

Mehring Yay?nc?l?k holds first cinema screening of *Tsar to Lenin* in Türkiye

Our reporters
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Mehring Yay?nc?l?k, publishing arm of the International Committee of the Fourth International, held the first cinema screening in Türkiye of the unique documentary *Tsar to Lenin* on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at the Caddebostan Cultural Centre (CKM) in Istanbul.

Despite the early hour and adverse weather conditions, about 50 people attended the screening, following the film with keen interest and expressing their enthusiasm afterward. The Mehring Yay?nc?l?k book stall set up at the venue attracted considerable attention.

The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party – Fourth International) conducted an extensive poster campaign on Istanbul’s Anatolian side in the lead-up to the event as well as for the May Day Online Rally. At a May Day rally held in Kad?köy on May 1, party members and supporters distributed its May Day statement alongside leaflets promoting the event. The strong response to promotional posts on social media platforms demonstrated the interest and appreciation that workers, intellectuals, and youth have for the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Before the screening, Ula? Sevinç, chairman of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi and editor of Mehring Yay?nc?l?k, delivered an opening speech on the contemporary significance of the Russian Revolution and the story behind the film. Thanking CKM Director Mr. Faruk and the cultural centre staff for making the event possible, Sevinç emphasized that it had been organized as part of May Day celebrations—the international day of working-class unity, struggle and solidarity.

He expressed solidarity with workers and others who had been detained, arrested or placed under house arrest in the days before May Day and on the day itself for

attempting to celebrate May Day at Taksim Square, a historically significant area for the working class. Noting that 576 people had been detained on May Day, Sevinç demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners, including independent union B?RTEK-SEN leader Mehmet Türkmen, who remains in jail, and Akbelen Forest activist Esra I??k.

Drawing parallels between the conditions that gave rise to the Russian Revolution and the current world situation, Sevinç stated: “The fundamental problems that led to the Russian Revolution have not disappeared—on the contrary, they have intensified enormously... The NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, which threatens to escalate into a nuclear conflict, continues. The genocidal war against the peoples of Palestine and Lebanon continues. The US and Israel’s imperialist war of aggression against Iran continues.”

Sevinç noted that despite Trump’s declaration of his intention to destroy civilization in Iran and turn the country back to the Stone Age, he continues to be supported by NATO allies, including Türkiye.

Sevinç explained that present conditions vindicated what Lenin had written during the First World War. He said, “In capitalism, and especially in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable; peace can only be won through socialist revolution.”

This held true for the defense of democratic and social gains as well. “Today, the imperialist powers are not only waging war against Iran and other countries—they are waging war against the international working class. The fundamental aim of this war is to eliminate all the social and democratic gains of the 20th century.”

Sevinç highlighted the world-historical significance of the Russian Revolution and its direct impact on

Türkiye, stating: “This groundbreaking event placed on the agenda the overthrow of the capitalist system—the root cause of imperialist war—and inspired and empowered anti-colonial mass movements across the globe. The national liberation war in Türkiye was among them.”

Turning to the deepening social inequality of the present era, Sevinç pointed out that the wealth of a handful of billionaire oligarchs now exceeds that of half the world’s population, noting that this chasm had reached unsustainable proportions. Governments around the world, unable to contain the growing opposition of the working class through democratic means, were turning toward authoritarian and dictatorial forms of rule.

He spoke to recent workers’ struggles in Türkiye, citing the Doruk Mining workers’ resistance in Ankara, the struggle of Polyak miners in İzmir, and the wildcat strike by Migros warehouse workers as expressions of this wave of struggles. “This is not unique to Türkiye. Strikes and protests are on the rise across Europe and around the world. All these struggles demonstrate that the workers movement can advance to the extent that it breaks free from the grip of the trade union bureaucracy,” he said.

Insisting that replacing one capitalist government with another solves none of the fundamental problems, Sevinç concluded that the task before the working class is the completion of the international socialist revolution begun by the Russian Revolution.

Noting that the international working class has grown to an enormous scale compared to 110 years ago and is objectively unified through a globally integrated economy, Sevinç explained that the material foundations for a global socialist economy already exist:

But whether humanity advances toward socialism or toward further barbarism will be decided by struggle. We hold that this struggle must be guided by the strategy that Lenin and Trotsky laid as the foundation of the October Revolution.

Sevinç addressed the history of the making of *Tsar to*

Lenin. The film was compiled from rare archival footage of the Russian Revolution through the collaboration of Herman Axelbank and Max Eastman, and had its world premiere in New York in 1937. Released in the midst of the Moscow Trials, the film documented Trotsky’s central role in the revolution and was consequently suppressed through the intervention of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR.

The film was only able to resurface after its ownership was acquired in 1978 by the US Workers League, the predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party.

He concluded:

The Stalinist bureaucracy committed its final betrayal of the October Revolution by dissolving the Soviet Union in 1991. But what collapsed was not socialism, it was Stalinism. From the very beginning, there was an alternative, and that alternative was represented, and continues to be represented, by the Left Opposition founded in the USSR in 1923, and subsequently by the Fourth International, established in 1938, under the leadership of Trotsky.

To help organize a screening of this historic film in cinemas or other venues in your city in Türkiye, please contact us.



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