

Antiwar protests in Turkey

Our correspondent
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On March 27, public workers held a protest at Ankara's Kizilay square, displaying their attitudes concerning the budget and the US-led war against neighboring Iraq.

The members of the Confederation of Public Employee Unions (KESK), the Revolutionary Confederation of Labor Unions (DISK), the Turkish Union of Engineers and Architects Chambers (TMMOB) and the Turkish Doctors Union (TTB) members were hindered by the police.

The KESK Ankara branch spokesman, speaking on behalf of the group members chanting antiwar slogans, said that the distribution of income should be fair and social aid should increase, adding that the government should prepare a budget in accordance with the people's demands in the fields of education and health, but not for war.

Consumers Association (TUKDER) Chairman Necati Yenturk called on consumers to boycott products, especially BP and Shell along with Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Burger King and Marlboro. Yenturk said at a press conference that all civilians—especially women, children and the elderly—were being negatively affected by the war, claiming that one of the objectives of the war was the transfer of Iraq's oilfields to US and British companies. Stressing that this war was not Turkey's war, Yenturk said Turkey should not participate in the US-led coalition.

The previous day another antiwar protest was held at Dolmabahce in Istanbul with the participation of public workers, some political parties and democratic organizations. KESK Chairman Sami Evren said in his speech that laborers in all provinces of Turkey would hold a protest against the war and the budget by gathering at town squares.

DISK Chairman Suleyman Celebi said that US imperialism had turned once again towards the Middle East and that the US invaded Iraq by infringing on

United Nations resolutions, calling on all democratic powers across the globe to assume an antiwar attitude.

During the protests, the police boosted security measures and some of the protesters were taken into custody by security forces.

KESK Kayseri spokesman Orhan Karakaya, criticizing the Turkish government, said that the current budget pushed back health and education investment. During the protests in Edirne, Education Union (Egitim-Sen) Edirne Branch Chairman Nevzat Ugur said that Turkey should not be drawn into the US-led war on Iraq. Meanwhile, the protests also continued in Izmir, Eskisehir and Van.



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