



RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Overview of Academic Freedom in Turkey: Re-Thinking Theory and *Praxis*

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, intellectuals always play a crucial role in influencing and changing society. Theory finds its realization in praxis but what is the relation of intellectuals to theory and praxis? The article tries to answer this basic question through an analysis of the actions of intellectuals for academic freedom and against repressions on the academy and society. It also investigates the form of struggles they create against these repressions in Turkey. Besides, the attitude of the government will be discussed as anti-intellectual behavior against the realization of intellectuals' theory in praxis.

KEYWORDS: Turkey; theory; praxis; intellectual; anti-intellectualism

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1. Introduction

‘The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last’
(Horkheimer 1947, p. 44).

This article will explore the place of theory and praxis in contemporary global politics. What is their role in struggling against restrictions of academic freedom? The research will be based on a group of academics from Turkey, calling themselves ‘Academics for Peace’,¹ challenging academic oppression. The particular aim is to address the problem of freedom of thought and research and therefore the problem of academic freedom, in three parts.

In the first part of this paper, we will discuss the problem of academic freedom within the context of the unity of theory and praxis. The theoretical ground will be predicated on the theoretical framework and approaches of the Frankfurt School, whose members had to flee from the Third Reich in Germany to the U.S., which seems to have some similarities with the migration of academics in Turkey, particularly to Europe. Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) claims that ‘the only thing that goes against my pessimism is the fact that we still carry on thinking today. All hope lies in thought’ (Adorno & Horkheimer 2010, p. 42). As we see from this quotation, Horkheimer totally despairs of praxis but still sees hope in thought. But the Gezi Revolt (2013) and the declaration or movement of ‘Academics for Peace’ (2016) demonstrates that there is always hope for praxis. The reason to consider the Frankfurt School as a theoretical base is grounded in the idea that they broadly discuss the relation of thinking to praxis, reason and intellect, culture and society. In his *Negative Dialectics*, which is also a sort of revolt against Marx’s 11th *Thesis on Feuerbach* (Adorno 2004, p. 3), the German philosopher and one of the prominent of Critical theorists, Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), introduces the importance of reason as a necessary part of proper thinking and suggests that we have to re-think this

¹ ‘Academics for Peace’ is a group of academics who signed a petition calling on the Turkish government to cease military attacks in Kurdish populated areas, mainly in southeastern Turkey.

necessary part of thinking. He criticizes the idea of the unity of theory and praxis that degrades ‘theory to a servant’s role’ (Adorno 2004, p. 143). The unity of theory and praxis includes less theory, leading the praxis to be ‘non-conceptual’ (Adorno 2004, p. 143). The German philosopher attack those who de-emphasize theory and suggest that instead of subjugating thought to praxis, praxis could be newly ‘reflected upon in theory’ because praxis ‘itself was an eminently theoretical concept’ (Adorno 2004, p. 144).

While the Frankfurt School re-thinks the place of theory in the unity of theory-praxis, which is based on the primacy of practice, they are on the wrong track by trying to recover ‘theory’s independence’ (Adorno 2004, p. 143). In their theory, there is still a gap between theory and praxis. In the *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno is concerned about reducing theory to be a servant of praxis but nevertheless, he evaluates thought as ‘an act of negation’ and ‘of resistance to that which is forced upon it’ (Adorno 2004, p. 19). He does not directly but indirectly relate thought or theory to actions, to practice-praxis. On the theoretical and intellectual level, ‘Academics for Peace’ presents an ‘act of negation’ and ‘of resistance to’ irrational decisions based on political power. These scholars realize their thought and theory at the practical and political level through resistance and negation of the current political situation in Turkey. Adorno describes the place of theory within praxis. Theory does not answer all problems but ‘it reacts to the world, which is faulty to the core’ (Adorno 2004, p. 31).

In the second part, using empirical data, we will explore the problem of academic freedom and the relation of praxis to theory at a practical level. After that, we will examine the action of ‘Academics for Peace’, comparing it with the Gezi Revolt. The group of scholars initiated a sort of political movement with a petition, by claiming that they ‘will not be a party to this crime!’ That enables the government to activate its domineering and repressive mechanism. The Gezi Revolt began with the protest consisting of different social and political groups against the government’s plan to destroy the Gezi Park in Istanbul. From a larger perspective, the revolt came as a reaction against the increasingly oppressive and intervening attitudes,

decisions and behavior of AKP government. The government's interfering policies and its anti-peace attitude constitutes the common motive both for the Gezi Revolt and 'Academics for Peace'. Another common characteristic of these two movements is anti-intellectual dispositions, views, and attitudes of former prime minister Erdogan toward them. This anti-intellectual attitude of the government is arguably more obvious in the case of the stance against the statement of 'Academics for Peace'. Among the AKP party and its supporters, ignorance has been extolled; this clarifies a particular and specific character of this period: the praise of ignorance. Anti-intellectualism addresses two different conceptions and hostilities: 1) 'a hostility to speculative thought, to theory, to learning from books', which is not our topic; 2) 'a hostility to a class of wo/men identified as "intellectuals"' (Leuchtenburg 1955, p. 8), which will be the subject of this paper.

In the third part, the article will discuss the challenges against this repression in Turkey and around the globe. At this point, in terms of political and social responsibility, the crucial question is: what is the function of an intellectual or an academic? How does it work in Turkey and in the world? Here I will analyse the form of struggles against academic restrictions and dismissals.

2. Theory versus Praxis?

Praxis simply refers to the activities, productions and movements of human beings and their relationship with each other. Praxis reflects human activities developed throughout history. Theory, instead, signifies an intellectual and mental activity of human beings, which works with 'reason', abstract ideas, and thought. The relationship between theory and praxis is based on an idea that praxis is the ground on which theory is realized, concretized, and embodied.

What is the relationship between theory and praxis? Before the Second World War, Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919) and Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) discuss this relationship in different manners in their works. Although their works make great contributions to the unity of theory and praxis, I will make use of the Critical Theory's approach, the Frankfurt School's theory, developed especially by

Horkheimer, Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) in the 1930s. Under a totalitarian regime,² they talk about the problem of praxis by questioning the origin of authoritarian regimes through the relationship between praxis and theory. They try to describe the result of rationality and irrationality through both empirical and theoretical studies. As an academic institution under leading scholars such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, the Frankfurt School criticizes praxis and tries to demonstrate its deficiencies through a critique of contemporary society and culture. For the Frankfurt School, the problem lays behind the relation of ‘reason’ to the practical results of human activities.

The first generation of critical theorists never ignore the relation of theory to practice, but they are not clear on what praxis meant for them. They believe in change: ‘By practice we really mean that we’re serious about the idea that the world needs fundamental change. This has to show itself in both thought and action’ (Adorno & Horkheimer 2010, p. 53). But they did not say how this change can be actualized. They continue, ‘the practical aspect lies in the notion of difference; the world has to become different. It is not as if we should do something other than thinking, but rather that we should think differently and act differently’ (Adorno & Horkheimer 2010, p. 53). For them, the way of thinking and acting is problematic and should be changed. The necessity of praxis is always their primary interest.

The Frankfurt School dedicates itself to theory, and therefore for them theory precedes praxis. The precedence of theory is obvious in their works and their attitude towards Marxism. The history of the Frankfurt School is significant to

² An authoritarian regime, generally distinguished from a totalitarian regime, is a government that is not concerned about, or does not take any responsibility for, the interest of its people. The main concern of authoritarianism is not to change the world or human nature: it focuses on the authority to take a firm grip on the people. In contrast to authoritarianism, totalitarianism penetrates all structures of society from education to economy. Under a totalitarian government, the state does not recognize any limitations in order to apply its authority. The concept of totalitarianism is related to the ideology of the state dominating over most of its citizens. The term ‘totalitarianism’ was described by Giovanni Amendola in 1923 to describe Italian Fascism. In her book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt uses the cases of Hitler and Stalin to analyze totalitarian regimes in which ideology has a prominent role. Although Hitler and Stalin used different ideologies, their basic aim was to change human nature and society by a new organization and structure of human life. In this respect, it can be said that ‘the key factors that distinguish totalitarian and authoritarian regimes are the degree of social pluralism and levels of political mobilization’ (Ezrow & Frantz 2011, p. 4).

comprehend the importance of an academic stance against authoritarian power, through their studies on, and critique of, theory and praxis. After his exile to America, Horkheimer decides to publish the third section of *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, in English under the title *Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences*. In 1940, he wrote in the foreword: 'Philosophy, art, and science have lost their home in most of Europe. England is now fighting desperately against the domination of the totalitarian states. America, especially the United States, is the only continent in which the continuation of scientific life is possible' (Jay 1973, p. 167).

Horkheimer highlights the displacement of philosophy, art, and science at the time due to the totalitarian regimes, which corresponds with the displacement of academics today in Turkey. In this terrifying period, not just philosophy, art and science had lost their home in Europe, but also the concept of humanity and humanity itself. Horkheimer would also define the situation of Europe, maybe better to say the situation of the whole world, in a philosophical context in his book titled *Eclipse of Reason*. He maintains that he does not believe that reason truly directs social reality (Horkheimer 1947, p. 9). It means that there should be other powers directing social life. Reason loses its meaning when it is separated from all sorts of particular dispositions and preferences. In this point, as a decision-maker or a determiner, reason leaves its task to the conflicting interests, which dominate the world (Horkheimer 1947, p. 9). Reason is now used for the prevailing interests of the dominant groups that adapt it to reality at will; therefore, reason surrenders to the 'irrational' (Horkheimer 1947, p. 13).

'What are the consequences of the formalization of reason? Justice, equality, happiness, tolerance, all the concepts that, as mentioned, were in preceding centuries supposed to be inherent in or sanctioned by reason, have lost their intellectual roots. They are still aims and ends, but there is no rational agency authorized to appraise and link them to an objective reality' (Horkheimer 1947, p. 23).

As Horkheimer observes in the passage above, justice, equality, knowledge, are concepts that had lost their intellectual roots in Germany, as it has happened recently in Turkey. Here, these concepts or political ideals have long been

found in venerable historical documents such as in constitutions and in the supreme law of countries, but according to Horkheimer, they are not confirmed reason in the modern sense. What is the result of such process in which reason loses its power? His answer: ‘The more the concept of reason becomes emasculated, the more easily it lends itself to ideological manipulation and to propagation of even the most blatant lies’ (Horkheimer 1947, p. 24). While theorists like Horkheimer and Adorno celebrate ‘reason’ and ‘intellect’, there are some in politics who insult them with anti-intellectualist behavior. The ideological manipulation that Horkheimer cited can also be found in the populist and anti-intellectualist attitudes mentioned above.

Although Critical Theory intends to establish a critical stance against Marxism while remaining within the Marxist world view – by integrating speculation and empirical research while criticizing ‘the adequacy of orthodox Marxism’ (Jay 1973, p. 253) – it continues to believe in the combination or unity of ‘critical theory and revolutionary practice’ (Jay 1973, p. 253). However, in their works, and in the context of their approach to practical action – political praxis – it is difficult to see this combination because they lose their belief in a strong political movement, the proletarian movement, which failed in the Soviet Union. This leads the Frankfurt School, particularly Horkheimer and Adorno to move further away from Marxism. In *Negative Dialectics* and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, they not only question Marxism but fundamentally challenge its premise. They believe that if there is social change, then it should be preceded by a theoretical change. The Frankfurt School finds the contradiction to be not between classes, rather in the conflict that exists between man and nature. According to Critical Theory, nature and man are not necessarily separated but they affect each other, they lead to changes in each other. Adorno and Horkheimer simply maintain that human beings are not evil when they come into the world; ‘they are neither good nor evil. They just want to survive’ (Adorno & Horkheimer 2010, p. 44).

In *Negative Dialectics*, criticizing Hegel, Adorno emphasizes the experiences– praxis– opposing method (Adorno 2004, p. 48). The critical theorists con-

tinue to relate their theories to reality and experiences. They never reject the Marxian terminology and accept the necessity of social change. These changes can be realized only by freely associated individuals. When they develop new theories, they never recommend the pleasure of thinking, but place the emphasis on practice and theory. Although Horkheimer suggests that he still believes in historical change, in his later work we can find a great deal of pessimism, who talks about the fact that we cannot do anything 'because of the situation we find ourselves in' (Adorno & Horkheimer 2010, p. 56). Here we can see his dilemma. For them, theory is a tool, which reflects on itself. It is a tool of practice, the mere instrument of theoretical practice. They separate their theory from Marx's theory, which is a function of the proletariat and based on class-consciousness. They reject the idea that theory is a sort of recipe. In *Towards a new Manifesto*, Adorno and Horkheimer emphasize the fact that the party no longer exists, and they are not in a revolutionary situation; for this reason, 'things are worse than ever'. Their words remind the world situation we find ourselves in. The situation does not lead us to 'image a better one', as Adorno claims (Adorno & Horkheimer 2010, p. 61). In short, they prefer to fight against authoritative powers by remaining in the field of theory. The problem defined by Horkheimer and Adorno actually refers to 'a lack of proper revolutionary leadership' (Hudis 2017), where there is theory but no leadership to realize it.

The main reason Critical Theory takes the side of theory is that they lost their belief in social change made by the majority of the populace because, according to Horkheimer, 'today the idea of the majority, deprived of its rational foundations, has assumed a completely irrational aspect' (Horkheimer 1947, pp. 30-31). This irrational decision or aspect can be in favor of more authoritarian and totalitarian forms, or more precisely in favor of fascism. This is because the judgement of the majority of people is manipulated by interests through various forms of manipulation. For Horkheimer, the ends are not determined by the light of reason (Horkheimer 1947, p. 31); thus, it is difficult to claim that one economic or political system is better than another. They emphasize the concept of the individual since they observe that the majority is manipulated by all kinds of interests. Not only are the

majority or people deprived of rational foundations, but democratic principles lack rational principles and pretend to depend on the so-called interests of people. But Adorno and Horkheimer think that ‘these are functions of blind or all too conscious economic forces. They do not offer any guarantee against tyranny’ (Horkheimer 1947, p. 28). The democratic principles serve the interests of an authoritarian form of government and dominant economic class. In this regard, Horkheimer claims that thinking has been reduced to the level of an industrial process, that is, it is a part of capitalist production. The problem now, in my view, is to raise reason from the place to which it fell and give new importance to reason and theory but within praxis.

In Critical Theory, we can find two main discussion points: 1) theory and 2) praxis. Their first point with theory or reason results from the second point, praxis. Their loss of belief in praxis, or more precisely in the ability of the majority of people acting rationally, leads them to take refuge in reason and theory. But the possibility of theory and reason depends on the possibility of praxis. Praxis creates the possible conditions for the products of theory and reason. Freedom of research, freedom of speech, freedom to teach, and academic freedom, all kinds of freedom are possible only if there is the possibility of a struggle against the restrictions, assaults, and blocks against these freedoms. If there is no action, there is no theory and reason. Theory is not something in itself, but theory and reason exists in and for itself. Throughout history, from ancient times until today, there are always some who struggle to create the possibility for theory and reason.

Critical Theory does not picture a true society, but this does not mean that its theoreticians were not interested in and did not look for a true society. If the theorists of the Frankfurt School were not interested in the true society, why did they deal with all these analyses for society and individuals? For example, their analyses in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and their researches on authoritarian society and regimes picture the disadvantages of society in general. They describe the ‘negative aspects’ of society in order to find a true one. Praxis refers to the act of changing and transforming, while theory is the content of praxis. The intellectual movement

(Academics for Peace) tried to realize their theory in praxis. They wrote a petition which is their constitutional right, in order to manifest their critical thinking into praxis. The manifestation of theory in practice is not easy, particularly where academic freedom, free research and speech are under attack.

3. Academic Freedom, Free Research...

What does academic freedom mean? What are the responsibility of intellectuals and academics? What sort of assaults are there against free research, free teaching, and free speech?

Academic freedom generally refers to freedom of expression, research, and university autonomy. Every article or book containing discussions of academic freedom first addresses the necessary preconditions of freedom 'for developing new ideas' (Drees & van Koningsveld 2008, p. 15). Academic freedom is a new concept arising in the last century (Seggie & Gokbel 2015, p. 7). It is actually a new understanding in the intellectual field, although the struggle for freedom in research and education, and freedom of expression, are not new. We can trace freedom of expression and teaching back to the defence of Socrates against 'the charge of corrupting the youth of Athens' (Hofstadter 1961, p. 3).³ But history continues to repeat itself in the 21st century by the restriction of freedom in researching and teaching at universities.

The question is what sort of freedom is the one we are talking about? 'For the most part, the concept of academic freedom as it is usually expressed today had not received a clear formulation in the ante-bellum period' (Humphrey 1951, p. 263). In the UK Education Reform Act 1988, Section 202 (2) academic freedom is defined as follows: 'The freedom [academics have] within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges

³ Academia of Plato is considered as the first form of university; according to Hofstadter, 'the university is in its origin a medieval institution'. For this reason, the first universities are based on religious education; they were the centers or institutions of 'clerical learning like the cathedral schools'. At the end of twelfth century, in Salerno, Bologna, Montpellier, Paris, and Oxford, the universities came into existence (Hofstadter 1961, p. 3).

they may have at their institutions' (Minerva 2016, p. 95). Academic freedom is to develop scientific research by being independent from the restrictions of any authority and to recognize only the self-determination, self-decision, and its quality is determined by themselves. '[...] academic freedom is generally understood as self-governance with respect to the scientific process' (Drees & van Koningsveld 2008, p. 16). Academic freedom is not only freedom of academics in universities, but it contains those who realize their academic activities. 'Academic freedom refers to the freedom of members of the academic community, comprising scholars, teachers, and students, who pursue their scholarly activities within a framework determined by that particular from the outside (UNESCO-IAU 1998)' (Seggie & Gokbel 2015, p. 10). Here the right to education has a part in academic freedom, as Judith Butler pointed out (Butler 2015).

According to Butler, 'academic freedom is conditioned', and thanks to these conditions it is possible to think and exercise academic freedom (Butler 2015, p. 293). Butler remarks that to think about academic freedom means thinking about complex institutional conditions, because these institutional conditions result in exercising academic freedom. Butler thinks that this is the first thing that we should keep in mind, and the second thing is not to forget that the right to education is not separated from the right to academic freedom (Butler 2015, p. 293). In sum, for Butler the right to education is a precondition of academic freedom. '[...] to have right only becomes meaningful if one has the power to exercise that right, then there is no way to think of the right of academic freedom apart from its exercise and, indeed, the right to education itself' (Butler 2015, p. 299). Even though it is difficult to define what academic freedom is, we can say that it is impossible to speak about academic freedom without touching on its preconditions: the institutional and legal conditions related to economic conditions. In this respect, academic freedom does not mean abstract and absolute freedom. Without the right to education, we cannot have academic freedom. In order to realize academic freedom, including free research, freedom of expression, freedom of teaching, etc., it is necessary to have the right to education as an equal opportunity principle. It is not the task of

this article to discuss in detail the right to education, which I believe is strictly related to current economic conditions and problems. Here I am talking about the anti-democratic implementations of the Turkish authorities, with regard to the freedom of speech, research, and teaching.

Academic freedom in Turkey has been regulated according to reforms in universities in different periods: 1933, 1946, 1960, 1973, and 1981.⁴ ‘The reform of 1933, for instance, took place in the Single Party Period; the 1946 reform coincided with the transition to the Multi-Party Period; and the others – 1960, 1973, and 1981 – were in military coup periods’ (Seggie & Gokbel 2015, pp. 17-18). Among these reforms, the last in 1981 is effective, according to the Higher Education Council,⁵ established in the same year. Academic freedom and free research were regulated according to the Higher Education Law 2547 (Seggie & Gokbel 2015, p. 18). Academic freedom was restricted in particular by the regulation and law implemented in 1981 (article 130). Article 130 states: ‘Universities, members of the teaching staff and their assistants may freely engage in all kinds of scientific research and publication. However, this shall not include the liberty to engage in activities against the existence and independence of the State, and against the integrity and indivisibility of the nation and the country’ (Seggie & Gokbel 2015, p. 22). While this article restricts academic freedom within the framework of the integrity and indivisibility of the country, it is not clear what sort of activities can damage the existence of the country. Article 25 of the 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey affirms that ‘everybody has freedom of thought and opinion’; article 26 states that ‘everybody has the right to express and disseminate his/her thoughts and opinions individually or collectively in words, in writing, in painting or in other ways’ (Gedikoglu 2013, p. 181). It seems that articles 25 and 26 contrast with article 130. On one hand, articles

⁴ For further information about the development of Turkey’s higher education system see Weiker (1962), Lewis (1961), Davison (1961).

⁵ In Article 131 of the 1982 Constitution, the Higher Education Council is defined as follows: it is an institution established ‘in order to plan, organize, govern, control the instruction of higher education institutions, to steer the education and scientific research activities of the higher education institutions, to support these institutions to be established and to be developed according to the objectives and principles stated in the law, and to ensure that the resources allocated to universities are used effectively, and to plan for the training of teaching staff.’

25 and 26 proclaim the freedom of thought and expression; on the other hand, in article 130 we see that these freedoms are restricted by the possible damage to the existence of the integrity and indivisibility of the country. This is an open-ended article. All constitutions have been drafted during military coups, which always attack democratic rights, such as freedom of speech, research, and teaching. For this reason, there has always been in some way a struggle against such repression and restrictions.

3.1. Petition as a realization of theory in praxis

‘We learn the following from the case of Petition of Intellectuals⁶: we are indebted to our people who make us what we are, intellectuals. We cannot pay it since this is an unpayable debt but we can try. And we do so, we are doing so and we will always do so as long as we live’
(Nesin et al. 1986, p. 16).

The petition of ‘Academics for Peace’ in 2016 is not the first such petition in Turkey. In the 1980s, there was another petition called ‘Petition of Intellectuals’ against the military coup of 1980, which 1,300 intellectuals signed and sent to the president’s office. Actually, the number of signatures was almost 2,000, but 500, for some reasons, could not be sent to the president’s office. The intellectuals wrote a petition against ‘unlawful punishment’ and torture, which became commonplace during the military coup in the 1980s (Nesin et al. 1986, p. 20). In this period, many parties were closed (for example CHP, and others) and in the place of them ‘state parties’ were established, and parliament was dissolved. The 1961 Constitution, based on the principle that basic rights and freedom cannot be touched, was legis-

⁶ This was a petition signed by a number of intellectuals against the military government in 1984. After the military coup of 1980 realized under the tutelage of Kenan Evren, many intellectuals were oppressed and there were legal and practical restrictions that did not allow the intellectuals and artists to create productively. Aziz Nesin (1915-1995) led a group of people to draft a petition against the government’s anti-democratic actions, entitled ‘Observations and Demands for a Democratic System in Turkey’. He was a Turkish humorist, writer, and the author of more than 100 books, and a political activist.

lated away (abolished). Instead of this, the 1982 Constitution originated from the principles of ‘the limitation of basic rights and freedom’, ‘the protection of the state against the individual and society’, and of the ‘fear of national will and organizational participation of people’ was imposed/enforced. Parties, trade unions, associations were closed or suspended, and some of them were made non-functional by restructuring (Nesin et al. 1986, p. 21). Some institutions, parties, and associations were suddenly considered illegal. The universities underwent a great liquidation and were *de facto* destroyed. The intellectuals who prepared and signed it were accused of distributing leaflets, which was considered a crime— when in fact it was a simple petition written to official authorities, which is generally considered a constitutional right according to the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. At the international level, in Western Europe and the U.S. more than 2,000 scientists, writers, artists, politicians, trade unionists, jurists, and ecclesiastics declared that they completely supported the ‘Petition of Intellectuals’ in 1984, among them Noam Chomsky. Ironically, he also supported the petition of ‘Academics for Peace’ in 2016.

While the intellectuals in 1984 signed the ‘Petition of Intellectuals’ under the military coup against the anti-democratic practices of the government, including the repression of academic freedom, torture, freedom of expression, in 2016 ‘Academics for Peace’⁷ signed another petition against the military attack against Kurdish cities in South East of Turkey. They used their democratic rights and wrote a petition to demand peace and criticize their government, which is not absolute and can make mistakes like other governments. These intellectuals lead us to ask what the task of the intellectuals should be. Throughout history, beginning with Socrates, we can clearly observe that intellectuals or scholars have always fought for the truth. But this truth before everything else is not *in itself* but both *in and for itself*. The intel-

⁷ ‘The Turkish state has effectively condemned its citizens in Sur, Silvan, Nusaybin, Cizre, Silopi, and many other towns and neighborhoods in the Kurdish provinces, to hunger through its use of curfews that have been ongoing for weeks. It has attacked these settlements with heavy weapons and equipment that would only be mobilized in wartime. As a result, the right to life, liberty, and security, and in particular the prohibition of torture and ill treatment protected by the constitution and international conventions have been violated. We demand that the government prepare the conditions for negotiations and create a road map that would lead to a lasting peace which includes the demands of the Kurdish political movement...’

lectuals pursue the truth in order to reveal it. Here two cases, both the ‘Petition of Intellectuals’ and ‘Petition of Academics for Peace’, demonstrate that intellectuals try to reveal the truth, which is their particular task. They indicate that they are in debt to society and to their people, so they can be political while also creating cultural and scientific values. If it is necessary, they can take political responsibility and have a political attitude. To be political, as Aristotle claims, is the nature of a human being. Human beings are political animals in a society in relation with others, which refers to praxis. Against this political attitude, the former president Erdogan accused these intellectuals of treason (Sendika62.org 2016).⁸

The declaration of ‘Academics for Peace’ is not the first declaration that repudiated state actions inside and outside the country. The declaration, ‘Déclaration de l’indépendance de l’esprit’ (*Declaration of the Independence of the Mind*)⁹ was written by French intellectuals and signed by Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Jane Addams, and other luminaries in 1919 against the French state. They discussed whether they could still support or ‘be subordinated to both national or political interests’. That is, French intellectuals refused to serve the state. After the Second World War, nationalism or patriotism increased. Against this declaration, ‘Manifeste du parti de l’Intelligence’, which aimed at ‘the non-Christian, supranational, “bolshivist” intellectual Left’, was published by 54 French authors in *Le Figaro* on 19 July 1919. Likewise, against the declaration of ‘Academics for Peace’ some right-wing, nationalist, and pro-government intellectuals wrote an anti-declaration, entitled ‘We stand by our state and nation as the academics of this country’ (Yeni Şafak 2016). We find the right expression for this situation that Giovanni Belardelli discusses in *Il Ventennio degli intellettuali*: ‘After 1945 fascism was often represented as a blind reaction incompatible with every intellectual activity’ (Belardelli 2005, p. vii).

⁸ He said: ‘Today we are faced with the treason of ‘so-called’ intellectuals who receive their salaries from the State, who are quite above the country average, above welfare level’.

⁹ It can be found in David James Fisher, *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement* (1988). The aim of Romain Rolland was to establish ‘a sense of fellowship, mutual comprehension, tolerance, and authenticity to the intellectual elite of Europe and the world’ (p. 51). His conception of an international of the mind was a call to restore and re-create those notions that were destroyed by the Great War in favor “nationalism, militarism, the uncritical consensus mentality, the mass delirium and destructive frenzy” (p. 51).

Here we can find the declaration by the French intellectual Romain Rolland, who after the Great War called on Europeans to fight against war and actively promote peace, which reminds us of the Turkish journalist Asli Erdogan's call on Europeans to act for democracy. Rolland righteously refers to Spinoza who wrote that 'Peace is not mere absence of war, but it is a virtue that springs from force of character' (Spinoza 1883, p. 314). Spinoza defined peace as a virtue; Rolland and other intellectuals on the side of peace take it as a virtue and thus as being conscious of this responsibility for peace, they call on humanity to struggle against war, resulting in psychological, physical, economic, social, and political problems.

3.2. The role of intellectuals: the political and moral responsibility of the intellectual

Fighting for academic freedom means seeking the truth that has been displaced by 'probability and calculability'. 'Academics for Peace' started a movement in the academic field, which again motivated us to question what academic responsibility entails. The concept of 'responsibility' is not a simple term, but a moral and political one that carries free and consciously made choices (Lemke 2017, pp. 72-74). Here some take the responsibility for academic freedom and some refuse it and maintain silence about the repression against academic research and freedom. Some academics in Turkey signed a petition stating that they take responsibility for the military operations carried out by the Turkish authorities in the Kurdish provinces in the South East of Turkey.

The political and moral responsibility of the intellectual centers on the question: Are intellectuals the ones who live or should live in libraries and laboratories or do they have political and moral responsibility for and in society? This is the fundamental question of this paper that I am trying to answer, which is related to praxis. The question above all else is what an intellectual is or means. 'The intellectual is one who provokes humanity' (Brombert 1966, pp. 26-27). It is enough to think just of Socrates, who provokes the Athenians by asking questions about truth, justice, friendship, love, etc. The intellectuals demonstrate or disclose the reality behind appearances. Sometimes they speak in the name of others. This refers to 'their

global responsibility' (Brombert 1966, pp. 26-27). According to some philosophers, like Henri Lefebvre, the task of intellectuals is not directly political, but to contribute to the creation of cultural values (Brombert 1966, p. 219).¹⁰ It is right that the intellectual should contribute to the development of culture and science of a society, but this is just one part of life: its theoretical part. There is also practical part, which is much more real than the theoretical one. We are members of a society; to live in a society is to be responsible of those who live in that society. Modern society tries to detach us from the responsibility of our lives, and from decisions impacting our lives. Living with others in a society entails being responsible for others, which is a precondition of freedom and a characteristic of collectivity and community. For this reason, to participate in politics is the main problem of modern society, modern politics, and modern democracy. Intellectuals are not only persons who work in laboratories to do scientific research or who bury themselves in the books in libraries.

When Aziz Nesin talks to *NoktaDergisi* (Nokta Journal), he gives a great degree of responsibility to the intellectual: 'I think that intellectuals did not do their job in the last three years. They did not do well earlier either. If we intellectuals did our job responsibly, there would not have such anarchy and terror' (Nesin et al. 1986, p. 500). According to him, the intellectuals are the inner conscience, the leaders of society and those who illuminate it (Nesin et al. 1986, p. 500). For Turkish writer, if scholars do not take responsibility, if they have a submissive attitude, keep silent, and lack a civilized heart, this is because they think only of their own interests; in other words, there is not any room for anything but self-interest (Nesin et al. 1986, p. 11). Nesin defines this petition as follows: when they wanted to prepare, and sign this petition, they had some concerns about the reaction of the military; they were afraid of getting arrested, being accused and punished, losing their jobs and passports. The academics who signed the petition of 'Academics for Peace' in 2016 underwent all the unjust treatments that Nesin described. But also, Nesin points out that the 'Petition of Intellectuals' in 1984 becomes a symbol of hope for

¹⁰ Also see Henri Lefebvre (1957).

people in that dark period (Nesin et al. 1986, p. 11). He tells that during military interrogations in that period, all suspects who signed this petition gained much strength by showing incredible solidarity. For Nesin, this was a spontaneous togetherness (Nesin et al. 1986, p. 15).

Four years ago, through the Gezi Protest (2013), people demanded from the government to give up its attempt to interfere in people's personal and social lives. This was a sort of democratic movement struggling for individual rights and freedom. It seems that there is an analogy between the Gezi protest and the movement of 'Academics for Peace', with some differences. The main analogy is that they both started as intellectual movements. They began with an intellectual demand. Both movements demonstrated legal demands and used their legal right to defend and protect their lives through demonstrations and writing petitions or declarations. Both movements also had a spontaneous feature, which received great support, both internally and externally. However, while the Gezi Protest was supported by a large mass of people, the declaration of 'Academics for Peace' is supported mostly by intellectuals, such as writers, scholars, and artists. Apart from the increasing oppression and violence of the government, one of the reasons is the increasing attacks of the radical Islamist group ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq), which creates a great fear over society.

3.3. An Analysis of Assaults on Intellectuals: Anti-intellectualism as an Offensive and Defensive Form

The Intellect is always considered a great problem for the *status quo*. Intellect means to 'examine, ponder, wonder, theorize, criticize, imagine' (Hofstadter 1963, p. 24), which is disliked by some authoritarian, totalitarian politicians, businessman, etc. The term intellectual is a recent concept, which does not exist in the French dictionary of Littré (1863-1877)¹¹ (Brombert 1966, p. 12). But in the socialist

¹¹ The term intellectual and anti-intellectual was first used during the Dreyfus case. At the end of 19th century, intellectual referred to a person who interferes with things in a dogmatic manner (Brombert 1966, p. 16). An intellectual was also defined as an educated and cultured person without a certain mission that s/he obstinately wants to impose as a chimerical idea upon a concrete reality (p. 17).

environment and literature of the 18th century, the term intellectual refers to the expression of ‘the mental laborer’, ‘workers of thought’, or ‘professionals of intelligence’ (Brombert 1966, p. 12).

Anti-intellectualism is an attitude. Even if it has a vague character, the common definition can be disliked of intellect or intellectuals. There are two different understanding of anti-intellectualism. We can differentiate the anti-intellectual attitude, which is against intellectuals, and attitude of anti-intellectualists who ‘are critical of certain views concerning the intellect’ (White 1962, p. 457). For example, according to George Sorel, intellectualism refers to ‘abstract rationalism that fails to deal with reality’ (Humphrey 1951, p. 40). In other words, by anti-intellectualism Sorel means anti-rationalism as far as rationalism is abstract and cannot adequately comprehend reality. Some philosophers like Nietzsche, Sorel, Bergson, William James, and writers like William Blake, D.H. Lawrence, or Ernest Hemingway can be considered anti-rationalist thinkers or opponents of intellectualism (Hofstadter 1963, p. 8). Sorel opposes ‘the role of the intellect in determining action’ and instead advocates intuition and emotion (Humphrey 1951, p. 40). This is very different from the politician’s anti-intellectualism. In the former’s anti-intellectualism, there is not a rejection or negation of intellect but rather a belief in the power of intuition and emotion. There is not any underestimation of intellect.¹² In this case, intellectualism and anti-intellectualism recognize rationalism but its use and form are different. In this respect, the above-mentioned philosophers and writers, as Richard Hofstadter points out in *Anti-intellectualism in American life*, are not anti-intellectualist in a sociological and political sense. That is why here we do not aim to discuss anti-intellectualism as ‘a type of philosophical doctrine’ (Hofstadter 1963, p. 8), but in its

Intellectuals are considered aristocratic and elite persons. For this reason, anti-intellectualism is used as a political instrument or a means of populism, which refers to be anti-elitism and anti-aristocracy. In 1900s, we can observe that in France, the intellectuals are those who abandon the nationalist mentality (p. 23), the claim that we directly see in Erdogan’s assertions about the intellectuals in Turkey who signed particularly the petition demanding the peace.

¹² ‘[...] the charge of intellectualism must be leveled at some particular system or systems of thought; and at Positivist or Platonic or mechanistic philosophy; and that anti-intellectualism is necessarily antirational [...]’. Bergson and James are well known for their anti-intellectualist philosophy. Instead of reason as an instrument of thought they ‘recognize the intuitive and non-rational element always present in man’s thought’ (Humphrey 1951, pp. 43-44).

sociological and political sense. When we talk about the intellect and intellectual, we have in mind certain vocational groups and also a certain value pertaining to the quality of mind or mental quality.

Anti-intellectualism is a sort of tool in the hand of supporters and politicians of neoliberalism and capitalism. In this respect, anti-intellectual attitudes aim to ‘mystify the world and in particular to support the project of neoliberal globalization’ (Agger 2008, pp. 423-430).¹³ This form of anti-intellectualism underestimates theory or intellect because theory has the potential to uncover and discover the truth of the world situation (Agger 2008, pp. 423-430). ‘To combat allegations of elitism, recent Republican presidents have adopted anti-intellectualism as a conservative form of populism’ (Shogan 2007, p. 295). This attitude is found in Erdogan’s public speeches, which demonstrates how close he is to the people and far from elitist and aristocratic lifestyles.¹⁴ ‘Anti-intellectualism is defined as a disparagement of the complexity associated with intellectual pursuits, and a rejection of the elitism and self-awareness that is commonly associated with intellectual life’ (Shogan 2007, p. 295). The aim of anti-intellectualism is politically to benefit from people. ‘A person who displays “anti-intellectual” qualities disparages the rational complexity associated with intellectual pursuits’ (Shogan 2007, pp. 295-296). It can be characterized as an anti-elitist attitude. ‘I depict anti-intellectualism as a strategic tool used by modern American presidents to enhance their political authority’ (Shogan 2007, p. 296).

In brief case studies, I examine the orientation of some politicians from Turkey that I find decidedly anti-intellectual in nature. As Colleen J. Shogan points out, American presidents utilize anti-intellectual posturing to enhance their political leadership. These politicians distance themselves from sophisticated, intellectual arguments. But they particularly stress how they are close to their national populace.

¹³ For an in-depth discussion about anti-intellectualism and its targets during the era of globalization and neo-liberism, see Agger (2008).

¹⁴ ‘We came to power not to be the master of this nation, we came to be servant of this nation’ (youtube 2014). But after the Soma mine disaster, he went to Manisa in Turkey and contradictorily threatened a protester, ‘if you blow your Prime Minister of your country a raspberry, you will be slapped’ (Odatv 2014); ‘On the world, the positions, authorities are not everlasting’ (Evrensel 2004).

In Erdogan's speeches, in particular during the Gezi Protest, anti-intellectual attacks were made towards people who took part in the protests. According to him, the protesters were a small minority of beatniks and radicals. 'Reagan liked playing the underdog, and understood the value of being underestimated in politics' (Shogan 2007, p. 299). Anti-intellectualism helps politicians to hide their elitist and bourgeois attitude through a populist approach. Erdogan does not insistently move away from the bravado (*kabadaylık*) of anti-intellectualism. Intellectuals are always considered to have an elite character.

Erdogan uses anti-intellectual expressions to refer to the academics and intellectuals signing the declaration of 'Academics for Peace'.¹⁵ He calls them 'lumpen', 'half-portion intellectual', and 'crappy so-called'.¹⁶ Besides, these intellectuals are also 'ignorant', 'dark', an 'intellectual piece of garbage'. Erdogan claims that these intellectuals do not produce any products or studies and therefore do not have any reputation on an international level. He labelled them 'supporters of terror'. This is a very important point to his populism, which addresses nationalist emotions or feelings. To frighten people by the charge of terrorism is the main political manoeuvre of the U.S., which we can also find in this speech by Erdogan. This speech took place in a *muhtar* (village headperson) meeting at which he explained clearly that these academics would 'pay the price of this betrayal' (Bianet 2016a).

Erdogan also attacked the intellectuals who wrote a petition called 'No War in Syria', declaring that they were worried about the intervention of Turkey in

¹⁵ When Erdogan talks about and criticizes this petition, he claims that 'Turkey does not have any problem with Kurdish citizens. That is, there is no Kurdish question in Turkey' (Hürriyet 2016). But in 2011 in a public meeting in Diyarbakir, he said that 'In this country there is a Kurdish question, you can call it "southeastern problem" or whatever you call. Will we live and breathe Kurdish question until we die?' (Diken 2015).

¹⁶ These expressions from President Erdogan's speech at 19th *muhtar* (village headperson) meeting (Bianet 2016b). Erdogan is not the first person to call intellectuals the 'so-called intellectuals'. In 1954 at a Republican Party meeting, President Dwight D. Eisenhower referred to intellectuals as 'wisecracking so-called intellectuals going around and showing how wrong was everybody [...]'. In the same speech, he gives a definition of the intellectual: 'By the way, I heard a definition of an intellectual that I thought was very interesting: a man who takes more words than are necessary to tell more than he knows' (Hofstadter 1963, p. 10). Here Eisenhower disdained the knowledge of intellectuals as unnecessary.

the war in Syria.¹⁷ He called them an ‘intellectual piece of garbage’ and continued to say that ‘these intellectuals do not have a stick in this world’ (Diken 2016). Erdogan called on the people to react to these intellectuals and said ‘there should be a reaction of my people against these. It does not mean that one who received the title of professorship from any place is an intellectual’ (Diken 2016). His speeches deliberately polarize the public by insulting the decisions of the institutions, which have the authority to give a professorship to a person. He is right that a person who has the title of professorship may not be a real intellectual, but it does not mean to have an ‘absolute’ right to sling mud at people. He simply just refers to those persons as intellectuals who are his supporters or on his side.

When Erdogan spoke after the Sultanahmet attack (12 January 2016), he attacked the academics who signed the petition for peace (11 January 2016 released to the public) and gave instructions to public institutions to make provisions against these academics or intellectuals. In this regard, Erdogan claims: ‘Today Turkey’s problem is the terror problem, like many other countries which are tired of it; it is not a Kurdish question’ (Hürriyet 2016). He calls on all public institutions to take measures to punish all those who ‘eat its bread but treat the State as an enemy’ (Hürriyet 2016). Erdogan believes that this is not only his personal idea but that people also think the same. He takes to saying everything on behalf of the people who are taken for granted. Erdogan insulted intellectuals as ‘the cruel’, ‘the darkest’, ‘the ignorant’, ‘the traitor’, ‘the lumpen’, ‘immoral’, ‘the polluted soul’, ‘the tool of terrorist organization’, ‘the repulsive’, ‘mandatory waste’ (Cumhuriyet 2016).¹⁸

Anti-intellectualism, no doubt, is not a new approach; it has a dark history, from Ancient Greece, as we can see in the case of Socrates, to the Middle Ages, and

¹⁷ This petition was signed by more than 200 intellectuals (18 February 2016). They expressed their concerns about the intervention of Turkey to the Syrian war and they wrote that ‘we do not allow R. T. Erdogan to take the possibility to ruin Turkey by pushing it into a dirty war, which he tried to do by the mandate for 1 March 2003’ (Diken 2016).

¹⁸ President Erdogan took action against those who criticize him or who he believes will give affront to him; however, some are trying to bring a suit against him. According to the second article of the Turkish Constitution, it is not possible to take criminal action against him except for treason. But it is possible to file a claim for compensation. It seems that Erdogan insults everybody by taking refuge behind this second article of Turkish Republic Constitution (Cumhuriyet 2016).

from the burning of Giordano Bruno by the church authority in 1600, to the burning of books during the Nazi-era and the Middle East, China, and Russia today. All around the world there are anti-intellectualist movements. The charter of peace by the ‘Academics for Peace’ group, which resulted in the dismissal of many academics and caused them to lose their research funding, is a response to an enormous amount of an oppression on freedom of thinking and research. Therefore, it is possible to think of anti-intellectualism as the result of populist policies. Across the globe, when we consider many political leaders, an anti-intellectual attitude appears in the party’s propaganda. This attack on the intellectual is in a sense the result of an attack on reason and intellect, as is substantiated by Max Horkheimer’s analysis of reason. To pose intuition and faith against reason, as it were, becomes an ideological apparatus (as Althusser called it). In the case of Erdogan, anti-intellectualism systematically becomes a government policy. In the realm of global politics, the situation is no different.

Anti-intellectualism actually represents a bourgeois attitude that takes sides with the capitalism. Populist discourses, by claiming that they are one with the people and like them, try to demonstrate that they are against elites and the aristocracy, by claiming that the intellectuals underrate them and exploit people’s feelings. Anti-intellectualism is nothing more than an elitist, bourgeois attitude, that takes the side of capital, which pretends to be on the side of the people. Although populism emerges from a discourse claiming to be on the side of the people, it does not pronounce any concrete ideas about self-government by the people. Populism excludes the people from governing. It claims to be based on the interests of the people but in fact these interests are paid no mind. Populism never targets long term outcomes or goals. It acts according to the needs of the people at the moment. For this reason, populism is not directly an ideology but rather an instrument in the service of an ideology or a discursive apparatus serving private capitalist interests. For example, the populist discourses in Europe make use of the fear about immigrants and refugees; in the U.S., this threat of terrorism has great influence. In short, populism

is nourished from people's hopes, needs, and feelings. Anti-intellectualism can be read as a political dimension of populism.¹⁹

Erdogan in fact desires to be accepted and confirmed by these 'so-called' intellectuals. He secretly desires to be like an intellectual, which for him is an elite. When he cannot achieve to be like them, he begins to exclude, ignore and humiliate them. Erdogan did not only insult intellectuals, but he also used all institutions as a means to attack them, to outlaw and disfranchise them. The victims are not only deprived of their academic research, university, and students; they cannot even go abroad because of their blocked passports. In some universities, there are no professors who can lecture because all have lost their jobs. These dismissals, disciplinary investigations, people in police custody and other unfair practices victimize the students. It is a great damage to the right to education and therefore to academic freedom.

Since July 2016, more than 120,000 academics, teachers and civil servants have been dismissed by statutory decree laws enacted during the state of emergency. 7,916 of them are academics, 460 of whom are from the Academics for Peace (BAK), and 33,990 of them are teachers.

¹⁹ Populism has different meaning for the Left and Right. But it is also accepted that populism has negative and positive connotations. According to some, populism is a positive force in leading us to pay attention to the importance of the historical role of the people in history (Keping 2016).

Table 1 - Right violations against 'Academics for peace' (BAK)

	Public	Private	Total
Removed and banned from public service with the decree of laws ^a	372	8	380
Dismissal ^a	37	39	76
Resignation	15	10	25
Forced Retirement	20	1	21
Removed and banned from public service with the decree laws + dismissal + resignation + retirement	409	51	460
Disciplinary Investigation	442	63	505
Disciplinary Investigations. Decision of the Investigation Committee: Dismissal from public service. Pending CoHE (YOK) approval	107	5	112
Preventive suspension	90	11	101
Suspension from administrative duty	3	4	7
Police custody	67	3	70
Pre-trial detention ^b	2	2	4

Source: (Barış için Akademisyenler 2017)

^a*Among the Peace Petition signatories, 42 academics that had been earlier dismissed or forced into resignation, were also removed and banned from public service with the decree laws. In addition, Ph.D. students within the Faculty Training Program suffer from rights violations due to the amendments in the procedures and principles and the decree laws.*

^b*Three academics had to stay in pre-trial detention for 40 days and one for 22 days until they were released after the first court bearing.*

We should not forget that in Germany and in Italy during the fascist period, many anti-fascist scholars lost their jobs. In December 1934 more than 600 academics were excluded from German universities for political reasons (Belardelli 2005, p. 30).

4. The Form of Resistance and Struggle for the Academic Freedom and against the Restrictions²⁰

At international and global level, many scholars, scientists, writers, universities, and associations declared their support for the right of the scholars in Turkey and the autonomy of Turkish universities.²¹ These scholars call on the Turkish government for peace and to stop restricting academic freedom and violating human rights and acting violently.

These actions violate both basic human rights and academic freedom. They obstruct the ability of these academics to conduct their research and fulfil other university-related duties. Crucially, these actions also violate several articles of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights – to which Turkey is a state party – in particular, the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of conscience.²²

The assaults on freedom and democracy are not new in the history of Turkey, as we mentioned before. In the 1980s, we can observe the first assault on academic freedom with the formation of YOK (Council of Higher Education).²³ Today the universities, because of two new decrees (675 and 676 published on Turkish Official Journal, on 29 October 2016), have lost their autonomy and academic freedom to decide and elect their university rectors, who from now on will be appointed by the President of Republic. The President decides one of three candidates proposed

²⁰ For further information reporting on recent attacks on higher education, like imprisonment and loss of position, see Scholars at Risk Network: <<http://monitoring.academicfreedom.info/map/turkey>>.

²¹ For a statement by the Council of the American Studies Association (28 July 2016) see: <<https://www.theasa.net/about/advocacy/resolutions-actions/resolutions/statement-academic-freedom-turkey>> (viewed 12 April 2017); for the letters (dated 4 April 2017, 14 January 2016, 22 February 2016 and 17 March 2016) of Middle East Studies Association in different period see <<http://mesana.org/committees/academic-freedom/intervention/letters-turkey.html>>.

²² Written by American Anthropological Association on 17 January 2016. For further statements, letters, and panels by other academic societies and organization see web-site of *Mesa: Middle East Studies Association*. For the support letter from 23 countries see Bianet (2016b).

²³ 'The Turkish higher education system is regulated by laws that contradict all international standards on academic freedoms, including those in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Right, the Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education, the Magna Charta Universitatum, and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel' (Times Higher Education 2017).

by the Council of Higher Education (YOK). The institutions of higher education in Turkey disquietedly do not only lose their autonomy but also the quality of teaching, researching, learning. The universities lose their qualified academics by dismissal, resignation, and retirement. The repression is felt both in private and public universities. The universities' rectors act as dictators and help the government to dismiss academics from universities. Universities even begin to control the conference papers to see whether they include critiques of the current government and its actions. Particularly in the last decade, the universities encounter serious repression. After the Ankara massacre (12 and 13 October 2015), a strike and boycott was organized and because of it the staff, students, and academics at the universities, were repressed (Bianet 2015).

Academics who create theory through critical reason assume political and moral responsibility, and criticize the existent situation in order to uncover the truth. But their action is not limited only to a petition. After the declaration of 'Academics for Peace', they continue to create forms of struggle against dismissal, resignation, and retirement. These forms of struggle lead us to think about the possibility of different kind of academy outside of the universities. Are universities the only place where we can produce new ideas, science, thought, discussions, and critiques?

Within the context of this question, the dismissed academics continue to struggle not only theoretically but also politically, and they are trying to create an alternative academy in order to meet with, and lecture to their students. The first academy for solidarity established at Kocaeli University by dismissed academics. After Kocaeli Academy for Solidarity, other academies are established in Mersin, Izmir, Dersim, Istanbul. Lastly in Ankara 'Ankara Dayanisma Akademisi' (ADA) (Ankara Academy for Solidarity) was established in the Chamber of Architects of Ankara Branch on January 2017; they organize seminars in the building of Trade Union of Public Employees of Education and Sciences (Egitim-sen). In their program, there are the following subtitles: 'Continued State of Emergency (OHAL) and the Regime of Legislative Decree (KHK)', 'Video-Action Workshop-I', 'Economic Cri-

sis and Labour’, ‘Defending Human Rights in the State of Emergency (OHAL)’, ‘Theater Workshop-I: Dramaturgy Reading’, ‘Solidarity Workshop-I: How can be human rights violations prevented in human destruction?’. In Ankara, there is also the Street Academy, which holds lectures in several parks and places. Among these ‘Praksis Journal Academy for Solidarity’ is established by Praksis Journal, which is a quarterly magazine.

Not only at the national level but also at the international one, there is solidarity and support for the dismissed intellectuals. In Europe, some institutions and universities in countries such as Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, U.S., England, Austria, Italy give jobs and scholarships to the academics at risks.

An academic, Nuriye Gülmen and a teacher, Semih Özakça, started a hunger strike in Ankara since 9 March 2017 in order to protest the attacks against the academy and to get their jobs back. They say that they struggle not just for their job but also against fascism, the delegated legislation (KHK), and the repressions realized through the State of Emergency. They say that in the last two months 37 persons committed suicide and 150,000 public servants (public employee) lost their jobs. Also in Istanbul, Ankara, Cologne, and Paris signatories of the ‘Academics for Peace’ started symbolic hunger strikes for up to 12 hours.

With the referendum in 16 April 2017, in spite of the will of people, Turkey entered a new path of violence and trickery: the Turkish presidential system, corresponding to the end of the so-called democracy of the constitutional and parliamentary system. There are three types of presidential systems. In the first group, there are countries such as the U.S. and Brazil, in which we can find the basic principles of democratic systems, such as the principle of separation of powers: legislative, executive, and juridical power. In the second type of presidential system, there are countries like France, where we can find a semi-presidential system. In the third type of presidential system we can find countries like Republic of Rwanda, Central African Republic, Mexico, which are semi-colonies of the developed capitalist countries and in which there is no principle of separation of powers or in which this separation is very weak. This last presidential system embraces now also Turkey and

helps the developed capitalist states interfere more easily in economic, social, and political life of the countries governed under this system. It seems that for the citizens of the Republic of Turkey there is no other way to continue to fight for democracy, for their historical achievements against this oppressive, one-man-system by way of both theory and praxis.

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