

NEWS BULLETIN

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THE SWITCH HAS GONE DOWN FOR SOMA!

On Friday, the 16th of May, with the call from Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Turk-Is), Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions (DISK), Confederations of Public Labourer's Unions (KESK and Birlesik Kamu-Is), Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) and Turkish Medical Association (Turk Tabipler Birliđi); tens of thousands of labourers have started a one-day strike across the country for the miners who lost their lives in Soma.

Labourer and employee members of union and trade associations have stopped working across the country, after a minute of silence in honour of the miners who lost their lives in Soma, on Thursday morning. There has been a significant pause in the building, petrol and metal industries. There has also been work stoppage in big organisations like BOTAS, TPAO, MKE and Turk Traktor. Teachers did not go to school, students boycott against classes.

Police Barricade

The labourer members of unions that are joint with Birlesik Kamu-Is in Istanbul had a moment of silence, early in the morning in their workplaces. The labourers came together to march to the Soma Holding company office. A banner saying "wasn't an accident, wasn't fate, it was Murder" was opened at the protest that the Workers' Party members had also taken part in. As the labourers march towards the office, they were chanting; "Burglar, murderer, public enemy AKP", "Resign Government" and "The miners did not die, they were murdered". The highlights of the protest were the banners that were anti-privatization and anti-subcontracting and also the labourers who wore miner helmets.

The street in which the office was located was blocked off with police barricades. The labourers who could not pass the barricades made their statements at this point. Secretary of the 4th Egitim-Is branch stated that sub-contractors had been nestled into the mining industry to lower the costs, he also stated "This has resulted in the loss of lives".

Alongside this protest, the labourer members of DISK, KESK, TMMOB and Turk Tabipleri Birliđi had come together, after their early morning minute of silence in their workplaces, to march to the Social Security State Office. However, the police did not permit the unions to march. The labourers once again presented their respects to the miners lost in the work crime, chanting "Resign government, the crime in Soma will be accounted for". The secretary general of DISK called for the expropriation of the mines across Turkey to stop sub-contracting.

Strike at the capital of labour

The miners that work in Turkey Mineral-Coal Institute in Zonguldak, the capital of labour, have carried out the one day strike to the centre of the city following the decision of Turk-Is. The miners lay on the Fevkani Bridge as they chanted "We want a peaceful death", "Everywhere is Soma, Everywhere is Zonguldak".

The miners that came from their provinces to Zonguldak city, met with the Democracy Platform Constituents and Student groups at the Miner monument. Thousands of people marched from the Miner monument to the Miner Casualties' monument.

"Labourers and employees hand in hand to general strike", "Murderes will pay", "Mine labourers are the symbols of resistance" were some of the chants throughout the march. There was a minute of silence for the Soma mine casualties in front of the monument. At this point, the ships in the docks had sounded their sirens. Satilmis Uludag, the Vice-president of the General Mine Labourers Union, said at the monument that "the ones who do not care about the miners lives shall pay". The miners who work in the Kozlu institute office gathered at the entrance of the mine in the morning. Later on, a funeral praying in absentia was held for the miners who were killed.

PROTESTS AGAINST THE TURKISH PRESIDENT AT SOMA

Close relatives of the victims of the mining disaster at Soma protested against President Abdullah Gul. One citizen stated to Gul "Because of you the crews cannot work. We don't need police, we need rescue crews. Get the hell out of here!"

After the suspenseful visit by Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, President Abdullah Gul also visited the mines where the disaster occurred. Before Gul arrived, the mine victims' relatives and other residents were removed from the area.

The relatives of the victims and the soldiers clashed when they tried to forcefully remove them. When Abdullah Gul entered the mines, the families of the victims protested. One worker yelled "We don't want Subcontractor's". Other residents were asking "Why do you need so much protection? What are you afraid of?"

The Soma residents have no patience for the government

Politicians poured into Soma after the mining disaster. When the Health Minister Mehmet Muezzinoglu arrived, residents were shouting "Government Resign!" Muezzinoglu was not able to respond when they followed it with "thieves, crooks, you emptied the money, is it better now? We are all in pain; your time has come to an end. The government must resign!" The Health Minister Muezzinoglu had to be escorted to his car by his body guards.

The Police in Soma have started a 'Witch Hunt'

The police started a witch hunt in the late hours after the Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan had to hide in a supermarket and literally escape the area after the protests in Soma the previous day. Once Erdogan left the ilce, there were marches and protests late into the night in Soma's streets. The AKP county building was stoned. Yesterday there were still conflicts.

During the funeral procession, hundreds of Soma residents were marching and calling out "We are Mustafa Kemal's soldiers", "Murderer Tayyip", "Tayyip Resign" slogans. The police took action after the Tayyip Erdogan protests. After the witch hunt began, the police detained Gokhan Ozgur Zirhli under custody. Zirhli told Aydinlik that he was held at the Police station for 4 hours. Zirhli said that "The police were literally rounding up people. I heard that there were at least 25 people under custody".

'WE DID NOT EVEN LOSE ONE LIFE BEFORE PRIVATISATION'

Cihan Cetin, who works as a crane operator and who lost his 22 year old cousin in the mines and told Aydinlik about that moment in the mining disaster and about the rescue operation that has brought Turkey into mourning.

No casualties before the sub-contracting

Cihan Cetin, who lost his 22 year old cousin in the disaster that occurred in the Soma mines, was a crane operator in the mines in Soma, and he told Aydinlik about the moment and search and rescue operations that had occurred.

Cetin, who said he had been a crane operator for 8 years in the mines where the disaster occurred said: "This incident was a massacre. Two months ago the Member of Parliament of Manisa brought this to the attention of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. They did not accept. They have been the reason of the massacre. I have been working here for 8 years. Before it was privitized, my father had worked here for 20 years. There were no casualties during those 20 years. Now we have come to this state asking for sub-contracting and privitization."

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