

# ECON 495 LABOUR MARKET IN TURKEY

(Question Bank, Final Exam, January 2012)

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What were the factors that weakened the Ottoman working class during the last decades of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century?

Explain with examples what “absolute impoverishment” and “relative impoverishment” are.

What are the main economic and political characteristics in the world during the Golden Age of capitalism? What were the effects of these characteristics on industrial relations? How did the basic characteristics of the Golden Age change from the 1970s onwards and what new factors were added? (d) What were the effects of these changes on industrial relations?

Compare the provisions of the Labour Act No.3008 and the Strike Act (Tatil-i Eşgal Kanunu) with respect to

- (a) the right to organize,
- (b) the right to strike.

It is claimed that in the 1950s, the civil servants in Turkey supported the CHP and the workers with a labour contract supported the DP and opposed the CHP. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Which organisations in Turkey were members of the WFTU?

How were the wages of workers in the Ottoman Empire in comparison to the wages in Great Britain in the 1839-1913 period? Why?

When and where was the first trade union in the world established?

Compare 275 and 2822 with respect to the aftermath of the suspension of a strike.

How did the İstanbul trade unions and workers support the National War of Independence? Give examples when necessary.

The U.S. Government started to invite TÜRK-İŞ trade unionists to the U.S.A. and to give considerable sums of money to TÜRK-İŞ from 1962 onwards. Why?

Why was it that the labour and trade union movement in Turkey could not play an influential social and political role in the pre-1946 period? Or did it?

Why, do you think, there were only a limited number of industrial actions in the 1925-1946 period?

What were the two main areas of conflict between the US and European Trade unions within the ICFTU in the 1950s? What did each party advocate? Why?

Why was there a scarcity of wage-labour in Turkey during the first three decades of the Republic?

Why do you think the workers supported right-wing political parties in the 1950s? Or, did they? Give examples.

The 1919-1922 period was characterised by a lively trade union activity and quite a large number of industrial actions in İstanbul? What were the factors leading to such a result?

In which areas were there improvements in the living and working conditions of the people in the 1950s?

Why, do you think, there were only a limited number of industrial actions in the 1925-1946 period?

Why was there a scarcity of wage-labour in Turkey during the first three decades of the Republic? Or was wage-labour abundant?

How did the Great Crisis influence the expropriation of the peasantry in Turkey?

What is "check-off" and when was it enforced by law in Turkey?

What were the main policies of the governments during the first three decades of the Republic to secure a continuous supply of wage-labour to mines and industry?

How did the Şeyh Sait uprising influence the fate of the trade unions?

Why was it that the labour and trade union movement in Turkey could not play an influential social and political role in the pre-1946 period? Or did it?

Why do you think the agricultural sector was subsidised in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s?

Why did DİSK support the 27 May coup before learning the programme of the military?

How do you explain the freedom to organize and to strike in İstanbul during the 1919-1922 period?

Why did the workers respond positively or at least silently to the military coup on 12 September 1980 which suspended the activities of trade unions, liquidated the Parliament and political parties and arrested and tortured about 600 thousand persons?

Explain briefly what a "dispute of right" and a "dispute of interest" are.

Why was there a scarcity of labour and of wage-labour in the 1923-1946 period?

What were the domestic and international economic and political factors which led to the military coup of 12 September 1980?

What were the main factors which slowed down the expropriation process in the rural areas in the 1945-1970 period in Turkey? Or was the expropriation process accelerated in this period?

Which categories of workers were outside of the scope of the Labour Act of 1936 (No.3008)?

How and why did the Governments create a labour aristocracy in Turkey in the 1930s?

When was the right to strike granted to workers in Turkey during the Republican Period?

Which organisations in Turkey were members of the Profintern?

How did TÜRK-İŞ and DİSK respond to the 27 May 1960, 12 March 1971 and 12 September 1980 coups?

What were the main functions of the guilds in the Ottoman Empire?

Why did the 15-16 June 1970 events take place? What is the importance of these industrial actions? What were its negative effects on the labour movement?

It is claimed that the first collective labour agreement in the world was concluded in Kütahya in 1764. Do you agree? If not, why?

Compare 5018, 274 and 2821 with respect to the procedures required for becoming a member of a trade union and for resigning from a trade union.

According to some sources, in the 1839-1913 period, the level of wages in the urban areas in the Ottoman Empire exceeded 40 percent of the wages in the UK. Do you agree? If so, explain the reason(s), keeping in mind that there was a developed trade union movement in the UK and the UK possessed colonies from which it could transfer economic surplus and that there was no trade union movement in the Ottoman Empire except for the 1908-1913 period and the Ottoman Empire was itself a semi-colony.

In which years were the following acts enacted?

274  
788  
2821  
3008  
5018

Compare 5018, 274 and 2821 with respect to the restriction of political activity of trade unions.

Comment on the following quotations:

“İşçi derneklerinin kurulması, 1845’te çıkarılan Polis Nizamnamesi ile yasaklanmıştı.” (TÜRK-İŞ, *Çalışma Hayatımıza Kırk Yılda Vurulan Damga-TÜRK-İŞ*, Ankara, 1992, p.10)

“Bu gelişmeler üzerine sendika kurmak ve grev yapmak konuyla yasaklandı. 25 Eylül 1908 tarihinde Tatil’i Eşgal Kanunu Muvakkatı çıkarılarak 1909’da yürürlüğe kondu.” (TÜRK-İŞ, *Çalışma Hayatımıza Kırk Yılda Vurulan Damga-TÜRK-İŞ*, p.10)

“O dönemde emperyalist güçlerin en büyüğü olan Almanların baskısı ile Tatili Eşgal Yasası acele çıkartılarak yürürlüğe konulmuştur. Bu yasa ile örgütlenme ve grev yasağı getirildi.” (Çeçen, Anıl, *Türkiye’de Sendikacılık*, Özgür İnsan Yay., Ankara, 1973, p.5.)

“1980 öncesinde grevsiz de olsa sendika kurma hakkına sahip olan kamu çalışanları (memurlar) bu haklarından yoksun bırakılmışlardır. Kamu emekçilerinin sendika haklarını yeniden elde etmeleri, ancak 1996’da kısmen gerçekleşebilmiştir.” (Oya Baydar, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Hareketi*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, İstanbul, 1998, s.7)

“İlk defa 1936’da, Türkiye’deki ilk genel çalışma yasası olan 3008 sayılı İş Kanunu çıkarılmıştır. Bu yasa çalışma koşullarını ve ilişkilerini belli kurallara göre düzenlemekle birlikte, sendika kurulmasına ve greve izin vermemektedir.” (Oya Baydar, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Hareketi*, 1998, s.6.)

“1824, ilk sendikanın kurulduğu tarih oluyor. Dünyanın sendikal örgütlenmeyle tanışmasından bu yana yaklaşık 170 yıl geçti.” (Gökçe, Y.Kemal, *Sendikal Bürokrasi ve Çözüm Önerileri*, Başak Yay., Ankara, 1993, sp. 17.)

“İşçi derneklerinin kurulması 1845’de çıkarılan Polis Nizamnamesi ile yasaklanmıştı.” (TÜRK-İŞ, *Çalışma Hayatımıza Kırk Yılda Vurulan Damga-TÜRK-İŞ*, p.10.)

“Thereafter systematic organization of workers disappeared, except for occasional attempts to establish societies, such as the Workers’ Care Society (Ameleperver Cemiyeti) of 1871, which combined mutual assistance and trade unionism in brief, unstable partnership.” (Rosen, M.R., “Turkey” in Galenson, W. (ed.), *Labor in Developing Economies*, University of California Press, 1963, p.279.

“In Turkey, the first major strike took place in late January 1872, when 500-600 workers of the İstanbul naval arsenal, protesting the long delay in the issuance of their wages and in an effort to bring their plight to the attention of the capital’s public, walked off their jobs.” (Zagladin, V.V., and others, *The International Working-Class Movement, Problems of History and Theory*, Vol.2, USSR, 1981, p.503.

“Bu gelişmeler üzerine sendika kurmak ve grev yapmak kanunla yasaklandı. 25 Eylül 1908 tarihinde Tatil’i Eşgal Kanunu Muvakkatı çıkarılarak 1909’da yürürlüğe kondu.” (TÜRK-İŞ, *Çalışma Hayatımıza Kırk Yılda Vurulan Damga-TÜRK-İŞ*, p.10.)

"It is interesting to note that, although the Act of 1909 had prohibited strikes and unionization only in public services and utilities, it brought the whole union movement of the period to an end, for there was virtually no industrial labor force outside these sectors during this era." (Dereli, Toker, *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism, A Study of Legislative and Socio-Political Dimensions*, İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi İktisat ve İçtimaiyat Enstitüsü Yay., İstanbul, 1968, p.57.)

"In September 1921, the Kemalist government, endeavouring to win the workers' support for the liberation struggle, introduced a law on the rights of the miners of the Ereğli coal basin which for the first time established an eight-hour day for miners, recognised their trade union and proclaimed certain rights for workers." (Zagladin, V.V. and others, *The International Working-Class Movement, Problems of History and Theory*, Vol.4, USSR, 1984, p. 458.

"O günlerin hükümeti, 1925 yılında Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu ile her türlü dernek ve sendika faaliyetlerini yasaklamıştır." (Sönmezsoy, Refik, *Türkiye'de ve Dünyada İşçi Hareketleri*, Boğaziçi Yay., İstanbul, 1981, p.16).

"Under the 'Renewal of Tranquility Law' (Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu) of March 1925, all 'professional organisations' were illegalised at a stroke." (Hale, William, "Labour Unions in Turkey: Progress and Problems," in Hale, W. (ed.), *Aspects of Modern Turkey*, The Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies of the University of Durham, University of Durham, Essex, 1976, p. 61.)

"4 Mart 1925 tarihinde çıkarılan Takrir'i Sükun Kanunu, işçilerin sendika kurmalarını yasaklıyordu... Bu dönemde, sendika kurmak yasak olduğundan işçiler teşkilatlanamıyordu." (TÜRK-İŞ, *Çalışma Hayatımıza Kırk Yılda Vurulan Damga-TÜRK-İŞ*, Ankara, 1992, p.12.)

"In 1923, at the İzmir Economic Congress..., the right of workers to form trade unions was recognised and it was also decided to modify the legislative structure to incorporate working people's rights into society. But these rights were never implemented, because they were abolished in 1925 as a result of an uprising instigated by the trade unions which were organising in the eastern provinces." (Ramazanoğlu, Hüseyin, "The Crisis of Trade Unionism in Turkey," in Brierley, W. (ed.), *Trade Unions and the Economic Crisis of the 1980s*, Gower Publishing Company, England, 1987, p.175.)

"1933'de Ceza Kanunu değiştirilerek greve gideceklere ağır cezalar getirildi." (TÜRK-İŞ, *Çalışma Hayatımıza Kırk Yılda Vurulan Damga-TÜRK-İŞ*, Ankara, 1992, p.13.)

"1940'da İş Kanununda yapılan bir değişiklikle, ... bütün sendikalar -hükümetin kurdukları bile kapatılmıştır." (Şişmanov, Dimitir, *Türkiye İşçi ve Sosyalist Hareketi, Kısa Tarih (1908-1965)*, Belge Yay., İstanbul, 1978, p.140.)