

Dear all, greetings from Giresun, the motherland of hazelnut!

I am coming from Giresun, Turkey where there is the best quality hazelnut production, the best aromatic one. Giresun is a city in the Eastern Black Sea region of Turkey. I am here as representer for Hazelnut Producers' Union: Fındık-SEN. This union is a part of Farmer's Unions Confederation, which is the member of global farmers movement, La Via Campesina.

The most important question of this presentation is, why am I here, as a hazelnut producer. As we know, all around the world there is farming. Hazelnut production is, as well, Turkey at the first place, have been conducted in Italy and other countries. Wherever you travel in the world, you will see farmers facing problems. Though we live in different parts of the world does not necessarily mean that we face different problems. From production to marketing, we face similar problems. It is mostly thought that the problems of hazelnut producers in a country is caused by another countries hazelnut producers. I am actually here in order to show that this is not the case. I am here to show that hazelnut producers around the world face similar problems. Yes, we may have some specific problems regarding each country, problems regarding production, distribution or marketing. But all these have very much common elements.

I am not sure about Italy, as I do not know much in detail. Hence, in Turkey, for the last 20 years, the economical organizations of the farmers - the cooperatives- have been eliminated by systematic policies. They are thrown out from the economical activity. I don't know how this happened in Italy. But I know that, in all around the world, agribusiness occupies much more space day by day. This is the case for Italy, as well as for Turkey.

Once it was FİSKOBİRLİK, a union of cooperatives, which was the only determinant over export of hazelnut. Nowadays, it is Italian, German or French multi-national companies and transnational corporations that is determinant over food and agriculture. I hope you focus here. The Italian rooted Ferrero company and its other branches bought the largest company of Turkey, Oltan Gıda, which was dominating the hazelnut market. Moreover, another Italian company Stellifer, as well others like Progıda and Balsu, which does not even count the fingers of a hand, dominates and controls the all market. Ferrero and Stellifer controls almost %40 of all Turkish exportation. This companies do not only export, but they work at the base level. They work in the countryside with paid-workers as if they are representing the Ministry of Agriculture, and they determine the agriculture policies.

I want to detail the Ferrero example. I experience in everyday how Ferrero works in the field, and I encounter Ferrero's workers in my daily life. After Ferrero bought the Oltan Gıda company, if started two offices in the east and the west parts of Turkey. In these offices, they have different technical-administrative stuff such as agriculture engineers, sociologists and so on, from different parts, for specific purposes. These

stuff work in the field directly with farmers, and organize some kind of technical education. They organize the contract processes with farmers. Ferrero prioritize the farmers which they do contract, by giving extra money. They do it through credit card system. They also distribute different technical materials to support farmers. They put extra money in the credit cards for farmers to spend. So, they make each farmer dependent on the system. The sole aim of this work in the field is to take control of the hazelnut production. They would become sovereign over food production. Their all work is in partnership with the ministry of agriculture and the farmers chambers which is a legal partner of the Ministry. As we face in all developing countries, the in Turkey farmers have been alienated to their products and land through the government policies. None of the farmers believe that the hazelnut farming will provide a future for their children. Farmers are in a golden TEPŞİ provided for the TNCs. It is a sustainable exploitation regime in agriculture, and controlling of the food production by the companies.

Pesticists and Herbicits over Agriculture

As corporate power takes more control, the dependency on agricultural inputs increase. The input dependency with the contractual farming is one of the most important realities nowadays where companies do not need to own the land but continue the exploitation through controlling the system.

Although it has been thought that in Turkey the conventional-industrial agriculture is dominant, the use of the inputs are less when compared to EU countries. In this sense, it can be said that the hazelnut plantations are still pure. There is no dominant use of chemicals. Hence, it does not guarantee the future. The policies of Erdoğan's government for the last 15 years have strengthened the agribusiness a lot.

It may be ironic, but the region has a lot of rain in the season where there is a heavy fight with the **Curculio nucum (the little hazelnut insect)**, which is mostly in May. It is like a secret hand of God preventing the intense use of chemicals. What we need to focus is the use of herbicides in our contemporary time, as it is mostly promoted by the companies. Hence, because of the geographical dimensions and the topography of the region, the use of herbicides is not much and there is a risk of loosing the land while using. The use rate is lower than the EU counties. Again, ironically, because of government's "security measures", the use of chemicals containing nitrogene was limited and so our land was secured by these chemicals. The "slow-herbicidies" produced in Europe was introduced in local market after this security measures. As the hazelnut producers do not have large land and we have divided land all over Turkey, the use of these herbicides is not very much.

PRESSURES OF FOOD INDUSTRY OVER PRODUCTION METHODS

Hazelnut is the basic input for chocolate industry. The companies that control the hazelnut production are companies mostly work on chocolate industry.

The main target of the food industry is to provide cheap hazelnut as input for the industry. This can be done only through industrial farming. This is a model based on mechanization of agriculture and dense use of chemicals. Although the industry refers to “ethical trade” in the last period, through preventing child labor in hazelnut production, there is intense child labor in hazelnut production as it is cheap. Though companies seem to fight with this child labor issue, they promote the model. Because, this model needs cheap labor, and this can be provided through the child labor.

In the last period, we also see “organic farming” and “good farming” practices through the needs of the food industry. We do not think this is a real agroecological model. This is also an industrial model. In this model, chemicals offered by the companies, as well industrial fertilizers are used. The animal fertilizers are provided by animals that are fed by industrial food. So, the so called-organic is not really natural, not based on peasant farming. This is a model based on certification, where labor and nature is put in the second hand, while trade is prioritized. This is a demand of the food industry, as there is a need for secure food all around the world. However, it is not the people that wins through this system, but the companies.

AGROECOLOGICAL PRACTICES AND ALTERNATIVE MARKETS

In our region there are some farmers who try to use agroecological methods and peasant farming in order to produce hazelnuts. But this is a very very small portion of all farmers. They are very marginal in numbers.

These farmers do not use chemicals. They do not use industrial fertilizers. They use plant compost or animal compost as fertilizer. They use agroecological methods to fight with diseases. They use methods coming from older generations.

These farmers have connections with some community supported initiatives, mostly consumer cooperatives. These cooperatives provide the product for the consumers. Fındık-SEN plays a role to determine the price for this ecological products. But, it is important to underline that this does not cover a big portion. It is mostly symbolic in numbers. Our aim is to expand this practices in numbers and in quantity, as well to develop agricultural and food policies that will support these practices all around the country.

We know that, UN has provided farmers to determine price over the production, distribution and marketization of our products and right to access to markets. As Hazelnut Producers Union, it is to realize this right as our priority. We do not seek a solution where each party will win. We seek a solution where small and medium farmers will be prioritized. FİNDİK-SEN wants the FİSKOBİRLİK to become a tool

for the sake of farmers to distribute our products to the market. As well, we try to organize the relation between the producers and the consumers- consumer cooperatives that operate in the cities. We organize the communication and relations between each party.

The hazelnut producers can take part in this global game with a global resistance. But, we first need to organize at the local level. We invite every hazelnut producer, to organize with the idea that organized producers do not lose.

Globalise the hope, globalist the struggle
Kutsi Yaşar