



CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH TRADE UNIONS
TÜRK-İŞ INTERNATIONAL

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CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH TRADE UNIONS HELD A MASS MEETING IN ANKARA ON THE 15th OF FEBRUARY TO PROTEST EXPLOITATION, SUBCONTRACT, IRREGULAR AND UNORGANIZED LABOR



Mass Meeting to protest exploitation, subcontract, irregular and unorganized labor was held by our Confederation in Ankara on the 15th of February 2014. Approximately 50 thousand workers from various provinces of Turkey gathered in the capital to take part in the demonstration.

The workers gathered in front of the Ankara Train Station at 08:00 in the morning and marched through

Talat Paşa Boulevard and continued towards Sıhhiye Square.

As they reached Sıhhiye Square, the workers started to shout slogans to protest exploitation, subcontract, irregular and unorganized labor.

The meeting took a start with a minute of silence and was followed by our National Anthem. General Secretary of TURK-IS and the President of Turkish



President Ergün ATALAY

Metal Workers Union Pevrul KAVLAK delivered the opening speech. General Secretary KAVLAK made the following statements;

"We have gathered here to protest exploitation, subcontract and undocumented labor, low wage policies, the minimum wage which is way under the limit of poverty, private employment agencies, initiatives to abolish severance pay, all types of flexible, irregular and precarious work, workplace fatalities due to the lack of OHS precautions, the misuse of unemployment fund, deunionization, dismissals due to trade union activities and privatization.

We will continue to occupy the fields until all the workers in this country acquires a decent life."

Following the opening remarks of General Secretary KAVLAK, members from Sugar Workers Union, Turkish Energy Workers Union, Mine Workers Union and Road and Construction Workers Union delivered their speeches. Rabia TAŞDEMİR, a member of Textile Workers Union who was dismissed due to union membership, also took the floor.

President of TURK-İŞ Ergün ATALAY was the last speaker. President focused primarily on the problems encountered by the subcontract workers. President ATALAY made the following remarks;

"Subcontract work is a bleeding cut in our country. It is a big shame. It is the biggest instrument of exploitation. The Ministry is preparing regulations regarding subcontract labor. We are ready for

support if these regulations will help to solve the problems. However while preparing a regulation we must assure the rights of both parties concerned. We cannot accept any amendment especially on article 2 of the Labor Law. The subcontract worker is deprived of the right to a sick leave, the right to attend a funeral, the right to eat at the workplace and most important of them all, the rights of severance pay.

We demand that subcontracting is removed from the agenda of Turkey. Especially all subcontract workers performing the essential work in the public sector should become a permanent staff. The remaining workers should be secured with a minimum five year contract. We must guarantee a safe future for the subcontract workers.

10 thousand subcontract workers employed at the General Directorate of Highways are affiliated to Road and Construction Workers Union. These workers perform the essential work. Road and Construction Workers Union filed a suit on behalf of 7 thousand members. 6500 of these workers won the case. Other cases were not filed as they were promised to become a permanent staff. Supreme Court of Appeals clearly stated that these workers were performing the essential work and that they should become a permanent staff otherwise they should be compensated. The total amount of these compensations adds up to 2.5 billion Turkish Liras. The highway workers are not running after money, they want a decent job. They will quitclaim if they become a permanent staff.



General Secretary Pevrul KAVLAK

Another shame of our country is the situation of the seasonal and temporary workers. 4 thousand workers in the public sugar enterprises, 2.5 thousand in the railways, 600 in the public energy enterprises and 500 in the public agriculture enterprises are temporary and seasonal workers. There are workers who have been working as a temporary staff since 20 to 25 years. They work for 3 or 4 months. The longest of them works for 5 months only. They don't have the chance to retire as their retirement contributions are not enough. A temporary worker working for 4 months each year can only retire after 60 years, while a temporary worker working for 3 month each year will need 90 years to retire. A contribution is cut from the wages of temporary workers to the unemployment benefit fund; however they don't have an access to the fund when they are dismissed.

We have friends here with us today from Yatağan, Yeniköy and Kemerköy. There is an intention

to privatize our thermal power plants and coal mines. Since 20 years we are trying to explain the fact that public enterprises are being sold for very low prices. Some people are making big profits. Privatization resulted with the loss of big public enterprises like paper and pulp enterprise, like Sümerbank. Privatization means unemployment and deunionization.

Following the privatization of the public enterprises the workers were subject to an exploitative type of employment called the 4-C. They were sentenced to poverty. TÜRK-İŞ is closely monitoring the court cases of the 4-C workers.

The Yatağan Thermal Power Plant workers came to Ankara on 10 October 2013. They marched to the Grand National Assembly. I was with you in Yatağan on the 24th of October 2013. You held a meeting on the 29th of December at Milas. TÜRK-İŞ was there with you. You were trying to come to Ankara on the 17th of January when they stopped



you on the way. However we were here. 5 thousand workers gathered in front of the Privatization Administration and voiced your demands. You could not make it then but you are here right now. We have promised you and now you are here with thousands of brothers and sisters who are supporting you.

Thousands of workers were dismissed during the last decade due to trade union organizing activities. Trade unions are afraid to continue their organizing activities as they don't want to become the cause of dismissals. There are employers who see trade unions as enemies.

In 1980 the population of our country was 45 million, 2.5 million was unionized. Today our

population is 75 million and the total number of union members is 1 million. Another difficulty which we are facing at the workplaces is the competence of the trade union. As our unions start to recruit members, the employer and the rival unions launch an objection to the court. Years pass until the court finalizes its decision. When the legal process is over, there are hardly any members of the union at the workplace. The press workers are unorganized; the union density in the press sector is 2%. We are witnessing big tragedies in recent years due to workplace accidents especially at the subcontracting workplaces. Everyday 4 workers die due to workplace accidents. This is a big shame for a country that has the 17th biggest economy in the world. This is a big shame for Turkey of the 21st century. Undocumented and informal employment should be stopped to avoid such tragedies. Our country is facing economic and political crises in the recent days, allegations of corruption on one side and parallel state on the other. These are all harming our country and the workers are shouldering the burden."

The meeting was finished after the speech of President ATALAY.

CONSUMERS PRICE INDEX (CPI) - FEBRUARY 2014

The wage increase in some of the Collective Agreements signed by our affiliated trade unions is index-linked with inflation rates. The estimations in this regard are based on the Consumer Price Index provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜIK).

According to the Consumers Price Index (2003=100) March 2014 bulletin published by TÜIK, monthly inflation rate was 0.43% while 12 months inflation rate was 7.89%. The average annual inflation rate was recorded as 7.60%.

The highest monthly increase was recorded as 2.29% in transportation. Transportation also has the highest annual increase by 12.68%. However a monthly decreased was observed by 5.06% in clothing and footwear. Provinces of Erzurum, Erzincan and Bayburt classified as the TRA-1 Region recorded the highest monthly CPI increase of 1.09%. In February 2014 within average prices of 432 items in the index, average prices of 43 items were unchanged. Average prices of 274 items increased while average prices of 115 items decreased.