

Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

NEWS- LETTER



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"There were too many strikes before our coup"

TRADE UNION 'NO' TO FASCISM

by Ramazan Tutak

in April, 122 thousand are under detention, 40 thousand under arrest. Another 123 thousand persons are wanted by the authorities. During the 90 days of detention (this period has recently been lowered to 45) thousands are subjected to the most savage torture methods. There is not a single progressive or democrat who has not been tortured while in detention. Falaka, tearing out of fingernails, ... denying any food and drink for days, electrocution, rape of the detainee or persons near to him — such are the barbaric and savage methods used under torture. After having undergone torture, thousands are handicapped for the rest of their lives, many die. They have attempted to cover up the murder of progressives under torture by claiming that he 'committed suicide' by jumping out of the window or 'killed himself by hitting his head against the wall'. Many anti-fascists of whom no news at all could be obtained after their arrest, have left our ranks as our unknown heroes.

The generals have chosen the workers and labourers as their prime target. On the third day of the coup all strikes were banned. All trade union activities were banned and a call issued to the DISK leaders, to executive and branch leaders of trade unions affiliated to DISK, to shop stewards, to give themselves up. The death penalty has been demanded for the leaders of DISK and for the leaders and activists of member trade unions. The bank funds of member trade unions and their property, made up of the monthly dues of DISK workers, have been confiscated. The activities of 10 General Executives and 78 branches of trade unions affiliated to Türk-İş have been banned. Thus, the working-class has

been deprived of its legal right to strike and all legal trade union rights.

Following the abolition of trade unions rights, the right of collective bargaining has also been revoked. Fascism's classic 'strength through force' system is beginning to be imposed. According to this, wages and social benefits will be decided upon by a state institution which calls itself the High Commission of Arbitration. If it sees fit, it will renew collective bargaining agreements whose period has expired. The decisions of this commission in which neither workers nor trade unions are in any way represented are absolutely binding, and no legal appeals can be made against them. In the last months this commission has fixed a new "minimum wage". This wage which amounts to 10 thousand TL gross, leaves the worker after all the deductions with 5 thousand TL. In other words, with just above £20. In which country in the world can one ensure a living for a month on this wage? If we also consider that the cost of living has, in the past 2 years, risen by 200%, the wage increase decided upon by the Commission will seem less even than petty alms.

The generals who have forced themselves upon the country with the 12 September coup have announced that, after having done certain things, they will withdraw and prepare a return to "democracy". With this they attempt to keep the people and European democratic public opinion in a state of expectation. In reality the so-called "return to democracy" and "construction of democracy" plans do not signal fascism's withdrawal from power; on the contrary, they are plans to provide the dictatorship with a lasting and

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One year has passed since the fascist general's junta took over power on the 12th September 1980 by the force of arms. Before the 12 September and faced with the struggle of hundreds of thousands of workers, they could not realize their plan to close down the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK). From the first day of the coup onwards, the prisons started to fill up with thousands of trade unionists and workers' leaders, all trade union rights and freedoms were trampled upon by a law issued by the five generals. The activities of the democratic mass organisations of teachers, peasants, students and artisans were banned, all their property confiscated, and their leaders crowded into the prisons under threat of heavy punishment. In this manner, the generals and the monopoly bosses behind them have been able to satisfy their past wishes and aims and have achieved their aim of installing a repressive and bloody dictatorship in Turkey.

The junta, which claims that it took over power in order to thwart 'anarchy' and 'terror', has itself made terror and torture official state policy. According to the official figures issued by the junta

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stable legal and political basis. The monopoly bosses having established their fascist dictatorship on the 12 September, are now attempting to change their appearance, to replace the military fascist with a civilian fascist rule. The legal system and state apparatus is in the process of being changed in accordance with the demands of fascist rule. Once these changes have been made, the generals will step back into the shadow and the present regime will be given a parliamentary appearance. The fascist dictatorship, which plans to proceed via the steps of the Constituent Assembly, Constitution, Referendum and Parliament, will present itself to our people and European public opinion as a legitimate government which has the support of the people (!) That the generals will bring democracy is a crude lie. Waiting for fascism to withdraw from power by itself, will only help it to gain time and strength. Those who one year ago announced that they had come in order to "secure the safety of the people's life and property" have abolished all legal democratic rights and freedoms, closed down the progressive press, instituted a censorship of the whole press, and turned the entire judicial system upside down. They have shelved the Constitution. They have had hundreds of people shot in the streets or killed under torture. 10 people have been hanged. To date, thousands are being tried under threat of the death penalty. In Turkish-Kurdistan, and under the name of carrying out military exercises, Kurdish villages are burned and rampaged. Thousands of Kurdish villagers, irrespective of whether they are young or old, are being subjected to the most barbaric and savage torture.

Informing European public opinion about these inhuman methods of the fascist junta and organising a broad campaign against the junta abroad, will greatly benefit the anti-fascist resistance movement in Turkey.

Both the past and present in the struggle against the junta lie with us. *Ramazan Tutak is a member of the DISK-affiliated Textile Trade Union.*

CDDRT's impact at Labour Party Conference

Urging delegates at the Labour Party Annual Conference to take Newsletters and leaflets, CDDRT supporters were drawn into discussions and questioned on many points throughout the week at Brighton.

1500 special Newsletters were distributed; this was in addition to 1200 leaflets advertising CDDRT's first Conference fringe meeting, held on the Monday. A late addition to a strong team of speakers at the fringe meeting (entitled "Turkey's Junta — Destroyer of Democracy") was David Blackman, Deputy General Secretary of the European Parliament. David Blackman underlined the need to "put a lot of pressure... block further EEC aid to Turkey." He declared that Danish politicians and their government had been taking a lead since December, and "have passed very tough resolutions... come the end of October and there will be no majority (to protect Turkey's junta - Newsletter) and a freeze on any further aid to Turkey." He pointed out that this would be less effective if bilateral aid continued. The generals were "very sensitive" and thus it was extremely important for "all to be working to achieve the expulsion of Turkey from the Council of Europe... Turkey could not possibly remain as a member..." If there is no stop to "detention without trial and infringement of basic democratic rights by January — Turkey will be expelled."

Richard Balfe MEP considered the junta was increasingly showing its true colours. He covered developments in the ETUC, the Council of Europe and the Council of Ministers of the EEC, all of which have made demands for a return to democracy. Finally, he said that "we oppose the death penalty and tortures throughout the world... we

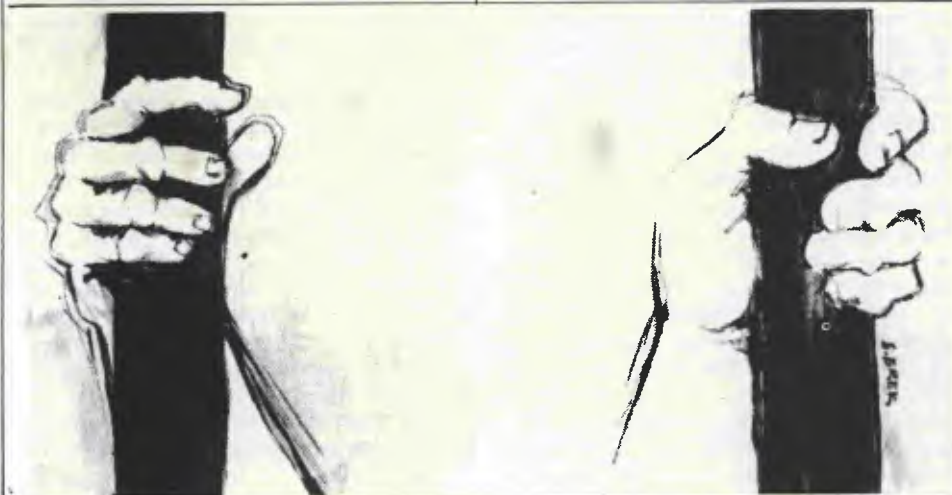
have to spread the message and keep up the pressure..." and, referring to the Conference Emergency Resolution on Turkish nationals, that this was "another nail in the present fascist junta in Turkey."

Bob Wright, AUEW Assistant General Secretary, emphasised that "the actions of the British people are indeed very important ... (given) the tremendous influence of the British labour and trade union movements." Concerning the trial of 52 DİSK trade union confederation leaders, he noted that "ICFTU has suspended the puppet organisation TÜRK-İŞ... in regard to DİSK... torture is being used widely against people arrested, whether guilty or not." He gave great importance to the necessary "pressure to save lives... this is a form of fascism and we should recognise it as such. We can play a major part in the restoration of democracy in Turkey."

Labour Councillors and other Party members in Greater Manchester had mobilised much support for the Emergency Resolution on Turkish nationals; Ken Bagnall, Councillor on Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council spoke on this and encourage delegates present to work for the Resolution at Conference because the junta was "looking abroad to attack opponents", who if "returned back to Turkey would face torture and possibly death." He attacked the junta's pose as "defenders of Turkey's democracy... the only neo-fascist country in Europe at this time."

Liz Nash, from the Labour Party International Department, concluded the meeting by point out that the "main purpose of this meeting is solidarity...". She affirmed that the junta in Turkey was "really only comparable to Pinochet's Chile" and that Evren must somehow "present a facade of... taking steps to return to democracy" which as she convincingly showed was belied by the composition of the proposed Assembly.

The Emergency Resolution on Turkish Nationals, originating with CDDRT members in the North-West, gathered much support amongst delegates, though it was not in the end taken due to lack of time. Over 230 CLP's and most major trade unions supported moves to have the Resolution discussed. It is considered likely that given the continued threat to Turkey's citizens in Britain, the NEC of the Labour Party will agree this Resolution.



"KEEP TURKEY HIGH ON AGENDA" - The use of Commons Meeting



Forty-six individuals, including HE The Ethiopian Ambassador and several MP's, who recently attended a CDDRT meeting in the Grand Committee Room in the House of Commons were rewarded with an excellent presentation of information and suggestions for the future. Amongst others, apologies for non-attendance had been received from Alf Lomas MEP, Dame Judith Hart MP, David Steel MP, Sir Ian Gilmour MP, George Foulkes MP, Stanley Clinton Davies MP, Neil Kinnock MP and Kevin McNamara MP. Title of the meeting, which was held on 29 October, was "The new Constituent Assembly — will it end suppression of trade unions and other democratic bodies?" (The Head of Turkey's fascist junta, General Kenan Evren, had opened the Assembly on 23 October).

Taking the chair Ernie Roberts MP introduced the meeting thus: "It is right and proper that such a meeting as this on such a subject as we are considering should be held in a place like this, inside the House of Commons." Ernie Roberts reminded the audience of moves by himself and other MP's inside Parliament in getting Early Day Motions put down, protesting at Evren's invitation to the Royal Wedding in July, "because he was the representative of a fascist force in Turkey." He mentioned that "100,000 opponents have been rounded up... many of them have been tortured and others murdered" and that "MP's and trade union leaders are being urged to defend our friends, our colleagues in Turkey."

The first speaker was Jim Moody, General Secretary of CDDRT, who spoke at length on the background to the present situation. He quoted the newspaper *Milliyet* (21 October 1981) concerning the junta's moving of the 2nd Army into Malatya (Kurdistan) and Evren's blandishments that "there are those who misinterpret something arising from a military need... they

claim that this is aimed at suppressing the people of the region... isn't this place part of Turkey?... aren't you all citizen-Turks?" A serious recent development Jim Moody mentioned was the closing down on 27 October of the the third-largest newspaper *Tercüman*, following articles by Nazlı Ilıcak, who had called the new Assembly undemocratic, a sentiment shared by Bülent Ecevit, Turkey's three times former Prime Minister. Ecevit had been called in by the military prosecutor for questioning following his statement critical of the junta and its cosmetic assembly proposals.

Jenny Little, Secretary of the International Committee of the Labour Party, gave the junta's definition of democracy: "alright, you have a constituent assembly, you have *no* political parties, and anyone who *was* a member of parliament... is barred from holding office." She said that "you are faced with a constituent assembly, so called, which is a complete charade... we and the Labour Party have a duty to expose what the Tory government's attitudes to Turkey are. They are unacceptable to us... In June this year the National Executive Committee passed a resolution... which among other things condemned the treatment of trade unionists in Turkey... The British TUC has taken a strong line in the ICFTU on this issue and within the European Trade Union Confederation and we must press that this continues.

"... A number of Constituency Parties also submitted resolutions on the plight of Turkish nationals in this country to our Conference... It has now been referred to the National Executive Committee who will undoubtedly take a favourable attitude to it given had it come before the Conference they were going to recommend to Conference that it be accepted. But equally important is that we work with like-minded forces elsewhere and in the international movement... the Socialist International... are obviously shocked by the treatment of Bülent Ecevit.

"... The Confederation of EEC Socialist Parties will continue to look and to press that the question of aid and general EEC relations are looked at very carefully and that they remain at a minimum.

"...The lesson for us... and one that we take very definitely as a Party is that we have got to keep Turkey high on the agenda... as long as we keep it high on the agenda it cannot be forgotten and with any luck the pressure on the European governments to take the right decisions will increase, and the isolation of the Turkish regime will be maintained."

Stan Newens MP also agreed that "we should seek to keep Turkey high on the agenda... the present regime has put trade unionists on trial... on charges which can, in fact, carry the death penalty... there are, at this very time of speaking here, thousands of Turkish trade unionists who have been put into detention.

"...The aim is quite clear, it is to eliminate trade unionism absolutely and completely from the Turkish scene... to eliminate democratic structures that in any way we can conceive of them as being democratic. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are today, in effect, illegal. Journalists, writers, politicians, various artists have been imprisoned... they have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment on a very considerable scale.

"... There can be no doubt — not one shadow of doubt — but that the attitude and behaviour of the present Turkish regime grossly offends international standards of human rights, it grossly offends the European Convention on Human Rights, and it grossly offends the democratic ideals to which all groups in this country of ours at the present stage pay lip service..."

Ernie Roberts, from the chair, reminded members of the audience about the National Conference on 12 December in NUFTO Hall and asked for "a good representation from the political and trade union movement."

12 December NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN TURKEY

The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party will be represented on the platform of the National Conference on Turkey. Alan Sapper, General Secretary of ACTT, has agreed to sponsor this Conference.

Delegates are already being elected to the CDDRT National Conference on 12 December in London. NUFTO Hall will host this important Conference on Turkey: already it is set to be a gathering representative of the labour and trade union movement in Britain; organisations should now elect delegates and apply for credentials (see enclosed application form and Draft Statement) without delay. **Act now and be represented at this important Conference.**

Turkey's working class

Seventy five per cent of workers' time is spent producing wealth that they never see, the levels of wages below that necessary for physical existence. Widespread malnutrition, low life expectancy and an appallingly high death rate, this coupled with a pathetic industrial safety record, children working from the age of twelve for only a tenth of the minimum wage. 25% unemployment with less than 10% covered by the social security system. That was the desperate situation the working people of Turkey found themselves

in twelve months ago. The workers' increasing demands for decent working conditions and for an end to the atrocious social deprevation that pervaded the country, were a clear indication of the abject failure of capitalism.

The nationwide social unrest was an open threat to the armed forces and the country's financial backers in Western Europe. Large groups of people were beginning to organise themselves and Turkey, the weak link of European capitalism, was in danger of being severed from its

western masters. The military provided its answer on September 12th, 1980. The subsequent reports are horrifying and have been extensively reported in previous issues of this *Newsletter*. Those of us who live in a democracy, no matter how imperfect it may be, should remember that when exploitation cannot be enforced by legislation, the "System" will attempt to resort to tanks, imprisonment and torture.

Councillor Phil Bray,
Stockport Metropolitan Borough
Council

Sponsors to date include

Frank Allaun, MP
Joe Ashton, MP
Guy Barnett, MP
Tony Benn, MP
Andrew Bennett, MP
Sid Bidwell, MP
Ron Brown, MP
Tom Cox, 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
Robert Kilroy-Silk, MP
Neil Kinnock, MP
James Lamond, MP
R. Leighton, MP
Bob Litherland, MP
Allen McKay, MP
William McKelvey, MP
Bob McTaggart, MP
Jim Marshall, MP
J. Maxton, MP
Joan Maynard, MP
George Morton, MP
Stan Nevens, MP
Stan Orme, MP

Bob Parry, MP
Reg Race, MP
Jo Richardson, MP
Allan Roberts, MP
Ernie Roberts, MP
Ernie Ross, MP
Dennis Skinner, MP
Phillip Whitehead, MP
Sheila Wright, MP
Richard Balfe, MEP
Roland Boyes, MEP
Richard Caborn, MEP
Ann Clwyd, MEP
Kenneth D Collins, MEP
Brian Key, MEP
Alf 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
Frances Dean, Sec., Manchester TU Council
Beryl Huffinley,
Yorks and Humberside 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. Manchester District
AUEW — Sheffield District
GMWU 115 Manchester Branch
NALGO — Hanckney Branch
NUM
NUPE
NUR — Manchester
TGWU
TGWU Reg. No. 1
UCATT — NW Region
Cambridge & District Trades Council
Greenwich 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
Ardwich 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' Society — Manchester University
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)
City of London Polytechnic Students' Union
UMIST — Students' Union
Manchester Poly Students' Union
Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation
London Co-op Political Committee
Lord Fenner Brockway
Lord Jenkins of Putney
Mgr. Bruce Kent
Arthur Latham
Robert J. Longuet
William Pomeroy
Marion Sarafi
Gordon Schaffer
E.P. Thompson

What is CDDRT?

CDDRT works to build solidarity in the struggle against fascist oppression of the working class, democratic and revolutionary movements in Turkey; against the genocide of the Kurdish nation; and against the expansionism of Turkey's finance capital, presently experienced by the peoples of Cyprus.

CDDRT considers it is necessary to campaign vigorously within the labour and trade union and student movements, organising demonstrations and meetings, to stop torture of political prisoners and ensure their release, bring an end to the violent judicial attack on DISK trade union confederation leaders and members, and prevent the consolidation of fascism in Turkey.

We call for an end to military rule, freedom for all democratic organisations, withdrawal of Turkey from NATO and cessation of all military, political and economic support, and an end to the occupation of Cyprus.

Wider sections of public opinion are becoming aware of the situation of the people of Turkey under the fascist junta. Ensure that you and your organisation play their part: **affiliate to CDDRT NOW!**

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, local organisations £5, individuals £2.

Name:

Address:

Send to: CDDRT, 29 Parkfield Street, London, N1 Tel: 01-226 3401. (Make cheques or postal orders payable to CDDRT).