

From 1 May to 18 May...It is the Struggle that Days Bring!

[Explanation: This article is an editorial in the Maoist newspaper Özgür Gelecek, published in Turkey. It provides information on the state of the class struggle in Turkey. The translation is unofficial.]

Istanbul 1 May was celebrated in the practice of those who said "1 May is Taksim area" and stood behind this will and made the streets leading to Taksim ring with their slogans, and in Saraçhane, despite all the adverse conditions, they charged the barricade.

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We left behind the 1st of May 2024. 1 May 2024 celebrations contain important lessons for the struggle of the working class and oppressed world rights both internationally and in our country. Evaluating these lessons correctly is important for the class struggle in the coming period.

Internationally, the 1 May celebrations show that the anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist opposition of the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the world is rising. In addition to the mass participation in the celebrations, we witnessed that the mass opposition to the genocidal attacks of the imperialist-backed Israeli Zionism against the Palestinian nation manifested itself in the 1 May celebrations.

Especially in the USA, the leading power of the imperialist capitalist system, the suppression of the occupation protests that started in universities and gradually spread to universities in other capitalist countries with fascist force apparatus -as if showing the limits of bourgeois democracies- made the solidarity with the Palestinian national struggle more visible in the 1 May celebrations.

It can be said that the international May Day celebrations were marked by the solidarity actions with Palestine. On 1 May, Palestinian flags were carried in the demonstrations of the masses who took to the fields in the imperialist capitalist centres. On 1 May, the banners, banners and slogans carried in the demonstrations condemned the atrocities and genocide committed by Israel and protested against the policies of the states that support Israel and export arms to Israel.

This emerging picture shows that the peoples of the world are on the side of the Palestinian people despite the support of the imperialist capitalist states for Israeli Zionism in the international arena. While the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the world express their reactions to the working and living conditions imposed on them on May Day, they also object to the danger of imperialist war, unjust wars and occupations, armament expenditures under the name of "defence" and preparation for war.

In addition, the massacre attacks on the Palestinian people by the Zionist savagery with the support of imperialism were protested and solidarity with the Palestinian people was shown.

In Turkey, 1 May was overshadowed by the Istanbul-Taksim debates. While this is understandable on the one hand, the working class was prevented from expressing the problems it faces in working and living conditions, especially

precarious work and low wages, from showing its reaction and renewing its determination to struggle.

Rather than who is responsible for this picture, it should be stated that the failure of the working class and labourers to express the basic demands of the working class and labourers en masse on 1 May and the failure to show the determination to struggle to enemies is important in itself.

It is important because; even on 1 May, the day of unity, struggle and solidarity of the working class, a worker was murdered in Tokat and 4 workers were injured in Kocaeli. What is imposed on the working class and labourers is working to death with slave living conditions.

Every year thousands of workers are killed under the name of "work accidents" due to precarious working conditions. The working class is not only murdered due to precarious working conditions in order to gain more profit, but also exploited to the bone with low wages and overtime. The economic crisis created by the ruling classes affects the working class and labourers who live by selling their labour the most.

Moreover, the first target of the Medium Term Programme announced under the name of "fighting" the economic crisis will be the working class and labouring people.

On 1 May, while fear awaits the mountains *[A folk expression in Turkish. In the sense of being very frightened, ed.]*

Under these conditions, the working class and labouring people were deliberately prevented from objecting to the working and living conditions imposed on them in Taksim Square on 1 May and from showing their strength and determination to struggle. Although tens of thousands of workers and labourers across the country took to the squares and celebrated 1 May in a widespread and mass manner, 1 May became an agenda item mainly because of what happened on 1 May in Istanbul.

Before 1 May, DiSK and CHP called on workers and labourers to gather in Saraçhane to march to Taksim on 1 May in Istanbul, but no practical action, even for show, was taken against the AKP-MHP fascist government's decision to ban Taksim. Worse still, the masses called to Saraçhane to march to Taksim on 1 May were "left in the middle" and 1 May was not even celebrated in Saraçhane!

The picture that emerged shows that there was no preparation even for Saraçhane, let alone marching to Taksim. In short, there was a complete fiasco.

Of course, the AKP-MHP fascist government is primarily responsible for this. As the 31 March local elections results show, AKP is losing the support of the masses. AKP has become the second party for the first time since its establishment. While millions of people cannot meet their most basic human needs under high inflation conditions and worry about what their future will be, AKP members and a handful of rich people are enjoying their days in luxury and splendour.

This objective situation causes the broad masses of the people to react to the situation they are put into. This reaction showed itself most concretely in the local elections of 31 March.

The ruling classes with their power and opposition are aware of this fact and cause them to use all their means to keep the reaction of the masses within the limits of order. Aware of the diminishing mass support, the AKP wanted to suppress the anger and reactions of the workers and labourers by banning the Taksim Square on 1 May.

Thus, it wanted to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, it terrorised the political agenda by banning Taksim Square, and on the other hand, it prevented the working class and labourers from making their basic demands heard and their reactions to the conditions they are living in from becoming visible.

It is not unknown that the 1 May area in Istanbul is Taksim Square. Both the ruling classes and the working class and labourers are aware of this fact. The historical importance of Taksim Square for the struggle of the working class in Turkey is known. Moreover, in addition to its historical importance for the class struggle in our geography, Taksim 1 May Square also has a current symbolic importance.

Despite this fact, which even the regime's own institutions have to accept, the ban on the celebration of 1 May in Taksim Square in Istanbul is directly related to the situation the government is in.

The AKP-MHP government is afraid of a mass movement that will develop against it and is extremely afraid of new "Gezi" events. In addition to the actual and legitimate workers' resistances, the masses on 8 March and then 21 March Newroz and of course the results of the 31 March local elections served as a warning for the AKP-MHP government. In the 31 March local elections, the reflex of resistance against the attempt to appoint a trustee to the Van Metropolitan Municipality has magnified and concretely demonstrated this fear.

This picture has made it necessary for the government to ban Taksim on 1 May. For this purpose, a state of emergency was declared in Istanbul on 1 May. 1 May was criminalised before and after.

Saraçhane plot is the trailer of the film

The most important indicator of this is not only the state of emergency declared on "security" grounds. Fear manifested itself in every field, from the threat of the Governor of Istanbul before 1 May, "the state will leave it for tomorrow, but it will not let you get away with it", to the statements of the Minister of Interior after 1 May, "the necessary was done" and the publications of the partisan media.

These statements and the publications of the partisan media have shown that the fear of those who keep the people under force is like nothing else. Fear waited for the mountains. They threatened because they were afraid, and they stank more because they threatened. It was seen in the actual and legitimate practice of the revolutionaries who marched to Taksim on 1 May that their threats had no value.

On the other hand, the role of the CHP, which called for marching to Taksim on 1 May, should also be specially pointed out. The CHP, the representative of the opposition clique of the Turkish ruling classes, also wanted to back up the anger and reaction of the masses on 1 May.

In the 31 March local elections, the CHP, which emerged as the first party in the election with the reaction votes against the AKP-MHP government, wants to make the mass support for itself permanent, carry it to the next general elections and use it as a support in the power struggle.

As the founding party of the Turkish ruling class state, the CHP functions as a safety valve against the danger of the reaction of the masses going out of order. It is a matter of historical experience that the CHP is not a left party and, moreover, that it defends the interests of a handful of comprador bourgeoisie and big landlords, let alone the interests of the working class and labouring people. And precisely for this reason, the CHP is trying to keep the reaction of the masses to the situation they have been forced into within the order.

What happened on 1 May, before and after, amply proves this policy. The CHP is pursuing a "controlled street" opposition under its own control. The government, aware of its diminishing mass support, calls for "softening in politics" from the mouth of the President himself. This situation points to the situation in which the AKP-MHP fascist government is in, as well as the role of the CHP, which responded positively to this call.

Since the coming process will be a process in which the working and living conditions of the people will be further aggravated under the name of combating the economic crisis and the reactions of the masses to the situation they are in will increase even more, they are in an attempt to take a precaution with their government and opposition.

What happened in Saraçhane is the trailer of the film to be put on stage. The AKP-MHP fascist government will attack with all the means at its disposal, will apply fascist terror on the masses, while the CHP will make the policy of keeping the reaction of the masses within the order. Both bourgeois cliques are in partnership in putting the entire burden of the economic crisis on the people, and they premiered this film in Saraçhane.

To win 18 May with "Taksim is the address of our claim"!

[18 May is the 51st anniversary of the murder of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, one of the communist leaders of Turkey, under torture. By referring to the 1 May resistance, it is meant to prepare for 18 May., ed.]

The picture that emerged on 1 May in Saraçhane was not unpredictable. As a matter of fact, in the discussions on Taksim Square in Istanbul before 1 May, this fact was stated as follows: *"Currently, the picture is extremely far from a positioning and handling in accordance with this reality. The trade union movement, while pretending to make an advance over Taksim, in reality carefully avoids the organisation of a process that will unleash the accumulated anger of the class. Taksim was won or lost with the masses. The key to the solution lies with the masses, it is here". [Statement before 1 May by Partizan, ed.]*

In the end, what happened in Saraçhane clearly showed how the Taksim exit was handled and eviscerated by DISK and KESK, especially by the CHP.

On the other hand, the wrongness of the revolutionary forces' following the empty, non-worker-inclusive Taksim exit and change of location of DISK and KESK has also been revealed. Of course, Taksim cannot be won without the masses, workers and labourers. However, once the demand for Taksim has been put on the agenda of the masses, what must be done is to fulfil the requirements of this exit.

Taksim was closed to those who wanted to march there in previous years. While many revolutionary forces forced Taksim with small groups despite this, this year many of these organisations went to Saraçhane "for Taksim".

It was a foreseeable case known by everyone that Saraçhane meant/would mean opening a political space for the CHP with the demand for Taksim. Revolutionary forces, in the name of being with the masses, remained under the ideological-political influence of the unions and the party of order, the CHP, and provided the ground for the political exploitation and undermining of the Taksim demand.

The address of the "We will celebrate 1 May in Taksim" undoubtedly requires a preparation and work that puts Taksim as a target both politically and de facto. Revolutionary forces are not strangers to this work and call. The distrust in their own power has caused a significant part of the revolutionary forces to engage in the CHP's policy of funnelling the anger of workers and labourers into the system through DISK under the name of "being with the masses".

Obviously, what should have been done was to march to Taksim and be in Taksim on 1 May in the name of the Taksim claim. The "Organising Committee" that called for this area is of course responsible for the Istanbul 1 May turning into a complete fiasco in Saraçhane. Despite this, the progressives and revolutionaries who gathered in Saraçhane with the will to march to Taksim and celebrate 1 May exercised their most legitimate rights against fascism's ban on Taksim.

They did not accept the conspiracy set up in Saraçhane and showed the practice of how to liberate Taksim by forcing the barricade. The detention and arrest attack after 1 May is directed against this will.

The "Saraçhane Case" has once again shown that the understandings that do not trust their own power and political stance, that follow the order parties, especially the CHP, will not win, and that the existing reactions of the masses will result in the imprisonment of the masses within the order. The Saraçhane case has once again shown the necessity of organising the independent politics of the working class and labouring people, not taking sides in the struggle for power between the ruling class cliques.

The Saraçhane practice has once again proved that the trade union struggle of the working class must be carried out not by class collaborationist trade union understandings, but by real class trade unionism. Istanbul 1 May was celebrated in the practice of those who said "1 May is the Taksim area" and stood behind this will and made the streets leading to Taksim ring with their slogans, and in Saraçhane, despite all the adverse conditions, they charged the barricade.

The slogan "Taksim is the Address of the Taksim Claim" is the practice of those who said "we will either open a new road or make a new road". The energy of the planned, lively, dynamic and enthusiastic work put forward since the beginning of April was reflected in the resistance put forward on 1 May. On 1 May, it is this line that will open Taksim Square and meet the anger and reaction of the masses on a revolutionary basis. This is the line that declared its will for Taksim on the 51st anniversary of the immortalisation of the communist leader İbrahim Kaypakkaya and stands behind this will.

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