



Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 14, 18th August 1981

What r turn to dem cracy?

On the 23rd October this year, roughly one year since the fascist junta headed by General Evren took power in Turkey, a so-called "constituent assembly" will convene for the first time. It will consist of 160 members plus the existing five man junta: forty of these will be handpicked directly by the junta (National Security Council) and the remaining 120 selected by the junta from lists of "trustworthy and capable" persons to be presented by the governor of each region (the vast majority of governors are either retired or acting army generals). The main function of the "constituent assembly" will be to draft a new law governing political parties and to draw up a proposal for a new constitution. After a "public debate" and a "referendum" on the constitution have been held, and after political parties have been formed in accordance with these new laws, "general elections" will be held in Turkey, returning the country to civilian rule. Civilian rule maybe, democracy no.

You may remember the sighs of relief heard in the West after the coup on the 12th September last year. Praise after praise was heaped on the "courageous and democracy-loving" army of Turkey and on its "moderate and even-handed" leader, General Evren. The gross violations of democracy such as the dismantling of all political parties and democratic organisations, suspension of parliament and the constitution, immediate arrest of MPs, trade-unionists and other working class representatives and democratically-minded persons was viewed, here, initially as a necessary evil. "Necessary" that is, to combat the "terrorism of right and left". During the course of this year, however, the true character of the Turkish junta has

become clear even to some, both inside and outside of Turkey, who had welcomed the coup at first.

Mounting international protest by bodies of the trade-union and labour movement against mass-arrest, torture and killing — in fact the systematic annihilation of the democratic and working class movement as well as the brutal oppression of the Kurdish nation in Turkey (that has taken on genocidal proportions) has made unconditional support for the junta increasingly embarrassing. Chancellor Schmidt of the FRG on a recent visit to Turkey saw it necessary to "voice cautious concern" about the state of democracy in Turkey while agreeing another massive financial deal to aid the junta's economic programme. Other western governments including the British, as well as international organisations of finance capital have been all too willing to reach out the helping hand against even the flimsiest promise of a return to democratic rule. It is in this light that a recent report by Mr. von Hassel submitted to the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament has to be seen. This report, dated 11.6.81, states that "the sole aim of those in power in Turkey since the 12th September 1980 is to create the conditions for an authentic and lasting democracy", and, just to make sure it is not seen to be bartering democracy for the stability of fascism, the report adds: "No parallel can be drawn between the intervention of the Turkish Army in 1980 and that of the Greek colonels in Athens in 1967-74 or between it and events in third world countries or Central America" (p.9).

Note that the death penalty is being demanded for almost 900 persons,

including 52 leaders of the trade-union federation DİSK, that an estimated 100,000 persons have been detained, that over one hundred people are known to have died under torture, that those papers that have not been closed down by the junta are blackmailed into a self-imposed censorship, that journalists who have not heeded Evren's call for "national unity" have been sentenced to more than 15 years imprisonment because they "mocked and insulted" the National Security Council, that literary writings have been banned, that artists and intellectuals who have refused to return to Turkey in order to face trial have been stripped of their citizenship, that people may not assemble to discuss politics, that foreign tourists have been sentenced to imprisonment for carrying tapes of Kurdish songs...

Whatever the hand-picked constituent assembly may decide about the formation of political parties it has already been decided by the junta that none of the previous political leaders may head a party. Whatever the assembly may decide for the constitution, the junta will be able to make a changes to the draft. Whatever "public debate" there will be, preceding referendum on the constitution it will not entail "the old", i.e. pre-coup political discussions; the Marshall Plan Authorities' actions may not be cussed; no material on Turkey's present or future may be published or for members of pre-coup political parties. Whoever may wish to apply to the local governor for membership of the constituent assembly, can only if he/she has not been involved in politics, has not served a prison sentence, has a higher education

Protests at DISK trials

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you on behalf of the organised agricultural workers of Great Britain to protest in the strongest possible way at the attack on basic Trade Union rights and democratic freedoms by the prosecution of 52 DISK leaders in Istanbul.

On behalf of my members, I appeal to your Government to free the Trade Union officials at present on trial and to give to the workers of Turkey the opportunity to join together in Trade Union activities in the same manner that freedom of activity is given to workers in this country.

Yours faithfully,

Jack R. Boddy, MBE, JP, National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers

Dear Ambassador,

On behalf of my organisation I am requested to protest in the strongest possible terms to the trial of fifty two DISK trade union leaders, including their President and General Secretary, all of whom are being threatened with the death penalty.

To prosecute trade unionists under Articles 141 and 142 of Turkey's Penal Code, means your government is perpetuating the code constructed by the fascist dictator Mussolini.

Such action and the results of such action will be condemned by genuine democratic trade unions all over the world.

The protection and extension of basic trade union rights and democratic freedoms is a responsibility we all carry, you and your government stand condemned in the eyes of the world for your destruction of these rights.

My organisation calls upon you to release these political prisoners along with the thousands of others held by your fascist regime.

L.G. Guy, General Secretary,

National Union of Sheet Metal Workers, Coppersmiths, Heating and Domestic Engineers

Dear Sir,

I am writing to protest in the strongest possible terms about the way in which your government is choosing to treat trade unionists when acting in the interests of their members. Any country which has any pretensions whatsoever to democracy must recognise that a free trade movement is a basic part of that democracy and attacks of the kind currently being carried out by the government are quite unjustifiable in any terms whether humanitarian, legal, economic or political. As a member of the European Parliament, I can only say that I would trust that the European Community will examine very carefully its relations with Turkey if this state of affairs continues.

Yours faithfully,

K D Collins, MEP

Dear Friends,

I am writing to protest strongly about the current position in Turkey, whereby 52 DISK trade union leaders are on trial in Istanbul.

We are concerned for the wellbeing of these people and all workers and students in Turkey at the present; we feel that the charges against the 52 DISK members are an attack on basic trade union rights and democratic freedoms.

Yours faithfully,

Dave Hellens, President

The University of Sussex Union

From O DIARIO, Lisbon, 9 July 1981

Lives of Turkish Trade Unionists are threatened by fascist regime. The leaders of the Turkish trade union centre DISK/MADEN-İŞ, imprisoned since the fascist coup of 12th September 1980, may be condemned to capital punishment for carrying out their union activities.

In a letter sent on Tuesday to Turkey's ambassador in Portugal, the National Secretariat of the CGTP-IN (General Confederation of Portuguese Workers/Intersindical Nacional) condemned the death sentence demanded by the representatives of the Turkish military power and expressed their vehement protest at the present situation in that country. The Portuguese trade-union centre demands "the immediate and unconditional release of all political and trade-union prisoners in Turkey and the full restoration of democracy".

The CGTP-IN went on to condemn the sentencing of 14 trade-union militants to lengthy prison terms by the Istanbul military tribunal, on the charge of having sung the "Internationale" in the course of the 23rd Congress of DISK/MADEN-İŞ, held in December 1979.

The absence of freedom, the existence of an organized and systematic repression, the summary trials and heavy sentences imposed on countless democrats for the exercise of elementary rights, constitute grounds for serious concern on the part of democrats throughout the world, according to the CGTP-IN.

In the statement, the CGTP-IN expressed its indignation at the "imprisonment of thousands of trade union leaders, notably A. Baştürk, the president of DISK and an outstanding figure in the world trade-union movement".

The Portuguese union leaders also denounced the Turkish government's prohibition of any contacts between a delegation of the European Trade Union Confederation, headed by two of its vice-presidents, and the DISK union leaders in prison as a result of the fascist coup.

Now, almost a year after the fascist coup in Turkey, the CGTP-IN states that the country is "suffering under one of the most shameful dictatorships".

(Translated by Mike Mullan)

MPs stand against fascist Evren

The House of Commons has seen several motions on Turkey set down, though not debated, over the weeks before the Summer recess. Appearing in Commons documents on 25 June was the motion regretting the invitation of General Evren to the Royal Wedding (see *Newsletter*, no:13), eventually signed by 34 MPs. (It also attracted an amendment signed by all of 3 Tory MP's welcoming Evren.)

Following a reactionary motion put down on 7 July, a motion which welcomed President (sic) Evren and wished both him and his Government well", sponsors of CDDRT and other MPs, including 45 put down a motion on 13 July as follows:

That this House, while utterly deploring the terrorist acts which have occurred in Turkey over the recent years, being in no way prepared to condone a military takeover which has ousted a democratically-elected government, installed military rulers, permitted democrats and progressives to be persecuted and grossly ill-treated, put 52 leading members of the union confederation DISK on trial, reaffirmed in stronger terms than ever the illegal seizure of territory in Cyprus and is proposing to substitute a puppet assembly for a

democratic constitution, bitterly regrets the invitation given to General Evren to attend the Royal Wedding and requests that this should be reconsidered even at this late stage and withdrawn".

This attracted a poorly-supported reactionary amendment which mentioned Evren's non-existent "constitutional commitments, presently necessitating his presence in Turkey", being "head of state of a friendly country and loyal ally", then launched into an attack on left-wing interference with the Royal Wedding guest list! It concluded by describing Evren as one of the "proven friends of this country". A fitting rebuff was delivered by 56 MPs in their motion of 21 July when they declared. "That this House deplores the continued arrest and restriction of hundreds of politicians and thousands of trades unionists in Turkey; and calls on Her Majesty's Government to oppose any moves for a closer association of Turkey with the institutions of the European Community until democratic rights in that country have been restored".

As yet there have been no opposing moves. MPs will no doubt have more collective work to do in October on issues brought to the fore due to the existence of Turkey's fascist junta.

PRISON LETTERS

The following letters describing the continuous and systematic torture and inhuman conditions in Sultanahmet Military Prison in Istanbul, were written by the prisoners on Sel-Pak toilet paper and smuggled out of the prison.

As before the 12th of September, since that date also, in the police stations, headquarters, military garrisons, prisons, and military prisons and detention centres, progressives, revolutionaries, democrats and even common prisoners are being tortured, threatened with death and subjected to inhuman repression.

We the undersigned prisoners express our protest at these practices and *illegible* them to the public.

Abdullah Meral and 48 others

We the undersigned detainees and prisoners declare that we have been subjected to the most severe tortures, which are a crime against humanity, and that torture continues in the prisons.

Cemal Ayyıldız and 117 others

To the public:

We the undersigned are political prisoners who have acted in accordance with our views so that our people may lead a humane life and for this reason have been imprisoned. We have felt it necessary to explain our living conditions to the public, because the spokesmen of the fascist junta plaguing our people have been talking about a regime respectful of human rights and have been on television, radio and in the press spreading lies that the allegations of torture are fabrications and that everyone receives the same treatment in the eyes of the law. They are trying to hide their ugly faces from progressive humanity with these lies and demagogues. But the conditions of Toptaşı prison where we are being held are enough to expose their lies. Here are the prison conditions of the "regime respectful of human rights"!

220 people are held in a room measuring 8m by 25m.

We are kept inside for 23 hours a day. We are only allowed out to exercise for 1 hour, 5 days a week.

The roofs of the wards are leaking. There is only one old wood stove for 220 people and we are given only 15 logs a day!

There are no bathing facilities in the prison.

There is only one toilet for all 220 people and that is inside the ward.

The food is terrible and only enough for 50-60 people. The majority eat stale bread. We are arbitrarily beaten and tortured.

All cultural and educational activities are forbidden, and as in the Nazi camps, we are even forbidden to read any books, including novels.

Sports are forbidden.

Despite these inhumane conditions, none of us are regretful that we are here and never will be. For we are the representatives of the oppressed people. Our aim in this text is to relate the facts to the public as they really are.

Erhan Küncü and 10 others

I am a prisoner in Sultanahmet prison. The situation in the prison is very bad. The prisoners here are subjected to inhuman repressions. Prisoners are systematically beaten daily until they are unconscious,

merely for their beliefs. Prisoners are left without food and water for days in cells ankle deep in water and without light and ventilation. We occupy damp cells which do not see sunlight for 24 hours and which fail to conform to even the most basic standards of hygiene. The majority of cells are not heated. Prisoners are not allowed out to the toilet at night and are forced to urinate in their sleeping quarters. Infestations such as lice and scabies are widespread. In addition to all these, prisoners are constantly subjected to beatings and abuse from officers and enlisted men. The wards are frequently ransacked under the pretence of carrying out searches. On occasion, prisoners are handed over to the political police for torture to extract false confessions.

Şemi Oral

After the 12th September they threw us into cold, damp and stuffy cells and forced us to wear a uniform. Day and night they beat us up, beat the soles of our feet, and threw us into totally dark cells flooded with water. The (prison) doctor says such things are not his business, that his only duty is to dispense medicines. In terms of breaking down human dignity, treating us as slaves and

militarisation, the prison is no different from a Nazi camp.

As if these were not enough, our visitors are interrogated and we are taken to the administration building to be tortured to confess to various crimes. The torture is carried out jointly by the police and the prison authorities and consists of bastinado and electric shock. They continue the torture until you confess.

We have been deprived of even the most basic social facilities. For example, we are not allowed out to the toilet for 12 hours and may bathe only once every 2-3 months. Infestations such as lice are fairly widespread. During the 12 hours which we are forbidden to go to the toilet, we are forced to urinate in our milk cups.

As for the tortures carried out on us by the police in division headquarters, the doctors at Selimiye barracks have records of our wounds. The following tortures were carried out on me at the division: Bastinado, sandbagging, electric shock, crucifixion while naked and anal rape with a truncheon. Yes, they shove truncheons up your anus and claim there is no torture.

Oğuz Ataçınar, 11 March 1981

Education under the jackboot

Since it came to power, the junta has given special attention to the question of education. Determined to recreate a "new Turkish youth loyal to the Father of the Turks, Atatürk", all educational establishments have been put under military supervision.

The first step was to suspend all those students and lecturers who are "under the influence of foreign culture". The Commission for Further Education appointed by the junta have been trying their best to rearrange all the education programmes in accordance with Great Turkish nationalism.

To prevent any opposition coming from the academic world, the Commission has

recently presented a draft law. When this comes into force this month it will mean that all higher education administrators (vice-chancellors, deans, rectors, principals, etc) would be considered as having resigned and that appointment to such posts will be made by the Commission; such appointment will then amount to conscription for two years.

The same draft law also proposes an annual fee of 25,000 TL (£125) for higher education — previously it was free. Although it is suggested that grants *may* be considered, in a country where basic wages are 10,000 TL (£50) per month there will not be many students who will be able to pay such a fee.

Wage cut

The High Referee Committee (a body set up by the fascist junta) has brought in the "collective bargaining" agreement for workers affiliated to YOL-İŞ Trade Union Federation, and who are employed by the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Cooperatives in the Road, Water and Electricity Departments. A collective bargaining agreement was originally due to be signed in December 1979.

As a result of this new "collective bargaining" agreement some of the workers each owe 30-35,000 TL (£120 to £140) which is four months income for a worker, because of the 70% "pay rise" given by the fascist junta when it took power. The true nature of the "pay rise" was explained by CDDRT at the time; it was "not a 70% wage increase as has been widely reported in English press but a 10% advance or loan on their wages" (*Newsletter*, no:1, 27 Sept, 1980).

Saluting the fascist general

A Ministerial Order of 7 June 1981 instructs us how to behave properly in the presence of Kenan Evren, Head of State of the Republic of Turkey:

1. Citizens have to stand still when they see the Head of State.
2. Citizens must turn their faces towards him.
3. All must stand at attention and give him a salute.
4. Everyone has to remain in this position until he has passed.
5. After he has passed, heads and eyes must follow him.

Junta b asts Communist Party arr sts

On 31 July 1981 *Milliyet* printed an article from which the following are extracts:

"...Teams of the First Branch of Ankara Security Headquarters started operations after it became evident that Hasan Yilmaz, a worker at the Kirikkale Bullet Factory, was a member of the TKP (Communist Party of Turkey — *Newsletter*). During operations lasting 6 months, about 1500 Party members, including 4 Central Committee... and Political Bureau members ... have been caught. Among Party members arrested are academics, doctors, journalists and trade unionists.

"During questioning of the captured Party members, it has become evident that there are about 300 in Southern Anatolia, 700 in Central Anatolia, 300 in the Eastern

Anatolia Region, 100 in the East Black Sea Region, 1000 in the Aegean Sea region, and 1500 Party members and sympathisers in the Marmara region. The total of Party members inside and outside the country is understood to be about 4500

"It has been discovered that the TKP has been influential in some of the unions affiliated to DISK and received financial support from them.

"Maden-İş, Banksen, Baysen-İş, Beton-İş Petkim İş and Aster-İş are among those trade unions which have helped the TKP. It was also found that the Progressive Youth Society (IGD) and the Progressive Women's Society (IKD) have worked as side organisations of the Party. IKD Chairwoman Beria Onger is being sought by the police for being

a TKP member".

This news of TKP arrests throws once more into full relief the fascist terror unleashed against the working class and Kurdish people. The fascist junta is in readiness for further arrests through the information obtained under torture. With the deliberate circulation of rumours concerning the TKP, that its members are "terrorists" and "Soviet agents", thousands have been arrested by the fascist junta who are neither terrorists nor spies. Those arrested are political people who have stood for a particular ideology. The basic democratic right of freedom of thought stands amongst other basic human rights held dear throughout the world.

International Day against fascism

CDDRT is very pleased to have initiated and given every effort to help organise this international Day Against Fascism. The day's events will start with a Demonstration assembling at 2pm in Devonshire Street, London, W1. This is where both the Turkish Ambassador has his official residence and the Chilean Embassy is situated. Just the spot to begin our protest at the fascist coups in Chile (11 September 1974) and Turkey (12 September 1981). Letters of protest are to be delivered at both places and around the corner at another nest of fascism, the El Salvadorean Embassy.

There will then be a March to the Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, WC1 (near Kings Cross/St Pancras) where two events are planned. At 5pm a Rally will be

addressed by leading labour movement and international speakers, including Ken Livingstone, GLC leader, and Bob Wright, AUEW Assistant General Secretary.

7pm sees the start of the Solidarity Concert, featuring top-line artists, including the Chilean group Pueblo, Raul Valencia and Melike Demirağ from Turkey, whose Turkish citizenship was taken away by Turkey's fascist junta: the same was done to her 2-year-old daughter.

All anti-fascists are urged to take part in the Day's activities. Show your solidarity with the peoples of Chile, El Salvador and Turkey. Tickets for the Solidarity Concert can be obtained from CDDRT at 29 Parkfield Street, London, N1, price £1.50 each. Fill in and send this slip.



"We will sing and they will try to silence us"
Melike Demirağ

Please send me ticket(s) for the Solidarity Concert on the International Day Against Fascism on 13th September 1981. I enclose cheque/PO for £

Name

Address

Sponsors to date include

Frank Allaun, MP
Joe Ashton, MP
Tony Benn, MP
Andrew Bennett, MP
Sid Bidwell, MP
Bob Cryer, MP
Ken Eastham, MP
Geoffrey Edge, MP
Bob Edwards, MP
Fred Evans, MP
Martin Flannery, MP
John Golding, MP
Les Huckfield, MP
Bob Hughes, MP
Roy Hughes, MP
James Lamond, MP
Bob Litherland, MP
William McKelvey, MP
Jim Marshall, MP
Joan Maynard, MP
George Morton, MP
Stan Newens, MP
Stan Orme, MP
Reg Race, MP
Jo Richardson, MP
Ernie Roberts, MP

Ernie Ross, MP
Dennis Skinner, MP
Richard Balfie, MEP
Roland Boyes, MEP
Richard Caborn, MEP
Kenneth D Collins, MEP
Brian Key, MEP
Aif Lomas, MEP
Dave Aaronovitch, Pres. NUS
Colin Barnett, Sec., NW TUC
Stan Cole, AUEW NC
Harry Conroy, Pres. NUJ
Lawrence Daly, NUM
J. Davidson, NW Dist. Sec. FTAT
Beryl Hufinley, Sec.,
Yorks and Humber-side TUC
E.V. Hughes, Vice Pres. NW TUC
Alex Kitson, TGWU
Mick McGahey, NUM
Alan Sapper, ACTT
Bob Wright, AUEW
APEX — Holborn Branch
ASTMS — Manchester HS Branch
AUEW — Kingston District
AUEW — N. Manch. District
AUEW — Sheffield District

GMWU 115 Manch. Branch
NALGO — Hackney Branch
NUM
NUPE
NUR — Manchester
TGWU
TGWU Reg. No.1
UCATT — NW Region
Cambridge & District Trades Council
Hackney Trades Council
Leeds Trades Council
Cities of London & Westminster Trades Council
Rotherham Trades Council
Stockport Trades Council
Waltham Forest Trades Council
GEC Openshaw JSSC
Ardwick CLP
Hazelgrove CLP
Runcorn CLP
St. Helens CLP
Wavertree CLP
LPYS
NOLS
Communist Party of Great Britain
Association of Cypriot Women in Britain
KNE — Communist Youth of Greece (org. in Britain)

Portuguese Communist Party
(org. in Britain)
Cyprus Students' Soc. — Man. Univ.
Organisation of Supporters of Iranian
People's Fedaii (Maj) — Britain
Committee for the Defence of
the Iranian Revolution
Iraqi Student's Society — UK
(Branch of GUSIR)
Kurdish Students' Society
in Europe (UK)
Students' Union
City of London Polytechnic
UMIST — Students' Union
Man. Poly S dents' Union
Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation
London Co-op Political Committee
Lord Fenner Brockway
Mgr. Bruce Kent
Arthur Latham
Robert J. Longuet
William Pomeroy
Marion Sarafi
Gordon Schaffer
E.P. Thompson

Affiliation to CDDRT

Help fight the barbaric regime in Turkey. Affiliate to the Committee for the 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, 29 Parkfield St., London, N1. Tel: 01-226 3401 (Make cheques or postal orders payable to CDDRT).