

HUMAN RIGHTS IN TURKEY

**through the eyes of
European Parliamentarians**

**Introduction
by Ernie Roberts, MP**

**Reports by
Chris Smith, MP
Jeremy Corbyn, MP**

Introduction: Turkey's struggle for democracy



by Ernie Roberts, MP
Chairman, CDDRT

You no doubt know about the problems of Poland and Solidarnosc. The press and TV have made sure of that. But do you know that since 1980, the military junta in Turkey has suppressed free trade unions? That fifty-five trade-union leaders in Turkey are on trial for their lives? That thousands of Turkish trade unionists have been imprisoned and tortured? That Turkish peace-movement leaders are also on trial for their lives, and their organisations banned?

Do you know that the Turkish people — workers, managers, students, professionals, liberals, socialists and all democrats are struggling for democracy in Turkey against brutal suppression?

The Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey and other bodies in Britain have sent delegations to Turkey to see for themselves and to report back on the conditions in that tragic country. On 29th August

1983, Members of Parliament Chris Smith and Clare Short, and former MP and Minister of State Alex Lyon returned from their visit to Turkey. At their press conference they said:

“What we saw in the trials indicated such a complete perversion of human rights in the sense that we know it in the West. The two trials that we saw are of the many that have been conducted under martial law before military courts. They were the DISK trial and the Turkish Peace Association trial. We spent a whole day at the DISK trial and the most emotive part of the trip for us was the impression left at the end.

“The DISK trial is an accusation against the second largest confederation of labour in Turkey. Those on trial are accused under Article 146 of the Penal Code of seeking to frustrate the will of Parliament and either partially or wholly to overthrow by force, the establishment of the Republic. The indictment runs to 855 pages. There is no such procedure in English law. This indictment is one charge under Article 146 against the accused, initially 52 of them, now 78. The military prosecutor has asked for the death sentence for the initial 52. They have been in prison since they were arrested in 1980 and the conditions in their prison are getting worse. The whole of this indictment does not specify anywhere one act of violence or the holding of any weapons. The nature of the force that is alleged is the force of ideas. These 78 people have been treated in a way which is despicable by Western standards. Their ideas are not Marxist-Leninist but are those typical of any Western trade-union movement. The DISK defendants are being assisted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, not exactly a pro-Marxist organisation. The ICFTU is subscribed to by America as being a haven for free trade unionism in the world. They would not be doing that if DISK were a Marxist-Leninist organisation.”

The trade unionists of Turkey are struggling for the same democratic rights that British workers and workers in many other countries have already achieved.

The Turkish peace movement is demanding the same freedom in Turkey that the CND movement has in the rest of Europe.

Because they demand these elementary democratic rights, many thousands of trade unionists and peace activists have been imprisoned. Amnesty International has taken up cases of prisoners of conscience and have protested about the executions and torture by the Turkish military junta, with President Kenan Evren.

Of the many thousands of political prisoners in Turkey, 2,500 have (as stated in the CDDRT's *Turkey Newsletter* of September 1983) since 7th July

"been on a hunger strike against the torture and persecution to which they have been subjected, many of them throughout the three years since the present junta seized power on 12th September 1980.

"Two prisoners, Irfan Ornek and M. Solmaz, were killed under torture as the prison authorities engaged in a virtual orgy of sadism and torture aimed at breaking the hunger strike. They even went to the lengths of broadcasting the screams of torture victims over the P.A. system at Metris Prison in Istanbul.

"The most recent reports are that, while the strike has been broken in Istanbul, it is still continuing in other cities: in Izmir, Adana and Erzurum. In Erzurum 1200 political prisoners are reported to be on a hunger strike till death. Two prisoners there, Nurettin Baysut and Halil Aksoy, are reported to be in critical condition.

"At the beginning of the strike, the prisoners issued a statement condemning the widespread torture, farcical court proceedings, and arbitrary detention practices..."

On 15th August 1983 a hunger strike in solidarity with the hunger strikers in Turkey's prisons was held in London for two weeks, with the united support of CDDRT, the Union of Turkish Progressives, the Union of Turkish Workers, the Union of Turkish Women and the Turkish Student Federation, with wide support from the Turkish community in Britain. Such unity is essential to remove the military junta. United action is the only way to achieve democracy, freedom and justice.

The *New Statesman*, reporting on the hunger strikes, said:

"This vast and tragic drama has potentially very great consequences for Turkey and its repressed opposition. Yet it has been all but ignored by the Western media."

British democrats must demand that publicity by the press, TV and radio must be given to the struggle for human rights and democracy in Turkey. Hackney Labour councillors have given a lead by "adopting" the people of the small Turkish town of Fatsa, and campaigning to publicise their plight. Fatsa has only 23,000 inhabitants, of whom 750 — that is, 3% — are at present on trial, on charges of "turning the town into a commune". 261 of these could face execution if they are found guilty. Many have already been murdered by the army and fascists.

Why should not other Labour Councils, Trades Councils and trade unions "adopt" towns and trade unions in Turkey, to help them in their struggles?

On one occasion recently, 46 British MPs protested in Parliament against General Evren and his military dictatorship, and this was followed by a further parliamentary protest of 56 MPs.

I wrote to the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, asking her government to put pressure on the Turkish Junta and demand human rights for Turkish people, particularly because the British government is an ally of Turkey, which is a member of NATO; but in spite of all her protestations regarding human rights and the Helsinki agreements in other parts of the world, she does not act in the case of Turkey.

In August 1983, Margaret Thatcher and her Tory government gave a loan of £15,000,000 at the reduced interest rate of 6% to the military junta in Turkey (see HMSO Cmnd. 8997), and yet she refuses our requests to give food aid to the Vietnamese people and even claims that there is not enough money for British hospitals.

The policy of the British Labour Party is contained in their statement:

"The Turkish dictatorship is of special concern to Britain given Turkish membership of NATO and its status in Europe. We deplore the Constitution imposed upon the Turkish people and will work for the restoration of freedom and democracy. Until this is achieved we shall oppose assistance to the Turkish junta."

To summarise, I quote the statement made by Tony Benn at a recent conference which I chaired on Turkey, when he said:

- * We support the trade union movement in Turkey!
- * We support the peace movement in Turkey!
- * We support the Kurdish people!
- * We are opposed to the junta!
- * We are opposed to their Constitution!
- * We are opposed to the arrests, and tortures, the repression, the trials and the militarisation of Turkey!"

So, workers, socialists and democrats — let us unite, Turkish and British, to win freedom, democracy and peace.

Press release by human rights delegation on their return from Turkey



Chris Smith MP, Clare Short MP and Alex Lyon, spoke at a joint Press Conference on 30th August following their visit to Turkey on a fact-finding delegation to investigate the human rights situation there, especially with regard to the treatment of political prisoners and the prison conditions in the junta's military jails.

Alex Lyon reported as follows:

This is the first occasion that any of us have been to Turkey. Our overwhelming impression is one of shock at the denial of human rights that exists in a country which is a fellow-member of the Western alliance, albeit the only dictatorship left in Western Europe.

My colleagues will give you their political impressions and tell you what political action they will be taking. I am going to speak about the general circumstances relating to the denial of human rights in the trials.

In 1980 after a period of increasing violence on the streets in Turkey, the army took over. All the people we met agree that at the time, there was relief in the country when the coup came. But now, there is increasing criticism of the military regime because the people do not feel that they are ever going back to democracy.

What we saw in the trials indicated a complete perversion of human rights in the sense that we know it in the West. The two trials that we saw are of the many that have been conducted under martial law before military courts. They were the DISK trial and the Turkish Peace Association trial. We spent a whole day at the DISK trial and the most emotive part of the trip for us was the impression left at the end.

The DISK trial is an accusation against the second largest confederation of labour in Turkey. Those on trial are accused under Article 146 of the Penal Code of seeking to frustrate the will of Parliament and, either partially or wholly, to overthrow by force, the establishment of the Republic. The indictment runs to 855 pages. There is no such procedure in English law. This indictment is one charge under Article 146 against all the accused, initially 52 of them, now 78. The military prosecutor has asked for the death sentence for the initial 52. They have been in prison since they were arrested in 1980 and the conditions in their prison are getting worse. The whole of this indictment does not specify anywhere one act of violence or the holding of any weapons. The nature of the force that is alleged is the force of ideas. These 78 people have been treated in a way which is despicable by Western standards. Their ideas are not Marxist-Leninist, but are those typical of any Western trade union movement. The DISK defendants are being assisted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, not exactly a pro-Marxist organisation. The ICFTU is subscribed to by America as being a haven for free trade unionism in the world. They would not be doing that if DISK were a Marxist-Leninist organisation.

All day we listened to judges reading from a prosecution file. There are no witnesses called against the defendants. They are simply being indicted on the basis of files of their speeches, articles and papers that were seized when DISK was raided. This file extends to several thousand pages. It is read to them as evidence against them. We heard the judges read parts of the papers. The papers did not relate to any particular incident, they covered a whole series of incidents including the organisation of a May Day demonstration in 1977 and a number of trade union activities which, over here, would be perfectly legitimate. Occasionally some of the accused would get up to protest that the judge was reading only the parts of the papers that hurt the accused and not those that helped their case. The accused were told to sit down. It is perfectly clear that the pieces of paper read by the judges were only those that the judges thought incriminated the accused. We listened almost with disbelief as they read out the

allegation that the President of the Union had actually asked for an increase in wages for school caretakers and that janitors in public buildings be given better rooms in which to carry out their work. That was seized upon by the military prosecutor as being evidence that these people were really Communists and Communism has been forbidden in Turkey since Kemal Ataturk.



The way in which they used this in the indictment can be illustrated by the following example. It is an extract from the indictment: "Article 3C of the constitution of DISK declares that unemployment can be terminated only by means of a rapid industrialisation by the state. In such activities, it would be to the benefit of the workers to use forward technology". The indictment goes on to argue that there are other Western European countries with some kind of a state sector. It wrongly alleges that Sweden has 4% state control. The indictment continues "... they manage to continue with less than 100% state control, why then does DISK want the development to be carried on by the state? Since the shortest cut to Communism is state capitalism or the state sector, therefore DISK is a Communist organisation." This is the kind of argument with which the defendants are being tried. We would have laughed in disbelief but for the realisation that these defendants risked losing their lives.

At the end of our visit, Clare Short MP and I saw the military prosecutor, who made it clear to us that there was little chance that these defendants would be acquitted. It is very likely that many will be condemned to death, although whether they will be executed is still in doubt. They are to be condemned to death because they do what any trade unionist in the UK would consider it his civil right to strive for. This shocks us.

In the Peace Association trial, the charges are made against a select group of people of every profession in Turkey. They are members of an organisation like the CND. They are arguing for peace and campaigning to rid Turkey of nuclear weapons. Amongst them were some of the most distinguished people in Turkey. A former Ambassador, who has been a diplomat for 27 years, was the President of the Peace Association and, although suffering from cancer, he is on trial. The military prosecutor has demanded a sentence of between 6-8 years for each of the defendants. There are other examples of a famous film star, a Professor of Physics, and a translator of Shakespeare into Turkish. They come from different professions in Turkey and it is obvious that the authorities selected a representative from each area of public dissent in Turkey to threaten others not to speak out of line. Everywhere we went in Turkey, this message had got home. People who spoke to us told us of their fears that they could receive a 30-year sentence for doing so.

We can put pressure on the members of the junta. It is a situation in which the Shakespearian translator is being tried because he was named by a former student in the UK. This Turkish student was tortured for 75 days before he was charged. In his statement, he names the translator and that is the only evidence against the latter. As a result, he was charged and for two years he has been suffering in the DISK trials. Although the DISK defendants are no longer in prison, he cannot get work because he has to attend the trial 2 days a week. All the defendants have to give up their normal activities, which are disrupted by the frequent court attendances, notwithstanding their release from prison.

We found the situation intolerable by any standard. We intend to stimulate as much interest on Turkey as there is on Poland because it is vital if these people are to be saved.

Chris Smith MP then spoke about his impressions in the following way:

The thing which struck all of us enormously was the tremendous dignity shown by the defendants in the face of overwhelming odds. Certainly most of those in the DISK trial are in prison and in the Peace Association trial one of them is still in prison, probably being tortured. The dignity which they showed in the face of farcical charges and legal proceedings, made us feel very humble.

Apart from the basic legal perversions I would like to mention other abuses.

As already mentioned, every person who talked to us insisted that we

neither reveal their identities nor repeat the conversations. They were terrified to talk to us, particularly if we were going to stir things up when we got home because they feared very substantial sentences if found out. I have never experienced this kind of fear or found it in other countries which says a lot about the way in which the regime in Turkey is keeping its hold on people.

I spoke to a number of people who had been tortured. One person in particular described how, 6 months ago, he had been very severely tortured by the military authorities in the military prison at Erzurum in eastern Turkey. Having talked to him, and to others who had experienced minor forms of the same treatment, and others who had actually seen torture going on, I have no doubt that the Amnesty International reports on Turkey and reports which have come out of Turkey recently about the prevalence of torture in prisons, are absolutely true.

We were also told about the prison conditions. Since we were refused admission to the prisons, we were not able to speak at any length, to those now imprisoned. Presumably, the Turkish government have something to hide. But we talked to those who had been in prison until recently and we heard in open court what those who are still in prison were able to say. People we met confirmed that the prison conditions are appalling and getting worse. Over the last fortnight, conditions in Metris prison in Istanbul have deteriorated considerably.

Journalists of the Turkish press, again fearful of being quoted, described the heavy censorship they face in reporting events in Turkey. A subtle form of self-censorship is adopted by the Turkish press to avoid being closed down by the military authorities. Not only are they extremely careful in their reporting, but anything they write about the prisons or the trials must first be approved by the military authorities. Censorship is arbitrary. Recently, two newspapers and one weekly magazine were shut down. Two of them have been allowed to start up, one is still closed.

On the question of elections which are to be held on 6th November, it is obvious that those elections will not be free and will not be fair. The political parties which are going to be allowed to contest those elections have been limited to three.

All other parties have been vetoed by the military government. The parties vetoed include every conceivable party of the centre or the left. The only parties which will be able to contest those elections are parties close to the thinking of the military government. As a result, any attempt to describe those elections as a fair test of public opinion, is not true. They will not be a fair test of public opinion. Just as the trials are a perversion of justice, those elections will be a perversion of democracy.

Finally, we are all shocked by the complacency shown by the British Embassy in Ankara. It is something that we will be taking further because the way in which the officials at the Ankara Embassy acted as apologists for the Turkish regime was such that they might as well be members of that

regime themselves. They were justifying to us everything that the regime was doing.

In Turkey, newspapers are being closed down, elections are being distorted, torture is going on in prisons, prison conditions are appalling, show trials are being held and human rights flouted. At least, Britain does have some influence left because Turkey is after all a member of the Council of Europe, an associate member of the Common Market and is a member of NATO. It is a country in which the Western European nations and particularly Britain, ought to be interested, involved and concerned. It is clear to us from our discussions at the Embassy that Britain is being far too supportive of the regime and not giving what the British people would want to say to the Turkish regime, which is that they really ought to start showing some genuine human standards of decency, fairness and democratic rights.

Claire Short MP stressed a point that was made by all the members of the delegation. She said:

I want to stress the shocking role of Britain in acting as an apologist for this regime. I had a briefing with the Foreign Office before we left and we had a meeting in Ankara where we were told repeatedly that torture, lack of human rights, press censorship, were necessary in Turkey, and that was argued with vigour by Britain's representatives in Turkey. It is a very dangerous situation for the whole of Europe.

First of all, Turkey is a member of NATO. This is meant to be a Western alliance to defend freedom and democracy. You need not take it from us. The ex-President Demirel, who was a full-blooded Conservative, who indeed was in government in alliance with a fascist party, is in detention in Turkey and has issued a letter now freely available throughout the West, saying that the regime is oppressive, that there is no chance of a return to democracy, and warning that if the West will not help the Turkish people, who insist on a return to democracy, then in future, Turkey will not look to the West for her friends. This is like putting Mrs. Thatcher into detention and her denouncing that sort of regime. I want to stress that in Turkey there is a general consensus, and it is not just on the left that these criticisms are taking place, and it is not just on the left that the oppression is taking place. Indeed Metris, where both the DISK and the Peace Association trials are taking place, is a military camp. That camp holds soldiers from members of the NATO alliance who are involved in joint-training and with whom we share a kind of responsibility.

The second point is that Turkey is a signatory of the European Declaration of Human Rights. International treaties are needed to protect our human rights at times when they are in danger. If human rights can be flouted so crudely as this without Britain entering a note of protest, then all of us are less safe. In Turkey, there is a somewhat distasteful joke going round which encapsulates it all. It is said that the generals are behaving like some men who rescued a drowning woman from a lake and then that

she should be so grateful, they rape her. The point being that there was a lot of anarchy in the streets before the coup and a lot of the Turkish people thought perhaps that only the military could save Turkey for democracy. But there has been no attempt to restore Turkey to democracy and, indeed, more and more people are saying there was, after all, martial law before the coup, and perhaps the military were permitting anarchy to develop in order for them to be able to take power and move on to suppress democracy in the way in which they have.

Certainly, if this can happen in Turkey, it can happen in more countries, especially in the sort of economic climate there is in Europe now. If this model is permitted to continue without any protest or pressure from countries like Britain — although of course there are countries in Europe that have protested, like France, Sweden and Denmark — then democracy is less safe in Europe.

I want to reiterate two points.

First, that Britain is apologising for the Turkish regime and this must stop. We will use our influence to push Turkey back to democracy on behalf of the Turkish people, and that is what they want from us.

Second, that if it is allowed to continue, democratic rights in the whole of Europe are under threat. It is hypocrisy for countries like Britain not to protest at such crude and gross oppression in a country that is a member of our alliance and then to stand and criticise the lack of human rights in other parts of the world.



Report on a fact-finding visit to Turkey



by Chris Smith, MP

1. Introduction

We were invited to visit Turkey, and sponsored, by the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey. Our only brief was to establish to our own satisfaction how human rights were being upheld or abused in Turkey, the nature of political trials there, how prisoners were treated, and what political freedoms were being denied. We went as Parliamentarians, concerned about the reports we had heard and wishing to find out what was actually happening.

Chris Smith MP (Islington South and Finsbury), Clare Short MP (Birmingham Ladywood), Alex Lyon (former MP for York and Minister of State) have recently visited Turkey. This was organised by the CDDRT. Chris Smith MP made out a summary of the visit as reported above.

We spent our time in Istanbul and in Ankara. We sat in as observers at the trial of members of the DISK (Revolutionary Confederation of Trade Unions). We met and talked with the families and lawyers of a number of defendants in both the DISK and the Peace Association trials. We talked to those of the defendants who were no longer in jail. We met with Turkish and British journalists. We talked in detail with representatives of the British Consulate in Istanbul and the Embassy in Ankara.

Sadly, we can not list the people we saw, or identify individually what they said to us. Under Turkish law it is possible that some of them could face severe charges if we did. Every conversation we had, began with assurances that the discussion was "off the record." The very fact that reassurance of this kind had to be given is itself evidence of the extent of fear that grips everyone in Turkey.

2. Evidence of Torture

There has been much well-documented evidence produced — especially by Amnesty International — of torture in Turkey's prisons and police stations. We ourselves heard several direct accounts from victims of torture and brutal violence.

One former prisoner, whose "crime" had been to work for a trade union, described how he was tortured in one of the prisons in the east of the country, last year. He had been kept for eighteen days in water up to his waist. He had been given electric shocks for three days. He had been beaten on his feet and legs. He had been blindfolded and made to run into walls. He had been laid out naked in salt water and given shock treatment. He had heard a woman near him being raped. And quite apart from the horrifying physical violence involved in this case, the worst aspect for him was that now — out of prison — he was unable to get a job his family were going hungry, and he had no prospects of employment or a decent life.

Two DISK defendants described to us how they had personally seen the results of torture in fellow-prisoners: teeth had been pulled out, people had been beaten over the head. The former President of DISK, Mr Bastürk, has in fact reported, in open court how he has been tortured and malbeaten. The response of the authorities has been — on the two occasions he has reported in this way to the court — to throw him into solitary confinement.

There has been a well-documented case — again described to us in person — of a UPI correspondent in Ankara being blindfolded, assaulted, and kicked when he went to a police station to apply for a passport. Far too little fuss has been made by UPI in his defence.

A common feature of the accounts we heard was that the questioning which accompanied the torture did not appear to be questioning aimed at eliciting desired information. Rather, it was designed simply to provide an excuse for carrying on with more physical violence.

3. Conditions in the Prisons

We asked the authorities for permission to visit the Metris prison in Istanbul (where many of the political prisoners are held). We were refused. That in itself says a lot about what the conditions must be like.

We did however hear descriptions from those who had themselves been in prison, and from lawyers defending prisoners at the moment. Their accounts were grim. Conditions do vary from prison to prison. But in Metris, for example, prisoners' exercise time seems to be limited to less than an hour a week. Prisoners are not allowed any paper or writing implements (which of course makes it particularly difficult to prepare anything like a proper defence for court). Visiting is restricted to ten minutes in a week by lawyers, and five minutes by families. Families have to queue from the early hours of the morning in order to get in. And in each case the interview takes place under the close surveillance of a soldier or soldiers.

Although no-one was able to give us a clear answer or the up-to-date position everyone confirmed that there had been — until very recently — a massive hunger strike in prisons across the whole country, which had started in Metris. It was now over in Istanbul. During the course of the hunger strike several prisoners had had to be taken into hospital; ambulances had been seen outside the prisons; and at least two people had died. These had been a total clamp-down on news of the hunger strikes, and not one word about them had been mentioned in the Turkish press or radio. The only channel for the news was in fact the BBC World Service.

The DISK defendants, in court, recorded that the conditions in Metris were in fact now getting worse. Since the hunger strike ended, a new regime has taken over in the prison, and life is now ever more difficult for the prisoners. Two days after our own visit to the court, all the defendants who are in prison had their heads shaved compulsorily.

4. The Show Trials

None of us have ever had quite such a Kafka-esque experience as our visit to the DISK trial. Getting in was bad enough: the "courtroom" is a converted gymnasium in a military compound on the margins of Istanbul. We had to leave the car at the gate, walk up the long dusty drive, have our passports labouriously checked, subject ourselves to a body search, and then be escorted by a posse of soldiers into the courtroom itself.

The charges being brought against the accused are themselves ludicrous. No crime of violence is attributed to any of the defendants. No charge is advanced which would be in any way regarded as an offence in any Western European country. The crimes alleged are crimes of thought, not of action. One of the pieces of evidence cited against the DISK members on the day we were present was an article, written some eight years ago in their newsletter, which sought to point out that working class

children had fewer educational opportunities than middle class children. Under Clause 141 of the penal code, this is "promoting the hegemony of one class over another" and is therefore illegal.

The court proceedings are ever worse. They started late. They consisted in large measure of one of the judges reading out, at great speed, portions of a series of documents which form part of the indictment against the accused. Note that it was one of the judges who did this — not the prosecutor who sat silent throughout. The reading was highly selective; the defendants tried to intervene to ask for the *whole* of a document to be read out, and not just a part, in order to demonstrate balance; their request was refused. As a result, only the damaging portions will appear in the court and be taken into account.

When one of the defendants rose, to indicate that the documents being quoted were old and not necessarily agreed to be all the accused anyway, he was abruptly told to sit down and shut up.

There is no calling of witnesses. There is supposedly an opportunity for the accused to answer the accusations at the end, but it is not a meaningful way of presenting a defence. The indictment runs to 700 pages. And only two copies are made available to the whole group of 78 defendants.

Throughout the proceedings the four lawyers supposedly representing the accused sat silently. Lawyers in the trial face severe penalties, and exclusion from the court, if they displease the judges in anyway. When the DISK trial began, the defence was initially conducted by Orhan Apaydin, President of the Istanbul Bar Association and Turkey's most prominent lawyer. No sooner had he started his defence, than he was arrested and imprisoned himself, and is accused under the Peace Association trial which is now beginning to draw to a close. Lawyers can be ordered to leave, if they say anything which displeases the judges; if they transgress twice, they can be dismissed from the case entirely.

All prisoners, before appearing in court, are stripped and searched. The means available to them to provide a defence for themselves are effectually non-existent. Yet we were all struck by the immense dignity with which they conducted themselves, and the clarity with which they made the few points they were permitted to make. During the lunchtime and afternoon breaks, we had an opportunity to exchange a few words with some of them, across the separating barriers. They were quite clearly delighted and grateful for our presence there, and thanked us for coming. It was a moving and humbling exchange.

The same conditions pertain in the trial of a number of members of the Turkish Peace Association. All except one have been released from prison, but are still required to attend court twice a week. All of them — including some of the most eminent people in Turkey, lawyer, diplomat, professor, painter, poet — have previously been in jail. The one still in custody recently stated in open court that he expected to be tortured, that his

current testimony was true, and that if it subsequently changed in any way the world should know it would have been under duress.

The evidence advanced in the Peace Association trial is ever more farcical than that in the DISK trial. The will of Peter the Great has been cited as an incriminating document. A letter of protest from a number of British MPs has been adduced as evidence of a foreign plot to subvert the course of native justice.

And at the same time, even those who are not held in prison face major problem in their outside lives, whilst the trials are going on. No one under trial is permitted to hold public office (which means there have been a mass dismissal of professional staff in the universities); So much for any notions of innocence until guilt is proved. Lawyers and other professional people who have to appear in court twice a week have only 3/5 of a week left in which to earn any money. The effects for some of them have been severe.

One question we kept on asking was *why* such "overkill" action was being taken by the regime in imprisoning and putting on trial large numbers of eminent and obviously guiltless people. As one person put it to us in response: if you imprison the President of the Bar Association, you intimidate every single lawyer in Turkey; if you put the whole trade union leadership on trial, everyone begins to think twice about joining unions. The impact of these actions, and the injustice enshrined in them, is enormous.

5. Press Censorship

There is some "formal" censorship of the press. Any reporting of the trials, or prison conditions, is subject to scrutiny by the military authorities. No unfavourable comment of any kind is allowed.

Ever more serious however, is the imposition of an informal self-censorship on all newspapers and magazines. It operates very simply. The regime has the power to close down overnight any part of the press in Turkey. They use the power regularly, wherever they see an article they object to. Whilst we were there, two of the six national daily newspapers were closed (one has now re-opened) and a weekly magazine had also recently been shut down. In each case, it is not only the particular journalist or the editor who is involved. The whole staff is affected.

The net result is that everyone, quite simply, is scared stiff of writing anything at all that might upset the government. Journalists and editors pore over articles to make sure they are as bland and supportive and innocuous as possible.

At the same time the foreign press is not exactly helped in the search for objectivity. The only Western journalist based in Ankara who sends critical reports back — the *Guardian* correspondent — has found that his home is bugged, his telephone tapped, and that he is under constant police surveillance. Such conditions hardly represent normal journalistic

facilities.

Most Western correspondents in fact visit Turkey at the express invitation and expense of the Turkish government. They are shepherded round by official guides who — certainly in the case of one recent such visit — in fact belong to the Secret Service. They are provided with the government “line” on events and nothing else. It duly gets reported as objective evidence in their articles on their return.

There also appears to be a marked resistance amongst editors and foreign news editors in the British press and radio, to giving Turkey the coverage it needs and deserves. We were quoted examples of the *Guardian*, the *Sunday Times*, and the BBC all expressing a lack of interest and concern. Given what is actually happening in Turkey, such unconcern defies credulity.

6. Trade Unionism

The DISK trial should in itself be sufficient evidence of the regime’s attitude towards trade unionism. As one person put it to us, the position of Bastürk (DISK President) — imprisoned, tortured, on trial, and with his confederation suspended — is in fact far worse than Walesa’s in Poland.

There is no freedom of association in Turkey: it is specifically excluded from the new constitution. No-one can form a new trade union unless they already have a prospective membership of 10% of the workforce in the entire industrial sector concerned, and 50% at the particular factory: a catch-22 which effectively prevents the establishment of any new unions at all.

Collective bargaining is only permitted through the medium of Turk-Is, the government-backed confederation of unions. In reality, this means that very little bargaining is carried out, and the union activity there is mostly of a social nature, carried out at factory level. There is no free trade unionism to speak of in Turkey.

7. Political Activity

Following the military coup in 1980, all previous political parties were disbanded and banned and most (although not all) former politicians were excluded from the chance of office. Generously, the regime invited the formation of new political parties, but reserved to itself the right to veto names of founder members: in order to qualify for the “privilege” of contesting elections, a party had to achieve 30 approved founder members. Fifteen new parties have sought to establish themselves. Only three have been “permitted” to do so, with 30 approved founders.

It is only these three approved parties which will contest the so-called elections due to be held on 6th November this year. All three are closely aligned to the military regime’s policies and personnel. One of them (headed by General Sunalp) is highly favoured to win. The only real opposition —

from the — equally right-wing but marginally independent party headed by Ozal — may very well be truncated between now and 6th November, by the expected dis-barring of numbers of its candidates.

The only party remotely of the left of centre which had any chance of formation — SODEP, the social democratic party — achieved only 28 approved names, despite many which were submitted, failed. The vetoing of SODEP does starkly highlight the almost unbelievably rigged nature of this forthcoming election.

It will certainly not be a free or a fair election.

8. Justifications Advanced

Throughout our time in Turkey, we found that two particular arguments were constantly advanced by apologists for the regime, as justification for the coup and their subsequent actions.

One was what might be called the “sigh of relief” theory. Everyone — from across the whole political spectrum — agrees that there was widespread street violence, including acts of terrorism, in the weeks leading up to the coup in September 1980. The violence seems to have come from both right and left; and we met at least one person who had had to flee the country because he was on a fascist “hit-list” at that time. The *reasons* for the violence (and the degree of agent-provocateurism involved), and the apparent inability of the authorities even where military law prevailed, at the time to cope, raise extremely important and unanswered questions. But there is general agreement that violence was rife, and that virtually immediately after the coup occurred, it ceased. To that extent, the statement that there was a great and general sigh of relief throughout the land when it happened is probably correct. But that does not, of course, provide any real justification for the abrogation of democracy. Nor does it explain or justify the fact that, three years later, the country is living under an oppressive dictatorship with little prospect of relief.

The other standard justification — advanced by both Turks and foreigners — was what could be called the “Turkey is Turkey” theory. This argument means: that there has been torture and political repression in Turkey since the days of the Ottoman Empire; that it is the “Turkish way of doing things”; that the country stands on the boundaries of Europe and Asia, and can’t be judged by “European” standards. The racism inherent in such remarks should not need highlighting. Torture is torture, wherever it occurs. Human rights are applicable right around the world, in Turkey just as much as (say) in Poland. But it should also be remembered that Turkey, since the days of Atatürk, has consciously striven to represent itself as being as “European” as possible. It is a Member of the Council of Europe, a Member of NATO, and an Associate Member of the EEC.

9. The British Embassy

During our time in Turkey, we met with high ranking representatives of both the British Consulate in Istanbul, and the British Embassy in Ankara. We received proper, courteous, and helpful treatment from the Istanbul Consulate; and we would have no complaints whatsoever about our reception there.

The British Embassy in Ankara, however, fell far short of what should be the normal standards of diplomatic practice. We were received with discourtesy. We had asked beforehand for a number of appointments to be sought on our behalf, and virtually no attempt had been made to do so. We asked while we were there for two particular people to be contacted for us; they weren't. Instead, we were simply handed two telephone numbers, and both of those turned out to be incorrect.

More importantly, however, the analysis of the political situation in Turkey which was presented to us by senior officers of the Embassy was biased and inaccurate, and had clearly abandoned many of the fundamental assumptions on which the British governmental system and way of life are based. The officials were, in effect craven apologists for the present military regime. We were told that Turks were "not afraid of speaking their mind" — which sat oddly with the futive fear envinced by everyone we had spoken to. We were told that the DISK and Peace Association trials were "not show trials of farces", and that the prosecution was "making a genuine attempt to establish a case". We were informed that a return to democracy was under way; that the President, General Evren, was "genuinely trying to do his best"; and that the military regime had brought about a "significant and welcome transformation" in the country. The script might have been written by Evren himself.

One point was reiterated time and again: that the Turkish people — the popular will — overwhelmingly supported the military regime and what it was doing. The fact that no-one really knows what it is doing, because of massive press censorship, seemed to be irrelevant. And the fact that the popular will had no means of manifesting itself in free elections was also ignored.

The standard of Embassy analysis and assessment revealed by our conversation was shockingly low. It is small wonder — if this is the quality of information flowing from Ankara to Whitehall — that British policy towards Turkey is so ill-formed. We have submitted a formal letter of complaint to the Foreign Office about the conduct and quality of the Embassy staff concerned.

10. Conclusions

We believe the facts as set out above speak for themselves. Our specific conclusions are, briefly, as follows:

There is widespread abuse of human rights in Turkey. Torture and

physical violence take place in prisons and police stations. Prison conditions are wholly unsatisfactory. Mass trials are taking place on unjust charges and under unjust procedures. The press is heavily censored. There is no free trade unionism. And political activity is severely curtailed.

b) The elections due to be held on 6th November will be neither free nor fair.

c) Britain should take immediate steps to change its public position on relations with Turkey. It should cease to provide every excuse to support the present regime, and should join with other nations in condemning in strong terms the human rights performance of the military government.

d) Britain should support the calls from other European nations for the expulsion of Turkey from the Council of Europe.

e) America should be requested to cease military aid to Turkey, which re-commenced this year.

f) Evidence of the abuse of human rights should be presented to the Congressional hearings shortly to take place in the United States.

g) A complaint should be submitted to the International Commission of Jurists, about the conduct of the mass trials.

h) The Western press and media should devote more attention, and show for more concern, than they have hitherto about Turkey. The commendable interest shown in events in Poland should also be shown about Turkey.

i) We strongly recommend that an all-party delegation of British MPs should now visit Turkey, urgently.

j) We call on the Foreign Secretary to take a personal interest in what is happening in Turkey, and to make representations for an immediate end to the use of torture, inhuman prison conditions, mass trials, and press censorship.

11. This Report

This report will be presented to:

- The Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey
- The Foreign Secretary
- The Library of the House of Commons
- The International sub-committee of the Labour Party
- The Foreign Affairs committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party
- The International Committee of the Trade Union Congress
- The Congress of the United States of America
- The United States Ambassador
- The Council of Europe
- The European Commission on Human Rights
- The International Commission of Jurists
- Amnesty International
- The British Press

Report on Turkey



by Jeremy Corbyn, MP

I was part of a delegation organised by CEDRI* to Turkey to attend the trials of the people, Councillors and Mayor of Fatsa. We were there to represent the resolutions of two hundred and eighty local authorities throughout Western Europe who have declared their solidarity with the people on trial.

We were also there to examine the human rights position in the country, the methods under which the mass trials are being carried out and the freedoms of political organisation.

Turkey underwent a military coup on September 12th 1980 and since then the country has been governed by a military junta under the presidency of General Evren. In 1982 a new constitution was introduced by the junta by means of a referendum which also linked the question of General Evren's Presidency to the 'YES' vote. No campaigning was allowed against the new constitution and the ballot was of dubious accuracy and

*CEDRI: Comité Européen pour la Défense des Réfugiés et Immigrés (Basle)

secrecy. In no sense could it be described as anything but a blatantly rigged referendum. The constitution also includes such laws as one preventing any political party preaching the supremacy of one class above another.

Since then the junta has been attempting to convince the rest of the world that free elections are about to be held in Turkey. On November 6th the people of Turkey will be able to go to the polls to elect the representatives of one of three parties; nobody is allowed to contest an election who was active in politics before the 1980 coup and the existence of any political party requires the prior approval of the military. The Parties approved so far are all of the right.

In Turkey at the moment there are a large number of trials going on; probably anything up to fifty and they encompass people who have been active, before the coup, in a very wide variety of organisations. The most notable trials are of the Turkish Peace Association, DISK, the Communist Party, Dev Yol, Yeni Celtek (miners) and Fatsa. In all cases they are mass trials and in all cases a very substantial number of death penalties have been asked for, and granted by the military tribunals. Since 1980 there have been over 1,000 executions in Turkey; almost one for every day that General Evren has been in power.

As the purpose of our visit was to witness the Fatsa trial and prepare a report on it we went to the northern town of Amasya where it is being held, and in whose prison the 758 defendants are held. Amasya is a beautiful old town south of the Black Sea, and it has a Mayor civil Governor appointed by the junta, large prison and even larger army camp on the outside of the town.

Our first port of call there was to meet the Mayor of the town and in conversation he told us that he was concerned that we were visiting because it implied that we did not trust Turkish justice and went on to tell us that the Fatsa people in the trial were all guilty anyway; he did not think there was anything odd in this remark.

Despite being assured that we would have complete freedom of movement and be able to visit the trial and the prison, this was not our experience. When we arrived at the army camp we were told that we could not enter it, but could come back the following day. One of the guards also told us that the Fatsa trial was not due to be reconvened until September 26th; a private soldier, in an unwitting aside, let us know that there was another trial taking place the following day of the people of Havsa. We asked on a number of occasions to see the officers running the camp, and the people administering the trials. On both counts we were told that this was all perfectly possible, but that a General was arriving on a tour of inspection and that we would have to arrive in such a way as not to interfere with his plans. When we did return we were told variations of the same story and that the Havsa trial would resume later. It did not but the numbers of very poor relatives who had made the long and expensive journey from their home town had clearly been lead to believe that there

was going to be a trial for them to witness. The people were poor and very despondant indeed.

As we had been told that we could visit the prison we attempted this; the building itself is a white concrete construction set alongside a mountain with few windows houses both the military and civilian prison. Our arrival were coincided with the throwing open of the large double doors and the awful sight of eight uniformed head shaven prisoners pushing a garbage truck out accompanied by a number of armed guards, with gate guards holding their sub machine guns with fixed bayonets. The prisoners were then forced to unload this truck surrounded by guards.

We were told that we were quite free to visit the prison, but that we needed the written approval of the Ministry of Justice in Ankara (seven hours away by road).

Since it seemed unlikely that there would be any trial whilst we remained in Amasya we returned to Ankara to witness the trial of the defendants who were accused of membership of Dev-Yol. After some complications we were able to visit this trial.

It takes place in a military camp in Ankara, with extensive guarding and registering. When we arrived we were then accompanied to a former sports hall that had been converted for the trial. Outside, in a dusty courtyard were soldiers, all armed and all continually directing the few relatives who were present; they all tried hard to stop our delegation talking to them. Inside the building the sight was incredible; two hundred and five men, all young, sitting on benches in civilian clothes but shaved heads, surrounded by soldiers, and sitting on the front row were thirteen young women prisoners also wearing civilian clothes. All the accused were surrounded by a steel fence. At the back in a sort of grandstand were no more than a hundred families who were also closely guarded. Apart from us the press benches were empty and the lawyers benches, totally separate from the prisoners, contained just two people. On a huge dais at the front sat seven military officers, all wearing uniform and a high collared cloak, one of them was apparently the prosecutor, but it was difficult to distinguish his presence from that of the judges. The guard was changed every twenty minutes with a very intimidating means of marching soldiers in and then standing double guard until positions had been doubled, and then marching the previous guard out. Any defendant wishing to go to the toilet has to be accompanied by a soldier.

The charges against the defendants were written in a two volume and very closely typed book; running to 1308 pages it catalogues cases against 578 people. The nature of the cases consists of their membership of Dev Yol and charges of collecting money for it, which was then used for other purposes and "plotting to overthrow the state" All of the charges related to the period before the coup in 1980, and was clearly the result of very intensive questioning.

All of the defendants had been in prison for about three years, and some of them were only aged eighteen, which means that at the time of arrest they were aged fifteen. As the prosecutor read out his charge in labourious detail the defendant concerned was then ordered to the dock to give his response. (The women were not called whilst we were there). In all cases they denied the charges, mostly stated that they had been tortured, all said that the statements were obtained under duress and in some cases said that they had signed them whilst blind folded.

It is quite clear that none of the defendants ever had free access to lawyers, were not allowed private visits, and had been subject to torture. We met people who told us the most horrifying accounts of being dragged from their homes at night in mid winter without proper clothes on; torture was a wide variety of vile methods but included cold water, keeping awake under questioning, electric shock and hitting with sand bags. The ever present threat of harming relatives was also frequently used.

Since the coup all democratic rights have disappeared in Turkey; the Trade Union in existence is run by the Government and all non approved Trade Unions are banned, the same applies to the political parties.

The Council of Europe, who condemned the referendum in 1982 have now been asked to investigate the breaches of Human Rights in Turkey by Holland, France, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The first hearing is due to take place soon and it ought to be closely watched.

Turkey is also a member of NATO and uses this position to be supplied with the most modern weapons to threaten its neighbours, but also to repress its own people particularly the Kurds. The junta have just landed an order for F16 jet fighters from the United States, with the inbuilt advantage of gaining a manufacturing capacity for it.

A country that has prisons bursting at the seams, daily executions, total control of all media outlets and racism enshrined in its constitution ought to stand condemned. Thousands of Turkish people in exile can attest to its brutality and to the dangers of living in Turkey and thinking anything about how much better society could be ordered.

Our short visit showed us the brutality, repression and total lack of any form of justice in the country.

The junta is very anxious to present the November 6th elections as some sort of step forward to democracy; this absolute lie must be exposed for the cynical manoeuvre that it is.

Jeremy Corbyn is the Labour Member of Parliament for Islington North. His constituency includes nearly ten thousand Turkish people and part of his mission was to report back to them. Before election to Parliament he was a member of the London Borough of Haringey Council where he proposed a motion of solidarity with Fatsa.

Appendix I

Strasbourg, 14 September 1983

Restricted
AS/Pol/Jur/Turquie (35) 5

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Sub-Committees on the situation in Turkey

Memorandum presented by Mr STEINER,
Rapporteur of the Political Affairs Committee

1. In its Resolution 794 (1983) the Assembly, after noting, in paragraph 7. "that there are a number of dangers and weaknesses inherent in the new Constitution", had nevertheless stated its belief "that the democratic character of the new Constitution will be determined, to a large extent, by the way it is implemented". The laws drawn up by the National Security Council after consulting the Consultative Assembly are basic factors for an assessment of this "implementation". The hearing of constitutional experts which was scheduled for this meeting could be held, as it was impossible for the Secretariat of the Council of Europe to translate the acts in time. They essentially comprise a law on political parties, an electoral law, a law on trade unions and collective bargaining, and a new law on the press. We should, in my opinion, make every effort to accelerate the study and assessment of these laws by obtaining, as soon as possible, the opinion of three experts, even orally to start with.

2. Although it is too early for us to comment on laws of which we only indirectly know the outline, we should already take note of their implementing measures, on which our information is already fairly comprehensive. I refer particularly to the law on political parties according to which one of the conditions for a party to take part in elections is that it should have 30 founder members approved by the military authorities before the 24 August 1983. The National Security Council objected to 454 persons out of the 779 who had applied. The result is clear: the November legislative elections will probably only be contested by three parties (whereas more than 15 parties wished to take part) — the "Nationalist Democracy Party" (described as centre-right), the "Motherland Party" (seemingly the liberal conservative right wing) and the "Populist Party" (apparently equivalent to a kind of centre-left). I used the term "probably" since the National Security Council can, until 21 September, disqualify any candidate deemed undesirable. Indeed the law stipulates that the National Security Council must ratify the list of candidates standing for election.

3. Before expressing an opinion on these laws and their implementation, it should be recalled that, in its Resolution 794 (paragraph 20 (iii)), the Assembly urgently appealed to the Government of Turkey "to do everything to ensure for political parties all the freedom necessary to organise and to prepare themselves for parliamentary elections". We should ask ourselves on this point whether such restrictions comply with the freedom of association recognised for all individuals by the European Convention on Human Rights.

4. Neither should we forget the other "urgent" appeal by the Assembly in paragraph 20 (ii) of the same resolution calling on the Turkish Government "to allow for a free discussion, at all stages, of further legislation to implement the Constitution in a democratic way, in particular the electoral law and the law on the political parties". Did a free discussion in actual fact take place? On this point, it is worth recalling the closure last

August of two large Turkish national daily newspapers, "Tercuman" and "Milliyet", decided by the National Security Council, and the criminal proceedings against two editorial writers, Mrs Nazli Ilicak and Mr Metin Toker. Mrs Ilicak had published an article on 10 August comparing the military regime to a "night between two days". She is charged with violation of two articles of the Penal Code on incitement to resisting the public authorities and offences against the dignity of the state; she is liable to a prison sentence of two months to six years. I need not recall that Mrs Ilicak was heard by the Political Affairs Committee and had contacts with the sub-committees during their fact-finding mission in Turkey in January 1982.

5. Publication of "Milliyet" was prohibited as from 16 August after carrying an article by Mr Toker — whom we remember as a very active and highly regarded member of the former Turkish parliamentary delegation to our Assembly — condemning the "scenario" devised by the military authorities in order to "re-establish democracy". Mr Toker is charged with violation of the National Security Council decree against any contesting of the military authority. He is liable to a six-month prison sentence.

6. I wish to point out that, in a memorandum smuggled out of Turkey and quoted by The Times on 9 August of this year, former Turkish political leaders, who are currently detained, thought that the next elections would be a fraud. The 16 signatories of the memorandum, including former Prime Minister Demirel, ask the European nations not to remain neutral in "the war between militarism and democracy" taking place in Turkey. According to them, Turkey "has been driven into a deeper crisis than before 12 September 1980", and they are extremely critical of western countries which they accuse "of applauding Evren until their hands were red". Among the memorandum's 16 signatories, nine belonged to Mr Demirel's party, while the seven others are former ministers or former parliamentary members of the People's Republican Party.

7. In one of my earlier memoranda, I raised the problem of purges which have reached alarming proportions in universities. In its Resolution 794, paragraph 12, the Assembly had said it was "concerned" about the law on the universities, adopted in November 1981. The law on higher education set up a Higher Education Council, known by the initials YOK, whose members are appointed by the President of the Republic. I intend to study this problem more deeply in my next report as it is a question of considerable importance.

8. The major event in the field of human rights was the hunger strike, from 8 July to 6 August, by 1,600 detainees in the four military prisons of Istanbul (Metris, Sagmalcilar, Sultan Ahmed and Kabakos). The prisoners' families asked the public authorities to take effective action to bring the hunger strike to an end. The prisoners complained above all about the difficulty of examining the official charges in any detail and obtaining

writing material. They asked that visits should no longer be limited or cut short, and requested an end to the harsh treatment and beating by wardens, and discrimination between prisoners. It is interesting to note that the Turkish press maintained a complete silence on the subject, presumably following the authorities' instructions. On the other hand, support for the Turkish prisoners spread in a number of member states of the Council of Europe. Turkish citizens went on hunger strikes in Paris (15 persons), Basel, Bern, Geneva and Winterthur (80), Denmark (20), the Federal Republic of Germany (450), Amsterdam (60), Athens (30), Innsbruck (20) and Stockholm. Danes demonstrated outside the Turkish Embassy. The President of our Assembly urgently appealed to General Evren asking him "for humanitarian reasons, to do everything to improve the conditions of all prisoners of conscience and save those prisoners on hunger strike". We have not been fully informed of the hunger strike's effects on the lives and physical or mental states of certain detainees. On the one hand, the authorities categorically deny that any of the hunger strikers have died; on the other hand, there are rumors that three prisoners have died and that about 60 others, in a critical condition, have been hospitalised.

9. Judicial proceedings, which have been somewhat slowed down by the military courts' summer holidays, have led to five death sentences passed by the Ankara military court on 7 July in the trial against members of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), charged with attempting to set up a Kurdish state within Turkish territory by force of arms. It is worth recalling that last May, a similar trial against members of the same party led to 35 death sentences and over 600 prison sentences of different durations. Furthermore, a trial was held at the end of July against 64 members of trade union connected with DISK, charged with co-operating with the banned Communist Party.

10. Lastly, a hearing of all the parties concerned should be held in October in the proceedings before the European Commission of Human Rights. So far, however, the Commission has provided no details on the subject.

Appendix II

POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PRELIMINARY DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN TURKEY presented by Mr Steiner

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its earlier positions on the situation in Turkey, expressed *inter alia* in its Resolution 749 (1983), and the urgent appeals it has made to the Turkish Government;
2. Noting that there has been no reaction to these appeals, in particular
 - (i) that so far the new Constitution has not been fully democratically applied;
 - (ii) that the laws adopted under the Constitution were not the subject of free discussion;
 - (iii) that the National Security Council has made use of the prerogatives conferred on it by the new laws to prevent the free

formation of political parties;

(iv) that martial law has not been lifted and the derogations from the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights remain in force;

3. Reiterating its concern in regard to the human rights situation in Turkey, above all given the large number of those imprisoned for ideological reasons and the many allegations made about prison conditions;

4. Endorsing the humanitarian appeal addressed by its President to the Turkish Head of State to ease the lot of all prisoners of conscience and to save the life of prisoners on hunger strike in various Turkish prisons;

5. Expressing its surprise and regret at the silence of the Turkish authorities in the face of this appeal;

6. Alarmed at the situation in the universities where recent purges run counter to freedom of education and conscience;

7. Convinced that freedom of the press is an essential element of any democratic system and that the repressive measures adopted by the authorities towards certain organs of the press constitute a serious obstacle to the process of a return to democracy, especially in a pre-electoral period;

8. Emphasising once again the importance that it attaches to the rapid completion of procedures before the European Commission of Human Rights;

9. Recalling that under Article 3 of the first protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights "the high contracting parties" — which include Turkey, "undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature" and that on the basis of the above considerations there are serious doubts about Turkey's observance of this undertaking;

10. Reserving the right to decide on the appropriateness of sending a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers aimed at setting in motion the procedure provided for by Article 8 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, when it can obtain the written opinion of three independent experts in constitutional law on the compatibility of the new Turkish laws with the Council of Europe's Statute and the European Convention on Human Rights;

11. Declares that under present conditions and on the basis of information now available, the parliament which will be elected in Turkey on 6 November will not be able to be considered as representing the Turkish people in a democratic manner, and could not therefore validly constitute a delegation to participate in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;

12. Instructs its Political Affairs and Legal Affairs Committees to follow the development of the situation in Turkey very closely and to report in January 1984.