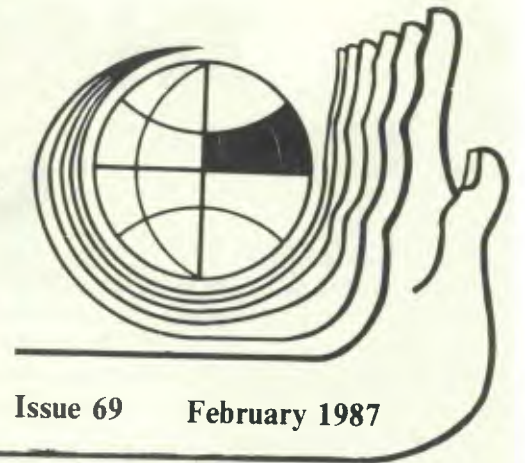
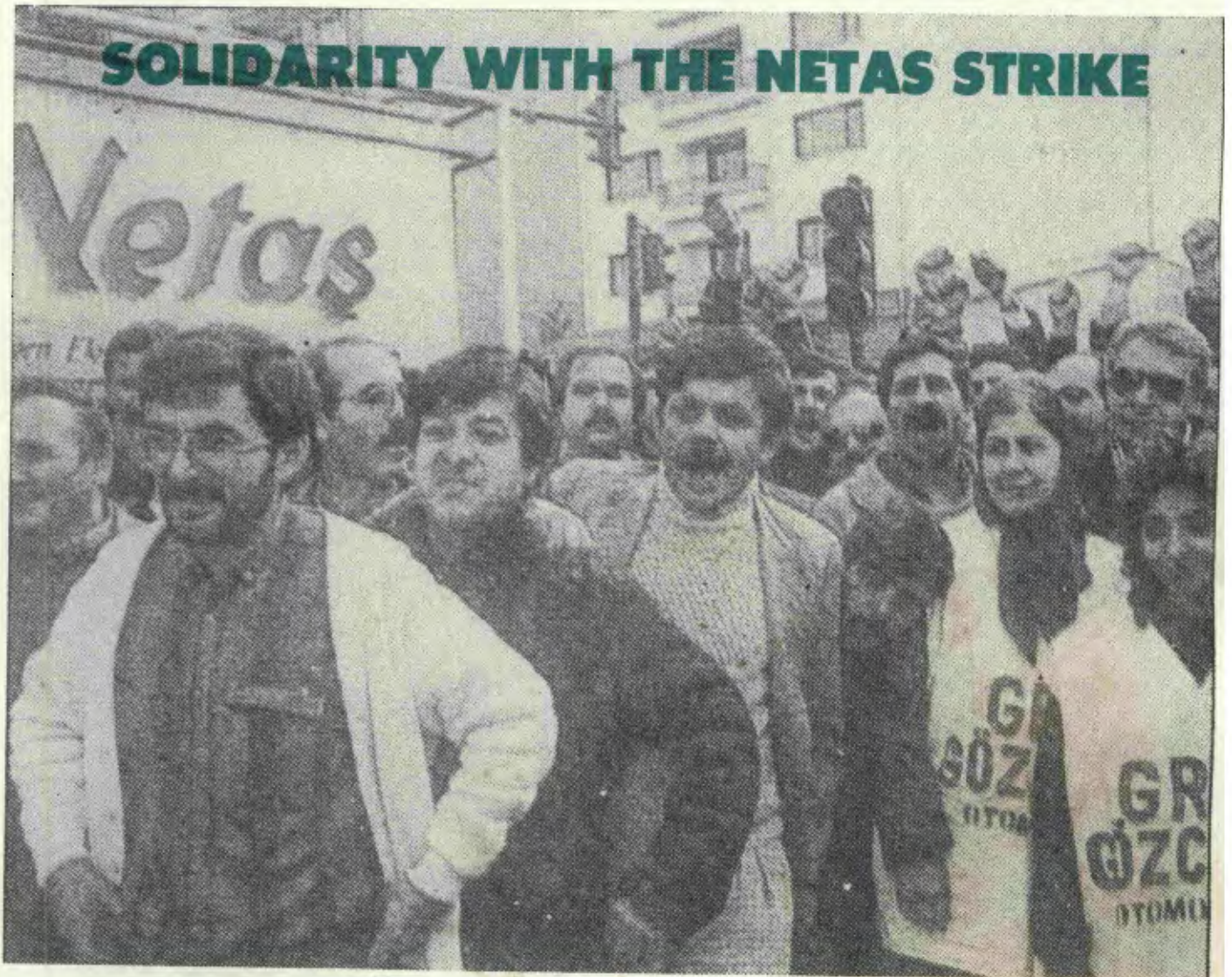


TURKEY NEWSLETTER

Monthly publication of the Committee for
Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey



Issue 69 February 1987



CONTENTS:

Struggle Grows p.2; News in Brief pp.3-4; The Netaş Strike — A Key Battle has Begun pp.5-7; Trade Union News: DİSK Sentences and the Türk-İş Congress p.8; Arrests, Torture, Trials p.9; The Religious "Antidote" in Turkey p.10; CDDRT News p.11; Terror in Kurdistan p.12.

THE STRUGGLE GROWS

1986 was a year in which the struggle for democracy in Turkey accelerated. In the years which followed the 1980 coup, when a junta of Generals tried to impose a fascist strait-jacket on Turkey it would have been hard to imagine that in under six years we would be witnessing mass demonstrations, strikes and open political struggle. And yet this is the reality of Turkey today.

In these conditions it is important for all supporters of democracy for Turkey to guard against two illusions which are being assiduously fostered in certain circles: Firstly, that the new conditions are a result of the regime voluntarily embarking on a path of an "orderly return to democracy". As CDDRT have pointed out on many occasions, this is false. The truth is that the present situation is a result of the failure of both the military junta and then the civilian regime to solve the underlying social and economic crisis in Turkish society. This cannot be solved as long as Turkey remains a medium-level developed country which tries to compete in the world market on the basis of the most savage exploitation of its workers by domestic and international monopolies. In these conditions, the peoples of Turkey are coming to the "point of explosion" forcing the regime to make concessions in order to try and save the crumbling social system.

The revulsion of democratic public opinion — particularly in Western Europe — at the behaviour of the regime and the 'embarrassment' that this caused to some of the regime's European allies also played a significant role.

The second dangerous illusion is that Turkey is now more or less a normal, almost West European style democracy. This too is untrue.

The working people of Turkey live in a system which bans outright or puts under tight limitations, the most elementary trade union rights. Where despite the rapid increase in the number of legal political parties, those who advocate views which are 'too left-wing' face trial and imprisonment. At the same time the 10 million people of Kurdistan in Turkey are subjected to a complete denial of self-determination or even national identity and live in conditions of bloody oppression and virtual war.

Torture of political suspects remains commonplace and according to Amnesty International figures there are still some 15,000 political prisoners in Turkey.

PROTEST

In 1986 students took action for the first time since the coup. The ferocious regime of military style discipline and brainwashing instead of real education to which they have been subjected since 1980 provoked the first open student demonstrations in April. By the end of the year, thousands of students nation-wide had taken part in marches, sit-downs and hunger strikes against their conditions.

AN AWAKENING GIANT

The great feature of 1986 was the return of Turkey's working class to the centre of the democratic struggle. When, in

February 1986 at the call of Türk-İş (Turkish Trade Union Confederation) 100,000 workers joined a protest rally in Izmir, it was clear that a new phase had begun in the democratic struggle. Throughout the year, strikes and protest actions by workers have increased, culminating in the largest strike since the 1980 coup at the Netaş factory (see page 5). At the same time, support for the idea of a united trade union movement around a single trade union centre has grown to an unprecedented level among Turkey's organised workers. Thanks largely to mass pressure from the rank and file, Türk-İş is increasingly seen as being able to fulfil this role.

In Turkey the only form of democracy which can withstand those, who, as soon as their interests are threatened, resort to military coups such as the nightmare for the peoples of Turkey which began on 12th September 1980, is mass, participatory democracy initiated 'from below'. That is why the trade unions rather than the present breed of Turkish politicians are the shock force of democracy. For this reason the developing workers' struggle in Turkey demands the unstinting support of all who genuinely want to see a democratic Turkey.

1987 will be a crucial year in the struggle for democracy in Turkey. Ever wider sections of the population will be drawn into this struggle. For genuine democrats throughout the world this means more and concrete forms of solidarity with this struggle will be required.



In contrast to previous years, January 1987 began with workers and students taking action to defend their rights.

On January 1st 8 students were on hunger strike in Istanbul against the oppression of the YOK (Higher Education Council). 3150 Netaş workers were entering the 44th day of their strike with workers telling journalists "we will continue until we get our rights". At the Derby factory, pickets from the rubber workers union — Laspetkim-İş — were on the gates again telling reporters "We are continuing our struggle for bread".

ROUGH STUFF

The finest traditions of 'controlled democracy' in Turkey were shown during a debate in the Turkish Grand National Assembly on December 21st. SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) MP Demir was beaten-up in full view of the House by ANAP (Motherland Party) MPs who took exception to remarks he made in a speech from the rostrum.

The fun began when Demir, during a speech on the agriculture and fisheries budget, accused ANAP MPs of having "been bought". He went on to say that Agriculture Minister Mustafa Cetin was guilty of wrong-doing amounting to corruption. Uproar broke out as ANAP MPs rushed forward shouting "don't throw mud, don't lie". Demir shouted back "you should live honourably, you should live like human beings". 10 to 15 ANAP MPs surrounded the rostrum. Demir threw a glass of water at them but they dragged him down and in the words of a press report "jumped on him". The session was suspended while Demir received medical attention. When he returned the session was resumed. The tactless Demir turned on one of the ANAP MPs who had attacked him and said "you will all end up with the rope or the jeep". Uproar again broke out. ANAP MP Baracuk said "he has insulted me by calling me a sold-out MP" and had thrown water at him: "Anyone who throws water at me I strangle". Whereupon an independant MP jumped up shouting "who will you strangle? Come out and lets see who will strangle who!". In the ensuing uproar MPs shouted and made obscene finger gestures.

At this point, a fight broke out between an SHP MP and ANAP MP Talat Zengin. When SHP General Secretary Fikri Saglar tried to separate them, Zengin put his hand to the gun he was carrying in his waistband. Fikri Saglar managed to push him over. Zengin retaliated by head-butting him before the session was again suspended.

SHP leader Inonu later called on the Chair of the session to resign and one MP even accused the chair of being drunk. Questions were also asked as to how Talat Zengin had been allowed to carry a gun in the parliament.

14th TIME LUCKY?

In December, groups of intellectuals and former leaders of some banned left wing parties met in the Ince Cinema, Istanbul to discuss establishing a legal

Socialist Party in Turkey.

If they succeed in founding such a party it will be the 14th such party since 1919 in Turkey. The 13 previous attempts have all ended in the regime of the day banning the party and punishing its leadership.

BRIBERY

SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) mayor of the town of Hadimkoy revealed that an MP of the ruling ANAP (Motherland Party) had offered him 500 million TL to defect to ANAP. He allegedly told the mayor: "What is there in the SHP? Come to ANAP where there is help... you can make Hadimkoy like Paris".

MANOEUVRES

The Free Democratic Party of ex-Chambers of Commerce and Industry leader Yilmaz has dissolved and merged with the ruling ANAP party. 11 of its 20 MPs have actually joined ANAP.

The tiny Citizens Party has also decided to disband and merge with the opposition True Path Party (sponsored by ex-Prime Minister Demirel) giving the party 2 extra MPs.

Parliamentary defections from one Party to another existing party are forbidden by the Turkish Constitution. This article was inserted by the then military junta to try and prevent the return of pre-coup parties to parliament and avoid the chronic instability caused by the flagrant trading and buying of MPs which is such a feature of Turkish parliamentary politics.

However, a loophole has been found in this law whereby MPs can leave their party to form a new one. The new party can then vote to merge with an existing party. A recent blatant example of this was the defection of 19 SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) MPs to form the Populist Party on 27th December. 76 hours later the "Weekend Party" voted to dissolve and join the DSP (Democratic Left Party) — sponsored by Ecevit, thus increasing its parliamentary representation to 24 MPs. All this, without having to put anything to the test of an election.

The balance of power within the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 9th January was as follows:

Motherland Party:	249
Social Democratic Populist Party:	65
True Path Party	35
Democratic Left Party	24
Independents	25
There are two vacant seats.	

SOLDIERS DIE IN CLASH

Tension has risen sharply on the border between Greece and Turkey following an armed clash at the River Evros in which 1 Greek and 2 Turkish soldiers died. A full report of the state of relations between the Ozal regime, Greece and Cyprus will appear in the March issue of *Turkey Newsletter*.

CYPRUS - A MILITARY BUILD-UP

In January, United Nations officials confirmed that a build-up of troops was taking place in the occupied Northern part of Cyprus.

In addition to 36,000 troops the Ozal regime is deploying air-to-surface rockets and a fleet of attack helicopters. This is being accompanied in the Turkish media by a major propaganda campaign about the 'danger' posed by the Greek Cypriot government.

IMPORTANT VISIT

Between 5-8 January, Richard Balfe MEP a rapporteur of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament visited Turkey on a fact finding mission.

Richard Balfe spoke to government and legal opposition figures as well as Türk-İş, Bar Association leaders and Abdullah Bastürk.

ECEVIT SENTENCED

Former Prime Minister and behind-the-scenes leader of the Democratic Left Party has been sentenced to 11 months prison for making political speeches while being banned from doing so in last year's by-election. He remains at liberty pending an appeal. If the sentence is upheld he could lose political rights for life, in addition to the actual sentence.

TEACHERS' DEPRESSION

School teachers in Turkey are leaving the state education system in their thousands to become anything from bosses to coffee makers according to a report published in *Tercuman*.

While there is such a shortage of teachers that 10,000 pupils will start the year without a teacher, thousands are leaving the profession because of the "unbearable situation" in the schools, the lack of material incentives and "economic difficulties". Wages have fallen behind to such an extent that it is virtually impossible for a married teacher to live without supplementing

NEWS IN BRIEF

his/her income in some way. Teachers are even becoming street vendors and tea carriers in their spare time to earn some money.

A mathematics teacher at Cisli lycee pointed out: "When I started teaching in 1967 I took home 508 TL a month. Out of that I brought a wedding ring for 17 TL. Today I get 40,000 TL per month and the same ring costs 30,000 TL.

Tercuman also interviewed a teacher who had left education to become a cafe waiter. "Today I serve tea but at least my pocket sees money".

In addition to a lack of material incentives, teachers find the compulsory national school curriculum to be "full of rubbish and of no use to the learner".

Since the 1980 coup, teachers have been subjected to a mass purge of the profession and an Education Ministry dominated by fascists and religious fanatics. Teachers are forbidden to join or organise a trade union and find the criteria for pay and promotion is not experience or qualifications but political views.

Teachers suspected of having political views opposed to the regime find themselves transferred *compulsory* to remote provinces.

Every time a teacher is transferred from one school to another — whether voluntarily or compulsorily — he or she is subjected to a 2-month security check by the political police.

THE OTHER 1%

While working people are being thrown out on to streets in the middle of winter, the rich flaunt their wealth.

100 million TL was spent on the wedding of Meltem Ercan to Yildirim Mayruk — the representatives of two of Turkey's wealthy families. The bride was weighed down with 2 kilos of gold and, according to the press, "dollars flew in the air". 2 kilos of diamonds and other jewellery were also given in gifts.



"THIS IS INHUMAN"

On New Years Eve police in Antalya fired shots in the air to disperse hostile crowds during the demolition of Gecekonu homes.

Gecekonus (literally "Overnights") are the substantial shanty towns where some 40% of the population of big towns live. Because of high rents and housing shortages there is no alternative accommodation for many people.

In Antalya, the local authorities have been demolishing Gecekonus at the rate of 20 homes per day. No alternative housing is provided, yet the state is

spending millions to demolish existing homes.

No sooner are the gecekonus demolished than the inhabitants have to start building new ones.

As on previous occasions, inhabitants of the Antalya gecekonus — led by women — resisted. The press reported that one gecekonu dweller Ayse Akin, mother of 8 refused to leave her home as bulldozers began to demolish it. When police tried to persuade her to leave she said "bury me with my house this is inhuman". They finally gave her family three days to collect her bricks. In the meantime they continue to live in the half demolished home as there is no alternative.

THE NETAS STRIKE - A KEY BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY HAS BEGUN

The strike of workers at the Netaş (Northern Telecom factory) began on 19th November 1986. In total, some 3150 workers are involved in this struggle. The Netaş strike is the largest since the 1980 coup.

Today in Turkey this strike has tremendous significance which goes far beyond the economic demands of the workers. The Netaş workers are in effect confronting both a multi national monopoly and the Turkish regime and military represented in Netaş. In the words of a union activist at Netaş: "It's not just a strike over pay and conditions. What we are really doing is fighting for democracy and the right to organise trade unions freely".

HARBINGER

The significance of the strike is fully appreciated by other workers in Turkey. If this strike is victorious it will lead to a massive offensive by the working class in Turkey to regain and advance trade union rights and reverse the situation where their wages have declined (in real terms) by two-thirds since 1977.

In their solidarity actions with the Netaş workers, workers in other industries have pushed aside the elaborate and oppressive labour laws designed to ban all aid and solidarity from workers in one industry with those in another. Thousands of workers are donating food, money and industrial products to the strike funds, artists are donating their works, theatres are donating tickets and villagers around Izmir are donating bus-loads of food.

Both independent trade unions and Türk-İş (Turkish Trade Union Confederation) are giving their support. The strike has become a focal point for an unprecedented level of trade union unity in the history of the Turkish labour movement.

The fighting spirit of the men and women on strike at Netaş is proving an inspiration to workers beginning to take strike action at other factories.

ATTITUDE OF NETAS

The bosses at Netaş seem somewhat taken aback by the unbreakable determination of the workers. As with so many multi nationals, they have worked hand in glove for years with oppressive regimes such as the Ozal government in Turkey. Netaş are used to a situation where the regime keeps labour cheap and quiet — often at the point of a gun — and Northern Telecom makes big profits.

The Netaş management have so far adopted two tactics: One is to threaten to close the plants down altogether — this is unlikely in view of the huge contracts Northern Telecom has in Turkey. The other is to try and continue production using 'apprentices'. These are 100-200 youngsters between the ages of 12 and 15 who are paid little more than pocket money and as apprentices are forbidden by law from striking or joining trade unions.

So far this tactic too has been failure. Netaş managed to produce some goods but the workers have prevented any trucks leaving the factories. In addition, the Netaş workers on strike have received the total support of the workers employed in small Netaş workshops and sub-contractors scattered about Anatolia.

THE REGIME'S ATTITUDE

The strike has put the Ozal regime in a quandary. If the strike is allowed to run its course and end in a workers' victory it will give the signal of encouragement to tens of thousands of workers in other industries who are on the brink of strike action. A victory could accelerate the demands for a general strike to restore full trade union and democratic freedoms.

On the other hand the regime knows that an attempt to crush the strike by brute force could lead to an 'explosion' similar to the Istanbul general strike of 1971 when workers swept troops and gendarmery from the streets and forced the government of the day to give more freedom to trade unions.

At the moment the regime's policy seems to be to keep a low profile and hope that the workers can be quietly starved back to work.

The regime's anxiety about the Netaş strike is heightened by the fact that the products of Netaş play a key role in both civilian and military modernisation schemes in Turkey.

On the civilian side, Netaş products are being used in the plan to equip every village in Turkey — no matter how remote — with at least one cordless telephone.

On the military side, a key aspect of the regime's drive to build up the most powerful army in the region is the introduction of communication systems as sophisticated as in the most advanced Western armies.



No one who wishes to be identified as a democrat can avoid supporting the Netaş strike. Social Democratic and Populist Party leader Erdal Inonu visits the picket line.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Throughout Europe, Turkish migrant workers have rallied to the cause of the Netaş workers and donated part of their wages to the strike fund. Solidarity committees have been — or are being — formed in several countries.

In Britain, Turkish workers have already sent £2,000 to the Netaş workers. On the initiative of Turkish community organisations and Chris Smith MP a Netaş Strike Support Campaign has been formed, chaired by Jeremy Corbyn MP.

In Canada, trade unions covering workers employed by Northern Telecom have decided to support their brothers and sisters in Turkey.

SOLIDARITY WITH 1

We reprint below the Netaş Strike Support Fund appeal

THE NETAS STRIKE:

- ★ The first major strike since 12th September 1980.
- ★ The workers have put forward very just demands.
- ★ The strike is continuing with enthusiasm and determination in spite of bans and restrictions.
- ★ It is the focal point of the class struggle and the struggle for trade union unity.

THE NETAS STRIKERS:

- ★ Have launched a solidarity campaign to help them continue the strike by overcoming the problem of lack of funds.
- ★ Have issued a call to "Give one hour's wages to the strikers".

WORKER FRIENDS ABROAD:

- ★ You too are a worker, you must show your solidarity!
- ★ If the workers in Turkey can give one hour, you should be able to give one day, or even one week!
- ★ Don't be satisfied with just giving yourself, ask for contributions from workers of other nationalities!
- ★ The Netaş workers have raised a banner of struggle and solidarity in Istanbul. Raise the same banner wherever you are, with all the workers!

Some information about Netaş

Netaş is a company owned jointly by a Canadian multinational monopoly called Northern Electric Ltd. (Northern Telecom Ltd.), and the State of Turkey through the Turkish Telephone and Telegraph (PTT) and the Foundation for strengthening the Navy. It produces telephone exchanges and components. Production is carried out primarily in a giant factory in Umraniye, Istanbul. In addition, there are small assembly workshops in various places in Anatolia. Netaş employs 3150 workers, the great majority of whom work in the Umraniye factory.

In 1986 the company increased production by 20%, also increasing its profits by at least that much. Meanwhile, before the strike a worker who had worked at Netaş for 15 years received on average a net monthly wage of 90,000 Turkish lira (TL) (about £90). When one considers that the rent of a *shanty* in Istanbul is at least 30,000 TL and that the *kitchen expenses alone* of a family of four have long since passed the 100,000 TL mark, it becomes clear just how low this wage is.

The striking workers and their demands

The Netaş workers are organised in the independent Otomobil-İş union. 2650 workers went on strike on 17 November 1986 after months of collective bargaining negotiations between the union and the employer had yielded no result.

The workers had demanded an hourly wage increase of 450 TL in the first year, 580 TL in the second as well as a bonus of



The men and women on the Netaş picket lines — determined to win.

two months' wages under the name of "wear and tear premium". However, there was disagreement on other issues aside from wages, firstly on the matter of the Discipline Council. The workers wanted a discipline council made up of two worker representatives and two employer representatives as well as a rotating chairperson. They also wanted the position of trade union representatives to be maintained after collective bargaining is concluded. They demanded severance pay of three months' wages, for workers to have a say in their transfers, and the correction of unhealthy working conditions. When none of these demands were accepted, the workers went on strike.

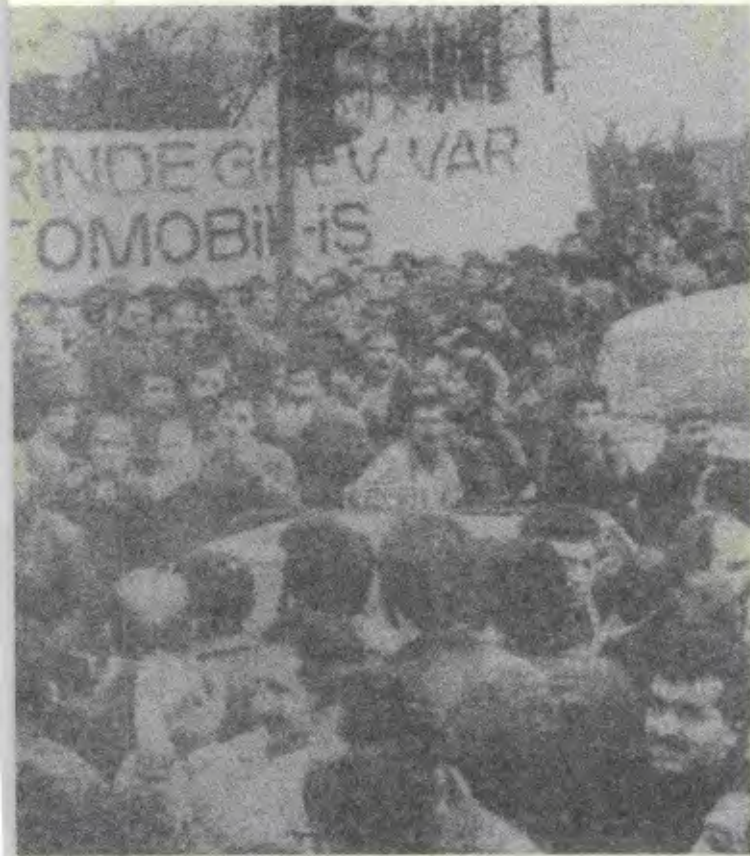
The strike is mainly continuing in the giant factory in Umraniye. It is supported by the majority of assembly workers in workshops in various places in Anatolia.

A focal point of the class struggle and the struggle for democracy

This determined strike being waged by 2650 workers at Netaş is the first major strike since 12th September 1980. The eyes of all workers and working people are on this strike. The success of this strike is vitally important not only for the strikers themselves, but for all workers and working people.

The labour laws are filled with restrictions on workers and trade unions. The fact that thousands of workers in a giant factory in an important branch of industry have gone on

THE NETAS WORKERS



strike for just demands despite these restrictions, that they are continuing the strike "with the enthusiasm and determination of the first day", to use a phrase of the workers, is dealing severe blows at every moment to the system which is trying to maintain itself with ferocious exploitation and anti-democratic laws. This strike is becoming a powerful example and strikes and resistances are multiplying throughout the country.

Together with the company whose partner it is, the state is acting as strike-breaker. While turning a blind eye to actions by the State and Netaş company which violate even the recent repressive labour laws, the courts and the police are trying to impose the restrictions in those laws on the workers.

While those who support justice and the people are on the side of the striking workers, enemies of the people have assembled on the other side. The strike has become the most important focal point of the class struggle and the struggle for democracy. In this struggle, working class solidarity and support for trade union unity is spreading rapidly.

A focal point of working class solidarity and the struggle for trade union unity

The Netaş workers are organised in the independent Otomobil-İş union but they have adopted the aim of the achievement of working class trade union unity on the basis of militant class trade unionism and within *Türk-İş*. This aim

was also adopted as a resolution at the *Otomobil-İş* congress held at the end of 1986.

The fact that the Netaş workers who defend the aim of militant trade union unity have undertaken a just action and are continuing the strike with the determination of the first day, and also that they are showing warm solidarity with other strikes that have started, has made this strike an important focal point in regard to the spreading of working class solidarity and trade union unity.

Workers from factories in the area, from shanty-town districts and other cities are either visiting the strikers themselves or sending their representatives. Among these workers are many members of *Türk-İş*. Those who come to visit do not come with empty hands. They do not neglect to bring donations they have collected among themselves, tea and cigarettes.

Meanwhile, the families of the striking workers, old and young, men and women, sons and daughters, are as self-sacrificing and determined as the strikers. They are militantly taking their place alongside the striking workers. In turn, the strikers are supporting all the other strikes which are going on, showing them the same solidarity.

Friend, you too are a worker, you must show your solidarity

A strike is continuing which is of great importance for all workers and working people, for the struggle for bread and democracy. In order for the strike not to be hindered by lack of funds, the striking workers have launched a solidarity campaign. In this campaign they have called on their class brothers and sisters to donate one hour's wages. Workers from various factories and region, various trade unions and progressive artists are participating in the campaign.

Worker friends abroad!

You too are workers, you must show your solidarity.

You too are being exploited because you are a worker. You too face unemployment, etc. Nevertheless you are still living and working in better conditions than workers in Turkey. If workers in Turkey can give one hour's wages to the Netaş strikers, you should be able to give one day's or even one week's.

Do not be satisfied with giving yourself, but ask the workers of other nationalities around you to contribute!

The enemy and the interests of workers, whether Turkish or non-Turkish, at home or abroad, are the same. The Netaş workers have raised a banner of struggle and solidarity in Istanbul. Raise the same banner wherever you are, with all the workers!

Donations should be sent to:
Netaş Strike Support Fund,
c/o 129 Newington Green Rd.
London N1 4RD
or direct to : Netaş Strike Support Fund,
A/c 01078577 (Midland Bank 40-05-05)
Newington Green Branch,
Midland Bank
Newington Green
London N16

TRADE UNION NEWS

TURK-IS CONGRESS

The 14th Congress of Türk-İş (Trade Union Confederation) held in December 1986 was marked by a strengthening of the forces in favour of a united and active trade union movement.

The tone of the congress was set by former chair Halil Tunc when he told delegates that they were meeting at "the most critical point in the workers' history". The question before congress was a question of the labour movement's continued existence. He reflected the mood of the overwhelming majority at the congress when he said it was their duty "to unite all workers"... "1987 will be the year when we take back our democratic rights and freedoms which were lost".

The struggle for the future of Türk-İş was reflected in the choice of three lists of candidates for the top posts in the confederation. The first was the 'centre-left' list headed by President of Türk-İş and Teksif (Textile workers) Şevket Yılmaz. The second, described as a Social Democratic list was led by Cevdet Selvi, leader of the powerful Petrol-İş (Petrochemical workers) union. The third was a right-wing list headed by Mustafa Ozbek, leader of Turk Metal (one of the metal workers' unions) and including the despicable Sadik Side, Türk-İş General Secretary and notorious for his collaboration with the post 1980 military junta.

The leadership elections ended in a total victory for Şevket Yılmaz and his supporters. Cevdet Selvi and his team emerged as the main opposition and the right under Ozbek were crushed.

Şevket Yılmaz fought on a platform of maximum unity of workers — irrespective of their political views within Türk-İş and development of a struggle to establish trade union freedom.

Cevdet Selvi had a similar platform but with more emphasis on a radical transformation of Türk-İş.

The total defeat suffered by the right including the removal of Sadik Side is seen as an endorsement for Türk-İş to embark on a road of open struggle for trade union rights and democracy in Turkey and support for the principle of the unity of all Turkey's workers within a single confederation — Türk-İş.

The massive pressure building up among rank and file workers for trade union unity and a determined struggle against the employers and the regime was fully reflected both in the results of the Turk-Is congress and of the individual trade union congresses. 1987 will indeed be "a year of struggle" as proclaimed at the congress.

DISK VERDICTS

The mass trial of 1,470 members and leaders of DISK (Revolutionary Confederation of Trade Unions) before a military court in Turkey ended on December 23rd. 264 defendants were given sentences of between 1 and 15 years imprisonment. In addition, DISK itself which has been suppressed since the 12th September 1980 military coup in Turkey has been formally banned. The court verdicts were based on the accusation by the military and the regime that DISK — by carrying out normal trade union activities, (wage bargaining, education courses and strikes) in the 1970s, had conspired to "establish the rule of one class over another".

Among those sentenced was Cetin Uygur, leader of the DISK-affiliated Miners' Union who received the heaviest sentence for having alleged links with the banned Dev Yol (Revolutionary Path) organisation and Abdullah Basturk, DISK President who received a 10-year prison sentence.



The new Türk-İş leadership (left to right): Orhan Balaban (Railway Workers' Union) — General Organisation Secretary, Cetin Gocer (Local Authority Workers) — General Finance Secretary, Şevket Yılmaz (Textile Workers' Union) — President, Emin Kul (Seamen's Union) — General Secretary, Mustafa Basoglu (Defence Industry Workers' Union) — Education Secretary.

ICFTU CALL

The Executive board of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions meeting in Brussels towards the end of 1986 issued the following statement:

Concerned that labour legislation in Turkey has still not been brought into line with the standards of the International Labour Organisation, despite repeated assurances from the Turkish government, the Board commended the continued efforts of its affiliate Türk-İş to recover trade union freedom and full workers' rights.

The ICFTU insists that "normalisation of Turkey's relations with Europe is neither warranted by improvement in the human and trade union rights situation nor by progress so far in restoring democracy." In particular, the ICFTU repeats its demand that the Turkish authorities lift the suspension of the DISK labour federation, drop the baseless charges against its leaders and release trade union assets and property to their rightful owners.

It is understood that the defendants will remain free while they appeal to a higher military court against the verdicts.

The Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey totally condemns this savage attack on trade unionists by the anti-democratic regime in Turkey.

It is no coincidence that the verdicts in the 5-year long DISK trial were handed down during the same week in which Türk-İş (Turkish Trade Union Confederation), the main functioning trade union centre in Turkey was holding its General Congress. The main theme at this crucial congress was the need to raise the struggle for trade union rights and democracy. Clearly, the timing of the verdicts was aimed at intimidating the reviving trade union movement.

The CDDRT calls on all affiliates and friends of democracy to protest at the DISK trial — which is a gross violation of even the most basic understanding of human rights and democracy, call for the quashing of the verdicts and an end to the persecution of trade unionists.

TORTURE, TRIALS AND PRISONS

VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONTINUE

Despite soothing words both from the regime in Turkey and its principal NATO allies political show trials, torture and violations of many basic human rights continue. On the 5th November 1986, Amnesty International issued a report on the torture and ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners in Turkey. When in 1985 Amnesty produced a similar report the regime claimed that the examples in it were all out of date or at least prior to full control by Ozal's 'civilian government'. The regime has been markedly quieter about this new report. In fact it is hard to see how they can answer it for Amnesty's report consists of reports, cases and admissions actually appearing in the press in Turkey!

The report covers the period January 1986 to June 1986.

The items printed below all appeared in issue No. 121 of Info-Turk the Belgium-based information bulletin.

DISAPPEARED

The secretary general of the Social-Democrat Populist Party (SHP) Fikri Saglar has drawn up a file comprising the names of 253 political detainees who have either died during their interrogation or disappeared since their arrest.

He is to present this list to the National Assembly and demand precise explanations on the fate of these victims.

THE NEW PENAL CODE

A commission of jurists which the Ministry of Justice gave the responsibility of modifying completely the Turkish Penal Code which has existed for years, has completed its works.

The new draft to be introduced at the next meeting of the National Assembly contains no modification which can make the penal code be in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights.

All that is involved is a new technical systematization of the Code which had been modified several times in the past.

Articles aimed at punishing crimes against the State remain as they are, particularly articles 140, 141, 142 and 163 which provide for prison terms of up to 15 years respectively for the following "crimes":

- activity or propaganda abroad against the interests of the State,
- communist organization and propaganda.
- separatist organization and propaganda.
- activity or propaganda against the principles of State secularism.

In the new project, these articles have received the numbers 324, 325, 326 and 327.

NEW CASES OF TORTURE

Several new cases of torture and ill treatment in interrogation centres and prisons were written about in the Turkish press.

● On November 2 in Istanbul, the parents of Hayrettin Eren stated that their son had been apprehended on 9 November 23, 1980, with his comrades and carried to an interrogation centre. Since then, they have had no news of the young man.

Eren's family, thinking their son might have been killed while being tortured, have asked the prosecutor of Istanbul to start an investigation against Commissioner Tayyar Sener, the person in charge of questioning Hayrettin Eren.

● Another policeman, Ümit Aybek, who tortured people and had been already sentenced to 10 years and eight months in prison, was promoted to chief of police in the Kadiköy Commune in Istanbul, instead of being removed from his post.

Aybek was sentenced on April 1, 1986, for having tortured to death an alleged communist activist, Mustafa Hayrullahoglu, on the 16.11.1982 in Istanbul. His sentence is currently before the appeals court.

● Populist deputies revealed on November 3 that some 80 workers in a factory in Konya had been burned with cigarettes by the police while they were being questioned for having written slogans on the walls.

● On the 28th of November, another revelation by populist deputy Kadir Narin: a villager from the village of Ecemis in Lice district in Diyarbakir province had been murdered while being questioned and tortured.

● Forty-eight political detainees in Mersin prison staged a 10-day hunger strike against ill-treatment.

TWO JOURNALISTS SENTENCED

Two employees of the daily *Hergün*, Veyis Sözüer and Mustafa Karapinar were sentenced on November 12, to a 10-month prison term each for having insulted the government in an article published in 1978.

On the other hand, on November 16, the state prosecutor launched a judiciary inquest against journalist Ziyad Ebuzziya for a conference he gave in the Foyer of Intellectuals. He is accused of having criticized the reform of the alphabet.



THE RELIGIOUS 'ANTIDOTE' IN TURKEY

The Turkish and international press has recently been paying much attention to what is seen as an upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey and, in particular, the wearing of the Islamic headscarf or "türban".

Since Atatürk's 'secular' republic was set up 63 years ago, Islamic fundamentalism has been seen by the Government and military forces as a threat to Turkey's modernization and gradual move to the West. Today secular principles have an enormous influence on Turkish society but are forced to coexist with the influence of Islam, which is still strong in some sectors such as the business world and the ruling Motherland Party itself. The state planning organisation, which is headed by Prime Minister Ozal's brother, Yusuf, is a well-known fundamentalist stronghold.

In early January this year, YOK, the Higher Education Council, banned the wearing of the Islamic headscarf in the universities. Apparently, they received such instructions from President Evren and sent out letters to individual universities requesting them to carry out the new regulations. The action created an uproar and since then both men and women students have organised protests including boycotts and hunger-strikes at several universities, against the ban.

Politicians have reacted differently to the controversy. President Evren, as an ardent Kemalist and ex-military officer, is making every effort to stamp out the fundamentalist influence in the universities and other institutions and will risk unpopularity with these sections in order to achieve this. The Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, is cautiously underplaying the government's role in the ban and is reluctant to discuss his standpoint on the issue. He was reported as saying that women should be permitted to cover their heads in "a contemporary manner", as a compromise. During the 1970s he was an Islamic traditionalist himself and still maintains the support of the religious right whilst upholding the virtues of Europeanism. In this instance, the PM is apparently against prescribing to the population.

Demirel and the SHP (Social Democrats) are keen to defuse the situation by making statements such as "the türban should not be used as a political tool" and have advised the students not to protest against the ban, but to "be patient".

President Evren has also used the problem for his own political interests. In his dramatic New Year's speech to the nation at Çukurova University, he said that the headscarf debate itself was a trivial issue but it had to be brought under control for democracy to survive. The real danger was the threat to the secular nation as provided by two equally extremist forces — the Islamic reactionaries and the Communists. He alleged both forces had joined together and infiltrated the military schools, the universities and armed forces to indoctrinate the young and conspire to take over the nation. This would take Turkey back to the situation of anarchy which existed before 1980. He warned that before such an eventuality could occur, the army would be brought in to restore democracy and the sacred principles of Atatürk.

While it is true that the wearing of headscarves has become more popular in Turkey, this could be due to several reasons. It may be as an act of defiance of the authorities, out of genuine commitment to Islam, or for financial gain. It is said that some women are being paid \$50 for wearing an Islamic headscarf by underground Islamic bodies backed by Turkish businessmen.

To some in the West, the apparent growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey will heighten fears and suspicions of Turkey becoming a religious state like Iran. At present, such a view would be overreactive, as much of the press



Islamic Protests

reporting has been. The Islamic following in Turkey has not taken a militant or revolutionary form. Having tried to stifle opposition within Turkey in the form of the political left, the government is now facing a new threat from the Islamic reactionaries but they are not yet a coherent force politically.

Support appears to be confined almost exclusively to the upper middle classes.

For the time being, the Islamic intellectuals are concentrating on raising Islamic awareness in the cities. So far, with Ozal's support, they are doing this unchallenged. However, the headscarf ban is an indication that some sectors are keen to check the growing fundamentalist movement; Ozal has already been criticised for his handling of the situation.

No one is sure as yet how far either Evren or Ozal are prepared to go in bringing the movement under control. Clear priorities will have to be decided by Ozal in particular, if Turkey is to have any chance of joining the European Community.

In the meantime, the religious issue is being used to divert attention away from the serious economic and social situation in Turkey both nationally and internationally.



The Turkish media commenting on Semra Ozal — the Prime Minister's wife who said "if you want to see modern Turkish woman — look at me."

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

In December, the London-based anti-imperialist organisation, Liberation, convened a conference entitled *Peace, Freedom and Justice in the Middle East*.

The main theme at this conference was the Palestine issue and absorbing talks were given by Israeli lawyer and civil rights campaigner Felicia Langer and by the PLO's representative in London, among others. In addition to Palestine, some time was given to the Iran-Iraq war, Cyprus and Turkey. The CDDRT was well represented at this conference. At the end of the event a declaration and charter for action was overwhelmingly adopted. The section on Turkey reads as follows:

6. We note that atrocities and human rights violations continue in Turkey. Hundreds of trade unionists have been tried solely for their legitimate trade union activities. Thousands of political prisoners remain, and hundreds of members of banned political organisations are under sentence of Death. In Kurdistan, in Turkey, the death toll mounts as the regime's army attempts to suppress the struggle of the Kurdish people for their rights. All working class political activity remains banned. At the same time the regime continues to pose a threat to regional peace. Particularly through the continued development of NATO and US bases in the country, and the presence of some 500 US nuclear warheads in Turkey.

We call for:

a. an end to the remaining mass trials, including that of the Turkish Peace Association leaders. An end to torture, and the unconditional release of all political prisoners;

b. support for the Kurdish people's right to self-determination;

c. support for the democratic and progressive forces in Turkey — including those working to transform the existing mass organisations, including the trade unions, into democratic bodies fighting to bring about real democracy in Turkey.

Because of the need to give full coverage to the Netaş strike, *Turkey Newsletter* has had to omit or curtail reports of some important developments in Turkey this month.

Affiliate to the CDDRT

Annual affiliation fees are: national organisation £25, local organisation £10, individual £6.

To the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey.

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Return to the appropriate CDDRT addresses.

4th BIENNIAL CONGRESS

Saturday 28th March 1987

10.30am - 4.30pm

The Council Chamber
ISLINGTON TOWN HALL
Upper St. London N1

The 4th Biennial Congress of the CDDRT takes place against the background of a rapid acceleration of the democratic struggle in Turkey.

Strikes, student protests, political activity and campaigns against human rights abuses are becoming the order of the day inside the country. At the same time Turkey is still ruled by an anti-democratic regime presiding over a system of gross exploitation, keeping thousands of political opponents in prison and posing a serious threat to peace abroad.

The 4th Congress will decide the basic guidelines for international solidarity work in support of the democratic forces in Turkey during this vital period.

Every affiliated organisation and individual is entitled to attend the CDDRT Biennial Congress as delegates and submit motions and vote on resolutions etc... motions must arrive at the CDDRT by Friday, 13th March at the latest.

I/we* wish to apply for delegate/visitor* credentials.

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Please find enclosed £ —— credential fee. (There is a charge of £1 per delegate's or visitor's credential to help towards the costs of the congress). * Delete which does not apply and return to CDDRT, 129 Newington Green RD., London N1 4RD.

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TERROR IN KURDISTAN



'Normality' in Kurdistan: armed guards with snow-plough.

Armed clashes and punitive operations by the Turkish army are continuing in the South East Anatolian provinces which make up Kurdistan in Turkey.

Most of Kurdistan remains under martial law.

CLASHES

Despite the regime's claims that the army has stamped-out resistance by Kurdish militants, fighting continues.

In October 1986 Kurdish guerillas armed with rocket-launchers knocked-out a NATO radar installation at the Mardin base. In the same month alone 3 soldiers, 2 gendarmes, 2 pro-government villagers, 1 guerrilla and 4 civilians were killed in armed clashes.

In November 1986, 2 soldiers and a 'village protector' died in clashes.

At the same time the mass trials of members of several Kurdish organisations are continuing.

In the schools of the region, the Ministry of Education has ordered the speeding-up of the teaching of Turkish. Several more school directors of Kurdish origin have been replaced by retired army officers.

'PROTECTED VILLAGES'

Another repressive measure has been 'grouping' of villages. Kurdish villagers are being moved into new 'residential

zones'. This policy began back in the seventies during the government of the social democratic Bulent Ecevit. Under the present regime it is being intensified with the aim of grouping the residents of 4,350 villages and hamlets. This programme will enable the army and security organs to keep Kurdish people under closer surveillance and enable stronger measures to 'Turkify' the population to be carried out.

VILLAGE 'PROTECTORS'



Under the headline "guards with ties", the newspaper Tercuman carried a report that armed pro-government villagers are to be paid 40000TL (£40) per month for their 'help'. As before, the 'protectors' duties will consist of informing on suspected "divisive elements" and tracking-down, or helping the army and police track down, Kurdish activists.

The newspaper reported one 'protector' as saying: "Now the government is giving us a salary we must behave like civil servants". The paper did not mention that unlike most civil servants, a protector can earn 2.5 million TL for bringing in a dead 'separatist'. The paper did mention however, that when the local administrators visited the village, "the guards wear ties and newly ironed trousers".

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