

TURKEY

news & views

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Uncertainty continues over election of the President

In his most recent statement at the end of August, PM Ozal reiterated that the majority group in the Parliament (i.e. ANAP) would nominate a candidate and the present Parliament would elect the President of the Republic.

This is still perceived as another one of Ozal's political manoeuvres as it is a general belief that the election of the President with the votes of only ANAP will be a source of political instability for a long time to come. Although ANAP has nearly 2/3 majority in the Parliament and could technically elect the President, local elections in March this year showed that this was a superficial majority as the party's following had shrunk to only 21%. Latest opinion polls indicate ANAP's fall as far down as 15%.

The opposition parties have already

made clear that they would not take part in the voting if the ANAP group go ahead and elect the President on its own.

There is intense speculation that Mr Ozal contemplates the highest office in the land for himself. His problem, however, apart from the hard attitude of the opposition parties, is the consequences for his own party. He will have to resign from his party to become impartial according to the Constitution. In the absence of an apparent acceptable leader to succeed him, already shaken ANAP may fall to pieces.

The election of the Speaker of the Parliament at the beginning of September will possibly give the first clues for the future of the Presidential elections.

□

Turkey Kurdistan

Terror claimed 1,400 lives in 5 years

Amnesty International expressed concern about the latest developments in Turkey Kurdistan. In an "Urgent Action" call addressed to AI groups all over the world asking them to raise the issue with the Turkish Government, AI draws attention to the events in the Cudi mountain and criticises the evacuation of the Kurdish villages in the region in order to preempt the actions of the Kurdish separatist organisation PKK, forcing the villagers to live out in the open countryside.

It was also declared that in the five years that have elapsed since the PKK raid on a police station in August 1984, 1400 people lost their lives in Turkey Kurdistan and systematic torture is going on in police stations and prisons.

Two years ago, not being able to curb violence in the Eastern regions, the Government had introduced "special governors" in eight provinces who had extra-ordinary military powers. This practice, however, instead of controlling and curbing terror in the region, had increased the problems. The introduction of the armed "village guards" was yet another factor that fueled terror in the region. The number of lives lost in these two years is 600 !

On 18 July, the bodies of two Kurdish peasants were burnt in the Yongali village of Hakkari at the Iraqi border and the incident was presented to the public as "two terrorists were killed in clashes with the security forces". This also shows that the Government's policy towards the Kurdish problem through military means is not conducive to a humane, just and democratic solution.

All democratic forces point out that such methods are far from bringing any solution to the national question in Turkey.

A just and democratic solution can only be achieved by recognizing the existence of the Kurdish people, putting an end to military operations and state terror in Turkey Kurdistan, lifting the ban on the Kurdish language and by bringing the question to open and honest discussion with the participation of all parties concerned and with the concept of new political culture.

Ozal threatens Syria

PM Ozal at an open-air rally in Hakkari where he spoke in a bullet-proof glass box threatened neighbouring countries helping Kurdish separatists implying primarily Syria.

□

New trade union laws in action for union bashing

Prior to the formation of Banksen (bank employees union affiliated to DISK) in the late 70s, every single bank had its own trade union; a convenient form of dealing with the "industrial relations" for the bank employers. Banksen, consisting of several bank unions and achieving much better collective agreements than individual bank unions set a "dangerous" example for the bank employers. So, the 12 September military regime had to deal with this problem of the "free enterprise" too. Banksen, along with DISK and its affiliated unions was banned, its assets and other resources unlawfully confiscated and squandered. Even more importantly, in the new trade union legislation made by the military junta in 1983 banks and insurance companies have been listed under the areas exempted from the right to strike for "national security".

Yapi-Kredi, with its 15,000 workers was the biggest workplace in Banksen. Trade union activists and lay members

in the bank formed a new union, Banks, after 1983. Banks as an independent union tried to continue positive traditions of Banksen in an entirely new situation. Despite the strait jacket put on the trade union movement, the very existence of a union such as Banks in the industry was seen as a threat for the future. So it had to be destroyed. In the absence of 12 September 1980 conditions, more refined ways than outright ban was needed. This year's collective agreement negotiations could provide a suitable opportunity.

The union, in an effort to compensate for the wage losses of the recent years caused by inflation running at an annual rate of 80% refused the employer's final offer of 130% for the coming two year period and sought a better deal by conducting passive forms of industrial action in the absence of the right to strike. In the meantime, the dispute was brought to the High Board of Arbitration. The HBA, where the union

side is represented by only two members out of nine, has, according to the law, the final say in industrial disputes.

At the HBA the Yapi-Kredi employer made the offer of 90% withdrawing its original 130%. The board decided, with the opposition of the labour side, to settle the dispute at 110%. After the "settlement" the employer forced the employees to resign from the union if they wanted to stay at work and benefit from the agreement. It did not, of course, forget to say: "We did want to give you a better wage rise, but your union prevented this!" As a result, most of the members have resigned from their union.

The operation represented the most vivid example of union bashing so far. The union "Banks" with the support of Turk-Is and many other democratic organisations is still trying to avert the situation to be able to maintain its existence. □

Nine year old Dev-Yol trial ends

7 death and 39 life sentences as well as 336 various terms of imprisonment were passed

The Dev-Yol (Revolutionary Path) trial, one of the biggest political trials of the 12 September period, ended at the military court of Ankara Martial Law Command, 9 years after it began.

While 7 of the 723 defendants were sentenced to death and 39 got life imprisonment, 336 of them received various other imprisonment sentences ranging from 3 to 20 years.

Investigations into the activities of the political group called Dev-Yol (Revolutionary Path) started in Ankara soon after the military coup of 12 September 1980 following the arrest of some 204 people who were accused with membership of this organisation and involved in its allegedly terrorist activities. The numbers involved soon included hundreds more.

During the two years of police investigations four young people lost their lives in the hands of the political police of Ankara Security Department.

The first hearing of the Dev-Yol trial opened in the military court of Ankara Martial Law Command on 18 October 1982 with 723 defendants. The military prosecutor demanded death penalty for 236 of them. During the course of the trial 7 of the defendants died as a result of illness and the horrible conditions in the prisons.

For a very long time the case was conducted under "war time emergency measures" which meant that the defendants could not use their right to

defence.

Like all the other trials of the 12 September period, Dev-Yol trial was also based on "evidence" extracted from the defendants under torture. This clearly is in gross violation of the international human rights conventions Turkey is a signatory to.

Not only the investigations but also the trial itself was conducted under police and military brutality. The defendants were brought to the court chained to each other, they were kicked and pushed about, and were even tortured in the courtroom. Many of them were in such a state that they could not walk on their own and had to be aided to the dock. On various occasions many defendants stripped down their underwear to show the torture marks on their bodies or to protest the bad treatment in the prisons.

The lawyers' demands to transfer the case to a civilian court were continuously turned down by the judges of the trial, thus violating the Constitution of their very own regime!

The Dev-Yol trial lasted for 9 long years. Like in many other political trials of the same period, at the end of the day, lengthy detentions had turned into *de facto* punishments. Hundreds of men and women were kept in prisons and incriminated without any evidence. They and their families have suffered great psychological and material losses.

Yes, the massive Dev-Yol trial ended with 7 death and 39 life sentences and prison terms totaling to thousands of years! But both the defendants and their lawyers as well as human rights organisations state that the decisions were political and they will be taken to the European Human Rights Commission.

The outcome of the Dev-Yol trial once more stresses Turkey's need for a genuinely democratic regime with all its rules and institutions. Extraordinary legal procedures incompatible with a contemporary state of law are still being employed to incriminate and convict people. Martial Law courts and State Security Courts, products of the 12 September regime marring the independent judiciary, continue to mete out death sentences. Anti-democratic institutions and practices introduced by the military regime continue despite the reactions and protests from wide sections of the society.

An anti-democratic Constitution and hundreds of laws restricting the freedoms of thought, speech and association are still in force and the Articles of the Penal Code considering communist thought an offence are still being employed. The defendants of the Dev-Yol trial were the latest victims to these anti-democratic measures and practices. □

Hunger strikes take lives

The hunger strikes staged in Turkey's jails to improve the terrible prison conditions end after 52 days, leaving two dead and over fifty permanently maimed :

The first anniversary of the so-called "1 August Decree" of the Ministry of Justice was commemorated with hunger strikes by over 2000 political prisoners in 19 prisons all over the country.

This Decree, issued on 1 August 1988, is basically about restrictions in prisons, making life even more unbearable for the country's thousands of political prisoners and their families.

Ever since its introduction, it had met various types of protest actions, both inside the prisons and outside.

This most recent action started when some 259 political prisoners in Eskisehir E-type special prison went on hunger strike on 28 June 1989. They demanded the lifting of the restrictions imposed on family visits and the ban on newspapers, journals, books, TV and radio, the improvement of the living conditions, including food and hygiene, and more time in open air.

The Government's response to a hunger strike with such basic human demands was shamefully inhuman. The Ministry of Justice accused the political prisoners on hunger strike of being "politically motivated" and "guided by terrorists".

On the 35th day of the hunger strike, the Ministry of Justice transferred the hunger strikers to another prison in Aydin. At the end of the four hour journey in the prison van, combined with the hassles from the gendarme, two of the hunger strikers were dead. This aroused wide-spread protests from various circles all over the country, the hunger strikes soon spread to other

prisons and included over 2000 political prisoners.

They were supported by not only their own families, but also by wide sections of the society who expressed their anger and disgust at the way the Government was handling the hunger strikes. The well-known humorist Aziz Nesin and four other prominent intellectuals staged a symbolic three-day hunger strike.

The families of hunger strikers also went on symbolic hunger strikes in solidarity.

The Human Rights Association did everything in its power to prevent any more lives from being lost.

While all this was going on, Mr Richard Balfe, British Labour MEP and member of the Turkey-EC Joint Commission, flew into Turkey to take up the issue with the Government. He had a series of important talks with various circles, both on the Government and the hunger strikers' side.

On the 50th day of the hunger strike, 101 of the prisoners became very ill and five reached a critical stage. The threat on their lives was increasing every hour.

On the 52nd day, the Minister of Justice declared that he was prepared to accept the hunger strikers' demands and promised to improve the prison conditions. The Minister's attitude to the hunger strike had been remarkable from the beginning; he was bold enough to publicly say: "5 people will die. They do it only for propaganda. They prefer to have a few deaths!" Mr Oltan Sungurlu also insisted that the prison conditions were good and there was no need to improve them. And yet, at the end of the day, he had no other choice but to accept that the prison conditions were bad and promised to improve them.

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From the press:

Letters from returning political prisoners

Mustafa Ekmekci,
Cumhuriyet, 24 August 1989

The letter of Dr Tarik Ziya Ekinci was mailed from Sagmalcilar prison (in Istanbul). I had not heard about his return. The last one that I had heard of was the return of Ataol Behramoglu. This is what Dr Ekinci has to say in his letter dated 6 August :

"Dear Ekmekci,

I have brought my 7-year-long exile abroad to an end by returning home on 30 July with my free will. The first night I was hosted by the police at Ataturk Airport. On Monday, 31 July, I was taken to court, charged with being one of the founder members of the Workers' Party of Turkey, and then I was set free by the court.

A press charge had been brought against me way back in 1979 for an article that I had written in the Party's journal called Yuruyus (March). The case had later been transferred to a Martial Law Court and ended with my conviction under Article 142 of the Turkish Penal Code. I had been given a sentence of 18 months' imprisonment, with no right of appeal. Now I am in Sagmalcilar prison, serving that 18 month sentence. If my previous arrests are taken into consideration, then I expect to complete this sentence in two and a half months' time.

Through your column, I wanted to inform my friends and the democratic public opinion of my return and imprisonment.

I wish you health and success.

Greetings and love to all friends."

Dr Ekinci is in "6. Kogus" (Ward 6) of Sagmalcilar Prison. I met him for the first time in Paris at Ataol's place, then again in Strasbourg at Prof. Server Tanilli's. He told me about the tortures he had been subjected to during his detentions before he left Turkey.

In the same ward, there is also a defendant of the Turkish Peace Association trial: Dr Cuneyt Basbug. He wrote me a letter, too.

"Dear Ekmekci,

I had to leave Turkey following the arrest warrants for the Peace Association leaders in 1982 and became a political refugee in Paris. I returned to my country on 4 July and was detained upon arrival. On 6 July I was taken before a court and formally charged with being one of the leaders of the Turkish Peace Association.

Although one month has passed since my arrest I have not been taken to court again, nor has a case been opened for me yet. Before I came I was planning to take the equivalence exam for my post-graduate degree in neurology obtained in Paris and also do my military service.

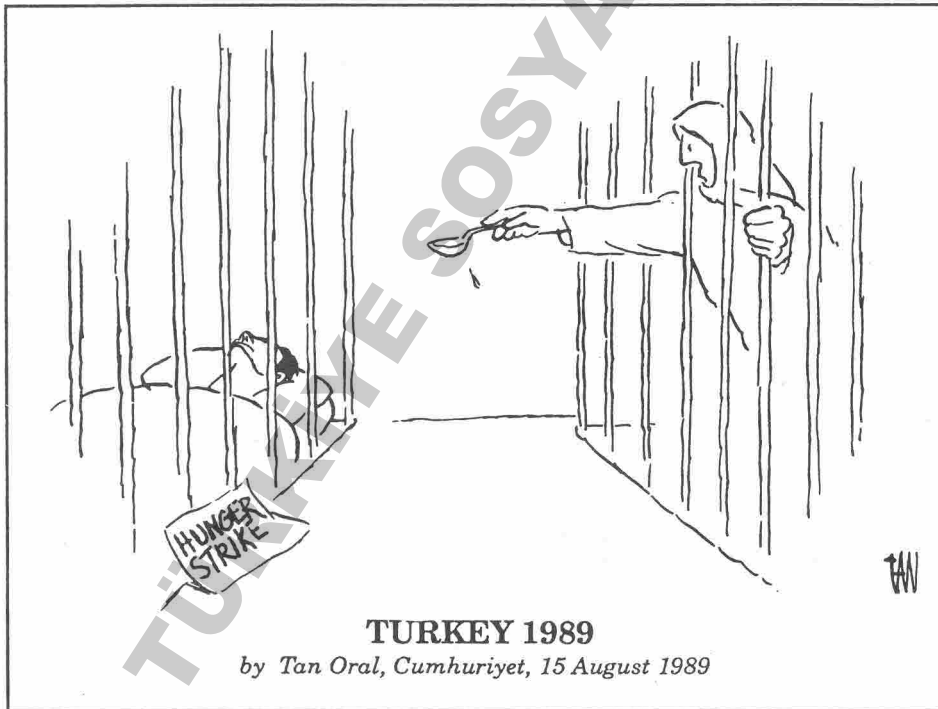
I had thought that I would be in the position to ask a court for justice and freedom, but never have I imagined that I would ask for faster proceedings to get the court case going!

Many people, including the policeman who detained me asked me why I had returned. This is quite straightforward: I want to live in my country freely and use my skills and profession for the benefit of my people. I cannot accept that one would have to pay a price for such simple and humane demands.

I wanted to inform you about my situation.

With very best wishes and greetings."

□



TURKEY 1989

by Tan Oral, Cumhuriyet, 15 August 1989

Executions to be carried out more easily ...

A recent Bill submitted to the Parliament by the Ministry of Justice removes the requirement of ratification by the Parliament of death sentences before they are executed.

A provisional section of the Bill states that the death sentences which have been before the Parliament for over four years for ratification will be deemed "not ratified".

In view of the fact that there are 229 death sentences awaiting ratification in the Parliament and most of them having been there for several years, it can be concluded that the Government is intending to evade this politically sensitive issue without losing face. In any case, the Bill is a strong indication of the Government's reluctance to go ahead with these executions.

However, it must be a deep source of concern to democratic circles and human rights campaigners who strive to get death penalty abolished, that the new Bill will make the executions much easier in the future. □

Hunger strikes ...

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Both the recent report on "Prison Conditions in Turkey" of the US Helsinki Watch Committee and the statement of the Paris-based International Human Rights Federation point out to the terrible living conditions in Turkey's prisons and assert that the "1 August Decree" aggravates this situation even further.

Furthermore, in a report published recently by DIE (The State Institute of Statistics), 141 prisons out of 639 have been found unsuitable to be used as prison.

Turkey is still a country with thousands of political prisoners, with a ban on Marxist thought, with severe restrictions on basic rights and freedoms. The rubble of 12 September military regime have not yet been cleared; the country has not been put on the course of democracy. The regime adopted a policy of destroying the political prisoners step by step. Already, hundreds of prisoners are suffering from partial paralysis due to bad prison conditions and prolonged periods of hunger strikes.

The only radical solution to this sad state of affairs is the formation of free and democratic Turkey. A speedy amnesty for political prisoners can be an initial step towards healing the wounds of the 12 September regime and leading the country towards democracy. □

Inkilap Dal dies

Refusal of issuing a passport led to the death of a political prisoner, Mr Inkilap Dal, who was released for health reasons. He was suffering from leucaemia and the doctors urged him to go abroad immediately for a bone marrow transplant.

He was able to get a passport only after a long and intense campaign which took several weeks. When he finally flew to Paris it was already too late. He died shortly after he was admitted to a hospital.

Another political prisoner, Mr Hamdullah Erbil, in very similar conditions, was also refused a passport to travel abroad for treatment. In the end, he was compelled to leave Turkey illegally with the help of his friends and relatives. He is now in West Germany receiving treatment.

Legendary singer Mr Ruhi Su, former President of Istanbul Bar Mr Orhan Apaydin -who was also one of the imprisoned leaders of the Turkish Peace Association- and publisher Mr Ismail Inanc who spent many years in prison are amongst those who died in recent years while waiting for a passport to travel abroad for treatment.

At present, there are 388,000 citizens being denied a passport to travel abroad. The majority of them are people who have been investigated or prosecuted for their left-wing political views.

They include politicians, human rights and peace activists, intellectuals, artists, writers, actors and actresses, publishers and film producers. □

Members of music group tortured

"Group Yorum", one of the most popular music groups of recent years were to give a concert in the Southern town of Mersin on 8 July, organised by a trade union.

Upon arrival at Mersin, the group was told by the police that their concert was banned by the local authorities. This led to a protest demonstration. During the demonstration, all nine members of the group together with twenty other people were detained. It was later revealed that two leading members of the group were badly tortured and three women members were forced to virginity test against which they resisted.

Group Yorum is well-known for their prison songs and songs in Kurdish language. While they are under arrest, their friends formed a "New Group Yorum". Their first concert on 28 July in Antalya was banned by the authorities. □

A new "Helsinki Watch" report

The US Helsinki Watch group recently published its latest report on the human rights situation in Turkey.

The report titled "Paying the Price-Freedom of Expression in Turkey" is based on, amongst other things, the observations of the members of the group who visited Turkey in the summer of 1988. It concentrates on the violations of freedoms of expression and association, giving specific cases as examples. The report underlines the need to radical changes in the Constitution and several other laws restricting fundamental rights and freedoms.

On the other hand, the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, in a report submitted to the CSCE Human Rights Conference held in May-June 1989 in Paris allocated a large section to Turkey. The report titled "Human Rights Concerns in Selected Helsinki Signatory Countries" dealt with the situation in Turkey under the headings torture, political prisoners, the Kurdish minority, freedom of expression, and freedom of movement. □

Steel strike continues

The strike at Karabuk and Iskenderun, two of Turkey's three steel plants, has been continuing for four months amid political speculations.

The employer of the State owned plants is represented in the dispute by private sector dominated MESS, The Union of Metal Goods Industrialists, once chaired by PM Ozal himself.

In the first two months of the strike, sixteen private firms, all members of MESS, imported \$400 million worth of steel from abroad and sold them at about 50% higher prices than the average steel prices in Europe. This lucrative business is continuing while 20,000 striking workers are trying to survive at starvation wages.

In the course of the strike, it has become clear that the government does not want a quick settlement of the dispute. It is generally believed that if the Directorate of State Iron and Steel Enterprises were involved in the negotiations directly rather than the MESS, the dispute would have been solved long ago. This, however is prevented by the government. Its attitude may be part of preparations of an atmosphere in which the two crucially important plants could be offered to foreign capital.

The independent union Celik-Is is continuing the strike in such difficult conditions. The Trade Union Confederation Turk-Is expressed support. Some unions have given financial support. □

Comment

"Enemies" and democracy

Hunger strikes staged in 19 jails in Turkey by over two thousand political prisoners in protest of ongoing torture and practices incompatible with human dignity... Initiatives and actions in support of the political prisoners on hunger strike... Detention and arrest of those who took part in such actions... Ozal Government's tactic of increasing political tensions while appearing indifferent to what's going on in the country... Government's economic decisions on 8-9 August which make the Turkish lira convertible and lower customs barriers... A statement made by General Torumtay, Chief of General Staff, on 18 August, expressing discontent within the armed forces... Demands for an early election expressed by political parties ranging from the UCPT to the right-wing True Path Party... Disputes between the Government and latent ruling circles over the Presidential election due in November... These, in a nutshell, have been the characterizing events in the Turkish political scene in the recent months.

In each of these events, the ruling circles, in an accustomed manner, created an "enemy" rather than deal with the problems concerned. The Justice Minister Oltan Sungurlu chose to try to justify the inhuman practices in the prisons by presenting the political prisoners as "terrorists" and "ideological militants" in a series of official statements.

The increasing tension in the East and the South-East of the country was justified by declaring the Kurdish people "enemy". The situation for the people in this region, however, is as described by Mr Mehmet Dulger, Deputy President of the TPP, who said "the state comes to beat them up and the terrorist to take their bread".

The business circles who criticized the 8-9 August economic measures for being introduced too early have been declared as "enemies" by Ozal. Prof Emre Kongar, a prominent sociologist, described this as "the government's threatening of the businessmen and the industrialists who are only seeking dialogue in the making of economic decisions".

General Torumtay's statement made on 18 August was also based on the theme of "internal and external enemies". He revealed that 98% of the security forces carrying out operations in the South-East were from the army. He referred to some neighbours as "enemies" and called upon the government to take the necessary political decisions.

Those who bare views and beliefs beyond the boundaries drawn by the regime are considered enemies. So are the political prisoners arrested and convicted for their views; those who

are in solidarity with them and who want a democratic, civilized regime in the country; the Kurdish people; even the businessmen and the industrialists; the neighbouring countries. Different parties in the election of the President are enemies of each other.

Can Turkey's problems be solved with these images of enemies? At the core of the problems is the reaction of the old type, backward political structures to the evolution of the Turkish economy, development of the capitalist relations, Turkey's opening to the outside world in many fields and the need to new structures necessitated by this new situation. So, the main problem at hand is either to settle this conflict in a civilized way or be driven into political instability.

This conflict has led the state apparatus into a crisis. The traditional State is having difficulty nowadays in reacting in the traditional way (ie. suppressing them by crude force) to the communist movement, to the Kurdish national movements. The main reason for this is the high level of democratic consciousness of the people of Turkey gained over the period following the 12 September 1980 coup. Also, every event and political development in the country and in the international sphere make Turkey's need for democracy even more strongly felt.

However, traditional forces within the State have so far failed to demonstrate readiness or willingness to live together with the communist movement, the Kurdish national movement, other movements of freedom and democracy. Instead of going into dialogue with the communist movement, the representatives of the Kurdish people, the lawyers of the political prisoners, they prefer to show-off their power.

At the threshold of the 21. century, it is not possible for Turkey, a Turkey who has signed the European Convention Against Torture and the Vienna Document of the European Conference on Cooperation and Security and who is party to the conventional disarmament talks in Vienna, to resort to policies of "multi-enemy violence"! Sooner or later these policies will have to be abandoned. But the longer the transition to a democratic structure will take, the more the political instability will increase, social life will suffer and Turkey's international reputation will be discredited. Such a Turkey is no good to anyone!

The most beneficial solution for Turkey is to establish a contemporary, pluralist democracy with many class parties, many ideologies, many cultures and many nations as soon as possible. □

UCPT Leaders abroad to return home

The Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Turkey announced that those members of the CC who are currently abroad will return to Turkey in September 1989, with the exception of Mr Mehmet Karaca and Mr Osman Sakalsiz, Deputy President and Deputy General Secretary, respectively who will remain abroad until another decision is made. The statement went on to say:

"The leaders abroad are returning to conduct open political activity, to take part in the struggle for democracy. They will spend every effort towards the formation of a legal communist party with the participation of broad Marxist groups, parties and individuals. Since the return of UCPT leaders Kutlu and Sargin in November 1987, the conditions have developed favourably with the support of the democratic circles and international solidarity." □

Trial of Sargin and Kutlu continues

At the last hearing of the two leaders of the UCPT at Ankara State Security Court on 25 August, the defence counsel's demand for the leaders' release on bail was refused yet again.

Mr Ersen Sansal, on behalf of over 900 defence lawyers representing Dr Sargin and Mr Kutlu, argued that the formation of the State security Court contravened the Constitution. This was rejected by the court.

Dr Sargin said in a long statement that the panel's reluctance to grant release on bail for nearly 20 months without any ground was bound to imply that they would be convicted and sentenced regardless of what happens in the court.

In the previous hearing on 2 August Mr Kutlu had made a strong statement exposing the political nature of this trial around the ban of publication of the UCPT Programme which was read at the court as part of the evidence against the two leaders. □

Another journal confiscated

August 1989 issue of the monthly *Ozgurluk Dunyasi* (Freedom World) has been confiscated by the order of the State Security Court. The article titled "Reactionary Imperialist Demagogy and the 'Kurdish Question'" was considered propaganda for weakening national feelings. □

UCPT says:

A new political strategy

Daily paper Cumhuriyet conducted a survey on present-day socialism. Following is the reply given by the leaders of the UCPT, Nihat Sargin and Haydar Kutlu, published on 4 July 1989 issue of the paper

Historical events are not shaped according to our subjective preferences, likes or predictions. Nor do they happen accordingly. To be able to understand the recent developments in the socialist countries and the present problems of Marxism, we should approach them from a historical viewpoint.

The radical renewal efforts of real socialism is the product of an objective need that has its roots in the past. Socialism, with its 70 years plus, has a relatively short past compared with capitalism. The crises which are spread over a much longer timespan into capitalism are known to the younger generations only from history books.

Socialism, however had to, and still does, live through such crises within a much shorter timespan. Secondly, the transition from capitalism to socialism is radically different from the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The latter covered a much longer period and was spontaneous. Socialism, however, cannot arise spontaneously from the bosom of capitalism.

First and foremost, the structure of the political rule has to change. At least, the developments have been like this. This characteristic of socialism that was treading paths untreaded before, made it more vulnerable and more open to subjective mistakes at the beginning. If we are not carried away by our imagination to draw up plans for subjective socialism, then we can see that all the negative and positive experience of socialism can provide valuable lessons for when we create our own socialism and we can indeed make use of them.

The ripening crisis of present-day socialism is based on three points:

- 1) Subjective mistakes,
- 2) The weaknesses created by historical conditions in the formation of socialism in one country, and
- 3) The fact that the developments in the world and the new conditions were not grasped in time.

The sins of the Stalinist era, bureaucratic deformation, wilful mistakes and the abolishment of the humanist essence of socialism have all played an important part in the present-day crises of socialism. But this does not explain everything.

Socialism was formed first in a very backward country like The Tsarist Russia. The socialism of China, Bulgaria, Cuba and Vietnam all have the same character. This backward background is one of the reasons for the mistakes and pains in the formation of socialism.

The second reason is the longlasting imperialist blockade. This has isolated socialism from the global development of the world, has made it introvert, led to the extraordinary strengthening of the state (which meant the strengthening of bureaucracy) and it has blunted the democratic functioning of the party-in short, it drowned democracy which is of determining importance in the development of socialism.

Thus, backward elements both in economy and in the cultural field have been frozen in a sense. This is why we are going to witness negative developments for some time to come yet, even in socialist countries who are talking about reforms. Like the mentality who shot at students in China or the practices against the Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in Bulgaria...

The obligation to defend socialism in one country against imperialism, the fact that the communist parties of the capitalist countries had to work longer than necessary as section of the Komintern because of this obligation, the Stalinist bureaucratic concept of the party, the vulgarizations in Marxist theory which were made in the Stalinist era, and the dogmatism that emerged

weakened the communist and the workers' movement. Marxism which had quite specialized in criticizing capitalists could not turn the weapon of criticism towards itself.

Historical approach alone is not sufficient to grasp the developments. It is also necessary to grasp the logic behind the deep-rooted changes of our era. To have foreseen the defaults of the living socialism does not necessarily mean to have grasped the logic of the era. If we think that the main tendency of our era has not changed and that the determining factor is conflict and arms race rather than interdependence [between nations] then it is possible to believe that the efforts for reform in socialist countries are wrong and do not have a chance to succeed, and that they will lead to the dissolution of the system and create the danger of returning to capitalism. In this case, there was no other hope than to draw up subjective projects of socialism, to believe that a new revolutionary wave is near or to put one's hopes into theories of world socialism. However, the realities are not like this.

The policies of glasnost and perestrojka actively contribute to the formation of the new system of international relations which is necessary for their own success. The democratization of international relations, the creation of a mutual security system, and the safeguarding of peace are preconditions for the reform initiatives. The policy of glasnost, on the other hand is an accelerating factor for changing the international climate.

Our socialism will carry its own national colours. It is neither necessary nor possible to repeat the Great October Socialist Revolution. The transition from capitalism to socialism will be much less painful in present day conditions depending on the degree of democratization of the international climate and denunciation of violence in every sphere of social life. We say that socialism will be achieved through peaceful means, that there will be more democracy under socialism. However, socialism cannot be made more attractive just by saying, "our socialism will be better," by drawing up projects for a better socialism. What ever we say and however we present things, the people in the street will see the living socialism and assess it as it is.

The condition for our establishing socialism through peaceful means, without giving in to the possibility of a civil war, is the creation of a new system of international relations, and this depends on the success of the processes of democracy, glasnost and perestrojka in socialist countries.

There is another essential factor for understanding the new qualities of our era. Even though the basic theoretical concepts of Marx, Engels and Lenin are still valid, we do not live in the same era as the great masters.

In Marxist theory, the focus of discussion is not on, "What kind of a socialism?", as is often assumed. There is no doubt the socialism of our era will be different. Although this question is an important one, the main issue is to find new, contemporary ways of transition from capitalism to socialism compatible with present day conditions. The method of transition to socialism determines the character of socialism. But it is not possible to foresee the socialism of the era with all its characteristics.

The new method of transition from capitalism to socialism is to put forward a new political strategy. One of the important reasons for the communist parties of capitalist countries not to be successful is their inability to present a democratic alternative within the framework of the capitalist system. Such a programme of radical reforms would mean to offer a solution for not only class conflicts, but also for conflicts of non-class nature, to be able to walk with a broad social opposition ranging from environmentalists to feminists.

Fighting with such a programme in the forefront of the struggle, we can rally the support of the majority for the democratic renewal of the country today and for the socialist re-structuring of the society tomorrow. At the same time, we can defend our sovereignty rights and contribute to the preservation of peace and democratization of international relations. Thus our people will see none of the basic problems of the country can be solved without the contribution of communists, of the working class. This is why a legal communist party is important and necessary for Turkey.

The most important characteristic of the UCPT programme is its ability to present such a new political strategy. □

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