December 19 Prison Massacres: Never Forget, Never Let It Be Forgotten!







As is well known, the December 19 Prison Massacre was carried out in a coordinated and simultaneous attack on 28 prisons under the command of the Turkish state by the fascist Ecevit coalition government.

In this assault, where the forces of revolution and counter-revolution faced each other under unequal conditions, the fascist state attacked with hundreds of bullets, gas bombs, soldiers, special units, commandos, and prison guards. In response, the imprisoned revolutionary vanguards of the people resisted with their bare hands, their consciousness, and their courage, creating the "Heroism Week."

The most valiant, fearless hearts of the revolutionary generation who refused to surrender drew their strength not from the doomed, decaying reign of the reactionary classes, but from an unparalleled commitment to the people, the revolution, and comradeship. They inherited this legacy from Deniz, Mahir, and İbrahim, preserving and elevating it.

The operation, named "Return to Life," was carried out by the fascist Ecevit government as part of the imperialists' exploitative agenda, enforced through the IMF. The goal was to resolve the "prison issue" to eliminate the resistance dynamics of the working classes, which were seen as an obstacle to the exploitation ambitions of the imperialists.

The hope for resistance and victory embodied by revolutionary prisoners, representing the working classes and the people's struggle against the capitalist order, was to be crushed

and eradicated in the F-Type prisons. This hope had long served as a beacon of resistance, illuminating even the darkest times outside through the struggles within prisons, a unique front of class warfare.

Even during the darkest periods of repression, such as the times of the fascist September 12 dictatorship in the Diyarbakır, Mamak, and Metris prisons, when social movements outside had been subdued and not even a single leaf stirred, the exceptional resistance of revolutionary prisoners became a source of strength, morale, and hope.

The fascist Turkish ruling classes, who planned the December 19 Massacre, once again targeted the prison issue at this juncture of class struggle, focusing on revolutionary prisoners. This comprehensive assault was strategically prepared and implemented on December 19, 2000, by the fascist state's puppet Ecevit government. Revolutionary prisoners, anticipating this strategic assault, prepared themselves by organizing and positioning through resistance movements such as "death fasts" and "indefinite hunger strikes."

On the morning of December 19, two forces clashed as true opponents in a "battle" on the ground of attack and resistance. Revolutionary prisoners, who were destined to be "physically defeated" due to the unequal power dynamics, were killed, were burned, wounded, and confined to F-Type cells, yet they were never truly defeated. Their unyielding determination, fed by unwavering devotion to the people, the revolution, and a free future, ensured that their resistance would remain unbroken.

Those who gave their lives and blood in this resistance, whose emaciated bodies were eroded by hunger, magnified the hope for revolution and its victory, fulfilling their historical mission. Standing at the pinnacle of class struggle, they proudly bore the honor of being the "never-surrendering revolutionary generation of sacrifice." Their blood-written history demonstrated to the fascist ruling classes' brutal state, as well as to the opportunistic collaborators, revisionists, and liberal fools flirting with it, that such a history cannot be erased.

They will continue to live in and be kept alive in our consciousness, hearts, and spirits as our reason for existence and resistance, as our guarantee of victory, as our immortal values. Let there be no doubt about this.

On the 24th anniversary of the December 19 Massacre, we once again commemorate our immortal comrades, who inspire us to win the future. We underline that one of our duties today is to learn from their instructive memories, to more tightly embrace the current tasks of class struggle with their lessons, and to stand in solidarity with the revolutionary prisoners in today’s prisons.

- Never Forget, Never Let the December 19 Massacre Be Forgotten!
- Long Live Our Immortal Comrades Who Created Heroism Week!
- Blood-Written History Cannot Be Erased!

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS PLATFORM

Memoir of Comrade Yaşar YAĞAN

The F-Type isolation attack, used to suppress individual and societal freedoms at a higher level, fundamentally aims to strip individuals of their core values, render them asocial, isolate them, alienate them, turn them into fearful beings, instill a sense of insecurity, make them easily manipulated, deprive them of their bold personalities, and drive them into psychological and physical traumas that lead to a syndrome of exhaustion and despair—an inability to express themselves and a loss of personality (or the creation of a lack of personality).

The stance of defending human values, demonstrated through hunger strikes and death fasts as a form of active resistance by our revolutionary comrades against F-Type practices implemented in our country's recent history, was unfortunately not adequately supported by other political entities that claimed to represent these values or by organized social circles. Consequently, this resistance was distorted by the system, resulting in a bloody outcome. Suppressed with blood, this resistance led to the death of many courageous comrades in trench solidarity and left many of us, emerging from the wreckage, physically disabled and traumatized, with some falling into a vegetative state.

The process, which began with the Ulucanlar Prison incident on September 26, 1999, and escalated step by step through the Burdur attack on December 19, 2000, culminated in a large-scale simultaneous assault on 20 prisons on the morning of December 19 under the guise of "establishing state authority." The Justice Minister of the time, Hikmet Sami Türk, claimed that "the state extended a compassionate hand to the prisons."
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This operation, conducted simultaneously in 20 prisons, resulted in 32 deaths (30 revolutionaries and 2 soldiers) and left over 600 comrades permanently disabled. Hikmet Sami Türk declared the operation successful, saying, "The operation was conducted successfully. There were no losses." During the operation, gas bombs, heavy weaponry, Skorsky helicopters, and construction machinery were used.

At Ümraniye Prison, where I was held, during the moments of the attack, I suffered a bullet graze on my back and ankle. Following a raid on the fourth day, I was left with three broken

ribs, permanent damage to my right arm, and severely damaged arteries leading from my neck to my brain. I endured inhumane torture during transfers to and from the military transport vehicle, just like my fellow comrades whose bodies had been battered to the core. Eventually, I was brutally thrown into the F-Type torture chambers, battered and broken, alongside other comrades in arms.

We, a few hundred comrades crammed into just one or two wards, were subjected to relentless attacks. From holes drilled into the ceilings with compressors, they sprayed us with a burning, thin chemical liquid. As soon as the liquid touched the skin, it caused stinging and burning. This was followed by pressurized foamy water and then the same chemical again. The substance was intensely caustic, causing our bodies to sting, our muscles to tense, and smoke to fill the air, making it difficult to breathe. This continued for a while.

Then the counter-teams stationed on the rooftops began firing on the ward doors and windows and relentlessly launching other gas bombs. For four days, we were dazed by these attacks, completely losing our sense of control. The dark smoke and fires made day and night indistinguishable.

During this indescribable chaos, we lost some of our comrades, our friends, either to burns or to the bullets of the soldiers. Others of us were left with physical and psychological wounds from the attack, wounds that we will carry with us as lifelong traumas.

To increase the effect of the nerve and gas bombs sprayed on us, they dangled an object encased in an iron cage from a pipe inserted through the holes in the ceiling. The mist and gas it emitted caused our eyes to burn and our throats to choke, making it nearly impossible to breathe. Sometimes I felt as if every part of my body was dissolving. For four days, our minds were parched from thirst, and we writhed in agony like snakes as the chemical gases burned our bodies. Some of us, driven to the point of madness by suffocation crises, passed out and collapsed wherever they were. No one could keep track of those who fell unconscious or who completely lost their sanity. We were left semi-comatose, our minds blurred, blinded by chemical gas and mentally debilitated.

The only thing we had to protect ourselves from the gas was a wet towel. The nerve gas and pepper spray attacks were endless. The suffocation caused by the nerve gas left us all completely drained. You think you're going to die, but when you don't, you're subjected to the same torturous agony again and again, driving you to the brink of madness. This must be the literal experience of "stuck between a rock and a hard place."

During the final gas attack, in the chaos of the dense crowd where no one could see, I lost consciousness and fell to the ground. In the commotion, I lost the wet cloth I had been

holding over my mouth. While unable to breathe under the weight of those who had fallen on top of me, I was also subjected to unconscious kicks to my head, face, and body from those struggling to stay upright. At one point, desperate to escape being trampled, I tried to crawl blindly, using my hands to feel my way to a wall. But the suffocation I was experiencing left me powerless, preventing me from moving forward. Meanwhile, I could not escape the blows raining down on my body.

I don't know how many minutes or seconds it lasted, but eventually, with a final desperate effort, I managed to reach the wall I had been struggling to get to. However, I still couldn't breathe. I tried repeatedly to inhale but failed, and my eyes felt like they were about to pop out of their sockets. "So this is the end," I thought, as I let myself slump against the wall.

But somehow, perhaps due to another gas blast, people fell on top of me again. At that moment, I was seized by a coughing fit so violent it felt like my chest was being torn apart. Gradually, I began to breathe again, just barely. "This must be what it means to rise from ruin," I thought to myself. Collapsing under weight and reviving again and again.

My scalp, face, eyes, arms, and back were burning with the stinging pain of burns. As the door of our overcrowded ward was blasted open from the outside, a fire was also started. It spread from the gap between the door and the ceiling. The echoes of the screams, spreading chaotically, still occasionally ring in my ears.

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Twenty-four years have passed, and to this day, I struggle to hold on to life despite the physical and psychological traumas I endured during that attack, despite the countless surgeries and my still-unhealed injured arm. Because I say, *"To spite the enemy, living one more day and preserving hope, even for that reason alone, is essential for us!"* Moreover, standing against these inhumane isolation practices, recklessly executed by fascist ruling groups, is not just a socialist duty but the most fundamental human responsibility and obligation. Their inhumane lynching campaigns will never be enough to conquer the inner fortresses of humanity and its values that we hold within ourselves.

Even though we experience defeats, for us, the essence lies in protecting, sustaining, and advancing individual and collective rights and freedoms, and above all, not losing our human dignity. To preserve the integrity of individual and collective rights, for the sake of freedom and fundamental human values, we must come together in shared spaces and on common ground by creating alternative realms of freedom.

To stand against the isolation imposed on all revolutionary individuals, which utterly diminishes human dignity, is to stand up for human honor. That is why the slogan, *"DO NOT REMAIN SILENT, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU'LL BE NEXT..."* applies to all of us.

DIGNITY OF HUMANITY WILL DEFEAT TYRANNY & TORTURE!