

Turkey invades North-Western Syria: In the face of nationalist consensus and militaristic unreason, we condemn Erdogan's war on Afrin!

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After weeks of moral preparation, diplomatic pressure and massive disinformation, the Turkish state has finally attacked the predominantly Kurdish enclave of Afrin, located in north-western Syria. Skilfully playing on the cleavages between Washington and Moscow, the Turkish President has launched a major military operation involving air strikes, the deployment of Islamist militias and the incursion of Turkish troops on Syrian soil ready for the offensive.

We strongly condemn this war, cynically called "Olive Branch", which will have no other consequence than to aggravate the tensions between the Turkish, Kurdish and Arab peoples, to postpone any hope of life together and whose ultimate objective is undoubtedly the consolidation of Erdogan's dictatorial regime.

To counteract the process of self-determination under way in Syrian Kurdistan, unacceptable to the Turkish Islamic-nationalist regime, Ankara wishes, with this offensive, to set up a "security zone" of thirty kilometres from its border. This project of occupation of Syrian land is presented as a bulwark against the presence of PYD forces – and its armed wing, the YPG, backed by Washington in the fight against Islamic State – on its border. While enjoying the consent of Russia and facing only a weak reaction from the United States, the Erdogan regime, seeking a victory in its foreign policy, presents this military operation as a "national security" offensive with a strong anti-Western / anti-imperialist connotation.

Despite an extreme polarization between Erdogan's supporters and his opponents, the rhetoric based on national security, by reinforcing the country's militaristic and nationalist historical tendencies, has succeeded in bringing together all sides of Turkish society, the different political sensitivities and various fractions of the bourgeoisie, behind the drums of war. The main opposition party, the CHP, a republican and secularist member of the Socialist International, as at every critical turning point, did not miss the opportunity to side with the AKP to announce its "total support for the military operation".

By adding the state of war to an already repressive state of emergency, the Erdogan regime today reaches an unprecedented level in the criminalization of any opposition to the war. While the HDP, a left-wing party from the Kurdish movement, has its hands totally tied by repression, several journalists and anti-war activists have been arrested in the early days of the operation, mainly because of pacifist messages posted on social networks. Artists and intellectuals are ostracized for not having supported the war. The slightest criticism of the military operation is identified with support for terrorism and betrayal of the homeland.

The struggle for democracy in Turkey cannot avoid a fight against militarism, "both outward and inward", as that historical figure of revolutionary antimilitarism, Karl Liebknecht, put it. This is all

the more true in a situation where judicial immunity for civilians who mobilize to suppress a coup d'état and "any other event as part of its extension", in short to defend the regime, is legalized through a decree and where the existence of many paramilitary formations is no longer a secret to anyone.

Will recourse to war once again save Erdogan and reinforce his weakened hegemony as in 2015 when the results obtained by the HDP had destabilized the Erdogan regime which decided to play the card of the war? This depends on the capacity for mobilization and resistance shown by the various components of the democratic opposition - with the radical left at its head - who have not yet bowed to militaristic unreason and nationalist blindness, it is true, in unprecedented repressive conditions.

Yes, anti-war activists and activists, in solidarity with the democratic demands of the Kurdish people, have reasons to be intimidated by the nationalist-fascist wave, but the reasons for continuing to advocate peace are much more numerous and so much more human. That is why we will refuse to be silent, to fail in our internationalist duty, will refuse to submit ourselves to the warlike, autocratic and corrupt Erdogan regime.

- *No to the war on Afrin, immediate withdrawal of Turkish military troops!*

- Support the right of democratic self-determination of the Kurdish people and all the peoples of the Middle East!

- No confidence in imperialist forces - the liberation of the peoples of Syria can only be through their common struggle!

- Long live proletarian internationalism, long live revolutionary anti-militarism!

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