



Turkey: Solidarity with the HDP

Svenja Spunck Wed, 23/11/2016 - 04:31

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During the night of November 4, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, the Turkish government imprisoned 14 members of parliament of the pro-Kurdish opposition party HDP, including both the co-chairpersons of the party. Such a large-scale operation had been expected for some time, only the date was unclear. A few weeks before, Figen Yüksekdağ, one of the two leaders had already been prohibited from leaving the country.

This wave of imprisonments was only possible because abolition of the parliamentary immunity of several HDP MPs was pushed through parliament in May 2016. Before the jailing of the MPs, dozens of elected mayors, especially from Kurdish areas, were removed from office and replaced by substitutes from Ankara loyal to the government. All those involved have been accused of cooperating with, or being a member of, the Kurdish Workers' Party, PKK. There are at least 102 legal actions against the HDP co-head Selahattin Demirtaş which, taken together, could result in two life sentences plus 600 years. In all, HDP MPs are facing 550 actions.

State of emergency

The continued state of emergency after the failed attempted coup of July 15 has allowed president Erdoğan to extend his power massively, effectively implementing a counter-coup even though he was unable to introduce the presidential system he wanted. Because the HDP made it clear from the beginning that it would not support the implementation of a presidential system, it is seen as the most dangerous opposition party. The fact that the party is also openly opposing the increasing islamism in Turkey and has shown solidarity with the Syrian-Kurdish PYD in Rojava, was used by the governing Welfare and Justice Party, AKP, to declare it as the political arm of the PKK and start a fight against it.

Since August 2015, the Turkish military has carried out numerous massacres and broad destruction in the Kurdish areas of the country, to which HDP MPs reacted with calls for freedom and negotiations. After having brought to account the Gülen movement for the attempted coup, the state power is now directing its might against the left and the Kurdish movement. Its intention is to destroy it before the referendum on the presidential system, which is expected in April 2017. Thus, the government, which was celebrated as a creator of democracy by the European governments, is acting against the will of 6 million voters.

The HDP's electoral success in June 2015 was a sign of hope for many youth, women and members of oppressed minorities. This hope, however, has now been dashed and the political situation is marked by desperation, political confusion and fear of dictatorship and fascism.

The imperialists and their hypocrisy

The German government, the European Union, the USA as well as others are now declaring their concern, German president Gluck even publicly criticised Erdoğan. However, this should not be allowed to obscure the support for the AKP government that they have shown for years. Especially, it should not obscure the fact that they supported all Turkish governments in their fight against the Kurdish population or that the PKK and other Kurdish and leftist organisations from Turkey remain on the 'terror lists' of the European Union and Germany and that deportations to Turkey are still taking place.

The German government has reacted by removing the prospect of easier visa applications for Turkish people. This, of course, does not threaten the Turkish government or capital but is rather aimed at the working class, youth and the impoverished layers of the population for whom the freedom of movement does not already exist.

Thus, the 'criticism' of the European Union and the German government remains purely verbal and cosmetic. For them, what matters is not 'democracy' in Turkey or the fate of the left or the Kurdish population but rather the strengthening of fortress Europe and the protection of the business interests of German imperialism.

Anyone who counted on the European Union to defend them has been left on their own, hence, the left in Europe needs to practically solidarise with the HDP! Daily rallies and demonstration are being held in many towns and cities. We call for everyone to support these because the right to demonstrate is effectively abolished in Turkey. It is down to us to publicise the crimes of the Turkish government because the Turkish press has already been 'coordinated' and only repeats the phrases of the government. It is down to us to build up pressure against the German government and its cooperation with the AKP-government.

For the immediate release of all political prisoners and their right to confidential meetings with their lawyers.

End the state of emergency and repeal all emergency laws

Reinstate all democratically elected mayors

Withdrawal of the military and special forces from the Kurdish areas

State financed reconstruction and compensation under democratic local bodies

For the self-defence of demonstrations and meetings against the fascist mobs

Reopen the Syrian-Turkish border for refugees

For the legalisation of the PKK and the lifting of all other bans on Kurdish, left and democratic organisations

Asylum for political refugees

Retraction of the refugee agreement between the European Union and Turkey, for open borders instead of fortress Europe

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