

LETTER FROM MIKIS THEODORAKIS

10 October 1988

Since I first wrote to you, the trial of KUTLU and SARGIN has opened in Ankara, on 8 June, at the "State Security Court". This is a special tribunal, composed of three judges - two civilian and one military. The Public Prosecutor is represented by one civilian and one military prosecutor.

I attended the opening of the trial, along with several dozen observers from Europe. There were also several eminent Turkish persons, including YACHAR KEMAL, ZULFU LIVANELI, MEHMET ALI AYBAR and others.

A large crowd had gathered in front of the court from the morning, and it was proving very difficult to gain admittance to the public gallery. The space available was limited, with scarcely enough room for the accused and their 150 lawyers (about 600 lawyers had volunteered to act for the defence). Several of the people who had gathered in front of the court were arrested and taken to police stations.

Further hearings were held on 17 June, 4 and 20 July, 1, 10, 17 and 24 August and 21 September. The next is planned for 14 October.

After the bill of indictment was read - with the procurator himself calling the case "the trial of the century" - KUTLU and SARGIN then read out their defence (I can send you these three texts in French, if you would be interested).

Many observers from both Eastern and Western Europe have attended all the hearings. Indeed, interest in the case goes far beyond the continent. However, it is important to note the initiatives taken in Turkey.

The petition launched by AZIZ NESIN, VEDAT TURKALI and DEMIRTAS CEYHUN has already collected tens of thousands of signatures. The trial has in fact become a national affair, challenging the democratisation of Turkey. I myself have felt this in my talks with Mr TURGAT OZAL, the prime minister, and the leaders of the Populist Social Democratic Party (INONU) and the Party of the Right Path (DEMIREL).

I believe that the most important thing is to work for the release of KUTLU and SARGIN, which was once again refused by the Court at the last hearing. The defence lawyers call this "political hostage-taking".

The number of signatories to our appeal is growing. But it must grow more and quickly. I would therefore ask you to do the following: sign the appeal yourself, but also have it signed by personalities you know in the country where you are and other countries too - or send me their addresses. And do more still, take initiatives in your own country.

In conclusion, I should just like to remind you that 10 December 1988 is the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Yours faithfully,

Mikis Theodorakis

