

**A PEACE STATEMENT
BY THE YOUNG TURKISH CYPRIOT LITERATURE AND ARTS MOVEMENT**

The Young Turkish Cypriot Literature and Arts Movement began twelve years ago. This young generation movement, born out of the pain of wars, initially began in poetry and then spread to the rest of the Arts.

The artists in this Movement have fought against chauvinism, militarism and the disappearance of the Cypriot culture. In that struggle they have published numerous literary and arts magazines, set up associations, organised artistic events and conferences.

The Turkish Cypriot artists have faced many difficulties in their struggle for peace, reapproachment between the two communities and the unification of Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot leadership, who have a repressive and chauvinist policy in the arts, have created an atmosphere of Mccarthysm. They have prevented contacts with Greek Cypriot artists and those wishing to participate in artistic events in South Cyprus.

One comes across examples of these repressive measures in Turkish Cypriot newspapers. These include the prevention of joint exhibitions of paintings, photography, cartoons, the performance of the Nicosia Turkish Council and Famagusta Emek theatres and folk dancing groups in the South. Other groups such as women and environmentalists have also been prevented from joint meetings. Many were organised under the auspices of the local councils and the UN. Others, amongst them artists, who have succeeded in going to the South from Europe, were accused of being traitors to their country and agents of the Greeks. (Toplum Postasi, March 1989)

The Turkish Cypriot Literature and Arts Movement is not an organisation. It is a movement of young artists who belong to various artistic organisations and are active in their respective fields. They work in conjunction with cultural organisations and publications in Cyprus, Turkey and England.

Since June 1988, their activities include the following: organising performances of poetry and music in Cyprus and England; exhibitions of paintings, concerts and performance of folk-dancing; expressing the aspirations of Turkish Cypriot artists within the context of the aims of PAND. They have also decided to take part in the cultural developments and festivals of peace organised by sister organisations in Cyprus, Turkey and England.

In August 1988, thirty-three prominent Turkish Cypriot writers, artists and intellectuals in a joint statement, expressed their wish for a peaceful resolution for Cyprus

in the Vassiliou-Denktaş talks. They also expressed their wish to work more closely with Greek Cypriot artists. Members of our Movement were amongst the thirty-three signatories. In addition, on 18th August 1988, at a meeting organised by the Council of Turkish Cypriot Cultural and Artistic Associations, at the premises of the Union of Turkish Cypriot Teachers', seven members of our Movement issued the following PEACE STATEMENT :

WE WANT A JUST AND LASTING PEACE

We categorically refuse to allow our art to become the tool of chauvinism, provocation for war and hostility. We demand:

i) the establishment without delay of a bi-communal, bi-zonal, independent and non-aligned Federal Republic of Cyprus;

ii) the dismantling and removal of the Sovereign British Bases and the arms and military forces which provoke wars on our island.

WE WANT TO LIVE AS TURKISH CYPRIOTS IN CYPRUS

We reject all cultural and arts policies, by other countries, which aim to eradicate Cypriot culture and the forced assimilation of the Turkish Cypriot community. We demand:

iii) that any attempts by the Turkish side to integrate the political and cultural identity of the Turkish Cypriot community be stopped;

iv) that the Greek Cypriot side guarantee the rights of security and equality for the Turkish Cypriot Community.

WE WANT ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE FREEDOM

We refuse to submit to repressive, discriminatory and slanderous attacks against socialist and humanist artists working for peace. We demand:

v) the provision of equal, independent, material sources for artistic creativity and the removal of anti-democratic laws;

vi) the reflection of rapprochement between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in the cultural and artistic fields.

WE WANT A CONTEMPORARY POLICY FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS

We demand respect for peace, democracy and human rights not only in our homeland Cyprus but in the rest of the world. We invite all artists and cultural organisations to join us.

MEHMET YASIN (poet)

ASIK MENE (painter)

NESE YASIN (poet)

CAN TUFAN (musician)

HAKKI YUCEL (poet/writer)

MEHMET BIRINCI (dancer/expert folk)

ALEV ADILOGLU (poet)