

Dear comrades, dear friends,

I greet you all wholeheartedly on behalf of the working class of Turkey and the Workers' Party of Turkey.

We carry both the pride and the responsibility of being here with you today, of feeling the same excitement, the same hope, and the same determination even as we speak in different languages.

At the outset, I would like to thank our comrades who have put great effort into organizing this very important conference.

## I. A Correct Diagnosis Is Essential

Drawing on our own experiences, I will share with you several points from an international perspective.

I hope that in the coming days we will have the opportunity to discuss these issues in greater depth together. I believe we need this. We are confronted with the task of comprehending a new phase, developing new forms of organization and struggle specific to this period, and producing new theoretical and political frameworks.

We must lean on the revolutionary practices of world history, but also recognize that this alone is insufficient. We must enter this new period with strength and advance accordingly. In fact, what we must realize is that we already entered a new period. This new period is progressing on its own path and continuously restructuring itself. What is lacking is a conscious and courageous revolutionary intervention into this process.

In this session, we are discussing the role and limits of institutional action within democratic struggle.

To ground this discussion properly, we must first ask:

In which historical moment are we speaking?

Because the meaning of institutions cannot be separated from the historical conditions in which they exist.

## II. International Counter-Revolution

What the world is experiencing today cannot be described as an ordinary crisis of capitalism.

The 3rd Congress of our party convened last summer, and we gave a name to this situation: what we are witnessing is a counter-revolutionary process organized on an international scale.

We have entered a new counter-revolutionary period. We must focus on this process and organize our political missions and preparations accordingly. We must not be misled by short-term fluctuations. We are living through a "world-historical" period that requires long-term and difficult struggles.

Imperialism and fascism are no longer separate processes.

They are complementing a comprehensive offensive of capital.

This structure, within a global order where socialism is not perceived as an alternative:

- Protects international capital and seeks to remove all obstacles to it from Latin America to the Asia-Pacific,
- Organizes multidimensional wars using advanced technology,
- It renders politics in an authoritarian manner and reduces the state to an apparatus of repression.

Its ultimate aim is to liquidate all the rights and freedoms that the working class and peoples have won through struggle, and to inaugurate a new period.

The political figures we observe in different countries are representatives of this unified process, this international counter-revolutionary organization. Counter-revolution is constructing a dark order under the leadership of an international reactionary alliance.

Fascism is a punishment imposed on the working class that has not been able to take power.

### III. War and Poverty Together

Wars are increasing today.

But their cause is not security, as is claimed.

Their real purpose is to conceal and sustain deepening inequalities and expanding poverty.

Let me give an example from Turkey:

Millions of people now work longer hours, more days, and for more years, yet earn less in real terms and live under worse conditions.

For the first time in a century, the next generation in our country is definitively poorer than the previous one and faces a darker future.

While a handful of capitalists grow richer, the working class has been pushed into harsher conditions and is almost entirely indebted. Their present has been reduced to mere survival, and their future is mortgaged.

For instance, in the last 25 years, at least 35,000 workers have died in what are called “work accidents”—in reality, workplace killings.

98% of these deaths occurred in non-unionized workplaces.

This is a form of classicide. Class struggle is no longer an abstraction—it is a concrete reality.

This picture reveals the true face of the system.

### IV. The Limits of Parliament

Under these conditions, we must define the role of parliament correctly.

Let us speak plainly: in this period of state restructuring,

Parliament is not a center of solutions.

Nor is it, on its own, even a sufficient instrument of struggle.

At best, it is primarily a terrain of struggle.

From our experience, I can share two concrete conclusions:

1. A politics confined to parliament is doomed to fail.

2. In Turkey, the government has rendered parliament entirely ineffective. In practice, all decisions are taken in the presidential palace, and the assembly merely ratifies them. For eight years, not a single legislative proposal from opposition deputies has been formally debated, while not a single proposal from the government has been rejected.

## V. The Link Between the Parliamentary Podium and the Street

Under these conditions, parliamentary struggle is meaningful only if there exists an organized popular and working-class force across the country.

We must remember: even if the working class appears to have gained its rights through laws passed in parliaments, the core of all these rights lies in the streets, in strikes, in resistance.

The demands raised there, are transformed into political programs and socialized among the people—this is how gains are achieved.

Therefore, we see parliament as only one arena of this struggle.

## VI. The People as the Subject of Politics

Today, the people are being pushed out of politics, defined not even as citizens but merely as “voters,” as passive supporters.

We reject this understanding.

The people must not be the object of politics, but its subject.

Therefore:

- Trade unions,
- People's assemblies,
- Local organizations

are the core foundations of political struggle.

We must ensure that our parties function as structures where working people hold decisive power. Our parties must truly succeed in becoming parties of the working class.

We seek to use the opportunities gained through elections and parliament both to strengthen our party and to build and expand the self-organization of the people.

Let me share an important figure from our country:

While our party—openly defining itself as Marxist-Leninist—received nearly one million votes (despite participating in elections in only half the country), the progressive trade union confederation has only 240,000 members.

Our first decision after the election was to declare that defeating this government is impossible unless that union reaches one million members, and we mobilized our organizations toward this goal.

## VII. Institutional Politics and the Revolutionary Line

Institutional politics always carries risks:

- Bureaucratization and parliamentarism,
- Integration into the system,
- The weakening of struggle through negotiationism.

Therefore, revolutionary politics—whether inside or outside parliament—must be:

- Transparent,
- Accountable,
- Rooted in continued struggle and organization among the people.

Politics must be based not on individual initiative or trust alone, but on collective principles.

### VIII. The Turkish Experience: Concretizing Theory

The results we have achieved in Turkey are products of this approach.

Our party has gained parliamentary representation:

Without capital support,

Without state funding,

Under heavy media blockade,

Relying solely on the power of the people.

Throughout our parliamentary presence, we have built our struggle on two axes:

1. Bringing the voice, agenda, demands, and anger of the people into parliament,
2. Exposing and resisting all reactionary activities of the assembly, and informing the public.

We summarized this as:

“Carrying the people into parliament, and parliament to the people.”

However, in the same process, we have also seen the following:

One of our elected members of parliament is being unlawfully held in prison, in violation of constitutional provisions. I would like to introduce our imprisoned comrade to you. Our comrade Can Atalay was among the leading figures of the struggle as a lawyer for the Chamber of Architects during the Gezi resistance, which erupted against an urban crime and ecological destruction. For this reason, he was unlawfully arrested.

While he was in detention, a devastating earthquake struck Türkiye in 2023—once again the result of urban crimes—claiming the lives of tens of thousands. In the aftermath, our party organized a strong solidarity effort in the affected region. From that very region, our comrade, lawyer Can Atalay, was elected to parliament while still imprisoned.

Despite being elected as a representative to the national assembly from a city he has never even been able to visit, and despite both constitutional provisions and three separate rulings of the Constitutional Court, he continues to be held in prison.

This demonstrates that lawlessness is a defining feature of this new period.

Today in Turkey, numerous elected representatives—including a former presidential candidate and the mayor of Istanbul—are imprisoned.

The Gezi resistance itself remains one of the most important experiences of struggle.

It taught us:

What unites is not differences, but common struggle.

What matters is which side of the barricade you stand on.

As we struggle together, we not only discover common ground but also create new forms of solidarity.

### **IX. Turkey's Historical Position**

Turkey is a historical crossroads between the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Europe.

The wars surrounding us increase the responsibility of this geography.

At the same time, relations with Europe are unequal.

Nearly 10 million of our citizens have been forced to work in European countries.

For Europe—so-called cradle of democracy—Turkey is positioned as:

- A source of cheap labor,
- A migrant warehouse,
- NATO's ground force.

Because of this role, anti-democratic practices in Turkey are tolerated.

### **X. A New Internationalism**

The struggles we wage in our countries inevitably take on an international dimension.

Solidarity is important—but not sufficient.

We now require:

- Joint actions,
- International coordination,
- New forms of struggle.

### **XI. Conclusion: A Historical Task**

Today, the issue is not merely to understand the world.

The issue is to change it.

An international revolutionary resistance must be built against counter-revolution.

This is only possible through:

- Organization,
- Unity,
- Courageous and comradely debate,
- Expanding the struggle.

The global order—manifested in aggressive interventions from Venezuela to Iran, from Palestine to Cuba and Greenland—must be overthrown.

The fact that a NATO summit will be held in Turkey at a time when the entire region is turning into a battlefield is no coincidence.

We will not remain silent while new war and occupation plans are made in our country, shaping the world according to the interests of a handful of capitalists.

While our peoples live in poverty and deprivation, we will not allow ever larger shares of public budgets to be allocated to war.

For this reason, we are launching a process of struggle beginning April 4, NATO's founding anniversary, leading up to the NATO summit to be held in Turkey in July 2026.

We see this as the beginning of a new phase of struggle together with our friends and comrades around the world.

We invite you all to organize a peace summit against imperialism, NATO, and the lawlessness of the alliance of Trump, Netanyahu, and their partners.

Just as this conference suits Porto Alegre, an international gathering for peace against NATO would suit Istanbul equally well.

Revolutionaries, regardless of their country, speak the same language:

the language of equality and freedom, of peace and brotherhood, of revolution and socialism.

I hope this language will bring us together, unite us, and make us comrades.

I look forward to following each participant's valuable contributions with interest, listening carefully, and engaging in deep discussions both here and in our country.

On behalf of our party and delegation, I thank all participants once again and wish for a productive conference with outcomes beneficial for the whole world.

In the ongoing protests in Turkey, two slogans stand out—I believe they apply internationally as well:

There is no salvation alone—either all together or none of us.

We will win through unity.

I greet you all with solidarity and wish success in our struggle.

Down with fascism!

Down with imperialism!

Long live revolution and socialism!