



Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 9, 6th March 1981

The junta threatens democrats abroad

The fascist junta is stepping up its efforts to combat opposition from Turkish democrats living abroad. A draft law is being considered, which would strip any Turk involved in "anti-state" activities, of their nationality, and according to *Hürriyet* (11.2.81) a deadline has been set for a number of prominent figures to return to Turkey, if they are to avoid this penalty. (It would also mean the confiscation of all property in Turkey). Five famous pop singers living abroad — Cem Karaca, Melike Demirağ, Şanar Yurdatan, Selda Bağcan and Sema Poyraz — were given until 13th March 1981 to return (*Hürriyet* 13.2.81), and are accused under Article 140 of harming the influence and respectability of the state abroad, which carries a penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

Behice Boran, chairman of the Worker's Party of Turkey, who is also abroad, was sentenced in her absence to 5 years imprisonment for making propaganda in favour of communism, plus another 2 years because it was via the media, and an extra 21 months was included, because her speech was broadcast twice on television. (*Tercüman* 17.2.81)

The junta is also thought to have been alarmed by the occasion at the Council of Europe, when Turkey came under criticism from social democrat MEP's (see inside story) and Turkish Democrats lobbying outside (including a CDDRT delegation from Paris).

Under the headline "The State is organising against divisionists and saboteurs abroad" *Tercüman* (18.2.81) went on to say:

"...Counter organisations are going to be formed against divisionist and harmful associations abroad.. (mainly in West Germany).

"... A commission has been set up under the chairmanship of State Minister İlhan Öztrak for this purpose.

"... The following measures will be taken by this commission:

— "The leaders and activities of divisionist, harmful associations will be documented one by one.

"Counter-organisations formed against these associations.

— "The broadcasts of Cologne Radio will be made ineffective.

— "Those who make broadcast on the Television (Abroad — N.L.) against Turkey from time to time, will be documented and attempts will be made in collaboration with the German authorities, to make the activities of these people ineffective.

— "Local teachers who make divisionist propaganda will be documented and discussions will be held with the Federal German authorities to end the employment of these teachers..."

Turkish press is implying that there already is, or should be cooperation between the Turkish authorities and the governments of Western Europe in harrasing and silencing the democratic opposition abroad. The *Newletter* has previously mentioned an article by *Son Havadis* which made claims that the British and Turkish Police were going to collaborate for this

purpose. The CDDRT has asked its sponsor MPs to raise this question, to see if there is any evidence behind it. The CDDRT calls on all labour and progressive organisations to support

its campaign to isolate the fascist junta and protect Turkish Democrats living abroad.

Affiliate to the CDDRT, by filling in the form on the back page of this *Newletter*.

Campaign to free ex-mayor and DISK leaders

Reports in the Western press over the past three weeks have provided information of torture in the cases of Ahmet İsvan, former social democratic mayor of İstanbul between 1973-77 and DISK leaders including Abdullah Baştürk (DISK President) and Fehmi Işıklar (DISK Secretary General).

İsvan was arrested in November 1980 and taken to Davutpaşa barracks having been implicated in a confession extracted from Fehmi Işıklar, after he had been hung up by the arms for 3 days. İsvan was charged with allowing the May Day demonstration by DISK to proceed in 1977. Ahmet İsvan was blindfolded and strapped to an iron chair for five days, without sleep or the use of a toilet. He repeatedly heard screams, and on one occasion was shown torture in progress. (*Guardian*, 16.2.81)

The publicity surrounding the case is forcing the junta into attempts to disprove it. İsvan was interrogated for 1,5 hours by the military prosecutor who later reported to the press unconvincingly that Ahmet İsvan denied being tortured and was proclaimed in good health by a Doctor — 3 months after his ordeal. A further instance, implying a cover up of torture, occurred when none of the DISK defendants were allowed to appear in Court on February 10th to face charges. The European TUC had to cancel a planned visit to Turkey, because no Trade Union leaders were "available" to meet them.

The CDDRT is to make central, a campaign against the imprisonment and torture of Ahmet İsvan and the DISK leaders, by sending a delegation to attend the DISK trial on 30th March. Already, an initiative by CDDRT sponsor Alan Sapper (Pres. ACCT) has resulted in the following decisions by the TUC General Council and International Committee:

1. To send a letter of protest about the DISK trial to HM Government and to the government of Turkey.
2. To move in the European TUC, that DISK be allowed to affiliate.
3. To move that the European TUC sends a delegation to Turkey to investigate the condition of trade unionists in the country.

The CDDRT calls on the Labour Party and Trade Unions to support the delegation to attend the DISK trial, both financially and by electing their own representatives. A special campaign poster, summarizing the facts and CDDRT demands, is to be circulated throughout the labour movement, in order to build support. If you can help, please write to:

CDDRT, 29, Parkfield St., London N1.

Junta condemned in European Council

A report on Turkey was presented to the Council of Europe by the Austrian delegate Steiner, but was so mild, that a number of social democratic members, including the British MEP Bob Edwards, called for a stronger draft resolution.

A number of figures came in for special attention by an article in *Hürriyet* (30.1.81) including the German member Butz, the Belgian member Degardins and Lady Fleming who was well known for her opposition to the Greek Colonels regime.

"... Degardins accepts, that being a European Leftist means serving those who strive to divide Turkey, to drag her into the communist camp..."

"... People like Butz, on the other hand emphasises 'humanist' greatness. ... he does this for personal friendship purposes; this behaviour is to a certain extent, his effort to become a famous effective man."

"... fanatic Greeks like Lady Fleming who would, despite her old age consider going to bed with the devil when Turks are mentioned... For people like Lady Fleming, this is due to the stimulus stemming from their nature..."

Mr. Bob Edwards MP not only sponsored the CDDRT, but also sent us a copy of his speech to the Council of Europe which took a stand of opposition to the fascist junta.

"... I read with great interest the speech by the general who claims to be the President of the Republic. He said that the right to strike was now illegal... one of the first declarations of the

military regime in Turkey was to order the striking steelworkers back to work, with the threat of imprisonment if they did not obey..."

"... like trade unionists elsewhere, the only sanction that a Turkish trade unionist can have against his employer in negotiations is the right to withdraw his labour; if he cannot withdraw his labour, he is a slave. I thought that the days of slavery in Europe were over for all time."

"The general talked in his broadcast about traitors who sang the *Internationale*. I have been singing the *Internationale* at May day meetings since I was 12 years old. It is the song of democratic socialism. From tropical zones to frigid poles on 1 May, millions of workers sing the song of international solidarity. What kind of mentality has this general, supposedly in charge of Turkey, that he does not understand the history of half of the human race..."

A potentially hostile attitude towards Turkey by the Council of Europe has clearly upset the junta, and an article in the *Times* (13.2.81) suggests that the Generals would prefer to withdraw their association from this body, rather than face this sort of exposure.

Rather than allow the fascist junta to withdraw into the shadows, the CDDRT is determined to keep the spotlight on them. We call on progressive organisations and individuals to support our campaign, and if possible, to raise as many issues of opposition to the junta throughout Europe.

War

Turkey's rulers are attempting to resolve the political and economic crisis of the past 12 years, firstly by suppressing all internal opposition to finance-capital, and secondly by creating the conditions for expansion — to open up new markets, new resources and new areas of investment. Turkey's relatively recent development to the stage of monopoly finance-capitalism was heralded by the seizure of Northern Cyprus as a colonial acquisition in 1974. Although Turkey is integrated militarily with the interests of imperialism through NATO and more lately CENTO, its own local interests via Greece, Cyprus and the Middle East force it to seek areas of expansion, whether this clashes with the interests of the US and NATO or not.

War

The month of February has seen four military manoeuvres called "Power belongs to the people 81"; "Alley Enterprise — 81 NATO"; "Republic is virtue — 81"; and "How happy is the man who calls himself a Turk". *Tercüman* (17.1.81) quoted General Evren in Adana as saying:

"One wrong step in the region can inflame it and even the world. That is why we must be ready for war at any moment and, while maintaining our preparedness for battle with anarchy and terrorism, our soldiers are also ready for War."

Luns, Secretary General of NATO has already said since the coup:

"The weight and influence of Turkey in the Middle East is greater than that of all other countries with the possible exception of the USA. In my opinion, Arabic countries are more sensitive to advice than some other countries. For this reason, the quiet diplomacy of Turkey in the region carries great importance." (*Cumhuriyet* 23.12.80)

The *Times* (13.2.81) in an interview with Foreign Minister Ilter Türkmen said:

"The military regime, in fact, looks to the

more moderate Muslim nations, such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, not only as stabilizing factors in the Middle Eastern Medley, but also as potential sources of oil and loans."

Add on top of this, references by newspapers to the population of Mosul and Kirkuk in oil-rich Iraq, as "our Turkish brothers," it can be seen, that Turkey not only is acting in concert with NATO and imperialism against the Soviet Union, but also seeking new areas of expansion in the volatile Middle-East, the fascist junta is emerging as an aggressive threat to World Peace.

...and peace

Lift Ban on Turkish
Peace Committee,

WPC Demands

Peace Courier, January 1981

The World Peace Council urged the Turkish authorities to lift the ban on the Turkish Peace Committee imposed after the military coup d'état in September 1980.

In a cable to General Kenan Evren, Head of State and Head of the National Security Council of Turkey the WPC expressed the sentiments of the peace organisations in 135 countries represented in the WPC, and said that the World Peace Movement is deeply concerned about the continued ban imposed on the Peace Committee in Turkey.

World public opinion, it added, highly appreciates the contribution made by the Turkish Peace Committee to the cause of peace, security and understanding among the peoples of the world, and consequently finds unacceptable the prohibition of its activities, particularly at a moment when, as never before, the danger of war is so great.

Detentions and deaths

Milliyet (9.2.81) has given figures for those detained as 5,695 and 14,861 in prison — a total of 20,500. The CDDRT estimates the figure to be closer 100,000, as the official press admits that the prisons are packed to over 3.5 times their true capacity. The article goes on to say:

"... Since the 12th September, Martial Law Courts have convicted 784 people after concluding 8,957 cases out of a total of 18,399."

Simply by taking their own figures, it means they could only convict in less than 10% out of those files that they've concluded, and yet over 20,000 people are still held with no real concrete evidence. It should also be kept in mind that some of those convicted were publishers of left-wing books, who had nothing to do with terrorism.

"During the 22 weeks since the coup, 328 people have been killed and 499 wounded."

It seems these figures don't include those killed by the security forces, which are at a rate of 10 per week.

For example, *Tercüman* (20.2.81) gives the figures for the first 17 days of February:

"... 17 terrorists have been captured dead... 20 people were killed because of 'political reasons'... 5601 activists were captured."

The figures for those "killed because of political reasons" are separate from killings by the army, yet it does not say who is responsible.

Furthermore 5601 captured in 20 days indicates the gross underestimation of those detained being 21,000. The figures for the first month after the coup were 6,000 (official and last month were still 5,600 — even if we take these official numbers, the total population in jail would still be roughly 40,000. Lastly, the *Times* (14.2.81) reported:

"The military prosecutor demanded the death sentence for 30 of a group of 82 leftists who went on trial in a martial law court in Ankara today charged with plotting to set up a Marxist state."

Four hangings have already been carried out since the 12th September.

CDDRT activities to date

Since the last *Newsletter*, the CDDRT has continued to expand its activities and publicity, with a second picket outside the Turkish Embassy on 26th January 1981, and a well attended rally against the DISK trial addressed by Jack Dromey (Sec. S.E. TUC) and Gerry Pocock (International Org. CPGGB). The first public meeting for the East London Branch was held at Hackney Labour Club with showing of the 1977 May Day film on 4th Feb. 1981. Leeds branch also had a "public meeting on the 13th Feb. at Leeds Trades Club and showed a 1973 film called "Turkey — a case of torture". Similarly, meetings were held at Sussex University Labour Club, with about 60 people attending and Manchester branch had its Solidarity Evening on the 21st February 1980.

CDDRT speakers have been invited to a Turkish Society meeting at the LSE between 4.00-6.00pm on Friday, 27th February.

Work from now on, will concentrate on building support for the CDDRT sponsored march and National Demonstration (see back page).

Tony Benn sponsors CDDRT

The CDDRT sponsors list continues to grow with the noted addition of Tony Benn MP. Others include Rolan Boyes MEP, Bob Edwards MP (see European Council), and Ken Eastham MP who writes:

"... I am sympathetic to your objectives and would be happy to be identified as one of your sponsors.

"Wishing you every success with this noble cause..."

Letters from Turkey

Imposed penalties

The total number of workers is 800, the majority being women.

Lunch break is half an hour and the food is bad, some workers do not go to the dining hall but eat bread. Some do not eat anything.

... When you pass through the cloak room you are searched like a thief... the factory has special armed guards.

Since the end of the strike, intimidation has increased in every respect. Especially striking is the guide formed by foremen and shift leaders concerning swearing, abuse and threats.

— If you are 15 minutes late they deduct 30 minutes pay.

— If you are absent an hour, they charge you 500 TL (£2). Workers call this "equating to nil"

— If you get permission to go to the doctor, they deduct from your pay the time. 50% of the medicine is charged.

— Although in the contract there is provision for 42 days before and 42 days after child birth paid leave for women, the leave before child birth is now not allowed. You are made to work till the moment you give birth.

— There is no crèche in the factory.

— If you leave work before 6 years you are treated as if you had not worked at all. (Insurance becomes invalid, no redundancy pay).

Istanbul, Jan 1981

Cost of living

Since 12th of September, the manhunt and arrest of workers is continuing. As the intimidation of employees and arrests continue, "Patriotic Commanders" appear on the television and say "1 kg of wheat = 1 litre of petrol; we shall make it". They think that the people do not know that 1 kg of wheat is 12TL where as 1 litre of petroleum is 40-50TL.

Istanbul

Work discipline

They are imposing unimaginable discipline for civil servants on the state pay roll. They are trying step by step with various conditionings to turn people into Robots who defend "Kemalism" in a way befitting the interests of employers.

Those who are working under article 657 (ie. slaves of the state pay roll) are intimidated more and more by the fascist dictatorship under the ideology of "Kemalism". Teachers who bear a great responsibility in educating the people get their fair of oppression...

The Minister of Education said in the Eastern provinces "we shall sack any teacher in 8 hours who does not defend Kemalism". The martial law commanders does not allow transit through municipality borders on Saturdays and Sundays.

They think that they can make puppets out of workers and janitors in the schools by applying fascist discipline, making them cut their hair, shave off their moustache and the like.

Tortured to death

Adil Yılmaz who lived in Kayaş was detained on 12th of December 1980 by the police. He was left dead by the police after dark wrapped in a quilt in Karşıyaka Cemetery. One of the personnel working at the cemetery recognised the body and informed his family. When his family and friends arrived they saw that his body was covered with torture marks and slit with a knife. There was a note left on his body saying "He committed suicide!" The day of the funeral service, the police arrived to detain his brother and asked his whereabouts. But the reaction of the people there forced them to retreat.

Ankara



Prison notes

You wrote in my last letter, "I sent you couple of presents. Please let me know if you received them or not." I did not receive them. You know the situation with the post. The things you said you sent to my mother have not arrived either. It is natural that small things do disappear. They beat us like cotton-wool. The times are such that the disappearance of people become a natural thing... We are completely isolated from the outside... The least of problems is that visits are restricted only to parents and it is for only an hour per week. You are not even allowed to see your married sister. However we say "To live, to live, 1000 years to spite the enemy" and we keep on living. The fact that I am in now for 3 years has aged my father even more, so it is difficult for him to visit me. It is difficult to be in jail outside your home town, difficult especially for your visitors.

... Prison

Army discontent

I had a discussion with some non-commissioned officers, who are discontent with the present regime, too. Now there is some unrest in the barracks. They have relieved 12 of their friends from their duties, and an inquiry about them has begun. They say they will face the same fate soon, too, and they are worried. They take away anyone whom they suspect or hear a complaint about.

Istanbul

Tax burden

I am a shoemaker apprentice in Izmir. After 12th September it became obviously apparent that we are being exploited, oppressed and we have no influence in the society...

After the introduction of the new taxes everything became confused.

The bosses declared us as foreman and said that we should keep books and go to the Tax Office and pay our taxes. Otherwise they say, we would get the sack.

We were surprised. How had we suddenly become foremen? Then we realized what was going on. When we were declared foremen, all tools we used and the shop was defined as our property, and we had to pay the tax. The boss consequently pays no tax. Besides, he does not pay the insurance. However, everything in reality belongs to the boss. In the end we were paying the tax burden brought by the fascist regime. Bosses avoid it yet again.

Izmir

Leeds London March Against Fascism in Turkey

7th MARCH LEEDS — Rally at 12.00 noon Woodhouse Moor.

WAKEFIELD — Public meeting at 7 pm Labour Club, Vicarage St., Speaker: Cllr. Dave Hinchliffe

8th MARCH BARNSELY — Public meeting at 6.30pm. Methodist Hall, Pitt St., Speaker: Mike Stoke, Secretary Barnsley Trades Council.

9th MARCH SHEFFIELD — Public meeting at 7pm. AUEW House, Furnival Gate. Speakers: Mike Elliott, Secretary Attercliffe, CLP. Ernie Walker, AUEW Sheffield DC. Gordon Ashberry, Sheffield Area, Secretary CPGB.

10th MARCH MANCHESTER — Public meeting at 7 pm. Hulme Labour Club, Stonelaw Close, Bonsall St., Speakers: Colin Barnett, Sec. NW TUC, Paul Salvesson, Greater Man. Area Sec. CPGB.

11th MARCH STOKE-ON-TRENT — Public meeting at 7pm. Stoke South LP Social Club, Longton Hall Rd., Longton.

12th MARCH BIRMINGHAM — Public meeting at 7pm. Star Club 25 Essex St.

13th MARCH COVENTRY — Public meeting.

14th MARCH LUTON — Public meeting on the Town Hall steps.

15th MARCH LONDON — Due to the ban on processions in London throughout this month, the march from Euston to Hyde Park has had to be cancelled.

The rally in Hyde Park, however, will go ahead.

Assemble, "Reformist Tree", 2.30 pm. Arrive individually. Bring your TU banners.



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Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

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

Name

Address

Send to: CDDRT, 28-29, Parkfield St., London N1. Tel: 01-226 3401. (Make cheques or postal order to CDDRT).