

WORKERS' PARTY OF TURKEY



INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN of **TİP**

www.tip.org.tr

June, 2020 / Issue #: 013

ANTI-RACIST STRUGGLE AND THE ANTI-CAPITALIST DEMANDS: THE NEW PHASE OF BLACK LIVES MATTER!



On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, 46-year-old black man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest. Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, knelt on Floyd's neck for eight minutes 46 seconds while Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down, begging for his life and repeatedly saying "I can't breathe". In the US, police violence against the black people does not occur for the first time. Moreover police murders in the US are not unique to Trump presidency; similar cases happened during the presidency of Barack Obama, the first black president of US. Protests against the police's murder of a black do not occur for the first time as well. But this time, the connection of new anti-racist struggle with the social struggles, the political level of the protests'

demands, protestors' composition, numbers, protests' locations indicate a rather new phase. "Black Lives Matter" has been the common name for these responses since 2013 and almost every year, reactions have been made on this topic at the national level. However, the protests that emerged following the killing of George Floyd are not a simple repetition of this process. 2020 "Black Lives Matter" has new and different features. By looking at the participant profiles, protests' places and numbers and the demands of the demonstrations, it can be said that the George Floyd protests have different qualitative or quantitative differences from the previous ones in 5 main titles.



What's New?

These 5 features that point to a new era in the struggle against racism can be summarized as follows:

1-Massification: The highest number of demonstrators to date has been reached.

2-Globalization: US borders have already been exceeded and turned into a global protest.

3-Localization: It has spread not only to the democratic big cities of the USA but also to small conservative towns.

4-Embracing the people- the class politics: Not only blacks or "browns" but also a very high participation of "whites". Protests became a phenomenon beyond s minority/ethnic/racial group protest. The anti-racist struggle began to unite with social struggle motifs and demands.

5-Radicalization and politicization: Demands against racist hatred started to cover class issues, the discourse became radicalized and started to point to a radical program whose goal and program started to emerge. It is more expressed how racist social and political practices are lethal in relation to the impoverishing and depriving character of capitalism.

While the right-wing populism and neo fascism is rising!

Demonstrators point to the parallelism between the racist discourse against blacks, the increase in police violence and the rise of right-wing populism. In other words, the rise of racist, discriminatory, right-populism, and the increase in attacks against blacks, which personified in Trump, is underlined. Although the government seems to take some appeasing steps in the US, Trump is a politician who owes his power to "polarize" the society. Even though it may seem contradictory in this respect, it seems that Trump is trying to benefit from these

developments in the coming elections. If some positive anti-racist steps are taken, they are mostly at the level of states or local governments. The central government will continue its right populist polarization policy, allied with neo-fascist forces in the field.

On the other hand, in the US, the left ideas are also in rise while the right wing politics gaining power. The ideas that are meant from the left here include a wide range of left political spectrum: the democratic / democratic socialist wing of the Democratic Party, which is referred to as a socialist in the US and rather found its expression in Bernie Sanders, autonomous anarcho-communist-weighted Anti-fa movements, traditional communist parties such as the US Communist Party and finally many eco-socialist social and political movements. While right-wing populist conservatism consolidated among middle-aged groups, the left ideas find much higher support among younger people. After a long time, black representatives became more prominent in the left movements. The fact that many social and political figures that have made anti-capitalist issues in recent years are black or brown is an indication of this.

In this respect, even if Trump can gain another election, it may be the last case for right-wingers, as generations from below tend to the left / socialist ideas at a higher rate than in the late 19th century.

It is evident that there has been quite some progress in the face of racism at the level of law, but the big break between black and white has never disappeared in terms of social, cultural and most importantly class balances. This fracture became more visible when the economic contraction combined with right-wing populism. Of course, this is not true for all the Americans. To

repeat, the more racism in American society is rising among some segments, there is a much higher level of anti-racism as it is, and this is the growing anti-racist segment.

Anti-racism and anti-capitalism!

When looking at the global plan of action in the United States, we must give attention to how Turkey and many countries attempts to show them as “exceptions”. Thinking or reflecting as if racism is unique to the US is meant to escape from the real problem. In some countries, there is an even worse situations than in the United States. Eastern European Countries, Gulf countries, even some countries in Africa and many more places. It is necessary to talk about a situation that is somewhat different from discriminatory, ultra-nationalist ideologies, in the context of the issue of discrimination in the US mostly due to people's color. But there are thin lines between racism and neo-fascism and right-wing populism in many cases. The forms of discrimination that they reproduce deepen by merging with the class discriminatory capitalist order.

The anti-racist movement that started in the US is gradually spreading all over the world, and is heading towards a wave of criticism towards capitalism that nurtures, reproduces and deepens racism. In this process, internationalists and anti-capitalists should combine the anti-racist movement in the US with the fight against various racist, nationalist, chauvinistic tendencies in their own countries. One does not have to override the other. Just like the struggle against racism has to be given together with the struggle against capitalism.



CRITICAL INTERFACES



By Central Committee Member of Workers' Party of Turkey Metin Çulhaoglu

Let us agree on one point: The ideological hegemony of neoliberalism has been distinctly regressing in the last decade; today, the features of the post pandemic period that are expected to be different is being widely discussed. At this moment, are socialists obliged to say “new things” in such a world?

We assume that there is such an obligation.

However, “new things” discourse was used in the near past so randomly that it either became something hollow or a cliché of an organized attack to imply that the knowledge of socialists are now useless. Some were afraid to say the word “new”: “What if they think I am ...” However, the solution is simple. You tell what is new first, then you review your standpoint on the basis of criticism you get...

We have written on it before: Socialism in Turkey must focus on to what is explicitly in contradiction with the doctrine rather than what it requires in a straightforward manner.

At the first glance it might seem irrelevant, yet we will continue with the emergence of the cinema of Yılmaz Guney (who is a socialist film director, and one of the pioneers of socialist realist cinema in Turkey*- Translator's note (t.n)).

The cinema of Yılmaz Guney did not arise somewhere apart from the mainstream Turkish cinema; it did not emerge from a far distant location; it came out by pushing what existed in Turkey as cinema from within.

We used this analogy to underline a truth about socialist policy. In socialist politics, one who stands too far apart and “ahead” can never appeal to the mediocre and the average. Since 1920, what we can call as “advanced” or “mature” in the Turkish socialist movement came out as a result of the efforts of the “advanced” to push or carry forward what was given from within.

In short, "I sign my songs in my corner and the others will understand it someday" is not a proper standpoint, you must do whatever you need to do with the mediocre or the mainstream.

We may assert that there are three main agendas before socialists: (1) the class/ people's movement that has a mass character; (2) socialist subjects with their own principles, perspective and organizational understanding, and (3) interfaces between 1 and 2....

The most critical one among these is (3), critical interfaces, in other words, "encounter" points. It is not possible to say much on (1). No doubt, there will be foresights, assumptions, and lessons to learn... What seems impossible is to predict when, under which circumstances and with which features the massive class movement will rise. Unlike (1), it is possible to say many things about (2) It can be said that the socialist subject must have some features such as this and that.....However, in doing this, there is the risk of going too far and falling in idealism.

Still, if something must be said on (2), it is an obligation for socialist agencies to reconstruct themselves as theoretical subject, ideological subject, and political subject. Well, by based on what, by observing what? To base on (1) which is an area of uncertainties may bring in idealism, therefore, where to look at is (3).

3 has a special place in terms of both giving clues of a possible (1) and in providing important information about what (2) must do and test itself.

What we mean is the local people's organizations, solidarity networks, public assemblies...

While closing let us engage in a prediction concerning (1), the one which is the most difficult one to talk about:

It is a very broad part of the society where intra-class demarcation lines are blurred despite the inherent class character; where the share of the unemployed has markedly increased (*); where bursts of rage may outweigh other features; where there are tendencies to move to the right which can be prevented; and where clear linkages can be made between existing reactions and capitalism itself.

(*) "The weight of the unemployed must not immediately suggest a negative connotation; according to the information given by Hobsbawm, 85% of the members of the Communist Party of Germany (KDP) was unemployed in 1932. – (Eric Hobsbawm, "Interesting Times, A Twentieth-Century Life (in Turkish: "Tuhaf Zamanlar", İletişim 2006, p.71)



LEBANON: WHERE TO?



In Lebanon, the protests that started against the additional taxes on WhatsApp, high cost of living, political turmoil and economic devastation in October 2019 were withdrawn with the coronavirus pandemic and the government was using this epidemic to recover itself, however, the protests erupted towards the end of April. It is not difficult to guess why. The Lebanese people were tired of drowning in the dilemma of either "starvation or pandemic" and they found the cure going back on the street.

The protests that started in October caused the government to fall. Three months later, the new government was tried to be established, but it still could not provide legitimacy for the public, but on the contrary, it is a matter that the majority of the people agree that it is not different from the previous government and that nothing will change as long as the sectarian-based cabinet continues. In Lebanon, the economic situation has gone so bad in the past

months that in December, the person whose daughter wanted 1000 Lebanese pounds (about 4.5 rubles) from him to buy food committed suicide. Likewise, when a man went to get a certificate from his daughter's school last February, a worker who could not receive the document because of his accumulated debt had set himself on fire.

In March, the Lebanese state announced its bankruptcy. The currency of Lebanon is watching an incredibly rapid decline, the news has spread that people in the country where hunger is looming around, people knocking on the doors of the houses and asking for food. While unemployment has risen above 25%, youth unemployment has reached 37%. At least one third of the population lives below the hunger threshold. The measures taken due to the coronavirus epidemic only made the life of the laborers more difficult. Because while many workplaces were closed due to precautions, many people remained unemployed. Already,

about 55% of the working people in Lebanon are working with precarious and casual wages. Moreover, 80% of hospitals in Lebanon are private. All hospitals have a maximum of 20 beds that can serve coronavirus patients. Therefore, it is clear that the health system is vulnerable to pandemics.

Violent clashes with soldiers and police, and the public's assault on banks are another aspect of the demonstrations. The intervention of the police and the soldiers against the protests that flared up at the end of April is much harder. Those detained stated that they were given electricity and were subjected to torture. The people are very angry, many cars were set on fire a while ago in Sidon. It is not in vain that banks are one of the main targets



of the struggle of the working people who are mobilized again under these conditions against the regime and capitalist exploitation policies. A significant portion of the leaders of the sectarian regime in the country are already shareholders of the banks. Banks try to seize the money of the working people while they and the bosses try to smuggle their money abroad. The struggle against banks, which are

the lifeblood of the imperialist capitalist system, gives us ideas about the anti-capitalist dimension of actions.

Another dimension of the issue is Hezbollah. Hezbollah has an assessment that the US-Israel and the Gulf kingdoms are trying to break the "resistance axis" in the crisis and they are trying to destabilize Lebanon, where Hezbollah is effective. Of course, it is certain that the actors mentioned above have such an effort

systematically. However, this assessment made on a national-regional scale can turn into a tool of oppression when used to defame the struggle of the workers to defend their rights. On the contrary, integrity in the fight against imperialism and capitalism can only be achieved if the working people are the real power of politics and the

street. In this context, graffiti on the streets is remarkable: Demission of all! . It is clear that this "all" includes Hezbollah.

The revolutionary uprising in Lebanon should be an inspiration for the struggle during and after the pandemic. We salute the Lebanese people with all our internationalist feelings for the victory of the anti-imperialist anti-capitalist struggle.

NEWS FROM THE PARTY



With the involvement of the chair of the party and a delegate, TİP gave support to HDP's "Democracy March" against discharging of two members of parliament of HDP which started in Edirne. Despite the existing pressure, we will continue our solidarity for peace and justice.

The vehicle used by our Deputy Chairman Barış Atay Mengüllüoğlu and our Hatay Provincial Organization was sabotaged by loosening the rubber bolts. Let the perpetrators of this humble attack, which meant the lives of our comrades, know that TİP will not surrender to the intimidation of any dark focus!



A bilateral online meeting with the Fronte Popolare from Italy was conducted where information between two organizations and increasing the solidarity between working class of Italy and Turkey was discussed.

In order to participate in a possible early general elections, TİP started a membership campaign and a campaign to open new provincial and sub-provincial offices all over Turkey.







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