

## The “New Turkey”: Fetishizing Growth with Fatal Results

by Zuhale Yeşilyurt Gündüz

Turkey’s ruling party has turned the country, which it calls “the new Turkey,” into a capitalist nightmare: a triad of neoliberal economics, political despotism, and Islamist conservatism. This article provides an overview of neoliberalism in Turkey, then looks at the government’s extraction policies, highlighting the Soma mine massacre as one tragic example of the destructive policies of the governing party, the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development Party). It also examines the extreme authoritarianism of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (formerly prime minister), and the growing cultural-religious conservatism, which the AKP has interlaced with Islamist rhetoric. This hegemonic triad of neoliberalism, despotism, and conservatism is an especially dangerous one. However, it is being increasingly criticized, and resistance movements against neoliberal policies are growing. All of this gives some hope for Turkey’s future.

### Neoliberalism in Turkey

Turkey used to be an agriculture powerhouse—one of only seven countries that could feed its people without agricultural imports. Turkey used to have state-led industrialization, import substitution, and protectionism, and still registered economic and industrial growth (although it also faced unemployment, high inflation, and debt problems). Turkey used to be all this and much more. After all, Turkey is a beautiful country, surrounded on three sides with seas. It has great lakes and rivers, huge forests, high mountains, and grand water falls.

However, much of this was crushed beginning January 24, 1980, the day neoliberalism entered Turkey and the government instituted a set of drastic economic restructuring measures. The ruling center-right Adalet Partisi (Justice Party) began a neoliberal program, which built upon capital accumulation and export support, opened the Turkish economy to foreign capital penetration, and turned the state into a mere servant of capital accumulation. Export subventions, privatization, deregulation, and finance and trade liberalization continuously increased.<sup>2</sup> Eight months later, the military intervened and ran the country for three years, during which it did its best to demolish the left and strengthen the neoliberal regime. Nothing was as it used to be and the changes realized in Turkey fulfilled the wishes and dreams of the Western powers, whether dressed as the IMF, World Bank, United States, or European Union. The neoliberal system was further developed under

Turgut Özal, who was first prime minister (1983–1989) and then president (1989–1993). The many economic crises (1994, 1999, 2001, and 2008–2009) did not bring a reversal of neoliberalism; instead, it was further fostered by the very crises it had created.**3**

Turkey's neoliberalism culminated in the new millennium with the rise of the AKP, a party with an Islamist background. The party wedded Islamist populism to neoliberalism, which has been critically dubbed “neoliberalism with a Muslim face.”**4** By winning over liberal intellectual and economic circles, the AKP has built a historic bloc with Islamic sentiments; İlhan Uzgel calls it “the new hegemonic bloc.”**5** Thus, in order to alter Turkey, the AKP initially had to alter itself.**6**

Under the AKP, the state became a facilitator of a neoliberal market economy and the protector of private capital. It no longer had a role in production, and totally integrated the Turkish economy with global markets. The party also continued the IMF program in full accord with business circles.**7** In order to attract the popular classes (and their votes), the AKP connected traditional religious values with liberal ones such as globalization. Though Islam was not constructed as the core reference point, its role is vital to the AKP's cultural-religious conservatism, and thus the party embodies not only the intersection of Islam and democracy, but also Islam and neoliberalism.**8**

What the AKP claimed as an “economic miracle” was nothing of the sort. Austerity policies, finance-driven growth, a private capital growth imperative, privatization, commodification of public services, huge rent regions from privatized lands that were formerly commons, decreasing security and living standards, wage cuts, cheap and easy-to-hire-and-fire labor, finance capital inflows, and a high trade deficit—this is not an “economic miracle.” Real production is diminishing and Turkey depends more and more on importing intermediary and capital goods, energy of all kinds, and even agricultural products.**9**

The AKP's economic model is built on two pillars. The first is crazed consumption via consumer credit. Turkey, with 74 million people, has 57 million credit cards with a total debt of \$45 billion. Giving the public consumer credit en masse was the main factor in Turkey's growth and “the magic trick that filled empty malls, and the opium that kept the majority of people quiet, happy and obedient.”**10** The second pillar is immense rent gains via commercialization of the commons. Lands, rivers, mountains, farmland, historical buildings, forests, parks—nothing is safe from commodification.**11**

The result of the AKP's policies was a continuous pauperization of the population and an increase in income injustice. In order to decrease social tensions and conflict, the AKP turned to "charity"—which it painted in Islamist colors. Thus, while weakening social policies and therefore public responsibility, the AKP promoted philanthropy to soften and ease the plight of the poor. By forgoing social welfare practices, the AKP maintained a "mercy economy," for the very poor.<sup>12</sup>

Turkey may show signs of aggregate GDP growth. It may now be formally the sixteenth-largest economy, arrogantly pronouncing huge jumps towards "the new Turkey," and striving towards the Top Ten. But in various global indexes, the country has fared much worse: in the UNDP's Human Development Index 2013, Turkey was ninetieth; in Transparency International's 2014 list, sixty-fourth; in the 2014 Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, it was one-hundred twenty fifth; and in the Climate Change Performance Index 2014, Turkey was among those countries considered "very bad."<sup>13</sup>

## Growth Fetishism with Fatal Results

It is more than a tragic irony that the AKP dubbed 2014 the "year of the environment," while it more honestly should have called it the year (or decade) of extreme exploitation of the environment!

The AKP's neoliberalism comes with tragic outcomes. This "merciless growth," which easily relinquishes humans, environment, and the commons for the "absolute fetish of economic growth," is driven by the construction sector, whose dynasts have passionate relations with the government.<sup>14</sup> People are not given a chance to participate in decision-making, even on issues that concern their lives deeply. Cities are opened up endlessly to the services of capital. It is no surprise, then, that Istanbul is now called "the city, which sold its soul to capital." Cities resemble huge construction areas and some areas are so full of skyscrapers, apartment blocks, and other huge buildings that it just takes one's breath away—in the most negative sense of the term. The AKP's development endeavors—the skyscrapers and business towers—steal even the ability and right to see the sky above.<sup>15</sup>

The AKP managed to connect consumption and construction closely with each other. Whereas a decade ago there were a few shopping malls in Turkey, by May 2014 the number has reached 329, with Istanbul alone being home to ninety-seven malls. In comparison, London has forty-two, Berlin and Rome have forty-three, Barcelona has forty-five, and Paris "just" fifteen. In the first seventy-nine years of the Republic of Turkey, twenty-six airports were built, and during the twelve years of AKP rule,

twenty-six new ones have been added—with more to come.<sup>16</sup> Huge skyscrapers, shopping malls, the third bridge over the Bosphorus, the third airport in Istanbul, nuclear plants aside hydroelectric and thermal power plants, and many more projects constitute Turkey’s “development.” More income for corporations means the opposite for all others, as people pay the price for this type of “growth.” Some lose their health and others their lives, in addition to environmental destruction such as the loss of forests, land, and clean drinking water. Claudia von Werlhof describes this bluntly: “While a tiny minority reaps enormous benefits from today’s economic liberalism, the vast majority of the earth’s human and non-human population, and the earth itself, suffer hardship to an extent that puts their very survival at risk.”<sup>17</sup>

The AKP’s program is built upon economic growth and ever-growing capital, and for this reason the government resists increasing workers’ safety regulations. According to the Workers Health and Safety Group, between 2002 and 2014 at least 14,455 workers have lost their lives at work. The report reveals a continuous increase: 811 workers died in 2003, 1,235 in 2013, and 1,600 in the first ten months alone of 2014.<sup>18</sup> Turkey ranks first in Europe (eight-and-a-half times higher than the EU average) and third globally in workplace accidents. From 2002 to 2011, workplace accidents have risen by 40 percent—a daily average of 219 accidents, with four deaths and five left unable to work. The mine sector is the most dangerous, with over 10 percent of miners suffering accidents at work. These are the deadly outcomes of three decades of privatization, subcontracting, outsourcing, poor occupational safety and health regulations, and insufficient, pre-arranged, pro-corporate inspections by authorities.<sup>19</sup> These factors make Turkey “cheap” and “competitive” globally—perfect to serve Western capitalism.

## Extractivism

In order to grow and develop, or so the AKP-written story goes, Turkey needs energy. As the country depends on energy imports while simultaneously “sitting” upon various forms of natural resources, the AKP stimulates the buildup of a “less energy dependent Turkey.” The fairy tales about the “need” for “more energy,” more coal mines and coal extraction, more hydroelectric and thermal power plants—plus the “must” for nuclear energy plants—is repeated over and over again by President Erdoğan and the AKP, who dream of a fossil-fuel dependent energy policy. They ask, “How else could Turkey grow? How else could it get rich?”

Turkey’s energy dependency is indeed quite impressive: it imports 98.6 percent of gas, 93 percent of oil, and 92 percent of coal. In 2012, 75 percent of all energy consumption was imported, while the rest was supplied from lignite (brown coal)

production.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the story goes, Turkey should use its “own” resources and extract more of these natural resources from domestic sources.

In “The New Extractivism,” Henry Veltmeyer and James Petras deal with this issue, defining extractivism as a decision by governments and corporations to extract more and more natural resources and to export these primary goods in order to “develop” economically and “cure” global recession, while disregarding the health, social, and environmental costs of this policy. Extractivism as a model of accumulation has a history going back five hundred years. When the capitalist system began to colonize huge parts of the globe, it structured itself around the raw materials found there. Since then, extractivist accumulation has been decided upon as a general policy (indeed a necessity of their existence by the natural-resource hungry centers of capitalism). Alberto Acosta reminds us of “the paradox of plenty” and “the resource curse”—and that it is always transnational corporations that are the “major beneficiaries of these activities.”<sup>21</sup> Extractivism goes beyond resource extraction and implies a development model. Fossil energy is not only the basis for capitalist production, but also the major force of capitalism and capitalist growth.<sup>22</sup> This indeed is “today’s imperialist plundering.”<sup>23</sup>

It is here that the AKP joined this neoliberal game, and 2012 was a turning point. Decreasing growth rates, lessening of foreign capital income, and the effect of the global economic crisis were all felt in Turkey. The AKP came up with the idea to decrease Turkey’s energy dependency and to turn to a domestic energy production, built upon domestic coal. The government would privatize land with coal areas, while giving incentives and guarantees to buy the produced goods. Capital meanwhile would build up thermal power plants, diminish workers’ safety and work guarantees, decrease costs of production, and sell their goods, as promised. And the remaining coal would be given away as charity coal bags for the AKP, especially before elections. Agricultural farming land would be part of emergency expropriation. Thus, the AKP loudly claimed it would turn the “crisis into an opportunity”—whereas in reality they created a neoliberal plunder economy.<sup>24</sup>

Between 2003 and 2011, 66 percent of Turkey’s growth was based on twelve sectors. Half of them were connected to construction and construction-related fossil-fuel sectors, which are all dependent on foreign imports or investments. Imported gas and coal accounts for 55.8 percent of the electricity produced in thermal power plants, and nearly all coal and steel is imported. Thus, Turkey’s growth in these sectors also means a growth in its trade deficit.<sup>25</sup>

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu’s November 6, 2014, announcement of Turkey’s tenth development plan for the years 2014–2018 highlights energy as a main

priority. Davutoğlu stated that legislation would be finalized soon to boost local construction of hydropower turbines exceeding 50 megawatts, to stimulate coal-fired thermal power plants all over Turkey's lignite areas by the end of 2015 through public-private cooperation, and to minimize the scrap dependence for raw materials by the iron-steel sector. This will bring an extractivism explosion to Turkey. However, as most of the coal-fired thermal power plants are driven with imported coal, it will by no means bring a lessening of dependency. Given the government's drive to become a "global energy hub" and a vital geopolitical power "Turkey's obsession with a fossil-fuel-driven developmentalism" is hardly surprising.<sup>26</sup>

The development plan highlights an energy production program that leans on local resources and a program to improve energy efficiency, and seeks to increase the amount of national resources in energy production from 27 to 35 percent. As there are no oil and gas reserves in Turkey, what is meant by "national or local resources" is lignite, which has the worst efficiency and highest waste among coal types. And what is meant by "improving efficiency" is to build thermal power stations on lignite areas all over the country. It is obvious that this plan does not take into consideration the well-being of humans or nature. Its main priority is capital maximization, plundering, and marauding—as much and as long as it can.<sup>27</sup>

However, reports reveal that the government's projections of energy needs are at least 25 percent higher than they are in reality. Turkey has the potential to have 47 percent of energy consumption come from renewable energy by 2030, at economic costs that are no higher than the current energy policy, and at human and social costs that are much lower than the current ones.<sup>28</sup> Turkey has one of the best renewable energy potentials in Europe, with 380 billion kilowatt-hours of energy that could come from solar photovoltaic energy and 48,000 megawatts wind capacity (Turkey's current capacity is only 2,000 megawatts). Renewable energy resources are clean, safe, and create employment. The European Wind Energy Association stresses that building a 1 megawatt wind turbine creates fifteen new jobs.<sup>29</sup> But instead of turning to clean energy, the AKP keeps on insisting on dirty energy policies by repeating the lie that "our country needs energy."

Besides, what are considered "energy needs" does not include energy used by households. Data reveals that the increase in energy consumption from 2009 to 2010 was close to 15,150,000 megawatt hours. While 15 percent of the increase stemmed from households, the rest was from industry and trade. Similar results can be seen in the increase from 2010 to 2011.<sup>30</sup> Thus, not only are the energy increase estimates *overestimates*, but the AKP refuses to mention the real reason for the increase: industrial production geared to capital accumulation.



Another predicament is the AKP's "heroism literature" on nuclear energy. Number one on this list is, "If Turkey does not build nuclear plants, it will remain without electricity." By repeating this lie over and over, the AKP tries to justify its dangerous decision to build nuclear plants. The story goes, "Turkey faces a quick increase in energy and electricity demand and we have to do something." Experts stress that the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources' projections do not reflect reality. Özgür Gürbüz points to a failure to confront the issue of inflated electricity demand, saying the government is "shockingly slow off the mark" in taking measures to decrease losses in energy efficiency associated with the transmission and distribution of electricity.<sup>31</sup> Thus the aim is to build two nuclear power plants, one in Akkuyu on the Mediterranean coast (in an earthquake-prone region) and one in Sinop on the Black Sea; both are beautiful places that will be ruined. Regulations about critical issues like security and nuclear waste were not dealt with at all. The government's disinformation and political repression leaves no hope for court cases against the nuclear plants.

## Soma

The Soma district in the Aegean province of Manisa used to be beautiful farm land, rich with crops like tobacco, olives, wine grapes, and wheat.<sup>32</sup> It was a prosperous agricultural region until the 1990s, when the state stopped giving agricultural subsidies. Farming became a difficult way to make a living, and many people left for the big cities. Soma was turned into a huge coal-mining district, resulting in deforestation, decreasing fertility of farming land, and the pollution of soil, air, and water. Many of those who stayed in Soma—which is home to nearly 40 percent of Turkey's two billion ton lignite coal reserve, as well as a lignite-fired thermal power plant—found work in one of the (then state-owned) coal mines. Today, out of a population of 105,000, the mining industry employs 16,000. On the entrance wall of Soma's state hospital you can read the fatalistic sentence, "For those who give a life for a handful of coal."

Truly, Turkey has become a country that removes both natural resources and corpses from underneath the earth. Enslaved workers await death while laboring under inhumane conditions for their families' sheer survival. The AKP's neoliberal policies minimize agriculture and turn land workers into mine workers; instead of farming above the soil, they are forced to dig underneath the earth.

The tragic mine disaster in Soma on May 13, 2014, was only one of many deadly incidents. What was different was the sheer number of workers killed—301 mine workers in one so-called "accident." Sendika.org calls it "one of the greatest workplace murders in Turkish history."<sup>33</sup> CEO of Soma Holding Alp Gürkan

previously had proclaimed that they had succeeded in reducing production costs from \$130 to \$24 a ton after privatization in 2005. This “success” was, unsurprisingly, the result of cuts in production costs like wages and safety measures. Most mine workers are insufficiently trained, and are temporary or unregistered workers; some are even underage. Despite this, in July 2013 the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources applauded Soma Holding for creating “exemplary mining complexes that prioritize the safety of miners.” Wages are so dismal that, for shifts as long as twelve hours, the salary a mine worker receives is as low as 420 euros—just above the official hunger line (the amount of money necessary for buying enough food for a family—as opposed to the more common “poverty line,” which includes costs like rent, transportation, and education) for a four-person household of 402 euros. Soma Holding then invested the Soma profits in Istanbul’s high-profit construction sector. Yaşar Adanalı, a researcher of urban development, says:

The capital accumulated by the exploitative working conditions is highly visible in the city [Istanbul], as it fuels the erection of many speculative real estate projects, such as the Spine Tower of Soma Corporation. The Spine Tower in Maslak, the major business district in Istanbul, is the tallest skyscraper in town and one of the most expensive, with its \$10,000 price tag per square metre.... After the Soma Massacre, people in Istanbul had organised various protests in front of the Spine Tower Project, stating that “the blood of the workers is dripping from the tower.”<sup>34</sup>

Remarkably, in October 2013, seven months before the massacre, Özgür Özel, a parliamentarian from the main opposition party Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, the Republican People’s Party), had proposed a parliamentary commission to investigate the very high number of workplace accidents and deplorable security measures of the Soma mines, and to improve safety regulations. This was rejected by the AKP on April 29, 2014, with an AKP parliamentarian declaring Turkish mines to be safer than those of most countries! And what else could he say? Soma Holding and the government had such close ties that the wife of the company’s general director was an AKP councilor.

Intimidation is one way the AKP fills large meeting areas all over Turkey. For example, Soma Holding workers were forced to participate in an AKP meeting before the local elections in March 2014. They were told that if they refused to go, they would not be paid that day.<sup>35</sup> Some weeks after the disaster, a parliamentary inquiry commission for Soma was finally established with all parties’ consent. This, however, was too little, too late for the victims of the massacre.

Another aspect of the AKP’s conservative Islamist policies is impoverishing and victimizing the people, and then giving them Islamic alms instead of rights-based



social welfare. Indeed, it was Soma's bloodstained coal that was provided as charity coal bags for the earlier local elections—consolation prizes for workers whose benefits had been stolen and jobs destroyed by the same party.

Another Erdoğan method is to dismiss criticism by normalizing workplace accidents. In an “accident” that resulted in thirty dead coal miners in May 2010 in northern Turkey's Karadon, he used Islamist fatalism to shrug off criticism by stating “death is in the nature of mining” and it is part of the “profession's fate.” After Soma, Erdoğan referred to the many who died in European and U.S. mine disasters in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to minimize the tragedy. He and his bodyguards also attacked the mourning families directly. National trade union protests after the disaster were ferociously met by police with water cannons and tear gas, and military troops were sent to the region to repress protests by the grieving families.<sup>36</sup>

Iron despotism is widening all over Turkey. Aslı İğsız says that the law is “deployed to concentrate power and to promote neoliberal institutionalization, whereas those who are unhappy with these policies are criminalized. This was exemplified in the Gezi protests.”<sup>37</sup> During the summer 2013 Gezi resistance increased against privatization of the commons, the destruction of the environment, growing conservatism, and increasing despotic rule. Erdoğan violently suppressed the protests. Police used 130,000 tons of tear gas canisters and water cannons—some of which launched water mixed with chemicals—on the protestors. Well over 2.5 million people, in all but two Turkish cities, participated in the Gezi resistance. Eight young men (including a fourteen-year old) were killed, nearly 5,000 people were taken into custody, and over 4,000 were injured.<sup>38</sup> The government's answer to peaceful protests was as repressive as possible.

## Fatalities

On October 28, 2014, just six months after the massacre in Soma, in an Ermenek/Karaman coal mine eighteen miners were trapped 300 meters underground by 11,000 tons of water pressing on a broken wall. The miners were on a lunch break, which they were forced to take underground since the mine owner would not allow them to eat above the earth, as this would take too long—lessening profits. Later it became public that mine workers had sent 124 complaint letters to the Labor Ministry about the mine's inhuman and unsafe conditions.<sup>39</sup>

A month later, there was the olive tree murder in Yırca, very close to Soma. The murderer was Kolin Holding, one of the clientelist construction and energy corporations, helping to build Istanbul's third airport, which will destroy the Kuzey

Forests there. Kolin felled 6,000 olive trees overnight—most of them with their fresh olives on their twigs—to build a coal-fired thermal power plant. Public-private cooperation worked perfectly here, and the emergency expropriation of May 10, 2014, occurred without notifying the peasants, whose very survival depends on the olive trees and their lands. Whereas the law states that emergency expropriation can be applied under very exceptional circumstances (such as a war or state of emergency), the AKP prefers this method when seizing peasants' land to give to comprador companies.<sup>40</sup> The next morning the State Council's decision was made public: Kolin was not given permission to build a thermal power plant at Yırca. Thus, the people of Yırca experienced the most depressing and exhilarating feelings within the span of a few hours. And at the moment of the announcement about the power plant, they picked up their tools and did what they are best at—planting new olive trees.

Soma, Ermenek, and Yırca—these are just a few examples of a much larger story. For many years the Bergama district, close to the city of Izmir, has fought against gold mining and the use of sulfuric acid for extracting gold. In the Çaldağı district of the city of Manisa, the fight against the poisoning of the soil with sulfuric acid to extract nickel has been going on for years, with CHP deputy Hasan Ören helping lead the fight. Two hundred thousand trees have been felled by the company that aims at extracting nickel. Activists protest the mine because it will poison the valuable area close to Gediz Valley, which is vital for agricultural farming. If they fail, two million trees may be felled at this beautiful mountain and Gediz Valley will no longer be home for agriculture.

In September 2014, ten workers were killed when an elevator rocketed to the ground from the thirty-second floor of an under-construction luxury skyscraper in Mecidiyeköy in the Şişli district of Istanbul as safety regulations were disdained. Disregarding a court rule to stop the construction of a mosque in the Validebağ Grove in Istanbul, construction vehicles came in and could not be stopped by those who resisted. Erdoğan declared the protestors as “enemies” of mosques. In Alakır Valley, a natural preservation site, five hydroelectric power plant projects are being built, with hundreds more to come. These are just some examples of what what is happening on a monthly basis in Turkey.

Every single little park, small sea, and tiny forest faces the same fate: someone will come and find a way to make money by destroying it. This growth-at-any-cost policy is obviously not sustainable. What strikes a human being most is the “normalization” of these accidents, injuries, and deaths. What happens in Turkey during a single day should be more than enough for a year, or two, or longer! This leaves us breathless, hopeless, and devastated. However, it is this neoliberal style of privatization,

deregulation, and wage declines—so dangerous for humans—that makes Turkey lucrative and attractive for Western capital. This is the reason why the neoliberal Western countries are no less guilty than the AKP itself for keeping this system alive—and enriching themselves, too.

## Conclusion

The “new Turkey” is built upon a triad of marauder capitalism, repressive government, and conservative Islamism.<sup>41</sup> Any analysis of Turkey needs to understand this first. This also means that resistance is insufficient as long as it does not also include resistance against political repression and Islamist conservatism, as they all feed on each other.

The Gezi resistance against disaster capitalism’s urban and energy projects—which destroy the environment and the commons—and against growing state repression and conservatism was a turning point in Turkey. The Soma protests from May to June 2014 added to awareness of the unscrupulousness of the regime of capital. Michael Hardt says: “This is a turning point in the public recognition of the destruction of Erdoğan’s neo-liberal policies that create wealth for a few and undermine the well-being of the many including the working class.”<sup>42</sup> He added, “It is certainly an opportunity but one that must confront numerous hurdles, including not only a powerful government repression and propaganda machine but also the relative lack of existing political and cultural ties among different sectors of the contemporary working class.”<sup>43</sup>

Currently resistance to the AKP’s policies are going on all over Turkey. One example of months of resistance is Fatsa, on the Black Sea, where people are fighting the use of cyanide in gold mining, which will destroy the forests and farmland. Their slogan is easy to grasp: “What is above the earth is worth much more than what is underneath!” In Turkish, this is play on words: Toprağın üstü altından değerlidir! also means “What is above the earth is worth much more than gold!” This slogan has become a common one in struggles against AKP energy policies. Studies of the Kaz and Çaldağı Mountains reveal that with a more sustainable agriculture and a focus on animal husbandry, a much higher income could be earned, the peasants could keep on producing food, the environment would be saved, and less energy would be needed. Instead the insistence on extracting resources will only destroy the environment and agricultural production, as well as the lives and health of the people. So it is best to keep under the earth what is underground. Indeed, mother earth knows best—otherwise she would have put those assets above ground herself!

The social philosophy that increasingly inspires South America—*sumac kawsaym*, *buen vivir* [good living]—is worth considering globally. It is a community-centric, ecologically balanced, and culturally sensitive way of living that is built upon harmony between humans and harmony between humans and nature. Eduardo Gudynas, a leading scholar, stresses the need to consume less, understand the beauty of the small and little, and change production processes.<sup>44</sup> But this necessarily entails both resistance and ecological revolution. Ignacio Sabbatella states “even with good intentions, the transition towards an ecological society is no more than a utopia if the foundations of capitalist production and reproduction are not questioned and altered.”<sup>45</sup> This then brings us to Joel Kovel’s eco-socialism, aiming at renovating the “integrity of our relationship to nature.... Eco-socialism is the ushering in, then, of a whole mode of production, one in which freely associated labor produces flourishing ecosystems rather than commodities.”<sup>46</sup>

In spring 2011, peasants from all over Turkey, together with their animals, walked for weeks to Ankara to protest against hydroelectric power plants that harmed the rivers and waterways on which their farms depended. For generations they had worked in flourishing ecosystems and did not harm the earth. Now they came to a point of no return as they lost more and more of their valuable lands and waters to dirty energy policies. After weeks of walking they were not even allowed to enter the Turkish parliament to express their predicament. Their slogan Anadolu’yu vermeyeceğiz (“We will not give away Anatolia”—Anatolia is the greater, Asian part of Turkey) was widely heard, although not by the AKP, but by others. Anadolu (Anatolia) spirit, just like the Gezi spirit, is still felt all over Turkey. It is vital to widen these protests and to make them all-encompassing. This is the only way for us all to survive—*buen vivir*!

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## Notes

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