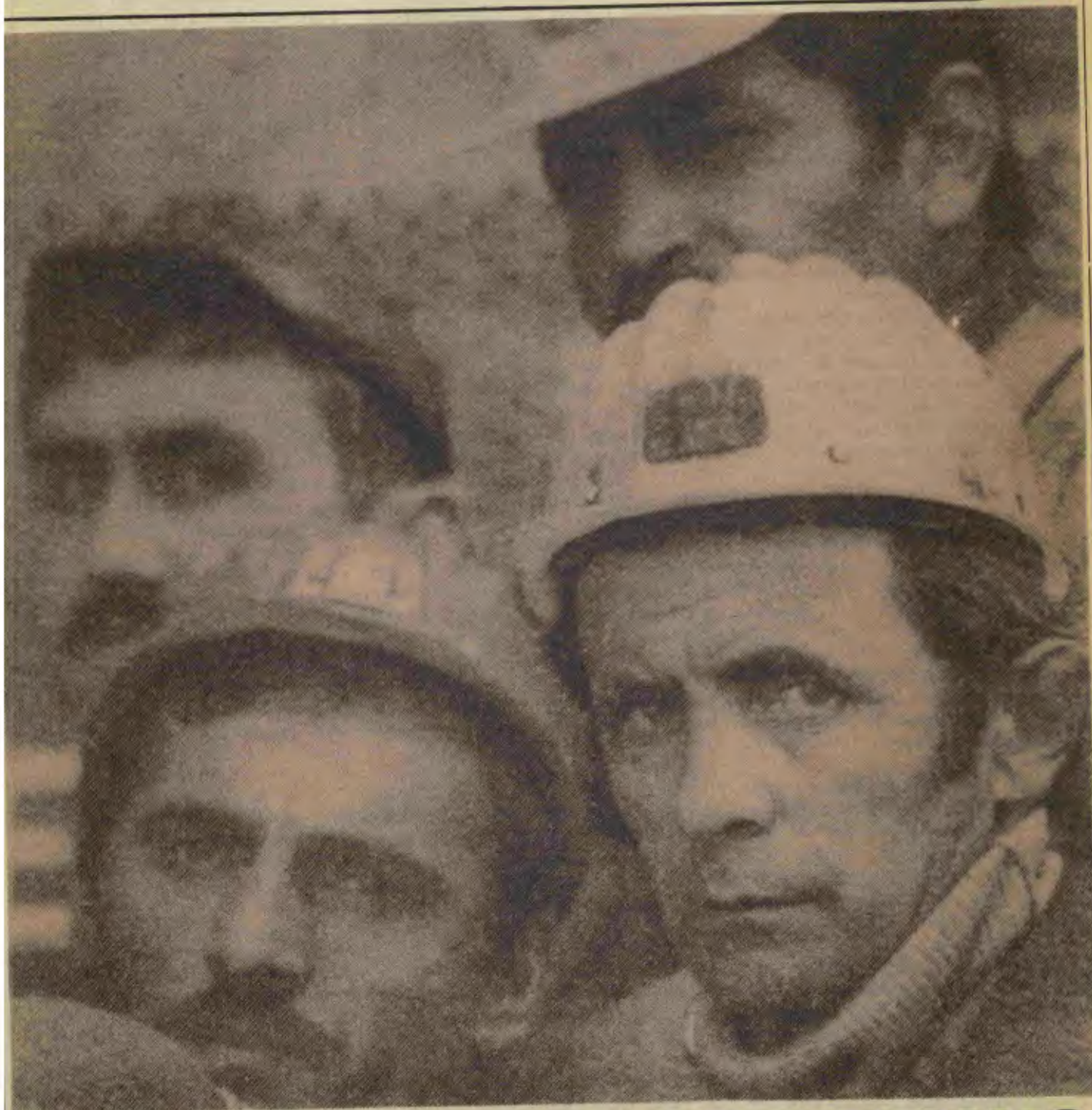


# TURKEY NEWSLETTER



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

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## WORKERS' ANGER GROWS

# MAMAK PRISONERS' HUNGER STRIKE

In January prisoners of Mamak Special Military Prison started a protest against prison uniforms and repression in the prison, which was actively supported by their families. The prison authorities apparently accepted some demands. However they did not keep their promise and after the resistance ended they in fact increased the repression.

As a result " the political prisoners of Mamak went on hunger strike for 42 days.

At the end of February both A-Blok and B-Blok prisoners started this action. Initially it was a hunger strike in which prisoners were taking only sugar and salty water. The authorities then put fascist prisoners into the same ward as the revolutionary prisoners.

In the middle of March a defendant at a trial told the court about the repression in Mamak and the hunger strike of the political prisoners. The prison authorities at Mamak immediately stopped giving sugar and salt to the hunger strikers. The prisoners then said "We are going to fast to death!"

A list of the names of 9 prisoners who were taken to hospital first appeared on the wall of the prison. Later forty five male and many more female prisoners were taken to hospital. Most of them were taken to military *Mevki* Hospital and the rest *Gülhane* Hospital (of the Military Medical Academy) in Ankara. However there are many more prisoners requiring urgent medical attention who have not been sent to hospital yet. Visitors are not allowed to see fasting prisoners.

In the middle of the hunger strike authorities also introduced a ban on books and letters aiming to stop communication of the prisoners with people outside prison, therefore preventing any information leaking out, especially to democratic countries of Western Europe.

Some prisoners are told that they would be taken to hospital on Friday 30 March. This is a common practice in Mamak. Authorities try to put some prisoners off to gain time by telling them that they will be taken to hospital, giving various days, which however either inaccurate, or they are not taken at all. They try to limit the number of prisoners being taken to

hospital to a minimum to prevent information reaching to their families etc...

On 23rd March democrat lawyers held a meeting about this.

The authorities changed the prison personnel fearing that they would be affected by the action. The latest change of personnel was on 5th March. The director of the prison has also been changed to give the impression that he was responsible for these events.

The resistance of the political prisoners is receiving the wide and active support of the people. Major events around the issue of resistance in the prisons, are expected to take place. That is why the question of amnesty for the political prisoners is still on the agenda despite the censorship on the topic itself.

The news of the hunger strike was given by the Turkish Radio and Television. The General Staff Headquarters later issued a statement in which "the fast was attacked as part of a propaganda campaign to embarrass Turkey at international forums, influence verdicts at trials, help organise pressure groups abroad and mislead foreign public opinion".

"The statement, quoting the findings of a nine-man commission comprising high-ranking officers, army doctors and government officials, denied widespread use of torture or maltreatment at military prisons. But it conceded that, of 63,000 people imprisoned since the proclamation of martial law in December, 1978, 53 had died in prisons."

"Of the deaths, 14 were suicides, 23 the result of various illnesses, two were due to torture and seven to hunger strikes. Seven more deaths were still being investigated, the statement said, and 80 officials, found responsible for 'isolated cases of torture or maltreatment' had been punished." (*The Times*, 5 April 1984)

The junta, through local elections, staged their mockery of "return to democracy" at the same time as around 600 political prisoners were on hunger strike, and Kurdish prisoners of Diyarbakır and revolutionaries in Metris were in resistance. As a result seven leading members of the West German "Greens" party staged a

protest demonstration in Ankara. These MPs demonstrated in protest at the violation of human rights and to show support for hundreds of political prisoners on hunger strike for a month.

Herr Uli Fischer, Herr Willi Hoss, Frau Garrielle Potthast, Herr Milan Horacek, all MPs, and Herr Rudolf Bahro, federal head of the party, Herr Lukas Beckmann, the former secretary-general, and Herr Kalle Winkler, the party's official songwriter, chained themselves to a park in the busiest district of the town. They then unfurled three banners inscribed with slogans in Turkish.

"Respect for human rights in West and East, for Turks and Kurds", "Democracy is not possible with torture and executions" and "Turkish workers cannot be expelled from West Germany," the banners read.

The protesters also distributed leaflets explaining they objected to human rights violations since the Turkish military coup in September, 1980.

Uli Fischer in an interview later told how the people showed great interest in their action. "Hundreds of people gathered around us within a very short time" he said "holding our shoulder, showing sign of victory, raising their clenched fists, they expressed their sympathy".

Together with at least eight foreign journalists, MPs were taken to a police station first and later to the Security. "We were interrogated" Uli Fischer said "put into jail, and in the evening taken to the airport in a police bus. We were sent to Frankfurt from there".

"With our action in Ankara, we'd like to show our responsibility as Germans and Europeans for more than 20,000 political prisoners, for tortured and executed people in Turkey," their leaflet said.

The fascist junta had put the revolutionaries in jail in order to silence them, to eliminate or at least minimise their influence on society. However all the developments in Mamak, Metris, Diyarbakır Military Prisons and the actions of the prisoners' families as well as those of democrats of all countries very clearly show that the fascists have failed to break their spirit of resistance. Their influence flows over the walls of the prisons to echo among the people.

# NO TO UNIFORMS IN METRIS

At the trial of the Communist Party of Turkey, 3 defendants who are also accused of supporting the *Worker's Voice* (*İşçinin Sesi*) took off their uniforms having only their underwears at the trial in Metris Prison. Three defendants *Hikmet Esen, Hayri Bökü, Ali Poyraz* and their lawyers told the court that they are forced to wear uniforms despite the fact that they have not been convicted yet. This practice by the authorities, they said, has no legal basis at all. What is more their

appearance in uniforms same as the convicted prisoners effect the court.

This was the second sitting that three defendants took off their uniforms in protest at the prison authorities. Fourth defendant at the Communist Party of Turkey trial *Adil Demirci* also took off his uniform in the police van on his way to the trial at Metris Prison from the Sultanahmet Prison where he was held. As he arrived at the court he only had his pants on.

The court decided that three defendants who despite the warning at the previous sitting insisted on coming to the court with their pants only are to be expelled from the courtroom and to continue their trial in their absence. The fourth defendant was decided to be warned for this was his first action, and if he continues coming to the court in his pants only his trial will be continued in his absence.

Four defendants were taken out of the court room.



On 31st March 1984, the Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain organised a solidarity march with the hunger strikers in Mamak. together with organisations representing the Turkish and Cypriot community in Britain participated in the march, Jeremy Corbyn MP. and three wives of hunger strikers in Mamak joined the march and held speeches at the adjoining rally.

## A state of emergency substituted for martial law

The cabinet meeting on 1st March decided on the lifting of Martial Law in 13 provinces beginning on 19th March. However, the lifting of martial law will actually occur in 5 provinces only; in the remaining 8 provinces a state of emergency will still be in effect. The provinces where martial law has been lifted are: Kırklareli, Bilecik, Kütahya, Muş, Burdur. A state of emergency will be in effect in the following provinces: Çanakkale, Kırşehir, Gümüşhane, Sinop, Isparta, Kastamonu, Çankırı and Bitlis.

In 54 other provinces martial law has been extended for 4 more months. (*Milliyet*, 3 March 1984)

The emergency legislation give great powers to the mayors in the area declared to be in a state of emergency. They will be able to:

- \* Halt settlement in the area and limit movement in or out;
- \* Close down all state and private educational establishments, as well as student halls of residence;
- \* Inspect entertainment establishments such as restaurants, bars, cinemas, theatres, hotels, motels, holiday villages etc., and stipulate compulsory opening and closing times for them;
- \* Ban strikes and lock-outs;
- \* Limit or cancel holidays for personnel involved in implementing emergency measures; confiscate all types of communications equipment;
- \* Stipulate duties to be performed by finance, property and labour. (*Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1983)

## Conditions for Radio-TV Director

Turkey's Radio and Television Broadcasting Company (TRT) is to select its future Managing Director from among three candidates. The qualifications required of the candidates are as follows

- 1) Be a graduate
- 2) Be over 40 years of age
- 3) Should have experience of 15 years in the specialised subject
- 4) **Should not have been a member of a political party in the last 3 years.**
- 5) **Should have a non-argumentative personality (!)**
- 6) To know the job of broadcasting well
- 7) **Should possess the ability to resist pressures**
- 8) **Should possess the ability to take measures that will overcome criticism.** (*Hürriyet*, 9 March 1984)

# THE CO OPERATIVE MOVEMENT AND TURKEY

An interview with  
**JIM LAYZELL**

**Secretary of The Political Committee, London RCS**

We have been interested for many years in what is happening in Turkey. Not only in Turkey of course, but because we are an international organisation we are concerned with what is happening to Cooperatives in different parts of the world.

During the military junta in Greece for instance we moved the expulsion of the Greek Cooperatives from the international cooperative alliance because we had been reliably informed that the Greek Cooperatives were no longer holding democratic elections. In fact the democratically elected leaders of the Greek co-ops had been removed and imprisoned by the junta and had been replaced by the junta's representatives.

We met representatives of the Turkish cooperative movement several times particularly the Yol-Koop Cooperative which has a building/road building coop- a consumer coop. But although we have written to them on a number of occasions in the last couple of years we have had no replies. We are as concerned as to what the position is with Turkish coops as we were with Greek coops. We are worried and concerned particularly following the trial of Turkey's peace leaders as to whether similar things are happening to Turkey's Cooperatives' leaders.

We are also particularly concerned as we have for many years had close links with Bulgarian Cooperatives and the Bulgarian peace movement, who, as many of your readers may know have been prominent in the peace forces in that part of the world.

(...)

We are concerned with the effect of Turkey having a military junta and its membership of NATO are having on the attempt to create the nuclear free zone. Besides being in the cooperative movement I am a member of the World Peace Council, we are particularly concerned at the arrest, imprisonment and trial of the leaders of Turkey's peace movement. And I read for instance the reply of the Turkish Ambassador to Alf Lomas MEP on this particular issue. When one reads of the various accusations levelled at the peace leaders who I have known for many years and who are campaigning for the same sort of thing as we are: an end to the nuclear threat — in fact an end to war altogether one views with a great deal of suspicion the accusations made against them.

We have a great concern for what happens in Turkey — not only what is happening to Turkey and the people of Turkey but its effect on other countries outside as well. Cyprus for instance, where there is a strong cooperative movement with whom we have close and friendly ties not with Greek Cypriots but also Turkish Cypriots. When until the recent invasion of Cyprus by Turkey we have been talking to them we have seen very little difference. It never entered my head whether they were Greek or Turkish Cypriots. The topics we were



*Jim Layzell speaking at the meeting held in memory of the Cuban construction workers killed in Grenada.*

discussing — Cooperatives and world peace were the same there were no differences. So we were horrified at what happened and not least with our own government for not taking steps to help the people of Cyprus particularly as we have a military base there.

**QUESTION:** Since the fascist coup in 1980 military manoeuvres have been constantly increasing in Turkey, on land sea and air with the involvement of NATO countries. These war games of the junta serve many purposes, firstly the fascist regime which has not been able to solve the deep economic problems in Turkey is trying to draw the attention of the people to outside the country. Secondly, the need to expand capitalism is on the agenda. However Turkey is under imperialist exploitation itself and cannot become an imperialist country in its proper sense, therefore they keep the military expansion high on the agenda. Would you like to comment on this?

**LAYZELL:** I think the situation in Turkey in many respects both military expansion and the economy has similarities with what is happening in Britain. We too are expanding militarily although the government would say it is reducing expenditure. Nevertheless there is a great increase in military expenditure with more sophisticated weapons. The attempt by our government is similar to the Turkish government — in the Falklands for example to take people's attention away from unemployment and other things that were happening in our country and with some success at that particular time. It has always been a great ploy of capitalist governments to use a pretended external threat to take people's minds away from internal problems. This is what the junta is doing in Turkey as well.

The effect of course of what both Britain and Turkey do

with their partners in NATO effects not only the people of Britain and Turkey but in many other countries, because experience shows in the past that very often military manoeuvres or so-called military manoeuvres lead to real conflict. There is the old saying that once you produce a new military weapon it is not long before you have to try it out. That's been the history of most of these things particularly in that area — new military manoeuvres on the borders of the Soviet Union produce the possibility of armed conflict. It would not be the first time a world war has started in that particular part of the world. So it is extremely worrying...

The effect on NATO of both Turkey and Greece being members and yet both in conflict is extremely dangerous...

**QUESTION:** You mentioned the danger to world peace and neighbouring countries. I would like to come to the question of Turkey's role in the region. The Iran-Iraq war is continuing, Turkey's oil pipeline is under constant threat as a result of this war and reactionary pro-American Arab states are forcing Turkey to adopt a policy against Iran. The 6th Fleet which had not been able to come to Turkey for 15 years because of the protests of the masses now visits Turkey, at the moment the 6th fleet is near Lebanon and Turkey has provided an air base for US troops in their operations in the Lebanon. How do you see these developments?

**LAYZELL:** I think all the manoeuvres by the US not only in the region but in the Caribbean are all linked with the one real basic purpose. The main purpose is to secure the oil supplies to the US. The US knows its own oil will be running low or running out altogether within a few years and therefore the strategy is to maintain at all costs the oil supplies to the US. If that means an armed conflict or the invasion of another state in order to do it, I think the present US administration will be perfectly prepared to do it.

(...)

That leaves the whole situation within that area in the melting pot. On the one hand there is the traditional support the US has given Israel and have used the Israeli forces almost as a section of the US armed forces, at the same time there is the overwhelming desire to maintain US oil supplies. Therefore they are in conflict with a number of their so-called allies. They cannot reconcile their Israeli allies with their Arab allies. This is a growing conflict and this affects NATO itself.

(...)

The position of Turkey within this whole strategy is plain and that is an extremely worrying one. On the one hand you have the US government who are themselves unstable and then the Turkish junta who face problems within and could also be led into some military adventure which would have no hope of success but could lead to a wider conflict. That is the danger that exists when one has a government not controlled by democratic means but, like military juntas are there by force and have no democratic opinion within their own countries to control them in the same way that democratic countries have.

Any military junta whether it be Turkey or Chile is always a grave danger not only to their own people but to the world at large.

**QUESTION:** Turkey's fascist rulers announced that they are ready and willing to be a nuclear zone. Recently Britain's defence minister visited Turkey to discuss the production of Rapier ground to air missile. How do you see the danger of a nuclear zone to Turkey both in terms of neighbouring countries and world peace?

**LAYZELL:** We have a close connection with Bulgaria. First as you know our connection with Bulgaria was through the cooperatives... Some years ago the Agrarian Party took the initiative in organising the peace forces in the area. We have been following closely the Bulgarians' attempt to create a Balkan Nuclear Free Zone because it did seem the area where there was a very real chance of success. In recent discussions I had with some leaders of the Bulgarian Agrarian Party they told me they had reached agreement with the Turkish government for a Balkan nuclear free zone. I must say I accepted this with some scepticism because I could not reconcile the fact of Turkey's membership of NATO with acceptance of a nuclear free zone. I think it is a propaganda ploy by the junta to show willingness to have a nuclear free zone if they do not renounce their membership of NATO or ask NATO and US forces to remove their nuclear weapons from Turkey. It is not acceptable or honest to say you are going to be part of a nuclear free zone if you have got nuclear weapons on your soil. The Bulgarians have no nuclear weapons on their territory so they can be quite honest about joining a nuclear free zone.

As with the British government trying to allay fears by saying nuclear weapons are only a deterrent so with the Turkish junta trying to calm the fears of the people by saying we will be part of the Balkan nuclear free zone. Because I think once the people of any country and we see it now in western Europe feel there is a great danger of nuclear war then there are other repercussions as well. And while in western democracies we have the possibility of removing our governments by elections in Turkey they have a military junta which can only be removed by an uprising of the people. So I think it is to the benefit of the junta to say they will be part of a nuclear free zone in order to pretend that everything is peaceful and there is no danger...

The other worrying thing is Turkey's involvement within the Iraq-Iran war. Recently the Turkish army went into Iraq with the connivance of the Iraqi government in order to attack the Kurdish minority there and there is no doubt that the struggle of the Kurds is a threat to the Iraqi regime itself. That's why they allowed the Turkish army in.

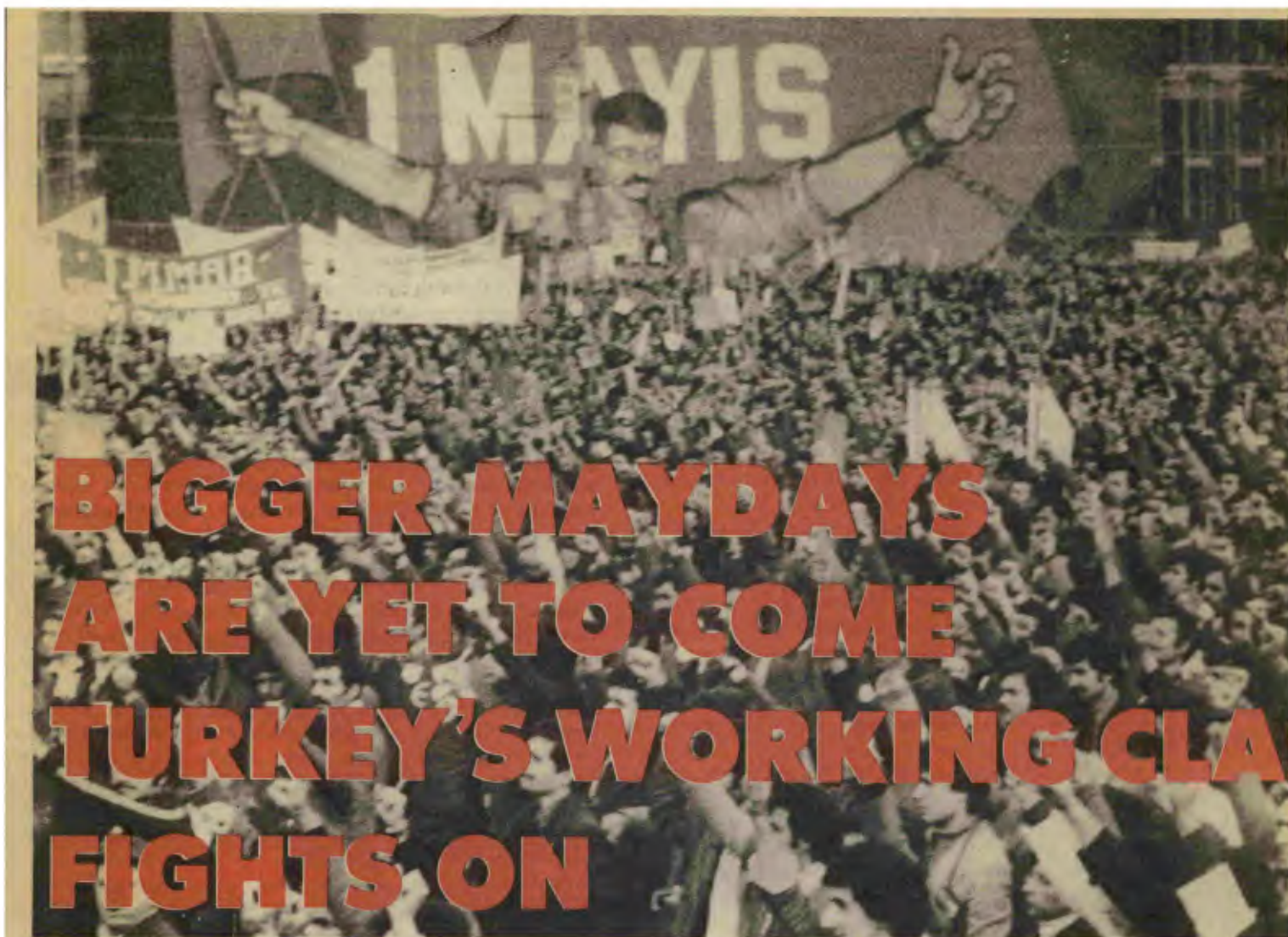
As I have said we are most interested to learn what is happening in Turkey particularly to the progressive forces in Turkey. If there is any way in which our fraternal greetings and friendship for the progressive forces in Turkey can be got to them then we will be very pleased.

We are well informed about what is happening politically in Turkey, but we are not getting information on the Turkish Cooperatives. If there is any way we can help the cooperatives we will be pleased to whether through international action or other action. Because we regard the cooperatives as one of the main forces for peace in the world. It is the only international organisation that has members in all countries East, West and third world.

**QUESTION:** Recently there has been a massacre in Diyarbakir Prison and many leaders of Kurdish organisations are said to have been killed and others are on hunger strike. Would you like to send a message to this and other prisons throughout Turkey where prisoners are resisting fascism.

**LAYZELL:** We would certainly send a message to Kurdish and other political prisoners in Turkey and Kurdistan, wishing them well and if there is any way we can send messages we will.

The British cooperative movement and from our Political Committee in London wish them every success in their struggle for liberation and human rights.



by Michael Hill

In the May issue of *Turkey Newsletter* every year since the 1980 fascist coup we have carried an article on May Days in Turkey. Reviewing the mighty demonstrations of Turkey's workers in the past and looking at the present situation.

The reason for this is not to go through a yearly ritual or to cling nostalgically to events of the past. It is because May Day the great international day of solidarity of workers throughout the world is inseparably bound-up with both the heroic past and the even more heroic future of the working class in Turkey.

May Day in Turkey is a thermometer of the class struggle. The day on which both friend and foe judge the combat readiness — the strength of the working class.

Since the formation of the Republic May Day has been banned in Turkey. So that, when in 1976 the workers swept aside all bans and marched into Taksim Square (renamed May Day Square), İstanbul in the largest May Day demonstration seen in the western world, it was clear that class struggle had reached a high level. That Turkey's working class had come of age. That Turkey was in crisis and a revolutionary situation had emerged.

The bourgeoisie unable to contain the situation through law responded with terror. In 1977 the may day rally was ambushed by fascist gunmen and political police and 40 workers were killed.

However, the following year hundreds of thousands of workers again made May Day Square their own and this time

the bourgeoisie dared not attack.

In 1976, 1977 and 1978 the international flag of the working class flew over May Day Square. The square rang with the slogans of the working class of Turkey demonstrating the solidarity of Turkish and Kurdish people in the struggle for international solidarity, a genuinely democratic society and an end to the oppression of Kurdistan.

May Day 1979 saw the bourgeoisie occupy May Day Square with their symbols-tanks and national chauvinism. Instead, the working class had to rally on May Day Square in İzmir.

In 1980 May Day did not take place at all. It was clear the initiative was passing to finance capital's malignant product — fascism. Four months later on 12th September 1980 fascist rule was imposed throughout Turkey and the era of full state terror against the working class and democratic forces had begun.

However, in the four years since then, the underlying economic crisis which gave rise to the gigantic class struggle and revolutionary upheavals of the 1970s has not been resolved. The working peoples' standard of living has fallen further, the rate of exploitation has intensified. Turkey like other medium level developed countries has continued to bare the full brunt of the world economic situation. The Constitution of 1982 was part of the attempt to set Turkey firmly in the mould of corporative state. To ensure that even without the existing junta Turkey would continue on a fascist course. Again the fraudulent elections of 1983 and this year were part of an attempt to establish a "controlled democracy" which



would operate the framework laid down by the junta and keep the working class disarmed. However, this path has led to fascism itself in Turkey showing signs of beginning to decay. The permitting of even the most controlled and puny exercises in democracy is accelerating this decay. If it is not stopped by a revival of fascist rule in an even harsher form it may lead back to the re-emergence of the crisis of the 1970s in a more acute form.

Until 1980 the name of DİSK (the Revolutionary Confederation of Trade Unions) was synonymous with the great May Days. Formed in 1967 it consisted of the most class conscious, militant sections of the working class. These had become dissatisfied with Türk-İş, the old trade union confederation formed in 1947 and whose leadership was committed to collaborating with the employers and the state. DİSK led the class struggle through the 1970s and therefore was the first target of the generals following the 1980 coup.

Its leaders were imprisoned, put on trial for their lives or fled the country. Its assets were seized, its organisations smashed. Since then the junta has tried to turn Türk-İş into a corporate trade union movement as in Mussolini's Italy. Türk-İş always contained a numerical majority of organised workers. Despite the collaborationist nature of its top leadership Türk-İş is the only functioning mass organisation of workers in Turkey today. DİSK is gone, but those who created its glorious traditions the conscious workers are still there. Their task is now to carry the great traditions of DİSK — the traditions of class trade unionism, the traditions of May Day into Türk-İş. To make those traditions the property of

the workers in Türk-İş. To raise the level of the whole working class despite the present leadership of Türk-İş.

The task is now to end splits in the trade union movement, to build a single trade union movement — to carry forward the May Day tradition. During these four years some people have pointed to the silence of the working class in Turkey and have implied in one way or another that the working class is passive, 'not fighting enough or are letting democracy down'.

These views are utterly false. The working class of Turkey has been fairly silent but it is not the silence of passivity, of defeat, it is the silence before the storm. The silence accompanying an ever increasing inward rage and anger.

The working class are drawing the lessons of the whole period from 1970 onwards. When they speak it will be with a voice louder and clearer than ever before. It will sweep away pigmy generals and puppet politicians who have tried to turn Turkey into one big prison. It will sweep away a system which cannot allow even a modicum of genuine democracy in Turkey.

The working class of Turkey with its great May Days behind it and its greater ones to come will establish the genuine democracy which it alone can guarantee.

On May Day let us reaffirm the international brotherhood of all workers and demonstrate our solidarity with the working class of Turkey.

Let us step up the fight for solidarity with Turkey's unbreakable political prisoners, for self determination for Kurdistan and for freedom and real democracy for the working class of Turkey.

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON PRISONERS IN DIYARBAKIR

*On this page we are printing items from Amnesty International's Newsletter (March 1984 Issue) dealing with conditions in Diyarbakir.*



**AI has called on the head of the Turkish armed forces to account publicly for seven prisoners reported to have died in a military prison in eastern Turkey in January.**

In an urgent message on 13 February to the Turkish Chief of General Staff, General Necde Urug, AI expressed concern about reports of the resumption of torture and illtreatment of inmates of Diyarbakir Military Prison.

It named seven prisoners reported to have died in the prison this year. Four were known to have been buried. In three other cases, AI learned that the families had been informed of their relatives' deaths but that the bodies were not available for burial.

AI said that all the families concerned should be given the bodies of their dead relatives and allowed to arrange independent medical examinations to establish the cause of death.

The organisation's call followed a visit by an AI delegate to Diyarbakir from 27 to 31 January to seek information about three prisoners reported to have died in unexplained circumstances.

The military authorities in Diyarbakir acknowledged the deaths of two prisoners, *Necmettin Büyükkaya* and *Yılmaz Demir*. They told the delegate that one of the prisoners had committed suicide and the other had died of a brain tumour. No form of inquest proceedings are known to have taken place.

After the delegate's visit AI received information on the deaths of four more prisoners.

These seven reported deaths came after inmates of the military prison had begun their second hunger-strike within six months. This one is reported to be in protest against the alleged resumption of torture in the prison and the withdrawal of concessions granted during a previous hunger-strike in September 1983.

AI has received frequent complaints of torture of inmates at Diyarbakir in

Two of a number of Kurdish prisoners who are reported to have been tortured in Diyarbakir this year — Mümtaz Kotan (left) seen at his trial in 1981, and Mehdi Zana, aged 45, former Mayor of Diyarbakir, whose trial ended in October 1983.

Mümtaz Kotan, a 41-year-old lawyer who has been adopted by AI as a prisoner of conscience, has been imprisoned since April 1980. He is said to have been tortured during his interrogation then. he was sentenced in July 1982 to eight years' jail for belonging to a Kurdish organisation and for alleged secessionist activities. The substantial Kurdish minority in Turkey is not officially recognised by the authorities and the Kurdish language is prohibited.

AI has received a number of reports that Mümtaz Kotan has been tortured repeatedly throughout his imprisonment. In August 1983 his health was said to be critical. He is married with one child.

Mehdi Zana is serving a 24-year prison term, reportedly in connection with alleged Kurdish secessionist activities. He is married with two children and has been adopted by AI as a prisoner of conscience.

He was detained immediately after the September 1980 coup and he too is reported to have been tortured repeatedly throughout his imprisonment.

He and Mümtaz Kotan are among a group of Diyarbakir inmates who, at the time of going to press, were reported not to have been seen by relatives for some weeks.

recent years and has repeatedly urged the authorities to investigate the allegations and take the necessary steps to halt the torture.

In May 1982 it asked to be allowed to send a team to check on reports that nearly 100 Kurdish prisoners were in poor health as a result of torture and harsh conditions.

One of the people it named at the time, Kurdish lawyer *Hüseyin Yıldırım*,

was later released and left Turkey — he gave a horrific account of tortures he said he and other Kurdish prisoners had suffered, including being beaten and given electric shocks on sensitive parts of the body while tied to a wooden cross (see April 1983 Newsletter). Three of these prisoners are known to have died in custody. The authorities acknowledged one of the deaths: they said the prisoners had committed suicide.

## ISLINGTON TRADES COUNCIL INVITES EVERYONE TO ITS INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY

### FESTIVAL & SOCIAL

at CAXTON HOUSE 129 ST. JOHN'S WAY N19

7pm til midnight Saturday 5th May

International Trade Union Speakers & Kent Miners Leader

International Entertainment plus Live band-Food-Late bar

Exhibitions

**Greek-Cypriot  
Song & Dance**

Tickets from Caxton House

Adm. £2.50 UB40/OAP's 50p

**Turkish  
Song-Dance-Music**

Buses: 41 & 210

Tube: Archway





## MOTHER DON'T CRY

by Emin Bozarslan

I am a young Kurd that is very well known  
 Look, I have brought with me a granada and a gun  
 I am going to war, I am going to fight  
 If I don't return, please mother don't cry

I am known from here to China  
 The rumour of me has reached the whole world  
 You will see my struggle and fight  
 If I am killed, please mother don't cry

I know very well that you are thinking of me  
 and my decisions to leave is very hard for you  
 But if death comes it is welcome  
 Then I will be a martyr, please mother don't cry

Kurdistan is mother to both you and me  
 I shall free her from the enemy's hands  
 If I return, our rumour will be great  
 but if I die, please mother don't cry

You took care of me and nursed me  
 Your eyes shed tears for my sake  
 You have had much trouble  
 Forgive me my guilt, and please mother don't cry

Rise and see with both eyes  
 Our Kurdistan, dear mother  
 has been caught in a trap  
 I shall leave, please mother don't cry

You are my mother, I am your son  
 but our mother in common is mother to  
 both you and me, this I must tell you  
 Now I am leaving, please mother don't cry

If I return, then everything is good  
 our hearts shall overflow with joy  
 But if I don't return, long live  
 the Kurds and Kurdistan, please mother don't cry

If I don't return, I will become a martyr  
 with Xalit Beg (1) and Şêx Seîd (1)

And among hundreds such brave men and heroes  
 I will be a guest, please mother don't cry

Our Seyid Riza (1) and Eli Şêr (1)  
 Doctor Fuad (1) and many other men  
 from our villages and from our cities  
 they are all there, please mother don't cry

Mother, according to the old,  
 rams are born for the butchers knife  
 But for our country both men  
 and women must go, please mother don't cry

I come to the world for to be free  
 but I have realised that I am a joyless slave  
 Don't you let me create joy!  
 You ought to let me, and please mother don't cry

If I become a martyr, than fetch at once  
 a forest plant from the mountain Şipan  
 Plant it carefully like a vine on my grave  
 It will grow, please mother don't cry

On it you shall hoist the "Alaya Rengin" (2)  
 Let it fly on my grave  
 With it the grave becomes a palace  
 where I rest contented, please mother don't cry

Let boys and girls come every year  
 to my grave and form a choir  
 hand in hand like a wall  
 shall they dance around, please mother don't cry

They shall sing, "Şîro, (3) lie contented in your grave  
 Now Kurdistan and the Kurds are free  
 In school we boys and girls study  
 with joy", please mother don't cry

It was written in 1967

- 
- (1) Kurdish martyrs  
 (2) Kurdistan flag (the Coloured Flag)  
 (3) The poets alias

In recent months Turkey has developed a very "consistent" pattern of foreign trade and relations. As can be seen below this consists of exporting arms and appropriately shrouds. Just in case both these exports are under-used it is following-up with attacks on foreign shipping.

## Turkish destroyers attack Greek ships

In the first week of March a Turkish flotilla fired on a Greek destroyer in the northern Aegean. The Greek government called this incident "a serious Turkish provocation" and resulted in the deterioration of the already troubled Greek-Turkish relations to their lowest level since mid-1970s.

After the incident "the Greek armed forces were placed on what was described as an increased alert and the Greek Ambassador to Ankara was recalled to Athens." (*The Guardian*, 9 March 1984)

An official statement issued in Athens reported that "five Turkish destroyers had fired two salvos of five shells each at the Greek destroyer, Panther, patrolling in Greek territorial waters off the island of Samothrace in the north-east Aegean earlier in the afternoon."

The American charge d'affairs was summoned to the Greek Foreign Ministry and told that American military assistance to Ankara and support for Turkish "demands" had instigated such actions by Turkey.

The Turkish Ambassador was summoned to the Greek Foreign Ministry for an explanation and said that the Turkish ships were on a routine exercise and fired in the direction of the Turkish coast and not at any Greek vessel. His explanation was rejected by Greece.

"NATO ambassador in Athens were also called to the Foreign Ministry and told that it was unprecedented and unacceptable for a member state of the alliance to provoke another member country." (*The Guardian*, 9 March 1984)

## 'Mysterious' ship takes arms to Brazil

On 20 March 1984 *Milliyet* reported that a ship with Panama flag called "Viking" entered into Italian territorial waters carrying large quantity of heavy arms and ammunition.

The captain of this "mysterious ship" was a Greek national called Yorgo Skanellis however it was not known where the ship was loaded with arms and where they were being taken to.

Italian authorities said that the statements given by the captain were contradictory. In his first questioning Captain Skanellis said that "he was coming from Turkey, and was taking the arms to Brazil". However information received by the Italian police claimed that the ship was going to Belgium, rather than Brazil.

Captain Skanellis, in one of his statements said that "He was going to call at the Greek part of Cyprus". But it was not

found out whether the ship did call at any ports of Southern Cyprus.

On the next day *Milliyet* carried out another news on this "mysterious ship Viking". The arms it carried were the production of Turkish state owned factory called Machinery and Chemical Industry (MKE) and were imported to Brazil.

Authorities of the Machinery and Chemical Industry said that they had loaded the Viking at the Derince port of Izmit with military equipment for the Brazilian Armed Forces. The ship departed Derince on 13 March with 18 tons rifle and pistol and some other ammunition. They added that "The export has been in absolutely legal ways. Exports by Machinery and Chemical Industry is something done all the time".

(*Milliyet*, 21 March 1984)

## Rapier missiles to Turkey

The Minister of State for D.o.D. Geoffrey Pattie visited Turkey on 28 February 1984. He met Turkey's Defence Minister, Zeki Yavuztürk and visited the Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu.

In July 1983 Turkey signed an agreement with Britain which presupposes that Turkey buys "Rapier" anti-aircraft missiles from Britain. This will be the second biggest project of Turkey in defence after the agreement that Turkey signed with the US on the purchase of F-16 fighters in December 1983.

In the first stage of the project Britain's "Aerospace" will provide 35 Rapier missiles, later they will assemble them in Turkey. (*Hürriyet*, 29 February 1984)

## Turkey's profit on shrouds to Iran

One strong indication that Iran's losses in its war with Iraq are running higher than the Khomeini regime anticipated: the country is apparently running out of burial shrouds. Last year Sümerbank, a textile company in Turkey, signed an agreement to supply Iran with 4 million meters of the white cloth used primarily for Muslim burials. With 1 million meters already delivered, Iranian officials recently contacted Sümerbank and asked that its cloth order be increased.

*NEWSWEEK*  
MARCH 19, 1984

**HUMAN RIGHTS  
IN TURKEY**  
through the eyes of  
European Parliamentarians

Introduction  
by Ernie Roberts, MP  
Reports by  
Chris Smith, MP  
Jeremy Corbyn, MP

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### CONSTITUTION OF THE CDDRT

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

- 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.
- Congress is the highest body of CDDRT and 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.

- 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-opt.
- The Executive Committee shall consist of the General Secretary and such other members as the General Council may decide. The Executive Committee shall meet at least fortnightly and be responsible for the day to day work of CDDRT.
- Local Branches of CDDRT are formed with the approval of the General Council.
- This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority at a Congress.
- The General Council may call, or upon request by two-thirds of affiliated national organisations shall call, a Special Congress.

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# ELECTIONS IN TURKEY PROVE NO RETURN TO DEMOCRACY

by SARAH BATHS

In the space of five months there have been two elections held in Turkey. The first, in November of last year a "general election" took place. This "general election" proved to be no return to democracy. With voting declared compulsory; and all political parties formed prior to the 1980 fascist coup banned from participating; the electorate was somewhat farcically given the "choice" between voting for one of the three meticulously vetted parties, namely the National Democracy; Populist and Motherland Party. All three parties unflinchingly professed their support for, what they term "the military revolution of 1980".

The "victor" to emerge from the elections, with 45.5% of the vote, was the Motherland Party under Mr Turgut Özal. Although all three parties well deserve to be called no more than puppet parties of the regime; it was encouraging to see that the party most closely identified with gaining the tacit support of the junta, the NDP, commonly known as the "state party" should have come such a poor third with 23% behind the Populist Party. With this, the Turkish electorate has quite clearly demonstrated its opposition to the Generals. The most likely reason for Özal's win was because: "for much of the campaign, Mr Özal has enjoyed the tremendous advantage of seeming to be the one candidate with a spark of independence from the military" (*Financial Times*, 28 October 1983) paying lip service to independence in campaign speeches is one

thing, however, the stark reality of who still rules in Turkey is another — one in which Özal and his Ministers have very readily come to terms with.

If you examine the ridged oligarchic structure of the fascist state and its constitution, so meticulously crafted to suit the needs of the generals, you can see how totally engulfed the elected Council of Ministers is. Playing a minor and subordinate role to the all powerful Presidential Council — in whose hands lie sole legislative and executive powers — there can in effect be no democracy in Turkey as long as this state structure continues to exist.

Although any real meaningful democracy still remains forbidden fruit, there took place recently another, this time local election. In essence the function of these "local elections", appears designed, to act as an early referendum for the "new" Özal government. Özal did indeed manage to recapture the people's vote, but with a slightly reduced majority of 41.4%. In contrast to the "general election" the "local elections" were opened up to include: SODEP the Correct Path Party and the Welfare Party. Significant factors to be drawn from these elections become clear when you study the distribution of the vote. The enormous growth in the opposition vote to the NDP, whose vote has decreased from 23% in the general election to 7% in the local election; and also the emergence of the extra-parliamentary opposition. With SODEP coming in second behind Özal, the combined votes

of the extra-parliamentary parties constitutes nearly 40%. Unperturbed by this, Özal seems confident, while the Turkish press commentaries conceded the anomaly of keeping such a sizeable opposition outside the sphere of "official politics", Mr Özal made it known that it would remain so. Constitutionally Özal is to remain in office until 1989. But with Turkey's balance of payments in deficit last year to the tune of \$3,5 billion (£2,5 billion) and this year's depreciation of the Turkish lira which in effect has meant a 10 per cent devaluation Özal's length of stay in office, from the point of view of the Presidential Council, must be seen in the light of his success or failure in dealing with the present economy.

For Turkey's working class this can only mean having to shoulder a heavier burden. No aspect of social life in Turkey passes without incident, the local elections no exception altogether they cost the lives of eleven people. While publicly the junta toys with democracy in the prisons, torture and repression continues. The tasks facing supporters of lasting democratic and human rights in Turkey must not allow themselves to be wooed by the junta's ballot papers. They must denounce these elections as a mockery of freedom, justice and democracy — with May Day once again approaching we should grasp this opportunity to show our complete solidarity with the people of Turkey and all the peoples of the world who have to suffer the torment of fascism.

**TURKEY**  
**NEWSLETTER**



*Recently we received the following letter.  
We publish it hoping that it will contribute  
to the struggle of the working class against factionalist  
tendencies in its ranks and further its unity.*

## **ANTI-TRADE UNIONISM AND FACTIONALISM UNDER THE GUISE OF SOLIDARITY**

by ALİ YILMAZ  
MADEN-İŞ DİSK

In the previous issue of *Turkey Newsletter* dated February 1984, an interview with the former Assistant General Secretary of DİSK, Aydın Meriç, was published. In this interview Aydın Meriç, while answering a question put to him by *Turkey Newsletter*, after severely criticising the top Türk-İş executive, stated that; "However, all these factors seem not to have diminished the role and image of Türk-İş in the eyes of the workers and the trade union movement in general in Turkey. The workers cannot carry out their struggle without their unions and Türk-İş is the only existing trade union centre for them."

As a reply to another question Aydın Meriç said that:

"Today, the workers are continuing their struggle in various ways. Regaining their trade union rights constitutes one of the most important aspects of the struggle. Therefore we must increase our solidarity with this trade union struggle that is going on. In particular, it is necessary to improve relations with the trade unions, trade unionists and progressive tendencies within Türk-İş, so that we help these organisations and individuals strengthen their relations with trade union centres in other countries.

"We must prevent the solidarity work with DİSK from being exploited or being made abstract. We can and must express our solidarity in concrete ways like going to the rescue of imprisoned DİSK members, solving the problems of political refugees and tackling the problem of *organising former DİSK members under the roof of Türk-İş*.

Solidarity work with DİSK must address itself to such concrete issues, otherwise solidarity based upon an abstract concept of DİSK which only survives in the minds of political refugees abroad, when in fact, *DİSK is*

*non-existent in Turkey*, will not do. And above all, political groups and individuals should avoid and desist from making such abstract propaganda their way of life."

Immediately after the publication of this interview, an article by Cahit Baylav, General Secretary of the so-called "SCTURDT", was published in a paper called "*Straight Left*". In this article, after giving some general information on the Turkish trade union movement, Mr Baylav put forward the following arguments:

1. "...Meanwhile the general's new constitution has so limited trade union rights that *many workers will no longer consider it worth joining a union.*" (my emphasis)

2. "...DİSK leaders who have managed to escape have called executive meetings of their unions abroad and are *still directing the activity of their rank and file* from outside. That includes my own union". (my emphasis)

Firstly, as if replying to Aydın Meriç's call for unionisation of former DİSK members this article of the so-called "SCTURDT" in *Straight Left* discourages workers from joining the only existing trade unions in Turkey.

Secondly, it is provocatively speculated in this article that the DİSK still exists organisationally and a small group of its ex-officials and ex-employees like Mr. Baylav are "still directing the activity of their rank and file from outside...", for example from London, Prague etc...

I will not go into detail as to the absurdity of these speculations, but for the time being I would like to raise some questions to the British labour and trade union movement.

1. While you are heroically fighting against curbing trade union rights in your own country, how can you in the name of solidarity sympathize with this

anti-trade union propaganda?

2. Does anybody in this country who has even a very little knowledge of what is going on in Turkey believe that DİSK still is *organisationally* existing?

3. Does anybody in this country who has even a little understanding of what trade unionism is, believe the nonsense about directing rank and file trade union members from London?

4. How, in the name of solidarity, could some trade unions and trade union officials of this country financially or even morally support these provocative and factionalist speculations?

One other reason that caused me to write this letter is the emergence of a new illegal publication in London called "*Gerçeğin Sesi*" and another one by the same "SCTURDT" called "*Dayanışma*". According to what is written in the publication of SCTURDT, it is financed and printed by a British trade union, namely AUEW-TASS, and also according to some rumours they are mailed by T&GWU. And this very same group has recently made use of NALGO premises for an anti-trade union meeting under the guise of solidarity with DİSK.

As far as I am concerned the International Trade Union movement, including the British Trade Union and Labour movement is faced with a very ingeniously designed trap.

A few ex-officials and ex-employees, now in exile, of a organisationally non-existent trade union organisation in Turkey are pretending that they represent something that really exists in Turkey. They would like to exploit the good will of the international trade union movement for their political groupings as well as use this good will as a means of making a living. The working class and the trade union movement of Turkey has not deserved that disgrace.