

Turkey: T?P's Hatay candidacy crisis underscores bankruptcy of the pseudo-left's orientation to the bourgeoisie

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The Stalinist Workers' Party of Turkey (T?P) has withdrawn its candidate for mayor of Hatay, Gökhan Zan.

The crisis erupted under conditions in which the T?P is cooperating extensively with the main bourgeois opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) in the local elections. The most prominent example of this collaboration was the CHP's support for T?P leader and Istanbul deputy Erkan Ba? in Gebze, one of the most important industrial centres of Turkey.

Hatay, as the city which suffered the greatest destruction and loss of life in the February 6, 2023 earthquake disaster, encapsulates the criminality of capitalism and the bourgeois political establishment. More than 23,000 people were officially reported killed and more than 30,000 injured because the necessary precautions were not taken against the expected natural disaster.

The responsibility of the current CHP mayor of Hatay, Lüftü Sava?, and his party, along with the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an, for this preventable disaster was clear. By renominating Sava? in the 31 March elections, the CHP confirmed its complicity in this crime.

On March 17, the T?P announced on social media that it had withdrawn its support for rival candidate Zan, a former national footballer who ran as a parliamentary candidate for the far-right Good Party last year. "We have received various allegations that Gökhan Zan, who was proposed as a joint candidate by the Hatay Alliance, was involved in relationships that our party would never tolerate," T?P said in a vague statement.

Audio files allegedly belonging to Zan, which were sent to the party leadership and later leaked to the press, reportedly record officials from the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) negotiating bribes with Zan in

exchange for his refusal to withdraw as a candidate. Both parties deny the conversation took place.

Zan had previously announced in February that he had been offered bribes and threatened by the mafia to withdraw from the election. He said in a press statement in response to these latest events that he and his family had been threatened by Sava?'s men and subjected to a campaign to discredit him with fake audio recordings. It has been widely reported that the CHP candidate was afraid of losing the election due to Zan's campaign.

The scandal is the product of the T?P's unprincipled collaboration with the CHP, a pro-NATO, right-wing bourgeois party. In last year's presidential elections, the T?P supported Kemal K?l?çdarolu, candidate of the CHP-led Nation Alliance. Kilicdarolu ran an explicitly pro-NATO campaign and in the second round formed an anti-refugee and anti-Kurdish alliance with the far-right Victory Party. The T?P, the Kurdish nationalist Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), and many pseudo-left tendencies continued to support K?l?çdarolu despite this.

The T?P's election campaign this year ignores the US-NATO imperialist war against Russia in Ukraine, Israel's NATO-backed genocide in Gaza, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on containing and suppressing growing social opposition and the shift to the left among the working class and youth with the illusion that the capitalist system is reformable.

On this basis, the T?P selected candidates through unprincipled horse-trading for seats with the CHP, the DEM Party and various pseudo-left organisations.

In addition to Zan, many people who had been officials of or candidates for various parties across the country—such as the Kemalist CHP; 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 Erdoğan's de facto ally the Vatan Party—were running for the T?P in the local elections.

CHP leader Özgür Özel summarized this unprincipled alliance earlier this year: “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, T?P voters will support the Republican People's Party in return for this gesture in Gebze.”

Zan's candidacy for the T?P in Hatay contradicted Özel's statement that the T?P would “not nominate candidates in places where... there was a risk of losing” for the CHP.

An opinion poll carried out between February 23 and March 5 showed that Zan would get 12 percent of the votes, drawing on popular opposition to the despised bourgeois parties, especially after the earthquake. Had the hated Sava? been renominated, enough votes could have shifted to lose the CHP the election in Hatay

Indeed, CHP leader Özgür Özel said in an interview published in *Sözcü* newspaper on March 17, “T?P's candidate has the potential to lose us the election.”

As unprincipled as the T?P was in nominating Zan, it was equally unprincipled in withdrawing his candidacy. In an interview with T24 on March 19, T?P leader Ba? said the following about Zan's claim that the audio recording was a montage: “Of course, I'm not very familiar with the technical details. This will be revealed after a criminal investigation, but he says it was done with a practice they call ‘deep fake’, but in some conversations he also tells our friends some statements like ‘If I don't win this election, I should think about my future’.”

“From now on, if Gökhan Zan claims he was framed, he will have to prove it,” Ba? declared, echoing the international pseudo-left's disregard for the presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial, as evidence by the reactionary #MeToo campaign.

On March 25, Ahmet ??k, a deputy of T?P Istanbul, published an “expert examination” report which it claimed confirmed the audio recordings. This report,

which has no official legal validity, shows that the recordings were sent to this expert on March 19 and 20. The T?P withdrew Zan as a candidate on March 17, before the accusation had even been confirmed by this so-called expert and based on a recording submitted by people of dubious credibility.

In his reply to Ahmet ??k, Zan made the following statements regarding the report submitted as evidence: “Mr. Ahmet ??k said that he had the recording examined by a person who claims to be an expert; this report does not belong to any organisation, it belongs to a person who does not even know if he has sufficient technological equipment. The report they claim has no validity. We asked for this examination to be carried out by the Forensic Medicine Audio and Video Examination Specialisation Board, the most competent organisation in Turkey, and this is the only report that can be relied upon”.

The recordings were reportedly received by the T?P about a week before the incident, and Zan added, “I officially made my statement regarding the criminal complaint [on March 17] at 21:19. The T?P, on the other hand, declared that it withdrew its support for me an hour later at 22:39 after learning that I had filed a criminal complaint. In fact, it had also delayed and kept me waiting to file a criminal complaint in the previous days”.

The Socialist Equality Group declares in its election statement its opposition to “the pseudo-left forces that seek to tie workers and youth to the national bourgeoisie” and determination to “fight to prepare the working class for the objectively revolutionary crisis that is developing globally.” This means fighting to build the Socialist Equality Party as the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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