

CONSTRUCTION OF “NEW WORKER” IN THE POST 1980 TURKEY:  
AN ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE OF TÜRK-İŞ, HAK-İŞ AND DİSK

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VOLKAN DELİ

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---

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Saktanber  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Dr. F. Umut Beşpınar  
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Prof. Dr. Mesut Yeğen (Şehir Üni.,SOC) \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. F. Umut Beşpınar (METU, SOC) \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Çağatay Topal (METU, SOC) \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

Name, Last Name: Volkan Deli

Signature :

## ABSTRACT

### CONSTRUCTION OF ‘NEW WORKER’ IN THE POST 1980 TURKEY: AN ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE OF TÜRK-İŞ, HAK-İŞ AND DİSK

Deli, Volkan

M.S., Department of Sociology

Supervisor: Dr. F. Umut Beşpınar

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This study aims at understanding the discursiveness of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK against the neoliberal policies *textually and discursively* shaped by the governments and employers in the years between 1980 and 2003 in Turkey. In this sense, Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis and Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory constitute the theoretical framework of this study. In this theoretical perspective, this study analyzes discourses of the labor confederations in four historical moments called January 24 measures (1980 coup), 1994 economic crisis, February 28 process and 2001 crisis. In each historical moment, governments and Turkish bourgeoisie have produced new hegemonic discourses and texts in order to construct the actors and circumstances of working life under the influence of the global neoliberal order since 1980. Against this neoliberal construction of working life, texts and counter-discourses of these labor confederations become important in order to understand their hegemonic capacities. In this context, this study portrays the relation among governments, employers and the labor confederations in a hegemonic relation and argues that the hegemonic capacities of these labor confederations could not prevent construction of ‘new worker’ as a prototype in the individualization and flexibilization of working life in the post 1980 Turkey.

Keywords: labor confederations, discourse, neoliberalism, hegemonic relation, new worker

## ÖZ

### 1980 SONRASI TÜRKİYE'DE 'YENİ İŞÇİNİN' İNŞASI: TÜRK-İŞ, HAK-İŞ VE DİSK'İN SÖYLEMLERİNİN ANALİZİ

Deli, Volkan

Yüksek Lisans, Sosyoloji

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. F. Umut Beşpınar

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, 1980 ve 2003 yılları arasında Türkiye'de hükümetler ve işverenler tarafından söylemsel ve metinsel olarak biçimlendirilen neoliberal politikalar karşısında Türk-İş, Hak-İş ve DİSK'in söylemselliğini anlamaktır. Bu anlamda, çalışmanın kuramsal çerçevesini Norman Fairclough'un eleştirel söylem analizi ve Laclau ve Mouffe'un söylem kuramı oluşturmaktadır. Bu kuramsal perspektif temelinde, bu çalışma 24 Ocak kararları, 1994 krizi, 28 Şubat süreci ve 2001 krizi olarak adlandırılan dört tarihsel an içinde, işçi konfederasyonlarının söylemlerini analiz etmektedir. 1980'den sonra küresel neoliberal düzenin etkisi altında, her bir tarihsel dönem içinde, hükümetler ve Türkiye burjuvazisi çalışma hayatının aktörlerini ve koşullarını yapılandırmak için yeni hegemonik söylemler ve metinler oluşturmuşlardır. Çalışma hayatının bu neoliberal yapılandırılması karşısında, bu emek konfederasyonlarının karşı söylemleri ve metinleri onların hegemonik kapasitelerini anlamamız açısından önem arz etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, hükümetler, işverenler ve işçi konfederasyonları arasındaki hegemonik ilişkiyi resmetmekte ve 1980 sonrası Türkiye'sinde, bu emek konfederasyonlarının hegemonik kapasitelerinin 'yeni işçinin' bir model olarak inşasını bireyselleşen ve esnekleşen çalışma hayatı içinde engelleyemediğini tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: işçi konfederasyonları, söylem, yeni liberalism, hegemonik ilişki, yeni işçi

Dedicated to My Family

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The crisis of trade unionism has occupied the agenda of trade unions since the second half of 1980 in Turkey. Strictly speaking, there is no a distinctive reason in order to explain away the crisis of unionism but the neoliberal policies of the capitalist order and technological change in production are two important factors influencing unionism all over the world. Specially, the influence of the accumulation crisis of capitalism on the labor market and working life appeared as ‘deregulation’ towards the late 1970s. Under the influence of the crisis of the capitalist accumulation, Turkey also attempted to re-structure the operation of the capitalist policies by way of the transtition from ‘export oriented based accumulation’ to ‘import oriented one’ in the early 1980s. September 12, 1980 coup facilitated this transition and paved the way for the operation of the free market economy in the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism.

Strictly speaking, the logic of neoliberalism confirms ‘free markets’ and ‘free trade’ in order to get rid of poverty and claims to improve human welfare by preserving ‘private property rights’. Thereby, proponents of the neoliberal vision choose to define all dynamics of economy and politics within the borders of the free market economy, in this sense; ‘market systems’ can regulate the realms such as welfare, education and social security (Harvey, 2005:65). On the other hand, there is no room for interventionist actors/institutions in the neoliberal vision since the intervention of institutions such as state and trade unions in economy disturbs the operation of the free market in a negative way and leads to the blockage of ‘individual freedoms’ (ibid.: 42). Therefore, the operation of the neoliberalism requires the elimination of all interventionist obstacles in front of the free market.

It is important to note that the main target of the neoliberal policies is to re-scale the organized labor as a form of capitalist restructuring. So to speak, neoliberalism's emphasis on 'entrepreneurial virtues' or 'personal failings' refers to the importance of individual capacities rather than that of collective action (ibid.: 69). It constitutes the spirit of the emerging disorganized capitalism leading to 'the increased division between private and public sector workers', 'mass consumption', the 'destruction of collective identity of working class' (Lash and Urry, 1987:234).

From here, the spread of disorganized capitalism around the world has constituted a main challenge to the collective action of the organized labor since the late 1970s. As parallel to these developments in the world, proponents of the neoliberal vision have aimed at making the free market economy dominant over society in Turkey since 1980. Thereby, the military attack supported by Turkish bourgeoisie eliminated the leftist social movements and the increasing power of workers, especially of DİSK and facilitated the operation of rules of the free market in Turkey. After the coup, the governments and Turkish bourgeoisie would integrate Turkey into the free market economy and 'put an end to class-based politics' by 'restructuring the state' (Yalman, 2009: 307-8).

On this basis, according to us, the integration of market systems into the realms from health to social security can be understood within four historical moments which are as follows; January 24 measures (1980 coup), 1994 economic crisis (April 5 measures), February 28 process, 2001 economic crisis (4857 labor law). These historical moments have deeply influenced the socio-political dynamics of society with relation to the transformation of the neoliberal policies and led to the emergence of new discourses within the political scope of Turkey. Throughout this study, we shall specify the transformation of neoliberalism from the point of the discursiveness of three big labor confederations, Türk-İş<sup>1</sup>, Hak-İş<sup>2</sup> and DİSK<sup>3</sup> in

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<sup>1</sup> Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu ( Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions)

<sup>2</sup> Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (The Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions cited from [http://www.hakis.org.tr/tanitim/hakis\\_eng.htm](http://www.hakis.org.tr/tanitim/hakis_eng.htm)).

Turkey; so, we shall elucidate what these confederations said in each historical moment formed by the governments and Turkish bourgeoisie.

In this sense, we shall analyze discourses of each historical moment by appealing to Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and to Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. Accordingly, the common denominator of these theoretical approaches is to enable us to understand discourses in a hegemonic relation between social actors of working life in Turkey. While Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory allows us to analyze a social movement as a political category, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis enables us to analyze 'actual texts' as a part of a hegemonic relation (Fairclough, 1992:93). Therefore, we shall conduct a dual discursive analysis by appealing to organisational texts of the confederations and the governments in order to elaborate the attributes of the hegemonic struggle between them by characterizing discourses and counter-discourses. On the one hand we shall analyze texts, that is, the government programs and Employer Magazine<sup>4</sup> published by TİSK<sup>5</sup> in order to understand their hegemonic discourses forming these historical moments in Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, on the other hand we shall present counter-discourses of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK by considering their struggle as a social movement with the basic concepts of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory.

From this theoretical standpoint, this study mainly aims at understanding the hegemonic power of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK over the governments and Turkish employers in the period from 1980 to 2003. If we sum up shortly, there were two important trade union identities in Turkey before 1980 coup, namely; Türk-İş and DİSK. Besides, Hak-İş was established in 1976 with support of National Salvation

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<sup>3</sup> Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey cited from <http://www.disk.org.tr/default.asp?Page=Contents&CatId=101>).

<sup>4</sup> İşveren Dergisi.

<sup>5</sup> Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Turkish Confederation of Employer Association)

Party<sup>6</sup> and tried to prove its existence in the unionism area until the second half of 1980s. DİSK was the most efficient confederation for that period and succeeded in being a popular subject among workers in particular and masses in general. Moreover, Yalman stated that DİSK functioned as a political party and posed a threat for Turkish bourgeoisie (Yalman, 2004:63). The discursive articulation of DİSK was based on anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-fascist discourse. DİSK's nodal point was to indicate 'socialist order' as a 'myth' in constructing masses and its articulatory position succeeded in fixing floating signifiers such as democracy, liberty and equality in order to construe a political camp (DISK, 1980a: 12-6).

On the other hand, as a strong rival, the class based unionism of DİSK antagonized the trade union identities of Türk-İş and Hak-İş. Shortly before the coup, January 24 measures were introduced by Özal to society as the only alternative. Turkish bourgeoisie, especially TİSK, eagerly supported the measures while complaining about anarchy, terror and ideological unionism. On the basis of discourse of 'law and order', September 12, 1980 coup repressed the 'ideological unionism' of DİSK and opened an area for January 24 measures. Hence, the military attack defeated the class based unionism of DİSK through 'force' in directives of Turkish bourgeoisie.

After the coup, there remained two labor confederations, namely; Türk-İş and Hak-İş. The military junta banned the activities of Hak-İş until the year 1981 and inspired Türk-İş in direction of discourse of law and order. That is to say, Türk-İş agreed with the military junta on discourse of anarchy and terror and declared the uselessness of 'ideological unionism' and determined the borders of being Turkish worker as 'hardworking and patriotic' (Türk-İş, 1980f, 1981b) on the basis of labor peace and dialog. In 1981, Hak-İş returned to the area of unionism with discourse of 'HAKK davası' inspired from Islamic elements. The confederation defined Turkish worker as 'spiritual (maneviyatçı) and loyal to national values' (Hak-İş,

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<sup>6</sup> Milli Selamet Partisi

1981:45), so, the confederation, with the impulse of anti-communism, reduced Turkish worker to a ‘categorical assumption’ in words of Fairclough.

It can be said that the military junta and bourgeoisie aimed at disciplining workers and labor unions by the restrictive legal regulation of working life in the period from 1980 to 1983. In this sense, Boratav calls this process as ‘counter-attack of capital’ and asserts that the contradiction between bourgeoisie and working-class was *systemically* deepened against labour later on (Boratav, 2009:148). As a result of the increasing pressure of the military junta over the labor confederations, 1982 constitution and acts no. 2821 and 2822 led to the crisis of unionism in Turkey. With the governance of ANAP, discourse of the free market aimed at ceasing the depotentiated trade unionism of Turkey.

In this process, Türk-İş started to emphasize on the ‘liberal and democratic unionism’ in order to advocate the socio-economic losses of workers and to emphasize on social state and social justice. However, Türk-İş’s opposition to Özal’s discourse of the free market was not turned into a labor movement; so, the confederation remained a complaining organization until 1986. On the other hand, Hak-İş could not develop a significant opposition to policies of ANAP but the confederation reduced its emphasis on discourse of HAKK davası. During Özal government, the confederation proposed a new economic system against the free market economy (Hak-İş, 1986a) but did not take action as a labor movement. In addition, although competition within unionism still shaped the antagonistic relation between Türk-İş and Hak-İş, they had a common ground against the class struggle.

Towards the late 1980s, the increasing voice of workers and wage earners forced the confederations to revise their union strategy. 1989 Spring Actions and 1991 Zonguldak Stike changed the inactive nature of unionism. Strictly speaking, 1989 Spring Actions discarded the government and Turkish bourgeoisie’s discourse of



labor peace and aimed at ceasing Özal's policies. Spring Actions were organized around demand of Bread, Peace and Freedom but headquarter of Türk-İş did not let workers' demands radicalize against the neoliberal policies of the government and agreed with the government by accepting 140 percent pay rise. The most important result of the actions was to weaken Türk-İş as equivalence and to bring 'union unity' into the agenda of the confederations.

In the changing climate of trade unionism, 1991 Zonguldak Strike was held by Genel Maden İş affiliated to Türk-İş. As a 'differential position' in the equivalence of Türk-İş, Genel Maden İş contributed to turn Zonguldak Miners into an empty signifier for the 'people'. In this sense, Zonguldak Miners represented anti-privatization and anti-Özalism with support of civil society. However, headquarter of Türk-İş did not discursively support to this first common action by reducing it to the pure economic aims.

In the course of the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the increasing labor movement interrupted the operation of the neoliberal policies by discarding discourse of labor peace. In 1992, DİSK gained the right to resume its activities. However, DİSK reduced its emphasis on class struggle and started to emphasize on democratic struggle. Also, the confederations focused upon the way in which a common struggle was anticipated, so, they formed the joint May Day manifests in order to point to 'unity of unions' (Türk-İş, 2002a:584, Hak-İş, 1992:215-9). Accordingly, they incarnated Employees' Common Voice Democracy Platform<sup>7</sup> in order to increase the power of labor movements. The Democracy Platform was an empty signifier totalizing democratic demands of labor unions and civil society. The increasing effect of the economic crisis functioned as a 'discursive exteriority' and made the labor confederations equivalent to each other. The representation of Kurdish Question in the discursive formation of the platform constituted a discussion point, as a result; the platform did not give a place to Kurdish Question in their solidarity.

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<sup>7</sup> Çalışanların Ortak Sesi Demokrasi Platformu

The burden of the traditional union representation over the platform was still effective, so, the platform did not go beyond being an ‘abstract unity’ following the pure economic aims against April 5 measures.

In February 28 process, Türk-İş and DİSK became a part of the politic camps, namely; the secular and the non-secular. Against discourse of reaction, Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK<sup>8</sup> formed Civil Initiative in order to advocate ‘the secular republic, Atatürk’s principles and national unity’. After that, TİSK and TOBB<sup>9</sup> participated in Civil Initiative by confirming discourse of Türk-İş and DİSK and there raised a new equivalent chain called Civil Initiative (*Beşli Girişim*). Hak-İş did not support to this new equivalence by defining discourse of reaction as an ‘artificial agenda’ and evaluated this equivalence as ‘attempted coup’ (Hak-İş, 1997a: 4). In this process, Türk-İş and DİSK did not hesitate to cooperate with TİSK and TOBB in spite of the burden of the neoliberal policies. In a sense, this situation indicated that, as labor organizations, Türk-İş and DİSK failed to understand the dynamics of the neoliberal policies in order to get rid of union crisis and became a part of discourse of secularism in favor of Turkish bourgeoisie.

Towards the late 1990s, the confederations decided to constitute a new platform in favor of labor. Türk-İş, Hak-İş, DİSK and civil society organizations incarnated Labor Platform (*Emek Platformu*). Against 1999 crisis and 2001 crisis, the platform aimed at representing the interests of all laborers. As an empty signifier, the platform’s nodal point became anti-IMF. The increasing problems of working life such as dismissals, sub-contract practices and unemployment were the focal point of the platform. However, the platform could not prevent the neoliberal policies of the government such as ‘social security reform’ and ‘sugar law’; so, the platform

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<sup>8</sup> Türkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkarları Konfederasyonu (The Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen).

<sup>9</sup> Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey cited from <http://www.tobb.org.tr/eng/index.php>).

did not have a characteristic feature when compared with the discursive articulation of the Democracy Platform.

After the 2001 crisis, Turkish bourgeoisie's discourse of flexibility became a hegemonic discourse, so, this discourse gained a legal base with the enactment of labor act 4857. Under these circumstances, the labor confederations did not organize texts as a part of their hegemonic struggle in order to portray the 'causal relations' of these crises. It is possible to say that the labor confederations could not figure out that the ongoing flexible practices since 1994 crisis led to the heterogeneity of labor market. In Turkey, there appeared 'core workforce' and 'peripheral workforce' as a result of flexibility. As a part of peripheral workforce, atypical employment, part time workers, home workers and seasonal workers changed the structure of collective action (DİSK, 2000: 912-3). However, if we think the discursive practices of the labor confederations within the borders of a hegemonic relation, the labor confederations could not develop a discursive strategy covering all of these new workers, so, the enactment of the flexibility oriented labor law 4857 became the result of their indifference to the hegemonic relation.

On the other hand, the confederations left 'isolated demands' outside the representation scope of the Democracy Platform and the Labor Platform, so to speak, they did not centrally represent Kurdish question, woman question, child workers, handicapped workers and so on. Therefore, if we say in words of Laclau (2005:149), they did not focus upon 'social heterogeneity' as well. As a result, the traditional representation of the confederations paved the way for the individualization of working life. As a result of these historical moments, the construction of 'new worker' can be seen as a prototype stemming from the individualization of working life.

On this basis, this study conducts the discursive analysis of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK around the research question: "What is the influence of the discursiveness of

Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK on the construction of ‘new worker’ in Turkey within the global neoliberal dynamics?” While responding to this question, this study shall highlight ‘barriers’ shaped by the conditions peculiar to Turkey in front of the development of the global neoliberal dynamics.

In this regard, this study contributes to the literature of the labor history by pointing to the discursiveness of working life in the post 1980 Turkey, so, it confirms that “the trade union is not a predetermined category” (Gramsci, 1990:265), so, it is a historical form determined by current conditions. In this regard, the confederations can overcome the crisis of unionism by representing ‘heterogeneity of labor market plus social heterogeneity’ in a new solidaristic form in the constitutive role of discourse.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This study mainly stands on two theoretical approaches, namely; Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. The common denominator of these approaches is to enable us to analyze the discursiveness of social actors and social practices in a hegemonic relation. Strictly speaking, Fairclough's emphasis on Gramsci's approach to hegemony is coterminous with Laclau and Mouffe's approach to hegemony. Accordingly, for Laclau and Mouffe, hegemony is not a "center or essence of the social" and it can be formed as a result of different articulatory practices (1985:139) while hegemony is "an unstable equilibrium" and a temporarily achievable domain in which social groups and social classes are in the struggle for Fairclough (1992:92).

On this basis, these approaches point to the constitution of a hegemonic formation with regard to the role of discourse in contemporary capitalism. That is to say, hegemonic practice and hegemonic struggle are taken up as the form of 'discursive practices (Fairclough 1995:94-5, Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). As to the distinction between these approaches, Fairclough privileges "the analysis of actual texts", which is not a part of discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe. Thus, he underlines that the production, consumption and interpretation of texts through social actors become as a part of hegemonic struggle (Fairclough, 1992:93).

On the basis of this distinction, we position Türk-İş, Hak-İş, DİSK, TİSK and the governments as social actors of working life against each other in analyzing the neoliberal parameters of working life in four historical moments. In this sense, we shall focus upon January 24 measures (1980 coup), 1994 crisis (April 5 measures), February 28 crisis and 2001 crisis in order to put the discursive formation of

working life through social actors into a historical analysis of neoliberalism in the context of Turkey.

If we return to the role of the distinction between CDA and discourse theory in this study, we shall mainly apply to a critical discourse analysis of texts produced and consumed by governments and employers in order to understand their discursive power on labor unions with regard to the neoliberal parameters of working life in post 1980 Turkey. Accordingly, we shall *linguistically* and *grammatically* analyze ‘government programs’ and ‘Employer Magazine’ (*İşveren Dergisi*) of TİSK in order to indicate how they organized hegemonic discourses in the historical transformation of the neo-liberal policies in the post 1980 Turkey.

On the other hand, we shall focus on the basic categories of Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory in order to reveal the attributes of the labor movements represented by the labor confederations as social movements against the discursive representation of working life through TİSK and the governments in the crisis periods. Also, it should be noted that the contribution of CDA to discourse theory provides us with the conditions in which we can linguistically analyze the important organizational texts of the labor confederations in the analysis of discourses of the labor movements in Turkey.

## **2.1 Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis**

### **2.1.1 Textual Analysis of Working Life in the Wake of the Constitutive Mentalities**

#### **2.1.1.1 Discourse, Discursive Practice and Text**

CDA discursively problematizes the categories such as neoliberalism, globalization, and knowledge based economy in order to explain away the linguistic aspect of the

global capitalism (Fairclough, 2002, 2001b). In this sense, CDA<sup>10</sup> analyzes these categories as discursive strategies of the global capitalism by focusing upon texts produced, consumed and interpreted by social actors and agencies. In another saying, he offers to evaluate new capitalism as “re-networking of social practices” and considers language and semiosis as an important way to “re-structure” and “re-scale” capitalism (Fairclough, 2001b:127). Thereby, the existent conditions of capitalism need to be revised in such a way as to create new ways of discourses, genres and styles.

In the context of Turkey, the mode of representation of January 24 measures introduced new discourses, genres and style to working life in order to res-structure capitalism by constructing social actors. In the post 1980 coup area, the involment of international global actors in the socio-political life of Turkey shaped ‘change’ in discourse and, as Fairclough indicates, dominant dicourses, genres and styles aimed at ‘colonizing new domains’ (ibid.:128). At this point, the definition of discourse, genre and style becomes important. As a form of social practice, discourse has three functions in the sphere of language; the first one is that the construction of “social identities” is contributed by discourse; the second one is that “discourse helps construct social relationship between people”, the third one is that “discourse contributes to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief” (Fairclough, 1992:64).

In the orbit of neoliberal discourse, discourses of Turkish bourgeoisie fulfilled these three functions in working life from 1980 to 2003. To set an expamle, discourse of law and order covered the linguistic sphere of working life during the early 1980s; accordingly, it implicitly contributed to the construction of DİSK as a ‘militant

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<sup>10</sup> “For instance, the whole idea of a ‘knowledge-based economy’, an economy in which knowledge and information taken on a decisive new significance, entails a discourse- based economy: knowledge is produced, circulates, and is consumed as discourses- discourses which are operationalized as new ways of acting and interacting (including new genres), and inculcated as new ways of being, new identities (including new styles)” (2001b:127)

union', of its activities (or social relations) as 'ideological unionism' and 'terror in workplaces' and of the knowledge and belief of people around 'economic productivity' and national interests (TISK, 1980a:21, 1980b). Thereby, the scope of "discursive practice" is an important part of the reproduction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1992: 65).

At this point, it is important to note that we should elucidate 'order of discourse' in order to understand genres and styles accompanying with discourse. According to him, a discourse is a way of representing the world and social life as a part of social practice. A genre is a special way of "interacting discursively" such as everyday conversation and meetings in various types of organization. A style<sup>11</sup> is the discourse aspect of being and personal identity. In other words, as a "way of being", it can be the style of manager or political leader with his/her bodily behavior (Fairclough, 2003:206, 2006: 26). It is important to note that order of discourse<sup>12</sup> refers to "social practice". More specifically, an order of discourse is to reveal the discourse aspect of the process in which a social order<sup>13</sup> is constituted by different social practices<sup>14</sup>, so, "it is the way in which diverse genres and discourses and styles are networked together" (Fairclough, 2003: 206).

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<sup>11</sup>Styles are seen as "the discursive aspect of ways of identities". It is concerned with the category of "identification" since it shows "how people identify themselves and are re-identified by others". Therefore, it is equated to identification. Most importantly, this process of identification is partly textual since it is realized in discourses, so, people can define themselves by using "assumptions" and "representational meanings" (Fairclough, 2003:159-160).

<sup>12</sup> It is important to figure out that "an order of discourse is not a closed or rigid system but rather an open system" (Fairclough, 2001b:124).

<sup>13</sup>The social order is an indicator of a "particular social space" *structured* by different types of practices. The discursive analysis of the social order refers to an order of discourse. It is possible to note that an order of discourse serves as a limited area for the analysis. As a result of this, social orders and orders of discourse are differentiated from the social order and order of discourse since he underlines that each order of discourse and social order would include different types of social practices and discourses as "structured". Once again, he asserts that the form in which discourses are structured in an order of discourse is determined by "changing relationships of power at the level of the social institution or of the society" (Fairclough, 2001a:24).

<sup>14</sup>"Social practices can be thought of as ways of controlling the selection of certain structural possibilities and the exclusion of others and the retention of these selections over time, in particular areas of social life" (Fairclough, 2003:24-5).



From here, we can say that the attribute of hegemonic struggle in working life determined by different orders of discourse for each historical period. While the military junta and TISK's social practices constituted a social order in the network of diverse genres, styles and discourses in the early 1980s, social practices of Özal and international actors (IMF and WB) recontextualized old genres, styles and discourses in the new order of discourse in the second half of 1980s. Therefore, as a result of game of hegemony, order of discourse of working life in Turkey became the scope of different combinations of genres, styles and discourses in the each socio-economic historical period.

At this point, the social and economic moments, which constitute the historical background of this study, can be seen 'social structures' since, for Fairclough, social structure can be seen as a category such as economy or social class. And the mediation between social structure and social events is provided by way of 'social practices' (2003: 23-4). From here, each historical moment such as February 28 or 2001 crisis can be considered as social structure insofar as it represents the limit of 'what is possible' (Fairclough, 2006:26).

If social practices connect social events with social structure, then we should respond to what social events mean. For him, social events construct 'what is actual' (ibid.), so, it takes us to the category of text enabling us to see "discursive practice in linguistic form", as Fairclough indicates; "if being an instance of social (political, ideological, etc) practice is one dimension of a discursive event, being a text is another" (1992:71). Therefore, as a part of discursive practice, the analysis of a particular discourse is composed of production, distribution and consumption of texts (ibid.).

In this context, we take up Employer Magazine (*İşveren Dergisi*), the government programs (and some organizational texts of the labor confederations such as May Day and protest manifests) as 'actual texts' since these texts constitute another

dimension of discursive practices of the governments and TİSK. More specifically, as Fairclough indicates; discourse becomes “the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part” (Fairclough, 2001a:20).

To set an example, discourse of anarchy and terror became the name of discursive event in order of discourse of working life in the early 1980s, at the same time; such discourse was represented by the governments and TİSK in their textual productions in the same manner (Ekinci and Önsal, 2008; TİSK, 1980a, 1980b). By the same token, discourse of ‘labor peace’ was the constitutive moment of 1994 crisis in the textual organization of the government, at the same time; it was a part of discursive practice of TİSK at the textual level (TİSK, 1994a: 3-5). Therefore, the discursive practices of the governments and TİSK formed texts in order to overcome other possibilities of structure by showing ‘what was actual’ in a hegemonic relation for that process. In doing so, the governments and Turkish bourgeoisie determined the elements of “text meaning” derived from the relation between discourses, genres and styles, or rather “the relationship of text to the event, to the social world and to the persons involved in the event” ( Fairclough, 2003:27).

## **2.1.2 Doing Textual Analysis of Working Life in Turkey**

### **2.1.2.1 Linguistic Analysis**

As a part of discursive practice, texts can be examined in two basic analyses, namely; “linguistic analysis” and “intertextual analysis”. Broadly speaking, the former refers to how language is used in order to demonstrate the relation between text and discourse at the linguistic level. The latter indicates how texts determine orders of discourse and how the historical transformation of texts is realized due to the articulation and re-articulation of genres, discourses and styles (Fairclough, 1995: 188-9).

In the field of linguistic analysis, Fairclough determines four main entities operating in text analysis. These are “vocabulary”, “grammar”, “cohesion”, and “text structure”. To put it briefly, these categories indicate the organization process of text, that is, he says that “every clause is a combination of ideational, interpersonal (identity and relational), and textual meanings”. This is to mean that the emergence of clauses in a text is determined by these categories. Thus, the clause may be “transitive” and “authoritative” in terms of ideational and interpersonal meanings. On the other hand, a textual aspect refers to “theme of the clause” (Fairclough, 1992: 76).

If we start from vocabulary, it can be said that the important thing is to understand “wording process”. This process can refer to different values, norms and institutions. He underscores that there may be alternative wordings as a result of their political and ideological significance. In other words, the focal point of wording process is for him to observe “how domains of experience may be reworded as part of social and political struggles (the example of rewording ‘terrorists’ as ‘freedom fighter’ or vice-versa is well known)” (ibid.:77).

The wording process of social and political issues constitutes a significant point for our analysis since it enables us to grasp the role of textual organization in a hegemonic relation. For example, Türk-İş and Hak-İş worded the subject of the labor movement as ‘workers’ while DİSK worded it as ‘working class’ in the early 1980s. On the other hand, the representation of Kurdish question signaled the existence of different wording processes in the textual organizations of the labor confederations in the 1990s. Accordingly, DİSK worded the matter as ‘Kurdish question’ (DİSK, 1994), Hak-İş worded it as ‘Southeast question’ (Hak-İş, 1989) and Türk-İş worded it as ‘terror’ (Türk-İş, 2002b). Thereby, it is possible to say that social actors of working life politically and ideologically had different experiences in their union struggles.

In definitions of ‘cohesion’ and ‘text structure’, the elements peculiar to vocabulary and conjunctive words constitute a linkage called “cohesion” in the formation of text and “text structure” points to the organization ways of ‘elements’ or ‘episodes’ in the ‘architecture’ of texts (Fairclough,1992:77-8). As to the category of grammar, he underlines ‘elements’ forming ‘clause’; in this sense, actional meanings refer to “speech function (statement or demand)” and “grammatical mood (declarative, interrogative and imperative)”. Representational meanings indicate the elements called “Processes, Participants, and Circumstances”<sup>15</sup> and enable us to see ‘excluded events’ and ‘included events’. This type of analysis is to aim at showing ‘forms of activity, persons, objects, social relations, times and places, means and language’ in a representation of social event in a text (Fairclough, 2003: 135-6).

In this context, grammatical analysis indicates how representation of a particular discourse is organized in the linguistic sphere of text. Thus, it enables us to discuss how representatives of TISK (or of the government) and of the labor confederations represented processes, participants and circumstances of working life. During 1994 crisis, TISK’s representation of collective bargaining and wage negotiations in Employer Magazine was a part of discourse of labor peace, in this sense, TISK stated that “demands of the labor confederations do not consider the economic conditions in which companies work”, so, TISK invested discourse of labor peace in order to shape the process in which demands of the labor confederations would be balanced. Accordingly, TISK constructed its own language sphere by excluding demands of the labor confederations as participants of the process (TISK, 1994a: 3-5).

In connection with this, the hegemonic struggle between social actors of working life witnessed ‘congruent representation of processes’ and ‘metaphorical

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<sup>15</sup>It should be noted that processes work with ‘verbs’, participants are seen as ‘subjects’ and ‘objects’, circumstances are seen as ‘time or place’ in the various forms of representation of social events (Fairclough, 2003:135-6).

representation of processes'. Congruent representation informs us "how events or practices or structures 'really' are", while metaphorical representation is a form of "representing processes as *processes*". That is to say, the formation of clauses becomes important in terms of 'tense'<sup>16</sup> and 'modality'<sup>17</sup> with respect to nominalization (Fairclough, 2003: 143). In this manner, it should be underlined how the representation of social events is realized in association with grammatical elements such as verbs and nouns. In the case of nominalization, it is possible to figure out that there is an abstraction, a generalization. That is, the representation of any process is presented by way of excluding 'participants in clauses' (ibid.: 144).

In this context, for this study, it is important to figure out how TISK and the governments represent flexibilization, globalization, knowledge based economy as 'processes' in opposition to the representation forms of the labor confederations. For this study, in the period from 1980 to 2003, the representation of flexibilization was a metaphorical representation since TISK reduced the role of events and subjects by increasing its emphasis on competitive economy. To make it clear, TISK turned the representation of flexibilization into a generalization by pointing to the importance of competition in the globalizing world. On the other hand, although TISK underlined the increasing rates of peripheral workers, sub contract practices in the development of knowledge based economy, it did not hesitate to state that 'flexibility is for the good of both employer and worker' (TISK, 1997b: 26-7). Accordingly, it did not allow for what job security and unemployment meant for workers in Turkey, so, it reduced flexibilization to a metaphorical category by

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<sup>16</sup> He explains "tense (so destruction' can cover 'was destroyed', 'is destroyed', 'will be destroyed', etc.) and modality ( so distinctions between 'is', 'may be' , 'should be' and so forth are 'lose) (Fairclough, 2003: 143).

<sup>17</sup> Modality is taken up in association with "knowledge exchange (epistemic modality)' and 'activity exchange (deontic modality)'. To put it briefly, these categories refer to the different forms of commitments. One thing to note is levels of commitment, that is, the levels can be 'high', 'median' and 'low'. These indicate the distinction between truth and obligation. For commitment to truth, he speak of epistemic modality according to the levels respectively : " he certainly opened the window", "he probably opened the window" and "he possibly opened the window". On the other hand, for deontic modality in terms of obligation, he says respectively that " you are required to open the window", "you are supposed to open the window", "you are allowed to open the window" (Fairclough, 2003: 167-70).

excluding the labor confederations's protective legal demands and workers' case in the formation of its own clauses.

In this sense, it can be said that TISK and the governments constructed their textual structures in the modality of 'evaluative statements'. For textual analysis, these types of statements show "what is good and what is bad" in text, more precisely, 'desirability' and 'undesirability' can be followed on this statements by analyzing adjectives and a noun phrase (Fairclough, 2003: 172). At this point, it is important to note that "deontic (obligational) modalities are linked to evaluation"<sup>18</sup> since the auspice of a statement or an action can be attributed to something desirable on the basis of values or norms in the case of obligational modality (ibid.: 173). From here, it can be said that the construction of working life in the neoliberal parameters was often realized by evaluative statements. For instance, January 24 measures and April 5 measures were introduced by the governments and Turkish bourgeoisie as the only alternative in the obligational modality on the basis of their nationalist and capitalist values. Also, as we shall see later, the flexibility of labor legislation was organized around a strand of evaluative statements in confirming the necessity of a competitive economy.

### **2.1.2.2 Intertextual Analysis**

For this study, another important part of textual analysis is "intertextual analysis" since such an analysis enables us to see the historical transformations of texts in the relation between discursive event and text. Fairclough says that

"The concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones" (1992:102).

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<sup>18</sup> He gives the lecture of Ton Blair as an example: Blair says : " The values we believe in should shine through what we do in Afghanistan" (2003: 173). That is to say, taking a desirable action in Afghanistan is committed on the basis of values they believe in.

The social conditions, in which texts are transformed by articulation of different genres, styles and discourses, are directly related to power relations determining social practices. Mainly, he underlines that the “heterogeneity of texts” is the focal point of intertextual analysis and that the “ambivalence of texts” can be emerged as a result of the use of “quotation marks” or “reporting verb”. There are two important forms of intertextuality, namely; “manifest intertextuality” and “constitutive intertextuality”. In order to focus upon discourse conventions, he prefers to employ the term “interdiscursivity” instead of constitutive intertextuality (ibid.: 104-5).

The distinction between these forms is defined as an opposition; while the former points to “specific texts overtly drawn upon within a text”, the latter indicates “the constitution of a discourse type through a combination of elements of orders of discourse” (ibid.: 117-8). At this point, the representation of the specific texts of European Community or ILO within the textual structures of TISK or the labor confederations can be taken up forms of intertextuality since it led to different types of combinations of diverse genres and discourses in order to generate new ones such as dialogicity, partnership and social dialog (and so on) in Turkey.

Intertextuality<sup>19</sup> leads to re-articulation of “prior texts”<sup>20</sup>, so, the articulation and re-articulation of the elements take the form of a “discursive change”, leading to “new discursive hegemonies” as well (ibid.: 97). In this sense, for example, Özal’s political discourse led to the transformation of texts by articulating genres and discourses in a new order of discourse. The transformation of order of discourse was mainly based on discourse of the free market economy. On this basis, TISK

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<sup>19</sup> Fairclough’s preoccupation with the matter of intertextuality is dealing necessarily with the category of “assumption” in the analysis of discourse. He attracts attention to the link between these categories since “as with intertextuality, assumptions connect one text to other texts” However, it should be marked that assumptions are different from intertextuality in many aspects since there is always something “vague” in text. This is to mean that there is no “attributed or attributable specific texts” in the function of assumptions (2003: 40).

<sup>20</sup>To make this point more explicit, he sees Thatcher’s political discourse as “a rearticulation of the existing order of political discourse” since this discourse created a new mix composed of “traditional conservative, neo-liberal and populist discourses” (Fairclough, 1992:93).

transformed its own texts by changing its social practices constructing the dynamics of working life in order to generate new hegemonic discourses.

At this point, textual analysis takes us to another important point where the relation between intertextuality and assumptions becomes important. Strictly speaking, intertextuality makes difference open by “bringing other ‘voices’<sup>21</sup> into a text”. On the other hand assumption diminishes difference by “assuming common ground”. In other words, he makes this point clear in the following way: “the former accentuates the dialogicality of a text, the dialogue between the voice of the author of a text and other voices, the latter diminishes it” (Fairclough, 2003: 41).

From here, he emphasizes on the importance of whether a text is dialogical or not. That is to say, ‘differences’<sup>22</sup> can be seen in a “negotiated text” in a clear manner. On the other hand, it must be noted that “orientation to difference” is not a simple process, content of which is complexly including the process from “recognition of difference”, ‘overcoming difference’ to a “normalization of differences of power suppressing differences of meaning and norms”. In this sense, he puts forward that “categorical assertions” constituting a text is related to “assumptions” in term of difference (ibid.: 42-3).

At this point, our analysis problematizes the production process of texts regulating working life. It seems to us that any text, which gives basis to the legal regulation of working life, was not constituted as a result of negotiation. Therefore, TISK and the government programs could not represent a ‘different voice’, which was peculiar to a labor confederation. Moreover, the constitutive intertextual relation between government and employers has been realized in Turkey since 1980. The first example of this was the production process of 2821 and 2822 union and

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<sup>21</sup> He uses the term “voice” as partly similar to the term “style” (Fairclough, 2003.: 41).

<sup>22</sup>Logic of difference indicates the proliferation of differences in a text while logic of equivalence points to the collapse of differences in that text, so, classification can be seen as categorization process of these differences and he says that “classification and categorization shape how people think and act as social agents” (Fairclough, 2003: 88).



collective bargaining laws. Before the enactment of these acts, as Koç indicates, TİSK's working reports had a constitutive role in the production process of the labor legislation of working life in the early 1980s (Koç,1982:20). Therefore, if we take up the representation of demands of workers as a 'difference' or 'dialogical option', Turkish bourgeoisie chose to overcome differences instead of recognizing differences by establishing an intertextual relation with the military junta in the early 1980s.

On the other hand, the role of a negotiated text is important to understand the constitution of hegemonic relation. This is to figure out "which texts and voices are included" and "which are excluded" in a text. Moreover, he attends to all elements in text such as persons, institutions and types of representations since attributed persons and non –attributed ones can be involved in the text (Fairclough, 2003: 47-8). At this point, we can see that the labor confederations agreed the government and TİSK on excluding representation of differences such as Kurdish question and woman question. For example, as far as we learn from Koç, Kurdish question was excluded from the texts of the Democracy Platform because of Türk-İş, DİSK and Hak-İş's common approach (Koç, 1997).

From this standpoint, it seems to us that as long as the labor confederations eliminated the representation of difference in order to produce new hegemonic discourses, they contributed to the re-production of 'assumptions' of employers in Turkey. In this sense, we can return to what we understand from 'assumptions', according to Fairclough, "existential, propositional and value assumptions" work in texts. Existential assumptions point to the existence of a case such as globalization, social cohesion and a knowledge-based economy, on the other hand propositional assumptions indicate "what is asserted is the sort of process" and a kind of demanding. As to the importance of value assumptions, he asserts that, for example, "social cohesion is assumed to be desirable" within the value system of the text, on the contrary, an undesirable one refers to "sense of unease and

inequality” (Fairclough, 2003:57). Therefore, a particular discourse includes these assumptions in order to indicate what is good, what is possible...etc. (ibid.: 58).

In this sense, it is possible to say that discourse of anarchy and terror was the existential assumptions of the government and TİSK in order to suppress the increasing power of labor movement and they organized their propositional and value assumptions in the orbit of this discourse in the early 1980s. When it came to 1990s, they invested discourse of labor peace and social dialog in order to show how ‘competitiveness’ was desirable under the assumption of the unavailability of globalization. Turkish bourgeoisie improved their discourses and assumptions in “logic appearances” and discarded “explanatory logic” of social events and processes such as terror and globalization.

At this point, the distinction between these two logics is important to understand a hegemonic relation in texts since an explanatory logic demonstrates how changes emerge in the social and economical processes with reference to the ‘causal relations’ of process. For Fairclough, many contemporary texts ignore the explanation of causal relations and override explanatory logic (Fairclough, ibid.:94-5). In this sense, TİSK’s representation of globalization and flexibilization took the form of logic appearance in order to construct workers and the labor confederations by pointing to what is desirable for working life in Turkey. As a result of this; their texts functioned as “hortatory report” which is one of contemporary genres. This type of report means “descriptions with a covert prescriptive intent, aimed at getting people to act in certain ways on the basis of representations of what is” (ibid.: 96).

### **2.1.3 Neo-Liberal Discursive Tendencies of Working Life in Turkey**

From all that has been said, textual analysis stands on the linguistic and intertextual analysis of discursive practice. Fairclough put such an analysis into a hegemonic

relation in order to point to ‘discursive changes’ in the sphere of new capitalism. In this regard, according to him, technologization of discourse and globalization of discourse represent two important shifts in the hegemonic potential of discourse. In our analysis, we can state that the historical transformation process of discursive practices and texts of working life in Turkey has been realized in the scope of these tendencies since 1980. In another saying, technologization of discourse and globalization of discourse has formed the linguistic sphere of working life in Turkey as two important tendencies of neoliberal restructuring since 1980.

### **2.1.3.1 Technologization of Discourse**

Strictly speaking, technologization of discourse is explained with a view to showing an ‘institutional goal or the efficiency of organizational practices’. It requires ‘the emergence of discourse technologists’, positions of whom point to their relationship to ‘knowledge’ and ‘institutions’. On the other hand, their relation to institutions is organized around some main ‘practices’ and ‘routines’ such as training and management. As a result, the process of technologization of discourse is to “shift the policing of discourse practice” (Fairclough, 1995:102-4). He specially attracts attention to the role of technologization of discourse in ‘service industry at the expense of manufacturing industry’. According to him, discursive practices are, to a great extent, important in both service and manufacturing industries in order to shape working process. This can be seen as a process in which a shift resulted from new technologies that can be experienced. The effects of those technologies are seen as the process from ‘repetitive and solitary work on a production line to more variable work in teams’ (Fairclough, 1992:215).

In Turkey, technologization of discourse is not divorced from the objective conditions of production. Essentially, the emergence of new types of work organization such as ‘quality circle’ incarnated traces of technologization of discourse after the second half of 1980s (Petrol-İş, 2000:895) and TİSK textually

and discursively demonstrated these work organizations with support of discourse technologists contributing to the reinforcement of discourse of flexibility. As we shall see later, accordingly; discourse technologists attempted to organize the sphere of work around new discourse technologies. Fairclough indicates that “discourse technologies establish a close connection between knowledge about language and discourse and power” (1992: 216).

We can specify this point in terms of cultural hegemony<sup>23</sup>, the key point would be the process in which ‘a new type of worker’ is constructed (ibid.: 215). Discourse technologies following specific goals executed by ‘institutional power-holders’ lead to ‘change’ in discursive practice ultimately. Hence, it makes possible for us to figure out the new regulation of discursive aspects of the existing orders. He says: “The technologization of discourse is associated with an extension of strategic discourse to new domains” (ibid.). In modern societies, redesigning orders of discourse within the borders of calculable effects over people is concerned with technologization of discourse.

From this perspective, according to this study, Turkish bourgeoisie has been in an effort to construct a new type of worker by putting the economic and social parameters of working life into the flexible labor legislation since 1990s. This

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<sup>23</sup>At this point, Gramsci’s influence on Fairclough’s elaboration is crucial in the context of technologization of discourse. To specify Gramsci’s contribution, what he means by cultural hegemony is a process in which the ruling class spread its own power over the whole society. The different apparatus of state from the schools to the courts contributes to the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes. Therefore, it is possible to say that there is a complex network composed of political, economical, cultural and moral sides in order to be a hegemonic power over all society. As Forgas indicates, his analysis of the space of ‘production’ is divorced from ‘a mechanically determining economic base’. Therefore, the conditioning and conditioned roles of political, cultural, ideological and moral elements are a part of production relations (Gramsci, 1988:275). Indicating the effort of Taylorism, the first task was to control the ‘moral values’ of workers and to develop the ‘mechanical and physical aspects’ of workers. On the other hand, this type of rationalism created ‘psycho-physical equilibrium’ to prevent the destruction of workers. This requires the new type of regulation of production. Therefore, the effort to create and maintain ‘skilled labour force’ became a main aim of rationalism. To perform this aim, high wages were the most important apparatus in the production process (ibid.: 289-91). This point enables us to understand the relation between hegemony and production since, for him, the birth of hegemony is realized in the factory and its implementation needs political and ideological tools to be effective over the whole society (ibid.: 278-9).

effort proceeded with moving discourse of flexibility to a central point by defining the emerging production techniques<sup>24</sup> within the borders of technologization of discourse and contributed to the enactment of 4857 labor act in 2003. As a result of this process, subject of collective labor law has been constructed as ‘new worker’ within the borders of this flexibility oriented labor law.

### **2.1.3.2 Globalization of Discourse**

In the category of globalization of discourse, he often points to the globalized effects of language in accordance with power relations, so, a contemporary capitalist society should be analyzed from the point of view of globalization. The process in which globalization is defined cannot be reduced to the essence of the economic order since, for him, it refers to the cultural and political process as well (Fairclough, 2001a: 203-4). It must be conceded that he focuses on the way in which language critique is used to expose ‘the politics of the new global order’. Therefore, ‘the new neo-liberal order’ is investigated by two main questions: The first one is how ‘the new ways of using language’ is used and the second one is what ‘new representations of change’ accepted are. From here, it should be said that globalization of discourse is not a simple, or homogenous, process, so, we should look for how global practices ‘colonize’ orders of discourse of societies<sup>25</sup> (ibid.: 205-6).

From this perspective, for this study, the colonization process of discourse of working life through the neoliberal order started with January 24 measures. The

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<sup>24</sup> For instance, ‘work perfection’ (iş mükemmeliyeti) and ‘self managed team’ (kendini yöneten takım) (Köstekli İ., 2000).

<sup>25</sup> A discourse of globalization represents itself more than what it is. It is offered as a ‘simple fact of life’. Therefore, it works ideologically. Moreover, it is used by proponents as ‘a discourse of power’. To make this point clear, he explains that “part of what they seek to do is to globalize the discourse of globalization- its key terms are translated (or transposed) into many languages (French ‘globalization’, ‘flexibilite’, etc.; Hungarian ‘globalizacio’, ‘flexibilitas’, etc.) and pervasively used (in contexts of professional management, journalism, education and so forth) in many societies” (Fairclough, 2001a: 207).

international actors of the global capitalism such as IMF and WB have started to become effective on the soci-economic order of Turkey. Accordingly, flexibility has been translated as '*esneklik*' and globalization has been translated as '*küreselleşme*' (and so on) as the new ways of using language under the influence of globalization of discourse.

As to new representations of change, the aim of actors of globalization process is to expand social practices, orders of discourse, genres and styles in order to canalize 'change in discursive practices' in favor of rules of the global capitalism. At this point, 'recontextualization' sheds on light how "the outside and the inside of a particular social entity' is adjusted by processes of globalization. That is to say, recontextualization refers to a process in which discourses, genres and styles outside a social entity are internalized in a 'new context'. Therefore, there raises a double relation; 'external entities' are recontextualized by the action of 'appropriation'. On the other hand, 'internal social entities' are defined a new context (Fairclough, 2006:28-9). In the context of working life in Turkey, for example; Özal internalized the free market economy in a new context by confirming anti-communism and national integrity in order to form a new representation of change. Thus, he recontextualized external elements of the free market economy with internal elements of conservative politics by appropriation of directives of international capitalist actors.

## **2.2 Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory**

A variety of thinkers have paid increasing attention to the development of capitalism in order to shed light on its negative effects. If we specify Laclau and Mouffe's approach in this sense, we must concede that their analysis mainly follows two directions; on the one hand they acknowledge the historical transformation of capitalism and its "dislocatory" effects over societies, on the other hand they improve their analysis in the direction of constructing new subjects

against capitalism. Before going into more detail, it can be underscored that Laclau espouses the argument of ‘disorganized capitalism’<sup>26</sup>, speciality of which is to “create new forms of social control” (Laclau, 1990:59).

In this sense, Laclau approaches to disorganized capitalism in terms of a ‘new international division of labour’. Specially, the Third World has become an area of ‘labour-intensive industries’ and these new conditions, which disorganized capitalism created, are seen as the forerunner of ‘new spaces for struggle’. Therefore, the new ‘dislocations’ should be figured out to overcome new forms of domination which disorganized capitalism shapes (ibid.:58-9). As a ‘surface of inscription’, discourse operates in dislocations of capitalism in which antagonism is always a determinant border between opposite camps and the basic role of discourse is to construct new subjects and re-articulate objects in this dislocated arena in the form of a hegemonic articulation.

From here, Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory enables us to understand any class or group as an articulatory subject in the dislocated area of structure. Accordingly, if we specify the dislocatory effects of capitalism from the point of Turkey, we can say that, as a result of the neoliberal policies, there have been a lot of dislocations within the scope of production in particular and of society in general since 1980s. At this point, a trade union can be considered as an articulatory subject since its task is directly related to dislocations of production and mediately to that of society. Therefore, we shall accept Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK as articulatory subjects in order to understand their efforts to construct workers and masses in a hegemonic articulation.

In this sense, the role of DİSK in 1970s can be exemplified since, as an articulatory subject, DİSK defined the socio-politic matters from education to housing problem as a result of the capitalist order (DİSK, 1977: 55-8) and explained away that “the

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<sup>26</sup> The argumentation characterized by S. Lasch and J. Urry, also studied by C.Offe.

struggle against fascism is to mean the struggle against the collobarative monopolist capital and imperialism” (ibid.:132, my translation). If we say in words of Laclau, the confederation established a ‘relation of contiguity’ between anti-fascist struggle and ant-capitalist struggle and became the name of a ‘concrete social agent’<sup>27</sup>.

Above all, discourse theory indicates that the discursiveness of social agent or identity has a potential to be a nodal point in opposing to new forms of social control of the capitalist order, so, the organization of a common struggle against forms of capitalist dynamics has a significant place, and in such an effort, discourse is the main and constitutive part of the process. Accordingly, the basic categories of discourse theory should be elaborated in order to understand the discursive articulation of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK in the post 1980 Turkey.

## **2.2.1 Reading the Discursiveness of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK with the Basic Concepts of Discourse Theory**

### **2.2.1.1 Articulation, Discourse and Discursivity**

Determining the role of articulatory practice, we can say that a social identity cannot be determined in a certain articulatory practice at the level of fundamental classes since, for Laclau and Mouffe; “every social identity becomes the meeting point for a multiplicity of articulatory practices, many of them antagonistic” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:138). Accordingly, as social identities, the articulatory practice of Türk-İş comes into existence against that of DİSK or Hak-İş and vice versa. However, as we will see later, their articulatory practices cannot be defined

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<sup>27</sup>At this point, we should clear up the articulatory role of a trade union in dislocations of the capitalist system. According to Laclau, if a trade union, which is literally to negotiate wages, takes up anti-racist campaigning, there is a ‘relation of contiguity’ between wage struggle and anti-racist campaigning. Moreover, if the union continues to struggle against racism and for wages, this relation would lead to a ‘certain equivalential homogeneity between two struggles’, to turn the union into a nodal point in the constitution of a ‘people’ and to become ‘the name of a concrete social agent, whose only essence is the specific articulation of heterogeneous elements’ (Laclau, 2005: 109-110).



by attributing a stable essence to their identities since the discursive production of these confederations is overdetermined by the ‘purely historical and contingent character of the being of objects’ (Laclau, 1990:118).

In this logic, discourses differentiate trade unions from each other; so to speak, they construct their members or masses by way of their own discourses as a result of their articulatory practices. In another saying, Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 105) explain away all components of the process in the following way;

“We will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call *discourse*. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call *moments*. By contrast, we will call *element* any difference that is not discursively articulated”

In this sense, for example; in the late 1970s, DİSK’s discourse of socialist order was a result of an articulation between anti-capitalist struggle and anti-fascist struggle while Türk-İş’s discourse of anarchy and terror was a result of an articulation among anti-communism, national unity and anti-class struggle. At this point, we should note that an articulation works within “regularity in dispersion”<sup>28</sup>, that is, a discursive formation is “an ensemble of differential positions” (ibid.: 106). Since every object is constructed by discourse in the extension of the discursive, differential positions are seen as “a discursive articulation” (ibid.:107). In other words, the existence conditions of these positions precondition an articulation

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<sup>28</sup>Laclau and Mouffe retain Foucault’s ‘regularity in dispersion’. Foucault defines a total system called “archive” in which an archeological reading is performed (2002:145-148). After all, as a practice and a production, discourse enables us to figure out objects in “their historical appearances” (ibid.:53). Moreover, he indicates that such an analysis of discourse requires an analysis of statements in dispersion without relegating to a same theme (ibid.). At this point, broadly speaking, Laclau points to the importance of archeology in showing “the heterogeneity of a discursive formation” by way of “regularity in dispersion” (Laclau, 1990: 435).

because “the transition from the ‘elements’ to the ‘moments’ is never entirely fulfilled” (ibid.:110).

Thereby, the discursive articulation of the labor confederations is to refer to an effort to control ‘differential positions’ in order to construct every object by way of discourse. Accordingly, the labor confederations’s effort is to capture this transition from the elements to the moments, so, the open character of their discursive identities signals the impossibility of the closure of any social identity. If we go into detail, as a discursive practice, articulation is not a priori category or plane for dispersed elements. Also, this is to indicate that there is no necessity of a unifying category such as working class or the logic of reproduction in Marxist essentialism for a plane of articulation (ibid.:109). What makes such an articulation possible is the existence of a “discursive exterior which always prevents social identity becoming fully sutured” (ibid.: 111).

To make this point concrete, the discursive practice of Hak-İş included an emphasis on Islamic elements such as ‘worship worker’ and ‘employer-worker relation based on Islam’ in order to form its own discourse in the early 1980s against class struggle, communism and fascism (Hak-İş, 1981) since, as a discursive exterior, the discursive articulation of DİSK, or of Türk-İş, prevented the closure of the social identity of Hak-İş. On the other hand, although they established the common platforms in order to advocate the democratic rights of workers in the course of 1990s, the existence of discursive exteriority within their individual discursive practices stimulated them to form their social identities in the face of actual social relations.

From here, we should say that the confederations form their discourses in social relations, so, their social configurations become meaningful in the *field of discursivity*. According to Laclau and Mouffe, there is always a ‘surplus of meaning’ preventing the closure of any social identity and social. This surplus

meaning is the “*field of discursivity*” in which the social can partially be constructed (1985: 111). No doubt, the discursive practices of the labor confederations work in this discursivity since, in theory of discourse, “every social configuration is meaningful” (Laclau, 1990:100).

Accordingly, the discursive practices of each labor confederation are meaningful in the field of discursivity since the identities of the labor confederations are socially constructed by discourse. At this point, what the social aspect of discourse means points to “the discourse which constitutes the subject position of the social agent” (ibid.: 101). That is to say, the subject position of the labor confederations is determined by the ‘material character of discourse’ and the ‘materiality of discourse’ can not be reduced to the experience of a “founding subject” since there are only diverse “subject positions”. That is, an articulatory practice must be seen in relation with the materiality of the diverse institutions, practices and rituals which a discursive formation structures.

From here, we can not claim that the social configuration of Hak-İş is meaningless while that of DİSK is meaningful since each confederation came out within a certain scope of social relations. Thus, each confederation presented itself as a subject position, so, they performed an articulatory practice with relation to their own institutions and practices. For example, the material character of discourse of DİSK was, to a great extent, derived from the leftist wing of social relations while that of Hak-İş was derived from the Islamic and conservative wing of social relations in the late 1970s. At this point, there was not a founding subject attributing them to a subject position but their discourses shaping their subject positions organized around different rituals and institutions.

On the other hand, , we can see that the role of the confederations was socially determined, so, the labor confederations put union unity on the agenda since the social conditions of the day indicated the increasing disturbance of workers and

wage earners after Spring Action and Zonguldak Strike. However, it is clear that the discursive practices of the labor confederations could determine the route of the increasing labor movement, so, there was no discourse (or a discursive subject position) superseding their subject positions.

At this point, we can determine how the labor confederations engaged in the notion of discourse within the field of discursivity by elaborating the categories of nodal point and floating signifiers<sup>29</sup> in theory of discourse. Accordingly, the role of any discourse can be determined as a “nodal point”<sup>30</sup> in order to dominate the field of discursivity, that is, the notion of discourse in this field would represent an effort to create a temporary ‘center’ controlling differences (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985.:112). The field of discursivity points to the status of elements, so to speak; “elements are incapable of being wholly articulated to a discursive chain” as “floating signifiers” (ibid.:113).

Following this conceptualization, we can point to some nodal points and floating signifiers of trade unionism in post 1980 Turkey. At first sight, each labor confederation used different nodal points in order to fix the field of discursivity of unionism until 1990s. On the eve of 1980, it can be stated that DİSK formed two nodal points; ‘socialist order’<sup>31</sup> and ‘anti-fascism’ by controlling floating signifiers such as democracy, state terror, democratic rights and freedoms (DİSK, 1977; 1980a). On the other hand, Türk-İş constituted its nodal point; ‘anarchy and terror’<sup>32</sup> by fixing democracy, Atatürk principles, fascism and reaction (Türk-İş, 1980a, 1980b). In this regard, as Laclau points out, as a floating signifier, democracy will vary one context from another one. In other words, it would refer to the different

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<sup>29</sup> Empty and floating signifiers are seen as “partial dimensions in the process of hegemonic construction of the ‘people’ ” since empty signifier is considered in conjunction with a stable frontier, however a floating signifier refers to the “displacements of that frontier” (Laclau, 2005:133).

<sup>30</sup> Laclau notes that this is similar to Lacan’s concept of points de capiton.

<sup>31</sup> Kemal Türkler states that “an advanced democratic order towards socialism led by our working class is proceeding with overcoming obstacles” (DİSK, 1977: 242 my translation).

<sup>32</sup> In January 1980, İbrahim Denizci, declared that “Türk-İş will start a campaign to protect democracy and Atatürk principles” against anarchy and terror (Türk-İş, 1980a: 20–1 my translation).

meanings in the sphere of liberal discourse and of socialist discourse. (1990:28, 1997:306).

### **2.2.1.2 Antagonism, Dislocation and Subject Positions**

The discursive construction of any social identity works with the constitutive role of antagonism, so, a social identity constructs itself by excluding ‘a radical otherness’. Therefore, the constitution of any identity requires such an exclusion, and so, antagonism (Laclau, 2007b:52). As Torfing states, as a “constitutive outside”, it determines the discursiveness of any identity under the historical circumstances (1999:124). Thus, antagonism implies ‘negativity’ characterizing the relation between identities or social agents. At this point, the distinction between antagonism and contradiction should be elucidated, as Laclau and Mouffe underscore; “A is fully A that being-not-A is a contradiction”. On the other hand, in the case of antagonism; “the presence of the “Other” prevents me from being totally myself” (1985:124-125). That is, if the presence of A prevents the closure of being-not-A, we can speak of antagonism between them.

As we stated before, it is possible to read this distinction from the point of the labor confederations. At first sight, as social identities, the relation among Hak-İş, Türk-İş and DİSK can be considered as a ‘contradiction’ but trade unionism history indicates that the discursive formation of the labor confederations signaled the existence of an antagonistic relation in unionism from 1980 to 1990s. Particularly, the class based unionism of DİSK was perceived by Hak-İş and Türk-İş as a threat, as a result; Türk-İş and Hak-İş formed their discursive strategies against class struggle, that is, DİSK. Hak-İş defined DİSK as a ‘satellite of the communist russia’ and Türk-İş as an ‘agency of foreing powers’ (Hak-İş, 1981:66-7). On the other hand, DİSK accused Türk-İş of supporting to ‘repression and exploitation order’ (DİSK, 1980b:235). After the coup, Hak-İş antagonized Türk-İş in order to construct workers around its own discursive practice until the second half of 1980s.

From here, it is clear that each labor confederation attempted to construct its social identity by excluding other confederation and preventing it from being totally itself, so, as Laclau determines, the constitutive role of antagonism performs the double function; on the one hand it prevents the ‘fullness’ of the identity and shows the ‘contingent’ character of the identity, on the other hand it shows that the identity would not be “what it is outside the relationship with the force antagonizing it” (Laclau, 1990:21).

Putting the role of the labor confederations into its place, we should underline that mentioning the singularity of antagonism<sup>33</sup> is not possible as a result of the operation of dislocations. According to Laclau; “structural dislocations operating in contemporary capitalism” are always at issue (ibid.: 45). That is, dislocation forms new possibilities for different types of articulation. In this sense, insofar as capitalism is taken up as a constitutive outside, Laclau asserts that there are no “stable social and political relations” and that hegemonic construction would be possible through new political alternatives in opposition to capitalism (ibid.:56).

Indeed, in theory of discourse, the category of dislocation forces us to define new struggle areas for the labor confederations. Although the neoliberal policies operated as a constitutive outside in the post January 24 measures, the labor confederations did not develop a different form of a discursive articulation to represent workers and masses until the late 1980s. Specially, the labor confederations reduced antagonism to a single point by opposing to class struggle in the period from 1980 to 1983. During the second half of 1980s, the restrictive legal regulation of working life led to the heavy socio-economic losses of workers under discourse of the free market economy. There was no possibility for

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<sup>33</sup>In this regard we can determine the location of language in conjunction with differences. If antagonism determines the borders of objectivity, the position of differences would depend on the constitutive character of antagonism, so, for Laclau and Mouffe, language is unable of implying antagonism in full, so, it can be seen “an attempt to fix that antagonism subverts” (1985:125). Another important point is that antagonism cannot be reduced to a single point. Because of its negativity, any of the differential positions can be seen as an area of antagonism, so, the multiplicity of antagonism is at issue (ibid.: 131).

solidarity between Hak-İş and Türk-İş since union competition prevented the representation of workers' interests, so, it is not incorrect to say that the antagonistic relation between the confederations was not dissolved in favor of workers (Hak-İş, 1986b:18).

At this point, it is important to respond to whether or not a labor confederation can identify itself with different subject positions since if a subject will be able to articulate dislocations of capitalism, it should identify itself with subject positions in the dislocated structure. In another saying, as Torfing indicates; “a single subject may identify with many different things and may thus occupy many different subject positions” (Torfing, 1999:150). Thus, ‘political subjectivities are created and formed’ within an identification process (Howarth, 2000:109). Therefore, for discourse theory, identification refers to the representation of political subjectivities.

According to Smith, if subject positions were a set of beliefs, structural positions would stem from these beliefs, so, an individual would become a “social agent” by way of these subject positions in a “social formation” (Smith,1998:58). On the other hand, subject positions are directly linked to political discourses and practices, in this logic, the condition of identification with a particular political discourse will not be predetermined, so, she overtly (ibid.: 71) underscores: “A relatively stabilized subject position provides a collectively shared framework for the interpretation of a given set of structural position” (ibid.:72). If there is a structural position workers gain, these workers can radicalize or deepen “solidarity with the exploited and the oppressed” (ibid.).

In this context, Türk-İş and Hak-İş can be seen as a ‘relatively stabilized subject position’ but it is possible to say that these confederations could not identify themselves with subject positions of workers. As we shall see later, although they constituted the solidaristic platforms in the course of 1990s, they turned a blind eye

to the heterogeneity of labor market in particular and of social heterogeneity in general. For example, the representation of Kurdish question constituted a crisis in the Democracy Platform although they emphasized on democratic rights and freedoms. On the other hand they did not constitute a structural position to represent dislocations of labor market such as atypical employment, woman workers and unemployment (and so on). If we accept that “the democratic transformation of society depends on a proliferation of new subjects of change” (Laclau, 1990:41), the discursive articulation of the labor confederations was insufficient to construct new subjects of change.

### **2.2.1.3 The logic of difference and the logic of equivalence**

In the discourse theory, Laclau and Mouffe introduce logic of difference and of equivalence in order to show the construction of the ‘political space’ with relation to the operation of antagonism and discursive exterior. Laclau and Mouffe say that: “the logic of equivalence is a logic of the simplification of political space, while the logic of difference is a logic of its expansion and increasing complexity” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:130). For our analysis, these two categories are productive in order to understand the constitution of the labor confederations and of the common solidarities after 1990s.

Following the definition above, it can be said that each confederation is based on logic of equivalence since they are composed of differential positions, so to speak; these differential positions refer to labor unions affiliated to the confederation. To set an example, as equivalence, Hak-İş is composed of eleven affiliated unions for today. Each affiliated union represents difference within Hak-İş equivalence and what made them equivalent to each other in this equivalence is the existence of discursive exteriority formed by other labor confederations. By the same token, this formation is valid for the discursive identities of Türk-İş and DİSK.



In the course of 1990s, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK became ‘differences’ in the emerging new equivalences since they started to determine a common enemy as discursive exterior. Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK constituted Employees’ Common Voice Democracy Platform with support of civil society organizations in 1993. Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK (later TİSK and TOBB) constituted Civil Initiative in 1997. Türk-İş, Hak-İş, DİSK, KESK, Türkiye Kamu-Sen, Memur-Sen formed the Labor Platform with support of civil society organizations in 1999. Each equivalent chain can be analyzed according to the definition of Howart below;

“...in the logic of equivalence, if the terms  $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  are made equivalent ( $a \equiv b \equiv c$ ) with respect to characteristic  $d$ , the  $d$  must totally negate  $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  ( $d = - (a, b, c)$ ), thus subverting the original terms of the system” (2000:107).

Accordingly, the  $d$  would function as the “discursive exterior”, so, the relation between  $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  would constitute an equivalent chain against the  $d$  (ibid). In other words, in the case of equivalence, there is something excluded and “all other differences are equivalent to each other in their common rejection of the excluded identity” (Laclau, 2005:70). Thereby, if we specify this point from the point of the labor confederations, antagonism between the confederations did not have a determinant role since they suspended their differences in order to form equivalent chains against a common enemy.

Broadly speaking, firstly, the Democracy Platform was formed against ‘privatizations, dismissals and non-unionization’, so, it is possible to say that the neoliberal policies of the governments functioned as discursive exterior totalizing differences in the platform. Secondly, Civil Initiative was different from both the Democracy platform and the Labor Platform since Türk-İş and DİSK cooperated with TİSK and TOBB by excluding the political identity of RP (*Refah Partisi*) and ‘reaction threat’ made them equivalent to each other. The discursive articulation of Civil Initiative subordinated workers’ socio-economic demands to discourse of

‘reaction’. Lastly, the Labor Platform was the result of the increasing crisis of working life and attempted to unify all laborers against IMF, so, IMF policies made them equivalent to each other.

At this point, it is important to note that equivalence and difference need each other to function properly since Laclau underlines that “all social (that is, discursive) identity is constituted at the meeting point of difference and equivalence” (ibid.:80) and that the constitutive role of difference as “identity” is never subordinated, that is, in Laclau’s words: “Equivalences can weaken, but they can not domesticate differences” (ibid.:79). Accordingly, each platform was the result of different combinations, for example, as differential position, IHD (Human Rights Association) withdrew its support to the Democracy platform since the representation of Kurdish question was not fulfilled by the platform, and so, the platform could not domesticate the discursive identity of IHD and the association attempted to construct a new equivalent chain on the basis of different articulatory practice.

At this point, Laclau and Mouffe underline two important subject positions, namely; ‘popular subject position’ and ‘democratic subject position’ in order to characterize antagonism points in logic of equivalence and of difference. In this sense popular subject position is capable of dividing the political space into two antagonistic camps, but, democratic subject position refer to a limited antagonism which is not dividing in that way (1985.:131). Accordingly, the process of the transition from “democratic demands” to “popular demands” becomes important to understand the constitutive role of social antagonism. In a sense, there are some frustrated social demands, as a result; there raises a possibility to constitute an equivalent chain between “isolated demands” appertaining to different subject positions, so, “the transition to a popular subjectivity consists in establishing an equivalent bond between them” (Laclau, 2005:86).

From here, a popular identity becomes the representative demand of an equivalent chain while referring to a particular demand, that is, it refers to the “total chain of equivalential demands”. In a sense, “a popular identity functions as a tendentially empty signifier”, so, a popular identity is an area of extension and intension of demands, so, it should embrace all social demands by diminishing its own particular demand (ibid.:95-6).

In this context, discourse theory enables us to define the subject position of equivalences of the labor confederations. Suffice it to mention that the Democracy Platform and the Labor Platform did not provide a transition from democratic demands to popular demands in this regard although they represented the ‘total chain of equivalential demands’.

#### **2.2.1.4 Hegemony**

As we stated above, the emergence of a popular identity does not occupy a differential position since it takes on the task of representation. Therefore, it must be emerged through the “collapse of all differential identities” (Laclau, 2007a:42). He explains this in the following way:

“This emptying of a particular signifier of its particular, differential signified is what makes possible the emergence of ‘empty’ signifiers as the signifiers of a lack, of an absent totality.” (ibid.: 42)

At this point, there raises a problem concerning the role of a universal representation. More particularly, if all differential positions are equal to each other, what or who authorizes one of them for ‘representation’ is determined through the role of a “hegemonic relationship”. In this sense, it is clear that any class or group can be hegemonic when representing an alternative emancipating order for wider masses of the population (ibid.:43).

For Laclau and Mouffe, the categories of “organic crisis” and “a historical bloc” are so crucial that the process of organic crisis points to a proliferation of floating signifiers and that the unification of a social and political space through the “instituting of nodal points” refers to a historical bloc. From here, they define a historical bloc as “hegemonic formation” (1985:136). On the other hand they indicate that hegemony is not a center or essence functioning in the social and political plane. They (1985:139) say that “hegemony is, quietly simple, a political type of relation, a form, if one so wishes, of politics; but not a determinable location within a topography of the social”.

From here, the relation between antagonism and equivalence would not be totally clarified as long as demands outside the equivalent chain are not considered. In this sense, according to Laclau, we can not merely speak of an opposition between an equivalent chain and an antagonistic power since there is also an opposition between something which is not in a “general space of representation” and an equivalent chain. Clearly this point shows that there is “exteriority to the space of representation “. This is “*social heterogeneity*” (Laclau, 2005:139-140).

This type of heterogeneity leads us to observe the characteristics of social antagonism since antagonism is not, as already previously mentioned, inherent to any social process such as the relations of production. That is to say, “a heterogeneity is not dialectically retrievable” (ibid.:149). The main aim of Laclau’s argument becomes clear that the “underdogs” called the “heterogeneous” must be constructed as “global anti-capitalist subjects” in determining an antagonistic frontier (ibid.:150). As can be seen, the importance of the hegemonic game is clear however it can be added that if the construction of an antagonistic border is to construct the “people”, there is no distinction between economic struggle and political struggle. For Laclau, this does not mean that “everything in society is political” but if there is room for heterogeneity, the possibility of a political dimension to construct the “people” would always raise (ibid.: 154).

In this context, discourse theory enables us to analyze the hegemonic capacities of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK by elaborating the attributes of their equivalences. As empty signifiers, Zonguldak miners, the Democracy Platform and the Labor Platform had different hegemonic capacities in terms of representation of workers and wage earners. If we evaluated these solidaristic forms from the point of their results, we can say that these empty signifiers could not understand the importance of ‘social heterogeneity’, so, their representation scope could not articulate isolated demands to union demands.

For example, although 1991 Zonguldak Strike, as the first common action after the coup, was not institutionally constructed as equivalence, Zonguldak miners could become an empty signifier in the struggle, and, as a differential position, Genel Maden İş affiliated to Türk-İş undertook the task of representation. With support of civil society organizations and the people, Zonguldak miners constructed a political agenda against policies of ANAP and privatization of mines (Karakaş, 1992). However, the traditional union representation of Türk-İş (and of Genel Maden İş) posed an important obstacle in front of politicized miners, so, their hegemonic struggle was reduced to their economic achievements.

For this study, the importance of discourse theory is to enable us to see how a labor confederation can be hegemonic in the dislocated area shaped by contemporary capitalism. In this sense, Laclau and Mouffe’s basic argument, which regards the construction of global anti-capitalist subjects as necessary, is not divorced from contemporary unionism approaches. Therefore, the hegemonic formation of the labor confederations requires the transition from the representation of the pure economic aims to that of social heterogeneity in search of solidarity.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW OF TRADE UNIONISM

#### 3.1 Hyman's Eternal Triangle

In the post 1980 Turkey, trade unionism can be seen within the borders of eternal triangle of unionism Hyman defines. From here, the classic Marxist approach to unionism is organized around the development of a revolutionary act, affirming the social and economic achievements of workers by establishing 'combinations' while the later developments in Europe and USA form the theories of 'social integration' and 'business unionism'. In this perspective, Hyman (2001:2-3) mainly speaks of three models of trade union identity for European trade unionism; the first one is that the role of trade unions is to develop 'class interests', so, anti-capitalist opposition is the cement of this type of union identity. The second one is that the main task of trade union is defined as the attempt to contribute to 'social integration'. In contrary to class antagonism, representing social interests constitutes a basic aim for these trade unions. The third one is 'business unionism' which privileges the role of 'collective bargaining'. Business unionism principally represents 'occupational interest' and does not engage in politics.

He stresses on that the triple categorization of trade union identity brings about 'the eternal triangle' composed of 'society', 'market' and 'class'. This is exactly to say that unions can not be evaluated without referring to each point in the triangle. He says that "business unions focus on the market; integrative unions on society; radical-oppositional unions on class" (ibid.: 4). Therefore, trade union identities can reflect the relation between class and market; between market and society, between society and class in the triangle. More still crucially, for him, the characteristic attribute of trade union identities and ideologies can be determined by indicating the position of trade union within the triangle.

From here, we can say that the trade union identities of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK in the post 1980 Turkey can be located within this triangle. If we take up the first model of unionism, it can be said that DİSK advocated the class interests and proposed a class and mass unionism in order to construct socialist order. As we shall see later, DİSK's struggle was organized around anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Therefore, it is possible to say that trade union identity of DİSK was determined by the relation between society and class until the coup.

On the other hand, Turkish unionism witnessed unionism types derived from social integration unionism and business unionism. In this sense, as we shall see later in detail, Türk-İş and Hak-İş have characteristics of social integration and business unionism since their foundation. Specially, Hak-İş and Türk-İş opposed to the class struggle, so, they saw DİSK as a threat in the late 1970s. No doubt, Türk-İş and Hak-İş was antagonized by the ideological perspective of DİSK and its socialist ideals were seen as an incompatible with the national and moral values of society. Therefore, Türk-İş and Hak-İş tended to advocate 'social integration' by eliminating the class based unionism of DİSK. That is to say, the class struggle was seen as the biggest obstacle in front of social integration. During this period, Türk-İş and Hak-İş defined their union identities against the class struggle and ideological unionism.

In the second half of 1980s, Türk-İş and Hak-İş got rid of the class based unionism since the military junta terminated the existence of DİSK. After this process, we can say that the labor confederations faced with logic of the free market economy. Thus, they were forced to move between market and society since, for them, there was no room class and class interests. Actually, it can be stated that the labor confederations turned into negotiant agencies by restricting their activities to collective bargaining. As Koç indicates, collective bargaining unionism is dominant and insufficient for Turkey (2003:260). However, as a form of business unionism,

collective bargaining unionism is still dominant over the labor confederations. As we shall see later, Zonguldak Strike and Spring Actions were interrupted by collective bargaining unionism of Türk-İş, so, the dominant tradition of Turkish unionism can be seen within the borders of business unionism.

In this sense, we should point to two types of unionism in literature in order to understand the trade union identities of the labor confederations in Turkey. Business unionism and Marxist approach to unionism are two important types of unionism for this study. What differentiates business unionism from the classical Marxist approach is the role of representation of workers and masses. In this sense, the role of politics has a key role to understand the attributes of their struggle.

### **3.2 The Traditional Trade Union Identities**

#### **3.2.1 Business Unionism**

Within the borders of the eternal triangle, the place of business unionism can be determined with reference to the relation between the labor market and class. Accordingly the development of trade unions is, to a large extent, to refer to their ‘purely economic’ aims. On this basis, Sidney and Beatrice Webb define two economic devices as a means of trade union regulations, namely; ‘restriction of numbers’ and ‘the common rule’. The former is defined as a method of the ancient trade union and used by trade union to regulate the interests of a certain occupation group. This type of regulation presupposes a special condition restricting ‘the entrance to an occupation’, so, it includes the exclusion of some workers in the trade (1965: 704). With the method of restriction of numbers, the relation between employer and workers can be regulated in favor of workers, so, there raises an important efficiency on the regulation of wages, working hours and conditions in industry (ibid.: 710). On the other hand, according to the Webbs the method of restriction of numbers does not increase the existent power of trade unions since



those who advocate the method participate in regulating laws concerning working life. As a result, workers who excluded from the trade may be indifferent to trade union in time (ibid.: 714). In other words, in the reading of Hyman, this method ‘gave employers a potent incentive to bypass union regulation and to set up with non-union labour’ (2001: 7).

The latter method is to determine a certain standard in order to regulate wage, working hours and health and safety. One of the important features of the ‘common rule’ can be determined by way of ‘mutual insurance’, ‘collective bargaining’ and ‘legal enactment’ (1965: 715, 2001:7). Although the device of the common rule stands on a certain standard for employment, as the Webbs underscore, it does not abolish competition for employment since employer may effectively want to benefit from workers by determining wages or working hours. Therefore, employer has a strong influence on the contract (1965:716). They say: “What it does is perpetually to stimulate the selection of the most efficient workmen, the best-equipped employers, and the most advantageous forms of industry (ibid.: 733).

As to the determinant factors of the common rule, all the activities of trade unionism are defined as forms of ‘mutual insurance’. This method is defined as ‘the provision of a fund by common subscription to insure against casualties’. The main task of trade union is to support members who can not work as a result of accidents. This method is to refer to the ‘friendly society side of trade unionism’ (ibid.: 152). Before the recognition of ‘collective bargaining’ and ‘legal enactment’, trade unions can only follow their aims by means of mutual insurance, so, they can succeed in preserving the interest of their members. Also, the Webbs indicate that mutual insurance is an effective way to enforce the power of trade unions in organizations of skilled handicraftsmen (ibid.: 166-7).

Another part of employment is collective bargaining. In the Webbs’s approach, it can be said that it is an important component of mutual insurance and legal

enactment. It is defined as a 'joint committee consisting of equal numbers of representatives of the employers and workmen respectively' (ibid.: 185). It serves as a tool to improve wages, working hours and health conditions and protects 'industrial peace' under the existing state of employment. However, the device of collective bargaining is not exactly satisfactory in regulating employment conditions since the function of representation through the representatives of the employers and workmen makes a 'joint committee' contestable. The role of a joint committee becomes awkward in the relation between 'an existing agreement' and 'a new one' since, in time, the necessity of 'professional experts' to advocate an existing agreement emerges in opposition to workers' interests within the borders of collective bargaining . Thereby, for the Webbs, although trade unions obtain important achievements for their members, it makes the coordination between trade unions impossible and creates disadvantageous results for trade unionism (ibid.: 195-198).

As an alternative model, the method of legal enactment erases the inadequate role of collective bargaining when the common rule is incarnated as an act of parliament (ibid.: 255). The Webbs indicate that the rising influence of trade unions on political life makes the method of Legal Enactment effective (ibid.: 253). This situation creates an opportunity for trade unions to be effective on the whole industry but, at the same time, it leads to some disadvantageous results stemming from the economic restrictions, so, the Webbs underscore that trade unions must persuade members of parliament to take the matter up although this situation makes the struggle process slow. The achievement of struggle to regulate working hours in favor of workers is evaluated as a result of such a process (ibid.: 254-7). The method of legal enactment is, in this regard, to guarantee the socio-economic achievements of workers' struggle when struggle is successfully completed. Accordingly the characteristic side of legal enactment is refer to 'national minimum of conditions for the most helpless and dependent grades of labor'. That is, it

provides a certain standard to enforce wages, working hours and health conditions (ibid.: 791).

When it is compared with collective bargaining, it can be said that it is not adaptable to the changing economic and technological conditions. At this point, a trade union policy can look for an adaptation to the changing circumstances, so, it can determine one of these methods to regulate working conditions within the sphere of common rule. On the other hand, the method of collective bargaining requires 'the drawback of occasional disputes and stoppages' and re-regulate working conditions but the method of legal enactment can fix a regulation although working conditions change (ibid.: 798-9).

At this point, for the Webbs, it can be said that the method of collective bargaining is superior to legal enactment since it is adaptable to the changing conditions. On the other hand, it can also be inferred that legal enactment is advantageous when compared with collective bargaining since it provides a economic balance for workers (ibid.: 803). The Webbs define mutual insurance, collective bargaining and legal enactment as trade union methods, which are parts of common rule. In this regard, they point out that the role of common rule becomes important as long as it has an effective influence on employers, so, the device of common rule should be used by trade unionism to enforce the standards of working conditions such as hours of work, safety conditions and wages in the long period, so, it should be seen a pressure tool over employers.

In general, the device of common rule points to the effective role of trade union methods, namely; mutual insurance, collective bargaining and legal enactment to form a trade union policy. In Britain, for the Webbs, hours of work, wages and safety conditions were basically confirmed as the main task of union regulation. At this point, 'economic weakness' is put into question and regulated by trade union methods. Collective bargaining can vary from one occupation to another or from

one trade to another. Also, legal enactment can be completed through the effort of workers and employers in an effective manner (Hyman, 2001:8). This type of approach to trade unionism is in accordance with 'business unionism', premises of which is explained according to the structure of labour market. To make this point explicit, with reference to Brody, he points to the role of business unionism as 'pure-and simple unionism' in American unionism and this model is taken to task for confining collective action to 'economism' (ibid.:8-9). At the heart of this critique, there is a socialist tendency to attribute social and political role to unionism. In this sense, he indicates that it is not possible for business unionists to protect the logic of market oriented unionism because of the changing circumstances of labor market. For example, technological development and immigration forces business unionists to rethink their instrumental aims (ibid.:13).

Another important challenge defined by him is the importance of politics in the regulation of labour market. That is, trade unions should focus on the way in which state has an important place in market relations. Thereby, trade unions must have a position against market to balance the effective role of the state. In other words, he (2001: 14) explains that

“unions.... take it for granted that the state should regulate at least some substantive aspects of employment contracts- notably, in every country, health and safety- and that part of their own function is to influence such legislation”

Therefore, the premises of business unionism are not satisfactory in terms of legal regulation since as an actor the state has a great influence on collective negotiations. From this standpoint, despite the evolution of capitalism, an effective trade unionism can regulate the labour market by positioning actors in a true manner. In this sense, business unionism underestimates the important role of politics and the actor of the state, so, as the pure and simple unionism it confines a trade union policy to economic achievements in market.

### 3.2.2 The Classical Marxist Unionism

The foundation of anti-capitalist trade union identity is obviously explained by Marx and Engels. The classic Marxist approach to trade unionism focuses on the way in which class opposition constitutes a focal point. Specially, the relation between politics and trade unions becomes an indicator of union structure because it refers to what the political implications of trade unions are. On the other hand, at this point, Marxist approach is important to elaborate the issues such as industrialization and the development of capitalism. As Jackson indicates, for the early Marxism, the role of trade unions is significant to ‘contribute to social change’ as ‘an expression of the common interest of the working class’ (1982:133). For Marx, the influence of the great industry on masses leads to the parallel growth of ‘combination’. Such a combination refers to the common interest of workers who works under the same conditions in a single place. He says that “combination has always a double end that of eliminating competition among themselves while enabling them to make a general competition against the capitalist” (1995:188).

Indeed, he points out that the evolution of combinations goes beyond the aim of the maintenance of wages, as a result of that; ‘association takes a political character’. Moreover, the political character of the struggle between workers and capitalist takes the form of class struggle. In the struggle, the constitution of ‘a class for itself’ is emphasized by him (ibid.: 188-9). In other words, Hyman explains away that the role of ‘collective organisation’ is not simply ‘a means of defending wages’ since it forms ‘a consciousness of class unity’, following the process from a class ‘in itself’ to a class ‘for itself’ (Hyman, 1971: 6-7).

In effect, this type of combination or collective organization constitutes trade union since the process in which the political role of the workers are opposed to the capitalist leads to ‘permanent combinations’ formed as trade unions (Marx, 1995: 187). Marx’s initial assessment concentrated on British Labour Movement, so, as

Hyman indicates, he evaluated trade union consciousness as a path to revolution, since according to him, the evolution of capitalism would lead to such organization in which the workers would learn to struggle with the capitalists. To make this point explicit, Marx sets forth (1866):

“Trades’ Unions originally sprang up from the *spontaneous* attempts of workmen at removing or at least checking that competition, in order to conquer such terms of contract as might raise them at least above the condition of mere slaves”

Although Marx and Engels concede the importance of the political character of trade unions, they concentrate on the issue in terms of class struggle and revolution. As Hyman indicates, trade unions are never defined by them as ‘purely economical institutions’ since trade unions can represent more than keeping wages by improving their political capacity challenging to the operation of the capitalist system (2001:18). In this regard, he draws three basic outcomes concerning Marx’s optimistic approach to trade unions. To put it briefly, first of all; the struggle of workers over wages and hours of work would become militant more and more, secondly; the capacity of collective organization would lead to the organization of greater numbers of workers, finally, the struggle would lead to the transition from ‘economic defence’ to ‘revolutionary politics’ (ibid.: 18).

Following the changing character of British labour movements in the 1860s, Marx and Engels revised their approaches to trade unionism with the emergence of ‘New Unionism’. At this point, Hyman points to three important aspects of their arguments; first of all, as we stated above, the representation of the lower-skilled workers with the development of the New Unionism, secondly; the ‘corruption of leaders of trade unions’ as a result of ‘the absence of revolutionary activity’, finally; ‘the embourgeoisement of the British working class’ (Hyman, 1971: 8-9).

At this point, the second one is important for us, according to Marx; the conservative role of leaders of the trade unions was criticized since, particularly in England, he defined such leaders who had a negative influence on workers' movement as the 'corrupted leaders' (1878).

Against the absent of revolutionary ideals, Marx's main focus is to determine the role of trade unions 'as organizing centres of the working class in the broad interest of its *complete emancipation*'. In this aim, he proposes that "they must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction" (Marx, 1866). Thus, it can be said that he sees trade unions as necessary institutions in order to devote the interests of the workers and he underlines that "it cannot be dispensed with so long as the present system of production lasts" (ibid). In this sense, he puts the political role of trade unions into a wider perspective in order to realize socialist ideals. Moreover, in this regard, the role of trade unions should not only organize workers but also the 'non-society men'. He obviously says: "They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow –and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions" (ibid). From the viewpoint of Marx, the political character of trade unions is becoming increasingly important. More precisely, the investigation of the socio-political role of trade unions can be put into question in order to develop an alternative way in which it is possible to organize 'the downtrodden millions'.

If we take a close look at the development of Marxian approach to trade unionism, after Marx and Engels, the general tendency of the theory is critical on the function of trade unions in the capitalist order<sup>34</sup> instead of pointing to the importance of the

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<sup>34</sup> Hyman points to three theories, namely; 'integration', 'oligarchy' and 'incorporation'. These theories are respectively improved by Lenin, Michels and Trotsky. To summarize, the theory of integration defines trade unionism as 'bourgeois politics' since trade unions does not pose a threat to the capitalist system. Moreover, as a carrier of bourgeois ideology, trade unions aims at developing economic interests and give rise to integration within the system. The theory of oligarchy indicates that the democratic structure of trade unions and the role of union leaders are investigated. Michels's basic argument is organized around the oligarchic development of trade unions since the unions which are composed of officials and experts makes 'direct democracy' impossible, so, the

political character of trade unionism. The ensuing debates on trade unionism within Marxist theory are always tied in with revolutionary practice and class struggle. In this tradition, Gramsci's emphasis on trade unionism is different since he makes a distinction between the factory council and trade unions in order to explain the role of revolutionary practice. According to him, the proletarian revolution is not a result of 'the arbitrary act of an organization' but a historical process indicating the development of 'given forces of production'. This is to say, the proletarian revolution cannot be defined through the political implications of organizations such as political parties and trade unions because the growth of trade unions corresponds to the implications of 'bourgeois ideology' and 'political liberty' (Gramsci, 1990:260).

That is, bourgeois ideology itself enables trade unions to improve their political and economic achievements. Therefore, he shows that the political implications of trade unions cannot overcome the bourgeois democracy. At this point, he focuses on the way in which the relation between revolutionary organizations and the revolutionary process is put into question. The latter refers to the relations involved in the factory where 'freedom for the worker does not exist, and democracy does not exist' since workers are directly subject to an exploitation relation (ibid.:260-1). At this point, his emphasis is to point to the role of 'industrial power' which limits the act of the worker. On the other hand, the worker accepts the necessity of the proprietor providing wages and bread and, for Gramsci, working class can only understand the content of this relation in the production process. From here, the

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participation of the workers is neglected in the decision process concerning strikes or negotiations. Also, this situation comes from the alienation between union leaders and workers since the life style and social status of union leaders becomes different from their members in this oligarchic order. As to the theory of incorporatism, Trotsky gives importance to the influence of government and industry on trade unions and mentions that the power of trade union can be used to control workers in assisting capitalism. At this point, the position of union leaders and the political character of trade unions could be function as repressive apparatuses. Incorporation points to a risky point at which trade unions can be transformed into an agent of capitalism controlling workers (Hyman, 1971: 11-20).



factory can imply a new form in which ‘the working class constitutes itself into a specific organic body, the system of Councils’ (ibid.: 262-3).

On this basis, as Hyman asserts, for Gramsci, there could not be ‘a general theory of trade unionism’ since ‘the nature of unionism varied according to contingencies of time and place’ (Hyman, 2001:24). To make this point explicit, for Gramsci, “the trade union is not a predetermined phenomenon” (1990:265) since it refers to a certain historical form shaped by ‘the strength and will of the workers’ which has an effect on the character of trade union. It is important to note that the aim of trade union is determinant to define its organization as a historical form. In effect, he pays attention that trade union, which is composed of organizational technicians and specialists, serves as an apparatus to balance the relation between the ‘working class’ and the ‘power of capital’.

From here, he determines two factors characterizing the growth of trade unions; in the first, the union represents an ‘ever increasing number of workers’. In the second, the union restricts its own movement scope at a certain stage where ‘the movement’s discipline and power is focused’ (ibid.: 265). From here, the relation between the council and the union becomes clear since the revolutionary role of the council aims at overcoming industrial legality while trade union confirm industrial legality to provide ‘a continuous supply of work and wages’ for its members (ibid. 266).

### **3.3 Dilemmas of Traditional Union Representation**

The early form of trade unionism the Webbs define deals with economic based issues and looks for the material achievements of workers according to their occupational position in the labor market. Following this, the task of business unionism is to regulate the economic conditions of employment such as wages, hours of work and health and safety conditions. Hyman defines this type of trade

unionism as ‘political economism’ since trade unions localize their activity scopes to improve the economic conditions of its own members in terms of business unionism (ibid.: 15). Beyond business unionism, as can be seen, the early Marxist approach to trade unionism focuses on the social and political role of trade unionism in a class based perspective to increase the political capacity of trade unions against the capitalist order.

The premise of struggle of class-based trade unionism is defined as a homogenous unity of workers under the umbrella of collective organization called ‘class’. In this sense, the socio-political role of trade unionism is seen as a constitutive potential in an effort to overturn the capitalist order. In parallel with this view, the role of strikes and revolutionary action must be seen as an important component of ‘anti-capitalist trade unionism’. However, the development of trade unions in twentieth century makes the political and economic representation of workers interrogable. As Gramsci indicates, as a historical form, or phenomenon, the political potential of trade unions becomes important to analyze the structure of trade unions for today.

Many authors assert that discussing trade unionism by concentrating the term of class is inadequate since the fragmented structure of labour market has effects on the representative of trade unions in a negative way. In a sense, this point of view is parallel to Laclau’s emphasis on the multiplicity of subject positions which make impossible to mention the homogenous unity of workers since, if we speak strictly, the antagonistic border experienced by trade unions does not stem from the common interests of workers but it is determined by the relation between their positions in the labour market and other actors such as the state and employers.

To make this assumption stronger, Hyman underlines three important factors; the first, ‘capitalism does not generate a simple class polarization’; the second, ‘the purely economic model of class formation is inadequate’; the third, ‘class, objectively defined, is no predictor of collective action’ (2001: 31). In the first, the

investigation of the limit of class consciousness is directly linked to trade union representation, so, the manner in which class based trade unionism becomes problematic enable us to grasp the changing aspects of union representation. Basically, Catalano improves a critical approach to two missions of union representation, the first one is that ‘the social construction of worker identity and autonomy’ according to their occupational position in the production system. The second one is the integration of worker into the capitalist social system. She evaluates such a representation as ‘essentialism’ since the weight of ‘working-class identity’ is determined through the ‘identical interests of each occupational group’ as ‘something given and immutable’. To make this point clear, such an approach to union representation leads to essentialism which “minimizes the necessity of developing workers’ capacity to construct, interpret and identify themselves as occupational and social subject” by stressing upon ‘working class autonomy’ (Catalano, 1999: 28-9). It is important to note that the class origin of workers should not be seen as the only factor characterizing union representation in opposition to essentialism.

Evaluating the history of trade unionism in terms of representation, it should be conceded that there is a certain differentiation in the construction of the labour market in the twentieth and the twenty-first century. For the twentieth century, Hyman (2002:11) points to the functional role of the representation of the ‘core workforce of large-scale industrialism’. As we already stated, this type of representation was reduced to the material achievements of the certain occupation groups. However, it is important to note that, for the same period, trade unions who advocated socialist or communist ideals proclaimed to extend their own representation area to those who were outside employment. Following that, he indicates four categories of representation in the history of trade unionism , first of all; ‘the traditional core agenda of ‘bread and butter’ collective bargaining over wages and benefits’, secondly; the representation of the attempts to limit employer’s authority over employment, thirdly; “the legislative framework of trade

union organization and action', finally; the representation of other aspects of social life such as 'the environment', 'consumer protection' and 'the local community' beyond employment (ibid.: 11).

From this point of view, union representation brings into indirect conflict with solidarity and the construction of labour market if we take up working class as a homogenous whole since he (2001:170) says: "The perceived common interests of the members of a particular union or confederation are defined in part in contradistinction to those of workers outside". Thereby, the approach of traditional trade unionism to representation encompasses either 'the external intervention of a politically driven class project' or 'the gradual experience of the limited efficacy of too narrow a representational base' (ibid). Under these circumstances, this situation prevents trade union from developing effective solidarity among workers. In this sense, it is obvious that the structure of collective organization does not correspond to all the workers since it indicates a fragmented structure of working class. Hyman (ibid.: 30) underlines:

"Modern trade unionism still involves organizational separation of workers on the basis of occupation or sector of employment as well as between nations and, in some countries, according to political or religious identity"

Besides that, as we already stated, if we evaluates trade unionism in terms of representation, trade unions cannot be categorized in the borders of a single form since the representation of 'skilled male workers', 'women', 'migrant workers or ethnic minorities' is subject to an important change determined by the form of capitalism and production (ibid.: 30-1) Moreover, the different ideological construction of trade unions leads to union pluralism (ibid.: 34). Reasons of the crisis of trade unionism which have occupied the agenda of trade unions in the course of the twentieth and twenty-first century are in part dependent on the ongoing domination of traditional trade unionism over trade unions. Rather, he (ibid.: 173) says:

“The crisis of traditional trade unionism is reflected not only in the more obvious indicators of loss of strength and efficacy, but also in the exhaustion of a traditional discourse and a failure to respond to new ideological challenges”

### **3.4 Challenges to Trade Union Representation**

If we consider dilemmas of union representation from the point of the labor confederations in Turkey, it is possible to say that there is still a traditional union representation which can be defined within the borders of business unionism. On the other hand, it should be noted that the socialist unionism of DİSK succeeded in constructing “the emancipation of the downtrodden millions” in words of Marx. However, Türk-İş and Hak-İş used the methods of ‘collective bargaining’ and ‘legal enactment’ in order to advocate their members.

In the course of 1990s, the crisis of traditional unionism led to the decreasing power of trade unions in Turkey since they could not become effective on collective bargaining and legal enactment as well. As Hyman indicates, the heterogeneity of labor market requires a new form of representation for collective action. Therefore, the labor confederations must go beyond the representation of occupational interests and overcome ‘political economism’. In Turkey, the heterogeneity of labor market has been prominently occurred since 1994 crisis. However, it should be noted that the great influence of international capitalist actors and neoliberalism on trade unions has appeared since 1980. Therefore, our analysis focuses upon the major reasons leading to the crisis of trade unionism all over the world. In the subsequent chapter, we shall explain away the basic entities of the historical transformation of capitalism in order to highlight the concepts and processes accompanying with our analysis.

### 3.4.1 The Neoliberal Fixation in Theory and Practice

In order to approach to the so-called crisis of traditional form of trade unionism in detail, the dilemmas of union representation should be contextualized. In words of Hyman: that ‘capitalism does not generate a simple class polarization’ has been explained away by many commentators with reference to the changing structure of labour markets since 1980. Their arguments demonstrating the changing components of a labour market correspond to the inadequacy of union representation since such a representation is not politically functional to advocate workers’ interests against the organization of capitalism. At this point, the emergence of neoliberalism as a strategic turn of capital accumulation refers to the important process in which the social and economical dimension of labor markets has been shaped in an effective manner. Transition from the myth of the welfare state of the Keynesian policies, or ‘embedded liberalism’<sup>35</sup> to that of personal freedom of neoliberalism during the 1980s shaped the social and economical life of European countries and USA. Proponents of the neoliberal policies in these countries demonstrated the ideological construction of their own neoliberal discourses around the watchword ‘there is no alternative’<sup>36</sup> (Clarke, 2005:57).

They organized a complex network affecting all strata of society by shaping the social, cultural and political values and norms. At this point, the crisis of unionism was not a coincidence for that period since the increasing importance of competition in the market required a flexible scope for the market actors, especially capitalists, without any ‘intervention’, or ‘a bargaining power’ since, as Palley indicates; “a public that views the economy through a bargaining power lens will have greater political sympathies for trade unions and institutions of social protection” (2005:21). In this sense, the transition to neoliberalism can also be read

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<sup>35</sup> Harvey defines this concept as the social and economical process in which state intervened in the operation of market policies by determining some standarts such as social wage and health care (2005: 10-11).

<sup>36</sup> The slogan belongs to Margaret Thatcher.

as the intensification of pressure over trade unions in the increasing visibility of competition all over the world.

If we take look at the development of neoliberalism in brief, the crash of Keynesian policies in the mid-1970s forced capitalists to seek the new alternatives to re-structure the capitalist order. From the year 1945 to the year 1970, according to Palley, Keynesianism was the dominant paradigm proposing two characteristic ways, namely; ‘monetary policy (control of interest rates)’ and ‘fiscal policy (control of government spending and taxes)’. For European countries, these implementations included the socio-economic interventions through the state in the operation of capitalist accumulation in order to provide social regulation and unionization (Harvey, 2005: 21). By the same token, Harvey indicates that ‘business cycles’ was balanced and that ‘full employment’ was targeted. In this aim, the intervention of states in industrial policy was to construct a variety of ‘welfare systems’ (ibid.: 10-11).

This process called ‘embedded liberalism’ signaled the importance of social protection. However, a public experienced unemployment and high inflation as a result of the crisis of capital accumulation, beginning in the 1970s. The crisis led to two main consequences, namely; the investigation of the existent economy theory and the emergence of labor movements. The latter constituted a serious threat to capitalist classes. In order to overcome this threat, the military takeover<sup>37</sup>, which was supported by the upper classes, paved the way for neoliberal policies (ibid.: 15, also see Colas, 2005:76). The former outcome was dependent on the revision of the interventionist economy politics. At this point, the building of neoliberalism has two branches, namely; neoliberalism in theory and that in practice. Harvey (2005:21) and Munck (2005:61) point to the importance of this distinction; the former was organized around the ideas of Frederic Hayek and Milton Friedman in the post Second World War. The influence of the academy,

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<sup>37</sup> For example, Chile and Argentine.

specially the Austrian school and the University of Chicago, on the process was significant.

If we summarize the theory of neoliberalism, we should clarify Hayek's basic argument composed of four elements called 'spontaneous order', 'epistemic considerations', 'economic efficiency', and 'the limited state'. Turner gives a brief explanation of these elements to us respectively; first of all, the central theme of spontaneous order is 'evolution', that is, the development of the 'free market economy' is not a result of conscious design but that of natural process, so, the operation of the market order is dependent on the elimination of a regulatory power over economy. Secondly, epistemic considerations refer to the existence of 'limited knowledge'. The role of markets is defined in the use of the limited knowledge in society since it is proposed that this type role of markets enables individuals to realize their aims by using this limited knowledge. More clearly, there is no a cooperation or mass actor having knowledge to indicate what individuals want and choose since the dispersed character of knowledge requires the operation of free market because markets open up such an information to individuals by means of competition (Turner, 2008: 121-3).

Thirdly, the competition constructs individuals as 'autonomous individuals'. This is to say that everyone is exposed to the rules of market so it is believed that everyone has 'a fair chance of earning a particular income' in the sense of 'individual initiative'. This is also defined as the attempt to eliminate 'negative inefficiency' by distinguishing winners from losers. Finally, Turner underscores that government intervention in Hayek's approach is not completely abolished, but the structuring of intervention regulating institutions is defined in favor of 'individualism' and 'market exchange'. Therefore, the role of limited government is committed in so far as the state supports the effective operation of the market economy (ibid.: 124-5)



Hayek's theoretical paradigm came to be inconsistent with the practice of neoliberalism in some manners. As Munck indicates, the advocates of neoliberalism in practice, who agreed upon the 'Washington consensus', presented a strategic practice of the paradigm different from Hayek's approach (2005:60). Saad-Filho and Johnston demonstrate three main accounts in order to shed on light what distances theory from practice. In the first, neoliberalism is not a 'mode of production' as 'capitalism' or 'feudalism' since "neoliberalism straddles a wide range of social, political and economic phenomena at different levels of complexity". In another saying, it may not possible to attribute a set of the certain variables to its operation, so, proponents of neoliberal policies can use domestic political, economical, legal, ideological as well as military force if necessary as pressure apparatus (Saad-Filho and Johnston, 2005: 1-2).

In the second, there is a strong link among neoliberalism, globalization and imperialism, so, the analysis of neoliberalism requires a detailed discussion of the process in which discourse of globalization works. In this regard, it can be said that the discursive totality of neoliberalism is set up according to the operation of globalization. Saad-Filho and Johnston point out that globalisation is 'the international face of neoliberalism'. In this sense, the nodal point of globalization discourse is organized around 'welfare improvements and the spread of democracy'. This process is implemented by 'diverse social and economic political alliances in each country' (ibid.: 2). In the third, it is not possible to determine a certain historical turn to analyze neoliberalism. The spread of neoliberalism in the historical process indicates that there is a dispersed expansion incarnating the neoliberal vision. However, it is claimed that it is possible to understand that the general feature of neoliberal policy in each country is to correct deficiencies of the capitalist order, to 'protect capitalism and to reduce the power of labour' (ibid.: 2-3).

According to Harvey, the distinctive features of neoliberalism in practice above have been realized by constructing 'common sense' in the gramscian sense. The

construction of such a sense refers to the ideological aspect of the process in which the media, the universities, schools (and so on) may be the effective proponents of neoliberalism. This side of the matter enables us to figure out how civil society is constructed to realize the neoliberal turn. At this point, it should be noted that coercion, which exercised by military and financial institution such as IMF and WTO, has been seen as effective apparatus to realize the ‘neoliberal turn’. Beyond this, the construction of common sense is a significant point to examine neoliberalization as an ongoing process (Harvey, 2005:40).

In this regard, it is beneficial to remind Laclau and Mouffe’s approach to ideology in order to analyze the ideological weight of neoliberal discourse. The interpellation of people by discourse of neoliberalism has an effort to fix the discursivity of economy in association with the construction of the cultural and political domains of capitalist societies. As far as Harvey indicates, it is clear that the advocates of neoliberal policies during the late 1970s concentrated on the defense of ‘individual freedoms’ by eliminating the influence of state power. This is also an attempt to decrease the power of class. He (ibid.: 42) says:

“By capturing ideals of individual freedom and turning them against the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state, capitalist class interest could hope to protect and even restore their position”

In this aim, proponents presented the ‘liberty of consumer choice’ with respect to ‘lifestyles, modes of expression’ and ‘a wide range of cultural practices’. As a response to the economic and politic crisis of capitalism during 1970s, borrowing the words of Laclau, proponents effectively experienced ‘the possibility of constituting the community as a coherent whole’ (Laclau, 1997: 303) in specially USA and Britain. To make this point explicit, as ‘a particular object’, neoliberalism was advocated and presented as the only way to construct people by means of institutions, governments and military. At this point, Munck’s point is important to note that neoliberalism cannot be evaluated in a true manner if it is taken up ‘just a

set of economic policies and ideology’, so, he points to the importance of the analysis of the strategic tendency to govern the complex global world (Munck, 2005: 68). As can be seen, since neoliberalism is based upon economic regulation, it can be called ‘a particular object’ but, as it was in the past, its ideological task is still continuing to represent more than itself in both theory and practice.

### **3.4.2 The Hegemony of the Neoliberal Discourse**

As we already stated, the neoliberal discourse hinges on economic based regulations. The main argument of the neoliberal economy is defined by Shaikh as ‘unrestricted global trade’. That is to say, markets need to function without restraint in order to ‘efficiently utilise all economic resources and automatically generate full employment’. Therefore, from the point of view of neoliberals, the unfavorable outcomes such as poverty, unemployment and crises are seen as a result of restriction implemented by ‘labour unions, the state, and a host of social practices rooted in culture and history’. In favor of the constitution of ‘market friendly’ structures, capitalist societies should fulfill a duty by reducing ‘union strength’, ‘privatising state enterprises, ‘opening up domestic markets to foreign capital’ (Shaikh, 2005: 41-2).

If we contextualize Shaikh’s argument, Palley’s argument is significant to understand two important aspects of neoliberalism, namely; ‘income distribution’ and ‘aggregate employment determination’. In the view of the former, it is claimed that ‘factors of production (labor and capital) get paid what they are worth’, so, institutions as trade unions are removed because of their intervening roles. In the view of the latter, ‘price adjustment ensures an automatic tendency to full employment’, so, policy intervention to this process should be eliminated in order to prevent ‘inflation’ and ‘unemployment’. From this contextualization, neoliberals aim at deregulating labour markets by way of income distribution policy. As a result of this, as he underscores, their aim is mainly to ‘create a labour market

climate of employment insecurity’ (Palley, 2005: 23). At this point, the relation between globalization and neoliberalism should be illuminated in order to elaborate the case of labour markets.

The process explained above can be defined as ‘the financialization of everything’ in the words of Harvey (2005:33). At the same time, Colas calls this process as the re-configuration of the relation between states and market at the international level. In other words, as a political project, ‘neoliberal globalisation’ confirms the primacy of the ‘private, economic power of the markets over the public, political authority of states’ by following ‘the state-led implementations’ in favor of ‘dominant classes’ (Colas, 2005:70). Colas and Munck pay attention to the process in which the reproduction of the neoliberal policies during 1900s was increasingly becoming since the decreasing weight of nation states in politics and economy, the flexibilization of labour, the reconfiguration of role of states has been put into the discourse of neoliberal globalization (Munck, 2005: 61-2).

At this point, it should be understood that the discourse of globalization may not be determined as the homogenization process of countries because of the increasing poverty of Third World countries. It is clear that there is an unequal development line in the sense of both the developed countries and the developing ones. As Colas indicates, the competitive soul of the free market is in charge of globalization since globalization is a ‘natural outcome of an untrammelled capitalist market...’ (2005:73).

On a global scale, the tension of neoliberalism refers to the re-definition of the role of state. Munck defines this process shaped during 1900s as the attempt to ‘reconfigure the state’ since ‘the market through liberalization and commodification’ is not enough for neoliberalism to be functioned, so, “the neoliberal project had to be extended to the social domain with issues such as welfare reform, penal policy and urban regeneration (and so on)” (2005: 63). In

order to control such issues, the transformation of the state is compulsory for neoliberals. Actually, in the Great Transformation, Polanyi pointed to the establishment of ‘laissez-faire’<sup>38</sup> by underlining the place of the state in the well-known picture. In this sense, the principle called ‘laissez-faire’ advocated by liberals was seen as an instrument to facilitate the spread of the free market over society (Polanyi, 2001[1944]: 147). Moreover, in the course of the nineteenth century, the argument of liberals was that the interfering policies in the operation of the market were the basic reason of the negative socio-economic outcomes such as poverty, unemployment and the failure of being welfare society. In this sense, the interfering actors were defined as trade unions and labour corporations (ibid.: 150).

Indeed, Polanyi’s point presents a strong base on which the relation between laissez-faire and economic liberalism can be elaborated to indicate the tension of the liberal policies in the market. If we specify his point for this study, ‘the association of labor’ and ‘the law of business corporations’ constitutes an important level to figure out the practice of laissez-faire. He underlines that the theoretical content of laissez-faire commits both the ‘rights of workers to combine and the right of capitalist combines to raise prices’ but in practice these rights were creating a conflict preventing the operation of the market, so, he says: “ in such a conflict the self-regulating market was invariably accorded precedence ” (ibid.: 154-5). This point brings us to the well-known tension between interventionism and laissez-faire. His contribution to the matter is becoming important since the distinction between laissez-faire and ‘economic liberalism’ is drawn in order to show the logic of economic liberalism.

Accordingly, ‘economic liberalism’ is defined as “the organizing principle of a society in which industry is based on the institution of a self-regulating market” (ibid: 155). As a result of this, we learn from Polanyi’s point that there is a mutual relation between market and intervention. In this sense, he underlines that the ‘force

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<sup>38</sup> The motto of the free market economy opposing to interventionism.

of law' implemented by the state is a functional apparatus for liberals to regulate the market in favor of their own interests (ibid.). He sums up the relation between 'intervention' and 'market' that "the behavior of liberals themselves proved that the maintenance of freedom of trade—in our terms, of a self-regulating market—far from excluding intervention, in effect, demanded such action..." (ibid.: 157). From here, it can be said that the approach of the market actors to intervention was pragmatic to realize the social and political conditions of the free market economy and, in this aim; the apparatus of 'legislation' of the state was to regulate those conditions by which capitalists were contended.

On this basis, the role of the neoliberal state can be ironically understood to observe the hegemonic capacity of neoliberalism in the course of twenty first century. Harvey (2005: 64) explains that the neoliberal state advocates 'strong individual private property rights', 'the rule of law', and 'the institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade'. As we stated already, the nodal point of the discursive totality of the neoliberal state refers to the protection of 'individual freedoms'.

At the center of the argument above, 'competition' has a crucial role to define the capacity of individuals and the power of the state in the marketplace. Neoliberals commit the constitutive role of competition between firms, between individuals and between nations in order to encourage 'privatization' and 'deregulation'. For them, the operation of privatization and deregulation aims at eliminating 'bureaucratic red tape', increasing 'efficiency and productivity', improving 'quality' and reducing 'costs' (ibid.: 65). That is, the constitutive role of the neoliberal state is discursively constructed as an essential element in the global market. Moreover, the myth of neoliberalism to increase welfare of society forces the state to privatize the realms such as education, health care and social security. The interfering role of the state is defined and accepted on the global scale. He explains in this regard: "States should

therefore collectively seek and negotiate the reduction of barriers to movement of capital across borders and the opening of markets to global change”<sup>39</sup> (ibid.: 66).

The internal contradictions of neoliberalism indicates that the process in which competition and the form of intervention is accompanying is based on two important political implications, namely; the establishment of individualism founded on the right to choose and the elimination of strong collective organization. If necessary, neoliberals provide to balance between these issues by forcing the state to limit democratic governance. On the other hand, the changing form of technological change becomes an effective weapon for neoliberals to operate the market rules since new production methods and new organizational forms are effectively used to control the workforce (ibid.: 68-9).

Actually, he leads us to an important point where the hostile relation between social solidarity and neoliberalism in association with the mode of production can be elaborated. Accordingly, the construction of the flexible methods of production shapes the main part of the labor markets. As we shall see later in detail, ‘lower wages’, ‘increasing job security’ ‘loss of job protections’ are seen the outcomes of the flexible production. This situation specially leads to the structuration of the disorganized labour in countries such as China, India and Mexico. In this frame, the common denominator of neoliberalism in practice brings into direct conflict with all forms of solidarity since it forms individual responsibility with an eye to disorganizing the labour market (ibid.: 75-6).

The hegemonic character of neoliberalism is apt to take the form of the restrictive policies in order to construct “freedom of individuals” and “welfare of society”. This clearly shows that the discursive side of neoliberalism has a constitutive role to articulate ‘democracy’, ‘liberty’, ‘welfare society’ (and son on) with the

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<sup>39</sup> In this process, international organizations such as the WTO and the IMF have a significant role in regulating agreements between states.

construction of civil society, so, the neoliberal state in many countries becomes hegemonic although the material conditions relate us different things. At this point, Harvey's contribution to the matter points to the increasing importance of civil society since the possibility of oppositional politics to neoliberalism is inherently related to the hegemonic capacity of the neoliberal state. Under neoliberalism, the proliferation of the rights which need to be expressed in a political manner signals the role of civil society as an alternative power to oppose to the neoliberal state (ibid.: 78).

### **3.4.3 The Changing Character of Production**

#### **3.4.3.1 New International Division of Labour**

As Saad-Filho and Johnston indicate above, neoliberalism is not a mode of production. It is a significant attempt to re-articulate the dislocation of the capitalist order by controlling the discursive side of the process, by implementing laws sustaining mobility of capital, by constructing civil society through the different apparatus such as consumption, education and media. In this process, the discursive composition of neoliberal policies founded on the flexible organization of production has been completed in the name of 'freedoms' and 'democracy' since 1980.

Indeed, the stage indicating the increasing pressure of flexibility over labor markets has been put into question by the contradictions and crises of the capitalist order. The organization of forms of production by capitalism placed too great burden on the active role of trade unions since the developing forms of production and consumption refers to the division of labor. As a result of this process, the social and political role of working class is modified and the increasing importance of civil society in association with the emergence of new social movements appears in the scope of politics. In this sense, the analysis of forms of production and



consumption stemmed from the crises of capitalism is prominent to understand the discursive weight of neoliberalism from the point of unionism.

The crises of capitalism, rather of the capitalist accumulation are analyzed by the well known approaches of the French Regulation School, Simon Clarke, Lipietz and Jessop. Although each approach requires a detailed discussion, it should be fixed that the common denominator of the approaches is to analyze the dynamics of the capitalist accumulation. In brief, if we take a look at the issue in terms of production and consumption, the pivot of the approaches is the importance of the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism and to other following developments in restructuring capitalism. At the center of this analysis, the line of the capitalist development organized around ‘a labor process’, ‘a mode of regulation’ and ‘a mode of accumulation’<sup>40</sup> is functional to understand this transition, out of the tensions between these approaches. In this regard, Clarke specifies the crisis of 1970s when the consequences of the crisis are compared with other crisis, namely; 1873 and 1929 since he underlines that the premises of new forms of production founded on post- Fordist regime of accumulation are derived from the crisis of the Fordist regime of accumulation during the 1970s (Clarke, 1991).

Throughout this process, as parallel to the analysis of neoliberalism above, Keynesianism shaped the implications of macro-economic politics. Clarke (ibid.: 105) explains away in accordance with Keynesianism in the following way:

“The dominant of the crisis during the 1970s saw the crisis in rather mechanical terms, focusing on the crisis of profitability, which was seen variously as the result of working class militancy, labor shortages, or the tendency of the rate of profit to fall”

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<sup>40</sup> Lipietz defines ‘a development model’ by indicating three variants namely; ‘a labour process model’, ‘a regime of accumulation’ and ‘a mode of regulation’. Such a development model offers us these variants in order of priorities. Accordingly, a mode of regulation is founded on the macro economic function of mode of regulation based on a labor process. Strictly speaking, a regime of accumulation determines the laws of macro economics regulating both the technological and economic conditions of production and the social aspect of production (1992: 2).

Although the rigidity of labour markets, the burden of welfare state on economy, the decreasing rates of profits were put into question, ‘the crisis-ridden tendencies of accumulation’ were not overcome by capitalists and states (ibid.). As a result, the burden of the crisis-ridden capitalism on production led to the new forms of management and production techniques, determining the division of labor<sup>41</sup>.

### 3.4.3.2 Fordism

In this sense, the role of capitalist accumulation should be drawn in order to frame the changing structure of the division of labor, Suffice it to mention that Clarke explains the transition process to Fordist regime of accumulation as ‘the regime of intensive accumulation’<sup>42</sup>. During the construction of Fordist methods of production, practices of Keynesianism dominated accumulation strategy by providing full employment and rising wages (ibid.: 117). To make explicit, we can appeal to the diagnosis of “Fordist state” Jessop and Sum explains. Accordingly, the aim of Fordist state in association with a “Keynesian welfare orientation” is to control circulation of capital and investments and to provide all citizens with welfare standards (Jessop and Sum, 2006:62).

Jessop and Sum determine four levels in order to specify the attributes of Fordism, namely; ‘the labour process’, ‘the regime of accumulation’ and ‘its modes of regulation and societalization’. It should be conceded that this specification is useful to understand the effect of a production method on society as whole. Specially, for our discussion, the relation between trade unions and production techniques can be elaborated in a comprehensive manner. Discussing the

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<sup>41</sup> Clarke says: “ While Keynesianism was the ideological expression of the attempt of capital and the state to respond to the generalised aspirations of the working class in the postwar boom, neo-liberalism is the ideological expression of the subordination of working class aspirations to the valorisation of capital” (1991: 129).

<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that the crisis of 1929 should be evaluated as ‘a regime of intensive accumulation’ since, after the crisis 1929, capitalists and states shaped the ‘wage relation’ in search of new methods of production based on mass production and consumption. In so doing, ‘the intensification of labour’ was provided by ‘rising wages’ and ‘social expenditure’ in order to regulate the capitalist accumulation (Clarke, 1991:109).

organization of Fordism, what the labour process represents can firstly be explained away. Accordingly, 'technical division of labour' organized around Taylorism is the core feature of this process, demonstrating the active 'mass production' (ibid.: 61).

As we already stated above in Gramscian sense, Taylorism adjusted the construction of a 'new type of worker' by confining worker's working order to the repetitive tasks. In the widest sense, as Hirsch demonstrates; the Taylorist organization of work led to the 'intensification of exploitation', 'deskilling workers', the increasing pressure of 'managerial control and supervision' over workers. In general, this process is evaluated as 'an accelerated capitalisation of society' since such a capitalisation was organized around 'the reproduction of labour power', 'the consumption goods' and 'the service industry' (1991: 15-16).

As to other levels of Fordism Jessop and Sum discuss, secondly; an accumulation regime of Fordism is defined as a circulation composed of the dynamics of production and consumption. Thereby, the relation productivity and profit is being maintained through the existence of mass demand provided by rising income. Thirdly, the construction of institutions, norms, laws and social relations to sustain Fordist accumulation is significant. At this point, the structure of the wage relation should be emphasized since the role of collective bargaining is efficient in organizing labour markets as a result of mass trade unionism. The participation of semi-skilled labour in the process in which the dynamics of mass demand are determined is to indicate tendency of trade unions to accept the powerful influence of managements on production (Jessop and Sum, 2006: 61-3).

The process of 'societalization' led by Fordism is an important matter which needs to be discussed in detail since the existent dynamics of society such as labour markets and consumption models were dislocated in the process. If we specify the scope articulated by Fordism with Keynesianism, the argument Jessop and Sum

propose can be followed that the basis of a 'wage-earner society' was structured by Fordist methods of production (ibid.:63-4) . In another saying, the social network of Fordism, in which strong trade unions, business associations and state intervention had a key role, was founded on a consumption centered society (ibid.. 65).

It is important to note that 'social disintegration' was the result of the emergence of 'consumer individualism' and of the collapse of 'pre-capitalist forms of social relations'. Throughout this process, state intervention and strong trade unions were the effective apparatus of Fordist socialization to cope with competition on the world market (Hirsch.:1991: 17). All in all, Fordism in conjuncture with Taylorism leaded to three general outcomes in terms of the regime of accumulation, namely; 'mass production', 'mass consumption' and 'mass trade unionism' (Lipietz, 1992: 6, Williams, 1994: 51).

These conditions characterizing Fordist regime of accumulation points to the limits of the organization of production as well. In order to understand the transition from Fordism to post-Fordist regime of accumulation, it is important to evaluate these limits and the role of working class against Fordism in this sense. Lipietz sees reason of the crisis as 'a crisis of the labour process' since the increasing effect of management techniques in production on workers leaded to the dehumanization of workers. At the beginning of the 1970s, the movements of working class against the conditions of market were crucial to understand the changing character of the division of labour. During these years, the structure of production was based on the distinction between 'those who designed and those who performed tasks'. On the other hand, the increasing pressure of the international mobility of capital over national economies had a negative influence on productivity and profits. Thereby, the Fordist regime of accumulation did not compensate the tensions of capital and labour markets surrounded by increasing unemployment (Lipietz, 1992:15-7).

The dislocatory effects of the crisis imposed the new paradigm regulating the ‘wage earner society’ of Fordism. In the 1980s, Lipietz defines this paradigm as ‘liberal-productivism’<sup>43</sup>, premises of which are to overcome the challenges created by the state and trade unions such as social provision and welfare state in order to set up a development model founded on the new methods of technology in production (ibid.: 30-1) since the crisis of Fordism was inherently rooted in the tendency of the capitalist order to increase the rate of profit. Following the French regulation school of Marxist economy, Williams underlines the rigid composition of Fordism through ‘an inflexibility of capitalist development’ and ‘a rigidity in the movement of labour’ led to the crisis of the capitalist accumulation (1994:51).

### **3.4.3.3 Post-Fordism**

After this process, as parallel to the development of neoliberal policies, the new models of capitalist accumulation brings direct conflict with the interventionist institutions and organizations such as trade unions, labor associations and states. The response of capitalism to the crisis of Fordism is, in this sense, defined as ‘the possible contours of a new accumulation’ and ‘a new hegemonic structure of capitalism’ (Hirsch, 1991:25). On the other hand, at this point, the role of politics can be determined since the transformation of labor markets, trade unions and production techniques led by economic innovation calls the new form of resistance for duty. More clearly, the transition from Fordism to post-Fordist accumulation of capitalism based on flexibility should be read as a transformation of politics since the new flexible mode of production brings about the new definition of work performed by different groups of workers such as women, handicapped people and the service class.

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<sup>43</sup> He refers to the power of Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in the United States by employing this concept (1992:30). In this sense, the concept can be retained in conjunction with the development of neo-liberalism.

In other words, Jessop and Sum indicates that post- Fordist labour process refers to ‘flexible workforce’ organized around micro-electronic and information technologies. There raises a distinction between skilled worker and unskilled worker in the post-Fordist process in comparison with the homogenous semi-skilled workers of Fordism (2006: 78). On the other hand, the construction of post-Fordist labour process corresponds to the effort to restructure needs of market on global scale since international competition has a great pressure over demand met by national economies. The construction of labour process during this process is associated with flexibility methods such as ‘skills’, ‘wage package’ and ‘form of labour contract’. As a result, ‘peripheral workers’ experiencing bad working conditions and poor payments and ‘marginalized social groups’ such as ethnic minorities and rural-urban migrants come into existence in this process (ibid.: 79).

It can be said that the new management techniques of post-Fordism aim at reaching the personal knowledge of workers by dissolving the method of Taylorism. In a sense, post-Fordism has a tendency to provide the permanence of technological developments for meeting needs of market in favor of production. As we explain by referring to the argument of Norman Fairclough above, Jessop and Sum defines this tendency ‘knowledge-based economy’ for today (ibid.: 80). It is important to note here that the role of state intervention is also modified to subordinate welfare policy to needs of market and support competition on global scale (ibid.: 81).

Overall, if we specify post-Fordism from the point of unionism, it is obvious that the existence of flexible work types such as part-time, home and temporary work, and insecure jobs would pose an obstacle to the collective organization of workforce. Specially, Hirsch sees this process as ‘a new class division between core and periphery’ characterizing ‘a post-Fordist layering of society’ (1991: 27). At this point, we should note that the application of methods of post-Fordist process varies from one country to another, so, as Kelly indicates, ‘the term post-Fordism is common but not universal’ since there are different usages of the term such as

'flexible specialization' and 'disorganized capitalism' (Piore and Sobel 1984 cited by Kelly, 1998:111).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE NEOLIBERAL PARAMETERS OF WORKING LIFE IN THE POST 1980 TURKEY

The place of Turkey into new international division of labor has been shaped by the 1980 military attack in direction of January 24 measures since 1980. Thereby, the crisis of capitalist accumulation created an opportunity by which Turkish bourgeoisie would be able to adapt to the rules of the international competition. In parallel to response to the accumulation crisis of capitalism, the common mind of governments and employers has articulated the socio-economic dynamics of Turkey to the global neo-liberal order since 1980s. As we have seen above, the transition from Fordism through post-Fordism to knowledge based economy within new international division of labor, in the strictest sense of the word, accompanies with the restructuration of labor process and a type of societalization. Therefore, the task of trade unions is becoming difficult against the capitalist competition and needs to be redefined (Lipietz, 1992:2, 32).

In this picture, the development of the neoliberal policies in Turkey has taken the form of a hegemonic project aiming at destroying the increasing power of labor unions, workers and student movements since the late 1970s. It seems to us that the ideological, political and cultural hegemony of Turkish governors and bourgeoisie is not divorced from the role of language in new capitalism. As Fairclough indicates, the efficiency of language of new capitalism cannot be understood by reducing its role to the merely economic dimension. The role of language should be considered with a view to understanding its power and ideological effects over society (Fairclough, 2002, 2003).



## **4.1 January 24 Measures: the opening of the neoliberal period**

### **4.1.1. Discourse of ‘law and order’: the collapse of ‘ideological unionism’**

With the breakup of Keynesian politics in the late 1970s, the high rates of unemployment and inflation signaled the existence of the crisis of capitalist accumulation. The restructuring process of capitalism required both a new mode production technique and a revised role of state in economy<sup>44</sup>. As we explained before, the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism and from organized capitalism to disorganized capitalism has a key role in the neoliberalization process of countries. To specify this point, Öngen draws attention to the dynamics of this transition by emphasizing on the re-organization of capitalism in some practices such as ‘reshaping industrial relations on behalf of capital’, ‘making new labor legislation to withdraw the vested rights of workers’, ‘flexibilization of the labor force and non-unionization’ (2004:165).

For Turkey, the development of the emerging neoliberal policies is not divorced from these dynamics. As we shall see later, the legal regulation of the labor market in Turkey through the military junta reinforces Öngen’s fixation. The underlying contradiction of the transition is to refer to the crisis of the accumulation regime of capital. More specifically, the emerging change in the production strategy has re-scaled the international division of labor all over the world since 1980. In many senses, this is to say that the dominance of the international capital over the world would tend to re-produce the material conditions of capitalism.

For Turkey, the ‘existing individual division of labor on a world scale’ constituted an adaptation problem to the international competition, so, ‘the appropriation of a greater amount of surplus-value’ became necessary for Turkish capitalists (Ercan, 2002:22). However, as an obstacle, the socio-economic achievements of working

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<sup>44</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Yücesan Özdemir and Özdemir, 2008: 58–9

class were prominent as a result of the effective union movements in the years between 1970 and 1980. More specifically, the socio-politic role of trade unions was advantageous in the import-oriented based accumulation. As Akkaya indicates, the accumulation regime of the import-oriented growth had become unsustainable by the 1970 since real wages were raising and unionism was getting strong more and more (Akkaya, 2002:136).

As Thomas indicates, the policies protecting workers were a part of the import substitution growth since the interventionist role of the state in economy regulated enterprises in the public sector. Moreover, according to him; ‘accelerating development’ was seen as a key motivation of the import substitution for the countries such as Turkey and India<sup>45</sup> (Thomas, 1995:5). However, it is important to note that although the model of the import substitution is advantageous for working class to achieve the important socio-economic conditions, considering the model as the only determinant factor can prevent us from paying attention to the role of class struggle in this process. More clearly, as Savran indicates, the achievements of the 1960s and 1970s were a result of workers’ struggle against the state and bourgeoisie (Savran, 2004: 27). At this point, especially in the late 1970s, the class based unionism of DİSK was significant to understand the role of the struggle against the state and bourgeoisie in Turkey. As Akkaya indicates, DİSK had 500 thousand-strong by 1980 and ‘after import substitution industrialization model entered a period of crisis, between 1971 and 1980, the number of strikes rose to 957 (Akkaya, 2002: 134). This point is important to understand the power of the organized labor in Turkey for that period.

During the late 1970s, as Boratav indicates, the Turkish economy was suffering from the crisis, as a result; the number of strikes rose and the losses of working day deepened the worries of employers. The socio-politic climate of Turkey reflected a ‘civil war’ in these years. Ecevit’s government resigned, Demirel took office and

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<sup>45</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Henk Thomas, 1995

Özal presented January 24 measures to Demirel's government in order to overcome the increasing burden of the crisis over society in the year 1979. The characteristic assumption of the measures was to control wages for a sustainable export (Boratav, 2009:147). This characteristic aspect of the measures, which Boratav indicates, was the forerunner of an important shift covering from import-oriented strategy to export-oriented one, that is, a radical change in production mode.

If we put the dynamics of the transition to the export oriented strategy in order, the first one was the tendency of Turkish bourgeoisie to decrease wages and to press the vested rights of workers in order to benefit from the opportunities of the international competition in the export oriented strategy (Savran, 2004: 27). The second one was that the effective discourse of the shift was motivated to increase the flexibilization of the labor market to overcome poverty in long term, in this sense; the interventionist role of 'trade unions and minimum wage legislation' was seen as a threat to the operation of the new model (Onaran, 2002:181). Third one is that the rules of this shift were determined by IMF and World Bank and were called a 'new stabilization and adjustment program' (Onaran 2002, Özar and Ercan 2002, Boratav 2009, Yalman, 2004). From here, in general, for Özar and Ercan, the basic aim of this new strategy was to

“reduce the role of state and develop a greater reliance on the private sector in the industrialization process and to restructure the economy towards greater integration with world markets” (2002: 166-7).

As parallel to the spirit of this transition, the integration of Turkish economy into the global capitalism was realized by the January 24 measures supported by the 1980 military coup<sup>46</sup>. The role of the military junta was not a sole experience peculiar to Turkey since the implementation of the structural adjustment programs in Chile and Indonesia was supported by the military attacks as well (Aydınöğlü,

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<sup>46</sup> Under the directorship of Bülent Ulusu, a new government was formed by the military junta and the economics minister of the government was Turgut Özal ( see Schick and Tonak: 2006: 394–5).

2006: 315). In Turkey, the military junta period sprang up on September 12, 1980 covered the years between 1980 and 1983. Kenan Evren, who was the general of the military junta, warned the political parties to unify against ‘anarchy, terror and separatism’. Thus, the aim of the junta was to destroy ‘terror’ and to ‘depoliticize masses’ (Schick and Tonak, 2006: 393-5). In this sense, it can be said that the nodal point of discourse of the military attack was ‘suppressing anarchy’ in order to intervene in and re-scale the socio-political life of society.

The program of Ulusu government is significant to understand the following process of Turkey. According to the program, it was said that the rules of the market economy would be implemented and that the free enterprise would be supported (Ekinci and Önsal, 2008:339). Thus, the military junta clearly declared their support to the liberalization of the state in direction of the market economy. On the other hand, another important side of the program was to define ‘Turkish worker’ as ‘hardworking and patriotic’ by emphasizing his/her ‘patriotism’. It seems to us that ‘patriotic worker’ was anticipation of the military junta rather than a pre-given subject. If we put it briefly, the textual organization of the program indicates that the governors needed to reword the case of ‘being worker’ in Turkey. In this logic, they needed to reposition social actors, social relations, values and norms (and so on). For example, it was said in the program that “ones ideologically guiding the eligible Turkish worker and ones abusing union rights will not be given chance” (ibid.: 340, my translation). By the same token, the program declared that the needed change would be made within collective bargaining, strike and lockout law, trade union act and labor act in order to establish ‘industrial peace’ (ibid.). In discourse of the establishment of ‘law and order’, the buildup of industrial peace was realized in direction of January 24 measures by defining workers within the borders of nationalism and by restricting union rights.

Under these circumstances, the 1980 military coup paved the way for the easy implementation of the January 24 measures in Turkey, so, the primary aim of the

coup was to facilitate the integration of Turkey to the world market by suppressing the leftist movements and labor movements and by banning the activities of DISK and all strikes (Öngen, 2004: 176, Ercan, 2002). From the point of Turkish bourgeoisie, as Yalman indicates, the establishment of TÜSİAD<sup>47</sup> in 1971 was important for us to understand the emerging class-belonging of Turkish bourgeoisie since the deepening antagonism between bourgeoisie and working class was seen as a strong threat during 1970s. In 1979, the activities of TÜSİAD were opposed to Ecevit's government in order to advocate their own class interests by "portraying it (the government) as a threat to private property and hostile to market economy, thus being detrimental to the 'national interests'" (Yalman, 2009: 306-7, our emphasis).

For Yalman, this process is the beginning of 'the restructuring of the state' since the military coup was the outset of both the new political regime and the new state form, it especially had controlled power relations between classes in favor of bourgeoisie and restructured civil society since 1982 constitution. From here, he emphasizes that Turkish bourgeoisie and army perceived the role of DİSK as a strong threat in the late 1970s since it took action as political party revolved around socialist ideals in constructing workers and masses beyond the pure economic aims. Against this situation, the basic aim of the military junta was to protect the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie and to support the foreign capital in terms of the structural adjustment program (Yalman, 2004: 62).

Indeed, the common mentality of Turkish bourgeoisie and the military junta was to support a new political strategy suppressing 'the militant working class and the student movements within the democratic form of state' (Yalman, 2009:308). The mentality of TİSK can be elaborated in order to reiterate the argument of Yalman's new 'historical bloc' as a 'new hegemonic strategy shaped by the state and bourgeoisie in Turkey. We can understand from the interview with Rafet İbrahimoglu, who was the general secretary of TİSK, that reason of the

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<sup>47</sup> Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği (Turkish Industrialist' and Businessmen's Association)

unproductivity of the economy was explained by discourse of ‘terror in workplaces’. That is, the struggle of working class to get the better socio-economic achievements was defined by the secretary as ‘terror’. Moreover, İbrahimoğlu underlined the mutual relation between ‘unionism and terror’ and said that the ideological unionism in Turkey should be abolished and the ideological strikes, mostly realized by DİSK, should be stopped in order to provide the economic productivity (TİSK, 1980a:21).

Soon after the 1980 military coup, Vehbi Koç’s letter to Kenan Evren was also significant in order to understand the role of employers in this new historical bloc. Koç wanted the military junta ‘to make a new labor legislation regulating the relation between workers and employers, to abolish the militant unionism, to regulate the severance pay (*kıdem tazminatı*) as a fund, to suppress the leftist organizations and Kurds and Armenians supporting working class movements, to support Turgut Özal’s ideas (DİSK, 1991: 32). Indeed, Koç formed a ‘style’ representing Turkish bourgeoisie of the day and, by the same token, Halit Narin, who was the president of TİSK, declared their support to the military junta in 1980. He said that

“today, everyone should support the authority to deal with the problems. In the late months, the export dramatically fell down as a result of strikes. We start should a campaign to increase the production and export and to distribute income fairly” (TİSK, 1980b: 2 my translation)

For this period, it should be underlined that Turkish bourgeoisie’s dominant order of discourse was coterminous with the common discourses, genres and styles of the military junta. As can be seen, the wording process of texts of TİSK represents the economic unproductivity as one of the results of the ‘ideological’ unionism and strikes. At this point, being ideological was opposed to the values and norms of employers, so, their discourses, styles and genres demonstrated a hegemonic camp against the ideology of the militant unionism by exhorting the military junta. Thus,

Koç and Narin's 'evaluative statements' clearly marked what was desirable in social practices. If we return to Fairclough's definitions above, the role of 'assumptions' blurs the possibility of dialogicity in texts by shaping 'modality' and by constituting 'common grounds' (2003: 41-55).

The role of modality is directly linked to the use of verbs in text, so, for example; the sentence of 'the export dramatically fell down as a result of strikes' does not include any 'possibility' such as 'the export may fall down' but creates 'a categorical assertions' by not ranking other voices in text. In other words, all economic process was explained with reference to 'strikes' and other social events or factors were excluded by bourgeoisie, so, it can be said that bourgeoisie was in an effort to construct circumstances and participants as strikes, ideologies and workers by excluding all of other important factors. Therefore, it is possible to say that, during this period, the representation of the social practices through Turkish bourgeoisie stood on 'propositional assumptions' by adding their textual voice to the voice of the military junta.

In another saying, Fairclough indicates that assumptions can operate in 'a neo-liberal economic and politic discourse' in order to increase 'efficiency and adaptability' and that "a particular discourse includes assumptions about what there is, what is the case, what is possible, what is necessary, what will be the case, and so forth" (ibid.: 58). For Turkey, Turkish bourgeoisie's assumptions succeeded in shaping common grounds in order to show what was desirable. In this sense, the ideological effects of assumptions concerning the emerging neoliberalism in Turkey can be elaborated since the establishment of hegemony works with the ideological assumptions of texts. From here, the core feature of texts created by employers was being 'hortatory report' during the military junta period, that is, Turkish bourgeoisie supported the military junta to construct people who would accept the social reality as it is, that is, as 'logic of appearance'.

In parallel with the propositional assumptions of Turkish bourgeoisie, January 24 measures constituted the mainspring of the emerging neoliberal program. In this regard, we can underline some important sides of the measures; first of all, devaluation and the abolishment of price control and of state economic enterprises (*kamu iktisadi teşekkülleri*) raises were put into practice (Boratav, 2009: 147). With the deregulation of the market, the interventionist role of the state to economy was interrupted and the rules of the free market was reinforced (Savran, 2004: 30). Secondly, the measures were not only a stabilization program but also an effective way to empower the international and local capital against labor in demonstrating the free market (Boratav, *ibid.*: 148). In this aim, the enforcement of privatization was used to transform production, so, the privatization of social services such as health, education and retirement was put into practice to decrease the power of working class and unionism. Moreover, the flexibilization and nonunionisation of the labour market became the one of the most important aims of capitalists and the state in long term (Savran, *ibid.*: 31) Lastly, the neo-liberal program was accelerated by way of the 1980 coup since it was not easy for government and capitalist to implement the measures against labor. Thus, the ‘counter attack of capital<sup>48</sup>’ was at work during these years (Boratav, *ibid.*: 148 my translation).

The internationalization process of Turkey was started by the January 24 measures in the direction of the neoliberal policies of the IMF and the WB, so, “the military coup reformed the state so as to organize a state that was strong in its dealing with labor and the social opposition” (Ercan, 2002:25). In sum, as ‘a new hegemonic apparatus’, the ‘policy reforms’ of the structural adjustment program were to

“entail opening the economy plus reordering public expenditure priorities, financial liberalization, privatization, deregulation, and the provision of an enabling environment for the private sector” (Yalman, 2009: 27).

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<sup>48</sup> Sermayenin karşı saldırısı.



At this point, the discursive tendency of capitalist groups and of the Turkish state can be read as globalization of discourse since policy makers and capitalist constructed working life and society by indicating the necessity of the opening of Turkish economy to the global capitalism with relation to the emerging definitions of the free market. For this period, the complaints of Turkish employers about the ideological aims of workers were articulated to the official discourse of the government. As Ercan indicates ‘the establishment of law and order within country’ was the ideological discourse of the day (2002: 26) as one of the emerging new hegemonic discourses.

On the other hand, Yalman enforces us to see the way in which proponents of the structural adjustment program demonstrated a ‘new mode of living signified more than anything else by the availability of the imported consumption goods that would be instrumental in gaining the consent of people’ (Yalman, 2009:250). Therefore, the hegemonic capacity of the emerging neo-liberal policies reached the point where the priority of the economic policies was adjusted to construct the practical life of society. In another saying, Yalman puts forward that “putting an end to class-based politics by appealing to virtuous virtues of individuals was a class strategy par excellence so as to establish the hegemony of the bourgeoisie” (ibid.:315). Specially, this aspect of the ongoing burden of the neoliberal policies over society would become more dominant with the policies of Özal’s government.

The January 24 measures shaped the Turkish economy from the year 1980 to 1988 and the presentation of the measures to society was organized around the ideological campaign; ‘there is no alternative’ (Boratav, 2009: 148). This point takes us to Fairclough’s argument (1992:58, 81) that, as an unavoidable reality, the language of the government demonstrated an ‘existential proposition’ revolved around the ideological aspect of its own assumptions. That is, the military junta created the ‘grounds’ to justify its claims in the representation of social practices. At this point, although the measures influenced the socio-economic life of Turkey

until the late 1980s, two important historical headings should be underlined; first of all, the enactment of 1982 constitution, 2821 trade union act, 2822 collective bargaining, strike and lockout act. The second one was the government of ANAP (*Motherland Party*) from 1983 to 1988.

With the enactment of the 1982 constitution, the continuity of the changed state form was guaranteed, that is, in the words of Yalman; an ‘authoritarian constitution’ was enacted by way of a referendum, so, the continuity of ‘restructuring of the state’ was guaranteed in order to ‘put an end to class-based politics’ (Yalman, 2009:298-9). Thus, a new hegemonic strategy starting with the early 1980 was placed into the political ground with the end of class-based politics in the 1970s. As Boratav indicates, the control of labor movements, the repressive labor legislation regulating working life, the disavowal of collective bargaining right and the restricted unionism were set up by way of 1982 constitution (Boratav, 2009:150-1). It is important to note that, although it was short-lived period, the establishment of the 1982 constitution stood on the effort to gain ‘the consent of people’ who suffered from the civil war and the economic crisis during the 1970s as well, at this point, Yalman’s emphasis is valuable since the ‘law and order’ rhetoric made the goods accessible to people and effected their living standards (Yalman, 2009:310).

It is to fix that, as a part of a hegemonic struggle, Turkish employers’ textual capacity shaped the context of 2821 trade union act, 2822 collective bargaining, strike and lockout act<sup>49</sup>. More specifically, Turkish bourgeoisie’s demands<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> For all legal regulations, see Koç, 2003:204–6.

<sup>50</sup> Koç shows some of these demands with reference to the working reports of TİSK in 1982, accordingly; ‘minimum wage should be determined for each sector and region separately’, ‘the different wage raisings should be fixed by way of contribution to production rather than the equal pay risings for everyone’, ‘wage rising should be dependent on productivity’, ‘retirement pensions are high and should be decreased’, ‘working hours should be increased, holidays and paid vacations should be limited’ (TİSK, 1982 April, Working Report cited in Koç, 1982:20 my translation-). As can be seen, Turkish bourgeoisie’s demands on wages were the forerunner of the flexibilization of working life. More precisely, the flexible wages and working hours were determined as a target in accordance with the spirit of neoliberalism. This process was intensified in the direction of

indicate that the regulation of the labor market included the undemocratic rules for workers under the discourse of ‘suppressing anarchy and terror’. In this sense, unions were “forbidden to pursue political objectivities, engage in political activities, establish relations with political parties” by way of the 1982 constitution (Dereli, 1998:42).

Almost all demands of employers were guaranteed by the military junta. The parameters of the new hegemonic strategy became more dominant over society and led to new dislocations within society. They intervened in the regulations covering the operation of retirement pensions, agricultural work, and social security policies. Therefore, it created new contradictions within civil society covering students, public servants, retirees and agricultural laborers. One of the important results of this process can be drawn in the following way; “appealing to people, workers in particular, as individuals, while trying to discredit the trade union movement by labeling it as a vested interest became the hallmarks of the day” (Yalman, 2009:308).

In addition, the military junta and its economy minister, Turgut Özal, found the solution to the socio-economic crisis of the 1970s by disavowing the organized labor and society. Against the increasing oppositions of unions, of especially DİSK, against the operation of the January 24 measures, the military junta used its armed

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employer’s pressure in the 1990s as discourse of globalization was articulated to the neo-liberal policies in Turkey.

From the point of unions, Turkish bourgeoisie proposed that ‘the relation between political parties and unions should be restricted’, ‘the dominance of anarchist militants over unions should be destroyed’, ‘the participation of unions in the meetings and actions of political parties should not be permitted’, ‘the politic and ideological based meetings and actions of unions should be banned’, ‘the all activities of unions in workplaces should be banned’, ‘regulation concerning the relevant business should be added to the law’ (TİSK, 1982 April, Working Report cited in Koç, 1982:22-4 my translation).

The demands of TİSK on strikes were significant to understand the role of new hegemonic strategy, accordingly; ‘sole collective bargaining should be concluded instead of two collective bargaining at a level of the relevant business and workplace’, ‘the lawless actions in workplaces should be prevented’, ‘the scope of the conditions to postpone strike should be enlarged’, ‘strikes with the ideological aims should be prohibited’, ‘the wages of strikers should be met by their own unions’ (TİSK, 1982 April, Working Report cited in Koç, 1982:23-4 my translation)

forces in order to provide the efficiency and adaptability of the neo-liberal program formed by the January 24 measures. As seen, the militant unionism was defined as ideological and harmful under discourse of ‘anarchy and terror’. Moreover, Turkish bourgeoisie and the economy minister Özal<sup>51</sup> used the same language and had the same referents in texts. Accordingly, the organized labor and its ideological apparatus constituted a main threat for their new hegemonic strategy. To reinforce their hegemony project, Özal and Turkish bourgeoisie were often appealing to the discourse of ‘aghas of trade union’ (*sendika ağaları*) in order to fix a target for workers. At this point, Koç’s fixation is significant that the existence of unions was intolerable for both Özal and the junta in spite of the moderate opposition of some leaders (such as Sadık Şide who was the president of Türk-İş) to the government before the January 24 measures (Koç, 1982:35).

Under these circumstances, the National Security Council prohibited the activities of DİSK, MİSK<sup>52</sup> and Hak-İş by the military coup in order to establish ‘the public order and public peace’ (Koç, 1982:35). Hak-İş recovered the right to activate on February 23, 1981. MİSK recovered the right to activate on January 18, 1984 but it was extinguished as result of the inadequate membership in the early 1990s (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996: 424–5). DİSK was forbidden until the year 1992. The only labor confederation whose activities were not prevented was Türk-İş.

From here, it can be said that the trade union identity of Türk-İş was reserved by the authority of the military junta since, as we shall discuss later, the moderate opposition of Türk-İş allowed the military junta to discipline working class until the late 1980s. When the characteristic of the new hegemonic strategy is taken up as the effort to put an end to class based politics in Yalman’s sense, we can give priority to the position of DİSK in comparison with other confederations since the

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<sup>51</sup> For Özal’s speech, see Koç, 1982: 34–5.

<sup>52</sup> Türkiye Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (The Confederation of Nationalist Workers Unions)

ideological totality of DİSK succeeded in threatening order of discourse of Turkish bourgeoisie and the state. During this period, the military junta and Özal's socio-economic policies used discourse of 'law and order' to destroy the organized society and the efficient unionism of the day was taken up as a part of 'discourse of anarchy and terror' in order to establish 'the public order and public peace' and to increase economic productivity in favor of 'industrial peace' and 'national interests'. As 'floating signifiers', these discourses would be articulated to the emerging discourses of the neoliberal hegemonic project in the following years.

#### **4.1.2 Adjusting the labor unions through discourse of the free market economy**

When it came to the year 1983, the military junta paved the way for the ensuing neoliberal policies of the government of ANAP. The first general election after the military junta period was held on November 6, 1983. The military service allowed three parties to participate in elections, namely; ANAP, HP (People's Party- Halkçı Parti) and MDP (Nationalist Democracy Party- Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi). The winner of the elections was ANAP with 45, 2 % while MDP which the army supported was the third party with 23, 3 % (Schick and Tonak, 2006: 396). On the socio-politic legacy of the military junta, Özal's government program was to solidify the implementations of the neo-liberal policies. In this period, we can understand from the textual organization of the government program that there was a 'shift' in discourses of the government. Accordingly, the military attack was evaluated as a way for 'democracy' and the importance of the economic measures was emphasized in order to prevent the recurrence of 'anarchy'. The government defined itself as 'nationalist, conservative, proponent of social justice and of the free market economy' (Ekinçi and Önsal, 2006: 346)

One of the most important attempts of the government program was to define the term of '*orta direk*' (*the main pillar*), accordingly; the category was to refer to the social stratus composed of 'farmer, worker, public servant, craftsmen and of

retirees of these occupations'. As to the relation between workers and employers, the government retained the emphasis on discourse of 'patriotic and responsible worker' as it was in the military junta period. In this process, there was still an intertextual relation between the military junta and Özal since both of them textually aimed at suppressing the power of the labor unions by forming the free market discourse. On the other hand, within the borders of 'labor peace', the government aimed at building the dialogical relation between workers and employers, rather than struggle, to develop the socio-economic conditions.

Another important change in discourse is that establishing trade unions, collective bargaining, and, strike and lockout right were seen as basic elements of the free democratic working life (ibid.). Along with the government of ANAP, Özal's emphasis on democracy was at work in order to develop the hegemony of bourgeoisie but, from 1983 to 1988, there was no change in the socio-economic condition of working class. Moreover, the juridical regulations of working life, formed by the military junta, were retained by ANAP. In this sense, as Boratav indicates, the success of ANAP was intertwined with its ideological discourses to construct people as individuals. In this sense, he calls the ideology of ANAP as a 'distorted populism' (*çarpık popülizm*) which aimed at constructing masses divorced from class consciousness (Boratav, 2009:152-3, our translation).

In the rhetoric of this distorted populism, discourse of '*orta direk*' (the main pillar) became a functional apparatus to construct people. Yalman indicates that Özal's rhetoric was to "reinforce the ideological hegemony of the bourgeoisie by de-emphasizing the class divisions in society", so, he attempted to construct 'the social basis of the party' by discourse of *orta direk* (Yalman, 2009:311). On the other hand, another important aspect of the ANAP's policy was organized around "Turkish-Islamic synthesis", in this sense; 'anti-communism', 'national integrity', 'separatist ideologies' were the part of the ideological discourses of ANAP (Boratav, 2009:157).

The government policy aimed at weakening the existent passive trade unionism in Turkey. The labor legislations of the military junta allowed Özal's government to improve 'the labor containment strategy'. Hence, the pressure of the government policies over trade unions was to influence wage negotiations and collective bargaining. With the labor containment strategy, trade unions would 'negotiate wages with employers but they would not negotiate economic policy with the government' and the role of collective bargaining would be decentralized. In the direction of demands of TİSK, the decentralization of collective bargaining was realized, that is, collective bargaining was centralized in favor of employers' end. In this way, collective bargaining would be conducted on 'the basis of branches of industry rather than enterprise' (Yalman, 2009:317-8). The neo-liberal policies of the government solidified the position of TİSK in working life and gave opportunity to employers to 'keep the wage rises as a bargaining chip in its relations with the trade unions' (ibid.: 319).

As a result of these implementations, the restricted labor rights and declines in real wages became a characteristic feature of the years between 1980 and 1988 (Onaran, 2002:183). Moreover, real wages in 1988 reached the level lower than ones in 1983 (Boratav, 2009:152). During this period, the involvement of WB into Turkish economy guided political decisions held by the government. Also, as Yalman indicates, the reports of WB determined what was desirable for the future of Turkish economy (Yalman, 2009). ANAP government's neo-liberal discourse was 'colonized' by the international institutions. Therefore, it is possible to say that, as one of the results of globalization of discourse, new types of representation were introduced to people within the borders of the politic, economic and cultural hegemony. In this sense, for example; the statement of 'offering papers of the state economic enterprises to public' was replaced with discourse of 'privatization' in the late 1980s.

As we stated before, Özal's political language was in accordance with the different types of recontextualization which were effective over society. As Fairclough indicates, the role of recontextualization refers to the process in which discourses, genres and style outside the entity are internalized in a 'new context', so, 'internal social entities' are defined in a new context. In this sense, Özal recontextualized internal social entities such as the nationalist, conservative political identity and 'patriotic workers' with the parameters of the free market economy in a new context formed by the influence of the emerging globalization of discourse.

During this period, there raised an effort to define the role of the state as parallel to the spirit of discourse of the global free market. There was 'change' in the 'forms of intervention' into economy (Yalman, 2009:330), so, it is not possible to say that the intervention of the state into economy was abolished by the government. From the point of trade unions, while the government was supporting the increasing power of TİSK, it became the 'impartial referee of industrial disputes' in the eyes of 'moderate trade unionists and workers' (ibid.: 322). Towards the late 1980s, the dominance of the international capital over Turkish economy became prominent and the growth of economy became dependent on external debts and outsourcing (Boratav, 2009:160-1).

Under these circumstances, Özal's government was not sustainable for workers in particular and society in general. The hegemonic ideology of the government was getting weak as a result of the increasing opposition of workers. Özal's neoliberal economic policies were deficient in many aspects since production fell down and rent-seeking economy rose. Moreover, Turkey's external debt was doubled (Öngen, 2004: 177). Özal's government did not meet the needs of working class and wage earners, as a result; workers attempted to organize strikes to be effective over the public. As we shall see later, in the years between 1987 and 1988, Türk-İş organized mass demonstrations and the Spring Actions (bahar eylemleri) were sprang up in the year 1989. (Akkaya, 2002:138). Later, Zonguldak Strike, sprang up



in 1991, was held by workers affiliated to Türk-İş. These protests marked the willingness of workers to take action against the military regulations and the ensuing policies of the government (Öngen, 2004:178).

Suffice to say that the Spring Actions have balanced the operation of the neoliberal policies in Turkey and signaled the impetus of workers and unions for action. Boratav indicates that the revitalization of labor movements led to ANAP's defeat in 1989 local elections. The increasing pressure of workers movements and strikes on the government brought about the socio-economical achievements for workers in the public sector and ANAP decided to raise wages of public servants by 142 percent. In general, from the point of wage rises, all laborers in Turkey had overcome the decade-long negative conjuncture by the year 1989 (Boratav, 2009:177). Indeed, the process starting with the Spring Actions signaled dislocations of civil society. The increasing influence of war in the southeast of Turkey on economy and the intensification of the migration from rural to urban were the important determinants of the process. According to Öngen, Özal's government followed two ways in order to control working movements and Kurdish movement, first of all; it used the ideological tactic organized around discourses of nationalism and religion, secondly; it aimed at controlling Kurdish movements by supporting the military methods (Öngen, 2004:178).

When it came to the year 1990, the hegemonic strategy of the governments remained unchanged. The impulse of the increasing working movements could not change the union identity of the confederations, especially of Türk-İş. Although workers achieved rises in their real wages and ANAP lost the 1989 local elections, the following governments<sup>53</sup> remained faithful to discourse of the free market economy in their programs. Moreover, Akbulut and Yılmaz' governments inherited the incompleting implementations of Özal's government such as privatization of the state economic enterprises and the flexibilization of workforce and targeted to

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<sup>53</sup> see Ekinci ve Önsal 2008

improve these implementations during the late 1980s and the early 1990s. From the point of workers and unions, although the right to establish union was seen within the borders of the democratic right, the significant change in union rights was not realized, and, as a part of discourse of ‘industrial peace’, a ‘dialogicity’ based on the ‘mutual respect and interests’ among unions, employers and state was recommended in regulating the working life of Turkey.

We should pay attention to discourse of globalization reproducing the dynamics of capitalism in the neo-liberal form. In this sense, the place of discourses of industrial peace and dialogicity or partnership should be determined as a part of discourse of globalization. Following this, we can turn to Fairclough’s emphasis on the ‘knowledge-based economy’ (KBE) within the global capitalism (2006:40). The cultural and political oriented discursive analysis of the KBE allows us to see the changing composition of the relation between business and governments. Accordingly, the nodal point of the knowledge based economy is the ‘buzzwords’ such as ‘partnership’, ‘networks’ and ‘enterprise culture’ (ibid.:42).

From here, the seeds of the knowledge based economy were planted by the military junta and Özal’s government into institutions, working life, culture and civil society in Turkey by presenting the neo-liberal policies as the only alternative. In the following years, the governments saw discourse of dialogicity or partnership in working relations as the ideological investment. It can be said that, discourses of dialogicity and partnership were supported by the governments and employers in order to control unionism in the early 1990s.

However, the discontent of working class with the neoliberal policies had reached the point where workers ignored discourse of dialogicity in working life. From the year 1990 to 1991, Zonguldak Strike became the most important instance of this case. Under the high rates of unemployment and inflation, the disagreement of the

General Mineworkers Union<sup>54</sup> affiliated to Türk-İş with collective bargaining negotiations led to Zonguldak Strike. The motivation of the strike was directly to oppose to Özal's policies. The president Özal became the target of workers (Yükselen 1998:550-3). Against the union's struggle, Özal pointed to the unproductivity of mines in Zonguldak and saw worker's struggle as extortion (*zorbalık*) (ibid.). However, workers were succeeded in changing the climate of politics. According to Savran, the increasing power of labor movements prevented the easy operation of the neoliberal policies by changing the result of 1991 elections and by not letting Çiller establish a minority government in 1995 (2004:32). By the same token, SHP (Social Democrat Populist Party) was welcomed by society, but it did not follow the class-based politics against the neoliberal policies, so, the leftist tendency was dissolved by the 1994 crisis on behalf of neoliberalism (Boratav, 2009:177).

## **4.2 1994 economic crisis and April 5 measures**

### **4.2.1 Discourse of 'labor peace': speaking of the crisis on the basis of national interests**

In these circumstances, the coalition government of DYP (True Way Party) and SHP primarily signaled the chronic inflation and the high unemployment in Turkey. On the other hand, the government program needs to be emphasized in some aspects since the government defined some headings such as 'privatization', 'unemployment', 'the operation of the outward oriented free market economy' and 'union rights' in different language from its predecessors. In this sense, the program indicated that the politics of 'no matter how privatization' would be assigned and that privatization would be seen as apparatus rather than an end to increase 'productivity and competition' in economy (Ekinçi and Önsal, 2008:368 my translation). The textual organization of the program is to point to the clear

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<sup>54</sup> Genel Maden İş.

definition of privatization but it is still ideologically<sup>55</sup> functional since the government presents it more than what it is by emphasizing economic productivity. Therefore, it is not divorced from the neoliberal hegemonic project but it is recontextualized by reference to the different terms. By the same token, the program indicated that “Turkey would develop with the balanced implementations of the rules of the free market economy in accordance with the mentalities of the social state and the balanced growth” (ibid.: 369 my translation). It should be noted that the influence of the increasing power of working movements on politics forced the coalition government to reconsider the rules of the free market economy and that the government marked the unsustainable side of the ongoing applications of the free market economy by implying the role of the ‘social state’.

On the other hand, Demirel’s government was one which clearly mentioned the norms of ILO (International Labor Organization) in the government program. Whereas discourse of ‘industrial peace’ in working life was retained by the government, it was said that the judgments regulating working life and unions in Turkey would be tempered to the ILO standards (ibid.: 371). However, this process should not be called the democratization of Turkish working life since the government underlined that the ILO norms would be included in 2821 and 2822 acts to the extent that 1982 constitution empowers (ibid.). In direction of these promises, ILO conventions<sup>56</sup> no. 59, 87, 135, 142, 144, 151 and 158 were ratified by the government in November 1992. However, convention 158 was vetoed by the president Özal (Dereli, 1998: 45). With the ratified conventions, especially C87; Turkey assured protecting ‘freedom of association’ but C87 was in conflict with the law no.2821 and no.2822 and the government did not attempt to solve these conflicts. The political ban of trade unions in the law no. 2821 needed to be revised in accordance with the ILO conventions. However, the government did not

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<sup>55</sup> If we say in the strict meaning of the term, for him, “ideology is one of the dimensions of any representation” (Laclau, 1997:302). In this sense, ideology represents the way in which the partially ‘incarnation of an ideological horizon’ is possible. That is to say, it represents the belief of ‘closure of the community through ‘showing itself as more than itself’ (ibid.: 303).

<sup>56</sup> For details of conventions : <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

take the needed steps in pursuit of the democratization of working life (Geniş, 1994:287).

We will discuss whether or not union confederations have tighten up on international labor norms in their struggles in the following chapter, but we should note that, during the 1990s, the increasing globalization of discourse was very effective over the socio-political life. For Turkey, the core feature of the process in which Demirel government allowed for ILO norms is to refer to the moderate role of ‘resistance’. In terms of Fairclough, ‘resistance’ is textually embedded in the operation of new capitalism. Accordingly, the discursively colonization of the old genres, styles and discourses through new ones can lead to ‘assimilation’ and ‘combinations’. In this sense, the dominance of the neo-liberal actors such as IMF and WB can, to a certain extent, be interrupted by ‘resistance’ in order to intervene in the colonization of discourse (Fairclough, 2001b:128). In this picture, Demirel’s government approved the norms of ILO but did not let the norms colonize the existent official discourse in working life. Therefore, it seems to us that there raised a contradictory ‘combination’ between international labor norms and Turkish union laws, as a result, obstacles in front of unionism remained same through this combination in terms of democracy.

During the DYP-SHP coalition, TİSK supported this contradictory combination on the basis of the existing laws and challenged to the willingness of the government to amend act no. 2821 and 2822 and to enact the package of unemployment coverage law draft since it would lead to the results preventing the development of Turkish industry (Koray and Çelik, 2007:329). This point is important to understand how TİSK positioned the neo-liberal hegemonic project during 1990s. Accordingly, as proponent of 1982 constitution, TİSK were rejecting the deficiency of 1982 constitution and declaring that there was no need to change 1982 constitution to re-structure working life in Turkey since there was no difference between the early 1980s and 1990s on the basis of working life because of union’s

demands for ‘irresponsible collective bargaining’, ‘inordinate extra payment’, strike for ‘unjustified requests’ (TİSK 1992 cited in *ibid.*:328 –our translation-).

In a grammatical sense, TİSK has been continuing to use ‘evaluative statements’ to indicate what is desirable for Turkey and tried to shape Turkish working life with reference to its own ‘propositional assumptions’ by appealing common grounds diminishing differences in the same manner since 1980. Moreover, for TİSK, there was no contradiction but harmony between ILO norms and the law no. 2821 and 2822 and if there was a change in these laws in favor of unions, Turkish industry would be ‘unproductive’ (Koray and Çelik:329). Thus, it was returning to discourse of ‘productivity of Turkish industry’. On the other hand, as far as we understand, TİSK’s discourse of industrial productivity covered social relations and actors; so, it suppressed difference such as discourse of dialogicity or partnership in its own texts in an effort to maintain the rules of the hegemonic project.

TİSK would have a position to solidify the neo-liberal policies interrupted by labor movements in the 1990s when the socio-economic crisis, starting with 1993, came to April 1994. For this period, the ongoing Kurdish Movement and the increasing Islamism constituted two separate headings for the political climate of Turkey. On the other hand, the Turkish economy was suffering from high inflation and stagflation (Öngen, 2004:179). Under such circumstances, after the 1993 elections, the coalition program of DYP and SHP kept in steps of the previous government. Accordingly, if we specify the process from the point of workers and unions; the protection of ‘work peace’ or ‘industrial peace’ was determined as the main principle in the employer-employee relation. Moreover, work peace was defined as an essence of the ‘social agreement’. Also, as a categorical entity, “unemployment” was included in the program. It was said that downsizing of the state and privatization would be realized in contact with workers, employers and unions (Ekinçi and Önsal, 2008: 376-8 my translation).

At this point, it is important to note that the program declared that 1982 constitution was an important obstacle in front of the democratic development of Turkey, so, the need for change in the constitution was emphasized, in this way; the labor law, collective bargaining and strike laws would be rearranged and the social state would be established. In this aim, Çiller's government proposed to constitute an 'Economic and Social Council' to conduct the negotiations among social actors. More importantly, from the point of working life, the program declared that the ILO convention no.158<sup>57</sup> would be ratified to provide 'job security' against nonunionization and non-covered employment in Turkish working life (ibid.: 380-1 my translation).

The practices of the DYP and SHP coalition on the promised headings in the program would be tested by the 1994 crisis<sup>58</sup> and April 5 measures. The crisis 'led to an exorbitant unemployment and an unprecedented level of inflation (120 percent)' (Dereli, 1998:45). In 1989, liberalization of capital movements incarnating the conditions of the economic crises in Turkey was a new period for the operation of structural adjustment program since the government increased its spending by using 'foreign capital inflows' to balance reduction in real wages. The 1994 crisis constituted a critical turn for the government and Turkish bourgeoisie to recover the socio-economic achievements of workers in the early 1990s (Onaran, 2002:183).

In these circumstances, employers' emphasis on flexibility, undergoing since 1980, took a new route with the post-1994 crisis area. Specially, Özdemir-Yücesan and

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<sup>57</sup> Termination of Employment Convention.

<sup>58</sup> Strictly speaking, Boratav defined the process from 1989 to the present as 'dominance of international finance capital' (*uluslararası finans kapitalin üstünlüğü*). The liberalization of capital movements was realized in 1989, the aim of free capital movements was to prevent capital flights by abolishing exchange controls. Thus, the convertibility of Turkish lira in accordance with IMF measures would be provided. For Boratav, as a result of the macro-economic measures, the main reason of 1994, 1998-99 and 2001 crises were the circulation of capital movements and dramatically outflow of capital. As a result of capital were the growth of current account deficit, the increasing risk within the system of banks, the political uncertainties, the finance capital and rent seeking prospects became unfavorable, so, capital outflow appeared (2009:181-3).

Özdemir indicate that the conception of ‘individual labor law’ through employers and the judicial system was perceived from the different point after the 1994 crisis. The main target of the neoliberal project was the ‘rigidity of the labor market’ and of labor legislation (Özdemir-Yücesan and Özdemir, 2008:98). Hence, the post-Fordist practices has been intensified since the mid-1990s and the policies such as ‘privatization’, ‘sub contracting practice (*taşeronlaşma*)’, ‘liberalization of capital movements’ were the necessities to pave the way for the acceleration of capital accumulation (Çoşkun 2008:185 my translation).

Indeed, for TİSK, the incomplete privatization was seen as one of the important reasons of the economic depression of the year 1993. On the other hand, there were serious complaints about the demands of unions for collective bargaining and wage rises. TİSK demonstrated the effects of these demands with reference to the customs union between Turkey and European Union, so, in this process, ‘labor peace’ had to be provided within collective bargaining agreements in order to protect the ‘competitive power of enterprises’ (TİSK, 1994a: 4-5). On the other hand, TİSK affirmed the global face of the neoliberal policies by pointing to the efficiency of the socio-political implementations of the European Community. Accordingly, TİSK gave a place to the EC’s policies for reducing unemployment in its own texts, accordingly; ‘lowering the costs of labor through reduction in social security measures’ and ‘the flexibilization of the labor life and of the labor law’ were seen the main precautions for unemployment. Thus, TİSK disapproved unemployment coverage and the protectionist implementations and put forward statement of ‘firstly employment’ (*önce istihdam*) by marking damages of interventionism (ibid.: 6-7 my translation).

With 1990s, the influence of globalization on texts of TİSK led to ‘the heterogeneity of texts’. As Fairclough points out, textual heterogeneity needs the use of ‘quotation marks’ and ‘reporting verbs’ (1992:104-5). In this sense, TİSK organized texts to confirm its own discourse type by giving the results of report of



the EC in quotation marks and font bold. At this point, we can figure out that the heterogeneity of texts of TİSK was a part of ‘hegemonic struggle’, as Fairclough indicates, the (re)articulation of diverse elements in a discursive practice is determined by hegemonic struggle itself (Fairclough, 1995:134-5), so, TİSK limited and cited some parts of the EC’s report to affirm its own discourse. On the other hand, another important issue from the point of representation of difference in texts can be seen in TİSK’s approach to Kurdish Question<sup>59</sup>, which became clear during 1990s.

By the same token, Bekir Sami Dağ, who was minister of the state, declared policies of the government about working life. Actually, Dağ’s approach is important to understand the attributes of hegemonic struggle between social actors since his manifest was concomitant with TİSK’s approach to the matters. He accepted that the integration of Turkey into the globalizing world was realized the free market economy and declared that privatization policies would continue. In this sense, ‘labor peace or work peace’ was repeated as the main component of working life. In this aim, the establishment of the Social and Economic Council was necessary (TİSK, 1994a: 12-3). It is clear that, during this process, there was a strong effort to construct labor unions and employers as participants of a common interest around labor peace within the Social and Economic Council. In this aim, representation of globalization was portrayed by employers and the government as a metaphorical modality.

For this period, the technologization of discourse, starting in 1980s, was effectively used by employers to balance the increasing power of workers and unions after the 1990s. We can see that TİSK often appealed to discourse technologists in order to form working life, so, the results of the 1994 crisis were evaluated by some

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<sup>59</sup>Refik Baydur, who was chairman of the board of TİSK, emphasized ‘terror’ as a main problem for Turkey. As can be seen, Baydur worded the matter as ‘terror’ and reworded discourse of ‘national unity’ and ‘indivisibility of the state’ by referring to discourse of Atatürkçülük. By the same token, Bekir Sami Dağ, who was minister of state, worded the main matter as ‘terror’ (TİSK, 1994a: 9).

academicians and experts<sup>60</sup> on the basis of language of new capitalism in favor of employers. In this sense, the discursive construction of production took the form of socialization of results of crisis on the basis of national interests. If we specify this point from the argument of ‘technologization of discourse’, TİSK started to focus on the new re-regulation of genres, discourses and styles of the existing discursive order and gave weight to articulate discourses of European Community and Customs Union to their discourses by pointing to the calculable effects of the process over people. In this aim, its discursive practices were potently connected with the rigidity of labor legislation in order to construct working life around discourse of flexibility. However, this effort will reach its aim in the year 2003.

Following the 1994 crisis period, Kubilay Atasayar proposed a sexennial ‘stabilization program’ which would cover economic and ‘social’ matters (TİSK, 1994b: 5). The coalition government introduced April 5 measures as a stabilization program. In a sense, the measures became the litmus paper of the government program, so, it can be said that the stabilization program of the government subdued the socio-economic achievements of the Spring Actions and Zonguldak Strike in 1994. Turkey’s increasing government deficit, chronic inflation, growing internal and external debts ruined the macro-economic equilibrium of Turkey. Dismissals because of economic crises and privatization<sup>61</sup>, restricted wages and payments<sup>62</sup>, price rises were the characteristic results of this period. On the other hand, and the April 5 measures were put into practice without considering the mentioned ‘labor peace’ based on ‘partnership’ or ‘dialogicty’ between workers and employers.

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<sup>60</sup> TİSK, 1994a: 14 -24, 1994b:6-9, 24-26, 1994c:10-13.

<sup>61</sup> In this period, the institutions were included in the scope of privatization as follows; Meat and Fish Authority (Et ve Balık Kurumu), Feed Industry (Yem Sanayi), Erdemir, Turkish Petroleum Refineries Corporation (Tüpraş), Petrol Ofisi, Turkish Airlines (THY), Turban, Havaş, D.B. Deniz Nakliyat and Ditaş, Turkish Electricity Authority (TEK), PTT, Sümerbank and Etibank (Türk-İş, 1996: 11, 40-42).

<sup>62</sup> It is clear that the socio-economic achievements of workers through the Spring Actions and Zonguldak Strike were eroded by the neo-liberal implementations of April 5 measures. Hence, according to national income distribution; as to compared to real wage rises, which were 34.6 percent in 1991, real wages fell by 25.1 percent in 1994 (Türk-İş, 1996: 28-9).

Türk-İş also accused the government of not applying to the confederations' view (Özkaplan, 1996:158-9).

#### **4.2.2 Discourse of 'social dialog': constructing the labor unions as a part of 'social agreement'**

The stabilization program of the government found a full support from Turkish capitalists. In the following days when the stabilization program was elucidated, TİSK proposed to implement the measures in order to get rid of the socio-economic problems as society. Moreover, the execution of April 5 measures was in accordance with that of January 24 measures from the point of the used language. Atasayar declared that 'there is no alternative nationally' on the basis of IMF policies (TİSK, 1994c:2, my translation). But also, this indicated the persistence of Turkish capitalists in demonstrating the continuity of the hegemonic project over society. In this regard, the 'social agreement' was seen as a shortage in the stabilization program, but Atasayar pointed out that there was still chance to provide the social agreement through the establishment of the Economic and Social Council (ibid. my translation). Actually, it would not be incorrect to say that TİSK pretended to support a 'social dialog', but, when we observe the process after the measures, it is clear that the main mentality of TİSK was against labor and labor's achievements, especially in the early 1990s.

By the same token, Baydur, who was the chairman of TİSK, proposed to socialize the costs of the stabilization program. Specially, his main target was the increasing efficiency of collective bargaining agreements in the period from 1989 to 1993, so, he underlined the unsustainable side of the economy under these conditions. Therefore, he proposed that privatization process should be accelerated, the state should share the costs of social insurance, wage rises should be dependent on productivity, the labor legislation should be made flexible, and the flexibilization of the labor market and wage flexibility should be provided (ibid.: 4-6, my

translation). At this point, it is important to note that Türk-İş was positioned by TİSK as a part of the social dialog in text and TİSK demanded to improve this dialog by supporting the Economic and Social Council in order to facilitate ‘labor peace’ (ibid.: 7). At this point, it can be said that TİSK tried to overturn the contradiction stemming from production relations before it took the form of antagonism, so, TİSK attempted to construct an ‘equivalent chain’ including demands of union confederations as well against the negative results of the crisis on the basis of national interests. The most important instance of this effort for TİSK was the establishment of an Economic and Social Council, so, discourse of ‘social dialog’ would take the form of ‘institutional identity’.

TİSK’s ongoing efforts to form an Economic and Social Council since 1980 became effective on the government. Thus, the government declared the establishment of an Economic and Social Council<sup>63</sup> on 17 March 1995. The role of the council was based on the article 27<sup>64</sup> of the Ankara Agreement between the European Economic Community and Turkey in 1963, and also ILO convention no.144<sup>65</sup>. However, Koray and Çelik indicate that there is no similarity between Turkish economic and social council and European Economic Social Committee in principle. The first and last meeting of the council was gathered under the presidency of Çiller in 1995 but it was dissolved as a result of disagreement between parties (Koray and Çelik, 2007:403-4).

In a sense, TİSK’s efforts to shape the post-crisis area by way of an Economic and Social Council were fizzled out. Moreover, the protest movements of working class against April 5 measures were held in different regions of Turkey (Özkaplan, 1996: 159-161). It is important to note that Çiller’s government took some legal steps for

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<sup>63</sup>The council would be composed of 15 members from the state, 5 members from employers’ organizations, 2 members from worker unions (Kepkep, 1996:361).

<sup>64</sup>The Council of Association shall take all appropriate steps to promote the necessary cooperation and contacts between the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and other organs of the Community on the one hand and the Turkish Parliament and the corresponding organs in Turkey on the other. [www.avrupa.info.tr/Files/File/EU&TURKEY/e-ankara\\_ENG.rtf](http://www.avrupa.info.tr/Files/File/EU&TURKEY/e-ankara_ENG.rtf)

<sup>65</sup>Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention.

labor unions and recognized the freedom of public servants to constitute union but, according to Koç, the government restricted workers' rights through these legal steps (Koç, 2003:209, Dereli, 1998:45). Also, the government realized its promise to ratify ILO convention no. 158 in 1994, but did not revise Turkish union law in accordance with ILO conventions, so, the actual practice of the convention did not become possible (Dereli, 1998:45).

In similarity with the Demirel's government, DYP-SHP coalition took action in direction of directives of IMF on the basis of April 5 measures. On the other hand, although some legal regulations were recognized, it did not harmonize union law with ILO conventions. If we specify globalization as 'an ultimate horizon for action' in words of Fairclough (2006:28-9), the government recontextualized priorities of IMF with its own policies as 'the only alternative', so, the government has not fixed 'resistance', partly provided by ILO conventions, within this ultimate horizon for a more democratic union action. At this point, it can be said that the promises of Çiller government to prevent nonunionization, uninsured and unsecured employment in the program were suspended on behalf of the neoliberal policies. Moreover, Çiller government left unions, specially non-unionized workers, vulnerable to the increasing unemployment of Turkey, as a result; non-unionization and dismissals run up, so, fear of unemployment marred the increasing unionism of the early 1990s (Boratav, 2009: 178). By the first half of 1994 crisis, the rate of people quitting job had reached about 30 percent. Türk-İş evaluated this unemployment proportion under the head; 'dismissals increased' (Türk-iş, 1996:38).

Under these circumstances, Turkish capitalists found an excuse with 1994 crisis for putting the flexible modes of production into practice. Köstekli points out<sup>66</sup> that flexibility practices were used to overcome the negative effects of the crisis on the

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<sup>66</sup> Köstekli cites from the explanation of Erdoğan Karakoyunlu, who was the chairman of Turkish Employer' Association of Metal Industries (MESS) and Sakıp Sabancı's declaration (Köstekli İ., 2000:845).

basis of the agreement among labor unions, workers and employers in the late 1994 and the early 1995 (Köstekli İ., 2000:845). After the year 1995, Turkish capitalists tried to form the labor market on the basis of discourse of flexibility, in this sense; their efforts would get results through the enactment of flexibility oriented labor act 4857 in the year 2003. For us, the most important challenge to labor unionism in Turkey would be the expansion of flexibility into society, since, as Harvey indicates (2005:75-6), ‘lower wages, loss of labor-job protection and decreasing job security’ are the basic results of the flexible production. As a result, the disorganized structure of labor market makes the construction of a solidaristic form difficult for unions. In this regard, demands of Turkish capitalists on flexibility, starting with the 1980s, reached a position where they reproduced the conditions of their hegemonic project by way of 1994 crisis. In another saying, as Yücesan-Özdemir and Özdemir indicate, the crisis, which the structural drawbacks of import-oriented growth caused, lowered the reproduction conditions of ‘collective labor power’ in the post-1994 crisis (2008:98 my translation).

Following this, the rigidity of labor legislation and of the labor market was seen as the main reason of troubles in the neoliberal policies (ibid.: 99). Hence, as parallel to the arguments of employers, the government supported the importance of flexibility in the seventh development program in 1995. “Indeed, what is aimed by flexibilization is a total abolition of protective labor legislation so that all relations in the labor market will be determined by individual contracts” (Onaran, 2002:184-5). In order to understand the reproduction conditions of the hegemonic project, at this point; we must continue to follow developments in the post 1994 crisis era. Accordingly, the increasing number of strikes<sup>67</sup> in 1995 became decreitive for the politic climate of Turkey. For Koç, the protest activities organized by Türk-İş had an important role in the divorcement of CHP from the coalition government on 20

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<sup>67</sup> As a result of strikes, 4,838,241 workdays lost, particularly in the public sector 4,249,920 days lost (Dereli, 1998:45).

September 1995 and the meeting held by Türk-İş on 15 October 1995 prevented Çiller's government from receiving vote of confidence (Koç, 2003:247).

### **4.3 February 28 crisis**

#### **4.3.1 Discourses of the secular and the non-secular**

In the changing socio-economic climate of Turkey, the Welfare Party<sup>68</sup> (Refah Partisi- RP), which was winner of March 27, 1994 local elections, won through 1995 general elections and formed the RP-DYP coalition government as a leading party. This political atmosphere was the forerunner of a new period since there appeared new discourses such as Islamic Bourgeoisie, Islamic Capital and Green Capital (*Yeşil Sermaye*) in the neoliberal world of Turkey. No doubt, Turkey's this period requires a detailed discussion in a wider perspective, but we shall restrict this part by following the referents of the process to the neoliberal policies and to the case of unions. Therefore, we shall position February 28 process from the perspective of labor unions and employers. As can be seen, until Erbakan government, the coalition governments did not compensate a large segment of society for the damage of the neo-liberal policies and of 1994 crisis. Specially, the political tendency of the so called social democratic parties called SHP and CHP was out of the class based politics and these parties could not develop a political myth in order to construct society against the defects of the neo-liberal policies.

On the other hand, as Öniş indicates, the operation of globalization process within the economic and cultural areas brought 'identity politics' into the actual politics on the basis of democratic values, diversity and pluralism. In this regard, it should be underlined that "political Islam in a late industrializing society fills the void left by the decline of the orthodox or secular social democratic politics of the left" (Öniş,

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<sup>68</sup> The Welfare Party managed to increase its share of the national vote from 7.2% in 1987 to 21.4% in 1995 ( Öniş, 1997:743).

1997:747). In this sense, the success of political Islam leaned in the way in which urban poor, different segments of society, new entrepreneurs, Muslim intellectuals, middle class based craftsmen were brought together by discourse of ‘social exclusion’ peculiar to identity politics (Buğra, 2004: 129 –my translation). At this point, the myth of Erbakan government became Just Order (Adil Düzen) to articulate the dislocations of the post 1994 crisis area. Actually, the RP and DYP coalition did not differentiate the government program from the previous ones in principle, accordingly; the rules of the free market economy and privatization policies would be carried out by the government (Ekinci and Önsal, 2008:403-4).

However, out of the government program, in practice, the Just Order of RP was defined by Öniş as a ‘mixed economy structure’ between the ‘free market economy’ of capitalism and the ‘state controlled socialism’, in this way; RP aimed at building a ‘cross-class compromise’ in order to get support from both of private business and poor (Öniş,1997: 754). In this politic structuring, if we specify the place of Islamic business, it can be said that Erbakan government changed the route of international capital by leaning to Saudi capital (ibid.). In addition, the increasing capacity of MÜSİAD<sup>69</sup> in economy constituted a new camp against the secular based TÜSİAD. The establishment of MÜSİAD was labeled as the ‘Green Capital’, but the increasing financial network of the association was moved it to the category of Islamic Capital in 1990s (Doğan, 2006:52-54). In terms of the economic perspectives and foreign policies, RP and MÜSİAD shared the same position and, at this point, the increasing weight of MÜSİAD in business as parallel to that of RP in politics was underlined in order to show the role of Islamic Capital within society (Öniş, 1997: 760).

From the point of this study, the role of Islamic Capital is significant to understand how they approached the relation between employers and workers. In this sense,

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<sup>69</sup> Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (The Independent Association of Industrialist and Businessmen)



Doğan puts forward that “the unofficial and individual oriented authoritarian and paternalist relations have become dominant in the relation between labor and capital instead of unions and collective bargaining” (2006:54, our translation). More specifically, Buğra gives more attention to the role of flexibility in constructing the relation between employer and workers, in this way; as a main principle, ‘reciprocity’ is accepted to form ‘social integration’ in terms of flexibility, so, the ‘organic congregation relations’ (*organik cemaat ilişkileri*) became possible in such way (2004:132 my translation). At this point, we can add that the borders of workplace and working hours were redefined in the flexible mode of production, that is, it led to the disorganization of labor. If we take up workplaces as the space of the organized labor, the flexible mode of production challenges to the unionization process. In this regard, flexibility leaves workers vulnerable to the emerging informal relations between employers and workers. More precisely, if we consider the socio-economic climate the RP formed, from this point, Buğra’s fixation becomes significant to understand what the free market economy meant for Islamic Capital in constructing social relations.

In this sense, as long as RP and Islamic Capital influenced the socio-cultural life of society with reference to Islamic discourse revolved around religious values, the ‘secular’ wind of society started to perceive the policies of RP as a threat to the neo-liberal democratic order. Rather, the increasing power of Islamic Capital based on the principle of ‘homo-Islamicus’<sup>70</sup>, determined their economic route towards the East. However, the ‘secular’ oriented Turkish bourgeoisie, especially TÜSİAD environment has been effectively trying to develop the socio-economic relations with the West since the 1990s under globalization of discourse (Öniş, 1997).

In a sense, this distinction allows us to see struggle for financial capital. Savran defines ‘financial capital’ as the motor force for both the secular and Western oriented capital and the Islamic capital, so, the struggle should be read as the

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<sup>70</sup> see Doğan, 2006:56

struggle of financial capital between these two winds (Savran, 2004:34). Besides RP shared the same economic perspective with MÜSİAD, the increasing power of political Islam of RP caused disturbance in the ‘secular’ order for the secular wind of society. Öniş pays attention that the burden of the political Islam over society surrounded the daily practices of society including the matters such as ‘education, dress, moral conduct, the position of women in society’. Thus, society was divided into two camps; ‘us against them’, ‘true believers versus non-believers’ as a result of identity politics organized around the political Islam (1997:764).

During this process, discourse of ‘reaction’ (*irtica*) had a key role to shape the socio-politic opposition against RP (Doğan, 1996). Also, the international policies of RP, to a large extent, suspended the West centered policies by opposing to Customs Unions and tended to improve the relation with Iran (Turan, 2005:263-7). In order to end up RP’s dominance within society, the National Security Council (MGK) introduced some decisions<sup>71</sup> into the political life of Turkey on 28 February 1997. The decisions of the NSC were ‘memorandum’ since, if the decisions were ruled out, the army would apply them by ‘enforcement’. As a military intervention, the February 28 process dissolved the struggle between two winds of bourgeoisie, namely; Islamic and Secular on behalf of the secular wind of bourgeoisie that wants to integrate Turkey into the West (Savran, 2004:34 my translation). In a sense, Turkish bourgeoisie had an opportunity to re-scale the short-lived interruption of the neo-liberal policies by way of the February 28 process (Savran, *ibid.*).

In the organization of the February 28 process, the role of Civil Initiative (*Sivil İnisiyatif*) constitutes the mainspring of this study. To put it shortly, as we shall see later in detail, Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK constituted Civil Initiative in order to oppose to the political implications of RP by embracing ‘discourse of reaction’ in this process. Later, TOBB and TİSK participated in this equivalent chain under the same discourse. The discursive position of Türk-iş and DİSK was able to find a

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<sup>71</sup> For the basic decisions of the NSC (see Turan 2005: 263).

place in dichotomies of ‘the secular and the non-secular’ in cooperation with Turkish employers. As ‘the unarmed forces’, associations of employers, TISK and TOBB, agreed with Türk-İş and DİSK in order to overthrow the Erbakan government in the first months of 1997 (Savran, 1994; Koç, 2003:280). In this process, as we shall see later, the discursive position of Hak-iş was different since the ‘discursive exteriority’ negating the union ‘identities’ of Türk-iş and DİSK was not perceived by Hak- İş as a threat on the basis of the different reasons during February 28.

In general, we can say that the perspective Refik Baydur drawn became dominant over the discursive strategy of Civil Initiative. In Employer Magazine, he supported the decisions of National Security Council on behalf of the ‘libertarian, secular, democratic regime’ of Turkey, at this point; it is important to note that the two-faced mentality of TISK was at work since on the one hand Baydur pointed out the democratic rules of parliamentary regime as a solution to the political matters of Turkey, on the other hand the role of NSC was regarded as a task performing the necessities of the democratic and secular Turkey (TISK,1997c:5). Also, the negative influence of the political instability of the day on the relations with the West was underlined since, according to TISK, “the politic and economic future of Turkey should be looked for in the West, not in other camps” (ibid.: 6). Evidently, in as far as we understand from the textuality of TISK, the east oriented policies of RP disturbed the perspective of TISK facing the West. In this sense, the continuity of the secular and democratic regime was regarded as ‘basis of production’ and so, TISK articulated the regime discussions to discourse of economic productivity and supported the secular wind of Turkish bourgeoisie on behalf of improving the relations with the West.

By the same token, as parallel to the decisions of National Security Council, “the lack of ‘octennial compulsory education’ (*sekiz yıllık zorunlu eğitim*) was accepted as a basic cause of child labor in Turkey” (ibid.). It seems to us that TISK

linguistically did fictionalize the ‘causal relations’ of the matters by creating abstract categories such as economic productivity and educational system. As parallel to the disciplinary spirit of knowledge based economy, TİSK defined the importance of skilled, educated labor and productive economy as necessities for the future of economic stabilization and succeeded in articulating the matter peculiar to working life to its order of discourse. In the face of such a situation, as we shall see later, the hegemonic discourses of text was produced and consumed by TİSK, Türk-İş and DİSK together, particularly in February 28 process.

In this regard, according to us, two important results can be drawn; on the one hand, as proponents of workers’ rights, the perception of Türk-İş and DİSK during February 28 was to indicate their incapacity to produce a new alternative in order to construct their members around a new myth, on the other hand they supported, in words of Öngen, the ‘civil imaged armed forces’ without figuring out the burden of the neo-liberal policies over workers, so, they did not investigate the ‘causal relations’ of the process.

After the overthrow of Erbakan government, the crisis period of Turkey from 1997 to 2000s has been dominated by the international actors; IMF and WB. The staff monitoring program put into effect under the governorship of ANAP-DSP (Democratic Left Party) coalition has shaped a new period since 1998. After that, following the results of April 1999 elections, the DSP-ANAP-MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) coalition has revised the staff monitoring agreement in order to resume the economy policies of IMF and WB. In this aim, 2000-2002 stand-by agreement has formed the economic policies of the coalition government (Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler, 2007:18-24). If we specify this process from the point of labor market of Turkey, the labor market of Turkey has been turned into the tank of cheap labor by way of deregulation and flexibilization (ibid.: 10).

On the other hand, it is important to figure out that the IMF and WB policies have formed not only economic orientations but also social policy. During this process, as a neo-liberal state, Turkish governments aimed at regulating social policy in order to construct people around the neoliberal policies. If we say in words of Harvey, the ‘financialization of everything’ was accepted by the governments as a main principle. That is to say, as Yücesan-Özdemir and Özdemir point out, the state determines the conditions surrounding outside workplace by way of social policies (2008:52). From here, it becomes clear that the dominance of the global neo-liberal all over the world has changed the form of state intervention, so, the tensions of capitalism such as crises, poverty and unemployment were seen as a result of existence of interventionist actors such as labor unions and the state. Hence, as Shaikh points out, eliminating labor union strength, privatizing state enterprises, opening up domestic markets to foreign capital were seen as a principle to get rid of poverty, unemployment and periodic economic crises (Shaikh, 2005:41-2).

#### **4.4 2001 crisis**

##### **4.4.1 Discourse of flexibility: the individualization of working life through force of law**

Harvey puts forward that the international neoliberal actors have advocated the policies of “deregulation, flexibilization and privatization” by paying attention to the constitutive role of ‘international competition’ (2005:65). As parallel to this, the insistent position of Turkish bourgeoisie on flexibilization and privatization deserves an emphasis in order to understand the ‘libertarian logic’ of Turkish bourgeoisie. Accordingly, the logic of ‘self-regulating market’ is valid to the extent that the state intervention facilitates the operation of rules of laissez-faire. Eliminating intervention is not possible since, in a neoliberal order, the state implements the ‘force of law’ in order to realize the aims of ‘economic liberalism’ on behalf of interests of capitalists classes (Polanyi, 2001[1944]: 155). From this

perspective, it seems to us that investigating the legal base of flexibilization of labor market in Turkey makes sense, as we stated before, the ‘selective intervention of the state’ became an effective weapon for Turkish capitalists in the process in which the flexibilization of labor law would be completed, so, intervention would take the form of force of law.

If we specify the weight of discourse of flexibility in detail, as we stated above, there appeared an opportunity for Turkish capitalist to intensify their discourse of flexibility in the following process of 1994 crisis. Erdoğan Karakoyunlu, who was deputy president of TİSK, simply formalized globalization as ‘free market economy plus competition’, so, his ‘style’ represented the dominant characteristics of employers of the day. If a genre refers to a ‘way of interacting discursively’ in words of Fairclough (2003: 206), the dominant genre of Turkish employers in texts corresponded to discourse of flexibility as a necessity of ‘competitiveness’ which would bring about economic ‘success’ (Karakoyunlu, 1995:35). In this regard, he spoke up that the rigidity of labor legislation was exceeded by putting flexibility into practice on the basis of a ‘dialog’ between labor unions and employers during 1994 crisis (ibid.: 37). During this process, Ziya Halis, who was the minister of labor, explained away the complementary role of the government in demonstrating globalization as an ‘inevitable fact’ for Turkey (Halis, 1995:30).

By the same token, in the report of the Global Tendencies and Turkish Labor Life, we can see that TİSK’s perspective have clearly taken the form of knowledge based economy as global strategy since 1994. As Fairclough indicates: “As for the discourse of the KBE, there is the characteristic claim that ‘knowledge, skills and creativity’ are the decisive assets for competitiveness....” (2006:42). In parallel to this perspective, TİSK’s emphasis on ‘competition power’ pointed to the changing role of ‘knowledge and capital’. More precisely, the ‘classical’ relation between labor and capital was revalued in connection with ‘knowledge’, so, for TİSK, the faith of societies became depended on their capacity to achieve and improve

‘knowledge’ in production (TİSK, 1997b:26). As can be seen, the business environment in Turkey understood the globalization process as an opportunity to adjust the ‘classical’ role of labor to a new trend, so, the superiority of knowledge to the production factors constituted an underlying impulse for the affirmation of new types of employment, so, TİSK and the government started to shape their discursive strategies by combining element such as knowledge, competition and creativity in the formation of their order of discourse.

This point takes us an important point which deserves emphasis in order to understand the ‘ideological effects’ of texts shaped by TİSK. For example, by the same token, Fairclough indicates that the claim such as ‘countries must be highly competitive to survive in the new global economy’ can be seen in the neoliberal discourse and can be involved in ‘new managerial styles’, so, how a such a claim influences people and power relations constitutes the ideological aspect of texts (2003:9). In this sense, whether TİSK influenced the labor unions in this direction of the claim or not is important to understand the ideological effects of texts on power relations.

Accordingly, TİSK has started to use a technical language to prove the inevitability of the process, for example; the distinction between skilled and unskilled labor has been emphasized and the role of workers in the organization of company has been redefined in the management techniques such as Total Quality Management (*toplum kalite yönetimi*) which integrate employees into company’s management. Thus, the ‘cooperation’ between workers and employers for higher employment and income has been defined as a ‘basic feature of these new industrial relations’ since the second half of the 1990s (TİSK, 1997b:27). Thus, for TİSK, ‘flexibility and decentralization’ became as inevitable parts of new industrial relations all over the world in the global order, so, the state should not be a part of working life for the effective ‘competition’ as long as it supports to the labor unions (ibid.: 27-9). In this way, the business environment of Turkey went into the effort to evaluate and define

the labor unions considering the needs of enterprise as a ‘complementary part’ of working life (ibid.: 29 my translation).

It seems to us that, the textual production of Turkish capitalists signals that there is a stable effort to construct a ‘new type of worker’, that is ‘new worker’ as a prototype, in ‘individualizing’ working life in Turkey in the ensuing debates on flexibility. Although the flexible mode of production was put into practice in the crises periods, discourse of the rigidity of labor market continued to be the dominant discourse. As can be seen, for the business environment in Turkey, the only way to individualize working life is to establish the legal base of discourse of flexibility, so, Turkish bourgeoisie wanted to eliminate the disappearing interventionist role of labor unions completely. In another saying, as Yücesan-Özdemir and Özdemir put forward, the efforts of Turkish bourgeoisie to abolish the rigidity of labor legislation can be seen the ‘testimony of the changing power relations’, so, it becomes possible that ‘individual labor act will regulate the scope in which collective bargaining could not be effective’ (2008:100 my translation). Accordingly, discourse of ‘freedom of contract’ (*sözleşme özgürlüğü*) would constitute a central point in order to rescale the relation between labor and capital in parallel to the neoliberal policies (Yücesan-Özdemir and Özdemir, 2008).

In accompany with the 2001 crisis, the government and Turkish employers produced a companion ‘voice’ in texts of TİSK. Moreover, discourse of flexibility was expertly articulated to this voice. In May 2001, Kemal Derviş, who conducted a stabilization program during 2001 crisis, agreed with TİSK’s report concerning the crisis in the following words:

“The flexibilization of labor market is very important for employment. The regulations hindering the operation of the productive operation of labor market are not beneficial for workers” (Derviş, 2001).



In the textual organization of TİSK, these words given in ‘quotation marks’ indicate the ongoing intertextual relation between the government and bourgeoisie in Turkey, just as in January 24 and in April 5 measures. Strictly speaking, along with the 2001 crisis, TİSK started to use ‘manifest intertextuality’ by articulating ‘official discourse’ to its own voice, so, there appeared a new period on the basis of discourse of flexibility by way of official discourse. TİSK appeals to ‘scare quotes’ in order to reinforce its own discursive position. Fairclough shows that “expressions in scare quotes are simultaneously used and referred to: scare quotes establish them as belonging to an outside voice” (1992:119). By the way of this scare quote, TİSK aimed at organizing discourse of flexibility by retaining authority of official discourse as an ‘outside voice’ in the text. Derviş’s second sentence grammatically includes ‘negation’ organized around ‘presupposition incorporating other texts only in order to contest and reject them’ (ibid.: 122).

It is clear that TİSK used Derviş’s expression in order to reject the protective regulations in the labor market in text. On the other hand, as a parallel to the spirit of TİSK’s other texts, Derviş’s expression does not sound as a ‘negotiated text’ since the rewording process of the relation between employment and flexibility does not include ‘possibility’ in grammatical sense in spite of his emphasis on ‘dialog and labor peace’, so, we can underline that the use of verbs and subjects through the state and bourgeoisie has been subjected to the power of language of the global economy since 1990s.

#### **4.4.2 Discourse of a contemporary labor law: the construction of a new type worker**

After the 2001 crisis, we can see that TİSK elevated discourse of flexibility to a central level in texts. Also, the government revised its discursive strategy in the direction of the needs of Turkish employers in the following policies of the stabilization program, in this sense, it can be added that a discursive change in

official discourse occurred on behalf of the flexibility of labor law. The new process was organized around discourse of ‘a contemporary labor law’. In this sense, Baydur, who was the president of the board of TİSK, appreciated ‘change’ in discourse of the government by marking it as a ‘contemporary’ step and underlined that the disappearing antagonism between workers and employers since 1992 should be continued by the government (Baydur, 2001). In the name of the government, Yaşar Okuyan, who was the minister of labor, underlined the need for a new labor law on the basis of ‘consensus’ between parties (Okuyan, 2001). As usual, TİSK applied to opinions of ‘discourse technologists’, who were some academicians, in order to solidify its own hegemonic position as well.

In the following months of the crisis, we can see that TİSK reached a comfortable stage in order to shape discourse of flexibility with the government’s support. Moreover, TİSK had a position in which the relation among Türk-İş, Hak-İş, DİSK and TİSK was defined as ‘union of forces’ against the crisis. From the perspective of textual organization of TİSK, it can be said that the discursive position of the labor confederations was not radically opposition to that of TİSK. Within the borders of business unionism or collective bargaining unionism, Bayram Meral, who was president of Türk-İş, Salim Uslu, who is president of Hak-İş and Süleyman Çelebi who is president of DİSK focused upon unemployment and economic disturbances on the basis of ‘existential propositions’ of the day (TİSK, 2001).

As we stated before, the existential propositions of TİSK were based on the parameters of the global discourse in the 2000s. Accordingly, TİSK underlined the importance of atypical work contracts<sup>72</sup> and the changing definition of work and

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<sup>72</sup> Under the title of TİSK’s perspective, TİSK explained reasons for a new labor law in the following way: “the transition from industry society to service society; the growth of service sector; the transition from mass production to consumption oriented production; the number of white-collar workers has increased ; the rate of women labor has increased in some sectors; the development of mass media and computer technology has changed the concept of workplace, so, the definition of homo-office, in intertwined form of workplace, has arisen according to skills and sectors”, “ the

workplace in order to be competitive in the new international division of labor. Indeed, TİSK tried to create an economic myth promising economic productivity and reduction in employment by taking European Countries as an example, so, TİSK supported the way in which the competitive power of Turkey would increase by way of the flexibilization of labor law. If we specify TİSK's perspective from the point of labor unions, we can say that TİSK has *legally* wanted to put principles of 'disorganized capitalism' into Turkey's labor market, so, as Offe, Lash and Urry demonstrates, the interventionist role of labor unions would be discarded by fragmenting 'collective identity' in the labor market in effective manner (Offe, 1985; Lash and Urry, 1987).

It is important to note that TİSK's discourse of flexibility did lack of the material conditions since Turkish employers already put wage and work flexibility in practice, especially after 1994 crisis. To reinforce this argument, part-time work is accepted less than 30 weekly working hours at the level of European standards, the rate of part-time employment for 1996 was 23.9 percent in Turkey. This lower rate than other countries may depend on high informal employment, cheap labor and ill-pay for Turkey. (Petrol-İş, 2000:466, also see Onaran 2002:185). Therefore, it was possible to mention the flexible mode of production for Turkey, so, TİSK's mentality should be seen an attempt to encompass the manoeuvre area of labor unions by legally individualizing working life.

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flexible work types has become necessary instead of full time work and the categories such as part time work and casual employment has appeared" (TİSK, 2002 my translation). Also, Bülent Pirlir, who is the general secretary of TİSK, underscored that "the expanding borders of definition of work and the roles of managers and workers in a work relation presuppose the changing attribute of power and responsibility; active participant is provided in designing work; policies such as knowledge sharing and communication is to increase motivation and performance; the increasing number of individual labor contracts depends on the attributes of workers; the labor force is getting more skilled; feminization of workforce; the dependency of workers on workplace decreases but workers still work for a company; atypical work contracts such as definite-termed labor contract, part time labor contract become widespread" under the influence of globalization (Pirlir, 2002 my translation).

For us, another aspect of the process is to refer to an attempt to construct a ‘new type worker’. Indeed, this attempt can not be reduced to the DSP, ANAP, MHP coalition and AKP government either. The roots of this attempt can, to some extent, be traced in the emerging neo-liberal policies in Turkey, so, Özal’s significant ‘contribution’ to the process deserves an emphasis. As we stated before, Özal’s emphasis on ‘orta direk’ including all segments of wage earners overtly shifted discourse of working class peculiar to 1970s by introducing discourse of the free market economy. In the late 1990s, the new hegemonic project of the government and Turkish bourgeoisie was to put an end to class based politics in the words of Yalman. For the same process, Turkish bourgeoisie and governments started to integrate the definitions of working life into a technical language based on globalization of discourse. It seems to us that discourses of Turkish bourgeoisie and governments defining the components of working life in Turkey have reached an order of discourse in order to develop an attempt to construct a ‘new type of worker’ by the year 2003.

Inspired from Gramsci, we can provide a basis for our argument. Accordingly, ‘cultural hegemony’ is a functional weapon for the ruling class in order to impose its own power over the whole society (1988:234). This type of hegemony is not reduced to one-sided relation in gramscian sense, so, we must mention a complex network composed of the effects of the political, economic, cultural and moral components embedded in production relations. For example, in this sense, Fordism signaled two functions; one the one hand it destroyed working class trade unionism by way of ‘coercion’, one the other hand it provided high wages in order to gain ‘consent’ of workers, so, the rationality of Fordism aimed at regulating the whole life of workers in production. Correspondingly, for him, it corresponds to ‘the need to elaborate a new type of man suited to the new type of work and productive forces’. In a sense, for him, this type of rationalization marks the relation between hegemony and production, so, hegemony was born in factory and expanded into all society (ibid.: 278-9).

For today, as parallel to spirit of the day, discourse practices of the ruling class focused on the constructive role of competition in the global economy. Therefore, the role of cultural economy should be determined within the borders of ‘competition’ spreading every inch of society. As we stated before, in the light of the developing knowledge based economy, the flexible mode of production has been explored as an engine power of competition in Turkey. Shortly before the enactment of labor act 4857, Murat Bařesgiođlu, who was the minister of labor, looked for the way to gain ‘consent’ of workers in the following words; “workers will make more time for themselves, be more active in social domains and get different works” by way of flexibility (Bařesgiođlu, 2003a, my translation).

On the other hand, it seems to us that this period refers to the increasing efficiency of ‘technologization of discourse’ from the point of cultural hegemony. Fairclough puts forward: “The engineering of change in discursive practices is part of a process of cultural engineering and restructuring cultural hegemony” (1995:105). As we stated before, TİSK often gave a place to discourse technologists in order to affirm its own discourse strategy. The privileged role of discourse technologists such as academicians and lawyers stems from their access to knowledge, so, their positions can be effective on the social identities in constructing a ‘conversational discourse’ (ibid.: 106). To set an example, as a discourse technologist, Ali Rıza B y kuslu<sup>73</sup> theoretically organized ‘the political economy of labor act’ in order to indicate the importance of new labor act in working life in text of TİSK. As a part of conversational discourse, he underscored the role of ‘social dialog’ in order to protect industrial peace (B y kuslu, 2003).

Following this, after the enactment of labor act 4857, Pirl r asserted that the new labor act was the result of ‘social dialog’ in favor of ‘labor peace’ and of Turkey, rather than employers’ favour, and that the real definition of ‘social state’ has been

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<sup>73</sup> Doc. Dr. and the general secretary of K PLAS (The Turkish Confederation of Employers of Chemistry, Oil, Rubber and Plastics Industry).

realized by way of new labor act (Pirler, 2003). Turkish bourgeoisie articulated discourses of labor peace and social state to discourse of contemporary labor law. Overtly, in words of Fairclough (1992:216); ‘an extension of strategic discourse to new domains’ has been performed by way of ‘institutional power holders’ in the direction of needs of employers.

Accordingly, the center to regulate social division of labor has been shifted from collective labor law to individual labor law and the labor act 4857<sup>74</sup>, which reduced labor to a calculable meta as a form of ‘production cost’ in harmony with discourse the neo-classic economy and the apprehension of the neoliberal labor-capital, has been enacted in order to ‘deregulate’ individual labor law in 2003 (Yücesan-Özdemir and Özdemir, 2008:106, our translation). Hence, this new ‘contemporary’ labor act has legally approved the emergence of atypical labor contracts, so, as Hyman indicates, the ‘dissolution of the localized networks’ reinforcing the power of trade unions has become possible within the disjuncture between work and community (2004:22). Henceforth, employer has gotten a position to regulate the relation between employer and workers on the basis of freedom of contract. Accordingly, Başesgioğlu *officially* asserted that this situation is advantageous for Turkish working life, since

“The definition of worker who is one working for pay as dependent on an employer does not cover all employees anymore. Then, workers, if necessary, can work at his/her home as a result of new technology” (2003b)

By this way, the legal base of individual labor law enabled Turkish bourgeoisie to construct a new type of worker in order to reach ‘desired economic productivity’

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<sup>74</sup>Article 7 regulates temporary employment relationship; Article 11 and 12 regulate a definite (fixed) term and an indefinite (open-ended) term; Article 13 regulates part-time and full-employment contracts; Article 14 regulates work on call; Article 15 regulates employment contract with a trial (probation) clause; Article 16 regulates employment contracts based on a “gang contract” <http://www.iskanunu.com/4857-sayili-is-kanunu/4857-labor-law-english/4857-labor-law-english-by-article.html#14>

within the borders of the global economy. From the point of the labor unions, this means that trade union movement would face with the increasing heterogeneity of the labor market in Turkey. Indeed, the effort of official discourse to re-define the case of being worker in Turkey can be seen construction of ‘new worker’ by the year 2003. As a prototype, this new type of worker is discursively constituted in two main tendencies namely technologization of discourse and globalization of discourse. These discursive tendencies constituted the spirit of flexibility oriented labor law 4857 and new styles, genres and discourses have been combined in a legal framework.

Also, this process signaled the increasing importance of the role of the labor confederations since the labor confederations must construct ‘new workers’ in order to form a solidaristic form. Thereby, it seems to us that the dislocated area of the labor market should still be seen as struggle area for the labor unions in spite of the dominant mentality of the neoliberal project in Turkey since, as Hyman indicates, the flexible types of labor force such as female labor, part-time workers and atypical forms of employment (and so on) can be seen as a potential for a renewal of trade unionism (Hyman, 1991:5). Therefore, at this point, we must return to counter-discourses of the labor unions against the neoliberalization process of Turkey. In this aim, the subsequent part of this study shall focus on the discursiveness of the labor confederations in order to understand the attributes of union movement on the basis of solidarity and politics by following the same crisis oriented perspective.

## CHAPTER 5

### BORDERS OF COUNTER-DISOURSE OF UNIONISM IN THE POST 1980 TURKEY

#### 5.1 Competing Discourses: A Discursive Analysis of DİSK, Türk-İş and Hak-İş

In the late 1970s, the labor confederations in Turkey responded to the socio-economic crisis of Turkey by crystallizing their trade union identities as parallel to the political climate of the day. As the most efficient trade unionism, the class based politics of DİSK became the focal point of being opposition to the common mentality of the government and Turkish bourgeoisie. As far as we understand, in this process, the discursive power of DİSK antagonized trade union identities of other labor confederations. Thereby, the socialist trade union identity of DİSK was often perceived by Türk-İş and Hak-İş as a strong threat to their conditions of existence. Evidently, founders of Hak-İş perceived the role of DİSK as a communist threat and clearly explained, after the coup, that “the main aim of DİSK was to transform Turkey into the satellite of the communist Russia” (Hak-iş, 1981:67, -my translation). By the same token, Türk-iş justified ‘struggle for communism, fascism and reactionism (and so on) in order to protect democratic order and to actualize social justice’ repudiating DİSK’s call for the common action against the government (Türk-İş, 1980b, 131: 5 my translation).

Within nine months from January 1980, it can be asserted that DİSK, as ‘popular subject’, divided the political space of unions into two antagonistic camps namely; socialist / anti-socialist and fascist/anti-fascist. As Laclau and Mouffe says, antagonism is not internal to the constitution of identity but functions as a constitutive outside constituting identity of any social identity (Laclau, 1990:16), accordingly, the formation of trade union identities of the confederations was, to a large extent, determined by a discursive exteriority at each other. The discursive



exteriority of socialist trade union identity to ‘liberal democratic union identity’ led to the formation of the distinctive discursive position. After 1980s, the discursive formations of the confederations, to a great extent, retained their differential positions in a hegemonic struggle. In the course of 1990s, in spite of change in their discourses, competition among them mainly determined the fate of unions in Turkey.

## **5.2 January 24 measures**

### **5.2.1 DİSK: Discourse of Socialist Order –the total rejection of capitalist order**

In the political climate of the early 1980s, we can see that the political agenda of Hak-İş, Türk-İş and DİSK did not signal a preoccupation with the increasing neoliberal policies of January 24 measures. Rather, they did not problematize January 24 measures as a socio-political threat. During this period, although DİSK, as the most efficient actor, saw the burden of the crisis of capitalist accumulation over Turkey as ‘an emerging dependency on new imperialist-capitalist system’, it chose to move ‘anti-fascist’ discourse to a central point by supporting socialist ideals in own texts (DİSK, 1979:9). In the second half of the year 1980, DİSK gave place to January 24 measures under the head of ‘more dependency, more poverty, more pressure’ against the demands of the government and Turkish bourgeoisie. It was said that the Demirel government adjusted the economic program to reports of Turkish employers on the basis of directives of ‘imperialist’ IMF (DİSK, 1980a:69, our translation).

By the same token, we can see that texts were also a part of hegemonic struggle between DİSK and Turkish bourgeoisie. DİSK pointed to the approach of TÜSİAD to the measures in order to put forward the dominance of Turkish employers on the government and defined that “the aim of the measures was to provide the stable operation of capitalism in our country and to increase the imperialist integration”

(DİSK, 1980b:117). If we specify this point from linguistic analysis, DİSK appealed to alternative wordings to define the actors and events of the process. In this sense, the confederation reworded ‘integration into the world market’ as ‘integration into imperialism’ and Turkish employers as ‘ruling classes and bourgeoisie’.

DİSK declared that the success of January 24 measures would be only depend on the destruction of struggle of all laborers through force (ibid.: 123). As can be seen, DİSK did not restrict its struggle to an opposition to the economic measures since the confederation perceived the appearance of ‘fascist state’ as a threat, so, the struggle of the confederation was based on the opposition to the capitalist-imperialist- fascist order. Against the propositional assumptions of TİSK, DİSK defined representatives of TİSK as ‘legislator’ and discursively succeeded in constructing counter-discourse. For instance, as we stated before, TİSK’s demands for postponing strikes and collective bargaining were directly linked to discourse of economic productivity for national interests. DİSK evaluated statement of national interests of Turkish bourgeoisie as an effort to establish a ‘national unionism’ and put forward that class interests were inseparable from national interests, so, statement of national interests was an ideological assertion of employers (DİSK, 1980a:44).

During this process, DİSK formed ‘propositional assumptions’ in order to influence Türk-İş. The confederation accused Türk-iş of not attempting to advocate the union rights of public laborers. More specifically, Türk-İş was unconcerned with ‘the membership of state economic enterprises to association of employers’ and with ‘the privatization of state economic enterprises’. Also, the cooperation of Türk-iş with the government within the context of ‘Social Agreement’ (Toplumsal Antlaşma) was seen as a significant obstacle in front of class struggle in Turkey (DİSK, 1980b:45-7). Moreover, it is important to note that discourse of ‘supra-parties unionism’ (*partilerüstü sendikacılık*) of Türk-İş was strongly criticized

since, for DİSK, the main aim of this type of unionism was to exclude working class from the scope of politics (ibid.:235). At this point, it is important to note that, as parallel to the classical Marxist literature of unionism, DİSK tried to construct workers in the totality of politic, economic and ideological struggle and, in this way, the confederation called for Türk-İş to form a common struggle against the policies of government, so, DİSK's effort was open to the establishment of dialog in opposition to 'fascist terror' (ibid.:235-6).

On the other hand, it should be noted that DİSK tried to influence the membership base of Türk-İş in order to form a single confederation based on principles of revolutionary unionism. This is completely in accordance with Marx's definition of combination, that is, workers' combination would eliminate competition between workers and provide a general competition against capitalism (Marx, 1995:188). As a labor movement, DİSK discursively formed an 'anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist working class movement', so, the role of the economic measures was considered as a part of the imperialist economic system.

On May 1, 1980, Abdullah Baştürk, who was the president of DİSK, explained away that "May 1 1980 is, under these circumstances, a part of struggle against fascism, imperialism and chauvinism" (DİSK, 1980a:5 my translation). Overtly, it can be said that DİSK put anti-fascist discourse into a central point against discourse of anarchy and terror of Turkish bourgeoisie and the government. In this sense, DİSK countered discourses of 'terror in workplace' and 'ideological unionism and strikes' by recontextualizing statement of 'terror' in new context. Accordingly, the confederation put forward that "the ruling classes has started to transform 'constitutional state' into 'terror state' in opposition to workers and laborers' decisive role to protect and improve their vested rights" (ibid.:42)<sup>75</sup>. At

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<sup>75</sup>Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) evaluated the current circumstances of the day on 2 January 1980, DİSK responded to the view of TSK on 4 January 1980 and said that "democratic rights and freedoms can not be destroyed on the ground of preventing 'anarchy, terror and seperatism'; ideas and beliefs cannot be abolished by aggravating 'coercion laws' " (DİSK, 1980b:254 my translation).

the textual level, as a part of hegemonic struggle, DİSK's language aimed at hindering the language of authorities by showing the invalidity of discourse of anarchy and terror, in this sense; the discursive articulation of DİSK included a strong attack to TİSK's effort to position social practices and social events within logic of appearance.

DİSK succeeded in constructing masses beyond the economic ideals. In the late 1970s and the first half of 1980, if we specify in concepts of Laclau and Mouffe, 'establishing socialism' became the nodal point of order of discourse of DİSK. In addition to this, we can see that, as a labor movement, DİSK<sup>76</sup> articulated anti-fascist and anti-imperialist discourse to its own socialist discourse in constructing discourse of socialist order as a myth. In this regard, the main principle of DİSK was to establish 'class and mass unionism' in order to overcome the capitalist mode of production and to provide the fundamental right and freedoms (ibid.: 14-7).

As can be seen, the class based politics of DİSK was discursively motivated within the referents of Marxist literature. The primary aim of the confederation was to develop 'a form of anti-capitalist opposition' on the basis of 'class interests', so, if we define the process in words of Hyman, the confederation determined its place between society and class against the emerging new rules of market within the eternal triangle of unionism composed of society, market and class (Hyman, 2001:2-4). Also, it should be noted that, as a part of its own traditional ideology, the confederation subordinated the main socio-economic problems to the class struggle in the historical climate of the day. Therefore, the ideological perspective enabled DİSK to see the problems of women<sup>77</sup>, youth, migrant and child workers with a view to indicating inequalities of capitalism. Thereby, its discursive articulation did

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<sup>76</sup>Moreover, representatives of World Federation of Trade Unions and World Confederation of Trade Unions participated in the seventieth annual meeting of DİSK. This support from international trade unions was significant in order to understand the power of DİSK in opposition to the policies of IMF and OECD within the international area.

<sup>77</sup> For example, Yeğen points out that DİSK's approach to parameters of 'woman question' was determined within 'its ideology and union tradition' (Yeğen, 2000:8-9).

not include an emphasis on subject positions of workers under the dominance of ‘working class’ subject.

It seems to us that only DİSK resisted the policy implications of January 24 measures in comparison with the socio-political position of Türk-İş and Hak-İş within the working life of Turkey. On the eve of 1980 coup, Türk-İş and Hak-İş criticized the ideological unionism of DİSK. Indeed, they were discontented with the increasing efficiency of DİSK among workers since, as Koç indicates, unions affiliated to Türk-İş had troubles in, specially, food, textile and metal branches and a major part of workers started to support and affiliate to DİSK (Koç, 1995a:36). This period indicated that the antagonism between unions determined trade union identities of union confederations in Turkey. Accordingly, Türk-İş and Hak-İş determined two separate discursive practices but, if we specify their discursive practices, trade union movement of Türk-İş and Hak-İş did not challenge to the operation of the neo-liberal policies. It is clear to see that Türk-İş deliberately supported discourse of anarchy and terror upheld by Turkish bourgeoisie instead of advocating workers’ fundamental rights and freedoms. By the same token, Hak-İş developed an implicit language in order to be a side of discourse of anarchy and terror.

In this regard, on the eve of 1980, the preoccupation of Türk-İş and Hak-İş with January 24 measures was reduced to language of the actual politics, so, they did not take the operation of the neo-liberal policies into the their discursive scope, so, their wording process did not involve the terms ‘neoliberalism or anti-capitalism’ as compared to the wording process of DİSK. Therefore, they did not textually point to the changing accumulation mode of capitalism before the 1980 coup. Moreover, their emphasis on January 24 measures became decisive in the early 1990s, that is, Türk-İş held a seminar to discuss the burden of January 24 measures on society (Türk-İş, 1994). However, as we see later in detail, the main aim of Türk-İş was to indicate the inconveniences of the measures, so, the confederation did not oppose to

the measures itself. By the same token, Hak-İş did not see January 24 measures an obstacle in front of their union movement for this period. However, it is possible to say that Türk-İş and Hak-İş winked at ‘counter-attack of capital’ by remaining inactive until the second half of 1980s.

### **5.2.2 Hak-İş: Discourse of HAKK davası -the reinforcement of Islamic unionism**

Hak-İş’s trade union identity was organized around a strand of ‘value assumptions’ referring to Islamic elements<sup>78</sup>. In the third general meeting, the basic concern of Hak-İş was to unify workers under the umbrella of the ‘national and moral culture’, so, trade union education revolved around national and moral values was necessary for the confederation to develop worker’s loyalty to the defined values and to increase ‘productivity’ (Hak-İş, 1981:25). It can be said that Hak-İş’s emphasis on national culture included an effort to create a center to construct workers as individuals loyal to national and moral values. The attitude of the confederation against September 12, 1980 coup becomes meaningful at this point, since the confederation explained away that ‘the most distinct reason of September 12 is anarchy’ (ibid.:30 my translation) and anarchy was perceived by the confederation as a threat to national and moral values.

For the confederation, the source of ‘anarchy’ was ‘ideologies’ and ‘foreign agents’. In the discursive formation of the confederation, DİSK was identified with communism and Türk-İş was identified with Americanism and Jewishness in terms of ideologies and foreign agents (ibid.: 66-67). Although Hak-İş’s opposition to class struggle and Americanism was clear, the confederation did not position itself against the military attack in a clear manner (ibid.: 31) , but it implicitly supported the military attack by confirming discourse of anarchy. Moreover, it is clear that

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<sup>78</sup> The symbol of Hak-İş confederation was composed of a minaret and a factory chimney within crescent until the year 1989. Hak-İş accepted May 1 as a communist and jewish festival until 1990 (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996:531).

the military junta appreciated this attitude of the confederation since, shortly after the coup; Hak-İş was freed to continue its activities on February 20, 1981. The confederation made this clear that ‘activities of our confederation, which were not a part of anarchy before the coup and which aimed at the establishment of work peace, were permitted by National Security Council’ (ibid.: 32 my translation).

After the coup, Hak-İş had an opportunity to reinforce its trade union identity in direction of its own traditional view. As is known, there was a significant political relation between the National Salvation Party<sup>79</sup> and Hak-İş in the year 1976. Moreover, Ahmet Tevfik Paksu, who was minister of labor from NSP, wanted to establish a labor confederation including trade unions following the mentality of NSP (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996:527). In following years after the coup, the allowed activities of Hak-İş aimed at constructing workers as parallel to the spirit of the constitutive mentality of NSP and the confederation elucidated this in the following way: “Hak-İş has protected the essence of ‘HAKK davası’ which has been upheld since its foundation” (Hak-İş, 1981:39 my translation).

Indeed, for this period, the nodal point of discourse of the confederation became ‘HAKK davası’. The notion of this discourse was to construct workers around ‘national values’, in this regard, the confederation stated that “TURKISH Worker is Spiritual”<sup>80</sup> and that “ Hak-İş is a representative of right and truth, loyal to the spiritual values of our Nation and shouldered the fight of suffering worker fellows” (ibid.: 45 my translation). The discursive articulation of HAKK davası signaled the borders of case of being worker by emphasizing on ethnicity, so, Turkishness was *textually* capitalized to signify workers in working life. In this sense, workers were portrayed within the borders of tradition and customary rules and the confederation took a position against communism and fascism to define the importance of tradition and national values. As a labor movement, HAKK davası was clearly

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<sup>79</sup> Milli Selamet Partisi.

<sup>80</sup> “TÜRK İşçisi Maneviyatçısıdır” (vurgu konfederasyona aittir)

based on ‘work peace’ or industrial peace’ in order to establish ‘fellowship between employers and workers’. On the other hand, struggle for better wages was seen as an apparatus to overcome the possibility of class struggle.

It can be said that there were not significant differences between Hak-İş and Türk-İş during this period. While Hak-İş was emphasizing on Islamic elements in order to determine the role of workers, Türk-İş was supporter of the status quo, but both of them were eagerly defending ‘work peace’ in order to overcome the class based unionism and ideological unionism. Therefore, it is possible to note that these confederations became a complementary part of the new neoliberal hegemony aiming at ‘putting an end to class based politics’. Accordingly, the confederation did not deal with January 24 measures but oppose to leftist ideologies for this period. However, HAKK davası of the confederation was fantastically filled up in order to solve all problems of working life, in this regard; it seems to us that the confederation developed HAKK davası as an effective ideological discourse although the confederation opposed to ideologies.

### **5.2.3 Hak-İş’s nodal point: Union Competition**

Hak-İş did not go on any strike before 1980 coup. After the year 1985, the confederation decided to go on strike<sup>81</sup> (Koç, 1995c:149). The enactment of 1982 constitution and Özal’s policies had a great influence on the changing attitude of the confederation. On the other hand, it is important to note that the differential positions of trade unions being affiliated to the confederation led to the increasing complexity of trade union identity of the confederation. To make this point concrete, a cluster of workers, which was a member of DİSK before the coup, became affiliated to Hak-İş after the coup (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996:530). Therefore, Hak-İş revised its traditional view in order to satisfy the

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<sup>81</sup> Genuine Food-Work (Öz-Gıda İş) and Genuine Thread-Work (Öz-İplik İş) came out on strike as leading unions between the years 1987 and 1988 (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996:530).



needs of workers. In 1986, the confederation partly started to problematize the results of the 1980 coup. Specially, the confederation regarded 1982 constitution and 2821 trade union act / 2822 collective bargaining, strike and lockout act as prominent obstacles to Turkish unionism (Hak-İş, 1986a:15).

Indeed, Hak-İş was seeing Türk-İş as an opponent and blamed Türk-İş for collaborating with employers and the government as the planner of the legal regulations of working life (ibid.: 16, 22-23). Accordingly, Hak-İş's solution to the problems of working life was to get rid of the useless mentality of Türk-İş. Actually, Hak-İş's approach to Türk-İş was motivated to gain new members by influencing workers affiliated to Türk-İş, so, it is not possible to say that Hak-İş stood out against the policies of the government since, as we stated before, the confederation itself was also an implicit supporter of the military coup. For this period, the prominent attempt of Hak-İş was to campaign a union struggle against Türk-İş in order to advocate and reach a democratic order.

One thing to note that, in 1986, Hak-İş protected its main principles such as supporting labor peace and opposing to class struggle but it appears that the confederation's emphasis on HAKK davası was switched under the policies of ANAP government. The union agenda of the confederation started to cover 'right to strike' in working life. The confederation attracted attention to the negative influence of January 24 measures on workers and wage earners. Hak-İş partly perceived the negative effect of the measures in accordance with the operation of the free market economy. According to the confederation, a new economic system<sup>82</sup> in accordance with the historical character of Turkey was necessary as alternative to the free market economy (ibid.: 19). The operation of the free market economy was put into question by the confederation in order to show the economic losses of

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<sup>82</sup> At textual level, Hak-İş made some propositions against January 24 measures as follows: 'all types of waste should be prevented', 'asset should be taxed not income', 'labor intensive investment should be increased', 'profit sharing and codetermination should be systemically started and extended', 'consumerism leading to the socio-psychological destruction of the fixed income employees should be prevented' (Hak-İş, 1986a:134 my translation).

workers and wage earners. However, it can be said that Hak-İş's propositional assumptions such as 'labor intensive investments should be increased' indicated a disabled perception since the confederation could not point to the changing role of division of labor in the globalizing capitalism, so, it could not perceive January 24 measures as a part of neoliberal hegemonic project, so, the confederations could not conceptualize dislocations of the free market economy.

Therefore, it seems to us that the involvement of January 24 measures and the free market economy into texts of Hak-İş was simply remaining a 'metaphorical representation'. To make this concrete, as Fairclough indicates, 'metaphorical representation is a form of representing processes as processes' without subject (Fairclough, 2003:143). That is, Hak-İş's emphasis on the free market economy and the measures did not expose the role of social actors and social events. Thereby, the confederation did not confront Özal government or Evren's politic role, which were the real actors of the process, but the confederation<sup>83</sup> degraded the position of Türk-İş whenever possible to solidify its own policy for this period. On the other hand, Hak-İş did not deal with the language of the government, so, Özal's discourse of 'orta direk' was not open to question. Moreover, the confederation<sup>84</sup> paid attention that 'the operation of the free market economy would lead to the disappearance of orta direk' (Hak-İş, 1986a:131 my translation). That is to say, the confederation was giving attention to the negative results of the free market economy by confirming Özal's discourse of orta direk. It can be noted that the limited political perspective

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<sup>83</sup>It appears that Hak-İş's opposition to the labor legislation was to overcome the dominance of Türk-İş on working life since the confederation put forward that the labor legislation arranged by the military junta reinforced the role of Türk-İş in the direction of a 'uniform state unionism' (*tek tip devlet sendikacılığı*) by restricting collective bargaining to threshold requirements (Hak-İş, 1986a:21). Accordingly, the confederation ambitiously criticized article 12 of 2822 collective bargaining, strike and lockout act since this article was preventing the representative capacity of the confederation as the only rival to Türk-İş.

<sup>84</sup>Necati Çelik, who was the president of the confederation, elucidated that "There are disappointments, underdogs and the exploiter-the exploited at the end of all economic systems based on interest, taxation and markup, but I am certainly saying that there is no ortadirek" (Hak-İş, 1986a:89 my translation)

of the confederation could not see discourse of orta direk as a part of the emerging neo-liberal project.

During the second half of 1980s, Hak-İş wanted the government to change 1982 constitution and the mentioned labor legislation of working life. Compared with Türk-İş, the confederation appealed to discourse technologists<sup>85</sup> and experts in order to organize its own counter discourse. However, the confederation did not support to Türk-İş's protests marches in the different regions of Turkey after 1986 since Hak-İş chose to claim that Türk-İş's demonstrations would not be successful instead of supporting to the meeting (Hak-İş,1986b: 18). It can be said that Hak-İş<sup>86</sup> perceived struggle of workers as a matter of competition, or rather, the antagonism between Türk-İş and Hak-İş precluded the possibility of solidarity between them in spite of dislocations of the new hegemonic project.

It is possible to say that Hak-İş's opposition to January 24 measures, the labor legislation and 1982 constitution could not take the form of protest demonstrations until the late 1980s, during this period, Hak-İş's struggle method was to go on strike. It is important to note that Hak-İş prepared a file about state economic enterprises against Özal's privatization policies in 1986. The confederation saw the privatization of state economic enterprises as a part of January 24 measures and problematized the policy implications of privatization in terms of workers. The confederation did not accept official discourse of unproductivity of SEEs by pointing to the profit rates of SEEs<sup>87</sup>. Moreover, the confederation gave attention to the emerging types of new work relations such as sub-contractor and contract labor and defined the process of privatization as 'enslavement of workers' and these new

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<sup>85</sup> See Hak-İş, 1986b:16, 1986c: 6-8.

<sup>86</sup> Salim Uslu, who was the general education secretary of Hak-İş, explained away that a 'discreet struggle was an indispensable condition for unity of unions'. According to Uslu, Türk-İş's hostile attitude against Hak-İş was the most important challenge to unity of unions (Hak-İş, 1986b:32, my translation).

<sup>87</sup> See Hak-İş, 1986c: 12.

atypical work types were regarded as a threat to unionism in Turkey (1986c:11-4, 1988:1).

As we stated above, the confederation, in certain points, indicated what 1982 constitution, the labor legislation and Özal's policies meant for workers' working conditions but the confederation did not take significant steps in order to challenge to the policies of the government. From 1986 to 1990s, it can be said that the confederation<sup>88</sup> tried to prove its presence in working life. In this regard, the confederation limited its struggle scope to the main problems of working life such as unemployment, wages and labor legislation. It can be asserted that the confederation followed a moderate opposition to the government policies, so, it did not call its members for mass demonstrations and did not celebrate May Day until the year 1989.

In general, the confederation attempted to control floating signifiers such as democracy, social state, liberal unionism and labor peace in order to construct workers as members within the borders of market oriented unionism, in this sense; the nodal point of struggle of the confederation became union competition, so, the confederation attempted to prove its existence against Türk-İş. In this sense, Hak-İş did not become effective on the government and employers as a labor union. Also, it should be noted that the emerging dislocations of neoliberalism did not occupy the agenda of the confederation, so, the wording process of the confederation did not include discourses of anti-capitalism and anti-neoliberalism. If we compare this approach with Türk-İş's sense, we can say that there was no significant difference between Türk-İş and Hak-İş's mentalities for this process.

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<sup>88</sup> Hak-İş's number of members was 172.140 in January 1988 (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996:530).

#### **5.2.4 Türk-İş: Discourse of ‘anarchy and terror’ – affirmation of the official discourse**

Before 1980 military coup, it is possible to figure out that Türk-İş was a part of new hegemonic project aiming at ‘putting an end to class based politics’ just like Hak-İş. In this aim, the confederation did not hesitate to support the government’s policies in order to throttle ‘anarchy’. İbrahim Denizcier, who was the president of Türk-İş, declared this situation in these words: “there are enough reasons forcing us to unify the same front in order to throttle anarchy attempting against our country and our lives” (Türk-İş, 1980a:20 my translation). In this regard, Türk-İş participated in the front the government constituted and the confederation’s policy was based on ‘workplace peace and labor peace’ demanded by the government. As a facilitator of the government policies, Türk-İş’s wording process discovered discourse of ‘economic anarchy’ in an effort to construct its attitude to protect democracy and Atatürk’s principles (ibid.: 9, 21).

During 1980s, as a social agent, what made trade union identity of Türk-İş possible was its opposition to subjects of anarchy. Moreover, Türk-İş attempted to look for ‘enemy’ by asking “who is corrupt enemy?” and its mission was designed to overcome anarchists, that is, ‘traitors’. Moreover, the confederation wanted its affiliated union to postpone strikes defined as ‘out of procedure’ (1980c:1, 33 my translation). It appears that Türk-İş (1980d: 1) already stood for ‘labor peace’, which was eagerly being supported by the governments and employers. However, its emphasis on ‘dialog’ would always constitute a problematic scope from the point of its trade union movement.

In this period, Türk-İş did not focus on January 24 measures at the textual level. Rather, the confederation affirmed the existential assumptions of the government and employers as parallel to the economic developments all over the world but also it underlined on January 25, 1980 that “new and fast prices hikes will occur.

However, we do not want that these price hikes should not force workers, public servants and retirees to beg one's bread" (Türk-İş, 2002a:1 my translation). Actually, Türk-İş's submissive economic perspective was the forerunner of the potential of its trade union movement since, for Türk-İş, there was no (and would be no) 'neoliberalism as question' or 'the free market as question' but there would be only the defence of the limited economic aims within the capitalist system.

It seems to us that this limited perception of the confederation signaled the role of 'corrupted leaders'. As Marx and Engels indicate, the absence of revolutionary activity leads to the corruption of leaders of trade unions since the leaders turns trade unions into 'purely economical institutions' by restricting the political capacity of workers (Hyman, 1971:8-9, 18; Marx, 1878). To reiterate this argument, we can underline these words: On 9 September, 1980 Türk-İş explained away that

"As Türk-İş, we specially want our workers not to engage in actual politics and not to get this vicious circle. We do not mean that worker and workers' institutions can not engage in politics.... If necessary, workers would make policy.... But, in so doing, Türk-İş must protect the unity and solidarity of workers "(Türk-İş, 2002a:12 my translation).

Although the confederation determined the conditions of the political role of workers in a limited manner, it never politically took action against the increasing power of the neoliberal hegemonic project of employers. Indeed, the leaders of Türk-İş turned a deaf ear to voice of workers although the participation rate of workers<sup>89</sup> in strikes was at the highest level in Turkey history in the period of the eight and a half months of 1980 (Koç, 1995a:29).

Under these circumstances, the 1980 military attack was appreciated by Türk-İş, and implicitly by Hak-İş. The activities of DİSK were forbidden by the military junta and this prohibition lasted until the year 1992, so, the most efficient agent of

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<sup>89</sup> 1,3 million workingdays passed on strike (ibid.: 30).

unionism was extinguished in the name of ‘law and order’. No doubt, the destruction of DİSK gave satisfaction to both Türk-İş and Hak-İş since they had ‘opportunity’ to construct workers affiliated to DİSK around their own ideals and value assumptions. As Koç indicates, Türk-İş considered that the role of the military attack was to weaken DİSK and to destroy oppositions of unions (Koç, 1995a:37). Indeed, after the coup, unionism in Turkey witnessed the tensions between Hak-İş and Türk-İş until 1990s. The common denominator of these confederations was to oppose to the class based unionism within the different articulation of discourses, in this sense, they were in harmony with the government and employers, especially TİSK’s approach.

Right after 1980 military coup, Denizcier gladly notified Kenan Evren that Türk-İş supported to the military attack in order to establish ‘unity of the state and indivisibility of nation’. By this way, Denizcier affirmed discourse of law and order in the name of Türk-İş (1980e: 1). Moreover, the general secretary of Türk-İş, M. Sadık Şide, was assigned to the ministry of social security of Ulusu government. In October 1980, Türk-İş gave a place to some parts of Ulusu government in its own text. The textually representation of the government program was significant in many senses since Türk-İş adapted to the language of authority by defining ‘Turkish worker’ in an intertextual relation. Accordingly, the confederation aimed at constructing Turkish worker as ‘hardworking and patriotic’ as parallel to discourse of the military junta. Moreover, the confederation considered the military attack as a necessity to establish democracy, so, worker’s rights would be better in this new democratic order (Türk-İş, 1980f:15, 1981a:1). Moreover, Denizcier clearly puts forward that

“anarchy and terror events sprang up 1970s and lasting until 1980s is not related to the real labor movements.... Ideologies encouraging workers to destroy workplaces and country and not to work are not related to workers’ interests” (Türk-İş, 1981b: 8 my translation).

The president clearly portrayed DİSK as a target by positioning the relation between employers and employees and attempted to define workers' interests in explaining the 'real labor movement'. In this regard, the order of discourse of Türk-İş was shaped under discourse of the 'liberal-democratic unionism'<sup>90</sup> (ibid.:8, 2002a:34). Türk-İş's<sup>91</sup> attitude towards 1980 military coup remained same in the following years but some unions affiliated to Türk-İş such as Petrol-İş, to a certain degree, criticized results of the coup in the second half of 1980 (Koç,1995a). Türk-İş accepted the military junta as a defender of interests of workers and never problematized January 24 measures in terms of working life until 1990s.

On 16 January 1982, the board of Türk-İş requested that 'labor peace should be effectively provided, the essence of collective bargaining and right to strike should be maintained, worker's rights and interests should be protected in building new legal regulations' (Türk-İş, 2002a:31 my translation). In the same report, Türk-İş clearly opposed to the 'transfer of state economic enterprises to the private sector' but the confederation discursively saw this matter from the point of the development of the 'national economy' (ibid.:31-2). The confederation declaratively positioned itself in order not to cause a disturbance in the operation of rules of the new neoliberal order. In this aim, the role of Türk-İş in the establishment of law and order was to solve the socio-economic problems in the understanding of 'national unity and solidarity' by keeping workers away from class struggle (ibid.: 33). What is particularly interesting about this process was the easy reliance of the confederation on the mentality of the military junta, so, it appears that Turkish employers and the military junta succeeded in, at least, gaining the consent of managers of Türk-İş by constructing them against anarchy and terror.

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<sup>90</sup> Hür Demokratik Sendikacılık

<sup>91</sup> On May 1982, in the name of Türk-İş, Denizci regarded supporting 'the state providing security of life and property' as a 'national task' and he was evaluating January 24 measures as a sustainable way for economy in so far as principles of social state was taken into account by the government (2002a:34-7)



Türk-İş was very late to figure out that the legal regulations of working life through by the military junta aimed at ceasing trade unionism in Turkey. Particularly, 1982 constitutional draft destroyed the expectations of Türk-İş on the basis of liberal-democratic unionism. Accordingly, Türk-İş stated that “the sole source of the economic rights and freedoms in the constitutional draft is the reports of Turkish employers in the last decade” (2002a:41 my translation). Türk-İş moderately determined the socio-economic burden of Turkish employers over working life but the confederation could not allow for the operation of the free market as a central issue and discourse of liberal-democratic unionism was articulated to discourse of anarchy and terror. We should underline that Türk-İş could not (or did not want to) perceive the measures in the context of the free market. After this process, the confederation focused upon declines in real wages and the economic achievements of collective bargaining day by day. After the legalization of the hegemonic project of employers by way of 1982 constitution, Türk-İş reacted to losses of workers and unions’ rights by discursively emphasizing on ‘purely economic aims’.

In this process, the confederation often used ‘evaluative statements’ organized around ‘deontic (obligational) modalities. As far as we learn Fairclough, this type of statement refers to some values in order to show what is desirable or undesirable in a social practice (Fairclough, 2003:172-3). At textual level, after 1982 constitution, the confederation would start to indicate what is bad and undesirable by bringing some values to the fore. The value-laden elements such as ‘Kemalism’, ‘Secular Republic’ and ‘Turkish Worker who is assiduous defender of democracy and republic’ were parts of discourse of liberal democratic unionism (Türk-İş, 2002a:60-3, 86-7, 105-118, 218 my translation). The process starting with 1982 constitution was the forerunner of the crisis of Turkish unionism. According to Türk-İş, the aim of the military junta and employers was to construct nonunion workers and democracy without right to establish trade union (2002a:58). Although Türk-İş figured out the mentality of the military junta on working life, the

confederation did not take action in order to recover losses of workers in the following years but criticized the policies of the government.

As we stated before, after 1983 elections, as a result of ‘transition’ to democracy, the governorship of Özal became effective until the early 1990s. The nodal point of Özal’s discourse was the ‘free market economy’. When observing the attitude of Türk-İş against Özal’s policies, we can see that Türk-İş did not organize a strong opposition which would negate discourses of ANAP. It seems to us that, as a representative of a labor movement, the language of Türk-İş was not theoretically qualified in order to respond to that of the government.

The confederation discursively developed a reflective language in accordance with the spirit of the actual politics. To set an example, the confederation started to articulate discourse of ‘liberal unionism’ to discourse of ‘pluralistic and libertarian democracy’ in order to confirm the role of ‘dialog’ in working life, in this aim; Şevket Yılmaz, who was the president of the confederation, evaluated the unsustainability of dialog by using an obligational modality: “we alone cannot live the method of dialog in solving problems. I am clearly stating: employers must remarkably estimate the situation” (2002a:91 my translation). Although the burden of the operation of the free market economy became unsustainable for wage earners and workers, the confederation still fantastically chose to support the possibility of dialog which would provide union rights for workers.

In this process, Türk-İş’s discourse of pluralistic and libertarian democracy was reduced to the pure economic aims as an abstract category of discourse. That is to say, texts of the confederation did not demonstrate the socio-political conditions of pluralistic and libertarian democracy since, as usual, the role of the submissive tradition of the confederation was to control workers by balancing the relation between the relation between the government and workers. It seems to us that this

traditional role appreciated by the military junta and the confederation continued to carry on its tasks after the coup.

### **5.2.5 Türk-İş's Liberal Democratic Unionism**

Türk-İş's perspective of the liberal and democratic unionism became the center to proliferate discourses to construct a common struggle against Özal's policies. As a labor movement, in the second half of 1980, Türk-İş formed demands of 'Bread, Peace and Freedom'<sup>92</sup> in order to construct workers against the policies of the government. According to Yılmaz; bread was representing 'economic security and social justice for everyone', peace was representing a 'fair life standard compatible with human dignity' for everyone', freedom was referring to the means of the 'economic and politic democracy' (2002a:64 my translation). As can be seen, the differential positions of each demand were totalized under a particular demand as Bread, Peace and Freedom in order to construct workers and the people.

Towards the late 1980s, Türk-İş started to make an effort to create a democratic demand by fixing floating signifiers such as democracy, social justice and national interests used by the government. Thereby, especially after 1985, Türk-İş decided to take action against the Özal government since, for the confederation, the restrictive implications of 2821 trade union act and 2822 collective bargaining, strike and lockout act were incompatible with the principles of the liberal and democratic unionism and Türk-İş demanded amendment of these laws from the government (2002a:185-7). However, the government did not realize the required amendment. In the following years, Türk-İş regarded this matter as a 'democracy question', so, Türk-İş's struggle for bread, peace and freedom aimed at recovering the economic and social losses of workers. However, Türk-İş affirmed this struggle as a struggle of 'hardworking and patriotic Turkish workers' (2002a:218). In a sense, Türk-İş and Özal's government was still like-minded about the borders of

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<sup>92</sup> Ekmek, Barış, Özgürlük.

‘being worker’ in Turkey. That is, the subject of the emerging struggle would become the ‘hardworking and patriotic Turkish workers’ and, beyond this, there was no subject for Türk-İş.

On this basis, Türk-İş eventually figured out that the ‘dialog policy’ would lead to new problems (2002a:233). Accordingly, Yılmaz declared that “there is no call for dialog from us anymore” on 21 December, 1985 (2002a:244 my translation). Indeed, this does not mean that Türk-İş would not return to ‘dialog policy’ (with the government) anymore. However, the socio-economic losses of workers were so much that the confederation had to be in a position to take action against the government. Bread, Peace and Freedom struggle occurred in the different regions of Turkey, in 1986, Yılmaz’s meeting lecture signaled the emerging attributes of union movement against Özal government, in this sense, the confederation pointed to the deficiency of individual and collective labor law, the downsizing of social state and the influence of contracted labor on nonunionization (Türk-İş, 1986:5-9).

In this struggle period, it should be noted that Türk-İş used the theoretically weak assumptions, the confederation could not see the changing form of state intervention in a neoliberal order, and so, its rewording process did not include the critique of ‘neo-liberalism’. As Yalman indicates above, January 24 measures, which were introduced by claiming the provision of the access to the imported consumption goods in gaining the consent of people, did signify nothing when it came to the year 1986. Yılmaz underlined this situation by comparing with the pre-1980 Turkey in these words: “we were standing in line but could buy a kilo of meat, but now there are everything from the imported clothes to the imported bananas but there is no money in pocket” (ibid.:8 my translation). It seems to us that the enchantment of the measures was broken by workers towards the late 1980s. The increasing awareness of workers started to force the confederation to take action

against the government<sup>93</sup>, as a result; the confederation looked for new alternatives by facing to conventions of ILO.

Türk-İş attempted to put its relations with ILO into a central point in order to create a pressure over the government in this process. Than ever before, the confederation saw applications of ILO conventions in accordance with act no 2821 and 2822 as a part of union struggle. Accordingly, Türk-İş brought ‘freedom of association’ into question within the borders of ILO conventions and accused Özal government of not meeting the commitment of freedom of association (Türk-İş, 2002a: 271, 284). The confederations did not express workers’ matters in the conferences of ILO and tell ILO conventions to its membership base until 1986. Against the increasing opposition of workers, the confederation saw ILO norms as a weapon against the government after 1986 but it did not work against the policies of the government, so, the confederation achieved no result from this overdue approach (Koç, 1995a:149, 162).

The government discarded the dialog between the confederation and ILO by following its neoliberal policies. Indeed, it can be said that Türk-İş’s moderate attitude against the military junta and ANAP leaded to a representation crisis under the increasing anger of workers. In addition to this, Özal was often using discourse of ‘trade union aghas’ (*sendika ağaları*) in order to canalize workers’ opposition to trade unions (ibid.:152, our translation). Under these circumstances, the confederation had to increase the efficiency of its opposition, as a result; Özal was introduced to workers as ‘opponent to Turkish worker’ (2002a:302, my translation).

It can be said that the aim of the confederation was to construct workers as opponents to Özal after 1986, so, the attribute of struggle was, on a large scale,

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<sup>93</sup> Hak-İş put forward that workers, who participated in İzmir meeting of Türk-İş in 1986, reacted to administrators of Türk-İş and exceeded the limits of the politic attitude of the confederation. Workers in the meeting called for Şevket Yılmaz’s resignation and shouted different slogans as follows; ‘no 1982 constitution’, ‘freedom for DİSK’, ‘call tortures to account’, ‘resign government’, ‘general strike’ (Hak-İş, 1986b: 19).

reduced to anti-Özalism. It appears that this situation pointed to the discursive inadequacy of the confederation since, although the confederation often appealed to discourse of ‘pluralistic and libertarian democracy’ in this struggle (ibid), it did not explain what this discourse meant in a concrete manner, so, antagonism was reduced to an opposition to Özal’s policies. Although the confederation tried to control floating signifiers such as democracy, liberty and social state in order to construct its members, its discourses were confined to the representation of ‘appearance’ or ‘processes without subjects’. For example, Türk-İş’s approach to discourse of orta direk was not based on evaluative propositions. Yılmaz reworded discourse of ortak direk as a ‘pompous definition deceiving masses’ rather than figure out its function (2002a:303). Beyond this, the confederation did not use any category in order to indicate the class position of workers against discourse of orta direk, so, the wording process of the confederation did not compel the limits of language of new capitalism in parallel to its submissive tradition.

When it came to 1987, Türk-İş had to take significant steps in order to respond to the increasing voice of workers. Therefore, the confederation started to face up its past, so, the confederation excluded some administrators such as Sadık Şide and Kaya Özdemir, who supported the military junta, from management in order to review its supporting role to the military attack (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1998:344). The confederation continued to organize mass actions with demands of Bread, Peace and Freedom, but the lasting protest actions beginning with the year 1986 could not become effective on the government<sup>94</sup>. In 1987, the branch platforms were established as divorced from the central headquarter of Türk-İş. The influence of these platforms on unionism would mainly prominent during Spring Actions in 1989 (ibid.). Towards the late 1980s, two important mass actions led by workers would characterize the trade union

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<sup>94</sup> Before 1987 general elections, Türk-İş started a campaign against ANAP by way of slogan; “don’t vote ANAP”. However, this call did not prevent ANAP from coming into power (Koç, 1995a:165). On the other hand, according to Şevket Yılmaz, the confederation’s campaign became successful (2002a:390).

identities of Turkey. These mass demonstrations were Spring Actions in 1989 and Zonguldak Strike in 1991. As we noted later, the socio-politic results of the demonstrations constituted a turning point from the point of Turkish unionism since workers succeeded in effecting not only the limits of Türk-İş and Hak-İş but also that of the government and created the strong labor movements against the results of the military coup and January 24 measures.

### **5.3 The Revitalization of Labor Movements from 1989 to 1991**

#### **5.3.1 1989 Spring Actions: Discourse of Bread, Peace and Freedom**

1989 Spring Actions were the first effective mass action after the period of September 12. Disputes in collective bargaining between the government and Türk-İş<sup>95</sup> were seen as the most important reason of the actions (Çelik, 1996:103, Koç, 1995a:178). By the same token, Yılmaz defined the process as ‘collective bargaining impasse’ and warned the government not to maintain disputes. If the government ignored the warning, workers would use their ‘right for not producing’ (*üretmeme hakkı*) (2002a: 446-7, my translation). The government, which was accustomed to comfort of the submissive unionism, refused Türk-İş’s demands and insisted on maintaining discourse of labor peace with support of Turkish bourgeoisie. However, the decisive politic attitude of workers against the government incarnated Spring Actions, so, 600.000 workers in public sectors realized mass actions in different regions of Turkey (Türk-İş 1989a:3-15, Çelik, 1996, Koç, 1995a).

In the process in which Spring Actions were come into being, the role of Türk-İş constituted a questionable point. Therefore, the *ipso facto* and independent character of the actions was generally emphasized by some authors<sup>96</sup>. As Koç indicates, Türk-İş did not have a central leading role in organizing demonstrations

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<sup>95</sup> 26 unions affiliated to Türk-İş conducted collective bargaining covering 600.000 workers in public sector for the months of March, April and May (Çelik, 1996:103).

<sup>96</sup> See Koç, 1995a: 181, Çelik, 1996:104.

but embrace Spring Actions<sup>97</sup> (1995a:182). Indeed, Türk-İş explained its support to workers' struggle against Özal's policies around a strand of demands (Türk-İş, 1989a: 4). These demands<sup>98</sup> mainly were articulated to discourse of bread, peace and freedom in 1986, so, as an 'articulatory subject', the confederation aimed at controlling the increasing power of workers instead of forcing the limits of struggle.

It seems to us that although the discursive articulation of antagonism included an emphasis on demand of 'democratic order' and demand of a 'decent life' (Türk-İş, 2002a:445), the confederation gave a central place to the effects of declines in real wages and oppressive structure of union laws on workers and unions. Therefore, the confederation could not become a 'popular subject' that would be able to construct masses beyond given demands. In another saying, although there were a lot of isolated demands in the political area of Turkey, if we say in words of Laclau and Mouffe, the confederation could not discursively canalize 'the isolated demands appertaining to different subject positions' such as Kurdish movement, woman question and child labor to the politicizing power of Spring Actions<sup>99</sup>. In this sense, if we evaluate the discursive articulation of the confederation on the basis of results of the actions, it can be said that the economic achievements of the actions subordinated to the increasing power of workers. Accordingly, the confederation agreed with the government on pay rise (140 percent) in May 1989, so, the economic losses of workers in the last five years were compensated but the oppressive union laws of the military junta remained same (Çelik, 1996:103, Koç 1995a:158, also see Türk-İş, 1989b:1-4).

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<sup>97</sup> At this point, it should be noted that ANAP lost Mart 1989 general elections while the actions were continuing and this situation encouraged Türk-İş in this process (Koç, 1995a:180).

<sup>98</sup> On May 1, 1989, the manifest of the confederation included the demands such as "bread for everyone", "peace based on justice" and "freedom with the means of economic and political democracy". On the other hand, the confederation refused discourse of social justice and social dialog of the government and explained that "our struggle was not based on 'class struggle' but national and international peace and democracy" (2002a:451, my translation).

<sup>99</sup> Çelik indicates that the actions included opposition to the legal regulations of the military junta restricting the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers and to social income distribution, so, the actions were also based on political demands beyond the pure economic demands (1996:103, my translation).



It is important to note that Spring Actions brought unionism to a problematic point. Accordingly, as far as we learn from Koç, Dok-Gemi İş and Tek Gıda İş attempted to prevent the Spring Actions while Yol-İş, Haber-İş and Demiryol-İş had a leading role during the actions (Koç,1995a:181-2). After the actions, unions such as Tek Gıda İş, Belediye-İş and Hava-İş were forced to change their management groups and unions started to differentiate their political positions from each other by forming a dichotomy namely leftist and right (ibid.: 195). In this sense, the driving force of the actions succeeded in forming a solidaristic form between labor unions but it is not possible to say that the actions could change the traditional trade union identities of the confederations. However, in Laclau and Mouffe's concepts, the actions partly radicalized the differential positions of some unions incarnating Türk-İş as an 'equivalent chain' by criticizing the confederation's actual political manner. As a result, these unions indicated the need for revising union policy of Türk-İş in the fifteenth general meeting (Koç, 1995a:195-9). As we shall see later, these tensions in the confederation would become apparent during Zonguldak Strike.

Together with the effect of Spring Actions, Hak-İş started to change its discourses as well. Moreover, Hak-İş found the economic achievements of the actions inadequate and saw the attitude of Türk-İş as 'submissiveness' on the basis of nonfulfillment of democratic demands (Hak-İş, 1989:31-32). Besides, the confederation started to move discourse of 'union unity'<sup>100</sup> to a central point since alliance of union forces was considered as a necessary condition of the success of the struggle as a result of the impulse Spring Actions created (ibid.: 32). On the other hand, the influence of the increasing power of labor movements on Hak-İş

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<sup>100</sup> In 1989, Demir-Çelik Strike led to such type of alliance between unions affiliated to Türk-İş and Hak-İş at the level of branch unions (Koç, 1995a:215).

led to change in the attitude of the confederation against May Day and started to signal its desire to celebrate May Day<sup>101</sup>.

Indeed, it can be said that Spring Actions revitalized the inactive unionism in Turkey. The actions provided for a great awareness of Türk-İş and Hak-İş for privatization. In the name of Türk-İş, Yılmaz explained the privatization policy of the government as ‘alienation’ and attempted to discard discourse of privatization by criticizing the government’s language. Accordingly, he pointed to the invalidity of the statement of ‘expansion of ownership to public’ by emphasizing on workers’ economic case (Türk-İş, 1989c: 2). By the same token, Hak-İş developed a wider perspective in order to show what privatization meant for Turkey. Accordingly, the confederation perceived privatization as an indicator of dependency on the mentality of international actors and of imperialism and pointed to the profitability ratios of the state economic enterprises in order to discard discourse of privatization. However, it should be noted that the confederation’s perception signaled the conditions of privatization, that is, there was no certain opposition to privatization as well (Hak-İş, 1989:438-9).

Although the confederations, to a large extent, explained away the negative influence of privatization on trade unions and workers, they did not produce a central counter-discourse in order to discard TİSK’s insistence on flexibility as a part of neoliberalism. For example, Hak-İş pointed to the ‘enslavement of workers’ as an aim of privatization policies (ibid.: 438), on the other hand the confederation maintained its emphasis on ‘dialog’ while negotiating with TİSK (Hak-İş, 1990:25). By the same token, Türk-İş was bent on opposing to ‘privatizations policies’ and ‘contract workers’ but it could not have a leading role during Zonguldak Strike which was mainly against privatization. Indeed, the increasing power of labor

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<sup>101</sup>Necati Çelik explained away that “Hak-İş upholds a free social order through the operation of democracy. In this regard, it is being thought that May Day can be celebrated as a day when freedom, peace and labor oriented ideas are sublimed....” (Hak-İş, 1991: 8, my translation).

movements brought the confederations to a crossroad by forcing the limits of their discursive space in this process starting with Spring Actions.

### **5.3.2 1991 Zonguldak Strike: Zonguldak Miners as an Empty Signifier**

Zonguldak Strike constitutes another significant labor movement in order to understand the historical role of labor unions. The transformation of the strike into a mass action verified the durability of the momentum created by Spring Actions. Specially, as we stated above, some unions affiliated to Türk-İş declared their discontent with the union policy of the confederation. Moreover, there appeared a camp called ‘social democrats’ within the confederation and they reworded workers as ‘working class’ in new style, criticized Türk-İş’s method of dialog for an effective struggle (Karakaş, 1992: 23). As a member of this camp, Genel Maden İş had a leading role during Zonguldak Strike as a result of collective bargaining disputes in the year 1990. Before the strike, Türk-İş supported to a dialog policy in order to reach an agreement with the government but Şemsi Denizer, who was the president of Genel Maden İş, saw this attitude of the confederation as a significant obstacle in front of the struggle (ibid.: 25).

After that, Özal’s insistence on the privatization of the state economic enterprises supported by the government formed the process. The government claimed that Turkish Hardcoal Authority<sup>102</sup> was not making profit, so, privatization was the best way to get rid of some unproductive institutions (ibid.: 26-9). Against this situation, the road to strike was planned as a map of struggle with a great support of 36 unions in order to oppose to Özal in particular and to ANAP in general<sup>103</sup> (ibid.: 35). In this process, DYP, SHP and different civil society organizations supported the struggle of Genel Maden İş. As a result, Türk-İş took decision of ‘not going to work for one day’ in January 3, 1991 (Türk-İş, 2002a:528). This decision created an

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<sup>102</sup> Türkiye Taşkömürü İşletmeleri

<sup>103</sup> Workers’ slogans were as follows; ‘resign government’, ‘we will not let the government sell Zonguldak’, ‘mines are ours’ (Karakaş, 1992: 35 my translation).

important moment where workers were, to a large extent, capable of forming a mass action by constructing civil society<sup>104</sup>. In this sense, as Koç indicates; January 3 general action was important as the “first common action” (Koç, 1995a:226). On January 4, Genel Maden İş decided to organize a long march, which was planned to last six days, from Zonguldak to Ankara, but Türk-İş did not lean to this march. Moreover, as a president of Türk-İş, Şevket Yılmaz wanted Denizer to postpone such a march by pointing to the necessity of dialog with the government (Karakaş, 1992:68).

After that, there were two main obstacles in front of miners’ struggle; the first one was the government and the second one was headquarter of Türk-İş. On the other hand, DYP withdrew their support before the march (ibid.:70). Genel Maden İş and workers started a long march<sup>105</sup> in spite of the negative pressure of the government, of Özal and of Türk-İş headquarter. During the march, it can be said that Türk-İş managers could not develop a decisive support to workers.

As usual, Şevket Yılmaz continued to speak of solidarity among workers without taking action and saw one of the most important marches of labor movements in Turkey as a ‘praiseworthy action’ by using an implicit language (2002a:541). This mentality of Türk-İş could not attribute a significant qualification to the march. Moreover, the confederation intervened in the process in order to create a dialog atmosphere in the fourth day of the march. As a result of these pressures, Denizer was forced to persuade workers to cease the march and so the agreement was provided on February 4, 1991 with workers’ support to Denizer (Karakaş, 1992:110-5, 131-3).

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<sup>104</sup> Some organizations explaining their support to the grev were as follows; ICFTU, Hak-İş, Union of bars of Turkey, Union of chambers of Turkish architects and engineers, Turkish Medical Association, Turkish Pharmacists Association, Turkish Veterinary Surgeons Association, Turkish Dentists Association, Mülkiyeliler Assocaiaion.... Political Parties explaining their support were as follows; SHP, DYP and HEP (Public Labor Party) (Koç, 1995a:225, my translation).

<sup>105</sup> Almost 70.000 workers marched by gaining support of craftmen and peasants (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1998:552–3)

Zonguldak Strike constituted a controversial point among labor unions in terms of its results. However, it can be said that the politicization of workers, starting with Spring Actions, showed the government the existence of working class subject. The neoliberal policies of the governments were interrupted by workers. Also, the traditional mentality of Türk-İş became unfunctional as a result of the increasing power and demands of workers. On the other hand, it seems to us that, as a characteristic example of a common labor movement, the discursive articulation of the strike was similar with Spring Actions in many senses since, the strike was limited to the pure economic achievements and the march was not well-organized action in spite of the increasing politic awareness of workers. That is to say, the willingness of workers to take action was reduced to antagonism among Özal, ANAP and workers, so, the march became short-lived and was interrupted by the confederation and later by the leadership of Denizler.

However, we should concede that there were two important results of the action. First of all, the people and civil society organizations, who witnessed the march and the action, identified themselves with Zonguldak Miners. As an empty signifier, Zonguldak Miners became the nodal point of anti-privatization and anti-Özalism. Secondly, the formation of the strike and of the march had a characteristic aspect in order to understand the capacity of a ‘differential position’ of Genel Maden İş. During the march, as a ‘difference’, the labor union weakened the equivalence logic of Türk-İş by constructing civil society around Zonguldak miners. As Laclau indicates, ‘equivalences cannot domesticate differences’ since there is a mutual relation between them in the formation of social identity (Laclau, 2005:79), in this sense, it can be said that the central discursive identity of Türk-İş could not succeed in domesticating Genel Maden İş at the outset of the action. As a first common action, Zonguldak march indicated that the discursive identity of a difference such as Genel Maden İş could constitute a different equivalent chain in order to construct workers and masses in a solidaristic camp (although it could not radicalize the antagonistic space).

## **5.4 1994 Economic Crises and April 5 measures**

### **5.4.1 Emerging solidarity against the crisis**

Between the years 1985 and 1991, the increasing power of unionism actuated by workers provided the significant economic achievements for workers. Spring Actions and Zonguldak Strikre took Turkish unionism to a peak point. It should be noted that the operation of the neoliberal policies of Özal and ANAP government was, to a great extent, interrupted by unions and workers. However, the stagnancy of the confederations prevented the struggle from exceeding the pure economic aims. In this regard, the focal point of Türk-İş and Hak-İş discursively became ‘social state’, ‘anti-privatization’, ‘democratic rights’ and ‘social justice’, but the confederations could not succeed in articulating these discursive elements to the struggle. Therefore, the representation of antagonisms was reduced by the labor confederations to the economic aims although there was a strong impulse in order to produce a significant empty signifier covering ‘different demands’.

On the other hand, this process determined a different route for the confederations in spite of its inadequacies. In the course of 1990s, the confederations started to incarnate new equivalent chains in order to prevent the burden of the neoliberal policies over society. In spite of the existence of the constitutive role of antagonism forming the identities of the confederations, the discursive articulation of antagonism between the confederations could discard competition in certain points.

With the early 1990s, Türk-İş and Hak-İş started to emphasize on ‘democracy’ and ‘democratic rights’ in their individual texts. On the other hand, in 1992, the activities of DİSK and its affiliated unions were legally allowed and DİSK started to resume its activities in the scope of unionism. In this process, their individual texts reflected their different approaches to the socio-political matters of Turkey. The labor confederations formed the different combinations of genres, styles and

discourses in order to explain away their approaches. This point is important for us to understand their individual discursive strategies before examining equivalent chains formed by the labor confederations.

In this sense, after starting its activities, DİSK abandoned its emphasis on class struggle and socialist attitude in the early 1980s, so, it sought for a new discursive domain in order to form its union identity. No doubt, the burden of 12 September process on the confederation destroyed its power on a large scale. In 1991, Baştürk explained that ‘democracy struggle’ was so important to overcome ‘September 12 fascism’ taking form of ‘civil-parliamentary’. In this sense, he drew attention to ‘left question’ in Turkey, so, the confederation looked for the ‘unity of leftist politics’ in the early 1990s (DİSK, 1991:2-7). The union identity of the confederation would lose its ideological perspective and become the same as Türk-İş and Hak-İş in the following years. However, it should be noted that the absence (or inability) of a leftist ground in politics became effective on the changing trade union identity of DİSK in certain points.

In the early 1990s, Hak-İş also distanced itself from the emphasis on Islamic elements<sup>106</sup> and attempted to develop its discursive articulation by paying attention to new dislocations of capitalism. The confederation determined ‘democracy question’ as a main matter in order to solve problems of working life. Indeed, the confederation enhanced its discursive capacity since it started to speak of the actual matters of Turkey. In this sense, the confederation textually represented Kurdish Movement by rewording it as ‘southeastern question’ but it did not explain its approach to the matter in a clear manner (Hak-İş, 1989:354-355).

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<sup>106</sup> The confederation replaced its symbol with one composed of a gear, an olive branch, a crescent and a red ground. According to the confederation, a gear refers to labor and bread; an olive branch refers to peace and life; a crescent refers to national unity, independency and freedom; a red ground refers to a conscious struggle’s blood (Hak-İş, 1989:39).

On the other hand, the confederation textually represented ‘environmental question’ in a narrow perspective (ibid.: 563). Also, it should be noted that although the confederataion textually articulated some important heading to their democracy discourse, it did not gave these matters a central place to represent them in the union struggle. Although the confederation accepted the crisis of unionism in Turkey, the confederation’s constitutive mentality remained the same in order to solve the difficulties of unionism. In this regard, the confederation saw the class based unionism as a threat to working life and emphasized on “workers’ loyalty to national and spiritual values” in Turkey by pointing to the importance of ‘unity and solidarity’, so, the confederation did not radically abandon its main principles determined in the early 1980s (Hak-İş, 1992:36). It appears that the confederation could not get rid of ghosts of the class based unionism although a decade passed. From here, the confederaion’s perception of ideological unionism shaped the role of the confederation in 1990s, so, if we say broadly, the confederation’s discursive strategies did not constitute an effective resistance against discourse of labor peace of the government in favor of workers.

The revitalization of labor movements and unionism became effective on the politic atmosphere of the day as well. DYP and SHP coalition government came into power after the early general elections in 1991. On 9 January 1992, Türk-İş responded the program of Demirel government positively (Koç, 1995a:237). It should be noted that Türk-İş did not learn anything from its mistakes in the past since the approach of the confederation to the government did not include a detailed solution to the crisis of unionism. The confederation textually stated the necessity of the ratification of ILO norms and wanted the government to take measures against dismissals and sub-contracting practices. Also, the confederation underlined the permanence of ‘labor peace’ by way of ‘dialog’ between unions and the government (2002a:573-4).



In spite of their discursive differential positions, Turkish unionism started to witness the efforts of the confederations to form a common ‘struggle’ in 1990s. It should be noted that Spring Actions and Zonguldak Strike became very effective over their shifting mentalities. In this sense, Türk-İş, DİSK, and Hak-İş celebrated May Day together and accepted May Day as ‘solidarity and struggle day’ in 1992. Yılmaz explained away that their common struggle was based on the principle of Bread, Peace and Freedom and, in this sense; they suspended competition against each other in order to empower labor movement (Türk-İş, 2002a:575, Hak-İş, 1992: 215-8). Indeed, the confederations used intertextuality by pointing to the international norms of working life in their joint declaration. In this sense, they determined ‘democracy ‘as a common ground in order to advocate workers’ rights (Türk-İş 2002a:584-6, Hak-İş, 1992:215) but they could not textually expose the role of social actors and social practices in a clear manner but define their demands at the categorical level, so, their joint declaration did not have a characteristic feature compared with the early 1980s.

The confederations resumed their common actions to be effective on the government. Meanwhile, DİSK elected Kemal Nebioğlu as president and Süleyman Çelebi as general secretary. Türk-İş elected Bayram Meral as president and Şemsi Denizci as general secretary in 1992 (Koç, 1995b:66-7). Actually, it should be noted that these leaders created new styles and genres for unionism. Although the traditional mentality of Türk-İş still became dominant, Meral considered their struggle as a struggle of ‘working class’ and employers as ‘capitalists’, so, it should be noted that the wording process of the president was different from that of Denizci and Yılmaz since they did not mention the subject as ‘working class’ during their presidentship.

The common struggle of public workers became effective on the government’s ratification of ILO conventions<sup>107</sup> and the unionization of public workers increased

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<sup>107</sup> Conventions no. 59, 87, 135, 142, 144 and 151.

in 1993 (ibid.: 71-2). On 1 May, 1993, Türk-İş defined May Day as ‘international unity, struggle and solidarity day’ against ‘IMF, WB and international capital’ and defined the subject of the process as ‘working class’ leading ‘workers, public workers, retirees and students’ (Türk-İş, 2002b:25-6). It is important to note that Türk-İş textually positioned the social actors and social practices in order to point to obstacles in front of unionism. In this sense, Türk-İş considered ‘unity of unions’ necessary in order to fight results of September 12, privatization and international capital and the confederation organized the struggle through discourse of democratization (ibid.:27-37).

#### **5.4.2 Employees’ Common Voice Democracy Platform: discourse of democratization**

Under these circumstances, the confederations decided to take action the policies of the coalition government since dismissals and sub contracting practices significantly increased and the restrictive aspects of the labor legislation remained unchanged. Thereby, Türk-İş, Hak-İş, DİSK and non-governmental organizations formed Employees’ Common Voice Democracy Platform<sup>108</sup> on 11 September 1993. Basically, the confederations accepted the development of democracy as a main tool in order to solve all problems of employees in Turkey (Çimen, 1996:274). In the early 1990s, the confederations figured out that, without union solidarity, their struggle would not be effective on the government’s ongoing policies against unionism under the increasing dominance of international capital. In this sense, the role of the platform would become important before and after 1994 crisis.

Democracy Platform was an instance of the first typical solidarity between not only the confederations but also the confederations and civil society in search of a discursive totality from the the logic of equivalence. In this context, the constitutive mentality of the platform underlined that “Democracy platform is not a model of

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<sup>108</sup> Çalışanların Ortak Sesi Demokrasi Platformu.

organization. Accordingly, it does not aim at eroding and weakening any organization within the platform” (DİSK, 1996:58, my translation) Thereby, the existence of the platform was based on the organizational ‘differences’ in order to respond to the antagonistic limit negating the structural conditions of their union identities.

As we stated before, an antagonistic limit functions in order to break up the objectivity of any identity, so, the contingent character of any identity is shaped by antagonism (Laclau, 1990:17) and this antagonistic limit functions as a ‘constitutive outside’ forming the discursiveness of any social identity (Torfing, 1999:124). In this logic, we can see that the confederations suspended their differential positions in order to overcome the crisis of unionism in the 1990s since there was a constitutive outside exceeding the discursiveness of their union identities against each other. If we say in words of Laclau, as a constitutive outside, the limit makes them all equivalent to each other (Laclau, 2007b:53). Therefore, the confederations excluded employers and governments from the platform in the constitution of their common discursive identity, so, they determined the limits of the emerging dialog at a distance in order to prevent the policies of the government and employers.

In the forming process of the platform, the leading mentality of the platform emphasized on the priority of the problems of employees in working life, but there was an effort to develop a language covering the actual politic matters. Koç indicates that ‘Kurdish Question’ constituted an important topic for organizations within the platform. In this sense, the constitutive mentality of the platform did not want to determine Kurdish Question as a main topic by pointing to the priority of struggle against ‘privatization, sub contracted practices and dismissal’. In this direction, the platform did not give any place to Kurdish Question within its discursive scope. As a result, as an important ‘difference’ of this equivalence, Human Rights Association<sup>109</sup> (IHD) led to a new equivalent chain, namely; ‘Peace and Democracy Platform’ in order to make Kurdish Question as a main

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<sup>109</sup> İnsan Hakları Derneği

discursive entity. However, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK prevented IHD's this attempt (Koç, 1997:50-51).

From here, the platform used discourse of 'democratization' in order to struggle against privatization, dismissals, non-unionization, sub-contract practices. Discourse of democratization was seen as a main apparatus to advocate the fundamental rights and freedoms of employees. However, it seems to us that although the platform emphasized on discourse of democratization, the platform textually abstained from representing Kurdish Question in its manifest and preferred to use the following statement; "we believe in the peaceful and civil solutions through people freely living their identities in order to solve problems" (Demokrasi Platformu cited by Koç: 1997:52, my translation). In this regard, it can be said that the platform reduced its articulatory capacity to a categorical assumption formed as "Employees' Common Voice" by confining discourse of democratization to an abstraction. It seems to us that the existence of the traditional mentality of Türk-İş<sup>110</sup> and Hak-İş had a great influence on the platform, so, as a solidaristic camp, the platform could not exist as a transformative power for organizations in struggle in spite of the unfavorable conditions of the day.

With the appearance of 1994 crisis, the platform incarnated four democratic demands; first of all; the 'democratization of working life' covering job security, 2821-2822 union laws and union rights. Secondly; the 'political democracy' was

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<sup>110</sup>Türk-İş incarnated its demands in workers councils constituted in different regions of Turkey during the year 1993. However, if we specify texts of the councils, the common denominator of these councils was opposition to the possible results of privatization policies. Beyond this, the headquarter of Türk-İş could not improve a discursive strategy articulating different demands, namely; 'democratic' and 'isolated'. The confederation accepted the existence of the different ethnic groups and political views in their organizations but it did not speak of their isolated demands in a clear manner. Moreover, the confederation used the statement of 'class companionship' in order to justify its representative capacity against 'terror' (Türk-İş, 2002b: 71, 85). Actually, it should be noted that, as a representative of a labor organization, Türk-İş did not use the wording of Kurdish Question in texts and the confederation represented the matter by reducing it to a 'terror matter'. Türk-İş's perception of the main matters of Turkey was not different from the official discourse of the day in many ways. However, we should concede that the confederation could give voice to the aims of anti-terror law and the role of ILO conventions, especially convention no 158(ibid.: 72, 81).

demanded to change 1982 constitution, September 12 law, anti-terror laws and to develop the attitude against the coup. Thirdly, the ‘economic democracy’ was demanded against April 5 measures. Lastly, anti-privatization was demanded (Karababa, 2000:217). The struggle of the platform in the direction of these demands became effective on the government. The platform demonstrated some important actions. The platform held a mass action against ‘privatization and workplace closings’ in Zonguldak on April 9, 1994 and a protest meeting against ‘unemployment and expensiveness’ on April 24, 1994 (Çimen, 1996:275).

Also, the platform decided to celebrate May Day together in 1994. The platform basically opposed to the stabilization program of the government in May Day manifest and said that “workers, public servants, retirees, craftsmen and peasants were under pressure of unemployment, inflation and terror” (2002b:137). In fact, the manifest textually did not signal tensions within the socio-political life of Turkey but the platform blamed the coalition government for implementing the directives of IMF and WB. In this sense, ‘the class companionship covering differences’ was determined as subject of the struggle against the policies of the coalition government (ibid.: 138-9).

The platform decided to use their ‘power from production’ in order to respond to the current mentalities of the government and other parties in parliament on 23 January 1994 (Karababa, 2000:219). In the following days, the platform organized a work cessation action on 20 July 1994 (Çimen, 1996:275). According to headquarter of Türk-İş, the aim of the action was to democratize Turkey, to demand collective bargaining with the right to strike for public servants and to oppose to the privatization policy and dismissals (2002b:170 my translation).

It appears that although, as an equivalent chain, the platform incarnated a common struggle by gathering different organization, the efficiency of the struggle of the platform was not so different from the period before January 24 measures from the

point of the mentality of the confederations. As leading organizations, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK were far from being a popular subject for society since they mainly focused upon the way in which the priority of the pure economic aims over other matters was prominent. Therefore, it was not possible to mention the significant socio-economic achievements of the platform against the operation of April 5 measures. In this sense, the platform's protests meeting against the government held on 26 November 1994 and proponents of the platform followed a road to Mausoleum (Anıtkabir) without slogan but workers and masses (about 100.000<sup>111</sup>) wanted to march towards National Assembly (TBMM) but Meral prevented this tendency of workers<sup>112</sup> (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996:275).

Towards the year 1995, the inefficient character of the platform started to constitute a breaking point among organizations forming the platform<sup>113</sup>. Hak-İş's changing attitude against privatization led to disturbance within the platform, so, it was abolished in 1995 (Çimen, 1996:275, Koç, 2003:240). Actually, the discursive strategy of the platform indicated that the platform was not a result of a common mentality since, as leading organizations, Türk-İş and Hak-İş did not represent more than occupational interests. Also, if we say in words of Laclau (2005:109), the discursive articulation of the platform did not involve a 'relation of contiguity' between democratic demands and isolated demands, so, the trade union identities of Türk-İş and Hak-İş produced a 'repeated essence' within the platform, so, the platform remained an 'abstract unity'.

Discourse of 'democratization' constituted the nodal point of the platform and the platform controlled the floating signifiers such as 'social state', 'national unity' and

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<sup>111</sup> see Karababa, 2000: 206

<sup>112</sup> Workers protested Meral's attitude by the slogans of 'satılık başkan' and 'hükümet uşağı' in front of the building of Türk-İş (Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi, 1996:275).

<sup>113</sup> Karababa indicates that TMMOB criticized the platform in many senses and blamed it for being 'bureaucratic and inactive'. Also, it was said that 'organizations forming platform prefer independent actions' (2000:209).

‘fundamental rights and freedoms’ in order to form their discursive strategy to be effective on masses. However, as seen, the discursive strategy of the platform was not capable of creating a successful empty signifier in order to construct masses around an ideal. It seems to us that the important reason of this inability was to function as if an apparatus of defined tasks. On the other hand, there was no interactive relation between organizations within the platform, so, it is not possible to speak of the transformative effect of the platform on the labor confederations after the breakup of the platform, so, the discursive strategies of the confederations remained unchanged.

In the disappearing process of the platform, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK positioned themselves against April 5 measures. This new process signaled that the labor confederations constituted their individual texts in different manners, so, it enables us to see why the platform could not form a significant discursive articulation. Türk-İş resumed its emphasis on discourse of democratization within the borders of the matters peculiar to working life. The confederation textually proposed a long termed structural program including the revision of the public institutions<sup>114</sup> against April 5 measures. On May Day 1995, the confederation stressed ‘class companionship’ beyond all interests and repeated its usual demands within the similar discursive scope. It should be noted that the propositional assumptions of the confederation such as “the state should intervene in the market” and “the labour legislation should be accorded with ILO norms” (2002b:249-250) were not enough to respond to the propositional assumptions of TİSK since the discursive strategy of Türk-İş did not include existential assumptions such as capitalism, globalization and imperialism as source of the matter while TİSK were stressing the unavoidability of globalization.

In this process, the discursive strategy of Hak-İş was parallel with that of Türk-İş in many ways. Yusuf Engin, who was the general organization secretary of the

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<sup>114</sup> See Türk-İş, 2002b:230.

confederation, explained the source of 1994 economic crisis as ‘informal economy’ (Hak-İş, 1995:478). By the same token, Necati Çelik explained that April 5 Measures led to the downsizing of ‘social state’ and warned the government not to resume its policies (ibid.: 317-8). However, the confederation could not perceive April 5 measures as one of the dynamics of the free market logic of capitalism. On the other hand, it should be underlined that Hak-İş’s approach to privatization<sup>115</sup> changed and the president Çelik explained that the confederation did not oppose to privatization in principle (ibid.: 25). Actually, it is not incorrect to say that Hak-İş could not follow a consistent union policy against privatizations and other important matters such as unemployment and sub-contract practices, so, its discursive capacity was incapable of opposing to the operation of April 5 measures.

The approach of DİSK to 1994 crisis and April 5 measures was textually and discursively different from that of Türk-İş and Hak-İş since the confederation attempted to concretize discourse of democratization in this process, so, its discursive totality signaled a textual heterogeneity as well. Although DİSK abandoned its emphasis on socialist ideals and class struggle, the confederation attempted to make discourse of democratization concrete by pointing to democratic solution to Kurdish Question.

It seems to us that what differentiates DİSK from other confederations was its approach to Kurdish Question since the confederation saw the matter as an important component of 1994 crisis in terms of cost of war and accepted Kurdish Question as a problem of ‘whether Kurdish identity would be recognized or not’ (DİSK,1994:121, my translation). Thereby, DİSK did not rely on the official discourse of the day and the confederation used a different wording process by indicating Kurdish Question under discourse of democratization.

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<sup>115</sup> As we stated before, this situation accelerated the breakup of the platform since the platform opposed to the privatization in a certain manner. As Koç underlines; as a sharer, Hak-İş wanted to benefit from the privatization of Meat and Fish Authority (Et Balık Kurumu) and then the platform warned the confederation. As a result, Hak-İş explained its departure from the platform and Baydur invited the confederation to be a member of TİSK (Koç, 1995c:177).



In this process, it is clear that the confederation put discourse of democratization into orbit of existential assumptions in order to explain the conditions of a democratic union struggle. In this sense, the confederation stated that “our main demand is that Kurdish Question should be understood in its dimensions and solved in a democratic way” (ibid.: 121, my translation). Therefore, DİSK considered the democratization of working life in particular and of Turkey in general by way of the democratic solution of Kurdish Question. However, it was a historical reality that the platform could not embrace DİSK’s approach to the matter within the scope of discourse of democratization.

On the other hand, it should be noted that Türk-İş and Hak-İş *textually* did not counteract TİSK’s emphasis on the rigidity of the labor legislation in the context of technology and globalization. However, DİSK, to a certain extent, noticed the influence of technology on the relation between employer and worker in the context of globalization. For the confederation, as a result of the post-fordist mode of production, ‘sub-contract practices’ were used to impoverish the power of working class ( ibid.:11). Thereby, the confederation perceived globalization process as an ‘ideological attack to establish the hegemony of bourgeoisie’ and explained that the aim of globalization process was to ‘control working class and depoliticize workers’ by re-forming ‘consumption’ and ‘knowledge’ (ibid.: 23). Although the confederation figured out discourse of globalization in its own practices, as a labor organization, it could not articulate results of globalization to the labor struggle.

Also, it should be noted that the confederation supported to international labor movement against the increasing hegemony of international capital, so, the confederation accepted the principle of ‘workers of all countries, unite’ to demonstrate an ‘anti-capitalist struggle’ (ibid.: 158). It seems to us that the confederation attempted to form its discourse in the context of socialist or leftist arguments but its effort was solely insufficient since, first of all; the losses of DİSK, because of September 12, could not be compensated. Secondly; there was no any

other confederation perceiving the crisis of unionism on the basis of ‘anti-capitalism and anti-globalization’ in Turkey, so, DİSK’s textually resistance to the existential assumptions of TİSK and the government (such as globalism is an irresistible reality) could not mirror the language of the struggle. Therefore, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK would continue to determine their positions within discussions of the actual politics in Turkey rather than discuss the crisis of unionism and a new type of solidarity in the context of globalization and new capitalism.

In the line of their differential positions, as a leading confederation, Türk-İş continued to criticize the approach of the political parties to the labor unions and organized a protest meeting<sup>116</sup> around discourse of democratization covering working life matters such as anti-privatization and opposition to restrictive union laws ( and so on) on August 5, 1995 (Türk-İş, 2002b:285). The confederation revealed the two fold approach of the coalition government; Demirel and Çetin<sup>117</sup> blamed Türk-İş’s call for the meeting for ‘being lawless’<sup>118</sup> (ibid.: 295-6, my translation). This situation indicates that DYP and ‘social democrat’ SHP considered the fundamental rights and freedoms of unions and workers as a propaganda boom in the elections.

In the following days, Türk-İş decided to take some concrete steps in order to influence the actual mentality of the government. Accordingly, the confederation declared that ‘a general strike will be held on 20 September, 1995’ and that ‘CHP will be urged to withdraw support to the coalition government’ (Türk-İş, 2002b:297). It can be said that the struggle language of the confederation was reduced to the criticism of the actual mentality of SHP and CHP. Especially, the

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<sup>116</sup> ‘Respect For Labor’ meeting (Emeğe Saygı Mitingi).

<sup>117</sup> Türk-İş stressed that Demirel, who was president of DYP, and Hikmet Çetin, who was the general secretary of SHP, supported January 3 1991 action while they were rival to ANAP as representatives of the opposition parties (Türk-İş, 2002b:295).

<sup>118</sup> However, the confederation explained away that their action was legal according to ILO convention no 87 included in the internal legislation of Turkey on basis of article 90 of the constitution (Türk-İş, 2002b:296).

confederation attributed some values such as being ‘anti-imperialist, independent and democratic’ to the constitutive mentality of CHP (ibid.: 300) and formed its opposition to the policies of the government on this basis, so, as a representative of workers; the confederation could not get rid of the abstract categories of Turkish politics in supporting status qua.

Türk-İş criticized Çiller’s reconcillatory attitude with IMF and employers. Hence, the confederation discursively created an opposition to IMF and became effective on the withdrawal of CHP from the government (ibid.: 323). In this logic, before 24 December 1995 early general election, the confederation declared that “DYP and CHP should not be voted” because of the implementation of April 5 measures (ibid.: 370). Indeed, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK did not focus upon Economic and Social Council the government formed, in this sense; the confederations did not speak of 1994 crisis and April 5 measures within such a council. However, the confederations did not produce the politic conditions of a common solidarity within Democracy Platform.

## **5.5 February 28 crisis**

### **5.5.1 Türk-İş’ and DİSK’s Discourse of Reaction**

Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK partly became effective on 1995 general election and, as a leading party; Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi-RP*) formed a coalition government with DYP. In this new process, Necati Çelik, who was the president of Hak-İş, became Labor and Social Security Minister of the Welfare Party. In a sense, this situation signaled the increasing political relationship between Hak-İş and RP since Hak-İş kindly welcomed Çelik’s ministry and appreciated his activities (Hak-İş, 1996b:7).

In 1996, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK continued their common struggle and manifests, in this regard; they celebrated May Day together and demanded union rights and freedoms. It should be noted that the discursive formation of their common manifests was duplicated compared with that of their past ten years. In this period, the confederations considered the erosion of ‘social state’ as a threat in front of the prosperity of society (Hak-İş, 1996a:14-23). However, it is clear that the confederations could not discuss the future of social state in the context of the globalizing capitalism, as a result; the confederations discursively developed a reaction to results of the neoliberal policies such as privatization and dismissals.

In this process, on 5 January 1997, Türk-İş organized a demonstration, namely; Protect Turkey! Struggle for Democratization!<sup>119</sup>, and, about 300.000 people participated in this meeting in Ankara (Türk-İş, 2002b: 480, Koç, 1998:157). Before the meeting, Türk-İş asked for Hak-İş to support the meeting, but Hak-İş stated that the dominant mentality of Türk-İş in the common struggles posed obstacle in front of democracy struggle and claimed that Türk-İş’s manifest ignored “pluralism, democratic contribution and constitution” (Hak-İş 1997a: 5-6). Accordingly, Hak-İş did not support to January 5 demonstration since the confederation did not accept the language of struggle.

Prominently, the discursive articulation of the demonstration signaled more than opposition to the economic policies of Erbakan government and the confederation emphasized on that “Turkey is a democratic and secular social law state based on Atatürk principles and human rights” (Türk-İş, 2002b:457, my translation), in this sense, Türk-İş<sup>120</sup> invited people to participate in a democratic struggle against

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<sup>119</sup> Türkiye’ye Sahip Çık! Demokratikleşme İçin Mücadele Et!

<sup>120</sup> It should be noted that Meral’s meeting lecture criticized the myth of Adil Düzen (Just Order) of Erbakan. He declared that the Just Order could not end up corruptions (yolsuzluk), relations between the state and gangs/mafia and privatizations. In this sense, he presented propositional assumptions in the name of Türk-İş; some important demands were as follows; “September 12 constitution and anti-democratic legislation should be changed”, “the problems of east and southeast should be firstly considered and the conditions of a peacefull order for everyone, regardless of ethnicity, should be

attacks to Atatürk principles, democracy and secularism (ibid.: 456). Since its foundation, the confederation has often underlined its loyalty to the democratic and secular order and Atatürk principles. In this process, the confederation started to focus upon discourse of secularism by fixing elements such as social state, anti-privatization and job security in order to construct the struggle. Also, it can be said that the confederation subordinated the matters peculiar to working life to discourse of secularism.

Indeed, the passive opposition of the confederations to the erosion of social state was interrupted by discourse of ‘reaction’ since Türk-İş and DİSK focused upon the political implications of RP instead of opposing to the negative influence of the neoliberal policies on working life. This period led to the emergence of the dual camps such as Islamic/Secular, Militarist/Anti-Militarist and Us/Them in the political space of Turkey. As we stated before, RP’s economic and politic perspective was, in principle, different from the previous governments with relation to West oriented policies. Against the political Islam of RP, Türk-İş and DİSK had a key role as a part of the secular public opinion. However, Hak-İş occupied a different place compared with Türk-İş and DİSK since, according to Hak-İş; there was no ‘reaction’ and ‘sharia threat’ but ‘an artificial agenda’ preventing the confederations from criticizing the social, economic and politic policies of RP (Hak-İş, 1997a: 4, 9).

On the contrary, Türk-İş and DİSK perceived ‘reaction’ and ‘sharia’ as a threat and participated in the secular wind of the political camp. In this period, Türk-İş and DİSK’s discursive articulation was shaped through the political identity of RP, so, the confederations moved their opposition to the political identity of RP to a central point. In this sense, this process raised the conditions in which Türk-İş, DİSK,

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established”, “ obstacles in front of public servants’ right to collective bargaining with strike should be abolished” (Türk-İş, 1997a: 11–2).

TESK, TOBB and TİSK formed a new equivalent chain called ‘Civil Initiative’<sup>121</sup>, by suspending their differences.

At this point, it is important to note that, as labor organizations, Türk-İş and DİSK did not hesitate to cooperate with employers’ organizations. Thereby, the ‘corrupted leaders’ of the confederations articulated employers’ discourses to their discourses at the cost of ignoring the conditions forming the crisis of unionism in Turkey.

#### **5.5.1.1 as a New Equivalence: Civil Initiative**

At the outset, Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK sowed the seeds of a new equivalent chain in order to show their discontent with the political Islam of RP in the first months of 1997. Unlike the equivalence logic of Democracy Platform, these confederations<sup>122</sup> excluded Hak-İş from new equivalence to form their common political identity. As a matter of fact, Hak-İş declared that the confederation was not invited to Civil Initiative (Hak-İş, 1997c:6). On 5 February 1997, these confederations pointed to the main problems such as ‘unemployment’, ‘terror’ and ‘attacks to the democratic and secular order’ and denounced Erbakan government for not preventing these problems in their joint manifest (Türk-İş, 2002b:468). During February 28 process, Hak-İş criticized Civil Initiative for supporting and applauding ‘attempted coup’ in the following way; “ the coup lobby harping on democracy used statements and treated as if waiting for coup” and added that “...our confederation opposes to any attempt suspending democracy and will oppose...” (Hak-İş, 1997b:5-6).

From here, it can be said that Hak-İş did not stand on discourse of reaction or of secularism but the confederation tried to fix democracy in order to criticize the role of Civil Initiative. Accordingly, the confederation articulated democracy to its

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<sup>121</sup> Sivil İnisiyatif- Beşli Girişim

<sup>122</sup> Also, Koç indicates that non-governmental organizations such as KESK, Turkish Medical Association, Turkish Pharmacists Association, Turkish Dentists Association did not support Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK (Koç, 1998:158-9).

discursive strategy. However, the confederation could not radically produce an alternative discourse and did not attempt to form a different camp. During process, democracy continued to function as floating signifier, so to speak, on the one hand Hak-İş and RP controlled democracy in order to form their hegemonic discourses, on the other hand Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK articulated democracy to their discourse of secularism. Also, it should be noted that the process of organic crisis leads to the proliferation of floating signifiers for Laclau and Mouffe (1985:136), in this regard, we can see that these confederations proliferated the floating signifiers such as Atatürk principles, social law state, modernization and republic in the February 28 crisis.

In this regard, Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK positioned themselves against ‘reaction threat’ as ‘real democrats’ and affirmed the decisions of National Security Council in the following words; “National Security Council’s decisions was for protecting the basic attributes of our republic” (Türk-İş, 1997b: 7). As ‘real democrats’, these confederations explained that they aimed at unmasking ones “engaging in deception” (*takiyye yapmak*) for “the unity and indivisibility of our country, our peoples’ happiness and democracy” (ibid.).

As we stated before, at this process, as a representative of the secular wind of society, Turkish employers, especially TİSK and TÜSİAD, constructed their discourses as opposed to ‘reaction threat’ in front of Turkish state, so, TİSK and TOBB participated in the equivalent chain Türk-İş, DİSK and TESK formed. Thus, the construction of Civil Initiative (Beşli Girişim) was completed. On 21 May 1997, they formed a joint manifest to share their discontent with public opinion and stated that “The modern and secular republic Atatürk formed is under threat....Reaction is a big threat to democracy in Turkey.... Our state and regime is under a big threat” (Türk-İş, 2002b:492). The discursive articulation of Civil Initiative was based on the nationalist and secular elements, so, it can be stated that discourse of anti-reaction constituted the nodal point of their common action. In addition, these

confederations appealed to ‘Atatürk’s nationalism and principles’ to advocate ‘the unity and integrity of Turkish nation’ against reaction threat (ibid.: 495). It is important to note that the common mentality of these confederations articulated ‘economic failure’ to discourse of reaction. Thus, the increasing inflation and unemployment and the discontinuation of the investments were related to the instability of the government.

In a sense, as Savran indicates, Turkish bourgeoisie opposed to Erbakan government to balance the financial capital against Islamic Capital (Savran, 2004). In this sense, as labor organizations, Türk-İş and DİSK supported to Turkish bourgeoisie’s struggle as well. On the other hand, their joint manifest had tensions in itself when it was textually evaluated since the destruction of ‘social state’ was directly linked to the government policies (Türk-İş, 2002b:492). Actually, TİSK had already advocated the practices attacking to the existence of social state by supporting January 24 measures and April 5 measures since 1980 but Türk-İş and DİSK ironically accepted Erbakan government as the only responsible for the process. Hence, as carriers of the underlying financial concerns of Turkish bourgeoisies, Türk-İş and DİSK could not engage in the increasing burden of neoliberalism over society, so, these labor confederations could not fix discursivity of February 28 around alternative discourses and could not produce a new myth in order to construct the people.

After the February 28 process, Hak-İş never perceived the political Islam of RP as a threat to the political regime of Turkey. As a discursive exteriority, discourse of reaction made Türk-İş, DİSK, TESK, TİSK and TOBB equivalent in the rejection of the political identity of RP. However, Hak-İş put such a rejection in the context of democracy and evaluated discourse of reaction as ‘an imaginary threat’ (Hak-İş, 1999:129). Indeed, the confederation<sup>123</sup> problematized the relation among civil

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<sup>123</sup> “Turkey constantly discusses secularism and does not need to debate social and law state. This situation has created a political area in which the actual agenda is determined by power-holders and interests”(Hak-İş, 1999: 130, my translation).



society, militarism and parliamentary regime in terms of February 28. In this sense, it is clear to see that, for the confederation, the February 28 interrupted the democratization process of Turkey and reproduced the conditions of the ‘official ideology’ (ibid.: 130). It can be said that Hak-İş attempted to concretize discourse of democratization by criticizing the status quo mentality of Türk-İş and DİSK. However, the confederation did not canalize its mass power in order to intensify its anti-coup discourse.

On the other hand, it should be noted that some affiliated unions did not support the headquarters of Türk-İş and DİSK, so, it is not possible to say that Türk-İş and DİSK received a full support from their membership base<sup>124</sup>. Indeed, the cooperation of Türk-İş and DİSK with Turkish employers created tensions among their affiliated unions and these tensions signaled a new demand for a new cooperation among labor organizations against the increasing burden of the socio-economic policies of the governments. Under these circumstances, after the overthrow of Erbakan government, Civil Initiative became follower of decisions of National Security Council and resumed its emphasis on reaction threat. On 25 March 1995, the initiative explained its support to ‘action program against reaction’ (Türk-İş, 2002b:540).

The mission of the initiative was, to a great extent, completed when it came the early months of 1998. Türk-İş, DİSK, TESK, TİSK and TOBB overcame their common enemy, so to speak; the political identity of RP was degraded. That is to say, the western and secular bourgeoisie of Turkey abolished obstacles in front of its financial power. After the dissolution of the initiative, Türk-İş resumed its economic based struggle as it was before but the tendency of labor unions appeared to develop a common struggle against the government policies, in this sense; their efforts characterized the case of unionism in the late 1990s.

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<sup>124</sup> As Koç indicates, Türkiye Sağlık İşçileri Sendikası (Turkish Health Workers Unions), Dok Gemi-İş Sendikası and Limter İş Sendikası asked for Türk-İş and DİSK to depart from Civil Initiative (Beşli Girişim) (Koç, 1998: 171–2).

## **5.6 2001 Economic Crisis**

### **5.6.1 The Labor Platform: Discourse of anti-IMF**

In a sense, this tendency can be taken up as a reaction to the negligent attitude of Türk-İş and DİSK towards labor during the February 28. In the late 1990s, labor organizations started to take significant steps in order to construct a common struggle and the increasing effect of IMF and WB on the government would shape the attributes of this common struggle in the rising economic crisis of 1999.

Accordingly, on 29 December 1998, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK declared a joint manifest to attract attention to their demands against results of economic crisis. Their perception of economic crisis did not textually signal the causal relations of the crisis but it brought their propositional assumptions into the actual agenda of Turkey. In this sense, they mainly focused upon IMF policies, dismissals a result of the crisis, job security, privatizations, democratization of union laws and corruptions and said that “IMF policies should be relinquished”. The confederations textually started to form an opposition to IMF policies, in this aim; they decided to take action together (Türk-İş, 2002b:600-1).

In this regard, the willingness of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK to act together was welcomed by KESK, Türkiye Kamu-Sen and Memur-Sen, so, combination between the confederations gained a new impulse for fighting against the government policies. On 27 January 1999, these confederations formed a new joint manifest and repeated their previous demands on working life. After April 1999 elections, DSP-ANAP-MHP coalition government put ‘social security reform law draft’ on its agenda. Strictly speaking, this law draft stimulated the willingness of these confederations to take action and expanded their struggle scope. Thus, on 14 July 1999, Türk-İş, Hak-İş, DİSK, KESK, Türkiye Kamu-Sen, Memur-Sen and civil

society organizations<sup>125</sup> elucidated that social security reform would destroy ‘social state and social security institutions’, lead to ‘retirement in grave’ (*mezarda emeklilik*), increase ‘informal employment’ and reinforce ‘private insurance’ in directives of IMF (Türk-İş, 2002b:624, my translation).

As we stated before, the determinant role of IMF and WB within the government policies has become prominent since 1998. In this sense, social security<sup>126</sup> reform was a part of the neoliberal policies in order to regulate social policy in Turkey, so, the government proceeded the ‘financialization of everything’ to another stage in which the deregulation and flexibilization of labor market became the main aim of the government and capital. In a sense, this determined the borders of organized labor since, as Yücasan-Özdemir and Özdemir (2008:52) indicate, social policy is a complementary part of the neoliberal economic policies in determining workers’ lives outside workplace.

Under these circumstances, the government, employers and labor organizations negotiated on social security reform but it did not give a significant result in favor of wage earners. Particularly, it is important to note that TİSK rejected Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK’s demand on job security (Hak-İş, 1999:230). Thereupon, labor organizations and trade associations gathered their demands under the umbrella of Labor Platform (Emek Platformu) to demonstrate a labor movement to be effective on the government on 14 July 1999.

As a labor movement, the platform opened a wide representation scope in which all differential identities constituted an ‘equivalence logic’ in order to fight against a common enemy, so, the platform functioned an ‘empty signifier’ representing demands of workers, public servants, retirees, unemployed people, peasants,

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<sup>125</sup> Tüm İşçi Emeklileri Derneği, Tüm Bağ-Kur Emeklileri Derneği, TMMOB, Türk Diş Hekimleri Birliği, Türk Eczacılar Birliği, Türk Tabipleri Birliği, Türk Veteriner Hekimleri Birliği, TÜRMOB (Türk-İş, 2002b).

<sup>126</sup> For details of social security reform, see Türk-İş, 2002b: 626-8

craftsmen. Hence, ‘subject’ of this new common struggle was represented as ‘employees’ (*çalışanlar*)<sup>127</sup>, so, it is possible to mention that the intended combination was more heterogenous as compared with Democracy Platform but it is not correct to speak of the heterogeneity of their demands.

Since its foundation, the platform has started to organize mass demonstrations; the most important demonstration was held on 24 July 1999. 400.000 people turned out in order to show their ‘power from production’ in Ankara (Koç, 2001:24-26; Türk-İş, 2002b:634). The discursive identity of the Platform was constituted through the rejection of the government, employers and international capital. Accordingly, discourse of anti-IMF<sup>128</sup> constituted the nodal point of the demonstration. Anti-IMF discourse was articulated to discourse of anti-*sömürgecilik*. At this point, as Fairclough indicates, the use of terms such as ‘capital’, ‘company’ and ‘transnational capital’ varies from one discourse to another (Fairclough, 2003:127). That is to say, although the platform stated that “IMF which is speaker of transnational capital wants to colonize Turkey” (Türk-İş, 2002b:635), the platform appealed to discourse of ‘*sömürgecilik*’ in order to emphasize on national independency and unity. At this point, it is crucial to note that Türk-İş’s emphasis on ‘*sömürgecilik*’ was not related to a socialist oriented discourse but it was formed in a scope where the national parameters of the secular republic were reproduced.

Therefore, it should be noted that the platform concretized the actors of the process by texturing IMF and WB as social agents, but, on the other hand, it controlled the flowing of expressions within its discursive strategy, so, the platform restricted its struggle to anti-IMF discourse. After July 24 meeting, the platform resumed its opposition to social security reform in the context of anti-IMF actions. On 13

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<sup>127</sup> Koç underscores this point; the core of the labor platform was composed of wage earners as different from Democracy Platform, so, it encouraged the constitution of local organizations (Koç, 2003:240, my translation).

<sup>128</sup> In the name of the platform, Bayram Meral stated ; “IMF wants privatization in order to present state institutions and organizations to transnational capital”, “international arbitration aiming at colonizing Turkey should be refused”, “We are in Kızılay for our national independency and our people’ peace and happiness” and “ for IMF, yes or no ?” (Türk-İş, 2002b:629-34, my translation).

August 1999, the platform realized a general action but it could not become efficient and the government legalized social security reform on 23-24 August 1999 (Koç, 2001:44-5). It seems that the platform could not embrace the impulse of July 24 meeting and centralize the struggle. The enactment of social security reform decreased the efficiency of the platform but could not dissolve the platform.

It can be said that the discursive articulation of the platform was not sufficient to overcome the government policies since the traditional perspective of the labor confederations could not transcend the vicious circle of the actual agenda in order to construct masses in Turkey. This situation indicates that although the confederations constituted new forms of solidarity, they perceived unionism within the borders of the socio-politic practices of the governments instead of constructing solidarities beyond the actual soci-economic matters.

The Labour Platform remained inactive until the year 2000 but the economic crisis period starting with November 1999 brought about the revitalization of the platform. Before discussing the attributes of this revitalization, Türk-İş resumed anti-IMF discourse in order to warn Ecevit government. Also, the confederation was insistent on the application of ILO norms within the labor legislation of Turkey. As a leading organization, Türk-İş convoked the labor platform in order to discuss the socio-economic matters of working life on February 2000. From here, the platform decided to use its ‘power from production’ on June 2000 but it did not organize the protest meetings (Koç, 2001: 47, 51).

In the late months of 2000, the platform started to emphasize on anti-IMF discourse in order to call attention to results of the rising economic crisis. On 28 February 2001, the platform announced that “the crisis from which our country are suffering today is the bankrupt of IMF policies” (Türk-İş, 2002c:105, my translation) Hence, the platform read the crisis process in the context of IMF policies, on the other hand, the platform underlined ‘dialog’ with the government in overcoming the

crisis. Although the platform defined the dynamics of the crisis in the continuity of capitalist policies from January 24 measures to February 2001 crisis, the platform restricted its discursive strategy to anti-IMF discourse, so, it became as an institution producing alternative solutions to the crisis rather than an agency of a labor movement.

In this sense, the platform proposed an alternative program<sup>129</sup> against IMF policies in order to overcome the crisis on March 2001. The program was a sum of the ongoing socio-economic demands since 1980. Strictly speaking, the program was organized around economic policies, agriculture policies and democratic, union and social rights. It should be noted that the propositional assumptions of the platform was *economically* comprehensive but there was no room for new demands and isolated demands. Therefore, the traditional mentality of the confederations became dominant over the discursive strategies of the platform in the textual organization of the program<sup>130</sup>. As in Democracy Platform, the Labor Platform did say little about subject positions of workers and wage earners although there were a lot of problems about immigrant, women and child workers.

From here, if we say in words of Laclau and Mouffe, the Labor Platform could not succeed in being a “popular subject” as well since it was based on a limited antagonism. Although the platform constituted an equivalent chain shaped by representatives of the different demands, it could not articulate ‘popular demands’ to its ‘democratic demands’. In a sense, the platform restricted its representation scope by way of anti-IMF discourse and just tended to speak of the economic crisis. Therefore, the confederation did not have a tendency to radicalize the political space by using an effective language.

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<sup>129</sup> For the program, see Türk-İş, 2002c:120–131.

<sup>130</sup> One thing to note, the platform distinctly stated that “Higher Education Council (YÖK) should be abolished” and pointed out that “the statement of ‘this product is produced by unionized workers’ should be labeled to products” in order to encourage unionization. These demands did not have a central place in the program but they signaled that the platform could represent more than occupational interests (Türk-İş, 2002c:126, 130).

Within the 2001 crisis area, DSP-ANAP-MHP coalition government effectively integrated the neoliberal policies and Turkish bourgeoisie reinforced its demand on flexibility and deregulation. Thereby, the platform had to struggle against the mentality of the government and of Turkish bourgeoisie, especially TİSK. In the direction of directives of IMF and WB, the government brought up ‘sugar law and tobacco law’ in the agenda and decided to perform privatization policies in order to get rid of ‘unproductive institutions’. On the other hand, as a complementary part of this process, the Turkish employers criticized the rigidity of the labor legislation in the period of crises of economy although they performed the flexible modes of production.

Under these circumstances, the platform could not organize the efficient activities; it decided to take action on 14 April 2001 but, as seen, it did not become effective on the government (Türk-İş, 2002c:143). Moreover, the labor confederations repeated their dialog oriented attitude, and accordingly, TİSK, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK came together to evaluate the crisis. They said that “four confederations have urgently formed a coordination council to develop the common solutions to the crisis in cooperation” (ibid.: 149 my translation). It seems to us that the confederations mainly wanted to prevent the closure of workplaces in such cooperation. However, the inactivity of the platform also indicated that this cooperation subordinated the struggle to the confederations’ dialog efforts.

As a matter of fact, the platform declared its willingness to fight against results of the economic crisis but it did not succeed in articulate dislocations of the crisis in the historical originality of the day. To make this concrete, the platform could not effectively represent the emerging invansion plan of USA about Iraq and the increasing effect of policies against labor in order to construct people in a social movement. On 22 October 2001, the platform took a decision to support the protest march of DİSK and KESK called “Global Equality, Justice and Peace March

against Unemployment, Poverty, Corruption and War”<sup>131</sup> (ibid.: 164). In this process, the labor confederations incarnating the platform resumed their individual activities, targeted to organize peasants and craftsmen and developed local organizations (ibid.: 168-9). However, it can be said that the platform did not centralize the protest meeting around a common mentality, so, it could not produce a revolutionary power to change the identities of labor organizations within the platform. That is to say, as far as we understand their discursive strategies, the confederations used the platform as a repressive apparatus over the government when required, so, they did not construct it as a solidaristic form representing a common mentality against the socio-politic system of Turkey.

In addition to this, the attitude of the platform against IMF and WB in the context of national independency and unity blurred the antagonistic relation between employers and workers/wage earners. The discursive articulation of the platform did not include an emphasis on TİSK’s discourse of flexibility and the platform did not stand against Turkish employer’s efforts. Also, although the platform took action and strike decisions, it did not realize an effective action and strike. It appears that the unwieldy and bureaucratic structure of the labor confederations and the dominance of leadership were two important obstacles in front of the platform. Therefore, although Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK focused upon just working life matters, they could not challenge to TİSK’s demands on the labor law since they did not establish a strong antagonistic relation among workers and TİSK in search of dialog.

As we stated before, TİSK used discourse of flexibility in order to get rid of the negative results of 2001 crisis. The material conditions of this discourse were, in fact, established by the post 1994 crisis area but TİSK wanted to legalize this type of deregulation of the labor market by stressing on the role of competition in the global world, so, for them, a contemporary labor law based on flexibility would

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<sup>131</sup> İşsizliğe, Yoksulluğa, Yolsuzluğa ve Savaşa Karşı Küresel Eşitlik, Adalet ve Barış Yürüyüşü.



lead to a more productive Turkey. In the agenda of the labor platform, the labor confederations did not directly aim at opposing to discourse of flexibility but the platform discursively opposed to privatizations and sub-contract practices a result of directives of international actors, and, it constantly demanded job security. However, if we specify Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK's approach to flexibility at textual level; the confederations, to a great extent, problematized the relation between unionization and flexibility.

In this regard, in the name of Türk-İş, Köstekli underlined that the applications such as 'total quality management', 'work excellence' and 'self managed team' are a part of flexible mode of production in Turkey and unions in workplaces are seen as an obstacle in front of competition in the globalizing world (Köstekli Ş., 2000:896). Indeed, as we stated before, as a form of flexibilization, these management techniques are the components of knowledge based economy and designed to overcome the interventionist role of unions.

In the context of globalization, Hak-İş defines flexibility as an effect of the technological revolution and knowledge circulation on production in the global world. The confederation does not strictly oppose to flexibilization as long as job security is guaranteed, so, the flexibility applications in Turkey should be regulated in accordance with the protective orders of the labor legislation (Hak-İş, 2000:907-8). When compared with Türk-İş and Hak-İş's approach to flexibility, DİSK gives a more detailed analysis of flexibility in relation to the capitalist logic, so to speak; the confederation states (DİSK, 2000: 912, my translation) that

“The main aim of flexibility models from the point of capital is to destroy the historical achievements of working class, break up collective rights and to individualize working relations by implementing labor management techniques”

From here, it can be said that DİSK elucidates the influence of flexibility over working life and indicates that the new labor management techniques such as ‘sub-contract practices’, ‘quality circle’, ‘human resources management’ and ‘just in time production’ give a basis to flexibility, in this way; companies using these techniques are making more profit (ibid.: 911 my translation). From here, it can be said that Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK have a different textual positions in analyzing the changing mode of production in Turkey. However, if we specify it from the point of the labor platform, DİSK’s significant analysis of flexibility was not turn into a decisive discourse in the common struggle.

Above all, the confederations could not produce an effective political manner in order to fight against discourses of Turkish bourgeoisie since they always controlled the floating signifiers such as ‘social dialog’ and ‘labor peace’ in order to restrict the potential of the struggle in the crisis periods of economy. In a sense, this process was completed by the enactment of labor law no 4857 in favor of the neoliberal policies in the year 2003 since TİSK’s discourse of flexibility gained a legal base, so to speak; the government and Turkish bourgeoisie have taken a great step towards the individualization of working life and the unionism mentality of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK has become bankrupt. In another saying, this situations signals that the individualization of labor law has legally completed construction of ‘new worker’ by the year 2003.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In the post 1980 Turkey, it is clear that trade unionism has been subjected to the global effect of the international division of labor and the increasing power of the neoliberal policies. As a result of this, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK have inevitably started to suffer from the crisis of union representation since the second half of 1980s. Each confederation found a valid reason to explain away the crisis of unionism but none developed an effective discursive articulation covering dislocations of contemporary capitalism beyond the representation of narrow membership interests since it appears that the labor confederations did not see the crisis of unionism as a crisis of representation. However, the labor confederation confined their crisis perception to the legal rights of their members and moved within the limited scope of language pointing to the main matters of working life. Therefore, the re-production of the crisis moment of unionism, to a great extent, corresponds to whether or not they could look for alternative hegemonic discourses in order to press discursive practices of the governments and of TİSK

A hegemonic relation is directly related to the category of representation. This representation can be sum of different demands peculiar to subject positions, so, any class or group can construct masses or the people by identifying itself with subject positions in order to form a hegemonic articulation (Torfing, 1999). Therefore, hegemony refers to a ‘form of politics’ which an articulatory subject would temporarily construct, so, hegemony cannot be reduced to a stable political category (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:139, Fairclough, 1992). From this perspective, as articulatory subjects of working life, the hegemonic potential of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK can be put into question since each crisis period such as 1994 crisis and February 28 dislocated structure of unionism.

Accordingly, we can mention that there are four important hegemonic positions in which the confederations leaded and participated in the historical order. First of all, DİSK was discursively the strongest articulatory subject in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Discourse of the confederation was based on the articulation of anti-facist struggle to anti-capitalist struggle. Therefore, the confederation established a ‘relation of contiguity’ between wage negotiations and anti-racist campaign, so, the confederation could construct a labor movement as a ‘concrete social agent’ rather than an ‘abstract unity’. However, the impetus of DİSK for the struggle was organized around its ideological worldview; so, the confederation could become a ‘mythical subject’ by fixing discourse of socialist order as ‘social imaginary’<sup>132</sup>. In this sense, the confederation problematized subject positions of workers through its perception of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism. On the other hand, DİSK could form its organizational texts as a part of its social practice against the textual practice of TİSK and of the government.

Secondly, the increasing disagreements of the public workers with Özal government incarnated 1989 Spring Actions. Indeed, the restrictive labor rights and soci-economic losses of workers in public sector started to open a way to the crisis of unionism in Turkey. There was no a class based unionism or a prominent leftist tendency among unions but just ‘liberal democratic unionism’ with which Türk-İş and Hak-İş agreed. At this point, it should be noted that the textual organization of liberal democratic unionism did not point to the concrete events and circumstances of working life in Turkey. Therefore, their perception of liberal democratic unionism was organized as a ‘metaphorical representation’ of unionism. The labor confederations did not demonstrate roles of participants and events in a union struggle. Therefore, their texts could not be a part of their metaphorical discursive practices in that process.

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<sup>132</sup> It can be seen as the ‘conceptualization of the ideological forms of discourse’ re-arranging dislocated structure (Torfing, 1999:115).

Under these circumstances, if we return to the evaluation of results of the actions, public workers forced Türk-İş to embrace the hegemonic moment of the actions which workers shaped. Türk-İş took on the representation of the actions by forming discourse of bread, peace and freedom. This discourse was constructed as the nodal point of the actions starting with 1986, but the confederation could not position subjects and circumstances in this discourse, so, these main demands remained the categorical entities or generalizations. Therefore, the discursive articulation of the confederation could not take the politicized role of workers to a step further in order to develop a solidaristic camp between different demands. However, the actions became hegemonic over the government if we evaluate it from the point of wage negotiations since workers succeeded in compensating their economic losses since 1980.

Thirdly, 1991 Zonguldak Strike was realized by Zonguldak Miners under the leadership of Genel-Maden İş, especially of Şemsi Denizer. The acceleration of 1989 Spring Actions, to a great extent, dissolved the passive nature of unionism. In this sense, Zonguldak Strike was organized around the increasing opposition of workers to Özal and ANAP policies. In this action, January 3 general strike was the moment where Zonguldak Strikes started to take the form of an ‘empty signifier’, so, all camps opposing to Özal such as trade associations and civil society organizations identified themselves with Zonguldak Miners. However, the discursive articulation of the action could not go beyond anti-privatization and anti-Özalism. By the same token, Türk-İş’s submissive attitude led to the decreasing capacity of the hegemonic potential of Zonguldak Strike. The action prevented privatization policy of the government and provided the economic achievement for Zonguldak Miners. It seems to us that Türk-İş and affiliated unions missed an important opportunity to construct their members and masses by confining their discourses to the borders of anti-Özalism in both Spring Actions and Zonguldak Strike.

Laslty, we can come to the February 28 process as a discussible point, as we stated before, Türk-İş, DİSK, TESK, TİSK and TOBB took decision to act together against the political implications of RP. It can be said, if we specify this process from the point of the confederations, Türk-İş and DİSK attempted to construct a political camp against ‘reaction threat’ stemming from the political identity of RP. However, it seems to us that the labor confederations became a part of the actual politic camping on the basis of the division of the secular and the non-secular rather than form a hegemonic camp. Thereby, Türk-İş and DİSK participated in the secular wind of public opinion with the full support of Turkish employers and they became a part of a hegemonic project reinforced by actors of the neoliberal policies. It seems to us that the support of Türk-İş and DİSK to February 28 process was historically problematic since this support did not occupy any point in overcoming the crisis of unionism.

In Turkey, the common experiences of the labor confederations signal that the hegemonic articulation of the labor confederation is insufficient in order to form a solidaristic camp against neoliberalism. One of the main reasons of the crisis of unionism stems from the increasing heterogeneity of working class since neoliberalism dissolved working class (Çelik, 2006:16). Therefore, the division between core workforce and peripheral workforce deepens the crisis of the traditional union representation (DİSK, 2000). From here, according to our analysis, the hegemonic relation among employers, governments and the labor confederations has leaded to construction of ‘new worker’ as a prototype in the historical period from 1980 to 2003. At this point, it should be noted that the labor confederations remained indifference to this hegemonic relation, so, they did not produce central discourses concerning flexible mode of work and workforce. Therefore, the category of new worker stemming from the heterogeneity of the labor market has been legally defined in the flexibility oriented labor law 4857 in 2003 in Turkey. In a sense, as a prototype, the emergence of new worker represents dislocations of new capitalism, indicating privatization of the domains such as

education, health and social security, flexible working life without job security, sub contract practices, feminization of workforce and unemployment (and so on). Therefore, construction of ‘new worker’ encourages the labor organizations and unions to figure out new struggle areas as well.

At this point, it is possible to discuss how a new union representation can construct the potentiality of new workers in Turkey. According to us, construction of a new struggle is directly related to the category of hegemony. As we stated before, it is not possible to attribute a center or essence to the category of trade union. This is to accept that “trade union is not a pre-given category” (Gramsci: 1988), so, its existence conditions can only be determined by the responsibility of its struggle for representing workers and masses in the necessity of the historical conditions. In this sense, for today, as Çelik indicates (2007:108), an international labor movement should be constructed against the dominance of the global capitalism in order to recover rights of workers and trade unions and it can be asserted that the labor confederations must be a part of formation of such an international labor movement since dislocations of capitalism lead to the heterogeneity of labor market and of society.

From here, at this point, there are two important areas which need to be represented by the labor confederations in Turkey. This study accepts the first area as ‘social heterogeneity’ and the second one as the heterogeneity of labor market. To put it clearly, social heterogeneity is the area in which there is an ‘exteriority to the space of representation’ such as ‘underdogs’ (Laclau: 2005:140, 149-150). This scope is getting important for today since dislocations of capitalism lead to new antagonistic points. As Offe indicates (1985.: 158) in the following way:

“An important future of division along which these conflicts could crystallize is that between male, native, highly qualified employees of middle age, on the one hand, and poorly qualified employees burdened with

greater labour market risks (women, immigrants, youth, the elderly and handicapped)”

Therefore, community and civil society becomes important for the labor organizations, that is, as Hyman indicates, the labor confederations is forced to a position in which their representative capacities have to expand ‘solidarity’ into ‘community’. To make it clear, a new form of union representation is related to the construction of ‘civil society’ (Hyman, 1994)

This takes us to the most important alternative, which is to define trade unions as ‘populist campaigning organizations’. The important thing is to grasp the relation between union movements and social movements since the unstable character of union membership, the shared conflict of the process and the common denominator of interests encourage trade unions to broaden their definitions on social issues. As Hyman puts forward, an extensive agenda can be improved on the basis of ‘alliances with social movements whose concern overlap with theirs’ (ibid.:131).

In this sense, the expansion of trade union politics into society is needed in order to be able to construct them as consumers, producers, women and workers (and so on) in a new solidaristic form. On the other hand, it can be said that the characteristic feature of trade union struggle should be its pertinacious effort to construct solidarity since it is crucial to note here that “solidarity is never a natural or fixed quality, always a goal which is at best elusive and ephemeral” (Hyman, 1991: 6).

In the context of these alternatives, if we think of the Democracy Platform and the Labor Platform, it can be said that Türk-İş, DİSK and Hak-İş aimed at constructing a solidaristic form between labor unions and civil society. However, these platforms did not play a transformative role for organizations since the common mentality of these platforms was to reduce demands of workers and wage earners to an economic core, so, their democratization demands could not be based on social



issues in front of Turkey. In this regard, they could not improve their organizations to construct their struggle and their organizational texts as a social movement revolved around the main social issues Kurdish question, woman question, unemployed, underdogs.

If we evaluate failure of Turkish unionism, we can say that the labor confederations could not construct civil society in a social movement although they witnessed the big mass demonstrations such as Spring Actions and Zonguldak Strike. At this point, we can look over examples of successful unionism in the world. The main indicator of these examples is that the crisis of unionism can be overcome since the crisis itself is related to the crisis of representation. As Özügurlu indicates, South Africa, Philippines, Latin America and Brasil overcame the crisis by developing ‘new social movement unionism’. These countries also were subjected to the increasing neoliberal policies of the global capitalism in a similar way with Turkey. Against the international capitalism, the labor unions changed the mode of representation and organization by destroying the bureaucratic central type of trade unionism and by organizing non-members in the local regions of cities in connection with representation of their all problems from health to education (2008:357-9).

Indeed, a new social unionism is connected with the new alternative social movements (feminist, anti-militarist, human rights, ecological, etc.). In a sense, this type of unionism is divorced from the definitions of economic determinism since the operation of capitalism exceeds the contradiction between capital and labor, so, workers should take on representation of representation of other repressed demands. Waterman explains this in the following way;

“Insofar as workers are increasingly recognized as –or asserting themselves– in favour of rights, peace, a clean environment and gender-awareness, they can both broaden the appeal of unionism and increase the number of their allies” (1999:250).

From here, according to Waterman, a new social unionism should represent a popular and democratic struggle for masses but this representation must have an international dimension since popular and democratic demands are against the global dominance of technology, militarism, bureaucracy (and so on) shaped a globalized and informatized capitalism (ibid.: 253-5). As Özüğurlu indicates, the labor confederations overcoming the crisis of trade unionism in Latin America or South Africa have revised their struggle in the logic of a new social unionism.

In this context, if we speak of the labor confederations and unions in Turkey, the labor confederations should eliminate the representation of only ‘specific constituencies’, excluding non-member and marginalized groups in the words of Hyman. Therefore, if we sum up, a hegemonic project embracing the factors such as ‘gender, ethnicity and employment status’ cannot be restricted to representation based on ‘job-related issues’. Therefore, unions should improve their ‘internal process of communication, discussion and debate’ in order to construct individual and collective interests (Hyman 1994:121).

In parallel to the spirit of a new social unionism, the fragmented structure of the labour market referring to female labour, part-time workers, atypical forms of employment, non-industrial and non-manual occupations can be seen as a potential for a renewal of trade unionism, so, new demands and new methods of organization and new forms of internal democracy can be constructed in favor of labour (Hyman, 1991:5). As we saw in our analysis, Turkey has the conditions for such a renewal of trade unionism since the heterogeneity of labor market has been accelerated by the economic crisis moments. Flexibility and sub-contract practices have started to shape the fragmented structure of working life since specially 1994 crisis (Yücesan-Özdemir and Özdemir, 2008:99, 112).

With the enactment of labor act no 4857; flexibility and sub-contract practices have been *legally* regulated in 2003. Turkish employers with the full support of the

government have individualized working life by defining the categories such as part-time work, home based work and atypical forms of work in the new labor law. Thus, Turkish employers have reached an adventegous position to determine the conditions of working life since as Hyman indicates; ‘as a form of managerial technique’, ‘time-flexibility’ is realized in favor of employer. The existence of workers is reduced to the needs of employer who can determine ‘unsocial hours and days’ as working time ( Hyman 2004 :24).

No doubt, this type of fragmentation has changed the character of organized labour in a certain workplace since all types of flexible work have changed the definition of workplace and leaded to the emergence of the disorganized labor. In another saying, the increasing importance of female labour in employment and atypical work contracts have started to influence, or organize, the social and political relations established by interrelations between people in work, home and workplace. If we specify what trade unions can do against the fragmentation of labor market, first of all, as Hyman indicates, workers’ choice can be flexible working time despite its negative outcomes. In order to construct a collective action, unions’ attempt is to refer to create alternatives ways which are attractive to all interests groups (Hyman, 2004:24).

On the other hand, the bureaucratic structure of unions and the role of union leaders should be revised from the point of such a democratic perspective. As we see in the approach of Marx, ‘union bureaucracy and leaders’ attitudes can mar a developing collective action and create alienation between leaders and workers. In order to prevent this situation, the category of democracy and of leader should also restructured in parallel to the new developments in the labour market (Hyman, 2004). Accordingly, the leadership history of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK can be put into question from this perspective since, as we saw in our analysis, the headquarters of Türk-İş attempted to prevent the increasing voice of workers in the Spring Actions and the Zonguldak Strike in the name of social agreement.

Therefore, union bureaucracy and corruption of leaders are one of the main problems of unionism in Turkey and, as we saw in our analysis, there are a lot of the corrupted leaders in Turkish unionism history.

In order to overcome this problem, ‘participative democracy’ can be seen an important alternative. If we turn to Hyman’s emphasis at this point, it is important to problematize whether or not the socio-political agenda of unions is adequate to represent differences in order to widen their representation scope. The expansion of ‘participative union democracy’ among all workers requires a new form of democracy, he focuses on European models at this point, and accordingly, alternative organization model can be developed by favor of ‘telecommunication and microelectronics’ (Hyman, 1994:122-4).

In sum, today, the traditional union representation of Türk-İş, Hak-İş and DİSK is in an intolerable crisis. Against this crisis, the labor confederations must establish a strong relation between solidarity and politics. Besides these, the labor confederations should improve their hegemonic discourses in order to construct ‘social imagineries’ in connection with new social movements. As we stated above, trade unions and labor confederations have all the conditions to generate alternative forms of union representation. Therefore, they should consider the heterogeneity of labor market as a potential and evaluate ‘social heterogeneity’ in connection with democratic and popular demands. In this sense, as Özügurlu indicates, a new union representation can be constructed within the borders of new social movement unionism by recovering the material conditions of workers and laborers, by organizing non-members, by incorporating workers into the active democracy and peace struggle, by developing the authority of workers in unions and society (2008:360, my translation). It seems to us that new workers represent a potential for a new struggle rather than the dominance of the global capitalism over the labor market. Therefore, the labor confederations should represent their democratic and

popular demands in a new social movement unionism by considering the actual alternatives of Turkey in an international solidarity.

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