



# ilerici kadınlar derneği

progressive  
women's  
organisation -turkey

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## NEWSLETTER

January 1984 No.1

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### ON ENTERING 1984

It has been one year since the PWO Office Abroad has been established. Our newsletter also completed its first year. During this period we have to give information to our readers from Turkey, the progressive women's movement and the harsh conditions of the women of our country, from women political prisoners and from the activities for solidarity with them.

When we review our issues of the last year, we can see clearly that, in spite of the claims by the junta, the conditions got even more difficult and that today in Turkey there can be no mention of human rights and freedoms. During the past year, the fascist junta became more closely tied to the aggressive and adventurist policies of USA imperialism. "Adventure" manoeuvres, openly threatening our neighbours, were held on Turkey's lands. Army troops entered into Iraq, in search of Kurdish patriots. A new agreement granted the USA the right to use the Incirlik base in the south for attacks to Lebanon. Military expenditures rose, in return for a few F-16 planes, USA monopolies were permitted to plunder our agriculture and industry even further.

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- . Realizing that it cannot any longer continue with an open military dictatorship, the fascist junta held sham election. They permitted the foundation of the parties they deemed as appropriate and banned the others. Party founders and parliamentary candidates were arbitrarily vetoed. Among the three parties permitted to contend the elections, the party of Özal, an accomplice of the junta and the trusted man of IMF, won the majority.
- . The economy moved nearer to the brink of disaster. Unemployment and poverty increased.
- . Repressions increased on a national scale. Many patriots lost their lives under the continued tortures and heavy prison conditions. Peace Committee leaders were convicted. New trials opened against the PWO with sentences up to 30 years demanded for the defendants.

On the other hand, in 1983 we witnessed the continuance of the struggle for democracy in our country despite these unfavourable conditions:

- . There were successive resistances in the military prisons and detention centres. No repression or torture could force the prisoners to submission. Actions by families of prisoners to support their relatives rose.
- . A massive campaign was conducted against the sham elections of the junta. Despite all oppression and threats, about 1.5 million citizens either refused to vote or cast non-valid votes. Evren's threats could not ensure a majority for the Nationalist Democracy Party.

Many other such examples can be quoted from workplaces, schools, working class districts, but we can note in brief that 1983 brought us also the perspective of new hope in the future. Our faith that the new year will bring us new victories in our struggle for peace and democracy, for overthrowing the fascist junta in Turkey became stronger.

Let the new year bring all of us peaceful and bright days.

PWO Office Abroad



## GREETING CARDS TO WOMEN PRISONERS

The Solidarity Committee for Women's Rights in Turkey which has been established in Britain started a campaign to send season's greetings cards to women political prisoners at the Ankara, Istanbul, Diyarbakir and Antakya military prisons. Jean Tate from the National Assembly of Women and the SCWRT who also visited Greenham Common writes the following:

"Sunday 11th December, women were gathering from all over Britain and some from Europe and America too to demonstrate on the anniversary of the decision to site Cruise missiles at Greenham Common. Hundreds of coaches jammed the roads all round the base and tens of thousands of women poured out and surrounded it in the freezing cold weather. Many of them were reminded of the thousands of women in Turkey, unable to make any protest against the mindless militarisation going on in their country too, now that they have been imprisoned for belonging to peace and women's organisations. As part of the campaign of the Solidarity Committee for Women's Rights in Turkey, they sent off greetings cards to Berin Uyar and Reha İsvan, carrying with them the heartfelt message of solidarity and love of women united in the same cause of peace and human rights.

The SCWRT had compiled a list of ten women in Turkish prisons together with brief biographical details and sent these to women's organisations, trades unions, peace organisations and other democratic and progressive organisations, asking them to send off season's greetings cards to those women in the prisons in Turkey. The response was tremendous, although the campaign was late in getting off the ground, and hundreds of cards were sent in the hope that some at least might reach their destination and bring cheer and comfort; or, if they did not, that the authorities of the Turkish regime would know that many women here in Britain know of the barbaric behaviour that is being meted out to the people in that country and are willing to take action, however small, against it."

AN INTERVIEW (A letter from a reader)

"Recently a mother and her daughter arrived to the country where I live. The small girl is 5 years old, her mother 25. Both of them are extremely pretty, full of life. The small girl's father, the young woman's husband is a political refugee. Now they also became political refugees.

The young woman herself also worked in the progressive woman's movement in Turkey for many years. After the coup on September 12th, 1980, she lived through difficult times. She told us about those days, calmly but her eyes filled with fury:

'My husband had to leave the house immediately in the days following the coup. He just told me in a hurry to change our house and if anybody asked to say that I didn't know anything and then left. I changed to a different house. I, my daughter and my elder sister, we started to live together. I was still going to work. One night, the police and soldiers raided our house. On pretext of searching the house, they turned it into a wreck, destroyed all the furniture. I said that I did not know anything. They started to beat me. My small daughter was desperately trying to come to my side. Then they began to harass her. They told me that they would beat her if I did not speak. She was trying to reach me, but every time she was prevented and cuffed. This went on like this until the next morning. I heard later that my mother's house was also raided the same day.

From that they on, they started to tail me. On the streets, at work, everywhere. My boss started to say everyday: 'I will fire you, then you will be left desolate, tell them where your husband is so that this matter can be finished'.

Police raided our house many times. They beat my mother, father, sister, daughter in front of my eyes. They could not obtain what they wanted. Then one day they took me to the 1st Branch (the political police). They shut me in a dark room filled with sewage water. I spent the night there. The tailing



continued in the following days. Again one day, after I returned from work, the police came and told me to get myself and my daughter ready. My mother asked where they were taking us. They replied: "To give some sense to your daughter". We got on a police car. My daughter cried all the time because she was hungry. One of the policeman told me that if I didn't keep her quiet, they would kill her. I was sure that they could do it. This time they were trying to interrogate me in the policecar. My daughter had fallen asleep, exhausted. But they were unsuccessful again. A few days later I was fired from my work. We were threatened with hunger. I worked at whatever job I could find. But I was dead tired and none of the jobs lasted long. The police came after me to talk with the boss and have me fired. These are roughly my experiences, which are not really so important. I and my daughter, we have already forgotten the pain of what has happened. What we could not and cannot forget is to fight to prevent other people from living through all these. Children should be together with their mothers and fathers. The prisons of the junta must be emptied. This inhuman junta must be overthrown. And this can only be possible through our struggle'.

Her small girl was sitting silently in an armchair, her eyes shining brightly, listening to her mother. She was a very pretty little thing which reminded one of the warmth of a May day, the flowers on an almond tree, the soft wind on the Bosphorus, of a bright, sunny future. I thought that she also had been tortured and she also had resisted."

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF OTHER LITTLE GIRLS AND BOYS, THOUSANDS OF YOUNG WOMEN, THOUSANDS OF AGING MOTHERS, TENTHOUSANDS OF RELATIVES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO HAVE TO FIGHT HUNGER AND POVERTY, WHILE SUFFERING COUNTLESS ANXIETIES FOR THEIR DEAR ONES. IN THE NEW YEAR, LET US INCREASE OUR SOLIDARITY WITH THEM, PROVE THEY ARE NOT ALONE.

## ONGER'S VISIT IN FEDERAL GERMANY

IKD President Beria Onger visited Federal Germany between December 29th-January 1st and participated at a series of meetings in Recklinghausen and Gelsenkirchen.

The first of the meetings organized by Turkish migrant women workers was held in Recklinghausen on January 29th, where a discussion took place about the urgent problems of migrant women.

B. Onger spoke on January 30th at a rally organized by the women's section of the Recklinghausen Turkish Workers' Union. After speaking about the situation in Turkey and the experiences of last year, Onger said: "We are entering 1984 in extremely dangerous conditions but with greater self-confidence, armed with new faith in the power of the masses and our experiences." Onger then stressed the tasks of Turkish women in the struggle against the fascist junta and said: "We the women of Turkey, whether we live inside the country or abroad, face even more difficult duties. Our conditions are much more difficult. But we are strong enough to tackle with these. The experience of the women movement in Turkey ensures us this faith in our own strength."

A meeting was organised in Gelsenkirchen on new years' eve, with the participation of migrant workers in the region. At her speech at this meeting, Onger particularly stressed the importance of the struggle for peace. She stated that the coup of September 12th could not damp the determination of our women to fight for peace and better living conditions.

On the first day of the new year, the active members of the Gelsenkirchen Turkish Women's Union gathered to discuss and exchange ideas in the organisation of migrant women and B. Onger gave information about the PWO office abroad.

During her visit, the Turkish migrant women also collected and handed to B. Onger financial aid for women political prisoners in Turkey.



## 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLYTECHNIC RESISTANCE

A significant anniversary was celebrated in Greece this November: the 10th year of the resistance at the Polytechnical School. The PWO was also represented at the activities organized by all political and democratic organisations in the country on occasion of the memory of the courageous actions of the students and the brutal massacre under the fascist colonels' junta in Greece.

A member of PWO Central Committee went to Greece on the invitation of the Progressive Mothers' Organisation. She participated in many activities during the week she stayed there. At the commemorative meetings organised in various municipalities and workplaces, the importance of the struggle by the Polytechnical students against the junta was stressed. Representatives of women from Cyprus, Chile, El Salvador and Turkey participating at the meetings voiced the fight waged by their peoples. They underlined the significance of the participation of women in these struggles.

The week of activities terminated with the march on 17th November, where almost one million people took part. Anti-imperialist, peace slogans resounded during the march, which ended in front of the American embassy. The slogans of the Progressive Mothers' Union bore the message that they did not want to lose their children in a war and were determined to fight to prevent this. The support these slogans received from the demonstrators and the onlookers proved that they expressed the feelings of the people of Greece.

There were also many slogans during the demonstration about the fraternity of the peoples of Greece and Turkey, denouncing the fascist junta in Turkey and asking for a Mediterranean as a sea of peace.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

These days many press organs start to publish figures from the past year. Even a few selections from these figures show that it is almost a miracle how working people in Turkey can continue to live:

- . The food expenses of a family of four increased by 60% last year. This amounted to 40 thousand Turkish liras at the end of the year in comparison to 28 thousand at the beginning of 1983.
- . In large cities transport prices increased enormously. Today a worker with a minimum wage has to spend at least 25% of it for transportation, if he takes only a single bus to and back from work.
- . While the unemployed increase daily by the hundreds, machines are also left unemployed. Capacity use in industry remained last year at 60%. This percentage dropped to as low as 40% in some industries. The main reason for this situation is quoted as insufficiency in demand.
- . In 1983 a record number of 196 new laws were enacted. 25 of them concern labour and social security, 18 education and culture, 18 the execution of death penalties, and 11 economic matters. Although involving different very important issues, the common point of all the new laws was the effort to institutionalize the fascist regime and restrict all the basic rights of working people.
- . In 1983, growth rates in national income and export fell, foreign export deficit grew, inflation realized at a ratio twice that of the prognosed one, exchange rate of the US dollar rose from 186 to 300 Turkish liras, the drop in the real incomes of the working people was marked even by employers' organizations. The only figures that showed a positive tendency were the profits of monopoly companies.