



ilerici kadınlar derneği

progressive
women's
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NEWSLETTER

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MORE PEACELOVERS UNDER PERSECUTION

A second lawsuit has been established against 48 more members of the Peace Committee of Turkey. The trial has started on November 19th at the 2nd Military Court in Istanbul. At this so-called "2nd Peace Committee Case", the defendants are tried with the demand of sentences between 5-15 years with the claim that they "tried to change the existing social and economic system in the country by working for peace".

Among the defendants are several well-known women: Özgül Erten (lawyer), Gülsen Tuncer (actress), Jülide Gülizar (journalist), Tezer Eraslan (engineer), Dora Kalkan (doctor of medicine), Nezahat Gündoğmuş (lawyer), and Ayfer Coşkun (lawyer). Dora Kalkan and Tezer Eraslan are also on trial at the case against the Progressive Women's Organisation, where sentences up to 30 years are demanded. Özgül Erten, apart from being a prominent lawyer, is also a researcher and writer on women's problems and has worked as a journalist. The other defendants include former members of the parliament, trade union leaders, jurists, writers, actors, painters and doctors.

The military prosecutor has announced that almost 150 other peace fighters are sought and will be

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brought to trial, either in this case or a yet third one.

In the meanwhile, the first peace trial is dragging on in the process of appeal. Notwithstanding the decision of the higher court, the military court insisted on its first verdict, dealing out sentences between 5-8 years to the defendants. Now another appeals court will discuss the case. The president of the Peace Committee, Mahmut Dikerdem, who is seriously ill and four other defendants have been temporarily released. Mrs. Reha İsvan and the other peace fighters still remain in prison however.

Solidarity from Israel

The Movement of Democratic Women in Israel has sent a letter to president Evren demanding freedom for Reha İsvan. The letter says:

"In the name of thousands of Jewish and Arab women in Israel, we demand the immediate release of Reha İsvan, the struggler for peace, a member of the Peace Committee of Turkey, who was tried and sentenced to 8 years imprisonment and later to be exiled for 2 years and 8 months. Her guilt as a human being was her will to live decently and oppose wars, being a woman that brings life to the world, these wars that bring shame to the future of humanity. We are fighters for peace. We learned a very bitter experience from wars and we hereby stress our continuous opposition to wars. We bring forth our disagreement for the inhuman sentence of Reha and demand her immediate release."

Need for more actions

We urge all our other friends also to step up their solidarity activities to save Reha İsvan from prison. As well known, Reha, who will be 60 years old next year, in addition to her work for peace has been an activist for the rights of women and children for many years. She has now been sitting in the Metris

military prison in Istanbul for a total period of over two years. Prisoners at Metris have repeatedly organised actions in order to improve the horrible conditions they are forced to live in.

Demands for Reha İsvan's release should be addressed to President Kenan Evren and/or Prime Minister Turgut Özal - Ankara - Turkey.

Letters of support can also be sent to her to the following address: Levent Cad. No.23 - İç Levent - Istanbul - Turkey.

Please let us know of any actions you take and write to us if you need more information.

NEW POLITICAL EXECUTIONS IN TURKEY

Two young people, İlyas Has and Hidir Aslan, have been executed by hanging in October. İlyas Has (29) and Hidir Aslan (26) had been politically active before the military coup of 1980 and were sentenced to death because of these activities.

50 people have been hanged in the last four years, 27 of them on political grounds. The executions had been stopped temporarily since last November, when the so-called elections took place, as a touch to give the regime a more "democratic" appearance. Some circles entertained hopes that the "civilian" government would stop them altogether. The new executions proved very painfully how groundless such a belief was.

Several days before the new hangings, junta chief Evren made a speech and revealed once more who really holds the ropes. He said, talking about political prisoners: "What should we do with these traitors, but hang them? Should we otherwise pay from the state coffers to feed them in prisons?" Of course not! The state coffers are for the junta chiefs and their accomplices to plunder and for their "big brothers", the imperialist monopolies, to rot.

The new "parliament" has also become an accessory to these murders by approving the death sentences.

There are more than 500 other political prisoners sentenced to death (48 of them just waiting for the approval of the parliament and president Evren) and thousands still on trial with the demand of capital punishment, among them trade union leaders.

It should be clear to all now that it is futile to pin any hopes on the present regime in Turkey and expect humane and merciful treatment from them. The only way of saving these thousands from death is to strengthen international solidarity.

STOP EXECUTIONS IN TURKEY !

RALLY IN GREECE

On September 22nd, 4 local organisations of the Greek Women's Federation cooperated to organise a solidarity rally with the peoples of Turkey and Cyprus. Over 1000 people participated at the event, among them mayors of these localities, representatives of local unions, cultural organisations and parties. Representatives of the Greek women, a member of the Progressive Women's Organisation and the mayor of Kamateru spoke at the meeting, stressing the importance of international solidarity and the close and friendly relations between the women of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. The program also included folk dances from the different countries.

TURKEY REFUSED PRESIDENCY OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The fascist regime in Turkey has applied to the Council of Europe for the chairman post during the next term of the Council. Having been saved from repulsion from the Council last May with the votes of reactionary forces and those who hoped the democratisation process could develop under this regime, they have now become so bold as to forward claims for the presidency. Even those who voted for Turkey to remain in the Council were astounded by this flagrant demand. It was "ill-timed", they said. The request was rejected with a large majority. The Prime Minister, Turgut Özal, said afterwards that the Council "does not carry any importance" for them anyway. Opposition parties, however, criticised Özal's remark, stating that good relations with the Council of Europe were significant for Turkey.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

An official committee has been formed in Turkey for preparations to the UN International Youth Year. The average age of the committee members is reported to be well over 50 and not a single youth organisation is represented - as they have all been closed after the coup and the establishment of new ones strictly forbidden with the laws and regulations.

The Turkish national committee does not favour the year's main themes of "peace, participation, development". The ministries and institutions taking part in the committee have instead plans to organise artistic and folklore competitions, festivals, exhibitions, musical programs, plus activities such as publishing 5 books on Islam and youth, an article competition on attitudes harmful to the morals of the Turkish youth, preparing sermons on Islam and youth to be read in mosques, and giving information to young prisoners about the dangers of using alcohol and narcotics.

PROBLEMS OF REINTEGRATION

Almost 300.000 Turkish migrants working in Federal Germany have returned to Turkey in the last few months. The return involves many complicated practical and bureaucratic problems, but more important are the questions faced in the home country. In addition to finding new jobs and housing, the returning family has to readapt themselves to Turkey. Particularly children and young people face serious difficulties in reintegration. A large number of them have been born, brought up and educated in Germany.

Many of these families want their children to enroll in private schools in Turkey, where the whole instruction is in foreign languages. However this possibility is limited. These schools are very expensive and there is a lot of competition for entrance. Therefore, the large majority of the returning children go to public schools. And here the problem of language arises. Having grown up abroad, they do not know their mother tongue sufficiently. Furthermore, there is a great difference between educational systems of European countries and Turkey. Consequently, children are left in a total confusion as to what to do.

They differ from their schoolmates in their language, attitudes, dress, choices... Some reintegration courses have been started for them. But these prove to be extremely insufficient. The administrators think that just by giving them some information about the history and geography of Turkey this question will be solved - paying no attention to their completely different upbringing, mentality and aspirations.

A big businessman, who owns several textile factories and expensive department stores, has made the most "concrete proposal" for them. He sees the only future for these young people as salesmen for his products - for miserable wages naturally.

Is this really the only perspective for thousands of returning children? No other seems available if both concerned countries do not immediately start serious programs for them.

WOMEN OF GÖKOVA RESIST

The Turkish authorities have decided to construct a thermic electric station in Gökova, a town in the Aegean region with immense natural beauties. Experts say that the station will completely destroy the nature in a very large area. The people of the region, all experts, artists, and many politicians oppose this plan, but primeminister Özal pays no heed to anyone.

Many villages will also be uprooted as a result and the people forced to migrate. Therefore the women of the villages have decided to take the matter in hand. They have placed guards around the village and whenever anyone involved in the project - researchers, inspectors, excavators - approach, all the women come out and prevent them from entering this area. By force, if necessary. They say: "We shall not give up our lands. We shall 'arrest' any cars that come here without our permission. We shall keep watch night and day, summer or winter. Let the men look after the children, we have done it for so many years..."

WOMEN'S PEACE ACTIONS IN AUSTRALIA

"Women for Survival", a national network of women in Australia who oppose violence are holding a camp in December at Cockburn Sound on the Indian Ocean coast. The camp is held to protest the Stirling Naval Base which is regularly used by the US 7th Fleet. The Australian women inform that their presence constitutes a constant and blatant violation of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace. They also protest Australia's collaboration with the USA's extensive nuclear military network which threatens the entire Indo-Pacific region. A women's peace train will take the women from the Pacific coast to the Indian Ocean, a distance of 4450 kilometres. Simultaneously in all states of the country there will be local actions protesting at the presence of over 30 US military bases in Australia. The action of our Australian sisters aims not only to protest the nuclear threat hanging over their country, but also to defend peace in this sensitive region in the world.

FACTS AND FIGURES

A new profession is developing in Turkey: entering job examinations.

According to the figures of the State Planning Department, unemployment has reached 19% in 1983. This is of course the official figure. Still it means that the number of unemployed is 3.5 millions.

As a consequence of this widespread unemployment, thousands of people are participating in job examinations, both in the private and public sectors. There are hundreds of applicants for each vacancy. Therefore such examinations are now held in sports halls or stadiums. For example, in October, 3000 people applied for the 222 vacancies at the Çankaya municipality.

Today to keep an eye on such examinations, complete the necessary application forms and then to take the tests is a vital "job". Those who have adopted the new profession say:

İsmail Güngör: "I have been unemployed for 3 years. This is my 15th examination."

Cengiz Duvancı: "I am a lycee graduate. I have been entering examinations for the last 7 years."

Renan Atalay: "I am married, and the mother of one. I started to enter examinations when I lost my job."

Among these thousands, many have university degrees. They are called "the unemployed with diplomas".

But all "examinationists" share the same view: although examinations are held, still it is those with contacts who get the jobs. Those with relatives in the concerned institutions have higher chances of "passing".

And the jobs sought through all these examinations and won only by means of "contacts higher up" are: street cleaner, night watch, clerk with minimum wages...