

# ISHA BULLETIN

No 3 • 1 MARCH 1988



**Türk-İş's Action Decissions and Developments**

**An interview with the General Secretary of NETAŞ**

**The resistance of NETAŞ workers**

**An interview with the Org. Secretary of TÜMTİS**

**Painter Mr. İrfan ERTEL**

FORTNIGHTLY BULLETIN OF LABOUR MOVEMENT  
AND TRADE UNIONS NEWS FROM TURKEY

# ISHA BÜLTEN

Fortnightly Publication of the ISHA

(Labour and Trade Unions)

Press Agency

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Subscription rates: 6months 1 year

Individuals \$ 25 \$ 40

Others \$ 30 \$ 50

For subscription, the amount  
required should be sent to the  
following bank account:

A. Mardin

Yapı ve Kredi Bankası

435 Küçüklanga Şubesi

Hesap No: 5664-8

ISHA Haber Ajansı adına sahibi ve  
sorumlu yazı işleri müdürü:

Arif Mardin

*Matbaa Bizim Ofset*

## editor's note

Dear readers,

The labour movement in Turkey tend to be more radical in 1988 as compeded with the past years:

- Trade unions decisions of activity that were reached after the meeting of Türk-İş Presidents Committee.
- The strikes that are carried on with determination by Tümtis (Trade Union of Transport Workers)
- Interesting activities that are performed in the sector of banking by the Banksis Trade Union contrary to prohibitions set by the constitution of 1982 and the Trade Unions Law.
- The rebelling of the workers of NETAŞ (Northern Electric Company A.Ş.) who are united to the independent trade union Otomobil-İş against the dissmisals, lunch boycotts that have been increasingly intensifying revently,... are among the indicator of this increasing radicalism apart from these, in this bulletin you will find interviews with Trade Unions Presidents who are set forward by the working class movment.
- We'll also introduce you a man of culture, an artist, Mr. İrfan Ertel.

With friendship and devotion,

Editor

news from türk-iş

# TÜRK-İŞ EXTENDS MULTIFARIOUS ACTION

After very high inflation of the last year, workers saw that there was nearly nothing left in their hands to live on. For that reason they have been asking for new rights and wages rise. Many things happened after their demands. Here is an article about it.

**T**ürk-İş strongly repudiated the decision of TİSK (Confederation of Turkish Employer Trade Unions) on limiting the monthly additional wage increase to 7,810-TL. (\$ 6.00.-). As already known, Türk-İş demanded an additional wage rise, subsequent to price increase, shortly after the general election, on all substantial consuming goods, reaching 100\$. Şevket Yılmaz, president of TÜRK-İŞ, upon the announcement of TİSK which was not expected in precedence of tripartite consultation, called the TÜRK-İŞ, Council of Presidents to meet on 10 February 1988 and stated in his declaration, "Türk-İş shall do everything in its capacity to protect the interests of working people". Declarations emitted prior to meeting, by union leaders suggested general tendency for open action. Kenan Durukan, president of Harb-İş said, "Legal or illegal, general strike is not too far." Workers, reacting against the declaration of TİSK, said that the additional increase determined by the employers would come up to 260.-TL. per day, which would enable them to buy a bus ticket, however they would not allow themselves to be ridiculed in such a way. Şevket Yılmaz, president of TÜRK-İŞ, in a press conference said that a total of 630.000 workers, 250.000 of whose collective agreements expired on 1-7 January 1988, and 380.000 of whose will expire between 1 March 1989-31 December 1989, will not be able to benefit from additional wage increase any way, and he further declared, "Indeed, our confederation beheld the contradicting statements issued by Halit Narin, on behalf of TİSK and Naci Önal, on behalf of TİSK affiliated Public Employers Trade Union with a great disappointment, amazement and repudiation. Particularly Halit Narin's statement yielded bias against

the the workers. We proposed an immediate compensation to cover the loss caused by inflation. We need money, not advice and preaching. Our Council Of Presidents is called for a meeting, to be held on 10 February 1988".

While president Yılmaz expounded the decisions agreed upon at the 10 February Meeting which continued for 8 hours, and expressed his wish for

*Mr.  
Şevket  
Yılmaz,  
President  
of Türk-İş*



## news from türk-iş

these decisions to be beneficial for all the working people, prime minister Turgut Özal said, "Everyone has to abide by the Law, and I shall not make further comments."

It was stated in the declaration issued by the Council of Presidents and in which the framework of the action program was laid out, that the decisions taken up by the governmental bodies and employer organizations in regards collective payment (additional increase) was "irresponsible, indignified and biased."

### RESOLUTIONS OF THE TÜRK-İŞ COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS

1) A new masterpiece of the mentality prevalent, since long, among the ranks of the political power and employers.

2) Action Plan for an expansible and consequent struggle.

"All the declarations (issued by employer and government representatives-ISHA) are based on partial determinations which neither our confederation nor individual unions agree upon. Such patronizing, irrational and biased determinations can only be interpreted as a new masterpiece of the mentality prevalent, since long, among the ranks of the political power and employers. Albeit its discriminative character, creating differences among public and private sector workers and among workers bind with collective agreements bearing different expiry dates, and its ridiculous level of payment, this biased determination, which withholds hundreds of thousands of workers from being entitled to an additional increase, reflects a provoking attitude. It appears that the political power and capitalist circles, who obviously consider it feasible to make the most of a social setting where labour rights and liberties as well as civil rights and liberties are extensively restricted by the constitution and legislation, shall persist with their ascendant commandment.

The real solution is contingent on lifting the constitutional and legal impediments restricting labour rights and liberties, free trade unionism, free collective bargaining and right to strike, and on constituting and enabling to function, democracy with all its principles and institutions. Should the real solution not be attained and the obstructive

mentality of the employers and of the political government not be vanquished, it is obvious that the sufferings of the working people and of the financially weak masses shall deteriorate and that even more time shall be wasted through new enticements.

Therefore, dealing with the existing political conditions and legal restrictions in association with focusing the recent developments on the real solution, our Council of Presidents believes that its efforts to overcome the economic and social difficulties encountered by the labour movement and to abolish all the Constitutional and legal restrictions on labour rights and liberties can be achieved only through an expansible and consequent struggle waged in unity and solidarity."

Action Plan set down in the declaration of the Council of Presidents is a follow:

1. To hold elucidative meetings, on a fixed date in February 1988, in seven regional branches which shall be attended by union branch representatives in each particular region and at which the action plan shall be expounded and discussed.

2. To call for a lunch boycott throughout country on a date in March, which shall be fixed by Türk-İş affiliated unions.

3. To organize, in April 1988 in the provinces of Istanbul and Adana, protest meetings against high prices, which shall be attended by all Türk-İş members.

4. To execute throughout the country with in the month of May 1988, a sit-down strike as a preliminary warning action, calling for the abolishment of the aforementioned legal restrictions in order for the people not to be oppressed any further under high price rates caused by the prevalent economic policy.

5. To stop work for a definite or indefinite period, throughout the country, as outlined (by the Türk-İş Executive Board) in the Action Program and set down by the declaration issued by the Council of Presidents which convened on 16 March 1987; should there be no positive response to proposals submitted by Türk-İş, despite the above mentioned warnings which shall be carried out before 30 May 1988. Decisions taken by central executive bodies of all affiliated unions, confirming the execution of above mentioned actions, are to be submitted in writing to Türk-İş Executive Board.

6. All affiliated unions to stimulate their executive boards, in order to prepare all branch leaders and competent organs for action; and take all the measures for the struggle to be conducted in complete unity.

## news from türk-iş

### TÜRK-İŞ APPLIES FOR ETUC AFFILIATION

**T**ürk-İş (Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions) with its membership of 1.650.000, applied officially to the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) for affiliation. Apparently ICFTU affiliated Türk-İş inclines to promote war-

mer and closer relations with the European labour movement.

Application of Turkey to the EC, and solidarity waged by Türk-İş during military regime, for the DISK defendants, against whom charges are still being held, is said to constitute the grounds for the recent application to the ETUC.

ETUC Executive Committee is expected to include on its agenda the application, during its EC Meeting which is to be held in April 1988.

### THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES HANGS...

**Anti democratic provisions of Trade Unions Act hinders thousands of union leaders to be elected.**

**A**nti democratic Trade Unions Act enacted during military rule iustigates fluctuations among the ranks of labour movement. According to the Act, nearly two thousand union leaders, still serving in administrative bodies of unions, are not entitled even to nominate at the union conventions expected to be held in 1989.

Şevket Yılmaz, president of Türk-İş, and fifteen other affiliated union presidents are affected by the Act which deprives, union leaders who have served for four consecutive terms (nearly eight years), of being reelected.

up with, in her attempt to provide "additional increase", an application not embodied either by legislation or collective bargaining agreement order. Thus Mrs. Aykut declared the year 1988 as the "year of dialogues". She then shifted the liability of the "additional increase" fiasco, which exasperated the workers, on the employers. And now a days she is seeking top level reconciliation with those union leaders who are keen on maintaining their "position".

Such efforts, seeking dialogue and recociliation will undoubtedly end lifting a few of the anti democratic provisions of Trade Unions Act. However it is also a fact that prime minister Özal is categorically against the amendment of Trade Unions Act. It is perceived that Turgut Özal, during a meeting with his administrative staff, remarked, "The seniors should go!"

Miss  
Imren  
Aykut



### MINISTER OF LABOUR SEEKS TOP LEVEL RECONCILIATION

**i**mren Aykut, the new Minister of Labour in Özal's cabinet, on the other hand, is on the watch to indemnify the bitter defeat she ended

### Union Leaders Not Eligible in 1989 Conventions

Mustafa Orhan (Mine workers), Mehmet Tezer (General Mine workers), Orhan Balta (Food workers), Şevket Yılmaz (Textile workers), Yener Kaya (Leather workers), Tamer Eralan (Cement workers), Basri Babalı (Glass workers), Mustafa Özbek (Metal workers), Nazım Tur (Dock workers), Bayram Meral (Construction workers), Faruk Barut (Energy workers), Mehmet Acidereli (Rail way workers), Ahmet Kurt (Longshoremen), Mustafa Başoğlu (Health workers), Kenan Durukan (Defence Industry workers), Hüseyin Pala (Municipal workers).

## interview



### AN INTERVIEW WITH THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF BANKSİS KUTSAL ÖZER

An interview with the general secretary of BANKSİS (Banking and Insurance Workers Trade Union). Mr. F.Kutsal ÖZER takes place in this issue. Striking is forbidden in banking sector in Turkey now. The members of this trade union have protested the employers with original actions. The disagreement has ended by the Supreme Arbitration Board.

**Question: Can you give a brief description of your union?**

**Özer:** Full name of our union is Banking and Insurance workers Trade Union. We have a membership of 12.500. Among our members are the employees of AKBANK, TÖBANK, AK sigorta IM—TAŞ Sigorta, ATLANTİK Sigorta and DOĞAN Sigorta.

**Question: Are you affiliated with an ITS? Or have you international contacts?**

**Özer:** We are affiliated with FIET and CMT. But our international affiliation is very recent. FIET extended its solidarity during disputes in AKBANK and announced that they were ready to assist us in any way.

**Question: We understand that the disputes at Akbank remain unsettled. Can you give a brief information on the case?**

**Özer:** We submitted, to the employer, our draft

proposals in September. Initial consultations started in October. In December disputes were locked. Our proposal regarding wages were 65% plus 30.000.-TL. for the first year. Employers offered 35% plus 15.000.-TL. There upon disputes were locked. Consultations with the official mediation did not yield result either. So the case was referred to the Supreme Arbitration Board. As you know, disputes still remain unsettled, and our workers consciously carried out various actions in protest.

**Question: What type of actions have they carried out?**

**Özer:** Our workers throughout the country, for instance, put on BLACK outfits for one day. Once they pursued, in protest of the employers a lunch-boycott. During annual celebrations of Akbank workers sent to the venues of celebration BLACK wreaths. The workers made known their reac-

ABOUT F. KUTSAL ÖZER

*"I became a union officer in 1976 as chief regional representative, I, then took office as the general secretary in the executive board. After 12 September, trade union legislation was altered and we merged with TÜMBAK-İŞ union organized in AKBANK and TÖBANK. I took an active part in organizing during the mergence, and was elected as the general secretary in the congress. I work as a union officer for 12 years now."*

tions to the public opinion. Once in Istanbul scattered leaflets from a helicopter to inform people on our dispute. Moreover, with the support of our ITS we shall organize abroad, marches which are to start in March.

**Question: Are you considering marches and other forms of actions to be carry out in Turkey?**

**Özer:** Even if competent authorities issue the necessary permission for a march, they would allow it on an outer city route. We are, therefore, not thinking of marches but rather other types of actions to attract the attention of the public opinion.

**Question: How does the prohibition of strike, established by the 1982 Constitution, in your branch of activity, influence collective bargaining agreements?**

**Özer:** Being deprived of the right to strike is a

current issue. Yes, we not hold that right. We had, during the last collective agreement disputes before this prohibition, taken up a decision to go on strike and had already posted it in the workplaces. Sabancı (a prominent figure in business world) upon being notified of the decision, immediately came to our union and the dispute was settled within three hours time. But today, the employers is materializing the prohibition which was brought by 12 September, as a vehicle of mistreatment and coerces us to accept his proposals, which otherwise has to be referred to the Supreme Arbitration Board.

**Question: You are an independent union. Have you in this case had any assistance from or asked for the assistance of Türk-İş?**

**Özer:** We have not asked for any assistance. But colleagues operating in the same branch of activity called to acknowledge us about their intentions to support us.

**Question: Türk-İş Presidential Council has issued a resolution on additional wage increase. What is your observation on this?**

**Özer:** We consider this wage increase as a donation from the employers, and we do not want it. We do not think it merits our workers and our union. It is stated in the Action Program of Turkish, that a decision for general strike would be taken. A decision for general strike can not be taken, it is illegal, but it can be carried out.

**Question: What are the complaints, in your branch of activity, regarding health, living and working conditions?**

**Özer:** We have a 40-hour working week. But this is constantly infringed and workers are forced to do overtime. Quite often it even outstrips the legal overtime hours. We submit our complaints to competent authorities to seek for a solution. In regard to health conditions, while the employer increases his profit with the introduction of new technology, he demands more over time where it would be expected to shorten the working time. So, this overwork causes mental exhaustion. Also, our colleagues working with computers are exposed to its harmful effects.

**Question: There are 6 different unions operating in your branch of activity. How do you evaluate this?**

**Özer:** We do not consider as proper so many unions to be organized in a branch of activity covering 65.000 to 70.000 workers. We are in favour of organizing as a single union against the employers. We even called several times, other unions to discuss the issue. But so far no progress has been achieved. We repeat once more that we endorse unity.

# NETAŞ WORKERS P

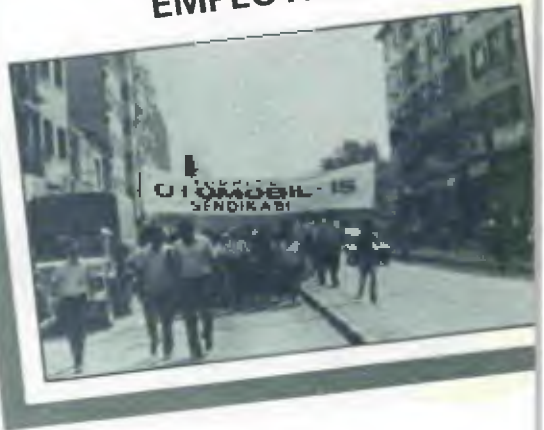


**DISMISSAL OF 9 SHOP STEWARDS, ENSUED BY 45 OTHERS IS DENOUNCED WORKERS WITHSTAND THE ATTITUDE OF NETAŞ EMPLOYERS**

**N**ETAŞ (Northern Electronic Company AŞ) workers, who stimulated action among the labour movement by achieving the **first** successful strike of 1987, held out once again. Subsequent to systematic sacking, at first of the partakers of last year's strike and recently of 45 workers, Umraniye workers halted work on 5 February 1988. They also announced that they were not going to start work before three days and marched on a route nearly 500 meters to protest the dismissals.

NETAŞ workers, on 7 February, gathered at the Umraniye branch of OTOMOBİL-İŞ to denounce the dismissals and they issued a press statement as follows:

"350 of our fellow friends, among whom were most of the workers who conducted the action, were sacked immediately after the strike. NETAŞ employers, who have been forcing us to pay for the strike action, announced yesterday a new combing out, an hour before the break. "NETAŞ



workers, claiming that the dismissals will continue even further, said," Tomorrow morning we shall be at NETAŞ, together with our kids and wives. And we shall not start work until the employer ensures job and life security". Evening shift workers also stopped work the

same evening. Cihangir Kaya, the shop steward





addressed 1,800 workers and their families who assembled in front of the factory on 8 February and condemned the dismissal of 9 shop stewards and 45 other workers. Following the speech, workers wrote out slogans on the walls of the factory cafeteria: "Long live the unity of the workers", "General strike", "Bread, peace and freedom" and "We are determined in our hold out against dismissals". Meanwhile security forces surrounded the factory but could not stop the two SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) MPs, Kenan Sönmez and Hüsnü Okanoğlu to carry through their speech conveying the denunciation of the events by 99 other SHP MPs. The two MPs also participated in the resistance.

On 9 February the police raided the cafeteria and attempted to disperse the workers. Workers responded the invasion by starting a march from the factory to Ümraniye branch, throughout which they called out slogans.

The next day workers who arrived at the factory

to start work, were met by civilian and military security forces. Although security forces patrolled outside the factory and civilian forces remained within the factory, production was performed below capacity.

İlhan Dalkılıç, president of OTOMOBİL—İŞ said, in a press conference, "We achieved the first big strike in the period following 12 September. Our strike was a success and constituted a turning point in the struggle of our country's workers. The strike was followed by wide dismissals.

All the workers sacked were carefully chosen among union members. The message from NETAŞ, where MESS is also involved, to the working class of Turkey is, "You are to lose your jobs if you go on strikes! We shall quash the image they are trying to create! We shall persist in our struggle to exist in NETAŞ!"

NETAŞ workers announced that they have stopped the resistance for the time being but their struggle shall continue.

## THE MINIMUM SALARY OR WAGE: THE MAXIMUM DEPRIVATION

**T**he minimum wage in Turkey, in related with the declining of the value of Turkish Lira, is going down in value, between 1978 and 1988. According to the Research, on October, 1978, as one American dollar as 25 liras, the minimum wage was 3300 liras. Namely the minimum wage was only 132 American dollars. As to the same scheme, simultaneously it was 384 Deuc. Marks. The loss of the value went on, constantly,

until now. Especially, in last decade, since the Governments accepted the system of daily rate of exchange, the acceleration of depreciating rapidly and inevitably rised.

How much money must the current salary today, in that case? According to the research, it must be just 134000 liras if American dollar based on or it must be 245000 liras if Deuc. Mark is based on. The further side, the current minimum salary is diminutive in a case, and it is not efficient to live on, properly and fairly. Where as the policies of the Government about money and wage, too, will only aggravate the situation.

Have you ever thought of the minimum wage in foreign exchange:

The sum of the minimum wage	The currency of Dollar	As dollar The Mini. W.	The cur. of Mark	As Mark Min. Wage
1.1.1978	3300 L. 25 L	132	8.6	383.7
1.5.1981	10000 L. 102 L.	98	44.5	225.0
1.4.1984	24525 L. 306 L	80	123.8	198.1
1.7.1985	41400 L. 542 L	77	202.6	204.3
3.1.1988	4250 L. 1018 L.	73	638.6	116.3



## QUESTION OF SPECIAL CONTRACT EMPLOYEES RECAPTURES ATTENTION

**Turkish Workers seek the solidarity of the international labour movement, at the ILO meeting taking place in March 1988, against the implementation of special Contract.**

**Q**uestion of Special Contract Employees, which for the first time was implemented in late 1986, is once more on the agenda. Inducement of further limitations on Decree No. 233 and introduction of Decree No. 308, which were put into effect after being published in the official Gazette on 18 January 1988, is a severe step in abolishing the right and freedom of association, collective bargaining and equal pay for equal work, of 85.000 workers today, and well over 150.000 workers by the end of the year. "Standing Committee for Job Evaluation," an extremely centralized body, in work places employing workers on special contract basis, set up from the general director or his assistant and 8 other members, shall determine the *basic wage* level according to 10 different wage groups classified on evaluation of job quality. Once that is determined, seniority wage per annum, not exceeding 5% of the fixed amount will be added, while to increase or lower the wages shall be determined according to daily evaluation of success grouping (A,B,C,D). Furthermore, the contract of the employee working on special contract terms can be cancelled even due to a minor dispute with the employer, regardless of his level of success.

Implementation of Special Contract Employees Decree is a sword hanging over the rights and liberties of association, collective bargaining and violates labour legislation. Reactions against this anti-democratic decree still continue.

Adv. Önder Aker, chief advisor of Türk-İş said in his statement, "Decree of Special Contract Employees has not only introduced adjustments in infringement of the Constitution, but also violated once more, some ILO Conventions which the duty to act in line with is pledged when the government undersigns them." Mr. Aker reiterated that the provisions of the Act 2821 and Act 2822 were already non-conformative with the ILO Conventions 87 and 98, and reminded, "the Turkish government, despite all its pledges and promises submitted to the ILO, to make the necessary amendments in the legislation in accordance with the ILO principles; has not taken a single step in fulfilling its pledges."

Turkish workers shall seek the solidarity of the international labour movement, at the ILO meeting, taking place in March 1988, against the implementation of Special Contract, while they announce that their struggle shall continue here at home.

## THE TUSIAD REPORT

**T**USIAD (The Club of Businessmen and Industriousmen of Turkey)'s Report said: Turkey got into more serious economic and financial troubles in 1988. According to the Report, not withstanding there were lots of serious warnings, The Government has not considered important enough the situation. Because the Government followed an election economy, the inflation has increased, the budget of the families who have a frugal revenue, has become restricted and the vigor of the enterprising businessmen who, according to the Report, must be dynamic force to lead to development, has abated. Adding

these, the Report said that The situation revealed that the policy of the Government about inflation, devaluation, addition and interest, has become exhausted. The Report has appraised separately these: The external debt have reached the limit and total debt is 12 % of the national production. The rate of external loan to the Turkey's exports, is smaller than 1/3.

In the suggestion part of the Report, there were these:

1. The Government must struggle against the inflation primarily
2. Instead of unilateral statements, as being in advanced countries, the problems must discuss in forums to which must join businessmen, experts and representatives of government.

## interview

# Sabri Topçu, General Organizing Secretary of TÜMTİŞ The striking Transport Workers SUCCESS OF STRIKE RELIES ON TRUE SOLIDARITY

The employers has answered the strike which was started at 104 work shops 5 months ago. The Zeytinburnu Municipality has backed the employes by trying to break the strike. But, beacuse of the TÜMTİŞ and the workers' firmness the employes were untied. Today the strike is contiuiung at less then 30 work shops. Here is the interview with the general organizing secretary of TÜMTİŞ.

**Question: Can you briefly tell us about TÜMTİŞ?**

**S. Topçu:** Our union was founded in 1949, covering land transportation. It is one of the founding unions of TÜRK—İŞ, and the only union operating in that industrial branch. We have 5 branches, in İzmir, Ankara, Adana, Diyarbakır and İzmit; and around 4,200 members. Some changes occurred in 1986 with the joining of independent and former DISK affiliated unions.

**Question: Can you describe the present stage your strike is going through?**

**S. Topçu:** We have reached the sixth month on strike which started on 16 September. We resisted, first in 35, later in 105 work shops, with a total of 1100 workers. Employers attempted to break the strike by declaring, on 17 September, an unjust lock-out action in 115 work shops. They then set up a company and started, despite the ongoing strike, transportation business again. Above all, this was conducted on public land and by state support.

**Question: Any messages you wish us to convey to the international labour movement?**

**S. Topçu:** Let us firstly pass a message to the working class in the country. Trade unionists in Turkey hold less concern over strikes whilst worker are more anxious over them. They have bad habits, it is not right to say, "Yes we support the strike, we support it in financial aspects." Such sentences should be buried *in the past*. Ev-

eryone should actively support the strikes, if we are to conduct the struggle worthy for the working class. We have no international contacts, for we lack cadres which could promote at an international level our union and our strike. We had John Mitchell here with us, a fellow unionist from Ireland. We received his letter and his support. Thats all we had from the international, we had a few uiouists who visited the strike.

**Question: Are you affiliated with an ITS?**

**S. Topçu:** We were affiliated with the ITF, and we recently decided to activate our contacts.

**Question: What are the over - all difficulties of the trade union movement in Turkey ?**

**S. Topçu:** Problems are extensive. Most of all, difficulties faced by the workers. Most of the leaders are in favour of a nonchalant struggle. Such approaches, I belevie, shall be conquered by the struggle of the rank and file. All unions in Turkey must carry out mass and class unionism. Workers education is indispensable if we are to wage a struggle for democracy.

**Question: What sort of curbs are there on trade union activities and how could they be conquered?**

**S. Topçu:** Far too many. They could be subdued by struggling of the workers and trade unions, including the most conservative ones.

**Question: What are your thoughts on trade union unity?**

**S. Topçu:** It is class unity which counts more than quantative unity. Nevertheless, our objective today, should be to promote unity and to

#### ABOUT SABRİ TOPÇU:

Born in 1946 in Hanak city of the Kars province. He took on his first job as a bus conductor in the Ankara Municipality. He was elected in 1974 as the general secretary of Ulaş-İş, which he later became the president of. He was elected as Istanbul branch secretary of TÜMTİŞ and now he is the general organizing secretary of the same union.



conduct struggle within Türk-İş. Such is our union's policy. We overturned the administration of 46 unions in Türk-İş by carrying out the struggle within it. If and when conditions require to set up a new confederation, we would of course consider the situation, but today it is not our objective.

#### **Question: What are your thoughts on the unity of trade unions operating in the same industrial branch?**

**S. Topçu:** We have no other union acting in our branch of activity. TÜMTİŞ is the alliance of four former unions (Nakliyat-İş, Bağımsız Ulaş-İş, Taşıt-İş, Bağımsız Karanakliyat-İş.) The merging of unions on industrial activity basis is very beneficial for the sake of struggle. We brought together 4,000 workers in a single union. Today our struggle rests on that figure. Now, uniting land, marine, air and railway transport into one union is on the agenda. This virtually means bringing 100,000 workers together. Which ever way the other unions may drift, our stance shall certainly be in favour of unity.

#### **Question: What particular difficulties have your union?**

**S. Topçu:** Our activity branch is one of the most fatiguing in Turkey. It covers small workshop consisting of 5-10 workers, of which the largest two employ about 200 workers each. And this means, may I say so, cheap labour, when it comes to bargaining. This costs us a lot. Strikes are another troublesome issue. But still, *we have always reached better agreement terms through struggle and strike.*

Our lads, working in the warehouses have no health security. Their legs break, their arms

break, still no measures would be taken. They lack adequate nourishment, but carry on their backs heavy loads which result in widespread tuberculosis and inguinal hernia.

#### **Question: How do you evaluate the recent decisions taken by the Türk-İş Presidential Council?**

**S. Topçu:** Our president is away at the moment, so our general secretary Yurdal Şenol is attending the meeting. They talk about general strike. Are the workers prepared? Have the unions created that confidence among workers?

I believe, in Turkey, we still have to prepare of workers for talking such an action. Should there be a general strike action, surely we are in it with 4000 workers who know each other well. So I say we would be one of the unions to partake in a general strike with least deserters. But still, working class of Turkey is not ready for a general strike. Prior to such an action. We must prepare the workers in rallies, meetings, mass demos and education. And such training can not reach its goal if conducted only by a minor section in Türk-İş and bey profs. The training for general strike can not be provided by such means. Nevertheless, it is an important step for Türk-İş even to talk about a general strike. Trade unionists in Türk-İş have advanced a step further. But I do not hold any belief for this strike to be carried out or in the preparedness of the workers. *Not prepared at all.* And without the necessary preparations the outcome would be an overall fiasco. If it is predicted for an action to result in a fiasco, then that action should not be implemented. Workers have no confidence for Türk-İş to be able to achieve a general strike.



## Painter İrfan Ertel: A Painter Should Paint for People

Since the 29th December, a talented painter is drawing the attention of a large number of art-lovers with his paintings exhibited at the Taksim Art Gallery in Istanbul. In the exhibition, which continues until mid January, Mr. İrfan Ertel has put on display some of his most recent works. Most of the paintings treat such sensitive topics as torture, conditions in prisons, oppression and the portraits of some of the banned artists because of the revolutionary tone of their art. We print the photos of some of his paintings in these pages. In the next issue we hope to be able to offer you an interview with Mr. Ertel in addition to some more of his works.

İrfan Ertel was born in Muğla-Bayır in 1951. He graduated from the State Academy of Fine Arts in 1978. He is married and has a son. İrfan Ertel opened his first personal exhibition in 1977 at the Foyer of Birlik sahnesi in Istanbul. The second exhibition was opened at the Taksim Art Gallery in Istanbul in 1984. Several other exhibitions, some of them with other artists, soon followed: Two in 1986; one in Istanbul, and one in Muğla, three in 1987; one at the French Cultural Center in İzmir, and the other two personal exhibitions were opened in Salihli and Dikili. His eight and most recent personal exhibition was opened at the Taksim Art Gallery in Istanbul on 29 December 1987.

**Artistic Views of İrfan Ertel:** İrfan Ertel regards painting not as an aim, but as a means to explain

what he would like to be able to say. He says that painting should not be for a small group of intellectuals above the society but for the vast masses of people; its meaning should be understandable to them, and not remain inside the artist's imagination. As a means to rid oneself from pure descriptionism, which is regarded to be the other extreme, he believes that one should correctly balance the form and content relationship. Showing a particular care when he chooses his topics, which are selected among those which are of interest to the whole society and which are actual, he tries to determine his artistic line from the reactions of the viewers of his paintings. He adds that no effort is spared to use additional techniques and tools if they can make contribution to clarify the meaning of his paintings.



*Painting: Irfan Ertel*

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ISHA BULLETIN

Dear readers,

ISHA Bulletin is the only publication in English in English, printed in Turkey, which is concerned primarily with the labour and trade union movement there.

In order to offer you a more satisfactory service, we would like to know your expectations from such a bulletin; namely, what would you like to see most, the kind of information that interests you, and what might be boring!

We have therefore prepared a brief questionnaire. We would be grateful if you could duly fill it and send to our address without sparing any comments and/or suggestions you deem useful. Thank you in advance.

ISHA Bulletin



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