

# Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu holds public meeting in Istanbul on Israel's genocide in Gaza

Our reporters  
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Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group, SEG) in Turkey held a public meeting in Istanbul on Sunday titled “Stop Israel’s genocide in Gaza! Socialist internationalism and the struggle against Zionism and imperialism.” Ula? Ate?çi, a writer for the *World Socialist Web Site* and a leading member of the SEG, gave the main report.

Ate?çi began his presentation by saying that it was part of a series of meetings organized around the world by parties and groups affiliated to the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). He said:

In these meetings, we explain to the working class and youth, i.e. the social base that can stop this genocide, the historical roots of the imperialist-backed genocide that Israel is continuing in Gaza, and we show what needs to be done both to stop this genocide immediately and to say “never again” to imperialist wars, genocides and massacres.

Ate?çi addressed the historical and programmatic issues raised by Israel’s genocide and ethnic cleansing campaign. The development of the Zionist movement and the historical conditions under which the state of Israel emerged were linked to the usurpation of political power by Stalinism in the Soviet Union that was opposed by the Left Opposition, the centenary of which is being commemorated.

He emphasised that if the Trotskyist opposition, rather than the Stalinist faction that advanced the reactionary theory of “socialism in one country” had been victorious in the struggle within the Bolshevik Party, which began in 1923, the world socialist revolution would have triumphed in the twentieth century and the many catastrophes, such as the Holocaust and the Gaza genocide we are witnessing today, would have been prevented.

“Stalin and the Communist Party in Germany played a decisive role in dividing the working class and paving the way for the Nazis to take power by declaring that the Social Democrats were ‘social fascists,’” Ate?çi said. He referred to David North’s remarks at a University of Michigan meeting:

Without the victory of Hitler, without the victory of fascism, there would never have been a mass Zionist movement, there would never have been a mass migration of Jews to Palestine. And one of the major factors in the escalating crisis that we are now witnessing simply would not exist.

Ate?çi discussed the development of both antisemitism and modern Zionism in the context of the ruling classes using them as a political weapon against the developing working-class and socialist movement.

He emphasised that Marxists drew attention to “the connection between the antisemites’ hatred of Jews and their hatred of socialism and the workers’ movement” and added: “Just as anti-Semitism essentially targeted the developing workers’ and socialist movement at the end of the 19th century, the Zionist political movement that developed around the same time was an anti-socialist and pro-capitalist movement that aimed to block the programme of international socialism from gaining ground among the Jewish masses of workers and intellectuals.”

Referring to Zionists’ collaboration with the Nazis in the 1930s, Ate?çi explained that “both reactionary ideologies were nationalist and pro-capitalist movements, strongly hostile to the international socialist movement of the working class.”

Ate?çi detailed the scale of the genocide in Gaza committed by the Israeli state and the support and complicity of the imperialist powers led by the US and its allies in the Middle East. He explained the role, hypocrisy and dilemma of the Turkish government led by President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an, the Turkish ruling class and the entire political establishment in the Gaza genocide.

Turkey was the first Muslim-majority country to recognize the state of Israel. Although relations between the two countries have ebbed and flowed for 75 years, they have always been based on the ruling class’s allegiance to imperialism, its military-strategic alliance and trade with the Zionist state.

The Erdo?an government’s attitude today was largely a continuation of this traditional policy. “No matter how much Erdo?an condemns Israel’s aggression, no matter how much he

calls it 'genocide,' it cannot change the fact that his government is part of the NATO military alliance, which is the main architect of what is happening in Gaza."

The same was true for the bourgeois opposition parties, which are pro-NATO and in favour of an alliance with Israel. These were the very same parties behind which the pseudo-left groups and trade union bureaucracies line up. Ate?çi explained:

It is not possible to oppose Zionism and the genocide in Gaza in a principled and consistent manner without opposing the Turkish ruling class and its establishment parties of all colours, which are deeply tied to imperialism and NATO, and without opposing them with a socialist programme based on the international working class.

However, it should not be concluded from this that the conflict between Ankara and Tel Aviv was simply artificial and unimportant. Erdo?an's criticism of the Israeli attack on Gaza and the US deployment of aircraft carriers to the region reflected concerns within the Turkish ruling class. Chief among them was that a possible war by the US and its allies against Iran could have unacceptable consequences for Ankara, including the formation of a US-backed independent Kurdish state.

Ate?çi discussed the attempts to suppress mass global protests in defence of the Palestinians and the slander that these protests are "antisemitic."

Referring to Hamas and other Palestinian groups, he noted that whether they advocate the so-called "two-state solution" or a single capitalist Palestinian state, the programmes of these organizations do not go beyond the confines of the prison of the imperialist nation-state system, which is the basis of the historical oppression of the Palestinian people:

The whole experience of the last century shows that the liberation of the Palestinian people lies in the united revolutionary struggle of the Arab and Jewish working class, together with their other class brothers and sisters in the Middle East, against the Zionist regime and against all capitalist regimes and imperialism in the region. The goal of this struggle must be the establishment of a socialist federation of the Middle East and a union of socialist republics throughout the world.

The presentation ended with an appeal to the audience to join the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu in this fight. Afterwards, contributions and questions from the audience led to a lively

discussion and a more detailed presentation of ICFI's perspective.

One of the participants asked why the mass protests against the genocide in Gaza in Europe and around the world, despite bans and repression, were not seen in Turkey.

Ate?çi explained that while the pseudo-left spoke out rhetorically against the Israeli genocide, in practice there was no attempt to mobilise workers and youth against it. These parties were based on and represented the upper middle class, not the international working class.

They were oriented towards the imperialist powers and their political representatives in Turkey. He reminded the audience that the pseudo-left parties backed Kemal K?ldaro?lu in the presidential elections last May despite his openly pro-imperialist and anti-refugee programme and that the Kurdish nationalist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and Stalinist Workers' Party of Turkey (T?P) deputies did not vote "no" in Finland's NATO bid vote in the parliament.

Another question was whether the "two-state solution" could be argued as an immediate solution to the genocide in Gaza. Ate?çi stressed that this imperialist-backed deception, which has been presented as an "immediate solution" for at least seventy-five years, ultimately led to the current genocide.

Gaza, he reiterated, was one of the most striking examples of the bankruptcy of the imperialist nation-state system and the reactionary consequences of national programmes. The working class taking power and replacing capitalism with socialism all over the world was the most immediate and direct response to the fundamental problems of our time.

The meeting also discussed Will Lehman's campaign for the presidency of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in the US in the context of the growing interest in socialism among workers and youth internationally.

The meeting was dedicated by the SEG to the memory of Comrade Helen Halyard, a leading member of the Socialist Equality Party (US), who died on November 28, and Comrade Halil ?elik, the founder and leader of the SEG, the fifth anniversary of whose death will be marked on December 31.

After the meeting, discussions with the audience continued and books published by Mehring Yay?nc?l?k were presented.



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