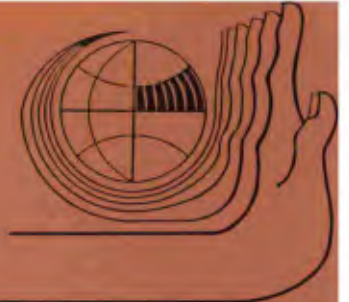


COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN TÜRKİYE

**R E P O R T O F T H E
1 9 8 8 C O N G R E S S**



Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey Türkiye Demokratik Hakları Savunma Komitesi



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1 9 8 8 C O N G R E S S O F T H E C O M M I T T E E F O R D E F E N C E O F D E M O C R A T I C R I G H T S I N T U R K E Y

The congress of the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey was held on March 26th, in the Union of Turkish Workers' Hall, London.

This congress marked a big step forward in the work of the nine-year old CDDRT.

Delegates representing, Turkish community and political organ organisations, British and Irish trade unionists, assorted organisations and individual CDDRT members met to discuss the present situation in Turkey and chart the way forward for the Committee.

The main areas discussed during the Congress were the situation of the trade union movement in Turkey, The struggle of the political prisoners, the battle for freedom of the Kurdish people and ways in which the CDDRT can involve trade union activists more deeply in the CDDRT itself.

Apart from those attending, the widespread support CDDRT and the struggle for democracy in Turkey is receiving was reflected in the numerous messages of support received from MPs, MEPs and trade unions who were unable to be represented on the day.

During the congress videos were shown of recent trade union struggles in Turkey and the congress ended with the election of a new CDDRT General Council.

General Council: W.ANDREWS (B.F.&A.W.U.), Bedir AYDEMIR, John M. BLOOM (NUPE), Dennis CANAVAN MP, Harry COHEN MP, Jeremy CORBYN MP, Ali HIKMET, Max HIRONS, Pat INGRAM (NALGO), Alf LOMAS MEP, Marion SARAFI, Fevzi SOLT, Peter SPALDING (GLATC), R.YURUKOGLU, and one representative each from: Turkish Students' Federation in the UK, Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain, Union of Turkish Women in Britain, Union of Turkish Workers.

5th CONGRESS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS
IN TURKEY, UTW HALL, 26th MARCH 1988

G E N E R A L S E C R E T A R Y ' S R E P O R T

Events in Turkey since our 4th (biennial) Congress in 1987 have borne out the main positions we adopted at that time.

At that time, we said that the struggle for democracy in Turkey was on the upturn and the spearhead of that struggle was the trade union movement inside the country.

In the year since we have seen trade union unity strengthened further and particularly, a growth in the influence of progressive elements within Turk-Is (Turkish Trade Union Confederation).

Several major strikes have taken place which have advanced the struggle for trade union and democratic rights to a new stage. The largest and/or most significant were: the Petrol-Is (Petro-chemical) workers' strike involving 9,500 workers in mid 1987, the historic leather workers' strike from August to December and the Migros shopworkers' strike covering the same period.

These strikes were not only successful in meeting workers' economic demands but also in advancing the cause of democracy. This was shown firstly by the mobilisation of other workers, shanty town dwellers and progressive public opinion behind the strikes so demonstrating opposition to the regime. Secondly, the strikes - particularly the leather workers, shop workers and the continuing loaders' strike, went beyond the limits of the anti-democratic laws. The regime was unable to fully use its arsenal of repressive measures. This was due to the mass support for the strikes in Turkey and solidarity abroad.

In 1987 the political prisoners issue also came to the fore as a result of massive hunger strikes and other protest actions.

The heroic struggle of the political prisoners and detainees has forced major concessions from the regime. It is our duty to support the prisoners in their fight for unconditional freedom.

In Kurdistan, 1987 saw armed clashes grow towards the proportions of a war. The appointment by the regime of a 'super governor' for the area, armed with the powers of a classical colonial Viceroy give the lie to the regime's claim that Kurdistan is just an integral part of Turkey.

Last year also saw the escalation of the struggle by students for academic freedom and democratic rights..

in all these struggles women played a prominent role.

Despite pressures both direct and indirect there was an increase in the number of democratic bodies and publications able to function in Turkey.

However, as before, all concessions given by the regime were forced from it in the course of mass struggles and international pressure. The regime has no real desire to establish a functioning democracy. Its essence remains profoundly anti-democratic. Thousands of political prisoners remain, more are sentenced for what would be considered normal political activities in this country. Parties to the left of the Social Democratic Populist Party are outlawed. Torture is still wide-spread. The Kurdish people are denied their rights. The colonialist occupation of North Cyprus continues.

In the area of foreign policy, following the meeting between Ozal and Papandreou in Davos a truce has been called in the 'cold war' between Turkey and Greece. This appears to have been made on the basis of considerable concessions by the Greek government.

Turkey continues to strive to gain the maximum benefits from the Iran-Iraq war. The danger remains of the regime being drawn into the war itself.

Turkey's role in NATO and the regime's ability to exploit its image as a great bulwark of the west remains a key card in the regime's attempts to avoid too much international pressure to make bigger concessions to democracy.

Below is a brief account of the main activities of the CDDRT from March 1987 to March 1988.

ACTIVITIES 1987-1988

TRADE UNION WORK

We continued to give great attention to work with and about trade unions.

Our aim was to inform the international trade union movement about the real situation of the trade union and workers' movement in Turkey, build links between the two and at the same time increase trade union support for the CDDRT.

To this end, the CDDRT gave great attention to trade union news in Turkey Newsletter, produce information sheets and circulars on the same subject.

We encouraged trade union bodies to establish contacts with their opposite numbers in Turkey. In this area there were several successes. Rahime Akdogan, head of Turk-Is Women's Bureau made another brief visit to London where she met several leading trade unionists in May 1987. In October, 1987 Ilhan Dalkilic, President of Otomobil-Is (independent metalworkers' union) and Otomobil-Is Finance Secretary Eyup Oner visited Britain at the invitation of the Greater London Association of Trades Councils. The Otomobil-Is visit was particularly successful with the visitors meeting Ron Todd, T&GWU. Norman Willis TUC, TUC International Department, Ken Gill, TASS, NUM International Officer and many others.

Between 2-5th October, John Mitchell General Secretary of the Irish Distributive & Administrative Trade Union and chair of the Irish CDDRT visited trade unions and strikes in Istanbul.

In February this year, Aynur Karaaslan leader of the successful Migros shop workers strike visited IDATU in Dublin. On her way back she stopped off in London for three days. Despite the short notice, several useful meetings were organised for her.

With the Union of Turkish Workers, the CDDRT organised a reception at the TUC Congress on 9th October attended by among others Norman Willis, General Secretary of the TUC.

In the year, CDDRT representatives addressed several trade union branch meetings

CDDRT representatives visited several trade unions to acquaint them with new developments in Turkey.

Among new trade union organisations affiliating to the CDDRT was the European Confederation of Trade Union (ETUC).

An important development in Turkey was the publication for the first time of an English-language trade union bulletin, ISHA Bulletin. We believe this publication can play a big role in informing the international labour and trade union movement of the trade union struggle in Turkey. The CDDRT is encouraging affiliates and friends to subscribe to this publication.

POLITICAL PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

The political prisoners campaign of the CDDRT has slowly developed.

Several prisoners have now been 'adopted' by various individuals and organisations in Britain. This has given a great moral boost to the prisoners. However there are still unacceptable delays in CDDRT getting letters from prisoners in Turkish translated.

The Free Bulutgil Campaign has been ended with the release of Aydin Bulutgil in January. Many signatures had been collected on our petition for his release. In addition Birmingham University Amnesty Group had organised their own energetic campaign and petition.

The campaign expanded during the political prisoners' mass hunger strikes last year. The CDDRT produced a postcard with a design by a political prisoner to be sent to the Turkish 'Justice' Minister supporting the prisoners' demands. 4,000 cards were produced (of which 2,000 were distributed by NALGO). The CDDRT held a joint picket of the Turkish Embassy with the Turkish Students Federation in the UK in support of the prisoners. In addition CDDRT supported a 36-hour solidarity hunger strike by the Union of Turkish Progressives and took part in a protest march by all organisations opposed to the Turkish regime on 12th September.

In relation to this work the CDDRT produced many press releases and other materials.

INTERNATIONAL WORK

This year the CDDRT has not given so much emphasis to this area of work.

Close relations have been maintained with the CDDRT and trade union organisations in Ireland. In addition widespread exchanges of material have been organised with international trade union bodies.

Plans to launch a new regular German language newsletter have been held up by 'technical problems'.

STUDENTS

In the area of solidarity with Turkey's students, the CDDRT has worked closely with the Turkish Students Federation in the UK.

Written material about the student question have been produced and the CDDRT has supported a TSF picket of the Turkish Education Councillorship in London, on 8th May and a Student solidarity evening held on the 3rd March 1988. Two successful joint benefit socials were organised by the TSF and the CDDRT on 24th June and 16th October.

KURDISTAN

The CDDRT's work in this area was mainly confined to providing written information and lobbying MPs etc.

In addition we have organised an important photographic exhibition of pictures

taken in Kurdistan in Turkey.

CYPRUS

The CDDRT supported a picket of the Turkish Embassy and a march in London on the anniversary of the invasion..

In addition, Turkey Newsletter carried articles on developments in Cyprus.

VIDEO PROJECTS

The CDDRT was involved in a highly successful video project mainly about migrant workers in Britain directed by Ken Henwood. The resulting video Linked By A Common Thread is on show at this congress.

The CDDRT is also in the process of producing a video about the trade union movement in Turkey.

PUBLICATIONS

In the period since the last congress, the CDDRT has produced:

- 5 issues of Turkey Newsletter (total of 15,000 copies)
- 6 CDDRT News Sheets
- 17 Press Releases
- 4 Information Sheets
- 3 Information Files
- 2 Torture Reports
- 1 International Bulletin
- 6 other leaflets/circulars

Turkey Newsletter is experiencing serious problems in being produced regularly despite more of the technical preparation being done by CDDRT members.

GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council of the CDDRT met three times.

CDDRT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee met every week except for August and the Christmas holidays. It presently consists of: The General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Finance Officer, Political Prisoners Campaign Officer, Research Officer. Press Officer, a representative of the Union of Turkish Workers.

In order to draw more people into the work of CDDRT we have turned some EC meetings into work meetings and opened all meetings to any member who wants to come along and participate.

AFFILIATIONS

The CDDRT is affiliated to Liberation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The CDDRT banner and many members were present on both the London and Croydon May Day marches last year, the CND National Demonstration in April, the Anti Apartheid demonstration in October, the Bloody Sunday Commemoration march in January and an 8th March International Women's Day march in Hackney.

The CDDRT had large and successful stalls at the SERTUC AGM, the Morning Star

Festival, London Labour Party Conference, events organised by the Union of Turkish Workers, Union of Turkish Women and TSF and the Third world Fair in December.

The CDDRT held the best fringe meeting for some years at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton on 30th September. The speakers were Jeremy Corbyn MP, Carole Tongue MEP. Stan Newens MEP and myself.

Last year the CDDRT moved to new and better offices. This has enabled us to organise our work in a far better manner.

This report obviously cannot cover the day-to-day work of answering inquiries, providing information, monitoring the situation in Turkey but which is vital none-the-less.

Thanks must go to the many CDDRT members who have worked over the last year to build the CDDRT. The CDDRT has only one person working full-time for the committee so volunteers play an even more important role in our organisation.

Max Hiron
General Secretary



COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN TURKEY
1988 CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

TRADE UNIONS

Congress reaffirms the position adopted on the trade union question in Turkey at the CDDRT's 1987 Congress.

The single most important aspect of the democratic struggle remains the fight for trade union freedom.

Congress notes that:

- Today in Turkey there exists one major trade union centre- Turk-Is (Turkish Trade Union Confederation). At the same time, the drive towards the unity of all Turkey's genuine trade unions under the umbrella of Turk-Is is gaining momentum. this is shown by the decisions of the congresses of many independent trade unions.
- The struggle for trade union and workers' rights is accelerating as shown by the 1987 strike wave. In the struggle for these rights the trade unions are beginning to push beyond the confines of the regime's anti-democratic laws and constitution.
- The rights of workers remain severely restricted by the present regime's Constitution, penal and labour codes. The basic rights of workers - as internationally recognised - the right to strike, the right to organise freely in trade unions on a democratic basis, the right to join the trade union of their choice and the right to conduct collective bargaining remain strictly curtailed.
- International solidarity has played a vital part in the advances made by the trade union movement in Turkey over the last year.

Congress resolves to:

1. Expose and oppose all attacks by the regime on the trade union movement in Turkey.
2. Continue to win the British trade union movement to support the development of a democratically united and active trade union movement in Turkey and oppose all political manouvers based on narrow interests to split or divide the Turkish trade union movement.

trade unions continued...

3. Continue to encourage trade unions in Britain and other countries at every level to increase close and first-hand contacts with their functioning counterparts in Turkey.
4. Organise under the control of known and bona fide trade unionists a Strike Solidarity Fund to raise material and moral support for major strikes in Turkey during the coming year. The funds to be directed for use in strikes in Turkey where because of the regime's anti-democratic measures, one trade union cannot give open material support to members of another during a strike.
5. Publicise the activities and views of the Turkish trade union movement.
6. Extend the number of trade union bodies affiliated to the CDDRT and increase the representation of trade unions on the CDDRT's General Council.
7. Draw up a model resolution along the lines of this resolution for use in the trade union movement.



POLITICAL PRISONERS

The last year has seen an upsurge in the struggle of political prisoners and their families in Turkey for freedom.

Today in Turkey there are 15,000-20,000 political prisoners and detainees. Many have experienced torture and/or ill-treatment. This has been well-documented by such bodies as Amnesty International. Many political prisoners are detained for 'offences' which would not be punishable in a democratic society. Others are held for actions they took in response to unbearable oppression by successive regimes in Turkey.

In addition to political prisoners serving sentences, (many passed by military courts in a travesty of justice), there are thousands of political detainees awaiting trial - often for very long periods.

In the last few months, thanks to the heroism and sacrifice of prisoners and their families some prison conditions have been eased.

However, the regime's claim to be improving its human rights record cannot be credible as long as the prisons remain full of political prisoners and detainees.

This Congress therefore calls for:

- * An end to all torture and ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees.
- * The real punishment of all those- both military, police and medical personnel involved in the torture of prisoners and detainees.
- * The unconditional release of all political prisoners.
- * The abolition of legislation under which most prisoners were convicted.

The CDDRT will continue to conduct a specific campaign of solidarity with political prisoners.

As part of such a campaign congress resolves to:

political prisoners continued...

- * Continue to publicise the plight of political prisoners individually and collectively.
- * Continue to campaign for individuals and groups to 'adopt' political prisoners and correspond with them.
- * Initiate a petition campaign to be completed by the end of 1988.

IRAN - IRAQ WAR REFUGEES

There are over a million refugees from the Iran-Iraq war in Turkey. Many are at risk from the Turkish regime.

The CDDRT calls for an immediate stop to the deportation of Iranian refugees in Turkey and implementation of all internationally accepted rights of refugees for political refugees including refugees from the Iran-Iraq war in Turkey.

ARMENIA

The CDDRT reiterates it's condemnation of the denial by successive regimes in Turkey of the genocide perpetrated by the Young Turk regime against the Armenian people in 1915.

The CDDRT calls for:

- * The right of displaced Armenians to return to the lands from which they were expelled and for the state to provide assistance to this end.
- * The right of Armenians in Turkey to guaranteed and full linguistic, cultural, educational and religious freedom.

WOMEN IN TURKEY

Women are playing an active role in the struggle for democracy and human rights in Turkey. This is demonstrated by the large number of women taking part in strikes and trade union protest actions, by the women who are leading the resistance in the gecekondu to demolitions and evictions, by the leading role played by women in the political prisoners' hunger strikes - particularly through TAYAD.

Despite efforts by the regime to suppress or divert women through Islamic fundamentalism, charity organisations or putting the blame for oppression on men as such, women are playing a bigger role in fighting the regime.

Congress reaffirms CDDRT policy of supporting the reviving working class women's movement in Turkey. Basing this on the belief that the working people of Turkey cannot be free from oppression without the active participation of women in the democratic struggle plus the unity of men and women in that struggle and women cannot be free from oppression until all the working people of Turkey are free.

Congress resolves to encourage links between women in the trade union movement in Turkey and abroad. And between progressive Turkish and Kurdish women and women in Britain and Europe.



COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN TURKEY
1988 CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

KURDISTAN

Congress notes that the Turkish regime, in the face of increasing resistance, has intensified its repression in Kurdistan, strengthening its army and purchasing sophisticated military hardware from, among others, Britain, for use against the Kurdish people.

Many villages have been forced to migrate en masse to cities, thousands of Kurdish peasants have been tortured just for giving food to Kurdish guerrillas. In an attempt to divide the Kurdish people the Turkish regime has formed a militia of village guards who terrorise the people.

The resistance of the Kurdish people and the struggle of political prisoners in Diyarbakir prison has won important concessions from the Turkish regime, proving that it is possible to achieve results with political action. the victory of the prisoners in Diyarbakir has shown the way forward to Turkish and Kurdish people. Bearing these facts in mind Congress resolves to:

1. Find out which companies are producing and supplying military equipment to Turkey.
2. Form links with the workers in those factories.
3. Campaign against sales of military hardware to Turkey.



COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN TURKEY
1988 CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

CYPRUS

Northern Cyprus is a virtual colony of Turkey. The continued presence of some 35,000 Turkish troops and a similar number of settlers from the 'mainland' demonstrates this fact.

Recent events have shown that the Denktash regime is also attempting to import the anti-democratic practices of the Ankara regime to Cyprus.

The establishment of real democracy in Turkey is vital to the struggle for a free Cyprus.

Only the withdrawal of Turkish troops and self-determination for the people of Cyprus can bring lasting peace to the island.

COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN TURKEY
1988 CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

STUDENTS

This Congress of CDDRT resolves to support the demands of students in Turkey for their academic and democratic freedom.

CDDRT supports their demand for:

- * The abolition of the Higher Educational Council (YOK).
- * Autonomous and democratic universities.
- * Free and scientific education.
- * Independent and free student unions.
- * The abolition of enrollment fees and all kinds of repression being used against students.

The CDDRT further resolves to improve its ties with the student movement in Britain and do its utmost to get the just demands of the students in Turkey across to the British democratic public.



SPEECHES AT THE 1988 CDDRT CONGRESS

STAN NEWENS M.E.P.

I'd like to do something today which is rather different from what I've done on previous occasions; I really want to give a report on the situation which exists in the European Parliament as far as Turkey is concerned at the present time, and in doing so I do want to pose some questions to you which I think that sooner or later any solidarity organisation - and certainly the CDDRT - has got to address itself to.

Now, ever since the military coup which overthrew the elected government on 12th September 1980, a struggle has been conducted supported by solidarity organisations, in particular CDDRT in this country against military rule, military trials, torture, executions and repression in general. Now at this point in time however it is important that we should recognise that the situation has changed from what it was immediately after the coup, and as such it's necessary to take stock of what has happened and to begin to determine our plan of campaign in the period which lies ahead; and this is something which is certainly reflected by the discussion which is now taking place in the European Parliament as a whole which in the period of the coup hardened very much against continuing relations with Turkey. Now as far as people arguing at the present time are concerned, on the positive side it is said - and we need to recognise this quite objectively - that election have been held in Turkey and although there may be objections to the fact that all parties were not legalised, that many restrictions were imposed, that the Motherland Party (which is a party of the Right) won, it must be recognised that the situation today is not the same as it was before the election of the Parliament.

In the Parliament - the Turkish Assembly - one of the new MPs, even though he was shouted down, raised the Kurdish issue openly there. Furthermore, Turkey has signed the European Convention on Torture, and some effort has been made to reduce the extent of torture - although of course we know it is still taking place. Death sentences continue to be imposed but are not carried out, and the Turkish authorities have let it be known that it's not their policy to carry out death sentences which are imposed. Furthermore, leading politicians who were previously denied the right of participating in political activities have after the referendum had their rights restored; and that must be recognised as having taken place on the positive side.

Now on the negative side we need to recognise, quite objectively, that the Constitution of Turkey still rules out an amnesty for political offences - so-called political offences. Secondly, class-based Parties are illegal under the Turkish Constitution and all of us are familiar with what happened to two Party leaders when they attempted to go back just before the elections took place. Human Rights abuses and torture have not ceased and there are some trials which are still pending. Furthermore, people spend an inordinate amount of time under detention awaiting trials which in any case we don't think - and can't possibly accept - are justified on any grounds whatsoever. Now when one looks more fundamentally at the situation as far as Turkey is concerned there are a number of issues which to me

are very, very important indeed. One is, that the Kurds continue to be denied recognition as an ethnic minority with their own rights; and although I personally would never approve of terrorist outrages carried out by the PKK (**Workers Party of Kurdistan**) - and I believe some have been carried out by the PKK - we've got to recognise that outrages have also been carried out by the Turkish authorities, and the treatment of Kurdish political activists in prison (particularly at Diyarbakir) and so on is absolutely appalling.

We have to recognise that Northern Cyprus continues to be occupied by Turkish troops, and that those of us who wanted to try and get the Turkish authorities to recognise that the Armenian massacres occurred, when one tries to press this on the Turkish authorities one is met with a blank refusal which indicates that their attitudes have not changed in any respect whatsoever.

It is quite clear that the Turkish administration and its establishment was very deeply angered by steps which were taken in the West as a result of the coup to indicate displeasure on the part even of people who were much more in the centre of the political spectrum than I count myself. They were rattled by the fact that the Council of Europe and the European Parliament cut relations in certain respects despite the fact that the United States continued to supply arms and the military importance of Turkey within the Western Alliance was still maintained. Now, however there has been on the Turkish side a quite determined effort made to meet some of the criticisms. And when one looks at the report which was made to the European Parliament a couple of years ago by Richard Balfe a number of the objections which were set out in that report have in fact been met; and the result is this, that today opinion is shifting within the European Parliament towards the acceptance of Turkey back on the same basis as relations existed prior to 1980. The issue surfaced in rather a big way over the question of ratification of a protocol on trade and it was argued that since the military coup the Turkish authorities had not carried out their responsibilities on the trading agreements. Nonetheless the protocol was approved on the 20th January, and many people even within the Socialist Group argued that no case continued to exist for withholding approval. We had quite a debate within the Socialist Group on this issue. In which I argued that we should not give approval. But I was not in a majority and ultimately in the Parliament as a whole opinion had shifted sufficiently for the protocol to be approved. Now the issue has been raised anew on the Political Affairs Committee which I have been attending the whole of this week, by a new report which has been prepared by the leader of the German Social Democrats for the whole of the Political Affairs Committee which includes all Parties. This particular report by Garter Walter sets forth a number of objections quite clearly - some of those to which I've referred - to the situation in Turkey, but eventually comes to the conclusion that steps should now be taken to reconstitute the European Parliamentary Delegation with a view to reconvening the joint Turkish-European Parliamentary Committee which was suspended when the military coup took place. Now in the discussion of this within the Political Committee I said, well, we shouldn't rush ahead on
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this because we would lose all leverage on the Turkish authorities to make the improvements in the many areas in which we still believe they are necessary. As against this, not only the Right but some socialists argued that if Mr Papandreou was now agreeing to meet Mr Ozal there was no case for saying that parliamentarians at a lower level should not also meet. The argument was raised, if people met it would still be possible to raise in those joint meetings the issues with which we are concerned.

The Turkish authorities' aim in the long run, is to seek membership of the EEC which I certainly would oppose in present circumstances. But there is a powerful lobby which is working towards acceptance of the Turkish case, and the argument that people like Gerte Walter and others are putting forward is this: That it would be better for us to say at this stage that we accept the resumption of relations on the basis that they existed prior to the coup, as an indication that we are prepared to discuss. Which doesn't committ us any further to accept anything else.

This is why I made my address to you this morning something of a report to you. It does seem to me that this is a situation in which solidarity organisations like CDDRT have got to take stock. I feel that if we continue to take a point of view which frankly emotionally I'm inclined to, which is to say no change and we just carry on. But then I am aware of the fact that opinion is shifting away - certainly from the position we held in the Socialist Group in the European Parliament some time ago, and I'm now inclined to put down ammendments, to get Walther's report to say, well, we wouldn't be opposed in principle to a resumption in the long run of these arrangements but we don't think we should rush it because we are still dissatisfied.

What I feel that I want to say to you this morning is this: I would very much appreciate the views of yourselves on what sort of action ought to be taken at this point because I am in touch, through being in the European Parliament, not only with the situation as far as British people are concerned but I am talking to people who reflect opinion right the way throughout the twelve member states of the EEC. And even in the case of the Greeks who've been most concerned of all to maintain a strong front not merely the left-wing groups but groups of all Parties have taken this view in the past and that is one of the reasons why since the Right of the Greeks have come with us we've been able to get a majority on many of these issues that opinion is now swinging. So I want to pose to you what the situation now is.

Ought we - and I believe we should - recognise that the situation's changed, how in these circumstances do we best persue the objectives which we continue to hold as firmly as ever, of working for a Turkey which is fit for working people and progressives to live in? A completely different Turkey from that which exists at the present time.

I believe we have got to address ourselves to the real situation and I've come along here this morning to pose those problems.

SPEECHES AT THE 1988 CDDRT CONGRESS

JEREMY CORBYN MP, Chair of CDDRT

We are once more in the midst of another public relations exercise by the Turkish Government in that they are continually saying to the rest of the world that they are a democratic country, its a free society, there is a pluralist democracy there and just to prove it they engineered the most incredible boom that the world has ever seen - and it was also the shortest lived boom that the world had ever seen because it lasted long enough to get Ozal re-elected and his party and left the country racked with debt and a very high rate of inflation as a direct result of it. But while the elections were portrayed as free, open and democratic elections what was not portrayed was that any party to the left of the Social Democratic Party was banned, it could not take part in those campaigns; indeed, even during the campaign itself people were being arrested and were being put into prison for their political beliefs, and during that campaign a very large number - possibly into thousands - of political prisoners remained in gaol and indeed the trials of those people continue and there's a whole set of new trials due to open I understand, towards the end of April. The reason of course for all this is that the economic problems that Turkey faces are quite serious and the only salvation that the Ozal Government sees to those is to join the European Economic Community and indeed they're under considerable pressure from other places to do that and so the lobbying in support of Turkish membership of the EEC is very considerable indeed - and I've noticed it going on in the British Parliament just as much as it's gone on in the European Parliament. That lobbying takes lots of forms. It takes the form of the attempts to try and recognise the so-called Turkish Republic of North Cyprus; it takes the form of continually saying that democracy is alive and well in Turkey. And a whole stream of visitors from the Turkish Government visit this country and they're entertained by Mrs Thatcher and her friends. It also takes the form of arm-twisting and very strong support for the development of a Turkish arms industry as the Eastern flank of NATO. Indeed in the recent NATO monthly publication "NATO Military News" there was a fifty page supplement on the Turkish arms industry and its successes and it's quite clear that they are very keen that Turkey should become a member of the EEC. To the extent that Mrs Thatcher herself is now going to visit Turkey the week after next. She's going there for a few days. The purpose of her visit is a little unclear but I imagine it's going to run along the lines of most of Mrs Thatcher's visits where nobody gets a word in edgeways apart from her and there will be a press conference before she goes to say she's going on a fact-finding mission. As soon as she gets off the plane she will start to regurgitate the facts and when she gets back she will no doubt say that everything is going well in Turkey, she's very happy with it, and she will be thinking again about support for Turkey's membership of the EEC. That is the sole purpose of that visit. And so by way of a pre-emptive strike I raised a whole number of questions in Parliament yesterday as to which parts of Turkey she was going to visit. Whether or not she would have a chance to go to the prison in Istanbul where there's plenty of space at the present time because of the number of people who got away yesterday (29 political prisoners escaped from Metris Military Prison). Or whether she'll be planning to go to Diyarbakir to meet those prisoners who went on hunger strikes in the past and indeed are preparing to take

future hunger strikes if necessary. Whether or not she's going to go to a trial, and see mass trials of people on trial for their political beliefs. It could be, of course, that she quite approves of that sort of thing and she'd merely go to pick up some tips of the sort of trials she'd like to operate in this country. But you can rest assured that one question that will not be high on Mrs Thatcher's agenda will be the question of human rights in Turkey because Mrs Thatcher's concern for human rights is extremely selective. She believes passionately in trade unions providing they're in Poland. She believes passionately in human rights provided they're in the Soviet Union. If it's trade unions or human rights in El Salvadore or Turkey well, they are an impediment to the development of a capitalist economy, and so her vision of those things is very selective. I think it is important that we do everything we can during this period of heightened publicity about the situation in Turkey because of Mrs Thatcher's visit, to demonstrate in this country to lobby the embassy here, to lobby the Foreign Office here and keep making the case of the very large number of political prisoners in Turkey and the banned political parties. And also just talking about the conditions under which those prisoners are forced to exist. the way torture is common. The way that political prisoners have been refused recognition up until now.

And recognising the victory that the Kurdish prisoners in Diyarbakir have achieved and it is a very considerable victory. They went on hunger strike over the refusal of the authorities to allow them to wear their civilian clothes or to use the Kurdish language. They have won that argument. Indeed, I believe I mean this very seriously, that the questions of the middle east war-the Gulf conflict- and the position of the Kurdish people is going to be one of the dominant political issues in the coming couple of years. Because it no longer tenable for three countries to go on, either oppressing or ignoring the existence of twenty million Kurdish people, nine million of whom live in Turkey. And whilst the degree of form of oppression differs between Iran, Iraq and Turkey the principle remains basically the same. That is, opposition to the recognition of the Kurdish people.

What has happened this past week in Iraq is something that is sickening - even by the standards of the Middle East conflict itself. If I could just quote something, because I think it has to be said, of what's actually happened this week in Halabja from the attack that's taken place by the Iraqi air force with their dropping of cyanide bombs on to a town, and I quote from the report by Nicholas Beeston which was in the Times of March 22nd. I'll just read you the first two or three paragraphs:

"Like Figures unearthed in Pompeii.

"Like figures unearthed in Pompeii; the victims of Halabja were killed so quickly that their corpses remained in suspended animation. There was a baby whose face frozen in a scream stuck out from under the protective arm of a man away from the open door of a house that he never reached. Nearby, a family of five sitting in their garden eating lunch had been cut down, the killer gas not even sparing the family cat or the birds in the trees which littered the well-kept lawn. Their neighbours had the foresight to hide in an underground shelter. It became their mass grave with ten men, women and children huddled together in the darkness surrounded by their best carpets and

the family's valuables.

Iraqi bombers first struck last Wednesday dropping their chemical agents relentlessly and leaving behind the groans of the mustard-gas victims and a trail of refugees and the haunting waxwork figures frozen by cyanide vapour.

Halabja was once a prosperous market town surrounded by green pasture on the shore of lake overlooked on three sides by the snow-capped mountains of Kurdistan. But for the fifty thousand Kurdish farmers and shopkeeper their proximity to the Iranian border turned the district into a battlefield which inflicted the worst punishment on its civilian population."

There are other reports in other papers which emphasise exactly what's happened. What we've heard and read and have now seen pictures of, what happened at Halabja last week, is exactly what would happen if a neutron bomb dropped on London or any other city; that is the effect. All the property is spared, there is no damage done to any property or buildings, every living creature dies.

We have to express our sympathy, our support and our solidarity to those people who have suffered such terrible losses this week in Iraqi Kurdistan. But also recognise that there can be no solution to the problems that the Kurdish people face by the dropping of cyanide bombs on them or anything else because it would nearly exacerbate the problems, exacerbate the differences and we have to do what this congress has done and what I believe all intelligent socialists should do in recognising the legitimate rights of the Kurdish people to their own culture, their own identity and their own self-determination because that is really what they're saying.

The treatment of Kurdish people in Turkey is different in degree, it is sure nevertheless that the intention is exactly the same, to oppress the aspirations of the Kurdish people. And those that stand up for the rights of Kurdish people have suffered imprisonment, have suffered hangings, have suffered shootings and have suffered deaths as a result of it.

I think we have to start looking at where the culprits of some of these things lie. Why is it that the Turkish government is given so much political, financial and military support? Is it because the governments of Western Europe and the United States actually support the denial of human rights in Turkey? I don't think it necessarily is that actually. I think they turn a blind eye to the denial of human rights in Turkey because for them it's more important that Turkey is a member of NATO, it's more important that it can be a listening post against the Soviet Union, it's more important that it can be a potential base for NATO activities in the area in the future. They're more interested in that than the question of human rights in Turkey itself.

So I think the functions that we have to express here are ones of genuine solidarity, of genuine international trade union solidarity. And to create in the working class and trade union movement of this country an understanding that the struggle of the working people in Turkey is not that different from the struggle of working people everywhere else. That struggle is for the right to a trade union, the right to representation

the right to negotiate wages and working conditions of people in Turkey. Because I think strikes and demonstrations and activities that have taken place in the past year show the determination and bravery of those people and the victories that have been won have been victories that have been won at the most appalling cost and appalling oppression against those people; we have to recognise that and support them in that. Those people are campaigning for the rights of women in Turkey, those people are campaigning for the rights of minority interests of other languages in Turkey likewise have to be recognised and have to be given all the support that we can muster for them. Because if we don't then we fail in our duties as trade unionists, as socialists, people who believe in the international struggle, we are leaving those people a struggle that is made all the harder by the lack of international support for it.

I believe that if Turkey is successful in becoming a member of the EEC which it well might be, then we are going to see more and more the movement of transnational capital between this country, Spain, West Germany, Turkey, Greece and so on. I think it is very important the trade union movement in this country just as much as in every other country recognises the way you deal with the problems of multi-national capital shifting it's investments around the world wherever it can get the worst working conditions and the lowest wages is not by dealing with it as a national matter and a national interest, it's by dealing with it internationally. So, if General Motors decides that it wants to shut down a plant here and invest in Turkey or shut down a plant in Turkey and invest somewhere else - and that's the kind of thing that can happen if Turkey becomes a member of the EEC - then it's solidarity between workers in Turkey and this country that is doubly more important, because they're dealing with exactly the same employer and exactly the same person who is trying to exploit them.

This congress of CDDRT comes at a particularly important time because of this EEC application, because of the visit of Mrs Thatcher. But it also comes at a time when we can recognise the tremendous achievements that have been made in the last year by the trade union movement in Turkey. We should support and salute them in the struggles that they are facing and against the very obvious and very violent denials of civil and human rights that exist in Turkey at the present time. I for one along with a lot of other members of the British Parliament and the European Parliament will be doing all we can to bring these matters to public attention through speeches in parliament, questions and deputations. Because that really is what we're there for, to use those platforms, to give voice to those people who otherwise would not be heard because governments like that of Turkey would not allow those voices to be heard.

SPEECHES AT THE 1988 CDDRT CONGRESS

RICHARD BALFE M.E.P.

I am pleased to be here again this year after a year in which we have seen -as we all know- quite a lot of activity vis a vis Turkey in Europe.

A am going to stick more or less to what I have been asked to talk about (**Note:**Turkey and Europe) although there are many other interesting things that could be said.

During the year I was able to visit Turkey and I did meet some of the Netas strikers when I was there.

It was also the year in which Turkey formally put in its application for membership of the EEC. And of course it was also the year when the election took place in the Autumn.

The position vis a vis the Turkish application for European Community membership is it is up to the European Commission to produce a report on whether or not it would be possible to open negotiations. That's the very very first stage.

There is no very great deal of urgency being put into the production of that report and it is not being pushed very hard either by the Turkish side or the European side. When Ozal was in Brussels recently he met Jaques Delor the President of the Commission and expressed himself satisfied with the rate of progress. Since the 'rate of progress' is that it will take two years to produce this report as to whether there can be any negotiations at all, it seems quite clear that having put in the application they are settling back.

It would of course require the sort of fundamental changes in the Turkish Constitution for them to join the EEC that the present government in Turkey is totally unwilling to contemplate. It has been made clear even at a very preliminary level that there would have to be changes in the Constitution in regard to trade union rights, academic freedoms, the way in which the legal system works and a number of other areas of the Constitution before any serious consideration could be given to Turkey joining. It would also be necessary to legitimise the broad range of political parties as is the case in the rest of Western Europe and to resolve the issue of Cyprus.

So with that sort of agenda before them, it is not unlikely that the last thing Mr Ozal wants is any speed. Because of course if they got up some speed they would end with a rejection. They would probably prefer for the thing not to be settled at all.

It is of course always difficult in the European Parliament to try and be constructive and helpfull where Turkey is concerned. The fact that Greece is a member of the EEC I am afraid means that there are a body of people who would use any opportunity to have a go at Turkey. One always has to be extremely careful and ask yourself; are we being lead into a cul-de-sac in order that these two countries (or the one we have got) can continue their arguing with each other or are we actually having a genuine point of view put to us on a given situation. Certainly its very interesting that after the Davos meeting the attitude of a lot of the Greek members of the European Parliament suddenly changed. Whereas in December when we deferred ratification of three quite minor protocols when we were told that it was quite unthinkable that they could ever be ratified. By February when they came up for ratification again and the Davos meeting was out of the way we were told that it was an urgent geasture that was needed by the European Parliament by the very people who a month before had told us it was exactly the opposite.

So on occaisions I do put it to you that one needs to be a trifle careful in the way that we deal with things.

The situation at the moment is that the Association Agreement as it is called which is the areement between Turkey and the EEC is in the process of being revived. It had actually started to collapse in 1976 when the Turkish side refused to implement some of the tariff reductions which were part of the agreement. But it was formally suspended by us in 1980 and it was said then that it would not be reconstituted until at least there had been something that resembled a democratic election.

I was actually there during the election period last year and met the leaders of those parties that were able to stand. I also met the lawyers of Messers Kutlu and Sargin... In the case of these elections we were assured by the parties which stood that insofar as they were concerned, although the election law was seriously deficient, they accepted the result of the election and did not challenge it.

The election law of course is full of pitfalls- the 10% barrier,

The way in which the additional seats were allocated, the way in which the constituencies had been put together. It is as I was moved to say almost as unfair as the British election system!. The thing that of course is unacceptable though is the banning of parties and the article in the Constitution which is used to do this. Not only the bans against the left but also we must be clear if we are talking about a free political system is it also means that the fundamentalist parties will have to be legitimised if Turkey is to qualify for EEC membership. That I think is a point that frightens Mr Ozal even more than the prospect of legalisation of the Communist Party or the Kurdish Parties.

So within that framework then we have had the elections.

Within the European Parliament we have continued to deal with the socialist party of Inonu. The Ecevit party has now all but disappeared.

We greatly regretted the fact that the Ecevit camp was unable to sink its differences and join with Inonu before the election. Because if they had done so, it would have led to something like 50-60 extra seats for the left within the Turkish Grand National Assembly. But that was not to be. However I do hope we don't have a repeat of that sort of behaviour in the future because it does lead to a weakening.

That is an outline of roughly where we have got to vis a vis Turkey. As I say, the Association Agreement I think will come back into being in the course of the next few months and numerous protests have been made and will continue to be made about the human rights situation in Turkey. Not only about messers Kutlu and Sargin who are the most famous of the recent cases but also the continuing day to day problems of people who are in prison, people who are under threat, people who are being tried, of intimidation which many lawyers face which we heard about when we were in Turkey.

This has got to be something which we do have to carry on campaigning for. I obviously only listened to the last three quarters of an hour (**Note:** of the CDDRT Congress) and I am not going to be able to listen to much more...but as far as we are concerned I think CDDRT does do an extremely good job keeping members of the European Parliament briefed. And also in my role as a member of the cooperative movement we get stuff also from CDDRT... As far as we are concerned I think that with the resources

of the capacity that you have got, as with so many organisations that work in the corners trying to promote causes I think the CDDRT does an extremely good job. A much better job let me say than many of the other solidarity organisations with which I have to deal, who do not have the level of dedication and service which this organisation has...

SPEECHES AT THE 1988 CDDRT CONGRESS

JOHN MITCHELL General Secretary, IDATU

I want to thank you for having me here for a start. I am very glad to be here.

I would not be here at all and there would not be a CDDRT in Ireland but for Max (**Note:** CDDRT General Secretary) initially and only for Max continuing his kind, jolly and effective cooperation with us. So rather than send fraternal greetings by letter, we decided we would send them in person both from the Irish CDDRT and our union- IDATU.

Our links have been strengthened over the last few months.

We have supported the NETAS strike and other strikes in the past. But in October I went to Istanbul. I visited the Migros pickets, the Deri-Is strikers and the Tuntis transport strikers. I also visited the offices of Petrol-Is. We have given financial support to all three strikes.

We then invited Aynur Karaaslan to visit our union in Dublin or Ireland in fact... She visited picket lines at Dunnes stores in Neena. That was a great act of solidarity for our strikes as well and she met our Executive Committee.

I don't want to preach but it is very important and it is worth more than a cliché that Irish unions- and I would suspect from my knowledge of them, British unions can learn a lot from unions in places like Turkey. Because unions were set-up to try to change society in many ways, to fight for social justice and not to be into property or status or demarcation disputes or a lot of the shoddy, shabby sort of things unions do nowadays. I think we can learn an awfull lot about where we came from and where we are supposed to be and where we should be going from unions in places like Turkey.

Also I think, going back to what the comrade from NALGO said, if people like our ordinary shopworkers can relate to ordinary shopworkers in Istanbul, Turkey or indeed in South Africa or the Phillipines for that matter, it brings a life and a reality to solidarity work. Because solidarity work is about people and not about paper. If people can see that it is not about someone like me or some other bureaucrat visiting picket lines or going on junkets, that they have a role to play as well and that the

people we are dealing with are ordinary people with the same ordinary problems that they have of bad pay, bad conditions and bad employers then it makes solidarity an awfull lot more real.

I would suggest very strongly to anybody with any influence in a union to try and have exchange delegations because really if you can put a human face on solidarity it brings it way beyond either money or paper, because it is almost as easy to give money as it is to give resolutions. Its if we get into the human side of it that it is really effective.

We have set-up links with the Migros workers and the Istanbul Branch of Tez-Koop Is...We have given a commitment to make regular financial contributions. We will give a few thousand pounds a year at least to our sister organisation in Turkey. We have agreed to exchange delegations, to exchange information, to lobby on their behalf.

We recently brought in a catigory of honorary membership in our union and the first honorary member of our union was Aynur Karaaslan. Which is in a way significant.

So really...I just want to say that we will continue as a union in Ireland to support not just the shopworkers but anybody who is struggling in Turkey and indeed in other parts of the world.

At the end of the day solidarity is about supporting people. Those people choose their weapons, they choose how to operate. We don't tell them, we are in no position to do so...

CONSTITUTION OF THE CDDRT

1. The name of the organisation shall be the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey (CDDRT).
2. The aims of the CDDRT are as follows:
 - End all vestiges of military rule, martial law, torture and executions.
 - Release of political prisoners.
 - Freedom for all democratic organisations.
 - End national oppression of the Kurds and national minorities.
 - Defend the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination.
 - Stop expansionism: end 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 harrassment of overseas opponents.
 - Organise solidarity on the basis of the foregoing utilising every means at our disposal.
3. Organisations and individuals accepting the aims of the CDDRT can apply to affiliate. Such affiliations 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 Council may call, or upon request by two-thirds of affiliated national organisations shall call, a Special Congress.