



# İlerici kadınlar derneği

progressive  
women's  
organisation -turkey

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## NEWSLETTER

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### THE MANIFESTO OF TURKISH INTELLECTUALS

Last May the Turkish intellectuals delivered a manifesto to president Evren and other authorities stating their observations about the present situation in the country and their demands for a return to democracy.

Prepared at first by 1256 intellectuals, the declaration soon received the support of over 1400. Among the signatees are internationally famous writers, artists, former ministers and parliamentarians, scientists, jurists, journalists and retired soldiers. They demand an end to torture and executions, a general amnesty, respect of universal principles of law, termination of martial law and state of emergency, freedom to press and right to organise through necessary changes in the constitution and the democratic working of the higher educations institutions and the radio and television.

The initiative of the intellectuals received broad support both inside the country and abroad. Leaders of various political parties also expressed their support.

Although prime minister Özal at first said that this was a "proof to the existence of democracy" in Turkey, investigations were immediately started about the supporters. Now the most well-known Turkish film and theatre actors

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Office Abroad: Elmegade 10, 4th - DK-2220 Copenhagen N - Denmark

0145 336 - 1 28 37 52



and actresses, writers, poets and other intellectuals are being taken in groups to martial law commandments and interrogated. However this move has not led to intimidation, as the junta expected, but on the contrary even larger number started to express publicly their support to the manifesto.

A short while after the intellectuals' initiative, a meeting organised by Türk-İş (Confederation of Trade Unions) served to reveal the feelings of the working class against this repressive regime. Over 10 thousand workers at the rally voiced their resolution to struggle with slogans like, "Strike is our right and we shall get it", "End to collaborating union leaderships", and "End to exploitation". The efforts of Türk-İş leaders to silence the workers remained futile, while the police and the soldiers did not dare to interfere.

Evren and Özal continue their efforts to stabilise fascism in the country. Well-known fascists are appointed to important positions in the state apparatus, universities, and the radio and TV. The fascist trade union confederation, closed after the coup, has been re-opened. Newly elected mayors from Özal's party are busy to change the names of streets and squares named after democratic personalities or even landmarks in the history of the Republic. Cultural works are destroyed.

The events of the last weeks prove that there is widespread and strong opposition to fascism. If all these reactions can be united in a single current, real democratic transformations can obviously be ensured. Today the most important task is to ensure this unity, to support all mass actions and to organise solidarity around them.

#### PWO'S 9TH ANNIVERSARY

June 3rd was the 9th foundation anniversary of the PWO. It was celebrated both inside the country and abroad.

The trial of the PWO and its members continues at the military courts of the junta. Many PWO members were arrested and tortured during the preparatory stages of this trial. The searches and arrests still continue.

In spite of all these repressions, however, thousands of women, trained in the ranks of the PWO have kept on fighting the fascist regime -with any means in their capacity. Those forced to go into exile have taken their stand in the front of the solidarity movement.

For the progressive women of Turkey, it is not only a matter of struggling against their immediate and harsh problems. In the foremost is the fight for peace and disarmament, as well as keeping up the solidarity with women under conditions of war and oppression.

PWO activists abroad have established the PWO Office Abroad, which works in accordance with PWO's basic principles, which are also strictly defended by members now living in various west European countries. Their cooperation and work with the migrant women workers in these countries have contributed towards involving more and more women around the activities for their concrete problems and for peace, as well as for solidarity with their sisters in Turkey. They also work to develop closer relations and cooperation between the Turkish migrant women and our sister democratic women's organisations of these countries. Through the PWO Office Abroad, the progressive women of Turkey have also been represented in many international forums, voiced their situation and struggle and learned from the struggle and experience of the international democratic women's movement and our sister organisations.

It has not been easy to continue the fight for the progressive women in their workplaces, neighborhoods after the junta and many had to do it in prisons. They have also been particularly active in solidarity work with political prisoners and their families. They have applied what they learned in the PWO to the new conditions. In our bulletin we have tried to publish some parts from letters we receive telling about these activities - maybe small, but extremely difficult to realise and valuable.

We can now say, on our 9th anniversary, that the PWO has played an important role in uniting the broadest masses of



women, giving them consciousness about their role and tasks, and joining the struggle for women's rights with the struggle for peace and democracy. We still face these tasks, which have grown much more difficult and significant. Members of PWO go on teaching what they know to other women and at the same time gaining from their new experiences. Now, we should become even more active in the fight for peace. We shall step up the efforts to create a better future for ourselves and for our children. We shall strengthen our ties with women all over the world fighting for peace.

Long live the PWO!

Long live the women of the world fighting for peace, independence and democracy!

#### FROM THE BILL OF INDICTMENT AGAINST THE PWO

The PWO trial, started with the military prosecutor's bill of indictment dated April 22, 1983, continues. As known, the prosecutor demands sentences of 30 years for the defendants and the organisation to be closed legally.

To prove his accusations, that the PWO was an illegal organisation and worked to undermine the state, the martial law prosecutor quotes "evidence" from our activities and publications running up to 200 pages. He is in a difficult position to support his charges however, so he says in the bill:

"... The law maker has deemed it a danger against the existence of the state that such destructive-natured unions are established and become active, and instead of punishing the culprit after the crime is committed and the damage occurs, has preferred to impede the inception of the damage and thus prevent the threat. This is a crime of threat and in such crimes the action of the culprit directed towards the action is considered sufficient for its punishment".

So he openly says that no offence has been actually committed. There is only the possibility that it might be committed. And who determines the existence of this possibility? The prosecutor of the junta, who suspended the cons-

titution of the existing regime, dismissed the parliament and seized power by means of force!

#### What were PWO's offences?

Let us give some examples from the bill of indictment as to what PWO's "crimes" were:

- It is an offence to print the following quotation from an appeal by the WIDF published in 1975: "Women of all continents: peace, equality, development - these are the sacred tasks awaiting all of us. We are strong enough to achieve these. Women, know your own strength. Your voice will be a powerful weapon. Raise your voice..."
- It is also a crime to call women to organise in the PWO. The following lines were taken from a PWO publication and underlined by the prosecutor as evidence: "We, progressive women, should unite in the PWO and lend our support to this organised struggle. We should also vote for those parties who will solve these problems."
- "At a rally organised by the PWO, a member sang a song telling about the distress of a mother" - another evidence of destructive activities!
- All international relations of PWO are considered crimes. For example, the large part of the speech made by PWO representative at a peace meeting in Athens in 1978, in which these lines were underlined to stress how offensive they are: "... Women are aware that funds reaching billions that are earmarked for the purchase of weapons can be spent instead for their vital needs. They ask the Turkish government, a signatory to the Helsinki Final Act, why it does not make any reductions in the defence expenditures. The PWO has made use of press releases and its publications to put forward this demand. It waged many actions such as signature collections".
- To publish joint declarations with other organisations where slogans like "out of NATO" or "all nuclear weapons should be destroyed" are raised is also a crime.



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- The solidarity campaign PWO waged with the striking metal workers in 1977 is a crime. To cook for the strikers, to their children and families are "evidences" of this crime.

- Solidarity with women of Cyprus is an arch-crime. Any mention, however small, of PWO's demand that UN resolutions on Cyprus be carried out have been carefully selected by the prosecutor and included in his indictment.

These are only a few selections of PWO's "destructive" activities. However one thing the prosecutor neglects to say is that all these have been conducted legally, in full accordance with PWO's program and rules, duly inspected and approved by the authorities, and that not a single action has been taken during all those years against the PWO because of these activities or publications!

#### VASIF ÖNGÖREN IS NO LONGER WITH US

On May 14th we lost our friend, well-known writer and theatre director Vasif Öngören. Beria Onger sent the following message of condolence to his relatives and friends:

"We have been deeply grieved by the news of the death of our well loved friend Vasif Öngören. It was painful and unexpected. Vasif has been creative all his life, producing many imperishable works. He has been personally active in organising many cultural programs of the PWO. He wrote the most meaningful story for our children: "The story of All Stories". Many many more children will read and learn from it. We shall always remember him with love and respect."

#### SOLIDARITY

The Solidarity Committee for Women's Rights in Turkey, established in Britain, has continued its intense activities during the last months.

On 8th of March, Mürvet Senesen from the Committee spoke at the meeting organised by our sister organisation NAW and stressed the importance of a general political amnesty in Turkey. Also in March, the Committee held a fringe meeting

together with Iranian and Iraqi women at the Women's Trade Union Congress. Delegates to the WTUC as well as women from Greenham Common attended the meeting where questions concerning the Middle East and Turkey were taken up.

In April, the Committee prepared a report on women's situation in Turkey and handed it to Tom Cox, chairman of the Labour group at the Council of Europe. They also gave him verbal information at a meeting that took place on May 3rd. The Committee has also sent a letter on the reunification of families of political refugees to all British parliamentarians, the press and religious and women's organisations.

During April and May, Committee members participated as speakers at meetings held by NAW Sheffield branch, the WILPF, and the Southern London Greenham Support Group, giving information about the Turkish women's struggle for peace.

On June 1st, INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY, the following poem was banned from Turkish school books, as being dangerous.

"The love sown in your heart by the mother  
will blossom,  
like a field of poppies.

The hope sown in your heart by the father  
will embrace the universe.  
The frightening dark cloud will disperse.

The consciousness sown in your heart by the  
teacher

will reach its aim.

The world will belong to you, children.



## FACTS AND FIGURES

The ruling Özal government has been very consistent in one subject: price hikes. According to them, in order to "squash" inflation, these are necessary and "will continue in small percentages". However inflation continues to soar (it reached 30% in the first five months of this year), while it is actually the majority of the population who are being "squashed".

On March 31st, the daily "Cumhuriyet" published a table showing the food expenditures of a family of four after the recent hikes. The basic needs required 40,00 Turkish liras monthly. But only 10 days later, this sum had already gone up to 42,000 liras.

The same paper published interviews with working women in April about their home economies. All of them asked the reporter the same question: "How are we going to live?" A white-collar worker, Dudu Solmaz, whose family has a total monthly income of 32,500 liras is asked: "What do you think of the latest rises", and she immediately begins to cry. Then she asked the question again: "How can I feed my two grown-up children and my man with this money?"

The weekly "Nokta" writes about the remarks people made to Prime Minister Özal during his visit in Istanbul:

"You have destroyed us!"

"The whole country is wretched Sir" - a leather worker.

"Please, Mr. Prime Minister, the price of rice exceeds 250 liars per kilo. We are destroyed by these high costs." - a mother of four.

An old man with a long beard shaking his shopping bag filled with bread, "their price became 40 liras. We are finished now. Find a way out, we voted for you Mr. Prime Minister, you keep alive."

Do you think they will keep alive?