

# **Statement of Principles of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party – Fourth International)**

**Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi****12 September 2025**

*The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party – Fourth International), which is in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), held its founding congress on June 13–15, 2025. The party's official formation process was completed in August. The congress unanimously adopted three resolutions: "Statement of Principles" (official program), "The Historical and International Foundations of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal," and the "Constitution." We are publishing the "Statement of Principles" below.*

**The world tasks of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi**

1. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party – Fourth International) is in solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938. The principles of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi incorporate the essential experiences of the revolutionary upheavals of the twentieth century, and the corresponding struggle waged by Marxists for the program of world socialist revolution. The socialist revolution, which signifies the forcible entrance of the masses into conscious political struggle, portends the greatest and most progressive transformation of the form of man's social organization in world history—the ending of society based on classes and, therefore, of the exploitation of human beings by other human beings. A transformation so immense is the work of an entire historical epoch. The principles of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi are derived from and necessarily reference the experiences of this epoch, which opened with the eruption of World War I in 1914, followed shortly thereafter by the conquest of state power by the Russian working class in the 1917 October Revolution.

2. The Fourth International, with which the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi is aligned, emerged out of the implacable struggle waged by Marxist internationalists, led by Leon Trotsky, against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union and the betrayal of the program of world socialist revolution by the dictatorial regime headed by Stalin and his henchmen. The political source of that betrayal, which led ultimately, in 1991, to the dissolution of the USSR, was the substitution of nationalism for internationalism by the Stalinist regime. The Stalinist bureaucracy was not the product of the October Revolution, but rather of the incipient capitalist counter-revolution. As Trotsky demonstrated, the bureaucracy was the "tool of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state." His prognosis has been graphically confirmed by the transformation of the Chinese, Soviet and East European Stalinists into immensely wealthy

oligarchs.

3. The socialist revolution is international in scope. As Trotsky wrote, "The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet." This fundamental principle of the Fourth International, which primarily defines the program and political identity of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi, was forged in the struggle against the Stalinist "theory" of "socialism in one country." The strategy of the working class, in Turkey as in all countries, must proceed from an analysis of world conditions. The era of national programs ended with the outbreak of World War I. More than one hundred years later, given the colossal growth of the world economy and its global integration, world economic conditions and the exigencies of inter-imperialist and inter-capitalist rivalries are the principal determinants of national life. Therefore, as Trotsky explained, "the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa."

4. Wherever revolutionary struggles of the working class first break out, whether in an advanced or lesser-developed capitalist country, in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America or Australasia, the social conflagration will inevitably assume global dimensions. The socialist revolution will not and cannot be completed within a national framework. It will, as foreseen by Trotsky in his Theory of Permanent Revolution, be completed on the world arena.

5. The program of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi expresses the interests of the working class, the leading and decisive international revolutionary social force in modern capitalist society. The central task of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi is to win the support of Turkish workers for the program of international socialism. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi strives, on the basis of this program, to unify and mobilize the working class for the conquest of political power and the establishment of workers' power in Turkey. This will create, thereby, the objective preconditions for the development of a genuinely democratic, egalitarian and socialist society.

6. These objectives can be realized only within the framework of an international strategy, the goal of which is the global unification of the workers of all countries and the creation of a United Socialist States of the World. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi works closely with its sister parties in the ICFI to build new sections of the world party in the Middle East, Central Asia, Europe and elsewhere. It puts forward the perspective of the United Socialist States of Europe and the Middle East against the goal of membership in the capitalist European Union and against the artificial borders drawn by the imperialist powers in the Middle East.

## The crisis of capitalism

7. Capitalism, and the imperialist system that develops upon its economic foundations, is the main cause of human poverty, exploitation, violence and suffering in the modern world. As a system of socio-economic organization, capitalism long ago exhausted its historically progressive role. The blood-drenched history of the twentieth century—with its two world wars, innumerable “local” conflicts, the nightmare of Nazism and other forms of military-police dictatorship, eruptions of genocide and pogroms—is an unanswerable indictment of the capitalist system. The number of victims claimed by capitalist-inspired violence runs into the hundreds of millions. And this figure does not include the consignment of the peoples of entire continents to unrelenting poverty, with all its attendant miseries.

8. The gigantic scale of the existing productive forces and the extraordinary advances in science and technology are more than sufficient not only to abolish poverty but also to guarantee every human being on the planet a high standard of living. Humanity can only achieve this level of prosperity by ensuring the continuity of life and resources on the planet through the democratic control of the existing productive forces by the international working class. Culture should be flowering amidst unprecedented material wealth. But, instead, conditions of life are deteriorating for the working class, and human culture, deprived of perspective and hope for the future, is in deep crisis. The source of the contradiction between what is and what should be is a global economic system based on private ownership of the means of production, and the irrational division of the world into rival nation-states.

9. All efforts to raise the living standards of the working class and address serious social problems run up against the barrier of private ownership of the means of production, the anarchy of the capitalist market, the economic imperatives of the profit system, and, last but not least, the insatiable greed and money-madness of the ruling class itself. The claim that the capitalist market is the infallible allocator of resources and the supremely wise arbiter of social needs stands utterly discredited amidst a series of multi-billion-dollar bankruptcies that shook the world economic system to its foundations in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, and the pouring of trillions of dollars into global financial markets after the COVID-19 pandemic. The boundary lines between “legitimate” financial transactions and criminal fraud have narrowed to the point of being almost invisible. The separation of the process of personal wealth accumulation from the production and creation of real value is an expression of the general putrefaction of the capitalist system. The massive inflation of the stock market through speculation and financialization has created unprecedented levels of social inequality, with a handful of people owning more wealth than the bottom half of the world’s population.

10. The deadly consequences for humanity of the capitalist system, based on private ownership of the means of production and the division of the world into rival nation-states, showed itself dramatically with the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic, similar to World War I, is a “trigger event” that intensifies and accelerates the deep contradictions of the global capitalist system. The health crisis has inevitably turned into a global social and political crisis as a result of the policies of the ruling classes that prioritize profit over lives. The global pandemic has turned into a global class struggle as it becomes increasingly clear that the major classes in society, the capitalist class and the working class, have irreconcilably opposing interests.

11. The inept, erratic and inhuman response to the pandemic has exposed both the incompetence and criminal character of governments in each country, and the political and moral bankruptcy of capitalism and the ruling elite. Despite the immeasurable health hazard posed by the spread of the pandemic, mostly threatening the working class, the ruling class

focused almost exclusively on the economic impact of the pandemic; that is, on how the disease will affect the stock market and the personal wealth of the wealthiest 1 to 5 percent of society. All ruling classes around the world have focused on increasing their profits and advancing their interests, not on containing the pandemic and preventing the deaths of millions of people. While millions have died and billions were infected with the long-lasting effects of COVID-19, the working class around the world fell victim to the pandemic’s devastating economic and social consequences.

12. The Zero-COVID policy in China has proven that the disease can be contained and eliminated. However, the global pandemic, by its very nature, can only be ended on a global basis. This can only be achieved through the independent political mobilization of the international working class, not by the bourgeoisie, which refused to mount a global response to the pandemic and subordinates life to private profit and the geopolitical interests of rival nation-states. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi, together with its sister parties in the ICFI, fights for a global elimination strategy to save lives and end the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this struggle, it supports the Global Workers Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic launched by the ICFI.

13. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi emphasizes that in order to harness the full potential of science and technology for the benefit of humanity, the wealth of health billionaires must be nationalized, vaccines must be made patent-free and available to all, and pharmaceutical companies and private hospitals must be transformed into publicly owned enterprises democratically controlled by the working class.

14. The irreconcilable conflict between the profit system and the very survival of humanity finds, in a literal sense, its most noxious expression in the crisis of global warming and the natural environment. The cause of this crisis lies not, as is falsely claimed by the bourgeois media, with population growth. Nor is it the result of science and technology—whose development is critical to the advance of human civilization—but, rather, with their misuse by an irrational and obsolete economic order. The impossibility of finding a genuine solution to the increasingly critical problem of climate change and other environmental problems within the framework of the profit system is an “inconvenient truth” that bourgeois politicians—even those who profess concern for the environment—deny. All scientific evidence points to the fact that nothing short of the socialist reorganization of the world economy—in which the planetary environment would no longer be held hostage to either the profit motive or destructive nationalist interests—will achieve the reductions in greenhouse gases necessary to prevent disaster.

15. The solution to the spreading economic crisis and the deteriorating social position of the working class lies not in the reform of capitalism, for it is beyond reform. The crisis is of a systemic and historical character. As feudalism gave way to capitalism, capitalism must give way to socialism. The key industrial, financial, technological and natural resources must be taken out of the sphere of the capitalist market and private ownership, transferred to society and placed under the democratic supervision and control of the working class. The organization of economic life on the basis of the capitalist law of value must be replaced with its socialist reorganization on the basis of democratic economic planning, whose purpose is the fulfillment of social needs.

## Imperialism and war

16. While the economic system operates on a global scale, with industry and finance controlled by transnational corporations, capitalism remains rooted in a system of nation-states. In the final analysis, the national state

serves as a base of operations from which the ruling class of each country pursues its interests on the world stage. The uncontrollable drive of the main imperialist states—including, first and foremost, the United States—for geopolitical dominance, spheres of influence, markets, control of vital resources, and access to cheap labor, leads inevitably to war.

17. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi opposes the use of military violence by the imperialist countries and their local capitalist allies to achieve their aims, under the pretexts of “War on Terror” or “human rights.” The government and media label as “terrorists” all those who resist the occupation of their country by foreign armies. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi denounces this imperialist-motivated slander and defends the basic right of people to defend themselves, their homes and their countries against neo-colonial invaders. This principled stand does not lessen the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi’s opposition to violent acts that target innocent civilians in either the occupied countries or any other part of the world. Such acts, which can be defined legitimately as terrorist, are politically reactionary. The murder of innocent civilians enrages, disorients and confuses the public. It deepens sectarian and communal divisions within the occupied country. When practiced internationally, terrorism undermines the struggle for the unity of the working class and plays into the hands of those elements within the imperialist and capitalist countries who seize on such events to justify and legitimize the resort to war.

18. Since the Stalinist bureaucracy dissolved the Soviet Union in 1991, the entire world has been caught in an ever-expanding maelstrom of imperialist war. The US-led imperialist powers and their regional allies such as Turkey have devastated countries from Afghanistan to Iraq to Syria to Libya and Yemen, resulting in millions of deaths and tens of millions becoming refugees. Over thirty years of imperialist aggression and NATO’s eastward expansion targeting Russia led to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. The war drive of the US-led imperialist powers for the re-division of the world, targeting Russia and China first and foremost, has now turned into a war with Russia. The growing danger of a nuclear third world war can only be ended by the mass mobilization of the international working class against imperialist war on the basis of a socialist program.

19. The Turkish ruling class supported the regime change wars in Libya and Syria, launched by the imperialist NATO powers. These wars were the imperialist response to the revolutionary uprisings of the working class in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011. The Turkish ruling class, deeply committed to the US-led NATO alliance, sees maneuvering between the US-NATO and Russia and China, and overt or covert military interventions as the main means of advancing its interests in the ongoing struggle over the redistribution of natural resources and geopolitical interests in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and the Caucasus. As part of a broader imperialist drive for a re-division of the world, the old conflict between Turkey and Greece revives, raising the dangerous possibility of a direct military clash with uncertain consequences. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi calls on the Turkish and Greek working class to reject the militarism and nationalism of “their” ruling classes and to join forces on the basis of an international socialist program. An integral part of this struggle is the demand to leave NATO and close the bases of this imperialist war organization.

20. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi demands the immediate withdrawal of the occupation forces in Cyprus, Palestine, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and all other oppressed countries. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi opposes the participation of the Turkish ruling class in these wars, interventions and occupations in the region and warns the masses about the global dangers of the aggression of US-NATO imperialism, which especially targets Russia and China in order to dominate the vast Eurasian territories. It calls for an end to imperialist aggression against Iran and other forces, which are seen as obstacles to the regional interests of US imperialism and the Zionist Israel. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi

encourages and supports the widest mass protests against militarism and war plans of imperialist powers and their capitalist allies. But given the fact that the causes of war are embedded in the economic structure of society and its political division into nation-states, the struggle against imperialist militarism and war can be successful only to the extent that it mobilizes the working class on the basis of an international revolutionary strategy and program. A mass anti-war movement must reject the bankrupt perspective of demanding that governments change their policies and aim for the working class to take power and abolish capitalism, the source of war.

21. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi adopts the following principles of the ICFI as the essential political foundations for an anti-war movement:

- The struggle against war must be based on the working class, the great revolutionary force in society, uniting behind it all progressive elements in the population.
- The new anti-war movement must be anti-capitalist and socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war except in the fight to end the dictatorship of finance capital and the economic system that is the fundamental cause of militarism and war.
- The new anti-war movement must therefore, of necessity, be completely and unequivocally independent of, and hostile to, all political parties and organizations of the capitalist class.
- The new anti-war movement must, above all, be international, mobilizing the vast power of the working class in a unified global struggle against imperialism. The permanent war of the bourgeoisie must be answered with the perspective of permanent revolution by the working class, the strategic goal of which is the abolition of the nation-state system and the establishment of a world socialist federation. This will make possible the rational, planned development of global resources and, on this basis, the eradication of poverty and the raising of human culture to new heights.

## **The capitalist state, democracy and workers’ power**

22. The essential precondition for the implementation of socialist policies is the conquest of political power by the working class and the establishment of workers’ power. While the working class must make use of all democratic and legal rights available to it in the struggle for power, vast historical experience has demonstrated that it cannot carry out the socialist reorganization of society within the framework of the existing institutions of bourgeois democracy and the capitalist state. The classic Marxist definition of the state as an instrument of class rule, consisting “not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds” (Engels), is even truer today than it was a century ago. The state is not, as reformists habitually assert, a neutral arbiter of social conflict. Its very existence testifies to the fact that society is split into irreconcilably antagonistic classes. The bourgeois state is an instrument that upholds the political dictatorship of the capitalist class. Even as a matter of law, the bourgeoisie reserves the right to sweep aside basic constitutional protections and procedures when it perceives a danger to its fundamental class interests.

23. The NATO-backed attempted military coup in Turkey on July 15, 2016, was a serious warning to the Turkish and international working class. The defeat of the coup by mass opposition was not followed by the “revival of democracy,” but by the construction of a presidential regime that increasingly abolished basic democratic rights. The geopolitical and class tensions arising from the global crisis of capitalism and the endless growth of social inequality underlie the worldwide collapse of democratic

forms of rule. The ruling classes, which prepare to go to war abroad and suppress the working class at home, strengthen the far right in every country and turn to authoritarian regimes.

24. While employing democratic rhetoric to legitimize its rule within Turkey and to justify its military operations abroad, the contemporary Turkish Republic state retains at its disposal repressive mechanisms of unparalleled scope in the name of “War on Terror”: a prison system, with thousands of political prisoners behind bars; a massive and heavily armed police force; a legal system that tramples even bourgeois legal principles and is dominated by political decisions; a form of government in which the state of emergency is normalized; an immensely powerful and lavishly funded military force, imbued with militaristic and anti-democratic sentiments; and a vast “national security” apparatus, which has been given extraordinary powers. Over all these institutions the people exercise virtually no effective supervision or control.

25. Democratic rights established in the past have been drastically eroded. The understanding of democracy has become the rule of, by, and for the rich. The right to vote and stand for election is thwarted by anti-democratic electoral laws that prevent the breaking of the monopolies of bourgeois political parties backed by the imperialist powers and big business. The existing electoral set-up excludes effective participation by parties opposed to the political establishment. The imposition of “trustees” who disregard this basic democratic right has become normalized. Election thresholds, financial aid and ballot access laws have been designed to prevent challenges to bourgeois rule. Likewise, freedom of the press means little when the major media outlets are controlled by powerful corporate interests. Moreover, the Internet, which has created the possibility for alternative opinions to be heard, is subjected to increasingly heavy-handed regulation and censorship.

26. The defense of democratic rights is inseparably bound up with the struggle for socialism. As there can be no socialism without democracy, there will be no democracy without socialism. Political equality is impossible without economic equality. Like the struggle against war, the fight to defend and expand democratic rights requires the independent political mobilization of the working class, on the basis of a socialist program, to conquer power. The intertwining of the struggle for democracy and socialism underscores the importance of Leon Trotsky’s Theory of Permanent Revolution, especially in countries of belated capitalist development like Turkey, as evidenced by the historical lessons of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century:

- There is no country in the world where the capitalist ruling class or its political representatives, including all oppressed and former colonial or semi-colonial countries, would play a progressive role.

- In all countries, the only fundamental revolutionary force capable of implementing and defending a democratic program without compromise is the working class. The struggle for democracy is combined with the struggle for socialism and workers’ power internationally. Only the united working class, leading the poor farmers and oppressed masses, can address historical tasks by establishing workers’ power as part of the world socialist revolution.

- The struggle in any country must be guided by an international strategy. For the workers in Turkey, the socialist revolution can only succeed if it can win the entire Middle Eastern, Caucasian, Balkan and international working class, of whatever nationality, religion and sect, into a common struggle for socialism against the regional ruling elites and their imperialist masters in the US and Europe.

27. The establishment of workers’ power requires far more than the election of socialist candidates to the existing institutions of the bourgeois state. New forms and structures of genuine participatory democracy—arising in the course of revolutionary mass struggles and representative of the working class majority of the population—must be

developed as the foundations of a workers’ government; that is, a government of the workers, for the workers and by the workers. The policy of such a government, as it introduces those measures essential for the socialist transformation of economic life, would be to encourage and actively promote a vast expansion of democratic working class participation in, and control over, decision-making processes. It would favor the abolition of existing institutions that either curtail democratic processes or serve as centers of conspiracy against the people. These and other necessary changes of a profoundly democratic character, to be determined by the masses themselves, are possible only in the context of the mass mobilization of the working class, imbued with socialist consciousness.

## **The political independence of the working class**

28. The struggle for power requires the unconditional political independence of the working class from the parties, political representatives and agents of the capitalist class. The working class cannot come to power, let alone implement a socialist program, if its hands are tied by politically enfeebling compromises with the political representatives of other class interests. First and foremost, this means unwavering rejection of the timeworn and fraudulent myth that the bourgeois opposition parties represent, as compared to the ruling parties, a “lesser evil.” Among the paramount political responsibilities of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi is to advocate, encourage and promote a decisive and irrevocable break by the working class with the entire capitalist political establishment.

29. In evaluating political tendencies, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi considers the decisive criteria to be not their episodic position on one or another question, but rather their history, program, perspective, and class basis and orientation. History provides countless examples of the working class being led into a political blind alley through the formation of electoral alliances that required, for the sake of ephemeral gains at the ballot box, that workers sacrifice their most essential political, social and economic interests. The “Popular Front” alliances formed by the Stalinists and Social-Democratic parties in the 1930s provide the most tragic examples of the consequences of the short-sighted and treacherous sacrifice of historic and long-term interests in the pursuit of broad-based, multi-class and, therefore, debilitating coalitions of incompatible social interests.

## **Against opportunism**

30. In its approach to all political questions and in its selection of the appropriate tactics, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi upholds the fundamental interests of the working class, based on a scientific understanding of the law-governed nature of the capitalist system and the political dynamics of class society, and a systematic assimilation of the lessons of history. It is this approach that places the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi in irreconcilable opposition to opportunist politics, which, in the pursuit of short-term tactical gains, sacrifices the long-term interests of the working class. Time and again opportunists have defended their betrayal of principles by claiming to be realistic politicians, not guided by “inflexible” dogmas and understanding how to adapt their practice to the requirements of any given situation. Time and again, such “realistic” politics have led to disaster—precisely because they were based on superficial, impressionistic,

non-Marxist and, consequently, unrealistic and false appraisals of objective conditions and the dynamics of the class struggle.

31. But opportunism is not merely the product of an intellectual and theoretical error. It has substantial socio-economic roots in capitalist society and develops within the workers' movement as an expression of the pressure of hostile class forces. All significant manifestations of opportunism—from that of Bernstein, which arose within the German Social Democracy at the end of the 19th century, and that of Stalin, which grew inside the Bolshevik Party in the 1920s, to that of Pablo and Mandel, which developed in the early 1950s inside the Fourth International, and, finally, to the opportunism of the British Workers Revolutionary Party that led to its break from the ICFI in the mid-1980s—can be traced to the influence exerted by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois social forces upon the working class. This is the underlying cause and significance of revisionism and opportunist politics. The struggle against such tendencies is not a distraction from party building, but, rather, the highest point at which the fight for Marxism in the working class is engaged.

## **Socialist consciousness and the crisis of leadership**

32. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi, in political solidarity with the ICFI, defends the classical Marxist conception—developed systematically by Lenin in the construction of the Bolshevik Party and carried forward by Trotsky in the struggle to found and build the Fourth International—that revolutionary socialist consciousness does not develop spontaneously in the working class. Socialist consciousness requires scientific insight into the laws of historical development and the capitalist mode of production. This knowledge and understanding must be introduced into the working class, and this is the principal task of the Marxist movement. This was precisely the point that Lenin emphasized in *What Is To Be Done?* when he wrote: “Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.” Apart from the efforts of the revolutionary party to introduce Marxist theory into the workers' movement, the predominant form of mass working class consciousness will remain at the level of trade unionism, defined by Lenin as the “bourgeois consciousness” of the working class. Denigration of the struggle for revolutionary consciousness, which is usually combined with demagogic attacks on intellectual and Marxist “elitism,” is the stock-in-trade of reactionary academics and political opportunists.

33. The victory of socialism—and, therefore, the survival and progressive development of human civilization—requires the construction, on the foundations of Marxist theory, of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution. Socialism will not be realized merely as the inevitable outcome of an unconscious historical process. The entire history of the 20th century testifies against such fatalistic “inevitabilism,” which is a caricature of historical materialist determinism and has nothing in common with the dynamic interaction of cognition, theory and practice exemplified in the work of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Capitalism survived the 20th century not because objective conditions were insufficiently mature for socialism, but rather because the leadership of the mass working class parties was “insufficient” for socialist revolution. The working class again and again entered into epic struggles. But these struggles, misled by the Stalinists, social democrats, centrist and reformist organizations, ended in defeats.

34. Capitalism exists today because of the betrayals of the working class by its own organizations—the mass political parties and the trade unions. “The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.” These words, with which Leon Trotsky began the founding document of the Fourth

International, remain supremely relevant as a definition of contemporary political reality. There is not a single mass organization in the world today that presents itself as an opponent of the existing world capitalist order, let alone summons the working class to revolutionary struggle. This has created a surreal environment, in which the anger and discontent of the working class is suppressed by the old, politically sclerotic organizations. But as Trotsky also wrote in the founding document of the Fourth International, *The Transitional Program*: “The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism and second by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus.”

## **Marxist theory and the working class**

35. The contradictions of the capitalist system will drive the working class into struggles that pose the revolutionary reorganization of society. These struggles will assume an explicitly international character, arising objectively from the advanced level of the global integration of the productive forces. Therefore, the great strategic task of the modern epoch is the forging of the political unity of the workers of all countries as the decisive international revolutionary force.

36. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi bases its activity on an analysis of the objective laws of history and society, particularly as they are manifested in the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. Rooted in philosophical materialism, Marxism insists on the primacy of matter over consciousness. “The ideal is nothing else than the material world,” wrote Marx, “reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.” The materialism of Marx is dialectical, in that it regards the material world and the forms of its reflection in thought not as an aggregate of fixed objects and concepts, internally undifferentiated, but, rather, as a complex of processes, in constant movement and interaction, with antagonistic and divergent tendencies.

37. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi seeks to develop, within the advanced sections of the working class, a scientific understanding of history, a knowledge of the capitalist mode of production and the social relations to which it gives rise, and an insight into the real nature of the present crisis and its world-historical implications. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi strives to transform the material potential for social revolution created by an objective historical process into a class-conscious and self-confident political movement. Applying the method of historical materialist analysis to world events, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi anticipates and prepares for the consequences of the intensification of the world capitalist crisis, lays bare the logic of events and formulates—strategically and tactically—the appropriate political response. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi insists that the progressive and socialist transformation of society can be achieved only through the mass struggle of the politically conscious working class. The actions of isolated individuals, resorting to violence, can never serve as a substitute for the collective struggle of the working class. As long political experience has shown, acts of individual violence are frequently instigated by provocateurs and play into the hands of the state.

38. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi upholds under all conditions the essential revolutionary socialist principle: to tell the working class the truth. The program of the party must be based on a scientific and objective assessment of political reality. The most insidious form of opportunism is that which justifies itself on the grounds that the workers are not ready for the truth, that Marxists must take the prevailing level of mass consciousness—or, more precisely, what the opportunists imagine it to be—as their point of departure, and adapt their program to the prejudices

and confusion existing among the masses. This cowardly approach is the antithesis of principled revolutionary politics. “The program,” declared Trotsky in 1938, “must express the objective tasks of the working class rather than the backwardness of the workers. It must reflect society as it is, and not the backwardness of the working class. It is an instrument to overcome and vanquish the backwardness. That is why we must express in our program the whole acuteness of the social crisis of the capitalist society, including in the first line the United States.” The first responsibility of the party, Trotsky continued, is to give “a clear, honest picture of the objective situation, of the historic tasks which flow from this situation, irrespective of whether or not the workers are today ripe for this. Our tasks don’t depend on the mentality of the workers. The task is to develop the mentality of the workers. That is what the program should formulate and present before advanced workers.” These words define precisely the approach taken by the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi.

### **The betrayal of the trade unions**

39. The opportunists’ aversion to telling the workers the truth is virtually always connected to their efforts to provide political cover for, and preserve the authority of, the old reactionary, bureaucratized and thoroughly corporatist trade unions and political organizations that maintain the subordination of the working class to the capitalist system. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi, in opposition to the opportunists, aims to develop within the working class an understanding of the nature of the old organizations—principally, the trade unions—which claim to represent the working people. The trade unions are controlled by and serve the interests of a substantial stratum of middle-class functionaries whose personal income is derived from their active and conscious role as facilitators of the corporate exploitation of the working class.

40. During the past decades, the trade unions have played a major role in breaking strikes, lowering wages, eliminating benefits, cutting jobs and shutting down factories. During this process, despite the loss of membership, the revenues of the trade unions and the salaries of their functionaries have continued to rise. Insulated from and indifferent to the hardships suffered by their membership and protected by the “dues check-off” and labor laws from rank-and-file protests, the unions are tied by a thousand threads to the corporations and the capitalist state.

41. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi calls for a rebellion against these corrupt organizations, which do not represent the working class. This does not mean that the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi abstains from working inside such organizations, to the extent that such activity is required to gain access to and assist the workers jointly oppressed by their employers and the union functionaries. But the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi conducts such work on the basis of a revolutionary perspective, encouraging at every point the formation of new independent organizations—such as factory and workplace committees—that truly represent the interests of the rank-and-file workers and are subject to democratic control.

42. On this basis, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi resolutely supports the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) launched by the International Committee of the Fourth International. The IWA-RFC provides a way and a means for the working class to resist the capitalist offensive intensified by the pandemic and the war by coordinating its struggle against the ruling class and the corporatist unions in different factories, sectors and countries.

### **Class unity versus identity politics**

43. Another form of opportunism, which has played a significant role in undermining the struggle for the unity of the working class and lowering class consciousness, is the promotion of innumerable forms of “identity” politics—based on the elevation of national, ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, gender, and sexual distinctions above class position. This shift from class to identity has been at the expense of an understanding of the real causes, rooted in the capitalist system, of the hardships that confront all working people. At its worst, it has promoted a competition among different “identities” for access to educational institutions, jobs and other “opportunities” which, in a socialist society, would be freely available to all people without such demeaning, dehumanizing and arbitrary distinctions. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi demands full equality for all people and defends unequivocally their democratic rights. All forms of discrimination based on national, ethnic, racial, religious or linguistic heritage, or on gender or sexual orientation, must be abolished. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi advances this essential democratic component of its program within the context of the fight for socialism, based on the political unification of all sections of the working class.

### **Against xenophobia and for the rights of refugees and immigrants**

44. An essential precondition for the forging of this unity is the unconditional defense of the democratic rights of immigrants and refugees living in Turkey. All the establishment parties and media foment xenophobia and incite witch hunts against refugees in order to divert attention from their own responsibility for the economic and social crisis caused by the capitalist system and NATO’s wars across the region. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi opposes all attempts to scapegoat migrants or refugees fleeing imperialist war for the economic crisis and rising unemployment, and all attempts to divide the working class and suppress the class struggle by fomenting chauvinist prejudices. It rejects the reactionary border regime of the European Union in collaboration with Turkey, which has turned Europe into a fortress and leads to the deaths of thousands of migrants.

45. Due to its geopolitical position, Turkey has been a transit country for people forced to leave their countries devastated by the imperialist interventions and seeking refuge in Europe in the hope of a humane life. More than 3.5 million refugees who left their home due to the regime-change war in Syria are trapped in Turkey as a result of the dirty deals between Turkey and the EU. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi stands for the unconditional right of workers of every country to live and work where they choose. We call for full democratic and citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees, including economic migrants classified as “unregistered workers.”

### **For the United Socialist States of Europe and the Middle East**

46. While Turkey is directly affected by the developments in Europe and the Middle East due to the critical position it occupies in the geopolitics of the world imperialist system, this also guarantees that the class struggle in this country will assume gigantic dimensions. This underlines the importance of building the Trotskyist movement in Turkey and across the Middle East.

47. Imperialist aggression has resulted in a bloodbath in the Middle East and poses the danger of a much bloodier regional war that could engulf Turkey. After Iraq, Syria and Yemen, the US-led imperialist powers and

Israel have launched a murderous imperialist war against Iran amid the genocide against the Palestinians. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi opposes in principle imperialist aggression against oppressed countries in the Middle East and elsewhere. Together with its sister parties in the ICFI, it fights for the revolutionary mobilization of the international working class against this aggression and its source: capitalism. The corrupt regimes and capitalist elites across the region are complicit in this bloody history, resulting in the devastation of entire societies. The only social force that will put an end to wars is the working class of the Middle East, united across all national, ethnic, religious and sectarian divisions and allied with their class brothers and sisters in the US, Europe and around the world. No bourgeois nationalist regime or party in the region is an ally of the working class against this imperialist aggression. Workers and oppressed masses of the Middle East need a clear socialist perspective and program based on the historical and international experience of the working class for a successful struggle against imperialism and its regional allies, i.e., the Turkish, Kurdish, Israeli, Arab, and Iranian ruling classes. The struggle against imperialist aggression aimed at the re-division and re-colonization of the Middle East is inextricably linked with the struggle for the United Socialist States of the Middle East.

48. Middle Eastern workers will find their allies in this fight among workers in America, Europe and around the world, where there is deep opposition to the endless wars waged by Washington and its allies. They will give strong support to the struggle of their class brothers in this region for the United Socialist States of the Middle East. The response of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi to the imperialist war in Turkey, which is a bridge between Europe and the Middle East, is the United Socialist States of Europe and the Middle East.

### **Proletarian internationalism against nationalism**

49. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi fights for the democratic, cultural and political rights of all oppressed peoples in the region, especially the Kurdish and Palestinian peoples. The democratic and cultural rights of the Kurdish people, divided into four countries at the center of imperialist wars and interventions in the Middle East, and the Palestinian people, subjected to ethnic cleansing and genocide by Zionist Israel, can only be secured under a socialist federation that will be part of the struggle for international socialism.

50. The defense of oppressed peoples does not mean support for pro-imperialist, bourgeois nationalist movements or a defense of separatism. The bitter history of the Kurdish and Palestinian peoples is marked by the betrayals of various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships. Bourgeois nationalism is bankrupt.

51. The global integration of the economy, undermining the nation-state and all kinds of nationalist and reformist projects, has made these leaderships more open to cooperation with the imperialist states. In the Balkans, the disintegration of Yugoslavia by the imperialist powers under the false “human rights” slogan, and most recently the establishment of the satellite state of Kosovo, is a clear example of this. The use of ethnic separatism incited in the Caucasus by the imperialist powers for their ambitions targeting Russia; the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, whose maneuvers between the imperialist powers, the Indian bourgeoisie and the Sri Lankan state prepared their tragic and bloody end; unending disasters experienced by Palestinians in the Middle East with the nationalist leaderships; and finally, the Kurdish nationalist movements that served as collaborators of imperialist occupation in Iraq or that emerged as a major proxy force in NATO’s war for regime change in Syria... All these bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist movements, which constitute the

main examples of the past thirty years, show that the so-called “national liberation” oriented to imperialism has brought nothing but disaster.

52. Fighting for education in the mother tongue, for the constitutional guarantee of the Kurdish language and for the recognition of all other democratic and cultural rights as well as freedom for political prisoners, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi insists that the only way to the lasting peace and democratic rights that the working people long for is the unification of workers of all nationalities in the Middle East and in the imperialist countries in the fight for global socialism and against war and neo-colonial oppression. It means fighting for the Socialist Federation of the Middle East, which will be part of a world socialist federation.

53. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi also resolutely fights against chauvinist attacks and historical falsification against minorities who were a major part of Turkey’s population and culture in the past and whose proportion in the population has been gradually reduced by systematic state policies. It seeks to unite these communities under the revolutionary leadership of the working class.

### **Democratic centralism**

54. The revolutionary struggle of the working class requires organization, and organization is impossible without discipline. But the discipline required for revolutionary struggle cannot be imposed bureaucratically from above. It must develop on the basis of an agreement, freely arrived at, on principles and program. This conviction finds expression in the organizational structure of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi, which is based on the principles of democratic centralism. In the formulation of policy and the appropriate tactics, the fullest democracy must prevail within the party. No restraints, other than those indicated by the party’s constitution, are placed on internal discussion of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi’s policies and activities. Leaders are democratically elected by the membership and are subject to criticism and control. Those candidates for leadership who cannot abide criticism should ponder the words of James P. Cannon, the founder of the Trotskyist movement in the United States: “The truth never hurt anyone, provided he was on the level.” But if the formulation of policy requires the broadest discussion and open and honest criticism, its implementation demands the strictest discipline. The decisions arrived at democratically within the party are binding on all members. Those who object to this essential element of centralism in the implementation of decisions, who see in the demand for discipline a violation of their personal freedom, are not revolutionary socialists but anarchistic individualists, who do not understand the implications and demands of the class struggle.

### **Class consciousness, culture and the World Socialist Web Site**

55. The fight for socialism demands an enormous growth in the political, intellectual, and cultural stature of the workers’ movement, in Turkey and internationally. In contrast to the practitioners of pragmatic and opportunist politics, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi is convinced that only a movement working at the highest theoretical level will prove capable of attracting the working class to its banner, preparing it for the struggle against capitalism, and, beyond that, the construction of a socialist society. While the bourgeois politicians seek to drag the working class down to their own intellectually debased level, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi strives to raise the working class up to the level required by its historic tasks. Not

only politics but also science, history, philosophy, literature, movies, music, the fine arts, and all areas of culture fall within the domain of socialist education. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi's most important instrument for the development of socialist consciousness within the working class is the *World Socialist Web Site* (wsws.org). With its daily analysis of world political and economic developments, exposure of the social realities of capitalism, coverage of workers' struggles, commentary on vital questions of culture, discussion of historical and philosophical themes, and examination of critical issues of revolutionary strategy, tactics and practice, the WSWS plays a decisive role in forging the contemporary world Marxist movement.

## Revolutionary strategy and transitional demands

56. The strategic aim of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi, in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International, is to educate and prepare the working class for the revolutionary struggle against capitalism, the establishment of workers' power and the creation of a socialist society. Our aim is not the reform of capitalism, but its overthrow. The attainment of this goal, however, requires the most careful and detailed attention to the conditions of life of the broad mass of workers, and the formulation of demands that address their needs. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi recognizes the necessity of establishing, in practice, a link between the perspective of socialist revolution and the concrete struggles in which the working class is engaged. In this effort, the work of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi is guided by the approach advocated by Leon Trotsky in the *Transitional Program*: "It is necessary," he wrote, "to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find a bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

57. Such demands include universal employment, unrestricted access to quality medical care and education, decent and safe housing, the cancellation of foreclosures and evictions, automatic adjustment of wages in line with inflation, the democratization of the workplace, unrestricted inspection by the public of the financial records of corporations and financial institutions, establishment of restraints on executive salaries, reduction of working hours with no loss of pay, imposition of a genuinely progressive income tax and significant restriction on the transfer of massive personal wealth via inheritance, nationalization and the establishment of democratic workers' control of large corporations vital to the national and global economy, and other demands of a democratic and socially beneficial character.

58. Transitional demands will play an important role in the political mobilization of the working class to the extent that they form part of a broader campaign to develop socialist consciousness. The Transitional Program is not an *á la carte* menu, from which demands are arbitrarily selected, without the appropriate political context or reference to broader political goals. If the Transitional Program is to serve as a bridge to socialism, the destination cannot be kept a secret from the working class.

## The working class and the socialist revolution

59. The work of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi is imbued with an

unwavering confidence, grounded in advanced scientific theory and rich historical experience, in the revolutionary role and destiny of the working class. But the victory of the socialist revolution depends upon the conscious struggles of workers. The emancipation of the working class is, in the final analysis, the task of the working class itself. As Engels put it so well, "Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organization, the masses themselves must also be in on it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are fighting for, body and soul." Thus, socialism can only be established when the workers themselves want it; and, conversely, when that decision is made, beneath the blows of crisis-stricken capitalism, there is no force on earth that will stop the Turkish workers from taking their place in the vanguard of the world socialist revolution.



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