

TURKEY NEWSLETTER



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Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

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NETAS VICTORY



W MEN BATTLE FOR DEM CRACY *Pages: 5, 6, 7.*

RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY REACH A NEW LOW

Relations between the governments of Greece and Turkey — two NATO allies continue to deteriorate. For several years a series of territorial and political disputes between the two countries have become so serious that actual talk of the possibility of war between them has become not unusual.

The latest twist in the cycle of tension started in October-November of last year. Tension rose rapidly along the Turkish-Greek land border following Greek government allegations that the Turkish regime was deliberately encouraging refugees from Iran to cross into Greece and firing on those who were turned back. Despite furious denials by the authorities in Turkey, the Greek government alleged that a well-organised smuggling ring was charging Iranian refugees between £500-and £2,100 (\$800-\$3,000) to get them across the border and that Turkish border officials and guards were involved.

Refugees from Iran, desperate to escape from the political terror of the Khomeini regime or seeking to avoid call-up in the Iran-Iraq war have been fleeing to Turkey in large numbers. In Turkey they face a real danger of being returned to Iran so most try to seek refuge in West European countries. In the course of this, many refugees are ruthlessly fleeced by the Ankara authorities and criminal elements, to the extent that they arrive at the Greek border without even their overcoats. This situation has led to exchanges of fire between Turkish and Greek border guards culminating in a full scale gun battle in December on the Evros river in which one Greek and two Turkish soldiers died.

This led to a burst of war hysteria in the Turkish media with the funeral of the two Turkish soldiers (termed "Martyrs") being turned into a platform to call for Greece to "be taught an historic lesson".

As we have pointed out before, the disputes between Turkey and Greece to a large measure have their origins in the rivalry between the two countries to become big trading partners of the Arab world and in fact, to become the dominant "middleman" in trade between Europe and the Middle East

The USA and NATO also have a vested interest in the dangerous tension between Greece and Turkey. It is a major guarantee that neither country — but particularly Greece — will dare leave the NATO alliance for fear that the other will be given a 'free hand'. This was graphically illustrated at the special session of the Greek Parliament held in January. During the debates. The Greek Prime Minister, Mr Andreas Papandreou, said he was keeping Greece in NATO because war with Turkey might be unavoidable if Greece pulled out.

"We are not leaving NATO at the moment because national security reasons force us to stay and because, however incredible it may sound that two NATO members could go to war, such a clash might be unavoidable if we leave," he said.

Mr Papandreou said that Greece had to keep its armed forces strong to face the "immediate" danger from Turkey. He was not against a dialogue with Turkey, but only if Ankara recognised Greek rights in the Aegean and withdrew troops from Cyprus.

He accused NATO of failing to protect Greece against Turkey and said that Athens had to rely on its own resources to defend national interests.

The Turkish regime is now in dispute with Greece over the demilitarisation of Greek islands of the Turkish coast, Cyprus, territorial waters and air space in the Aegean, in addition to disputes on the Evros river border. The regime in

Ankara has deployed the massive 4th Army along the Aegean coast equipped with some 140 special landing craft. It is perhaps 'fortunate' for peace in the Aegean that the Turkish regime is at the moment preoccupied with deteriorating relations with other neighbours — Syria and Iran, and is looking for 'lebensraum' at the expense of the Kirkuk-Mosul area of Iraq.

MISSING

The following letter appeared in the *Irish Times* 19.11.1986 and refers to an article written by Brendan O'Cathaoir in the same paper about the unanswered question as to what happened to 1,619 Cypriots who 'disappeared' while in the hands of the Turkish army after the 1974 invasion of northern Cyprus.

Sir, — Your Turkish correspondents (letters, November 17th/18th) went to considerable lengths to justify Turkey's involvement in Cyprus. Their letters followed the tiresome pattern of Turkish propaganda: injured innocence, complaints, denials, fudging the basic issues, and rattling a few skeletons in the Greek cupboard.

Neither refuted the main points of my article on October 13th: that 12 years after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, 1,619 Greek prisoners are still missing, and since the Committee on Missing Persons was set up in 1981 it has failed to determine the fate of the missing Cypriots.

Mr Bilge Erol, of the Turkish Embassy in Dublin, states: "The parties to the question of missing persons in Cyprus are the two communities of the island." As I submitted in my article, that attitude is not good enough. The prisoners were taken into Turkish military custody, and if any of them are still alive they are being held in Turkey. The Turkish authorities should not be allowed to walk away from the problem which they created. In September a relatives' delegated asked the European Parliament to form a committee to visit Turkey in an effort to trace the missing prisoners.

Mr Erol, in denying the accusations of torture made by Amnesty International, wrote: "Sporadic cases that occur seldom are being immediately dealt with and the responsible persons are being condemned by independent courts." Your readers can accept the word of Mr Bilge Erol or the report of Amnesty — the respected human rights organisation. In deciding they may be helped by the following quotation from the October issue of the newsletter of the Committee for Democratic Rights in Turkey: "Allegations and cases of torture of political detainees are still occurring on an almost weekly basis. Torture is still used systematically, the only difference today being that it is applied on a more selective basis than two years ago."

The Turkish perception of historical truth is perhaps best illustrated by a speech of President Kenan Evren last July denying the Armenian Massacre: "Wherever the Turks went they brought justice, science and culture. They never intervened in the religion, traditions or language of the indigenous population." Such rhetoric is no consolation to the 180,000 Greek Cypriots uprooted by the Turkish "peace operation" in northern Cyprus.

Mr Osman Ertug, writing from Turkey on behalf of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", expressed profound regret about my article. Unfortunately for Mr Ertug, I subscribe to the principle that it is the task of the journalist to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

VICIOUS ATTACK

On the night of the 8th February an explosion followed by a fire destroyed the well-known Şan theatre in Istanbul killing a night-watchman.

The police, after a superficial examination announced that the fire was probably caused by an electrical fault.

This is not the view of director Ferhan Samsoy whose comedy *Muzir Musical* (A Detrimental Musical) has been playing to packed houses for several months. Ferhan Samsoy believes the fire was caused by Islamic fundamentalists. *Muzir Musical* satirises the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists whose backward ideas have become fashionable in some strata in Turkey. For several months Samsoy and his actors have received death threats by letter and phone. In addition, Samsoy himself had been indicted before a court for "slandering religious values" the punishment for which is one year imprisonment and a 10 million TL fine.

The explosions occurred only half an hour after the actors had left the theatre. Normally they work much later. Mr Samsoy believes that there was a deliberate attempt to murder some of the cast as well as destroy the theatre.



ENCYCLOPEDIA+ "SEPARATISM"

The publisher of a Turkish edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica is being prosecuted because it says that an Armenian state existed in southern Anatolia in the 11th century. He faces charges of separatism and weakening Turkish national feelings.

CARDS CONFISCATED

It has emerged that in December and January, police raided numerous publishers, printers and bookshops with the purpose of confiscating New Year greetings cards containing poems by famous "anti-establishment" poets like Nazım Hikmet and Ahmet Arif or pictures containing the white dove peace symbol.

During the raids, some 20 booksellers were arrested and about 30,000 cards confiscated.

Abusing their authorisation the police in addition seized books on socio-political subjects totalling 136 different titles without warrants.

TORTURE CONTINUES

David Bamford writing in the London *Guardian* of 13th February 1987, reports that:

"Torture is still taking place in Turkish prisons, according to the Turkish Human Rights Association in a report, published yesterday.

The association claims that despite the return to civilian rule in 1983, torture techniques, including electric shock, the beating of feet, and forcing detainees to stand naked in cold water, are still widely practised.

Mr Nevzat Helvacı, the association's chairman, said the true scale of human rights abuse is still unknown because it is not possible to establish the current situation in eastern Turkey.

But the report names 149 people who it says have been killed while in custody since the 1980 military coup. Ninety-seven are said to have died while undergoing torture and 14 more because they were denied medical treatment. Four are listed as having been killed during prison clashes and 10 more from the effects of hunger strikes.

Mr Helvacı also referred to 24 deaths allegedly through suicide, but he said some of those were almost certainly murder cases.

He said the Human Rights Association — set up by leading Turkish intellectuals last year to investigate alleged human rights abuses — demanded an urgent government investigation into the cases of those named in the report, Mr Helvacı said those prison officers responsible for the deaths must be brought to justice.

He conceded that the numbers of new torture cases had dropped in recent years because he said fewer people were being detained.

The Turkish justice and interior

ministers recently admitted that torture had taken place in some prisons.

An Amnesty International report last December also concluded that torture was still taking place in Turkish prisons."

PRIORITIES



In the same month in which the Turkish media found that there are some 1 million homeless children in Turkey and only orphanages to accommodate 18,000 the government announced that a multi-billion TL factory has gone into production to produce F16 jets. The Turkish version has been christened the "fighting Sahin" and is seen as an important step in war preparations.

VISIT

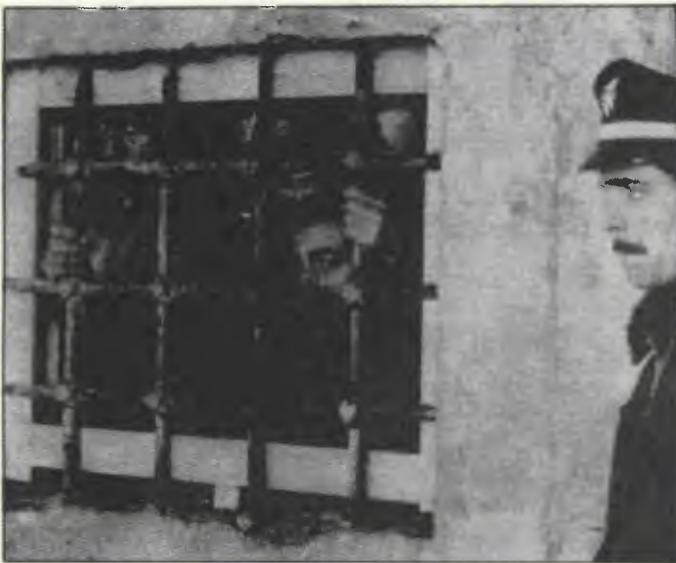
Prime Minister Özal visited the USA in early February. Besides meeting those we suspect are his political and economic gurus — Nixon and Rockefeller and having an operation he had an audience with Reagan.

A significant part of their discussions covered the Iran-Iraq war in which Turkey is becoming more involved both directly and as a possible springboard for US intervention. Despite arguments over trade protectionism, US-Turkey relations have improved. The bitter row which lasted for one year over the renewing of Deca (Defence and Economic Agreement) caused by the Ankara regime wanting a higher price for acting as a US regional policeman has ended with slightly improved terms for Turkey. In return the US keeps its bases, listening posts and other installations in Turkey. While visiting Washington Özal has asked that the US give large quantities of weapons and military equipment which the US has in excess to requirements.

PRISONS

ADOPTING A PRISONER

by Elizabeth Davies



In Turkey today there are thousands of political prisoners most of whom were brought to trial and sentenced by military courts set up since 1978 when martial law was first imposed in many provinces of Turkey. Such courts were operated by martial law commanders given sweeping powers to maintain 'law & order'.

In 1986, Amnesty International issued a report — Unfair Trial of Political Prisoners in Turkey. The document states that more than 48,000 political prisoners tried by military courts since the declaration of martial law in December 1978 have been sentenced to imprisonment or to the death penalty after unfair trials. (The basic standards for a fair trial can be found in Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights to which Turkey is a signatory).

The continued violation of human rights in Turkey has been well documented by such groups as Amnesty International and it is obvious that thousands are suffering greatly in Turkish prisons as a result of unfair trials and torture. The struggle to achieve any positive action in this area is long and difficult. Concerned groups and individuals can be led into a sense of powerlessness as the regime responds blandly to criticism and flaunts itself as a prospective EEC member.

As individuals concerned with human rights in Turkey it is important to feel able to contribute positively to end the injustices so apparent in Turkey today. One way groups or individuals can contribute to this process is by adopting a political prisoner: The CDDRT has been collecting information on prisoners in Turkey of varying political backgrounds over the past few months and have been involved in encouraging small groups to 'adopt' one or more of these prisoners. The success of such a campaign depends on the willingness of individuals to maintain contact with their prisoner, sending cards, letters and books whenever possible. (Turkish prisoners are no longer allowed to receive parcels, clothes etc., but can receive books).

Prisoners already adopted by groups are receiving mail and have written back expressing their happiness over contact from abroad.

Adopting a prisoner is a powerful act on the personal and political level. Receiving a letter from outside is good for morale and strengthens a prisoner's knowledge that their struggle is not forgotten. By adopting a prisoner we are demonstrating to the Turkish regime that there is international solidarity against their persistent violation of human rights.

If you or your group are interested in adopting a political prisoner and want to know more about the campaign you can write to the CDDRT for further information. This will consist of guidelines on the nature of the contact with the prisoner and as much detail as possible on the person concerned and their case.

MILITARY COURT DELAYS DECISION

On Wednesday 11th February, the Supreme Military Court of Appeal in Ankara heard an appeal against the 16-year prison sentence passed on prisoner of conscience Aydan Bulutgil in 1981.

Despite the fact that Aydan Bulutgil was sentenced to a longer term of imprisonment than Turkish law proscribes for his 'offence' (membership of an illegal organisation) and the state prosecutor was prepared to acknowledge this, the military court has delayed its verdict until 28th October 1987.

In the meantime, Aydan Bulutgil, who is confined to crutches as a result of police 'questioning' remains in the notorious Mamak Military Prison.

The military court gave no reason for the delay in reaching a decision. However, this situation is widely thought to be a result of the desire in influential military circles to keep those they consider key political opponents from taking part in the growing democratic struggle for as long as possible.

On the same day as his appeal, Birmingham University Amnesty group handed in petitions calling for Aydan Bulutgil's release at the Turkish Embassy in London. In addition the Embassy had been receiving 5 letters per day making the same demand.

Many MPs and MEPs such as Bob Litherland MP, Carole Tongue MEP and Alf Lomas MEP made strong representations on Aydan's behalf.

In view of this flagrantly unjust decision, the "Free Aydan Bulutgil Campaign" calls for renewed efforts to gain his release. The collecting of signatures on the petitions should continue. People should protest at the military court's decision by writing to: The Ambassador, The Turkish Embassy, 43 Belgrave Square, London SW1.

A document giving details of Aydan Bulutgil's case is available from CDDRT addresses.

FREE AYDAN BULUTGİL CAMPAIGN



WOMEN BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY

Despite various legal rights, women in Turkey are second-class citizens. They confront inequalities and oppression in their daily lives — at work, at home and at school. Working women bear a double oppression both as workers and as women.

The struggle for various rights for women has a long history — for a country with an Islamic history — in Turkey. The first women's organisation was formed in the last years of the Ottoman Empire in 1916. (The Islamic Association for the Promotion of Women's Work) with the limited aim of drawing women into work outside the home. The Constitution and Civil Codes of the new Republic of Turkey (1924 and 1926) recognised rights for women in advance of the previous Islamic Shariat laws but it was only in 1934 that women gained suffrage.

Until the 1970s the women's movement in Turkey took the form of mainly middle class 'tea and charity' organisations. It was only in 1975 under the impact of industrialisation, economic crisis and violent class conflict that a truly mass working women's organisation was created — the IKD (Progressive Women's Association). The 1970s was the decade when Turkish working women became involved in political life fully, joining in strikes, revolutionary movements and fighting shoulder to shoulder with men against onslaughts by the state and fascist terrorists. Women also advanced their own demands for full legal right, and economic equality. The IKD frightened the authorities so much that it was banned before the 1980 coup in 1979. Even so, in its last year, it was actually lagging behind the demands of the period for an even more advanced form of women's organisation.

The period following the 1980 coup was a black one for women. They lost many of the gains won in the 1970s and more women were tortured and thrown into prison as political prisoners than at any other time in Turkish history.

However even in the prisons women spear-headed resistance actions by political prisoners.



WOMEN FIGHT F

TODAY

In Turkey today women's legal status let alone position in society remains lower than that of men.

The Civil Code of Turkey is a good example of in how backward a context women's rights are recognised. Take, for instance, Article 159. It reads:

"Work of women other than homework depends on her husband's permit ... a wife may be engaged in work or a handicraft with her husband's explicitly or implicitly expressed permission."

Another example is Article 155, which defines the role given to the husband. It reads:

"It is the husband who represents the unity of the act of marriage," whereas the role of the wife according to same Article, is limited to the permanent needs of the house."

Woman's right to raise her voice as an independent citizen is obstructed. Woman who does not have the right to decide independently on where to work; or women whose domain of independent action does not go beyond her house ... How can she independently use her rights to vote and be elected and to what extent?

One of the most degrading laws for women is in the Turkish Penal Code. According to Article 440 of the TPC, a woman who has committed adultery is to be punished with from 6 months to 3 years imprisonment. Whereas the man who has committed the same crime, might be punished only under certain circumstances. These "circumstances" are described in Article 441 as, "... a man who beholds an unmarried woman ... inside the house where he resides with his wife, or at a place which is publicly recognisable ..."

This is simply to declare that all women who commit adultery immediately go to jail, while man's circumstances are to be "considered". If there are not any "bad" circumstances men aren't to be found guilty.

As it is very easy to see, the right of equal opportunities at work, in education and at home, is socially and legally *not* recognised for women. Legal equality is yet to be established. Rights which are already recognised by laws are either insufficient or just hollow statements.

The regime in Turkey however, recognises that women are not prepared to accept their lot, that their rage against the social and economic conditions imposed on them is bound to break-out. To divert this, the regime and its big monopoly backers have adopted two approaches. One is to try and prevent the mobilisation of women in the democratic struggle, to split women's issues off from the democratic struggle or to subordinate them to organisations under the leadership of people like Semra Özal (wife of the Prime Minister) whose activities were explained by

Zuhal Meric, a founding member of the IKD as follows:

"Recently we have also got something called a "female council of ministers". As is known, the legitimacy of the government in Turkey is nil ... And now, as if the members of this government — who were promoted to these posts after the elections of November 1983, which were a blend of tyranny and jugglery — are not enough, their wives are available in the forefront of the market. And this is called the "female council of ministers"(!)

The aim of this arrogant initiative is to get the eyes of working women focused on the active wives of our "respected" ministers. But we should also have a look at the "activities" of this female council of ministers

For example: "the female council of ministers met under the leadership of Mrs Semra Özal, at Gölbaşı. During the meeting participants discussed issues of fashion, food recipes, activities of the association and slimming diets. However, the participants ate 10 different cakes, 75 portions of stuffing (dolma). 18 lbs of chicken, 24 lbs of pastry, 180 pieces of stuffed meat-balls, and 10 pots of yoghurt." (*Tercüman*, 1st May 1986)

With such a meeting, the female council of ministers showed what efficient and productive activities they have for the working women of Turkey.

It is also important to mention the "Trust for the Promotion of Turkish Women" which was recently founded under the leadership of course, of Mrs Özal. The interesting list of the leaders of this trust reads as follows:

Semra Özal, from Motherland Party (ANAP)
Aynur Yurtçu (wife of the province leader of ANAP in İzmir) from İztaş Holding
Füsün Topbaş (a relative of a provincial leader of ANAP) from Bahariye Textiles Co.,
Lale Tara, from Enka Holding,
Emine Cerrahoğlu, from Cerrahoğlu Group,
Türkan Sabancı, from Sabancı Holding,
Meral Kubalı, from Yaşar Holding,
Necla Kavala, from Kaval Group,
Necdet Tahiroğlu, from Tahiroğlu Group,
Güzide Kılıç, from Rothmans.

This Trust is made up of the monopoly-holding bourgeoisie who are women only in sex. It is almost the women's section of ANAP. It can promote only the interests of the Turkish monopolies.

DANGER

The other recent dangerous trend is to try and embroil women in Islamic fundamentalism. This politico-religious movement with its fascist overtones may well become the last resort of the regime in the face of the growing democratic forces. Most working women in Turkey are increasingly aware that Islamic movements would

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Women bear the brunt of mass unemployment. In western towns such as İzmir where there has been massive immigration from the depressed rural areas this is particularly true.

These women are waiting at an unofficial street-corner 'labour market' for prospective employers to pick them out. Women cannot afford to go to the official job centres where the authorities charge the unemployed person 5,000 TL (£5) for every job interview arranged.



Kurdish women face national as well as oppression based on class and sex.

NO SURRENDER TO RELIGIOUS FANATICS

The Federation of Women's Organisations which unites 12 normally pro-establishment women's organisations met on the 7th February and declared their total opposition to attempts by Islamic reactionaries to undermine the rights won by women. In a joint statement the organisations declared: "We will never give up the rights that have been given to women." The President of the Federation declared: "Women must not give in to the religious fanaticism going around."



Price: 95p Price: 30p
 Both available from CDDRT, 129 Newington Green Rd., London N1 4RD.

HOUSING CRISIS

The President of Türk-İş (Turkish Trade Union Confederation), Şevket Yılmaz took press reporters on a tour of Ankara and Istanbul to highlight the lack of accommodation for workers on average wages. They found that in a 'lower middle class' area of Ankara, for a normal-sized flat landlords were charging 250,000 TL (£250) per month plus a deposit of 500,000 TL and six months rent in advance! They also spoke to workers living in gecekondu (shanty towns) and found they had to pay 25,000-30,000 TL (£25-£30) per month rent for their shanty. Şevket Yılmaz commented: "Those who say 'these are the golden years' should come here. 28,000 TL (the proposed minimum wage) is not enough even for rent".

In large towns the price of rented accommodation has risen by 100% in one year. In addition, if you are not a Turkish citizen, there is an extra charge of 12,000 TL.

Landlords in Turkey now ask tenants for identity cards of all family members, marriage and birth certificates plus references from two guarantors and the tenant's last landlord.

MINE DISASTER



The latest in a series of disasters at coal mines in Turkey occurred in February. At the İncirharmanı colliery in Zonguldak — the main coal mining area of Turkey 9 miners died and 576 were injured in a cave-in.

As with previous disasters this was caused by the gross exploitation to which miners are subjected by the state coal board.

The funerals of the victims turned into a major demonstration of grief and anger by the mining community.

Türk-İş Educational Secretary M. Başoğlu speaking at the mine castigated the Özal regime for their total indifference to the tragedy. Mineworkers said the disaster was caused by appalling working conditions; not enough safety and low bonuses which force the miners to work long continuous shifts to earn enough just to feed their families. Lack of proper safety provisions meant it took many hours to organise rescue teams to try and get the trapped miners out.

The grim life of Turkish miners was spelt out at the mass funerals by a father who has now lost two of his three sons in pit disasters and a wife who was watching her second husband to be killed in a mine accident buried. She said: "What a bad destiny I have. My previous husband died in the mine 10 years ago... They knowingly go to their death for bread money."

DISK COMMEMORATION

On February 13 a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the founding of DİSK (Revolutionary Confederation of Trade Unions) — now suppressed, was held in Istanbul. The last president of DİSK Abdullah Baştürk and representatives of the European TUC and the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) took part. The foreign trade unionists also attended a two-day seminar on trade union rights on the 14-15 February called by the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP). Among those attending were Norman Willis, General Secretary of the British TUC and Ron Todd, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union.

The seminar, which some had feared was a prelude to establishing a break-away trade union confederation from Türk-İş instead turned into a powerful rallying forum for unity. Şevket Yılmaz and all the Executive Committee members and presidents of the Türk-İş trade unions attended. They expressed their solidarity with the DISK leaders appealing against sentences by the military courts. The Türk-İş delegation which represented the main political trends in the confederation expressed their determination to protect and expand trade union unity within the framework of Türk-İş.

UNION PUBLISHES SURVEY

Recently the *Petrol-İş* trade union affiliated to Türk-İş conducted a survey among its members the results of which were published in a brochure entitled: "Figures from the living conditions of our members".

Based on replies from 22,410 *Petrol-İş* members, approximately one third of the union's total membership, the brochure calculates that, after rent has been deducted, a family of four has only enough money left to buy half a loaf of bread and 70gm. of white cheese for each person. And that is based on the assumption that nothing is spent on any other needs!

On the basis of the same survey, the brochure concludes that the average net monthly wage of the *Petrol-İş* workers who participated is 44,208 TL while average monthly rent they pay is 25,621 TL. Thus after rent is deducted, the worker has 18,587 TL to spend on all his other needs.

The survey also showed that on average each worker is responsible for the livelihood of four-five other people and that all of their food, clothing, transportation, heating, light, education and other expenses have to be met out of that 18,877 TL.

Other results of the survey were:

— While every worker has four-five dependants, each family has at least two unemployed.

— More than half of the union's members had been unemployed for a three-year period before starting their present job.

— Of the union members, 42% own their own homes, but 43% of those homes are shanties (gecekondu).

— The workers who do not own their own homes spend 61% of their wages on rent.

— The real wages of the union members fell 55% from 1977 to 1985.

It must be pointed out that the situation of the *Petrol-İş* worker is an average one when compared with the working class as a whole. There are many workers who are in much worse condition.

(Reprint from Turkey Today)

NETAŞ STRIKE VICTORY

The strike by workers at the Netaş telecommunications equipment factory in Istanbul ended in victory on 19th February — the 94th day of the strike.

The employers — the Canadian multi-national Northern Telecom agreed to a pay rise of 40.5% back-dated to August 1986 and 31% for 1988. In addition workers will receive their wages for the time spent on strike, special payments and no victimisation of strike leaders. The only major demand not achieved was increased representation on the works disciplinary council.

Both the leadership of their union Otomobil-İş and the strike committee consider the settlement a resounding victory. In fact, not only was the Netaş strike the longest and largest since the 1980 coup but also the most successful.

TURNAROUND

The strike victory followed a dramatic turnaround by the Turkish regime. In the weeks before the settlement it looked as though the regime was settling in to starve the workers back to work. The government and PTT (Turkish Post and Telephone) was preparing to buy between 15 and 110 billion TL worth of equipment abroad to circumvent the strike. Yet within about two weeks the regime intervened to order the employers to settle.

The reason for this about-face is no mystery. As we pointed-out in the last *Turkey Newsletter*, the Netaş Strike had become a rallying point for all democratic forces in Turkey. Workers, villagers and artists were all mobilising to aid the strike. The regime's eternal fear of 'an explosion' grew.



Norman Willis and colleagues visit the picket lines.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY - A KEY ROLE

According to the Netaş workers themselves, a key factor in causing the regime to retreat was the high level of international moral and material support given to the workers. By far the largest sums of money to feed the strikers came from abroad. In addition, for the regime the final straw was the visit to the picket lines of European trade unionists including Norman Willis of the British TUC, Ron Todd of the T&GWU plus West German, Spanish and Finnish trade union leaders. The last thing the regime wanted was international attention focussed on this strike.

The largest single contribution to the strike came from the Netaş Strike Support Committee in London. Well over £6,000 has been sent and money is still coming in. Among the contributors were Turkish migrant workers and British trade unions and branches including £280 from Brent Branch of NALGO (National Association of Local Government Officers) alone. Trade unions such as IDATU (Irish Distributive & Administrative Trade Union) in Ireland also contributed via the London Strike Fund.

The full accounts of the London Strike Fund plus a list of sponsors and those who sent messages of support is to be published shortly.

THE FIGHT G E S N

In Turkey, attention has now focussed on the strike by workers at the Derby rubber factory not far from Netaş. Over 1,000 workers are on strike at this plant and they have been receiving support from the Netaş workers. Despite laws forbidding workers in one union from supporting workers in another, it is understood that ways are being explored of using the remaining Netaş funds to support the Derby workers.



THE NETAŞ STRIKE COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS ITS HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO SUPPORTED THE NETAŞ WORKERS, THE SUCCESS OF THE NETAŞ STRIKE DEMONSTRATES THE POWER OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY.

ACTION AGAINST MESS ENDS - FOR THE TIME BEING

The confrontation between MESS (the metal industry employers) and 30,000 metal workers has ended. The workers' union Otomobil-İş was forced to capitulate to the employers' demands following the decision of the much bigger right-wing led Türk-Metal union (representing 60,000 workers) to settle with MESS.

Otomobil-İş is an independent union while Türk-Metal is affiliated to Türk-İş. This set-back has lead many Otomobil-İş workers to call for a merger with Türk-Metal or at least affiliation to Türk-İş so that they can link-up with the many progressive workers inside Türk-Metal to change the leadership and create a united front against the MESS employers.

PIRELLI STRIKE ENDS

The strike by workers at the Pirelli tyre factory in Turkey has ended with a 45% wage increase for 12,000 workers.



The regime's answer to unemployment — the soup kitchen.

MIRACLE?

The economic miracle supposedly master-minded by Prime Minister Turgut Özal is wearing thin. Even the *Financial Times* has been forced to admit: "... The Turkish economy, one of the IMF's favourite success stories is riddled with indicators which give rise to concern ..." Özal has pursued a policy of bank-reorganisation, opening the doors to foreign investment, creating an export-orientated economy and selling off state enterprises. The basis of the regimes plans for economic development remains as before the ruthless exploitation of Turkey's workers.

The profits of Turkey's monopolies such as the huge Koç and Sabancı holdings continue to rise while the workers' standard of living falls. However, the country's foreign debt remains around \$25 billion and in addition short-term debts are building up as a result of separate government ministries borrowing to cover short-falls or build-up infrastructure to attract foreign investment. Efforts to encourage exports have lead to massive fraud and fly-by-night businessmen collecting grants and tax relief for fictitious exports then running off to Switzerland with the proceeds. The spirit of the age is caught by Turkish newspaper headlines such as "he sold the bank like an

orange". Officially there are now 4 million unemployed with 1 million more joining the labour market each year.

"Our country is full of cheap labour and mineral wealth and therefore can become the centre of a European market" — Prime Minister Özal in *Hürriyet*, 15th January.



In İzmir unemployment is rising fast swelled by people migrating from the impoverished countryside. As a result of the population of İzmir and other western towns is rising by 12% a year. These young people in Sinav have blocked the street queueing for 33 job vacancies.

According to official figures unemployment is close to 17% and has risen steadily since 1978. Price increases have been phenomenal with wholesale prices rising 400% since 1981. In evaluating these figures it has to be kept in mind that the official statistics invariably underestimate the real situation.

THE PRICE

The human cost of the Özal regime's 'economic miracle' was demonstrated in statistics published in the magazine *Yankı*. This publication noted that Turkey now has more industrial accidents per year than any other country. As a result, 1,600 workers die each year in work-related accidents. The causes of these deaths are broken-down as follows:

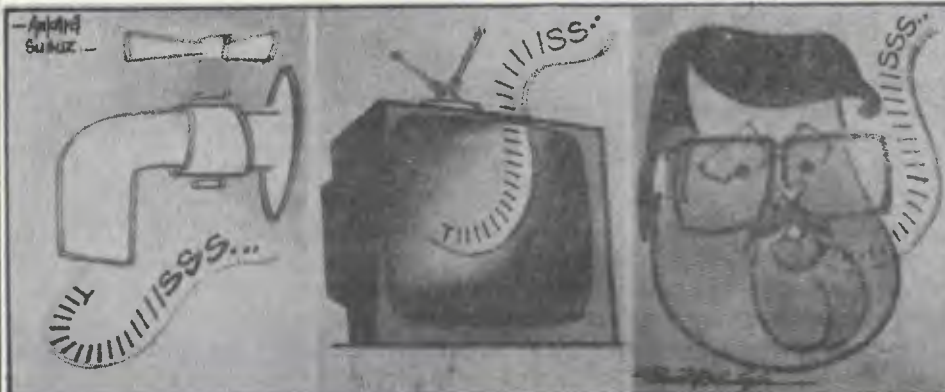
Accidents involving vehicles	38%
Fire and explosions	30%
Collapse of industrial buildings/structures	12%
Hit by falling objects	5%
Falling down	5%
Poisoning	4%
Electrocution	3%
Squeezed or crushed in machinery	3%
Others	1%

These figures do not include the 5-10 accidents per week involving the 9 million agricultural workers who travel to work on tractors and trailers. As agricultural workers are not covered by any insurance and work-safety legislation, accidents involving them are not classed as workplace accidents.

A typical work accident reported in the press was the case of textile worker and mother of three Sunduz Kaya who was scalped when her hair was caught in unguarded machinery. In such cases, there is little if any compensation payment.



Break-downs in the water and electricity supplies in Özal's 'boom economy' are commented on this cartoon from Ter-cüman.



BRITAIN:

The CDDRT is holding a series of introductory discussion meetings on the situation in Turkey. The first in the programme will be:

March 3rd, 7pm: **WOMEN'S STRUGGLE IN TURKEY.** Speaker: Cllr. Ayşe Hasan.
RED ROSE CENTRE, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7.

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

14th March, Tuesday 7pm

**Stoke Newington Town Hall,
Stoke Newington Church St.,
London N16.**

Speakers, cultural groups and stalls.
Organised by Union of Turkish Women in Britain

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.

The Congress will also be an important forum for rallying support for the democratic struggle in Turkey. To this end, the CDDRT intends that the Congress will be as informative as possible.

Visitors' tickets are available at £1 each from CDDRT.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CDDRT

1. The name of the organisation shall be the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey (the CDDRT).

2. The aims of the CDDRT are as follows:
End all vestiges of military rule, martial law, torture and executions.

Release of political prisoners.
Freedom for all democratic organisations.
End national oppression of the Kurds and national minorities.

Stop expansionism; end the occupation of Cyprus
Withdraw Turkey from NATO and close all NATO bases.

No military, political or economic support for the anti-democratic regime.

Totally oppose the regime's harassment of overseas opponents.

Organise solidarity on the basis of the foregoing utilising every means at our disposal.

3. Organisations and individuals accepting the aims of the CDDRT can apply to affiliate. Such applications are subject to the approval of the General Council. Affiliation fees shall be set by the General Council and become payable from 1 January each year.

4. Congress is the highest body of the CDDRT and shall meet every two years. It shall consist of delegates from Branches and affiliated organisations and individual affiliates. Congress shall elect the General Council and consider reports and the motions. The conduct of business shall be on the basis of Standing Orders approved by Congress. Pre-Congress arrangements are the responsibility of the retiring General Council. Each Congress shall decide the size of the General Council.

5. The General Council is the continuing body of Congress and shall meet quarterly. It shall appoint the Executive Committee which is responsible to it. The General Council shall have the right to co-option.

6. The Executive Committee shall consist of the General Secretary and such other members as the General Council may decide. The Executive Committee shall meet at least fortnightly and be responsible for the day to day work of the CDDRT.

7. Local Branches of the CDDRT are formed with the approval of the General Council.

8. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority at a Congress.

9. The General Council may call, or upon request by two-thirds of affiliated national organisations shall call, a Special Congress.

CDDRT ADDRESSES

BRITAIN 129 Newington Green Rd.
London N1 4RD

FRANCE 7 Rue Leclerc,
75014 Paris

IRELAND: 9 Cavendish Row,
Dublin 1

USA: Box 90, 924 W
Belmont Ave., Chicago,
ILL 60657

WEST c/o Internationaler
GERMANY Jugendverein,
Germaniastr. 89

6000 Frankfurt am Main 60

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.

I/we* wish to affiliate to the CDDRT and enclose a cheque/PO for £

Name

Address

Date of Affiliation

*Delete as applicable. Includes subscription to **TURKEY NEWSLETTER**

Return to the appropriate CDDRT addresses.

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Return to the CDDRT, 129 Newington Green Road,
London N1. Tel: 01-226 2668.

EDUCATION

TEACHERS' CONDITIONS

Some of the problems faced by teachers were listed by the *Milliyet* newspaper as follows:

- Lodgings or hostels set aside for teachers accommodate only 12% of them, while 65% live in rented flats or houses.
- More than half of all teachers have a second job in order to help make ends meet.
- 70.6% were unable to take a holiday in the past five years.
- Teachers' salaries range from 55,000 to 130,000 TL (approximately £55-£130) per month.
- Half or one-third of the salary goes for rent.
- Landlords are extremely reluctant to rent to teachers out of fear that they will not be able to pay the rent.
- Less than 25% of teachers read a newspaper regularly.
- Only 5% read at least one book a month.
- Many teachers in big cities walk long distances to and from work in order to save on transportation expenses.

One of the biggest problems facing teachers is the shortage of places in teachers' hostels. Asked about the need for a second hostel in Keles in Bursa, Minister of Finance and Customs Altemuçin gave the following reply:

"If the teachers in villages are married off to each other, there will be no need for a second hostel ...

"Let us marry the teachers to each other. In this way we will have solved the problem of the second hostel. In the meantime I will talk to Sumerbank about getting interest-free mortgages

for them. Really, let us get the teachers married." (*Hürriyet*, 1 December 1986)

This attitude is not only an insult to the teachers, it is an open admission that the government cannot solve their housing problem.

OPPRESSION IN EDUCATION

To keep university professors on the 'correct ideological path', YÖK, the Higher Education Council which runs the universities in Turkey is to set them school homework! This will consist of making the professors write essays on the following themes — irrespective of their specialisation: The ideas of Atatürk (the dictator treated as the 'founder of modern Turkey'), the reforms of Atatürk and the foreign policy of Atatürk.

While the YÖK pursues its obscurantist practices at the universities, hundreds of thousands of students are still deprived of the right to higher education.

This year, 496,490 young recipients of secondary school diplomas sat the university entrance examinations. Of them, only 140,153 were authorised to register.

At the present time, 600,000 young people pursue higher education in Turkey in several branches of 27 universities. The number of professors and other teachers of higher education is only 25,000. Thus the number of students to teacher has risen to 24, while that number was 21 the previous year.

On the other hand, in the only private university *Bilkent*, founded by YÖK president Dođramacı and available only to the youth of privileged families who

can pay a high registration fee one teacher takes care of only five students.

BRUTALITY LEADS TO DEATH

The death of Libyan student Leyla Ebubidyan who died when the knotted sheets by which she was attempting to escape from a school dormitory gave-way has highlighted brutal conditions in the Levent Kız Meslek Lisesi — a prestigious state high school for girls in Turkey.

Investigations at the school showed that the conditions found there are not unusual in the state sector — especially in education for girls. It was found that students were subjected to beatings by staff, that bribery and a system of informers were in use throughout the school and that the authorities even subjected the students to compulsory virginity tests by medical personnel.



The above photo shows the official university slogan at the entrance to Konya's Selçuk University. You would be mistaken if you thought it consisted of an exhortation to study or gain knowledge. Instead it is a quote from 'father' of modern Turkey Atatürk: "It should not be forgotten that the biggest enemy of the Turkish nation is communism. Liquidate it wherever it is seen!"

**TURKEY
NEWSLETTER**



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London N1, England