

PSD'S HISTORY, IDEOLOGY AND PROGRAMME

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARTIYA SERBESTIYA DERSIMI (PSD)

A few words on “Tekosin” (1) is necessary to explain the background of the movement known as PSD, the Freedom Party of Dersim.

Tekoşin, was a socialist Kurdish organisation founded in June 1978 by a group of revolutionary from Dersim who had left “Kurtuluş” (2), over their ideological and political differences, one of which was the national question, the Kurdish question in particular.

Tekoşin had hundreds of supporters, most of whom were from Dersim.

A year after Tekoşin`’s emergence hundreds of PKK members from Inner Dersim, Antep, Elazig, Batman, Diyarbakir and Mardin left PKK to join Tekosin. PKK, which in our view is a creation of Turkish intelligence, used violence to stop the process of its dissolution. Six Tekosin members were killed during the year 1979 by PKK with the help of Turkish intelligence service(3).

After the 1980 military coup in Turkey, Tekosin launched a guerrilla war against the military fascist regime. Its guerrilla war based on Dersim and had lasted for two years, during which hundreds of Tekosin supporters were arrested. Four prominent members of Tekosin were killed by the state either in fighting or under torture in prisons (4). Many of its cadres went into hiding. Some of them had to go into exile at first in Damascus and Beirut, thereafter in European countries, such as Sweden, Britain, Holland, France and Germany.

Tekoşin fighters were in very close contacts with the peasants of Inner Dersim on daily basis during the years of armed struggle. One of the reasons for which they were in Dersim`’ mountains was to teach the peasants their “Kurdish” identity, to which the peasants had strong objections. This objection to the Kurdish identity in Dersim was so widespread that Tekosin began to debate the issues of ethnic origin and identity. Some of its members who were actively involved in armed struggle, started a field study, asking lots of questions to the people of elder generations about their traditions. This research and discussion gained more momentum while in exile in 1987-1988, especially when a new magazine called Desmala Sure (The Red Handkerchief) had emerged (5) in London in 1991, which eventually led the Tekosin to break away from the Kurdish nationalist influences and from the Stalinist version of socialism.

That`’s how the Tekosin gradually transformed itself into a Dersimi movement and took the name PSD in 1997.

PSD`’S IDEOLOGICAL STAND AND PROGRAMME

PSD`’s background which briefly stated above in itself refers to its commitment to the socialist ideals, though the party doesn`’t see the possibility of socialism in one country alone.

PSD`’s primary goal is a national self-rule in Dersim committed to the democratic values including secularism. In other words a de-colonisation process which also covers a radical social transformation in the interests of the people as a whole, especially in the interest of the labourer, including those

without work and property is needed. PSD stands for a new social order centered around the human values, such as social justice, equality and freedom.

To this end a national resistance based on mass struggle is unavoidable.

So long as the common national goal is the country's main concern, PSD keeps its doors open to the every variety of the left-wing and socialist tendencies, as well as the patriotic and democratic elements of the Dersim society who are willing to ally themselves with the socialists inside the party.

URGENT DEMANDS

The following reforms are urgently needed to start the de-colonization process in Dersim:

- recognition of the 1938 Dersim genocide alongside the 1915 Armenian genocide.
- abolition of all remainder of the "Law of Tunceli" including the so-called "Extra Ordinary Regime" which has been practically in force since the "Law of Tunceli" in late 1935.
- restoration of the Dersim identity
- an end to the ongoing "dirty war" between the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) and PKK, both of whom are nothing other than the occupiers in Dersim.
- freedom for Dersimis to freely organize and participate in political life with their own identity and organizations.
- the right of the education and free publication in native languages, called Kırmancki (Zazaki) and Kurmanci
- freedom of religion and an autonomous status for the religious-cultural institutions of Dersim called "ocak"
- to stop the current dam project in progress over the River Munzur
- to take urgent measures as to stop the mass migration from Dersim
- effective measures to overcome widespread unemployment and poverty
- improvement of the health and education services
- to rebuild the destroyed villages and provide conditions so that the villagers concerned could return back to their lands safely

The above cultural, linguistic, social and political demands show the way by which the five century long Dersim Question could be solved. Beginning with the reforms such as the recognition of the national identity and cultural rights, followed by the broader rights for the local administrations and the re-establishment of the economy in the interest of the local people, might offer a chance to a democratic and peaceful solution to the Dersim Question which the Party favours so long as it is a real possibility. The subsequent step must be a democratic self-rule in Dersim.

NOTES

1. The movement named after the journal known as “Tekoşin”. The term “Tekoşin” means “Struggle”. Eight issues of Tekoşin were published between the years 1978 and 1986.

2. “Kurtuluş” was one of the Turkish left-wing group originated from “The People’s Liberation Party and Front of Turkey”, the THKP/C, a movement of early 1970s, led by Mahir Çayan.

3. The names of the members of Tekoşin who were killed by PKK are:

Ali Yaylacık known as “Balta” (30 March 1979), Bozan Arslan (1 May 1979), Mehmet Uzun (13 August 1979), Ahmet Ballı (20 August 1979), M. Salih Eren (19 December 1979) and Kamer Özkan (30 September 1993).

The dates of assassinations are given in brackets.

4. The Tekoşin’s members who were killed by the Turkish state:

Orhan Gönülalan (1 May 1980), Burhan Şener (1981), Hüseyin Aydın (21 March 1985) and Hıdır Doğan (1992).

Kamer Özkan and Hüseyin Aydın were among the founders of the Tekoşin and its first Central Committee members.

5. Sixteen issues of “Desmala Sure” were published between the years 1991 and 1996.