

## PEACENIK

### IN AMERICA

This summer was a perfect run-up for Reagan to his election campaign, for even before the 'super-dollar' hit the headlines, American patriotism was running high, fed by euphoria at the number of gold medals in the Olympics. Nobody bothered to mention that there was less competition without Eastern bloc athletes — indeed the US media and public positively revelled in the potential for Cold War remarks. Street vendors beside the Capitol were doing a roaring trade with t-shirts declaring 'Tell the Soviets go play with themselves'. But it was bumper stickers which really summed it up, reading: 'Keep the foreigners out of the Olympics'.

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Mondale's foreign policy is cracking like rotten wood under pressure from the Right. But it is hardly surprising . . . it was, after all, Mondale who first sold the US boycott of the Moscow games to American voters back in January 10 1980. The occasion was the tough primary campaign Jimmy Carter was fighting against Senator Edward Kennedy in Iowa. Carter needed a 'strong-man image after the fiasco of the US hostages in Iran. And the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided his ally Mondale with the perfect opportunity. Interestingly, Reagan started out by opposing the boycott, but later went the whole hog on it.

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In a land where individual freedom of choice for those who can afford it comes above the good of many, it was refreshing to see that on the new fast road into Washington, commuters are required to form carpools and barred from using the road with less than three people in a car. However, committed entrepreneurs with little regard for the environment have hoodwinked highway police by travelling with inflatable plastic dummies, in the passengers' seats. So, we are forced to ask, was the road solely for dummies? For it transpires that the multi-million dollar project was actually part of the government's civil defence plan, built as an escape route to whisk top officials out of the capital to Dulles Airport and beyond in the case of a nuclear war.

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The exact nature of the links between traditional male sexuality and war-impetus is still being debated, but it does seem to be costing the US government dearly. They had to crack down when it was discovered that at the Washington Defence Intelligence Agency \$25,000 a month was being spent on a New York Dial-a-Pom number.

The Peacenic column will be a regular feature in END JOURNAL.

# Turkey: activists' agony prolonged

In a surprise move at the end of August, the Military Court of Appeals in Ankara ordered the retrial of the Turkish Peace Association (TPA) executive on procedural grounds, despite demands for acquittal. The controversial trial of the TPA is set to start another legal odyssey.

Presided over by Lieutenant-General Hakki Erkan, the panel of five senior officers comprising the Appeals Court ruled that there were procedural irregularities in the trial, that certain items of evidence presented by the sentencing military tribunal were unacceptable, and that last November's convictions were based on 'insufficient investigation'.

Observers in Turkey interpreted the decision as an attempt to defer a final judgement against Turkey's peace prisoners which include some of the country's most respected public personalities and intellectuals.

In the face of strong criticisms from Turkey's allies in the West, a decision to acquit the TPA would have been regarded as a loss of face, it is argued, while upholding the savage sentences of 5 to 8 years hard labour could seriously jeopardise the Ozal government's fence mending with the EEC.

One interesting aspect of the appeals is that for the first time the muzzled Turkish press managed to give fairly detailed reports of the hearing — including an account of the pre-Appeals Court hearing vigil, held in front of the Edith Cavell Memorial near Trafalgar Square by Bruce Kent and other prominent supporters of the peace movement, to draw attention to the plight of 68-year old TPA President and cancer patient Mahmut Dikerdem.

Similarly, former Turkish ambassador Dikerdem's nomination for this year's Nobel Peace Prize has received considerable press attention in Turkey, as well as an 11,000 strong petition from Austria backing the nomination and calling for his release.

Also in August, an Ankara martial law court began trying 56 Turkish academics and intellectuals accused of breaking the law by instigating a petition signed initially by 1,256 leading intellectuals. Submitted to President Evren (General Evren and chief of martial

law administrator until donning civilian clothes) this deferentially worded document called for an end to torture and the reinstatement of the 'full range of civil liberties and freedoms which exist in the Western alliance of which we are an integral part'.

Careful to remain within the limits of the restricted constitutional rights recognised under the present regime, the signatories nonetheless touched a very raw nerve when they challenged current official Turkish ideology which asserts that 'pluralism' resulted in the 'terror' of the late 1970s which brought Turkey to the brink of civil war. 'A fundamental feature of statehood' the intellectuals argue, 'is respect for the law in the struggle against terror. The past experience of terror can never justify the state resorting to the same methods as the perpetrators of terror.'

Some 3,200 Western intellectuals have supported this petition including three former prime ministers, the leaders of the British Labour and Liberal Parties, E P Thompson, Noam Chomsky, Arnold Wesker, Adrian Mitchell, Tom Bottomore, Bernard Crick, Peter Worsley and Julie Christie.

Both the stalling on the TPA trial and the plight of the 56 petitioners has renewed doubts over Nato and US assurances of a 'normalisation' in Turkey. Two things have not changed since the day of the coup four years ago in September 1980 — the regime's use of martial law to stifle open debate and its cynicism over the exercise. 'That only 56 people have been charged', Ozal has declared 'is a concrete step in the transition to democracy.'

Meanwhile, Turkey tops the league of military sales from the United States with purchases of US\$3,059 million (Saudi Arabia and Egypt are second and third), Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine's frequent trips to Turkey this year seem to have landed lucrative contracts for military supplies and Rapier missiles, while the OECD reports 20% unemployment, foreign debts of around \$18,000 million and an inflation rate of 45% which has decimated the economy and living standards.

Jean Furtado

