-------- Mensagem Original --------

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| **Assunto:** | [Squares] Fwd: [reclaiming-spaces] update 2 from Istanbul |
| **Data:** | Mon, 3 Jun 2013 15:55:38 +0100 |
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FYI especially Bernado and I will also post your recent request to the

Reclaiming Spaces list :)

---------- Forwarded message ----------

From: Orhan Esen [<orhanes@superonline.com>](mailto:orhanes@superonline.com)

here s the version 2, with updates on in red.

On Jun 2, 2013, at 6:24 PM, Orhan Esen wrote:

dear friends, colleagues,

The following is a personal evaluation of the happenings in Istanbul as per

june 2nd sunday PM, as far as i could obtain material from last weeks

observations at field and from social media. Due to overwhelming amount of

input inaccuracies may be anavoidable. hence the organisation as single

notes.

have also a look to my extensive background information article on Taksim

project in turkish links below, (\*)

I apologize for not having been available for all personal requests on

interviews, meetings this week.

I hope this report helps as a preliminary statement

any feedback welcome

best in solidarity, orhan esen

Situation in istanbul changed and changes every minute very fastly. This,

still true. Here are the updates after observations of sunday 2nd june.

till 8 PM.

yesterday, June 1st Sat, possibly over a million people marched to taksim

square from all over the metropolis (and the country), and police forces

withdrew from the taksim area.

today it was sealed with heavy barricades from the construction site and

remained a safe bell jar.

It was one of the the most extraordinary days Istanbul ever witnessed in

its 2700 years history, everyone will admit. Call it whatever you may wish.

today was even more so.

important remark first:

the police terror shifted to nearby besiktas neighbourhood surpassing any

level of cruelty so far known. most horrendeous reports hint to the usage

of a new chemical matter. human rights violation of a next level occured at

besiktas / dolmabahce area last evening. situation must have been very

serious, social media is full with worst stories. people suffered in a way

that no one was even able to capture images or like. the kind of gas used

(definetely not the common teargas) in besiktas in the evening hours must

be interrogated. ( i have no further details as per this moment)

note: in besiktas there is another very important right to the city issue

(privatization of their cost in front of the prime ministers office /

exclusion from space) and particularly the Besiktas FC fans were very

actively and radically supporting the Taksim issue from the second day of

the occupy action on and are very much pissed with premier Erdogan as they

justly feel that tphe prime has literally 'stolen their waterfront'. a very

personal issue+ there.

in besiktas trouble still goes on. today many bad news from all over turkey

arrived.

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and some notes on a political analysis of the situation here:

that mass situation as per yesterday, will be analyzed by many from

different angles. i ll try to capture a few main features.

- the character of the big mass that entered the square has changed. the

original occupy movement with the aim to save the park \*absolutely lost

control over the situation\*. ý dont say this to blame: it would have been

technically absolutely impossible.

- but also: if anyone or any"body" says, it has control over the political

situation: question it. the situation is developing in a very spontaneous

way, for sure many different actors applying their own agendas. Technically

a coordination of leftwing political groups is organizing the event on the

Taksim square and gezi park today, june 2nd.

remarkable ! taksim was never so tidy. taksim was miraculously converted

into a site of holy pilgrimage. families visiting to make holiday pictures

in front of burnt and cleaned police cars etc. social media is full with

these..

- that new movement spread out to entire country. hard clashes took place all over. its not any more a taksim gezi park movement alone. taksim has turned a symbol or code. not exclusive content any more.

- it has become a very general, very wide spectrum mass movement with a strong secularist undertone. a movement of all secularists, who are

opposing to and discontent with either the very nature or simply with the current governing style of an authoritarian conservative government.

kemalist autoritarianism was the most visible today on site. screaming for ours " we are the soldiers of mustafa kemal". (still better than: army come and save us ! - legitimazing military rule) still at the same time getting "folkloric" in a way.

- this means at the same time: the 'right to the city' character of the original movement has strongly undergone. It is not a genuine "occupy" or "right to the city" movement any more. if the term is appropriate: "occupy is politically occupied or overshadowed".

- example: groups like anti-capitalist muslims, who were integral part of the original right to the city / occupy movement / resistance officially disappeared (at least became invisible concerning their banners).

today they reappeared, not many in numbers, but very visible. in "peaceful coexistence". i add the photo. next door to some hard core kemalists. The nonmuslim antikapitalits obviously as a bufferzone. no other cause would have brought them in the same space together. its a first. kurds appeared as well, more visibly. and lgbtt, ...

i did not hear any more paroles spent on the taksim project, as was

dominating the original movement. this was the case, even on friday when nearly 50 000 people passed over the park and still were trying to collect their own garbage, still when being treated with teargas.

- from personal and mass experience point of view, the situation has an immense emancipating impact. There is a very undeniable "revolutionary" moment to all. After the "liberation of Taksim" hundreds of thousands of young people, many with their families enjoy this once in a life feeling.

Its a big festival of freedom simultaneously.

today you would name it clearly: at taksim, there is the revolutionary situation in a bell jar. you may visit it, come in, experience, breathe it, enjoy. get poisoned. and get back out of the oasis, walk a mile until the next operating public transportation hub and get back to business as usual. in 2 days millions of istanbulits just motivated by social media come to visit it. its carnevalesque and very liberating in the most positive sense.

however extreme polarisation of media by government supporters and kemalists reduces it to a white/black political picture. colors, nuances get lost. thats why we need social media for it.

creativity and humor of graffiti knows no boundaries. i am amazed every time.

- with the new situation at Taksim, as per 1st june, the demolition of the police campus at the entry of taksim gezi park, as well as the headquarters of the construction company (both in neighbouring prefabricated containers, both rudely occupying the park entry since months) seem to reflect wide spread consensus of the gathered mass. All close nearby public utilities such as bus terminals etc were uneffected. A selective deconstruction took place.

still so. they ve become mekkas of revolution tourism. very tidy, cleaned up. as if they were "produced" on purpose for a film set.

at night further demolitions of construction machines -for the tunnel under construction, the startup phase of the taksim project since november 5th 2012, took place. taksim tunnel project under construction stopped. (an extensive comment on the tunnel project is in my article)

as there is no authority anymore, particularly at nite, further

demolishings by unidentified persons -as habitual in such cases- at any further target obviously occured. it is expected that mainstream media will make extensive coverage with that.

this tendency remained limited to first nite only. "authority" or better call it common sense, collective responsible behaviour is fully reebstablished. i am amazed another time. the very discipline of the first three nites, when the occupy movement consisited of some intellectual elite mainly, is reestablished on a very general mass basis.

- the new tone of the demonstrations is the request for the government to withdraw. (not for "early elections", lets say or for "the change of the unfair electoral system" that does not allow a good representation but only strong parliamentary majority)

- Republican leader Kilicdaroglu's words a week ago in front of the socialist international to compare Erdogan with Assad as a dictator, which resulted in a very cold reaction of / mental exclusion from the assembly (pointing to the elected character of Erdogan compared to Assad) reflects this mood very well. The republican inacceptance of electoral results since 3 periods must be noted at this point. Republicans canceled a planned demonstration on asian side and have asked for mass mobilization to Taksim on May 31st instead.

- phantasms about post-conquest Taksim are shifting dramatically apart, and getting respectively maximalistic on the other side as well: the very same day (june 1st) , the prime minister Erdogan openly talked about a new police blockade and the total cleansing of the square, cutting down all trees, developing that building on the gezi park, as projected, and even going further: demolishing the opera house@taksim (which is currently being restored with government money !) The new police barricade did not occur.

big novelty: the AKM / opera house under renovation was squatted today. The discussions around its destiny in the last ten years are the real reason for the entire taksim project. Erdogan originally wanted to demolish it.

>From his position there was a barter / a big concession for him: renovating the AKM but getting the barracks instead. possibly losing both, is too much for such an ego. he may do anything to prevent this. Isn't this all too much closeness for a prime minister to local affairs ?

Another very frank but very problematic statement (of erdogan) followed: an elected government is only to be controlled by voters every 4 years, in between any intirvention should be allowed without questioning. he only admitted that police may have gone a bit too far in usage of teargas. (possibly the reason for the experiment with a new gas in besiktas ! )

- also to note: the republican movement clearly present at Taksim did not do business as usual, (so far) they did not demand 'the army to duty' as in former republican mass rallies like a few years ago. If this position continues, this might help them witnessing their own power as such, gaining self confidence. Taksim events may become a major milestone for the republicans to become a part of the democratic system. ("we are powerful enough, we do not need a big brother to watch upon us, our presence is well justified, we are part of this country, no one can touch us, our identity, dignity and way of life.")

today, this was demonstrated.

- however, very obscure, and in my view threatening annonces made appearence in social media (such as "armed muslims attacking/slaughtering demonstrators"). obviously to provoke the republican sentiments, to foster escalation.

- as per 1st june, the very official words of Erdogan 2 weeks ago, to ban any political activity from taksim square eternally, has become de facto reduntant and history. the left wing groups' revolutionary instinct or reflex widely recognized the potential of the taksim conflict. june 1st, was widely conceived as a delayed may 1st, 2013 celebration which was first of technical reasons forbidden at Taksim this year, and soon officially banned forever. Taksim square was flagged with banners of all left movements, simulating the mayday.

why not simply demanding this gain to be briefed oficially ? why not negotiate now, that this right to demonstrate at Taksim in future is untouchable ? this would have been a great gain, after 30 years of conflict on mayday at taksim. no, it is even not articulated ! we want the government go.

- the "conquest" of the square, triggered revolutionary mood: is about to officially demanding the withdrawal of the government. (just like once the tzar. analogies to octoberrevolution are not seldom articulated in these circles) nothing else is good enough. a simple and logical demand "the taksim project should be renegotiated" (=hmm: childish) is simply overheard, as we are in revolutionary state now. (=the revolution will possibly solve the park issue in future as a minor technical detail; "our technicians" know it much better than theirs).

the major question still remains: where is the face to negotiate with the government. the maximalizm - not attached to / really interested in – the original issue, is not interested in a real solution for the gezi park and taksim project. to be taken seriously in this matter: we still need the negotiators to be taken seriously by the government. otherwise a useless struggle will escalate.

- a very personal remark (for future) here: I am (potentially) concerned about a possible escalation, vis a vis of the peace process underway in kurdistan. circles openly opposing the peace process, like ultra republican "workers party" and likes openly showed flags yesterday on the square. right wing nationalist mhp members/symphatisants have been often reported having taking part in the clashes with the police forces. Left wing circles distanced to / sceptical about peace process simply since it is inaugurated by the AKP, are very present at taksim. circles planning torpedoing the peace process cannot possibly find better pre conditions.

- the government should not / cannot be as stupid as not seeing that finishing a war in the east of the country cannot be accompanied by the inauguration of another war in the west. The secularized west, (be it right or not) definetely perceives many very recent intirventions and policies of the government as declaration of war to their lifespheres. Public drinking becoming a major component of the protest acts is significant hereby.

- BDP/HDK, representative of the kurdish movement and its allies, has been strongly present at the initial ('occupy') phase through the very person of Sýrrý Sureyya Onder, deputy at the parliament, who played a key role in stopping the bulldozers. He got injured with a gas bullet and shortly disappeared. A stronger statement / involvement of the BDP and its allies in HDK will surely help to normalize the situation as well to secure and reestablish democratic standards.

today a low profile kurdish presence could be witnessed.

- the original, founding Taksim Platform's appeal "Taksim hepimizin ! / Taksim belongs to everybody (or all of us) !" a clear appeal to pluralist use and participatory planning of the Taksim square has been undermined. The widely accepted secularist slogan, widely accepted by most secularist circles " Taksim Bizim ! / Taksim belongs to Us", as a claim to exclusive usage of urban space is in my view not unproblematic.

here i attach the turkish original of the actual press release of the Platform as per this morning, June 2nd.

The initial taksim platform

<http://www.taksimplatformu.org/>

has released the following declmaration this morning:

\*TAKSÝM PLATFORMUNDAN BASIN AÇIKLAMASI - 01.06.2013\*

1. Gösteri ve yürüyüþ yapmak anayasal ve demokratik bir haktýr. Parký,

yeþili ve aðaçlarý korumak isteyenlere þiddet uygulamak ise suçtur.

1. to demonstrate is a constitutional right. exercising violance to those who want to protect a park, the green and the trees on the other hand, is a crime.

2. Bu amaçla hareket eden yaþlý genç, hasta, saðlýklý insanlarýn üzerine yoðun þekilde biber gazý sýkmak ve þiddet uygulamak vahim bir insan haklarý ihlali ve iþkencedir.

2. to spray tear gas on young, old, healthy or ill people motivated by the above, and exercise violance on them is a major violation of human rights and torture.

3. Farklý görüþlerden oluþan çok sayýda uzmanla yola çýkan ve baðýmsýz sivil bir insiyatif olan Taksim Platformu projenin duyurulduðu ilk günden beri yönetimle Taksim'e yapýlmasý planlanan müdahaleyi konuþmaya çalýþýyor. Yönetimin görüþmek yerine þiddeti, kaba kuvveti tercih etmesi Kabul edilemez.

3. The taksim platform, which is an independent civic initiative comprising of experts from different fields, is trying to discuss with the governent the project since the very first day it was announced. It is inacceptable that the government prefers sheer violance over negotiations.

4. Yönetimin Taksim'deki aðaçlara zarar vermeyeceðinin sözünü vermesini istiyoruz. Taksim'e yapýlacak inþaattan vazgeçilmesini ve kentin merkezindeki en büyük yeþil alanýn mevcut aðaçlara zarar verilmeden geniþletilmesini ve STK'larýn da katýlýmý ile daha iyi korunmasýný talep ediyoruz. Aksi halde yönetim Ýstanbul'un en önemli yeþil alanýný yok etmeye çalýþan ve bu nedenle halký ayaklandýranlar olarak tarihe geçecektir.

4. We want the government to promise they will not harm the trees at taksim. We demand that the construction plans in the center of Istanbul is given up, the green space is enlarged without harming the existing trees, and beter protected with the participation of NGOs.

5. Bu gerçekler doðrultusunda halkýn demokratik ve toplumsal tepkisini dile getirmesine desteðimiz devam edecektir.

5. we will continue to support peoples' democratic and social reactions according to the above mentioned criteria .

\*"Taksim Hepimizin!"\*

the other issue based organization directly focused on the Gezi Park, Taksim Gezi Park Protection and Beautification Association, established 2013

<https://www.facebook.com/taksimgeziparkidernegi?fref=ts>

<http://taksimicinayagakalk.com/>

they will release an appeal as well, ill forward it.

final words: i am often asked what the demands of an international solidarity campaign should be. i can certainly state the following,

- the usage of any chemicals on demonstrators should be banned immediately.

- responsibles for harsh and unjust treatment of peaceful occupiers that has led to escalation of the conflict should be investigated.

- taksim square's function also as a space for istanbuls citizens political visibility should be preserved. both the squares' and the adjacent gezi parks' physical properties -regarding security etc- should be developed.

- the taksim project should be re-negotiated as a whole in a participatory process. the green herein should not be touched.

- a monument commemorating the souls of the 37 people who died on the "bloody" mayday 1977 to be part of the Taksim project.

(in my view 1 + 2 june 2013 has already secured a strong place in history. it has already become the TAKSÝM DAY)

best regards, orhan

(\*)

links for my article, written as soon as the construction works on the

tunnel began (Taksim, November 5th., deciphring a coup d'etat)

so far in turkish only.

<http://www.yesilgazete.org/blog/2012/12/07/taksim-5-kasim-bir-darbenin-sifreleri-orhan-esen/>

<http://www.turnusol.biz/public/makale.aspx?id=14361&pid=19>

or a better print version, in Birikim monthly, feb 2012