'My Terrorism is Good'

Oral Çalışlar

Killing hundreds of people sitting at their office desks is terrorism. Wrapping a bomb around your waist and killing the man on the street, the policeman on his shift, is terrorism. Killing hundreds of people by bombing Yugoslavia for days and days is terrorism. Launching bombs on Palestinians and killing children is terror. Terror can be committed by a government, a group, or an individual. The main target of all these attacks is the human being. If we want to be consistent, and not follow double standards, then no excuse can justify a terrorist act. If the USA and various European nations bomb Afghanistan and kill human beings (as they did in the past), we cannot excuse this "terror" just because it has its reasons. USA does not have the right to kill hundreds of innocent Afghan civilians in order to capture Osama bin Laden, who killed hundreds of innocent Americans.

Governments, groups or individuals who promote terrorist acts may have their reasons. For example the Palestinian people are the victim of Israel's longstanding policy. They live homeless, without land and property. The land they barely attained in recent years, and hoped to live on freely, is once again being bombed. Is it possible to ignore the rage that has accumulated in them? In the world, especially in the Western world, the understanding of "terror" is limited to the acts of individuals or small groups. That is why "governmental terror" remains unseen. Was not the planning of a coup d'état in Chile, and the killing, or the supporting of those who killed the Prime Minister Allende and thousands of Chileans a form of terror? Was not questioning Stalinists in illegitimate courts and executing them terror? Were not the bombings, raids and executions throughout Turkey by the generals who overthrew the government on September 12, 1980 terror? The attacks on the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon were terrorism; so is the USA's many attacks around the world. It is impossible to tolerate or accept these terrorist attacks under any ideology. The attacks upon NY and Washington were also an act of craziness. But it could also be said that the activists who gave up their lives did this with great anger and sacrifice. We could argue about the reasons that underlie these acts. We could discuss the oppression and inequality that leads people to do what they do. But none of them can 'justify' the violent actions they motivate. For days we watched what happened to Afghanistan on TV. We are aware of the poverty and helplessness of this country. The oppression of the Taliban regime and poverty made the country an explosive place. Afghanistan was thus a place where it was very easy to raise terrorists. People there are poor and helpless. It is easy to channel their anger. That is why Osama bin Laden made his base there.

There is a large income gap between the northern countries and the southern countries. It is clear that this gap will widen even more with globalization. This means that on the one hand, while the world is becoming more like a small village, the poor (who are getting poorer) and the rich (who are getting richer) are ever closer to each other and able to see each other

more clearly. If this imbalance continues, the inclination towards "terror" in the poorer countries will increase.

The situation the USA faced after the attack on the WTC brought the issue of "terror" to the attention of the whole world. Attention was directed to the opposition between fighting against terror and democracy, and fighting against terror and human rights. In Turkey in particular, the question is discussed in a completely distorted way. Is there not a democracy and human rights problem in Turkey? Of course there is. Are the criticisms coming from abroad on this subject accurate or not? Of course they are. In Turkey there is both government terror and group terror. Are we going to criticize group terrorism and accept government terror? When planes hit trade centers and kill hundreds of people, do we have to give up the fight for human rights and freedom in Turkey? Turkey's democracy standards are low; can these recent attacks be an excuse to accept living with these low standards? Can the attacks justify torture? Can every human right be violated because of the attacks? After these events, is the West giving up democracy?

We must agree on this point. No one's terror is good. There is no possibility for any terror to be just. Nor is anybody's terrorist a good terrorist. Let us discuss and try to understand the reasons for terror; but let us never justify it.

Translated from Turkish by Sırma Soran Gumpert