

ITA

BÜLTEN BULLETIN

INFO-TÜRK AJANSI
INFO-TÜRK AGENCY
AGENTSCHAP INFO-TÜRK
AGENCE INFO TÜRK
INFO-TÜRK AGENTUR

COLLECTIF TURC D'EDITION ET DE DIFFUSION
SQUARE CH.M.WISER, 13/2 - 1040 BRUXELLES
TEL: (32-2) 230 34 72 - DEPOT LEGAL 2198
BANK ACCOUNT INFO-TÜRK: 310-0148714-02

Reprinting of our articles authorized
with the mention of INFO-TÜRK

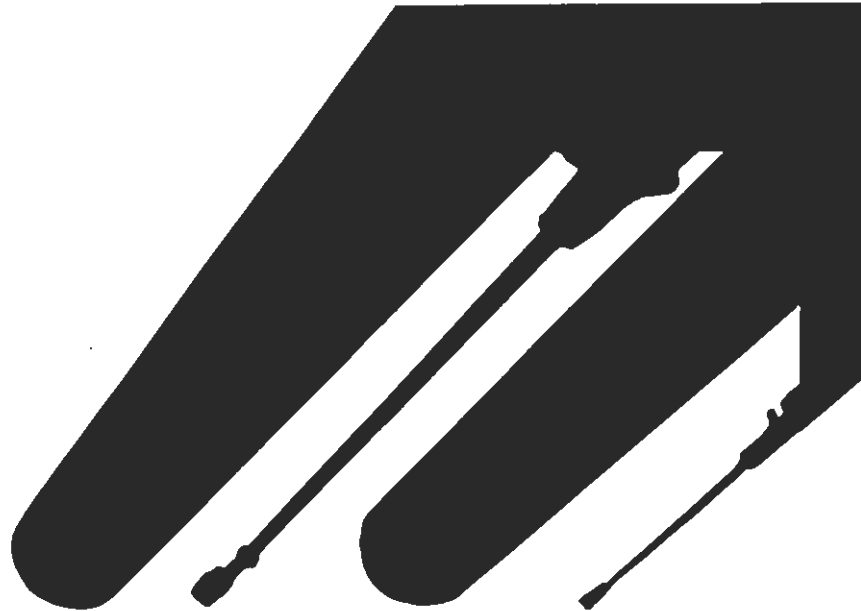
Monthly periodical
Year V
July/August 1981
English 57-58
Annual subscription:
Benelux 350 BF
Abroad 400 BF

BLOODY BALANCE-SHEET OF THE ONE-YEAR FASCIST MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN TURKEY

A RUBBER-STAMP "CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY" UNDER THE SHADOW OF BARRELS

ANKARA (ITA) - As the first one-year term of the military junta ruling the country since the 12th september 1980 coup d'état expires, the military prime minister, Retired Admiral Bülent Ulusu claimed on August 15, 1981, at his fourth press conference, that peace and security had been by and large established and repeated the "determination of the military to restore civilian rule as soon as possible".

The head of the cabinet of ex-soldiers and technocrats, drawing the attention to the preparations of a "constituent assembly", called understanding from friendly countries. The understand expected by the military means the changement of the critical attitude of international organizations such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament as well as the national assemblies of European countries.



As mentioned in our preceding BULLETINS, the European Parliament had adopted on April 10, 1981 a resolution asking the European organizations, the Commission, the Council of Ministers and member states to take their responsibilities by notifying the Turkish Government that the association between Turkey and the Community would be immediately suspended if the democratic rights and processes were not re-established within two months.

On the other hand, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe expelled the representatives of the Turkish military junta from its membership during its debates in May 1981.

The Turkish case will be again on the agendas of the both parliamentary bodies in autumn 1981. The Council of Europe will debate upon the definitive expulsion of Turkey from its membership, that is to say, putting an end to the presence of the Foreign Minister of the Junta in the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

For this reason, Uluşu resorted at his press conference to falsifications in order to manipulate the European public opinion and parliamentarians and claimed: "While establishing peace and security in the country, the rule of law and order have always been given due attention, extraordinary courts have not been set up and trials are conducted by independent judges. This fact must not be ignored. We hope that the politicians of the friendly countries will adequately evaluate this important matter."

If the military tribunals of martial law are not extraordinary courts which are formed of the army officers under the order of the army commanders, what kind of a tribunal are they?

The real character of these courts have been evaluated by the International Commission of Jurists of which the report on the subject takes place in the following pages of the BULLETIN.

It is these tribunals which are still trying more than 2,500 persons under the menace of death sentence. Moreover, ten of them have already been condemned and executed at gallows.

It is these tribunals which are still trying the distinguished intellectuals, politicians, trade-union leaders, journalists and writers under the menace of heavy prison terms.

With the purpose of convincing the European public opinion of its good will, the five-man "National Security Council", ruling military junta of Turkey, has finally staged the first act of the game of "Passage to Democracy".

The chief of the Junta, General Kenan Evren had announced earlier that the military would prove its good will with the inauguration of a "Constituent Assembly" in Autumn to draft a new Constitution for the country.

The "Constituent Assembly Law" announced on June 30, 1981, said the Assembly will comprise of the five-man NSC itself with binding powers along with a 160-member "Consultative Assembly", made up of representatives of the provinces.

The Consultative Assembly (the lower chamber) will comprise of 120 members to be nominated by the NSC from among candidates put forward by provincial governors and a further 40 will be directly appointed by the Council itself.

At first sight, the NSC seems to have ample "raw materials" to go on with, as the number of applicants for seats was disclosed to have exceeded eleven thousands when the deadline expired at midnight of August 15, 1981. As a first step, the provincial governors will nominate 360 candidates from among them.

The number of seats allocated to the representatives of 67 provinces of Turkey were set according to their populations. All the members will have to be University graduates with a minimum age of thirty. But an important feature of the law is that "those who were members of political parties on September 11 (a day before the coup d'état) last year are barred from the Assembly.

But two important features of the law make it clear that the 160-man Consultative Assembly will serve to the Junta solely as a puppet in order to create the image of "orientation to a parliamentary democratic system" and to calm the world democratic forces who condemn the junta for having suppressed the parliamentary work.

First of all, the law bars "those who were members of political parties on September 11 (a day before the coup) last year" from the Assembly. So, all dynamic forces of the country are kept out of the so-called legislative works. Even if not being affiliated to any political party on September 11, 1980, anyone who has the conviction of keeping the democratic rules of the suppressed Constitution will not be admitted to take part in the "lower house".

Secondly, the Law, as made clear by Evren before, grants total power to the NSC within the Constituent Assembly which would function as an upper house. The bills, to be proposed by the "Consultative Assembly, the Government and the NSC, will be enacted with the approval of the NSC. The NSC will be able to make amendments which will be binding and final.

The Law set the first task of the Constituent Assembly as drafting a constitution, which will be submitted to a referendum, and only after that "in line with the provisions of the future constitution" will the Assembly set itself to the task of legislating the Political Parties Law. The Election Law will be next in line and the Constituent Assembly would then continue as a normal legislative body until it turns its tasks over to the next "democratically" elected parliament.

In order to save the face, the NSC will no doubt be in need of some "political celebrities" in the absence of the now-disgraced politicians who were barred from the projected assembly. In fact, many former politicians who are celebrated by their conservative and even reactionary ideas and who were not member of any political parties on September 11, 1980 have applied for the membership of the Constituent Assembly. Along with them and some conservative academicians, the junta counts on another category believed to be groomed for membership from among the retired army officers and young bureaucrats invested with appropriate powers to run the day to day affairs of the state since the coup.

Thus, as stressed by the ANKA News Agency, the product of such an Assembly, that is the shape of Turkey's "new democracy" can be expected to be in the image of its creator, the Turkish Army.

Internal settlements of the Army

The meeting of the Supreme Military Council, bringing together the highest ranking officers of the Armed Forces, was also another center of attention at the beginning of August 1981 as the observers waited to see how the country's military rulers would overcome the thorny issue of blocked promotions.

Though the retirements of General Nurettin Essin, the Commander of Land Forces and General Sedat Celasun, the Commander of Gendarmerie, both the members of the five-man military junta, were normally due for November of last year and early this year, the chief of Junta General Evren had announced that the annual routine of promotions and retirements would not be heeded so as to preserve the coherence of the National Security Council and pre-empt embarrassing speculations.

Another strong man, General Necdet Uruğ, the Commander of the First Army and of the Martial Law in Istanbul area, was the most senior of the generals up for the promotion and normally the Command of Land Forces was to be taken over by him. But as the normal rung for that promotion remained occupied by the suspended retirement of General Ersin, the way out of the impasse hinged on the ability of the Supreme Military Council to persuade General Uruğ to make do, for the time being, with the post of Deputy Commander of Land Forces, a post created last year for all the four armies, apparently with such a possibility in mind.

An added advantage offered to General Uruğ, seems to be the position of the Secretary General of the National Security Council, which its present holder, General Haydar Saltık is said to have accepted to vacate in exchange for the Command of the First Army, the rearing ground for the ultimate command posts.

Generally new "brain" of the 5-man junta, General Uruğ is considered more militarist than his predecessor and a hardening is expected as regards the day to day affairs of the State, mainly the so-called "anti-terrorist" operations.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS
COMMENTS THE STATE MACHINERY IN TURKEY

GENEVA (ITA) - The International Commission of Jurists has published a study on "The Legal Situation in Turkey" which had been presented as a memorandum to the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in April 1981.

Below we give the commentaries on the "State machinery of Turkey" after the military *coup d'état* of September 12, 1980:

"The Legislative Arm

"The parliament and government established in accordance with the 1961 Constitution were dissolved and replaced by the National Security Council as from 12 September 1980. The Council is made up of the Chief of the General Staff and the Commanders-in-Chief of the Army, Air Force, Navy and Gendarmerie. General Evren announced the same day that the NSC, which he chaired in his capacity as Chief of the General Staff, had 'provisionally' assumed legislative and executive power pending the establishment of a new parliament and government.(1)

"Legal force was given to this arrangement by three instruments enacted by the NSC, the first being the 'Rules of Procedure for the NSC in its law making capacity'(2) the second the 'Law on the Constitutional Order' which stipulates that 'the powers and functions assigned by the (1961) Constitution to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey... shall, as from 12 September 1980, be temporarily exercised by the National Security Council'(3) and the third, a law of 12 September 1980 confirming the members of the NSC in their posts by stipulating that they will continue to carry out their duties as members of the Council until such time as the 'Grand National Assembly of Turkey effectively resumes its work'(4).

"The NSC has also given itself the power to revise the 1961 Constitution which, as stated in the Law on the Constitutional Order, remains in force (Art.1). The same law stipulates that if there is any discrepancy or contradiction between the provisions of the Constitution on the one hand and those of laws, decisions or communiques promulgated by the NSC, the latter shall be deemed 'constitutional amendments' (Art.6). It should also be pointed out that the same law prohibits all appeals to the Constitutional Court to annul NSC instruments (Art.3).

"It is clear from this that the NSC enjoys full power to legislate and to amend the Constitution, at least in this initial period of the transitional regime.

"The second phase of that period will begin, apparently, with the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, scheduled, 'barring unforeseen obstacles', for September or October 1981, as General Evren has just publicly announced. He also announced that the political parties, whose activities are suspended and will remain so until the new Constitution and the laws referred to below are adopted, will not be allowed to sit in the Constituent Assembly.(5)

"The Constituent Assembly will be able to assist in the drafting of the new constitution and of the laws governing the electoral system, political parties, associations, public meetings and demonstrations and labour relations (strikes, lock-outs, collective bargaining, etc). The bills it drafts will be submitted for approval to the NSC, whose decision shall in all cases be final.(6)

"In addition, it should be noted that there is a further bill whose scope is no less significant than that of the bills just listed and which is not included among those that will be drafted with, at the very least, the Constituent Assembly's 'participation'. This is the Emergency Powers Bill, which confers full powers on the government for use in the event of national emergencies or disasters and/or in time of economic crisis, and enables it to impose a set of civic and material obligations and responsibilities on the citizens. This Bill, drafted by the Ministry of Justice, will soon be submitted to the government for consideration.(7) It is therefore likely to become law even before the Constituent Assembly is convened.

"It should further be noted that, contrary to the statements of General Evren and General Saltık referred to in paragraph 1 above, the laws governing associations, freedom to meet and form associations and the bill to amend labour legislation are being drafted by the government. It would accordingly seem that they are going to be passed by the NSC even before the Constituent Assembly is convened.

"The Executive Arm

"The executive in the present as in the previous system is bicephalous and consists of the head of state and the Council of Ministers. But the dominant partner is the head of state because, firstly, he is Chief of the General Staff and Chairman of the National Security Council, and, secondly, the powers and duties formerly conferred on the President of the Republic are expressly vested in him by Article 2 of the Law on the Constitutional Order. On the other hand, that same law does not unequivocally recognise the Council of Ministers as an organ of state. The only references to it are in Articles 4 and 5 of that law and Articles 18 and 19 of the 'Rules of Procedure', and then indirectly.

"As far as relations between the NSC and the government are concerned, the 'Rules of Procedure' place the latter under the control of the former.(8)

"Furthermore, the legal responsibility of the Council of Ministers is largely revoked or suspended for the transitional period, for the Law on the Constitutional Order prohibits all appeals to annul Council of Ministers decrees (Art. 4). Similarly, it is henceforth forbidden to request the Council of State (the highest administrative court) to suspend the implementation of ministerial decisions affecting the status of public service personnel (Art.5).

"With regard to the government, consideration must be given firstly to the new relationship which has been established between the central government and the autonomous local authorities, and then to changes in the relationship between the civilian and military authorities.

"In the first field, local independence is being reduced or removed by the central government: the NSC has, in fact, removed all the mayors from office and announced the dissolution of all municipal and provisional assemblies. (9) This is a temporary measure for the duration of the 'transitional' regime. The NSC's aim here is to create impartial and 'non-partisan' local authorities. To this end, new mayors were appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, whose Directorate of Local Government announced at the end of November that appointments had been made to 54 out of the 67 provincial administrations.(10)

"Although these measures are temporary and may be explained by the present emergency, a tendency to perpetuate them is nonetheless visible. Thus the NSC's Administrative Affairs Committee in a report to the NSC on the 'reorganisation of public administration' recommends abolishing municipal elections and adopting a system of appointing mayors.(11)

"Concerning changes in the relationship between the civilian and military authorities, mention must first be made of a temporary measure placing the General Security Directorate under the control of the Gendarmerie.(12) But the shift in the balance of power between the two emerges much more clearly from the new legislation on martial law commanders. The essential features of that legislation, which is no longer temporary, are as follows:

"Firstly, the responsibilities of the martial law commanders for security and consorship have been extended. The Law of 19 September 1980 amending the Martial Law Act (13) empowers commanders to request the immediate dismissal of any national or local government staff whose continued employment would be 'undesirable' or 'of no value' (Art.1); to censor or suspend any kind of publication (newspapers, magazines, books, etc); to prohibit the circulation and communication of printed matter; to order the seizure of any kind of printed matter, including musical records and tapes; to halt the operations of printing works and recorded music firms that have printed or published such material; to forbid strikes, lock-outs, trade union activities, public meetings and demonstrations, as well as the activities of associations; to suspend teaching in secondary schools and universities; to request the authorities of such institutions to expel pupils and students whose presence in a region where martial law is in force is deemed incompatible with the maintenance of public order, etc.(Art.2). The new law also eases restrictions on the use of firearms by the police (Art.3). The duration of detention without charge is raised initially to 30 days,(14) and may be extended to 90 days, by a recent amendment to the Martial Law Act.(15)

"Secondly, the changes in the superiors to whom the martial law commanders are responsible need to be noted. Unlike the previous system, in which the Prime

Minister was responsible for co-ordination between the martial law commanders in the various regions, and in which the commanders themselves were directly answerable to the Prime Minister, a new law replaces the Prime Minister by the Chief of the General Staff.(16) Henceforth, therefore, the martial law commanders will be responsible to, and their activities co-ordinated by, the military hierarchy alone (Arts. 2 and 3).

"A second change, made by the Law of 15 November 1980, concerns the answerability of the martial law commanders and makes it impossible to appeal to the courts against administrative acts by the commanders. The Law stipulates that 'no proceedings may be instituted with a view to annulling administrative actions taken by martial law commanders under the provisions of the present act, nor can they be held civilly liable for personal fault'(Art.7).

"The Judicial Arm

"The most striking change in this field is the virtually complete suspension of judicial review of the legislative and executive processes. The Law on the Constitutional Order prohibits any appeal to the Constitutional Court to challenge the constitutionality of 'communiqués, decisions, decrees and laws' promulgated by the NSC (Art.3). All right of appeal to the Council of State against NSC acts, against Council of Ministers decrees and against 'orders issued by any of the Ministeries is also revoked' (Art.4). The law also contains a provision on ministerial decisions regarding the personal status of civil servants, the effect of which is to deprive the latter, if not of the right to appeal to the Council of State for a decision to be reversed, at least of the right to request that the implementation of administrative decisions affecting them be postponed (Art.15). This is simply a temporary regulation that will not outlast the transitional regime.

"With regard to criminal justice, consideration may be given to the somewhat different pattern that is emerging from the legislation introduced since the military take-over and which is likely to affect the military government's successor.

"Firstly, there is a trend towards extending the purview of military justice at the expense of civil justice. This is due in part to the fact that all Turkish provinces are at present under martial law. The NSC was therefore obliged, immediately after the take-over, to set up new military courts in the new martial law regions.(17) The new law has also extended the substantive and territorial jurisdiction of the military courts when martial is in force. The NSC's afore-mentioned decision not only gives the martial law courts jurisdiction over the offences detailed in the Martial Law Act, but also adds a further list of crimes, including 'any kind of crime against the Republic, against the NSC or its communiqués, orders and decisions, against the integrity, indivisibility and independence of the fatherland and the nation, and against national security, as well as crimes likely to subvert fundamental rights and freedoms'..(18) This extension of the scope of military justice is legalised and even accentuated by the law amending the Martial Law Act (19), which was followed by another of similar scope.(20) Furthermore, the Military Court of Cassation has strengthened this trend by its decision that military courts shall be empowered to try the 'ideological offences' provided for in Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Criminal Code.(21)

"The second trend concerns the relationship between the judiciary and the executive and consists in increasing the former's subordination to the latter, particularly as regards military justice. Shortly after the take-over, the NSC assumed control over the appointment and dismissal of judges in the martial law courts.(22) This power was subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Defence, which must act in consultation with the Chief of the General Staff.(23)

"But none of this prevents the NSC from acting directly either to appoint new judges to the military courts or to transfer them, whenever it considers such action is called for.(24)

"Still in the field of criminal justice, a further new departure since the military take-over has been to increase the severity of sentences by amending the Turkish Criminal Code.(25)

"To conclude, let us briefly consider the changes in both civil and military criminal procedure resulting from a series of new laws amending earlier legislation:

"Under the Law of 19 September 1980

"The martial law commander is empowered to interpret the law's provisions and decide whether a case should be brought before a civil or military court (Art.8, amending Art. 15/2, 3 and 4 of the Martial Law Act).

"Prison sentences passed by military courts under martial law may neither be suspended nor converted into fines (Art. 10, amending the former Art. 17).

"The identity of an informer in a case may not be revealed, even during a trial, without his consent (Art. 11, amending Art. 18/c).

"Crimes for which the penalty is a prison sentence not exceeding 3 years may be tried in absentia (Art. 11, amending Art. 18/1)

"The right of appeal to the supreme court against prison sentences not exceeding 3 years is abolished (Art. 11, amending Art. 18/n).

"Under the Law of 14 November 1980

"Martial law courts under a single judge are established and are empowered to try offences for which the maximum penalty is five years' imprisonment (Art.4).

"The discretionary power of judges to lighten the sentences on accused persons whose conduct during the hearing is good is abolished (Art.5).

"The duration of adjournments in hearings and adjournments for the defence to prepare pleadings is reduced respectively to 30 days and 15 days (or 30 days in the case of mass trials) (Art. 6/k).

"The above two laws amend the Martial Law Act of 1971. To them should be added the following two laws which were introduced subsequently:

"Law of 7 January 1981

"This law amends the Code of Criminal Procedure and makes two essential changes. Firstly, it revises the procedure for challenging judges, the aim being to forestall excessive questioning by the accused or his lawyer. Secondly, it allows a trial to continue in the absence of the defendant.(26)

"Law of 21 January 1981

"This law amends criminal procedure in military courts and merely extends the changes made by the Law of 7 January 1981 to the field of military justice.(27)

Notes and References

- 1) Radio and television broadcast by General Evren, 12 September 1980.
- 2) Official Gazette (OG) of 28 September 1980-17119.
- 3) Art. 2 of the Law of 27 October 1980, No.2324 (OG,28 October 1980 - 17145).
- 4) Law on the National Security Council, 12 December 1980, No.2356 (OG,12 December 1980 - 17188(b)).
- 5) Taken from General Evren's speech at Konya (see La Presse turque of 16/1/1981).
- 6) Press conferences given by General H. Saltık on 28 October 1980 and 1 November 1980 (See Le Monde of 30 October 1980 and the Turkish daily Milliyet of 2 and 23 November 1980) and General Evren's speech at Konya (cited above).
- 7) See statement issued by the Ministry of Justice (Turkish daily Cumhuriyet of 29 January 1981).
- 8) Articles 18 and 19 of the Rules of Procedure, amended by NSC Decision No.10 dated 25 February 1981 (OG,3 March 1981 - 17268).
- 9) Law of 25 September 1980, No.2303 (OG,29 September 1980 - 17120) and Law of 25 September 1980, No.2304 (OG,29 September 1980 - 17120).
- 10) Milliyet, 25 November 1980.
- 11) Milliyet, 1 February 1981.
- 12) Communiqué No.9 and Decision No.1 of the NSC (OG,12 September 1980 - 17103(b), and 14 September 1980 - 17105).
- 13) Law No.2301 (OG,21 September 1980 - 17108).
- 14) NSC Decision No.8/12-1633 (OG,17 September 1980 - 17108).

- 15) Law of 7 November 1980, No.2337 (OG, 8 November 1980 - 17154).
- 16) Law of 14 November 1980, No.2342 (OG,15 November 1980 - 17161).
- 17) NSC Decision No.7 of 14 September 1980 (OG,15 September 1980 - 17106).
- 18) Ibid.
- 19) Law No.2301 of 19 September 1980 (OG,21 September 1980 - 17112). See in particular the amendments concerning Articles 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the Martial Law Act of 1971.
- 20) Law No.2310 of 8 October 1980 (OG,10 October 1980 - 17131/b).
- 21) Decision of the 4th Chamber of the Military Court of Cassation, 7 October 1980 (Cumhuriyet, 24 October 1980).
- 22) NSC Decision No.6, 14 September 1980 (OG,15 September 1980 - 17106).
- 23) Art.4 of the Law of 19 September 1980, No.2301, amending Article 11/2 of the Martial Law Act (OG,21 September 1980 - 17112).
- 24) A few examples:
 NSC Decision No.41/25496. 19 January 1981 (OG,21 January 1981 - 17227).
 NSC Decision No.42, 23 January 1981 (OG.28 January 1981 - 17204).
 NSC Decision No.43, 5 February 1981 (OG.10 February 1981 - 17247).
 NSC Decision No.46 (OG. 3 March 1981 - 17268).
- 25) Law of 12 January 1981, No.2370 (OG.10 January 1981 - 17216).
- 26) Law of 7 January 1981, No.2369 (OG.10 January 1981 - 17216).
- 27) Act of 21 January 1981, No.2376 (OG.23 January 1981 - 17229).

ON THE OPPRESSION OF THE KURDISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

LAHTI, Finland (ITA) - The International Writers' Reunion was held on June 15-19, 1981 in Lahti, Finland. During this meeting, Mr. Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, Kurdish author of Turkey who is actually in Sweden, gave the following speech on the oppression of the Kurdish language and literature in Turkey:

"Please let me first ask you some questions:

" - Can you imagine a language in which it is completely forbidden to write?

" - Can you imagine a literature which is not allowed to be written or read?

" - Can you imagine a culture that has been threatend by extermination for more than half a century?

" - Can you imagine a people with a population of more than 10 million, that is not allowed to use its own language, its literature and its culture?

" - Can you imagine millions of children who are not allowed in school to study in their own mothertongue, but have to use a foreign language?

" - Can you imagine a nation that has signed all international laws and treaties on Human Rights but yet tries to exterminate a culture, kill a literature and forbid a language before the rest of the world with all its democratic and Human Rights organisations?

"Perhaps these questions and their implications seem unbelievable and untrue. Perhaps you began to think that these questions belong to some ancient mythological tales from some barbarian days long ago.

"But neither those questions nor their content belong to prehistory. They belong to our days, the twentieth century, and they are about the Kurdish language, the Kurdish culture and the Kurdish literature, that has been totally forbidden by the Turkish state which includes northern Kurdistan.

"I am going to tell you about the undemocratic and inhuman repression that is being used by the Turkish state against the Kurdish people, the Kurdish language, the Kurdish culture and the Kurdish literature.

A Totally Forbidden Language

"The Kurdish language is an Indo-European language that is one of the three old major languages in the Middle East (the two other being Arabic and Persian). After 1071 when Turkish tribes began to settle in Anatolia, the Turkish language became the forth major tongue in the Middle East.

"The Kurdish language is spoken by about 20 million people living in Kurdistan, that has been divided between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Kurdish minorities also exist in the Soviet Union and Lebanon. Since the middle of the 1960's many Kurdish immigrants live in every country of western Europe and Australia.

"In northern Kurdistan, a Turkish colony since 1923, about 10 million Kurds are living; which is more than half of the total Kurdish population. There are also about 1 million Kurds living in different parts of Anatolia because they were exiled from Kurdistan by the old Ottoman empire and the Turkish republic. Some of them also moved there during recent years in search of employment.

"As I have already said, about 10 million Kurds live in northern Kurdistan although their language is completely forbidden since 1923. During the feudal Ottoman empire every language spoken within the territory of the empire and among them Kurdish, were allowed. But when the Turkish republic was formed, the Kurdish language was forbidden throughout northern Kurdistan. This situation has continued up until today and the Kurdish language is still forbidden.

"It is not allowed to write or to publish books in Kurdish. It is not allowed to print Kurdish papers or magazines. It is not allowed to even write private letters in Kurdish. And it is not allowed to do any research on the Kurdish language.

"The Turkish government has continually attempted to exterminate the Kurdish language and assimilate the Kurdish people with the Turks. The Turkish government also uses all facilities possible, such as education, mass media and different kinds of oppression to fulfil this aim.

The Only Forbidden ABC-Book

"In my country you are not even allowed to write and publish an ABC-book in Kurdish. I am fully aware that it is not proper to use oneself as an example. But since in northern Kurdistan there is only one example of an ABC-book and this example involves myself, I just simply have to use myself as an example. And this is the case:

"As a Kurdish author I felt the responsibility to my people and my language and I decided in the middle of the sixties to write an ABC-book in Kurdish for Kurdish children and illiterates. The book called ALFABE was published in 1968 in Istanbul, Turkey. This was a great event for the Kurdish people and the Turkish government. Because this book was the only Kurdish ABC-book in northern Kurdistan, every Kurdish child and adult greeted it with great joy. On the other hand the Turkish government reacted strongly towards me and towards the book. After two days, two courts, one in Istanbul, the other in Diyarbakır (the main city in Kurdistan) banned the book and declared it illegal throughout Turkey. Also, the Turkish authorities accused me of trying to split Turkey and form an independent Kurdish state with this little ABC-book of only 64 pages. Because of this accusation I was kept in prison for four months. The book is still forbidden in Kurdistan and all of Turkey. All this for only one reason: the ABC-book is written in Kurdish and the Kurdish language is forbidden in Turkey.

"So, this Kurdish ABC-book is, as far as I know, the only ABC-book in the world that has been forbidden. I have never heard of anything like it anywhere in the world, not even in South Africa. This is a scandal and a black sin against Humanity and Human Rights and the responsibility rests on the Turkish government.

"Last year the second edition of this ABC-book was published in Sweden thus becoming the only Kurdish ABC-book in Europe. Kurdish children and adult anal-phabets in Europe began to use it too.

Oppression of the Culture

"It is not only the Kurdish language that is oppressed in northern Kurdistan and all of Turkey but also the ancient Kurdish culture. Like all people throughout the world, we too have special traditions and folklore, which the Turkish state is trying to exterminate. Because of the Turkish governments' rrasistic policy, a Kurd is even not allowed to say 'I am a Kurd'.

"Because the Turkish government decided to assimilate the Kurdish people with the Turks, they want the Kurdish people to forget their culture, their traditions, their folklore and lose their national identity in order to feel like Turks.

"This is another crime that the Turkish government commits against Humanity and Human Rights.

"We consider all cultures to be common goods, belonging to all human beings in all the world. Everyone regardlessly of country and culture can learn to

know each other by giving and taking from each others cultures and by knowing and studying each others traditions and folklore. Thus culture forms a very big part in creating friendship and a wider understanding between people from different countries.

"This is why the crime committed by the Turkish government against the Kurdish people is a crime not only against the Kurdish people but against all human beings in the whole world.

The Forbidden Literature

"The Kurdish literature is forbidden in northern Kurdistan as well as the whole of Turkey. We have a very rich folk literature and a very old classical literature. Folk tales and classical poems are the two basic elements in the Kurdish literature. But it is not allowed to write or publish Kurdish poetry nor folk tales. It is not allowed to do any research on the Kurdish literature. Because the Kurdish language is forbidden, it is not allowed to develop the old literature and create a modern Kurdish literature. The younger generations are not allowed to write short stories, novels or poems in Kurdish.

"If a Kurd does write and publish in Kurdish, he or she will risk prison, oppression etc. The Turkish authorities will immediately ban the Kurdish publication and the Kurdish people will not have the opportunity to read it.

"In recent years some collections of Kurdish poems and short stories have been published, but they were all banned and burned by the Turkish police. There are some Kurdish books published abroad, for instance in Europe, but the Kurdish people in Kurdistan are not allowed to import and read them. It is not only forbidden to publish Kurdish books in Turkey, but it is also forbidden to receive Kurdish books, papers, records, cassettes etc. from abroad. The Turkish government decided in 1967 to forbid the import of anything of Kurdish origin published abroad.

"This suggests that the Turkish government has decided to exterminate the Kurdish literature. This is a crime against Humanity and Human Rights. We all know that literature, any literature, is an important platform where people meet, learn to know each other, understand the problems of one another and explore the traditions of other people. Through literature there is a creative exchange of cultures between nations and therefore literature is of common interest for every human being in the world. Because of this, the crime committed by the Turkish government by forbidding and attempting to exterminate the Kurdish literature, is a crime not only against the Kurdish people but to all human beings.

The Children Have to Study in a Foreign Language

"Kurdish is the mothertongue and spoken language throughout Kurdistan. Every Kurdish child uses it at home with his family and in the streets with his friends. But when they become seven years of age and begin school, they are forced to talk and read in Turkish, although Turkish is a completely foreign language to them. Kurdish and Turkish are two entirely different languages. Kurdish belongs to the Indo-European language family while Turkish is an Ural-Altai language. The difference between Kurdish and Turkish is like that of English and Arabic or French and Swahili.

"I do not think that it is very hard to understand how difficult it must be for the schoolchildren to be forced to talk and read in a completely foreign language. This is a severe form of torture against children and this is another crime against humanity. It is hardly to be found anywhere else in the world, but this is the situation the Kurdish children have to face in northern Kurdistan. This crime is committed against them before all people in the world and before all organisations defending democracy and Human Rights."