

# Dr. Ismail Besiki To the Judges

The following is a shortened version of the preliminary statement made by Dr. Besiki on April 1990 to the Turkish Court. He was arrested in February 1990 following the publication and subsequent confiscation of his book *Interstate Colony — Kurdistan*. He was charged with "disseminating propaganda and undermining national pride." He has been imprisoned by the Turkish authorities since 1971. He has recently been sentenced to 100 years in prison.

## To the Judges: A science that is incapable of criticising official ideology cannot progress

This is not the first time that I have been tried for my studies on the Kurdish question and scientific concepts. I have appeared in various courts on various dates since 1967. The contents of the indictments arraigned on these occasions has never changed. Since the late sixties the same allegations have been repeated in the same terminology using the same concepts:

"Citizens of the Turkish Republic are referred to as Turkish. There is no nation in Turkey except the Turkish nation and no language except Turkish. The existence of another nation or another language cannot be accepted. Every person who is a subject of the Turkish state and everyone who is bound to the state through citizenship is Turkish. Not differentiated in language, religion, sex or race everyone is Turkish. Whatever their ethnic origin.

The basic principle accepted by the constitution is that everyone is Turkish. All Turks are equal in political rights. It is an offense to say there is a nation other than the Turkish nation or a language other than the Turkish language or a culture other than Turkish culture or to defend this language and culture."

The Turkish state and its official ideology denies the existence of the Kurdish nation and the Kurdish language. The Kurds are considered to be a Turkish tribe, the Kurdish language a dialect of Turkish. In this way sociological realities are denied by means of official ideology. Official ideology is not just any ideology. Official ideology implies legal sanction. Those who stray outside the boundaries of official ideology are shown the way to prison. The constraints of official ideology obstruct the development of science. This pressure paralyzes thought and cripples and blunts minds. These qualities of science and official ideology have become more obvious in recent years.

As I pointed out above, the contents of the charge sheets have not changed since 1967. However, the subjects and contents of my writings and the social and political understanding therein have changed considerably. For instance the writings published in 1990 bear little or no resemblance to the articles published in 1967. The new work is more correct and coherent. It is plain that the chains that crippled and enslaved thought and language have now been broken and are no longer held in such regard. This is one of the most important facts of the process beginning in the late 60s and continuing to the present day.

It is at this point that I feel it is necessary to touch on the concepts of legality and legitimacy. I do not share the views expressed in the indictment, since these views are an expression of official ideology and based on a lie and denial of the truth. These things may exist in law but they are not legitimate. Whether it is 5 generals or 450 deputies that pass it makes no difference. Legislation denying the existence of the Kurdish nation, language and culture can have no legitimacy at all. In law legitimacy is more important than legality.

The Kurdish population in the Middle East is in excess of 30 million. The Kurds have lived in Kurdistan for 4,000 years, whereas the Turks started to move from Central Asia through Khorasan into Iran, Kurdistan, Iraq, Syria and Anatolia in the second

half of the 11th century. To wipe out the Kurdish nation, its language and its culture is barbaric. There is no way such a process can be approved by public consciousness. The Turkish nation does not deserve to be known as the perpetrator of such barbarism. In this respect there is a great difference between legality and legitimacy on the subject of the Kurdish question. In present day this difference, this contradiction has become more striking and has caught the imagination of public opinion.

All over the world political and social currents like liberation struggles, struggles for self-determination and human rights are gaining strength. These struggles have also, undoubtedly, influenced Kurdish society. In recent years the Kurdish people have entered a process of awakening. The Kurds have realised that Kurdish society is a slave society, the like of which is not to be found anywhere in the world. The system which the imperialist states and the Turks, Arabs and Persians in league with them, have seen fit for the Kurds is a system of slavery. A nation whose name has been banned. A nation whose honour has been usurped, a nation whose self betrayal has been facilitated, a humiliated nation.

The Kurds have not only realised the state they are in and the status seen fit for them. They have also begun to feel shame at their slavery. In which case, they should remedy the situation. They need to find a way to live in dignity. The present struggle is a struggle for equality with all nations and peoples. And through this struggle world opinion is understanding more about the Kurdish question. The world is following the Kurdish struggle for democracy, freedom and equality as is progressive opinion in Turkey.

Let us consider the fact that the Turks came to the Middle East in the 11th century.

They have lived on these lands for less than a thousand years. They have humiliated and degraded the original owners of these lands, who have been here for 4,000 years. While there are independent states with populations of only 10,000 how have the Kurds, with a population of more than 30 million been made to submit to such a dishonourable life? These questions need to be examined.

Today there is a Turkish Kurdistan, an Iranian Kurdistan, an Iraqi Kurdistan and a Syrian Kurdistan. But the Kurds have no Kurdistan. Why not? Kurds also live in various republics of the Soviet Union. They live in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and in villages in the foothills of the Pamir mountains. Why? How did they get there? What was the reason for their exile? Why was a divide and rule policy used against the Kurds? Undoubtedly a nation which is the victim of a divide and rule policy has great weaknesses. What are the Kurds weaknesses? All these questions need to be investigated and scrutinised.

Turkish universities, Turkish professors, writers, Turkish political parties and the Turkish press have a widespread, accepted understanding. This is emphasised in the public prosecutor's indictment. According to this understanding everyone in Turkey is equal and no-one is subjected to different treatment due to their language or culture. Everyone can rise to high office in public service. No-one is prevented from doing so. For instance anyone can become a deput, minister, governor, judge, officer, professor etc. It is possible to give examples of this view:

"In the administration of Turkey there has never been in the past or present, a policy of exclusion based on a person's ethnic origin. Nobody has ever been prevented from entering parliament or reaching the highest posts in the state due to being of Kurdish origin." (Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Soysal. 'Separatism', *Milliyet* newspaper, 14/3/90)

"The Kurds are not deprived of any rights. No-one in Turkey has been deprived of the right to achieve high office

by claims of being a minority." (Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Soysal. *Milliyet* 1990, from a speech made at South-East Europe Minority Rights Conference in Copenhagen on 30 March and 1 April 1990)

"The Kurds have not been considered a minority in Ottoman or in Republican Turkey. Citizens of Kurdish origin have been able to take their place equally in the public and private sector." (Prof. Dr. Dogu Ergil, 'Eastern Question'. *Milliyet*, 23/3/90).

"The Turks and the Kurds have lived together for hundreds of years. Citizens of Kurdish origin can gain promotion in their chosen careers, in the military or civilian bureaucracy without encountering any obstacle. In today's Motherland Party government there are several ministers of Kurdish origin." (Ugur Mumcu. 'Where is the problem?' *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, 28/3/90)

"There is absolutely no difference between citizens living in the East and citizens in other regions...as democracy is based on the vote it results in a sharing of resources...Turks and Kurds share the same fate. We endure the problems of living in a poor country together. No one treats Easterners as second class citizens...There is no discrimination between Kurd and Turk." (Nazli Ilicak. Press summit in Presidential Palace, *Tercuman* newspaper, 8/4/90)

"Turkish society is not racist. Anyone who says 'I'm Turkish' is accepted as a member of society. It is written so in the constitution. Ataturk said, 'How happy is one who says I am a Turk' not 'How happy is one who is a Turk'. It is not a matter of race. In everyone's past there is some element of Turk, Laz, Georgian, Circassian, Kurd or other. They have become mixed up. There are those among us who have a different mother tongue. It is possible to meet migrants from Crete who speak no Turkish. This does not prevent them being one of us. Turks of Kurdish origin in our midst have become commanders, judges, MPs, ministers, prime minister, even president. They have achieved more high posts than their percentage of the population. There is no discrimination. While this is the state of affairs we are faced with a clandestine struggle in the south-east. There are no Muslim minorities in Turkey. The language spoken is Turkish. Everyone is obliged to learn this language. Primary education is compulsory. If there are people who don't know Turkish the fault lies with the teachers who didn't teach them or the students who didn't learn." (Ihsan Sabri Caglayangil. 'Turkey's security and an appraisal'. *Gunes* newspaper, 10/4/90)

It is necessary to point out that the professors, writers, journalists and bureaucrats' ideas are wrong. They emphasise that those 'of Kurdish origin', have equal rights with Turks and that they are able to achieve high office in the state apparatus. But they ignore the basic condition for this "equality". In Turkey a person "of Kurdish origin" who denies his identity becomes like a Turk and makes propaganda for Turkish nationalism can achieve anything. There is no doubt about that, but it is not equality. This means enslaving this society, destroying it, facilitating its self-betrayal and humiliating the nation and the people. According to Turkish university professors, the Turkish press, Turkish diplomats and Turkish writers this is "equality". One cannot claim that a person who is enslaved, who denies his identity, has equal rights with the person and the nation he tries to resemble. Democracy and its basic condition, equality is of course a universal concept, whereas the concept being propagated above can only be "equality according to the Turks" or "democracy according to the Turks".



It is emphasised that people from the East, or those of "Kurdish origin", can become MPs. But it should be realised that these people do not contest the elections as Kurds, they do not get elected as Kurds! In Turkey the Kurds are a nation which has had its identity usurped. When a child is born to Kurdish parents the child is registered as a Turk. From the Turkish constitution downwards all Turkish laws usurp the Kurdish identity. A Kurdish child is given a Turkish identity card. His or her Kurdish identity is objectively denied. After such a denial and a Turkicisation operation to say that all Turks are equal regardless of race, language or religion does not mean everyone is equal. This is undoubtedly not an objective equality but an ideological equality. In that case it is a constitutional and legal requirement that Kurds, those "of Kurdish origin", are Turkish. It is quite natural then, that after everyone is Turkicised at birth they should contest elections, become civil servants and achieve high office.

For a person to work in the state bureaucracy it is of course not enough for that person's Kurdish identity to be usurped. That person has to reject the characteristics of Kurdish society, has to say he is a Turk and with his ideas and actions put this over convincingly. Those who defend their Kurdish identity can get nowhere in Turkey. They cannot even become a caretaker or jailor, let alone a MP. There is only one thing these people can become: an accused person or a convict.

It is true that there are several ministers "of Kurdish origin" in today's government. But they achieved these positions because they denied their national identity and became slaves. For this reason, whenever there is the slightest national oppression of Turks in Bulgaria, Western Thrace (Greece), Cyprus, Azerbaijan etc. these "Turks" speak out. They defend the rights of these Turkish communities. However, when in Kurdistan the Kurds are faced with intense persecution and repression they remain silent.

In the 1980s over forty young people were tortured to death in the dungeons of Diyarbakir because they insisted on defending their identity and didn't sing the Turkish national anthem and take part in Ataturkist education. Ministers "of Kurdish origin" felt not the slightest need to intervene. In Southern Kurdistan the Kurds were massacred in their thousands with chemical weapons, tens of thousands were wounded and crippled and hundreds of thousands were forced to flee to Turkey in a wretched state. They were put behind barbed wire and treated like prisoners. They have not been recognised as political refugees. Of course, the ministers whose "Kurdish origin" is emphasised made no fuss about this. For professors, writers and the press to assert that everyone is equal and can become a MP or even a minister means nothing less than that they approve of the slave status seen fit for Kurdish people. This shows just how official ideology has blunted intellects. The fact that professors make such assertions shows just how official ideology has distorted science. A science that does not challenge and criticise official ideology has no chance of developing. It is easy to see that Turkish professors, journalists and writers have double standards. They opposed vehemently the Bulgarian state's claim that: "In Bulgaria there is no such ethnic group as the Turks. They are Bulgarians who were Turkicised by the Ottomans. Everyone in Bulgaria is of Bulgarian ethnic origin. Every Bulgarian is equal in regard to race, language or sex". They asserted that this was an example of racism and imperialism to be found nowhere else in the world. There, too, those who denied being Turkish could achieve high office. But this did not mean the Turks had equal rights. The professors, writers and journalists condemned the Bulgarian government's violations of human rights. They stressed the inequality of Bulgarians and Turks. They see as equality the much worse situation of Kurds vis-a-vis Turks which is much more obvious and has existed not just in recent years but for nearly seventy years. They boast that: "The Turks have never treated anyone differently on account of their ethnic origin". This is racism. Not to see other peoples as deserving rights they see fit for their own nation. And this racism is thoroughly systematized. For example, Bulgaria has been able to change its policy concerning the Turks whereas Turkey cannot even dare to think about the subject of the Kurds.

One shouldn't perceive racism as always being a matter of separate housing estates, separate restau-

rants, separate beaches etc. Turkish style racism means humiliating and looking down on the Kurdish language and culture i.e. everything Kurdish, and imposing the Turkish language and culture in its place, using state terror as the most effective tool in this process. In Turkey professors, writers and diplomats both perpetrate intensive racism and also start their articles by saying "Turks aren't racist". The Turks apparently count as one of their own anyone who says "I'm Turkish". This is not the point. Problems start when someone says "I'm Kurdish". This is when state terror is used to "transform Kurds to Turks".

This racist and double-standard approach is not reserved only for professors and writers. It has been defended by Turkish universities as a whole and a very large proportion of the Turkish press. Turkish political parties, Turkish workers' organisations, legal associations, the theology ministry and Turkish sports federations have also adopted this idea and approach.

Many judges criticized Bulgaria for its policies towards the Turks but when we say "the Kurds suffer severe persecution, state terror is being used against the Kurds. The Kurds are being assimilated", we are put on trial in front of these very same judges. The double standard evident in the thoughts and actions of these judges attracts attention of course. It is just such a system of justice which damages justice itself. This double standard approach doesn't stop there. Look at this example:

*"Recently you must surely have heard frequently people saying 'How can Turkey, which is under threat on account of the Kurdish question of self-determination, dare to base its own case in Cyprus on the same right?' Or words to that effect. Turkey's stand finds heart in the fact that in the administration, neither in the past, nor today, has there been a policy of discrimination based on ethnic origin. No one has been prevented from entering parliament or taking high office in the state because they were 'of Kurdish origin'. In other words, the exact opposite of the situation in Cyprus.*

*Yes, there are problems and especially in regard to the freedom to use the mother tongue there are definitely steps that must be taken. But these are not problems that cannot be solved within a framework of common sense that is not based on ethnic discrimination.*

*On account of this to draw parallels between the situation of citizens of Kurdish origin in Turkey and the situation of the excluded Turks in Cyprus is an ill-intentioned position that can be used as an excuse either to incite unnecessary division in Turkey or deliver the Turkish Cypriots into a Greek Cypriot Sultanate. Or it's just another way of weakening our just case by our own hand."*

*(Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Soysal. 'Separatism' Milliyet. 14/3/90)*

Here we have a mentality which needs to be examined and scrutinised closely. A comparison is being made between Turkish Cypriots and Kurds. It is being emphasized that the Kurds live in very good conditions while the Turks in Cyprus live in very bad conditions. In other words, that Turkish-Kurdish relations are run in a very democratic legislative framework whereas Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot relations are administered in a very anti-democratic legislative framework. This is not only the mentality of Prof. Soysal. It is the shared mentality of Turkish writers and the Turkish press. It is becoming increasingly the mentality of the state's official ideology. In this respect it needs to be examined.

For over 20 years intensive, widespread oppression has been practiced in Kurdistan. State terror has been adopted as a basic policy. The security forces, commandoes, gendarmes, police and counter-insurgency squads frequently raid villages. All the inhabitants are rounded up in the village square.

Children and women are lined up on one side and the men on the other. The men are then stripped naked. The men are tortured in front of their womenfolk and children. String is tied to the sexual organs of the men and the string is then given to the women. They are then made to parade around the village under rifle butts. This is undoubtedly humiliating and degrading treatment.

Did the Turkish Cypriots suffer such treatment I wonder? Whether before 1974, 1964 or 1958. So how can it be said that the legislation governing Turkish-Kurdish relations is democratic whereas that governing Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot relations was so anti-democratic?

In Kurdistan today human beings can easily be killed by the security forces without anyone asking questions. Sometimes people are killed to exact vengeance, sometimes to intimidate and threaten the people. Sometimes, too, commanding officers say "Bring some heads, then you can go on leave". Junior officer Riza Parlak said Gendarme private Nuri Kocak had been rewarded with 15 days leave by his commanding officer, Zahit Engin for killing two villagers. (Gunes14/3/1990)

When the relatives of those killed complain to the appropriate departments they get nowhere. No investigation or inquiry is started into either the commander who gave the order or into those killed.

When the situation is so clear, so strikingly manifest, how can the Turkish Cypriot community be compared with the Kurds in Kurdistan? Did the Greek Cypriots kill the Turkish Cypriots in such an arbitrary way, with no questions asked?

The state's counter-insurgency squads frequently disguise themselves as guerrillas and commit atrocities. The incident which took place on 21 January 1990 when 28 Kurds were massacred in Sete (Ikiyaka) village near Yuksekova was one such example (see "Towards2000", issue No 13, 25/3/90, page 26: "I didn't do it, I was beaten and made to appear on TV").

Sometimes, too, village guards in guerrilla garb are encouraged to kill patriotic Kurdish families. The slaughter of 3 people, two of them babies, in Hakkari in March was one such incident. The incident was reflected in the Turkish press as "Baby murderers



PKK". (Milliyet, 31/3/90). Subsequently it came to light that the crime had been committed by village guards. ("Towards 2000", issue No4.1/4/90)

Despite all the above Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Soysal is still able to compare Turkish-Kurdish relations favourably to Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot relations, since, we are told, those "of Kurdish origin" whose identity has been usurped can be elected to parliament. Presumably he thinks that once they can sing Kurdish folk songs everything will be peace and light.

In Cyprus prior to 1974 Turkish Cypriots could enter parliament as Turks. They could become ministers as Turks and the vice-president of Cyprus was a Turk. There was no question of the Turkish Cypriots being excluded.

It is necessary to ask the professors: In Turkey Kurds do not enter parliament as Kurds, they do not contest elections as Kurds because as soon as they are born they are registered as Turks. "Equality" begins after this usurpation. This is not, of course, equality, because equality is a fundamental principle of democracy, is a universal concept to which conditions cannot be attached.

Every year on 23 April Turkish Cypriot children come to Turkey and participate in the 23 April celebrations (International Children's Festival). The same people who say "we love children very much, we are the first state to give children a festival", show rifle butts to Kurdish children.

In Kurdistan the sole administrator is the military. They rule by decrees and orders. Governors have no say. People are forced to eat excrement to make them obedient and loyal to the state. After people are killed at random the army claims they were "PKK militants". Bodies are then burnt to eradicate evidence. Has any thing like this ever happened in Cyprus? How can such comparisons be made?

Israel cannot think of using chemical weapons against the Palestinians and the Americans were unable to use them in Vietnam but these weapons have been used on several occasions in Kurdistan.

Kurdistan is an international colony divided between four states. In fact Kurdistan is a country that is not even a colony. It is a nation without an identity, a nation that has had its identity usurped. There are great differences between Kurdistan and classical colonies. For instance between the way Britain administered India and the way the Turks administer Kurdistan. When Britain appointed a senior official preference was given to those who knew local languages and were familiar with local cultures. But when officials are appointed in Kurdistan knowledge of Kurdish and familiarity with Kurdish culture is not required since the Kurds are a nation under threat of being eradicated along with their language, culture, name and history.

Turkey guarantees legally and in practice the political, social and national rights of the Turkish Cypriots. Their rights are also guaranteed by international treaties. Whenever there is a violation of the rights of the Turkish Cypriots Turkey intervenes immediately to seek redress through diplomatic channels or, if necessary, by military means. The situation is the same for Turkish communities in other countries. Whenever any pressure is put on the Turks in Bulgaria or Western Thrace (Greece) Turkey immediately protests. The problem is taken to international assemblies and human rights organisations are alerted.

For the Kurds the situation is somewhat different. Since the Kurds have had the right to set up their own independent state usurped, whenever there is persecution there is no authority which can make a protest to the state concerned. As protests and condemnations from human rights bodies are unofficial the states persecuting the Kurds will ignore them.

The use of chemical weapons in Southern Kurdistan in 1988 was the greatest instance of genocide since Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. However the world's reaction was muted. Saddam Hussein's regime suffered no great condemnation. The Halabja massacre took place on 16 March 1988. On 20 March the Islamic Conference held a summit meeting in Kuwait. At the summit the Bulgarian government was condemned for changing the Turks' names and giving them Bulgarian ones. The Israeli government was condemned for persecuting the Palestinians and the Greek Cypriot government was condemned for not recognising the Turkish state of Northern Cyprus. The Soviet Union was condemned for its presence in Afghanistan but not a word was spoken about the geno-

cide perpetrated against the Kurds by the Iraqi regime. Not one leader of the 42 Islamic countries felt the need to put the subject on the agenda. For this reason Saddam Hussein's government was able to commit such crimes against the Kurds. If there were a member of an international body that could put the matter on the agenda they would not be able to behave in such an unrestrained manner. All this is a consequence of the division and parcelling up of Kurdistan.

Let's imagine for a moment that Israel used chemical weapons against the Palestinians. What would the world's reaction be? The world would be in uproar. There would be protests for weeks all over the world. Huge demonstrations would be held. There would also undoubtedly be protest meetings in Israel too, because one shouldn't forget that Israel is a democratic society and that it is possible for public reaction to show its opposition to government policies. Israel would be condemned and isolated from the international community, which it knows very well, so it would not even consider using chemical weapons.

However these weapons have been used in Kurdistan without resulting in great international protests whereas when an English (sic) journalist named Bazoft was executed in Bagdad the Western countries protested long and loud.

If even a small part of the persecution and genocide practiced in Kurdistan was applied in Cyprus against the Turkish Cypriots the Turkish government, political parties, universities and press would lead the protests. It would be wrong to criticize a professor or a writer for not supporting oppressed peoples and those suffering persecution because to support or not to support an oppressed people is a moral question. However if such a mentality tries to give lessons in democracy every day then it should be exposed for what it is. The racist and colonialist attitude and behaviour should be exposed. Official ideologists make their propaganda regularly whereas those who criticize are sent to prison. The Turkish press should remember Voltaire.

The opposition parties in Turkey have given the government a blank cheque saying "do as you wish, just stop these troubles, we won't ask any questions, don't worry".

There is something ironic about these words. The political parties in Turkey don't have the power to ask questions! Even though they have millions of votes they have no power. A few generals take power, detain the party leaders for a time and then send them home. There is no such thing in Turkish politics as resisting military coups. Surrendering to military coups is an important tradition in Turkish politics. Turkish politics is cowardly and sycophantic. The only freedom political parties have is to approve policies of persecution and tyranny. In Turkey Kurdistan policies are not government policies, they are army and MIT (National Intelligence Organisation) policies. In other words, state policies. Policies on Kurdistan are formulated by the National Security Council. These policies cannot be debated in parliament and as state policies have to be supported by opposition parties. In Turkey the government, opposition, political parties and parliament are a lot weaker than is thought. In Turkey the state has an illegal aspect, an illegal function and this is its powerful aspect. It is this illegal function of the state which dominates parliament. Turkish politics has yet to expose this illegal character of the state.

We have tried to give some examples of state terror in Kurdistan. One shouldn't perceive state terror as only physical oppression. One shouldn't neglect the mentality behind state terror, torture and oppression. This also needs to be examined. In my opinion "Understanding of science peculiar to Turks", "Understanding of democracy peculiar to Turks" and "Understanding of equality peculiar to Turks" etc. are important dimensions forming this mentality. The "national interest" can make it necessary to tamper with the facts, to distort the truth. The Turks need democracy but this democracy will include torture. Otherwise how will those who are "patriotic" be able to bring round those who are "unpatriotic" or "traitors".

Nationalism is a characteristic the Turks certainly won't relinquish but they also seem to feel it necessary to eradicate other people's national characteristics and to try to make them resemble themselves.

If the reporting of an incident conflicts with the national interest then that incident shouldn't be reported. This is the mentality behind state terror, oppression and torture. In this respect state terror in Kurdistan is formulated and reproduced with the

assistance of Turkish universities, the Turkish press, Turkish political parties and Turkish legal associations.

One of the concepts stressed in the indictment is that of "shared national joy and sorrow". According to this there is an indivisible, organic link between all citizens in pain, sorrow, joy and pride. It is emphasised that everyone is Turkish and that everyone shares common feelings in cases of the above feelings. In reality of course, this was not the case. For example during the war in Cyprus everyone was expected to assist Turkey and to publicise the justness of Turkey's action. When there was persecution of the Turks in Bulgaria everyone was expected to criticize Bulgaria and participate in the campaign against it. But if a Kurdish resident of Siirt or Hakkari tried to assist the Kurds fighting the Iraqi government by, for instance, sending medicine, he would be arrested and thrown into prison.

The situation of the Kurds who had to flee from Southern Kurdistan and take refuge in Turkey and that of the Turks who were sent from Bulgaria is informative. At first Turkey didn't want to accept the Kurds as refugees, and even returned some to Iraq. Later, for various reasons, Turkey allowed the Kurds to stay but rather than recognising them as refugees stuck them in camps behind barbed wire and treated them like prisoners of war.

Of course the Turks from Bulgaria were not treated in this way. Our "cousins" were assisted in all ways possible. Those with relatives in Turkey were allowed to stay with them, whereas the Kurds from Iraq were not allowed to stay with their relatives, or in other words, the Kurds in Northern Kurdistan were obstructed when they tried to help those who had fled from chemical bombardment. The Turkish government even announced that "Our doctors have carried out tests and have found no sign of the use of chemical weapons". They protected Iraq the perpetrators of genocide. A delegation of experts from the UN were denied permission to carry out tests on the Kurds, who were suffering the after effects of chemical weapons. As the Kurds have not been granted refugee status, aid from abroad is also not being accepted. The Turkish government says, "Send us the aid, we will distribute it to those in need". Foreign states, finding Turkey unreliable, are unable to send aid. They are not sure that such aid will reach the Kurds. The Turkish state prevents aid reaching the Kurds, stops Kurdish people in Turkey rendering assistance and then complains about the "financial burden" the Kurds have brought.

I want to dwell a little upon the concept of "national pride". Wanting the Kurdish people to be free, wanting them to live in equal conditions with the Turkish people is taken to be propaganda undermining the national pride of the Turks. In fact, demanding equality for the Kurdish people, or the removal of bans on Kurdish language and culture definitely cannot undermine the national pride of the Turks. On the contrary it would strengthen it since defence of human rights and freedoms strengthens national feelings.

The campaign in Germany against the Turks may well wound Turkish pride but why should the demand for Kurdish freedom wound Turkish feelings?

The fact that the United Nations and some member states are unable to send aid to the Kurdish refugees because they consider the Turkish state's promises lack credibility may well wound national pride.

Turkey, with its colony Kurdistan, certainly has no chance of taking a place amongst the democratic states of the West. It is becoming increasingly clear that Turkey is ruling a colony with a policy the like of which is not to be found anywhere in the world. Turkey will move further away from the West, from Europe, because at every international gathering it attends Turkey will face questions about its colony Kurdistan. Turkey's record on this subject is not without blemishes. It has much to answer for. The only way it will be able to avoid these questions is by taking care to stay away from these meetings. This is all I have to say at this stage of the proceedings.

With respect.

Ismail Besikci  
18 April 1990, Sagmalcilar Prison, C-13  
Bavrampasa, Istanbul