

TURKEY

news & views

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A new stage in trade union and workers' activities

The trade union and workers' activities that have started in the period leading up to the 26 March local elections and have since risen gradually remind us of a wave coming from the depths of the sea. This is not an unexpected development. It follows naturally from the rapid impoverishment process the working people are going through as a result of the austerity measures of 12 September 1980 coup. However, the development of the movement and some of its features seem to be opening quite a new page in the history of the trade union movement in Turkey. In the actions, the initiative and the creativity of the rank-and-file is most noteworthy. As for participation, it can only be described as extraordinary. The workers are united in their work places and enter various actions as a well-knit, solid body.

Furthermore, since a substantial part of negotiations involves some 600,000 public employees, their actions directly address the representatives of the Government. Workers chant slogans like "We are hungry!" on one hand, and "Ozal must resign!" on the other.

Workers below poverty line

If we take the already low workers' wages of 1983 as an index equal to 100, the average

real wages in 1988 has fallen to 56.66. Even according to official statistics, the workers have lost nearly half of their wages in the course of the last five years.

The substantial portion of the worker's wage pays for essential expenses like rent and food. However, the rapid fall in purchasing power of their wages makes working class families unable to meet their essential needs. For example, to be able to buy a

loaf of bread, a worker had to work 19 minutes in 1979; in 1987 this doubled to 35 minutes. In 1979, one kilogram of meat was worth four hours 53 minutes' work; now, however, even a whole day's work does not enable the workers to buy one kg meat and they have to work overtime!

In short, working class families are well below poverty line today.

According to a research conducted by Turk-Is Research Centre, the essential kitchen expenses of a four-member working class family has increased 29 fold since January 1980 and reached TL 228,855 in January 1989. Another study (by ANKA News Agency) gives the poverty line in December 1988 as being TL 238,403. But, all of the 600,000 public employees involved in actions were getting salaries of TL 150,000 a month. In the words of a Turk-Is official: "Workers are waging a struggle for life."

Restrictions on trade union activity

The 1982 Constitution and labour laws enacted following the 12 September

1980 military coup have imposed extensive restrictions on trade union rights and activities. The complaint brought to the ILO by the international trade union confederations (WFTU,

ICFTU and WCL) against Turkey not complying with international standards of trade union freedoms is still on the agenda.

The new trade union procedures brought in the following 1980 coup have further restricted the already limited right to strike, so much so that it is no longer a right! This so-called right only arises during the collective bargaining

Years	No of strikes	No of workers on stike	No of working days lost
1984	4	361	4,947
1985	21	2,410	194,296
1986	21	7,926	234,940
1987	307	29,734	1,961,940
1988*	143	26,202	1,057,550

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF STRIKES ACCORDING TO YEARS.

Note: * until 13 October

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From the press

Front page editorial from liberal daily Milliyet by Altan Oymen (27.4.89)

Detention

Mayor of Sanliurfa Mr Halil Celik of Refah Partisi (The Welfare Party, pro-Islamic) has been in police custody for 11 days. The reason for his detention, as declared to the public, is his words: "I am not a supporter of Ataturk's reforms; I am against secularism."

If this is the only charge against him, it is not very clear under which article of the Turkish Penal Code he will be charged. It is true, however, that there are many articles under which any "word" pronounced may be interpreted

as a crime. Even so, this can not be a reason for detaining a suspect for 11 days for "police investigation".

Has the "word" interpreted by the police or the prosecutor as a crime been uttered or not? Since the suspect says "yes", what remains to the police to "investigate"? Take him to the court and it is up to the judge to decide whether it is a crime or not.

Unreasonably delaying the hearing of a suspect before a court amounts to an unjust and unlawful "de facto sentence". The provision in the law for extending the detention period for up to 15 days has not been intended for this purpose.

On the other hand, is it right to have someone who says "I am not an Ataturk supporter, I am against secularism" sitting in the chair of the Mayor?

This is an entirely different matter, and measures to prevent such eventualities are quite different. (...) Detaining Mayors, members of political

parties for the words they say and moreover, extending the detention period to its maximum limit without a convincing reason are not amongst them.

Detaining people ... Arresting them... Solely for the words they say or write... Keeping them under arrest for long periods without any reasonable ground...

Examples of these are common place. On my desk are a press release informing of the arrest of the writer Mr Yalcin Kucuk who has been arrested in recent times almost regularly once a month; articles and reports reminding of the continuing detention of Mr Haydar Kutlu and Dr Nihat Sargin who were detained about one and a half years ago; letters from the families of many other political prisoners, maybe not as famous, but in similar conditions... Many, many of them. But none honours our democracy we claim to be improving!

Yet another bloody May Day

May Day, the international day of working class unity and solidarity is an official day of celebration and festivities in some countries while in others it is commemorated with demonstrations and rallies even though it is not an official day of celebration.

There are, however, four countries in the world where 1 May is banned and working people are not permitted to celebrate it officially or unofficially. Turkey is one of them!

Despite the ban, the first mass demonstration on May Day was in 1976 when, under the leadership of DISK

(progressive trade union centre, banned after the coup) hundreds of thousands of workers rallied in Istanbul.

In 1977, the demonstration was the largest outside the socialist countries. But this peaceful demonstration was turned into a blood-bath when secret police stamped the crowds, shooting indiscriminately and leaving 33 men and women trampled to death. Hundreds were wounded and many were detained in police cells.

This year, 12 years after the first bloody May Day, similar scenes were repeated in Istanbul. Police opened fire

on the workers who had gathered to participate in the -still unofficial-May Day Rally, killing a young man and wounding 42. 400 demonstrators were taken into custody.

In a written statement the minister of Interior defended the ban and the Police action on May Day on the grounds that 1 May was no longer a public holiday after an amendment in the law made in 1982.

Opposition parties were united in holding the ruling Ozal Government directly responsible for the blood spilled on May Day.

Never ending repression in prisons

"What about the prisons? Are there any improvements in the prison conditions?"

This is a question asked by foreign observers over and over again.

Regrettably, the answer to it still remains negative despite all official claims that democracy has been restored and human rights violations have come to an end.

Following a series of hunger strikes involving over 2000 political prisoners earlier this year, repression in Turkey's prisons is still continuing.

Totally unprovoked raid in Ankara Central Prison in April where 57 political prisoners were severely beaten by gendarmes, leaving five severely wounded with broken ribs and head injuries, and the 15-day hunger strike that followed in protest of the attack, attracted a great deal of attention both in Turkey and abroad. Amnesty International issued an urgent action/health concern call for the casualties, the European Parliament also discussed and condemned the

attack. Hunger strike was abandoned when the prosecutor promised that he would investigate into the matter and establish the perpetrators of the attack. Two months have gone past, nothing has been heard yet.

The days that followed cannot exactly be called incident-free. While 49 political prisoners in Amasya prison were staging a hunger strike in protest of terrible conditions, repression and torture in the prison, their families who went to the Ministry of Justice to convey their imprisoned relatives' problems were detained and kept in custody for several days in difficult conditions.

The latest example of such practices comes from Nazilli prison. The repressive and inhuman actions of the prison authorities by harassing and intimidating both the prisoners and their families have reached unprecedented levels.

Upon this, the prisoners blockaded themselves in their wards to resist the

attacks, but eventually the soldiers brought down the walls and forced themselves in to end the hunger strike.

The following excerpt from a letter to the Human Rights Association (in Turkey) by an ex-prisoner gives an idea about the grim situation in Turkey's prisons:

"As you know, the recent 33 day long hunger strike had ended without an agreement. Another 10-day hunger strike involving some 40 prisoners also ended with false promises.

"There are prisoners who are still not released even though they have completed serving their prison terms. (...) An inmate who fell down during the hunger strike and had an intracerebral haemorrhage was denied hospitalization and, after two months, is still waiting in the prison with his life at risk. Other prisoners with various other medical complaints are left without any medical care."

Police assault on journalists: six reporters wounded

On Thursday, 4 May 1989, in a suburb of Istanbul the police brutally attacked journalists covering the funeral of Mehmet Ali Dageci who had been killed on 1 May by police bullets while he was trying to take part in May Day rally.

Harsh methods adopted by the government to implement its ban on May Day celebrations, especially the police actions on the day such as opening fire at the demonstrators with live ammunition killing one person had been bitterly criticised by all newspapers as well as the opposition parties. PM Ozal defended his government's position and the actions of the police. Moreover, he accused the press of "weakening the security forces"

This was sufficient encouragement for the police looking for an opportunity to take revenge against journalists for their coverage of the May Day events.

A few headlines and excerpts from the serious daily *Cumhuriyet* can give an idea about the extent of the attack:

"Ozal accused, police hit: mass beating of journalists"

"Journalists trying to cover the funeral and the events around it have been twice attacked by the police using truncheons and shields, throwing stones. Six journalists wounded. Our reporter Mr Fuat Kozluklu had his wrist broken while 'Gunes' reporter Mr Huseyin Can, his arm. Photographer of Gamma press agency, Mr Sedat Aral had a cerebral trauma. 'Nokta' reporter is also amongst the wounded"

Another headline reads **"From the police radio: 'shoot the traitors' "**.

The report following gives a detailed transcription of the police's radio communications. The paper felt obliged to use only initials of many unprintably indecent words used for journalists.

International criticisms

Only a few days after the attack on journalists in Istanbul, a resolution condemning the Turkish government was adopted in Berlin at the annual conference of the IPI, the International Press Institute. The move was initiated by Mr Oktay Eksi, editor of the popular daily *Hurriyet* and President of the Turkish Press Council.

The attack was also brought to the attention of the Information Forum held in London as part of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Towards the closing stages of the Forum attended by 35 nations, the representative of the British delegation criticised the Turkish government over the beating of journalists in Istanbul. The Turkish delegate's response to the effect that "everything in Turkey had been in accordance with laws did not impress the participants of the Forum.

Daily paper banned

More recently, on 21 May 1989 a mass circulation daily "Sabah" was banned upon the publication of the first part of a serial criticising PM Ozal and his family for using their influence to do benefit to certain circles. The court's ruling was based on a controversial amendment in the law made last year widely believed to be contravening the Constitution..

Free press?

Following is an excerpt from a statement made by Mr Yavuz Ozcan, editor of the journal "Toplumsal Dirilis" (Social Revival). (From "Yeni Yol", 15 May 1989)

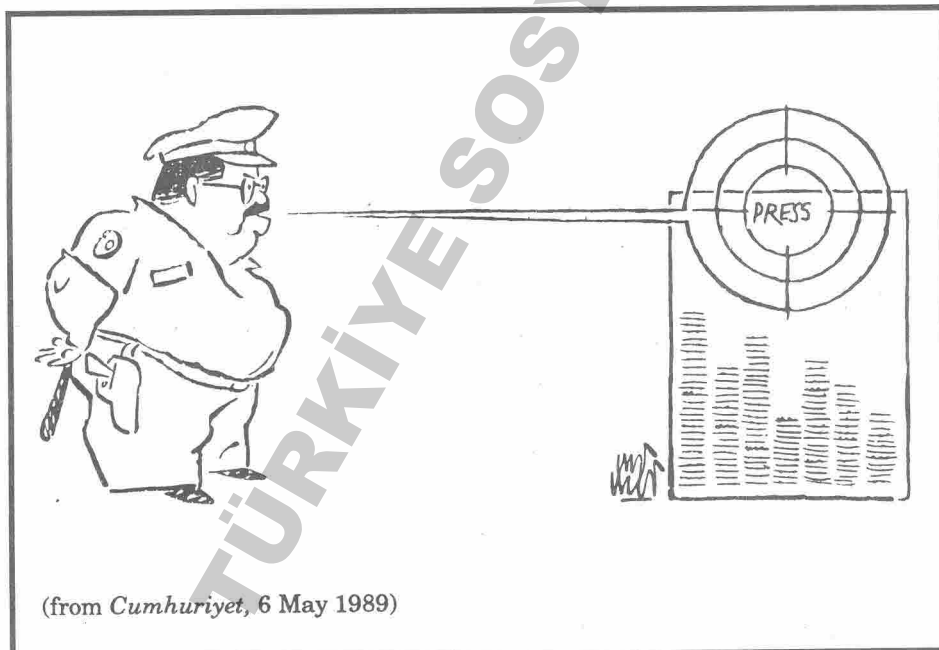
During the "operation Unity" launched by the security forces upon the murder of an army major in Istanbul on 22 October, home of our journal's proprietor Mr Cemal Yalvac, editors Mr Hasan Usak and Yavuz Ozcan have been raided and the first two were detained. Mr Ozcan could not be detained as he was away in Izmir.

The next morning, a police team stationed in our offices detained all the workers and visiting readers. The office was stormed and plundered by the police. They stole our cash (worth £400), three professional cameras (worth £2000), a fax machine (£2000), three press bags, 4 portable recorders, 6 sets of encyclopediae, one wall clock, and all stationary, technical equipment, and articles. All staff of our journal were taken to the political police and were detained for 16 days during which they were continuously tortured with physical torture methods like electric shocks, hanging in the cold and not being allowed to eat or sleep. They were also subjected to psychological torture and thus forced to sign made up statements. [...]

Our journal has been a target for the regime's destruction plans ever since its inception. The security Department and State Security Court in Diyarbakir has initially alerted Istanbul police against us. Each issue of our journal was confiscated. Our editor-in-Chief Hasan Usak was threatened by the prosecutors of the State Security Court when he went to Istanbul to give his court statement. Distribution of our journal was prevented. We were continuously followed by political police. [...]

Yes, we did commit a crime - a crime against fascism, by writing the truth, by upholding the good and the beautiful ...

We would like to express our thanks to all those who have lent us moral support in maintaining our publication, especially to the Consulates of the socialist countries, Amnesty International, US Helsinki Watch Group, International Press Institute, Human Rights Association (Turkey), West German parliamentary group visiting Turkey, TAYAD, DEMKAD, the journals Elkaramah and Behram and all our readers who despite all obstacles and difficulties persistently continued their support ...



(from *Cumhuriyet*, 6 May 1989)

Convention for Democracy declares: "Abolish crimes of thought"

At the end of April, over 900 prominent intellectuals and politicians came together at a "Convention for Democracy" in Istanbul called by the popular humorist Mr Aziz Nesin and economist and former MP Prof Sadun Aren on behalf of a group of initiators.

The leaders of the opposition parties Prof Erdal Inonu of the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), Mr Suleyman Demirel of the True Path Party (DYP), Mr Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party (RP) and Mr Ferit Ilsever of the Socialist Party (SP) all attended. This was an indication of their intention to reach a consensus on democracy. The absence of ruling Motherland Party (ANAP) and Democratic Left Party of Mr Bulent Ecevit was noticeable.

In his opening speech, Mr Nesin said that "in Turkey the rules of democracy had not been observed" and he called upon all to unite in an endeavour to achieve national independence and human rights. On the Kurdish question he said: "Unless there is a democratic solution to the Kurdish question, we cannot talk of democracy in Turkey".

Professor Inonu said: "I promise that when we come to power we will establish democracy with all its institutions. The 'crime of thought' will be a thing of the past."

Mr Demirel, former conservative PM deposed by the 12 September 1980 coup, criticised certain circles for airing irresponsible threats like, "The country

can go back to the days of anarchy of the pre-12 September 1980 coup period! First and foremost, we should stop blaming democracy for organised terror."

Agreeing with most of the points made by the other leaders before him, Mr Erbakan of the pro-islamic Welfare Party suggested a "Tribunal for Democracy". He criticised Mr Inonu for not defending freedom of association along with freedom of expression.

Mr Ferit Ilsever of the Socialist Party also pointed to urgent questions concerning democracy.

Mr Ilhan Selcuk, a leading columnist of the daily *Cumhuriyet*, one of the main contributors to the Convention, spoke about freedom of thought and association. He said that "in order to achieve democracy in Turkey, all anti-democratic articles in the Constitution and the laws should be repealed. This is a question of government!" He further added that struggle for democracy in Turkey was rising with the left being the base. Therefore the left should postpone discussing its differences but start building alliances for democracy."

The imprisoned leaders of the UCPT Mr Kutlu and Dr Sargin sent a message of greetings and support to the Convention. In their message which was applauded enthusiastically by the delegates, the UCPT leaders thanked all concerned for their support and solidarity and said: "The fact that we are unable to respond to your invitation and be present amongst the

delegates with our communist identities is itself a clear indication of the main obstacles before our democracy."

The Final Document of the Convention was declared at a press conference on 3 May. It notes the Conference's decision to campaign for the abolishment of Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code and to hold a separate meeting concerning the Article 163 which bans activity aiming formation of a state on religious principles.

The Final Document further stresses that "military coups are incompatible with democracy" and that "our country has no more time to lose in achieving democratic rights and developing them". It also states that a 12-member "Democracy Watch Committee" as well as study and research groups have to be formed who would carry out work in various fields of social life and that in the autumn an even broader conference would be held.

Stressing the need for a new Constitution, the Final Document notes that "before the elections political parties should present to the public opinion their proposals for a new Constitution so that the new Constitution can be prepared with the participation of the widest possible circles.

Finally, the Document demands that 1 May is celebrated legally as the Workers' Day, necessary legal reforms are carried out for ending censorship and the Parliament exercises full control over the security forces and

EC-TURKEY joint parliamentary commission meeting: Embarrassment for Turkish government, disappointment for the Europeans

The second meeting of the EC-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Commission - resumed last January after an 8-year long gap - was held in Ankara on 24-26 April 1989.

Eighteen members from different political groups and member countries of the European Parliament held meetings with representatives of the Turkish Government as well as members of the Turkish Parliament.

The meeting was opened by speeches from the Chairs of the two sides. Mr Luc Beyer de Ryke, the Belgian Liberal head of the EP delegation expressed his serious concern about Dr Sargin and Mr Kutlu, the imprisoned leaders of the United Communist Party of Turkey (UCPT). These remarks which visibly

embarrassed Mr Bulent Akarcali, the Head of the Turkish delegation were expectedly censored in the news bulletins of the TRT (Turkish State Radio and TV).

The main issues on the agenda of the two-day meeting included:

- * the presentation of the report of the membership commission,
- * consideration of Turkey's application to join the EC,
- * social problems of Turkish immigrants in the EC,
- * discussion on the human rights situation in Turkey (with the relevant Ministers of the Turkish Government in attendance)
- * the urgent situation of the Kurdish refugees from Iraq.

Many questions regarding the military imposed 1982 Constitution, continued instances of torture, the DISK trial which has entered its 8th year and other human rights violations were raised with the Turkish side. The standard answer to most of these questions was the familiar cliché: "The Constitution was accepted with 92.5% of the votes in the referendum and torture only exists in the minds of those who want to discredit Turkey".

When European Parliamentarians stated that torture was not a mere allegation but a well documented fact, Justice Minister Mr Oltan Sungurlu said: "I don't know, I didn't have time to investigate."

Further more, the European side persistently asked the Justice Minister about repealing Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code (TPC) banning undesired political activity, known as the 'Mussolini laws'. The Minister's answer was that they had formed a 24-member Committee. This Committee, the Minister claimed, conducted an opinion poll and canvassed reactions from various circles which was used to amend the Draft TPC accordingly. He also claimed that public opinion was not in favour of abolishing the Articles 141 and 142.

In answering questions regarding press censorship, the Minister chose to confuse the issue by asserting: "The newspapers hamper the work of the security services by disclosing the names of terrorists sought by the police. The censorship aims to prevent this".

A more specific question regarding recent censorship of articles written by the prominent lawyer Halit Celenk and a sociological survey written by the eminent publisher Muzaffer Ilhan Erdost, was ignored by the Minister.

Mr Sungurlu referred to the 14.000

political refugees emigrated to Western Europe since the coup as 'terrorists and criminals'. He was, however, challenged by the social-democratic MP Mr Tevfik Kocak who cited the late Mrs. Behice Boran, the veteran socialist and President of the Workers' Party of Turkey and Mr Gultekin Gazioglu, President of the now banned Teachers' Association.

Mr Kocak said: "These people are our past. They are not terrorists. The socialists and communists forced into exile are devoted patriots."

The social democratic MP went on to say: "We all know that there are police teams specially trained for torture. The army's presence is felt everywhere. Ozal collaborates with the military. The communist party should be legalized. Kutlu and Sargin should be released. Otherwise you can't call the regime a democracy."

Referring to the January meeting, Mr Luc Beyer de Ryke confronted the Turkish side with the following: "You promised further developments towards democracy. You raised our hopes. But now we are disappointed. Worse still, there is definitely a regression. You are

deliberately confusing political prisoners for the likes of drug offenders and other criminals. We know that many political prisoners have been tortured to obtain confessions.

"You claim that the detention period has been reduced from 48 hours to 24 hours. But how can you account for Kutlu and Sargin's detention for 19 days during which they were denied access to the outside world and tortured? There are many similar examples.

"You say that there are laws and courts and that you are merely enforcing the law. But it is you, the politicians who make the laws. This is a vicious circle. You should find a way out."

Justice Minister Sungurlu, visibly disturbed by Mr de Ryke's words, retorted angrily: "We have never promised you that Articles 141 and 142 would be abolished!". The European side could hardly suppress their smiles.

In sum, the meeting which had been built up by the Turkish Government as the recognition of their democratic credentials, failed in its intended purpose of mending fences between Turkey and the EC.

comment

WE WANT A DEMOCRATIC CHANGE AND STABILITY

The local elections of 26 March have resulted in a new situation in Turkey. The ruling Motherland Party (ANAP), with only 21.7% of the votes, having lost 14.6% of its electoral support since the general elections in November 1987, trailed in the third place while the Social-Democratic Populist Party (SHP) came first with 28.2% (an increase of 3.5%) and the True Path Party (DYP), led by former Prime Minister Demirel, was the runner-up with 25.6% (an increase of 6.5%). Other parties contesting the elections also improved their share of votes.

However, the fact that no single party could command the majority support led to diverse interpretations both in Turkey and abroad.

In our opinion, the recent local elections have led to two important conclusions:

Firstly, these local elections have shown the democratic accumulation and people's developing awareness for democracy in Turkey. The people have rejected the Ozal Government's reluctance to get rid of the repressive regime created by the military coup of 12 September 1980, its policies aggravating social and economic problems and its persistent disregard of political morality. For the past year or so, topics for discussion in Turkey have been to bring down the soaring inflation and to stop the increase in the cost of living as well as a democratic election law, a democratic Constitution, the establishment of trade union rights and freedoms, the ending of political arrests, torture and executions, the abolishment of Articles 141, 142 and 163 of the Turkish Penal Code, the lifting of the ban on the communist movement, the release of the UCPT leaders Dr Sargin, Mr Kutlu and other political prisoners, and the ending of oppression on the Kurdish people.

In this situation, the result of the local elections has improved the conditions for the struggle for democracy. Now, leaving the 12 September regime behind and entering the path of a democratic change is a more achievable objective than ever before.

Secondly, the electorate who clearly demonstrated its preference for change has not, however, given a clear answer as to how this change should be brought about. The fact that none of the opposition parties contesting the elections could present a viable alternative to ANAP's policies has played an important role in this.

Following the defeat, PM Ozal carried out a major Cabinet reshuffle, with the support of the most reactionary circles within ANAP, and he won the vote of confidence for the new Government with his false majority in the Parliament obtained through the anti-democratic Election Law. This, however, could not be a reason for the opposition forces ranging from communists to Demirel's True Path Party to drop their strong demand for an early general election. In a democracy, a party commanding only 21.7% of the votes cannot form the Government. The Prime Minister's insistence to remain in power for a further three years with the support of one fifth of the electorate is bound to give rise to new tensions. Worse still, allowing the ANAP "majority" in the present parliament to elect the new President in November for a seven year term will be a major factor of instability.

In the meantime, some circles both within ANAP and within the structures of 12 September regime are intensifying their efforts to increase political tension, as most vividly exemplified on May Day in Istanbul. In this situation, if the forces of democracy and the opposition parties do not take the issue of forming a democratic accord concerning all basic

problems on top of their agenda, a period of destabilisation with an uncertain future may follow in Turkey. In short, after the 26 March local elections Turkey is facing a new test of democracy.

The Convention for Democracy held in Ankara on 29-30 April 1989, has provided all political forces in Turkey with a valuable opportunity for reaching a broad consensus on the basis of a democratic change and stability.

The Convention, initiated by world famous humorist Mr Aziz Nesin and Prof Sadun Aren, and attended by some 900 participants including the leaders of all opposition parties (Dr Sargin and Mr Kutlu with their messages from the prison) has been an important milestone in this direction.

We on our part will spend every effort to arrive at broad political accords, a stable development and to get people's votes be reflected in all spheres of social life. We will reiterate at every opportunity and every platform that the legal functioning of the communist movement is indispensable to get the country out of the vicious circle of military coup - restricted democracy - political crisis - military coup.

a new stage ...

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talks, usually renewed every two years. It can only be implemented after completing very lengthy bureaucratic procedures. The grounds for postponing or banning a strike by the government are also very wide. General strike, solidarity strikes, go-slows and decreasing the productivity are strictly banned. Furthermore, 400,000 union members are working in the industries where any kind of strike is banned by law on the grounds of national security, public safety etc.

Since the enactment of the trade union laws in 1984, the strikes have been spread over the years as illustrated in Table 1. This table shows that the unions abandoned their timidity in their actions. Yet, it is not possible for the workers to effectively defend and develop their rights only by exercising their limited rights to strike as defined by law. For this reason they develop, sometimes with their own initiatives and sometimes with their unions, various forms of "passive resistance".

Some of the actions of the workers:

5 April: Turk-Is Council of Presidents met and decided to "collectively decrease production and productivity".

7 April: 11,000 members of Petrol-Is (Petroleum workers' union) participated in actions such as

boycotting the meals, overtime ban, reporting sick collectively and organising marches.

8 April: For over a month now 24,000 steel workers in Iskenderun and Karabuk steel and iron works are continuing with their go-slows because their planned strike was not allowed to go ahead.

9 April: 4,000 workers at Golcuk Shipyard, members of Harb-Is (union of civilian workers in the military establishments) blocked the traffic on the main highway for four hours.

10 April: 5,000 members of Agac-Is (wood workers) at 20 workplaces, 3,400 members of Petrol-Is at 3 oil refineries, 6,000 Harb-Is members at Golcuk Shipyards and other military establishments, and 10,500 agricultural workers, members of Tarim-Is started various actions.

11 April: 87,000 Tes-Is members in energy industry, 25,000 metal workers, 11,000 petrol-is members, 4,500 Harb-Is members, 10,000 workers at the Maritime Bank and thousands of workers in sugar and building industries staged various actions.

12 April: In more than 20 provinces all over the country hundreds of thousands of workers reported sick collectively, slowed-down work and went on marches. In Istanbul, 15,000 workers at the State Monopolies for Tobacco and Tea demonstrated; 5,000 workers at military shipyards downed tools and blocked the main Istanbul-Ankara highway to traffic.

13 April: Workers' actions are continuing. Police interfered with the 15,000-strong workers' demonstration in Istanbul. In the south-eastern province of Adana 15,000 workers are involved in various actions.

14 April: 87,000 energy workers, 11,000 petroleum workers and 24,000 metal workers are continuing their actions. In Istanbul, 25,000 municipal workers at the Electricity Works are also continuing their actions.

15 April: Istanbul faced long power cuts as a result of workers' action.

16 April: Food workers at various places joined in the actions.

19 April: 35,000 railway workers reported sick collectively.

20 April: Workers stopped work for one hour in three sugar factories. 12,000 communication workers, members of Haber-Is union had their hairs shaved

collectively. In Golcuk, 7,000 women and men marched with their empty pots and pans. In Karabuk Iron and Steel plant 4,000 workers organised a rally.

21 April: 40,000 in 27 sugar factories stopped work for one hour. 20,000 communication workers joined the action.

22 April: At the weekend the actions took the form of overtime bans.

25 April: 120,000 road construction workers, members of Yol-Is, started their actions. In the food industry, 20,000 workers reported to work one hour late.

28 April: The number of workers involved in various types of action has reached 200,000! 20,000 members of Tek Gida-Is (food workers) working in state owned cigarettes and alcoholic drinks factories in Istanbul stopped work for one hour. 120,000 members of Yol-Is organised 1-2 hour "late start" throughout Turkey. Those in Bursa sat on the ground in the form of the word "aciz" (we are hungry).

1 May: Over five thousand union members gathered in Istanbul for May Day demonstration despite the ban and extremely heavy police presence.

2 May: There are signs of softening in the government side two days before the expiry date of the government's postponement of the steel strike.

Actions continued with increasing intensity until 16 May, when Turk-Is, the trade union confederation said that all out strike was inevitable.

...Then came the agreement

It was only after two months of "passive actions" of the workers that the government (represented by the Union of Public Employers) would substantially increase its original offer (from 110 percent to 141 percent per year on average) and the agreement was reached.

It is true to say that the increase will be sufficient only to compensate for the losses caused by the last two year's inflation, and it will not improve the real wages.

On the other hand, if the workers had not realised their power and come out with broadly based organised action, the agreement would have settled at about half of the above level.

The workers declared to everyone that they are there, refusing to give in to political and economic pressures.

TURKEY

news & views

Bulletin of the United Communist Party of Turkey

July 1989

Issue No.2

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"MUSSOLINI LAWS" IN THE PARLIAMENT

Could this be beginning of the end for Articles 141 & 142 ?

After years of discussion about the possibility of repealing the notorious Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code adopted from Mussolini's Italy in the 1930s, so removing the main obstacle before the formation of the communist party legally, a concrete step is now being taken.

Six members of the ruling ANAP (Motherland Party) group, all from Eastern Turkey submitted a draft bill to the Parliament amending the two articles in such a way to exclude "freedom of thought" from their scope by inserting the necessity of violence in order to make them applicable in a case. The bill also removes death sentence and bring reductions in the prison terms envisaged in not only 141 and 142 but also 163, which bans political activity aiming to establish a religious state as opposed to secular state.

Many democrats including Mr Nevzat Helvaci, President of Human Rights Association and Prof Inonu, leader of the SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) have understandably described the move

as inadequate for freedom of expression and said that there could not be room for such laws in a proper democracy. It is generally accepted, however, that if the bill becomes law even in its present form, thousands of people either sentenced or charged under these articles will see their sentences ended or charges dropped; more importantly, the biggest legal threat against intellectuals, journalists, politicians or anyone whose views could be regarded as undesirable by the rulers of the country will have been removed to a great extent.

PM Ozal prefers to be evasive about the issue. When questioned, he pretended to be unaware of what his own Party's members were doing. The movers of the bill believe that they will have enough support within ANAP and SHP needed to steer it through the Parliament.

On the other hand, ANAP's proposal for simplifying and amending parts of the Constitution has been met with scepticism by the opposition parties. They regard the move as a distraction from the main issue on the agenda, ie. early general elections. □

Kutlu and Sargin - still in prison, still on trial

"Trial of the Century!" This was the expression used by the prosecutor of the State Security Court to describe the trial of Dr. Nihat Sargin and Mr. Haydar Kutlu, the leaders of the UCPT, which started in Ankara on 8th June 1988. The two leaders had already been under arrest since their arrival in Turkey on 16th November 1987.

The latest hearing was held on 16th June 1989. The two leaders' appeal for release was refused and they continue to be held in prison.

Prof. Ozek, one of over 800 defence lawyers, made a twenty page-long submission demanding the release on bail of the two leaders. He thoroughly explained that the continued arrest had no legal grounds and that it had turned

into a de facto sentence.

But the State Security Court was not to be convinced. The demand was refused. Then continued "the reading of the evidence" which, at this last hearing, was the provisional programme of the Party.

The hearings are supposed to be open to the public, but ever since the first hearing the public has been kept well away from the court by intense security measures. At every hearing there have been scuffles between hundreds of people trying to observe the trial and the police preventing them. At every hearing there have been foreign delegations observing the trial and registering their protests.

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Turkey still on the agenda

Following the onslaught on the trade union movement of 12th September 1980 regime (arrest of trade unionists, suspension of trade unions and their activities), the complaints put forward by the three main international trade union centres (WFTU, ICFU and WCL) have merged at ILO level bringing a case against the Turkish Government for its violation of trade union rights.

The violations continued after the imposition of the 1982 Constitution and the enforcement of the new trade union legislation which contains provisions incompatible with internationally recognised norms. The case against Turkey has been continuing for several years.

Prime Minister Ozal's government adopted, at the ILO, a policy of trying to gain time for the implementation of the new trade union laws in Turkey by making manoeuvres and false promises and pretending to be cooperative. Last year, for example, some cosmetic changes in the law were made shortly before the annual ILO conference.

But the Trade Union Rights Committee of the ILO in its latest report insists on the necessity of radical changes in the Constitution and in the trade union laws in order to ensure particularly:

- the right to form a union without any pre-conditions and authorisation beforehand;
- the right to join the union of one's choice and the right for a union to affiliate to federations or international trade union organisations of its own free choice;
- the right for a union to conduct its internal administration and to elect its organs freely;
- the right to freely organise its actions and draw up its programme of action;

- the right to free collective bargaining and the right to strike.

In this year's Conference, the Committee of Experts for the Implementation of Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO has concluded that Turkey has failed to implement Convention 98 (on collective agreements) and Convention 111 (on discrimination in employment and profession). The Committee also highlighted numerous restrictions on the right to strike as well as non-recognition of the right to unionise for civil servants.

Mr. Houthuys, President of the Workers' Section, said "The Turkish Government has been indulged in making manoeuvres for many years. There is no improvement at all". Mr. Vischersen, the President of the Employers' group, said "The situation is not good for Turkey."

According to the Turkish Government and the Employers' Association, the ILO and the unions are exaggerating the situation in Turkey where "a Western type democracy with all its institutions is in operation".

Turk-Is, the Turkish Trade Union Confederation, do not share this view and it has displayed a more active role compared with previous years.

During the discussion of the implementation of the Convention 111, the Turkish Government's failure to bring a solution to the situation of some 5000 civil servants and academicians sacked by the Martial Law commanders for political reasons. The government representative's reply was far from convincing the members of the Committee. In the end, on a proposal of the Workers' members supported by the Employers' members, the Committee decided to include a special paragraph on Turkey in the final report. □

24,000 steel workers' strike into third month

Karabuk and Iskenderun are two of the three main iron and steel plants in Turkey. About 24000 workers between them, all members of Celik-Is have been on strike for two months over pay.

The strike in Karabuk is first ever in this plant's 50-year history. A worker there with 10 years' experience gets about \$50 net per month.

The prolonged strike is not only hitting workers themselves but is also dragging people in the service sector and small trades around these huge plants into poverty and despair.

On the other side, the strike is costing the State about \$1 million a day. The government prefers to be seen undisturbed. But signs of discontent are emerging. Recently, Miss Imren Aykut, Minister of Employment, bitterly criticised Mr Isin Celebi, Minister of State responsible for steel plants, for his efforts to settle the dispute which she regarded as an intervention in industrial relations.

The government allowed speculators to import steel from abroad without customs duty. There are claims that some circles close to the PM are among the profiteers. Fear is growing among some sections of the industry for possible closure of the plants.

Union leaders state that an additional \$50 million is sufficient to settle the dispute. Damage caused so far is much higher than this figure. □

Three-digit inflation rate feared

Publication of the wholesale and retail price indices for the first five months of 1989 by the Directorate of Statistics gave rise to concerns about a rapid increase in the inflation rate in the second half of the year.

The main source of concern is the observation that the wholesale prices index has increased faster than the retail prices index in four of the five months.

The experts reckon that this may result in

an explosion in the inflation rate in autumn.

According to Prof Ciller of the Bosphorus University, a slight increase in demand will lead to a big rise in the inflation rate in these circumstances. Prof Ergin of Istanbul University even predicts a 3-digit inflation rate towards the end of the year.

Government's policy of putting up the prices of the goods and services produced by State Economic Enterprises (KITs) plays an important part in the

soaring inflation. Recently, prices of sugar, electricity, spirits and cigarettes have been increased. Petrol prices and others are expected to follow suit in the weeks ahead.

Essential monthly kitchen expenses of a 4-member family have gone up by 71.4% from 221,285 TL in June 1988 to 348,879 TL in May 1989. A steel worker who has worked in Karabuk plant (now on strike) for 13 years earns only 105,000 per month net. (2000 TL is about \$1). □

5,000 years of imprisonment for journalists

The exact number of the cases opened against left-wing periodicals and newspapers and the exact amount of sentences meted out to the journalists and editors of these papers following the 12th September 1980 coup is not known. However, it is not too difficult to work out that the total number of years only journalists have been sentenced to in the last nine years has exceeded 5,000.

Presently, 28 journalists and publishers are still languishing in

Turkey's prisons, serving a total of 2,300 years (an average of approximately 82 years each)!

The three years immediately following the military take-over (1980-83) have seen the conviction of 218 journalists out of the 796 tried in 632 trials. In the parliamentary period that followed, 1426 cases were opened for 2127 journalists. Between 1985 and 1988, 538 journalists were convicted and received lengthy sentences. □

The Press in 1988

- * 40 periodicals, 60 books confiscated
- * 11 convictions
- * 5 bn Turkish lira in fines
- * Ban on the entry of 440 publications into the country
- * Decisions to burn 3 books
- * 3 arrest warrants
- * 15 detentions, 11 trials

The Press in the first 4 months of 1989

- * Decision to confiscate 8 periodicals
- * Confiscation of 3 books
- * 15 convictions
- * 25 m. Turkish lira in fines
- * Decisions to burn 2 books
- * One arrest, 5 detentions
- * Cases opened against 30 publishers
- * Ban on the sale of 25 films and video cassettes

Poet takes risk and returns from political exile

Mr Ataal Behramoglu, a prominent representative of Turkey's modern poetry returned home on 27th June 1989 ending his five and a half year long political exile in Paris.

He was met at the airport by many writers, poets, his friends, relatives and lawyers. He was detained overnight, fortunately at the Police Station at the airport rather than Political Police Hq in Gayrettepe, notorious for torturing. He was released the next day.

Mr Behramoglu was one of many intellectuals who were detained in February 1982, for being a member of the Turkish Peace Association. They were all charged under Article 141 with "turning the Association into a communist organisation". When he was released on bail in 1984 after two years under arrest he left Turkey as a political refugee.

He was later acquitted for this charge.

Mr Behramoglu was also prosecuted for being a member of the Communist Party of Turkey ; but this charge was dropped as he was already facing the same charge in the Peace trial.

He had a ratified one-year sentence, under Article 140 for "repudiating the name of the State". This was the excuse for the police for detaining him on his arrival. But his lawyers had already managed to get this sentence deemed served as he was unjustifiably kept under arrest for, not one, but two years during the Peace trial.

Undoubtedly, his return will encourage many political refugees considering to return home. □

From the press:

Early elections: the only way out

Hasan Cemal's editorial in Cumhuriyet, 13 June 1989

The results of the recent opinion polls show that the ruling Motherland Party (ANAP) is on a downhill slope.

We know that our PM Ozal does not give much credit to such opinion poll results. However, similar opinion polls had once correctly predicted ANAP's rise. Their only serious failure in recent times was their inability to predict the extent of ANAP's huge losses in Istanbul in the last local elections. By and large, we can safely claim that the opinion polls indicate general tendencies quite accurately.

The findings of various opinion polls conducted in the last four weeks are far from bringing joy to ANAP. KONDA and PIAR highlight the following common points in their findings recently published in the dailies Milliyet and Sabah :

* ANAP continues to lose votes. It has sunk below 21.8% it had got in the local elections in March. If elections were held today, ANAP would not get more than 15%.

* ANAP has lost its credibility. Only 11.3% of those questioned by PIAR believe that ANAP can win an election again. Only 3.5% of those questioned by KONDA believe that ANAP can bring down inflation rate. And only 10.7% of those questioned by PIAR would like to see Ozal as the next President.

* Another important common finding of the two polls relates to early elections. KONDA has found that 75.3% of the electorate want to have early general elections within this year. PIAR's finding was 68.9%, with 55% wanting the elections as early as this summer.

Respect for people's will and Turkey's political realities show that the general elections should be held before the election of the President due in October. We don't want to believe that our Prime Minister Ozal can possibly overlook this fact. It is very difficult for a party whose political support has rapidly melted away and whose following has shrunk to this extent to continue to remain in power and to govern the country.

For the time being PM Ozal gives the impression that he is evading realities and dragging along a downhill slope. He keeps on claiming that his Party will remain in power until 1992 and the next President will be elected by the present Parliament.

This attitude of the Leader of the ruling party ANAP can only drag the country into a political crisis. He should stop insisting on evading the realities and listen to the voice of common sense without delay. □

Another mass grave uncovered - Authorities silent

For the second time this year, the weekly journal *2000'e Dogru* (Towards 2000) reported a mass grave in Turkey Kurdistan. The journal, in its 4th June 89 issue gives details of how the bodies of persons killed in armed clashes or under torture had been dumped together into pits dug with excavators near the mobile Gendarmery Regiment in Sirnak.

The appalling report is based on the revelations made by an ex-soldier who personally took part in the operation, several former detainees including Mr Kemal Birlik, now an ANAP Member of Parliament, and many members of local community.

The report claims that out of 82 PKK militants killed during clashes in five years prior to February 89, the bodies

of very few of them have been given to their families. For 11 bodies, even identities have not been established.

Mr Kemal Birlik MP, in his interview gives a graphic account of his detention and torture. Upon the shameful silence of his party's government over these revelations of mass graves he said there was not much he could do because he was having threats.

Some months ago following a similar report published in the same journal concerning mass graves in Siirt's "Butchers' River" a haphazard inquiry was conducted. A few bodies were found without even a thorough examination of the area and the issue was passed over with some conflicting statements made by local authorities. □

Kutlu and Sargin...

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Party Programme published and banned

After the reading of the Party programme in the court was completed, it was published by a private publisher and put on sale. Only the next day would the ban come. Even a short period on sale was sufficient for thousands of people to buy it.

It is, of course, an inexplicable contradiction on the part of the government, which on the one hand makes proposals to amend the Constitution and Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code which restrict the freedom of expression, and, on the other, expects political gain from continuing the arrest of the Communist leaders and the confiscation of their Party programme from bookshops.

Only a month ago, the Constitutional Court published the justification of its verdict refusing the demand for the closure of the Socialist Party, where it clearly said: "A party can legally be formed on a class basis so long as it adheres to the principle of coming to and going from power with free elections." There is nothing in the programme of the UCPT which suggests otherwise.

So the confiscation of the Party Programme is in violation of both the above ruling of the Constitutional Court and the principle of open trial.

Anniversary meeting in London

On 8th June 1989, the first anniversary of the opening of the trial, an evening of solidarity was organised in London where the UCPT Deputy President, Mr. Mehmet Karaca, made the key-note speech.

An audience of some 800 warmly welcomed a message from the two imprisoned leaders in Ankara prison. They said in their message:

"It is not customary to commemorate the anniversary of the opening of a trial. But if it is the trial of democracy, it is meaningful and appropriate to do so. What is unacceptable however on the eve of the third millennium is the fact that democracy can be a matter for courts and trials. We believe that this trial will help bring irreversible positive gains for democracy and there will never be a disgrace like this trial again for our country." □

STOP PRESS:

As we go to print, the latest hearing of the two leaders was held at Ankara State Security Court on 3 July 1989. The defence's demand for their release on bail was refused again and the hearing was adjourned, only after the morning session until 2 August. No reason given.

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might become impossible in a future balance of forces.

The proposals of the Central Committee of the UCPT, as listed below, take into consideration the feelings of the democratic public opinion. They are aimed to open the way for radical changes in the Constitution and to get the will of the people reflected in the Parliament with early general elections to be held under democratic conditions.

* The present Parliament should ensure democratic changes in the Constitution by adopting a provisional. Article entrusting the new Parliament to be formed to carry out substantial changes in the Constitution with a reasonable but a more easily attainable majority confined only to this exercise.

* The present Parliament has lost its representative character. Early elections should be held after introducing legal measures to secure democratic conditions for the elections. Above all, the constitutional ban on declaring a political amnesty should be lifted and the election law should be repealed in such a way to secure a democratic election.

* The political parties should make public their views on the Constitution in the course of the election campaign. Especially the Government should clarify its proposals. The UCPT has already declared its views concerning a democratic constitution in the document "Programme for Peace and Democratic Renewal" adopted at its founding congress in 1988.

* Every effort should be spent for the parties to reach a broad consensus on the Constitution before the elections.

* Most importantly, the people should be given the right to their own say about the Constitution. To this end, a major public debate should be launched. People should be able to take part in this debate freely in factories, workplaces, universities and schools, neighbourhoods and elsewhere. The state should finance the publicity of this debate.

The UCPT, together with other progressive and Marxist circles, will try its best to make maximum contribution to the organizing of this debate and to unite people around a democratic Constitution.

We say "yes" to going ahead now with constitutional amendments as long as they reflect the wishes of the people.

We say "yes" to an early election so long as democratic conditions for it are created. This is the UCPT's stance.

We believe that there is, before us, the opportunity to put an end to the era of making and amending constitutions by military coups.

Only can a Constitution written by the people resist bayonets. □

Turkey's Kurdish question- A burning issue

In the last couple of months there has been an upsurge of Kurdish refugees from Turkey claiming political asylum in Britain. Their number has reached thousands. They state that they are escaping ethnic and political repression in Turkey. The Turkish and the British governments argued that these refugees were economically motivated. On the other hand, in Turkey itself, there has been a marked rise in the number of clashes between the army units and some Kurdish movements in recent weeks.

Following is a brief summary of the the UCPT's position on Turkey's Kurdish question as explained by a CC Member.

This is one of the most important issues on Turkey's political agenda. The Turkish Government's approach to the question has been incredibly crude.

First of all, the very existence of the Kurdish people in Turkey is officially denied. Consequently, all just demands of the Kurdish people are seen as "separatism" and the Kurdish question is presented to public opinion as the work of "enemies provoking the people from outside".

This has been the official policy of the Turkish state since the proclamation of the Republic in the early 1920s. In recent years, especially following the military coup of 12th September 1980, this official policy has taken harsher and more brutal forms.

Tens of thousands of Kurds have been detained, tortured, raped - massacred and mass scale repression have become a part of the Kurdish people's lives.

The number of Kurds tortured to death in military prisons or killed in army raids on Kurdish villages is not known but it is no less than several hundreds. The prisons in Turkey Kurdistan are notorious for their inhuman conditions and "modern" torture methods.

There are about 10 million Kurds living in Turkey. They are most densely populated in the South Eastern parts of the country.

Recently a "super Governor" with extraordinary powers has been appointed to rule over these regions.

There is a special army corps and a special police task force too. The whole region is governed by special laws. These are all signs of preparations for a colonial type of administration for the region.

This situation is contrary not only to the aspirations of the Kurds but also of the Turks. Both Turkish and Kurdish peoples demand an immediate end to this outright violation of human rights.

This crude approach of the Turkish government is also extended to the

thousands of Kurdish refugees in Turkey who fled brutal attacks and atrocities in Iraq. These Iraqi Kurds are not recognised as refugees in the sense of the UN Convention 1951. They are still kept in temporary camps near to the Iraqi border. Due to poor conditions in these camps many Iraqi Kurds have lost their lives. The Turkish Government's unsympathetic attitude towards them leaves these people with the unfair choice between poverty, hunger, death or leaving Turkey. The question is: for where?

The UCPT's policy concerning the Kurdish question is based on respect for human rights and the Kurdish people's right to self-determination.

Taking the regional character of the Kurdish question into consideration, the UCPT regards the solution to this question as a requirement for peace and security in the whole region. It is essential to find a just and peaceful solution to this problem by developing a dialogue between all democratic forces in the area based on common interests.

To this end, the UCPT is of the view that a solution to the Kurdish question should be found within the borders of each of the four neighbouring countries with substantial Kurdish populations: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. It should take into consideration the specific conditions in each of them. This solution should also be based on the voluntary unity of the Kurdish people with other peoples living in that particular country. Such a solution is possible and it is in line with the interests of the peoples living in the region. This will be the materialisation of the Kurdish people's right to self-determination.

When we say "voluntary unity" of the Turkish and Kurdish people what we mean is a democratic unity based on equal representation of both peoples. On the way to achieve this, we concentrate our attention on day to day tasks and on day to day policies which will enable us to fulfill those tasks.

In this context the UCPT's policies have two important aspects. One of them is to fight the national oppression of and discrimination against the Kurdish people. The

achievement of this aim will involve opposing the rule of Turkey Kurdistan with extraordinary measures, exposing the atrocities on the Kurdish people, urging an enquiry into the anti-democratic and inhuman practices of the 12th September regime, ensuring the recognition of full refugee status for the Kurds fleeing from Iraq, opposing the ban on the Kurdish language and Kurdish culture, fighting for the achievement of favourable conditions for the return of refugees from Turkey in various Western European countries and recognising Kurdish people's right to participate actively and effectively in the political life of the country with their Kurdish identity.

The second important aspect of our policy is the immediate improvement of the living conditions of the Kurdish people.

There is a large percentage of unemployment in Turkey. The ratio is even higher in Turkey Kurdistan. In all respects this region is the least developed part of the country. Social services are at a deplorable level, or even non-existent.

These factors are the main source of an intense emigration from this region. A special development programme for the region is needed. The Turkish governments have never kept their promises to this region.

The aim of the UCPT's day to day policy is to create, with the support of the Turkish people, a "Kurdish civil rights movement" on the basis of human rights.

In conclusion, we, above all, demand that the government should abandon the traditional policy of denying the existence of the Kurdish people. Their existence should be recognised.

The Kurdish people should be able to participate in political life with their Kurdish identity. This is crucial in achieving a just, democratic and peaceful solution.

The only healthy way to solve problems is to discuss them in a democratic atmosphere for all parties concerned and to draw conclusions together. □

CC Statement made on 7th June 1989 on

Amending the Constitution and early general elections

The leadership of the ruling Motherland Party (ANAP) reiterated its call on the opposition parties in the Parliament to discuss its proposals to amend the Constitution. This time the proposal was coupled with the view that the amendments would be enacted after the elections (whenever they may be) and the call for talks was made in a formal way.

Needless to say, one of the fundamental obstacles to democracy is the 1982 Constitution and the interests of our country require radical changes in it. The conditions for Turkey getting rid of this Constitution are more favourable now more than ever before.

However, many in ANAP leadership, certainly Prime Minister Ozal himself, have given support to the regime formed following the 12 September 1980 coup, have taken active part in its running, have participated in the preparation of the 1982 Constitution, and called upon the people to vote for it in the referendum held in the shadow of bayonets. All democratic circles, TIP (The Workers' Party) and TKP (The Communist Party who later merged to form the United Communist Party of Turkey) rightly campaigned for voting "NO" to the Constitution. Under this Government which is now talking about amending the Constitution, Dr Sargin and Mr Kutlu, imprisoned leaders of the UCPT are being charged at Ankara State Security Court with, among other things, campaigning against the Constitution.

On the other hand, the ANAP leadership, under the pretext of making democratic Constitution, is also speling out some

On 6th June 1989, UCPT Deputy President, Mehmet Karaca and Deputy General Secretary, Osman Sakalsiz, issued the following press statement on

Recent developments in Bulgaria

It is only natural that the recent developments in Bulgaria have aroused a great deal of interest in Turkey. At a time when in Europe today the tendency to remove tensions between military blocs is increasing and no effort is spared to reach a consensus based on human rights, and when the peace preserving efforts of all socialist countries, including Bulgaria, are highly acclaimed by all peace loving people, we observe, with deep concern, the recent practices of the Bulgarian government which are not in line with the above mentioned processes.

As we have also brought to the attention of the Communist Party of Bulgaria before, the attitude of the Bulgarian government towards its citizens of Turkish ethnic origin is totally incompatible with human rights and with the ideals of socialism which we defend. This attitude of the Bulgarian government is harmful to the interests of the peoples of Turkey and Bulgaria.

It furthermore endangers the realisation of the intended reforms in accordance with perestroika, glasnost and democracy in Bulgaria as well as the reduction of tension in the Balkans and creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation. These developments also adversely affect the processes of democratisation in our country.

The UCPT wants to reiterate that there is no other alternative but to solve the problems through dialogue and on the basis of respect for human rights, and calls upon all forces with common sense to work towards this end.

As communists of Turkey we believe that our traditional friendship with our Bulgarian comrades provides us with the opportunity to contribute to establishing such a dialogue and we declare that we will do all in our power to prevent further tension between Turkey and Bulgaria.

intentions which could lead to consequences damaging the principle of separation of powers. Calling, on one hand, for a democratic Constitution and, on the other, removing judicial control over possible violations of the Constitution by governments are incompatible. ANAP's demand for a democratic Constitution and its desire for an unchecked and unchallenged rule are contradictory views contained in the proposals. The Constitution should be based on the idea of "State of Law".

In addition, it is possible to see in these proposals signs of a political ploy aimed at avoiding possible early elections. If the Government is contemplating to gain time with these proposals in order to boost its poor standing this will only show that it is not sincere about the constitutional amendments.

For these reasons, Ozal's proposals for constitutional amendments have been met with caution and suspicion by the parliamentary opposition and the progressive public opinion.

The UCPT, although it shares these feelings, is of the view that it would be wrong to push the proposal aside.

Some recent statements made by the DYP (True Path Party led by former PM Demirel) have led to concerns amongst the people for they represented a concession from some democratic views of this Party towards the 1982 Constitution. On the other hand, the SHP's (the Social Democratic Populist Party led by Prof. Inonu) stance that it will change the Constitution when it comes to power lacks a realistic basis.

ANAP's policy of constitutional amendment has raised doubts because its content is unclear. It may also mean indefinite postponement of the early general elections that have become inevitable.

On the other hand, the opposition parties' policy of having the elections as soon as possible bears the danger of overlooking the urgent issue of democratic changes in the Constitution that

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On 24th June 1989, the UCPT Central Committee issued the following open Letter to the CC of the Communist Party of China concerning

Recent events in China

Dear Comrades,

We have learnt from the press that many young people who have been found guilty in relation to the recent events in your country have been executed and that further executions are to be expected.

These young people may have carried out activities which are considered criminal offences according to the laws of your country, but we believe that they have been punished in a way not compatible with present-day conditions and with common sense.

The continuation of the executions may lead to deepening the wounds opened by recent events and create gaps between the Party and the people that will be hard to bridge as the time progresses.

Please, dear comrades, stop the executions of these young people; do not allow them to languish in prisons. We ask this of you in the name of humanity and socialism, as a Communist Party that has been fighting in its own country under extremely difficult conditions for many decades, as a Party many members of which have languished in military jails, been tortured and lost their lives for the great ideals of communism.

Political problems should be solved with political methods. As you yourselves have pointed out, it may as well have been the case that anti-socialist, counter-revolutionary forces have infiltrated the youth who have staged peaceful, democratic demonstrations in Peking. We do not believe, however, that problems prominent enough to mobilise hundreds of thousands of people can be solved by violent means.

We, communists of Turkey who have great respect for the historic gains which the Communist Party and the people of China have achieved, would like to express our support for the development of the process of reform and democratisation in China and wish you every success in your work.