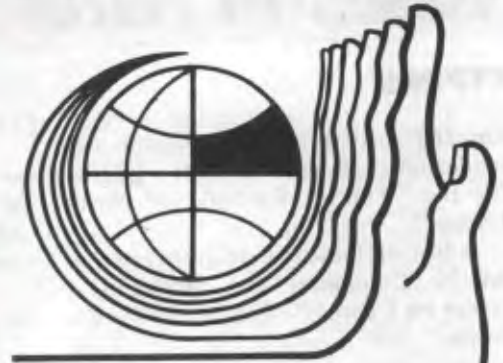


TURKEY NEWSLETTER

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



Issue 76 September 1987

LEATHER WORKERS' STRIKE



POLITICAL PRISONERS' HUNGER STRIKES



NEWS IN BRIEF

CYPRUS

On 2nd July, a cunning attempt was made to strengthen backdoor recognition for the "Turkish Republic of North Cyprus".

A British House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee has produced a report on Cyprus. While calling for the North Cyprus administration to "reduce its dependence on Turkey", it recommends lifting transport and trade embargoes on the North.

The presence of a massive Turkish army garrison and virtual direction of the economy by the Ankara regime's financial "experts" makes the idea of the Denktash administration reducing its dependence on Turkey "utopian" to say the least!

On 9th July the *Financial Times* diplomatic correspondent reported that: "The British Government has officially urged Turkey to reduce its military presence in the northern part of Cyprus as a step towards a settlement of the Cyprus problem, officials said in London yesterday.

The appeal was made by Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, to Mr Vahit Halefoglu, his Turkish opposite number, on the last day of the Turkish Foreign Minister's official visit to London, during which he also had talks with Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister.

Sir Geoffrey, echoing the recommendations made last week by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, expressed the opinion that only a small reduction of Turkish troops in northern Cyprus would lead to a disproportionately large increase in confidence between the Greek and Turkish communities on the island.

However, Mr Halefoglu, who argued that Turkish troops were stationed in northern Cyprus as a counterweight to a military build-up in the Republic of Cyprus, gave no indication that Ankara was prepared to make a gesture of the kind proposed by Sir Geoffrey.

The Foreign Secretary also urged Turkey to persuade Mr Rauf Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, to respond positively to the latest proposal by Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations Secretary-General, for so-called parallel talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

In a speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House yesterday, Mr Halefoglu stated unequivocally that Turkey had no intention of "paying any political price" for full

membership of the European Community.

Britain has made it clear that it will not make up its mind finally on full Turkish membership until the European Commission has produced its "considered opinion".

"I WAS HUNGRY"



Mother of 2, Safiye Kilic, being marched to court in Ankara for stealing a music set.

Safiye Kilic is an immigrant from Bulgaria. Her husband had left her. Without any means of support, Safiye Kilic stole to buy food for herself and her children. When asked why she had stolen she replied "because I was hungry". She faces a long prison sentence.

INDOCTRINATION IN UNIVERSITIES

The National Security Council (MGK) has launched a new campaign of indoctrination in universities by organising a series of conferences on "External menaces, terror and anarchy". The first of these conferences was given in Istanbul University on May 4, 1987, and all professors were obliged to attend it.

Following the Rector's opening speech, two lieutenant-colonels from the

General Staff and a high ranking police chief made briefings in their relative subjects. The orators claimed that Turkey is surrounded by hostile forces of which Greece claims Western Anatolia, Bulgaria North-Western territories and the "separatists" Eastern Anatolia and that the Soviet Union concentrates its troops at the Turkish border in East. They also accused Syria of supporting "separatist" forces.

WATER THICKER THAN BLOOD?

After years of strain and hostility, July and August saw a rapprochement between the Turkish regime and Syria.

In July Ozal paid the first ever official visit by a Turkish Prime Minister to Syria. The background to this development is the ability of both States to harm each other's interests. The Turkish regime has long accused Syria of backing Kurdish guerillas fighting in SE Anatolia. Syria on the other hand is threatened by the building of a series of dams by Turkey at the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

As well as providing Syria with most of its water for agriculture, the Euphrates also powers the hydro electric station which supplies Syria with half its electricity. Since the dams were begun, the water levels in both Syria and Iraq have fallen.

The Turkish regime has offered Syria more water in return for trade and security concessions. As a result, the Ozal visit ended with the signing of a security protocol by which Syria has undertaken to tighten border security and exchange intelligence information with Turkey.

IMF ORDERS

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has issued a warning to the Turkish regime to cut the rate of inflation. This follows a visit to Turkey by fund officials in late July.

The IMF says the increase in Turkey's inflation rate this year is "most discouraging" and calls on the regime to cut public spending.

Despite the Ozal regime's loyalty to monetarism, it is unlikely to heed the IMF call due to the General Election to be called in November.

They have resorted to the traditional policies of an "election economy" i.e. using state funds to prop-up the economy until the elections are over.

BE CAREFUL!



Recent municipal elections being carried out with the "friendly" assistance of armed gendarmes.

AN INVITATION TO INFORM

In Turkey coffee houses are traditional meeting places where people relax and discuss various things - most frequently politics. It is also well-known that members of banned political parties and movements tend to use coffee houses as rendezvous.

It is against this background that Ankara police chief Ali Erken ordered 700 coffee shop owners to a meeting in a sports hall. Here he "invited" the owners to regularly inform the police of any "suspicious" characters or "interesting" conversations they might hear.

As coffee shops are subject to police licensing great pressure can be applied to the owners.

CURFEW

On the 12th July, the Turkish regime carried out a census in order to prepare the electoral lists for the September 9th referendum. The entire population of Turkey was ordered to stay indoors for 14 hours while 250,000 officials backed by army and gendarme units carried out a headcount of every adult.

Anyone caught out of doors without a permit was liable to up to 6 months imprisonment. 172 people are to be prosecuted, mainly in Istanbul, for ignoring the curfew.

CHILDREN FOR SALE

Police in Turkey have detained members of a gang who have been kidnapping or buying children from poor families. After forging identity cards and bribing officials the gang sold the children to rich families.

PRISON



For 10 years old Orhan Özsari, summer spelt the beginning of a 2 year prison sentence (in an adult prison) for stealing 5000TL (about £4) from a coat in an Ankara market. Illiterate because he could not afford to go to school, Orhan stole in order to buy food.

ATTACK

An Istanbul police station came under machine gun attack on the 13th August.

One Deputy Police Chief and two constables died in the attack. The attack is believed to have been carried-out by either militants of the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) or Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left).

IRANIAN REFUGEES

A recent report by Amnesty International warns about the growing dangers to the huge number of Iranian refugees currently in Turkey. They are facing increased harassment and dangers of being returned to Iran.

A full report will appear in the October Turkey Newsletter.

In Turkey Newsletter No. 74-75 an error appeared on page 6 under Cyprus - An Unhappy Anniversary ... "Over 30,000 people had to flee their homes" ... should have read "Over 180,000 people had to flee their homes. Today some 30,000 are still in refugee camps."

NO HOLIDAY

This year 9-year-old Özlem Sen did not have a summer school holiday. Instead she spent the time like thousands of other children in Turkey, on the streets trying to earn money. She needed the money to buy the required school books, note books, pens etc., so that she could stay at school.

Such is the economic situation for many working families that they barely earn enough to pay for food and shanty town accommodation. To afford "luxuries" such as education, many children have to spend their spare time in street trading. For many, this takes the form of shoe shining or cigarette and food selling. As for Özlem, she spent from dawn to dusk on Yüksel Road in Ankara offering to weigh people on bathroom scales for a small charge.



HUNGER STRIKES

At the time of going to print, at least 400 political prisoners were on hunger strike in different prisons throughout Turkey.

The present wave of prison hunger strikes began at the end of May. Since then some 2,000 political prisoners from 5 revolutionary organisations have at one time or another taken part in the strikes.

The demands of the hunger strikers reflect the continuing appalling conditions in the prisons. At the same time they demonstrate the high morale of the prisoners despite years of imprisonment and their determination to regain their freedom.



DEMANDS

The demands of the hunger strikers vary from prison to prison depending on local conditions but the most common are:

No prison uniforms.

No bringing of prisoners in chains to court hearings.

An end to all torture and ill-treatment.

An end to visiting restrictions.

A reduction of all prison sentences by a third (as allowed for by present laws, but seldom applied to political prisoners).

The right to send and receive letters.

Better food.

Better health treatment including access to hospitals.

The right to receive any publication which is freely available outside.

The right to possess radios.

The right of families of prisoners to petition prison authorities about conditions.

VOICE OF THE FAMILIES

The increasingly active Association of the Families of Prisoners has spear-headed the campaign to break the "self censorship" of the Turkish media about the hunger strikes. The Association is having tremendous success at mobilising

support for the hunger strikes in a wide cross-section of Turkish society.

On the 12th August, both prisoners' families and a delegation of artists and writers gathered in front of Bayrampasa Prison in Istanbul to show support for 7 political prisoners entering their 36th day of hunger strike. Security police waded into the families and 14 people found themselves joining their relatives in prison. At the same time, the artists' delegation led by Yasar Kemal (author of "Memed my Hawk") and including Tarik Akan (star of Yilmaz Güney's film "YOL") joined other prisoners' relatives in making strong protests to the prison governor.

"EVEN SLAVES HAVE SOME RIGHTS"

Yasar Kemal said that: "Even slaves have some rights... but if you are in these prisons you don't even have those sort of rights".

Also campaigning for the prisoners are the wife and son of Kemal Türkler, the great leader of the DISK Trade Union Confederation who was murdered by fascists in 1979.

Both the civilian "E Type" Prisons (for political prisoners and some other high security prisoners) and the Military Prisons have been affected by the strike.

7 prisoners are on a fast to the death at Sigmalcilar Prison.



Social Democratic Populist Party General Secretary joins political prisoners' families in a sit-down protest.

THE REGIME'S RESPONSE

The mis-named Minister of Justice, Oltan Sungur, while claiming that he "felt the pain of every hunger striker" refused to meet a delegation from the Association of Prisoners' Families. He accused the prisoners of being "ideologically motivated".

In response to Sungur's attitude families of prisoners staged a limited hunger strike in Güven Park, Ankara.

The regime has adopted a dual

approach to the hunger strikes.

Information reaching the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey, is that in some prisons the authorities have improved conditions and met *some* of the demands.

However, at the same time, those deemed to be "ring leaders" are being punished with loss of remission and lengthening of sentences. In one case reported to CDDRT, a prisoner with only 15 days of a long sentence left to serve was administratively sentenced to an extra 1 1/2 years for joining a hunger strike.

Solitary confinement on bread and water and transfers to other prisons are also being meted out.

The regime is also developing new "L Type" prisons which are being built as "West European-style" prisons, i.e. cells only housing 4 persons as opposed to the "Turkish" style dormitory wards instead of cells. The L Type prisons will contain only political prisoners.



Minister of Justice Sungur - where he should be.

SWINDLE

In a blaze of publicity the regime has announced that it will allow journalists to visit prisons. However, it has now emerged that certain "conditions" will apply. The journalists must apply to the Ministry of Justice in advance. It will tell the journalists which prison they may visit. The prison authorities will draw up

TORTURE, TRIALS AND PRISONS

a plan for a visit and decide who the journalists can meet and what parts of the prison they can inspect.



Families being refused traditional visits to prisoners on Fathers' Day.

SOLIDARITY

A massive campaign of solidarity with these heroic political prisoners and their families is needed now.

These prisoners, despite ill-treatment, torture, seemingly endless prison sentences and attempts to brainwash them into renouncing their beliefs, are defending their political dignity and honour. They remain unbowed.

The hunger strikes put to the test the regime's sincerity in wishing to end human rights abuses and become a fit candidate for EEC membership.

Democratic public opinion throughout the world must raise its voice in support of the thousands of political prisoners in Turkey and their demands.

We must particularly call for an early release of all political prisoners.



A meeting of the Association of Prisoners Families.



Plain-clothes security police arrest prisoners' relatives during the Bayrampasa hunger strike.

AGM

The Association of families of political prisoners held their first AGM on 17th August.

The AGM was attended by many foreign observers including representatives of the West German Green Party.

At the AGM the prisoners' families decided to step-up their campaign for

freedom for the prisoners. After the meeting, the relatives went to Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul to hold a press conference. This turned into a demonstration in support of the political prisoners.

UNREPENTANT

Further doubt has been cast on the number of prisoners the regime claims have availed themselves of the notorious "Repentance Law" which enables political prisoners to have their sentence reduced or be set free if they inform on their comrades or organisation.

In an August issue of *Nokta* a letter appeared from political prisoner Sabri Ok, who had been named in *Tercuman* as a "repentant" prisoner.

Sabri Ok angrily refuted this slur writing "I have refused to repent ... I am still in the defiant wards (cells)" He went on to write that despite having a ratified death sentence passed on him he was not going to give in.

AMNESTY REPORT

Amnesty International published a report on 15th June detailing continued violations of human rights in Turkey. The report included details of torture and death in custody and the continuing imprisonment of prisoners of conscience.

ESCAPE

A daring escape by political prisoners in Erzurum Military Prison took place on August 3rd.

8 prisoners belonging to Dev Yol (Revolutionary Way) tunnelled their way to freedom by digging an 89 meter tunnel in 328 hours.

Of the 8 prisoners 5 had been sentenced to death and 3 to life imprisonment.

ARRESTS

The authorities announced the capture of the sixth organiser of the TKP(B) Communist Party of Turkey (unity) on 13th July.

After nationwide raids 23 members of Partizan TKP ML were arrested. Some months ago the organisation's General Secretary was shot dead by police.

TORTURE

Five policemen have been convicted of torturing suspected political activist Ismail Süt to death in Kars prison. They were sentenced on 8th July to 4 years each in goal.



Leather Workers Strike



A strike by leather workers began in late June when Deri-Is (leather workers union) gave notice of strike action in 33 Istanbul workplaces. The organisation of skin trade bosses responded by locking out workers in all 117 leather production workshops in Istanbul.

The dispute began over the fact that in the last year the profits of the leather industry rose by over 250% while workers got no rise in wages at all. In addition the employers had announced that they would only negotiate with trade union officials who had a document from the regime's State Prosecutor to "prove" they had not been "guilty" of any (political) 'crimes'. The workers totally rejected these humiliating demands.

When news of the lockout spread through the Kazilicesme shanty and slum district of Istanbul (whose small workshops produce 80% of Turkey's leather goods), workers began a spontaneous march. This was the first "un-notified" march and demonstration since the 1980 military coup. 3,000 workers swept aside two hastily constructed police cordons to reach their union offices. The local Deri-Is branch secretary stated: "Our workers have done this on behalf of all the working class of Turkey".

In August 34 more workshops joined the strike. Police also summoned four Executive Committee members of Deri-Is to the police headquarters to interrogate them about the "illegal" march by workers. They were released after representations from MPs.

Over 3,500 leather workers are now on strike. The workers are surviving on just 25,000TL (£18) per month strike pay. However, they are determined to fight on to a victorious conclusion.

Leather workers march through Istanbul - the authorities dared not stop them.

As with the Netas strike earlier in 1987, the leather workers strike marks a further escalation of the battle to establish trade union rights in Turkey and defeat the present regime.

A massive campaign of solidarity has begun in Turkey with the strike. Despite the restrictions of Turkey's labour laws, other Turk-Is affiliated trade



Women on the picket line, leather workers' strike.

unions and some independent unions are giving support.

Big collections in aid of the strikers have been made in factories employing Turkish workers in Britain, France and West Germany.

From Britain, messages of support to the strikers have been sent from TASS-the manufacturing union, the Bakers, Food & Allied Workers Union, NALGO and district organisations of UCATT, SOGAT and T&GWU.

The Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union in addition to a message of support, sent \$150.

These messages of support from abroad play an important role in the morale of workers on strike against the present regime from using it against them. We the workers and trade union organisations send our messages of support to the strikers.

The address to send messages to:
Deri-Is Sendikası
Kazilicesme Subesi
Gokalp Mah./Sokak 1
Zeytinburnu/Istanbul
Turkey

Donations to the strikers:
Deri-Is
Muzur Pekgulec & A
Acc. No. 4817
Ziraat Subesi
Istanbul
Turkey

The CDDRT would be glad to send messages sent.

VICTORY

The Petrol-Is (Petrol Workers Union) 9,500 workers end pay increases and secured.

ILO

During the 73rd Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, the Commission accused the Turkish government of "buying time" by delaying its response to the ILO's request for a new Labour laws and the government's promises. Turkish trade unionists heavily criticised by the ILO Congress who called for new laws restricting trade union rights to strike and freedom of movement. In a related move, the American AFL-CIO has urged the ILO Congress to remove Turkey as a "favoured nation" until its labour rights improve in the

BIG STRIKE

A marathon strike by workers in the giant Aluminium works in Turkey almost three months ago.

WOMEN MOBILISATION

Responding to the request for membership among women, a first national conference was held in September.

Under the slogan: "Women's struggle", a national

A MESSAGE TO A BOSS



Workers from a small clothing factory in Istanbul beat up their boss who had not paid them for 3 months (*Hurriyet* 17.7.1987)

YES

Turk-Is at its last council meeting called for a yes vote in the September referendum on restoring political rights to banned politicians.

Prime Minister Ozal accused Turk-Is of "meddling in politics".

RAILWAY WORKERS STRIKE

After 55 days of fruitless negotiations, Demiryol-Is (Railway Workers Union) began an indefinite strike throughout Turkey in June. This was the first really nationwide railway strike in Turkish history.

As with other workers, railway workers in Turkey have experienced a dramatic decline in real wages and working conditions since the 1980 military coup. The average wage of a railway employee is now 60,000 - 70,000TL (£56-68) per month. In addition workers are subject to repression by the authorities. For example, in 1986 police were called to help force train drivers in Ankara to work a 23 hour shift. The regime also has a law outlawing strikes on urban railways.

As soon as the strike decision was announced, the railway authorities gave notice of a lockout of all railway employees to begin at the same time as the strike. The workers responded to this by beginning a go-slow affecting even urban railways and boycotting their free lunches in canteens.



Railway workers show strength.

The union put all its holiday homes and other property up for sale to raise money for the strike.

The main strike demands were for pay rises and job security. For many years, the railways had been run in an almost "paternalistic" way, with reasonable pay and a "job for life" policy.

However, since the 1980 coup all that changed. Wages fell, joint commissions of workers and management were scrapped, sub-contractors whose employees are forbidden to join trade unions were brought in to clean stations and trains.

The management staged provocations against the workers in line with directives from the powerful Union of State Employers, which coordinates the managements of all state owned industries.

SUPRISE

When the strike began, the employers were taken aback by the determination of the workers and by the widespread support for the strikers from passengers.

The strike covered all 40,000 railway workshop workers. Even train drivers, who are classified as civil servants which means that, in effect, they are not allowed to form a trade union (only an "association"), participated in actions in support of the rest of the railway workers.

After only a few days the strike was called off by the union on the basis of an improved wage offer and job guarantees.

Such is the changed situation in Turkey, that in many places the members of this once "quiet" union staged demonstrations demanding the strike go on until all demands be met in full.



UNITY CALL

A recent conference of work place delegates of Otomobil-Is (the independent Metal Workers' Union) ended with a call for their union to join Turk-Is (Turkish Trade Union Confederation).

This means that affiliation to Turk-Is is now the union's official policy.

This development is seen as an historic step towards trade union and workers' unity in Turkey.

The statement on this decision published in Otomobil-Is's journal, called for all trade unions to take advantage of the historic possibility and join the ranks of Turk-Is. It went on to condemn "attempts to establish another Trade Union centre" as totally wrong in today's conditions. "The Turkish working class has an historic opportunity to unite in one trade union centre -Turk-Is" ... "The unity of the working class must be defended at all costs."

HOUSING

ATTACK ON GECEK NDU DWELLERS

The local authorities in Turkey celebrated summer by launching an onslaught against the Gecekondu ("shanty-towns" where one third of the urban population live). Many Gecekondu consist of substantial buildings and are the only homes affordable for most working people and the unemployed.

Bulldozers backed by police and para military gendarmes moved into various Gecekondu mainly without giving any notice. Police dragged families and their few possessions from their homes, then the bulldozers smashed them down.



Hundreds of families are forced to spend nights in the open following the destruction of their homes.



Mother of 2 killed when her home was demolished over her head.



Crowds stone security forces.

As on previous occasions fierce resistance to the demolitions was offered mainly by women.

In Istanbul, police and bulldozers took advantage of the curfew imposed during the July census to attack the Sariyer district. However, after the demolition of some houses, crowds came into the streets, built barricades and began stoning the security forces. The residents ignored the threat that to be out of doors without permission was illegal. Eventually the police and council officials had to withdraw.



Children protest at the destruction of their homes.



Istanbul: Police retreat.

BITTER STRUGGLE

Last months have seen numerous bloody clashes in the South East Anatolian provinces of Turkey - which constitute Turkish Kurdistan.

Several massacres blamed on some Kurdish militants have been given publicity in the western media. What has not received so much notice is the years of brutality and genocide by successive Turkish regimes in an effort to stamp-out the national identity of the Kurdish people.

Armed clashes are becoming so frequent in Kurdistan that we have not space in this month's *Turkey Newsletter* to list them all. Instead we will just mention some recent developments.

NEW AND SINISTER FORCE

With the obvious failure of the "village protectors" (the local pro-regime militias) to protect themselves let alone crush the Kurdish guerillas, the regime is developing a new and sinister force. Recruitment has begun of "Special Purposes Teams". These units are planned to total 5,000 men eventually.

The Special Purpose Teams will consist of volunteers preferably with a police, army or civil service background. They will form a highly paid and trained mercenary force.

Dressed in civilian clothes and armed with AK47s. The teams will be permanently based and get to know certain localities in Kurdistan. Ironically, in view of the Turkish regime's claim that the Kurds dont exist, ability to speak Kurdish is required of all team recruits!

Attached to the teams are psychological warfare units. According to press reports, team members have been taught to "finish off a terrorist with one bullet". 1,200 have already been recruited to the teams.

There are widespread fears that the Special Teams could be responsible for some civilian killings blamed on Kurdish militants.

SUPER GOVERNORS

Martial law may have been abolished in the Kurdish part of Turkey but it has been replaced by something just as oppressive -the Super Governor. The Super Governor has special powers to coordinate the work of all provincial civil and military officials in the provinces making up Turkish Kurdistan.

He has the power to confiscate vehicles control the media and expel people from the area. The Super Governor can also deport entire populations from districts and issue weapons at his own discretion.

The Super Governor is in effect a colonial viceroy for Kurdistan. His very appointment and the special laws to be applied only in Turkish Kurdistan demonstrate that this is not just a "normal", integral part of Turkey.

SHAMEFUL

The recent killings in SE Anatolia have been used in a crude and dishonest way to try and score political points against supporters of democracy for Turkey in the European Parliament.

On July 16th a full page ad appeared in the *Guardian* in Britain. Signed by various public organisations in Turkey —

some of whom should have had more sense. The ad, obviously written in the clumsy style of the regime's directorate of information, attacks a recent resolution passed by the European Parliament on the 1915 genocide against the Armenians in Turkey. The resolution was in fact quite moderate, condemning all terrorism, but calling on the Turkish regime to acknowledge the historical fact of the genocide. The document also called for the rights of the Armenian and Kurdish people to be recognised as a condition of Turkey's membership of the EEC.

In response the Turkish regime makes the amazing claim that "Turkey does not have problems such as Spain's Basques, Britain's Northern Ireland or France's Corsica". It then goes on to try to put the blame for the recent killings in Turkish Kurdistan on the European MP's!

The reality is that the Turkish regime has seized on the tragic events in SE Anatolia in order to try and silence any criticism of it's criminal policies by people abroad by labelling them "terrorist sympathisers".

The reverse is true, it is the policies of the present regime in Turkey - just like it's predecessor in 1915 which results in bloodshed.



'Special Teams' mercenaries in plain clothes.

SEPTEMBER REFERENDUM

On 6th September a referendum reestablished the political rights of 100 pre-1980 coup politicians by a narrow majority. A full article on the referendum and its consequences will appear in the October issue of *Turkey Newsletter*.

TORTURE CONTINUES

"Turkey's chief of police, Saffet Arikan Beduk, recently made a plea on behalf of torturers. Referring to Turkish policemen who have been convicted for using torture, he acknowledged that "small incidents have occurred", but called it "a pity" that "some of our friends have been punished" since they "worked with good will and merely made some mistakes".

Just a few days before Mr Beduk's statement appeared in the Turkish press, we interviewed a young woman in Istanbul who had been held and tortured for 20 days in the Gayrettepe police station. Twenty-six years old and the mother of a young child, Nurhan (this is not her real name) was accused of having distributed Communist leaflets on the eve of May Day. She was subjected to relentless interrogations and beatings, given electric shocks and doused with cold water to intensify the pain. "It's not the electricity that hurts," she explained, "it's the convulsions, and hurting yourself during them."

Nurhan ultimately confessed to whatever her torturers demanded. So did Zeynep, who had been detained some days before Nurhan, and, during torture, had implicated Nurhan, a casual friend.

It has been almost two years since martial law has been lifted after a series of reports in the press and in parliament concerning the use of torture by the police. Vigorous attention to this abuse, combined with the government's assurances that it was punishing torture, aroused hopes that an age-old practice in Turkey might finally be brought to an end.

The present government boasts of being the first in Turkish history to admit to torture and to have ended it.

According to the Minister of Justice, legal actions have been taken against some 1,500 torturers and 100 have been sentenced.

But torture is difficult to prove. Victims are blindfolded during torture so that they cannot later identify their torturers, there are usually no sympathetic witnesses in the torture chamber and people who are released from custody are often afraid to press charges for fear that they will be taken in again.

Torturers use techniques designed to leave no traces (hence, the popularity of electric shocks), and doctors assigned to examine torture victims are appointed by the state. Thus, the procedures that Turkish authorities have established for

bringing complaints of torture usually do not work, except in extreme cases where the victim had died or been permanently damaged.

A newly formed Human Rights Association in Turkey has documented 169 deaths from torture since 1980. The list includes 36 "suicides" in police stations, 30 of which occurred in the past 18 months.

During a recent visit to Turkey, we received numerous reports of recent torture, including one about a 5-year-old boy who was given electric shocks in front of his parents in order to force them to "confess".

Torture in Turkey takes place mainly in police stations during an initial period of investigative detention. Under present regulations, the Istanbul police can hold detainees for 15 to 30 days of interrogation without access to families or lawyer.

"If I had asked to see my lawyers," Nurhan laughed, in response to our question, "they would have told me I'd been seeing too many American movies."

If the Turkish Government is really intent on eliminating torture, it should approve a bill, now being introduced in parliament for the second time, that would guarantee that detainees have immediate access to a lawyer.

It should enact further legislation that would shorten the period of detention, allow victims to be examined by doctors of their own choice and dramatically increase the penalties for torturers.

Above all, the government should demonstrate by actions its will to end torture forever.

What would happen if the president or the prime minister were to drop in unannounced one day at, for example, the infamous Gayrettepe police station? Perhaps they would interrupt the torturers in action. They would probably find their equipment: leather blindfolds, cattle prods, rubber tires, poles for suspending people, straps for tying them, clubs for beating them.

Such evidence would dissolve once and for all the myth that torture has ended in Turkey aside from an occasional act of "excessive zeal". It would put the police on notice that the government meant business. It might ultimately bring truth to the fiction that Turkey has eliminated torture.

This article appeared in the New York Times, 13.7.1987.

MILITARY PROBLEMS

Mr Turgut Özal, the Turkish Prime Minister, was shaping his government's future strategy more confidently yesterday after his bold shake-up of the country's top brass.

The Chief of General Staff, General Necdet Urug, who had been ordered to retire two months' prematurely, had named General Necdet Özturun as his successor. However, Mr Özal declared General Özturun *persona non grata* and appointed in his place General Necit Torumtay. The Prime Minister's move prompted something of a crisis in Turkey.

He described the shake-up as nothing more than the assertion of civilian authority over the military. But leaked accounts of a cabinet meeting and secret talks with President Evren made it clear that other considerations forced him to act.



A disappointed General Özturun's ambitions ended.

The outgoing Chief of General Staff, explaining his early retirement, said his successor needed time to choose his subordinates. Mr Özal, however, saw the general's attempt to install General Özturun as being part and parcel of a prearranged promotion of a closed circle of generals.

He linked General Urug's desire to have his trusted lieutenant take the post to his suspected ambition to become President. The post is seen as the ultimate "military rank" in Turkey, where only one out of seven Presidents have had a civilian background.

Meanwhile, Mr Özal was believed to have offered the sop of a possible second term in office to President Evren to counter-balance his powers.

Rasit Gardilek, writing in the *Times* 2.7.1987.

LABOUR PARTY FRINGE THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY

Wednesday, September 30th
5.30pm

NORFOLK RESORT HOTEL
KINGS ROAD, BRIGHTON

speakers include

Jeremy Corbyn, MP
Richard Balfe, MP
Stan Newens, MEP
Carole Tongue, MEP
Max Hiron, CDDRT General Secretary

Video showing of Turk-Is film

BENEFIT SOCIAL

To celebrate the opening of the
CDDRT's new offices.

FRIDAY, 16th OCTOBER
7.30pm

84 Balls Pond Road, London N1
(Buses: 24, 30, 38, 277 — nearest tube: Highbury Corner)

Turkish music live and recorded

Turkish Food

Drink

Stalls

Raffle

ALL WELCOME — ADMISSION £1.50 waged, £1.00 unwaged.

Organised in conjunction with the
Turkish Students Federation in the UK.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CDDRT

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

2. The aims of the CDDRT are as follows:
End all vestiges of 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 anti-democratic regime.

Totally oppose the regime's 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 the 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.

4. Congress is the highest body of the CDDRT and shall meet every year. It shall consist of delegates from Branches and affiliated organisations and individual affiliates. Congress shall elect the General Council and consider reports, and the 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-opt.

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 at least fortnightly and be responsible for the day to day work of the CDDRT.

7. Local Branches of the 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.

CDDRT ADDRESSES

BRITAIN 129 Newington Green Rd.
London N1 4RD

FRANCE 7 Rue Leclerc,
75014 Paris

IRELAND 9 Cavendish Row,
Dublin 1

USA Box 90, 924 W
Belmont Ave., Chicago,
ILL 60657

WEST c/o Internationaler

GERMANY Jugendverein,
Germaniastr. 89
6000 Frankfurt am Main 60

Affiliate to the CDDRT

Annual affiliation fees are: national organisation £25,
local organisation £10, individual £6.

To the Committee for Defence of Democratic
Rights in Turkey.

I/we* wish to affiliate to the CDDRT and enclose
a cheque/PO for £

Name

Address

Date of Affiliation

*Delete as applicable. Includes subscription to **TURKEY NEWSLETTER**

Return to the CDDRT, 84 Balls Pond Road, London
N1 4AJ, Tel: 01-254 0387.

CYPRUS

On the 10th July CDDRT members joined the picket of the Turkish Embassy in London to protest at the continued occupation of North Cyprus.

On the following Sunday, the CDDRT and many Turkish democrats demonstrated their support for the people of Cyprus by joining the big march through central London organised by the Cyprus Coordinating Committee.

NEW OFFICES

The Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey and *Turkey Newsletter* are moving to bigger offices at 84 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4AJ, Tel: 01-254 0387.

All correspondence should be sent to the new address as of *10th September 1987*.

The office is open between 9am and 6pm weekdays, visitors are welcome. In addition, there are open meetings which all interested can attend on the *3rd Monday of every month at 7.30pm*.

TORTURE, TRIALS AND PRISONS

TORTURE



Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left) member Ertugul Mavioglu has had his claim to have been tortured in the Istanbul security centre upheld. An enquiring has been ordered.

Two marine NCO's are on trial for torturing Murat Özcan while he was being held in a military prison. Murat Özcan had his arm broken and his left ear permanently damaged as a result.

However, the defence lawyers successfully sought a ruling that a civilian court had no right to try his client as the alleged offence took place in a military establishment.

This trial may now be heard in a military court. Meanwhile, Murat Özcan is serving a 32 year prison sentence on the basis of confessions extracted under torture.

MARTIAL LAW ENDS - EMERGENCY BEGINS

On July 19th martial law was lifted in the last 4 provinces of Turkey (those constituting Turkish Kurdistan). They had been under martial law for the last 8 1/2 years.

However, nine provinces, Istanbul, Bingöl, Tunceli, Van, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin and Siirt, will be subjected

for four months to a "State of Emergency". In the provinces under a state of emergency, civil governors can use the powers of martial law commands such as applying censorship on the press, banning meetings, collective bargaining, strikes and resorting to use military troops for cracking-down on rallies.

According to the daily *Cumhuriyet* of May 18 1987, over a 27-year period since the institution of "democracy" in Turkey, eighteen years have passed under martial law.

Handcuffed students being marched from the Istanbul State Security Court during their trial for participating in an illegal protest march.

HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

After two previous rejections, the Human Rights Association was finally granted permission to operate and held its first AGM. Nevzat Helvacı, civil rights lawyer, was re-elected as President. In his inaugural address, Helvacı stated that 240,000 Turkish citizens had been arrested in the seven years since the 1980 military intervention and that the great majority of these detainees had been subjected to torture and maltreatment. He said that torture during interrogating and "crime of thought" still existed in Turkey. (*Cumhuriyet* 22.6.1987)



**TURKEY
NEWSLETTER**



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