

ABRIDGED TEXT OF UCPT VICE PRESIDENT MEHMET KARACA'S SPEECH DELIVERED IN LONDON
ON 8 JUNE 1989 ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE UCPT LEADER'S TRIAL
IN ANKARA -

Dear Friends,

First of all, I would like to express sincere thanks to the organisers of this meeting, to all our friends who have contributed to make this a successful event, to all of you who have come to attend the meeting and to our British supporters. I would also like to extend warmest greetings to all of you, both personally and on behalf of my Party.

Dear Friends, we are living through days of re-evaluation and re-construction . all over the world. In our own country, however, we are still living the problems of getting out of the dark period following the 12 September 1980 coup.

In recent days this has taken the form of an upsurge of refugees from Turkey to Britain for political and economic reasons. This is used as a pretext to introduce visas for the citizens of the Republic of Turkey. We believe that this is a shame for not only the Turkish Government who forces its own citizens out of their own country as a result of their economic and political repression, but also for the governments of those countries who turn a blind eye towards violations of human rights and democracy in Turkey and then treat the citizens of our country in a degrading and humiliating way.

Dear Friends, recent international developments make it imperative for all countries to carefully reassess their situations and their relations with other countries. Whereas until yesterday countries with more modern weapons commanded more respect in the international arena, today it is countries who contribute most to peaceful solutions of conflicts and to disarmament on a global scale who enjoy greatest respect. In this respect, the initiatives of Gorbachov and other Warsaw Pact countries are received with enthusiasm by all peaceloving people all over the world. In many Western countries, these initiatives have forced the governments to review their positions and policies - as quite concretely manifested in the recent NATO summit in Brussels. Clearly, such developments have not been achieved overnight and efforts must be continued if we want to secure lasting and irreversible peace on our planet.

On the other hand, it is sad that the collective resistance actions of the students in China for greater democracy are being suppressed violently by force. The people of China should not have been subjected to this drama. This type of inhuman practice can never be justified when conflicts can be resolved by peaceful means.

Another source of concern to us is the recent developments in Bulgaria concerning the Turkish minorities living there. We believe that they not only adversely affect the relations between two neighbouring countries, but also diminish the effects of the invaluable contributions by the socialist countries to the process of peace, detente and progress in the recent decades.

Dear Friends,

The military dictatorship which seized power in Turkey as a result of the coup on 12 September 1980 has not been defeated by a radical revolutionary counter-attack. And demands to get out of this dark period through democratic reforms have not yet achieved any considerable success. The regime is constantly contradicting itself and is far from securing genuine democracy for the people of our country. Regrettably, the opposition parties are not strong and/or determined enough to lead the country out of this crisis.

As for our Party, what do we want to achieve? The United Communist Party of Turkey ultimately wants to achieve socialism in Turkey.

But today, what do we say today? Today we want to achieve genuine and irreversible democracy in our country. We believe that this can only be achieved by active participation of large sections of the society in the struggle for democracy. We do not see democracy as an instrument to be used on the way from capitalism to socialism. We want to make democracy our aim rather than our tool.

KUTLU and SARGIN's initiative to achieve legality of the communist movement is clearly an instrument in the struggle for democracy. We believe that their trial, completing its first year today, has contributed and is still contributing to the democracy struggle of our people. It has appropriately been called "Trial for democracy" by wide sections of the society.

In the history of our Republic, the parties of the working class and working people have not been permitted to work legally. The communist party has always been banned. It certainly was not the wish or the intention of the communists to remain illegal. No party striving to organise and lead the masses could possibly wish to work underground. It was imposed on us communists against our wishes.

However, given the changing conditions in the world, this situation banning the whole communist movement could no longer continue. Communists of our country had every right - and duty - to contribute to the development of our society. And they wanted to do that openly and legally. This was why our comrades SARGIN and KUTLU took all the risks and returned to Turkey 18 months ago in order to contribute to the struggle for the legality of the communist movement which, in its own right, is an important aspect of the democracy struggle, not only for communists, but for all other forces of democracy.

The events following our comrades' return are known to you all. And today, their trial has completed its first year. It has been a trial for democracy from our point of view, and for the ruling circles, it has been a trial of shame!

The trial, based on a primitive indictment, has provided a platform for the people to see and hear communists as they really are rather than as been presented to them by the ruling circles as "secretive", "subversive" and "separatist" elements. For decades the courts tried to establish the defendants' link with communism and communist organisations. In this trial, however, the State Security Court in Ankara has before them the two leaders openly stating their identities as the leaders of the communist party. What, then, is the court trying to establish and why is it taking them such a long time?

The lifting of the ban on the communist movement will be major contribution to the freedom of expression and association in Turkey and to our peoples' struggle for democracy. The struggle for democracy is struggle for freedom and for bread. The struggle for democracy is struggle to live in human dignity both in our own country and abroad.

With all the talks about atmospheric changes and greenhouse effect etc it is impossible to predict what kind of a summer we are going to have this year. But we can say with confidence that politically it is going to be a hot summer for us !

The Presidential elections are scheduled for the autumn. The outcome of the recent local elections when the government party ANAP (Motherland Party) came third behind the opposition parties is already an indication that the Presidential elections will be not very easy for the ruling circles. Clearly the contradictions regarding the rulers of 12 September 1980 coup are deepening.

Our Party's views in relation to early elections and discussions concerning the Constitution can be briefly summarized as follows:

- A democratic change in the present Constitution should be guaranteed by this Parliament. A temporary clause should be added to the Constitution mandating the Parliament to be elected to make the necessary democratic changes in the Constitution.
- The Parliament today does not represent the majority of the people. This is why the general elections should be brought forward and the present Election Law should be changed to enable democratic elections.
- The Article in the Constitution preventing political amnesty should be abolished,
- No effort should be spared to reach the widest possible consensus between all political forces regarding the changes in the Constitution before the early elections.
- The discussions about the changes in the Constitution should be open to public and all citizens should be encouraged to openly and freely participate in these discussions.

One of the most important issues in our country is the Kurdish national question. The Kurdish people have been subjected to varied oppression for many decades. Our Party will do all in its power to contribute to a just, democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. First of all, the existence of the Kurdish people should be recognized and all oppression on these people should be ended immediately. The ban on their language and their culture should be lifted at once. Our Party will support all Kurdish national movements striving to achieve a just, democratic and peaceful solution to this question.

While the UCPT is waging a struggle for the legality of the communist movement, it is prepared to exercise this right under the roof of one party with the widest possible Marxist circles. Our Party is ready to discuss the programme and concept of such a broad based Marxist party with all Marxist forces now. The merger between the Communist Party and the Workers' Party of Turkey into UCPT is only a beginning regarding the unity of the Marxist movement. The communists of our country are now faced with the historic task of achieving this unity. We as the UCPT are aware of this historic responsibility and are prepared to do our share towards it.

Thank you.