



# **The Experience of Academics for Peace**

## **Aslı Odman**

**Conference**

*Commercialization, health services and academic freedom*

14-15 January 2017

Chamber of Physicians Istanbul/Cağaloğlu

# **Violation of Rights, Rights Struggles and Experiences of Organizing in the Corporate Academy: Cases**

Aslı Odman

8 November 2014

Platform of Intra-University Solidarity –

Panel on ‘Whose Science?’

Chamber of Physicians Istanbul/Cağaloğlu

**Corporatization process of Istanbul Bilgi University bw 2009-2011 after its purchase by Laureate Edu. Inc. led us to some insights back in 2014 on the tendencies at the universities:**

- rise in precarious employment
- rise in authoritarianism in the academic administration
- loss of autonomy in academic fields/departments and rise in their instrumentalisation
- the ideology of ‘managerialism’ overrides
- erosion in the concepts of ‘public good and rights’
- new and fragmentary type of the utilisation of the legal field (i.e. Corporate Private Law references)

Kaynak: Hakan Arslan / Aslı Odman, 2011: “İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi'ndeki Şirketleşme ve Sendikalaşma Süreci.” In: Metalaşma ve İktidarın Baskısındaki Üniversite, SAV Yayınları (editörler: Serap Korkusuz Kurt / Fuat Ercan)

**...which have become quasi-rules in the current process, galvanized by the Peace Petition’s strong appropriation by academics:  
Political and Market Authoritarianism hand in hand  
[meanwhile corporatization cycle, Bilgi University at sale again !]**

## What did we infer back in 2011 from the Corporatization process at Bilgi University?:

- The methods that are tested at Foundation/*Vakıf* universities will spill over to public universities, deemed to be safe heavens for academic labor force. The academic field as a whole will tilt right-wards.
- Thus, organising in academia is not only a prerequisite to defend job security but also professional basics, autonomy and an ideal of a university. Defending job security at universities is the foundation work to defend freedom of expression.
- The process after 2011 made clear that stance of some academics despising academic organising as being ‘inappropriate, because we are not workers and we are not supposed to ‘defend our bread’ have been proven to be very short – sided and archaic.

Academics for Peace, initiated in November 2012: Pro-Liberation Hunger Strikes of the Leader of the PKK Öcalan – Peace Process- Process of the Armed Conflict

**THE PEACE PETITION 2016:  
JUST AN  
ATOMIC/SPONTANEOUS/UNEXPECTED,  
NOT ORGANISED ACTION BY  
ACADEMICS BUT SEVERE REACTION BY  
THE REGIME: WHY AND HOW?**

# 2012 November: Founding Petition of the Academics for Peace:

## Turkish Academics' Statement of Solidarity with Kurdish Detainees on Hunger Strike



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by Jadaliyya Reports

Nov 04 2012



*[The following statement was issued by the below-listed Turkish academics in support of the demands and rights of the Kurdish hunger strikers protesting their detention.]*

To the Press and the Public:

We, the academics listed below, would like to declare that we will include the Kurdish problem and the demands of the hunger strikers on our agenda— in our academic activities, in the courses we present at our universities and in our written work— until all Kurdish detainees can exercise their right to defense in their native language and until the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan is ended to re-establish his communication with his lawyers and to enable the continuation of peace negotiations.



[Celebration of the Kurdish holiday Newroz in Diyarbakir, Turkey, 2010. Image by sushiharold via Flickr]

The present situation in Turkey corresponds to a disaster that can no longer be covered up. The war that has now continued for thirty years has caused immeasurable emotional and material losses to the peoples of

# From 156 signatories to 2212 – from addressing the ‘occupational groups’ to addressing the state

- "To the Press and the Public:
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- The present situation in Turkey corresponds to a disaster that can no longer be covered up. The war that has now continued for thirty years has caused immeasurable emotional and material losses to the peoples of this land. Nature, humans, and society have suffered irreparable damage. Violence continues to be transmitted from one generation to the next without recognising any ethical boundaries; trauma spreads by defying the desire and need for solidarity, and is inscribed in our social memory only with its destructive force.
- This war must urgently be brought to an end. The necessary political means must be created for the wounds to be recognized, treated, and, in time, healed.
- The most urgent action to be taken in the name of peace right now is to do everything possible to stop the hunger strikes of the detainees.
- We are here, and we stand united. **We call on members of all occupational groups to take an urgent stand against the present condition of the detainees.**
- 3 November 2012

# Bu suça ortak olmayacağız! //Em ê nebin hevparên vî sûcî!

- **As academics and researchers of this country, we will not be a party to this crime!**
- "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.
- This deliberate and planned massacre is in serious violation of Turkey's own laws and international treaties to which Turkey is a party. These actions are in serious violation of international law.
- We demand the state to abandon its deliberate massacre and deportation of Kurdish and other peoples in the region. We also demand the state to lift the curfew, punish those who are responsible for human rights violations, and compensate those citizens who have experienced material and psychological damage. For this purpose we demand that independent national and international observers to be given access to the region and that they be allowed to monitor and report on the incidents.
- We demand the government to 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. We demand inclusion of independent observers from broad sections of society in these negotiations. We also declare our willingness to volunteer as observers. We oppose suppression of any kind of the opposition.
- We, as academics and researchers working on and/or in Turkey, declare that we will not be a party to this massacre by remaining silent and **demand an immediate end to the violence perpetrated by the state**. We will continue advocacy with political parties, the parliament, and international public opinion until our demands are met"



According to the data of Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) [\[1\]](#), since August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (which is the date of first declared curfew) until February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 **at least 224 civilians (42 children, 31 women, 30 people over the age 60)** lost their lives in regions and in periods of time that curfews were officially declared.

Ankara Workshop of AFP (Academics for Peace)  
February 2016: Definition of the Crime,  
geographically, temporally and as a content

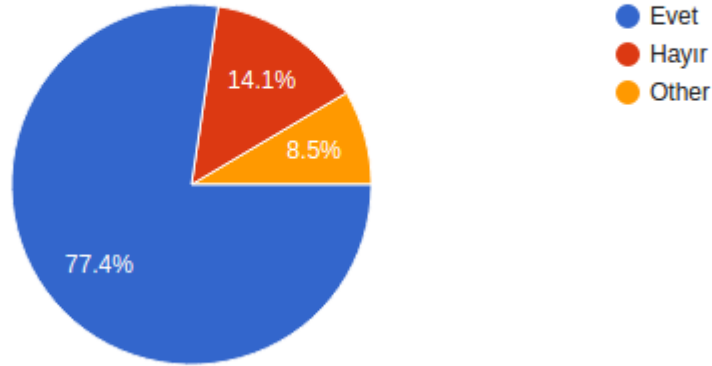
## What are the key aspects, leading to an intense response of the Peace Petition, both by academics and the political regime?

- addressing only one side, the state, of which we are citizens
- *calling a crime 'crime' directly*
- a content, making use of the 'use value' of freedom of expression and not its 'exchange' / show-off value
- its timing: the temporal peculiarities between the raised civil self-reliance since Gezi 2013, political crisis in december 2013 and the election results in 7 June 2015 and the fall back to direct authoritarian rule and armed conflict right afterwards: Feeling of helplessness and uselessness as public intellectuals.
- its spontaneousness and centerlessness, unchaining synergy effects over provinces, over universities and making personal ties of trust in academia clear

## What can AFP be? What did its process crystallize?

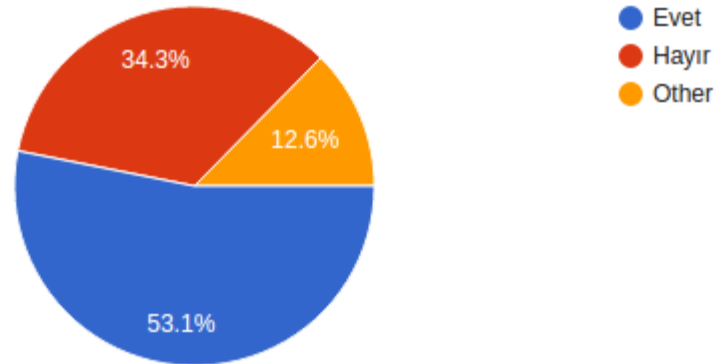
- AFP is a flexible union of signatories and now a 'union of fate' under very harsh repression
- It is not an 'organization'. It can be a pre-network, leading to concrete unions around the manifold defence activities for the right to live. Questioning the 'social relevance' of our scientific / academic activities and its ties with the society.
- AFP should reconcile with its modest role to give a first hit in manifold activities for the public good, justice and peace and not aim to be 'the opinion leader of the society': The Academic, is it an opinion leader or scientific worker?
- **AFP is a transmission line, it is a fish net!**
- AFP is a case destroying the 'aura of being a privileged social group' in the academia, being different than the other sectors of society, being the 'enlightened ones ahead of the society'.
- The academic labor force accounts to nearly 150 thousand people, the peace academics sum up to 2212: Are we the enlightened leaders of 'academic values'? Does our fate give hints about the main tendencies in academia?
- There is no such thing like the 'academic of the state' by looking at its civil servant status. Scientific / academic activities are public activities and thus public good, not state's commodity! The dependency of scientific activities on the state's regime was made visible with the case of AFP'

Üniversitenizde imzacılarla iletişime geçtiniz mi? (800 responses)



Most of the peace academics started to get into contact after the threats by the regime has started. The threats, worries and feeling of being exposed to state's repression helped us to build a network of academics.

İş güvenliğinize dair halen kaygı duyuyor musunuz? (800 responses)



**Kaynak: Report by the AFP  
Solidarity Group – Ankara  
Workshop  
20 February 2016**

# dilemmas AFP is going through

- its common denominator is not clear and pending between 'individual freedom of expression' and 'defending the public good'
- another pendulum, linked to the first one: Should we consecrate our energies to defend the content of the Petition, i.e. peace in the Kurdish Region or defend the rights of the repressed academics for peace, thus to internal solidarity?
- **Yet I think that there is no contradiction between the agenda for peace in the Kurdish region and the agenda for the solidarity among the academics for peace who are involved in everyday struggles to defend everyday peace in manifold contexts and settings (ecology, urban rights, labor rights, gendered struggles, migration, racism, public health etc.)**

# fault lines in the Turkish academy that the AFP process made clear

- public-foundation universities,
- metropolitan and provincial universities (more than 100 universities out of the current 183 have been founded during the rule of AKP. Number of universities and academic personnel had doubled after the take-over of the rule by AKP in 2002)
- 'elite/old' and 'common/new' universities (huge differences in social / cultural capital, international networking, force of the graduates, accountability to / dependency on international academic standards or 'national values')
- older academics with title / younger precarious academics
- huge differences in women's and men's labor (and older and younger scholar's labor) in upholding the internal solidarity

## Profile comparison between the Academics for Peace (AFP) and Academics for Turkey (AFT) signatories (2212 vs 2071 signatories)



‘The AFP petition was signed by academics affiliated to 433 different universities at different levels; 102 of them are universities in Turkey, rest abroad. One third of the signatories are academics working at universities abroad. [ Green: AFP, Red: AFT)

(Source: Efe Kerem Sözeri: [Evrensel Değerler ve Milli Yalnızlık](#): İki Bildiri, p24, 28 Ocak 2016)





‘Red: All signatures at that university pertain to the AFT Petition (2071 in total), Yellow: most of the signatories pertain to AFT, just very few signatories of AFP Petition still do come from those provinces.



# Fields of study and Gender matter!

## Bildirilere imza atanların bölümleri



## İki bildiride kadın akademisyen oranı

Barış için Akademisyenler



● Erkek ● Kadın

Türkiye için Akademisyenler



● Erkek ● Kadın

Overriding fields of  
**AFP** signatories: social  
sciences, medicine etc  
and 54% women.../

**AFT**: theology,  
engineeering, and just  
%18 women

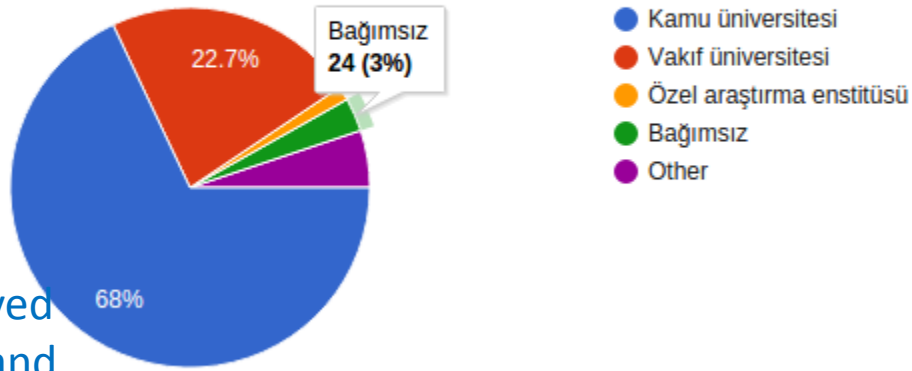
Source:

Sözeri, 20. Ocak. 2016

**PS**: : Random sample  
108/4279

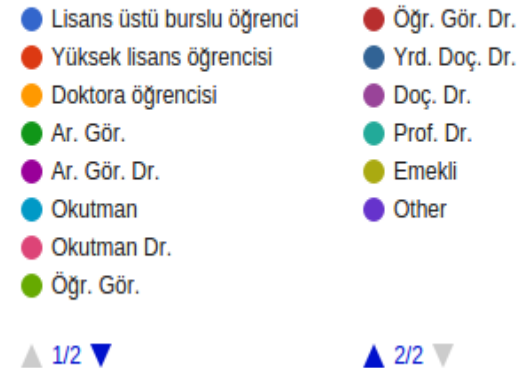
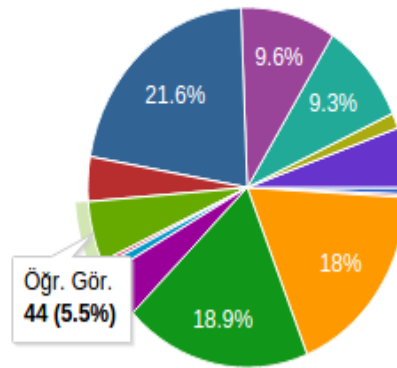
## Bağlı bulunduğunuz kurum türü: (799 responses)

Very precarious academic personel (precarious research assistants and TA's, unemployed PhD students and PhD's, instructors') share is very high compared to secure jobs in academia, assist.prof., assoc.prof., and profs. **PRECARITY DOES NOT FORECLOSE ACTIVISM + COLLECTIVE ACTION, on the contrary!**



Academic personel at foundation universities, making up only 1/6th of the whole academic labor force are overrepresented both in the list of the signatories and in the dismissals until the 15th of July, the date when decree-law dismissals started.

## Akademik unvanınız: (800 responses)



<b>Barış İçin Akademisyenlere yönelik hak ihlalleri / Rights violations against "Academics for Peace"</b>	<b>Kamu / Public</b>	<b>Vakıf / Private</b>	<b>Toplam / Total</b>
<b>KHK ile kamu görevinden ihraç* / Removed and banned from public service with the decree laws*</b>	304	8	312
<b>İşten Çıkarma / Dismissal</b>	29	33	62
<b>İstifa / Resignation</b>	10	8	18
<b>Zorla Emekli Etme / Forced Retirement</b>	5	1	6
<b>Disiplin Soruşturması / Disciplinary Investigation</b>	428	63	491
<b>"Üniversite Öğretim Mesleğinden veya Kamu Görevinden Çıkarma" talebiyle YÖK'e gönderilen dosyalar / Disciplinary investigations. Decision of the Investigation Committee: Dismissal from public service. Pending CoHE (YÖK) approval.</b>	103	5	108
<b>Görevden Uzaklaştırma / Preventive suspension</b>	68	11	79
<b>İdari Görevden Alınma / Suspension from administrative duty</b>	3	4	7
<b>Gözaltı / Police custody</b>	52	3	55
<b>Tutukluluk** / Pre-trial detention**</b>	2	2	4

\*KHK'lar ile kamu görevinden ihraç edilen 28 akademisyen aynı zamanda işten çıkarılmış, istifa etmeye veya emekli olmaya zorlanmıştı; ayrıca en az 63 ÖYP'li imzacı, yapılan usul ve esas değişiklikleri ve KHK'lar ile hak ihlallerine uğradı. / \*Among the Peace Petition signatories, 28 academics, who had been earlier dismissed or forced into resignation or retirement, were also removed and banned from public service with the decree laws. In addition, at least 63 PhD students within the Faculty Training Program suffer from rights violations due to the amendments in the procedures and principles and the decree laws.

\*\* 3 akademisyen 40 gün ve 1 akademisyen 22 gün tutuklu kaldıktan sonra çıkarıldıkları mahkeme tarafından tahliye edildiler. / \*\* 3 academics had to stay in pre-trial detention for 40 days and 1 for 22 days until they were released after the first court hearing.

# inequalities in the process of violation of rights of AFP signatories:

- being a 'civil servant', once a guarantee for job security at university no longer is after the mass dismissals by way of decree-laws after the failed coup d'Etat and the declaration of the state of exception. 304 out of nearly 400 who have lost their jobs have been dismissed by way of decree laws and nearly all of them are civil servants with established academic titles.
- inequality in terms of Penal Law: Only the first wave signatories of the petition are called to penal investigations (1128). The judiciary prefers to ignore the around 1000 people who have signed the petition after the state repression has started rather as an act of defending the freedom of expression of their colleagues and the academic field.

# 'The importance of being organized!:

## Where does AFP get its energy from locally?

- The Union of Education and Science Workers (Eğitim-SEN) central and provincial organizations (mainly the network of former struggle of precarious research assistants back in 2009 and 2012: Assistant Solidarity against Article 50D )
- Chamber of Turkish Physicians TTB , Union of Health and Social Workers SES , but also TİHV (Human Rights Foundation Turkey] organically linked to organized physicians.
- TÖDA (Tutuklu Öğrenciler Dayanışma Ağı / Solidarity Network with Detained Students)
- Gitt-Türkiye (*Groupe internationale de travail Turquie* with 3 Reports on Right Violations in Turkish Academy bw. 2011 and 2015)
- Vakıf Üniversitesi Emekçileri Dayanışma Ağı ve Bilgi Sendikalaşma Deneyimi (Network of Workers at Foundation University and the relicts of the Unionization movement at Istanbul Bilgi University)
- Organized parts of the occupational groups (TGS, Siyad, BSB... journalists, filmmakers, documentalists )
- Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi (feminist cross-organizations for peace )...
- ...



# *Bariş İçin Herkes (BİH), Everyone for Peace initiative*

Mass support to AFP from emancipatory, democratic and non-ethnocentric parts within different occupational groups, in them: [See the support list as of 20 january 2016] <sup>20</sup>

[10 February meeting of  
Everyone for Peace /Şişli]



- Üniversite Öğrencileri Desteęi (“Baęzı Üniversiteliler” kampanyası) - 36019 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barışa Destek – (8355 bireysel, 86 kurumsal imza – tam liste)
- Barış Bloku
- Barış İçin Alevi İnisiyatifi - 124 imza (tam liste)
- Üniversite Öğretim Üyeleri Derneęi
- İTÜ Öğretim Üyeleri Derneęi
- 1402’likler – ilk imzacı 12 kiři (liste 20 Ocak’a kadar güncelleniyor)
- Akademisyenlerden Fikir Özgürlüęü Metni - 610 imza (tamamlanmıř)
- Barış İçin Gazeteciler - 625 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Edebiyatçılar – (800 imza – tam liste)
- Barış İçin Sanatçılar - 1086 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Tiyatrocular - 779 imza (tam liste)
- Barış İçin Sinemacılar - 433 (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İsteyen Fotoęrafçılar - 989 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Feministler - 2805 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Kadın Giriřimi
- LGBTİ Barış Giriřimi
- Kaos GL Derneęi
- Lambdaistanbul
- Barış İçin Mimarlar – 100 imza (18 Ocak 17.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)

- Barış İçin Yayıncılar – 53 yayınevi (tam liste)
- Barış İçin Hukukçular - 2000 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Psikologlar ve Psikolojik Danışmanlar - 162 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Sağlıkçılar İnisiyatifi - 1639 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Eczacılar ve Eczacılık Öğrencileri – 210 imza (tam liste)
- Barış İçin İşsizler - 327 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış İçin Tribünler – (4 büyükler dahil olmak üzere 16 takımdan taraftar grupları)
- Barış İçin Rehberler - 95 imza (tam liste)
- Barış İçin Plaza Çalışanları - 324 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- Barış Öğretmenleri - 255 imza (18 Ocak 13.00 itibariyle, güncelleniyor)
- KESK (Kamu Emekçileri Sendikası)
- DİSK (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)
- Eğitim-Sen
- TODAP (Toplumsal Dayanışma İçin Psikologlar Derneği)
- TTB (Türk Tabipler Birliği)
- TMMOB (Türkiye Mimar ve Mühendis Odaları Birliği)
- TMMOB Şehir Plancıları Odası
- TMMOB Şehir Plancıları Odası İstanbul Şubesi
- TMMOB Mimarlar Odası İstanbul Büyükşehir Şubesi
- TMMOB Çevre Mühendisleri Odası İstanbul Şubesi
- TMMOB Makina Mühendisleri Odası
- TMMOB Jeoloji Mühendisleri Odası
- Ankara Barosu
- YARSAV (Yargıçlar ve Savcılar Birliği)



- Demokrat Yargı Derneđi
- Türk Ceza Hukuku Derneđi
- Çađdaş Hukukçular Derneđi
- TİHV (Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı)
- İHD (İnsan Hakları Derneđi)
- Akademisyenlere Destek Açıklaması (İstanbul, Ankara ve İzmir’de aydın, yazar ve akademisyenlerden kendileri hakkında suç duyurusu)
- Mazlum-Der Akademisyenlere Destek Açıklaması
- Adalete Davet
- Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı
- Barış Anneleri Meclisi
- SOMDER (Sosyoloji Mezunları Derneđi)
- Koç Üniversitesi Asistan Dayanışması
- Göçmen Dayanışma Ađı
- Kuzey Ormanları Savunması
- Barış İçin Ekoloji Aktivistleri
- Birleşik Haziran Hareketi – 442 imza (18 Ocak 23.30 itibariyle, imza kampanyası hala açık)
- Erktolia
- Sendika.org
- Ankara Özgür Haber Platformu
- Jiyan
- Barışın Mühendisleri, Mimarları, Plancıları – 1020 imza (18 Ocak 23.30 itibariyle, imza kampanyası hala açık)
- Dođu Akdeniz Üniversitesi Akademik Personel Sendikası (DAÜ-SEN)
- PLAZA EYLEM PLATFORMU - beyaz yakalıların dayanışma ađı
- SİYAD - Sinema Yazarları Derneđi
- Vakıf Üniversitesi Öğrencileri
- KA.DER
- Mülkiyeliler Birliđi

# AFP's first and only general 'strategy' meeting in Ankara

## 13/14 February 2016

### AGENDA:

- Alternative Academia: A new University?
- Peace Agenda in the Kurdish Region
- Solidarity in the face of repressions
- Where are we standing now?

\*ca. 140 signatories from everywhere joined that meeting, part of the participants coming from the peripheral provinces being relatively high.

# Ankara meeting set the following working groups:

**Those still active and functional are in orange, those inert are in black.**

- BAK Dayanışma – AFP Solidarity
- BAK Hukuk – AFP Legal Consulting
- BAK Uluslar arası – AFP International Networking
- BAK Asistan – AFP Assistants
- BAK Proje Üretimi – AFP Project Writing
- BAK Akademik Nöbet (sonra Cezaevi Nöbeti'ne dönüştü!) – AFP Justice Vigil
- BAK Doktora Öğrencileri – AFP PhD Students
- BAK Söz – AFP Discourse Creating
- BAK Alternatif Bilgi Üretimi – AFP Alternative Academy
- BAK Bilginin Toplumsallaşması – AFP Commonalization of Knowledge
- BAK Uluslararası Konferans – AFP International Conference
- BAK Fon Destek \_ AFP Financial Solidarity with the Dismissed

# still active internal solidarity organs

- **AFP Solidarity** (direct contact with the dismissed and those whose rights are violated, contact lists, rights violation reports )
- **AFP Financial Solidarity with the Dismissed** (#sharingsalaries)
- **AFP Social Media**
- **AFP Legal Consulting** (collective, anonymous legal help to all by those legal experts who share the same destiny as signatories)

# internal solidarity

- **AFP International** (organizing funds, posts, mentors of solidarity abroad, helping out with proposals and legal / bureaucratic procedures, writing of support / protest letters )
- **AFP Alternative Academy** (Solidarity Academies in more than 10 provinces, the Movement of the Campusless, shared courses)
- **AFP PhD Students and ÖYP Assistants**

# The energy that AFP transmits...

(AFP as a transmission line and a fish net)

Locality is the most important dynamic in creating solidarity academies of the dismissed:

Eskişehir, İstanbul Movement of the Campusless,  
KODA Kocaeli, Mersin, Dersim, Praksis Journal,  
İzmir, Ankara Street, Ankara ADA, Antalya  
ANDA, Mardin Solidarity Academies ...

The first common workshop due in March 2017 in  
İstanbul: Where to go from here?