

FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY

The Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey was founded in 1978 by Turkish community and political organisations in Britain along with people and organisations in the British labour and progressive movements. The original aim of the CDDRT was to campaign against the growing restrictions on democratic rights in Turkey.

After the 12th September 1980 coup, which brought a junta of generals to power and an even higher level of repression, the CDDRT's work expanded. More individuals and organisations joined. The CDDRT organised demonstrations, marches, petitions, meetings and international conferences to help publicise the situation in Turkey and raise solidarity with the many thousands of political prisoners and refugees.

In late 1983 fresh developments in Turkey opened up new possibilities for solidarity. The fascist junta gave way to the anti-democratic civilian regime of Turgut Ozal. A process of disintegration of the regime began as the struggle for

democracy inside Turkey began once again to rise.

The forces of democracy inside Turkey today are becoming increasingly active in the trade union movement - Turk-Is (Turkish Confederation of Trade unions) - , student organisations and many other new bodies.

While continuing to support in any way we can the thousands of political activists still on trial and providing solidarity with the estimated 15,000-20,000 political prisoners, the CDDRT is now working to establish contact between the democratic forces - particularly the trade union movement inside Turkey and their equivalents in Britain and other countries.

WHAT IS THE CDDRT

The CDDRT today has groups and sister organisations in the USA, West Germany, France, Switzerland and Ireland. In addition there are close links with Turkish solidarity organisations in Greece and Scandinavia.

The CDDRT is a democratic body

governed by an annual congress at which every affiliated organisation and individual can fully participate.

The CDDRT produces *Turkey Newsletter*, an internal newsheet for members; *CDDRT News*, briefing papers and other materials.

The CDDRT on its own and in cooperation with others, organises meetings, conferences, rallies, film shows and other practical activities.

SOLIDARITY NEEDED

Turkey is a member of NATO with a 700,000 strong army and a prospective member of the EEC. At the same time it has the most repressive regime in Western Europe.

The resurgent democratic forces inside Turkey need support and solidarity; this is the task of the CDDRT. To do this effectively we need more affiliates/members. If you are not already, we urge you to consider joining our committee as the most effective way of showing your support for the peoples of Turkey.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CDDRT

1. The name of the organisation shall be the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey (the CDDRT).
2. The aims of CDDRT are as follows:
And all vestiges of military rule, martial law, torture and executions.
Release all political prisoners.
Freedom for all democratic organisations.
End the national oppression of the Kurds and national minorities. Defend the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination.
Stop expansionism, and the occupation of Cyprus.
Withdraw Turkey from NATO and close all NATO bases.
No military, political or economic support for the anti-democratic regime.
Totally oppose the regime's harassment of

overseas opponents.

Organise solidarity on the basis of the foregoing utilising every means at our disposal.

Union of Turkish Workers

3. Organisations and individuals accepting the aims of the CDDRT can apply to affiliate. Such applications are subject to the approval of the General Council. Affiliation fees shall be set by the General Council and become payable from 1st January each year.

4. Congress is the highest body of the CDDRT and shall meet every year. It shall consist of delegates from Branches and affiliated organisations and individual affiliates. Congress shall elect the General Council and consider reports, and motions. The conduct of business shall be on the basis of Standing Orders approved by Congress. Pre-Congress arrangements are the responsibility of the retiring General Council. Each Congress shall decide the size of the General Council.

5. The General Council is the continuing body of Congress and shall meet quarterly. It shall appoint the Executive Committee which is responsible to it. The General Council shall have the right to co-opt.

6. The Executive Committee shall consist of the General Secretary and such other members as the General Council may decide. The Executive Committee shall meet at least fortnightly and be responsible for the day to day work of the CDDRT.

7. Local Branches of the CDDRT are formed with the approval of the General Council.

8. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority at a Congress.

9. The General Congress may call, or upon request by two-thirds of affiliated national organisations shall call, a Special Congress.

CDDRT GENERAL COUNCIL

W. ANDREWS (BF-BA WLD)
Bedri AYDEMİR
John M. BLOOM (NOPE)
Dennis CANAVAN MP
Harry COHEN MP
Jeremy CORBYN MP
Ali HIKMET
Max HIRONS
AH LOMAS MEP
Pat INGRAM (NALOD)
Marion SARAFI
Fevzi SOLT
Peter SPALDING (GLATE)
AY YURUKOĞLU
One representative each from:
Turkish Students Federation in the UK
Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain
Union of Turkish Women in Britain

Affiliate to the CDDRT

Annual affiliation fees are: national organisation £25, local organisation £10, individual £6.

To the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey.

I/we* wish to affiliate to the CDDRT and enclose a cheque/PO for £

Name

Address

Date of Affiliation

*Delete as applicable. Includes subscription to **TURKEY NEWSLETTER**

Return to the CDDRT, 84 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4AJ, Tel: 01-254 0387.

Subscribe to **TURKEY NEWSLETTER**

Subscription rates are:

Britain & Ireland £3.00pa
Europe & Mideast £4.00pa
Rest of World £7.00pa

Bulk rates per issue:

50 — £5.00, 100 — £8.50
200 — £15.50, 400 — £28.
All inclusive of postage.

I wish to subscribe to *Turkey Newsletter* for one year and enclose a cheque/PO for £

Name

Address

Subscription to commence on

Return to the CDDRT, 84 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4AJ.

TRADE UNIONS AND WORKERS' RIGHTS IN TURKEY TODAY

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİHİ ARAŞTIRMA
VAKFI
TÜSTAV
ARŞİVİ



In Turkey today the living and working conditions of workers are unbelievable. Even the regime's statisticians cannot bridge the gap between the cost of living and the average workers' wage. For example, in 1987 the Turkish petrochemical workers' union Petrol-İs carried out a survey which showed that the monthly expenditure for a family of two parents and two children (the average Turkish family) was as follows:

Food: L120, Rent of a shanty town dwelling (gecekondu): L100. These figures do not include transport, clothes etc.

While the above expenditure comes to L220, the average wage for a petro-chemical worker with 20 years' service was L73! At the same time the legal minimum wage which is all that millions of workers receive was only L28.

Since the 1980 coup real wages have fallen by at least 60%.

Child labour is rife with many 10-13 year olds working in factories and sweatshops as "apprentices". They have no trade union or social security rights. There are some 4-5 million children between the ages of 9 and 14 in full-time work according to Turkish Ministry of Labour figures in 1987.

Turkey has so many industrial accidents because of poor working conditions and the pressure to earn enough to eat that it has been described as a form of "class genocide". On average 4 workers die each day in industrial accidents and 9 are permanently disabled and these figures only reflect the minority of workers who are insured.

In addition to appalling living standards, workers are also faced with a whole battery of anti-democratic laws. These outlaw "political parties based on class", sympathy and general strikes, "political activity or statements" by any trade union, membership of any political party by trade union officials, strikes in a wide variety of industries of national importance including banks, schools, sections of the petroleum industry, defence industries, civil servants (which

include manual workers in many nationalised industries). At the same time the regime has special "anti strike" paramilitary police units (who amongst their powers have the right to video all negotiations between employers and workers). Also, workers wishing to join a trade union have to sign a document and pay the equivalent of a weeks wages to a public notary. To be recognised, a union has to organise at least 10% of the workers in an industrial sector and 51% in each workplace. The Labour Ministry determines whether a union has met these conditions.

Despite the conditions outlined above, plus the constant arrests and harrassments of trade union activists, today the trade unions are spearheading the fight for democracy in Turkey.

In Turkey today there are three functioning trade union centres plus a handful of independent trade unions not affiliated to any centre. Of the trade union centres only one is of any importance and that is Turk-İs with nearly 2 million members and growing. The other centres are the small pro-Islamic (but having some social democratic tendencies) Hak-İs and the even smaller fascist centre MİSK (backed by some employers and elements in the Ministry of Labour).

Of the independent trade unions the most important is the progressive metal workers union, Otomobil-İs.

Turk-İs is the oldest and largest trade union centre in Turkey having been founded in 1948 at the beginning of Turkey's industrialisation. In 1968 it split under the impact of the growing economic and political crisis in Turkey and the more radical trade unions formed DİSK (Revolutionary Confederation of Trade Unions) which spearheaded the epic class struggles in Turkey in the 1970s.

Following the 1980 coup DİSK was brutally crushed by the junta while Turk-İs was allowed to continue functioning in a limited way. However, especially after 1983 former DİSK members began to flood into Turk-İs. This meant that instead

of the more active and advanced workers being isolated from the great majority in a separate trade union centre, for the first time a basis for a united, genuine, free and active trade union movement grouped around Turk-Is had emerged.

Today Turk-Is has embarked on a road of struggle against the anti-democratic regime in Turkey and the employers - the real sponsors of the post-1980 reign of terror and repression.

Beginning in 1986 with a protest rally by over 100,000 workers in Izmir, Turk-Is has organised a "Bread and Freedom" campaign of massive protests and graduated strike actions leading up to a general strike for trade union freedom and democracy. The "ultimatum" to the regime was delivered in March 1988 when nearly two million workers staged a simultaneous lunch-time food boycott and protest meetings.

A series of massive and largely successful strikes which often broke the regime's labour laws in 1987 and early 1988. These included the epic Netas telecommunications factory strike which lasted from 1986 until February 1987 and which succeeded largely thanks to solidarity from workers, villagers and intellectuals throughout Turkey plus support from the international trade union movement particularly from Britain. This was followed by many strikes including 9,000 petro chemical workers, 4,000 Istanbul leather workers and shop workers.

Of particular note in the current wave of strikes and protests is the high involvement of previously "backward" groups of workers and the massive participation of working women who have dominated many actions.

1987 saw the largest strike wave in Turkey since the revolutionary crisis of the late 1970s with over 29764 workers going on strike.

While the streets resound to the popular workers' slogans of "workers hand in hand towards a general strike" and "the working class is great - nothing is greater" an intensive campaign proceeds to draw the most progressive of the non-affiliated trade unions into Turk-Is.

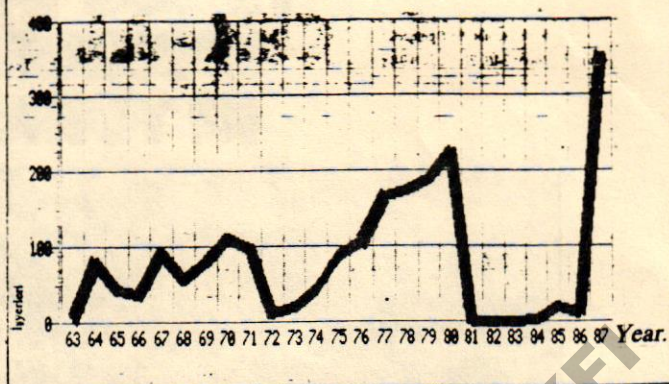
The regime has failed to give any real concessions to the growing workers movement either economically or politically. In response to the regime's Labour Minister who said: "If the workers act illegally I cannot save them". Turk-Is President Sevkett Yilmaz replied: "All labour unions will be free... Whether you want it or not it will happen."

"The government is keeping its hostile attitude against workers although we have warned them often in the past. It must be known that we will not leave the country in the hands of a few capitalists. Everybody must be aware of the fact that if Turkish workers stop working, life stops..."

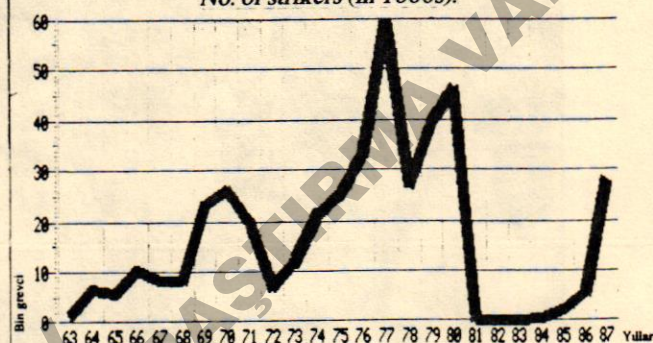
The CDDRT believes the trade union struggle fundamental to the struggle for a real democracy in Turkey. A considerable part of the committee's work is raising moral and material support in Britain and Europe for all workers' struggles in Turkey. In addition the CDDRT encourages and assists trade union bodies abroad in establishing contact at all levels with the functioning trade unions inside Turkey.

The CDDRT supports the principle of all Turkey's workers organising within Turk-Is as the united, democratic and independent trade union centre.

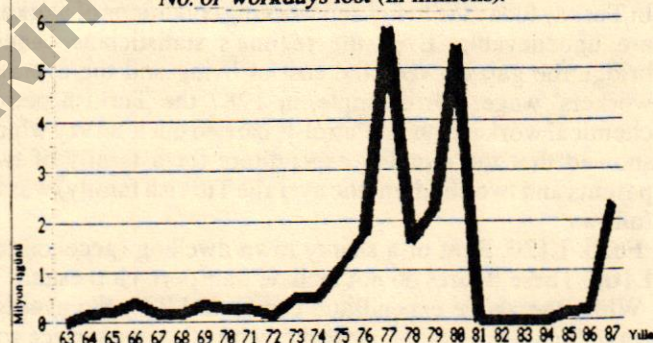
No. of workplaces on strike.



GRAFIK 2
No. of strikers (in 1000s).



GRAFIK 3
No. of workdays lost (in millions).



TÜRKİYE
TÜSTAV
ARŞİVİ
TARİH

Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey
84 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4AJ, Tel: 01-254 0387