WOMEN AND SOCIALISM IN TURKEY:
CASE OF
PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION
(ILERICI KADINLAR DERNEĞI)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
THE MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY
EMEL AKAL

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

T.C. YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURULU
DOKUMANTASYON MERKEZİ

FEBRUARY 1996
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................ iii
ÖZ ........................................................................................................................... iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ....................................................................................... v
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..................................................................................... vi
ABBREVIATIONS ............................................................................................... ix

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................. 1

2. METHOD .......................................................................................................... 10

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT .................. 18
   3.1 The Utopians .......................................................................................... 20
   3.2 Marx-Engels, Social Democratic Parties and the Internationals .......... 22
   3.3 The Communist Parties and the Comintern ........................................... 24

4. SOCIALISM AND WOMEN ............................................................................ 28
   4.1 The Views of Utopians on the Subject of Women’s Liberation ...... 30
   4.2 Marx-Engels and Emancipation of Women ................................. 32
   4.3 Women in Social Democratic Parties and the Internationals ........... 36
   4.4 The October Revolution, Comintern and Women ......................... 45
       4.4.1 Lenin’s Position ........................................................................ 45
       4.4.2 Soviet Practice ....................................................................... 48
   4.5 The Comintern and Women ......................................................... 50
   4.6 Women Against War and Fascism .............................................. 56
5. WOMEN IN THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN TURKEY.....63
   5.1 Brief History of the Socialist Movement in Turkey.................63
   5.2 Women and Socialism in Turkey........................................68
   5.3 Brief Look at the 1970s...............................................72
   5.4 Which Women Became Socialists? Why and How?...................74

6. A CASE STUDY: İLERİCI KADINLAR DERNEĞİ (IKD)
   THE PROGRESSIVE WOMEN’S ORGANIZATION........91
   6.1 The Founding of the İlerici Kadınlar Derneği/IKD..............91
   6.2 The IKD-TKP Relationship.........................................97
   6.3 What Kind of a Women’s Organization?.........................103
      6.3.1 IKD and the ‘Organizational Independency’..............112
   6.4 The Ideological Structure of the IKD and
      Its Approach to Feminism.........................................114
   6.5 The Kadınların Sesi (The Voice of Women) Newspaper........121
   6.6 The Organizational Structure of the IKD.......................127
      6.6.1 Regional Organization and the Regional Secretariat..130

7. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IKD
   AND BRIEF RETROSPECT........................................140
   7.1 Activities of IKD..................................................140
      7.1.1 The Educational - Research Commission..................141
      7.1 Campaigns.....................................................144
      7.1.3 8th of March, International Women’s Day...............146
      7.1.4 Literacy Classes, Health Work and Various Activities.149
   7.2 IKD and Solidarity with Worker Class..........................151
   7.3 The Anti-Fascist Struggle and Activities.....................155
   7.4 The Own Way of Turkish Women................................163
   7.5 The IKD: A Conservative Women’s Organization...............167
   7.6 What did Women Gain from IKD Membership.....................170
8. CONCLUSION .................................................................................. 175

REFERENCES .................................................................................................... 185

APPENDICES

A. The enthusiastic crowd cheering while the TKP message was read at the Second General Assembly of IKD ................................................................. 190

B. First Issues of Kadınların Sesi Newspaper ......................................................... 191

C. Examples from Kadınların Sesi Journal ............................................................. 192

D. “Handy Tips” and “Mother and Children Health” Columns from Kadınların Sesi .......................................................... 193

E. “News Bulletin” in Turkish and English .............................................................. 194

F. A banner posted on a street in Diyarbakır on March 8th, 1978 ......................... 195

G. First Women March in Trabzon on March 8th, 1979 ........................................ 196

H. Women selling trousseau at Kadıköy-Istanbul in ‘Solidarity with the workers on strike’ .......................................................... 197

J. “IKD rally at Ordu on July 23rd, 1979 ................................................................. 198

K. “IKD cannot be silenced” banner carried in a march ........................................ 199

L. A view of the ‘End to Mother’s Grief’ rally organized together with CHP .......................................................... 200

M. A view of 500 Women marching from Istanbul and Izmir to Ankara in protest of closing down IKD on April 24th, 1979 ......................... 201