

A Report on the Situation in Turkey

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I am writing this to inform you that people in over 65 cities of 81 in Turkey are demonstrating against the reactionary and oppressive regime of Tayyip Erdogan and his party. We have demonstrations even in the most reactionary cities in Turkey. People in every neighborhood in the cities are on the street. Police throw gas bombs at demonstrators, beat and arrest people. It is not like in the late 1960s, because people did not care about us much then. We students were demonstrating for independence and socialism then. Now everybody is on the street. Nobody cheered when we were demonstrating in the late 60s in Turkey. Now people are cheering and supporting the demonstrators. Today we have more people on the street in my neighborhood in Ankara than yesterday. Police are shooting gas bombs inside the houses because people are providing shelter for demonstrators who are escaping from gas and police beatings. Youngsters and people from every walk of life are on the street and want the Erdogan government to resign. Erdogan uses the classic rhetoric about demonstrators and he threatens them by saying that he can send one million supporters to the street (he means, to smash the demonstrations). He says: "I keep 50 percent of the population at home" (he means that he can use 50 percent of people who support him against the other people). His mindset and approach reminds me of Jay Gould who said once that he is not worried about demonstrations and labor strikes, because he can hire one-half of the working class to kill the other half. For a lot of people, Erdogan is a reactionary dictator. In Turkey people are scared to say something against Erdogan. Television did not provide any news about the demonstrations except the television stations of the major opposition party and Turkish Labor party television, because mainstream media either support the administration or are scared of Erdogan's rage/wrath. People in Istanbul walked in front of the major television stations and announced that if they do not feature them in the news they will occupy the TV station. Then, TV stations started reporting, but in a highly distorted manner. After this incident, very few media personnel resigned from their posts in the TV channel. Erdogan scolded the Reuters journalist who dared to ask him a question that he did not like. The Internet is used for the most effective channel of communication and organization of the protests by everybody. Erdogan expressed his utmost anger against Twitter and social media. Everybody uses their mobile phone for communication and recording the events and putting/disseminating them on the Internet. Mainstream media started

lying as usual. Two main labor unions in Turkey run by those who ask some meaningless concessions from the government try to stop workers to demonstrate, but workers are on the street, too. Demonstrations are rapidly spreading all over the country. Soon, I know, religious reactionaries (not all religious people are reactionary) will attack demonstrators. There is a high probability that we will witness a domestic/civil war in Turkey.

I was at the center of the demonstrations in Ankara yesterday and the day before. Demonstrators do not do anything wrong, but police continuously shoot pressured water, gas and noise bombs at them and attack demonstrators. Police behave like they are fighting an enemy. They curse at and threaten people by e.g. saying: "get lost otherwise we arrest you and you know what we do when we arrest you." We know there are some progressive and conscientious people in the police force, but they are also under the threat of the empire of fear. But we will see a differing police behavior as the time goes by in the process. Now, there is an indiscriminate use of gas bombs (CS gas). Your eyes get severely burned and you cannot breathe, you start coughing, and you feel dizzy if you are close to the fume. Also when it hits you or blows up beside you, you get shocked (I saw it). So far we have four killings and many wounded.

As usual, they claim that demonstrators/provocateurs destroy and vandalize everything around. Yes we see a lot of destruction; in fact, it is started and done by plain-cloth police. How do I know: (1) this is a historical fact. (2) I know from the late 60s, because we could recognize the police then, but it is difficult to recognize them now. (3) How come there is no vandalism, destruction and terror where there is no police around? Here are few examples: I attend demonstrations at the center of the city where police provokes, attacks and where plain cloth police destroys everything around, provoking some young people to do the same. My daughter and my wife and neighbors attend huge demonstrations in our neighborhood where there is no police presence yet: You can see no violence, no destruction and no vandalism in these demonstrations. Yesterday, I had to come back home early at night because I almost fainted three times because of the police gas. Later, I attended two neighborhood demonstrations and there were no destruction and violence. Last year, I attended two demonstrations in Athens, Greece. There was no police presence and there was no violence and destruction. Athens was burning when there was police presence. When police was involved, Athens was like a war zone, like in Ankara and Istanbul. Those who rule the police force organize and run the show of violence and destruction as usual.

People are against "Erdogan's empire" that is misrepresented in Europe and elsewhere. This reactionary party clearly stated that they "use the democracy train until they get the power and reach their destination." They are misperceived by Europeans who think that this government is anti-racist and democratic. They are not racist because their political view belongs to the middle ages of Islamic rule: They think that all Muslims are the people of God and those who are not Muslim are condemned by God and will all go to hell. That is why Erdogan is against nationalism, but his/their nationalism is based "ummad/ümmed" that means the collective community/nation/commonwealth/empire of Islamic peoples. Their nationalism is based on a different logic, the logic of Muslim statehood. A statehood where a prime minister considers himself king and tells people that he does anything he wants, he builds a mosque there if he wants ("there" refers to the park where people do not want the government to cut the trees down). Before the uprising, demonstrators were sleeping in the park and police attacked them at dawn. The government uses the known tactics of Hitler: The police invades people's (e.g., journalists, academicians, army commanders) houses and arrests them very late at night, especially at dawn. They call it "dawn operation". They arrest young people for demonstrating or saying something against the administration. Students at school cannot wear a T-shirt with any message that can be considered "political expression". Now, there are journalists, academics, politicians, army commanders, students and other political prisoners who have been in jail for more than 5 years WAITING FOR TRIAL OR TRIAL IN PROGRESS.

Their rule is based on material plunder and ignorance that is fed by multi-channeled mis-information, education and re-education. Their current rule is historically comparable to extensive degrees of material plunder: They (party leaders and business owners) allocate material riches to themselves and immaterial values to the true and fake believers who generally are ready for slaughter while chanting "God is great" regardless if opponents are Muslims or not - like crusaders in the middle age who conducted killings in the name of Jesus despite the fact that Jesus is completely against oppression and killings. We hear this chanting on TV news when Syrian opposite forces fire guns and kill people. This also reminds me not only of the War Prayer of Mark Twain but also the pressure he got from his publisher and family against publishing it. The policies of the ruling party in Turkey are also supported by some old so called Marxists and/or, Maoists, "leftists" and their sons/daughters who mostly reside in Istanbul and live a posh life (some work for media corporations with 20-30 thousand dollars salaries a month and/or get paid by the media for their appearances in discussion shows or get benefits in different ways).

The widespread fear in Turkey is also fed by private enterprises: Once there was state censorship (it still prevails), now we have censorship by the rule of private enterprises, so-called auto-censorship (self-censorship) which is buttressed by organizational and peer oppression in media and academia. I wrote a book for a university last year and I had to revise it many times because they are scared of law suits from private enterprises (especially by the media). You can not mention a corporation's name, you cannot criticize a corporation by providing its name. I sometimes watch the Tonight Show and similar US shows in English in Turkey and Turkish subtitles do not give any names of any corporation that is mentioned in the show. I was sued by the show producer last month for 20.000 dollars for criticizing one of the most popular TV sitcoms in a meeting (I make about 2000 dollars a month). Freedom of thought and expression is suppressed not only by the ruling administration but also by the corporations and those who are scared of being a target of revenge. Freedom is a right and privilege of the ruling and powerful forces who can also manipulate and abuse the law for their own interests. Copyright freedom is not a freedom of the writers, it rather protects (or turned to be) the property right of the enterprises.

This is the first time I am witnessing a public uprising. It is different than the one we had in the late 60s.

People all over the world should know. Yet, unfortunately, the "whole world is watching" carefully packaged factoids. In Turkey, the media was not providing any news on the uprisings until yesterday, and they were broadcasting usual series, soap operas, sitcoms, competition programs and films instead. Now they cannot hide anymore, thus they started their usual mind management business in the news. To a varying extent, similar evaluations can be reached about the coverage on international news channels such as BBC, Al Jazeera, The Press TV and RTV that I watch often.