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Hunger strikes in Turkey

Sir—In your Dec 23/30 news item, you continue to do a service to those deprived of basic human rights in Turkey by publicising the views of such organisations as the World Medical Association¹ and the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.²

Although torture is a fact of life in Turkey, health professionals who raise their voices in protest at ill treatment of prisoners face arrest, physical assault, and imprisonment, and can themselves be tortured.^{1,3} The crimes of the Turkish state have been described as based on a fundamental failure to respect the right to think differently, with any opposition to the military-dominated status quo an invitation to terror and disappearance (www.geocities.com/hari6kumar/garbisprisons.html, accessed Jan 31, 2000). Protests over attempts to isolate prisoners in top-security prisons are part of a continuing campaign by prisoners and their families and supporters against the routine use of ill treatment as a punishment and as a psychological weapon to silence dissent before, after, and during trials and sentencing.

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has declared that Abdullah Ocalan, head of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), has the right to appeal against his death sentence on the grounds that he was denied a fair trial because of Turkish violations of the European Convention on Human Rights. A year ago, the European Union formally adopted Turkey as a candidate member. An insistence on respect for human rights is a condition of European Union membership. Unfortunately, if the Ilisu Dam project is anything to go by, western European governments are mainly concerned with the prospect of commercial gain from access to Turkish markets.

Lamentably, the UK government is showing the way with its intention to grant a UK£200 million export credit to Balfour Beatty for a project that will drown the historic town of Hasankeyf and leave up to 78 000 Kurds without homes or land.⁴ Doctors should express support for their persecuted Turkish colleagues, but the UK electorate as a whole must ponder the question, what price an unethical foreign policy?

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H C Bastian, Aldous Huxley, and Jonathan Osborne

Sir—The neurologist H C Bastian whose many works were reported by B H Jellinek (Dec 23/30, p 2180)¹ has the distinction of being mentioned in one of the more scientifically literate classics of twentieth-century literature, Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*.

"Philip was dining alone. In front of his plate half a bottle of claret and the water jug propped up an open volume. He read between the mouthfuls, as he masticated. The book was Bastian's *On the Brain*. Not very up-to-date, perhaps, but the best he could find in his father's library to keep him amused in the train. Halfway through the fish, he came upon the case of the Irish gentleman who had suffered from paraphasia, and was so much struck by it that he pushed aside his plate and, taking out his pocket book, made a note of it at once. The physician had asked the patient to read aloud a paragraph from the statutes of Trinity College, Dublin. 'It shall be in the power of the College to examine or not examine every Licentiate, previous to his admission to a fellowship, as they shall think fit.' What the patient actually read was: 'An the bee-what in the tee-mother of the trothodoodoo, to majoram or that emidrate, eni eni kratei, mestreit to ketra tontombreidei, to ra from treido a that kekritest.' Marvellous! Philip said to himself as he copied down the last word. What style! What majestic beauty! The richness and sonority of the opening phrase! 'An the bee-what in the tee-mother of the trothodoodoo.' He repeated it to himself. 'I shall print it on the title page of my next novel,' he wrote in his notebook."

Aldous Huxley, who may have known of Bastian's book through his grandfather, T H Huxley, who had debated in the 1870s with Bastian, took various liberties in quoting. The book's

real title is *The brain as an organ of mind*.² The passage is from the by-laws of the College of Physicians, and Huxley's changes make the opening words of the patient's reading sound more poetical, Bastian having, "An the be what in the temother of the trothodoodoo". Bastian himself was not entirely accurate in his transcription of this almost Joycean passage, which would be at home in *Finnegans Wake*. Cited as by "Dr Osborn", the case was taken from a neglected classic of neuropsychology, published in 1834 by a Dublin physician, Jonathan Osborne (1795–1864).³ Among other rich detail, the paper contains an early attempt at aphasia therapy, a field in which Bastian was influential.⁴ Osborne's patient had been fluent in French, German, and Italian, and on returning to Trinity College, Dublin, "his extraordinary jargon caused him to be treated as a foreigner".⁵ Although Osborne emphasises that in the opening line, "We observe . . . several syllables of frequent occurrence in the German language, which probably had made a strong impression on his memory," that is lost in Bastian's version, "ein einkrastrai" instead being rendered as the more Hellenic "eni enikrastrai".

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DEPARTMENT OF ERROR

Indinavir concentrations and St John's wort—In this Research letter by S Piscitelli and colleagues (Feb 12, 2000, p 548), the first sentence on p 548 should be "The AUC₀₋₈ of indinavir decreased by a mean (SD) of 54% (15%) (35.8 [13.0 to 15.6] [5.9]) after therapy with St John's wort (p=0.0008)."^{*}

Emphysematous pyelonephritis: a rare cause of pneumaturia—In this Case report by H Jain and colleagues (Jan 20, p 194), the third author's name was incorrect. It should be M Anthony Albornoz.

Bone-targeted therapy for advanced androgen-independent carcinoma of the prostate: a randomised phase II trial—In this article by Shi-Ming Tu and colleagues (Feb 3, p 336), the word placebo in figure 1 on page 338 should be replaced with control intervention.