



Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

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Turkey's journalists face imprisonment and torture

At its 15th World Congress held in Greece in May, the International Federation of Journalists included Turkey on its list of countries where freedom of the press was in danger and where journalists were either imprisoned, forced to leave the country under threat of death or even killed because of their views (*Demokrat*, 17 May 1980). This was before the coup when the list of murdered liberal and leftist journalists included ABDİ İPEKÇİ (Editor of *Milliyet*), Ali İhsan Özgür (Editor of *Politika*) and Recai Ünal (Correspondent of *Demokrat*).

After the fascist coup of 12th September 1980, the two remaining left-wing dailies, *Demokrat* and *Aydınlık* were banned. Among the amendments to the martial law code announced on 21st September were provisions enabling Martial Law commanders throughout the country to surveil all communications, censor the press and confiscate books and newspapers deemed to be in contravention of Martial Law regulations. Moreover, it was announced that journalists who "Internationally propagate erroneous, unfounded or exaggerated information in a manner to create alarm or excitement among the public" will be jailed from six months to two years. If the offence has been committed "in concordance with a foreigner", the sentence will not be for less than a year, and if it has been committed by way of the media the sentence will be doubled.

In January of this year, the editor-in-chief and editor, Salim Bayar and Erol Türegün, of the daily *Hürriyet* were arrested after *Hürriyet* carried an article saying that the cabinet was to announce sweeping price rises on many state-produced goods and services. The arrest came simultan-

ously with a second several day's ban on the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* and after the imposition of a 30 day prison sentence on the *Tercüman* columnist Nazlı Ilıcak who had been too insistent in her enquiries as to the date by which the junta proposed to restore democracy.

In telegrams to General Evren, the International Federation of Journalists protested the arrests of Bayar and Türegün and demanded their immediate release.

Other sentences include Bektaş Erdoğan, editor of the leftist *Kitle* — 20 years (*Guardian* 10 January 1981) and Doğan Yurdakul, editor of the leftist *Aydınlık* — 7,5 years (*Guardian*, 5 February 1981).

A highly publicised case was that of the left wing publisher İlhan Erdost. A report published in the *Sunday Times* revealed that he had been heavily beaten to death by a group of soldiers whilst being transported in the back of a lorry to Mamak Military Prison.

The restriction imposed on the press, and journalists are only one aspect of the political and economic crises through which Turkey has been passing for the last ten years. The reign



of terror and assassination by fascist gangs which claimed 5000 lives in the two years before the coup, has now given way to the systematic and more effective oppression by the army and police. The Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey was established in 1978 by Turkish progressives in Britain to rally democratic opinion against fascistisation of the state. This is the tenth issue of the *Newsletter* since the coup, which has consistently revealed the true nature of General Evren's fascist junta. Inside, we report on its use of censorship, torture, imprisonments are executions as a special issue for the NUJ conference, the CDDRT would welcome support and affiliation from the NUJ and its local organisations for the struggle for press freedom and against fascist oppression in Turkey

**SPECIAL NUJ
ISSUE**

Up t dat report by Amnesty International on torture cases

Amnesty International's latest bulletin on Turkey brings the number of deaths in custody to 18, and states it has...” copies of three autopsy certificates for people who have died in custody which make it quite clear that death was caused by torture.” *Amnesty* also included in its bulletin a detailed statement alleging torture made by İlhan Sürmeli in November 1980, from which we have reprinted some extracts.

“I am İlhan Sürmeli, Chemical Engineer.

“On the night of 3 November, around 12 o'clock, the police came and took me from my friend Sirri Çolpan's house where I was staying as a guest.

“The persons who came to take us introduced themselves as Mehmet from Section I of the Security Department and his team of four. They were all civilians.”

“...
“A while later we stopped and entered a building with our eyes blind-folded. At the entrance they recorded our names. Then we were taken to a room on the same floor with the entrance. Here they made us stand at arms length from the wall facing it. Then they told us to touch the wall with the tips of our forefingers and stand on one foot at the same time. I remained in position with my eyes blindfolded for three and a half days, except for the durations when I was taken to torture.”

“Torture in other rooms continued. Five minutes later they came back. Saying, ‘So, you still don't talk,’ started beating me with sticks as before. When I finally collapsed completely, one of them said, ‘Stop, I shall show him how to stay lying. Electricity will make him jump up like a genie’.

“Again they forced me up by pulling my hair. They forced me to lean on the wall once more with my forefingers which had lost all sense of feeling. They went away.

“In the afternoon they took Abdurrahman Taşçı and a girl whose name was Pamuk to torture. I heard them using awful swear words to the girl and threaten her with molesting her. Naturally we were given our due of beating frequently. One of them kept hitting me on the heart from the front and on the lungs from behind. He said, ‘These blows will not leave marks on you, but your heart and lungs will be finished.’

“A little later someone came and said to me, ‘You will be taken to torture too.’ A little later all of us who were standing on one foot were given ‘falaka’ beating one by one. Later, before the night shift arrived, Abdurrahman Taşçı and Pamuk were brought back. Sirri Çopur and Mehmet Bedri Gültekin were taken to torture.

“We spent the second night standing on one foot, without food or water and frequent beatings with sounds of torture filling the room. That night they kept saying, ‘You will be taken to torture in a short while, you will not survive electric shocks and you will die.’

“Sometime during the night a girl was brought accompanied by her parents. The girl was called Nalan. They started giving

her torture treatment.

“Apparently the girl was brought upon an informer's word. Her parents had insisted to come with her. The father was a 53 year old retired teacher and her mother was a 47 year old housewife. Nalan was tortured before her parent's eyes. From what I could hear, she was undressed naked and perhaps actually molested. A while later they started torturing her father too. Then they said she was given pills whereafter she talked.”

“...
“On the morning of the third day, the worst thing I felt was thirst. We were given no food or water nor taken to toilet, but the worst thing was thirst.”

“...
“The morning shift started by beating those of us with papers on our backs. They said, ‘If you did not talk, we will take you to torture today. It has now become a matter of pride for us. See whether you can stay alive.’

“That morning Abdurrahman Taşçı was given a ‘falaka’ beating. Later two persons called ‘Savaş’ and ‘Ayhan’. Abdurrahman Taşçı was forced to jump up and down for 10 minutes after falaka. Then he was again laid down for falaka.

“On the third day's noon, we were told that we would be given food. Again 100 liras from each were collected. Again no food was given.

“After lunch-break we were separated. I was taken away from all my friends. A man introducing himself as ‘major’ pushed me into a room. He asked me my education. Then he said since I was a chemical engineer I would know what electricity was. He said, ‘We will try

something together’. He put two rings to which electric cables were attached on my middle fingers. Saying he was going to make a small test, he opened the current. After repeating this about ten times he said, ‘How do you like this most simplest for of electric shock. If you do not speak you will die here’. He then started asking from where I knew Sirri Çopur. He kept increasing the voltage while questioning me.”

“...
“This time he said, ‘We shall go back to electricity later. Now we shall make another experiment.’ Then he made me put my hands one on top of the other and hit them until he was tired. He was saying while hitting me, ‘Put your hands one on top of the other so that your fingers will not break.’

“Then he restarted giving electricity, but this time he was using another method. He tied one of the poles to my right forefinger and the other to my left leg. He gave a strong current and I fell down. He said I would not be able to stand this and he would continue this treatment for months and again asked me about the place of the guns. Then he let me wait for about 15 minutes as if they would give me electric shock any minute. I was now lying down on the floor unable to stand up any more.”

“...
“... They place two papers before me for me to sign.

“I insisted to have my eyes opened and said I would not sign anything while my eyes were closed. They beat me two times more for this. Finally unable to resist any longer I signed my name on papers not knowing what they were.”

People reported to have died in custody since 12 September 1980

Name	Date of death
1. İrfan Çelik	24 September 1980, Davutpaşa prison, İstanbul
2. Zeynel Abidin Ceylan	24 September 1980, Ankara Police Headquarters
3. Sadan Gazeteci	26 September 1980, İzmit prison
4. Rafet Demir	27 September 1980, Police Headquarters, Bursa
5. Ali İnan	27 September 1980, İstanbul
6. Ahmet Feyzioğlu	2 October 1980, Police Headquarters, Bursa
7. Ahmet Karlangaç	18 October 1980, İstanbul
8. Hasan Asker Özmen	October 1980, Ankara Police Headquarters
9. Saadettin Güven	October 1980, İstanbul
10. Metin Aksoy	October 1980, in Erzurum or Ağrı
11. Ekrem Ekşi	14 October 1980 in Numune Hospital, İstanbul
12. Bekir Bağ	28 October 1980, Mamak Military prison
13. İlhan Erdost	7 November 1980, Mamak Military prison
14. Cengiz Aksakal	10 November 1980 in Trabzon Hospital
15. İbrahim Eşki	16 November 1980, Ankara Police Headquarters
16. Ercan Koca	15 December 1980, Ankara
17. Cafer Dağdoğan	December 1980, Adana
18. Behcet Dinlerer	20 December 1980, hospital, Ankara

The Leeds to London March wins supporters for democratic rights in Turkey

The Leeds to London March Against Fascism in Turkey ended in London on the 15 March with a well-attended Rally in Hyde Park. (The proposed procession was cancelled due to restrictions imposed by the police.) Extracts of the speeches given by Alan Sapper, Alf Lomas, Marion Sarafis, Carlos Placido and a speaker from Kurdish Student Society in Europe are printed below. The General Secretary of the CDDRT, Jim Moody, reported that the March had been a great success in contacting local organisations and people throughout the North and Midlands, and in winning support for the future activities of the Committee.



Alan Sapper, General Secretary ACTT, Member of the General Council and the International Committee of the TUC:

"... The International Committee of the TUC has taken very important decisions in this respect: they have said 'Release the imprisoned trade unionists, stop the torturing..."

"Let a delegation go and we ask the government to isolate Turkey, to cast her out of the community of civilised nations while they have still got a fascist junta in control.

"... And that is why the TUC and the trade union movement in growing numbers is supporting the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey. We all wish you well, we all know that together and united, the fascist junta of Turkey will be overwhelmed and overcome and the people will be set free."

Alf Lomas, MEP (Labour):

"... I am very happy to be here today to express my solidarity with the campaign against the fascist junta in Turkey, and also to bring you greetings from a number of socialist colleagues in the European Parliament and particularly from the Labour Party group there..."

"... The Socialist Group has expressed its solidarity (with the anti-fascist struggle — *Newsletter*), and we have said that if a delegation goes to Turkey, which is at present being planned by the European Parliament, that we'll only take part providing two conditions can be met. One

is, that whoever goes will be completely free to go anywhere and talk with anyone; and secondly, that there will be access to prisons and that we will be able to speak to the people, the political prisoners, the people we believe have been subject to torture and humiliation in those prisons.

"... I believe that the Turkish people and the people in many other countries throughout the world, with the support of progressive world opinion, will sweep out this fascist junta from power... I pay tribute to those who have marched down from Leeds to London; every one of us, and particularly those that hold any office in the labour movement, should pledge today to do everything we can to hasten the day when the Turkish fascists will be swept from power and relegated to the dustbin of history where they belong."



Carlos Posidas Representative of the Portuguese Intersyndical Trade Union in Britain:

"Friends, I am speaking on behalf of the Portuguese Intersyndical Committee in Britain. The Intersyndical has pledged its solidarity and support for the trade unionists in Turkey who are being persecuted and arrested, and the unions that have been disbanded by the present fascist dictatorship there... The unions in Portugal will also continue to give their support for the struggle in Turkey against fascism and the Turkish working class."



Marion Sarafis (widow of the wartime Greek Resistance leader, General Sarafis): "... Greek democrats who were active against the junta of 1967-74 must now

stand up in support of their Turkish brothers and sisters who are today fighting a junta which does all the same things: which arrests, court martials, imprisons, tortures, even executes — and that is more than the Greek junta, which wanted to try it but was stopped by protests from abroad. That shows that these protests can be effective..."

"Many of these Greek compatriots in London have already declared their support for your struggle.

In Athens there are already Committees for Solidarity with the Turkish People, and public personalities like Lady Fleming have spoken out. Here we must do what we can to support the CDDRT, which is why we have come here today. It is not just me who is saying this, I am saying it because that is how my late husband, General Sarafis, the Wartime Resistance Commander-in-Chief, thought about brotherhood with the Turkish people... We must stand shoulder to shoulder in our brotherhood

A Representative of the Kurdish Students' Society in Europe:

"... The members and the Committee of Kurdish Students' Society in Europe wishes to deliver its message of fraternal solidarity with your organisation for the tremendous struggle you have done, and the Leeds March which was a great success... the struggle of the Kurdish and Turkish people in Turkey will be spearhead to destroy the fascist junta in Turkey. Our joint struggle will be victorious soon.

British lawyers report on the condition of imprisoned trade unionists

Between January 17 and 20 of this year, two members of the English Bar attended the proceedings being taken against the left-wing federation of Turkish Union (DISK) in the Bakırköy Labour Court, İstanbul, at the request of the World Federation of Trade Unions. They were able to speak to prominent lawyers, journalists and trade unionists, and have since filed a report on their findings. Here, we have printed some extracts by the two lawyers, Nick Blake and Helena Kennedy, both members of the Haldane Society.

Proceedings in the Labour Court

In about July 1980 the Istanbul public prosecutor commenced proceedings against DISK under Article 30 of the Trade Union Code. There are two principal trade union confederations in Turkey: Türk-İş with approximately one and a half million members, and the more left wing DISK with half a million members. DISK was founded in 1967; it represents workers from a variety of political parties and its leading members include a former Mayor of Istanbul (Ahmet İsvan) and a number of past and present deputies of the National Assembly. The President of DISK Abdullah Baştürk who is 52 years of age, was a RPP deputy in the National Assembly for 8 years.

Since the coup DISK has been banned collective bargaining has been suspended; many DISK officials have been detained in military detention and more recently criminal proceedings have been begun against many of the leading elements. It appears that DISK militants have been especially singled out in the process of repression. After the coup many thousands of people were detained, including the leaders of the principal political parties. The National Security Council promptly issued a decree extending the period of detention without judicial arrest permissible under martial law from 15 days (it having been increased to that period from 48 hours in 1973) to 30 days and thereafter to 90 days. Many of the two thousand DISK members were subsequently released, but many hundreds, including the leading elements, were not and remain in custody. We noted whilst preparing this report that the British paper the *Guardian* reported on 25th January 1981 that the leaders of a right wing trade union had been released that day, in contrast to the treatment meted to the DISK members.

Allegations of torture:

We did not speak directly to any recent victim of torture but were informed of the allegations that were filed with the Martial Law Court in respect of the DISK defendants. It has been alleged:

- i. that all detainees were blindfolded throughout the time that they were in detention, including interrogation sessions and when being asked to sign statements.
- ii. beatings to the sole of the feet have been administered.
- iii. electric shocks have been applied to all parts of the body.
- iv. detainees have been kept standing at bayonet point for up to 14 days without sleep prior to interrogation.
- v. threats of assassination have been made to stand on the ledges of

windows and were told that they were many feet above the ground whereas they were only a few inches above it. One trade unionist was released with broken bones after he sustained injury during such an incident.

Conclusion

We were not able to make a general investigation of human rights in Turkey, although during the course of our enquiries on the DISK trial, two points were repeatedly made to us:

- i. all lawyers we spoke to were very concerned about the arbitrary extension of the period of pre trial detention and the possibilities of torture and oppression that such extended periods of incommunicado detention provided to the authorities.
- ii. the task of obtaining accurate information was impeded by the fact that the authorities are implementing the provisions of Article 140 of the Penal Code punishing the supplying of information derogatory to the state, and the penalties for this offence have been increased by decree from six months to three years where foreigners and journalists are involved. A number of journalists working on the daily paper *Hürriyet* have been detained on this charge for refusing to retract a report of proposed increase by the junta.

We conclude:

- i. that the present regime in Turkey has a strong hostility to the principle of socialist politics and the right of the working people to organise independently in trade unions to promote their interests.
- ii. that the present regime is using its unlimited powers to repress militant trade unionism.
- iii. that the repression of the DISK union amounts to a prima facie violation of those Articles of the Turkish Constitution and the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation that recognise the right of workers to freely organise in trade unions.
- iv. that a prima facie case exists of interference by the military authorities with the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law, in breach of the Turkish Constitution and internationally recognised standards.
- v. that a prima facie case exists of the violation of the individual rights of the members of the DISK Confederation, including the right to free expression and not to be subjected to torture.

Nicholas Blake

Helena Kennedy

London, 30th January 1981

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