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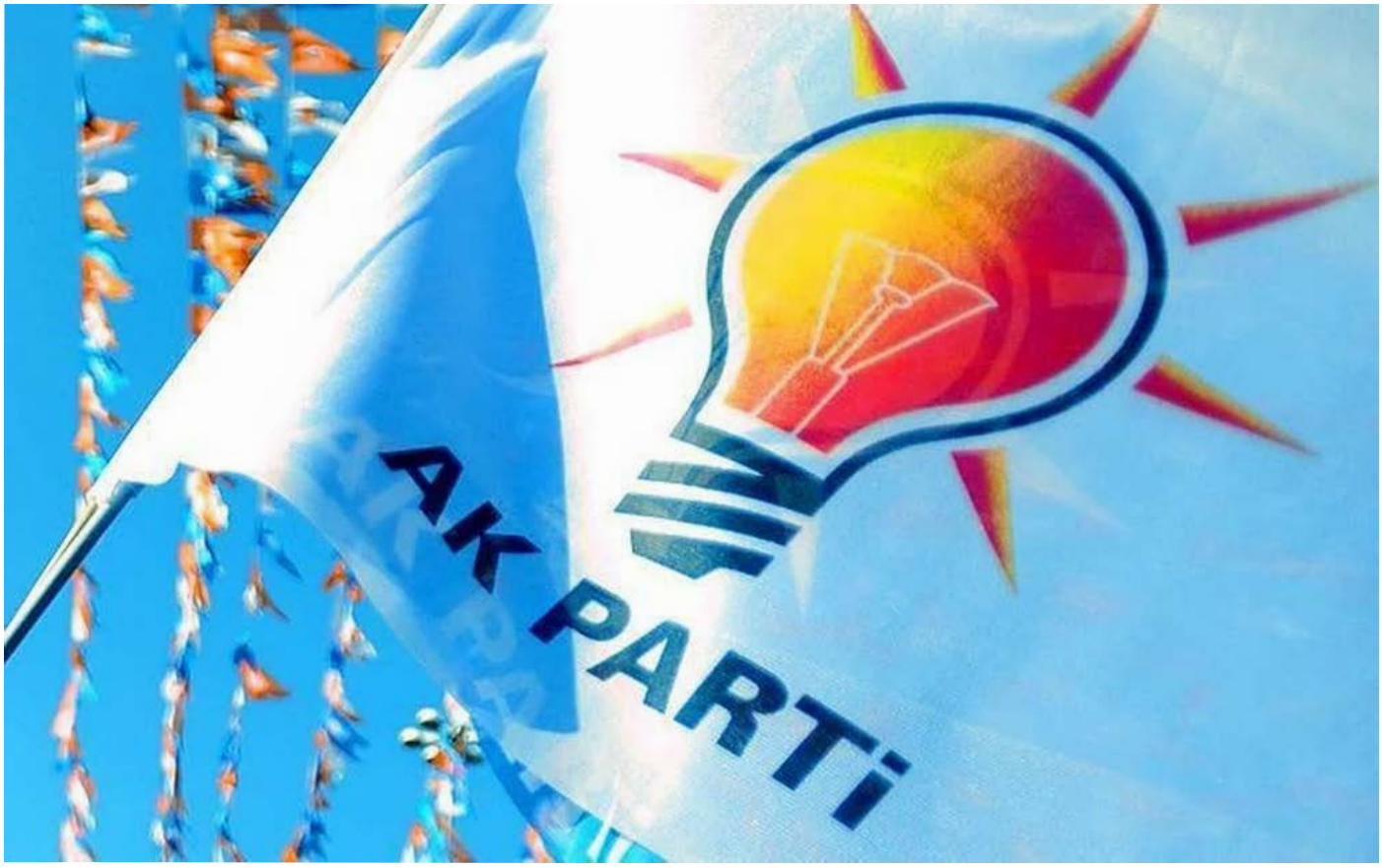
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AKP's 24 years in power: Crisis, poverty, and decay





24 years of AKP rule:
What lies behind the growing repression?

Gözde Kök,
Member of TKP Party Council

As the Justice and Development Party (AKP) completes its 24th year in power this month, the debate over the nature of Turkey's political regime remains very much alive. The arrests of opposition politicians and journalists, the use of the judiciary as an instrument of political intervention, restrictions on the freedoms of assembly and organisation, the removal of elected mayors from office, and, more recently, the operations targeting the main opposition party have all reinforced the widely held view among left-wing opposition circles that the AKP has established a fascist regime. The expression "one-man regime", often used to convey much the same idea, describes a system of government centred on the President, in which all state institutions are subordinated to his will.

Although these descriptions may appear to capture the repressive character of the government, they fall short of explaining Turkey's political situation. More importantly, they narrow the objectives of political struggle. When the central goal becomes defeating fascism, ending one-man rule or removing Erdoğan from power, the class relations behind the repression are pushed out of sight. This, in turn, gives rise to calls for the broadest possible opposition alliance. The left is thus presented with the prospect of an alliance that brings together, on one side, the social-democratic main opposition, which remains firmly in the wake of big capital, and, on the other, the Kurdish nationalist movement, which leads a coalition that also includes reactionary Kurdish tribal leaders and is pressing Turkey together with the forces in power for a new "peace process" based on ethnic and religious divisions and neo-Ottoman expansionist ambitions.

Yet there is no need to invoke fascism to explain the AKP's repressive policies. On the contrary, the indiscriminate use of the term makes it harder to understand the government's actual strength, its limitations and the reasons behind its growing reliance on repression.

Fascism by definition and in its historical trajectory

Georgi Dimitrov's report to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935 occupies an important place in the communist movement's historical understanding of fascism. Dimitrov defined fascism in power as the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital. This definition approached fascism

through the particular political form assumed by capitalist class rule under certain conditions, rather than through the personal characteristics of political leaders or the intensity of state violence.

The rise of fascism in Germany and Italy was closely connected to the profound crises of capitalism following the First World War and the existence of a powerful working-class movement. In Germany in particular, the communist movement posed a serious political threat to the bourgeois system. Under these circumstances, fascism emerged as a political regime through which the capitalist system could be maintained, imperialist ambitions pursued and, to these ends, the working-class movement crushed.

Throughout the twentieth century, state apparatuses under fascist regimes were reorganised in line with the needs of monopoly capital and imperialist expansion. Fascism also established ideological and political mechanisms capable of binding society to a particular historical project. Fascist governments possessed a considerable capacity to mobilise and rally broad masses behind them. The Nazis drew on Germany's defeat in the First World War, economic devastation and widespread social discontent to construct a narrative promising the rebirth of the German nation. Rooted in chauvinist nationalism, anti-communism and racism, this ideology mobilised different sections of society around a common political objective. Mass support played an important part in the establishment of fascist rule and the subsequent reorganisation of society.

The defining characteristics of fascism cannot be reduced to the severity of state repression. Capitalist states restrict democratic rights and suppress working-class movements by force under political regimes other than fascism. The murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in 1919, during the founding period of the Weimar Republic rather than under a fascist regime, is a striking example. To identify a regime as fascist, we must explain why the capitalist class has become unable to maintain its rule through existing political arrangements, how the state has been reorganised, and what social and ideological conditions have made such a transformation both necessary and possible.

The character of the AKP rule

The AKP's nearly quarter-century in power offers numerous examples that invite comparisons with the fascist regimes of the twentieth century. It came to power with strong backing from the capitalist class, fostered the growth of business groups close to the government, sought to bring trade unions and social organisations under its control, placed loyal cadres in state institutions, and made the judiciary and the media increasingly dependent on political power.

The 2017 constitutional amendment took this centralisation further by concentrating executive authority in the Presidency, reducing parliament's capacity to exercise oversight and expanding political interference in the judiciary. The repression directed against opposition politicians, journalists and social movements in recent years, the appointment of government trustees to replace elected local authorities, and the operations targeting municipalities governed by the main opposition party are all part of this picture.

These developments leave little doubt about the AKP's reactionary and repressive character. But similarities with fascist regimes do not explain why the capitalist class in Turkey would need fascism. To answer that question, we must examine the present conditions of capitalist class rule and the AKP's place within the system.

Fascism is the most reactionary form of political regime available to the capitalist class. The bourgeoisie does not turn to fascism because it suddenly abandons its commitment to democratic freedoms. It has never hesitated to restrict those freedoms when they threaten the capitalist system as a whole. Fascism comes onto the agenda when existing political mechanisms prove inadequate to safeguard that rule and the course of class struggle makes a different form of government necessary.

No such necessity exists in Turkey today. For the time being, the working class lacks the organisation and political strength to pose a vital threat to the capitalist system. Economic problems and social discontent are growing, but they have yet to develop into an organised political struggle directed against capitalism. Moreover, the bourgeoisie can maintain its pressure on labour without resorting to a fascist regime. Working-class organisation has been substantially weakened, public assets have been transferred to capital, and privatisation and marketisation have greatly expanded the scope for capital accumulation. The existing regime, with all its repressive features, continues to serve the fundamental interests of the capitalist class. There is no compelling reason for the bourgeoisie to seek a fascist reorganisation of political power.

The AKP's efforts to concentrate executive power, monopolise political authority and use the state's coercive apparatus against the opposition should also be considered in a wider international context. Similar tendencies are increasingly visible even in Western capitalist countries that pride themselves on their democratic traditions.

The AKP's particular role in this



process deserves closer attention. It has been the principal political force behind a transformation that deepened the integration of Turkish capitalism into the imperialist system, dismantled gains won by working people and placed the resources of the state more extensively than ever at the disposal of capital. Today, the AKP continues to pursue policies aimed at convincing the monopolies that it can represent their interests more effectively and more ruthlessly than any of its rivals. At the same time, it seeks to eliminate those very rivals, leaving the capitalist class with no political alternative to its own rule.

Yet none of this is sufficient for the AKP to establish a fascist regime on its own. Quite apart from the absence of the historical conditions for such a regime, it is highly doubtful that the AKP possesses the political capacity to build one.

Establishing a fascist regime requires more than control over the state's coercive apparatus. It entails a comprehensive reorganisation of political and social life, the elimination or transformation of existing institutions, and the mobilisation of a social force capable of carrying this process forward. The AKP was once a political movement capable of mobilising broad sections of society, offering them a vision of the future and transforming the structure of the state accordingly. After nearly a quarter-century in power, however, that capacity has been seriously eroded. The social and institutional strength of religious reaction, the state resources at the government's disposal and the electoral support it still commands should not be underestimated. But none of these guarantees that the AKP can mobilise society behind its political project as it once did.

The AKP's political ambitions and its growing reliance on repression

In its early years, the AKP had a programme aimed at transforming Turkey in line with the needs of capital. Promises of economic growth, the prospect of EU membership, the rhetoric of democratisation, the consolidation of religious reaction in social life and state institutions, and the restructuring of the state were all part of this programme. Backed by broad sections of the capitalist class, the AKP was able to mobilise considerable social support for this transformation.

Alongside its efforts to reorganise Turkish capitalism domestically, it has also pursued its own vision of Turkey's place in the imperialist system, seeking to expand the economic and political reach of Turkish capital, particularly across the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. This neo-Ottomanist vision has offered the Turkish bourgeoisie the prospect of new markets, investments and spheres of influence within the framework of wider imperialist plans. It remains an important part of the AKP's political project.

Yet this vision has failed to generate comparable enthusiasm in society. After nearly a quarter-century in power, the AKP is finding it increasingly difficult to convince even sections of its own support base that such ambitions offer a way out of the country's deepening political crisis and widespread poverty. Its project has not disappeared, but its capacity to mobilise society around that project has seriously weakened. The government continues to pursue its ambitions while increasingly relying on repression to deal with the political and social tensions it cannot resolve.

Repressive interventions in political life do not eliminate contradictions. On the contrary, conflicts among different factions within the ruling bloc, driven by competing political and economic interests and including the struggle over who will succeed Erdogan, have intensified to the point where they can no longer be concealed. As these conflicts grow sharper, they further obstruct any attempt to act with a coherent strategy and a common political direction. Faced with political and social opposition, those in power increasingly resort to repression, often responding to immediate threats at the expense of a coherent political strategy.

The recent funding scandal has dealt another major blow to the AKP's mechanisms for manufacturing consent. After 24 years in power, the party now faces a profound crisis of governance.

This does not mean that the AKP has lost all its strength or that it will soon be removed from power. No clearly defined political alternative has yet taken shape. Its control over the state apparatus and its position within the capitalist system also allow it to remain in power. But remaining in power and retaining the political capacity to govern a country are two different things.

What should communists do?

To argue that Turkey does not have a fascist regime is not to downplay the AKP's repressive practices. Communists do not need to label these practices fascist in order to fight against them. The question is what political objective this fight should serve. Calls for the broadest possible democratic front against the AKP's repression envisage acting side by side with the political forces that serve in the last instance for the continuation of the capitalist system around the goal of removing the present government. In such an alliance, confronting the capitalist system is pushed into the background, while the independent political objectives of the working class become subordinate to the priorities of the opposition operating within the system. For TKP, the defence of democratic rights cannot be separated from the struggle against bourgeois dictatorship.

Constantly presenting the government's repression as proof of its strength also creates an image of an unassailable government. Yet while the AKP can silence political rivals, it cannot eliminate social discontent. It can restrict the opposition's room for manoeuvre, but it has failed to generate renewed popular support or enthusiasm.

The task of communists is to expose the capitalist class rule behind the repression, explain why the government increasingly depends on coercion, and strengthen the independent political struggle of the working class. A political struggle that refuses to settle for replacing the AKP with another representative of the capitalist system can also provide a genuine social basis for resisting repression.



Is the spectre of communism haunting Europe once again?

Aslı Çakal,
Member of TKP Party Council

The streets in many countries across Europe and the world came alive once again with massive mobilisations. The social anger accumulating against the housing crisis, systemic flaws in education, and declining living standards is manifesting through student protests, strikes, and mass demonstrations. Bringing together different generations, social segments, and political tendencies, these mobilisations are opening up debates not merely regarding government policies but concerning the very future of the existing social order.

References to the Paris Commune echoing through these protests, the singing of the Internationale in unison, and slogans like "The people united will never be defeated" are undeniably striking. Where this social energy will be channeled, however, will be decisive for the future of these actions. Will it once again remain within the confines of the system, or will it pave the way for a new political quest that challenges the status quo? It appears that a new era is dawning—one in which the answers to these questions will be determined by those who fight.

Capitalism's permanent loss of legitimacy

To answer the questions above and comprehend the wave of actions sweeping across Europe, we must first examine the economic and material terrain from which this social mobilisation arises. Let us state it clearly from the outset: the unrest surfacing in various forms across Europe today stems from problems that may appear independent of one another, yet are forged within the exact same social and economic relations. The primary issues driving crowds into the streets—soaring housing costs and rents, wages lagging behind the cost of living, the dismantling of public services such as education and healthcare, and young people's lack of faith in the future—are not, in fact, independent of one another. They are directly linked to the way production and social resources are organized and are, in fact, part of capitalism's structural problems.

From the perspective of the capitalist economy, the ultimate aim of production is not to satisfy social needs, but to expand capital and sustain profitability. The fact that these two goals have coincided at certain turning points in history does not eliminate the fundamental contradiction between them. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, capitalism no longer felt any need to offer incentives to the working classes to keep them within the system; today, it sees no barrier whatsoever to carving chunks out of workers' historic gains simply to prop up profit rates.

Looking at France, for instance, we see that the continuation of capital accumulation in a given country by no means implies that public services are strengthening or prosperity is spreading to all sectors of society. On the contrary, as we see today, broad working-class living standards can deteriorate even while national economic growth indicators appear positive. As basic necessities like housing, education, and healthcare are dragged into the sphere of market relations, access to these services is dictated by purchasing power rather than human need.

Today, unlike German monopolies, major French monopolies have largely maintained their strength; yet the working class in France faces mounting barriers to public services, alongside a severe decline

in the quality of those services. Consequently, the demands of high school students for improved material conditions in education are now converging with the dissatisfaction of broader segments of society regarding the high cost of living and economic insecurity. It is this systematic degradation of living standards that draws diverse ideological and political currents into the same arena of struggle—from students to Yellow Vests, radical leftists to nationalists, environmentalists to Palestine solidarity activists. Those in the streets are not "looters, thugs, or immigrants," as the mainstream media alleges, but the broad, increasingly impoverished masses themselves.

Concurrently, the "Maricarmen" protests in Spain, which began as a response to the housing crisis, encompass a wide range of groups—from tenant organizations to student groups, and from labor unions to political parties. Despite comparisons drawn between the anger flaring up at real estate speculators and certain local administrations and the liberal-leaning plaza occupations of 2008, the inherent class-struggle potential of today's movement was quickly confirmed when it transformed into a call for a general strike. Social unrest across Europe ranges from mass demonstrations of young workers and students in Greece, Italy, and Albania, massive strikes in Belgium, and actions centered once again on the housing crisis in Portugal. All of this demonstrates that capitalism—whose sole driving force is profit—has historically run its course and has is losing its legitimacy in the eyes of the working class and the people.

Opportunities from the perspective of class politics

Across Europe, broad sections of the public are developing reactions that question the problems created by capitalism, even if they do not necessarily start from an explicit critique of capitalism itself. Turning these reactions into a coherent anti-system program, however, requires organized political intervention.

We cannot claim that today's actions are entirely devoid of organization. People coming together around common issues, establishing networks of communication and solidarity, developing forms of action, and making collective decisions also constitute a form of organization. Yet, the internal organization of a social movement is not the same as a political organization aimed at transforming society as a whole.

Unmasking the mechanisms through which the existing order generates these crises and aligning disparate struggles toward a common political objective are urgent tasks for communists. This is precisely where the historical mission of the communist movement lies. The goal is not merely to aggregate those dissatisfied with the status quo, but to build the political will and organizational capacity required to establish the social order that will replace capitalism.

In Europe—a continent occupying a pivotal place in the historical development and struggle of the working class and home to numerous multinational monopolies—the active participation of left politics and communists in popular movements rooted in the structural crises of capitalism offers a vital opportunity to revive class struggle. This presents an opportunity for the left in Europe—the vast majority of which spent a significant portion of the period following the collapse of the USSR engaging in identity-based politics—to move beyond its drift away from challenging the status quo and the goal of seizing state power. Only class politics can restore to the working people the conviction that another world is possible and worth fighting for.

The common ground that today unites segments of the population with diverse political histories and ideological leanings in the arena of action must be leveraged to dispel existing prejudices against socialism, enable communists to win allies, and weaken their enemies.

History has proven repeatedly that the economic discontent generated by capitalism does not automatically crystallize into class consciousness. Right-wing, fascist political movements can exploit economic and social grievances by scapegoating immigrants, foreigners, or specific minorities, thereby diverting workers' anger into reactionary channels. This manufactures precisely the kind of fratricidal hostility among social groups suffering from exactly the same economic crises that capitalism desires.

Standing against the warmongering of capitalism

In Germany last September, student protests against the government's war rhetoric and the defense budget hike intersected with workers' protests. It is not unlikely that this issue will continue to spark street protests in the coming period. After all, the ruling class justifies soaring fuel and food prices, stagnant wages and pensions, and the erosion of social rights by pointing to the "necessary expansion" of military expenditures.

The relationship between the allocation of resources to military spending and the funding of health, education, and social security services also brings a class-based debate to the fore. From this perspective, the struggle against war—and against NATO itself—cannot be divorced from the immediate economic and social demands of working people. Yet, in forging this connection, the tendency to reduce every problem to a single cause is neither accurate nor persuasive.

The strength of communists lies in their possession of a perspective and methodology capable of elucidating the dialectical relationships between phenomena, their material foundations, and their connections to class struggles through analysis of concrete conditions. There is an urgent need for a political perspective that can unify disparate fields of struggle while exposing the root causes of social troubles and strengthening the independent organization of working people. This is crucial for organizing socialism as a genuine alternative.

For all these reasons, the recent wave of actions in Europe carries profound significance—not only regarding the continent's immediate political balances, but also for addressing the contemporary historical tasks facing the international communist movement.



The crisis of capitalism and the youth's struggle for the future

The youth are rising up in Europe, but is everything alright in Turkey?

The protests which began in France with the reactions of students to the conditions of education quickly spread across Europe with the participation of other social strata. The increasingly unified sentiments of students, teachers, parents and workers further show that ongoing problems aren't limited to the sphere of education. As the deepening crisis of capitalism, the cuts to public services, increasing cost of living and lack of security further complicate the lives of broad social strata, workers are made to pay the bill of war and rearmament politics. As youth and workers in Europe take to the streets against these conditions, the situation in Turkey where similar problems exist arouses curiosity.

Turkey's unique position within the imperialist system does not exempt it from the problems we listed above. On the contrary, all the problems faced by students and workers in Turkey stem directly from capitalism itself.

We see that in Turkey, the student youth are being drawn deeper into the production process each year in line with the needs of the capitalist class. We would not be wrong to say this: The vast majority of Turkey's student youth are already part of the Turkish working class! Tens of thousands of young people struggling to continue their education amid great hardships within the "hell of labor" are an indispensable element for the capitalist class.

The number of students forced to work in order to complete their education is steadily increasing. Students are forced to live in conditions unworthy of human dignity and to subsist on substandard food. Workers and students, the working people, instead of benefiting from economic growth, are struggling against an ever-increasing wave of poverty. The mechanisms of exploitation within the country are intensifying. Long working hours, the undermining of unions, precarious working conditions, workplace accidents, and workplace murders are turning Turkey into a paradise for capital while transforming it into a massive "labor hell" for workers.

The priorities of Turkish capitalism

Turkey's economic output is growing, and the importance and weight of the role it plays in the imperialist hierarchy are increasing. As a result, capital accumulation is concentrated particularly in the defense industry, and this sector's share of the working population is growing proportionally. Of course, this process is the result of Turkey's quest to expand its hegemony and the growing pains of its imperialist transformation.

In the 2027 budget, the amount allocated for defense increased by 83.5% compared to the previous year, while the budget allocated for education increased by only 26.5%. Moreover, this increase loses even more of its value when the country's high inflation is taken into account. While students worry about the cost of a single meal, our country's resources are being channeled into defense industrial monopolies. The burden of expansion in the defense industry and Turkey's quest to extend its hegemony within the imperialist system is being placed directly on the shoulders of workers.

One of the ways this process is affecting students' lives is the increasing number of partnerships

between universities and NATO and defense industrial companies. The scientific knowledge produced in universities is being used to give Turkey an edge in the arms race.

Child labor, exploitation, reactionism

Not only scientific studies in universities, but the entire education system is shaped according to the needs of capital. The youth of Turkey face not only a severe economic crisis and conditions of exploitation but also the marketization of education and an intense, reactionary siege.

Vocational Training Centers (MESEM), promoted by the capitalist class and the state, have provided a legal veneer for child labor. The Ministry of National Education and the capitalist class, using the excuse of youth unemployment reaching 14%, are promoting an education model that means high school students go to work four days a week and to school one day a week, under the guise of creating jobs. By the 2025–2026 academic year, at least 95 child laborers had been killed by the capitalist system. The deaths of these children, caused by a lack of safety measures (omitted because they are viewed as mere costs) and by grueling conditions of exploitation, serve as proof of the complicity between the government and the capitalist class. Like high schools, universities are also being redesigned to suit the needs of the market. In line with the needs of Turkish capital, the duration of university education is being shortened at the expense of the quality of education, while internship periods are being extended.

In areas described by the government as "strategic," the curricula of vocational schools are directly determined by employers through commissions that are predominantly composed of defense industry companies. While employers turn every crisis into an opportunity to boost their profits, this is the reality they impose upon students. This marketization is further compounded by an intense, reactionary siege. Billions of liras are being transferred from the budget allocated for students' right to education to religious sects that are disguised as "foundations" by the Ministry of National Education itself. School doors are thrown wide open to these reactionary groups through various activities. Curricula are being redesigned, with scientific content steadily stripped away. Their goal is to cultivate a generation that neither thinks nor questions.

"A lack of a future", a term that encompasses all these issues, acts like a black hole, pulling young people in, draining their vital energy, and grinding them down. Whether they are just beginning high school or are in their twenties and on the verge of graduating from university, young people find themselves unable to see any path forward. In the absence of collective organization, this lack of a future leads only to profound despair, paralysis, and isolation.

Yet, no one could dare to claim that the youth have surrendered to this siege. The anger accumulating among the youth against hopelessness, exploitation, and reaction holds powerful potential for an organized struggle directed against this entire system.

TKG is fighting to reclaim the future that has been stolen from us

A lack of a future is neither a matter of fate nor a temporary crisis. The situation into which the youth have been pushed today is the true face of capitalism. Therefore, the response must address the entire system that creates these problems. The Communist Youth of Turkey (TKG) approaches its struggle within universities and high schools with this comprehensive perspective.

TKG strives to channel the anger accumulating among the youth beyond the confines of the existing order. From high schools to universities, it builds a political barricade against exploitation, reactionary ideologies, and the absence of a future, ensuring that young people do not succumb to despair or isolation, asserting instead that "we are stronger together." Through "Solidarity Networks," it organizes the struggle against the injustices faced by young people, such as those forced to work in workshops during their high school years, as well as the housing and nutritional challenges encountered by university students. It organizes educational programs rooted in Enlightenment values to counter curricula stripped of scientific content. Yet, it does not harbor illusions about achieving a "better university" within the framework of capitalism. It fights for secular, scientific, equal, and free education, maintaining that this is only possible under socialism.

The Communist Youth of Turkey does not view the youth merely as a social segment fighting for the resolution of its own specific problems; rather, it defines them as a revolutionary force participating in the working class's struggle for political power. Rather than harboring the expectation that the anger and accumulated discontent of the youth will spontaneously lead to political transformation, TKG is waging an organized struggle, guided by a clear program, to ensure that the reaction against a futureless existence evolves into a sustained political movement.

In this regard, TKG defines its primary task as follows: to articulate the socialist alternative by addressing the specific problems young people encounter in education, the workplace, and daily life; to break through despair and isolation by expanding opportunities for youth to organize; and to contribute to the development of a revolutionary youth movement in Turkey.

The youth of Turkey, meanwhile, are preparing to make their presence felt.

"Don't emulate France. Don't fall prey to Western imperialism. Protect Turkey, and Turkey will be yours!" These words come from Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the fascist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), a staunch defender of the current order and a key facilitator of the operations conducted by U.S. imperialism within our country.

Bahçeli's appeal is by no means a coincidence.

For he knows that the voices echoing through the streets of Europe will, in time, rise within the schools, workshops, and dormitories of Turkey as well.

An ordinary, unrestrained politician of our times: Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya



One of Turkey's biggest financial scandals in recent years has left hundreds of thousands of investors facing losses and reached the highest ranks of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). At the centre of the controversy is Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya, a former Minister of Family and Social Policies and AKP deputy chair. Allegations that Kaya and her husband made around 2 billion Turkish lira from suspicious share transactions in just a few months, selling their holdings shortly before the scandal broke, have also exposed growing divisions within the ruling party.

According to figures released, the couple invested approximately 163 millionTurkish lira in shares of Özata Denizcilik in April. By September, proceeds from their share sales had reached 2.17 billion Turkish lira. The sales took place just before the fund crisis became public on 16 September.

On 26 September, Kaya asked "to be relieved of" her AKP duties. Her assets, along with those of her husband, were subsequently frozen, and both were questioned as part of the investigation. The couple applied to return the proceeds exceeding their original investment. On 22 October, Kaya stated that more than 2 billion Turkish lira had been repaid.

How could a senior figure in the ruling party make such an extraordinary profit in a matter of months, only to return the money once the scandal erupted? A look at Kaya's political career suggests that the questions go well beyond stock market transactions.

The milestones of her political career

A graduate of the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering of a well-known private university, Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya joined the AKP's Istanbul provincial executive board in 2009. That same year, she became an adviser to the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a position she held until 2012. After serving in various party posts, she entered parliament in 2015 and was appointed Minister of Family and Social Policies in May 2016.

During her time in office, Kaya was a prominent defender of the AKP's reactionary policies towards women. In November 2016, the government introduced legislation that became widely known as the "rapist amnesty

bill". It proposed suspending sentences in certain cases of sexual abuse if the perpetrator married the victim. Kaya defended the proposal, which provoked widespread protests from women's organisations, claiming that it would address the grievances of "thousands of families". The government eventually withdrew the bill under public pressure.

Kaya also made headlines during the diplomatic crisis with the Netherlands in March 2017. Ahead of Turkey's constitutional referendum, she travelled to Rotterdam to campaign among Turkish voters but was prevented by Dutch police from reaching the Turkish consulate. After refusing to leave her vehicle, she was eventually escorted to the German border. The incident escalated into a diplomatic confrontation, with Erdoğan denouncing the Dutch authorities as "Nazi remnants". The AKP used the confrontation as part of its referendum campaign.

Municipal scholarships and a family's rise through the state

Another controversy in Kaya's career concerned an education scholarship financed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB). She began working as an engineer at İSBAK, a municipal subsidiary, on 14 November 2008. Just two months later, she was sent to the United States for further education. Municipal funds covered expenses amounting to $85,791 and 20,289 Turkish lira.

Following the change of municipal administration, an inspectors' report identified three procedural irregularities in the scholarship arrangements. The municipality filed criminal complaints against 13 public officials. Kaya, meanwhile, obtained court orders blocking access to 71 websites carrying reports about the scholarship.

The affair became a striking example in the debate over how public resources were made available to politically connected figures under AKP rule. Kaya came from a family already notorious for its members' rapid rise to senior positions in the state bureaucracy under AKP rule, earning them the nickname "super siblings" in the Turkish press.

Two billion Turkish lira returned, questions unanswered

The fund scandal brought Kaya's career in the AKP leadership to an abrupt halt. Rather than facing the public directly, however, she chose to communicate through journalists. On 22 October, she told journalist Nagehan Alçı that she had returned more than 2 billion Turkish lira, representing the proceeds above her initial investment. The announcement did little to answer the questions surrounding the transactions: why those particular shares were purchased, and why they were sold just before the crisis became public.

Further allegations emerged in the scandal's aftermath.

While the authorities showed little willingness to pursue a thorough investigation into the scandal involving Kaya and her family, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) took legal action and on 5 October, it filed a criminal complaint with the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, calling for an investigation into Kaya, her husband and other potentially responsible parties on several grounds, including misuse of inside information, market manipulation, trading in influence and abuse of office. The complaint also demanded scrutiny of the possible involvement of regulatory bodies and individuals wielding political influence. Amid growing public outrage over the scandal and mounting political pressure on the AKP, Kaya was eventually remanded in custody on charges of violating the Capital Markets Law and membership of a criminal organisation.

Kaya as a representative of a rotten political culture

The fund scandal has deepened divisions within the AKP. Mutual accusations among party figures, revelations by pro-government journalists and disputes over the scope of the investigation suggest that the affair extends far beyond a narrow circle. The party faces a serious dilemma. It needs to distance itself from compromised figures to contain public anger, yet a thorough investigation into the political and financial networks that sustained those figures could have consequences reaching much further into the system.

Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya offers a particularly revealing portrait of the kind of politician produced by this period. The conversion of political influence into personal advantage, privileged access to public resources and an apparently insatiable appetite for wealth run through the controversies surrounding her career. All this has been accompanied by relentless moral preaching. A politician who lectured society about family values, morality and sacrifice now finds herself at the centre of allegations involving billions of Turkish lira in questionable financial transactions. The gulf between public rhetoric and political practice could hardly be more glaring.

While millions struggle to make ends meet, enormous fortunes are amassed in a matter of months. And when the scandal breaks, simply returning the money is presented as if it settles the matter. Such an attitude speaks to a political culture in which privilege has become so deeply entrenched that even the most extraordinary gains appear to require little explanation.

Yet this culture is not confined to the AKP. The reason these practices have become so blatant under its rule is that the party has controlled the distribution of public resources and the machinery of the state for so many years. The web of interests linking capital, politics and the state creates the conditions for similar forms of corruption across the political spectrum, including within the opposition. Where political influence can be turned into financial gain and state power placed at the service of capital accumulation, corruption cannot be reduced to the personal morality of individual politicians.

This is also the source of the AKP's paralysis in the face of the fund scandal. It may be possible to sacrifice a few individuals, but dismantling the networks that nurtured them, promoted them and granted them privileges would mean calling into question the very foundations of the capitalist system and bourgeois politics. That is what Kaya's political career ultimately reveals.

Erosion of Voters' Mandate:

Party Defections in Turkey



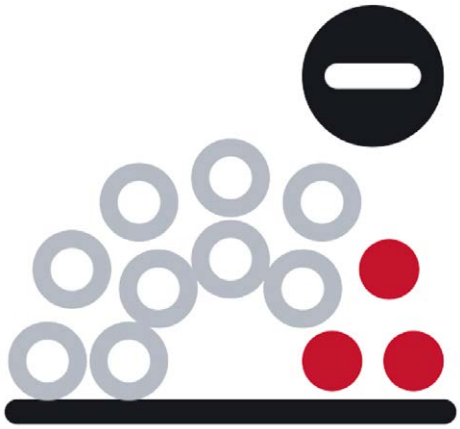
155 MPS HAVE SWITCHED PARTIES

Between the May 14, 2023 general elections and October 2026, 155 of Turkey's 600 MPs switched parties at least once, representing 23.6% of valid votes cast in 2023, approximately 12.5 million votes. A total of 274 party switches occurred, as some MPs changed affiliation multiple times.

ONLY 44 MPS LEFT

Of the 169 MPs elected on Republican People's Party (CHP) lists in 2023, 121 now have different political affiliations, including those who joined the newly formed New Party (Yeni Parti). Only 44 parliamentary seats remain under CHP control. Millions of voters who supported the CHP partly due to concerns about the 7% electoral threshold now face altered political representation.

The İYİ Party's parliamentary representation similarly declined from 43 to 25 seats.





AKP GAINS 13 SEATS

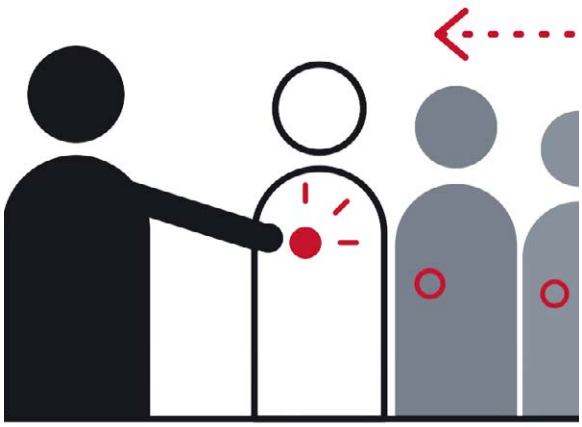
The Justice and Development Party (AKP) was the only party to increase its parliamentary representation, from 268 seats in 2023 to 281 in October 2026. Meanwhile, the CHP fell from second to fifth place in parliamentary representation

PARTY SWITCHING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

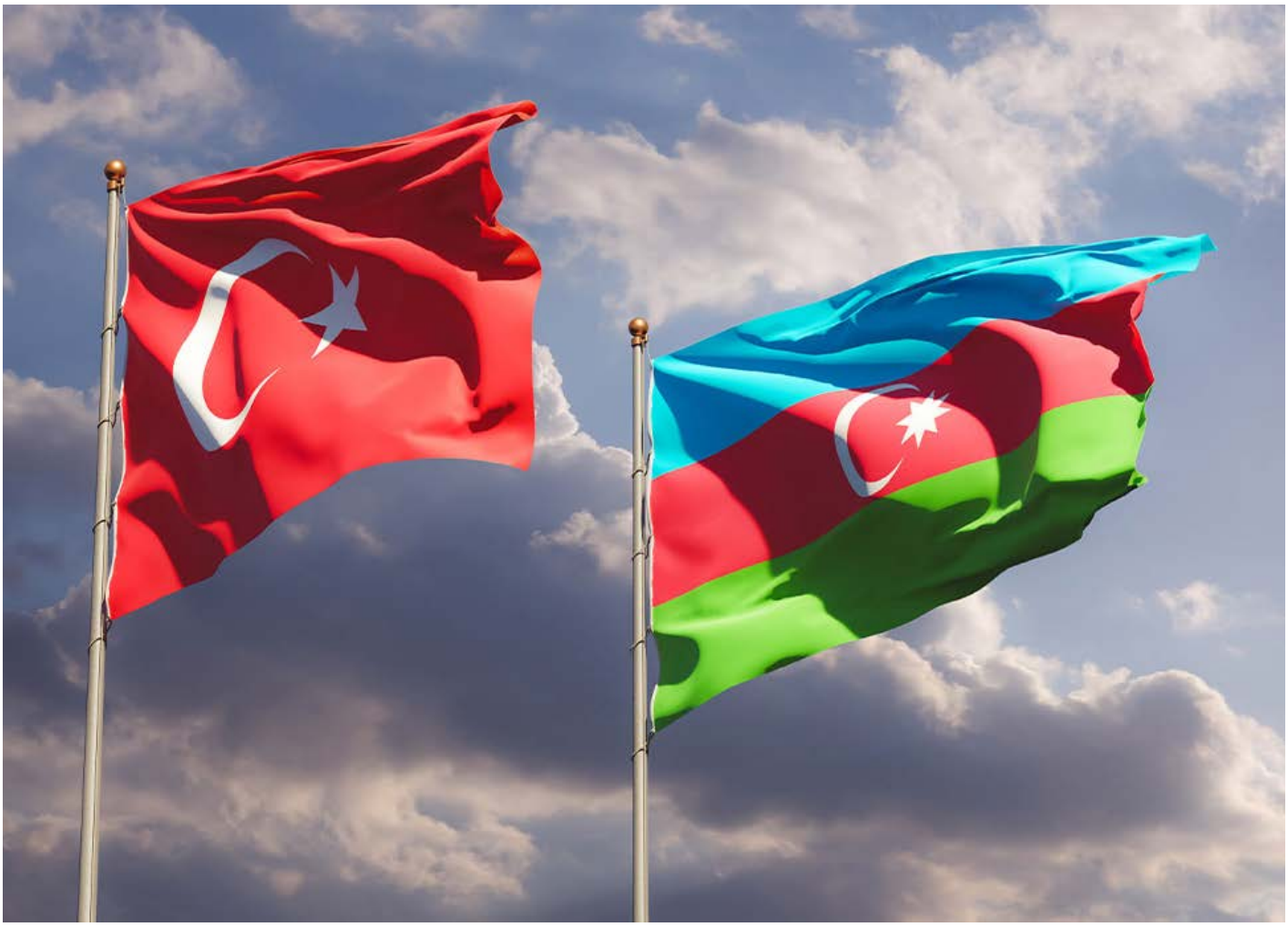
Following the March 31, 2024 local elections, party changes also affected municipalities. Among the 1,003 provincial and 322 district municipalities, 285 mayoral party switches occurred, while 32 mayors were removed from office.

Of the 35 metropolitan and provincial municipalities won by the CHP, only 8 remained under its control by October 2026. Meanwhile, 108 mayors joined the AKP, bringing 29 metropolitan and provincial municipalities under AKP governance.

The latest example was İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, governed by CHP mayors for approximately 23 years. Mayor Cemil Tugay joined the AKP, with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan personally pinning the party badge onto him.



Highlights from Turkish Foreign Policy



Turkey and "fraternal country" Azerbaijan drift apart

In October, one of the most important items on Turkish foreign policy's agenda was the serious tension with Azerbaijan, which for years had been regarded as a "fraternal country" under the slogan "one nation, two states".

The Azerbaijani government's decision to ban students from coming to school in headscarves drew sharp criticism from within the AKP and the pro-AKP press. Alongside well-known reactionary journalists and social media personalities in Turkey, some prominent AKP political figures also joined the controversy.

Oktay Saral, Chief Advisor to President Erdoğan; Leyla Şahin Usta, AKP Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Group, and a number of AKP MPs issued statements calling on the Azerbaijani government to reverse its decision.

Tensions rose further when Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev responded very sharply to the criticism from Turkey, stressing that Azerbaijan would not let anyone interfere in its internal affairs.

The Azerbaijani state agency APA published an article revealing that ships continued to travel from Turkish ports to Israel, although it removed the piece from its website a few hours later.

Similarly, another news site close to Aliyev published an analysis recalling that Turkey had attempted a coup in Azerbaijan in 1995. The analysis also accused Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan of interfering in Azerbaijan's internal affairs through instructions given via Turkey's embassy in Azerbaijan. The ruling New Azerbaijan Party also singled out Erdogan's Chief Advisor Oktay Saral by name and warned the AKP against interfering in the country's internal affairs.

Seeking to ease tension, MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli said: "We will not allow the seed of discord to be sown between us." Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan likewise stressed brotherhood, saying there was "no need for differing views to be turned into a propaganda tool on social media".

The Azerbaijani government then declared 31 Turkish citizens persona non grata and demanded the dismissal of certain officials. The dismissal of Erdoğan's Chief Advisor Oktay Saral was met with dismay in the pro-AKP press. Erdoğan's former speechwriter Aydın Ünal published an article stressing that "Turkic unity" was an illusion and that efforts should instead be directed toward Islamic unity.

Erdoğan's direct intervention also failed to resolve the crisis. After dismissing his chief advisor, he called Aliyev and invited him to Turkey. Nevertheless, Ilham Aliyev did not

attend the 13th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS).

Following Aliyev's decision not to attend the summit, an analysis published by Azerbaijan's state news agency APA on October 29 revealed even more clearly how far the tension had gone. It directly named the AKP and the Islamist-Nurcu (a strong sect in Turkey) groups that support it as responsible for a campaign said to have been waged against Azerbaijan in Turkey for about a month. The analysis stated that the Turkish government was encouraging radical religious reaction in line with its own goals and expected Azerbaijan to shape its foreign policy according to Ankara's wishes. It also drew attention to Turkey's continuing relations with Israel, stressing that, despite the talk of brotherhood between the two countries, every state had its own interests. APA openly defended Aliyev's decision not to attend the summit in Ankara.

Turkey's hitting a wall in Azerbaijan is of major significance for its neo-Ottomanist foreign policy. The Turkish bourgeoisie and the AKP government, who intend to expand further across the region, plan to use their relations with Azerbaijan to that end; Azerbaijan has plans of its own, particularly concerning its relations with Israel. These developments suggest that Azerbaijan can now be counted among the areas where Turkey's neo-Ottomanist foreign policy is hitting a roadblock.

Mecca Agreement passes parliamentary committee

Alarming developments continue to unfold concerning the Mecca Agreement, which has occupied a prominent place on the political agenda in Turkey and internationally in recent months.

Although President Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan have made statements such as "it targets no one" and "defensive in nature", preparations to send troops to Yemen at the request of Saudi Arabia, which is bogged down there, have accelerated.

While it was emphasized that six more countries were seeking to join the agreement, the Pakistani side had not hidden its belligerent position, openly saying "We have to protect Saudi Arabia."

The Turkish government meanwhile continues to call for a reduction in tensions as though these preparations were not underway, while preparing to secure a constitutional basis for the Mecca Agreement through parliamentary approval.

Although the Mecca Agreement, from which withdrawal is impossible for 10 years, could easily drag Turkey into war, it passed the Foreign Affairs Committee of the parliament without any serious debate and was referred to the parliament.

Apart from the communists, no one is speaking out about how the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, developed in line with US plans for the Middle East, is gradually drawing Turkey into war.

While there is complete agreement among bourgeois politicians over the Mecca Agreement, which is of great importance to the expansionist ambitions of Turkish capital, TKP held a demonstration in the capital, Ankara, calling on MPs to vote "no" to the Agreement and declaring: "We have no soldiers and no children to die protecting Saudi oil." As the only objection raised in Turkey on this issue, it drew great interest both domestically and internationally.

Turkey-Libya Maritime Jurisdiction Agreement rekindles tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean

On 20 October, the House of Representatives allied with Khalifa Haftar in eastern Libya ratified the maritime jurisdiction agreement signed in 2019 between Turkey and the Tripoli-based Libyan government. The decision marks an important shift in the eastern Libyan administraton's relations with Ankara, which had previously rejected the agreement and opposed Turkey's military support for the Tripoli government. The parliament also withdrew its 2020 decision to sever political relations with Turkey. Ankara's rapprochement with Haftar, whose forces it had intervened against militarily in 2019-2020, has thus opened up new room for diplomatic maneuver for Turkey in Libya. The agreement signed in 2019 defines the maritime boundaries between Turkey and Libya in the Eastern Mediterranean, where competition over the exploration and exploitation of oil and natural gas resources is intensifying.

In 2022, Ankara also signed another agreement with the Tripoli government covering hydrocarbon exploration. The maritime boundaries set out in the Turkey-Libya agreement overlap with those claimed by Greece and Egypt under the agreement they signed between themselves. Greece and Cyprus argue that the Turkey-Libya agreement ignores the maritime jurisdiction areas of the Greek islands. The latest ratification prompted fresh objections from Greece, Cyprus and the European Union, and Egypt also came out against it. Tension over the division of maritime jurisdiction areas and access to energy resources in the region has thus risen once again.

What is happening in Libya can be seen as one example of how the nation-states inherited from the 20th-century international order are being dragged into a process of irreversible instability and disintegration.

With its rival governments and armed forces backed by different external actors, Libya remains one of the arenas of the struggle for political influence, military presence and control of energy resources. Turkey's intervention in Libya is also closely linked to the regional ambitions of the AKP government and the economic interests of the Turkish capitalists. The closeness recently established with Hafter shows Ankara's willingness to cooperate with both sides of Libya's political divide in order to preserve and expand its position in the country. Meanwhile, conflicting maritime jurisdiction agreements and the interventions of regional and international powers deepen the competition over the energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, while increasing the danger of new military confrontations and war.

TKP took to the streets in Ankara against Mecca Joint Defense Agreement



The Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) gathered in Ankara to protest the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, warning that it could drag Turkey into Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen. Hundreds of people joined the event and called for a struggle against the ratification of the agreement in the parliament.

Ahead of the rally, TKP sent an open letter to members of parliament, warning that the agreement could pull Turkey into the war Saudi Arabia is waging in Yemen. Stating that supporting the Saudi administration, which acts in line with the interests of the US and Israel, is not in the interest of the people, the party announced that it would oppose the ratification of the agreement in the parliament.

Citizens who participated in the rally spoke to soL TV:

"The imperialists are exploiting every part of our country, above ground and below. Have they now come for our people's blood? We are against the Mecca alliance, or any alliance, on behalf of others and dying somewhere for them."

"With this alliance, Saudi Arabia, together with the US, will start a war in line with the interests of Israel and the US, and this war will be waged in Yemen. They will send Turkish soldiers there. That is why we oppose a war that has nothing to do with us. We have to stand against it."

You can also read the statement of TKP Central Committee

TKP's solidarity after the flood

On October 14, torrential rain hit İstanbul and the wider Marmara region, causing deadly floods that killed at least five people and left six missing.

In the aftermath of the disaster, TKP made solidarity visits to many of the devastated areas and opened all its buildings and district houses to the people of İstanbul. In its statement, the party said:

"And most importantly, let us not forget: no disaster that befalls us is our fate. Let us unite and stand in solidarity against those who condemn our citizens to these conditions with their rent-seeking, profit-driven approach.

We are building solidarity networks through our district houses. You can turn to the district house closest to you for your needs. We wish us all strength and a swift recovery."



Devrim (Revolution), now published in Spanish:



TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan's latest book, Revolution, was translated to Spanish published under the title *Revolución by Tinta Roja*, the publishing house of the Communist Party of the Workers of Spain (PCTE). Okuyan met readers in Madrid, answered questions from Tinta Roja editors, discussing both the book and the challenges of the revolutionary struggle. PCTE General Secretary Ástor García and several members of the party's Central Committee also attended the event.

Revolution was also published in English and German.

The English edition of the book is available as an e-book.

TKP called on Turkey to stand against the blockade of Cuba

The United Nations General Assembly voted on October 28 on the resolution calling for an end to the blockade against Cuba. TKP issued a statement prior to the vote, stressing that Turkey must maintain the position it has held so far.

Drawing attention to the timing of the vote, the statement said: 'This vote carries special significance as it comes at a time when the US is depriving the Cuban people of vital energy resources

TKP congratulates Cuba following UN vote

Following the UN General Assembly vote in which a majority of countries supported ending the US blockade of Cuba, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) sent a letter congratulating the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Cuban people. The letter praised the firm and resolute stance of the Cuban delegation, led by Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez, describing it as an example for all humanity. TKP also reaffirmed its determination to strengthen solidarity with Cuba and continue standing shoulder to shoulder with the Cuban people in their struggle.

Common struggle against imperialism on both sides of the Aegean

TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan met with Dimitris Koutsoumbas, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), at the KKE headquarters in Athens.

The meeting addressed political developments in Turkey and Greece, the international situation, and relations between the two countries. The two parties emphasized the importance of continuing their internationalist solidarity and cooperation, strengthening friendship between the peoples of Turkey and Greece, and their common struggle against wars, poverty, and exploitation.

A TKP delegation was at the event hosted by the KKE in Alexandroupolis on October 18, under the slogan "Friendship and common struggle of the peoples against exploitation, capitalist competition and war! Socialism is the real way forward for the peoples!".

Murat Akad, member of the TKP Party Council, addressed the event which reaffirmed the solidarity between the working people of Turkey and Greece.



Highlights from Workers' Struggle

Xiaomi Warehouse Workers

PE (Breathe Down the Bosses' Neck), a workers' solidarity and struggle network established by the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), set up the Warehouse Workers Solidarity Network and brought workers together to accelerate the collective bargaining process.

PE's experts and lawyers, together with TKP's local organization, strengthened the workers' unity. Instead of leaving the workers at the mercy of the union and the boss, PE made sure they took part in the process themselves.

The workers joined the union, and then the collective bargaining process began. On Monday, October 19, they signed the collective bargaining agreement in Ankara, the workers' representative overseeing the process.

Workers celebrated together at the District House, where they also held their meetings.

Journalists laid off by Manşetiz fight back against injustice

12 journalists were laid off by Manşetiz through a text message from the Social Security Institution and the company is trying to usurp their rights with Code 48. Code 48 declares that the employer ended the employment contract because the worker failed to show up for work without excuse. This code carries heavy consequences: a worker dismissed under it loses the right to severance and notice pay, and the state employment agency denies them unemployment benefits, treating the dismissal as the worker's own fault. Bosses exploit exactly this, they shift the cost of the dismissal onto the workers themselves.

The injustices faced by Manşetiz workers reached us through PE's Communication Workers Solidarity Network and quickly turned into a struggle. Workers of Manşetiz, now fighting together with PE, are demanding payment of all unpaid wages and meal allowances, payment of the notice compensation they are owed, and correction of their termination codes to reflect the truth. They made a press statement on October 2 , at the Nâzım Hikmet Cultural Center (NHKM) in İzmir, demanding their rights.

Atamay Textile Workers Win Their Rights

Workers at Atamay Textile, a subcontractor producing for Tommy Hilfiger, continued their struggle for unpaid wages and compensation after the factory's closure.

Organized through PE, workers held simultaneous protests outside Tommy Hilfiger stores in İstanbul, Ankara and Izmir, demanding that the brand take responsibility for their unpaid claims.

Following an earlier victory by a group of 34 workers, a second group announced on October 27 that they had also secured their rights.

Şua Construction Workers Win Despite Threats

Workers employed at the Kuzey Adalar construction project in Istanbul had not received their wages for two months. Organized through PE, they protested outside the construction site and the offices of the main contractor and subcontractor.

Despite threats and complaints filed against them by their employers, the workers continued their struggle. On October 31, they announced that all their claims had been recognized through a formal mediation agreement.



TKP Marches to Reclaim the Republic



On the 103rd anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey, mass marches were held in Ankara, İstanbul, and İzmir following the call by the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP). People took to the streets under the slogan "We reclaim the republic stolen from us," emphasizing the need for rebuilding it in the hands of its true guardians: the working people.

Under the slogan "This country is ours! Long live the Socialist Republic!", workers, retirees and young people marched side by side for equality, secularism and independence, against the exploitation of labour and the rule of capital.

In the speeches delivered during the demonstrations, the question "Who stole the Republic, built on the blood and sweat of the working people?" was answered. The role of the capitalist class in seizing the country's wealth and resources was emphasized, along with the need for class struggle and a decisive break with the rule of capital to defend republican values.

TKP declared that October 29 should be a day of struggle rather than merely a national celebration. The Party called for a new Republic based on equality, secularism, independence and the political power of the working people.