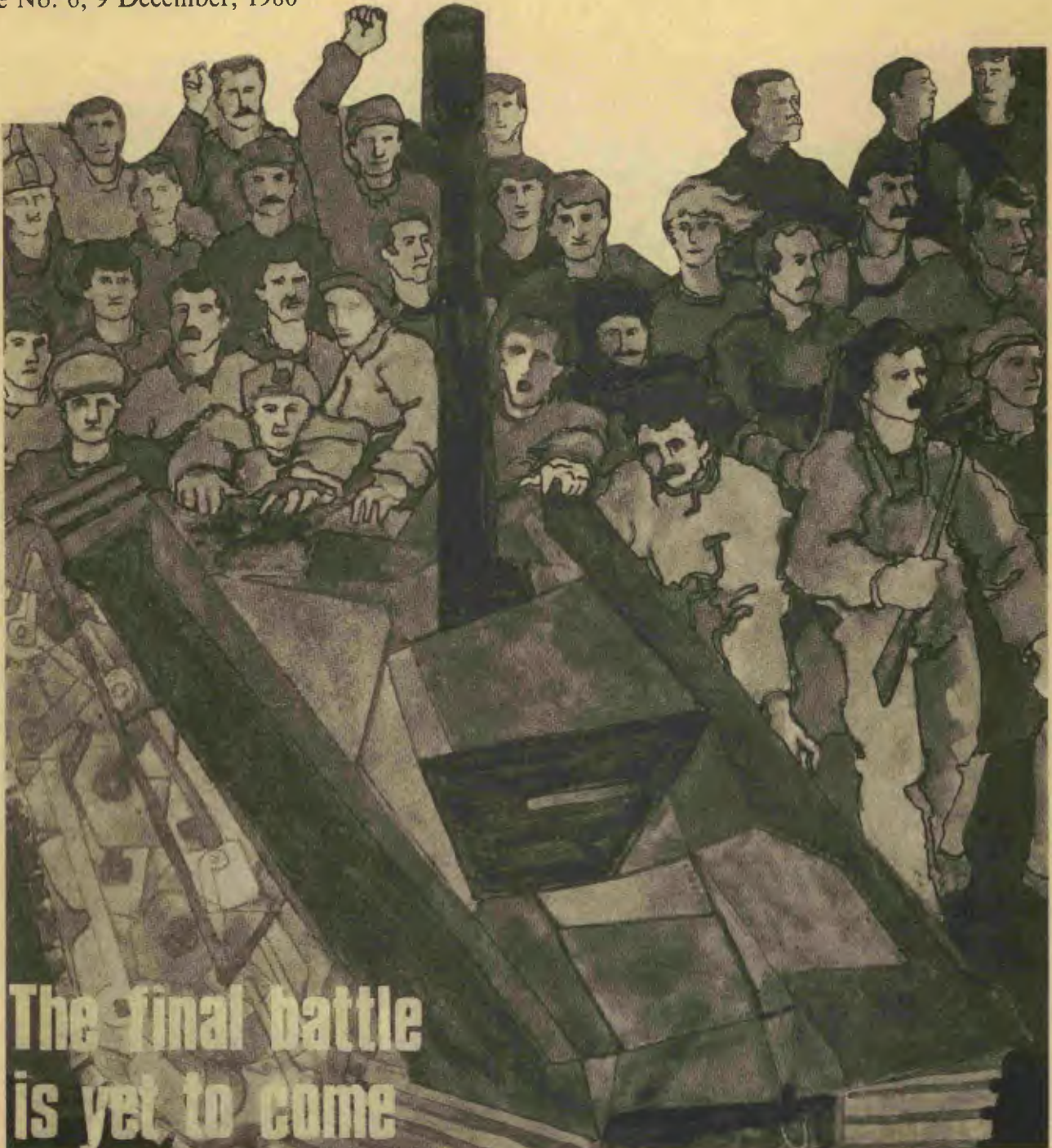


Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 6, 9 December, 1980



The final battle
is yet to come

**TURKEY'S JUNTA IS A FASCIST JUNTA,
SOLIDARITY WITH THE ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLE!**

Cracked down on trade unions after fascist coup

One of the fascist junta's first actions on seizing power on 12th September was to ban all progressive Trade Unions and their activities and to order striking workers back to work. Within days, thousands of trade unionists had been taken into custody where they still remain. All officials of all the banned trade unions were ordered to give themselves up at the nearest Martial Law headquarters or to be treated as fugitives.

The situation in Turkey which led up to 12th September involved a heightening of class conflict, with massive strikes and demonstrations primarily organised by the Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation DISK. In 1976, a general strike against State Security Courts was called to oppose efforts to prolong martial law, after the Turkish Army's attempt to impose fascist measures between 1971-73.

Every year between 1976 and 1980, massive May Day demonstrations occupied the streets of major cities, reaching half a million in Istanbul in 1977 alone. In recent years, fierce strike battles were fought, with the Metal Workers (Maden-Is) staying out for 8 months in 1978, and finally forcing the Employers' Federation (MESS) to concede substantial wage rises and other benefits.

A high point was reached in February 1980 when an attempt to replace workers at the state run Taris Factory in Izmir with members of a fascist controlled union, led to an occupation by 10,000 workers. The ensuing attempt by the army to evict them resulted in a barricade insurrection in the shanty towns (gecekondus) throughout the Izmir region, lasting 2 weeks.

Below the poverty line

The workers in Turkey suffer one of the highest rates of exploitation in the world. Up to 75% of a worker's time is spent producing profit, and subsequently, the level of wages are forced below the minimum required for his physical existence. This is illustrated by widespread malnutrition, high death rate and low life expectancy. Refusal by employers to invest in industrial safety has given Turkey one of the highest accident rates, with five times the rate in manufacturing and over ten times in mining, compared with UK figures. A further aspect of intense exploitation is the employment of children from the age of 12. For example, at the Pasabahce Bottle and Glass works in Istanbul, 200 children work for 300 Turkish Lira per month until they are 18, which is one tenth the current minimum wage.

Today, there is 25% unemployment (less than 10% of workers are covered by Social Security), 100% inflation and a shortage of every commodity, resulting in long queues in every town and city. One can wait 24 hours for petrol at those stations still in service. Black market speculation in butter, meat, cooking oil, coffee, petrol and medicines etc., has contributed to a "parallel economy" which is possibly of equal importance to the official economy.

Fascist reactions and state oppression

In response to the struggle of working people and Kurds against these intolerable living conditions, fascist paramilitary groups linked to the fascist Nationalist Action Party carried out a campaign of assassinations and terror in which 5000 people have died since 1978. They machine-gunned the 1977 May Day demonstration in Istanbul, killing over 30 and wounding 200, and the massacre of 110 men, women and children at

Kahramanmaras in December 1978 provided the opportunity to re-impose martial law in the major industrial regions and Kurdistan.

Despite this, the fascist terror continued unabated to a higher level, with finally the assassination of Kemal Türkler, President of the Metal Workers' Union, founder and former president of DISK, provoking a spontaneous outburst of anger as 800,000 workers downed tools, under the threat of arrest in July of this year.

However, the Turkish army never ceased to use martial law against progressive forces. In 1979, May Day was banned in Istanbul, with tanks occupying major road junctions and squares; 1000 people were arrested, including 6 DISK leaders the night before. In 1980, an even tighter clampdown was effected, and a never ending process of intimidation reminded the Kurds of their "loyalty" to the Turkish nation.

The fascist coup

The takeover by General Evren was a continuation of the reactionary process designed to intimidate the working people and Kurds into acceptance of extreme poverty, exploitation and national oppression. It was part and parcel of fascistisation of the state to achieve these ends. It took place at a period of rising class struggle with 60,000 metal workers on strike and the promise of more to follow. The Generals quickly forced the strikers back to work, excluding them from a 70% loan on future wages given to all employees (this was mis-reported by the Western press as a 70% wage rise).

The Junta is attempting to disguise its own fascist character, by appearing to act against right-wing terror groups as well as the left. The fascist run union MISK was banned, as well as DISK, but it is still the liquidation of organisation and trade union rights for the 1 million militant DISK workers that is the General's prime target.

The reactionary Trade Union Confederation TURK-IS, which was set up in 1947 under the guidance of American labour organisations (notorious for their covert CIA links), is now the *only* legal trade union organisation.

TURK-IS is being incorporated into the state apparatus, with its General Secretary Sadık Şide now Minister for Social Welfare. Indications have been made that preparations for a new "National Type" of trade unionism is under way (*Hürriyet*, 16th October 1980), and that collective bargaining is to be replaced by state imposed incomes policy. Workers are being "actively encouraged" to join these unions which already smack of Mussolini's syndicals.

The emphasis today, as can be seen from the workers' letters opposite, is a drive for greater productivity through sacrifice, hard work and speed up on the part of the workers: "...we are expecting to see a way of living and solidarity which is disciplined and in which frugality is emphasised, and a speed of work which offers the whole strength of the nation." (Evren's 13th September speech)

Letters from workers in Turkey



"...In these units (Municipal Works Departments — Newsletter) oppression and arrests of workers and office staff have become an every day phenomenon.

"...On 14th September 1980, fascists went beyond what they had been doing every day at Altintepe building. Like in Nazi Germany (even occupation armies do not do this), they locked the doors of Soyacılar Kortadeks Unit, and surrounded the building with police and gendarmes, showing as an excuse a leaflet from the 12th March period (aftermath 12th March 1971 military coup — Newsletter) which had been left by somebody unknown. They have taken workers and office staff, including pregnant women and mothers with their babies to torture houses, packed in buses."

(Izmir, October 1980)

"...At Sümerbank in Izmir, oppression of workers is going on. The chairman and members of the executive of the Union branch are under arrest and have been sacked from their work. ... 6 women friends have been questioned with accusations of slowing down the work. Two of them were sacked under the 12th Article of the work law and the others fined 3 days wages.

"...Other oppressions are as follows: The plant is working 3 shifts. The shift starting at 3.00 pm ends at 11.00 pm. Since there is a curfew at midnight, the friends who live far away spend the night at police stations. We do not have services. ... At dinner times, they give us each a ticket. The time allowed is 30 minutes. The queue stretches as far as the door. When the time runs out, they don't give the rest a meal. If you're last, you are questioned. ... One friend has been exiled to another shift and fired to work every Sunday." *(Izmir, October 1980)*

"...Last week three soldiers entered the seasonal Monopoly Factory. They gathered all the men working at the plant. They checked their moustaches. Those with long moustaches were given time to cut them. The next day most of the men came to work with trimmed moustaches.

"...For women workers, make-up, skirts with slits and trousers are prohibited. The meeting of workers from different units is prohibited. Even going to the toilet requires permission." *(Izmir, October 1980)*

"...After the fascist junta came to power, oppression increased in factories where strikes were banned and workers forced back to work. I will give an example from Ege Industry. This is one of those factories where the strikes were banned and oppression increased. Although nobody hung around the toilets, they have now appointed an official to oversee that there is no conversation between workers. At workbenches the workers are forced to increase production. The workers' representatives are not allowed to enter the plant."

(Izmir, October 1980)

"...In the state establishments (KIT), personnel have to be at their work five minutes before work commences. Also at these organisations, if an employee leaves his desk and talks to another employee, this is an offence. Personnel are often gathered and the announcements of the Martial Law commanders are read, and they are made to approve it.

"...In some work places, workers are made to collect rubbish by force. People are made to do drudgery work. At work places of IETT (Istanbul Electricity and Transport Organisation — Newsletter), the same workers are made to do 3 shifts with no break by the colonel in charge."

(Istanbul, October 1980)



March against fascism in Turkey

The Committee for Democratic Rights in Turkey was founded in 1978, to rally world democratic opinion against fascisation of the state in Turkey, and in particular, Articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Code, which are directly culled from Mussolini's Penal Code.

Since the 12th September 1980, the CDDRT has launched an international campaign with organisations at the moment in Britain, France, West Germany and Norway, to expose the fascist character of General Evren's ruling junta.

In Britain, local organisations have already been established in London, Leeds, Manchester, Brighton, Colchester and Loughborough. Affiliations from local and national organisations of the labour and progressive movements are steadily coming in. A National Congress of the CDDRT will be convened, in order to democratically decide on its constitution and programme.

To expand local organisations and links with the

British labour movement, a sponsored march by 25 Turkish progressives will set off from Leeds on Saturday 7th March and end in London on Sunday, 15th March with a National Demonstration to Hyde Park.

Help in organising a week of demonstrations, public meetings and accommodation in Leeds, Barnsley, Sheffield, Manchester, Stoke, Birmingham, Coventry, Luton and London is to be sought from the local trades councils, union and party branches in those cities. If you as an organisation or individual can aid us, please write to the CDDRT at the address below. Secondly, we need political and financial support at all times, and if you as an organisation or individual have not already affiliated to the CDDRT, fill out the form below, or write for more information.

Lastly, the CDDRT will be only too pleased to provide speakers for any meetings you have; just contact us by 'phone or letter.

Our slogans for the March are:

TURKEY'S JUNTA IS A FASCIST JUNTA, SMASH THE FASCIST JUNTA!
FREEDOM FOR TURKEY'S WORKERS, SMASH THE BANS ON UNIONS!
STOP THE TORTURES, FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY!

Sponsors to date

Frank Allaun, MP
Joe Ashton, MP
Andrew Bennett, MP
Sid Bidwell, MP
Bob Cryer, MP
Geoffrey Edge, MP
Fred Evans, MP
Martin Flannery, MP
Les Huckfield, MP
Bob Hughes, MP
Roy Hughes, MP
James Lamond, MP
Bob Litherland, MP
Eddie Loyden, MP
Jim Marshall, MP
Joan Maynard, MP
George Morton, MP
Stan Newens, MP
Stan Orme, MP
Jo Richardson, MP
Ernie Roberts, MP

Dennis Skinner, MP
Richard Caborn, MEP
Alf Lomas, MEP
Colin Barnett, Sec., NW Region TUC
Stan Cole, AUEW NEC
Lawrence Daly, NUM
J. Davidson, NW Dist. Sec. FTAT
Beryl Huffinley, Sec., Yorkshire and Humberside Region TUC
E.V. Hughes, MBE Vice President, NW Region TUC
Alex Kitson, TGWU
Mick McGahey, NUM
Allan Sapper, ACTT
Bob Wright, AUEW
ASTMS — Manchester HS Branch
AUEW — Kingston District
AUEW — N. Manchester District
NUM — Derbyshire
NUM — Lancashire
NUM — Yorkshire

TGWU
UCATT — NW Region
Hackney Trades Council
Leeds Trades Council
Rotherham Trades Council
Stockport Trades Council
Ardwick Constituency Labour Party
Communist Party of Great Britain
CPGB Manchester Area
KNE — Communist Youth of Greece (org. in Britain)
Portuguese Communist Party (org. in Britain)
Cyprus Students Society — UMIST
UMIST — Students' Union
London Co-op Political Committee
Lord Fenner Brockway
Mgr. Bruce Kent — CND
Arthur Latham
William Pomeroy
Gordon Schaffer

Affiliation to CDDRT

Help fight the barbaric fascist regime in Turkey. Affiliate to the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey (CDDRT). Cost of affiliation for one year: national organisations £20 (can be negotiated), local organisations £5, individuals £2.

Name

Address

Send to: CDDRT, 28-29, Parkfield St., London N1. Tel: 01-226 3401. (Make cheques or postal order to CDDRT).