

The struggle against war and the perspective for the working class in the Turkish elections

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This is the report delivered by Ula? Ate?çi, a leading member of the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group) in Turkey, to the 2023 International May Day Online Rally. To view all speeches, visit wsws.org/mayday.

Revolutionary greetings from the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu in Turkey.

We welcome this May Day under conditions in which the war in Ukraine is moving towards a direct military conflict between the US-NATO imperialist powers and the Russian Federation. The campaign of the IYSSE to build a global mass movement against this war, which threatens all of humanity with nuclear catastrophe, represents the only revolutionary socialist opposition to this danger worldwide.

There is no anti-war faction within the ruling elites. The vote in the Turkish parliament to support Finland's accession to NATO, which is part of a new escalation in the war against Russia, has proved this once again.

Both the capitalist ruling bloc led by President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an and the bourgeois opposition alliance led by the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP) unanimously approved Finland's NATO membership. The Kurdish nationalist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) did not take part in the vote, repeating the argument of the NATO powers and declaring that "Finland's security concerns are legitimate."

The deputies of the pseudo-left Workers' Party of Turkey (T?P), which lined up behind the bourgeois opposition, also made it clear that it was not a socialist or anti-imperialist party by not opposing NATO's expansion. In short, this vote was an open declaration of allegiance to imperialism by all political representatives of the bourgeoisie and the upper middle class in Turkey.

This is also a striking confirmation of Leon Trotsky's

Theory of Permanent Revolution. Nearly 90 years ago, in Prinkipo, Istanbul, where he was exiled by the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky wrote:

With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.

On the centenary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the bourgeoisie is completely incapable of solving the basic democratic problems, especially the Kurdish question, and securing independence from imperialism. These tasks, which can only be solved on a global scale, fall to the working class, which will unite behind it all the oppressed masses on the basis of an international socialist program.

The February 6 earthquake disaster in Turkey and Syria is another painful example that the capitalist nation-state system and bourgeois rule have outlived their time and are incompatible with the needs of global society.

The ICFI has explained that the war in Ukraine cannot be understood without taking into account the Stalinist bureaucracy's dissolution of the USSR in 1991, followed by more than 30 years of US-led imperialist aggression in the Middle East and Central Asia.

After Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, since 2011 the

NATO powers, including Turkey, have waged a war for regime change in Syria that has killed at least half a million people and made millions more refugees. This has meant the dismemberment of the country and the destruction of its infrastructure.

This imperialist aggression has only exacerbated the earthquake catastrophe in Syria. Moreover, while the US and European imperialist powers poured over 100 billion dollars into the war in Ukraine and trillions into militarism, they abandoned millions of earthquake victims to their fate and provided almost no emergency aid, except for token ones.

As scientists have explained, this social disaster, which is estimated to have killed around 150,000 people in Turkey and Syria, could have been foreseen and prevented. However, the policy of “profits before lives” applied to the COVID-19 pandemic was also at work in this and similar disasters.

In fact, neither the Erdoğan government nor the bourgeois opposition behind which the pseudo-left rallies is interested in protecting the public from disasters such as earthquakes, pandemics and climate change, the devastating consequences of which are preventable.

Therefore, the fight for the most basic democratic and social rights to life, decent housing and health care is an integral part of the struggle to transfer power to the working class and build a socialist society worldwide.

The February 6 earthquake, a historic catastrophe that has deeply affected tens of millions of people, took place in conditions of escalating class tensions and social anger in Turkey, as in the rest of the world, and has further exacerbated them. The real annual inflation rate here is still above 110 percent.

While there has been a massive transfer of wealth from the working class to finance capital, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, all the trade union apparatuses and the capitalist political establishment agree that a social explosion must be prevented at all costs.

That is why the bourgeois opposition alliance, which includes the Kurdish nationalist movement and the pseudo-left, claims that winning the presidential and parliamentary elections on May 14 and changing the government with them is the only way forward.

The Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu rejects this as a blatant lie. The bourgeois opposition is in the service of

imperialism and the ruling class, such as Erdoğan’s right-wing alliance, and it is inherently incapable of solving the fundamental social and democratic problems of the working class and youth masses.

Whatever government is formed on May 15, one thing is certain: In the conditions of the worldwide collapse of democratic forms of rule under the pressure of growing geopolitical and class tensions, it is inevitable that the new government of the banks and big business in Turkey will pursue a policy based on militarism abroad and class war at home.

The most urgent task for the working class and youth is to achieve political and organizational independence from imperialism and the bourgeoisie and to prepare for mass revolutionary struggles against war and capitalism.

This means establishing the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi as the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, which represents the continuation of the Trotskyist movement founded a century ago. We call on all those who agree with this perspective to join this fight.



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