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**FOR THE UNION MAKES US STRONG:
THE İSTANBUL METAL WORKERS AND THEIR STRUGGLE FOR
UNIONIZATION IN TURKEY, 1947-1970**

BY

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BS, Middle East Technical University, 2003

MA, Middle East Technical University, 2005

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the Doctor of Philosophy degree

in the Graduate Programme in History

Wilfrid Laurier University

2015

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ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of the history of organized metal labor in İstanbul, Turkey after the Second World War. It analyzes and displays the complex and intermingled historical processes within which laborers in the private metal sector of İstanbul experienced workplace relations and actively responded to them. In this regard, although recent immigrants to Istanbul were exposed to unfamiliar conditions and labor relations, they attempted to shape those new relations through several means, in particular through the establishment of trade unions. In an effort to provide a comprehensive picture of class formation in the metal sector after the war, this study, therefore, focuses on the experiences of the İstanbul metal workers in their workplaces and living districts, as well as their efforts to be organized in effort to influence and change those conditions.

This dissertation relies on three interrelated levels of social relations, since the majority of the metal workers gained a certain class consciousness and habit of acting collectively between 1945 and 1970 in Turkey: the metal worker's experiences in their work and social lives, their unionization and their collective actions. Of course, those conditions did not exist in a contextual void in Turkey after the war years; they were shaped by both the state policies which developed out of a certain world context, and by several social and historical problems with which Turkey grappled after 1945, as well as the particular type of progress of economic order, namely capitalism. In Turkey, the metal workers' collective responses to the prevalent conditions from which they suffered took shape in parallel with changes in the political order, the state institutions, and the balance of political ideologies. What I am suggesting in this dissertation is that the İstanbul metal worker's collective consciousness, and collective struggles which reached a peak towards end of the 1960s, were formed by the combination of different factors: the changing state intervention in regulating workplace relations after the war years, the changing patterns of social relations between bosses and workers, the progress of unionization in the sector, and most importantly, the various types of workers' collective actions that occurred as a response to all those dynamics. In the end, it was the workers' collective actions that constituted the most important reason for their rise as distinct social actors, namely; becoming members of a defined class in Turkish society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An academic work is truly produced through the collective labor of many individuals, albeit all of them do not realize the extent of their contribution. This study is not a deviation from this clich  , thus I am grateful to many people for their assistance and patience during my work on this dissertation. I ask the forgiveness of my friends and those I have forgotten to mention by name.

This text is based on archival research in many institutions in Turkey, including T rkiye Sosyal Tarih Arařtırma Vakfı (The Association of Turkey's Social History Research) in İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı (The History Association) in İstanbul, the Atat rk Library and the Beyazıd State Library in İstanbul, the Adnan  t ken Library, the National Library. and the Ankara University Library, all of them in Ankara. I salute the help and advice of their staff in locating documents. Those include; Sibel S. Sular, Fahrettin Ozan, Fahri Aral and Cem Ko . But, more than any institution, I am indebted to the Middle East Technical University Library and its great librarian, T lin  z elik. She did not only immediately provide any material that I asked but T lin also manifested her friendship by allowing me to use her office, her desk, even her computer whenever I needed. Our friendly conversations and traditional backgammon competitions greatly relieved me during my impasses when writing this study. I am also thankful to İbrahim Kurnaz, Sevgi Oymak, Eray T rker, G k e Karadeniz, ř kr  Tařtepe, Hatice H r and Emre Hasan Albayrak for their help in extracting the resources provided by this library. Duygu Canan  zt rk and Denizhan  lgen Deniz assisted me in finding several materials in the National Library. Duygu T rk Karahano ulları and Onur Can Tařtan provided me with books from the Library of Political Science, Ankara  niversitesi. I am so grateful to those friends for their assistance.

I am also thankful to those who agreed to interviews, a very important component of such a study. Those include Ege Cansen, Nuri  elik, Seyfi  a an, H seyin Ekinci, Mehmet Kul, Mustafa T rker, Aziz Amca, İsmet Amca, Celal Akıl and Ali Can.

Wilfrid Laurier University and Tri-University's Graduate Program in History offered me great opportunities and knowledge, especially in terms of asking historical problems and handling with them efficiently. I am grateful to Blaine Chiasson, Adam Crear, Jeff Grischow, Eva Plach, and Stuart G. McCook for their contributions and advice during my years in Waterloo. I am also thankful

to Cindi Weig who did her best to listen my every administrative problem, and who patiently tried to solve my most silly questions and problems. Helen Paret and Prof. Joan Norris from the Faculty of Graduate Studies solved my financial problems, which no doubt constitute the biggest obstacle for any international student. I cannot find proper words to express my gratitude to them. During my studies, I was also lucky to have other contributions from various people in Europe and Turkey. Those are Brian Mello, Erdem Kabadayı, M. Hakan Koçak, Zafer Aydın, Can Şafak, Berkay Aydın, Mustafa Bayırbağ, Ferdan Ergut, Nesim Şeker, Recep Boztemur. Atilla Aytekin, Birten Çelik and Görkem Akgöz, who carefully read the sections of this study and made invaluable criticisms and comments. I am also grateful to Ozan Yıldırım and Ayhan Üsküdar who helped me in preparing the tables and maps in this work. Alper Mugan kindly assisted me in preparing the Abbreviation section. But, more than anyone else, I am thankful to Onur Can Taştan who closely read this work and provided me with very enriching comments. Our debates on the working class history in Turkey, as well as the theoretical and methodological approaches to conduct a study on the labor history constituted a firm ground for most of the arguments I am presenting in this study.

In addition to those names, my friends both in Canada and Turkey made the writing of this study possible by both their criticisms and love they provided me from the depth of their hearts. Landis and Violet Brubaker offered me their hospitality in Canada. Furthermore, I will be forever in debt to Ayça Tomaç and Burcu Habibe Baba for making their comments on my studies and displaying their warm friendship without any expectation and hesitation in this big and lonely country. Alper Mugan, Bircan Işık, Gamze Aydemir, and Tülin Özçelik in Turkey have always encouraged me whenever I had any trouble in finding a way in my life during this study. Alper Mugan's unending passion toward life, his broad smile and Bircan Işık's charming laugh became a source of inspiration to me. I am afraid that I will never be able repay my debt to such wonderful friends.

Members of my dissertation committee, Renée Worringer, Rob Kristofferson, and Karin Hofmeester, provided me with important criticism and thus greatly helped me to put forth stronger arguments. Since they have from different backgrounds in terms of their field of expertise, their comments and criticism enabled me to focus on the different aspects, which are undoubtedly required

for any social history research. Cheryl Jacklin-Piraino has carefully read this thesis, proofread it for me and reminded me about every inconsistency within the text.

My supervisor, Gavin D. Brockett, did not supervise just this text; he has also helped me to find the true way whenever I lost myself in the difficult road of obtaining a Ph.D and being an international student in a foreign country. He unwaveringly provided me with very good, thoughtful and insightful comments and advice while I was writing this study. He pointed out different trajectories that might better pave the way for various opportunities to me. Furthermore, his unfailing joy and cheer encouraged me whenever I fell into despair. I am aware that this study is my own creation; however, it was Gavin who enabled this achievement. His excellent supervisory skills went in parallel with his invaluable friendship. I can only hope that our collaboration will last in the future.

As always, my family, Feleknaz Balkılıç, Kazım Balkılıç, Funda Akkaya, Erhan Akkaya and our newborn beloved Rüzgar Akkaya, became the most important mainstay on which my trust has never failed in vain. Throughout this study, I always felt that I was loved and supported by them. They all constituted a firm ground in which I could confidently plant my feet. My sincerest hope is that I never disappointed them as a son, brother and uncle.

During my first year in Canada, I learned that my family and I lost our beloved uncle-in-law, Arif Kaya. Once upon a time, Marx expressed his one of the most famous words: “The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.” I know that Arif Kaya, being a laborer throughout all his life, worked hard to save himself and his family from such a burden of history: his untimely death made the horror and cruelty of the past even more palpable for all of us. So, I dedicate this study to his living memory.

To the memory of Arif Kaya, the most diligent and honest worker that I ever met...

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFL-CIO: AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR-THE CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

AID: AGENCY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AP: ADALET PARTİSİ-THE JUSTICE PARTY

BASIN-İŞ: TÜRKİYE BASIN, YAYIN, MATBAA ÇALIŞANLARI SENDİKASI-THE PRESS, PUBLISHING AND PRINTING HOUSE WORKER'S UNION OF TURKEY

CAM-İŞ: TÜRKİYE CAM SANAYİ İŞÇİLERİ SENDİKASI-THE GLASS INDUSTRY WORKER'S UNION OF TURKEY

CHP: CUMHURİYET HALK PARTİSİ-THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

ÇELİK-İŞ: TÜRKİYE ÇELİK İŞÇİLERİ SENDİKASI-THE STEEL WORKER'S UNION OF TURKEY

DİSK: DEVRİMCİ İŞÇİ SENDİKALARI KONFEDERASYONU-THE PROGRESSIVE WORKER'S TRADE UNION CONFEDERACY OF TURKEY

DP: DEMOKRAT PARTİ-THE DEMOCRAT PARTY

DPT: DEVLET PLANLAMA TEŞKİLATI-THE STATE PLANNING INSTITUTE

GIDA-İŞ: TÜRKİYE GIDA SANAYİ İŞÇİLERİ SENDİKASI-THE FOOD INDUSTRY WORKER'S UNION OF TURKEY

ILO: INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

KRİSTAL-İŞ: SERAMİK, ŞİŞE VE CAM SANAYİ İŞÇİLERİ SENDİKASI-CERAMIC, BOTTLE AND GLASS INDUSTRY WORKERS' UNION

LASTİK-İŞ: TÜRKİYE PETROL, KİMYA VE LASTİK SANAYİİ İŞÇİLERİ
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TURKEY

MADEN-İŞ: TÜRKİYE MADEN, MADENİ EŞYA VE MAKİNA SANAYİ İŞÇİLERİ
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MESS: MADENİ EŞYA SANAYİCİLERİ SENDİKASI-TURKISH EMPLOYER'S
ASSOCIATION OF THE METAL HARDWARE INDUSTRY

MHP: MİLLİYETÇİ HAREKET PARTİSİ-THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY

MPM: MİLLİ PRODÜKTİVİTE MERKEZİ-THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTER

TİP: TÜRKİYE İŞÇİ PARTİSİ-THE TURKISH LABOR PARTY

TİSK: TÜRKİYE İŞVEREN SENDİKALARI KONFEDERASYONU-THE
CONFEDERACY OF TURKISH EMPLOYER'S ASSOCIATIONS

TSİD: TÜRK SEVK VE İDARE DERNEĞİ-THE TURKISH MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION

TÜRK-İŞ: TÜRKİYE İŞÇİ SENİDİKALARI KONFEDERASYONU-THE WORKER'S
TRADE UNION CONFEDERACY OF TURKEY

TÜRK MADEN-İŞ: TÜRKİYE MADEN-İŞÇİLERİ SENDİKASI-THE MINE WORKER'S
UNION OF TURKEY

TÜSİAD: TÜRKİYE SANAYİCİ VE İŞADAMLARI DERNEĞİ-THE ASSOCIATION OF
TURKISH INDUSTRY AND BUSINESSMAN

TÜSTAV: TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH VE ARAŞTIRMALAR VAKFI-THE
ASSOCIATION OF TURKEY'S SOCIAL HISTORY RESEARCH

UAW: UNITED AUTOMOBILE WORKERS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It was between June 15th and 16th, 1970 that the biggest workers' uprising Turkey had ever witnessed took place in İstanbul. By following the Kartal-Göztepe road, or by taking Ankara Highway from the Anatolian side of the city, or by marching from the well known workers' districts of Eyüp, Alibeyköy, Topkapı, Sağmalcılar, Levent, Beykoz and İstinye from the European side, nearly 100,000 workers fought with state forces in an effort to reach the city center in Taksim. The journey was in protest of new legislation which would exert significant restrictions on the free union choice of workers, and eventually result in the dissolution of DİSK (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu - The Progressive Workers' Trade Union Confederacy of Turkey), one of the two biggest workers' confederations at the time. DİSK had been founded by a few former TÜRK-İŞ (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu-The Workers' Trade Union Confederacy of Turkey) unions in 1967 with a socialist cause, and it progressed significantly towards 1970 in terms of its both membership numbers and political influence in Turkey, while claiming to be the *genuine* and *revolutionary* union of workers.

In order to obstruct its further rise, the administrators of the party in power, namely the AP (Adalet Partisi- The Justice Party) and the TÜRK-İŞ officials, had long been working on a draft law, which finally came to the Grand National Assembly in 1970. With the cooperation of the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-The Republican People's Party) - the founder of the Republic in 1923 and one of the two major parties since the beginning of the multi-party politics in 1945-, the AP was able to ratify the draft, first in the Assembly and then in the Senate. Afterwards, and with the approval of President Cevdet Sunay, the draft was sanctioned on June 11th. While the high officers of DİSK immediately contacted the political parties in Ankara to demand a repeal of the legislation, the district and factory representatives organized meetings with the workers on the shop floor to explain the repercussions of the new law. As they had already experienced conflicts in previous years while fighting for their free union choice, a significant number of İstanbul workers responded

positively to the call of their representatives and invaded the city streets for two days. Being absolutely determined to arrive in the city center and join forces with other workers, they surmounted several barricades installed by the police and military. Some workers even damaged the Haymak metal factory, which was owned by the nephew of the head of the AP, Şevket Demirel.¹ During these clashes, one police officer and three workers lost their lives. In some factories, the incidents lasted more than two days. The Council of Ministers declared martial law on June 16th in İstanbul and in the neighbouring city of Kocaeli, home to several factories. Military forces surrounded Türk Demir Döküm, Derby, Çelik Endüstrisi, Elektro Metal, Seka, Arçelik, etc., on June 17th, and the workers would not return back to work in Türk Demir Döküm, Derby, İzsal, Sungurlar and Rabak until June 22nd. In the end, order was restored again, and in addition to the arrest of 50 DİSK administrators, including the general secretary, Kemal Türkler, more than 5 000 workers were fired from the factories. Nonetheless, the Constitutional Court² repealed the law in 1971 as a result of an application of the Türkiye İşçi Partisi (TİP-The Turkish Labor Party), which had been founded in 1961 and which became very effective throughout the decade following a socialist cause.

The June 15-16th labor upsurge left a significant scar on public memory in Turkey. In addition to several documentaries, a film called *Zengin Mutfağı [The Kitchen of the Wealthy]*, was shot by a prominent director of the Turkish cinema, Başar Sabuncu, with accompanying performances of famous actors such as Şener Şen and Nilüfer Açıkalın.³ Today, several trade unions and political parties still organize meetings to commemorate the martyrs, and debate the legacy and importance of the riot. More importantly, the events signified an important threshold for the workers who participated in terms of enriching their collective action repertoire and fostering solidarity. In fact, a significant amount of İstanbul's workers were veterans of collective action, especially in the post-Second World War Era, but the June 15-

¹ His brother's name was Süleyman Demirel, one of the very influential right-wing politicians in Turkey from the 1960s until the mid 1990s.

² The Constitutional Court was founded after the 1960 coup d'état in Turkey with the aim of protecting the basic rights and freedoms defined in the 1961 Constitution and checking the compliance of the new laws to the Constitution itself.

³ *Zengin Mutfağı [The Kitchen of Riches]*. Dir. Başar Sabuncu. Perf. Şener Şen, Nilüfer Açıkalın, Oktay Koruyan, Gökhan Mete, and Osman Gergen. Erler, 1988, Film.

16th riot was their defining experience. These collective actions contributed to the formation of a common consciousness among the workers; therefore, an increasing number of them began to define and express their common interests at the expense of the interests of factory owners, or wealthy classes. The workers of İstanbul began to see themselves as members of a larger group, namely the working class, through their actions after the Second World War.

Despite being a turning point in the formation of the working class, these collective actions, however, were not the sole factor; rather, the workers' shared experiences, which were rooted in their social relations with other groups and various classes in their workplaces and living places, were important catalysts that actually spurred them to engage in collective action and shaped the formation of their class. That narrative of class that I weave into this work follows a complex web of relationships between the workers' social formations, their common experiences, and their struggles to be a prosperous and respected group within the larger society. This story of class foundations had a remarkable influence on political and social life in Turkey after 1945.

There are few works, which devote attention to the history of workers of the post-war era, especially in comparison to the significant amount of studies about the late Ottoman Empire and Early Republican Period.⁴ Moreover, the already limited historiography, which focused on the political and social developments of the post-war era, rarely reflected on how social relations in Turkey actually evolved after 1945 through a class lens, and fewer of them based their assumptions on situating the class as the important actors in the ongoing social relations at the center of their narratives. The existing literature perceived these historical developments as the net results of clashes between political parties and movements, or as the one-sided reflections of transformations in industrial and social areas where the class as

⁴ The long enduring Ottoman Empire had participated in the First World War on behalf of the Axis Powers led by Germany between 1914 and 1918. After being defeated in the War, a significant portion of lands of the Empire were occupied, including its capital city, İstanbul. While the occupation went on, a resistant movement emerged in the inner Anatolia and it was later unified and led by Mustafa Kemal and his close friends. The resistance defeated the Greek occupation forces in several battles and signed several treaties with the other occupation forces, such as the Italian, French and British. As a result of those treaties, the foreign military forces were withdrawn from Anatolia. After the victory, Mustafa Kemal and his friends declared the dissolution of the old Empire and the foundation of the new Republic on October 29th, 1923.

subject did not play any part in political developments. With their a top-down approach, these studies see class relations or struggles, if any existed, as the *natural* cause of certain social and economic developments; however, the classes as actors were not seen to have had any influence on the progress of such developments. When they reflected on class relations, they superficially placed emphasis on the laws and legislations, which were exerted by the state on trade unions, rather than how those laws actually influenced the very life of real people and how those people, in turn, perceived, experienced, and resisted those changes.

For example, two pre-eminent scholars, Feroz Ahmad and Erik Jan Zürcher, in their influential books on Turkish history including the post-war developments, draw attention to the polarization of politics between 1945 and 1980. While Feroz Ahmad mainly focuses on political developments of the period between 1945 and 1980, he does not assign a position to the workers or their institutions in understanding the political and social processes in the 1950s; nevertheless, he situates the workers movements in the 1960s in the context of such developments. Having a certain structuralist perspective that class struggles are the inevitable and a direct result of industrial developments rather than the class relations, he sees the emergence of the working class and class struggles in the 1960s, but not in the 1950s, as the natural result of the capitalist development, which gained a momentum in Turkey in the 1960s. In doing so, he ignores the development of the private sector, which set the conditions for class relations in the 1950s. As a result, he misses important continuities in the relations of classes, which began to take a different shape immediately following the post-war period.⁵ Erik Jan Zürcher, on the other hand, draws a general framework for the political, economic, social and cultural developments in Turkey after 1945. Though he mentions the development of working class suburbs and trade unions before the 1960s, for Zürcher, the “actual” workers’ movements began to take a shape mostly after 1960, and as a sub-category of the

⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye’nin Oluşumu* [*The Making of Modern Turkey*], Yavuz Alogan [trans.] (İstanbul: Kaynak, 1995); Feroz Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye* [*The Turkish Experiment in Democracy*], Ahmet Fethi [trans.] (İstanbul: Hil, 2007).

increasing political struggles between left and right.⁶ By introducing class relations to the study of collective actions, and equating the rise of class movement with the rise of ideological struggles, Zürcher ignores the importance of actual social relations and the ideals and thoughts of ordinary people which contributed to the emergence of the collective actions and the notably independent development of the classes and class actions in the 1950s and 1960s.⁷

The situation is not very different for those scholars who claimed to write historical accounts of the post-war era by using the concept of class, or some other Marxist categorizations. For example, Çağlar Keyder and Korkut Boratav discuss how the Turkish economy transformed from an export-oriented model, based on agricultural products, to an import-substitution model, based on intermediary goods, thanks to the rise of a new bourgeoisie and its changing interests. Both of these writers claim that the increasing importance of industry and social welfare paved the way for class conflict over the distribution of resources in the 1960s. According to them, the necessities of creating internal markets led the state and bourgeoisie to tolerate wage increases for workers.⁸ In such reasoning, there is no need to analyze the classes as social actors who actually experienced industrialization in a specific way, and who engaged in a struggle to take advantage of whatever the economic model was. Rather than analyzing the actual class relations and developing a model based on those relations, the classes seem only to fulfill roles which were assigned by Keyder and/or Boratav themselves, or through a specific reading of Marxism. According to their accounts, the redistributive policies of the state contributed to the

⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). For a recent study which typically analyzes Turkish history between 1960 and 1970 by mostly depending upon the competition between political ideals, see Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960'tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi [The Turkish History From 1960 to Today]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014).

⁷ Ibid. For the similar accounts see, Cem Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve İdeolojisi [The Democrat Party: Its History and Ideology]*, (Ankara: Sevinç, 1970); Taner Timur, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Geçiş [The Transition to the Multi-Party Life in Turkey]*, (Ankara: İmge, 2003); Mustafa Albayrak, *Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Demokrat Parti [The Democrat Party in the Turkish Political History]*, (Ankara: Phoenix, 2004); Tevfik Çavdar, *Türkiye'nin Demokrasi Tarihi [The History of Democracy in Turkey]*, (Ankara: İmge, 2004).

⁸ Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development*, (London: Verso, 1987); Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi: 1908-1985, [The Economic History of Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1993).

emergence of class conflicts, but they did not mention how the class struggles themselves took part in shaping those policies.⁹ In their portrayals, we encounter an idealized picture of the classes as categorized social groups, rather than living social actors, since classes are assumed to act collectively only to fulfil their economic functions in a given society. To what extent this assumption fits within the actual history of the collective or individual acts of class actors, however, is unclear. Moreover, due to this idealization, classes acted, for those authors, as the groups, which lacked any ideals and independent thought, and merely followed their material interests. This is a very mechanistic concept of class, no matter how well it fits with the assumed Marxist understanding of class.

There are other scholars who tried to explain the post-war developments in Turkey by focusing on large scale social changes, such as the industrialization of agriculture, migration and urbanization which took place after the war. Inspired by the post-war modernization theory, those scholars' perspectives were derived from another teleological assumption: why did Turkey's history not follow the same path taken by developed capitalist countries during the nineteenth century? By focusing on this question and assuming an idealized and unilinear development pattern for each nation, those scholars analyzed the *deviations* and *anomalies* in Turkish history, rather than the actual process itself. As a result, even when they seemed to explain the transformations in social life and their repercussions on political developments, the social groups seemed again to simply fulfill the historical roles assigned by the authors, themselves.¹⁰

In short, the existing limited historiography, which focused on the post-war economic, social, political or cultural developments, produced a kind of history that lacks actual and living social actors. Although this dissertation acknowledges that these scholars

⁹ For a similar criticism to the literature which analyzes how the distributive policies resulted in improvement of workers' life style during the post-war era in the USA, look at: Richard McIntyre and Michael Hillard, "Capitalist Class Agency and the New Deal Order: Against the notion of a Limited Capital-Labor Accord", *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 45 (2013): 129-148.

¹⁰ For example, see: Kemal Karpaz, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi [The History of Turkish Democracy]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul, 1967); Ruşen Keleş, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Şehirleşme, Konut ve Gecekondu [The Urbanization, Housing and Squatter Houses in Turkey in 100 Questions]*, (İstanbul: Gerçek, 1972); Michael N. Danielson and Ruşen Keleş, *The Politics of Rapid Urbanization: Government and Growth in Modern Turkey*, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985).

contributed significantly to Turkish historiography of the late 1940s and the succeeding two decades by presenting the different factors that highlight the structural conditions of the class formation and action; notably however, the aforementioned scholarship lacks any proper analysis of the real social actors who created their own histories in the context of historical developments in Turkey. Accordingly, this dissertation's main goal is to enrich the field of study by situating the human actors, especially workers, in their deserved place in Turkish history.

In fact, the Turkish labor historiography had long been dominated by a similar idealization of the working class and teleological perception of history. When the socialist scholars, either within or outside of academic circles, who assumed that the developments which took place in agriculture and industry would result in the dispossession of people and proletarianization, and that this process, naturally, would lead to class struggles and class consciousness for the workers, did not find the traces of *genuine* class consciousness which they searched for, they put the blame on the underdevelopment or irregular progress of the Turkish capitalism. If those scholars who were looking for the *true* historical processes found the *genuine* working class and class consciousness, specifically in the moments that the collective actions of the workers were on the rise, they analyzed the state and state policies, unions, unions leaders and their ideologies, or socialist movements and their leaders rather than the ordinary people who actually catalyzed those actions through their own labor. In those accounts, ordinary people remain as the passive followers of either the bourgeoisie or socialist ideology.

This kind of history writing was challenged by the studies of Donald Quataert and a younger generation of Turkish scholars, who followed the path designated by Quartet's works and developed new research agendas accompanying new perspectives, questions and methods through the mid-1990s. A member of this generation, Yiğit Akın, is certainly right in criticizing the older, but still dominant historiography methods for (re)producing an elitist vision of history, wherein the labor processes and different and conflicting actors of those had

been largely ignored.¹¹ This style of history writing, according to Akin, almost completely focused on the organization, parties and leaders of the workers and workers' collective action.¹² By analyzing how the actual social relations evolved on the shop floor and in living places from a bottom-up perspective, rather than an elitist and statist one, most assumptions and discussions of the old history might be refuted.¹³ Rather than looking for the presence or absence of an assumed working class or true class consciousness, and taking pains to understand real people's ideals, beliefs or actions in their historical context, those scholars did not focus on the whether the laws of capitalism or modernism actually fit in the case of Turkey. Rather, they focused on how capitalism took a particular shape and how it evolved in Turkey. They engaged in writing the social history of workers' factories or living place experiences as the factors, which situated them in a particular historical context.¹⁴

When examining the labor history of the late Ottoman Empire, scholars generally focused on the formation of the working class, workers' collective action within the history of trade unions, industrialization and the socialist movement, as well as the social history of the workers. Three theoretical frameworks dominate these studies: the Modernization School, the teleological Marxist class analysis, and "the social history of the working class" approach, inspired by E. P. Thompson's monumental work, *The Making of English Working Class*. Both the Modernization School and the Marxist class analysis focus on the workers' collective

¹¹ By labor process, I am referring to the organization of work in workplaces; that is, how people work, how they are controlled and how they are paid for on the shop floor level. This level, I think, is a place where capitalist relations can be observed in their most crystallized forms. There is significant literature on the labor process: Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, (New York: Free Press, 1974); Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Basic Books, 1979); Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production: The Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism*, (London: Verso, 1985); Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The US Experience*, (London: Verso, 2000).

¹² Yiğit Akin, "Emek Cumhuriyet Dönemi Emek Tarihçiliğine Katkı: Yeni Yaklaşımlar, Yeni Kaynaklar [The Contribution to the Labor Historiography of the Early Republican Period: New Approaches, New Sources]", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 2 (Autumn 2005): 75-79. For a reply to Akin, look at: Ahmet Makal, "Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Emek Tarihi ve Tarihçiliği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme [An Analysis of the Labor History and Historian Craft of the Early Republican Period]", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 3 (Spring 2006): 215-264.

¹³ Akin, "Emek Cumhuriyet Dönemi Emek Tarihçiliğine Katkı: Yeni Yaklaşımlar, Yeni Kaynaklar", 79-111.

¹⁴ For a fine analysis that focuses on the historical transformation in the international labor historiography from the institutionalist approach to another one which primarily focuses on the social relations in explaining labor history, see: Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History: What is Left of the Social*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

actions of the late Ottoman Empire.¹⁵ Well-known authors of the Modernization School, Toker Dereli and Sedat Ağralı, whose works are often utilized and quoted by subsequent scholars of this school, presume that working class action and trade unionism in Turkey

¹⁵ For the works of the Modernization School, see Sedat Toydemir, “Türkiye’de İş İhtilaflarının Tarihçesi ve Bugünkü Durumu [The History and Current Situation of Work Conflicts in Turkey]” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 4 (1951): 45-66; Lütfi Eroğlu, *Türkiye’de İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi [The History of Working Class in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Kutulmuş, 1951); Cahit Talas, *Türkiye’de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Toplu Sözleşme [Trade Unionism and the Collective Bargaining in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Maliye Enstitüsü, 1965); Nusret Ekin, “Strikes and Lockouts in Turkey” *İ. Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Journal* 36:26 (1966): 131-154; Sedat Ağralı, *Günümüze Kadar Belgelerle Türk Sendikacılığı [Turkish Trade Unionism Until Today With Documents]*, (İstanbul: Son Telgraf Matbaası, 1967); Toker Dereli, *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi, 1968); Anıl Çeçen, *Türkiye’de Sendikacılık [The Trade Unionism in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Özgür İnsan, 1973); Gülten Kutal, *Türkiye’de İşçi Sendikacılığı [The Workers’ Unionism in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: İÜ İktisat Fakültesi, 1977); Cahit Talas, *Türkiye’nin Açıklamalı Sosyal Politika Tarihi [The Explanatory History of Social Politics of Turkey]*, (Ankara: Bilgi, 1992); Ayşen Tokol, *Türkiye’de Sendikal Hareket [The Unionist Movement in Turkey]* (Bursa: Ezgi Kitabevi, 1994); Adnan Mahiroğulları, *Cumhuriyetten Günümüze Türkiye’de İşçi Sendikacılığı [The Workers’ Unionism From the Republic To Today]*, (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2005). For the Marxist analysis, see Radmir Platonovich Kornienko, *The Labor Movement in Turkey* (Washington: Joint Publications Research Service, 1967); Kemal Sülker, *100 Soruda Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketleri [The Workers’ Movements in Turkey in 100 Questions]*, (İstanbul: Gerçek, 1968); Oya Sencer, *Türkiye’de İşçi Sınıfı: Doğuşu ve Yapısı [The Working Class in Turkey: Its Emergence and Characteristic]*, (İstanbul: Habora, 1969); Kurthan Fişek, *Türkiye’de Kapitalizmin Gelişmesi ve İşçi Sınıfı [The Development of Capitalism and Working Class in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Doğan Yayınevi, 1969); Alpaslan Işıklı, *Sendikacılık ve Siyaset [The Trade Unionism and Politics]*, (Ankara: Odak, 1974); George Haupt and Paul Dumont, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyalist Hareketler [Socialist Movements in the Ottoman Empire]*, Tuğrul Artunkal [trans.] (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1977); Hüseyin Avni Şanda, *1908 İşçi Hareketleri [The 1908 Workers’ Movements]*, (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1978); P. Kitaygorodski, *Türkiye Komünist ve İşçi Hareketi [The Communist and Worker Movement in Turkey]*, Fatma Bursalı [trans.] (İstanbul: Aydınlık Yayınları, 1979); Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye’de Sınıf Mücadelesinin Gelişimi [The Development of Class Struggle in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Birlik, 1979); Nikolaevich Rozaliev, *Türkiye’de Sınıflar ve Sınıf Mücadeleleri [The Classes and Class Struggles in Turkey]*, M. Anibal [trans.], (İstanbul: Belge, 1979); Mesut Gülmez, “Bir Belge, Bir Yorum: 1909 Tatil-i Eşgal Yasası ve Grev [A Document, An Analysis: The 1909 Strike Law and Strike],” *Toplum ve Bilim* 12 (1980): 50-64; Şehmus M. Güzel, “1871 Ameleperver Cemiyeti [The 1871 Worker Charity Association],” *Bilim ve Sanat* 8 (1981): 43-45; Zafer Toprak, “1909 Tatil-i Eşgal Kanunu Üzerine [On the 1909 Strike Law],” *Toplum ve Bilim* 13 (1981): 141-156; Şehmus M. Güzel, *Türkiye’de İşçi Örgütlenmesi [The Workers’ Organization in Turkey]*, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Ankara University, 1982; Alpaslan Işıklı, “Wage Labor and Unionization,” in Irvin Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak [eds.], *Turkey in Transition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Dimitir Şişmanov, *Türkiye İşçi ve Sosyalist Hareketi [The Worker and Socialist Movement of Turkey]*, Ayşe Zarakolu and Ragıp Zarakolu [eds.], (İstanbul: Belge, 1990); Yavuz Selim Karakışla, “The Strike Wave in the Ottoman Empire,” *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* XVI:2 (1992): 153-177; Şehmus M. Güzel, *Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketi [The Workers’ Movement in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Sosyalist, 1993); Peter Carl Mentzel, *Nationalism and the Labor Movement in the Ottoman Empire* unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, University of Washington, 1994; Yüksel Işık, *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze İşçi Hareketinin Evrimi [The Evolution of the Workers’ Movement From the Ottoman to Today]*, (Ankara: Öteki, 1995); Yavuz Selim Karakışla, “The Emergence of the Ottoman Industrial Working Class, 1839-1923,” in Donald Quataert and Erik J. Zürcher [eds.] *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, (London: Tauris, 1995); Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi [The History of Working Class and Unionism of Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2003); Peter Mentzel, “The Bulgarian Declaration of Independence and the 1908 Oriental Railway Strike,” *East European Quarterly* 4 (2004): 403-419; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye’de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler [The Strike Right and Strikes in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih, 2004); Şehmus M. Güzel, *İşçi Tarihine Bakmak [Analyzing the Workers’ History]*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 2007).

“naturally” developed out of the industrial growth in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Based on official statistics which show the number of workers in Turkey, trade union publications and the newspapers of the period which mention class actions, and the official documents of labor laws and regulations, Dereli and Ağralı assume a linear development for the trade unions of the late Ottoman Empire. By using sources, which were produced by the state officials or trade unions, Dereli and Ağralı miss the intricacies of class formation in Turkey, such as the influence of pre-capitalist relations on the working class, as well as the influence of culture or regional variations.¹⁶

When socialism as a political project reached its zenith in Turkey during the 1960s and the 1970s, some scholars, such as Oya Sencer, Kurthan Fişek, Şehmuz Güzel, Kemal Sülker and Nikolaevich Rozaliev, began to question the assumptions of the Modernization School by focusing on industrial development and the accompanying political turning points to delineate the class action. The main goals of their studies are to prove the existence of classes and class struggles in their *true* forms in the Ottoman Empire, and to make connections between working class actions and the “inevitable movement” of Turkey towards socialism. In this way, they focused on the institutions and collective actions of workers to argue for class consciousness. Motivated by the growing influence of socialism in the 1960s, these scholars tried to find the historical roots of workers’ “natural inclination toward socialism” in Turkish history. In their works, the Marxist scholars depend on government documents, official statistics, trade unions’ and political party publications, and the major newspapers of the period. Due to their perspectives and sources, these authors analyzed the workers as “immature” in terms of consciousness when workers did not engage in collective actions; consequently, they missed the importance of continuities in the class formation and daily life strategies used by the workers in order to survive.¹⁷ They also assumed, like Ağralı

¹⁶ Ağralı, 1967; Dereli, *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism*.

¹⁷ Sülker, *100 Soruda Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketleri*; Fişek, *Türkiye’de Kapitalizmin Gelişmesi ve İşçi Sınıfı*; Sencer, *Türkiye’de İşçi Sınıfı: Doğuşu ve Yapısı*; Rozaliev, *Türkiye’de Sınıflar ve Sınıf Mücadeleleri*; Güzel, *Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketi*.

and Dereli that the working class and trade unions “naturally” come out of industrial developments in Turkey.

The method of assuming a natural and unilateral class formation and analyzing the sects of the working class who engaged in collective actions was challenged by the development of the “history from below” approach, in the 1990s and 2000s, thanks to the works of Donald Quataert and his followers. Quataert, in his book *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire* and Sherry Vatter, in her article “Militant Textile Weavers in Damascus”, refute many of the assumptions of the Modernization School and teleological Marxist analysis by historically demonstrating that non-linear industrial developments created uneven working class formations in different parts of the Empire. Furthermore, they argue that urbanization processes, nationalist and Islamist movements, and old methods of production relations in urban and rural areas are all important in class formation, as well as industrialization. To this end, the writers benefit from sources through which they can integrate the voice of workers into their research, such as court records, grievance petitions, local newspapers, and memoirs, in addition to government documents, trade unions’ archives and national newspapers.¹⁸

Those sources give the writers an indispensable opportunity to penetrate into the actual social

¹⁸ Sherry Vatter, “Militant Textile Weavers in Damascus: Waged Artisans and the Ottoman Labor Movement, 1850-1914,” in Donald Quataert and Erik J. Zürcher [eds.] *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, (London: Tauris, 1995), 35-57; Donald Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006). For the other important works of the history from below approach, see Donald Quataert, *Social Disintegration and Popular Resistance in the Ottoman Empire, 1881-1908* (New York: New York University Press, 1983); Donald Quataert, “Machine Breaking and the Changing Carpet Industry of Western Anatolia, 1860-1908,” *Journal of Social History* 19/3 (1986): 473-489; Donald Quataert, *Workers, Peasants, and Economic Change in the Ottoman Empire* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 1993); Sherry Vatter, “Militant Journeymen in Nineteenth-Century Damascus: Implications for the Middle Eastern Labor History Agenda,” in Zachary Lockman [ed.] *Workers and Working Classes in the Middle East* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 1-19; Donald Quataert, “The Workers of Salonica, 1850-1912,” in Donald Quataert and Erik J. Zürcher [eds.] *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, (London: Tauris, 1995), 59-74; Donald Quataert, “Zonguldak Maden İşçilerinin Hayatı, 1870-1920 [The Life of Zonguldak Mine Workers],” *Toplum ve Bilim* 83 (1999-2000): 80-90; Donald Quataert, “Labor History and the Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922,” *International Labor and Working Class History* 60 (2001): 93-109; Donald Quataert, “A Coal Miner’s Life During the Late Ottoman Empire,” *International Labor and Working Class History* 60 (2001): 153-179; Cengiz Kırılı, “A Profile of the Labor Force in Early Nineteenth-Century İstanbul” *International Labor and Working Class History* 60 (2001): 125-140; E. Atilla Aytekin, *Tarlalardan Ocaklara, Sefaletten Mücadeleye: Zonguldak-Ereğli Kömür Havzası İşçileri 1848-1922 [From Lands to the Quarries, Misery to the Struggle: The Workers of Ereğli Coal Basin]*, (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2007); Birten Çelik, “Sweatshops in the Silk Industry of the Bursa Region and the Worker’s Strikes in 1910,” *Turkish Historical Review* 4 (2013): 26-56.

relations of workers and incorporate these social relations and the workers' own experiences into larger historical transformations. These writers focus on the survival strategies and individual struggles, as well as the collective actions, to present a more integrated class history of the late Ottoman Empire.

There are also very few studies of working class formation and action in the Early Republican Period (1923-1945) compared to the number of works on the late Ottoman Empire. From the Modernization perspective, Sedat Ağralı, Toker Dereli, Cahit Talas and Orhan Tuna focus on the 1922 İzmir Economy Congress and the 1936 Labor Law which puts the industrial conflict in a legal framework. By using the legal documents of the Congress and the 1936 Law and official statistics, these authors argue that the working class was the passive actor in Turkish history until 1945, when a change in the Association Law allowed the workers to organize.¹⁹

Marxist scholars like Yüksel Akkaya, Şehmus Güzel, Kurthan Fişek, Zafer Toprak and Oya Sencer focus on analyzing individual collective actions in the different regions of Anatolia and the relations between the workers' organizations, socialist-communist parties and the state, rather than workers' experiences. These authors try to explain the reasons behind state suppression and the workers' lack of response by focusing on the industrial development of the country, as well as the actual number of workers and the level of class consciousness among them, and by utilizing the works of the Modernization School in terms of changing legal frameworks. Although these schools and writers benefit from each other's works, it is a stretch to say there is a good discussion between them in terms of their methodologies and assumptions. Once more, the workers who do not act collectively are perceived as the silent actors in Turkish history.²⁰

¹⁹ Orhan Tuna, *Grev Hakkı [The Right to Strike]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1962); Cahit Talas, *Türkiye'de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Toplu Sözleşme*; Ağralı, 1967; Toker Dereli, *Aydınlar, Sendika Hareketi ve Endüstriyel İlişkiler Sistemi [The Intellectuals, Union Movement and the System of Industrial Relations]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1975).

²⁰ Fişek, 1969; Sencer, 1969; Şehmus M. Güzel, "1919-1922 Dönemi İşçi Hareketleri ve Grevler [The Workers' Movements and Strikes Between 1919 and 1922]," *Mülkiyeliler Birliği Journal* 89 (1987): 34-38; Zafer Toprak, "Şirket-i Hayriye Amele Cemiyeti ve 1925 Grevi [The Association of Workers of

Even if the “history from below” approach, thus far, does not deal with the formation of the working class and labor action in the 1920s, there is an impressive and comparatively rich historiography of the social history of workers, which brings new sources to the table from the 1930s and 1940s. In that time period, Yiğit Akın, Nurşen Gürboğa, Murat Metinsoy, Can Nacar, Görkem Akgöz and Barış Alp Özden are the most important writers of this perspective. These writers criticize the Modernization and Marxist Schools by pointing out that these schools’ assumptions and limited sources resulted in them overlooking large groups of workers who did not get involved in collective action. The writers also overlooked continuities and some critical elements such as religious ties, the effects of migration, social formation in the urban areas and shop floor dynamics etc., in class formation.

Therefore, those writers using the social history approach have begun to address the survival strategies of the workers, as well as the collective action in workplaces, especially in mines and urban areas. Accordingly, they use new and enriching sources such as workers’ grievance petitions, local newspapers, and reports from the factory inspectors, as well as memoirs, novels and oral history interviews.²¹ As a result, their work is able to present a more integrated and enriched picture of the class formation and action.

Şirket-i Hayriye and the 1925 Strike,” *Toplumsal Tarih* 30 (1996): 6-14; Yüksel Akkaya, “Çukurova’da Sendikacılık ve İşçi Eylemleri, 1923-1960 [The Unionism and Workers’ Actions in Çukurova],” *Kebikeç* 5 (1997): 183-200; Yüksel Akkaya, “Türkiye’de İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık [The Unionism and Working Class in Turkey],” *Praksis* 5 (2002): 131-176.

²¹ Can Nacar, *Working Class in Turkey during the World War II Period* unpublished M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2004; Murat Metinsoy, “İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Zonguldak Kömür Ocaklarında Ücretli İş Mükellefiyeti ve İşçi Direnişi [The Waged Compulsory Work Obligation and Workers’ Resistance in the Zonguldak Coal Basin During the Second World War Years],” in Kürşat Coşgun and Ahmet Öztürk [eds.], *Zonguldak Kent Tarihi Bienali’nden Seçmeler* (Zonguldak: ZOKEV AND TMMOB, 2006), 93-112; Murat Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türkiye: Savaş ve Gündelik Yaşam [Turkey in the Second World War: The War and the Daily Life]*, (İstanbul: Homer, 2007); Can Nacar, “Ekmeğin Yokluğunu Bilirim, Kıtlığı Gördüm: İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Kentsel Alanlarda Emekçiler [I Know the Lack of Bread and Saw the Dearth: The Laborers in the Urban Era during the Second World War Years],” *Praksis* 16 (2007): 195-217; Yiğit Akın, “The Dynamics of Working-Class Politics in Early Republican Turkey: Language, Identity, and Experience” in Touraj Atabaki and Gavin D. Brockett [eds.] *Ottoman and Republican Turkish Labor History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 167-188; Nurşen Gürboğa, *Mine Workers, the Single Party Rule, and War* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2009); Nurşen Gürboğa, “Compulsory Mine Work: The Single-Party Regime and the Zonguldak Coalfield as a Site of Contention, 1940-1947,” in Touraj Atabaki and Gavin D. Brockett [eds.] *Ottoman and Republican Turkish Labor History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 115-142; Can Nacar, “Our Lives Were Not As Valuable as an Animal: Workers in State-Run Industries in World-War-II Turkey,” in Touraj Atabaki and Gavin D. Brockett [eds.] *Ottoman and Republican Turkish Labor History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 143-166; Barış Alp Özden, *Working Class Formation*

The Modernization School, the Marxist analysis view, and the “history from below” approach both analyze the working class in the period of transition to the multi-party regime (1945-1950) and the Democrat Party’s rule (1950-1960) in Turkey as a single period. Related to this period, Robert Bianchi, Cahit Talas and Toker Dereli focus on how radical trade unions sprang up in 1945, as a result of the change in the Association Law, how these unions were oppressed by the state in 1946, and how alleged yellow-dog unions²² were enforced in the second half of the 1940s and the 1950s, in the context of the broader political changes in Turkey.²³ For this period, the writers’ main focus of analysis is on the changing industrial relations and labor regulations/laws; therefore, they benefit from the analysis of legislations published in the relevant issues of the official state newspaper, the debates within the Parliament, the reports in national newspapers, articles presented by the professors employed in İstanbul University during the Conferences of the Social Politics, and relevant trade unions publications.²⁴

Likewise, Ahmet Makal, Yüksel Akkaya, Şehmuz Güzel, Mesut Gülmez, and Yıldırım Koç use the same sources to deal with spontaneous strikes, conservative trade unionism and new labor legislation. These scholars assume that the increasing pace of

in Turkey, 1946-1962, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011; and Görkem Akgöz, *Many Voices of a Turkish State Factory: Working At Bakırköy Cloth Factory, 1932-1950*, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Amsterdam University, 2012.

²² Yellow-dog unions refer to unions thought to work in cooperation with employers or those founded secretly by employers themselves to undermine real trade unions. This definition was first used when French employers founded some unions to fight with real unions in the 1880s.

²³ Talas, *Türkiye’de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Toplu Sözleşme*; Toker Dereli, *Türkiye’de Sendika Demokrasisi [The Union Democracy in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: İÜ İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1977); Robert Bianchi, *Interest Groups and Political Development in Turkey*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). For the Marxist analysis, see Sülker, *100 Soruda Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketleri*; Işıklı, *Sendikacılık ve Siyaset*; Yıldırım Koç, *Türk-İş Neden Böyle, Nasıl Değişecek? [Why Türk-İş is Like That and How It Will Change?]*, (İstanbul: Alan, 1986); Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihinden Yapraklar [Pages from the History of the Working Class of Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Ataol, 1992); İlhan Akalın, *İşçi Sendika Tarihi [The History of Worker-Union]*, (Ankara: Öteki, 1995); Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye’de İşçiler ve Sendikalar [Workers and Unions in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Türkiye Yol-İş Sendikası, 2000); Mustafa Doğan Görkem *Governmental Involvement in the Establishment and Performance of the Trade Unions during the Transition to Multi Party Politics* unpublished M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2003; Erdem Kocabaş, *Political Change and Working Class Formation between 1945-1960 in Turkey* unpublished M.A. Thesis Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2006; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye’de Sendikacılık [Unionism From Patronage to Politics in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010); Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi [The History of Working Class of Turkey]*, (Ankara: Epos, 2010).

²⁴ Cahit Talas, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Sosyal Politika Meseleleri [The Issues of Social Policy in the Turkish Republic]*, (Ankara: SBF Maliye Enstitüsü, 1960); Dereli, *Aydınlar, Sendika Hareketi ve Endüstriyel İlişkiler Sistemi*; Bianchi, 1984.

industrial development in Turkey created favorable conditions for working class activity. However, it should be noted that the state obstructed collective action through legislation. The state provided individual workers with opportunities to make their demands within the legal mechanisms, such as the Arbitration and Conciliation Mechanism and Regional Labor Courts. The state also oppressed the radical unions and controlled workers by allowing conservative trade unionism to function. As a result, according to these scholars, the working class was the silent actor of the multi-party regime and the Democrat Party rule, outside of a few spontaneous strikes or resistances.²⁵

Some of the works of the “history from below” approach cover the period of the multi-party regime;²⁶ nevertheless, it is difficult to say if this approach is productive for analyzing the Demokrat Parti (DP-The Democrat Party) rule. Hakan Koçak’s articles, published in 2008, are provocative and impressive essays which analyze working class structures, for they depend on Ira Katznelson’s framework, a method that stresses analyzing class formation within the larger political, social and economic changes. By relying on memoirs, news in local and national newspapers, and articles presented in the Conferences on Social Politics, which were organized by İstanbul University from the early 1940s to the late 1980s, Koçak successfully discusses how the working class defined itself in the 1950s in Turkey.²⁷ In the same vein, Barış Alp Özden, in his well-written thesis, explores how the

²⁵ Mesut Gülmez, “1961 Öncesi Türk Toplu İş İlişkilerine Bir Bakış ve Değerlendirme [An Outlook and Analysis of the Turkish Collective Work Relations Prior to 1961],” *TODAY İnsan Hakları Yıllığı 1983-1984* (1984): 98-122; Şehmus M. Güzel, “İsmet İnönü, Sosyal Politika ve Grev [İsmet İnönü, The Social Politics and Strike],” *Yapıt* 10 (1985): 67-86; Şehmus M. Güzel, “1946 ve Sonrasında Türkiye’de Grev Tartışması [The Strike Debate in Turkey in 1946 and Its Afterwards],” *Toplum ve Bilim* 40 (1988): 46-50; Yıldırım Koç, “1947 Yılında Sendika-Dışı İşçi Örgütlenmeleri [The Workers’ Organizations Other Than Unions in 1947],” *Mülkiyeliler Birliği Journal* 108 (1989); Yıldırım Koç, “1947 Sendikalar Yasası [The 1947 Trade Union Law],” *Mülkiyeliler Birliği Journal* 121 (1990): 10-14; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri, 1946-1963 [The Work Relations in Turkey during the Multi-Party Period]*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002); Akkaya, Türkiye’de İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık; Yüksel Akkaya, “Demokrat Parti Döneminde Grevler [The Strikes in the Democrat Party Period],” *Toplumsal Tarih* 112 (2003), 60-66; Güzel, *İşçi Tarihine Bakmak*.

²⁶ Selin Dingiloğlu, *The Statist Industrialization and the Formation of Industrial Working Class in the Early Republic*, unpublished M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2006; Yiğit Akin, “The Dynamics of Working-Class Politics in Early Republican Turkey”; Nurşen Gürboğa, *Mine Workers, the Single Party Rule, and War* and Nurşen Gürboğa, “Compulsory Mine Work: The Single-Party Regime and the Zonguldak Coalfield as a Site of Contention.”

²⁷ Hakan Koçak, “Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Oluşumunun Sessiz Yılları: 1950’ler [The Silent Years of the Working Class Formation in Turkey: The 1950s],” *Toplum ve Bilim* 113 (2008): 90-126; Hakan Koçak,

workers defined themselves in the context of changes in their everyday living and working conditions. Özden successfully analyzes the ways in which the workers responded to their changing environment, the state's labor policy, and the changing industrial regime in the everyday life of people. In the end, the author discusses a specific kind of class language the workers produced at the end of those interlinked processes.²⁸ It is unfortunate that apart from Koçak's and Özden's studies, the working class historiography does not deal with class formation from the bottom up, but rather with the developments of trade unions and political parties for the post-war period. Moreover, their writing focus on those workers who were employed in state enterprises; therefore, their narratives and assumptions need to be revised through the experiences of the workers recruited in private industry which significantly developed through the 1950s.

For the 1960s, Ağralı, Dereli and Talas point to growing industrial development, industrial relations and the increasing number of workers, as well as progressive changes in laws and political structure, and the increasing size of trade unions as the reasons for the workers' collective actions.²⁹ After putting forth these concepts, their work lists the strikes and resistances in several industrial plants and factories without demonstrating the causal links between the structural changes and those actions. Likewise, Şehmus Güzel, Kurthan Fişek, Yıldırım Koç, Kemal Sülker, Dimitir Şişmanov, and Nikolaevich Rozaliev account for the development of trade unions and their political stance with the increase in the size of industry and structural transformations in legal and political systems. Then, the scholars from both these theoretical frameworks present arguments based on several strikes and acts of resistance by focusing on the demands of workers and the narratives of their actions. Güzel and the others further examine working class collective actions for their potential to instigate

"50'leri İşçi Sınıfı Oluşumunun Bir Uğrağı Olarak Yeniden Okumak [Re-Analyzing the 50s as the Threshold of the Working Class Formation]," *Çalışma ve Toplum* 3 (2008): 69-86.

²⁸ Barış Alp Özden, *Working Class Formation in Turkey*.

²⁹ See Ağralı, 1967; Dereli, *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism*; Talas, *Türkiye'nin Açıklamalı Sosyal Politika Tarihi*.

socialist movements by merely looking at workers' collective action in factories or street demonstrations.³⁰

To summarize, there are certain analytical problems in the historiography that address the 1960s: first of all, past scholars mostly analyzed the institutional and political history of the period, such as the 1961 Constitution which addresses strikes and trade unions, industrial structures which shape the relationship between workers and bourgeoisie, or the spread of socialism as a political force which radicalized workers' movements. After discussing these institutional and political frameworks, they narrated the history of labor movement as "naturally" coming out of such institutional and political developments. The main deficiency of such a framework is that it does not provide us with any explanation as to why the workers in a particular industrial plant, sector or region – whether as an organized group or as individuals - participated in industrial actions.

Even though some contemporary scholars, like Brian Mello, developed a more sophisticated approach by depending upon the contentious politics framework to analyze the collective actions within the scope of the historical developments, which occurred in a particular country, they cannot evade the top-down approach. Mello, whose goal it is to situate the working class movement into the larger political developments between 1960 and 1980, relies upon vast trade union archives, such as the DİSK archives, and the prominent national newspapers, such as *Akşam*, *Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet*. Nevertheless, the voice of the working class itself is still lacking in Mello's top-down analysis.³¹

Another deficiency of these studies which deal with labor and labor movements between 1960-1980 is that they depended upon a concept of "an ideal worker" having "an

³⁰ Sülker, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketleri*; Fişek, *Türkiye'de Kapitalizmin Gelişmesi ve İşçi Sınıfı*; Koç, *Türkiye'de Sınıf Mücadelesinin Gelişimi*; Rozaliev, *Türkiye'de Sınıflar ve Sınıf Mücadeleleri*; Şişmanov, *Türkiye İşçi ve Sosyalist Hareketi*; Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi*; Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi*; Sülker, *Türkiye'de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler*; Güzel, *İşçi Tarihine Bakmak*. For further examples, see; Işıklı *Sendikacılık ve Siyaset*; Kitaygorodski, *Türkiye Komünist ve İşçi Hareketi*; Işıklı, "Wage, Labor and Unionization"; Işık, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze İşçi Hareketinin Evrimi*.

³¹ Brian Mello, *Evaluating Social Movement Impacts: Labor and the Politics of State-Society Relations* unpublished Ph. D. Thesis University of Washington, 2006; Brian Mello, "Political Process and the Development of Labor Insurgency in Turkey, 1945-1980" *Social Movement Studies* 6/3 (2007): 207-225.

ideal class consciousness” to analyze the labor movement and its participants, regardless of whether the workers had such consciousness or not.³² Moreover, workers do not just gain class consciousness as a result of their position in the economic structure in a particular country. Several other factors such as urbanization, family ties, and religious ties, may contribute to the advent of a class consciousness. Quataert’s and his followers’ research agenda focusing on the social and cultural transformations, as well as economic ones, was not acknowledged by the subsequent works on working class formation for the three decades between 1950 and 1980 which largely dealt with the development of trade unionism within the context of emerging industrial relations from a top-down perspective.³³

Yet, the labor history of the 1960s is currently making progress. Several scholars such as Zafer Aydın, Aziz Çelik and Hakan Koçak successfully narrate the social history of a few important collective actions or the history of factories by entwining the workers’ experiences with the social, political and economic-industrial developments. By drawing upon the local and national newspapers, available factory and union documents, literary sources and oral history accounts, those authors sketch the social history of the events and workers lives. More importantly, these authors focus on shop floor dynamics, and where the actual encounters of the classes occurs, such as between workers and owners/managers - a more opaque method to explain the industrial dynamics. In other words, those writers perceive the factory as an important site, where the daily individual or collective conflicts occur and contribute to the formation of the class relations and class consciousness.³⁴

Lastly, it is very interesting that the biggest labor upsurge in Turkey, the events of June 15-16th, have not yet become the subject of any scholarly work, except for some short

³² Dereli, 1967; Fişek, 1969; Güzel, “Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e İşçi Hareketi ve Grevler”; Koç, *Türkiye’de İşçiler ve Sendikalar*.

³³ For industrial relations, see Talas, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Sosyal Politika Meseleleri*; Tuna, *Grev Hakkı*; Makal, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri*; for the trade unionism, see Ağralı, 1967; Dereli, *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism*; Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı ve Sendikacılık Hareketi Tarihi* and *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi*.

³⁴ Aziz Çelik and Zafer Aydın, *Paşabahçe: Gelenek Yaratan Grev [Paşabahçe: The Strike That Created Legacy]*, (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2006); Zafer Aydın, *Kavel: Kanunsuz Bir Grevin Öyküsü [Kavel: The Story of an Illegal Strike]*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih, 2010); Zafer Aydın, *Geleceğe Yazılmış Mektup: 1968 Derby İşgali [The Letter to the Future: The Derby Invasion in 1968]*, (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2012); Hakan M. Koçak, *Camın İşçileri: Paşabahçe İşçilerinin Sınıf Olma Öyküsü [The Workers of Glass: The Story of Paşabahçe’s Workers Becoming a Class]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014).

articles written in popular history journals and left-wing newspapers.³⁵ Other accounts about the incident were written by the workers themselves, or union leaders who participated in the events.³⁶ The situation is a good example of the dearth of labor history in Turkey for the post-war period.

In short, while tinged with a certain teleological perspective, the Turkish labor historiography has long searched, albeit in a futile attempt, for *genuine* class relations like those it assumed to exist in the capitalist West, and *true* class consciousness which it assumed as being defined in classical Marxism, as well as revolutionary class struggles which would emerge out of socialist ideals. In this sense, those historical cases which do not fit with the *true* formation of class are seen as *deviant*. This perspective resulted in certain fallacies inherent to this manner history writing.

First of all, this is a highly problematic approach to history: instead of conceiving history and historical processes as a complex web of relations and contingent combinations of different patterns, this approach takes historical developments as if the events appeared in compliance with the history that has a certain direction (towards socialism), a certain beginning and end, and therefore a certain aim, in and of itself.³⁷ As a result, it sees historical developments in terms of class relations in Turkey each as exceptional and incoherent ones. However, as Somers argues, this incoherency is not one of any historical cause, but it rather stems from the theory itself. In her words: “the incoherency stems from inferring a

³⁵ For such studies, see Hakan Koçak, “Tarihi Değiştiren İki Uzun Gün: 15-16 Haziran [Two Long Days That Changed History: The 15-16 June]”, *BirGün*, June 13, 2009 and Süheyla Algül, “15-16 Haziran [15-16 June]”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 245 (May 2014).

³⁶ For example, see Kemal Nebioğlu, “15-16 Haziran [The 15-16 June]”, *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7, İstanbul: İletişim, 1988, 2154-2155; Celal Alçınkaya, “Silahtar’da İki Büyük ve Sıcak Gün [Two Long and Hot Days in Silahtar]”, *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7, İstanbul: İletişim, 1988, 2150-2151; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye’yi Sarsan İki Uzun Gün [Two Long Days That Shook Turkey]*, (İstanbul: İleri, 2005); Sırrı Öztürk, *Gelenekten Geleceğe 15-16 Haziran [The 15-16 June From Tradition to the Future]*, (İstanbul: Sorun, 2008).

³⁷ By epistemology of absence, Somers mainly refers to a way of producing knowledge that analyzes any developments in any specific region in a time period, by depending on what lacked in them in terms of a general pattern of history. It is obvious that having a rigid perspective on how history *must* proceed, and what conditions there must be to follow the general and stable patterns, this methodology explains social or state formation in terms of absences, rather than what was really going on. The cases that do not fit with the general patterns in theory are expressed as deviant or anomalies. Margaret R. Somers, “Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation,” *Social Science History*, 16:4 (Winter 1992): 591-593.

teleological prediction”.³⁸ This historiography fits well with an agenda shaped by what Somers calls an *epistemology of absence*.³⁹ Secondly, and it is ironic, but this kind of materialist history is marred by a sort of idealism in the sense that it stresses how the ideals and beliefs of leaders, but not the actual social relations or the beliefs of ordinary people, motivate people to get together and act. Thirdly, this method is based on a state and law-centered approach, since it focuses on how the state and law unilaterally shape the institutions, and frame the actions and beliefs of ordinary people. Fourthly, this way of writing has over-simplified the economic determinist approach in which the economy fulfills its assigned role as creating classes.

As a result, this viewpoint assumes that classes are simply the natural outcomes of industrial developments and “there should be a casual link between the societal and economic changes of the industrial revolution (class in itself) and the emergence of a revolutionary class consciousness (class for itself)”.⁴⁰ In consequence, it misses the other important factors, such as state formation, religious or family ties, ethnicity, or the peculiar patterns of people’s own experiences in the working and living places. Lastly, and related to these previous arguments, teleological Marxism, through which the Turkish labor historiography has long progressed, is an institution-centered approach that concludes historical processes are largely the products of the institutions or the leaders who decided the institutional policies, and that ordinary people are the passive subjects of that history. Therefore, this is a history without human subjects.

There is no doubt that the criticisms and studies made by Quatert and his followers constituted both an important challenge and contribution to the literature, since they attempted to bring the human subject back to the history of class in Turkey. On the other hand, is the agenda of social history, as it existed, (which brought significant and enriching

³⁸ Ibid., 595. Also look at: Jürgen Kocka, “Problems of the Working-Class Formation in Germany: The Early Years, 1800-1875” in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg [eds.] *Working Class Formation: Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986): 281.

³⁹ Margaret R. Somers, “Workers of the World, Compare!” *Contemporary Sociology*, 18:3 (May 1989): 325.

⁴⁰ Margaret R. Somers, “Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation,” 595. Also look at: Sean Wilentz, “Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790-1920,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 26 (Fall 1984): 2.

challenges to the labor history of the 1930s and 1940s) a viable option for the 1950s and 1960s to explain class formation? Is it possible to *de-center* the institutions, state or political parties, which held an important place in working people's lives after the Second World War in our analysis?⁴¹

Since that time, the enriched agenda of social history as proposed by the new generation of Turkish labor historians has had some problems regarding the class formation of the post-war era. First of all, the existing literature has thus far left the 1950s and 1960s almost untouched. Secondly, the literature rarely reflected shop floor dynamics - one of the important sites in which class relations are cemented. Although some studies analyzed how class relations played out on the shop floor, these were focused on factories constructed and managed by the state. There is simply no study of the private factories that were expanding during the 1950s and later. Thirdly, and related to this point, the existing literature on the social history of workers does not perceive the employers either as individuals or as a distinct social group. As a result, another important component of class relations seems almost untouched in those accounts. And lastly, due to their assumptions and the time-period, this literature did little to deal with working class organizations and movements that significantly contributed to the formation of class and class language itself. However, Michael Hanagan has reminded us long ago that class consciousness must be embodied in the institutions that mobilize class actors.⁴²

Certainly, I am not calling for a return to the agenda, methods or questions of the old institutional, essentialist and teleological writing. What I am proposing is to construct a viable perspective that will incorporate the history of institutions and collective actions in the narration of class formation without necessarily having an institution or state-centered

⁴¹ Ira Katznelson has rightfully acknowledged that: "After all, working-class struggles, prospects, and identities have been bounded up with the state and with the rules and institutions that have linked them to the state". Ira Katznelson, "The 'Bourgeois' Dimension: A Provocation About Institutions, Politics, and the Future of Labor History," *International Labor and Working Class History*, 46 (Fall 1994): 23.

⁴² Michael Hanagan, "Response to Sean Wilentz," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 26 (Fall 1984): 31-36.

perspective, in order to successfully portray a more full-fledged image of the working class.⁴³ As Gerald Friedman claims: “Through slogans and common actions, workers become a class.”⁴⁴ As a consequence, the social history of workers and class formation, as proposed by Donald Quataert and his followers, must be revised and enriched by those dynamics which shaped the workers’ experiences after the post-war era in order to have a more accurate and comprehensive history of workers.

In 1994, one of the prominent labor historians, Ira Katznelson, made a call which ignited great debate amongst scholars in the field; to return to a state-centered approach in order to overcome the current crisis of the old and new social history. He acknowledged the need to incorporate some liberal assumptions, ones that were based mainly on the historical evolution of rights, into the theoretical framework. As a result, the state as an independent variable, and its liberal conceptualization, must be prioritized in labor studies to avoid the field’s imminent danger of trivialization.⁴⁵ Although it was widely debated whether including the liberal perspective of the modern state, and/or hinging upon a statist approach leads scholars to neglect social context and action,⁴⁶ other prominent figures, such as Geoff Eley and Gerald Friedman have long been calling for scholars to give the state and politics their deserved place in both social and labor historiography. Especially since state, state policies, intra-elite political competition and institutions, including both trade unions and state institutions, all matter to the lives of ordinary people and they do not one-sidedly determine social outcomes, but rather exert their many pressures on the path of class formation.⁴⁷ Before

⁴³ For a good study which links the changing political environments with the daily social life of workers, see: Elizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁴⁴ Gerald Friedman, “Is Labor Dead?” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 75 (Spring 2009): 134.

⁴⁵ Ira Katznelson, “The ‘Bourgeois’ Dimension: A Provocation About Institutions, Politics, and the Future of Labor History,” 7-32.

⁴⁶ Michael Hanagan, “A Return to Liberalism in Labor History?” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 46 (Fall 1994): 51-57; David Montgomery, “From Scientific Socialism to Political Science,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 46 (Fall 1994): 63-66; Judith Stein, “Engaged History,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 46 (Fall 1994): 81-85.

⁴⁷ Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, “Why Does Social History Ignore Politics”, *Social History*, 5:2 (May 1980): 249-271; Gerald Friedman, *State-Making and Labor Movements: France and the United States, 1876-1914* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1998); Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History: What’s Left of the Social*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010).

them, Tony Judt had already criticized the negligence of politics in the works of social history.⁴⁸ Similarly, collective actions, especially strikes as the most well known form of contentious politics between workers/their institutions and managers/bosses and their organizations, are significant events, which spur on unity and sometimes division within and between classes.

The social history of the particular forms of class and class consciousness takes shape in interactions with those factors, and as response to those variables. Equally important is the historical pattern of relations that the different groups engaged in and how they influenced class formation in a particular locale: formation of social classes takes place out of the interrelations between various groups. Any social history of the working class must reflect on the actions and ideals of the other classes, and most importantly, on the managers and owners. In fact, workers and bosses/managers “were engaged in a process of defining their relationships, rather than acting on the basis of accepted premises”⁴⁹ in post-war Turkey. Such a comprehensive perspective requires us to consider their institutions, if any existed, in order to explain the dynamics of class relations and consciousness. In conclusion, any social history writing of workers must be carried out by incorporating state, state policies, political competition and institutions, without being entrapped by the over-deterministic institutionalist and statist perspective.

The modern world is characterized by the competing ideologies through which the political movements attempt to inculcate in people its ideas, value-systems and visions. Although it seems that socialism and liberalism appeared as the main modern ideologies *par excellence* in a post-French Revolution world, several other ideologies, including nationalism and conservatism (as generally taking the form of religious movements) offered alternative perspectives to people and they became even more successful than either socialism or liberalism in several cases in terms of getting popular consent about their validity in modern

⁴⁸ Tony Judt, “A Clown in Regal Purple: Social History and Historians,” *History Workshop Journal*, 7:1 (1979): 66-94.

⁴⁹ Diane Koenker, “Skilled Workers and the Strike Movement in Revolutionary Russia”, *Journal of Social History*, 19:4 (Summer 1986): 621.

times. Authors and supporters of those ideologies constantly try to (re)define them in their clearest terms in a changing world in an effort to sketch out the current world and provide a viable alternative to it. The liberal ideology defines social relations as taking place between individuals who act through self-interests on one side, and the state on the other: it contends that while individual liberties, (freedom to have property being the most indispensable one), must be allowed to grow as much as possible, any state intervention which may limit those liberties must be scaled down. In a liberal ideology, natural rights are universal and sacred, never to be violated. It also defines a new relationship between state and civil society based on the law, wherein the state must act within the framework of law in its relationship with people who are bestowed with rights, basic freedoms, the freedom to private property, and the right to resist against tyranny. By contrast, socialism addresses social relations as being characterized by the conflict between classes, emerging out of the fact that while some people have the means of production, the others lack that advantage and property owners control the economic benefits created by the labor of property-less class. In socialist ideology, the struggles between owners and workers are inherent in the capitalist world, and this lays the basic foundation of any inequality; consequently, socialists spoke for the abolishment of private property.⁵⁰ As distinct from liberal and socialist ideologies, nationalist ideology emphasizes upon the very “reality” of the existence of nations and contends that national identities, rather than self-seeking subjectivities or class’ interests, are central to the definition of individuality. Therefore, nationalist movements attempt to inculcate in people an identity that denies any internal difference or conflict, including class differences, within a given society.⁵¹ Accordingly, it purports that the creation of an organic community, where the

⁵⁰ For the basic tenets of liberalism and socialism, see David E. Ingersoll and Richard K. Matthews, *The Philosophic Roots of Modern Ideology: Liberalism, Communism, Fascism*, (Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 1986); John Schwarzmantel, *The Age of Ideology: Political Ideologies from the American Revolution to Post-Modern Times*, (MacMillan: London, 1998); and Lyman Tower Sargent, *Contemporary Political Ideologies: A Comparative Analysis*, thirteenth edition (Thomson Wadsworth: Belmont, 2006).

⁵¹ See Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, (New York: Routledge, 1998); Gavin D. Brockett, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk: Provincial Newspapers and the Negotiation of a Muslim National Identity*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

interests of different groups would be common ones and state mechanisms would iron out any conflicts. At the same time, conservatism and religious movements typically emerged as a reaction to the main modern ideologist ideologies, namely liberalism and socialism, and argue that those ideologies and rapid social changes result in the dissolution of the bonds of society and the human soul, the very basic tenets of which could mostly be found in the religious identity of individuals. Therefore, conservatism and/or religious movements simply offered people a return to their old religious traditions to save themselves from the meaningless modern social life and destructive forces of the modernity.⁵²

Although these ideologies are all different from each other at the most abstract level in terms of how they understand and conceptualize the existing world, they often co-mingle at the practical level. Ideologies do not appear in the real world in their purest forms. This is not just due to the fact that their supporters yielded different and even conflicting definitions of ideologies over the years. This also stems from the fact that ideologies are embodied in political movements that have a political agenda to become successful. In fact, followers of, or leaders of, certain political movements revised those ideologies and theories in light of the interests of their movements. In this regard, there may exist distinct and sometimes conflicting tenets within a specific ideology. For example, a socialist, a nationalist or a religious leader, or an institution or party, may capitalize on the elements, which seemed to be embedded in one particular ideology for their practical purposes, such as mobilizing certain groups. It is well known that Joseph Stalin used some elements of Slav nationalism during the WWII to inspire Slavic people to fight against Nazi Germany. Similarly, an influential Islamic leader in Turkey, Necmettin Erbakan used some socialist inspired concepts in the early 1990s, and a very influential left-wing journal, *YÖN*, blended socialism with Turkish nationalism in the 1960s. Similarly, the Arab socialism of the post-world war era was a combination of socialism, statism, secularism and Arab nationalism.⁵³ The Communists in Iran supported the nationalist and constitutionalist leader, Mohammad Mosaddaq in his

⁵² Schwarzmantel, *The Age of Ideology*; Sargent, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*.

⁵³ Vijay Prashad, *Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, (New York: New Press, 2007).

struggle against British imperialism.⁵⁴ An Iranian revolutionary and sociologist who published several books on the sociology of religion, Ali Shariati, tried to merge some elements of socialism with Muslim practices and beliefs before the Iranian Revolution in 1979.⁵⁵ Fidel Castro and his comrades also utilized a nationalist language, instead of a pure Marxist terminology, to demonstrate how American imperialism had exploited and oppressed the whole Cuban nation except for very few servants of imperialism within the country during the course of the revolution.⁵⁶ This element of blending ideologies is very relevant for ordinary people, such as workers, who are not necessarily related with any organization or party or are the rank-and-file of such organizations. For example, any worker inspired by socialism may see their labor as the foundation of the wealth of a country, but he/she may amalgamate such assumptions with a Muslim or Christian religious belief that the labor was already done in service of Mohammad or Jesus Christ. This approach is also applicable in the case of workers who engage in collective actions in an effort to legitimize their actions. A certain kind of conception of equality or justice inspired by the leftist ideas may be a motivating factor for a workers to join in the collective action, but at the same time, they may call for army or any state offices or officials, which they suppose as state institutions, to defend every groups' interests without bias toward their nationalist ideals. In brief, the ideologies are not necessarily exclusive of each other in practice.

This was the case when a deadly struggle erupted between capitalism and socialism in the post-World War 2 era. The idea that the free market economy would flourish when liberated from state intervention has largely lost its influence on the organization of society due to the 1929 financial crises, rise of fascism during the 1930s and succeeding Second World War. As a result, in the aftermath of the war it was proposed that economic inequalities might be ironed over through the “good-will” of richer classes and necessary state

⁵⁴ Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne [eds]. *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

⁵⁵ Kingshuk Chatterjee, *‘Ali Shari’ati and the Shaping of Political Islam in Iran*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

⁵⁶ Marifeli Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course and Legacy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

interventions; in fact, such a strategy to get rid of poverty had good economic reasoning: in a world where commodities were produced for mass consumption, the laboring classes as the most populous group in society had to earn well enough to purchase these goods. In a sense, the “idea of social justice”, which assumed a certain kind of fair relations between different classes, would be maintained over such an economic rationale following the war. Meanwhile, the socialist ideology gained credibility, especially in underdeveloped countries, as a method to curb poverty and overcome economic backwardness; however, socialism became an influential current in most countries in alliance with nationalism, and even in alliance with religious movements in some cases. In the age of imperialism, oppression and exploitation exerted by one nation over other(s) was a reality that people suffered from as they suffered from imbalanced class relations. After 1945, the political movements informed by those ideologies took a shape in such a world. The existence of liberalism, socialist, nationalist and religious ideologies and political movements must be understood within this context in Turkey after the war.

Relying upon such a perspective and having such an agenda, I will focus on the particular social history of the metal workers, which took shape through their experiences, institutions, and collective actions. This history follows the pattern of the workers’ migration to İstanbul, their dwellings in a new city, the social structures in their poor neighbourhoods, their working experiences, their relations with managers, bosses and with their fellow workers, as well as their relations with their own collective organizations, and between organizations and the construction of the workers’ own collective subjectivity within these complex developments. Here, rather than centering the problem on collective consciousness, I am concentrating on the social relationships which workers established between themselves and with their own union(s), managers/owners and their organization and state and state policies. I am also integrating the idea of how workers situated themselves both individually and collectively in the larger organization of society. Of course, I am not totally neglecting class consciousness in this study, but following the important caution that Sean Wilentz made

to not confuse class consciousness with socialist consciousness.⁵⁷ I am not trying to measure the workers' mind with a properly designed ruler: I am not laying the workers of the after war period on Procrustes' bed.⁵⁸ What I am doing instead is to understand and explain how a collective workers' consciousness, at least among the militant metal workers, rose out of their collective experiences and acts of resistance, and how, in turn, such a collective consciousness influenced their actions which ultimately shaped the working class formation in the metal sector.

In fact, the state was the main actor in the initiation of industrial growth for the second quarter of the 20th century in Turkey. By the 1950s, the private sector, nurtured by state enterprises, increased its influence and made particularly large investments in the metallurgy sector that, by and large, was located in İstanbul. In time, the metal sector broadened its scale and scope thanks to state aid, as well as cooperation with foreign capital investors, the rapid enlargement of cities, and the fact that the metal sector became a stalwart of the Turkish economy in the 1960s. Metal hardware production, in particular, became the most important branch of the sector; in fact, Barış Öz mentions a production boom of metal goods after 1963.⁵⁹ More importantly, the metal bosses began to carry weight in political and social developments in Turkey. For example, Vehbi Koç became the role model for other capitalist entrepreneurs in Turkey, as he was the most well known social figure and the representative of the Turkish capitalist class. Furthermore, the metal bosses/managers were among the first class group to recognize their collective interests and to be unionized to defend them. Their organization, Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası (MESS-Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Hardware Industry) pioneered the establishment of Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (TİSK-The Confederacy of Turkish Employers'

⁵⁷ Sean Wilentz, "Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790-1920", 1-24.

⁵⁸ In Greek mythology, Procrustes is a son of Poseidos who invites every passenger to his castle located in a secret place between Athens and Eleusis to spend the night. There, he lays the visitors to his iron bed and stretch or cut-off them to fit the bed.

⁵⁹ Barış Öz, *Kalkınma Sürecinde Sektörel/Sendikal Dinamikler, Örnek Olay: Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası [The Sectoral and Union Dynamics in the Development, The Case Study: The Union of Turkey Maden-İş]*, unpublished M. A. Thesis, Marmara University, 2005, 21.

Associations)⁶⁰ and Türkiye Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (TÜSİAD-The Association of Turkish Industry and Businessman)⁶¹ and it became one of the most effective managers' unions, albeit in a limited scale in the 1960s in comparison with the 1970s.

Moreover, the metal workers constituted a significant sector of the workforce in İstanbul. They resided in different working class neighbourhoods, such as Alibeyköy, Gaziosmanpaşa, Eyüp, Söğütözü, Mecidiyeköy, Topçular, İstinye, Kartal or Pendik. A large number of those workers were unionized and their left-wing union, Maden-İş, –first founded as İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası [İstanbul Iron and Metal Hardware Industry Workers' Union] in 1947 and then changing its name to Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makine Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası [Mine, Metal Hardware and Machine Industry Worker's Unions of Turkey] in 1956 - was one of the most influential workers' organizations from the 1950s through to the 1980 coup d'état. Despite its central role, the social history of the metal workers remained almost untouched in the Turkish labor historiography.

Two works are an exception at this point. The first is the previously mentioned work of Zafer Aydın on the Kavel Strike in 1963, and the second is the master's thesis of Barış Öz on the development of Maden-İş. In his thesis, Barış Öz explains the rise of unionism in the metal sector as hinging upon the rise of the sector itself. Although he situates the rise of the union in the context of economic and political developments, Öz fails in explaining why ordinary workers joined in the union, or how they framed their relations with the union. And although his thesis focuses on the establishment of the manager's union, he does not explain the specifics of relations between workers and owners/managers in the factories. So, rather than the workers who filled the rank and file of the union and created the collective actions, it

⁶⁰ TİSK was founded in 1961 as the confederacy of the businessman's organizations. After its foundation, it became very influential in Turkey's economic and political life while representing the entrepreneurs in several official institutions, such as the sub-commissions in the National Assembly, and in international organizations, such as ILO (International Labor Organization).

⁶¹ TÜSİAD was founded by a few large scale entrepreneurs in Turkey in 1971 to defend the interests of the big business circles. Although it was not very effective for a time after its foundation, it began to be more influential in Turkish politics towards the end of the decade. In fact, it played an important role in the dissolution of a left-populist CHP government which had been founded in 1978 as it initiated an anti-government campaign in 1979. It officially supported the military coup in 1980. TÜSİAD is still one of the most influential organizations in Turkey's big business circles.

was the union leaders, their ideology and important legal and political developments that influenced the activities of the union as a legal entity which came into prominence in the story of the union. The working class as the social actor and that class having an impact on those political, social or institutional developments remains an unanalyzed concept in Öz's account.⁶² While it is true that Öz's account of Maden-İş gives important details on unionization in the sector, it is nonetheless highly problematic in terms of how it remains faithful to outdated modernist and Marxist assumptions and fallacies. Yet, Öz's study is the first comprehensive history of the metal workers in Turkey.

In consideration of that fact, I have attempted to further illuminate the workers' experiences by including research from national newspapers such as *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Milliyet*, and provincial newspapers such as *Gece Postası*, *İşçi Postası*, *Son Saat*, *Son Baskı*, *Son Havadis*, *Yeni İstanbul*, *Öncü*, and *Türkiye Birlik*, in order to track the workers' factory life, the workers' unionization attempts, and the broader political, social and economic developments in Turkey. I also studied the leftist journals of the period like *YÖN*, *Sosyal Adalet*, *İşçi-Köylü* and *Türk Solu*. For the metal sector, there was one union, Maden-İş, in the 1950s and one more, Çelik-İş [Türkiye Çelik-İşçileri Sendikası, The Steel Workers' Union of Turkey], in the 1960s.⁶³ I consulted the Maden-İş, Nebil Varuy⁶⁴ and Kemal Sülker⁶⁵ archives, which provided significant information on the workers and their unionization attempts, especially under Maden-İş. Although I reached out to the weekly journal of Çelik-İş, this union does not keep an archival record. For my project, I also conducted oral history interviews. I interviewed eleven people in total, including ex-metal workers, Maden-İş's

⁶² Öz.

⁶³ Although a third union existed in the sector, Metal-İş, it was barely organized among the İstanbul metal workers. This union, rather, found its members among the metal workers in the state factories and small metal ateliers or enterprises established in Anatolia.

⁶⁴ Nebil Varuy is a lawyer and ex-member of the Turkish Labor Party. He published a book about this party based on his memories and evidence that he has collected throughout his life: Nebil Varuy, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi, Olaylar-Belgeler-Yorumlar, 1961-1971* [*The Turkish Labor Party: Incidents-Evidences-Analysis*], (İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, 2010).

⁶⁵ Kemal Sülker was a late socialist, TLP member, unionist and journalist. He was an active journalist who worked in several newspapers; *Gece Postası*, *Öncü*, *Türkiye Birlik*, *Yeni İstanbul* and *Akşam*, and reported the union news. He was a unionist and worked in Maden-İş and DİSK. Furthermore, he published several books on the development of Turkish trade unionism, from which I extensively relied upon for this study.

workplace representatives, from the Türk Demir Döküm, one of the most important and contentious factories of the metal sector in İstanbul and owned by Vehbi Koç, Maden-İş's unionists and officers, and a MESS's lawyer, a MESS officer and a factory manager. I failed to find a former Çelik-İş's representative and officer as union was dissolved more than forty years ago.

Although it is impossible to access the archives of some of the significant factories and those of the union of metal managers, I was able to obtain the managers' speeches in the plenary meeting records of their unions in the 1960s through my research in the Orhan Tuna⁶⁶ archives, which are located in the building of the History Association in İstanbul. Moreover, I studied the articles and news in the MESS Bulletin, TİSK Bulletin and *Sevk ve İdare* that was published from the mid-1960s to give advice to the managers of the period on how to run an enterprise. I also interviewed a union lawyer, Nuri Çelik,⁶⁷ and an administrator, Ege Cansen,⁶⁸ of the manager's union, and the latter was also the personnel manager in an employer's union of another big metal factory.

To uncover the details of the state's perspective and action, I looked at news reports of state officials' speeches and actions related to resolving labor' issues and adapting workers into Turkish society. I have also read the laws and legislations on regulating industrial life in Turkey. In addition, I studied the *Çalışma*, which has been published by the Ministry of Labor since 1945.

Those combined sources provided me with sufficient evidence to analyze the complex interaction of institutions and social actors. However, I am aware of that all historical evidence is affected to a certain degree by the social position or ideological inclinations of the actors who produce that evidence. Therefore, I benefited from the broad

⁶⁶ Orhan Tuna was a professor at İstanbul University. He was well known for his scholarly on the social politics, trade unionism, and industrial democracy from the beginning of the late 1940s.

⁶⁷ Nuri Çelik is a professor in the field of labor law and lawyers. He has worked in MESS and several universities, including İstanbul University and İstanbul Ticaret University. He published courseware books about labor law which are still used in the universities.

⁶⁸ Ege Cansen has worked in the MESS and Koç Holding Company for years as a top-officer beginning from the early 1960s; moreover, he has been writing columns for a long time, especially about economics for major Turkish newspapers, including Hürriyet.

range of perceptions from each side; state, employers and workers, to reconstruct this history in a reasonably balanced manner. In incorporating my evidence, I paid particular attention to the way I used oral history. Social history, mostly from Marxist scholars, began to benefit from oral history interviews by the 1960s through the inclusion of the voice of oppressed peoples which cannot necessarily be extracted from conventional sources.⁶⁹ As John Tosh argues: “Oral history tries to give social history a human face.”⁷⁰ And the working class historians who aim to challenge the making of history “from above” frequently used this resource. Oral histories also provide the historian with a “different set of truths” than the “propaganda of the victors.”⁷¹ However, a significant problem arises in using interviews as a historical source. Among historians, this sort of source has long been received sceptically; however, British historian John Tosh states that, until the emergence and later hegemony of Rankean history in the mid nineteenth century, antique historians and Middle Age chroniclers and historians extensively used this source. In fact, several sources, such as those produced by Medieval chroniclers like William of Malmesbury, used by the contemporary historians are “word by mouth” in origin. Here, Tosh argues that the main problem, which arose out of interviews that are conducted by the contemporary researchers, is that oral evidence necessarily has a certain slant for the “principle of contemporaneity” that the historians do not want to give up.⁷² The interviews are based on memory, which can change over time, and thus are unreliable, by nature.⁷³ However, the reasons why oral history developed among historians mainly lie in the necessity of using such a source in several fields, like those of recent political history, history of everyday life, and history of pre-literate societies. Examples would be historians who are engaged in the history of recent political figures where some parties use other communication techniques rather than the written word, or in the case of

⁶⁹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (London: Pearson Education, 2002), 298; Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 4; Donald A. Ritchie, “Introduction: The Evolution of Oral History,” in Donald A. Ritchie [ed.] *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.

⁷⁰ Tosh, 301.

⁷¹ Joan Sangster, “Oral History and Working Class History: A Rewarding Alliance,” *Oral History Forum, Special Issue: Working Lives: Special Issue on Oral History and Working-Class History*, vol. 33 (2103): 1-3.

⁷² Ibid, 207.

⁷³ Ibid, 303; Abrams, 5; Ritchie, 9.

laboring classes who do not generally leave written documents. In situations like these, historians conduct interviews with people in several ways.⁷⁴ Oral sources or interviews are particularly important for historians who excavate the life of ordinary people, since their voices, if they exist at all, are largely stamped out by the intuitional, dominant voice of others, such as state or union officials or journalists.⁷⁵ Therefore, personal interviews constitute significant sources for those who study recent social and political developments. So, this study is also predicated upon the oral sources with some reservations. In fact, I recognized during the interviews that workers might be confused when recalling particular events, or the names of their union's representatives and managers. Some workers had also a natural tendency to exaggerate their own roles in the events. Another factor which limited more effective use of oral sources in this study is that the workers I met with began to talk about same stories in a same way; therefore, I realized that the narration of their stories became repetitive after several meetings. To overcome the above mentioned problems, my project did not take what is said in the interviews for granted, but examined the context of how it is said, why it is said and what it means, as well.⁷⁶ And the information distilled from the interviews will go hand in hand with careful analysis of the social events of the period.

The different sources that I used for this study each contributed to a comprehensive narrative of class structure among the İstanbul metal workers within the said framework. In this regard, this study is largely based on daily newspapers that helped me to sketch out a worker's daily problems and grievances, his/her function and the role of the union for the workers in factories. It also included the development and progress of unions and collective actions, as well as public debates regarding the "workers' issue" in Turkey. Accordingly, I was able to analyze how the metal workers collectively responded to the developments and changes imposed by political or economic shifts. Those sources, alongside state sources, also contributed to the examination of the state's changing perspective, the discourse and efforts surrounding workers' issues, and social justice and development in Turkey between 1945 and

⁷⁴ Tosh, 206-209.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 210.

⁷⁶ Abrams, 1.

1970. Furthermore, the widespread leftist journals of the 1960s provided me with important information about the collective actions of workers that gained momentum in that decade and enhanced my analysis of public debates, which the left has been influential in shaping. The union archives and journals complemented the story of workers' daily problems and frustrations, and their collective actions.

Additionally, I looked at how the militant workers perceived their position within the social order, their relations with bosses/managers and fellow workers, the unionization or their own collective actions, and briefly how they articulated their voices within a given socio-historical context through those sources. The union archives also helped me to debate how the unions functioned and their changing discourse in terms of an evolving socio-political surrounding. In addition to those sources, this study significantly depended on oral history interviews, albeit within said reservations, to expose workers' migration and socialization patterns in city and workplace life, their workplace problems, and their conceptualization of labor unity and social cohesion. In terms of oral history, I interviewed nine workers from the Rabak and Türk Demir Döküm factories and two ex-managers of the Arçelik Factory who were also active within the metal employer's organization, MESS. The workers were involved in the Maden-İş activates as the worker's representatives and district representatives. I also talked with the rank-and-file of Maden-İş. Most of them migrated to the city in the beginning or middle of the 1960s to find a job. For migration and socialization patterns, I hinged my conclusions upon secondary sources, which are composed of various surveys conducted in the 1960s among the İstanbul workers in different worker neighbourhoods. Those surveys were carried out by several physicians, such as C. T. Gürson and O. Neyzi, on public health, and sociologists and city planners, like Mübeccel Kıray, Tansı Şenyapılı, Erol Tümertekin, Ruşen Keleş, Turan Yazgan, Kemal Karpat, W. M. Charles Hart, who followed the progress of modern cities, with particular focus on the migration and development of suburban life in İstanbul from the perspective of modernization theory, in relation with several state institutions, such as Devlet Planlama Teşiklatı (DPT-The State

Planning Office)⁷⁷ or universities, such as İstanbul University or the Middle East Technical University. Not just in Turkey, but around the world, sociological analysis of migration to the cities and newcomers' integration to the city life flourished and the surveys those I incorporate into my dissertation were carried out to analyze to integration of immigrants to the assumed modern life in İstanbul. And lastly, the journals, which were published by several managers' unions or independent management organizations, made it possible to for me to examine the managers' perspectives about the ongoing public debates, their course of action, as well as the story of collective action from their own perspective. Of course, such sources narrated the events from their own perspective as mostly blaming the unions to conduct "illegal or excessive actions." Therefore, I used those sources with a certain caution. Depending on different sources produced by state, employers and workers helped me to create a comprehensive analysis of relations of those different actors, through which working class *makes* itself, as contended in the famous *Preface* by E. P. Thompson in his *the Making*,⁷⁸ in a given context.

This study is handicapped with a certain imbalances especially in terms of my analysis on the discussions about Çelik-İş, which is one of the two significant unions in the İstanbul metal sector. Nonetheless, this came out of the current body of evidence. I had no documents for this union except its official journal. As a result, I had to rely on this resource, as well as other newspapers, which I cannot say were very sympathetic to this union, and the oral interviews that I conducted with the workers, Maden-İş organizers and the factory managers. Even the ordinary workers who were not active and militant members of Maden-İş, and the managers who experienced several conflicts with workers, portrayed a yellow-dog union image for Çelik-İş in our meetings. However, I need to state that there is no evidence to prove such allegations about this union. Accordingly, I tried to analyze the history of Çelik-İş

⁷⁷ DPT was founded in September 30, 1960 by the military government which had overthrown the DP government on May 27, 1960. From the beginning of its foundation, DPT has been advising governments on the economic and social developments of the country and preparing the economic development plans on the basis of five years.

⁷⁸ Edward Palmer Thompson, "Preface," in his *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1965), 8-13.

based upon that evidence as fairly as I could manage, under the circumstances. And, again, I state the views of opponents of this union with a certain caution.

Despite my findings, this study is also handicapped, to a certain extent, in its attempt to fulfill the perspective and agenda that I propose here, thanks to the condition of archives in Turkey. The archives of factories are very important in the analysis of daily life within factories, the individual responses to workers' problems, social fragmentation, as well as solidarity between the employees and the processes of collective bargaining, etc., in the current literature of the social history of the working class. Unfortunately the employers, especially those in the private sector in Turkey, are quite reluctant to provide researchers with documents about their enterprises. As for the state archives, it is well known that the workers and unions reported their grievances to the official Regional Work Offices, which were founded after the Second World War by the state to deal with workers' problems. But the current people who are in charge in these offices told me that these documents are discarded periodically due to legislations regarding the state archives. So, these relevant documents simply do not exist. Furthermore, the coup d'état in 1980 resulted in the destruction of most of the documents in the archives of Maden-İş. One of the other unions, Çelik-İş, joined with another federation in the middle of the 1970s; therefore, the people I have made contact with there do not even know where the archives are located.

These problems with my archival research created some real challenges for the arguments made in this study. First of all, the existing data is scattered. It is, therefore, hard to find a pattern for any particular enterprise and the analysis should be made by looking at the sectoral dynamics, rather than individual factories. Such a generalization from less specific data, naturally, may result in missing the key dynamics unique to the individual enterprises. Secondly, since the information about managers in the 1950s is sparse when compared with the information for the 1960s, there may be a problem of disproportionality between the evidence used to support certain arguments. In some cases, I felt compelled to make general abstractions about the employers/managers without empirically supporting my claims well enough. Thirdly, although the existing data set provides good arguments for the dynamics of

solidarity between the workers, the absence of the factory and state archives results in some debate about the fragmentation between workers.⁷⁹ Thus, my analysis of workers, their representatives, as well as union leaders and union themselves, appears as if those people constituted unified and uni-dimensional social groups, rather than complex, and sometimes even contradictory ones who had internal divisions. I did my best to expose such internal divisions, but I must admit I failed in exposing certain dynamics that resulted in the emergence of those divisions due to the lack of evidence. The most obvious fragmentation in the metal sector seems to occur as a result of competition between the unions. That results in another potential flaw with such a study: I am dealing primarily with organized labor, although my initial aim was otherwise. There are basically three reasons for this; first of all, the available resources mention almost nothing about non-unionized labor after the war years in Turkey. And secondly, nearly eighty percent of the İstanbul metal workers joined unions, particularly after the introduction of the Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining Law in 1963. Therefore, one of the defining features of the metal workers in İstanbul was their unionization during the Sixties. Thirdly, the tendency to be unionized among the İstanbul metal workers was very low before the 1960s. In parallel, the author of this dissertation does not neglect or see any irrelevancy between the individual, daily struggles and collective and organized struggles in the workplace; however, it is nearly impossible to sketch out patterns of such battles due to lack of documents. The absence of available documents also created a real challenge when analyzing the voice of “ordinary” workers who did not actively participate in the collective actions; as a result, my analysis had to depend on the language of the militant workers within the enterprises. For better or worse, this is the story of organized labor and their collective struggles.

⁷⁹ For the importance of analyzing fragmentation as well as solidarity between workers, see: Michael Hanagan, *The Logic of Solidarity: Artisans and Industrial Workers in Three French Towns, 1871-1914* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 309-327; Elizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*. However, Oestreicher argues that unionization, and Eleanor claims that shared workplace, experiences may become a crucial factor in overcoming fragmentation between workers. Look at: Richard Oestreicher, “Introduction,” in his *Solidarity and Fragmentation: Working People and Class Consciousness in Detroit, 1875-1900*, (Illionis: University of Illionis Press, 1989), xv-xix; Susan Eleanor Hirsch, *After the Strike: A Century of Labor Struggle At Pullman*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 24-25.

There is another problem that stems from the absence of information. I have very few sources about the daily life of the workers within their neighbourhoods; an important dimension of their social life which doubtlessly contributed in creating both the networks of solidarity and fragmentation. Researchers of the social history of labor in Turkey know that the majority of workers lived together in the districts of the squatter houses in İstanbul. Moreover, we know some of the general problems in these settlements, such as unreliable electricity, poor water quality, poor roads, etc. We also know that the major collective actions and strikes were supported by the people of the neighbourhoods who are mostly the relatives or friends of the workers. But there is a lack of evidence available to analyze the fragmentation, which may be the result of, for example, gender differences, divisions between informal and formal workers, and the influence of the original birthplaces of the dwellers, etc., within the neighbourhoods. For now, I can only hope that further studies and enriching discussions about the metal sector, as well as other sectors that may emerge out of comparing those future studies with mine will minimize those important disadvantages of this study.

Despite all these drawbacks, I think the information about the workers' common grievances and problems, their unionization attempts, the developments of the unions, the perspective and acts of both the state and employers, the narratives of work conflicts, and collective actions, will provide me with important background information, enough to shed a light on the social history of the metal workers who constituted a significant portion of the Turkish working class.

I divided this thesis into three interrelated parts covering a time period which ranges from the post-war era to 1970, when the June 15th-16th labor upsurge took place. In the first part, I am situating the post-war experiences of the İstanbul metal workers into their historical context. To such an end, Chapter 2 shows how the private metal industry began to develop in İstanbul through state aid and started gaining momentum after the mid-1950s. I then debate how the metal employers/managers intended to run enterprises; such an outlook also brings us to discuss managerial methods to engender fidelity of employees to the workplace, and to organize and control worker relations. However, the managers were not the sole actors to

regulate industrial relations; the state intervened in organizing workplaces through its policies, laws and institutions, including trade unions and its particular discourse on industrial democracy.

Chapter 3 outlines the workers' experiences, which were shaped partly by the economic developments, managerial practices and legal and discursive framework of industrial relations in their living and working places. But those experiences were simultaneously shaped by other factors such as migration dynamics, migrants' settlement in the city, their expectations, social formation in the new neighbourhoods and their problems in their living places. Their common grievances around work relations further built up their frustrations.

Yet, the metal workers collectively responded to their common problems and strived to ameliorate their bitter experiences immediately after the Second World War through their union. On this topic, the first section of Chapter 4 of this study examines the organization and rise of the metal union. The metal union was quick to grasp the political opportunities of the post-war era and adopted the language of citizenship and workers rights into its official discourse. Inspired by union language, the militant metal workers defined their place in the larger social realms and formed their own class language, which oscillated between loyalty and insubordination to the existing factory regime and social order. Then, the chapter ends with the forms of collective actions in which a significant number of the metal workers participated; those actions fomented a certain legacy in the succeeding periods.

In the second section, I mainly deal with the changing political context that provided workers with significant opportunities to make their demands heard. This part covers the period between 1960 and 1963. Although the development path of the metal sector, its geographical distribution, the migration dynamics, the pattern of workers' social formation and tradition of their workplace experiences remained largely unaltered, the coup d'état and succeeding political and instructional transformations influenced the type of collective response of the workers. Chapter 5 reflects on those developments by considering how the bosses/managers and organized workers perceived these large scale structural changes.

Afterwards, the relations between bosses/managers and workers were significantly shaped through collective bargaining, talks that were mostly contentious. In this regard, Chapter 6 analyzes the notorious Kavel Strike, the most well known and effective attempt of the metal workers to intervene collectively in shop floor dynamics. The Kavel Strike severed the already tense relations between bosses/managers, and workers and their union in this sector.

And in the last section, I grapple with the increasingly strident workers' collective struggle to apply their rights of free union choice that had been provided by the law. This struggle took place first in 1964 between metal workers and bosses, on behalf of their institutions. Chapter 7 deals with several strikes in the major firms of the sector. As a result of these strikes, the old left-wing union lost its authorization in various big plants and was replaced by the anti-communist union, Çelik-İş. Accordingly, this institution factored into the story of class relations by the year 1964. This requires studying the (changing) politics of the major institutional actors. Chapter 8, then, analyzes the institutional actors as Maden-İş, the bosses and Çelik-İş. The fight between those actors was to make themselves key players on the shop floor; therefore, Chapter 9 focuses on shop floor dynamics in the era of the collective agreement. Here, I am focusing on how the workers who experienced shop floor relations were supposedly regulated through the agreements between bosses/managers and workers on behalf of the both sides in a peaceful manner. However, those relations did not progress as expected and they resulted in widespread worker discontent and resistance towards the end of the decade. Then, Chapter 10 looks at the dynamics and forms of the collective actions as well as the prevailing characteristics of the language of the militant workers, which strongly emphasized the solidarity of labor to defend common interests against injustices stemming from the class relations, both on the shop floor and within the larger social order. Here, the militant workers imagined a different and just set of social relations in which labor would ultimately have its respected and deserved social place. And this language, importantly, emphasized the collective struggle to realize workers' dreams.

During my meeting with workers, I realized that nearly all of them often compared days gone by with the current conditions of workers in Turkey, and they emphasized how

great their collective power was and how their unity was a beautiful thing. They seemed to feel a certain pity for today's worker due to the lack of solidarity and they clearly enunciated that they missed the old days, despite their bitter experiences and memories. Even the most militant workers recalled their workplace as a heaven, which they collectively constructed through their struggles. Of course, such a memory reflects only a small part of a larger reality; however, it does not come out of nowhere. The metal workers truly and collectively strived to (re)construct work relations. They objected to the *natural* progress of order and they demanded to be a respected and well-living group within the larger social life and to a certain degree, they succeeded in their goals, which taught them the importance of solidarity. This is the story of the metal workers' collective struggle of writing their own fate. After all, "class itself is not a thing, it is a happening."⁸⁰ In this study, I, therefore, will portray how the metal workers shaped their own futures in the post-war Turkey.

⁸⁰ Edward Palmer Thompson, "The Peculiarities of the English", *Socialist Register*, 2 (1965): 357.

PART 1

PROVIDING FOR FAMILY, OBTAINING THEIR RIGHTS: THE POST-WAR EXPERIENCES OF İSTANBUL METAL WORKERS (1945-1960)

In 1948, the general secretary of the İstanbul Iron and Metal Hardware Industry Workers' Union, Yusuf Sıdal,⁸¹ declared in a press interview that the life of the metal workers, and of workers in other sectors as well, had to improve in order to increase productivity in Turkish industry, and that the issue was of significant national importance. In the interview, Sıdal promoted the so-called national purpose of creating an industrial society that would take its roots, according to the policy makers of the young republic, from its foundation in 1923, and grow as a result of the collaborative hard labor of both employees and employers. According to Sıdal, workers who were provided with a proper living and a respected place within such a society would more readily fulfill their national duties as loyal and diligent citizens. In other words, in the interview he stated that workers, who constituted one of the more significant forces behind creating an industrialized and developed country in all its aspects, should be treated well in terms of both material and social concerns.⁸²

Actually, Sıdal's press statement is the reflection of a *zeitgeist* that was dominant in Turkey after the war years. The modernization of the country through industrialization had taken a place over and above the agendas of different governments from the start of the closing years of the Ottoman Empire; and the ultimate introduction of multi-party politics in 1945⁸³ did not bring a fundamental change in this shared national goal. Whether state-led industrialization or expansion of private industry would sooner achieve this goal became a contentious issue among policy makers in the country; however, all sides agreed on the

⁸¹ Sıdal was born in 1904 and began to work in Halıcıoğlu Nail Factory in 1925. He was from the first unionist generations of the Turkish Republic. While working in Şakir Zümre Factory, he founded and then became the first president of the İstanbul Iron and Metal Hardware Industry Workers' Union. He resigned his post in 1954.

⁸² "Gece Postası İşçileri Dinliyor: Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Dertleri [The Gece Postası Listens Workers: The Troubles of the Workers of Iron and Metalwork]" *Gece Postası*, February 11, 1948.

⁸³ Turkey was ruled the Republican People's Party (CHP) from the beginning of the foundation of the Republic in 1923. Although several opposition parties, such as the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) and the Free Party (FP), were founded and became influential in different time periods, they were closed by the state. From 1931 until 1945, CHP was the single legal party in the country.

necessity of development of private industry, especially in the context of changing world politics and economies following the war years. After obviously choosing sides with Western Bloc, there was nothing for Turkey to do but follow a capitalist development pattern of industrialization. The major concern shared by the actors in different parties was that such a development might not be possible without being exposed to the “bloody class struggles” that challenged European economies and their state structures in the initial decades of the capitalist development. In light of this concern, the competing major parties, the CHP and DP, hit on the idea that since all social groups, both workers and employers, would benefit from overall development of the industry and economy in the country, so they must work in cooperation to make this improvement real, rather than fighting which each other and thereby harming the greater economic structure.

Therefore, both parties developed their strategies regarding industry and industrial relations dependent upon that basic assumption. It was true that the workers and unionists of the period were both caught up in this shared national goal; however, they skillfully developed ways to capitalize on this: if workers were expected to work diligently and loyally to improve the national economy, they must be, in turn, treated as respected citizens of this country. Mostly, the ex-peasants who migrated to the growing industrial areas and chiefly to İstanbul from different improvised areas of Turkey (primarily from the North East, Eastern and Central Anatolia) were motivated by the prospects of a good lifestyle and becoming esteemed citizens within Turkey’s social realms and national politics. These ideas were due, in part, to the above mentioned national goal which had such promise. They looked to benefit from the opportunities created by a growing and prospering society. However, they would realize in time that they had to develop a significant collective effort to achieve their aims.

Sıdal’s statement is the best summary of the general frame of mind of the first unionized metal workers in the private metal sector in Turkey. The formation of such a consciousness stemmed from workers’ experiences, which passed through the complex maze of the rise of the metal sector and construction, and the subsequent installation of an industrial relation system. Add to this their migration to the city and engagement in city and work life,

their responses to economic and social conditions in their fight for their rights, their efforts to earn a respected place within society by being organized, and their realization of common interests as a distinct social group. This part of my study analyzes how the state of the private metal sector, the general social and political developments in the country, the legal organization of industrial relations and factory regimes, and the foundation of the metal union as an institution for achieving the workers' common interests all shaped the historical pattern of class formation. In essence, this part will assess how the İstanbul metal workers experienced, comprehended and responded to the economic, social and political developments, which Turkey witnessed after the Second World War.

Before studying the experiences of the metal workers, it will be necessary to understand the progress of the private metal sector in Turkey. That is not say that the development of the metal sector in post-war Turkey alone determined the formation of the working class. The metal workers rose as a community by also responding to migration dynamics, city life and political developments. But it is certain that industrial developments exerted pressure on the rise of the metal workers' class. The story of the metal sector, therefore, must be analyzed first. To that end, Chapter 2 will discuss the general condition and slow development of the private metal sector in İstanbul and give some examples to explain why private entrepreneurs were so reluctant to invest in the industry, and how this situation shifted, albeit slowly, over time. Then, the chapter will focus on the metal bosses and the enterprise managers themselves, since the metal workers' experiences were influenced by the strategies and activities of those who were assumed to run the workplaces. And lastly, since the legal framework of industrial relations and the factory regime molded workers' activities, the chapter will touch on the progress of industrial relations, which the Turkish state pursued as a response to internal and external developments.

In addition to the development of the sector and formation of an industrial relations system, the conditions of city and work life in the post-war era certainly molded workers' experiences. Since most of the workers were new immigrants, Chapter 3 will examine migration dynamics and the motivations of prospective workers in coming to İstanbul; why

they migrated, especially after the mid 1950s, and what they encountered in the city's residential districts and workplaces, which all factored in their experiences. The purpose of the chapter will be to investigate the most burning issues for the metal workers within city and work life in İstanbul.

It would be wrong to assume that the post war metal workers were the innocent victims of the social or economic conditions under which they lived. On the contrary, they were proactive in transforming their living conditions and they attempted to find personal and collective agency within the legal constraints and dominant thoughts of the period. In other words, their own acts shaped the workers' common experiences and consciousness, as well as the conditions to which they were exposed. Chapter 4 will analyze the primary dynamics of the metal workers' actions, both on the shop floor and on an institutional level. Since trade unions were the significant instruments of the İstanbul workers and were used to improve their lives both in the workplace and in living spaces from the beginning of the development of private industry in the city, Chapter 4 will first focus on the formation and development of the metal union. The chapter will then reflect on how the union viewed the state and their bosses and by what means they gained rights for their members, and defended and enhanced their existing rights.

Overall, studying the first experiences of metal workers in İstanbul through the development of the sector and polarization of the political landscape, as well as the workers' own activates to improve their conditions, will effectively illuminate the historical patterns of class formation among metal workers. Notably, patterns formed after the war years would greatly influence every class activity, and the constantly changing and fragmented class consciousness by definition, in the 1960s. The legacy of the 1940s and 1950s, in brief, would be shared by, and sometimes revised by, future members of the class. Furthermore, this historical outlook will be important to contextualize the dynamics of class action in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE SCENE: THE RISE OF THE PRIVATE METAL SECTOR AND ITS MANAGERS

I. The State and Slow Development of the Private Metal Sector in İstanbul

From the first noted impacts of Western imperialism, the top of the both the Ottoman and Turkish state agendas the industrialization of Turkey was the formation of a bourgeois class to lead this economic development and modernization of the country. Literature which focuses on the pre-war history of the Turkish economy claims that the statist policies⁸⁴ to

⁸⁴ Although the 1930s in Turkey were characterized by the etatist economic policies, there were intense debates among the policy makers and authors who tried to build a Kemalist ideology about the content and scope of the state intervention in the economy. While Celal Bayar and influential high officers at İş Bank, that was established in 1932 to provide funds to private entrepreneurs those who were eager to engage in industrial activities, argued that etatism was a temporary measure to deal with the current crises of the Turkish economy, others, in particular ex-communists, such as Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, Vedat Nedim Töre, and well-known authors, such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu of the famous *Kadro* journal, addressed etatism and state presence in the economic relations as a more permanent solution to regulate the side effects, i.e. class conflicts, of industrial development and maintain the so-called classless structure of the society. By appointing Celal Bayar as prime minister sometimes, and İsmet İnönü, who was the chief rivalry of Celal Bayar and who was influenced by opinions of *Kadro* at other times, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk followed a economic policy which went and forth between those two wings. In the context of the emerging Cold War, however, etatism as an economic model left the state's agenda after 1945 with the introduction of multi-party politics and Turkey's preference of taking sides with the Western capitalist world. Both of the major parties, CHP and DP, declared allegiance to liberal ideals in the industrial development of the country. However, this must not be confused with the liberal ideas that would become dominant in the world as a response to the crisis of the 1970s. In fact, the First World War and the famous 1929 crisis that followed had undermined the viability of liberal ideals, a position defined by the notion of *laissez faire*. Then the United States, as the newly rising leading power of the capitalist world, adopted Keynesian policies which suggested state intervention as a regulatory force in economic relations within society, and also the state as an entrepreneur in industrial development. After the end of the Second World War, most major capitalist countries whose economies had been at the verge of collapsing between 1929 and 1945 followed this model. In parallel, neither CHP, nor DP totally abandoned the idea of state intervention in the economy after 1945; the number of state enterprises in the Turkish economy increased between 1950 and 1960, in spite of the fact that DP officials promised to privatize some state enterprises that had been established in the 1930s. For some of the books which analyze the debates in the 1930s regarding etatism and end of the etatist policies in the context of the Cold War see: Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Düzeni [The Order of Turkey]* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1971); Çağlar Keyder, *Dünya Ekonomisi İçinde Türkiye: 1923-1929 [Turkey in World Economy]* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1982); Charles Isaawi, *The Economic History of Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye'de Devletçilik [Statism in Turkey]* (Ankara: Savaş Yayınları, 1982); Yahya Sezai Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi [The Economic History of Republican Era]* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1986); Çağlar Keyder, *State and Classes in Turkey* (London: Verso, 1987); Bilsay Kuruç, *Mustafa Kemal Döneminde Ekonomi [The Economy in the Mustafa Kemal Period]* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1987); Yakup Kepenek, *Türkiye Ekonomisi [The Turkish Economy]* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1993); Nevin Coşar ed. *Türkiye'de Devletçilik [Etatism in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Bağlam, 1995); Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi, [The Economic History of Turkey]* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1993).

industrialize Turkey grew from the economic necessities of the period, and from the existing statist economic perspective which was dominant, not just in Turkey, but in various countries during the 1930s. Therefore, using industrialization as a triggering force to set the grounds for modernization was a contentious issue among the policy makers after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. However, some politicians and the limited wealthy class of the period considered the increasing statist policies of the 1930s as temporary measures to efficiently deal with pressing economic bottlenecks. According to the memoirs of Can Kır  , who was employed as a high ranking staff by Vehbi Ko  ⁸⁵ in his companies for several years, Vehbi Ko   saw the Republican principle of statism as a temporary solution required by the special conditions of the period.⁸⁶ Consequently, although some portions of the wealthy commercial classes benefited significantly from the statist policies of the decade, most demanded the state abandon some of those policies, such as price monopolies, etc., which might harm their businesses.

Simultaneously, the state has never given up the idea of empowering a modern bourgeoisie that engaged in industry and, indeed, passed several laws to encourage domestic investors to engage in industrial activities.⁸⁷ The Bank of Industry and Mines was established by the state in 1925. It provided 3.8 million Turkish lira to those who engaged in industry, and it also became partners with several enterprises, investing nearly 2 million Turkish lira in total. The Industry Promotion Law, ratified in 1927, assumed significant tax immunities and

⁸⁵ Vehbi Ko   was one of the most famous businessmen of Republican Turkey. He was born in 1901. His father had engaged in commerce and had run several small businesses in Ankara. As he was financially supported by his father, Vehbi Ko   began to involve himself in trade in his early twenties. After Ankara became the capital city of the newly founded Republic, the commercial opportunities for Vehbi Ko   grew immensely. He capitalized on this by investing in the construction sector. Furthermore, he earned significant amounts of money being the local representative of a few large international companies, such as the Ford Motor Company and Standard Oil. After the Second World War, he invested in the industrial sectors, especially the metal hardware sector, and became one of the most famous industrialists in the country. His companies still operate in Turkey covering vast economic sectors.

⁸⁶ Can Kır  , *Anılarımla Patronum Vehbi Ko   [My Boss, Vehbi Ko  , in My Memories]*, ( stanbul: Milliyet, 1996), 74.

⁸⁷ Necdet Serin, *T rkiye'nin Sanayile mesi [The Industrialization of Turkey]* (Ankara: Sevin  Matbaası, 1963), 107-109; Esin Pars, *T rkiye'de  şveren Sendikacılığı [Business Unionism in Turkey]* (Ankara: Ankara  niversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fak ltesi, 1974), 103; Ay e Bu ra, *Devlet ve  şadamları [State and Businessman]* ( stanbul:  leti im, 1997), 67-74; Boratav, *T rkiye  ktisat Tarihi*, 11-72.

state supports to the private enterprises. But the members of the traditional Turkish bourgeoisie, mostly composed of commercial groups, showed little interest in investing in the industrial sector in a country where the exports of consumer goods were regulated and the internal market was very limited. The available private capital was also limited, and it was possible to make a profit elsewhere with less risk. A few entrepreneurs could not successfully run their factories and most of them were taken over by the state in the 1930s; Isparta Cotton Factory, Maraş Paddy Factory, Uşak Progressive Sugar Factory, Ankara Cement Factory, etc all fell to this fate.⁸⁸ Therefore, industry was not seen as an advantageous investment area in terms of commercial interests at the time. A key contributor to this lack of interest was the desire of the traditional bourgeoisie to make quick and huge profits when these industrial activities would only provide long-term gains. According to a foreign scholar, R. W. Kerwin, who surveyed Turkish businessmen in 1951 to examine their worldviews, this class expected to make profits as quickly as possible and felt safer in trading activities rather than industrial ventures.⁸⁹ And according to Doğan Avcıoğlu, who was the founder and editor of *YÖN*, the commercial groups were interested in imports and exports and wholesale trade, rather than industry in the first decades of the Republic. The İş Bank, which was founded in 1924 by the state, provided huge sums to commercial groups, supplying encouragement to them through such perks as railroad investments.⁹⁰ For example, Vehbi Koç, who would later become one of the pre-eminent bosses in the metal sector, mainly involved himself in finished products and earned huge profits from such activities before and during the war years.⁹¹ As another example, commercial groups were interested in the transport and import of coals, which were extracted from state mines in the Zonguldak and Ereğli regions located in the northern part of the country.⁹² In fact, the commercially-minded bourgeoisie, which benefited most from

⁸⁸ Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*, 382-390.

⁸⁹ Robert W. Kerwin, "Private Enterprise in Turkish Economic Development" *Middle East Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Winter, 1951).

⁹⁰ Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*, 341.

⁹¹ Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik: İşletme Tarihine Marksist Bir Yaklaşım* [Arçelik from a Street Grocery to a Global Actor: A Marxist Approach to History of Enterprise], (İstanbul: Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2010), 178-200.

⁹² Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*, 401.

credits distributed by the state, were not necessarily motivated to engage in industrial sectors. Therefore, the private industrial sector remained under-developed and weak until the mid 1950s. By 1938, there were 1 098 private enterprises which benefited from state subsidies. However, approximately 90% of this number was composed of small enterprises or ateliers (workshops) in which an average of 2-3 people were employed.⁹³ State-led factories were home to the majority of large-scale industrial labor in Turkey.

In the post-war economic and political climate, the reluctance of commercially-minded groups to invest in industrial activities slowly began to change. First of all, this group had accumulated a huge amount of capital by exploiting the conditions created by the statist economic policies in the 1930s.⁹⁴ Secondly, according to Esin Pars, the commercial bourgeoisie significantly benefited from the high inflation and black market activities, which are the frequent results of war.⁹⁵ This class was also eager to demonstrate to the world a new commercial momentum after the war. For example, Vehbi Koç took over the responsibility of marketing the products of several major US companies such as Oliver, US Rubber, and Siemens, and he renewed his agreement with Ford.⁹⁶ However, it must be noted that the entry of the traditional bourgeoisie into industrial activities was still very slow. A Turkish economic historian, Yahya S. Tezel, calculates that the profits earned in trade activities were quite high in comparison with those gained in industrial activities.⁹⁷ Accordingly, even in 1951, most of those who took the risk of investing in industrial activities wanted to return to the commercial dealings to which they were accustomed.⁹⁸

⁹³ Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*, 395-398; Serin, *Türkiye'nin Sanayileşmesi*, 110; Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 111; Özgür Öztürk, *Türkiye'de Büyük Sermaye Grupları: Finans Kapitalin Oluşumu ve Gelişimi [The Big Business Circles in Turkey: The Formation and Development of the Financial Capital]*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2010), 50-51 and 57.

⁹⁴ It is interesting to consider that nearly 67% of the businessmen in the industry were those who had formerly engaged in commercial activities and/or were former state officials. Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları*, 90. Also look at; Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*, 64 and 75.

⁹⁵ Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 133. Also look at; Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları*, 117; Koray Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, 202-203.

⁹⁶ Özgür Öztürk, *Türkiye'de Büyük Sermaye Grupları*, 57-63.

⁹⁷ Yahya S. Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi*, 269.

⁹⁸ Robert W. Kerwin, "Private Enterprise in Turkish Economic Development" *Middle East Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Winter, 1951): 25.

The effort to accumulate capital was further encouraged after the war by the availability of cheap and long-term credit provided by the state to entrepreneurs who invested in industrial activities. The new programme of the Republican government, accepted in 1947, meant all industrial activities, except public services and heavy industry, would be handed over to the private sector and the state would encourage the development of private entrepreneurship by supplying any necessary means to achieve this end.⁹⁹ This policy continued into the next decade, especially after Democrat Party took the power in 1950, the state facilitated such private sector endeavours.¹⁰⁰ The state further encouraged the development of the private sector by improving Turkey's existing infrastructure to link the interior of Anatolia to the hinterlands of the country. Furthermore, Turkish entrepreneurs benefited from the cheapness of services and products, which were produced by state enterprises and used by private industry. Within this alliance of state industry and private enterprises, the latter were economically subsidized, too.¹⁰¹ Ultimately, the hesitations of the commercial bourgeoisie waned and real investments in industry began to take hold towards the middle of the decade. Sabahaddin Zaim used statistics provided by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations to show that overall support of industrialization by private companies increased in the first half of the 1950s.¹⁰² A private industrial sector was finally growing in Turkey.

A well known economic historian, Necdet Serin, argues that the private industrial enterprises flourished with the support of the Industrial Development Bank of Turkey established by the state in 1950. Using official statistics, Serin also shows that fixed capital

⁹⁹ Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 136.

¹⁰⁰ As Necdet Serin stated in his book, the political program of the Democrat Party, which was published in 1949, indicated that the leading actors of the Turkish economy shall be composed of private companies; consequently, all the private entrepreneurship must have been supported by creating new business opportunities and safe business conditions. Necdet Serin, *Türkiye'nin Sanayileşmesi*, 120. Also look at; Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları*, 75; Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 149.

¹⁰¹ Necdet Serin, *Türkiye'nin Sanayileşmesi*, 114; Özgür Öztürk, *Türkiye'de Büyük Sermaye Grupları*, 65-72; Mustafa Sönmez, "75 Yılın Sanayileşme Politikaları [The Industrial Policies of 75 Years]," in Oya Baydar [ed.] *75 Yılda Çarklar'dan Chip'lere [From Machine Wheels to Computer Chips in 75 Years]* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 8.

¹⁰² Sabahaddin Zaim, "Türkiye'nin İktisadi ve Sosyal Gelişmesinde Sanayileşmenin Önemi [The Importance of the Industrialization in the Economic and Social Development of Turkey]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 16 (1965): 239-241.

investments made by the private sector increased from 36.4 million Turkish lira in 1950 to approximately 200 million in 1956, after a slight decrease in 1957 to 171.912 million. Investment then increased again to 285 143 million in 1959. Furthermore, the number of private workplaces increased from 2 515 in total in 1950 to 5 284 in 1960.¹⁰³ The tendencies of the commercial bourgeoisie with regard to industrial investments can also be observed in the actions of different capitalist circles. Prominent business groups such as Koç, Sabancı, Çukurova, Yaşar, Akkök and Yazıcı Holding Companies, increasingly began to use their commercial accumulations, money earned from industrial interests after the war years with considerable financial support from the Industrial Development Bank of Turkey.¹⁰⁴ According to the late Sakıp Sabancı, who was the biggest shareholder the Sabancı Holding Companies after earning a considerable amount of capital from the commerce, his father, Hadji Ömer Sabancı, began to establish industrial enterprises after the war. Likewise, the future Dinçkök Holding Companies diverted their capital to industrial area, mainly textiles, during the 1950s. Jak Kamhi, the owner of the Profilo Iron Rolling Factory, founded his enterprise in 1953.¹⁰⁵ By 1960, 59.7 percent of all available private companies were ones founded after the war.¹⁰⁶

The development of the metal sector in Turkey fits well within this narrative. Before explaining this story further, I need to note that the metal industry covers wide range of sub-sectors from the production of metals, melting, filtering, milling, moulding and forming every kind of mineral ore, to steel production and the production of metal hardware, electric machines and tools. Most of the big metal factories such as the iron foundries, were rolled in Profilo, while the iron was cast in Demir Döküm and nails were produced in Halıcıoğlu Nail Factory, which was engaged in the primary metal production. However, some small ateliers, like those in Topkapı and Rami districts, produced secondary metals from scrap. There is no doubt that the big factories which were established to produce consumer goods and/or metal hardware became the leading sub-sectors of the metal industry in İstanbul, both in terms of

¹⁰³ Necdet Serin, *Türkiye'nin Sanayileşmesi*, 123, 144-144b

¹⁰⁴ Özgür Öztürk, *Türkiye'de Büyük Sermaye Grupları*, 63-66.

¹⁰⁵ Mustafa Sönmez, *Kırk Haramiler: Türkiye'de Holdingler [The Forty Bandits: The Conglomerate Companies in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Arkadaş, 1992), 208-209, 238, 244.

¹⁰⁶ Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları*, 85; Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*, 80.

their sizable developments and the historical roles their owners played, which would become more crystallized over the next decade.¹⁰⁷ As will be described further, the most important reason for the expansion of this industry was the huge migration to cities and the development of modern cities after the war years in Turkey. Furthermore, the İstanbul metal sector was also characterized by private enterprises, which engaged in basic metal production. The most critical working class actions would take place in these factories, where the processing of iron and steel and other metals for metal casting took place. In several enterprises, such as Profilo, Türk Demir Döküm and Arçelik, both the processing of metals and the production of consumer goods were carried out within the same factory, in different sections. The factories, which were established to process metals, were also the major ones in the sector. Those which engaged in the production of metal hardware, household electrical appliances or metal processing, or both, such as Kavel, OTOSAN, Demir Döküm, Rabak, İzsal, Şakir Zümre Factory, Horoz Nail Factory etc., would witness tense class conflicts at the end of the 1960s.

The fixed capital investments made by the private sector in the metal hardware industry, including household electrical appliances, increased from 1 364 000 million TL in 1950 to 16 532 000 million TL in 1960. Within the same time period, the number of workplaces in this sub-sector increased from 140 to 321,¹⁰⁸ dominated by the larger enterprises. In parallel with growth in the sector, the big enterprises in İstanbul were founded after the mid-1950s, and nearly 60 percent of them were established between 1952 and 1964.¹⁰⁹ Those companies which were established towards the end of the 1950s came to be influential in the overall Turkish economy, as they were in the metal sector and in industrial life. Furthermore, the big metal plants would witness tense and conflictual class encounters during the decade, just like the small workplaces in the sector. The owners and high-level

¹⁰⁷ Hacer Ansal, “Demir-Çelikten Beyaz Eşyaya Metal İşkolu [The Metal Branch From Iron-Steel to White Goods],” in *75 Yılda Çarklar’dan Chip’lere*, in Oya Baydar [ed.] *75 Yılda Çarklar’dan Chip’lere [From Machine Wheels to Computer Chips in 75 Years]* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 192.

¹⁰⁸ Necdet Serin, *Necdet Türkiye’nin Sanayileşmesi*, 144b, 166b.

¹⁰⁹ Eyüp Karadayı, *İstanbul’un Sanayi Potansiyeli [The Industrial Potential of İstanbul]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Sanayi Odası, 1964).

managers of the factories that produced consumer goods and metal hardware established MESS, a group that would later become the most influential member of TİSK.

The development of the private metal sector in Turkey followed a general pattern: Before the war, the metal industry in İstanbul had been mostly composed of small ateliers with no more than ten workers.¹¹⁰ The number of workers per workplace increased over time. While the number of workers per workplace in the private metal sector, which constituted 84.2 percent of the metal sector in İstanbul, was 27 percent in 1950; this increased to 29 percent in 1952 and again to 37 percent in 1954.¹¹¹ In the private sector, there were a few big plants in İstanbul such as Şakir Zümre in Sütlüce (within the border of Eyüp district), Emayetaş and Sıtkı Bütün in Bakırköy, and the Auto Scissor Lift Factory in Feriköy, the Süleymaniye Lighter and Hot Copper Wire Factories in Eyüp and Rami, and Nail Bolt Factories in Ayvansaray. Towards the latter part of the 1940s, the private businessman gradually began to invest in the metal sector; the most well known of these investors were Vehbi Koç and Jak Kamhi. In addition to Kamhi's Profilo, Vehbi Koç founded the General Electric Bulb Factory in 1947, Arçelik factory in 1956, Türk Demir Döküm in 1958 and OTOSAN in 1959.¹¹² After the mid-1950s, the private metal sector then leapt forward and, consequently, the number of workers in the sector increased.

Upon this development, the Turkish state and its economic policies greatly contributed to the formation of the new enterprises in the metal sector between 1954-1960. According to Mustafa Sönmez, the state intensively supported the Koç Company, which would eventually become the most powerful group in the metal sector.¹¹³ For example, in addition to supplying credit for the establishment of OTOSAN¹¹⁴ Assembly Line Factory in

¹¹⁰ Yusuf Sıdal'ın Halıcıoğlu Şubesi Açılış Konuşması [The Opening Talk of Yusuf Sıdal at Halıcıoğlu Branch], TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 122; Türkiye Ticaret Odaları, Sanayi Odaları ve Ticaret Borsaları Birliği, *Türkiye'de Makine ve Madeni Eşya Sanayii* [The Metal Hardware and Machine Industry in Turkey], (Ankara: n.p., 1958); Hacer Ansal, "Demir-Çelikten Beyaz Eşyaya Metal İşkolu [The Metal Branch From Iron-Steel to White Goods]," 191.

¹¹¹ Necdet Serin, Necdet *Türkiye'nin Sanayileşmesi*, 167.

¹¹² Mustafa Sönmez, *Kırk Haramiler*, 198.

¹¹³ Ibid, 203-204.

¹¹⁴ The word "oto" is the abbreviation of the word "otomobil" (automobile) and "san" is the abbreviation of "sanayi" (industry) in Turkish. Thus, Otosan means otomobil sanayi (the automobile industry) in Turkish.

İstanbul, where different exported parts of automobiles would be assembled, the government funded the necessary foreign exchange to encourage factory growth for one year.¹¹⁵ Additionally, cooperation with several large foreign companies was an important resource for the development of the major metal factories in İstanbul. Despite limits on foreign trade, the DP government abolished all limitations on foreign capital and recognized equality of foreign capital investment with domestic ones through The Law of Fostering Foreign Capital, ratified in 1954. Consequently, several foreign companies, such as Siemens, invested in the metal sector in Turkey. Indeed, according to Esin Pars, most metal plants that operated as assembly line factories where foreign products were compiled and finished were founded through the cooperation of both foreign and domestic capital.¹¹⁶ In this regard, the profits accumulated in the sector were largely vulnerable to economic fluctuations not just in Turkey, but also in the global economy; therefore, there were different factors that might squeeze profits in the sector. This undoubtedly restrained the economic decisions and policy implementations of the factory owners.

Apart from state support, internal developments created further links in the chain for the growing metal sector in the country. An increasing population rate, the urbanization and marketization of agriculture expedited the development of the industry in general, and the metal sector in particular.¹¹⁷ The growth of cities, which gained momentum beginning in the mid-1950s, and the expansion of state offices were all crucial factors in the strength of the metal sector, since the metal hardware items that were produced in these factories were used as building equipment, office materials, furnaces, stoves, elevators, or radiators. Ege Cansen,

¹¹⁵ Bernar Nahum, *Koç'ta 44 Yılım [My 44 Years in Koç]*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1988), 117.

¹¹⁶ Özgür Öztürk, *Türkiye'de Büyük Sermaye Grupları*, 73; Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 145-167. The foundation stories of several Koç Factories in the metal sector are fine examples of state help and cooperation with foreign capital. For the details of this story, look at: Vehbi Koç, *Hayat Hikayem [My Life Story]* (İstanbul: n.p., 1983); Bernar Nahum, *Koç'ta 44 Yılım*, 71-88 and 106-117; Mustafa Sönmez, *Kırk Haramiler: Türkiye'de Holdingler*, 203; Benim Adım Ford Otosan *[My Name is Ford Otosan]*, (İstanbul: n.p., n.d.), 14 and 24-27; Can Kırac, *Anılarımla Patronum Vehbi Koç*, 111-114; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000 [From Product to Brand: The Institutional History of Arçelik]*, (n.p.: Arçelik Anonim Şirketi, 2001); *Demirdöküm'de 50 Yıl [The Fifty Years in Demirdöküm]*, (n.p.: Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları Anonim Şirketi, 2004); Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*.

¹¹⁷ Gülten Kazgan, *Tanzimattan 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye Ekonomisi [The Turkish Economy from Tanzimat [The Reform Era from 1839 to 1855, a.n.] to the 21. Century]*, (İstanbul: Bilgi University, 2006), 86.

the former manager of human resources in Arçelik Factory from the early 1960s to the late 1970s, claims that the improvements in the construction sector also factored in the progress of the metal sector in the 1950s.¹¹⁸ The metal plants produced hardware for use by the expanding middle class in cities; items such as refrigerators, laundry machines, vacuum cleaners, or automobiles. The state-led improvement of the city infrastructure after the mid 1950s, in the areas like electricity and telephone wires, further contributed to this development.¹¹⁹ The improvement of some infrastructure facilities after this date, such as highways, also contributed to the progress of the metal sector, just as the development of roads facilitated the automobile sector. According to Bernar Nahum, an important high officer of Koç Holding Companies from the mid-1940s and the former general manager of OTOSAN, the demand for automobiles was on rise after the 1950s.¹²⁰ Indeed, Vehbi Koç cited this demand as reason to establish an automobile plant in 1959.¹²¹ One notable difference in the period after 1954, according to several Turkish economic historians, was that the restraints exerted on foreign trade factored into the formation of an import substitution economic model, which suggested enhancing domestic industry for the sake of the development of internal markets.¹²²

As a result of all these developments, the private metal industry first slowly and then more rapidly expanded in Turkey in the mid 20th century. Although several scholars argued that such developments were still unfledged and that the commercial bourgeoisie was still more powerful than the industrial class, it was obvious that private interest in the metal sector was rooted in this period.¹²³ For example, 59.7% of plants in this industrial branch were

¹¹⁸ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁹ Mustafa Sönmez, *Kırk Haramiler: Türkiye’de Holdingler*, 114.

¹²⁰ Bernar Nahum, *Koç’ta 44 Yılım*, 121.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹²² Ümit Akçay, *Kapitalizmi Planlamak: Türkiye’de Planlama ve DPT’nin Dönüşümü* [Planning Capitalism: Planning in Turkey and Transformation of the State Planning Institute] (İstanbul: Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2007), 51; Mustafa Sönmez, “75 Yılın Sanayileşme Politikaları,” 9. Generally, the available literature supposes a rupture between economic policies of the 1950s that were characterized by liberalism, and those of the 1960s and 1970s that were characterized by the import substitution model. However, some policies of the DP governments, in particular the foreign trade regime, proved that the first signs of the dominant economic model of the 1960s firstly appeared in the 1950s. For well known examples of this literature, look at: Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey* and Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*.

¹²³ Sabahaddin Zaim, “Türkiye’nin İktisadi ve Sosyal Gelişmesinde Sanayileşmenin Önemi,” 239-241.

world from the beginning of the century in an effort to increase profits as much as possible, without paving the way for social conflicts within enterprises.¹²⁷ Yet, it is debatable that those methods were ultimately successful in wiping out collective conflicts between workers and owners/managers completely; however, those ideas increasingly constituted the norm among the major industrial companies in the world, in order to increase production peacefully in their factories. It seems that the Turkish metal industrialists, on the other hand, barely applied those already developed methods in the fear that the changes might squeeze their profits. By depending upon the articles regarding industrial relations and workers' rights and the complaints of state officers or workers, we can sketch a pattern showing metal managers, like employers in other sectors, were against any "outside intervention"- either the state's or trade unions'- which might inhibit their profits. According to the workers' complaints and a few findings that I have made, the characterizing feature of workplace relations between owners/managers and workers was discipline and close supervision of the work process. In

¹²⁷ Modern and scientific management techniques and the term "industrial democracy" emerged and developed in parallel with flourishing of modern enterprises in Western Europe and North America at the end of the nineteenth century. Its 'father' was Frederick Taylor who, alongside with some other influential figures in the US's economy, improved management techniques in an effort to both increase profits for his companies and regulate managers' relations with workers in creating industrial democracy. Those techniques became sophisticated at a time when the large-scale firms and technology-led mass production began to dominate the economy towards the end of the nineteenth century and when the working class movements began to develop by the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, the working class movements then took on new forms and adopted new strategies to tackle the new methods improved by managers to regulate shop floor relations more easily in Western Europe and North America. During relatively stable North American and European economics following the Second World War, those concepts or methods; such as modern management and industrial democracy, became mottos of industrial theories and applications. Those ideas were also imported to the newly developing capitalist countries after the Second World War through students who were educated in Western countries or Western institutions which operated to disseminate "modern ideas" to the rest of the world. For the *magnum opus* of the literature that focuses on the emergence and further development of the management techniques and industrial democracy, see Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1977). For a more recent study, look at: Daniel A. Wren, *The History of Management Thought*, (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2005). However, Marcel Van Der Linden warns us to be careful when talking about the geographical origins of modern management. While criticizing the current literature as being Eurocentric, he also argues that some examples of those methods could be seen in non-European regions, such as the Caribbean, before the Industrial Revolution took place in the 19th century. There, owners improved those techniques in order to control "unfree" labor that is mainly slave labor, rather than free labor itself. See, Marcel Van Der Linden, "Re-constructing the Origins of Modern Labor Management," *Labor History*, vol. 51, no. 4 (November 2010): 509-522.

fact, Vehbi Koç would later admit that the owners or managers before the 1960s hardly used those modern management techniques that focused on providing the industrial democracy on shop floor; furthermore, he would claim that most owners were not aware of, or did not want to recognize, worker's rights. It is possible that some owners and managers tried to utilize some incentives to commit workers to administration and to their workplaces. However, I encountered few examples of this throughout my study.

In addition to having little evidence to show how the metal owners and managers attempted to derive the consent of workers, there exists scarce data to argue the world view of metal managers/ employers in terms of industrial relations, or the details of state intervention through the formalization of the industrial democracy and labor regime, and workers' rights in Turkey. Therefore, my assumptions regarding discipline, control, and the consequent tense relations between those groups are open to any challenge and revision, which, I hope, would be made by the future studies.

A well known means of controlling the labor force is to create divisions between skilled and unskilled labor, or to reinforce existing divisions through material incentives, or by creating hierarchies. In fact, there was a scarcity of skilled labor and an abundance of unskilled workers in the metal industry in the 1940s and 1950s. It is unfortunate that we have little knowledge about how the factory managers dealt with this problem. In Arçelik, a decision of the board management dated 1955 shows that a skilled technician would be invited to the factory to train moulders. According to another decision, four or five young workers would be sent Germany to be trained as moulders and press operators. In addition, several factory seminars were given regarding production measurements, and an apprentice course was opened in the early 1960s in the factory.¹²⁸ The Türk Demir Döküm managers seemed to follow a different course of action; they recruited skilled workers from state

¹²⁸ Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, 257-258.

enterprises by promising them higher wages.¹²⁹ However, we do not know whether such examples represent a meaningful pattern in the availability of scant evidence.

It appears that the employers/managers randomly provided tangible rewards that are material incentives in a few instances. Additionally, they seemed intolerant to any affairs beyond their interests, such as workers' objections to wages, unionization, or legal persecutions, any of which might decrease their profits. In the same vein, a foreign author on Turkish industrial relations asserted that most managers who pursued the notion of production and efficiency in workplaces did not concern themselves with worker relations. Rather, they were impatient with workers' demands and grievances and did not want any intervention by the unions in shop floor affairs. Although a small number of bosses or managers attempted to imitate the industrial democracy that existed in the West, and sought to cooperate with unions on shop floor, most of them aimed simply for quick and significant profits. The tendency to not recognize unions was widespread among most employers/managers of the period. They saw unions as an obstacle to their profits and industrial growth. In this vein, they even seemed reluctant to fulfill their legal obligations to their employees.¹³⁰

Accordingly, Turkish entrepreneurs in the metal sector were willing to run their businesses under the conditions of so-called "free market" during the 1950s. For example, most of the metal plants did not prepare standard factory regulations, despite it being mandatory by the law, nor did they distribute the prepared ones to representatives or workers. And the existing few regulations were formulated without advice from, or consultation with, the union or workers.¹³¹ Furthermore, some metal bosses did not abide by existing laws in terms of industrial relations: in some cases they did not apply decisions reached by the

¹²⁹ *Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları A.Ş.-İstanbul İl Hakem Kurulu Başkanlığı'na, 1958 [Türk Demir Döküm Factories Joint Stock Company-To The Provincial Arbitration Court, Istanbul]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2, Envelope 127.

¹³⁰ M. Sumner Rosen, "Turkey" in Walter Galenson [ed.] *Labor in Developing Economies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 265-267.

¹³¹ "Kilit Fabrikası [The Lock Factory]" *Maden-İş*, year 1 no. 20 (9 November 1957), 3; Kemal Sülker, "Son Kararlardan Sonra İşçilerin Durumu [The Conditions Of Workers After The Latest Decisions]" *Gece Postası*, April 2, 1959; "Üyelerin Haklarını Arayan Sendika Başarı Sağlıyor [The Union Which Seeks for its Member's Rights i Becoming Successful]" *Maden-İş* (1 August 1959), 3.

provincial arbitration councils in terms of working hours, overpayments, etc.¹³² Those examples were received poorly by the metal workers who assumed that the metal managers did not want the state to intervene in industrial relations on the shop floor, and that the managers did not want such relations to be formalized. The metal workers often claimed that managers did not apply Labor Law on the shop floor and wanted to run enterprises completely at their own will. Maden-İş's workplace representatives gave plenty of examples to disclose the bosses' unlawful actions in their speeches and meetings, as well as in their talks with correspondents or petitions to the Ministry or Regional Work Office.¹³³

To reveal the bosses' states of mind in terms of industrial relations, we can also look at how they attempted to earn the loyalty of workers, both toward themselves and toward their workplaces. What did the managers of the private metal enterprises do to enhance loyalty among their employees to workplaces? Unfortunately we, again, have very few documents to shed light on the management practices on the shop floor level; however, the documents we do have demonstrate that just a few metal plants applied modern management methods to keep workers on shop floor and keep them working hard. The biggest metal boss, Vehbi Koç, later confessed that the bosses ran their enterprises completely at their own will during the 1950s:

¹³² "Halicioğlu Şubemizin İlk Kongresi Başarılı Geçti [The First Congress of our Halicioğlu Branch was a Successful]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 3 (20 November 1954), 3-4; Zühtü Coğal, "İşçi Neden Hak Sahibi Değil [Why Workers Do Not Have Any Right]," *Son Saat* January 27, 1956; "Kısa Haberler [News in Brief]," *İstanbul Demir Ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 2 no. 8 (28 January 1956); "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette* no: 9640 (22 June 1957); "Günde 14 Saat Çalışmağa Mecbur Edilen İşçiler [The Workers Who Were Forced To Work 14 Hours In A Day]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 23 (25 January 1958), 1; "Fazla Mesai Ücretleri Alamıyorlar [They Cannot Get Overtime Payment]," *Gece Postası*, July 10, 1958; "Asgari Ücreti Tatbik Etmeyen Bir İş Yeri Daha [Another Workplace Which Does Not Apply Minimum Wage]," *Şehir* September 7, 1958; "Bir İş Veren İşçilerini İstedığı Tarzda Cezaya Çaptırıyor [A Employer Punishes His Workers However He Sees Fit]," *Şehir*, April 5, 1959; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette* no. 10390 (25 December 1959); "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette* no: 10656 (16 November 1960).

¹³³ *İş Kanununun 22nci Maddesi İşçileri Müşkülata Uğrattı-1952; İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası 8. Genel Kurul Toplantısı*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive.

“We freely recruited and dismissed workers, we freely gave wages to them, we did have rights, but they did not from 1950 until 1963.”¹³⁴

Can Kır   who worked as manager in different Ko  factories for several years and married one of the owner’s daughters spoke about the non-existence of any modern management knowledge among bosses in the 1950s. İlhami Karayal  n, who has taught courses about the factory management and industrial relations at İstanbul University and Bosphorus University between 1958 and 1979, and who worked in nearly 140 Turkish industrial enterprises as a councillor, touched on the same point.¹³⁵ Whether the high level of unemployment encouraged bosses/managers to not utilize modern management methods, or their ignorance (not knowing modern management practices, sticking to traditional methods, or having a worldview that was not tolerant to any outside intervention in executing their own business) resulted in not providing inducement for workers on the shop floor level, it is apparent that those methods seemed to be rare in the sector.

In fact, there are few available examples to show that the metal bosses provided some tangible rewards to the metal workers. The future president of the workers’ union, Kemal T rkler, expressed his concerns about the lack of any worker benefits in the sector.¹³⁶ In 1956, Ayvansaray Bolt Factory supplied production and seniority bonuses to its workers and this created a certain solidarity, according to the owner, between his workers and himself.¹³⁷ The management of the same enterprise divided workers to the groups composed of 5-6 people and rewarded the group, which was assumed to work the hardest.¹³⁸ The Ar elik Factory management, in the same vein, decided to distribute bonuses to diligent workers in 1959 -

¹³⁴ Quoted by Mustafa S nmez, *Kırk Haramiler*, 158.

¹³⁵ *Mamulattan Markaya Ar elik Kurum Tarihi*, 170 and 196.

¹³⁶ “Madeni E ya İ  Kolunda Asgari  cret Tesbiti [The Settlement of Minimum Wages in the Metal Hardware Sector],” *Gece Postası*, August 7, 1956).

¹³⁷ “Ayvansaray Civata Fabrikası [Ayvansaray Bolt Factory],” *Maden-İ * year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 4.

¹³⁸ “G. Elektrik Amp l Fabrikası [G. Electric Light Bulb Factory],” *Maden-İ * year 1 no. 3 (15 December 1956), 4.

bonuses equal to two monthly salaries.¹³⁹ The Demir Döküm Factory management provided some benefits from the beginning of production. In the first seven months of the work, management paid 5 000 TL in marriage and birth support to its 544 employees in total.¹⁴⁰ It is plain that such rewards were targeted to increase productivity, as well as to encourage loyalty to the workplace. But those practices did not have any continuity, even within the factories where they were applied.

It seems that although the metal bosses or managers seldom used tangible rewards on the shop floor, some of them at least applied a paternalist discourse to infuse a sense of family among workers. Following his survey of over two hundred entrepreneurs, Erdoğan Soral, the late scholar on industrial relations at İstanbul University, argued that being founder-shareholder and manager, which nearly half of bosses were at this time, accounted for that paternalist, centralist and conservative attitude among Turkish employers, based on his surveys among the employers/managers of the private Turkish industry.¹⁴¹ In fact, a sort of paternalist discourse could be observed in several metal enterprises. Ahmet Binbir, who was the first general manager in OTOSAN, asserted that the workers of the factory called him “father” in the workplace out of his benevolence.¹⁴² Similarly, Ege Cansen revealed that Lütfü Doruk, who established Arçelik with Vehbi Koç, and who had been the long-time general manager of the factory, acted and more importantly as the workers perceived him as a paternalist figure in Arçelik.¹⁴³ In such narratives, the bosses or managers might seem as benevolent figures who took care of their employees’ rights; however, it is unfortunate that we do not have much information about the extent of paternalism in the metal factories.

¹³⁹ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 42-43. For similar examples, see: “Bakır Tel Çekme İşçileri Zam Aldı [The Copper Wire Workers Got Wage Increase],” *Gece Postası* January 18, 1956; “İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee],” *The Official Gazette* no: 10604 (15 September 1960); “İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee],” *The Official Gazette* no: 10614 (27 September 1960).

¹⁴⁰ *Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları A.Ş.-İstanbul İl Hakem Kurulu Başkanlığı’na, 1958 [Türk Demir Döküm Factories Joint Stock Company-To The Provincial Arbitration Court, İstanbul]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2, Envelope 127.

¹⁴¹ Erdoğan Soral, *Özel Kesimde Türk Mütessesbileri [Turkish Entrepreneurs in Private Sector]* (Ankara: Ankara İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi Yayınları, 1974), 149-150.

¹⁴² *Benim Adım Ford Otosan*, 60.

¹⁴³ *Demirdöküm’de 50 Yıl*. Also see: Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, 419-421.

Nevertheless, in looking at the scholar's observations on managerial practice in Turkey, the memories of important figures such as Vehbi Koç, and/or worker's complaints, it seems there was not a widespread and effective "family soul" within the metal factories to inspire workers' fealty to the factory administration. Furthermore, a paternalist boss could be very intolerant, sometimes to the extreme, in his disciplining of workers on the shop floor.

In fact, the administrative practices in the metal sector were largely characterized by close control over the work process, which was overseen by the bosses/managers themselves. In his biography, Vehbi Koç described himself as a disciplinarian with a strict attitude towards work, and he defined the modern age as the era of work. Regarding workload, there was not even a spare minute during working hours.¹⁴⁴ As Ege Cansen recalled that Burhan Günergun, the general manager of Türk Demir Döküm from 1958 to 1971, believed in strict discipline in running that enterprise.¹⁴⁵ Likewise, the portrayal of Lütfü Doruk as a paternalist boss in Arçelik simultaneously presented him as a disciplinarian type: it was said that Lütfü Doruk, one of the biggest shareholders and the general manager of Arçelik, often tightly controlled the progress of work in the factory, even throughout the midnight shift.¹⁴⁶ The memories of an ex-manager in Arçelik supports the strict work discipline in Arçelik, that each employee had to come to work at 8 a.m; the workers who arrived in the factory later than this would not be allowed to work and their Sunday wages were also held back.¹⁴⁷ Regarding labor discipline in the shop floor, some managers admitted that they even controlled the clothes and visual appearance of workers. Ahmet Binbir recounted that he could not let workers with beards enter the workplace.¹⁴⁸ The managers of Arçelik often checked male workers in terms of their shaving, hygiene or clothing.¹⁴⁹ Those discipline mechanisms would actually be the part of a widespread intolerance that will be described in detail. Most workers'

¹⁴⁴ Quoted by Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, 180.

¹⁴⁵ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012. Also look at: *Demirdöküm'de 50 Yıl*.

¹⁴⁶ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 34.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted by Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, 305.

¹⁴⁸ *Benim Adım Ford Otosan*, 60.

¹⁴⁹ Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, 427.

demands in the sector cited discipline and the low tolerance of the bosses as one of the main causes of workers' grievances in the decade.

To summarize, the metal bosses or managers constructed very weak relations with their employees before the 1960s, as Ege Cansen mentioned, despite all the calls of state officials and unionists of the period.¹⁵⁰ They ran their enterprises while making little effort to earn the loyalty of their employees; in addition, they were intolerant to any 'outside intervention' to their own business affairs. In the absence of any modern managerial methods to gain the workers' loyalty and to keep them on workplace, the state, through its laws, institutions, personnel and unions, would attempt to fill the gap. The industrial order, which was also supported by unions, and the unions' response to it on the shop floor on behalf of workers, shaped the workers' experiences, as did the administrative practices.

III. The Post-War Framework of Industrial Order and the Factory Regime

Creating an industrial order based on industrial democracy constituted one of the most important items in the political agenda of the post-war Turkish governments. The party in power, the CHP, attempted to expand the boundaries of Turkish democracy to a certain extent in order to smooth over the social discontent of the war period; that discontent was also widespread in the industrial area and party officers were well aware of the fact.¹⁵¹ In terms of the legal industrial regime and labor relations, the government of the time had a bad reputation for its industrial policies; for example, it prohibited workers from leaving their workplaces without permission, it increased time at work without any extra payment, or it abolished the weekly rest day in order to maintain productivity and provide huge profits for the flailing Turkish bourgeoisie. There was also widespread discontent among workers because the economic burden of the war was on the shoulders of the laboring classes - a

¹⁵⁰ Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 170, 196 and 202.

¹⁵¹ Cem Eroğul mentions severe criticism towards the party during the budget discussions in 1945 in terms of tremendous state debts, high cost of living, deeply miserable conditions of workers and weak state officers, large black market activities, etc. Likewise, Kemal Karpaz stated that the regional branches of the party roused strong criticism of the CHP in 1945. Kemal Karpaz, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi [Turkey's Politics]* (İstanbul: İstanbul, 1967); Cem Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve İdeolojisi [Democrat Party: Its History and Ideology]* (Ankara: Sevinç, 1970).

burden that got heavier towards the end of the war.¹⁵² In addition, the regime's main goal in this period was to be a part of the capitalist democracy led by the United States, and it imitated the Western legal institutions and laws, which were assumed to pave way for a stable capitalist democracy free from class conflicts. Accordingly, the area of industrial relations would be an important component of those institutions and laws.¹⁵³ Consequently, the government initiated a set of "democratization" attempts, including new industrial relations and social policies, in an effort to usher in a new regime that would incorporate the laboring masses.¹⁵⁴ That means, in practice, the institutional channels through which a wider section of population, such as unionists, workers scholars, politicians of the opposition parties, might claim their opinions and demands in terms of the labor relations, were expanded after the war years in Turkey.

The Turkish state attempted to control the workers and their unions and regulate work relations in unprecedented ways after the war. Its laws and instructions primarily aimed to prevent the "side effects" of the industrialization, namely class conflicts, and force the unions to follow its specific political agenda. However, the state at the same time created important opportunities for the labor owners and trade unions by first of all recognizing worker's rights, as well as responsibilities; the specific configuration of citizenship and the worker's assumed position as producer provided firm ground for workers and unions to defend their rights. Furthermore, trade unions, as legal entities, constantly attempt to expand legal boundaries. They shape the labor process or labor struggles, but at the same time they are shaped, more or less one way or another, by the resistance occurring in the labor process itself, or by the

¹⁵² Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 129-131; M. Şehmus Güzel, "Capital and Labor during the Second World War" in D. Quataert and E. J. Zürcher (eds.) *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, (London: Tauris, 1995); Cahit Talas, *Türkiye'nin Açıklamalı Sosyal Politika Tarihi [The Explanatory History of Social Politics of Turkey]* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1992).

¹⁵³ Fatih Güngör, "1946-1960 Döneminde Türkiye'de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Demokrasi, [The Trade Unionism and Democracy in Turkey Between 1946-1960]," in Alpaslan Işıklı [ed.] *Türkiye'de Sendikacılık Hareketleri İçinde Demokrasi Kavramının Gelişimi [The Development of Concept of Democracy Within the Trade Unionism Movements in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1994), 131-138.

¹⁵⁴ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri [Collective Agreements and Their Roles in Turkish Economy]* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1967), 74. Also look at; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetten Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*.

collective struggles themselves. Therefore, the operation of those laws and institutions does not completely depend upon predetermined rules; rather, their actual process is open to constant struggle between different actors, groups or classes. In this regard, based on the literature produced by the followers of contentious politics and collective movements, I am taking state, state policies, its laws or institutions as a contentious point of interest through which modern political progress and the progress of social relations cannot wholly be determined under the pressure of powerful groups, whether state officers or wealthy classes.¹⁵⁵ In this study, I believe that the development of worker's collective actions in Turkey after the war years is a fine illustration of this argument.

In fact, the term "industrial democracy" became a important component of public debates after the war years: dealing with the problems of workers was seen as a national cause.¹⁵⁶ Unionists, a few journalists and scholars and state officers participated in this debate. Just after the end of the war, the political officers of the regime argued for reform to the industrial complex in Turkey. In this effort, they were defined as one of the essential groups in transforming Turkey into a modern society. The basic rights of workers would be recognized and workers would ultimately have access to legal channels, at least in the state discourse, to make their demands known. In fact, by instigating arguments on the "very nature" of class conflicts in the Western countries, Sadi Irmak, the first Labor Minister in Turkey, defined the role of the state in the *Çalışma Journal*¹⁵⁷ as one of protection for

¹⁵⁵ For some important works in this literature, look at: Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, 2007) and Charles Tilly and Lesley J. Wood, *Social Movements, 1768-2012*, (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, 2013). For some important works which focus on how the state and state mechanisms pave the way for labor and unions, see: Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Gerald Friedman, *State-Making and Labor Movements: France and the United States, 1876-1914* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

¹⁵⁶ Osman Şevki, Uludağ, "İş ve İşçi [Work and Worker]," *Çalışma* year 1 no. 1 year 1 (September, 1945).

¹⁵⁷ The *Çalışma Journal* was regularly published between 1945 and 1987 by the Labor Ministry immediately after the foundation of this ministry. By 1948, it was published on an every third-month basis and its publication was suspended until 1953 with the election of the Democrat Party in 1950.

employees who, according to him, were the as much the creators of this modern world and society, as were the employers. Rather than an antagonistic relationship, he painted a picture of solidarity between those two groups, and this solidarity would develop the greater country as a whole. In this picture, the Turkish state would act as a mediator to regulate industrial and social life, to prevent work conflict between employees and employers, and both of these groups would shoulder the task of creating a modern Turkey. The rules and regulations of the state would obviate the “side effects” of industrialization, namely class conflict, which was seen an inevitable result of industrialization.¹⁵⁸ Such an outlook was also shared by the scholars of the period who studied industrial relations and social politics:

“...But, the importance and content of the struggle (the struggle between classes) has changed. This change refers to that class struggle which aimed to destroy and eliminate a (an entire) social class in terms of the reality of social classes which takes place in every society and (one which) cannot be (relegated to) only words, writings or even party programmes, (one which) was replaced with the idea of struggle regarding economic interests between related classes.”¹⁵⁹

In other words, the government policy of settling Western democracy in the country saw industrial relations as a measure to prevent class conflicts, which might arise due to the growing numbers of workers seen in the process of industrialization of the country. In this regard, the state would prevent likely class conflicts by copying the laws, rules and regulations, which were launched in developed countries as a result of “bloody” class

The journal was published intermittently between 1956 and 1959 and after 1959 it did not seem to appear until 1972.

¹⁵⁸ Osman Şevki Uludağ, “İş ve İşçi [Work and Worker],” *Çalışma* year 1 no. 1 year 1 (September, 1945).

¹⁵⁹ Orhan Tuna, “Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi [The Development of Trade Unionism in Our Country and the Issue of Being Unionized for Our Workers],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 6 (1954).

struggles.¹⁶⁰ Sadi Irmak pointed out that state approach to the work issue would be to improve the living conditions of workers, maintain health service and provide a bright future for employers. Those state efforts would increase productivity, which was necessary to catch up to the level of developed Western countries. In order to reach those goals, the state must have regulated work relations in terms of social justice and national interests.¹⁶¹ Therefore, the state regulations must have:

“...brought jobs to workers and workers to employers, registered workers supplied ration cards to them, trained them to be qualified, opened day care centers for their children, enacted the Social Insurance Law [ratified in 1945, a.n.] by getting premiums from employers to provide compensation to those who deserved them, and to cure those who got sick because of work, etc.”¹⁶²

Likewise, scholars, politicians and columnists who reflected on social policy and industrial democracy during the period touched on similar problems to be dealt with by the state.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Sadi Irmak, “İşçi ve Devlet [Worker and State],” *Çalışma*, year 2 no. 13 (December, 1946). The difference of the post-war discourse in Turkey from the previous discourses in terms of class relations is that while the former period state discourse refuted any existence of classes in Turkish society, the latter period the official discourse accepted the existence of classes by negating the antagonistic characters of them. For such an argument, see Mesut Gülmez, “Celal Bayar ve İşçi Hakları [Celal Bayar and Workers’ Rights],” *Amme İdaresi Journal* vol. 20 no. 1 (March 1987). For the influence of Western democracy on Turkish scholars and unionists, look at: Orhan Tuna, “İçtimai Siyasette Yeni Temayüller [New Tendencies in Social Politics],” *Çalışma* year 1 no. 2 (November, 1945); Bahir Ersoy, “Türk Sendikacılığının İnkişafına Mani Olan Bazı Sebepler [Some Reasons Which Inhibited the Development of Turkish Trade Unionism],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 7 (1955); Orhan Tuna, “Sendikacılık ve Siyaset [The Trade Unionism and Politics],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 7 (1955); Cahit Talas, *Sendika Hürriyeti [Trade Union Freedom]* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1957).

¹⁶¹ Sadi Irmak, “Dergimiz ve Amacımız [Our Journal and Aim],” *Çalışma* no. 1 (September 20, 1945); Sadi Irmak, “Sosyal Politika ve Çalışma Davalarımız [Social Politics and Our Work Issues],” *Çalışma* year 1 no. 3 (January, 1946); “Çalışma Bakanının İşçilerle Konuşması [The Talk of Labor Minister with Workers],” *Gece Postası*, March 3, 1948.

¹⁶² İ. Hakkı Yeniay, “Çalıştıranlar ve Çalışanlarla Bir Konuşma [A Talk with Employees and Employers],” *Çalışma* year 1 no. 1 (September, 1945).

¹⁶³ “İş Mahkemeleri Kurulmadan İşçi Hakları Korunamaz [The Workers’ Rights Cannot Be Protected In the Absence of Labor Courts],” *Gece Postası*, March 16, 1948; Cahit Talas, “İnsan Hakları Beyannamesi, Sosyal Barış ve Adalet [The Declaration of Human Right, Social Peace and Justice],” *Çalışma*, year 4 no. 27 (April-May-June 1949); “İşçiye Verilecek Grev Hakkı ve Kurulması İstenen İş Borsası [The Right to Strike for Workers and Labor Market Needs to be Established],” *Gece Postası*, June 28, 1950; “İşçilere Ücretli Hafta Tatili ve Bayram Yevmiyesi Ödenmesi Hakkındaki Kanun [The Law on Weekly Rest Day and Religious Feast Fee],” *Gece Postası*, August 10, 1951; “Beş Altı Ay Sonra Yürürlüğe Girecek Hak: Ücretli Tatil [A Right to Come Into Effect in 5-6 Months: Leave of Absence with Payment],” *Gece Postası*, August 12, 1951.

To keep industrial peace, the arguments addressed workers' positions in a democratic society. Above all, the state promised that workers would be a respected group within society. In order to feel this respect, the workers, whether employed in state or private enterprises, should be treated properly. Still, a lot of them argued that an employer, too, must greatly contribute to a peaceful workplace in which workers would feel safe, well-respected and well-treated. To such end, industrial enterprises should be run through rational methods, which again had been devised in developed countries. State officials or scholars assumed that a rationally managed workplace should assign a certain amount of value to its employees, pay a fair amount for wages, provide opportunities to climb the job ladder, listen to the opinion of its employees, consider rules in a reasonable manner, and treat its personnel in a humane manner in order to keep a peaceful workplace and, thus, to maintain productivity.¹⁶⁴ Then, to deserve this elevated position, the workers would be able to see themselves as an indispensable part of society and work more efficiently on the shop floor. Only such a rationale would make social and industrial peace possible.¹⁶⁵ In turn, those who argued for industrial democracy assigned some responsibilities to workers in the development of the national economy and the assurance of industrial peace. Articles in newspapers or journals, speeches in the meetings of political parties or congresses, and the leaflets and brochures of various parties, called on laborers to work responsibly and resolutely in return for provisions and rights supplied by the state and employers.¹⁶⁶ On this topic, several authors wrote on the importance of the education of workers to increase productivity and industrial democracy.¹⁶⁷ By working diligently and cooperating with employers, workers were assumed to fulfill their responsibilities and contribute to the development of a democratic and modern society.

¹⁶⁴ Ali Sıtkı Gökalg, "İş Hayatında Beşeri Münasebetler [Social Relations in Work Life]," *Çalışma Vekaleti*, vol.II no: 4-5 (January-February-March, April-May-June 1953).

¹⁶⁵ Cahit Talas, "Verimliliğin Arttırılmasında Psikolojik ve Manevi Amiller [The Psychological and Moral Factors in Increasing Productivity]," *Çalışma Vekaleti Journal*, vol. 1 no.1 (March-April-May 1953); Orhan Tuna, "Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi [The Development of Trade Unionism in Our Country and the Issue of Being Unionized for Our Workers]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 6 (1954): 61-68.

¹⁶⁶ İ. Hakkı Yeniay, "Çalıştıranlar ve Çalışanlarla Bir Konuşma"; Sadi Urmak, "Çalışma İhtiyacımız [Our Need to Work]," *Çalışma* year 1 no. 10 (September, 1946).

¹⁶⁷ Ekmel Zadi, "İşçi ve Sendikacıların Eğitimi [The Education of Workers and Unionists]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 7 (1955).

The party in opposition in the second half of the 1940s, the Democrat Party, shared this outlook with the regime. A founder of the DP and the future president of the country between 1950 and 1960, Celal Bayar, spoke in 1949 in a meeting in Zonguldak, saying that workers must have their rights recognized in a democratic society in which labor and capital embrace each other in solidarity.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, a decrease in the cost of living and recognition of the right to strike without destroying social order and economic harmony were among the items of the new government program, which was declared in May 29, 1950.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, after winning the election in 1950, the Democrat Party continued to share this perspective on industrial democracy and citizenship with the CHP. In fact, Adnan Menderes made a press statement in May 1950 and said that the relations between employers and employees would be regulated in a peaceful manner in terms of social justice. The living conditions of employees, he added, would be improved in parallel with the economic capabilities of the country.¹⁷⁰ Despite all those common points, the public debate was not free from controversy; the debates around the right to strike created a significant division between those who participated in the public discussions.

The right to strike was prohibited by the 1936 Labor Law in Turkey. Although the 1939 Associations Law was amended in 1946, the right to found unions was recognized and the Trade Union Law was ratified in 1947, those decisions did not include the right to strike and make collective agreements. And although the Democrat Party did not show even the slightest disagreement with the Republican People Party about the general framework of industrial democracy and industrial citizenship, either when in opposition or in power, it was a vocal proponent of the right to strike during its opposition years.¹⁷¹ The party in power, the

¹⁶⁸ Mesut Gülmez, “Celal Bayar ve İşçi Hakları.”

¹⁶⁹ Cem Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve İdeolojisi*.

¹⁷⁰ “İşçilere Tanınacak Grev Hakkı, İş Kanunun Bugünkü Durumu [The Strike Rights for Workers and The Current Condition of Labor Law],” *Gece Postası*, May 21, 1950. Also look at; Esin Pars, *Türkiye’de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, pp. 146-147; Mesut Gülmez, “Celal Bayar ve İşçi Hakları.”

¹⁷¹ M. Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketi [The Workers’ Movement in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Sosyalist Yayınlar, 1993), 238-239; Ahmet Makal, *Ameleden İşçiye: Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Emek Tarihi Çalışmaları, [From Amele to Worker: The Labor History Studies on Early Republican Period]* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), 231. Also look at; Esin Pars, *Türkiye’de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 134-135; Mesut Gülmez, “Celal Bayar ve İşçi Hakları”; Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*; Fatih Güngör, “1946-1960 Döneminde Türkiye’de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Demokrasi”; Ahmet Makal,

CHP, and the authors, columnists and unionists who supported the CHP line, all supported the argument that the right to strike was not necessary for Turkish working class, since the Turkish state was already established and existed as a state of a unified populous, rather than that of particular classes. The state, they argued, already paid attention to the interests of all its citizens, regardless of their class.

In 1950, the Republican Ministry of Labor published a book, called *Strike Incidents and Our Country*, which was a compilation of several articles and news reports about how strikes harmed the national economy, how they accounted for social disturbances and unrest, and how the communists exploited such incidents in other parts of the world. As industrial democracy progressed all over the world, such a right became unnecessary. In fact, developed countries gradually began to limit this right, which was seen as harmful to economies, to social harmony, and to workers themselves. Furthermore, Turkish industry was still in a state of infancy; therefore, any incident to inhibit its growth would be destructive.¹⁷² In the same manner, the Labor Minister, Tahsin Bekir Balta, had claimed in 1948 that the compulsory arbitration mechanism was in place to end work disputes in Turkey; as a result, the right to strike was not necessary.¹⁷³ The uncompromising attitude of the CHP regarding strikes actually represented the limits of its tolerance in the expansion of industrial democracy. The DP would prove to be not much different than its rivals in the long run by not legislating this right during its government period between May 1950 and May 1960. However, the very existence of such a public debate created an opportunity for workers to introduce their current problems, plus their social position issues and demands, into the public agenda in the late 1940s.

Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri [Industrial Relations During The Mult-Party Period in Turkey], (Ankara: İmge, 2002).

¹⁷² *Grev Olayları ve Türkiyemiz [Strike Incidents And Our Country]* (Ankara: The Ministry of Labor, 1950). Also look at; Fatih Güngör, “1946-1960 Döneminde Türkiye’de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Demokrasi”; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri*.

¹⁷³ “İşçi Dertleri ve Çalışma Bakanının İncelemeleri [Workers’ Troubles and Investigation of the Labor Minister]” *Gece Postası*, March 2, 1948. For the columnists, professors and unionists who followed RP’s line on strike issue, see: M. Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketi*, 246-247; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye’de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler [Strike Right and Strikes in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1976), 90 and 119.

The DP's defence of the right to strike was the most significant principle, which distinguished it from the CHP in terms of industrial relations during the late 1940s. To understand the DP's firm defence of the right to strike it is necessary to look at the party's ideological position, however pragmatic it was, versus that of the CHP. Since its foundation, the DP's policies and criticism towards the CHP took shape around its discourse of populism. That is to say, the main criticisms of the DP towards the party in power were the high cost of living, anti-democratic laws and oppressive mechanisms of state control of the masses. In brief, the ranking officers of the DP claimed that although the main founding principle of the Republic had been to give sovereignty to the people, the CHP neglected the lower classes, both in terms of providing a sustainable life to them and in having them participate in the political decision-making processes. A future DP government, they assumed, would be the voice of demands of the workers and peasants. Indeed, the political motto of the party during the election period was 'Enough is Enough! The Nation Speaks!' Most Turkish historians analyzed the ending of the single party regime as the beginning of a period in which larger groups of people in Turkey demanded to become a social actor in their own lives, and in a political scene. The foundation of the Democrat Party provided such social segments with the hope of putting their fates into their own hands.¹⁷⁴ Seeing hope, larger sections of society increasingly participated in the public debate concerning their social, economic or political demands after 1945.

In fact, the majority of the Turkish people were introduced to issues on the national scene through this party, or through its populist discourse. For example, the DP administrators in the different regions of Turkey visited industrial enterprises and talked with workers about their problems and complaints.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the DP spokesman declared that unions would act independently from any political pressure and they would be devoted the right to strike under their rule. Celal Bayar defined strikes as the most essential right of workers in a branch

¹⁷⁴ Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetten Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*, 119.

¹⁷⁵ Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*; Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye'de İşçiler ve Sendikalar: Tarihten Sayfalar [Workers and Unions in Turkey: Pages from History]*, (Ankara: Türkiye Yol-İş Sendikası, 2000), 40-44; Taner Timur, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Geçiş*, 40 and 44.

congress of the party.¹⁷⁶ Therefore, the party became successful in garnering the support of impoverished social groups in Turkey. The existing literature on the DP agrees that peasants in rural areas and workers in cities constituted the social base of this party. Most workers in İstanbul voted for the DP in the 1946 election because the DP defended the right to strike.¹⁷⁷ The DP and its largely unfulfilled promises transformed the climate of the war years, which had been mainly characterized by widespread despair due to the large scale poverty, into flourishing hopes for a brighter future.

The broad support of this party among İstanbul workers did not wane before, during, or after the 1950 elections. In the early days after the DP's election victory, the news about enacting the right to strike made the headlines of all the newspapers, and the statement of the DP officers after the elections stirred up the hopes of workers. In the opening speech of Grand National Assembly in November 1950, Celal Bayar re-emphasized the promise that the new government would recognize the right to strike soon enough.¹⁷⁸ The right to strike took centre place in the programme of the first DP government in 1950.¹⁷⁹ But several succeeding DP governments did not recognize this right at all and, later on, followed the CHP's old argument that this right had become unnecessary since the government had already taken precautions to improve workers' lives. However, the unions, scholars and columnists who had defended those rights in the late 40s, were determined to pursue their demands, mainly the strike right,

¹⁷⁶ M. Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi*, 211.

¹⁷⁷ Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*. Also look at; Sedat Ağralı, *Günümüze Kadar Belgelerle Türk Sendikacılığı*. Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye'de İşçiler ve Sendikalar: Tarihten Sayfalar*, 35; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1946-1963*, 55; Taner Timur, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Geçiş*, 45-46; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetten Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*, 212; Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi*, 150. According to Cem Eroğul, some peasants who lived in the villages around Bursa began to share the empty lands amongst themselves after the victory of DP in the 1950 election and when they were asked what to do they replied that there was no democracy in the country anymore. Cem Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve İdeolojisi*, 89.

¹⁷⁸ Mesut Gülmez, "Celal Bayar ve İşçi Hakları." Also look at; Fatih Güngör, "1946-1960 Döneminde Türkiye'de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Demokrasi," 140-141.

¹⁷⁹ "İş Kanunu Tamamen Tadil Olunmalıdır [The Labor Law Should Be Completely Revised]," *Gece Postası*, May 30, 1950. Also look at; "İşçilere Tanınacak Grev Hakkı, İş Kanununun Bugünkü Durumu [The Right to Strike for Workers and the Present Situation of the Labor Law]," *Gece Postası*, May 20, 1950; "Türkiye İşçi Haklarını Koruma Cemiyeti Genel Sekreteriyle Greve Dair Etraflı Bir Konuşma [A Comprehensive Talk with the General Secreter of Turkish Association to Protect Workers' Rights About Strike]," *Gece Postası*, June 27, 1950.

in the DP period.¹⁸⁰ The trade unions in İstanbul clamoured for the strike law and exerted pressure on the government to keep its promise. They claimed this right in statements to newspapers, their meetings, and conferences or congresses.¹⁸¹ Consequently, such actors increasingly withdrew their support from the DP party and although they did not openly challenge this party in the decade, they accused the party of founding a dictatorship in Turkey after the government dissolution by the military intervention on May 27, 1960. In spite of this, several other laws were introduced and institutions were established, such as the 1947 Labor Law, the 1945 Law of Work Accidents, Occupational Diseases and Maternity Security, and the Workers Security Organization founded in 1946, through which workers could find their voices and feel themselves to be important and respected citizens in their work and city life.

The important question here is how all those promises, of both the CHP and DP would be kept. What were the instruments of creating a society in which workers would see themselves as a respected social group, and what instruments created a workplace in which workers would labor in a peaceful and efficient manner? Because metal workers of the period

¹⁸⁰ “Madeni Eşya İşçileri Kongresinin Kararı [The Decision of Congress of Metalhardware Workers],” *Gece Postası*, November 16, 1954; Orhan Tuna, “Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi”; Bahir Ersoy, “Türk Sendikacılığının İnkişafına Mani Olan Bazı Sebepler.” In fact, the right to sign collective agreements took shape in the Labor Law of 1947. What scholars and unionists demanded was to revise this item in the law to make it obligatory for both employers and employees. Cahit Talas, “Memleketimizde Kollektif İş Mukaveleleri Sisteminin Teessüs Edememesinin Sepepleri [The Reasons for the Inability to Construct a Collective Agreement System in Our Country],” *Çalışma Vekaleti Journal* vol. 1 no. 3 (September-October-November-December 1953). Also look at; “Türkiye’de ve Avrupa’da İşçi Ücretleri Durumu [The Wage Conditions in Turkey and Europe],” *Gece Postası*, September 12, 1954; Cahit Talas, *Sendika Hürriyeti*.

¹⁸¹ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Sendikacılık ve Siyaset [Trade Unionism and Politics]* (İstanbul: Birikim, 1979), 360-366; Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye’de İşçiler ve Sendikalar*, 42-85; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye’de Sendikacılık*, 223-224. According to Irvan Brown, the workers in the private sector were firm defenders of the right to strike: Kenan Öztürk, *Amerikan Sendikacılığı ve Türkiye: İlk İlişkiler-AFL-CIO’nun Avrupa Temsilcisi Irving Brown ile Söyleşi [The American Unionism and Turkey: The First Relations-Interview with The European Representative of AFL-CIO, Irving Brown]* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2004), 45. Also look at; “İşçiler Grev İçin Dün Bir Toplantı Yaptılar [The Workers Gathered a Meeting For Strike Yesterday],” *Son Saat*, February 21, 1955; *İşverenlerde Zihniyet Değişikliği Bekleniyor [Change of Mind Is Expected from Employers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 37 Envelope 1792; “Yeni Yıla Gिरerken Temenni ve Vaadleri Tekrar Hatırladık [We Remembered the Promises and Yearnings on the Edge of the New Year],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956); “Grev Hakkı İsteriz [We Want the Right to Strike],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 14 (6 July 1957), 1; *Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu, 7 Ekim 1956-15 Aralık 1957 [The Annual Report of Mine, Metal Hardware and Machine Workers’ Union in Turkey]*; M. Sumner Rosen, “Turkey,” 292.

exploited those newly created institutional and political tools, which would recognize the rights and importance of workers within the industry and society, at least in discourse, this is an important question to be answered.

IV. Creating Industrial Democracy: Laws, Institutions and Unions

Both the CHP and succeeding DP governments attempted to establish an industrial regime through institutions, laws and trade unions. Nevertheless, the boundaries of such system were very restricted for both governments, which denied the antagonistic characteristics of classes in capitalism and assumed the solidaristic and assiduous work of classes would improve Turkish society and the economy. The CHP and DP governments, therefore, did not see the need to construct mechanisms through which different classes collectively and contentiously endeavour to solve labor disputes; rather, they desired individual solutions for such problems. They allowed collective mechanisms to exist, but only to a limited extent. Nevertheless, this created the legal mechanisms on which workers both might stand against, or cooperate with, employers. Through these limited legal mechanisms, workers could, and would indeed, realize and define their common interests as a distinctive social group having different interests. In other words, the legal mechanism created by the Turkish state ironically factored into the workers' realization of shared interests.

In fact, the state's attempts to create an industrial mechanism to solve labor disputes had begun even before the war. The Labor Law introduced in 1936 was an important legislation that also influenced similar post-war attempts at regulation. The Law prohibited strikes and lockouts, which, it assumed, would function against the interests of the weaker sector, namely industrial workers. Instead, it envisaged an arbitration mechanism to solve labor disputes.¹⁸² In 1938, the CHP government passed a regulation called The Conciliation and Arbitration Regulation of Labor Disputes, a statute which defined the mechanism by

¹⁸² Ferit H. Saymen, *İş İhtilafları ve Hal Yolları [Work Disputes and Methods to Handle Them]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat ve İktisaiyat Enstitüsü, 1949); İlhami Coşkundeniz, "Toplulukla İş İhtilafları, Hazırlanması ve Yürütülmesi Meseleleri [The Collective Labor Disputes, The Issues of Preparation and Execution]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 7 (1955): 61-83.

which workers' representatives would deal with labor disputes in workplaces. According to this law, representatives who were responsible for maintaining peace would act as conciliators for both sides. In case of any failure to conciliate the dispute, the workers would appeal individually to the state or collectively through their representatives. It was assumed that the provincial arbitration board and then the superior arbitration board, on which workers and employers would be represented by one member each, would discuss the disputes.¹⁸³

But this mechanism did not function effectively before and during the war years. First of all, the workers were afraid to utilize it since they had to write their names openly during the election of workers' representatives. They worried about a backlash if they voted for a representative whom employer/managers were not fond of, plus they were under the threat of being punished by several means. Secondly, the regulation did not recognize any protection from dismissal for the representatives, who were sometimes seen as disobedient or troublemakers by employers. As a result, workers before and during the war years rarely resorted to this mechanism. For example, between the years of 1941-1946, only seven cases were brought to the arbitration courts.¹⁸⁴ Still, the arbitration law did actually create a workers' mechanism through which workers had the chance of declaring their demands and aspirations on the shop floor. In summary, the state constructed a corporatist mechanism that included the workers and gave them more or less a chance to be an actor in the progress of work relations before the war.

From the beginning of the 1950s, the mechanism began to function more effectively and there were several reasons for this. First of all, the DP government revised the existing Conciliation and Arbitration Regulation of Labor Disputes in 1951. In the new regulation, the important point was that unions' rights to be involved in labor disputes were clearly defined and the legal boundaries of collective actions were somewhat extended by the new regulation. The inclusion of unions in the mechanism can account for the rise of the number of labor

¹⁸³ *İş İhtilaflarını Uzlaştırma ve Tahkim Nizamnamesi [The Conciliation and Arbitration Regulation of Labor Disputes]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 26 Envelope 1392.

¹⁸⁴ İlhami Coşkundeniz, "Toplulukla İş İhtilafları, Hazırlanması ve Yürütülmesi Meseleleri"; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Tarihi [History of Trade Unionism in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2004), 101.

disputes brought to the arbitration mechanism since unions, and union representatives who undertook the functions of workers' representatives now had more knowledge about legal frameworks and opportunities. Consequently, the arbitration mechanism dealt with 103 cases in 1953, alone. In the 1950s, the Regional Work Office of İstanbul estimated that 30 000 workers were affected by the outcomes of labor disputes in 1953.¹⁸⁵ The workers applied this mechanism mainly in order to increase their wages. Despite these changes, the representatives were still under the threat of being fired due to the absence of any protective legal measures for them.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, this constituted one of the most important aspects of the workers' grievances and was a key item in legal conflicts.

For the sake of industrial democracy, the labor courts were seen as another mechanism to create industrial peace and social peace.¹⁸⁷ The labor courts were founded during the last period of the CHP government in 1950, but actually became functional during the DP government. Both individual workers and unions were given the right to apply to the courts, and both the workers' and employers' representatives would become the members of the courts.¹⁸⁸ The labor courts considered the disagreements between individual employers and employees in terms of contracts between employer and employee, conflicts that were defined in the Labor Law, or disagreements between the Worker's Security Organization and insured workers. In the end, those turned out to be important mechanisms for workers to grapple with their problems on the shop floor. For example, in the first ten months of 1953, 1 061 cases in total and in the last four months of 1955, 596 cases were considered by those courts.¹⁸⁹

Another important step in creating an industrial democracy was the establishment of the Ministry of Labor in 1946, with the expectation of protecting workers, improving their

¹⁸⁵ İlhami Coşkundeniz, "Toplulukla İş İhtilafları, Hazırlanması ve Yürütülmesi Meseleleri."

¹⁸⁶ Cahit Talas, "Mümessil İşçilerin Himayesi [The Protection of Workers' Representatives]," *Çalışma Vekaleti Journal*, vol. 1 no.1 (March-April-May 1953).

¹⁸⁷ Safa Ş. Erkün, "İş Mahkemeleri Kurulurken Bazı Düşünceler [Some Considerations on the Establishment of Labor Courts]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 2 (1949): 34-48.

¹⁸⁸ "İş Mahkemeleri Öbür Gün Faaliyete Geçiyor [The Labor Courts Are Going To Be Active in the Following Days]," *Gece Postası*, August 2, 1950; "Asgari Ücret Tesbiti ve İş Mahkemeleri [Determining The Minimum Wages And The Labor Courts]," *Gece Postası*, August 31, 1950.

¹⁸⁹ Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1946-1963*, 351-356.

living conditions and health, increasing productivity and regulating work relations that fell under the scope of social justice.¹⁹⁰ Inspired by the British case, the Ministry opted for a tripartite structure composed of state officials, workers and employers, to prevent possible class struggles and to solve work problems under state supervision.¹⁹¹ From this day forward, the Ministry would regulate all matters regarding work life and the Ministry invited workers to air their grievances to the related branch of itself.¹⁹² The scholars of the period supported this corporatist structure from the beginning of its foundation. They advised unions to act in cooperation with the Ministry to get workers' rights, or columnists called openly for the Ministry to deal with labor problems.¹⁹³ Conversely, the Labor Ministers met with unions to listen their complaints and problems.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, workers individually sent their petitions about their problems: in 1953 alone, more than 9 000 petitions were sent to the Ministry and the Ministry resolved most of them on behalf of the workers.¹⁹⁵ The Employment Agency under the Ministry of Labor, founded in 1946 to regulate the labor market and to serve for example to unemployed people to find a work and employers to find workers,¹⁹⁶ and the Social Security Organization, founded in 1945 to compensate laboring class in case of the social, physical, economic and occupational hazards during the work,¹⁹⁷ were other important institutions in terms of the meetings they held in which workers and unions had the right to participate and declare their opinions.¹⁹⁸ Another government effort was to organize Work

¹⁹⁰ Sadi Irmak, "Dergimiz ve Amacımız." Also look at; Osman Şevki Uludağ, "İş ve İşçi."

¹⁹¹ Sadi Irmak, "Memleketimizin Çalışma Meseleleri [The Work Problems of Our Country]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 8 (1956): 43-45.

¹⁹² İ. Hakkı Yeniay, "Çalıştırılanlar ve Çalışanlarla İlgili Bir Konuşma."

¹⁹³ "Ansızın İşsiz Bırakılan ve Hakları Ödenmeyen 50 Kişi Zor Durumda," *Gece Postası*, April 17, 1948; Orhan Tuna, "Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi."

¹⁹⁴ "İşçi Dertleri ve Çalışma Bakanının İncelemeleri [The Workers' Problems and Inspection of the Labor Minister]," *Gece Postası*, March 2, 1948; "Çalışma Bakanının İşçilere Konuşması [The Labor Minister Talks with Workers]," *Gece Postası*, March 3, 1948.

¹⁹⁵ Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1946-1963*, 355.

¹⁹⁶ Makal claims that the institution found jobs for 20 912 people in 1946 and this figure has increased to 574 170 in 1960: Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1946-1963*, 214.

¹⁹⁷ Makal asserts that while 382 024 workers out of 427 364 workers who covered by the Labor Law were insured by this institution in 1951, this figures increased to 710 820 out of 975 570 in total in 1963. Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1946-1963*, 395.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 207-216. Also look at: "9 Kişilik Bir İşçi Heyeti İstanbul İşçilerinin Görüşlerini Belirtmek İçin Ankaraya Gidiyor [A Workers' Committee of 9 Persons Is Going to Ankara to Declare the Opinions of

Assemblies in which the state, and employers' and employees' representatives would gather and discuss the important matters of industrial life and relations, with the goal of creating an industrial democracy. To that end, the Assembly would give advice to the Ministry of Labor about employer-employee relations. Work Assemblies were one of the key ways to include workers as a partner in industrial life. In the First Work Assembly in 1947, the representatives discussed several issues regarding industrial life. Improving workers' wages, establishing labor courts, enacting the weekly rest day, providing housing near to workplaces, making the provision of food on the shop floor obligatory, and establishing close relations with unions of both managers and employees were all items introduced to in a report of the First Work Congress which the CHP government organized in 1947.¹⁹⁹ The Second Assembly was organized in 1954.²⁰⁰ Although we do not know whether those assemblies reached their goals in the 1940s and 1950s, it is obvious that this mechanism, through which workers tried to impose their views on state officers and employers, can be counted as a significant opportunity for workers to voice their troubles and demands. Both the CHP and DP governments also passed several laws regarding social policy, such as The Law of Work Accidents, Work Diseases and Maternity Insurance in 1945, the Law of Weekly Day Rest, Payment on National Rest Days, The Law of Severance Pay in 1952, and The Law of Lunch Break in 1954.²⁰¹ These laws constituted a firm legal ground on which workers could make their demands. However, there is no doubt that the most significant post-war mechanism for workers was the trade union.

İstanbul Workers],” *Gece Postası* June 10, 1950; “İşçi Sigortaları Kurumunun İki Yeni Tesisi ve Faaliyetler (Two New Facilities of the Social Security Organization and Their Activities),” *Gece Postası*, June 11, 1951; “Sigorta Genel Kurulunca Tesbit Edilen Mühim Dilekler Nelerdir (What are the Significant Demands Inspected by the General Assembly of the Security Organization),” *Gece Postası*, July 8, 1951; “İşçi Sigortaları Kurumunun Son Bir Yıllık Çalışmaları [Activities of the Social Security Organization in the Last Year],” *Gece Postası*, November 7, 1952.

¹⁹⁹ “Çalışma Meclisi Gündemi [The Agenda of the Work Congress],” *Çalışma*, year 2, no. 17 (April 1947); “Çalışma Meclisi Raporu [The Report of the Work Congress],” *Çalışma* year 2 no. 17 (April 1947).

²⁰⁰ Perihan Sarı, “Çalışma Meclisi [Work Assembly],” in *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı and Tarih Vakfı, 1996).

²⁰¹ İ. Hakkı Yeniay, “Çalıştırılanlar ve Çalışanlarla İlgili Bir Konuşma”; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri*, 72-73.

In the post-war industrial regime, the government defined trade unions as another significant institution to bring about the formation of an industrial democracy and peaceful workplaces. The scholars, authors, unionists and party and state officers of the period hit upon the idea that trade unions were indispensable for creating a social and industrial peace, and to obstruct the destructive class struggles in modern and capitalist societies.²⁰² These associations were also crucial in creating an industrial discipline that would contribute to productivity and educate workers to ensure industrial peace. To this end, unions were also expected to cooperate with employers in the interests of harmony. Scholars and unionists defined unions as shields of the weaker classes; weak in terms of their social and economic standing against the more powerful classes of society.²⁰³ To lend credence to their idea of the importance of unions in a democratic society, they gave the examples of unions from developed capitalist countries, such as those in the United States, by pointing out that foreign unions did not apply revolutionary methods or demand too much share from the national wealth in these countries, and those unions contributed to the overall progress of a democratic society.²⁰⁴ In summary, their foundations were explained on the grounds of bringing peace between the disparate classes.

However, the actual story of the foundations of unions in Turkey demonstrated a deviation from this ideal model. The foundation of trade unions had been banned in 1938 by the proclamation of the Association Law; however, the CHP government, which assumed an important role to trade unions to regulate industrial relations, abolished, de facto, the ban on

²⁰² Sadi Irmak, “Çalışma Bakanı Sadi Irmak’ın Radyodaki Demeci [The Press Statement of Labor Minister, Said Irmak, in Radio],” *Çalışma* year 1 no. 12 (November, 1946); Sadi Irmak, “Çalışma Meclisi Açılış Nutku The Opening Speech of the Work Assembly,” *Çalışma*, year 2, 1947.

²⁰³ Orhan Tuna, “İşçi Sendikalarının Mahiyet ve Vazifeleri [The Importance and Duties of Workers’ Unions],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 3 (1950): 131-141; Ekmel Zadi, “İşçi ve Sendikacıların Eğitimi”; Bahir Ersoy, “İşçi Gözü ile İşçi ve İşveren Münasebetleri,” Ferit H. Saymen, *İş İhtilafları ve Hal Yolları*; Cahit Talas, “İnsan Hakları Beyannamesi, Sosyal Barış ve Adalet”; Orhan Tuna, “Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi.” For the education issue, the scholars displayed the examples of capitalist countries, such as Germany, England or the States in which, they assumed, industrial peace and democracy had reached a mature level. Look at; Raşit Öymen, “Meslek Eğitimi ve Vatandaşlık Terbiyesi [Trade Education and Citizenship Training],” *Çalışma* year 1 no. 3 (January, 1946); Ekmel Zadi, “İşçi ve Sendikacıların Eğitimi.”

²⁰⁴ Esat Tekeli, “Birleşik Amerikan Sendikalizmi [Unionism in the United States],” *Çalışma* year 1 no. 6 (May, 1946); Orhan Tuna, “Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi.”

establishing trade unions by revising the Association Law in 1946. Capitalizing upon this, several unions with direct or indirect ties with socialist parties sprouted up in İstanbul. The literature on 1946 unionism claims that these unions successfully organized a significant portion of İstanbul workers. This independent development backed by socialists was unacceptable for the authorities; thus, the unions founded in 1946 were prohibited in December 1946.²⁰⁵ Then, the CHP attempted to control unionism by enacting the Trade Union Law in 1947. In fact, the reports prepared by the Internal Affairs and Justice Commissions within the National Assembly²⁰⁶ regarding the draft of the law pointed out that the unions founded in 1946 had been controlled by “foreign elements”²⁰⁷ and thus had begun to be characterized by politics; therefore, a trade union law was needed to obstruct such possible and harmful developments. Those preambles would be reiterated by the government representatives who prepared the draft in their Assembly speeches.²⁰⁸ As a result of this law, the unions were prohibited from engaging in any kind of politics and could not act against the “nationalism and national interests” of the country. In order to join with international confederacies, trade unions would be required to get an approval from the Council of Ministers. In addition to not providing the right to strike, this law even laid out several punishments to union leaders or union officers who engaged in strike acts.²⁰⁹ With this law, the CHP aimed to use unions as one of their control mechanisms for industrial life and relations.²¹⁰ To maintain control and penetrate into the unions, the CHP also supplied a significant amount of money to trade unions between 1947 and 1950. Therefore, independent unions leaned towards the line of the DP in the political sphere, and declared their support for

²⁰⁵ Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetten Siyasete Türkiye’de Sendikacılık*, 84-114.

²⁰⁶ The commissions played a significant role in the progress of the Grand National Assembly throughout its history. The commissions were constituted by the certain number of the deputies who were assigned to meet, discuss and write reports on the drafts of the legislation within the commission and present the reports to the Assembly itself.

²⁰⁷ By foreign elements, those who prepared the report mainly referred to the communist elements.

²⁰⁸ Bahir Ersoy, “Türk Sendikacılığının İnkişafına Mani Olan Bazı Sebepler”; Orhan Tuna, “Sendikacılık ve Siyaset.”

²⁰⁹ Makal, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri*, 225-238.

²¹⁰ Fatih Güngör, “1946-1960 Döneminde Türkiye’de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Demokrasi,” 148-154; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri*, 228-229 and 234.

this party in the elections during the late 1940s.²¹¹ Nevertheless, the DP government followed the same line of the CHP government in weakening unions, which acted independently, promoting other unions, which toed the political line of the party in power.²¹² Both parties shared a common goal of preventing the development of independent unionism.

Despite all the restrictions and deficiencies that existed in the law, a significant amount of workers became members of unions in Turkey. According to Makal, the number of organized workers significantly increased starting in the late 1940s. And according to Orhan Tuna, 30 percent of workers who were covered by the Labor Law joined unions. Kemal Sülker claims that 54 499 workers out of 111 197 workers in total were organized in İstanbul by 1954.²¹³ And despite oppression, several unions chose to determine their own way instead of becoming a voice of either the CHP or the DP. In fact, Maden-İş that was founded in 1947 in the metal sector by some former workers in the sector, such as Yusuf Sıdal, Nizamettin Babaoğlu, and Cafer Değirmenci, after the law was enacted. It's true that this union was founded by the workers who were close to the CHP, such as Yusuf Sıdal, and they defined the main interests of the union to be those of defending the country's national interests. The union engaged mainly in political lobbying to defend the rights of its members, and although it did not develop easily in its first years, it became one of the militant supporter of the right to strike (and here it is unfortunate that we do not have evidence to show the union's policy about this issue during the late 1940s), and the figures of its membership would considerably increase.

So, both the CHP and DP governments attempted to create harmony between workers and bosses to bolster the existing order. But the progress of industrial relations, industrial citizenship and factory regimes did not completely coincide with their goals. The discourse, rhetoric, or mottos they used to legitimize industrial democracy, and the

²¹¹ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Sendikacılık ve Siyaset*, 359.

²¹² Sedat Ağralı, *Türk Sendikacılığı*, 48-61; Fatih Güngör, "1946-1960 Döneminde Türkiye'de Sendikacılık Hareketi ve Demokrasi"; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1946-1963*.

²¹³ Orhan Tuna, "Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi"; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Tarihi*, 129; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri*, 276.

instructions they founded to create the mechanisms of peaceful work relations, provided significant political opportunity for workers and their workers' organizations to publically declare and attain their goals. In their fight to use these opportunities created by the state, workers eventually realized their common interests against their bosses and saw the necessity of acting together. The state had promised to meet their demands and hopes through the enactment of laws and state regulations if they were loyal and hardworking citizens. However, workers actually experienced rather a different picture than expected with harder work, poorer working conditions and lower earnings after the war years. They also experienced widespread oppression exerted by bosses/managers when they objected those conditions. Consequently, they tried to convince state officers of their rights in state institutions or in the public sphere, and called for the state to intervene in the unfair situations in social and factory life. Workers also sought ways of cooperating with owners in return for being treated well, having their complaints heard, and providing with them enough money to sustain their lifestyles. When they failed to produce the desired results, workers acted collectively without transgressing the legal framework enacted by the state. In the end, they learned that they had to struggle together in their own organizations for a decent lifestyle and to be a well-respected group in Turkish society.

CHAPTER 3

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: WORKERS' TROUBLES

IN THE CITY AND IN THE WORKPLACE

While the post-war political and industrial regime assumed a democratic society in which the prosperity of worker citizens would flourish with the industrial development of the country, the İstanbul metal workers did not experience a prosperous life in terms of providing for themselves and their families. Both the established workers of İstanbul and newcomers came across widespread poverty in the city. The living and work conditions of the older metal workers who had suffered under the circumstances of war, like other workers in the city, did not considerably improve after the war years. The newcomers who arrived from rural areas looking for a better life and who resided in the outer limits of the city faced the most hardship in simply finding a proper and steady job. Those immigrants who were able to find a relatively permanent job in the sector earned a meagre amount of money to sustain themselves, and they rarely benefited from the opportunities of city life, or they were exposed to difficult and dangerous work conditions. Most significantly, they faced extreme intolerance to any objection. In order to combat those hardships, the more established metal workers launched trade unions to pursue common interests within modern society, defining their solidarity as their most powerful weapon in the struggle to sustain a proper life. Over the years, the new, younger metal workers would join the union and would realize through their common experiences that they had to stand together and take direct action to defend their livelihoods and rights within city and work life. In addition to their unionization experience, their common hardships in city and work life shaped how they perceived state, laws, institutions and bosses/managers as a distinct social group with their own and different interests.

I. Preface: The Migration to İstanbul and the Locations of the Metal Industry

Post-war Turkey witnessed a considerable change in terms of the country's demographic composition: an increasing number of rural people, who constituted the

overwhelming number of population, began to migrate to the cities. The main factor behind the migration was the social polarization between the large landowners, small landowners and landless peasants due to a population growth. This population growth also resulted in the further fragmentation of land holdings as peasant families could no longer retain their properties. As a result, the young male members of families began to migrate to cities. The mechanization of agriculture, albeit less importantly, was another factor dictating migration to cities. These combined forces pushed poor peasants into urban areas in the 1950s. According to surveys, the slow development of industry in Turkey and the scarcity of permanent and high salaried jobs also accounted for the migration to cities after the Second World War. Unfortunately, the migrants could not be easily absorbed by the city economy.²¹⁴ After coming to cities in the hopes of finding a job and sustaining a better lifestyle, poor migrants had to face the difficulty of finding a job immediately after their arrival, just to survive. İstanbul, where it was believed that opportunities were greater, became the focal point of the migration after the war years.

In terms of their original birthplace, migrants displayed considerable variation: while some of them immigrated to Turkey from the former Yugoslavia, the majority of the migrants arrived in İstanbul from different places in Anatolia, especially from places where there were high unemployment rates such as North East, Eastern and Central Anatolia. Whether relocating from abroad or coming from the East of İstanbul, the most important impetus of immigration was an economic one.²¹⁵ A survey conducted by a city planner, Tansı Şenyapılı,

²¹⁴ Richard D. Robinson, "Turkey's Agrarian Revolution and the Problem of Urbanization," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 22 no. 3, Special Issue on Attitude Research in Modernizing Areas (Autumn, 1958): 398-401; Yücel Talip, "Türkiye'de Şehirleşme Hareketleri ve Şehirler [The Urbanization Movements in Turkey and Cities]," *Türk Coğrafya Journal* no. 20, (1960): 29; Ruşen Keleş, *Türkiye'de Şehirleşme Hareketleri [The Urbanization Movements in Turkey]*, Türk İktisadi Gelişmesi Araştırma Projesi, August 1961, 31-69; Nephân Saran, "İstanbul'da Gecekondü Problemi [The Squatter Problem in İstanbul]" in E. Tümerterkin, F. Mansur and P. Benedict [eds.], *Türkiye: Coğrafi ve Sosyal Araştırmalar* (İstanbul: İstanbul University, 1971), 384; Ahmet İçduygu; İbrahim Sirkeci, and İsmail Aydıngün, "Türkiye'de İçgöç ve İçgöçün İşçi Hareketine Etkisi [The Internal Migration in Turkey and the Influences of Internal Migration on Working Class Movement]," in Ahmet İçduygu, İbrahim Sirkeci and İsmail Aydıngün [eds.] *Türkiye'de İçgöç* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998), 207-222; Mübeccel Kıray, *Kentleşme Yazıları [Writings on Urbanization]* (İstanbul: Bağlam, 1998), 100.

²¹⁵ Ahmet İçduygu; İbrahim Sirkeci, and İsmail Aydıngün, "Türkiye'de İçgöç ve İçgöçün İşçi Hareketine Etkisi [The Internal Migration in Turkey and the Influences of Internal Migration on Working Class Movement]," Mübeccel Kıray, *Kentleşme Yazıları*

among inhabitants who were recruited in large numbers into the industry in Kağıthane, a working-class district next to the Golden Horn in İstanbul, in the 1970s indicated that 63 percent of them left their original birthplaces due to problems with basic subsistence.²¹⁶

In terms of geography, nearly 50 percent of all industrial enterprises by 1955 were located in the Marmara Region -Turkey was geographically divided to seven regions - and nearly 65 percent of the plants in the Marmara Region were concentrated in İstanbul. According to Serin, the larger market opportunities, the availability of a work force, and access to, and transportation of, raw materials and electricity were the dominant factors in such a geographic distribution.²¹⁷ Indeed, according to a survey conducted over a total of 1 367 workplaces in 1961, proximity to raw materials, transportation, availability of the cheap land and proximity to the workers' neighbourhoods were the main factors in choosing the location of enterprises. Tansı Şenyapılı indicates that the migration to İstanbul gained momentum after the war years. In 1950, more than 130 000 people migrated to the city. Most of those people settled in squatter areas, which were founded by the long-term, poor residents of İstanbul around their workplaces. For example, the population of Alibeyköy – another working class district near to the Golden Horn in İstanbul - went from 2 150 to 12 809 between 1950 and 1965.²¹⁸ As Tansı Şenyapılı indicates, the regions where the industrial plants were erected were typically surrounded by squatter areas. For example, Silahtarağa (also near to the Golden Horn), Kağıthane or Alibeyköy districts were bursting with industrial plants, as well as squatters' communities in which the workers and their families dwelled. When the industrial plants sprang up in Kağıthane after 1955, Gültepe, a neighbourhood in Kağıthane, came to be an important living place for workers. By 1970, nearly 70 percent of Kağıthane's population were recruited into the industrial sector.²¹⁹ The migrants also lived in Zeytinburnu, Eyüp, Rami, Taşlıtarla and Topçular districts, all of which were located to the

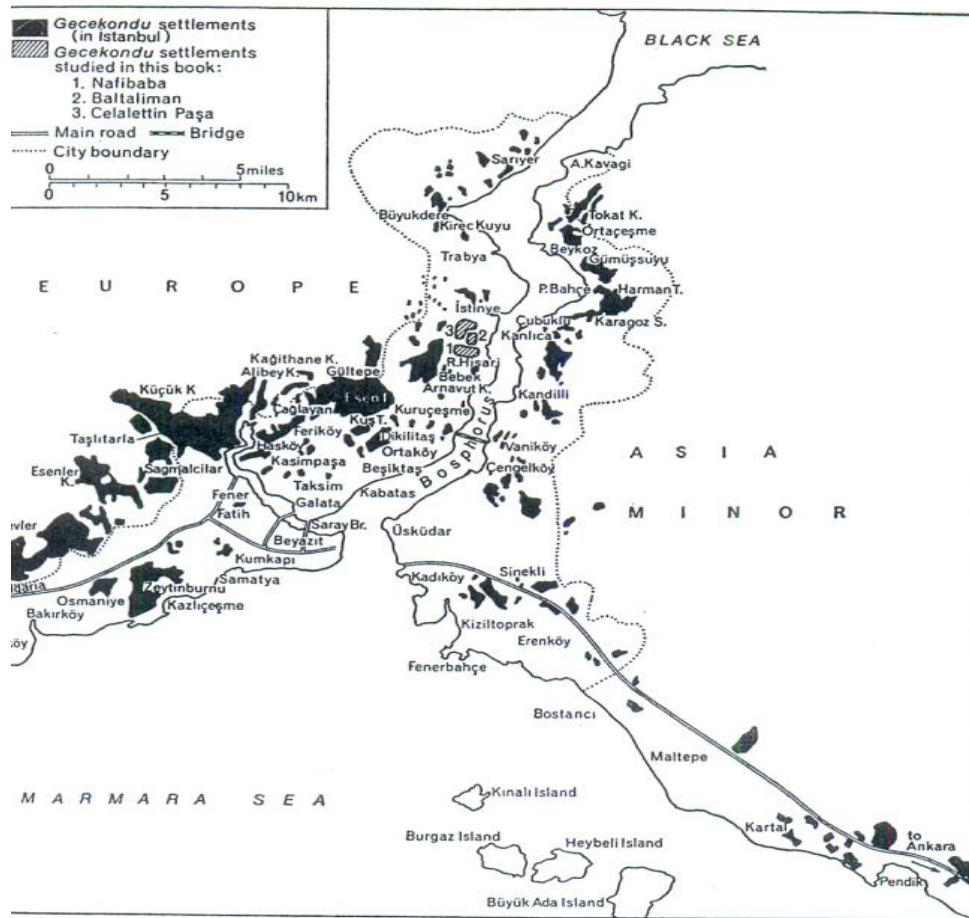
²¹⁶ Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu*, 86.

²¹⁷ Necdet Serin, *Türkiye'nin Sanayileşmesi*, 173-174. Also look at: Erol Tümertekin, *İstanbul Sanayiinde Kuruluş Yeri*, 56.

²¹⁸ Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu [The Problem of Non-Integrated City Population]* (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 1978), 66-69.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 66 and 69-72.

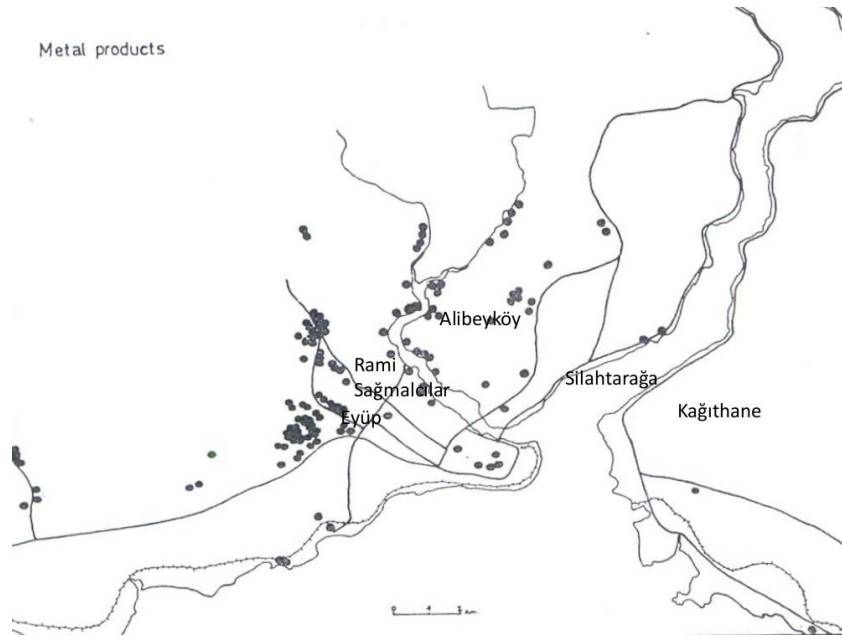
south of the Golden Horn. Similarly, half of the Zeytinburnu population worked in the surrounding factories by 1962.²²⁰ In brief, the development of İstanbul as an industrial city attracted new immigrants who left their villages in Eyüp, Rami, and Topkapı districts on the European side of the city, and Kartal district, on the Anatolian side. Those regions also overlap with the geographical distribution of the metal sector.²²¹



Map 1: Squatter Settlements in İstanbul (Source: Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu*, 67).

²²⁰ Nephân Saran, "İstanbul'da Gecekondu Problemi," 386.

²²¹ It should be stated that the number of immigrants who would, at least potentially, make up the industrial workforce was not very high when compared with the number of the immigrants who came to İstanbul during the succeeding periods. See Ahmet Ali Özeken, "Türkiye Sanayiinde İşçiyi Barındırma Problemi [The Problem of Housing for the Workers in Turkish Industry]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 3 (1950): 103-130.



Map 2: Distribution of the Metal Sector on the European Side, the Golden Horn (Source: Erol Tümertekin, *İstanbul Sanayiinde Kuruluş Yeri*, 85).

The geographical distribution of immigrants displayed some parallels with the geographical distribution of the metal sector. Comparing Map 1, which shows the distribution of the squatter areas in İstanbul in below, with Map 2 and Map 3, which show the geographical distribution of the primary and secondary metal production as stated below, easily shows that Eyüp, Rami, Sağmalcılar, Alibeyköy, Silahtarağa and Kağıthane districts on the European side of the city, and Kartal and Maltepe districts on the Anatolian side, were home both to the squatter regions and metal factories. In fact, for the metal sector, nearness to the workers' neighbourhoods was the first factor for choosing locations. The former human resources manager of the Arçelik Factory and economist, Ege Cansen, stated during our interview that the Eyüp region, including Silahtarağa, Gaziosmanpaşa, Kağıthane, Alibeyköy and Taşlıtarla neighbourhoods, were flush with cheap and unqualified labor.²²² Eyüp was the most crowded district in terms of number of workers in İstanbul.²²³ Indeed, the big metal hardware and metal processing factories, for example, Arçelik, Türk Demir Döküm,²²⁴

²²² Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

²²³ Eyüp Karadayı, *İstanbul'un Sanayi Potansiyeli*.

²²⁴ Both Arçelik and Türk Demir Döküm were established by Vehbi Koç and his friends respectively in 1954 and 1958. In their first years, while the office furnaces from the iron and steel were produced in

Rabak,²²⁵ Şakir Zümre,²²⁶ etc., were all located in Eyüp district as it is also obvious from Map 3.²²⁷

In addition to cheap labor, laws and regulations have a significant role in the locations of industrial plants. In Turkey, despite the Act for the Preservation of Health in 1930, many metal hardware and processing plants had remained within the city due to the rapid development of İstanbul at that time. But the Act had prevented the founding of the larger metal plants within the city. Afterwards, the Nazım Plan (Regulatory Plan) of 1937 selected the Golden Horn as well as the northern part of the city as locations of industry, but it can't be said that the historical development of industry followed the framework of that plan. Rather, industry seems to have expanded into the city in a random manner. The plants developed in any part of the city as were seen suitable by the owner.

Yet, the location of the metal factories showed a certain pattern, as the small workshops where the secondary metal production was made were concentrated in Rami and Topkapı and the bigger ones were located at the Golden Horn. The Golden Horn, which is a unique natural urban port and the primary inlet of the Bosphorus in Istanbul, was filled with industrial plants from the beginning of the industrialization period in Turkey. The port was a perfect choice for the water transport of finished goods since it is close to the city center, and the Golden Horn was also a good place in terms of marketing. Moreover, the presence of the Silahtarağa Power Station, established in 1914 to provide electricity to the city, enabled the plants to enjoy easy access to this energy source.²²⁸ In this regard, the early bigger metal

Arçelik, the raw iron was cast, and cast iron radiators and enamel pots and pans were produced in Türk Demir Döküm. The production scale would considerably vary in the next decade in both enterprises.

²²⁵ Rabak was founded in 1957 in Kağıthane by Fuad Bezmen who had also invested in the textile sector after the foundation of the Republic. Copper was processed in this factory and electrolyte copper, composite aluminium stranded conductor, aluminium casting and steel wires were also produced in this enterprise.

²²⁶ Being a close friend to the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Şakir Zümre founded a factory in 1925 with his name to produce armament and sell his products to the Turkish army. Since the United States supplied armament to Turkey after the Second World War, the factory began to produce stove with 1947.

²²⁷ Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, p. 367; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*.

²²⁸ Erol Tümerterkin, *İstanbul Sanayiinde Kuruluş Yeri*; Asu Aksoy, and others. *Silahtarağa Elektrik Santrali'nin Hikayesi [The Story of Silahtarağa Power Station]*, (İstanbul: n.p., 2007).

plants were concentrated around Golden Horn, chiefly to the north of Atatürk Bridge²²⁹ and continuing up to the Kağıthane and Alibeyköy streams as shown in the Map 2.²³⁰ Towards the 1960s, the major metal enterprises continued to be established in Topkapı, Sağmalcılar, and Rami where cheap labor was available.²³¹

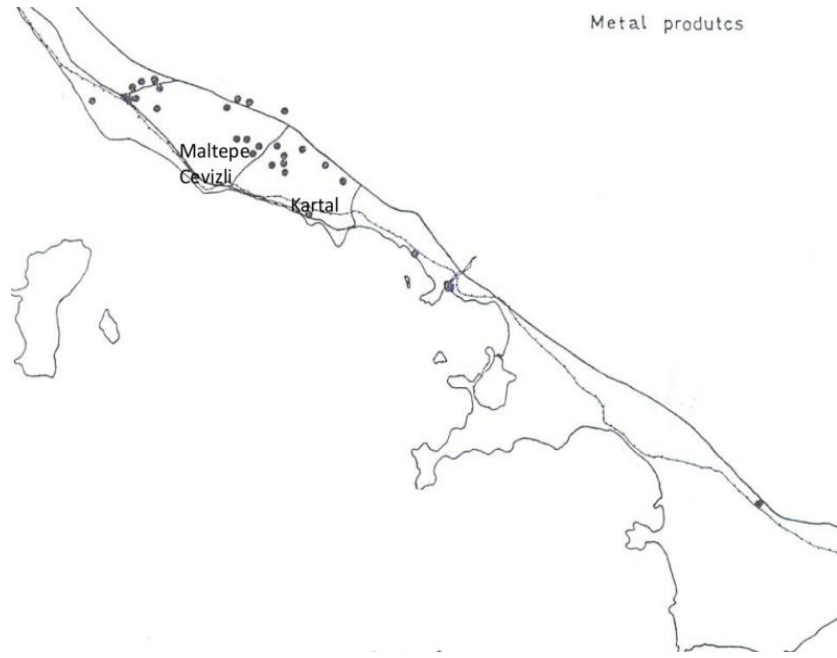
Throughout the late 1950s, however, there was a shift in terms of the geographical distribution of the sector. This was because conventional areas were already full of industrial plants in the city. Accordingly, any new metal enterprises had to be launched on the Anatolian side of İstanbul, mainly in the Kartal district, which is shown in Map 3 below. Tümerterkin claims that another important reason for the geographical shift of the metal industry was the official Industrial Plan of 1955, according to which, workplaces engaged in the metal sector were considered to be hazardous to the population's general health. Consequently, new enterprises began to be launched in the outer city regions towards the end of the 1950s. Nevertheless, some regions such as Kağıthane and Alibeyköy, which was considered the outer city, continued to be the key locations of the metal hardware, electrical household appliances and metal processing.²³² By 1970, 60 percent of the metal industry was still located in the European side including Eyüp, Rami, Ayvansaray and Topçular districts. Therefore, newcomers mainly settled in such places where these industrial zones emerged and developed into the city. The interrelated process of the geographical distribution of the industry and that of the squatter settlements factored into the distribution of new migrants.

²²⁹ The older name of the Atatürk Bridge was the Unkapanı Bridge which had been established to link the historical peninsula to the European side of the city. When the bridge was torn down by a storm in 1936, the Atatürk Bridge was built in the same year.

²³⁰ "Eyüplülerin Terkos Suyuna İhtiyacı Var [The People of Eyüp Needs Fresh Water]," *Gece Postası*, November 19, 1952.

²³¹ Faruk Özbakan, *Faruk İstanbul Madeni Eşya Sanayii [İstanbul Metal Hardware Industry]* Unpublished Graduation Thesis, İstanbul University, The Institute of Geography, 1970.

²³² Erol Tümerterkin, *İstanbul Sanayiinde Kuruluş Yeri*, pp. 80-87.



Map 3: Distribution of the Metal Sector on the Anatolian Side (Source: Erol Tmertekin, *İstanbul Sanayiinde Kuruluř Yeri*, 86).

The young male peasants who were newly arrived to İstanbul usually resided with their relatives at first. After finding a job and getting married, they mostly continued to live within the same district. Although we lack documents which would illuminate the exact development of neighbourhoods that influenced so much of a workers' experiences in city life, and more importantly, culminated in the possible fragmentation between communities, we can argue that the development of communities, the worker's shared experiences in the community life, their socialization patterns factored in the class formation. In the same vein, we do not have any information on how the growth patterns of communities were reflected in daily shop floor relations between workers, but the neighbourhood's support was an important factor of the worker's collective actions. We can assume that the common problems of workers in terms of the city life in İstanbul, regardless of which groups they belonged, must have factored in the perception of their common interests.

II. The Post-War Experiences of the Metal Workers in İstanbul

The immigrants who increasingly came to İstanbul after the Second World War in order to find a job and alleviate the misery of rural life had to tackle some common problems

that mostly arose from their condition of poverty within the city. It is true that most of them strived to deal with those problems through the help of the communities within which they were socialized through inter-community marriages, or established socialization places such as coffee houses; at the same time, these community ties helped newcomers to find jobs. Those who were recruited into an industrial job also worked on those problems by joining together in their workplaces. Furthermore, most industrial plants were an integral part of the community that surrounded them; as a result, any problem the workers faced within the workplaces was also the problem for the community. In fact, community support was one of the important aspects of the collective struggles in the metal sector, as would be seen in the following decade, before all the shanty towns that surrounded the factories were occupied by the workers' families and the workers had taken over the responsibility of providing for them: the concern of providing for the family was one of the motivating factors behind unionization. In this regard, work and community life, and work and community problems, constituted two sides of the same coin.

The newcomers to İstanbul also constituted the bulk of the work force required for the metal plants. A union seminar book shows that significant portion of the metal workers arrived in the city after 1945 while they were around late teens and/or early twenties.²³³ The metal workers were largely composed of young, single, male migrants. In fact, Karpat mentioned that those who had previously migrated to make some money, and then planned to return their villages in the 1950s, were often young, single male migrants who ended up seeking permanent jobs to settle in big cities.²³⁴ The workers that I conducted interviews with in this study confirm those findings. For example, an ex-Demir Döküm worker named Mustafa Türker claimed that since there was no work opportunity in his home town, he came to work instead in İstanbul in 1959, when he was an adult.²³⁵ Similarly, another ex-Demir Döküm worker, Celal Akıl, came to İstanbul, when he was 12 to escape the miserable

²³³ 1970 Seminar Kayıt Defteri [*The Seminar Book of Record*], TÜSTAV Maden-İş Archive, Envelope 9.

²³⁴ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*, 55.

²³⁵ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

conditions of his original birthplace. Before being recruited into a big metal plant, he had worked as a gardener in Alibeyköy.²³⁶ The young prospective workers conjured images of a settled life in İstanbul, and they longed to be respected citizens of the larger city community. According to scholars who conducted surveys in the many squatter settlements of İstanbul during the 1960s and 1970s, from the perspective of modernization, the people of these regions hoped to be a part of city life; in other words, they aimed to sustain their lives in a way similar to that of the established city dwellers. Most immigrants came to İstanbul to settle in the city and maintain a good lifestyle rather than simply accumulating sufficient funds to provide for their families back in their villages, or stay engaged in other activities in rural areas.²³⁷ Many of the population of Zeytinburnu stated as a response to a survey question in 1961 that they were not considering returning to their original birthplaces since they had nothing there to help them maintain a good life.²³⁸ They ultimately became permanent laborers within the industrial complex of the post-war period.

In fact, Kemal Karpat observed during his study that the residents of the squatter areas were highly optimistic people who aspired to reach a higher standard of living in İstanbul.²³⁹ They further dreamed of climbing the ladders of social hierarchy if possible. For example, they wanted to have their own small shops.²⁴⁰ In fact, nearly half of the population in Gültepe said that they hoped to have their own business in the future. It can be argued, based on Karpat's survey, that the same desire was shared by the settlers in other squatter settlements in İstanbul.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, the prospective workers who had newly arrived to İstanbul experienced a different life from what they had expected to find. They had hoped to have a good and permanent job, earn sufficient money to provide for themselves and their families, have access to the unique opportunities created by city life such as education, and

²³⁶ Celal Akıl, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Nephân Saran, 403.

²³⁹ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*, 25 and 34-35.

²⁴⁰ Even in the 1970s, most factory workers wanted their sons to have their own small shops. This demonstrates that the idea of having their own shops was a deep rooted intention of the factory workers. See, Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu*, 113.

²⁴¹ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*, 112; Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu*, 103.

special consumer goods, and to become a respected citizens within the society and construct their own business if possible. In this regard, being respected citizens means for the metal workers to be loyal, assiduous and productive citizens of the nation and obtain their rights, earn sufficient money to provide for their families, and be treated well in workplaces. Nevertheless, they would soon understand that being a loyal and hard working citizen would not be enough to realize their dreams. Rather, they had to struggle, individually or collectively, in an effort to reach their personal goals.

The single metal workers would be expected to marry soon after finding a job and they were expected to become a member of the family economy, in which they would act as provider for their extended family.²⁴² The single young men would typically marry the daughter of either their one of relatives or neighbours, soon after arriving. This meant the metal workers were concerned about providing for their families as well as themselves, and those pressures, plus the inter-community nature of marriages, must have enhanced the solidarity networks in the workers' districts, as well.

The sociological surveys about the migration generally agree that a significant portion of village traditions, beliefs and life-styles has survived amongst the immigrants in modern cities.²⁴³ A traditional sexual division of labor was in effect within the squatter areas in Turkey: as Karpat argues, family life was still regulated by village customs during the 1950s and 1960s. His study shows that majority of women that he had interviewed had no outside employment; furthermore, about 83% percent of women who had outside jobs worked as servants. While the ratio of women who were recruited into private firms was 6%, the same ratio for men was 57%.²⁴⁴ (Interestingly, Şenyapılı's studies among Gültepe and Kağıthane residents disclose that while the number of male heads of the family was 336 out of 350 in

²⁴² Tansı Şenyapılı, "Cumhuriyet'in 75. Yılı Gecekondu'nun 50. Yılı [The 75th Year of the Republic and the 50th Years of Squatter]," in Yıldız Sey [ed.] *75 Yılda Değişen Kent ve Mimarlık* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998), 311.

²⁴³ Nephân Saran, "İstanbul'da Gecekondu Problemi [The Squatter Problem in İstanbul]"; Ahmet İçduygu; İbrahim Sirkeci, and İsmail Aydıngün, "Türkiye'de İçgöç ve İçgöçün İşçi Hareketine Etkisi [The Internal Migration in Turkey and the Influences of Internal Migration on Working Class Movement]"; Mübeccel Kıray, *Kentleşme Yazıları*, Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*; Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu*.

²⁴⁴ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*, 96-102.

total when he conducted surveys, this figure was only 14 when the questions were asked by female interviewers.)²⁴⁵ Industrial life in İstanbul was also male dominated. Within the family, the male partner was traditionally accepted as the provider of the family. They were expected to find steady and well paid jobs. And according to village traditions, the function of women in the squatter areas was to take care of children and domestic chores.²⁴⁶ In fact, Şenyapılı argues that while the heads of the families in the squatter areas began to be recruited into more permanent jobs, their family members gradually began to act more as consumers in a modern city in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁴⁷ A health survey conducted in Rami indicated that the fathers of families who were socially accepted as the head of the family and who were recruited in the industrial plants were the sole providers for those families, and they were most readily recruited in the industrial plants while very few mothers were employed.²⁴⁸ It is unfortunate that we do not have clear evidence to show the effect those traditional patterns had on the workers who were recruited into the metal plants, and their families. However, a survey conducted in 1970 shows that the metal plants which were located in the European side of the city²⁴⁹ included only 768 female workers out of 36 648 workers in total.²⁵⁰ Based on those figures, we can conclude that the metal sector in terms of the traditional sexual division of labor was not an anomaly. We can also suggest that the male metal workers wanted to supply their families with a good wage to maintain a healthy lifestyle, purchase consumer goods such as refrigerators, radios or laundry machines for their wives, and support their children with a solid education to elevate the next generation within the social hierarchy. Indeed, providing for the family constituted an important dimension of

²⁴⁵ Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu*, 82-83.

²⁴⁶ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*, 130-132.

²⁴⁷ Tansı Şenyapılı, *Gecekondu: Çevre İşçilerin Mekanı [The Squatter House: The Space of Peripheral Workers]*, (n.p.: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi, 1981), 43-47.

²⁴⁸ C. T. Gürson, C. T. and O. Neyzi, *İstanbul'un Rami Gecekondu Bölgesinde Çocuk Sağlığı Konusunda Araştırmalar [The Researches Regarding the Child Health in the Rami Squatter Regions in İstanbul]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi, 1966).

²⁴⁹ The city of İstanbul is geographically divided: while some land is situated in the continent of Europe, the other parts are located in the Asian continent, in Anatolia.

²⁵⁰ Faruk Özbakan, *İstanbul Madeni Eşya Sanayii*. Also look at: Turan Yazgan, *Şehirleşme Açısından Türkiye'de İşgücünün Demografik ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Bünyesi [The Demographic and Socio-Economic Structure of the Labor Force in Turkey Regarding Urbanization]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi, 1968), 5 and 25.

their language about unionization of the metal workers.²⁵¹ It is also important to note that the above mentioned surveys by Tansı Şenyapılı and Kemal Karpat were conducted in the districts where a lot of the metal hardware, household electrical appliances and metal processing factories were established.

For the metal workers who were recently married and wanting to escape from their relatives' shared accommodation, the most burning issue was housing. It is obvious that the prospective workers had to first put a roof above their heads in order to advance themselves and their families. The single metal workers often resided with their immediate families or close relatives in the squatter houses. But the married ones built their own houses as close to their workplaces as possible, or bought one which had been built seemingly overnight. The same problem was an irritating issue for most workers in İstanbul. Orhan Tuna called attention to the housing problem in İstanbul in 1955.²⁵² In fact, the workers of the Silahtarağa Power Plant said that their one of the biggest problems was housing.²⁵³ A metal worker, Basri Karagöz, from Şakir Zümre reflected on the necessity of employers to provide housing for workers in order to increase workers' productivity.²⁵⁴ To rectify this problem, the workers built squatter houses, mostly in areas surrounding their workplaces. Some of these structures were simply shacks built overnight while others looked like simple houses.²⁵⁵ And for those

²⁵¹ Kemal Sülker, "İşçi Çocuklarının Okutulması İçin Sigorta İhdası [The Gift of Insurance Regarding the Education of the Workers' Children]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 23 (25 January 1958), 2; TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive Box 14 Envelope 760. For the scholars of the period, providing for the family was seen as an important discourse for claiming workers' rights or setting down the basics of modern industrial relations Adnan Laykım, "Asgari Ücret ve Muhtelif Ücret Sistemlerinde Garanti Ücretler [The Minimum Wages and Guaranteed Wages in the Different Wage Systems]," *YODÇE Bulletin*, no. 2 (May 1958); 44.

²⁵² Orhan Tuna, "Asgari Geçim Haddi Meselesi [The Issue of Minimum Maintenance Level]," *Son Saat*, January 20, 1955. Also look at: *Köylüye Toprak Verildiği Gibi İşçilere de Ev Verilmelidir*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 40 Envelope 1856.

²⁵³ "Silahtarağa Elektrik Fabrikası İşçileri İdareden Şikayetçi [The Workers of Silahtarağa Power Plants Complain about the Management]," *Gece Postası*, November 26, 1950.

²⁵⁴ "Basri Karagöz Tahakkukunu İstedığı İşçi Davalarını İzah Ediyor ve Üzüntülerini Belirtiyor [Basri Karagöz Explains the Workers' Causes Which He Wanted to Handle and Expresses His Grievs]," *Gece Postası*, July 24, 1951.

²⁵⁵ Ekmel Zadil, "İstanbul'da Mesken Meseleleri ve Gecekonducular [The Housing Problems in İstanbul and the Squatter Houses]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 2 (1949). Also look at: Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu*; M. Şehmus Güzel, "Capital and Labor During World War II"; Ahmet Makal, *Ameleden İşçiye: Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Emek Tarihi Çalışmaları*.

metal workers who did not own a house, the rents were too high in İstanbul.²⁵⁶ The metal workers also lashed out about insufficient housing in the city and the high cost of housing.²⁵⁷ It was a problem to be overcome through their common struggles in the union.

The inner city workers of İstanbul had to confront other serious hardships, too. Lifestyle conditions had deteriorated during the war years for the lower classes in İstanbul. Osman Şevki Uludağ, who worked in several health institutions as a medical doctor during the 1940s, admitted that the living conditions of the lower classes were poor; the people were ill-fed and ill-dressed.²⁵⁸ Uludağ's statements were also verified by several academic works. For example, Boratav, states that the burden of state-led industrialization had been on the shoulder of peasants, especially the small wheat producer, and upon the shoulders of workers in cities during the pre-war era. This burden got even heavier during the war years. The following table prepared by Boratav shows the deterioration of wages and the concurrent increase in the cost of living during the war years:

Table 1: The Basic Indicators of Distribution of Wealth in 1938-1939 and 1944-1945

	1938-1939	1944-1945
Industrial Production Index	100	78
Industrial Price Index	100	357
Wheat Production Index	100	63
Wheat Price Index	100	568
Tobacco Production Index	100	105

²⁵⁶ "Ortaköyde Teneke Kutu Fabrikası: 2 [The Tin Box Factory in Ortaköy]," *Şehir*, January 8, 1959.

²⁵⁷ "General Çelik Eşya Fabrikasında İşçi-İşveren Arasında Tesanüt [The Solidarity Between Employee and Employer in General Steel Good Factory]," *Gece Postası*, 20 July 1958.

²⁵⁸ Osman Şevki Uludağ, "İş ve İşçi [Work and Worker]," *Çalışma* year 1 no. 1 year 1 (September, 1945).

Tobacco Price Index	100	490
Cotton Production Index	100	88
Cotton Price Index	100	356
Real Wage Index	100	51
Share of Wages in National Income	8.4	8.2
Wholesale Price Index	100	449
Real National Income Index	100	75

Source: Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*, 69.

From the table, it can be inferred that industrial production numbers decreased by a considerable amount between 1938-1939 and 1944-1945. Between those same years, while the production of wheat and tobacco decreased, the production of some other goods flourished. In the meantime, overall prices of those goods significantly increased; consequently, as it can be seen from the table, the wholesale price index escalated. However, real wages, the share of wages in national income and real national income all decreased at the same time period. In a nutshell, the cost of living considerably increased during the war years in Turkey. Another table shows the increase the price of some basic goods before and during the war:

Table 2: The Changes in the Price of Basic Goods (1939-1943)

Goods	Prices (Turkish kuruş)		Ratio of Price Increases %
	1939	1943	
Wheat	6	110	1733
Flour	15	110	966
Rice	35	185	428
Egg	1.5	9	500

Source: Murat Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye: Savaş ve Gündelik Yaşam*, 63.

In brief, the two tables clearly disclose that the prices of the basic goods, which constituted the essential diet of Turkish society, markedly increased in Turkey before and during the war years. In his masterfully written book, Metinsoy also argues that bread, which is the most important food staple for Turkish people, deteriorated in terms of its taste and nutritional value, despite the increases in price during that time.²⁵⁹ Similarly, Orhan Tuna sized up the living conditions and wages and asserted that while the wage index increased from 100 to 157 between 1938 and 1943, the price index of basic goods increased from 100 to 300-400 over the same time interval.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, between 1938 and 1947, the cost of living index in İstanbul rose from 100 to 419, a more than fourfold increase.²⁶¹ Sabahaddin Zaim, in the same vein, argued that the purchasing power of wages decreased by half from 1938 to 1945 and it could reach 1938 levels by 1952. For the same period, the cost of living

²⁵⁹ Murat Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye: Savaş ve Gündelik Yaşam*, 64. Also look at; M. Şehmus Güzel, "Capital and Labor during World War II"; Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Tek Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1920-1946 [The Labor Relations in the Single Party Period in Turkey]* (Ankara: İmge, 1999).

²⁶⁰ Orhan Tuna, "İş Piyasası ve Ücretler [Job Market and Wages]," *Çalışma* no. 5 year 1 (April 1946).

²⁶¹ "Memleketimizde Geçinme, Gıda Masrafları Endeksleri [The Cost of Living and Food Indexes in Our Country]," *Çalışma*, no. 25 year 3 (January-February-March 1948).

index in İstanbul rose from 100 to 389.²⁶² These statistics allow us to claim that the purchasing power of waged labor was notably low before 1945 in Turkey.

The numbers also show us that low earnings and high food prices did not significantly change after the war, but wage increases in the early 1950s slightly ameliorated the conditions of workers' families.²⁶³ A report of the First Work Council in 1947 admitted that the average wages in some regions were below even the minimum amount to sustain life.²⁶⁴ Similarly, Orhan Tuna also stated that, according to unions in İstanbul, real wages decreased, rather than increased, between the years 1950-1954 and life for İstanbul's workers did not improve in parallel with the increase in national average income rates.²⁶⁵ In fact, the newspapers of the period were dotted with reports about the high cost of living in İstanbul in 1953 and 1954; for example, the headline of *Gece Postası* on August 19, 1953 declared that the government was not taking any measures against the high cost of living.²⁶⁶ Nearly one month later, the same newspaper mentioned that basic foods such as meat, milk, fruits and vegetables were too expensive in İstanbul.²⁶⁷ The cost of living was also a frustrating matter for people of Eyüp. In 1953, 140 citizens sent a letter to the provincial newspaper, *Gece Postası*, saying that the price of fruits and vegetables were too high in the district. The letter was as follows:

"Eyüp is a region of poor people who are laborers and have low incomes. It may not be a big issue for the people of Taksim that the price is 15-20 Turkish kuruş per one kilo; on the other hand, this amount is very high for the

²⁶² Sabahaddin Zaim, "Türkiye'nin İktisadi Gelişmesinde Ücret Siyasetinin Önemi [The Importance of Wage Politics in the Economic Development of Turkey]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 19 (1968): 327.

²⁶³ Ibid, 334. Also look at: Korkut Boratav, "1950-1965 Döneminde Tarım Dışındaki Emekçi Gruplar Açısından Gelir Dağılımındaki Değişiklikler [The Changes in Income Distribution in Terms of Labor Groups Outside the Agricultural Sector Between 1950 and 1965]," *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilimler Fakültesi Journal* vol. XXIV no. 1 (March 1969): 216.

²⁶⁴ "Çalışma Meclisi Raporu [The Report of Work Council]," *Çalışma*, year 2 no. 17 (April 1947).

²⁶⁵ Orhan Tuna, "Memleketimizde Sendikaların Üzerinde Durdukları Meseleler [The Issues on Which Trade Unions of Our Country Reflect]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 8 (1956): 107.

²⁶⁶ "Hükümet İstanbulluları Oyalıyor [The Government Detains the Residents of İstanbul]," *Gece Postası*, August 19, 1953.

²⁶⁷ "Pahalılık Meselesi [The Problem of High Cost of Living]," *Gece Postası*, September 10, 1953.

people of Eyüp. The municipality should sell those foods themselves at a subsidized price to make us happy.”²⁶⁸

The existing documents about living conditions in İstanbul are full of complaints from workers about their despair and anger regarding their lifestyles despite all the promises given to workers that they would have a decent life if they agreed to be a part of an established factory regime. A worker of Silahtarağa Power Plant narrated his misery as follows:

“Although we lived well until 1939, afterwards the increasing cost of living destroyed us. Today, while we are working more than 12 hours, we earn 100 Turkish liras at most. After yielding 20 liras of this amount to rent, it is impossible to sustain 4 people at home. For this reason, I fought a lot with my wife; she ultimately left the house. One of my children has passed away out of our misery. My family has been torn apart. After building a squatter house from plywood in order to keep the rent at my pocket, the officers of municipality demolished my home...How we are supposed to live? In sum, the workers’ wages must be increased to save our future.”²⁶⁹

A metal worker Hüsametdin Dinç, in the metal union congress in 1951, stated that despite the increases in the cost of living, the workers’ wages hardly changed, and didn’t live up to the promises.²⁷⁰ Likewise the workers of Halil Sezai Bed Factory stood up for an increase in their wages in 1954 in order to deal with the trying conditions and high cost of living.²⁷¹ In the same year, the workers of Auto Scissor Lift Factory, Ayvansaray Bolt

²⁶⁸ “Eyüplüler de Tanzim Satışı Yapılmasını İsrarla İstiyorlar [People of Eyüp Press on Food Prices],” *Gece Postası*, September 6, 1953.

²⁶⁹ “Gece Postası İşçilerle Konuşuyor [Gece Postası Talks to Workers],” *Gece Postası* February 13, 1948.

²⁷⁰ “Fabrikalarda Çalışan Bütün Genç İşçiler Sendikaya Girebilmeli [All Young Workers in Factories Should Be Recognized and be Unionized],” *Gece Postası*, November 4, 1951.

²⁷¹ *Karyola İşçileri Ücretlerine Zam İstediler [The Bed Factory Workers Demanded an Increase in their Wages]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 40, Envelope 1856; “Karyola Fabrikası İşçileri

Factory, Topçular Copper Wire Factory, Topçular Esat Ketenoglu Copper Wire Factory, Balat Copper Wire Factory, Aker Nail Factory, Bahariye Hot Wire Factory, and Zeytinburnu Enamel Factory all pressed their bosses with similar demands for the same reasons.²⁷²

The conditions inside squatter residences in İstanbul continued to deteriorate after the mid-1950s. In reviewing news reports, 1954 seems to be an important turning point regarding living conditions in İstanbul. The headlines of provincial newspapers, indeed, pointed towards these unsupportable price increases in the city.²⁷³ In 1954, it was stated that the price of potatoes, onions, beans, and eggs, which were the basic diet of low income groups, had simply risen too much.²⁷⁴ Orhan Tuna claimed in 1955 that the living conditions of workers would become unbearable if the price increases went on in the same manner. He also claimed that wages were slipping, contrary to what the Labor Minister said in September 1955.²⁷⁵ On this issue, Zaim argues that although the official statistics which compared living indices with wage indices in İstanbul showed the purchase power of workers rose to a certain extent during the 1950s, those numbers could not reflect the same upward changes in buying power. This was because the average wage did not illustrate the true income of workers. To put it more clearly, the monthly incomes of semi-qualified or non-qualified workers were far below the average wages estimated by published statistics. In spite of the increases in real wages in the early 1950s, he commented, the increases in the price of domestic staples eradicated wage

%55 Zam İstedi [The Bed Factory Workers Demand 55 Percent of Wage Increase],” *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 3 (November 1954).

²⁷² *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Eyüp Şubasının Çalışma Raporu [The Work Report of the Eyüp Branch of the Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 12 Envelope 683; “Develi Emaye Fabrikası İhtilafı İl Hakem Kurulunda [The Work Conflict of Develi Enamel Factory is at the Arbitration Council],” *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 3 (November 1954).

²⁷³ “Halkı Soyan Bazı İstifçiler Basıldı [Some Hoarders Who Rob the People were Raided],” *Gece Postası*, 28 June, 1954; “Pahalılık Her Türlü Gıda Maddelerinde Gittikçe Artıyor [The High Price of All Food are Increasing Further],” *Gece Postası*, July 7, 1954; “Bütün Malların Fiyatları Yükseliyor [The Prices of All Goods are Increasing],” *Gece Postası*, December 14, 1954.

²⁷⁴ “Kuru Gıda Madde Fiyatları Çok Yüksek [The Food Prices Are Too High],” *Gece Postası*, February 4, 1954. Also look at: “Pahalılık İstanbullu Kasıp Kavuruyor [The High Cost of Living Rages İstanbul],” *Gece Postası*, March 31, 1954.

²⁷⁵ Orhan Tuna, “Asgari Geçim Haddi Meselesi [The Issue of Minimum Maintenance Level],” *Son Saat*, January 20, 1955. Also look at: Kemal Sülker, “Her İstatistik Hakikati İfade Kabiliyetinde Değildir [Not Every Statistic Explain Truth],” *Gece Postası*, September 21, 1955; Kemal Sülker, “İşçi Ücretleri Son Beş Yılda Arttı mı, Azaldı mı? [Did the Workers’ Wages Increase or Decrease in the Last Five Years],” *Gece Postası*, September 22, 1955.

increases to a certain extent.²⁷⁶ The struggle for sustenance became much harder towards the end of the decade. The price of fruits and vegetables, the latter category being one of the most basic food groups for workers' families, rose sharply in 1957. In June 1958, the government again increased the price of basic goods in İstanbul. In 1959 alone, the index of wholesale prices rose 20 percent.²⁷⁷ The local newspapers in İstanbul dedicated their headlines to how life had grown so much more expensive in the last months.²⁷⁸ Kemal Sülker, in 1958, told of the deterioration of workers' living conditions on the basis of increasing food prices. He added that basic foods, which workers mainly consumed, got more expensive, but not luxury food items.²⁷⁹ In fact, it's clear these high prices adversely influenced whole impoverished social groups, including metal workers in İstanbul, throughout the 1950s.

After the middle point of the decade, the deterioration of living conditions in İstanbul were definitely felt and expressed by the metal workers. One worker in the Halıcıoğlu Branch Congress of the union asserted that, despite significant increases in the basic food prices and rents, workers could not get sufficient wage increases to balance out those price increases.²⁸⁰ The metal workers of the Profilo enterprise claimed in 1956 that their wages were eroding day by day, on the basis of increasing prices in the city; as a result, the workers argued, they could not provide for their families.²⁸¹ In parallel with the increases in price indices, the boisterous complaints of the metal workers about the costliness of life in İstanbul increased

²⁷⁶ Sabahaddin Zaim, *Türkiye'de Metal Sanayinde Ücretler: Ücret Seviyesi, Ücret Bünyesi ve Sistemleri* [The Wages in the Turkish Metal Industry: The Wage Levels, Structure and Systems], unpublished manuscript, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 22, Envelope 1167.

²⁷⁷ "İhtikara Karşı Yeni ve Çok Şiddetli Tedbirler [The New and Severe Precautions Against Profiteering]," *Gece Postası* July 30, 1957; Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 160; "Resmi Endekslere Göre Pahalılık Arttı [The Cost of Living Increased According to The Official Statistics]," *Gece Postası*, July 5, 1959.

²⁷⁸ "Hayat Pahalılığını M. Vekilleri de Kabul Etti [Deputies, too, Confessed the Cost of Living]," *Şehir*, December 20, 1958; "Zam Kuyrukları Kopamadı [The Chain of Price Increase Never Ends]," *Gece Postası*, January 21, 1959; Kemal Sülker, "Fiyatlarda İstikrar [Stability on Prices]," *Gece Postası*, April 17, 1959.

²⁷⁹ Kemal Sülker, "Pahalılık Dalgası ve İşçiler [The Price Increase Wave and Workers]," *Gece Postası*, September 13, 1958; Kemal Sülker, "İşçilerin Son Zamlar Karşısındaki Durumları [The Situation of Workers After the Latest Increases]," *Gece Postası* June 14, 1958.

²⁸⁰ "İşçi Sigortalarına Sert ve Ağır Hücumlar [Fierce and Severe Criticisms to the Workers' Insurance]," *Son Saat*, April 9, 1956.

²⁸¹ "Profilo İşçileri %50 Zam İstedi [The Profilo Workers Demand a 50% Wage Increase]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 2 no. 8 (28 January 1956). Also look at: "İş İhtilafında Dikkati Çeken Karar Alınıyor [An Important Decision is Taken in the Work Dispute]," *Gece Postası* April 25, 1955.

towards the end of the 1950s. Indeed, the administrative board of the one of the biggest metal enterprises in İstanbul, Arçelik, acknowledged the increasing cost of living in 1958, and again in 1959.²⁸² The head representative of the Tin Box Factory in Ortaköy, İbrahim Kurt, admitted that he earned more money than his fellow workers; nevertheless, his salary was still insufficient to provide for his family.²⁸³ Likewise, the other workers in the factory complained about the level of their incomes being too low to take care of the needs of their families. The İstanbul workers asserted that they could not even purchase school books for their children.²⁸⁴ The huge gap between the actual earnings of the metal workers and the high prices of even basic goods constituted the most significant motivator for the workers to get together under union flags. Indeed, the most widespread issue of work conflicts at that time was low wages. How the metal workers suffered from the cost of living in İstanbul was illustrated in the pages of the Maden-İş's newspaper that portrayed the monstrous hands of the cost of living causing a worker to tremble out of his/her fear.

²⁸² *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 38 and 42. See also: Sabahaddin Zaim, "Türkiye'de Metal Sanayiinde Ücretler: Ücret Seviyesi, Ücret Bünyesi ve Sistemleri," 11 and 21.

²⁸³ "Ortaköyde Teneke Kutu Fabrikası: 2 [The Tin Box Factory in Ortaköy]," *Şehir*, January 8, 1959.

²⁸⁴ "Hakem Kurulunda Varol Duruşması Yapıldı [The Varol Case Was Heard in the Arbitration Council]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 5 (12 January 1957), 1; "İşçiler Yüzde 40 Zam İstiyorlar [The Workers Demand a 40 Percent Wage Increase]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 8 (23 March 1957), 1; "İstihsal Primi Hazırlığı Başladı [The Preparations for Giving Production Premiums Begin]," *Gece Postası*, July 4, 1958; "Pahalılık Karşısında İşçiler de Zam İstiyor [Workers Demand Wage Increase On the Basis of Costliness]," *Şehir*, August 18, 1958; "İşçi Mümessili Olmayan İşyerinde Asgari Ücret de Yok [The Workplace Where There was no Workers' Representative Did not Apply the Minimum Wage]," *Şehir*, August 21, 1958; "Maden-İş İki İhtilaf Çıkardı [Maden-İş Utilized Two Work Disputes]," *Şehir*, September 7, 1958; "T.D.D.de Atölyede Çalışan İşçiler [The Atellier Workers in Türk Demirdökümü]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 38 (1 September 1958), 1 and 4; "Doğu Çakmak'ta Verilen Zammı Az Bulduk [We Found the Wage Increases in Doğu Lighter to be Rare]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 38 (1 September 1958), 4; "İşçi Sendikaları Birliği İşçilerin İsteklerini Ç.Vekiline Bildirdi [The Confederation of the Workers' Unions Reported the Workers' Demands to the Labor Minister]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 31 (28 October 1958), 3; "TDD Fabrikası Kalifiye İşçi İhtiyacını Karşıladi [TDD Factory Met Its Quota of Qualified Workers]," *Gece Postası*, November 27, 1958; "İşçi Ücretleri Geçim Şartlarına Hiç Uymuyor [Workers' Wages not on Par with Life Conditions]," *Maden-İş* year 3 no. 32 (31 January 1959), 1 and 4; "Hususi Sektörde Çalışan İşçiler Zam Alamıyor mu [Does the Workers in Private Sector not Get Wage Increase]," *Şehir*, February 14, 1959; "Bakırköy Şubesinin Nakli Kararlaştırıldı [The Move of the Bakırköy Branch Was Decided]," *Maden-İş* year 3 no. 37 (9 September 1959), 3.



Figure 1: -The Cost of Living and Workers (Source: *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 2 no. 9 [September 1956], 5).

The problems of the metal workers were not only about the high cost of living in İstanbul: the conditions made it difficult to sustain a decent life in the shanty towns. The newspapers of the period are full of articles about the problems in squatter regions where mostly factory workers and the city's impoverished resided. For example, the road infrastructure problems were quite severe in the neighbourhoods where laboring class dwelled. Additionally, the conditions on public buses were awful and they often came late.²⁸⁵ The workers of the Silahtarağa Power Plant claimed that, due to lack of any public transportation, they had to travel to their workplaces on foot.²⁸⁶ The Eyüp workers also complained about the terrible condition of the drinking water in the region. In fact, there was no domestic water system at most houses; consequently, residents of the region had to use well water for their daily needs. Usually, there was just one well for each neighbourhood in the district and some of them did not run properly. However, the most frustrating problem for the residents of the poorer districts was the health issue.

²⁸⁵ "Eyüplülerin İki Dileği [Two Wishes of People of Eyüp]," *Gece Postası*, March 2, 1948; "Eyüp Mıntıkasında Çalışanların Çektiği Seyrüsefer Zorlukları [The Transportation Problems of Laboring People in Eyüp Region]," *Gece Postası*, June 19, 1948; "Eyüp Bol Vasıta İstiyor [Eyüp Demands Abundant Public Vehicle]," *Gece Postası*, December 18, 1956; "Eyüplüler Vasıttadan Dert Yanıyor [The People of Eyüp Moans for Lack of Public Vehicle]," *Gece Postası*, December 18, 1956; "Eyübe Tramvay Verilmez mi [Shall Eyüp Not Be Supplied with Street Car]," *Gece Postası*, December 21, 1956; "Rami," *Gece Postası*, December 29, 1956; "Eyübe Dolmuş Bulunamıyor [Dolmuş Cannot be Found to Go to Eyüp]," *Gece Postası*, July 29, 1957; "Eyüp ve Balatlılar Çok Sıkıntı Çekiyorlar [The People of Eyüp and Balat Greatly Suffer]," *Gece Postası*, June 19, 1958.

²⁸⁶ "Elektrik Fabrikası İşçileri Dün Bir Protesto Toplantısı Yaptı [The Silahtarağa Power Plant Workers Organized a Protest Gathering]," *Gece Postası*, November 24, 1950.

Two doctors, C. T. Gürson and O. Neyzi, conducted a health survey among children in Rami, which was a primary residential place for the metal workers, in 1966. This study was a fine illustration of the problems, which the residents of the squatter houses experienced in Turkey. According to the survey, most houses were bereft of the basic infrastructures such as water or proper sewer systems. The families were also poorly fed due to their low income. The survey concluded that all these points factored into the serious health problems evident among children.²⁸⁷ Similarly, the people of Eyüp also expressed their concern about the filth and poor-looking appearance of their district.²⁸⁸

In addition to health problems, whether as a result of improper feeding or poor infrastructure, the metal workers of İstanbul also suffered from the lack of attention in the hospitals of the Social Security Administration²⁸⁹ in several cases. The workers complained that the hospital in Halıcıoğlu, which is located near to the Golden Horn, did not begin to examine workers until 11am and the building was inadequate to give a good care to the sick. Furthermore, most of the hospitals did not employ a midwife, who helped workers' wives during childbirth.²⁹⁰ The workers in the Eyüp and Kalafat workplaces complained about the state hospital in the region, too.²⁹¹ Discouragingly, the subpar treatment provided in those hospitals continued to be a major concern for the metal workers who inhabited shanty towns over the subsequent decades.

²⁸⁷ C. T. Gürson and O. Neyzi, *İstanbul'un Rami Gecekondu Bölgesinde Çocuk Sağlığı Konusunda Araştırmalar [The Research Regarding Child Health in the Rami Squatter Regions in İstanbul]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi, 1966).

²⁸⁸ "D.P. Eyüp Kongresinde Sert Tenkitler Yapıldı [The Harsh Criticisms Raised in the Eyüp Congress of Democrat Party]," *Gece Postası*, February 4, 1952; "Eyüplülerin Ebedi Dertleri [The Unending Troubles of the People of Eyüp]," *Gece Postası*, November 9, 1952.

²⁸⁹ The Social Security Administration was founded in Turkey by the Law of Worker's Security Administration ratified in 1945 to provide services, such as health, to laborers.

²⁹⁰ *Sendika Kademelerinde Gizli Mücadele-Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Şube Toplantısında Konuşulanlar [The Hidden Struggle within the Union-The Talks in a Branch Meeting of the Union of the Iron and Metalwork Workers]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 40, Envelope 1856; *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası 8. Genel Kurul Toplantısı [The Eighth Meeting of the General Council of the Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 133.

²⁹¹ "Eyüp Sigorta Dispanseri ve İtiraf Edilen Noksanlıklar [The Eyüp Social Security Dispensary and Admitted Shortfalls]," *Gece Postası*, April 22, 1951; "Kalafat Yeri Davası," *Gece Postası*, September 31, 1953.

In order to alleviate the particular problems of life in the city, the migrants applied mainly political tools to their purpose. During the election periods, they utilized their rights to vote as political leverage, preferring to vote for candidates who either promised to solve problems in the squatter regions, or who were perceived by the residents as a candidate working on behalf of the poor. Conversely, the political parties visited the workers' districts to demand votes from the people by promising to deal with their many problems.²⁹² Some recent works, which debated class formation during the post-war era, assume that involving themselves in political activities fostered solidarity among the İstanbul workers in the 1950s.²⁹³ Unfortunately, there exists no data to show to what extent those activities influenced the metal workers, or whether metal workers even participated in the political life of the country by being involved in a party.

Similarly, there are few documents to infer what other methods the residents of the squatter areas resorted to. There were some associations, such as the Association of Improving Silahtarağa, set up in the squatter areas to improve conditions.²⁹⁴ It is another unfortunate problem that we lack documentation about the actions or influences of this organization among the metal workers. Nevertheless, we have abundant evidence to argue that the union was a critical mechanism for the metal workers to ameliorate their living conditions and overcome their common problems in work and city life. Conversely, the frustrations caused by their experiences at work and in the community motivated them to get together under the umbrella of another organization, namely Maden-İş.

III. The Workplace Experience: Wages, Discipline and Work Conditions

A) Metal Workers' Earnings

As noted, the most essential reason for the metal workers to be unionized was that wages in the sector were too low to provide for themselves and their families in the city. In

²⁹² Tansı Şenyapılı, 'Cumhuriyet'in 75. Yılı Gecekondu'nun 50. Yılı,' 307.

²⁹³ Hakan Koçak, *Camın İşçileri: Paşabahçe İşçilerinin Sınıf Olma Öyküsü [The Glass Workers: The Story of Paşabahçe Workers Being a Class]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014).

²⁹⁴ "Silahtarağa'yı Güzelleştirme Derneği Ana Tüzüğü [The Statute of the Association of Improving Silahtarağa]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 16 (10 August 1957), 3.

fact, Sabahaddin Zaim related in one of his seminars that the most contentious and significant issue in Turkish industrial relations was the issue of wages. According to his calculations, Zaim claimed that the wage increases in the metal sector throughout the 1950s were well below consumer price increases.²⁹⁵ The union and provincial newspapers were full of news about the workers' wage complaints.²⁹⁶ This battle was at the top of the agendas of nearly all the union congresses and workers' meetings held over the decade.

Additionally, the metal workers of İstanbul often suffered through wage cuts, troubles in incorrect bonus payments of certain workers, or improper piece rate bonuses.²⁹⁷ The existing applied trade regime, namely the import regime, and the absence of raw materials forced the metal employers to lower labor costs through wage cuts or worker dismissals. For example, because of an influx of nail imports from Yugoslavia in 1953, some nail factories in İstanbul cut the daily wages of workers.²⁹⁸ In some cases, the daily wages of workers who stayed home due to an illness or an accident were not paid.²⁹⁹ The workers of Bakırköy Enamel Factory asserted in 1951 that the bonus pay of workers in the strenuous and dangerous work areas was doled out at 25 percent instead of 50 percent as indicated in the regulations of the factory. In the same petition, workers claimed that most of the fines given to workers did not comply with the allowable reasons given under the law.³⁰⁰ A news article in *Gece Postası* in 1954 stated that at the Kalafat workplace, where secondary metal production was done, the workers' overtime fees were not paid; however, the small

²⁹⁵ Sabahaddin Zaim, "Türkiye'de Metal Sanayiinde Ücretler: Ücret Seviyesi, Ücret Bünyesi ve Sistemleri."

²⁹⁶ "İşçiler Yüzde 40 Zam İstiyorlar [The Workers Demand 40 Percent Wage Increase]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 1; "Nur Metal İşçileri % 75 Zam İstiyor [The Nur Metal Workers Want 75 Percent Wage Increase]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 1; "İşçiler Geçim Sıkıntısı Çekiyor [The Workers Are Suffering in order to Sustain Themselves]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 4; "Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Ücretleri Konuşuldu [The Wages of Metal Hardware Workers Were Spoken]," *Şehir*, August 26, 1958.

²⁹⁷ "Bakırköy Emaye Fabrikasında İşçi Ücretleri Düşüktür [The Workers' Wages are too Low in Bakırköy Enamel Factory]," *Gece Postası*, September 24, 1952.

²⁹⁸ "Madeni Eşya İşçileri Çivi İthalinin Durdurulmasını İstedi [The Metal Hardware Workers Demand an End to Nail Imports]," *Gece Postası*, March 25, 1953. Also look at; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Tarihi [History of Trade Unionism in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2004), 143.

²⁹⁹ "Madeni Eşya İşçileri Mümessilinin İzahatı [Explanation of the Representative of Metalhardware Workers]," *Gece Postası*, June 18, 1948.

³⁰⁰ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası Yönetim Kurulu Başkanlığı'na*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2, Envelope 134.

workplaces there were famous for forced overtime work.³⁰¹ The scarcity of raw materials became yet another excuse for the bosses to force employees to accept only half of their wages.³⁰² Additionally, the metal bosses did not pay Sunday fees, bonuses or overtime payments in several cases.³⁰³ For example, the Demir Döküm management did not pay some workers' fees for Sundays, even though these workers had not even been contractually informed that they had to work in the factory those days.³⁰⁴ In cases of such wage cuts, it became naturally much harder for the metal workers to sustain their lifestyles and provide for their families.

Another important problem was the threat of dismissal. Not just the metal workers, but the workers in the other sectors, too, always worked under threat of being fired from their jobs after the war period. In fact, one of the hottest issues that workers brought to the consideration of the Labor Ministry was the arbitrary expulsion of workers by factory bosses.³⁰⁵ Similarly, in their meeting with the Minister of Labor, Tahsin Bekir Balta, the trade unions in İstanbul lashed out at high numbers of workers' dismissals in 1948.³⁰⁶ This problem was widespread among the metal workers. In 1948, a non-unionized metal work plant

³⁰¹ "Kalafat Yerinde Çalışan İşçilerin Dertleri [The Troubles of Workers Employed in Kalafat Workplace]," *Gece Postası*, March 29, 1954.

³⁰² "Gizli Gizli Komünist Radyosu Dinleyenler Haddini Bilmeli? [The People Who Secretly Listen the Communist Radio Must Know How Far They Can Go]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 26 (10 May 1958), 1; "İşverenler Maden İş Kolunda Yarım Yevmiye Veriyorlar [Employees Pay Half Fee in the Metal Hardware Sector]," *Şehir* April 8, 1958; "Birlikte Öğrenelim [Let's Learn Together]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 2; "Bir Buçuk Aydır Yarım Yevmiye Alan İşçiler [The Workers Who Have Gotten Half of Their Fees in the Last Month and a Half]," *Şehir*, January 30, 1959; "Bir İşyeri Yarım Yevmiye Ödüyor [One Workplace Pay Half Fee]," *Şehir*, March 1959.

³⁰³ "Akümülatör Fabrikalarında [In the Battery Factories]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 25 (1 April 1958), 2; "Topçular Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı [The Congress of Topçular Branch was Done]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 1 and 2; "Maden İşçileri İş Verenlerin Baskısından Dert Yanıyor [Metal Workers Are Complaining About the Oppression of Employers]," *Gece Postası*, October 26, 1958; "Pazar-Bayram Yevmiyelerini Alamıyanlar [The People who Cannot Get Their Sunday-General Holiday Fees]," *Şehir* January 30, 1959; "Sungurlu Kazandan Şikayetler Artıyor [The Complaints From Sungurlu Kazan Are Increasing]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 40 (9 February 1960), 4.

³⁰⁴ *T.D.D. Fabrikasında Çalışan Üyelerimize Tamim [The Declaration to Our Members in T.D.D. Factory]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2, Envelope 127.

³⁰⁵ According to the item 13 of the Labor Act 3008, which was accepted in 1936, the bosses were free to fire any workers. Furthermore, the National Production Law, which was decreed in 1940 to give extraordinary authority to the political power in Turkey, put forth that the workers could not leave their jobs without a proper excuse. Such workers could be forced to go back to work by police. Look at; İ. Hakkı Yeniay, "Çalıştırınlar ve Çalışanlarla İlgili Bir Konuşma."

³⁰⁶ "İşçi Dertleri ve Çalışma Bakanının İncelemeleri [The Workers' Problems and Inspection of Labor Minister]," *Gece Postası*, March 2, 1948.

dismissed all of its workers.³⁰⁷ The boss of Sıtkı Bütün Enamel Factory fired its 13 employees in 1952 without citing any reason.³⁰⁸ One of the reasons for workers' layoffs was to decrease labor costs in the industry. In order to do that, some metal employees fired older workers and recruited new ones at lower wages.³⁰⁹ As stated earlier, the workers' dismissals were widespread due to a dearth of raw material in the sector.³¹⁰ But sometimes the bosses fired workers in order to replace them with low waged workers and used the excuse that the scarcity of raw materials was forcing them to make cuts.³¹¹

In brief, there was no job guarantee for the İstanbul metal worker. The pages of the union newspaper and provincial newspapers were full of analyses and stories about widespread unemployment among the metal workers.³¹² Due to the scarcity of raw material, unemployment became a problem in the metal sector by 1954.³¹³ In 1955, the Eyüp branch of the metal union detailed the unemployment issue found among the metal workers in the region in its working report.³¹⁴ Unemployment rose in the sector again in 1958 due to a

³⁰⁷ "Ansızın İşsiz Bırakılan ve Hakları Ödenmeyen Elli Kişi Zor Durumda [Fifty People Who Became Jobless All of a Sudden and Whose Rights were not Given are in Difficulties]," *Gece Postası*, April 17, 1948.

³⁰⁸ *Bakırköy Şubesinin Sıtkı Bütün Emaye İşçilerine Beyannamesi [The Declaration of Bakırköy Branch to Sıtkı Bütün Enamel Workers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 129.

³⁰⁹ "Madeni Eşya ve Kauçuk Sanayinde de İşçi Tensikası Baş Gösterdi," *Gece Postası*, February 24, 1951. Also look at; "Sendikalı İşçilere Yeni Baskılar [The Current Oppressions on Unionized Workers]," *Gece Postası*, November 7, 1953.

³¹⁰ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Eyüp Şubesinin 11/10/1953 ten 27/5/1955e kadar Çalışma Raporu [The Working Report by the Eyüp Branch of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers' Union from 11/10/1953 to 27/5/1955]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 12 Envelope 683; "Mazot Sıkıntısı Kalkıyor [The Diesel Oil Trouble Ends]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 1.

³¹¹ "İşçiler İşten Çıkarılıyor [Workers Are Being Dismissed]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 10 (6 April 1957), 4; "İşçi Mağdur Edilmemeli [Worker Should not be Victimized]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 1; "Hammadde Sıkıntısı Artıyor [The Scarcity of Raw Material is Being Widespread]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 24 (1 March 1958), 1; "İşsizlik Tehlikesi Kendisini Gösterdi [The Unemployment Threat Revealed Itself]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 25 (1 April 1958), 1; "Maden-İş Bir İşvereni Mahkemeye Verecek [Maden-İş Will Sue an Employer]" *Gece Postası*, September 17, 1958.

³¹² "İşten Çıkarılanlar Gittikçe Artıyor [The Dismissals Are Gradually Increasing]," *Gece Postası*, December 13, 1954; "İşsizlik Arkadaşı [Friend of Unemployment]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 3.

³¹³ "Mensucat ve Madeni Eşya Fabrikasından Çoğu İşçi Çıkarılıyor [Most Workers of Textile and Metal Hardware Factory Are Being Dismissed]," *Gece Postası*, December 7, 1954.

³¹⁴ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Eyüp Şubesinin 11/10/1953 ten 27/5/1955e kadar Çalışma Raporu*.

further scarcity of raw material.³¹⁵ At that point, most prospective metal workers, as well as workers in the other sectors, had to compromise and work for lower than expected wages.³¹⁶ Those who were lucky to (re)find a job in the sector also had to compromise and fall in line under the demands of bosses/managers.

B) Factory Discipline

The difficult life of the metal workers on the shop floor was added to the list of grievances and it motivated them to stand together in an organization. Upon their arrival to the city, the first thing the young male migrants did was to seek out a job; however, those workers were uneducated and unqualified for any industrial job. According to Şenyapılı's survey on Gültepe district where significant amount of metal workers lived, the average age of fathers in any given household was in between 25 and 44, and approximately 60 percent of them had finished only primary school. The Karpat survey demonstrated a similar social structure, in terms of age and education, among the settlers in the northern hills of İstanbul.³¹⁷ These migrants had difficulty of finding a job in the city during the lean years of the 1950s. Unemployment had already been a critical issue for the older residents of İstanbul in the 1940s. The newly emerged private industry could not absorb the considerable number of migrants who continued to stream into İstanbul throughout the 1950s.³¹⁸ The young, uneducated and unqualified migrants who were considered lucky to even find a job constituted the majority of the work force in the metal sector. Such a demographic must have been attractive for the metal bosses, since those poor sections of the labor market constituted a cheap labor force that had no specific qualities and accordingly could be recruited at low wages. In fact, one of the reasons why the metal bosses choose Eyüp or Kağıthane districts was the abundance of such an unskilled labor force in those regions as Ege Cansen

³¹⁵ "Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda İşsizlik Tesbit Ediliyor [The Unemployment Rise in the Metal Sector]," *Gece Postası*, March 25, 1958; "Maden-İş Kolunda İşsizlik Tehlikesi [The Unemployment Danger in the Metal Sector]," *Gece Postası*, April 3, 1958.

³¹⁶ Faruk Özbakan, *İstanbul Madeni Eşya Sanayii*, 1970; Tansı Şenyapılı, "Cumhuriyet'in 75. Yılı Gecekondu'nun 50. Yılı," 310.

³¹⁷ Tansı Şenyapılı, *Bütünleşmemiş Kentli Nüfus Sorunu*, 82-83; Karpat, Kemal *The Gecekondu*, 96-99.

³¹⁸ Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 160.

admitted.³¹⁹ An uneducated and unqualified workforce allowed the bosses/managers to control easily labor on the shop floor, as it was easy to make them obedient as threatening with dismissals.³²⁰ This is the main reason why the metal bosses/managers could easily fire workers during the 1950s as stated above.

Such a ruralized and unqualified work force came face to face with a relatively qualified and already urbanized work force in the city. However, the number of unqualified workers was very high when compared to those of qualified ones. In the absence of unemployed older craftsmen, one of the biggest problems for industrial enterprises, including the metal ones, was to find skilled workers, despite all the attempts to train new arrivals on shop floor. It is quite possible that the high number of unskilled workers and semi-skilled workers resulted in a lack of general fragmentation on the shop floor, since there weren't enough skilled workers to create a meaningful social divide.

The informal organization of neighbourhoods according to the birthplace of migrants could also have been reflected in shop floor dynamics as a type of social division between workers. Nevertheless, one study conducted in 1970 argues that the cohesion of metal workers inside the factories did not reflect their geographic origins; rather, workers from widely different regions were recruited in the metal enterprises. There were few factories where significant numbers of workers from the same birthplaces labored together.³²¹ Moreover, it does not seem that any important division happened during the collective actions that was based on the worker's neighbourhoods and/or original birth of place: metal workers from different origins would join together in the collective actions and play equally important roles during the 1960s. While there might have been minor fragmentation between the metal workers depending upon their original birthplaces in their daily life on shop floor, there is not, unfortunately, sufficient evidence to debate this possibly important aspect of class formation.

³¹⁹ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul August 29, 2012.

³²⁰ Cf. Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 163-191. Also look at: Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979).

³²¹ Faruk Özbakan, *İstanbul Madeni Eşya Sanayii*.

Similarly, we do not know whether such fragmentation influenced the organizational attempts of the metal workers during that period. Therefore, we can assume that being organized in union abolished the possible fragmentations between workers in terms of their original birth places.

Nonetheless, whether coming from different ethnic or religious roots, or having different job qualifications, the overwhelmingly close supervision was seen as another common problem for workers in the sector. Discipline in the workplace referred to the control of any movement of the workers from the beginning of the work period. For example, one can obviously see in the factory regulations, which were very sparse in that period that bosses/managers assumed a strict control over punch cards in the entrance of the factory. These regulations claimed that punching the card of another worker was a reason for dismissal. Furthermore, the regulations declared that even the slightest delay on the job would not be tolerated. According to the rules, managers were free to cut off the wages of workers who were not able to arrive on time. They had also complete authority to determine when and how the work would proceed. According to the regulations, managers were free to assign workers to any shift, and workers had to obey management decisions. It was another a common and strict rule that workers could not wander within workplaces. Managers asked for loyalty and respect toward their supervisors, too. This control was even assumed when workers left their plants; for example, the regulations asserted that the packs or bags of workers would be checked in the factory gate.³²²

In fact, close supervision and time discipline was effectively maintained in several metal plants. For example, a manager from the Arçelik factory narrates:

“The work tempo was more serious in Sötlüce [the place where the factory was located, a.n.] than today. Everyone put up his/her signature at 8am. If anyone arrived at 8.10am, they were not allowed to sign. Your Sunday wage

³²² *General Elektrik Dahili Talimatnamesi [General Electric: The Factory Regulation]* (İstanbul: n.p., 1954), 16-18; *Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları A.Ş. İşyeri İç Yönetmeliği, 1958 [The In-House Regulations]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Envelope 125, 15-16.

was cut as well, as you were not allowed to work on that day. There was a very strict work discipline.”³²³

Such time and movement discipline became excessive in some cases. A metal worker, Mehmet Ağdeviren complained that the workers had to ask to leave their duties even when they were going to toilet.³²⁴ Similarly, the workers of the Metal Endüstrisi Factory in Taşlıtarla neighbourhood, located in Gaziosmanpaşa districts, expressed that the management did not allow them to go outside to meet their needs, such as for drinking water or urinating, until the lunch break at noon.³²⁵ The Türk Demir Döküm workers claimed that management did not let them go out during the lunch break at all.³²⁶ Moreover, the workers, who were provided one hour food and rest according to in-house rules and regulations complained that the managers and foremen pressed them to return to work in only 30 minutes.³²⁷ During this decade, the intense control over work constituted one of the important experiential aspects in the factories for metal workers.

Falling under the term “simple control”, it seems that the labor process was arbitrarily regulated in most metal plants, which means that even the existing law could be neglected by the bosses/managers.³²⁸ The metal workers also experienced strict discipline on the shop floor over the issue of work hours. For example, the İstanbul workers complained about forced overtime during the post-war era. Indeed, employers in İstanbul had grown accustomed to augmenting working hours by exploiting the National Protection Law and the irregular and scarce state inspection of factories during the war years.³²⁹ The employers’ misuse of already ineffective state intervention on the shop floor affairs went on after the war. The workers of

³²³ Quoted from Koray R. Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik*, 305

³²⁴ “Beraber Öğrenelim [Let’s Learn Together],” *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 23 (25 January 1958), 2.

³²⁵ “İş Yerlerinde İşçilere Baskı Modası Geçmedi [The Attitude of Oppressing Workers on Workplaces Did not End],” *Şehir*, March 29, 1959.

³²⁶ “Maden-İş İki İhtilaf Çıkardı [Maden-İş Conducted Two Work Disputes],” *Şehir*, September 7, 1958.

³²⁷ “T.D.Döküm Fabrikası İhtilaf Yuvası Oldu [The Türk Demirdöküm Factory Became a Place Full of Problems],” *Maden-İş*, January 31, 1959.

³²⁸ By the term “simple control” Richard Edwards refers to a direct and arbitrary control of bosses on the labor process within enterprises: *Contested Terrain*, 11-36.

³²⁹ Murat Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Türkiye: Savaş ve Gündelik Yaşam*, 211.

one steel factory complained in 1948 that they were forced to work longer than the Labor Law suggested.³³⁰ The workers of a metal factory in Bakırköy complained in 1951 that employers pushed employees to work for up to 12 hours in the nitric acid section where working more than 8 hours was prohibited by the law.³³¹ Another plant in Kalafat demanded nearly 60 hours in a week from its workers, without any overtime pay.³³² Indeed, one of the burning issues for employees in the 1950s was the arbitrary extension of work hours without overtime payment.³³³ There is no doubt the arbitrary decisions of bosses/managers concerning work time put a certain distance between employers and employees in the sector; therefore, it is no coincidence that the metal workers' union strived to regulate work hours through collective bargaining and collective agreements by the late 1950s, so that bosses/managers could not force workers into situations whenever and however they desired. While discussing the term "simple control", Richard Edwards also argues that this type of control refers to direct supervision of work activity by the factor owners themselves.³³⁴ In several cases, the Turkish metal entrepreneurs themselves controlled the work within the factories. For example, an important shareholder and general manager of the Arçelik factory often visited sections within the factory to check the progress of the work.³³⁵ However, it should be noted that we do not have sufficient evidence to show the widespread behaviour of this sort in the enterprises.

³³⁰ "Gece Postası Muharrirleri İşçileri Dinliyor [Correspondents of Gece Postası Are Listening to Workers]," *Gece Postası*, January 31, 1948.

³³¹ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası Yönetim Kurulu Başkanlığı'na [A Petition to the General Board of the Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2, Envelope 134.

³³² "İşçilerini Haftada 60 Saat Çalıştıran Bir İşveren Mahkemeye Veriliyor [An Employer Who Put His Workers to Work 60 Hours in a Week is Being Sued]," *Gece Postası*, May 7, 1953.

³³³ "Kalafat Yeri Davası [The Cause of Kalafat Workplace]," *Gece Postası*, September 31, 1953; "Birlikte Öğrenelim [Let's Learn Together]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 2; "Günde 14 Saat Çalışmağa Mecbur Edilen İşçiler [The Workers Who were Forced to Work 14 Hours in a Day]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 23 (25 January 1958), 1; "Fazla Çalışan Maden İşçileri [The Metal Workers Working Longer]," *Gece Postası*, January 26, 1959; "Demir Döküm Fabrikasında İşçiler Pazarları Zorla Çalıştırılıyor [The Workers Are Being Forced to Work on Sundays in Demir Döküm Factory]," *Şehir*, February 19, 1959; "İstanbul Semt Şubelerinden Dördünün de Kongresi Başarı ile Sona Erdi [All of the Four District Branch Congresses Ended Successfully]," *Maden-İş* (9 September 1959), 3; "T.D.D.de Atölyede Çalışan İşçiler [The Workers Recruited in the Atelier of T.D.D.]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 38 (1 October 1959), 1 and 4.

³³⁴ Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain*, 25.

³³⁵ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 34.

In fact, once cannot say that the existing laws benefited workers at all, in terms of overtime pay during the 1950s. The factory management had the right to require overtime work without extra payment by law, and the metal managers frequently used this power. The Appeal sent on the behalf of Türk Demir Döküm Joint-Stock Company to the İstanbul Regional Work Office in 1958 stated that overtime work pay was already applied to wages in the factory. According to this document, the management utilized and would utilize overtime work within the limits of the existing laws and according to needs of the market and the job in the factory. Moreover, the document claims that the management provided 50 percent bonus for the longer hours.³³⁶ However, in most cases the metal bosses refused to pay extra money to workers who were forced to work beyond their normal shifts. Widespread forced work, thus, was an important aspect of the metal workers' grievances after the Second World War.

The metal workers also frequently complained that it was very difficult to get a leave of absence from workplaces due to illnesses or accidents. Such workers would run the risk of being dismissed or having their wages cut.³³⁷ According to factory rules and regulations of 1958 in Demir Döküm, the workers who went to the regional office of the Social Security Administration of Turkey for any reason, including any kind of illness or accident, could not demand any money for the time that they were away.³³⁸ And lastly, the workers lashed out at the substandard treatment in the workers' hospitals located around their neighbourhoods.³³⁹ The Demir Döküm management also decided the duration of workers' recovery from any

³³⁶ *Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları A.Ş.-İstanbul İl Hakem Kurulu Başkanlığı'na, 1958 [The Türk Demir Döküm Factories Joint Stock Company-To the İstanbul Provincial Arbitration Committee]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2, Envelope.

³³⁷ "İzin Kağıdı [Leave of Absence Paper]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 2; "İstanbuldan [From İstanbul]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 31 (28 October 1958), 2; "Demir Döküm İşçileri Haksızlığa Uğruyor [Demir Döküm Workers Are Exposing to Injustice]," *Gece Postası*, October 28, 1958.

³³⁸ *Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları A.Ş. İşyeri İç Yönetmeliği, 1958 [The In-House Regulations]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Envelope 125, 15-16.

³³⁹ "Sigortanın Halicioğlu Sağlık İstasyonundan İşçiler Şikayetçi [Workers are Complaining About the Halicioğlu Branch of the Workers' Insurance]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 5 (12 January 1957), 2; "Sigortadan Şikayet Edildi [The Insurance was Complained]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 2; "Birlikte Öğrenelim [Let's Learn Together]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 24 (1 March 1958), 2; "Topçular Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı [The Congress of Topçular Branch was Held]" *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 1 and 2; "İşçilerin Ele Alınmasını İstedikleri Bir Hadise [A Problem Which Workers Want to be Dealt With]," *Şehir*, January 10, 1959; "İstanbul Semt Şubelerinden Dördünün de Kongresi Başarı ile Sona Erdi [All of the Four District Branch Congresses Ended Sucessfully]," *Maden-İş* (9 September 1959), 3.

illnesses and accidents. According to Clause 51 of the Rules and Regulations of 1958, the workers who could not attend work due to illnesses or work accidents longer than ninety days could be fired.³⁴⁰ Based on this clause, a Türk Demir Döküm worker, Ali Osman Yiğit was fired from the factory after having an accident.³⁴¹

The same metal workers who earned insufficient money to sustain themselves in the city and experienced close and arbitrary supervision on shop floor were also exposed to unhealthy and dangerous work conditions. The poor working conditions inside metal plants were yet another crucial factor stimulating workers to respond to their problems through their union.

C) Work Conditions in the Metal Sector

There is no doubt poor working conditions magnified the grievances of the metal workers, since their health and even their lives were at stake in the metal plants. The workers' common problem of unhealthy/unsafe conditions constituted a significant portion of their formal complaints. First of all, they complained about not being well fed due to their low earnings, and that this problem affected their overall workers' health.³⁴² Furthermore, some workplaces, including both big and small plants, did not supply any food such as lunch or supper to their employees, or they supplied low quality foods. Those complaints were common for especially Şakir Zümre and Türk Demir Döküm Factories.³⁴³ Additionally, the workers bemoaned the fact that most metal plants were bereft of necessary health and safety

³⁴⁰ *Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları A.Ş. İşyeri İç Yönetmeliği, 1958 [The In-House Regulations]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Envelope 125, 21.

³⁴¹ "T.D.D.de Şikayet Salgını [The Complaints About TDD]," *Maden-İş* August 1, 1959; "Türk Demirdöküm'de Baskı [The Oppression on Türk Demirdöküm]," *Gece Postası*, August 22, 1959.

³⁴² "Verem Haftası [The Tuberculosis Week]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 2.

³⁴³ "Şakir Zümre Fabrikası İşçilerinin Dilekleri," *Gece Postası*, June 22, 1948; "Atatürkün Emri İle Kurulan Müessese [The Enterprise Founded by the Order of Atatürk]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 4; "T.D.Döküm Fabrikası İhtilaf Yuvası Oldu [T.D.Döküm Factory Became a Place Full of Conflict]," *Maden-İş* (31 January 1959), 4; "Bozuk Yemekler [Contaminated Foods]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 43 (14 May 1960), 1. For other examples of complaints about food, look at: *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası Yönetim Kurulu Başkanlığı'na*; "Kalafat Yerinde Hastalananlara, Kazaya Uğrayanlara Bakan Yok [There is no One Who Would Take Care Sick and Injured Workers in Kalafat]," *Gece Postası*, July 23, 1953; "Toplulukla İş İhtilafları [The Collective Work Disputes]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 2 no. 6 (7 January 1956), 3; "Ayvansaray Civata Fabrikası [Ayvansaray Bolt Factory]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 4.

considerations. Şakir Zümre Factory workers asserted that they were moulding irons in the foundry section twice in a day and the high temperatures there aggravated their illnesses. The same workers claimed that the boss did not provide any work clothes or shoes to protect workers from the dangers of the job.³⁴⁴ The Türk Demir Döküm was another factory where the workers worked under dangerous and unhealthy conditions: Ege Cansen admitted that the foundry was a very dangerous job; additionally, the workers easily got sick due to inhalation of dust and chemicals in the job.³⁴⁵ In the same vein, Sıtkı Bütün Factory workers in 1951 sent a bill to the union and claimed that the employer did not supply any work clothes, that the cafeteria and bathroom were filthy, there was no aspirator in the nitric acid section in which workers labored without any protection, that workers in the painting section worked without any protective clothes and others were assigned dangerous and strenuous jobs without taking any necessary job safety precautions.³⁴⁶ The workers of Ayvansaray Nail Factory also voiced discontent with the high sound levels and high temperatures in the workplace.³⁴⁷ The metal workers in Kalafat, which was composed of smaller ateliers, spoke of the poor health conditions in the workplace, which made people sick.³⁴⁸ A metal worker, Muzaffer Gürün, said:

“We do not have any safety measures in Kalafat workplace. When we get sick, we are not treated well due to lack of money. However, we should have our lives insured. We do not have any changing room. We will be ruined if we have a work accident. Employer grants leaves of absence for two days at

³⁴⁴ “Şakir Zümre Fabrikası İşçilerinin Dilekleri,” *Gece Postası*, June 22, 1948.

³⁴⁵ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul August 29, 2012.

³⁴⁶ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası Yönetim Kurulu Başkanlığı'na*. Also look at: “Sıtkı Bütün Madeni Eşya ve Emaye Fabrikasının Hali [The Conditions in Sıtkı Bütün Metal Hardware and Enamel Factory],” *Gece Postası*, December 11, 1951.

³⁴⁷ “Çivi İmali İçin Hep Otomatik Vasıtalar, Aletler Kullanılıyor [The Automatic Devices and Tools Used to Produce Nails],” *Gece Postası*, April 4, 1952.

³⁴⁸ “Kalafat Yerinde Çalışanların Önlenmeyen Dert ve Şikayetleri [The Unstopped Troubles and Complaints of Workers in Kalafat Region],” *Gece Postası*, July 22, 1953; “Kalafat Yerinde Hastalananlara, Kazaya Uğrayanlara Bakan Yok,” *Gece Postası*, July 23, 1953. Also look at: “Ayvansaray Civata Fabrikası [Ayvansaray Bolt Factory],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 4; “Kilit Fabrikası [The Lock Factory],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 20 (9 November 1957), 1 and 3; “Topçular Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı [The Congress of Topçular Branch was Done],” *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 1 and 2; “İstanbul Semt Şubelerinden Dördünün de Kongresi Başarı ile Sona Erdi [All of the Four District Branch Congresses Ended Successfully],” *Maden-İş* (9 September 1959), 3.

most...We carried too heavy a load; as a result, most of us have lumber disc herniation.”³⁴⁹

Fourthly, workplace accidents, whether due to workers’ ignorance or insufficient precautions, often took place in this sector. In fact, the union newspaper presented a lot of examples of work accidents.³⁵⁰ It was reported that two workers, Kutay Altıntaş and Mehmet Altan, lost their eyes on the job in 1957.³⁵¹ In the same year, Hüseyin Geçkaldı, Şükrü Aydın and Hüseyin Yılmaz, Eyüp Yalçın lost their fingers in the press machines in the different factories.³⁵² There were frequent accidents in the press machines of the Türk Demir Döküm Factory. In late 1958, inexperienced workers were recruited for the press machines, which resulted in some serious work accidents. Several of the workers lost fingers or hands.³⁵³ In 1959, Ali Osman Yiğit had a work accident in the factory.³⁵⁴ The Demir Döküm workers even killed an animal as a sacrifice in the hopes of preventing work accidents, in 1958.³⁵⁵ In addition to the high number of work casualties, some accidents were fatal.³⁵⁶ The worst of all

³⁴⁹ “Kalafat Yerinde Hastalananlara, Kazaya Uğrayanlara Bakan Yok,” *Gece Postası*, July 23, 1953.

³⁵⁰ “Gece Postası Muharrirleri İşçileri Dinliyor [The Reporters of Gece Postası Are Listening Workers],” *Gece Postası*, February 11, 1948; “Madeni Eşya ve Kauçuk Sanayinde de İşçi Tensikası Baş Gösterdi [The Workers’ Dismissals Happen in the Metalwork and Rubber Industries, too],” *Gece Postası*, February 24, 1951; “Kalafat Yeri Davası,” *Gece Postası*, September 31, 1953; “Beraber Öğrenelim [Let’s Learn Together],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 2; Kemal Türkler, “Madeni Eşya Sanayiinde İşçi Sağlığı ve İş Emniyeti Meselesi [The Issue of Workers’ Health and Work Safety in the Metal Hardware Industry],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 2 and 3; “Görünmez Kaza [An Unestimated Accident],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 1 and 3; “İsmail Şahini Kaza Geçirir Geçirmez Evinde Ziyaret Ettik [We Visited İsmail Şahin just after Having an Accident at Home],” *Maden-İş*, year 2 no. 30 (25 September 1958), 4; *Bir Fabrikada Haftada 5 İş Kazası Oluyor-1955 [Five Work Accidents Weekly Take Place in a Factory]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 40 Envelope 1856.

³⁵¹ TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 3, Envelope 149.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *T.D.D. Fabrikasında Çalışan Üyelerimize Tamim*; “Türk Demirdöküm İşyerinde Baskı ve İşten Çıkarmalar [The Oppression and Dismissals in TDD],” *Maden-İş* October 28, 1958.

³⁵⁴ “T.D.D.de Şikayet Salgını [The Complaints About TDD],” *Maden-İş* August 1, 1959; “Türk Demirdöküm’de Baskı [The Oppression on Türk Demirdöküm],” *Gece Postası*, August 22, 1959.

³⁵⁵ “İş Kazasını Önlemek İçin Kurban Kesen İşçiler Arasında Üç Saat [Three Hours Among the Workers who Killed an animal to prevent Work Accidents],” *Gece Postası*, November 26, 1958.

³⁵⁶ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası 8. Genel Kurul Toplantısı*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 133. Also look at; “İşçi Sağlığına Dikkat Gittikçe Azalıyor [The Care to Workers Health Are Gradually Diminishing],” *Gece Postası*, March 7, 1954; “İş Emniyeti Kampanyası [The Campaign For Job Safety],” *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 2 no. 6 (7 January 1956), 4; “Bir İşçi Ailesinin Karşılaştığı Facia [A Tragedy which A Workers’ Family Had],” *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 23 (25 January 1958), 2; “Bir İşçi İki Şaft Arasında Can Verdi [One Worker Died By Being Squeezed Between Two Shafts],” *Gece Postası*, September 10,

accidents was the explosion at the Nuri Kılıgil Factory in 1949, which left 21 workers dead.³⁵⁷ In this sector, the metal workers' very lives were at stake.

Low income, close supervision of the work process and dangerous work conditions all combined to create a sense of unfairness and resulted in widespread grievances and complaints among the metal workers. The worker who raised his voice against unfairness and fought for his rights, on the other hand, encountered deep resentments of either bosses or the managers. The widespread oppression against dissident workers, which was common in other industrial sectors as well, was another reason to standing together in their own organizations.

D) The Oppression of Dissident Workers

Bosses' intolerance to any objection on the shop floor resulted in various forms of oppression of any workers who were either worker-union representatives, or an ordinary worker who raised his voice against unfairness in the workplace. Systemic oppression was especially felt by union members or representatives who were assumed to stand for the workers' rights and who struggled to solve those workers' problems in cooperation with employers. Nevertheless, employers attempted to destroy every means through which workers would voice their demands and rights.

To this end, the metal bosses promoted several methods to quash the channels of protest and dissent. The most important mechanism for discontent workers was the legal institution of their workers' representatives. To render this institution powerless, few bosses/managers did not allow the election of workers' representatives from taking place in their enterprises. In Berec Cell and Battery Factory the managers did not allow the workers to make elections to select their representatives in 1956. This happened in a metal factory in Kağıthane in 1958.³⁵⁸ But, it appears that this was not a pattern in the sector: more than this,

1959; "General Çelik Eşya İşçilerinin Ücretleri Arttı [The Wages of General Steel Hardware Workers Increased]," *Gece Postası*, March 25, 1960.

³⁵⁷ "İşyerlerinde İhmaller Yüzünden Ölen İşçileri Hatırlama Günü [The Remembrance Day for Workers Who are Dead due to Negligences in the Workplaces]," *Gece Postası*, February 25, 1952.

³⁵⁸ *Madeni Eşya İşçileri Eyüp Kongresi Yarın-1956 [The Congress of Eyüp Branch of Metal Hardware Workers is Tomorrow]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 40, Envelope 1856; "İşçi Mümessili

the metal bosses/managers used several other tactics to keep the representative workers under control. For example, they prevented select “undesired workers” from running for elections, or they nullified the election if an undesired worker won.³⁵⁹ Others forced workers to choose from only the men who were loyal to employers.³⁶⁰ In some cases, the metal bosses forced workers to sign a covenant in which the workers promised not to engage in any activities, which were determined to be to the detriment of bosses.³⁶¹ Despite such methods, the efforts to be unionized in the sector flourished towards the late 1950s in the sector.

In addition, the union’s newspaper and provincial newspapers both gave the abundant examples of punishments for dissident workers. The practice of dismissing outspoken workers was especially common. According to the narratives of the metal workers of the period, metal bosses did not allow anyone to have a say in running their enterprises and tolerated no opposition. In the Kalafat workplace, İsmail Özçelik, who wanted his employer to reduce work hours from 58 to 48, was fired without any severance pay.³⁶² In one case where workers refused to work without any overtime pay for their 60 hours in a week, the employer used abusive language against them and then fired three workers.³⁶³ In some cases, bosses fired most of the workers as a result of losing any labor dispute in the Regional Work Offices.³⁶⁴ Hamdi İnağ, who was laid off after getting a leave of absence due to visiting a

Seçimleri İşçi İşveren Mücadelesini Kızıştırdı [The Workers’ Representative Elections Escalated the Struggle of Employee-Employer],” *Son Saat*, March 20, 1955; “Madeni Eşya İşçileri Kongresinde İthamlar [The Accusations in the Congress of Metal Hardware Workers],” *Gece Postası*, April 16, 1956; “Hala Seçim Yapmayan İşyerleri Var [There Are Still Workplaces Where Elections Do Not Take Place],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 17 (31 August 1957), 2; “Mermer İş’te Kaçak İşçi Çalışıyor: Sendika Gerekli Yerlere İhbarı Bulundu [The Illegal Workers are Being Labored in Mermer İş: The Union Remonstrated to the Related Authorities],” *Maden-İş* (1 August 1959), 1 and 2.

³⁵⁹ “Bir Madeni Eşya Fabrikasında Usulsüz Mümessil Seçimi [An Unlawful Representation Election in a Metalwork Factory],” *Gece Postası*, April 14, 1952.

³⁶⁰ “İşçi Mümessilleri Seçimi Hızla Devam Ediyor [The Election of Workers’ Representatives Are Rapidly Going On],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 10 (6 April 1957), 1 and 3.

³⁶¹ “Bir İşyerindeki İşçilere Zorla Taahhütname İmzalatılmış [Workers Were Forced to Sign a Covenant in a Workplace],” *Gece Postası*, April 5, 1959.

³⁶² “Hakkını Arayan Bir İşçi [A Worker Who Seeks His Right],” *Gece Postası*, August 2, 1953.

³⁶³ “İşçilerini Haftada 60 Saat Çalıştıran Bir İşveren Mahkemeye Veriliyor [An Employer Who Put His Workers to Work 60 Hours in a Week are Being Sued],” *Gece Postası*, May 7, 1953.

³⁶⁴ “İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası 8. Genel Kurul Toplantısı.”

doctor, considered his dismissal to have been rooted in his activities as a member of the union and not keeping his tongue still against injustices.³⁶⁵

In addition to the oppression of workers' representatives, private employers, according to the trade unionist of the period, did not want any unionized worker in their workplaces and expelled these workers from the job. There was just one union in the metal sector until the 1960s, the Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers, founded by the older and experienced metal workers of the time. According to Kemal Sülker, the first worker who was laid off due to his trade union activities had been the president of the Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers, Yusuf Sıdal.³⁶⁶ Indeed, the union in 1953 released a press statement in which it mentioned the common practice of dismissing unionized workers, humiliating union representatives and withholding any rights and benefits from them.³⁶⁷ In 1954, similarly, the Enamel Factory in Bakırköy fired 137 workers, including the President, General Secretary, and the other high-ranking union staff, along with the head representative of the workplace.³⁶⁸ The metal bosses especially tended to fire representatives. Even Kemal Türkler, the president of the union, was fired in 1955 from M. Sıtkı Bütün Factory.³⁶⁹ Nurettin Kalpcan, for example, lost his job in 1956 due to his activities in a plant located in Topçular. In 1958, Kemal Türkler, who was the chair of Maden-İş, issued a declaration to the workers of Türk Demir Döküm and he said that as a result of the work conflict which Maden-İş representatives reported to the Regional Work Office in 1958, the general manager of the factory, Burhan Günergün, and his fellow might work to pressure the unionized workers.³⁷⁰ Kemal Türkler was proven right. Kenan Duman, who was one of the workers representatives in the factory, was fired after the work conflict.³⁷¹ It was also reported in 1959 that the Demir

³⁶⁵ "Bir Madeni Eşya Fabrikasında Usulsüz Mümessil Seçimi [The Irregular Representative Election in a Metal Hardware Factory]," *Gece Postası*, April 14, 1952.

³⁶⁶ Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Tarihi*, 100.

³⁶⁷ TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 136. Also look at; "Demir, Madeni Eşya İşçileri Toplandı [The Iron and Metal Hardware Workers Gathered]," *Gece Postası*, October 4, 1953.

³⁶⁸ TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 135.

³⁶⁹ "Bir Sendikanın Başkanı ile Genel Sekreteri İşten Çıkarıldılar [The President and General Secretary of a Union Was Fired]," *Gece Postası*, February 22, 1955.

³⁷⁰ *T.D.D. Fabrikasında Çalışan Üyelerimize Tamim*.

³⁷¹ "Türk Demirdöküm İşyerinde Baskı ve İşten Çıkarmalar."

Döküm management fired 30 workers due to their membership in Maden-İş.³⁷² Similarly, another plant in Silahtarağa fired 28 unionized workers.³⁷³ The metal bosses especially dismissed unionized workers when the workers' disputes were being settled in the arbitration committees.³⁷⁴ Another news source stated that the chair of the Topkapı Branch, Adnan Arkın, and the chair of the Şişli Branch, Tevfik Aktürk, were both fired in 1960 for the same reason.³⁷⁵

In some other cases, the wages of dissident workers were cut. Nurettin Kalpcan, who was permitted to return to work following a decision of the arbitration committee, was not given a portion of his salary.³⁷⁶ Some employers refused to pay social benefits specifically to unionized workers. The trade unionists claimed that some employers assigned tasks to them, which would bring in only lower wages for unionized workers in order to force them to leave their jobs. For them, such attitudes of the employers stemmed from their perception of the

³⁷² "Sendikacılara Baskı Hareketi Maden-İş'te Hala Durmadı [The Oppression on the Maden-İş Members did not Still Stop]," *Gece Postası*, August 19, 1959.

³⁷³ "Bir İşyerinde Sendikali İşçilere Baskı Yapılıyor [Unionized Workers Are Oppressed in a Workplace]," *Gece Postası*, January 2, 1959.

³⁷⁴ "Ücretlere Yüzde 400 Zam İsteyen İhtilaf Kesin Uzlaşmada [The Dispute Which Asked for 400 Percent Wage Increase is on the Final Committee]," *Gece Postası*, May 19, 1956; "Sendikaya Müracat Ettiler [They Invoked to the Union]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 3; "Birlikte Öğrenelim [Let's Learn Together]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 26 (10 May 1958), 2; "Topçular Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı [The Congress of Topçular Branch was Held]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 1 and 2; "İş İhtilafı Çıkarın İşçilere Yeni Baskı [A New Oppression on the Workers who Called for a Work Dispute]," *Maden-İş* (1 August 1959), 1 and 2; "General Dikiş Fabrikasında Maden-İş'in Mücadelesi [The Struggle of Maden-İş in the General Sewing Machine Factory]," *Maden-İş* (1 August 1959), 3; "Şakir Zümre Fabrikasında Altı İşçi İşten Çıkarıldı [The Six Workers were Dismissed in the Şakir Zümre Factory]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 38 (1 September 1959), 1 and 4; "İstanbul Semt Şubelerinden Dördünün de Kongresi Başarı ile Sona Erdi [All of Four District Branch Congresses Ended Successfully]," *Maden-İş* (9 September 1959), 3.

³⁷⁵ *Şakir Zümre Madeni Eşya Fabrikası İşçilerine [To the Workers of Şakir Zümre Metal Hardware Factory]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 3 Envelope 141; "Cabir Metilli İade Edildi [Cabir Metilli Returned His Work]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 2 no. 6 (7 January 1956), 3; "Mümessil Hakem Kurulunda [The Representative is on the Arbitration Board]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 1 and 3. Also look at: "Profilo Mümessili İşten Çıkarıldı [The Representative of Profilo was Dismissed]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 4; "İki Mümessil İşten Çıkarıldı [Two Representatives Were Fired]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 1; "Mümessiller Çalıştırılmadı [The Representatives were not Given any Work]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 4; "İşten Çıkarılan Temsilciler [The Fired Representatives]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 1 and 3; "İş İhtilafları Önemle Takibediliyor [The Work Disputes Are Cautiously Being Followed]," *Maden-İş* (31 January 1959), 3; "T.Demir Döküm İşyerinde Baskı ve İşten Çıkarılanlar [The Oppression on T.Demir Döküm and the Fired Workers]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 31 (28 October 1958), 1 and 2; "Adnan Arkın İşten Çıkarıldı [Adnan Arkın was Fired]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 44 (28 May 1960), 1 and 3; "Topkapı Şube Başkanının İşine Nihayet Verildi [The Job of the President of the Topkapı Branch Was Ended]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 44 (28 May 1960), 1 and 3.

³⁷⁶ "Verilmeyen Zamlar [Not Given Wage Increases]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 4.

trade unions as dens of mischief intent on usurping their rightful profits.³⁷⁷ The Demir Döküm management in particular cut the wages of unionized workers. And although the İstanbul Regional Work Office decided on a 20 percent wage increase effective from September 1, 1958, the unionized workers were not paid their wage increases for a long time after that date.³⁷⁸ Some metal bosses or managers insulted the unionists on shop floor.³⁷⁹ In some cases, employers even beat unionized workers.³⁸⁰ Furthermore, the dissident workers were then assigned more dangerous and arduous jobs.³⁸¹

Despite all the miserable conditions portrayed in the above chapter, it would be wrong to see metal workers as the powerless victims of these economic, social or political conditions. Indeed, some of them decided to act collectively to improve conditions in the workplace and living places. There were two options for the metal workers to respond such an industrial and city life: firstly, the workers might attempt to ameliorate their families' status and become respected citizens in the society through individual or collective actions. It is unfortunate that we do not have available documents to demonstrate the pattern of those individual actions. We have only a little information about the cases brought to the labor courts through the assistance of the union. For collective actions, the metal workers had two formal means in the period. Either they might join a political party to benefit from the populism as the hegemonic ideology in the 1950s, or they might become a member of the union and struggle with their fellow workers. Again, we have little knowledge about whether the metal workers utilized the first means. Yet, we do have abundant evidence of them utilizing the metal union as a leverage to have a better life.

³⁷⁷ Bahir Ersoy, "İşçi Gözü ile İşçi ve İşveren Münasebetleri."

³⁷⁸ "İşçilere Baskı [Oppression on the Workers]," *Maden-İş*, July 20, 1959; "Maden İş Kolunda Sendikacılara Yapılan Baskılar Mahkeme ve Kurula Aksettirildi [The Oppressions on the Unionist in the Metal Sector were Reported to the Labor Court and Regional Work Office]," *Gece Postası* July 20, 1959.

³⁷⁹ "Bir Rum İş Vereni İşçilerin Baskı Yapmasından Şikayetçi [Workers Are Complaining About the Oppression of a Greek Employer]," *Şehir*, September 25, 1958.

³⁸⁰ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 3 (November 1954).

³⁸¹ "Sendikalı İşçilere Baskı Yapanları Dava Ediyoruz [We Are Suing Those Who Oppress the Unionized Workers]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 35 (20 July 1959), 2; "Lehim Ustası Perçincilikte de Aynı Başarıyı Gösterir mi [Does the Solder Master Demonstrate the Same Success in Clinching]," *Şehir*, July 4, 1959.

Trade unionism, therefore, was the main means to ameliorate the life conditions and earn a respectable in an assumed democratic and modern society. The metal workers who founded and organized the unions were determined to stay within the existing political and social order and law; moreover, they preferred to improve their union by exploiting the fissures within the political system, and to reform the existing legal framework on behalf of workers rather than fighting in their workplaces. They also aimed to create a workers' community in which the metal workers of İstanbul would realize, declare and resist as one voice in support their common interests. Although the union approach towards the methods of battle was revised to a certain extent and the union began to lend more importance to conducting fights within workplaces over time, the framework of the first unionists, which was to involve themselves in the political sphere and remain within the imposed legal system to make workers a respected group in the modern system, left a significant legacy for unions to follow in the succeeding periods. Therefore, we must analyze the foundation of the union, and the assumed political and industrial system at their early roots.

CHAPTER 4

BETWEEN LOYALTY AND INSUBORDINATION: THE FORMATION AND FURTHER PROGRESS OF THE UNION

Trade unions were the significant instruments of the İstanbul workers to improve their lives, both in workplaces and communities, throughout the period covering the post-war years. Although the history of unionization in Turkey went back to late nineteenth century, it does not follow a steady and progressive linear development, largely due to state oppression. Finally, the 1938 Association Law prohibited the foundation of organizations based on the class.³⁸² After the Second World War, led by the experienced and old workers, trade unions emerged in İstanbul in several sectors. The unions, which had been founded in 1946 considerably flourished without being controlled by the government, were prohibited; yet, the government, as debated above, would make the foundation of trade unions possible with the 1947 Trade Union Law albeit with important reservations to control the development of unionism.

One of the unions founded after the Union Law in 1947 was the Union of İstanbul Iron and Metal Hardware Workers. From this date onwards, the metal union became more influential, albeit slowly, among the metal workers especially after the mid-1950s. The union, which was established by the older skilled workers in the sector, shared the state's perspective about industrial relations and social justice and applied lobby activities to defend the rights of its members in its first years. The union's policy about the industrial framework of the labor relations in Turkey would not considerably change in the future, as the relatively young workers began to join in the union and this young generation took over the administration of it; however, the new administration which took power in 1954 began to conduct several work

³⁸² For the history of trade unions in Turkey before 1945, look at: Lütü Eroğlu, *Türkiye'de İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi*; Sedat Ağralı, *Günümüze Kadar Belgelerle Türk Sendikacılığı*; Toker Dereli, *The Development of Turkish Trade Unionism*; Anıl Çeçen, *Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*; Hüseyin Avni Şanda, *1908 İşçi Hareketleri*; Nikolaevich Rozaliev, *Türkiye'de Sınıflar ve Sınıf Mücadeleleri*; Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihinden Yapraklar*; Şehmus M. Güzel, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketi*; Adnan Mahiroğulları, *Cumhuriyetten Günümüze Türkiye'de İşçi Sendikacılığı*; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Tarihi*.

actions that fell within the defined legal framework of the time to defend its members rights. Through application of the collective labor dispute mechanism, the worker's representatives and unionized workers would often experience tense relations with the bosses/managers in the sector. It is also important to note that the union strived to form several solidarity mechanisms within itself as it expanded among the metal workers after the mid-1950s to empower worker's unity to stand against any laws contrary to workers' interests, and against any bosses who were assumed to attempt to exploit workers "greedily and unlawfully".

Consequently, the metal workers' experiences on city and work life and their collective responses on the shop floor contributed to the improvement of a labor language which focused on the importance of being together to defend their rights and which oscillated between loyalty and insubordination to their bosses/managers in workplaces. However, this language was still tempered with the idea of a paternalist state and the existence of common interests between workers and employers. In the end, these unionization efforts and a common language left an important heritage for the more widespread collective conflicts that took place during the 1960s between the metal workers and the bosses/managers.

I. The Formation and Progress of the Union

Unfortunately, there are few documents that shed light on the activities of the Union of İstanbul Iron and Metal Hardware Workers in the late 1940s. The union was formed in July 1947 by the initiatives of Yusuf Sıdal, who worked as a fitter machinist in Şakir Zümre Factory, and other experienced workers.³⁸³ Sıdal borrowed 400 Turkish Lira from the Union of Textile Workers in Golden Horn Region to establish the group.³⁸⁴ It is important to note that some of these older and skilled workers were ex-communists or ex-unionists and they were influential in the foundation and progress of the union. One of the founders was

³⁸³ Indeed, a famous unionist, Kemal Sülker, claimed in one of his educational studies of the metal workers in 1963 that mainly older workers formed the trade unions of the after 1947 period. *İşçilerin Teşkilatlanma Çabaları [The Unionization Attempts of Workers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 23 Envelope 1245.

³⁸⁴ *Maden-İş'in 16 Yıllık Tarihçesi [The Sixteen Year Old History of Maden-İş]*, TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive Envelope 1643.

renowned Üzeyir Kuran (alias Father Üzeyir) who had been a significant figure in union activities of the 1920s. Üzeyir Kuran, who had been trained in a vocational school, had also been a member of the Turkish Communist Party at the same time interval.³⁸⁵ Although we do not have any document to argue to what extent Üzeyir Kuran socialist legacy has helped in the shaping of the union's policy and worldview of the early metal unionists, we know that Father Üzeyir was an influential figure in the union's activities. First, he was the general chair of the union between 1950 and 1954. Then, he was actively involved himself in union conferences and made speeches in order to defend the workers' cause. Despite his socialist legacy, Kuran's ideological stance and approach to workers' causes was politically ambiguous and pragmatic. He utilized the concept of class more often than his counterparts in his speeches and talks in several union activities; still, he believed, at least in his discourse, in the peaceful solution of workplace conflicts or defended the solidarity between classes regarding the development of Turkish industry as a national cause. There is no doubt that his ambiguous stance inspired other influential figures and policies of the metal union.

Yusuf Sıdal, another union founder, was also an experienced and skilled metal worker. Like Üzeyir Kuran, he had actively engaged in unionization movements in the 1920s.³⁸⁶ There exists no document to show that Sıdal was a member of the communist party, but Sıdal and Kuran knew each other from those days. Like both these figures, all of the other founders of the metal union were skilled workers in the private metal factories in İstanbul, such as Ayvansaray Nail Factory, Şakir Zümre Metal Hardware Factory, and Türmasan Nail Factory. For example, Nizamettin Babaoğlu, another important figure within the union, had attended a vocational high-school and was recruited into a metal factory.³⁸⁷ Similarly, Basri

³⁸⁵ "Üzeyir Kuran Meslek ve Sendikacılık Hayatını Bütün Teferruatıyla Anlatıyor [Üzeyir Kuran Narrates His Life of Occupation and Unionism in All Its Aspects]," *Gece Postası*, September 2, 1951; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetten Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*, 236-238.

³⁸⁶ Faruk Pekin, "Sendikalar [Trade Unions]," *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* vol. 6 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1994).

³⁸⁷ "Müstakil Milletvekili Adayı Nizamettin Babaoğlu Ne Diyor? [What Does Nizamettin Babaoğlu, A Candidate in the Elections Say?]," *Gece Postası*, May 7, 1950.

Karagöz honed his skills during work.³⁸⁸ One advantage of a founders' position in the job hierarchy was that the union, from the beginning of its foundation, acted mainly to improve the skills and lifestyles of its members. Providing financial help to its members was defined as one of the duties in its founding statutes in 1947.³⁸⁹ Leading by the skilled workers might make the foundation of the union easy, and in this sense, the history of the 1947 unionism in Turkey fits well within the labor history in the world. However, being a skilled worker does not seem to give a privilege in involving in the union affairs, at least in the eyes of bosses/managers as it is being proven by that Yusuf Sidal as the general chair of the union was fired in 1948.³⁹⁰ Therefore, the oppression on unionized workers, either skilled or unskilled, was severe in the metal sector.

Despite being founded by the older and skilled workers, the founders did not attempt to exclude unskilled workers; rather, they aimed to develop the union core which they assumed would be constituted of mainly skilled workers. This would prove unfruitful, however, due to the scarcity of skilled workers in the sector, and both unskilled workers, as well as skilled ones, would later become the active members of the union. In this regard, it seems that there was no division between the organized metal workers in terms of their skills; for example, both of these groups would be workers' representatives in the future and/or act as the active and militant members of the union. In fact that there were six unskilled workers as well as skilled ones such as a fitter, a moulder, two turners, a caster, a press operator and a welder among the members of the executive committee who were selected in 1957.³⁹¹ This would enhance the solidarity between workers, especially when they collectively encounter with bosses/managers on the shop floor.

³⁸⁸ "Basri Karagöz Hayatını ve Şakir Zümre Fabrikasında Bir İnfilak Hadisesini Anlatıyor [Basri Karagöz Narrates His Life and an Explosion in Şakir Zümre Factory]," *Gece Postası*, July 22, 1951.

³⁸⁹ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Ana ve İç Tüzüğü [The Statute of the Union of Iron and Metalwork Workers in Istanbul]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 5 Envelope 281; "Boşta Kalan İşçilere Yardım Yapılacak [The Workers Who Become Jobless Will be Helped]," *Gece Postası*, October 12, 1954.

³⁹⁰ "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Dertleri [The Troubles of Iron and Metalhardware Workers]," *Gece Postası*, November 11, 1948.

³⁹¹ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının 15 Aralık 1957 Tarihindeki 10. Genel Kurula Sunulmak Üzere Hazırlanmış Hesap Raporu [The Deed Statement That was Prepared to be Offered to 10. General Congress of Türkiye Maden-İş Union in December 15, 1957]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 3, Envelope 151.

In fact, the post-war unions, as the actors of the industrial democracy and as significant institutions to provide worker loyalty to the factory regime, were not effective in achieving their initial goals and they had difficulty attracting particularly the young and unskilled worker in their first years. Indeed, the scholars of the period claimed that workers were indifferent to the unions in the late 1940s.³⁹² Üzeyir Kuran bemoaned workers' ignorance of the importance of being organized in the union in 1950.³⁹³ Distrust of the legal framework can account for some of the workers' indifference to unions – a framework that often failed in its promises due to legal constraints. But the main reason for the weakness of trade unions was employer oppression of unions and workers' representatives. Even the Labor Minister of the DP government, Hasan Polatkan, admitted such oppression on those who sought workers' rights on the shop floor.³⁹⁴ Yusuf Sıdal put employers' oppression in the spotlight to explain workers' ignorance or reluctance to being unionized.³⁹⁵ In fact, Yusuf Sıdal himself was the first union leader to be dismissed from his job in 1948 due to his involvement in union affairs.³⁹⁶ In the future, Kemal Türkler who became the general chair in 1954, would be dismissed from the Sıtkı Bütün Enamel Factory. Similarly, the metal workers of Şakir Zümre Factory confessed that they could not fight for their rights out of the fear of losing their jobs. They also noted that the employer established a relief fund for non-unionized employees in the factory to prevent workers from being drawn into union organization.³⁹⁷ As discussed above, there is an abundance of news reports, which show how often the worker's representatives lost their jobs in the metal sector during the 1950s.

³⁹² Orhan Tuna, "İşçi Sendikalarının Mahiyet ve Vazifeleri [The Importances and Duties of Trade Unions]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 3 (1950); Sadi Irmak, "Memleketimizin Çalışma Meseleleri [The Work Problems of Our Country]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 8 (1956), 45.

³⁹³ "Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Temas Ettikleri Çok Mühim Davalar [The Very Important Problems That the Metal Hardware Workers Address]," *Gece Postası*, December 5, 1950; "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Toplantısı [The meeting of the Iron and Metal Hardware Workers]," *Gece Postası*, December 6, 1950.

³⁹⁴ "Çalışma Bakanının Son Tamimi Üzerine Bazı Notlar [Some Notes about the Last Inpsection of the Labor Minister]," *Gece Postası*, July 30, 1950.

³⁹⁵ "İşçi Sendikaları Feshedilmek Tehlikesinde [Trade Unions Face the Danger of Being Abolished]," *Gece Postası*, February 3, 1948. Also look at; 'Maden-İş'in 16 Yıllık Tarihçesi'; "İşçilerin Teşkilatlanma Çabaları."

³⁹⁶ "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Dertleri [The Troubles of Iron and Metalhardware Workers]," *Gece Postası*, November 11, 1948.

³⁹⁷ "Şakir Zümre Fabrikası İşçilerinin Dilekleri," *Gece Postası*, June 22, 1948.

Consequently, the metal union could not flourish in terms of membership figures in its earliest period.

In fact, the union made no huge leaps forward in the beginning of the 1950s. In a general meeting in 1954, it was stated that the number of organized metal workers in the union was over one thousand members. But according to the officers, the union was still in its infancy.³⁹⁸ It seems that with the foundation of the new metal plants and increasing numbers of prospective metal workers coming into the city, the expansion of the metal union would later become more feasible, after the mid-1950s. In parallel with the coming of the young and uneducated migrants, a young and more militant unionist generation, which was often accused of being communist, began to rule the union. In the 1954 congress, Kemal Türkler, who had become the chair of the Bakırköy Branch in 1952, and his friends, Ruhi Yümlü, Cabir Metilli and Kazım Narmanlı, took power in the union and followed a more militant route on the shop floor.³⁹⁹ Due to the intense efforts of these young metal workers and their pragmatic stance to benefit from political opportunities, the union would significantly expand towards the 1960s. In the 1956 congress, the union decided to act on a national scale and changed its name to *Maden ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası-Maden-İş (Mine and Metal Hardware Workers' Union)*. By 1957, branches had been established in the four different districts of İstanbul which covered the area of the most important metal plants, and the number of organized metal workers rose to 6 708 in the city.⁴⁰⁰ By 1961, the total number of their district branches was 7 in İstanbul and the number of union members had reached to 28 000.⁴⁰¹ The numbers suggest that after the mid-point of the decade, Maden-İş showed a

³⁹⁸ “Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikaya Alakasız [The Iron and Metalwork Workers Were Indifferent to the Union],” *Gece Postası*, September 16, 1953; “Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Gittikçe Gelişiyor [The Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers Improves],” *Gece Postası*, April 7, 1954; *Bakırköy Şubesinin Sıtkı Bütün Emaye İşçilerine Beyannamesi*.

³⁹⁹ “İdare Heyetimiz [Our Administrative Board],” *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası New Bulletin*, (April 1954).

⁴⁰⁰ *Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu, 7 Ekim 1956-15 Aralık 1957 [The Annual Report of Mine, Metal Hardware and Machine Workers' Union in Turkey]*, 6-7.

⁴⁰¹ *Maden-İş Faaliyet Raporu: XIII. Genel Merkez Kongresi, 1957-1961 [The Annual Report of Maden-İş: The XIIIth General Headquarters Conference]*, 99-118 and 191.

considerable growth and it became an influential organization among the İstanbul metal workers.

It may be assumed that clear that the development of the union was the result of the stubborn and militant struggles of the top officers of the union, who were representatives at the same time on the shop floor and worker's representatives. Despite oppression and losing their jobs more than once, as discussed above, the new generation did not give up fighting for the rights of the union members. More importantly, they would continue to work in the plants and they never severed their relations with the workers. That means the union officers had close relations with the rank and file. In fact, the union spent considerable effort to return the dismissed representatives to their workplaces.⁴⁰² As a result of their struggles, a significant number of workers related to the cause of the union and learned to act together on the shop floor. Furthermore, a young unionist generation arose in both the rank and file of the union and on the shop floor level as union representatives. This generation, which earned the trust

⁴⁰² In fact, there are plenty of sources which demonstrate that the metal bosses/managers often fired the worker's representatives and union fought hard to return them to their work. For such examples, see: "Demir, Madeni Eşya İşçileri Toplandı [The Iron and Metal Hardware Workers Gathered]," *Gece Postası*, October 4, 1953; "Bir Sendikanın Başkanı ile Genel Sekreteri İşten Çıkarıldılar [The President and General Secretary of a Union Was Fired]," *Gece Postası*, February 22, 1955; "Cabir Metilli İade Edildi [Cabir Metilli Returned His Work]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 2 no. 6 (7 January 1956), 3; "Ücretlere Yüzde 400 Zam İsteyen İhtilaf Kesin Uzlaşmada [The Dispute Which Asked for 400 Percent Wage Increase is on the Final Committee]," *Gece Postası*, May 19, 1956; "Mümessil Hakem Kurulunda [The Representative is on the Arbitration Board]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 1 and 3; "Profilo Mümessili İşten Çıkarıldı [The Representative of Profilo was Dismissed]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 4; "İki Mümessil İşten Çıkarıldı [Two Representatives Were Fired]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 1; "Mümessiller Çalıştırılmadı [The Representatives were not Given any Work]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 4; "Sendikaya Müracat Ettiler [They Invoked to the Union]," *Maden-İş* (23 March 1957), 3; "Birlikte Öğrenelim [Let's Learn Together]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 26 (10 May 1958), 2; "İşten Çıkarılan Temsilciler [The Fired Representatives]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 1 and 3; "Topçular Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı [The Congress of Topçular Branch was Held]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 27 (16 June 1958), 1 and 2; "T.Demir Döküm İşyerinde Baskı ve İşten Çıkarılanlar [The Oppression on T.Demir Döküm and the Fired Workers]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 31 (28 October 1958), 1 and 2; "Bir İşyerinde Sendikalı İşçilere Baskı Yapılıyor [Unionized Workers Are Oppressed in a Workplace]," *Gece Postası*, January 2, 1959; "İş İhtilafları Önemle Takibediliyor [The Work Disputes Are Cautiously Being Followed]," *Maden-İş* (31 January 1959), 3; "İş İhtilafı Çıkaran İşçilere Yeni Baskı [A New Oppression on the Workers who Called for a Work Dispute]," *Maden-İş* (1 August 1959), 1 and 2; "General Dikiş Fabrikasında Maden-İş'in Mücadelesi [The Struggle of Maden-İş in the General Sewing Machine Factory]," *Maden-İş* (1 August 1959), 3; "Şakir Zümre Fabrikasında Altı İşçi İşten Çıkarıldı [The Six Workers were Dismissed in the Şakir Zümre Factory]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 38 (1 September 1959), 1 and 4; "İstanbul Semt Şubelerinden Dördünün de Kongresi Başarı ile Sona Erdi [All of Four District Branch Congresses Ended Successfully]," *Maden-İş* (9 September 1959), 3; "Adnan Arkin İşten Çıkarıldı [Adnan Arkin was Fired]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 44 (28 May 1960), 1 and 3; "Topkapı Şube Başkanının İşine Nihayet Verildi [The Job of the President of the Topkapı Branch Was Ended]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 44 (28 May 1960), 1 and 3.

of the workers in the 1950s, would be significant actors of the more severe struggles during the next decade.

Provincial newspapers and union journals of the 1950s readily show us that Maden-İş was improved on the shoulders of representatives on the shop floor. The worker's representatives who were chosen by the workers were given the task of bringing the worker's demands to management, and presenting the complaints of workers and managers while trying to solve those problems through negotiation. This model had been established by the Labor Law ratified in 1936. The existing law already provided workers with the chance of selecting their own representatives, who was shown also by Maden-İş at the union's representative on the shop floor, or the union attempted to make their own representatives selected as the worker's representatives at the factory. Nearly all worker's representatives inside the workplaces, where the union was organized, were at the same time the union's representatives.⁴⁰³ The representatives, who worked cooperatively with their colleagues and dealt with even the smallest, day to day problems brought to them, were the key figures in the organization of the union.⁴⁰⁴ With a lack of written evidence, it is hard to draw conclusions on how the worker's and/or union's representatives functioned in the internal organization of the union; yet, since nearly all high officers of the union, such as Kemal Türkler, Kazım Narmanlı, Cabir Metilli and others were at the same time the worker's and union's representatives, there must have been close relations between rank and file and the people who were at the top positions of the union hierarchy at the same time. For the workers, the union, rather than being an abstract, complex entity, was embodied by the worker's

⁴⁰³ Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu, 7 Ekim 1956-15 Aralık 1957 [The Annual Report of Mine, Metal Hardware and Machine Workers' Union in Turkey], 14.

⁴⁰⁴ Şakir Zümre Madeni Eşya Fabrikası İşçilerine [To the Workers of Şakir Zümre Metal Hardware Factory], TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 3 Envelope 141; Maden-İş Faaliyet Raporu: XIII. Genel Merkez Kongresi, 1957-1961 [The Annual Report of Maden-İş: The XIIIth General Headquarters Conference], 134; Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının İstanbul Bölge Merkez Şubesinin 9-Ekim-1960 Tarihinde Yapılacak İlk Normal Kongresine Sunulmak Üzere 1.1.1959 Tarihinden 30.09.1960 Tarihine Kadar Faaliyet Raporu [The Annual Report of Deeds Between 1.1.1959 and 30.9.1960 to the First Congress of İstanbul District of Turkey Maden-İş Union in 9 October 1960], TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 2 Envelope 80, 1; Sendika Temsilcisi ve Görevleri [Union Representatives and Their Duties], TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive Envelope 673.

representatives who were working beside them on shop floor. Therefore, representatives were the most essential element of the union to bridge the gap between union and workers.

The importance of the representative mechanism after the war years may further be understood from the intense and widespread boss'/manager's oppression of representatives, as will be described in detail below. The metal bosses/managers utilized several tactics, including not allowing elections to take place, and forcing workers to select the bosses' own "man" (representative), or dismissing the elected workers, etc., all to prevent the union gaining strength on the shop floor level. The metal union actually had a difficult struggle against their bosses to have unionized workers' representatives, or to have their own chosen members selected in workplaces as representatives. The choice of "man" was important since they would be the most significant actors in dealing with workers' problems and grievances through the law, and there were assumed to act as fair mediators between workers and managers/bosses.⁴⁰⁵ The most significant function of representatives in the workplace was to carry workers' problems to managers. The metal representatives chose to meet with managers directly as a first step in solving shop floor issues. The union often emphasized the importance of compromising with employers to create peaceful working conditions on the shop floor level.⁴⁰⁶ But due to the widespread oppression of both representatives and organized workers in the sector, the relations between bosses and representatives was antagonistic from the beginning. In fact, the representatives were the most oppressed groups, a fact that clearly attracted the rage of the metal employers. Yet, the metal representatives would largely try to fulfill their duties during the 1950s and would faithfully execute union policies on shop floor level. In this regard, they would become the most significant group for the union by providing steady relations between the union and the workers, themselves. The union officers who were at the same time metal representatives, such as Kemal Türkler, Kazım Narmanlı, Ruhi Yümlü, Cavit Şarman, Hilmi Güner in the 1950s, would be most important actors during the more intense struggles of the 1960s.

⁴⁰⁵ *Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu*, 14.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 15.

II. The Union, Bosses and State

İstanbul Iron and Metal Hardware Union had shared the general ideological and nationalist political framework of the post-war industrial democracy in Turkey to leverage its demands. In its first statute, which was immediately published after the 1947 Trade Union Law, it was stated that the union would elevate the social status and lifestyles of its members only by working within the boundaries of the law. Furthermore, the statute also claimed that anyone who was known to harbor ideas that might damage the “high interests of the state and nation” would not be accepted as a member.⁴⁰⁷ The statute designated that the aim of the union was to cooperate with employers to increase productivity in the workplace, and to improve relations between employers and employees. This would result in the development of national industry and wealth, which the workers were assumed to get their deserved share.⁴⁰⁸ However, the actual progress of relations with the metal bosses/managers after the Second World War would compel the union to fight with the employees, rather than cooperating with them, in a combined effort to improve the lives of its members in that decade. The ensuing fight clearly influenced the language of union’s officers and worker representatives. In this regard, following the national development discourse that promised a good life in case of working in solidarity with employers limited the activities of union which could easily be indicated as harmful to the development of national industry; however, this nationalist discourse, at the same time, provided a strong ground to the union activists who hinged their demands for worker’s rights based on the employees being loyal and hard working citizens of the country. In fact, when they felt that worker’s rights were not provided either by bosses/managers or state, the union officers and worker’s representatives utilized the nationalist ideology to leverage their demands.

⁴⁰⁷ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Ana ve İç Tüzüğü [The Main and Internal Regulations of the İstanbul Iron and Metal Hardware Workers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 5 Envelope 281.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

A) Ideological Framework of Union Policies

Following the dominant nationalist discourse of the post-war years in terms of national industrial development, the organized metal workers of İstanbul supported the idea of working in cooperation with their employers to improve national productivity and industry in Turkey. Thus, the metal union hit upon the idea of promoting this solidarity between the classes as a way to develop the whole society without falling into “destructive class struggles.” The union seemed to take responsibility for engendering loyalty among workers to their workplaces, in the absence of any employer’s strategy to do so. In return for cooperating with employers, the metal workers would demand a reasonable, modest income to sustain their families and provide a good lifestyle for them, as well as expecting decent treatment in the workplace. They also wished to be recognized as helpful citizens who contributed to development of society in their minds and therefore to be given a respected place within the broader social hierarchy.

In order to foster the union position after the war years, the early union ideology defined workers as an indispensable group of an assumed democratic society. It stated that the society could not live in prosperity unless workers got their deserved rights and shares: the interests of the metal workers could not be separated from the interests of the whole nation. Under this ideal society, neither bosses nor workers should be greedy, or demand more than they deserved.⁴⁰⁹ In a speech during the opening of Halıcıoğlu Branch in 1953, Yusuf Sıdal stated that the unionized metal workers constituted a significant section of the army of production in the land; therefore, the union had to develop, despite all hardships, to fulfill its national duties.⁴¹⁰ On the front page of the union’s newspaper dated April 1954, it was stated that the prosperity of workers was strictly tied with Turkey’s future. The paper went on to define the role of workers’ representatives on the shop floor as a “national” duty.⁴¹¹ And it

⁴⁰⁹ “Müstakil Milletvekili Adayı Nizamettin Babaoğlu Ne Diyor?” *Gece Postası*, May 7, 1950.

⁴¹⁰ *Yusuf Sıdal’ın Halıcıoğlu Şubesi Açılış Konuşması [The Opening Talk of Yusuf Sıdal in Halıcıoğlu Branch]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 122.

⁴¹¹ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 (April 1954).

seems that the coming of the new young unionist generation barely changed this ideological stance.

Indeed, the arguments in the union journal asserted that the development of modern society all over the world was the product of workers' efforts. Furthermore, the working class, according to Maden-İş, was the most significant social group in the maintenance of a peaceful and healthy society. To not recognize workers' rights and to not respect to them as citizens would be to jeopardize whole system.⁴¹² In fact, Turkish society would improve on the shoulders of hard working and loyal Turkish workers. The national economy, similarly, would be promoted by workers who were supplying products.⁴¹³ The president, Kemal Türkler, asserted that the metal workers were specifically proud of being a group of Turkish workers.⁴¹⁴ To encourage this sense of pride, the union routinely advised its members to work hard on the shop floor and be loyal citizens. Being diligent workers, indeed, was expressed as a national duty. To disseminate its ideology amongst the workers, the union representatives distributed leaflets advising workers to work hard toward increasing national productivity. These leaflets put forth that worker's assiduous work would, in turn, result in the development of the national economy.⁴¹⁵ The union defined its very existence and main

⁴¹² "İşçinin Teknik Sahadaki Fikirlerine Kıymet Verilmeli [The Workers' Opinions on Technical Issues Must Be Taken Into Account]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 5 12 March 1955, 2; "Grev Hakkı Tanımamak [Not Recognizing Right to Strike]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, 14 September 1956, 8; *Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu, 7 Ekim 1956-15 Aralık 1957* [The Annual Report of Mine, Metal Hardware and Machine Workers' Union in Turkey], 15; Kemal Sülker, "Kollektif İş Akdinden Ne Anlıyoruz? Kemal Türkler ile Görüşme [What Can We Understand from the Collective Agreement? Interview With Kemal Türkler]," *Gece Postası*, February 27, 1959; "Eyüp Semt Şubesi Kongresi [Eyüp Local Branch Congress]," *Maden-İş* 20 July 1959, 3.

⁴¹³ "Sendikalı Olalım [Let's Join in Unions]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 1 April 1954, 2; "Verem Haftası [The Tuberculosis Week]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 2; "Yurdumuzda İşçi [Worker in Our Country]" *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 2.; "Demas Demir Çekme Fabrikası İşçileri 1 Öğün Yemek İstiyor [Demas Iron Workers Demand Food Once a Day]," *Maden-İş* (29 January 1957), 4; Kemal Sülker, "Eli Kırbaçlı İşveren Vekili İstemiyoruz [We Do not Want Managers With Whip at Their Hands]," *Gece Postası*, May 22, 1958; "Eyüp Semt Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı, İstekler Belirtilti [The Eyüp Local District Congress Held, the Demands Were Declared]," *Maden-İş* (20 July 1959), 1 and 3.

⁴¹⁴ "İşçinin Teknik Sahadaki Fikirlerine Kıymet Verilmeli [The Workers' Opinions on Technical Issues Must Be Taken Account]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 5 (12 March 1955), 2; "Eyüp Semt Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı, İstekler Belirtilti [The Eyüp Local District Congress Was Done, the Demands Were Declared]," *Maden-İş* 20 July 1959, 1 and 3.

⁴¹⁵ "Yeni Kampanyamız [Our New Campaign]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 1 April 1954; "Eyüp Semt Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı, İstekler Belirtilti [The Eyüp Local District Congress Was Done, the Demands Were Declared]," *Maden-İş* 20 July 1959, 1

function as being an entity, which facilitated an increase of productivity in the workplace. In parallel with this, Maden-İş expressed its intention of contributing to peaceful relations on the shop floor, creating a peaceful work order and helping to increase productivity, rather than destroying the harmony between employees and employers and inhibiting the proper running of enterprises.⁴¹⁶ The union presented the interests of workers as the interests of whole society. They felt that recognizing workers' rights and improving their life and work conditions would contribute to the development of Turkish society as a whole. To make such a society possible, Maden-İş sought to establish good relations based on mutual respect and understanding with bosses.⁴¹⁷ However, it would be wrong to argue that such a nationalist ideology which might cloud, or cover up, the inequalities based on the class differences in a capitalist society that completely restricted the union activities; rather, the union was successful in making its demands through the nationalist ideology. Since the union's nationalist ideology demanded a fair return for its members' hard work, from the state, society and employees. In fact, when this request fell on deaf ears, the union discourse would adopt a more rebellious tone.

After reminding employers of the importance and functions of workers for the benefit of society and country, the metal workers listed their demands in the congresses of the union and legal work disputes after the war years. They wanted their hard-earned rights and shares to be recognized. Since the most important industrial resource was the willingness of the labor force, the workers argued they had the right to make such demands of their bosses.⁴¹⁸

The seditious language of the union emerged from that point. Not only was the assumed

and 3; "Sendikalar da İşçileri Daha Çok İstihsale Davete Başladı [Unions, too, Began to Invite Workers for More Production]," *Gece Postası*, July 21, 1959.

⁴¹⁶ "Türk Demir Döküm İşçilerinin İhtilafları Reddedildi [The Disputes of Türk Demir Döküm Workers Were Refused]," *Gece Postası*, December 27, 1958; "Elektro Metal Fabrikasında Röportaj [The Interview in the Electro Metal Factory]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 44 (28 May 1960), 4.

⁴¹⁷ *Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu*, 15; "Maden-İş Sendikası Yıldırım Ekibi Kuruluyor [An Urgency Team of Maden-İş Union Is Being Formed]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 5 (12 January 1957), 1; "İşçiler Yüzde 40 Zam İstiyorlar [The Workers Demand 40 Percent Wage Increase]," *Maden-İş* 23 March 1957, 1; "Vehbi Koç'a Ait Fabrikada Kollektif İş Akdi İçin Teşebbüse Geçildi [Attempts Have Been Initiated to Make a Collective Agreement in the Factory Owned By Vehbi Koç]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 29 (9 August 1958), 1 and 3; "Maden-İş İyi Münasebet Peşinde [Maden-İş Is Looking for a Good Relationship]," *Şehir*, January 27, 1959.

⁴¹⁸ "Demir İşçilerinin Zam Talebi Hakem Kurulunda [The Wage Increase Demands of the Iron Workers Are On the Arbitration Council]," *Gece Postası*, April 16, 1954.

industrial regime of the existing political structure shared by the metal union, but also the real experiences of their city life and work life which also contributed in shaping the ideological framework of the union. The real, daily experiences, which were very different from the idealized picture as sketched by the industrial regime, did not shake the roots of the union ideology; nevertheless, the gap between that ideal and reality was clearly pointed out by union officers or representatives. For example, Üzeyir Kuran claimed that although the workers constituted the most honored group of the society as the producers of wealth, they still could not win their rights.⁴¹⁹ According to the Kemal Sülker notes on the eighth congresses of Maden-İş, most members stated that workers did not have a respected place in social life and were despised by other social groups.⁴²⁰ The future chair of the union, Kemal Türkler, had already normalized this type of social structure in his speech to a union conference in 1952, based upon the idea that the social dichotomies were embedded in human beings from the beginning of the time; nonetheless, he warned the upper class must not oppress the lower class for their own interests; otherwise, if the oppression in Turkey did continue, social peace and justice would be in jeopardy.⁴²¹ To maintain social peace and industrial democracy, bosses and state had to fulfill their roles properly, just as much as workers. However, the shop floor experiences of the metal workers proved that the metal bosses were far from fulfilling their assumed “national” duties.

B) Bosses/Managers and the Union

As noted previously, the union ideology valued cooperative and peaceful relations on the shop floor level. There were two primary actors for union relations in the workplaces: bosses and managers. If the bosses/managers would realize the common interests between

⁴¹⁹ “Küçük İşletmelerde Çalışan Vatandaşların Artan İzdırabı [The Increasing Suffering of the Citizens Who Labor in the Small Enterprises],” *Gece Postası*, July 22, 1951.

⁴²⁰ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası 8. Genel Kurul Toplantısı [The Eight Meeting of the General Council of the Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 133. Also look at; *İl Hakem Kurulu Protesto Beyannamesi-January 1953 [The Declaration of Protest of the Provincial Arbitration Committee]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 12, envelope 683.

⁴²¹ “Bakırköy Emaye Fabrikası İşçilerinin İş İhtilafları [The Labor Disputes of Bakırköy Enamel Factory],” *Gece Postası*, October 12, 1952.

themselves and their employees, and the common good of workers' rights on the shop floor, the union argued there would be no reason for conflict within workplaces to occur, and peaceful relations on shop floor would result in the development of national productivity and wealth from which all social groups could fairly benefit.⁴²² According to Basri Karagöz, if enterprises and bosses acceded workers' rights and ran their enterprises in a proper manner, hard-working employees would increase productivity in those workplaces, in turn. So, both sides would benefit from this cooperative relationship.⁴²³ Nevertheless, their actual relations gave the metal workers reason to complain that the metal bosses did not realize the common benefits between employees and employers in Turkey. Actually, most of the metal bosses exploited their workers without recognizing the rule of any law. They oppressed workers on the shop floor, were intolerant to any workers' demands or objections, and they inhibited workers' solidarity, which took the shape as unionization.⁴²⁴ The opinions of the metal workers about their employers, therefore, developed as a mixture of their ideals and real experiences.

Despite sharing the ideological framework of the period, which stood for the solidarity and cooperation of employees and employers, the language of the metal workers evolved to be negative toward their employers. Although, in several cases. Maden-İş officers or news reports in the union journal spoke positively about the metal bosses who were seen to be taking care of their employee's interests. In one case, the union hailed the owner of the employer at Ayvansaray Nail Factory when he compromised with workers' demands in terms

⁴²² *Maden-İş Faaliyet Raporu: XIII. Genel Merkez Kongresi*, VII.

⁴²³ "Basri Karagöz Tahakkukunu İstedığı İşçi Davalarını İzah Ediyor ve Üzüntülerini Belirtiyor [Basri Karagöz Explains the Workers' Causes Which He Wanted to Handle and Expresses His Grief]," *Gece Postası*, July 24, 1951. Also look at; "Sendikalar ve İstekleri [Unions and Their Demands]," *Gece Postası*, October 31, 1951.

⁴²⁴ Kemal Sülker, "Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sendikasının Eyüp Şubesi [The Eyüp Branch of Iron and Metal Hardware Union]," *Gece Postası*, April 14, 1955; Kemal Sülker, "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Eyüp Şubesi Kongresi [The Eyüp Branch Congress of Iron and Metal Hardware Workers]," *Gece Postası*, April 15, 1955; "Maden-İş Sendikası Yıllık Kongresini Yaptı [Maden-İş Union Made Its Annual Congress]," *Gece Postası*, July 22, 1957; "T. Demir Döküm İşyerinde Sendikacılar Baskı Görüyor [The Unionists Are Encountering Oppression in T. Demir Döküm]," *Gece Postası*, October 11, 1958; "Kovulan İşçi Mümessilleri [The Dismissed Workers' Representatives]," *Gece Postası*, March 12, 1959; "Sendikalı İşçilere Baskı Yapanları Dava Ediyoruz [We Are Suing Those Who Oppress Unionized Workers]," *Maden-İş* 20 July 1959, 1-2; "Topçular Kongresi ve Yeni Şikayetler [The Topçular Congress and New Complaints]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 37 (9 September 1959), 3.

of wages, social benefits and unionization. In return, the employer's representative at the Ayvansaray Nail Factory claimed that factory management was aware of the benefits of workers' unionization within the factory. He described the union as one of the main factors behind developing an enterprise. According to him, workers and employers needed each other for the sake of mutually supporting national interests. This enterprise, which also paid the workers' insurance premiums without any cut, was held up by the union as an ideal one.⁴²⁵ In fact, the union representatives succeeded in fulfilling workers' demands by directly meeting with the bosses in some cases. The union journal presented such figures positively, declared workers' gratitude towards them, and discussed the satisfaction of both sides. Furthermore, they touted such well-intentioned bosses as an ideal example for the "intolerant and greedy" ones to follow.⁴²⁶ In one case, the union sent a letter of thanks to an employer who gave bonuses to the employees.⁴²⁷ The union and representatives put forth that the sympathetic bosses who took pains with the development and improvement of the country than their own pocket would more readily tolerate workers' moderate demands. However, since most bosses could not shake off "old habits and practices," the metal union complained that its attempts to establish good relations with bosses mostly failed.⁴²⁸ When they were in direct conflict,

⁴²⁵ "Bütün İşçileri Sendika Üyesi Olan Müessese [An Enterprise Where All Workers Are Union Members]," *Gece Postası*, March 31, 1952; "İşçilerin Sendikalı Olmasının Bir Çok Faydaları Vardır [There Are Many Benefits of Workers' Unionization]," *Gece Postası*, April 1, 1952; "İşçilerin Sigorta Primleri ve Bir İşverenin Kararı [The Insurance Premiums of Workers and an Employer Decision]," *Gece Postası*, April 3, 1952; "İşçilere Zam Yapıldı [The Workers Got Wage Increases]," *Gece Postası*, August 19, 1953; "Sıcak Tel Çekme İşçileri Yılda 70.000 Lira Tutarında Zam Almağı Sağlandı [The Metal Workers were Able to Get 70.000 Turkish Lira Wage Increases in a Year]," *Gece Postası*, October 17, 1954.

⁴²⁶ "Topçular Bakır Tel Çekme Fb. İşçilerine Zam Yapıldı-İşçiler Memnun [The Wages of Topçular Copper Iron Workers Were Increased-The Workers Are Pleased]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 2 no. 7 (14 January 1956); "Şakir Zümre Zam Kararı Verdi [Şakir Zümre Decided About Wage Increase]," *Gece Postası*, March 8, 1956; "G. Elektrik Ampül Fabrikası [G. Electric Light Bulb Factory]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 3 (15 December 1956), 4; "Ayvansaray Civata Fabrikası [Ayvansaray Bolt Factory]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 4; "Ücretlere 100 Kuruş Zam Yapıldı [The Wages were Increased to 100 Kuruş]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 7 (16 February 1957); "Bayram Hediyesi [Religious Holiday Gift]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 12 (18 May 1957), 1 and 4; "Karşılıklı Anlayış ve Hüsniyet [Mutual Tolerance and Good Intentions]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 16 (10 August 1957), 1; "Koç Fabrikaları İle de Kollektif Akid Yapılacak [There Will Be Collective Agreement With Koç Factories Too]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 30 (25 September 1958), 1 and 2; "Türmason Çivi Fabrikası İşçilerine Zam Yaptı [Türmason Nail Factory Increased the Wages of Its Employee]," *Şehir*, June 10, 1959; "Elektro Metal Fabrikasında Röportaj [The Interview in the Electro Metal Factory]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 44 (28 May 1960), 2.

⁴²⁷ "İşçilerine İkramiye Verdi [He Provided Bonuses to His Employees]," *Şehir*, June 27, 1958.

⁴²⁸ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası 8. Genel Kurul Toplantısı*.

whether in the political sphere or on the shop floor, the metal workers defined their interests and employers' interests as opposing viewpoints.

Nonetheless, such examples were very few in comparison with the examples of bosses who were assumed to frown upon workers' demands. In most cases, the metal workers had to utilize the full weight of their lawful rights and conduct collective actions to even get their legal rights, as they were generally not adhered to by the bosses/managers in the workplaces. These legally bounded collective actions in which workers, mostly representatives, clashed with bosses left an important legacy for the succeeding periods in terms of how workers related to bosses as a different social group. At the core, the metal workers experienced their relations with bosses as contentious, a point made obvious from the narratives of their experiences on shop floor and from the increasing number of the work disputes brought to the arbitration committees in İstanbul. According to the metal workers, the metal employers did not want the state to intervene in industrial relations on the shop floor and, further, they did not want such relations to be formalized. They also claimed that employers did not apply Labor Law on the shop floor and that the bosses wanted to run enterprises completely by their own rules. For them, the bosses appeared reluctant to be limited by law, both in terms of administration practices and profits. The union leaders gave plenty of examples to disclose bosses' unlawful deeds in their speeches in the conferences and meetings, in their talks with correspondents, or in petitions to the Ministry or Regional Work Office.⁴²⁹ The metal workers also protested such employers in their meetings.⁴³⁰ Kemal Sülker, who was a famous journalist and high officer in the metal union, described such employers as follows:

“Some employers cannot stomach the workers' rights which were recognized by the law. They only aimed to earn excess profit and run their workplaces at their own will. They wanted workers to work from the early morning to the late evening. They wanted to dismiss workers when they get sick. The

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ “İşyerlerinde İhmaller Yüzünden Ölen İşçileri Hatırlama Günü [Remembrance Day for Workers Who Have Died Due to Negligence in the Workplace],” *Gece Postası*, February 25, 1952.

employers did not want any wage increase. They will not give out Sunday wages to employees who do not work on Sundays. Let alone two daily wages, they do not desire to give one daily wage on Republican Holidays.”⁴³¹

Consequently, the language of most metal workers defined Turkish employers, who were not eager to provide for worker rights, as having bad intentions, being greedy in terms of profits and intolerant to workers’ rights.⁴³² Such employers, the workers argued, still applied “Middle Age methods” to increase their profits.⁴³³ These employers generally interpreted the union as if the union would act against the benefit of the enterprises; therefore, they attempted to destroy the union at every turn.⁴³⁴ As a result, the union officers accused most Turkish metal bosses of being bent on the inhumane exploitation of their workers. The metal bosses were disrespectful to their workers, they insulted workers and they even treated workers as slaves, which they pretended to have purchased. The union claimed that although workers worked hard to fulfill their national duties, the metal bosses acted selfishly about workers’ demands to take what was rightfully theirs.⁴³⁵ Those “greedy and exploitative” behaviours of the metal/bosses were discussed as harmful to the “national” interests: the metal unionists and

⁴³¹ Kemal Sülker, “İşçi Mümessilleri Seçimi ve Baskı Yapan İşverenler [The Election of Workers’ Representatives and Employers Who Oppress],” *Gece Postası*, April 10, 1957. Also see; Kemal Sülker, “Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sendikasının Eyüp Şubesi [The Eyüp Branch of Iron and Metal Hardware Union],” *Gece Postası*, April 14, 1955; Kemal Sülker, “İşçi-İşveren Münasebetleri [The Worker-Employer Relations],” *Gece Postası*, December 14, 1957.

⁴³² “Madeni Eşya İşçileri Kongrelerini Yaptı [The Metal Hardware Workers Held Their Congresses],” *Gece Postası*, July 18, 1955; “117 İşçi Temsilcisinin Katıldığı Toplantıda Tesbit Edilen Dilekler [The Demands Declared on the Meeting in Which 117 Workers’ Representatives Participated],” *Gece Postası*, August 5, 1957; “Maden-İş İşçileri Kollektif Akit İstiyor [Maden-İş Workers Demand Collective Agreement],” *Gece Postası*, June 2, 1958.

⁴³³ “Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda İşçilere Baskı Yapılıyor [The Workers Are Being Oppressed in the Metal Hardware Sector],” *Şehir*, December 31, 1958.

⁴³⁴ Kemal Sülker, “Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Bugün Kongre Akdediyor [The Iron and Metal Hardware Workers Are Holding Their Congress Today],” *Gece Postası*, July 17, 1955; “Kovulan İşçi Mümessilleri [The Dismissed Workers’ Representatives],” *Gece Postası*, March “2, 1959; “Elektro Metal Fabrikasında Röportaj [The Interview in Electro Metal Factory],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 44 (28 May 1960), 4.

⁴³⁵ “Yeni Kampanyamız [Our New Campaign],” *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 1 no. 1 (April 1954), 6; “Grev Hakkı Tanımamak [To Not Recognize Right to Strike],” *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* 14 (September 1956), 8; “Maden-İş Sendikası [The Maden-İş Union],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 2 (1 December 1956), 3; “Topçular Kongresi ve Yeni Şikayetler [The Topçular Congress and New Complaints],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 37 (9 September 1959), 3.

representatives, thus, applied the nationalist ideology in order to present their fights with bosses/managers as legitimate one.

This perception facilitated the workers' motivation to fight when their rights were not recognized. One experienced metal worker, Father Üzeyir, called upon workers to not be afraid of the bosses' oppression, and the bulletin of the metal workers also called on workers' representatives to resist oppression. Some employers, the metal workers argued, were opposed even to the existence of unions. On the other hand, the union argued, workers who were exposed to the arbitrary decisions of employers constituted the foundation of the country. Consequently, employers had to abandon their oppression of union members and representatives in order to fulfill their duties to the nation.⁴³⁶ Those experiences and perceptions undoubtedly encouraged the metal workers to define themselves as "us" as against the bosses, which were expressed as "them."⁴³⁷ But it must be argued that such a dissident language alone did not define the nature of relations between the workers and bosses/managers as a contentious and antagonistic one arising out of the distinct position of those two social groups within the capitalist mode of production; rather their actual unfair relationship could also be traced to the "profit greedy" characteristics of the Turkish metal bosses. Consequently, either new laws or the "good-will" of the metal employers might have ameliorated those inequities.

Despite workers sharing a common outlook with management for national economic improvement, the contentious encounters on the shop floor fostered the idea of fighting with bosses when necessary, using appropriate legal mechanisms. That is, the union had faith in

⁴³⁶ "Sıtkı Bütün Madeni Eşya ve Emaye Fabrikasının Hali [The Conditions in Sıtkı Bütün Metalwork and Enamel Factory]," *Gece Postası*, December 11, 1951; *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası Yönetim Kurulu Başkanlığı'na [A Petition to the General Board of the Union of the İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2, Envelope 134; "Madeni Eşya İşçileri Kongresinin Kararı [The Decision of Congress of Metalwork Workers]," *Gece Postası*, November 16, 1954; *Bakırköy Şubesinin Sıtkı Bütün Emaye İşçilerine Beyannamesi*.

⁴³⁷ Kemal Sülker, "Grev Kampanyasını İdare Edecek Bir Komite Kuruluyor [A Committee Is Being Launched to Manage Strike Campaign]," *Gece Postası*, February 28, 1955; Kemal Sülker, "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Eyüp Şubesi Kongresi [The Eyüp Branch Congress of Iron and Metal Hardware Workers]," *Gece Postası*, April 15, 1955; "Madeni Eşya İşçileri Kongrelerini Yaptı [The Metal Hardware Workers Made Their Congresses]," *Gece Postası*, July 18, 1955; "Maden-İş Sendikası Yıllık Kongresini Yaptı [Maden-İş Union Made Its Annual Congress]," *Gece Postası*, July 22, 1957; "Sendikalı İşçilere Baskı Yapan Bir İşveren [An Employer Who Represses the Unionized Workers]," *Şehir*, September 23, 1958.

the state and the existing laws to regulate industrial relations and restrain “greedy” bosses on behalf of workers. Although several other unions and workers collectively went on strike during the period, and thereby transgressed the relevant law in effect, neither the metal workers nor their union initiated such an attempt. The metal workers’ efforts to draw bosses into the preset framework of the law were an important legacy to be inherited by the union in the following years.

On this subject, the available documents disclose that both the union ideology and common language of the workers oscillated between insubordination and loyalty to their employers based upon the nationalist ideology of the post-war years. Although the union’s ideology stood for peaceful relations with the metal bosses, when the workers felt widespread and intense unfairness and exploitation, they easily shifted to a language, which spoke against employers and made a clear division between workers and bosses. In such cases, a significant portion of the metal workers declared their support in the fight for their rights.

C) The State and Union

The union’s ideology reflected a pragmatic approach to its relations with the state mechanisms in place at the time. Yusuf Sidal claimed in 1948 that the standard of living had to improve in the name of developing productivity and the industry as a whole. To such an end, he added, the government had to implement new rules and regulations.⁴³⁸ That is to say that, in line with the hegemonic framework of the industrial democracy, the metal workers assigned a vital place to the state to regulate the workplace and industrial relations in the country. By being careful to remain within the law and simply revise the boundaries of it, it can be said that the metal workers struggled to formalize industrial relations and the labor regime as much as possible in order to overcome the so-called “arbitrary nature” of employers.

⁴³⁸ “Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Dertleri [The Troubles of Iron and Metalwork Workers],” *Gece Postası*, November 11, 1948.

Above all, the union's discourse analyzed state power as an intermediary force between employers and themselves. In other words, it saw state, governments or laws as the protector of workers as against the "exploitative and greedy" attitudes of bosses. The workers, who were loyal citizens to their country and state, would only be beneficial and diligent members of society when their rights had been granted. After reminding everyone that the workers were the indispensable group of economic life, an army of production, the union officers and representatives called the state officers, bureaucrats, ministers or deputies in the parliament "elders." The metal workers who espoused such a paternalist discourse requested the "elders" provide workers' rights in industrial and economic spheres.⁴³⁹ In this discourse, the union and workers' representatives defined a kind of industrial citizenship, which had to be framed by laws and be accepted by employees. Only then would industrial democracy and social peace improve on the shoulders of citizen workers. In fact, recognizing workers' rights and providing a good life to them would, in turn, result in an increase in productivity. In sum, recognizing workers' rights would improve the economy and society as a whole in Turkey.⁴⁴⁰ Following such an argument, the union called the state officers and institutions to intervene in the labor disputes between workers and bosses/managers on behalf of the former group.

Thus, such an approach to state explains why Maden-İş mainly battled in the political sphere to get their promised rights, as well as to revise laws and regulations. Until the 1960s, Maden-İş applied two primary methods to tackle the problems of the metal workers: one was to improve close relations with the political actors, that is lobbyism, and the other one was to conduct resistance actions on the shop floor level. The union mainly chose to act in the political sphere to protect workers' rights in the late 1940s. A union member, Basri Karagöz, had argued that the metal workers founded the union in order to get their rights, which were defined by laws. He added that as a result of intimate relations with high state officers the

⁴³⁹ "Topçularda Bölge Müdürlüğü Kadrosu Yetersizdir Denildi [It was Stated in Topçular Congress That The Cadre Of the Provincial Office Was Not Sufficient]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 37 (9 September 1959), 3 and 4.

⁴⁴⁰ *Pek Muhterem Mebuslarımız [Our Esteemed Representatives in the Grand Assembly]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 3 Envelope 147.

union would be able to gain some rights.⁴⁴¹ We do not know whether there was an organic relationship between the union and the party in government, CHP, in the period, nevertheless, Yusuf Sidal was a supporter of this party. Furthermore, the union got some 5 000 Turkish Lira from the fund that was provided by the government to the İstanbul unions in 1948.⁴⁴² The unionists also tried to be active in the political scene, itself. One metal workers and union member, Nizamettin Babaoğlu, became an independent candidate in the 1950 general elections to represent workers and seek their rights in the National Assembly.⁴⁴³ As we know, Babaoğlu failed in this attempt. The union, moreover, began to challenge with legal collective disputes, especially after the middle of the decade, in addition to persuading deputies, political parties or governments to grant workers' rights.

III. The Union Acts I: Exerting Pressure on State

In spite of its trust in the state and laws, the union found the boundaries of existing laws too limiting and consequently it attempted to expand them. Furthermore, the union exerted its pressure on state institutions like the Labor Ministry or the Provincial Labor Office, to force bosses to apply laws on shop floor properly. And lastly, the union benefited from the mechanisms of labor courts and work conflicts where the union representatives openly challenged bosses albeit under the supervision of state officers.

From its foundation to the 1960s, Maden-İş mainly acted to benefit from the laws and institutional channels, which were provided by the state. Such a strategy was their main way to overcome workers' concerns in city and work life in the late 1940s, due to their ideology and the relative weakness of the union itself. The union leaders, therefore, participated in the meetings of some official groups, which were created to regulate industrial life in the nation. For example, Yusuf Sidal was the representative of the İstanbul metal hardware workers in

⁴⁴¹ "Basri Karagöz Sendikaların Gayeleri ve Şimdiye Kadar Sağladığı Faydaları İzah Etti [Basri Karagöz Explained Aims of Unions and their Benefits to Workers Until Now]," *Gece Postası*, July 23, 1951.

⁴⁴² Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Tarihi*, 90.

⁴⁴³ "Müstakil Milletvekili Adayı Nizamettin Babaoğlu Ne Diyor?" *Gece Postası*, May 7, 1950.

the Social Security Administration where he struggled to gain workers' rights.⁴⁴⁴ In order to realize their goals, the metal unionists were involved in the Work Assemblies of 1947 and 1954, which were undertaken to provide an industrial peace mechanism to bring the state, employers and employees together and reach some decisions on regulating the labor regime, and to push the state officers to accept their demands.⁴⁴⁵ Conversely, the state officers attended and gave speeches in the meeting of the metal workers.⁴⁴⁶ In fact, lobbyism constituted the main method of the union for a long time.

The metal workers also attempted to use the Labor Ministry or the İstanbul Regional Work Office for solving problems. They wired their grievances about industrial life, such as troubles about laws or complaints in the workplaces, to the Labor Ministry or Regional Work Office in İstanbul.⁴⁴⁷ In 1948, the İstanbul unions, including the metal union, wrote a report about the unions' troubles for the consideration of the Labor Ministry.⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, when 50 workers were dismissed from a factory in April 1948, the union applied legal means to solve this problem, which the union defined as a national cause, and called for the Regional Work Office and Social Security Administration to deal with the issue.⁴⁴⁹

It is unfortunately not clear to what extent this method was successful during the late 1940s. However, a change in political atmosphere with the introduction of the multiparty politics after the war years encouraged not just the metal unionists, but nearly all organized workers in Turkey to capitalize on opportunities which might possibly come out of the rivalry between parties. In fact, following up on the DP's promises to provide rights and prosperity to workers, the İstanbul unions pressed on the demands they had declared in the previous period,

⁴⁴⁴ *Maden-İş'in 16 Yıllık Tarihçesi*.

⁴⁴⁵ "Çalışma Meclisi Gündemi" and "Çalışma Meclisi Raporu" *Çalışma* year 2 no. 17 (April 1947).

⁴⁴⁶ "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Toplantısı [The Meeting of the Iron and Metalwork Workers]," *Gece Postası*, December 6, 1950.

⁴⁴⁷ "İşçi Sendikaları Feshedilmek Tehlikesinde [Trade Unions Face the Danger of Being Abolished]," *Gece Postası*, February 3, 1948; *Maden-İş'in 16 Yıllık Tarihçesi*.

⁴⁴⁸ "İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Yıllık Kongresi [The Annual Congress of İstanbul Iron and Metalwork Workers]," *Gece Postası*, October 31, 1951; "Fabrikalarda Çalışan Bütün İşçiler Sendikaya Girebilmeli [All Workers Employed in Factories Must Have the Right to be Unionized]," *Gece Postası* November 4, 1951; "İşçi Sigortaları Genel Kurulu Toplantısında Varılan Kararlar [The Decisions of The General Assembly of Workers' Insurance]," *Gece Postası*, June 8, 1952.

⁴⁴⁹ "Ansızın İşsiz Bırakılan ve Hakları Ödenmeyen Elli Kişi Zor Durumda," *Gece Postası*, April 17, 1948.

immediately after the 1950 elections. The increasing hopes triggered by the new government were reflected on the shop floor, too. The newspapers of the first days of the DP's government were bursting with news of how the workers raised their voices after the government revised some items in the Labor Law. One significant aspect of the amendments was to recognize unions' right to engage in collective labor disputes in workplaces. As a result, unions would have a chance to become more powerful and effective. When workers were dismissed in several sectors, unions and workers' representatives in the workplace maintained the legacy of calling state institutions and officers to their aid in August 1950.⁴⁵⁰

The metal union was one of the most hopeful workers' organizations of this new epoch. In the words of general chair of the union, Yusuf Sıdal, the metal workers paid close attention to the news from Ankara where the government was supposed to enact important laws to protect workers and improve their lives.⁴⁵¹ In all, the tide of events for the metal workers further changed, at least in the imagination of the unionists, with DP's coming to power in May 1950. One metal worker, Basri Karagöz, said that he actually became hopeful after the change in the political balance in 1950.⁴⁵² After the DP's victory, a workers' representative from the Silahtarağa Power Plant cried that the workers had waited a long time for the enactment of the worker-friendly laws and regulations to protect employees, and he said they did not aim to transgress any laws.⁴⁵³ By reminding the public of the workers' importance as a social group within the society, and the state's duty to protect this group's interests to the new government, the metal workers continued to depend on the legal framework to meet their goals. In comparison with the previous periods, we have more

⁴⁵⁰ "İşçi Hakkını Arayan İşçi Mümessilleri Vazifeden Atılıyor [The Workers' Representatives Who Seek Workers' Rights Are Fired]," *Gece Postası*, August 7, 1950.

⁴⁵¹ "Memurlarla İşçilerin Dört Gözle Beklediği Gelir Vergisi [The Income Tax Which Public Employees and Workers Are Eagerly Waiting For]," *Gece Postası*, December 21, 1950.

⁴⁵² "Basri Karagöz Sendikaların Gayeleri ve Şimdiye Kadar Sağladığı Faydaları İzah Etti [Basri Karagöz Explained Aims of Unions and their Benefits to Workers Until Now]," *Gece Postası*, July 23, 1951. For the developments in the Turkish unionism after DP's coming to power look at; Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri [Collective Agreements and Their Roles in Turkish Economy]* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1967), 78.

⁴⁵³ "Silahtarağa Elektrik Fabrikası İşçilerinin Mühim Şikayetleri [The Considerable Complaints of the Silahtarağa Power Station Workers]," *Gece Postası*, November 25, 1950.

documents to shed a light on metal workers' demands and efforts in terms of the legal framework regarding the industrial relations and factory regime in the 1950s.

As with the period before 1950, the metal workers spoke in the congresses of the union that their struggle had to depend on the existing legal framework; but they were also aware that they had to fight to change and revise the laws which worked against to their interests even after the DP's coming into power.⁴⁵⁴ They demanded several new items and revisions in the Labor Law from the new government, such as the enactment of the law to strike, or analysis of the minimum wages in the sector.⁴⁵⁵ The union wired petitions to the Grand National Assembly or Labor Ministry in Ankara in several cases to ask about the progress of these laws, especially the right to strike and a minimum wage, which the new government had promised long ago.⁴⁵⁶

It seems that during the 1950s, Maden-İş firmly defended the strike right. Rather than being a contentious issue, the union perceived strike as a regulatory activity to balance the interests of two different groups, namely workers and bosses, whose interests were assumed to be common in the "natural order of society." Without a strike law, the much desired industrial democracy and social peace would become impossible. Through strikes, workers would get their deserved and fair share from the national wealth. Otherwise, the problems of creating a wealthy and happy minority would jeopardize the social peace. In this regard, rather than being a destructive activity, strike would maintain peaceful relations and cooperation between workers and bosses. As a result, Turkish industry and the economy would greatly benefit from the strike right. The assumed nationalist workers and unions of the

⁴⁵⁴ "Üzeyir Kuran'ın İşçilere Verdiği Öğüt ve Ötedenberi Üzerinde Durduğu Fikirler [The Advice and Opinions of Üzeyir Kuran]," *Gece Postası*, September 9, 1951.

⁴⁵⁵ "Basit Sebepler Yüzünden İşten Çıkarılan İşçilerin Durumu [The State of Workers Who Were Dismissed For Trivial Reasons]," *Gece Postası*, September 1, 1951; "İşçi Mevzuatının Tamamen Değiştirilmesi Lazımdır [The Regulations Regarding Workers Must Be Wholly Changed]," *Gece Postası*, September 29, 1951; "Fabrikalarda Çalışan Bütün İşçiler Sendikaya Girebilmeli [All Young Workers in Factories Must be Recognized with the Right to be a Member of Unions]," *Gece Postası*, November 4, 1951; "İş Kanununun 22nci Maddesi İşçileri Müşkülata Uğrattı [Item 22 of the Labor Law Caused Troubles Among Workers]," *Gece Postası*, March 18, 1952.

⁴⁵⁶ *Pek Muhterem Mebuslarımız [Our Esteemed Representatives in the Grand Assembly]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 3 Envelope 147; "Mebuslara Mektup Yazıldı [A Letter Written to the Deputies]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 2 no. 7 (14 January 1956); "Başvekil ve Çalışma Vekiline Tel Çekildi [A Letter Wired to the Prime Minister and Labor Minister]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 16 (10 August 1957), 1.

Turkish industry would never utilize the strike right for enabling chaos within the Turkish economy or society.⁴⁵⁷ In brief, the union successfully applied nationalist ideology in order to defend the strike right.

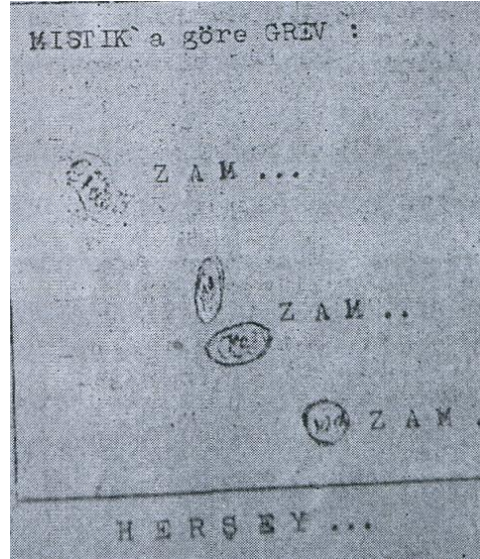


Figure 2: - The Strike According to Maden-İş. –Wage Increase, Wage Increase, Wage Increase. – Everything... (Source: *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 2 no. 5 [19 March 1955], 3).

In the same vein, the union firmly defended the implementation of minimum wage. After minimum wage came to be enforced in the sector, the metal workers found the level of it to be insufficient for the workers to provide for their families. One of the reasons for the low level of the minimum wage, according to the workers, was that they were settled over the expenses of other workers in a family. However, they felt minimum wage should have been determined by averaging over a multi-worker family, which included at least three employed

⁴⁵⁷ "Grev Hakkı Kampanyası [The Strike Right Campaign]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 1 no. 5 (12 March 1955), 2; Kemal Sülker, "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Bugün Kongre Akdediyor [The Iron and Metal Hardware Workers Are Holding A Congress Today]," *Gece Postası*, July 17, 1955; "İşçi Sigortalarına Sert ve Ağır Hücumlar [Fierce and Severe Criticism of the Workers' Insurance]," *Son Saat*, April 9, 1956; "Grev Hakkı Tartışmaları [The Debates on the Right to Strike Right]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, 14 September 1956, 8; *Yeni İstanbul Gazetesi Müdürlüğüne [To the General Office of Yeni İstanbul Newspaper]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 3 Envelope 149; *Madeni Eşya İşçileri Kongresinde İthamlar [The Accusations on the Congress of Metal Hardware Workers]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 40 Envelope 1856; Kemal Sülker, "Maden-İş ve Tahkim Müessesinin Aksaklığı [Maden-İş and the Defect of the Arbitration Order]," *Gece Postası*, May 7, 1957; Kemal Sülker, "Maden-İş'in XI. Büyük Kongresi [The Eleventh Grand Congress of Maden-İş]," *Gece Postası*, December 15 1957, "Maden-İş Başkanı Vergi Adaleti İstiyoruz Dedi [The President of Maden-İş Said We Want Justice on Taxes]," *Gece Postası*, February 14, 1959; "Eyüp Semt Şubesi Kongresi Yapıldı, İstekler Belirtili [The Eyüp District Congress Were Done and Demands Were Claimed]," *Maden-İş*, 20 July 1959, 1 and 3-4.

persons.⁴⁵⁸ Maden-İş also asked to revise existing laws regarding the annual leave of absence with payment, the payment of daily fees during the off-days instead of half fees or severance pays, and the regulation of the arbitration committee. In fact, the government legislated several laws on these issues during their time in power.⁴⁵⁹ If such rights were not provided by the government, it would be very hard to keep the national life stable.

In parallel, the union officers applied their old method of establishing perpetual relations with the state institutions and officers.⁴⁶⁰ In addition to the Labor Ministry or the DP government, the metal union and workers applied to the Provincial Labor Office in İstanbul to resolve labor grievances on the shop floor. The metal union defined the office as the “Marko Pasha”⁴⁶¹ of the workers, the place where all workers had the chance to state their problems.⁴⁶² While the union pushed the Ministry to legislate new laws or revise the existing ones on behalf of workers, they applied to the Provincial Offices to solve their urgent problems, such as oppression of unionized workers, dismissals of the workers’ or union’s representatives, management refusal to apply laws and legislations, or the resolution of work disputes brought to the arbitration committees on workplaces, arbitrary wage cuts, forced

⁴⁵⁸ “Madeni Eşya İşçileri Kongresinde İthamlar [The Accusations on the Congress of the Metal Hardware Workers],” *Gece Postası*, April 16, 1956; “Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Asgari Ücretin Yeniden Tesbiti İçin Çalışmalar Başladı [The Endeavours Were Reinitiated in the Metal Hardware Branch to Re-Detect the Minimum Wage],” *Şehir*, October 10, 1958; “İşçilerin Çalışma Bakanından İstedığı Belli Başlı Hakları [The Basic Rights Which the Workers Asked from The Labor Minister],” *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 31 (28 October 1958), 1 and 3; “Hususi Sektörde Çalışan İşçiler Zam Alamıyormu [Does not Workers in the Private Sector Get Wage Increase],” *Şehir*, February 14, 1959.

⁴⁵⁹ Kemal Sülker, “Tahkim Nizamnamesinin Bariz Aksaklıkları [The Obvious Defects of the Arbitration Regulation],” *Gece Postası*, November 11, 1955. For the list of the rights provided by the DP government, see: The Ministry of Labor *İşçiye Sağlanan Faydalar [The Benefits Provided to Workers]*, (Ankara: n.p., 1957); Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri*.

⁴⁶⁰ “20.000 Madeni Eşya İşçisi Pazar Günü Toplanıyor [20 000 Metal hardware Workers Are Gathering on Sunday],” *Gece Postası* March 24, 1954.

⁴⁶¹ Marko Pasha was an Ottoman doctor with Greek origin. He was a famous doctor and also a deputy in the first Senate of the history of the Ottoman Empire that was founded in 1878. Since he was a patient doctor and tried to take care of his patients in every matter, his fame was widespread among the common folk. Accordingly an idiom “go, and tell your troubles to Marko Pasha” appeared among the people. In fact, the journal, Marko Paşa, published by the famous humorists and writers, Sabahattin Ali, Aziz Nesin, Rifat Ilgaz and Mustafa Mim Uykusuz, was very influential between 1946-1947 and reached a circulation of seventy thousand, a number that was difficult for many publications to achieve at the time.

⁴⁶² Kemal Türkler, “Yasak Kalkmalı [The Prohibition Must Be Abandoned],” *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 4 (20 December 1956), 1.

overtime work, etc.⁴⁶³ The union further participated in some of the general meetings; such as the meetings to decide the minimum wages of the branches in the metal industry, in the Provincial Office.⁴⁶⁴ In fact, the workers appreciated some of the efforts of the Provincial Office, which resolved most issues on behalf of workers towards the end of the 1950s. However, in most cases the union reports spoke poorly about the role of the Provincial Office, as almost all issues brought to this institution were left unresolved, and the officers ignored most complaints. The union found the work of the Provincial Office unsatisfactory due to the shortage of qualified personnel, an insufficient budget, and the office's insufficient authority over factory bosses.⁴⁶⁵ The union published a protest statement, which accused the Provincial Arbitration Court of being unable to protect workers' rights in January 1953. According to the statement, the committee, which did not undertake "scientific" methods to deal with labor disputes, was indifferent to the labor disputes in İstanbul. The union also complained that the committee did not reach decisions in a timely fashion, and cited the fact that it took 15 days to reach a decision on regulations. As a result, the actual wage increases, the union argued, did not keep pace with the increasing cost of living.⁴⁶⁶ The metal workers complained that the work inspectors of the Provincial Office would take the side of employers instead of

⁴⁶³ "Hakem Kurulu Kararını Dinlemeyen İşveren [An Employer Who Does not Care About a Decision of the Arbitration Committee]," *Gece Postası*, November 11, 1955; "Bir İşçi Mağdur Edildi [One Worker Was Preyed On]," *Şehir*, July 12, 1958; "Bir İşveren İşçilerini İstedığı Tarzda Cezaya Çaptırıyor [An Employer Punishes His Workers Whatever Ways He Finds Suitable]," *Şehir*, April 5, 1959; "İstinye Kablo Fabrikasında da 12 Saat Çalışma Var [There Are 12 Hours, too, Work in Wire Factory in İstinye]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 39 (15 November 1959), 1; "Tekrar İşe Alınanlara Yeni Muamele Yapılıyor [The Returned Workers Are Treated As if They Are New Workers]," *Gece Postası*, February 17, 1960; "Bir Fabrikada Çalışan İşçilere Pazar ve Genel Tatil Yevmiyeleri Ödenmiyormuş [The Sunday and Holiday Fees of Workers in Factory Were not Paid]," *Son Saat*, May 9, 1960.

⁴⁶⁴ "Madeni Eşya İşçilerinin Ücretleri Konuşuldu [The Wages of the Metal Hardware Workers Were Discussed]," *Şehir*, August 26, 1958; "Kablo ve Radyo İşçilerinin Asgari Ücreti Esasa Bağlanıyor [The Minimum Wages of Wire and Radio Workers Are Being Decided]," *Şehir*, January 9, 1959.

⁴⁶⁵ *Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu*, 25; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının İstanbul Bölge Merkez Şubesinin 9-Ekim-1960 Tarihinde Yapılacak İlk Normal Kongresine Sunulmak Üzere 1.1.1959 Tarihinden 30.09.1960 Tarihine Kadar Faaliyet Raporu*, 3; "Hakem Kurulları [The Arbitration Committees]," *Şehir*, December 20, 1958. For cases in which the Provincial Office resolved on behalf of workers, see: "İşine Son Verilen İşçi Mümessili İşine İade Edildi [The Worker Representative Who Had Been Dismissed Were Returned to His Work]," *Şehir*, July 28, 1958; "Kenan Dumana Yeni Güçlükler Çıkartılıyor [New Difficulties Are Created for Kenan Duman]," *Gece Postası*, November 3, 1958.

⁴⁶⁶ *İl Hakem Kurulu Protesto Beyannamesi January 1953*.

employees.⁴⁶⁷ According to most workers, the wage increases provided as a result of the labor disputes were also too low.⁴⁶⁸ Furthermore, the provincial newspapers and union journals spread news about employers who did not apply the decisions of the arbitration committee, or matter of law, on the shop floor, despite all the warnings of the Provincial Office.⁴⁶⁹ Clearly, this office was not an efficient mechanism or method for the metal union to solve the problems of their members. In a cartoon, it was claimed that the work inspectors were actually working on behalf of employers:



Figure 3: -What is the use of the Labor Office? -The office recruits people as inspectors but it educates them as legal advisors and mentors for employers... (Source; *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 3 [20 November 1954], 3).

The İstanbul workers also complained about the slow progress of labor courts, as well as that of the work office and provincial arbitration committees. Those complaints varied from the lack of effective methods and cooperation among the different committees for analyzing work disputes, to the low numbers of, and insufficient authority of, the inspectors.

⁴⁶⁷ *Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu*, 24; *İş Müfettişlerinin İşçi Haklarına Karşı Olan Titizlikleri Azalıyor* [The Meticulousness of Work Inspectors Towards Workers' Rights Are Waning], TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 37 Envelope 1792; "Bölge Çalışma Müdürlüğünde [In the Provincial Work Office]," *Maden-İş* 23 March 1957, 1.

⁴⁶⁸ Orhan Tuna, "Memleketimizde Sendikaların Üzerinde Durdukları Meseleler," 110-111.

⁴⁶⁹ "Maden-İş Bir İşvereni Mahkemeye Verecek [Maden-İş Will Sue an Employer]," *Gece Postası*, September 17, 1958; "İki İşveren Savcılığa Verildi [Two Employers Were Sued]," *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 43 (14 May 1960), 1.

Add to these problems, loopholes in the law, the long wait for decisions, illegal cooperation between inspectors and bosses, and unfair decisions made on behalf of employers, etc.,⁴⁷⁰ it became obvious that neither the current government would legislate the rights demanded by the union, nor could the Provincial Labor Office and labor courts function effectively on behalf of the workers, so Maden-İş began increasingly to apply another legal mechanism: collective work actions.

It is unclear whether the political lobbyism of the union, as well as other trade unions, succeeded in their aims. However, it is clear that, over time, demands made by workers to the DP government proved fruitless. Towards the end of the decade, most unions who had previously supported the DP government withdrew their support from this party since it did not legislate most union demands, including the right to strike. Though they did not openly challenge DP while it was still in power, most Turkish trade unions, on the other hand, would hail the coup d'état after the military intervention on May 27, 1960, and accused the old government with impoverishing Turkish workers.

IV. The Union Acts II: Work Conflicts

In the available body of documents, it can be seen that the metal workers were not content with the state's intervention to improve work conditions. The union began to utilize the mechanism of arbitration committees more effectively, throughout the 1950s, and the arbitration mechanism was, in fact, the only legal mechanism for workers to claim their demands collectively. To put the argument succinctly, in addition to the political struggle, the early metal workers, collectively or individually, fought on the shop floor by using the legal methods designed by the state after the Second World War.

⁴⁷⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının İstanbul Bölge Merkez Şubesinin 9-Ekim-1960 Tarihinde Yapılacak İlk Normal Kongresine Sunulmak Üzere 1.1.1959 Tarihinden 30.09.1960 Tarihine Kadar Faaliyet Raporu*, 2; *Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makina Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası Faaliyet Raporu*, 24-25; "İşçiler İş Mahkemelerinin Arttırılmasını İstiyorlar [Workers Demand the Number of Labor Courts Increase]," *Son Saat*, April 5, 1955; "Toplulukla İş İhtilafları Sürüncemede Kalıyor [The Collective Worker Disputes Left Hang in the Air]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 2 no. 8 (28 January 1956); "İl Hakem Kurulu Tarafsız Değil mi? [Was the Provincial Arbitration Committee not Neutral?]," *Son Saat*, February 14, 1956.

It is true that this mechanism was not an open challenge, nor as effective as strikes or other forms of collective action conducted against bosses/managers, such as work stoppages or factory invasions. Yet, applying collectively to a legal mechanism and demanding certain changes in the ongoing relations with bosses must have fostered solidarity between workers. Furthermore, the sense of exercising their own rights, rather than waiting on the benevolence of employers, enriched the idea of the undeniable rights of workers. This was actually an important heritage for the metal workers of the succeeding period to adopt, and conducting collective labor disputes would later flourish among the metal workers.

The workers in İstanbul had rarely used this mechanism collectively in the 1940s due to employers' oppression of the representatives and organized workers, and also due to the general malfunctioning of the legal mechanism; for example, the indifference of the officers in charge, or the lingering over the decision-making process.⁴⁷¹ On the other hand, due to the DP's rise to power and their revisions of the Labor Law, the İstanbul workers, in general, gradually applied this method more effectively. In 1950, they conducted seven collective labor disputes. In 1951, the total number considerably increased to 51. In 1952, this reached 70 and, in the succeeding year, the İstanbul workers applied this method 89 times. In using the arbitration mechanism, the metal workers followed the same pattern as the workers in İstanbul. The metal workers had never applied to the arbitration council in the late 1940s. Then, they very slowly began to benefit from the arbitration mechanism to solve their problems by 1950.⁴⁷² Eventually, the method would become one of their mainstays, particularly after the middle of the decade.

The important question to be raised here is; what was the reason behind the infrequent use of the arbitration mechanism in the late 1940s and early 1950s? In addition to their preferences for battling in the political sphere and their distrust of the legal mechanism,

⁴⁷¹ Ferit H. Saymen, *İş İhtilafları ve Hal Yolları [Work Conflicts and Means to Solve Them]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat ve İktisadiyat Enstitüsü, 1948).

⁴⁷² "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Niçin Toplulukla İş İhtilafı Çıkarmıyor [Why The Iron and Metal Hardware Workers Do Not Call For Collective Labor Disputes]," *Gece Postası*, September 4, 1951; "Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Başkanının Sözleri [The Words of the General Chair of Iron and Metalwork Workers]," *Gece Postası*, December 13, 1951.

which Father Üzeyir explained, the oppression of metal employers over the workers' representatives, who were afraid of losing their jobs, or of being punished in some other way by employers, should be counted as another reason for this reluctance to resort to arbitration. Indeed, the scholars or state officers of the period confessed to the oppression of those workers who sought their rights in their workplace. They claimed that it was not rare for employers to call up workers or workers' representatives who were involved in the disputes to their offices, to force them to abandon their applications. In some cases, they fired workers after the disputes were closed. Some employers refused to apply the arbitration committee decisions on the shop floor, too, by firing the workers who won these cases. Moreover, some employers forced workers to choose those who were closely affiliated with bosses as their representatives; as a result, such representatives were not keen on using this mechanism. Some bosses also did not attend the meetings of the arbitration committee in order to delay the decision-making processes. In some cases, they bribed state officers on the committee, or the inspectors who were in charge of writing a report on the dispute after inspecting the workplace.⁴⁷³ Such employers' attitudes were widespread among the metal enterprises in the 1950s.⁴⁷⁴ Consequently, the union and most metal workers were reluctant to use this mechanism for several years.

It's obvious, then, that oppression and malfunctioning of the legal system obstructed the metal workers as they conducted collective labor disputes, to a certain extent. This would, however, change by the beginning of the 1950s. Firstly, amendments in the law allowed unions to nominate their own candidates in the election of workers' representatives, and representatives supported by unions became more consciousness of their rights, as well as

⁴⁷³ Ekmel Onbulak, "Mümessil İşçilerin Himayesi [The Protection of Workers' Representatives]" *Çalışma Bakanlığı Journal*, vol. 1 no. 1 (March-April-May 1953); Bahir Ersoy, "İşçi Gözü ile İşçi ve İşveren Münasebetleri"; Orhan Tuna, "Memleketimizde Sendikacılık Hareketlerinin Gelişmesi ve İşçilerimizin Sendikalaşma Meselesi"; İlhami Coşkundeniz, "Toplulukla İş İhtilafları, Hazırlanması ve Yürütülmesi Meseleleri [The Collective Labor Disputes, Issues of Preparation and Execution]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları* no. 7 (1955); Sedat Ağralı, *Türk Sendikacılığı [Turkish Trade Unionism]* (İstanbul: Son Telgraf, 1967).

⁴⁷⁴ "Tahkimi Yanlış Bilgilendiren İşverenler [Employers Who Misinform the Arbitration Council]," *Gece Postası*, March 10, 1953; "Hakem Kurulu Kararını Tatbik Etmiyenler [The Employers Who Did not Abide By the Decision of the Arbitration Council]," *Gece Postası*, September 3, 1953; "Ücretlerine Zam İsteyen Tel İşçileri [The Wire Workers who Asked for Wage Increases]," *Gece Postası*, September 21, 1954.

legal procedures. Therefore, they became more willing to use those rights for the benefit of workers. Moreover, the metal union gained strength with expansion of the sector after the mid-1950s, and with the participation of new and young workers in the union. Although the new generation was not so different from the old one in terms of ideology, they were more militant in the fight. When those factors combined with the perception that the current government would not recognize workers' demands, the metal workers gradually applied this mechanism.

For example, the metal workers conducted labor disputes with the employer of Sıtkı Bütün Enamel Factory in 1952; Ayvansaray Bolt Factory, Mihran and Artin Haçadoryan Metalwork Factory, Bakırköy Sıtkı Bütün Enamel Factory in 1953; Eyüp Hot Wire Factory, Ayvansaray Nail Factory, Develi Enamel Factory in Zeytinburnu, Rami Copper Wire Factory, the Can Factory in Ortaköy, the Süleymaniye Lighter Factory, the Koroza Button Factory, Esat Ketenoglu Copper Wire Factory and Feriköy Auto Scissor Lift Factory, in 1954.⁴⁷⁵ Those actions would greatly increase in number after the middle part of the decade.

After the mid-1950s, Maden-İş gradually used the collective action mechanism more, one, which it rarely applied during the first half of the decade. As a general trend, workers in other sectors also utilized arbitration more often towards the end of the 1950s. Between 1956 and 1957, the union conducted 33 work disputes, and won the majority of them.⁴⁷⁶ From 1957 to 1961, the union conducted 116 disputes in İstanbul.⁴⁷⁷ In nearly all the larger workplaces, workers conducted collective labor disputes, such as in Kavel, Berec, Nur Metal, Auto

⁴⁷⁵ “Bir İş İhtilafını Yüksek Hakem Kurulunun Süratle Neticelendirmesi İstendi [The Union Asked For an Immediate Solution to a Labor Dispute by the Arbitration Council],” *Gece Postası*, February 17, 1953; “Otomakas Fabrikası İşçileri Yüzde 75 Zam İstiyor [The Auto Scissor Lift Workers Ask for Wage Increase as 75 Percent],” *Gece Postası*, March 12, 1954; “Madeni Eşya İşçileri Ücret Zammı İstedi [The Metalwork Workers Demanded Wage Increases],” *Gece Postası*, June 25, 1954; “Madeni Eşya İşçileri İş İhtilafını Kazandı [The Metalwork Workers Won the Labor Dispute],” *Gece Postası*, July 30, 1954; “Bakır Tel Çekme İşçileri Zam Talebinde Bulundu [The Copper Wire Workers Demanded Wage Increase],” *Gece Postası*, August 24, 1954; “Develi İşçileri Yüzde 65 Zam İstedi [Develi Workers Wanted a 65% Wage Increase],” *Gece Postası* September 7, 1954; “Sıcak Tel Çekme İşçileri Yılda 70.000 Lira Tutarında Zam Almağı Sağlandı [The Metal Worker were Able to Get 70.000 Turkish Lira Wage Increases in a Year],” *Gece Postası*, October 17, 1954.

⁴⁷⁶ *Maden-İş Faaliyet Raporu: XIII. Genel Merkez Kongresi*, 152.

⁴⁷⁷ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının İstanbul Bölge Merkez Şubesinin 9-Ekim-1960 Tarihinde Yapılacak İlk Normal Kongresine Sunulmak Üzere 1.1.1959 Tarihinden 30.09.1960 Tarihine Kadar Faaliyet Raporu*, 6-8.

Scissor, Şakir Zümre, Ayvansaray Bolt, Profilo, Arçelik, Türk Demir Döküm, Emayetaş, Rabak, Sungurlar, and General Electric, etc. These plants were located in the most populous workers' neighbourhoods. It is important to note here that most of the work disputes ended in a decision favouring the workers. Through these disputes, workers attempted to solve their most troublesome problem; that is, the issue of wages. In fact, most disputes were about increases in pay.⁴⁷⁸ Furthermore, food issues, work conditions, the provisions for public transportation to the factory and late payrolls were all likely to become other issues brought to the arbitration committee.

We do not have records of meetings in those arbitration committees; therefore, we do not have a chance to analyze the language that was utilized by the worker's representatives at that time. It is also very hard to measure how those limited collective encounters were reflected in the language of workers. After all, the metal workers were using a mechanism, which was designed by government in order to increase labor productivity and prevent the development of contentious industrial relations. Nevertheless, we know from several of the above mentioned narratives that most of the labor dispute process did not go on smoothly between workers and bosses/managers. It would not be wrong, therefore, to conclude that those disputes factored in the definition of worker's collective interests as being in direct opposition to those of the metal bosses.

V. Solidarity and Creating a Workers' Community

In addition to the collective labor disputes, which improved solidarity, and the idea of having common interests between metal workers, the union attempted to form a metal workers' community, which would enrich the notion of togetherness. Union officers

⁴⁷⁸ "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision of High Arbitration Committee]" *Official Gazette* no: 9637, July 13, 1955; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision of High Arbitration Committee]," *Official Gazette* no: 9640, June 22, 1957; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision of High Arbitration Committee]," *Official Gazette* no: 10310, September 19, 1959; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision of High Arbitration Committee]," *Official Gazette* no: 10433, February 16, 1960; "Ücret Alamayan 550 İşçi İhtilaf Çıkarttı [550 Workers who Could not Get Wages Conducted a Dispute]," *Milliyet*, April 10, 1960.

contended that this community would foster solidarity among the workers and would, therefore, further empower them in their fight against the inequities and injustices to which they were widely exposed. In addition, the union organized several social events to further promote it.

As opposed to the so-called “greedy and intolerant” bosses, the metal workers felt it important to act together through sharing the burden of their experiences in city life and at work, and they started cooperating in their responses to their common problems. Indeed, they claimed that no bosses could stand against the workers’ rightful demands if they resisted collectively.⁴⁷⁹ This type of unity was also emphasized in the written declarations that were distributed in workplaces.⁴⁸⁰ The workers’ representatives from several enterprises defined bosses as having different and conflictual interests with workers, and recounted some of the bosses’ attempts to shatter workers’ unity in the shop floor. To garner unity among the workers, the union had to train them to eschew individual opportunism, which would prevent the formation of a community consciousness, in favour of a general understanding of the necessity of common action to pursue common interests.⁴⁸¹ The union began to publish a news bulletin, *The Bulletin of the Union of İstanbul Iron, Metal and Metal Hardware Workers*, which claimed to be the voice of the metal workers in 1954, to train its members about being effective workers and union members. The bulletin also advised metal workers, who were assumed to be the creator of the modern world, to fight together for their rights.⁴⁸² There is no doubt that the union itself would become fertile ground for such unity to be cultivated.

⁴⁷⁹ “Madeni Eşya İşçileri İşsizlik ve İthal Rejimini Tenkid Etti [The Metalwork Workers Criticized the Unemployment and Export System],” *Gece Postası*, November 1, 1951.

⁴⁸⁰ “Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikasının İşçi Konfederasyonları [The Workers’ Congresses of the Union of Iron and Metalwork Workers],” *Gece Postası*, October 8, 1952; “Süleymaniye Çakmak Fabrikasında [In the Süleymaniye Lighter Factory],” *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, April 1954.

⁴⁸¹ *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası 8. Genel Kurul Toplantısı*.

⁴⁸² *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, (April 1954).

To enhance the solidarity of workers, the union was portrayed as a home base where workers could fight for their rights and feel safe amongst other metal workers.⁴⁸³ The first issue of the bulletin stated that the metal workers could not earn anything by being silent and simply begging. The metal workers had to be unionized to get their rights.⁴⁸⁴ The union assumed that any workers who did not actively join in the union's actions and did not make themselves a force in the push for worker solidarity had no business asking for their natural rights.⁴⁸⁵ Articles in the union journal gave examples of how the union was run for the benefit of metal workers.⁴⁸⁶ The workers would realize their lawful and common rights only through fighting for them, alongside their unions. The bulletin also praised the formalization of industrial relations and the labor regime, which would each protect workers against the "arbitrary" actives of bosses.⁴⁸⁷ Accordingly, the metal union tried to endow their members with a consciousness of being part of a social group. In fact, members of the union even published poems, which praised their jobs, their labor, or their working tools, in the bulletin.⁴⁸⁸

The union called for the metal workers to embrace their unions and be an undefeatable group against injustices through the poems, drawings and articles published in its newspaper. While in the first part of a cartoon published in 1954, a fat boss who was sitting on an end of a teeter-totter weighs on individual skinny workers was illustrated, in the second part he was moved upward on the same tool as those workers came together and sat as a group on the opposite part of the tool. It undoubtedly emphasized the importance of solidarity between laborers. The union distributed leaflets, which touched on the importance

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ "Sendikalı Olalım [Let's Join in Unions]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 1 no. 1 (April 1954).

⁴⁸⁵ *Kongrelere Gitmiyen Sendikacılar Hakkında Beyanname Yayınlandı [A Declaration Was Published About the Unonists Who Did not Attend Congresses]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 40 Envelope 1856; Kemal Sülker, "1-Maden-İş'in Çalışmaları 2-Yeni Bir Yapı Kooperatifi [1-The Works of Maden-İş 2-A New Building Cooperative]," *Gece Postası*, September 9, 1957.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*; "Sendika Ne Yaptı [What Did the Union Do]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 31 (28 October 1958), 2; 'Üyelerin Haklarını Arayan Sendika Başarı Sağlıyor [The Union Which Seeks Their Members Rights Become Successful]' *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 38 (1 August 1959), 3.

⁴⁸⁷ "Sendikalı Olalım [Let's be Unionized]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* (April 1954).

⁴⁸⁸ "Tezgahım [My Workbench]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, (April 1954).

of keeping up solidarity and defending their union, on the shop floor. Those calls resonated to a certain degree with the metal workers. During union meetings, several organized metal workers touched on the importance of the union and union's representatives to bolster solidarity between workers, regulate relationships with employers and control the proper implementation of laws on the shop floor.⁴⁸⁹

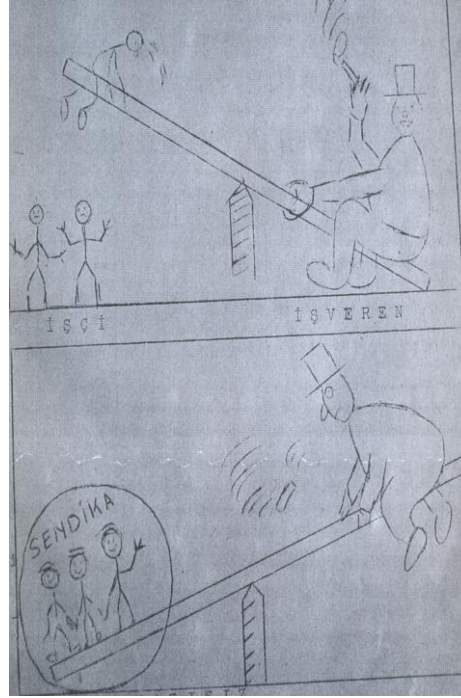


Figure 4: -(Source: *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 1 no. 2 [16 October 1954], 3].

A metal unionist from Ortaköy claimed that workers without unions were individuals who were alone and weak in their battles with their employers. Therefore, the metal workers should all be joined together in unions.⁴⁹⁰ Indeed, another cartoon published in 1956 demonstrated the union as the worker's palace of justice.

⁴⁸⁹ "Öğüt [Advice]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 1 no. 3 (20 November 1954), 2; "Sendikalı Olalım [Let's Be Unionized]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 1 no. 5 (12 March 1955), 9.

⁴⁹⁰ "Röportaj [Interview]" *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 1 no. 3 (20 November 1954), 8. Also look at: "Biz Bize [Us to Us]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 2 no. 8 (28 January 1956), 5; Ertuğrul Polat, "Uzun Seneler Emeği 4 Madalyonun Hikayesi [The Story of 4 Man Who Worked in the Union For Years]," *Gece Postası*, December 19, 1957.

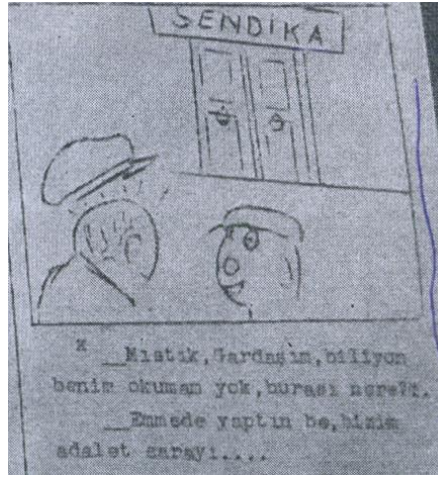


Figure 5: -Mistik, my brother, I am illiterate. What is this place? – Hey, come on, this our place of justice...(Source: *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin*, year 2 no. 6, [7 January 1956], 5).

The ties between the metal workers were not lauded merely in discourse, or by emphasizing the importance of solidarity within laboring classes. Maden-İş handed over some tangible benefits to its members, too. To this end, the union founded a relief fund in 1956, to which members would all contribute. With the help of this fund, the union supplied financial aid to its members to ease their daily problems and foster their commitment to the union. For instance, in cases of birth, death or conscription, the union provided cash to the metal workers.⁴⁹¹ Maden-İş also launched another cooperative in which the workers had a chance to purchase cheap food, clothes, heating requirements and household items.⁴⁹² The union then founded a building cooperative, which would provide its members with low cost housing.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹¹ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının İstanbul Bölge Merkez Şubesinin 9-Ekim-1960 Tarihinde Yapılacak İlk Normal Kongresine Sunulmak Üzere 1.1.1959 Tarihinden 30.09.1960 Tarihine Kadar Faaliyet Raporu; Maden-İş Faaliyet Raporu: XIII. Genel Merkez Kongresi*, 167-168; “Madeni Eşya İşçileri İçin Sandık Kuruldu [The Metal Workers Founded a Relief Fund],” *Gece Postası*, September 13, 1956; “Develi Emaye’de Bir İşçi [A Worker in Develi Enamel Factory],” *Gece Postası*, December 29, 1956; Kemal Sülker, “Yardımlaşma Şuuru, Maden-İş’in Yardımlaşma Sandığı [The Consciousness of Solidarity and The Relief Fund of Maden-İş],” *Gece Postası*, October 14, 1956; “Yardım Sandığı Hizmete Devam Ediyor [The Relief Fund Is Continuing to Serve],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 38 (1 October 1959), 1 and 4.

⁴⁹² “Maden-İş İstihsal ve İstihlak Kop. Faaliyette [Maden-İş Purchasing and Consuming Cooperative is on Duty],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 40 (9 February 1960), 1.

⁴⁹³ “Maden İşçileri İçin Yapı Kooperatifi Kurularak Ortak Kayıtları Başladı [The Building Cooperative Has Been Founded for the Metal Workers and Registrations Have Begun],” *Maden-İş* year 3 no. 32 (31 January 1959), 1; “Türkiye Ölçüsünde Yapı Kooperatifi Hazırlığı Başarı ile Sona Erdi, İşe Başlamıyor

Through these activities, the union aimed to spread its influence and ideas of solidarity among the metal workers during the decade.

With this goal in mind, the metal union also held Khitan (circumcision) feasts for the male children of the metal workers. According to the report presented to the General Council, nearly 4 000 members participated in circumcision feasts in 1960, as they were communal celebrations. The union also organized balls and picnics to get members to socialize together. To further garner loyalty, the union arranged lottery drawings and distributed union badges in workplaces. It hired religious men to sing prayers to the souls of deceased metal workers and their late relatives, to meet some of the religious and spiritual needs in the community. It is obvious that by hiring a famous singer, organizing festivals downtown and serving up luxury items such as champagne, which is known as the drink of the upper classes, the union wanted their members to feel a part of modern city life.⁴⁹⁴ Indeed, an ex-lawyer of several trade unions, including Maden-İş and DİSK, Sina Pamukçu, portrayed the unionists of the 1950s, including the unionists in Maden-İş as being determined to have a respected place in society.⁴⁹⁵ It is unfortunate that we lack any document to debate how such activities were influential in fostering solidarity among the rank and file. In the absence of the workers' voices, it is impossible to pursue such a debate. However, it can be speculated by the way those activities continued to be held over the next decade that the practices were more or less widespread among the metal workers during the 1950s.

Moreover, Maden-İş put an emphasis on the education of their members. A union report claimed that the workers had to be well informed, both about the technical details of their jobs to get a better position in workplaces, and about the details of their social and

[The Preparations for Founding a Building Cooperative on a National Scale Ended Successfully, the Union is Ready to Begin to Work],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 39 (31 May 1959), 2.

⁴⁹⁴ “Maden-İş Mevlid Okuttu [Maden-İş Get Someone to Read Mawlid],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 33 (1 April 1959), 4; “Maden-İş, İşçi Gezilerini Programa Bağladı [Maden-İş Scheduled Workers' Trips],” *Gece Postası*, April 24, 1959; “Sendika Kurban Bayramı İçin Bir Gezi Tertibetti [The Union Organized a Trip for the Religious Holiday],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 34 (31 May 1959), 1; “Sendikamız ve Gece Eğlenceleri [Our Union and Night Entertainments],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 39 (31 May 1959), 3; “Büyük Sünnet Düğünü [The Big Circumcision Feast],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 36 (1 August 1959), 1; “Yıllık Balomuz Bu Gece Yapılıyor [Our Annual Ball is Taking Place This Night],” *Maden-İş* year 4 no. 42 (22 April 1960), 1.

⁴⁹⁵ Aziz Çelik, *Sina Pamukçu ile Sendikalı Yıllar [Interview: The Union Years with Sina Pamukçu]* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2010), 35.

economic rights to a better life at work and at home. Education, moreover, strengthened the ties between the union and the workers, and amongst the workers themselves. To bolster unity between the metal workers, the union organized several seminars to inform the representatives of the legal rights of workers and their own rights, as well. The union also attempted to elevate the technical knowledge of their members regarding their jobs, to further promote them in the workplace hierarchy. A report on the actions of the union in 1959 stated that, despite few being in number, workers greatly benefited from such educational courses.⁴⁹⁶ Seminars and courses also aimed to nurture worker commitment to their jobs and workplaces, which in turn would increase productivity. Again, we do not have any documents to allow us a window into the actual influences of such seminars on the rank and file. Those educational drives must have been effective, however, at least for the union's representatives who took part, since several old representatives would become the pioneers of the union's activities during the more contentious times, namely in the 1960s.

VI. Conclusion: The Legacy of the Post-War Years

Except for very few examples, the existing labor history literature analyzes the post-May, 1960 era as a completely new period characterized by the large scale development of trade unionism and significant changes in related legislation. While it is true that such transformations significantly factored into the formation of the working class in Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s, especially by paving the way for a considerable increase in the collective actions of workers, such an approach, on the other hand, ignores the patterns which left an important legacy to the succeeding period, after the Second World War. I would

⁴⁹⁶ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının İstanbul Bölge Merkez Şubesinin 9-Ekim-1960 Tarihinde Yapılacak İlk Normal Kongresine Sunulmak Üzere 1.1.1959 Tarihinden 30.09.1960 Tarihine Kadar Faaliyet Raporu*. Also look at: *Maden-İş Faaliyet Raporu: XIII. Genel Merkez Kongresi*, 101 and 165-166; "Sendika Kurs Açacak [The Union Will Open a Course]," *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası News Bulletin* year 1 no. 3 (20 November 1954), 2; "Yeni Yılın İlk İşçi Semineri [The First Worker Seminar of the New Year]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 7 16 February 1957, 3; "Maden-İş Sendikası İşçi Mümessillerine Kurs Açıyor [The Maden-İş Union Is Opening Course for Workers' Representatives]," *Maden-İş* year 1 no. 13 (8 June 1957), 1 and 3; "B Tipi İşçi Semineri Başarı İle Neticelendi [The B Type Seminar Was Done Successfully]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 23 (1 April 1958), 1; "İşçi Seminerinden Mezun Olan İşçiler [The Workers Who Graduated from the Workers' Seminar]," *Maden-İş* year 2 no. 30 (25 September 1958), 2.

therefore argue that the existing literature must largely be revised in terms of the discussions of continuities and ruptures which the 1960s and 1970s inherited, to better sketch a comprehensive picture of class formation in Turkey after 1945.

It must be noted that the rising consciousness which emphasized the necessity of unity among the metal workers towards the end of the 1950s should not be confused with class consciousness in the Marxist sense. First of all, there is little data about the scope of members' participation in union affairs at that time. The number must not be high, since we do know about the leaders' frustration over the indifference of the workers, especially until the mid-1950s. Secondly, the general ideology of the union did not reach beyond the general framework of the industrial democracy and factory regime, which was designed by the state. Rather, the metal union contributed to the formation of that general democratic framework and supported it. For example, the union often warned workers that to be unionized did not simply mean to oppose bosses, or even gang bosses, in every case, nor it did mean to be manipulative of employers. On the contrary, every union member had to contribute to productivity in the workplace, and to the national economy, by working hard in order to earn their rights and benefits.⁴⁹⁷ In this sense, the available class consciousness must be comprehended within the hegemonic discourse of the industrial democracy of the period.

Nonetheless, we can still argue that this is a brand of class consciousness, since it encompasses the bulk of common interests among workers and defends them together under the umbrella of a defined organization. Despite having the ideal of cooperation between workers and bosses, it touches on the real contentious experiences between these groups. Considering the broad scope of such a consciousness, it is even more disappointing that we lack the relevant documents to argue about the extent of rank and file comprehension of union ideology, although we can claim that the union representatives, which governed relations between Maden-İş and the rank and file, shared a common consciousness with workers to a great extent. Therefore, we can speak of the effectiveness of class consciousness, at least

⁴⁹⁷ *Bakırköy Şubesinin Sıtkı Bütün Emaye İşçilerine Beyannamesi.*

among the metal workers who would lead the workplace resistance movements during the 1960s.

In fact, in spite of its weakness and the dominance of its solidaristic and state-centered ideology, a generation of unionists led by Kemal Türkler and his friends sprouted up from the rank and file of the union and, more importantly, they were the workers' or union's representatives. In addition to dealing with union affairs, they continued to do their jobs in the workplaces; therefore, they must have had close relationships with the metal workers on the shop floor. These metal workers' representatives were very eager to pursue workers' causes, despite all the troubles they encountered, such as threats of losing their jobs, or being accused of being communists. And they would leave an important legacy, which would be reflected in the wider and harsher struggles of the 1960s.

In terms of the metal sector, its patterns of growth did not show a considerable change in the new epoch: the private metal industry in İstanbul improved through state aid and in cooperation with foreign capital investment. In addition, most bosses/managers would show little tolerance to workers' demands for change, and resented the existence of Maden-İş due to small profit margins in the sector, as well as the apparent scarcity of skilled labor force, and their world view of "my business and my rules". Although it is true that some important enterprises strived to implement a few modern techniques to bind workers to the workplace and smooth over discontent, those efforts were very limited in terms of their scope and were not common in the sector. Largely as a result of this, relations between employers/managers and workers did not significantly improve in the private metal sector in İstanbul during this time.

Moreover, patterns of migration to the city, community structures, the composition of the labor force, and the frustrating common experiences of the metal sector, which were compounded after the war years, did not significantly transform the sector in the new era. Except through some periods when wage increases exceeded price increases in the city, the foremost problem of the metal workers was still being unable to provide for their families. In addition, employers'/manager's oppression of the unionized and dissident workers did not

relent. Therefore, contentious relations between workers and bosses/managers remained. In this regard, the main mechanism for the metal workers was still their solidarity under their union, and this was the main means to reach their goals within the existing social hierarchy.

The new governments' approach to the general framework of industrial relations, and the assumed role of the trade unions, were also unchanged after the coup d'état; however, they largely expanded the legal mechanisms through which unions could collectively make claims on behalf of their members in the 1960s. But the rise of contentious policies over the distribution of available resources made relations between workers, and employers and the organizations of both groups, more strained. Therefore, the 1960s would witness intensified conflicts and collective struggles between those two different social groups; and the most militant collective battles would take place in the metal sector.

Inspired by promises made by the new governments, Maden-İş' policies would also remain the same until a more fundamental change occurred in 1967, with the foundation of a second workers' confederacy, namely the Confederacy of Progressive Trade Unions (DİSK), as will be described in detail later. The union continued to exert pressure on several state apparatuses to legislate new workers' rights. In the meantime, it applied the available collective mechanisms to get its members' rights on the shop floor level: Maden-İş extensively used the arbitration mechanism between 1960 and 1963, as it had done especially after the mid-1950s. Therefore, common language and consciousness existed among the organized metal workers through a combination of their relations with bosses/managers, their common experiences, and the union's ideology, which still oscillated between loyalty and insubordination to the existing social order, and negativity towards the general organization of workplace order in the first years of the decade.

PART 2

THE CHANGING FORM OF COLLECTIVE ACTION: THE METAL WORKERS IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, 1960-1963

It would be an exaggeration to debate the Sixties as a completely new epoch in terms of the metal workers' collective experiences and struggles. The 1960 coup d'état, which dissolved the DP government, did not completely transform the ideological framework of industrial relations, which had taken shape in the climate of the post-war years in Turkey; nonetheless, it substantially widened the political and institutional channels through which workers and unions could voice their demands. At first, the new regime reiterated the old promises of the right to strike, collective bargaining and social justice for workers. More importantly, it revived the old attempts, which had largely been halted in the mid-1950s, to institutionalize those rights. At the same time, the İstanbul unions, including Maden-İş, exerted pressure on the politically powerful for legislation of workers' rights during the new decade; furthermore, they continued to benefit from new and old institutional methods to improve their member's work and life conditions. While the pattern of collective struggle created after the war remained almost unchanged in the first years of the 1960s, the metal workers, however, realized that the state intervention in labor dynamics was not as influential as they'd expected, and the metal bosses were still reluctant about instilling industrial democracy on the shop floor. So, the workers began to stage more effective collective actions, that is strikes, to enforce their demands on both the state and the employers. In fact, the famous strike of metal workers at the Kavel Factory in 1963 demonstrated the first sign of coming changes in terms of workers' collective responses to the social, political and institutional developments in the 1960s. The metal workers, who were aware of the new political opportunities provided by a new regime, were more determined than ever to shape their own fates during the 1960s. To this purpose, they waged bitter fights to organize their own, trusted unions in the new decade.

The term “social justice” as used herein must be understood within the context of the historical transformations that occurred in the state and economy in the capitalist world. The two World Wars, the collapse of liberal economy, which was marked by the 1929 crisis, social upheavals in between the war years and the rise of socialism as an alternative to capitalism enabled policy makers in the western countries to reflect on creating a better mechanism in which a capitalist economic model would progress without causing significant economic recessions and social conflicts. In order to save the economy from collapse and alleviate labor disputes, the Roosevelt government (1932-1945) in the United States implemented the New Deal Policy, which included relief programs to poor people and provided several rights, such as collective bargaining to workers. The main assumption behind the policy was that improving the lifestyle of poor people and labor would develop internal markets by turning them into consumers; as a result, the economy would be stabilized without both causing a significant decrease in the profits of entrepreneurs and a decrease in social disturbances. After the war years, most European states began to implement more or less same program after getting considerable amount of aids from United States in order to recover the economy, which, as a result of both the 1929 crisis and the Second World War, was on the verge of total collapse. The so-called welfare state promised social justice to poor sections of society who would justly, albeit not equally, benefit from the national wealth produced by the cooperation of labor and capital: in fact, the European states created the mechanisms for making social justice possible; the public expenditures made by the states rapidly increased, especially in the health and education sectors. Furthermore, the governments began to recognize social rights such as leave of absence with pay, the maternity leave, etc. They recognized trade unions as legal entities and bargained with them, under the name “social dialogue” to control labor in return for providing welfare to employees. Accordingly, the social justice and welfare state became a norm in nearly all Western capitalist countries to create a more stabilized society.⁴⁹⁸ The term “social justice” was

⁴⁹⁸ For the further details of welfare state and social justice, look at: Steffen Mau and Benjamin Veghte, “Introduction: Social Justice, Legitimacy and the Welfare State” in Steffen Mau and Benjamin

heavily informed by the economic prescriptions and development plans offered by the officers of the United Nations and United States to Third World countries to recover their economic underdevelopment and stabilize the societies. However, it was successfully articulated by the national liberation and/or socialist movements, and states, which followed a non-capitalist path of development, to their programs in the regions where people have long been suffered from the colonialist rule or imperialist exploitation.⁴⁹⁹ Thus, “social justice” turned into a contentious term around which different political and social actors took a position, as happened in Turkey during the 1960s.

The new laws, the most important of those undoubtedly being the 1961 Constitution and the 1963 Trade Union Law, would accompany the public debate around “social justice” in Turkey. In spite of those changes, the development of the private metal sector, the residential patterns of the new immigrants, and the factory conditions, which contributed to shaping the collective perception and responses of the metal workers, did not significantly transform themselves in the new decade. Chapter 5 will firstly take a brief look to those stagnant processes, the most important of which was the bosses’ inclination to be the sole administrator of work relations; something that manifested itself in lasting enmity towards unionism and unionist activities in the workplace. Then, the chapter will further analyze the institutional advances of the new regime, the public debate around the term social justice, and the rise of leftist movements which had largely been oppressed by the both the CHP and succeeding DP governments; how the state officers, union leaders and bosses understood social justice, just income distribution, and even socialism, as a better way to create a democratic and modern society.

Alongside those debates, the chapter will reflect on the position of the metal bosses and unions, as both employers and workers, in this period. We have only scant evidence of how the metal bosses, specifically, perceived and reacted to the developments that took place

Veghte [eds.] *Social Justice, Legitimacy and the Welfare State*, (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 1-16; Béla Tomka, *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Europe*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 154-191.

⁴⁹⁹ See, Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World*, (New York: New Press, 62-74; Ozay Mehmet, *Economic Planning and Social Justice in Developing Countries*, (London: Routledge, 2011), 17-36.

in the first years of the 1960s. However, they attempted to be more effective through their organization – MESS - in political and social realms, when the growing influence of the ideas of fair income distribution, social justice and socialism, and institutionalization of workers' rights overlapped with the Kavel Strike in 1963. Maden-İş was also an important actor of those debates: the union and its officers were right in the middle of the public debates on the social justice. In this regard, it is important to tackle an important question; how did the organized metal workers respond to the new *zeitgeist*?

It would appear workers arrived on scene as soon as they realized that, unless they collectively acted, the enlarging political and institutional channels would not automatically bring them the social justice which were promised by the state. Consequently, an increasing number of metal workers engaged in collective actions to exert their influence in order to either obtain those rights promised by the state but not recognized by bosses/managers in workplaces, or to foster new ones. Accordingly, Chapter 6 will analyze the metal workers who staged a famous strike, the Kavel Strike in 1963, on the verge of the right to strike meetings in the National Assembly. As well as leaving important marks on the legacy of workers' collective struggles against the bosses, and being an important landmark on the formation of strike culture in Turkey, the Kavel strike and succeeding strikes during the following year at the big metal plants of İstanbul severed the already tense relations between the metal workers and bosses.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE METAL WORKERS: EXPANSION OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Theseus: "...There is nothing worse for a city than a sovereign, when first no laws are common, and he rules alone, taking himself for law. That way nothing is equal. But when the laws are written, the poor man and the rich have equal rights. Then, when a wealthy citizen does wrong, a weaker one can criticize, and prevail, with justice on his side. *That's liberty.*"⁵⁰⁰

"Struggle my brother, struggle" cried metal worker, Ahmet Arslan, in his poems published in the *Maden-İş* newspaper in 1969. He expressed another sentiment in the same poem that while bosses were accumulating huge amounts of money and landlords were increasing their land holdings at the expense of poor peasants, workers who were "earnestly" working for their country and families were expected to maintain their lives under very difficult conditions.⁵⁰¹ To contend with those social injustices, Ahmet Arslan called his fellow workers to get together under a trade union banner and fight for their rights. In fact, his voice was echoed among many metal workers in the Sixties: the 1960's was characterized by collective action for the metal workers in Turkey. These collective struggles were no doubt one of the most influential aspects of the metal workers collective experiences and common consciousness in the decade.

The changing *zeitgeist* in the new decade must be accounted for one of the most important reasons for the rise of collective actions during the 1960s. Partially inspired by the rise of leftist and/or national liberation movements in the so-called Third World, the public

⁵⁰⁰ Euripides, "Suppliant Women" in Peter Burian and Alan Shapiro [eds.], Rosanna Warren and Robert A. Brooks [trans.] *The Complete Euripides*, vol. 3, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 211.

⁵⁰¹ Ahmet Arslan, "Struggle", *Maden-İş*, no. 22 (May 1969).

debate was increasingly characterized by discussions on the underlying reasons of social inequalities, widespread poverty, economic development and the methods to solve those urgent problems. The different actors of industrial relations, mainly the state officers, employers and labor unions, thus, began to reflect on “the social justice”, a term which even took place in the new constitution after the coup d’état, as a magic touch to salvage Turkey from its underdevelopment.

I. Constants

In certain aspects, the new decade represents significant continuities of pattern in terms of the growth of the İstanbul metal industry, migration to the city, composition of the labor force in the sector, and workers’ common experiences in working and living places. The new decade witnessed the expansion of the metal sector, which followed the same patterns that existed in the post-war era. The first civil government, after the coup d’état, prepared a Development Plan in 1963 that concluded in supporting private entrepreneurship to improve the domestic market, so that the whole of the national economy would develop. To this end, the new governments continued to assist private industry through several promotions and tariff policies. Furthermore, with the steady expansion of cities and enlargement of the housing sector, the need for durable consumer goods significantly rose in the 1960s. In turn, the big private enterprises multiplied, both in terms of their numbers and their influence on industrial life. Moreover, the existing ones, such as Arçelik, Demir Döküm, Profilo, Şakir Zümre etc., diversified and expanded the scope of their production.⁵⁰² For example, Bernar

⁵⁰² Eyüp Karadayı, *İstanbul’un Sanayi Potansiyeli [The Industrial Potential of İstanbul]* (İstanbul: İstanbul Sanayi Odası, 1964), 9; Erol Tümertekin, *Manufacturing and Suburbanization in İstanbul* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Coğrafya Enstitüsü, 1970), 10; Mustafa Sönmez, ‘75 Yılın Sanayileşme Politikaları [The Industrial Policies of 75 Years]’ in Oya Baydar [ed.] *75 Yılda Çarklar’dan Chip’lere [From Machine Wheels to Computer Chips in 75 Years]*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 10-11; “Demir Çelik’ten Beyaz Eşya’ya Metal İşkolu [The Metal Sector From Iron-Steel to White Good],” in Oya Baydar [ed.] *75 Yılda Çarklar’dan Chip’lere [From Machine Wheels to Computer Chips in 75 Years]* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 192; Mehmet Altun, *Ortak Akıl Ararken [In Search for the Common Reason]* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008), 23-30; Özgür Öztürk, *Türkiye’de Büyük Sermaye Grupları: Finans Kapitalin Oluşumu ve Gelişimi [The Big Business Circles in Turkey: The Formation and Development of the Financial Capital]*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2010), 83-92. For the increasing number of workers in the metal sector, look at: Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü [The State Statistic Institute], *1964 Sanayi ve İşyerleri Sayımı Broşürü [The Leaflet of Industry and*

Nahum recounts this detail the actual development of OTOSAN as it took place between 1960 and 1970.⁵⁰³ Similarly, the other important metal plants, such as Arçelik and Demir Döküm grew during the 1960s. In parallel with the growth of private metal plants, the number of metal workers multiplied in İstanbul. In a letter to Vehbi Koç, Bernar Nahum stated that the number of employers also had to be increased, thanks to the expansion of production in OTOSAN.⁵⁰⁴ By 1970, the total number of workers in the metal sector located in İstanbul was 32 052 in total.⁵⁰⁵ The İstanbul metal industry blossomed into one of the biggest sectors owned by private individuals.

The metal sector was also diversified in terms of its spatial distribution during the 1960s. Since the old regions, Eyüp, Topkapı or Zeytinburnu, where the already established industry did not leave room for new industrial enterprises, the new establishments had to be located in other areas and the metal industry began to take hold on the Anatolian side of the city. Towards the end of the 1950s, the metal plants, like Ootosan, had already been established on the Anatolian side and in the new decade many more plants were built there. In parallel, new migrants from the regions of Black Sea, Eastern and Middle Anatolia began to reside in those places. As a result, the metal workers could soon settle and work in nearly all the major working class districts of the city.

These residential patterns followed old traditions. That is, the squatter areas again sprouted up around the factories located on the Anatolian side, such as Kartal, Pendik, Maltepe or Gebze.⁵⁰⁶ Labor's spatial distribution remained the same, with communities focused around the perimeters of the factories and the population of both old and new squatter

Workplaces Census in 1964], (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1964), table 5 and table 19.

⁵⁰³ Bernar Nahum, *Koç'ta 44 Yılım [My 44 Years in Koç]*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1988), 72. For Arçelik, look at: *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000 [From Product to Brand: The Institutional History of Arçelik]*, (n.p.: Arçelik Anonim Şirketi, 2001), 61. Also, look at: *Demirdöküm'de 50 Yıl [The Fifty Years in Demirdöküm]*, (n.p.: Türk Demirdöküm Fabrikaları Anonim Şirketi, 2004).

⁵⁰⁴ Nahum, 134. For the increasing number of workers in Demirdöküm, look at: *Demirdöküm'de 50 Yıl*.

⁵⁰⁵ Erol Tümertekin, "İstanbul ve Çevresinde Sanayi Özellikleri ve Dağılışı [The Characteristics and Distribution of Industry in İstanbul and its Surroundings]," in his *İstanbul: İnsan ve Mekan [İstanbul: People and Place]* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1997), 39.

⁵⁰⁶ Tümertekin, *Manufacturing and Suburbanization in İstanbul*, 28-30 and Tümertekin, "İstanbul ve Çevresinde Sanayi Özellikleri ve Dağılışı."

regions grew significantly, thanks to an increasing number of rural people coming to İstanbul during the 1960s from the various cities, such as Rize, Trabzon, Sivas, Kars. The newcomers arrived at the city for similar reasons to those who had come during the previous decade. An ex-Demir Döküm worker, Mustafa Türker, claimed that he came to İstanbul in 1959 since there was no job and no promising future in his home town.⁵⁰⁷ Another familiar pattern was that most prospective workers, who constituted the cheap labor force for industry, were still young, uneducated male migrants. Moreover, they were still largely dependent on the incomes, which they earned in the city; they did not bring with them any extra money, food or household goods from their rural homes. Those men, most of whom would marry soon, were the sole providers for their families. A mother-in-law of one Kavel worker stated that her son-in-law, Murat, was the only provider to supply bread at home.⁵⁰⁸ It is apparent that the metal workers considered their struggles to be in the interest of their communities, which were so closely formed around their families inside the workers' neighbourhoods.

There was no doubt that leaving their birthplaces, and arriving at a new city that the migrants barely knew, made them vulnerable. Their main survival mechanism was to participate in the social networks, which their relatives had previously established in the workers' neighbourhoods, and to reside in the squatter areas where their close relatives or people from the same birthplace settled.⁵⁰⁹ During the 1960s, most workers and workers' families still lived out their lives in the squatter areas and participated in the already established social networks, which often developed according to commonalities of birthplace.⁵¹⁰ In the squatter areas, the workers who, along with their families, constituted the majority of the regions' population, socialized together. Maden-İş's former district chair of

⁵⁰⁷ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012. The other metal workers recounted the same reason for coming to İstanbul: Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

⁵⁰⁸ Selma Tükel, "Grevcinin Bileğinde Kelepçe [The Cuffs at the Ankle of the Strikers]," *Sosyal Adalet*, year 1 no. 5, (16 April 1963): 7.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid; Charles W. M. Hart, *Zeytinburnu Gecekondu Bölgesi [The Squatter Area in Zeytinburnu]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Ticaret Odası Yayınları, 1969), 62-63 and 94-95.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, 82; Ruşen Keleş, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Şehirleşme, Konut ve Gecekondu [The Urbanization, Residence and Squatter Houses in Turkey in 100 Questions]*, (Ankara: Gerçek, 1972), 135-136; Michael D. Danielson and Ruşen Keleş, "Urbanization and Income Distribution in Turkey," in Ergun Özbudun and Aydın Ulusan [eds.], *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Turkey*, (New York: Holmes&Meier, 1980), 274.

Silahtarağa, Hüseyin Ekinci, said during our interview that the metal workers were neighbourly to each other and they came and went into their neighbours' houses for nightly visits. They were married to each other's daughters or sons and they had common problems with their living places. Some other metal workers, with whom I conducted interviews, similarly claimed that after arriving to the city in the 1960s and dwelling in the Kağıthane and Alibeyköy squatter areas, they, as a group, attended picnics, concerts and film demonstrations organized in their neighbourhoods.⁵¹¹ In the same vein, the male metal workers mostly went to coffee houses to spend their leisure time after finishing their work for the day. There, they played either cards or backgammon and discussed the latest sporting events, as well as their personal or common problems within the neighbourhood and factory.⁵¹² Those types of socialization patterns must have tightened their bonds.⁵¹³ For example, the coffee houses had a special status as a place of socialization for the workers, so much so that the unions conducted their meetings with their members at those locations. In fact, the factory invasions and strikes that accelerated towards the end of the 1960s became an issue for whole neighbourhoods, which surrounded the industrial plants. People in those areas, who were mostly the close relatives of workers, supported collective actions by every means at their disposal.

The most burning problem of the metal workers in the city was still to provide for their families. According to a survey conducted in 1968 by Kemal Karpat, nearly half of the squatter dwellers who settled in the northern hills of İstanbul complained about insufficient income to meet their increasing economic needs.⁵¹⁴ Similarly, one metal worker claimed that:

⁵¹¹ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; Seçkin Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012; İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012; Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

⁵¹² Seçkin Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012; İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

⁵¹³ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012. In fact, the other participants talked about the nightly visits as one of the social activities in the squatter areas: Aziz Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; Seçkin Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

⁵¹⁴ Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 111.

“My hourly wage is 80 kuruş. My net income is 160 Turkish Lira per month. I am providing for five people: mother, father and three sisters. There is no worker in the family, but just me. I am paying 50 lira for rent and another 50 lira for shopping by installments. I am ashamed to say but, after paying electricity and water bills, I am left with 50 lira for meeting our monthly food expenses. What else can I say? You can estimate the rest...”⁵¹⁵

A similar hardship was emphasized by a mother of one Kavel worker:

“My son has been working in the factory for eight years. He is a masterman. But he has a big family to sustain. They were barely supporting themselves...”⁵¹⁶

A journalist who visited the house of a Kavel worker described the house and surrounding area as follows:

“The house, where the family pays 150 lira for rent, is indeed one large room. They are using the kitchen and toilet together with two other families. Mefharet Sarsar made use of a table, which she put in the corner of the room, as a kitchen. Gas range, stew pots and plates (...) 7 people are sleeping in a single room (...) The squatter houses, located at the İstinye hills where the Kavel and Türkay Match Factories are located, are mostly composed of one room homes and they were run down...”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁵ “Bir Ayda 160 lira Alan Bir Kaynakçı Hayatını Anlattı [A Welder Who Monthly Earns 160 Lira Narrated His Life],” *Türkiye Birlik*, 26 July 1962, 1 and 4. Also look at: “İşçi Gündelikleri Son Derece Azdır Geçinmeye Yetmiyor [The Daily Fees of Workers Are Very Few, They Are not Enough For Living],” *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 53 (15 August 1961), 3; “Hayat Pahalılığı Aile Düzenini Tehdit Ediyor [The High Cost of Living is Threatening the Family Structure],” *Öncü*, June 28, 1962; “Hayat Her Gün Pahalılaşıyor [Life Becomes More Expensive Every Day],” *Öncü*, August 31, 1962; “Bir Gecekonduyu Ziyaret Sırasında Dinlediklerimiz [The Conversation During a Visit to a Squatter House],” *Gece Postası*, September 16, 1962; “İşçiler Çok Güç Duruma Düştü [Workers are in Great Trouble],” *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 69, (21 January 1963): 1 and 8.

⁵¹⁶ Quoted from Selma Tükel, “Kavel mi? Kader mi? [Kavel or Fate?],” *Sosyal Adalet*, year 1 no. 3, (2 April 1963): 7.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

The official statistics further affirm the workers' complaints. For example, the cost of living index between 1956 and 1963 demonstrates the level of workers' incomes as follows:

Table 3: The Average Wages in Industry and Cost of Living Index in İstanbul,
1956-1963

Years	Average Wages (TL)	The Ratio of Increases (%)	The Cost of Living Index in İstanbul
1956	12.32	-	100
1957	12.20	-1	111.9
1958	14.36	18	121.4
1959	19.62	13.66	159.7
1960	18.11	-9.23	170.1
1961	18.39	1.5	176.1
1962	19.14	4.08	184.4
1963	20.64	11.7	204.1

Source: Ertuğrul Soysal, "Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Toplu Sözleşme Tatbikatından Doğan Bazı Meseleler [Some Problems Caused By the Practice of Collective Bargaining in the Metal Sector]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 19 (1968): 69.

It is plain from the figures available in the Table 8 that while the living index in İstanbul multiplies more than two times between 1956 and 1963, the increase of the average wages in the industrial sector was well below to this ratio. From 1956 to 1957, while the cost of living index increased from 100 to 111.9, average wages demonstrated an increase, too. From those years until 1959, the average wages significantly increased, especially between 1958 and 1959; and the cost of living index more or less increased in parallel with the wage increases. Nonetheless, while the average wages decreased between 1959 and 1960, the cost

of living index continued to increase. Until 1963, both the wages and cost of living index continued to improve approximately in the same range. That means, the huge differences which had emerged between wages and prices during the war years did not still close in the first years of the 1960s. The problem of poverty among the workers were often emphasized in the worker's papers of the time:



Figure 6: The headline says that the workers got through the Sacrifice Feast without any money (Source: *İşçinin Sesi*, 6 May 1963).

Therefore, it is natural that workers applied every means, including unionization, for securing their benefits and attaining their desired lifestyle.⁵¹⁸ Regarding the everyday problems they all shared, squatter areas were still bereft of infrastructural services during the decade; that is, the area suffered from water, road, transportation and drainage problems.⁵¹⁹ The actual living places of the metal workers had many more problems, which made workers' lives even more unbearable.

In an effort to overcome those issues, there were several available mechanisms to help the new migrants adjust to life in İstanbul. As in the 1950s, social networks hinged upon

⁵¹⁸ Karpat, 43.

⁵¹⁹ "Eyüpte Birçok Vatandaş Susuzluktan Kıvrıyor [A Lot of Citizens Suffer From Lack of Water System in Eyüp]," *Gece Postası*, July 16, 1962; "Yol Yapımı Hızlandırılmalı [The Construction of Roads Must Be Facilitated]," *Gece Postası*, July 20, 1962; "Kağıthane Köyünün Giriş Yerindeki Tahta Köprü Ne Zaman Tamir Edilecek [When the Wooden Bridge At the Entrance of Kağıthane will be Repaired]," *Gece Postası*, August 27, 1962; "Silahtarlılar Hiç Olmazsa Bir Çeşme İstiyor [Silahtar People Asks For a Fountain At Least]," *Gece Postası*, August 30, 1962; Celal Akıl, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012; Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012; İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012; Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

family relationships in the communities that helped immigrants to find jobs during the new decade. Almost all the workers I interviewed said that they had found work in the metal plants through their relatives.⁵²⁰ Hasbal Kayalı, an ex-Kavel worker, claimed that most Kavel workers found a job within the factory through the help of their relatives, who were foremen or mastermen in the factory.⁵²¹ These family ties must have facilitated the workers' participation in social networks at the shop floor level. However, in the absence of evidence, it is impossible to debate the extent of solidarity in these networks, or the social divisions in neighbourhoods, which may have been drawn along lines according to the people's original birthplaces. We don't know how these elements reflected on the daily relations between workers on the shop floor. Did managers or bosses capitalize on those social divisions and ties to organize shop floor relations on their own behalf? In the same vein, did the new union, Çelik-İş, attempt to benefit from any local social division due to neighbourhood structures, in order to undermine Maden-İş? There is insufficient material to ask these important questions about social network fragmentation, as well as solidarity dynamics.

Based on the oral history interview that I conducted with the metal workers and managers, this study argues that the social division between dwellers of the squatter areas did not reflect on the union activities on the shop floor in a meaningful manner. At least within the bigger plants, the workers from different birthplaces acted together to defend their common interests.⁵²² According to Ege Cansen, although there was a social division between workers according to original birthplaces in Arçelik, those divisions did not culminate in a schism in terms of unionization.⁵²³ Indeed, the list of metal workers who participated in the seminar of Maden-İş in 1970 showed that people from many different birthplaces were the

⁵²⁰ Aziz Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; Celal Akıl, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012; İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012; Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012; Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

⁵²¹ Quoted by Zafer Aydın, *Kanunsuz Bir Grevin Öyküsü: Kavel 1963 [The Story of an Unlawful Strike: Kavel, 1963]*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih, 2010), 21.

⁵²² Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012; İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012; Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012; Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

⁵²³ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, January 14, 2013.

members of the same union.⁵²⁴ Those social networks must have, in some way, influenced workers' daily life in the workplace, but we again lack documents to sketch a meaningful pattern for this important issue in the formation of the working class.

The composition of the labor force in the metal sector remained almost the same in the new decade. In parallel with the expansion of the sector, the enterprises were made up of uneducated and young male workers. Indeed, the seminar book proved that most metal workers had attended only primary school, and their ages were between 25 and 40.⁵²⁵ During the decade, the majority of the metal workers remained non-qualified and semi-qualified. The ratio of qualified work force in the sector was only 16 percent by 1964.⁵²⁶ According to Ege Cansen, most bosses at the Demir Döküm Factory were unqualified.⁵²⁷ The composition of the work force was a great advantage for the metal bosses since they did not have to pay high wages to uneducated workers. To meet their quotas of necessary qualified workers, the bosses applied a strategy of training non-qualified workers on the job. Indeed, the qualified workers employed at the Demir Döküm claimed that they did not know anything about the job before being recruited; they learned their technical skills while on the job.⁵²⁸ Consequently, there was no weighty social division between qualified and non-qualified workers to factor into work disputes; in fact, most qualified workers, according to Sabahaddin Zaim, sided with workers during the collective actions.⁵²⁹ In conclusion, it seemed that generational or educational differences did not create a division between workers on shop floor. In fact, the majority of the militant workers who would conduct collective actions at the end of the 1960s were young and inexperienced.

⁵²⁴ 1970 *Seminer Kayıt Defteri [The Seminar Book of Record]*, TÜSTAV Maden-İş Archive, Envelope 9.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Eyüp Karadayı, *İstanbul'un Sanayi Potansiyeli*, 51-52. Also look at; Sabahaddin Zaim, *İstanbul İmalat Sanayiinde İstihdam Seviyesi ve İşgücünün Bünyevi Hususiyetleri [The Level of Employment in the İstanbul Industry and the Constitutional Features of Work Force]*, (İstanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1965), 8 and 56-59.

⁵²⁷ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

⁵²⁸ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 2, 2012; Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

⁵²⁹ Sabahaddin Zaim, *İstanbul İmalat Sanayiinde İstihdam Seviyesi*, 54.

The tense relations between workers and managers/bosses in terms of intolerance to workers' demands, strict management control over work processes, insufficient workers' income, strenuous and dangerous work conditions, and oppression of dissident workers, also remained unchanged during the first half of the 1960s. Despite attempts of the managers on some workplaces to settle on a type of industrial democracy⁵³⁰ based on mutual understanding between employers and employees, the grievances of the metal workers did not decline in the period. Even so, some big metal enterprises began to develop and apply new managerial methods to earn the loyalty of employees.⁵³¹ The managers of a very few metal plants put a job evaluation system into effect within the workplace to provide a sense of fairness among its employees. Indeed, it seemed successful in some plants to a certain degree, but just for brief periods.⁵³² In addition, Arçelik, for example, founded an apprentice training school in the early 1960s to create its own qualified labor force. The managers aimed to train the young laborers with the idea of being highly valued Arçelik personnel; consequently, the problem of labor commitment to their workplace would be resolved.⁵³³ Furthermore, some metal enterprises even provided extra benefits, such as annual bonuses, or child or marriage

⁵³⁰ As described above, the term industrial democracy developed in the United States and then in developed Western capitalist countries, albeit with some reservations as stated by Marcel Van Der Linden, to regulate the labor process and smooth over the labor disputes on shop floor. While it began to be expressed by the state and/or union officers after 1945 in Turkey, it came into the agenda of the big business circles who gradually attempted to apply modern management techniques after 1960 in the enterprises. As a concept, it was fostered by the managers, who encountered this concept during their education in the West, in the enterprises and management organizations, such as TSİD (Türk Sevk ve İdare Derneği-The Turkish Management Association). In this regard, the industrial democracy became a central term in the management journals, such as, İşveren, MESS, MESS İşveren, MESS Bulletin, Sevk ve İdare, TİSK İşveren, in the conferences and seminars on the industrial relations *Endüstriyel Demokrasi Semineri [The Seminar on Industrial Democracy]* held in the Faculty of Political Science Library, Ankara University in 1970 and *İşçi-İşveren Kollektif Münasebetlerinde Son Gelişme Semineri* held in 1967, and scholarly books, such as Orhan Tuna, *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri [The Economic and Social Impacts of the Collective Agreement System in Turkey]*, vol. I (Ankara: The State Planning Institute, 1969). After 1960, the debates of the industrial relations were thus characterized by the term industrial democracy as developed in the Western capitalist countries with the beginning of the twentieth century.

⁵³¹ Ahmet Karasaç, "Ücret Sistemlerinin Nedenleri ve Bünyesi [The Reasons and Features of Wage Systems]," *MESS Bulletin*, 42, (16 November 1965); Selçuk Yalçın, *Türkiyede İş Değerlemesi Tatbikatı [The Practice of Job Evaluation in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1969), 15-19.

⁵³² Yalçın, 15 and 43-46. Also look at: *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000*, 200; "Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları [The Türk Demir Döküm Factories]," *Bizden Haberler*, 10, (February 1966): 10-11.

⁵³³ Koray Yılmaz, *Mahalle Bakkalından Küresel Aktöre Arçelik: İşletme Tarihine Marksist Bir Yaklaşım [Arçelik from a Street Grocery to a Global Actor: A Marxist Approach to History of Enterprise]*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2010), 258.

allowances to maintain commitment and peace on the shop floor.⁵³⁴ A famous manager, Şahap Kocatopçu stated in 1962 that Turkish management in general had become less oppressive in terms of labor policies on shop floor, in the 1960s.⁵³⁵ Furthermore, some managers joined in TSİD (Türk Sevk ve İdare Derneği-The Turkish Management Association), which was founded to train managers in the methods of running industrial plants based on modern management techniques.⁵³⁶ However, those attempts were mostly in vain due to its shallowness of scope. Significantly, employer's/manager's efforts to undermine the union continued unabated in this period.

Most metal bosses and managers strived to restrict the range of the union's activities and constrain its influences on workers. In other words, the approach of most bosses/managers ("my business, my rules") to running enterprises was still dominant in the sector. In fact, most of them were both bosses and managers at the same time, and reacted negatively to any intervention on running their own business.⁵³⁷ Ege Cansen, who was a director of personnel relations at Arçelik, said that the metal employers of the period showed disdainful attitudes towards any workers' demands.⁵³⁸ Nuri Çelik, who worked in Arçelik as a lawyer, stated that:

⁵³⁴ "Emayetaş Madeni Eşya, Saç ve Emaye Fabrikaları [Emayetaş, Metal Hardware, Metal Sheet and Enamel Factories]," *İşveren*, vol. II no. 1, (October 1962): 14; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 41-42. For the other social benefits provided by employers to the metal workers, see: "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 10851, July 11, 1961; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 11008, January 13, 1962; "Örnek İşveren [An Ideal Employer]' *Türkiye Birlik*, 8 March 1962; "Örnek İşveren [An Ideal Employer]," *Türkiye Birlik*, March 22, 1962; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 11240, October 24, 1962; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 11434, June 21, 1963; "İşçilerin İsteği Yerine Getirildi [The Workers' Demand Was Answered]," *İşçi Postası*, July 12, 1963.

⁵³⁵ Şahap Kocatopçu, "The Role of Management in the Development of Turkish Industry," (paper presented at the International Conference on Problems of Capital Formation and Investment in Industry, İstanbul, August 6-25, 1962).

⁵³⁶ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000*, 121.

⁵³⁷ Şahap Kocatopçu, "The Role of Management in the Development of Turkish Industry," 56. Also look at: Orhan Tuna, "İşçi-İşveren İşbirliği: Türkiye'deki Mevcut Uygulama ve Bu Konuda Bazı İmkanlar [The Employer-Employee Cooperation: The Existing Practice in Turkey and Some Opportunities on the Issue]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 22-23 (1971): 101-102.

⁵³⁸ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, January 14, 2013.

“...those times were the age of employers. They were extremely unyielding to workers’ demands. They were stern bosses.”⁵³⁹

Even the most well-known enterprises in terms of workers’ rights did not allow the union or workers to be a part of management.⁵⁴⁰ That is, the metal bosses’ attitude towards workplace relations were the same as those of the previous decade in the beginning of the 1960s; the metal workers still suffered through the same despotic factory regime in the metal sector. Furthermore, the work time and work discipline on the shop floor intensified in several metal plants due to expansion of production in these enterprises.⁵⁴¹ This reflected on the shop floor as more careful surveillance during work hours, forced overtime work, or with the bosses not recognizing the right to workers’ annual leave of absence.⁵⁴² To remain competitive in the sector, the firms had to curb any actions of dissent and increase their profit margins as much as possible. In fact, workers’ complaints, which were grim in the 1950s, about low wages, arbitrary wage cuts, dangerous and strenuous work conditions, poor quality foods, forced overtime work, overtime work without no payment, dismissals, etc., continued into the first years of the 1960s.⁵⁴³ As noted, the oppression of the dissident, unionized

⁵³⁹ Nuri Çelik, interview by author, Mecidiyeköy, İstanbul, January 16, 2013.

⁵⁴⁰ According to Selçuk Yalçın, Arçelik and Türk Phillips were the good examples of successful enterprises in terms of earning commitments of their workers and creating a sense of fairness as a result of applying the job evaluation system. Even they, however, did not allow workers and unions to have a word in shaping the work relations on shop floor. Yalçın, 15-19 and 43-46.

⁵⁴¹ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 60.

⁵⁴² “Zoraki Çalıştırma [Forced Overtime Work],” *Türkiye Birlik*, October 4, 1961; “İzin İstiyorlar [They Are Asking For Annual Leave of Absence],” *Türkiye Birlik*, October 4, 1961; “Tutumunu Değiştirmeyen İşveren [An Employer Who Did not Change His Attitude],” *Türkiye Birlik*, January 10, 1962; “Helaya Gitti Diye İşinden Attılar [They Fired Him For Going to Toilet],” *Son Saat*, May 23, 1962; “Bir Fabrikadan 5 Şikayet Var [There are Five Complaints About a Factory],” *Türkiye Birlik*, July 29, 1962.

⁵⁴³ “Maden-İş Kolunda Kriz Baş Gösterdi [A Crisis Took Place in the Metal Sector],” *Son Havadis*, October 2, 1960; “Bir Fabrikada İşçilere Usulsüz Ceza Veriliyor [The Workers Were Illegally Punished in a Factory],” *Son Saat*, March 7, 1961; “Bir İşveren Vekili Yıkanmak İçin Sabun İsteyen İşçiyi Dövdü [One Employer’s Representative Beat a Worker Who Demanded Soap to Have a Bath],” *İşçinin Sesi*, year 3 no. 12/5 (16 September 1962); “Bir Fabrikada 30 İşçi Yemekten Zehirlendi [30 Workers Had a Food Poisoning in a Factory],” *Gece Postası*, May 30, 1963; “İş Kazaları Her Sene Fazlalaşıyor [The Work Accidents Augment Every Year],” *Gece Postası*, June 1, 1963; “Türkiye’de İşçiler Emeginin Karşılığı Ücreti Alamıyor [The Workers Cannot Get Fair Salary in Turkey],” *İşçi Postası* July 15, 1963, 1 and 4; “Şimdi de İdareciler [Now, Managers Too],” *Gece Postası*, September 30, 1963; “Maden-İş’den Haberler [The News Report],” 1963/3, *TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive*, Envelope 654; Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; *Yellow Mehmet*

workers and workers' representatives did not diminish in the decade.⁵⁴⁴ The majority of İstanbul metal workers were still frustrated over their work experiences.

In the same manner, the legacy of the 1960s, which referred to the Maden-İş strategy of solving its member's grievances through political means, or by suing bosses or conducting labor disputes at the İstanbul Regional Work Office, stretched on into the new decade. In the Maden-İş Congress, assembled in 1961, it was asserted that the number of cases brought to the labor courts exceeded 3 000 that same year.⁵⁴⁵ The issues brought to the Regional Work Office and the arbitration committee ranged from low wages, poor quality foods and lack of wage premiums, to the reduction of benefits, arbitrary wage cuts, or incorrect application of minimum wages. The labor disputes affected most big enterprises; such as, General Electric, Singer, Bereç Battery, Rabak, Elektro Metal, Demir Döküm, Emayetaş, Dever Metal Hardware, Şakir Zümre, etc., in the sector.⁵⁴⁶ But the union often complained that the existing

Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012; Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

⁵⁴⁴ "Hak İddiasında Bulunursanız Amerikan Sermayesini Çekerim [I Withdraw the American Capital if You Claim for Your Rights]," *Son Havadis*, September 4, 1960; "Şeşbeş İş Yerinde İşçilere Baskı Arttı [The Oppression Augmented in the Şeşbeş Workplace]," *İşçinin Sesi*, year 3 no. 12/4 (April 1962); "Temsilciyi İçeriye Almayan Bir İş Yeri [A Workplace Which Did not Let the Workers' Representative In]," *Türkiye Birlik*, June 30, 1962; "Nurettin Çavdargil Bu Memleketi 56 Ağaya Bırakmayacağız Dedi [Nurettin Çavdargil Said: We Will Not Leave this Country to the Mercy of 56 Aghas]," *İşçinin Sesi* year 3 no. 13/1(4 November 1962), 1 and 4; "80 Oyuncak İşçisinin İşine Nihayet Verildi [80 Workers in a Child's Toy Factory Were Fired]," *İşçinin Sesi*, year 3 no. 13/3 (18 November 1962), 1 and 4; "İşveren Hükümdarlığı [The Employer's Sovereignty]," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 46 (10 June 1963).

⁵⁴⁵ "Maden-İş Kongresi [The Congress of Maden-İş]," *Türkiye Birlik*, October 9, 1961.

⁵⁴⁶ For the examples where the metal workers complained about shop floor problems to the state officers or institutions, see: "Şikayet Eden İşçilere Çeşitli Başkılar Yapılıyormuş [The Workers, Who Make Complaints Are Exposed to Various Oppressions]," *Son Saat*, March 5, 1961; "İşçilerin Mesai Parası Ödenmiyor [The Overtime Payment Is not Given]," *Son Saat*, April 7, 1962; "Bir İşyeri Ecevit'e Şikayet Edildi [One Workplace Was Complained to Ecevit]," *İşçinin Sesi*, year 3 no. 12/7 (30 September 1962); "Maden-İş Sendikası Cemal Gürsel ve İsmet İnönüye Telgraf Çekti [The Maden-İş Union Wired to Cemal Gürsel and İsmet İnönü]," *Gece Postası*, February 9, 1963; "Maden-İş Sendikası Ankarada Müsbet Temaslarda Bulundu [The Maden-İş Union Made Beneficial Contacts in Ankara]," *Gece Postası*, March 25, 1963; *Maden-İş'den Haberler [The News Report]*, 1963/3, TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 654. For the examples of work disputed brought to the Regional Office, see: "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 10722, February 1, 1961; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 10791, April 25, 1961; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 10963, November 21, 1961; "Maden-İş'ten Haberler [News from Maden-İş]," *İşçinin Sesi* year 3 no. 12/7 (30 September 1962); "Rabak Zam Yaptı [Rabak Increased Wages]," *Son Baskı*, November 9, 1962; "İş Uyuşmazlıkları Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Kararı [The Work Dispute Decision Of High Arbitration Committee]," *The Official Gazette*, 11430, June 17, 1963.

legal mechanism for overcoming workers' problems did not function well.⁵⁴⁷ As a result, Maden-İş would make its first attempts to transgress the existing legal framework following certain institutional and political developments; namely, the metal workers would go into strike at Kavel in 1963 before the law was enacted.⁵⁴⁸ Transgressing the legal framework would become an important legacy to be passed down, one imitated at the end of the decade when workers would decide that they were left without any other choice.

II. Changes

A) The 1960 Coup D'état and Beyond

Although it is true that neither the historical pattern of the establishment of the metal sector, nor the formation of workers' neighbourhoods and workers' grievances themselves on the shop floor went through significant changes in the new decade, the political and institutional life which contributed in shaping the workers' collective responses and collective consciousness was, itself, transformed to a great extent. The 1960 coup d'état, which overturned the DP government on May 27, 1960, was the main political development in the new era in terms of overhauling political opportunities for workers.

The military regime established after the coup d'état reiterated the old promises of industrial democracy as an aspect of social justice and the development of national wealth, from which all social classes would, it was assumed, benefit fairly. The military and then the civil governments all accused the former DP government of not giving the necessary attention to social and economic problems on behalf of the lower classes, especially for workers. For them, the workers' rights were still unrecognized and they also suffered from miserable work

⁵⁴⁷ "İşçi Mahkemelerinin Bugünkü Durumu Tatmin Edici Olmaktan Çok Uzaktır [The Current Conditions of Labor Courts Are not Satisfactory]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 55 (7 October 1961), 3; "Maden-İş Kongresi [The Congress of Maden-İş]," *Türkiye Birlik*, October 9, 1961; "Asgari Ücret Komisyonları İşlemiyor [The Minimum Wage Commissions Do not Function Well]," *Türkiye Birlik*, October 20, 1961; "Hakem Kurullarından Şikayetin Sonu Gelmiyor [The Complaints About Arbitration Councils Did not End]," *Türkiye Birlik*, November 16, 1961; "Yüksek Hakem Kurulu Çok Geç Karar Veriyor [The Decision Making Process of the High Arbitration Council Lasts too Long]," *Türkiye Birlik*, October 29, 1962.

⁵⁴⁸ While the Kavel workers gave up working on 28 January, 1963, the Collective Agreement, Strike and Lockout Law was put into force after the text of the law as published in the Official Gazette on 24 May, 1963.

and life conditions under DP rule. In the new era, they insisted, industrial development would take place in parallel with the principle of social justice and fair income distribution.⁵⁴⁹ Furthermore, they made several attempts to fulfill those promises.

After taking power, the military government assigned one of his members, Numan Esin, to conduct talks with the unions. In his statements, Numan Esin claimed that although he was not a Marxist, he accepted the existence and power of the working class in a modern society. During his meetings with the İstanbul unions in 1960, he promised that the government would soon recognize the right to strike.⁵⁵⁰ Furthermore, the military regime attempted to include famous unionists as the spokesmen for workers in Turkey: it asked the labor unions to send six representatives to the Constituent Assembly to contribute to the planning of a new constitution.⁵⁵¹ The İstanbul unions would quickly comprehend those developments as the emergence of new political opportunities, through which they could work more effectively to navigate the changing tides surrounding industrial relations: the six worker's representatives from TÜRK-İş joined in the meetings to prepare a new Constitution in the Constituent Assembly.⁵⁵² According to the memories of the general chair of TÜRK-İş, Nuri Beşer, the confederacy was influential in those meetings.⁵⁵³

To ease industrial conflicts, the military regime appointed as Labor Minister, Prof. Cahit Talas, who had been known as a firm defender of the right to strike in the previous decade. Talas did not change his position in the new epoch: he defended the right to strike in

⁵⁴⁹ Bülent Ecevit, "Türkiye'nin İktisadi Kalkınmasında Sosyal Adalet ve Demokratik Devletçilik [The Social Justice and Democratic Statism on the Economic Development of Turkey]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 14 (1963): 2-3.

⁵⁵⁰ Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık [The Unionism from Paternalism to Politics in Turkey]* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 350-351.

⁵⁵¹ Sedat Ağıralı, *Türk Sendikacılığı (The Turkish Trade Unionism)* (İstanbul: Son Telgraf, 1967), 102-104.

⁵⁵² The Constituent Assembly got together between January 6 and October 24, 1961 to prepare a new constitution in Turkey. It was composed of the high rank officers of the military forces and the members of the Representative Assembly, who were selected by the various organizations, such as the bar associations, universities, youth organizations and trade unions, as well as the political parties. But a court decision prevented the ex-members of the Democrat Party from being selected to this assembly. Therefore, it was mostly composed of those who were close the CHP.

⁵⁵³ Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*, 329.

every speech he made during the 1960s.⁵⁵⁴ For Talas, one of the main goals of the May 27th Revolution was to provide sweeping social justice which would be the underlying factor in the transformation of the Turkish society.⁵⁵⁵ He also argued that providing a just income to workers, whose wages were truly quite low, would also contribute to overall industrial development. Indeed, Talas reiterated the post-war discourse; for him, the employers and employees had to work together to improve the national economy and wealth. To accomplish this, the unions had to be strong enough to impose their demands on employers.⁵⁵⁶ Another benefit of the cooperative relations between workers and employers was that the construction of a democracy based on social justice would obstruct the spread of harmful class conflicts in Turkey.⁵⁵⁷ In summary, Talas considered social justice as a way to eradicate the polarizations caused by fractured class relations in Turkey. His appointment augmented the hopes of the İstanbul unions in the new regime.

Similarly, the civil governments continued to utilize the discourse of social justice, fair income distribution and industrial democracy, which the military regime had pioneered after the first elections in 1961. In fact, the rights of workers and the goal of ending workers' misery was emphasized on the programme of the first, and then the second, coalition governments.⁵⁵⁸ The Prime Minister of the first civil government, İsmet İnönü,⁵⁵⁹ promised

⁵⁵⁴ "Çalışma Vekili Talas Kollektif Akdın Tek Müyyeddisi Grev Hakkıdır Dedi [The Labor Minister Said that the Strike Right is the Sole Condition of Collective Agreement]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 47 (20 August 1960), 1.

⁵⁵⁵ Cahit Talas, "Cumhuriyetin Sosyal Politikası [The Social Policy of the Republic]," *Öncü*, October 19, 1960; Cahit Talas, "İşçilerin Asgari Ücretleri Yeniden Tesbit Ediliyor [The Workers' Minimum Wages Are Being Re-Evaluated]," *Öncü*, May 31, 1961.

⁵⁵⁶ Cahit Talas, "Nasıl Bir Ücret Politikası? [What Kind of Wage Policy?]," *Öncü*, September 9, 1960.

⁵⁵⁷ Cahit Talas, "Milli Prodüktivite Merkezinin Faaliyet Programı Hakkında Rapor [The Report on the Action Programme of the National Center of Productivity]," in *Milli Prodüktivite Merkezinin Faaliyet Programı Hakkında Raporlar [The Reports on the Action Programme of the National Center of Productivity]*, (Ankara: Milli Prodüktivite Merkezi, 1966), 13-14.

⁵⁵⁸ Cahit Talas, *Türkiye'nin Açıklamalı Sosyal Politika Tarihi [The Explanatory History of Social Politics of Turkey]* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1992), 148-149.

⁵⁵⁹ İsmet İnönü was a late hero of the Turkish War of Independence who was publicly known as the right hand man of the Turkish Republic after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. After Atatürk's death in 1938, he was appointed as the general chair of the CHP and fulfilled this role until his resignation both from his position and the party in 1972. He passed away in 1973.

social justice and fair income distribution in his speeches.⁵⁶⁰ But the most prominent figure of the new area was certainly the Labor Minister, Bülent Ecevit. He often emphasized the duty of the state to improve the low wages of workers and ameliorate the bad working conditions in his press interviews. Therefore, Ecevit asserted, the CHP-AP (Adalet Partisi-The Justice Party) coalition government, which believed in social justice, would re-evaluate the minimum wages and take every measure to improve workers' living conditions; as a result, all citizens would fairly benefit from the development of the national economy.⁵⁶¹ Similar to Cahit Talas, Bülent Ecevit often argued about the necessity of the right to strike in order to heal the social wounds in Turkish society. After getting the right to strike, Ecevit said, workers would assiduously labor to make their enterprises profitable, which in turn would increase workers' income. This was the only way to improve national industry - on the basis of social justice.⁵⁶²

Ecevit followed the old industrial democracy discourse by claiming that rather than being antagonistic groups, both employers and employees constituted indispensable parts of the whole of industrial life. They would both capitalize on the development of national industry, since their interests were actually in common, rather than in conflict. For this to happen, Ecevit reflected, both groups had to abandon their selfish interests and consider the economy of the Turkish nation as a whole. Social justice, including the industrial democracy that was the only way to abolish the possibility of struggle between labor and capitalists, would also inhibit the growth of communist ideology in Turkey.⁵⁶³ Further, social justice,

⁵⁶⁰ İsmet İnönü, "Geçmişle Uğraşmayacağız [We Will not Strike Back At the Past]," *Öncü*, January 21, 1962; İsmet İnönü, "İnönü ve Ecevit İşçiler İçin Görüşlerini Açıkladılar [İnönü and Ecevit Declared Their Opinions For Workers]," *İşçi Postası*, June 5, 1964.

⁵⁶¹ Bülent Ecevit, "İşçiye Grev Hakkı Şarta Dayanmayacak [We Will Provide Unconditional Strike Right]," *Son Baskı*, December 21, 1961. Also look at: Bülent Ecevit, "Grev Hakkı Kanunlaşıyor [The Strike Right is Being Legislated]," *Öncü*, January 4, 1962.

⁵⁶² Bülent Ecevit, "Sosyal Adaletle Hızlı Kalkınma Arasındaki Bağlantı [The Relation Between Social Justice and Fast Development]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (10 June 1963).

⁵⁶³ Bülent Ecevit, "Açış Konuşması [The Opening Speech]," *III. Çalışma Meclisi*, 22-29 January 1962, Ankara, 27-29; Bülent Ecevit, "İşçi Emeginin Değerini Alacak [Worker Will Get the Real Value of His Labor]," *İşçi Postası*, February 5, 1964; Bülent Ecevit, "İşçi Ücretlerine Yapılan Zamlar Devlet Sektöründe Büyük Faydalar Sağlamıştır [The Wage Increases Provided Great Benefits on the State Sector]," *İşçi Postası*, February 2, 1965; Bülent Ecevit, "Ecevitin Konuşması [The Speech of Ecevit]," *İşçi Postası*, June 8, 1964; Bülent Ecevit, "Bülent Ecevit'in İşçi Bayramında Yaptığı Konuşma [The Speech of Bülent Ecevit on the Labor Day]," *İşçi Postası*, July 27, 1964. Also look at: Turhan Feyzioğlu, "Konuşma [The Speech]," *III. Çalışma Meclisi*, 22-29 January 1962, Ankara, 75; Cahit

according to Ecevit, would add up to an increase in the profits of private capitalists, in the sense that since workers would always exert pressure on owners for higher wages, the owners would have to create new ways to improve their enterprises and augment profits. Therefore, rather than diminishing in importance, the idea of social justice would prevail and grow along with the significance of private capital in a democratic society.⁵⁶⁴ Both Talas and Ecevit strived with this rhetoric to comfort employers and workers at the same time, in order to drum up support for the new regime.

But the primary difference from the previous period was that the governments of the new decade greatly expanded the scale of post-war discourse on social justice. Like their predecessor, the military and civil governments took important steps to realize their promises in the 1960s. The first act here was to roll out the 1961 Constitution. The initial draft of the new constitution, in which the unionists took a part, put forth that the state would protect the economically weak, particularly the workers and other social groups who had limited income. The same document asserted that any democracy that was bereft of social aspects was doomed to become extinct. Specific items regarding social justice also took their place in the 1961 Constitution. Item 40 stated that economic and social life had to be regulated on the principles of social justice. Furthermore, Item 45 claimed that the state would take necessary measures to provide fair wages for its people, in order for them to have a decent life.⁵⁶⁵ Regarding industrial relations, the most important development was undoubtedly the inclusion of the right to strike in the new constitution. The National Assembly rolled out the right to strike on April 1961; however, it would not be fully legislated until 1963.⁵⁶⁶ In fact,

Talas, *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Konferansları [The Conferences on Collective Work Agreement]* (Ankara: Banka ve Ticaret Hukuku Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1964), 15.

⁵⁶⁴ Bülent Ecevit, "Demokratik Çalışma Düzeni ve Ekonomik Gelişme [The Democratic Work Order and Economic Development]," *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 1 (3 October 1962): 4-9.

⁵⁶⁵ *Anayasada İşçi Hakları [The Workers' Rights in the Constitution]*, (n.p.: Maden-İş Yayınları, no. 8, October 1967). Also look at: Esin Pars, 174-175; Cahit Talas, *Türkiye'nin Açıklamalı Sosyal Politika Tarihi*, 68-72; Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri [The Constitutional Developments in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic]*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2007), 381.

⁵⁶⁶ "Temsilciler M. Grev Hakkının Anayasaya Alınmasını Kabul Etti [The Representatives Assembly Voted For Incorporating the Strike Right to the Constitution]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 51 (4 May 1961): 1 and 4.

the future debates about the directions of the constitution on social life, social justice, and property rights would influence the political and industrial struggles of the 1960s.

In addition to the 1961 Constitution, the new CHP-JP government organized the Third Work Assembly in 1962, and as noted previously, the governments of CHP in 1947, and DP in 1954 organized the first two of the assemblies where the employer's, worker's and government's representatives would discuss the important issues in terms of the industrial relations in order to reach peaceful solutions. The idea of social justice and fair income distribution would also take place in the First Five Year Development Plan,⁵⁶⁷ prepared in 1963.⁵⁶⁸ However, the most important legislative development was the legislation of the right to strike in 1963. In the climate of the famous Kavel Strike which began at the late January 1963 and increasing pressure of unions, the Law of Strike, Collective Bargaining and Trade Unions was brought to the National Assembly on April 1963 and legislated on July 12, 1963. Bülent Ecevit hailed the legislation as the beginning of a new era in which the social balance between labor and capital would finally be reached. Consequently, the Turkish worker, Ecevit added, would have a say in the industrial, social and economic development of the country.⁵⁶⁹ In addition to recognizing the right to strike, the new law exerted strict rules over employers about workers' dismissals, overtime payments, unionization rights and workers' representatives. In fact, it reorganized shop floor rules on behalf of workers.⁵⁷⁰

In addition to taking a part in the new Constitution, the state and TÜRK-İŞ alliance in the early 1960s could be observed acting on the political scene. As noted above, TÜRK-İŞ and several other unions within the confederacy like Maden-İŞ, supported the coup d'état with public declarations. The general chair of TÜRK-İŞ participated in a meeting that was organized by the members of the military government and the representatives of the political

⁵⁶⁷ Before the foundation of DPT in 1960, the CHP governments, in fact, had prepared two development plans in during the 1930s on the basis of five years. Another plan was prepared after the war years in 1947, but it was never put into practice. After the foundation of DPT, this institution had begun to prepare development goals again on the basis of a five-year plan.

⁵⁶⁸ "Kararname [The Decree]," *The Official Gazette*, 11329, February 8, 1963, 18. Also look at: M. Nihad Ay, *Türkiye'de Toplu Pazarlık Düzeninde Ücret Oluşumu [The Formation of Wages Under The System of Collective Bargaining in Turkey]* (İzmir: İktisadi ve Ticari Bilimler Fakültesi, 1969), 14.

⁵⁶⁹ Bülent Ecevit, "İşçinin Yeni Hak ve Sorumlulukları [The New Rights and Responsibilities of Worker]," *İşçi Postası*, July 25, 1963.

⁵⁷⁰ Cahit Talas, *Türkiye'nin Açıklamalı Sosyal Politika Tarihi*, 162-165.

parties in 1961. Furthermore, several ministers in the cabinet had begun to organize meetings with TÜRK-İş about labor problems by 1962. Other than this, the confederacy backed the state policy about the Cyprus issue⁵⁷¹ and attempted to explain the opinions of Turkey to international organizations, such as AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations) and ILO.⁵⁷² Those developments would naturally irritate the entrepreneurs of the period.



Figure 7: Bülent Ecevit (third from left, front row) and the workers' representatives in İzmir (Source: *İşçi Postası*, August 12, 1963).

Accordingly, Ecevit simultaneously tried to comfort the employers who were irritated by the new developments by asserting that the Turkish workers and unions had to take the interests of the whole society into account, rather than just considering their own. Actually, both workers and employers, Ecevit stated, must not abuse the rights recognized by the new law; otherwise, social order would be in jeopardy.⁵⁷³ To relieve the worry of employers, the 1963 Labor Law included the right of lockout to ensure “balance” between employees and

⁵⁷¹ Cyprus was leased to the British Empire by the Ottoman Empire in 1878. After this date, the United Kingdom began to rule the island and the population, primarily composed of Greeks and Turks, who lived on it. The population on the island earned their dependence after long conflicts with the British rule in 1960. After that, the conflict between Greeks and Turks escalated. In 1963, Turkish elements withdrew from the government and the Cyprus issue reached its climax on the international political scene.

⁵⁷² Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye’de Sendikacılık*, 420-428, 455-456.

⁵⁷³ Bülent Ecevit, “İşçinin Yeni Hak ve Sorumlulukları.” Also look at: Bülent Ecevit, “Türkiye’de Bir Sınıf Savaşı Olmayacak [There Will be no Class War in Turkey],” *İşçi Postası*, July 25, 1963.

employers.⁵⁷⁴ Ecevit's arguments showed that the state institutions or officers had their own limit regarding social justice, fair income distribution and industrial democracy. The limit was, indeed, the limit of a capitalist democracy; the workers' struggles should not target the existing social order, which was based on the profit and private property. On all occasions, Ecevit and his colleagues assured employers that the new laws did not pose any threat to their profits or property rights.

Indeed, the military regime and succeeding governments supported the growth of private capital. For example, the 1963 government program declared support for private industry by all available means.⁵⁷⁵ Moreover, the state officers attempted in their meetings with industry to alleviate the fears and grievances of employers, which had reached a peak due to the expansion of workers' rights. According to Ecevit, there was no need for employers to be afraid of the right to strike since it was recognized even in countries where private capital had complete freedom to act.⁵⁷⁶ In this regard, a Turkish scholar, Ergun Özbudun seems right to say that the 1961 Constitution involved egalitarian values; on the other hand, the principles were not imbued with a radical content.⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, Ecevit urged workers and unions by saying that the acts to maintain the principles of social justice and fair income should not obstruct capital accumulation, or restrict the economic activities of private capital, which were indispensable elements of a democratic society.⁵⁷⁸ Furthermore, Ecevit argued that if the right to strike was not used responsibly, it would harm both sides. As a result, before calling for a strike, the unions had to iron out problems by meeting with

⁵⁷⁴ For the debates at the Constitution Commission and National Assembly on whether the lockout was a right or not look at: Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye'de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler [The Strikes and the Strike Right in Turkey]* (İstanbul: Gözlem, 1976), 234-266.

⁵⁷⁵ Esin Pars, 65. Also look at: Bülent Ecevit, "Çalışma Bakanı Bülent Ecevit Konfederasyonumuz Genel Kurul Toplantısında Bir Konuşma Yaptı [The Labor Minister, Bülent Ecevit, Talked in the General Council of Our Confederacy]," *İşveren*, vol. 2 no. 9 (June 1964): 4-8.

⁵⁷⁶ Bülent Ecevit, "Çalışma Bakanı'nın Radyo Konuşması [The Speech of the Labor Minister on the Radio]," *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 2 (August 1963): 5-7.

⁵⁷⁷ Ergun Özbudun, "Income Distribution as an Issue in Turkish Politics," in Ergun Özbudun and Aydın Ulusan [eds.] *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Turkey*, (New York: Holmes&Meier, 1980), 55 and 72.

⁵⁷⁸ Bülent Ecevit, "Türkiyenin İktisadi Kalkınmasında Sosyal Adalet ve Demokratik Devletçilik [The Social Justice and Democratic Statism on the Economic Development of Turkey]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 14 (1963): 6.

employers first.⁵⁷⁹ For example, when the Kavel workers walked out in 1963, Ecevit publicly accused Maden-İş of preferring a contentious method rather than a peaceful one. Ecevit claimed that the union had made a great mistake by resorting to illegal measures in the absence of relative laws.⁵⁸⁰ Ecevit's stance on the Kavel Strike would cause great disappointment amongst the unionists who largely supported the strike in the 1963.

Although the state attempted to define the framework of social justice, it could not completely control how it was affected by different social groups. In this regard, the decade witnessed a class war on the very definition of social justice: while unionists of the period were largely inspired by state attempts to define this notion for the sake of the interests of the workers, and thereby holding bosses to account for exploiting poor people, the well-known bosses publicly declared how they actually worked hard to provide social justice by improving the national wealth the country, and recognizing workers' rights.

B) Taking Sides: The Unions, Bosses and the Idea of Social Justice

Nearly all famous unionists of the period supported the idea of social justice. In the fifth general congress of Türk-İş in 1964, the chair, Seyfi Demirsoy, spoke of profit greedy employers, whom he saw as a "happy minority" in that group, saying that if they continued to pursue their old habits, the working class would resist them by all possible means. In his speech, Demirsoy presented employers as a social group which inhibited social justice, fair income distribution and overall national development in Turkey.⁵⁸¹ Demirsoy's speech and definitions were a meaningful example of how union leaders comprehended bosses, despite all official discourse of mutual cooperation and common interest between workers and employers.

It's clear that the 1960s in Turkey witnessed widespread contentious debates on social justice. It is also true that the idea of social justice became a norm in the capitalist

⁵⁷⁹ Bülent Ecevit, "Açış Konuşması [The Opening Speech]," *III. Çalışma Meclisi*, 22-29 January 1962, Ankara, 30.

⁵⁸⁰ "Çalışma Bakanı Sendikaları Suçlu Buluyor [The Labor Minister Finds Unions Guilty]," *Gece Postası*, February 16, 1963.

⁵⁸¹ *Maden-İş'den Haberler*, Special Issue, 28.1.1964.

countries through the development of welfare state to consolidate the system and realize labor-capital accord. However, in Turkey this notion created a firm ground on which the reasons behind social inequalities and the different methods that could be employed to overcome them were publicly debated. In fact, the Turkish left efficiently benefited this ground to enlarge its influence within the Turkish society; for example, the name of monthly journal of the Marxist Turkish Labor Party was *The Social Justice*, in which not just the party members, but also the prominent public intellectuals of the time, discussed the possible ways of building socialism in Turkey.

During the 1960s not only the Turkish left or union leaders, but also employers, famed journalists, university professors and intellectuals all touched on the importance of social justice, just income distribution, social harmony between different classes, and the social principles of the 1961 Constitution in their speeches, articles or books. Çağlar Keyder claims that the bureaucrats and intellectuals of the 1960s became the firm defenders of the idea of development intermixed with social justice.⁵⁸² Most of those socially influential figures defined a common interest between labor and capital in terms of it being necessary for the development of national economy; at the same time, they plainly accepted the unfairness of the existing social order in Turkey. For them, the workers could not get their fair share in return for their labor under such a system. Furthermore, there was nearly a common consensus that bosses in Turkey were greedy and exploitative in their behaviours and did not heed workers' rights. It was assumed that a minority of employers had greedily exploited the workers and natural resources up until that time, for their own selfish interests. Consequently, a significant number of scholars, columnists or bureaucrats emphasized the fact that social and economic relations, which had progressed without significant attention to the workers' cause thus far, had to be regulated to level the unfair playing field between labor and capital. Indeed, the development of Turkey would be possible if, and only if the workers' conditions

⁵⁸² Çağlar Keyder, "Chapter 4: The Political Economy of Import Substitution" in his *State and Classes in Turkey* (London: Verso, 1987).

could be improved.⁵⁸³ To summarize the point, there was a general idea that the existing degenerated social system had to be revised, or completely replaced with a moral and just one, in which everyone would fairly benefit from national wealth.



Figure 8: The headline states that the Turkish workers were on radar for the first time. The placard over the head of the woman says that the Turkish workers are the guardians of the Constitution (Source: *İşçinin Sesi*, year 1 no. 8, (8 May 1963)).

Inspired by the widespread consensus on the necessity of social justice, both employers and employees declared their wish for a democratic society in which every citizen would have a chance to sustain a proper lifestyle. However, the problem was the definition of the limits of a fair society. In other words, the employers' and employees' organizations declared their definitions of the term "social justice" as something that would make Turkish society one of the developed nations in the world; nonetheless, there was no common further agreement on the implications of the term. The boss' and workers' organizations, which were

⁵⁸³ There are indeed very rich documents to analyze the public debates about social justice, industrial democracy, just income distribution or socialism as a means to provide social justice and economic development. For some of those, look at: Ertuğrul Polat, "Sosyalizm [Socialism]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (12 August 1962); Metin Kutsal, "Sendika Hürriyeti [The Unionism Liberty]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 13 (1962): 116; Engin Ünsal, *İşçiler Uyanıyor [Workers are Awakening]* (İstanbul: Tan, 1963); Engin Ünsal, "Faşizm, Sosyalizm, Komünizm [Fascism, Socialism, Communism]," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 26 (20 January 1963): 1 and 5; Ahmet Çitilci, "Sosyal Adalet [Social Justice]," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 32 (3 March 1963); Cahit Talas, "Milli Prodüktivite Merkezinin Faaliyet Programı Hakkında Rapor"; *İşçi-İşveren Kollektif Münasebetlerinde Son Gelişme Semineri [The Seminar on the Latest Developments of Collective Relations Between Worker and Employer]* (İstanbul: Hüsni Tabiat Matbaası, 1967); Orhan Tuna, *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri [The Economic and Social Impacts of the Collective Agreement System in Turkey]*, vol. I (Ankara: The State Planning Institute, 1969); *Endüstriyel Demokrasi Semineri [The Seminar on Industrial Democracy]* (İstanbul: Milli Prodüktivite Merkezi, 1970).

often in the public spotlight, saw the definition of social justice quite differently due to their own social positions and classes. Consequently, they both conducted a class war over the true meaning of the social justice.

The İstanbul unions had celebrated the May 27th coup d'état and exerted pressure on the new regime to fulfill their promises to workers quickly. Indeed, just after the coup , union leaders began to demand the right to strike and an end to the restrictions on union freedoms and attacks on social justice. The right to strike, especially, the union leaders said, would balance out the unfair social relations between workers and employers. In this regard, they welcomed the appointment of Cahit Talas, who was known by unions as the firm defender of this proposed legislation, as Labor Minister. Then, the 1961 Constitution, according to unions, brought in a new era that provided a social and legal framework to create and maintain the rights of laboring classes.⁵⁸⁴ To conclude the point, national political developments augmented the hope of the unions in the beginning of the new decade.

Encouraged by the widespread debates about injustice, the unions directed a public assault against employers by accusing them of being responsible for the huge social and economic gaps between social classes. The workers' current conditions in Turkey were utterly miserable; workers, who labored in cooperation with employers to improve the national economy could not get their deserved share of the national wealth, and they could barely sustain themselves due to the unfair income distribution and unjust social and economic relations. However, the unions briefly stated, workers must be provided with a just income and the principles of social justice had to be accepted in order to obstruct a bloody class war. They called for fair income distribution, nationally. In essence, the unions argued for the workers and employers, both, to be able to take benefit from the national wealth.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴ *Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu Adına Ömer Ergün'ün Radyo Konuşması [The Radio Speech of Ömer Ergün on behalf of The Workers' Confederation of Turkey]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 20 Envelope 1089.

⁵⁸⁵ *Temsilciler Meclisi Üyesi Bahri Ersoy'un 26/2/1961 Tarihinde Temsilciler Meclisinde Yapmış Olduğu Konuşma [The Speech of Bahri Ersoy, the Worker Member of the Representative Assembly, at the Representative Assembly on 26/2/1961]*, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive; "Türk-İş Genel Sekreteri Kurdaş'a Hücum Ediyor [The General Secretary of Türk-İş Blames Kurdaş]," *Öncü*, February 19, 1961; "Mecliste İşçilere Dün Zam İstendi [Wage Increases Were Asked Yesterday at the

In order to secure workers' rights, the unions followed their old strategy of backing the state, which had already promised to provide a decent life and respected place for workers. In this regard, unions defined the current regime as the protector of laboring classes. For example, Demirsoy argued that since the existing social system made the rich richer and the poor poorer, the state had to take sides with the weaker social groups, namely workers. In return, he promised that workers would do their best to maintain social peace by staving off harmful and excessive collective acts. In fact, by saying that workers would walk out only if they felt unfairness, Demirsoy urged the regime to promote social justice, lest the workers would make it happen on their own terms. In essence, Demirsoy's comment was a threat to the regime. In fact, to reach their goals, the union leaders tried in this manner to be vocally influential on the policy-making processes of the new era. As an example, they demanded the right to representation in the preparation stages of the new economic plan by arguing that the plan had to reflect the principles of social justice.⁵⁸⁶ Moreover, union leaders insisted that the right to strike and high minimum wages were being encouraged by the new regime discourse on social justice and the new constitution.⁵⁸⁷ On those demands, they were more bold and determined than they had been in the previous decade.

While it is true that the union leaders still defined cooperative relations with employers in theory during the 1960s, their actual portrayal of Turkish employers was quite different from such an idealized picture. According to the unions, the actual relations between workers and employers in Turkey were conflictual due to the employer's "greediness and intolerance" of any workers' rights. In order to create a fair society, the union leaders publicly

National Assembly],” Öncü, February 27, 1961; *Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu Adına İsmail Aras'ın Radyo Konuşması [The Radio Speech of İsmail Aras on behalf of the Workers' Confederation of Turkey]*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 20 Envelope 1091; “Seyfi Demirsoy'un Konuşması [The Speech of Seyfi Demirsoy],” in *III. Çalışma Meclisi*, 22-29 January 1962, Ankara, 93-96; İsmail Topkar, “Türkiye’de Sendikalizmin Gelişmesi ve İktisadi Hayata Tesiri [The Development of Unionism in Turkey and Its Effect on the Economic Life],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 15 (1964): 88; *İşçinin Beslenmesi ve Milli Produktivite [The Feed of Worker and National Productivity]* (Ankara: Türk-İş Yayınları no. 41, 1965), 25 and 119.

⁵⁸⁶ “İşçiler Grev Hakkı İçin Israr Ediyor [Workers Are Pressing on the Strike Right],” *Son Havadis*, September 5, 1960; Kemal Sülker, “Memleketimizde İki Yabancı [Two Foreigners in Our Country],” *Türkiye Birlik*, November 15, 1962; Ağralı, 200-201.

⁵⁸⁷ Hüseyin Yıldız, “Grev Mutlaka Tanınacaktır [The Strike Right Will Certainly Be Recognized],” *Türkiye Birlik*, October 8, 1960; “Sığın Tek İsteğimiz Grev Grev Grev Dedi [Sığın Said That Our Only Demand is Strike, Strike, Strike],” *İşçinin Sesi*, (March 1962): 1 and 3.

accused employers, as a distinct social group, of striving to prevent the development of unionism and social justice in Turkey.⁵⁸⁸ Furthermore, they claimed that most entrepreneurs still did not believe in social justice, and that they did not heed any law regarding relations with workers.⁵⁸⁹ In defining the actual relations between workers and employers in Turkey, the unions presented employers as having been engaged in an exploitative behaviour. Seyfi Demirsoy, who hailed the strike law as an end to the exploitation, stressed the exploitative reasoning and attitudes of the Turkish employers.⁵⁹⁰ In essence, although the unions did not define a contentious relationship as being intrinsic to the social order itself between labor and capital, famous unionists pegged workers and employers as two different social groups, and more importantly their relations were, in fact, conflictual in Turkey. The union's definition of employers as a distinct and exploitative social group would further radicalize relations between workers and employers in the decade.

To emphasize the unequal class relations in Turkish society and raise their voices to promote the end of injustice, workers became more visible in the public eye. In the first years of the decade, unions organized several meetings and demonstrations to make their demands; mainly for higher wages and the right to strike. Workers also called for an end to exploitation in those meetings and took an antagonistic approach against employers, at least until their rights were recognized.⁵⁹¹ The most well known of their public demonstrations was the Saraçhane Mitingi which took place on December, 31, 1961, in İstanbul. Several İstanbul trade unions including Maden-İş and others who would later establish DİSK decided to organize a nation-wide protest meeting to claim the right to strike, better wages and several other workers' rights. For this meeting, the workers rushed into İstanbul from the different cities of Turkey, such as Eskişehir, Adana, Zonguldak, Afyon and Erzincan. About 150 000

⁵⁸⁸ Kemal Sülker, "Sendikalar Tehlikede [Unions are in Jeopardy]," *Türkiye Birlik*, July 20, 1962.

⁵⁸⁹ Kemal Sülker, "Çalışma Bakanı ve İşverenler [The Labor Minister and Employers]," *Türkiye Birlik*, July 28, 1962; İbrahim Uluç, "Konuşma [The Speech]," in *İşçi-İşveren Kollektif Münasebetlerinde Son Gelişme Semineri [The Seminar on the Latest Developments of Collective Relations Between Worker and Employer]* (İstanbul: HüsnüTabiat Matbaası, 1967), 13.

⁵⁹⁰ "Sömürücülüğe Paydos [End to the Exploitation]," *İşçinin Sesi*, 41 (6 May 1963).

⁵⁹¹ "İzmit'te 5000 İşçi Yürüdü [5000 Workers Walked in İzmir]," *Öncü*, December 12, 1961; 10binlerce İşçi Toplantı Yapacak [Thousands of Workers Will Organize A Meeting]," *Öncü*, June 9, 1962; "Dağlara Baraj Kuracağız ve Kimse Yıkamayacak [We Will Build Dam on Mountains and Nobody Could Destroy It]," *Öncü*, August 13, 1962.

workers in total participated in the demonstration. The posters that workers carried demanded strike legislation, an end to workers' misery, and support for higher wages. In the meeting, the union leaders emphasized that they were not against the government, but they demanded the state keep its promises about social justice.⁵⁹² The meeting must have been an encouragement for İstanbul workers to act collectively for asking their rights. The meeting was also an important sign that if the state did not keep its promises and employers did not give up their old habits of intolerance and greed, workers would not hesitate to fight, with the help of their unions, to get their demands met.



Figure 9: The workers in the Saraçhane Demonstration. The placard held by the woman states: 'Salary is 120, house rent is 150 Turkish Lira (Source: Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*, 364).

How did employers react to those kinds of public assaults by the union? At this point, it would not be hard to argue that the employers of the period took a defensive position in order to prove that they actually supported workers' rights, stood for social justice, or were concerned about social poverty. The social and political aura of the 1960s emphasized social justice, decried the corrupt social order and unfair employer-employee relations, and thereby greatly damaged the credibility of private entrepreneurs. The statements of the employers

⁵⁹² "Mitinge 150bin İşçi Katıldı [One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Workers Participated in the Demonstration]," *Öncü*, January 1, 1962. Also look at: Çelik, 363.

pointed out the loss of employer credibility during the 1960s.⁵⁹³ As a result, the big bosses of the era felt the necessity to be more visible on the public scene in order to increase the public's sense of their reliability and trustworthiness. To this end, employers often reminded the public through speeches, books and conferences, of the importance of private capital for national development. They also portrayed their businesses as being beneficial for the whole country. In the absence of strong private capital, employers and managers argued, democracy would be doomed in any society. Moreover, some employers declared that they stood for social justice, and they engaged in charity activities in response to public support for the need for social equality. The employers often made these attempts to soften their reputations in order to engage in cooperative relations with workers or workers' unions.⁵⁹⁴ They even argued that any plan for economic development must consider social repercussions at first.⁵⁹⁵ Some employers further acted to maintain much demanded social justice on the shop floor.

In this regard, prominent bosses of the period founded TSİD or engaged in relations with official institutions, such as the MPM (Milli Prodüktivite Merkezi-The National

⁵⁹³ Can Kırâç, *Anılarımla Patronum Vehbi Koç [My Boss, Vehbi Koç, in My Memories]*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1996), 158 and 190; Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları [State and Businessman]* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997), 334.

⁵⁹⁴ *Kalkınma Planı Hakkında Özel Sektörün Görüş ve Dilekleri [The Opinions and Wishes of the Private Sector on the Development Plan]* (Ankara: Türkiye Ticaret Odaları, Sanayi Odaları ve Ticaret Borsaları Birliği Matbaası, 1962), VIII-X; Vehbi Koç, "Devlet ve Milletçe El Ele Çalışalım [Let's Work Cooperatively as State and Nation]," *Son Saat*, March 27, 1962, 1 and 5; Haldun Kip, "İşveren-İşçi Münasebetlerinde Sendikaların Rolü [The Role of Unions on the Relations Between Workers and Employers]," *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 1 (3 November 1962); Vehbi Koç, "İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesinde Verilen Konferans, 5 Ocak 1963 [The Conference at the Faculty of Economics in İstanbul University, 5 January 1963]," in *Vehbi Koç'un İş Hayatımızla İlgili Konferansları [The Conferences of Vehbi Koç About Our Business Life]* (İstanbul: Bükler, 1963), 24 and 30-31; Mümtaz Altınelli, "İşçi-İşveren Münasebetleri ve Konfederasyonumuzun Tutumu [Worker-Employee Relations and the Approach of Our Confederacy]," *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 6 (26 March 1963): 4-5; Nejat Eczacıbaşı, "Özel Sektör ve Devletçilik [The Statism and the Private Sector]," *İşveren*, vol. II, no. 11 (August 1964): 7-10; Tarık Binat, "Amerikan Kapitalizminin Gerçek Manası [The True Meaning of the American Capitalism]," *İşveren*, vol. 3 no. 2 (November 1964): 9-11; "Türkiye'de İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Turkey]," *İşçi Postası*, September 30, 1965; Şahap Kocatopçu, "Açış Konuşması [The Opening Speech]," in *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Seminerleri, 1 Mart 1965-26 Mart 1965 [The Seminars on Collective Bargaining]* (İstanbul: Çeltüt Matbaacılık, 1965), 9; Nejat Eczacıbaşı, "Sosyal Kanunlar ve Özel Teşebbüs [The Social Law and Private Capital]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 16 (1965): 3-4; *Türkiye'de Özel Sektör ve Kalkınma [The Private Sector and Development in Turkey]* (Ankara: Türkiye Ticaret Odaları, Sanayi Odaları ve Ticaret Borsaları Birliği, 1966); Ay, 122; Pars, 225.

⁵⁹⁵ Nejat Eczacıbaşı, 'Sosyal Kanunlar ve Özel Teşebbüs', 1.

Productivity Center).⁵⁹⁶ According to the narratives of Şahap Kocatopçu,⁵⁹⁷ some prominent employers of the period established TSİD in 1962 upon the advice of an American committee that came to Turkey to conduct seminars on management of industrial enterprises.⁵⁹⁸ Both of these institutions organized conferences, seminars or courses for managers on how to maintain peace on the shop floor, or how to establish a modern management structure within enterprises to satisfy employees or to increase productivity without sacrificing social justice. In these events, the engineers and professors, who were mostly trained in Germany and England, expressed the importance of industrial democracy and modern management techniques, such as a wage system based on an impartial evaluation of workers' performance and seniority, in order to both increase productivity and provide a sense of fairness among employees.⁵⁹⁹ It is impossible to debate to what extent those seminars or conferences influenced the employers' approaches to shop floor dynamics or social relations, due to the absence of related documents. But inferences can be derived from the regular complaints within those organizations that most employers did not actually heed the advice of management experts and were inclined to pursue their old motto; "my business, my rules". Moreover, one can argue that the employers' stance on the concepts of social justice or fair income distribution was quite different, even conflictual, from that of unions and workers.

The two surveys which were conducted in 1961 and 1974 among the entrepreneurs of the period give us some idea about how they defined social justice. According to a survey conducted in 1961 by Arif Payaslıoğlu, who was a professor of economics in the Middle East Technical University, nearly 65 percent of employers were against the workers' right to

⁵⁹⁶ MPM was founded in 1965 to search for possible measures in order to increase productivity in both state and private industrial enterprises and educate the personnel of those in terms of the latest developments and methods of industrial productivity.

⁵⁹⁷ Şahap Kocatopçu was the former general manager of the Turkey's Bottle and Factories Joint Stock Company after 1945. He was also the general chair of TUSİAD and TİSK. Kocatopçu was assigned as the Minister of Industry and Commerce after the military coup d'état in 12 September, 1980. He remained on duty from 1980 to 1983.

⁵⁹⁸ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000*, 195-196.

⁵⁹⁹ Metin Kutsal, "Sınai İşletmelerde İş İdaresi Semineri [The Seminar on Management in Industrial Enterprises]," *YODÇE Bulletin*, (November 1961); Kamil Oba, *Ücretler ve Sosyal Yardımlar Tatbikatı [Wages and Benefits Practice]*, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive; Şahap Kocatopçu, "The Role of Management in the Development of Turkish Industry"; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000*, 197.

strike.⁶⁰⁰ In 1974, a political scientist from the Ankara University, Erdoğan Sora, conducted another survey among the Turkish employers. This survey shows that the employers accepted the strike right, but they wanted unions to be strictly governed by laws due to their excessive demands. They also objected to the application of the strikes; for them, the problems between workers and employers could be solved through mutual understanding, cooperation and sacrifices.⁶⁰¹ In fact, most employers comprehended social justice, industrial democracy, modern management techniques, etc., in a very restricted manner. The scholars of the period admitted that most employers saw any workers' demands as harmful to their profits and to their "natural right" to rule their own enterprises.⁶⁰² Indeed, the employers mentioned that the demands of unions, which were "excessive", created unease amongst themselves. These excessive demands might threaten the business of employers and they, in turn, could not provide high salaries for their employees.⁶⁰³

The employers also expressed their concerns about social justice. First of all, the idea and practice of social justice as understood by unions must naturally threaten the prestige and profit of private capital. Secondly, employers objected to the idea of social justice in terms of the redistribution of wealth and the resulting decrease of private profit. Lastly, they said social justice had to be understood as the fair distribution of national wealth, but only according to knowledge, talent and the education of citizens, rather than as an generalized, equal distribution.⁶⁰⁴ Essentially, the employers of the period approved of the distribution of national wealth and social justice, but in a limited manner. They accepted those notions as

⁶⁰⁰ Arif Payaslıoğlu, *Türkiye'de Özel Sanayi Alanındaki Müteşebbisler ve Teşebbüsler*, 43.

⁶⁰¹ Erdoğan Soral, *Özel Kesimde Türk Müteşebbisleri [The Turkish Entrepreneurs in Private Sector]* (Ankara: Ankara İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi Yayınları, 1974), 160-161.

⁶⁰² *Türkiye'de Özel Sektör ve Kalkınma*, 47; Sabahaddin Zaim, "Türkiye'de Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Tatbikatı ve Endüstriyel Demokrasi [The Practice of Collective Agreement and Industrial Democracy in Turkey]," in *Endüstriyel Demokrasi Semineri [The Seminar on Industrial Democracy]* (İstanbul: Milli Prodüktivite Merkezi Yayınları, 1970), 164; Buğra, 195-196.

⁶⁰³ "Türkiye'de İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Turkey]," *İşçi Postası*, October 1, 1965; "Türkiye'de İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Turkey]," *İşçi Postası*, September 30, 1965; Nejat Eczacıbaşı, "Sosyal Kanunlar ve Özel Teşebbüs," 5-6; "Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonunun Ücret Politikası [The Wage Policy of the Employer's Unions of Turkey]," in *Türkiyede İşçi Ücretleri vol. 1* (Ankara: Prodüktivite Merkezi, 1965), 145-146; Orhan Tuna, *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri [The Economic and Social Effects of the Collective Agreement System]*, vol. II, (Ankara: The State Planning Institute, 1970), 242; Pars, 232.

⁶⁰⁴ "Türkiye'de İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Turkey]," *İşçi Postası*, October 1, 1965; *Türkiye'de Özel Sektör ve Kalkınma*, 104.

long as their profits would keep increasing and their right to rule their own business would not be impinged. At this point, it was impossible to reach an agreement with unions since employers comprehended unions' arguments on the excessive profits of private capital as a direct assault against private capital, itself.

Furthermore, the perceived unionist assault fostered the idea of being organized among the employers. Bosses of the period often emphasized unity to combat the increasing organization of workers and their growing influence in political spheres. In fact, the employers of the period founded their own organizations, or tried to empower the existing ones, to defend their rights collectively.⁶⁰⁵ As a result, the workers and employers came face to face collectively through their organizations. In this regard, the workers' and bosses' debates became much more contentious when they encountered each other on the public scene. For example, both those social groups met during special meetings held to determine minimum wages, in December 1961. There, employers argued against the level of minimum wage put forth by workers' representatives in İstanbul. In reply, workers' representatives accused employers of being reluctant to stand for a fair minimum wage. For workers, the employer's representatives seemed single-minded on the issue of low minimum wages in the meetings, and this was yet another an example of their "bad intentions" and "greed."⁶⁰⁶

As another example, the employer's representatives called upon significant reserves during the debate over the right to strike in the Third Work Assembly organized in 1962. Their stance was that strikes could harm the national economy if they were to happen in several crucial sectors. The workers' representatives firmly objected to the proposals of employers' representatives on this issue, and asserted that employers aimed to sabotage the

⁶⁰⁵ Şahap Kocatopçu, "Hürriyet İçinde Kalkınma [The Development in the Liberal Order]," *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 2 (November 1962): 3; Şahap Kocatopçu, "Açış Konuşması [The Opening Speech]," in *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Seminerleri*, 9; Ay, 121; Pars, 236 and 247.

⁶⁰⁶ "İşçiler İşverenlerden İyi Niyet Bekliyor [Workers Ask For Good Intention from Employers]," *Türkiye Birlik*, December 11, 1961; "Asgari Ücretler İşçileri Tatmin Etmekten Çok Uzak [The Minimum Wages Do not Satisfy Workers]," *Türkiye Birlik*, December 14, 1961, 1 and 4; "13 İskolunda İşverenler Asgari Ücrete İtiraz Etti [Employers Objected the Minimum Wages in 13 Sector]," *Türkiye Birlik*, January 6, 1962, 1 and 4.

congress by objecting to nearly every one of the workers' demands.⁶⁰⁷ In fact, the headlines of the newspapers reflected the harsh debates over the right to strike that took place in the Assembly.⁶⁰⁸ The contentious relations between workers' and employer's representatives did not subside in the next Work Assembly, which was held in 1965. The workers' delegations, as an example, loudly objected to an offer by the employer's delegation, which argued for strike restrictions, and the delegates then left the meeting.⁶⁰⁹ To summarize, these encounters between collectives further severed workers' and employer's relations during the decade. Another repercussion of the encounters was that when representatives or union officials began to deal with employers as a collective entity rather than individuals, their view of the current class divisions and differences in society was made more clear.

The rise of socialism in the 1960s would further cause strained relations between unionists and employers. Unlike the governments, which presented private capital as an indispensable actor in economic and democratic development, the leftist discourse approached the private sector as a "parasitic entity" that grew unfairly and relentlessly by "exploiting" poor people in Turkey. While union officers did not adopt such a language to openly challenge the very roots of capitalist relations in Turkey, they did, however, address inequitable relations and their attitude towards Turkish bosses as more or less inspired by the leftist discourse, which considerably increased its influence in the country at that time.

C) Rise of the Left

The 1960s were truly a golden age for the leftist movement, which had been brutally oppressed by the state in Turkey in the previous periods. With the chance of pursuing its activities legally, the leftist movements became a considerable political force, influencing the

⁶⁰⁷ *IIIüncü Çalışma Meclisi Programı, 22 Ocak 1962 [The Programme of the Third Work Congress, 22 January 1962]*, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive; "İşçiler İşverenlerin Meclisi Sabote Ettiği Fikrinde [The Workers Think That Employers Are Sabotaging the Congress]," *Öncü*, January 24, 1962.

⁶⁰⁸ "Grev Yapılabilecek İşyerleri Tesbit Edildi [The Workplaces, Where The Strike Would Become Legal, was Figured Out]," *Öncü*, January 25, 1962; "İşçi Temsilcileri ile İşverenler Çatıştı [There Were Conflicts Between Workers' Representatives and Employers]," *Öncü*, January 26, 1962; "Çalışma Meclisinde Kavgı Çıktı [A Fight Occured in the Work Congress]," *Öncü*, January 30, 1962.

⁶⁰⁹ Ağralı, 186-187.

political debates and daily life of Turkish society throughout the decade. The left, which benefited from the above mentioned political developments and opportunities created by the new regime, would be a significant actor in the widespread public debates regarding social justice and income equality. It would propagate the idea of social justice by taking workers' side and emphasizing socialist ideology as the only viable method by which to rule the country.

The 1960s' leftists stamped their mark on the era through their political party organizations, as well as through the work of their intellectuals, their publications, university organizations, cultural activities, and anti-imperialist campaigns, etc. The most influential of those mediums was a monthly journal, *YÖN*, and a political party, the Turkish Labor Party. Both *YÖN* and the TİP were able to organize a considerable number of Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals, student movement leaders, unionists, bureaucrats, journalists, and university professors. As a result of these combined voices, the movement became very influential on the political and social life of the country.

YÖN started publication in 1961 after 1042 intellectuals signed a declaration. *YÖN* was originally founded by the initiative of six influential intellectuals of the time: Mümtaz Soysal (1929-), İlhami Soysal (1928-1992), İlhan Selçuk (1925-2010), Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu (1906-1988), Hamdi Avcıoğlu (d. 1986), and Doğan Avcıoğlu (1926-1983). The circulation of the journal reached unprecedented figures in Turkey: it sold more than 20 000 copies weekly. A foreign scholar defined this as an impressive number for a political-ideological periodical at those times.⁶¹⁰ The journal was a iconoclast periodical, in particular due to its emphasis on socialism, a word that had long been taboo to even be expressed aloud. It touted socialism as a political and economic model to "save" Turkey from its backward position in the international order.⁶¹¹ The name of the journal can literally be translated as *direction*: indeed, the editors, in fact, published it to give direction to Turkey. It was an Ankara weekly paper

⁶¹⁰ Jacob M. Landau, *Türkiye'de Aşırı Akımlar [The Extremist Movements in Turkey]*, Erdinç Baykal [trans.], (Ankara: Turhan, 1978), 75.

⁶¹¹ Gökhan Atılğan, "Yön-Devrim Hareketi [The Yön-Devrim Movement]", in Murat Gültekingil [ed.] *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 8: *Sol [Left]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 597-646.

and comprised twenty-four pages in large format. According to a survey conducted between Ankara university students in 1965, the journal was widely read by students who were at the top of the journal's demographic with about 40.4 percent of total readers. The first issue was published on 20 December 1961 and it was suspended to be published on 30 June 1967, on the proclamation that it had completed its mission.⁶¹²

According to a Turkish scholar, Yalçın Küçük, *YÖN* was one of the most influential journals in the history of Republican Turkey.⁶¹³ The *YÖN* declaration emphasized the unfairness found in society, and declared the stance of its signators as being for the rights of just income distribution, industrial development within a statist economy, and economic planning based on social justice.⁶¹⁴ The journal brought the idea of socialism within such a framework to the attention of Turkey's social and political groups. According to authors who penned articles about the workers' causes, the Turkish workers who were oppressed by employers and lived under miserable conditions were slowly recognizing their common interests.⁶¹⁵ In terms of a class war, the debates in the journal were in parallel with the regime discourse; that is, only social justice might obstruct the rise of class conflicts in Turkey.⁶¹⁶ Further, its criticisms of employers were even more severe. *YÖN* called out employers as members of a "happy minority" in Turkey and argued that they exploited the labor and national resources of the country only to fill up their own pockets. For example, the journal portrayed Vehbi Koç as one such problematic employer in Turkey.⁶¹⁷ The wide use of this

⁶¹² Özgür Mutlu Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism* (London-New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 20-43.

⁶¹³ Yalçın Küçük, "Türkiye'de Planlama Kavramının Gelişimi Üzerine [On the Progress of the Development Concept in Turkey]," *ODTÜ Gelişme Journal*, The Special Issue (1981): 101.

⁶¹⁴ Quoted by Gökhan Atılğan, *Kemalizm ile Marksizm Arasında Geleneksel Aydınlar: Yön-Devrim Hareketi [The Traditional Intellectuals Between Kemalism and Marxism: The Yön-Devrim Movement]*, (İstanbul: Yordam, 2008), 309-315.

⁶¹⁵ Attila Karaosmanoğlu, "Türk İşçisinin Durumu ve İşçi Hareketleri [The Condition of Turkish Workers and Workers' Movements]," *YÖN*, year 2 no. 66 (20 March 1963); Mükerrrem Hiç, "İşçi Ücretlerindeki Adaletsizlik [The Unfairness on Workers' Wages]," *YÖN*, year 2 no. 70 (17 April 1963).

⁶¹⁶ "İşçiler ve Geçim Derdi [Workers and Sustaining Problems]," *YÖN*, year 2 no. 53 (19 December 1962).

⁶¹⁷ "Haftanın Portresi: Vehbi Koç [The Portrait of the Week: Vehbi Koç]," *YÖN*, year 2 no. 66 (20 March 1963).

term, ‘happy minority’, would be adopted by several union’s officers, leftist movements and other publications of the period.⁶¹⁸

Another influential political current of the period was the TİP. The unionists of the 1950s, who had believed in influencing party politics in order to get workers’ rights, began to reflect on founding a workers’ party just after the coup d’état. The relatively militant union leaders such as Kemal Türkler, Kemal Nebioğlu, Basri Karagöz, İbrahim Denizcier, and Avni Erakalın reached an agreement to establish the Turkish Labor Party in 1961. According to Sedat Ağralı, Maden-İş and Lastik-İş, which would later be the most militant unions of DİSK, were the most determined unions in creating a workers’ party.⁶¹⁹ The unionists had decided the aim of the TİP was to defend the interests of the long-oppressed working class and carry them to the seats of the National Assembly where workers could use their voices more effectively. Although the TİP was nearly invisible on the political scene in its first years, it would become much more influential organization, especially after the unionists invited the leftist intellectuals to the executive committee. Despite the (sometimes physical) attacks at the party meetings or congresses, and accusations of communism, the TİP widened its influence and sent 15 deputies to the National Assembly after the 1965 elections. More significantly, its discourse, such as the “right to resist”, “anti-imperialism”, “the end of exploitation”, and “calloused hands to the parliament”, was infused widely into Turkish society. The TİP’s policies had major effects on political life in Turkey.⁶²⁰ Since the party came from a leftist interpretation of the concepts of social justice and just income distribution, the TİP’s political line clashed with employers who were already uncomfortable with the state’s policies on industrial relations.

⁶¹⁸ It is true that *YÖN* should be defined as a platform rather than a political party, where the different, even conflicting views were expressed especially about how the socialism would be maintained in Turkey. Therefore, above mentioned framework of the journal must be understood as the views of the close circle who founded *YÖN*. The same circle would began to publish *Devrim [Revolution]* as a more narrow journal to designate the ideological and political framework of a future revolution in Turkey.

⁶¹⁹ Ağralı, 106-111.

⁶²⁰ For a fine study about the effects of TİP on Turkish social and political life, look at: Artun Ünsal, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi [The Turkish Labor Party]* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2002).

One of the most significant repercussions of the inclusion of Marxist intellectuals in the party was that the TİP became more affiliated with the Marxist discourse and, over time, it consequently leaned towards a more clear-cut, anti-capitalist position. Regarding the current income distribution, Aybar stated in his first press bulletin that the widespread injustice and unfair income distribution accounted for the misery of the laboring classes in Turkey. In order to overcome this, the national wealth must be fairly distributed and the laboring classes must get their deserved share from the national economy.⁶²¹ Moreover, the succeeding party leaders and political cadres adopted the word “class” into their lexicon, in a specifically antagonistic use of the term. Future party documents would clearly state that the laboring classes, not just workers, would rule the country. In other words, the party openly expressed its intention that the working class should have had a decisive word on the future of Turkey. The party documents also argued for shrinking the influence of private capital in the Turkish economy. Instead, state enterprises would be expanded and private capital would be forced to follow the principles of a new economic plan under the TİP power.

Although the TİP claimed to provide room for private capital under its planned statist economy, it defined an inherently antagonistic relationship between workers and employers. According to the TİP, the interests of laborers and wealthy classes were conflictual rather than cooperative in nature. The party defined the wealthy classes, who had control of the means of production, as groups, which inhibited the development of social justice and just income distribution in Turkey. Thus, the TİP identified the existing social order as an exploitative system⁶²² and emphasized the class distinctions in the society by hailing the people as workers, (noble) peasants and sharecroppers during the election campaign in 1963. More importantly, the party called on those segments of the society to awaken and fight for their common rights and interests. In its public meetings and declarations, the party promised to rid the country of the “tyranny of exploiters” whom they said dominated the existing social

⁶²¹ Mehmet Ali Aybar, *TİP Tarihi [The TLP History] vol. 1* (İstanbul: BDS, n.d.), 207-208.

⁶²² Sadun Aren, *TİP Olayı [The TLP Case]* (İstanbul: Cem, 1993), 185.

and economic order in Turkey.⁶²³ The TİP was one of the most influential parties, which openly criticized the fundamental roots of the existing social order, namely capitalism, throughout the Turkish history.

After M. Ali Aybar became the party chair, TİP's socialist stance became more obvious and the idea of socialism found its place in society in Turkey, throughout the 1960s. The first programme had not included even a word "class" and emphasized rather the Atatürk reforms in the single-party period, and the principle of social justice took its place in the 1961 Constitution. After being leader of the party, Aybar assigned a commission which would pen a regulation defining the party as the political organization of the working class and those who get together under the democratic leadership of the working class. Subsequently, the 1964 program, which was produced by the party members as well as non-party members of some intellectuals, was ratified in the First Congress at İzmir in 1964. This document ran for more than three editions in the same year when it was accepted at the congress.⁶²⁴

In fact, the new program clearly included the main assumptions of Marxism. In the same vein, in 1964, party officers inserted the word socialism into the party programme, prominently emphasizing the features of the 1961 Constitution. In order to foster the spread of socialist ideas in Turkey, it analyzed the Constitution as the main defender of workers' rights and held the position that the document implicitly supported the idea of socialism because it included items about social justice and just income distribution. Accordingly, the party defended the constitution in its program, declarations, and debates within the parliament and public meetings.⁶²⁵ To summarize the point, the TİP strived to insert an antagonistic definition of class into the idea of social justice, which was one of the hegemonic discourses of the period.

There is certainly a paucity of material to debate the specific influence of socialism amongst Turkish metal workers. Since the union did not want its members to be divided along

⁶²³ Aybar, 255-259.

⁶²⁴ Mustafa Şener, "Türkiye İşçi Partisi [The Turkish Labor Party]," in Murat Gültekingil [ed.] *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 8: *Sol [Left]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 356-418.

⁶²⁵ Aren, 55-69 and 170-171; Aybar, 18-19.

party lines, and since it defined the function of unionism as the defense of the common economic and social interests of the metal workers, Maden-İş, (the leader of which being one of the founders of the TİP), did not follow any obvious party politics among its rank and file. Hüseyin Ekinici, the chair of the Silahtarağa District Branch of Maden-İş, described Kemal Türkler as a socialist; however, Türkler, he claimed, was aware of the fact that unions were mass organizations, which included a people with a variety of ideas. According to Ekinici, Kemal Türkler preferred not to become one of the public faces of the party in order not to lose the support of metal workers.⁶²⁶ Kemal Türkler interpreted the duty of unionists to be defenders of other members who were ignorant of their true political inclinations, by all means possible. In this regard, the union did not exclude diligent, well-respected and trustworthy workers and representatives who, at the same time, refuted socialist ideology. Those representatives, in turn, did not mind the ideological stance of the union officers, since they saw Maden-İş as the true defender of metal workers' rights.⁶²⁷ In fact, anyone who searches among the journals of Maden-İş barely encounters news about the TİP, or the declarations and opinions of party politicians. Because of this, it is nearly impossible to evaluate the influence of this growing socialist ideology on the metal workers. Yet, since Maden-İş was one of the founders of the TİP and Kemal Türkler was the member of the party, the metal bosses and rival union, Çelik-İş, would accuse Maden-İş of being a "puppet" of the so-called communist TİP, especially when the struggles between MESS, Maden-İş and Çelik-İş were at their peak. Both MESS and Çelik-İş would blame Maden-İş for "ideological strikes" which were assumed to be conducted for political gain, rather than actually aiming to improve the conditions of the metal workers. In fact, some union members, and some factory representatives or the district representatives, such as Hüseyin Ekinici, İlyas Kabil, were the active members of the TLP. Those people worked for the party during election times and

⁶²⁶ Hüseyin Ekinici, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012. Also look at: Aren, 37; Çelik, 540.

⁶²⁷ Hüseyin Ekinici, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

spread the seeds of socialism amongst the public.⁶²⁸ Moreover, some active party members worked in the union as expert lawyers or contributed articles to the journals. At this time, socialist ideology became influential among some high-ranking officers of the union, and amongst district representatives who also acted as diplomats between the rank and file and high union officers.

The new laws and regulations, the features of the 1961 Constitution, the official discourse on social justice and income distribution, and the rise of the left as an influential political current all accounted for the new, widespread public debates on social justice in Turkey during the 1960s. The employers, who were irritated by the increasing power of the left and increasing state intervention on shop floor issues and industrial relations, would eventually respond in kind. Employers and their organizations, and workers and their organizations, would each attempt to define social justice and other related concepts differently, and even in a contentious manner. In other words, the idea of social justice which was actually first brought to wide attention by the state, would only add up to further polarization between workers and bosses during the 1960s.

III. Conclusion

The military intervention overthrew the DP government, which lasted nearly 10 years in Turkey in part by accusing this party of creating important social and political cleavages to divide the Turkish society. However, neither the military nor new civil governments did, or could, resolve the widespread worker's grievances, which were assumed to be products of the ignorant policies of the old government. But at same time, workers' and unions' demands became one of the most important issues of public debate in Turkey. Through government's promises, legal texts and rise of the left in the period, the idea of social justice became the defining feature of *zeitgeist* of the Turkish society. As a result, the 1960s witnessed a formation of a solid foundation on which workers and unions would articulate their demands. The concept of social justice, first formulated in the developed capitalist countries in order to

⁶²⁸ Hüseyin Ekinici, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

ensure the survival of the existing social and economic relations through conciliating the interests of capital and labor, became a contentious area in Turkey through which the basic foundations of social order were highly debated.

CHAPTER 6

INTERVENTION: THE KAVEL STRIKE, 1963

The new political opportunities created by the state and encouraged by the unions, and the resulting public debates over social justice including industrial democracy and income distribution, would radicalize the relationships between metal employers and workers whose grievances about work and city life continued. In fact, the İstanbul metal workers, who were quick to grasp these political opportunities, would become more bold and determined to get their rights and earn their much desired place within the social order. Towards the end of the 1962, the union decided to act on the shop floor to get their members' rights recognized – rights which the state seemed uneager to provide, so the union fought for them through collective actions. The fight between metal workers and bosses would culminate in the famous Kavel Strike. These collective actions in the form of strikes would substantially change the working relationship between the metal employers and their workers. Through the widely supported Kavel Strike, the metal workers would take an important step to win their rights when they were not provided by the state or their bosses.

In the last days of January 1963, the metal workers at the Kavel Factory, which was owned by two prominent metal bosses, Vehbi Koç and Emin Aktar, went into one of the most famous and influential strikes in Turkish history. The strike lasted 36 days and ended with victory for the union. It was such a pivotal moment in public life of the country that there were drawn out, heated debates held between famous journalists, columnists, the well known intellectuals of the country, the employees' and employers' organizations, and the parties and representatives in the National Assembly. During the strike, critical meetings about the labor law were being conducted in the National Assembly. The walkout also created a division within the Assembly, between those who supported the strike and those who did not. The supportive representatives emphasized the unlawful acts of the employers on the shop floor and the miserable conditions that the workers suffered through. In contrast, the others claimed that the strike itself was unlawful and such acts might culminate in anarchy and social

disorder, which might well pave way for communism.⁶²⁹ In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that not just the higher state organizations, but also the whole of the Turkish public was divided between two camps; those opposed to the strike and its supporters.⁶³⁰ The Kavel Strike was the most significant collective attempt of the workers up until that time to settle the social justice on their own behalf. The Kavel and its repercussions would also radicalize the already tense relations between metal workers and bosses on shop floor.

İstanbul's metal workers, whose old shop floor grievances did not fade in the new decade, were quick to grasp the soul of the new age and were ready to actively respond to the political and institutional developments that were occurring in the country. They immediately adopted the new discourses of the period into their language. These notions; such as social justice, fair income distribution, and "happy minority", or the new mottos; such as, an end to the exploitation, the maintenance of workers' rights, and implementation of the social principles of the Constitution, were inscribed on the minds of the metal workers. The workers' representatives, who were considered by the workers to be their own voices, utilized the new notions and mottos in their encounters with the metal bosses and managers. At first, officers of the metal union trusted the relevant state organs and officers to realize the goals behind these notions. However, when the new regime, in which the union's officers often declared their faith, was late to fulfill its promises, the workers and unionists became more determined to intervene in the ongoing developments. In addition to Maden-İş's efforts to secure workers' rights on the institutional level, the workers would collectively push the limits of the industrial framework through their own efforts. Their collective actions in the forms of strikes would prove that the metal workers were determined to transgress the laws, if necessary, to achieve their demands. It's apparent that the metal workers attempted to capitalize on current political developments, which, indeed, provided significant opportunities from the beginning of the 1960s.

⁶²⁹ Aydın, 94-100.

⁶³⁰ Zafer Aydın gives a detailed account and provides a well-written analysis of the strike in his book, *Kanunsuz Bir Grevin Öyküsü*.

I. The Road to Kavel

As in the 1950s, the workers' and/or union's representatives of the Sixties were the most important figures to pursue the union's policy and align the rank and file with the union on the shop floor. The representatives, who had acquired considerable experience and pursued their duties despite the bosses' oppression during the previous decade, continued to provide communication between workers, employers and the union. One ex-Kavel worker, Hasbal Kayalı, claimed that:

“There were workers' representatives. Nobody did see any boss. We told our every need to representatives. Then, they conveyed our demands to the boss.”⁶³¹

The importance of the worker's-union's representatives can also be understood from the incidents at Kavel: here the Kavel workers refused to work when the general manager did not re-hire the dismissed representatives who had been fired in the beginning of the strike in January 1963. Although nearly all high officers of the union had been the worker's and union's representatives at the same time during the 1950s, it was impossible to determine how those figures had functioned in the organizational structure of Maden-İş in the previous decade. On this issue, Maden-İş imitated the United Automobile Workers' (UAW) model in terms of its internal structure. It is impossible to determine when exactly Maden-İş began to apply the organizational model of the UAW; however, an union report dated 1959 claims that this model would be applied soon.⁶³² It can be concluded that the representatives would be important in the internal organization of the union by the beginning of the 1960s.⁶³³ Like the

⁶³¹ Quoted from Aydın, 18.

⁶³² *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının İstanbul Bölge Merkez Şubesinin 9-Ekim-1960 Tarihinde Yapılacak İlk Normal Kongresine Sunulmak Üzere 1.1.1959 Tarihinden 30.09.1960 Tarihine Kadar Faaliyet Raporu* [The Annual Report of Deeds Between 1.1.1959 and 30.9.1960 to the First Congress of İstanbul District of Turkey Maden-İş Union in 9 October 1960], TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 2 Envelope 80, 1.

⁶³³ Maden-İş, particularly, had close relations with the United Automobile Workers (UAW), one of the militant worker's unions at the United States. Founded in the 1930s, this union had launched many strikes between 1930 and 1945 and flourished in the relevant sectors. Although it expelled many communists who had constituted the most militant fraction within the union until the end of the Second World War, UAW continued its militant and uncompromising policy after 1945. The UAW initiated a

stewards of UAW, the representatives on shop floor were chosen by the votes of the rank and file as the one representative for each twenty workers. It was not written as a rule but according to the worker's narratives that each section and atelier, such as assembly, press atelier, rectify atelier, quality control atelier etc. within a factory chose one representative for each section. Those local representatives selected a local head representative as the union's head representative within the factory. The local representatives were assumed to solve worker's problems and complaints by firstly negotiating with the chief of each section within the laws and valid collective agreement. In case of a disagreement, they were responsible for taking those problems to the head representatives who were then to present the problems to the high administrators of factories. The local representatives were also responsible for taking worker's demands in each factory section during the period of collective agreements and preparing an agreement with the head representative. They directly represented the worker's during the meeting. The union's lead representatives constituted the head representative assembly within a district branch and this assembly selected the executive committee and chair of the district branch. They, in turn, chose the executive committee of Maden-İş.⁶³⁴ In

shop steward system, through which the union pursued its activities at the shop floor level. The union organized on the basis of significant work groups within enterprises who generated organic leadership during the production process: those leaders would coincide with extensive shop steward system. Therefore, "the dense network of stewards were in fact the cornerstone of the union organization" in workplaces. Those stewards were elected by the rank and file and thus, there was a strong trust mechanism between union organization and rank-and-file. This led to the fact that the real power of UAW laid on the departmental level within individual enterprises. See Nelson Lichtenstein, "Auto Worker Militancy and the Structure of Factory Life, 1937-1955," *Journal of American History*, vol. 67, no. 2 (September 1980): 335-353. Also look at: Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor*, (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1995) and Jonathan Cutler, *Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004). Maden-İş attempted to imitate this organizational model of UAW especially after the mid-1950s. There were some articles in the *Maden-İş* journal to define the organization of unions in the US and this union in particular. Even, Walter Reuther, the general president of UAW, arrived in Turkey in the early 1960. Kemal Türkler severally visited the US to participate in the congresses of UAW. See: "Amerikada Sendikalar Nasıl Çalışıyor [How Unions Work in America]", *Maden-İş*, year 4, no. 41 (5 March 1960), 5; "Beynelmilel Fedrasyona Üyeliğimiz [Our Membership to the International Federation]", *Maden-İş*, year 4, no. 46 (8 October 1960), 1 and 4; "Kemal Türkler, Amerikadaki İnceleme Gezisini Tamamlayarak Yurda Döndü [Kemal Türkler Returned to the Country Upon Finishing His Visit To America]", *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 20 (25 June 1966): 1. For the impressions of an American unionist about the relations between unions and workers in Turkey, see: Kenan Öztürk, *Amerikan Sendikacılığı ve Türkiye*, 10-11.

⁶³⁴ *Sendika Temsilcisi ve Görevleri [Union Representatives and Their Duties]*, TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive Envelope 673; *Sendika Temsilcisinin Görevleri [The Duties of the Union's Representatives]*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Yayınları, no. 3, 1966), TÜSTAV Library.

this sense, Maden-İş argues that the administrators of a trade union should have directly and democratically been selected by worker's themselves.⁶³⁵

In the absence of sufficient evidence, it is very hard to assess to what extent a certain framework, such as the strict hierarchy of the organization of Maden-İş, actually functioned in a democratic manner on the shop floor. Nonetheless, anyone who searches among the pages of Maden-İş Journal can see the lists of the workers' representatives and their tallied votes cast by workers' themselves in different metal plants. Furthermore, no workers with whom I conducted interviews did claimed otherwise: in each section within factories they selected their Maden-İş representatives without coercion; men who, in turn, honestly dealt with the workers' problems and asked their opinions during the collective agreements. It must be noted that such a scene might be illusionary in reflecting upon the actual progress of the representative mechanisms on the shop floor, and drawing conclusions based only upon worker's memories might overlook some important dynamics. The argument here is open to be challenged by further studies.

But it can be generally concluded that the metal representatives derived their legitimacy to act as the workers' own voices from a democratic election system. At this point, the union focused on the training of representatives on the shop floor in the new laws, the union's interpretation of social justice, fair income distribution, the importance of the 1961 Constitution, the strike and collective agreement rights, and finally, the methods of conducting a successful strike or signing a good collective agreement. In 1962, more than 100 metal representatives from the biggest metal plants joined in the educational courses of solving the union member's problems in terms of worker's rights defined in the Constitution.⁶³⁶ Invited foreign unionists also gave lectures about the methods of collective struggles during the union's seminars. Moreover, the unionists conducted meetings with

⁶³⁵ *İşçiler Sendikası Olmalı [Workers Should Be Unionized]*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Yayınları, no. 4, 1965), 15.

⁶³⁶ "Maden-İş'in Semineri [The Seminar of Maden-İş]," *Türkiye Birlik*, February 2, 1962. Also look at: "Beraber Öğrenelim [Let's Learn Together]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 51, (7 March 1961): 3; "Eğitimde Yenilik [The Revisions in the Education]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 51, (23 September 1961): 1 and 4; "Berec'te Sohbet Toplantısı [The Meeting at Berec]," *Türkiye Birlik*, February 22, 1962.

workers in the metal plants about unionism and workers' rights.⁶³⁷ At the same time, in those seminars the representatives learned legitimate ways of fighting injustices on the shop floor. Those courses and seminars, as well as the ongoing public debate, must have factored in how the metal workers conceptualized the social justice in the early 1960s.

In this regard, the available evidence demonstrates that most workers' representatives on shop floor were using the term social justice to raise worker's demands. The metal workers' representatives on the shop floor, who had gathered significant experience from the work conflicts in the previous decade, and who had been influenced by the new political developments, immediately comprehended the character of the new age. Yet their view of the bosses and their brand of social order, in fact, still went back and forth between loyalty and insubordination. Rather than seeing it as a radical break from the past, the metal workers saw the widespread influence of the idea of social justice as an affirmation of their old assumptions and arguments; for them, as in the previous decade, the interests of employers and employees in Turkey were common ones. In fact, the metal workers sometimes adopted quite conciliatory and paternalistic expressions in their relations with employers. The head representative of Türk Demir Döküm workers, Şinasi Kaya, wrote a letter to Vehbi Koç in 1963 and called him the "big brother" and "father" of workers. In his letter, he talked about the low level of workers' wages and stated that managers, who were blamed for oppressing workers, were responsible for this situation.⁶³⁸ So, Şinasi Kaya adopted a much more contentious discourse towards the general managers of the enterprises, as was obvious during the Kavel Strike when most representatives put the general managers on the spot in their accusations. In another written statement, Şinasi Kaya accused the general manager of being involved in unlawful acts, contrary to workers' rights in the factory. In the rest of his article,

⁶³⁷ TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 664; "İşçilere Filmler Gösterilecek [The Movies Will Be Displayed to Workers]," *Son Saat*, April 22, 1962.

⁶³⁸ Şinasi Kaya, "Vehbi Koç'a Mektup [A Letter to Vehbi Koç]" *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 65 (21 January 1963): 1 and 4.

Kaya asserted his determination to fight against such incidents.⁶³⁹ However, based on their shop floor experiences, most representatives, unlike Kaya, assumed not just managers, but also bosses to be a different social group who care about nothing but filling their own pockets by exploiting workers. According to them, social justice and democracy did not exist in Turkey, since the wealthy classes continued to increase their wealth by exploiting workers, while poor people had to slave away just to sustain their lives in the country. For the metal workers, the malevolent attitudes of employers were the main reason for the lack of social justice in Turkey.⁶⁴⁰ For a worker representative from the Rabak Factory, Nurettin Kalpcan, the bosses in Turkey had gotten used to exploiting workers. He compared the living situation of workers and employers and said that, while the employers sustained a very decent lifestyle, workers suffered under several difficult conditions. Nurettin Kalpcan also claimed that income distribution in Turkey was unfair. Under such circumstances, Nurettin Kalpcan stated, it was impossible to talk about social justice in Turkey.⁶⁴¹ For the workers, the current conditions on shop floor were not in compliance with the idea of providing the decent life that was imagined in the Constitution.⁶⁴² The representatives took a stand against those hardships and declared their determination to get workers' deserved place in society.⁶⁴³ It appears that social justice meant, for workers' representatives at least, being able to provide for one's family, realizing one's deserved place in the social hierarchy, obtaining rights such as unionization, and other rights which were defined by the law and which came from the very

⁶³⁹ Şinasi Kaya, "TCDDY Fabrikaları Gl. Müdürü Sayın Bayına Bir Sözümüz Vardır [We Have a Word To Say to The General Manager of TCDDY Factories]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 57, (23 October 1961): 3.

⁶⁴⁰ "Çavdargil Bu Memleketi 56 Ağaya Bırakmayacağız Dedi [Çavdargil Said That We Will not Leave This Country to the Mercy of 56 Aghas]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (4 November 1962): 1 and 4; "Türkiye'de İşçiler Emeginin Karşılığı Ücreti Alamıyor [The Workers in Turkey Cannot Get a Fair Wage]," *İşçi Postası*, July 13, 1963.

⁶⁴¹ Nurettin Kalpcan, "İşveren Hükümrânlığı [The Employer's Sovereignty]," *İşçinin Sesi*, 46, (10 June 1963). For the opinions of several other representatives, look at: "Maden-İş'in Şişli Şubesinin Toplantısı Hararetle Geçti [The Şişli Branch Meeting of Maden-İş Was Full of Enthusiasm]," *Türkiye Birlik*, October 18, 1962.

⁶⁴² "İşçilerin Sağlığına Önem Verilmiyor [The Workers' Health Is Ignored]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 65 (21 January, 1963): 2.

⁶⁴³ "Çavdargil Bu Memleketi 56 Ağaya Bırakmayacağız Dedi." Also look at: "Maden-İş Sendikasının Şişli Şube Kongresi Bugün Yapılacak [The Şişli District Congress of Maden-İş Will Be Assembled Today]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (18 November 1962); "Maden-İş'in Şube Toplantıları Başladı [The District Meetings of Maden-İş Has Begun]," *İşçinin Sesi*, year 3, no. 13 (1963): 1 and 2.

condition of being a laborer. The meaning of social justice would be more crystallized for the Kavel workers while they were struggling with the bosses/managers on shop floor, as I will discuss below. Those speeches and narratives indicate that there might be some differences between worker's representatives about the term social justice, especially when it came to the matter of the bosses; however, it could be concluded that like unions and leftist publications or parties, the metal worker's representatives adopted a relatively radical version of the idea of social justice in the first years of the 1960s by putting either bosses or the "corrupt order" in Turkey in the spotlight. That is to say, while the metal workers stood for a common interest between employers and themselves in theory, their portrayal of the real situation in Turkey was quite different. The ongoing political developments and debates seemed to radicalize, to a certain extent, the ideological stance of the workers, which had taken a shape in the post-war period.

Following their union's official discourse and policy, the workers' representatives generally welcomed the coup d'état, which promised to end the dark days of workers under the DP government,⁶⁴⁴ and, for the most part, they waited for new reforms to be legislated before actively struggling with employers in the first years of the decade. They held out hope that workers' rights would be provided by the state and by legislation that had been revived by the new regime. In this regard, the metal workers, especially the representatives on shop floor, kept their trust on the legal framework in the early 1960s.⁶⁴⁵ However, this would begin to change after late 1962, and metal workers and their representatives began to conduct collective actions in several cases without waiting for the assistance of legal mechanisms. This change of attitude went in parallel with a transformation in the union's discourse and strategy from the mid-1960, into late 1962. On this subject, I will firstly look union's changing approach in fighting for workers' rights promised by the new regime.

⁶⁴⁴ "Kongrelerimiz Yapıldı [Our Congresses Were Done]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 61, (22 November 1962): 1, 3 and 4.

⁶⁴⁵ "Temsilciyi İçeriye Almayan Bir İş Yeri [A Personnel Manager Who Does not Let a Representative In]," *Türkiye Birlik*, June 30, 1962.

II. Maden-İş in the Times of Social Justice

The unionist legacy of the 1950s, which hinged upon their trust of state mechanisms, as well as the workers' own will to fight poverty and earn a respected place within the social hierarchy, was enhanced in the metal sector by the political developments that took place in the early part of the decade. The metal workers' union enthusiastically saluted the political and institutional developments of the new era. Maden-İş hailed the 1960 coup d'état and succeeding reforms in terms of social justice and democratic industrial relations. For the union, the military intervention liberated the Turkish people and workers, too, who had been under threat from the oppressive policies of the DP government.⁶⁴⁶ From the first day of the new regime, the union attempted to exert pressure on politicians and political circles. Just after the military intervention, Kemal Türkler wired Cemal Gürsel, the head of the military government, to celebrate the coup d'état that, according to Türkler, saved the nation. He also wired Cahit Talas and Sıddık Sami Onar, the chair of the Committee to Prepare the Constitution, and stated that the new constitution should include the right to strike.⁶⁴⁷ So in their press interviews, the union leaders asked the military government to immediately fulfill its promise of granting the right to strike.⁶⁴⁸

Maden-İş was also quick to grasp the institutional transformations and changing political opportunities created by the new regime, and they adopted the notion of social justice into their discourse. The union often declared its support for the reforms and for those state officials who were in charge of industrial relations.⁶⁴⁹ For the union leaders, the 1961 Constitution, which rendered law-making institutions as the bodies to legislate the most crucial workers' rights, was the most significant development of the new period. For example, Kemal Türkler defined the new constitution and new social order as taking the side of

⁶⁴⁶ Kemal Sülker, "Hakları Tanımıyan, Hürriyetleri Ayak Altına Alan Rejim Çöktü [The Regime Which Did not Recognize Rights and Trampled Freedoms Has Fallen Apart]," *Maden-İş*, (19 June 1960): 2.

⁶⁴⁷ Kemal Türkler, "Orgeneral Gürsel'e [To General Gürsel]," *Maden-İş*, (19 June 1960): 1 and 3.

⁶⁴⁸ "Sendikacılar Ne Diyorlar [What Do the Unionists Say]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (September 11, 1960).

⁶⁴⁹ "Maden-İş Başkanı dün Sayın Ecevit'e Karşı Değiliz Dedi [The Chair of Maden-İş Said Yesterday: We Were not against Ecevit]," *Türkiye Birlik*, September 7, 1962.

labor.⁶⁵⁰ Encouraged by the increasing state intervention on industrial relations, Maden-İş then followed the old tradition of getting their member's rights by staying within the purvey of law and involving themselves primarily in peaceful relations with employers.

Nevertheless, Maden-İş did not challenge the core of those notions and laws as proposed by the state; rather, it exerted its pressure on extending their scope and scale. In other words, the union still negotiated with the state about the content of the social justice and new laws, as it had attempted to do in the previous decade. For example, Kemal Türkler publicly criticized the DPT for not inviting unionists to help with preparations of the plan, and he declared that the plan ignored the idea of social justice. According to Kemal Türkler, the plan unfortunately did not show any sign that development would take place within the ideological scope of social justice.⁶⁵¹ At the same time, he argued that the current minimum wages were not sufficient to provide workers with decent life, a promise that was embedded in the constitution itself.⁶⁵² However, Maden-İş' loyalty to the regime, and their decision to trust the state mechanisms instead of fighting with employers was quickly shifted into a more insubordinate and contentious position.

In fact, while the military and succeeding civilian governments dallied in making new laws, which were in compliance with workers' demands, the union leaned towards earning workers' rights through a more active approach. When the right to strike was not recognized immediately after the coup d'état, the union proposed a gathering with other unions to voice their opinions publicly.⁶⁵³ The 1961 Sarayhan Demonstration, attended by significant numbers of workers from several metal plants, was the first collective warning of the metal

⁶⁵⁰ Kemal Türkler'in Maden-İş Dördüncü Kongresi Açış Konuşması [The Opening Speech of Kemal Türkler in the Fourteenth Grand Congress of the Maden-İş], TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 2 Envelope 88.

⁶⁵¹ "Başkan Kemal Türkler Plancıların İstifasını ve Görüşlerini Açıkladı [The Chair Kemal Türkler Expressed His Opinions on the Resignation of the Planners]," *Son Baskı*, December 16, 1962.

⁶⁵² "Onüç İş Kolunda Asgari Ücret Tesbit Edilmiş Değil [The Minimum Wages Were not Still Determined in Thirteen Sector]," *Türkiye Birlik*, October 25, 1961; "Asgari Ücretler İşçileri Tatmin Etmekten Çok Uzak [The Minimum Wages Do Not Satisfy Workers]," *Türkiye Birlik*, December 14, 1961; "Asgari Ücret Sistemi Mutlaka Değiştirilmeli [The Minimum Wage System Must Be Absolutely Altered]," *Türkiye Birlik*, December 27, 1961.

⁶⁵³ Kemal Türkler, "Sendikacılarımızın Kültür Seviyeleri [The Cultural Level of Our Unionists]," *Son Havadis*, October 6, 1960; "Maden-İş Sendikası Grev Yapmak İçin Karara Vardı [Maden-İş Decided to Go On Strike]," *Türkiye Birlik*, December 1, 1961.

workers to the current government that they must fulfill the promises of the regime. A Kavel worker remembers participating in the demonstration with his fellow workers.⁶⁵⁴ During the meeting, Kemal Türkler made a speech to the crowd and declared the union's decisiveness by stating that if the state did not provide the strike right, workers would get it through their own power. In the following year, the union often declared that they would get their member's rights by all possible and legal means, including collective actions, to warn the government that they must introduce workers' rights legislation.⁶⁵⁵

Leaning towards collective actions influenced the union's stance on workers-employers relations. The union, indeed, had revised its own statute in 1961. The new statute reiterated its old promises of securing peaceful relations on the shop floor, training its members to increase productivity, and acting on behalf of the national interests.⁶⁵⁶ That is, the union still defined a solidaristic relationship, linked by common interests between workers and employers, rather than a contentious one in its official documents. The union leaders further emphasized that point in their articles and press interviews.⁶⁵⁷ For example, Kemal Türkler claimed that the workers should have walked out only as a last resort after exhausting all peaceful means available to come to an agreement with employers.⁶⁵⁸ To provide workplace peace, the union leaders warned that workers should have their deserved and fair share of the national income.⁶⁵⁹ Otherwise, social peace on shop floor would be in jeopardy.

Like the workers' representatives, the union leaders, indeed, did not hesitate to adopt a more contentious language towards bosses whose "greedy" actions, the unionists assumed, had resulted in workers' poverty. The union officers often claimed that the metal employers

⁶⁵⁴ Quoted from Aydın, 14.

⁶⁵⁵ *Kemal Türkler'in Basın Bildirisi [The Press Interview of Kemal Türkler]*, TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 653; "Türk-İşe Yapılan Teklif Bir Günlük Grev [The Proposal to Türk-İş is One Day Strike]," *Türkiye Birlik*, May 23, 1962.

⁶⁵⁶ *Maden-İş Ana Tüzüğü, 1961 [The Statute of Maden-İş, 1961]*, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 16 Envelope 128.

⁶⁵⁷ "Maden-İş ve Faaliyeti [Maden-İş and Its Activity]," *Maden-İş*, (16 January 1961); Kemal Türkler, "İşçi Eğitimi ve Önemi [The Workers' Education and Its Importance]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 62, (10 December 1962): 1.

⁶⁵⁸ "Maden-İş Kongresinde Ortak Pazar ve Lokavt Yetkisi Tenkit Edildi [The European Union and Right to Lockout Was Criticized in the Congress of Maden-İş]," *Gece Postası*, October 28, 1963.

⁶⁵⁹ "Maden-İş'in Bu Sabahki Toplantısı [The Press Meeting of Maden-İş at this Morning]," *Son Saat*, August 26, 1962.

who did not recognize workers' rights were exploitative. The union also accused bosses of trying to "sabotage" social justice and other constitutional principles, right from the beginning of the new era.⁶⁶⁰ In their discourse, the union leaders used their old motto of "workers as the creator of all value in society." According to this discourse, although the workers were the loyal children of the country and did their best for the national interests, some employers still insulted them and refused to recognize their rights.⁶⁶¹ More importantly, Kemal Türkler presented the first signs of defining an antagonistic relationship between capital and labor.⁶⁶² Towards the end of 1962, the union leaned towards to use the current leftist criticism of the social order in Turkey. According to the union, the current laws and reforms, including the labor law and the development plan, served the interests of the wealthy classes who constituted the minority of population in Turkey.⁶⁶³ In parallel with said political changes, the union's discourse became increasingly radicalized during the 1960s.

To conclude the point, when the expected reforms from above did not happen as the metal workers desired; that is, when the metal workers' shop floor experience did not improve and when the metal bosses displayed their unwillingness to recognize workers' rights on shop floor, the workers and the union became more determined to earn their demands through their own actions. So it can be said that the spirit of the new age resulted in an unintended consequence; the political opportunities as seen by the metal workers and union bolstered their inclinations for involving themselves in collective actions on shop floor level. The ideas of social justice reflected on shop floor relations in increasing tension between workers and bosses. Those tensions and succeeding conflicts would again influence political developments, in turn. The collective actions would further eradicate the idea of solidarity

⁶⁶⁰ Kemal Türkler, "Maden-İş Hazırdır [Maden-İş Is Ready]," *Maden-İş* year 4, no. 54, (23 September 1961): 1 and 4; Kemal Türkler, "İşçi Gözü ile, İşçi-İşveren Münasebetleri ve Prodüktivite," 14.

⁶⁶¹ Kemal Sülker, "İşçinin İnsanca Yaşamaları [Workers' Living in a Human Manner]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 58, (18 November 1962): 1 and 3.

⁶⁶² Kemal Türkler'in *Maden-İş Dördüncü Kongresi Açış Konuşması [The Opening Speech of Kemal Türkler in the Fourteenth Grand Congress of the Maden-İş.]*

⁶⁶³ "Zamlara Karşı Olacağız [We Will be Against the Price Increases]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (1 December 1962): 1 and 6.

and common interests between workers and employers. Moreover, they would culminate in the more climactic relations between these social groups.

Even before the Kavel strike, some İstanbul metal workers and Maden-İş initiated a defence of those rights which were not recognized by employers, through their own collective actions at Gümüş Motor Factory, located at Eyüp Samurkaş Factory and a nail factory located at Halıcıoğlu. These actions occurred at the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963. The key question, here, is whether Maden-İş developed a strategy of conducting *de facto* collective actions to enforce both employers and state mechanisms to revise shop floor relationships in a period when the state was still not intervening in industrial relations on behalf of workers. There are no documents we could use to discern whether the union led workers to act collectively in those factories, or whether workers acted on their own. Nonetheless, the similar story line in each event leads us to argue that there was a certain common rationale behind the walkouts. In each case, the course of events, more or less, took place as follows: after workers staged a work stoppage, a union officer visited the factories to meet with employers accompanied by a worksite inspector, who would hopefully settle the matter. There, if the work inspector detected any unlawful act; such as, not providing wage increases or not providing wages at all, he/she reported it to the Regional Work Office. Faced with such a *fait accompli* process, employers in each case became compelled to agree with workers' demands.

Such a pattern leads us to consider that those actions were waged with the foreknowledge of the union to force employers to accept workers' demands. For example, in May 1962, the Gümüş Motor workers complained that the owner, who had fired several workers under the excuse of having little business over the previous month, also missed wage payments to its remaining employees. As a result, the workers first staged a work slowdown,⁶⁶⁴ and then they completely stopped working in June 1962. When the union leaders went to the factory, the general manager insulted both workers and unionists at first,

⁶⁶⁴ "İşçilerin Hepsinin Alacaklı Olduğu Bir İşyeri [A Workplace in Which All Workers Are Creditors]," *Türkiye Birlik*, May 3, 1962; "2 Aydır Ücret Alamadılar [They Got Nothing for 2 Months]," *Türkiye Birlik*, May 25, 1962.

and claimed that the work stoppage was an act against the national interests. After several meetings, however, Kemal Türkler, the workers' representatives and the general manager reached an agreement for payments to be made.⁶⁶⁵ Yet, tense relations remained inside the factory. After two months, the general manager forced workers to work overtime on Saturdays and Sundays; furthermore, he ordered the workers to work an additional three overtime hours during the week. When some workers would not agree to those conditions, the factory owner fired them. Later, in September, the workers began once more to complain that they had not been paid any money for two months.⁶⁶⁶ As a result, they walked out and held sit-down strike for one day to warn the boss.⁶⁶⁷ But after the meetings with the union, the employer agreed to workers' demands.

The tide of events was similar in the Samurkaş factory and the Halıcıoğlu Nail Factory. In January 1963, the workers at Samurkaş stopped working since they had not received their pay. Then, the union leaders and a work inspector visited the plant of 160 workers, and the employer agreed to make a payment after the meetings.⁶⁶⁸ Likewise, the metal workers of Halıcıoğlu Nail Factory went out to one-day strike because the boss did not offer the wage increases that had been agreed to in a previous legal work settlement. In this factory, the boss had first attempted to divide workers by supplying wage increases to only 28 workers out of 91 in total. In spite of the fact that a union officer, Ruhi Yümlü, met with the employer and explained that his behaviour was unlawful, the owner did not relent. Then, Ruhi Yümlü told workers that they were free to act and 68 employees stopped working. After the union took action, the Provincial Work Office sent an inspector to the workplace and the inspector succeeded in reaching an agreement between the workers and their employer.

⁶⁶⁵ "İşçilerin Grevi Başarıya Ulaştı [The Workers' Strike Was Successful]," *Öncü*, May 31, 1962; Kemal Sülker, "Gümüş Motor'da Grev [The Strike At Gümüş Motor]," *Türkiye Birlik*, June 1, 1962.

⁶⁶⁶ "Gümüş Motorda Baskı [The Oppression at Gümüş Motor]," *İşçinin Sesi*, year 3 no. 12/6, (June 1962): 1 and 4; "Paraları Verilmezse İşlerini Bırakacaklar [They Will Stop Working If they are not Paid]," *Türkiye Birlik*, July 25, 1962.

⁶⁶⁷ "İşçiler Oturma Grevi Yaptı [Workers Stage Sit-Down Strike]," *Türkiye Birlik*, September 7, 1962.

⁶⁶⁸ "Samurkaş İşyerinde Grev Yapıldı [There Was a Strike at the Samurkaş Workplace]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 65, (21 January 21 1963): 1 and 4.

According to the signed protocol, the boss promised to give the required wage increases to workers.⁶⁶⁹

It is plain that those similar collective actions were not strikes in the full sense of the term; rather, they were work stoppages undertaken to compel employers/managers to negotiate and meet the workers' demands. We cannot call them strikes because, first of all, neither the union nor the workers made any advance preparation for them. And secondly, the events did not last more than one day. However, it would be wrong to evaluate these incidents as spontaneous or haphazard; on the contrary, the existence of a similar pattern in these events proved that there was a certain rationality behind them. The actions further proved that the metal workers and union had become more determined and bold in acting collectively, for their rights and demands - especially when their legal rights were not provided by the state and/or employees during the time when the notions of social justice, workers' rights, or fair income distribution was so widespread and influential in a society. Such a rationale could also be seen in Kavel in 1963.

III. The Changing Forms of the Workers' Collective Action: The Kavel Strike

The Kavel Strike was the most famous example of the metal workers' determination and trust in their own power to make a decent life for themselves and become respected citizens in a modern society. In fact, its repercussions significantly influenced the future course of worker-employer relations in the metal sector. Like in Gümüş Motor, Samurkaş and the Halıcıoğlu Nail Factory, the Kavel workers set out to lobby for their bonuses and to end the oppression of the workers' representatives, and they used what could generally be defined as a *fait accompli* process; that is, the incident began as a sit-down strike that would draw the attention of mediators.⁶⁷⁰ Unlike the Gümüş Motor, Samurkaş and Halıcıoğlu incidents, the

⁶⁶⁹ "Tel Çivi Fabrikasındaki 91 İşçi Oturma Grevi Yapıldılar [The 91 Workers at Thread Nail Factory Made a Sit-Down Strike]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (27 January 1963); TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 654.

⁶⁷⁰ "200 İşçi Bu Sabah Oturma Grevi Yaptı [The 200 Workers Made Sit-Down Strike At This Morning]," *Son Baskı*, January 28, 1963.

collective action initiated by the Kavel workers took a form of illegal strike and lasted more than a month.

The Kavel Cable Factory was established in 1954 by Vehbi Koç, Eli Burla and Emin Aktar in Eyüp and then was moved to İstinye, in the Sarıyer district of İstanbul, after urbanization had augmented the electrical infrastructure in Turkey. Before the war, there had been considerable number of workers who recruited into a state owned and state run shipyard. In addition to Kavel, several other private factories, such as Türkay Match Factory, Beldeyama, Beldesana etc, were founded in the region and İstinye became one of the working class districts of İstanbul.⁶⁷¹ In fact, community support would factor significantly in the success of the strike.

The history of work relations at Kavel was, indeed, not bereft of contention. The Kavel workers had already been unionized for five years. The worker's-union's representatives were the key actors in bringing workers' demands to the bosses in Kavel: in 1960, the worker's representative Halis Bilici who was selected by the Kavel workers, with the support of Maden-İş, wrote four different petitions to present to management.⁶⁷² As will be described below, one of the main reasons for the strike was the dismissal of the worker's representatives. In 1960, the Kavel workers had complained that the Sunday overpayments were lower than the amount indicated by the law. The workers had another grievance, too; that employees who had worked more than three years not were recognized with their legal right of annual leave. Furthermore, the workers expressed their discontent over forced overtime work.⁶⁷³ Kavel workers then conducted two collective labor disputes in 1957 and 1959, respectively, asking wage increases.⁶⁷⁴ The tense workplace relations reached their peak with the arrival of a new general manager, İbrahim Üzümcü, who had been educated in the management field the United States and appointed to the factory through the advice of Vehbi Koç in 1961.

⁶⁷¹ Aydın, 13.

⁶⁷² Ibid, 12, 16-17.

⁶⁷³ Kazım Narmanlı, "Beraber Öğrenelim: Kavel-Kablodan Bir Üyemiz Soruyor [Let's Learn Together: One Member from Kavel Asks]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 48, (8 October 1960): 3.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid, 18-19.

As a new manager, İbrahim Üzümcü had promised the employers he would establish a new work relations system to increase profits. According to the narrative of one Kavel worker, Üzümcü arranged a meeting with the workers and asked them for complete obedience to their superiors, as a way of fulfilling those promises to his employers. He also ordered workers to resign from Maden-İş.⁶⁷⁵ Towards the end of the next year, Üzümcü cut the annual bonuses and replaced the old wage system based on workers' seniority with a new one based on merit. Then, the representatives' intervention in those developments on the shop floor resulted in a struggle between the union and the general manager. One Kavel worker, Hamit Şindi, told of the beginning of the strife as follows:

“The New Year⁶⁷⁶ came. Everyone was uneasy. Would the bonuses be paid or not? (...) News arrived that they would not be given. Everyone became sad, what would happen now? (...) We left the factory but, we were full of hatred (...) We went to work at the following day. Yet, we slowed down the work.”⁶⁷⁷

In return, Üzümcü firstly laid off four workers' representatives.⁶⁷⁸ But the workers were quick to respond to the dismissals. Just as they did in Gümüş Motor and Halıcıoğlu Factories, the workers struck back by sitting down in the cable casing section, which was the most vital and crowded part of the factory. The cable-casing workers recruited the others and 173 workers, out of 220 in total, began a sit-down strike on 28 January 1963. When the workers teased one masterman who forced the workers to get back to work, the employer applied to the district attorney and complained that workers were participating in “anarchist” activities and that they had attacked the machines. Üzümcü fired ten more workers in the same day. These workers were called to the police station and asked them to give a testimony and the incident further aggravated the tension within the factory. After giving their testimony

⁶⁷⁵ Quoted by Aydın, 25-26.

⁶⁷⁶ 1963.

⁶⁷⁷ Quoted by Aydın, 28.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 29.

and being released, the ten arrested workers began to wait in front of the factory and the other workers continued to sit within the factory. On the fifth day, the police came to the factory and forced the employees to go back to work. But, as a result of the workers' boisterous objections, the police evacuated the factory. On February 1st, İbrahim Üzümcü asked the workers to sign a paper resigning from the union. After the general managers fired all workers who had refused to sign the papers, the workers constructed the strike tent in front of the factory and on February 2nd, the real strike began. In the meantime, the meetings between the unionists and the employer had begun, at the request of the union; but the two sides could not reach an agreement. The employer would not accept the union's demands, which were to get the four fired workers' representatives back to work, as well as an end to the oppression of unionized workers, the supply of bonuses each year, certain items about work clothes and food were to be added to the workplace regulations, and a discipline committee composed of both workers' and employer's representatives was to be initiated. Finally, they asked that no one would be punished or fired without the common decision of this committee.⁶⁷⁹

The strike brought such a strong reactions from the public that the Labor Minister, Bülent Ecevit, the Minister of Interior Affairs, Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata, the chair of Türk-İş, Seyfi Demirsoy, and chair of TİSK, Şahap Kocatopçu, met several times in an attempt to resolve solve the dispute. However, the meetings were interrupted often due to the uncompromising attitudes of both sides.⁶⁸⁰ Eventually, the state officers, both of TİSK, Türk-İş, MESS and Maden-İş leaders, and the workers' representatives, sat at the table on March 1963. As a result of these negotiations, the bitter strike came to an end on its thirty-fifth day.

⁶⁷⁹ "Grevcilerle İşveren Dün Uzlaşamadılar [The Strikes and the Employer Could not Reach An Agreement Yesterday]," *Gece Postası*, February 1, 1963; "7 Grevci Mahkemeye Veriliyor [7 Strikers Are Being Sued]," *Gece Postası*, February 5, 1963; "Anlaşma Olmadı [There Was no Agreement]," *Maden-İş*, year 4 no. 64, (9 February 1963): p. 2; TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 663; Aydın, 35-47.

⁶⁸⁰ "İşçi ve İşveren Teşekkülleri Arasındaki Anlaşma Şartları [The Agreement Conditions Between Workers' and Employer's Organizations]," *Türkiye Birlik*, March 8, 1963; "Otuzbeş Günün Hikayesi [The Story of the Thirty-Five Days]," *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 6, (26 March 1963): 19.



Figure 10: The Kavel workers, employer and Bülent Ecevit, after signing the protocol in front of the factory (Source: *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 6, 26 March 1963).

Despite the similarities in terms of the origins of the events, the Kavel strike was much bigger than the workers' collective actions at Gümüş Motor or Samurkaş, both in its scale and scope. It spread across the nation, both sides adamant in their position, and its violence radicalized the relations between workers and the private metal industry in İstanbul. The walkout also provided significant evidence about the true state of relations in the sector at the time.

So, what does the walkout tell us about the workers' view of industrial relations at a time when those relations were constantly being shaped and reshaped by the struggles between workers and employers? What was the importance of the Kavel Strike in terms of the changing relationships between the state, employers and unions? What were its repercussions for future metal worker and employer relations?



Figure 11: The strikers at Kavel (Source: Zafer Aydın, *Kanunsuz Bir Grevin Öyküsü*, 55).

Among all these important questions, we can first see that the Kavel strike was a key event in terms of portraying the metal workers' state of mind during the 1960s. The strike showed that when the metal workers felt an unfairness and a threat to their rights, or to their voice on the shop floor, they were determined to respond through the help of their union. In Kavel's example, the bonuses were important for the workers who could barely sustain themselves with their meager wages. Those bonuses had previously been paid to workers once in a year based on seniority. Since, they had been paid for a long time, the workers perceived the bonuses as their rightful earning. Furthermore, the workers claimed that since most of them were paid low amount of wages, the bonuses had a great importance for most workers who could barely sustain their families. One worker, Numan Çoban, claimed that they had difficulty earning enough to support a family; in this regard, the bonuses had great importance for the workers. He added that some workers used bonuses for providing the educational needs of their children, and some used the funds from them to purchase essential wood and coal for the winter.⁶⁸¹ In other words, the bonuses were critical to the workers' daily lives. For them, the walkout stemmed from their decision to take actions in order to simply "put food on the table."⁶⁸² In fact, it was written on the placards that were hung around workers' necks that 'We Would Rather Die Than Give Up Our Rights', 'We Want Social Justice', 'End to Exploitation', and 'We Do Not Want To Be Exploited.'⁶⁸³

But the motivations behind the workers' action were not just material; at the same time, they acted against the possibility of losing an essential mechanism of making their demands on the shop floor, for one of the most vital conditions of the workers to end the strike was to get their representatives back to work. After the Kavel workers were paid less than the usual amounts in bonuses, they conducted a slowdown strike in the December 31, 1962, İbrahim Üzümcü fired İlyas Kabil who was the head representative, İsmet Er, Metin Ant, and Ali Yıldırım who were the local representatives in the mid-January, 1963. Then, the

⁶⁸¹ Quoted by Aydın, 26.

⁶⁸² Ibid., 26-30.

⁶⁸³ Enis Gökçe, *Kavel Önünde 36 Gün [The 36 Days In Front of the Kavel]*, (İstanbul: Orhan Mete ve His Association, 1963), 14.

other nine worker's representatives went to see the general manager and refused to sign the union resignation papers which İbrahim Üzümcü gave to them. They were consequently fired. The workers who were very aware that they were main mediums of negotiation with management in the factory reacted strongly to the dismissal of their representatives and gathered in a coffee house in İstinye upon the call of the union. The general chair of the union Kemal Türkler participated in the meeting and he, alongside with the some other representatives spoke to the workers. At the end of the meeting, the majority of the Kavel workers voted for strike.⁶⁸⁴ The representatives were so important during the strike that the workers within the factory confessed that they had, at first, lost their courage because the leading and experienced representatives had been dismissed. Then the workers regained their courage after learning that the representatives had gathered to wait in front of the factory.⁶⁸⁵

The importance of representatives in Kavel can also be concluded from the attitudes of the general manager. Although the boss accepted the proposal of paying bonuses to workers, he adamantly refused to reinstate the fired representatives.⁶⁸⁶ The manager's resistance shows that the fight also took place over the issue of how to organize work relations within the factory. While the workers fought for broadening the scope of their representation, the manager strived to limit it as much as possible.

The Kavel Strike also indicated the metal workers' resoluteness in terms of their rights. When the general manager called on workers to sign a paper of resignation from the union, workers refused to sign them, despite the manager's threat of firing them. As another example, when a truck accompanied by the police force came to the factory to help deliver products, they laid in front of the police and delivery trucks and prevented the trucks from leaving the factory. On February 5th, the employer posted an opening for new workers; as a result, the workers set up a barricade in front of the factory and did not allow anyone to enter.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 16; Aydın, 19.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid, 39

⁶⁸⁶ Enis, 17.

After this, all the workers began to wait in front of the factory during daylight, and at least 50 workers kept night watch.⁶⁸⁷



Figure 12: The headline states that the 220 fired Kavel workers established a barricade in front of the factory. The bread in the hands of the workers symbolized their fight for survival (Source: *Maden-İş*, 9 February 1963).

Since the Kavel workers actually engaged the general manager before and during the events, the workers' anger was not directed towards their employers. Their actions targeted the unfairness of a factory regime that was assumed to be structured by the general manager. Since they had such a strained relationship with the general manager specifically, they personified their grievances in the figure of İbrahim Üzümcü. The workers claimed that, from the beginning of the İbrahim Üzümcü era in the factory, labor rights were not taken into account.⁶⁸⁸ Such a point of view was bolstered by the workers' representatives and union's approach toward the role of the manager on the events. For the workers' representatives at the Kavel factory, all disputes seem to have originated after the appointment of İbrahim Üzümcü as the general manager, in 1961. Another representative claimed that after İbrahim Üzümcü, bonuses were not given, and the unionized workers and representatives were forced to resign.⁶⁸⁹ In this regard, they shared the hegemonic ideological framework of the period; that work conflicts in Turkey primarily stemmed from some employer's or manager's "greedy and uncompromising" attitudes towards workers' rights.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 11-18; Aydın, 39-49.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 38-39.

⁶⁸⁹ Tükel, 7.

The strike itself demonstrated the ideological stance of the metal workers' representatives during the first half of the 1950s. Except in one case, none of the representatives gave up their struggle despite all police threats, the danger of losing their jobs, and even despite offers of bribes from the employers. The head representative, İlyas Kabil, had been selected on February 1962 by the workers.⁶⁹⁰ Kabil was also the chair of Şişli district and a member of the TİP. In his speeches at the union congress, İlyas Kabil firmly defended the ideas of social justice and emphasized that, while the real producers of the national wealth (i.e., the workers) suffered through miserable conditions, "a parasite class" enjoyed their lives.⁶⁹¹ Another local representative, Halis Bilici, was also an important figure in these events. Bilici was a firm defender of social justice and he asserted that there was no social justice and democracy in Turkey due to the exploitation of workers by the rich. For this reason, he said, workers had to go out and get their rights for themselves.⁶⁹²

Throughout the strike, Maden-İş attempted to make the events known on the public scene to drum up support for the strikers. In this regard, the union activated a public relations strategy designed to communicate the inevitability of the strike, and show it as a last resort measure to resist the unfairness on the shop floor. Maden-İş, which designed its strategies to capitalize on the political opportunities that emerged after the coup d'état, mainly strived to legitimate the Kavel Strike in the eyes of the state mechanisms, officers and the wider public. Despite all the police attacks and the employers' uncompromising attitudes, the union was careful about securing the legitimatization of the strike in a country where the idea of social justice and common national interests prevailed. The Maden-İş officers argued that the workers resisted against the employers' unfairness, as was their natural right according by the 1961 Constitution. Here, the union argued that the incident itself was not unlawful, an

⁶⁹⁰ "Maden-İş'te Yeni Temsilciler [The New Representatives of Maden-İş]," *Türkiye Birlik*, February 10, 1962.

⁶⁹¹ "Kongrelerimiz Yapıldı."

⁶⁹² 'Maden-İş Şube Toplantıları Başladı'.

accusation leveled at them by the employers.⁶⁹³ In his visit and talks to the Kavel workers, Kemal Türkler said that they were not against democracy or capital, but neither would they would allow capital to exploit labor. He said that the Kavel workers attempted only to balance social justice, which meant balancing the unfairness between labor and capital in Turkey.

During the strike, the union officers declared their belief in the mutual interests of labor and capital and they often stressed the idea of maintaining a peaceful workplace. For the Kavel event itself, they accused the other side, specifically the general manager or employers, of damaging those good relations within the factory. One union officer, Ruhi Yümlü, claimed that the peace was first disrupted by the new general manager, İbrahim Üzümcü, not the workers.⁶⁹⁴ In this regard, the union attempted to personify the root cause of the troubles in the figure of İbrahim Üzümcü. During the meetings with the employers and state officers, the workers' side claimed that the strike would not have happened if İbrahim Üzümcü had not acted in the way that he did.⁶⁹⁵ In other words, their view was that the strike took place as a result of the "unlawful and unfair" acts of the general manager. In brief, the union strategy was to get the support of the legal framework, as well as to drum up public support, by stressing the obvious injustices caused by employers or/and managers.

To this end, the union sought to keep the state mechanisms on its side, so the workers tried to prove that the strike would not damage the national economy and interests. For example, the workers did not allow any goods to get out of the factory, with the exception of critical cables produced for the Ministry of the National Defence.⁶⁹⁶ During the strike, the union called on the government to intervene in the affairs and to act as intermediary between the workers and the employer.⁶⁹⁷ Actually, the unionists often asked the government to protect the weaker side, namely the workers. In their meetings, the union officers called them

⁶⁹³ "Maden-İş Sendikası Vehbi Koç'u İtham Etti [Maden-İş Accused Vehbi Koç]," *Gece Postası*, February 2, 1963; Kemal Türkler, "Kavel Olayının İçyüzü [The Real Story of the Kavel Incident]," *Sosyal Adalet*, year 1, no. 1, (19 March 1963): 10.

⁶⁹⁴ Ruhi Yümlü, "Kaveldeki Olayın Safhaları [The Stages of the Incident at Kavel]," *Maden-İş*, year 4, no. 64 (9 February 1963): 2.

⁶⁹⁵ Aydın, 80-81.

⁶⁹⁶ "Kavel İş Yeri İhtilafı Bu Hafta Sessiz Geçti [The Work Dispute at the Kavel Was Calm This Week]," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 30, (February 17): 19; Enis, 27-29.

⁶⁹⁷ "İşçide İş Huzuru ve Güveni Kalmamıştır [There is No Work Peace and Trust in the Workers]," *Gece Postası*, February 8, 1963.

the "father of the workers" who were expected to protect their children.⁶⁹⁸ When the police attacked the workers, the union wired the government to intervene and stop them.⁶⁹⁹



Figure 13: The fight between the workers and police forces at Kavel (Source: M. Şehmus Güzel, *Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketi [The Labor Movement in Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Sosyalist Yayınlar, 1993).

However, the strike showed the workers that the state mechanism was not wholly a trustworthy one. From the first day of the strike, while the police forces were located around the factory to save the enterprises from any “harmful” acts; the people of the İstinye region created a buffer zone between police and the strikers. Therefore, we can see there was a tension between the police forces and the workers. In the meantime, the employers asked the police forces to let the administrative officers in the factory. On February 13th, a vehicle carrying administrative officers accompanied by the police forces was stopped by the strikers; as a result, the police attacked the workers and some strikers were injured. On February 19th, two workers were arrested for resisting the police. On March 3rd, the employers asked the police again to help transfer goods within the factory by truck. When the strikers attempted to prevent this, the police forces attacked again near the strike tent, and yet another clash occurred between police and workers.⁷⁰⁰ The workers also experienced a sense of unfairness in the eyes of the law. While the workers were called to the police station to give a testimony

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid; Aydın, 54-55.

⁶⁹⁹ “Maden-İş Sendikası Cemal Gürsel ve İsmet İnönüye Telgraf Çekti [Maden-İş Wired Cemal Gürsel and İsmet İnönü],” *Gece Postası*, February 9, 1963; TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 655.

⁷⁰⁰ Enis, 23-30; Aydın, 40, 68-74.

upon the request of the general manager, the police did not call İbrahim Üzümcü himself, despite workers' complaints against him. This caused questions about fairness in the minds of the workers and raised further grievances.⁷⁰¹ But the most disappointing event for the union officers and the Kavel workers was the public statement made by the Labor Minister, Bülent Ecevit, who came out against the strikers. He publicly accused the union of choosing a contentious, rather than a peaceful method to resolve the dispute. According to Ecevit, this was a misguided approach and both workers and the employer were exposed to serious repercussions as a result.⁷⁰² But the state officers, at the same time, strived to maintain the trustworthy reputation of the state in the minds of the workers. After the police attacked the strikers, the police chief withdrew most police forces from the factory. Then, the police chief visited workers and told them that he had no doubt about the workers' patriotism. In the same vein, the governor, Niyazi Akı, visited the workers and claimed that workers were right in their cause. He also promised the workers that no one but the strikers would work in the factory after the strike.⁷⁰³



Figure 14: The Police Chief, the Kavel workers and their children (Source: *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 6, 26 March 1963).

⁷⁰¹ Aydın, 36-37.

⁷⁰² "Otuzbeş Günün Hikayesi [The Story of the Thirty-Five Days]," *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 6, (26 March 1963): 29 and 33.

⁷⁰³ TÜSTAV, Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 658.

Invoking state help also meant that the union wanted to solve the issue through institutional means. In fact, Maden-İş conducted the strike as a leverage through which it could impose the workers' demands on the state and the employers. The union also wanted TİSK and MESS to intervene in the affair and help them reach a peaceful solution.⁷⁰⁴ However, one important consequence of these institutional encounters was the further radicalization of Maden-İş discourse towards employers. In fact, when the negotiations fell into a deadlock, the union presented the source of the problem as the actions of the Turkish employers in general, rather than one person. During their press interviews, the union leaders claimed that employers only wanted to capitalize on the climate of the post-DP period. The strike, they said, proved that the employers' main goal was to obstruct the legislation of those workers' rights supported the constitution. Led by Vehbi Koç, the union officers claimed some factory owners in fact stood in the way of social justice and economic development in the country.⁷⁰⁵ With this declaration, the union called on other unions and workers to support the Kavel Strike; a call to collective action which was an important milestone in the realization of the social justice principle in Turkey.⁷⁰⁶

These collective encounters radicalized the employer's discourse, too. In fact, the strike can be seen as a moment in which the conflicting sides stated their attitudes towards social justice. The declarations of the employers during the strike demonstrated how they interpreted workplace peace, collective actions and workers' rights. In opposition to the union discourse on injustices on the shop floor, the employers strived to prove how such a unlawful and contentious act as a strike might damage the so-called national interests. For the employers, the union chose a contentious way to negotiate, rather than meeting peacefully with the manager, or conducting work disputes inside the Labor Office. The actions of the union destroyed the possibility of workplace peace, they claimed, not the acts of the employers/managers in the factory. The union's methods, they said, would create "anarchy"

⁷⁰⁴ Aydın, 69.

⁷⁰⁵ "Başkan Kemal Türkler Açıkladı [The Chair Kemal Türkler Made an Explanation]," *Maden-İş*, year 4, no. 64, (9 February 1963): 2 and 4.

⁷⁰⁶ TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 660.

within society.⁷⁰⁷ And the walkout was simply against the national interests and counter to the growth of national wealth.⁷⁰⁸

Furthermore, the employers tried to present the strike as being a result of “provocations” of only a few workers who were eager to disrupt the peace in Kavel. They claimed that employers did not refuse the rights of workers, at all. They argued, rather, that it was natural for workers to have some rights, but they must reach their demands through peaceful ways and by following the existing laws. The main goal of the workers should have been to keep peace on shop floors not to disrupt it.⁷⁰⁹ The biggest employers’ union, TİSK, which had been founded by the initiative of MESS, explained that the Kavel Strike was an obstacle to workplace harmony. More importantly, the employers saw the event as a challenge to their property rights, which were also recognized by the constitution. Overall, they framed the Kavel Strike as an act against property rights.⁷¹⁰ During the strike, the employers utilized this discourse frequently. They were insistent on this point, saying that workers invaded the factory, ignored the police and threatened “the good intentioned” people who were willing to work.

As a reply to the accusations made by Maden-İş towards İbrahim Üzümcü – they dubbed him a disrupter of the peace - the employers narrated the story from their point of view, claiming it was the “provocative” attitude of some representatives rather than Üzümcü’s acts that were to blame. According to them, İbrahim Üzümcü, the newly appointed general manager of the factory, had aimed to turn the run-down factory into a profitable one, so that both workers and employers would mutually benefit from those improvements. The employers’ narrative continued that Üzümcü, on the other hand, had learned soon enough that some workers, who were workers’ representatives and held a “fearful authority” over other

⁷⁰⁷ “Son Anlaşmadan Evvel Yapılan Toplantılardaki Görüşmelerin Tahlili [The Analysis of the Meetings Took Place Before the Last Agreement],” *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 6, (26 March 1963): 6-7.

⁷⁰⁸ “Kavel Fabrikasındaki Olay [The Incident at the Kavel Factory],” *İşveren*, vol. 1, no. 3, (December 1962): 22-26; Haldun Kip, “Kavel Protokolünün Tahlili [The Analysis of the Kavel Protocol],” *İşveren*, vol. 1, no. 6, (26 March 1963): 6-7.

⁷⁰⁹ Mümtaz Altınelli, “İşçi-İşveren Münasebetleri ve Konfederasyonumuzun Tutumu [The Employee-Employer Relations and the Attitude of Our Confederacy],” *İşveren*, vol. 1, no. 6, (26 March 1963): 4-5; Kip, 6-7.

⁷¹⁰ “Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikasının Yayınladığı Bildiriler ve Ötesi [The Notices Circulated by Maden-İş and Their Beyond],” *İşveren*, vol. 1, no. 6, (26 March 1963): 15-17.

workers, and had gotten used not to working at all. They also had gotten used to opposing their superiors by threatening them, saying that the union supported them. Such acts eroded peace in the workplace and decreased productivity. İbrahim Üzümcü had often warned those representatives, and he had waited patiently for them to behave themselves, rather than punishing them immediately. Nonetheless, when those workers continued to take advantage of the good intentions of the manager, he had to fire four of them.⁷¹¹ Through these accusations and their own narrative, the employers similarly attempted to drum up public support against the strike.

What about İbrahim Üzümcü himself? The man in the spotlight simply reiterated the rhetoric of the employers, saying that the strike was “unlawful”, that it took place as a result of the union’s “provocations”, and that the walkout would harm the “national” interests and industrial peace. Üzümcü asserted that the workers went out to strike as a result of unionist instigations. He also claimed that such incidents harmed the entire country. As a result of the strike, the factory, and the “national” economy, had lost significant amount of money, he said.⁷¹² In fact, Üzümcü used the same rhetoric in his speech to the workers on February 1st, to try to persuade them to go back to work.⁷¹³

However, his uncompromising attitude towards the workers’ demands before and during the strike was too obvious. In fact, İlhan Lök, the former chair of MESS, remembers İbrahim Üzümcü as a stern man who was not fond of compromising. This, Lök asserted, had pleased the employers of the period, too.⁷¹⁴ Furthermore, Üzümcü frowned upon the workers’ demands during the strike. In addition to firing five workers’ representatives, he forced 50 workers to resign on the first day of the sit-down strike.⁷¹⁵ During his speech to the workers in

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² “Kavel Fabrikasını Geziyoruz [We Are Visiting the Kavel Factory],” *Türkiye Birlik*, March 7, 1963; “Kavel’de İstihsal Her Yıl Biraz Daha Artıyor [The Production Is Increasing Every Year in Kavel],” *Türkiye Birlik*, March 8, 1963.

⁷¹³ Enis, 11-12.

⁷¹⁴ Aydın, 25.

⁷¹⁵ Enis, 3-5.

the fifth day, he said nothing about bonuses, which was a crucial issue for the workers.⁷¹⁶ Moreover, he developed some tactics, which would be later used by the metal employers to break strikes in Turkey. For example, the manager attempted to give bribes to the leaders of the walkout.⁷¹⁷ He also promised to distribute money to the workers who would resign from the union.⁷¹⁸ While he agreed to provide bonuses as a result of meetings with the workers, he was extremely reluctant to allow the workers' representatives back into the factory.⁷¹⁹ Consequently, Üzümcü's words, or the other employers' discourse on the strike, had little impact on the strikers.

The Kavel strike was also important to show how the employers of the period viewed the issue of workers' rights, a point that was exemplified by the issuing of bonuses at Kavel. In fact, while the workers saw the bonuses as their natural rights, the employers saw them as generous blessings bestowed upon the workers by management.⁷²⁰ According to them, the annual bonuses meant the workers had no right to protest other issues.⁷²¹ The outlook towards workers' rights as employer blessing was widespread amongst the employers. In his meeting with a journalist, İbrahim Üzümcü said that although he had "good intentions", the workers were acting 'ungratefully'.⁷²² Ege Cansen, in our meetings, emphasized that most metal employers had the same approach during the period.⁷²³ Here, the metal bosses' position on worker-employer relations was basically a paternalist one in which workers were expected to appreciate employers for recruiting them to the job, and for providing them a chance to supply bread for their families.

⁷¹⁶ "İşveren Oturma Grevine Karşı Lokavt Yaptı [The Employer Held Lockout Against the Sit-Down Strike]," *Gece Postası*, January 29, 1963; Enis, 12-13.

⁷¹⁷ Aydın, 40.

⁷¹⁸ "İşçileri Sendikadan Ayırmak İçin İşveren Nasıl Para Dağıttı [How Did the Employer Distribute Money to Separate Workers from the Union]," *Gece Postası*, February 5, 1963.

⁷¹⁹ "Kavel Fabrikasındaki Olay [The Incident at the Kavel Factory]," *İşveren*, vol. 1, no. 3, (December 1962): 23-24; "Grevcilere Polis Zor Kullanıyor [The Police Uses Force Against the Strikers]," *Gece Postası*, February 1, 1963; "Kavel Kablo İşçileri Hala İşe Alınmadılar [The Kavel Cable Workers Were Not Still Allowed to Return Back to the Job]," *İşçinin Sesi*, 28, (3 February 1963).

⁷²⁰ Aydın, 27.

⁷²¹ "Kavel Fabrikasındaki Olay [The Incident at the Kavel Factory]," 22-26; Kip, 6-7.

⁷²² Enis, 8.

⁷²³ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

The strike was also important as a symbol of the solidarity between the workers of different factories and their different unions. The other unions, both in İstanbul and in other parts of Turkey, had widely declared their support. Some unions even sent food,⁷²⁴ while others provided financial aid to the Kavel workers. In their calls to their members, the unions emphasized the rights provided by the Constitution and the importance of solidarity between workers to resist, together, any injustices.⁷²⁵ Factory workers nearly from all metal plants in İstanbul came to Kavel and declared their support on February 22nd, which was a religious holiday.⁷²⁶ Furthermore, some metal workers from the other factories often visited the strike tent and even supplied money to the Kavel workers.⁷²⁷ More importantly, some metal workers conducted different collective actions to show their solidarity with the Kavel workers. For instance, the Demir Döküm workers grew their beards to protest the unlawful acts of the Kavel employer. The Demir Döküm workers said that their general manager, Burhan Günergün, did not recognize their basic rights, either. It's likely that they supported the Kavel workers in the hopes that the same course of events would not happen to them. Similarly, the workers of other metal plants began to grow their beards to show their support. Such acts of solidarity greatly motivated the Kavel workers. Hamit Şindi claimed that when they heard about the Demir Döküm workers' beards, the front yard of Kavel became a festive place.⁷²⁸

It is important to note that the fight of the Kavel workers was also supported by the people of the region who were often either relatives or friends of the workers. A mother of one worker came to be called "Kavel Mother" due to her support for the strike. After the arrest of her son, Kavel Mother said:

⁷²⁴ Enis, 20.

⁷²⁵ "Kavel İşçileri Destekleniyor [The Kavel Workers Are Being Supported]," *Gece Postası*, February 2, 1963; "Sendikalar Grevçileri Destekliyor [Unions Support The Strikers]," *Gece Postası*, February 14, 1963; "Kavel Kablo Grevi Devam Ediyor [The Kavel Cable Strike Continues]," *İşçinin Sesi*, 31, (24 February 1963).

⁷²⁶ Enis, 25-26.

⁷²⁷ TÜSTAV, Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 655; TÜSTAV, Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 656; "Kavelin İşçileri Destekleniyor [The Kavel Workers Are Being Supported]," *Maden-İş*, year 4, no. 64, (9 February 1963); "Kavel'in Kahraman İşçileri Haksızlığa Göğüs Gerdiler [The Heroic Kavel Workers Resisted Unfairness]," *Maden-İş*, year 4, no. 64, (9 February 1963): 1.

⁷²⁸ Aydın, 48.

‘I kept guard⁷²⁹ in front of the factory for thirty-six days. Way to go! I kept waiting. I waited for 360 days. I raised 7 boys. I can spare my life in this way. They should have arrested me, too.’⁷³⁰

After the incident erupted, nearly 100 hundred children of the Kavel workers flooded to the factory and chanted the slogan “give our fathers their rights.”⁷³¹ The İstinye locals, who were mostly composed of the working class families, also visited the strike tent to show their support and encourage workers. They distributed food, cigarettes and bread to the workers.⁷³² From February 2nd, nearly 500 people rallied with the workers in front of the factory. After the clash with the police, the İstinye people came to the factory and began to chant the Gazi Osman Paşa march.⁷³³ Then, the workers staged a protest meeting in İstinye. The support of the people, especially that of women, factored into the duration and success of the strike. In fact, an old woman, Hasibe Nine, led the crowd during the events. One day, when the governor asked the workers to disperse, she asked the governor whether he had any children, in order to challenge him or engage him in debate. A Kavel worker, Ahmet Usta agreed that women played a significant role in preventing the police from attacking the workers.⁷³⁴ For example, the women supporters prevented the employers from removing factory goods on March 2nd.⁷³⁵ The support of the community and the women did not end, even after the strike. When the Kavel workers were arrested after the strike had come into an end, their

⁷²⁹ From the first day of the strike, the strikers kept guard in front of the factory to prevent that the employers/managers might bring raw materials, transport any finished goods and recruit new workers to maintain the production. Afterwards, a crowd from the İstinye region accompanied the strikers in their wait.

⁷³⁰ Quoted from Tükel, 7.

⁷³¹ Yümlü, 2.

⁷³² TÜSTAV, Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 655.

⁷³³ The Gazi Osman Pasha March was composed at the beginning of the century to narrate the defence of Plevne Castle by an Ottoman military commander, Osman Pasha against the Russian Army, in 1877. During the protests of the DP government in 1960, the protestors changed the words of the song as ‘Wish It Did Not Happen Like This/Wish The Brothers Did Not Kill Each Other/Damn the Dictators/This World Will Not be Yours’. After that, the march symbolized the fight against tyranny in Turkey during the 1960s.

⁷³⁴ Aydın, 42-43.

⁷³⁵ Ibid., 76.

families, including Kavel Mother, came to watch the court proceedings in April.⁷³⁶ The gender roles within families motivated workers' spouses, who were vulnerable to any change in their husband's earnings, to support the workers' cause. Their support was one of the most important factors in the workers' victory at Kavel.



Figure 15: The workers and their children try to get warm in front of fire (Source: *Maden-İş*, 9 February 1963).

IV. Aftermath of the Kavel Strike

The Kavel strike ended with a protocol signed by the employers, the workers' representatives and the Maden-İş officers on March 3, 1963. The protocol stressed the importance of maintaining labor peace on the shop floor, and a mutual respect for the interests of both sides.⁷³⁷ After that, the Labor minister, the Vice-President, the İstanbul governor, the Police Chief, the Chief of the Provincial Work Office, the Head of TİSK, and the representative of Türk-İş all came to the factory and spoke to workers about peaceful and cooperative relations between workers and employers, the unity of social groups and the necessity of hard work to increase productivity; speeches accompanied by the applause of the workers. Furthermore, the shareholder of the factory, Emin Aktar, invited the representatives to his office and said that the factory was the place where both workers and employers made

⁷³⁶ Tükel, 7.

⁷³⁷ "İşçi ve İşveren Teşekkülleri Arasındaki Anlaşma Şartları [The Agreement Conditions Between Workers' and Employer's Organizations]," *Türkiye Birlik*, March 8, 1963.

their living. He emphasized that the employers had already forgotten the incident and advised workers to forget what had happened, too. And then he told them to work hard.⁷³⁸

The end and resulting aftermath of the strike showed that the crisis which erupted out of the shop floor dynamics at Kavel and immediately spread out across the whole country came to an end with both sides heralding their belief in social justice and the common national interests. The climate after the strike was as a period of analysis. Was it really so? Were the strike and contentious work relations really diversions from the “normal course of events”? Did it not leave any legacy behind it? Let’s begin with the last question.

This particular collective action stamped its mark on the workers’ minds. The Kavel strike can be seen as a significant milestone for the workers’ comprehension of modern work relations and social relations, in general. As a result of their bitter collective action, most Kavel workers lost their initial feelings of “gratitude” towards the employers for providing them with a job; instead, the workers became more aware of their rights as citizen-workers. In fact, a Kavel worker, Hasbal Kayalı, expressed that, before the strike, his colleagues had spoken of the employers as having blessed them by recruiting them into the work force at the plant. After the strike, he said that the workers learned to claim their rights and fight for them, if necessary. Another worker said that Kavel became a place for workers to shed their peasant status and become modern citizens.⁷³⁹ The strike also motivated the union to ask more boldly for their members’ rights. After the strike, Maden-İş declared that employers must have become aware that the workers would no more bow before the unlawful and arbitrary acts of the employers, and that they would no longer subject themselves to eternal misery.⁷⁴⁰ The Kavel Strike is also a fine illustration of analyzing how the metal workers understood the social justice during the 1960s. The workers who went into the strike to provide for their families and protect the representative mechanism on shop floor demanded the social justice within the factory. Therefore, the social justice meant to earn a decent income to sustain a

⁷³⁸ “Otuzbeş Günün Hikayesi,” 41-42.

⁷³⁹ Quoted by Aydın, 21 and 153.

⁷⁴⁰ TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 660.

better life to their families, have their own mechanism to claim their grievances and demands, and therefore work under labor relations based on justice for the Kavel workers.

The strike also had significant impact on the unionization of the metal workers. Throughout the events, the demarcation between Maden-İş and Çelik-İş became much more keen.⁷⁴¹ Çelik-İş, which had been seen by most unionists as a “yellow union” attempted to intervene in the affairs, too. Unfortunately, we don’t know much about the foundation and development of Çelik-İş. This union remained undeveloped until the early part of 1962. From the beginning of that year, the union began to be organized in several small metal enterprises and was able to win some rights for workers by negotiating with employers, bringing cases to the courts, or engaging in labor disputes at the Provincial Work Office.⁷⁴² Apropos to the spirit of the new time, the union often declared its stance for the idea of social justice; that is, the mutual cooperation and peaceful relations between employers and employees which would develop the national economy.⁷⁴³ It is true that most unions and union leaders defined Çelik-İş as “yellow union” in the early 1960s, but it is very hard to take this argument as true one in the absence of direct evidence. Furthermore, this union conducted several labor disputes to get its members’ rights as stated above.

The struggle between Maden-İş and Çelik-İş gained momentum in the first months of 1962. It was aggravated after a fight between members of Maden-İş and the chair of Çelik-İş over a metal enterprise and its dismissal of the Maden-İş members in January 1962.⁷⁴⁴ In March, the news about the resignation of more than five hundred Türk Demir Döküm workers appeared in newspapers. However, two union representatives of the factory, Şinasi Kaya and

⁷⁴¹ Türkiye Maden-İş, which was the oldest trade union in the metal sector was unrivalled until the foundation of Çelik-İş (İstanbul Çelik, Demir ve Madeni Eşya Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası-The İstanbul Steel, Iron and the Metal Hardware Workers’ Trade Union). Although this union appeared to be weak until the Kavel Strike, it was able to be organized in several workplaces by the beginning of 1963 and it would be the authorized union in 1964 in several important metal hardware and metal processing factories in 1964.

⁷⁴² “İşçilere Zam [The Wage Increase],” *Son Saat*, March 23, 1962; “İşçi Haberleri [The News About Workers],” *Son Saat*, March 28, 1962; “Mesai Ücretleri Verilmiyen İşçiler [The Workers Whose Overtime Payments Are Not Given],” *Son Saat*, April 11, 1962; “Çelik-İş Sendikası İş İhtilafı Çıkarttı [Çelik-İş Conducted a Work Dispute],” *Türkiye Birlik*, October 15, 1962.

⁷⁴³ “Çelik-İş Sendikası Başkanı Bugün Bir Basın Toplantısı Yaptı [The Chair of Çelik-İş Organized a Press Conference Today],” *Son Saat*, February 9, 1963.

⁷⁴⁴ “Mahmutpaşada 2 Sendika Çatıştı [There was a Fight Between Two Unions in Mahmutpaşa],” *Türkiye Birlik*, January 11, 1962.

Sabri Kuruç countered this news after eight days and stated that Çelik-İş was deliberately spreading such “lies” to undermine the trust of the metal workers to Maden-İş.⁷⁴⁵ In the succeeding month, 300 workers of the Hot Wire Factory at Eyüp joined in Çelik-İş.⁷⁴⁶ As the fight between the two unions intensified inside the factory, both sides began to challenge each other publicly. According to Maden-İş’s allegations, the metal bosses had been funding representatives of Çelik-İş in a move to undermine the unity of the metal workers who supported Maden-İş.⁷⁴⁷ In fact, the Maden-İş’s representatives from various factories claimed that their employers were forcing workers to resign from Maden-İş and join in Çelik-İş.⁷⁴⁸ The fight between Maden-İş and Çelik-İş reached its peak during the Kavel Strike.

Çelik-İş presented an extremely negative stance during the Kavel Strike for both the Kavel workers and unionists. The Çelik-İş officers made several declarations and held organized press meetings in which they accused Maden-İş of inciting the workers to strike. Çelik-İş also organized a press meeting on February 9th regarding the events. Kazım Çoçu, the chair of Çelik-İş, said in the meeting that the “unlawful” acts, such as those that happened in Kavel, would destroy workplace peace. The strike, which took place as a result of the “direct provocations” of the unionists for their own “glory”, would ultimately harm the interests of workers.⁷⁴⁹ Çoçu also claimed that they were standing up against the unionists who deceived workers into stoppages in accordance with their “malicious” ideology, namely communism.⁷⁵⁰ After two days, the union published a declaration for the workers and adopted

⁷⁴⁵ “Maden-İş Sendikası İstifalar Devam Ediyor [The Resignations from Maden-İş Are Keeping Up] and Çelik-İş Sendikası 550 İşçiye Zam Temin Etti [Çelik-İş Got Wage Increases for 550 Workers],” *Son Saat*, March 13, 1962; “Aynı İş Kolunda İki Ayrı Sendika Mücadele Ediyor [The Two Unions Fight With Each Other in the Same Sector],” *Son Saat*, March 20, 1962.

⁷⁴⁶ “300 İşçi Maden-İşten Ayrılıp Çelik-İşe Geçti [The 300 Workers Who Left Maden-İş Became the Members of Çelik-İş],” *Son Saat*, April 5, 1962. For the similar incidents, look at: “İşverenlere Yanaşmalar [The Snuggling to Employers],” *Türkiye Birlik*, April 10, 1962.

⁷⁴⁷ “Maden-İş Sendikası bir Kısım İşverenlerden Şikayet Ediyor [Maden-İş Complaints About Some Employers],” *Son Saat*, April 5, 1962; “Bir Kısım İşverenlerin Para İle Yeni Sendika Kurdukları İddia Ediliyor [Some Employers Are Told to Have a New Union Founded],” *Son Saat*, April 7, 1962; “Bazı İşverenlerin Garip Tutumları [The Weird Attitudes of Some Employers],” *Türkiye Birlik*, April 10, 1962.

⁷⁴⁸ “İşçiler Baskıdan Şikayetçi [Workers Complain About Oppression],” *Türkiye Birlik*, February 23, 1962.

⁷⁴⁹ “Otuzbeş Günün Hikayesi,” 18-19.

⁷⁵⁰ “Çelik-İş Sendikası Başkanı Bugün Bir Toplantı Yaptı [The Chair of Çelik-İş Organized a Press Meeting Today],” *Son Saat*, February 9, 1963.

the same discourse. The declaration urged the assumed “loyal, nationalist, traditionally-minded” Turkish workers who considered the national interests first, not to create an opening for “corrupt” ideologies.⁷⁵¹

In spite of their declarations of support for the Kavel workers, but not the strike, the Çelik-İş officers did not visit the site of the job action and expressed their opposing views on the matter. Consequently, the Kavel workers saw Çelik-İş as a “yellow union” for their declaration that the strike should be abandoned. They said that no one from Çelik-İş came to strike area to distribute any leaflets. Instead, Çelik-İş officers sent the leaflets to the houses of the workers. İlyas Kabil got those leaflets from the workers’ homes and tossed them into the fire.⁷⁵² In fact, the famous unionists who hired a bus to visit the strikes in Kavel kicked the chair of Çelik-İş out of the bus and accused him of being against the strike.⁷⁵³ Whether Çelik-İş was funded by the metal bosses or whether it was a “yellow-dog union”, the Kavel strike proved that another player had to be considered to fully explain the complex worker-employer relations in the metal sector.

Another impact of the Kavel strike was one felt by the metal bosses. The strike motivated the metal bosses to unite under MESS. In fact, İbrahim Üzümcü stated this was a necessity of defending employers’ rights.⁷⁵⁴ The resistance of workers at Kavel, and its aftermath, displayed the importance of staging collective struggles to the metal bosses for defending their rights. Indeed, one well known metal manager admitted that the metal bosses got together in the 1960s on the growing threat of strong workers’ unionism.⁷⁵⁵ With the Kavel Strike and legislation of the right to strike coming in July 1963, an increasing number of the metal bosses applied to MESS to be a member.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵¹ “Kavel’deki Grevde Bazı Menfaatçıların Kasıtlı Rol Oynadıkları İddia Ediliyor [It Is Claimed that Some Self-Seekers Are Influential on the Kavel Strike],” *Son Saat*, February 11, 1963.

⁷⁵² Aydın, 58.

⁷⁵³ “Kavel Grevi Olayı İçin Açıklamalar Yapan Çelik-İş Türk-İşi Protesto Ediyor [The Çelik-İş Who Makes Declaration for The Kavel Incident Protests Türk-İş],” *Son Saat*, March 2, 1963.

⁷⁵⁴ “Kavel’de İstihsal Her Yıl Biraz Daha Artıyor [The Production Is Increasing Every Year in Kavel],” *Türkiye Birlik*, March 8, 1963.

⁷⁵⁵ Ertuğrul Soysal, “Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Toplu Sözleşme Tatbikatından Doğan Bazı Meseleler,” 65.

⁷⁵⁶ *Dünden Sonraki Gün [The Day After Yesterday]* (İstanbul: MESS Yayınları, no. 601, 2010), 30.

The Kavel walkout also left a legacy of a strike symbolism and folklore to be pondered by the other strikers in the metal sector. The strike tent, which the workers founded in front of the factory on the sixth day, became as symbol of the solidarity and decisiveness of the workers. It was a place for the workers to gather and debate the latest developments regarding the strike. In fact, the Kavel tent would be used by the other workers during the following strikes. The tent factored in the formation of a public space characterized by the worker's solidarity. The workers from the other plants visited the tent and showed their solidarity within it, thus, it became a physical symbol of their collective struggle. Another important legacy was the strike line. The Kavel workers drew a line 200 meters in front of the factory and did not allow anyone, not even the police, to cross the line. It was a significantly threatening incident for the employers since the line meant, for them, a direct attack to their "property rights." It symbolized for the workers, on the other hand, the boundaries of the very institution that put food on their tables. The line reminded them of the importance of their fight to their job, their rights and their daily bread. In this regard, it also enhanced the workers' commitment to the factory. Furthermore, the support of the neighbourhood and the acts of solidarity of the other workers were other legacies left for the future members. The visits of the neighbourhood supporters, the fight with the police forces, the support of the other metal workers and their financial help, events which all happened during the Kavel walkout, would be imitated during later strikes in the sector. All of these events would also add up to the creation of a strike culture, not only among the metal workers, but among the all workers in Turkey.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁷ Aydın, 145-146.



Figure 16: The Kavel Strikers and the strike tent (Source: Zafer Aydın, *Kanunsuz Bir Grevin Öyküsü*, 33).

Let's turn here to the question of whether the strike or the tense relations between employers and employees was a diversion from the norm. Did the course of events return to its "regular flow" in the metal sector after both employers and workers declared their willingness for peace? It simply did not. The course of events would prove the metal workers had to wage further wars to provide for their families and win their rights. In fact, the story of Kavel workers did not come to an end with the protocol that both parties signed. Fourteen workers were arrested in March on the charge of obstructing police.⁷⁵⁸ One arrested worker, Ali Sarsar, had a new son just one day after his arrest. His son was called "Fate" which hinted at the bad fate of the Kavel workers; in fact, the baby boy would die soon after.⁷⁵⁹ Maden-İş organized a campaign for the arrested workers and other unions and workers sent significant amounts of money to the families of the workers, and to the workers themselves.⁷⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the strife between the general manager and the workers continued on the shop floor. According to the workers, the general manager forced them to resign from Maden-İş after the strike had come to an end. He also fired five workers. Upon this, the union published a notice, according to which İbrahim Üzümcü had attempted to disrupt the peace and mutual

⁷⁵⁸ "Kavel Kablo'da 14 İşçi Nezarette [The 14 Kavel Workers Were Under Custody]," *İşçinin Sesi*, no. 34, (17 March 1963).

⁷⁵⁹ Tükel, 7.

⁷⁶⁰ TÜSTAV Nebil Varuy Archive, Envelope 662.

understanding between the union and employers.⁷⁶¹ When the workers' representatives were in prison, İbrahim Üzümcü sent a letter to their homes, which informed the workers that their work contracts had been cancelled.

On the basis of ongoing oppression, the workers' struggles did not end. The prisoners, including İlyas Kabil and Halis Bilici, were released on April 11th. They were met by the İstinye people at the same night. In order to protest the dismissal of their representatives, the factory workers stopped work once again. After the meetings, the employers were convinced to rehire the workers. However, Üzümcü did not give up on his attempts to destroy the union on the shop floor. In 1964, he signed a collective agreement with Çelik-İş, which had been successful in organizing some workers. The tiring strike, the dismissal of the four workers' representatives, and a disagreement between the union representatives on the shop floor, finally resulted in the acceptance of this agreement by the workers.⁷⁶² However, the ongoing struggle in the plant was a sign of the coming struggle in the sector. In fact, the year 1964 would witness bitter collective struggles of the metal workers.

V. Conclusion

The dissolution of the DP's government by a military intervention on May 27th, 1960 and the succeeding social reforms did not directly change and/or improve the patterns of the metal workers' common experiences that took a shape after the war years; however, it created new channels, or expanded the existing ones through which workers would claim their demands and fight for their rights. The promises of the post-May 1960 governments to recognize workers' long-standing demands, the emergence of the notion of social justice as one of the most important components of the hegemonic discourse, and the rise of leftist ideas in the era, all motivated the metal workers and their union to be more bold and determined in

⁷⁶¹ "Kavel'den Şikayetler Devam Ediyor [The Complaints from Kavel Are Going On]," *Gece Postası*, March 8, 1963; "Maden-İş Sendikası Açıklama Yapıyor [Maden-İş Makes a Declaration]," *İşçinin Sesi*, (3 June 1963).

⁷⁶² Aydın, 136.

fighting for more democratic workplace relations and society. As in the previous decade, their union was the İstanbul metal workers' main tool to realize their goals.

Accordingly, the Kavel Strike can be seen as the peak of the metal workers' struggles between 1960 and 1963; there, the metal workers collectively acted to protect their rights, to improve their lives and, more importantly, to secure their representatives and union, Maden-İş, which they perceived as their voice and a tool to represent themselves in workplace relations. Significantly, such an act would influence their common language and consciousness that now spoke of their lawful or "natural" rights rising out of being a laboring citizen and a meaningful contributor in the formation and development of their countries. That language would be further enhanced during their more widespread collective actions at the end of the 1960s.

PART 3

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL: THE RADICALIZATION OF THE SHOP FLOOR - STRUGGLES IN THE METAL SECTOR, 1964-1970

The Kavel Strike was a harbinger of the future contentious encounters between bosses/managers and workers in the metal sector of İstanbul. The 1963 Labor Law meant the shop floor relations and struggles were more highly regulated in Turkey. After the legislation, the Turkish trade unions significantly increased their influence in social, economic and political life, and they became much more essential to workers' daily lives. During this period, the number of collective agreements was augmented, and all the sides - state officers, employers and unionists - would refer to those documents in order to regulate shop floor relations in a peaceful manner and serve the interests of all parties involved. Sorting out workplace relations through individual negotiations and bargaining became less common in several industrial sectors. Consequently, more workers were organized into unions to benefit from collective agreements. In essence, the shop floor principles began to be significantly determined as a result of negotiations, bargaining and even fights, if necessary, between the organizations of both employers and workers. Accordingly, I will focus on the first widespread collective actions between the metal workers and employers/managers in Chapter 7, concentrating on union demands, and the strategies both unions and employers pursued during collective bargaining. Then, I will analyze the strikes and the process of workplace relations, which motivated the İstanbul metal workers to be organized in the metal sector.

Indeed, more acute disagreements would take place between the metal workers and bosses/managers over the period between 1968-1970. In order to interpret their significance, in Chapter 8, I will track the ideological and political course of developments within Maden-İş, MESS and Çelik-İş, the latter of which being an influential actor in the sector after the defeat of Maden-İş in the 1964 strikes. Regarding this topic, I will firstly touch on the changing ideological and political discourse of Maden-İş, and whether this union's shift towards a more obvious leftist and Marxist discourse resulted in the furthering of poor

relations between union and bosses/managers. After delineating Maden-İş's changing political discourse, the same chapter will focus on how the metal bosses and Çelik-İş responded not just to the developments that occurred within Maden-İş but how they also responded to the increasing leftist influence in Turkey. Certainly, those developments paved the way for more acute fights amongst workers, unions and bosses between 1968-1970.

As a side note, in order to prevent confusion about the organization of this chapter, I will be explaining a shift in Maden-İş's official policy and language by following a chronological order at first, with the hopes of explaining this shift more clearly. Afterwards, I will analyze the main elements of this union's, the employer's and Çelik-İş' ideological position and strategies. Following that, I will change to a thematic approach, rather than a chronologic one, to explain those elements in detail. However, it's possible that ideological and political polarizations might have influenced the degree of animosity between workers and bosses; yet, they do not directly explain why the majority of workers participated in those actions. For a better picture, we must study the workers' actual experience in their working places. Thus, in Chapter 9, I will analyze the workplace relations between workers and bosses/managers, after 1964 in the private metal sector in İstanbul. Despite the Labor Law and collective agreements, most of workers' insufferable workplace experiences remained unchanged towards the end of decade. The chapter will mainly focus on their low wages and the restrictions on workers' free representation, and thus, free union choice, which was the key issue that led the majority of the metal workers to stage collective actions between 1968 and 1970. Chapter 9 will expose how important it was for the workers to develop agency through their trustworthy representatives and unions as they organized workplace relations.

And in Chapter 10, I will analyze the collective struggles wherein the majority of the İstanbul metal workers participated to protest their bitter work experiences, and in which the ideological and political polarization was rendered more obvious. As a result, Chapter 10 will emphasize the demands of workers, which were to be provided with high wages and the recognition of their free union choice, as well as their forms of actions. Certainly, those collective actions influenced the general mindset and the language of workers: the voice of

the militant metal workers at the time highlighted the legitimacy of their demands, which they wanted to liberate from the idea of the benevolence of bosses/managers, or the promises of the state and tie intrinsically to the workers' position in the organization of society; that is, to being a producer of the wealth of the country and thus a contributing citizen. The chapter will also touch on the ways in which the militant workers conceived justice, and their common interests and collective struggle as an effort to win and maintain their rights. Chapter 10 will end with an analysis that discusses the metal workers' collective language and mindset as the important aspects of this class' formation.

CHAPTER 7

THE METAL WORKERS AND BOSSES ON THE SHOP FLOOR:

THE DEFEAT OF MADEN-İŞ IN 1964

From the end of 1968 to the spectacular working class uprising of June 15-16, 1970, employee-employer relations in the metal sector were much more contentious than they had been during the previous era. Between 1968 and 1970, a significant number of İstanbul metal workers were involved in collective actions such as sit-down strikes, or factory occupations in which workers occupied the factory for few days and allowed to no one to enter into the enterprises except themselves until their demands were accepted. Or they were involved in more formal legal strikes in several big and medium-sized plants actions located both on the Anatolian and European sides of the city. Moreover, metal workers from nearly all factories participated in the June events. Several of them, including union officers and representatives, were arrested and many of them were hurt during the battles. One metal worker lost his life in the Gamak resistance, while another died during the June events. Some workers also lost their jobs due to their involvement in the actions. Despite this oppression, they did not yield to their employers' pressures.

However, it would be misleading to present the struggles of the period between 1968 and 1970 as spontaneous ones. On the contrary, the roots of those battles could be brought back to the earlier conflicts; such as the work disputes, which were waged by the metal workers before the Labor Law and the notorious Kavel Strike. Yet, a significant threshold for the metal workers was crossed during the conflicts that stemmed from the disagreement over collective bargaining, and the succeeding strikes in 1964.⁷⁶³ Accordingly, I will study the

⁷⁶³ Before proceeding with the story of the 1964 strikes, I need to reiterate a point that I briefly touched on the introduction part of this dissertation, regarding how I am approaching Çelik-İş. I am well aware that the following story may seem to analyze this union and its role and function in the metal sector with an apparent bias; but I feel this possible weakness comes out of the inavailability of evidence which makes it difficult to develop a in-depth evaluation of Çelik-İş that does not reflect my own ideological inclinations. It is very possible that Çelik-İş and its representatives went head to head contentiously in several specific workplaces, in an effort to maintain its members rights; yet, I did not have such examples among the little evidence that I was able to find about this union during my

1964 strikes by focusing on two important issues; wage increases and the organization of workplace relations in the sector. Since they were mainly institutionalized fights between the organizations of bosses and workers, this chapter will initially look at the developments of trade unionism after the Labor Law 1963. Then, it will cover the strikes in an effort to comprehend its reasons, strategies and results. In fact, as a result of those conflicts, Maden-İş had lost the first round of the battles, and the bosses/managers oppression of the workers' free choice in some metal factories continued. In the end, although the workers got wage increases in some workplaces, they had still lost their free union choice. Despite the defeat, however, the metal workers' struggles left a significant inheritance for future struggling workers.

1. The Development of Unionism After the Labor Law

Post-Labor Law industrial relations in Turkey witnessed the growing influence of trade unions in terms of both scale and scope. The number of unionized workers overall rose after 1963: according to a survey conducted by Orhan Tuna in 1969, nearly 60 percent of workers joined unions after 1963.⁷⁶⁴ For 1964 and 1965, the number of unionized employees increased by 42 000 in total.⁷⁶⁵ But, the more spectacular increase took place in 1967, when the numbers of unionized workers were more than tripled and then in the following years. In

research. In this regard, it is nearly impossible to prove the common allegations; such as it being a “yellow dog union”, or “bosses’ union” or “sold union”, which the other unions, including Maden-İş, accused Çelik-İş of being. For example, there is no way to prove whether Çelik-İş and its leaders, or its representatives on the shop floor, were involved in monetary exchanges with bosses and managers. Therefore, I submit those allegations not as proven facts, but as the allegations of those who made them. Furthermore, the available documents and the interviews that I conducted with workers, as well as managers, demonstrate that Çelik-İş was certainly inclined to conduct peaceful and cooperative relations with bosses/managers in the workplace. As an example, this union and its members strived to persuade workers to return back to work in several factories during the 1964 strikes. The evidence and course of events put forth that a considerable amount of the metal bosses preferred Çelik-İş, instead of Maden-İş, to represent workers as their recognized and entitled union. Furthermore, a considerable amount of the metal workers who staged widespread strikes throughout sector between 1968 and 1970, perceived and described Çelik-İş as the “yellow dog union” who functioned in the workplaces on behalf of bosses/managers rather than worker interests. In this thesis, I will label Çelik-İş as an example of business unionism which emerged in the United States in the first quarter of the twentieth century. I will further discuss this point when I am explaining the Çelik-İş’s official discourse in the Chapter 8.

⁷⁶⁴ Orhan Tuna, *Türkiye’de Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri*, vol. 2 [*The Economic and Social Effects of the Collective Agreement System*], (İstanbul: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1970), 32.

⁷⁶⁵ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri* [*The Collective Work Agreements and Their Places in the Turkish Economy*], (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, no. 229-211: 1967), 94-100.

fact the figures in Table 5 suggest that the total number of 834 680 in 1967 saw and unprecedented increased to 2 088 219 in 1970 and to 2 362 787 in 1971. Table 5 also shows that although there was a decrease in the number of unions by 1968, the number of unionized workers seem to have an increase in this year. More importantly, for the significant amount of workers, being unionized was an important step in having an advantageous situation in terms of basic income and sustenance. In fact, Tuna's survey indicated that nearly 90 percent of workers thought that being unionized was a significant benefit for them.⁷⁶⁶

Table 4: The Number of Workers' Unions and Employers' Associations and the Number of Their Members

Years	Employers' Organizations		Employees' Unions	
	The Figures	The Member	The Union Figures	The Member
1948	4	-	73	52 000
1949	2	-	77	72 000
1950	2	-	88	76 000
1951	5	-	137	110 000
1952	10	-	248	130 000
1953	12	-	275	140 000
1954	17	576	323	180 387
1955	25	1 059	363	189 595
1956	28	1 092	376	209 155

⁷⁶⁶ Orhan Tuna, *Türkiye'de Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri*, vol. 2, 49. Also see: Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi [The History of Working Class in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Epos, 2010), 204-205.

1957	27	1 244	385	244 853
1958	29	1 364	394	262 591
1959	32	1 434	417	280 786
1960	33	1 150	432	282 967
1961	35	1 706	511	298 679
1962	47	1 820	543	307 839
1963	78	1 605	565	295 710
1964	92	1 769	595	338 769
1965	104	1 927	658	360 285
1966	108	3 550	704	376 909
1967	-	-	798	834 680
1968	-	-	755	1 007 928
1969	-	-	797	1 193 908
1970	-	-	737	2 088 219
1971	-	-	631	2 362 787

Sources: Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri*, 100 and Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi*, 200.

As the above table indicates, the number of trade unions in Turkey showed a steady increase from 1948 until 1967. It is seen that the most significant increase in the union numbers took place between 1964 and 1966, when the first collective agreements were signed in Turkey. After 1966, the increase showed some fluctuations, while the number of unions

decreased between 1967 and 1968, 1969 and 1971. It also shows some increases between 1968 and 1970. In parallel with those figures, the number of workers who joined unions was at a steady increase, too, except between 1962 and 1963. However, between 1966 and 1967, and between 1969 and 1970, those figures almost doubled. This timing corresponded with the second and third terms of the collective agreements; thus this sharp increase can be explained by workers who saw the benefits of the first collective agreements signed in 1963 and 1964 increasingly joining unions. Similarly, the numbers of employer's organizations increased from 1948 to 1966, except between 1956 and 1957. Unfortunately we do not have numbers for the period after 1966. However, it must be noted that this figure sharply increased between 1962 and 1964 due to the recognition of collective agreements and trade unions law in 1963. It is interesting that, contrary to this increase, the number of workplaces that joined the employer's organizations decreased between 1962 and 1964; however we have no information to discuss the reasons for such a decrease. Furthermore, after 1964 this number began to increase again and between 1965 and 1966 until it was almost doubled.

In parallel with the increase in the number of unionized workers in Turkish industry, unionization was also very high in the metal sector following the introduction of the Labor Law. According to Işıklı, the most frequently unionized workers were in the tobacco, distillery, mining, textile, railway, sugar and metal hardware sectors.⁷⁶⁷ By 1965, nearly 80 percent of workers were unionized in the metal sector.⁷⁶⁸ Therefore, the expansion of unionization in the metal sector was not significantly different from that of other sectors in the decade; all in all, the 1960s was characterized by the growth of unionization for the Turkish workers.

However, Yıldırım Koç warned scholars that those figures, which were based on the reports submitted by unions to the Ministry of Labor, were unreliable because nearly all

⁷⁶⁷ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri*, 107.

⁷⁶⁸ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri*, 107; Ertuğrul Soysal, "Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Toplu Sözleşme Tatbikatından Doğan Bazı Meseleler [Some Problems Stemming From The Practice of Collective Agreement in the Metal Sector]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 19 (1968): 64; Orhan Tuna, *Türkiye'de Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri*, vol. 2, 33.

unions deliberately distorted their reports and misinformed the Ministry by inflating their actual numbers in order to get authorization rights in workplaces. According to the Labor Law, unions were required to declare the numbers of their members to the Ministry; however, they were not obliged to prove them. Furthermore, the Ministry had no authority to examine the accuracy of those figures. Koç maintains that, especially after 1970, all figures submitted to the Ministry of Labor were inaccurate due to growing union competition.⁷⁶⁹ Despite these overblown figures, the number of unionized workers showed a considerable increase in Turkey after 1963, and the metal workers constituted the undeniable part of this general trend.

Table 5 also shows that there was an increasing number of employees joining together in these organizations. Although the tendency to be unionized was not so widespread among the employers, one of the biggest employer's unions was in the metal sector.⁷⁷⁰ By the end of the decade, nearly all big metal plants became members of MESS and the total number of MESS members rose to 250.⁷⁷¹ For the most part, the fights between the workers and employers were centred on these institutions.

One of the most significant developments in terms of unionism was the increasing number of collective agreements around which most shop floor disagreements took place. Between 1963 and 1969, the total number of collective agreements was 907 in all sectors.⁷⁷² In 1964, Maden-İş signed 106 collective agreements covering 17 369 workers in total.⁷⁷³ Between June 1965 and September 1965, the union signed 21 other agreements.⁷⁷⁴ In 1967, the number of collective agreements between MESS-Maden-İş and MESS-Çelik-İş was 84, covering 26402 workers in total.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁶⁹ Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi*, 188-202.

⁷⁷⁰ "En Büyük İşveren Sendikası MESS [The Biggest Employer's Union is MESS]," *İşçi Postası*, August 4, 1967; Orhan Tuna, *Türkiye'de Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri*, vol. 2, 71; M. Nihad Ay, *Türkiye'de Toplu Pazarlık Düzeninde Ücret Oluşumu [The Formation of Wages Under The System of Collective Bargaining in Turkey]*, (İzmir: İktisadi ve Ticari Bilimler Fakültesi, 1969), 122-123.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid, 130.

⁷⁷² Orhan Tuna, *Türkiye'de Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Düzeninin İktisadi ve Sosyal Tesirleri*, vol. 2, 175.

⁷⁷³ "1964 Yılında 106 İşyerinde T. Sözleşme İmzalandı [The 106 Collective Agreements Were Signed in 1964]," *İşçi Postası*, January 2, 1965.

⁷⁷⁴ "Maden-İş 4 Ayda 21 Yeni Sözleşme İmzaladı [Maden-İş Signed 21 New Agreements Within Four Months]," *İşçi Postası*, September 29, 1965.

⁷⁷⁵ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri*, 128.

The biggest repercussion of the increasing number of collective agreements was found in workers' wages. In fact, the share of workers' wages from the national wealth increased after 1963.⁷⁷⁶ There was a common consensus among Turkish scholars that the percentage of increase in wages in the private sector had ultimately caught up with the increases in living indices after 1964. Between 1964 and 1965, the average wage increase was 10.9 percent, while the living indices in İstanbul rose by 5 percent.

The other important underlying reason behind rising wages was the overall minimum wage increase. Between 1961 and 1966, minimum wages increased by 41.6 percent, and in the same time interval, the increase in living indices in İstanbul was 29 percent.⁷⁷⁷ In fact, the most contentious issue during the first collective bargaining was the matter of minimum wages.⁷⁷⁸ The employers objected to minimum wages in general, arguing that minimum wages would force employers to increase all wages in the factories.⁷⁷⁹ The minimum wage issue created many more conflicts towards the end of the decade. In 1969, the level of minimum wages became one of the burning issues between the employers' and employees' organizations.⁷⁸⁰ For the metal sector, however, minimum wages were not in focus until the late 1950s. It is unfortunate that we do not know how the above mentioned increase in minimum wages between 1961 and 1966 reflected on the metal sector, but by 1964 the minimum wage of 13.00 TL per day in this sector remained within the general average of the minimum wages in Turkey.⁷⁸¹ It can be concluded, then, that the increase in the average wages in the metal sector more or less mirrored the general rise of wages in Turkey. Therefore, minimum wages must have factored considerably in the improvement in the salaries of metal workers. Consequently, it would not be wrong to argue that wages in

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., 139.

⁷⁷⁷ Alpaslan Işıklı, *Toplu İş Sözleşmeleri ve Türkiye Ekonomisi İçindeki Yeri*, 121 and 127.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 121.

⁷⁷⁹ "Türkiye'de İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Turkey]," *İşçi Postası*, October 10, 1965. Also look at: "Türkiye'de İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Turkey]," *İşçi Postası*, June 24, 1965.

⁷⁸⁰ "Türk-İş," *İşçi Postası*, June 7, 1969; "Asgari Ücretler Tesbit Edildi [The Minimum Wages Were Settled]," *İşveren*, vol. 7 no. 9 (June 1969): 4-8; Nihat Yüksel, "Asgari Ücret Sorunu [The Problem of Minimum Wage]," *İşveren*, vol. 7 no. 9 (June 1969): 15-18.

⁷⁸¹ *Türkiyede Komisyonlarca Tespit Olunan Asgari Ücretler [The Minimum Wages in Turkey as Detected by the Commissions]*, (Ankara: Bakanlıklararası Produktivite Merkezi, 1964), 6; *Asgari Ücret: Türkiye ve Dünya Uygulaması [The Minimum Wages: Its Application in Turkey and World]*, (Ankara: TÜRK-İŞ Yayınları, no. 119, 1978), 61.

general, and minimum wages in particular, were the most important reasons which led to the struggles, as we will discuss in the last chapter.

Due to the high levels of unionization, both among the metal workers and bosses (in fact, most metal bosses joined in MESS during the collective bargaining in 1963 and 1964), the fight over collective agreements mainly took place between their unions. As a result, when the first widespread collective struggle took place in the sector in 1964, the workers' unionization was divided inside the metal plants. In fact, although the members of Çelik-İş had been very few in the sector in the beginning, when the bargaining turned into conflict, their numbers significantly rose as a result of defeat of the Maden-İş strikes. The Çelik-İş representatives also attempted to intervene in the events by declaring the strikes "illegal" and asking workers to return to work. As a result of the success of the bosses and the failure of Maden-İş during the strikes, this union was somehow able to organize in most of the bigger metal plants. This would create another pattern of collective action for the metal workers of the future that included yet another actor in workplace relations. In conclusion, as the members of employer's and worker's unions increased, the workplace struggles between workers and employers/managers became more institutionalized.

II. The Metal Workers Go On Strike

Encouraged by the Kavel Strike and the 1963 Labor Law, Maden-İş and its members attempted to intervene in shop floor affairs more decisively in 1964. The unionized workers and union's representatives on shop floor level saw the legislation of collective agreements and strike right as an important events which would usher in a new era in terms of having a say in organizing workplace relations. Maden-İş began, therefore, to prepare for collective bargaining towards the end of 1963. Inspired by the law, Maden-İş was hopeful to reach its goals including proper implementation of minimum wages, proper enforcement of rules by the commission, a union presence in every enterprise, provision of benefits and bonuses, improvement of workplace conditions in terms of workers' health, and an end to the arbitrary workers' punishments and dismissals.

Since the workers' and employers' representatives could not reach an agreement on the worker's demands during the bargaining, the union decided in favour of strikes. The most significant worker's demands put by Maden-İş were the increase in wages and regulation and institutionalization of the workers' interventions in shop floor affairs; namely, the establishment of discipline committees/which, according to union officers, would put an end to the widespread arbitrary dismissals and punishments of the workers in general, and unionized workers and union representatives specifically. In fact, Maden-İş's representatives established those two issues as their line in the sand during the bargaining. On the other side, the metal bosses/managers, who had already been uneasy due to latest political developments and the parallel growing influence of the idea of social justice, not to mention the Kavel Strike incidents, were further perturbed by the workers' demands; consequently, the owners/managers of the big metal plants frowned upon those workers' demands during bargaining. As a result, most bargaining culminated in strikes, especially in the big plants such as Arçelik, Türk Demir Döküm, Emayetaş, Sungurlar, Altınbaş Nail, Dever Technic and Ayvansaray Bolt Plant, factories that were all represented by MESS in the bargaining, as well as in Singer, which was not a MESS member.

The 1964 Strikes, in total, were the second instructional encounter of the Maden-İş's members with the bosses after Kavel. Maden-İş bargained with individual employers when the union would not hand over its rights to MESS. It also clashed with the MESS officers who were assigned by the employers to carry out the meetings on their own behalf. The bargaining processes went more smoothly for the first type of enterprise, since the union could force those employers to go along with the union's terms. Maden-İş was also able to sign agreements with some of the enterprises, which were members of MESS.⁷⁸² With the majority

⁷⁸² "Maden-İş'in Yeni Bir Başarısı [A New Success of Maden-İş]," *İşçi Postası*, March 20, 1964; "Maden-İş'in Yeni Bir Başarısı [A New Success of Maden-İş]," *İşçi Postası*, March 21, 1964; "Tuzla Jeep'de Sözleşme İmzalandı [The Agreement Was Signed in Tuzla Jeep]," *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 67 (30 March 1964): 1; "Maden-İş ECA Pres Döküm İle Toplu Sözleşmeyi Bitirdi [Maden-İş Has Finalized the Collective Agreement With ECA Press Foundry]," *İşçi Postası*, May 18, 1964; "Maden-İş Başarılı Sözleşmeler Yaptı [Maden-İş Made Successful Agreements]," *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 69 (20 June 1964): 2; "Cihan Komandit Elektro Metal Toplu Sözleşmeyi İmzaladılar [Cihan Komandit and Elektro Metal Signed the Collective Agreements]," *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 69 (20 June 1964): 2; "Philips'le de

of MESS' members, however, the meetings progressed more acrimoniously since most big firms, especially those owned by the Koç Holding, were determined to force Maden-İş to defer to MESS' terms. And Maden-İş certainly had great difficulty making MESS agree with the union's demands. Since arguments at the bargaining table evolved into collective actions, the encounters sharpened the language of the metal workers and the union, which had previously oscillated between obedience and dissent during the progress of class relations in Turkey. However, the union's language would turn entirely into a radical and socialist one with the foundation of a more radical trade union's confederacy DİSK in 1967.

Collective bargaining between Maden-İş and MESS began at the end of 1963 at the request of the union.⁷⁸³ After a few sessions, the meetings came to a stand-off, in January 1964. Then, the disagreement protocol was sent to the Regional Work Office and Maden-İş declared its determination to go on strike in case of disagreement during the meetings of the referee board.⁷⁸⁴ In compliance with the law, the referee board was established with the

Anlaşma Oldu [The Agreement Took Place in Philips, too],” *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 69 (20 June 1964): 2; “Madeni Eşya İşverenleri Sendikası Parçalanıyor [The Metal Employer's Union is Shattering],” *İşçi Postası*, July 9, 1964; “Maden-İş Dün İki İşyeri İle Daha Toplu Sözleşme Yaptı [Maden-İş Made Collective Agreement with Two More Workplaces],” *İşçi Postası*, July 14, 1964; “Maden-İş Sendikası ile Unilever-İş Teneke Fabrikası Arasında T. Sözleşme İmzalandı [The Collective Agreement Between Maden-İş and Unilever Can Factory Was Signed],” *İşçi Postası*, July 15, 1964; “İki Fabrikada Daha Sözleşme Yapıldı [Two More Collective Agreements Were Done],” *İşçi Postası*, July 23, 1964; “Maden-İş Sendikası Simko Müessesesi İle Güzel Bir Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Yaptı [Maden-İş Signed a Fine Collective Work Agreement with the Simko Enterprise],” *İşçi Postası*, August 7, 1964; “Maden-İş 34 İşyeri İle Sözleşmeler Yaptı [Maden-İş Made Agreements with 34 Workplaces],” *İşçi Postası*, August 13, 1964; “Maden-İş 7 Sözleşme Daha Yaptı [Maden-İş Signed 7 More Agreements],” *İşçi Postası*, September 5, 1964; “Maden-İş Topkapı Merkez Şubesi Yirmi Altıncı Toplu İş Sözleşmesini İmzaladı [The Topkapı Central District of Maden-İş Signed Its Twenty Sixth Collective Agreement],” *İşçi Postası*, November 28, 1964; “Maden-İş Nürmetalle Anlaştı [Maden-İş Reached an Agreement with Nürmetal],” *İşçi Postası*, December 24, 1964.

⁷⁸³ According to the Labor Law, the collective bargaining would start with the call of either the authorized union by the law or the employer and/or manager in charge. The other side would have to obey this call and sit down at the table. In case of dispute, a protocol of disagreement would be sent the Regional Work Office or the Ministry of Labor. After this, the offices in charge would organize a conciliation meeting which both sides had to attend. In addition to sending their representatives, both sides would choose an impartial mediator. With the participation of those representatives and the mediator, a referee board would be assembled. In case of disagreement within the board or the refusal of the decision of the board by either employer's or employee's sides, the disputes might be solved by strike or lockout. For the process, see: Cahit Talas, *Türkiye'nin Açıklamalı Sosyal Politika Tarihi [The Explanatory History of Social Politics in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Bilgi, 1992), 176-177.

⁷⁸⁴ “İşverenler Sendikası ile Müzakereler Kesildi [The Bargainings with the Employer's Union Were Interrupted],” *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 65 (6 January 1964): 1; “Maden-İş Sendikası İşverenlerle Sözleşme Müzakereleri Hazırladı [Maden-İş Prepared Drafts For The Collective Bargainings With Employers],” *İşçi Postası*, January 6, 1964; “40 Bin İşçi Grev Yapacak [The 40 Thousand Workers Will Strike],” *İşçi Postası*, January 9, 1964; “Maden-İş Yöneticileri Dün Temsilcilerle Toplantı Yaptı [The Maden-İş

participation of one employers' representative and one employees' representative, and an impartial mediator who was chosen by the mutual consent of both sides. In mid-April, the board had reached a decision. Although Maden-İş voted in favour of the decision, MESS did not go along with the board's proposals. As a result, Maden-İş reiterated its intention to strike and it asked its members to vote for a strike mandate in May. However, commanders of martial law enforcement, which was in effect in İstanbul at the time, did not allow the union to carry on the strikes in the city.⁷⁸⁵ Furthermore, Maden-İş did not totally abandon its hope of reaching agreement through the meetings. The union asked the government to intervene in the affairs in June and the Minister of Industry was assigned to conciliate both sides. By applying to the government, Maden-İş also hoped to gain time for its strike preparations and increase its legitimacy in the eyes of the public officers. Although he listened to both sides, the Minister did not declare his opinion on the root matters of the conflicts.⁷⁸⁶ In the meantime, martial law was dissolved in July 20, 1964, and the union was in a legal position to execute its strike plans.

Meanwhile, the first significant strike, one that occurred at the Singer Factory located in Kartal, had taken place earlier that year, in March 1964. Why the military commanders allowed this walkout to take place is unknown, but loopholes in martial law, most probably, gave permission to Maden-İş to stage a strike in the Singer plant since it was a foreign

Officers Has Met with the Union's Representatives Yesterday],” *İşçinin Sesi*, 9 January 1964; “Maden-İş Sendikası Dün Grev Kararını Açıkladı [Maden-İş Declared Its Strike Decision Yesterday],” *İşçinin Sesi*, 11 January 1964.

⁷⁸⁵ As a result of a military uprising within the army in 1963, martial law was declared in May 21, 1963, and, it lasted until July 20, 1964.

⁷⁸⁶ “MESS’le Anlaşmazlık Özel Hakeme İntikal Etti, Karar Bekleniyor [The Dispute with MESS Was Brought To The Referee Board, The Decision Is Awaited],” *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 66 (20 January 1964): 1; “Grev Gözcülerinin Seçimine Başlandı [The Selection of the Strike Guardians Has Begun]”, *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 66 (20 January 1964): 1; “MESS’le Maden-İş Arasındaki Anlaşmazlık İçin Karar Verildi [The Decision Was Reached Over the Dispute Between MESS and Maden-İş],” *Maden-İş*, year 5 no. 68 (20 April 1964): 1; “Maden-İş’le Görüşmeler [The Meetings with Maden-İş],” *İşçi Postası*, May 16, 1964; “Madeni Eşya İşverenleri Uzlaştırma Kurulu Kararını Tanımıyor [The Metal Employers Do Not Accept the Referee Board’s Decisions],” *İşçi Postası*, May 21, 1964; “Maden-İş Grev Yoklaması Yapıyor [Maden-İş Is Going For The Strike Vote],” *İşçi Postası*, May 21, 1964; “İşverenler Sendikası Maden-İş’e Sert Bir Cevap Verdi [The Employer’s Union Made A Hard Repsonse to Maden-İş],” *İşçi Postası*, June 17, 1964; “Maden-İş Önemli Temaslara Başladı [Maden-İş Began to Engage in Important Contacts],” *İşçi Postası*, June 18, 1964; “İşçiler Durumdan Çok Memnun [Workers Are Very Pleased],” *İşçi Postası*, July 6, 1964; “1670 İşçi Grev Halinde [1670 Workers Are On Strike],” *İşçi Postası*, August 19, 1964.

company. In addition to a being the first strike in the metal sector after the legislation went into effect, the Singer strike was a good example of how and why the strikes occurred, and how they were defeated. While Maden-İş and the Singer employers were waiting for the decision of the referee board, the Singer manager signed an agreement with Çelik-İş, which was, in fact, not the entitled union to make a collective agreement on behalf of workers there. The labor court invalidated this contract upon the objection and application of Maden-İş. But while waiting for the decision of the referee board, Maden-İş officers considered taking initiative in the workplace, inspired by Kavel, to force the bosses/managers to give in to the union's terms. Maden-İş even named its strategy "Kavel Plan 2". They asked the Singer workers to vote on a strike and after the majority of the workers supported the union's decision, the union initiated the walkout.⁷⁸⁷ In reply, the management illegally began to recruit new workers to continue production within the factory; however, the state authorities did nothing to prevent the management's strategy. Furthermore, the union officers were arrested under martial law following complaints by the management. In the meantime, Maden-İş accused management of exerting a pressure on workers to join in Çelik-İş; although we do not have sufficient evidence to prove this allegation, it is a fact that the number of strikers petered out over time.⁷⁸⁸ After 82 days, the union had to end the strike and it lost its recognition on the shop floor. Most workers joined in Çelik-İş, which had signed a general covenant with the employers. When Maden-İş abrogated the strike, Çelik-İş signed the collective agreement with the Singer Factory.⁷⁸⁹ In fact, the course of events in Singer was a harbinger of what would later happen at the other metal plants.

⁷⁸⁷ "Singerde 300 İşçi Greve Gidiyor [300 Workers Are Striking in Singer]," *Gece Postası*, March 3, 1964; "Singer İhtilafı Büyüyor [The Singer Dispute is Ascending]," *İşçi Postası*, March 24, 1964; "Singer Fabrikasında İşçiler Grev Yaptılar [The Singer Workers Staged Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, March 28, 1964; "Mahkeme Kararı [The Court Decision]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 3; "Grev İçin Bildiri [The Declaration for the Strike]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 3; "Singer'de Niçin Grev Yapılıyor [Why There Is A Strike in Singer]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 3.

⁷⁸⁸ "Maden-İş'te Grev Yapan İşçilerin Sayısı 53'e Düştü [The Number of Maden-İş Strikes Has Decreased to 53]," *Yeni İstanbul*, May 19, 1964.

⁷⁸⁹ "Singer İşçilerinin Grevi Sona Erdi [The Strike at Singer Has Ended]," *İşveren*, vol. 2, no. 9 (June 1964): 19.

After the abolishment of martial law in İstanbul, the workers of Arçelik, Emayetaş, Sungurlar, Türk Demir Döküm, Altınbaş Nail, Dever Technic and Ayvansaray Bolt Factories walked off the job in August and September.⁷⁹⁰ In Ayvansaray and Emayetaş, Maden-İş and the factory managers reached an agreement. In other factories, though, the strikes were defeated. Consequently, the union lost its rights on the shop floor and Çelik-İş, who had proved before the labor court or the Regional Work Office that it made up the majority of the workers among its members in those enterprises, gained entitlement for representation and signed collective agreements with the bosses/managers on behalf of workers. In fact, each story of the strikes which ended in defeat, was, more or less, the same. After the declaration of a strike, the employers/managers sued the union, union officers, and workers' representatives or strikers for engaging in unlawful acts on shop floor. They also publicly accused Maden-İş and the union's representatives of instigating and forcing into action workers who were actually not willing to be involved in strikes. In the meantime, the bosses illegally recruited new workers to carry on production and harassed the strikers to resign from Maden-İş. Then, Çelik-İş stepped in and applied to the Regional Work Office or the labor courts, claiming that the majority of workers in those enterprises were truly members of Çelik-İş. As a result of all of this, the strikers failed in the main object of any strike - to stop production - and the number of strikers diminished over time. Then, Maden-İş had to give up striking altogether and it lost its recognition as a representative union. On the same day when the failure of Maden-İş became official, Çelik-İş called the employers to sign the agreement to become the entitled union on the shop floor.⁷⁹¹ The overlapping of employer and employee

⁷⁹⁰ "Arçelik İşçileri Dün Greve Başladı [The Arçelik Workers Walked Out Yesterday]," *Milliyet*, August 11, 1964, 2; "Arçelik Fabrikasının Faaliyeti Durmadı [The Production Did not Stop in Arçelik]," *Milliyet*, August 12, 1964, 2.

⁷⁹¹ "Maden-İş Dün Bir Fabrikada Greve Başladı [Maden-İş Initiated A Strike In A Factory Yesterday]," *İşçi Postası*, August 1, 1964; "35 İşyerinde GREV Hazırlığı Var [There Are Strike Preparations At 35 Workplaces]," *İşçi Postası*, August 5, 1964; "Maden-İş'in 35 İşyeri İle İhtilafı Halledilemedi [The Dispute of Maden-İş With 35 Workplaces Could Not Be Resolved]," *İşçi Postası*, August 10, 1964; "Maden-İş'de Dört Grev Devam Ediyor [The 4 Strikes of Maden-İş Are Lasting]," *İşçi Postası*, August 13, 1964; "1670 İşçi Grev Halinde [1670 Workers Are At Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, August 19, 1964; "Arçelik Fabrikasında Grev!..[The Strike at the Arçelik Factory]," *İşveren*, vol. 3, no. 1 (October 1964): 4-9; "Toplu Sözleşme Haberleri [The Collective Agreement News]," *İşveren*, vol. 3, no. 2 (November 1964).

tactics with their shared majority trust of Maden-İş regarding the law and legal mechanisms paved the way for the defeat of the 1964 strikes.

III. Wages and Discipline Committees

After introduction of the legislation, there were two main goals Maden-İş and its members had been struggling to attain since just after the Second World War: the first was related to an increase in workers' wages and the second was about consolidating the union mechanism on shop floor level. For the second goal, the union proposed that during the collective bargaining with the metal employers and/or their representatives, they would form a disciplinary committee to regulate workplace relations. This body would be made up of equal numbers of workers' and employer's representatives. For the metal bosses who absolutely refused to consider those demands, even the very existence of Maden-İş which was assumed to make "excessive demands", became increasingly a thorn inside the workplaces. Thus, the bosses would mainly strive to undermine this union's position during bargaining, and also during strikes.

The union's officers, the district chairs and representatives on shop floor often declared their determination to win their rights provided in the Constitution and Labor Law. The union officers argued that the new laws, as well as workers' organized and regulated struggles, would end the "arbitrary" rules of employers on shop floor.⁷⁹² In this regard; the first option for the union was to find common points with the employers at the table. In January 1964, the chair of the union, Kemal Türkler, asserted that they aimed to solve the disagreements in a peaceful manner. However, Türkler also claimed that the employers frowned on workers' demands and took an uncompromising attitude towards them. Since "the peace breaker attitude of the employers" in the union's lexicon had become more obvious in

⁷⁹² "İşverenin Keyfi Hareket Etmesine Artık Paydos [No More Arbitrary Employers Acts]," *İşçi Postası*, September 10, 1964.

time, the workers were compelled to go on strike to protect their own rights.⁷⁹³ Given this union perspective, one can argue that the union was willing to compromise about most of its demands except in regard to the two issues noted above.

In fact, during the bargaining processes, which culminated in the strike, the metal union followed an attitude of compromise. For the first demand, Maden-İş rationalized its demand for wage increases on the grounds that it would not increase production costs. On the contrary, the wage increases, which would motivate workers to work harder, would reduce production costs by increasing productivity.⁷⁹⁴ However, the metal employers would not approach this demand in a positive manner and refused the union's proposal. For the union, it was impossible to cave in to the employer's position, which leaned towards workers' propositions on benefits, but allowed only very small increases for wages.⁷⁹⁵ On the second issue, the union proposed a discipline committee that would be composed of an equal number of workers' and employers' representatives to guarantee the job safety of its members and representatives. The union put forth those demands as its line in the sand and the workers' representatives similarly put forth their determination to earn those rights in workplaces through action.⁷⁹⁶

Further addressing the second issue of discipline committees, Maden-İş put forth that it might risk going into strikes to establish this key mechanism. The union officers asserted that, in the absence of such committees, the employers would become the only authority to rule the workplaces and would keep on "oppressing" the unionized workers, whom they saw as the main reason for workers' insurgency on shop floor. The union also hit upon the idea that the discipline committees would facilitate management on shop floor by punishing the

⁷⁹³ Kemal Türkler, "Hedefimiz [Our Target]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 65 (6 January 1964): 1; "İşçilerin Greve Gidiş Sebepleri [The Reasons of Workers' Strike]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 70 (12 August 1964): 1 and 4.

⁷⁹⁴ Cavit Şarman, "Toplu Sözleşmeler [The Collective Agreements]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 65 (6 January 1964): 1; Hilmi Güner, "Toplu Sözleşmeler ve İşçi İstekleri [The Collective Agreements and Workers' Demands]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 66 (20 January 1964): 2.

⁷⁹⁵ "İşverenlerin Maksudı [The Employers' Purpose]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 65 (6 January 1964): 1.

⁷⁹⁶ "Maden-İş Şişli Bölgesi Temsilciler Toplantısı [The Meeting of Union Representatives in Şişli District of Maden-İş]," *İşçi Postası*, December 7, 1964.

workers who acted against the law and collective agreements.⁷⁹⁷ Hinging upon such assumptions, Maden-İş officers claimed that the real problem during the bargaining was the employers' desire to pursue their old habits ("my business, my rules") in ruling factories. According to the union, the employers/managers who interpreted this as their natural right to rule wanted "complete obedience" from workers.⁷⁹⁸ However, the employers/managers found those assertions simply unacceptable.

Therefore, according to the union officers, the main responsibility for the strikes rested on the shoulders of the employers who did not respect workers' rights. The union put the blame on the employers who were seen as unyielding to workers' demands on the issues of the discipline committee and wage increases.⁷⁹⁹ During the meetings, the union published a brochure entitled "The Rights Which the Employers Are Uneager to Recognize." The brochure was a good summary of how the union comprehended the attitude of MESS during the bargaining. In it, the union narrated the strike process and emphasized the unyielding attitudes of MESS, which actually stood against decisions of the referee board. The brochure also emphasized the oppression of the Maden-iş members and the employers' tactics to reach an agreement with Çelik-İş. According to the brochure, MESS objected vehemently to the increase in the number of workers' representatives on shop floor. The employers rejected the rule of allowing the head representative to have two hours leave of absence in a day to deal with union issues. The metal bosses/managers were also against the union's demands on overtime work and the revisions on severance pay. According to the brochure, some MESS

⁷⁹⁷ "Disiplin Kuruluna Niçin İhtiyaç Var? [Why the Discipline Committees Are Necessary]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 65 (6 January 1964): 3.

⁷⁹⁸ "Maden-İş'in Toplu Sözleşme Teklifleri [The Items Offered By Maden-İş In The Collective Bargainings]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 65 (6 January 1964): 4; Kazım Narmanlı, "İşveren Neden Korkar? [What Is Employer Afraid Of]," *İşçi Postası*, September 28, 1964.

⁷⁹⁹ "İşverenler Sendikası ile Müzakereler Kesildi [The Bargainings with the Employer's Union Were Interrupted]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 65 (6 January 1964): 1 and 4; "İşverenlerin Maksadı [The Employers' Purpose]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 65 (6 January 1964): 1 and 4; "Maden-İş Sendikası İşverenlerle Sözleşme Müzakereleri Hazırladı [Maden-İş Prepares Drafts For Collective Bargaining With Employers]," *İşçi Postası*, January 6, 1964; "40 Bin İşçi Grev Yapacak [The 40 Thousand Workers Will Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, January 9, 1964; "Maden-İş Yöneticileri Dün Temsilcilerle Toplantı Yaptı [The Maden-İş Officers Has Met with the Union's Representatives Yesterday]," *İşçinin Sesi*, 9 January 1964; "Maden-İş Sendikası Dün Grev Kararını Açıkladı [Maden-İş Declared Its Strike Decision Yesterday]," *İşçinin Sesi*, 11 January 1964.

members, especially the big factory owners, were clearly against nearly all union demands.⁸⁰⁰

For the union, this intolerance dragged out the bargaining into conflicts and strikes.

It is unfortunate that the available evidence on the voices of employers is not so rich in comparison with that of the workers and the union. But I would argue, based upon those limited sources, that the metal bosses/managers were generally uneager to defer to the workers' demands and they wanted to keep ruling their own workplaces without any outside intervention. Their reluctance was clear from the employer's decline of the referee board's decisions, a body which even included the employer's representatives. Additionally, some employers separated from MESS, which they claimed showed an extreme intolerance to the workers' demands, and they agreed to cooperate with Maden-İş.⁸⁰¹ In fact, the general manager of Arçelik, Ali Mansur, asserted that he and the other managers were against sitting down with workers and negotiating the terms of shop floor relations even after the Labor Law. In this regard, Mansur said, the bargaining progressed in a very contentious manner and both sides considered each other as enemy. When collective bargaining turned into strikes, the employers refused to even talk with workers.⁸⁰² As is plain from the employer's arguments, the main reason for the conflict between the workers and employers was the issue of the discipline committee, which the union officers defined as their line in the sand. Moreover, the employers' publications admitted that the employers "rightfully" objected to the union's demands about discipline committees.⁸⁰³ As one general manager admitted later, the most unacceptable demand of workers was to have a say in ruling the shop floor.⁸⁰⁴ Similarly, the general manager of Türk Demir Döküm, Burhan Günergün, admitted that Maden-İş brought some administrative demands to the table that were unacceptable for the

⁸⁰⁰ *İşverenlerin İstemediği Haklar, 1964 [The Rights Which Employers Are Uneager To Recognize]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Envelope 1995.

⁸⁰¹ "Madeni Eşya İşverenleri Uzlaştırma Kurulu Kararını Tanımıyor [The Metal Employers Do Not Accept The Referee Board's Decisions]," *İşçi Postası*, May 21, 1964; *Maden-İş MESS Uyuşmazlığı Hakkında Rapor [The Report on the Dispute Between Maden-İş and MESS]*, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 307.

⁸⁰² *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000 [From Product to Brand: The Institutional History of Arçelik]*, (n.p.: Arçelik Anonim Şirketi, 2001), 169.

⁸⁰³ 'Arçelik Fabrikasında Grev!..', 4.

⁸⁰⁴ Ertuğrul Soysal, "Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Toplu Sözleşme Tatbikatından Doğan Bazı Meseleler," 66.

employers.⁸⁰⁵ According to the employers, the strikes took place as a result of such extreme workers' demands. MESS and the employers, therefore, put the blame on the union for the strikes, in direct opposition to the accusations of the union. Whether the workers' union or employer's union were to be blamed, it was certain that the bargaining ultimately reached a deadlock and the time had come for both sides to decide their strategies to win this game.

IV. Strategies

Both Maden-İş and MESS followed various strategies to get the other side to relent. Those strategies and their effectiveness would determine who would achieve a victory. Eventually, the employers' side came out the winner in this struggle due to its strategy of weakening the strikes and undermining the union through both legal and illegal methods. But Maden-İş' overwhelming trust in the legal mechanism and its inability to mobilize the rank and file, while at the same time resorting to those slower legal methods, cost the union too much: it was defeated and it lost entitlement rights in most of the metal plants.

During the strikes, the union declared that the metal workers went on strike only as a last resort to defend their rights.⁸⁰⁶ In order not to "kneel down" to employer's "arbitrary" rules, the workers utilized their constitutional right to strike against employers who were not ready to provide workers' rights in the workplace. In an effort to legitimize their decision, the union pointed out that the employers' union and the employers themselves were acting against the Constitution and the law. Based on that assertion, the workers' union officers claimed that the employers' "uncompromising" attitude during bargaining was, in fact, an attack on "free" unionism as established in the 1961 Constitution. When the union began to bargain with the employers, it based its workers' demands on the principles of the Constitution that stressed free unionism, a wage system based on social justice, and job security. However, the employers did not want most of these Constitutional rights to be put into effect. Maden-İş argued that MESS actually had a hidden agenda of obstructing

⁸⁰⁵ Kazım Çoçu, "Sağduyunun Zaferi [The Victory of Common Sense]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 3, (1 October 1964): 1 and 4.

⁸⁰⁶ "1670 İşçi Grev Halinde [1670 Workers Are at Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, August 19, 1964.

constitutional rights, including the right to strike, shattering the workers' unity and disrupting the mechanism of workers' representation. Such intentions, however, would only bring Turkish society back to where it was, 100 years previous. Examples of this behavior could be seen, they said, in how MESS and the employers invited the "unauthorized" Çelik-İş to sign agreements, how they sued the union and union officers, abrogated the work contracts of strikers, and threatened to resign from Maden-İş.⁸⁰⁷

The workers' representatives then adopted the same language of demanding the lawful rights and protesting the intolerant attitude of employers towards their demands.⁸⁰⁸ The head representative of Türk Demir Döküm, Sabri Kuruç, argued that although the employers earned too much, they were still unwilling to give wage increases to workers. They also pursued "tyranny" on shop floor, in particular by objecting to the demands of discipline committees.⁸⁰⁹ In the same vein, the Emayetaş and Altınbaş Nail workers claimed they went on strike only to get their lawful rights that were being ignored by the "uncompromising" attitude of employers. The placards on the factory walls asserted the same discourse of worker rights being provisions in the constitution.⁸¹⁰ The placards on a building at the cross streets of Arçelik stated: "My Father, You Should Resist For My Rights", "We Will Never Rat Out Workers" and 'We Are Striking To Buy Freedom For 15 Liras.'⁸¹¹ Rising up against the so-called tyranny of the employers, the union's language towards employers became much more radicalized than that of the previous decade.

Since the talks had turned into conflict, the union adopted a more contentious language to the employers as a class, which was represented by MESS during the bargaining and strikes. Maden-İş did not attribute the contentious relations to a single individual within the ranks of the employers, unlike it had done during the Kavel Strike; rather, it sided against

⁸⁰⁷ *Maden-İş MESS Uyuşmazlığı Hakkında Rapor*.

⁸⁰⁸ "1670 İşçi Grev Halinde [1670 Workers Are at Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, August 19, 1964.

⁸⁰⁹ Sabri Kuruç, "Yeni Düzendeki İşçi İşveren Münasebeti [The Employer-Employee Relationship in the New Order]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 66 (20 January 1964): 3.

⁸¹⁰ "Singer'de Grev Dün Başladı [The Strike Has Begun Yesterday in Singer]," *Gece Postası*, March 28, 1964; "1670 İşçi Grev Halinde [1670 Workers Are at Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, August 19, 1964; "Hakkımızı Alıncaya Kadar Greve Devam Edeceğiz [We Will Pursue the Strike Until We Get Our Rights]," *İşçi Postası*, 26 August 1964.

⁸¹¹ 'Arçelik Fabrikasında Grev!..', 4-9.

the employers as a whole, and MESS as their organization. In fact, the Maden-İş officers argued that the bargaining, in which the MESS representatives did not participate, was easily finalized. In other words, the union officers and representatives saw that its “real fight” was against MESS.⁸¹² The union also accused MESS of destroying Maden-İş in order to pursue the “status quo of exploitation”. It considered the main goal of MESS was to “strangle” those workers’ rights put forward in the constitution.⁸¹³

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to conclude that the transformation of Maden-İş’s lexicon was a radical one. Firstly, the union officers or representatives barely utilized the term “class” in their accusations against the employers. Secondly, Maden-İş kept citing its argument about “well-intended employers” who yielded to the workers’ rights and demands. In those examples, the union gave up its contentious attitude and language towards the employers with whom it could reach an agreement. Some of those enterprises were, indeed, members of MESS who began to separately to meet with Maden-İş after a certain time. The union praised such owners and presented them as the “ideal bosses” who were aware of the “common” interests between workers and employers, and thought of their employees’ interests as well as their own. After signing the agreements, the union officers or representatives advised workers to work hard to deserve what they’d earned from the agreements. In their speeches, they emphasized the “mutual” interests of employers and employees in improving the national economy.⁸¹⁴ The assumptions about “common interests” still held a considerable sway in the union’s and workers’ discourse.

⁸¹² *Maden-İş MESS Uyuşmazlığı Hakkında Rapor*.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁴ “Maden-İş’in Yeni Bir Başarısı [A New Success of Maden-İş],” *İşçi Postası*, March 20, 1964; “Maden-İş’in Yeni Bir Başarısı [A New Success of Maden-İş],” *İşçi Postası*, March 21, 1964; “Tuzla Jeep’de Sözleşme İmzalandı [The Agreement was Signed in Tuzla Jeep],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 1; “Maden-İş ECA Pres Döküm İle Toplu Sözleşmeyi Bitirdi [Maden-İş Has Finalized the Collective Agreement With ECA Press Foundry],” *İşçi Postası*, May 18, 1964; “Maden-İş Başarılı Sözleşmeler Yaptı [Maden-İş Made Successful Agreements],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 69 (20 June 1964): 2; “Cihan Komandit Elektro Metal Toplu Sözleşmeyi İmzaladılar [Cihan Komandit and Elektro Metal Signed the Collective Agreements],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 69 (20 June 1964): 2; “Philips’le de Anlaşma Oldu [The Agreement Took Place in Philips, too],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 69 (20 June 1964): 2; “Madeni Eşya İşverenleri Sendikası Parçalanıyor [The Metal Employer’s Union Is Shattering],” *İşçi Postası*, July 9, 1964; “Maden-İş Dün İki İşyeri İle Daha Toplu Sözleşme Yaptı [Maden-İş Made Collective Agreement With Two More Workplaces],” *İşçi Postası*, July 14, 1964; “Maden-İş Sendikası ile Unilever-İş Teneke Fabrikası Arasında T. Sözleşme İmzalandı [The Collective Agreement Between

Maden-İş conducted several other strategies to make the walkouts successful. As a legal entity, the union resorted to legal mechanisms to stop the unlawful acts of the employers, such as the recruitment of new workers during the strikes. In general, Maden-İş kept its traditional policy of trusting the legal mechanisms and complained about the perceived “unlawful” acts of MESS to the state officers and organs. As it was mentioned above, state organizations returned most applications of the union in their favor until September 1964. This was when the labor court invalidated the covenant between MESS and Çelik-İş regarding the Singer Factory, and the Regional Work Office threw out two applications from Çelik-İş concerning the Türk Demir Döküm Factory. However, those decisions eventually turned against Maden-İş.⁸¹⁵ Furthermore, although the Regional Office or labor courts reached some decisions in favor of Maden-İş, they were ineffective in enforcing those decisions. Then, with the weakening of the their strike positions, the workers began to join in Çelik-İş and the law mechanism, which Maden-İş was able to utilize as the authorized union by having the majority of the workers inside the workplaces, then became useless for the union.

The brief story of the Arçelik Strike is a good example of how Maden-İş failed in capitalizing on legal mechanisms. When the strike began on September 10th, the Arçelik employers applied to the district attorney by asserting that the strike was not legal on the grounds that the employers had not been informed previously about the strike date. Before the court decision, however, the Arçelik management began to recruit new workers, an act which was not in agreement with the Labor Law. Furthermore, the management sent a notification

Maden-İş and Unilever Can Factory Was Signed],” *İşçi Postası*, July 15, 1964; “İki Fabrikada Daha Sözleşme Yapıldı [Two More Collective Agreements Were Signed],” *İşçi Postası*, July 23, 1964; “Maden-İş Sendikası Simko Müessesesi İle Güzel Bir Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Yaptı [Maden-İş Signed A Fine Collective Work Agreement With The Simko Enterprise],” *İşçi Postası*, August 7, 1964; “Maden-İş 34 İşyeri İle Sözleşmeler Yaptı [Maden-İş Made Agreements with 34 Workplaces],” *İşçi Postası*, August 13, 1964; “Maden-İş 7 Sözleşme Daha Yaptı [Maden-İş Signed 7 More Agreements],” *İşçi Postası*, September 5, 1964; “Maden-İş Topkapı Merkez Şubesi Yirmi Altıncı Toplu İş Sözleşmesini İmzaladı [The Topkapı Central District of Maden-İş Signed Its Twenty Sixth Collective Agreement],” *İşçi Postası*, November 28, 1964; “Maden-İş Nürmetalle Anlaştı [Maden-İş Reached an Agreement with Nürmetal],” *İşçi Postası*, December 24, 1964.

⁸¹⁵ *Hukuk Dairesi: Rapor [The Judicial Office: The Report]*, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 40, Envelope 327. Also look at: “Talisman İşyerinde Sözleşme Yetkisi Maden-İş’e Verildi [The Agreement Right Was Recognized to Maden-İş in Talisman],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 3.

that the loss of money caused by the strike would have to be compensated for by Maden-İş. Upon the application by Maden-İş, the Regional Work Office put on record that the employer illegally hired new workers. Given this official record, the union applied to the labor court to affix a seal on the machines. The Regional Work Office also sent a report about the unlawful acts of the Arçelik management to the district attorney. But the attorney refused to issue any warning to the employers. Moreover, the court threw out the union's demand by arguing that Arçelik had a very "important" place in the Turkish economy. This was an important decision when it came to the ultimate defeat of the strike.⁸¹⁶ Since the union did not, or could not, push the legal offices through strong and effective collective actions, all its work to utilize the legal mechanisms turned out to be futile.

Another move of Maden-İş to shatter the unity of the metal employers was to negotiate with the metal employers individually. The tactic was influential to a certain degree and Maden-İş signed agreements with some MESS members. In turn, however, MESS gathered a meeting among its members and emphasized the importance of solidarity between the employers. MESS also threatened to end the membership of those who would agree to meet individually with Maden-İş.⁸¹⁷ As a result, this method was in vain, too.

It was also normal and significant for a trade union, as a legal entity, to apply legal mechanisms. Notwithstanding the case of strikes, a union must support their legal fight with strong collective actions to pressure the legal mechanisms to make progress on behalf of the workers. Here, Maden-İş clearly failed in organizing strong workers' actions. Whether the union's over-trust in the laws, or their inability to convince workers to pursue the strikes as a whole, or their failure to separate individual workplaces from MESS, or whether even the strategies of bosses/managers factored into the absence of widespread and effective workers' actions is not very clear. But whatever the cause, it was certain that the workers' union could

⁸¹⁶ "Maden-İş Sendikası Arçelik İşverenini Dün Şikayet Etti [Maden-İş Sued the Arçelik Employer Yesterday]," *İşçi Postası*, October 2, 1964; Kemal Sülker, "Arçelik Grevinde Maden-İş Sendikasını Kim Yendi [Who Defeated Maden-İş in the Arçelik Strike]," *Sosyal Adalet*, (31 December 1964): 17-20; *Hukuk İşleri Dairesi Raporu [The Report of Judicial Office]*, Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive; "Maden-İş'in Bildirisi [The Maden-İş Declaration]," *İşçi Postası*, February 2, 1965; Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye'de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler*, 282-292.

⁸¹⁷ *Dünden Sonraki Gün [The Day After Yesterday]*, (İstanbul: MESS Yayını no. 601, 2010), 31-35.

not mobilize its members efficiently. Consequently, Maden-İş, which was by far the most important workers' union in the metal sector in İstanbul, lost its battle in nearly all big metal plants in 1964 and its authorization rights in those plants disappeared. In Arçelik, for example, Çelik-İş signed a "fine agreement" as a result of the "good intentions" of the employers/managers.⁸¹⁸ Those Kavel workers who did not walkout were joined by the Sungurlar workers in Çelik-İş in September, 1964.⁸¹⁹ In fact, between the end of the September and into October, most of the important metal plants, including Kavel, Arçelik, Profilo, Talisman, Sungurlar, Türk Demir Döküm, and Gümüş Motor, recognized Çelik-İş as the entitled union on shop floor.⁸²⁰

It was not a surprise that the employers strived to get rid of Maden-İş, which was in disagreement with the bosses/managers over the organization of workplaces. In fact, the tactics applied by MESS and the managers to break the strikes proved that the metal bosses/managers of the period aimed to replace a union which sought for regulating shop floor relations as the equal partners of employers/managers with another union that did not have such cooperation on their agenda. In our interview, Hüseyin Ekinci⁸²¹ claimed that the metal bosses/managers preferred Çelik-İş to be organized in the workplaces after the Labor Law, and they, indeed, desired collective agreements with this union.⁸²² In fact, Ege Cansen affirms Ekinci's views, arguing that the Arçelik managers agreed with Çelik-İş to get rid of

⁸¹⁸ "Arçelik Fabrikasında Grev Oylaması [The Strike Vote in the Arçelik Factory]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 2, (17 September 1964): 1.

⁸¹⁹ "Çelik-İş Sendikası Grevde Perişan İşçilere Yardımcı [Çelik-İş Is Helping the Miserable Workers at Strike]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 2, (17 September 1964): 1 and 4; "Kavel İşçileri Çelik-İş'e Geçti [The Kavel Workers Transferred to Çelik-İş]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 2, (17 September 1964): 3.

⁸²⁰ "İşçiler Grev İstemedi [The Workers Did Not Strike]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 4 (17 October 1964): 1 and 4; "Bölge Çalışma Md.lüğüne İtiraz Eden Türk Maden-İş Sendikası Mahkeme Önünde de İtirazında Haksız Çıktı [Maden-İş Who Objected to the Regional Work Office Turned Out to be Wrong in Front of the Court, too]," *Çelik-İş*, year, 1 no. 5 (1 November 1964): 3; "Sungurlar Kazan Fabrikasında Maden-İş Kaybetti Çelik-İş Sendikası, Kazandı [Maden-İş Lost and Çelik-İş Won at the Sungurlar Furnace Factory]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 5 (1 November 1964): 3; "Arçelik Fabrikasında Maden-İş Kaybetti Çelik-İş Sendikası, Kazandı [Maden-İş Lost and Çelik-İş Won at the Arçelik Factory]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 6 (1 December 1964): 3.

⁸²¹ Hüseyin Ekinci was born in Erzincan and moved to İstanbul with his family after the Second World War. He has begun to work as a baseman in the Rabak Factory located in Kagithane in 1962. He was selected as the head representative from Maden-İş in 1963 and became the general chair of Silahtarağa district of the union in 1965. He was also a member of TİP.

⁸²² Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

Maden-İş in 1964.⁸²³ They perceived the ongoing strikes as an opportunity to get rid of Maden-İş; however, it should be noted that there are no written documents to prove such claims.

In the hopes of destroying Maden-İş and breaking the strikes, the bosses/managers utilized several tactics. The first of these was to force the workers to resign from Maden-İş. To accomplish this, they fired workers, transferred them to another job, or punished them under several excuses.⁸²⁴ Particularly after the union's decision to go to strike in January, the employers threatened workers to force them to resign from the union.⁸²⁵ Capitalizing on the prohibition of the strikes, the managers began to force the union representatives to comply with their wishes, and they exerted pressures on workers to resign from Maden-İş. In June, 23 Demir Döküm workers who refused to resign from Maden-İş, were fired.⁸²⁶ In the same manner, the Arçelik management also forced the workers to resign from the Maden-İş.⁸²⁷ At the end of June, Maden-İş made a declaration that put forth that the employers intimidated workers into resigning from Maden-İş to shatter workers' unity, so that management could sign collective agreements with another union.⁸²⁸ Even in the factories where the union signed the agreement, the bosses/managers still demanded workers abandon Maden-İş.⁸²⁹ These acts reached their peak during the strikes. In the case of the Singer Strike, the general manager of the factory forced the workers to disavow Maden-İş.⁸³⁰ Furthermore, after the abolishment of the *etat de siège*, "the strike threat" became more real and the employers increased pressure on workers to embrace Maden-İş.⁸³¹ In this regard, the Arçelik managers abrogated the work

⁸²³ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, January 14, 2013.

⁸²⁴ "61 İşyeri Greve Gidiyor [The 61 Workplaces Are Going into Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, May 18, 1964.

⁸²⁵ "Bozguncuların Yaptığı Menfi Propaganda Her Yerde Boşa Çıkıyor [The Negative Propaganda of Defeatists Were in Vain Everywhere]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 66 (20 January 1964): 3.

⁸²⁶ "23 İşçi İşinden Atıldı [23 Workers Were Fired]," *İşçi Postası*, June 6, 1964.

⁸²⁷ "Bazı İşverenler Baskıya Başladı [Some Employers Initiated the Oppression]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 69 (20 June 1964): 1 and 3.

⁸²⁸ "Maden-İş Sert Bir Bildiri Yayınladı [Maden-İş Published A Harf Declaration]," *İşçi Postası*, July 1, 1964.

⁸²⁹ "İşçiler Sendikadan Çıkmağa Zorlanıyor [The Workers Are Being Forced to Leave the Union]," *İşçi Postası*, January 11, 1964; "İşçilere Ne Diye Baskı Yapılıyor? [Why Are The Workers Being Oppressed]," *İşçinin Sesi*, January 18, 1964.

⁸³⁰ "Singerde 300 İşçi Greve Gidiyor [300 Workers Are Striking in Singer]," *Gece Postası*, March 3, 1964; "Örnek Bir Olay [An Example Incident]," *Sosyal Adalet*, year 2, no. 19/1 (8 April 1964): 11.

⁸³¹ *Maden-İş'le MESS Uyuşmazlığı Hakkında Rapor*.

contracts of several union representatives during the strike.⁸³² The threat and real fear of losing their jobs was the most significant reason for the majority of workers to give up on their strike plans.

In some cases, the employers/managers even came out against bargaining with Maden-İş, in spite of the fact that it was the entitled union to make agreements. For example, although Maden-İş called for the Kavel Factory to sit at the collective bargaining table, the manager, İbrahim Üzümcü, dismissed the idea, claiming that Maden-İş did not officially represent the Kavel workers.⁸³³ In the same manner, the Singer management was unwilling to sign an agreement with Maden-İş; the management, apparently, had previously signed a covenant with Çelik-İş.⁸³⁴ And like the Singer management, the Arçelik management had also signed a covenant with Çelik-İş before the strike.⁸³⁵ In fact, the metal bosses seem to be very determined to wipe out Maden-İş in the sector.

The employers also threatened to fire the current workers and recruit new workers to continue production and break the strikes. Although the Labor Law plainly prohibited the recruitment of a new worker during a strike, the metal employers/managers often resorted to this method.⁸³⁶ In Singer, the management began to hire new employees even before the strike had started. In addition, the management made the administrative staff to wear work clothes and fulfill the jobs of workers. In the meantime, the Singer managers visited workers' houses

⁸³² "Arçelik Fabrikasında Grev!.." 4-9.

⁸³³ "Maden-İş Şişli Bölgesi Kavel'le Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Yapıyor [Maden-İş Şişli District Is Making A Collective Agreement With Kavel]," *İşçi Postası*, July 29, 1964; "Kavel Maden-İş'le Sözleşmeyi Yalanlıyor [Kavel Belies the Collective Agreement With Maden-İş]," *İşçi Postası*, August 1, 1964; "Maden-İş'le Kavel Arasında Başlayan Tartışma Şiddetlendi [The Debate Between Maden-İş and Kavel Escalated]," *İşçi Postası*, August 4, 1964.

⁸³⁴ "Singerde 300 İşçi Greve Gidiyor [300 Workers Are Striking in Singer]," *Gece Postası*, March 3, 1964; "Singer İhtilafı Büyüyor [The Singer Dispute is Ascending]," *İşçi Postası*, March 24, 1964; "Singer Fabrikasında İşçiler Grev Yaptılar [The Singer Workers Staged Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, March 28, 1964; "Mahkeme Kararı [The Court Decision]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 3; "Grev İçin Bildiri [The Declaration For The Strike]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 3; "Singer'de Niçin Grev Yapılıyor [Why There Is A Strike In Singer]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 3.

⁸³⁵ "Arçelik Eşya Fabrikasında 460 İşçi Maden-İş Grevine Katılmadı [460 Workers in the Arçelik Hardware Factory Did Not Participate In The Strike Of Maden-İş]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 1 (30 August 1964): 3; "Arçelik Grevinin İç Yüzü [The Inside Story of the Arçelik Strike]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 72 (31 December 1964): 1.

⁸³⁶ "61 İşyeri Greve Gidiyor [The 61 Workplaces Are Going into Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, May 18, 1964; *Maden-İş'le MESS Uyuşmazlığı Hakkında Rapor*.

and promised to increase their daily wages if they gave up the strike and left Maden-İş.⁸³⁷ Likewise, the Arçelik managers also recruited new workers during the strike. While the Regional Work Officers drew up a record that illegal acts had been committed in these cases; the employers replied that whether the strike was lawful or not, they had the right to recruit new workers.⁸³⁸ As a result, the continuance of production in those factories was one of the important reasons in the failure of the strikes.

All those employer tactics undoubtedly weakened the strikes. But the most influential of the strategies for both sides was the utilization of the legal mechanisms to argue their case. In nearly every strike, the employers sued Maden-İş officers and strikers on the grounds that they were conducting unlawful strikes, or instigating or “provoking” workers. In the Singer Strike, the district chair of Maden-İş, İlyas Kabil, was arrested upon the complaint of the general manager.⁸³⁹ Furthermore, four union officers who wanted to address the Singer workers were taken into custody.⁸⁴⁰ In the same manner, the Emayetaş and Dever bosses sued the union officers for being engaged in an unlawful strike. However, the district attorney threw out their applications.⁸⁴¹ The Ayvansaray workers were also interrogated by police at the request of the factory manager.⁸⁴² Similarly, the Arçelik management sued some Arçelik workers for involving themselves in an unlawful strike, and later abrogated their work

⁸³⁷ “Singer İşçileri Grev Yaptı [The Singer Workers Made Strike],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 67 (30 March 1964): 1; “Singerdeki Greve 15 İşçi Daha Katıldı [15 More Workers Participated In The Singer Strike],” *Gece Postası*, March 31, 1964; “Singer İşçileri Grevi Yeni Bir Safhaya Girdi [The Singer Worker Strike Went Into A New Phase],” *İşçi Postası*, April 1, 1964; “Singerde Niçin Grev Yapılıyor? [Why There As A Strike In Singer],” *İşçi Postası*, April 1, 1964; “Singer Grevi Başarılı Şekilde Devam Ediyor [The Singer Strike Is Sucessfully Going On],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 68 (20 April 1964): 1; “Singer’deki İhtilaf Yeni Bir Safhada [The Singer Dispute is at the New Stage],” *İşçi Postası*, May 13, 1964; “Singer Grevi Devam Ediyor [The Singer Strike is Going On],” *İşçi Postası*, May 18, 1964.

⁸³⁸ Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye’de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler*, 282-292.

⁸³⁹ “Singerdeki Greve 15 İşçi Daha Katıldı [15 More Workers Participated in the Singer Strike],” *Gece Postası*, March 31, 1964; “Singer İşçileri Grevi Yeni Bir Safhaya Girdi [The Singer Workers’ Strike Went Into A New Phase],” *İşçi Postası*, April 1, 1964; “Singerde Niçin Grev Yapılıyor? [Why There Is A Strike in Singer],” *İşçi Postası*, April 1, 1964; “Singer Grevi Başarılı Şekilde Devam Ediyor [The Singer Strike is Sucessfully Going On],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 68 (20 April 1964): 1; “Singer’deki İhtilaf Yeni Bir Safhada [The Singer Dispute is at the New Stage],” *İşçi Postası*, May 13, 1964; “Singer Grevi Devam Ediyor [The Singer Strike is Going On],” *İşçi Postası*, May 18, 1964.

⁸⁴⁰ “Türk İş Başkanı ve Dört Sendikacı Nezarete Alındı [The Türk-İş Chair and Four Unionists Were Taken Into Custody],” *Yeni İstanbul*, April 6, 1964; “Demirsoy ve Türkler Tevkif Edildiler [Demirsoy and Türkler Were Arrested],” *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 68 (20 April 1964): 1 and 4.

⁸⁴¹ *Bakırköy Cumhuriyet Savcılığı Ademi Takip Kararı, 29 August 1964 [The Nolle Prosequi of Bakırköy Public Prosecutor]*, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

⁸⁴² “İsabetsiz Grevlerin Geride Bıraktığı Acı Gerçekler [The Bitter Realities Caused by the Inappropriate Strikes],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 2 (17 September 1964): 3.

contracts.⁸⁴³ The possibility of being arrested, jailed, or losing their jobs, created widespread fear among the strikers.

In addition to those prosecutions and interrogations which intimidated the strikers, both MESS and Çelik-İş applied to the labor courts or Regional Work Offices to repeal the authorization right of Maden-İş in the workplaces, and stop the so-called unlawful strikes. Çelik-İş applied to the state organs by claiming that it had majority of members in workplaces. MESS or managers, on the other hand, complained that Maden-İş was engaged in illegal acts. Until September, all these decisions were in favor of Maden-İş; however, by the time the strikes were growing weaker, the tides had begun to turn against Maden-İş. In Demir Döküm, Çelik-İş applied to the Regional Work Office and the labor courts twice; but its applications were declined. In September, Çelik-İş made another application and this time the Regional Office accepted it. As a result of several meetings, the Office provided Çelik-İş with representation rights on the shop floor. Upon the refusal of the Maden-İş objection, a collective agreement was signed between MESS and Çelik-İş, in September 1964, for this factory.⁸⁴⁴ When the strike began on September 10, the Arçelik employers applied to the district attorney, saying the strike was unlawful because the union had not informed the employer about the strike date. Therefore, MESS wanted the court to declare the strike officially unlawful and nullify it.⁸⁴⁵ The same application was made by the Altınbaş management.⁸⁴⁶ In addition, Maden-İş claimed that MESS had inappropriate contact with a person in charge in the Labor Ministry and the Regional Work Office, with the intent to

⁸⁴³ “Arçelik’te Grev Yapan İşçiler Mahkemede [The Arçelik Strikers Are At The Court],” *Maden-İş’den Haberler*, 1964/42, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive; “Bir İşçi Arçelik Aleyhine Açtığı Tazminat Davasını Kazandı [One Worker Who Had Sued Arçelik for Damages Won the Case],” *MaHa Ajansı*, 24 June 1966, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

⁸⁴⁴ “Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları İçin Çelik-İş’le Toplu Sözleşme İmzalandı [The Collective Agreement with Çelik-İş Was Signed In The Türk Demir Döküm Factories],” *MESS Bulletin*, no. 3, 30/9/1964; “Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları Toplu İş Sözleşmesini Yaptı [The Türk Demir Döküm Factories Signed the Collective Agreement],” *TİSK İşveren*, (September 1964): 23.

⁸⁴⁵ “Arçelik Fabrikasında Grev [The Strike at the Arçelik Factory],” *İşçi Postası*, August 11, 1964; “Arçelik Fabrikasında Grev!..[The Strike at the Arçelik Factory],” *İşveren*, vol. 3, no. 1 (October 1964): 4-9; *Mahkemenin Direnme Kararı ile Temyiz Layihası [The Court Decision About the Right to Resist and the Assignment of Errors]*, (İstanbul: Bükler Matbaası, 1966); Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye’de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler*, 282-292.

⁸⁴⁶ *Zeytinburnu Cumhuriyet Savcılığı Ademi Takip Kararı, 27 August 1964 [The Nolle Prosequi of Zeytinburnu Public Prosecutor]*, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

persuade them to abrogate the strikes.⁸⁴⁷ When those legal interventions added up, MESS's tactics of forcing the strikers to resign from Maden-İş, and their habit of recruiting new workers to carry on production seemed effective. The metal strikes stood on the brink of failure towards the end of September.

To conclude the point, Maden-İş eventually lost those strikes as a result of several combined effects; the employers' unity under MESS, the determination of MESS and its uncompromising attitude towards workers' demands about wage increases and workers having a say in shop floor affairs, MESS' skill in using the legal mechanisms, the employers'/managers' strong and increasing pressure on workers to break the strikes, Çelik-İş's involvement in the affairs, the failure of legal mechanisms on the unlawful employer's acts, Maden-İş's overwhelming trust on the legal mechanisms to win workers' rights, and finally, Maden-İş's inability to produce an influential strategy to strike back to the employer's moves.

Nonetheless, the strike ended with victory in some factories. In Ayvansaray, which was a member of MESS, the employer yielded to the workers' demands and agreed to sign with Maden-İş.⁸⁴⁸ In examining the terms in different collective agreements signed by Maden-İş, it appears that although the workers got significant wage increases and benefits, there was no item included in the agreement about the participation of workers in shop floor regulation, which Maden-İş defined as its key issue.⁸⁴⁹ This right was earned in just a few small or mid-sized enterprises.⁸⁵⁰ Therefore, this "success" remained a Pyrrhic victory for the union, since the widespread oppression of Maden-İş members and representatives significantly continued in the sector after the 1964 Strikes.

⁸⁴⁷ *Maden-İş MESS Uyuşmazlığı Hakkında Rapor.*

⁸⁴⁸ "Maden-İş'in Yeni Bir Zaferi [A New Victory of Maden-İş]," *İşçi Postası*, September 2, 1964.

⁸⁴⁹ "775 İşçi Zam Aldı [The 775 Workers Got Wage Increases]," *İşçi Postası*, February 1, 1964; "General Elektrik İle Sözleşme Yapılıyor [The Agreement is Being Signed with the General Electric]," *İşçi Postası*, May 14, 1964; "Maden-İş 7 Sözleşme Daha Yaptı [Maden-İş Signed 7 More Agreements]," *İşçi Postası*, September 5, 1964.

⁸⁵⁰ "Maden-İş Yeni Bir Sözleşme İmzaladı [Maden-İş Signed a New Agreement]," *İşçi Postası*, June 30, 1964.

V. Conclusion

Maden-İş lost its first institutional battles against MESS mostly on, an are in which Maden-İş invested its time and energies more than the metal workers themselves did in 1964. A union officer later admitted that while the union had pursued its struggles through a reliance upon the relevant legislation, employers effectively responded by declaring each strike unlawful and exerting pressures on the legal mechanisms to forbid them. They also made gains when they asked the legal mechanisms to arrest the strikers and union officers. Those tactics focused mainly on scaring strikers through the threat of being interrogated by the police.⁸⁵¹ Furthermore, especially during the Arçelik strike, when the labor court refused Maden-İş's demands to affix a seal on the machines by stressing the importance of the factory for the broader Turkish economy, the latter union's tactics seemed to prove the inefficacy of using legal mechanisms exclusively to win the battle.⁸⁵² In fact, according to the union officers, the freedoms provided by the constitution were defeated during the Arçelik strike.⁸⁵³ And a serious repercussion of the 1964 strikes on Maden-İş was a loss of trust towards the legal mechanisms for securing its member's rights. Therefore, Maden-İş' members in other workplaces would resort to transgressing the law in the future, rather than depending upon it.

Although the metal workers won significant material gains, and lived through relatively prosperous years compared with what they had gone through previously, as a result of the collective agreements in 1964 and 1965, the metal workers continued to suffer from insufficient representation in shop floor level. When this feeling was compounded by the reduction of their earnings towards the end of the decade, the metal workers would collectively rise again to keep their Constitutional rights and so-called natural rights that stemmed from being the producers in modern society. But this time, the metal workers and Maden-İş would not try to back actions solely with the law; rather, they would conduct more direct actions by trusting their own power and unity.

⁸⁵¹ Akgün Ersoy, "Kanunsuz Grev ve Suç Sayılışı [The Unlawful Strike and Its Being a Crime]," *Maden-İş*, year 5, no. 72 (31 December 1964): 2.

⁸⁵² *Hukuk İşleri Dairesi Raporu [The Report of Judicial Office]*, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive; *MaHa Ajansı*, 1965/9, 5 April 1965, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁸⁵³ Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye'de Grev Hakkı ve Grevler*, 282.

CHAPTER 8

THE CHANGING POLITICS AND THE ACTORS IN THE SECTOR: MADEN-İŞ, THE METAL BOSSES, AND ÇELİK-İŞ

After the defeat in the 1964 Strikes, the tension between workers and bosses/managers in most metal plants seemed to disappear for a time; nonetheless, it would escalate again towards the end of the decade over the issue of workers' earnings and workers' free union choice. In the meantime, the official political discourse of Maden-İş underwent a significant transformation by the mid-1960s. It is apparent from the union journal, and from the speeches of union leaders and conference records that the union began to follow a Marxist-socialist terminology, which assumes incompatible interests between workers and owners, rather than common, national interests. This change in discourse was especially noticeable after the union separated from TÜRK-İŞ.⁸⁵⁴ Upon adopting a Marxist lexicon, the union's official ideology would no longer hinge upon the idea that the collaborative work of workers and employers would increase the national wealth so that both sides could fairly benefit, since the exploitation of worker's by bosses was a "reality" that derived from the private ownership of the means of production, rather than the "profit greedy acts of *some* bosses." It seems that while the union representatives did not execute a Marxist discourse while organizing on the shop floor level; the radicalization of the union's discourse strained already tense relations between bosses/managers and this union, a group which had long been a *persona-non-grata* entity in the workplaces. We can conclude here that the transformation in the Maden-İş's political discourse and strategy was one of the main causes of the radical shop floor struggles that took place between 1968 and 1970.

⁸⁵⁴ TÜRK-İş had been founded in 1952 as the confederacy of the trade unions in Turkey. Although it had close relations with the Democrat Party in the early 1950s, this is replaced by the tensious relations while the DP did not recognize some rights that had been long asked by the trade unions. The general chair of TÜRK-İŞ, Nuri Beşer, resigned from its post after the military coup in 27 May and new chair, Seyfi Demirsoy, and executive committee hailed the intervention; furthermore, the union sent six representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Afterwards, TÜRK-İŞ involved in close relations with the post-coup d'état governments and often met with the governments' representatives including the Labor Minister, Bülent Ecevit. Until the break up, Maden-İş was a member of this confederacy.

Specifically after the foundation of DİSK⁸⁵⁵ in 1967, Maden-İş adopted an obvious Marxist and socialist political language. The union's publications, its officers and conferences began to analyze Turkey and its economic, social, political and cultural structure from the perspective of class struggle, which basically assumes that class conflicts are embedded in capitalism itself and, therefore, they cannot be balanced in a capitalist mode of production. Based on this theory, and by defining itself as a revolutionary union, Maden-İş declared its goal to contribute in founding a socialist country, albeit through democratic means, namely elections. However, rather than staging industrial struggles to reach their goal of a socialist state, Maden-İş's main strategy was to recruit new members as much as possible by first getting back the authorization rights which it had lost in during the 1964 Strikes. Afterwards, the union would educate those members through the perspective of Marxist class consciousness and persuade them to vote for the socialist party in the elections. But while shaping such a strategy, Maden-İş did not totally abandon the pursuit of peaceful relations between workers and bosses in the plants where the bosses/managers were eager to recognize Maden-İş.

The metal bosses, who had already displayed their disdain over the existence of the union in the workplaces in 1964, were not eager to recognize the new, radicalized Maden-İş inside their enterprises; consequently, most bosses/managers frowned upon the workers' demands of being represented by Maden-İş on the shop floor. Although their union, MESS, was one of the largest and most influential employers' unions in the country, it did not have a significant role to play in coming events; and it should be underlined that nearly all the plants

⁸⁵⁵ DİSK (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu-The Progressive Workers' Trade Union Confederacy of Turkey) was founded in 1967 by the five unions, Maden-İş, Lastik-İş (Türkiye Petrol, Kimya ve Lastik Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası - The Oil, Chemical and Rubber Industry Workers' Union of Turkey), Basın-İş (Türkiye Basın, Yayın, Matbaa Çalışanları Sendikası - The Press, Publishing and Printing House Workers' Union of Turkey), Gıda-İş (Türkiye Gıda Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası - The Food Industry Workers' Union of Turkey), Türk Maden-İş-Zonguldak (Türkiye Maden-İşçileri Sendikası - The Mine Workers' Union of Turkey, Zonguldak). The first three of those unions had been the member of TÜRK-İŞ, but they broke up with this confederacy under the allegations that this confederacy turned into a agent of the United States and Turkish bosses. Then, they founded DİSK alongside with Gıda-İş and Türk Maden-İş in 1967. From the beginning of its foundation, DİSK publicly expressed its political aim as founding a socialist country; DİSK, thus, followed a clear Marxist strategy and heavily influenced the Turkish politics until it's activities were suspended by a military coup d'état in September 12, 1980.

where the bitter struggles took place were the members of MESS. Generally speaking, it would not be wrong to consider the bosses' intolerance of Maden-İş as the unspoken policy of MESS.

For the metal workers, some of whom some having experienced the fights in 1964, and for some newer workers as well, the metal bosses/managers were not willing to recognize their rights on shop floor and they paid no attention to the working and living conditions of their employees. We can see that the metal workers also struggled to remove these injustices.

Between 1968 and 1970, Maden-İş's members and the majority of the metal workers who wanted to make Maden-İş the authorized union on shop floor clashed with their fellow workers. The two workers' unions in the metal sector mainly fought for authorization rights, and each put forth that they were the "true union of workers" which could better obtain workers' rights. In this fight, Çelik-İş used an anti-communist language that was the exact the opposite of Maden-İş's statements. In fact, Çelik-İş had always displayed a nationalist and an anti-communist stance; but it was the shift of Maden-İş's line that eventually added up to the radicalization of Çelik-İş' language. However, the majority of the metal workers leaned towards leftist Maden-İş and selected their own representatives with their free choice on the shop floor. As a result, Maden-İş, which had been defeated in many big metal plants in 1964, finally prevailed over Çelik-İş at the end of the decade.

To conclude the point, the radicalization of the political discourse of the bosses and the workers' unions had undeniably influenced industrial struggles at the end of the decade. Although the metal workers did not vote for the socialist party, and nor were they recruited among the ranks of the socialist movements as Maden-İş had hoped, they did begin to feel themselves part of a class by internalizing or consolidating certain thoughts, notions and language such as exploitation, class differences, wealthy vs. poor classes, the ideas of social justice, corrupt order, and imperialism. In this regard, this chapter will focus on the transformation of Maden-İş's discourse, its new political language and the opposing position of the bosses and Çelik-İş.

I. Maden-İş Shifts Towards the Left

The official discourse of Maden-İş in terms of the social order, economic policies, industrial relations and workers' place in modern society have made sometimes moderate, sometimes radical reformations on the unfair economic and social order caused by the "greedy acts" of Turkish employers. The union asked for state intervention to eradicate these injustices. In terms of the employers, the union's strategy had always oscillated between the emphasis on a struggle against those who did not accept workers' rights, and mutual cooperation with those who have had "good intentions" and "benevolent behaviours" towards their workers, ever since the foundation of the union in 1947. This strategy was also followed when the post May 27th governments promised to provide social justice and to tear down inequalities in Turkey. Maden-İş's politics, inspired by the rise of the left, shifted towards the explicit criticism of "the corrupt order" in which capital prevailed over labor and "wealthier classes, as the happy minority" capitalized on the resources of Turkey for their own interests. But the union's policy, which had often stressed the importance of state or laws as neutral mechanisms to protect the interests of weaker social groups, did not deviate from the framework of the post-war industrial democracy; that is to say, workers and employers, as the main groups of society, had the shared interest of improving the national economy and wealth. Both sides would benefit from economic and social development by respecting each other's rights within the framework of social justice, the limits of which would be defined by the state. Nonetheless, Maden-İş's official policy went through a significant change after the mid-1960s, due to the rising influence of TİP and leftist ideology on the high ranks of the union and its split from TÜRK-İş, and further, through to the establishment of DİSK in 1967.

The stern and uncompromising attitudes of the metal bosses towards Maden-İş and their strategy to get rid of the union on the shop floor during the 1964 strikes hardly changed the union's official language. Although Maden-İş's publications continued to accuse some employers of "stalling" on workers' rights and "exploiting them for their own pockets," the union officers stood for peace on shop floor and good relations between employers and employees for the sake of the "development of the national wealth", which would be made

possible by the resulting increase in productivity.⁸⁵⁶ A union report which reflected on the defeat of the 1964 Strikes emphasized that Maden-İş had always tried to secure workplace peace as an official union policy.⁸⁵⁷ Furthermore, in his message for the New Year, 1965, Kemal Türkler stated that the union would try to foster good relations with the *bona fide*, or “good faith” employers who were “generous” to the workers’ demands.⁸⁵⁸ Likewise, the district chairs mentioned the union’s attempts in terms of their support of industrial democracy and mutual respect between workers and employers.⁸⁵⁹ Even when the union’s official discourse began to shift towards the left, Maden-İş claimed to be respectful to the employers who provided a “fair share” to the workers.⁸⁶⁰ Accordingly, the union officers sometimes met with the employers to pursue peaceful relations in workplaces.⁸⁶¹ In essence, Maden-İş’s political line still stood for a regulated type of capitalism in which the workers and employers, as “respected and productive social groups,” would cooperate to improve the national economy after defeat in the 1964 Strikes.

However, several leftist authors who were either close to the political line of TİP, or the party intellectuals themselves, began to participate in the affairs of Maden-İş by 1964. This was a moderate deviation from the union’s old political language. Leftist writers regularly wrote in the union journal or organized workshops to educate union’s representatives and workers. In those seminars, they spoke through a mixture of Third-Worldist and Marxist terminology. Educators emphasized the unequal distribution of wealth in Turkey, claiming the problem stemmed from the “dominant economic model.” In order to

⁸⁵⁶ *Gerçek İşçi Sendikası [The True Workers’ Union]*, (İstanbul: Maden-İş Yayınları, no. 2, 1965), 13-17; *İşçiler Sendikalı Olmalı [Workers Should Be Unionized]*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Yayınları, no. 4, 1965), 15; Kemal Türkler, “İşçi Gözü İle, İşçi-İşveren Münasebetleri ve Prodüktivite [The Employer-Employee Relations and Productivity from the Gaze of Worker],” *Ekonomik Gelişmede İnsan Gücü Semineri [The Seminar on Human Power in Economic Development]*, 7 February 1966-12 February 1966, İstanbul; TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Envelope 157.

⁸⁵⁷ *Maden-İş MESS Uyuşmazlığı Hakkında Rapor [The Report on the Dispute Between Maden-İş and MESS]*, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 307.

⁸⁵⁸ Kemal Türkler, “Yeni Yılın Bütün İşçilere Mutlu Olmasını Dileriz [We Wish Happiness For All Workers in the New Year],” *Maden-İş*, year 3, no. 72 (31 December 1964): 4.

⁸⁵⁹ “Topkapı Kongresinde Ergün Erdem Yine Genel Başkan Seçildi [Ergün Erdem Was Selected Again As the Chair in the Topkapı Congress],” *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 8 (27 July 1965): 6.

⁸⁶⁰ “Singer’de Çalışanlar Uyarıldılar [The Singer Employees Were Warned],” *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 24 (7 November 1966): 2.

⁸⁶¹ “Şakir Zümre İşçileri Adına Sendikanın Teşebbüsü [The Union Initiative in the Name of Şakir Zümre Workers],” *Ma-Ha Ajansı*, 1 July 1966, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

overcome inequalities, the lecturers favoured applying a statist economic policy that would side with the interests of laborers.⁸⁶² Kenan Somer, who was a member of TİP, a professor of political science in the Ankara University, and who had translated several Marxist-Leninist classics such as *The Holy Family* (Marx), *Anti-Dühring* (Engels), and *The State and Revolution* (Lenin) during the decade, talked about the science of the working class without labeling it as Marxism in his union lectures. He was clear to address capitalism as a system, which revolved around individual ownership of the means of production.⁸⁶³ Simultaneously, some union brochures encouraged increased class consciousness in a Marxist sense for workers.⁸⁶⁴ Articles appeared in the union's journal about the necessity of a change in the economic order and of workers' participation in the administration of the country as a class.⁸⁶⁵ This moderate shift was not that influential among the union's officers and representatives, but it clearly had its effect on the language of the union journal with the assignment of Kemal Sülker⁸⁶⁶ as the editor-in-chief, in 1965.

At the beginning of that year, Kemal Sülker began to write the front-page editorial for the journal, articles which generally included a leftist lexicon. In his writings, Sülker mentioned how workers were the sole creators of wealth, how they suffered and were exploited under the capitalist system, but not simply under the "greedy acts of some bosses." The key to overcoming their problems, Sülker argued, was that workers had to be infused with a class consciousness, one which made the assumption that the interests of the workers and employers were not actually the same. In addition to defining political power as a

⁸⁶² Uğur Cankoçak, *Maden İş Eğitim Araştırma Bürosu Hafta Sonu İşçi Eğitim Notları: Türkiye'nin Kalkınmasında İşçilerin Rolü* [*The Weekend Workers' Conference Notes of the Maden-İş Education and Research Bureau: The Role of Workers in the Development of Turkey*], TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 307.

⁸⁶³ Kenan Somer, *Maden İş Eğitim Araştırma Bürosu Hafta Sonu İşçi Eğitim Notları: Sendikalar ve İstihdam Problemi* [*The Weekend Workers' Conference Notes of the Maden-İş Education and Research Bureau: Unions and the Employment Problem*], TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 307.

⁸⁶⁴ *İşçiler Sendikalı Olmalı*, 11.

⁸⁶⁵ "Sendikacılık ve Gerçek [The Unionism and Truth]," *Maden-İş*, year 3, no. 73 (15 January 1965): 2.

⁸⁶⁶ Kemal Sülker has long worked as a journalist who reported about workers' and trade union's news in various newspapers such as *Gece Postası*, *İkdam*, *Son Telgraf*. During the 1960s, he published *Türkiye Birlik* with Kemal Ilıcak and he joined in TİP. He became the general secretary of this party and a member of the general executive committee. He actively participated in the foundation of DİSK and was assigned as the general secretary of the confederacy. After 1975, he withdrew from this post and involved in writing the history of trade unionism in Turkey.

capitalist power, Sülker assumed a non-capitalist path for the Turkish economy to develop.⁸⁶⁷ Although neither Sülker's writings, nor the other articles, speeches and declarations of the union officers talked about the abolishment of private property, or even about the foundation of socialism, in a clear sense, Sülker's articles contained a certain difference from the old official political language of the union. At this point, a Third-Worldist ideology, according to which Turkey was an underdeveloped country and society due to the sovereignty of the "conservative-exploitative powers and circles," began to be influential in the union's journal. It seems, though, that the journal was not so effective among the higher officers of the union in terms of their definitions of class character for the existing order. For example, Kemal Türkler, in the Fifteenth General Congress of Maden-İş, still mentioned capitalizing on the Constitution to found a social justice order, which all the classes would equally benefit from.⁸⁶⁸

However, the activity report of the same congress also called for unionists to realize that the classes and class differences were a "reality" in modern society. The report also addressed capitalist circles as "the happy minority" who exploited the natural resources of the country for their own pockets, in collaboration with the foreign capital. This exploitation was the main reason for inequalities in the country. The report presented the idea of "true salvation" as the pursuit of a non-capitalist development methodology.⁸⁶⁹ Likewise, Türkler, in the same speech, also proposed a non-capitalist path for the economic development of

⁸⁶⁷ Kemal Sülker, "Türkiye'nin İki Önemli Konusu [The Two Important Issues in Turkey]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 1 (21 February 1965): 1; Kemal Sülker, "Sendikacılık ve Toplumculuk [The Unionism and Socialism]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 2 (15 March 1965): 1; Kemal Sülker, "İşsizlik Artıyor, Milli Gelir Düşüyor, İşçiler de Birbirine Düşürülüyor [The Unemployment is Rising, The National Income is Declining, the Workers Are Being Set Against Each Other]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 3 (4 May 1965): 1 and 7; Kemal Sülker, "Bir Yılı Değil Bir Zihniyeti Yendik 1965'te [We Did not Overcome a Year But a Mentality in 1965]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 15 (30 December 1965): 1; Kemal Sülker, "Biz Kişilerden Yana Değil, Fikirlerden, İlkelerden Yanayız [We Do not Side With People But Opinions and Principles]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 17 (1 April 1966): 1 and 6.

⁸⁶⁸ "Türkler'in Kongreyi Açış Konuşması [The Opening Speech of Kemal Türkler]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 8 (27 July 1965): 3.

⁸⁶⁹ "İşçi Sendikalarının Genel Durumuna Dair [On the General Conditions of the Workers' Unions]," *Maden-İş*, year 1, no. 11 (26 September 1965): 5 and 8; "Hakim Sınıflar ve İktidarlar [The Dominant Classes and the Political Powers]," *Maden-İş*, year 1, no. 12 (20 October 1965): 3; "Türkiye'nin Ekonomik Durumuna Genel Bakış [A General Outlook to the Economic Condition in Turkey]," *Maden-İş*, year 1, no. 14 (20 December 1965): 6.

Turkey.⁸⁷⁰ Other authors published articles in this journal that supported the severing of all relations with imperialism and full economic independence.⁸⁷¹ In conclusion, it is apparent that the union's political language began to transform to a leftist one by the beginning of 1965.

We do not have sufficient evidence to debate how the rank-and-file reacted to these publications, conference speeches, or seminars. We also have little evidences to show that the Maden-İş representatives were probably influenced more by anti-communist propaganda. For example, one Maden-İş representative claimed that foreign and harmful ideologies functioned to destroy the country by disrupting the brotherhood of workers and employers. He supported the idea of obstructing the infiltration of such ideologies among workers.⁸⁷² Moreover, Kemal Türkler often distanced himself and Maden-İş from communism upon the increasing assaults of employers or government officials. In fact, Türkler explained that Maden-İş was against communism as a platform, which was an ideology assumed by many to seek power through revolutionary methods. It was a regime of coercion.⁸⁷³ But, after the foundation of DİSK in 1967, neither he nor other union officers ever resorted to such an anti-communist discourse.

The question here is; to what extent did the election success of the TİP in 1965,⁸⁷⁴ and the TİP itself, influence the shift of Maden-İş's official political position? Zafer Aydın, who has recently published several books on the working class movements during the 1960s, asserts that the rise of an anti-imperialist movement led by the party and the YÖN movement in the mid-1960s influenced those unions, which would later establish DİSK.⁸⁷⁵ Similarly, another working class historian, Yıldırım Koç, argues that the election success of TİP ignited

⁸⁷⁰ "Türkiye Ortak Pazardan Çıkmalıdır [Turkey Must Get Out Of the Common Market]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 15 (30 December 1965): 3.

⁸⁷¹ İsmet Ercan, "Anayasa'ya Sahip Çıkmak [Looking After the Constitution]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 20 (25 June 1966): 8; İsmet Ercan, "Kurtuluş Yolu Anayasada [The Way of Salvation is the Constitution]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 21 (10 August 1966): 8.

⁸⁷² Halil Ceylan, "Bir Sendika Temsilcisi Konuşuyor [One Union's Representative Is Talking]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 2 (15 March 1965): 7-8.

⁸⁷³ Kemal Türkler, "İftiralar Son Cevap [The Last Reply to the Slandering]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 19 (22 May 1966): 2.

⁸⁷⁴ In the 1965 general elections, while AP took 52% percent of all votes, and CHP took %28 of all votes, this ratio for TİP was %3. Despite its low percentage, TİP gained to be represented by 15 members in the National Assembly thanks to the election system used in the 1965 elections.

⁸⁷⁵ Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık [The Unionism from Paternalism to Politics in Turkey]* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 323.

the hope of the left-wing unionists within TÜRK-İŞ.⁸⁷⁶ It was true that the unionists from TİP founded DİSK without taking any direct orders from the party; however, their approaches to Turkey were nearly the same.⁸⁷⁷ In fact, the influence of the TİP on Maden-İş reached its peak after its separation from TÜRK-İŞ in 1967. While the TİP members prepared reports for the Maden-İş Congresses or organized education seminars,⁸⁷⁸ there was always a gap between the union and the party; in fact, the union chair, Kemal Türkler, did not mix with union affairs and party affairs.⁸⁷⁹ But, there is no doubt that the Maden-İş's political line, which would become more radical after the foundation of DİSK, resembled that of TİP to a great extent after 1965.

The major turning point for the radicalization of Maden-İş's policy was the break from TÜRK-İŞ and the foundation of DİSK in 1967. But why did Maden-İş, which alongside some other unions had founded TİP in 1961, decide to break its ties with TÜRK-İŞ? The union's officers' answer to this question was rather ambiguous, since the union had declared TÜRK-İŞ as the "true" confederacy of Turkish unions only six months before the split. The union's abandonment of the confederacy was blamed generally on the involvement of TÜRK-İŞ with America's unions, which acted as the agents of the imperialist state. Maden-İş publications gave abundant examples of AID's cooperation⁸⁸⁰ with TÜRK-İŞ. They also published news that argued that AFL-CIO,⁸⁸¹ which was funded by CIA to pursue imperialist

⁸⁷⁶ Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi [The History of Working Class in Turkey]*, (Ankara: Epos, 2010), 214-215.

⁸⁷⁷ Sadun Aren, *TİP Olayı [The TLP Case]* (İstanbul: Cem, 1993), 111.

⁸⁷⁸ For example, look at: *Türkiye Hakkında Rapor [The Report on Turkey]*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Yayınları, no. 10, 1969).

⁸⁷⁹ Sadun Aren, 37 and 112; Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye'de Sendikacılık*, 540.

⁸⁸⁰ In the context of the emerging Cold War and Marshall Plan that the United States undertook to rebuild the war-torn Europe and save it from Communism, President Truman's government initiated a program to provide technical and financial aid for enabling underdeveloped countries to tackle their social problems effectively. After several steps, the Congress approved the foundation of the Agency for the International Development (AID) in 1961, which would supply aid to foreign countries. In this context, AID provided considerable amount of funding to Turkish institutions, including trade unions.

⁸⁸¹ AFL-CIO was founded in 1955 as a result of the merging of the two biggest trade unions in the United States. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) was founded in 1886 through the initiative of several craft union and by doing so it became the oldest federation of the American unions. In order to pursue a more industrially-based union policy, several unions left the AFL in 1935 and founded the Congress of Industrial Organization at the same year. The CIO attempted to organize in mass industrial enterprises, such as steel or auto production plants, and it organized several radical and violent strikes until 1945. Although Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 made the obligatory that the union leaders would swear

propaganda among the unions world-wide, provided TÜRK-İŞ with funding.⁸⁸² Maden-İş's official explanations also asserted that TÜRK-İŞ had given up on the interests of the laboring classes and did not strive to defend their rights anymore. In other words, TÜRK-İŞ, in their opinion, was no longer a workers' organization; Maden-İş even addressed TÜRK-İŞ "traitor" of the working class.⁸⁸³

The other important reason presented by Maden-İş was that TÜRK-İŞ did not support the important strikes such as Mannesman, Bozkurt Textile, Ataş Refinery⁸⁸⁴ and the famous Paşabahçe strike.⁸⁸⁵ In fact, the Maden-İş's reports presented the developments during the

that they were not Communists, many CIO leaders refused to take that action. However, the radical and communist leaders were purged from the union by the beginning of 1948. The CIO merged with the AFL in 1955 and the resulting AFL-CIO took a more anti-communist line in the climate of the Cold War era.

⁸⁸² "Amerikan Casusluk Teşkilatı İşçi Sendikalarına Geniş Para Yardımları Yapmış [The American Intelligent Agency Provided Large Amount of Money to the Workers' Unions']," *Ma-Ha Ajansı*, 4 March 1967, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive. Also look at: *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967, vol. 1* [The Work Report of XVIII. General Congress of Maden-İş], (22, 23, 24, 25, October 1967), 21: *Türk-İş Çıkmazı* [The Dead End in Türk-İş], (İstanbul: DİSK: Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu Yayınları, no. 1, 1967), 9.

⁸⁸³ *TÜRK-İŞ (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu) Üyeliğinden Ayrılma Hakkında Rapor* [The Report on the Separation from TÜRK-İŞ], October 1967, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 12, Envelope 8; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, vol.1*, 21; *Türk-İş Çıkmazı*, 3.

⁸⁸⁴ The workers who were members of Maden-İş in the Mannesman Pipe Mill, which was located in İzmit, a city next to İstanbul, carried out a strike in November 25, 1965 after a disagreement over the collective bargainings. The strike has come to an end in January 15, 1966 when both sides reached an agreement. In Bozkurt Textile Factory, which was located in Zeytinburnu, İstanbul, the workers walked out in November 13, 1963 due to disagreements during the collective bargainings. After a protocol was signed in November 15, 1963, the strikers returned back to work. Nearly two hundred workers in Ataş Oil Refinery in the city of Mersin which was located in the southern Turkey, staged a strike on December 21, 1963 since the workers and employers could not agree on the terms of the collective agreement. In these enterprises there were 31 workers who were the citizens of the United States and the 23 workers of them voted for the strike. However, the Council of Ministers postponed the strike on its tenth day as arguing that "it was harmful to the national security."

⁸⁸⁵ There were two unions in the Paşabahçe Factory which had been established in Beykoz, İstanbul in 1936 to produce primary glass products. Cam-İş had been founded in 1947 by skilled workers who were close to the Democrat Party under the name of Paşabahçe Şişe ve Cam Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası [Paşabahçe Bottle and Glass Industry Workers' Union]. The union would change its name to Türkiye Cam Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası [The Glass Industry Workers' Union of Turkey]. This union was a member of TÜRK-İŞ. After the 1963 Trade Union Law, a second union, Kristal-İş (Seramik Şişe ve Cam Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası Ceramic, Bottle and Glass Industry Worker's Union) was established and became influential among the Paşabahçe workers who were fond of the collective agreements signed between Cam-İş and the Paşabahçe employers in 1963. In May 1965, the Kristal-İş representatives asked the employers to create a new agreement, claiming that Kristal-İş was the authorized union in the factory. Since the employers refused to sign a new agreement, 2 200 workers stopped working and declared a strike on January 31, 1966. Towards the end of the second month of the strike, TÜRK-İŞ made a public declaration asking for an immediate end to the walkout. Afterwards, six members of TÜRK-İŞ, including Maden-İş, founded a committee to support the strike on April 6, 1966 and several other unions who were also the members of TÜRK-İŞ declared support of the strike. On April 19, the Council of Ministers postponed the strike for one month, claiming that "it

Paşabahçe Strike as the most obvious example that TÜRK-İŞ was no longer an organization of the working class. According to their narrative, when Kristal-İş had called the Paşabahçe workers out on strike in 1966, TÜRK-İŞ had initially supported it. In the meantime, however, it had signed a protocol with the employers' confederation and asked Kristal-İş to stop the walkout. When the Kristal-İş officers refused TÜRK-İŞ' request, the five unions, including Maden-İş, established a committee to support the strike. Then, TÜRK-İŞ administration expelled those unions from the confederacy.⁸⁸⁶ According to the union's version of the events, the militant unions perceived TÜRK-İŞ's move as the last straw and decided to establish a different confederation.

However, the reasons given by Maden-İş for the breakup of the unions were truly confusing. For example, a working class historian, Aziz Çelik, asserts that the real reason was the increasing influence of the AP⁸⁸⁷ on the confederacy. The right-wing AP, as the successor of the DP, had been victorious in the 1965 elections and had adopted a staunch anti-communist line opposing the increasing influence of the left, both in political and social life. The AP pursued a policy to inhibit the rise of the TİP's influence in every sphere of life, including inside the unions, which were known to keep close ties to this party. In this regard, AP was successful in augmenting its influence in TÜRK-İŞ during the general congress of 1966. Consequently, the left-wing unions realized that their breathing space was shrinking within TÜRK-İŞ. According to Çelik, the AP's move was more of an explanation than the reasons presented by DİSK or Maden-İş about the split. First of all, the unions, which would establish DİSK, had previously taken huge amounts of money from the AİD. Furthermore,

was harmful to the public health"; however, with the exception 11 workers, no other workers returned back to the work. On May 18, both sides, Kristal-İş and the employers deferred to the advice of the High Arbitration Council and the strike has come to an end. After the strike, several unions, including Maden-İş and Lastik-İş, who would later establish DİSK, were temporarily dismissed from TÜRK-İŞ. For the details of the strike, see: Çelik, Aziz and Aydın, Zafer. *Paşabahçe: Gelenek Yaratın Grev*, İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2006.

⁸⁸⁶ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası 1. Bölge Temsilciliği: Maden-İş Sendikası'nın Değerli Üyeleri, Kıymetli İşçiler [The First District Representative of Maden-İş: The Dear Member of Maden-İş and the Precious Workers]*, 1.3.1967, no. 967/7, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308; *Türk-İş Çıkmazı*, 23-31.

⁸⁸⁷ The Justice Party was founded in February 11, 1961 with some ex-members of the DP as the successor of this party. From the beginning of its foundation, it became the most important and influential party of the right wing in Turkey. It took the power after winning the 1965 elections.

even after the Zonguldak events, Maden-İş did not show any signs of wanting separation from the confederacy. Çelik seems right when he talks about the Paşabahçe Strike and its aftermath – how it can be viewed as the tipping point after a long series of events, rather than a decisive cause.⁸⁸⁸ Likewise, Yıldırım Koç states that the anti-communist climate, which augmented its influence within TÜRK-İŞ after the election of 15 TİP representatives in the National Assembly, resulted in the exclusion of the TLP unionists from the TÜRK-İŞ management in the 1966 General Congress.⁸⁸⁹ As a result, the separation from TÜRK-İŞ can be attributed to the cumulative effects of all the above mentioned developments. It seems that there was not a single cause that led Maden-İş and other unions to break away from TÜRK-İŞ. Rather, TİP's election success, AP's growing influence within the confederacy and TÜRK-İŞ's move towards the right all accounted for the separation of those unions from this organization.

Maden-İş and other unions founded DİSK in February 1967. Maden-İş hailed the foundation of DİSK as an important historical moment for the rise of the revolutionary working class:

“(…) DİSK emerged out of a revolutionary hope and became the representative of the working class among the unions with a solid foundation to revive the unionism which was dormant, shattered and defeated.”⁸⁹⁰

Maden-İş declared DİSK an organization that would fight against domestic and international exploiters, seek replacing the order of exploitation with the order of social justice, improve the national economy and make fair sharing of the national wealth possible.⁸⁹¹ After the foundation of DİSK, Maden-İş's language transformed to a radical Marxist line.

⁸⁸⁸ Aziz Çelik, *Vesayetden Siyasete Türkiye’de Sendikacılık*, 514-528. Also look at: “Türk-İş’ten Gazilik Beratı Aldık [We Got The Veteran Certificate From Türk-İş],” *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 26 (27 December 1966): 1; Aziz Çelik and Zafer Aydın, *Paşabahçe 1966: Gelenek Yaratın Grev [Paşabahçe 1966: The Strike Created Tradition]*, (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2006), 143.

⁸⁸⁹ Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi*, 214-215.

⁸⁹⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 20.

⁸⁹¹ *DİSK (Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu) Kuruluşu Hakkında Rapor [The Report on the Foundation of DİSK]*, October 1967, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 12, Envelope 8.

The most important change in the official language of Maden-İş was the adoption of the word “class” in the Marxist sense: Maden-İş’s outlook on the political, social, cultural or economic developments began to take a shape based on the perspective that class differences and antagonisms were the inherent characteristics of any capitalist regime. In light of the deaths during the Zonguldak incidents of 1965; the union’s news agency declared that:

“The Turkish working class will never forget their brothers who defended their bread with blood.”⁸⁹²

Furthermore, the phrase “working class” was inserted into the union’s statute in 1967, a term never appearing in the statutes of 1947, 1961 and 1965. Unlike the previous statutes, the 1967 statute also defined a clear mission to the union to establish an independent country based on the principles of social justices - ideas bestowed upon the Turkish working class to imbue them with a revolutionary consciousness and abolish class exploitation.⁸⁹³ Furthermore, as the chair of the union, Kemal Türkler began to define the existence of classes and class differences as an “undeniable reality” in his public declarations.⁸⁹⁴ Similarly, a more explicit Marxist lexicon based on class analysis was adapted in the union’s reports. For example, they argued that class conflict, which was reflected in every sphere of society with strong economic, political and cultural affect, was inherent to the capitalist system.⁸⁹⁵ The Report on Turkey, published in 1969, stated:

“(…) Since the basic antagonism between the laboring classes and the dominant capitalist classes stems from mode of production and distribution, the struggle does not come to an end [in the capitalist order, a.n.]. For, as

⁸⁹² “Zonguldak Olaylarının Acı Yıldönümü [The Bitter Anniversary of the Zonguldak Incidents],” *Ma-Ha Ajansı*, 10 April 1967, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁸⁹³ See: *İstanbul Demir ve Madeni Eşya İşçileri Sendikası Ana ve İç Tüzüğü*, 1947, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 5, Envelope 281; *Maden-İş Ana Tüzüğü*, 1961, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 16, Envelope 128; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası, Ana Tüzüğü* [The Main Statute of Maden-İş Trade Union, Turkey], 1965, TÜSTAV Library; *Maden-İş Ana Tüzük* [The Main Statute], 1967, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 309.

⁸⁹⁴ *DİSK Genel Başkanı Kemal Türkler’in Demeci* [The Declaration of Kemal Türkler as the Chair of DİSK], TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 28, Envelope 1475.

⁸⁹⁵ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1969-1971*, [The Work Report of XX. General Congress of Maden-İş], (10, 11, 12 September 1971), 49-63.

long as the exploitation goes on, capitalists make interventions through law in order to defend their own interests and keep [that, a.n.] order surviving. Consequently, they lead the laboring classes into new forms of actions. Yet, the conflict of interests between laboring and dominant classes cannot be overcome. Because it is impossible to abolish this basic antagonism under an order based on exploitation.”⁸⁹⁶

According to the same report:

“The interests of the Turkish working class are against those of the agha [landlord, a.n.]-‘*comprador*’ classes and usurers. That means, it is impossible to defend the exploitation rights of agha, boss, comprador, usurer and, at the same time, side with the laboring classes to protect their rights. Being rich on one side means the being poor on the other side. In this regard, a party which claims to protect the rights of both sides, and to not touch the exploitation right of aghas, bosses, and usurers, to argue for the existence of a unity or mutual interests between classes, is hiding the truth from the laboring classes, lulling them and deliberately lying.”⁸⁹⁷

In other words, the union’s social, economic and cultural analysis grew out of “the class perspective”, and the union analyzed and presented the current political, social and economic developments from that class language and its unique views. The cartoons published in the union’s newspapers began to portray the bosses as the ones who enjoyed their lives by resting on the back of poor laborers, those who knelt down and crawled on the ground.

⁸⁹⁶ *Türkiye Hakkında Rapor*, 56.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

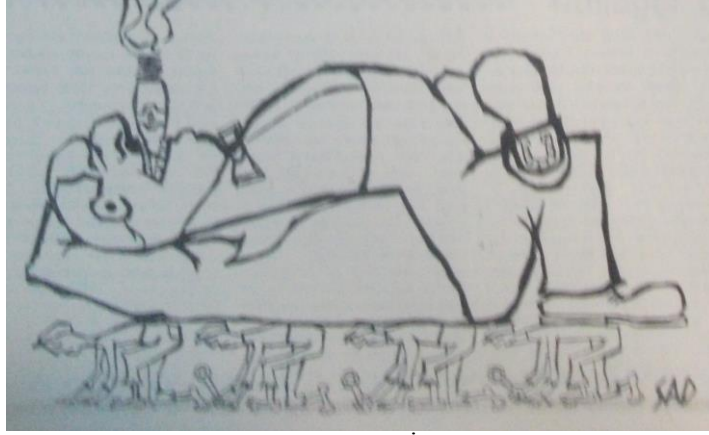


Figure 17: Source: *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969, 4.

In addition to capitalism, Maden-İş's political language censured imperialism, too. They blamed socio-economic problems and worker's miseries on the collaboration of Turkish capitalism with imperialist forces, those who actually wanted Third World countries to remain underdeveloped in order to exploit their resources more efficiently. The union reports basically argued that the social order in Turkey had been corrupted by collaboration with imperialism. Imperialism had once been wiped out during the Liberation War, between 1920 and 1923, but afterwards it seeped back into the country through economic channels.⁸⁹⁸ In this sense, the resources of Turkey were exploited by the imperialist forces, especially after the Second World War, through the willing collaboration of the various state organs. And not just the state, but the dominant classes also collaborated with these imperialist forces who aimed to exploit the natural and human resources of underdeveloped countries and enlarge their sphere of influence. Here, there was a common interest between the capitalist order and classes in Turkey and the imperialist system and forces.⁸⁹⁹ In parallel with those assumptions, Maden-İş declared its agenda would include fighting national capitalism and international imperialism simultaneously.

⁸⁹⁸ *Türkiye Hakkında Rapor*, 1 and 45.

⁸⁹⁹ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967, vol.1*, 24-26 and 51; *Milli Gelir Dağılımında Eşitsizlik [The Inequalities in the Distribution of the National Income]*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Yayınları, no. 6, 1967); *Türkiye Hakkında Rapor*, 50; "Montaj Sanayi İşçileri Eməğiniz Gavura Akıyor [The Workers in the Assembled Industry! Your Labor Is Going to the Foreigners]," *Maden-İş*, (1 May 1969): 4; "Genel Yönetim Kurulu Bildirisi [The Declaration of the General Executive Committee]," *Maden-İş*, (1 May 1969): 7; "Hokkabaz Sandığı [The Illusionist's Chest]," *Maden-İş*, no. 17 (22 October 1969): 8.

In doing so, Maden-İş abandoned their idea of a more personal cause of the injustices; the most important problem in Turkey was no longer the “exploitative or greedy behaviours of the employers”, but the broader capitalist order of private property based on individual ownership of the means of production. That means the “corruption” of order in Turkey stemmed from its very social foundations.⁹⁰⁰ Accordingly, their long-enduring view of state mechanisms had transformed: the dominant classes now held the political power and made the laws according to their class interests to maintain the system.⁹⁰¹ So the union put forth that the state’s economic policies were designed on behalf of the interests of wealthier classes, which were in conflict with those of the laboring classes; that is, the political power in Turkey functioned against the interest of the working class.⁹⁰² The state, or the current political order, which contributed to the social injustices despite being assumed to operate otherwise, made the rich richer and poor poorer. Therefore, the dominant classes were extremely reluctant to see the transformation of such a system, since they had *carte blanche* to exploit the poor people under the current one. In the report of the eighteenth general assembly of the union, it was stated that:

“We can easily say that the dominant classes cannot apply the method to prevent insurgency in this society, in the east or different regions. They cannot make planned and regular social-economic development. They cannot build a solid administration and systematic justice system. The bourgeoisie has lost the opportunity of establishing an order based on social justice a long time ago.”⁹⁰³

⁹⁰⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol. 1, 55 and 62.

⁹⁰¹ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, [The Work Report of XIX. General Congress of Maden-İş], (7, 8, 9,10 September 1969), 3.

⁹⁰² *Ibid*,158-164.

⁹⁰³ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 47. Also look at: *Türkiye Hakkında Rapor*, 57-58; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu*, 17 August 1969 [The Deed Report of the Sixth District of Maden-İş], TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 15, Envelope 180.

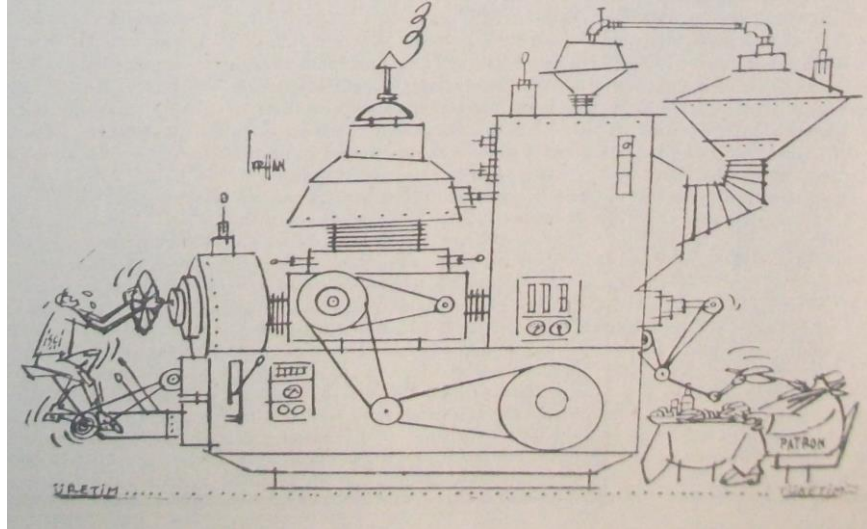


Figure 18: The production and consumption (Source: *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969, 2).

This new language claimed that those classes who had the means of production and held the political power got the lion's share from the national wealth. Yet, due to capitalist sovereignty, the working class in Turkey was bereft of many social and economic opportunities, despite being sole creator of all wealth.⁹⁰⁴ In fact, another cartoon in the union paper depicts a skinny worker operating a machine while a heavily sweating boss sits in front of a table on the other side eating the product of the machine with great pleasure. This dominant economic model, in which workers labored hard and bosses consume the products, and the sovereign state mechanism that functioned to serve the interests of the wealthy classes, was firmly entrenched in Turkey. Accordingly, workers must abolish this system to achieve their true interests since they were the true creators of the wealth, and even the true creators of factories, as another cartoon portrayed in the union's newspaper.

⁹⁰⁴ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 147; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 231-234.

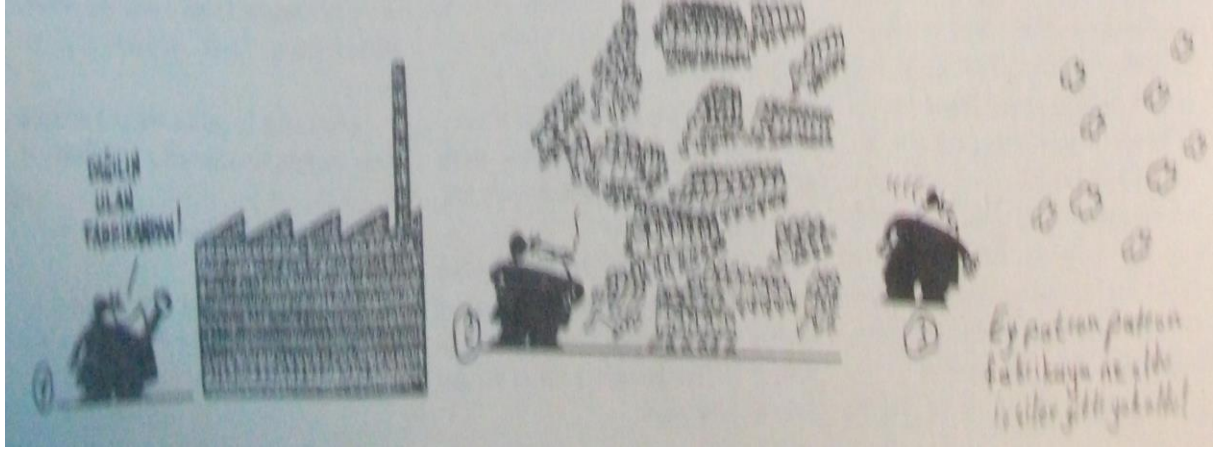


Figure 19: 1- Hey, Disperse the Factory, 3- Hey, boss, what happened to the factory. When the workers gone, it disappeared! (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 19, 1 December 1969, 2).

The union put forth its intention to be involved in a political struggle alongside other revolutionary forces in Turkey, as well as economic battles. The new union statute said that the solution of the working class dilemma would be possible only upon the foundation of a social order in which the state would be independent, and in which a statist economy would be dominant.⁹⁰⁵ Moreover, the congress' reports openly called the new order socialism, which all the unionists had to embrace because social injustices and exploitation could only come to an end under this order.⁹⁰⁶ And the most efficient and permanent way of abolishing injustices and founding socialism was through the participation of the laboring classes in the relevant state mechanisms.⁹⁰⁷ Upon the arrival of the US' Sixth Fleet to İstanbul in 1968, Kemal Türkler declared that:

“The happiness of the Turkish working class and the other laboring classes will only be possible when our country gets rid of the exploitationists,

⁹⁰⁵ *Maden-İş Ana Tüzük*.

⁹⁰⁶ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 56 and 62; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 2 and 223-224.

⁹⁰⁷ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 24; “Köylü İşgalleri [The Peasant Invasions],” *Maden-İş* (1 April 1969): 3; “Direnmeler [The Resistances],” *Maden-İş*, no. 15 (10 September 1969): 2; “4. Bölge Temsilciliğinden Haberler [The New From the Fourth District Representative],” *Maden-İş*, no. 15 (10 September 1969): 3; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*.

foreigners and their servants. This will be successful if our laboring people hold the political power.”⁹⁰⁸

That means, in addition to being organized alongside revolutionary unions, the working class would lead the founding of a socialist country, and therefore had to be a political force by being organized politically, as well.⁹⁰⁹ To such an end, the union publications and officers stated that the workers had to understand their place as a class and as free citizens society; the working class had to reach a “class consciousness”.

But Maden-İş did not interpret the establishment of socialism in the classical Marxist-Leninist terminology. To found a socialist country, the workers had to replace the current economic, social and political order in accordance with the principles of the 1961 Constitution which would pave the way for the abolishment of the “corrupt order” and establishment of a just one:

“(…) The [1961, a.n.] Constitution sides with the interests of the laboring popular classes and segments, rather than the interests of the dominant classes. And today’s corrupt order will be changed in accordance with the Constitution when the representatives of the laboring classes get the majority in the National Assembly.”⁹¹⁰

Maden-İş’s officers declared the 1961 Constitution to be supportive of the laboring classes.⁹¹¹ In its speeches, the officers promised to apply the 1961 Constitution to the fullest

⁹⁰⁸ “Kemal Türkler’in Demeci [The Declaration of Kemal Türkler],” *Maden-İş*, 15 March 1969, 5.

⁹⁰⁹ Selahattin Ünlü, “Emekçiler Birleşiniz [The Laborers, Unite],” *Maden-İş*, (7 July 1969): 2; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 6-7; “Sosyalist Türkiye İşçi Sınıfının Öncülüğünde Kurulacaktır [The Socialist Turkey Will Be Founded By the Working Class],” *Maden-İş*, no. 15 (10 September 1969): 3; Kemal Sülker, “Türk İşçi Sınıfı ve Örgütlenme [The Turkish Working Class and the Organization],” *Maden-İş*, no. 20 (8 December 1969): 2; Kemal Sülker, “İşçi Sınıfının Politik Güç Olması [Workers’ Becoming the Political Force],” *Maden-İş*, no. 21 (January 1970): 2.

⁹¹⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 24. Also look at: *Anayasada İşçi Hakları [The Workers’ Rights in the Constitution]*, (n.p.: Maden-İş Yayınları, no.8, October 1967).

⁹¹¹ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu*.

extent.⁹¹² This strategic, rather than theoretical, discourse would provide Maden-İş with a medium through which the union would argue against the accusations of the metal bosses – accusations that said the workers and unions acted only to defend their Constitutional rights by engaging in collective actions between 1968 and 1970. Maden-İş’s official policy, in fact, reasoned that the radicalization of the workers’ movements in those years was due only to the lack of proper application of the Constitution. For the collective actions, the congress’ reports emphasized that the primary social group who truly engaged in unlawful actions were employers.⁹¹³ Moreover, they called for the state forces, district attorneys, the police, the Labor Ministry and the government, all of whom the union depicted as the servants of the capitalist regime, to act on behalf of the workers.⁹¹⁴ Ironically, this union policy also accused Çelik-İş and the employers of instigating the workers by becoming involved in these unlawful acts and by not respecting workers’ free choice of union.⁹¹⁵ This irony undoubtedly stems from the fact that, despite all the revolutionary rhetoric, Maden-İş was still a legal entity - a position which the union capitalized on to reach its goals. Another point was that Maden-İş believed in recruiting new members as much as possible and educating them through the socialist ideology in order to establish socialism, rather than crippling the economic production through industrial disputes.



Figure 20: 1- Capitalism and Boss, 2- The Strike Guardian, Capitalism and Strike (Source: *Maden-İş*, May 1970, 3).

⁹¹² Kemal Türkler, “İşçi Gözü İle, İşçi-İşveren Münasebetleri ve Prodüktivite.”

⁹¹³ For example, look at: *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 146 and 154.

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 138; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 163.

In summary, Maden-İş's official policy foresaw a clear political mission for the unions. The articles in the union journal plainly targeted the AP's power because of concerns that they were trying to pass legislation to prop up the corrupt order. These laws would destroy the Constitutional rights of workers and free unionism.⁹¹⁶ Another cartoon depicts the prime minister, Süleyman Demirel, locking up a worker, saying that the capital is under lock and key and the imprisoned worker replies: Me, too! In fact, the union journal defined the AP government as a political power that was an enemy to the working class.⁹¹⁷ The journal interpreted the collective actions between 1968 and 1970 as the rise of the workers as a defined class. Those actions proved that the workers realized their class power and they would stand to fight against the current the social order. The journal presented those actions as the fight against exploitation by the capitalist classes, as well.⁹¹⁸ But the revolution would only take place as a result of the unity of all laboring classes and revolutionary groups.

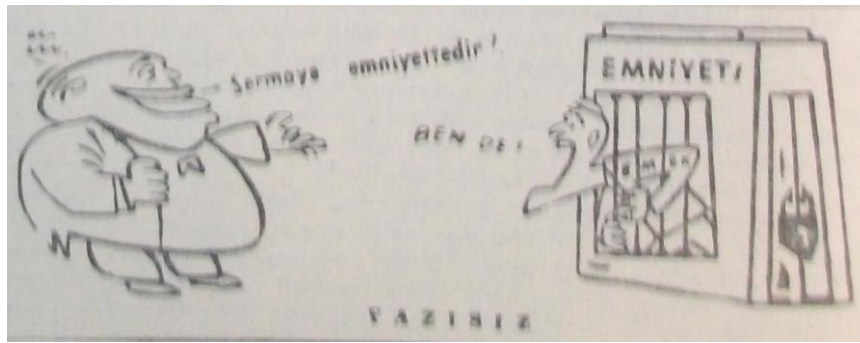


Figure 21: The fat man is the Prime Minister, Süleyman Demirel says: Capital is under lock and key. The prisoner replies: Me, too (Source: *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 2).

Accordingly, the union reports emphasized establishing alliances with other revolutionary organizations within the country.⁹¹⁹ Maden-İş began to be involved in relations with the revolutionary youth clubs, which were very active at the end of the decade.⁹²⁰ In 1965, Maden-İş declared its participation in a campaign of nationalizing oil resources and it

⁹¹⁶ "Emekçi Halka Hücum Tasarıları [The Drafts Against the Laboring People]," *Maden-İş*, (1 April 1969): 1; Kemal Sülker, "Özgür Sendikacılığa Son Verilmek İsteniyor [The Free Unionism is Desired to be Ended]," *Maden-İş*, (1 April 1969): 2.

⁹¹⁷ *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 1; "Demirelin Yediği Naneler [The Shit That Demirel Did]," *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 2.

⁹¹⁸ "Demir Döküm İşçilerinin Eylemi Örnek Olmalıdır [The Action of Demir Döküm Workers Should Be An Example]," *Maden-İş*, no. 15 (10 September 1969): 1.

⁹¹⁹ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 195.

⁹²⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 148.

was supported by the youth organizations.⁹²¹ In fact, several union members participated in a public demonstration organized by a university association to protest poverty in Turkey.⁹²² In return, the youth organizations participated in several workers' demonstrations.⁹²³ In another example, the workers and youth groups organized a joint protest meeting on the coming of the US Sixth Fleet to İstanbul on February 16, 1969.⁹²⁴

Importantly, Maden-İş's reports criticized the dominant perception of unionism; that unions solely functioned to provide their members with material gains. According to those reports, this was not how to bring "true salvation" for the workers; on the contrary, the workers' salvation lay in reaching a common class consciousness. So, the unions had to work to give that political and class consciousness to the workers who would then become involved in political and the other important matters of the country. In this regard, the reports presented Maden-İş's main goal of giving a class consciousness to workers, in terms of both an economic and political sense.⁹²⁵

The union journal and its various reports exploded with articles and news about the importance of education for the working class. According to the union journal, education would be a very significant tool in fighting against the dominant classes.⁹²⁶ A poem published in the Maden-İş Journal read:

"Learn!

Begin from the simplest one!

Learn the ABC's .Yet, it is not enough

⁹²¹ "TÜRK-İŞ ve Gençlik Emperyalizme Karşı Mücadeleye Başladı [TÜRK-İŞ and the Youth Began to Fight Against Imperialism]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 5 (7 June 1965): 8.

⁹²² *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, vol.1, 149.

⁹²³ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 198-199.

⁹²⁴ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Genel Başkanlığı [The General Chair of Maden-İş]*, 31 October 1968, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 6, Envelope 37; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 201. The students and workers who participated in the demonstration were attacked by a fascist group chanting "Communists, Go to Moscow" and saying "Allahuekber-God is the Great". Two students were stabbed to death during the incidents.

⁹²⁵ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967, vol. 2 [The Work Report of XVIII. General Congress of Maden-İş]*, (22, 23, 24, 25, October 1967), 202-217 and 225; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 5; Kemal Sülker, "Devrimci Sendikalara Düşen Görev [The Duty of the Revolutionary Unions]," *Maden-İş*, no. 17 (22 October 1969): 2.

⁹²⁶ "İşçi Eğitiminin Önemi [The Importance of the Workers' Education]," *Maden-İş*, (1 May 1969): 3.

But, you learn at first.
Do not let anybody break your courage
Begin, now!
You must learn everything
Since you will rule tomorrow
(...)”⁹²⁷

A union report written in 1969 argued that since cultural capital was in the hands of the dominant classes, and the movies or theaters served the interests of the dominant ideology, the laboring classes and poor people either lacked any opportunity to get a proper education, or were deluded by a “false consciousness”. Therefore, the content of education, movies or theaters had to be revolutionary and the laboring classes had to be provided with open access to that media.⁹²⁸ The Education Bureau of Maden-İş explained the goal of the workers’ education was to increase awareness of class-based social, economic, cultural and political events.⁹²⁹ In order to create this awareness among the workers, the union organized seminars and conferences, and gave lessons about the nature of the capitalist system, classes, the social and economic structure in Turkey. They also touted the features of the 1961 Constitution, socialism, class consciousness, the function of unions, and discussed the internal organization of Maden-İş. In 1969, the total number of workers who participated in those seminars was 1 875, and more than 3 500 metal workers participated in the conferences that same year.⁹³⁰ Although we do not have any evidence to show how the rank-and-file was influenced by such educational efforts, we can speculate about its success to a certain extent by reviewing the statements of the union’s members in the union journal.

⁹²⁷ “Öğren [Learn],” *Maden-İş*, (1 May 1969): 7.

⁹²⁸ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 170-177.

⁹²⁹ *Eğitim Dairesi Komisyonu Raporu [The Report of the Education Bureau Commission]*, October 1967, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 309.

⁹³⁰ “Eğitim Seminerleri [The Education Seminars],” *Maden-İş*, (7 July 1969): 3. Also look at: *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 178-180.

The transformation of Maden-İş's official policies certainly radicalized its relations with the metal employers. Another important question to ask here is; to what extent did the Maden-İş's rank-and-file incorporate the changing official policy of the union? And how did the employers respond to the radicalization of the union's discourse? How did the dissident workers, those who were employed in the factories where Çelik-İş had the recognition right, react to this leftist discourse? Although it was true that Maden-İş did not follow a leftist political line among rank and file, and the majority of the metal workers did not vote for the TİP in the elections, the union discourse was echoed amongst the metal workers at the end of the decade. Such a language would become more explicit over time, especially among the workers who were actively involved in the collective struggles between 1968 and 1970. Analyzing this language will be the subject of the next chapter. But first, it's time to turn to the metal bosses' response to the changing language of Maden-İş.

II. The 1960s: Hard Times for the Metal Bosses

The radicalization of the unions' political language during the foundation of DİSK created widespread anxiety among employers, men who were already worried about the growing influence of leftist ideas in the country. Vehbi Koç wrote a report on Turkey and sent it to the CHP's administration in 1965. He lashed out the current climate in Turkey, saying:

“The authors who publish leftist articles repeatedly attack the private sector (...) What sin is it if the private sector works, succeeds and makes some money under the existing laws and order? After the last strike in the Çanakkale Ceramic Factory, some leftist writers presented the income of the enterprise and wrote some articles saying ‘the enterprise earned this amount of money, the workers cannot get their deserved share’. The private sector surrendered to intimidation in the face of those attacks (...) The extreme

leftist currents significantly grew and demonstrated their influences everywhere in our country.”⁹³¹

Vehbi Koç’s pessimism and trouble about the existing political climate of the country was shared by most of the bosses during the 1960s. In fact, the post-May 27th period was truly a hard time for the entire capitalist class in Turkey. The growing influence of socialism, the widespread public debates on the idea of “social justice” and the “corrupt” social-economic-political order, and the increasing organization of workers’ under trade unions, all whittled away at the credibility of employers as a class in the period. In fact, the Arçelik institutional history, published by the enterprise itself in 2001, depicted the period as troubled times for management and employers.⁹³² In the same manner, Ege Cansen remembered this period as a “dark age” for Turkey.⁹³³ In our interview, Nuri Çelik claimed that the 1963 Labor Law, the improving unionism and the growing prestige of the left movement, intimidated the employers who had been very comfortable and had run their enterprises just as they had done in the past.⁹³⁴ According to Ayşe Buğra, a well known scholar who published a book about the history of state and entrepreneurs in Turkey, the reason why the entrepreneurs began to take an active role in social life was the increasing unionization of workers and the spread of socialist ideas.⁹³⁵ Three specific historical developments were especially terrifying for the metal employers; the election of 15 TİP candidates to the National Assembly in 1965, the foundation of DİSK in 1967, and the rise of the student movements in 1968.

In his recollections, Can Kırar, who worked as a high ranking staff in Vehbi Koç’s companies for several years, spoke of the 15 TİP members inducted into the National

⁹³¹ Quoted from Mehmet Altun, *Ortak Akıl Ararken [In Search for the Common Reason]* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008), 50.

⁹³² *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000 [From Product to Brand: The Institutional History of Arçelik]*, (n.p.: Arçelik Anonim Şirketi, 2001), 166.

⁹³³ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

⁹³⁴ Nuri Çelik, interview by author, Mecidiyeköy, İstanbul, January 16, 2013.

⁹³⁵ Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları [State and Businessman]* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997), 334.

Assembly, an event that rippled across business circles in Turkey in 1965.⁹³⁶ Vehbi Koç also admitted that such an election result worried the entrepreneurs, including himself. He even said that the TIP members who disseminated anti-private sector ideas had to be silenced.⁹³⁷ Those anxieties reached their peak after the foundation of “the militant and extreme DİSK” – a common denominator used by the reports of the employer’s organizations⁹³⁸ – on which Maden-İş had a great influence. The foundation of DİSK in 1967 further appalled the metal bosses when that union openly declared its socialist ideology. After the foundation of DİSK, MESS made a statement saying that although DİSK’s officers knew very well how the strikes bled the workers, they aimed to conduct more strikes in the industry due to their “extreme” political ideology. MESS’ declaration also asserted that, due to the DİSK’s attacks, Türk-İş would lean towards a more “extreme” position, itself, to keep its members who would be “deluded” by the DİSK’s “deceiving discourse.”⁹³⁹ The metal employer’s attitude towards DİSK would become even more radical in time. As a result of DİSK’s stance, they argued, labor unionism had taken on the structure of political unionism and diverged from its “true goals” over the preceding few years.⁹⁴⁰ In the General Assembly of MESS, organized in 1969, they used the words “sugar and honey” to define TÜRK-İş in comparison to DİSK.⁹⁴¹ In the same meeting, the metal employers talked about every move of DİSK’s being an “illegal” one.⁹⁴² Such a hostility towards DİSK was so embedded that Ege Cansen, in our interviews, still talks about DİSK as a political and militant union which “indoctrinated and brainwashed” workers against the employers between 1963 and 1980. According to him, all militancy

⁹³⁶ Can Kırâç, *Anılarımla Patronum Vehbi Koç [My Boss, Vehbi Koç, in My Memories]*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1996), 157 and 190.

⁹³⁷ Vehbi Koç, “Sanayicilere Düşen Vazifeler [The Duties of Entrepreneurs],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 11 (May 1966): 1 and 2.

⁹³⁸ For example, see: *MESS: IX. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı [MESS, The Meeting Decision Record of the IX. General Assembly]*, Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁹³⁹ “Son Gelişmeler [The Latest Developments],” *MESS*, no. 48 (16 February 1967).

⁹⁴⁰ Tuğrul Kudatgobilik, “Toplu Sözleşme Düzeni [The Collective Agreement Order],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 17 (May 1969): 25.

⁹⁴¹ *MESS: IX. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı [MESS, The Meeting Decision Record of the IX. General Assembly]*, Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁹⁴² Ibid.

during the 1960s rose as a result of the political attitude of DİSK.⁹⁴³ So the metal employers suggested taking a radical and uncompromising attitude towards workers' actions, which were assumed to promote political revolution rather than simply securing the workers' economic stability.⁹⁴⁴ The succeeding left turn of Maden-İş' language and political line assured the employers that they had to wipe out this union from the workplaces in order to secure their order.

Thirdly, the student movements which began to flourish with the rise of leftist movements in the latter part of the decade, and the establishment of independent student organizations that reached their peak during the 1968 and 1969, worried bosses even further. In fact, the student movement that began with the questioning of educational problems, and the foundation of the student organizations to solve those problems, were gradually characterized by leftist ideas that framed educational problems as just a one repercussion of the bigger social inequalities in Turkey. As a result, the students increasingly organized, not just to voice their own demands, but also to get rid of an overall unjust social order. In parallel with this, they staged huge demonstrations in which they demanded to put an end to the existing order. The employers of the time defined those movements as "extreme" ones, which disrupted the peace and social order in Turkey.⁹⁴⁵ In fact, the General Assembly of MESS saw the student and workers' movements as parallel forces.⁹⁴⁶ And the employers felt that the student movements, which were rising in Turkey and the rest of the world at that time, had "infected" work relations in Turkey.⁹⁴⁷ According to the metal employers, all workers' militancy and growing hostility towards the private sector in Turkey was caused by

⁹⁴³ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012; Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, January 14, 2013.

⁹⁴⁴ *Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası: X. Olağanüstü Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı, 1970* [The Union of the Metal Hardware Employers in Turkey: The Meeting and Decision Record of the X. Extraordinary General Assembly], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁹⁴⁵ Ege Cansen, "Bu İşin Kolayı Yok [There is No Easy Way For This]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 44 (April 1969): 1; Can Kırâç, quoted by Mehmet Altun, 34.

⁹⁴⁶ *MESS IX. Genel Kuruluna Sunulan Faaliyet ve Hesap Raporu* [The Account and Deed Report Served to the IX. General Assembly of MESS, 31 October-14 November, 1969, 14, Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁹⁴⁷ *Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* [The Confederation of the Turkish Employers], *İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor* [The Report on the Illegal Incidents Occur in Workplaces], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

“leftist propaganda” which hinged upon deceiving workers and the larger society to undermine democracy in Turkey. Given those perceptions, Vehbi Koç believed that a widespread struggle against communism was necessary, since the left deliberately undermined the credibility of the private sector to establish its own “tyranny”.⁹⁴⁸ This would add to the tense relations in the metal sector between 1968 and 1970. The next section of this chapter will concentrate on the questions of how those developing conflicts reflected on the worldview of the metal employers, and how the metal employers responded, in turn.

The first thing for the Turkish employers to do was simply to unify, like the workers had already done. To combat the increasing worker solidarity under trade unions, the metal bosses increasingly touched on the importance of being organized to defend their own rights in society. Jak Kamhi, who was an influential figure in MESS as the owner of the Profilo Iron Rolling Factory, claims that the threat of disorder in the workplaces caused by strong, political and militant unionism during the 1960s pushed the organization of the metal bosses; consequently, some of the biggest factory owners, including himself, founded MESS and strived to persuade the other employers in the sector to join.⁹⁴⁹ A brochure published by MESS called the employers to support the union by stating that the metal employers lagged behind the workers in terms of solidarity.⁹⁵⁰ MESS had actually been founded in 1959 on the initiative of owners of the several big metal plants in İstanbul. The union was established to “defend the common interests of the metal employers, provide solidarity between them, maintain harmonious and peaceful work relations on the shop floor, and contribute in the development of the national wealth.”⁹⁵¹

There were two important features of the organization that influenced shop floor relations and collective encounters in the metal sector. First of all, MESS had a significant

⁹⁴⁸ Mehmet Altun, 51.

⁹⁴⁹ *Dünden Sonraki Gün [The Day After Yesterday]* (İstanbul: MESS Yayını no. 601, 2010), 20.

⁹⁵⁰ *MESS: Tanıtma Broşürü [MESS: The Brochure of Introduction]*, Tarih Vakfı, The Archive of the Labor Ministry.

⁹⁵¹ *MESS: Tanıtma Broşürü*; Tarih Vakfı, The Archive of the Labor Ministry; *MESS Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası: Anafüzük ve Temsilcilik Yönetmeliği [MESS, The Union of the Metal Hardware Employers in Turkey: The Statute and Representative Regulations]*, (n.p.: Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası Yayınları, no. 5, n.d.); “Sendikanın İşverenlerle Müşterek Hareket Etmesi [The Cooperation of the Union with Employers],” *İşveren*, vol. 1 no. 3 (December 1962): 16; 25. *Yılımız: MESS [Our Twenty-fifth Anniversary]*, (İstanbul: Emek, 1984), 7-8.

impact on the institutional developments of the big metal plants. For example, a professor of management and industrial relations from İstanbul Technical University, İlhami Karayalçın, evaluated the foundation of MESS as a significant group that influenced the course of events in Arçelik. Secondly, the bosses/managers of the big metal plants who founded MESS were greatly influential in the affairs of the union. Thus, the policy making process within the union was shaped, directly and indirectly, through the interests of the big metal plants. Şekip Menço, İlhan Lök, Burhan Günergun, Jak Kamhi, Lütfü Doruk, Adnan Bense, and Halil Kaya were the decisive figures in MESS.⁹⁵² Especially with their stern attitudes of preventing the infiltration of “militant and political unionism” into the workplaces, their presence factored into the radicalization of shop floor relations towards the end of the decade.

Despite the attempts of the big factory owners to organize, the metal bosses were hardly interested in being unionized in the first years of the decade. Although the members of MESS had a considerable impact on the formation of TİSK in 1961, and some metal bosses attempted to be influential on the decision making process of the new laws concerning industrial life, very few of the metal bosses leaned towards the idea of the “collective defence” of employer rights, except during the period of the 1964 strikes.⁹⁵³ The 1961 Constitution broadened institutional channels that provided workers the opportunity to raise their demands. This development led the metal bosses to join in MESS, a fact that was admitted by the bosses and managers, themselves.⁹⁵⁴ In fact, after the Kavel Strike and the Labor Law, and with the approach of collective bargaining in 1964, an increasing number of enterprises joined in MESS.⁹⁵⁵ By 1964, the total number of MESS members was 145, and

⁹⁵² *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 198.

⁹⁵³ *Dünden sonraki Gün*, 17-28 and 30; Özgür Öztürk, *Türkiye’de Büyük Sermaye Grupları: Finans Kapitalin Oluşumu ve Gelişimi [The Big Business Circles in Turkey: The Formation and Development of the Financial Capital]*, (İstanbul: Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 2010), 82; Esin Pars, *Türkiye’de İşveren Sendikacılığı [The Business Unionism in Turkey]* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1974), 178.

⁹⁵⁴ İlhan Lök, “Türkiyede İşveren Teşekkülleri [The Employer’s Associations in Turkey],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 17 (1966): 238.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 244; 25. Yılımız, 12-14.

half of that number had joined the union after the beginning of collective bargaining events at the end of 1963.⁹⁵⁶

Table 5: The Number of MESS Members After 1960

Years	Number of Members
1960	17
1961	17
1962	27
1963	72
1964	145
1965	185
1966	208
1967	236
1968	240
1969	269

Source: *MESS IX. Genel Kuruluna Sunulan Faaliyet ve Hesap Raporu [The Account and Deed Report Served to the IX. General Assembly of MESS]*, 31 October-14 November 1969.

Table 5 indicates the number of MESS members doubled between 1963 and 1964 and later figures disclose a steady increase in each year. Despite this growth, the dominant worldview effective among the employers (“my business, my rules”) influenced their relations with the union. Most of the metal employers were not willing to allow any outsider,

⁹⁵⁶ *Dünden Sonraki Gün*, 31.

even if it was their own association, to intervene in the running of their enterprises. Furthermore, most metal employers showed indifference to the organization's affairs; that's why most MESS officers and factory owners still complained about the ignorance of their members towards the association's affairs until the end of the decade. That's also one of the reasons why MESS, as an organization, was less influential on the course of events between 1968 and 1970. In fact, Ege Cansen remembers MESS was as a minor actor in the employee-employer relations during the late 1960s.⁹⁵⁷

Ege Cansen was right. Although MESS had been a considerable actor during the 1964 strikes, the metal employers did not collectively respond during the events that happened between 1968 and 1970. Rather, they responded to the collective actions of workers as individuals. In the General Assembly that took place in 1970, Burhan Günergun, who was the general manager of the Türk Demir Döküm Factory from the beginning of its foundation in 1958 and a general chair of MESS in the late 1960s, would admit that the metal employers did not respond collectively, or take any action at all against the workers' militant collectives, between 1968 and 1970.⁹⁵⁸ Even in 1967, Adnan Bensele, who was the general manager of the Arçelik Factories, had talked about the inefficacy of MESS in the political sphere.⁹⁵⁹ In order to confirm Adnan Bensele's complaint, when one member criticized MESS for not participating in the meetings of the Minimum Wage Commission⁹⁶⁰ in 1969, an organization officer replied that the Ministry did not even ask them to join in the meetings.⁹⁶¹ To summarize the point, although one of the main goals of MESS was to deal with the social problems of its members, which referred to polishing the waning social prestige of the

⁹⁵⁷ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, January 14, 2013

⁹⁵⁸ *Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası: X. Olağanüstü Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı*, 1970 [*The Union of the Metal Hardware Employers in Turkey: The Meeting and Decision Record of the X. Extraordinary General Assembly*], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁹⁵⁹ *MESS: VII. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı*, 1967 [*MESS, The Meeting and Decision Record of the VII. General Assembly*], Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive.

⁹⁶⁰ By the Minimum Wage Law ratified in 1951, a commission would be gathered on unspecified time basis by the participation of the representatives of Ministry of Labor, employers and unions to determine the level of minimum wages in the every sector for each sector.

⁹⁶¹ *MESS: IX. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı*, 1969 [*MESS, The Meeting Decision Record of the IX. General Assembly*], Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive.

employers, the employers hardly acted upon this task in a collective manner during the 1960s, except during brief periods.⁹⁶²

As a result, the task of securing the respect for private property and entrepreneurs was undertaken by a few individual metal employers. Vehbi Koç's attempts were considerable in terms of ameliorating the credibility of private capital, which was wasting away.⁹⁶³ For this, Koç became more visible in the public arena. He organized conferences, gave press interviews and spoke on the radio. As a first step towards securing their credibility, Vehbi Koç and the other metal employers blamed the rise of left for their collective poor repute in the society. For them, the leftist journalists and writers who became more effective day by day were misleadingly disseminating the idea that the employers as a class were actually exploiters who considered nothing but their own profits.⁹⁶⁴ Responding to such leftist "lies", the employers confessed that the majority of society had begun to see employers as "exploiters" and "pillagers" who robbed the economic resources of the country; their profits were, indeed, perceived to be gained through unfair and illegal methods. One metal boss claimed that the leftist ideas had become so widespread and influential that even owning a workplace was seen as a crime in the 1960s.⁹⁶⁵ But the metal employers were well aware that it would not be enough to simply cast the blame on the left for all their troubles.

In addition to pointing to the left as the main body responsible for increasing social criticism towards the private sector, and increasing workers' militancy, the metal employers/managers tried to bolster the prestige of the private sector through seminars, publications and speeches in which they talked about how they actually took care of the development of the national wealth, not just their own pockets. In those events, they presented examples of how their businesses contributed to the improvement of the national economy. In their public speeches, articles and press interviews, the metal employers

⁹⁶² Esin Pars, 174.

⁹⁶³ According to Özgür Öztürk, Koç Holding was very influential in MESS. Özgür Öztürk, "Türkiye'de Sendikal Mücadele, Sermaye Birikimi, MESS ve Koç Holding [The Union Struggles, Capital Accumulation, MESS, and Koç Holding in Turkey]," *Praksis*, no. 19 (2009): 347.

⁹⁶⁴ Mehmet Altun, 48.

⁹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

mentioned how they thought primarily of the national interests and spent their time and efforts to develop the whole country against the increasing and influential criticisms about bosses being “greedy and profit-oriented.”⁹⁶⁶ Koç said the aim of the private sector was to develop the national economy without forsaking the freedoms of a “democratic order.” He claimed that the employers had to persuade the government and the Grand National Assembly that they weren’t interested solely in the contents of their own pockets.⁹⁶⁷ To disseminate this idea across the whole of Turkish society, the metal employers argued for the necessity of proving how their businesses were beneficial for the entire country.⁹⁶⁸ According to Vehbi Koç:

“(…) If we are able to keep our attitudes and behaviours going on during the next couple of years, the danger of the destruction of private property in Turkey will vanish (…) Unless we, by our self-control, will prove that we serve for this country, our existence will be in jeopardy.”⁹⁶⁹

For this, the employers had to pay their taxes and engage in social aid campaigns.⁹⁷⁰ To uphold their social prestige, the metal employers/managers presented the metal factories and their products as the pride of Turkey.⁹⁷¹ In this way, the metal employers expressed the existence of a capitalist class as indispensable; *sine qua non* of a democratic order based on the idea of social justice. And since the private sector was an indispensable part of the

⁹⁶⁶ “Deri İşkolunda Gev ve Lokavt Sona Erdi [The Strike and Lockout Has Ended in the Leather Sector],” *MESS Bulletin*, no. 13 (14 May 1965); İlhan Lök, “Türkiyede İşveren Teşekkülleri,” 239-240; VI. Koordinasyon Toplantısı [The Sixth Coordination Meeting]’ *MESS İşveren*, no. 27 (30 March 1966); Can Kırac, 118.

⁹⁶⁷ Vehbi Koç, “Sanayicilere Düşen Vazifeler,” 1 and 2; Can Kırac, *Anılarımla Patronum Vehbi Koç [My Boss, Vehbi Koç, in My Memories]*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1996), 190. Also look at: *Türkiye’de Özel Sektör ve Kalkınma [The Private Sector and Development in Turkey]* (Ankara: Türkiye Ticaret Odaları, Sanayi Odaları ve Ticaret Borsaları Birliği, 1966).

⁹⁶⁸ Ertuğrul Soysal, “İşçileri Rahat Bırakınız [Leave Workers Alone],” *İşveren*, vol. 7, no. 12 (September 1969): 3

⁹⁶⁹ Quoted by Can Kırac, 158.

⁹⁷⁰ Vehbi Koç, “Türk İş Adamlarını Yeni Görevler Bekliyor [New Tasks for the Turkish Businessman],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 14 (July 1967): 1.

⁹⁷¹ Ali M. Mansur, “10’ncü Yıldönümünde Arçelik ve Bizler [Arçelik and Us in its 10th Anniversary],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 4 (December 1965): 1; Turgut Kayakan, “Arçelik’ten Olmanın Gururu ve Bizi Bekleyen İşler [The Proud of Being From Arçelik and the Works Awaiting for Us],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 5 (January 1966): 1.

democratic and economic order, the state then had to enlarge the opportunities provided to the private sector.⁹⁷² To summarize the point, the employers aimed to kill two birds with one stone through such public relations; the first goal was to increase their profits through state help, and the second was to remake the public image of being an entrepreneur as a righteous and respected citizen.

Consequently, the metal employers often declared their loyalty to the new regime of rights and social justice. For them, the new era, the 1961 Constitution and the 1963 Labor Law provided both employers and employees with the chance of elevating Turkish society to the same level as developed, democratic countries, through mutual cooperation and work.⁹⁷³ They defined the collective agreement order as a way to maintain peaceful work relations and considered the agreement a path to institutionalizing the mutual and common interests of both employers and employees.⁹⁷⁴ In the words of Cüneyt Dosdoğru, the personnel manager of General Electric:

“Employee-employer relations are the indispensable part of production. While workers contribute in production throughout labor, the employer’s contribution comes through the production tools of enterprises and the risk of business. As long as this common order is maintained, this mechanism should function well.”⁹⁷⁵

The bosses publicly declared their stance for such ideals as the assumption of mutual interests and cooperation, as well as the need for a decent and respected place in modern social and political life, which was increasingly centred around the concept of social justice, the new rights provided by the Constitution, just income distribution, development and

⁹⁷² Hüseyin E. Sermet, “Özel Sektör ve Kalkınma [The Private Sector and Development],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 3 (March 1965): 24; Can Kırar, “Niçin Özel Sektör [Why the Private Sector?],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 5 (May 1965): 9.

⁹⁷³ İlhan Lök, “Türkiyede İşveren Teşekkülleri,” 239; Can Kırar, 118.

⁹⁷⁴ Tuğrul Kudatgöbilik, “Toplu Sözleşme Düzeni [The Collective Agreement Order],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 17 (May 1969): 25.

⁹⁷⁵ Cüneyt Dosdoğru, “Türkiye’de İşçi-İşveren Münasebetlerinin Tarihi Seyri [The Historical Course of Employee-Employer Relations in Turkey],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 21 (1970): 74.

planning based on improvement of all social groups, etc. In fact, the metal bosses specifically took up the cause of social justice; they expressed that one of their duties was to contribute in creating social justice in Turkish society.⁹⁷⁶ They also claimed to support the right to strike, on the condition that the lockout right would be also provided to them.⁹⁷⁷ Likewise, Vehbi Koç declared in his speeches and press interviews that he stood for the idea of developmentalism, just like the workers' unions; however, unlike the unions' assertions, he felt that the state had to provide more support to private capital, without which national development would spiral into disaster.⁹⁷⁸ This point is important since such differences emerged not just around the idea of developmentalism, but also around a certain gap between how the metal employers comprehended all these concepts and ideals, and how the workers interpreted them. That gap, which actually stemmed from their different class affiliations, was one of the main reasons for their radical collective encounters at the end of the decade.

Although the metal employers declared their belief in social justice and workers' rights, at the same time, they criticized nearly all workers' and union's demands regarding wages and representation rights on the shop floor, calling them excessive and harmful to businesses that fed both employers and employees, equally. When they came out in favour of the right to strike, the metal bosses also stated that every strike, whether in the metal sector or not, was at its root unlawful, and was disruptive of work peace. Likewise, they contended that strikes arose from the irresponsible or "provocative" acts of the unionists.⁹⁷⁹ The MESS Bulletin also published articles to show how the modern world opposed strike events, which

⁹⁷⁶ Vehbi Koç'un İş Hayatımızla İlgili Konferansları [The Conferences of Vehbi Koç About Our Business Life] (İstanbul: Bükler, 1963), 5-10 and 24; İlhan Lök, "Türkiyede İşveren Teşekkülleri," 245; Ege Cansen, "Arçelik'i Tanımak ve Arçelik'li Olmak [Meeting Arçelik and Be a Part of It]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 21 (May 1967): 1; "Türkiyenin Planlı Kalkınmasında Sanayiinin Yeri [The Place of Industry in the Planning Development of Turkey]," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 14 (July 1967): 11.

⁹⁷⁷ "Kavel'de İstihsal Her Yıl Biraz Daha Artıyor [The Production Increases in Kavel in Every Year]," *Türkiye Birlik*, March 8, 1963.

⁹⁷⁸ Vehbi Koç'un İş Hayatımızla İlgili Konferansları, 5-10 and 24.

⁹⁷⁹ "Deri İşkolunda Gev ve Lokavt Sona Erdi [The Strike and Lockout Has Ended in the Leather Sector]," *MESS Bulletin*, no. 13 (14 May 1965); "Hareketli Günler [The Busy Days]," *MESS Bulletin*, no. 24 (February 1966); "Sona Eren Grevler [The Finalized Strikes]," *MESS*, no. 26 (15 March 1966); "Paşabahçe Uyuşmazlığı Yüksek Hakem Kurulunda [The Paşabahçe Dispute at the High Referee Board]," *MESS*, no. 30 (16 May 1966); "Maden-İş'in Derince Grevi [The Derince Strike of Maden-İş]," *MESS*, no. 48 (16 February 1967).

caused a deterioration of everyone's lifestyles.⁹⁸⁰ Secondly, MESS said nearly all wage increase demands of the workers and unions were extreme ones, since it insisted that the wages were already relatively high in the metal sector when the wages were judged against the productivity of workers. Moreover, MESS strictly objected the idea that workers' wages in Turkey were low; on the contrary, they thought wages were quite high, countrywide. Therefore, the workers' power to purchase basic goods was also very high. Ertuğrul Soysal was the general manager of Iron and Needle Industry founded in Topkapı, İstanbul in 1951, and the general chair of TİSK between 1969 and 1970. He stated in 1967:

"The wages have been increasing by 10%, since 1963. The share of the industrial worker from the national income was bigger than those of other individuals by three to five times. Such a difference does not exist in any part of the world. Here, the workers were a happy minority (...) To what an extent, such an increase goes on? We say let's pass this year in every collective agreement. It shall not go on like this. The most expensive item is labor in my cost account (...) We are going into a deadline."⁹⁸¹

According to Ertuğrul Soysal, the workers' wages were well above the national average income per person.⁹⁸² Furthermore, MESS asserted that to increase wages before augmenting productivity would culminate in inflation, and that would be to the detriment of all citizens in the country.⁹⁸³ For MESS, the excessive wage demands would disrupt the economic balance.⁹⁸⁴ Thus, the union denounced the 1969 decision of the Minimum Wage

⁹⁸⁰ "Doğumun Kontrolüne Yeni Bir Rakip: Grev [A New Rival to the Birth Check: Strike]," and "Her On Amerikalıdan Üçü Grev Aleyhtarı [Three Americans out of Ten Opposed Strike]," *MESS İşveren*, no. 28 (15 April 1966); "Grevler Amerika'da Gazete Sanayiini Ortadan Kaldırıyor [The Strikes Destroy the Newspaper Industry in the America]," *MESS İşveren*, no. 38 (16 September 1966); "İngiltere ve Grevler [England and the Strikes]," *MESS İşveren*, no. 104 (1 July 1969).

⁹⁸¹ *MESS: VII. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı*, 1967.

⁹⁸² Ertuğrul Soysal, "Sanayimizde İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Our Industry]," *İşveren*, vol. 7, no. 9, (June 1969): 2-3; Ertuğrul Soysal, "İşçileri Rahat Bırakınız," 3.

⁹⁸³ "Sorumsuz İddialar: İşçiler Ödenen Ücretler Sefalet Ücreti midir? [The False Allegations: Are the Wages Paid to Workers too Poor?]," *MESS Bulletin*, no. 26 (26 July 1965); Ertuğrul Soysal, "Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Toplu Sözleşme Tatbikatından Doğan Bazı Meseleler," *MESS İşveren*, no. 34 (1 June 1967): 8-9.

⁹⁸⁴ Feridun Ergin, "Grev ve Ücretler [Strike and Wages]," *MESS İşveren*, no. 96 (1 March 1969).

Commission which had been agreed to by the state, and which also allowed one Türk-İş and one TİSK representative each on the committee.⁹⁸⁵ But, the differences between metal bosses and workers were not just about the existing lifestyle conditions; they had also different views about organizing work relations on shop floor.

In this regard, the metal employers were especially irritated by the workers' demands about participating in management decisions on the shop floor.⁹⁸⁶ According to Orhan Tuna, most employers in Turkey saw the management of businesses as their sole domain.⁹⁸⁷ Such an outlook was valid for the metal employers/managers. Nuri Çelik stated that the management right refers to the employee's obligation of obedience.⁹⁸⁸ In the same vein, Ege Cansen claimed that the workers' participation in management was neither possible nor beneficial.⁹⁸⁹ The metal employers who refused the Maden-İş's demand to sit on discipline committees during bargaining in 1964 claimed full authority on the labor process on the shop floor.

In conclusion, although taking a stance for social justice, workers' rights including strike and unionization rights, and just income distribution, MESS and the metal employers interpreted and presented nearly all the demands of workers as excessive, unnecessary or peace-disrupting during the 1960s. The production manager of Arçelik, Ethem Yücesan, asserted in 1968 that the Turkish workers were experiencing their golden age in terms of their

⁹⁸⁵ "Konfederasyonumuzun Asgari Ücretlerle İlgili Bildirisi [The Declaration of Our Confederacy About the Minimum Wages]," *MESS İşveren*, no. 104 (1 July 1969); Ertuğrul Soysal, "Sanayimizde İşçi Ücretleri [The Worker Wages in Our Industry]," *MESS İşveren*, no. 104 (1 July 1969); Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 232. For TİSK, look at: Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 195. Also look at: Erdoğan Soral, *Özel Kesimde Türk Mütteşebbisleri [The Turkish Entrepreneurs in Private Sector]* (Ankara: Ankara İktisadi ve Ticari İlimler Akademisi Yayınları, 1974), 159.

⁹⁸⁶ Ertuğrul Soysal, "Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Toplu Sözleşme Tatbikatından Doğan Bazı Meseleler," 65-66.

⁹⁸⁷ Orhan Tuna, "İşçi-İşveren İşbirliği: Türkiye'deki Uygulama ve Bu Konuda Mevcut İmkanlar [The Employee-Employer Collaboration: The Practice and Some Possibilities in Turkey]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 22-23 (1971): 101-105.

⁹⁸⁸ Nuri Çelik, "Türkiye'de Toplu İş Sözleşmesi ve İşverenin Sevk ve İdare Hakkı [The Collective Agreement in Turkey and Employer's Right to Management]," in *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Seminerleri, 1 Mart 1965-26 Mart 1965 [The Seminars on Collective Bargaining]* (İstanbul: Çeltüt Matbaacılık, 1965), 91. Also look at: Aydın Akbıyık, "Toplu İş Sözleşmesi ve İşverenin Sevk ve İdare Hakkı [The Collective Agreement and Employer's Right to Management]," in *Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Seminerleri, 1 Mart 1965-26 Mart 1965 [The Seminars on Collective Bargaining]* (İstanbul: Çeltüt Matbaacılık, 1965), 91.

⁹⁸⁹ Ege Cansen, "İşçilerin Şirket Sevk ve İdaresine Katılmaları [The Workers' Participation in the Corporation Management]," *Sevk ve İdare*, year 3, no. 15 (September-October 1968): 26.

income and rights.⁹⁹⁰ In reality, the metal employers perceived those workers' gains to be a result of the blessings passed down from employers/managers. In fact, MESS declared in 1968 that workplace peace, which had been made possible as a result of "generous attitudes of employers", was about to be destroyed due to the extreme demands of the unions.⁹⁹¹ The clashes between workers and employers were examples of exactly this point. The metal employers/managers displayed a certain intolerance to the workers' demands which extended beyond the bosses' "blessings"; in other words, the entrepreneurs wanted workers to accept a kind of social justice or industrial democracy framed by themselves. Nuri Çelik defined the metal employers as very uncompromising people in terms of workers' rights. In fact, the bosses' despotic methods continued to be dominant in the sector.⁹⁹² Ege Cansen's narratives about the metal bosses confirmed those of Nuri Çelik's regarding the bosses' intolerance of workers' rights. The metal bosses were actually willing to progress worker-employer relations, according to Cansen, but on the basis of paternalism. In Cansen's words:

"The metal bosses had such an understanding towards workers: 'if I recruited you to my workplace and provided bread, you have to obey my rules and feel gratitude towards my blessings.'"⁹⁹³

Otherwise, the workers were seen as disrupters of the peace, or traitors by the employers, Cansen added. When those "ungrateful demands" coincided with the political and ideological instigations of the growing left at the end of the decade, a movement which provoked a "bloody class war" for the union's own hidden agenda, the employers defence was that the social peace was threatened by workers. Those attitudes towards workers' actions to see them as seditious activities might further radicalize the struggle between workers and employers at the end of the decade.

⁹⁹⁰ Kenan Şentürk [ed.], "Serbest Kürsü [The Free Platform]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 37 (September 1968): 2.

⁹⁹¹ "Toplu Pazarlık Regiminde İşletmelerin Ücret Sorunları [The Wage Problems of Enterprises in the Collective Bargaining Order]," *MESS İşveren*, no. 88 (1 November 1968).

⁹⁹² Interview with Nuri Çelik, January 2013, Mecidiyeköy, İstanbul.

⁹⁹³ Interview with Ege Cansen, 29 August 2012, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul; Interview with Ege Cansen, January 2013, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul.

In addition to Maden-İş and MESS/the metal bosses, the other important actor was Çelik-İş, which had been able to organize several big and middle sized metal plants during 1964. This union was actually characterized by a staunch anti-communist language.

III. Çelik-İş: Workers' Rights and Anti-Communism

Contrary to Maden-İş's shift towards left, Çelik-İş represented a rigid anti-communist line in the metal sector during the 1960s. Furthermore, this union represented a deviation from the general line of policy of Turkish trade unionism in certain aspects, such as the debate over statism. Due to its ideological framework and activities, this union was accused of being a "yellow-dog union" not just by Maden-İş, but also by other Turkish trade unions. However, there is no evidence to prove such accusations. In fact, while the DİSK began to use the lexicon of revolutionary and/or industrial unionism, Çelik-İş followed a model of business unionism that began inside the American Federation of Labor, with its famous leader Samuel Gompers,⁹⁹⁴ and with its anti-communist/socialist lexicon. Under this model, the union placed an emphasis on responsible unionism; paying particular attention to the benefits of its members, as well as those of employers and common national interests. Although Çelik-İş's official discourse was close to liberalism in terms of the defence of private property, its ideological position seemed more closely tied to the traditional nationalist movements, due to its comprehension of class in modern Turkish society. Furthermore, due to the lack of evidence we do not know how the charismatic leadership of its leader, Kazım Çoçu,

⁹⁹⁴ Samuel Gompers was born in 1850. He became the first president of AFL in 1886 and held the seat until his death in 1924. Under his leadership, AFL became the primary example of business unionism as being structured around his charismatic and oligarchic leadership. The business unionism as developed by AFL also referred to a responsible unionism in terms of providing the optimal benefits for its members and dealing "fairly" with employers. Although Samuel Gompers debated about any possible alternative capitalism in the late 1890s, by the turn of the century, he declared socialist/communists as the worse enemies to the modern society. In this regard, business unionism also meant to being in opposition to revolutionary unionism which addressed the unionist activities to abolish the order of the private property. In fact, nearly two hundred radical anarchist, socialist, communist trade unionists founded Industrial Workers of the World in 1905 in Chicago, the United States to supplant capitalism with socialism. For further details, see: Foster Rhea Dulles and Melvyn Dubofsky, *Labor in America: A History*, (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1984), 142-232; and Melvyn Dubofsky, *Industrialism and the American Worker, 1865-1920*, (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1996), 35-154.

functioned in the internal structure of Çelik-İş; it seems, however, that his name was at the forefront of every union activity, especially in the union's journal.

Despite being founded in the late 1950's, Çelik-İş remained a very small and ineffective union when it came to shaping the worker-employer relations in the metal sector, up until 1963. As of 1962, the union had begun to act inside several workplaces to take authorization rights away from Maden-İş.⁹⁹⁵ The fight reached its peak during the Kavel Strike and the following 1964 strikes, and Çelik-İş seems to be victor with its strategy of business unionism, in particular while demonstrating a clear anti-communist language. Çelik-İş even attacked Maden-İş during the strikes on the charge that Maden-İş had a hidden agenda of establishing a "leftist tyranny" by provoking the workers into striking.

After the 1964 strikes, the union's politics took shape around an anti-communist ideology. It made the accusation that all actions of Maden-İş and DİSK were politically motivated ones that had nothing to do with the workers' demands and rights. In fact, the Çelik-İş discourse comprehended the TİP's election to the National Assembly, the foundation of DİSK, and the student movements, as great threats to the country and to workers' rights. Although, Çelik-İş's officials hit on the idea that the unions had to stay out of politics to defend their member's rights efficiently, Çelik-İş ironically defended the necessity of private property to stabilize the existing political system. In this regard, while following the business unionism model, it often advised the employers to provide workers' rights in order to obstruct the spread of communism in Turkey. This staunch anti-communist position provides us with some idea of how Çelik-İş defined a modern society, work relations, and their strategy as a union to get its member's rights.

Çelik-İş's officers' depiction of modern society was, more or less, in line with the hegemonic one that existed amongst the related state organs, and both employers' and employees' organizations, at first glance. That is, the union officers defined society as a

⁹⁹⁵ "Küçük Sendikalar Toplu Sözleşme İçin Büyük Sendikaları Yıpratıyor [The Small Unions Undermine the Big Unions for the Collective Agreement]," *Gece Postası*, September 13, 1963; "Çelik-İş'in İthamlarını Maden-İş Reddetti [Maden-İş Refused the Accusations of Çelik-İş]," *Gece Postası*, September 19, 1963.

family in which all individuals shared a “common” interest of supporting national development. Kazım Çoçu, the chair, objected the idea of labor as a commodity, and claimed that there were no class differences or even different classes in society; on the contrary, society itself was formed on the “common” interests of the nation. On this subject, Kazım Çoçu talked about the existence of shared interests between workers and employers in his articles.⁹⁹⁶ On the development of family, or nation, Çelik-İş assumed a high place within the hierarchy for workers, since workers had a significant role in the creation of national wealth.⁹⁹⁷ Following upon that idea, the union held that the biggest shares belonged to workers, for their contribution to the development of Turkish factories:

“While there were 500-600 workers in OTOSAN in the past, 1300 workers are laboring today. The biggest share belongs to our fellow workers in this development.”⁹⁹⁸

Therefore, the union was adamant that workers must get their deserved share from the economic-social order in Turkey. Until that point, Çelik-İş’s discourse seemed to be the same as the hegemonic approach of the period in theory; most of the unions, including Maden-İş, reflected on the existence of common and national interests before the middle of the decade. But the answer to one of the most intensely debated questions of those years - how the Turkish economy and society would further develop - differed with Çelik-İş, and not just from its rival counterpart, Maden-İş, but also from most of the unions of the period. Çelik-İş’s officers firmly objected a common idea, widespread among the Turkish unions, that statism was the best choice for the Turkish economy and society to develop.⁹⁹⁹ On this issue, Çelik-İş’s political stance seemed to be closer to the idea of private entrepreneurs of the time; it said

⁹⁹⁶ Kazım Çoçu, “İşçi Köle Değildir [Worker is not a Slave],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 90 (1 December 1968): 4.

⁹⁹⁷ Kazım Çoçu, “Sağduyunun Zaferi [The Victory of Common Sense],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 3 (1 October 1964): 1; Kazım Çoçu, *Sendikacılık Yolu [The Way of Unionism]*, (İstanbul: Bayraktar, 1967).

⁹⁹⁸ Kazım Çoçu, “Otosan’da İsteğimiz Olacaktır [We Will Reach Our Demands in Otosan],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 92 (1 January 1969): 1. Also look at: “Pancar Motor Dizel Motopomp İhraç Etti [The Pancar Motor Exported the Diesel MotoPomp],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 96 (1 March 1969): 1.

⁹⁹⁹ “Türk-İş’e Saygı ve Güven Boşuna Değildir [There is Good Reason To Respect and Trust to Türk-İş],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 97 (1 April 1969): 4.

that the private sector had to have a larger place in the economic order. The union journal is dotted with articles that argue how the more influential statist ideology in Turkey actually constituted a threat to the “order of freedom”, and even paved the way for socialism-communism. Furthermore, like the employers, Çelik-İş’s officers defended the idea that the state had to take necessary precautions so that the private sector would improve further.¹⁰⁰⁰

Kazım Çoçu objected those who saw private property as an exploitation of the natural resources of the country¹⁰⁰¹ and he stood firmly against the definition of the private sector as inhibiting the national development with its profit-oriented attitudes; the private sector, according to him, was more beneficial than the state sector in terms of economics. In every country, the “miracles” of development were realized through the encouragement of private sector interests.¹⁰⁰² In fact, the private sector provided essential employment opportunities for workers.¹⁰⁰³

Another hegemonic idea of the period, which was shared by Çelik-İş, was the common notion of the necessity of improving productivity in Turkish industry to develop the national economy.¹⁰⁰⁴ To this end, Çelik-İş’s officers assigned a duty to the workers to take on their tasks diligently. The function of unions was to motivate workers to work hard and increase productivity, it said, which, in turn, would greatly contribute to wage increases. The large unions that would fulfill this duty were seen as beneficial associations for the national interests.¹⁰⁰⁵ As for the employers, Kazım Çoçu advised them to respect workers’ rights in

¹⁰⁰⁰ Kazım Çoçu, “Kalkınmamızda Türk-İş’in Basireti [The Foresight of Türk-İş in Our Development],” *İşçi Postası*, April 5, 1968.

¹⁰⁰¹ Kazım Çoçu, “Montaj Sanayii [The Assembling Industry],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 96 (1 March 1969): 4.

¹⁰⁰² Kazım Çoçu, “Planlı Kalkınma ve Karma Ekonomi Sistemi [The Planning Development and the System of Mixed Economy],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 1 (17 September 1964): 1.

¹⁰⁰³ Kazım Çoçu, “İşgaller ve Boykotlar [The Invasions and Boycotts],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 93 (15 January 1969): 4.

¹⁰⁰⁴ O. Zeki Demirel, “Kalkınma ve İşçiler [Development and Workers],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 93, (15 February 1969): 2.

¹⁰⁰⁵ “İşçi Kardeşlerimiz Hedefimiz Milli Sanayii Geliştirmek [Fellow Workers, Our Target is to Develop the National Industry],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 2 (17 September 1964): 1; “Asgari Ücretler Konusunda Türkiye, Asya Milletleri Arasında En İyi Durumda [Turkey is the Best Among the Asian Nations In Terms of Minimum Wages],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 91 (15 December 1968): 3; “Sendikalarımıza Dört Elle Sarılalım [Let’s Firmly Embrace Our Unions],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 94 (1 February 1969): 2.

order to ensure peace in the workplace, which, in turn, would increase the productivity.¹⁰⁰⁶ The important question for the union was; how would those cooperative and mutual work environments be implemented on the shop floor?

On this point, Çoçu suggested that the more productive workers had to be rewarded through the application of a “scientific job evaluation system.”¹⁰⁰⁷ But more than this, the issue was both sides, workers and employers, internalizing the idea of social justice and how their interpretations of that idea would decide the fate of work relations. In other words, Kazım Çoçu emphasized that good work relations depended upon a brand of social justice, which would secure the interests of both sides as assurance of the order of freedom. Under such a system, the employers would recognize workers’ rights to keep order in the workplace. And, under this brand of social justice, Çoçu asserted that the workers would work harder to contribute to their factories. Therefore, productivity would increase and enterprise would increase its profits.¹⁰⁰⁸ Since all sides would benefit from a common idea of social justice and productivity increases, the system would keep functioning without serious difficulties.

Çelik-İş’s discourse defined the current situation in Turkey as incompatible with this simple framework. According to Çelik-İş’s officers, there were two main actors responsible for the lack of workplace peace in Turkey; the employers who did not recognize workers’ rights, and the “provocative unions” that were actually more interested in political aims rather than the workers’ rights and well-being. Kazım Çoçu further divided the Turkish employers into two categories: those who believed in social justice and provided workers’ rights, and the other employers who were motivated by “selfish thoughts” and did not want the workers to be organized.¹⁰⁰⁹ Rather than the employers, however, the articles in the union journal pointed the finger at the unions, which it defined as provocative (socialist-communist) to the already

¹⁰⁰⁶ Kazım Çoçu, “İşletmede Verimlilik ve İşçi Refahı [Productivity in Enterprise and Workers’ Wealth],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 5 (1 November 1964): 2; Kazım Çoçu, “Randımana Göre Ücret Sistemi [The Wage System According to the Efficiency],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 6 (1 December 1964): 1.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Kazım Çoçu, “İşletmede Verimlilik ve İşçi Refahı”; Kazım Çoçu, “Randımana Göre Ücret Sistemi.”

¹⁰⁰⁸ Kazım Çoçu, “Çalışma Düzeninde Mutluluğumuz [Our Happiness in the Work Order],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 1 (17 September 1964): 1 and 4; Kazım Çoçu, “Sosyal Adalet Hürriyet Düzeninin Teminatıdır [The Social Justice is the Insurance of the Order of Freedom],” *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 37 (1 April 1966): 1 and 4.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Kazım Çoçu, *Sendikacılık Yolu [The Way of Unionism]*, (İstanbul: Bayraktar, 1967).

disrupted workers-employers relations in Turkey. In this regard, Çoçu maintains that although Çelik-İş stood against the employers who did not provide workers' rights, at the same time, it objected to other unions that perceived and presented the entrepreneurs as enemies. In one interview conducted in 1965, Kazım Çoçu asserted that there had been no single disagreement between Çelik-İş and employers. For Çoçu, the private sector provided considerable social rights to workers. He added that he was content with how the employers grasped the idea of social justice.¹⁰¹⁰ Furthermore, Çelik-İş painted most of the big metal bosses as tolerant and eager to cooperate with workers. In this regard, the union pursued good relations with the employers and managers of those plants.¹⁰¹¹ Furthermore, the union journals frequently mentioned how the metal employers took care of their employees. However, especially towards the end of the decade, Çelik-İş began to criticize the owners more harshly by declaring that they, as the union, would no longer kneel down to any employers who did not recognize workers' rights.¹⁰¹² Çelik-İş lashed out at the Turkish employers:

“(.) it is unfortunate that most of our employers does not seem to be aware of danger of the class war which threatens our country. The important point to remember is that crowds, which are bereft of a decent life, will become the most available mean for the vicious people who seek for class differences. If our employers really stand for the order of freedom, they immediately have to seek for the possibilities that will bless the laboring people with a better life. The most important factor which will bring our country to the edge of the leftist tyranny is the people's misery which comes out of lack of good conditions for living.”¹⁰¹³

¹⁰¹⁰ “Çelik-İş Başkanı Kazım Çoçu'nun Türk Sanayii Hakkındaki Görüşü [The Opinion of Çelik-İş's Chair, Kazım Çoçu, on the Turkish Industry],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 16 (15 May 1965): 2.

¹⁰¹¹ “Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikası Hızla Büyüyor [The Türk Demir Döküm Factory Is Fastly Enlarging],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 91 (15 December 1968): 1.

¹⁰¹² Kazım Çoçu, “Otosan'da İsteğimiz Olacaktır [We Will Reach Our Demands in Otosan],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 92 (1 January 1969): 4; “Grevden Tedirgin Olmamak Lazım [There is no Cause to be Worried About Strike],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 94 (1 February 1969): 2; Kazım Çoçu, “İşverenin Oyunu [The Employer's Ploy],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 95 (15 February 1969): 1; “Eveleme Geveleme Ben Gidemem [Don't Mince, I Can't Accept],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 97 (1 April 1969): 2.

¹⁰¹³ Kazım Çoçu, *Sendikacılık Yolu [The Way of Unionism]*, (İstanbul: Bayraktar, 1967), 104.

After 1968, Çelik-İş began to highlight the second category of employers who did not recognize workers' rights and who acted in a selfish manner.¹⁰¹⁴ Further, Çelik-İş organized a strike in Levent Madeni Eşya, in May 1969, to defend its member's rights.¹⁰¹⁵ The intolerance of employers, they claimed, was the force dragging the workers into the political and provocative unions.¹⁰¹⁶ As a result, the threat of communism was growing day by day in Turkey. In truth, the communist threat was the most burning issue for Çelik-İş.

In those times when Çelik-İş increased its criticisms towards employers, Çelik-İş simultaneously presented "the irresponsible unionists", those who instigated workers to act against their employers for their own political aims, as the main reason for the lack of peace in workplaces. Çelik-İş claimed these unionists had no interest in worker rights. According to an article in the union journal, a unionist who really sided with workers would say:

"(...) We analyzed the current condition of your workplace, that is, its economic and financial situation. Following this analysis, we demanded wage increases and social rights which cannot be supported under current conditions. After the bargaining process, we reached an agreement over most of our demands (...) We never lead the way by undermining your workplace and lowering your economic and social conditions into further misery by demanding items which your employers cannot give (...)

Our beloved brothers, we never want you to be involved in fights with your bosses; such a fight will never be beneficial; neither to you nor to your bosses or the country (...) If there is a fight between workers and employers, our

¹⁰¹⁴ "Hepten Kendine Yontan, Bindığı Dalı Keser [Those Who Act Selfishly Cut Their Own Throats]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 64 (1 August 1967): 2; Kazım Çoçu, "Nereye Gidiyoruz? [Where We Are Heading]," *İşçi Postası*, October 1, 1968; Kazım Çoçu, "Allah Belasını Versin Sarı Sendikaların [God Damn the Yellow Unions]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 87 (15 October 1968): 1; Kazım Çoçu, "Bazı İşverenler Çok Yanlış Yoldadır [Some Employers Pursue Wrong Ways]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 89 (15 November 1968): 1 and 4; Kazım Çoçu, "İşçi Köle Değildir [Worker is not a Slave]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 90 (1 December 1968): 1; "Otosan Büyük Sözleşme Komitesi Toplantı [The Agreement Committee Assembled in Otosan]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 95 (15 February 1969): 3; "Ay'a Gidenler ve Biz [We and Others Who Go to the Moon]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4 no. 92 (1 January 1969): 2.

¹⁰¹⁵ Kazım Çoçu "Levent'e Dair [About the Levent Strike]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 100 (15 May 1969): 4.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ahmet Arkan, "Herkes Aya, Biz Yaya [Everyone Goes to Moon, We Are on Foots]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 95 (15 February 1969): 4.

national industry will collapse, the factories will be closed, we will all be unemployed and we will be forced to leave our country to find a work and chase after our bread.

We do not believe that the rights of our fellow workers can be earned through fighting, we believe that every good result can be reached through agreement and compromise. Nonetheless, when we encounter vicious employers who abstain from providing your rights despite the good economic position of the workplace, we do not refrain from seeking your rights within the framework of the law.”¹⁰¹⁷

But a unionist who did not side with workers would tell them:

“(…) Our aim is to make you boss and make your boss workers. Until now, while you worked like slaves, they lived in the mansions; from now on, you will be like a boss, your boss will be slaves under your mandate.

(…) We want your wages to increase by double, the condition of your workplace is none of our business. We do not care if any workplace, which does not provide wages we ask, is closed (…)

(…) Our heroic brothers, we wanted the union’s representatives be paid to do no work and to have a right to participate in the factory management (…)

(…) there was no agreement since your bosses who relentlessly exploit you did not agree with those demands (…)

Even if the factory is closed, even if you become hungry, even if your family and children fall into misery on streets, we will insist on our decision as your mighty representatives (…)”¹⁰¹⁸

¹⁰¹⁷ “İşçiden Yana Olan Bir Sendikacı İşçiye Böyle Söyleyecektir [An Unionist Who Sides With Worker Will Harangue Worker Like This],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 11 (15 February 1965): 2.

¹⁰¹⁸ “İşçiden Yana Olmayan Bir Sendikacı İşçiye Şöyle Nutuk Çekecektir [An Unionist Who Does not Side With Worker Will Harangue Like This],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 11 (15 February 1965): 2.

Kazım Çoçu asserted that the secret goal of that kind of unionist was to create a class war by capitalizing on every disagreement between workers and employers. In every battle, they misleadingly encouraged workers to stage strikes without estimating the likely damages of such acts upon the workers themselves, and upon national industry. Those unionists motivated workers to act against the law, as was obvious from what it had happened during the metal strikes in 1964.¹⁰¹⁹ For Çelik-İş's discourse, the main goal of the "provocative" unionists was to found a "communist tyranny" in Turkey.

Çelik-İş was a union that followed the methods of business unionism and presented a staunch anti-communist stance during the 1960s and 1970s. In its views, the method of conflict and class war, which the "provocative" unionists were assumed to conduct to get workers' rights, would bring the country to the edge of communism, which Çelik-İş perceived as the great destroyer of workers' rights. In fact, communists wanted only "chaos", under the excuse of class differences inherent to every society, to found their own "tyrannies". According to the union's political discourse, while the most powerful unions existed in the countries where there the sovereignty of private property hinged upon the idea of social justice, there was no union freedom at all in communist countries.¹⁰²⁰ The communist ideology called for bloody wars, but the ideology of "free" order searched for human happiness.¹⁰²¹ In other words, communists sought an order in which there was no freedom. Çoçu says that the real "yellow-dog unionism" was dominant in communist countries. Using this reasoning, Çoçu also accused the so-called ideological unions, such as Maden-İş, of being yellow ones. For them, both the "yellow" and "provocative" unions referred to the same thing. They did not heed workers' rights; on the contrary, they secretly agreed with employers

¹⁰¹⁹ Kazım Çoçu, "Zonguldak Olaylarının Sorumluları İşçiden Yana Olmayan Tahrikçilerdir [The Responsible of the Zonguldak Incidents Are the Provocators Who Do Not Side With Workers]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 13 (15 March 1965): 1 and 4; "Çelik-İş'in Bildirisi [The Declaration of Çelik-İş]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 13 (15 March 1965): 1 and 4; "Genel Başkan Kazım Çoçu: Güçlü Sendikaları Birliğe Davet Etti ve Zarurettir Dedi [The Chair, Kazım Çoçu, Invited the Powerful Unions to Cooperation By Stating Its Necessity]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 90 (1 December 1968): 4.

¹⁰²⁰ Kazım Çoçu, "İşçi Köle Değildir [Worker is not a Slave]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 90 (1 December 1968): 4; "Patron Devlet ve Hür Sendikacılık [The Boss State and Free Unionism]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 93 (15 January 1969): 2.

¹⁰²¹ Kazım Çoçu, "Yurdu Sevmek Lazım [It Is Necessary to Love the Land]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 102 (1 August 1969): 4.

and instigated workers' involvement in unlawful acts.¹⁰²² In fact, Çelik-İş declared DİSK on the industrial scene, and TİP on the political scene, to be the most dangerous of actors, one which followed a Marxist-communist agenda. Before the foundation of DİSK, Çelik-İş had already accused Maden-İş of being communist, since, in 1961, it was one of the founders of "the Marxist TİP". Çelik-İş officers argued that the Maden-İş unionists were, at the same time, the members of TİP who pursued an agenda of creating class conflicts against employers.¹⁰²³ Those unionists were dealing with the success of their political ideologies, namely communism, but not workers' rights or well-being. The Maden-İş officers staged collective actions for their own "pious revolutionary" purposes.¹⁰²⁴ For Çoçu, Maden-İş dragged the workers into poverty by encouraging them to strike in 1963 and 1964; but the Maden-İş officers actually sought their own fortunes and fame.¹⁰²⁵ Furthermore, for Çoçu, DİSK founders, (one of them was Maden-İş) actually aimed to "exploit" workers for their own political purposes.¹⁰²⁶ In fact, the "unlawful and destructive" workers' collective acts began with the foundation of the "anarchist DİSK."¹⁰²⁷

Çelik-İş's officers also declared TİP to be against the order of private property, and of having the agenda destroy democratic order and establish a communist tyranny. Çelik-İş highly criticized the TİP's representatives at the Assembly.¹⁰²⁸ Those representatives who called for socialism wanted workers to be harshly exploited by their employers so that they could incite class hostilities in Turkey, with the end goal of founding communism. By hiding behind the idea of social justice, they propagated the idea that the social order was corrupt,

¹⁰²² "Sarı Sendikacılar ve Ötesi [The Yellow Unionists and Beyond]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 87 (15 October 1968): 3.

¹⁰²³ Kazım Çoçu, "Türk İşçisi Özgürlüğü İçinde Mutlu Olma İsteğindedir [The Turkish Worker Want To Be Happy in the Order of Freedom]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 11 (15 February 1965): 1 and 4.

¹⁰²⁴ "Kavele Duyuru [The Declaration to Kavel]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 88 (1 November 1968): 2.

¹⁰²⁵ Kazım Çoçu, "Grev [Strike]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 8 (31 December 1964): 1.

¹⁰²⁶ Kazım Çoçu, *Sendikacılık Yolu*, 148.

¹⁰²⁷ Kazım Çoçu, "Bölünme [The Separation]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 55 (15 February 1967): 1 and 4; Rebii Şenkartal, "İşçi Tasvip Etmiyor [Worker Does not Approve]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 94 (1 February 1969): 3.

¹⁰²⁸ "Türkiye Vietnam Olmayacaktır [Turkey Will not be Vietnam]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 67, (1 September 1967): 3.

and in doing so, they actually aimed to destroy the order of “freedom”.¹⁰²⁹ Similarly, Kazım Çoçu presented the student movements in 1968 as “anarchist” incidents, which would bring Turkey to the brink of destruction.¹⁰³⁰ Those approaches to class movements, which were on the rise between 1968 and 1970, would radicalize the fight between Maden-İş and Çelik-İş.

It is apparent that Çelik-İş analyzed the events between 1968 and 1970 from this perspective. For the union journal, DİSK resorted to unlawful acts in that period as they saw them as necessary outcomes of the destructive actions of students and TİP.¹⁰³¹ Starting in early 1968, Çelik-İş claimed that the provocative unionists wanted to create anarchy among the workers and class differences between employers and employees by capitalizing on every opportunity. They actually wanted to found a “leftist tyranny” under the excuse of defending workers’ rights.¹⁰³² The main goal of the “provocateurs”, on the other hand:

“(…)is not the well-being of the workers within freedom or a good future for the nation. What they desire is the rise of a class war, whilst (supporting) the slavery, misery, lose of freedom and destruction of the freedom of nation.”¹⁰³³

Çelik-İş perceived and presented the rising class movements at the end of the decade to be a result of the deceptions of unions who aimed to drag the workers into establishing communism where there was no real freedom. Kazım Çoçu and the union journal argued for

¹⁰²⁹ “Hürriyet İçinde Mutluluk İstiyoruz [We Want Happiness Within Freedom],” *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 65 (15 August 1967): 2; Kazım Çoçu, “Sosyalistlerde Özgürlük Safsatası [The Fallacy of Freedom in Socialists],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 81 (1 September 1968): 1; “Hangi Düzendey? [In Which Order?],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 101 (1 June 1969): 2.

¹⁰³⁰ “Anarşi Hürriyetsizliğe Giden En Kötü Yoldur Hürriyetsizliğin Sendikasızlığın Sonudur [Anarchy is the Worst Way of Going to Unfreedom, and The Ultimate Way of Unfreedom and Lack of Unions],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 82 (1 August 1968): 1; Kazım Çoçu, “Anarşi Çıkar Yol Değil [Anarchy is a Dead End],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 82 (1 August 1968): 1. Also look at: “Taşkınlığın Sonu [The End of Extremism],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 79 (15 May 1968): 3.

¹⁰³¹ “Türk-İş Neredesin? [Türk-İş, Where Are You?],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 82 (1 August 1968): 2; “Sendikalara Politika Sokulamaz [The Politic Should not Be Allowed to Penetrate Into the Unions],” *Çelik-İş*, year 5, no. 93 (15 January 1969): 2; Kazım Çoçu, “İşçi Olaylarının Sorumluları İşçiden Yana Olmayan Tahrikçilerdir [The Responsible of Labor Incidents Are the Provocateurs Who Do Not Side With Workers],” *Çelik-İş*, year 5, no. 132 (1 September 1970): 1.

¹⁰³² “İşçiler Tahrike, Kaba Kuvvete Karşı Hürriyeti ve Meşruluğu Savunuyor [Workers Defends Freedom and Legitimacy Against the Provocations and Brute Force],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 76 (1 March 1968): 1 and 4.

¹⁰³³ Kazım Çoçu, *Sendikacılık Yolu*, 44.

these collective actions to be defined as unlawful acts, which would damage the whole country.¹⁰³⁴ In opposition to such “communist provocations,” Çelik-İş assumed a nationalistic character to the Turkish workers and utilized a nationalist discourse and approach. And Çoçu defined the obstruction of class war as a “national” duty:

“Given that the spread of the idea of class war will greatly damage the Turkish worker and Turkish unionism, we, as unionists, consider siding against the provocateurs who aimed to create a class war as a honour of debt and think such an action as a national duty, on the other side.”¹⁰³⁵

“Yes, our fellow workers, we, Çelik-İş, are not provocateurs, we are a nationalist union; for being a nationalist means to love Turkey. The one who loves Turkey does not encourage the Turkish workers to become involved in the destructive acts that put Turkey into difficult situations.

The one who loves Turkey pursues the way of increasing the wage as return for labor, without the hands of workers robbing the workplace, within the framework of existing law and order.”¹⁰³⁶

In this regard, the union defined the identity of the Turkish worker; and it was a definition filled with assumptions of nationalism and liberalism. Under this characterization, the Turkish workers did not want to become “proletariats”. The Turkish workers did not want class war and did not seek to destroy the employers as a class.¹⁰³⁷ Kazım Çoçu asserted that the Turkish workers, on the contrary, were aware that they could gain their rights under the order that recognized the importance of private property. Such an order assumed not the division of, but the unity of different segments within society. Çoçu asserted that there were

¹⁰³⁴ Kazım Çoçu, “İşgaller ve Boykotlar [The Invasions and Boycotts],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 93 (15 January 1969): 1; “Tahrikçi Sendikacılık, Kapkaççı Sendikacılık, Gerçek Sendikacılık [The Provocative Unionism, Purse-Snatching Unionism and the Real Unionism],” *Çelik-İş*, year 5, no. 132 (1 September 1970): 3-4; “Türkiye Vietnam Olmayacaktır [Turkey Will not be Vietnam],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 67, (1 September 1967): 3.

¹⁰³⁵ Kazım Çoçu, *Sendikacılık Yolu*, 45.

¹⁰³⁶ “Kavele Duyuru [The Declaration to Kavel],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 88 (1 November 1968): 2.

¹⁰³⁷ Kazım Çoçu, “Kalkınmamızda Türk-İş’in Basireti [The Foresight of Türk-İş in Our Development],” *İşçi Postası*, April 5, 1968.

no classes in Turkey, and that Turkish workers had the same rights as the other members of the Turkish nation in general.¹⁰³⁸ And the union journal defined those Turkish workers who would not be tempted by the “provocateurs” as people who stood for nationalist ideals. For the union, a good Turkish worker thought about national interests first.¹⁰³⁹ Drawing upon such assumed features of the ideal Turkish worker, Çelik-İş’s official policy suggested the unions stage a coordinated struggle against “provocateurs”:

“We, as the young Turkish workers, have to stand, by keeping our unity, against those who try to drag our future to the darkness by ignoring the national interests on behalf of their own individual ambitions and caprices.”¹⁰⁴⁰

But what was the method offered by Çelik-İş to resolve the disputes between workers and employers in order to prevent workers from falling in the hands of “provocative” unionists? At this point, it is important to note that, according to Çelik-İş, there might be disagreements on workers-employers relations, but neither side should abuse the disagreements and resort to methods of conflict, rather than compromise. The path of compromise would both resolve the disputes and prevent a destructive class war. Consequently, the unionists must resort to a method of agreement, rather than a method of conflict, to solve the problems.¹⁰⁴¹ As for employers, Çelik-İş demanded they to be eager to provide workers’ rights.¹⁰⁴² Çoçu stated that:

¹⁰³⁸ Kazım Çoçu, “45. Yılda Daha da Güçlüyüz [We Are Getting More Powerful in the 45th Years],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 88 (1 November 1968): 1; “Türk İşçi Tarihi 19. Yüzyılda Başlamıştır [The History of Turkish Workers Began at the 19th Century],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 96 (1 March 1969): 3.

¹⁰³⁹ “Türk-İş’e Saygı ve Güven Boşuna Değildir [There is Good Reason To Respect and Trust to Türk-İş],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 97 (1 April 1969): 4.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ahmet Arkan, “Artık Yeter [Enough is Enough],” *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 94 (1 February 1969): 3. Also look at: “Hürriyet Düzenini Savunan Gerçek Sendikalar Tahrikçi Sendikacılığa Karşı Birleşmelidir [The True Unions Which Defend the Order of Freedom Must Be United Against the Provocative Unionism],” *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 32 (1 December 1966): 1 and 4.

¹⁰⁴¹ “Fikir Meydanı [The Land of Ideas],” *Çelik-İş*, year 5, no. 91 (15 December 1968): 2.

¹⁰⁴² “Davullu Zurnalı Toplu Sözleşme İmzalayanlar İşçiyi Aldatıyorlar [The People Who Signed the Collective Agreements Accompanied by Drum and Horn, Are Deceiving Workers],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 6 (1 December 1964): 2.

“We sincerely desire that employers have a contribution in the creation of a happy Turkey by giving the deserved share to labor, within the idea of social justice; such an attitude is also appropriate with the twentieth century.”¹⁰⁴³

By showing tolerance during the collective bargaining and accepting the workers’ demands of wage increases, the employers would also join in the anti-communist struggles:

“It should not be forgotten that the family affairs of businessmen and industrialists of our country are being revealed day and night. The workers, who work for salaries equal to 400-500 TL, and they are truly honorable, show loyalty to the land, love freedom and live under thousands of difficulties, know about these meetings in which everything is being spent like water. Our employers who have such a superior lifestyle should provide what is necessary to be provided to our very good-hearted workers, for whom the employers are responsible to provide a peaceful life. The employers should not act selfishly, so that our workers would not be influenced by those who seek a change of order. The employers should not cut their own throats.”¹⁰⁴⁴

As a model of the ideal employer, the union officers gave the example of Vehbi Koç as a “great man” who fought against communism by recognizing workers’ rights and being involved in charitable acts.¹⁰⁴⁵

Like a business union, Çelik-İş advised its members to deal “fairly” with the employers by not claiming “excessive demands”, for the sake of the future well-being of

¹⁰⁴³ “İktisadi Kalkınmada Emegın Değerlendirilmesi [The Utilization of Labor Within the Economic Development],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 28 (15 November 1965): 1 and 4.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Kazım Çoçu, “Vatanın Gerçek Çıkarı Nerede? [Where Does the True Interest of the Land Lie],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 83 (15 August 1968): 4.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Tekin Erer, “Örnek Adam Vehbi Koç [The İdeal Man: Vehbi Koç],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 67 (1 September 1967): 3. Also look at: “Özel Sektöre Kırü Kırüne Karşı Olanlara Yerinde Bir Şamar [An Appropriate Reply to Those Who Are Blindly Against the Private Sector],” *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 60 (15 May 1967): 1 and 4.

private enterprise. In fact, while siding with the right to strike against the employers who did not recognize workers' rights, Çoçu claimed that the workers had to think about the limits of the enterprise in order not to damage the national economy. In this regard, the workers should not make extreme demands that might put the workplace in danger. The workers demands had to be appropriate, and made with consideration of the conditions of the national economy and of that particular enterprise. It is important to find the optimal level of demands during strikes; otherwise, both the workers and the workplace would be in danger.¹⁰⁴⁶ The strikes should also not transgress the law. There had to be respect for the law.¹⁰⁴⁷ This dialogue about excessive demands and lawful action in particular shows us of the mindset of the metal employers about the limits of the right to strike.

How much success did Çelik-İş's discourse on the common interests between workers and employers see among the working class? Also, to what extent did the workers accept the notion of the superiority of the private sector over the state sector, or the discourse being offered on economic productivity, the dangers of "provocative" unions and class war, anti-communism and nationalism as a means to fight those dangers? We don't have much evidence to reflect on those important questions, but one master worker from Sungurlar Factory wrote a letter to the union newspaper that mentioned how he and his family passed through a difficult time in their lives thanks to the help of his boss. In this letter, the worker praised the enterprise as a benevolent one.¹⁰⁴⁸ Yet, we do not know if the larger portions of the metal workers shared the same feelings towards their bosses and enterprises. Based on the workers' language, which can more obviously be followed during the Kavel and succeeding strikes, the workers' feelings appear to be closer to grievance and complaints, rather than

¹⁰⁴⁶ Mehmet Mankut, "Çalışma Düzenimizin Genel Görünüşleri [The General Appearances of Our Work Order]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 1 (17 September 1964): 4; Kazım Çoçu, "Çalışma Düzenimiz Mutlu Geleceğin Eşiğindedir [Our Worker Is At the Edge of a Happy Future]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 47 (1 September 1966): 1 and 4; Kazım Çoçu, "Türk-İş'i Dinlemek Lazım [It Is Necessary to Listen Türk-İş]," *İşçi Postası*, December 24, 1968; "Grevler ve İşçiler [Strikes and Workers]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 91 (15 December 1968): 2.

¹⁰⁴⁷ "Sendikalara Politika Sokulamaz [The Politic Should not Be Allowed to Penetrate into Unions]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 93 (15 January 1969): 2; Rebii Şenkartal, "İşçi Tasvip Etmiyor [Worker Does not Approve]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 94 (1 February 1969): 3; Kazım Çoçu "Levent'e Dair [About the Levent Strike]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 100 (15 May 1969): 4.

¹⁰⁴⁸ "Bir Hakikat ve Teşekkür [A Truth and Thank]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 27 (15 October 1965): 3 and 4.

gratitude. I will analyze the features of this language in the next chapter. But since the majority of the metal workers participated in collective struggles between 1968 and 1970, we can claim that Çelik-İş's arguments about above-mentioned matters found little footing among its members.

What about workers' representatives as the most important figures linking workers, unions and employers? In this regard, we similarly have little record of the voice of Çelik-İş's representatives on the shop floor. Few of them touched on the importance of getting together in a collective to defend their lifestyles and rights.¹⁰⁴⁹ Some others talked about the workers' right to live in a dignified manner, which was implied in the Constitution.¹⁰⁵⁰ Some others declared their belief in fighting against communism and provocative unionism as a way to win their rights. Similarly, they emphasized the need to attain workers' rights through peaceful means. They also talked about the necessity of mutual respect to secure workplace peace.¹⁰⁵¹ In this sense, the Çelik-İş's representatives seem to share the ideological framework of the union, but we don't have conclusive findings to debate further how language shifted in their relations with workers on shop floor, or even if it did. Nor can we determine conclusively if the representatives revised or modified that language.

IV. Conclusion

An important repercussion of the 1963 Labor Law was the growth in union membership and further institutionalization of workplace conflicts between workers and employers/managers: accordingly, the ideological shifts and policies of the organizations gained importance in explaining shop floor relations and the struggle between those groups. And the transformation of Maden-İş's official discourse towards a more radical one further

¹⁰⁴⁹ Şahin Can, "Mücadele Azmi [The Ambition to Struggle]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 32 (15 January 1966): 3; M. Rahmi Gülentürk, "Düşüncelerim [My Thoughts]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 38 (15 March 1966): 3.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Elgin Şahin, "İşçi Hakları ve Çalışma Barışı Arasındaki İlişkiler [The Relations Between the Workers' Rights and Work Peace]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 44 (15 July 1966): 3.

¹⁰⁵¹ Salim Aslan, "İşçi Hakları [The Workers' Rights]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 43 (1 July 1966): 3; Elgin Şahin, "İşçi Hakları ve Çalışma Barışı Arasındaki İlişkiler [The Relations Between the Workers' Rights and Work Peace]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 44 (15 July 1966): 3; Şahin Can, "İşçi Hakları ve Çalışma Barışı Arasındaki İlişkiler [The Relations Between the Workers' Rights and Work Peace]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 45 (1 August 1966): 3.

intimidated the metal bosses who had already plainly showed their reluctance about this union's presence in their factories during the 1964 strikes. When this combined with their rigid objections to the metal workers' demands about high wages and more democratic workplace relations, shop floor relations in the İstanbul metal sector became increasingly difficult. The presence of Çelik-İş, which had adopted a staunch anti-communist line, would further radicalize the struggle at the end of the decade.

Yet, the important question of "why" still remains. Why, indeed, were the majority of metal workers *not* attracted by the Çelik-İş discourse that was characterized by the model of business unionism? Why did the metal workers participate in collective actions against the same union that provided them with important wage increases, especially in the collective agreements of 1964 and 1965, and even won them extra benefits? In fact, the union prioritized the material gains of workers during its bargaining with employers. Its communications highlighted how the union had battled and won wage increases and benefits for its members and¹⁰⁵² the union journal was full of news about benefits like maternity, coal, or school benefits provided by the union itself to its members.¹⁰⁵³ In Levent Metal Hardware Factory, the union staged a strike when the employer/manager did not recognize the union's/worker's demands. Furthermore, the union organized circumcision feasts for the children of its members.¹⁰⁵⁴ Similarly, why did most of the metal workers act against those

¹⁰⁵² "Arçelik'te Müzakereler Bitti [The Bargainings Have Come to an End in Arçelik]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 70 (17 November 1967): 1; "Çelik-İş Sendikası Yüzde 37.5 Ücret Zammı Aldı [Çelik-İş Got Wage Increase as %37.5]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 64 (1 August 1967): 1; "Çelik-İş Sendikasının Kavel'deki Zaferi [The Victory of Çelik-İş at Kavel]," *Çelik-İş*, year 5, no. 90 (1 December 1968): 1; "Çelik-İş Sendikası Günterm İle Anlaştı [Çelik-İş Agreed with Günterm]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 92 (1 January 1969): 1; "Otosan'da Toplu Sözleşme Yapıldı [The Collective Agreement Was Signed in Otosan]," *Çelik-İş*, year 4, no. 102 (1 August 1969): 1.

¹⁰⁵³ "Çelik-İş Sendikasının Ocak 1965 de Yaptığı Yardımlar [The Aids Made By Çelik-İş on January 1965]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 11 (15 February 1965): 3; "Türkiye Çelik-İş Sendikasının Son On Beş Gün İçine Yaptığı 52 Liralık Sosyal Yardımlar [The Aids, Which Are Equal to 52 TL, Made By Çelik-İş During the Last Fifteen Days]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 18 (1 June 1965): 2; "Çelik-İş Sendikası Üyelerinin Ölümünde Eşlerine Aylık Bağlanacak [Upon the Death of Çelik-İş Members, A Salary Will Be Paid to Their Spouses]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 30 (15 December 1965): 1 and 4; "Türkiye Çelik-İş Sendikasının İşçilere Yaptığı Sosyal Yardımlar [The Social Aids Made By Çelik-İş To Workers]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 31 (1 January 1966): 2; "Sosyal Yardımlar [The Social Aids]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 53 (31 December 1966): 3.

¹⁰⁵⁴ "Sendikamızın Tertip Etmiş Olduğu Sünnet Düğünü Büyük İlgi ve Memnuniyet Yarattı [The Circumcision Feast Organized By Our Union Created Great Interest and Content]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 23 (15 August 1965): 1; "Çelik-İş Sendikasının Büyük Sünnet Düğünü [The Grand Circumcision Feast

bosses who provided them with their “deserved share” from the profits of the factories and benefits to improve workers’ and their families’ living conditions? Why did the shop floor relations between workers-unions and employers become so heated at the end of the decade?

We’ve seen some answers to those questions posed above; such as the radicalization of the union’s politics that severed relations between Çelik-İş, Maden-İş, and the metal employers. The bosses’ extreme intolerance to Maden-İş and DİSK also factored into the long and harsh battles in the sector, a union that they assumed was a satellite of the Marxist TİP, and thus one of the main actors fighting to destroy the current order. But the union’s shifting political ideologies remains an insufficient factor, in and of itself, to explain why the majority of the metal workers preferred Maden-İş over Çelik-İş in the fight against employer oppression. The answer lies in the course of shop floor relations: in particular, in the issues of decreasing wages and representation problems, both of which gave the İstanbul metal workers the final incentive to join the collective fights between 1968 and 1970.

of Çelik-İş],” *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 45 (1 August 1966): 1 and 4; “Muhteşem Sünnet Düğünü [The Grand Circumcision Feast],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 83 (15 August 1968): 1 and 4.

CHAPTER 9

MODERN MANAGEMENT AND THE METAL WORKERS ON THE SHOP

FLOOR: THE AGE OF THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

“There is another class that stands against us beyond all. Unless we workers will get together and be as one against this class, they will crush us (...) We have to get together. We constitute the majority, but our words are not effective anywhere.”¹⁰⁵⁵

These were the words of Ahmet Sürmene, a metal worker, just before the notorious labor upsurge of June 15-16th, 1970. Sürmene and his fellow workers felt that the necessity of being unified stemmed from their common experiences in their factory and city lives. Their conviction became even further consolidated during the collective struggles at the end of the decade. Not having any say in their workplace, and having a desire to change this situation, led Ahmet Sürmene and his fellow metal workers to act together at the end of the 1960s. The metal workers collectively responded in an effort to make themselves respected citizens who had the right to speak their opinions on events in the workplace. As a result, the metal sector in İstanbul experienced very contentious years with the workers’ collective actions that occurred between 1968 and 1970; several factories were occupied, several of them witnessed strikes and other kinds of collective actions, and the metal workers asked, or forced, the bosses/managers of factories to recognize the union and workers’ representatives which had been chosen by themselves, by free vote.

There were two basic, underlying reasons, which drove the metal workers to act collectively; one was insufficient income to provide for their families, and the other was the absence of proper mechanisms through which workers could make their demands. Their battle was to make their freely chosen union the authorized workers’ body on the shop floor,

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ahmet Sürmene, “İşçiler ve Politika [Workers and Politics],” *Maden-İş*, (7 July 1969): 5.

since the majority of the metal workers did not feel Çelik-İş was a proper mechanism to represent them. Furthermore, even in the workplaces in which Maden-İş was organized, the bosses/managers' oppression of the unionized workers went on until after the mid-1960s. Consequently, the metal workers' struggle was a struggle to be organized.

In essence, the post-Labor Law conditions on the shop floor, which were assumed to be characterized by the mutual agreement of the workers and employers through collective bargaining, accounted for the labor upsurge in the factories. In this sense, the workers' fights referred to the workers' attempts to intervene in work relations, which had formerly been unilaterally organized by the metal bosses/managers. The social justice promised by the state regulations, the 1963 Labor Law, and even the employer's association, had ignited the workers' hopes of getting their deserved share of the national wealth and having their respected place as citizens in the social hierarchy in the early parts of the decade. The workers had been promised a decent life in the cities with their families, and their relations with the employers were to have been based on mutual respect in the workplaces. Yet, the story of the İstanbul metal worker progressed in nearly the opposite direction: the majority of the labor force neither reached a lifestyle which would provide for their families, nor did they experience a democratic work relationship based on a recognition of workers' rights, and respect for the diligent and loyal citizen's hard work.

But the issue of worker empowerment was still there for the metal bosses/managers. The 1964 Strikes led the owners/managers of the larger plants, in particular, to reflect on the difficulty of ruling their workplaces by depending on force and oppression. In fact, after the 1964 Strikes, the metal bosses/managers increased wages and gave benefits to workers. Furthermore, they applied certain so-called scientific managerial techniques to both get workers' consent and create loyalty among them to the workplace. However, most metal workers still felt overly exposed to injustices caused by the bosses/managements' profit "greediness" and "intolerant" attitudes towards workers' demands, despite the fact that several enterprises applied the "scientific methods" of work evaluation systems to garner commitment among workers and increase profits. Wage increases, furthermore, began to

dwindle in the face of the rising inflation towards the end of the decade. Most metal bosses were not eager to recognize what they saw as the “communist and militant” Maden-İş, which was perceived by most metal workers as the true union to defend their interests efficiently.

I. The Era of Modern Management in the İstanbul Metal Sector

As mentioned previously, the idea and practices of modern-scientific management emerged and developed in North America at the end of the nineteenth century. After the Second World War, those ideas and practices were imported by developing countries. In fact, the ideas and practices of “scientific” management, as developed in the United States, were received as the “true” and “sole” model in Turkey during the 1950s and 1960s. These ideas were brought to the country by students who were educated in the West, in institutions that operated to disseminate these “modern ideas” to the rest of the world. The students who received their MA, MB and/or Ph.D from universities in the United States began to return to Turkey and they were recruited by the big or mid-sized private or public enterprises as managers. In the context of the development of the private industrial sector, “scientific” management was also imported to the country via several educational institutions, such as the Institute of Business Economics at the University of İstanbul, which was established in the mid-1950s under the model of business schools in the US. The Institute received a considerable amount of financial support from Harvard Business School during its first years. The managers who were trained in the US were also influential in the dissemination of the ideas and practices of scientific management in Turkey during the 1960s. Furthermore, upon the advice of the US’ officials who often visited Turkey to contribute to the industrial development of the country, Türk Sevk ve İdare Derneği (The Turkish Management Association-TSİD) was founded in 1962 to train managers in the ways of scientific management techniques, in order to increase profits and successfully control the labor process. After publishing a journal in 1966, TSİD also organized several conferences, in which employers/managers from various private and public enterprises participated, about the ideas and practices of scientific management. Furthermore, the scholars began to publish books on

the ideas and practices of scientific management and possible ways to implement them in the Turkish enterprises, during the beginning of the 1960s.¹⁰⁵⁶

The period between 1964 and 1968 saw some employers/managers make an effort to provide a sense of fairness to the workers in the İstanbul metal industry by applying these ideas and using the practices of scientific management. The 1964 Strikes truly motivated the metal bosses/managers to tackle the issues of workers more closely. The general manager of Arçelik, Ali Mansur, admitted that he was keenly aware of the abyss between workers and managers in terms of their work relations during the 1964 Strike in the factory. Consequently, he attempted to improve his relations with workers through “scientific management methods.”¹⁰⁵⁷ The idea of scientific management, which was thought to provide stability in the workplace by getting both employers and employees interests together and increasing productivity in turn, had penetrated into the agenda of the metal bosses by the end of the 1950s. The metal bosses/managers saw it as an opportunity to determine the distribution of extra benefits by applying work evaluation system to calculate each workers’ labor “scientifically.” But almost none of them had reflected on improving their professional relationships with workers, or thought of creating proper channels through which workers could voice their problems and demands. Most managers still counted on the lure of extra benefits and the aversive items in the collective agreements, plus the work evaluation system,

¹⁰⁵⁶ For some of those studies, look at: Mehmet Oluç, *İşletme Organizasyonu ve Yönetimi [The Organization and Management of Enterprises]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İşletme Fakültesi Yayınları, 1963); İlhami Karayalçın, *Zaman Etütleri [The Researches on Time]*, (n.p.: Sümerbank Merinos Yünlü Sanayi Müessesesi Eğitim Bürosu Yayınları, no. 39, 1965); İlhami Karayalçın, *Organizasyon Planlaması [The Planning of Organizations]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, 1966); İlhami Karayalçın, *Hareket Araştırması [The Research on Motion]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, 1968). For the influences of the US’ officials on the foundation of TSİD, see: Şahap Kocatopçu, “The Role of Management in the Development of Turkish Industry.” For examples of the secondary literature on the coming of the ideas and practices of the scientific management to Turkey, see: Atilla Baransel, *Çağdaş Yönetim Düşüncesinin Evrimi [The Evolution of the Contemporary Management Thought]*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İşletme Fakültesi Yayınları, 1979); Behlül Üsdiken and Yorgo Pasadeos, “Türkiye’de Örgütler ve Yönetim Yazını [The Organizations and Management Literature in Turkey]”, *Amme İdaresi Journal*, 26/2 (1993): 73-93; Ayşe Buğra, *Devlet ve İşadamları [State and Businessman]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997); Behlül Üsdiken, “Importing Theories of Management and Organization,” *International Studies of Management & Organization*, vol. 26, no. 3, (1996): 33-46; Behlül Üsdiken, Nisan Selekler and Demet Çetin, “Türkiye’de Yönetim Yazınına Egemen Anlayışın Oluşumu: Sevk ve İdare Dergisi Üzerine Bir İnceleme [The Emergence of the Dominant Ideas on the Management Literature in Turkey: A Research on the Journal of Organization and Management]”, *Amme İdaresi Journal*, vol. 31, no. 1, (March 1998): 57-87.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi, 1955-2000 [From Product to Brand: The Institutional History of Arçelik]*, (n.p.: Arçelik Anonim Şirketi, 2001), 169-170.

the presence of a union that was assumed to deal fairly with management, and their more forceful techniques of oppression of workers as they ruled the factories after the 1964 Strike. The only exception to this mindset would be the owners/managers of the Arçelik Factory who took a different tone in employee relations.

In addition to the strikes, the strengthening of the metal sector and the planned capacity expansion of some big metal plants encouraged the bosses/managers to devise certain ideas for dealing with work relations more efficiently. By the mid-1960s, big factories such as Arçelik, Türk Demir Döküm and Otosan increased both the scale and scope of their production. By 1962, production in Demir Döküm had significantly increased and its production per worker increased by 27 percent. The factory was further expanded by 300 percent in 1965, and this capacity expansion work lasted until 1967.¹⁰⁵⁸ Similarly, the Arçelik Factory went through a capacity expansion after 1964, and it moved to a new plant in the Anatolian side of the city at the end of the decade. Likewise, the General Electric Factory made new investments in 1967, and the Otosan Factory increased its production capacity in 1965.¹⁰⁵⁹ All those expansions contributed to the growing number of workers and to an increasing work pace.

As a result, the managers of such enterprises began to reflect on better ways of dealing with workers who, in an increasing number, might instigate a rise in shop floor tensions. For example, Bernar Nahum expressed his concerns about the rising probability of strike due to the growing number of workers in the factory, in his letter to Vehbi Koç in 1965, written upon the planning of the expansion in Otosan.¹⁰⁶⁰ The important problems of earning workers' loyalties in order to prevent collective resistance, and at the same time maintain work discipline, penetrated more notably into the agenda of the metal bosses/managers after

¹⁰⁵⁸ "Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları [The Türk Demir Döküm Factories]," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 9 (October 1966): 10-11; "Türk Demir Döküm," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 77 (1 April 1967): 3; *Demirdöküm'de 50 Yıl [The Fifty Years in Demirdöküm]*, (n.p.: Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları Anonim Şirketi, 2004), 67-76.

¹⁰⁵⁹ "1967 Yılında Koç Holding Çalışmalarına Toplu Bir Bakış [A General Outlook to the Works in the Koç Holding Company in 1967]," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 15 (June 1968): 10; Bernar Nahum, *Koç'ta 44 Yılım [My 44 Years in Koç]*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1988), 127-139.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 134.

the mid 1960s; as a consequence, several tactics were used by the managers to meet their goals.

The first widespread tactic of the metal employers to earn the workers' loyalty was to provide extra benefits to support workers and their families, in addition to wages. In fact, nearly all the metal plants provided workers with this economic incentive through the first collective agreements signed in 1964 and 1965. Most of the agreements, whether signed in the period of the first agreements or in the succeeding periods, supplied the employees with important bonuses, premiums and several extra benefits, or money to help the worker who had lost his/her spouse or children, or extra fuel funds for the winter.¹⁰⁶¹ Furthermore, for the first time, wages in the metal sector reached beyond the level of the living indices in 1965. But those wages, which constituted the most significant portion of the workers' income, came to be undermined in time, although plants kept on providing benefits, notwithstanding. But the metal bosses/managers had several concerns about wage increases in the sector. From the beginning of 1967, the metal employers/managers had already begun to complain that the higher wages were greatly damaging their businesses.¹⁰⁶² Their concerns reached a peak in 1969,¹⁰⁶³ when the bosses/managers seemed determined to provide an income level insufficient for the metal workers to consider accepting.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Arçelik A.Ş. Toplu İş Sözleşmesi [Arçelik Joint Stock Company: The Collective Work Agreement]*, (İstanbul: Çeltüt, 1964), 29-31; "1964 Yılı İçinde Toplu İş Sözleşmesi Durumu [The Collective Bargainings Within 1964]," *İşveren*, vol. 3, no. 5 (February 1965): 15-17; "Arçelik," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 9 (October 1966): 16; "Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları [The Türk Demir Döküm Factories]," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 9 (October 1966): 11; *Maden-İş İle Profilo Sanayi ve Ticaret A. Ş. Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi [The Collective Agreement Between Profilo Industry and Commerce Joint Stock Company and Maden-İş]*, in effective between 18.7.1966-31.12.1968, 23-27; *Türk General Elektrik Endüstri A. Şirketi İle Türkiye Maden-İş Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi [The Collective Agreement Between Turk General Electric Joint Stock Company and Maden-İş]*, in effective between 1967-1968; 20-23; *MESS IX. Genel Kuruluna Sunulan Yönetim Kurulu Faaliyet ve Hesap Raporu [The Account and Deed Report of the Executive Committee to the Ninth General Assembly of MESS]*, 31 October-14 November 1969, 45-58; *Singer'e Hoşgeldiniz [Welcome to Singer]*, (n.p.: Singer, 1969), 8-17; *Aramıza Hoş Geldiniz [Welcome to Arçelik]*, (n.p.: Arçelik, 1969); *1969 Toplu İş Sözleşmelerinin Tahlili [The Analysis of the 1969 Collective Bargainings]*, (İstanbul: MESS Yayınları no. 11, 1970); *1970 Toplu İş Sözleşmelerinin Tahlili [The Analysis of the 1970 Collective Agreements]*, (İstanbul: MESS Yayınları no. 16, 1971).

¹⁰⁶² *MESS: VII. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı [MESS: The Report of the Proceedings and Decisions of the Seventh General Assembly]*, 14 November 1967, Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive; *Dünden Sonraki Gün [The Day After Yesterday]* (İstanbul: MESS Yayını no. 601, 2010), 35-38.

¹⁰⁶³ "Toplu Pazarlık Rejiminde İşletmelerin Ücret Sorunları [The Wage Problems of Enterprises In the Collective Bargaining Regime]," *MESS-İşveren*, no. 88 (1 November 1968): 1; Ertuğrul Soysal,

Another widespread tactic was to provide premiums and hand out promotions to employees who were the hardest working and most loyal to their superiors on the shop floor level. The Rabak Factory's collective agreement included a promise to give premiums to employees who devised ways of increasing productivity.¹⁰⁶⁴ The Singer plant management promoted the workers who were most diligent, and several workers who had been unqualified in the beginning were promoted to supervisor of their sections. This company also rewarded the most determined workers.¹⁰⁶⁵ Likewise, other factories opened educational courses through which unqualified workers would be trained to be mastermen, and the company otherwise rewarded its hardest working employees.¹⁰⁶⁶ But the most well-known and widespread strategy to earn the workers' loyalty was undoubtedly the work evaluation system, implemented to create a sense of fairness among employees and increase productivity and profit, simultaneously.

In fact, evaluation systems were much discussed in Turkey during the 1960s. The importance of a system to create both a sense of fairness and a rise in productivity was emphasized in several conferences, books and journals. The authors or speakers argued that a work evaluation system would end wage injustices on the shop floor by imposing an "objective criteria" on the workers' earnings or promotions. As a result, it would yield worker motivation and increased productivity.¹⁰⁶⁷ The metal employers' organization, MESS, made

"Sanayimizde İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Our Industry]," *MESS-İşveren*, no. 104 (1 July 1969).

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası İle Rabak Elektrolitik Bakır ve Mamulleri A.Ş. Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi ve İş Yönetmeliği [The Collective Work Agreement and Factory Rules and Regulations Between Maden-İş and Rabak Electrolitic Copper Products Joint Stock Company]*, in effective between 1967-1968, 17.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Mahmut C. Mucuoğlu, "İhracat Gayesile Sevk ve İdare [The Management For the Exportation]," *Sevk ve İdare* (1966): 104; *Singer'e Hoşgeldiniz*, 7.

¹⁰⁶⁶ A.T. Yazman, "Bugünkü Otosan! [Today's Otosan]," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 15 (June 1968): 2; "Otosan Bayramı [The Otosan Festival]," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 12 (September 1966): 10; *Benim Adım Ford Otosan [My Name is Ford Otosan]*, (İstanbul: n.p., n.d.), 83.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Kamil Oba, "Ücretler ve Sosyal Yardımlar Tatbikatı [The Practice of Wages and Social Aids]," 22. 6.1963, *Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive*; Mahmut C. Mucuoğlu, "İş Etüdü Verimin Arttırılmasında En Efektif Yol [The Work Evaluation is the Most Efficient Way in Increasing the Productivity]," *Sevk ve İdare*, year 2, no. 5 (January 1967): 13-19; Sadi Gencer, "İş Değerlendirmesinin Produktiviteye Etkileri ve Ekonomik Yönü [The Effects of the Work Evaluation on Productivity and Its Economic Side]," *Sevk ve İdare*, year 2, no. 5 (January 1967): 31-34; Aynur Güldamla, "İş Değerlendirmesinin Türkiye'deki Uygulama Durumu [The Practice of the Work Evaluation System in Turkey]," *MESS-*

its first attempts to put the “scientific” work evaluation system into practice in 1964, based on the assumption that this system would alleviate the injustices stemming from the differences between workers’ wages by bringing the rule of equal wage for equal work. By this system, it was assumed the managers would have the chance to analyze the workers’ merits impartially and efficiently. MESS organized seminars to stress the importance of managers ruling their workplaces in a “scientific” manner.¹⁰⁶⁸ Although MESS could not practice this system organization-wide until 1969, several factories individually applied it on the shop floor.¹⁰⁶⁹ Yet, with the exception of a few cases, the application of this system contributed to the workers’ sense of injustice and their frustration over factory work policies, contrary to the expectations of managers.



Figure 22: A figure which symbolizes a worker in a “modern workplace”. (Source: *Sevk ve İdare*, no. 1-4, 1966, 86).

Above all, the work evaluation system significantly automated the workers’ movements by defining a specific job for each worker. As portrayed in the above figure, the system also assumed a time interval for the each job to be finished and managers promised to reward workers who were able to finish their duties in the shortest time. The workers were

İşveren, no. 100 (1 May 1969): 17-18; Selçuk Yalçın, *Türkiyede İş Değerlemesi Tatbikatı [The Practice of Job Evaluation in Turkey]* (İstanbul: Sermet Matbaası, 1969).

¹⁰⁶⁸ Melih Koçer, “İş Değerlendirme’nin Mana ve Önemi [The Meaning and Importance of the Work Evaluation],” *İşveren*, vol. II, no. 5 (February 1964): 4-6; “Personel Yönetici Seminerimiz [Our Seminary to the Managers],” *MESS*, no. 39 (1 October 1966); “Personel Yönetici Seminerimiz [Our Seminary to the Managers],” *MESS*, no. 43 (1 December 1966); *Dünden Sonraki Gün*, 290.

¹⁰⁶⁹ “Yeni Üyelerimizden General T. A. O. [From Our New Members, The General Electric],” *MESS Bulletin*, no. 21, (4 December 1965): 4; “Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları [The Türk Demir Döküm Factories],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 9 (October 1966): 11.

forced to work harder and faster in order to finish the job within the prescribed time allotments. In the Singer Factory:

“A worker uses the mill and makes a hole with five different machines by plugging and detaching the unit, all within a 1.02 minute time interval (after which time the entire process starts again).”¹⁰⁷⁰

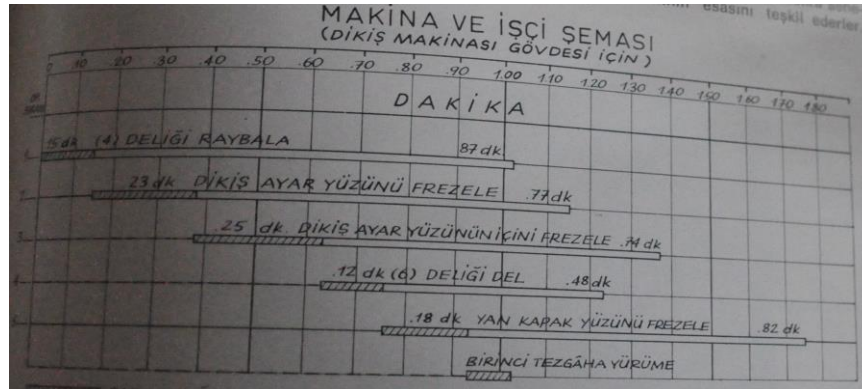


Figure 23: An example from the work evaluation system from the Singer Factory. The numbers show the hours and minutes which the workers were expected to invest in finishing specific jobs. (Source: *Sevk ve İdare*, no. 1-4, 1966, 103).

In this so-called scientific system, neither workers nor unions had any say in changing or revising the objective criteria that, again, “scientifically and impartially” evaluated each worker. And the workers’ income was determined through these evaluations.¹⁰⁷¹ As a result, the managers had nearly complete control over the work process through this system, and since it was applied and interpreted by the managers/foremen, it was hard to persuade the workers of “the scientific and impartial” characteristics of the system. Despite growing worker frustration, most big metal plants kept the system, or began applying the work evaluation system for the first time, on the assumption and rhetoric of it being a scientific, objective and impartial measure of work.

II. Arçelik: A Unique Case?

The Arçelik Factory was a distinct example, in terms of the scale and scope of the work evaluation system and other managerial tactics to create a commitment among the

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid., 101.

¹⁰⁷¹ Mahmut C. Mucuoğlu, “İhracat Gayesile Sevk ve İdare,” 100-104.

workers to bosses/managers. Despite this, the majority of the Arçelik workers would demand to be represented by Maden-İş at the end of the decade; in other words, employers/managers could not derive workers' consent as extensively as they hoped, even under supposedly improved factory work relations. Arçelik had been applying the work system to give a sense of fairness to the employees since 1960.¹⁰⁷² Adhering to the rules of the system, the management often evaluated the workers by measuring each workers' movements and efficiency within a given time.¹⁰⁷³ Work was defined in the factory journal in 1969 as follows:

“Each worker assembles an unit on the assembly line. The work never stops and demands constant attention. The clock immediately reveals which workers are slow.”¹⁰⁷⁴

The Arçelik Factory was exceptional in getting workers' consent to the system. Here, the management organized seminars to examine time and motion studies in the factory in 1965. In those, the workers were shown how to use the given time efficiently to increase productivity.¹⁰⁷⁵ One researcher who analyzed the work evaluation systems claimed that the Arçelik workers were clearly told about the details of the system, and their complaints were carefully examined by the management. According to him, most workers, therefore, gave their consent to the system.¹⁰⁷⁶ In addition to the management's close interest to the workers' complaints, the tangible benefits of work evaluation must have factored in the workers' presumed consent. The system even promised the chance of being promoted to everyone who worked hard enough and was able to show their merit,¹⁰⁷⁷ and the factory organized examinations for promotions by 1965. In the first year, 81 workers out of 144 applicants were

¹⁰⁷² *Arçelik A.Ş. Toplu İş Sözleşmesi*, 25-28; Ahmet Karasaç, “Ücret Sisteminin Nedenleri [The Reasons of the Wage Systems],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 13, (September 1966): 2; Ahmet Karasaç, “Ücret Sistemleri'nin Bünyesi [The Content of the Wage Systems],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 14, (October 1966), 2; Selçuk Yalçın, 15.

¹⁰⁷³ Mahmut C. Mucuoğlu, “İş Etüdü Verimin Arttırılmasında En Efektif Yol,” 15.

¹⁰⁷⁴ “Arçelik,” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 18 (December 1969).

¹⁰⁷⁵ “Zaman ve Hareket Etüdü Semineri [The Seminary on Time and Motion Analysis],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 3 (November 1965): 1; Birol İlkesen, “Zaman ve Biz [Time and Us],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 1 (September 1965): 2; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 95.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Selçuk Yalçın, 15-19.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Arçelik A.Ş. Toplu İş Sözleşmesi*, 28; “Arçelik,” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 18 (December 1969); *Aramıza Hoş Geldiniz [Welcome to Arçelik]*, (n.p.: Arçelik, 1969).

promoted through the exam results. The number increased to 204 workers out of 312 applicants in 1967.¹⁰⁷⁸ It is important to note that, rather than asking for knowledge about their jobs, the exam's questions were rather about the pros and cons of the strike and work discipline.¹⁰⁷⁹ It seems the exam was conducted to evaluate the loyalty of the workers, rather than their merits and hard work.

Arçelik was also a distinct example in terms of the management's several other attempts to earn workers' consent to the factory and management. Arçelik management argued for the need to bestow the workers with a factory identity. According to Cansen:

“(...) That means, [our aim, a.n.] was to create a unified spirit within Arçelik.

It was our main goal. We always wanted to make ‘Arçelik worker’ the second identity of the employees (...).”¹⁰⁸⁰

Ali Mansur, who claimed that he understood the lack of communication between workers and managers during the 1964 Strike, decided to publish a factory journal called *Arçelik'te Bir Ay [A Month in Arçelik]*. The journal was first published and distributed to workers in 1965. It aimed to create a factory identity among the employees.¹⁰⁸¹ To this end, the articles in the journal hit upon the idea that the factory rose through the common work of all its members, including workers. It described Arçelik as a family and the general manager, Lütfü Doruk, called the employees from the journal pages “children.” Several articles in the journal also often emphasized developing the Arçelik family further through diligent work. It was assumed that the national industry and wealth would develop, in turn.¹⁰⁸² In addition to

¹⁰⁷⁸ “Arçelik'te Terfî İmtihanları [The Promotion Examinations in Arçelik],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 4 (December 1965): 7; “Mayıs Dönemi Terfî İmtihanları [The Promotion Exams in the May Period],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 10 (June 1966): 1; “Arçelik'liler Gecesi [The Arçelik Night],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 19 (March 1967): 1; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 101 and 135.

¹⁰⁷⁹ “Arçelik Fabrikasının Olumlu Bir Davranışı [A Beneficial Practice in Arçelik],” *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 29 (1 December 1965): 1 and 4.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Quoted by Koray R. Yılmaz, 264.

¹⁰⁸¹ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 180.

¹⁰⁸² Lütfü Doruk, “Çocuklar [The Children],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 1 (September 1965): 1; Fethi Yokeş, “Ne Kadar Zormuş! [How It Was Hard!],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 2 (October 1965): 1; Ali Mansur, “10'ncü Yıldönümünde Arçelik ve Bizler [Arçelik and Us in Its Tenth Anniversary],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 4 (December 1965): 1; Ege Cansen, “Arçelik'i Tanımak ve Arçelik'li Olmak [Knowing Arçelik and Being A Member of It],” *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 21, (May 1967): 1.

the journal, the Arçelik company attempted to earn worker's commitment through mastership and apprentice courses. The company opened a mastership course in 1964, an apprenticeship course in 1960, and another in 1965 after the factory was moved to Çayırova, in order to infuse workers with a factory identity starting from childhood. For example, Celalettin Kiriş attended those courses in Sütluçe in the early 1960 and then he began work in the assembly line.¹⁰⁸³ With the apprenticeship course, the management recognized an opportunity with the workers' children. In fact, workers' children attended the course starting in 1965 and, as a result of this training, it was assumed that those workers' children who were indoctrinated with the institutional culture of Arçelik would see the enterprise as their home.¹⁰⁸⁴

Management also sought other ways of creating a sense of fairness and family identity amongst workers. After 1965, the managers, including the top officers, began to sit at the same cafeteria tables with the workers in an attempt to improve relations with them.¹⁰⁸⁵ The factory also provided medical examinations to the workers' children and even school sundries.¹⁰⁸⁶ It organized night festivals called "Arçelik Nights" in which both workers and managers socialized together.¹⁰⁸⁷ The management even founded a solidarity association for the employees in order to give social aid to its members.¹⁰⁸⁸ But the most sophisticated management plan was to establish an "Arçelik City" where the company would provide workers with houses surrounding a factory:

"We will create such a surrounding and such a city that, for example, the master Zeki in my mould section will talk about Arçelik when he goes home at night (...) He will talk about his day at the factory, his problems; for example, how he did the mould, what kind of problems he encountered; then,

¹⁰⁸³ Koray R. Yılmaz, 258.

¹⁰⁸⁴ M. Tarık Yasa, "Arçelik Çırak Eğitim Kursu [The Apprentice Training Course in Arçelik]," *Sevk ve İdare* (1966): 37-41; "Arçelik," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 18 (December 1969); *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 77 and 88.

¹⁰⁸⁵ "Arçelik," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 18 (December 1969); *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 170.

¹⁰⁸⁶ "Sağlık İşleri [The Health Practices]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 5 (January 1966): 1; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 108, 127 and 187.

¹⁰⁸⁷ "Teklif Kutuları [The Opinion Boxes]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 8 (April 1966): 1; *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 110 and 183-185.

¹⁰⁸⁸ "Arçelik A.Ş. Yardımlaşma Derneği Çalışmaları [The Works of the Solidary Association at the Arçelik Joint Stock Company]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 16, (December 1966): 2.

how he tackled those problems. The boy or child of master Zeki will listen this conversation, he will get used to Arçelik right from his childhood and when the age of work comes for him, ultimately, he will apply to Arçelik first, either as worker, master, engineer, or the manager...consequently, Arçelik will become a family at first, then a school, and finally a small city.”¹⁰⁸⁹

Yet, the Arçelik City projects failed. According to Ege Cansen, workers preferred to stay in Pendik, Kartal or Tuzla districts, rather than the surrounding factory community that was seen as a deserted place.¹⁰⁹⁰ However, the other methods seemed to contribute to developing the majority of the workers’ loyalty to the factory, at least in the first years of the mid-1960s. Ege Cansen recalled that worker-employer relations progressed in a different way in Arçelik compared to the other factories.¹⁰⁹¹ The stories and narratives of the Arçelik workers that we are able trace in the factory journal confirmed Ege Cansen’s comment to certain extent.

It is evident that widespread promotions were a main contributor to worker loyalty in the Arçelik Factory. Several workers who had been trained as apprentices in the factory found their chance to climb the ladder of work hierarchy. For example, Celalettin Kırış began to attend an apprenticeship course in 1965. After three years of education, he was assigned to the assembly line as a worker. Then, he was promoted to work in the research laboratory within the factory.¹⁰⁹² Furthermore, several workers stated their contentment with the promotion system. They thought that it was a fair system, since those who deserved it most would have the chance to be promoted.¹⁰⁹³ Thus, the management, it appears, was successful

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 153-154.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, January 14, 2013.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Demirdöküm’de 50 Yıl*.

¹⁰⁹² *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 178.

¹⁰⁹³ “Bir Başarı Hikayesi [A Success Story],” interview by Mürsel Sevil, *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 28, (December 1967): 5.

in creating a commitment among the workers to the factory, their jobs, or even to the management itself.

The workers' own voices confirm this assumption. İsmail Erkan claimed that he was very proud of being in Arçelik. Muhittin Öztürk stated his contentment with the enterprise giving workers all their rights.¹⁰⁹⁴ Likewise, Orhan Güven voices his contentment in working in Arçelik, which he said was one of the best and benevolent enterprises in Turkey. Veli Toptankaya was also grateful to Arçelik, because it was through their help that he bought his house. Aytekin Babalık stated that there was good work discipline in Arçelik, and that meant workers valued their labor there.¹⁰⁹⁵ Mustafa Kaleli claimed that all his children were raised on the "bread of Arçelik". He also claims that he was very happy about the Arçelik Nights. He advised his fellow workers to obey the orders in any enterprises in which workers earned their living.¹⁰⁹⁶ An Arçelik worker also stated that the workers should obey the orders of their superiors.¹⁰⁹⁷ This overall sense of fairness and contentment about working in Arçelik drove workers to feel loyal to management, to their orders, and to existing factory rules.

In this regard, the workers seemed to internalize the notion of family. In a poem written by a worker from the welding section:

"This is the welding section
Everyone is enthusiastic to work
You will see everyone at the bench before the ring
(...)
The climate of the section changes suddenly
The welding section turns to a festive place
Our greasy clothes, darkened hands
We keep working with pleasure.

¹⁰⁹⁴ "İki Arkadaşımızla Başbaşa [Together With Two Our Friends]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 4 (December 1965): 6.

¹⁰⁹⁵ "İşte Onların Söyledikleri [Here, Their Words]," interview by E. Arslan Başaran, *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 17, (January 1967): 3.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Quoted by Koray R. Yılmaz, 411.

(...)

Arçelik is our benefactor

Our value is known there

We are all grateful to our Father

We say good day to the Arçelik family.”¹⁰⁹⁸

In a similar manner, Hüseyin Şenyer expressed his feelings as following:

“(...) They [the trucks, a.n.] carry our perfectly produced goods by taking them from the door to the service of our beloved land and to all the world, for the comfort and peace of the humanity (...)I feel myself lucky to work in this happy home.”¹⁰⁹⁹

Veli Güner, who was content to work in Arçelik, defined the factory as a family and called Lütfü Doruk the ‘father’.¹¹⁰⁰ In conclusion, the Arçelik management seemed to be successful in creating worker loyalty to the factory itself.

Nonetheless, the factory commitment or identity did not necessarily mean loyalty to the management in Arçelik. First of all, management techniques, promotions being the most important of those tactics, had weakened in their efficacy towards the end of the decade. The number of workers who got promotions slightly decreased in Arçelik at that time.¹¹⁰¹ And secondly, the workers’ own labor, rather than gratitude towards the bosses/managers, was at the center of the factory identity. In other words, the workers’ factory commitment stemmed from the idea that the factory developed on the shoulders of workers. In parallel with the

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ramazan Çavuşlar, “Daire 19 [The Section 19],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 10 (June 1966): 3.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Hüseyin Şenyer, “Aile Yuvamız [Our Family Home],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 4 (December 1965): 8.

¹¹⁰⁰ Veli Güner, “Boyahane’de mi Çalışıyorsun? [Are You Working in Dye-House?],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 9 (May 1966): 3.

¹¹⁰¹ “Terfi Sınavları Sonuçlandı [The Promotion Exams Have Ended],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 46 (June 1969): 4; “Terfi Sınavları [The Promotion Exams],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 52 (December 1969): 3; “Sınavlar [The Exams],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 58 (June 1970): 2.

management discourse, the workers advised their fellow workers to work hard to improve both Arçelik and themselves.¹¹⁰² According to Mehmet Anar:

“Arçelik is at the right place in the national development with its product and its workers. It has a say and stake in the fate of the land.”¹¹⁰³

In this sense, their “loyalty” referred at the same time to their jobs or the goods they produced, for which the workers had contributed their hard labor. For example, the workers of the Polisaj Section wrote of pride in their work in articles from the factory journal.¹¹⁰⁴ Another worker also stated that he was proud of his labor and products.¹¹⁰⁵ The workers believed that the factory flourished on the shoulders of workers.¹¹⁰⁶ The development of Arçelik, which the workers made possible, also meant the development of the nation.

Despite all the management’s efforts and its relative success in earning worker’s commitment to the factory, the Arçelik workers would choose to be represented by Maden-İş at the end of the decade. In fact, in 1970 the majority of workers in the factory sided with Maden-İş, which was not well thought of by the employers, just like the other metal workers in different factories. Furthermore, the Arçelik became a contentious place in terms of worker-employers relations. The Arçelik workers were at the forefront in the June 15-16th events, which Ege Cansen described as a trauma for that factory.¹¹⁰⁷ Arçelik management was successful in creating a kind of factory commitment among the employees; but this commitment did not necessarily mean a complete obedience to the management or management rules. It is true the management of this factory was unique among the other private metal factories located in İstanbul, in terms of its sophisticated managerial tactics.

¹¹⁰² Rahmi Fidan, “Bütün Gücümüzle Çalışmalıyız [We Must Work With Our All Strength],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 11 (July 1966): 3; Erdoğan Kılıç, “Buzdolabı Son Montaj Bandı [The Refrigerator Last Assembly Band],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 14, (October 1966): 3.

¹¹⁰³ Mehmet Anar, *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 14 (October 1966): 3.

¹¹⁰⁴ Hikmet Perker, “Biz Polisajcılar Tanıyınız [Know Us, The Polisaj Workers],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 4 (December 1965): 3.

¹¹⁰⁵ Kutlu Doğan, “Ünit Montaj [The Unit Assembly],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 22 (June 1967): 3.

¹¹⁰⁶ Muharrem Yüksel, “13 ve 14 Numaralı Maliyet Merkezlerini Tanıyınız [Know the Cost Center Whose Number is 13 and 14],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 12 (August 1966): 3.

¹¹⁰⁷ *Mamulattan Markaya Arçelik Kurum Tarihi*, 173.

However, even in such a place, the majority of the metal workers wanted to have their own organizations to ensure their rights.

III. Wages, High Work Tempo and the Problem of Representation

Although a lot of collective agreements were signed between workers and employers with an eye to pursue peaceful relations in the metal sector, the İstanbul metal workers were still frustrated over working conditions. The main factors which had driven workers to organize in a union in the first place did not dramatically change in the era of the collective agreements. Firstly, although the increasing scale and scope of the factories contributed to the build-up of workers in sheer numbers, general labor demographics hardly changed after the mid-1960s. And although some parts of the labor force that had been hired, especially after the mid-50s, were older, a significant number of the workers were still young, uneducated, male migrants. Most of those men arrived in the big city to provide for their families and/or have a decent life. Ahmet Sürmene says that he had to come to the big city with his wife and children out of a state of misery in his village.¹¹⁰⁸ Likewise, most of the workers with whom I conducted interviews said they came to İstanbul in the mid-1960s to escape the impoverished conditions of their birthplaces.¹¹⁰⁹ These people had already been married with children before migrating to the city, or were married soon after finding a job in the sector. According to the MESS's statistics, more than sixty percent of them were married with children by 1969.¹¹¹⁰ Furthermore, they were the sole income earners within their households. One metal worker claimed that most of his fellow workers were the sole wage earners within the household, while their wives dealt with the domestic duties and took care of the children.¹¹¹¹

¹¹⁰⁸ Ahmet Sürmene, "İşçiler ve Politika [Workers and Politics]," *Maden-İş*, (7 July 1969): 5.

¹¹⁰⁹ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, 21 June 2012; Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, 29 August 2012; Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013. Also look at: "Yiğit İzsall İşçilerinin Grevi 48 Güne Vardı [The Strike of the Brave İzsall Workers Reached to 48 Days]," *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 6.

¹¹¹⁰ *1969 Çalışma İstatistiği [The 1969 Work Statistics]*, (İstanbul: MESS, 1972), 12 and 15.

¹¹¹¹ Mahmut Yalçınkaya, "İşçi Arkadaş [The Fellow Worker]," *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969, 4. Also look at: "Sendikacıları Tanıyalım [Let's Introduce the Unionists]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 7 (19 July 1965): 2.

The voice of the metal workers verified this status of the workers.¹¹¹² It would appear that the metal workers' main concern was tangible; providing for their spouses and children was still the main concern of the metal workers.

Secondly, the socialization patterns of the metal workers, which contributed in the workers' unity within the workplaces and collective actions, remained intact. Whether old or young, the workers continued to live in the squatter houses that surrounded the workplaces. They engaged in established community patterns that mostly revolved around networks based on residents' original birthplaces.¹¹¹³ Those community ties would help them to find jobs in the metal workplaces. An ex-Demir Döküm worker, Aziz Amca, mentions that he was able to find work in the factory through one of his relatives in 1967.¹¹¹⁴ Another old Demir Döküm worker, Mustafa Türker's maternal uncle, had been employed since the construction of Demir Döküm and with his uncle's help, Türker was recruited to the factory as a painter to spray products with a special pistol in the enamel section.¹¹¹⁵ Seyfi Çağan's father also helped him to find a job in Demir Döküm in 1964.¹¹¹⁶ Such a process must have resulted in the quick adaptation of the new workers into the social networks within the factory. With so many relatives around them, it must have been easy for the new workers to adopt the established social networks within the workplaces and develop a commitment to the factory. This commitment and involvement might have enhanced the attitudes of both of consent and demur among the workers – an attitude that I will discuss at the end of the chapter.

Thirdly, there seems no significant social fragmentation to factor into the collective action patterns between the metal workers in terms of the requirements of jobs, which they were assigned to perform. For example, based on the interviews, the Demirdöküm workers,

¹¹¹² "Bu Nasıl İş? [How This Is So?]," *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969, 4; *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 8; "Arçelik'te Çalışan Bir İşçi Arkadaş Yazıyor [A Fellow Worker Who Works in Arçelik is Writing]," *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 4.

¹¹¹³ "Evleri Yıkılan İşçiler Yürüdü [The Workers Whose Houses Were Demolished Marched]," *Maden-İş*, no. 17 (22 October 1969): 4.

¹¹¹⁴ Aziz Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹¹¹⁵ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹¹⁶ Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

who either worked in the foundry section to carry the cast iron,¹¹¹⁷ or worked in the rectify section to determine the quality of radiators,¹¹¹⁸ participated in the invasion of the factory in August 1969. In fact, Hüseyin Ekinci, who actively participated in most of the collective actions in the region between 1968-1970 as the chair of Silahtarağa district of Maden-İş, performed a so-called unqualified job, carrying out the raw materials to trucks in the Rabak Factory.¹¹¹⁹ Unqualified workers who had not been trained to perform certain jobs that require expert knowledge still constituted the majority of the total employees in the metal sector. According to the MESS's statistics, more than half of the metal workers had graduated only from primary school by 1969.¹¹²⁰ Similarly, a Maden-İş report stated that nearly 20 percent of the metal workers were illiterate and 50 percent of them had graduated only from primary school. For example, Mustafa Birinci could not continue in school due to a lack of financial opportunities for his father who had been a worker, too. He had to go out and find work when he was fourteen.¹¹²¹ In the same vein, İlyas Kabil, a worker from Kavel, began to work after graduating from primary school.¹¹²² Furthermore, the majority of the work force, who were assigned to do jobs those require certain knowledge, did not have any formal education for their jobs; they were mostly trained on the job, or through courses that the factories' management organized.¹¹²³ İsmet Amca, an old Demir Döküm worker who was assigned a job that required measuring camshafts and threading radiators so that bungs could be plugged, claims that he had no prior knowledge about his job and he learned every skill in the factory.¹¹²⁴ Mustafa Türker also says that he learned to paint the furnaces, stoves and radiators with the help of his maternal uncle during the job.¹¹²⁵ This culture of transmission of skill

¹¹¹⁷ Yellow Mehmet Kul, interview by author, June 21, 2012.

¹¹¹⁸ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹¹⁹ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹¹²⁰ 1969 Çalışma İstatistiği [*The 1969 Work Statistics*], (İstanbul: MESS, 1972), 12 and 15.

¹¹²¹ Türkiye Hakkında Rapor, 62.

¹¹²² "Sendikacıları Tanıyalım [Let's Introduce the Unionists]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 6 (21 June 1965): 6 and 8; "Sendikacıları Tanıyalım [Let's Introduce the Unionists]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 7 (19 July 1965): 2.

¹¹²³ A.T. Yazman, "Bugünkü Otosan! [Today's Otosan]," *Bizden Haberler*, no. 15 (June 1968): 2; Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012;

¹¹²⁴ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹²⁵ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

from worker to worker must have also alleviated the social divisions within work force on the shop floor to some level, and contributed to unity between workers.

But those divisions, which one would think might arise out of gender, skill or birth place differences, did not reflect on the worker's collective actions. In fact, the metal workers collectively rose up at the end of the decade, firstly against those men (i.e. bosses, managers) who did not recognize workers' rights, or and Çelik-İş's men, who were assumed not to be working on behalf of workers. The workers' continuing grievances on the shop floor truly motivated the metal workers to join in the collective actions at the end of the decade. The sense of not having a say in the labor process greatly factored into the metal worker's widespread collective actions at the end of the decade. For the metal workers, there were two main sources of their grievances: the first one was a lack of decent income to sustain themselves and their families in İstanbul, and the second was the lack of mechanism for the workers to affect the progress of work relations on the shop floor.

The framework set forth for social justice in Turkey had promised workers that the institutionalization and formalization of work relations through collective agreements would force employers to respect and recognize employee rights on the shop floor, and would further provide them with a decent lifestyle. Nonetheless, it is difficult to demonstrate that the metal workers experienced a democratic industrial relationship after the mid-1960s; the 1964 collective agreements did not relieve the oppression of the metal workers. Only a few enterprises resorted to modern management techniques based on getting the consent of the workers in the progress of work relations. In our interview, Nuri Çelik claimed that most managers in the metal sector were uncompromising, unlike the Arçelik managers led by Ege Cansen who reflected on the beneficial side of the "industrial democracy." Most of them, like Burhan Günergun who was the general manager of Demir Döküm, were very oppressive.¹¹²⁶ In fact, a Demir Döküm worker, Kasım Sert, says that he had been oppressed by the managers

¹¹²⁶ Nuri Çelik, interview by author, Mecidiyeköy, İstanbul, January 16, 2013. Ege Cansen also thinks that the uncompromising attitude of Burhan Günergun caused in the troubles between workers and management in Türk Demir Döküm. Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

ever since he was recruited to the factory in 1967.¹¹²⁷ The vague word “oppression” was reiterated by the majority of the metal workers who joined in the collective actions. But what does it mean exactly? What kind of oppressions were the metal workers exposed to on the shop floor?

The word “oppression” firstly referred to the income issue for the metal workers. While it was true that the collective agreements signed after 1964 gave significant benefits to the workers in addition to the wage increases, the benefits still constituted only a small portion of the workers’ income. Although there is no exact data to show the changes in the wages of the metal workers between 1965 and 1970 within the factories, or in comparison with other sectors, the real wages which constituted the essential portion of the workers’ income began to lag behind consumer price indices in İstanbul by 1970. It is true that if we take 1963 as the base year, while real wages increased from 100 to 136 between 1963 and 1969, price indices increased from 100 to 131 in İstanbul.¹¹²⁸ This meant that the purchasing power of waged labor increased after 1963 until 1969. However, the same statistics showed the increase in real wages decreased under the level of increases in price indices by 1970.¹¹²⁹ Other scholars, such as Yıldırım Koç and Korkut Boratav, calculated that the real workers’ wages increased between 1963 and 1973 in Turkey.¹¹³⁰ The official statistics also show that the increase in real wages in the private sector reached its peak in 1969.¹¹³¹ But more important than the increases in wages was how the metal workers experienced city life in İstanbul. Ziya Kayla said in his public declaration in 1969 that consumer price increases had actually clawed back the workers’ income hikes in İstanbul.¹¹³² The metal workers keenly felt

¹¹²⁷ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

¹¹²⁸ Esin Pars, *Türkiye’de İşveren Sendikacılığı [The Business Unionism in Turkey]* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1974), 231-232.

¹¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹¹³⁰ Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*; Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye İçi sınıfı Tarihi*.

¹¹³¹ İcen Börtüçene, “Ücretler ve Fiyatlar [Wages and Prices],” in *21-23 Ekim 1975 Tarihlerinde Ankara’da Düzenlenen Türkiye’de Toplu Pazarlık Sisteminde Yol Gösterici Faktörler Seminerinde Sunulan Bildiriler, Tartışmalar ve Panel Görüşleri [The Reports, Debates and Panel Discussions in the Seminar of the Guiding Factors in the Collective Bargaining System in Turkey Held in Ankara Between October 21-23, Ankara]*, Ankara: Milli Prodüktivite Merkezi Yayınları, no. 198, (1976), 81.

¹¹³² Rasim Öz [ed.], *Kemal Türkler Kürsüde [Kemal Türkler is in the Chair]*, (İstanbul: Ketev, 2003), 49.

the reduced buying power of their incomes due to these basic price increases. A worker complained that the increasing prices had eradicated workers' incomes.¹¹³³ Likewise, a metal worker, Ahmet Sürmene, claimed at the end of the decade that the workers could barely feed themselves.¹¹³⁴ Another metal worker describes his low income as follows:

"I am a worker dwelling in the Kasımpaşa squatter houses. I earn a minimal amount of money at the end of the month. I was walking by a grocery store with my small child. The child cried a lot. I could not bear it and bought 4 sugar candies. The grocery asked for 2 TL. I would give 2 out of 5 in my pocket for 4 sugar candies. I was surprised since we have not eaten even such an expensive vegetable before (...)"¹¹³⁵

Insufficient income was especially suffered by the workers who were recruited into the middle sized plants. The Horoz Nail Factory workers complained about their low wages in 1969.¹¹³⁶ In the poem of Ali Şahin, a worker from the Aksan Factory, the misery of the workers was narrated as follows:

"A worker should not be hired to work for a 13 TL daily fee
He does not involve himself in society out of his discontent
Not every employer has mercy on workers
When we complain of this, we are labelled as disrupters
(...)
We cannot have the tailor sew clothes and jackets
The debt to grocery and butcher has increased
Our needs are too many to be calculated
Poverty is infused our essence and veins

¹¹³³ Mahmut Yalçınkaya, "İşçi Arkadaş [The Fellow Worker]," *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969, 4.

¹¹³⁴ Ahmet Sürmene, "İşçiler ve Politika [Workers and Politics]," *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 5.

¹¹³⁵ "Bu Nasıl İş? [How This Is So?]," *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969, 4.

¹¹³⁶ "Horoz Çivi İşçileri Direniyor [The Horoz Nail Factory Workers Are Resisting]," *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 1. Also look at: "Efem Alüminyum Sanayi İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Efem Aluminum Industry Workers Speak]," *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 5.

(...)

A small room is 100 TL to rent

Children get sick, the weather turns cold

There is no stew pot and pan to cook a soup

We do not care about our stomach.”¹¹³⁷

Even the employees of the big metal plants who earned more than their counterparts in the middle or small sized metal plants had several hardships to overcome in the fight to sustain their families.¹¹³⁸ The recollections of the former Demir Döküm workers confirm the problem of low wages, too. İsmet Amca was recruited to Demir Döküm in 1966 and he claimed that from the beginning of his job in the factory, he always received poor wages.¹¹³⁹ Likewise, Ali Can said that the Demir Döküm workers always earned low wages and there were few wage increases in the 1960s.¹¹⁴⁰ Low wages, it appears, were the most severe problem for the metal workers, but they were certainly not the only problem.

Secondly, “oppression” referred to the arbitrary nature of the employers/managers in organizing work relations, despite the existence of collective agreements and the Labor Law. In brief, oppression encompassed the unlawful acts of the employers/managers regarding the progress of work relations on shop floor level and it had a pattern in the sector. First of all, the arbitrary acts included the lack of job guarantees in the workplaces. The metal workers were

¹¹³⁷ Ali Şahin, “Sorarım Size [I Ask You],” *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 5.

¹¹³⁸ “Arkadaşımız Ahmet Şahin [Our Fellow, Ahmet Şahin],” interview by E. Arslan Başaran, *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 19, (March 1967): 3; “Otosan Fabrikasından Bir İşçi [A Worker From the Otosan Factory],” and “Otosan İşçilerine Sesleniyorum [I am Calling to the Otosan Workers],” *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969; “Demirdökümde İşler Durdu: İşçiler Fabrikayı Gece İşgal Etti [The Works Stopped in the Demirdöküm-The Workers Invaded the Factory at Night],” *Akşam*, August 2, 1969; “Kendileri İşgalci Olanlar Demirdöküm İşçisini Suçlayamaz [The Invaders Cannot Blame the Demirdöküm Workers],” *Ant*, 12 August 1969; “İşçi Koç’un Kölesi Değildir [The Workers Are not the Slaves of Koç],” *Ant*, 12 August 1969; “Demirdöküm İşçilerinin Eylemi Örnek Olmalıdır [The Struggle of the Demirdöküm Workers Should be an Example],” *Maden-İş*, 8 December 1969; “Otosan İşçileri Maden-İş’e Girdiler [The Otosan Workers Joined in Maden-İş],” *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970); “Elektrometal Baştemsilcisi Turhan Söyler’le Konuştuk [We Talked With Turhan Söyler, the Headrepresentative of the Elektrometal Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2; “Yiğit İzsal İşçilerinin Grevi 48 Güne Vardı [The Strike of the Brave İzsal Workers Reached to 48 Days],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 6.

¹¹³⁹ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

frustrated that the bosses/managers fired them whenever they found appropriate.¹¹⁴¹ In fact, the metal workers were still working under the threat of being fired at every moment. Some metal bosses fired, in particular, the older workers who had higher wages.¹¹⁴² Secondly, there were the issues of arbitrary punishment and unilateral regulation of workplace relations, which contributed to widespread unfairness for the metal workers. The metal workers often complained about these arbitrary punishments.¹¹⁴³ Some factories cut the Sunday wages of the workers without giving any proper reason¹¹⁴⁴ and some of them did not pay wages on time.¹¹⁴⁵ Others paid reduced wages to the workers,¹¹⁴⁶ or forced workers into overtime hours.¹¹⁴⁷ Another tactic was to transfer workers within the factory without getting their consent.¹¹⁴⁸ The Efem workers complained that they were not allowed to go to the workers' hospital when they were sick.¹¹⁴⁹ Seyfi Çağan said that the dissident workers were transferred to other jobs as punishment during the time of Çelik-İş in Demir Döküm.¹¹⁵⁰ The workers' narratives on this subject show that even the institutionalization of work relations through collective agreements did not put an end to unilateral rulings and arbitrary punishments exerted by the bosses/managers. The workers I met criticized Çelik-İş for the perceived unfair relations in the factories; in fact, when they spoke of the old days of being treated unfairly, they called it

¹¹⁴¹ "Toplu Sözleşme [Collective Agreement]," *Maden-İş*, year 3, no. 72 (31 December 1964): 7; "Siemens Kablo Fabrikasında Toplu Sözleşme Yapılacak [There Will Be Collective Agreement at the Siemens Cable Factory]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 20 (25 June 1966): 2; Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu [The Confederacy of Turkish Employer's Unions], *İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor [The Report on the Illegal Actions Take Place on the Workplaces]*, Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive, 7; "Singer Olayı İle İlgili Özel Bülten [The Special Issue About the Singer Event]," *MaHa Ajansı*, 11 January 1969, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308; "VI. Bölgeden Haberler [The News From the Sixth District]," *Maden-İş*, no. 20 (8 December 1969): 5; "Patronlar İşçi Çıkartıyorlar [The Bosses Dismiss Workers]," *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970): 4.

¹¹⁴² Salim Aslın, "İşçi Hakları [The Workers' Rights]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 3 (1 July 1966): 3.

¹¹⁴³ "Toplu Sözleşme [Collective Agreement]," *Maden-İş*, year 3, no. 72 (31 December 1964): 7; "Patronlar İşçi Çıkartıyorlar [The Bosses Dismiss Workers]," *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970): 4.

¹¹⁴⁴ "Birinci Bölge Temsilciliği Başarılı Çalışmalarına Devam Ediyor [The First District Representative Keep Its Successful Works Going On]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 19 (22 May 1966): 3 and 7.

¹¹⁴⁵ "Şakir Zümre'den Ayrılan Sendikalı İşçilere Tazminatları Sağlandı [The Severance Pays Were Provided to the Workers Who Left Şakir Zümre]," *Maden-İş*, year 12, no. 27 (20 February 1967): 13.

¹¹⁴⁶ "Sendikadan Haberler [The News From the Union]," *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969, 7; Muharrem Yankaçan, "Emayetaş İşçileri Bu Mektubu Okuyunuz [The Emayetaş Workers, Let's Read This Letter]," *Maden-İş*, 15 February 1970, 4.

¹¹⁴⁷ "Kısa Sendika Haberleri [The Short Union News]," *Maden-İş*, 1 May 1969, 6.

¹¹⁴⁸ "Jeep Fabrikası İşçileri Uyarıldı [The Jeep Factory Workers Were Warned]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 20 (25 June 1966): 2 and 8.

¹¹⁴⁹ "Efem Alüminyum Sanayi İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Efem Aluminum Industry Workers Speak]," *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 5.

¹¹⁵⁰ Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

the “time of Çelik-İş.” Such a portrayal, which depicts Çelik-İş as and its representatives as the ‘men’ of bosses/managers, must be carefully analyzed in the absence of evidence, notwithstanding; since, as it was clear from a memory of Ali Can below, the representatives of this union attempted to defence worker’s rights in several cases.

In addition to failing to stop the employers’/managers’ arbitrary behaviour in the workplace, the collective agreements tightened workplace discipline by formalizing how the workers’ were expected to act on shop floor. In this regard, oppression thirdly meant a strict control over the workers’ movements and attitudes within the factories. For instance, the managers were free to search workers in the entrance and exit area at the workplaces, according to items in the collective agreements. In addition to the strict rules over the arrival, breaks and leaving work on time, the factory rules emphasized control over the movement and attitude of workers within the factories.¹¹⁵¹ And most employers were free to assign any workers to any type of work. According to the collective agreements, the employers were further free to extend work hours on the condition of extra payment.¹¹⁵² Some clauses put forth that the employers were free to fire the workers whose recovery from illness was predicted to last more than 90 days.¹¹⁵³ Those strict rules, and the manner of their application, added to the workers’ grievances in the metal sector. One Arçelik worker complained about wage cuts due to a slower work pace.¹¹⁵⁴ İsmet Amca described the strict control as follows:

¹¹⁵¹ *Arçelik A.Ş. Toplu İş Sözleşmesi*, 53-55; *Uzel Ticaret ve Sanayii Limited Şirketi İle Maden-İş Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi [The Collective Bargaining Between Uzel Commerce and Industry Limited Company and Maden-İş]*, in effective between 1 March 1964-31 December 1965, 33-37; *Maden-İş İle Profilo Sanayi ve Ticaret A. Ş. Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi [The Collective Bargaining Between Profilo Commerce and Industry Joint Stock Company and Maden-İş]*, in effective between 18.7.1966-31.12.1968, 34-44; *Türk General Elektrik Endüstri A. Şirketi İle Türkiye Maden-İş Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi [The Collective Bargaining Between Turk General Electric Joint Stock Company and Maden-İş]*, in effective between 1967-1968, 53-61; *Hoşgeldiniz [Welcome]*, Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları Anonim Şirketi; *Singer’e Hoşgeldiniz*, 6.

¹¹⁵² *Arçelik A.Ş. Toplu İş Sözleşmesi*, 23; *Uzel Ticaret ve Sanayii Limited Şirketi İle Maden-İş Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi*, 30-31 and 43.

¹¹⁵³ *Türk General Elektrik Endüstri A. Şirketi İle Türkiye Maden-İş Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi*, 49; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası İle Rabak Elektrolitik Bakır ve Mamulleri A.Ş. Arasında Toplu İş Sözleşmesi ve İş Yönetmeliği [The Collective Work Agreement and Factory Rules and Regulations Between Maden-İş and Rabak Electrolytic Copper Products Joint Stock Company]*, in effective between 1967-1968, 14.

¹¹⁵⁴ Muzaffer Çolakoğlu, “Şu Kart Basma İş [The Problem of Punching Cards],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 35, (July 1968), 4.

“The workers’ every moment was controlled by the management and Çelik-İş employees. Forgive my words, if you had to go to toilet, you had to take permission from the foreman in the time of Çelik-İş. There was a strict and overwhelming control over the workers.”¹¹⁵⁵

Likewise, Mehmet Kul recalls that the foremen and gang bosses controlled the workers very strictly in Demir Döküm. There was no permission to smoke, or even go to the toilet during the work hours.¹¹⁵⁶ According to Ali Can:

“Before the resistance, we could not even go to the toilet. I wanted to go to the toilet once to urinate. I saw the late Necati who was a foreman at the gate. He suddenly began to yell at us that we stayed too long in the toilet. You had to return to your work immediately. The foreman watched our every movement closely by saying ‘do your jobs fast!’”¹¹⁵⁷

Demir Döküm was not an exception. The Singer workers were similarly frustrated over the strict management control of workers.¹¹⁵⁸ But the items in the collective agreements, or arbitrary punishments exerted by bosses/managers, were not the only causes of the workers’ frustration over the strict work control.

The workers’ grievances over the manager’s/foreman’s control over the labor process also stemmed from the application of the work evaluation system, which was assumed to provide a sense of justice among the workers in the metal plants. According to this system, each labor gang was given a valuation point determined according to surveillance of the work by the engineers and managers. Mustafa Türker says that:

¹¹⁵⁵ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁵⁷ Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

¹¹⁵⁸ “Singer Baştemsilcisi Ahmet Yüzyıl’a Sorduk, Söyledi [We Asked the Singer Headrepresentative, Ahmet Yıldız, He Told],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2.

“The managers and engineers watched our every movement. They were assigning points to us according to our efficiency in each section and team.”¹¹⁵⁹

As well as this strict control over the labor process, the system yielded a high work tempo for the workers by forcing the workers to finish their jobs in certain time to get a high wage. The high pace of work was defined in Arçelik as follows:

“The work tempo in Sütluçe was more serious than that which exists today. Every morning, everyone used to sign and enter the factory at 8.00 a.m.. Signing the paper at 8.10 a.m. was impossible. As well, as you were not allowed to work that day, and your Sunday wages used to be cut. There was highly disciplined work.”¹¹⁶⁰

A visitor to Otosan Factory mentioned the high production pace in the factory, too.¹¹⁶¹ The Arçelik workers often complained that the hard, fast and relentless work pace exhausted the workers.¹¹⁶² The situation was not different in other factories. Seyfi Çağan said that the foreman always forced the workers to work hard and fast in Demir Döküm.¹¹⁶³ In the same manner, an Emayetaş worker cried out that he was overwhelmed by the work in the factory. He said that he used to work 12 hours in a day.¹¹⁶⁴ The work evaluation system, which was implemented to create a sense of fairness among the workers through its “scientific and impartial methods”, actually contributed to the workers’ frustration. Most metal workers were frustrated that the so-called scientific evaluation system did not function

¹¹⁵⁹ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁶⁰ Quoted by Koray R. Yılmaz, 305.

¹¹⁶¹ A.T. Yazman, “Bugünkü Otosan! [Today’s Otosan],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 15 (June 1968): 2.

¹¹⁶² “Kalıp ve Kalıp Tornaları Atelyesinden Beş Arkadaşımızla Konuştuk [We Talked with Five Fellows From the Mold and Mold Turn Attellier],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 5 (January 1966): 3; Erdoğan Kılıç, “Buzdolabı Son Montaj Bandı [The Refrigerator Last Assembly Band],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 14: (October 1966), 3; Erdoğan Kılıç, “Biz Eksantrik Presçiler [We, The Eccentric Pressman],” *Arçelik’te Bir Ay*, no. 16: (December 1966): 3.

¹¹⁶³ Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

¹¹⁶⁴ Muharrem Yankaçan, “Emayetaş İşçileri Bu Mektubu Okuyunuz [The Emayetaş Workers, Let’s Read This Letter],” *Maden-İş*, 15 February 1970, 4.

impartially. In fact, the points given to workers were decided through the evaluation of those who applied this system. Consequently, such a system was highly vulnerable to corruption on the part of management.

Ege Cansen draws attention to this issue when he claims that such systems created wage differences in the overall private metal industry because the workers, who knew they were paid according to the piece rate system, developed his or her own methods and in some cases could disrupt the team's work. Also, some jobs were totally carried out by means of machines, so it was hard to measure the workers' efficiency.¹¹⁶⁵ In addition, nepotism was widely seen in the metal sector and it factored into the workers' growing sense of unfairness about the job evaluation system. In several workplaces the masterman and foreman gave high points to those who were close friends or family.¹¹⁶⁶ Mustafa Türker also talks about nepotism within the Çelik-İş, almost all of whom worked as "gang boss or foreman" when it came to categorizing them in terms of the job evaluation system.¹¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the Demir Döküm workers who had worked in the same team for at least six years and had earned the right to get the highest wages were transferred to other sections; as a result, such workers were not paid the maximum wages, instead they were paid the minimum wages of their new teams.¹¹⁶⁸ Therefore, it is clear that these methods of application of the new, "scientific" system resulted in frustration among the Türk Demir Döküm workers. Of special concern were the favors being done for the bosses and managers that created a sense of unfairness between the workers. This theme of unfairness turned out to be the most common subject of the workers' language when they collectively expressed their claims to management.

Fourthly, the term "oppression" referred to the poor treatment of those workers who were thought to work inefficiently, and they were outspoken in their frustrations. Insults and humiliations directed at such workers and were widespread in the sector.¹¹⁶⁹ In one incident,

¹¹⁶⁵ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁶⁶ Muhlis Kaya, "Merhaba Emekçiler [Hello the Laborers]," *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 10.

¹¹⁶⁷ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁶⁸ "Demirdöküm Protokolünde Bahsi Geçen İş Değerlendirme Sistemi Nedir [What is The Work Evaluation System Mentioned in the Demir Döküm Protocol]?" *Türk Solu*, 26 August 26 1969.

¹¹⁶⁹ "Kısa Sendika Haberleri [The Short Union News]," *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 6.

Ali Can poured molten iron into the oven, but the edge of the oven was clogged. Can tried to twist it, but he could not open it. Then, the foreman yelled at him and told the gang boss to fire him immediately. When the gang boss said that it was not fair, since Ali Can had a wife and children, the foreman swore at Ali Can, saying to keep out of the matter, in no uncertain terms.¹¹⁷⁰ In the recollections of İsmet Amca, especially in the foundry section of the Demir Döküm Factory, gang bosses or foreman slapped the workers if they performed inefficiently, or if they expressed their concerns.¹¹⁷¹ Likewise, Mehmet Kul said that there was a great deal of humiliation and insults hurled in Demir Döküm before the invasion that took place in 1969.¹¹⁷² Mustafa Türker also claimed that the management, the gang bosses and the foreman insulted, beat and even relocated the workers who were thought to not work efficiently, and/or who talked about their concerns. Seyfi Çağan said that there were arbitrary wage cuts and humiliation of inefficient workers in Demir Döküm. The foremen acted like a “god figure” and workers could not say anything in front of them. He said that they were generally oppressive and intolerant of all workers.¹¹⁷³ This poor treatment was certainly one of the causes that led the metal workers to conduct collective actions.

Fifthly, the traditional problems of arduous work, frequent work accidents and problems of inadequate food at the factories, did not relent in most plants during the period. For example, the work was particularly difficult in the foundry section where most of the labor force was employed in Türk Demir Döküm. Foundry work required immense labor power. Hüseyin Ekinci described the working conditions as follows:

“The work was definitely very strenuous in Türk Demir Döküm. There were melting pots and ovens in the foundry section. The heat increased to a hundred degrees at times. The workers had to work under such a high heat for hours without having a proper break. The foundry workers used to carry white pieces of cloth in their pockets to dry their sweat. But, after some time,

¹¹⁷⁰ Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

¹¹⁷¹ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁷² *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁷³ Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

the colour of those cloths turned to black. The workers also expended a lot of energy due to the strenuous work.”¹¹⁷⁴

Similarly, Ege Cansen claimed that the work in Demir Döküm was very strenuous and dirty. The foundry work at the time meant exposure to dust and coal and the risk of overheating. At the end of the workday, the faces of the foundry workers were blackened by coal dust.¹¹⁷⁵ İsmet Amca, who worked an assembly job for more than 10 years, claimed that although work in his section did not require enormous physical strength, the workers in the foundry section had to transfer nearly 10 tons of pig iron to the ovens by hand every day. Then, these workers used to carry the molten iron in melting pots.¹¹⁷⁶ Likewise Mehmet Kul, who worked in the press section, claimed that it was very difficult job in the foundry section, since the workers had to work in 180-degree conditions.¹¹⁷⁷

Despite strenuous work conditions, most metal employers did not take enough measures to ease the burden of work on the shop floor. Ege Cansen claimed that there were ventilation and lighting problems in Demir Döküm.¹¹⁷⁸ In addition, Ali Can claimed that there was no cooling system for the workers of the foundry section who had to work under in extremely high heat.¹¹⁷⁹ The workers also complained about the bad work conditions in Gamak.¹¹⁸⁰ Those work conditions, and the increasing work tempo, resulted in the high number of illnesses and work accidents among the metal workers.¹¹⁸¹ Even in Arçelik, which

¹¹⁷⁴ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹¹⁷⁵ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁷⁶ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁷⁷ Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁷⁸ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

¹¹⁸⁰ “Gamak İşçileri Direniyor [The Gamak Workers Resist],” *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 2. Also look at: “VI. Bölgeden Haberler [The News From the Sixth District],” *Maden-İş*, no. 20, (8 December 1969): 5; “Elektrometal Baştemsilcisi Turhan Söyler’le Konuştuk [We Talked With Turhan Söyler, the Headrepresentative of the Elektrometal Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2.

¹¹⁸¹ “Halit Yiğit’in Hastalığı [The Illness of Halit Yiğit],” *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 1 (21 February 1965): 3; “Diğer Ziyaretler [The Other Visits],” *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 3 (4 May 1965): 2; “Bir Sendikacının Başına Merdiven Düştü Hastahaneye Yatırıldı [The Ladder Has Fallen Into the Head of an Unionist, He Was Carried to the Hospital],” *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 26 (27 December 1966): 3; “Sendikadan Haberler [The News From the Union],” *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969, 7; Mustafa Demiray, “İşçi Arkadaşlara [To the Fellow Workers],” *Maden-İş*, no. 23 (15 February 1970): 10; Yusuf Yıldırım, “Sosyal Sigortalar İşçinin Değildir [The Workers’ Hospitals Do Not Function Well for the Workers],”

was one of cleanest and least intense workplaces, the number of work illnesses and accidents was not minor.¹¹⁸² I listened to a lot of narratives about work accidents during my interview with the ex-workers of Demir Döküm. One example came from Celal Akıl who recalled that he saw the internal organs of a friend from Aksaray, İstanbul. Additionally, one of his close friends, İbrahim, and another man were badly hurt in the factory. He also admitted that he accidentally crushed the feet of one of his fellow workers, Ali Can, when he was carrying goods.¹¹⁸³ To compound these illnesses and accidents, the metal worker also complained about not getting proper treatment in the workers' hospitals.¹¹⁸⁴ It was obvious from these narratives that the metal workers' very lives were at stake under the current system.

The metal workers were also concerned about insufficient or ill-prepared foods in their workplaces. One of the reasons which led the workers to conduct a collective action in Horoz Nail Factory in 1969 was the poor food.¹¹⁸⁵ İsmet Amca claimed that the workers, whether from the foundry section or assembling section in Demir Döküm, were also short of food and most workers performed their jobs on an empty stomach. He also maintained that the chefs were sycophantic towards management and the Çelik-İş's representatives, and that they distributed food unfairly. They put a lot of food onto the dishes of union leaders while the other workers received less. According to him, the managers and the workers used to eat

Maden-İş, no. 24 (20 March 1970): 5. Also look at: *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, [The Work Report of XIX. General Congress of Maden-İş], (7, 8, 9, 10 September 1969), 159.

¹¹⁸² Ahmet Kuzucu, "İşçi Sağlık Problemleri [The Health Problems of Workers]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 3 (November 1965): 4; Ahmet Kuzucu, "1966 Yılı İçinde Müessesemiz Sağlık Servisi Çalışmaları [The Works of the Health Service in Arçelik Within 1966]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 17 (January 1967): 4; "Ayağı Kesildi [His Leg Was Cut]," *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 6; Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁸³ Celal Akıl, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

¹¹⁸⁴ "İşçilerle Toplantılar [The Meetings With Workers]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 17 (1 April 1966): 3; "Sigorta Hastanelerinin Hali, Yürekler Acısıdır [The Condition of the Workers' Hospital is Miserable]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 78 (15 April 1968): 1 and 4; Salih Adem, "Bir İşçi Diyor ki: Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumundan Nasihat Değil Tedavi İstiyorum [One Worker Says: I Want Not Advice But Treatment From the Social Security Administration]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 82 (1 August 1968): 2; "Talisman İşçisi Halil Ceylan Konuşuyor [Halil Ceylan, A Talisman Worker, Speaks]," *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 3.

¹¹⁸⁵ "Horoz Çivi Fabrikasında Direniş [The Resistance at the Horoz Nail Factory]," *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 2; "Horoz Çivi İşçileri Direniyor [The Horoz Nail Factory Workers Are Resisting]," *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 1. Also look at: "Sendikadan Haberler [The News From the Union]," *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969, 7; "Gamak İşçileri Direniyor [The Gamak Workers Resist]," *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 2; "Efem Alüminyum Sanayi İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Efem Aluminum Industry Workers Speak]," *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 5; "Otosan İşçileri Maden-İş'e Girdiler [The Otosan Workers Joined in Maden-İş]," *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970).

in separate areas and the managers were provided with a higher quality and quantity of food.¹¹⁸⁶ Mehmet Kul also claimed that, before the 1970s, the managers who ate in the different section were supplied with better nutrition.¹¹⁸⁷ The workers' concern about the inadequate and poor quality food was also verified by Hüseyin Ekinci's memories:

“One day in 1966, when I was sitting in my chair in the regional district of Maden-İş, one fellow worker came and asked to talk with the chair of the union. I said that I was the chair, but he did not believe me. He had expected to see fat old man, most probably. After persuading him that I was the chair, he talked about his concerns. He said that he was fired from Demir Döküm, where he had worked in the foundry section, because he stole a quarter loaf of bread from the cafeteria. When I asked ‘why did you do this?’, he replied that it was because he was hungry. Then he unfortunately was caught by one of the union representatives and this man reported the incident to the managers. As a result, the managers fired the worker.”¹¹⁸⁸

In general, the metal workers' experiences of unfairness did not end, despite all the promises, collective agreements and “modern-scientific” management techniques; the workers, consequently continued to fight to overcome injustice as they had done in the previous periods, this time through their own mechanism; namely, the trade union. During this period, the metal workers were exposed to widespread oppression in their unionization attempts and the metal bosses/managers would exert high pressure on the workers to give up trying to select their own union through their own free will. This oppression constituted one of the primary reasons, which would lead the metal workers to rise up collectively at the end of the decade.

¹¹⁸⁶ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁸⁷ *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁸⁸ Hüseyin Ekinci also mentioned that the food problem was common among the metal workers in İstanbul in the 1960s. He recalled that when he visited a metal factory in Mecidiyeköy, he saw that the workers were supplied with one bottle of Coke and a half a loaf of bread. Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

In this regard, the word “oppression” lastly referred to the lack of a proper mechanism to voice the workers’ demands and frustrations after the mid-1960s. An Arçelik worker, Remit Aslan claimed that the Arçelik workers did not have a proper mechanism to voice their complaints and demands in the factory.¹¹⁸⁹ During my interviews, the ex-Demir Döküm workers also verified that it was nearly impossible for the workers to express their concerns and grievances openly. İsmet Amca, as another example, said that there was no one to complain to.¹¹⁹⁰ While there was a union in nearly all the big and mid-sized metal plants, in those plants where Çelik-İş was organized, the union did not invest itself in attempts to solve workers’ problems. During the time of Çelik-İş, Mehmet Kul said that union representatives did not listen to complaints and the workers who were brave enough to express their concerns were immediately blacklisted.¹¹⁹¹ In one case, some workers of Demir Döküm went to see Kazım Çoçu, the chair of Çelik-İş, to discuss the workers’ problems in the factory. But Kazım Çoçu declined to see them and drove them away from the union building.¹¹⁹² Turhan Söyler, from the Elektro Metal Factory, claimed that workers could not ask for their rights in the time of Çelik-İş.¹¹⁹³ In the words of one Emayetaş worker:

“One Sunday, the masterman came at 19.00 pm and said that you would work until 7.00 am. I objected to this. When I came to work in the following day, I learned that I was fired. Our daily wages were cut. But the representative did not say anything about this.”¹¹⁹⁴

In fact, it is nearly impossible to know exactly whether the bosses/managers were involved in under-the-table dealings with the representatives of Çelik-İş in the metal sector. Yet it was clear that there was not a particularly close relationship between the union and the

¹¹⁸⁹ Remzi Aslan, “Arçelik’li İşçi Kardeşlerime Sesleniyorum [I am Calling for my Fellow Workers of Arçelik],” *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 3.

¹¹⁹⁰ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁹¹ *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹¹⁹² Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹¹⁹³ “Elektrometal Baştemsilcisi Turhan Söyler’le Konuştuk [We Talked With Turhan Söyler, the Headrepresentative of the Elektrometal Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2.

¹¹⁹⁴ Muharrem Yankaçan, “Emayetaş İşçileri Bu Mektubu Okuyunuz [The Emayetaş Workers, Let’s Read This Letter],” *Maden-İş*, 15 February 1970, 4.

rank and file. The union made no attempt to construct a mechanism of trust with its members. Although they were the most important link between the union and its members, for example, the Çelik-İş's representatives were not chosen by the workers themselves. Anyone who searches inside the union's journal pages finds nothing about the representative selections on shop floor; on the contrary, the news articles relate that the union assigned the representative in workplaces from the center.¹¹⁹⁵ In Arçelik, collective bargaining stated that the employers would choose three candidates out of the representatives assigned by Çelik-İş, and the union, in turn, would assign one of them as the head representative.¹¹⁹⁶ Secondly, Çelik-İş and its representatives did not ask workers' opinions about the collective agreements. In fact, most agreements were being signed without workers' knowledge.¹¹⁹⁷ In Demir Döküm, the majority of the workers did not have any knowledge about when and how the agreement was signed, or its content.¹¹⁹⁸ In the absence of a trusted and proper mechanism to make their voices heard, the majority of the metal workers leaned towards Maden-İş at the end of the decade.

The majority of the metal bosses clearly preferred Çelik-İş, instead of Maden-İş, to represent the workers on shop floor.¹¹⁹⁹ Maden-İş's reports accused the employers of forcing the workers to join in unions that the workers did not support, and employers signed collective agreements without the workers' knowledge with this union.¹²⁰⁰ The Demir Döküm workers claimed that the general manager, Burhan Günergun, forced them to join in Çelik-

¹¹⁹⁵ "Temsilci Tayinleri [The Assignments]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 7 (15 December 1964): 1; "Çelik-İş Sendikasının Temsilcileri Vazife Başında [The Çelik-İş's Representatives Are On Duty]," *Çelik-İş*, year 1, no. 12 (1 March 1965): 2; "Sendika Temsilcilerinin Görevleri Büyüktür [The Duties of the Union's Representatives Are Huge]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 40 (15 May 1966): 4.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Arçelik A.Ş. Toplu İş Sözleşmesi*, 12.

¹¹⁹⁷ "Pancar Motor'da İşçiler Çelik-İş'in Oyununa Gelmedi [The Pancar Motor Workers Did not Fall in the Tricks of Çelik-İş]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 23 (26 September 1966): 8; Rasim Öz [ed.], 40.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu, 17 August 1969 [The Deed Report of the Sixth District of Maden-İş]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 15, Envelope 180.

¹¹⁹⁹ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, January 14, 2013; Nuri Çelik, interview by author, Mecidiyeköy, İstanbul, January 16, 2013.

¹²⁰⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967, vol.1 [The Work Report of XVIII. General Congress of Maden-İş]*, (22, 23, 24, 25, October 1967), 288.

İş. ¹²⁰¹ Ali Can recalls that, Burhan Günergün cooperated with Çelik-İş in Türk Demir Döküm. ¹²⁰² They perceived Çelik-İş and its representatives as not being a body of their own choosing, for most workers, their union managers were seen as the “man of the bosses” who sold workers’ rights for their own pockets. ¹²⁰³ In the poem by Osman Keskin:

“While the yellow unionists smoke expensive cigarettes

Workers could not find the İkinci

Do not blink your eyes, my friends, to them

Wake up fellow workers, the time has come.”¹²⁰⁴

The lack of free choice of representatives was a main cause of Maden-İş’s organization on the shop floor. Unlike Çelik-İş, Maden-İş gave importance to constructing close relations with the workers through the union’s representatives. First and foremost, the union’s representatives were also the representatives of the workers chosen by their free will. A manager in the sector admitted that while Maden-İş left the choice of the workers’ representatives to the workers themselves, most unions assigned them from the center. ¹²⁰⁵ In fact, the union newspapers are full of news on the various representative elections that took place. ¹²⁰⁶ As the chair of the one of the most important metal workers’ district, Silahtarağa, Hüseyin Ekinçi claimed that they put voting chests in the ateliers so that the workers would

¹²⁰¹ “İşçiler Fabrikayı Gece İşgal Etti [The Workers Invaded The Factory At Night],” *Akşam*, August 2, 1969, 1 and 7; “Fabrika Ordunun Elinde [The Factory Is At the Hand of The Army],” *Milliyet*, August 7, 1969, 1 and 11.

¹²⁰² Ali Can, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

¹²⁰³ “İşçiler Fabrikayı Gece İşgal Etti [The Workers Invaded The Factory At Night],” *Akşam*, August 2, 1969, 1 and 7; “Otosan İşçileri Maden-İş’e Girdiler [The Otosan Workers Joined in Maden-İş],” *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970); “Singer Baştemsilcisi Ahmet Yüzünlü’ye Sorduk, Söyledi [We Asked the Singer Headrepresentative, Ahmet Yıldız, He Told],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 3.

¹²⁰⁴ Osman Keskin, “Yeter Zulüm [Enough to Oppression],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 3.

¹²⁰⁵ Cüneyt Dosdoğru, “Türkiye’de İşçi-İşveren Münasebetlerinin Tarihi Seyri [The Historical Course of Worker-Employer Relations in Turkey],” *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, no. 21 (1970): 76.

¹²⁰⁶ For example: “Emayetaş’ta Temsilci Seçimi Başarı İle Neticelendi [The Representative Election Was Successfully Done in Emayetaş],” *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 21 (10 August 1966): 7; “Sendika’dan Haberler [The News From the Union],” *Maden-İş*, 15 March 1969, 7; “VI. Bölgeden Haberler [The News From the Sixth District],” *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 6; “Sendikadan Haberler [The News From the Union],” *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969, 7; “Kısa Sendika Haberleri [The Short Union News],” *Maden-İş*, 1 May 1969, 6; “Estaş İşçileri İle Toplu Sözleşme İmzalandı [The Collective Bargaining Signed With the Estaş Workers],” *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 6; “Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikalarında Seçim Yapıldı [The Election Was Made in the Türk Demir Döküm Factories],” *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969.

be able to choose their own representatives.¹²⁰⁷ Mustafa Türker likewise claimed that no one influenced the selection of their representatives in Maden-İş's times.¹²⁰⁸ Mehmet Kul recalls that the workers themselves democratically chose their representatives.¹²⁰⁹ When I asked Celal Akıl about the reason for his choice for Maden-İş, he simply said that it was a better union since workers were free to choose their representatives in Maden-İş.¹²¹⁰

Maden-İş also demanded its representatives engage in close relations with the rank and file on shop floor level. The 1967 Congress Report advised the representatives to meet with workers, to hold meetings to explain the union's aims and to heed their problems. The head representatives were asked to write reports about their meetings with the workers and send them to the local district. Through these meetings and reports, the strategies of the local district would be devised.¹²¹¹ Maden-İş also leant importance to listening to rank and file opinions on the collective bargaining. The union reports stated that the union had to organize meetings with the workers before the collective bargaining agreements were signed in order to first learn their demands and inform them about the process of bargaining.¹²¹² In fact, the collective agreement section of the union published a report, which suggested that the local districts distribute survey sheets to the members to get their opinions about the agreements in 1967. The report mentioned that the representatives acknowledged the workers on shop floor during every stage of the bargaining.¹²¹³ It seems that those union strategies worked efficiently in earning the workers' trust to the union during the late 1960s.

It's also evident that Maden-İş was more successful than Çelik-İş, in terms of constructing trust mechanisms between the rank and file and the union itself, through its representatives on shop floor. Most workers claimed that they joined in Maden-İş due to their

¹²⁰⁷ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹²⁰⁸ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012

¹²⁰⁹ Yellow Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹²¹⁰ Celal Akıl, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 20, 2012.

¹²¹¹ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967*, 223-225.

¹²¹² *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 30-32.

¹²¹³ "Toplu Sözleşme Dairesi Komisyon Raporu [The Commission Report of the Collective Agreement Section]," in *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967, vol. 1 [The Work Report of XVIII. General Congress of Maden-İş]*, TÜSTAV Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 312, (22, 23, 24, 25, October 1967), 223-225.

trust in this union, and their desire for it to represent their rights in a proper manner.¹²¹⁴ İsmet Amca narrated his transfer to Maden-İş as follows:

“We did not know anything about unionism, about Çelik-İş (...) One day Celal Alçinkaya who was from Rabak and a very trusted, respected and honored man, came to us. He told us about Maden-İş and persuaded us. After the work, we began to register for Maden-İş (...).”¹²¹⁵

In his recollections, Aziz Amca states that they had a good union to defend their rights.¹²¹⁶ In the words of Mustafa Türker:

“We were very content about the union, it was our union. We all trusted it.”¹²¹⁷

Despite being a religious worker, İsmet Amca said that he chose leftist Maden-İş out of his trust of the union.¹²¹⁸ Even the managers admitted that since Maden-İş defended workers’ rights truly, the workers chose this union.¹²¹⁹ But this trust did not emerge just out of the union’s policy. It also stemmed from the workers’ intense struggles to make Maden-İş the authorized union in the workplaces at the end of the Sixties.

IV. Conclusion

It’s clear that the metal workers had to struggle to organize Maden-İş in their workplaces. It’s equally clear that the metal bosses/managers were determined to obstruct the

¹²¹⁴ Ahmet Sürmene, “İşçiler ve Politika [Workers and Politics],” *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 5; “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969; Hıdır Yıldırım, “Elektro Metal İşçilerine Sesleniyorum [I am Calling for the Elektro Metal Workers],” *Maden-İş*, no. 20, (8 December 1969): 5; “Auer Fabrikası Baştemsilcisi Cengiz Turhan’la Konuştuk [We Talked With Cengiz Turhan, the Headrepresentative of the Auer Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2; “Elektrometal Baştemsilcisi Turhan Söyler’le Konuştuk [We Talked With Turhan Söyler, the Headrepresentative of the Elektrometal Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2.

¹²¹⁵ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹²¹⁶ Aziz Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹²¹⁷ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹²¹⁸ İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹²¹⁹ Nuri Çelik, interview by author, Mecidiyeköy, İstanbul, January 16, 2013.

penetration of Maden-İş into the metal plants. The Maden-İş reports emphasized how the employers acted to prevent Maden-İş from being organized.¹²²⁰ One hundred and twenty five Gamak workers were fired in 1969 after they joined Maden-İş,¹²²¹ and/or the Demir Döküm workers who sought to become organized in Maden-İş were fired by management.¹²²² The workers who wanted to be organized in Maden-İş were fired in Singer, too.¹²²³ And there are many more examples of management stifling the workers' union. Management did not allow the workers to choose their unions freely in the Horoz Nail Factory.¹²²⁴ The employers of Gamgam gave half wages to the workers who were unionized in Maden-İş.¹²²⁵ One Otosan worker claimed that the management did not allow Maden-İş to be organized inside the factory.¹²²⁶ Kemal Uğur, from the Pendik District, complained that the workers' representatives and workers themselves were exposed to the bosses/managers' oppression

¹²²⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967*, 245-252; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 4; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1969-1971*. Also look at: "Bir Bölgenin Çabalarına Toplu Bakış: Topkapı [A General Outlook to the Works of a District: Topkapı]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 2 (15 March 1965): 5; "Pancar Motor'da İşçiler Çelik-İş'in Oyununa Gelmedi [The Pancar Motor Workers Did not Fall in the Deceptions of Çelik-İş]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 23 (26 September 1966): 8; "Jeep Fabrikası İşçileri Uyarıldı [The Jeep Factory Workers Were Warned]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 20 (25 June 1966): 2 and 8; "Singer'de Çalışan İşçiler Uyarıldı [The Singer Employees Were Warned]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 20 (25 June 1966): 4; "İşçi Sendikası Üyeliğinin Teminatı İçin Uyarı Yapıldı [A Warning Was Made For the Guarantee of the Free Union Choice]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 24 (7 November 1966): 2; "İşverenler Tazminata Mahkum Oldular [The Employers Were Convicted to Pay Reparations]," *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969, 6; "Horoz Çivi Fabrikasında Direniş [The Resistance at the Horoz Nail Factory]," *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 2; "Toplu Olarak Maden-İş'e Katılan Altılar Sanayi İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Altılar Industry Workers Who Completely Joined in Maden-İş Speaks]," *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 5; "Türk Demir Döküm İşvereni 19599 Liraya Mahkum Oldu [The Türk Demir Döküm Employer Was Convicted to Pay 19.599 Turkish Lira]," *Maden-İş*, no. 20 (8 December 1969); "Emayetaştan Bir İşçi Sesleniyor [One Worker From Emayetaş Is Calling]," *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970): 5.

¹²²¹ Yıldırım Koç, *DİSK Tarihi: Efsane mi Gerçek mi? [The DİSK History: Reality or Legend?]*, (Ankara: Epos, 2008): 131.

¹²²² İbrahim Osmanoğlu, "Kendileri İşgalci Olanlar Demir Döküm İşçisini Suçlayamaz [Those Who Are Themselves Invaders Cannot Accuse the Demir Döküm Workers]," *Ant*, 12 August 1969, 4; "Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk]," interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu*, 17 August 1969.

¹²²³ "Singer Olayı İle İlgili Özel Bülten [The Special Issue About the Singer Event]," *MaHa Ajansı*, 11 January 1969, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

¹²²⁴ "Horoz Çivi İşçileri Direniyor [The Horoz Nail Factory Workers Are Resisting]," *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 1.

¹²²⁵ "Şerif'i Patron ve Polis Kurşunu Öldürdü [The Bullet of Police and Boss Killed Şerif]," *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 5.

¹²²⁶ "Otosan Fabrikasından Bir İşçi [A Worker From the Otosan Factory]," and "Otosan İşçilerine Sesleniyorum [I am Calling to the Otosan Workers]," *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969.

over union choice.¹²²⁷ Despite such oppression, the metal workers from nearly all plants collectively acted to make Maden-İş their authorized union in the workplaces. Even the employer's organization admitted that this type of oppression over the free union choice of workers was one of the causes of the so-called illegal events.¹²²⁸ Nearly all metal plants in İstanbul witnessed similar workers' struggles to make Maden-İş be recognized by the bosses/managers between 1968 and 1970. Through those struggles, the militant metal workers would adopt a more radical language, which reflected their intention to put an end to injustices that they felt to be exposed on their working and living places.

¹²²⁷ "Pendik, Topkapı Şube Kongreleri de Yapıldı [The Pendik and Topkapı District Congress Were Done, Too]," *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 8 (27 July 1965): 6.

¹²²⁸ Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu [The Confederacy of Turkish Employer's Unions], *İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor [The Report on the Illegal Actions Take Place on the Workplaces]*, Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive, 11; Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 254.

CHAPTER 10

THE PERIOD OF COLLECTIVE ACTIONS, 1968-1970

“Wolves tear apart a horse who wanders alone. But, when horses discern the threat, get together and act together, they would instantly destroy the monster.”

A Worker, Dursun Seyit, from Samsun, quoted from Ağralı, Sedat *Türk Sendikacılığı*, 9.

The most distinguishing characteristic of the collective actions that took place between 1968 and 1970 was certainly their radical nature. The metal worker, who suffered through factory life and encountered significant hardships in the city, joined in collective responses to their conditions between 1968 and 1970, just as they had previously done in 1963 in Kavel, Gümüş Motor or Samurkaş, and in 1964 in several other plants through strikes, or as they had done during the 1950s in nearly all metal factories through legal work disputes. But this time their effort was different in terms of the scale and scope of the actions. In fact, Turkey witnessed widespread collective actions that were conducted by the various social groups in the different parts of the country between 1968 and 1970. By 1968, the revolutionary youth groups had organized important and large scale in the big cities of the country, İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir, and within the different universities such as Middle East Technical University, Ankara University, İstanbul University, Istanbul Technical University, etc., to protest the educational issues, as well as the overwhelming influence of the US in Turkey's economic and political life and unfair social relations within the country. They would often occupy the universities to make their demands heard. Different youth groups would also get involved in relations within workers and peasants to spread their ideas and encourage a revolution. In this way, they would support every workers' and peasants' collective actions. In those years, peasants made an unprecedented effort and organized meetings to protest the low prices of good that they produced, and/or landless peasants invaded the lands of landlords who were assumed to force the peasants to work for their own

interests by usurping lands. In addition to students; and peasants' struggles, the collective actions in several factories became more frequent and radical between 1968 and 1970 in Turkey. The workers who were recruited in textile, chemical, rubber factories and mines, not just in İstanbul but in the different parts of Turkey, occupied those enterprises, or went into strikes to make their voices heard. For example, the Alpagut workers, who had not been paid for more than two months, invaded the mine in Çorum, a city in the Central Anatolia, in May, 1969. Bossa workers, too, in a big southern city, Adana, stopped production and occupied the factory in November 1970 to get higher wages.¹²²⁹ In the absence of direct evidence, it is impossible to discuss whether the collective actions of the İstanbul metal workers led the way for the workers in the other sectors, or students and peasants who engaged in the collective struggles; nonetheless, considering the rise of radicalism among the other social groups as well as among workers between 1968 and 1970, the metal worker's actions were the part of those larger struggles and constituted a rule rather than an exception. Furthermore, the metal worker's actions in İstanbul were the most influential of those struggles since it expanded to nearly all the important workplaces in İstanbul.

First of all, the actions swept through many workplaces in the sector and thus influenced a considerable number of workers. Secondly, although the collective actions of the period resembled the previous struggles in terms of the workers' demands on wages and free union choice, the metal workers did not rely on legal mechanisms to reach their demands in this period. They did not apply to any state office to ask permission to engage in collective actions. The metal workers, first and foremost, counted on their own collective power, which

¹²²⁹ For further details about the student's, peasant's and worker's collective actions between 1968 and 1970, see "Türkiye'de 1968 [1968 in Turkey]," in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi* [The Encyclopedia of Socialism and Collective Struggles], vol. 7 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1988), 2068-2109; "Köylü Mücadeleleri [The Peasant's Struggle]," *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi* [The Encyclopedia of Socialism and Collective Struggles], vol. 7 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1988), 2136-2138; "1969-1970 İşçi Hareketi [The Workers' Action Between 1969 and 1970]," in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi* [The Encyclopedia of Socialism and Collective Struggles], vol. 7 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1988), 2146-2148. It is unfortunate that the literature on the story of collective actions between 1968 and 1970 are still very immature; in fact, the existing ones which focus on the interactions between those actions analyze the period within the perspective of development of the leftist currents in Turkey. For some examples of this literature, see: Ergun Aydınoglu, *Türk Solu: Eleştirel Bir Tarih Denemesi* [The Turkish Left: An Attempt to Write a Critical History], (İstanbul: Belge, 1992); İlhan Akdere and Zeynep Karadeniz, *Türkiye Solu'nun Eleştirel Tarihi*, [The Critical History of the Turkish Left], (İstanbul: Evrensel, 1996).

was rooted in their class position inside the production process. Counting on this power, the metal workers transgressed the laws and staged direct collective actions. The workers simply stopped producing and did not allow any outsider to maintain production in their workplaces. These workplace invasions/factory occupations¹²³⁰ were one of the most common and influential forms of the metal worker's collective actions between 1968 and 1970. Thirdly, the workers fought fiercely with police forces, despite deaths, casualties and imprisonment. And the workers' community surrounding the factories participated in the actions through several means.

Nonetheless, this radicalism had its limits. Maden-İş and their workers based their actions on the items and demands which they linked to a decent lifestyle; issues such as democratic work relations and free union choice, which were items drawn from the 1961 Constitution. In this regard, they insisted on the legal legitimacy of their actions against the accusations from other unions and bosses/managers. After all, their fight was for rights that were already promised in constitutional text – promises that were presumably a high priority in a democratic state. And after all these struggles, a considerable number of the İstanbul metal workers began to redefine their place in modern society, as well as their interests and dreams, through a common language and consciousness; a language that placed labor of workers at the core of the general progress of society, and one that reflected the workers' widespread desire to balance out social inequalities.

¹²³⁰ The factory occupation is a form of worker's direct action to control the labor process and production, to prevent a possible lockout and/or make their demands recognized by bosses/managers. There had been examples of factory occupations before, but the term took hold in the collective actions repertoire of the working class first with the widespread factory occupations that took place in 1919 and 1920 in Italy, and then in 1936 and 1937, in France. The workers also invaded factories in 1968 in Italy and France. In those examples, the workers collectively occupied factories and they generally continued to work for their own behalf by trying to sell the finished goods. They did not let anyone else, except the factory workers, enter the factories. This type of action was perceived as a direct assault to property rights by bosses/managers. For example, see: Paolo Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories: Italy 1920*, G. A. Williams (trans.) (London: Pluto Press, 1975); Michael Torigian, "The Occupation of Factories: Paris 1936, Flint 1937", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 41, no. 2, (April 1999): 324-347; Dave Sherry, *Occupy!: A Short History of Worker's Occupation*, (London: Bookmarks, 2010). In parallel with this, the İstanbul metal workers did not let anyone into the factories during the occupations. However, the metal workers occupied the factories between 1968 and 1970, not to disrupt the labor process or prevent lockouts, but to make their demands, higher wages and free union choice, more widely accepted in Turkey.

I. For Our Bread and For Our Union

Several metal workers had attempted to organize Maden-İş inside factories where the union and its representatives had been wiped out during 1964, well before the time period of 1968 to 1970. Throughout 1966, the increasing number of Çelik-İş's declarations which warned workers to not be deceived by "some provocateurs" demonstrated that Maden-İş officers facilitated its attempts to register members in such workplaces that year.¹²³¹ When the end of the first collective agreements approached, Maden-İş's unionists tried to organize workers inside several enterprises such as Pancar Motor, Auer, Singer, Türk Demir Döküm, Elektro Metal and Emayetaş, but those efforts were unsuccessful.¹²³² The first reason for the failure was employer/manager oppression of the metal workers. The employers who learned of the Maden-İş' attempts to organize threatened to fire workers.¹²³³ Hüseyin Ekinci, a Maden-İş officer in the Silahtarağa district, claimed that although they tried to organize Maden-İş after 1965 in the region, they could not accomplish this due to strong employer oppression. He claimed that when a worker even spoke about Maden-İş inside the workplace, he was immediately fired.¹²³⁴

For example, Seyfi Çağan was fired in 1966 under the excuse that he was organizing Maden-İş in Demir Döküm.¹²³⁵ In the same manner, several Pancar Motor workers lost their

¹²³¹ "İşçi Kardeş Tahriklere Kapılma Türkiye Çelik-İş Sendikası Tahrikçileri Mutlaka Ezecektir [The Brother Workers, Do not Fall in Provocations, It is Certain that Çelik-İş Will Destroy the Provocators]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 47 (1 September 1966): 1 and 4; "Çelik-İş Üyelerini Uyardı [Çelik-İş Warned Its Members]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 48 (1 October 1966): 2; "Bildiri [The Declaration]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 70 (15 November 1967): 3.

¹²³² "Pancar Motor İşçileri Neyi Protesto Ediyorlar [What Are the Pancar Motor Workers Protesting For]," *İşçi Postası*, September 27, 1966, 1 and 4; "Oturma Grevinden Sonra Ankaraya Yürüyen Pancar Motor Fabrikası İşçilerinin Durumu Ne Olacak [What Will Happen to the Pancar Motor Workers Who Marched to Ankara After The Sit-Down Strike]," *İşçi Postası*, October 3, 1966, 1 and 4; "Pancar Motor Auer ve Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikaları İşçileri Maden-İşte Toplanıyor [The Pancar Motor, Auer and Türk Demir Döküm Factories' Workers Are Being Organized in Maden-İş]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 24 (7 November 1966): 1 and 7; "İşçiler Bilinçli Bir Şekilde Maden-İş'e Giriyorlar [The Workers Are Consciously Joining in Maden-İş]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 25 (5 December 1966): 2 and 3; "İşçileri Aldatmaya Kalkanlar İçin Bilgi Savaşı Açıldı [The War of Knowledge Has Declared Against Those Who Tried To Deceive the Workers]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 25 (5 December 1966): 2 and 8; "Pancar Motorda, Singer'de Auer'de Sözleşmeyi Türkiye Çelik-İş Sendikası İmzalıyor [Çelik-İş Signs the Agreement in Pancar Motor, Singer and Auer]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 51 (21 November 1966): 1.

¹²³³ "İşçi Sendikası Üyelığinin Teminatı İçin Uyarma Yapıldı [A Warning Was Made For the Guarantee of the Free Union Choice]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 24 (7 November 1966): 2.

¹²³⁴ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹²³⁵ Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

jobs when they joined in Maden-İş instead of Çelik-İş.¹²³⁶ But when we consider the employer's/manager's oppression during workers' attempts to organize Maden-İş between 1968 and 1970, employer oppression cannot be the sole and sufficient explanation of their failure. Another factor was that the union's strategy still took shape around the belief that the Regional Work Offices would hand over authorization rights to Maden-İş if it was able to register the majority of the workers on shop floor. As late as 1967, a union report put forth that the union would conduct its struggle for authorization rights in the workplaces without going beyond the law itself.¹²³⁷ And in several factories, such as Gamak and Türk Demir Döküm, the labor court recognized the authorization rights of Çelik-İş.¹²³⁸ Despite union arguments that the court's decisions were not lawful, Maden-İş did not abandon its trust in legal mechanisms towards the end of the decade.

However, the status quo had begun to change by 1968. DİSK had been founded the year before and had declared its Marxist agenda. Furthermore, the widespread collective actions of the students and poor peasants polarized the political climate in Turkey. The workers of different industrial sectors, who suffered similar problems to those of the metal workers, also began to stage collective actions. For example, the Derby workers occupied their factory in 1968.¹²³⁹ Furthermore, due to the increasing prices in the city, İstanbul's workers were more concerned about their wages. Even the moderate Türk-İş officers began to publicly complain in 1968 that the workers' wages were too low to provide for their families. They also protested the employers' approach to minimum wages and workers' income in

¹²³⁶ "Pancar Motor'da İşçiler Çelik-İş'in Oyununa Gelmedi [The Pancar Motor Workers Did not Fall in the Tricks of Çelik-İş]," *Maden-İş*, year 10, no. 23 (26 September 1966): 8.

¹²³⁷ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XVIII. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1966-1967, vol.1*, 288.

¹²³⁸ "Auer Fabrikasında Sözleşme: 850 İşçi Geniş Haklar Aldı [The Agreement in the Auer Factory: The 850 Workers Got A Lot of Rights]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 58 (1 April 1967): 1; "Gamakta Sözleşme Yetkisi Aldık [We Eearned the Right to Make Agreement in Gamak]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 60 (15 May 1967): 1 and 4; "Balkanların En Büyük Döküm Fabrikası Türk Demir Dökümde Sözleşme Yetkisini Çelik-İş Aldı [Çelik-İş Earned the Right To Make Agreement in the Biggest Foundry of the Balkans, Türk Demir Döküm]," *Çelik-İş*, year 2, no. 60 (15 May 1967): 1 and 4.

¹²³⁹ For a brief story of this invasion, look at: Zafer Aydın, *Geleceğe Yazılmış Mektup: 1968 Derby İşgali [The Letter to the Future: The 1968 Derby Invasion]*, (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2012).

general.¹²⁴⁰ The reports from Maden-İş similarly touched on the Turkish workers' problem of insufficient income.¹²⁴¹

It would become explicit from their public statements that the metal employers already frowned on union demands for wage increases. Well known bosses/managers, such as Ertuğrul Soysal in the metal sector, pursued a public relations strategy that declared unionists wage demands did not reflect the reality of their paycheques. In his articles and speeches, Ertuğrul Soysal claimed that wages were not actually low in Turkey and that the union's demands for increasing wages did not have any scientific foundation. The reality was, according to managers, that wages were already high in comparison with productivity per worker, right across Turkish industry.¹²⁴² The articles in MESS's newspaper, likewise, assumed that the employers had already given in to "excessive" wages to the workers out of "generosity" during previous periods of worker discontent. The employers held that the unions had always provoked their members into demanding more wages, just to keep the union's membership numbers up. The union's pragmatist strategy and the language of "excessive wage demands" culminated in high inflation, which was the real reason for wage erosions, according to the employers. The articles also warned that since the unions insisted on these "excessive demands," peaceful work conditions were about to disappear. And they wrote of how employers were determined not to bow down to the unions' "excessive demands," because employers wanted to keep industry and production going.¹²⁴³ It is obvious

¹²⁴⁰ "Çalışma Meclisi Kuruluyor [The Work Assembly is Assembling]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 77 (1 April 1968): 1 and 4; Engin Ünsal, "Asgari Ücretler Nasıl Olmalıdır? [How Much the Minimum Wages Should Be]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 85 (15 September 1968): 3 and 4; "Türk-İş," *İşçi Postası*, June 7, 1969, 1 and 4.

¹²⁴¹ *Türkiye Hakkında Rapor*, 37.

¹²⁴² Ertuğrul Soysal, "Madeni Eşya İş Kolunda Toplu Sözleşme Tatbikatından Doğan Bazı Meseleler [Some Problems Caused By the Practice of Collective Bargaining in the Metal Sector]," *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 19 (1968): 71; Ertuğrul Soysal, "Sanayimizde İşçi Ücretleri [The Workers' Wages in Our Industry]," *MESS-İşveren*, no. 101 (May 1969); Ertuğrul Soysal, "İşçileri Rahat Bırakınız [Leave the Workers Alone]," *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 7, no. 12 (September 1969): 2-3. Also look at: *MESS: VII. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı [MESS, The Meeting Decision Record of the VII. General Assembly]*, 14 November 1967, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive and Namık Zeki Aral, "Geçen Yıllarda Fiyatlar ve Ücretler [The Prices and Wages in the Previous Years]," *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 7, no. 6 (March 1969): 3-6.

¹²⁴³ "Toplu Pazarlık Rejiminde İşletmelerin Ücret Sorunları [The Wage Problems of Enterprises in the Collective Bargaining Order]," *MESS-İşveren*, no. 88 (1 November 1968).

from such articles in the journal that the metal bosses would not tolerate workers' demands for high wages.

The minimum wage issue further escalated the nervous relations between employers and unionists in 1968 and 1969. In the first meetings of the Minimum Wage Commission, a disagreement between the workers' and employers' representatives about the level of wages took place. While the employers' representatives argued for adjusting the minimum wage based on the needs of one worker, the workers' representatives fought for wages to be estimated by considering a worker's family needs, where the family was composed of at least 4 people.¹²⁴⁴ Although the report of the Biochemical Institute of the Ankara University, which was prepared for those meetings, stated that the minimum amount of food which a worker's family (composed of five people in total) required per day was equal to 23 TL, the commission adjusted that level to between 15.50 and 19.50 TL, after long debates.¹²⁴⁵ The employers were not pleased with even this lowered range. The association of the metal employers, MESS, declared that such a high level of minimum wage would add up to increases in prices and inflation. The declaration further argued that the decision was arbitrarily taken without "scientifically" reflecting on the economic conditions of the Turkish industry.¹²⁴⁶ Articles in the TİSK Journal came to the conclusion that the sudden rise in minimum wages, after which all the workers' wages would have to be adjusted upward, would harm their enterprises.¹²⁴⁷ And a report to MESS stated that the metal employers had to prepare themselves and their enterprises for the "excessive increases" in minimum wage.¹²⁴⁸

The minimum wage level was an important threshold for the unions as well, since the other workers' wages would be fixed accordingly. A TÜRK-İş officer, Sedat Ağralı, wrote in

¹²⁴⁴ "Asgari Ücretlerin Tesbitinde Uyuşmazlık [The Disagreement On the Minimum Wages]," *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 85 (15 September 1968): 1 and 4.

¹²⁴⁵ "Tıp Fakültesi Biyokimya Enstitüsünün Açıklaması: Beş Kişilik Bir İşçi Ailesinin Günde 23 Liralık Gıda Alması Lazımdır [The Declaration of the Biochemical Institute of the Faculty of Medicine: A Worker Family Composed of Five People Should Purchase Food Equal to 23 TL In a Day]," *Maden-İş*, 1 April 1969, 3.

¹²⁴⁶ "Konfederasyonumuzun Asgari Ücretlerle İlgili Bildirisi [The Declaration of Our Confederacy About the Minimum Wages]," *MESS-İşveren*, no. 101 (May 1969); Esin Pars, 194-195.

¹²⁴⁷ Nihat Yüksel, "Asgari Ücret Sorunu [The Minimum Wage Problem]," *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 7, no. 9 (June 1969): 15-18.

¹²⁴⁸ *MESS IX. Genel Kuruluna Sunulan Faaliyet ve Hesap Raporu [The Account and Deed Report Served to the IX. General Assembly of MESS, 31 October-14 November, 1969, 12-13.*

April 1969, that the minimum wages that had been settled unfairly by the commission were actually too low for the workers.¹²⁴⁹ Such concerns were also raised by Maden-İş. Their union reports stated that it was the most important issue for the workers since the other wage increases and salary scales would be based on minimum wage.¹²⁵⁰ Amidst all these debates, the unionists were further concerned that the employers would not properly implement the wage levels set by the commission. A news report published in April 1969, in *İşçi Dünyası* (The Workers' World) argued most employers were reluctant to give the minimum wages at all.¹²⁵¹ In the meantime, a Maden-İş report assumed that employers might not pay any workers' wage that exceeded the new minimum level. In this case, the report put forth the determination of the union to engage in collective actions in the workplaces over the matter.¹²⁵² But, in order to force the employer to apply the minimum wage agreements properly, Maden-İş firstly had to earn authorization rights in the workplaces. Here, the collective fight over wages intermingled with the fight over unionization rights.

When the workers' frustration over these injustices took root on the shop floor, work relations and oppression of their free union choice combined with the issue of low wages to create heightened tensions at the end of the Sixties. At this time, the metal workers chose to be represented by Maden-İş in the hopes that the union might be more effective in making their voices heard. In this climate, Maden-İş and its representatives were able to mobilize the majority of the metal workers in İstanbul. According to Hüseyin Ekinçi, the combined effects of the high cost of living and oppression of their free union choice motivated the workers to resist in Demir Döküm.¹²⁵³ One of the underlying reasons for the metal workers to take action was the simple desire to have a decent life. For example, the Singer workers asked for wage

¹²⁴⁹ Sedat Ağralı, "Sendikacılar ve Ücret Politikası [The Unionists and Wage Policy]," *Yeni İstanbul*, April 20, 1969.

¹²⁵⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 29. Also look at: "İşçiler Fiili Direnmeye Çağrılacak [Workers Will Be Asked to Resist]," *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 1.

¹²⁵¹ "Asgari Ücreti Vermek İstemeyenler Pek Çok [There Are Too Many Who Are Reluctant to Give the Minimum Wage]," *İşçi Dünyası*, 23 April 1969, 1 and 4.

¹²⁵² *TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive*, Box 6, Envelope 37.

¹²⁵³ "Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk]," interview by Hüseyin Ekinçi, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

increase during the invasion in 1968.¹²⁵⁴ The Demir Döküm workers staged a collective action as a response to their management's intransigence on wages by invading the factory.¹²⁵⁵ The workers there complained that the factory management refused to implement the new minimum wages, which were to have taken effect July 1, 1969, and they were further angered over general wages in the sector.¹²⁵⁶ One Demir Döküm worker, Kasım Çiftçi, claimed that the workers demands included the implementation of the new minimum wage laws.¹²⁵⁷ The disagreement between Maden-İş and management over wages also paved the way for sit-down strikes in Horoz Nail Factory in 1969, and İzsal, in 1970.¹²⁵⁸ The Gamak workers complained, too, that the management did not apply the minimum wages in the factory.¹²⁵⁹



Figure 24: The Demir Döküm workers in the action. In the placard which was located in front of the workers it was stated that: 'Our Fellow Worker, Our Struggle is the Struggle for Our Bread.' (Source: *Türk Solu*, year 2, no. 90, 5 August 1969).

¹²⁵⁴ "Singer Olayı İle İlgili Özel Bülten [The Special Issue About the Singer Event]," *MaHa Ajansı*, 11 January 1969, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

¹²⁵⁵ "İşçiler, Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikasını İşgal Etti [The Workers Invaded the Türk Demir Döküm Factory]," *Vatan*, August 1, 1969, 1 and 5; "Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikasını İşçiler İşgal Etti [The Workers Invaded the Türk Demir Döküm Factory]," *Yeni İstanbul*, August 1, 1969; "Bir Üzücü Olay Daha [Another Sad Incident, Too]," *Milliyet*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 11; Kemal Türkler, "İstenilen Kanun Hükümünün Uygulanmasıdır [We Want the Law to be Implemented]," *Akşam*, August 7, 1969; "Demirdökümün Yiğit İşçilerini Destekleyin [Support the Brave Workers of the Demirdöküm]," *İşçi-Köylü*, August 8, 1969; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu, 17 August 1969 [The Deed Report of the Sixth District of Maden-İş]*, TÜSTAV, Kemal Sülker Archive, Box 15, Envelope 180.

¹²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵⁷ "Demirdöküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demirdöküm Workers Speak]," *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

¹²⁵⁸ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 35-38; "Horoz Çivi Fabrikasında Direniş [The Resistance at the Horoz Nail Factory]," *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 2; "Maden İş, İzsal İşçileri İçin Neler İstiyor? [What Does Maden-İş Ask For the İzsal Workers]," *Maden-İş*, April 1970.

¹²⁵⁹ "Gamak İşçileri Direniyor [The Gamak Workers Resist]," *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 2.

As noted, the other burning issue for the metal workers was the restriction of their free union choice. According to a report by Maden-İş, written in 1969, the workers battled to choose their union, independently of any oppression. The report narrated the typical series of events in a factory as follows: any worker who wanted to join Maden-İş was immediately fired by managers and no other workers could give testimony of support due to the fear of being unemployed. Then, the employer signed agreements with the “yellow dog” unions. Ultimately, when the workers resorted to their resistance right provided by the Constitution, the “man of the yellow union” and police forces attacked the workers.¹²⁶⁰ Although the series of events rarely took place as described in the narrative of the report, it was plain that the metal workers actively fought for their free union choice in the period, inside several different plants.¹²⁶¹ For example, the Demir Döküm workers claimed that the oppression of their free union choices, and the oppression of Çelik-İş’ demands on the workers culminated in collective events.¹²⁶² In fact, one of reasons behind the factory invasion of 1969 was the humiliation and beating of a Maden-İş representative in the management office by a police chief and the Çelik-İş representative. When the factory management did not obey the protocols signed between Maden-İş and the management in 1969, one Maden-İş representative decided to talk with Burhan Günergün, who then began yelling, saying that the workers were all communists, and that the factory already provided them with their “bread”, but they still asked for more rights. Then, he called a police chief and wanted the representative to come his office again. There, the police chef and the Çelik-İş leader beat and degraded the Maden-İş representative. When the workers’ representative resisted, the police arrested him.¹²⁶³ Other Maden-İş members were called to the management office and were

¹²⁶⁰ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 131-133 and 155.

¹²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 134 and *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1969-1971*, 163. Also look at: “Bir Üzücü Olay Daha [Another Sad Incident, Too],” *Milliyet*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 11.

¹²⁶² “Kısa Sendika Haberleri [The Short Union News],” *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 6; “İşçiler Fabrikayı Gece İşgal Etti [The Workers Invaded The Factory At Night],” *Akşam*, August 2, 1969, 1 and 7.

¹²⁶³ “Kendileri İşgalci Olanlar Demirdöküm İşçisini Suçlayamaz”, *Ant*, 12 August 1969; “Demirdöküm İşçileri İş Bıraktı [Demirdöküm Workers Stopped Working]”, *İşçi Postası*, May 16, 1969; “Demirdökümün Yiğit İşçilerini Destekleyin [Support the Brave Workers of the Demirdöküm]”, *İşçi-Köylü*, August 8, 1969 and “Demirdökümde İşler Durdu: İşçiler Fabrikayı Gece İşgal Etti [The Work Has Stopped in Demir Döküm: The Workers Invaded the Factory At Night],” *Akşam*, August 2, 1969.

forced to resign from Maden-İş and register for Çelik-İş. One female worker was harassed and the teeth of another male worker were smashed.¹²⁶⁴

Likewise, the conflict between Çelik-İş and Maden-İş led to the events in the notorious Kavel Factory in 1968. Here, although nearly all workers resigned from Çelik-İş and transferred to Maden-İş, the management allowed Çelik-İş to collect union dues from the workers. In the meantime, it forced the workers to resign from Maden-İş and fired 26 workers, some of whom were Maden-İş representatives.¹²⁶⁵ In reply, the workers occupied the factory, demanding that their dismissed colleagues be hired again.¹²⁶⁶ Similarly, when the Teksan management fired 15 workers after everyone in the factory joined Maden-İş, the workers conducted a sit-down strike.¹²⁶⁷ After the Gamak workers joined Maden-İş, the boss fired 124 workers.¹²⁶⁸ In Hisar, Efem, Magirus, Horoz Nail, ECA, and Sungurlar Factories, the workers struck back by sitting down, or occupying their workplaces, demanding to make Maden-İş the authorized union between 1968 and 1970.¹²⁶⁹ The majority of the metal workers fought to get rid of Çelik-İş. An anonymous Demir Döküm worker expressed his feeling towards Çelik-İş and Maden-İş as follows:

¹²⁶⁴ “Demir Döküm Fabrikası İşçileri Direndiler [The Demir Döküm Factory Workers Resisted],” *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 1; “İşçi-Polis Savaşı [The Worker-Police Battle],” *Vatan*, August 5, 1969, 1 and 5; “HerŞey İşçilerin Çelik-İşten Çıkıp Maden-İş’e Girmeleriyle Başladı [Everything Began Workers’ Transfer to Maden-İş From Çelik-İş],” *Milliyet*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 11; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu 8 Ekim 1967-17 Ağustos 1969*, TÜSTAV Kemal Sülker Archive Box 15 Envelope 850 and Rasim Öz [ed.], *Kemal Türkler Kürsüde [Kemal Türkler is in the Chair]*, (İstanbul: KeteV, 2003): 41.

¹²⁶⁵ Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu [The Confederacy of Turkish Employer’s Unions], *İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor*, 7; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu*, 17 August 1969; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu*, 1967-1969, 154.

¹²⁶⁶ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu*, 17 August 1969.

¹²⁶⁷ “Kısa Sendika Haberleri [The Short Union News],” *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 6.

¹²⁶⁸ “Şerif’i Patron ve Polis Kurşunu Öldürdü [The Bullet of Police and Boss Killed Şerif],” *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 5. Also look at: Yıldırım Koç, *DİSK Tarihi: Efsane mi Gerçek mi?* 131.

¹²⁶⁹ “Hisar Direnmesi Başarıyla Bitti [The Hisar Resistance Ended With Success],” *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 3; “Efem Alüminyum Sanayi İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Efem Aluminum Industry Workers Speak],” *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 5; “Horoz Çivi Fabrikasında Direniş [The Resistance at the Horoz Nail Factory],” *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 2; “Horoz Çivi İşçileri Direniyor [The Horoz Nail Factory Workers Are Resisting],” *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 1; “Hapishanede Yatan Naci Karaca Anlatıyor [Naci Karaca Who Was Prisoned Narrates],” *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969, 6; “Sungurlarda Direniş [The Resistance in Sungurlar],” *Maden-İş*, April 1970; “E.C.A. İşçileri de Savaşıyor [The E.C.A. Workers Fight, Too],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 7; Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu [The Confederacy of Turkish Employer’s Unions], *İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor*, 8.

“We will not sign anything under duress
Damn it, we will not live with this money
The traitor Çelik-İş does not seek our rights
Let’s stick to our Maden-İş.”¹²⁷⁰



Figure 25: Text painted on a factory wall: “Down With Çelik-İş.” (Source: *Maden-İş*, April 1970, 2).

In Singer, the workers claimed that Çelik-İş sold out to the employers, and they demanded to transfer to Maden-İş.¹²⁷¹ İsmet Amca remembers that the workers fought hard in Türk Demir Döküm for Maden-İş to be recognized by the employer.¹²⁷² Like him, several Demir Döküm workers said that they fought for their union freedom.¹²⁷³ In İzsal, the workers conducted a strike for Maden-İş to be recognized by management.¹²⁷⁴ These were “excessive actions,” in the words of employers, which were staged to overcome or revise the existing framework of shop floor relations that was enforced by the bosses/managers on behalf of their own interests. They were also “excessive” in the sense that these forms of actions transgressed the law, which dictated when and how to conduct a collective action in the workplace.

¹²⁷⁰ İşçi-Köylü.

¹²⁷¹ “Singer Olayı İle İlgili Özel Bülten [The Special Issue About the Singer Event],” *MaHa Ajansı*, 11 January 1969, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 11.

¹²⁷² İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹²⁷³ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

¹²⁷⁴ “İzsal’da Grev [The Strike in İzsal],” *Maden-İş*, April 1970.

II. The Metal Workers in Action

A Demir Döküm worker, Binali Karaca, summed up the determination of his fellow workers to overcome the oppression of the managers by saying that the workers would resist until such time that they finally got their rights.¹²⁷⁵ In fact, the most important feature of the collective actions in the metal sector was the workers' determination, and therefore the radicalism of their actions, which stemmed from the fact that the metal workers did not limit themselves to legal mechanisms during these collective struggles. Rather, the metal workers first and foremost trusted in the power of their solidarity to reach their demands for higher wages and free union choice between 1968 and 1970. The workers counted on their class position as essential producers of goods in the factories, and they stopped working without first applying to any legal mechanism. Another important characteristic of the actions was its scale in the sector. The Emayetaş workers invaded the factory in 1968 for twelve hours. The workers conducted sit-down strikes in Yapar Biraderler, Gemi Zinciri, Mehmet Üretmen, Teksan, Topuz and Magirus Factories. They also occupied Kavel, Demir Döküm, Singer and Rabak and they stopped working in the Hisar, Efem, Gamak, Horoz Nail, ECA, Auer Factories. These actions spread to İzsal and Sungurlar in the first months of 1970. With the collective actions happening across so many factories, a considerable number of İstanbul metal workers were affected by those events.

¹²⁷⁵ "Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk]," interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.



Figure 26: The Auer workers during the invasion of their factory (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 25, 6 April 1970, 2).

The most widespread and effective form of action was factory occupations. During these actions, the workers did not allow bosses or managers to enter the factory, as we know from the bosses'/managers' complaints.¹²⁷⁶ In Demir Döküm, the workers first stopped working on May 15th. But since the employer's oppression continued for Maden-İş members and the management refused to apply the minimum wage increases, the workers invaded the factory on July 31st.¹²⁷⁷ In Sungurlar, the workers locked the factory doors and did not allow anyone to enter.¹²⁷⁸ When the employer did not keep his promises that had been made through a protocol between the employer and Maden-İş in 1969, the Sungurlar workers invaded the factory for a third time in 1970.¹²⁷⁹ In Rabak, the workers stopped working for 18 days and

¹²⁷⁶ "İşçiler, Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikasını İşgal Etti [The Workers Invaded the Türk Demir Döküm Factory]," *Vatan*, August 1, 1969, 1 and 5; "İşçiler Fabrikaya Kimseyi Sokmuyor [The Workers Do not Allow Anyone To Enter Into the Factory]," *Vatan*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 5; "Emayetaş İşgali [The Emayetaş Invasion]," *MESS-İşveren*, no. 87 (16 October 1969); Ahmet Baysal, "Sanayimizi Tehdit Eden Büyük Tehlike [The Great Danger Which Threatens Our Industry]," *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 9, no. 8 (June 1970): 25-28 and Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹²⁷⁷ "Bir Üzücü Olay Daha [Another Sad Incident, Too]," *Milliyet*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 11; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu*, 17 August 1969.

¹²⁷⁸ "Sungurlarda Direniş [The Resistance in Sungurlar]," *Maden-İş*, April 1970.

¹²⁷⁹ "Sungurlar Fabrikasında Kaynayan Kazan [The Boiling Furnace in the Sungurlar Furnace Factory]," *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 2.

did not allow anyone, except themselves, to maintain the production line.¹²⁸⁰ The workers who occupied the factory finally had their say on the shop floor, even if temporarily.

In İzsal, one placard stated that the factory belonged to workers.¹²⁸¹ The radicalism of these actions and attitudes resulted in widespread fear among the metal bosses/managers. The metal employers perceived the acts as direct attacks on their property rights.¹²⁸² One article in the TİSK Journal stated that the events were direct and illegal interventions on their “natural right” to rule the workplaces; according to the employers, the underlying cause of the events was the workers’ desire to manage the workplace.¹²⁸³ While the invasion was a direct threat to capitalist property rights in modern society; nonetheless, it would not be correct to say that the metal workers acted to abolish those rights. Rather, they acted to supercede the unacceptable workplace relations to which they were subjected. And their actions took a radical shape since the bosses were not allowing the workers to have a say on the shop floor.

The collective actions of the metal workers were so influential that their scale truly irritated the bosses/managers who perceived those actions as paving the way for socialism. In fact, at the end of 1969, Vehbi Koç exclaimed that the workers’ actions undermined work order and discipline on the shop floor level.¹²⁸⁴ In addition, the employers complained that the workers were involved in several other practices such as laziness and going to toilet, etc., as a means of sabotaging the work.¹²⁸⁵ For the employers, the workers’ grievances did not stem from unfair work relations, but instead were caused by ideological factors. The collective events were promoted by DİSK whose main goal was “ideological”.¹²⁸⁶ When the collective

¹²⁸⁰ “Rabak Aliminyum İşçileri Bugün İşbaşı Yaptı [The Rabak Alimunium Workers Began To Work Today],” *İşçi Postası*, September 25, 1969, 1.

¹²⁸¹ “İzsal’da Grev [The Strike in İzsal],” *Maden-İş*, April 1970.

¹²⁸² *Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası: X. Olağanüstü Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı, 1970* [The Union of the Metal Hardware Employers in Turkey: The Meeting and Decision Record of the X. Extraordinary General Assembly], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

¹²⁸³ Ahmet Baysal, “Sanayimizi Tehdit Eden Büyük Tehlike [The Great Danger Which Threatens Our Industry],” *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 9, no. 8 (June 1970): 25-28.

¹²⁸⁴ Vehbi Koç, “Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikasındaki Olaylar [The Events at the Türk Demir Döküm Factory],” *Bizden Haberler*, no. 18 (December 1969).

¹²⁸⁵ *Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası: X. Olağanüstü Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı, 1970* [The Union of the Metal Hardware Employers in Turkey: The Meeting and Decision Record of the X. Extraordinary General Assembly], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.

¹²⁸⁶ *Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu [The Confederacy of Turkish Employer’s Unions], İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor [The Report on the Illegal Actions Take*

actions gained momentum after the second half of the 1968, TİSK published a report that implied all these actions were conducted by a central group with a hidden agenda.¹²⁸⁷ Likewise, the MESS reports defined the workers' actions as communist.¹²⁸⁸ The bosses/managers called on their employees to pay no attention to what the "radicals" preached on the streets. They said that there had always been inequalities and differences in terms of rulers and the ruled in the society and that it was impossible to find an order, which based on total equality.¹²⁸⁹

The workers discontent and actions spread towards the mid-1970s to such a great extent that the bosses/managers complained that work ethic and discipline totally disappeared in the factories. For them, the workers had gotten used to claiming their every demand through collective and unlawful actions and, according to managers, the workers had stopped using any legal mechanism, at all. The bosses/managers complained that workers hung placards that referred to class struggles.¹²⁹⁰ In June 1970, the metal employers said that the workers' discontent and actions grew in the sector day by day and, in fact, these illegal acts threatened the whole industry.¹²⁹¹ In the words of Ege Cansen, if the period between 1960 and 1980 was a dark time for the metal bosses, the events that took place between 1968 and 1970 significantly accounted for the creation of that nightmare.

Place on the Workplaces], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive, 11; *MESS: IX. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı* [*MESS, The Meeting Decision Record of the IX. General Assembly*], 14 November 1969, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive; Esin Pars, *Türkiye'de İşveren Sendikacılığı*, 196.

¹²⁸⁷ Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 5.

¹²⁸⁸ *MESS IX. Genel Kuruluna Sunulan Faaliyet ve Hesap Raporu* [*The Account and Deed Report Served to the IX. General Assembly of MESS*], 31 October-14 November, 1969, 34.

¹²⁸⁹ Lütfü Doruk, "Arçelik'liler [The Members of Arçelik]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 53 (January 1970): 5; Ege Cansen, "Demokrasi [Democracy]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 56 (April 1970): 1; Ege Cansen, "Asıl Mesele [The Real Problem]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 58 (June 1970): 1 and 3; Ege Cansen, "Beyin Yıkama [The Brainwashing]," *Arçelik'te Bir Ay*, no. 59 (July 1970): 1.

¹²⁹⁰ Ahmet Baysal, "Sanayimizi Tehdit Eden Büyük Tehlike [The Great Danger Which Threatens Our Industry]," *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 9, no. 8 (June 1970): 25-28.

¹²⁹¹ *Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası: X. Olağanüstü Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı*, 1970 [*The Union of the Metal Hardware Employers in Turkey: The Meeting and Decision Record of the X. Extraordinary General Assembly*], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive.



Figure 27: The wounded Demir Döküm workers after the clash with the police force. (Source: *Ant*, 12 August 1969, Front Cover).

This implied sense of radicalism also stemmed from the details of the events. In most factories, the workers did not abstain from clashing with police forces. On the contrary, the metal workers fought fiercely with police during the events. In January 1969, there was a battle between the Singer workers and police.¹²⁹² The Magirus strike, which lasted 46 days, was also a bloody one.¹²⁹³ The Demir Döküm workers, too, fought with the police¹²⁹⁴ and a Horoz Nail factory worker, Sabri Yılmaz, was seriously injured during a fight with police.¹²⁹⁵ One worker, Şerif Aygün, was shot dead by the police in Gamak.¹²⁹⁶ Those violent fights would also prove workers' determination to achieve their demands.

¹²⁹² "Singer Olayı İle İlgili Özel Bülten [The Special Issue About the Singer Event]," *MaHa Ajansı*, 11 January 1969, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

¹²⁹³ *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 8-9.

¹²⁹⁴ "İşçi-Polis Savaşı [The Worker-Police Battle]," *Vatan*, August 5, 1969, 1 and 5; "Bir Üzücü Olay Daha [Another Sad Incident, Too]," *Milliyet*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 11; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu, 17 August 1969*.

¹²⁹⁵ "Horoz Çivi Fabrikasında Grev Olaylarla Geçiyor [The Strike at the Horoz Nail Factory Is Full of Events]," *İşçi Postası*, May 21, 1969, 1; "Horoz Çivi Fabrikasında Direniş [The Resistance at the Horoz Nail Factory]," *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 2; "Horoz Çivi İşçileri Direniyor [The Horoz Nail Factory Workers Are Resisting]," *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 1; "Hapishanede Yatan Naci Karaca Anlatıyor [Naci Karaca Who Was Prisoned Narrates]," *Maden-İş*, 22 July 1969, 6.

¹²⁹⁶ "Şerif'i Patron ve Polis Kurşunu Öldürdü [The Bullet of Police and Boss Killed Şerif]," *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 5; "Şerif'in Öldürülüşünü Gören Arkadaşı Selim Erkan Anlatıyor [Selim Erkan Who Is a Friend of Şerif and Witnessed His Murder Narrates]," *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 6.



Figure 28: An illustration, which depicts the murder of Şerif Aygün in Gamak by police forces (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 21, 8 January 1970, 5).

The support of the community that resided in the neighbourhoods surrounding the factories further increased the radicalization of the events and the success of the collective actions. This had been proven by the İstinye people, most of whom were the relatives of either the Kavel workers, and by the other laborers recruited in the various factories in the region, during the Kavel Strike in 1963. In fact, most collective actions quickly turned into community events between 1968 and 1970, since the workers' well-being was critical to the survival of the community. Indeed, the metal workers were one of the most significant groups in the neighbourhoods, alongside their families. The communities, which surrounded the workplaces, were mostly fed through the workers' salaries. In the words of Mehmet Kul:

“On pay day, the whole region used to turn into a festive place. In fact, all of the region [Eyüp, a.n.] was fed by the workers' income.”¹²⁹⁷

In this regard, the workers were the sole earner of their families, as well as significantly contributing to the economic well-being of the community. As stated above, community life, itself, developed around the factories after the Second World War in İstanbul. Therefore, the boundaries between working and living places were very vague. After leaving

¹²⁹⁷ *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

the factory, the workers socialized in places such as coffee houses, or at community events like weddings, circumcision feasts, religious festivals, picnics, etc. In fact, Maden-İş conducted meetings in the workers' houses and inside local coffee houses, which were the usual places of socialization for the workers.¹²⁹⁸ In our interview, Seyfi Çağan said that he and his fellow workers organized Maden-İş in the coffee houses of Eyüp.¹²⁹⁹ This was a fact well recognized by the bosses and managers of the period. Ege Cansen confessed in our interview that militant unionism spread to the whole Silahtarağa region during this period.¹³⁰⁰ A report published by TİSK stated that the workers' families who dwelled nearby to the plants acted as supplementary forces during these events. In some cases, they closed the roads so that the police forces could not get to the factories.¹³⁰¹ It seems that the TİSK's report was right. For example, the families of the Horoz Nail Factory workers supported the strikers and fought with the police.¹³⁰² The workers' close relatives became a part of the events at Singer, too, where they stoned the police forces who attacked the workers.¹³⁰³ Seyfi Çağan recalls that both workers and people from the community pushed the police back from Demir Döküm factory.¹³⁰⁴ In Demir Döküm, the children, wives and close relatives of workers who stayed outside the factory during the invasion resisted against the police forces and called up other residents of the region from the mosque when the workers were attacked. Alongside the workers, the community fought off the police forces in the sixth day of the invasion.¹³⁰⁵ In the words of Hüseyin Ekinci:

¹²⁹⁸ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012; İsmet Amca, interview by author, June 21, 2012; *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹²⁹⁹ Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

¹³⁰⁰ Ege Cansen, interview by author, Kızıltoprak, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹³⁰¹ Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu [The Confederacy of Turkish Employer's Unions], *İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor*, 11.

¹³⁰² "Horoz Çivi İşçileri Direniyor [The Horoz Nail Factory Workers Are Resisting]," *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 1 and 6.

¹³⁰³ "Singer Olayı İle İlgili Özel Bülten [The Special Issue About the Singer Event]," *MaHa Ajansı*, 11 January 1969, TÜSTAV, Maden-İş Archive, Box 39, Envelope 308.

¹³⁰⁴ Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

¹³⁰⁵ "İşçi-Polis Savaşı [The Worker-Police Battle]," *Vatan*, August 5, 1969, 1 and 5; "Ordu Gelince İşçiler Fabrikadan Çıktı [The Invaders Left the Factory When the Military Forces Have Arrived]," *Milliyet*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 11; "Polis İle İşçi Çatıştı [There Was a Battle Between Workers and Polices]," *Yeni İstanbul*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 7; "İşgalci İşçilerle Polis Çatıştı 63'ü Polis Olmak Üzere 121 Ağır Yaralı Var [The Police Fought With the Invading Workers: The 63 Polices Were Inflicted Out Of 121 Badly Injured People in Total]," *İşçi Postası*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 4; *Türkiye*

“(…) After the second and third sound of bombs, we saw that people of the neighbourhood came into the factory like ants. The mob surrounded the police forces which had surrounded the factory.”¹³⁰⁶

In general, the collective actions were seen as a matter of death and life for the metal workers, as well as their communities. In fact, not just the worker’s families, but the other residents of the community who participated in the events defended the well-being of the community, due to the fact that the workers constituted one of the most indispensable parts of the community inside the poor districts of İstanbul.



Figure 29: The children of the Demir Döküm workers collecting stones in case of a police attack (Source: *Akşam*, August 7, 1969, 1).

This radicalism, however, had its limits. While the metal workers did not utilize any legal mechanisms at this time, their union sought for the legitimacy of the collective actions in the legal texts, after the accusations of illegal actions made by the bosses and Çelik-İş. The metal bosses/employers condemned the actions as illegal and disruptive of the general work order¹³⁰⁷ and they complained that the workers had resorted to illegal mechanisms to make

Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu, 17 August 1969; Rasim Öz [ed.], 41-42.

¹³⁰⁶ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹³⁰⁷ Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu [The Confederacy of Turkish Employer’s Unions], *İşyerlerinde Vuku Bulan Kanun Dışı Olaylar Hakkında Rapor*; MESS: IX. Genel Kurul Müzakere ve

their demands.¹³⁰⁸ For example, during the Demir Döküm events, the employers and their unions, namely TİSK and MESS, said that the irresponsible unions provoked the workers for political gain.¹³⁰⁹ In MESS declarations, Maden-İş was accused of provoking the workers in Emayetaş.¹³¹⁰ Similarly, Çelik-İş claimed the collective actions were illegal. The union journal published statements saying that a few “provocateurs” instigated the workers and threatened to establish a “communist dictatorship” in the country.¹³¹¹ On the face of these public accusations, Maden-İş officers attempted to persuade the larger public on the legitimacy of the actions. In these cases, the union held up the Constitution to legitimize the workers’ actions. The union officers statements cited the main cause of the actions as neither “excessive” demands nor “provocations” of the union, but rather, they claimed that workers had been forced to act because the employers had ignored the Constitution, a document which provided workers with rights that state mechanisms could not/did not enforce. The union said further that the workers acted only to apply the rules of the Constitution, in the fullest sense.¹³¹² This defence echoed amongst the representatives and

Karar Tutanağı [MESS, The Meeting Decision Record of the IX. General Assembly], 14 November 1969, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive; MESS IX. Genel Kuruluna Sunulan Faaliyet ve Hesap Raporu [The Account and Deed Report Served to the IX. General Assembly of MESS, 31 October-14 November, 1969, 15 and 32; Vehbi Koç, “Türk Demir Döküm Fabrikasındaki Olaylar [The Events at the Türk Demir Döküm Factory],” Bizden Haberler, no. 18 (December 1969); Türkiye Madeni Eşya Sanayicileri Sendikası: X. Olağanüstü Genel Kurul Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı, 1970 [The Union of the Metal Hardware Employers in Turkey: The Meeting and Decision Record of the X. Extraordinary General Assembly], Tarih Vakfı, Orhan Tuna Archive; Esin Pars, 196; 25. Yılımız: MESS [Our Twenty-fifth Anniversary](İstanbul: Emek, 1984), 17.

¹³⁰⁸ Ahmet Baysal, “Sanayimizi Tehdit Eden Büyük Tehlike [The Great Danger Which Threatens Our Industry],” *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 9, no. 8 (June 1970): 25-28.

¹³⁰⁹ “Türk Demir Döküm’de Filli Durum [The Fait Accompli in Türk Demir Döküm],” *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. VII, no. 11 (August 1969): 2-3; Ertuğrul Soysal, “İşçileri Rahat Bırakınız [Leave the Workers Alone],” *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 7, no. 12 (September 1969): 2-3; Esin Pars, 252-253.

¹³¹⁰ “Emayetaş İşgali [The Emayetaş Invasion],” *MESS-İşveren*, no. 87 (16 October 1969).

¹³¹¹ “Anarşi Hürriyetsizliğe Giden En Kötü Yoldur, Hürriyetsizliğin Sendikasıızlığın Sonudur [Anarchy is the Worst Method Leading to Lack of Independence, It Yields in Slavery and Unionless],” *Çelik-İş*, year 3, no. 82 (1 August 1968): 1 and 4; “Singer Olayları Hakkında Çelik-İş Sendikasının Bildirisi [The Declaration of Çelik-İş About the Singer Incidents],” *Çelik-İş*, yer 4, no. 93 (15 January 1969): 3.

¹³¹² “İşçi-Polis Savaşı [The Worker-Police Battle],” *Vatan*, August 5, 1969, 1 and 5; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası XIX. Genel Kurul Çalışma Raporu, 1967-1969*, 3 and 125-139; “Meşruluğunu Yitirmiş Her Kuruluş İşgal Edilebilir [Any Institution Which Lost Its Legitimacy Can Be Invaded],” *Maden-İş*, no. 15 (10 September 1969): 7.

workers on the shop floor level, too. For the workers and their representatives, their resistance was a right set out in the Constitution.¹³¹³ Kasım Sert from Demir Döküm, claimed that:

“I want to state that our action is not illegal. We only utilized our rights provided by the Constitution.”¹³¹⁴



Figure 30: A photo taken from the Demir Döküm invasion. The workers wrote the 14th item of the Constitution that stated that every person had the right to improve his/her life and no one could be tortured or oppressed over his/her thoughts. (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 17, 22 October 1969, 8).

This radicalism was also limited in terms its clash with state forces. The metal workers fought back fiercely against police; yet, when the military forces intervened in the events, they quickly reached an agreement. When military forces came to Demir Döküm after a fierce battle with the police, the workers declared their confidence in them. A workers' council agreed to meet with the man in charge and evacuated the factory, but only after a military leader promised them no one but the Demir Döküm workers would work again in the factory. The commander told them that, until the dispute was resolved, he would not hand

¹³¹³ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969; Hıdır Yıldırım, “Uyan da Oku Kardeş [Wake Up and Read My Brother],” Salih Topçu, “İşçi Sınıfının Kurtuluş Yolu Nedir? [What is the Salvation Way for the Working Class],” *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970): 11; “Auer Fabrikası Baştemsilcisi Cengiz Turhan’la Konuştuk [We Talked With Cengiz Turhan, the Headrepresentative of the Auer Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2.

¹³¹⁴ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

over the factory to the employers, and, in fact, the commander kept his promise.¹³¹⁵ The story of this event was repeated to me several times during my interviews with the ex-workers. The same thing happened in Sungurlar when the workers invaded the factory in May, 1970.¹³¹⁶ But the same metal workers would not hesitate to clash with the military forces in June 15-16th, 1970.

Some militant workers, however, did not seek the legitimacy of their actions in any legal text. They resisted out of their “natural” right to resist injustice and unfairness. They resisted when their natural rights, rooted in being producers in society, were not recognized or were oppressed. The source of their legitimacy stemmed from their position in society, namely being producers of wealth. For some of the militant metal workers, it was their natural right to resist against unfairness.¹³¹⁷ This stance demonstrated that their radicalism and their beliefs in their rights had two sources: one was the law, and the second one was their contributions to society as producers. Based on the latter belief, they demanded their true and deserved share from the bosses and the state. The belief in the righteousness of their cause, indeed, motivated them to act against what they saw as unfairness in the workplaces and larger society. Their motivations and their experiences during the struggles contributed to the existence of a common consciousness among the militant metal workers.

III. For the Sake of Our Labor: The Language of the Militant Metal Workers

The militant metal workers’ common consciousness took shape as a result of their experience of surviving injustices and their common actions to end them. This consciousness, first of all, demonstrates a certain pride among the militant workers on their position within

¹³¹⁵ “Ordu Gelince İşçiler Fabrikadan Çıktı [The Invaders Left the Factory When the Military Forces Have Arrived],” *Milliyet*, August 6, 1969, 1 and 11; “Demir Döküm’de İşgal ve Gev Sona Erdi [The Invasion and Strike Have Come To An End in Demir Döküm],” *Milliyet*, August 21, 1969, 1; *Türkiye Maden-İş Sendikası Altıncı Bölge Temsilciliği Faaliyet Raporu*, 17 August 1969.

¹³¹⁶ “Sungurlar Fabrikasında Kaynayan Kazan [The Boiling Furnace in the Sungurlar Furnace Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 2.

¹³¹⁷ “Singer Baştemsilcisi Ahmet Yüzyıl’a Sorduk, Söyledi [We Asked the Singer Headrepresentative, Ahmet Yıldız, He Told],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 3.

the society as the producer of wealth of the nation. Ali Şahin, from the Aksan Factory, described how the workers created the country as such:

“They say citizen in the tax and vote
Friend in the road, brother in the front
Fight with the enemy for the land and honor
But, insult us when the time to work comes

It is the worker who makes the country
Peasant is the patron of the country
Profiteer, broker crushes workers
Open your eyes, I say to you
(...)”¹³¹⁸

The discourse here reflected the widespread thought amongst the militant workers, that it was the labor of workers that advances the development of the society and the nation. For example, Hüseyin Kuş claimed that the workers’ labor established the country, bridges, high rises and roads.¹³¹⁹ The author of the above poem, Şahin, believed workers produced the wealth in society, yet they were treated unfairly. That is the main point that the militant workers touted as the reason for the legitimacy of their collective actions. In return for their labor, the bosses who owned the factories, or the managers who ran them, had to provide rewards for the “true” or “just” value of that labor. But they did not. In the words of a union representative:

“We are the workers who devote their knowledge and bodies to the national industry so that our country would catch up to the level of the developed nations in terms of technology and industry. In parallel with this, although there is no discussion on which elements are being used to construct that

¹³¹⁸ Ali Şahin, “Sorarım Size [I Ask You],” *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 5.

¹³¹⁹ Hüseyin Kuş, “Bu Düzenin Sonu Gelir [This Order Will Come to an End],” *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 4.

future, our value is unfortunately not taken into consideration. Before all, we must be aware of our true value and, in accordance with this, we should ask a fair return for our value and knowledge, without having any shame, and we should also ask for our rights alongside this awareness.”¹³²⁰

For the militant workers, their commitment, if any existed, to their workplaces came out of their own labor, not out of the so-called the “benevolence” of the bosses/managers. An Arçelik worker said that although he had a certain commitment to his workplace, in which he earned his bread for his children, the workplace did not provide for his true share of labor.¹³²¹ He defines the management as such:

“We called him [Lütfü Doruk, a.n.] ‘father’ for years, we committed our hope to him. He made a promise to us. We would own a house. We would own a car. Our life would change through his help. You know the result: he made his own house. He bought his own car, he did to us what he did (...)
[For the General Manager, a.n.] That person, we heard his name, but we have not seen him once. He was unaware of our existence, he does not bother to know us. He has no intent to know us (...).”¹³²²

Therefore, their common language spoke for the widespread belief among the militant metal workers that while they were making considerable contributions in the society, their rights, whether lawful or natural, were not recognized. One Demir Döküm worker complained that that the workers were treated as (unwanted) step children in the country.¹³²³ A poem by Ekrem Ekinçi depicted his sense of injustice as follows:

“(…)

¹³²⁰ “Bir Sendika Temsilcisi Konuşuyor [A Union Representative is Speaking],” *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 2 (15 March 1965): 7.

¹³²¹ “Arçelik’te Çalışan Bir İşçi Arkadaş Yazıyor [A Fellow Worker Who Works in Arçelik is Writing],” *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 4.

¹³²² Ibid.

¹³²³ “Evleri Yıkılan İşçiler Yürüdü [The Workers Whose Houses Were Demolished Marched],” *Maden-İş*, no. 17 (22 October 1969): 4.

We are workers but we do not have capital
We are citizens but we do not have a protector
We do not have any member in the law and government
commissions
(...).”¹³²⁴

Salih Topçu from Arçelik expressed the misery of “poor” workers as compared with the wealthy employers as follows:

“A worker labors and strives and he commits to his job and brings his family from his villages, out of his trust in his boss. He thinks that he will work in factory for his whole life, furthermore, he rents a squatter house, but he could not afford a furnace for the winter. How can he, the poor creature, afford one: money is necessary for buying fuel. He earns: 19 TL and 50 kuruş (...)
The life of an employer: He rides in his automobile; he carries his wife and child. Well my wife, where shall we go tonight? My lord, the weather is cold, let’s ride to Beyoğlu go to the Club Kartiye. We shall have some dinner and have some fun (...) after having some food there, the time is 02.00 am and they desire whisky (...) There, they go and spend their nights. (...)The life of the boss goes on like this.”¹³²⁵

Some militant workers, therefore, perceived the injustices, which workers exposed to be as a result of unequal relations between workers and employers. In this regard, the militant workers’ complained about the unequal income level between bosses and workers in Turkey:

“Agha owns a hundred thousand square meters of land
There is no balance in justice

¹³²⁴ Ekrem Ekinçi, “İşçi Kardeşlerime Sesleniyorum [I am Calling for My Fellow Workers],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 9.

¹³²⁵ Salih Topçu, “İşçi Sınıfının Kurtuluş Yolu Nedir? [What is the Salvation Way for the Working Class],” *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970): 9.

Who hears the voice of the worker?

Boss counts his money

(...).¹³²⁶

A poem written by an anonymous Demir Döküm worker during the occupation emphasized on the same point and berated the bosses who exploited workers in the country and oppressed the workers who went after their rights:

“The laborer cannot get their true share

Most could not even find proper food

The general manager, this world is not yours

Let’s look at the labor of the worker.’¹³²⁷

“The poor peasant goes to a foreign land

He enters into factory work

The exploitative boss chases after him

He does not like those who seek for their rights

You begin to your work and work with your labor

You keep working with your strength

The exploiters defraud you of your rights

(Maden-İş) runs after such an exploiter

Worker attends his work every day

He asks for the money when the time comes

But asking his true share

The exploitative boss does not like this

¹³²⁶ Ahmet Arslan, “Mücadele [The Struggle],” *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 7.

¹³²⁷ İşçi-Köylü.

(...).”¹³²⁸

One placard which was hung on the Auer factory walls during the action stated that ‘We Will Crush the Heads of the Exploiters.’¹³²⁹ Ahmet Yüzyıl, from Singer, said that the capitalist classes who exploited the workers were the main reasons for the workers’ misery.¹³³⁰ According to Ahmet Sürmene, the bosses, and their chiefs who were not actually involved in production activity, usurped workers’ labor.¹³³¹

The prevailing language among the militant metal workers, therefore, demonstrates that the workers collectively rose up to overcome the injustices they experienced. The Demir Döküm workers said that they rose up because their income was barely enough for their families, while the general manager earned huge amounts of money. According to the Demir Döküm workers, it was unfair to earn an average 500 TL a month, while the general manager, Burhan Günergün, got a 600 000 TL premium from the profit of the factory.¹³³² Another injustice detailed in the language of the militant Demir Döküm workers was that, although the men closest to the Çelik-İş representatives got high points in the job evaluation system, the other workers were given lower points; as a result, their wages were less.¹³³³ Related to this, the common language further disclosed that the militant metal workers demanded a more decent life:

“Worker shall work and know his job

Boss shall relent

¹³²⁸ Osman Yavuz, “Garip İşçi [The Poor Worker],” *Maden-İş*, no. 21, (1 January 1970): 11.

¹³²⁹ *Maden-İş*, April 1970.

¹³³⁰ “Singer Baştemsilcisi Ahmet Yüzyıl’a Sorduk, Söyledi [We Asked the Singer Headrepresentative, Ahmet Yıldız, He Told],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 3.

¹³³¹ Ahmet Sürmene, “İşçiler ve Politika [Workers and Politics],” *Maden-İş*, 7 July 1969, 5.

¹³³² Altan Öymen “Usül Meselesi Dışında Silahtarağa Olayı [the Incident At Silahtarağa Except the Method Problem],” *Akşam* August 7, 1969.

¹³³³ Tanju Cılızoğlu, “2500 İşçi 4 Gündür Taş Üstünde Yatıyor [The 2500 Workers Have Been Lying on the Stone For 4 Days],” *Akşam*, August 4, 1969, 1 and 7; Altan Öymen, “[Usül Meselesi Dışında Silahtarağa Olayı [the Incident At Silahtarağa Except the Method Problem],” *Akşam*, August 7, 1969, 1 and 7; “Demir Döküm Protokolünde Bahsi Geçen İş Değerlendirmesi Nedir [What is the Work Evaluation That Was Mentioned in the Protocol in Demir Döküm],” *Türk Solu*, year 2, no. 93 (26 August 1969). Seyfi Çağan mentioned about the same injustice in our meeting. Seyfi Çağan, interview by author, Alibeyköy, İstanbul, January 15, 2013.

And give the value of workers in a human manner.”¹³³⁴

Some militant metal workers pointed out that they acted collectively to revise or change the existing unfair social relations.¹³³⁵ İskender Çerkes asked for change and justice in his poem:

“(…)

It is not true to say that this is our fate from birth

It is not ethical to destroy love and respect in this order

Boss eats, but worker does not

My brother, although it went on like this, it will not go on like that

(…)

It is not right to give much to wealthy people, but less to poor ones

God sees this segregation, but accepts it not

Is it not clear that’s why a heavenly justice exists

My brother, although it went on like this, it does not go on like that.”¹³³⁶

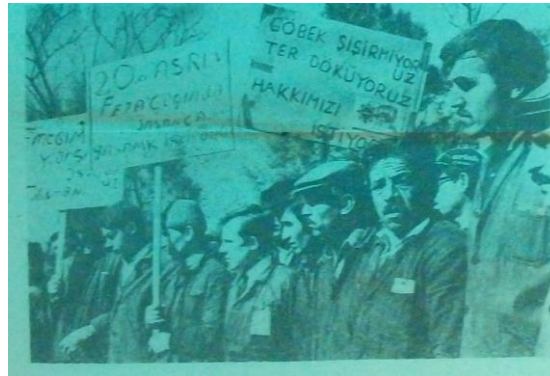


Figure 31: The placards held by the Talisman workers stated that: “We are not growing our bellies, we are laboring! We Ask For Our Rights,” “We want to live in a human manner.” (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 25, 6 April 1970, 3).

¹³³⁴ Ali Şahin, “Sorarım Size [I Ask You],” *Maden-İş*, 1 June 1969, 5.

¹³³⁵ Mustafa Demiray, “İşçi Arkadaşlara [To the Fellow Workers],” *Maden-İş*, no. 23 (15 February 1970): 10.

¹³³⁶ İskender Çerkes, “Böyle Gitmez [It Does Not Go On Like This],” *Maden-İş*, 22 May 1969, 4.

The militant workers asked for their deserved place in Turkey's social life; they wanted to be recognized as good and respected citizens.¹³³⁷ The head representative of Auer claimed that his fellow workers desired to be treated well, wanted work guarantees and higher wages.¹³³⁸ Kemal Güçlü from Demir Döküm claimed that they staged the collective action to abolish the oppression of workers and ease their misery. They acted in order to live in a human manner.¹³³⁹ An anonymous worker, together with Ali Demirel, wrote to the union journal that they and their friends in the workplaces dreamed about their rights and fair share in society.¹³⁴⁰ The Efem workers stated that what they wanted was only their natural rights earned by their labor.¹³⁴¹ Several metal workers expressed their desire to live in a fundamentally different kind of society. İskender Çerkes dreamed of a different country, bereft of oppression, exploitation, unfairness, and full of equality and justice:

“Think about a country’ where the Laborer gets his rights

Worker and peasant will not be oppressed in the future

Where one is not afraid of the future, and will not be exploited

(...)

Think about a country! Where there is no class difference

It does not bother with meaningless questions

No one robs the individual, nation or state

It is not afraid, nor bows down to unfairness.”¹³⁴²

¹³³⁷ “Sendikacıları Tanıyalım [Let’s Know the Unionists],” *Maden-İş*, year 9, no. 7 (19 July 1965): 2.

¹³³⁸ “Auer Fabrikası Baştemsilcisi Cengiz Turhan’la Konuştuk [We Talked With Cengiz Turhan, the Headrepresentative of the Auer Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 25 (6 April 1970): 2.

¹³³⁹ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

¹³⁴⁰ “Arçelik’te Çalışan Bir İşçi Arkadaş Yazıyor [A Fellow Worker Who Works in Arçelik is Writing],” *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 4. Also look at: Ali Demirel, “İşçi Sınıfının Kurtuluş Yolu Nedir? [What is the Salvation Way of the Working Class],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 4.

¹³⁴¹ “Efem Alüminyum Sanayi İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Efem Aluminum Industry Workers Talk],” *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 5.

¹³⁴² İskender Çerkes, “Düşün [Think],” *Maden-İş*, no. 19 (1 December 1969): 7.

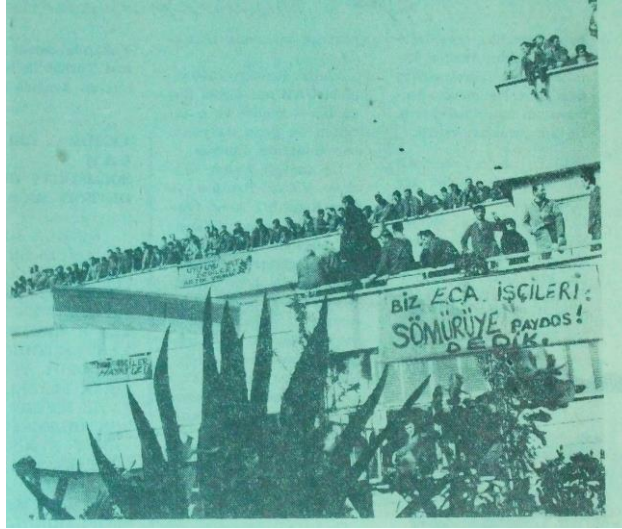


Figure 32: The Eca workers at the invasion. The placard says that: “We, the ECA workers, said end to the exploitation.” (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 28, 23 May 1970, 7).

Accordingly, the militant metal workers believed in solidarity and staging common struggles to get their rights and put an end to injustices. Their common voice, then, also spoke of the workers’ own power. A Demir Döküm worker states:

“My brother, do not we have a right to live? We wanted union freedom. The employer’s representative permanently destroyed our rights. Then, the oppression, tricks, ploys caused in the events. We said ‘enough was enough’.”¹³⁴³

An Emayetaş worker called on his fellow workers not to be afraid of bosses/managers and the “man of Çelik-İş,” since the workers, collectively, were stronger than them.¹³⁴⁴ Binali Karaca says that unless the working class did resist, it could not obtain its rights.¹³⁴⁵ One Demir Döküm worker said that they would fight until the working class was recognized as a

¹³⁴³ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

¹³⁴⁴ Muharrem Yankaçan, “Emayetaş İşçileri Bu Mektubu Okuyunuz [The Emayetaş Workers, Let’s Read This Letter],” *Maden-İş*, 15 February 1970, 4.

¹³⁴⁵ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

social group, one which deserved to live in human manner.¹³⁴⁶ Ahmet Canbaba's poem called the metal workers to battle:

“Why, your house is nothing but single room
Lords own castles and apartment buildings
Don't say it always went on like this
Gain strength slowly

Your labor is not in vain
Your hands shall rise against the tyranny
Your pen in this cause
Shall declare a war against unfairness.”¹³⁴⁷



Figure 33: The İzsal workers dance a traditional Turkish folkdance during their actions. (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 28, 23 May 1970, 6).

Lütfü Aykut, from *Elektrometal*, expressed the workers' misery and told the others that their time had come:

“Few coins in a day
This is our whole money

¹³⁴⁶ Ali Demirel, “İşçi Sınıfının Kurtuluş Yolu Nedir? [What is the Salvation Way of the Working Class],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 4.

¹³⁴⁷ Ahmet Canbaba, “Senin Davan [Your Cause],” *Maden-İş*, no. 17, (22 October 1969): 7.

Half hungry half full
Our mothers suffer
You work, the others earn
Our condition is always bad
We were tricked for years
And we barely came to here
(...)
Hey, my friend, wake up
Our time has come
We opened the banner of victory
Ahead of us...’’¹³⁴⁸

Osman Keskin, from Demir Döküm, gave examples of their struggles when they collectively overcame injustices:

“We are not horses to participate in a race
We are not soldiers to hail the commanders
Why is there oppression of workers?
Wake up fellow workers, your time has come

We hoisted our flag in Demir Döküm
Everyone boos the general manager
Hail the workers as Maden-İş
Wake up fellow workers, time has come.’’¹³⁴⁹

Another worker from Demir Döküm narrated their collective actions:

“The sleeping workers awaken

¹³⁴⁸ Lütfü Aykut, “Uyan İşçi [Wake Up, Worker],” *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970): 8.

¹³⁴⁹ Osman Keskin, “Yeter Zulüm [Enough to Oppression],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 3.

They came to the factory at one p.m.

I checked to see, did the general manager wake up?

Give us our right, or we'll take it."¹³⁵⁰

And, Karaveli, a Gamak worker, put forth the workers' determination in his poem on the death of Şerif Aygün:

"The workplace called Gamak produces motors.

The bourgeoisie called 'boss' worships money.

Do not consider that my death will end this war."¹³⁵¹

In conclusion, there emerged a certain common consciousness among the militant metal workers, which pointed out a pride in their labor and an unfair relationship between bosses/managers and workers within the existing social order. More importantly, the militant metal workers who shared this consciousness talked about their determination and desire to overcome those suffering experiences that they lived through in their working places. The most important lesson that the metal workers learned from their experiences, thus, was the necessity of solidarity to make their dreams come true.

IV. An Injury to One...

The metal workers' experiences of their factory and city lives and collective actions culminated in the formation of workers' commitment towards their workplaces, to each other, and their own power and unity. The idea of the common labor of the militant metal workers, improving their factories (their own sources of income) and the nation, as well as the common nature of their struggles, tightened their bonds to the factories. The form of action taken, namely the factory occupation, shows that the metal workers were indeed looking after their workplaces. For example, the Demir Döküm workers who participated in the occupation did

¹³⁵⁰ İşçi-Köylü.

¹³⁵¹ Gamak İşçilerinden Karaveli [Karaveli, A Gamak Worker], "Şerif Canma Ne Oldu? [What Happened to Şerif, My Dear]," *Maden-İş*, The Special Issue on Unionization, November 1969, 7.

not leave the factory, which was their source of income, in the “hands of anyone else.”¹³⁵² In fact, the struggle itself enhanced this feeling of loyalty among the militant workers. Mustafa Türker remembers Demir Döküm as the best factory in Turkey, due to the workers’ struggle there.¹³⁵³ Hüseyin Ekinci expressed the workers’ commitment to the factories and union policy in the following:

“After the workers began to choose their union and representatives freely, they began to see the factories as their income sources. They considered the fact that they had to work efficiently and fully deserve what they earn, they reflected that they had to care about their workplaces. We educated the workers in that way. We always wanted our members to work efficiently in their workplaces.”¹³⁵⁴

Their collective struggles and factory lives also enhanced their commitment to each other within the workplaces. In this sense, they reached a common consciousness of being “we” through their struggles. The İzsal workers said that:

“We became unified during the strike. We learned each other very well. We learned new things. Most importantly, we realized our power, we realized that the factory would not work without us.”¹³⁵⁵

A factory manager defined this commitment as following:

“(…) the employer provides bonuses to the workers whom he assumed had worked hard. No, you cannot. Reason? Either you give it to us all, or you cannot give it to anyone (…).”¹³⁵⁶

¹³⁵² “Demir Döküm İşçileri [The Demir Döküm Workers],” *Akşam*, August 7, 1969, 1 and 7.

¹³⁵³ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹³⁵⁴ Hüseyin Ekinci, interview by author, Sarıyer, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹³⁵⁵ “Yiğit İzsal İşçilerinin Grevi 48 Güne Vardı [The Strike of the Brave İzsal Workers Reached to 48 Days],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 6.

¹³⁵⁶ Ahmet Baysal, “Sanayimizi Tehdit Eden Büyük Tehlike [The Great Danger Which Threatens Our Industry],” *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 9, no. 8 (June 1970): 25-28.

Their commitment to each other and their feeling of “we” went beyond the factory level, as well. In fact, the active metal workers visited each other’s places of resistance, or supported each other through several means. Hüseyin Ekinçi said that the workers of the other factories, such as Sungurlar or Magirus, sent food to the Demir Döküm workers during the invasion. The Demir Döküm and Auer representatives visited the Otosan workers who newly joined in Maden-İş in 1970 and shared their experiences.¹³⁵⁷ The Demir Döküm workers staged a protest march in the region to support the Sungurlar workers who were taking action. And the workers of Demir Döküm, Rabak, Elektro Metal, Şakir Zümre and the Steel Industry, visited the Sungurlar workers to proclaim their support.¹³⁵⁸

This kind of support enhanced and empowered the workers’ sense of unity within the workplaces. In fact, the struggles transgressed even regionalism or job differences among the metal workers. The workers from different regions and different jobs participated in the collective actions and in the education seminars of Maden-İş, in order to defend their common rights. The workers of Bufer, Türk Demir Döküm, Kavel, Magirus, Uzel, Elektro Metal, Grundig, Philips, Profilo, Auer, Tekfen, Arçelik, etc., all participated in the union’s seminars.¹³⁵⁹ Those common struggles and encounters resulted in a sense of unity among the militant workers. An enthusiastic Demir Döküm worker asserted that the unity between workers had begun with the actions of the Demir Döküm workers, since the workers of the other factories and people of the region supported them.¹³⁶⁰

¹³⁵⁷ “Otosan İşçileri Maden-İş’e Girdiler [The Otosan Workers Joined in Maden-İş],” *Maden-İş*, no. 24 (20 March 1970).

¹³⁵⁸ “Sungurlar Fabrikasında Kaynayan Kazan [The Boiling Furnace in the Sungurlar Furnace Factory],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 2.

¹³⁵⁹ *1970 Seminer Kayıt Defteri [The Seminar Book of Record]*, TÜSTAV Maden-İş Archive, Envelope 9.

¹³⁶⁰ İbrahim Osmanoğlu, “Kendileri İşgalci Olanlar Demir Döküm İşçisini Suçlayamaz [Those Who Are Themselves Invaders Cannot Accuse the Demir Döküm Workers],” *Ant*, August 12, 1969, 5.

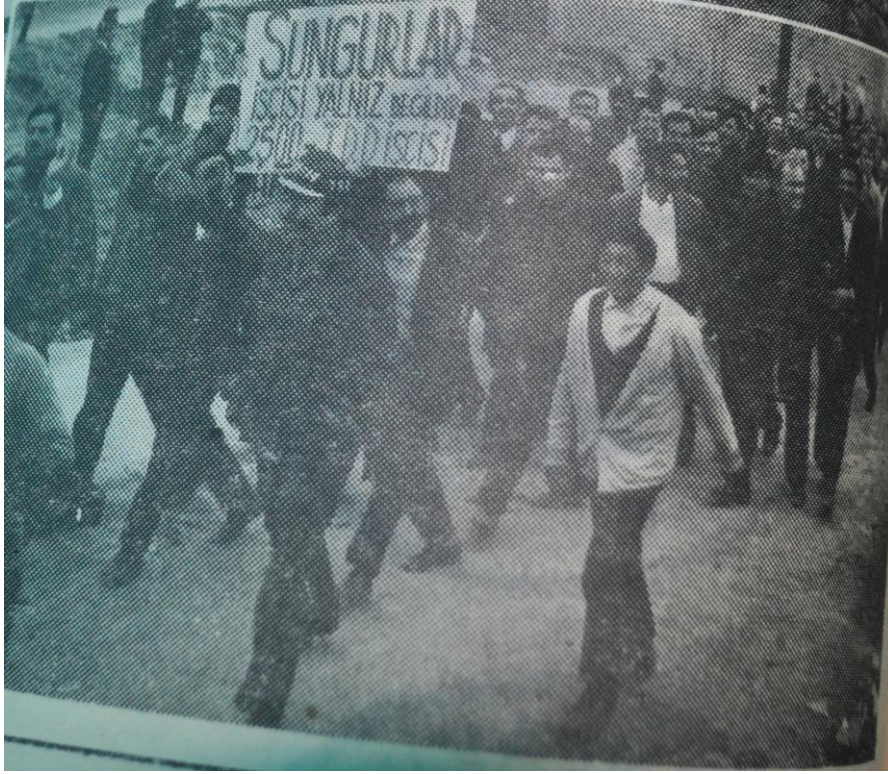


Figure 34: The Demir Döküm workers march in Eyüp to support Sungurlar workers (Source: *Maden-İş*, April 1970).

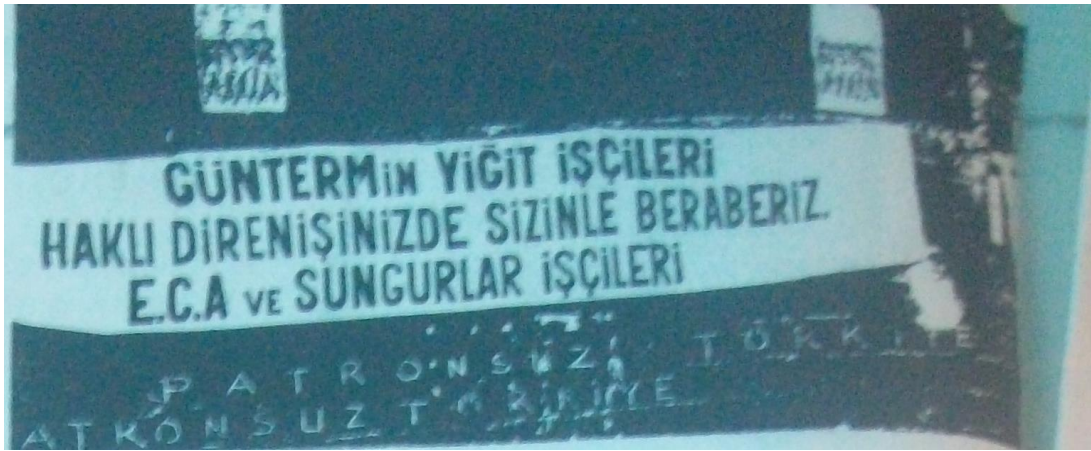


Figure 35: The placard proclaims the support of the ECA and Sungurlar workers for the Günterm workers who occupied the factory (Source: *Maden-İş*, no. 29, 20 June 1970, 4).

More importantly, these struggles enhanced the idea among the militant metal workers that only they and their own organizations could defend their own rights. Even the metal managers admitted at the end of the decade that the workers acted collectively on every issue.¹³⁶¹ In İsmet Amca's recollections, the workers had to fight to prove their own power

¹³⁶¹ Ahmet Baysal, "Sanayimizi Tehdit Eden Büyük Tehlike [The Great Danger Which Threatens Our Industry]," *TİSK-İşveren*, vol. 9, no. 8 (June 1970): 25-28.

and unity.¹³⁶² As the İzsal workers stated, the workers realized their own power throughout the struggle.¹³⁶³ The Demir Döküm events meant, according to Kemal Güçlü, that:

“This action is the latest stage of the history of the Turkish workers’ actions. The following actions will take this as an example. For this, the workers have to show their class power (...) The working class must realize its own class at first, then it has to learn that there is another class on the other side. Since, when the working class with a class consciousness rises up, it will be triumphant.”¹³⁶⁴

And lastly, battling together enhanced their commitment to their solidarity and union, which actually was created and/or empowered in the workplace through the workers’ collective struggles. In our interview, Aziz Amca said that their interests were common and they had a strong solidarity. He added that they could win their rights from the bosses thanks to their union. He recalled that they were, as workers, very powerful and Maden-İş was a strong and trustworthy union.¹³⁶⁵ According to Mehmet Kul, the union had made the workers strong and led the workers to believe in their own power.¹³⁶⁶

Maden-İş also left an important legacy in the minds of the people who dwelled in the neighbourhood. During our interview with Aziz Amca, a man intervened in the talk and said that the union provided a focus of solidarity for the workers. He said that in today’s Turkey there is no such thing as solidarity.¹³⁶⁷ I realized during my interviews with the ex-metal workers that they often compared the current conditions of workers in Turkey with the conditions that once existed with a certain nostalgia. Mustafa Türker compared their times with the current situation:

¹³⁶² İsmet Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹³⁶³ “Yiğit İzsal İşçilerinin Grevi 48 Güne Vardı [The Strike of the Brave İzsal Workers Reached to 48 Days],” *Maden-İş*, no. 28 (23 May 1970): 6.

¹³⁶⁴ “Demir Döküm İşçileri Konuşuyor [The Demir Döküm Workers Talk],” interview by Hüseyin Ekinci, *Maden-İş*, 10 September 1969.

¹³⁶⁵ Aziz Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

¹³⁶⁶ Mehmet Kul, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 21, 2012.

¹³⁶⁷ Aziz Amca, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, June 19, 2012.

“I remember the old times and miss them very much. Now, I am very sad about the current situation of workers in Turkey. There is no unity among them, they are being oppressed but they cannot resist. There was a unity in our times. If any workers’ noses bled, we used to get together and resist. Now, there is nothing.”¹³⁶⁸

But such memories were not just the products of yearning for the good old times. In fact, Mustafa Türker’s memories were confirmed by Osman Yavuz’s poem, written in 1970:

“Come fellow workers
Our unity makes us strong.”¹³⁶⁹

Osman Yavuz’s voice was a good example that the metal workers’ unity may be simple nostalgia for Mustafa Türker, but it was a reality for the metal workers who lived through those times and participated in the actions.

¹³⁶⁸ Mustafa Türker, interview by author, Yıldız Tabya, İstanbul, August 29, 2012.

¹³⁶⁹ Osman Yavuz, “Garip İşçi [The Poor Worker],” *Maden-İş*, no. 21, (1 January 1970): 11.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION: ONE BIG FAMILY

The metal workers' own collective experiences and struggles led them to the realization and enunciation of their common consciousness. It was not a *pure* class consciousness in the Marxist sense of the term; however, it was common among the İstanbul metal workers. This consciousness defined the common interests and desires of the metal workers to live in a decent manner and become a respected group of the society. More importantly, it emphasized the need for solidarity in the struggle to make their dreams come true. It was not a movement against capitalism *per se*, or against the order of private property; yet it certainly demanded a change in the existing social structure, which had enabled injustices and impoverished certain social groups. In order to abolish those social injustices, the language of the militant workers increasingly emphasized unity and struggle, but not the benevolence of the state or bosses. Above all, it derived the legitimacy of their demands from the workers' special place in society as the producers of the nation's wealth. Having a sense of pride in being laborers, the metal workers claimed their demands in several ways in post-war Turkey.

In this study, I am offering a social history, which is based on three interconnected sets of relations, in an effort to delineate the specific factors that paved the way for the formation of common class experiences and the rise of a class consciousness. The first set of relations is made up of the workers' experiences in their living and workplaces. History writing has to problematize the social formation of workers, both in living and working places, in terms of the social dynamics of workers' unity and their divisions in terms of race, gender, family patterns, etc. For living places, the dynamics of migration, the geographical construction of neighbourhoods,¹³⁷⁰ the pattern of social formation, the mechanism(s) of workers adaptation to the city life, workers' desire to be a part of larger community, etc., are

¹³⁷⁰ Labor geography is a new and stimulating field in the studies of working class history. See, Don Kalb, "Class (in Place) Without Capitalism (in Space)?" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 57 (Spring 1994): 31-39; Andrew Herod, "Workers, Space, and Labor Geography," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 64 (Fall 2003): 112-138.

all factors that matter in class formation, action and language.¹³⁷¹ In this regard, I take workplace as the battleground¹³⁷² between workers and bosses/managers. The history of enterprises should not only deal with the rise of particular sector(s), or with statistics in terms of workers' numbers, but history should also consider the actions and perspectives of managers and owners, as well as the application of managerial techniques which complete the framework for labor relations. This institutional history must be enriched by the managers'/employers' organizational history in order to understand how the bosses situated their social identity in the larger social relations, and society. When considering the bosses/managers, it is also important to show how they reacted to a new world characterized by workers' rights, the expansion of union density, and state growth.¹³⁷³ Therefore, I focus on how control¹³⁷⁴ is maintained on shop floor level, within the limits of my evidence. This control was a significant cause for workers' grievances and frustrations, and I focus, too, on

¹³⁷¹ Mary Lynn Mc Dougall, "Consciousness and Community: The Workers of Lyon, 1830-1850," *Journal of Social History*, 12:1 (Fall 1978): 138; Michael Hanagan, *The Logic of Solidarity: Artisans and Industrial Workers in Three French Towns, 1871-1914* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980); Lenard R. Berlanstein, "The Formation of a Factory Labor force: Rubber and Cable Workers in Bezons, France (1860-1914)," *Journal of Social History*, 15:2 (Winter 1981): 181; Michael Hanagan and Charles Stephenson, "Introduction" in Michael Hanagan and Charles Stephenson [eds.] *Proleterians and Protest: The Roots of Class Formation in an Industrializing World*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 13; Sharon Stichter, "Migrants and Working-Class Consciousness in Kenya," in Michael Hanagan and Charles Stephenson [eds.] *Proleterians and Protest: The Roots of Class Formation in an Industrializing World*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 171-196; Michelle Perrot, "On the Formation of the French Working Class", in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg (eds.) *Working Class Formation: Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986): 88-91.

¹³⁷² Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Basic Books, 1979): 13. Also look at: Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹³⁷³ Richard McIntyre and Michael Hillard, "Capitalist Class Agency and the New Deal Order: Against the notion of a Limited Capital-Labor Accord," 134. For an excellent account on how the American capitalist class responded to the "labor problem" in the First World War years, look at: H. M. Guelman, "Being of Two Minds: American Employers Confront the Labor Problem, 1915-1919," *Labor History*, 25:2 (1984): 189-216. Also look at: Richard Edwards, 99-110; Donald Reid, "Industrial Paternalism: Discourse and Practice in Nineteenth-Century French Mining and Metallurgy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 27:4 (October 1985): 579-607; Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor's Great War*; Susan Eleanor Hirsch, *After the Strike*.

¹³⁷⁴ I agree with Richard Edwards about the conflictual nature of control at the workplace: "Those basic relationships [relations between capitalist and worker, my addition] in production reveal both the basis for conflict and the problem of control at the workplace. Conflict exists because the interests of workers and those of employers collide, and what is good for one is frequently costly for the other. Control is rendered problematic because, unlike the other commodities involved in production, labor power is always embodied in people, who have their own interests and needs and who retain their power to resist being treated like a commodity." Richard Edwards, 12.

how the workers respond to the managerial practices they are experiencing.¹³⁷⁵ Then, the particular types of workers' acceptance and resistance, individual or collective, to managerial practices further contribute to the story of the formation of class and consciousness. The most general means for organizing collective resistance is certainly through unions. Therefore, it is inevitable that the unionization process must be researched, plus the kind of social dynamics unionization was dependent upon, and what kind of new dynamics it created, as well as the particular forms of workers' commitment to the union.¹³⁷⁶

The institutional history of unions, their ideologies, actions, leadership, and organizational types must also be the subjects of any thorough social history of workers. Hence, I focus secondly on the set of relations between institutions. Here, the state, its institutions and their particular relationships with workers, bosses and their organizations must be analyzed. The history of intra-elite political competition has to detail how and why competition rises, and how individual workers, or their collective organizations, seize and exploit the opportunities of that same competition. Thus, I narrate the state policies in Turkey after the war years to tackle the question of the particular forms of citizenship, rights and social justice offered by the state, and the perception of those elements by both the workers and the trade unions.¹³⁷⁷

¹³⁷⁵ Cf. Richard Edwards, 57-75; Lenard R. Berlanstein, 163-186; Jürgen Kocka, "Problems of the Working-Class Formation in Germany: The Early Years, 1800-1875" in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg [eds.] *Working Class Formation: Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986): 316-324; Michael Hanagan, "Solidary Logics," *Theory and Society*, 17 (1988): 309-327; Craig Heron, *Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883-1935* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); Dave Lyddon, "Industrial-Relations Theory and Labor History," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 46 (Fall 1994): 122-141; Susan Eleanor Hirsch, *After the Strike: A Century of Labor Struggle At Pullman*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor's Great War*, 217.

¹³⁷⁶ For a good study analyzing how the workers committed to their union based on workers' experiences, see: Jack Metzgar, *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000).

¹³⁷⁷ For the importance of contentious politics and state policies on the class formation and language see, Sean Wilentz, "Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790-1920," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 26 (Fall 1984): 1-24; Martin Shefter, "Trade Unions and Political Machines: The Organization and Disorganization of the American Working Class in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg [eds.] *Working Class Formation: Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986): 197-276; Aristide R. Zolberg, "How Many Exceptionalism?" in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg [eds.] *Working Class Formation: Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986): 452-455; William H. Sewell, Jr. "Uneven Development, the Autonomy of

Furthermore, such a history must discuss the framework of law that assumes a particular place for the workers and their organizations, and employers and their organizations, in the “natural” order of things in the country. These are laws designed to affect and regulate the factory regime and shop floor dynamics. On this topic, my main focus is on the process of law, since the state policies or institutions might transform to points of contention between workers and bosses/managers, over time.¹³⁷⁸ In general, the unions and workers demanded formal control promised by the state so that they could negotiate the conditions of work more easily.¹³⁷⁹ But this discussion will not be confined with the framework of law. It has to question how managers/owners and workers all legitimized their demands based on the laws and state policies. This reasoning must also search for the underlying patterns in which managers/owners and working class actors actually behaved, either within the laws, or how they transgressed them.

And lastly, I am encompassing the set of relations that took shape at the action level. The collective actions of workers, the role of union(s), the dynamics of workers’ participation, their demands, the form of actions and their repercussions on both state actors, has to be a part of the agenda scrutinized¹³⁸⁰ since as Friedman argues:

“Strikes are among the formative experiences in many workers’ lives, recalled in detail long after their conclusion. By demonstrating their solidarity, participation in public action solidifies workers’ commitment to

Politics, and the Dockworkers of Nineteenth-Century Marseille,” *The American Historical Review*, 93:3 (June 1988): 604-637; Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Gerald Friedman, *State-Making and Labor Movements*; Jeremy Adelman, “Political Ruptures and Organized Labor: Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, 1916-1922,” *International Labor and Working Class History*, 54 (Fall 1998): 103-125; Susan Eleanor Hirsch, *After the Strike*.

¹³⁷⁸ For a recent account of how the institution of workers democracy as part of the industrial democracy offered by the state turned to a point of struggle between workers and bosses/managers in France, see: Mathieu Floquet and Patrice Laroche, “The Impossible Transition From ‘Absolute Monarchy’ Toward Industrial Democracy in France: The Experience of Workers’ Representatives at Schneider, 1899-1936,” *Labor History*, 55:1 (2014): 117-136. Also look at: Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*; Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor’s Great War*; Susan Eleanor Hirsch, *After the Strike*.

¹³⁷⁹ Cf. Richard Edwards, 19-22. Also look at: Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor’s Great War*.

¹³⁸⁰ For some examples of social history which focused on collective actions, see: Ronald Aminzade, *Class, Politics, and the Early Industrial Capitalism: A Study of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Toulouse, France* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); Gerald Friedman, *State-Making and Labor Movements*; Susan Eleanor Hirsch, *After the Strike*; Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing For Coal: America’s Deadliest Labor War*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

the union; it convinces them that their cause is just because they are united.”¹³⁸¹

In essence, I situate the narration of a class formation within the social relational settings, which are contemporaneous to it.¹³⁸² This is an analysis that examines the fine networks of those relationships, both in time and space.¹³⁸³ An analysis of workers’ discourse must complement the broader picture in order to understand how the workers saw and defined themselves, their particular place in society as a distinct social group, “their condition as creators of the wealth of the community”,¹³⁸⁴ and how this definition related to the general definition of citizenship and rights,¹³⁸⁵ their relations with managers/employers and the state, and how they defined bosses/managers as “others”.¹³⁸⁶ Of course, the workers’ collective language is a refracted image of reality; however, such an analysis will provide us with invaluable clues to penetrate into the intellectual minds of workers and sketch their actual, not assigned, consciousness.

The interrelated processes of industrial struggles, class formation and the emergence of a certain common consciousness among the İstanbul organized metal workers between 1945 and 1970 took shape through the interplay of different actors and institutions within a changing historical context. In other words, being constrained by the historical context, the metal workers engaged in various relations with their fellow workers, both in the working and living places, with bosses/managers, unions, employer’s associations and the state institutions. What they experienced through such relations motivated some of them to recognize their common interests and stand in unity to overcome their shared problems.

¹³⁸¹ Gerald Friedman, *State-Making and Labor Movements*, 50.

¹³⁸² Cf. Margaret R. Somers, “Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation,” 609.

¹³⁸³ Don Kalb, “Class (in Place) Without Capitalism (in Space)?” 34.

¹³⁸⁴ Custodio Velasco Mesa, “Revolutionary Rhetoric and Labor Unrest: Liège in 1886 and Seville in 1901,” *International Review of Social History*, 56 (2011): 245.

¹³⁸⁵ Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 355; Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor’s Great War*; Custodio Velasco Mesa, 246.

¹³⁸⁶ Michelle Perrot, “On the Formation of the French Working Class,” 100; Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor’s Great War*.

Eventually, and in several instances, they acted together to change, or at least reform, the existing conditions from which they suffered.

After the war years, being deprived of any hope for the future in their original birthplaces, an increasing number of mostly young male peasants began to arrive in İstanbul, seeking a decent life. They hoped to benefit from the opportunities created by city life; shopping, cultural activities, a decent education for their future children, etc. Most of them settled in the squatter areas where their relatives, either by kin or by birthplace, were already embedded in social networks. Here, they were socialized with the population of neighbourhoods, which was composed mostly of workers from different sectors. The existence of those social networks helped new immigrants to find jobs in factories, including the metal plants, which were flourishing after the mid 1950s and thus required an expanded labor force.

The wealthy classes who had previously been involved in commercial activities began to invest in industry during the post-war period. Coming from the background of limited commercial activities, these entrepreneurs aimed to make quick and large profits from the businesses; accordingly, they were intolerant any outside intervention, either coming from the state or from trade unions, which might squeeze in their profits. They attempted to organize workplace relations according to this requirement, and that reflected in workplace relations in the so-called arbitrary actions of employers; employers who showed little tolerance of workers' demands, which might obstruct profits. Furthermore, few of them adopted tangible or discursive managerial techniques to commit workers to the workplaces, and/or management; they largely exerted close and strict control over work processes. As a result, there was no consolidated network of trust between workers and bosses/managers in those workplaces.

However, the bosses/managers were not the sole actors in regulating workplace relations; the state intervened, albeit much less effectively than it did in the 1960s, in industrial relations with several mechanisms and discourses on industrial democracy during the post-war era. In addition to founding several institutional mechanisms such as workplace

representation, labor courts, the Ministry of Labor, the Work Assemblies, and in addition to allowing the foundation of trade unions, albeit with several constraints, and invoking several laws such as the Work Accidents, Work Diseases and Maternity Law, the Old Age Insurance Law, etc., the state thereby infused the discourse of industrial democracy based on the assumption that the cooperative efforts of different groups in the workplace would lift productivity and, eventually, the national economy. In other words, the state promised workers would have their rights, have a decent life and have a respected place in the social hierarchy, if they were loyal, cooperative and assiduous citizens. However, the state actually expended little effort in democratizing the progress of work relations and providing a good life to its worker-citizens, and there is evidence that the metal workers experienced a very different life than it was promised in the working and living places.

Despite the promises, and unlike their hopes, the metal workers experienced suffering in their living places and due to workplace relations. In their neighbourhoods, they had problems with housing and had difficulty providing for their families. In the factories, they worked for low wages, which were always under the official levels of minimum wages, while their working time was also longer than the laws indicated, and most of them were forced to work for longer hours. They were under constant threat of being fired due to fluctuations in the sector, their work conditions were dangerous and unhealthy, and most importantly, their legal rights of being unionized and being represented by their fellow workers - representatives whom they wanted the right to choose freely – was an issue that went unrecognized by the bosses/managers. In short, the majority of the metal workers suffered an unjust relationship in the workplace, where they felt they were “over-exploited”; thus, an increasing number of them realized, in time, that the hopes of having a decent life would not be realized unless they took action.

Neither socialism nor liberalism had taken deep roots in the Turkish society before 1945.¹³⁸⁷ In the context of the emerging Cold War, people could increasingly identify with

¹³⁸⁷ Tefik Çavdar, *Türkiye’de Liberalizm: 1860-1990 [The Liberalism in Turkey]*, (Ankara: İmge, 1992).

nationalism without giving up their religious identities.¹³⁸⁸ However, neither the CHP nor the succeeding DP governments tolerated, except during brief periods, the independent development of nationalist and religious movements, as well as a socialist ones. Therefore, the dominant hegemonic ideology represented by the party in power, the DP, was constituted by a nationalism heavily informed by religious identities, a staunch anti-communism leaning, and an absolute support and infatuation with the US and liberalism that did not exclude state intervention in people's lives or economic relations, but assumed that Turkey would develop by means of an economic order based on private property. Surely, this could be interpreted as a keen support for the capitalist world in the context of the Cold War.¹³⁸⁹ In particular, the anti-communist ideology and nationalist language was certainly influential on the trade unions in the decade.¹³⁹⁰

However, the official discourse and mechanisms offered after the war years provided workers with opportunities to raise their collective voice and struggle for their demands, and to allow their views to be heard on the subject of the current state of affairs; in fact, the workers used the nationalist ideology to ask their rights. Above all, the state allowed the trade unions to exist and act, albeit within the constraints framed by itself. And the metal workers used those opportunities to improve their lives and have a say in workplace relations during the decade. The metal workers' union was founded in 1947 by a few master-workers in the sector with the aim of increasing productivity in the workplace and making the metal workers honored members of society. The union had largely trusted the legal mechanisms to get its members' rights between 1945 and 1960. Since the union depended upon political lobbyism

¹³⁸⁸ Brockett, *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk*.

¹³⁸⁹ Tanıl Bora and Nergis Canefe, "Türkiye'de Popülist Milliyetçilik [The Populist Nationalism in Turkey]," in Tanıl Bora [ed.] *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 4: *Milliyetçilik [Nationalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002): 635-662; Tanel Demirel, "Demokrat Parti [The Democrat Party]," in Murat Yılmaz [ed.], *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 7: *Liberalizm [Liberalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005): 480-530; Tanıl Bora, "Adnan Menderes", in Murat Yılmaz [ed.] *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 7: *Liberalizm [Liberalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005): 482-507.

¹³⁹⁰ Yüksel Akkaya, "Korporatizmden Sendikal İdeolojiye, Milliyetçilik ve İşçi Sınıfı [Nationalism and Working Class from Corporatism to the Union Ideology]," in Tanıl Bora [ed.], *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 4: *Milliyetçilik [Nationalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002): 829-840.

instead of workers' own unity and action, and since they were being oppressed by the widespread bosses/managers' intolerance in the workplaces, the metal workers did not show a considerable interest in the union's efforts and affairs during its first years. Afterwards, however, the union pursued a more balanced policy and weighed in the workplace struggles, as well as initiatives on the level of higher policy making - especially after the arrival of a young and militant generation to posts in the union. As a result, an increasing number of the metal workers joined in the union and voted for the representatives nominated by the union to speak for them in the workplace. The union then improved on the shoulders of workers' representatives, in whom the workers had certain trust and recognition as their own voices; although the new union administrators were already the workers' representatives in the workplaces where they were recruited. But the union gradually became the main mechanism to make dreams come true for most of the metal workers towards the end of the 1950s.

In its first years, the union's official discourse stressed cooperative relations between workers and employers to lift and support the national economy, thanks to having a philosophy of using their political connections to gain workers' rights. For this, the union advised its members to work hard and be compromising in their relationships with the employers. The union spread the idea that for loyal and assiduous workers, the state and employers who first considered the national interests rather than their own pockets would eventually recognize workers' rights.

Due to an absence of evidence, we do not know how effective such a discourse of loyalty was among the rank and file; yet we do know that after the gradual shift of the union's policy, and as a result of long term workers' suffering, the metal workers' own vision of their workplace relations, bosses/managers, and the best ways to revise them, was rather different than their imagined picture. After the election of the new administration, the union applied the legal mechanism of work disputes more often to resolve workers' grievances, and an increasing number of workers openly stood against their bosses/managers on the shop floor. Secondly, poor, unchanging workplace experiences, widespread poverty and a lack of state intervention motivated workers to act together to handle their own problems. An increasing

number of the metal workers began to touch on the subject of workers' unity and using collective struggle to deal with widespread injustices. In parallel with this, the union discourse shifted towards the language of insubordination. This shifting language did not transgress the ideological borders mapped out by the state; it still assumed peaceful relations in workplaces would improve the national economy, it still advised workers to be loyal and hard working citizens, it still stated the primary goal of the union's existence was to increase the productivity; nonetheless, neither workers nor union's representatives encountered many bosses/managers who were eager to accept workers' rights, recognize workers' demands or tolerate workers' representatives. The situation was different for the metal workers. Unlike the union's assumptions of industrial democracy, the true-life experiences of the metal workers culminated in the flourishing of another discourse simultaneously, with a language that perceived and enunciated the bosses/managers as "profit greedy", "oppressive tyrants" who considered nothing but their own pockets. For the metal workers, workplace relations were frustrating as they did not promise any hope for the workers who were entrapped in constant poverty and injustice. This language, at the same time, increasingly stressed how the unity and solidarity of workers could change this situation. As demonstrated, the pattern of collective action, which hinged upon workplace struggles and political lobbyism, as well as a growing world vision, which oscillated between loyalty and insubordination, remained as a legacy of the industrial movement into the 1960s.

The military intervention that took place on May 27th, 1960 did not bring a fundamental change to the metal workers' lives; the metal workers were still frustrated over low wages and/or the bosses/employer's oppression in the workplaces. But the new order reiterated the old promise of industrial democracy and fostered it with the promise of social justice, which referred to the just distribution of national wealth. Those promises, furthermore, were put in the new Constitution that was declared in 1961. The widespread public debates that followed on social justice, unfair income distribution in Turkey, or the "corrupt order" which was rooted in the large inequalities between poor and wealthy citizens, indicated a promising era in which the workers' dream of having a decent life and respected

place in the social hierarchy might be realized. The state also broadened institutional channels through which the workers might make their demands known; and finally the Labor Law, invoked in 1963, recognized the long-expected right to strike.

The new period opened up by the military intervention would also witness the proliferation of different ideologies and new political struggles that would affect the whole of Turkish society. Nationalist or religious movements could not be embodied as distinct social movements until the end of the decade, but socialist movement(s) in particular made a huge leap during the 1960s, considering they were previously suppressed by the state. In this decade, the Justice Party, as the heir of DP, represented nationalism and religiosity especially as a stand against the growing alleged communist threat in Turkey and the new policy of its main rival, CHP, being defined the “left of the center”.¹³⁹¹ In fact, as one of the young and charismatic leaders of CHP, Bülent Ecevit did not hesitate to define the party in public as a leftist one.¹³⁹² The AP and particularly his new, young leader, Süleyman Demirel, seemed to adopt a discourse of the Cold War era by addressing the US the savior of “free “people on earth and denigrating the Soviet Union or China as the real enemy to the humanity. Accordingly, the AP’s leaders accused socialist or “left of the center” parties, and leftist movements or people, of being the “servants” of “disguised” communists. Towards end of the 1960s, an independent nationalist and/or religious movement emerged in opposition to student and worker’s movements in the streets. Being greatly informed by an anti-communist discourse, those political movements emphasized the idea that communism posed the greatest threat to national integrity and the devoutness of Turkish people. On February 16, 1969, (Bloody Sunday) a crowd attacked a public meeting that was jointly organized by the workers

¹³⁹¹ Tanel Demirel, “Adalet Partisi [The Justice Party],” in Murat Yılmaz [ed.] *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 7: *Liberalizm [Liberalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005): 548-583; Tanıl Bora, “Süleyman Demirel,” in Murat Yılmaz [ed.] *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 7: *Liberalizm [Liberalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005): 550-577.

¹³⁹² Özkan Ağaş, “Ortanın Solu: İsmet İnönü’den Bülent Ecevit’e [Left of the Center: From İsmet İnönü to Bülent Ecevit],” in Murat Gültekingil [ed.] *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 8: *Sol [Left]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007): 194-221; Emin Alper, “Bülent Ecevit,” in Murat Gültekingil [ed.] *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 8: *Sol [Left]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007): 202- 213; Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960’tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi [The Turkish History From 1960 to Today]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014): 131.

and students to protest imperialism. Two workers from TİP were murdered, and the attackers chanted “Death to the Communists” and “*Allahuekber*”, literally meaning “God is the Greatest”.¹³⁹³ Those types of street movements got considerable support from the party in power, the AP, in its struggle against “anarchy”. And fascist types of street movements would become a human resource for the nationalist party, the MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi - The Nationalist Movement Party,) which was established under the charismatic leadership of an old army member, Alpaslan Türkeş, in 1969, after incorporating some elements of Muslim beliefs in its vision. Opposing both capitalism and communism, this nationalist movement declared its adherence to a ‘third way’ defined by the national economy.¹³⁹⁴ Here, Çelik-İş’s ardent anti-communism, nationalism and liberalism in terms of an absolute support for private property did not conform to the mainstream ideological currents of time.

As evidenced by the Maden-İş’s shifts toward left after the mid-decade, socialist ideology gradually became much more influential in the political scene and in social life in Turkey. Until the socialist movement became further fragmented towards the end of the decade, two main sources of support, the *YÖN Journal* and TİP, represented socialism in Turkey during the better part of the 1960s. Being affected by an Arab Socialism that was mainly pioneered by Gamal Abdal Nasser and Ba’ath Parties in Egypt and Syria, *YÖN* followed a socialist ideology informed by nationalism, anti-imperialism that was believed to have roots in Kemalism, and the Kemalist statist policies of the 1930s. Thus, *YÖN* aimed to found a statist economy, rather than seeking the abolishment of private property, an approach that would make rapid economic development possible and simultaneously provide social justice for all people. Although there were some articles about how İslam and socialism might

¹³⁹³ Yüksel Taşkın, “Anti-Komünizm ve Türk Milliyetçiliği: Endişe ve Pragmatizm [Anti-Communism and Turkish Nationalism: Anxiety and Pragmatism],” in Tanıl Bora [ed.] *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 4: *Milliyetçilik [Nationalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002): 618-634; Kemal Can, “Ülkücü Hareketin İdeolojisi [The Ideology of the Nationalist Movement],” in Tanıl Bora [ed.] *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 4: *Milliyetçilik [Nationalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002): 663-685; Tanıl Bora, “Alpaslan Türkeş” in Tanıl Bora [ed.], *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 4: *Milliyetçilik [Nationalism]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002): 686-695.

¹³⁹⁴ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergâh: 12 Eylül’den 1990’lara Ülkücü Hareket [State, Hearth and Dervish Lodge: The Nationalist Movement from the 12th September to the 1990s]*, sixth edition (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000): 52-60; Aydın and Taşkın, *1960’tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi: 157-159 and 175-176.*

be compromised in the journal, this did not become a defined topic for the influential writers of the journal who were the ardent believers of Kemalist *laicisim*. In fact, *YÖN* writers believed in the establishment of socialism as the result of efforts of enlightened intellectuals followed by the *zinde kuvvetler* (*robust forces*) of society, including workers, peasants, bureaucrats, middle class intellectuals, small shop owners and army officers, rather than the revolutionary struggle of workers. It is interesting that *YÖN* presented socialism as the sole way to smooth over class conflicts that were ignited by the capitalist economic order.¹³⁹⁵ TİP, on the other hand, defined a party through which the oppressed classes would peacefully take over the political power. In this sense, its political stance was closer to the orthodox Marxist ideology. But similar to *YÖN*, TİP's leaders envisioned an anti-imperialist political agenda, which emphasized Kemalist nationalism as the suitable ideology of an oppressed nation. In fact, the first program of the party accepted in 1961 stressed the Mustafa Kemal reforms and the notion of social justice as included in the 1961 Constitution: socialism aside, the word "class" was not even incorporated in the document.¹³⁹⁶ Therefore this party, too, attempted to construct an alliance with the defenders of a left-interpretation of Kemalism in the 1960s. A party brochure published and circulated in 1965 addressed *gerçek Atatürkçüler* (*real Atatürkists*) to join in the struggle to save the country from the oppression of imperialism.¹³⁹⁷ Both *YÖN* and the TİP had an active role in inserting the idea of socialism into the very center of the political scene in Turkey and they garnered considerable popular support during the 1960s. Although *YÖN* movement disappeared from the political scene after the military intervention in 1971, TİP continued to exist until the military coup d'état in 1980. However, it would later be much less influential and it would revise its socialism to resemble an orthodox

¹³⁹⁵ Gökhan Atılgan, "Yön-Devrim Hareketi [The Yön-Devrim Movement]," in Murat Gültekingil [ed.] *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 8: *Sol [Left]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007): 597-646; Özgür Mutlu Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism* (London-New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011): 20-43; Aydın and Taşkın, *1960'tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi*: 109-111.

¹³⁹⁶ Mustafa Şener, "Türkiye İşçi Partisi [The Turkish Labor Party]," in Murat Gültekingil [ed.] *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce [The Political Thought in Modern Turkey]*, vol. 8: *Sol [Left]*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007): 356-418.

¹³⁹⁷ Doğan Özgüden, "Türkiye İşçi Partisi'nin Kuruluşu [The Foundation of the Turkish Labor Party]," *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi [The Encyclopedia of Socialism and Social Struggles]*, vol. 6, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1988): 1998-1999; Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey*: 64-92; Aydın and Taşkın, *1960'tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi*: 132-133.

Marxist-Leninist party in the 1970s. In fact, their political agendas would become the subject of intense discussion at the end of the 1960s and the main bodies of the socialist movements in Turkey eventually became fragmented.¹³⁹⁸ Maden-İş and its leader held close ties with the left movement, especially after 1965; nonetheless, those debates did not seem to influence this union and its vision remained in parallel with the TİP. Furthermore, the word ‘socialism’ became clearly pronounced by the TİP’s officials and the party program was revised through the orthodox Marxist ideology. In parallel, the official Maden-İş’s documents were predicated upon the general terms of Marxism. The intense debates within the social movement seemed to reflect little on the workers who were more inspired by the terms as social justice, rights and citizenship, or the contents of the 1961 Constitution, than the unending terminology and debates of the socialists in Turkey, as evidenced by the language utilized by the militant metal workers.

In reply, the Turkish bosses began to appear more and more on the public scene. Although they defended the idea that they and their enterprises were progressing in accordance with the national interests; they were unconvincing when they claimed to stand for social justice, too, since the on-going workers’ grievances indicated that the bosses’ oppression had never stopped. It is true that some bosses/managers planned managerial techniques to derive workers’ consent, but they were very few, both in limit and scope, in the metal sector. The 1960s were truly hard times for the capitalist class, as they would later admit.

The Turkish unions immediately perceived those changes and participated in public debates; the union leaders made public calls for the foundation of a new order based on social justice through which the workers, the producers of the wealth in the country, would get their deserved share of the national wealth and finally become respected citizens. To achieve this, they exerted considerable pressure on the military and succeeding civil governments to work together to formulate the necessary laws, which would end the tyranny of the bosses. The metal union was one of those unions: its leader, Kemal Türkler, engaged in several lobby

¹³⁹⁸ Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey*; 94-179.

actions to invoke the labor laws as soon as possible. But, the union's activities were not constrained by the meetings with the related political circles in Ankara; Maden-İş actively involved itself in the organization of the Saraçhane Demonstration in 1961, the first workers' public demonstration after the post-war years. As stated in Türkler's speech, if the state or state institutions' officers delayed in founding the order of industrial democracy, the workers, as the producers of the wealth, would act together to establish it by their own power. Thus, Kemal Türkler clearly declared the official line of the union. In fact, Maden-İş proved its determination to make changes happen at the beginning of 1963, with the Kavel Strike.

The representatives on the shop floor were quick to adopt the new language and benefit from any changes. In the union's general and district congresses, the representatives, who were the most important links between workers and the union, cried out against the bosses/employers' unchanging oppression and the workers' continued misery, despite the promises of the new order. In an effort to overcome those issues, the workers' representatives emphasized unity and action. As a result, the metal workers conducted sit-down-strikes in three factories, Samurkaş, Gümüş Motor, Halıcıoğlu - factories that did not pay workers' wages on time. But the most notorious and effective of those acts was the Kavel Strike which lasted 35 days and divided the public into two groups; those who supported the strike and as those who did not.

The Kavel workers stopped working first when the management refused to pay them annual bonuses. Then, after the dismissal of their representatives who organized the first work stoppage, the workers decided to walk out. In a short time, the strike was brought to the public eye and the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Interior intervened in the events to find a common point between the union and bosses, the latter of whom were adamant about not to allowing the workers' representatives to return. In the meantime, the bosses attempted to get products out of the factory and the police forces attacked the strikers several times; yet, the workers were able to hold their line with the help of people from the surrounding squatter houses. In the end, the bosses accepted the majority of the workers' demands and the strike had come to an end.

The Kavel Strike, as a collective industrial struggle, is an important example to show how the bosses and workers perceived the character of the decade. First of all, it showed that, according to bosses, the workers' wages, premiums or benefits were actually "blessings" which the bosses themselves presented to workers out of their "generosity". Secondly, the bosses were still uneager to accept any outside intervention in the regulation of the workplace. They wanted to abolish or constrain the mechanism of workers' representatives. In essence, the bosses were eager to pursue their old habits of "my business, my rules." But the workers were pursuing what they felt were their lawful or "natural" rights which stemmed from their social position as the producers of wealth; accordingly, Kavel was a just fight and not one undertaken to disrupt peace, but instead to get workers their deserved and rightful share from society. Furthermore, the strike showed that the metal workers, at least those who worked in Kavel, were decisive in fighting for their right to be represented on the shop floor. The Kavel workers resisted for the sake of securing their representatives' positions, whom they had chosen with their own free will. In this regard, the Kavel Strike was also the clash of two different mindsets.

Another significance of the Kavel event was that it contributed to the further deterioration of relations between workers, unions and bosses in the sector, and it became one of the causes of the uncompromising attitudes of the bosses towards workers' demands in the collective bargaining events of 1964. By that time, the collective agreement era, which was assumed to pave way for the industrial peace and solidify the cooperative work relations between workers and bosses/managers, had arrived. But the first collective bargaining meetings had not progressed in a peaceful manner: MESS, the bosses' association in the metal hardware sector, was determined to constrain the rights of workers' representatives; Maden-İş, on the contrary, sought to strengthen them. The first bargaining meeting went into a deadlock and the union declared its strike decision at several big metal plants. Due to mismanagement by the union, it was defeated and Maden-İş lost its authorization rights in several metal plants. Çelik-İş won recognition rights and the era of collective agreement had truly begun, albeit poorly, for the metal workers.

The new era held promise that the collective agreements reached through the mutual consent of both sides would yield peaceful work relations in which workers and employers would respect each other's interests and demands. The contentious work relations, however, did not evolve into orderly relations after 1964. Some big plants, such as, Arçelik, applied new managerial tactics to better commit workers to their job, to their workplaces and to the existing managerial rule. Initiatives like these, however, were still limited, both in scale and scope; many firms planned to derive workers' consent with wage increases and some benefits. Yet, most metal workers began to complain about low wages towards the end of the decade. Furthermore, the metal workers still toiled in unhealthy workplaces under strenuous and dangerous work conditions. More importantly, their grievances were not heard and their demands were mostly not tolerated; that is to say, they suffered from the absence of a proper mechanism to make their demands on the shop floor. Here, they had a certain distrust of the representatives of Çelik-İş, whom they did not choose. All these underlying causes motivated the metal workers to search for an alternative mechanism in the workplace and in several plants they rose up collectively to make Maden-İş the recognized union between 1968 and 1970.

In the meantime, Maden-İş's official line shifted left and it became one of the founding unions of DİSK; as a result, this union and its representatives certainly became *persona non grata* for the metal bosses in the workplaces. Partly because of this, and partly because of the legacy of the contentious relations with Maden-İş, bosses had punished all workers who strived to re-organize Maden-İş in the workplaces before 1968. As a result, the collective actions became much more radical and transgressive after that time. Instead of waiting for the legal procedures to work, the metal workers simply stopped working in most places to wait for their demands to be met. They were finally successful in organizing Maden-İş and making their freely chosen representatives be recognized by the bosses/managers.

These common experiences, struggles and changing consciousness motivated the İstanbul metal workers to be one of the leading groups in the June insurrection. When they felt threatened, they gained their rights through their own struggles. The workers of the Çelik

Industry, Elektro Metal, Rabak, Singer, Sungurlar, Türk Demir Döküm, Kavel, İzsal, ECA, Hisar Döküm, Ayvansaray Bolt and other factories, accumulated a significant amount of experience in collective struggle between 1968 and 1970. Even before that, they had marched from their factories or living places to the city center in Taksim. But that was not a spontaneous event: from the end of May, the high officers of DİSK convened more than once and planned to take illegal collective actions against the draft which would result in the dissolution of the confederacy. After the law was invoked in June, DİSK called the workers' representatives to take immediate action in their workplaces. And all the workers' representatives, not just from the metal sector, got together on June 14th in the DİSK headquarter in İstanbul. The speeches the metal representatives made during that meeting reflected their determination to fight against the dissolution of the unions, and for the retention of workers' rights which had previously been the subject of their bitter struggles. A representative from Haymak stated that:

“(...) My fellow workers, we always resist against employers who desired to usurp our rights that we gained through our struggles and yellow gangs [yellow dog unions, a.n.] who wants to consume the daily bread of our new born children. Friends, I am shutting off switches by tomorrow (...)”¹³⁹⁹

Orhan Adem's words indicate the same point:

“(...) My age is now 37, I am still hungry, I am working with my all strength but I cannot get my rights (...) My work, the work of my honor, fills their treasure, stomach and gizzard (...) Unlike them, I do not spend money in clubs, theaters, in the USA or whatever places. I was grown in İstanbul, I am 37 years old but I still do not know much of İstanbul. Why this is so? It is because of my financial condition. Because, my financial condition is not well. For any of us, it is not good. There are a lot of things that we cannot

¹³⁹⁹ Quoted from, Turgan Arınır and Sırrı Öztürk, *İşçi Sınıfı-Sendikalar ve 15-16 Haziran [The Working Class-Trade Unions and 15-16 June]*, (İstanbul: Sorun, 1976), 188.

see, eat or travel. They always spare us those rights. We worked with our full strength. They did not give us our deserved rewards, they made us work for nothing. They made us work as slaves. And from now on we woke up. We will crush them and resist them like this, we will knock them down with our full strength and power and with our unity (...).”¹⁴⁰⁰

And the union administration used journal headlines to call the workers to fight: “The Working Class, Be Prepared! Our Big War is Beginning”.¹⁴⁰¹ Following the promise of Haymak’s representative, the metal workers, indeed, closed off the factories in the next two days. In some factories, such as Türk Demir Döküm, İzsal and Sungurlar, the workers were not persuaded to return to the line until June 22nd, despite martial law being declared by the government on June 16th, the second day of the events.

After the June uprising, several Maden-İş’s officers and workers’ representatives were arrested and imprisoned. Nearly 5000 workers were fired from the plants. But their actions previous to June 15-16th were fruitful in terms of placing the foundation for the workers’ own and trusted union to rise in the workplaces. Despite continuing to battle over the representation issue in the succeeding years, Maden-İş and its representatives were the main mechanism through which İstanbul metal workers claimed their demands until the 1980 coup d’état. In fact, after the June events, Osman Keskin from Demir Döküm wrote:

“(…)

İstanbul became a place of victory

The workers’ blood lay on the streets

Traitor Türk-İş blames us

Let’s find out guilty and innocent, brothers

We are not guilty of their accusations

¹⁴⁰⁰ Quoted from, Turgan Arınır and Sırrı Öztürk, *İşçi Sınıfı-Sendikalar ve 15-16 Haziran [The Working Class-Trade Unions and 15-16 June]*, (İstanbul: Sorun, 1976), 202-203.

¹⁴⁰¹ *Maden-İş*, the Special Issue, 15 June 1970.

We will not be exhausted with three martyrs

We will not bow down to the tyrants

Since we have unbreakable ankles

The guilty are too obvious, innocents are suspected

We are suffering from the etat de siege (martial law)

Yet, our struggle continues

Think, bosses, your time has come (...)”¹⁴⁰²

The workers’ collective struggles were so intimidating for the metal bosses and managers that one metal boss, Jak Kamhi, confessed in the meeting of MESS that took place on December 29th, 1970, that the unity and power of the bosses was on the verge of dissolution. Jak Kamhi claimed that the entrepreneurs’ properties and lives were under threat.¹⁴⁰³ The rest of the speakers emphasized the necessity of the bosses’ own unity against the increasing unity of the workers.¹⁴⁰⁴ They did, indeed, begin to work together. As a result, the decade between 1970 and 1980 witnessed much more contentious industrial relations between the metal workers and bosses. Eventually, it was not the metal bosses, but military intervention which brought an end to this fight, on September 12th, 1980.

All these experiences and struggles led to the proliferation of a collective mindset and language among the militant metal workers. It was not an anti-capitalist vision in the sense that it did not refuse the rights of private property. It was, on the other hand, against the “over-commoditization” or “over-exploitation” of labor. This vision has a certain sense of fairness and justice, as it took its roots from the public notion of social justice that reflected on the necessity of installing a certain balance between different social groups in order to

¹⁴⁰² Osman Keskin, “Bizim Salı [Our Tuesday]”, *Maden-İş*, 31 (30 September 1970), 4.

¹⁴⁰³ *MESS XI. Olağanüstü Genel Kurulu Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı, 29 Aralık 1970 [The Deeds of Meeting and Decision of MESS’ XI. Extraordinary General Assembly, 29 December 1970]*, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive.

¹⁴⁰⁴ *MESS XI. Olağanüstü Genel Kurulu Müzakere ve Karar Tutanağı, 29 Aralık 1970 [The Deeds of Meeting and Decision of MESS’ XI. Extraordinary General Assembly, 29 December 1970]*, Tarih Vakfı Orhan Tuna Archive.

maintain a healthy social progress, and from the notion that labor was the producer of the wealth of the land. As a result, it demanded the reformation of the existing “corrupt and injustice social order” in Turkey. More importantly, this vision had a well-founded trust in the workers’ unity, solidarity and struggle to make the world, or at least their living places, a better place. And this vision is still alive in the memories of the old metal workers; in the words of one ex-Türk Demir Döküm workers:

“The union made us strong and taught us that if the workers would unite, they won. We would get our rights. We trusted in our own power. Our unity was very beautiful like a family. We were very powerful.”¹⁴⁰⁵

¹⁴⁰⁵ *Yellow* Mehmet Kul, interview by author, June 21, 2012.

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