

TURKEY NEWSLETTER



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of Democratic Rights in Turkey

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GENERAL STRIKE CALL GROWS



TURKEY & BRITAIN

THATCHER VISIT TO TURKEY-HUMAN RIGHTS NOT ON THE AGENDA

"Turkey is very important as far as NATO is concerned..."

... "I have a great admiration for Prime Minister Ozal and the work he is doing".

Such were some of the sentiments with which British Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher began her visit to Turkey between 7th-9th April.

The official visit was the first by a British Prime Minister since the war and marked an historically important new stage in relations between Britain and Turkey.

Not only has Thatcher visited Turkey but major Turkish cultural and trade exhibitions are underway in Britain and "President" Evren, leader of the 12th September 1980 coup, responsible for the mass tortures and deaths following that terrible event is to pay a state visit to Britain in the summer.

For the British government, the main aim of the visit was to develop trade further. In recent years, Britain, which was once Turkey's major trading partner has been fighting to regain its dominance. This is shown by the dramatic increase in the last three years. Bilateral trade has gone up by 160% and is so far worth 700 billion.

For the British government the main possibilities for expanding trade with Turkey lie in getting the contract to build a third bridge across the Bosphorus and, in the long run more important, arms sales.

For the Turkish regime, the visit provided an opportunity to press Britain to support its application to join the EEC and to enhance the regime's credibility and "respectability" both at home and abroad.

"A MEETING OF MINDS"

Mrs Thatcher once said that she did not know whether Mr Ozal was a Thatcherite or she was an Ozalite. This close sympathy is reflected in similar economic philosophies. Though Ozal, trying to apply monetarism within the framework of a medium developed country has been somewhat less successful than Mrs Thatcher. Turkey has inflation running at 70%, massive foreign debts, a budget deficit of 4.4% of the GNP and one of the biggest strike waves in the country's history.

However there are striking similarities including Turkey's massive privatisation

programme that can only be compared to Britain. This was underlined last year when the chief architect of Ozal's privatisation plan, Gengiz Israfil, a former high flyer with the US bank Morgan Genfeldt and the IMF gave an interview to *Milliyet*. In the course of it he said: "We are the first third world country to apply the Thatcher philosophy. This is our good fortune"... "We are being backed by the USA and the World Bank... they are helping us because we will be the first model of thorough privatisation after Britain."

EEC AND NATO

The "meeting of minds" however, does not mean that Thatcher and Ozal's views are absolutely identical.

Ozal hoped Thatcher would give unqualified support to Turkey's application to join the EEC as has France. Mrs Thatcher did reiterate the British government's support for the unfreezing of EEC aid to Turkey worth \$575 million which had been held up as a protest against the 1980 coup. But she also made clear that Britain thought it was still too early for Turkey to join the EEC. Not on the grounds that the regime still has a lousy human rights record but because the Turkish economy is still too unstable and the free movement of Turkish workers to the rest of Europe could cause problems.

Also during her stay, Mrs Thatcher beat a cold war drum and called on Turkey to accept updated nuclear weapons despite the US-Soviet INF agreement. This Turkey is unwilling to do. The regime likes to emphasise its key role as NATO's southeast bulwark — a view clearly shared by Mrs Thatcher, and one used by successive Turkish regimes and their apologists to justify every and any violation of human rights. But at the same time, the regime emphasised that it is not interested in complicating its good relations with the USSR without good compensation. The Turkish regime responded to Thatcher's call by reiterating its support for INF and saying that what Turkey wants is more conventional weapons. Which we believe could be used by Turkey in some military adventure in Iraq.

WAR INDUSTRY

The most successful result of the trip from both governments' point of view will undoubtedly be in the field of lucrative arms deals.

The "little matters" of violations of human rights in Turkey and the war danger posed by the regime will not deter British arms salesmen.



Ozal, Thatcher and a mutual friend

During her visit, Mrs Thatcher discussed co-production of Rapier anti-aircraft missiles worth 200 million and the purchase of 40 Tornado fighter bombers.

Mrs Thatcher told the Anatolian News Agency that Britain was ready to help update Turkey's massive (and coup-prone!) standing army of more than half a million.

Britain is now one of Turkey's biggest suppliers of military equipment.

HUMAN RIGHTS

For all friends of democracy in Turkey, the most disappointing though not surprising feature of the visit was Mrs Thatcher's total failure to press the regime on continued human rights violations. As the *Guardian* pointed out: "Turkey's poor human rights image was totally bypassed during Mrs Thatcher's first full day in Ankara"...

"During two hours of talks with her Turkish counterpart, Mr Turgut Ozal, human rights were not discussed"...

Amnesty International asked her to raise the situation of Turkish prisoners alleging ill-treatment and referring to the 200 prisoners under sentence of death"...

This was all in marked contrast to Mrs Thatcher's last trip to Moscow when she adopted a very "robust" position on human rights in the USSR.

On the Cyprus issue too, Mrs Thatcher carefully avoided expressing any view that would antagonise Ozal or the puppet government in North Cyprus.

OUR POSITION

We in the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey reiterate our well-known position; we are not opposed to contacts with Turkey at various levels. But what we are opposed to is not tying relations between other governments and the Turkish regime to big improvements in the human rights situation. It is a well-known fact that the Turkish regime will not make one concession in this field unless it faces massive pressure at home or foreign states and bodies such as the EEC demand them as the price for better relations.

PALESTINE DEMONSTRATIONS



On February 14th members of the Association of Families of Prisoners and Detainees (TAYAD) and of the Association of Women in Democratic Struggle (DEMKAD) held a press conference followed by an 'illegal' march in Istanbul in support of the uprising by Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Ignoring calls to Disperse the protestors sat down in Sultanhamet Square and shouted slogans in support of the Palestinians and also Turkish political prisoners. Riot police then moved in and began beating and arresting the protestors (many of whom were women) under the horrified gaze of passing tourists. So "enthusiastic" were the police that they even beat-up some of their own plain clothes colleagues by mistake!

Ten women were among the arrested.

Since this protest there have been several more on the same subject in different parts of Turkey. Those organised by right-wing Islamic fundamentalists attempting to cash in on public sympathy for the Palestinian people have been sanctioned by the regime.

THATCHER VISIT CRITICISED

Suleyman Demirel, leader of the opposition conservative True Path Party (DYP), speaking at a mass rally on April 10th accused Mrs Thatcher of trying to interfere in domestic Turkish politics.

He said however that even the support Ozal has been receiving from Mrs Thatcher in exchange for the contract for the Third Bosphorus Bridge would not do the administration much good.

BRUTAL TREATMENT OF GECEKONU DWELLERS



Big clearances of Gecekondu (shanty towns) are continuing around Istanbul. Protests by Gecekondu dwellers who are usually thrown onto the streets with little warning are met with police truncheons.

STUDENT PROTESTS CONTINUE



Throughout February and March student protest actions against the oppressive YOK (Higher Education Commission), poor living conditions and the bans on student unions continued.

Most protests were in Universities and other educational establishments around Istanbul.

In one incident (March 7th), political police detained 11 of 21 students who were suspended for one year from the Marmara Printers' High School for joining a food boycott. This time the students were arrested for protesting against their suspensions!

2000 STAGE A "PIRATE" DEMO



Over 2000 students disrupted traffic in the Laleli and Cagaloglu districts of Istanbul to stage an illegal ("pirate") demonstration.

The students shouted anti-government slogans and clashed with riot police.

BANNED

The Turkish regime "celebrated" the month in which International Women's Day occurs by banning the recently formed Association of Women in Democratic Struggle (DEMKAD) on the grounds that by organising solidarity with political prisoners it was "engaging in activities inappropriate for such an organisation".

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS?

The Ministry of Justice in Ankara has brought a draft bill to parliament which provides for fines of 10 million Turkish Liras for any newspaper each time it "gives a false news report".

The delicate question of who decides what is false news is causing some discussion.

This latest attack on press freedom in Turkey will add to the regime's already formidable array of powers. It is well known that the regime is using the so-called "Harmful Law" — ostensibly aimed at obscene publications to cripple through fines anti-government papers. In addition the regime has abused the state monopoly of paper products to rise newsprint paper prices so high as to force many smaller dissident magazines, newspapers and publishers out of business.

TROUBLE AT A STATION



The continuing rage of workers and commuters at the general hardships of life under the present regime were reflected in an action at Gebze Haydarpasa main railway station in Istanbul.

During the evening rush hour on February 22nd, a worker died of a heart attack while running for a train which was leaving early. In response over 1,000 enraged passengers poured onto the railway tracks blocking all the lines for at least two hours.

DECA EXTENDED

After hard bargaining and strains in US-Turkish relations the regime has finally signed a "side-letter" which extends its 1980 US Defence and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA).

As a result President Evren will now visit the US in June.

The economic and (mainly) military aid package for Turkey will now be worth \$525.3 million for the 1988 fiscal year.

TURKEY AND SOUTH AFRICA

In the next issue of *Turkey Newsletter* we will carry a full report on the increasingly close links between the Ozal regime and the criminal apartheid regime in South Africa.

NEWS IN BRIEF

SOCIALIST PARTY FORMED, SOCIALIST PARTY IN COURT

A court case has been opened by the state prosecutor against the leaders of a newly formed Socialist Party in Turkey. They are accused of having other aims than those laid out in the party's constitution.

SCANDALS GALORE!



Legal political life in Turkey has been rocked by a series of scandals centering on leaked MIT (Turkish National Intelligence Service) documents.

The two most important scandals are one involving the shady business deals of Defence Minister Vuralhan. These involved among other things the allegation that he sold bullet proof vests to the security forces which were not bullet proof.

Vuralhan's important links with Saudi Arabia (to which he used to be Ambassador) will probably save him as the regime is doing deals with the Saudis which probably even involve Turkish troops being hired out to "defend" that country in return for oil etc.

The other big scandal is a really "juicy" one involving sex, racketeering and the army. This centres around a leaked MIT report which accuses former Army Chief of the General Staff Urug of arranging for Istanbul police to turn a blind eye to Mafia activities during the Junta period in return for the "favours" of leading Turkish singer Emel Sayin.

What adds even more importance to this particular scandal is the widespread feeling that its real target is not Urug but President Evren himself. The deliberate leaking of the report being arranged by supporters of Prime Minister Ozal to "warn" Evren not to try and block Ozal's proposed changes to the Constitution.

Whatever the case, this burst of scandals in which Turkey's "elite" are slinging mud at one another and even at the hitherto "sacred" institution- the Turkish Army, shows the crisis afflicting

the present anti-democratic regime and its moral and political bankruptcy for all to see

ECEVIT STEPS DOWN

Ex Prime Minister Ecevit who leads the dwindling Democratic Left Party (DSP) resigned as Chair on March 7th.

This is being taken to mark the end of the political career of the man who ordered Turkish troops into Cyprus in 1974, who shares part of the responsibility for the build-up to the 1980 coup and who's DSP split the social democratic vote in the November 1987 Election.

NOW HE WILL, NOW HE WON'T

Inonu, leader of the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) announced his resignation on February 22nd. But on March 1st he announced that he had taken his resignation back.

The surprise move is thought to be the result of faction fights within the SHP. In particular, Inonu was angered by a group of MPs who bravely demonstrated their solidarity with Kurdish political prisoners on hunger strike at Diyarbakir prison. Inonu is not famous for strong opposition to the regime.

Following the threat of mass resignation by the SHP's entire Executive, Inonu "graciously" withdrew his resignation.

FILM CENSORSHIP PROTEST



On April 14th Film makers staged a protest in Istanbul at the verual wrecking of the Istanbul Film Festival by the regime's Central Committee of Censorship. This follows decisions by the committee to ban the Turkish film "Water Also Burns" because it is about a man trying to make a film on the life of Turkey's greatest poet Nazim Hikmet. "Unfortunately" Hikmet was also a communist who after years in goal died in exile.

The censors also banned a Soviet Georgian film called "Supplication" for "humiliating the principals of Islam" and insisted on cuts in four other foreign films including Beneix's film "Betty Blue". The director said that if they had made all the cuts insisted upon the film

would "only last fifteen minutes".

GUN ATTACKS AND FOOTBALL

Football is a rather serious business in Turkey and like everything else it has become politicised. This was shown on March 3rd when newspapers carried pictures of the bullet riddled car of a candidate for the chairmanship of one of Istanbul's premier football clubs, Fenerbahce.

Fenerbahce's AGM usually reflects the political factions in Istanbul politics. The chairmanship of the club gives the holder considerable influence in the city's political and business life.

This year Kadikoy Council leader Osman Hizlan (leading member of the ruling ANAP Party) wanted to be chairman. When a rival candidate, Fazil Tokat ignored a "suggestion" that he should withdraw, henchmen of the big bosses of the ANAP party sprayed his car with automatic gunfire as a clearer suggestion to Tokat.

GUNS AGAINST WOMEN



To "celebrate" International Women's Day on March 8th, the governor of Istanbul banned DEMKAD (Association of Women in Democratic Struggle).

In protest DEMKAD members tied themselves to the railings of the governor's office with black ribbons. Machine gun toting security police arrived to break-up the demonstration and arrests were made.

BOOK BANNING

In February and March there was a further rash of book bannings in Turkey. The latest batch included Henry Miller's *Tropic of Capricorn*.

GREATEST JAIL BREAK IN MODERN TURKEY



"YOUR WALLS CANNOT HOLD US"

In the most spectacular jail break since the 1980 coup, 29 political prisoners escaped from the maximum security Metris Military Prison outside Istanbul.

Eleven of those who escaped were under sentence of death. This includes nine members of TIKKO — the military wing of the Communist Party of Turkey -Marxist Leninist who had been sentenced to death by a military court only two days before the escape.

The escapees belonged to a variety of banned left-wing organisations- TIKKO, Dev Yol (Revolutionary Path), TDKP (Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party), Partizan and Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left). Apart from the eleven under death sentences, one was a detainee. Eight had been sentenced to life and the rest were serving sentences of more than thirteen years each.

In a carefully planned operation, the prisoners inside and supporters working on the outside dug a tunnel 60 meters long from their cell block to a point outside the perimeter fences near a road. Apparently they utilised an existing drainage system. In this way they were able to dispose of the earth from their operation undetected.

Meanwhile supporters prepared a "safe house" near the prison containing false identity papers and getaway cars.

On the night of Thursday, March 24th, between 10pm and 11pm, the prisoners made their escape.

Their absence was not detected until the lunch-time roll call Friday noon.

The prisoners left behind slogans painted on the walls of the prison including the words "your walls cannot hold us".

At the time of going to print only one prisoner has been recaptured. The rest are believed to have escaped to new guerrilla bases in mountainous areas of Turkey.

Despite massive search operations in and around Istanbul, the authorities failed to track down the escapees.

The humiliation caused to the regime and particularly the military is serious. As a result the authorities have reacted by sending into Metris a team of State Prosecutors to carry out an investigation. The Military Governor of Metris and some officers and guards have themselves been thrown into prison for "negligence". Not content with this, prisoners and guards have all been interrogated by the investigators.

One other thing this daring escape shows is that despite tortures and pressure the morale of political prisoners is higher than ever.



After the escape, the army trains their guns on prisoners' families.

A BIG VICTORY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS

After a year of massive hunger strikes and street protests, the regime has announced a series of concessions to political prisoners in mid-February.

Prisoners uniforms are to be abolished for political prisoners in civilian goals. A few days later (February 27th) the regime announced that steps will be taken "in the next few months" to transfer all political prisoners to civilian goals. This will be a big improvement as

conditions are not as harsh in civilian goals as in the military prisons.

"INHUMAN PRACTICES IN MAMAK PRISON"

During a parliamentary debate on the Bill to transfer political prisoners to civilian jails on March 9th, an MP of the ruling Motherland Party (ANAP), Namik Zeybek stated that "inhuman practices are being perpetuated in Mamak Military Prison" and called on all those who want to see an end to anti-democratic

practices to take this into consideration.

During the debate it was said that there are 50,000 detainees and convicts.

HUNGER STRIKE STILL CONTINUING

A major hunger strike by political prisoners involving over 130 inmates of Canakkale E Type Prison is underway. The prisoners are demanding better living conditions and implementation of reforms announced by the Justice Ministry.

TORTURE, TRIALS AND PRISONS

BUCA PRISON HUNGER STRIKES

In March police arrested 73 people including 53 students who were protesting in front of Buca prison, Izmir, in support of a hunger strike by political prisoners.

There have been two recent hunger strikes in Buca. The first was in February involving 26 prisoners in support of one by Seviye Kopru, a nurse who had been detained on the accusation of being a member of the Communist Party of Turkey and who had been raped by interrogators.

The second action in March was for better prison conditions including no prison uniforms. Students went on hunger strike in solidarity.

Following the arrests outside the prison. Other students sold their blood to hospitals in order to raise bail money for the students now awaiting trial.

After 15 days the prison authorities agreed to the prisoners' demands.

DEMONSTRATION



A demonstration by TAYAD outside the gates of the Istanbul governor's office was brutally broken-up by police.

The demonstrators were protesting in support of political prisoners. they strung a line of baby dolls linked with prison chains across the governor's gates.

Police arrived and arrested three women and one man before they could escape.

TAYAD MEMBER TORTURED

Camil Kocacan, a member of TAYAD (Association of Families of Detainees and Prisoners) has filed a statement accusing interrogators at the Security Police headquarters in Ankara of torturing her a few weeks ago.

Camil says she was arrested for taking part in a TAYAD protest, taken to the

headquarters, stripped, beaten and subjected to high pressure water.



Meanwhile, the trial has opened of the Executive Committee of TAYAD. They are accused of organising a "Freedom for Political Prisoners Week" contrary to the law on meetings.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The Turkish parliament has changed the law on capital punishment. Under the new provisions if a sentence of death is not endorsed by parliament within a year of it's passing the sentence is auto-

matically changed to life imprisonment.

One MP claimed in the debate that "the hardest punishment is waiting to be hanged"... "Many have lived in daily fear of the hangman's noose for 4-5 and even 8-9 years".

However the regime has not abolished the death penalty as such. So that, in "emergency" conditions the authorities will still be able to "legally" execute political dissidents.

"WHAT! THEY HAVE ALSO TORTURED YOU?"

That nobody is safe from the torturers in Turkey was shown at a trial before the Istanbul State Security Court in January.

Policeman Ali Karabacak while on night patrol last year was ambushed and had his gun stolen. Such is the situation in Turkey that when Karabacak managed to get back to the station and report the incident, the authorities first assumption was that he had given his weapon to a

A GREAT VICTORY FOR HUNGER STRIKERS!

On the 20th February 1988, the hunger strike by 2000 Kurdish political prisoners in Diyarbakir Military Prison ended in victory with the Turkish government accepting all the prisoners twelve demands.

Emin Yavuz, who had gone into a coma during the strike, died in hospital after its conclusion. His death was another to add to the long list of those who have died in this notorious prison.

The hunger strike had begun on 8th February, sparked off by a court verdict of 5th February when 20 members of the PKK (Workers Party of Kurdistan) were sentenced to death and 13 to life imprisonment. On hearing the sentences the prisoners chanted slogans and shouted "The day we pull these show courts down around your ears is near".

Two days after the hunger strike began families of the prisoners started a solidarity hunger strike in the Diyarbakir offices of the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP).

Two SHP MPs joined the hunger strike-Kars MP Mahmut Alinak and Mardin MP Adnan Ekmen. Despite pressure from their own party and hostile press coverage they stayed on hunger strike until the demands were met. The solidarity hunger strike attracted great sympathy and support in Diyarbakir. 400 students from Dicle University in Diyarbakir gave out red carnations to those on hunger strike.

Facing mounting solidarity from prisoners in other jails and protests,

including a demonstration by over a thousand people in Diyarbakir itself, the regime was forced to give in.

The prisoners demands were:

1. Prisoners to be able to speak freely with their relatives in Kurdish, in the presence of one warder (soldier).
2. An end to obligatory uniforms.
3. No restrictions on beards or long hair.
4. Visits to be increased from half an hour to one hour. Visiting hours extended to the whole day.
5. Those needing a special diet to be allowed to receive food from their families with a doctor's report.
6. Typewriters, saz (traditional stringed instrument), painting materials to be allowed for those wishing it.
7. Washing to be allowed out to be washed by families.
8. Prisoners to be allowed to speak on the phone to the outside.
9. Freedom to meet lawyers.
10. More variety in canteen food.
11. Money permitted to be carried by prisoners.
12. A negotiating committee to be elected by the prisoners.

Soon after the conclusion of the hunger strike the prison authorities began to transfer prisoners from Diyarbakir to prisons in the far west of Turkey; Aydin, Eskisehir and Bursa.

There are two reasons for this: To break the resistance of the Diyarbakir prisoners and to attempt to nullify the victory of the hunger strikers.

TORTURE, TRIALS AND PRISONS

"subversive organisation". A special interrogation team was sent for and some days later Karabacak signed a statement saying he had indeed handed over his gun voluntarily.

However when the case came to court the luckless Karabacak was unable to corroborate his own "confession".

When closely questioned by the judge as to why he had signed such a patently false confession, the policeman calmly stated that interrogators had tortured him with electric shocks. Unable to contain his surprise the judge exclaimed: "What! They have *also* tortured you?".

WICKED DECISION



Dev Sol militant Mesut Demirel had his hands blown-off while allegedly making a bomb on the eve of the 1980 coup. He is still on trial.

In February a French specialist Professor Jean Piellet manufactured a pair of hands to replace those Mesut lost. However, the Turkish authorities have denied Prof. Piellet access to Mesut and have refused permission for the hands to be fitted.

TRIALS

The Turkish General Staff announced in February that during an eight-year period between December 1979 and April 1987, Military Courts had tried 59,701 people for "ideological crimes".

Of these, 5,179 were still on trial in 1987. the number of detainees (awaiting trial) in military prisons was 1,205.

Of those on trial, 3,640 were categorised as "leftists" and 871 "separatists" (Kurdish).

OPEN LETTER

The Chair of the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD), Nevat Helvacı in an open letter to Prime Minister Ozal called for the restoration of citizenship for the more than 13,000 exiles who were stripped of citizenship following the 1980 coup.

In his letter Helvacı also appealed for the regime to grant political asylum according to internationally recognised standards for the nearly 1 million refugees who have fled to Turkey from Iran.

INDICTMENT

The indictment in the case of Kutlu and Sargin the two leaders of the United Communist Party of Turkey (TBKP) has now been completed. The State Prosecutor is calling for 36 years each imprisonment.

SHEPHERD MURDERED

It was reported at the end of March that Mehmet Ali Coskun, a shepherd in the Mardin district had been taken away by gendarmes. Two days later, his relatives were invited to formally identify his body before burial.

The authorities claim Mehmet Coskun had hung himself in a police cell. But relatives say he was tortured to death.

Coskun's father-in-law said: "When I went to the morgue, I saw his body. His neck had needle marks. His head was split open and his back was black with bruises".

TORTURE - A "HUMANE" SOLUTION

Dicler Medical Faculty Professor Kemal

Beleyer has come up with a solution to the problem of torture in Turkey. He wrote in a paper that interrogators should stop torturing suspects and instead *inject* detainees with truth drugs and chemicals "which make the subject sleepy" and interrogate them in this condition "as is done in the USA".

The Chairman of Turkey's Doctors' Association has condemned Beleyer's "humane" suggestion.

TEN YEAR OLD GIRL BEATEN



The father of 10 year old Pembe Hapyilmazer carries his daughter. She is unable to walk following her detention by Izmir police on suspicion of shop-lifting. While in police custody she was given falaka (bastinado)-beating on the soles of the feet until unable to walk.

Turkey has signed the UN Convention banning torture...



"Hang them by their arms. Haven't you heard? We have signed an agreement to stop that kind of torture".



“THE WORKING CLASS IS GREAT AND NOTHING IS GREATER”

On Friday March 10th nearly two million workers throughout Turkey staged midday protest actions. They were responding to a call from Turk-Is (Trade Union Confederation of Turkey) to stage a lunchtime food boycott, the first stage in a series of “warning” actions directed at the regime and employers.

On February 10th, the highest body of Turk-Is, the Council of Presidents met and in an unprecedented show of unanimity the Confederation decided to stage a campaign of escalating actions leading to a general strike (which is illegal under the regime’s anti-democratic labour laws).

In an ultimatum to the regime and employers, Turk-Is called for a new wage rise to compensate for recent massive price rises and inflation. they also called for a restoration of full trade union freedom.

MASSIVE SUPPORT

The “lunch boycott” was in fact a much more significant action than the name implies. Most workers held protest meetings, disrupted production and “extended” their lunch breaks into virtual illegal strikes several hours long.

All over the country workers raised the slogan “Workers hand-in-hand to a general strike”. The action was also joined by thousands of rank and file members of trade unions not affiliated to Turk-Is.

Lunch boycotts took place in Army factories at Erzurum and Ankara. These factories are under semi-military discipline and are not run by managers but by commandants.

The Ankara factory commandant “ordered” his 561 workers not to join the boycott. On the day 560 took part!

In Batman (in Kurdistan) 4,000 workers marched through the streets in an illegal march.

The mighty strength of the Turkish working class is drawing other sections of society behind it. In Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara students joined the food boycott as did patients in many hospitals and Turkish workers at the Bosch factory in Stuttgart, West Germany.

Speaking after the regime’s Labour Minister Aykut had said “If the workers prefer to act illegally, I’m not able to save them”, Turk-Is President Sevket Yilmaz stated: “All labour unions will be free. The Turkish press will be free. Whether or not you want it, it will happen”.

“The government is keeping its hostile attitude against workers although we have warned them often in the past. It must be known that we will not leave the country in the hands of a few capitalists. Everybody must be aware the fact that if Turkish workers stop working, life stops throughout the country”...

HYSTERICAL REACTION

TISK- the employers’ union responded to the workers’ action by calling on their members to inform the state authorities of any “illegal actions” by workers. They also accused the workers of embarking on a road leading to “chaos” and “anarchy”.

The regime has also opened one trial against the leadership and is threatening another.

On 23rd March the trial opened in Ankara of the Turk-Is leadership accused of “being involved in politics” by calling for a “yes” vote in last September’s referendum on restoring political rights to pre-1980 coup politicians. Under Turkish law it is forbidden for trade unions to make any “political” statements or actions.

In addition, the regime is threatening to prosecute Turk-Is

for calling for general strike even though they have never actually used those words.

Not content with these measures the regime has announced its intention to apply provisions in the labour code which forbid trade union officials and leaders elected prior to 1982 from holding office for more than two 3-year terms. In this way they hope to get rid of Sevket Yilmaz among others.

"PEOPLE GROWN REBELLIOUS"

Following the boycott mass rallies have been held throughout Turkey. In one at Sakaya in March Sevket Yilmaz told 30,000 workers that as a result of Prime Minister Ozal's economic policies "people are having to buy bones to make soup". "They tell us they (the regime) want to enter the EEC but they cannot even go to Kizilcahaman (an Ankara township) with their present mentality".

In a Turk-Is rally in Adana on April 3rd 40,000 workers and their families shouted "strike is our right we will take it by force" and "the working class is great nothing is greater".

In response to the regime's attitude unions representing 30,000 cement, health, timber and textile workers have issued notification of strike action.

Unions representing 500,000 workers are preparing to walk out of negotiations with employers.

Following the failure of the rigidly state controlled Turkish radio and television (TRT) to adequately report the actions of Turk-Is the confederation has barred them from all its events.

A leader of the opposition conservative True Path Party reflected the wide-spread fear in official circles in Turkey when he told parliament that to an unprecedented degree "the people have grown rebellious". This has also been reflected in the main Turkish daily papers who write that "an insurrectionist mood is growing among the workers".



Sevket Yilmaz denounces state-controlled TV.

In factories all over Turkey workers are adopting a variety of protest actions: boycotts, strikes, hunger strikes, stopping work to stage "clapping protests", refusing to work for more than the value of their wages, working to rule and many other types.

Today, the regime is so worried they are even ready to talk about lifting some of the most repressive sections of their labour laws. They are trying every tactic to divert the wrath of the workers.

However the economic reality of Turkey, a country whose present economic system cannot even meet the bare existence requirements of millions of people, deprives the regime of much ability to manoeuvre.

SOLIDARITY VITAL

In the coming months the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey will seek to raise maximum solidarity with the trade union struggle in Turkey.

The CDDRT position is clear, today we are witnessing a



Nearly two million workers boycott food in works canteens all on the same day.

truly important turning point in the battle for democracy in Turkey. It is the duty not just of the international trade union movement but of everyone who thinks of her/himself as a democrat to support this gigantic initiative of Turk-Is and the working people of Turkey.

If the trade unions in Turkey can break the regime's oppressive structure then it will be possible for everyone in Turkey to do so.

TURK-IS ACTION PROGRAMME

1. Hold regional meetings to draw up and explain the action plan to the regional trade union organisations.
2. Call a nationwide lunch boycott in March.
3. Organise in April in Adana and Istanbul province protest meetings against price rises to be attended by all Turk-Is members.
4. To organize in May 1988 a 2 hour strike nationwide to call for an end to restrictive trade union legislation.
5. Organise a definite or indefinite national work stoppage in May.
6. Prepare all affiliated unions down to branch level to take all measures to carry out the struggle in complete unity.

TURK-IS ADMITTED TO THE ETUC

On April 8th, the Administrative Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) meeting in Brussels voted in favour of admitting Turk-Is as an affiliate.

This welcome step is seen as a strong demonstration of solidarity with the line of Turk-Is in fighting for full trade union rights in Turkey.



The workers of Turkey are showing their power in a series of strikes and mass actions.

TRADE UNION NEWS

ANOTHER OUTRAGE, WORKERS RESPOND

Another murderous attack by fascist thugs hired by the employers has occurred at the Nursan factory (see *TN no.78 and 79-80*) in Istanbul.

Three fascists masquerading as members of the right wing Turk Metal union stabbed a worker belonging to Otomobil

Is (independent metal workers' union). The aim of this outrage was clearly to divide the workers.

The workers staged an immediate protest and the police were forced reluctantly to arrest the culprits.

The Nursan workers, realising that the thugs would probably be released marched to the police station and surrounded it. They then forced their way in, dragged the three fascists into the street and gave them a thorough beating. The workers also warned the police that if they did not take strong action against the employer-backed local bully boys they would burn the police station to the ground.

PRIVATISATION

Following the privatisation of Teletas, a state-controlled telecommunications manufacturer many women workers are threatened with the sack.

As a protest at sackings members of DEMKAD (Association of Women in Democratic Struggle) went to the plant with a protest black wreath on 1st March.

Company guards who attempted to remove the wreath were knocked to the ground by angry women.



Women clash with security guards outside Teletas.

TEACHERS' UNION FORMED

After years of searching for a way round the regime's anti-democratic legislation which forbids teachers from forming a union a way has been found.

On February 15th, Egit Der (Teachers' Association) held its founding congress. The union has been founded by the leaders of three banned teachers' trade unions: TOB-DER, Toc and Ilk-Sen.

To avoid the regime's legislation the

union is classed as an association of retired teachers to which all practicing teachers have been invited to apply for "honorary" membership. However, it is being accepted by everyone as a functioning trade union.

"UNCAREFUL"



Forbidden by law from striking, Istanbul's poorly paid dustmen members of

SECURITY FORCES SURROUND NETAS



Throughout February and early March there were a series of attacks by the employers and regime on workers at the NETAS (Northern Telecom) factory in Istanbul.

Many readers will recall that this factory was the centre of an historic and successful strike in 1986-1987 which began the current wave of strikes for economic and democratic demands. Since then a campaign has been waged at the plant to sack all trade union activists as a vindictive reprisal.

Following the sacking of a further 45 workers on February 5th, workers downed tools, staged an "illegal" march and announced a three-day strike.

The management responded by announcing the sacking of 9 shop stewards.

On the 7th February, at a mass meeting at the Umraniye branch of their union (Otomobil-Is), the workers denounced the sacking of 350 Netas workers since the strike and said: "Tomorrow morning we shall be at NETAS together with our

Belediye-Is (Municipal trade union) have begun a policy of "uncarefully" collecting garbage as a protest

SHOP WORKERS STRIKE

In Ankara on March 18th 280 members of Tez Koop-Is (Shopworkers' union) staged a sudden strike that left elevators stopped and garbage uncollected at shopping malls throughout the city. Their union has given notice that more than 1,700 will strike shortly over poor wages.

MINIMUM WAGE = 1/3 OF THE COST OF FOOD

In March it was calculated that it costs 152,274TL to feed the average Turkish workers' family of four per month. Yet at the same time, the minimum wage (which is the average) was only 50,594TL.

kids and wives. And we shall not start work until the employer ensures job and life security".

1,800 workers assembled in front of NETAS the following day and wrote slogans on the factory walls: "long live the unity of the workers", "General strike", "Bread, peace and freedom". Meanwhile security forces surrounded the plant but could not disperse the meeting

On the next day police raided the works canteen to break-up a workers meeting. The workers responded with a march to their Trade Union Branch.

On the 10th February workers arriving at the factory were met by civilian and military security forces who had been called in to "ensure production". Workers responded to this by keeping production at the lowest possible capacity.

On the advice of their union the workers have called off the action for the time being.

(Information supplied by *ISHA Bulletin*,

BIG DEVELOPMENTS

"Peace in our time" or papering over the cracks?

The 31st January meeting between the Prime Ministers of Greece and Turkey at Davos in Switzerland has led to a marked change in Greek-Turkish relations.

Before the meeting between Papandreou and Ozal nobody publically expressed much hope of a positive outcome.

The previous March, Turkey had almost gone to war with fellow NATO ally Greece over territorial disputes in the Aegean sea. Turkey and Greece were deadlocked over the Cyprus question and Greece was blocking the Turkish regime's attempts to normalise its relations with the EEC. The two countries were also engaged in a desperate struggle with each other to gain a share of the lucrative Middle East market.

Suddenly, after a few hours' meeting in Davos everything was sweetness and light between the two governments. Papandreou announced a "no war" deal between the two countries, the setting up of a telephone "hot-line" between Ankara and Athens to avert possible conflicts, an exchange of state visits

In addition, the Greek side promised to lift its objections both to the renewal of Turkey's status as an EEC Associate and Turkey's application for full membership. In return Turkey promised to lift the 1964 decree which suspended the property rights of the Greek community in Turkey.

The governments decided to set up two joint committees, the first at ambassadorial level to "define problem areas, explore the possibilities of closing the gap and move towards lasting solutions". The other would explore areas of possible economic and commercial links as well as cultural exchanges.

Immediately after the talks, high level delegations of Greek and Turkish businessmen met to explore trade between the two countries and significantly *set up a joint commission to plan a joint penetration of the Middle East market.*

IS THERE A REAL CHANGE?

In past issues of *Turkey Newsletter* we have written that the tension between Greece and Turkey posed a serious war danger and that the Turkish regime was expansionist and a danger to regional peace. Has this changed?

In our view it is still too early to say whether the Davos summit means peace or just a truce.

The success of Davos appears to be the result of four factors which are not a very good basis for peace.

Firstly, the participants did not in detail talk about the most serious conflicts between Turkey and Greece- ie the Aegean dispute and the Cyprus question- not even the fate of the estimated 1,600 Greek Cypriots who "disappeared" after Turkey occupied the North of the island in 1974. These matters have been carefully side-stepped or relegated to the work of commissions.

Secondly, The Greek government's fear that the USA is and will use Turkey with its 600,000-strong army to blackmail Greece over the question of US bases and ensure Greece's "loyalty" to NATO. Papandreou may be trying to end this by giving concessions to Turkey. this is thought to be shown in references to the strains in Turco-Greek relations being "exploited" by "certain circles". Apparently with Ozal's agreement Papandreou said "we are being used by the great powers" apparently in a reference to the US.

This attitude would tie in nicely with the Turkish regime's wish to indulge in possible military adventures in the Middle East without having to ask for uncle Sam's permission.

The third factor is mutual economic interests. Greek business sees great possibilities in the large Turkish market. Greece has the advantage of being an EEC member and aspirations to be the middleman in trade between Europe and the Middle East. But Turkey with its big potential and Islamic background could pose a serious threat. By uniting for joint exploitation of the market, the two countries would stand a better chance against competition from bigger economies.

The fourth, and in our opinion most important factor, is Turkey's increasing involvement in both the Iran-Iraq war and in attempting to crush the growing Kurdish guerilla struggle in its own back yard. If major military involvement is being planned Turkey would not want to have to deal with a second front in the Aegean.

CYPRUS

While hinting at a reduction in the 25,000 strong Turkish army garrison in Northern Cyprus, Ozal has given strong reassurances to Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash that Turkey will continue to back his government.

there is no sign yet that Turkey is prepared to sacrifice its colony in Cyprus.

The election of George Vassiliou, a businessman backed by AKEL, the Cypriot communist party as President of Cyprus came amid hopes of a fresh initiative to solve the Cyprus problem.

However, despite claims that Vassiliou is "more flexible" than Kyprianou, his predecessor, he soon found that no matter how flexible he is, short of recognising the complete partition of Cyprus there is no way of satisfying Denktash and his masters in Ankara.

Vassilou proposed talks with the Turkish side but Denktash immediately advanced conditions for talks which could not be acceptable to Vassilou. Denktash then had the gall to accuse the Greek Cypriot side of being "intransigent". North Cyprus "Foreign Minister" Atakol happily stated that the chances of a settlement of the Cyprus question were "practically nil".



On a recent visit to London, Denktash had a nasty surprise when confronted by Cypriot demonstrators in Whitehall calling for reunification of their homeland.

KURDISTAN

QUESTIONS AND GUNS

In Turkey today, faced with an enormous quantity of unlicensed weapons held by the public, the regime has eased the gun laws and licencing procedures. They are doing this with two aims in mind: Firstly to find out who is armed and secondly, to arm all supporters of the regime. This is particularly clear in the Kurdish provinces of Turkey.

In Kurdistan pro-government people are being encouraged to buy guns in an effort to turn the struggle against Kurdish guerillas into a civil war. This intention is clearly shown in the questions asked of those applying for gun licences in this area.

A copy of the questions to be asked of applicants by the gendarmery in the Baskale district of Van province was recently published:

1. How many people have you captured-informed on up to date?.
2. What have you done for the state?.
3. Which statesman do you love most and who's picture hangs in your home?.
4. For which party do you vote?.
5. Which Asiret (clan) are you from?.
6. How much property do you possess?.

In this area 6,000 gun licences have been issued. The licensee can own side arms and automatic weapons including machine guns. Furthermore, heshe can carry these weapons about in daily life.

SHP MEMBER FACES DEATH



Fifteen members of the SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) including a branch chair are on trial before a State Security Court charged with aiding and abetting the PKK.

The State Prosecutor is calling for the death sentence for SHP Kiziltepe Branch Chair, Selanik Oner.

BATTLE

Frequent armed clashes and raids are reported from the provinces of Turkish Kurdistan mainly involving fighters from the PKK (Workers Party of Kurdistan)

On April 1st there was a full scale 8-hour battle between PKK guerillas and the Turkish army near the Syrian border

at Nusayban.

The regime claims 20 Kurdish fighters were killed for the loss of one soldier, an NCO and an officer. However it has come to light that at least one Turkish helicopter was also shot down during the battle.

SENTENCED TO 75 YEARS



Sakine Cansiz, a 30-year old PKK (Workers Party of Kurdistan) Women's Organiser and Press and Publicity Officer, who has been in jail for nearly ten years, was sentenced to a total of 76 years imprisonment for 6 offences including "insulting the bench", "breaking prison rules" and "fighting in her cell". She had taken part in no violent actions against the Turkish State and yet had been sentenced to 24 years in 1984.

As Sakine Cansiz had conducted a political defence, joined in political demonstrations in the courtroom and taken part in protests in prison she was sentenced to a further 52 years imprisonment.

NATO AND KURDISTAN

The Turkish weekly magazine *Iki bin'e Dogru* has revealed that a NATO military exercise was planned for January this year. The scenario for this was to be a rebellion in Turkish Kurdistan backed by "a Balkan state". And that NATO forces were sent to quell the uprising.

The exercise was cancelled after protests from Greece. However the thinking behind the exercise gives an alarming insight into the dangerous thinking in NATO circles in regard to the "Kurdish Question".

MP SPEAKS OUT

British Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn raised the situation of the Kurdish people in Turkey in Parliament on March 25th

in connection with Mrs Thatcher's visit to Turkey:

"...In the Kurdish areas of eastern Turkey there is virtually a civil war and many Kurdish people are in prison in Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey. I understand that during the Easter recess, or shortly afterwards, the Prime Minister is to visit Turkey. I hope that if she goes ahead with that visit she will carry very strong messages. First, she should convey the message that Turkey is not a democracy, and cannot be, because of the hundreds, if not thousands, of political prisoners in that country. People are on trial because of their political beliefs, and the general secretaries of the Communist party and the Workers' party, Mr Kutlu and Mr Sargin, are in prison. Secondly, she should tell the Government of Turkey that their country cannot be looked upon as a free democracy while military rule still applies in some of their provinces and while the Kurds are being oppressed. The Kurdish language is banned in Turkey, and the word "Kurdistan" is also banned. The invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Turkey is part of an attempt by the Government of Turkey to cover up their crimes so they can gain entry to the European Community".

EXHIBITION



An exhibition of photographs of life in Kurdistan in Turkey is on show at the Union of Turkish Workers Centre, 84 Balls Pond Road, London N1, opening times 9am to 9pm seven days a week.

The photographer, Richard Wayman took the series of striking pictures during travels in the area last year.

"PROTEST AND RESISTANCE LEADS TO A VOICE BEING HEARD"



Arif Sag.

Between April 6th-14th, Arif Sag, one of Turkey's most popular folk singers and players upon the *saz* (traditional stringed instrument) and a SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) member of the Turkish parliament for a district of Ankara, visited London.

During his stay, Arif Sag visited various Labour Party and Trade Union figures and gave a concert on April 10th.

Arif Sag is one of the "left group" within the SHP. This group came to notice with its uncompromising support of the Diyarbakir political prisoners' hunger strike and the raising of the Kurdish question for the first time in the Turkish parliament.

During his visit he granted an interview to *Turkey Newsletter*. Below is part of that interview.

The November General Election in Turkey lead to ANAP (Motherland Party) retaining power with a disproportionate number of seats. In this situation how do you and your SHP colleagues envisage conducting an effective opposition?

If it was not for this type of election system the SHP would have received 20% more seats than we did. It is an anti-democratic way of being elected to government.

We realise that the next election will probably be fought under the same system. However we still believe we can come to power under it. But once in power we would replace this system with a more democratic one.

Recently, in the British press reports appeared of the hunger strike in Diyarbakir prison, which despite the death of one prisoner lead to big improvements in the conditions of political prisoners. We understand you were one of a group of SHP MPs who supported the strike. Could you give us some information about this.

As a member of the SHP I am part of the left section within the Party. As a left section we are prepared to support action such as the one that took place in Diyarbakir.

Our section is trying to create a new type of MP rather than the typical type who avoids supporting such activities and protests which are coming from the people. This is the reason why we supported the hunger strike and other protests at Diyarbakir prison.

We are prepared to support such protests wherever they are happening. We are prepared to raise these questions in parliament as well.

For example, we will freely raise the problems of the Kurdish people.

Not only will we support the protests and actions of the people, we believe we should play a leading role in initiating such activities.

For the first time the "Kurdish Question" was raised in the Turkish Parliament. Do you feel this marks a big change in attitudes to this question in Turkey?

There are people who are being oppressed in Turkey. As MPs we must voice the problems of the oppressed people openly in parliament.

If there is a Kurdish problem then we have to raise this question and openly express our views. If we don't do this then we are deceiving the people.

In Turkey there is an attempt being made to cover up what is happening. There are tortures going on and there are Kurdish people in Turkey.

We have to stand up and oppose those who are doing this cover-up.

For example, Ozal and his group will meet behind closed doors and say there is a Kurdish question and there is a Kurdish people and what shall we do about it. But when Ozal comes into parliament he will not go to the rostrum and say the same thing. This is hypocrisy. We are no longer prepared to tolerate this.

We will openly say what we want to say and fight against what is happening. To this end, we will use to the full the democratic parliamentary system which is open to us. We will do so openly. That is how the foundations of true demo-

cracy are laid.

On the question of attitudes: For example the Diyarbakir incident. There for the first time after the action, the Prime Minister actually said that the prisoners could if they wish speak Kurdish. This shows the pattern of change which is emerging. However, this is only happening because of the protests and resistance.

Protest and resistance leads to a voice being created.

In the light of new developments, do you think there is a danger of Turkey being dragged into the Iran-Iraq war?

First I must say I was not in Turkey when these recent developments took place so I have only been able to follow them from the daily newspapers.

But in my opinion (I don't know the party's opinion, having been away), from what I can see, is that if Turkey entered the Iran-Iraq war it would only be because they were in a difficult position, that they had been left with no choice and were pushed into it with the desire of America.

In my opinion this would be very wrong and it would pull Turkey back at least 50 maybe a 100 years. Turkey in its present situation once entering such a war would under its present economic condition be not able to sustain the burden and would fail. So it would be drastically wrong for Turkey to become involved.

I would like to add this, I am against wars and people being killed. This is an inhuman situation and the only reason it is kept going is to keep the arms industry on its feet and heap-up profits from it. To me this is inhuman and barbaric. I am against this both as an individual and because of my political/ideological views.

Mrs Thatcher is visiting Turkey. It seems she will not discuss the human rights situation in Turkey only the contract for the third Bosphorous Bridge and arms sales.

In relation to an agreement on the bridge it shows that the British economy must be in a bad way if they are so desperate just to get a mere bridge contract!. The people of Britain should be able to see this and react accordingly.

In relation to the selling of arms to Turkey and signing weapons contracts, what will come out of this?. It is obvious that Britain will sell arms to Turkey then what will the Turkish government do with those arms? They will use these arms in order to kill the people of neighbouring countries.

THE 1988 CONGRESS OF THE CDDRT

The 1988 Congress of the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey was held on the 26th March in London.

This year's congress was successful both in the number of delegates and in increased trade union representation.

The work of the CDDRT was reviewed and the guidelines laid down for the coming period. A period which will see further big changes in the situation in Turkey.



In the morning session, Stan Newens MEP, raised some vital questions to which the CDDRT must address itself on the issue of Turkish-European relations.

After mentioning the continued abuses of human rights - particularly the Kurdish question and the continued occupation of Northern Cyprus, Stan Newens went on to point out: "Now it's quite clear that the Turkish administration was very deeply angered by the steps which were taken in the West as a result of the coup to indicate displeasure on the part even of people who were far more in the centre of the political spectrum than I count myself. They were rattled by the fact that the Council of Europe and the European Parliament cut relations in certain respects despite the fact that the United States continued to supply arms and the military importance of Turkey within the Western alliance was maintained.

Now however, there has been on the Turkish side a quite determined effort made to meet some of the criticisms; and when one looks at the report which was made to the European Parliament a couple of years ago by Richard Balfe a number of the objections which are set out in that report have in fact been met."

Stan Newens went on to detail the shift of opinion on within the European



Parliament including the socialist group and his view that: "We shouldn't rush ahead on this because we would lose leverage on the Turkish authorities to make improvements in the many, many areas in which we still believe they are necessary"

Stan Newens ended with pointing out that we must; ..."recognise that the situation has changed, how in these circumstances do we best pursue the objectives which we continue to hold as firmly as ever, of working for a Turkey which is fit for working people and progressives to live in. A completely different Turkey from the one which exists at the present time..."

Stan Newens was followed by the Chair of the CDDRT, Jeremy Corbyn MP who pointed out that the November General Elections in Turkey were not so democratic as they were portrayed: "What was not portrayed was that any party to the left of the Social Democratic Party was banned, it could not take part in the campaign; indeed, even during the campaign itself people were being arrested and were being put in prison for their political beliefs,"...



Commenting on Mrs Thatcher's planned visit to Turkey, Jeremy Corbyn pointed out that there is "one question that will not be high on Mrs Thatcher's agenda will be the question of human rights in Turkey because Mrs Thatcher's concern for human rights is extremely selective. She believes passionately in trade union rights providing they're in Poland. She believes passionately in human rights provided they're in the Soviet Union".

Jeremy Corbyn pointed out that a blind eye was turned to violations of human rights in Turkey because of its importance to NATO.

Jeremy Corbyn condemned the oppression of the Kurdish people in Turkey and while on that subject strongly denounced the atrocious chemical attack on Kurds in Iraq by the monstrous Saddam Husain regime.

Jeremy, on behalf of himself and his colleagues pledged to continue to raise the situation of the people of Turkey both in the British and European Parliaments.

CDDRT General Secretary, Max Hirons delivered the annual report pointing out the massive increase in the democratic struggle in Turkey and the need to further develop direct contact and give direct support to the democratic forces inside the country.



Max Hirons also pointed-out the big increase in the work of the CDDRT over the last year particularly in regard to trade unions.

During the congress lunch break there was a showing of the video *Linked by a Common Thread* about the situation of migrant workers in Britain and the international context.

The afternoon session of the congress began with a lively debate on how to strengthen the work of CDDRT particularly in involving more members in the work of the committee and in building a much bigger base among rank and file trade union activists in support of the CDDRT and its aims.

In the afternoon session, Richard Balfe MEP a well known expert within the Socialist Group of the European Parliament on Turkey, spoke to the congress.

Remarking that the Turkish Government was not racing its application to join the EEC Richard Balfe pointed out that this was probably due to the big

INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL

In September 1988, in West Germany an International Tribunal will meet to put in the dock both the post coup junta of General Evren in Turkey and the present regime of Ozal. They will be indicted before a panel of European lawyers, parliamentarians, trade unionists and democrats for violations of human rights and democracy.

The evidence will be presented by the victims of the regimes.

This tribunal will be a major platform for exposing the truth about the human rights situation in Turkey.

The tribunal has been set up on the initiative of Turkish and Kurdish exiles in West Germany and German members of trade unions, the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party.

Further information can be obtained from the CDDRT or by writing direct to: **Turkey Information, c/o Postf.910843, D-3000 Hannover 91, Federal Republic of Germany.**



changes the regime would still have to make to be acceptable: "It would of course require the sort of fundamental changes in the Turkish Constitution for them to join the EEC that the present government in Turkey is totally unwilling to contemplate. It has made clear even at a very preliminary level that there would have to be changes in the Constitution in regard to trade union rights, academic freedoms, the way the legal system works and a number of other areas before any serious consideration could

be given to Turkey joining. It would also be necessary to legitimise the broad range of political parties as is the case in the rest of Western Europe and to resolve the issue of Cyprus.

At the end of his talk Richard Balfe strongly supported the work of CDDRT saying: "As far as we are concerned I think that with the resources of the capacity you have got...I think the CDDRT does an extremely good job. A much better job let me say than many other solidarity organisations with which I have to deal, who do not have the same level of dedication and service which this organisation has"...

In the afternoon session, John Mitchell, General Secretary of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union and Chair of Irish CDDRT spoke. He reported on his visit to striking workers in Istanbul last year and the recent visit of Aynur Karaaslan, leader of the successful Migros shopworkers strike to Dublin.

John Mitchell made a strong call for trade unionists at all levels to establish or strengthen links with Turkish trade unions: "If people like our ordinary shopworkers can relate to ordinary shopworkers in Istanbul, Turkey or

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 CDDRT are as follows:
And all vestiges of military rule, martial law, torture and executions.
Release all political prisoners
Freedom for all democratic organisations
End the national oppression of the Kurds and national minorities. Defend the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination.
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 forgoing utilising every means at our disposal.

Union of Turkish Workers

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 1st January each year.

4. Congress is the highest body of the CDDRT and shall meet every year. It shall consist of delegates from Branches and affiliated organisations and individual affiliates. Congress shall elect the General Council and consider reports, and 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 Congress may call, or upon request by two-thirds of affiliated national organisations shall call, a Special Congress.

CDDRT GENERAL COUNCIL

W. ANDREWS (B.F.&A. W.U.)
Bedir AYDEMIR
John M. BLOOM (NUPE)
Dennis CANAVAN MP
Harry COHEN MP
Jeremy CORBYN MP
Ali HIKMET
Max HIRONS
AIF LOMAS MEP
Pat INGRAM (NALGO)
Marion SARAFI
Fevzi SOLT
Peter SPALDING (GLATC)
R. YURUKOGLU
One representative each from:
Turkish Students' Federation in the UK,
Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain,
Union of Turkish Women in Britain

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**

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indeed South Africa or the Phillipines for that matter, it brings a life and a reality to solidarity work. Because solidarity work is about people and not about paper."

"I would suggest very strongly to anybody with influence in a union to try and exchange delegations because really if you can put a human face on solidarity it brings it way beyond either money or paper, because it is almost as easy to give money as it is to give resolutions. Its if we get into the human side of it that it is really effective."

Copies of the full report of the 1988 CDDRT Congress can be obtained from the CDDRT's office, price 1 including p+p.

The congress ended with a showing of a video of a Turk-Is demonstration in the city of Izmit last year.

In the evening there was a CDDRT social.



SOME CDDRT RESOLUTIONS

ON TRADE UNIONS

The CDDRT reaffirms the position adopted on the trade union question in Turkey at the CDDRT's 1987 Congress.

The single most important aspect of the democratic struggle remains the fight for trade union freedom.

The CDDRT notes that: -Today in Turkey there exists one major trade union centre- Turk-Is (Turkish Trade Union Confederation). At the same time, the drive towards the unity of all Turkey's genuine trade unions under the umbrella of Turk-Is is gaining momentum. This is shown by the decisions of the congresses of many independent trade unions.

-The struggle for trade union and workers' rights is accelerating as shown by the 1987 strike wave. In the struggle for these rights the trade unions are beginning to push beyond the confines of the regime's anti-democratic laws and constitution.

-The rights of workers remain severely restricted by the present regime's Constitution, penal and labour codes. The basic rights of workers - as internationally recognised - the right to strike, the right to organise freely in trade unions on a democratic basis, the right to join the trade union of their choice and the right to conduct collective bargaining remain strictly curtailed.

International solidarity has played a vital part in the advances made by the trade union movement in Turkey over the last year.

Congress resolves to:

1. Expose and oppose all attacks by the regime on the trade union movement in Turkey.

2. Continue to win the British trade union movement to support the development of a democratically united and active trade union movement in Turkey and oppose all political manoeuvres based on narrow interests to split or divide the Turkish trade union movement.

3. Continue to encourage trade unions in Britain and other countries at every first-hand contacts with their functioning counterparts in Turkey.

4. Organise under the control of known and bona fide trade unionists a Strike Solidarity Fund to raise material and moral support for major strikes in Turkey during the coming year. The funds to be directed for use in strikes in Turkey where because of the regime's anti-democratic measures, one trade union cannot give open material support to members of another during a strike.

5. Publicise the activities and views of the Turkish trade union movement.

6. Extend the number of trade union bodies affiliated to the CDDRT and increase the representation of trade unions on the CDDRT's General Council.

7. Draw up a model resolution along the lines of this resolution for use in the trade union movement.

ON POLITICAL PRISONERS IN TURKEY

The last year has seen an upsurge in the struggle of political prisoners and their families in Turkey for freedom.

Today in Turkey there are 15,000-20,000 political prisoners and detainees. Many have experienced torture and/or ill-treatment. This has been well-documented by such bodies as Amnesty International.

nal.

Many political prisoners are detained for "offences" which would not be punishable in a democratic society. Others are held for actions they took in response to unbearable oppression by successive regimes in Turkey.

In addition to political prisoners serving sentences, (many passed by military courts in a travesty of justice), there are thousands of political detainees awaiting trial - often for very long periods.

In the last few months, thanks to the heroism and sacrifice of prisoners and their families some prison conditions have been eased.

However the regime's claim to be improving human rights cannot be credible as long as the prisons remain full of political prisoners and detainees.

The CDDRT therefore calls for:

*An end to all torture and ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees.

*The real punishment of all those military, police and medical personnel involved in the torture of prisoners and detainees.

*The unconditional release of all political prisoners.

*The abolition of legislation under which most prisoners were convicted.

The CDDRT will continue to conduct a specific campaign of solidarity with political prisoners.

As part of such a campaign the CDDRT will:

*Continue to publicise the plight of political prisoners individually and collectively.

*Continue to campaign for individuals and groups to "adopt" political prisoners and correspond with them.

*Initiate a petition campaign to be completed in late 1988.