



Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 8, 29th January 1981

Unions in Turkey on trial

*After having been released from detention,
223 left trade unionists from DISK
were re-arrested after an appeal
by the tribunal prosecutor
for warrants to be issued by the
Istanbul Military Tribunal.
(Guardian, 21.1.1981)*

Already, an earlier report by *Milliyet* in December of last year stated that 68 DISK members are already going to trial including Abdullah Baştürk, the leader of DISK; Fehmi Işıklar and Rıza Güven, both executive members of DISK; and Ahmet İsvan, ex-mayor of Istanbul and Republican People's Party candidate. They are all accused of trying to establish the rule of one social class over another.

The new year saw a build up to the latest mass arrest, with arrests of 39 DISK members reported by *Hürriyet* (2.1.1981) and 15 by *Milliyet* (8.1.1981).

It is expected that eventually 2,000 trade unionists will go to trial and the *Guardian* Editorial on the 22nd January 1981 says:

"... there are informed suggestions that the main trade union organisation, DISK, will be permanently banned."

At the moment, the only legal trade union organisation is the right wing Türk-İş which was founded in 1947 with help from American International Labour Organisation, notorious for their CIA links. Türk-İş has been incorporated into the state apparatus with its General Secretary Sadık Şide, now Minister for Social Welfare, and preparations underway for a new "National Type" of trade unionism. (*Hürriyet* 16.1.80).

The purpose of outlawing DISK and forcing workers to join Türk-İş is to create labour discipline and impose a speed up of production. A possible extension to a 56 hour working week has been suggested.

Letters from Turkey published in previous *Newsletters* indicate how military occupation of the factories have gone hand in hand with harsher disciplinary measures for "lateness and slackness".

A recent newspaper report indicates how future labour relations will be conducted, while genuine trade



unionists languish in jail.

"No strikes or lock-outs will be allowed in Turkey for at least two years. The only office which will have a say in the collective bargaining will be the Supreme Arbitration Committee. SAC will consist of representatives of workers, employees and the government. Its decisions cannot be appealed against. Hence the need for the 1,5 million workers to go on strike is not necessary." (*Tercüman* 13.1.81)

The fascist coup of 12th September 1980, has set out to resolve Turkey's political and economic crisis in favour of monopoly capitalism, and its first task which has become widely apparent, is the smashing of any democratic, independent organisation of the working class such as DISK

trade unions. The CDDRT already has a growing list of sponsors from the British Labour and Trade Union Movement (see back page) but is now calling on them to show solidarity with trade unionists fighting fascism in Turkey. Support the *Rally against the DISK trial* and affiliate to the CDDRT.

RALLY AGAINST THE DISK TRIAL

Tues. 10th Feb. — 7.00 pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
speakers include:

Jack Dromey (Sec. S.E. TUC)

John Chamberlain (Nat. Sec. CDDRT)
speaker from CPGB

speaker from a Kurdish organisation

The junta digs in

The New Year has brought a clearer view to the process that Turkey is undergoing. The initial impression of the 12th September coup, held by the Western press and many democrats, was that General Evren had acted to save the country from economic chaos and terrorism of both fascists and the far left. "If only stability could be injected into the country's politics, then maybe some solutions could be found to the social and economic crisis which has gripped Turkey for the past 12 years."

The CDDRT, always rejected this view from the beginning, and stated that monopoly capitalism must increasingly seek ways of suppressing the struggle of working people and Kurds against their deteriorating conditions of existence.

Fascism

History has shown fascism to play this role. Although a mass fascist organisation, the Nationalist Action Party had grown in strength, and carried out an effective campaign of terror and massacre against the labour and progressive movements, it was also likely that fascism could seize power through the army, as in Chile, Bolivia and Greece in 1967. This is what happened on the 12th September 1980.

Assembly

The first indication of the General's long term plans began to be revealed when Evren inaugurated a year of celebrations marking the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Atatürk, by stating he would announce a timetable for a return to parliamentary rule this year (*Guardian*, 6.1.1981).

This was followed up by Evren when he declared that a Constituent Assembly would be set up between Victory Day (August 30) and Republic Day (October 29). However, no members of former political parties would be eligible for election. He was quoted as saying "We shall never hand over Turkey to those who brought her to this condition." (*Guardian*, 16.1.81) Evren added that, "Once a Constituent Assembly is established... it would function as the lower house in a two chamber legislative. The upper chamber would consist of members of the five-man National Security Council (which now runs Turkey — N.L.) and have ultimate authority" (*Guardian*, 16.1.1981).

Editorial

Now, even the *Guardian* Editorial can not avoid noticing certain facts about Evren's "benign" rule.

It stated under the title *Neutrality is only skin deep*, (22.1.1981)

"Turkey's military rulers this week added a further 223 trade union activists to the 35,000 political prisoners (three quarters of them from the left) who now jam the country's prisons. ... Leading representatives of the neo-fascist Nationalist Action Party have been released and there are informed suggestions that the main trade union organisation, DISK will be permanently banned. Speculation has it that torture by the military is on the increase, that at least a dozen people have been killed in custody since the coup four months ago and that, almost without exception, the victims were left-wingers.

The initially "neutral" coup is slipping rapidly to the right.

"... An authoritarian and patriotic military dictatorship (however 'neutral' in intention) is finding instinctive allies and easy sympathisers on the right..."

"... the coup has, at best, bought Turkey time, not solution. At worst it is merely preparing the scene for another overwhelming explosion in a desparately unstable part of the globe."

Disguise

The CDDRT would like to add this. "Neutral" was how Evren described his own coup. The

apparent "slipping to the right" is due to the junta being increasingly unable to disguise what it does, by what it says.

Anybody who looked beneath the surface 4 months ago would have found a fascist junta whose prime purpose was to save monopoly capitalism, by smashing its main enemies — the democratic organisations of the working people and Kurds. Today this has been verified. Furthermore the fact that the junta does not see itself as "temporary" is seen by the declared intention to institutionalize itself.

Base

A new Constituent Assembly and new constitution at the end of this year is clearly going to leave power in Evren's hands and yet provide him with 'legality'.

The junta is looking for a mass political base for one reason — it is planning to stay and complete the process of fascistisation of the state. Already they are clearing out all civil servants in position of the state and economy, who don't owe total allegiance to the National Security Council.

Most of these were appointed by the Demirel regime, before the coup. They include Doğan Kasaroğlu (Head of State Radio and Television) who was replaced by Lieutenant General Macit Akman; Atilla Onuk (Head of the semi-offical Anatolian Newsagency) who was replaced by retired Brigadier Cevdet Tanyeli; Cemil Ünlütürk (Director of Press and Information) and top officials have been removed from the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Culture, Department of Pious Endowments, the State Sugar Company and the State Petrol Marketing Agency. (*Guardian*, 24.1.1981)

Resignations

Ismail Hakkı Aydınoğlu, the governor of the Central Bank was forced to resign on the eve of his meeting with international bankers in London (*Financial Times*, 12.1.1981) and was followed 10 days later by 3 deputy governors (*Guardian*, 22.1.1981). Apparently, Aydınoğlu had criticized the economic policies of Deputy premier Turgut Özal, who had originally designed the Austerity programme for the Demirel regime. Özal and his economic strategy of boosting exports and foreign investment, and encouraging free market forces was adopted by the junta. However it was reported in the *Financial Times*, that Özal's powers were to be diluted, and his economic committee to be "replaced by a 'high co-ordination board' headed by retired Admiral Bülent Ulusu, the prime minister..."

Solution

To say the least, the fascist junta is digging in and is in the process of creating organisations and institutions for the purpose of controlling every political, economic and social aspect of Turkey's society in the interests of monopoly capitalism.

The *Guardian* Editorial's reservation seems to be that the coup is only temporary, and its present course will lead to destabilization. On the contrary, Hitler, Mussolini and Pinochet all brought stability and a solution to the crisis in their particular countries. But to do this, fascism destroys the democratic, national and class rights of the mass of people. We call on you to support the struggle of Turkey against the fascist solution.

Fascists released

A few days after the mass arrests of DISK trade unionists was reported, the executive board of the fascist run Union Confederation MİSK was released. All are members of the fascist Nationalist Action Party. (*Guardian*, 24.1.1981)

Two weeks earlier, nineteen NAP MP's had also been released. The junta must increasingly reveal its intention to crush the left, while being openly lenient to NAP members. Apparently, Ministeries like Agriculture are still packed with NAP supporters, and no attempt has been made to remove them. (*Guardian*, 10.1.1981)

Editors face charges

One of the reasons why the junta is moving to place its "own men" in positions controlling the mass media, is illustrated by the case of the *Hürriyet*, a national newspaper, which published a story concerning possible public-sector price increases. The junta demanded a retraction, and the Editors refused. Subsequently, three editors have been detained, three reporters questioned, and one Editor in Chief summoned to the Martial Law Prosecutors office (*Guardian*, 24.1.1981). The *Guardian* (16. 1. 1981) actually reported that 6 staff would face court proceedings. Similarly, *Cumhuriyet* was banned in Adana for 5 days, for giving "false information" (*Hürriyet*, 12. 1. 1981).

A letter of protest has been sent by the International Federation of Journalists to the junta (*Guardian* 15.1.1981).

Evren says...

"If we had been a bit late, they (Revolutionaries — N.L.) would now be in charge of the country and would probably be addressing you instead of me.

"... I hear things like 'Although there was Martial Law before 12 September you couldn't control them (revolutionaries — N.L.)'. We offered quite a few proposals then. We couldn't get bills passed through parliament because they were against 'human rights', or they were 'anti-democratic'. Just to please a few people we nearly lost the whole country.

"We'll get rid of them... we'll have the necessary laws ... and leave our places to a Kemalist Government." (*Tercüman*, 16.1.81)

Letter from a tortured victim

(Sent to Amnesty International)

My name is Metin Cengiz. I am a lawyer registered at the Izmir Bar of Turkey and also a member of the Executive Committee of the Bar. I was arrested by police and soldiers at 23.30pm on the evening of 12th September 1980 when the fascist ccup took place.

... I was taken with my books into a military van when I saw another lawyer friend of mine, Gültekin K. Suvarlı, also registered at the Izmir Bar. More than 10 houses were raided until 3.30 am in the morning and 20-25 more people joined us.

We were all taken to the 1st division (political police) at the 6th floor of the police headquarters. This was the top floor and the attic above had been turned into a torture chamber through special arrangements. No one except the officers of the 1st division are allowed into this floor which is displayed on the wall with a notice.

Blindfolded

To pass through this door detainees were blindfolded and the eyes were not unfolded until one left the place which could mean a week to 30 days. They took me to the roof blindfolded. Artificial obstacles were avoided by commands from the officers like "turn left", "turn right", "bend down" so that I could not discover the layout of the place. I was handcuffed to a bench together with the others and despite the presence of young girls they were swearing at us.

The person next to me was making strange noises. At first I thought he was snoring... But it was the sounds made by a tortured person.

Screams

... Later on, ... the screams of men and women, indescribable outcries started coming up. The sound of beating, shouts and disgraceful swearing by the torturers filled the air. These voices never ceased during the 8 days I stayed in Security Headquarters...

... On the first day they took my photograph in a narrow cell... A policeman named Sezer... hit my chest, my head my back and my stomach with all his might... I could hardly breath. Others joined him with kicks and punches.

No sleep

... I was made to sit down on benches without moving and without sleep for

four days... Even nodding of the head when falling asleep became a reason for beating.

... During this time, we were kicked and punched in the face, chest and feet without pity. Because we were blindfolded, we didn't know where the next blow was going to come from.

...A lot of the political torturer police knew me well from the trials I had followed. They were hitting me and saying "you defend the communists, police killers!"

They were releasing all their pent up hatred and rage.



The Falaka — "the feet are tied down and the soles beaten with a metal rod".

Falaka

... Later they made me take off my trousers and shoes. They said I should stretch my arms out sideways and leap up and down. They told me to count backwards from a thousand. My mouth and throat were dry. I was sweating continuously... When I said the numbers wrong or didn't pull my knees up far enough, I was hit with a stick, kicked and punched. My muscles were awfully tired... Then they made me lay down on the floor, and put my feet on the falaka, tying my ankles tightly with string. Two were holding the ends of the falaka. Another two stood on my outstretched hands. Another torturer held a metal rod like a pipe — not very long and as thick as a middle finger. He hit the soles of my feet calmly and firmly.

Pain

3-4 were asking questions, screaming like animals. "You are a member of the Central Committee; tell us two organisation houses; where is the money from the robbery? Where is the one who escaped from prison? Where is the one we're looking for?" The pain on the soles of my feet were

unbearable. It was indescribable. I didn't think a human body could withstand it. They rubbed the soles with the rod to stop the blood collecting. They started hitting again.

Crucified

... Later on they untied me. To stop my feet swelling, they told me to stretch my arms out sideways and leap up and down continuously. They made me lay down again. This time, they crucified me by tying me down tightly on a wide plank. They wound a cloth around my ankle and put my feet through the falaka, tying tightly with string. Another torturer put a chair on my chest and sat on it. They put some folded clothes under my head to stop it hitting the concrete.

Prodded

They started hitting again, with my legs 90° in the air. When I moved my hip up due to the pain, I felt a policeman named Sezer, sympathiser of the fascist Nationalist Action Party, who arrested me at my home, trying to push a willow branch with a notched end into my anus. He was prodding... to stop my screams they pushed a dirty cloth into my mouth. They didn't untie me even though I said I would tell them of an organisation house. They asked me for the address. I told them my father-in-law's address. The idea of escaping from them stuck in my head. I wanted to gain time...



Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

MARCH AGAINST ISM IN TURKEY

- 7th MARCH LISBON (Demonstration)
- WARFIELD (Public Meeting)
- 8th MARCH BARNSTAPLE (Public Meeting)
- 9th MARCH SHEFFIELD (Public Meeting)
- 10th MARCH MANCHESTER (Public Meeting)
- 11th MARCH STONE (Public Meeting)
- 12th MARCH BIRMINGHAM (Public Meeting)
- 13th MARCH COVENTRY (Public Meeting)
- 14th MARCH LONDON (Demonstration)

15th MARCH LONDON NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION
(Assembly 1.00 pm, in front of Boston Station
March to Speakers Corner.)



Picket outside Turkish Embassy

The CDDRT organised a picket outside the Turkish Embassy between 7.00pm and 8.00pm on Monday 26th January. About 60 people turned out at short notice, to protest at the arrest of 223 members of DISK. A letter was delivered to an official inside the Embassy.

A report of the demonstration, involving mostly Turkish Progressives working and studying in Britain, appeared in the Turkish Newspaper *Son Havadis*, 26.1.1980.

It said:

"Ultra-leftist Turks (!) are marching in London... It has been learned from the British police that Turks who are involved in terrorist activities and supported by communist and leftist organisations in London are organising a march.

"British police stated that if any of the terrorists, whose description were given by the Turkish police, join the march, they may be arrested."

What's the CDDRT

The Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey was set up in 1978 by the Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain, the Turkish Students Federation and the London Bureau of Turkish Workers. It began its campaign against Articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Code, which essentially outlaws any organisation propagating the domination of one

social class over another. It is used primarily against left wing organisations and was taken direct from Mussolini's Penal Code.

The CDDRT has since begun an International Campaign to expose the fascist coup of 12th September 1980, and calls for International Solidarity with the struggle against fascism in Turkey.

CDDRT Activities

Sat. 31st Jan.

Picket outside the Turkish Embassy, Belgrave Square, SW1 (Near Hyde Park Corner). "Solidarity with the struggle for Trade Union Rights in Turkey!". From 5.00pm — 6.00pm. Please bring Trade Union banners.

Wed. 4th Feb.

Founding meeting of the East London branch of the CDDRT. 7.00pm. Hackney Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane. Speakers from the CDDRT and Turkish Progressive Organisations in Britain (A film of the 1977 Mayday in Istanbul will be shown).

Tues. 10th Feb.

"Rally against the trial of DISK Trade Unionists." 7.00pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Speakers include Jack Dromey (Sec. S.E. TUC), John Chamberlain (Nat. Sec. CDDRT), speaker from CPGB, speaker from a Kurdish organisation.

Sat. 21st Feb.

"International Solidarity Evening" at UMIST, Manchester. Includes songs and dances from Kurdistan and Greece 7.00pm. Price £1.

Fri 6th March

"International Solidarity Evening with the March Against Fascism in Turkey" at Mandela Hall, Univ. of Sussex, Brighton. Includes performers from the African Students Association, with support from the Palestinian and Iranian Societies.

Sat. 7th March — Sun. 15th March

"Leeds to London March against Fascism in Turkey". Public meetings in Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley, Sheffield, Manchester, Stoke, Birmingham, Coventry, Luton and London. Further information from address below.

Sun. 15th March

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION against Fascism for Solidarity with Trade Union Rights in Turkey. Assemble in front of Euston Station at 1.00pm. March to Speakers Corner. Speakers from CDDRT, Labour and Progressive Movements. (Alan Sapper) has agreed to speak. (Gen. Sec. ACTT).



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Affiliation to CDDRT

Help fight the barbaric regime in Turkey. Affiliate to the Committee for the Democratic Rights in Turkey (CDDRT). Cost of affiliation for one year: National organisations £20 (can be negotiated), local organisations £5, individuals £2.

Name:

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Send to: CDDRT, 29 Parkfield Street, London, N1 Tel: 01-226 3401. (Make cheques or postal orders payable to CDDRT).