

WORKING CLASS FORMATION IN THE DEMOCRAT PARTY PERIOD:  
EVALUATING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH TRADE UNION  
PUBLICATIONS

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **WORKING CLASS FORMATION IN THE DEMOCRAT PARTY PERIOD: EVALUATING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH TRADE UNION PUBLICATIONS**

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This thesis discusses the working class formation, particularly the class consciousness formation of the working class during the Democrat Party period. Class consciousness formation is evaluated as a dimension of class formation process. Getting organized, trade unionization and collective action, especially calling a strike are among the significant aspects of class consciousness formation. During the DP period, right to strike is the most controversial and noteworthy issue. It is the basic debate in the trade union newspapers. This is the reason of discussing class consciousness with reference to right to strike as handled by the trade union newspapers.

According to this study, class consciousness should be perceived as a phenomenon composed of different levels. In addition, class struggle can take place in different ways and class consciousness can have different forms. Although, it is hard to say that there is a class consciousness in the Leninist sense of the term, it is possible to talk about an economic-corporate consciousness with Gramsci's words. Trade unionization during the DP period and trade union publications are important experience of the workers in class consciousness formation process.

Working classes do not generally taken into consideration in the studies of the DP period and also in the researches on Turkish labor history. The study also asserts that, experiences of trade unions or the workers in general during the DP period are worth to analyze for the Turkish labor history.

**Keywords:** Class struggle, class formation, class consciousness formation, trade union movement, strike, Democrat Party period, trade union press

## ÖZ

### DEMOKRAT PARTİ DÖNEMİNDE İŞÇİ SINIFI OLUŞUMU: SINIF BİLİNCİNİN SENDİKA YAYINLARI ÜZERİNDEN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

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Bu çalışma Demokrat Parti döneminde işçi sınıfı oluşumunu, daha özelde sınıf bilinci oluşumunu tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Sınıf bilinci oluşumu sınıf oluşumunun bir parçası olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Örgütlenme, sendikalaşma ve kolektif eylemler, özellikle grevler sınıf bilinci oluşumunun en göze çarpan unsurlarıdır. Grev hakkı Demokrat Parti dönemini en tartışmalı ve dikkate değer gündemidir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada sınıf bilinci sendika dergilerinde ele alındığı biçimiyle grev hakkında hareketle ele alınacaktır.

Bu tez sınıf bilincinin farklı düzeylerden oluşan bir olgu olarak alınması gerektiğini iddia etmektedir. Sınıf mücadelesi farklı yollar izleyebilir ve sınıf bilinci farklı biçimlere bürünebilir. Bu dönem için Leninist anlamda bir sınıf bilincinin varlığından söz etmek zor görünmekle birlikte, Gramsci'nin ifadesiyle ekonomik-korporatif bir bilinçten söz edilebilir. DP dönemindeki sendikalaşma ve çıkarılan sendika işçi sınıfı bilinci oluşum süreci açısından önemli deneyimler olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

İşçi sınıfı bir sosyal aktör olarak DP dönemini inceleyen çalışmalarda ve Türkiye emek tarihi çalışmalarında genellikle dikkate alınmamıştır. Bu çalışma, sendikaların ve daha genelde işçi sınıfının 1950-1960 dönemindeki deneyimlerinin de Türkiye emek tarihi açısından incelenmeye değer olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sınıf mücadelesi, sınıf oluşumu, sınıf bilinci oluşumu, sendikal hareket, grev, Demokrat Parti dönemi, sendikal basın

To

“Onlar”

*“Onlar ki...  
Korkak, cesur, cahil ve çocukturlar  
Ve kahreden  
Yaratan ki onlardır...  
....  
En bilgin aynalara  
En renkli şekilleri aksettiren onlardır.  
Asırda onlar yendi, onlar yenildi.  
Çok sözler edildi onlara dair  
Ve onlar için zincilerinden başka kaybedecek şeyleri yoktur,denildi.”*

*Nazım Hikmet*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*“Gerek işverenler gerek hükümet işçileri bir nevi aşağı ve tehlikeli sınıf gibi telakki etmiştir. Birçok işyerlerinde patronlar işçilerin kendi sayelerinde geçinen, ekmeğini onun kapısında bulan insanlar, bir nevi uşak gibi bakmakta ve işçilerin hayatlarının tehvini yolunda yaptıkları icraat işçiye bahşedilmiş bir lütuf gibi telakki etmektedirler. Patron iş kanununu çok defa isterse tatbik etmekte ve isterse hiç aldırmamaktadır. Kanunen kendisine verilen hakların işçiler tarafından aranmasını ise patronlar umumiyetle hoş görmemişlerdir. İşçiler çok yerlerde bir ecir ve hizmetkâr gibi muamele edilmiş ve iş kanununa göre iş yerlerinde seçilen işçi mümessilleri tarafından bu haklar arandığı zaman bu mümessiller komünistlikle itham edilmiştir. Emniyet teşkilatının dahi bu ithamların tesiri altında kaldığı ve birçok işçileri hususî sicillere geçirerek bunları takip altında bulundurduğu esefle kaydolunacak bir hakikattir” (Barkın, January 10, 1948).*

This thesis aims to analyze the development of the working class formation during the Democrat Party period in Turkey. The DP period is generally discussed in terms of the change in the political regime from one party to multi-party system, with a special emphasis on juridical regulations and the party politics. In these studies and in the discussions on the DP period, social actors outside the government or state elites especially the working classes are not generally given much consideration. This missing dimension of the analysis of the DP period, that is the working class,

will be the focus of this study. It will attempt to underline the saliency of this period for the study of Turkish labor history and/or Turkish working class movement.

Information for this study on the working class is taken from written documents belonging to the most visible working class organizations in the Democrat Party period. The project will analyze trade union newspapers, particularly focusing on evidence of the class formation process. The study analyzes the parts of the trade union newspapers that provide the necessary groundwork for the period investigated. One journal and three newspapers from different locations and sectors were chosen from throughout the DP period. The documents are chosen from different sectors and different locations to enable discussion of class consciousness formation considering variations.

Location and sector were primary variables in choosing the newspapers. Therefore, the periods analyzed for each source are not identical. *Sendika Yolu*, a pioneer of trade union press in Turkey, was published for a short time in comparison relative to other trade union publications. The paper was published weekly from 1948 and 1949 in a small town, Nazilli. *Sendika Yolu* was an organ of a trade union in textile industry. The second paper, *Ereğli İşçi Postası*, belonged to another trade union in the textile industry established in a comparatively bigger district. This newspaper continued to be published weekly throughout the entire DP period. *Maden-İş*, the third source, was published in İstanbul fortnightly by the trade union with the same name. *Maden İş* was a national trade union of mine workers. The Zonguldak Mine Workers Trade Union, another union in the mining industry, published *İşçi Sendikası* locally in Zonguldak. The Union published the paper weekly throughout the period. *Petrol İş*, the final journal evaluated in this research, was published fortnightly by the Turkish Oil Workers Trade Union and intended to be nationwide. The headquarters of this trade union, and the journal of *Petrol-İş*, was İstanbul.

Besides the sector, location and scale of these organization; the publications differ from each other in terms of their position in relation to the politics of the

government regarding the trade union movement. Some dissented from certain government policies, others preferred not to oppose or criticize the government. This differentiation can be seen clearly in the discussion on the right to strike in each of the newspapers. The research will evaluate each of the newspapers' standpoints towards the right to strike.

The basic elements in the discussion of class consciousness formation include getting organized, the struggle for rights, and the struggle for class interests. Trade union press, a tool utilized for expressing class interests, is used as a means of evaluation for class consciousness formation. Trade union newspapers and journals exhibit the problems of workers, workers dissatisfaction, and worker demands from both trade unions and government. Trade unions press provides suitable ground to evaluate the class consciousness formation of workers.

This work will have two general concerns: specifically, the politics of the DP government during the DP period, and the impact on and meaning of DP policies for working class formation. The relationship between the DP period and DP policies will be assessed with reference to working class formation and class consciousness formation. After a historical narration of the DP period, the formation of class consciousness within the working class, in particular members of the trade unions, is assessed through archival research of trade union newspapers from different locations and sectors. However, the right to strike is analyzed through articles, comments and viewpoints from the archive because the issue is the most tenuous between both political parties and between workers and the government. The main questions addressed in the study are the following. How much workers were expressing themselves independently, from which ideologies they were being influenced, for what reasons they were becoming organized, were they feeling themselves as members of the proletariat, under what conditions workers and their families were living, in what ways they were expressing their demands and in what ways they were seeking for their rights, were they struggling against employers or

were they only a pawn in the party politics of the DP regime? These are the questions that provided the motive for undertaking such a research.

This study focuses on a particular historical time period, and therefore will benefit from a historical-sociological approach. According to Tilly, to understand how a phenomenon comes into being we should before all else understand *when* it comes into being (quoted by Ergut and Uysal, 2007:12, emphasis added). Here, Tilly underlines the importance of the circumstances particular to a certain time period. From this statement, we can also infer the relationships among different phenomena and, in a sense, the relationship between structure and agency. The most important aspect of the historical sociological approach, relevant to this study, is the capability to see agents not as subject to structures, but as independent agents having their own voices (Ergut and Uysal, 2007:12). Historical sociology provides an approach, addressing the tension between structure and agency, bringing to light the previously invisible agents within a historical time period. In this historical-sociological research, workers, as the subject of this study, are called upon to speak. The intention of the study is not solely to tell story of the workers, but to understand the formation of class consciousness in the working class within a specific period, and under certain conditions. Documents, namely trade union newspapers, are analyzed for this aim.

Class consciousness formation is evaluated with reference to trade union newspapers. The conclusions derived from newspapers are analyzed within a certain theoretical framework. Historical materialism is the methodological framework of this study. Scientific socialism and historical and dialectical materialism are the scientific basis of Marxism. Historical materialism gives a privileged role to the proletariat in the capitalist social formation. Historical materialism maintains that working class is the carrier of socialism in the capitalist mode of production and in the capitalist relations of production. Class consciousness of workers is formulated in relation with the socialist role of the working class. In this regard, historical materialist methodology makes it

meaningful and valuable to discuss class consciousness formation. Class consciousness formation is evaluated within the confinements of historical materialism.

The historical-sociological method is a meta-theory, while historical materialism is a grand theory. In this study, they are not formulated as competing approaches, but as complementary. The experiences and activities of the workers, or the voices of the agents, is put forth through a historical-sociological framework. The conclusion derived then is evaluated with a historical materialist perspective. Otherwise, the research would overlook the years preceding the rise of the working class in the 1960s. Class formation and class consciousness formation in the working class during the 1950s is valuable to study in itself. In addition, it is valuable when we look at class consciousness formation with the knowledge of the changes in 1960s. The major claim of this study is that class consciousness is neither strictly a matter of structure nor a matter of agency. Therefore, the conditions and circumstances of the era, and the atmosphere of the working class will be discussed before class consciousness formation of workers.

1950 is a turning point in Turkish political history. The transition to the multi-party system was legally realized in 1946. Political parties were established based on these new legal regulations. The Democrat Party was among them. The Democrat Party became the strongest alternative to the Republican's People Party (RPP), swiftly taking the support of those suffering under the single party regime. The Second World War had badly affected the daily lives of ordinary people, especially peasants and workers. In addition to the oppressiveness of the regime, their low standard of living resulted in dissatisfaction and vocal opposition. These developments were trouble for the RPP, but favored of the DP and gave the party its first electoral triumph in 1950.

The Democrat Party directly opposed the RPP's ideology and politics. The DP's main electoral issue was giving a voice to the nation, which influenced many



people. Some have argued that the DP was representative of the periphery as opposed to the RPP, the party of elites. The fundamental discourse of the party was giving voice to the people including peasants and workers. The DP claimed that it symbolized the will of the nation, the periphery, and the province, and was the first founding representative of democracy. There remain ongoing discussions in Turkish politics regarding which party, and who, represented whom, as well as the dynamics and actors in the democratization process at that time.

The DP's most distinguishing feature was its promise to end statist economic policies, and to execute liberal economic policies. The DP government did not completely realize these goals; however, it laid the groundwork for the execution of a liberal economy. Steps to open to the capitalist world had already begun under the RPP in the Single Party Period. In the late 1940s, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were the most important features of the beginning of this transition. The Democrat Party merely advanced these attempts and further opened the way for economic liberalization. The Democrat Party solidly declared its place in the capitalist world order.

The Democrat Party government was in power throughout the Cold War as Turkey positioned itself beside the United States in this period. Until 1945, the main principle of Turkish foreign policy was maintaining friendly relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union. In contrast, the Democrat Party appeared as a significant and devoted ally of the United States. This change had major effects on the political atmosphere of the country. One of the main motives of the Democrat Party's ideology was anti-communism, although there was not a big "threat of communism". Anti-communism had already been an element of RPP's ideology; however, under Cold War conditions it became much more evident and systematic. Just after coming into power, in 1951, the DP government initiated a wave of arrests of communists which continued in 1954 and 1957. The DP made strong efforts to hinder the link between socialists and workers. Arrests were part of this endeavor.

Although the multi-party system opened the way for the establishment of class-based parties, including socialist parties, attempts were made to exclude the left from this system (Eroğul, 1987:103). According to Sunar, populism was the basic principle that provided massive support to the Democrat Party (1985:2081). The DP spoke to peasants and workers with its populist discourse gained the support of these groups. The DP's electoral success showed that the masses utilized the political opportunity provided by the multi-party regime. Workers had been very deprived with the harsh conditions during the Second World War, so there was increasing dissatisfaction among this group of society. In addition to these conditions, the politics of the RPP towards the people pushed them to an alternative political choice.

In existing analyses of the Democrat Party period, mass support for the party is briefly mentioned. Mass support is generally perceived as a passive element in historical studies concerning the Democrat Party period, while the main concern of the studies has been the application of legal regulations of the DP government or the DP's class structure<sup>1</sup>. The working class especially, which is part of social formation, is neglected in the analyses of this period. Koçak draws attention to this point in his different studies. He argues that, in the narrative of the period, the working class is taken as an object of policies and regulations of the DP. However, certain aspects of the working class are overlooked, including the impact of the working class in the process of obtaining certain rights and opportunities, the strategies formulated by the class, and the perception and interpretation of the consequences of these developments (Koçak, 2008a:75).

The working class appeared as an effective social actor by the 1960s. In the 1960s, Turkish society witnessed many strikes, protests, and factory occupations. After the 1960 coup d'état, the political atmosphere in the country changed. The proletariat became one of the new subjects of this new era; the number of worker

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<sup>1</sup> Works of Karpat, Eroğul and Sunar can be listed as the examples of these studies.

organizations increased and more leftist parties were established (Aydınöglü, 2007:51). The working class movement and the socialist youth movement grew and fed off of each other throughout the 1960s. This is the main reason for seeing the 1960s as a starting point of the working class movement, as the working class became an influential social actor in Turkish political history after this period. If the 1960s is perceived as an important time of change in the history of Turkish working class, the background of this change, and the history behind the leap should also be analyzed.

The 1950s was a period of learning for Turkish labor, especially for the process of working class formation. In fact, the working class history of the 1950s represents a hopeful shift from previous periods, providing the means for the initial accumulation for the uprisings of the 1960s (Koçak, 2008b:91). The Law of Associations was amended in 1946, lifting the ban on establishing class-based organizations and opening the way for the foundation of trade unions and socialist parties. Immediately after, trade unions began having organic relations with socialist parties. This period is called 1946 Trade Unionism, and is known as a peculiar period in Turkish labour history. The RPP government disapproved of this development in the trade unions. Socialist parties and the trade unions connected with these parties were shut down shortly after their foundation. However, the inclination of workers to trade unions, especially the socialist trade unions, required the government to take new measures. The 1947 Trade Unions Law prohibited trade unions from dealing in politics. With this passing of this law, a highly-controlled, and limited type of trade unionism emerged compared to the relatively free and independent trade unionism of 1946.

Considering this legislation, Koçak argues that an origin of 1950 is more suitable in the periodization of labor movement than the categorization of 1946-63.<sup>2</sup> According to him, the delineation 1946-63 is suitable for the work relations dimension of Turkish labor history. However, when focusing on worker movement

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<sup>2</sup> This periodization can be seen in Makal's (2002) and Güzel's (1996) works.

or class formation, the periods should be 1946; 1947-1950; and 1950-1961 Saraçhane Meeting (Koçak, 2008a:74). 1946 represents a unique period so it should be evaluated in itself. 1947 begins a new period for Turkish working class. After closing down socialist trade unions and enacting the new trade unions law, it became more difficult for trade unions to improve and follow their own class politics. During the 1950s, the connection between the left and the working class was severed, and the influence of the left movement on working class became non-existent (Koçak, 2008a:72).

In scientific socialism, the location of working class in the relations of production gives it the power to abolish capitalism with a revolution. Class conscious workers are expected to promote this revolution. Put briefly, capitalist dynamics create the opportunity for the emergence of revolutionary consciousness among working class. Class consciousness is generally identified with revolutionary class consciousness. Being a member of a Marxist or socialist organization or union is accepted as an indicator of “class consciousness” (Vatter, 1998:89).

Within the socialist tradition, there are different views on how change will take place, or how the revolution will be realized. However, the socialist tradition generally accepts that those with a socialist ideology, including class conscious workers and socialist leadership, will play primary role in this process. Historically, socialism is accepted as the ideology of proletariat. Therefore, class formation of working class is thought of together with socialist movement. The structural, objective existence of working class is one side of class formation process, and class consciousness is the other. In the 1950s, no organic relations remained between the working class and any leftist or socialist political parties. The working class was deprived of representation by a political party as proletariat. Because the working class lacked a structural existence within the political system due to the absence of powerful socialist or leftist alternatives, it is important to look at the dynamics of the formation of working class consciousness.

There are a wide range of opinions on the scope of class consciousness formation and on the ways through which class consciousness is extended. Mainstream approaches can be divided into two major branches. In the first, class consciousness is formulated as a stage, even as a status, to be achieved by through political intervention. The emergence of class consciousness implies that the working class has transformed from a class in itself to a class for itself.<sup>3</sup> Some argue that this transformation would be a result of the economic development, while others argue that an outside political intervention is necessary for this transformation (needs citation). However, the general point for this approach is the achievement of class consciousness. The second approach argues that class consciousness is a process. Represented by E.P. Thompson, “experience” is one of the distinctive concepts in this approach to class consciousness (needs citation). In the process approach, class consciousness and class appear concurrently; class consciousness is not something to be achieved. Just like the class itself, class consciousness is in the process of being made.

It is important to add that class struggle is a central and determining phenomenon for class consciousness formation in both approaches. Class struggle is the result of contradictory class interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalist social formation. Awareness of the interests of the class, and struggle for those interests are significant indicators of the existence or the formation of class consciousness. The class conscious worker is one that is aware of his/her class interests, not only his/her individual interests. Class struggle is conceptualized as an outcome of the capitalist mode of production independent from the cognition of worker. A second important dimension of the class struggle is the perception of class struggle by the workers, and their experiences. Workers’ perceptions of class struggle extend from the existence of the class. This is why class struggle, and in connection with it, class consciousness, are significant issues for class formation.

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<sup>3</sup> This understanding is formulated by Marx in the Poverty of Philosophy. Kautsky, Lenin, Lukacs are the most famous followers of this kind of definition of class consciousness.

Following collective interests requires collective action. It is assumed that the main power of working class comes from its capacity to act collectively. Being organized and collective actions are among the basic elements of the class consciousness formation. Working class organizations are the institutions where workers work for their own interests. Trade unions are the traditional organizations of the working class and in these organizations workers learn to act collectively and to struggle for their interests collectively. Strikes, which are said to be the weapons of the proletariat against capitalists, are the strongest realization of workers' collective power; therefore, strikes have a large role in class consciousness formation. Strikes are the schools of class struggles. Accordingly, while studying class consciousness formation and class formation in general, it is important to analyze both the relations of workers to strikes, and workers' perceptions of strikes.

Economic structure is one aspect of the class formation process. The relation between structure and consciousness is a considerably controversial issue among Marxists. The essence of the discussion is to what extent economic structure determines consciousness of the proletariat or to what extent economic and social conditions of workers determine the formation of proletarian class consciousness. However, class formation should be analyzed in both dimensions of structure and agency. The role of and impact of economic, social and political conditions should be taken into account while considering class consciousness. It is often simply assumed that the impact of objective class positions and class relations on consciousness are shown by means of political attitudes. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the economic, political and social dimensions of the atmosphere surrounding the working class. It is necessary to understand the circumstances shaping the country in the 1950s in order to fully understand class formation of the working class. It is also necessary to understand the links between the changing conditions and consciousness formation of the working class.

The economical, ideological and political aspects of the period must be observed to draw a comprehensive picture of the class formation, and also prior to analyzing

class consciousness formation in the Democrat Party period. 1950 is commonly accepted as the beginning of a transformation period for Turkish political history.<sup>4</sup> Besides the political changes of the period mentioned above, in the 1950s changes also took place in the economic conditions and structure of the country. The Second World War, while bringing increasing poverty and grief for the working classes, also contributed the accumulation of capital for some groups. The impact of this capital accumulation during war times was initially apparent after the war and resulted in the economic changes of the 1950s. Although it could not completely achieve its economic liberalization goals, the Democrat Party turned to private sector and to foreign capital. The government's industrialization attempts went hand in hand with changes in agricultural policies. The agricultural sector was at the center of both the economic structure of the country and the economic policies of the government. Agricultural mechanization, prompted by aid from the Marshall Plan, was a driver behind the economic changes. Consequently, social and political changes began in Turkey. The latter changes show the 1950s to be a period of acceleration in industrialization, immigration, urbanization and proletarianization. The proletariat became a visible actor in society

Koçak underlines these objective conditions in his article on the 1950s working class. According to the author (2008a:76), the significance of 1950s extends from the capital accumulation process. In this process, foreign aid allowed production intended for domestic market to increase. Consequently, industrial capital gained strength and mechanization, or automation, became widespread in large scale enterprises. Koçak maintains that when these factors are taken into consideration, the place of struggle gains significance in the history of class formation (Koçak, 2008a:76). Living accommodation was a basic problem for the industry workers at that time. The problem was solved either through squatter housing, or through construction cooperatives. Both solutions combined workers together in their living spaces and their daily lives. The basic result of these developments for the working class created the dynamics of class consciousness formation.

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<sup>4</sup> Karpat and Weiker can be counted among the representatives of this opinion.

The Democrat Party period is important for its place in Turkish political history and for the regulatory change impacting work conditions and workers. As mentioned before, the period is also important as a time when Turkish trade unionism had become widespread. The period was also predecessor to increasing labor movements of 1960s. The combination of these factors makes discussing class consciousness formation valuable. To a certain extent, discussing class consciousness formation is tantamount to discussing class formation. The existence, or non-existence, of class consciousness for the working class in this period is studied considering the conditions of the country. Class formation, particularly the class consciousness formation, is going to be discussed with reference to different perspectives in the following chapters.

The second chapter presents general approaches to class formation process and theoretical perspectives on class consciousness. An investigation of the rationale behind the privileged role of the working class in the class structure of capitalist social formation, and the consequences of this privilege for class struggle and class consciousness will take place. The background of the emergence of the proletariat and proletarianization process will be evaluated. Many questions will be addressed in this chapter, including: what is class consciousness, how it can be defined, how it can be measured, and how it emerges. Furthermore, the relationships between class positions and class consciousness, and to what extent structural conditions influence the formation of class consciousness are also among the questions we will try to find answer of in this chapter. The third chapter assesses the structural aspect of working class formation. In this chapter, the Democrat Party period is put forth as preparation to the subjective aspect of class formation in the DP period. Identifying the structural changes of the period, and what they brought about, are some of the questions that will be answered. Their impact on society and the repercussions on the working class will also be questioned in this chapter. Finally, class consciousness formation of the working class will be discussed with reference to workers' views on the right to strike taking place in trade union publications.



Answers will be sought to questions such as: in what forms class consciousness of the workers can be observed in the DP period, to what extent we can talk about class consciousness, what are the ways of struggle, what do workers demand from the government and in what ways. Evaluation of the extent of the impact of the conjuncture of the period on working class profile, and workers' perceptions of the conjuncture, as well as their own conditions and class positions will also take place. This chapter will question workers' means of protection of their interests, their main political and economic agenda, their organizational capacity, and their approaches to trade unionization. The research formulates the third and fourth chapters as a totality. Within these chapters, the research will attempt to answer the questions of to what extent we can talk about working class formation and existence of working class consciousness.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **A THEORETICAL SURVEY OF THE DEBATES ON THE CLASS FORMATION**

In this chapter, theoretical framework of the thesis is going to be presented. The theoretical framework is composed of the discussions class formation and class consciousness formation. Different viewpoints on the conceptualization of class formation process and on the definition of class consciousness are going to be given place in this part. Before all else, the place of the class in the social sciences and the importance of class-based analysis in social researches are going to be put forth. Mainstream definitions of class are going to be evaluated comparatively. Making a choice among different conceptualization is a basic step to continue the debates on class formation and also class consciousness formation. Particularly, the debates within the Marxist tradition considering the class formation process of working class and class consciousness of the working class is going to form the main point of reference for this study. Class struggles, class interest, class consciousness, experience are among the phenomenon that will compose the axis of the study.

#### **2.1 Observing Class Formation**

##### **2.1.1 Definitions of Class**

Class is and always has been a basic concept in social sciences. Either as a core *explanan*, or a *sub-explanan*, or as an *explanandum*, in analyzing the dynamics of societies, class consistently takes the consideration of social scientists. Class has

primacy in the social sciences because the notion of it has stayed at the core of social stratification theories that provide an effective framework for analyzing a social formation. Class has two different usages in social sciences. Class may be the core unit of the social structure, or it may be an element of the social stratification phenomenon (Öngen, 1996:29). These two different usages find their expressions in Marxist and Weberian theories. Marxism takes class as a primary unit and the Weberian approach takes class as one of the explanations of social stratification.

Class is an important sociological category and concept for both Marxist and Weberian theoretical models. It is generally accepted that the notions of “class and class struggle are analytical cornerstones” in Marxist theory (Özüğurlu, 1994:13) and “class plays relatively peripheral role in Weber’s work” (Wright, 2002:833). Besides being a sociological category, social class has political and ideological meanings in the general theoretical framework of Marxism. It is an integral component of Marxist methodology.

Class studies from Marxist and Weberian theorists; however, both begin their analyses with observation and evaluation of capitalism, and by attempting to identify the origins of the capitalist system. On the other hand, they provide models of social stratification. Another common point in Weber’s and Marx’s class analysis is private property. Ownership of property plays a central role in the determination of class divisions of a society by shaping distribution of resources and wealth. Property is a parameter in the distribution of income and privilege for Weber through means of the market acts and transactions (Salaman, 1981:94). Marxism goes beyond this Weber, and adds that distribution of private property gives rise to division of labor, the basis of class struggle in societies. Division of labor emerges between owners of the means of production and those who do not possess any property in capitalist social formation. A basic precept of Marxism maintains that the antagonistic character of the capitalist class relations – seen

through the notion of class struggle – is a result of the private ownership of the means of production.

Here, interpretations of the theory argue that Marxism uses the concept of social class as if it is inherent to capitalist society. For Weber, class is a creation of the market, and only in the absence of market interactions can one talk about status groups (Wright, 2002:846). Stratification of society is not the only feature of capitalist society. Especially in Marxist theory, social classes historically construct antecedent societies. For Marxists, class is an analytical tool that one can use when looking at the history of all types of societies. Since social class is utilized as a tool in understanding modern capitalist societies in the aforementioned class theories, society can also be taken as a modern concept. But when explaining the emergence and nature of capitalism, Marx sees the class system of capitalism as a different form of social organization from previous societies. As Giddens (1971:239) quotes from Marx:

“The emergence of capitalism transforms the ties of civil society into pure ties of the market: the individual functions as a member of a community only in the abstract sense in which he has rights as citizen in a separate political sphere.”

Marxist scholars argue that class can be used in two different ways in the theory. First, in the broad sense of the term, class refers to “any relation involving the appropriation of surplus value” and second, in its historically specific usage, the emergence of class corresponds to the emergence of bourgeoisie (Godelier quoted by Sayer, 1991:69). In other words, class corresponds to the emergence of capitalist social formation and capitalist relations. The conceptualization of classes is distinct from estates, slaves and castes (Swingewood, 1975:115). In addition, the “modern proletariat is the first underclass to develop its own large-scale organization (trade unions) which foster class identifications and class consciousness.” (Swingewood, 1975:115). Other scholars also categorize class as a modern concept. Holding in mind that classes only exist prior to modernity, Crompton (1996:4) argues that class-based organizations – organizations representing interests of a particular class

– are the sources shaping modern era. Sayer (1991:69) also embraces class as a modern category and “defines class as a different kind of social relationship than its equivalents in the pre-capitalist world”. He adds that:

“What makes class different from estate - or from any previous form of social distinction - is that it appears as a ‘purely economic’ relation. /.../ [But] class appears to be less internal or essential component of subjectivity than is caste or servility or slavery-in sum those relations Max Weber analyzed in terms of ‘status’” (Sayer, 1991:69).

Attributing a significant role to class in their analysis is a theoretical principle for Marxists and Weberians; however, they differ in the definition and explanation of classes. Indeed, in Marxist theory, class struggle – it cannot be thought separate from the existence of classes – is much more a critical concept. The term class struggle hides the understanding that the notion of class has or should have political connotations and this is one of the features that gives essence to the perception of class in the Marxist tradition. Capitalism, and the logic of capitalism, separate the spheres of politics and economy. A duality is brought about between them; ironically from one side they become fused with the existence of antagonistic classes, and on the other with the realization of class struggle.

### **2.1.1.1 Weberian Perspective on Social Classes**

In Weberian analysis, the status group is another sociological category besides social class. Weber differentiates classes and status groups on the basis of the determining role of objective and subjective conditions in the status or class formation processes. He uses the terms social status and class status to indicate the different parts in his social stratification model. ‘Party’ is the other component of Weber’s schema of stratification (Wright, 2002:834). Classes, status groups and parties are phenomena that correspond to the distribution of power within a community. (Weber, 1991:181) In this model, status and class are different conceptualizations that differ in their realization. Social class is commonly identified with the activities in the economic sphere. On the other hand, status is

not limited to the area of economic activities, but refers to the cultural and social power of a particular group of individuals. Weber (1991:194) briefly explicates these categorizations:

“Whereas the genuine place of classes is within the economic order, the place of status groups is within the social order, that is, within the sphere of the distribution of honor... [But] parties live in a house of power. Their action is oriented toward the acquisition of social power, that is to say, toward influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be. Parties may represent interests determined through class situation or status situation.”

Social status includes moral values, prestige, religion, culture and so forth as variables. It can be argued that social status is more comprehensive than class positions since more variables are active in the conceptualization of social status in Weber’s analysis. In Weber’s definitions (1971:91), social status may partially or completely determine class status. For Weber, status is a factor in social stratification, but class is not. On the other hand, status groups themselves play a vital role in some phases of historical development (Giddens, 1971:166). Variables such as income, occupation and education play a role in the definition of status. Class is a direct outcome of the market economy in Weber’s social theory. Specifically, the concept of class comes forth with capitalist economic formation in his theory.

“A market is distinguished from direct reciprocal exchange (barter) in so far as it involves speculative economic action oriented towards the securing of profit through competitive trading. Classes can only exist when such a market- which may take numerous concrete forms-has come into existence, and this in turn presupposes the formation of a money economy”. (Weber, quoted by Giddens, 1971:163).

The location of people in the market determines their class position. Class situation, in a sense, therefore corresponds to the market situation of an individual. In other words, groups of “people sharing the same market or class situation<sup>5</sup> are all subject

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<sup>5</sup> As seen, market and class situation are used like synonyms in this definition.

to similar economic exigencies”. Then, “a class denotes an aggregate of individuals who thus share the same class situation” (Giddens, 1971:164). This class situation is a reflection of market-determined “life chances” in Weber’s terminology (Crompton, 1996:29). Economic opportunities in possessing goods and commodities, income level, economic interests and form of activities in the labor and/or commodity market are the components of the social class formation in Weber (Sayer, 1991:101). There are three types of classes derived from the variables that Weber takes into account;

“a) a class is a ‘property class’ when class status for its members are primarily determined by the differentiation of property holdings; b) a class is an ‘acquisition class’ when the class situation of its members are primarily defined by their opportunity for the exploitation of services on the market; c) the ‘social class’ structure is composed of the plurality of class statuses between which an interchange of generations is readily possible and typically observable.” (Weber, 1971:87).

Concisely, in Weber’s formulation economy, namely the market economy has a significant role in determination of classes but it is not the only criteria when identifying an individual’s class. This is why as seen in the above quotation he prefers to talk about different types of classes. On the other hand, while Weberians are taking the market as given, and ignoring the class struggles, Marxist uses class struggle, which potentially led to the creation of specific economic system, as an inseparable component of the definition of the class (McNall et al, 1991:2).

### **2.1.1.2 Marxist Perspective on Social Classes**

In the totality of the Marxist framework, the definition of class significantly differs from other definitions due to the repercussions it has on political and ideological spheres. Structural identification of class, particularly the working class, is examined in detail within the Marxists’ theoretical framework. In Salaman’s (1981:197) words, “The Marxist theory of class is a theory of society and economy; an analysis of the basic processes of capitalist society and their implications for basic social divisions”. Salaman (1981:195) states that Weber’s understanding of

class lacks a theory of political economy while Marxists meet this requirement. He adds that Marxism goes beyond the visible part of the market. The definition of class is based on what is unrevealed. Class is defined not based on exchange relations; it is defined based on the relations of production (Salaman, 1981:195) that at universally effect all kinds of market relations.

The notion of exploitation is another point that differentiates the Marxist definition of class from the Weberian definition. For Marx, exploitation is a result of surplus production and is the basis and the guarantee of capitalist social formation. Exploitation is the term that explains the persistent accumulation of wealth by a small class – the capitalists – and the persistent impoverishment of another class, the working class- (Roemer, 1982:6). The process of surplus production brings about relations of exploitation. Exploitation differs from inequality in Marxist literature. Exploitation is the nucleus of inequality, and can be avoided only in a system that would not allow the private ownership of means of production. Ending exploitative relations is the main goal of raising class consciousness. Exploitation is the cause of contradictory class interests, as well as the cause of the conflict in capitalist society. In Orthodox Marxism, the proletariat is expected to be aware of exploitative relations through the conflict experienced in life. The project is then to end exploitation. Moreover, what is essential in Weber's approach is that social classes, which are defined in purely economic terms and which are different from social status, are not the forces that determine the destiny of society. As a methodological individualist Weber does not attribute historical value to social classes or a particular class. Crompton (1996:10) mentions different meanings of the word class. One of the meanings refers to social actors that have the potential to change society. For Marxists, this actor in capitalist society is the proletariat. In discussions of the working class, Marxism greatly differs from Weberian analysis.

Dialectic materialism, one distinguishing feature of Marxist theory, improves upon scientific socialism. Scientific socialism goes hand in hand with the examination of capitalist social formation. Scientific socialism is the name of the theory that



provides an objective and scientific explanation of the logic that ends capitalism and leads into socialism. In this formulation, the internal contradictions of the capitalist system as a whole, and the antagonistic character of capitalist relations of production transform the division of labor and class structure of the capitalist society, creating a historical role for the working class. In Orthodox Marxism, the potential power of the proletariat to take the control of means of production and expropriate them can lead to the termination of capitalist social formation with a revolution.

“Its objective social weight and political power, derived from its role as a direct producer, makes it potentially powerful political force; while its subjective role as both the representative of humankind’s alienation and exploitation as well as of its universalizing negation of the same-achieved in and through class struggle- makes it a revolutionary power.” (Perkins, 1993:13).

This formulation is particular to Marxism and is primarily why a rather comprehensive Marxist literature on working class formation exists. For Weber, the development of a strong sense of community within the working class as a whole is improbable and can emerge only in limited situations (Benson, 1978:44-45). However, the tendency of the working class to act as a community, for Marx, is the condition that makes meaningful to study working class formation.

In this study on class formation of the working class, the understanding of class according to Marxism is utilized as the theoretical framework. Its distinguishing emphasis on relations of production, exploitation, the achievement of class consciousness through class struggle, and the historical role of the working class provides a comprehensive framework with which to study working class formation.

### **2.1.2 How to Identify Class Formation**

Most recent debates on class analysis, particularly on the existence of the proletariat and the definition of the working class, incorporate the idea that changes in the

capitalist system give way to change in class structure. According to this idea, due to improvements in capitalist system, and changes in capitalist relations of production, the working class cannot and should not be defined within the boundaries of classical Marxist understanding. These changes have blurred the consciousness of working class, but have created clear class distinctions (Belek: 2007:25). Belek (2007:25) adds that these clear distinctions do not directly affect class consciousness since a one to one correspondence between class structure and class consciousness does not exist.

The relation between structure and consciousness is analogous to the relation between the objective and subjective. In the aggregate, these relationships are also analogous to the relation between structure and agency at a more abstract level. Katznelson uses a different conceptualization that corresponds to these dichotomies. She mentions that, on class formation studies, Marxists generally follow two camps: theory and history. Representative of theory is Althusser and history is Thompson (Katznelson, 1986:12). At the same time, Althusser represents the structural approach to class formation and Thompson represents the relational approach to class formation. Therborn (1983:39) notes that class is both an objective and subjective phenomenon and class formation is a dual process involving those objective and subjective aspects. He explains in detail:

“In its objective aspects, class formation is a socio-economic process accompanying the development of a mode of production: the process of agents moving into, being shaped by, and being distributed between the different kinds of economic practices which constitute the given mode of production. In the case of the working class, this process first of all entails the formation of a mass labour-force for industry and other capitalist enterprises. In its subjective aspect, on the other hand, class formation is an ideological and political process of the tendential unification of class members into forms of common identity and of concerted action as conscious class members in relation to members of other classes. This second constitutive process is manifested in the development of class-specific collective actions and institutions. Here again we part ways with the Thompsonian current by not treating the making of a class as exclusively a process of conscious self-identification. The reason is our suspicion that the capability of a given class depends not only upon its degree of self-identity, but also upon its concrete economic location and the organizational and power resources available to it.” (Therborn, 1983:39).

This quotation clarifies the roles of objectivity and subjectivity in class formation and therefore identifies the roles of class structure and class consciousness in class formation. Orr and McNall (1991:104) mention three components of class formation: structure, class consciousness and organizational capacity in their study on working-class formation in Kansas. However, in Marxist theory, becoming organized and then acting collectively are the indicators of the formation of class consciousness. Following this, class structure and class consciousness can be conceptualized as different levels of class formation process. There are different categorical divisions within Marxism about the relationship between these levels. Some emphasize the structural dimension and perceive a hierarchical relation between the levels. Another group takes into consideration the agent dimension and sees the relation as horizontal. A final category is one that sees reciprocity between structure and consciousness. Katznelson's definition of class formation is an example of the third category. After expressing that class in capitalist societies should be used to mean four connected layers that are "structure, ways of life, dispositions, collective action" (Katznelson, 1986:14); the author claims that class formation can only occur when class exists at all of these levels (Katznelson, 1986:21). In Katznelson's formulation, consciousness and structure are combined, and their combination is used to identify the class phenomenon.

Also in discussion of class formation, Belek (2007:89-90) states two approaches: structural and progressive. This is a generally accepted categorization in the definition of class. Hobsbawm uses structure and class consciousness as two meanings of class (Orr and McNall, 1991: 103). In the structural approach, class is a social entity which is defined according to objective measures. In the progressive approach, brought to the foreground by social historians, class can only be defined when individuals identify themselves as a class departing from their own experiences (Belek, 2007:89-90). In conclusion, two kinds of determination are effective in class formation process:

“The determination, by the relations of production, of the organization of ideological and political relations and the determination, by the totality of these objective relations, of the relations among the concrete men and women who are their carriers, including the relations of struggles” (Prezeworski, 1986:67).

In other words, class structure and class consciousness and/or class struggle are the determinants of class formation.

## **2.2 Analysis of Class Structure or Classes in Economic Sphere**

In class analysis studies, discussions hinge on the fundamental dichotomy between structure and agency. The structure-agency relation stays at the center of most debates in the social sciences. Theoretical positions are more or less determined according to the dominance and significance of either structure or agency. The relation, whether it is mutual, contradictory or dialectical, also appears as an *explanan* in different theoretical positions. As put forth by Dworkin (2006:3):

“Whether derived from Marx’s writings, class theory and analysis in the humanities and the social sciences has been dualistic, founded in the distinction between objective socio-economic structure and forms of consciousness and action shaped by it. Scholars working in various disciplines by no means agreed about the extent to which this material foundation determined consciousness and action.”

Structure-agency relation is a crucial point in discussions about class analysis. Which one takes priority in class formation analysis fuels the debates. Wright (1989:51-52) summarizes the role and extent of class structure in analysis of class formation and presents his views on class structure as such:

“Class structure imposes limits on class formation, class consciousness and class struggle. Class structures constitute the essential qualitative lines of social demarcation in the historical trajectories of social change. The concept of class is a relational concept. The social relations that define classes are intrinsically antagonistic rather than symmetrical. The objective basis of these antagonistic interests is exploitation. The

fundamental basis of exploitation is to be found in the social relations of production.”

For Wright, classes are first and foremost structures which compose social structure, and the structural location of a class indicates the social role of that class. As shown above, Wright, following Poulantzas, sees the structural analysis of class as a pre-determinant of class formation, but not as the sole explanation of class formation. Özuğurlu (2008:41) notes that Wright inherits the conceptual framework of Poulantzas and Carchedi and gives analytical priority to class structure. In this understanding, the socio-economic structure of the society, meaning the sociality of the relations of production for Marxists, locates classes. “Class refers to the objective relations that individuals enter into independent of their will, arising from the social relations of production.” (Dworkin, 2006:25). Structural analysis of class primarily deals with the class positions in the capitalist mode of production. Classes are basically determined according to their places in the economic sphere.

### **2.2.1 Location in the Relations of Production**

According to all different theoretical stands within the Marxist theory, class is primarily an economic category. At the least, the economic sphere is a principal determinant in most Marxist class analysis. Marx does not define class according to income or consumption; rather he defines class according to its bearing with the mode of production (Swingewood, 1975:113). The development of a class of workers is a contingent process shaped by existing relations of production and dependent upon the establishment of new conditions of existence and policies that structure new forms of resource access and dependence (Feldman, 1991: 134). Poulantzas (1978:14-15) defines social classes within this framework as such:

“They are groupings of social agents, defined principally but not exclusively by their place in the production process; i.e in the economic sphere. The economic place of the social agents has a principal role in

determining social classes. Classes are defined according to their places and positions in relations of production.”

Poulantzas’ quotation designates the general framework of the meaning of class as economic categories. Öngen (1996:175) states that there are three generally accepted measures of values used to define classes as economic categories. These are the relation with means of production, locations in the relations of production and the sharing of social production. The author states that Carchedi has added management of the function of collective labor as the fourth measure of value (Öngen, 1996:175). Carchedi (1977:50) defines classes on the pure capitalist economic structure level with four items:

“1. By the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production. 2. By their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production. 3. By their role in the social organization of labor. 4. By the dimensions of share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it.”

In Marxist analysis, relation with means of production indicates the place of a class in the relations of production. Position in the relations of production also determines the social role of a class. Therefore, relation with means of production determines all social roles (Carchedi, 1977:50). Wright (1989:52) lists this characteristic of classes among the conceptualizations of class structure. As mentioned, he states that class structure determines “the essential qualitative lines of social demarcation”; or the mode of production forms the social relations which have their foundation in economic relations (Wright, 1989:52, Swingewood, 1975:13).<sup>6</sup> In *Wage Labor and Capital*, Marx explains this relation by referring to the inner dynamics of capitalist social formation. He affirms that capital is a social relation of production. He exposes capital as a bourgeois relation of production, and

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<sup>6</sup> There is hidden the potential for a social change in this social structure since these relations brings about a social consciousness. Potential for a social change that would be achieved by a revolution is a hardcore topic for Marxism and for all Marxists. The phenomenon of revolution is influential on class consciousness, class struggle and class formation issues.

as a relation of production of bourgeois society. While addressing working class, the author declares that the existence of working class, which possesses nothing but the ability to work, is a necessary presupposition of capital.

The proletariat is the class that sells its labor force to the capitalist during the production process. The proletariat class does not own any means of production, but works up a means of production, and by his manual labor produces both value and product in exchange for salary. As suggested by Marx, the existence of the proletariat is *sine qua non* for the existence of capital. Dahrendorf (1961:4) writes that in addition to Marx and Engels, the economists Ricardo and Ure, and the utopian socialists Saint-Simon and Fourier have brought up the existence of both the “class of capitalist” and its opponent the “laboring class”. In other words, they all refer to the existence of the “rich” as opposed to the “poor class”. The perception of the classes in antagonistic contradiction to one other, is based in the economic relations that bring about the structural locations of the two opposing classes.

### **2.2.2 Proletarianization Process**

Another dimension of structural analysis of class, particularly the working class, is the proletarianization process. The objective criteria regarding the proletarianization process must first be introduced in order to define the working class in economic terms, (Öngen, 1996:179). The proletarianization process indicates the existence of the working class as an economic category; it refers to the dynamics of capitalist mode of production and class relations in this mode of production. According to Tilly (1983:5), “in general, Marx portrayed proletarianization as the forcible wresting of control over the means of production away from artisans and, especially, from peasants.”. Stephen Edgell (1993:5) mentions three different modes of proletarianization: the proletarianization of the society, the proletarianization of work, and the proletarianization of politics. These conceptualizations of proletarianization do not indicate levels of the

proletarianization process. All together, they underline the integrated nature of the process and strengthen the structural base of it. Bearing this in mind, the definition of the proletarianization process can concurrently include these three meanings.

Proletarianization of the society, as derived from most Marxist writings, refers to the subjection of certain classes – non-proletarian populations in Tilly’s (1983:14) terms – to the wage system through change in modes of production and production relations.

“The lower strata of the middle class — the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants — all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.” (Marx and Engels, 1988:62).

Wage-laborers multiplied as the demand for their labor increased in industrial production (Tilly, 1983:4). The change in the population was also consolidated by the migration to urban areas from rural ones. Therefore, urbanization is synonymous with the process of proletarianization, and both emerge after industrialization. This is the first meaning of proletarianization.

Another dimension of the phenomenon is the proletarianization of labor force, which is an outcome of industrial needs. Proletarianization of labor can be observed in parallel with proletarianization of society. The proletarianization process symbolizes the increase in dequalification of labor, the homogenization of labor, and the increase in subordination of a significant part of labor to capital (Öngen, 1994:316). The process also symbolizes an increase in alienation of the worker to his/her work. Öngen (1994:328) maintains that Marx does not see degeneration of work and dequalification of the labor force as a result of the alienating effect of working. The author instead sees it as a problem linked to the difficulties in finding



jobs for most of the population. Industrial production, at least for its earlier periods, did not require skillful work like that of an artisan.

In the history of industrial societies, when the new needs of the labor force of the industrial society combine with the increase in urban population, and also with the amount of people seeking employment; the phenomenon of proletarianization becomes layered. In other words, capitalist economic relations bring about expropriation, and by means of it degeneration of work. Proletarianization of the labor force is also used within Marxist theory to explain changes in the working conditions of the middle classes. In this regard, proletarianization means “losing control of the ultimate end of the work process, a liability to be substituted and a variable degree of exploitation” (Carchedi, 1977:97).

At this juncture, the problem of defining the proletarianization process is linked to “the problem of conceptualizing the overall class structure of capitalist societies” (Singelmann and Wright, 1982:180). The proletarianization process is an inseparable component of class formation of capitalist society. Tilly expresses this reality of the capitalist social formation as such:

“We live in a proletarian world. Depending on how you classify workers in various sorts of socialist states, either a majority or a fat majority of the world’s labor force are people who work for wages using means of production over whose disposition they have little or no control. They are proletarians. In this broad but authentic sense of the word, we are almost all proletarians. Yet quite recently -only a few hundred years ago- very few people anywhere worked for wages. Most people lived in households which exercised considerable control over their means of production, however meager those means. In the past few hundred years, the world has proletarianized.” (Tilly, 1983:1).

When conceptualizing proletarianization, the central process is concentration of capital (Tilly, 1983:33) in Marxist analysis. However, not only Marxists assume a link between capital accumulation and proletarianization. Charles Tilly puts forth that classical economists, particularly Adam Smith, considered a general

association between “capital accumulation” and the proletarianization process or “the growth of the proletariat” (Tilly, 1983:6).

Engels (1987:66) mentions the centralizing tendency of manufacturing in his work *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. This tendency is a generally accepted fact in Marxist theory. The author writes that the “population becomes centralized just as capital does” (1987:66), the population meaning wage workers. It is generally accepted that the concentration of capital on one side naturally brings about the centralization of working class on the other. When proletariat has matured, and become centralized, and workers experience hard-working conditions and poverty, the ground for collective action and political consciousness emerges (Edgell, 1993:7).

The proletariat’s acquisition of political consciousness corresponds to political proletarianization. In other words, political proletarianization is a direct outcome of proletarianization of society and proletarianization of labor force – with its alienating, dequalifying and homogenizing effect. The ground for collective action is prepared structurally. Many Marxists assert that this ground flourishes by means of economic interests.

“Large-scale industry draws together large numbers of workers, unknown to each other and divided amongst themselves. But this estrangement soon passes as workers combine together to defend an interest they do have in common: the maintenance of wages.” (Perkins, 1993:52).

Lockwood’s (1966:206) book, which analyzes class consciousness in connection with structural parameters, repeats that, “the same organization of factory production throws workmen together, physically and socially, and provides the prime basis for their collective action”. First declared by Marx and Engels (1988:63);

“[But] with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows,

and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labor, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level.”

Lembcke connects the issue to power relations between working class and capitalists. He states that;

“Class power is not a zero-sum game. Thus working class deskilling and economic immiseration resulting from capitalist class’s accumulation of wealth does not necessarily mean that the working class is left weaker by the process. Rather, the process that increases capitalist class power through capital accumulation simultaneously and contradictorily collectivizes the working class and thus empowers it, not in material but in social ways.” (Lembcke, 1991:86).

Another feature of political proletarianization is related to the nature of labor in capitalist relations of production. Özüğurlu (2008:64), after claiming that proletarianization can be analyzed with regard to four unequal and combined processes – impoverishment and expropriation on one hand, and capitalization of means of production and intensification on the basis of private property on the other hand – draws attention to two dimensions of proletarianization. These are the expropriation of and the emancipation of labor (Özüğurlu, 2008:65). Emancipation of labor corresponds to the natural dynamics of capitalist relations of production, and stems from economic and political character of capitalist system at the same time. In class relations of capitalist social formation, there is no owner of the laborer, contrasting the servants of feudal and imperial societies. Capital, and capitalist relations of production, frees labor from the “idyllic dependent relations” of feudalism and this makes labor a class in the scene of history (Aronowitz, 1992:21). Normatively, a worker is owner of his labor force and he/she is free to sell it in exchange for wages to whomever he/she wants in the free market. A laborer is assumed to be free in his/her actions in the wage system of capitalist economic relations. Similarly, Saint-Simonians illustrate “the wage earner (ouvrier) is not, like a slave, the direct property of his master; his condition, always

temporary, is determined by a transaction between them” (quoted by McCarthy, 1978:74).

This is the so-called emancipation of labor. However, it is not hard to see, in observation of the economic character of capitalist system, that the worker is not free in his/her relation with the capitalist. Workers are dependent on these transactions for their survival. In this respect, Saint-Simonians add that the transaction is not free on the part of the wage-earner, “since he is compelled to accept it, reduced as he is to obtain the subsistence of each day from the labor of the previous day.” (Quoted by McCarthy, 1978:74). This duality – this feature of free labor – gives birth to the potential historical role of working class advanced within Marxist theory. The tension between the invisible dependence and simultaneous independence of the labor force within capitalism provides the ground for the collective action. Collective action takes place against the invisible collective power of the capitalist class.

### **2.2.3 Labor Process**

The proletariat stands at the core of the Marxist theory because it has the potential of changing the world, and, sooner or later, the potential to emancipate humanity. In the essence of this prediction lie the hidden impacts of the labor process. The labor process hides the potential for the emergence of class struggle, and the rise of class consciousness of the working class. Structure is gained from the organization of work in the factory, where the potential of working class consciousness matures.

It is difficult to separate the categories of class definitions. Within Marxist theory, phenomena that seem to have purely structural impacts can have and usually do have repercussions that extend beyond structure. The labor process is one of those phenomena. It is simultaneously both an outcome of and a determinant of economic structure; it is an imminent component of the productive process. Marxists derive class structure and its dynamics from theories of the labor process, and attribute a

secondary role to the individual mobility patterns related to class consciousness (Burawoy, 1982:18). In a sense, the labor process establishes class structures and it is the form and dynamics of class structure that give rise to class consciousness. Michael Burawoy is one of the pioneers who highlight the labor process and its significance for the class formation process. The labor process is effective in class struggle and in the emergence of class consciousness. Vallas writes that also in the literature on the labor process, working conditions play a predominant role in the development of class consciousness (Vallas, 1987:237). The labor process is not simply an economic process, nor simply a function of economic position for Burawoy (McNall et al. 1991:9). The labor process is political in itself; therefore, it connects to the political consciousness of the working class. The author is against the identification of class formation with the ‘class in itself’ position and the production sphere has its own ideological apparatuses (Özuğurlu, 2008:48). In his book, in which he analyzes “industrial proletariat at point of production”; he puts the relation between economics and politics as such:

“Organization of work has political and ideological effects—that is as men and women transform raw materials into useful things, they also reproduce particular social relations as well as an experience of those relations. Alongside the organization of work- that is labor process- there are distinctive political and ideological apparatuses of production which regulate production relations. The notion of production regime or, more specifically, factory regime embraces both of these dimensions of production politics.” (Burawoy, 1985:7-8).

In this theoretical position on the emergence of class consciousness, “regime production determines whether a class in itself is transformed into a class for itself” and “regime production, which refers to how a person actually works, mediates between the development of class in itself and class for itself” (McNall et al. 1991:9). In this perspective, there is hidden the idea that capital itself and capitalism are political phenomena. The totality of capitalism’s ideological and political function takes its role in the reproduction of labor process and capitalist social formation as a whole. This is why Burawoy “warns” that political, legal and

ideological institutions of capitalism are the guarantor of the external conditions of production (Thomas, 1982:90). Braverman, Edwards and Burawoy focus on the transformation of the labor process coincident with the transformation of the capitalist economy and enterprise, and their model locates the origin of inequality in the labor process (Thomas, 1982:87). Inequality – shaped by the production process, where exploitation matures, as said before – is the basis of contradictory class relations.

Like Burawoy, Braverman stresses the link between the labor process and exploitation. He sees the working class as the raw material of exploitation (Braverman, 2008:345). The working class is defined as the living part of capital. It is the motivating part of the process that gives surplus value to aggregate capital (Braverman, 2008:345). In his book *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, the author states that his focus is on the class in itself, not on class for itself, and the point of discussion is labor under capitalist relations of production (Braverman, 2008:56, 76). The author also writes that the primary need while studying class formation is to draw a picture of the existing form of the working class, or a picture of the shape given to the working class by the capital accumulation process (Braverman, 2008:56). The existing form of working class is shaped by the atmosphere where the capital accumulation process takes place: the factory. In Braverman's theory, any manufacture is in the domain of the labor and capital polarization. This polarized opposition extends systematically to the national and international levels (Braverman, 2008:345). Braverman attributes much significance and value to the production process and labor process as a part of class formation process and views these processes as social relations. In his article "*Working Class Formation of United States*", he argues that what makes people a part of working class is not the phenomenon of working, but certain relationships workers get involved in by working. In other words, being a worker is consequence of a social relationship (Braverman, 2008:425). Also for Poulantzas (1978:232), the process of production is a basic determinant of capitalist relations and/or 'capitalist socialization of labor'. In his formulation, the "production process is defined not by technological factors,

but by the relationships between agents and the means of labor, and hence between the agents themselves” (1978:20). His focus is on the unity of the labor process, the forces of production, and the relations of production (Poulantzas, 1978:20). At the same time, the author argues that –relations of production dominate the labor process (1978: 21).

The capitalist class is the owner of the means of production and these relations of production result in contradictory interests between these two classes. This tension is not a simple contradiction for Marx himself and for Marxists. Over and above, it is a war, and the internal dynamics of capitalist system lay the groundwork for the victory of the working class. This was first declared by Marx and Engels (1988: 66) in 1848 in their famous and impressive work, “*Manifesto of the Communist Party*”. This process had been anticipated as such:

“The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class are the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labor. Wage-labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.”

In Orthodox Marxist theory; capitalism, first as an economic system and second as a political and social system, is sentenced to termination by revolution. It is the history-making task of the proletariat to manage this revolution, and to establish a socialist society. The place of the working class in the capitalist economy, and its position in relations of production, determine this historical task. This is why Marxism attributes a privileged position to the proletariat and identifies socialism as the ideology of the working class.

The relationship between socialist ideology and the working class has been a controversial issue for those studying the working class. An ideal proletarian is envisaged as a person equipped with class consciousness that addresses socialism and revolution. However, this may not be the case in reality. This supposition is an abstraction and it addresses an ideal type. “Class consciousness” stands at the center of these controversies. These discussions involve both definition of and determination of class consciousness as well as its emergence or achievement.

### **2.3 Analysis of Class Consciousness or Classes in Struggle**

As mentioned before, for Marxism, the history of all societies up to the present – meaning the capitalist age – is the history of class struggles. Class struggle is the other aspect, and under certain conditions, the more crucial aspect of the class formation process. In another view, the relationship between class formation and class struggle is viewed as reciprocal. According to this viewpoint, classes should not and cannot be defined external to class struggle. Struggle is an integral part of class formation process (Wacquant, 1991: 42). Actually, both analyses and theories of Marxism define of the notion class struggle as more or less the same with the one just stated. The below quotation presents a general approach to relation between class structure and class struggle:

“Class structure is important because it sets objective limits to the historical development of class struggles. /... / Class struggles on the other hand, can also affect class structure because it simultaneously “shapes and realigns the internal relations within classes and the relation between them. ... In this sense, and to this extent, classes possess an inherently contingent historicity. They are determined by their place in a historically specific ensemble of production relations and by their self-activity, which constitutes and reconstitutes these relations and their place within them” (Zeitlin, quoted by Mcnall et al. 1991:3- 4).

The proletariat is a product of the capitalist age with a different capacity and role from previous subordinate classes. In its struggle against the bourgeoisie, or against capital, the proletariat has the potential to overthrow the dominant class:



“It is the class that suffers most from the alienated conditions and social misery of existing conditions; and it is also the class, which is, by virtue of the potential it possesses to abolish those conditions in and through its own act of self-liberation, destined to assume the political leadership of society previously exercised by the bourgeoisie” (Perkins, 1993:35).

Class consciousness is a feature that distinguishes the proletarian class from other classes, for example, the peasantry. This distinguishing feature is a central component of Marx’s analysis of capitalist society. The idea and development of a “class for itself” is a consequence of capitalist relations of production. For instance, the peasantry form a class – a class in itself – based upon its relationship to the means of production. However, these objective relations do not give the capacity for peasantry to be “a class for itself” (Dworkin, 2006:29). Class consciousness is commonly exemplified by the consciousness of the proletariat, which allows the class to manage a revolutionary role. Class consciousness is a significant part of Marxist theory similar to the notion of the proletariat. It is a marker in the class formation process of the proletariat. Perkins (1993:11) writes on the relationship between the role of the proletariat and the consciousness of that proletariat. The relationship is a mediating category between structure and agency and the development of class consciousness is the determining element in whether or not capitalism is going to be overthrown.

With reference to the above categorizations of Belek, those approaching the class as progressive phenomenon, namely social historians such as Hobsbawm and Thompson, agree that “class struggles [are] rooted in objective class relations”, but they add that they do not intend a certain form of class consciousness (Dworkin, 2006: 55). Even though approaches to class formation process are classified according to the highlighted criterion, it is agreed that structure and consciousness are mutually related parts of the discussions on class formation. Katznelson (1986:6) writes that in most of the class studies, class ideas, organizations and activity are to be inferred from class structure. The author adds that:

“The essentialist assumption that classes ‘in themselves’ will indeed must, act ‘for themselves’ at some moment is rarely stated in such a direct, old-fashioned way, but it continues more loosely and implicitly to underpin much of the theoretical debate about classifications.”

Marx’s usage of “class in itself” and “class for itself” is the pivotal point where discussions on class analysis or particularly on class formation intersect. Marx states his ideas on this matter in his book *Poverty of Philosophy* (1995:189):

“The economic conditions have in the first place transformed the mass of the people of a country into wage-workers. The domination of capital has created for this mass a common situation with common interests. Thus, this mass is already a class as opposed to capital, **but not yet for itself**. In the struggle, of which we have only noted some phases, this mass unites; it is constituted as a class for itself. The interests which it defends are the interests of its class. But the struggle between class and class is a political struggle.”

While the structure of the working class implies class in itself, consciousness of the class implies class for itself in the classical formulation. Although Katznelson shows it to be classical, this distinction is the basis of class formation studies. The division between class in itself and class for itself is not explicit or clear cut. More correctly, the two concepts are reciprocally related, they are not independent from each other. Therefore, discussions on struggle and consciousness may include many or few references to structure.

When considering definition of class, the interconnectedness of the concepts of class structure, class struggle and class formation is apparent. It is generally unclear which concept should be prioritized. Indeed, no ranking among concepts exists in Marxist theory, except for the historical significance given to a certain class: the proletariat class in the age of capitalism. Classes first come into being in production relations. The existence of the proletariat is dependent upon the capitalist means of production and its location in capitalist production relations. However, what makes the proletariat a proletariat, according to Marxism, is not its location in economic relations, but rather its social position that extends beyond production relations and

the division of labor. As stressed by Prezeworski, economic relations derived from production in the labor process generally unite with relations in other areas. This unity then may give rise to political and ideological forms of struggle (quoted by Öngen, 1996:249). This relation can also be described from the other side:

“...The underlying structure of class relations shapes the overall pattern of class consciousness. While the overall patterning of consciousness in a given society and the nature of the class coalitions that are built upon those class relations are shaped by the organizational and political practices that characterize the history of class struggle”. (Wright, 1989: 40).

As seen, class consciousness is bounded to the class relations and both of them are enclosed by class struggle.

### **2.3.1 Approaches to Class Consciousness**

Working class consciousness is not the consciousness of individual worker, but rather the collective consciousness of the working class. Indeed, within the framework of Marxist theory, regardless of the degree of consciousness, one can only begin to identify consciousness of the working class when workers begin to behave or act collectively. For some theorists, collectivity is seen as a necessary, but insufficient condition. Marx claimed in some of his writings that “the working class is revolutionary or is nothing” (quoted by Perkins, 1993:12). While some Marxists follow in this line, others see it as a highly idealist and reductive conceptualization. They then attempt to create new perceptions of class consciousness, or to add new dimensions to class consciousness.

Weberians also deal with the issue of consciousness. Weber links the emergence of class consciousness to certain conditions similar to the structuralist Marxists’ approach to class consciousness. For Weber, the emergence of class consciousness is possible when the class enemy is a directly visible group in the economic condition of capitalism, when people in the same class situation are large in number, when the ground for organization – large scale factories – is ready, and

when there is leadership motivating the class for achievement of their goals, (Giddens, 1971:165-166).

Giddens mentions the views of Aron on class and class consciousness of the working class, which differs from the Marxist view on working class. For Aron, Giddens states, the working class does not manifest class consciousness. However, Aron believes that classes gain importance for society when they form unified group consciousness (Giddens, 1981:62). It is important to mention this view because it supports the understanding that approximates class to class consciousness. Prezeworski (1986:51) is another scholar who believes that “one way or another, sooner or later, objective class relations spontaneously find expression at the level of political activity and consciousness”. He does not equalize class consciousness with class; however, he sees structural conditions as a prerequisite to emergence of class consciousness. The author’s main emphasis is on class struggle in the class formation process. Generally, there is a compromise on the role of structural conditions in the development of class consciousness; however, what usually changes is the content of class consciousness.

According to Mill, there must be three conditions for the existence of class consciousness: A person has to have a rational awareness of his/her class interests and be loyal to these interests. At the same time, they must be aware of the interests of other classes so that they can be neglected and more importantly – for the case of working class – they must to be ready to act collectively to achieve their class interests (quoted by Belek, 2007:72). Ollman writes that achieving class consciousness means recognition of belonging to a group whose members are subject to the same material conditions, and so have the same interests. Recognizing those interests correctly, and recognizing the social and economic conditions shaping those interests, indicates the emergence of class consciousness. Ollman (1972) defines the process leading to ‘class consciousness’ in various steps:

“First, workers must recognize that they have interests. Second, they must be able to see their interests as individuals in their interests as members of a

class. Third, they must be able to distinguish what Marx considers their main interests as workers from other less important economic interests. Fourth, they must believe that their class interests come prior to their interests as members of a particular nation, religion, race, etc. Fifth, they must truly hate their capitalist exploiters. Sixth, they must have an idea, however vague, that their situation could be qualitatively improved. Seventh, they must believe that they themselves, through some means or other, can help bring about this improvement. Eighth, they must believe that Marx's strategy, or that advocated by Marxist leaders, offers the best means for achieving their aims.”

Interests may be short-term or long-term interests. In some perspectives on working class consciousness, the level of class consciousness is determined according to the awareness of short-term or long-term interests. Many different theorists agree with the realistic assessment that socialism is the long-term interest of proletariat and socialist consciousness is equal to class consciousness.

### **2.3.2 Class Interest(s) and Class Consciousness**

The definition of class consciousness indicates class interest. Consciousness is being aware of one's own interests. Class or class consciousness refers to being aware of class interests as a whole. Some also typologize class consciousness. Landecker lists three types: class status consciousness, class structure consciousness and class interest consciousness. Class interest consciousness means identification of personal interests with class interests, and distinguishing between different interests of different classes. He adds that class conflict is a result of those conflicting class interests (Landecker, 1963:221). In Marxist class understanding, class interest is a structural notion and class consciousness is conceptualized in a manner to cover all of the aforementioned types. Moreover, the role of class interest is very crucial in working class consciousness because its ultimate interest, socialism, aims toward historical change. Kautsky, in his monograph called “*The Class Struggle*”, stresses being aware of group interests. He writes that:

“The sense of conscious strength and the spirit of resistance develop themselves among the working proletariat only after it has awakened to

the understanding of the community of interests that binds its members, and of the solidarity of its ranks.” (Kautsky, 1899:10).

Since the determination of working class is not simply an economic phenomenon, and because it extends to ideological, political and cultural spheres, it is difficult to absolutely or definitively define class interest. Socialism is accepted as the long-term and only real interest of the proletariat, and is assumed to be the ultimate purpose of working class struggle. Bottomore, after touching on the current critiques and questions regarding the affinity between the working class and socialism, states that the basis of organic proximity between proletariat and socialism, or the ground that feeds the expectation of growth of consciousness, stem from the revolutionary conflicts in Europe in the year 1848 (Bottomore, 1991:11). The rise of the labor movement in that period has provided historical evidence for the improvement of working class consciousness.

Development of the labor movement can be a consequence of organized action by the working class. Being organized and acting collectively are fundamental processes in the development of proletarian consciousness; at the same time they are indicators of class consciousness. Hobsbawm underlines the importance of organization as “an essential complement of working class consciousness”, adding that socialist consciousness is achieved by organization (quoted by Strikwerda, 1991:185; Dworkin, 2006:55). Strikwerda (1991:199) adds that organizations such as cooperatives, mutual insurance societies and labor unions also feed socialist organizations. In conclusion, organization first gives way to the emergence of class consciousness and this working class consciousness has a high potential of becoming socialist consciousness. Moreover, Kautsky sees the nucleus of socialism in the organization of labor. He claims that:

“Their [workers] labor itself brings home to them the power of union, and develops among them the sense of voluntary and gladsome discipline both of which are the conditions precedent for socialist production, and are likewise the conditions precedent for the successful struggle of the

proletariat against the system of exploitation that prevails under capitalist production.” (Kautsky, 1899:11).

One important question that has always been at the center of the evaluation of class consciousness, is how to identify the relation between socialist and/or revolutionary consciousness and working class consciousness. At this point, the debate on false consciousness appears. Steinberg (1983:4-5) states two approaches regarding this issue: first, the Leninist and Lukacsian tradition, and second, humanistic Marxism. He suggests that in the former approach, class consciousness is formulated as a “unique determined ideology” and can be realized in revolutionary conflict with the role of vanguard party of the working class (Steinberg, 1983:4).

In the humanistic approach, class consciousness is viewed as an “open-ended process”. Through developing their consciousness, workers make themselves a class in this process (Steinberg, 1983:5). Social historians, particularly the English social historians are the representatives of the second approach. A striking feature of these theorists is that they are identified as, and self-identify as socialists. Their main consideration is “the particular historical conditions of class formation and conflict and partial autonomy of people in making history rather than being solely a midwife, and the open-endedness of the historical process (Steinberg, 1983:4). Class consciousness is also viewed as a process in this understanding, different from the approach seeing class consciousness as an object (Steinberg, 1983:4).

Gramsci provides a different conceptualization of class consciousness. His main contribution to discussions on class formation and class consciousness formation issues was his conceptualization of “moments”. We have seen that class consciousness was identified with revolutionary consciousness by Marx and Engels and chiefly by Lenin and Lukacs. In the same line, Gramsci conceptualizes consciousness in connection with the transformation of society, or the construction of counter-hegemony against the existing bourgeois order of the society. Moments

are the phases of the counter-hegemony formation. Counter-hegemony is possible with workers' consciousness formation. The first moment is the economic corporate moment, the second is the moment of economic class consciousness, and the third moment is the political moment (Yetiş, 1999: 64). Gramsci (1988:204) defines moments as such:

“A subsequent moment is the relation of political forces; in other words, an evaluation of the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organization attained by the various social groups. This moment can in its turn be analyzed and differentiated into various levels, corresponding to the various moments of collective political consciousness, as they have manifested themselves in history up till now. **The first and most elementary of these is the economic-corporate level**, [in which] a tradesman feels obliged to stand by another tradesman, a manufacturer by another manufacturer, etc., but the tradesman does not yet feel solidarity with the manufacturer; in other words, the members of the professional group are conscious of its unity and homogeneity, and of the need to organize it, but in the case of the wider social group this is not yet so. **A second moment** is that in which consciousness is reached of the solidarity of interests among all the members of the social group – but still in the purely economic field... **A third moment** is that in which one becomes aware that one's own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the merely economic group, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups. This is the most purely political phase, and marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures; it is the phase ... bringing about not only a union of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a “universal” plane, ...”

Belek (2007:56) states that the working class has the capacity to display its class interests as the general interests of the society. One of the concrete indicators of class consciousness is the capability to generalize. Gramsci conceptualizes the relation between class interests and class consciousness in “moments”. Gramsci makes a new formulation of transition from class in itself to class for itself, similar to Lenin's differentiation between trade union consciousness and political consciousness. Moments compose the phases of political consciousness formation; they are at the same time forms of class



consciousness. Considering this, it can be argued that Gramsci remains in the midst of Leninist and Thompsonian conceptualization of class consciousness.

Yetiş (1999:61) states that, according to the revolutionary Marxist approach, including Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Gramsci, trade unions are the necessary organizations of class struggle; however, they are insufficient for the realization of the ultimate target for workers in class struggle – classless society. In the trade union movement, one frequently comes across economic-corporatist tendencies (Yetiş, 1999:65). Yetiş (1999:65) argues that when class consciousness remains at this economic-corporate model, reproduction of the bourgeois hegemony would be problem-free. He (1999:75) adds that the economical-trade unionist struggle can gain a political outlook compatible with the third moment when it reconnects the politics of the whole social structure. Gramsci's conceptualization of moments more easily presents the relation between the objective and subjective aspects of class consciousness formation processes. Types of moments are defined with reference to different experiences of the working class and through these experiences workers reach political consciousness and gain the capacity to create counter-hegemony.

### **2.3.3 Class Struggle, Experience and Class Consciousness**

There is an obvious relation between class struggle and class consciousness in all branches of Marxism, determinist or humanist, and in structural or relational approaches to class. Wood states that class as a relation means that contradictions and conflicts account for social and historical processes; Thompson has shed light on the dimension of process (Wood, 1995:77). Thompson sustains the discussion on class consciousness from relations of production to cultural, political and social spheres within a historical context. Class and class consciousness do not remain abstract conceptualizations in this kind of view. Richard Tilly (1968: 291) suggests

that Thompson's achievement is giving noneconomic aspects of class consciousness a palpable, concrete form.

“In Thompson's treatment, political activism, religious movements, and related ideologies are not derivative phenomena explicable directly in terms of society's "economic substructure" but possess their own historical timetables and are best treated as independent variables in the social process.”

In his work, *“The making of the English working class”*, Thompson is one of the architects defining class in the context of creation, of process, and of experience. “Experience” is the cornerstone in this type of class understanding and class definition. A class creates itself through its experiences, according to Thompson. These experiences are either part of the production process, part of the relations of production or part of political action. The experiences may be directly or indirectly-related to components of class struggle. Indeed, they are inherent to class struggle. Seeing class from a relational viewpoint means that class struggle is seen as a determinant of class. Relation to the proletariat defines the bourgeoisie under capitalist production relations, in capitalist social formation, while the proletariat is defined by its antagonistic struggle to counter the bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie politics. Classes are not predefined or fixed entities in this perception of class; instead, they come into being through class struggles. Thompson explains:

“Classes do not exist as separate entities, look around, find an enemy class, and then start to struggle. On the contrary, people find themselves in a society structured in determined ways (crucially, but not exclusively, in productive relations), they experience exploitation (or the need to maintain power over those whom they exploit), they identify points of antagonistic interest, they commence to struggle around these issues and in the process of struggling they discover themselves as classes, they come to know this discovery as class-consciousness. Class and class-consciousness are always the last, not the first, stage in the real historical process.” (Thompson, 1978:149).

Thompson's concept of experience is a component of class struggle; therefore, he gives analytical priority to the class struggle (Özuğurlu, 2002:43). Within this

analytical framework, he attempts to analyze the working class historically in economic, cultural and political realms. Thompson (1978:147) repeats his understanding of class in his famous book in an article to make his views clear:

“Class, in my own usage, is a historical category: that is, it is derived from the observation of the social process over time. We know about class because people have repeatedly behaved in class ways; these historical events disclose regularities of response to analogous situations, and at a certain stage (the ‘mature’ formations of class) we observe the creation of institutions, and of a culture with class notations, which admits of transnational comparisons. We theorize this evidence as a general theory of class and of class formation: we expect to find certain regularities, ‘stages’ of development, etc.”

In Thompson’s analysis of class formation, class actors, or actors that account for a class, gain significance as they make themselves a class through their own experiences. These experiences raise awareness of class and so all experience implies the existence of class for Thompson. Class consciousness is not an *a priori* phenomenon; it can change and improve through time. As a Marxist and socialist historian, Thompson values the consciousness of working class but he is against the *a priori* definition of class. In other words, “no actual class formation in history is any truer or more real than any other, and class defines itself as, in fact, it eventuates” (Thompson, 1978:150). The author argues that production relations largely determine class experience. These are production relations that people either enter into or that they were born into outside of their will. He adds that class consciousness is the handling of traditions, value systems, ideas and institutionalized forms of class experiences in cultural terms (Thompson, 2002:40).

#### **2.3.4 Schools of Class Struggle: Strikes**

The basic premise of Marxism is that trade unions and collective actions of the proletariat, specifically strikes, are components and indicators of workers’ class consciousness. Marx believed that trade unions provide gains through collective bargaining and striking (Işıklı, 1979: 284). In addition, regarding politics and trade

unions, Marx suggests that political organization of the working class is inevitable, and trade unions are important in contributing to the establishment of political organization and its activities (Işıklı, 1979: 285). A class conscious worker should be a member of a trade union and should not hesitate to go to a strike when necessary. It is expected that a class conscious worker will be aware of the contradictory class interests of the employee and employers. Awareness of this contradictory relationship goes beyond the boundaries of trade unions for Lenin. Lenin (1973) makes a distinction between trade union consciousness and class consciousness. He claims that workers can cultivate only trade union consciousness on their own.

“We have said that there could not be Social-Democratic Consciousness among the workers. It can only be brought to them without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness.” (1973:37)

Trade union consciousness is awareness of the necessity of unionization and struggle against employers within the framework legislation. According to Slaughter, (1975) class consciousness is related with identification of interest, and this consciousness can best be seen in “combinations or trade unions”. Slaughter (1975) also differentiates trade union consciousness from other “levels” of working class consciousness, adding that it does not necessarily facilitate the development of political consciousness. Lenin equates trade union politics with bourgeoisie politics and identifies class consciousness with revolutionary consciousness. Revolutionary consciousness cannot arise among the working class without the influence of socialists. This is why Lenin differentiates between trade union consciousness and political consciousness. This phenomenon is not peculiar to Russia.

“In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently from spontaneous growth of a workers movement, but arose rather as a natural and inevitable result of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia.” (Lenin, 1973: 37).

This means that in addition to the daily experiences of workers that hinder the potential of revolutionary class consciousness, there should be an external intervention by socialists for the emergence of class in itself.

Hyman (1971) sees Lenin's position as pessimistic, and Marx and Engels as optimists regarding the role of trade unions in consciousness formation of the working class. The optimistic standpoint sees unions as a stage in the transition from class in itself to class for itself. Unions are schools of class war and strongholds of workers in their struggle against employers for a socialist revolution. On the other hand, Lenin criticizes trade unions that are concerned only economic issues since his main ideological argument depends on the class struggle of the proletariat. The proletariat's class struggle is both economic and political (Hyman, 1971). However, compared to Hyman's categorization, Lenin evaluates strikes more optimistically. Lenin sees strikes as significant in the struggle of the working class. Workers are forced to go on strikes to achieve their demands. This is what gives strikes their significance. Strikes reveal the capacity and potential of workers to fight.

“In time of strike, workers do not think only his/herself; he/she goes on a strike thinking his/her worker friends ... Every strike brings thoughts of socialism and emancipation from the domination of capital to the minds of workers. .... Strikes teach workers to become unionized and to struggle against capitalist only when they are organized.... This is why socialists call strikes **a school of war** by means of which, workers learn to struggle against [their] enemies for the emancipation of all people from the yoke of the capital.” (Lenin, 1975: 165-167).

Still, class consciousness means going beyond economic interests and achieving political and social rights. Furthermore, Lenin pursues a revolutionary road. Class consciousness is directly related to the emancipation of the working class and the whole society through revolution. Revolutionary consciousness is achieved through experiencing class struggle and through the political organization of the proletariat and its leaders: the party. The party stands in the forefront in Leninist tradition, but does not undermine experience. Randive (1984:1-2) claims that for Marx and

Engels “the political party of the working class could not be formed and expanded in isolation from this practical struggle involving the large mass of workers”. Marx believed that political acts should lean upon trade union struggle. He fought against Lassalle, who did not believe in the role of trade unions in the enhancement of the conditions of the workers or the in the emancipations of the working class (Işıklı, 1979: 283). In this sense, Marx and Engels do “link the daily struggle, the struggle of the trade unions and strikes with the struggle for class emancipation” (Randive, 1984:3).

This chapter began with debates on working class and working class formation, and concluded with debates on class consciousness. The idea of class consciousness is filtered out of these debates and categorized. The chapter discusses variations on the Marxist understanding of class consciousness. The chapter discusses the range of understandings from one apex to the other, according to the mainstream separation made by Steinberg, where class consciousness is at one end, a “unique determined ideology”, and, at the other, an “open-ended process”. These are two apexes of the discussed subject.

On one hand, neither of the extreme definitions are chosen over the other in this research. On the other hand, the research will use aspects both of the definitions. The processual approach does not externalize class consciousness as something to be achieved. Defining class consciousness as a unique determined ideology handicaps the concept of the working class by confining it to a particular time, period, place, and to particular circumstances that effect class consciousness formation. This may result in the transcendence of the working class from the social formation that it comes from and undermine the activities of working class. If we were to define class according to its consciousness, we would not be able to refer to the emergence of the working class.

On the other hand, seeing class consciousness as an open-ended process makes the definition of class consciousness particularly amorphous. Regarding the

conceptualization of working class in Marxist theory generally, defining class consciousness as an open-ended process has the potential of breaking off the ties between socialism and working class. A more satisfactory conceptualization of working class consciousness formation seems to be made by the conceptualization of moments. This definition enables evaluation of class consciousness in a certain time period, and also valuation of class consciousness with regard to the dimensions of time and place. Different breaks in the path from class in itself to class for itself correspond to different levels or forms of class consciousness. At the same time, becoming a class for itself still remains a goal for the working class. Marxism expects the proletariat class to become a class for itself from class in itself. Class in itself is the structural situation of the class. Objectively, structure in reality causes class in itself. On the other hand, class for itself refers to a class that is aware of its collective interests as a class and follows them collectively. In conclusion, in the following chapters, this research will present a cross-section of the voyage of the Turkish working class from class in itself to class for itself.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE TRADE UNIONS AND THE WORKING CLASS DURING THE DP PERIOD**

Focus of this chapter is going to be the position and place of the working class during the Democrat Party period. It is mentioned above with reference to Therborn (1983:39) that class formation has two dimensions. In this chapter, structural aspects of the class formation are going to be presented. Working class formation during the DP period is put forth within a socio-economic process. Working class and their basic form of organizations during the period that is trade unions are going to be evaluated within these processes. Class relations, particularly the relations between the DP and the trade unions are going to be taken into consideration as a part of the social, economic and political processes. Structural aspect of class formation is not conceptualized only in terms of mode of production and its repercussions. That is to say, working class will not be evaluated only in relations of production, but the political, ideological, legal and also cultural environment is going to be put forth as a part of the structural side of class formation process. Putting the environment means putting the economic and social conditions of the working class; therefore the developments and changes during the DP period, in particular the developments and changes regarding the working class will be described in this part. To understand the DP period, party's politics and ideology and its difference and/or similarities with its counters, it is necessary to have a historical outlook.



### **3.1 Historical Developments Preceding the Democrat Party Period**

#### **3.1.1 Transition to Multi-Party Period**

1946 is the year that the Single Party Regime ended, and with it, the governance of the Republican People's Party. In 1946, new legal regulations enabled transition to a multi-party regime. The electoral triumph, or electoral success, of the Democrat Party in 1950 election was a striking development after the acceptance of multi-party regime. As a protest to the oppressive governance of the Single Party Regime, people took up the strongest alternative to the RPP – the Democrat Party. According to Keyder (1987:122), the components of different social classes regardless of the awareness of their own class interests composed a resistance, which was based on universal principles, against the authority of bureaucracy. Lewis described the single party period as dictatorship and evaluated the electoral success of the Democrat Party as a democratic triumph. He described the situation of the country under the National Chief as such:

“The strains and stresses of the war years, the burden of mobilization, the universal threat of foreign espionage and infiltration, all reinforced the need for strong government, and lent some color of justification to the repressive measures adopted. Martial law was imposed, the press and publications were more strictly controlled than ever, police surveillance became universal, and an increasingly illiberal attitude to foreigners and to the non-Muslim minorities reached its climax in the discriminatory Capital Levy of 1942” (Lewis, 1951:320-321).

Lewis added that after this period of oppression, a strong and fast struggle for democracy between 1945 and 1950 took place. The results were the democratic elections of 1950 and accomplishment of the Democrat Party (Lewis, 1951:321). In the elections of 14 May 1950, the percentage of participation in voting exceeded 80%. The Democrat Party received 53.35 % of the votes, and had 408 of the 487 seats in the parliament (Eroğul, 2003: 83). This result shows the change of will among people and their will to oppose to the RPP. It is generally accepted that the

DP had taken support mostly from rural areas; however, in their study about social change and electoral behavior Özbudun and Tachau (1975) argue the opposite. Regarding urban and rural development and its link with political behavior, they claim that;

“As for the socioeconomic concomitants of party votes, it has been observed that the Democrat Party (in the 1950s) and the JP vote has consistently been positively correlated with provincial development, while the RPP displayed differential support from the more backward provinces in the early 1950s. Correlations between the RPP vote and provincial development became insignificant in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.” (Özbudun and Tachau, 1975: 474).

Ahmad mentions that historically, opposition is equated with hostility in the political culture of Turkey. Therefore, the Democrats saw their electoral success as a political revolution (Ahmad, 1977:38).<sup>7</sup> People were in need of a new government that could change their harsh life conditions. In this context, the 1950 elections had been the political expression of the people’s dissatisfaction. The Democrat Party was successful in manipulating these conditions and the political atmosphere. The Democrat Party was the product of a common reaction of various social classes and groups in the uneasy atmosphere of war years (Timur, 2003:26). Karpat draws attention to the political and cultural meaning of transition to multi-party regime:

“At the end of the Second World War, the cultural evolution of Turkish society from within, and its interpretation of political concepts, including freedom, had developed to the point of regarding one party rule as oppressive, dictatorial, anti-individualistic, and generally fundamentally contradictory to the political dignity of the individual and to society.” (Karpat, 1957:110)

Karpat argues that the common goal of democracy had motivated the struggle for multi-party system, since the only motivation for it was democracy. It was not a class struggle. Democracy, by accepting the freedom of different groups, appeared as a new solution to absorb the class struggle in society (Karpat, 1957:484-486).

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<sup>7</sup> The electoral triumph of 1950 elections was called “white revolution” by Democrat Party members (Ahmad, 1977:38).

According to Lewis, the most acceptable explanation of the transition to a multi-party system by the RPP was to prevent a possible uprising among people as a result of their harsh conditions. (Lewis, 1951:323). In other words, to overcome “the popular discontent, which had reached a critical level, and to prevent a social explosion”, İsmet İnönü decided to adopt multi-party system (Eroğul, 1987:102). There were external and internal reasons behind this decision.

Dissatisfaction of the people is noteworthy for this study. Historical sociology helps us to hear the voices of the people. Dissatisfaction and seeing the Democrat Party as a solution to this problem shows us the voices of people. Newly emerging entrepreneurs, who accumulated an important amount of wealth during the war, also played a role in this decision (Eroğul, 1987:102, Lewis, 1951:324). The idea that the *etatism* of the early republican period should be returned to, and its form changed, had spread.

After the Second World War the balance of world politics had altered. Amicable relations with Soviet Union were a primary matter of Turkish foreign policy in pre-war era. After the War the preference of the government was to join the Western World, a goal in line with the westernization principle of Turkish Republic (Eroğul, 1987:103). Europe’s experience with fascism, and the defeat of fascism after the Second World War, led to the embracement of democracy by Western countries. This put international pressure on the Single Party Regime of Turkey. Turkey had turned its face to Western countries, moreover, to the new capitalist power of the world: the United States of America. These developments began to shape the economic, social and political destiny of the country and its people. Consequently, the transition to multi-party regime and the election of the Democrat Party is accepted as a turning point for the history of Turkish Politics.

The steps for liberalization of foreign trade, industrialization for export to foreign markets, and the economic restructuring through foreign capital investment had been taken under the government of İsmet İnönü. The Democrat Party raised these

arrangements (Boratav, 2008:94-95). These arrangements supported the growing commercial bourgeoisie, which had gained wealth during the War. This new group established a support base for the Democrat Party. The War years polarized wealth on one side and increasing poverty on the other side. While the bourgeoisie was becoming increasingly rich, the working classes (workers and peasants) were becoming impoverished. Income per capita had decreased 25% in comparison with the pre-War period (Yerasimos, 1976:1340). At the end of the Second World War, capital invisibly accumulated in some hands but not others, bringing about “low living standards of the wage and salary earners and peasants” (Karpat, 1957:49). Therefore, Şişmanov (1978:147) defined the period of 1946-50 in Turkey as the dictatorship of big landowners and the bourgeoisie class.

Dissatisfaction of the people from the regime was an objective reality. Dissatisfaction diffused among different groups of people, especially among the working class and peasants. Nacar, in her thesis on the working class in the period of Second World War, points out that low living standards and working conditions for workers caused discontent. Here is a brief description of those conditions:

“Hard hit by working conditions and low wage levels, working people faced great difficulties meeting their needs. Meeting accommodation, food, health and education was not an easy task. A considerable number of people had to spend nights on the streets, in public baths, or their worksites; search for spoiled foods in open markets and garbage dumps; develop substitutes for scarcely found foods and gather grasses. To contribute to the family budget, thousands of school age children work in different sectors as artisans, factory workers or day laborers” (Nacar, 2004:92).

The National Law of Protection in 1940 worsened the working conditions. This law eliminated some basic rights of workers that were given in 1936. Workers’ weekly holidays were abolished and some regulations protecting women and children in employment were suspended (Yerasimos, 1976:1320; Timur, 1997:181; Işık, 1995:105). This law allowed a great extent of government intervention in economic life; however, not for protection (Timur, 1997:177). For example, from the articles of the law: “Workers and servant cannot quit [from] their jobs without an excuse.

They can be labored by force against [a] normal remuneration. If it is seen [as] necessary work hours can be augmented three hours a day. The sentences of Labour Law considering women and children are not applied in industrial enterprises.” (Timur, 1997:178). This Law obviously worsened the conditions of workers.

The philosophy of the National Law of Protection, which cared for employers, continued to exist in the coming era. Capital accumulation in the private sector, as a result of *etatist* politics, high inflation, economic reduction and the black market opened the gap between different classes. Deprived from those conditions, people had begun to seek for change. Populism depending on a classless, unprivileged and fused mass, and *etatism*, were now impossible to connect (Akin, 2004:29). By the 1940s, class divisions were obvious in Turkish society (Makal, 2002:43).

Taking into account these facts, it is not surprising that these circumstances gave way to polarization within the society and had created complaints and new demands. People began to express their complaints and demands differently. One of the ways among these is through the trade union press that provides the data for evaluation in the last part of the study. Nacar’s thesis underlines the important point that steps toward democracy were not only a result of creating a market society and industrialization, increasing the number of industrial workers, but also a solution to the increasing demands and complaints of workers being expressed in different ways (Nacar, 2004:93). The working class began to foreshadow its existence as a social actor in the social and political scene of the country with a well-coordinated expression:

“The process of social and economic development was creating new groups which could potentially become part of the political spectrum. One such group was labor. According to the 1945 census some 674,000 were employed in industries and handicrafts and about 139,000 more in transportation and communication activities. Perhaps half of these were workers in large, mass-production industries. They were not allowed to organize, on the grounds that such organizations would have leftist tendencies, but trade union consciousness grew.” (Weiker, 1973:287).

This fact is observable in the promises of two major parties, the Democrat Party and the Republican People's Party, regarding the working class. Social existence of the workers is also observable in the legal regulations considering work life and workers. The working class appeared as a social actor and began to be taken very seriously by the government and political parties. Establishment of the Ministry of Labor, Workers Insurance Association (İşçi Sigortaları Kurumu-İSK), and the Employment Association (İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu) are among those arrangements (Makal, 2007:232).<sup>8</sup> Sülker (2004:54) claims that, suffering of industrial workers under intensified exploitation, pessimism of the working classes, and bad conditions necessitated the establishment of a ministry dealing with work relations. Working class survival became very important, as did finding solutions to workers' deteriorating situations.

In this period, labor disputes between workers and the government, were viewed as a solution to the work problems. Koçak (2009: 150) writes that the social policy literature from the 1950-1960 period highlights the increase in the number of labor disputes after the DP's coming into power. It is pointed out that, although the percentage of wage increase was not high enough, labor disputes provided lots of gains for workers and trade unions tended to stir disputes (Tuna quoted by Koçak, 2009:150). By means of those labor disputes, workers learned to use the means they have in their relation with employers, their experience provided them self-confidence and improved their capacity to change (Koçak, 2009: 158). It seems that workers found opportunity to make changes in their at least economic conditions and tried to extend the borders of their rights.

The crucial step towards the multi-party system was taken by the Amendment in Law of Association in 5 June 1946. The Law of Association with the law No. 3512, dated 1938, prohibited the foundation of associations based on class. This article of the law was abated in 1946 (Tanör, 2004:347 and Gülmez, 1995:206). Political

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<sup>8</sup> Other laws Makal mentions are: İş Kazaları ile Meslek Hastalıkları ve Analık Sigortaları Hakkında Kanun (1945), İhtiyarlık Sigortası Kanunu (1949), Hastalık ve Analık Sigortası Kanunu (1950). (Makal, 2007:233).

parties, and more importantly, trade unions began to be established after these legal regulations. A door was opened for politicization of the people. As a proof of the increasing interest of people in public affairs, Karpas (1957:490) shows that newspaper circulation increased more than 300 percent starting from 1946. Weiker (1973:286) maintains that over 1,300 voluntary associations existed in Turkey by 1946. However, the scope of class-based organizations were kept under control by other legislation like Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Criminal Code (Tanör, 2004:347-348). The Trade Unions Law dated 1947 was also formulated with the same aim. Nevertheless, starting from June 1946, workers, who had been subjected to low wages, and dismal living and working conditions, showed great interest in trade unions (*Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, 1988:1937). Indeed, the Turkish working class, for a short time, experienced independent trade unions after 1946 amendments. This experience went down in history as the Trade Unionism of 1946 (1946 Sendikacılığı).

### **3.1.2 Trade Unionism of 1946**

After class-based organizations became legal, the way opened for the establishment of trade unions. The year 1946 provided some relief for the social opposition in the country and 1946 Trade Unionism for the workers. In 1946, with intensification of political activities, the unionist movement skipped forward (Şişmanov, 1978:151). In cities that workers were concentrated in, like İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Zonguldak, Kocaeli, Samsun, Adana, Bursa, Kayseri, Trabzon, Eskişehir, Sivas and Malatya, trade unions were established (Şişmanov, 1978:151). From their very emergence as a class, workers, yet as a class in itself, were subjected to oppression. Martial Law and prohibition of trade unionization were the elements of oppression in the 1940s. Martial Law was accepted on 2 May and remained until 1947 in İstanbul, Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ and Çanakkale. Martial law played a significant role in preventing organization of the working class and class struggle (*Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, 1988: 1936). The law limited “the rights of thinking, meeting and demonstration, getting organized, press and publication” and

it “played a determining role in making the political and police pressure on the working class and intellectuals more intense.” (Kocabaş, 2006:50).

In these circumstances, people had widely adopted the opportunity for opposition (Eroğul, 2003:43). In the attempts to establish a multi-party system, different political parties were established. Among them were socialist and leftist parties. Tunçay states that after the recognition of multi-party system, nine leftist political parties were established (Tunçay quoted by Gökmen, 1998:168). From those nine parties, the Turkish Socialist Party (Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi) and the Turkish Socialist Workers and Peasants Party (Türkiye Sosyalist Köylü ve Emekçi Partisi) created the so-called 1946 Trade Unionism. The main feature of 1946 trade unionism was the organic relations between the two parties and some trade unions.

This period is an example of socialist trade unionism or trade unionism framed by socialist consciousness. Öztürk (2007) argues that in a limited time period, 1946 Trade Unionism had extensively organized the working class in a swift manner. The motive behind 1946 Trade Unionism was the belief that trade unions were schools of class struggle for the workers. This belief is compatible with the general approach of Marx and Engels on the role of trade unions, and in particular the views of Hobsbawm. Indeed, Esat Adil, the chairman of TSP, saw trade unions as a substitution for the political party of the working class given the current conditions of the country (Öztürk, 2007:52). This perspective also makes 1946 Trade Unionism unique in the history of Turkish trade unionism.

For TSEKP, worker unions must be regarded as not only economic entities but also as social entities. Besides dealing with the economic interests of workers, such as working hours, and wages, unions should deal with the daily life of the workers, their culture and education (Öztürk, 2007:59). Based on these principles, supporters of these parties established trade unions and tried to carry socialist consciousness to the workers. Workers responded to these attempts. In this period, the working class met with its universal ideology – socialism – at the level of trade unionism. The life



of trade unionism, which was independent from state and system parties (Özbey, 2001:24), had not been so long. In December 1946, those parties and trade unions of those parties were closed, being accused of participating in political activities perceived harmful by the government (Özbey, 2001:24). The Martial Law Command declared the reason of closure of the parties and unions as “being founded undercover and trying to establish the primacy of one class over others and also disrupting the existing economic and social rules of the country” (*Vatan*, December 17, 1946 quoted by Öztürk, 2007:110).

After this experience the RPP took the matter of worker movement seriously and subsequently decided to take the control of trade unions. Establishment of nationalist and anti-communist trade unions was the main motivation in the following periods. On 20 February 1947, Trade Unions Law with Law No. 5018 was passed (Tokol, 1994:23; Özbey, 2001:25).

### **3.1.3 Trade Unions Law of 1947**

The main rationale of the Trade Unions Law of 1947 was to prevent the integration of the working class and the workers movement with the socialist movement and taking them under the guidance of the RPP (Güzel, 1996:155). 1946’s ‘bad experiences’ with trade unions for the government greatly shaped the content of the new law. During discussions in the Parliament on the Bill on Trade Unions and Employer’s Unions and Confederation, and Reports of Internal Affairs, Justice and Labour Commissions; Diyarbakır deputy Vedat Dicleli (1947: 296) expressed the aim of the law. First, he drew a general picture of the working class, respondents of the law, in Turkey at the moment:

A working class had come into being as a normal and essential consequence of industrialization. Today, number of workers had reached an undisdainable quantity. Number of workers approximates to 300.000 and with their families they are 1.5 million people; therefore we are discussing on this bill to make them happier all aspects of their lives, to make them organized and to maintain their condition against employers.”

He adds:

“... Unless we make this bill a law and arrange the relations of workers and employers, we will lay the groundwork for foreign influences and for the rise of lots of dangers. Trade unions that we will to establish aim to rescue workers from being part of political influences and aim to provide the mutual aid among them.” (1947: 297).

Discussions on the bill gave signals of the intention from enactment of this law. Minister of Labor, Dr. Sadi Irmak, (1947:300) in his speech at the session on this bill, said that increasing number of workers forced the organization of workers for representation of their class or occupational interests. He added that since the organizations established for this necessity began to back out of their duties, a rearrangement of workers' organizations appeared was required for the sake of labor life. With little objection to the law's prohibition of strikes, the bill on Trade Unions was discussed and approved by the assembly. Trade unions were going to be established without their basic universal tool, without a weapon of struggle against employers because of this law.

Law stated that trade unions could be closed by court decision in certain cases. In line with the aims of the government, regulation left a wide scope for these cases in order for the government to maintain control over trade unions. Article 7 of the law stated that;

“When acted contrary to the conditions written in the first paragraph of the first article and the second paragraph of the second article or to the judgments in the fifth and sixth articles or when members of Executive Committee and administrators in trade unions encouraged members for strike and lock-outs that are crimes according to labor law and attempted those activities; without prejudice to the criminal provisions required by these activities, trade union is closed temporarily or permanently by court decision from three months to one year.”(1947: 319-324).

The first and second articles stated the form of trade unions and designated their tasks. According to the first article, trade unions were established for mutual aid,

cooperation among workers, declaring common goals, and representation. The second article added that non-workers could not establish unions or become member of a trade union. Judgments in the fifth article banned union involvement in political activities, formulated trade unions as nationalist institutions, and banned acting against national interests. The fifth article also banned joining international unions without the permission of Council of Ministers. Under the sixth article of the Law, using income for objectives outside those determined by law and statute was forbidden (1947: 316-324).

The Law contained indefinite and arbitrary judgments, including ‘acting against national interests’. This notion vague, leaving the destiny of trade unions to the will and under the perception of state authorities. Trade unions were transformed into a form bound to the state and highly controlled by state. Trade unions were deprived of the right for collective bargaining or collective agreements. Unions were only allowed to participate in arbitration committees to express ideas on behalf of workers. This is why 1947 Trade Unionism does not cohere with universally attributed historical and social responsibilities of trade unions (Işık, 1995:117).

Despite the narrow and shallow content of trade unionization, after the 1947 Law more workers began to become members of trade unions. The number of workers increased and with the acceptance of Trade Union Law some preferred to organize in trade unions (Karpat, 1957:491). After the adoption of the Trade Unions Law on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1947, 73 trade unions, 4 employers unions, and 1 trade union alliance were established throughout 1948 (İşçi Sendikaları Birliği) (Sülker, 2004:103). Workers began to extend their demands and rights of opposition. The most important demands of the trade unions from the government were the right to strike, collective agreement. and a new labor law recognizing these rights and increasing wages (Şişmanov, 1978:151).

Weiker (1973:287) argues that most of the trade unions were consequences of dissatisfaction with the low level of wages and/or a compulsory execution forced by

the relations between Turkey and the West. Nonetheless, this process played an important role in training for Turkish working class; their awareness of being a distinct class from the other groups of society expanded. Turkish workers were learned well the lesson of group pursuit of their self-interest by means of these new developments (Weiker, 1973:287). While demands considering economic issues were met partially, demands for right to strike were not met until 1962. Margulies and Yıldızoğlu (1984:16), after summarizing the background of the new developments, put the meaning of this law as such:

“The single party state, cloaked in the Kemalist fiction of a “classless, casteless unified society”, showed a paternalistic interest in the problems of labor while it rigorously disallowed any self-organization of workers. In 1947, the government promulgated a new Unions Law allowing trade unions but not recognizing right to strike. The timing of this law was probably related to several factors: Turkey’s attempt to take its place in the postwar “free world”; the government’s concern to win popular support prior to the first general election under the new multi-party regime; and concern to preempt an spontaneous self-organization by the working class, which had suffered disproportionately from the austerity of the war years.”

Additionally, although this law was prepared by RPP to guide trade unions, it was compatible with the intents and politics of the Democrat Party. Şişmanov suggests that both of the parties were demanding nationalism from trade unions, seeking support for national interests in the fight against communism. They also sought to create harmony between workers and employers. Most of the work force was working in public economic enterprises. This pressure was a facilitating factor in the creation of harmony based on nationalism. Şişmanov adds that both the RPP and DP were in strong consensus on taking severe measurements to prevent a relationship between Turkish trade unionism and international trade unionism and to block the growing of ideology of communism, keeping it outside the republic (Şişmanov, 1978:151).

### 3.2 Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş)

After the execution of the Trade Unions Law in 1947, many trade unions began to be established. After a short time, these dispersed and weak trade unions began to express their wills for an upper association and/or confederation. After 1948, trade unions and federations began to be established (*Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*: 1996: 325). İstanbul Trade Unions Association was first among the associations established, and the Hotel, Restaurant and Entertainment Workers' Federation (TOLEYIS) was first among the federations (*Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, 1996: 325). İstanbul Trade Unions Association was known for its link with the Republican's People Party. The association was an attempt of the RPP to take to control of trade unions and their tendency for centralization (*Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, 1996: 325).

The Democrat Party was also approaching trade unions with the same aim. The will of the confederation was being expressed in such conditions and under the influence of those two parties. The following was said in the Labor Report presented to the First General Meeting of Türk-İş in 1952, regarding the Trade Unions Law and new age of Turkish Trade Unionism:<sup>9</sup>

“The government headfirstly prepared a law to prevent the massive activities of workers and to control the activities of trade unions; and the Assembly adopted the Trade Unions Law. After the adoption of this law, the government attempted to establish trade unions in each sector giving order to its party members. Workers behaved timidly against this development that raises the belief that it is under the control of government. However, despite this timidity, with the spiritual and material supports of the government, trade union movement slowly progressed. Trade unions that learned lots of things in a short time period and that surfaced like a lion to acquire new rights and workers that want to eliminate the interruptions of existing parties took place by trade unions in an increasingly active manner. After all, the party, which adopts freedom of strike and new social reform in its program in the last deputy elections, received the confidence of the

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<sup>9</sup> Türk-İş 1. Genel Kuruluna Sunulan Çalışma Raporu (Eylül 1952) in *Belgelerle Türk-İş Tarihi I (1952-1963)*. Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu.

majority of the workers. By this way, in our opinion, trade union movement entered into a new stage in the efforts of establishing democracy.”<sup>10</sup>

The intent of the trade unions was to establish a confederation independent from both the RPP and the DP; however, this could not be achieved. Under Cold War conditions, and emerging sympathy to America and American aid; it was nearly impossible for the inexperienced and young Turkish trade union movement to remain outside the influence of USA and its ally the DP (*Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, 1996: 326). In other words, after becoming a member of NATO in 1952, the establishment of trade unions confederation fell under the influence of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which was controlled by American trade unionists (Güzel, 1996: 162). After the visit of members of ICFTU, including Irving Brown and Herman Patthet, and with the approval of the DP, Türk-İş was founded in 1952 (*Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, 1996: 326-327, Güzel, 1996:162) under these external and internal conditions. Founders of the Confederation were:

1. Ankara Trade Unions Federation
2. Bursa Trade Unions Association
3. Eskişehir, Sakarya Region Trade Unions Federation
4. Adana Southern Region Trade Unions Federation
5. İstanbul Trade Unions Association
6. İzmir Trade Unions Association
7. Black Sea Region Trade Unions Federation
8. Turkish Transportation Workers’ Federation
9. Toleyis, Hotel, Restaurant and Entertainment Workers’ Federation
10. Teksif, Textile and Weaving Industry Workers Trade Union Federation <sup>11</sup>

Güzel (1996:162) states that there were worker leaders supporting the DP and also the RPP, in addition, there were independent trade unionists in the early years of Türk-İş. It can be concluded that the foundation of a confederation was not only a plan of the internal and external governors; indeed, organized workers had a role in this process. Although it was not a powerful and determining role; these

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<sup>10</sup> All the quotations of the thesis have been translated by the author.

<sup>11</sup> Türk-İş Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu Ana Nizamnamesi, Madde:45, in *Belgelerle Türk-İş Tarihi 1 (1952-1963)*. Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu.

experiences should be taken into consideration when discussing the class formation of Turkish workers.

Since a publication of Türk-İş did not exist in the analyzed period, it is not possible to directly follow the approaches of Türk-İş, and how its continuities and changes influenced the matters of workers. However, it can be derived from the sources analyzed in this research that, regarding the right to strike, Türk-İş showed consistency from the very beginning. However, intensity of the issue decreased throughout time. The attitude of the Democrat Party towards the right to strike changed after 1950. Later, in 1959, on the right to strike, the most controversial issue of the period, Türk-İş stated that:

“We demand the enactment of Law of Strike, for years. This demand is expressed in all of the workers’ congress and annual reports. We believe that this right, which was vested for the workers of free and civilized countries long time ago, should be anyhow entitled to Turkish workers. This demand of ours met with the response of “You do not have any money to call a strike”. By this way let me add that strike is not obtained with money but money is assured with strike.”<sup>12</sup>

The demand of the right to strike is incompatible with the discourse of democracy of the DP, but at the same time, striking is a tool for protecting the interests of workers by Türk-İş, especially their economic interests. Türk-İş did not want to deprive the workers of this universal tool. Türk-İş was an entity caught between the demands of workers and the impact of the government, between the interests of workers and finding ways for the realization of these interests.

### **3.3 The Democrat Party Coming into Power**

Genesis of the Democrat Party occurred within Republican’s People Party through opposition to the existing politics of RPP. The party became fractured considerably during the discussions on Agrarian Law and those opposed to the Law of Giving

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<sup>12</sup> Türk-İş İcra Heyetinin Müessesiler Heyetinin Sunduğu Rapor (20 Mayıs 1959) in *Belgelerle Türk-İş Tarihi 1 (1952-1963)*. Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu.

Land to Farmers (Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanunu). Those in opposition a short time later declared the Proposal of Four (Dörtlü Takrir) (Eroğul, 2003:27). This Proposal, which was rejected by the government, was an obvious declaration of opposition to the RPP. After the Amendments in the Law of Associations, the signers of the Proposal of Four organized in the form of a political party on 7 January 1946. Yerasimos, (1976:1346) after discussing the tasks of the signers of the Proposal, argues that four faces of the bourgeois class movement were represented in this establishment. These four faces were financial capital, agricultural capital, professional occupations, and bourgeois intellectual.

The DP is generally perceived as the movement that defeated the “kapikulu” bureaucrats by allying with the trade bourgeoisie. The trade bourgeoisie got rich during the war and were landowners. Timur adds that the DP’s trailing of the poor masses gave a populist and democratic image to the movement (Timur, 2003:26). Therefore, it seems that the factors forcing transition to a multi-party system are the factors that gave way to the rising of the Democrat Party. In a sense, İsmet İnönü had laid the groundwork for the end of the power of RPP; the RPP then opened the way for opposition but lost control of the developments (Eroğul, 2003:69).

Besides the low standard of life and severe work conditions, Akın gives priority to a report on some additional reasons for the discontent of people in the single party period and their turn away from RPP. The factors are listed in four items: “trailing of works in governmental offices, cruel treatment of officials towards ordinary people and bribing of them, school matters in villages and lastly and most importantly as we have seen expensiveness and jobbery.” According to the same report, the Democrat Party members use these items for propaganda in their campaign (quoted by Akın, 2004: 40). Mistreatment of people by the regime was a real issue of complaint. It was one of the important factors behind the popular support to DP.



Democratic discourse of the DP influenced various groups within the society. The socialist intellectuals of the era also supported the Democrat Party with the hope of democratization in its early phases. For instance, Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel, known communists, came together with Democrat Party members to express their expectation of a democratic and free regime. Keyder (1987:122) states that “even the illegal Communist Party actively supported the Democrat Party in the 1950 elections”. Democracy and liberalism were the general principles of the party (Eroğul, 2003:31). These principles are presented as the most important distinguishing feature from the RPP. In Article 7 of the program it is stated that: “We find the founding of associations, cooperatives and trade unions by workers, peasants, merchants and industrialists, freelancers, civil servants and teachers and university students with professional, social and economic aims a necessary development.”<sup>13</sup> This quotation, besides showing the place of democracy in the DP’s discourse, indicates the populist feature of the party.

Sunar (1985:2076) suggests that populism is the key concept to understand the success of the Democrat Party and also the Democrat Party period. Populism is defined as the ideology that stimulates the masses, which fall outside of the current power bloc. Considering the ideology of the DP, and its relation with the RPP, it can be said to be populist (Sunar, 1985:2076-79). Workers were among the groups that fell outside the power bloc. The Democrat Party accomplished taking workers’ support. According to Şişmanov, the Democrat Party skillfully benefits from the atmosphere of discontent among the workers. (Şişmanov, 1978:154).

### **3.4 Working Class and the Democrat Party Politics and Practices**

Margulies and Yıldızoğlu argue that, as a consequence of the politics of industrialization, which gained importance in the post-war period, the working class appeared as a social force in the political scene following the end of the war. Their

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<sup>13</sup> “Program madde 7: “...işçilerin çiftçilerin, tüccar ve sanyicilerin, serbest meslek mensuplarının, memur ve muallimlerin, yüksek öğretim talebelerinin mesleki, içtimai ve iktisadi maksatlarla cemiyetler, koopeartifler ve sendikalar kurmalarını gerekli buluyoruz.” (quoted by Eroğul, 2003:31)

class organizations were trade unions (Margulies and Yıldızođlu, 1984:16). In parallel to these developments, the Democrat Party appealed to workers by creating an alternative in government, and workers responded positively to the call of the DP (Iřıklı, 1979:358). During its election campaign, the DP made profuse promises to workers that trade unions would be able to act freely, that the right to strike would be recognized, and that a democratic regime would be established in the country. By the means of these promises, the DP gained the support of working people (řıřmanov, 1978:163).

In addition to conditions inside the country, relations with United States also affected the politics of DP concerning workers. Economic support of Turkish capitalists, merchants and landowners, who profited from the acceptance of American aid, and from cooperation between Turkish and American trade unions, significantly increased the rate by which the Democrat Party rose (řıřmanov, 1978:150). Some goals of the US and the new Turkish government intersected. For example, American trade unionist Irving Brown is known for his effect on the Turkish trade union movement and in the establishment of Trade Unions Confederation of Turkey (Türkiye İřçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu - Türk-İř).

Brown had been invited to consult with the government on the issues considering working class politics (Güngör, 1996: 194). His aim was to inspire Turkish trade unions to combine trade unions around a nationalistic center. His observation on Turkish workers and on the future of trade unions was that although communism was very weak in Turkey, the very low living standards of workers could have created the opportunity for communists to establish new nuclei within trade unions. This could have been harmful for Turkish trade unionism in the period of transition to free trade unionism. Becoming a part of NATO could also prevent this threat (Güngör, 1996: 194).

As a part of Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, the United States got involved in trade union movements in various countries to manipulate them and to make them

serve the international interests of the United States (Işıklı, 1979:366). Fiscal support and education were among the means of intervention. Anti-communism is the most apparent feature of American trade unionism that differs from European trade unionism. Relation with a political party is not acceptable for American trade unions. This type of unionism is known for its negation of politics and notion of class struggle. On the contrary, for instance, English trade unions are known for their organic relations with Labor Party. The American type of trade unionism is formulated to prevent the emergence of class consciousness among workers based on the recognition of class struggle. Placing unions above politics is a means to this end. The Democrat Party's aim is in conformity with this understanding, and it is this understanding that the Trade Unions Law of 1947 has its roots in. The Democrat Party's demand for the right to strike is also formulated within these boundaries.

In comparison to the collective rights of workers, the Democrat Party was more optimistic about the individual rights of workers. The attitude of the Democrat Party toward workers had two dimensions. It was authoritarian in collective work relations, but protective in individual work relations (Makal, 2002:56). For instance, regarding individual work relations, the number of workers subject to Labour Law increased, workers and employers participated in the conflict solution commission, and significant development occurred in sphere of Social Security (Makal, 2002:73-74). However, in terms of collective rights DP broke its promises. While DP was the opposition party it was defending right to strike against the RPP. When the DP came into power, the RPP, the opposition party of the period, began to defend the right to strike. The DP had forgotten its promises to workers (Makal, 2002:60). In the 1949 program of the party, the right to strike exists, but in the 1951 program there is neither the right to strike nor collective agreement (Işıklı, 1979:360). The 1949 program states "...with the condition of staying out of any kind of political influences and objectives, we believe that right to strike of trade

unions should be accepted”.<sup>14</sup> They prepared a draft of law of “Strike and Lockout” and sent it to worker unions to take their ideas. The unions evaluated the draft as restrictive (Makal, 2007:278), but this proposal did not become law under Democrat Party governance. The right to strike was the main topic of discussion during this period, and both of major parties tried to take control of trade unions. For a period, the DP diverted from worker issues and especially on their most strong collective right: the right to strike. On the right to strike, Minister of Labor Samet Ağaoğlu in 1953 said that:

“In a liberal system, not in a statist system, all the works in terms of law to be finished; then when there is a conflict between workers and employers, workers can go on a strike. Today we are not in such a case and we are working to reach that situation.”<sup>15</sup> (Quoted by Makal, 2007:280).

In 1956, Minister of Labor Mehmet Mümtaz Tarhan repeats the same idea on the right to strike and uses the same justification for not recognizing the right to strike.

“Why didn’t we realize right to strike up to now? To realize this and call on a strike, we do not have a developed industry. Our industry is still in infancy and we cannot kill this industry with strike that is a heavy method in the solution of conflicts. To recognize right to strike it is necessary to abolish the conditions that results in strikes and by means of this prevent our country from bad results of strikes....Secondly... to go on a strike, financial position of trade unions must be very strong” (quoted by Makal, 2004)<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>“Bütün bu meslek ve tesanüt teşeküllerinin manevi şahsiyet olarak her türlü siyasi tesir ve maksatlar dışında kalmaları şartıyla, işçi sendikalarının grev hakkının tanınması fikrindeyiz.” (quoted by Makal, 2002:67).

<sup>15</sup> “Devletçi sistemde değil, liberal sistemde vazı kanun olarak yapılacak bütün işler bitmiş olsun. Ondan sonra iş verenle işçi arasında bir ihtilaf çıktığı zaman greve müracaat edilmelidir. Bugün için henüz o vaziyette değiliz, o vaziyete gelmiye çalışıyoruz, arkadaşlar.” (Samet Ağaoğlu by Makal)

<sup>16</sup> “...Grev hakkını şimdiye kadar niye realize etmedik? Grevi yapmak için evvela gelişmiş bir sanyie malik değiliz. Sanayimiz kundakta bebek halinde idi. Bu sanayii, grev gibi ağır bir ihtilaf tedbiri ile, ihtilafın en had tedbiri ile kundakta iken öldüremezdik. Grev hakkını kabule edebilmek için grev sebepleri ortadan kaldırmak zarureti vardı. Onlara bu hakları vermeden grev hakkını kabul ettiğimiz gün grev meydana gelebilir. Bırakınız bizi işçiye verilmesi gereken hakları verelim, grevi icabetettiren sebepler ortadan kalsın ve memleketimiz grevin kötü neticeleriyle derah karşı karşıya gelmesin. İkincisi, grev hakkını vermeyi icabettirecek sebepler henüz tevekkün etmemiştir. Çünkü grev tapabilmek için sendikaların mali vaziyetlerinin çok kuvvetli olması lazımdır.” (T.B.M.M Zabıt Ceridesi, Dönem: X, İçtima: 2, Cilt:10, 47. Birleşin, 28.2.1956,ss. 1128-1129; quoted by Makal,2004)

Sülker (2004:49) purports that the Democrat Party legitimized supporting the right to strike, and workers then had to find the chance and courage to defend their right to strike. Makal suggests that regulation of the right to strike is inconformity with the democratic principle of the party (Makal, 2004). While discussions on the acceptance of the right to strike were going on, strike movements began in the centers like İstanbul, İzmir, Ankara, Mersin and İskenderun (Şişmanov, 1978:170). The government took harsh measures on the organizers and leaders of the strikes. Trade unions were generally separated between RPP and DP. The intention of the confederation was perturbing the DP and the RPP executed its best effort in this process. To take the trade union movement under control, the Democrat Party decided to place supporters of the party on the administrative council of the confederation (Şişmanov, 1978:165). American trade unionism, anti-communism, and nationalism successfully implemented by the Democrat Party in preventing class consciousness based trade unions.

Populism, as we have seen, was an important feature of the Democrat Party politics that shaped the relation of the party with different social groups, including the working class. Different from the preceding period, the Democrat Party did not hesitate to conceptualize the society as a class-based society. In a class-based society, the DP was aware that to prevent an independent working class movement, which is potentially open to socialist ideology, working class organization should be controlled. In this regard, the relationship of the DP with the working class was based on close control. The “threat of the Soviet Union” also made such control necessary and the Party used programmatic, social and ideological ways to provide this control. Anti-communism is a basic element among both conscious and unconscious elements of control methods that are fed by nationalism. Corporatism in work relations, in terms of solidarity among classes, not the rejection of classes, is also counted as a feature of the politics of the DP towards the working class.

The bilateral approach of the Democrat Party turned out to be much more authoritarian after the 1954 crisis, when the Golden Age of the Democrat Party ended. The moderate populism of DP had turned into authoritarian populism. The already self-contradictory relationship of DP with workers, seen in their approach to the right to strike, began to turn negative against workers and workers' rights. This was reflected in actions against trade unions and oppressive practices on trade unions increased (Makal, 2002:90). Government tried to prevent the emergence of independent trade unions and working class movements, and used oppressive measure for this goal (Makal, 2004). Tight budgets and low wages brought about social dissatisfaction, and this increasing dissatisfaction was sometimes expressed in strikes. These strikes resulted in increasing oppression due to their prohibitions, resulted in increasing oppression.

The Left had already been excluded from the multi-party system since its beginning (Erođul, 1987:103). The Democrat Party was no better than the RPP in its relation with social opposition, especially when opposing workers and socialists. The workers' independent movement was severely restricted as was the alliance between workers and socialists. Communism never had a chance to survive in the country. Since the beginning of the government, communists and socialists had was subject to serious mass arrests. Under Democrat Party governance, there were 13.500 political prisoners (Şiřmanov, 1978:174).

### **3.4.1 The Working Class in the Political Arena**

**Article 5 of Trade Unions Law of 1947** definitively prohibits the integration of politics in trade unions.<sup>17</sup> Based on Article 5, many trade unions were shut down during the DP period (Özbey, 2001:29). However, during the same time period, the governorship of İstanbul allowed demonstrations against communism (Komünizmi

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<sup>17</sup> Article 5 of the Law: “İřçi ve iřveren sendikaları, sendika olarak siyasetle, siyasal propaganda ve siyasi yayın faaliyetleriyle iřtigal edemezler ve herhangi bir siyasi teřekkölün faaliyetlerine vasıta olamazlar” (Quoted by Özbey, 2001:29).

Telin Mitingleri), demonstrations that are still obviously political in character (Işıklı, 1979: 362). The intention of the DP is revealed through this hypocrisy. The party was expecting to force trade unions to support its own party politics.

On the other hand, there were trade unionists that sought alternative political representation for workers. The initial alternative was the Democrat Workers Party, which was established in November 1950., This left wing party was established in İstanbul, and while claims of the influence of political parties on workers were part of its agenda, the party's main goal was "representing common interests and life of intellectuals that are devoted to democratic ideas regardless of their economic and social conditions and especially workers, peasants, artisans and small merchants"<sup>18</sup> However, it was not a Marxist Party (Sülker, 2004:160).

Before the 1954 elections, workers embarked on another courageous development, the Supporting Committee of Worker and Worker-Friendly Deputies (İşçi ve İşçi Dostu Milletvekillerini Destekleme Komitesi) (Işıklı, 1979: 362). Ten trade unionists and a lawyer, arguing that worker deputies had become party deputies, established this Committee, and expected to follow politics independent from party politics (Sülker, 2004:306-307). However, the Committee was put on trial, and was prohibited from its activities in general elections in 1952 (Sülker, 2004:306).

Workers' links with leftists or socialists had already been prohibited through suppression and arrests. Trade unions were the only class-based organization for workers, and they were under strict control. Workers were barred from the only organization that reflected their own politics, and that could represent their political demands. One or two attempts for representation were obstructed early on. Dealing with politics collectively as a class was forbidden, but individual ways for trade unionists were open. According to Akkaya, between 1947 and 1960, trade unionists recognized their power. They demanded benefits from their political

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<sup>18</sup> "İktisadi ve içtimai durumu her ne olursa olsun demokratça düşünüş sistemine bağlı bütün münevverlerle, bilhass işçi, köylü, sanatkar ve küçük esnafın hayat ve menfaat beraberliğini temsil eden parti"(quoted by Sülker, 2004:160).

advantage as trade unionists,. Finally, powerful and influential trade unionists joined the political arena, and sometimes became deputies of opposition or governing parties (Akkaya, 2002a). Akkaya adds that trade unions relations with politics were limited to becoming a deputy for the administrators in this period (Akkaya, 2002a). Koçak writes that the Beykoz group of workers sent their representative to the parliament. The author also writes that the leader of the Glass Workers' Trade Union in Paşabahçe, Ahmet Topçu, became one of the first deputies of the multi-party regime (Koçak, 2009: 200). He was a deputy of the DP; however, his argument on the right to strike exceeded the party line in the discourse of the Party. Topçu defended the right to strike as a “necessity of democracy” and maintained that to deny it was to deny class struggle (Koçak, 2009:201). Topçu defined three ways<sup>19</sup> for workers to struggle with their employers and said that:

“Class struggle is the way of gaining right for a class depending upon its own power.... Our current Law of Association adopts establishment of class based organizations. This means that existing class can struggle in an organized way and this is the actual democracy. For the establishment of democracy the controversy between Labor Law and Law of Associations should be removed and a labor law vesting right to strike should be enacted.” (Topçu quoted by Koçak, 2009: 201).

According to Koçak (2009: 201), Topçu's perception of striking as a means of class struggle is an outcome of class consciousness achieved through trade unionist struggle. This exemplifies the relation between class consciousness and the capacity to organize through trade unionization. However, Koçak states that in the following years, following the party line of the DP, Ahmet Topçu did not discuss the right to strike. This case can simultaneously be interpreted as showing that the working class was an important social actor, so much so that the governing party perceived its potential for collective action and political organization as a threat and attempted to confine its politics to individuals.

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<sup>19</sup> İşçilerin sermayecilerin aşırı istismarından kurtulması için tarihte; patrona başvurma, devlete başvurma (tahkim yolu) ve sınıf mücadelesi olmak üzere üç yol bulduklarını belirler. (“Sendika Başkanlarına 4 Sual: Ahmet Topçu Diyor ki”, *Hürbilet*, December 2, 1949; quoted by Koçak, 2009: 201)



In addition to directly preventing the space for the working class to potentially experience and learn class struggle, the Democrat Party fought working class ideology and politics.

### **3.4.2 Ideological Frame work of the Democrat Party**

#### **3.4.2.1 Anti-Communism**

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, which implemented the doctrine, declared the new world order after the Second World War. The most significant point of the Doctrine was American anti-Soviet politics. The essence of the doctrine was to fight socialism and to gain international support in this fight. The base of this international support was economic aid to countries under the threat of influence from the Soviet Union (Sander, 1991:203-204). Turkish foreign policy after the war developed under the influence of American foreign policy. The American project involved Turkey, and the Democrat Party was a faithful supporter, both of the project and of the intense anti-communist goal of the project. The American government had a global aid program for trade unions. Turkish trade unionists were part of this program. In addition to trade unionists' support, some union leaders were sent to America for education on trade unionism (Öztürk, 2004:15).

Anti-communism penetrated into the working class, promulgated by the notion of American trade unionism. One contribution of American trade unionism was the prohibition of trade unions in politics. On the other hand, European trade unionism was political, and European unions had relations with class-based political parties. European trade unionism was politicized due to its Marxist influence; moreover, communists were active and effective in European trade unions after 1945 (Brown quoted by Öztürk, 2004:21, 23). American trade unionism was seen as an antidote to socialist interaction among workers in trade unions. Anti-communism was the

main ideology in American trade unionism. In fact, Brown, the aforementioned American trade unionist, states that after the Second World War, during the Cold War period, his concern in Turkish trade unions began due to the threat of communism that was influential in European trade unions (quoted by Öztürk, 2004:37).

Kenan Öztürk's interview with Irving Brown gives the details of the impact of American trade unionism on Turkish trade unions. Brown states that he learned of the emergence of a trade union movement in Turkey, and was surprised when he saw the 'genuine' trade unions independent from European trade unions. These were his reasons for concern about Turkish trade unions, and also for coming to Turkey in 1951 (quoted by Öztürk, 2004:9). Brown was an important name in the establishment of Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş) and in providing the link with American trade unionism. In this period and in the following years, many Turkish trade unionists were trained in USA. On these developments, particularly on the establishment of a confederation, Brown expressed that,

“Always in all trade unions, work begins with inexperienced workers. But workers have a kind of instinct to form trade unions. When the idea of founding a trade union to defend their interests comes into mind; organization of trade unions and the relations with employer, etc. comes into being spontaneously. This is dialectic.” (quoted by Öztürk, 2004:14).

Anti-communism campaigns were comparatively successful among workers in the Democrat Party Period. Frequently organized demonstrations took place against communism (Komünizmi Telin) in the country. Workers and members of trade unions were participants in these campaigns, although politics was banned for them. Oppression of the communist was indirect oppression of the working class movement. Akkaya argues that especially after the arrests of Communists in 1951 (1951 Tevkifatı) it became impossible to develop class-based politics for workers (Akkaya, 2002a).

### **3.4.2.2 Corporatism**

In the history of Turkish politics, corporatism is generally identified with the politics of the single party period. In corporatism, society is composed of occupational groups that are dependent upon each other and that coexist in harmony. The ideology of the Single Party Period, based on the rejection of social classes, is a good example of the denial of classes. Existence of social classes had been rejected for the sake of a corporatist society (Keyder, 2006:49). Makal (2002:180) finds identifying corporatism with the rejection of social classes inadequate, and writes that when there is not corporatist type of organization or network, one cannot talk about systematic existence of corporatism.

Fundamental mechanisms used to achieve social and economic aims in corporatism are generally in the form of social agreements between the employers confederation and trade unions confederation. These confederations have great power of representation and are highly centralized organizations. The state is also involved in the social agreements as a party (Makal, 1998: 290). In other words, the working class should be organized in order to speak of the emergence of corporatism. Therefore, the existence of corporatism in work relations for Turkish trade unionism rises only in 1947 with the adoption of Trade Unions Law (Makal, 1998: 290). Since strong and centralized trade union representation that could make negotiations with employers or state did not exist in the Democrat Party period, Makal argues that there was not any form of corporatism during that period. In this respect, Makal (1998:290) starts the period of corporatism in 1960 ends it in 1980. However, when general characteristics of corporatist society are taken into consideration, an idea particularly underlined by Keyder, one can argue that in its relation with trade unions DP government had a corporatist spirit.

In terms of work relations, corporatist tendencies were evident in the party. Trade unions of the period, whether under the control of the RPP or the DP, could be

defined as corporatist trade unions. Cizre (1992a:30) argues that corporatism is useful for the definition of the quality of the trade unions, but adds that corporatism should be separated in different categories according to the social context it takes place in.

Corporatism is an institutionalized model of concerted action in which the state, employers, and unions are involved in the process of formation and implementation of economic and social public policies. Only one union was involved in this concerted action at the expense of losing organizational autonomy (Cizre,1992a:30). Lack of organizational independence and organic involvement in the state are important characteristics of corporatist trade unions. The aim and intention of the DP towards trade unions involves these two characteristics. The intention of the DP was to create an American-style trade unionism. This goal was achieved through Turk-İş and its ban from political activity, serving the corporatist aims of the DP. The DP's model regarding interest groups in general, and trade unions in particular, sustained the macro goal of the preceding period, which was similar to the model of Russian corporatism (B.Collier) that incorporates labor using state agents and politics rather than party (Cizre, 1992b:47). The DP controlled trade unions by excluding them from politics and by using the power of laws and state bureaucracy (Cizre, 1992b:48).

### **3.5 Status/Condition of Workers**

To draw a complete picture of the atmosphere in which the working class was formed, and to understand the status of the class consciousness of the workers, it is necessary to consider the economic structure of the country and the economic and social structure of the working class. Analyzing the aspects of proletarianization also contributes to understanding the political position of the working class. In Turkish history, the 1950s is described as the period that immigration, industrialization, and proletarianization all prominently increased. All of these processes are interdependent and dialectically stimulate each other. The existence

of the working class and the form it existed in was determined by these developments.

Agricultural mechanization went hand-in-hand with industrialization, and, in a sense, is the origin of the other developments. Agricultural mechanization is the reason for agricultural capitalism and it effected industrial capitalism. Usage of machines and technological tools in agriculture brought about an efficiency of labor, concentration of production, and expansion of capitalist partnership in agriculture (Rozaliyev, 1978: 197). Akşit (1988:1947) adds that the prevalence of private property in agriculture also supported agricultural transformation. He argues that settlement of private property in land appeared concurrently with several other factors. These factors included the replacement of *karasaban*, or primitive wooden plows, with tractors and modern plows; acceleration of commodities and market relations; migration from villages to the cities; and the spread of capitalism. In this period, the agricultural sector began to lose its strength, and as a result, landless peasants became proletarians very quickly, and peasants that had some or little land began to lose it. Agricultural mechanization resulted in unemployment in the agricultural sector, and those landless peasants began to migrate to the cities (Şişmanov, 1978:181).

### **3.5.1 Proletarianization Process**

#### **3.5.1.1 Agricultural Mechanization and Industrialization**

The freedom to sell its labor is the main characteristic of the proletariat that distinguishes it from peasants as a class. Settlement of private property in land, and agricultural mechanization hastened the emancipation of labor force. The agricultural sector maintained its weight in the economy during the Democrat Party period, and peasants established the base of votes for the DP. Due to these factors, agricultural policies took up a significant place in DP politics. The need to improve its connection with the capitalist world was producing new DP policies. Some steps

of industrialization had already been taken by the RPP, within the *etatist* framework of economic development. The Democrat Party abandoned *etatism* and improved private capitalism through integration with the capitalist world. For this reason, the DP also encouraged industrialization. The new proletariat social force was created through developments in the agricultural sector and industrialization. In a report of the World Bank in 1950, the economic situation of Turkey is put as such:

“Industrial sector had been given too much weight against agricultural sector. Agriculture should stick out. Unless agricultural productivity is augmented, necessary labor force and sustenance for industry cannot be provided.” (quoted by Küçük, 1978:255).

The report adds that investment mechanisms in Turkey should also be regulated in favor of private capital. This report shaped the politics of economic policy of the Democrat Party. Keyder (2006:57) evaluates these processes in 1950 as the start of bourgeois modernization. The author argues that economic development and agricultural commercialization in the beginning of this decade had brought the expectations of government and its rural supporters into reality. The development program implemented between 1947 and 1953 involved the augmentation of agricultural production, and liberalization of foreign trade (Yerasimos, 1976:1385). The main intention of the Democrat Party was to satisfy private capital and rural supporters, two social classes that it had organic relations with. Although it depended on these classes and overwhelmingly had their support, the Democrat Party began to take into account the newly growing social force: the working class.

Social proletarianization was the natural consequence of industrial developments. Industrialization is the most effective source of the proletarianization. The Second World War prompted a rapid and large accumulation of capital, providing the ground for the economic developments and changes in 1950s. Together with this influx of capital, agricultural mechanization provided the opportunity to invest in industry and export revenues had increased in early 1950s. With the aid received, in three years following 1950, export revenues had been transformed into 35.00 tractors and the area under cultivation had increased more than 50% (Keyder,

2006:57). Statistical information representing this change in agricultural mechanization is tabled item by item below:

*Table I.: Number of agricultural machines and tools in Turkey's Agriculture<sup>21</sup>*

<b>Machineries</b>	<b>1944</b>	<b>1948</b>	<b>1952</b>	<b>1957</b>
<b>Metal Plows</b>	419.932	771.258	853.846	1.012.174
<b>Tractors</b>	956	1.750	31.415	44.144
<b>Plows of tractors</b>	1.900	3.323	30.776	46.251
<b>Reapers</b>	103	994	3.222	6.523
<b>Implant Machines</b>	6.515	14.796	30.203	36.781
<b>Harvest Machines</b>	2.096	16.248	22.033	---

**Source:** S Sözeri, *Der Wirtschaftsaufbau der Türkei nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg*, v. 54; "Monthly Review of Statistics", 1958, no52p. 130; quoted by Rozaliyev, 1978: 197

Throughout the Democrat Party period, there is a visual increase in the usage of machines in agriculture, and this established the basis for the resurgence of industrial sector. Yerasimos (1976:1392) states that the share of machines for manufacturing industry among imported machinery had increased to 30.1% from 20.1% in between 1952 and 1955. Those data, brought together with the above table, show that the development of agricultural mechanization and industrialization are organically and consequentially related to each other. With the changes in agricultural sector, demand increased in the domestic market and the totality of these factors accelerated industrialization. In this period, the agricultural sector maintained its high relative position in national income.

*Table II: Share of Agriculture, Industry and Services in National Income<sup>22</sup>*

<b>YEARS</b>	<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>SERVICES</b>
1948	53%	14%	33%
1950	52%	16%	32%
1958	44%	22%	34%
1961	42%	23%	35%

**Source:** Arranged from State Planning Agency, 1963,v.9,table:9 quoted by Makal, 2002:91

<sup>21</sup> Number of agricultural machines and tools in Turkey's Agriculture (source: S Sözeri, *Der Wirtschaftsaufbau der Türkei nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg*, v. 54; "Monthly Review of Statistics", 1958, no52p. 130; quoted by Rozaliyev, 1978: 197)

<sup>22</sup> Share of Agriculture, Industry and Services in National Income (Source: Arranged from State Planning Agency, 1963,v.9,table:9 quoted by Makal, 2002:91).

There were taken various steps towards industrialization. Rozaliyev suggests that according to the uncertain data of the industrial count in 1957, only in the primary industrial areas (İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Bursa, Eskişehir, Kocaeli, Sakarya and Adana) did the number of industrial establishments, from small workplaces to big factories, increase. Between 1949 and 1957 they increased from 6.889 to 28.031, and the number of workers increased from 71.000 to 253.000 (Rozaliyev, 1978: 220). One of the declared aims of the Democrat Party was to enhance private capital, but it is commonly thought that the Democrat Party did not go beyond statist policies. Public enterprises were superior to private sector enterprises in terms of economic power and productivity; however, they correspond to only 15% of the total of industrial enterprises. On the other hand, these enterprises were employing 46% of the industrial workers. The number of state economic enterprises doubled under the Democrat Party government (Yerasimos, 1976:1386-1387). After 1954, the DP's objective of involvement in the capitalist world became more evident. In 1954, The Law on Encouraging Foreign Investments was enacted to stimulate industry, the Law of Oil was also enacted with the same aim. Industrialization was a significant element of DP's economic policy approach, but it should be added that agriculture was still the dominant sector in Turkey's economy throughout 1950s. Below a table of employment displays the situation:

*Table III.: Developments in the Sectoral Distribution of Employment<sup>23</sup>*

<b>YEARS</b>	<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>SERVICES</b>
1944	86.5%	8.3%	5.2%
1950	84.8%	8.4%	6.8%
1960	74.8%	11.5%	13.7%

**Source:** Bulutay, 1995, p. 189, Table 7.1, quoted by Makal,2002:92

Data shows that the Democrat Party period is a period that develops the “process” of industrialization. Numbers show that the society is becoming proletarian swiftly; that it is a period of social proletarianization. Between 1950 and 1963, the

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<sup>23</sup> Developments in the Sectoral Distribution of Employment (Source: Bulutay, 1995, p. 189, Table 7.1, quoted by Makal,2002:92).



percentage of increase in the workers of manufacturing industry was 103% and the percentage of increase in working premises was 95%; in addition, workers within Labor Law had increased continuously except for in 1958 (Makal, 2002:149-152).

### 3.5.1.2 Internal Migration, Urbanization and the Working Class

Makal argues that there is big correlation with the votes of the DP and variables such as industrialization, urbanization and literacy, which are symbols of modernization (Makal, 2002:62). Transformation of Turkish society resulted in the success of the DP that promised to meet the needs of this changing society. Spontaneous developments as well as changes stimulated by DP, which we have already observed, were elements of this transformation period of Turkey. Demand for labor force in cities appeared due to industrialization. This fact, combined with changes in the rural areas of Turkey, such as the growing unemployment of peasants as a result of agricultural mechanization, made migration from rural areas to urban areas inevitable. In this initial phase of internal migration, attractive factors in the cities and repulsive factors in the villages, such as more difficult life conditions, played important roles (İçduygu, et al. 1998: 208). Below, the table presents the urban and rural population between 1950 and 1960:

*Table IV.: Rural and Urban Population in Turkey: 1950-1960<sup>24</sup>*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total (1000)</b>	<b>Rural (1000)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Urban (1000)</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>
1950	20.947	17.037	<b>81</b>	3.910	<b>19</b>
1955	24.065	18.640	<b>77</b>	5.425	<b>23</b>
1960	27.755	20.447	<b>74</b>	7.308	<b>26</b>

**Source:** State Institute of Statistics, 1991, quoted by İçduygu et al, 1998: 219 and revised by the author

<sup>24</sup> Rural and Urban Population in Turkey: 1927-1990 (Source: State Institute of Statistics, 1991, quoted by İçduygu et al, 1998: 219 and revised by the author).

In the 1950s, the process of urbanization increased, and squatting began to develop swiftly. Previously migration was seasonal; in the season of construction there was migration to the cities, but with agricultural mechanization, immigrants began to return to their villages only in harvest time. This created a semi-residual type of urbanization (Keyder, 2006:315). Enhancement in transportation and communication facilities contributed to the mobility of the villagers and they met with modern-urban society (Keleş, 1985:157 quoted by İçduygu et al. 1998: 222). This was the first generation of squatting in the housing history of Turkey. Machineries also resulted in a surplus labor force in rural areas. Unemployed poor peasants had become part of the proletariat class and as a cheap source of labor; they threatened the conditions of working class. The decrease of share-cropping and tenancy in agriculture pushed landless peasants to become consistent paid workers; due to agricultural mechanization this group of people edged towards cities (Makal, 2002:98).

As mentioned before, the Second World War was a turning point for Turkey economically, politically and socially; particularly it was a turning point in terms of industrialization and proletarianization. On one hand, private capital accumulation had increased through incentives, which continued for more than 20 years. On the other hand, state-owned industry basically appeared (İçduygu et al. 1998: 228). The combination of this fact with the changing nature of world politics established the objective foundation of the working class movement in Turkey (İçduygu et al. 1998: 228). It can be argued that the 1950s is the period the working class was being formed objectively; in other words, this period corresponds to objective aspect of class formation or proletarianization. Furthermore, the sources of proletarianization essentially appeared in this period. The aforementioned conditions, processes, and developments in the country shaped the quality and the profile of the working class.

### 3.5.2 Characteristics of the Working Class

Economic changes were the fundamental sources of acceleration of proletarianization in that phase. In 1950, the number of both workers and trade union members had increased; moreover, while the number of workers had increased threefold, trade union members had increased six fold (Makal, 2002:276). In his study *Workers Movement in Turkey: 1908-1984*, Şehmus Güzel evaluates the working class historically. The author categorizes according to periods. One of these periods is the period between 1946 and 1960, which is the point of our study. Sources of the labor force or proletariat in this period are first, broken and poor peasants, who are semi-peasants and semi-proletarian; second, broken artisans and owners of small workshops and manufactures; and third, the proletariat from previous periods (Güzel, 1996:136-137). These sources are general and universal sources of the birth of proletariat.

In class formation, including formation of working class consciousness, characteristics of the labor force play a role. “Inconsistency and consistent removal, transition from one work place to another due to bad life conditions and low wages; low productivity, ethnic variety, usage of child and woman workers” (Güzel, 1996:137-138) are the most important features of the labor force affecting the class formation process. In addition, most of the wage earners were in the public sector (Güzel, 1996:137-138).

In this period, the “number of first generation proletarians is not very much, above all second and third generation proletarians are very little” (Güzel, 1996:136-137). In Western countries, the source that continually feeds the working class is workers’ children; however, the Turkish proletariat was a first generation proletariat of rural origin and did not have this consistency (Makal, 2002:115). When compared with Western countries, the Turkish proletariat was very young and inexperienced. Experience and transfer of experiences among workers and

between worker generations are critical for the emergence of class consciousness. In addition, for the emergence of class consciousness, mutual contact of workers is necessary. However, since there is no continuity in the labor force during this period, this interaction did not take place, and it was difficult for the Turkish proletariat to develop a sense of being a worker and for behavior to emerge in a modern sense (Makal, 2002:115).

Group organization and collective action are the indicators of class consciousness formation. For instance, as we have already seen, Hobsbawm approaches the organizations of work as “an essential complement of working class consciousness”.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the general social and economic profile of the working class, working class organizations such as workers’ associations, cooperatives and trade unions, and also leaders of the class and/or their organization give ideas about class consciousness of the workers. Makal argues that just like other workers, a majority of the trade union members and administrators were first generation proletarians (Makal, 2002:312). Leaders of working class, like the class itself, were inexperienced, and trade unions, which are the schools of the class struggle, were insufficient for the emergence of a class in itself.

There are examples from the trade union newspapers regarding the matter of generation and experience. From these examples, the link between workers’ generation and class consciousness, that was mentioned by Güzel (1996: 136-137) can be observed. In *Sendika Yolu*, a newspaper published in Nazilli, biographical description of trade union leaders were published, and continued for a number of issues. These biographies are important because they give ideas about generation as a factor in the class formation process. In the descriptions in *Sendika Yolu*, it is evident that the workers that came to the fore in the trade unions had the experience of being workers for a long time. For instance, Cevdet Tevfik Şigay, who was later discharged from his job and arrested on the account of communist activities<sup>26</sup>, had

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<sup>25</sup> This argument of him was taking part in the 43<sup>rd</sup> page of this study.

<sup>26</sup> Akkaya mentions that in 1952, in Nazilli Woven Factory, workers and leader of trade union Cevdet Şigay were arrested due to their communist activities and this was declared in newspapers.

become a worker at a very early age. His adventure in labor started in İstanbul in the 1930s, and he accumulated various experiences. His maturity as a worker, combined with his enthusiasm in writing poems, gave him a different outlook from the general outlook of the other workers. In the course of time he became a trade union leader (*Sendika Yolu*, October 13, 1948). A similar figure Burhanettin Halil Algan also came from a worker family and had become a worker at an early age. He and his family had migrated from the Balkan states (*Sendika Yolu*, October 20, 1948) where working class formation first appeared within the frontiers of Ottoman Empire. Workers that migrated from Balkans were inclined to become more militant. (Militancy and struggle should be evaluated accordingly to the restraint conditions). These personal accounts are also important in the connection between trade unions and ordinary workers. In the biographies, the most emphasized characteristics of the mentioned person are kindness, devotion to wealth of workers, being just, and living like an ordinary worker. The message intended for workers is that trade unions are like their family.

Among those trade unionists, it is important to recall Cevdet Şigay. Cevdet Tevfik Şigay publishes poems in the newspaper; in one of his poems he challenges another trade unionist, Ali Galip Özkan, writing in *İşçi Sendikası*. In a poem called “**Biraz Düşün Arkadaş**” (Think a little bit my fellow), Özkan writes about the condition of Turkish workers optimistically. He says that workers are living in wealth and happiness. As a response to the unrealistic picture drawn by Özkan, Şigay writes a poem titled “**Düşün, Fakat Dinle Arkadaş!**” (Think, but Listen my fellow). He criticizes and even accuses Özkan of ignoring reality. He writes that saying “we are neither hungry nor unemployed” is not proper, and even a senseless statement. He adds that nobody other than Özkan would believe the statement “we are living in wealth and peace free from grief”.

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Those newspapers also inform that in Adana security forces had carried out investigation in the houses of two trade unionists (1998:44).

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Biraz Düşün Arkadaş</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Düşün, Fakat Dinle Arkadaş!</b> (Ali Galip Özkan'a)</p>
<p>Gafil olma sen sakın, Yurt ve Millet işinde Şu dünyanın halini biraz düşün arkadaş Milletler perişanlık ve sefalet içinde, Cihanın ahvalini biraz düşün arkadaş.</p> <p>Birliđi bozu lanlar yiyorlar birbirini, Yakıyor yıkıyorlar kendi öz evlerini, Oğullar dinlemiyor babanın dertlerini, Bunların manasını biraz düşün arkadaş.</p> <p>Biz ne açız ne işsiz, ne yuvasız ne yersiz, Rahat sükun içinde yaşıyoruz kedersiz, Güvenle bakıyoruz geleceđe cümlemiz, Geçmiş ve yarın biraz düşün arkadaş.</p> <p>Bu gün bizden vatanın beklediđi gayrettir. Millet yoluna hizmet eşsiz bir meziyettir. Çalışmak bu yurt için en büyük kudrettir. Millet olayalarını biraz düşün arkadaş.</p>	<p>Gafil olmakda söz mü memleket işlerinde? Sen dünyayı bırakda yurduna bak arkadaş. Varsın olsun milletler bin sefalet içinde, Sen kendi halini gör, cihan nene? Arkadaş.</p> <p>Birliđi bozu lanlar yiyorsa birbirini, Neyine gerek senin geliştire sen keyfini. Oğul yemiyor artık babanın ekmeđini, Bunları düşün, fakat biraz dinle arkadaş.</p> <p>“-Biz ne açız, ne işsiz, ne yuvasız, ne yersiz-” Demek pek doğru olmaz insana derler hissiz. “-Rahat, sükun içinde yaşıyoruz kedersiz,-“ Bunlara senden başka kim inanır arkadaş.</p> <p>Güveniyoruz elbette geleceđe cümlemiz, Bugünü ve yarını düşünmek emelimiz. Hani yoktur inan ki sağa sola meylimiz. Gayreti bırakmadık, bırakmayız arkadaş.</p> <p>Bugün mü ya sade o vatanın beklediđi, Bizler ki Türk işçisi, hep onun gözbebeđi. Vicdansız soysuzları okşuyacak bileđi, Milli vahdetimizle kıracağız arkadaş.</p> <p>Hakikate tapalım, riyaya süse deđil, Emeđi koruyan da budur ancak iyi bil. Hür adalet, fazilet, kanun önünde eğil, İnsanlığın ruhunu hakir görme arkadaş.</p> <p>Bütün millet ağlarken zor geçime, yokluđa, İnkâr gelip yan yatmak yakışmaz insanlığa. Eđer lazımsa alay bel verip haksızlığa, Milyonların vebali senin olsun arkadaş..</p> <p>Cevdet Şigay (Sendika Yolu, February 18, 1949)</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Ali Galip Özkan (İşçi Sendikası, February 2, 1949)</p>	

These two poems are impressive examples of differentiation among workers. Ali Galip Özkan's poems and writings are mostly in line with the trade unionist profile demanded by the DP. On the other hand, although there is not a big difference in terms of ideology, politics and culture, Şigay's poems largely illustrated the reality of workers in terms of both their life standards and in terms of their political, ideological and cultural reality. He continues his poems in a similar manner. In his

poem called “Workers”, he writes: “His heart is injured and he only pities his own fate; he sometimes falls out of a work unjustly and sleeps hungry... But nobody sees him, nobody listens him. /.../ Poor, parentless, suffering workers live life of misery away from home. What about the fate of one abased him?”<sup>27</sup> (*Sendika Yolu*, April 15, 1949). He generally expresses the bad conditions workers face even though they work hard. In another poem he wrote for mine workers in Zonguldak (*Sendika Yolu*, August 31, 1949) his expression was reproachful rather than rebellious.

Generation, experience and transfer of experiences are important in the formation of class consciousness. The working class at the period is identified as a young class and as composed of peasants and workers. The examples given illustrate the fact that there are variety exists among the workers’ profiles and these differences once again show that class consciousness is dependent on various parameters. Generation, origin of workers (peasant-worker), and capacity of organization are among those parameters. Considering this evidence, and that those factors had been aforementioned before this chapter, the research will now enter into discussion of the observation of these factors by the workers.

Trade unionization of the period was far from providing the basis for the emergence of class consciousness. One reason for this was that trade unions were diversified in terms of their bases. This diversification was not strengthening or complementary, but instead exclusionary and contradictory. Diversification negatively effected trade unionization (Makal, 2002:275). In his evaluation of workers’ organization in the period between 1947 and 1960, Güzel argues that “trade unions were weak and they mostly paid attention to the social assistance activities and main line of trade unions, which are dominated by American trade unionism, were conciliatory” (Güzel, 1996:166).

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<sup>27</sup> Line of poetry in original language: “Dağlıdır yüreciği, derdine kendi yanar, Nahak yere bazan da işsiz kalır, aç yatar. Kalırda hicran ile gönülden ağlar, inler, Lakin hiç kimse onu, ne görür ne de dinler. /.../ Hasreti var özünde, hep doğduğu yerlerin, Yoksul, öksüz, bivefa, çilekeş işçilerin. Gurbet ellerde böyle ömrünü sürüklerken, Bahtu mı ya sade o, onun boynunu büken?”

The below statement can be used as a concluding remark on the profile of the working class in the 1950s:

“Lack of class consciousness that plays a very important role in workers movement, weakness of senses of occupational solidarity that is the only motive of cooperation, peasant-worker typology of workers, immaturity of the industrial proletariat, contingency of the patriarchal links with employers, temporality of work relations continue to exist. It should be stated *en passant* that they are hindering factors for both trade unions movement and open work struggles.” (Tuna, quoted by Makal, 2002: 313).<sup>28</sup>

All things considered, in the 1950s, the economic and social groundwork for the formation of the working class had been established. As social actor, the working class began to form its own organizations. However, in terms of class consciousness formation, trade unionization did not provide the satisfactory groundwork for class struggle and class consciousness because there had been direct and indirect obstacles to the emergence of a class-conscious working class.

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<sup>28</sup> “... işçi hareketlerinde çok mühim rol oynayan sınıf şuurunun kemale gelmemiş olması, kendi kendine yardımın yegane muharriki mahiyetinde olan mesleki tesanüt hislerinin zaafi, işçilerimizin mühim bir kısmının köylü-işçi tipini temsil eylemeleri, sınai-proleter işçi tipinin henüz tam manasıyla doğmamış bulunması, işverenlere karşı patriyarkal bağların devamı, çalışma münasebetlerinin geçici oluşu, yahut hiç değilse sübjektif telakkilerin böyle bir mahiyet göstermesi vakılar halinde devam etmektedir. Bunların gerek sendikacılık hareketlerinde, gerek açık iş mücadelelerinde aksatıcı birer unsur olduklarını burada sırası gelmişken kaydetmek lazımdır” (Tuna, quoted by Makal, 2002:313).



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **EVALUATING THE DISCUSSIONS ON RIGHT TO STRIKE IN THE TRADE UNION NEWSPAPERS**

It has been mentioned that class formation has two aspects. One is objective and the other is subjective. The objective part is established by structural variables like economic, social and political conditions. The subjective part corresponds to the agency dimension. The actions, reactions, and situation of agents play a general role in the subjective part. Within the context of working class formation, the subjective aspect is composed of the conscious or unconscious reactions of workers to their structural circumstances, their observation of their conditions and the effects of these conditions on themselves personally and/or collectively. Workers' perceptions of themselves as a class, and their behaviors as a collective entity, and their interventions in the issues that surround them, can make them appear as social actors. Workers as social actors have a role both in making themselves a class, and in formation of their opposing classes. In other words, in the class formation process the will and consciousness of the agents who are workers are important. The notion of agency over or against structure, on its own, indicates the existence of will and consciousness. Class consciousness can indicate itself in different forms, in different cases. There are some widely accepted situations, actions or forms in which one can talk about the existence of class consciousness. Awareness of one's own group interests as opposed to other groups, pursuing these interests collectively, being organized, being based in organizations that put forth collective actions, and solidarity are some of the basic elements of class consciousness.

In this chapter, several aspects of class consciousness will be discussed through

evaluation of trade unions publications. First, workers' attitudes towards trade unions, the most common and universal organizational form for workers; and second, workers' attitudes towards the collective action model, which includes striking and collective agreements are going to be set forth. Being organized and acting collectively for class interests, long-term or short-term interest, are the primary elements of class consciousness for all versions of Marxism and they have a significant place in class struggle approaches.

To observe how the working class makes or forms itself, during the DP regime, it is meaningful to look over the trade union publications. Through analysis of these publications, approaches of workers to trade unions, including how much they value trade unions, and specifically their approach to striking or the right to strike will be illuminated. Although there are differences among trade unions' publications, there are general characteristics in them that give clues about the formation of the working class. These clues allow us to draw a general picture of the profile of the working class at the national level under the governance of the Democrat Party.

Akkaya and Bulut (2009:124) suggest that the trade union press during the 1946-1960 period demanded to be taken into consideration. The press expressed the unions' desire for the democratization of work life, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly. The democratization of work life includes the will for democratization of political life and democratization of the regime. Through these publications, the trade unions proclaim the aim of transforming the government (Akkaya and Bulut, 2009: 124).

Some of these newspapers were being published in provinces like Ereğli (Konya), Zonguldak, and Adana. Others were being published in Istanbul, which has historically been the center of trade and industry. Coal companies in the Ereğli district of Zonguldak also have a long history but compared with the geographical and historical conditions of İstanbul, they offered a rather closed and local way of

life for the people living and working there. In the 1950s, the vast majority of industrial workers maintained their links with their home villages. This situation is much more visible in the provinces. Differences in geographical and historical conditions, in industrial development, and in the form of economic relations reverberate to formation of the working class, including the political and cultural profile of workers.

Following, general and introductory information on the analysis will be given. There is one journal and four newspapers that are analyzed in detail. These papers were organs of trade unions of different branches that were being published in different centers. These are:

<u><i>Ereğli İşçi Postası</i></u> (1951-1960)	<u><i>İşçi Sendikası</i></u> (1947-1959)	<u><i>Petrol İş</i></u> (1958-1960)	<u><i>Maden İş</i></u> (1956-1963)	<u><i>Sendika Yolu</i></u> (1948-1949)
<u>Trade Union of Textile Workers</u> (Mensucat Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası—Ereğli/Konya)	<u>Trade Union of Zonguldak Mine Workers</u> (Maden İşçileri Sendikası--Zonguldak)	<u>Turkish Oil Workers Trade Union</u> (Türkiye Petrol İşçileri Sendikası--İstanbul)	<u>Trade Union of Turkish Mine, Metalware and Machine Industry Workers</u> (Maden ve madeni eşya ve makine sanayi işçileri sendikası—İstanbul)	<u>Trade Union of Textile Workers</u> (Mensucat Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası—Nazilli/Manisa)

*Ereğli İşçi Postası* was being published in Ereğli district of Konya. It was an organ of Trade Union of Textile Workers (*Mensucat Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası*) and began to be published in 1951. It was a weekly newspaper called the workers' newspaper in the cover page of the newspaper. It continued to be published weekly until 1960. It was a local newspaper that appealed first to workers of Sümerbank Ereğli Cotton Factory (*Sümerbank Ereğli Pamuklu Sınai Müessesesi*) and also to the whole district. The trade union leader was the responsible editor of the newspaper in its earlier days of broadcasting life, later it changed but still an active member of the trade unions was responsible for the newspaper. Workers, whether trade union members

or not, were writing to the newspaper mostly to express complaints of the conditions in the factory. Considering the general outlook of the trade union and its organ *Ereğli İşçi Postası*, it can be argued that newspaper presents rather compatible content with the DP's perception of trade union movement. Dissatisfaction, and demands and challenges about work life and working conditions were published in the newspapers; however, they were not directly oriented towards the government. Satire was also used in some writing in the newspaper to criticize bureaucracy in general or factory management.

*İşçi Sendikası* was the weekly newspaper of Trade Union of Zonguldak Mine Workers (*Zonguldak Maden İşçileri Sendikası*). This trade union was established in 1947 with the name Trade Union of Ereğli Coal Basin Mine Workers (*Ereğli Kömür Havzası Maden İşçileri Sendikası*) and changed its name in 1949. Its first issue was published in 15 October 1947. This weekly newspaper was published continuously for thirteen years. The newspaper, which was marketed as “occupational, literal and social newspaper of workers”, generally dealt with the occupational and daily problems of the workers and with economic improvements for the workers. It was a local publication appealing to workers of the Coal Basin with the intention of unionist education. It was one of the first newspapers in the labor press of the period and it was published for a long time (Akkaya and Bulut, 2009: 98). According to Akkaya and Bulut (2009: 114), *İşçi Sendikası* was long-lived because the trade union was a big one. Moreover, it had easier circumstances because of its politics, which did not go against the government nor deviate from state politics. They add that this form of the newspaper represents a tactic or strategy to maintain its existence (Akkaya and Bulut, 2009: 114).

*Petrol İş* was the organ of Turkish Oil Workers Trade Union (*Türkiye Petrol İşçileri Sendikası*) that gathers oil workers working around the country under a single roof (*Petrol İş*, June 16, 1958). The trade union was established in 1950 by 23 workers working in Beykoz Foundations of Sokoni Vakum Oil Company, Shell Company of Turkey with the name Trade Union of İstanbul Fuel Workers (*Petrol*

*İş*, June 16, 1958) and took the name of *Petrol-İş* (Turkish Oil Workers Trade Union) in 1954, and began to organize at the national scale. *Petrol-İş* Journal's first issue was published in 1958 and it was issued fortnightly. It was defined as the "social, economical, cultural, occupational and non-political" journal of the oil workers. In the journal, since the trade union aimed to organize at the national scale, information and news about the sector was predominant. The headquarters of the trade union were in İstanbul, and it was a rather strong trade union. Due to these facts, and also due to its journal format, the quality of the content of the journal differs from other trade union publications. Discussions on workers' conditions, the meaning of trade unions, the right to strike and collective agreements took place in a more informative and instructional way in the journal. Information on the trade union movement in different countries was also present with the objective of educating Turkish workers on trade unionization.

*Maden İş* began its publication life on 17 November 1956, as an organ of the Trade Union of Turkish Mine, Metalware and Machine Industry Workers (*Türkiye Maden, Madeni Eşya ve Makine Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası*). Like *Petrol-İş*, it was organized at the national scale. The union's general secretary was Kemal Türkler, who was a famous labor leader and founding father of Turkish Confederation of Revolutionary Unions (*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*). He was at the same time editor-in chief of the newspaper. *Maden İş* was defined as a social, economical and intellectual newspaper (*İçtimai-iktisadi-fikri magazin*). Confederation<sup>35</sup> in Turkey was an important subject being discussed in the newspaper. One or sometimes more pages of the newspaper was appropriated for interviews from different work places discussing workers' problems and working conditions. *Maden-İş*, since its' beginning, defended the right to strike and demanded the right to strike and collective agreement consistently. The trade union was active in drawing up a draft statue for the amendment of Trade Unions Law (*Maden İş*, February, 1957). Akkaya and Bulut (2009:123) state that with its general standpoint, *Maden-İş* appeared as a trade union and trade union press

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<sup>35</sup> It is mentioned as "sendikal birlik" (gathering of trade unions under a single union) in the newspaper.

standing to be a “subject”. The Kavel Strike in 1963 can be put as an indicator of becoming a subject. The issue with the date 9 February 1963 was about the boycott in Kavel Cable Factory. To protest dismissals, 220 workers went on a lockdown strike in front of the factory. It was stated in *Maden İş* that the conscious struggle of workers had been appreciated by national and international trade unions and it added that 220 workers had been clamped together for their rights and defended their rights bravely and valiantly (February, 1957).

*Sendika Yolu*, which was the organ of Trade Union of Textile Workers (*Mensucat Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası*), was first published on 18 August 1948 in Nazilli. It appealed to the workers of Nazilli Sümerbank Cotton Factory. The newspaper was for the 2000 workers in this factory, and although it was published in a small town, the weekly newspaper was effective (Akkaya and Bulut, 2009: 107). It declared the aim of the newspaper in its heading by calling itself “worker newspaper publishing demands and sufferings of workers”, and called out the workers: “Fellow Worker! Trade Union is your social castle. It will defend your rights. It will emancipate you.” (August 18, 1948 and in continuing issues). Akkaya and Bulut (2009: 125) argue that since *Sendika Yolu* followed a policy that did not cohere with government politics, from its first issue it was suppressed, being frequently accused of communism. The authors define the situation as the tension between structure and agency. The trade union leader and chief writer of the newspaper Celal Ülkü and also another active trade union leader Cevder Şigay were arrested, being accused of propagating communism.

The general picture of each trade union publication has been drawn. Their most prominent features and distinguishing characteristics have been put forth to clarify their standpoints first hand. In the following section, those publications are analyzed with reference to their position on trade unionization, the right to strike and collective agreement and their perception of working class.

#### **4.1 Being Organized and Trade-Unionization**

As mentioned before, Orr and McNall (1991:114) counted organization, besides ideology and consciousness, as a distinct element of class formation process. Organization is at the same time a component of class consciousness process. Being organized can be seen as a step in the progress of class consciousness formation. It is in a sense an embryonic type of class consciousness. For the working class, trade unions starting from 18<sup>th</sup> Century are the master form of being organized at a large scale. Trade unions are the predominant class organizations of the proletariat.

“Trade unions are the most wholesale, most common and the oldest organizations of workers. They, before all else, aim to enhance and to keep direct or indirect economical interests of the workers. Rights that should be given to workers due to their class positions and protective umbrellas altogether; all sort of occupational social rights and demands pertinent to work life are within the framework of unionist organization. Trade unions are tools and organs of economical struggles of workers.” (Fişek, 1998:114).

Trade unions can be regarded as an expression of to what extent people define themselves as a part of a social class, or to what extent they prefer to highlight their class identities. It is a reality that people are structurally captured in class positions; however, formation of class does not end at that point. People’s perception of themselves is also a component of the class formation process. This is a subjective aspect of class formation process. Some believe that class matters because people think it matters (Savage, 2000:23). This statement seems idealistic, but it is meaningful when interpreted as actors’ intervention. For example, in this study, the working class has a core role in the formation of a class. From a Thompsonian standpoint this means people make themselves a class if they think of themselves of a class. In the case of industrializing Britain for instance, Thompson argues that subjective awareness of class and injustice was central to the process of class formation (Savage, 2000:23).

By 1946, with the amendments to the Association Law, social organizations had become effective, and people had found the opportunity to make political choices. After a long period of prohibition of class-based organizations, trade unions emerged. Trade unions had spread after the Trade Unions Law was taken effect in 1947. These trade unions were very poor because of the lack of the right to strike or have a work stoppage. Trade unions were under control of the state, and due to repression workers were conciliatory and remained within the boundaries of the law. In order to ameliorate poor working and living conditions, workers used legal means when attempting to gain more rights.

After the amendments in Association Law in 1946 that overturned the ban of establishing class-based organizations, workers began to organize rapidly (Güngör, 1998:104; Işıklı, 1979:355; Yıldırım, 2003:80). The repressive regime of the single party period had precipitated this process (Güngör, 1998: 104) and they began to establish trade unions (Işıklı, 1979:355). Workers' position in this period is evaluated in the *Sendika* journal:

“Coming generations will hail those handful heroic working children, who persevere to eliminate the obstacles for keeping alive and strengthening their organization that has been established with stupendous efforts and inconceivable tools (quoted by Işıklı, 1979:355-356)”.

In this period, class-based parties were established and called out to workers. Those parties, *Türkiye Emekçi ve Köylü Partisi* and *Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi* were interconnected with trade unions. To separate the new socialist parties and trade unions, the Republican People's Party government tried to take control of trade unions with new regulations. In 1947, the Trade Unions Law was passed and afterwards, trade unions became widespread but were prohibited from engaging in politics.

The 1950s can be seen as the trade unionization period of the working class. Under the governance of the Democrat Party, the number of workers covered by the Labor Law increased from 373.961 to 754.875; the number of trade unions increased



fivefold from 88 to 417; while the number of trade union members increased from 78.000 to 280.786, and the rate of trade union members rose to 37% from 21% (Ministry of Labor, 1978 quoted by Akkaya, 2002b:163). First and foremost, the aim of working people seemed to be membership in a trade union, and from the other side, trade unions' main intention was to increase their membership. The table below shows the fact with numbers:

*Table V.: Development about the number of trade unions and member of trade unions between 1948 and 1963<sup>36</sup>*

Year	Number of Workers amenable to Labor Law	Number of trade union members	Number of trade unions	Number of unions and confederations	Number of members per trade union
1948	329 463	52 000	73	1	712
1949	344 514	72 000	77	2	935
1950	373 961	78 000	88	3	886
1951	427 364	110 000	137	8	803
1952	488 505	130 000	248	16	524
1953	556 535	140 000	275	17	509
1954	583 292	180 387	323	23	558
1955	604 295	189 595	363	27	522
1956	645 321	209 155	376	26	556
1957	681 012	244 853	383	18	639
1958	671 704	262 591	394	18	666
1959	754 875	280 788	417	21	630
1960	824 881	282 967	432	27	655

**Source:** Rearranged and Calculated from Ministry of Labor, 1978, p.146-147; Talas, Dilik, Işıklı, 1965,p.56; Kutal, p.20; quoted by Makal, 2002: 276.

Makal (2002:276) explains that while the number of workers had increased threefold, the number of trade union members had increased approximately sixfold. From these numbers it may be inferred that workers subject to Labor Law had showed an intention to organize. Although trade union members were not a majority of all workers, the data indicates a relatively significant increase. Without regard to weakness and naïveté of the trade unions, the organizational consciousness of workers is worth analyzing since this period can be seen as a time of learning for the Turkish working class.

<sup>36</sup> Resource: Rearranged and Calculated from Ministry of Labor, 1978, p.146-147; Talas, Dilik, Işıklı, 1965,p.56; Kutal, p.20; quoted by Makal, 2002: 276.

#### 4.1.1 How trade unions and their aims were formulated

Trade unions for that period had a different meaning from the current meaning and duties of trade unions. Trade unions then were the initial steps in the establishment of the new and mass organization of the working class. In this respect, they can be perceived as the entities that provided the base for the formation of working class consciousness. The trade union is presented as the only genuine organization of workers in all of the newspapers. The organization's main aim is the enhancement of workers' organization. Seeing trade unions as their own organizations, workers did not expect to be politically influenced and interpreted trade unions within the boundaries of occupational and economical activities.

“Trade union means workers community, therefore individuals who can vindicate this union first and foremost should be free from political ideas and from the material and spiritual influences of their manager, supervisor and chiefs” (*İşçi Sendikası*, June 21, 1950)

A common observation of trade unions, was defining their main aim as a combination of helping workers to offer their labor to the market as capital and helping workers to secure their own interests. The trade union before all else was a workers' association and so, should vindicate the rights of workers. Emphasizing collectivity instead of individuality, workers' leading source of power was their union. To the extent that they are organized, and can work for the realization of their common will under trade unions, they can be successful (*Petrol-İş*, June 18, 1959).

The aims of the trade unions are sometimes presented in a direct and comprehensive way, and sometimes just touched upon, but they are repeated continuously. In news on the opening of courses on trade unionism, the courses are expected to initiate the advancement of trade unionization, regulating the relationship between workers and employees and increasing production (*istihsal*) in a parallel way with developed countries (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, September 10, 1953).

It is added that trade unionism are not limited to those tasks and that a trade union is a union, rather a society within a society that deals with the social and cultural problems of the country (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, September 10, 1953). The 1950s were the industrialization and proletarianization period of the country. Industrial and economical developments were important agenda items in the country. There was much migration from rural areas to the cities, concomitant with industrialization and agricultural mechanization. This condition of the country is put forth by *Maden-İş* (January 26, 1957) as such:

“Developing Turkey... Yes, foreigners usually use this phrase to define our country. Fortunately, after long years, even after centuries, we are now the children of a developing nation and country... Everyday, a building constructed in a different location of your country dazzles us; we watch them with admiration... But have you ever thought about the creators of those buildings? They are the naked workers of iron rolling and mechanical industry.”

Development meant industrialization for both workers and the government. In line with these developments, there was an increase in proletarianization in purely economic terms. Workers and their fundamental organization, trade unions, were concerned with workers' rights and the problems of workers. Unions were also dealing with problems in employment, a basic variable in the economic development of country. Beyond the economic development of the country, employment is directly connected with the economic interests of the workers, even to their survival. Workers were aware that unemployment had negative effects on their unionization and collective action. The unemployment problem was also seen as a significant reason for the weakness of trade unions. Therefore, trade unions saw finding solutions to unemployment problems as their duty. The only remedy for unemployment from the side of the workers was to unite in the form of a trade union. (*Petrol-İş*, December 15, 1958). Going beyond organization, trade unions sought concrete and feasible solutions to this problem. For instance, trade unions decide to work collectively with the Labor Placement Office (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, November 15, 1956).

The aims, tasks, and contents of trade unions were formulated as more or less the same in all of the different newspapers.<sup>37</sup> It is important to notice that trade unions are considerably accepted by workers, showing that already workers had come together and were acting together for their rights and interests. In most of the newspapers, workers from factories wrote to the newspaper, and demands from the employers were also expressed in the pages of the newspapers. Workers sometimes wrote only to appreciate their trade unions and to express their pleasure from the trade union in solving both their working life and daily problems. Another important point about the profile of the trade unions are the duties of trade unions attributed by workers. Economic development of the country is stressed. Contributing to this process is presented as an essential task of trade unions. As mentioned above, except for dealing with politics, trade unions can be and should be involved in cultural, social and economic issues that affect the country. In *İşçi Sendikası* the aims of trade unions are stipulated:

- “1-It should be interested in production and national economy of the country.
- 2-Occupational knowledge of workers should be increased and their culture should be expanded.
- 3-Precaution to illnesses and accidents, physical force and abilities of workers should be increased.
- 4-In economic issues, between workers and employers and in common issues they should exchange ideas.
- 5-Positive effects of increasing efficiency in cheapening of cost of living should be announced and explicated.
- 6-Relying on their knowledge and technique, trade unions should refer to the judicial principles.
- 7-Following the ways that trade unions in democratic countries come through, examining errors and goods; trade unions should benefit from good and suitable remedies from the goods of other countries’ experiences” (*İşçi Sendikası*, August 3, 1957).

Destiny of the country’s economy and workers conditions are perceived as interdependent. Workers are located at the center of economic development and they are exalted due to this task. Being a worker and part of the labour force are also held in high regard, both due to being an important part of economic

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<sup>37</sup> Since we are talking about trade union publications, this is not surprising.

development, and independent from it. Labour is deemed as the most valuable resource, and therefore, it is mentioned that workers should get what they deserve. In other words, trade unions' organization puts effort toward the development of country in all respects. In this effort, there are people who work hard but do not receive their share of wealth. People must struggle together to end any kind of injustices. (*Petrol-İş*, September 20, 1958). *Petrol İş* views the situation from a social justice perspective underscoring a very crucial point – that to get justice workers should struggle. In this manner, European workers' struggles for trade unionization are mentioned in newspapers. These struggles are also considered to highlight the difference between conditions of Turkish workers and European workers. It is observed from the newspapers that, specifically there was an inclination to think that the Turkish workers were able to get organized in trade unions without fighting for it. However, they thought that Turkish trade unions had a lot to learn from the struggle engaged by the European trade unions. This approach of the Turkish trade unions to struggles and ways of achieving rights illustrates the fact that the democracy discourse of the DP had been successful among the working class. Based upon this perception it can be argued that workers had believed in that the regime has transformed into a democratic one and in this democratic regime, they have some rights and they can enhance their rights.

The history of trade unions in Turkey, and in other countries, especially European countries, was usually published in all of the trade unions' newspapers. History is part of the education process of workers, and education is expected to improve trade union consciousness. Western trade unions are seen as models for Turkish trade unions. However, Western trade unions, in power and position, are very far from Turkish trade unions. Yet the expectation is to achieve the same power and position as Western trade unions. For instance in *Ereğli İşçi Postası*, articles on French trade unions and English trade unions were published as a serial. In those articles, it is mentioned that workers of those countries achieved their current rights over time and by means of struggle. Both in France and England, there were prohibitions on the organizations of workers; but later they gained the right to be

organized. It is emphasized in one of the articles that workers did not give up, and forced governments to make amendments in laws to defend their rights (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, April 20, 1958).

When taking into consideration what is chosen to be emphasized in articles and the rationale behind these choices, it can be argued that instead of directly stating demands regarding trade unions in that period, the unions seemed to be choosing a less dangerous way by referring to other countries. Emphasis on the fact that gaining rights is a process, and that Turkish workers would achieve more rights in time through their efforts is expressed in the writings of the trade-unions. Enhancement of the power of the workers is linked to the ability of trade unions to enlarge their membership and to enhance their power base. Workers' rights are not perceived as individual rights; on the contrary, the power of workers against employers comes from their tendency and need to act collectively. It is believed that they need to act collectively in order to gain certain rights for themselves and their trade unions. This point is clarified in *Petrol İş* (June 18, 1959):

“Main source of the works is their associations. When workers become organized and work for the realization of their collective interests under a single trade unions, they would achieve they demanded. The demands of workers remain within the confinements of law and principle of social justice. Depending on the principle of social justice, we express our demands./.../ We are much more experience and organized today. We demand right to strike. /.../ For the sake of our demands and interests and for the enhancement of our conditions, we have to have much more powerful trade unions.”

Collectivity and role of trade unions in the creation and revelation of this collectivity is also highlighted in a different newspaper:

“Against employers who are economically powerful, striving for rights and interests of workers is a must. Result of separate and individual struggles will be to the disadvantage of workers./.../ In view of these disadvantages workers need to safeguard their rights and interest collectively through established occupational organizations that is trade unions. Trade unions are the defenders of economical and occupational rights of the workers. They work to prevent the violation of laws. They prevent arbitrary applications and do not allow exploitation.” (*İşçi Sendikası*, April 13, 1959).

A common point underlined in all of the publications is that being a part of trade union is the most reliable, and generally the only way for workers to seek or demand their rights. There are examples of workers who write letters to the trade union to be a member of the association. One significant example is a worker that demands an inspector in his letter, expressing that he demands his rights, even at the cost of being expelled from his job. (*Petrol-İş*, August 16, 1958). Also *Petrol İş*, mentions the risk that the establishment of weak trade unions can be destructive for the emergence of strong trade unions. Powerful, massive trade unions can overcome this handicap and can genuinely struggle for the interests of workers. (*Petrol-İş*, June 18, 1959). Trade unions seek for their workers the share of wealth the workers created in the industrialization of their country. This is in part how unions created social justice, or how their ways intersected with social justice. The trade union is the only foundation or source for the rights and justice of workers. (*İşçi Sendikası*, December 7, 1949).

The newspapers mostly suggest to workers that they should protect their own organizations, and through these legitimate organizations, they should endeavor to improve their rights and enhance their life conditions. In confrontations, it is important for trade unions actions and their implications to remain within the boundaries of the law. Usage of any tools in the struggle should adhere to the law. Previously, collective agreement, and especially striking were among the basic tools used in the conflict between employers and employees, namely in class struggle. Following, the content and extent of right to strike and collective agreement is analyzed.

## **4.2 Right to Strike and Collective Agreement**

Before talking about the right to strike, it is essential to define striking and its role in the class struggle. The demand for the right to strike implies that those demanding this right expect to gain something from the achievement of that right. This can be understood by analyzing the content of the newspapers on the strike

phenomenon. The right to strike is primarily defined with the goal it pursues. This right is the right to call a strike (Demircioğlu, 1996:503). Strike action is known to be the workers' action of stopping production and service in their fight for collective agreement and other rights. In a detailed form, strike is a significant tool or weapon that is used by the proletariat to vindicate his/her rights and interests, to restore work and life conditions to more humanistic and just manner, in other words, it is a tool to limit exploitation (Güzel,1993:13). Şehmus Güzel describes the strike in his book *Strike- Contribution to the Structural and Functional Examination of Strike*. To strike is to cease work by workers collectively to make the employer accept the demands of the employees (Sellier, quoted by Güzel, 1993:16). To strike is also to cease work by workers of a certain number that work in the same factory or that have the same jobs with the disposition of starting work again after reaching goals or after the conflict ends (Hueck and Nipperday, quoted by Güzel, 1993:16). To strike may also be to cease work by most of the workers for a certain or uncertain time in a factory or region to change working conditions in favor of workers and to gain advantages (Talas, quoted by Güzel, 1993:16). Finally, to strike is to cease work temporarily by a group of workers to gain a conflict with the employer or to come to be known, or to strengthen the demand of change in employment (definition of State Institute of Statistics, quoted by Güzel, 1993:16).

The common point in these definitions is to cease work. Workers stop work to achieve their goals and to demand something from their employers. Under the strike phenomenon there lays the confidence of workers of their power. As we have seen, workers' power comes from production. They produce for the continuity of capitalism and to stop producing goods is highly expensive for capitalists. This is why Marxist theory attributes a privileged role to the proletariat. There are objective and subjective elements of strike. Şehmus Güzel lists the subjective elements of strike, which are also used in the aforementioned definitions of strike. According to Güzel, workers should demand and aim to digress from the contract of employment; they should talk about the strike problem, and should have looked for solutions together beforehand. Workers should reach a decision collectively



and they should also have the aim of maintaining or changing their economic and social conditions (Güzel, 1993:20-21).

Those definitions of strike are technical definitions and categorizing the elements as objective and subjective are also part of the technical description of the strike. However, subjective elements of strike are more important in terms of class consciousness. Reasons and motivations behind calling a strike or behind threatening the employer with strike form the content of subjective elements of the strike. Workers play a conscious role as agents in this content. In the Marxist theory of class struggle, strikes are a basic tool for struggle and the importance of the strike comes from its strength as a tool. As we have seen, the proletariat is the revolutionary class in capitalist social formation, and the importance of its activities departs from this basic assumption. The proletariat's interests, desires, considerations, and its endeavor to achieve them are steps in the class formation process. In other words, every activity of the working class, by means of which class consciousness is developed, is important for Marx (Randive, 1984:2).

There are different types of activities to call upon to force the employer to accept the demands of the workers. They are the most evident collective actions. Work restrictions, boycotting meals and services, growing a beard, and factory occupations are examples of collective action. They are spatially factory-based activities. The strike is one of the strongest of the factory-based collective actions. Collectivity is at its highest during strikes. In the above listed collective actions, specifically strikes and their related forms of action, trade unions have a crucial role in class consciousness formation. The formation of trade unions and the trade union movement were important steps in the formation of a class consciousness (Randive, 1984:2). Perkins (1993: 53) revises the view of Marx on "Strikes and Combinations of Workers" that is portrayed in *Poverty of Philosophy*:

"Through strikes, combination and trade unions 'proletarians carry out before our eyes their organization as a class' and constitute themselves as a class, not only as a class in opposition to capital with a common situation

and common interests but also, as the interests it defends become class interests and as class struggle unavoidable a political struggle, so too it 'constitutes itself as a class for itself.'”

Lockwood refers to two different forms of class consciousness which are rooted in two interrelated yet independent processes. The first is the consciousness of a division of interest between employer and employee, and the second is a consciousness of a community of interest among employees (Lockwood, 1966:208). Trade unionization is the indicator of the second process regarding the development of class consciousness.

The content of the newspapers show that the first process – a division of interests between employers and employees – is not realized or is realized in a discontinuous manner. Employer and employee are not always seen as contradictory groups. There are examples of content that reflects contradictory interests of the employers and employees, and even mention about the opposition between labor and capital. However, the interests of the working class are conceptualized as common interests of a class rather than as interests of an individual worker, but they are not conceptualized as an uncompromising and antagonistic relation between labor and capital. Taking into account Ollman’s definition of class (see Chapter Two), one can observe some aspects of class consciousness at this point. Ollman (1972) states that as an initial step of class consciousness formation, workers should become aware of their interests and see those interests as interests of their class.

The period of 1950-1960 is the youth of the Turkish working class in terms of trade unionization. The decade was a learning process and was mostly shaped under the influence of the framework drawn by government politics. Due to these factors, one cannot talk about a homogenous and coherent consciousness of working class for this period. The lack of integration and coherence is best seen in trade unions’ approach to the right to strike and collective agreement. The Labour Law that was initiated in 1936 prohibited strikes and lockdowns; Article 72 of the law strictly states that strikes and lockdowns are forbidden (Sülker, 2004:203).

Throughout the 1950s, strikes and collective agreements are predominantly handled in the trade unions newspapers. It was the crucial matter in question for workers, for the Democrat Party and also for the main opposition party, the Republican's People Party. For the Democrat Party, one of the most important promises for workers before coming into power was recognizing right to strike. On the other hand, the RPP opposed to right to strike. In *Ulus* newspaper, which is known as the press organ of the RPP, Peyami Safa (*Ulus*: 1950) in one of his articles on the right to strike says that when workers use the weapon of strike in their struggle with capital; there is a third, innocent party. That party is production. The author adds that since every strike harms production, the strike is a harmful activity for both the society and the workers themselves. Vedat Nedim Tör (*Yeni İstanbul*, March 5, 1950) argues that in Turkey, class interests were not organized, and state was very far from a class state. This feature of the state results in the regulation of labor life by the state without the struggle of the working class. According to Tör, the Turkish state is very humble toward workers' rights, and in such conditions, the right to strike is useless or harmful, and moreover, the strike is very outdated for the time.

The same argument is expressed in different newspapers throughout the period. They write that either the strike is not proper for our country, or recognizing the right to strike requires time because the Turkish working class is very inexperienced (*Güzel İstanbul*, March 16, 1950; *Tan*, April 10, 1950).<sup>38</sup> These arguments were mostly used by the RPP against the DP, who supported the right to strike in the early 1950s. Since that period, it was on the agenda of trade unions, but was not supported by the totality of the trade unions. There were supporters and opponents of the strike departing from different rationales; however, at the same time there is no clear-cut distinction between those supporting and those opposing the right to strike. There are cases where these facts interfere with each other.

Trade unions general approach in their relation with government is conciliatory.

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<sup>38</sup> Those newspapers, other than the trade union newspapers, are compiled in the book of *Grev Olayları ve Türkiyemiz* by Çalışma Bakanlığı in 1950.

Staying within the boundaries of law is stressed and doing best for the country is the primary motive of the workers when seeking remedy. One can find in different trade union papers the same motive as both explanation of supporting and opposing the right to strike. A good example of this can be found in an issue of *Ereğli İşçi Postası*, in which strikes of construction workers in İzmir, and of Hilton construction workers are interpreted. In the news, it is mentioned that construction workers in İzmir went on strike illegally, but because they were exposed to injustices. It is also mentioned that previously Hilton worker and construction workers in İzmir had been partially successful in their attempts to strike. Following, it is said that workers unions want desperately want the right to strike, and that prohibiting strike is not any better than going on strike. The argument in the article is that if the strike had been legitimate, construction workers in İzmir would not have embarked upon that action. The article insisted that the government should not fear the strike.

Strikes exist to convince parties of agreement and compromise (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, August 7, 1954). All worker unions comprehend strike as a principle of agreement and compromise, and agree that strike should be used in a manner suiting the benefits of the country (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, August 7, 1954). Here, fundamentally, the right to strike is demanded from the government and workers put difficult life conditions as factors of going on strike. We witness the phenomenon that capitalist relations of production result in collectivization of action of the workers independent of their will. Indeed, in this period when the strike was forbidden, some newspapers hesitated to put their ideas on the usage of the strike, but on the other hand, when life conditions worsened, they became clearly aware that strike was necessary for workers.

Strike, a form of collective behavior, indicates to us the existence of a belief and understanding that collective activity can be influential (Hyman quoted by Seçer, 2007:154). Within the framework of institutionalization of work relations, some reasons for conflict disappear due to institutionalization and passive ways of

solving conflicts, such as improvement in participation mechanisms and centralization of the collective agreement structure which results in a lower tendency to call a strike (Makal, 1987: 222-223).

Although the period is characterized by the prohibition of strike and ongoing discussions on the right to strike, workers had occasionally gone on strikes for various reasons.

#### **4.2.1 Supporting Right to Strike and Collective Agreement**

The demand of collective agreement and the right to strike are dependent upon each other. Collective agreements are made between employers and trade unions. The right to strike is a necessary prerequisite for collective agreement (*Maden-İş*, February 16, 1957). Just like strikes, collective bargaining and collective agreement are indicators of the power of workers that relies on their collective consciousness and collective actions. Collective activities of workers against employers all result from the contradictory interests of workers and employers. In labour economics, the term industrial conflict is used to define the results of the contradictory interests of labour and capital. While the strike represents industrial conflict, collective agreement represents pacifism (Kerr, quoted by Seçer, 2007: 144). However, when we look from the standpoint of workers' struggle; both are part of the struggle for seeking justice. Consequently, they are both used in the same context in this analysis. Industrial conflict, or the inherent contradictions of capitalist relations of production, brings about objections and opposition from workers.

The determination of wages is one of the most concrete indicators of this contradictory relationship. The most widespread reason to go on strike is disagreement on wages between employers and workers. The "wage problem comes first among the reasons of strike." For increase in wages, workers are generally aware that strike is the most effective instrument. Due to its effectiveness, workers demand the right to strike, "land workers, industrial workers and white-

collar worker should utilize this right” (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, August 29, 1953). Conflict on wages reveals the significance of strikes regarding strengthening of workers’ collectivity. Lenin (1975: 161) refers to this claiming that in the process of wage determination a single worker does not have any power. Seeing this, workers began to rise up to employers jointly. He highlights the fact that strikes are imminent to the capitalist system for workers.

“The Social Democrat Party has always perceived economical struggle as a part of class struggle of the proletariat. Experience of all capitalist countries has shown that most appropriate organizational form for economical struggle of the working class is massive trade unions. Economical struggle can bring about enhancement in conditions of working masses and empowerment in genuine class organizations only if it fuses with political struggle of the proletariat” (Lenin, 1975: 271).

The tension in the determination of wages gives capitalist system the mentioned contradictory feature. Within the context of contradiction between employers and workers in capitalist system, the necessity of collective agreement is evaluated in one of the newspapers:

“Employer should pay for labor and this results in decrease in profits. Since an employer seeks maximum profit, he/she does not consider life conditions of a worker and perceives this situation as a just situation. Nevertheless, in free/liberal countries, class-based organizations that are trade unions can limit these rights and collective agreements are used for this reason. Collective contract is the principle of agreement and compromise. Our trade unions always long for collective agreement to improve the life of workers. Due to this fact, the employer sees collective agreement as threat and rejects the demands of trade unions. The mentality of employer, anyway, impedes to accept collective agreement... To compel employers to accept collective agreement, trade unions should have the effective legislation” (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, August 14, 1952).

In this evaluation, it can be observed that workers of the Cotton Factory of Ereğli were aware of their collective power as producers against the employers and this gave them leverage in their relation with employers. It was emphasized that their force could only be used in an effective manner on organized ground. Emphasis on collective agreement is in conformity with the assumption of Marxist theory that

capitalist relations of production result in the emergence of collective action and collective consciousness. “Human labor like any commodity needs market. In countries where open labor struggle takes place, labor comes out to market and on the demand-supply basis it is priced. It is not the case for Turkey. Recognition of the right to strike, implementation of labor law and trade union law is the real remedy and trade unions should contact with deputies about these issues.” (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, September 18, 1954). In this quotation, the social aspect of the proletarianization process in which a worker becomes both independent from the capitalist and dependent to it at the same time becomes evident. Capitalist relations of production and the market economy make organization a necessity for workers. Strikes and trade unions are formulated as playing a disliked, forceful role for employers in the recognition of workers’ rights; however, workers do not rely upon only their own capacity and look to the assistance of deputies. Proletarianization at this level cannot be ground to take collective actions even though workers are aware the impact of being organized (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, September 18, 1954).

The main argument of the supporters of the right to strike is that the right to strike is a means of security for workers. Workers are in a weak position relative to employers and the right to strike and collective agreement are tools that could close the gap between employers and workers in terms of rights. The right to strike and collective agreement are necessities of a democratic regime. It is underscored that workers should be given their democratic rights. In demanding rights for workers, in addition to democracy, workers refer to the economic system. In an article in *Ereğli İşçi Postası*, first, relations between the economy and democracy, and their influence on the relations between employer and worker are discussed. Subsequently the right to strike is demanded from the Democrat Party. It is stated that:

“Guided economy is state economy and unguided economy is entrepreneurial capitalism. The former pursues etatist policies and the latter pursues liberal policies. Since the state is the only entrepreneur in etatism, it deems collective bargaining necessary and does not want strike. However, in unguided economy the working class that uses its labor and capitalist

class as capital is equivalent in respect of capital so rights and freedoms that are given to the capitalist class should be given to the working class automatically. Workers should find the opportunity for progress over liberal capitalist social formation to appraise their labor. **Opportunities to establish trade unions, federations and confederations and to make conflicts, to call strikes, to meet in public or indoor places to criticize the government and employers and to make collective agreements should be provided and all of these should be considered as their acquired rights and freedoms.** Based on these explanations it is asked whether if the Democrat Party, owning the claim of being the party to implement liberal economy politics, did provide the same rights and freedoms.” (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, June 2, 1952).

The Democrat Party holds liberalization of the economic system as their most significant aim. Trade unions, which were the only representative of the workers for that time, demand from the government rights and freedoms for workers, because workers need to be guaranteed the rights and freedoms listed above. Although these rights are put at a general, abstract level, it is underlined that they are going to be sought by trade unions (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, June 2, 1952). In *Petrol İş* (November 1, 1959) democracy is seen as possible only when democratic institutions function; however, it is believed that in Turkey, the functioning of democratic institutions was not possible. The strike is a basic action and a democratic right, actually a basic premise of democracy for workers; but since it is not allowed, one cannot talk about the freedom of trade unions. In the below quotation, interpreting the strikes of steelworkers in U.S, one can see that democracy and the right to strike are intertwined:

“Workers’ representative David MacDonald answers the arrangement conditions of the representative of employer as ‘despicable demand’ and he gets his courage and support from the strike, in other words, from genuine democracy. Otherwise we believe that, in a country where guided economy that does not allow right to strike reigns; the claiming employer will not give the kind of an answer that would be credulous.” (*Petrol-İş*, November 1, 1959).

The other point continuously mentioned in the newspapers is the rights of workers in foreign countries. It is said that the right to strike, as a primary defense weapon of the workers, had already come into prominence in democratic countries, and the



question was whether this legitimate tool could work in Turkey. (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, April 16, 1956). This question makes sense, because it is a general agreement that trade unions were not matured or strong enough, but in this article this fact is not put as a rationale of opposing right to strike. On the contrary, it is emphasized that despite this fact workers should work to access this right.

“If we only wait for the result, thinking that we are weak and so we cannot be successful in this act, then we would have taken the responsibility of coming generations on our shoulders and would suffer the consequences of this responsibility. Anything put into practice for the first time faces with difficulties but as times goes these difficulties disappear. When striking is put into practice for the first time it can look hard; but it is little harder than collective agreement for a strong trade union.” (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, April 16, 1956)

The basic requirement of going on strike is strong trade unions. The financial conditions of trade unions should be improved, and their size must be increased to use strike as a weapon. (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, June 4, 1957). A comparison of European and Asian countries on the issue of collective agreement takes place in one of the articles in *Petrol İş.* (*Petrol-İş*, June 18, 1959) It is written that Asian countries are in a backward situation in terms of the implementation of collective agreements. The important point of this comparison is that the primary reason for this backwardness is the perception that business is the collective source of income for both employers and employees. For this reason, collective agreements were not executed properly. It is implied that interests of employers and employees cannot be the same, and that thinking otherwise is dangerous. Seeing the interests of employers and employees, or the interests of capitalists and the working class as reconcilable is conceptualized as false consciousness in Marxist theory, particularly in the Leninist and Lukacsian traditions.

Based on this assumption, the ideas stated in the article can be evaluated as a search for true consciousness or a search for the best way for workers in the struggle of gaining rights. In addition, it is stated that since the gaps in the Trade Unions Law No. 5018 and Labour Law No. 3008 provide such opportunities for employees that

they do not need to establish trade unions. This statement also should be taken into consideration because it indicates that workers are aware of the double standard among the employers and employees in the execution of laws regarding work life and organization. In this duality, the executive head – the representative of state power in this case – sides with employers. The state and bourgeoisie are located opposite to workers. Presenting the relationship between employer and worker as directly oppositional is not the general tendency, but it is continuously implied in a conscious or unconscious manner. Workers initially turn to their own existence as a group having common interests; they turn to their own collectivity. Relying on their own unions, their own collectivity and mass power is stressed when the relations between worker and employer are taken into consideration. This brings to mind Lockwood's second process of consciousness: it is not wrong to argue that a community of interest exists among employees. The demand of the right to strike is repeated one more time in this regard.

“In comparison to the period that you advocate the right to strike, we are today much more organized and matured. Why do you fight with your previous ideas?... Those employers want to use workers as a tool for their own benefits. They were genuine neither in advocating right to strike yesterday nor in objecting to the right to strike using the excuse of the good of the country today. Those kinds of employers only seek their benefits and try every possible means in this way. Against them, an effective and eminent front should be established under the light of laws. It is absolutely necessary to go to strong, effective and large-size trade unions instead of small-size trade unions. .... In this regard we should work hard for the eventuation of social demands especially the right to strike as soon as possible; we should take sides with those who stand up for our demands enlightened by social justice in opposition to employers, we should benefit from their ideas and should not forget that there are intellectuals on our side. We should increase our endeavors to establish a collective action front with the people on our sides in the struggle for the realization of social justice, not only employer-employee struggle.” (*Petrol-İş*, June 18, 1959).

Summarizing the major points in the trade union newspapers; we see that the right to strike is basically defined as a defensive weapon for workers in their relations with employers. Awareness of their subordinate position relative to employers forces workers to seek the right to strike. It is also emphasized that in line with the

democratic steps of the country, workers embrace of the right to strike is a fundamental democratic right and demanding legalization of this is a democratic right. On February 15 of 1957, *Maden-İş* published the declaration of the İstanbul Trade Unions Association on the legislation regarding trade unions and collective agreement and the right to strike. This declaration demanded the amendment of the Trade Unions Law with Law No. 5018 and also mentioned that to force employers to sign collective agreements with trade unions; the right to strike is a must. It is said in the newspaper that *Maden-İş* and their association, the İstanbul Trade Unions Association, had been demanding right to strike for years (*Maden-İş*, February 15, 1957). Moreover, in the following issues of the newspaper, the headline states that the Trade Unions Association prepared a draft bill of Trade Unions (*Maden-İş* March 9, 1957). The Trade Union of Zonguldak Mine Workers also demanded the amendment of the Trade Unions Law and especially its articles that were disadvantageous to the workers (*İşçi Sendikası*, February 13, 1958).

Trade unions became more courageous throughout time, their growth and their increasing depth of experience provided the power they required to bargain with employers.

Workers' position in relations of production and their life conditions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century already required strikes and collective agreements. However, examination of country's economic and social conditions and the according workers' conditions worked against the right to strike in the minds of the workers.

#### **4.2.2 Opposing Right to Strike**

While approaches supporting the right to strike are clear and the motives are more understandable, approaches opposing right to strike are incoherent and their arguments are not very powerful. A very typical example is as such:

“Strike is known as a bad thing. Strike is a defense tool used by workers unwillingly. After the discussions on whether strike is good or bad; in

conclusion strike is taken good and seen as suitable to our country by the authorities.” (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, September 11, 1952).

An argument also accepted by those opposing to right to strike was the fact that striking is a tool for the enhancement of workers’ conditions, and consequently, the right to strike should be given. What is underlined regarding the strike act is that the strike is perceived as unsuitable for the current interests and conditions of the workers. Different rationales play different roles in opposition to the use of the strike tool in the struggle to seek justice. The weakness of trade unions and unemployment are the major reasons that are brought forward. Another reason for not going to strike – since striking is forbidden, this insinuates that the right to strike pointless – which is also subject to circumstances, is the mission of the workers in the industrial development of country. The main character of struggle and seeking rights is conciliatory rather than confrontational. The journal *İşçi Sendikası* presents much more nationalist and statist features in comparison to journals such as *Maden-İş*, *Petrol-İş* and also *Ereğli İşçi Postası*. On the right to strike issue, there are articles claiming that the right to strike would badly effect Turkish workers, and therefore they did not support the idea of the right to strike. There are also other journals arguing against striking alongside the supporters of the right to strike and that see striking as a crucial tool for workers. As a general tendency, conciliatory attitudes, combined with a lack of confidence, seem to lead to demand for the right to strike aloud in a confident and consistent manner. This case is relevant among different trade unions, and within each trade union; even if they bear in mind that the strike is a basic right for the sake of workers.

“In National Production and Industrial Enterprises, we nationally cannot allow even a single wheel to turnover missing” says *İşçi Sendikası* (*İşçi Sendikası*, January 25, 1950). Production for country and for nation is put above anything for workers. Within this perspective, workers’ main task was to work for the wealth of the country. Regarding this task, labour is sanctified in various forms. Workers were attributed value for their position in the relations of productions; they were the

producing class. Here, in terms of power, workers in production intersect with views supporting the right to strike. Their power was coming from the capability of ceasing production, as mentioned earlier; on the other hand, in nationalistic views, workers' power comes from producing for the country. Being a class, which produces depending on its only power – labor – indicates the very nucleus of the character of the capitalist relations of production. This fact shows the confidence of worker of their own power and collectivity from a different and more corporatist side.

Turkey was seen as a developing country and required workers, particularly industrial workers, who could carry out this task. The achievement of wealth nationwide brings about wealth for the country. One dimension of this development perspective pertains to trade unions. Depending on the youthfulness of the country in terms industrialization, and so in terms of proletarianization, trade unions were said to be newly getting strong. In this perspective, the first aim of Turkish workers should be to organize in trade unions, their mass organizations; the right to strike would be a far later goal for them.

“Strong trade unions can brave talking about strikes and make workers listen their ideas. There are not strong unions in Turkey. In our country there is not a certain worker staff. There is a continuous inflow from villages to the factories. In this regard, trade unions do not have the opportunity of a threat element against employers. ...For the present the only thing we can do is to make our trade unions powerful and to abrogate difficulties in front of this task...Otherwise-fighting for the right to strike is an unnecessary luxury.” (*İşçi Sendikası*, November 14, 1959)

Having power is the most underlined and required feature in the newspapers in the context of struggle for workers' rights and demands. Power is thought to be synonymous with the prevalence of the mass of workers and their membership in trade unions. It is said to workers that increasing the membership of their trade unions will facilitate and hasten the seeking of legal rights. (*İşçi Sendikası*, February 25, 1956). If workers were not powerful enough to keep to their demands, the right to strike would be meaningless for them.

“The Turkish worker is poor.... Even the most brave and strong of trade unions do not have conditions to pay the half of the workers’ daily fees. In such as a case, it is obvious that strike can only bring about loss for workers not gains.”(*İşçi Sendikası*, January 25, 1950).<sup>39</sup>

Unemployment is another important reason to oppose the right to strike. Unemployment is used as an argument against the demand of the right to strike because jobless people, the substitute army of industry, are obstacles to the class struggle of workers. Workers mostly work in state enterprises, but their wages and life standards are very low. In addition to these conditions, unemployment forces workers to concur their position. “Due to the migration from villages to the cities, unemployment is an objective reality in the country.... That is, today anyone who wants to work cannot find a job immediately. Since this is the way it is, talking about right to strike is not understandable. (*İşçi Sendikası*, January 25, 1950)<sup>40</sup>. These conditions solidify the perception that the interest of the nation and the interests of workers are dependent upon each other. The logic of “what is bad for country is bad for us” turns out to be a reason to avoid strikes.

In line with this perspective, the Zonguldak miners declared that they did not want the right to strike and maintained that they saw working for the country, for the nation, and for their households as a national mission. In this perception, striking is not compatible with national interests, and moreover, supporters of strikes are accused of having goals influenced from outside the country (*İşçi Sendikası*, February 1, 1950)<sup>41</sup>. The Cold War forced governments to take a side:

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<sup>39</sup>“Türk işçisi fakirdir. ... Sendikaların en kabadayısı bile üyelerine yarım gündelik ödeyecek durumda değildir. Bu vaziyet karşısında grevin işçi sınıfına menfaat değil, zarar getireceği aşıkardır.” (*İşçi Sendikası*, January 25, 1950).

<sup>40</sup> Evvela şunu açıklayalım ki: geçen senenin kurak gitmesi dolayısıyla köylülerin şehirlere ve iş yerlerine akın etmesi neticesi olarak bugün memlekette hakikaten bir işsizlik mevcuttur.... Yani bugün memlekette çalışmak isteyen herkese iş bulunmamaktadır. Hal böyleyken bazı kimselerin ve hele bazı Millet vekillerimizin grev hakkından bahsetmelerinin sebebini bir türlü anlayamıyoruz.... (*İşçi Sendikası*, January 25, 1950)

<sup>41</sup> “Zonguldak maden işçileri mümeşilleri hep beraber grev istemediklerini ve yurt için, millet için, yuvaları için her zaman çalışarak kazanmağı milli bir vazife bildiklerini hep bir ağızdan and içerek belirttiler.

Grevi niçin istemiyoruz: Çünkü şu veya bu vesile ile sağlamak istediğimiz hiçbir gizli emelimiz olmadığı gibi, şunu bunun mahiyeti meçhul gayelerine de alet olmak fikrinde değiliz. ... Biz grev

the Soviet Union or the United States of America. The Democrat Party was emphatic about its support of the United States. Cold War conditions resulted in a clear anti-communist ideological stand in Turkey. Anti-communist politics of the government had influence on trade unions and especially on their ideas regarding the right to strike. Strikes were identified with communist ideology, which was seen as disastrous for the nation. Anti-communism appears as the one of the most popular reasons for opposing right to strike. Moreover, those supporting strikes are obliged to prove that they are not communists. In *Petrol İş*, an annoyance of being accused of communism comes across. Communism is an ideology that they constantly struggle against with absolutely everybody. When they demand the freedom to strike, it should be seen as a normal right in democratic governments (*Petrol-İş*, January 15, 1959). *İşçi Sendikası* declares that they do not want to “nourish communist microbes by means of strikes, on the contrary we want to kill those red microbes by working in cooperation.” (*İşçi Sendikası*, February 1, 1950)<sup>42</sup>.

#### 4.3 Summary of the Views on Right to Strike and Class Consciousness

Economic development, democracy, national interest, anti-communism and the value of labor are the major points in the trade union newspapers in determining the formulation of the ideas on the right to strike. The right to strike is seen as a normal consequence of economic and industrial development, as an inevitable consequence of democratization, and as a *sine qua non* of democratic governments. Economic development and industrialization is the structural basis of proletarianization of the society. The assumption that is generally accepted is that there is a positive correlation between industrialization and collective oppositions of workers.

“Macro-sociological theories of political economy reveal a debate over the

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istemiyoruz çünkü en ileri memleketlerde bile grevcilerin milli menfaatları değil, dışarıdan alınan emirleri hedef tuttıklarını duyuyoruz” (*İşçi Sendikası*, February 1, 1950)

<sup>42</sup> Grevle Komünist mikroplara gıda vermek değil, bilakis elbirliği ile çalışmak ve bu kızıl mikropları öldürmek istiyoruz. (*İşçi Sendikası*, February 1, 1950)

relationship between the level of economic development and strikes. Authors from various schools of thought tend to agree only on the thesis that strikes tend to increase during the period of early industrialization. These are the times of widespread social and economic problems such as the uprootedness felt by people involved in the necessary and large-scale rural-to-urban migration, eighteen-hour workdays, mass impoverishment, overcrowded housing, fits and starts in the business cycle, and so on.” (Stack and Haas, 1983:44).

Stack and Haas (1983:44) argue that concentration of workers in cities brings about the potential members of trade unions and that this enables trade unionists to access unions. Gathering together increases the communication of workers and makes them share common complaints and sufferings. It is expected that workers will begin to demand better and better conditions for themselves, and that these conditions would give rise to conflicts and disputes between workers and employers (Stack and Haas, 1983:44). The most effective tool for the disputes is the strike. Once again, it is expressed that industrialization naturally brings about contradictions. Economic development and/or industrialization evoked trade unionization, collective action, and collective consciousness among workers. Although strikes were forbidden until 1962, there were examples of calling strikes occasionally since difficult conditions forced workers to go on strikes. At the same time, emphasis on economic development and the value attributed to industrialization reinforced the idea that the nation made progress through the contributions of workers. The idea of the significance of workers’ task in economic development also resulted in oppositions to right to strike among some groups of workers. This perception played an obstructive role in the formation of a class consciousness.

Regarding the relation between democratization and strikes, it is inferred that the right to strike in European Countries had been achieved through various struggles for this right. A common idea in the newspapers was that since that time the right to strike was accepted as a universal norm, so harsh struggles were not required for Turkish workers to gain the right to strike. This fact was a reality, but at the same time, a (compulsory) preference of the trade unions of the period. In the period



between 1952 and 1961, the dominant approach of trade unions was obtaining certain rights by getting along with the government, instead of creating a line of struggle and raising an independent class movement (Özbey, 2001:27). This attitude was a result of the negative experience of independent trade unions that were established in 1946 outside of state control. Those trade unions were closed in a short time period, and the trade unionists were punished (Özbey, 2001:27).

Looking at the above circumstances, the mode of class struggle, which gives its shape to class consciousness, can be classified into two categories: conciliatory and contradictory modes of struggle. Essentially, they can only correspond to different strategies within the class struggle since the final interests of employers and workers cannot compromise with each other. Steinberg (1983:26) separates the discourses that working class can embrace into two categories. These models of discourses arise on the basis of the lived experiences of the class, and the repercussions of these experiences are an expression of various different factors (Steinberg, 1983:26). The meaning and content of strike, which is a fundamental indicator of working class consciousness, differs according to the models. For the first model of discourse, if masters do not violate this rationality, there will not be a necessity of a strike from the sides of workers. "Workers are forced into strikes; they do not enter into them indiscriminately to seek advantage." Workers are the producers of the wealth of the society and strikes serve the interest of the community (Steinberg, 1983:30). Class interests are not formulated as contradictory in this discourse and strikes are not seen as weapons in achieving the rights and demands of workers.

In his second categorization of discourse uncompromising conflict between workers and capitalists is recognized and the relation between employer and worker is formed depending on their economic and social power (Steinberg, 1983:31). In this formulation collectivity gains an important role. Collective consciousness of workers against the capitalist is present in this discourse. Due to the contradictory interests of workers and employers, workers can only achieve their goals through

struggle. In this struggle, strikes are effective weapons for workers, and they are not only used for defensive reasons but also for offensive ones (Steinberg, 1983:33). Strikes indicate a dispute, therefore the wealth and property of workers has a role in the maintenance of the wealth of the society. It can be concluded that workers are located in a more crucial and critical place in the relations of production. Collective capacity and the act of production give the working class a powerful position over against the employers. In this regard, striking appears as both a defensive and an offensive weapon in the hand of workers.

Labor is attributed a significant value, due to the act of production, in both artisanal and operative forms of working class consciousness. The value attributed to labor is an important aspect of class consciousness formation, but as we have seen both in the categorizations of Steinberg, and also in the analysis of trade union publications, it is not enough for the development of a contradictory class consciousness. "All strikes are uniquely social phenomena and they require some collective awareness or issue around which to revolve, a decision to proceed, and sufficient organization and communication to be enacted." (Kelly and Nicholson, 1980:280). This is an objectively true fact and some sort of awareness among workers is also observable in the trade union newspapers evaluated in this research. It should also be added that working class consciousness is open to different discourses, conditions and effects and due to this reason it does not express itself purely as class consciousness, at least for the Turkish workers of the Democrat Party Period.

The most effective factors of the period are nationalism, economic development, or corporatism in the context of the relationship between workers and employers, and lastly anti-communism. Anti-communism was already a weapon used against the workers' movement during single party period. Striking was identified with communism. In *Türk Sesi* (January 25, 1950) it had been declared that if the right to strike is given to the Turkish worker; communism, "which cannot come out of toilets", would find a chance to develop. The DP government developed this

ideological stand and punished strikes. The Democrat Party recognized some of the individual rights of workers, and class-based organization of workers were created, but at the same time, there was strong coercion by the government against social opposition. Primarily communists and socialists, then intellectuals, and additionally workers were exposed to the coercion of the government. The Democrat Party's ideology was also pervasive among workers and besides the policies of government, the state was oppressively influential in the consciousness formation of the workers both as a political actor and also solely as a phenomenon. There were economic and structural conditions for the formation of class consciousness, but there was no political or ideological environment supportive of the emergence of an independent class consciousness of the working class. We cannot talk about political proletarianization. It was only an embryonic proletarianization in terms of politics.

#### **4.4 Strikes of the Period**

After assessing different views on strikes among trade unions and discussing the attitudes of the DP and also the RPP, it is meaningful to mention the strikes of the period. The first strike of the 1950-1960 period, but not under the DP government, shows the link between the DP and workers, and workers' perception of the DP. On 13 May 1950, at the Ereğli Coal Company, workers had left the factory and went to their village to participate in the elections of 14 May 1950 that brought power to the DP (Güzel, 1996:180). Güzel defines this strike, which dramatically ceased production, as a political strike. This strike showed both the capability of workers and the significance of the DP for mineworkers at that time.

During the RPP's governance, or the period from 1937 to 1950, there were 15 strikes, and under DP governance from 1950 to 1960, there were 36 strike actions (Akkaya, 2003:60). Although the DP had promised to give the right to strike, this right was not recognized under DP governance. In the years between 1950 and 1960 the prohibition of strikes continued; workers went on strikes in some cases.

In spite of the general spirit mentioned above, and especially in spite of prohibitions, there were workers that went on strike. This fact is an important fact for the discussion on class consciousness. An interesting strike took place in 1953. On August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1953, textile workers went on “some sort of a hunger strike” (as the newspaper states) arguing that their bread had been halved, and number of strikers increased to 1000 in 48 hours. During their work hours the strikers had continued to work without eating anything and in this way protested the employer (*Ereğli İşçi Postası*, August 3, 1953).

In between 1951-1959, workers appealed to actions such as occupations and strikes 35 times (Akkaya, 2002b:171). Akkaya details the picture of those action of workers:

“Actions that started with the strike of lumpers in İskenderun in 1951, reached its peak in 1952 and workers went on strike 9 times. Most militant workers of the period were the lumpers in İzmir and İskenderun. While workers went on strike 11 times in transportation, storage and entrepot branches, there were 6 strikes in textile, 4 in construction and 4 in food sectors... In the strikes in this period, İstanbul had lost its weight and strikes carried in Anatolia gained an evident primacy.” (Akkaya, 2002b:171).

In the period from 1950-54, when there was a relatively positive relationship between the DP and workers, workers went on strike 22 times. In the second period, from 1955-60, when tension begun to increase, workers went on strike 14 times (Akkaya, 2003:60) and due to increasing authority and suppression of the DP, the workers’ movement weakened (Akkaya, 2002b: 171). Akkaya (2003:60) writes that in terms of branches, lumpers, employed in the work of loading and offloading, were in the front rank with eight strikes. Foing on strike was to a certain extent dependent on sector and branch of work. When working conditions became worse and worse, militancy increased. According to Makal, (2002:334) those worker movements generally occurred when there remained no remedy to grueling working conditions, and when these conditions were unbearable. At the same time, workers risked unemployment and arrest. In almost all of the strikes, police forces interfered

and many workers were legally charged. In addition, trade union leaders were arrested and trade unions were shut down due to strikes (Akkaya, 2003:65).

Makal adds his evaluation on the characteristic of strikes in 1946-1960:

“In respect of geography, it can be observed that nearly all of the strikes condensed in big cities due to the fact that wage labor had been congregated in these cities...Among the reasons for going on a strike, wages had a major weight and it is followed by work hours, workers health and job security with a little proportion (Makal, 2002:335).”

As already stated in the period between 1946 and 1963, strikes were banned, but there were cases that violated the prohibition of strikes. The period legally ended in 1963, but the change actually began with the strike in Kavel Cable Factory in İstanbul. Strikes occurred, and the continuous debate on the right to strike seen in the aforementioned publications can be seen as the building blocks of the new period for Turkish trade union movement. Going on strike despite the prohibition was an indicator of the efforts of workers in becoming a subject.

Newspapers and journals of the trade unions presented the elements and factors in the formation of class consciousness. Publications contributed to the presentation of the profile of workers in different sectors and places. They also contributed to the designation of aspects of the class formation process and the form of class consciousness. The content of the publications did not present a holistic picture of class formation, with its objective and subjective aspects, compatible with a single one of the approaches on class consciousness. If we see class consciousness as a gradual phenomenon, in a general picture, composed of the workers in Nazilli, Ereğli, Zonguldak and İstanbul, the publications tell us that the workers are experiencing themselves as a class including some dimensions of class consciousness. However, when looking at the details, we can see that there are examples deviating from this general picture. There are examples among trade unionists that act as class conscious actors despite confinements. Strikes were also examples of deviations from the general picture. This tension between the macro

and micro levels let us conclude that this period was a learning process for trade unions and its members.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

While the Democrat Party period is accepted as an important period in Turkish political history, the working class is generally not given a place in the studies of this period. The working class, or the trade union movement, is evaluated as following the politics of the Democrat Party; however, this understanding is one sided. Evaluating the period only in terms of the Democrat Party cannot show us the total picture of power relations between different classes and between fractions of classes in that period. Process of the working class formation is not independent from the power relations and struggles among different classes within a social formation. In other words, class struggles have a primary role in the formation of classes. That is to say, class formation and class consciousness formation of the working class in the DP period is not independent from the politics and ideology of the DP. Class consciousness of the workers, who had been organized in the trade unions of the period, was mostly shaped under the influence of the DP. Populism, nationalism and anti-communism were the fundamental ideological pillars of the DP. These influences were reflected in the discourses of the trade union newspapers and journals analyzed in this study.

The study was composed of three chapters. Class consciousness formation as the subjective aspect of the class formation was first set forth theoretically. Secondly, this theoretical framework was utilized in the evaluation of working class consciousness formation of the period at hand. This was handled by focusing first on the structural dynamics of working class formation and second on the effects of these dynamics in the existence and shaping of class consciousness. The structural environment that the working class was born into is conceptualized not only in

economic terms, but also by taking into account all other political, ideological, social and cultural factors that shaped the formation of the working class. In other words, while structures determined the form of working class, the existence of the class also affects the ideological, cultural and political aspects of the structure as a whole.

In the first chapter a set of concepts meaningful to the discussion of the subject were put forth. Discussions of class formation and class consciousness formation from within the different Marxist conceptualization of class composed the theoretical framework of the study. Although, there are differentiations regarding class consciousness formation among Marxist scholars; it is commonly accepted that working class has a privileged role in the capitalist social formation. Revolutionary task of the proletariat is most visible in the Leninist tradition. In this version of Marxism, this revolutionary task of proletariat is directly related with class consciousness formation of the working class. Thompsonian line class consciousness is conceptualized as a process and it is argued that class consciousness can have various forms.

It can be said that the discussion is the relation between ‘class in itself’ and ‘class for itself’ according to Marx’s formulation. In a sense, in this study, the link between these two processes was discussed in detail in the context of the Democrat Party and the state of the working class during the period. From the discussions on class formation and class consciousness formation, the main objective of the study was understanding working class formation in the Democrat Party period from different class consciousness and class formation theoretical points of view. Thernborn’s classification of class formation as objective and subjective was the main reference point to the background of the study. Class consciousness corresponds to the subjective side and they are mutually related and cannot be analyzed independently. Katznelson is another name that inspired the study, actually that inspired the conceptualization of the relation between the aspects of class formation process. According to Kaztnelson (1986:14), as we have already



mentioned, “structure, ways of life, dispositions and collective action” are the integral levels of class formation. The study evaluated these levels of class formation and tried to follow their link with class consciousness formation. The main intention of this study was to look at working class formation during the DP period from within the debates on class formation and class consciousness formation.

Turkish workers and the Turkish labor movement in comparison with the European working class is generally accepted as a young and inexperienced class and due to this fact, it is believed that the Turkish working class cannot be determined as a class conscious class until the 1960s. However, the working class already emerged as a social actor by the 1950s. The DP was part of many developments that were part of labour relations, and such kind of changes influenced working class formation. Trade unions began to be established after 1946 and there was a swift increase in trade unionism starting in the 1950s. This study asserted that legalization of establishing class-based organizations in 1946 revealed the will of the working class to establish its own organizations. It also revealed the politicization of workers against the RPP.

In the second chapter, the objective aspect of working class formation was put forth. The structural dynamics of working class formation, which were directly or indirectly connected to the politics of the DP, were evaluated. With reference to Tilly<sup>43</sup>, it can be repeated that it was essential to analyze the Democrat Party period to observe the class consciousness of working class. The end of the prohibition on the establishment of class-based organizations had opened a new path for Turkish politics, and it was shown that the working class was directly influenced from this development. This research designated that the DP party government period starting from 1950 was a transformation period in the social history of Turkey, and detailed its impact on the labour movement throughout the period. The DP’s policies regarding the working class were described and evaluated in connection

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<sup>43</sup> The understanding of Tilly has been given place in the introduction of this study.

with structural changes. Agricultural mechanization and industrialization resulted in internal migration and all were causes of proletarianization. Social proletarianization and the potential for political proletarianization can be observed due to these developments. The term political proletarianization of Edgell (1993:5), in a sense corresponds to class consciousness formation. It can be concluded that social proletarianization was an objective fact for 1950s.

On the other hand, political proletarianization cannot be claimed with such clarity since the determinants of this process are dependent on various actors mentioned throughout the study. Although binds with rural areas did not disappear, migration from rural to urban areas, together with industrialization, brought workers together and fed them the seeds of proletarian culture. For example, the newspapers exposed that accommodation was an important problem for workers in the 1950s, and this problem was solved with workers construction cooperatives, resulting in the forgoing of workers. The social existence of the working class, in other words, the objective aspect of class formation was questioned and it can be concluded that the working class, by means of trade unions, appeared as a real and effective social actor in the social scene. Kocabaş supports this point in his thesis with reference to E.P.Thompson's statement. He writes that after 1950, there is a '*working class in this land and it can be defined with a certain accuracy as an element of the social structure.*' (Quoted by Kocabaş, 2006:131). What workers had done, what they had learned, what they demanded, what they discussed, what they articulated, what they were subject to, under what conditions were they subject to, and what were its influences, are the questions that were answered throughout the study.

The background of the period and previous experiences of the workers were described to clarify the characteristics of the class, and to clarify the process of formation from a historical viewpoint. Especially, 1946 Trade Unionism had an important and unique role in Turkish labor history. It is accepted as the contact of workers with their political allies, socialists. To understand the dynamics and aspects of class consciousness, it is helpful to evaluate worker movement and trade

unionism in the DP period in comparison with 1946 Trade Unionism. In terms of class consciousness, 1946 Trade Unionism corresponds to a phase of existence of class consciousness of workers. In this period, trade unions were having organic relation with socialist parties, which are accepted as a parameter of class consciousness formation. Trade unions in the DP period; however, did not present such a picture. Experiences of 1946 show that class consciousness does not have a linear relationship with industrial development. As we have said, in the 1950s, the working class reached a form of social existence, but this did not necessarily bring about a class conscious working class. This fact illuminated once again that the maturing of conditions is not enough for the maturing of class consciousness; or that the relationship between structure and agency is not a linear relation. Class consciousness formation appears as a multi-dimensional issue and the existence of class consciousness do not always have certain boundaries.

The third chapter of the study was allocated to the subjective aspect of class formation, namely to the analysis of class conscious formation. Analyzing the working class's own discourse was the most beneficial way to study class consciousness formation. Although they had certain boundaries, and to an extent, a shallowness, the trade union press provided the necessary impression regarding class consciousness formation. Anti-communism was a fundamental ideological weapon in the DP period. Anti-communism was hanging on both in trade unionist organization and on trade union press as a sword of Democles (Akkaya and Bulut, 2009: 78). Any simple demand of trade unions was being challenged for communist tendencies, and newspapers or journals of trade unions where those demands were being expressed became the target of critics. It was observed from the trade union newspapers that trade unions of the period were strictly kept away from leftist or socialist politics. Channels for following their politics other than trade unions, which were controlled by the government, were closed for the workers. The circumstances of the period surrounding the working class were discussed since they effected class formation, including objective and subjective dimensions, of the workers. Those circumstances contributed to or resulted in the emergence of trade

union consciousness in the Leninist sense of the term. Within trade unions, members of the unions generally struggled for the improvement of their economic conditions and their work life or living standards. In addition, although the right to strike has the potential of diverting trade union consciousness, it had been taken generally in the economic sense in the trade union publications.

The right to strike was a critical discussion point of the period not only in the agenda of workers but also on the agenda of governing and opposition parties. Discussions and information on the right to strike and collective agreement continued through the 1950s. Strikes were also associated with the propaganda of communism, but there were still trade unions, as seen from the publications, defending the right to strike. The newspapers analyzed showed that anti-communism had been very influential in the formation of discourse of trade unions and in the formation of class consciousness. The newspapers illustrated that the profile of the workers changed largely according to the scale of the trade union. *Maden-İş* and *Petrol-İş* presented much or less an independent stand from the politics of the DP; while for instance *İşçi Sendikası* and *Ereğli İşçi Postası* were largely following a politics in line with the framework drawn by the government. *Sendika Yolu*, on the other hand, appeared as a distinct case. Although it was a local publication appealing to small number of trade union workers; it did not hesitate to oppose government politics. It should be added that none of the trade unions could directly oppose the DP politics. The working class was deprived of its basic class struggle weapon and it was left isolated to prevent becoming class conscious for the workers. In this sense, the proletariat was imprisoned to its spontaneity in the Leninist sense of the term and this played a crucial role in the shaping of class.

Local news in the trade unions newspapers had disturbed factory owners, civilian authorities and institutions associated with labor life. The activities of the trade unions were followed seriously by capitalists and the state, and reaction to them was mostly in the form of repression (Akkaya and Bulut, 2009: 104). The activities

of trade unions were very limited, and any little activity of trade unions was subject to suppression. This is why trade unions press wrestles within the competition between RPP and DP. Akkaya and Bulut (2009:104) claim that the trade unions press should not be seen as a part of this competition, but rather should be seen as benefiting from it and maintaining its existence in this balance. The working class movement in the period and class consciousness should be evaluated considering the current circumstances. Otherwise, evaluation can remain as a highly abstract evaluation that is disconnected with current reality besides the reality of working class. If we approach class consciousness as a unique determined ideology; it becomes nearly impossible to define class conscious workers for any working class chosen casually from a historical time period. On the other hand, identifying class consciousness with the existence of class makes the problem of class consciousness unnecessary. Progress, experience and process appeared as the keywords in the perception of class formation and class consciousness formation in the research. If the distinction between class in itself and class for itself is thought as a straight line rather than two distinct points, class consciousness can be perceived as this straight line. From this perspective, evaluating class consciousness as a phase that should be achieved, the working class does not exhibit a class conscious class form throughout the 1950s. Class formation comes into being through class struggle. This statement is accurate but it should be stressed that the strategies and tactics of class struggle can vary according to the circumstance of the certain historical time period. The working class can follow a conciliatory way to achieve its interests. Therefore, the position of the working class, which compromises with its counter-group, does not necessarily indicate that workers are not aware of their collective interests or that they do not possess class consciousness. Trade unions' positions relative to the RPP and the DP can also be evaluated in this regard.

The study illustrated that it is a necessity to develop different forms of class consciousness and different ways of class struggles. In this context, Gramsci's conceptualization of moments meets this necessity. These moments correspond to different levels of class consciousness. By means of this, he in a sense opens the

way for the conceptualization of class consciousness as a process and for the usage of the term “experience”. However, Gramsci did not fall in the above mentioned handicaps of the two main approaches of class consciousness formation. Moments formulated by Gramsci provided a suitable ground in discussing the class consciousness of the workers during the DP period as an experience. Trade union newspapers illustrated that workers depending upon their own conditions, they make their own definitions of interests. This is an example of a moment of working class consciousness formation in the achievement of political consciousness. Regarding the analysis of Gramsci, one can argue that workers, who are member of trade union, indicate the economic-corporate moment during the DP period.

In Thompson’s understanding of class; workers of course have class consciousness in this period. For Thompson, it is not existence in the form of having an ideal interest and nor like a patient on the table of a gauger and it should be remembered that class is not a thing but a relation (Thompson, 2004:41). It is hoped that this study made it clear that the concept of experience was essential for the analysis of class consciousness formation even for the Democrat Party period. When the meaning of Industrial Revolution is sought in the conditions of factory workers, one can think that consciousness of working class is shaped by these conditions; however when it is evaluated as a process of outburst and starting on a way, class consciousness gains a very different content (Buğra, 2004: 12). In these silent years (Koçak, 2008b), they in a sense accumulated experience and knowledge of being a class.

Objective aspect, with its political, ideological and cultural dimensions, is influential in shaping of class consciousness and form of class struggle. In my point of view, when state of working class and form of class consciousness is defined according to a revolutionary class consciousness, according to the working class’s intention for revolution, class consciousness formation reduced to an abstract ideal form and began to be delayed to future. On the other hand, claiming that working class is conscious with its existence avoids the term of class consciousness and

connected to it term of class in itself. It can be derived from the study that parameters for the analysis of class consciousness can vary and class consciousness can have different forms depending upon the atmosphere at which class consciousness formation. Working class consciousness is a phenomenon in itself but it becomes measurable with the actions of workers.

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