

TURKEY NEWSLETTER

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Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey



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STUDENT PROTESTS SWEEP TURKEY



BIGGEST STRIKE SINCE COUP



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PEACE TRIAL CONTINUES



The real face of the present regime in Turkey is being revealed every week in an İstanbul military court as it has been for the last five years. Peace is on trial in Turkey.

Earlier this year we reported in *Turkey Newsletter* that the trial of the leadership of the Turkish Peace Association had been dissolved in a High Military Court. Unfortunately the proceedings have continued in a lower military court. 71 leading figures of the TPA remain on trial with 37 of them threatened with sentences of between 5 and 15 years imprisonment. Among the defendants are prominent writers, artists, lawyers, journalists and other public figures including former Turkish Ambassador M. Dikerdem. By establishing and leading a moderate body which advocated peace and nuclear disarmament in the 1970s the prosecution is claiming they were conducting "communist propaganda."

The Military Prosecutor is calling for 37 defendants to be sentenced to terms of imprisonment, 28 to be released, 4 to be tried separately on other charges (membership of a banned party) and 2 to have charges against them dropped because they have died during the course of this marathon trial.

The military prosecutor in an incredible 70-page speech in late November attempted to justify — in effect — putting peace on trial by accusing the defendants of being tools of "Russian imperialism". His speech revealed more about the mentality of the regime that is prosecuting than about the supposed 'crimes' of the defendants. He posed the 'question'; "... are these defendants guilty according to our laws of an ideology and of trying to bring down this system while hiding behind the mask of peace lovers?" In his amazing contortions to get a conviction, the prosecutor — an officer of a NATO army — went to the lengths of saying he was: "Against all

imperialisms" including... "US imperialism" which "is barbaric and exploits people to the bone", not to mention British and French imperialism. But that the defendants were not against "Russian imperialism which hides behind the mask of peace and brotherhood but is trying to enter my country".

The Turkish Peace Association, which anyone who glances at its history can see, was an extremely respectable organisation which neither participated in, or advocated, any form of violence, is accused by the regime of "putting across the propaganda of non-realistic peace." If this were an imprisonable offence in other countries, the streets of all the world's cities would be deserted. It is probably because this, the real crime of the TPA in the eyes of the regime, is so ridiculous, that it is attempting to cook-up tired, old 'Soviet plot' smears to give the trial credibility.

The anti-democratic nature of the regime and its minions was exposed when the prosecutor summing-up said that what the defendants were accused of was "not just a normal crime of thought", — no comment is necessary.

While this Kafkaesque trial continued in İstanbul, the regime and its allies abroad claim Turkey has returned to democracy. One of the unwritten understandings which have led to normalisation of Turkish-West European relations was that show trials such as the TPA trial should be ended and the defendants freed entirely. The continuation of this appalling trial shows just how trustworthy this regime is if real pressure against it is relaxed.

Along with all democrats, CDDRT calls for the immediate acquittal of all those on trial for peace.

GECEKONU TRAGEDY

The human cost of the regime's attempt to destroy gecekondu (shanty town) settlements was spelt out in November.

During an operation to destroy houses in an Ankara Gecekondu a policeman and two young girls died when the house they were in was bulldozed while the police officer was trying to persuade the girls to leave their home. The government prosecutor is calling for 4 to 10 years imprisonment for the bulldozer driver (himself a gecekondu dweller) while the real culprits, those local authorities who are pursuing the strategy of rendering thousands homeless, escape scot free...



Blood on their hands... 2 children die as the government bulldozes their home.

GECEKONDU RESISTANCE

On 25th November, there were violent scenes in Manisa when officials moved in to demolish homes in a Gecekondu (shanty town). One pregnant woman tried to attack officials with a shovel as they came to destroy her home. As is now usual in these incidents, women stoned government officials and Security Police who were there to enforce the biggest demolition operation in Manisa for 10 years. The local Mukhtar (District headman or Mayor) who had given the people permission to build their homes, has been arrested and is to stand trial.

MANOEUVRE

Prime Minister Turgut Özal reshuffled his cabinet following the miserable results for the ruling Motherland Party (ANAP) in September's by-elections, (see *TN No.67*)

In the aftermath of the by-elections daily reports are appearing of ANAP members defecting to the True Path Party (DYP) led from behind the scenes by Özal's former boss; the banned former Prime Minister Demirel.

Özal has used the reshuffle to create 10 Secretary of State posts. These are being openly offered to leaders of groups of MPs who are prepared to defect from their own parties to the ANAP. The results have been quick, already the fourth largest party in parliament — the Free Democratic Party (HDP) has voted to dissolve and join ANAP.

It was also announced on the 3rd December that VAP — the small Citizens Party had decided to disband.

Since the last General election 37% of MPs have changed from the party on whose ticket they were elected and joined another.

PRIVATISATION

A government commission met for four hours in Ankara on December 2nd and agreed to privatise a whole range of KITS (State Economic Enterprises) starting with Turkish Airlines. This lucrative concern is likely to be split into four parts and each section sold off.

SNOUTS IN THE TROUGH

"Its been a record year for bribery" according to Turkish newspapers. The lack of real democratic controls and the 'free enterprise' spirit of the Özal regime has bred an attitude similar to that of pigs at a trough among many political and business leaders. The publication of the annual crime figures for Turkey show that bribery was top of the list in 1986. The statistics have led some commentators to call 1986 in Turkey "Bribery Year".

SHP BLUES

Again in the aftermath of the by-elections, prominent members of the Social Democratic Populist Party including Muzaffer Saraç and ex-General Secretary Angin have written an open letter to party leader İnönü. The letter appeals for the SHP to get it's act together by strengthening party discipline.

A group of SHP MPs are planning to break-away and set-up a new party — "the People's Party".

FINED

In Ankara, the former vice-president of the Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP), Mr Barış Can, was fined 5 million Turkish Lira for having insulted the Minister of Justice during debates at the National Assembly.

ATTACK

The leader of the main conservative opposition party — the DYP (Correct Way Party) — which is backed by banned politician Demirel — has launched a savage verbal attack on the Özal government. Cindoruk accused "those in power" of "preparing the way for communism" by their brutal treatment of whole sections of society. He went on to say "This type of government can only be seen during periods of exploitation"... "The Özal government's ideas are those of the nineteenth century."

FILING

According to *Info-Turk* bulletin, The Minister of the Interior announced on September 15, 1986, that new regulations had been put into effect to improve the filing of all "suspects" in Turkey.

In virtue of this new regulation, "suspects" will be put into four categories. The identity and particularities of those suspected of "anarchist acts", will be put on orange cards. Blue cards will be for deserters, yellow for arms and drugs smugglers and white for those suspected of common law crimes.

If possible, each form will have a photo of the suspect and his vital statistics.

Even if a suspect is acquitted by the legal process, his form will be kept in the archives if the police are not convinced of his innocence.

The definition of "suspect" is made in the new regulations as: "Whoever makes the security forces believe he may commit a crime, or whoever is suspected of an already committed crime but cannot be prosecuted because of insufficient evidence."

"CAPTURED DEAD"

On November 24th, security police reported that "8 terrorists" belonging to the left-wing group TKP/ML Partizan had been captured dead after a 6 1/2 hour gun battle in Ovacik district. One gendarme is reported to have also died.

Among the dead was the group's female press officer.

The security forces announced that they had begun "Operation Sledgehammer" to track down local sympathisers of the group.



A HOT WINTER IN TURKEY

BIGGEST STRIKE SINCE COUP

The biggest strike since the 1980 coup erupted on November 19 when 3150 workers shouting "bread-peace-freedom" left the factories of the Canadian-owned NETAS telecommunications company.

The workers, members of the Otomobil-İş trade union walked out following a breakdown in pay and conditions talks.

The management of NETAS have threatened to close the plants. However, the morale of the strikers (100% of the workforce) remains high. The fighting spirit was expressed by one worker who called the beginning of the strike "a day of festival".

The General Chairman of Otomobil-İş personally joined the picket lines to express the union's total support. As in most major actions against the regime or employers in the last two years women formed a significant section of the picket line.



NUMBER OF STRIKES GROW

The NETAS strike is the latest in a series of strikes and other industrial actions. At the end of November, 630 workers went on strike at the Pirreli factory in İzmit. As at NETAS all the workforce walked out after pay talks with the management, (dragging on since August 1986) broke down. The union of rubber industry workers — Lastik-İş raised the official strike banner at the factory gates and all workers refused to go in.

Elsewhere, boycott campaigns are being conducted in many factories. Workers are boycotting canteens, company buses and contacts with the bosses in protest mainly at poor work safety. Turkey is number one in the world for deaths through industrial accidents.

"We are starving every day — one more day is not important"



At the Gemza factory in İzmit 26 workers were arrested by police for boycotting the works canteen. After the union threatened action they were released but still face the prospect of trial for breaking labour laws. One union official commented: "This is the first time in my 23 years experience that people have been arrested for refusing to have lunch in a canteen."

In the SEKA paper mill in İzmir (the largest in Turkey) 2,000 workers boycotted the canteen for 4 days. In addition, when the company staged a lavish banquet for all employees to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary, every worker refused to enter the dining hall. Faced with a fiasco, the employers desperately phoned around to get together a 'rent-a-crowd' to eat the meal. When one of the 'special guests' arrived, he asked the workers gathered outside why they did not come in and eat the lovely food. A worker replied "we are starving every day — one more day is not important."

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

Fear is gripping the regime in Turkey as the 30,000 workers in MESS (Metal Industries) plants meet to prepare for strike action. The MESS workers traditionally play a role similar to miners in Britain. The regime knows that strikes by metal workers have always heralded big struggles in Turkey.

The trade union movement in Turkey is entering a new phase. This has clearly been shown at the conferences of individual trade unions being held in preparation for the Türk-İş (Turkish Trade Union Confederation) General Meeting on December 23rd. At most of these meetings delegates have called for greater workers' unity around a single trade union centre. In addition, leaderships are being elected on a platform of escalating the struggle for trade union rights and democracy.



“Don't be divided ... we will bring democracy and change our destiny”

Part of this growing mood was reflected in a speech by Halil Tunç, former Türk-İş leader and recognised spokesman for the prevailing mood in the trade union movement. He told delegates to the Gıda-İş (food processing industry union and with 180,000 members the largest Türk-İş union) conference, referring to the 1975 İzmir General Strike that they have the power to “close the switches”. Tunç went on to say: “I have no respect for those who have no respect for the workers”... “The Turkish people and workers have remained silent for 6 years but have now reached the point of explosion”... “They (the regime) did not value this silence. They thought that this meant that the workers had given in”... “The regime was following a policy of being the workers' enemy”... “Don't accept these conditions. Don't be divided... we will bring democracy and change our destiny”...

*“There is no time to lose.
Our patience has run out”*

At the congress of the moderate National Seamen's Union delegates discussed the correct strategy and timing for a general strike (something forbidden by the Turkish Constitution) and their General Secretary said: “We are not afraid of the barriers put up against a general strike”.

The İstanbul Secretary of Herb-İş (Defence Industry Trade Union) said at his union conference: “We should not be afraid of the word ‘general strike’. There is no time to lose. Our patience has run out”.

The battle lines are being drawn for the fundamental battle for democracy in Turkey. The meaningless posturings of various politicians cannot solve the struggle for human rights and freedom in Turkey. It is the trade union and workers' movement that is the cutting-edge of the battle for democracy.

The Türk-İş Congress on December 21st is an opportunity to prepare for this battle.

TURKISH JOURNALISTS' CONGRESS

The Annual Congress of the Turkish Journalists' Union (TGS) met on October 4, 1986, in İstanbul. This congress, formulated the following demands,

- All laws inspired by hostility vis-a-vis workers, notably the 1982 Constitution, the Code of Unions, Strike and Collective Negotiations, the Turkish Penal Code, should be modified.

- May First should be proclaimed a new Labour Day as it is in other countries.

- The case against DİSK should be ended.

- It is shameful in the last quarter of the 20th Century not to have freedom of opinion and to arrest journalists for their opinions. It is also shameful that non-respect for the freedom of the press in Turkey remains on the agenda of the International Federation of Journalists.

- The Confederation of Turkish Unions (Türk-İş) to which TGS is affiliated should become more active.

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT OF TURKEY

The CDDRT holds the view that the most important single aspect of the struggle for democracy in Turkey today is the fight for trade union freedom around a single trade union centre — Türk-İş. In view of this, the General Council of the CDDRT has advanced the following platform for use in British trade union bodies.

On the basis of the general experience that an organisationally united and democratically organised trade union movement has always served the interests of the workers better than a divided movement, “trade union unity” has long been the battle cry of all working class fighters in all countries of the world.

It should therefore be the battle cry of all true friends of the Turkish trade union movement.

Noting the facts;

- That there is today one major trade union confederation in Turkey (Türk-İş) with 1.3 million members.

- That Türk-İş membership has increased by 600,000 since 1981, that half of these new members came from DİSK (the banned Revolutionary Confederation of Trade Unions), and that this demonstrates a strong tendency within the working class to unite under a single trade union confederation.

- That the influx of militant workers into Türk-İş and the combined pressure of the new and old rank and file membership has compelled the Türk-İş leadership to adopt a more militant line in opposition to the government and the employers in general, as demonstrated in the recent mass demonstrations, and to begin to depart from its collaborationist policies of the past.

- That DİSK, the progressive and militant trade union confederation which was banned by the fascist junta after the 1980 coup, has ceased to function and exist as an organisation, and that this was accomplished by brute force on the part of the junta against the wishes of its membership.

- That the right to organise for the working class is severely restricted under the present regime and constitution, which limits the right to strike, the right to collective bargaining and the right to set up trade unions without restriction and on a democratic basis.

It is therefore imperative that;

- The British trade union movement should raise the demand for a democratically united and militant trade union movement in Turkey and oppose all political manoeuvres based on narrow interests to split and divide the movement.

- This call for trade union unity should more specifically be based on the following points;

1. Struggle against the persecution and trial of DİSK leaders must be vigorously continued until all charges against them are dropped and their *right* to reopen DİSK is recognised.

2. Trade union unity under a single confederation should be clearly formulated as unity within Türk-İş with a view to overcoming its shortcomings by a democratic struggle from within.

3. Considering the fact that neither the TUC nor individual trade unions in Britain have close and first-hand relations with their counterparts in Turkey, they should be urged to increase these contacts at all levels, thus gaining valuable ground from which to influence the Turkish trade union movement towards unity.

STUDENT PROTEST



Sit-down protest.

The oppression of students at the hands of the regime and particularly the YÖK (Higher Education Commission) has finally pushed students into action.

In previous issues, Turkey Newsletter has recounted the militarisation of education and the system of almost continuous examinations for students which enables the authorities to purge higher education establishments and force students to spend all their time 'cramming' rather than pursuing serious studies.

SUICIDE

The spark which ignited the first nation-wide protests by students since the 1980 coup was the suicide in October of law student Isa Tanrıverdi in a dormitory of Marmara University (İstanbul). He committed suicide because he feared expulsion from the university for failing to hand in two of his mid-term exam-papers. Following his death on October 28th, two students went to lay a black wreath in front of the University Senate House — they were arrested by security police. In response 1,000 students gathered on the spot and began a sit-down protest. This continued despite police threats to arrest them all if they did not disperse.

The students demanded to speak to the rector and the release of the two arrested. Police from the 'Agile Force' cordoned off the area and Deputy Police Chief Mehmet Agar addressed the students saying: "Don't bargain with me, It was a good job they were arrested. We stopped them from

committing a crime". Students asked if it was crime to carry a wreath to which Agar replied; "They didn't commit a crime. Anybody can be arrested for close examination".

The rector tried to appease the protest by telling the students that the university authorities were planning to go to the Joint Universities Council to get support for a change in the education laws. He added that if the arrested students were "innocent" they, no doubt, would be released(!).

Despite attempts to contain it, student protests rapidly spread across Turkey in November. Small groups of students began to march from various towns in the direction of the capital — Ankara — to present petitions to the authorities. In many cases parents braved the security police to join the marches. One mother summed up the feelings of parents when she said: "Children who we are trying to educate with our pensions are being expelled from universities for a single exam".

ON TRIAL

While students marched, those who had taken part in an earlier walk to Ankara from İzmir in 1986 were standing trial. In 1985 the first legal student association was founded at the 9th September University, İzmir. However the university authorities tried to prevent the association holding its congress. In protest against this and other oppressions 9 students began a walk to Ankara to present a petition. On

THE STUDENT DEMANDS

1. The continuous threat stopped.
2. Education fees must not be a huge burden on students.
3. It should not be a single class.
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5. It should not be c exams.
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Parents join the marches.

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ITS SWEEP TURKEY

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Students walk to Ankara.

COLD COMFORT

Asked to comment on the students' grievances, the deputy head of YÖK Kemal Karhan said: "What's the need for schools if there is no attendance requirement". He said that any change in the mid-term examination requirements was out of the question and added: "The student who doesn't work during the year will not be successful at the end of the year... Shall we turn the whole of higher education into open education?..." Karhan also defended the exorbitant fees taken from students by claiming: "This system is applied everywhere. In any case, the state gives long term loans to those who cannot pay..."

HUNGER STRIKES

The arrest of many students and the clampdown on street protests has led students in various towns to begin hunger strikes. Since the end of November these have been breaking out and dying down then starting again.

In İstanbul police chased hunger striking students all over town in an effort to prevent the place of hunger strike becoming a rallying point for students and supporters.

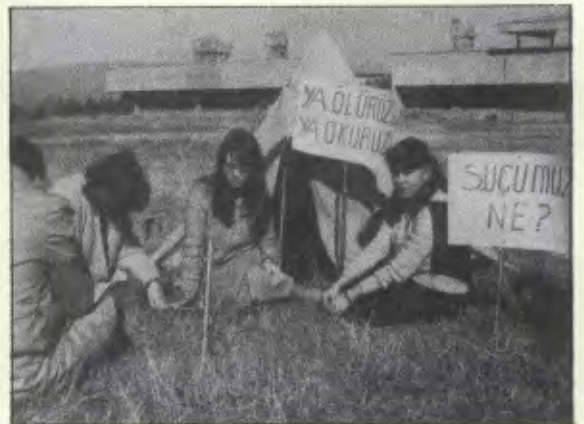
For another section of society in Turkey the period of silence has ended.



Parents present their children on hunger strike with red carnations.

EXPELLED

The Turkish press announced that more than 40 thousand university students had been excluded from university by order of the Higher Council of Education (YÖK), during the 1984-85 school year alone.



7 female students at Erzurum's Atatürk University who were expelled for failing just one mid term exam organise a protest.



Students on hunger strike spend the night in the cold in an İstanbul Park after being pursued by the police.

TORTURE, TRIALS AND PRISONS

UNBELIEVABLE INCIDENTS

Members of the SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) delegation visiting villages in the district of Mardin have reported "unbelievable incidents" of oppression in many villages.

In one incident police looking for a man in 9 villages rounded-up 24 uncooperative villagers and held them in the open police station yard for 23 days and nights. In another case, police hunting a suspect arrested his wife and compelled her to undergo a medical exam to see if she had recently had sexual intercourse to determine "whether her husband had visited the village".

The SHP delegation which included 2 MPs reported that even supporters of the ruling party were being tortured by local police.

"THEY KILLED MY SON"

On 2nd December a mother alleged that her son — a student at Denzli Middle School — had been beaten to death by campus guards after he arrived late for lessons. They then hung him to make it look like suicide.

Questions about the case are to be asked in the Turkish parliament.

TEACHERS' SPOKESMAN TORTURED

Mr Ayhan Saruhan, the editor of the revue *Öğretmen Dünyası* (Teachers' World) declared that he had been tortured during his detention. He had been arrested in 1984 in Ankara for having accompanied a Swedish delegation during their inquiry on respect for human rights in Turkey.

NEW DEPARTMENT

The regime's Ministry of the Interior has set up a new department for the "fight against terrorism". According to the newspapers of September 23, this department will be made up of six different sections specialised in their respective areas. One of these sections will be responsible for pursuing organisations or groups abroad opposed to the Turkish regime.

Already about 100 police officers posted to this new department have gone to the United States and have had special training between March and August 1986.

SEVEN DOCTORS BEFORE TRIBUNAL

Seven leading members of the Doctors Association of İstanbul have been tried before a criminal tribunal for having held their congress without official permission and for having posted up certain tracts on the walls of their premises. Each faces a prison term of up to six months.

BANNED

In Viranşehir, in Sanllurfa Province, the local newspaper *Kracadag* was banned by the governor on September 3 for an indefinite period.

This journal had revealed that an army captain had tortured villagers during an investigation.

TORTURER BACK ON THE JOB

The lie has been given to claims by the regime that it punishes those found guilty of torturing political prisoners in reports in the Turkish press at the end of October.

A torturer in the police force who had been sentenced to a prison term of 13 months and 20 days for having paralysed a detainee during interrogation at Kars, was returned to his job at the Sakarya Prefecture after having served his sentence. According to reports, this policeman was the object of another case for having tortured to death another detainee in Erzurum. Although he was sentenced to a prison term of 5 years and four months, policeman Kemal Kartal is well protected and even put to work by the Ministry of the Interior under the pretext that his sentence has not yet been ratified by the Court of Cassation.

A JOB INTERVIEW WITH A DIFFERENCE

A young student suffering from leucemia declared on September 10, 1986, that he had been tortured at the police station although he had informed the policemen of his illness.

Mumin Yaşar Serdar was summoned to the station for an inquiry to do with his request for a job in the public sector. So as to obtain certain answers that Serdar did not want to give, the police burnt the student with cigarettes. He is 17 years old.

300,000

According to the daily *Milliyet* of October 7, by virtue of new regulations regarding protection of national security, during the course of six years, more than 300,000 people have been refused jobs in the public services. Not only people who have been sentenced for a crime concerning national security, but all those who are not of Turkish origin or married to someone of foreign origin or suspected of not being attached to the ideal of Turkism have been banned from taking up such posts.

Parents of political prisoners in the Metris prison in İstanbul, have pointed out, in a petition addressed to the military authorities, that these prisoners are systematically deprived of medical treatment.

TRIALS AND SENTENCES

A mass trial against Dev-Yol resulted on September 17, 1986, in the life imprisonment sentence of an accused and prison terms up to 20 years for 65 others.

In İzmir, a member of Dev-Yol was sentenced to capital punishment and six others to various terms totalling 40 years and 10 months.

In Diyarbakir, two alleged members of the TKP (Communist Party of Turkey) were sentenced to terms of 2 and 5.5 years.

HUNGER STRIKE IN PRISON

Political prisoners in the special Bartın prison launched a hunger strike as a sign of protest against ill treatment in this prison.

A social democratic MP had indicated August 30 that conditions in this prison were becoming more and more intolerable. "All the political prisoners are deprived of medical needs and very often of drinking water. While several prisoners have already acquired the right to be freed due to a new law, the prison authorities provoke incidents so that they cannot benefit from the right because of indiscipline. The Human Rights Association indicated on October 21 that left-wing prisoners were systematically exposed to the threat of death or beating in cells for right-wing prisoners in which they are often locked up.

TENSION

Turkey's relations with Syria are continuing to deteriorate. The confession of a Jordanian translator at the Syrian Embassy in Ankara, (which was partially shown on Turkish television) that he helped murder a Jordanian diplomat, marked the start of a fresh campaign against Syria. The Turkish regime alleges Syria has been involved in numerous terrorist incidents in Turkey.

This development has come at the same time as the deterioration of US and British relations with Syria.

In an alarming development a massive military exercise began at the İncirlik air base in Turkey involving Turkish and US aircraft. Some press reports have also mentioned British involvement. These exercises have largely consisted in scrambling aircraft in the direction of the Syria border.

Psychological pressure against Syria: US planes landing at İncirlik.



MISSOURI VISIT



In late November, the US battleship Missouri paid a visit to İstanbul in what is interpreted in a major show of strength in support of the Özal regime by the Regan administration.

The Missouri visited İstanbul before in 1946. The cartoon below published in the Turkish newspaper Tercüman shows what 40 years of a 'special relationship' with the US has done for the Turkish people.



FRATERNAL GREETINGS



The problem of malnutrition and poverty among the peoples of Turkey did not bother these members of NATO's North Atlantic Assembly when they tucked into a good spread laid on by İstanbul's Mayor last month. Among these stout defenders of democracy who support a regime in Turkey which keeps over 15,000 political prisoners locked up and regularly tortures opponents, was Italian Communist Party MP Cerguetti. He told his fellow NATO supporters (in an obvious reference to the fact that the Communist Party of Turkey is banned), that it is wrong

to proscribe the Communist Party in a western country. He was not however advocating legalisation on the grounds of improving democracy, but because illegal communist parties become terrorist groups! and went on to imply that the banned CPT and other left parties in Turkey were such groups. This 'support' was greeted with joy in the pro-regime press. No doubt the thousands of left-wing political prisoners and the hundreds of CPT members on trial throughout Turkey would like to extend their "thanks" to comrade Cerguetti for his kind words!

BACK IN THE FOLD?

On November 3rd, David Bamford the London *Guardian* Ankara correspondent reported that:

"Turkey took over the chairmanship of the Council of Europe at the weekend, an organisation from which it was suspended until three years ago because of its alleged violations of human rights.

The post, which Turkey will hold for the next six months, is largely symbolic, but it is regarded in Ankara as a vital stepping-stone towards becoming a full member of the European Community.

There has been considerable opposition from European Socialist groups over the Turks taking the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe because of continuing allegations of human rights violations and the lack of political freedom in the country.

Following the military coup in September 1980 Turkish political parties were abolished and tens of thousands, including leading moderate politicians, were imprisoned. Allegations of torture were frequent and the Council of Europe voted to suspend Turkey from its parliamentary assembly and withdraw its voting rights in the Committee of Ministers.

Since the resumption of civilian rule in December, 1983, under the right-wing prime minister, Mr Turgut Özal, Ankara's rehabilitation in Europe has been swift. The 1983 elections, held under martial law and involving only political parties of the military's choice, were at first disregarded by the Council in Europe. In an astonishing about turn a report issued by the council five months later concluded that Turkey was on the way to democratic normalisation.

The Council of Europe now finds itself chaired by a country which, according to a Western diplomat in Ankara, still has hundreds of political prisoners. About 100 of its leading politicians, including the former prime minister Mr Bülent Ecevit and Mr Süleyman Demirel, remain politically banned until 1982.

Meanwhile, martial law has been extended into next year in five eastern provinces, where the army is engaged in a brutal but largely unreported guerrilla war with Kurdish separatists.

Coinciding with Turkey's reacceptance into the Council of Europe the EEC in September reactivated its association agreement and unfroze 600 million ECU's (£390 million) of aid to Turkey. Now the Özal Government is strongly hinting that it will make an early application to become a full member of the EEC. In December this year under the terms of the association agreement, Turkish workers are technically allowed the right of free access to EEC countries.

Turkish officials have said the Government may try to force the EEC's hand by applying for full membership before the December deadline. In Athens a government spokesman for Turkey's arch rival, Greece, has promised that it "will block Turkish entry if necessary for 60 years."

Other West European countries, fearing the social and economic consequences of having to support an impoverished country with a Muslim population of over 50 million, are also discreetly trying to persuade the Turks not to consider applying at this stage.

Turkish officials in Ankara privately recognise that even if Mr Özal does decide to apply for membership now, Turkey stands no hope of it becoming a reality for at least 20 years."

HAND IN THE TILL

The following report appeared in *The Independent* 6th November 1986.

Turkey's Social Democrats are expected to ask the National Assembly next week to investigate allegations that Tahsin Şahinkaya, former head of the Air Force and member of the junta which seized power in 1980, received bribes from General Dynamics and other companies.

Mr Şahinkaya, a former general, has denied the allegations and published a list of his assets, which showed him to be a man on modest means. A group from the Social Democratic Populist Party, the main opposition, claim he left many assets off the list and is in fact wealthy.

Mr Şahinkaya was one of the five generals who ruled Turkey between 1980 and 1983. In 1982 Kenan Evren, then Chief of Staff, became President after a referendum and the four others were appointed to the Presidential Council designed by a new constitution to accommodate them. The council is to be dissolved in 1988, when Mr Evren's seven-year term as President comes to an end. But until then its members enjoy immunity from prosecution.

"The allegations against Mr Şahinkaya include the taking of bribes from the General Dynamics firm during the purchase of F-16 aircraft", said the motion. It also accused him of using his authority to influence the course of air force contracts for personal gain.

The accusations went beyond Mr Şahinkaya and seemed to embrace the top men in the military regime. The generals had stopped political terrorism, which threatened Turkey with civil war, but "opened the way to economic anarchy". Their rule was characterised by "illicit gains made by powerful interests."

During the military government, rumours were rife connecting some generals with bribes, graft and nepotism.

As the Social Democratic put it: "There are many allegations concerning this period which were uncovered but could not be written about. One of the persons against whom most of these allegations are targeted is Mr Şahinkaya." However, no hard evidence has surfaced to support the allegations, and Mr Şahinkaya's case is no exception.

It is claimed that he bought and sold a yacht, three flats, two pieces of land and a car which are not accounted for in his list of assets. The Social Democrats ask how such things could be bought on a general's salary, but no evidence has been produced to show that Mr Şahinkaya accepted bribes from General Dynamics or any other company.

If the Assembly pursues the matter it will set up a commission to investigate the charges. Acting on the commission's report, it could send Mr Şahinkaya before the Supreme Council for trial. Observers, however, consider such an eventuality to be remote, especially so soon after the end of military rule.

US GRANT

The US announced on November 13th a 1987 military grant to Turkey of \$312 m plus \$178 m in credits. Turkey had wanted all the money as a grant. Last year it received \$714 m of which only \$215 m was a grant.

**BRITAIN:
CDDRT RALLY**

Some 200 people packed the Rio Cinema, London, for the CDDRT in Britain's last big event for 1986, on 16th November.

Yilmaz Güney's moving film *The Heard (Sürü)* was shown. This was followed by a brief rally. Greetings were brought to the event by National Organisation of Labour Students Secretary Rob Minshull, Islington borough councillor Ayşe Hasan and Kurdish writers H Sancari.

CDDRT General Secretary M. Hiron gave a brief resume of recent events in Turkey and called for greater solidarity with the peoples of Turkey and increased support for CDDRT.

Those attending the event also saw a display of photographs telling the story of recent events in Turkey and sampled Turkish food.

**SWITZERLAND:
FIRST CONFERENCE**

On November 28th the first public meeting of the Swiss CDDRT was held in the town of Basle.

Apart from seeing a video of workers' actions in Turkey, the audience heard speakers from the CDDRT's in France and Britain. Special interest was paid to a talk by Tom Fuernburg — a local anti-nuclear activist — who detailed the links between the Swiss nuclear power industry and Turkey.

Most people agreed that the highlight of the event was an absorbing talk by İsmet Şerif Vanlı jurist and prominent Kurdish writer.

The conference was attended by a cross-section of Swiss, Turkish and Kurdish people. A sound basis has been laid for an active Swiss CDDRT.

**BIRMINGHAM CALLS
FOR BULUTGIL'S
RELEASE**

The campaign to release Turkish political prisoner Aydın Bulutgil at present suffering in a Turkish Military Prison has taken a step forward.

Amnesty International Birmingham University Group has brought the case of Aydan who was a student in Birmingham — to the city's public. Reports have appeared in the local media and the City Council has taken up the case.

This campaign is vital — not only to save Aydan Bulutgil himself; who is ill as a result of his treatment at the hands of the authorities — but to draw attention to the continuing plight of thousands of political prisoners still languishing in Turkish prisons.

Copies of the Free Aydın Bulutgil Petition are available from CDDRT, 129 Newington Green Road, London N1 4RD

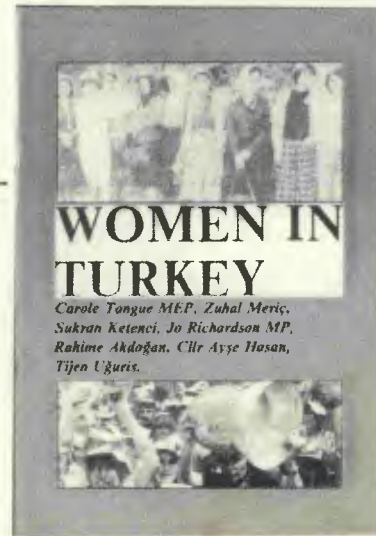
**MUZAFFER SARAC
AQUITTED**

Muzaffer Saraç, Turkish social democratic leader who was on trial in Turkey for statements made in Dublin has been acquitted.

However, we understand that the files against two Turkish members of the CDDRT who were present at the meeting and for whom the Turkish police issued arrest warrants have not been closed.

Both the CDDRT and the organisations which invited Muzaffer Saraç to Dublin and London would like to thank all those who spoke out on his behalf.

WOMEN IN TURKEY



*Report of the Briefing Conference
on Women in Turkey, London, June 1986.*

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GREECE YESTERDAY – TURKEY TODAY: A bad precedent for the “protectors”

For anyone who has spent half a lifetime in Greek political work the resemblance between authoritarian governments in the two countries is a clear case of Tweedledum & Tweedledee. Indeed there were times when the Evren regime, in its military phase, suggested a carbon-copy of the late & unlamented Greek Colonels' Junta.

But the newly-organised “protectors”, reported in the last issue of *Turkey Newsletter*, re-call an earlier Greek institution which arose from wartime circumstances and bedevilled the country's life at least until 1981.

When, towards the end of 1943, the Greek left-wing Resistance began to establish control of the countryside which it was progressively liberating from the Occupation forces, the third and longest-lived of the Greek collaborationist governments — possibly at German prompting and certainly with German assistance in arms and training — began to raise anti-Resistance units in the villages under the title of Security Battalions. The basis for recruitment was probably more in village feud than in ideology. A Greek novelist has given expression to this in a dialogue between two young men, village antagonists, where he has the Battalionist saying to the Resister: “If you had not gone to the mountains, I would not have gone to the Battalions! And if you had gone to the Battalions, I would have gone to the mountains!”

At final liberation in October 1944, the British, determined that these weapons should not come into Resistance hands, rounded up the Battalionists and interned them in camps. But when, in December, the Resistance clashed with the returned Greek Government-in-exile, then the British released and re-armed them to fight with the Government forces. This story was told me by a former British officer who was disciplined for protesting against the order.

“During the period of British “protectorate” (January 1945 — March 1947) which followed these clashes, the Security

Battalionists were either absorbed into the Greek Government forces or more often roamed the countryside, together with other right-wing bands, exercising a White Terror which drove returned Resistance men back into the mountains and thus was one of the main causes of the 1947-49 civil War. During the Civil War they continued to act as auxiliaries to the Government forces, specialising in “doing their dirty work”.

After the defeat of the Democratic Army in the Civil War, when the country should have returned to a normal life, the former Greek President, Mr Karamanlis, then Minister for Social Welfare, gave these gangs a legal status for the first time, institutionalising them as TEA or MEA units (National Defence Battalions or Units) by arming right-wing villagers. In 1955, 1958 and 1961 he probably owed the electoral victory which made him Prime Minister to the control his party could thus exercise in all rural areas. From the previous elections in 1958 I myself remember the murder of a 70 year-old left-wing village election agent. And, though the institution was abolished after the fall of the Colonels' Junta in 1974, as late as the municipal elections of 1981 a village mayoral candidate of the ruling PASOK (Papandreou) party was murdered by one of these former “Home Guards”.

What Greece inherited from the wartime Axis Occupation, Turkey has now deliberately created. By calling on the assistance of these irregular “protectors”, her Government has released a dangerous *djinn* which will only with difficulty be bottled up again by a later more enlightened regime.

By Marion Sarafi

A full report on latest developments in Kurdistan will appear in February *Turkey Newsletter*.

**TURKEY
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