

Oppose the police operation against the Socialist Laborers Party in Turkey!

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On Friday, December 13, 15 members of the Socialist Laborers Party (SLP), which identifies itself as Trotskyist, including its chairwoman, and four members of the Energy, Industry and Mine Workers Union and the United Transport Union were arrested in police raids and accused of being members of a “terrorist organization.” Three of the detainees were placed under house arrest on Tuesday, while the others were released under judicial supervision.

The Socialist Equality Group (SEG) unequivocally condemns this police state operation and calls for the case to be dropped and for the immediate release of those under house arrest. The SLP and its members, who have been linked to “terrorism” on trumped-up charges, have basic democratic rights, including the right to engage in political activity, and these rights must be strongly defended by the working class.

This baseless operation, part of a growing police state crackdown on political opposition in Turkey, comes as the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan intensifies its attacks on the social and economic conditions of the working class and prepares for war in the Middle East, particularly over Syria. On the same day as the operation, Erdoğan issued a decree that de facto banned the metalworkers’ strike. In recent months, many elected Kurdish mayors have been dismissed and many people have been arrested for protesting the government’s complicity in the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

In a press statement Wednesday, SLP chairwoman Güneş Gümüş said the group faced an extensive frame-up. She said that according to the case files, the arrested members have been physically followed for four years, and phone calls, social media accounts and financial records of party members have been examined by the police. Legal party activities such as “visits to workers’

strikes, women’s activities, summer camps, interviews” are being shown as criminal evidence.

Gümüş stated that members of her party were accused of being members of an “armed terrorist organization” and that the organization was mendaciously called “Trotskyists, 4th Left Construction (Bolshevik-Trotsky).” She added that the file did not even contain a photo of a slingshot as a weapon and that photos of picnics, summer schools, drinking tea at a cultural center were shown as evidence of the “crime.”

She added that the SLP’s Izmir provincial executive, despite being accused of being members of an “armed terrorist organization,” were brought to Ankara on a plane accompanied by an undercover policeman without any precautions, indicating that even the security forces carrying out the operation were aware of the fabricated character of the charges.

In a statement on social media, lawyer Cenk Yiğit described the case as an example of black humor. He wrote on his X/Twitter account that the only basis for portraying the SLP as an “illegal organization with a legal appearance” was that a 24-year-old young man who had just become a member of the party was joking on the phone with his former teacher. The teacher jokingly teased the young man, saying, “You’ve become a revolutionary, as if you could do anything,” to which he replied, also as a joke, “We will take power with an armed popular uprising.”

This year has witnessed an increase in police state repression, especially after the “détente” talks between Erdoğan and Kemalist Republican People’s Party (CHP) leader Özgür Özel following the March 31 local elections. This rapprochement between Erdoğan and the CHP was part of the ruling elite’s efforts to “strengthen the internal front” under conditions of the

deepening war in the Middle East, as the president later put it.

The government unlawfully closed Taksim Square on May Day, despite a ruling by the Constitutional Court, and police violence against workers and youth who tried to celebrate in the square was accompanied by retaliatory arrests.

The Kurdish nationalist Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM)--several of whose elected mayors were dismissed and replaced by trustees--announced that 3,128 of its members were detained and 409 of them arrested last year.

Nine people were arrested last month for protesting Erdogan over Turkey's ongoing trade and oil shipments with Israel. The government had previously arrested members of the group "One Thousand Youth for Palestine" for calling for a break in relations with the Zionists. A Palestinian university student was sent to a detention centre under threat of deportation after protesting against Turkey's mediation in the supply of oil from Azerbaijan to Israel at another panel discussion on Palestine organised by *TRT World*.

At the end of November, more than 200 people were detained, including trade unionists, journalists and lawyers. Five people, including Fatma Alökmen, the vice-president of the independent Revolutionary Textile Workers' Union, and two workers, were arrested on trumped-up charges.

The Erdoğan government uses detentions, arrests and trials without any legal basis to suppress and criminalize political opposition. But the recent operation against the SLP has a different aspect: It is the first time that such an extensive trial and police operation has been organized against a party that calls itself "Trotskyist."

The Socialist Equality Group has well-documented and fundamental historical and political differences with the Socialist Laborers Party. But regardless of these differences, the state's attempt to discredit "Trotskyism" in the eyes of workers and youth by equating it with terrorism is a serious political threat.

The SEG calls on workers and youth to demand an end to all political trials, which the government uses as a tool of repression, and the release of political prisoners, and to study carefully the history and perspectives of Trotskyism as documented on the *World Socialist Web Site*.



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