

The fight against war and the global expansion of the ICFI

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These remarks were delivered by Ula? Ate?çi to the Sixth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia), held from September 24 to 27, 2022. Ate?çi is a leading member of the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group, SEG) in Turkey. On June 19, the International Committee of the Fourth International unanimously approved the application of the SEG to be its section in Turkey.

Revolutionary greetings from the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu in Turkey. It is a great honor to have the opportunity to participate in this critical congress organized under extraordinary circumstances.

The draft resolutions submitted to the congress, which are in line with congresses organized by other sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), confirm once again that we are the only political tendency that represents the historical continuity of the Marxist-Trotskyist movement.

An analysis of the world based on historical foundations and the revolutionary role of the international working class makes clear the political tasks of the revolutionary leadership can only be fulfilled by the Socialist Equality Parties.

Our approach towards the major global issues objectively positions the ICFI and its sections as the only revolutionary socialist political tendency in the world. Of course, this position was not achieved spontaneously; it is an outcome of a political struggle that is constantly being developed every day.

The pandemic, whose existence has been largely ignored by the entire capitalist establishment, including the pseudo-left, the media and trade unions in all countries except China, has taken a terrible toll. As discussed in the relevant congress resolution, billions of people have been infected, more than 20 million have died, and hundreds of millions are suffering from long-

term health conditions. Only the ICFI is consistently fighting to end the pandemic and save lives, even as this terrible catastrophe continues.

Another urgent global issue threatening the entire world population is the danger of nuclear war. As the ICFI has long warned, the objective logic of the US-NATO escalation of the war against Russia and the growing US aggression against China is moving towards direct confrontation between nuclear-armed powers. In 2014, following the far-right coup in Kiev, the ICFI warned, “Another imperialist bloodbath is not only possible; it is inevitable unless the international working class intervenes on the basis of a revolutionary Marxist program.”

What we are witnessing in Ukraine is the beginning of this imperialist bloodbath and the redivision of the world. In these conditions, as the congress resolution against the war makes clear, the ICFI is the only political tendency struggling to mobilize the international working class to prevent a nuclear escalation and to put an end to capitalism, the source of war.

At this point, I would like to mention Turkey’s individual position in the war against Russia as a NATO member. President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an’s government is trying to play the role of a mediator in the war because of Turkey’s strong economic and military ties with Russia, and because it is trying to use Russia as a counterweight in its disputes with its NATO allies. Although it has supported Ukraine with drones, it does not back NATO’s goal of regime change in Moscow and the dismemberment of Russia. Ankara does not participate in Western sanctions against Russia.

Of course, this is not because the Erdo?an government is a “pacifist” government, but because

they see these goals as incompatible with the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie. On this basis, Turkey's political and economic ties with Russia have further developed since the start of the war in Ukraine. The US and the EU have begun to monitor the Turkish banks, believing that Russia is using Turkey to evade sanctions.

At a time when the main imperialist powers want Russian President Vladimir Putin dead, Erdoğan repeatedly meets Putin and refers to him as "my friend." All this is compounded by the fact that Ankara does not fully support with the aggression of the US-led imperialist powers against China.

Erdoğan attended the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit. After the summit he declared Turkey's goal of joining the organization. It should be recalled that the main impetus for the NATO-backed coup attempt against the Erdoğan government in 2016 was the Turkish government's efforts to maneuver between its imperialist allies and Russia and China.

NATO's war against Russia has also brought the historical conflicts between the Turkish and Greek ruling classes to the point of explosion. Ankara's unreliable character in the imperialist conflict against Russia has increasingly led NATO powers to arm Greece and turn it into a military base of operations against Russia.

Erdoğan has declared the US bases in Greece a threat to Turkey. He has called into question the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea and threatened to invade them. All this is compounded by the ongoing conflict over hydrocarbon resources around Cyprus, the northern part of which has been occupied by Turkey since 1974. As we warned on the *World Socialist Web Site*, the risk of a direct armed conflict between these two NATO allies is extremely serious and only the international mobilization of the working class can prevent such a catastrophe.

Just like the imperialist powers' drive towards the redivision of the world and thus towards nuclear war, the Turkish bourgeoisie's drive towards war in the Mediterranean and the Middle East is driven by reactionary geopolitical interests as well as uncontrollable social tensions at home.

With an official annual inflation rate of 80 percent in August, Turkey ranks fourth in the world, according to Trading Economics. Real annual inflation is thought to

exceed 180 percent. According to one study, 90 percent of Turkey's population lives below the poverty line.

These explosive social conditions have manifested in numerous wildcat strikes and many national strikes by health workers. As many comrades at the congress emphasized, the radicalization of the working class is by no means unique to the United States. In fact, we are witnessing the most politically conscious expressions of this international radicalization in the recent campaign of Comrade Will Lehman and the meeting organized by the railroad workers rank-and-file committee in the US.

The bankruptcy of capitalism and the entire political establishment that defends it is becoming more visible than ever. They are locked in an agenda of war abroad and class war at home against the burning needs of the working people.

In these conditions, the pseudo-left forces in Turkey play a particularly reactionary role in seeking to chain the developing movement of the working class to parliamentarism and capitalism. Recently, two pseudo-left alliances have been formed in the run-up to next year's presidential and parliamentary elections.

The main common feature of both is their rejection of the revolutionary character of the working class and socialist internationalism. These alliances, in the final analysis, are orienting towards Erdoğan's rival pro-EU and pro-NATO bourgeois faction. These pseudo-left alliances have put forward programs of national reform without any material basis for decades.

All this makes the upcoming founding of the Turkish section of the ICFI all the more important. We believe that the establishment of the SEP in Turkey will be an important contribution to the ICFI's global expansion in the "fifth phase" of the Trotskyist movement and will inspire the establishment of new sections from New Zealand to Brazil, Russia and elsewhere.



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