

Labor Union Leadership¹

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Abstract

Unions were initially created as economic supports for workers. Along the course of time, they developed with difficulties and acquired social and invariably political dimensions. Unions' emergence in Turkey was late, while their improvement was painful. All over the world, as unions grew bigger, union activities got more professional along with acquirement of new technical possibilities, on one hand; and considerable losses in the early enthusiasm also occurred, on the other hand. Business owners sometimes associated unions with radical opposing political currents in their inappropriate fear. But the mentioned currents did try to penetrate into those establishments, where economical considerations with a view to welfare were supposed to have been the overweighing issues. Even though at times, some union leaders themselves essentially neglected the workers while solely focusing on an increase of their own might, through false unions; their wrongdoing should not be loaded on to honest union activities. In this article, also a novel by H. Robbins which is very related to the topic, is made much use of.

Key words: Labor union; Worker; Union leader; Economic interest; Labor; Power

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*I've perspired my love,
I've perspired!
Soaked with frothy, wavy sweat;
Here I am:
A laborer!
Copper-faced,
Steel-hearted!
And with a brass-wrist,
As for my body;
It consists of
Iron scrapes, stone pieces
And a lot of concrete!*
A. N. Gelendost, 1966
(from *Poems on Workers*, Trans. by the author)

INTRODUCTION

Social policy is understood as the entirety of the state measures aiming to improve the situation of population layers weak in material gains. On top of all masses weakness in economic conditions² and thus worthy of protection takes place in the working class. Those are the people who gain their subsistence solely by laboring and are therefore covered within the scope of the work law for their protection (Boyacıgil, 1968, pp.4-5).

Whenever the rights of workers come into question; a word which comes to minds and is not to be imagined apart from the workers is indeed the “union” as an institutionalized structure.

Unionism represents an institution preserving its existence almost in all countries from socialist ones to develop ones and from authoritative political regimes to pluralist democracies (Ekin, 1989, p.72).

In Turkey; due to the weakness of the industry as well as legal and political intolerance; unionism is a rather delayed activity with the respect to developed countries.

² Though utterly simplified; a very didactic example would consist of comparing the worker with the peasant, another weak element of the society. The striking difference is that the latter, in his community (*Gemeinschaft*) will at least survive in the literal sense; while the former in his urban society (*Gesellschaft*) is devoid of such a guarantee. (Author)

It is interesting to note that the working class was not to be “spoiled” even after the Second Constitutional Monarchy: *Liberal clauses dated 1909 were in question; but; the eight item of the Law of Tasks and Occupations dated July 7, 1325 [1909] was almost totally knocking down the unions by stating that it is forbidden to establish a union in any organization carrying out public services* (Sülker, 1998, p.64, with reference to Velidedeoğlu & Ataay). *This same mentality had been present in 1850 when in Police Regulations the abolishment and prevention of labor teams and categories had been inserted* (Sülker, 1998, p.64).

As Boyacıgil (1968, p.83) notes it *during the aftermath of the Second World War; the change in political and economic conditions led to the setting up of unions and the guarantees in 1961 Constitution enabled their revival.*

1. CONTRIBUTING MATERIAL FROM AN AMERICAN FICTION WORK

It is possible to incur that in many countries furthering unions was not easy at all. In one of his novels, Harold Robbins tells the story of a young man originating from the mountainous West Virginia, starting his career in coal mines and ending up as a prominent union leader.

In Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh, the heart of the steel industry, in September 1919 the first unions are at the stage of burgeoning and a big prospective strike irritates the atmosphere of the city.

Strike posts are in front of the plant, forming a human chain by holding hands³ and the opposing forces come against them all together. The latter consists of the mounted police, the national guards (which mean the American version of gendarmerie) and the paid henchmen of the Pinkerton Bureau, a private detective office present since 1950. A lot of blood is shed. The wives and children are not spared from the blows either.

The hero of the novel, Daniel, had found a guard job just after his military service in World War One. The chief of the guards is a retired non-commissioned-officer. When Daniel had questioned the prospective use against the strikers, the chief had fired him immediately and moreover had had him beaten up. From that moment onwards, Daniel had taken refuge among the unionists (highlighted from Robbins, 1979, pp.278-284).

Daniel had formerly started his work life as a miner and got promoted to a clerical task. His sister at the textile plant, Molly Ann, and her husband Jimmy got

³ When I was an undergraduate student, a left-wing militant on return from a riot told us at the canteen how they had held hands and thus had saved themselves without any bruises. “Otherwise,” he added “the mob-police would have dared to realise quite a massacre!” (Author)

killed with the bullets of the men of Mr. Fitch, the big shot and practically the owner of the town of Fitchville. The issue was to soften and bring into line the recalcitrant workers of the textile plant in town. When father Jebb went down town and revenged himself on the deputy sheriff, Mr. Fitch retaliated by busting the mountain house and exterminating the whole family.

Daniel in turn killed Mr. Fitch and headed for the reformatory house, from where he got sent to Europe as a new recruit. At the time, his consideration of the events had been thoroughly on personal grounds. Roscoe, carrier of the bad news about the daughter and the son-in-law, was fighting his own separate war. They had confiscated his land for a derisory sum for a new textile plant, whereby a feud had started (a not uncommon happening in the area), causing the loss of his father and his elder son (Robbins, 1979, *passim*).

Only later was he to grasp that the actual matter merely meant the growth of power and money by feeding on labor (Robbins, 1979, p.162).

The coal mines of West Virginia mentioned in the novel are indeed infamous and come to attention in an environmental article:

[In West Virginia] historically, the coal companies were able to gain control of the state legislative and dominate legislative committees. Coal companies were free from safety regulations. Until 1904, there was not a single prosecution in West Virginia and there was none after 1912 for safety regulations. (Fox, 2009, p.45)

“West Virginia had had some of the weakest environmental laws and most lax regulatory rules in the United States” (Fox, 2009, p.46). (In the novel, Robbins tells us how scapegoats are sacrificed in cases of accidents arising from negligence. The hero of the novel, Daniel, starts his job at the age of sixteen along with other even younger co-workers).

The Big Dan of the future days is discovered by unionist Murray, who had arrived from New York in order to support the 1919 strike. He is sent to a vocational Junior college on behalf of the union. (He had visited the mountain primary school formerly. While working in the mines, he had taken private courses from the adventurous lady teacher of the county). After the junior college he assumes full time work with considerable responsibility in the union. One of his responsibilities is to engage in extensive traveling, get to know places and influence potential members. This is a dangerous game which he nicknames *suicide task*.

As a matter of fact; in Kansas City, armed Italian immigrant thugs in charge of tasks handed down from bosses give him a very rough time. They move him around in an automobile for three days. They just allow him to do his toilet in the wilderness. Later they “forgive” him just because the related strike is broken. The forgiveness means to dump the man among the bushes in the midnight!

He comes to a gasoline station on foot in cold air; buys himself a pair of used pants from an employee, washes and shaves himself and looks more or less human again. A waitress, a divorcee named Tess, looks after his bruises. She gets interested

in this strange man. They cut a deal. The waitress quickly sells her house to an interested customer, deposits the money in a bank and takes Daniel to California in her own car. (Soon she is to become his first wife. But she is to die during giving birth to his son).

Tess can never understand her husband's peculiar job. In the beginning she would insist he takes a proper job like everybody else. Meanwhile, as a compensation for the endured hardships, he would pass some time in motels with his new wife at the cost of the union budget. (Those new types of hotels where one can watch his car just outside his room—1930s—are getting popular all over). His purchasing an under armpit leather case and the related iron piece to go with it—which he would never part within the future—falls in the same time period (Robbins, 1979, summarized from pp.235-255).

2. THE CASE OF TURKEY ON THE WAY TO UNIONISM

The percent of the population working in the industry climbed from 7.5% in 1960 onto 9.2% in 1970. The five-year-development- plan applications ever since 1963 were bestowing new organizations and structures to economic life and industry, in particular. In oil, automobile, iron-steel, chemical and plastic production sectors; the private investments along with the state-financed investments increased the number of jobs. The number of female workers augmented. A distorted urbanization through the setting up of slums (bidonvilles) was under way. Job-holders were somehow in contact with labor unions. People are eagerly learning from newspapers and television (popularized after 1968) was in the process of acquirement a political consciousness, as well. Leftist publications increased and debates of problems from socialistic point of view were getting possible. In 1963 the Law of Collective Bargaining, Strike and Lock-out got passed. In addition came a Law of Labor Unions, which were much broad-scoped than the previous 1947-year version (Güzel, 1989, pp.121-122).

[After the 1960-coup, previously existing] *Türk-İş* came to terms with the junta and as a prize was allowed to develop foreign contacts. Soon; a rather central, firmly attached-to-the-main-roof, and far from an autonomous and highly bureaucratic structure came into being within the union. At the general assembly in bursa in 1964 supporters of the justice Party were promoted to key positions. Upon the political party's gaining power in 1965 elections the intimacy got closer. In discourse, though, especially with the effect of American type of unionism, an attitude well above political parties got emphasized. The opportunity to get rid of the attachments in favor of the Laborers' Party — established in 1961— offered itself with the Paşabahçe glassware strike, in 1966. *Kristal-İş*, *Petrol-İş*, *Maden-İş*, *Lâstik-İş*, *Basın-İş*, all providers of support for the strike, got fired from the bosom of *Türk-İş* (Güzel, 1989, highlighted from pp.123-124).

Glass-workers, were of the opinion that the three-year-long collective agreement envisaged by the employer; let alone bringing new rights; would even annul the former gains. Accordingly; they established a new syndicate called Kristal-İş (Sülker, 1998, highlighted from pp.95-96). Paşabahçe strike accelerated the detachment from Türk-İş and eventually the current of DİSK emerged (Sülker, 1998, p.98).

The competition between the two confederations climbed swiftly. In one intermediate headline in a newspaper, former head of Türk-İş and a quota-senator, Halil Tunç, was reported to have given the interesting declaration: “If today a leftist coup were to be realized, they would hang me even before [Vehbi] Koç!”

While I was an undergraduate student; a friend of mine in a folk play team narrated the following incident: The coach of the team taught a fast rotating action and a girl asked if this would not jeopardize a vertebra (disk) slide. The coach grinned and playing with his thick moustache wittingly replied: “DİSK will never slide! But, maybe Türk-İş will!”

In 1967, smaller unions expelled by Türk-İş collaborated with Gıda-İş and established the Confederation of Revolutionary Labor Unions (DİSK). Zonguldak Maden-İş left aside, private industry unions were in the majority and the political opinion was radical. The forty thousand presence grew onto a hundred thousand in 1970. With the law numbered 1317 it was attempted to check the new organization’s growth. Because of that, on June 15 / 16, 1970 big riots got organized in İzmir and İstanbul. Thanks to those riots, it became evident that it would not be easy to close it down. In 1971 memorandum the confederation was not outlawed but many members got arrested and irritating moments were experienced. DİSK welcome the 1973 elections as a hope of getting more civilian. Incorporating Tekstil-İş, Pektim-İş, Baysen-İş and Oleyiş among its ranks; it continued to grow. In 1975 during the First National Front Cabinet, two more confederations emerged under the names Nationalist Labor Unions and Hak-İş.⁴ In 1980 each claimed to possess thirty to forty thousand members (Güzel, 1989, highlighted from pp.124-126).

During the events of 15 / 16 June, I was having his school vacation in Thrace. As a studious student, he was practicing his English with the expatriate employers of a drilling company, with whom he got friendly, in the open park, in evenings. One of the chiefs of the foreign company referred to the incidents and called the rioters “the rats”. The young progressive student I was, the expression hit home; so I kept his silence in protest.

The next summer I got an interpreter job at the drilling site. One day the tower chief inspecting attendance discovered a day’s absence and inquired into the situation. The worker said that as a union representative he rightfully deserved a day

⁴ *Hak* is literally “the rightful or lawful or spiritually correct”; but the word also designates God Almighty. The last stanza of the national anthem employs the word, stating that *independence is the right of this nation who worships God (hakkıdır Hak’ka tapan)*. Author

off in a month. The young interpreter translated the sentence. The chief dismissed the worker and with a grimace mumbled after him: “F*ck the union!”

Just on the verge of the September 12 coup, the workers, especially in the state sector, were having substantial gains at the collective bargaining meetings. An unqualified worker working overtime could have a purchasing power well above his engineer, his superior! Moreover, a contrasting inconsistency was in question. Some were doing *de facto* office work but just because in cadre they were so designated, they were benefiting from the advantages of the collective agreements as if they were hard-working blue collars! (General Kenan Evren also pointed out to this contradiction in one of his speeches, at the time, probably aiming to please sentiments of equity. “A worker is a man working in front of scorching fire,” he explained).

Unions were real foci of political power at one time. was then working for a state-owned plant (Turkey was a mixed-economy example until recent large-scale privatizations). One evening at the company mess hall; the plant manager in person was having dinner with the union representative; a burly man with a huge moustache and bluntly easy manners. An engineer observed them from their table and said: “The rude unionist fellow acts as if he were superior to all! I just feel sorry for the director, who is obliged to put up with him!”⁵

3. DIMINISHING ENTHUSIASM ALONG WITH AUGMENTING POSSIBILITIES

When unionism first came into being it was like a calling. As unions got big and professional, the initial commitment and enthusiasm died down. In Robbins’ work, this point is emphasized in a striking manner:

⁵ The following poem got written (in Turkish) late in that very same evening:

LAST NIGHT AT THE SOCIAL FACILITIES

Last night the union
leader of the factory
Dined with the director.
Slumping on his wooden chair;
Playing with his big moustache;
Slurping on his lukewarm soup;
Enjoying his dry drink;
Quite a sight was the man!
The director himself was
Openly irritated!
Ignoring the rude manners;
Concentrating on his food;
With a minimum of talk;
Performing a ritual,
From which a much-desired
Escape was not possible! The Author.

Big Dan is a friend of ladies as well as workers. A woman he meets in the train, Christina, happens to be the niece of a gigantic steel company. But she is attractive and this fact does not deter the unionist from strengthening his *liaison* with her, especially after the death of his wife. The affair gets to be known, leading to disappointment in worker circles. Yielding to pressures, Murray deactivates him under the cover story of a “high-level” coordination position. In the isolated room to which he is now appointed to, He gets depressed. Squeezing his enormous fists he gets to meditate over his past life often. He resents his present passive situation.

One day she asks the secretary in the corridor if she likes to be holding this job. Nancy replies that it is just a job. He further inquires if she thinks she is contributing to the betterment of the working classes. Nancy replies that she had applied for the 15 dollars-a-week vacancy since there was no other alternative (Robbins, 1979, highlighted from pp.355-356).

4. THOSE WHO ARE GREEDY FOR MIGHT

Just after my *lycée* graduation I got a summer job as a receptionist at a coastal tourist hotel. In a few days, the local union representative, a cashier, found him and talked about his union by embellishing his narration. The young receptionist signed the membership application without much fuss.

During the fall season the cadres had to be shrunken. At the reception section he got “the very first axe” as a single employee who had not yet done his military service. At the moment, neither the unionist-cashier appeared on the horizon nor did he remember to search for the man! There he was, experiencing in person a disloyalty on the part of a union in his tender age! Quite a piece of *Erlebnisse* it was, to get fired!

Indeed; it must be a priority of any union to gain strength and growth rather than care for the well-being of its members whoever. If the members themselves somehow acquire certain benefits for the betterment of themselves along this continuous development and improvement process, then, so much the better. Just the realization of a desired by-product but nothing more, in actuality!

Now, it must be specified here at this point that nothing is wrong and astonishing at all regarding the above-mentioned situation. In fact, the concept could very well be generalized to include any similar legal personality or institution whatsoever, besides unions. Author Vedat Türkali does just that in the case of forming a judgment regarding a well known charity organization:

I was to learn through a fire calamity in our neighborhood [in Samsun] how life goes ahead to disprove a lot of commonplace discourse the schools keep teaching us. A fire broke out in the house of a neighbor just behind us. In our garden we had previously built an one-room-sized cabin with the hope of a prospective rent.

That hut also got burnt. Two mulberry trees in between protected our main house building. Some time later, in another fire further up the quartier, around two dozens shanty homes got destroyed. In neither two calamities not a single soul witnessed the presence of the Red Crescent [Kızılay,⁶ which had been called Hilâl-I Ahmer in those days]. Terrified and miserable children, women and men were offered glasses of tea and plates of soup only by the other neighbors, to the best of their capabilities (Türkali, 2008, pp.8-9).



Figure 1
Corporate Managers Do Possess a Lot of Political Influence (Illustration by the Author)

Nevertheless, the so-called feeling of having a union backing up one could very well be regarded as a moral support for the individual. Even this aid should not be underestimated. However; neither a union nor any other organization nor any abstract ideal of some kind can replace the security feeling and the solidarity pleasure of a direct, face-to-face primary group aid between real persons if only merely offering a single cigarette is involved! Sociological investigations have long proved the positive consequences of concrete solidarity of primary groups and its supremacy over auxiliary solidarity through any organization. (Indeed; some military sociologists confirm that in World War II; the immediate platoon comrades were of much higher concern and significance with respect to a *Führer* figure for the plain German warrior; while in a similar manner; the wellbeing of fellow soldiers

⁶ *Kızılay* proved to be slow and rather incapable in reacting to the big *Marmara* earthquake in 1999, as well. But at least a lesson was taken from the misfortune and the main official charity organization of Turkey got restructured soon after. Nowadays it appears to be operating in far more competent hands. (Author)

were much more important than concepts like democracy and freedom for the typical allied soldier).



Figure 2
Manual Workers Are Held in Contempt by Some White-Collar Professionals
(Illustration by the Author)

In certain cases unions may also involve ethnical dimensions and thus aggravate the personal feeling of protection: “The culture of indigenous Qanjobal people from the Guatemala highlands forms part of the lives of transnational communities in and around Omaha” [in Nebraska] [like the guest workers from Turkey in Germany].

Guatemalan organizers have adapted popular education techniques of Central America’s political movements to the campaigns to organize unions among immigrants in non-union meatpacking plants. [Moreover] the demand by Qanjobal [Mayan language] migrants for the music of their hometowns is possibly the only hope that the manufacture of marimbas, their traditional instrument, will continue in their highland town of origin, Santa Eulalia. [The nostalgia of the immigrant for the main culture left home is indeed stronger] (Bacon, 2005).

5. CORRUPTION IS PRESENT THERE, NO WONDER!

The hero of Harold Robbins, after his deactivation in the union attempts to establish a union of unions under his own supervision. This would be an organization aiming to protect the unions themselves and provide counseling and guidance under a huge umbrella, so to speak. When it comes to borrowing the necessary credit for the project; the only probable source appears to be a Miami gangster chief directly involved with unions. The man is Mr. Lansky, a man sick in his heart in the literal as

well as in the figurative sense but also in possession of tremendous worldly power. He succumbs to the promises of future gains and lends the money. Big Dan, in spite of this alliance with the demonic figure, manages to keep his own hands clean in implementation and improvement of his fancy project. Black limousines with official license plates from tax departments almost openly “shadow” his dwelling and office building for a time period; But they do not deem it necessary to intervene and carry out a search (Robbins, 1979, *passim*)

Further along the course of time Big Dan decides to undertake another project: To furnish his organization with producer installations and plants! To realize this enterprise he must draw financial inputs from members, who are cautious and unwilling in risky attempts. The man relies on his fame and charisma to accomplish his dream. This time he knowingly excludes Lansky; but the price is heavy. Just at the moment when his hilarious speech finds positive repercussions at the Whitehouse (!) he receives a bullet in his chest. Nevertheless he recovers his health.

This bullet issue is his second physical misfortune. Previously, he had received a head blow during the 1937 Chicago strike and got paralyzed below his waist. In a wheelchair he had been brought to his father’s mountain house with Christina, where he patiently and resolutely rehabilitated himself over months with special gymnastic movements; before finally leaving the house on foot.

His life ends in a private plane crash. His second son, 17-year-old Jonathan—despite being on bad terms with the father in his life time—decides to carry on a journey by hitchhiking, starting from his father’s home in West Virginia. As if in contact with the soul of the dead man, he follows his father’s early rout and shares his impressions with the reader.

In the beginning of all strike decisions; chronicles get printed on newspapers from the mouths of bosses;⁷ which are preoccupied with secret subversive ideas of communists full of intents to destroy America. For sound minded union leaders, in reality, it is only a matter of increasing the welfare of the worker and sheer politics has no direct importance whatsoever. Nevertheless; one can not regard a union as being immune from infiltration of radical political opinions, in practice, either.

In fact; just before that eventful stroke which rendered him unable to walk, *Big Dan strongly advises his friend Murray to take it slow and temporize before announcing the expected strike. He reminds his friend the 1919-Pittsburgh lesson. He tells him that chances of winning are slim and that Chicago police are ready, tough and determined to interfere. What could Murray do? Murray confesses that*

⁷ [Automobile maker] Henry Ford was generous in giving wages. He doubled the amount in 1914. Rival firms got in difficulty in providing the same salaries and the most qualified workers joined Ford. [But in spite of this trait of his] Ford used to hate labor unions. He struggled with them for years. Rather than coming to agreement with the car workers’ union, he would have closed *down the plant if his wife had not opposed. He did come to terms with the union in 1941* (Akbulut, October 14, 2011, p.5).

he is under pressure and he can not delay action for more than two weeks at most because the “commies” [the common pejorative term for communists] are already campaigning to top him over from his position (Robbins, 1979, p.317).

The mother of the second son Jonathan is Margaret. Her first approach to the man is for giving a complaint. The girl’s father had lost a leg in a work accident but could not get a penny from the union. *During the talk at one point she gets furious and stands up in a rage. She tells him that the unionists are good at collecting contributions but absent when it comes to giving money away. Daniel replies that most unions are responsible but her father’s union was dishonest. The girl screams that they are all thieves and her opinion is formed fast (Ibid., p.422).*

Finally Dan arranges a night watchman’s job for the crippled father. The girl keeps seeing the middle-aged union leader despite the father’s warnings and feels herself attached to the man. His second wedding occurs. His now-adult first son (who got his education at Harvard to become a lettered unionist) *reminds his father that the girl is young. Dan smiles and replies that he, at his heart, is still a mountain man; that is one of those men who pick up the flowers fresh (Ibid., p.456).*

While burying his first wife it was he *who took the spade with his callused hands from a grave-digger and covered the coffin with earth, saying that the mountain villagers used to bury their own dead like this (Ibid., p.349).*

In essence, the secret of the success of Big Dan lies just here. He is one of the workers. This blue-eyed man with bushy eyebrows and unaffected airs had risen from the file and rank. He is transparent even in his vice. His fondness of whisky,⁸ his interest for the fair sex including the niece of a steel holding’s boss are known to everyone. In a speech where he verbally attacked the oil-rich Arab sheiks [after all, for all his superior qualities, in a sense, he is nothing more than a white American citizen, if one comes to think of it] he had even been criticized as being chauvinistic and war-wager. In his most famous speech, which made him get a bullet wound, he had all of a sudden stopped reading the paper in his hand. This expert-prepared paper full of statistics did not appeal to his taste (Robbins, 1979, *passim*).

Instead, in an improvised speech, he simply shows his audience that he is just one of *them*. He suggests that in the path of life, as workers, they should leave their own imprints and this way proves themselves.⁹ To achieve this goal, he reasons, he

⁸ In the prologue of his autobiographic novel, *Whisky*, famous Turkish author Çetin Altan states with regret that he had been condemned by certain circles for dinking whisky as a deputy of the Laborer’s Party. Whisky has acquired that symbolic value because in Turkey it is awfully expensive. In bars of Pittsburgh, however, iron-steel workers (most of whom are immigrants from Central Europe) usually consume cheap whisky. (Author)

⁹ One might as well admit that such a leader is a real role model. One of my undergraduate friends, Erkan, once worked for a week as a paid questionnaire-applicant in a research project. One of the items on his sheet was a hypothetical questions: “In whose place would you like to be in this life?” In a slum neighborhood, an army sergeant welcome him. My friend was surprised when this subject dwelled upon this particular question with enthusiasm, asserting that he’d rather become a labor leader! My friend kept praising the sergeant for days. (Author)

needs to get new contributions—offering the possibility of installment payment as well—to make them manage their own capital rather than being partners in other companies. He coaxes them with success.

Big Dan is an individual who knows himself too well also. While deactivated in the union work, he had been offered a lucrative job in Los Angeles from movie-makers' unions.¹⁰ Two crooked local leaders want to win him over because of his fame (and probably eventually manipulate him) for a high salary. Moreover, his motherless baby-son is being taken care of by a nursemaid in this very same city. But; there is an insurmountable catch: Daniel just senses that he will be alienated among white shirts clerical employees, city-bred illuminators and other movie scene personnel! In other words; even mental workers and light-muscle workers are not his cup of tea! He is at ease among heavy workers in mines and blast furnaces, truck drivers, construction workers (Robbins, 1979, *passim*).



Figure 3
Empoyees of a State-Owned Paper Plant Heading for Work in a Provincial Turkish City (Illustration by the Author). [The Plant Is Later Privatized]

¹⁰ Former American president Ronald Reagan (1911-2004) had been such a union leader. For six successive terms he got elected as the head of Screen Actors Guild. With this former title, he was more effective in his support for the Polish Solidarity Current led by Lech Walesa (internet knowledge, last access-date: October 3, 2014).

A mere glance at the following news lines reveal many things about the might struggle regarding unions:

Nine people have been killed in clashes between rival unions at a South African mine owned by leading platinum producer Lonmin, police have said. The dead included two policemen attacked by a mob, and three workers killed by officers, at the mine in North West province, police said. The violence is linked to a battle for membership between a new and a long-established trade union. (August 12, 2012, BBC News).

6. THE HONEST UNION-MAN'S CONCERN

A union man who has internalized his job and is attached to it with his heart is always preoccupied with the betterment of people whom he represents.

Reknown Turkish novelist late Fakir Baykurt (1982, 2011, p.12); in his eulogy of a friend, a painter who had been the son of a unionist, says: *His father is also a worker. Besides a union leader, who had written a book on miners! Because he comes from a new style of illuminated family and grew up among the workers, naturally his worldview was formulated in favor of the workers.* (Resorting to the writer's terminology, the above-mentioned friend, *while faced with persecution in Turkey, quit the country as of 1982, to head for Germany; and for seventeen long years, continues to live there [in 1982]).*

[Indeed] The local organization of domestic and family life could not avoid bearing the marks of the occupation pursued by the men folk. In ports like Liverpool and London, dock work was amongst many occupations in which work roles were inherited down the family; and daily life within the home had to adapt to the uncertainties of casual employment, with consequences for attitudes towards work, risk and career in the wider community. (Day, 2006, pp.75-76)

As in other "extreme" cases, like mining, whole populations were bound together by shared encounters with disaster and tragedies. While the same could be said of iron and steel-producing communities, the range of skills they required and the dynamics of their industrial growth and decline made for a very different type of individual (Day 2006, p.76 with reference to Harris, 1987; Fevre, 1989).

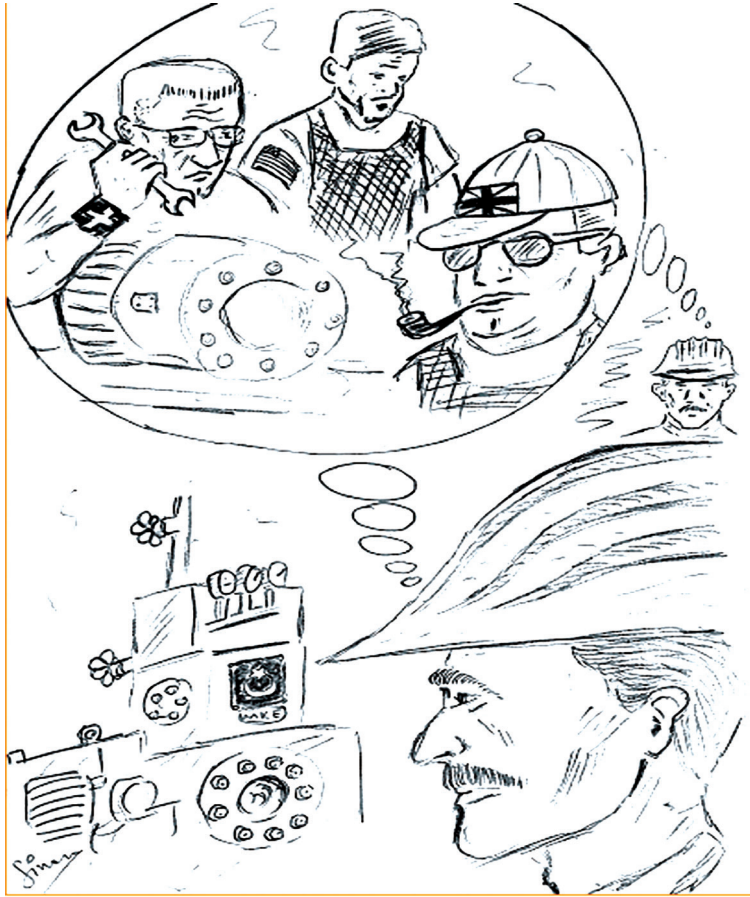


Figure 4
Turks Just in the Process of Taking Over a State-Owned Facility, Constructed by Foreign Experts, in Mid-Anatolia. the Attitude of the Turkish Worker Towards Foreign Experts Is Positive, Compatible and Concerning (Illustration By the Author)



Figure .5
Unions Are Sometimes Drifted Towards Political Conflict By Cunning Manipulations and Thus They End Up in the Middli of Violent Riots Having Nothing to Do With Worker Rights and Work Situations Directly (Illustration by the Author)

CONCLUSION

Labor unions are important establishments among non-governmental organizations; they represent the organization and social power of the working people. Ever since the industrial revolution, the development of unions became possible with many difficulties and problematic interruptions. In Turkey the unions achieved their identity in 1950s and their eventual growth and gain in variety proved to be fairly quick despite a rough path of progress.

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