

# Erkan Ba?'s local election campaign shows the T?P's orientation towards the bourgeoisie and trade union bureaucracy

Bar?? Demir, Ula? Ate?çi  
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The leader of the Turkish Workers' Party (T?P) and Istanbul deputy Erkan Ba? has announced that he will be his party's candidate for mayor of the Gebze district of Kocaeli in the local elections to be held on March 31. Ba?'s campaign makes it clear that T?P, whatever its name, is in reality not oriented towards the working class but towards the bourgeoisie and the trade union bureaucracy.

In his statement on social media, Ba? said the following: "The meaning of T?P's candidacy is to take responsibility, to put your hand under the stone. I share the responsibility that I expect from my friends and I declare my candidacy from Gebze, the biggest labor basin of our country."

This is purely demagogic. The T?P is not running an election campaign based on raising the consciousness of the working class and youth and mobilizing them against the ruling class and imperialism, in the face of such fundamental problems as the danger of a nuclear war escalated by the USA/NATO against Russia, the genocide in Gaza, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the danger of earthquakes.

On the contrary, the entire electoral campaign of the T?P is based on unprincipled horse-trading for seats with the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP), the Kurdish nationalist Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM) and various pseudo-left parties, and serves to politically disarm the working class and youth.

The CHP and the DEM party did not put up a mayoral candidate in Gebze and supported Ba?. The T?P participated in last year's parliamentary elections in alliance with the DEM Party and supported Kemal K?l?çdarolu, the candidate of the CHP-led National

Alliance, in the presidential elections.

The T?P recently reached an agreement with the right-wing bourgeois CHP for the local elections. CHP leader Özgür Özel summarized this unprincipled alliance:

"We worked with T?P as follows. They did not nominate candidates in places where the CHP was running neck-and-neck and where there was a risk of losing.

"Erkan Ba? ran for the mayor in Gebze which is a district with a large working-class population. We support him there.

"But in Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality, in the districts and in the places where the T?P did not nominate a candidate and where we are competing, the T?P voters will support the Republican People's Party in return for this gesture in Gebze."

The right-wing character of the CHP, which Ba? thanked for supporting his campaign and which is supported by the T?P and numerous pseudo-left groups in major provinces such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, was clearly demonstrated on Wednesday in a rally speech by Burcu Köksal, the CHP's deputy group leader and candidate for mayor of Afyonkarahisar.

"If I am elected mayor, the doors of Afyonkarahisar Municipality will be open to all political parties except the DEM party," Köksal said, expressing her open hostility towards Kurds.

In the same speech, she threatened, "I will send the Syrians out of Afyonkarahisar, no questions asked."

Köksal's far-right campaign against Syrian refugees and Kurds is not an aberration, but a continuation of former CHP leader K?l?çdarolu's campaign in the presidential elections. K?l?çdarolu formed an anti-refugee and anti-Kurdish alliance with the fascist Zafer

Party in the second round of the elections, while the DEM Party and the T?P continued to support him.

Ba?'s visits after declaring his candidacy also clearly show that his party is oriented towards the bourgeoisie and the trade union bureaucracy and not the working class. Last week, as part of his election campaign, he visited the KBS Mold Fastening Systems factory in Gebze, with the permission of the company's management. The video posted on X/Twitter shows a member of the management introducing Ba? to the workers.

In the video, this person says, "It is a great privilege for us to have him with us today, sharing our meal. I thank him for that... This is also an advertisement for us," before giving the floor to Ba?.

In his speech, Ba? made it clear that his party's campaign is based on an alliance with two bourgeois parties (CHP and DEM) and promotes the pseudo-left lie that the capitalist system can be reformed.

"They have turned people against each other with false and erroneous polarizations," Ba? said, criticizing both the Erdo?an government and the CHP-led opposition and thanking the CHP and the DEM party for supporting him.

Repeating the lie that all capitalist establishment parties repeat in general and local elections, "If you vote for us, your situation will improve", Ba? continued, "If you want to change, if you want to beautify, if you want to live well, if you want to make Gebze an example for Turkey, if you think that we can realize an exemplary municipalism in Gebze not only for Turkey but for the world, March 31 is an opportunity to take your destiny into your own hands.

"For the first time in Turkey, workers can govern a large district like Gebze. We became candidates to show this."

The next visit demonstrated the T?P's orientation not towards the working class but towards the trade union bureaucracy that stands against it. Ba? visited the Gebze branch of the Turkish Metal Union, which is mainly responsible for the wage and social losses of metalworkers and whose members rebelled by occupying factories in 2015.

Earlier this year, Türk Metal, together with the D?SK-affiliated Birle?ik Metal-?, signed a sellout contract one day before the announced strike date of some 160,000 metal workers.

The T?P is neither a working-class nor a socialist party. Like the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), a faction of the Democratic Party in the USA, it acts as a so-called "left" extension of the CHP and the DEM party in Turkey. Its function is to try to keep the growing opposition among the working class and youth, which is turning to the left, within the limits of the capitalist order represented by parliament, local governments and the trade unions.

T?P's adaptation to the politics of the bourgeois order was also reflected in the way it opened its doors to the politicians of these parties. Many people who had been officials of or candidates for various parties across the country, such as The Kemalist CHP, the far-right Good Party, the Democratic Left Party (DSP), which supported Erdo?an in last year's elections, the Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA), which broke away from the AKP, and Erdo?an's de facto ally the Vatan Party, were running for the T?P in the local elections.

There is an inseparable connection between the T?P's orientation towards the two bourgeois parties and their pro-NATO imperialist character. Last year, T?P deputies did not participate in the vote on Finland's membership in NATO, signaling that they could be a reliable ally like Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain or the Left Party in Germany.

The attitude of the T?P towards the genocide carried out by Israel in Gaza with the support of the USA and NATO is not very different. This genocidal war, which the Erdo?an government feeds by continuing to trade with Israel, has never been on the main agenda of the T?P. This is because consistently opposing the genocide in Gaza would require mobilizing the working class and youth against US-NATO imperialism, Zionism and the entire bourgeois political establishment in Turkey.



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