

Youth: Country's future and the country's failure

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Turkish Daily News

ISTANBUL- Official ceremonies for the National Sovereignty and Children's Day, "Çocuk Bayramı", were held throughout the country and marked by speeches emphasizing that "Children are the future of the country".

As is now traditional, numbers of children visited the work places of some of the most powerful people in the land and had a taste of the adult world. Istanbul Governor Rıdvan Yenişen, newly appointed Istanbul Police Chief Kemal Yazıcıoğlu and Istanbul Mayor R. Tayyip Erdoğan all received child visitors, swapping seats with them for a few hours.

Some children expressed concern to Chief Yazıcıoğlu about police using truncheons in social unrest, while Mayor Erdoğan and Governor Yenişen listened to

the demands of children, particularly about the environment and pollution.

Mayor Erdoğan reiterated the catchphrase of the day, saying "the children are the future of our country" to the visiting youth delegation. Not surprisingly, since they were accompanied and closely watched by their teachers, the children did not bring up the touchy subject of "Habitat cleansing" which the officials of Istanbul municipality have been carrying out against such "street creatures" as cats, dogs and street children recently.

Habitat II and the failure of the country

The sprucing up for Habitat II proceeds apace in the ritzier sections of Istanbul where the Habitat seminars are to be held in June.

The municipality is pouring trillions into such cosmetic projects as repaving already-paved streets and walks — turning İstiklal Caddesi into a crowded swamp; realigning garden beds and filling the potholes often created by previous public works programs. All in the name of beautification and cleaning.

Part of tarting up the city has to sweep the streets of residents authorities think would contaminate the view for the visitors. A massive poisoning of cats and dogs was allegedly carried out, although the municipality denies any responsibility for the sudden disappearance of cats and dogs in central Istanbul.

Since the municipality is not poisoning them the gallant creatures appear to have committed suicide en masse to avoid blighting the vistas in their beloved city. Other unsightly street denizens considered under "Habitat cleansing" are the children prowling Istanbul's central district rather boisterously offering tissues, shoeshines or whatever to passersby. Usually no older than ten, most have to work and cannot afford school. Istanbul municipality officials have

been observed beating these children on sight on the streets to encourage them to ply their trade elsewhere. Happy Çocuk Bayram.

Glue sniffers, slightly older but still children have much bigger problems than ordinary street kids. As sniffing glue is a rather long and supposedly pleasurable way of committing suicide, they do not live long and have no prospects for the future. There are an estimated few hundred of them in the city who sleep outside in cardboard boxes, eke out a living panhandling and are subjected to frequent pedophilia and beatings. They will certainly receive their due from the Habitat cleansing process.

Neither glue sniffers nor the street children are the "future of the country", for few of them have any future. They carry on sniffing glue and begging, or trying to cajole a few lira for a shoeshine on this happy Children's Day.

And they have a further occupation until the end of Habitat II: To hide themselves from the officials who want to eliminate the "failure of the country" from the shopwindow of Turkey.

Children, praised as future of Turkey, still lack sufficient care and attention

Turkish Daily News

ANKARA- On Children's Day it has been revealed that more than 22 percent of Turkish children start working between the ages of nine and 12.

Research carried out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security said that 3.5 million of the country's 11 million youngsters aged between nine and 12 were currently working.

It has also been reported that these children work without insurance, usually for even less than the minimum wage, and are not provided with yearly holidays.

In separate research, the Hak-İş labor confederation noted that 13 percent of the children who are working currently do not attend schools, and that 60 percent of these are girls.