

TURKEY NEWSLETTER



Monthly publication of the Committee for
Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

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May 1983



MAY DAY GREETINGS

Support our struggle against the fascist junta

BENN SLAMS JUNTA

The fascist junta in Turkey was denounced in strong terms at the CDDRT's STOP THE TRIALS meeting 16th April at Conway Hall, London. The large English/Turkish audience of 208 listened to the speeches on the edge of their seats.

Rivetting speeches by **Tony Benn MP**, **Aydın Meriç** (Assistant General Secretary of DİSK) and **M Emin Bozarslan** accused Turkey — ally of Britain, fellow member of NATO, the Council of Europe and signatory of the Convention on Human Rights of crimes against humanity.

Messages of solidarity for the meeting and with the objectives of CDDRT were read to the audience by CDDRT Chair **Ernie Roberts MP**. These came from far and wide: Kurdish Students Society in Europe, Association of Kurdish Students Abroad, NUJ, ISTC, TGWU, NUM, NGA and the DİSK Liaison Committee in Brussels amongst others, showing in the words of Tony Benn MP "very wide support from the Labour movement in Britain".

Chair **Ernie Roberts MP** told the meeting that during his 20 years as Assistant General Secretary of AUEW, "I had the honour and pleasure of meeting **Kemal Türkler**, President of the engineers union in Turkey. My union was a great friend of the Turkish engineers union which is now outlawed

by the military junta. ... That's why I am pleased to introduce the Assistant General Secretary of DİSK". **Ernie Roberts** went on to highlight **Aydın Meriç's** long struggle for justice in Turkey from his youth to his leadership in DİSK, and including organising mass activities like the huge May Day demonstrations that rocked Turkey in the late 70's.

In a speech of great depth **Aydın Meriç** told the meeting of the junta's flagrant violations of human rights: "The most basic human rights of freedom of conscience, freedom of organisation and trade union rights including the right to strike and collective wage bargaining are non-existent." He told the meeting of mass arrests, investigations and show trials now continuing. 200,000 have been arrested since the junta seized power on 12 September 1980, and subjected to barbaric torture in the prisons of Turkey. "The total number of people who have died under torture to date is 150. Some I knew personally."

Aydın Meriç explained what he called "economic terror against the working people of Turkey... Today the labour power of Turkey's workers is among the cheapest in the world. Real wages of workers has fallen in the past three years to the level of 20 years ago. ...

"There is the main DİSK trial in



which 78 defendants are on trial, 67 for their lives. Another 80 people, among them myself, are on the wanted list in connection with this trial. Then there are the trials of individual unions affiliated to DİSK. At the latest count a total of 300 leaders of ten trade unions are being prosecuted."

Again and again **Aydın Meriç** emphasised the importance of the DİSK trial. "We need to stand up against the attempt to try the true defendants of this trial: that is, the working class of Turkey itself and its most active and militant trade union movement.

"It is quite true that people did fall victim to terrorism before the 12 September. I can give you three examples from DİSK. In 1976 a worker at the Fiat automobile works in Bursa was brutally murdered. The killers? The fascists! In 1977 the half million strong May Day Rally in Istanbul was attacked from the outside and over 40 people were killed. The killers? The Counter Guerilla Department of the General Staff! In the immediate run-up to the fascist military takeover in June 1980 the founder and President for 13 years of DİSK, **Kemal Türkler**, was brutally murdered. Again, his killers? The Counter Guerillas. The Chief of the General Staff during this period was none other than **Kenan Evren**, the head of the junta. The notorious Counter Guerilla which played such a direct role in these massacres was directly attached to the Deputy Chief of the General Staff. What about after the 12 September 1980? Has the terror stopped? No. It has only been legalised."

MAY DAY GREETINGS

from the

Transport & General Workers Union

in solidarity with the campaign
for democratic principles and
trade union rights in Turkey.



Moss Evans
General Secretary

Alex Kitson
Deputy General
Secretary



“Millions of Kurdish children cannot be taught in their mother-tongue, Kurdish. At school they must talk, read, write and be educated in quite a foreign language, namely in Turkish.

“Since the fascist and racial military coup took place 12 September 1980, many Kurds were killed by the Turkish officers and policemen and thousands of Kurds have been put into the Turkish military prisons. ...

“Nobody may crush any culture or exterminate any literature. ... It is a great crime. The Turkish regime, especially the fascist military junta of Turkey today commits an inhuman crime.”

Emin Bozarslan told the meeting about İsmail Beşikçi, the Turkish author and expert sociologist on Kurdish affairs now condemned for a total of 15 years for writing a letter to Switzerland criticising the oppression of the Kurdish people.

Referring to the Turkish fascists' false game of “return to democracy” **Bozarslan** said, “Maybe the generals of the military junta will then take off their uniforms, putting on civil clothes instead like the former civil fascist regime of Salazar and Caetano.”

This outstanding Kurdish democrat ended his speech with a moving rendition of his poem *Don't Crush Our Flowers* in English, Kurdish and Turkish. Everyone in the audience rose to their feet.

Jim Moody, General Secretary of CDDRT, made an appeal for money which realised £135.

To a standing ovation **Tony Benn** MP rose to address the meeting. He started by saying, “May I just emphasise what an effect a meeting like this has. We discover how many of us there are who share this view. ... A report of this meeting will be going to two very important groups: I'd be very surprised if the Turkish Embassy isn't represented here tonight; the intelligence services will be represented here tonight. We have a direct link with powerful people.

Let's be absolutely clear they get the message right!”

Tony Benn then read extracts from the Constitution of the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey to the meeting. Later he read the passage on Turkey from *The New Hope for Britain*, which was passed unanimously by the Shadow Cabinet and the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. This states,

'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.'



Tony Benn called for support for the people of Turkey saying “We want solidarity in Turkey. We want solidarity in Britain. We want international solidarity.”

He warned the fascist junta, “We must not allow the public relations activities of the Turkish junta to mislead us ...the fake democracy which they are planning to introduce under state approved political parties which are to be allowed to engage in the charade of an election... that is designed to confuse, to defuse, to persuade the *Manchester Guardian* to write a more sympathetic leading article about the junta than they would if the crudity of the repression continued.”

Tony Benn ended on an optimistic note: “The classic lesson I've learned is that victory is always to come: by a combination of determined and united effort by the working class movement in the country concerned plus international solidarity.”

To shouts of **WE WILL SMASH FASCISM** the meeting as one rose giving **Tony Benn** a long and loud standing ovation.

To the packed meeting, and to chants of **FREE DİSK NOW!**, **Aydın Meriç** pledged, “We will put an end to these crimes against humanity in Turkey. We will establish democracy through the free will of the people themselves. ... We need solidarity at every level and in every form. ... We note with satisfaction the positive stand which British democratic public opinion is taking. The wide interest from Members of the British Parliament is proof of the scale of solidarity. I would like to mention the role and achievements of the CDDRT in particular with admiration.”

The meeting was fortunate to have as second speaker **Mehmet Emin Bozarslan** the brave Kurdish writer who now lives in Sweden. He has been arrested many times in Turkey for his campaign to preserve the Kurdish language and culture. “I will tell you about ten million people, who suffer one of the hardest racial oppressions of the world today. These people are the Kurdish people, who live in North Kurdistan, the Turkish part of Kurdistan.

“The Kurdish people in North Kurdistan are forbidden even to use their own language. It is completely forbidden by the Turkish regime to publish books, newspapers and magazines in Kurdish. If you do you will risk a penalty of many years in prison.



FREE TRADE ZONES

General Evren has his picture in shop windows in Turkey, next to a picture of Kemal Atatürk. Since the coup there has been a run on statuettes of Atatürk from souvenir shops: these are good to own if you have a visit from the police! Everywhere the generals are eager to dress up as Atatürk. Evren likes to be photographed in top hat and tails and his speeches echo with nationalist phrases: "Freedom from foreign domination". "Pride in the country".

The State Planning Organisation, originally created by Atatürk to foster independent economic development, was instructed to draft a report on free trade zones and forward it to the Committee on Free Zones and Free Ports, chaired by State Minister Sermet Refik Pasin, which was convened on February 28 this year.¹

Companies operating within the free trade zones will have access to land at little or no cost, no taxes or rates of any significance and low labour costs.

In the SPO report it is proposed that the first free trade zones in Turkey will be founded in Nemtur Bay, İzmir, Antalya and Yumurtalık-Adana.²

The free zone in İzmir will concentrate on manufacture of an unspecified nature. The zone in Antalya will be for services, especially foreign contractors,



storage and the manufacture or assembly of electronic equipment. In addition, the establishment of a free port is being considered. The two candidates at present are İskenderun and Mersin.³

Unemployment in Turkey has climbed to a record 2,901,000 this year, being 20 per cent of the labour force, while the average per capita income was estimated as being \$1460 in 1980.⁴ This income figure is misleading however, as it merely represents an average rather than real income distribution. A minority will be receiving incomes far in excess of the average, the majority will be below it. The majority wage will tend to fall as unemployment rises and people become desperate to work for even a meagre salary.

The position of the labour force will be made weaker by the new labour legislation currently being drafted in Ankara. Under these, all nominees for union posts will be subject to state

approval. Union elections will be held under court supervision. It will be illegal for trade unions to fund political parties. All unions will be obliged to inform the Interior and Labour Ministries of their activities and policies. Union accounts will also be audited by state officials. Payment of dues directly from the employer will be abolished and the dues prohibited from exceeding one per cent of the member's basic wage.⁵

These measures are making Turkey attractive for foreign investors. In January 1983 \$23 million was invested in Turkey of which \$19.8 million was of West German origin.⁶

This investment will do little for the Turkish people as a whole. It will be concentrated in the export sectors using a low paid labour force. So while exports have grown by 89 per cent since 1980,⁷ and are expected to be worth over \$6 billion dollars by the end of this financial year, unemployment has increased from 1,952,000 to 2,901,000.⁸ "This adaption to exports could really be called the Turkish miracle" said the President of the İstanbul Chamber of Industry, Nurullah Gezgin, to a reporter from the *Herald Tribune* (10.3.83). Meanwhile the government is further dismantling the remaining barriers that both protected and nurtured local industry and the import substitution programme created by the Atatürk Regime in the 1920's.⁹

M H Room

Notes: 1-3, 5, 6, 8 Briefing Magazine. Ankara. Dated 28.2.1983. 4 Unpublished figure based on OECD statistics. 9 *Herald Tribune* Special Report on Turkey. 10.3.1983.

May Day Greetings

Remembering the great May Days of
DISK

Jean Pavett,
Secretary British Peace Assembly
Bedford Chambers,
London WC2E 8HA
Tel: 01-240 0720

Hackney NALGO

Sends May Day Greetings
and Best Wishes to
Turkish workers at home
and abroad in struggle
for democratic rights in
Turkey.



Workers in TGWU
ACTSS 1/524
offer solidarity to
Turkish workers and trades
unionists in their struggle
against fascism and
repression in Turkey.
ACTSS 1/524

MAY DAY 1983

No Surrender to Fascism

by Tijen Uğuriş

The working class of all countries struggling against exploitation and oppression of man by man and for the liberation of working people, especially express their revolutionary solidarity on May Day. The Turkish bourgeoisie has always curbed this expression by the working class of Turkey, it has drowned May Day Square in blood, and has called its tanks onto May Day Square.

Despite all this Turkey is a country which experienced the biggest May Days of capitalist countries in recent years. What lies behind this is the class struggle.

The bourgeoisie banned May Days, but as the class struggle sharpened the laws and bans of the bourgeoisie started to lose their function.

In 1976, for the first time hundreds of thousands went to Taksim Square in İstanbul. They renamed it May Day Square and celebrated May Day openly.

May Days have become cornerstones in the class struggle since 1976. On the one side the front of capital, and on the other, labour's front. Everyone closely watched the May Day. The front of capital was forced to act according to the strength of labour's front displayed on May Day Square. Labour's front was encouraged by the strength shown by the working class in the May Day Square, and was drawn into class struggle much more massively and actively. They went on strike, and started resistances. In this way were the DGM's (State Security Courts) smashed. The bourgeoisie tried to paralyse the working class movement with these DGM's. The working class of Turkey crushed them by their massive resistance. The bourgeoisie retreated.

Then May Day 1977 came; again all eyes were on May Day Square. Hundreds of thousands were in the May Day Square. The working class of Turkey was on the way to win an active majority of the people for its aims, for socialism. It instilled fear in its enemy. The bourgeoisie knew that its laws had lost validity and that it could not legislate new fascist laws. The bourgeoisie saw the solution in an assault on May Day Square. 40

murdered workers were the victims of this vile attack. But on May Day 1978 hundreds of thousands were again in the Square.

In 1979, the bourgeoisie placed its tanks in May Day Square and raised its banner. So instead May Day Square in İzmir was filled with working people.

On May Day 1980, the working class could not display its united strength to the bourgeoisie. May Day became the turning point. Counter-revolution gained courage. Four months later the fascist coup came.

One thing was proved in the strikes, resistances and occupations in our country. The working class of Turkey has boundless ability and potential to destroy the world of exploitation and slavery, establish the world of brotherhood and freedom, to lead all the working people in this struggle. Every single right on the front of labour was gained by the display of this ability of the working class, it has been shown to friends and enemies, and became the product of this struggle.

Counter-revolution has suppressed the class struggle by a fascist coup. The junta is exercising an unprecedented economic terror. The *real* wages of the workers reached its highest level in 1977 when the glorious May Day was celebrated. In 1982 under fascism it dropped to one half of 1977, even lower than the 1963 level. The food cost alone for a 4 person family is 60,000 TL (£200; Report by the Medical Faculty of the Aegean University, reported in *Milliyet* 4 September 1982). The minimum wages that Evren promised to increase during his "election campaign" have been "increased" (!) from 7,200 TL (£24) to 10,600 TL (£35) monthly.

Fascism destroyed all the rights of the workers that they had won by spilling their blood. The junta is trying to make sure that the working class will not get them back in the future. Before it "returns to democracy", it is passing its fascist laws. It has already passed laws for new DGM's (State Security Courts). Even the smallest economic-democratic rights of the working people have been eradicated. 74 people are being tried in

the DISK trial, 64 of them for their lives. Miners who continued to produce coal in the Yeni Çeltik mine, which the employer had closed down, are being tried amongst more than 700 defendants. In the Kurdistan Workers' Party trial of 620 defendants, for one defendant the death penalty has been demanded 20 times over.

Under the influence of its failure to solve the economic crisis the fascist junta is looking at its neighbours with an even greater appetite. Together with the USA it is preparing bloody plans for Middle East.

However there are two things that the fascist junta have not been able to do. Firstly, it could not exhaust the revolutionary potential of the working class. Our working class has been defeated in this battle but did not surrender. Without giving way to defeatism and passivism and displaying its determined stand in the class struggle, the working class proves it is the vanguard in this period also.

Secondly, the fascist counter-revolution has not been able to solve its deep economic crisis. The sharp class struggle that was expressed on previous May Days originated from serious economic problems. Suppression of the class struggle means preventing the economic crisis being reflected in political life. Based on the economic crisis which is further deepening, social life in Turkey is pregnant with sharp class struggles.

The fascist junta is aware of both. Therefore its fascist constitution was prepared in a way that will obstruct the future class struggle.

May Day 1983 will be the third May Day the working class of Turkey will spend under fascist oppression. Fascism is keeping May Day Square empty by force. But the working class of Turkey is keeping its glorious tradition. It is preparing for the May Days that it will celebrate by **crushing fascism**. Today every gain — bread, peace and freedom — is directly dependent on destroying fascism. The working class of Turkey will achieve this. Our duty is to declaim that we are on the side of the working class of Turkey.

FIGHT TO TOPPLE THE JUNTA

An LBC Interview with Aydın Meriç



Aydın Meriç (Assistant General Secretary of DİSK) gave a lively interview to **Dan Damon** on his LBC latenight phone-in radio programme 14 April. The interview was just two days before the CDDRT's successful STOP THE TRIALS meeting.

Originally to have been a debate between **Meriç** and a representative from the Turkish Embassy, **Dan Damon** explained "... after much telephoning I finally met with the Turkish press councillor here and I explained the plans for this programme. He said he would try to provide an official or pro-government contributor. Today he told me that they had now decided not to take part."

The first caller was an American woman asking whether it was true the junta planned to bulldoze the *gecekondu's* in May. **Meriç** answered "Yes, *gecekondu's* have been one of the major problems of large cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Adana, and the present military junta decided to bulldoze all these small buildings where most of the working people are living. ... In İstanbul alone 40% of the population live in these small houses ... now they are going to be thrown out of these houses and they don't know what to do."

Asked about the existence of the yellow trade union Türk-İş, officially recognised by the junta, **Aydın Meriç** explained, "... DİSK is fighting *against* the junta, not directly with this trade union centre. ... There are a lot of questions to be answered. For example, why are they (Türk-İş—TN) keeping a deathly silence over what is happening to the leaders and members of DİSK? Secondly, why are they so silent about suppression of all trade union rights in Turkey? How can they explain their participation in the government? What

type of relations are they having with people like Maurice Paladino and company who presently head the notorious AAFLI (Asia Africa Free Labour Institute) — a cover organisation for the CIA. ... These are the questions these people must answer."

Dealing with a question on the Kurdish minority in Turkey, **Meriç** said, "After the Turkish people, Kurds are the second largest national group in our country. Their number amounts to almost 20% of the whole population. ... It is strictly forbidden to accept the existence of Kurds in our country. ... They are under national suppression and oppression; equal rights for them and their right to determine their future is a struggle for all progressive forces in Turkey including for DİSK."

Dan Damon asked "...What earthly good can we do here in Britain". In thought provoking reply **Aydın** commented, "... As far as I can see there is a mistaken approach in evaluating such regimes like Turkey. It is a widely acknowledged fact that some countries regardless of their political systems base their attitudes towards other regimes solely on the foreign policies of the latter. In this one-sided opportunistic attitude in evaluating the present regime in Turkey some circles both within the country and internationally come to some opportunistic conclusions on the intentions and practice of the junta. Therefore, the high degree of interest and solidarity shown by British democratic circles especially the activities of the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey have been a great encouragement to us all."

What about the results of the Referendum held Nov 1982 and the now infamous 91% vote claimed by the junta to be a major step towards democracy? **Aydın** had this to say, ... "I would like to point out that approximately 4 million people between the ages of 18-25 did not participate in the Referendum. Another

3 million electors did not vote at all and 2 million of the voters said *NO* and that Referendum was held under strict repressive conditions. There *is* resistance to the junta. There *was* resistance to the junta and it's growing every day. In a democratic election, if we are going to have any in the near future, they won't stand a chance at all."

Finally, in answer to the question what is the future of Turkey? **Aydın Meriç** declared, "It depends on the struggle of the democratic forces both on a national scale and internationally. How strongly they fight to topple the junta, this will determine the future of Turkey."

DUSTBIN CORNER



Evren visited the town of Aydın in April. On arrival he reprieved a *camel* due for religious sacrifice. His great "humanity" was rewarded later. An old man wanted to kiss his feet! The modern Atatürk, Başbuğ Evren deigned to allow this man to kiss his hand.

CONSTITUTION OF CDDRT

1. The name of the organisation shall be the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey (CDDRT).

2. The aims of CDDRT are as follows:
End military rule, martial law, torture and executions.

Release of political prisoners.
Freedom for all democratic organisations.
End national oppression of the Kurds and national minorities.

Stop expansionism; end the occupation of Cyprus.

Withdraw Turkey from NATO and close all NATO bases.

No military, political or economic support for the fascist junta.

Totally oppose junta harassment of overseas opponents.

Organise solidarity on the basis of the foregoing utilising every means at our disposal.

3. Organisations and individuals accepting the aims of CDDRT can apply to affiliate. Such applications are subject to the approval of the General Council. Affiliation fees shall be set by the General Council and become payable from 1 January each year.

shall meet every two years. It shall consist of delegates from Branches and affiliated organisations, and individual affiliates. Congress shall elect the General Council and consider reports and motions. The conduct of business shall be on the basis of Standing Orders approved by Congress. Pre-Congress arrangements are the responsibility of the retiring General Council. Each Congress shall decide the size of the General Council.

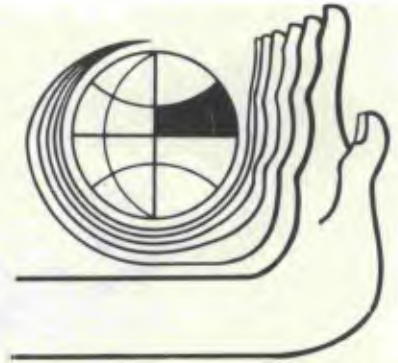
5. The General Council is the continuing body of Congress and shall meet quarterly. It shall appoint the Executive Committee which is responsible to it. The General Council shall have the right to co-option.

6. The Executive Committee shall consist of the General Secretary and such other members as the General Council may decide. The Executive Committee shall meet weekly and be responsible for the day to day work of CDDRT.

7. Local Branches of CDDRT are formed with the approval of the General Council.

8. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority at a Congress.

9. The General Council may call, or upon request by two-thirds of affiliated national organisations shall call, a Special Congress.



General, Municipal, Boilermakers & Allied Trades Union

General Secretary David Basnett

May Day Greetings from GMBATU

*to all our friends throughout the world
especially those suffering under the present
viciously cruel regime in Turkey*

PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES

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Claygate, Esher,
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COHSE Caterham Branch
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GMWH 115 Manchester Branch
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Waltham Forest Trades Council
GFC Openwall JSSC

Union of Turkish Workers
Ardwick CLP
Beckenham CLP
Bermondsey CLP
Cambridgeshire CLP
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Chickmannan & E Stirlingshire
CLP
Greenwich CLP
Halemplice CLP
Hazelgrove CLP
Heywood & Royton CLP
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Keighley CLP
Renfrewshire West CLP
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National Organisation of Labour
Students
Communist Party of Great Britain
Young Communist League

Porting For Progressive Era Tyrku
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(Branch of GUS IR)
KNE — Communist Youth of
Greece (org. in Britain)
Kurdish Students Society in Europe
(UK)

Portuguese Communist Party
(org. in Britain)
Union of Turkish Progressives
in Britain
Turkish Students Federation of UK
City of London Polytechnic
Students' Union
Cyprus Students' Society —
Manchester University
Leeds University Union
UMIST — Students' Union
Manchester Poly Students' Union
Manchester University Students'
Union
Teesside Polytechnic Students'
Union
Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation
Demokrat Norway
Haldane Society of Socialist
Lawyers
London CRS Political Committee
Lord Fenner Brockway
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Lord Jenkins of Putney
Mgr. Bruce Kent
Arthur Latham
Robert J. Longue
Lord Molloy
John Platts-Mills QC
William Pomeroy
Andrew Rothstein
Marion Sarafi
Gordon Schaffer
E.P. Thompson

CDDRT Second Congress

10.30am County Hall, London SE1

Sunday 15 May 1983

Our Second Congress on Sunday 15th May, County Hall, London SE1 is being held during a time when the economic and political terror in Turkey has never been so great. The junta is now preparing to establish state, constitutional fascism.

Their kangaroo courts are a disgusting spectacle for all the world to see. They are not just trying Turkish and Kurdish working people and trade unionists, but they have also put peace, art, culture, education and learning on trial. This is an insult to

humanity.

Since the last Congress two years ago CDDRT has grown in strength and influence. Our national and international conferences, public meetings, liaison activities, petition campaigns and publications have led the way forward in the struggle against fascism in Turkey. Our monthly *Turkey Newsletter* has become one of our solidarity weapons and is a credit to the CDDRT.

This 1983 Congress will mark our past

achievements and pave the way for a much more massive fight to help topple the fascist junta. We need your help! Affiliate to CDDRT and get your organisation to do so, too. Take part in our work *attend our Congress*, build CDDRT locally and distribute the *Turkey Newsletter*. It costs only £1 to attend CDDRT Congress.

Let's make this Congress a success!

Let's ensure that fascism is destroyed in Turkey!

Executive Committee, CDDRT

Application form for Second Congress, Sunday, 15th May, 1983, County Hall, London SE1, 10.30am.

* I/We wish to take part in the Second Congress of CDDRT.

* I am/We are *not an affiliate.

* Enclosed is the appropriate affiliation fee (see form below).

Delegate(s) fee(s) enclosed £ (£1 per delegate.)

Name/Organisation

.....

Address(es) for credentials

.....

*Delete as applicable.

Affiliate to CDDRT

Organisations and individuals accepting the aims of CDDRT (see Constitution) are eligible for affiliation. Annual affiliation fees are: national organisation £25, local organisation £10, individual £6.

I/we* wish to continue*/apply for* affiliation to CDDRT and enclose a cheque/PO for £

Name

Address

.....

*Delete as applicable.

Return to CDDRT, 29 Parkfield St, London N1 OPS. Tel:01-226 2668.

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