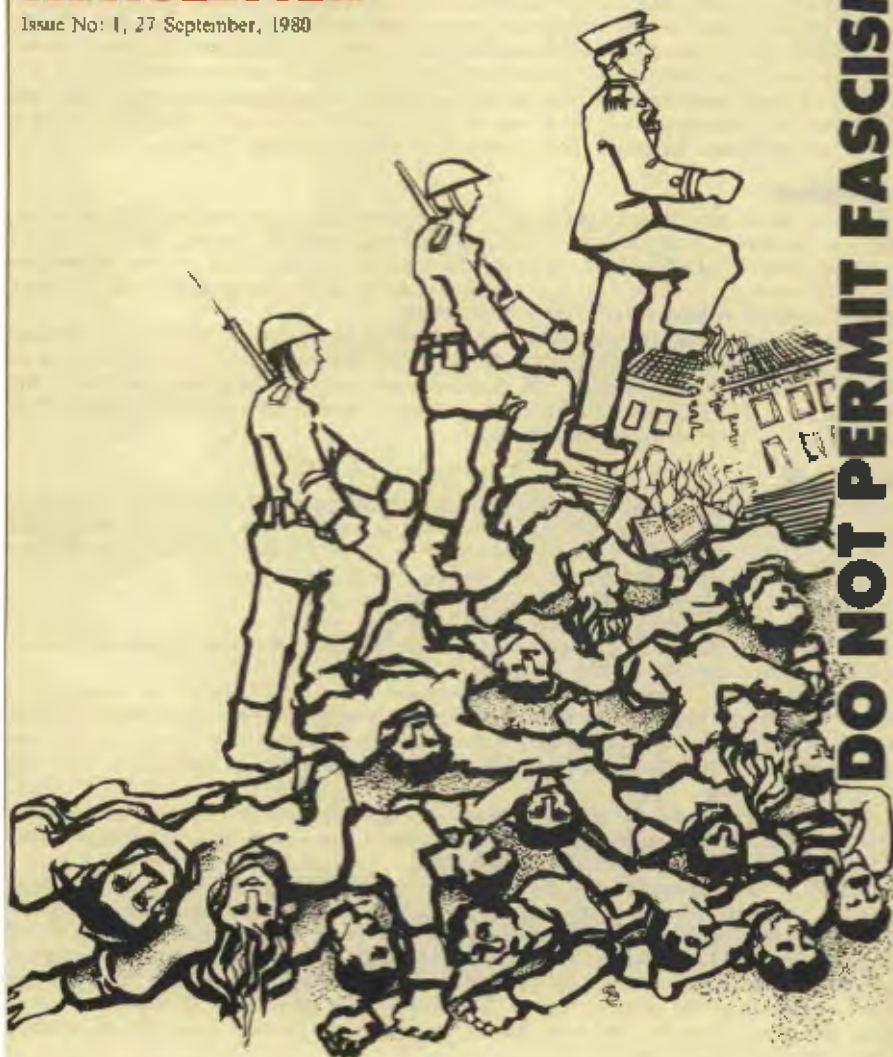




Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 1, 27 September, 1980



**DO NOT PERMIT FASCISM
TO CONSIDER ITSELF IN TURKEY**

True face of 12 September coup d'etat

Two weeks ago the military seized power in a "bloodless" coup the stated aim of which, to stamp out terrorism and anarchy from "both the right and the left" and to restore the ailing economy, gained a degree of respectability and support in the West not usually afforded to military coups. Former Chief-of-Staff and now self-proclaimed Head of State General Kenan Evren has been conducting a well organised public relations campaign to present the junta which he heads as a bulwark against the civil war which everyone admits was engulfing the country.

Behind the middle-of-the-road image of patriotism and devotion to democracy that has, and is, being presented to the world (*Time* magazine described Evren as a "stern but kindly schoolmaster" (29 September 1980).), the junta has carried out such widespread arrests and imposed such harsh and ominous measures that, were they fully reported, would leave no doubt in anyone's mind that this carefully planned and executed coup is a fascist coup aimed at achieving a short, swift and harsh victory in the civil war that the state and the fascists have been waging together, until now almost in spite of the incompetence and chaos in the government, against the working class and the Kurdish national movement. The measures announced in the past week, let alone those which will surely follow, amount to much more even than a declaration of war, of which there have been many in the past year, including Demirel's warning that "the state is engaged in a merciless struggle. It will not be waged with flowers". They amount to a demand for unconditional surrender and acceptance of a fascist state. Witness:

Forced labour

In the first week alone more than 10,000 people were arrested and more were being rounded up. Stadiums and university campuses were being turned into open-air prisons. Those arrested include *all* the leaders and officials of the trade union confederation DISK, in total more than 1,000 trade unionists. At least 80 members of parliament including the former Prime Minister Demirel and opposition leader Ecevit are under arrest.

With all trade union activity, including strikes, banned, more than 60,000 textile and metal workers who had been on strike were forced back to work under threat of being treated as criminals. They were "granted", not a 70% wage increase, as has been widely reported in the English press, but a 70% advance, or loan on their wages. This at a time when, faced with 120% inflation, the lowest wage demand was for 140%.

Shoot to kill

The decree of 21st September gave martial law commanders throughout the country a free hand:

- They are now able to appoint and dismiss all categories of civil servants; surveil all communications, including private letters, and censor the press; confiscate books, close schools, expel students, ban all meetings and any association that might still exist.

- There is to be virtually unlimited detention without trial.

- There can be no appeal of sentences of less than 3 years.

- Security forces have the right to shoot to kill at their own discretion anyone who raises suspicion or fails to immediately obey an order.

- Journalists who "intentionally propagate erroneous, unfounded or exaggerated information in a manner to create alarm or excitement among the public" will be jailed from six months to two years. If the offence has been committed "in concordance with a foreigner", the sentence will not be for less than a year, and if it has been committed by way of the media the sentence will be doubled.

The last measure is clearly aimed to head off any attempts to organise international condemnation of the junta and support for resistance against it. Those responsible for the news-sheet in your hands are liable to two years of imprisonment.

In the light of these developments, the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey appeals to all democratic public opinion, all democratic organisations, the counterparts of which have been banned and the leaders of which have been arrested in Turkey, all democratically-minded individuals, to condemn the coup and the trampling on all democratic and human rights in Turkey. We appeal to them to expose in every way possible the repressive and fascist character of the present regime. The Committee invites you to sponsor it or to become its affiliate or member. We also ask for support in the form of donations in order to enable us to carry on our work.

TUC and Liberation condemn arrests and repression

In the first week after the coup both the TUC and *Liberation* sent messages to the Turkish Embassy in London expressing their concern and condemning the wide-scale arrests of trade unionists and opposition leaders. Speaking for all its members, which include 100 MP's and all major trade unions in Britain, *Liberation* sent a telegram to the Turkish Embassy and the government in Ankara protesting the coup and the arrests of opposition leaders, and calling for their immediate release. The following is the text of the letter sent to the Turkish ambassador by Mr Lionel Murray, TUC General Secretary:

September 15, 1980

Your Excellency,

Trade Union Rights in Turkey

I am writing to express the concern of the TUC at reports that trade union freedoms in Turkey have been severely restricted. In the light of the reports that trade union federations have been banned, that trade unionists have been arrested, and that strikes have been prohibited, we join with other national trade union organisations in urging that freedom of association should be fully respected in Turkey, and that trade union organisations, their members and their leaders should be allowed to carry out their legitimate activities without interference or intimidation. The Government of Turkey has announced that all international treaties and commitments previously entered into will be fully honoured. Among the national obligations accepted by Turkey are those arising from membership of the International Labour Organisation and particularly the provisions of ILO Convention No.98 — ratified by Turkey — guaranteeing the right to organise and to bargain collectively. These internationally agreed standards must be observed if Turkey is to discharge fully its international obligations.

We would be grateful if you would convey to the Turkish Government as a matter of urgency our expression of concern and our appeal for full respect for trade union freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Mr. Lionel Murray
General Secretary



Tanks and armoured cars are present on every strategic point in every city in Turkey.

STOP PRESS.....

- All elected mayors and all municipal councils throughout the country were disbanded on 26 September. The martial law commander of each region will appoint new bodies.
- Eight people, said to be terrorists or subversives, were shot dead on 26 September. Four of those killed in the shootings which took place in the Black Sea and South- Eastern regions were Kurds.
- The National Security Council warned anyone in possession of bombs, dynamite, daggers, flick-knives, sword, scimitars, bayonets, throttling chains and cheese cutters to surrender them immediately. The penalty for possessing, carrying or selling any of these is 30 years' imprisonment.



In Istanbul, a civilian is searched for arms.

One of the dozen identity check points in Ankara. Anybody failing to possess an identity card can be sent to prison for one year.



In the light of wide-scale arrests of trade unionists and opposition leaders and the announcement of measures which trample on all democratic and human rights that remained in Turkey, the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey voices its hope that our members will renew their affiliation and that other democratic organisations and individuals will become sponsors or affiliates.

For further information about the Committee and its activities, please contact:

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