



Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 7, 10th January 1981



Torture Cases: "... they didn't reach my ears."

(Premier Admiral Ulusu, *Tercüman*
9.12.1980)

The photographs opposite were published by Amnesty International in a report on torture in Turkey, shortly before the fascist coup of 12th September 1980. Their own investigations revealed that

"The mission delegate reported on return that torture was widespread and systematic.

"The increase in torture can be directly related to the increase in the number of people arrested (for political reasons, which in turn is due to the high level of political violence in Turkey during the past few years." (*Torture in Turkey* by A.I., p.3)

They go on to say:

"The methods of torture most commonly used are *falaka* (the beating of the soles of the feet) electric shocks, burning with cigarettes, violent assaults on all parts of the body and the insertion of police truncheons or other objects into the anus or vagina."

Since the fascist coup, this situation has escalated with 40,000 people being taken into custody in the first two months after 12th September. Subsequently the period of detention has been extended to 90 days, during which time no charges need be made and there is no right to consult a lawyer.

The Generals are keeping a tight grip on all news reported through strict censorship and have closed down all progressive publications. Even Turkey's oldest daily, *Cumhuriyet*, was closed down for a week, for "disseminating information which might alarm the public."

For example, a clue to what is really happening is the sudden rise of deaths while in custody. Over ten of

these cases have come to light in the past four months; all of them showing signs of extensive injuries caused by electric shocks, beatings and cigarette burns.

Ahmet Hilmi Fevzioglu, Ergun Sen and Rafet Demir all "threw themselves" out of a fifth floor window at the Bursa Security Headquarters within a month of each other. Ahmet Kirlangic committed suicide after "banging his head against his cell wall in a fit of nervous depression" (*Hürriyet*, 19 October) In Ankara, a person was arrested while sticking up a poster but was reported a few days later as having died of unknown injuries — an enquiry is to be held (*Milliyet*, 18th December).

Hanging has also been imposed for the first time since 1972; so far five have been executed. The man-hunt carried out by the army has resulted in around ten deaths per week, according to the censored press. The total number of victims due to armed clashes in Kurdistan are not known.

The Junta has set out to smash, all resistance from the working people and Kurds in Turkey, by attempting to impose a fascist solution to the political and economic crisis which has enveloped the country for the past ten years. It is using widespread arrests and detentions, torture, executions, killings while in pursuit, and "re-education" through the "ideology" of Atatürkism.

The CDDRT calls for solidarity from world democratic opinion, with the struggle against fascism in Turkey.

STOP THE TORTURES

FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY

Erdost file

The *Sunday Times* recently carried a report by Muzaffer Erdost, who was an eye-witness to the death of his brother, İlhan Erdost, in Mamak Military Prison. İlhan Erdost was a prominent left-wing publisher, who was arrested with his brother by martial law forces, for "possessing banned books".

While they were climbing into a prison lorry, the soldiers started kicking them and hitting them with truncheons. Muzaffer writes:

"The prison lorry had two parts, there was a bolted door separating these two parts. Four soldiers carrying truncheons, two hitting me and the other two hitting my brother. They were hitting without pity, with all their strength. After a while I started to yell. My brother said nothing. For a moment I turned back and saw my brother stumble and fall on the floor. He was having difficulty getting up. Two soldiers were still kicking him, hitting him with truncheons."

Muzaffer reckons that the beating lasted half an hour. It continued while they were being taken out of the lorry and also in the courtyard.

"It was unbearable, so we asked the non-commissioned officer to stop it. He said, 'You should have thought of this before.' I saw my brother fall again. He couldn't get up. They were on him, kicking, hitting, striking. With difficulty he got up. They told us to stand at attention even though our feet could no longer carry us. Our hands were swollen like logs. We weren't able to put them against our sides. The non-commissioned officer shouted, 'Put your hands against your sides. You have only your testicles to burst.' When the soldiers heard this, they started to beat us again."

The brothers were eventually taken to a ward. İlhan was stumbling and often falling.

"The two soldiers yelled. Prisoners came running from a cell. Several prisoners took me by the arm, several others took my brother. For a moment our eyes met. His face was partly covered with blood. His eyes were bloodshot. We looked at each other and said nothing.

"My brother took two more steps and said, 'I feel ill. I am going to vomit.' He was about to fall. The prisoners took him by the arm, and laid down on a bed. They took his shirt off. I called 'İlhan, İlhan' I cried again. They told me he would be alright. I thought he must have fainted. I didn't want to admit his death."

Footballer jailed

Ali Kemal, a professional soccer player, who was involved in a punch up during a recent match, was jailed for 19 hours. His story appeared on the sports page of *Hürriyet* (1.1.1981) apparently overlooked by the censors.

"They took us to Beşiktaş police headquarters. They threw us into a room one metre square with 6 students and 3 of us (there were 2 other footballers involved — N.L.). We could hardly stand on foot back to back. From there, they took us to Security Head Office. There they threw us into a cell for women. It was like an ice-box. We froze. This time we were among thieves and killers. The place was as bad as a rotting corpse.

The prison "Godfathers" were lying on the wooden benches, and the rest of us paupers lay on the stone floor. I wanted to cry. We shivered from cold till the morning. When they said, 'you can't get out once you're in', I was losing my sanity... I didn't think I would survive... I learned the philosophy of life in 19 hours."



Insid Mamak pris n

The following extracts are from an article which ran for five days in the legal newspaper *Milliyet*, about the conditions at Mamak Military Prison. The points to note are the levels of overcrowding due to the arrest of thousands since the 12th September, and the attempt to reform political prisoners with a new discipline and loyalty to authority and "Ataturkism".

7th December 1980

"A prison founded during the March 12th period (military takeover on 12th March 1971), and specially designed for political prisoners and people who have taken part in terrorist activities...

"As a result of increased terrorist activities in recent years, this place is now crammed full... Overcrowding accelerated after 12th September and there is no place left in the prison. To provide space for newcomers, new blocks are being built."

"With a completely new understanding of discipline, with new application that we could never understand or think of, the situation has completely changed, especially since the 12th September. In the new order, there is no place for indiscipline, slackness and evading. This has been replaced by prisoners who pass their days under commands, orders and a great discipline."

8th December 1980

"At Mamak Prison, the fundamental element is discipline.

"...In wards and cells, everything is done by order and in order. For example, when somebody in authority enters the corridor, to the wards, an order of 'attention' is given. Following this order, all prisoners and detainees have to stand to attention with their backs to the closed ward doors.

"...If a second order is given, they turn towards you. If told to relax, they stand at ease, otherwise remain at attention with eyes looking upwards."

"One of the biggest problems of Mamak Prison is the smallness of the wards. Wards designed for 20-25, are on average sleeping 70-80 people, nearly on top of each other, especially since 12th September, when the numbers arrested reached unexpected levels. This problem has gained very serious dimensions.

"The walls of the prison are surrounded by wire-netting and wires; there are always guards at ground level and in towers. Also during the night, specially trained dogs are let free to deter escapes. ... in front of some blocks, there

are automatic heavy machine guns, to be used in case of mass escapes."

9th December 1980

"All blocks and wards at Mamak Military Prison and detention centre are resounding with the speeches and words of Ataturk. Prisoners and detainees spend a great part of their day studying Ataturkism.

Behind the closed door, a prisoner reads from Ataturk's book out loud while standing to attention, and the others listen to him. Sometimes, somebody in authority orders him to stop reading, and asks questions about Ataturk and Ataturkism. Answers are given, while standing to attention. If there are mistakes, they are corrected."

"As a necessity of education in Ataturkism, only Turkish flags and photographs of Ataturk are hung on the walls..."

10th December 1980

"Inspection is done in the corridors, not in the wards. After an order, the prisoners march out into the corridor. Everybody lines up and with an order, counting from the right begins. At this stage, there is a mass recital of: 'I am Turk, I am honest, I am hardworking'. This procedure is repeated in the evening, with the addition of singing the National Anthem together.

"Because the number of prisoners has grown to unexpected numbers, the time for the prisoners to see their families is quite restricted. This can go down to as little as five minutes a week. Every block has one day of visitors in a week. Meetings have got to be in Turkish (not Kurdish—N.L.) and should be easily heard by the guards on duty. Meetings between prisoners and visitors and lawyers are very carefully checked on. The transfer of news or gifts is prohibited.

"Meetings with lawyers are restricted to 15 minutes a day. A lawyer can only see 3 of his clients on non-visiting days. Now, even the exchange of files and documents between lawyers and clients is done through the prison authorities.

Letters from Turkey

"A man caught carrying a gun has given the name of a friend. In the shanty town districts where this person lives, it is necessary to carry a gun. It is necessary to be prepared against the attacks of fascist gangs every night. My friend together with his friend ... were subjected to unimaginable tortures. My friend as a consequence of the tortures lost his consciousness and was forced to say that he was the murderer of three people killed in that district. This is how he managed to stop the torturing.

"Another event which I know of has occurred near Abdi Ipekci Students' Residence Hall in Istanbul. The soldiers wanted to search a group of students who were coming back to their hall at night. One of the students who was near the street corner wanted to avoid being searched and turned into the other street to go to the Hall. He was killed and the others wounded as a result of the soldiers open firing. (The reason why he tried to avoid being searched was not because he was carrying any offensive weapon. These people were not involved in politics and were not the types who would commit any crime. ...) The search on his body found nothing that would imply a guilt. What is interesting is the way the event was reflected in the daily press, 'an anarchist who started a gunfight with security forces was captured dead'."

Istanbul, December 1980

"Those worker and civil servant friends who were taken from Kartodeks without reason which I wrote you about in my last letter, were 'released' after being put through various tortures. But it was said that these innocent people were certainly guilty of something, however we could not find the evidence but we will give them a new punishment', they sacked them on 26th November 1980. They sacked not only these people but 76 others and the sackings are continuing every day. Soldiers are hunting for people with lists in their hands. Many of my friends who were proven to be innocent are either arrested again or sacked. Or their job is given to someone else and they are made redundant. For example, Suleyman Soydan and Niyazi Gokce are being arrested and released and arrested continuously.

"...An official of the fascist junta in Kartal Military Garrison said 'we given up on IETT (Electric and Transport Works—N.L.) of Istanbul. We shall definitely purge it'."

Istanbul, December 1980

"The people who had been waiting for a long time at the bus stop at Turk-Is blocks had become nervous. The bus arrived after considerable delay. A young worker and the driver had a slanging match. The bus moved off but then stopped a little way down the road where there was a military outpost. The driver told the gendarme. The sergeant took the worker down the bus, and started to beat and search him."

Ankara, December 1980

"...Kizilay (Ankara City Centre—N.L.) is swarming with police and gendarmes. If people gather spontaneously due to anything happening they are dispersed with rifle butts."

Ankara, December 1980

"The soldiers are entering the classrooms whenever they like. They are trying to build psychological pressure on the students. They beat any student they choose with rifle butts. And they enjoy this tremendously. Recently they beat a student with rifle butts and dragged him through the corridors. For the last two weeks our school has been searched from top to bottom continuously by 40-50 soldiers and a couple of policemen. During these searches a girl was found to be carrying a pamphlet on her and was arrested. We could not learn anything about her fate till today."

Istanbul, December 1980

"In this letter, although they may be trivial I want to write to you about some concrete events that occurred in Beytepe Campus at Hacettepe University (Ankara—N.L.) that took place after 12th September fascist coup.

"On the third day of the junta, that is on 15th September, 2500 students, 1000 workers, staff and lecturers were herded together at gunpoints in a square because of a couple of pamphlets.

Afterwards, the Colonel asked us to give up those who threw the pamphlets. When this was not met they took away a couple of people at random and made the rest wait there till 9pm. Then soon after this, they drew up a list of 500 people. This is the list of those who will be expelled from the school for any trivial reason. Some of them have already been expelled. They also took away the files of 250 of those included in the list, together with their photographs. They are keeping this 250 under very close surveillance continuously. Besides they are forcing all staff, bus drivers and lecturers to spy on the rest."

Ankara, December 1980

"In the night of 12th December at 2 am, the soldiers and the police of the fascist junta made 100-150 civilians march from Findikzade to the gendarme headquarters beating them continuously with rifle butts.

Istanbul, December 1980



Political prisoners in Mamak, where they are officially considered to be soldiers. The prison authorities claim that it is no longer necessary to beat up prisoners.

DISK trial begins

(DISK is the Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation)

Milliyet recently reported that Istanbul Martial Law Court has decided to bring charges against 68 of the 506 DISK members still in detention. The rest are still under examination. Those arrested includes Abdullah Basturk, the leader of DISK, Fehmi Isiklar and Riza Guven, both executive members of DISK; and Ahmet Isvan, ex-mayor of Istanbul and Republican Peoples' Party candidate. They are all accused of trying to establish the rule of one social class over another; and trying to set up organisations for the establishment of working class rule, by breaking Article 141 of the Penal Code, Law 171 concerning meetings and demonstrations, and also laws 272 and 275 concerning collective bargaining.

These charges have no basis in truth and have been trumped up, in order to allow the junta to proceed in a seemingly legal manner, to smash any democratic organisation of the working people and Kurds. The fact that the junta itself dissolved the previous constitution of which the DISK defendants are supposedly in breach of removes any basis in legality for these persecutions.

The CDDRT is continuing to build

the campaign against the fascist junta, with the "Leeds-London March against fascism in Turkey" as its focal point. Local Labour organisations are being contacted in the cities through which the March will go between March 7th and 15th, including Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley, Sheffield, Manchester, Stoke, Birmingham, Coventry, Luton and London. A sponsorship folder and forms are now available, providing information on the campaign, and asking for financial sponsorship.

National Demonstration

On 15th March, the sponsored March will go from Wood Green in London, through North London where a substantial Turkish community lives and meet up with the National Demonstration which will assemble in front of Euston Station, and set off for Hyde Park (Speakers' Corner) at 1.00pm. Speakers will be from the CDDRT, Labour and progressive movements. Posters and leaflets are also available to publicise the March and National Demonstration. All material is available from 29 Parkfield Street, London N1.

Amnesty News Release

On Thursday 27th November 1980, Amnesty International released a statement condemning torture in Turkey since the 12th September coup.

The British section of Amnesty International said today that at least eight people had died in custody in Turkey since the military coup of 12th September, and indications that torture of political detainees was widespread.

In four of the eight cases, A.I. has received detailed information strongly suggesting that the deaths were the result of torture, the section said. In two other cases, members of the police have been charged with murder. However, A.I. believes systematic torture of detainees has continued.

The report continued to confirm the information published in the last seven issues of this Newsletter.

Karl Marx' great grandson sponsors CDDRT

Robert Jean Longuet is the grandson of Jenny Marx and the Communist Charles Longuet. He sent us a letter from his home in Paris saying:

"I remember very well the good meeting with the dynamic members of the UTPB in London. It is with all my heart that I accept to be one of the sponsors of your Committee. My best greetings to the Turkish comrades.

"With fraternal greetings,
Robert Longuet."

Widow of Greek Resistance Leader sponsors CDDRT

Dear Friends,
I saw a reference to your Committee in a recent *New Statesman* ...

... First of all, I enclose a small donation to your funds and then I would like to offer you what help my experience may permit. I do this as the British-born widow of General Sarafis, military commander of the wartime left-wing Greek Resistance Army ELAS, who had strong views of the necessity of Balkan brotherhood, friendship between the Greek and Turkish people, etc. ...

... What I can offer is practical experience in organising work on political prisoners, ... also how valuable a strong campaign on political prisoners can be. I did this myself all during the seven years of the Greek Junta, running an international information network ...

... If it would be of use to you, I am ready to put my experience in this field at your disposal ...

Marian Sarafi

Westminster meeting on Turkey

On the 9th December 1980, a meeting was organised in the Commons by Liberation and chaired by Sid Bidwell MP who also sponsors CDDRT. About fifty people attended to hear accounts of the situation in Turkey since the coup by the ex-director of the press and publicity dept. of the Metalworkers' Union (affiliated to DISK) and a speaker who was previously a lecturer at the Bosphorus University, Istanbul. Another CDDRT sponsor, Frank Allaun, MP was present and London representatives of the Turkish press, as well as reporters from the British press.



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