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Mass murder in Ankara — the finger points at the Turkish state

Andrew Flood

October 13, 2015

Graffiti has appeared at the site of the bomb explosion in Ankara yesterday that reads “It was not terror that killed us, it was the state.” This is reflecting the widespread belief that the true origins of the bombing that killed around 100 people at the pro Kurdish peace demonstration are to be found in Erdogan’s AKP party desperate attempt to intensify conflict in the hope of polarizing the electorate ahead of November’s elections. The same process in other words that those killed yesterday were demonstrating against.

Turkish election law doesn’t allow a party that wins less than 10% of the vote to take any seats. In the June elections the radical left and pro-Kurdish HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) achieved 13% of the vote, taking seats and denying the AKP a majority. Since then Turkey has been run by an interim prime minister. By intensifying conflict the AKP hopes to drive the vote for the HDP back below that 10% bar, allowing the AKP to hold onto power.

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Retrieved on 13th August 2021 from www.anarkismo.net

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This is the context to understand why the Turkish state blocked Twitter & Facebook in the immediate aftermath of the bombing as pro government media sought to blame it on the PKK. The huge spontaneous demonstrations in Istanbul and elsewhere yesterday suggest that few who access the facts are liable to be fooled, hence the need to throttle social media.

Those killed included Anarcho-syndicalist Ali Kitapçı. Another anarchist in Turkey who knew his writes on Libcom Ali was a great guy and a very dedicated class militant. He was himself responsible for actual realisation of strike calls in his sector (railroad workers) in Ankara. He was not supportive of actions of Kurdish movement. I think he went to the demonstration for antimilitarist class action to end the civil war and bring peace.

He was active in his union which is connected to Disk [BTS which is affiliated to KESK Confederation]. He was in constant struggle to change it to an anarcho syndicalist union at least in practice. He even had ideas in last years to form another syndicalist union with international unions in its sector to further the cause of the workers. I am going to his funeral now.”

In a press conference in the aftermath of the bombing Selahattin Demirtaş the HDP chair said:

“We have reached a point where they (AKP) can almost accuse us of bombing our own rallies”.

“The Prime Minister (Davutoglu) delivers a 30 minute long speech. In these 30 minutes, he uses 20 of them to smear us (HDP). The PM holds a speech about the rally where over 100 of our friends were massacred, but he is dedicating the largest portions of the speech to threaten me”.

“You are wrong if you think you can intimidate us by standing in front of the cameras and point fingers and threaten us. We are not afraid of anything but god”.

“Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Even if a single bird flies over the skies of Ankara will the state know. This is the most surveilled city in the country. We hold a mass rally with 100 000 people, but there weren’t a single security personnel to be found on the streets. Look at their own rallies, the security checks start several blocks away”.

Chris S. who witnessed the explosion and aftermath has posted on Facebook that “This was a *trade union* and associations of engineers architects and doctors organised peace march. The police completely disappeared before the explosions. The first police reaction after the explosions was to tear gas the injured. The police arrived before the ambulances. I saw with my own eyes ambulances kept waiting to let the police enter the area first.

There is no doubt in anyone’s mind here who is responsible for this attack. The PKK are about to announce a unilateral ceasefire in the runup to the general election, and it seems these bombs are designed as an attempt to prevent that ceasefire from happening. Turkey’s deep state is in action in a big way and probably out of control. The HDP has repeated calls for peace.”

There will probably be a solidarity protest called in Dublin in the next days, keep an eye on our social media for an announcement of details.