

# Stop the prosecution of left-wing anti-war students in Turkey

Statement of Toplumsal Esitlik—the ICFI’s Turkish supporters  
28 March 2018

Toplumsal Esitlik strongly opposes and denounces the police raids and arrest of left-wing anti-war students at Bogaziçi University in Istanbul, following the barely concealed order of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The wave of crackdowns took place after some 25 left-wing, anti-war students organised a peaceful march in protest against a small group of Islamists, who celebrated the victory of the Turkish army and its proxy force, the so-called Free Syrian Army (FSA), in the Syrian province of Afrin, on the university campus on Monday, March 19.

Following the anti-war protest under the banner “There is nothing to celebrate about war and occupation,” pro-government Islamist and nationalist forces launched a witch-hunt against left-wing students in the social and mass media. Meanwhile, the university rector, one of Erdogan’s henchmen, denounced the anti-war activists as “terrorists”, while defending the “freedom of expression” of the Islamist students.

According to media, some 14 students have been arrested and 10 of them released, with 4 remaining in custody, and the police are seeking to detain another 8 students. Most of the activists arrested so far are from Marksist Fikir Topluluklar? (Communities for Marxist Ideas, MFT) and the Sosyalist Emekçiler Partisi (Socialist Laborers’ Party, SEP).

Toplumsal Esitlik has unbridgeable and documented political differences with these tendencies. Nevertheless, these differences do not lessen our opposition to these police raids and arrests against their members or sympathisers, which are motivated by the most reactionary objectives and are directed against essential democratic rights.

The ongoing crackdown against Bogazici University

students is part of broader repression against the working class and the youth by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has escalated under the state of emergency declared after the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016.

Erdogan has personally denounced the arrested students. Speaking at a provincial congress of his AKP, in Samsun on Saturday, Erdogan tried to distort the facts, presenting the Islamist students as victims of an attack by “communist, traitor-to-the-nation youth who attempted to break up the stall.” He also vowed to expel left-wing students from the university, saying, “We will not allow them the right to study. Universities cannot raise terrorist youths.” The Turkish president has repeatedly declared that Bogaziçi University, one of the few liberal universities in the country, does not reflect “Turkish values”.

In Turkey, political activity in schools and universities has long been strictly banned for socialists and punishable with dismissal, if not with imprisonment, while pro-government Islamist and Turkish nationalist fascistic forces have a free hand.

Turkey’s working class and youth must recognise the police crackdown and arrest of the Bogazici University students as another sign of a new wave of oppression, prepared by the AKP government, against the backdrop of an ever-deepening economic crisis and its reactionary war in Syria.

To defeat the drive to war and dictatorship of the Turkish ruling class, politically personified by Erdogan, and enthusiastically supported by Islamist and nationalist fascistic forces, workers must take the lead in defending democratic rights and demand the immediate release of the arrested students.

The struggle against the drive to war and dictatorship

can only be successful if it is based on an internationalist socialist, revolutionary programme historically defended and developed by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

We strongly condemn the police raids and arrest of the Bogazici University students and demand their immediate release, and call on all workers and youth to organise workplace and school committees to fight against the drive to war and dictatorial forms of rule, as a fundamental component of struggle for international socialism.



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