Peace Committee of Turkey

Dear comrades

It is a honour for us to be together in Izmir for the 8th Trilateral of our peace movements. We hope to continue and strengthen our cooperation in the future. Our experiences offer us the chance to go deeper to analyse our common problems and to make progress in the coordination of our struggle for peace, which is a responsibility for all of us.

We send our greetings to all comrades of the peace movements and to the peace-loving people of Cyprus and Greece.

Comrades

The year 2017 has been the scene of deepening crisis of the imperialist-capitalist system and rising aggressiveness against peoples. We are quite concerned about the developments in the Asia Pacific region where the tensions turned to be threats of war. This year we also witnessed the imperialist challenge against the anti-imperialist regimes of Latin America, especially the coup attempts in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Lastly the decision of the US President claiming Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is another insult and aggression to the Palestinian people and all peace-loving peoples of our region.

We condemn imperialist aggressiveness and emphasize that this escalation is the result of the world crisis due to the capitalist competition and imperialist policies. So, while declaring solidarity with the peace forces and innocent peoples, we have also to establish links between the peace struggle and the struggle of the toiling masses to overthrow the capitalist exploitation system. We know, the latter represents the unique guarantee of the world peace.

Middle East is a dumping ground for imperialist projects. During previous years imperialism tried successive political models based on the so-called moderate Islam, then let’s say, radical Islam. Imperialism had preferred direct invasion and occupation which ended with the entering of other big forces into the scene, as Iran and Russia, which was a fiasco for the US.

The set of fiascos continue; US had set an alliance with Kurdish nationalism, but left Barzani alone it his attempt of independence. As to Syria, this is the same imperialist centre that launched a dirty war to Damascus, using the djihadist gangs and the regional reactionary regimes, and that today tries to re-establish contacts with Asad government… To be sure EU and US shared this same performance.

The aggressiveness of imperialism is also a clear concrete appearance of its crisis. Imperialism really is in a bottleneck and is not able any more to develop successful, comprehensive and convincing strategies.

In this historical moment it is very important to follow principled policies and be open to revolutionary creativity. While the problems are getting complex and much more harmful and destructive, the possibility of a leap forward of the oppressed masses is timely. Peoples do not really need to live in despair, but if and only if progressive forces follow anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, class-based political strategies.

We, in Turkey, keep on putting emphasis on the involvement of the AKP government into the tragedy of Syria. Peace Committee of Turkey is the political continuation of the Peace Association which was the first movement that had brought to the public agenda the war crimes of the government in Syria, in the very beginning of the Syrian crisis. Then the issue was exploited in a dirty competition inside the ruling forces of Turkey, namely between the sects lead by Erdoğan and Gülen, both being Islamist, reactionary, and friend of imperialism. It is meaningful that despite the Gülenist coup attempt of July 2016 and the escalation of contradictions and struggles now, as seen in the trial in New York and discussions between President Erdoğan and Western leaders, the issue of war crimes committed in Syria is forgotten by all sides. The debate is reduced to how Turkish government had violated US sanctions against Iran and to the corruption in the AKP regime. To be sure these are also important, but everybody prefers to forget about what happened in Syria.

Syria was invaded by reactionary gangs supported in all means, by AKP regime, along with other reactionary regimes of the region, namely Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others. The organization called “Islamic State” to whom large parts of Syria and Iraq were offered, was the product of an imperialist plan, shared with Turkey among others. Turkey assumed the role to serve as a military and logistic basis, to finance IS in different ways, such as to intermediate the exportation of oil, sale of historical artefacts, etc all stolen from the people or from the legitimate regime of Damascus.

Imperialists, regional big forces and Turkish regime, they all prefer to cover up the war crimes to legitimize the existence of Turkish Army in Syria now, and reserve it to use in case. Turkish Army occupied a region of Syria thanks to the permission given by both US and Russia, and Turkey’s function there, is both to limit the Kurdish rise, and to offer protection to the reactionary gangs that existed under diverse names. On the other hand, Syrian Kurdish movement PYD is collaborating with US and keeps contacts with Russia! Actually, there are news on the media, stating that IS militants from different countries want to stay in Turkey than returning to their native country as they would be prosecuted at home, but protected in Turkey. This is the so-called fight against terrorism!

Peace Committee of Turkey believes in the just struggle of the peoples against imperialism and not in the interference of imperialists or big forces. In this sense, we think that this is another duty to warn and enlighten people about the role of Russia. The Russian intervention to Syria was called by a legitimate government and changed the equilibrium for the benefit of the people and peace forces. However, Russia is a capitalist state, therefore it behaves according to the needs and interests of her own capitalist monopolies, and tries to develop imperialist strategies. The support given by Moscow to Ankara is a clear evidence of Putin’s matchless opportunism.

As a result, we call for the withdrawal of all imperialist and foreign forces from the region.

We also refuse the deployment of Russian S-400 missiles and Russian Armed Forces in Turkey, along with claiming both the dissolution of NATO and the ending of NATO membership of Turkey.

We insist on the need for the prosecution of those who committed crimes of war and crimes against humanity, and those who profited from the war, the deportation of millions from their homeland.

The refugee problem has been given an impetus by the ongoing wars in our region. The situation in Turkey is probably the worst: Turkish state did never sign international agreements that ensure some rights to people who were obliged to come here. Turkey does not recognize these people as refugee or asylum seeker but register them as “applicants for international protection” and defines only a status of temporary protection. So, millions live without any rights, most of them under the obligation to work illegally, unregistered, with very low salaries and form step by step a large and lower part of the working class. This gives way to racism and xenophobia. Turkish government presents itself as the protector of the poors, but make use of the existence of three million refugees first as cheap labour and as an instrument to bargain with European countries by opening the borders and transfer the problem to the West. This inhuman approach is typical for bourgeois reactionary governments.

We defend the end of Turkish intervention in Syria, setting up normal relations between the two states, which will enlarge the possibility for refugees to return home. We defend all civil and working-class rights for people who live and work in Turkey.

Recent step by President Trump about Jerusalem is simply a provocation. This decision will never be welcomed by the peoples of the Middle East and we defend Palestine to be a full member of UN with East of Jerusalem its capital. While we keep being in solidarity with Palestine people and peace movements of Palestine and Israel, we must uncover the “second Davos” tactic of Erdoğan. AKP government which is losing ground and lives in a very critical climate, both in the international relations and in national issues tries to restore her once influential position as a regional leader country, as the revival of old Ottoman times. Erdoğan tried to assume the role of leadership of the Islamic world and the suppressed masses of the region by his demagogy against US and Israel. However, Turkey has no longer such a chance. The rise of neo-ottomanism had coincided with the imperialist strategy. The conditions are quite different today.

The troubles or deterioration in Turkish-American and Turkish-EU relations cannot be commented as the starting point of the disengagement of Turkey from the Western alliance and so a chance for anti-imperialist forces. The discussions are demagogic, first. Secondly Turkey’s manoeuvres are limited within the borders of the capitalist system. Thirdly Turkish ruling bourgeoisie has strong ties with the Western capitalism. The current escalation does not represent a structural divergence of Turkey from US and EU, which is tactically possible, but mainly the deepening of the political crisis in Turkey. Our country does not adopt a new and radical international position, but simply goes into a crisis. Plus, this crisis cannot be managed by the existing Islamic government. AKP could not persuade the society into a religious regime. The republicanism and secularism are quite strong among all modern strata of the society, the urban working class and some traditional parts such as Alevis. Today we do not observe a popular active and massive resistance as it was in the summer 2013, but AKP regime remains very unstable.

The escalation in Turkish-Greek relations came out of the “need of provocation” of Erdoğan government, looking for a “second Davos” whose waves are supposed to reinforce its national and international prestige and position. As observed in various examples, the oppressive regimes try to eliminate or just to postpone the dynamics of crisis by fabricating enemies. Bourgeois parties in opposition do accept the competition of nationalism with AKP and the chauvinism is rising.

Peace Committee of Turkey condemns the war mongering and the rushing up of hostility and hatred against neighbouring countries and peoples. We condemn also attempts to open to discussion the Lausanne Treaty, which was mainly one of the basic international document of the modern republic of Turkey founded as the result of the anti-imperialist resistance, and by the help of the socialist Russia in early 1920s. Beside the threats on the peace, such attempts to discredit the modern history of Turkey makes part of the reactionary transformation of the country.

In its early years, AKP was looking to enlarge its public support by a demagogy to overcome some historical problems of the country, among them the Kurdish and Cypriot problems. In this way AKP presented itself as a democratic reform party challenging the archaic regime reigning in Turkey.

Kurdish “peace process” was stopped by 2013-2014, as Erdoğan understood that the process had turned against him. AKP regime was about to fall into a severe crisis. The economy was not recovering enough after the world crisis. The society was not supporting enough the regime change. The neo-ottomanism and the leadership of the region was turning into a dream. The government was losing the support of imperialism. Lastly there were alarm signals with respect to the alliance of ruling forces. So AKP had urgently to consolidate itself and decided to centralize all political power, to block to domain of operation of all political parties, state institutions, social movements etc.

Kurdish nationalist movement has never adopted a principled anti-imperialist position and always remained pragmatic and opportunist as to its political collaborations. When was broken out the popular uprising of 2013, the Kurdish leadership commented the massive resistance as an attempt to create a social basis and political climate suitable for a coup against the “legitimate government” of AKP! After the peace process stopped, Kurdish movement entered into collaboration with US imperialism, especially in Syria. As it is known, PYD in Syria is a close parent of PKK in Turkey.

Peace Committee of Turkey never believed that the old peace process would be resulted in a just, viable solution of the Kurdish question, which is a historical question of national oppression, but is constantly regenerated by the ruling capitalist system, to divide the unity of the working classes and to guarantee cheap labour to the capitalists. So, Peace Committee of Turkey has always been in favour of the democratic rights of the Kurds, against any nationalist approach and for the unity of the working class and progressive forces of the country. We strongly condemn the oppressive, even destructive measures taken by the government against Kurdish people and severely reject any tendency of collaborationism with imperialist forces.

AKP was not sincere as to the Cyprus issue neither, but succeeded for a while to deceive even progressive and peace forces. The Peace Committee keeps itself absolutely out of the nationalist-chauvinist political atmosphere dominating the Turkish public opinion and asks the withdrawal of Turkish army forces from all missions out of the country, among them the invasion and occupation of the Cyprus island. The concrete core of the problem is the division of Cyprus due to the occupation. We know that the occupation of 1974 makes part of the imperialist plans to control the region and to suppress the popular progressive movement in Cyprus. The creators of the problem cannot assume the role of solution provider. Cyprus question should and may only be solved by the common struggle of the Greek-Cypriots, Turkish-Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites and Latins, together with the support of the peace-loving, anti-imperialist movements of Greece and Turkey.

We defend the reunification of the island as a sovereign state, because the dissolution of the countries is part of the current imperialist strategy, and such a development will whitewash the historical destructive role of imperialism, Turkish occupation and the illegitimacy of the puppet state in the north of the island. We condemn openly the Turkish policy to change the demographical structure of Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus may be an island of peace in the very centre of bloody struggles if and only if all relations with imperialism are abolished, starting with the British military bases, the EU membership etc.

As the Peace Committee of Turkey, we appreciate the Trilateral meetings we are holding for eight years. These meetings give us the chance to understand more deeply our respective positions and ongoing struggles, and we really believe that the cooperation of our three peace movements will be much more fruitful in the future.

Thank you

Aydemir Güler