

# Rosa Avesta from TKP-ML Central Committee / Women's Commission: WOMEN ORGANISE, BECOME LEADERSHIP, RAISE THE WAR IN KKB!

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*The Proletariat Party announced its first congress in a statement in April 2019 and shared some of its decisions with the public. One of these decisions was the decision to establish an organisation called the Communist Women's Union. Besides, there were some particular decisions regarding women in the Party Program and its Statute. We discussed these decisions with Rosa Avesta from the TKP-ML Central Committee / Women's Commission.*

***– TKP-ML recently declared its first Congress and stated that it had signed a series of decisions about women that we would like to discuss. But before moving on to this, could you briefly explain how / under what conditions you went to the Congress process for your Party?***

**Rosa Avesta:** Firstly, I would like to congratulate and salute our first Congress through this interview. If we start from the conditions in which we held our Congress, it may seem cliché. However, it is natural that we emphasize the continuity of fascism because, since its foundation, Turkey has been ruled under a fascist dictatorship. However, there are periods, in which the ruling classes are face crises in governing, the state

aggression increases against all layers of society, their struggles, revolutionary and communists. Although we cannot give an exact date, the conditions we held our Congress in started after the general elections which were held in June 2015. The ruling party AKP has suffered various shocks before and after the June 2015 elections, thus increasing the state violence. For example, the Gezi Uprising took place, in which a wide variety of oppressed communities participated, and thus the state found it challenging to terrorize this movement. There was also the process of Rojava, which was born from the civil war in Syria under the nose of Turkey's southern borders.

There was the Self-Governance Resistance, which began immediately after the June 2015 parliamentary elections and was suppressed by massacre and aggression. Of course, the qualities, shortcomings and weaknesses of these and more can be evaluated in terms of the interests of the people and from a class perspective. However, there is a fact that these processes have created important shocks in the AKP government and raised the crisis of non-governance, which is inherent due to the structure of the country.

As you may already know, AKP came to power through certain alliances and strengthened its power and control by eliminating and re-creating these alliances. For a period, under the "war against military tutelage" the AKP government with the help of "Left" eliminated the "Kemalist clique" within the army and later fought against the Fetullah Gulen Congregation whom it collaborated with; thus old friends became enemies, old enemies became friends. The AKP government managed to stay in power to this day through puzzle policies. This alliance and enemy policy and the capacity to manipulate the public it is one of its strongest points. However, its same policy points out its weakest side and one that prepares its own end.

At this point, the critical thing to note is that all this friendly-enemy policy takes a position in bourgeois-feudal politics, and the opposition to the foundations of the state has no place in this equation. Anyone who is trying to get involved in this equation has no option other than being tied up to one bourgeois clique or the other.

*– Doesn't this contradict with the politic of taking advantage of contradictions between enemies?*

– No, do not get me wrong; this last sentence is entirely different from the conflict and division within the enemy you are saying, from the policy of taking advantage in the name of revolution. But since this is not our topic, we did not want to extend it. The point I would like to emphasize here is the fact that no opposition that is not targeting the foundations of the state will not coincide with the interests of the people and the revolution, whatever the name. We wanted to make this emphasis because we give great importance to the blows received by AKP we mentioned above that the rivalry among the ruling classes and the people's opposition should be separated by thick lines.

As a result, the economic crisis, the fact that masses are getting more miserable every day and the dissatisfaction with their situation, the actions of the working class and the unemployed, even if they are fragmented, the unrestrained revolt of the Kurdish nation, the struggle of women and LGBTI + individuals from the most dynamic social sections of the oppressed and the wave of the rebellion caused by the gradual exhaustion of the hope of the youth, not even the future, but to save the day, is increasingly making it difficult for AKP government to sustain the crises. As its aggression increases, it is a step closer to collapse, as it feels the failure more and more, it becomes more aggressive. This situation continues despite all the interventions it does.

For example, the “coup” ruse, which they considered “the grace of God” in 2016, did not work, only made the spiral of violence and aggression more insurmountable. It does not only keep this within the borders, but it also tries to find a solution to the survival problem through military occupations. However, this is not a sustainable situation. In other words, the AKP government, along with its sidekick MHP, is experiencing the sad end of all dictatorships, collapse.

As a general picture, of course, it is necessary to emphasize many issues, but this is enough for us to see the conditions of the country where our Party held its Congress. Intense aggression towards the people and the revolutionary, communist subjects of the people. Furthermore, it is necessary to underline that aggression, which has been succeeded in depressing revolutionary and communist topics to a certain extent. This is also a reality for our Party.

***– Yes, but for the Communist Party, there is a process beyond these attacks.***

– I already wanted to connect the subject there. While the objective conditions are briefly so, what is expected from a communist party is to make stronger breakthroughs by using the crisis experienced by the government in favour of the revolution with its positioning under these conditions. At the time of all this, while the Communist party was concerned about not breaking with the class struggle, on the one hand, it was mostly rendered breathless with its own internal problems. It was fighting against the coup attempt within the Party and fighting for the implementation of the Party principles.

It is useful to approach this process in many aspects, which are all deeply interconnected. One of these aspects is the reflection of the liquidationist attack within the Party of the imperialist-capitalist system from 2000. We should also add that the Party was not sufficiently prepared ideologically, politically, theoretically, and organisationally against this attack. Although we have talked about liquidationism a lot, we have not been able to concretize it, and not being prepared was one of the reasons that led the 2015 coup. Even though having possessed the knowledge to publish a series of books about liquidationism, it is precisely liquidationism itself, not to take steps to deal with concrete liquidation in practice. Revolution is not made with words; revolution is concrete; as concrete as life. Words do not kill the enemy. It is the concrete equivalent of words that will make the revolution. However, if you experience an ideological decline, you cannot find a solution other than cling to words and slogans.

For example, you cannot manage an organisation by constantly repeating slogans, for example, even if the proposals are entirely correct. Moreover, you cannot present it as an indicator of ideological robustness. By doing so, you only make slogans meaningless; you make them cliché. Worse still, you would lead the organisation ideologically to collapse. The most ironic example -in our context- is, “Revolution will not happen without women, women cannot be liberated without revolution” slogan. Isn’t it a highly accurate and scientific proposition? But is there any justified logic that can explain our inability to organise women while we have been chanting this slogan for the past 45 years? What kind of revolutionary would throw the responsibility to women by saying “Party’s doors are not closed to women”? We say the same thing for the working class and the people, but do we take the approach that is “Party’s doors are not closed to the workers, let them come themselves and organise”? This is turning a blind eye to one of the most fundamental aspects of revolution by continually

repeating the same slogan and render it useless. Of course, this issue has various elements; its direct relationship with the patriarchal structure. However, our example is only about substituting slogans for reality.

Returning to the question of liquidationism; In the name of ideological robustness, if you leave the political area blank, the result is bright, ideological-political collapse. The only place you can go by not making a road map in practice, by making short-medium and long-term plans, just by determining the situation (to be honest, we are successful at this), by being satisfied with the analysis is garrulity. This is precisely the view of our congress on the putschist-liquidationist line “left-looking right liquidationism”.

In fact, if we say the coup that we have experienced as “a result of the imperialist-capitalist attack”, the result will not change. Or if we define the issue with superficial approaches such as “we have been cleansed, we have been purified”, the result will not change. In short, if we only publish ‘books’ on liquidationism and putschism and do not examine the concrete implications of this, if we are not ideologically renewed, and freeze the war against this understanding, and our end will be liquidation.

Speaking of freezing, one of the main issues of the coup in our Party is the state of frost. Again, this is not just a process specific to the communist Party. The revolutionary and communist movements all over the world and our country are experiencing this process somehow. In this issue, the ranks are not drawn with a ruler like a map, of course; however, it takes various forms such as status quo, dogmatism, the left-looking right liquidationism, instead of producing a policy suitable for new conditions freezing theory in the name of struggling with revisionism.

This conflict is a revolutionary conflict, but if this conflict and “chaos” can be managed or managed well enough, revolutionary results can come out of it. Examples of communist or revolutionary parties that achieve this significantly exist both in history and today. It emerged as one of the manifestations of the coup because there was no leadership capable of managing this conflict. As you know, the crack appeared at the leadership level.

– *Can you summarise?*

– There are dozens of titles more to be mentioned. Therefore, it is useful to look at a whole process definition that is determined, written-drawn, analysed before and during the Congress. The point we are trying to say briefly here is to point out that the Congress was held in extremely unfavourable conditions. This finding is often understood to be a disadvantage, but it depends on how you look at it. This “disadvantaged” situation also increased the importance of the Congress. This process has revealed our hidden-capped, consensus-related problems, and showed the way to be walked in a way. No matter how much the ruling classes attack, the Communist Party has put forward the will to carry out the revolution. Moreover, despite the so-called “disadvantaged” process, steps were taken in practice with a series of concrete decisions, from the Kurdish national question to the gender question, a road map on working within the working class to our orientation on the Middle East. The Party Program was formed and the deficiencies in the statute were eliminated and renewed. So, it is essential where you look at the process from. We emphasise not to “complaint, whine” of the process as a cause of future failures, but to change all this inappropriateness and to understand the decisions and orientation

of the Congress correctly. And finally, I would like to end with the sending regards and respect to Comrade Orhan (Nubar Ozanyan) for his contributions to our Party.

***– You have finished summarizing the process, but can you explain what you experienced from the women’s front in a few sentences, how it affected you?***

– Whatever our Party experienced in the past four years; as women, we have experienced as well. Of course, it was slightly more backbreaking for us.

You know, the 8th Conference of our Party had decided on forming a women’s organisation. In line with this decision, the Women’s Committee affiliated with the Central Committee was formed and started its work, even if it was delayed. Despite its incredibly challenging aspects, it was the first time for us to re-learn, make sense of everything. Our self-confidence has increased as it should have been for all of us, we have taken significant steps towards walking more firmly with the Party. We faced many problems, we struggled... But in the end, we always took further steps, faced, settled up, and further organised. In the coup process that started immediately after the counter-revolutionary operation in 2015, we developed an attitude that adopted our Party against the coup as women. We think we are quite successful in this regard. Of course, this had a price. Like all our comrades in the face of the coup, we were attacked, but we were also exposed to the extra attacks from this fraction, which ultimately reflected their sexist and male-dominant perspectives.

We were called princesses, feminists by this group. For them, we were enemies of the Party who thinks nothing but sex from dusk till dawn. Our LGBTI + comrades were declared “perverts” overnight. We were subjected to manipulations that could appeal to the reactionary sides of society which is the policy of AKP Government. However, I can proudly say that we have never personalized these attacks. We did not perceive it as an attack on our person. We did not rush to prove ourselves individually. Because this hostility was towards our Party, we, as women in the Party ranks, “deserved” these attacks. So, we were not victims of the process, and we paid the price for our commitment to the Communist Party and our principles. We are proud of this.

On the other hand, we did not stay quiet towards the sexist expressions of our comrades (these examples were exceptions) against the women in the putschist ranks. In this sense, we think that we have passed the test as women in the Party. As a matter of fact, the attacks were not personal, for example, making the membership of a female comrade member of Central Committee controversial also made the existence of the Women’s Committee affiliated with Central Committee through our female comrade controversial and ignored. They dared to eliminate the labour of women who remained in their ranks. In other words, as the components of the Women’s Committee, we have not only stood in an essential place in the reckoning of our Party but also have walked to a line that protects and develops women’s gains within the Party. We haven’t allowed sexist attacks or discourses regardless of whom they are directed.

***– As a result, you held your Congress in a difficult process. There are, of course, many points to consider. However, we would like to focus mainly on the decisions you made regarding the gender problem. Can you briefly summarise the decisions taken?***

– The most important decision on the issue of women-gender was, of course, the establishment of the Communist Women’s Union (KKB), an autonomous women’s organisation affiliated with TKP-ML. However, it would be incomplete to consider the establishment of this organisation as a Congress decision alone. Because of the establishment of the Women’s Committee and even before it should be evaluated as a result of the women’s struggle that was discussed in various fields, especially in the youth field. In other words, while taking this decision in Congress is a result, we can also say that it is the beginning of the developments in the upcoming period, as we would like to mention later.

Before the establishment decision of KKB, of course, there were the studies, discussions, organizing activities etc. carried out by the Women Committee. And as a result, several achievements were also gained. Of course, it is a movement that appeals to an audience that makes up half of the masses of the people and aims to eliminate the patriarchal structure that forms the foundations of the society and the system. So, our achievements may seem exceedingly small, but as in a joke; “A small step for humanity, a big step for us”. In this way, our achievements point to especially essential steps for us.

A conference or congress resolution is necessary for the discussion of the gender issue within the Party, the establishment of particular policies for women, the establishment of organisations, and proposals for amendments to the statute. For this reason, even though these changes were not made before, we had various applications and decisions at various points. For example, the acceptance of the principle of “the statement of women is essential; the obligation to prove otherwise belongs to the man” (related to the violence against the women), positive discrimination, investigation of crimes against women at the initiative of the Women’s Committee, etc. In short, we can say that all the decisions included in the Congress resolutions, for women and LGBTI + individuals, have been the agenda, discussion and struggle areas of the Women’s Committee for a long time. A significant part of it was put into practice.

While there was such a situation before Congress, the establishment decision of KKB in Congress should be qualified as a leap forward in terms of women’s organisation and struggle. This decision is one of the steps to make the slogan mentioned above a reality; “There is no revolution without women, no women cannot liberate without revolution”.

While discussing the establishment of KKB, we must correctly answer the most basic of questions. KKB is a product of which necessity? Our level of understanding of the necessity for KKB will find the place it deserves and will play its role in the revolution and emancipation of women. This point is clearly stated in the Congress resolutions if we summarise these decisions directly.

*“Communists, who grasp the importance of the class in all revolutionary activities, are organised as women-men with qualities continue their struggles side by side. However, the area in which they are organised, the environment, is ultimately within the class society. To reach the masses and communicate in a way they can understand, solution contradictions and problems, the creation of special plans / unique organisation, plans, and programs, as well as the methods and general perspectives and programs, require special work and effort. The solution to women’s issues and women’s organisations should be interpreted based on this understanding. (...)*

*This means that class oppression and exploitation further multiply through sexual position and acquire new dimensions. For this reason, the organizing work of the oppressed class must unite with the unique problems of the woman of the same class facing sexual inequality and oppression. Due to these unique issues, it is vital to create unique organisations for working women.*

*If we summarise in terms of our country; the reality of; working women deprived of equal pay for equal work, houseworkers, Kurdish women experiencing national oppression, women who are exposed to all kinds of violence which may be killed any moment. In short, the current class organisational models are unable to cope with the issues of women within the oppressed class in which the violence and oppression are at another level. (...)*

*Therefore, women who are increasingly passive in their tiny world consisting of four walls; it is exceedingly difficult for the proletariat to mobilise these women in the struggle for power against the bourgeoisie. Overcoming this objective situation, carrying out the organising work among the working women who make up half of the society, also makes it necessary to fight against all the variants of the patriarchal system and the male domination it produces, which is one of the foundations of women's real freedom.*

*Under the double oppression and exploitation of the capitalist system, we can see all the variants of the unique psychology created by the restricted life of the women in all areas of life. The main thing here is to raise awareness of this fact, to know the privileges that class societies give to men, and to create special forms and means of organising workers, labourers, domestic workers, and young women as equal members in the communist party, just like men. However, with this method, we can lay the paths of the broadest mass of workers and labourers towards freedom against centuries-long slavery. However, with this method, slogans for the salvation of humanity are no longer means of agitation but become a slogan of action.*

*Communists will be able to solve the problems as long as they can create an organisation that can build all the relationships and values of the new society of tomorrow, where they struggle to establish and carry them to the whole society. Therefore, it is vital to take extraordinary measures in favour of women in the party and to go-to models that will open the way to eliminate this problem. These measures and models will be the guarantee of women's presence within the party.*

*As a result of all these reasons, it is imperative that this target group, who is wanted to participate in the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, we need to create organisations suitable for the specific situation this specific group is in. Our Party took the first step in the 1st Congress of TKP-ML; With the accumulation of the Women Committee formed by our Party after the 8th Conference, a new organisation was established under the leadership of our Party under the name of the Communist Women's Union (KKB)."*

***– Wouldn't such an organisation bring about the marginalization of the women's issue and the women within the Party and the "exclusion from the main areas"?***

-Though I understood the content of your question, let us make it clear a little bit more. What do you mean by the main areas? What is the main work? These need to be defined correctly. As our Congress clearly indicates, the woman-gender issue, or more precisely, the patriarchal system is one of the fundamental issues of our revolution. Namely, when we say KKB, we are talking about an organisation that is working in one of the main areas of the revolution. There do not exist primary-secondary in this area. No, if we are talking about the primary

areas in terms of the strategy of our revolution, namely the guerrilla struggle, which is the basis of the People's War strategy, KKB will be organised wherever the Party and women are, of course, it will be wherever the revolution strategy requires. Even though it has not been a long time since Congress, KKB is already organising in these areas, and our women and LGBTI + comrades in the guerrilla field are taking steps.

But I understand that this is not what you are talking about, and yes, I can say that such a danger is present. There are two sides to the problem; The first is the danger of marginalising the female-gender or the patriarchal issues. In other words, the attempt to position the Party outside this problem with the idea that this patriarchy problem belongs only to the field of interest and organisation of KKB. In fact, there are clear statements about the justification of the founding decision of our Congress, women's organisation against this danger. As in this text we cited above, this problem is one of the main issues of the revolution. Therefore, it is one of the fundamental issues of the Party and the revolution. The Party's positioning itself outside this will be a summary of the approach to the main problem of the revolution, and hence to the revolution. No organisation that claims revolution should jump over an issue that affects not only women and LGBTI + s, but the whole society. The second aspect of the danger is the marginalisation of the women within the Party on this issue. However, KKB is not an organisation that is dedicated only to gender-oriented development and gender-oriented struggle of women. In other words, KKB is an organisation established to develop its intervention at both the women's policies, understanding and practical cadre level in all areas of the Party, while fighting gender-oriented as the area, we are specific to. In other words, it is an organisation that will carry out particular studies to ensure that gender-conscious women exist in the cadre level and become the subjects of the revolution and the Party. As far as we can do this, we will be away from the risk of marginalisation.

Of course, this is not as easy as we said so. For this reason, the guarantee of eliminating the two-way danger is KKB itself, the Women's Commission under the leadership and the commitment of the whole party to claim the revolution. But more importantly, women's organisation should become a material power and become an indispensable power.

***– Returning to the founding grounds of KKB again, there was already a Women's Committee before KKB. Wasn't it possible to achieve the goals you just mentioned with the Women's Committee?***

– The Women's Committee had an especially important mission, as I mentioned very briefly above, and it has successfully fulfilled its part in the given conditions. Although it was very delayed in terms of our party history, it ensured that the gender issue was systematically visible, discussed as well as revealing sexist approaches in our ranks.

Especially in the Party, it revealed its potential to develop the initiative of women and to take further duties. Women's Committee through discussions and its practice revealed and struggled against patriarchy and its reflections within the Party.

At one point, however, the Women's Committee consisted of a committee. Although with the rising of women masses, various methods for bringing women closer to the Party by establishing sub-women committees was developed, there was also a problem of balance between the dynamics that emerged and the reality of being a committee. So, I can say that KK's work, practice, initiative development power, etc. has imposed a qualitative

leap. What was this qualitative leap? Creating an organisation that has its own mechanisms, management level, hierarchy, can organise the working women masses at various levels, can develop initiative thanks to its autonomous structure, and can be the direct subject of the struggle for revolution. I do not know precisely whether the following statement is appropriate. However, I can say that KKB imposed its birth on both the Women Committee and the Party.

For example, while in the 1st Conference of our Party, there was a decision to establish a women's organisation, in the 2nd Conference, this decision was withdrawn on the grounds that it was "sexist". In a way, this is a "natural" result. It was decided to establish a women's organisation with particularly good intentions, and the right reasons, we have no doubt about it. On the other hand, this decision is not the result of accumulation and will, especially of women. It should be a decision made on the necessity for the realisation of the revolution. This is not wrong. But we do not discuss the establishment of KKB only through a necessity designed to realise the revolution. So, we are not just talking about quantitative participation. We are talking about the qualified presence of women, the will and mind to join the revolution, the leading power joining the party to realise the revolution. A committee is not enough for this; this can only be achieved through an organisation under the leadership and own initiative of the Party policies and the Women's Commission. In other words, a women's organisation for us is an obligation beyond necessity...

***– How will KKB ensure the qualified involvement of women in the revolution and the Party?***

– KKB has a versatile mission. If it can fulfil these missions, eligible involvement of women will also be ensured.

Firstly, KKB is a school for women. A KKB, which serves as a school for the development of women ideologically, politically, organisationally and militarily, will also be a guarantee of qualified participation. Women trained in these schools will be able to better organise their minds and wills in the service of the Party and the revolution. An academy, where women are both educators and students, and they receive ideological, political, organisational and military training is a vital and functional project for the development of women. Our realisation of such a project in the medium term will make women's participation more qualified.

Secondly, when it comes to schools, only examples such as women's academies should not be considered. This is among the objectives, of course. However, an organisation that implements itself the policies it produces on its own initiative, within its own hierarchy, is a school. As I said, this does not exclude academy type organisations. Women will have an area where they can learn to take the initiative and manage by organising in KKB.

Thirdly, KKB will not be a structure that only produces policy for itself. It will also be the producer and enforcer of the Party's women's policies. In this sense, it also guarantees the rights and duties of women within the Party. A communist party, organised within the framework of women's policies and turned into a women's Party, forms the basis for the participation of women both quantitatively and qualitatively. KKB also has the mission of creating this ground. But of course, it will not be done only with direct interventions of KKB. While women who are organised and take the initiative in KKB are participating in the Party work, they will also carry out their experience and knowledge they have gained here directly to the Party. In other words, as we have emphasised before, women will be organised not only in KKB but also by taking the initiative in all areas of the Party.

Fourthly, in the conferences or congresses it will organise, it will create areas where all women in the Party can unite their minds and wills. Thus, they will be prepared to be women who are not only implementing policies but also producing policy.

In addition, KKB will be a school not only for women but also for all our comrades. Of course, they will not be organised in KKB, but they will take part in the change of the whole Party by figuring out the patriarchal problem in ways of educational activities, workshops etc. organised by KKB

Of course, as the KKB organisation progresses, new ones will be added to this mission, and its deficiencies will be completed on the way, directly in the struggle.

***– Only the establishment of KKB has not been realized about women in your congress. At the same time, with the amendments and additions to the statute, you have made various decisions about Feminization and for the Party to adapt to women’s policies. Can you tell us more about this?***

– Yes, our party has made a qualitative leap with the establishment of KKB at the Congress. However, it made another leap with the changes it made in its statute. The Party statute is a kind of constitution that regulates in-Party functioning, duties and rights, organisational principles etc. Like everything in life, Party regulations are not gender-free. The claim that it is genderless, so a gender-blind approach is an approach that legitimises the patriarchal system and makes the ignoring of the existence of women invisible. The problem of gender is not an issue related to our will, our intention. In other words, by saying “we do not have sexism”, sexism does not disappear. You cannot eliminate an existing problem by saying “it doesn’t exist here”, but you can ignore it, which is also against the oppressed.

The issue of the statute is just like that. By acting as if there was no sexism, claiming that there was no gender difference, you could only enlarge this problem by making it invisible. Therefore, a statute that does not make special arrangements and does not contain special articles for women makes it invisible aside from solving the disadvantaged situation of women and LGBTI+ s.

In this sense, it is extremely important to add these articles to the statute.

What are these articles? As a critical issue, positive discrimination and quota implementation have become articles of association. In the conditions of the Party Membership in the I. Part of our Party Regulation, that says “Although priority is given to workers and peasants of the class origin, every person who meets the following conditions can be a member of TKP-ML,” the continuation of the article “Positive discrimination is applied to working women in terms of the Membership in TKP-ML” is added. When we consider the difficulties experienced by women in the struggle, their organisation in the Party ranks and the application for membership to the Party, the necessity of positive discrimination also arises automatically. Consider two lanes of the same competition, one straight, with a floor suitable for running; the other is a lane full of thorns, restrictions, obstacles. Women run in this disadvantaged lane. Making the floor suitable is, of course, the desired and required solution. This is only possible by eliminating the patriarchal system. When we think that this system will not disappear without a revolution, and even after the revolution, this structure will continue socially, making the

ground favourable is a long-term issue. Here, the positive discrimination that will be applied for women to organise in the Party ranks and become a member of the Party will be the most significant help of women in this unequal run.

Let us again say that a woman became a Party member, with or without positive discrimination. The issue does not end here for the female gender, which is enlarged with gender roles and constructed in accordance with these roles. It is necessary to be in executive positions in order to have executive committees in the Party and reflect its will and mind more. It is exceedingly difficult for individual women to demand this and to find themselves worthy of these levels. Apart from exceptional examples, women “get candidates” for these levels with an external offer and suggestion; they accept these tasks mainly by discussing the Party’s decision or the needs of the Party. So, it is still not a belief that they will accomplish that task, that they are worthy. Our Party, who saw/grasped this problem, brought the quota system at its 1st Congress and put the quota of thirty per cent women in all Party committees, starting with the leadership, namely CC (Central Committee). In this sense, the Congress, which is the highest will of the Party, has acted in accordance with its decision and has also implemented a thirty per cent quota in the CC election. This attitude of the Congress should be an example for the whole Party, and the quota of women should be applied without any objection and without “buts” in the assignments made to the Party committees. KKB, but beyond all, the whole Party must follow this application. In addition to positive discrimination and quota implementation, articles targeting the patriarchal system for women, LGBTI+ s have been added to the statute. For example, in the “Duties of the Member” section, this article has been added: “To fight against the patriarchal system and to raise public awareness in this direction. Actively combating gender discrimination and gender roles among the Party and popular masses.” In other words, active struggle against the patriarchal system, gender discrimination and gender roles are emphasized as the duty of not only our women comrades but also all-party members.

One of the most important amendments was made in the articles regulating the “Judgment and Disciplinary Penalties” of Party members. In addition to one of these articles, stating “breaking the unity, not complying with decisions and discipline, not accepting duties” etc. it has been stated that members and candidate members who commit crimes against the public and particularly against women, children and LGBTI+, will be investigated, prosecuted and punished. While crimes against women, children and LGBTI+ in the patriarchal exploitation system are known to be unpunished and based on men’s judiciary, the communist party is giving the message to the people it calls for organisation, in particular to women and LGBTI+, that with this article the justice of our party is the true justice. So, it is extremely important.

Under the same title, there are two crucial changes in the procedure for the trial of Party members. The first is that investigations and punishments in accusations about women and LGBTI+ s, such as sexual harassment, rape, violence, discrimination, homophobia, will be realized by KKB. This article is a decision that we have brought to the agenda during the Women’s Committee process and that we have implemented significantly. However, our field of application was not at a level that included Party members at the time. Indeed, a conference or congress decision was required for this. However, the maturation of this article as an understanding was ensured by the discussions and practices of the Women’s Committee.

*– Isn’t this decision contrary to the “familiar” hierarchical functioning of communist parties?*

– Not. However, if we push too hard, we may say that the hierarchical structure is reinterpreted at a more advanced level. But we did not discuss this article over the disruption of hierarchical structure. We did not find a discussion in this way correct. If there is something that needs to be disrupted, including the hierarchical structure, it breaks down, and a new one is built. Our main discussion is about who can make the correct decision in gender-based accusations and how to achieve justice accurately. Charges related to women and LGBTI+ are overly sensitive and specialised areas of expertise. A speciality that requires studied and experienced methods. Therefore, despite all its good intentions and all communist qualities, it is not an area where everyone can achieve complete justice and conduct an effective and fair investigation/trial. As a matter of fact, there are injustices in all revolutionary and communist organisations, and this is well known. Therefore, it is KKB, which is the women’s organisation that can perform this task in the best way and has specialised women in this field. Investigation and trial processes are extremely complicated processes. Especially when it comes to crimes against women and LGBTI+s. Of course, it is necessary to see child abuse in this. By making a clear definition of whether an act is harassment or not, it is required to compromise in this field to act under that definition. While in one act, we can describe the same act as harassment, we may not be able to define it in another given situation. While the same movement says that there is no harassment in one place or another, it is a phenomenon that can be revealed with the right methods of women in the process of investigation. I must also say that the justice system, which will be developed under the leadership of women, also points to real justice for men.

It is undoubtedly much more detailed, but I think this is enough to show our point of view. In other words, we look at the issue over justice, not about potentially disrupting the hierarchy or sayings of others. If the idea of justice, so the justice system, in a communist party collapses, everything collapses. Can we talk about a common justice where there is no justice for women, LGBTI+ and children? No! However, we are still assertive that it is not a decision that would disrupt the hierarchical order of the communist party.

Another addition is the decision of the principle of “Women’s statement is essential; the responsibility to prove otherwise belongs to the man” in crimes, especially sexual violence against women and LGBTI+ s. This article is as follows: “Investigation and trial are carried out by KKB in the accusations (sexual harassment, rape, violence, discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) related to women and LGBTI+. TKP-ML accepts the principle of women’s statement is essential; the responsibility to prove otherwise belongs to the man in such investigations.”

Many discussions, articles have been written and questions have been answered on this article since the establishment of the Women’s Committee. However, we persistently must answer the same questions. Of course, we do not have the luxury of saying “We are tired of telling”. Yet, all our organised comrades should read and try to understand these discussions. Because this principle, which we have been applying for a long time, is an extremely important and valuable investigation method especially for women and LGBTI+ who are exposed to sexual violence or violence due to their gender. This principle is a method of applying a justice system for the oppressed, just like positive discrimination. And repeatedly, I would like to say that it is an investigation method, not a result. It is a method applied to reach the correct conclusion. In doing so, it is a method that prevents women and LGBTI+ who make a statement of violence from being exposed to violence throughout the investigation and prevents the person from being exposed to violence again and again in the violence spiral. This principle is not a principle that “executes extrajudicially” the perpetrator of violence and seeks the right to

defend himself. As I said, this is a very complicated and vital issue, and it is not possible to explain it in three or five sentences, so all of our past discussions should be examined retrospectively and should be followed carefully for the next ones.

Now let me clarify two points without you asking. First, when we say KKB will carry out these investigations, different approaches emerge. KKB is a top-down organised structure, although it has not yet fully established its formation as an organisation. Meaning, it should not be understood that investigations/trials will be carried out by all women. Investigations will be carried out by Party women of KKB who are specialised/ trained / going to be trained in this field. Of course, all women and even men need to specialise in this regard and learn the correct methods. However, the Party statute, as known, is the text that covers Party members and candidate members. So, it covers the inner party. At this point, it is essential to eliminate misunderstandings or deliberate demagogues.

Secondly, it is a question of whether such decisions need to be included in the statute of a communist party. We and, of course, our Congress care about the existence of these articles in our Statute, as we think that the provisions of an existing organisation must be clear to ensure justice. In other words, when you call people to organise, first your program and second your statute is your mirror. What is this Party against, for what and what kind of war is it predicting? And what principles does it have when running this war? The answer to these questions should be found in the Party program and statute so that we can see how we approach issues. On the other hand, what we call the communist party is not a phenomenon aside or above from the class society we are in. All value judgments, culture and gender roles in society also exist in communist parties. If there is such inequality in society, it is not possible that this will not be reflected in the Party. Naturally, saying that there is a law, and this law is applied equally to everyone is not proper or not enough with the mildest discourse. Law should be considered together with the society it is in. We cannot set a single law for two unequal segments. If you determine, you will unjustly behave toward one side.

‘The statement of women is essential’ is one of the most significant achievements of the women’s movement. Where this does not exist, the struggle against the male domination of the organisation that women are in will be crippled. There is a social phenomenon here.

***– How do you evaluate these decisions you mentioned? For example, do you find them enough?***

– As I said in a response above, the changes and decisions we made in favour of women, may seem like a drop in the ocean alongside the thousands of years of women’s oppression. However, in addition to this gigantic history, firstly, our Party is forty-eight years old, and the secondly, our involvement in this matter is entirely new. So, as I said above, these are small steps for humanity, but enormous steps for us. And once again, the decisions taken at this Congress correspond to a qualitative leap in our women’s struggle. This leap will, of course, not only be achieved through decisions but will be achieved through a party reality that will best implement and further develop these decisions.

To be able to unite with the masses of working women in all areas, organise them in the ranks of the communist party, make them fight and lead; Taking the steps of a women’s organisation that aims to make women’s participation in the class struggle more qualified indicates a qualitative leap in itself.

However, we communist women say with all our daring; we want the world. So, in response to your question, I say that these decisions are surely not enough. While organising the working women masses, on the other hand, we have a goal to feminise the Communist Party. It seems that the concept of feminisation is probably understood; we are not talking about a party of women only. We are talking about a party that can interpret the world and produce policies from the eyes of the oppressed of the oppressed and have a correct perspective that speaks to a whole communist party, especially to party members. We are talking about a communist party where not us women or not only us women, but all our comrades have perceived the gender roles and struggle against them. We are talking about a communist party, where our LGBTI+ comrades do not have to constantly highlight their presence in the class struggle and are not in a state of constant defence. So yes, our decisions empower us, but they also open a new struggle process for us.

I do not know if you have any questions about the following. However, I would like to answer under this question that we do not find Congressional decisions regarding LGBTI+s enough. In other words, the LGBTI+ agenda has not been accurately reflected in our Congress and its decisions. In this regard, since our paths crossed under the common denominator of gender, the responsibility was mostly on the shoulders of us communist women. It is clear, however, that we have not been able to fulfil this task sufficiently. However, we will be working on completing our duties, both with the organisation process of KKB and the upcoming period.

*– What would you like to say about the upcoming period and your plans?*

– Firstly, I would like to emphasise the importance of walking firmly. Every walk starts with the first step. And it is necessary to take this first step firmly to the right place. Since KKB has not yet completed its organisation, we cannot talk directly about concrete planning. It is not right in terms of an illegal structure anyway.

However, I can answer this question as follows; We must start by understanding the mission of KKB correctly and in detail. The whole Party, especially our women comrades, must perceive it accurately. KKB has a dual mission, the first is to organise the masses of working women, to win them to the Party and revolution through KKB, to ensure the qualified participation of women in the Party. On the other hand, to make the Party struggle continuous to free it from sexism and to become a just structure, to ensure that the Party reaches the level that can embrace the masses of women. To produce policies appropriate to these two missions, to lead the implementation of policies, etc.

The decision to establish KKB, which means that all the women's work of the Party is gathered under one roof, is also especially important for institutionalisation. Building an organisation is not one and equal to institutionalisation. If you establish an organisation, but fail to institutionalise that organisation, you cannot carry out long-term and mission-oriented work. Therefore, to institutionalise, we need the labour, opinion, idea, criticism, demand and will of all women.

To meet this need, we attach great importance to a mechanism that can combine the mind and will of all women with or without a Party Membership, and make the policies of KKB and of course the Party by evaluating the resulting data. We can formulate this from women to the Party, from the Party to all people. We plan to apply this

formulation with conferences, congresses, meetings, and training activities that can change both in terms of participation and content.

Again, the goal of KKB being a school for women is essential. This may be in the form of academies, where both the teachers and students are women, where ideological, political, organisational and military training will be held. It is necessary to construct the KKB organisation itself as an academy with methods that develop the initiative. There are several projects that we have discussed in this sense. But of course, these need both intensive time and labour.

– *Lastly, what do you want to say?*

– We can spare our last words to call women. The working women masses have no interest in this system, this patriarchal exploitative system. There is nothing other than the thickening of the walls of the dungeon that this system, which turns our lives into a dungeon that we love with illusion and manipulation, can present to us. Our liberation as women is in revolution and the struggle for revolution. To do this, we call to join the Communist Women’s Union and become the subject of the revolution under the leadership of our Party TKP-ML.

Secondly, I would like to address women who are organised in various areas of the Party. KKB is our self-organisation. Let us organise in KKB against the masculine mentality that divides, confronts us, drags us into competition and prevents us from being a financial power.

KKB is the seal of our promise of revolution to all oppressed, exploited, ignored and murdered women and all martyred women from Meral Yakar to Barbara, from Cahide Karakaş to Sefagül Kesgin and many others... And no one should doubt that we will keep our promise.

Turkish: <https://www.tkpml.com/tkp-ml-merkez-komitesi-kadin-komisyonundan-rosa-avesta-kadinlar-kkbde-orgutleniyor-onderlesiyor-savasi-yukseltiyor/>

[From: <https://www.tkpml.com/rosa-avesta-from-tkp-ml-central-committee-womens-commission-women-organise-become-leadership-raise-the-war-in-kkb/> (accessed May 9, 2020).]