest folk music. His songs addressed poverty, class inequality, political repression, imperialism and social injustice, and he was repeatedly prosecuted and imprisoned because of his political lyrics. His work combined the Anatolian âşık tradition with a strongly left-wing and popular political outlook.

^{xxx} **Lütfiye Kaçar (1960–1994):** A revolutionary born in Manisa who became involved in the anti-fascist struggle before the 12 September 1980 military coup while studying Geography at Istanbul University. She was prosecuted for membership of Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left) and spent five years in prison. After her release, she continued revolutionary organising and took responsibilities within the Revolutionary Workers' Movement. Kaçar was reported detained in Istanbul in October 1994 and subsequently forcibly disappeared.

^{xxxi} **Selim Mehmet Yücel (1956–1981):** A revolutionary born in Çanakkale who joined the struggle while studying at the Istanbul Higher School of Finance and Accounting. He became one of the leading figures of Istanbul Revolutionary Youth (Dev-Genç) and later continued his activities as a member of the Armed Revolutionary Units (SDB) of Revolutionary Left. After refusing under torture to confess to the killing of Istanbul Deputy Police Chief Mahmut Dikler, Yücel was taken away by police and executed on 3 April 1981.

^{xxxii} **Ahmet Karlangaç (d. 1980):** A leading cadre of Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left) and a member of its early Armed Revolutionary Units (SDB). He was detained in Istanbul on 2 October 1980 in connection

with Devrimci Sol activities and the killing of former Prime Minister Nihat Erim. Contemporary court testimony stated that Karlangaç was repeatedly tortured in police custody and collapsed during interrogation; he died on 12 October 1980 while held at Istanbul Police Headquarters.

^{xxxiii} **Mehmet Büçkün (1959–1979):** A revolutionary born in Malatya who became active in the student movement at Istanbul Technical University and in Dev-Genç. He later took leading responsibilities within Devrimci Sol in Adana and the surrounding region, where he was involved in organising among workers and poor neighbourhoods. On 19 June 1979, while attempting to resolve a dispute involving different left-wing groups in Adana, he was shot and martyred during the period of intra-left conflict.

^{xxxiv} **Necdet Pişmişler (1955–1981):** A revolutionary born in Bursa who became involved in the revolutionary movement during his youth and later studied Civil Engineering at Istanbul Technical University. He took responsibilities in Dev-Genç and subsequently in the revolutionary movement. After being arrested in 1980, he escaped from prison and was assigned to organise rural guerrilla activity in the Black Sea region. He died on **5 November 1981** in a clash with gendarmerie forces in Aybastı, Ordu. He was one of the pioneers of the movement's rural guerrilla tradition and as a martyr.

^{xxxv} **Hasan Telci (1957–1984)** — A worker and member of Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left) from Mudanya, Bursa. He worked as a porter at Mudanya harbour and became active in revolutionary organising from 1977, particularly among workers and local youth. Arrested in 1980, he later participated in the 1984 Death Fast resistance against prison repression and the compulsory prison-uniform policy. He died on **24 June 1984**, in the final days of the resistance.

^{xxxvi} **Erim-Dikler Case:** A Revolutionary Left trial separated from the Main Trial by the 12 September junta. The authorities sought to conclude the case rapidly in order to carry out death sentences against the defendants.

^{xxxvii} **We Are Right, We Will Win (*Haklıyız, Kazanacağız!*)** — The collective political defence presented in the **Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left) Main Trial**, one of the major mass political trials following Turkey's 12 September 1980 military coup. The defence was read in court by **Dursun Karataş** on behalf of Devrimci Sol defendants and set out the movement's analysis of the coup, fascism, imperialism, class struggle and the revolutionary struggle in Turkey. It was subsequently published in Turkish in **two volumes in 1989** by Haziran Yayınları under the title *Haklıyız, Kazanacağız! – Devrimci Sol Savunma*.

^{xxxviii} **Three Who Made a Revolution** — A biographical history of **Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin** by the American writer and historian **Bertram D. Wolfe (1896–1977)**. First published in 1948, the book traces the development of the Russian revolutionary movement and the political formation of the three figures through the period leading to the October Revolution. Wolfe had himself been involved in the early Communist movement in the United States but later broke politically with Stalinism, a background that shaped his interpretation of Soviet history.

^{xxxix} **TİKB (Türkiye İhtilalci Komünistler Birliği – Union of Revolutionary Communists of Turkey)** — A Marxist-Leninist communist organisation founded in Turkey in **February 1979**, with roots in revolutionary circles active from the late 1960s. It has historically emphasised working-class organisation and socialist revolution.

^{xl} **Abdullah Meral (1952–1984)** — A militant of **Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left)**, born in Kalebayır village in Manyas, Balıkesir. He became involved in the revolutionary movement in the mid-1970s and was imprisoned after the 12 September 1980 military coup. Meral participated in the **1984 Death Fast** against prison repression and the compulsory prison-uniform policy, and died on **14 June 1984**, the first of four prisoners to martyr during the resistance.

^{xli} **24 January Decisions (24 Ocak Kararları)** — A package of economic measures announced by the Turkish government on 24 January 1980, associated particularly with Turgut Özal. The programme marked a shift towards an export-oriented, market-based economy and included devaluation, reduced subsidies and state spending, price liberalisation and measures to restrain wages. For working people, already suffering from severe inflation and economic crisis, these policies brought a further decline in living standards: real wages fell sharply, while the prices of many basic goods and services increased. The programme was implemented more extensively following the 12 September 1980 military coup and became the basis of Turkey's economic liberalisation during the 1980s.

^{xlii} **Metin Türker (martyred 5 June 1993)** — Born in Bulgaria, Türker migrated to Turkey in **1978** and joined the revolutionary struggle. Of his fifteen years of political activity, he spent approximately **eight years in prison**. He was detained in Ankara in 1990 and subjected to torture; the resulting health problems worsened during imprisonment because adequate treatment was not provided. He was taken to hospital in Bursa, where he was martyred on **5 June 1993**. He is commemorated by the revolutionary movement as one of its martyrs.

^{xliii} **Fatih Öktülmüş** — a leading Turkish communist revolutionary and one of the founding cadres of the TİKB (Türkiye İhtilalci Komünistler Birliği — Revolutionary Communists' Union of Turkey). Imprisoned after the 12 September 1980 military coup, he became known for his resistance under torture and in prison. In 1984, he joined the death fast against the repression and degrading conditions imposed on political prisoners. He was martyred on **17 June 1984, on the 62nd day** of the death fast alongside Abdullah Meral, Haydar Başbağ and Hasan Telci.

^{xliv} **Mete Nezihi Altınay (1959–1996)** — a revolutionary from Mersin who took part in Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left) from its formative period. He was imprisoned during the years of the 12 September military junta and later played an important role in the reorganisation of the revolutionary movement between 1986 and 1991. He subsequently joined the guerrilla organisation in the Tokat–Sivas region, where he served as a unit deputy commander. He was martyred on **30 January 1996**, together with six comrades, in the rural area of Yukarı Asarcık village in Hafik, Sivas.

^{xlv} **Cavit Özkaya (1958–1991)** — born in Çanakkale, he became involved in revolutionary politics while at school and joined Dev-Genç after moving to Istanbul for university in 1975. He took responsibilities in the Beyazıt Dev-Genç organisation and later worked in the Black Sea region. Arrested in early 1983, he participated in the 1984 Death Fast Resistance as part of its second group. After his release in 1988, he was involved in rebuilding Devrimci Sol's armed units (SDBs) and served on its Military Committee. On **12 July 1991**, Özkaya and other Devrimci Sol members were killed during police/security-force operations at several locations in Istanbul; they are commemorated by the movement as the **"12 July Martyrs."**

^{xlvi} **Şaban Şen (1961–1991)** — born in Balıkesir, he joined the revolutionary struggle while attending teachers' college and later continued his activities as a Dev-Genç member while studying at Istanbul University Faculty of Law. Arrested in 1980, he was part of the first group of the 1984 Death Fast Resistance, together with Abdullah Meral, Hasan Telci and Haydar Başbağ. After his release, he was appointed political coordinator of the movement's organisation abroad. He lost his life in a traffic accident in **Belgium on 18 December 1991** and is commemorated among the movement's revolutionary martyrs.

^{xlvii} **Mürsel Göleli (1956–1994)** — a revolutionary born in Erzurum and a cadre of Devrimci Sol. Before 1980, he took responsibility in the movement's organisation in Istanbul; following the 12 September military coup, he was arrested and spent many years in prison. He was among the signatories of *Haklıyız Kazanacağız* (*We Are Right, We Will Win*). He escaped from prison in 1990 and, after being recaptured, escaped again from Nevşehir Prison in February 1993 together with other political prisoners. He later continued the struggle within the Dersim Guerrilla Unit and was martyred on **19 March 1994** in the Arasor Valley area of Çemişgezek, Dersim, together with Nazım Karaca and Feride Karaca, during an armed clash with the security forces.

^{xlviii} **The Epic of Sheikh Bedreddin** (*Simavne Kadısı Oğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Destanı*) — a book-length poem by **Nâzım Hikmet**, first published in **1936**. It recounts the early fifteenth-century rebellion associated with **Sheikh Bedreddin** and his followers against the Ottoman order. Hikmet presents the revolt through themes of poverty, inequality, communal ownership and the struggle of peasants and the oppressed, making Bedreddin a powerful symbol of social rebellion in modern Turkish literature.

^{xlix} **Recai Dinçel (1958–1993)** — born in Sinop, he became involved in revolutionary politics while pursuing higher education and took part in **Dev-Genç**, including its Aksaray Regional Committee. He was imprisoned before the 12 September 1980 military coup and released in 1990. He later held responsibilities in **Devrimci Sol**, including organising armed units and serving as a regional cadre in the Black Sea area. He was also among the signatories of *Haklıyız Kazanacağız* (*We Are Right, We Will Win*). On **24 March 1993**, he was martyred together with **İbrahim Yalçın Arıkan and Avni Turan** during a police operation in Bahçelievler, Istanbul; it was an extrajudicial execution.

^l Engin Kaya — a former **TKP/ML** activist who was identified as an **informant working for MİT** (National Intelligence Organisation). He was accused of passing information about his comrades and revolutionary activities to the intelligence services, including information connected with the **7 October 1988 Tuzla operation**, in which four TKP/ML militants were martyred. In this sense, he was regarded as having betrayed his comrades, the organisation he had belonged to, and the revolutionary ideology he had claimed to serve. Devrimci Sol subsequently detained and interrogated Kaya and announced that it had executed him in February 1989.

^{li} **İlginç Özkeskin (1961–1996)** — born in Istanbul on **14 February 1961**, he became involved in the revolutionary struggle while studying medicine at Çapa Faculty of Medicine. He joined Dev-Genç activities from 1978 and continued his political work following the 12 September military coup. Arrested on **30 April 1987**, he spent several years in prison and was released in May 1993. He was imprisoned again in 1994 and participated in the **4 January 1996 Ümraniye Prison Resistance**. During the **1996 Death Fast Resistance**,

Özkeskin joined the hunger strike against prison policies and was **martyred on 24 July 1996, on the 66th day of the Death Fast.**

^{lii} **Zeynep Arıkan Gülbağ (1968–2001)** — born in Hekimhan, Malatya, she joined the revolutionary struggle while studying at Istanbul University in 1986–87 and took various responsibilities within Dev-Genç for about five years. In 1992 she married Kazım Gülbağ, and later continued her struggle as a cadre of the revolutionary movement in Istanbul. She was imprisoned and took part in the **2000–2001 Death Fast Resistance** against the F-Type prisons. After being released on health grounds, she continued the Death Fast in **Küçük Armutlu, Istanbul**. She was **martyred on 27 September 2001, after 343 days of resistance.**

^{liii} **13 September 1992 Internal Coup:** An internal coup attempt within Revolutionary Left. On 13 September 1992, at the organisation’s central base abroad, a group within the organisation took Dursun Karataş prisoner and attempted to seize control of the movement. Karataş escaped on 5 October and later returned to the base himself, where the conflict with the coup plotters continued. Following the intervention of the cadres, the coup attempt was defeated and work towards founding the Party resumed.

^{liv} **Avni Turan (1954–1993)** — born in Düzce into a poor Circassian family, he became involved in the revolutionary struggle while studying at Istanbul Technical University in the mid-1970s and took active responsibilities within Dev-Genç and various regional organisations. Following the 12 September 1980 military coup, he was imprisoned and took part in prison resistance, including volunteering for the **1984 Death Fast Resistance**. After his release, he continued his activities as a cadre of Devrimci Sol. On **24 March 1993**, he was martyred together with **Recai Dinçel and İbrahim Yalçın Arıkan** during a police operation in Bahçelievler, Istanbul, following an armed confrontation lasting several hours.

^{lv} **12 September 1980 Coup:** The military coup of 12 September 1980 established a fascist junta in Turkey. Revolutionary organisations, trade unions, democratic associations and other opposition forces were subjected to widespread repression, arrests, torture and imprisonment. Revolutionary Left declared that it would resist the junta and continue the struggle.

^{lvi} **1984 Death Fast and the Single-Type Uniform:** In 1984, political prisoners launched a Death Fast against the attempt to impose the Single-Type Uniform (TTE) and other prison policies aimed at forcing political prisoners to surrender their political identity. Dursun Karataş joined the first Death Fast team on 13 April 1984. The resistance lasted 75 days and ended on 26 June after certain political objectives had been achieved. Abdullah Meral, Haydar Başbağ and Hasan Telci of Revolutionary Left, and Fatih Öktülmüş of TİKB, were martyred during the resistance.

^{lvii} **Susurluk Scandal:** The term refers to the revelations associated with Susurluk concerning relations between state institutions, security forces, fascist organisations and organised crime. The slogan “Susurluk Is the State!” expressed the view that these relations were not an aberration outside the state, but part of the state’s counter-guerrilla structure.

APPENDIX:

YOUTH (DEV-GENC) MARCH:

Bağımsızlık şiarını 6. filo'lar karşısında haykıran
şanlı haziran günlerinde sınıfla kaynaşan
Bizler gençliğiz savaşıyoruz emperyalizme karşı
İşçi köylü öğrenci gençlik zafere kadar
Cesaretle inançla atıldık kavgaya yöneldik aydınlıklara
Okulda fabrikada kırdık işgalleri kıra kıra
Bizler gençliğiz savşıyoruz faşizme karşı
Savaşacağız döktüğümüz kanda boğana kadar
Doğrulup gürledik nisan direnişi'nde kavganın izindeyiz
özgür bir gelecek müjdecisi yükselen sesimiz
Bizler gençliğiz savaşıyoruz oligarşiye karşı
Savaşacağız halkla birlikte kurtuluşa kadar

*Shouting the slogan of independence in the face of the Sixth Fleet,
Uniting with the working class in the glorious days of June,
We are the youth, we are fighting against imperialism,
Workers, peasants, students, youth — until victory!*

*With courage and conviction, we threw ourselves into the struggle, turning towards the light,
In schools, factories and the countryside, breaking occupation after occupation,
We are the youth, we are fighting against fascism,
We will fight until it is drowned in the blood it has shed.*

*We rose up and thundered in the April Resistance; we follow the path of struggle,
Our rising voice heralds a free future.
We are the youth, we are fighting against the oligarchy,
We will fight together with the people until liberation.*

Comrade Mahir is freezing at Kızıldere

**Sobalarında kuru da meşe yanıyor
Mahir yoldaş Kızıldere'de üşümüştü donuyor
Tüm dostları zindanlarda çürüyor
Kardeşim yoldaşım Mahirim vay...**

**Kızıldere, kızıldere...
On yerimde yara bere...
Mahir gardaşı vurdular,
Haber ver, Gittiğin yere...**

*Dry oak burns in their stoves,
Comrade Mahir is freezing at Kızıldere.
All his comrades are wasting away in the dungeons,
My brother, my comrade, my Mahir, alas...*

*Kızıldere, Kızıldere...
My body is covered in wounds...
They shot brother Mahir,
Carry the news wherever you go...*



**We grew up with HIM, became stronger with HIM,
we walked towards the revolution with HIM,
with HIM we overcame the obstacles before our dreams,
under HIS leadership we grew into an unbreakable organisation to be envied and
admired.**

**Even if we cannot accept it, our *Dayı* is no longer physically among us.
But through the values and traditions he created, through everything he left us, he will
always be with us, within us and before us.**

We will not feel his absence!

**It is because *WE KNEW HIM* that, in morality, culture, ideology, thought and practice; in
our relationship with the people, the revolution and our confidence in ourselves, we
drew clear lines between revolution and counter-revolution. Our greatest strength, our
greatest weapon, was this.**

This was a strength that no force in the world could defeat.

This was Marxism-Leninism.

WITHOUT HIM, BUT WITH HIM, we will carry our march towards revolution to victory.

This book contains the accounts of those who knew HIM.

This book contains the feelings and thoughts of those who fought under HIS leadership.