

After the Turkish elections: How the pseudo-left rallied behind the CHP

Part III: The role of the Revolutionary Workers Party (D?P)

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This is the third and concluding part of a three part series.

The D?P, which fraudulently claims it wants to “refound” the Fourth International, provides cover for this reactionary pseudo-left milieu and tries to block the construction of a section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) fighting for Trotskyism in Turkey. Its link to Savas Michael-Matsas’ EEK provides a political key to understanding its role in promoting and providing political cover for petty bourgeois, pseudo-left parties oriented to the CHP and to the Turkish bourgeoisie.

Michael-Matsas led the ICFI’s Greek section that supported Gerry Healy during the 1985-6 split between the ICFI and the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) led by Healy in Britain. Michael-Matsas broke with the ICFI on an utterly unprincipled basis, refusing discussion with other sections and maintaining that they had no authority even to meet without Healy’s permission. Underlying this was his agreement with the national-opportunist orientation Healy had developed, rejecting the theory of Permanent Revolution. After splitting with the ICFI, Michael-Matsas definitively entered the orbit of the pro-austerity social-democratic Pasok party in Greece and, like Healy, hailed Mikhail Gorbachev’s Perestroika as the beginning of the “political revolution” in the Soviet Union.

A decisive aspect of the rejection of Permanent Revolution by Healy and Michael-Matsas was that they invested the Middle Eastern bourgeoisie with a progressive, even revolutionary role. While Michael-Matsas traveled to Iran after the outbreak of the 1979 Iranian revolution and promoted the theocratic forces that had come to power and were suppressing layers of workers that had led the revolution, Healy accommodated to the national regimes in Iraq, Libya and beyond—developing unprincipled financial ties with these governments behind the back of the ICFI.

They thus rejected the ICFI’s fight since its foundation in 1953 to provide revolutionary perspective to the

international working class against imperialism, Stalinism and bourgeois nationalism. Healy and Michael-Matsas joined the petty-bourgeois camp, led in 1953 by Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel, of those who called for the political liquidation of the Trotskyist movement into Stalinism and bourgeois-nationalism. The ICFI’s struggle against Pabloite forces inside the WRP culminated in a 1985-86 split with the national opportunist renegades in the WRP. The struggle against Stalinism and bourgeois nationalism underlying this split was strikingly confirmed just five years later, as the Kremlin dissolved the Soviet Union and restored capitalism in Russia. The resulting disappearance of the main military obstacle to imperialist war paved the way for three decades of war in the Middle East.

Three decades later, the D?P’s reactionary maneuvers flow directly from its Pabloite orientation. As it orients to the CHP and, through it, to US and European imperialism, it also develops friendly ties to the emerging capitalist ruling elites in Moscow and Beijing cultivated by the AKP. As the WSWs previously pointed out, the policy of D?P is in accord with a “neo-Pabloite perspective ... that Putin has the potential to present some sort of anti-imperialist alternative, a counterweight to the domination of US imperialism.”

The D?P maintains a close collaboration with Russian Stalinists like Darya Mitina, a long-time Stalinist operative with extensive ties to the Russian state. Representing the Stalinist United Communist Party of Russia (OKP), Mitina, along with her husband and political partner, Said Gafurov, attended the EEK’s summer camp in Greece. In a 2014 interview with *IA Regnum*, a pro-Kremlin information agency, he was introduced as an “advisor to the president of the Russian Federation.”

The D?P also supported the pro-NATO, pro-EU Kurdish-nationalist HDP until the June 2018 elections. In fact, its justifications for endorsing the bourgeois-nationalist HDP were similar to those its allies use to support the CHP

against Erdoğan. In 2015, it declared: “We see an HDP victory as a blow to the anti-worker, reactionary politics of Erdoğan and the AKP.” The D?P fraudulently claimed that the “HDP is not a workers’ party, but neither is it a bourgeois party.”

The D?P’s Pabloite perspective played itself out in this year’s Turkish election campaign, as the entire pseudoleft layer of which it is a part oriented ever more directly to Ankara and imperialism.

Calling for “uniting the 99 percent under the roof of labor” and for a Constituent Assembly to rewrite the constitution of the Turkish republic, the D?P warned that the CHP-led alliance is an “American opposition” to Erdoğan. It wrote on April 2, “the working class needs a United Front, and in general, working people need a political focus independent of capital and imperialism. For this, all forces who want bread and liberty, notably socialists, must immediately break with the American opposition led by CHP. If the left and socialist forces do not make this break today, they will become partners of this front’s crimes against the people.”

The D?P’s call on its “left and socialist” allies to break with the “American opposition” is a political fraud. Firstly, there is nothing left or socialist about supporting US or European imperialism, which the D?P all but acknowledges that its allies are doing. Secondly, the D?P has the same class orientation as its more explicitly pro-imperialist partners and was itself calling on the CHP to lead a struggle against Erdoğan. The D?P is in the final analysis—no less than the ÖDP, the EMEP and other such parties—a partner in what the D?P itself calls “crimes against the people.”

Underlying the D?P’s differences with the ÖDP or the EMEP are not principled differences of class orientation or political strategy, but tactical divergences on foreign policy bound up with its Pabloite links to the Moscow regime. The D?P’s zig-zags towards the various bourgeois states and parties are politically incoherent and utterly unprincipled. On the one hand, while calling for bourgeois parties in the parliament to “return to the bosom of the nation,” it can denounce the CHP, incorrectly and in a populist-nationalist way, as an “American” party. On the other hand, it turns around and promotes as “left” and “socialist” parties that are orienting through the CHP to Washington or Berlin. What is consistent in the D?P’s various opportunist twists and turns, however, is its opposition to a Trotskyist perspective for an international struggle of the working class against imperialist war and the capitalist ruling classes across the Middle East and internationally.

This is however the only viable political perspective for the type of movement that is emerging. The mass movements in Sudan, Algeria and Egypt against the military regimes, strikes of US teachers, autoworkers and

maquiladora workers in Mexico, the “yellow vest” protests against social inequality in France taken up by workers as far away as Iraq, last year’s anti-austerity protests in Iran, and recent mass protests in Puerto Rico and Hong Kong are the initial stages of a movement against imperialist war and capitalist dictatorship. Anger among workers at military-police repression and mounting social inequality is growing and increasingly erupting around the planet.

In this situation, the exposure of the pseudo-left parties carried out by the ICFI and its supporters based on a Trotskyist historical and international perspective is of critical strategic significance. The residual and entirely false identification of the pseudo-left with “left-wing” or “socialist” politics leaves workers with no perspective to unify these emerging insurgent struggles of the working class into a revolutionary struggle. Instead, workers are told that the way forward is to experiment with one or other national tactic that ties them to parties of war and repression like the CHP.

The record of today’s Turkish pseudo-left parties and the bankruptcy of their maneuvers with the bourgeoisie constitute a spectacular confirmation of Trotsky’s theory of Permanent Revolution. In countries of belated capitalist development, the capitalist class is incapable of establishing a democratic regime or of breaking the deep ties linking it to imperialism. These tasks fall to the working class, mobilized in an international struggle for proletarian socialist revolution. The task is to advance this perspective and to build the revolutionary leadership for the working class, that is *Sosyalist E?itlik*, as a section of the ICFI in Turkey.

Concluded.



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