

HDP, pseudo-left back anti-refugee, anti-Kurdish candidate K?l?çdaro?lu in Turkish elections

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Yesterday, the Kurdish-nationalist People's Democratic Party (HDP) endorsed Turkish presidential candidate Kemal K?l?çdaro?lu, despite mounting popular opposition to K?l?çdaro?lu's reactionary campaign.

The HDP and countless pseudo-left groups embraced K?l?çdaro?lu as the candidate most likely to unseat incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an. In the event, K?l?çdaro?lu came in second with almost 2.5 million fewer votes than Erdo?an. K?l?çdaro?lu responded by signing a protocol on Wednesday with Ümit Özda?, the leader of the far-right Victory Party, aiming to capture Victory Party votes.

The protocol pledges to deport in one year 4 million refugees who have fled NATO wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria to Turkey. This effectively abolishes the right to asylum, in flagrant violation of domestic law and international agreements to which Turkey is a party. The protocol also pledges to continue the "fight against terrorism," the pretext Erdo?an has used to arrest thousands of HDP members, to dismiss elected HDP mayors in Kurdish provinces and mount illegal cross-border military operations into Syria and Iraq.

This makes a mockery of claims by the HDP and the pseudo-left that K?l?çdaro?lu's election will make the current reactionary regime democratic.

In Diyarbak?r, outraged Kurdish HDP voters denounced K?l?çdaro?lu in interviews with BBC Turkish, as anger mounts among the 5 million voters who voted HDP in the parliamentary elections. K?l?çdaro?lu won 72 percent of the vote in Diyarbak?r, thanks to HDP support. One of these voters, Nurten, told the BBC she would not vote K?l?çdaro?lu in the second round, because the protocol with Özda? "equates Kurds with terrorism."

Even right-wing parties allied to K?l?çdaro?lu felt compelled to distance themselves from K?l?çdaro?lu's fascist policies. Eleven officials of the Future Party of Ahmet Davuto?lu, a former prime minister of Erdo?an's

Justice and Development Party (AKP), announced their resignation in protest. They issued a statement declaring:

"We will not stand for language that insults refugees who seek asylum in our country and who have no other goal than to live and survive in safety and peace. We will stand against those who, instead of criticizing the immigration policy and proposing a more substantive and correct policy, promise to throw refugees into trucks and deport them like Nazis."

Mustafa Yenero?lu, deputy chairman of the DEVA party, a former AKP deputy and now a deputy of K?l?çdaro?lu's Republican People's Party (CHP), also criticized his own candidate. Yenero?lu said: "I do not look at the identity of the marginalized, and I do not listen to the explanation of evil. I will trample on any policy that tramples on human dignity."

Yesterday, however, HDP leaders issued a press statement announcing that their support for K?l?çdaro?lu in the second round remains unchanged.

The statement sought to appease voters with token criticisms of K?l?çdaro?lu. It said: "We do not approve of any political approach that breaks, exploits, dampens or distracts the resistance for democratic change in society. We will continue our democratic struggle against such approaches until the end. We have evaluated the protocol signed yesterday between the Victory Party and the CHP in this context and shared our criticism with the public."

In fact, the HDP's brief statement on Wednesday complained about the dismissal of its elected officials and was silent on plans to deport millions of refugees this year. And so, the HDP statement yesterday added a few lines on this issue.

“It is wrong and inhumane to turn migrants or refugees into an instrument of political interests,” the HDP cynically declared, adding: “The responsibility for this situation lies not with the victimized migrants or refugees, but directly with the government that insists on war policies and instrumentalizes refugees for economic and political gain. The refugee and migrant problem can only be solved by waging a strong peace struggle against war policies.”

That is to say, the HDP admits that it is endorsing a candidate with a wrong and inhumane policy, victimizing innocent refugees for political gain. It is a statement of the HDP’s own utter bankruptcy.

Imperialist wars and regime change operations have continued almost uninterruptedly since the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Tens of millions of people in North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia were forced to flee their homes and live in misery in foreign countries, without basic rights. Both the Turkish and the Kurdish bourgeoisie are complicit in these crimes, committed above all by the leading NATO imperialist powers.

The HDP’s talk of waging a “strong peace struggle against war policies” is also a fraud. It did not oppose Finland’s NATO membership, which Erdoğan brought to parliament, and declared that the country’s “security concerns are legitimate.” The HDP thus helped bring Finland into NATO as it wages war on Russia.

K?l?çdarolu has outlined deeply unpopular policies, pledging to be a better NATO ally than Erdoğan and endorsing the economic program of the T?S?AD business federation. He clearly plans to clamp down on working class opposition to his agenda by massively mobilizing the police state, on the pretext of anti-refugee and “anti-terror” operations.

Nevertheless, K?l?çdarolu has maintained the support of Turkey’s main pseudo-left parties, who like the HDP are being exposed as bankrupt and reactionary tools of imperialism, austerity and police-state rule.

The pseudo-left Workers’ Party of Turkey (T?P), an HDP ally, has remained silent on K?l?çdarolu’s filthy campaign, which aims to divide workers along national lines. It continues to enthusiastically support K?l?çdarolu.

“This [refugee] issue should not be turned into a daily political instrument that appeals to the sentiments of society,” T?P leader Erkan Ba? told Sözcü TV. However, Ba? did not mention K?l?çdarolu’s name and refused to condemn him.

Ba? called to replace the AKP’s foreign policy by a “peaceful” policy in the Middle East. He then incoherently invited the US imperialism and its allies—the region’s chief warmongers—to resolve the war crisis. Ba? said, “An

international law must be implemented in order to force Israel, the US, the Gulf states, all those who are involved in the process of dragging Syria into a civil war, to take responsibility for the compensation of this process.”

The Left Party, the sister party of Greece’s Syriza, declared: “It is clear that the economic and social crises of the country cannot be overcome with an opposition [i.e., K?l?çdarolu’s] approach that does not take into account any of the demands of the people and is stuck on a nationalist, right-wing axis by inciting anti-refugee sentiments. The Left Party will continue its struggle against the reactionary fascist policies based on ethnic and sectarian divisions.”

Nevertheless, the Left Party declared that it would “continue to support Kemal K?l?çdarolu in order to put an end to political Islamist fascism.”

That is, the Left Party’s position is that to combat fascism, it must support a candidate advancing policies it describes as fascist.

Yesterday, Labour Party (EMEP) leader Selma Gürkan similarly endorsed K?l?çdarolu against Erdoğan “in order not to give way to racist, chauvinist and nationalist policies that set people against each other ... in order to prevent the policies against immigrants that are being negotiated with the imperialists at the negotiating table from finding an answer.”

The unconditional surrender of the HDP and the pseudo-left to K?l?çdarolu is an undeniable declaration of loyalty to imperialism and of hostility to the working class. They are, by their own admission, in alliance with fascistic forces. They do not oppose war, fight for democracy or defend the working class. They are reactionary parties speaking for affluent sections of the middle class oriented to imperialism.

The Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu, the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, calls on the workers and youth to reject both Erdoğan and K?l?çdarolu. A politically independent movement must be built in the working class. The way forward is the mobilization of the working class internationally in a struggle for power, based on a socialist and revolutionary program.



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