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JUNE 5 ELECTIONS: ANTI-DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND FASCIST TERROR PREVENT THE PEOPLE FROM MANIFESTING THEIR WILL

ANKARA (ITA) - June 5, 1977, more than 20 million voters will go to the polls in Turkey to elect a new National Assembly and one-third of the numbers of the Senate. But no one can claim that these elections are being held in a way to secure the participation of all voters, especially of those of the opposition parties, and the legislative representation of the toiling masses.

First of all, the actual electoral system of Turkey is the main obstacle to a democratic legislative representation.

Secondly, the terrorist acts carried on by both the security forces and the paramilitary fascist "Gray Wolves" commando units intimidate many people to go to the polls.

An Anti-democratic Electoral System

Turkey has witnessed many changes on the electoral system for the past 22 years, following the birth of multi-party era. In the origin of each electoral law, it is impossible not to detect the influence of the ruling parties, either the Republican People's Party (CHP) or the Justice Party (AP).

The first electoral system was the majority system and the party list obtaining the most votes was to get all seats regardless of votes obtained by other parties no matter how close a race it was. But this system became a boomerang for the CHP in 1950 elections and contributed to the overwhelming victory of the Democrat Party (DP).

The military, author of the 1960 coup imposed a proportional system to give smaller parties a more equitable representation.

The most democratic system was adopted in 1965 elections. The National Remainder System enabled the votes of parties which failed to clear the barrier on the provincial level to be counted on the national level. The surplus vote were now added to the national remainder. Seats not distributed in the provinces were distributed at the national level in proportion to the extra votes of parties. This system enabled the newly formed Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP) to be represented in Parliament with 15 deputies.

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But the CHP and the AP, fearing the growing popularity of the TIP, changed the electoral system in 1969 again. Thus, the small parties have lost the chance to be represented efficiently in the legislative body. For example, the TIP had lost 13 seats in Parliament in 1969 elections.

Youth and Workers Abroad Do Not Have The Right to Vote in general elections

Another anti-democratic aspect of the electoral system is the fact that 2.5 million youths under the age of 21 in Turkey and more than 1 million workers abroad are deprived of voting. Taking into consideration that the registered voters in Turkey are about 20 million, 17 per cent of them who constitute the most conscious sector of the population do not have word on the administration of the country.

Within the recent legislative term, none of the political parties who are represented in Parliament showed any effort to guarantee the right to vote to the youths and the workers abroad.

The proposals to lower the voting age in Turkey to 18 has been opposed by bourgeois parties on grounds that people of 18 are of school age. But this fails to reflect the general situation. Two and a half million youths are to gain the right to vote if the proposal is passed. With the most optimistic assumptions, only 300.000 of them are in schools. The remaining ones are workers, employees, and carry responsibilities like other citizens older than 21.

On the other hand, despite many promises, the Turkish workers abroad still cannot vote. The proposal to recognize the right to vote to the workers abroad has been always obstructed in Parliament by the right-wing parties. The Republican People's Party (CHP) too has not carried on necessary efforts to pass the bill. Now, during the electoral campaign, the CHP tries to convince the workers abroad to have their annual vacations at the beginning of June and to come to Turkey in order to vote in favor of CHP. But practically this proposal is not realistic, since the time of vacation is generally determined in accordance with the requisites of the employers. Furthermore, because of the unemployment in European countries, the Turkish workers are generally afraid of leaving the country where they work even in the vacation time.

Primary Elections Are Also Obstacle To A Democratic Representation

Party candidates are determined through primary elections. This system was introduced in a 1965 Law on Turkish Political Parties as a part of electoral reform. The goal of sponsors of the reform was to reduce the influence of the party headquarters and the local political bosses over the selection of the party candidates.

However, the Turkish primary system is not as democratic as one would think at first glance. In fact, the determination of the candidates of bourgeois parties still depends on the will of a limited number of people.

First of all, all party primaries are open only to party members. While 20 million voters are registered, party adherents in Turkey do not exceed one million. Yet it remains problematic even for the rank and the file to be able to vote all in the party primaries. Because, a temporary disposition of the Law on Political Parties allows the parties to limit the number of the members who can vote in the primaries. Only a limited number of delegates indicated in the party statutes are allowed to vote.

Yet, the smaller the number of the delegates are, especially in some provinces where parties do not have many members, the more easy it becomes for those seeking the party candidacy at the top of the listes to try to influence the delegates by illegal means such as bribing them.

On the other hand, the party headquarters can veto the nomination of any person who is considered as adverse to the ruling fraction. For example, before the recent primaries, even the CHP headquarter vetoed participation in primaries of 89 candidates who are accused of being "left" more than the official CHP line.

Security of Elections Threatened By the Fascists

Since the 1961 Constitution imposed new guarantees for the security of elections, all the control and supervision of electoral procedure are carried on by judicial organs. The Supreme Election Board, composed of seven regular and four alternate members who are elected by the High Court of Appeal and the Council of State among their judges.

The Supreme Election Board provides an additional guarantee for democratic and fraud-free elections. The same body reviews and passes final judgement on all irregularities, complaints and objections regarding election matters during and after elections, including primary elections and electoral propaganda.

Despite these constitutional guarantees, the Nationalist Front Government violates the security of elections through illegal means such as mobilizing the state forces and para-military "Gray Wolves" commando units to threaten the voters who favour the left-wing parties.

For example, all posters put on wall by the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP) are torn down by the police and the gendarmery, and party leaders and militants are detained without any justification. In Ankara and Istanbul, local leaders of the TIP were attacked and wounded by the adversaries of the party.

The state-owned Radio-Television Broadcasting Corporation (TRT) too makes its utmost in order to prevent the TIP from propagating socialism during its electoral campaign. According to the press communique of the party headquarters, the TRT Administration censored the party slogans such as "Down with chauvinism, only payout: socialism!", "Forwards for independence, democracy and socialism!", "Let's place the flag of socialism in Parliament!"

Leader of the Republican People's Party
also under armed attacks

The May Day Massacre in Istanbul and armed attacks on Ecevit, Leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), during its electoral campaign in three towns have been most striking examples of the violation of the security of 5 June elections in Turkey.

While the identified provocators and executors of the May Day Massacre which caused 34 persons to die and hundreds to be wounded are still at large, the contents of a tape recording of Ecevit's comments during the assault on himself in Siran were disclosed.

The followings are the extracts from the tape recording:

"I want the security forces to do their duty... I am calling to the security forces. You cannot let the public be stoned and clubbed. Send them (assailants) away. If you don't I'll come and do it. We will not leave the children and the country to those bandits. (Gunshots). Don't worry, don't be afraid ladies. I am here. If they are going to kill, they are going to kill me first."

(To the scattering gendarmerie soldiers):

"Commander... Your duty is to prevent those stoning these people. Do not let a handful of kids crush the Turkish soldier. Are you going to let the soldiers be crushed by a handful of kids?"

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After his returning from electoral campaign, in Ankara, Ecevit made the following statement on the assaults:

"The dangers I encountered during my trip are natural. When there is no security of life in Ankara, in the streets, in the schools, in the dormitories, I am not entitled to seek security for my life. Either our lives are ensured as a whole, for everyone, or nobody has it.

"I am glad to be among you again, but my mind is in those far, unreached parts of the country, where I left people, without security, without the State." ./.

Identified Assassins Still At Large

On the other hand, in order to prove the fact that the May Day Massacre was planned and executed by the state security forces, a film which had been taken of the massacre was shown to the press on May 15, 1977 in Istanbul.

In this film one can see clearly three policemen who had gone up to the top of the Water Department Building and opened fire on the crowd below at the Taksim Square. But they have never been arrested.

Beside these political assaults and assassinations, the para-military fascist "Gray Wolves" Commando Units have murdered nine persons within only 2-week period.

- May 13: Policeman Rüstem Çankaya was shot to death in Ankara.
- May 16: Student Mehmet Albay was shot to death in Ankara.
- May 17: Student Zeki Bük was shot to death in Istanbul.
- May 18: Student Ekrem Tar was killed by a bomb explosion in Ankara.
- May 19: Driver Ismail Bilgi was shot to death in Trabzon.
Student Enver Özdek was stabbed to death in Adana.
- May 20: Student Adil Kamer was shot to death in Gaziantep.
- May 24: Student Erol Erbiçer was stabbed to death in Turgutlu.
Worker Mustafa Yigit was stabbed to death in Seydişehir.

Thus, the total number of the political assassinations' victims rose from 228 to 237 within 25-month period of the Nationalist Front Government.

Furthermore, ex-colonel Alparslan Türkeş, leader of the fascist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and the Deputy Premier of the Nationalist Front Government has openly declared that the "Gray Wolves" Commando units would establish order at the polls without hesitating to shoot if necessary. The aim of this threat is to prevent the left-wing voters from going to the polls.

Journalists Tried Before Military Tribunals

Military tribunals are also charged with intimidating the opposition press. Recently, a military tribunal in Istanbul condemned Mr. Tektaş Agaoglu, Editor of weekly Gerçek, to one year imprisonment for defaming the Turkish Armed Forces. This verdict was approved by the Military Court of Cassation.

Miss Leyla Cümbüş, Editor of weekly Halkın Sesi is also being tried before the same military tribunal on the same charge for having criticized the Turkish Armed Forces' military operation in Cyprus.

The lawyers claim that the military tribunals are not authorized to judge the journalists and these trials are violation of the Turkish Constitution.

Big Bourgeoisie For A Strong Government

Turkey's leading industrialist Vehbi Koç called on the citizens of Turkey to vote in the June 5 elections and to secure the formation of a strong government.

"The elections are very important. Everyone should go to the polls and cast their votes for the party they believe in," said Koç. "It is our major wish that a powerful government can be formed after the polls. There are many problems, domestic and international that only a powerful government can solve."

He also added that the government would have to repair relations between this country and the US and with the European Economic Community.

For the big bourgeoisie of Turkey, there is no difference between the Justice Party and the Republican People's Party and any of them should come to power alone. But if it is not possible, the big bourgeoisie favours a AP-CHP coalition government.

AP and CHP Race For Gaining The Confidence Of The Bourgeoisie

While the Justice Party (AP) is openly defending the interests of the bourgeoisie, the Republican People's Party (CHP) tries to make the same thing with a programme promising more reforms which will secure the social peace.

Party Chairman Ecevit, during his electoral campaign, has attacked on the left with the purpose of gaining the confidence of the United States and the big bourgeoisie.

Despite the fact that some "left" groups are unconditionally supporting the CHP and accusing the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP) of dividing the left votes by particip-

ing in the elections, the CHP leader Ecevit warned the party candidates and organisations that they should not approach other left groups and views saying "do not go to them and do not say 'let us be together, since you are leftists and we are leftists', because we are all different leftists. To claim we are the same would lose us confidence of the people and the left as well. It is impossible for us to satisfy all those differences in the left at the same time."

Answering criticism from left circles that the CHP is a "revisionist party, deviated from the leftist ideology", Ecevit said "This criticism is wrong. We determined our democratic leftist philosophy through the time, together with the people, according to the conditions of our country. It belongs to us, therefore it cannot be deviated from any leftist ideology born in foreign countries, and neither could we have revised something that we never had anything to do with."

As to the Turkish-American relations, Ecevit said that the CHP attributed due importance to these relations.

"A possibility that the Turco-US relations may be harmed will only occur in case the US creates the impression that it is supporting a certain side or in case doubts spread that America is directly or indirectly involved in domestic incidents which cause discount in the country," Ecevit said.

Demirel's Fist and the United States!

Prime Minister and Justice Party Chairman Süleyman Demirel said the most important issue of the country for the June 5 elections will be "procuring stability", and called on all "nationalist forces" to unite for "stability".

"In order to achieve stability and coherency, all nationalists should unite in aim, faith and determination, for the sake of the motherland in the Justice Party," Demirel said.

Demirel claimed the disturbance in Turkey is the result of a "conspiracy" staged by communism not only in Turkey but in all the world which aims to divide and destroy the Turkish Republic.

"The Justice Party regards it as a duty to fight against communism for the motherland, as a prerequisite of nationalism. It also believes that no matter from which party, it is a compulsion for all children of the motherland to join the Justice Party in this fight."

In its electoral campaign, the Justice Party tries to exploit Demirel's meeting with President Carter in London.

Semi-official news agency AA informed after Demirel's meeting with US President that Demirel raised his fist and landed it on the negotiation table saying, "I will not let anyone walk over Turkey's rights."

The fist issue received bigger publicity in Ankara than Demirel's actual accomplishments or shortcomings in London. While the left-wing press was mocking with it, pro-government politicians too reacted to the "fist" incident. Vice-Premier and National Salvation Party Chairman Necmettin Erbakan said in a campaign speech: "he has hit his fist on Carter's table. Don't make me laugh. Who is he do that to Carter? He went there with his fat body to do somersaults before the Americans, begging them to help him."

Two rightist parties and the Cyprus Problem

Two far-rightist parties too disclosed their electoral manifests.

The National Salvation Party (MSP) will declare the independence of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, demilitarise the Aegean islands controlled by Greece and turn the "Haghia Sophia" (St. Sophia) Museum back into a mosque as in the days of the Ottoman Empire, in addition to developing relations with Moslem countries, if it comes to power alone, according to the MSP Electoral Manifest.

On the other hand, the Electoral Manifest of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) demanded that Cyprus should belong to Turkey as a whole: "The MHP opposes giving any concession in Cyprus. It is out of question to consider that concessions can be made given opportunity for a Greek Cypriot superiority which is the projection of Greece on the island which belong to Turkey as a requirement of national security, its interests and geography."

Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP) Nominated Workers

While the seven bourgeois parties are racing in order to satisfy ruling classes and reactionary circles, only the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP), with its programme and candidates, defends the interests of the working people of Turkey.

The TIP which participates in the elections at 15 out of 67 provinces of Turkey showed totally 183 candidates. Of these candidates 44% are workers and trade-union leaders, 5% rural workers, 12% technicians, 7% teachers, 20% socialist intellectuals such as writers, journalists, doctors, lawyers and 2% artisans.

The TIP leaders accuse both the Justice Party (AP) and the Republican People's Party (CHP) of carrying out their electoral campaigns on the base of anti-communism and of nominating the army commanders who are responsible for the violation of human rights during the period of military rule between 1971 and 1973. The Commander of Naval Forces and the Commander of Eskisehir Martial Law Headquarters take place on the CHP tickets, and the Commander of Istanbul Martial Law Headquarters and the President of Ankara Martial Law Tribunal on the AP tickets.

Another responsible of that period, Commander of Air Forces, is already a CHP representative in the Senate.

On the other hand, during the recent primaries, the CHP Headquarters vetoed participation in primaries of 89 candidates who are considered "left" more than the official CHP line.

(C-DN-M-H-PR-DG-ET-27/5)

TURKISH WORKERS IN BELGIUM CARRY ON THE CAMPAIGN
AGAINST THE REPRESSION IN TURKEY

BRUSSELS (ITA) - The Turkish militants of the two trade-union organisations of Belgium, FGTB and CSC, who carry on a campaign against the repression in Turkey, sent the following letter to the democratic forces of Belgium:

"Turkey is at a turning point of its history. For the first time, in Turkey, it is possible that after the June 5 General Elections, a democratic government be formed by the popular voting.

"The Nationalist Front Government representing the ruling circles, has resorted to assassinations, to the repression, to the torture, and used the armed "Gray Wolves" commando units against the people's meetings, in order to intimidate the democratic forces and to prevent the people from having freely the June 5, 1977 general elections. The aim is to prevent the workers from getting conscience and the people from having their destiny in their own hands.

"The 1st May 1977 Massacre in Istanbul is the latest example of these oppressions.

"We do not have any doubt that, despite every kind of repression and different provocations, the people of Turkey will pass this period with a great success. We believe that all democratic forces out of Turkey must manifest their solidarity with the democratic struggle of the people of Turkey.

"Taking into consideration this necessity, the workers of Turkey affiliated to the CSC and to the FGTB organised on May 4, 1977 a press conference in order to inform the public opinion of the realities of Turkey. So started the campaign of solidarity.

"The Turkish militants of the two trade-union organisations in Belgium, being conscious of the fact that they are obliged to defend the economic and democratic rights of the Turkish workers of different views, call on you, in order to further in an efficient manner this campaign of solidarity, to sign the text enclosed and to return it to the addresses of the two trade-unions. The signed texts will be sent to the President of the Republic of Turkey. Friendly yours.

CSC TURKISH SECTION

EGTB COMMITTEE FOR THE WORKERS OF TURKEY

THE TEXT TO BE SENT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Mr. Fahri Korutürk
President of the Republic of Turkey
Çankaya - Ankara - TURKEY

Mr. President,

The undersigned desire that the Turkish people be governed democratically and that its living conditions be improved from the economic, social and political point of view.

To that purpose, we would ask you, as the President of the Republic, to exercise your initiative

- in order to stop the repression, the oppression and the assassinations which strike only the democratic forces of Turkey and to unmask the guiltyies;

- in order to arrest and to bring before the justice the responsables of the 1st May 1977 Workers' Massacre.

We have every confidence in the people of Turkey and we desire that it be free to choose its own representatives who are capable to construct to-morrow a more just and more democratic society.

We hope that your pressing appeal will be heard.

SIGNATURES

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