

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRALIZED CONTROL OVER LABOUR IN TURKEY, 1950 - 1960

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The object of this paper is to present an inner view of centralization trends and their implications within the labour movement in Turkey. It is argued that the establishment of centralized control over labour between 1950 and 1960 precluded the formation of an independent labour movement in more recent years. This was, in fact, the aim of those in power to control a crucial social force from above, and their successful manipulation of the organization of the labour force through various mechanisms arrested the development of common working-class goals and interests. Consequently, the investigation of those mechanisms and devices for control, as well as the scrutiny of the relationships between differing units within the labour movement, constitute the core of this article.

The literature on the organization of the working-class during the Democratic Party rule (1950-1960) generally tends to present the concentration of small, thus ineffective, unions in the body of Türk-İş as a progressive step in the history of labour. The advocates of this view (Talas, 1972; Çeçen, 1973; Işık, 1972; Sülker, 1975) base their judgment on the fact that the increase in the rate of unionization and the concentration of the bulk of unionized workers under one huge labour confederation should necessarily constitute the essential pre-conditions for the formation of a strong trade union movement. At the time, that

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is in the early 1950's, this view had a strong foothold not only within the labour movement but also among the academic circles and the most progressive sections of the intelligentsia, in general.

Bearing more recent developments in the trade union movement in mind, it becomes necessary to re-investigate the conditions under which the large-scale organization of the working-class took place. It is generally true that unity within fewer and larger labour organizations constitutes a major advance before the working-class starts acting independently towards the achievement of its own goals within the array of different distracting political movements, but one should also look into the nature of such large labour organizations to determine the degree of their contribution to the cause of the working-class. In Turkey, Türk-İş played the role of organizing the dispersed elements of the working-class particularly during the rule of the Democratic Party, and thus appeared to create the pre-conditions mentioned above. A scrutiny of the foundation and the internal structure of Türk-İş, however, reveals that, in contrast with the popular view shared by many authors, the recruitment of a considerable section of industrial labour by Türk-İş accounts largely for the preclusion of the formation of a radical trade union movement. The reduction of the working-class' whole struggle to merely the attainment of immediate goals, or to economism in particular, after 1960 can thus be traced back to the 1950's during which the original sin fell upon the organization of the working-class.

Turkey's complete integration with the world capitalist system brought alongside with it a very complex relations of dependency. Apart from the orientation of the Turkish economy according to the needs of the world system, the political dependency ties between Turkey and the U. S. had to be established in order that the latter's interests could be secured in the domain of the former society. An extension of this general drive towards the West, impersonified by the U. S., was the control of industrial relations by the Democratic Party whose major aim was the completion of the aforementioned integration in almost every possible field. Therefore it was not unduly surprising that the then Minister of Labour was so enthusiastic on the formation of a powerful labour confederation with the aid of several American institutions, since this meant at the time the establishment of centralized control over labour (Talas, 1972: 293). Moreover, such a confederation would be an exact copy of American labour organizations,

which had historically proven to be very successful in co-optation and in reducing the working-class struggle to mere economism.

The Democratic Party and the U. S. alliance had a suitable tool to manipulate, that is the pro-Democratic union leaders, who throughout the period contributed, to a great extent, to the accomplishment of definite tasks. In other words, those leaders acted as both mobilizers among the workers, and as adjuncts in relation to the Democratic Party and the state apparatus accompanying its rule. The Democratic Party-U. S. -pro-Democratic union leaders' complex thus not only succeeded in preventing the development of a radical political thrust within labour during the period under investigation, but also managed to leave its imprint on the trade union movement even in later periods. This factor has therefore constituted one of the most significant reasons for the maintenance of labour organizations, which have never become detrimental to the functioning of the prevailing political system. Yet the only way to develop such a conclusion is to carefully examine the first large-scale organization of the working-class, Türk-İş, as well as its internal structure which is largely responsible for this end.

1. The Formation of an Organizational Nucleus

The labour movement in the 1950's can be characterized as an extremely polarized movement with a deep involvement in party politics. The polarization was so apparent that union leaders would defend a political party's attitude towards labour and that party's general political stance in a very indiscreet way. For instance, just three months prior to the 1950 elections, Zühtü Tetey, the leader of the pro-Republican Trade Unions of Istanbul, said that «the working-class community is really disappointed in those irresponsible unionist who demand the recognition of the right to strike» (Vatan, 28 Ocak 1950).

Amid such polemics, however, there were some serious attempts to form the nucleus of a leading organization which could gather the majority of the existing unions under the same roof and orient the labour movement towards the goals of one of the two prominent parties. Such attempts were intensive within the pro-Democratic camp because of the potential victory of the Democratic Party in the forthcoming general elections. The first indication of these preparations occurred in January,

1950, when the pro-Democrat İhsan Altinel held a meeting with his colleagues in his coffee house in Istanbul to discuss the strategy to be pursued, (Sülker, 1975 : 59) The speakers expressed their complaints about the Republican Party in power, which was exerting heavy pressure on their affiliated unions through legal and financial means, and emphasized the necessity of first capturing the leadership of the main labour organizations and then joining them to found a large confederation to control the labour movement as a whole. The fifty-one in attendance at the meeting also decided to send a telegram to the Government demanding the legalization of the right to strike. It is ironic that the same person, İhsan Altinel, would run in the elections on the Democratic Party ticket, and then denounce those who demanded the right to strike.

Two weeks after that meeting, and four months prior to the Democrat Party's victory at the polls, the Istanbul Textile Workers' Union, which was controlled by the pro-Democratic unionists, held its own congress and elected İhsan Altinel as chairman. The most important resolution of the congress was the joint decision of the attendants on the formation of the «Free Trade Unions.» The formation of this organization was finally accomplished through the active participation of the pro-Democratic unions in the textile, transportation, leather, and tobacco processing industries, which also indicate that the Istanbul base was successfully established.

At the same time, a similar struggle was taking place in Bursa, which was an important industrial zone with large textile plants, The major labour organization was the «Trade Unions of Bursa,» which had seven affiliates (Sülker, 1975: 82-85). Of these affiliates, the strongest was the Bursa Textile Workers Union, which was widely supported by the pro-Democratic workers of the Sumerbank Public Enterprise factory. Recep Kirim, the chairman of the «Bursa Textile Workers Union» and later a Democratic Party deputy, and his colleagues seized the opportunity to form a base in this province after the Democratic Party came to power in May 1950. Recep Kirim submitted a list of complaints to the Ministry of Labour in March, 1952, asserting that the pro-Republican unions in the food, construction, mining, and tourism industries did not pay their membership fees regularly, The Ministry of Labour sent three supervisors to the area to investigate whether the allegation was true or not. After a brief study of the case, the investigation team prepared a report saying that these unions had,

in fact, failed to forward their premiums, and thus the Administrative Board of the «Trade Unions of Bursa» ousted these affiliate pro-Republican unions (Ant, 3 Nisan 1952). A few weeks later, the organization held an emergency meeting to elect new members to replace those ousted from administrative posts. The eighty-four delegates attending the congress unanimously voted for Recep Kırım as the new chairman of the "Trade Unions of Bursa", marking the second victory of the pro-Democratic camp within the labour movement.

The victory of the Democratic party in the 1950 elections had a certain effect on the balance of power within the labour movement, changing it in favour of the pro-Democrat unionists through the Ministry of Labour's frequent interference in the administrative relations of unions. The existing Republican bases fell one by one in the same way as the pro-Democrat unionists, who were legally and financially backed by the Government, increased their pressure on the rival camp. The Çukurova base, a southern region where the largest cotton plantations had been developed, and the unions of İzmir were captured by these activities with the help of similar investigation reports of abuses prepared by the Democratic Ministry of Labour. (Yeni İstanbul, 5 Mayıs 1953).

Three incidents can be cited to show the reader how the purge directed at the pro-Republican and independent unionists and workers was manipulated by the pro-Democratic forces. It is interesting that even employers were involved in incidents to ensure gaining certain benefits through collaborating with the Government. The first incident was that of a worker, İsmail Daysal, who initially supported the Democratic Party because it demanded the recognition of the right to strike, and then dissociated himself from this camp as a result of the revision in the Democratic attitude towards labour. Although he had his own independent views on these questions, İsmail Daysal attended a meeting organized by 14 pro-Republican unions in İzmit for the determination of strategy in fighting the Government. He asked the chairman of the meeting whether he could express his views on the issue, and when his request was accepted, he said, "the labour movement, which covers six million agricultural and industrial workers, cannot grow unless we sever our ties with these political parties and found our own party." (Yeni İstanbul, 5 Mayıs 1953). Much to the surprise of most observers, İsmail Daysal was arrested that night on subversive charges and then released the next day, but

the employer dismissed him without compensation. He subsequently became a taxi driver and lost contact with his friends and unions.

A similar incident took place at the Leather Industry plant in Istanbul, in which the majority of the workers were Republican sympathizers while their union was controlled by the pro-Democratic clique. These workers had long been expressing their discontent about the arbitrariness in the union administration, and as a result they launched a campaign against the pro-Democratic takeover not only in their own union but also in the National Workers Union of Istanbul, which had earlier been formed by the unification of the "Free Trade Unions" and the "Trade Unions of Istanbul". The workers were holding meetings at the Beykoz plant, and calling for the resignation of their leaders. In early July, 1952, they announced their joint decision that they would not elect factory representatives unless the candidates proved their independence from all existing parties (Gece Postası, 13 Temmuz 1952). The outcome, however, was not encouraging for the rebels. Eighty-four of them were dispersed among other leather industry plants and sixteen were left jobless as a result of the joint action taken by the leaders of their union and the employer. This incident was so widely publicized at that time that even the Republican Party officials protested with a press statement.

The third incident was a clear example of how the party in power recruited some of the members of the opposition camp. Süreyya Birol, the chairman of the "Cibali Packaging Factory Workers' Union," had a strong influence among the workers due to his rhetoric and his efforts to publicize the workers' problems. He was also an important member of the pro-Republican "Trade Unions of İstanbul," as well as being a previous activist in this party's organization. He had been under tremendous pressure, since the attacks of the rival unionists and the Government agents were focussed on him because he was an influential leader among the workers. To the surprise of all the attendants at the union's congress held in January 1952, he declared his resignation from the "Trade Unions of İstanbul" on the grounds that he would solely devote himself to the problems of the workers at the Cibali plant (Sülker, 1975: 66). Nevertheless, he became a member of the Democratic Party a few months after the incident, thus losing credit among the workers who previously supported him. Süreyya Birol was just one of those who defected from the Republican front, because they sought the security and prestige of belonging to the party in power.

All these efforts on the part of the pro-Democratic front were in fact aimed at the formation of an organizational nucleus which would later account for the formation of Türk-İş. First the labour organizations controlled by the Republicans were captured, through legitimate or illegitimate means, and then some of the dissidents were swept aside in major organizational areas. Finally, the liberated organizations merged to form a much larger organization, Türk-İş. All these activists, İhsan Altınel, Recep Kirim, and Süreyya Birol, played an important role in the organization of not only the Democratic faction but also the labour movement as a whole, since Türk-İş embodied all those unions of considerable size.

II. The Foundation Of Türk - İş

Immediately after assuming power, the Democrats forced the pro-Republican "Trade Unions of Istanbul" to join the "Free Trade Unions", which was an adjunct of their party (Sülker, 1975: 65-66). The "National Workers' Union of Istanbul" came into being as a result of the Democrats' pressure on the former organization. The dissolution of the major pro-Republican organization in the new federation was an early indication of the ruling party's attitude towards the labour movement. Although the Democratic view on the issue favoured the multiplicity of small unions in general, one powerful labour organization was considered essential in controlling the movement. The pressure put on the Government concerning the right to strike led the Democrats to establish their own labour organization which would mobilize the majority of the working-class and thus neutralize independent or pro-Republican unions. This labour organization would be the link between the political authorities and the working-class influencing the political orientations of the workers. In pursuit of this policy, government agents seized the leadership of the "National Workers' Union of Istanbul". At the congress of January 20, 1952, Mehmet İnhanlı and Naci Kurt, who were the pro-Democratic unionists, were elected as the chairman and supervisor of the organization respectively (Sülker, 1975: 66). Consequently, the first objective was achieved in controlling the majority of the Istanbul workers, but there were other unions in Anatolia, which were either controlled by the Republicans or independent unionists. The foundation of the "National Workers' Union of Istanbul" constituted a step

towards the foundation of a nation-wide labour organization, to exercise control over the labour movement as a whole.

Coincidentally, the idea of establishing a confederation paralleled Turkey's general affiliation with the West (Çeçen, 1973: 32). Since 1947, American advisors had been visiting Turkey to design policies for its economic development, giving suggestions in technical matters and collaborating with the Turkish officials. As a result, labour management became a part of this cooperation.

In 1951 and 1952 coincident with the organization of the first occupational federations, visits to Turkey were made by U. S. labour officials, ICFTU representatives and American unionists serving as labour advisors in the Paris Headquarters of the ECA. These visits provided an important stimulus to further organizing efforts. The victory of the Democrats in 1950 had been a great encouragement to unionists, and the generally favourable and permissive atmosphere of the post-election years helped to produce a substantial increase in the number of unions and union members. All these events united to create a growing conviction that the time was propitious for a major effort (Rosen, 1962: 285).

The personal efforts of Irwing Brown, the chairman of ICFTU's International Relations Department, played an important role in the realization of this major project. Irwing Brown expressed the views of the ICFTU, promising financial assistance for the foundation and functioning of the future confederation, and the training of the Turkish unionists in the United States (Işıklı, 1972: 307). At several conferences in Turkey, he laid emphasis on the necessity of the adoption of Western trade unionism, which was clearly related to Western-oriented economic development,

At the time, some intellectuals and academic circles supported the organization of industrial labour around a confederation, thinking that this would solve, to a large extent, the question of fragmentation (Talas, 1972: 291). A series of meetings was held to form the nucleus of a confederation. As a result, several unions from Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Bursa and Adana and the "Textile and Transportation Workers' Federation" joined to form the "Confederation of Trade Unions of Turkey" (Türk-İş), in July 31, 1952. At the first congress, Nuri Özsan, the Minister of Labour, stated that Türk-İş would harmonize the efforts made by his Ministry and by labour unions to improve labour relations

(Talas, 1972: 293). Thus, the Democratic Party openly declared its support for the confederation. At the congress of 1953, Naci Kurt was elected as the Chairman of Türk-İş. He also became a candidate of the Democratic Party in the 1954 elections campaign, exposing the link between Türk-İş and the ruling party (Işıklı, 1972: 305-306).

The Democrat's control over Türk-İş prevented the formation of an independent labour movement, even though the majority of the unionized workers were held together in the confederation through the concerted efforts of the Ministry of Labour and American labour organization (Tachau, Ülman, 1965: 158). Although there were some other non-partisan leaders with working-class origins in Türk-İş, they could only split the leadership of the confederation and lose a considerable degree of influence in the decision-making process if they tried to dispute Türk-İş policies. One reason for that was the lack of experience and prestige necessary to hold the key posts in the organization. Unless they were affiliated with the political authorities, union leaders could not play an important role in guiding the labour movement, no matter how influential they were among the workers.

The leaders of Turkey's unions differ in many important respects from all other leadership groups in Turkish society. They are members of the working-class, as a result of the legal restriction excluding non-workers from union membership. Leadership is for them a new experience, with challenges which they often fail to master fully. Their new eminence is itself a challenge to older leadership groups in political and economic life, and they find it extremely difficult to win recognition and acceptance. Prestige normally depends on education, occupation, age and social origin in Turkey; in all these respects union leaders are at a disadvantage. Like the unions, they are young (Rosen, 1962: 287).

III. Organizational Units Within the Labour Movement

Despite the undemocratic experiences observed before and after the foundation of Türk-İş, the Rules and Regulations prepared for this confederation were fairly democratic as far as the relationships between various organs were concerned. The central administration of Türk-İş had five main organs: a) General Assembly, b) Admi-

nistrative Board, c) Exucutive Board, d) Control Committee, and e) Discipline Committee. The most important organs were obviously the Administrative and Executive Boards, which had the authority to call a meeting of the General Assembly. The General Assembly consisted of the union representatives elected for each thousand members, and it was the chief organ for the election of new administrative officers in regulated periods of time.

The Administrative Board was composed of the representatives elected by the workers of one union from each industrial branch, and thus the number of representatives was equal to that of the industrial branches. The election of these representatives was realized in local congresses held by corresponding unions. The Administrative Board derived its power mainly from its control over the financial sources of the Confederation. Apparently, the financial funds could be utilized by a clique within the Board to its own advantage.

The Executive Board had a more restricted list of members who were elected at the General Assembly by secret ballot. The Executive Board consisted of: the chairman of the Confederation, the secretary general of Türk-İş, the secretary general of the Finance Department, the secretary general of Education, and the Secretary general of Organization. What made the Executive Board important was its authority to appoint regional representatives as well as to replace them.

Aside from the organs forming the central administration mentioned above, there were three main layers within Türk-İş' body: a) The National Union, the sole representative of the industrial branch having various union locals in different regions, b) The Federation, the conglomerate of different unions in the same industrial branch but not necessarily the only representative; and c) The Local Union, the representative of the workers in a factory or factories within an industrial branch and which are affiliated either directly to the Confederation, for example Turk-İş, or to a federation or a national union.

The formation of the national unions can be traced back to 1953-1954, when the workers in the shipping industry gathered under the first national union of Türk-İş, and the miners under the second, (Maden-İş) (Dereli, 1966: 47). This was followed by the formation of the "Oil Industry Workers' Union" (Petrol-İş) in 1955, marking not only the foundation of the main organizational type of the Confederation,

but the initiation of centralization trends as well. The importance of the national unions stemmed from their homogeneity and financial strength, which was the result of their authority to assess their own budgets. Moreover, the national unions had more organizational potential because of the wide scope of facilities provided for them by the Confederation.

The federations, however, did not possess that much power since their affiliated unions had a legally independent status with separate funds and elected their own leaders although the promotion of these leaders was usually hindered by the federal administrations. Nevertheless, they constituted the second best type of organization as seen by Türk-İş, for they at least unified various feeble unions operating in an industrial branch under the same roof. The formation of the federations dated as early as 1952 through the organization of the separate unions in textiles by the "Textile Workers' Federation" (TEKSİF), which later became a national union. The Türk-İş administration constantly forced its affiliates to form a federation and then a national union in order to eliminate dispersion, and control the organization more effectively.

The third layer was constituted by the local unions, which continually posed a threat to the organizational and administrative philosophies of the Türk-İş leaders. The local unions, which were affiliated to federations but retained their financial and constitutional independence, were frequently forced to unify with the federations and the national unions in corresponding industrial branches, and at times, they were even threatened by expulsion from the Confederation. (Dereci, 1966: 51). Local unions, which were directly affiliated to Türk-İş without the mediation of federations, constituted even more of a threat to Türk-İş policies, since they were more independent than those affiliated to federations. The activity report submitted to the fifth General Assembly of Türk-İş in 1964 openly called for the exertion of force against those unions that refused to join federations (Türk İş, 1964: 79).

It is important to do something about these unions, since they nullify equal representation while there are other unions that are represented by their federations. It is thus essential to authorize the federations to forcefully annex these small unions in order that the strengthening of our Confederation can be secured.

The main problem arose from the difficulty of controlling the leaders of the local unions, who were in close contact with the workers and thus very influential among them, as opposed to the professional administrators of the higher organizations, who were distant from the workers, although they generally had working-class backgrounds (Aşçıoğlu, 1964). As a result, there has been a constant struggle between the minor leaders, who tried to avoid merger in a federation or national union, and the central administration, often resulting in the victory of the latter through its access to powerful control mechanisms.

IV. Centralization Trends and Internal Democracy

It has been mentioned earlier that the Democratic Party leaders intended to control the labour movement through the formation of a huge confederation, which would unify the independent but less influential unions. Once it came into existence, Türk-İş would try to achieve centralization not only of the labour movement but also of its own organization. In fact this question arises in almost every large organization, but given the polarization of the Turkish labour movement, attempts at centralization contradicted the principles of internal democracy in Türk-İş, and it did nothing but weaken the movement.

Early attempts at centralization focussed on two main points: a) the unification of small and dispersed unions in large federations and national unions, b) the restriction of the number of industrial branches which was a legal matter and thus fell within the jurisdiction of the Government. As far as the implementation of the first point was concerned, efforts to unify these unions were not fruitful, as the previously independent unions strongly objected to the idea of, in particular, the national unions. Joining a national union meant the loss of the legal status accorded to an independent union, since the national unions could only have union locals as opposed to the legally established and autonomous members of the federations. There were many influential leaders among these small unions, who were solely devoted to the cause of the labour movement, and thus would not want to be replaced by the officers appointed by the national union's central administration (Dereli, 1966: 55-56). In fact, they had a justifiable reason for rejecting these officers, since they were democratically

elected by their fellow workers and had strong conviction that they truly spoke for labour. The officers to be appointed to union locals, however, would not even know whom they were going to represent.

The resistance to centralization was so strong that the Türk-İş administration was going through a serious crisis in the mid-1960's. The crisis was actually disclosed in a report submitted to the General Assembly, which emphasized the weakness of the Confederation in imposing its policies. (Türk İş, 1966: 86-95). According to the report, the "Cement Industry Workers' Union" (Çimse-İş), the "Sugar Industry Workers' Union" (Şeker-İş), and the "Textile Industry Workers' Union" (TEKSİF) were the unions that had best succeeded in recruiting the existing unions in their fields, while the directly affiliated unions in leather, printing paper products industries, in mining refused to join either the federations or the national unions. The report stated that divergent political views accounted partly for the internal disunity, although the major cause was the small unions' fear of losing their independence.

The dissention, which accused the Türk-İş administration of dictatorial tendencies and being overly cooperative with the Government, was gradually eliminated, particularly after 1960, due to the introduction of stricter measures aimed at the liquidation of the non-submissive unions and also as a result of circumstantial necessities. The turning-point in breaking the resistance to centralization came about in 1964, when the Türk-İş leaders decided to found a Committee for the settlement of disputes, just prior to the fifth General Assembly of the Confederation. (Türk-İş, 1964: 52). The Committee prepared a report to be submitted to the Assembly which included the results of its own investigation of the case and its recommendations for the settlement of the internal disputes. According to the report, Türk-İş should force all its members that were directly affiliated to join either the corresponding federations or the national unions, and expel those who refused to obey. This principle was adopted by the General Assembly, and enforced immediately after the Assembly ended. (Dereci, 1966: 52).

The practice of a tougher stance towards the dissident unions produced immediate results, decreasing the number of unions from 543 in 1963 to 400 by the end of 1964, and that of the federations from 36 to 10. In the same period, the number of Türk-İş members increased

from 420,000 to 500,000, (Özdemiroğlu, 1963: 5) although they were represented by fewer unions. Although this was not a complete centralization of the sub-organizations, it could be safely said that Türk-İş had managed to centralize control.

The second point Türk-İş advanced was the restriction of the number of industrial branches; which would mean that the Confederation would have less federations and national unions to control. The number of the industrial branches when Türk-İş was founded amounted to 36, and the leader of the new organization demanded the reassessment of this number throughout the reign of the Democrats. The disagreement between the Government and Türk-İş at the time stemmed from the latter's intention to restrict the number of industrial branches while the industrial sector was expanding to fields that had been hitherto untouched. With the establishment of new industries, such as plastics and fertilizer, it was impossible for the Government to restrict the number of these new fields of investments by legal means, since every field opened to economic activity entailed the employment of a number of workers. As a result, the different views of Türk-İş and the Government could not be reconciled until the end of this era.

After 1960, however, Türk-İş started to reiterate its plan on the codification of the industrial fields. Initially, a special committee was formed to examine the labour legislation in other countries, and then prepare a report pertaining to its findings (Özdemiroğlu, 1963: 15). The committee favoured the idea of adopting the German model, which involved only sixteen industrial branches. When the new Government decided to study two draft bills on the right to organize and the right to strike and to collective bargaining in 1963, Türk-İş leaders raised their voice once again through secretary general of the Confederation, Halil Tunç, publicizing the view that "labour could not play an important role in the country's political and economic life unless the excessive number of the industrial branches were limited." (Türk-İş Dergisi, 1963: 3). Yet it seemed that the new Republican Government faced the same dilemma as the Democrats, and restricted the number of industrial branches to 24 through the enactment of Law No. 274 on the right to organize (Türk-İş 1964: 92). Even this concession on the part of the Government did not satisfy the Türk-İş leaders, who then published a general critique of the new law.

The centralization movement within Türk-İş did, in fact, increase its organizational power, as manifested in the rapid growth of the number of its members, but it certainly created problems in relation to the Confederation's internal democracy. First of all, the opposition faction and the local leaders were not given the chance to represent their sympathizers properly. The national unions and federations had more organizational power owing to this control of large financial sources and thus they recruited the bulk of the new members of the Confederation as against the limited capacity of the directly affiliated local unions. The ultimate goal of the Türk-İş administration was to achieve the unification of the federations to form national unions, the leadership of which were elected in their respective congresses held once in every two or three years. The federations constituted a conglomeration of the affiliated unions in the corresponding industrial branch, and therefore, the leaders of these affiliates had a relatively greater chance of getting elected in the general congress of the federation. The national unions, however, had only regional branches, which did not elect their own leaders, so the leaders of these higher organizations were generally those who were supported by the Türk-İş administration, while the election of the leaders in the federations were subject to sharp competition between the top administration and the federation's affiliates (Dereli, 1966: 69). Efforts to achieve this goal were fruitful, as Türk-İş managed to form 24 national unions by the end of 1964 and restricted the number of the federations to only ten. As a result, the leaders of many small unions, which were forced to join a national union, lost their leadership status, despite their wide influence among the workers.

Secondly, although democratic principles governed the election of the leaders in the federations, the independent candidates of the small affiliates did not enjoy the opportunity or recognition compared with those supported by the Türk-İş administration.

This was mainly due to the fact that the candidates at the factory level were known by the workers, but in contesting the federation's elections, they were not known by the representatives of other affiliates at the general congress. Since these representatives were influenced by those in power, they generally voted for the pre-determined leader or leaders, as they did not know the other candidates anyway.

This was particularly true in the case of many pro-Democratic union leaders, such as Mahmut Yüksel, chairman of the Dockworkers

Union, Rüştü Güneri, chairman of the Marine Workers Union, and Naci Kurt, member of the Türk-İş Executive Board, who had little contact with the workers but occupied important post in the Confederation through the support of the Democratic Party and the Türk-İş administration. All the persons cited above became members of Parliament on the Democratic Party ticket after the 1957 elections, but failed to reflect labour problems and the workers' interest thereby.

Thirdly, the Türk-İş administration had a strong grip on the national unions, which represented the majority of workers covered by the Confederation. As has been mentioned previously in this study, the General Assembly consisted of the representatives, who were elected directly by the workers for each thousand members, and therefore, the national unions carried much more weight than the smaller union at the Assembly (Türk-İş, 1966: 75). Under these circumstances, it was next to impossible for an opposition candidate to get elected unless his supporters made inroads into the powerful national unions. The only exception to this general trend in the history of Türk-İş was the control by dissidents over a few original federations that were already controlled by the dissidents when they joined Türk-İş, and they eventually split from this Confederation to form the left-wing DİSK.

Finally, the establishment of powerful sub-organizations within Türk-İş restricted the workers' freedom of choosing a union for registration, despite the fact that several independent or 'break-away' unions existed and were legally recognized by the Government. This was observed particularly after the enactment of the law on the right to strike and to collective bargaining when the workers naturally preferred the stronger affiliates of Türk-İş to other independent unions as they desired to get the most out of the collective bargaining process. (Kutal, 1966: 36-37). Also, it precluded the formation of new unions for the simple reason that their chances of growth were relatively slim.

These were the main reasons for the development of a weak labour movement, not to mention other abuses, such as the improper use of finances, bribery, and fraud. Nevertheless, there was another important mechanism for control within Türk-İş, that is, the system of education, which deserves special attention.

V. Education as a Device For Control

The education of the workers as well as leaders in labour organizations is necessary for the creation of a strong labour movement and sophisticated leadership cadres. Yet this mechanism, too, became a tool for control in the hands of the Türk-İş leaders immediately after the inception of the Confederation.

It is not our concern here how the Türk-İş leaders were trained in the United States, and how these leaders were promoted to important posts, despite the fact that they were quite distant from the workers. Aside from these leaders, there were others who attended the seminars held by the Confederation, and were promoted in their careers. The system of education that Türk-İş introduced was open to manipulation by the central administration, since the candidates running for the leadership posts had to fulfill the requirement of completing certain courses provided in those seminars. For instance, a candidate contesting the elections in a local union had to obtain a diploma from the local seminars held normally once a year. (Türk-İş, 1966: 100-119). Some of the courses provided in different types of seminars were as follows:

Local Seminars : a) Unionism b) The role of unions in economic development c) Unions and Democracy d) Collective bargaining.

Regional Seminars : a) Social security b) Labour Legislation c) Mass psychology d) Unions and human relationships.

National Seminars : a) Economy and unions b) Employer-Employee relationship c) Economic planning d) European Economic Community e) American Labour Movement (Türk-İş Dergisi, 1964: 31).

The training program of 1964, for instance, consisted of 8 national, 14 regional, and 26 local seminars. By the end of 1965, 5718 members successfully graduated out of a total of 148 seminars, while 2661 trainees failed the program. The courses provided in these seminars were generally aimed at the creation of an «a-political» group of leaders, as was admitted by the secretary general of the Confederation, Halil Tunç. (Tunç, 1963: 7). Atilla Karaosmanoglu, the director of the Research Department of Türk-İş in the mid-1960's, lays stress on the same points saying that the graduates of these seminars would tell the

workers that they should not attend the congresses of the political parties. Nor should they have any relationship with the politicians. (Karaosmanoğlu, 1963: 7). According to Karaosmanoğlu, this campaign had a certain effect on the workers, as manifested by the fact that the workers constituted less than 1 % of those attending party congresses between 1960 and 1965.

The second characteristic of the courses was the emphasis on ways to increase the productivity of labour, since this would contribute to the economic development of the country as well as to the growth of the private sector. "The growth of the private sector", boasted Halil Tunç, "... will eventually lead to the economic well-being of labour" (Tunç, 1963 : 15). The Trainees were constantly told to adopt the official political line of the Turk-İş administration, which could be considered an effective means of increasing central control.

The main tutors in these courses were Roger Burgess, Charles Levinson, and Thomas E. Posey, who were sent to Turkey by AID and spent many years there as the guests of Turk-İş leaders. (Türk-İş Dergisi, 1964 : 38). However, the most important aspects of these seminars was the employment of the training programs as an effective device for internal control, since most of those trainees failed were the ones whose political thinking was considered detrimental to the official policy of the organization (Aşçıoğlu, 1964). Thus the threat of an opposition leadership forming at any level was eliminated immediately. In other words, dissension was restricted only to those who had been among the original founders of the Confederation, since these founders had been elected as chairman in their unions prior to the foundation of Turk-İş. If the fact that the workers striving for power within Türk-İş had to successfully complete all courses in three different kinds of seminars is taken into account, then it becomes clear why it was so difficult for the local leaders to pose a serious threat to that administrative elite.

VI. Conclusion

On the whole, Türk İş managed to accomplish the organization of industrial labour to a large extent, owing primarily to the support provided by the Democratic Party Government and to the financial means at its disposal. Although this seems to be advantageous to the

labour force at first glance, further scrutiny of the case reveals that the monopoly of Türk-İş over the labour movement paradoxically weakened it as a result of the conservative leadership that the Confederation brought. This was mainly because of the type of organization that the Turkish labour movement experienced, which was imposed from above, and not as a result of the workers own efforts. The overwhelming majority of the union leaders were engaged in a political camp which prevented them from truly speaking for the workers and acting independently, and since the Türk-İş administration blocked the way for the emergence of independent leaders, the labour movement could not assume a self-sustained and independent character. This naturally affected organized labour's efforts to enhance its political role in a negative way.

The second significant implication of centralized control over labour was its preclusion of the transition from militancy to radicalism, since the majority of the radical union leaders were either obstructed in the education system, or replaced by those who were co-opted by the Government or the Türk-İş administration. As a result, the existing government and the labour organization it founded manipulated the labour movement in accordance with the dictates of party politics until 1960, but even this tight grip could not prevent the development of a militant attitude among the workers against both the coercive State apparatus and union bureaucracies in later periods. This, however, constitutes the topic of a different research.

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ÖZET

TÜRKİYE'DE İŞGÜCÜ ÜZERİNDEKİ MERKEZİ KONTROLÜN KURULUŞU, 1950 - 1960

Bu çalışma Türkiye'de işçi hareketinin 1950-1960 dönemindeki gelişme modeli üzerindeki tartışmaları tarihsel bir açıdan yeniden gündeme getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Söz konusu dönem Türkiye'nin batıya açılış yıllarını içerdiği için ekonomik ve siyasal düzeylerdeki bütünleşmeyi işçi hareketinin de Amerikan tipi sendikal örgütlenme tipine kaydırılması izlemiştir. Amerikan Sendikacılığı ve Türk işçi hareketi arasındaki köprü görevini üstlenen Demokrat Parti iktidarı bir yandan sendikal örgütlenmeyi desteklerken diğer yandan da grev hakkı olmayan ve yönetici kadroları kendisine bağlı olan bir hareket modelini başarı ile gerçekleştirmiştir. İşçi hareketinin Demokrat Parti döneminden kaynaklanan bu yapısal zayıflığı daha ilerdeki yıllarda da örgütlenme girişimlerine bir ayak bağı teşkil etmiştir. Bu çalışmanın ağırlık noktası da işte bu merkezi denetimin ve yönetici durumundaki işçi liderlerinin ele geçirilişlerinin hangi yollardan gerçekleştirilebildiğini sorgulamaktan ötesine gitmemektedir.