

THE STRUGGLE OF PROGRESSIVE FORCES AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND REACTION IN TURKEY

Presented by the Turkish Students
Federation of The U.K. and Eire (İTÖF)

This year the Turkish Republic celebrated the 50th anniversary of its foundation.

The republic was founded after a victorious anti-imperialist war waged by the entire people for national independence and social progress. The anti-imperialist struggle of 1918-23 brought political independence, and a sovereign state was established on the ruins of the feudal theocratic monarchy.

Today, however, Turkey finds itself as an underdeveloped country under the hegemony of imperialism. The anti-imperialist war that was waged 50 years ago is only a history. The political, economic and military hegemony of imperialism has intensified especially after Turkey became a member of NATO in 1952. The strategically important areas of our land have been turned into NATO bases. There are more than 100 American and NATO bases in our country today.

The military installations are directed against the socialist countries and Arab peoples for aggressive purposes. They are a basic threat against peace in the area.

Imperialism penetrated Turkey also in the form of so called technical and economic aid, loans and credits, through foreign trade system and foreign investment. The industrialization aim has been oriented to the needs of international monopolies rather than to the needs of people. Today the country still lacks a heavy industry which supplies modern means of production, and basic economic and social problems still await solution. Unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and similar diseases characterize the daily life of masses. The basic political basis of imperialism in the country, the domestic agents of imperialism, are the ruling classes.

Turkey 50 years ago, after the victorious anti-imperialist war chose the path of strengthening capitalism in both urban and rural area, rather than industries, fundamental social and economic changes.

In the course of development along the capitalist path, the local monopoly groups developed under the impact of and closely tied up with the international monopolies.

Moreover, a democratic agrarian reform was not carried out. Although the big land owners are increasingly turning into capitalist types of production, they still carry some of the feudal features.

Today, a tiny minority of monopolists and big land owners and their political parties, in unity with imperialism reigns supreme in the country. The grip of these forces has been fur-

thermore consolidated along with the intensification of the exploitation of the masses in the last few years.

Turkey witnessed a growing working-class and democratic movement for genuine independence and social progress in 1960 s. In a short period of time, many sections of society joined the ranks of this movement which was expressing the hopes and aspirations of the masses for a better future . Unable to stop this movement within the framework of bourgeois democracy, the ruling circles welcome the takeover by the pro-NATO, pro-American military clique on 12 March 1971. Since then an unprecedented wave of repression has been unleashed in the country. 20,000 people from all walks of life became victims of fascist type junta. They were jailed and tortured. Three young patriots were executed, thousands are put into prisons with harsh sentences.

All the hard-won democratic gains of the masses were ruthlessly crushed. All progressive organisations were banned.

The attitude of the military clique towards the Kurdish people took the form of outright aggression. Living under heavy oppression is not a new experience for the Kurdish people-nearly eight millions in Turkey. Throughout the history of the republic they felt the national oppression.

It is clear that the true unity and friendship among the Kurdish and Turkish people can only be established if this unity is achieved voluntarily and democratically.

Three months ago the military clique was forced to concede the holding of general elections under the growing pressure from democratic and labour movement. The election results sharply reflected the deep discontent of people towards a fascist type repressive rule. By their votes, the masses resolutely demanded democratisation of life, social justice, an agrarian reform and a better future. The right wing pro-imperialist parties suffered heavy blows in the elections.

These results become even more important when one remembers that elections were held under heavy repression and terror, the working class was prevented from participating in the elections freely and independently. The ban on the CPT has been continuing since 1923 and Labour Party of Turkey, the legal socialist party of the working class, has been outlawed in 1971. This situation, furthermore, limits the fight against the grip of the big business.

Although the democratic forces have scored important gains since the elections, we are aware that the main political positions in the country are still controlled by imperialism and local reaction. The reactionary forces entrenched themselves in the state apparatus, and in the upper sections of the army. They have strong holds in the parliament. There is always the possibility of a CIA engineered coup being put into effect to stop the move of the democratic forces. We must not forget the lessons of the fascist coup in Chile.

Today, one of the most important issues where the forces of reaction challenge the upsurge of the democratic movement in Turkey is the demand of all progressive forces for the immediate release of all political prisoners and a general amnesty in Turkey. Basic form of international solidarity with the people of Turkey would be raising the demand for freedom to the victims of the fascist type junta.

We know that the struggle that awaits the people of Turkey ~~is~~ arduous. But we also know that the struggle for national and social liberation of our people can not be stopped.

LONG LIVE INDEPENDENT AND DEMOCRATIC TURKEY

LONG LIVE PEACE- DEMOCRACY SOCIAL PROGRESS

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