

CLASS UNDERGROUND, CLASS ABOVEGROUND: ZONGULDAK  
MINEWORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS

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MINEWORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS

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Class Underground, Class Aboveground: Zonguldak

Mineworkers and Their Unions

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## Thesis Abstract

Yasin Kaya, “Class Underground, Class Aboveground: Zonguldak Mineworkers and Their Unions”

This research is on the objective and subjective determinants of the Zonguldak mineworkers’ and their union’s power. It has three parts: First, it studies the effect of the structural and institutional forces functioning in global and national scale on the workplace and marketplace power of miners in the local context of Zonguldak. For this purpose, the evolution of the state-capital relations is studied through historical lenses with a specific emphasis on post-1980 era. Second, it inquires the mineworkers’ union’s organizational structure and strategies to analyze the grounds of mineworkers’ associational power. For this reason, it analyzes the historical development the union’s relation to its member base, the legal universe, TÜRK-İŞ and inter-party relations in Turkey. Third, it looks into the mineworkers’ perceptions questioning how they make meaning of the structural, institutional and ideological dynamics taking place in global, national and local levels that effect on their union and themselves; and how they conceptualize possible responses to such dynamics. Through this, it reflects on how mineworkers perceptions inform and be informed by the capacity of their union. The ultimate aim of this study is to underscore the necessity of dual approach to working class. It recommends studying it as an objective structural position in the relations of production that is shaped in its interplay with the state and capital; and as a subjective cultural formation that is constituted by workers’ experiences, practices, attitudes, beliefs, consciousnesses, and perceptions.

## Tez Özeti

Yasin Kaya, “Yeraltındaki Sınıf, Yer Üstündeki Sınıf: Zonguldak Maden İşçileri ve Sendikaları”

Bu araştırma Zonguldak maden işçilerinin gücünün nesnel ve öznel belirleyeni hakkında. Üç bölümden oluşmaktadır: İlk bölümde, Zonguldak bağlamına odaklanılarak, küresel ve ulusal ölçekte etkin olan yapısal ve kurumsal kuvvetlerin madencilerin iş yeri ve iş piyasası düzlemlerindeki güçlerine etkisi çalışılmaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, 1980 sonrası döneme ağırlık verilerek devlet-sermaye ilişkilerinin tarihsel gelişimi incelenmektedir. İkinci bölümde, maden işçilerinin sendikalarının örgütsel yapısı ve stratejileri çalışılmakta, böylece maden işçilerinin örgütsel gücü analiz edilmektedir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda ise, sendikaların üye tabanı, hukuki evrenle, Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu’yla ve siyasi partiler arasındaki ilişkilerle münasebeti incelenmektedir. Üçüncü bölüm maden işçilerinin algıları hakkındadır. İşçilerin küresel, ulusal ve yerel düzlemlerde etkin olup sendikalarını ve kendilerini etkileyen yapısal, kurumsal ve ideolojik faktörleri nasıl algıladıkları ve bu faktörlere cevap olabilecek tepkileri nasıl kavramsallaştırdıkları bu bölümün konusudur. Bu sayede, maden işçilerinin algıları sendikalarının kapasitesine nasıl etki eder ya da ondan nasıl etkilenir sorularına cevap aranmaktadır. Bu tezin asli amacı işçi sınıfına ikili bir yaklaşıma duyulan ihtiyacın altını çizmektir. İşçi sınıfına, bir taraftan devlet ve sermaye arasındaki ilişkinin tesiri altında şekillenen üretim ilişkilerinde nesnel yapısal bir konum; diğer taraftan işçilerin deneyimleri, pratikleri davranışları, inançları, bilinçleri ve algılarıyla oluşan öznel kültürel bir oluşum olarak bakmayı önermektedir.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AFL-CIO:	The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AP:	Justice Party
CHP:	Republican People's Party
DISK:	Revolutionary Workers' Unions Confederation
DP:	Democrat Party
DYP:	True Path Party
EKİ:	Ereğli Coal Institution
EMKİD:	Ereğli Coal Mine Basin Association
EMKİS	Ereğli Coal Basin Mineworkers Union
GMİS:	General Mineworkers' Union of Turkey
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
MKHİS:	Union of Coalmine Basin Workers
MTA:	Institute for Mine Etude and Search
SEE:	State economic enterprise
SHP:	Social Democrat People's Party
TİSDK:	Congress of Labor Unions Solidarity
TİSKP:	Workers' and Peasants' Socialist of Turkey
TMİS:	Mineworkers Unions of Turkey
TMİSF:	Turkish Federation of Mineworkers Unions
TSP:	Socialist Part of Turkey
TTK:	Turkish Institution of Hard Coal
TÜRK-İŞ:	The Confederation Workers' Unions in Turkey
ZMİS:	Zonguldak Mineworkers' Union

## PREFACE

The origins of this study dates back to May 2006. During a visit to my hometown Zonguldak for an underground course research, I participated in the May Day rally. However, the mineworkers were absent. Their absence left me in surprise since my memories of the Zonguldak mineworkers' militancy in 1900-1991 were still vivid. Where had the workers gone? I raised this question to the head of local branch of mineworkers' union. He was holding omnipotence of "Globalization" for workers absence.

More I read the literature on labor unions and their worldwide decline, more I encountered with the term "Globalization." Despite of thousands of pages on the negative effects of globalization on labor, I took the notice of inadequacy of the workers' experiences of, attitudes towards, and role in globalization. Such all-encompassing term lacked actual existence of the crucial actors: the workers. Then, the driving force behind this study then became clear: Bringing the workers back in to social research.

I begun to read the union's periodicals, the local newspapers, and participated in long conversations with union leaders and the workers. The growing literature on the history of Zonguldak coal basin helped me to grasp the structural and institutional factors that surround the workers' work and daily lives through historical lenses. In 2008, I paid my first visit to Karadon pit to interview the miners at their workplace. I heard many complaints both aboveground and underground yet little criticism of the union. Then in 2009, soon after the union elections, I visited Kozlu district for the second set of in-depth interviews. The critical tone in workers' discourse increased severely.

My research reached to a sutured level after fifteen in-depth interviews, many unrecorded and informal talks and detailed coverage of the union's periodicals. However, at least two important phenomena left unstudied. First, although I found the opportunity to observe the labor processes, I did not have time or scientific and historical data to study the effects of altering labor processes on workers. Second, despite I noticed the significance of the growing private sector mining and increasing number of workers employed in these mines for the object of study, I had to limit my research to public sector mining and miners due to time constrains. Unfortunately, the former is beyond my expertise and not included in my future research agenda, but I the latter is.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Political Economy regards the proletarian (...) like a horse, he must receive enough to enable him to work. It does not consider him, during the time when he is not working, as a human being. It leaves this to criminal law, doctors, religion, statistical tables, politics, and the beadle. Karl Marx<sup>1</sup>

The working class—the factor par excellence for contestation of the existing order of things—seems to adopted as its principal weapon practices of preservation of the status quo, staticness, rigidity, and *resistance*, while on the other hand, change, proteiformity, and speed—the great myths of modernity—have all intents and purposes become attributes of capital. Marco Ravelli<sup>2</sup>

#### Studying Union Decline

##### Global Downward Trend and the Limits of Statistical Data

Figures on union presence and union activity suggest that there is a general and downward trend after 1970s. Visser's<sup>3</sup> adjusted data, the mostly cited and reliable source on union presence<sup>4</sup> illustrates the severity of the fact: Decline in union membership is 11.3% in US, 35.2% in UK, 36.7% in New Zealand, 47.1% in France and 9.3% in Japan between 1970 and 2003. The decline is more visible in terms of union density. Today, union density rates are lower than were in 1970 in all member countries of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) but four small European countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium).<sup>5</sup> The general character of union decline demand general explanatory factors, operating in

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1992): 288

<sup>2</sup> Marco Ravelli, "Worker Identity in the Factory Desert," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 115.

<sup>3</sup> Jesse Visser, "Union Membership Statistics in 24 Countries," *Monthly Labor Review* January (2006): 38-49.

<sup>4</sup> Union presence is mostly expressed in terms of union membership (measured by the total number of workers who are member of a union) and union density (measured either by union membership as a percent of the labor force or membership as a percent of total or nonagricultural wage and salary employment), which have statistical advantage concerning data collection and comparison.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

on global scale and affecting the power of the unions world-wide.

Despite such a general downward trend, the cross-country variances tend to increase. These variances are more striking in terms of union activity.<sup>6</sup> Bargaining coverage for instance is 50% in Australia almost quadruple of the coverage in the United States, which is 13.8%. These cross-country variances suggest that the institutional (union administered unemployment funds, the accepted presence of unions in the workplace, coordinated nationwide bargaining, and consultation) and political (the state suppression on labor organization) forces that are framed at national scale carry great importance.<sup>7</sup> Strike rates also illustrate the cross-country variances in the downward trend. For example, the ratio of strike rates has been and continues to be higher than in France than United States.<sup>8</sup> And these variances call for a historical analysis of labor strategy that is followed within a national context. In France, the labor unions have followed a “labor movement strategy” with comparatively lower membership yet higher labor militancy that led to success whereas in United States “workplace type of unionism” with higher numbers of members yet reluctant to strike as an instrument to overcome the labor disputes is employed.<sup>9</sup><sup>10</sup>

Departing from these figures one cannot merely pass by the conclusion of a global union decline without taking the note of the reporting errors concerning union

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<sup>6</sup> Union activity is mostly expressed in terms of strike rates (taken as the militant form of union activity) and rates of collective bargaining coverage (the share of workers covered by labor contracts negotiated by labor unions.)

<sup>7</sup> Visser (2006); Clara Chang and Constance Sorrentino, "Union Membership Statistics in 12 Countries," *Monthly Labor Review* December (1991): 46-53.

<sup>8</sup> Visser (2006).

<sup>9</sup> Kim Moody, *Workers in A Lean World : Unions in the International Economy* (New York: Verso, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Philippe Saint Marc, *L'économie Barbare* (Editions Frison-Roche, 1994).

membership data<sup>11</sup> and Western-oriented source of the data collection. On the one hand, these reporting errors can be controlled through several adjustments methods for comparability purposes,<sup>12</sup> however the validity of intra-country analysis of union power is at stake given the difficulties in data collection. On the other hand, the standardized data is available to be collected from mostly developed countries, and conclusions drawn from these statistics are not adequate to give an account of union power in developing countries.<sup>13</sup>

One example to this is Turkey where neither the survey nor reported data is adequate for giving a full picture of union power. The official data collected by the Turkish Ministry of Labor does not give a pessimistic picture of the union membership. According to the Ministry, the rates are 61.54%, 54.97%, 69.39%, 68.45%, 58.37%, and 58.98% in 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2009 respectively.<sup>14</sup> However, these figures are not collected through standardized measurement apparatus with a consequence of not being acknowledged by International Labor Organization (ILO) and labor unions' self-reports of their membership statistics are unreliable.<sup>15</sup>

Aziz Çelik's adjusted data is more valid according to the ILO measurement standards and more instructive of union membership rates: 22.2%, 18.7%, 13.5%,

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<sup>11</sup> Chang & Sorrentino (1991); George Sayers Bain and Robert Price, *Profiles of Union Growth: A Statistical Portrait of Eight Countries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980); Tito Boeri, Agar Brugiavini, Lars Calmfors, *The Role of Unions in Twenty-First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Visser (2006).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, "2821 İşçi ve Sendika Üye Sayıları," *T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı İnternet Sitesi*, 19 Ocak 2009, [http://www.calisma.gov.tr/article.php?article\\_id=665](http://www.calisma.gov.tr/article.php?article_id=665) (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Aziz Celik and Kudret Lordoglu, "Türkiye'de Resmi Sendikalaşma İstatistiklerinin Sorunları Üzerine," *Çalışma ve Toplum* no. 2 (2006): 11.

and 10.1% in 1988, 1990, 1995, and 2000 respectively.<sup>16</sup> Çelik does not exclude the workers in informal sector and civil servants when calculating the total number of workers, and regards the workers under any collective bargaining coverage as unionized as the workers.

The piteous picture of the union membership figures is also to be derived from the statistics on strike activity. There is a significant downward trend of the union activity since 1990. The number of the strikes declines from 458 in 1990 to 120 in 1995, 52 in 2000, 34 in 2005, and 15 in 2008. Whereas the number of days lost due to a strike is approximately 347000, 484000, 368000, 177000 and 145000 in 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2008 respectively.<sup>17</sup>

The limits of the data collected by the Ministry of Labor are even more visible in terms of the union membership rates of General Mineworkers' Union of Turkey (GMİS, Türkiye Genel Maden İşçileri Sendikası.) According to the most recent data published by the Ministry, GMİS has 32008 members, 23.14 % of the workers in mining sector in Turkey. However, these figures have no validity. GMİS is only organized among Turkish Institution of Hard Coal (TTK, Türkiye Taşkömürü Kurumu) workers and Institute for Mine Etude and Search (MTA, Maden Tetkik Arama) employee. The total number of workers employed by TTK and MTA is 8903<sup>18</sup> and 3639<sup>19</sup> respectively. That is to say GMİS *officially* organized 32008

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<sup>16</sup> Metin Özüğurlu, "Türkiye'de İşçi Sınıfı Mücadelesinin Görünümü," *Sendika.org*, 22 Eylül 2005, [http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi\\_no=3408](http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no=3408) (Retrieved on 16 April 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, "Göstergeler," *TİSK*, 31 Mayıs 2009, <http://www.tisk.org.tr/gostergeler.asp?id=519#2> (Retrieved on 5 June 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Türkiye Taşkömürü Kurumu, "Personel Yapısı," *TTK İnternet Sitesi*, 01 Kasım 2008, <http://www.taskomuru.gov.tr/index.php?page=sayfagoster&id=15> (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Maden Tetkik ve Arama Genel Müdürlüğü, "Kurumsal Yapı," [www.mta.gov.tr](http://www.mta.gov.tr) (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

workers out of 12542, in other words 255.2% of GMİS' potential members are actually GMİS members. Needless to say, this is a logical impossibility. Such illogical figures derive from GMİS' false membership reports it presents to the Ministry to participate in collective bargaining. Like the other labor unions in Turkey, GMİS has to be organized in 10% of the total workers in mining sector (totally 138,306 workers) to participate in the collective bargaining. That is to say, GMİS has to have 13,830 members to be over the legal threshold and to participate in the collective bargaining.

In short, the statistical data suggest that there is global downward trend in terms of union presence and union activity. However, it is limited to depict the severity and the character of union decline in specific cases. Turkey in general, GMİS in particular, are among such cases. Thus, going beyond the numeric figures is required to better grasp the conditions GMİS and the other Turkish labor unions are in.

#### Going Beyond the Statistical Data

As stated above, historical analyses of labor strategy that is followed within a national context is needed to make sense of cross-country variances of figures on union presence and activity. Moreover, studying the strategies that the labor unions in a country or a union in particular has followed is important to understand the symmetries and asymmetries between the figures on union presence and union activity. For instance, despite GMİS' high levels of organization among its potential members, it did not organize any significant labor movement after 1970 apart from the labor militancy in 1990 and 1991. Did it mobilize more *peaceful* instruments of union activity? Or did it follow an obedient strategy to the neo-liberal governmental offences against mineworkers? Since, the asymmetry between union membership

and activity cannot be explained through the statistical data in the case of GMİS, these questions demand a historical study of its character that informs the strategies it followed as well as that of the national legal universe that frames its character and strategies.

All TTK and MTA workers are affiliated with GMİS and are covered by GMİS' collective bargaining with the employer representative. However, there is a growing number of mineworkers in Zonguldak basin who are not unionized thus without collective bargaining coverage. How do GMİS relate to these workers? Why it does not or cannot organize these workers? These questions demand to go over the statistical data and analyses of GMİS' approach to the private sector mineworkers.

The numeric figures of union presence and activity are not capable of giving a picture of the subjective conditions. All public sector mineworkers in Zonguldak basin are GMİS members. In other words, all are *officially* affiliated with the union. However, how do they *actually* relate their union? Do they have confidence on it, or rather are detached from it? How do their attitudes towards their union affect the union's character and strategy? These question demand listening the workers themselves rather than approaching them solely as items in statistical data: That is to say studying them as actual agents with perceptions, ideas, hopes etc. rather than merely as officially stated union members.

#### How to Approach Social Class?

The questions raised above calls not only the actual *workers* but also the *actual* workers under analysis. In other words, an analysis of the working class called forth that does not merely takes the class as a structural position in the relations of production but also as a category that defines collective forms of workers' practices and perceptions. Let me begin elaborating this with a quotation from Ayşe Buğra:

What we see today is that the debates on working class take place through two distinct approaches. On the one hand, the objective-structuralist approach regards class as an objective phenomenon that derives from people's locations in the relations of production. On the other hand, subjective-constructivist approach develops a class analysis that takes the forms of workers' perception of their own conditions and how they make meaning out of these into consideration through emphasizing the notions such as "class experience" and "class culture."<sup>20</sup>

What Buğra suggests is mobilizing the objective-structuralist approaches to study "class as a potentiality" and subjective-constructivist approaches to study class as an actualization of such a potentiality through political struggle.<sup>21</sup> I follow this suggestion in my study of Zonguldak coalminers. On the one hand, I study the coalminers' location in the relations of production, that is to say the location of labor in the face of evolving state-capital relations, labor process, and industrial linkages in Zonguldak coal basin. Such an analysis helps me better grasp the structural and institutional factors that have affected on the coalminers and their union. On the other hand, I trace the experiences of the coalminers as well as their ideological and political attitudes through a study of their perceptions of their co-workers and union. The advantage of such a study is to better depict the cultural elements and discursive spaces these perceptions are embedded in. Studying these elements and spaces inform the possibilities and the limits of escalation and actualization of workers' potential class power to struggle with the structural and institutional factors that circumscribe the workers and their union. As we shall see, such a dual methodology is very useful in explaining the union decline.

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<sup>20</sup> Ayşe Buğra, "Sosyal Sınıflar Tarihe mi Karıştı?," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 113 (2008): 21-28.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 10

## Explaining Union Decline

### “Globalization” and the Union Decline

There is almost a consensus on the decreasing power of the labor unions since 1970s. Citing the downward and global trend in union presence and union activity, commentators argue that the decline stems from global dynamics that have disabled labor against capital.<sup>22</sup> Herein the general downward trend of union decline, “globalization” as a blanket term is coined by scholars who attempt to grasp the whole cosmos of structural, institutional and ideological factors that oppress labor. However, such heuristic gesture forces labor to a conceptual position in which labor appears as victimized by every single social and political change and merely as a passive receiver of the changes beyond its own reach.

Globalization literature reflects on the general downward trend in union power in two ways: Market-centered-explanations of globalization highlight the global character of the decline and focus on structural factors in global scale behind it, whereas state-centered-explanations of globalization holding on the cross-country variances of union decline, bring the importance of nation-states to the forefront and focus on institutional and political forces.

Scholars who adopt a “market centered explanation of globalization” refer to the advances in production technologies, unraptured integration of worldwide production and capital markets<sup>23</sup> as the general characteristics of globalization. By referring to the increasing mobility of capital “race to the bottom” scholars with

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<sup>22</sup> See Ronaldo Munck, *Globalisation and Labour : The New "Great Transformation"* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2002); Munck Ronaldo and Peter Waterman (ed.), *Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalization : Alternative Union Models in the New World Order* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Jeffrey Harrod and Robert O'Brien (ed.) Harrod, *Global Unions? : Theory and Strategies of Organized Labour in the Global Political Economy* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> J. H. Dunning, *The Challenge for National Economic Regimes* (London: Economic and Social Research Institute, 1994); K. Ohmae, *The End of Nation State* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

pessimism argue that capital moves to areas in search of cheap labor with the consequences of lowering of wages and working conditions in Global South.<sup>24</sup> Lowering of wages and working conditions, it is argued, decreases the bargaining power of the unions as a *direct* consequence of increasing mobility of capital that labor cannot challenge. Scholars who point to the *indirect* effect of “globalization” on labor, argue that the role of the nation states decreases with global economic processes<sup>25</sup> and the states capacity to protect the workers’ rights decreases,<sup>26</sup> in other words welfare states’ protective belt around labor is destroyed with the global economic forces states employ the rules of the market and be “workfare states”.

This perspective possesses a conception of change from above, assigns the economic processes a transcendent character, without taking into consideration what agents and relations construct these economic processes. And these accounts draw on problematic assumption that “globalization” is a totalistic, uniform and an already instituted autonomous process. In short, globalization for this accounts has a “hyper global” character.<sup>27</sup> It does not stems from actualities but is created *ex nihilo* and works not on actual geographies but on *tabula rosa*. For these accounts, labor and labor unions are merely the passive receivers of the changes taking in global level. On the other hand, “state centered explanations of globalization” focus on the state choices that has made globalization possible.<sup>28</sup> Through an institutionalist

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<sup>24</sup> Anita Chan, "A 'Race to the Bottom' Globalisation and China's Labour Standards," *China Perspectives* 46 March-April (2003).

<sup>25</sup> R. Reich, *The Work of Nations: A Blue Print for the Future* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

<sup>26</sup> Charles Tilly, *Global Flows of Labor and Capital* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> D. Held, *Global Transformations : Politics, Economics and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance* (Blackwell Publishing, 1999); G. Garreth, "Global Markets and National

framework, these accounts point to the requirement of institutionalization led by the states' law making capability for liberal markets to emerge, develop and spread.

These accounts argue that the states have had *indirect effect* on labor unions through institutionalizing markets that undermine workers' power and *direct effect* by their intervention to regulation of labor unions through their law making capacity. These approaches are strong in explaining the role of the nation-states in divergence outcomes of the global processes however assigns a complete agency to the states and overlooks the attitudes, demands and actions of the economic actors most importantly the workers.<sup>29</sup>

### Globalization Discourse

The facts and the fictions of globalization are interrelated yet are distinct phenomena. On the one hand, the productive and finance capital, commodities, and labor power as well as the knowledge in the form of information are the subjects of accelerating global circulation. On the other hand, the abstraction, conceptualization, symbolization of the world as a totality is globally circulating through the discourse and ideology of "globalization". Globalization has an *excess* over the things it signifies. It is also a fiction having a distinct existence than its referent. As Cameron and Palan<sup>30</sup> indicate the interplay of concrete global processes and institutions and the various stories, myths, ideologies and rhetoric on globalization reproduce "globalization"s conditions of existence. The economic and technological forces produce their fictions, but these fictions do not merely represent the forces that make

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Politics: Collusion Course or Virtuous Circle?" *International Organization* 52 (1998): 4; Linda Weiss, *The Myth of Powerless State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Mine Eder, "The Constrains on Labour Internationalism: Contradictions and Prospects," in *Global Unions? Theory and Strategies of Organized Labour in the Global Political Economy*, ed. Jeffrey Harrod and Robert O'Brien (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002): 167-187.

<sup>30</sup> Angus Cameron and Ronen Palan, *The Imagined Economies of Globalization* (Gateshead: Sage, 2004).

them possible. They have a separate existence and they produce the economic and technological logic that run the global forces. Uniformity produced by the logic of globality tends to integrate and capture all meanings of unification of the parts of world.<sup>31</sup> Thinking and conceptualizing the world as a unity is almost impossible without being contained in the logic that global forces produce. This is an example of how the logic of globalization reproduces through marking its facts to be thought as absolute, the only alternative, and unattainable to be changed.

The discourse of “globalization” provides specific forms of subjectivities, positions, agencies and forms of consciousness in and through which identities, decisions, choices and interventions are produced and enacted.<sup>32</sup> The subjectivities and identities are not reducible to social-structural location or variables,<sup>33</sup> rather they are produced in everyday forms of practices. One may argue then, not merely the facts of globalization but its fictions that circulate in the daily experiences of the workers and the workings of labor unions affect union power with framing the repertoire of actions’ of these agents. Hence, the power of GMIS union has also its subjective source--that is embedded in the worker consciousness, manifested and communicated with worker perceptions towards their unions. Through these perceptions the discourses of globalization in various modalities intervene in the actualities of labor universe. Globalization if not *as such* then as a discourse that embodies a certain conception of space and time is a factor in local universe of Zonguldak basin.

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<sup>31</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World or Globalization* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Serap A. Karatekin and David F. Ruccio, "Global Fragments: Subjectivity and Class Politics in Discourses of Globalization," *Economy and Society* 27 no. 1 February (1998): 76.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Miller Klubock, *Contested Communities : Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile's El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998): 5

### Breaking Globalization into its Constituents

The “globalizing” processes lack the commonly assumed unity of effects<sup>34</sup> and far from being an already instituted, all-encompassing, totalizing phenomena they are fragmented and varied. They are constantly reproduced as they are experienced. To depict the discontinuities and ruptures in the workings of global economies as well as to see the mixed consequences they cause on actual humans and organizations—in our case the workers and their unions—“globalization” has to be broken to its constituents. These constituent elements can be depicted in their realm of practice that is to say among the realm of workers’ experiences. This will make us to see the how structural, institutional and political forces operating in global and national level amalgamate and effect on the local world of labor in Zonguldak.

Wright’s<sup>35</sup> and Silver’s<sup>36</sup> analyses that depict the structural and institutional sources of workers’ power are a good way to start study how Zonguldak mineworkers and their unions are affected by the global and national factors. For Silver who builds his framework on Wright’s conceptualizations, there are two principal sources of workers’ power: Their *associational power* stems from the “formation of the collective organizations of the workers.”<sup>37</sup> Wright cites labor unions, workers’ political parties and worker communities as the three major manifestations of associational power of the workers. *Structural power* on the other hand, stems from workers location in the economic system. There are two subtypes for structural power: The first one is the *marketplace bargaining power* that is

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<sup>34</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Erik Olin Wright, "Working-Class Power, Capitalist-Class Interests, and Class Compromise," *The American Journal of Sociology* 105 no. 4 (2000): 957-1002 .

<sup>36</sup> Beverly J. Silver, *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*: 13

directly proportional to the tightness of the labor markets. The skills of the workers, level of general unemployment and workers' non-wage sources of income are the most important components of the level of marketplace bargaining power. The second one is the *workplace bargaining power* that is the result of "strategic location of a particular group of workers within a key industrial sector."<sup>38</sup> Workers integration with the production processes, the position of the workers' industrial sector within a particular production linkage, and the strategic importance of the industrial sector in the totality of the national and international production are the most important elements of workplace bargaining power.

Wright and Silver's conceptualization of the determinants of workers power can be adopted to study the power of labor unions. Workers' structural and associational powers are represented by their unions' power in organized form. Taking sources of workers power and their organizations' power as identical requires assuming that the labor unions are workers' representative organizations *par excellence*. There are two reasons that allows such identification for analytical and heuristic purposes: On the one hand, unions are forms of legitimization that embody the bargaining power of the workers and collective actors that mobilize this power in the collective bargaining processes. On the other hand, historically speaking, labor unions have been the universal forms that have been adopted to provide an organized structure to groups of working people since 1850s.<sup>39</sup>

The schema below brings together the objective determinants of labor union power in a locality, i.e.: structural and institutional factors operating in global,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Jeffrey Harrod and Robert O'Brien, "Organized Labour and Global Political Economy," in *Global Unions? Theory and Strategies of Organized Labour in the Global Political Economy*, ed. Jeffrey Harrod and Robert O'Brien (New York: Routledge, 2002): 3-28

national, and local level. This approach has five assumptions: (a) Global structural forces are mediated by institutional and political factors in national level. For a structural economical change to effect on a locality, the state has to actively intervene through its legal, oppressive or ideological apparatus. (b) The national institutional factors embodied in the agency of the state inform the union power through organizing the legal universe in which the labor organization act. (c) Geographical and political proximity of work councils and political parties to the labor union in question, and the relationship between these actual agents, who embody the power of the organizations, shape the ability of a local labor union.<sup>40</sup> (d) The relationship between the workers' power and union power is reciprocal: Labor unions provide associational power to the workers, that is to say an instituted ground for collective action and workers' structural power is the only source for labor union structural power. (e) However, such ideal representation relationship is not necessarily found on the actual relationship between the union and the workers. That is to say, workers' power may not be represented by the labor union. Rather, this relationship is always communicated through various mechanisms, forms, agents, and ideas which are the subjects of empirical study.

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<sup>40</sup> I forfeit the role of working class parties and worker states in my case study. Simply because the working class political parties have negligible power in Turkey and none of the labor unions are in contact with any worker states even if there is any.

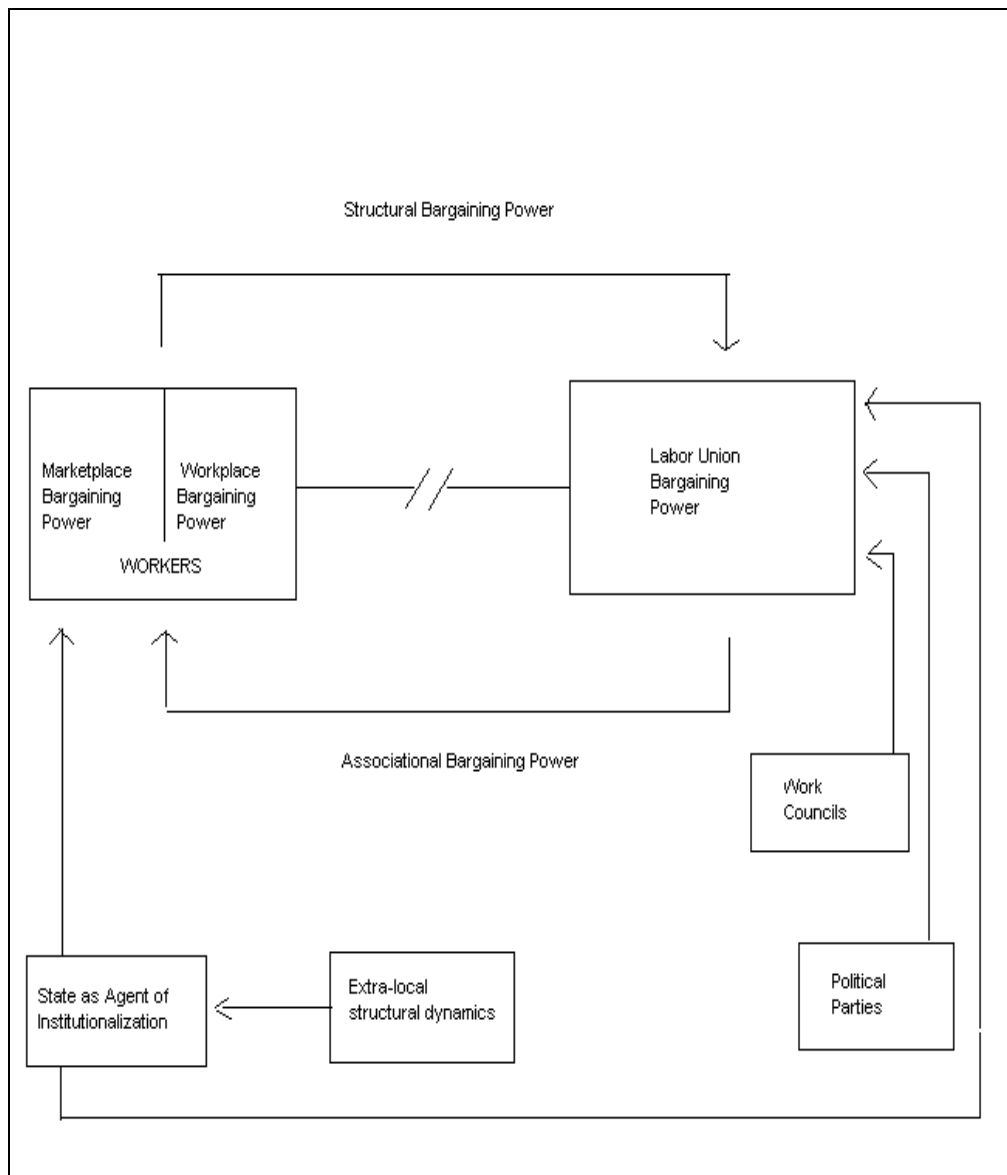


Fig. 1. The sources of workers' power

This schematic conceptualization of the objective determinants of union power helps to better grasp how the changing structural and institutional factors affected on the mineworkers and their union potential power. As the following pages will illustrate such changes in the post-1980 era have been disabling for GMIS. Against these disabling dynamics, GMIS adopted a defensive strategy and “preservation of the status quo, staticness, rigidity, and *resistance*”<sup>41</sup> as its principal weapons. Moreover, despite its declining potential power, it seems a long way from actualizing its present

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<sup>41</sup> Ravelli (1996): 115

potentiality.

Why is so? This research also asks this question to the mineworkers, inquires how they perceive their unions and interpret its decline: Do they see the decline of their union as a necessary outcome of global factors beyond their control? Does the globalization discourse circulate with the basin? Or do they hold the union leaders responsible for the process? And to what extent do their perceptions contribute to the working of the unions? How do their perceptions inform their sense of belonging to their class identity? Mineworkers answers to such questions inform the reader about the relationship between the challenges the mineworkers and their unions face and workers' perceptions, ideologies, myths and rhetoric that embrace these processes.

#### Plan of the Study

The corpus of this work has three parts: In the following chapter, the structural power of Zonguldak mineworkers is studied in three sections: First, in order to depict how workers potential power that derives from their class structural location in the relations of production, an historical account of evolution of the state and capital relations and their effect on labor is presented. The emphasis of this section is on the trends of gradual deindustrialization and indirect privatization in the basin that took place during the post-1980 era. The ways in which the outcomes of these trends—namely decline and fragmentation of production processes and labor market—negatively affected mineworkers' and GMİS' potential power is the premium concern of this section. Second, the potential power of mineworkers that derive from their location in the industrial linkages is studied. This section suggests that loosening of the linkages between the hard coal production and iron-steel sector diminished mineworkers' potential power. The last section gives a historical account that illustrates how the growth of production was integrated with the urban growth

and urban setting in the case of Zonguldak. The integration of production and urban space has consolidated mineworkers' work and daily lives with the results of workers having common practices. How mineworkers' common practices nourished and formed a class culture under such circumstances is the main concern of this section. It also points that the structural changes labor encountered in Zonguldak in the course of post-1980s also had disadvantageous consequences for dissolution of workers' common practices.

The third chapter is on GMİS, the only labor union now organized among the public sector mineworkers in Zonguldak basin. Approaching GMİS as the only association that institutionalizes workers' organized power and that transmits associational power to the workers, this chapter analyzes its traits through the course of its history through the lenses of its relation to four elements: (i) the legislative framework in Turkey, (ii) The Confederation Workers' Unions in Turkey, (TÜRK-İŞ, *Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*), (iii) inter-party relations in Turkey, and (iv) its member base. Its underlying problematic is to understand GMİS' contemporary weak and passive status after the remarkable labor movement it organized in 1990-1991 as a response to the challenges the mineworkers faced in the post-1980 era.

The fourth chapter is on GMİS representatives' and mineworkers' perceptions. In parallels with the recurring references in their discourses, such perceptions were categorized and presented in three spatial axes: First, the union leaders refer to the global factor whereas the mineworkers mostly to local even individualistic circumstances when asked to locate the problems before their unions. How globalization discourse reproduced by the union leaders disables the union's attitudes towards the challenges it faces with is what this section tries to depict.

Second, both the union and the mineworkers identify the city of Zonguldak and the coalmining work. Departing from this, this section tries to grasp how Zonguldak and the identity of *Zonguldaklılık* relate to the workers' class identity and effect their union's power. Third, country and nation are recurring themes in workers' perceptions. Such notions were interlinked with the union's defense of labor rights during the course of 1990-1991 movements. However, such interconnections seem to be ruptured in the perceptions of workers now. Rather sensual affiliation with the nation is on the foreground that prepares a ground for the union to have nationalist stance that disfavors workers class interests.

This is a humble yet passionate study. On the one hand, it is on Zonguldak public sector mineworkers. It is an attempt for a better understanding of the objective and subjective dynamics behind the union decline in the Zonguldak basin. On the other hand, it is on late global capitalism. It tries to contribute to the literature that analyzes the effects and remaking of global capitalism in distinct localities.

## CHAPTER 2:

### STRUCTURES, INSTITUTIONS, AND LABOR

The contiguity between the workers' workplace and marketplace power and labor's structural position in the relations of production was established in the previous chapter. It is this labor's structural position in Zonguldak basin that we seek to investigate in this chapter. Through an analysis of the transformations in the structure of the state-capital relations, the loosening of industrial linkages and dismantling of Zonguldak as an economic-social landscape, the dynamics that have effected labor's structural position over the course of post-1980 are studied. However, only if the history of the formation of these dynamics is covered one will be able to better grasp the changes in the previous three decades. Hence, although the focus of this chapter is on the post-1980 period, it gives a very brief summary of the 180 years of the basin and depicts how the above-mentioned structural relations have evolved.

This chapter has three parts: In the first section, it focuses on the development of the state-capital relationship through out the history of the basin. Then it illustrates how the reconfiguration of the state-capital relationship due to the practices of indirect privatization and gradual deindustrialization that took place over course of post-1980s, have made labor worse off. In the second section, the productive linkages in which coalmine production is located are studied. Depicting the loosening of the industrial linkages between the domestic hard coal sector and the iron-steel industry, we show how the strategically importance of Zonguldak mineworkers have decreased. The third section is on dismantling of Zonguldak as a city of production. The erosion of Zonguldak's character of a city of production, we argue has fragmented miners' daily practices and limited the class identity

formations.

### The State-Capital Relations

This section gives a brief summary of the state-capital relationship's historical evolution and its multiple effects on labor.<sup>42</sup> I approach to the history of the state-capital relationship from three vantage points: (i) The ways in which capital required for the growth of production have been supplied (whether the state or the private sector was predominant in capital accumulation processes), (ii) The ways in which the basin is administered (whether the administration was centralized by the state or dismantled by the private companies), (iii) The ways in which labor power necessary for production has been supplied. (Whether the labor power was supplied through free labor form or compulsory labor form.)

#### The Long Century of the Basin, 1830-1940

The first recorded hard coal production in the Zonguldak basin dates back to 1829.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> There is a growing literature on the history of the basin. The path breaking works, Donald Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006) and Nurşen Gürboğa, *Mine Workers, the State and War: The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Basin as the Site of Contest, 1920-1947* (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, 2005) are worth mentioning here since they study the basin through the lenses of the workers experiences and depict the role of labor in its own making. Such history writing that assigns primary role to labor's experiences unlike the orthodox Ottoman historiography that regards them as *quantite negligeeable*, is likely to be improved given the recently explored archival data (See Donald Quataert and Nadir Özbek, "The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Mines: A Catalog of Archival Documents", *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 23, no. 1 (1999), 55-67). However, in the historical account of this chapter, despite the acknowledgements of these works, the state-capital relations are taken primary and its effect on labor is summarized. There are two reasons behind why we did not give an emphasis to the active role of labor in the evolution of the relations of production in the basin: (1) Although above-mentioned valuable works give detailed analyzes of particular periods, such history writing yet to be developed to give an account of the periods after 1947. Since the primary purpose of this section is to give a comparative analyze within the whole course of history, the lenses of the state-capital relations and their effects on labor gives an opportunity for such a systematic overview. (2) Theoretically speaking, the analysis of the structural location of labor in the relations of production demands the study of the production capacity, labor process and administration of the basin. Historically speaking, labor had a secondary role in the evolution of these dynamics in the basin. Thus, the reason why we regard the state and capital as the premium explanatory factors rather than labor in depicting the latter's position in the relations of production.

<sup>43</sup> If not cited otherwise, the historical data presented in this section is compiled from Ahmet Naim, *Zonguldak Havzası (Uzun Mehmet'ten Bugüne Kadar)* (Istanbul, 1934); Sina Çıladı, *Zonguldak Havzasındaki Karşı Eylemler* (publishing date is not provided). Ekrem Murat Zaman, *Zonguldak*

In the early years of the basin, coal production was dependent on the Ottoman navy's increasing demands of coal. Ottoman navy bought its first steamboat named “*Sürat*” from Britain in 1827. The number of steamboats in the navy increased after its reformation in 1829. Then, the basin also had provided hard coal to meet several Ottoman institutions' (namely Tophane, Tersane and Darphane<sup>44</sup>) needs of fuel. Although, some<sup>45</sup> also point to the British commercial and military boats that had been buying coal from the region, the records of such economic activities are absent. Whereas the demand for hard coal production was limited to the needs of military and administrative institutions in the last three quarters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the demand for hard coal had flourished in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due the increasing demands of power generation and industrial sectors.

The increasing coal demands required industrial growth of the coal sector and higher levels of productivity. For these aims to be accomplished however three inputs were required: First, construction of facilities of production and infrastructure necessitated capital. Second, administrative mechanisms had to be institutionalized to regulate the coal production units and coal trade. Third, coal production was a labor-intensive sector in a high degree. This required increasing number of workers in the site of production, as well as discipline and control instruments to make the laborers docile.

The ways in which such inputs were provided shaped the state-capital

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*Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı* (Ankara: TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri Odası, 2004). Sadrettin Enver, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzamız* (Ankara: Güzel Sanatlar Matbaası, 1941).

<sup>44</sup> Kadir Tuncer, *Aguilla, Barbara, Kıvırcık* (Zonguldak: Tusak Yayınları, 2004); Ahmet Makal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çalışma İlişkileri, 1850-1920 : Türkiye Çalışma İlişkileri Tarihi* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1997): 160.

<sup>45</sup> One example to this view is Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Amasra'nın Üç Bin Yılı* (İstanbul: Zonguldak Valiliği Yayınları, 1987). Cited in Ekrem Murat Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı* (Ankara: TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri Odası, 2004): 28.

relations in the first ninety years of the basin. As we shall see, labor was submissive to such relations in its absence of labor organizations. Through the axes of these inputs that shaped the state-capital relations, we categorize and study this long period in four sub-periods: (i) 1848-1867, (ii) 1867-1914, (iii) 1914-1920, and (iv) 1920-1940.

Table 1. The Forms of the State-Capital Relations

Sub-Periods	Capital Problem	Administration Problem	Labor Power Problem
1848-1867	Capital is provided by the British supported Galata Bankers	Authoritarian yet unsuccessful attempts for a centralized administration	Free Labor in the 1840s, Authoritarian proletarianization of the peasantry
1867-1914	The nourishment of the private foreign capital; beginning of monopolization of French capital <i>via</i> Ereğli Company	Shift of administration from military control to civilian state control	Shift to disciplinary methods from Authoritarian oppression
1914-1920	Transfer of French shares to German companies	Administrative Control of Germany, then invasion of France	First legally defined labor relations
1920-1940	State Controlled Capital Accumulation	<i>Towards Centralization of Administration</i>	First Labor Law, Act of Associations. No class organization is Allowed

#### Authoritarian-Embryonic Capitalism, 1848-1867

Although the first records about the coal extraction dates back to 1829, the first administrative mechanism in the basin is established in 1848. Beginning from 1848, the state sought the ways to provide capital, regulate coal production and coal trade. Despite its authoritarian attempts for centralized control of capital flows, production output and coal sales, the levels of production remained more limited and less regulated than expected.

Through out this sub-period, the Ottoman state had to allow the private

capital to operate the mines. The modality of the relationship of the state and private capital was similar to contemporary system of *rödevans* as we shall see in the following pages. That is to say, the ownership of the whole basin belonged to the state. It did not sell the pits to the private entrepreneurs rather rented and allowed them to operate the mines.

The first capitalists in the basin who operated the small-scale mining enterprises were British linked Galata bankers. They already had accumulated capital that they provided through their mercantilist practices in the Ottoman lands. They transferred a limited portion of their capital to the basin expecting high revenues from the coal trade through the links they already have. These bankers had an advantageous status in the basin. They had privileges from the state in return of the loans they gave to it. Britain had always been concerned about the revenues of the Galata bankers in their mercantilist practices and occasionally intervened to their relationship with the state. However, she did not directly involve to the basin in this period perhaps because of the limited level of the revenues provided from basin.

Between 1827 and 1848, small workshop like mines without a central administrative mechanism existed in the province. The need to control and manage these small coalmining enterprises raised the problem of administration. The Ottoman state aimed to form authoritarian mechanisms of control and administration however these attempts were unsuccessful. *Sultan Abdülmecid* (who was the *par excellence* owner of the Ottoman territories and the mines) sent *Kapıcıbaşı Ahmet Nazif Ağa* and Architect *Hüsnü Bey* to the basin to determine the borders of the basin in 1848. After this first attempt to regulate the basin, he announced a decree, the first legal document to administer the region, and the basin has been included to the territory of Property of Ministry of Foundations (*Evkaf-ı Celile-i Mülûkhane*).

According to the decree, the Ministry was the only responsible institution to regulate the trade of coal. Until 1865, the Ministry forced the companies to sell their coal to the Ottoman navy and other state institutions, and the revenue gathered from these companies were distributed to the religious charities.

In 1867, formally named as “*Ereğli Maden-ı Hümayun İdaresinn Nizannamesi*” but commonly known as *Dilaver Paşa Regulations* (named after the Ereğli governor and Head of Mine Commission) was declared. These regulations also aimed the authoritarian control of the coal market through banning the free coal trade practices and forcing the companies to sell of their production to the military governance of the basin.

Labor was firstly “imported” and then “localized” however in both cases it is oppressed in the absence of any institutional labor relations. Until 1861, the small coal companies mostly supplied the labor power. Faced with the lack of experienced miners and local peasant’s refusal to work in the mines,<sup>46</sup> the British entrepreneurs brought British engineers as well as the Croats and Montenegrins, and Dalmatians. The first recorded local workers were unskilled youngsters aged between 14-18 from the near villages who worked under the surveillance of the Croatian workers<sup>47</sup> who were employed due to the increasing production to meet the demand.

The localization (thus Turkification) of the labor force has started with *indirectly* and *directly forced* proleterianization of the peasants. On the one hand, the state could not pay the money it bought from the coal companies (Zafirpulos Company 1859-1860, British Coal Company 1860-1861.) It applied forced taxation

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<sup>46</sup> Donald Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006): 54

<sup>47</sup> Bahri Savaşkan, *Zonguldak Maden Kömürü Havzasının Tarihçesi* (Zonguldak: İlkadım Matbaası, 1993)cited in Ekrem Murat Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı* (Ankara: TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri Odası, 2004): 29.

method and collected taxes from the neighboring villages to pay these costs. The peasantry became propertyless to pay these high taxes and then turned their faces to the mines for their subsistence. On the other hand, the Ottoman state initiated the authoritarian military control in the basin, which caused directly forced proletarianization through *Dilaver Paşa* Regulations. According to these new regulations the villagers had to supply wood to be used in the mines, and animals to be used to carry coal. Fourteen villages had to send their male peasants aged between 13 and 50, twelve day a month to work in the mines on a rotational basis. Hence, the peasants were forced to be industrial workers.

However, the limits of authoritarian practices were experienced when the most of the mine operators bankrupted and workers' efficiency decreased due to the unpaid wages: Serbian, Slavic, Greek, Armenian mine operators protested the state after their unpaid coal sales, coal black market emerged and there were numerous escapee from the work. Coal production decreased enormously with the scarcity of private capital and investment as well as the lack of disciplined labor power.

#### Liberal-Disciplinary Early Capitalism, 1867-1914

Between 1867 and 1914, the state-capital-labor relations had changed drastically due to three major transformations: (i) the Ottoman state had lost its control on private coal operators and foreign capital flows to the basin; (ii) The private capital grew in the basin and Ereğli Coal Company established limited monopoly; (c) The authoritarian control of labor power had been relaxed and were replaced with disciplinary methods.

The state-capital relations had been reconfigured due to the limitations of the levels of productivity and capital accumulation. As a result of the pressure of the private capital, the state lifted the ban of coal sales in the free market and allowed the

sale of the 40% of the total production in the free market in 1867. This prepared the necessary ground for the private capital to flourish in the basin: Courtg Company, Karamanyan Company, Kasaptarla, Hallaçyan, Gregoviç, Societe d'Heraclee Osmanlı, Boyacıyan Hacı Anesti, and Rombaki Company had become the major producers with increasing revenues. The revenues of these companies doubled due to the inadequacy of the 60% of coal production for the needs of the state. The state had to buy from these companies to supply coal to its institutions and paid up to 50-70% of the original market price of coal to these companies.

The military control of the region is abandoned and administration is civilized. The control of the region is taken from the Ministry of Naval Forces (*Bahariyye Nezareti*), first is given to Ministry of Public Works and Transportation and then to the Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture of Forests and Mines. This transition of the management form military to the civilian branches of the state marks the end of military administration of the basin after forty-three years. Given the establishment of the free coal market, the participation of the state in this market as an economic agent, and cease of the military control over the basin, one may argue that the state-capital relations had taken liberal form. Moreover, in this sub-period there is a tendency of monopolization of production in the hands of the foreign private entrepreneurs.

The first monopolization in the basin had taken place in this period. The high profiting industry of hard coal mining attracted the French capital through Ereğli Company (*Societe anonyme Ottomane d'Heraclee*). It had become one of the biggest industrial companies in the Ottoman state under the civilian administration of the basin and the absence of any labor rights. Not it only employed the highest number of workers (5185 workers) but also it was the most profiting company from its sales

(44,5 million *kuruş*, approximately 44.4 % of the total revenue). It had been controlling 79 % of total coal production in 1902, and 77 % in 1907.<sup>48</sup> The other relatively small enterprises were Balya-Karaaydın Company (French Capital) *Kozlu Kömür Madenleri Osmanlı A.Ş.*, *Bender-Ereğli Birleşik Kömür İşletmeleri A.Ş.* (Belgian and German Capital) and *Maadin Osmanlı A.Ş* (Russian Capital). What differentiates Ereğli Company from the others was not only its size but also its investments on the infrastructure building to raise productivity and efficiency. Its capital investment raised up to 186 million *kuruş*.

Growth of private capital accumulation, technological developments of production process, and the growth of infrastructure in the basin transformed the basin from a mining town to an industrial mining city. Despite the Ottoman State's privileges to Ereğli Company, there were numerous disputes among the state and the company.<sup>49</sup> Such disputes brought the 1908 mining law, which aimed to institutionalize the relationship between the state and private capital in the basin. Although, the miners were also unsympathetic towards the French company, in some cases there were incidences of spontaneous actions against it,<sup>50</sup> this law did not bring any benefits to them. It was rather labor-blind and far away from institutionalizing the labor-capital relations under a labor contract. Elements of capitalism had been institutionalized, that is to say the free market was emerging, capital was accumulating and centralizing, the state-capital relationship was being regulated. However, another defining trait of capitalism was still absent in this sub-period: Free labor under labor contract. Rather the modernization / capitalization of the relations

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<sup>48</sup> E. Atilla Aytekin, *Tarlalardan Ocaklara, Sefaletten Mücadeleye: Zonguldak-Ereğli Kömür Havzası İşçileri 1848 - 1922* (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2007): 33.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*: 33-36.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: 34.

of production was not bringing modernization of labor relations rather was making use of its absence.

In the context of labor-blind institutionalization of industrial relations, labor was disciplined through the organization of the space the workers inhabited. The demand for labor power was growing with the increase in coal production and in revenues. This led to migration to the basin and the demand for housing increased. Given the constraints of mountainous geography of the region, the organization of the city space appeared as a problem. The Ottoman state declared *Tezkere-i Samiye Number 289* which made official approval to construct any building compulsory. The state prepared official maps and organized the city space around the production site. The organization of the city space, which will be discussed in detail in Section 2.3, was aiming to construct the city according to the needs of production that caused the strong linkages between the daily practices and working life. The state approached to labor as a *mass* whose daily lives had to be organized and disciplined however kept the worker-capitalist relationship arbitrary leaving the capitalist full control over the workers' working life.

#### The War Regime and the Institutionalization of Labor Relations, 1914-1921

The control of the Ottoman state over the basin had totally ceased with the First World War. The power relations between the German and French militaries determined the relations of production in the region.

The dominance of the French capital in the basin began to cease prior to the First World War when the Ottoman state-supported German capitalists began to buy shares from the Ereğli Company. Germany also got the administrative control of the basin through its dominance on the War Coal Center which was established to administer the region during the war years. However, when the Ottoman-German

alliance lost the war, *Entente Forces Coal Commission* replaced the control of War Coal Center. And the French army invaded the basin to “protect the rights of Ereğli Company” by referring her legal rights of intervention deriving from to the Montrose Treaty. The war regime in the region lasted until the end of the anti-imperialist struggle, which brought the establishment of a new Turkish state.

On the 11 May 1921, the national assembly announced the first legal document (*Havza-i Fahmiye’de Kömür Tozlarının Menafi-i Umumiyesine Olarak Furuhtuna Dair Kanun*) that regulates the worker welfare. With this law, the revenues obtained from the coal dust would then be used for subsidizing the health costs of mineworkers. However, this law could not be put into practice because the coal dust could not be accumulated and stored. On the 10 September 1921, the first labor act in Turkish history was introduced in the basin: *Havza-i Fahmiye Amele Kanunu*. With this document, the modern labor relations, that is to say employment relations based on and regulated by a written law, has begun in the basin. First time in the modern Turkish history, the relationship between the capitalists and the workers was legally defined. This law regulated the working conditions, the working hours and provided limited social security mechanisms to the worker.

#### The Crises and Statism, 1921-1940

This sub-period is marked with the global economic crises, which were responded by the statist policies. The global coal crisis in 1926 and the Global Economic Crisis in 1929 increased the world price of coal. Due to the high global prices, the national economy’s dependency on domestic coal increased. Consequently, the new Turkish state put restrictions on coal export and began to invest more on the mines to increase productivity. Türkiye İş Bankası, established on 26 August 1924 “with private capital and with the authority to accept deposits, in order to operate in

corporate and retail banking activities, in addition to initiating or participating in all kinds of financial and industrial sector corporations as may be required.<sup>51</sup>” It then on supplied a high ratio of the needs of capital for the state-led industrial growth, including the public sector in mining. These changes to statist policies in the region was in parallel with the nation-wide change from liberal economic to statist industrial development that is instituted with the Law of Promoting Industry (*Tevvik-i Sanayi Kanunu*) in 1927.

The role of the state as a capitalist and producer in the basin was compatible with the protectionist statism it followed with early 1930 nation-wide. “The protectionist-statist”<sup>52</sup> policies had been the most crucial developments in the basin: The private mining enterprises could not afford the restricted conditions imposed by the state. The smaller mining companies sold their pits to the state in 1935, and Ereğli Company sold its shares to the state in 1936. The state then became the sole owner and manager of production in the basin.

The basin’s new character of being owned and managed by the state, as well as the various other protectionist and statist policies did not bring a significant refinement for the status of labor. Some argued that the statist turn in the state-capital relations aimed at providing capital accumulation for the private capital. In this transitional phase of state-led capitalist development, the arguments further, aimed to overcome the capital savings problem that became even severer with the global crises:

[C]orporatism can be observed in the third world countries after the

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<sup>51</sup> Türkiye İşbankası A.Ş., “Unconsolidated Financial Report For The Period Between 01 January – 30 September 2005 Together With Independent Auditor’s Limited Review Report Thereon,” 30 September 2005, <https://isbank.com.tr/ir/dosya/Isbank30092005tas.pdf> (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

<sup>52</sup> See Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisad Tarihi: 1908-1985* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1990) for a detailed analysis of protectionist-statist policies in the 1930s in Turkey.

accumulation crises. The formula of corporatism in such cases is to provide capital accumulation for the private sector through the protection of the neo-mercantilist policies of state capitalism and through *control of labor power* (Emphasis is mine).<sup>53</sup>

Although the state-capital relations changed dramatically, the state's attitude to labor continued to be authoritarian and disciplinary. The first labor law is introduced in 1936 for such purposes:

“The state controlled the political life through the single party regime and controlled the economic life through its statist economic policies. And the Labor Law served as the state's principal instrument for control of labor and labor power.”<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, the 1938 Act of Associations restricted any class based associations such as trade unions also represents the authoritarian state control of labor through denial of labor rights (See Chapter 3) Such labor offensive and class blind statism aimed at providing accumulation of private capital, which can be defined as corporatism.

#### Nationalization and Compulsory Labor, 1940-1980

The production output grew enormously after 1940 with raising number of workers employed in basin. Three dynamics made these growth possible: (i) Capital supplied by the foreign aid was transferred to technological investment in the basin; (ii) administration is centralized and the ownership of the pits were fully nationalized; (iii) docile labor power is supplied through compulsory labor regime and then corporatist control of labor.

Coal extracted from Zonguldak basin carried a great importance for fueling the industrial development in Turkey. Due to the Second World War, the dependency of the Turkish state on the domestic coal extremely increased. In order to secure and increase the coal production, the state took a serious step in 1940. On 30 May 1940,

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<sup>53</sup> Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de Korporatizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Tek Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1920-1946* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1999: 366

it announced “*Ereğli Kömür Havzasındaki Ocakların Devletçe İşletilmesi Hakkında Kanun*”. With this law, the state institution of Ereğli Coal Institution (EKİ, *Ereğli Kömür İşletmeleri*) is established and the management and the operation of all the pits were gathered in the hands of the state. Moreover, with “fusion” of the administration, the management of all the pits were collected in a single organizational structure administrated by the experts that are appointed by the state. With the establishment of Etibank, the financial control of all the mining activities in Turkey was collected together. Etibank supplied the necessary capital for the investment in and operation of the pits. Such state capitalist practices in the basin lasted until 1984<sup>55</sup>.

The vital importance of coal production made the state look for measures to guarantee the labor power. The compulsory labor regime had been already introduced since 1937 with the compulsory mining work for the criminals. Until 1950, 1500 worker-criminals were employed annually. Moreover, the soldiers were forced to work in the basin in 1943.

The most dramatic compulsory labor practice began with the law of “*mükellefiyet*” (“Obligation” - which is commonly known as the second *mükellefiyet* after the Dilaver Paşa Regulations). The state—in order to ensure the labor supply during the war years in which the coal production carried enormous strategic importance—used coercive methods to draw the villagers in the Zonguldak province. These villager-workers were employed in the rotational basis: they spent half of the year in their village, the other in the pits. This had three major consequences: (i) The state who became the sole owner and the manager of the basin with establishment of

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<sup>55</sup> See Erol Kahveci, “The Miners of Zonguldak ,” *Work and Occupation in Modern Turkey*, 173-200 (London and New York: Mansell, 1996).

EKİ, applied practices of coercion and violence on the workers and villagers, and it intensified its existence in the region. (ii) Republican People's Party asked for the consent of the people in the region to ensure the compulsory labor and the propaganda practices helped the paternalistic ideology to deepen. (iii) The agricultural-based economy of the region collapsed due to the labor power fleeing from the villages to work in the mines.<sup>56</sup> The economy of the region became more dependent on the coal production. These dynamics brought radical changes in the state-capital relationship: (a) The state has become the sole capitalist in the region through using its coercive power, (b) The relationship between the state and labor became more paternalistic in ideological scale, (c) The villagers lost their agricultural sources for subsistence and they were forced to be proletariats, the people who depend on the wage for their subsistence.

If coercive control of labor was the one method of the state to accumulate capital through expropriating surplus labor *via* authoritarian means, investing on “dead labor power”, that is to say on increasing the levels of productivity through investing on the technology had been the other method. However, the state lacked necessary capital to transfer to the technological developments. Three international aids helped it to accomplish such goals as the table below illustrates:

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<sup>56</sup> Nurşen Gürboğa, *Mine Workers, the State and War: The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Basin as the Site of Contest, 1920-1947* (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, 2005).

Table 2. International Aids and credits (1950-1974)<sup>57</sup>

Type of Aid	Years	Amount
Marshall Aid	1950 - 1956	103.5 Million dollars (600 Million Dollars in 1995 values)
Credit from Development Loan Fund	1961 - 1963	14.5 Million Dollars (51 Million dollars in 1995 values)
International Development Credit	1969 - 1974	21.5 Million Dollars (28 Million Dollars in 1995 values)

With the help of the foreign credits, the total production output had increased and reached its peak with 8,545,000 tonnes/year in 1974 (See Fig. 2). The number of workers had risen from 21,138 workers in 1940 and reached its peak to 42,072 in 1978. The rate of the rise in the number of workers in 1942-1950, 1951-1960, 1961-1970, 1971-1980 had been 2.96%, 3.16%, -1.37%, 1.84% consecutively. In short, the state owned industry with foreign aid oriented investments led the hard coal industry to develop. The state became a giant producer in the basin in which numerous workers produced and live.

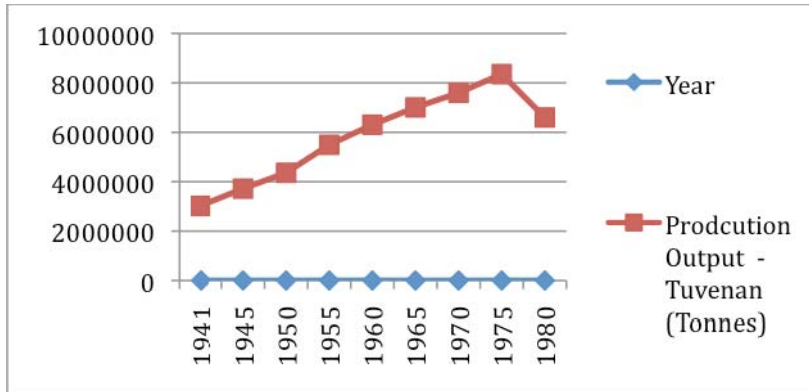


Fig. 2. Total production output (1940-1980)<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Engin and Ali Osman Yılmaz Arıoğlu, *Dünya'da Taşkömürü Madenciliğine Genel Bakış ve Zonguldak Taşkömürü Havzası'nın Değerlendirilmesi* (Zonguldak: Türkiye 13. Kömür Kongresi Bildiriler Kitabı, 2002): 424.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.: 424.

## Dismantling of Production: Indirect Privatization and Gradual Deindustrialization, 1980-2009

Gradual deindustrialization and indirect privatization have been the major trends of state-capital relations' transfigurations in the course of post-1980 in the Zonguldak basin. On the one hand, terminating the coal production in the basin had been on the agenda of the neo-liberal governments since 1980s. However, coal production has not been terminated rather reduced gradually in public sector mines. The total number of mineworkers employed in the state owned hard coal industry sharply declined from approximately 42,000 to approximately 9,000 in 2008 with the severe decreases in the hard coal production output from 8.5 million tones in 1974 to 2.3 million tones in 2008 (See Fig. 2). On the other hand, a remarkable amount of coal production shifted to the coal companies owned by the private capital. Due to the legal constrains that restricted sale of the ownership, the processes of privatization have taken an indirect path. TTK has sold licenses to operate the coalmines since 1989 through the system known as *rödovans* (after French word *redevance*.) By 2009, the private sector through *rödovans* system extract over 10 % of total hard coal production in 500 pits and employs 5000 mineworkers most of them through their 200 subcontractors.<sup>59</sup>

This section begins with describing the dynamics behind such trends. It approaches to the dynamics behind the processes of privatization and deindustrialization from three vantage points: (i) The effect of national-scale macro economic policies on the structural transformations that has taken place in Zonguldak basin, (ii) The legal universe that institutionalized these processes, (iii) The fundamentals of the neo-liberal logic behind state elite's discourses regarding

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<sup>59</sup> Türkiye Taşkömürü Kurumu, *TTK İnternet Sitesi*, 01 Kasım 2008, <http://www.taskomuru.gov.tr/index.php?page=sayfagoster&id=15> (Retrieved on 17 May 2009.)

privatization and deindustrialization processes. Then the section explains how the state-capital relations altered with disadvantageous consequences in the structural power of mineworkers.

### Trends of Gradual Deindustrialization and Indirect Privatization

The transformation of the state-capital-labor relationship in the post-1980 era in the Zonguldak basin is significantly related to the path Turkey followed for *integration with the global capitalism and development*: (a) Turkey has opened its economy to the international capital market and liberalized its import regime and financial flows along its borders however without adequate control mechanisms,<sup>60</sup> (b) the public-led import substitution model of development has been changed to the model of private-sector-led export oriented industrialization.<sup>61</sup>

These had two significant direct effects on the Zonguldak basin: On the one hand, the liberation of import regime led to the decline of several productive sectors<sup>62</sup> including the coal extraction in Zonguldak. With the liberation of import regime, coal extracted from the Zonguldak basin became indispensable to compete with the imported coal. However, Zonguldak coal did not have adequate competitive advantage in comparison to imported coal. There are two major reasons that limited its competitive advantage: First, the necessary investments to increase the levels of productivity were not adequate. Limited levels of productivity resulted in limitations for decreasing the costs of production per unit. High production costs limited the domestic coal's capacity to compete in the coal market with floating market prices.

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<sup>60</sup> Irma Adelman and Erineç Yeldan, 2000, "The End of Developmental State?," *The Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* cited in Erineç Yeldan, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Türkiye Ekonomisi: Bölüşüm, Birikim ve Büyüme* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000): 23

<sup>61</sup> Erineç Yeldan, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Türkiye Ekonomisi: Bölüşüm, Birikim ve Büyüme* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları): 31-63.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*: 25

Consequently, previously major buyers of Zonguldak coal, Karabük Iron and Steel Factory as well as Ereğli Iron and Steel Factory preferred the cheaper imported coal that was available with cross border coal trade (See the section titled “The Productive Linkages”). Second, TTK’s prices were controlled to supply cheap energy source to the country’s key industrial sectors<sup>63</sup>. Although the production cost per unit was higher than the production of imported coal, sale price of coal was kept below the market value. The result has been the increase in the losses.

On the other hand, the alteration of the national strategy of development led to a reconfiguration of the shares of public and private sector coal production. The investments to TTK which is a state economic enterprise (SEE) declined which lead its production capacity to drop off whereas there was a huge bulge in the production capacity of the private coal companies. The *indirect* privatization practices has begun in 1989 and accelerated in mid-1990s. Through the practices of *rödevans* system, TTK aimed to make the private mining firms operate economically less advantaged pits. With this system, the number of pits operated by the state declined while the number of pits operated by the private sector increased. However, in the lack of the private sector’s access to global coal market and to coal markets controlled by mafia in metropolises,<sup>64</sup> these companies have sold their production to TTK’s previous buyers such as Çatalağzı Power Plant. In another words, the total production output in the basin did not rise rather the share of the state sector was transferred to the private sector. Hence, not only the practices of deindustrialization but also

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<sup>63</sup> 30.4 million dollars/year between 1972-1979, 18.2 million dollars/year between 1980-1989, 47.8 million dollars/year between 1990-1994, 28.9 million dollars/year between 1972-1994. Source: Şaziye Kaya, *Türkiye Taşkömürü Kurumu'nun Özelleştirilmesinin Sosyo Ekonomik Sonuçlarına Yönelik Bir Araştırma* (Bolu: Unpublished Thesis, 1999): 109

<sup>64</sup> Kadir Tuncer, *Tarihten Günümüze Zonguldak'ta İşçi Sınıfının Durumu* (İstanbul: Göçebe Yayınları, 1998).

privatization resulted in the decline in the industrial growth in the province.

Privatization and deindustrialization were not mechanical outcomes of the structural changes in global scale. Rather, the neo-liberal governments made these processes possible through their policies. Four legislations have been the frameworks of the institutionalization of privatization of Zonguldak basin and the industries that it sells its production:

First, on the 24 January 1980, “economic stability program” was accepted. With this program supplying the production inputs from the foreign markets and increasing the competitiveness for the production inputs, decreasing of the share of the state in the economy, and liberalizing the foreign trade was planned.<sup>65</sup>

International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank supported program also aimed to accomplish these goals through controlling the wages. Second, the Enactment announced on 20 May 1983 proposed the privatization of EKİ and Karabük Iron-Steel Factory. This enactment is followed by the reorganization of EKİ and formation of TTK on 11 November 1983. With this reorganization shrinking the size of the institute is aimed. The reorganization of the institution as well as the endeavors for privatization of the ownership and management slowed down with the strike of Zonguldak workers in late 1990 and 1991. Third, IMF program again proposed shrinking of the institution and the closure of Karabük Iron-Steel Factory if it is not sold to the private capital on 5 April 1994. And last, the law of privatization has been issued on 27 November 1994 and various SEEs including TTK have been taken into the program of privatization. The rehabilitation program to adapt TTK for privatization is put into practice after this program.

These legislations were supported by the discourse of neo-liberalism through

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<sup>65</sup> Salih Köse, “24 Ocak 1980 ve 5 Nisan 1994 İstikrar Programlarının Karşılaştırması ,” *Devlet Planlama Tekilatı İnternet Sitesi*, <http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/planlama/42nciyil/koses.pdf> (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

which the state elites and capitalists tried to legitimize neo-liberal practices of privatization and deindustrialization. Although the main reason behind the decline in the quantity of production and of the revenues were result of the limited competitive advantage of Zonguldak coal due to the lack of necessary investments, the state elites publicized the reasons differently. The problems of the basin were attributed to the *essential* inefficiency of production in the SEEs, labor costs due to the high wages and the inappropriate *nature* of Zonguldak coal to compete in the global market. The spokesmen of the neo-liberal governments, however, did not try to overcome the residual decline in production and revenues through investments and better pricing mechanism. Rather, they supported “privatization” of TTK and the closure of pits (“deindustrialization”) through reproducing a discourse in which efficiency is presented as the premium worth whereas state ownership is taken essentially inefficient. Ömer Barutçu’s<sup>66</sup> words illustrate the primacy given to the privatization of Zonguldak basin:

Transition from an economic structure based on public sector towards to a private sector based economic structure carry great importance for the future of Zonguldak. (...) I call TTK into action. Sell the inefficient pits immediately with the conditions of competitiveness. Sell TTK’s houses and lands too.<sup>67</sup>

Herein, Barutçu refers to a *fundamental* economic restructuring, to a grand plan of privatization, rather than solely a policy change, as the solution for the residual decline of revenues and production in the basin. His reasoning is a synecdoche of the two assumptions of the pro-privatization logic: (a) Efficiency is the outcome of competitiveness, which can be achieved *via* privatization. (b) Inefficiency of the SEEs is an automatic outcome of the state ownership. From this enclosed logic that

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<sup>66</sup> Then a state minister.

<sup>67</sup> Ömer Barutçu, “Açılış Konuşması,” in 2. *Zonguldak Kurultayı* (Zonguldak: GMİS, 1992):10-11

equates privatization with efficiency, and locates state ownership within a casual determinacy relationship with inefficiency, derives the logic of deindustrialization. If efficiency is the only goal and state ownership is *necessarily* inefficient, the only way for efficiency is terminating the state owned industry if privatization is not possible. However, an *excess* that cannot be consumed in this enclosed logic is apparent: What will the workers do if they lose their job? The solution for this problem comes from Ersin Faralyalı, the former Minister of Energy and Natural Sources.

(...) We can provide 4000 new jobs. I don't know what these jobs will be but it should definitely not be TTK. I see young friends in this room. We shouldn't make these young people dependent on coal mining and working underground when the service sector is very dominant in the world.<sup>68</sup>

Another crucial question remains unanswered in this train of thought: Why is service sector more preferable than the productive sectors? The solution Faralyalı brings does not derive from the logic of efficiency this time. Rather it comes from *dues ex machina*, from an outer source of the efficiency logic: "Service sector is very dominant in the world." Not the efficiency of the service sector rather its commonality in the world is given as the motivation behind the deindustrialization practices.

If the state bureaucrats accentuate the importance of retreat of the state from the production in Zonguldak basin for the purposes of efficiency as such, İshak Alaton, a famous businessman known as a social democrat points to the role of the state in this new economic structure:

In 1976, the conservatives in Sweden nationalized the ship building

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<sup>68</sup> Ersin Faralyalı, "TTK'yı Birlikte Rehabilitte Edelim" in 2. *Zonguldak Kurultayı* (Zonguldak: GMİS, 1992): 16.

industry, in other words, the state survived the bosses from bankruptcy. In the following six years ship industry continuously lost revenues and caused trouble for the Swedish economy and exploded inflation (...) In 1982, social democrats came to the power again (...) They closed down all of the ship industry. Instead, Volvo truck factories were introduced in the region, computer companies were established. Private sector was stimulated with low interested loans. (...) Today, Sweden is one of the strongest economies on the world.<sup>69</sup>

Alaton not only points to the inefficiency of state owned production but also claims that state ownership favors only the bosses not the workers. If, his argument goes, the state stimulates the private sector with preparing the necessary institutional mechanisms in which they can have low interest loans, the country and *therefore* the workers will be favored in the new structure. And he presents this formula as a social democrat project, as in itself a worker friendly step. Privatization and replacement of coal production in this logic demand the active participation of the state to make the necessary arrangements. Perhaps, presenting the neo-liberal ideology that blankets privatization and deindustrialization as if it is a social democrat project by claiming that these processes will bring benefits to the workers, aims to take the consent of the workers.

The discourse of efficiency was functional in the state elite's practices of privatization in the Zonguldak coal basin. In 1989, first *rödovans* practices were initiated with declared purposes of efficiency. TTK made contract with entrepreneurs and rented its rights to operate pits. TTK had two aims for efficiency with these contracts: On the one hand, rather than spending on the production costs in economically less advantageous pits, it planned to benefit the license fees the entrepreneur would pay. On the other hand, it planned to halt the illegal mining activities in the basin through making the entrepreneurs control such activities in

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<sup>69</sup> İshak Alaton, "Zonguldak'ı Birlikte Kalkındıralım," in 2. *Zonguldak Kurultayı* (Zonguldak: GMİS, 1992): 31.

their licensed territories.<sup>70</sup>

Such practice altered the state-capital relations and had negative consequences on labor:

#### Alteration of the State-Capital Relations

*Rödovans* system has initiated a new form of relationship between the state and capital. According to the Mining Law (Number: 3213) the state had the sole owner of the basin and only it had the right to operate the mines. Moreover, the law had institutionalized the unity of the basin, that is to say TTK did not have the right to sell, rent or transfer any portion of the basin. Hence, *rödovans* and subcontracting practices were legally restricted. In 1990, a bylaw had been introduced that allowed such practices however tied them to the approval of Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.

In 1991 and 2002, the State Council (*Danıştay*) declared the illegality of *rödevans* and subcontracting practices. The rationale behind its decision was the specific legal status of the basin. The Mining Law had not regulated the basin until 2004. Rather a specific law (3867 Sayılı *Ereğli Kömür Havzasındaki Ocakların Devletçe İşletirilmesi Hakkında Kanun*) that did not allow any privatization practices was the legal framework of the coal production and trade. In 2004, the new mining law is introduced and regulation of the basin was affiliated to the mining law. And with the bylaw of 3 January 2005, the approval requirement of the *rödovans* licenses forfeited the necessity to be approval by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.

The future of *rödovans* system is still debatable: On the one hand, Erdoğan Demir (the owner of *Demir Madencilik* and the president of Zonguldak Chamber of

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<sup>70</sup> [http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/3bdf955c5d92555\\_ek.pdf](http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/3bdf955c5d92555_ek.pdf) (Retrieved on 15 May 2009.)

Commerce) and the other mine operators are not satisfied with the licenses they buy to operate the mines. Rather they pressure to the government to make the TTK have the right sell the *ownership* of the mines to the private sector. Given the private entrepreneurs ongoing relations with coal companies in European Union, China, and Russia,<sup>71</sup> if private entrepreneurs' demands of administrative transformation were realized, it is more likely to see the international capital flows in the basin through these private firms. On the other hand, the opponents of the *rödovans* system argue that the rationale behind the constitutional code that assigns the state the sole ownership of the basin is the idea that coalmines are public goods. They criticize the new Mining Law and affiliated regulations for treating legal universe of the coal production and trade as if elements of civic law rather than public law.<sup>72</sup>

#### Consequences of Deindustrialization and Privatization on Labor

The gradual deindustrialization meant the gradual decline in the number of mineworkers employed in the public sector. There are two major reasons behind this: On the one hand, whereas the capacity of production is reduced, the demand for labor power decreased. More and more mineworkers were retired however not replaced with the new employees. On the other hand, as depicted earlier the neo-liberal rationale taken the labor costs as the principal reason behind the diminishing revenues of TTK. In such an ideological framework, the process of retirement of mineworkers was fastened through the practices such as forced retirement (*reysen emeklilik*.) Due to these factors the number of mineworkers in the public sector mining in the basin decreased sharply: 41,927 in 1980, 38,231 in 1990, 19,151 in

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<sup>71</sup> *Demir Madencilik A.Ş. adına Erdoğan Demir Açıklama Yaptı: Asla Firmamızda Kaçak Üretilip Satılan Kömür Yoktur*, 6 November 2007, <http://www.ereglidtv.net/haberler.asp?haber=27105> (Retrieved on 17 May 2009.)

<sup>72</sup> [http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/3bdf955c5d92555\\_ek.pdf](http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/3bdf955c5d92555_ek.pdf) (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

2000 and 8,903 in 2008. Whereas the workforce diminished quantitatively, the workers' potential collective power that derive from their location of relations of production diminished. Simply because, many were excluded from those relations. Protecting the production against deindustrialization then has become the first issue of the organized labor's agenda. (See Chapter 3). Moreover, the labor market for mine work has shrunk, and dependency of the present workers to the labor market increased. Under the high levels of unemployment in the country as well as in the city, working in a coalmine has begun to be perceived as a fortune (See Chapter 4).

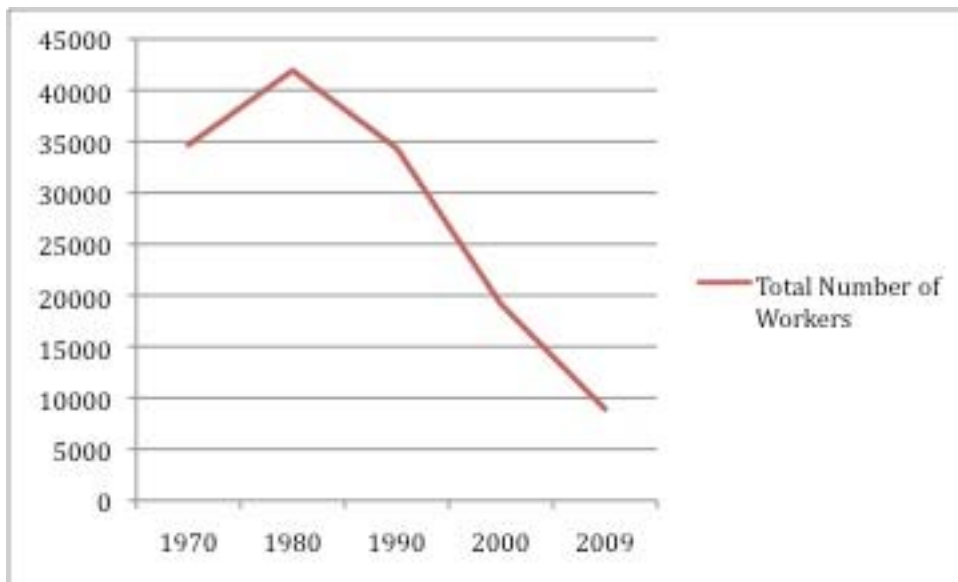


Fig. 3. Total number of workers in TTK (1970-2009)<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Source: [www.taskomuru.gov.tr](http://www.taskomuru.gov.tr) (Retrieved on 15 May 2009)

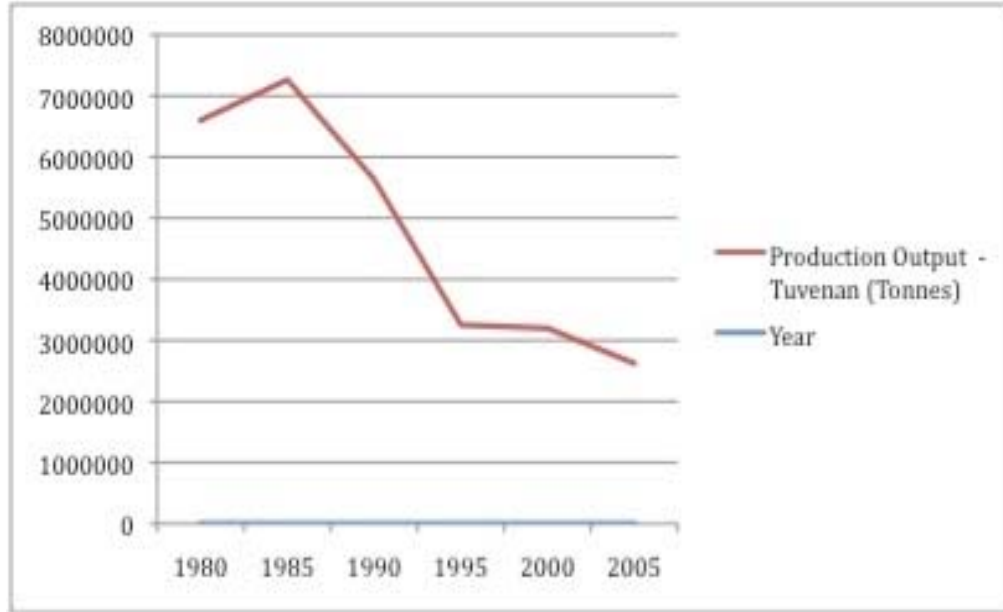


Fig. 4. Production output in TTK (1975-2005)<sup>74</sup>

*Rödovans* system has presented great challenges to the workers mostly due to subcontracted and informal work. The figures presented above depict the share of subcontracted work in the production. The subcontractors employ 76% of the workers employed working in *Demir Madencilik*. Moreover, as Tuncer reports, the coal companies that make the *rödovans* contracts subcontract an important segment of their work without legally documenting the concord.<sup>75</sup> If the illegal work has been reported in the controls of the state inspectors, the coal companies deny the responsibility and argue that these illegal companies were beyond their own control.<sup>76</sup> Each company has nine subcontracting firms in average and it is estimated that 4000 workers are employed in these firms with very limited percentage of formal work and total lack of unionization.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Source: Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Kadir Tuncer, *Tarihten Günümüze Zonguldak'ta İşçi Sınıfının Durumu* (İstanbul: Göçebe Yayınları, 1998):175

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.: 176.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.: 177.

The practices of privatization fragmented the labor market. Whereas free labor was only employed in the public sector until 1989, three new employment practices emerged: (1) Workers in the subcontracting firms operating servicing the public sector coal mines. (2) Workers in the subcontracting firms operating servicing the private sector coal mines. (3) The workers employed in private sector coalmines. Moreover, it would be right to estimate that the workers in the informal coalmines increased given that it is highly possible that the *rödevans* practices fostered the growth of informal coalmines.<sup>78</sup>

The practices of privatization fragmented the production sites. All the mineworkers were previously employed in TTK. TTK had a bureaucratic organization among all pits in the basin. Such bureaucracy facilitated the communication among the workers therefore made them easier to organize. However, when the bureaucratic unity of the basin is separated through the emergence of private sector, the communication between the workers working in public and private sector broke down. This was a great challenge to the labor given that GMİS organized its synchronization and coordination on the axis of public sector administration (See Chapter 3).

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<sup>78</sup> There is not an academic study on the informal coalmine sector in Zonguldak. Neither, the links between the private coal firms and informal coalmines is not proved yet. However, some commentators as Kadir Tuncer claim such a connection depending to his personal non-academic observations which are highly possible to enlighten the future researches.

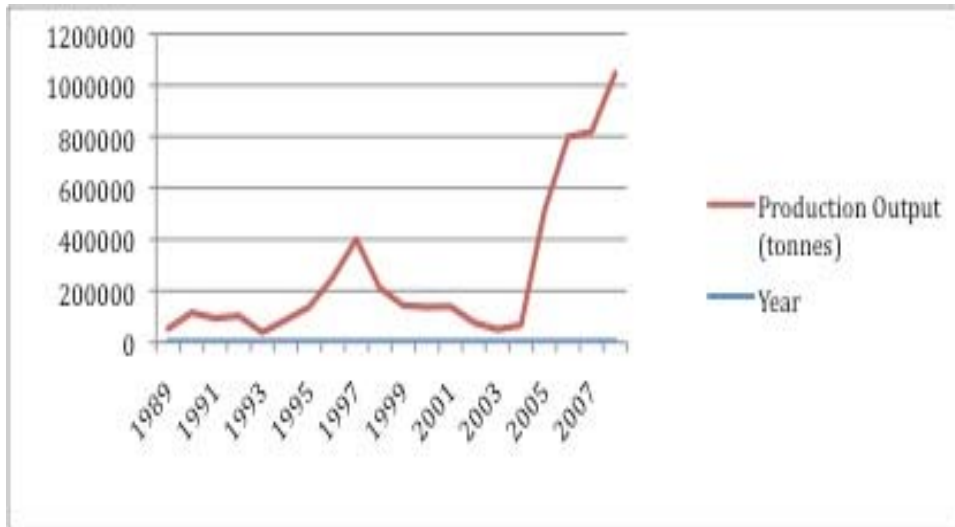


Fig. 5. Production output in private sector hard coal production (1989-2007)<sup>79</sup>

The processes of privatization and deindustrialization had other great impacts on labor: (1) The loosening of productive linkages between coal sector and iron-steel sector decreased the key strategic importance of the miners. (2) The city of Zonguldak as a space in which the workers' work life and daily life intertwined began to lose its character as the city of production. The next two sections elaborate on these.

#### Loosening of Industrial Linkages

Let us begin with a schematic representation of what we mean with the rigidity of industrial linkages and how they effect workers' potential power: Assume that *firm A* supplies raw material to *firm B*, and *sector B* produces raw material for *firm C*. And assume that *firm B* is absolutely dependent to *firm A*, and *firm C* to *firm A*, that is to say assume the production input of a latter firm in the linkage is solely supplied by the production output of a former firm in the linkage. In such a hypothetical case, the workplace power of the workers in *firm A* is great. That is because if the workers cease to produce, than production in *firm B* and *C* will also stop. We call the

<sup>79</sup> Source: [www.taskomuru.gov.tr](http://www.taskomuru.gov.tr) (Retrieved on 15 May 2009)

diminishing determinacy of these firms to each other as loosening of the industrial linkage. And assume that the loosening of industrial linkages lead to diminishing potential power of workers' (and therefore their unions) that arise from their strategically key importance. As we present below, the industrial linkages in which Zonguldak coal production is located have loosened in the course of post-1980 which lead to the diminishing potential workplace power of the mineworkers and their union.

Until 1940, Zonguldak coal basin had a great direct importance for the daily life of the metropolises if not had an importance for other industrial sectors. For example, Silahtaraga Power Plant (where Bilgi University Silahtar Campus is located now) constructed in 1914 continued to be the only power plant that supplied electricity for Istanbul until 1950. And the coal for this plant was supplied from Zonguldak basin. Moreover, coal used to be widely used in railroad transportation to which the basin supplied coal. Despite the crucial weight of Zonguldak coal for electric energy and transportation, we may not pass directly to the argument that the workplace power of the Zonguldak mineworkers was of crucial importance. That is because the workers are required to be organized and have the ability to strike to galvanize such potentiality. In fact, the miners did not have the right to have a union and the strikes were not allowed for a long time, which disabled their workplace power.

In 1940, the basin was nationalized in parallel with statist-protectionist economic policies. The state that followed a development strategy based on its own protected industry established iron and steel factories. First in 1941 the Karabuk Steel and Iron Factory and in 1964, Ereğli Steel and Iron Factory have begun to produce. With the inland railroad between Zonguldak and Karabuk, the mines in the

former supplied raw material for the former. And the coal produced in Zonguldak have transported to Ereğli through the ship operated between the harbors in each cities. On 27 November 1948, a power plant was constructed in Çatalağzı that supplied energy for Zonguldak and neighboring regions.

Karabuk and Ereğli Iron and Steel Factories were not the last stops in the industrial linkages. Rather Karabuk produced long iron that is widely used in construction sector; and Ereğli produced flat iron that is widely used in productive sectors of automotive and durable goods. In short, Karabuk and Ereğli factories supplied raw material for public and private sectors that had crucial importance for national economy and Zonguldak coal had crucial importance for Turkey's industry. Hence, the Zonguldak mineworkers had the potentiality to affect the entire national industry and economy by a long enduring strike.

Due to the reasons previously stated, Karabuk and Ereğli Factories began to buy important coal in the post-1980. This lead to a new industrial linkage this time not iron and steel sector oriented rather dependent to solely electricity production. As illustrated in Table 3 and Table 4, Çatalağzı Power Plant has become the major buyer and the share of sale of Zonguldak coal to iron-steel sector diminished enormously. That means that the miners now almost do not have the potential power to affect the automotive, durable goods and construction sectors with a possible strike.

Table 3. Sectors TTK Sold Coal To (1974 – 2001)

Sector	1974 tones/year <sup>80</sup>	2001 tones/year <sup>81</sup>
Iron-Steel	2,138,518 (45 %)	410,399 (18 %)
Power Plants	1,179,057 (25 %)	1,479,905 (65 %)
Industry	449,675 (10 %)	177,176 (8 %)
Transportation	724,846 (15 %)	1,379 (0.1 %)

Table 4. Firms TTK Sold Coal To (1965 – 2004)

Firm	1965 tones/year <sup>82</sup>	2004 tones/year
Çatalağzı Power Plant	538,000	1,272,763
Ereğli Iron Steel	525,000	52,682
Karabük Iron-Steel	1,157,000	340,009

Iron and Steel factories demand hard coal with high quality whereas the power plants demand coal with lower quality. We see that the share of higher quality piece coal in TTK production decreased from 17.44 % in 1990 to 14.02% in 2006. Since lesser demand for products with higher quality means lesser need for the infra structure to produce high quality coal, such decrease brought the lower investment on technology required for extraction and lower investment for technology after extraction processes applied to coal to increase its quality. Due to the diminishing level of technology in the labor process, the demand for skilled labor to operate higher technology has decreased. The limitations if not lowering of the skills of the mineworkers means that the possibility of the worker to be substituted with new

<sup>80</sup> Ekrem Murat Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı* (Ankara: TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri Odası, 2004): 135

<sup>81</sup> Source: Türkiye Taşkömürü Kurumu, <http://www.taskomuru.gov.tr>, (Retrieved on 19 May 2009).

<sup>82</sup> Source: Ibid.

recruits with low skills and lower labor costs increases. Hence, analytically speaking, we may argue that with the new industrial linkage that is based on electricity production means a decrease in the power of the mineworkers that derive from the importance of their skills in the labor process.<sup>83</sup>

### Dismantling the City of Production

“Forgoing the train [the railroad that then crosses across the city center] for the health and beauty of the city? But, this train and the railroad were here even before the city. Miners resisted: Here the mine is the root, the city is attached to it. Don’t forgo the train do the city then. In fact, the fancy city of Zonguldak rose above from these wagons like a tree blossoms from a pine cone.” İsmail Habib Sevük - 1936<sup>84</sup>

The quote above beautifully illustrates how the city of Zonguldak has developed with a single industry of coal production and how the facilities of production have intertwined with the places of daily life. The integrity of production with daily life made the mineworkers working and daily lives to conjoin. Such integrity makes it possible to conceptualize Zonguldak as a space in which the relations of production and daily practices together take place. Below, we give a very brief account of how such a socio-economical space has been constructed and then was dismantled in the course of post-1980. Importance of such an analysis of the Zonguldak space to understand the power of mineworkers derives from this: The character of Zonguldak

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<sup>83</sup> As the readers have probably already noticed, my argument that links the changes in industrial linkages in the basin and the change in the mineworkers potential power that derive from their skills does not derive from an empirical research rather is based on analytical reasoning. In order to get a better understanding how these relations have *actually* taken place, a closer investigation of the changing levels of technology and skills in mining is required. An analysis of the actual evolution of the forces of production requires a detailed research of labor process. Unfortunately, this is beyond the scope of my research. I hope that new researches building on such investigation will shed light on the matter.

<sup>84</sup> Cited in Ekrem Murat Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı* (Ankara: TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri Odası, 2004): 96 Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of English Working Class*, dü. 1968 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books , 1968).

space as a city of production made the togetherness of the mineworkers at work to continue to in their daily lives. The workers not only had common practices at work but also when their shifts were over. That made the workers' power that derive from their class position in the relations of production to weave with their potential power to act collectively which is nurtured with a worker culture composed of common practices and experiences in the Zonguldak space.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Zonguldak was a divided space. The difference between the lives of the mineworkers and the administrators as well as engineers was substantial. They had totally different daily practices: Their living space was separated and so was the language they used. The workers were speaking in Turkish but the mine operators from various nationalities were not. The Turkish engineers preferred to speak in French, even among themselves, believing that French is sign of a higher social status.

In 1908, the Ereğli Company built dormitories for the workers to resident close to İhsaniye and Kandil pits. However, the living conditions in these were very bad. At the same time, an elite culture has grown in Zonguldak. The operators and state officials put on their suits and go to cinema and they had a library in the city but only with books in French.

In 1923, *Amelebirliđi* (Union of Workers) Law, the first system of social security was established. The fund supported aid of food, children education, health to the workers in need. With *Amelebirliđi* the workers began to live not solely based on their wages but also on the advantages of being a worker. After 1930, the production oriented daily life changes has accelerated. In worker neighborhoods were established in Üzülmez and Kozlu; worker dormitories were built in Aydıntepe and İhsaniye. In 1938, primary school, cinema, tennis and volleyball courts were

built for the workers in Kılıç.

After the nationalization in 1940, modern worker *pavions* and facilities that serve food and entertainment were built. These facilities were serving food for 30,000 and accommodation for 2200 workers. Health facilities followed this. In 1942, “*Ekonom*” system of credited shopping was introduced. Shops were opened that did not aim to profit rather meet the needs of the workers and only accepted tokens that were given to the workers. In short, a worker culture has been established with the workers with similar working, living, entertaining, and shopping practices.

After 1980, these facilities were closed down one by one. The worker houses were sold. The health facilities were either closed or were united with the state health system. *Ekonom* system was quitted. The bases of common daily class practices melted down. And so did the common working practices with the raise of private sector. Due to the great differences working standards in public private coal mines and public mines as well as the wage differences among the workers in private and public workers, two separate worker cultures have emerged due to the great gaps in working and living practices among these two groups of workers. If E.P. Thompson<sup>85</sup> was right to depict workers’ common experience is the basis of the formation of working class then perhaps the course of dismantling of Zonguldak as a city of production that gives common practices to the workers means that of devastating of the working class.

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<sup>85</sup> Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of English Working Class*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968).

## CHAPTER 3:

### THE MINEWORKERS' UNIONS, 1908-2009

This chapter studies GMİS, the only labor union now organized among the public sector mineworkers in Zonguldak. It analyzes its changing traits in the course of its history through the lenses of its relation to four elements: (i) the legislative framework in Turkey, (ii) Türk-İş (iii) inter-party relations in Turkey, (iv) and GMİS' member base.

The first worker resistances in the history of modern Turkey had taken place in 1870. There had been twenty-three informal strikes (then the right to strike was not legally recognized) between 1870 and 1908.<sup>86</sup> The number of labor movements radically increased with the era of second constitutionalist period in 1908<sup>87</sup> and ceased with the Law of Stoppage of Works (*Tatil-i Eşgal Kanunu*), which banned the unions and prohibited the strikes in July 1909.

The first known labor movement in Zonguldak basin is the workers and mineworkers' wildcat strike in Ottoman Ereğli Company (*Ereğli Şirket-i Osmaniye*) in 1908. They surrounded the Company's head quarters and fought with the police forces. The movement came to an end when the workers' demands were satisfied. There were merely four remarkable labor movements in the basin between 1909 and 1946.

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<sup>86</sup> Ahmet Makal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çalışma İlişkileri: 1850-1920* (Ankara: İmge Kitapevi, 1997): 20

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*: 22

Table 5. Labor Movements in the Zonguldak Basin (1909-1946)<sup>88</sup>

Year	Location	Reason(s)
1910	Gelik Pits	Payment differences among the workers The punishment mechanisms.
1911	Gelik pits	Low payments.
1913	All coasts in the basin.	Low payments
1923	Asma pit	Payment differences among the workers The punishment mechanisms.
1923	Şömendifer workers	Demand for implementation of Work Law No.: 151

#### Early Legal Unions, 1946 – 1960

What lies at the roots of today's GMİS is the Solidarity Fund organized in Kilimli District in 1937. Before the organization of this fund, Workers League (Amele Birliđi)—a fund that was established by the state in 1921 to provide additional social security service to the workers—was already present in the basin. However, Solidarity Fund was fundamentally different than Workers League. Whereas the Worker Union had tripartite organizational and financial structure composed of the representatives of the state, the employer and the employee, the Solidarity Fund was a worker initiative. Although this pre-union initiative was closed down shortly after its establishment due to The Law of Associations of 1938—which banned class-based associations—it is considered as the first predecessor of GMİS.<sup>89</sup>

The cadres of Solidarity Fund established Eređli Coal Mine Basin Association (EMKİD, *Eređli Maden Kömür Havzası Derneđi.*) This association

<sup>88</sup> Source: Sina Çıladı, *Zonguldak Havzasındaki Karşı Eylemler* (publiser and year are not provided): 15

<sup>89</sup> Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, *Genel Maden-İş*, Cilt 2, in *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996): 458-462

adopted its charter to the Law of Associations revised in 1946 and to the Law of Labor Unions that legally recognized the labor unions in 1947. In its first official meeting with the participation of Sadi Irmak (then the Minister of Labor) in April 1947, EMKİD was renamed as Ereğli Coal Basin Mineworkers Union (EMKİS, *Ereğli Kömür Havzası Maden İşçileri Sendikası*.) In addition to EMKİS, Union of Coalmine Basin Workers (MKHİS, *Maden Kömür Havzası İşçileri Sendikası*) was established in 1946. Democrat Party (DP, *Demokrat Parti*) supported MKHİS had approximately 1000 members.<sup>90</sup>

The first legal socialist parties of Turkey, Socialist Part of Turkey, (TSP *Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi*) and Workers' and Peasants' Socialist of Turkey (TSİKP *Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi ve Köylü Partisi*) had been established—mostly by the cadres that had present or previous affiliations with illegal Turkish Communist Party. These parties accelerated the unionization process. The labor unions direct affiliations' to these parties did not last long due to the Labor Union Law issued in 1947. The law prohibited labor unions' attachments to the political parties. However, the legacies of the organization models these parties proposed have had great impact on the history of Turkish labor union organizational structures.

TSP was proposing a vertical organization model. According to this model, a single union would represent the workers in a sector. These unions from different sectors would be united under a national federation that will then apply for a membership to World Federation of Labor Unions. TSİKP's proposition was less centralist and a mixture of horizontal and vertical organization models. According to this model, a union would be established in every single production unit that will come together and form the union league in the city they are located in. In addition to

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<sup>90</sup> Sina Çıladı, *Zonguldak Havzasındaki Karşı Eylemler* (publisher and year are not provided): 54

such a league, there would be a national federation that unites the sector-based unions established in each city.<sup>91</sup>

In 1947, EMKİD was closed due to the claim of its affiliation with TSP and TSİKP. Although, there is not a proof of such an affiliation other than the government's claim, the legacy of these parties' approaches to labor unions remained in the basin. Through a *post facto* analysis one may argue that the unions established in the basin held a model that is a mixture of TSP and TSİKP's models. The largest coalminers' union (EMKİS and its successor Zonguldak Mineworkers' Union (ZMİS, *Zonguldak Maden İşçileri Sendikası*)) was a sector based union rather than being production unit based and was associated with the central union structure through TÜRK-İŞ. However, it also had a distinctive character of being organized territorially, which is to say it was organized in a single city of Zonguldak. Moreover, there was other various unions in the basin organized in production unit basis until 1980, which joined to GMİS (The successor of ZMİS) in 1983. ZMİS unions' fragility to intra-party vying for power in the union has been one of its founding characters. The conflicts between Republican People's Party (CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) and DP echoed in the intra-union disputes until 1960. ZMİS' leader cadres were mostly CHP members and sympathizers. However, the popularity of DP was greater among workers. The reason behind this is the popular reaction to the compulsory labor practices that were applied during CHP's single party era. In December 1950, the union was renamed to ZMİS and Necati Diken had been elected as the chief executive. Necati Diken had strong connections with DP and remained in the position until he was elected DP parliamentarian in 1954 general elections.

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<sup>91</sup> Osman Öztürk, "1946 Sendikacılığı," *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi Cilt 1* içinde, 169-175 (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996).

In the congress held in 1954, Ömer Karahasan known with his affiliation to RPP was elected as the chief executive. This congress held in June 1959 has a crucial importance to indicate severity of the conflict between two political wings. The debate between the supporters of two candidates Mehmet Alpdündar and Muzaffer Yılmaz—CHP and DP affiliates respectively— turned to a fight during the congress. Mehmet Alpdündar was also a debated figure after his recruitment due to his opposition to the DP government and employer representatives in The Commission of Minimum Wage Determination. The conflict ended after the intervention of police forces to the congress. Supporters of Alpdündar protested the police intervention and left the congress. Muzaffer Yılmaz was elected as the executive chief. Muzaffer Yılmaz could not hold his position more than a year and Ömer Karahasan known with his reconciler character was elected again.<sup>92</sup>

ZMİS was not affiliated in the early years of TÜRK-İŞ, the first labor union confederation in Turkey, which was proclaimed in 1952. There are three main reasons behind TÜRK-İŞ's establishment: First, the unions mostly organized in public sector sought for a united and coherent attitude against the greatest employer, the state. Second, the unions demanded educated cadres in the realm of labor relations. Last but not least importantly, RPP and DP demanded a central organization to better control the labor movements.<sup>93</sup> AFL-CIO (The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) affiliated TÜRK-İŞ is mostly regarded as politically pro-American and anti-communist and

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<sup>92</sup> Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, *Genel Maden-İş*, Cilt 3, in *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996): 458-462

<sup>93</sup> Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, *Türk-İş*, Cilt 3, in *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi* içinde,(İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996): 325.

organizationally corporatist.<sup>94</sup>

ZMİS did not become a TÜRK-İŞ member immediately. Rather it formed the Turkish Federation of Mineworkers' Unions in 1958. ZMİS as well as the Federation had joined to TÜRK-İŞ in July 1960. The reasons behind ZMİS' late affiliation with TÜRK-İŞ are not studied in the literature. However, we may propose three interrelated hypotheses that may influence the future inquire: First, TÜRK-İŞ was reluctant for such unification due to the internal conflicts in ZMİS. Second, ZMİS cadres who were affiliated with DP were reluctant to join TÜRK-İŞ lines due to the latter's CHP affiliated cadres. And third, power and autonomy seeking ZMİS cadres preferred to form a mineworker unions' federation with headquarters located in Zonguldak rather than being a part of TÜRK-İŞ, which had its center of organization in Ankara. Similar to TÜRK-İŞ, ZMİS had not declared any ideological positions of pro-Americanism or anti-communism in this era. Hence, it would not be appropriate to seek for ideological reasons behind such late affiliation.

#### The Vivid Years, 1960 – 1971

The importance of the period between 1960 and 1970 for ZMİS, derives from four key dynamics: Liberalization of the constitutional structure and institutionalization of the right to strike, the competing even conflicting unionism of TÜRK-İŞ and Revolutionary Workers' Unions Conferderation (DİSK, *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*), the increasing influence of TİP (Workers Party of Turkey – Türkiye İşçi Partisi), and wildcat strikes of 1965 and 1968 that took place *despite of* ZMİS.

To say the least, 1960 was a sharp turning point in the labor relations in Turkey. After the military take over in 1960, which is followed by closure of DP and

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<sup>94</sup> Ümit Cizre, "Korporatizm ve Türk Sendikacılığı I & II," *Birikim*, no. 41 & 42 (September - October 1992): 30-37.

execution of its leaders, a new constitution was prepared. More liberal in its nature, the constitution of 1961 fostered fundamental rights and liberties, namely civil, economic and social rights<sup>95</sup>. The new Union Law (Number 274) and the Law of Collective Bargaining, Strike and Lock Out (Number 275) inaugurated the ground for legally defined rights to strike.

Whereas TÜRK-İŞ grew rapidly its centralist, anti-communist and class-compromiser traits became clear: It became more centralized with the formation of nationally organized unions and sector-based union federations; its anti-communist rhetoric even ramparted as its “Curse to Communism” in 1962 suggests; it rejected its role in the class struggle and appropriated an economic unionist perspective. The latest is lucid in its general executive Demirsoy’s below quoted words that he told in the general congress in 1966:

There is this in the class struggle: Working class will demolish another class. We do not have such an intention. But our struggle is for humanly living, to be with everybody humanly and to live an honored life, not for class struggle.<sup>96</sup>

Demirsoy’s words were a response to the opposition growing in TÜRK-İŞ. This opposition was constantly criticizing the executive cadres for having class compromiser character, affiliations with RPP and Justice Party (AP, *Adalet Partisi*) and pro-American stance. The opposition had close contacts with TİP. TÜRK-İŞ’s rhetoric of political neutrality increased with an intention to thwart the TİP alignment in its union lines.

TİP affiliated opposition became more stringent with the consequences of climbing enmity within the confederation. Such enmity gave way to the formation of

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<sup>95</sup> See Bülent Tanör and Necmi Yüzbaşıoğlu, *1982 Anayasasına Göre Türk Anayasa Hukuku* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001) for a detailed discussion.

<sup>96</sup> Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, *Türk-İş*, Cilt 3, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996): 335.

Congress of Labor Unions Solidarity (TİSDK, Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Dayanışma Konseyi) in 1966. In 1967, TÜRK-İŞ's executive committee debarred some unionist who afterwards formed DİSK. All founder unionists except Mehmet Alpdünder were TİP members. Mehmet Alpdünder, as previously stated, was a very influential figure in the unionism in Zonguldak coal basin. His role in the wildcat strikes taken place in mid-1960s in Zonguldak is still debatable.

Four major wild-cat strikes had taken place in the basin. In March 1965, the mineworkers sparked the first massive worker uprising in Turkish history with the demand of just distribution of merit oriented wage increases. The number of the workers who attended the uprising quickly rose up to 6000. They barricaded the entrances to the city, stopped the entire production in the mines and fought backed to the police and army forces. Two workers died due the army's gunshots and 30 workers were wounded. 15 soldiers were wounded. In 1968, the process of collective bargaining lasted longer than expected. 7000 workers who argued that ZMİS collaborated with the employer stopped the production. Some of these workers attacked the building of ZMİS. The strike and uprising grew rapidly and included 25,000 workers. In 1970, after Osman İpekçi was elected as the general executive, 19,000 workers protested ZMİS in Gelik region. However, this uprising did not last long and did not spread to the other regions in the basin. Finally in April 1970, workers stopped the production and warned ZMİS for a better collective bargaining agreement.

In the cases of 1965 and 1968, ZMİS and TÜRK-İŞ held Mehmet Alpdünder and DİSK responsible for these uprisings. In 1968, DİSK rejected such accusations and claimed that the uprisings were the workers' autonomous reactions against ZMİS' approved right of participation to the collective bargaining despite its actual

membership was limited to 3000.<sup>97</sup> Three things derive from this:

First, the grassroots type labor movements in this period were not organized by ZMİS. Rather, ZMİS was passive in 1965 and itself the target of the latter movements. If there is a truth part in the claims that ZMİS's registered number of workers were much higher than the number of its actual members (something we may not be sure since the available data only indicates the registered workers and there is not a study that studies the number of actual members) and ZMİS' collaboration with the employer, then it would be possible to argue that ZMİS was not a building block of the labor movement rather a block before the labor movement.

Second, the opposition in ZMİS previously along the lines of CHP-DP dispute, had taken a new form along the axis of Türk-İş and DİSK dispute. Mehmet Alpdünder who was previously closer to CHP and opposed the DP affiliated unionists, got closer to TIP, established Türk Maden-Sen after his debarment from ZMİS, opposed the right wing political parties *and* CHP, and declared its defiance against Türk-İş. The social research lacks necessary accounts of such a transformation of Alpdünder's position. Whether the pressure of the growing labor militancy in the basin, strengthening of labor politics in the country in general, or his personal struggle with the right wing ZMİS unionists is behind such a transformation is yet to be studied.

And third, the affiliation of ZMİS and TÜRK-İŞ was not only through organizational structure but there was also a discursive continuity between TÜRK-İŞ and ZMİS leaders. The anti-communist rhetoric and stance against class unionism were especially reproduced during the above referred labor militancy in the basin

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<sup>97</sup> Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, *Genel Maden-İş*, Cilt 1, in *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996): 458-462.

through TÜRK-İŞ's accusations of DİSK and ZMİS's accusations of Alpdünder.

### Military Interventions and Passive Unionism, 1971 – 1989

The military interventions of 1971 and 1980 have been very crucial in the history of labor movement both in and out of the basin. The ZMİS administration was obedient to the military intervention of 1971 and declared its nationalist stance against communism and statist position against independent class politics. The resolution of ZMİS's congress in 1971 illustrates this:

The activities of the radical right that aimed to establish a fascist dicta regime and those of the radical left that similarly aimed to establish a communist dicta regime to create an unrest in our homeland, could not be destructive and could not develop, as they could not since the foundation of our Republic. They accelerated their destructive activities through exploiting the social and economic conditions and our citizens with low income. They even moved on to sabotages to the regime, our Republic, our Constitution and to every foundational elements of our state. (...) It is our humanitarian and national duty to reach our mineworkers—who had great roles in our country's development, dedicated their altruistic and honored work, and devoted themselves to their country with the awareness of its homeland's realities—to prosperous levels, develop and improve their labor force.<sup>98</sup>

ZMİS three traits in this period, namely apolitical, nationalist-statist and nationalist-industrialist unionism were reflected in the paragraph presented above. First, when ZMİS declared its distance to political extremism, this also meant the aim to distance from class militancy and class politics. The activities of TİP, DİSK on the one hand, the wildcat strikes in the basin on the other, were regarded as those of radical left; and affiliation with working class states, working class parties or any other form of working class organizations apart from TÜRK-İŞ were interpreted as an act of contributing to the destructive activities. Second, the union held a perspective of organic society without distinct social classes and regarded its "national duties" as

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<sup>98</sup> Zonguldak Maden İşçileri Sendikası, "Açılış," in *2. Olağan Kongre Raporu* (Zonguldak: ZMİS, 1971), 14-17.

the source of its activities. Taking the national interest as identical with its members' interest, it interpreted the neo-liberal turn in the state's policies as a necessity; and held a passive attitude towards anti-labor neo-liberal practices under the motto of "responsible unionism" with "being aware of homeland's realities". And third, it assumed a unity of interests among the agents within the tripartite industrial relations (the state, employer, employee) for their common aims of economic development. It underscored its own role in improving efficiency of the labor power to help the industrial growth. Moreover, such perspective then became incorporated in—previously designated—neo-liberal rhetoric of efficiency that held inefficiency of laborers for the increases in TTK's losses.

The basin was monotonous in terms of labor activism and union activity in 1970s.<sup>99</sup> On the one hand, despite of the accelerating militancy in left wing politics and labor union activism, there was not a labor movement in the Zonguldak basin in 1970s. Rather, ZMİS had distanced the social movements taking place outside of the region. On the other hand, Mehmet Tezer was elected the secretary general in March 1972 and remained in his position in the absence of any declared opposition along the union lines until 1989. In short, whereas the zenith of labor militancy in the basin as well that of opposition to ZMİS was in the 1960s their nadir was in the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps, the military interventions did not only cause the labor movement to dwindle in the basin but also has been a force to guard ZMİS' union bureaucracy.

ZMİS welcomed the coup d'état in 1980 too and did not resist the new legislative framework regulating labor relations that were instituted shortly after military take over. In its congress in March 1983, it stated in its progress report that

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<sup>99</sup> Sina Çıladı, "Zonguldak Kömür Havzasında İşçi Hareketi ve Sendikacılık," in *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, 557-563 (İstanbul, 1998).

“the 12 September movement has not been frightening for the mineworkers and our union, rather it has been a survivor for us”<sup>100</sup> and described its model of unionism as “responsible unionism.”<sup>101</sup> However, the legislative framework regarding labor relations has been a major occluding factor for processes of unionization after 1980 in Turkey. The 1982 constitution, Union Law (No.: 2821), Law of Collective Bargaining, Strike, and Lock Out (No.: 2821) aimed to centralize organizational structures of the unions, to regulate the mechanisms of signing in and out of membership and to limit the union activity.<sup>102</sup> The consequences of these had been mixed for ZMİS.

First, Turkish Federation of Mineworkers Unions (TMİSF, *Türkiye Maden İşçileri Sendikaları Federasyonu*) adopted itself to the new legal framework that abolished the federations. It transformed itself to a union organized nation wide: Mineworkers Unions of Turkey (TMİS – *Türkiye Maden İşçileri Sendikası*). Although, ZMİS was previously a member of TMİSF, it did not join its new body rather adopted its organizational structure to the new legal framework. It changed its name to GMİS and transformed itself to a union organized nation wide. Twelve smaller mineworkers unions organized in the basin then joined to GMİS. In short, the new legislations that aimed centralization of the union organizations even strengthened GMİS with the new unions joined to it.

Second, although GMİS was defined as a labor union that is organized nationally, it remained to be local to the basin. The processes of amalgamation of TMİS and GMİS were unsuccessful due to GMİS refusal to the proposal that

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<sup>100</sup> Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, Cilt 2, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi* içinde, 461 (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 461

<sup>102</sup> Mesut Gülmez, *Sendikal Haklarda Uluslararası Hukuka ve Avrupa Birliğine Uyum Sorunu* (Ankara: Belediye-İş Yayınları, 2005), 6-19.

suggested the transfer of its headquarters from Zonguldak to Ankara.

Third, the new regulations introduced a new requirement for the unions in order to centralize their organizational structures and to limit their activities. According to the new regulations, the unions had to be organized among the 10 % of the workers in their sector in order to participate in the collective bargaining. This did not pose any challenges to GMİS in the 1980s and 1990s since the number of its adherents was much higher than 10 % of the mineworkers in Turkey. However, when it began to lose its members due to the decreasing number of workers employed in the public sector mining in the basin, it then reported more members than it actually has in order to participate to the collective bargaining. It continued to pay dues for the fake members to TÜRK-İŞ, which increased its financial burdens.

#### Activism and Passivity, 1989 – 2009

As the readers may already have noticed, whereas the previous chapter has taken the year 1980 as a turning point in the analysis of the structural factors that challenged the mineworkers, this chapter regards 1989 as the decisive moment of the changing union attitudes and strategy. The reason behind such a differentiation in the categorization is simple. The union continued its obedient character it had in 1970s, and did not resist to the neo-liberal actions towards the mineworkers. In 1989, however, the executive board radically changed. Şemsi Denizler, was elected as the chief executor, and then on GMİS held an anti-neo-liberal attitude and declared its strategy as class unionism:

The perspectives of the working class and capitalist class towards the collective bargaining are fundamentally different. That is because the interests of each class are radically antagonistic to each other.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Halil Turgut Özal (1927-1993) was the 8<sup>th</sup> president of Turkey, prime minister and leader of right-wing Mother Land Party. As prime minister, he transfigured the Turkish economy by preparing a ground for privatization of many SEEs. Özalism, comparable to Thatcherism, is a nation-wide ideology that is consisted of “American secularism, American democracy, American capitalism and

GMİS with its class unionism approach partly abandoned its apolitical stance and approach and loaded a new content to its nationalist-statist and nationalist-industrialist unionism. The political tone in the union leaders' sprung as it held a strong opposition and militant rhetoric against Turgut Özal and Özalist neo-liberalism. As a response to neo-liberal agenda of deindustrialization in the Zonguldak basin and nation wide neo-liberal strategies towards privatization of SEEs, GMİS approached to preservation of coal mining industry in Zonguldak and conservation of state-led industrialization as the elements of class interest. GMİS' relation to TÜRK-İŞ altered. TÜRK-İŞ's bureaucratic cadres were criticized severely for being passive and obedient towards implementations neo-liberal regulations. Moreover, the TÜRK-İŞ's unionism strategy was criticized for being out-dated and not appropriated for working class struggle in neo-liberal times. The paragraph taken from GMİS' periodical and is a part of a piece title "our new unionism approach."

As you again already know, The 15<sup>th</sup> General Congress of TÜRK-İŞ held its meeting on 11-17 November 1989 in Ankara. Unfortunately, progressive and innovative executive cadres who could keep pace with changing, developing international and national circumstances could not be elected.<sup>104</sup>

The changing traits of GMİS had become more distinct during the strike movement in 1990 and 1991. In 30 November 2009, after the collective bargaining process was not followed by an agreement, GMİS declared strike in TTK and MTA's workplaces. 48,000 workers stopped producing and demanded not only wage increases but also bringing the neo-liberal policies of deindustrialization and privatization to an end.

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American liberalism." (Sedat Laçiner, "Turgut Özal Period in Turkish Foreign Policy: Özalism," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 2009.)

<sup>104</sup> Genel Maden-İş, "Temsilciler Kurulu Toplantısı," in *Zonguldak Gerçeği*, 10-14 (Zonguldak: Genel Maden-İş, 1991).

The strike attracted wide popular support and was supported by the other segments of working class in Turkey. Pop singers Edip Akbayram and İlhan İrem planned to sing in solidarity concerts but the concerts were cancelled due to a danger of over crowd. In 14 December 1990, 100,000 workers organized in Petrol-İş, Likat-İş, Deri-İş and TÜMTİS stop producing for two hours in solidarity with Zonguldak mineworkers. And in 3 January 1991 TÜRK-İŞ cadres were forced to take the decision of “General Warning Action” and the workers stopped working for day strike. In 4 January 1991, Zonguldak mineworkers had begun their march to Ankara to protest the government. However, the police and army barricades stopped the workers in Bolu and the workers had to return home. In 17 January 1991 the Gulf War begun and in 25 January 1991, the government used its “legal right to postpone all strikes in the country for 60 days”, referring to its actions’ necessity for “national security” in the conditions of war.<sup>105</sup> In 6 February 1991, GMİS had to sign the collective bargaining agreement.

Three remarkable labor actions had taken place in the basin until the end of the first half of 1990s. First, on 14 November 1992, workers protested their union that proposed to increase the dues. The workers were stopped by the police barricade and the dues were increased from 1,5 % to 2 % of worker wages.<sup>106</sup> Second, on 27 January 1991 the workers in Kozlu district ceased to produce to protest the late payments of their bonuses. Third, on 1 June 1993, the Kozlu workers stopped to produce to support the nation wide protests that demanded more democratic society.

The consequences of the activism in the first half of 1990s on GMİS in terms

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<sup>105</sup> For further inquiries on the strike see N.S. Karakaş, *Eylem Günlüğü* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1992).

<sup>106</sup> *Zonguldak Maden İşçilerinin Sendikayı Protesto Eylemi, 14.11.1992*, Cilt 3, *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi* içinde, 563-564 (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998).

of its relation to its member base, inter-party relations in Turkey, and TÜRK-İŞ had been mixed: First, despite GMİS motto of “union democracy” and the meetings and education seminars in all of the mining district that called for workers’ active participation in the decision making processes, the leader cult personalized in the person of Şemsi Denizer was so strong during the course of the strike. The cult of leadership endured in the GMİS in the following years which resulted with his brother, Ramazan Denizer’s election as the chairperson of the union. Second, GMİS’ relation to party politics remained to be fragile. Before 1991 general elections, right wing True Path Party (DYP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*) and centralist-leftist (Social Democrat People’s Party (SHP, *Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*) struggled to include Şemsi Denizer to their lines and Denizer has chosen SHP.<sup>107</sup> Denizer first was closer to DYP but then had chosen SHP after a guarantee of being the first in the party’s list before the ballot.<sup>108</sup> However, SHP and Denizer lost the elections.<sup>109</sup> Third, Denizer and GMİS’ criticism towards TÜRK-İŞ cadres and its union strategies increased. Denizer blamed its cadres for “cheating the workers” and being “yellow unionists”<sup>110</sup> and called for the need “to bury TÜRK-İŞ’s strategy down the earth.”<sup>111</sup> In December 1992, he was elected the general secretary to TÜRK-İŞ whereas Bayram Meral, DYP’s candidate in the previous elections was elected the executive general. The institutional conflicts between GMİS and TÜRK-İŞ resolved, and Denizer had

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<sup>107</sup> *Güneş*, “Zonguldak'ın 'Babası'na SHP'den Alkışlar,” 5.9.1991.

<sup>108</sup> *Sabah*, “SHP'nin 'Zor' Transferi,» 5.9.1991.

<sup>109</sup> *Milliyet*, “Trilyonluk Bürokratlar Sandıkta Kaldı,” 23.10.1991.

<sup>110</sup> *Güneş*, “Meclis'e Sarı Sendikacılar Girdi”, 30.10.1991.

<sup>111</sup> *Günaydın*, “Türk-iş'te Kavga Var,” 1.7.1991.

been the most influential figure in TÜRK-İŞ's administration<sup>112</sup> until his assassination in 6 August 1999.

In 2000s, GMİS' total number of members declined (Table 6). The decline is more severe if the limits of the membership data collected by the Ministry of Labor is acknowledged. According to the most recent data published by the Ministry, GMİS has 32008 members, 23.14 % of the workers in mining sector in Turkey. However, these figures have no validity. GMİS is only organized among TTK workers and MTA employee. The total number of workers employed by TTK and MTA is 8903<sup>113</sup> and 3639<sup>114</sup> respectively. That is to say GMİS *officially* organized 32008 workers out of 12542, in other words 255.2% of GMİS's potential members are actually GMİS members. Needless to say, this is a logical impossibility. Such illogical figures derive from GMİS's false membership reports it presents to the Ministry to participate in collective bargaining. Like the other labor unions in Turkey, GMİS has to be organized in 10% of the total workers in mining sector (totally 138306 workers) to participate in the collective bargaining. That is to say, GMİS has to have 13830 members to be over the legal threshold and to participate in the collective bargaining.

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<sup>112</sup> *Meydan*, "Türk-İş'in Gizli Patronu," 15.12.1992.

<sup>113</sup> [www.taskomuru.gov.tr](http://www.taskomuru.gov.tr) (retrieved on 25 May 2009).

<sup>114</sup> [www.mta.gov.tr](http://www.mta.gov.tr) (retrieved on 25 May 2009).

Table 6. Number of GMİS Members According to the Statistics Collected by the Ministry of Labor (1947-2006)<sup>115</sup>

Year	Members
1947	12,000
1959	38,880
1975	56,955
1987	54,494
1996	47,174
2006	30,526
2009 (official)	32,008
2009 (actual – estimated)	12,500

The major reason behind such decline in numbers is the diminishing numbers of workers employed in TTK (Chapter 2) that constitutes the major membership base for GMİS. Moreover, GMİS is only organized in among the public sector mineworkers employed in TTK and MTA workers, and *did* not organize the new forms of labor that emerged with the private sector mining and subcontracting work. Rather it was reluctant to organize in the private sector mining. For instance, on 5 November 2008 workers employed in Hema Mining in Kandilli refused to work with the demands of better wages and working conditions and payment of their wages.<sup>116</sup> The workers stated despite their demand of unionization and GMİS' reluctance to organize them.<sup>117</sup> There are three possible reasons GMİS' reluctance: (i) It is often argued that GMİS cadres are reluctant to organize in the private sector because they do not want any changes in the number of delegates who vote in union elections to conserve the delegate's present attitudes.<sup>118</sup> (ii) The present workers pay a day's

<sup>115</sup> Source: [www.calisma.gov.tr](http://www.calisma.gov.tr) (Retrieved on 15 May 2009)

<sup>116</sup> Vedat Kılıç, *Hema'da Eylem*, 11 5 2008, [http://www.demirmedya.net/haber\\_detay.php?haber\\_id=21963](http://www.demirmedya.net/haber_detay.php?haber_id=21963) (retrieved on 13 June 2009).

<sup>117</sup> Gökhan Durmuş, *Özel Madende, Özel Sömürü*, 8 5 2009, [http://www.evrensel.net/haber.php?haber\\_id=50581](http://www.evrensel.net/haber.php?haber_id=50581) (retrieved on 13 June 2009).

<sup>118</sup> Salim Çalık, *Genel Maden İş Nereye Gidiyor?*, 30 5 2007, [http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi\\_no=11058](http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no=11058) (retrieved on 13 June 2009).

wage which is closer to 5 % of the monthly wage as a due to the union, which ranges between 35 and 65 TL. Most of the workers are employed in private sector are paid minimum wage which has a net amount of 477 TL.<sup>119</sup> This means that if organized, the private sector workers will pay 23 TL. Perhaps, the GMİS cadres regard organizing in the private sector mining as not worthy.<sup>120</sup> (iii) GMİS' organizational structure is based on organizing in public sector. On the one hand, its organizational body is based on the bureaucratic organization of TTK's administrative body. That is to say, GMİS' union branches and TTK's administrative branches are shaped accordingly. On the other hand, GMİS' collective bargaining system and practices are shaped around its relation to the state, its members' sole employer. Moreover, needless to say, unlike the mineworkers in private mining sector, the public miner workers are much less likely to be deployed due to being a member of a union. All in all, GMİS has to ameliorate its organizational body and has to be suitable to be organized in public sector.

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<sup>119</sup> *Asgari Ücret ve Yasal Kesintiler (01.01.2009 - 30.06.2009)*, <http://www.yaklasim.com.tr/malibilgiler/pratikbilgiler/maddeler/003.htm> (retrieved on 13 June 2009).

<sup>120</sup> Given the financial difficulties GMİS is in, to us is more likely for GMİS to make cost benefit calculations. The estimated debts of GMİS mounted up to approximately 5-5.5 million TL. See *İnzalar GMİS'te*, 26 12 2008, [http://tabaninsesi.com/tabani/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=1](http://tabaninsesi.com/tabani/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=1) (retrieved on 13 June 2009).

## CHAPTER 4:

### MINEWORKERS' PERCEPTIONS

This chapter inquires Zonguldak mineworkers' perceptions. It approaches to their perceptions from two axes by asking two interrelated questions: (1) How do the mineworkers make meaning of the structural, institutional and ideological dynamics taking place in global, national and local levels that effect on their union and themselves? (2) How do they conceptualize possible responses to such dynamics?

Such inquiry of perceptions is important to understand the subjective dimension of union power. This chapter addresses the relationship between the perceptions and union power from the vantage points of three sets of questions.: (a) How do the mineworkers interpret their organized strength? Do they see their union capable to resist the dynamics that challenge them? Or rather, they regard such challenges as beyond their union's reach? (b) Are there gaps of perceptions between the mineworkers and the union leaders?<sup>121</sup> How these gaps relate to the union's strategy, organizational structure and politics? Studying the gaps of perceptions is important because it sheds light on the union' ability (i) to supply associational power to the mineworkers and (ii) to reflect mineworkers' structural power.<sup>122</sup> (c) How do their perceptions inform their class identity? How do the union relate to workers' identity forms? Is it capable to mobilize their identifications towards class formation and class action?

The structure of this chapter is constructed on the bases of categories with spatial references: "Globalism/Locality", "City", and "Nation." These categories

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<sup>121</sup> "Union leaders" stands for the elected and professional unionist who serve in the union's general executive board or one of its administrative branch.

<sup>122</sup> See Figure 1.1 for the description of the analysis.

were thematized frequently in the union's and workers' own accounts. And such categorization serves the purpose of thematic accordance with workers' own accounts. Moreover, the character of *Zonguldak* as an industrial *city* and the basin's key role in the *national* industrial development altered along Turkey's path of integration with the *global* capitalism in post 1980s as Chapter 2 illustrated. Mentioned categories are useful to depict how the facts in post 1980s are communicated within the workers' discursive spaces that embodies their perceptions. Furthermore, these categories are functional for analytical and heuristic purposes to see how the workers' perceptions amalgamate with the structural and institutional dynamics taking place in larger level and act in the locality of the basin.

#### Globalism and Locality

Globalization discourse has been prevalent in the ways in which the union leaders' conceptualize the challenges they face and the responses they give to the challenges. Within such discursive space, "globalization", "new world order" and "imperialism" have been used interchangeably to signify the totality of a wide range of forces, trends, strategies, and programs that affect labor. Blanketing every factor that repress and oppress labor, "globalization" has been taken either as a self-revering and self-ruling systemic totality, or as an all-encompassing process ruled by a super-agent. In the course of 1990-1991 movement, the discourse had both enabling and disabling functions for the union. Whereas it strengthened the union's ideological coherency through holistically externalizing the forces that challenge them, it prevented the union to clearly identify the national actors' relative autonomy in their hostility towards labor. Now, the discourse has a disabling function for the union due to the union cadres' submissive positioning. This comes in two forms: On the one hand, it opens up a discursive realm in which the leaders locate the problems beyond

the repertoire of their action. On the other hand, in addition to such submissive pessimism, few are optimist and indicate that they still have hope. But this optimism is also a submissive optimism since it regards hope a transcendent force that would automatically derive from the self-ruling capitalism or will be actualized by youth which is taken as an ambiguous category.

#### 1990-1991

Despite the common usage of globalization/new world order/imperialism in the union leaders' explanations of the problems the mineworkers' face with, these notions lack fixed meanings. Rather, they stand for a wide range of forces, dynamics, trends, and circumstances on the one hand; or for various strategies, programs, or approaches. The sentences below from a GMİS report exemplify such dual meanings attributed to globalization:

In the last 20 years, capitalism as a universal system is under a new reformation process after the crises of 1970s. The most basic element of this reformation is *globalization* which indicates going beyond the nation-states and transforming the world to a single Market. (...) The aim of the new *approach* is to slow down the pace of demand and nominal income increases, and to demolish interventionist and regulative tendencies.<sup>123</sup> (Emphasis is mine)

This sentence is from a section titled “the new world order” and describes the challenges workers face in the post-1980 era. On the one hand, all of such challenges are explained by referring to a fundamental systemic force, namely globalization as the new world order of self-ruling capitalism. The report takes “globalization” as a spontaneous process that derives from the drive of capital rather than as an outcome of the actions of particular agents. On the other hand, although the report does not indicate any agent, it calls globalization an “approach”.

Linguistically speaking, an approach requires a subject, that is to say there should be

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<sup>123</sup> Genel Maden İşçileri Sendikası, 6. *Olağan Genel Kurula Sunulan Çalışma Raporu*, Union Report (Zonguldak: Genel Maden - İş, 1999), 3-4.

someone who makes that act of approaching to somewhere or something. In the lack of any specific referent, “globalization as an approach” signifies something(s): Globalization rather than being a self-revering and self-ruling systemic totality, is an action whose actor is ambiguous. That very ambiguity serves as an empty discursive space in which GMİS leaders fill in to signify their temporal enemies.

United States of America was occasionally posited in such space and taken as a super-agent as the *par excellence* perpetrator of globalization: “Press and media use the tactic of “lie lustily some filth will stick<sup>124</sup>” to wear our union out (...) American patented *the new world order* threatens *all institutions* through the media fed by credits.” (Emphases are mine).<sup>125</sup> Herein, the empty discursive space of the *agent* of “the new world order” is filled in by two entities: The Turkish media and press are posited in an antagonistic relationship with workers. However, the ultimate agent is United States since the media and press are totally dependent instruments of such an omnipotent doer. This time the agent of the “new world order” is not ambiguous. It is the USA. And it is not only an agent but also a super-agent that blankets every factor (including Turkish media and press) that antagonizes labor and labor union as well as *all* national institutions. The specific role of the Turkish media and press is not evaluated, nor the class interest of the media owners, rather veiled by indicating an external force.

The globalization discourse was functional for GMİS to construct an internal coherency through a holistic externalization of the source of the factors oppressing labor. That is to say, labor is conceptualized as the victim of all global factors and

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<sup>124</sup> In the original text a Turkish idiom, “*çamur at izi kalsın*” is used. The quote I borrowed from Thomas Hall expresses the same meaning. Source: Robert Andrews, *The Routledge Dictionary of Quotations* (Routhledge, 1987).

<sup>125</sup> Genel Maden - İş, «Demokratik Kurumlar Medya Tehdidi Altında,» *Genel Maden - İş*, no. 42 (September 1993): 6-7.

national factors dependent on the former, blanketed under the term globalization; and labor's organized power was regarded as capable to confront these factors: "The new world order is against being organized. IMF knows the power of GMİS. So does World Bank. GMİS is the biggest obstacle before imperialism that wants to invade our country."<sup>126</sup> "

Herein self-esteem against the omnipotent force that of "the new world order" is apparent. The threatening tone in the critique of the super-agent and affiliated institutions immerses with the utterances of resistance. Moreover, such self-esteem embarks upon not only defending workers' interests but also guarding the country. Such approach is not identical to taking a nationalist position. Despite the nationalistic implications, the working class interest is not immersed in national interest; rather the endeavor to protect the former is taken as the endeavor to protect the latter. However, whereas it attributes complete dependent status to national bourgeoisie, it ignores the relative autonomy of these actors in their hostility towards labor. We shall come back to this.

### The Contemporary Situation

As discussed in the previous chapter, whereas the number of the workers employed in the public sector mining diminished, the private sector partly replaced state-ran mining activities. GMİS did not resist such processes of deindustrialization and privatization; and it did not adapt itself to the new consequences. As the following lines illustrate, the above described self-esteem withered away and pessimism against the currents that made the labor worse of flourished in the 2000s. Compatible with GMİS' ineffective union strategies and activities, the union leaders now mobilize the globalization discourse to legitimize their passivity against the new consequences,

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<sup>126</sup> Genel Maden İşçileri Sendikası, *6. Olağan Genel Kurula Sunulan Çalışma Raporu*, Union Report (Zonguldak: Genel Maden - İş, 1999), 101

and to veil the union's inability to organize in the private mine sector and to wage struggle against newly emerging capitalists in the basin.

During the preparatory phase of this study in 2006, I participated the May Day gathering in Zonguldak. However, the miners were absent in the rally. Workers' absence in a city that is usually called "the capital city of labor" left me in surprise. I asked why to a head of local branch of GMİS the following day. Here is how he answered me: "The new world order made the people lonely. Now they don't even trust on their neighbors. (...) These miners walked to Ankara... 100 thousand people<sup>127</sup> ... Now they don't participate to the workers' day gathering in their own city."<sup>128</sup>

For this representative of GMİS, the crisis of the union was the reason behind workers' absence. And he was pointing to the "new world order" as the ultimate source of the union's crisis. In his conception, "new world order" was as an external force to the union. This external force was capable to intenerate to every single relationship, and had the ability to transform even the relations among neighbors. It was also a force that demolished the trust of the people to each other, kept the workers apart from each other, made them to care about themselves only. It was a transcendent force that directly acted on the people, without any intermediate actors and caused tremendous effects. The union was not responsible of the absence of the workers in the May Day, rather it was the victim of that force. For him, "the new world order" was an omnipotent deity that broke down the possibility of workers' collective action and kept them immobile.

Then a young man came in the room, handed this representative the daily

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<sup>127</sup> Here he refers to Zonguldak workers march to Ankara that was ended with an army barricade in 1991.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with H.U., the former head of a GMİS local branch (2 May 2006).

newspaper. I learned that this representative participated the May Day rally in Ankara, not in Zonguldak with the other leaders of the union when I saw his picture on the front page of the paper. (He had his mining helmet on and was covered with crowds of Turkish flags and had a proud smile on his face.). He paused the interview, and picked up the phone: “Did you see my picture Ms. A.? Did you see who protects this f\*\*\*ing country?” Perhaps, he was referring to the new world that he protects his country against.

This union leader refers to globalization as an omnipotent force that amalgamates structural, institutional and ideological dynamics taking place in global, national and local levels; and as an external force which the mineworkers and the union is merely a passive receiver of. By assigning globalism all of the responsibility for the absence of workers in May Day, he chooses to neglect his and GMİS’ role responsibility. Hence, such is an obedient stance against the forces of globalization, fused with pessimist and submissive stance about the power of the union.

The submissive and obedient stance does not always take a pessimist tone. When asked about the passivity of GMİS, another union executive repeated the submissive perspective but stated an optimism outlook:

Yes, unfortunately our union has been passive. But tell me who is active? Who can stand against the attacks of *the new world regime*? You also watch TV, read newspapers, you tell me, who does? (...) The sons of this country cannot go on like that. As the poet has written, “The human has hope.”<sup>129 130</sup>

Given the decline of GMİS in terms of union presence and activity the submissive tone of the speech is understandable. However, he extends such condition of passivity to the all parts of the country. The antagonism between externally sourced new world

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<sup>129</sup> Probably he is referring to Nazım Hikmet’s poem named *Umut* (Hope).

<sup>130</sup> Interview with H.T., 38 year old hewer from Karadon pit (5 May 2008).

order, and the county as a totality that is regarded as its victim continues to be reproduced. Labor as well as other potential agents of resistance are again discursively amalgamated and put into a position in which they are all passive receivers of a systemic force: The amalgamated and contained abstract unity receives of an externality beyond their reach and they cannot reply back because the object of the reply cannot be reached at the moment. Despite such a catastrophic image that leaves no room for change, he invites the rhetoric of hope. “Hope” does not intermingle with such an image. It juxtaposes alongside of it. He invites the word “hope” to his discourse however without inviting any specific actor. “The sons of this country” just as “hope” is a stylistic speech gesture without its content feeding an empty optimism.

Not all union representatives were leaves their submissive optimism without content:

Now, once again, the worth of coal is realized. China and other great powers of *the new world* order demand more and more coal. We have world’s one of the best coal in terms of its calorie. (...) The giants like Germany reevaluates her coal policies. They have begun to re-operate their mines that they closed down.<sup>131</sup>

This GMİS representative does not state his optimism without attaching his reasoning behind it. At this point, I am not interested neither about the validity of his observation concerning the increasing importance of the importance of coal or about his argument about the quality of Zonguldak coal. Rather, I believe it is more interesting to see how he associates his optimism about the union revival with his truth claim. He pictures a different “new world order”, the loads a new content to it. This time, it does not signify all factors that oppress labor but rather a possibility for the miners to regain the power they used to have. Despite, the content difference of

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<sup>131</sup> Interview with H.U., 35 year old union professional from Kozlu Branch of GMİS (4 January 2009).

“the new world order”, its discursive position as an external entity endures. Rather than the miners, the perpetuator of submission is the basis of the optimism to go over miners’ submission. For him, the external enemy is becoming the hope. The solution appears in the internal mechanism of the external system.

GMIS leaders reproduce the globalization discourse through locating the source of the problems that challenge miners and their union to a conceptual geography that is beyond the workers’ reach: To globality as a conceptual geographical level. Within this discourse, the leaders perceive the workers as passive receivers of the changes that are taking place without any control of the workers. Although the effects of the amalgamated unity of these factors on mineworkers are articulated, the union’s and workers responsibilities in union decline are not visible in this discourse. Now I turn to where and how the workers’ locate their and their unions’ problems to see (a) How do the mineworkers interpret their organized strength? Do they see their union capable to resist the dynamics that challenge them? Or rather, they regard such challenges as beyond their union’s reach? (b) Are there gaps of perceptions between the mineworkers and the union leaders?

Whereas the union leaders locate the sources of miners and their union’s problems to a globe scale, the miners locate them to local or even individual scale: (i) The alienating nature at the very moment of production, (ii) their coworkers in the workplace, (iii) unionists, (iv) shop stewards. The consequences of such conceptualizations are mixed. First, some mineworkers—those refer to problems (i) and (ii)—conceptualize their problems in a conceptual space that is beyond the control of their agency. But they do this through essentializing the sources of their problems, unlike the union leaders who refer to a global sourced dynamics that affected the basin in the course of post-1980s. Second, some—those refer to

problems (iii) and (iv)— refer to responsibilities of the union that it cannot accomplish such as education seminars and ineffective shop stewards. By doing these they also shed light on why there are gaps of perceptions between the mineworkers and union leaders.

MK, thirty year old miner from Karadon pit refers to the deterioration of trust among his coworkers that makes the alienating nature of mining work unbearable: “Everybody is buried in a grave once. We are buried everyday in these graveyards. You are alone here, you have nobody but your friend to trust to. If you do not trust on him, this does not work. (...) Now there is gossip everywhere. Nobody trusts to nobody.”<sup>132</sup> The theme of alienation among the workers repeats here as in the discourse of HU but with a crucial difference. Whereas HU refers to globalization as an omnipotent power that emanates from an external source to the individual relations and alienates workers from each other, MK refers to the alienating nature of coal mining as a universal condition. For MK, alienation is both a cause and a result: One the one hand, mining causes alienation. Alienation is not a social category for him. Rather is a universal and ahistorical phenomenon that derives from the very intimate relationship between the producer and the act of production. He locates the source of alienation in the very moment of production when he encounters with nature to produce. Conceptualized as such, alienation in mining cannot be got over because it is a natural condition beyond the scope of human intervention. On the other hand, for MK alienation may become bearable with socialization. However, given the absence of trust and presence of gossips that signify the lack of cooperation among workers, the socialization required for overcoming alienation is deficient. He approaches to lack of cooperation as a temporal condition (“Now” there is gossip

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<sup>132</sup> From an interview I conducted with Kazım 35 year old miner in the -550 metres depth of Karadon pit. (5 May 2008).

everywhere) rather than as a universal one. However, he is silent in depicting the reasons of changing sociability and thus such a condition.

In the following minutes of my conversation with MK, his coworker ZM who is slightly older than MK intervened the conversation. He silently approved MK's observations and then addressed his reasoning behind such a lack of sociability:

They exhausted the mines. They exhausted the union. They sent the ignorant people here and called them engineers. They do no care about the mine, they care about their wallet. If you only think about your wallet, workers do not have anyone. Then neither the mine nor the union will survive.<sup>133</sup>

ZM does not refer to any systemic forces behind such a condition. Rather, he points to self-interest seeking individuals. More importantly, he points to the individuals in the very locality of working place, the engineers. He attributes more power to the engineers than they have by marking them as the only responsible agents behind workers', the union's and the institution's problems. Here is an ambiguity. How does the engineers' actions result in union's deterioration? Or are there other individuals other than the engineers who only "care about their wallets?" Does he also point to the union leaders as conductors of such corrupt behavior? When he says the workers don't have anyone, does he also refer to the union and argue that it is not with the workers? Although, ZM did not mention any corrupt behavior of union leaders, I understood that he was rather reluctant to indicate this explicitly after I conducted interviews in the Kozlu pit soon after the union elections.

The miners from Kozlu pit were very critical of the previous union administration and blaming Ramazan Denizer, the former union leader for his corrupt behaviors. When I told them that I did not hear about such criticism in the Karadon pit, three reasons were raised. First, they told me that Ramazan Denizer was

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

a previous worker and union representative in Karadon pit therefore popular among the workers in Karadon. Second, they claimed that Denizer was from the same town origin with many workers from Karadon pits, even he had kinship ties with family numerous workers. Third, one worker reminded the mountainous geography and its distance to the city center of Karadon and claimed that such condition make the workers more feudalistic which result in their absolute obedience to their leaders.<sup>134</sup> Whether stated explicitly or referred implicitly, distrust to union leaders is a recurring theme in the discourse of workers when asked to locate the sources of their and union's problems. In addition to essentializing the problems, individualizing them through pointing particular leaders—rather than to systemic forces—is another phenomenon among the workers.

During my interviews both in Karadon and Kozlu pits, the perception of the absence of the union in the workplace was a recurring theme. Like MK and ZK's perception of loneliness in the workplace Kozlu mineworkers also referred to the sense of loneliness. However, unlike Karadon mineworkers they hold the union's absence in the workplace as responsible for this:

The union assigns the shop stewards from the ones who should retire. If such people need to continue to work and have wage, the institution will not make them retire 'cause they have a position in the union. If anyone who should retire has a kid that he has to look after, he has to send to school, he will be the shop steward. (...) Shop stewards do not work. The biggest problem of the union is this.<sup>135</sup>

Herein, the worker states the shop stewards have crucial importance for the worker-union relationship. For him, the shop stewards are the actual perpetrators of the union activity in micro level, the working environment: The union holds the

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<sup>134</sup> Despite such assumed differences among workers from different pits is relevant to study the dearth of class identity, at this point I cannot study this due to the inadequate data to make such an analysis.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with a miner aged around 40 from Kozlu pit (5 January 2009).

continuous communication with the workers through these agents. However, these mechanisms do not function, rather has become merely a formality and leave the workers without a close proximity to their union. This has two results: On the one hand, the workers do not *experience* the union in their work place, with consequences of diminishing trust to the union, sense of loneliness and lack of sociability at work. On the other hand, the workers cannot inform their union about their individual problems which can be collected by the shops stewards. In this break of communication, the union cannot collect information from the workers therefore cannot conjoin these information to shape its policy.

Workers' perception of problems in the individual and very local level without linking these with any systemic forces taking place in larger scale, and union's actual absence among workers are related also in another form. The union not merely cannot get information from the workplace but also it does not function well enough to inform the workers about the dynamics taking place in larger scale:

There has not been an education seminar for years. If you do not educate the guys, you cannot expect right analyses of the problems from them. The problem is not anywhere else; we have the problem. But the union is the solution.<sup>136</sup>

Herein, the problems are located in two levels: communitarian and institutional.

First, he refers to abstract workers who are unable to comprehend the problems that they face. He approaches education as a force that can enlighten the workers and arm them with conceptual instruments with which they will be able to comprehend the circumstances they are in. One point carries great importance here: When he refers to the ignorant workers who require education, he does not approach them as particular workers. Rather for him, the workers as a community have the common trait of being

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with a miner excelled in transportation of extracted coal, aged around 40 from Kozlu pit (5 January 2009).

unable to comprehend what enfolds them; and he locates himself in an intrinsic location to that community, marks the “we” character of the community and expresses his sense of belonging to that communitarian identity. Thus, this critique of the workers take a self-reflexive form, the speaker regards himself as both the subject and object of the criticism. He is the subject as long as he criticizes the labor union as an exterior entity to the community that is expected to educate them as if the possessor of knowledge. And he is the object of his own criticism, not only because he is a member of the “community of ignorant”; but also due to his self-attributed exterior position to “the guys who cannot rightly analyze their problems”, and his inclusion to the category of “you” that should “educate the guys.” Approached as such he expresses his proximity to the union through sharing the responsibility of it. In other words, when he locates the labor union to an exterior position to the community, he regards the former as an institution with specific duties that it cannot accomplish. But when he locates it to an interior position in the community, he regards it as a tool of the community; the fallacy of the labor union becomes that of the community.

In short, there is significant gap of union leaders’ and workers’ perceptions of their problems. Where the former reproduces the discourse of globalization, the latter locates the source of the problems to individual and communitarian level without linking these to extra-local factors. This has implications of lack of communication and presence of autonomous union bureaucracy: First, the leaders locate the source of the problems beyond their own reach through the globalization discourse which is instrumentalized to give away their own responsibilities. Whereas the workers do not associate with such discourse however cannot have conceptual tools to link the problems in local level with the dynamics in national and global level that oppose

their union and themselves. Second, the significant gap of perceptions among the leaders and workers suggest that the distance between the union and the workers is not only institutional but also symbolic. That is to say, the real facts on the ground are interpreted from delinked worlds of meaning.

### The City

The identity of *Zonguldaklılık*, being from Zonguldak, signifies two forms of belonging: On the one hand, it denotes the working class identity of the mineworkers. On the other hand, it is a space-oriented identity that encapsulates an inter-class alliance against the neo-liberal policies. The bases of such identifications rely on two interrelated factors that are discussed in Chapter 2. First, as discussed in the city of Zonguldak as socio-economical space grounded the amalgamated working and daily common practices of the mineworkers. Workers' class culture that is composed of such common practices led the identity of being a worker and living in Zonguldak to intermingle. Second, due to the dependence of the city economy to a single industry of coal mining, defending the coalmines against neo-liberal policies meant defending the city. Hence, other micro-classes' dependence on the city economy, led them to realize the cross class alliance with the workers on the basis of *Zonguldaklılık* identity. GMİS frequently referred to such identification with the city during the labor mobilization in 1990 and 1991 and identified the endeavor of defending workers' right with that of defending the city and people of Zonguldak:

Today, everybody living in Zonguldak; the retired, widows, orphans, peasants, shopkeepers, greengrocers, butchers, intellectuals, lawyers, technicians are all anxious. They murmur here and there: Zonguldak is going out of our hands; Zonguldak will sink down, life will be over. We call all workers, everybody living in Zonguldak: no coal, no life (...) My fellow tradesmen, greengrocers! To whom will you sell

your apples if there is no one to buy them? My fellow hotel owner!  
Who will stay at your hotel rooms if they close down the pits?<sup>137</sup>

GMİS then based its movement to a spatial identification that includes but gets beyond working class identity. Such spatial identification had been based on material relations from which necessity of class alliance between the *proletariat* and *petit bourgeoisie* (peasants, lawyers, shop keepers) is derived. GMİS also produced the significant other of the identity of *Zonguldaklılık*. It denounced the neo-liberal agents who support deindustrialization through the closure of the mines as enemies of Zonguldak:

Nobody has the right to not to take Zonguldak seriously nobody has the right to gamble on Zonguldak. We will not this to happen. We will continue to confront the ones who want to push Zonguldak to the edge of the abyss and sink it down.<sup>138</sup>

The identity of *Zonguldaklılık* appeared as a site of discursive struggle between the union and the elites who supported deindustrialization, that is to say the closure of the pits. Köksal Toptan's, former Minister of National Education words illustrate such an endeavor: "The expression of Zonguldak means coal was relevant until now. However, from now on, if you insist to repeat that expression, we cannot find a way out for Zonguldak."<sup>139</sup>

Whereas GMİS was advocating the importance of defending the city *via* defending the industry, the neo-liberal governments suggested the necessity of liberating the city *from* the industry. The government elites were reproducing the discourse of efficiency that is framed by neo-liberal ideology (Chapter 2) and

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<sup>137</sup> Genel Maden-İş, *Şemsi Denizler Anlatıyor: Zonguldak Gerçeği* (Zonguldak: Genel Maden-İş, 1991), 25

<sup>138</sup> Genel Maden-İş, "Zonguldak Direnişimiz," *Genel Maden-İş*, no. 36 (November - December 1991): 2-8.

<sup>139</sup> Köksal Toptan, "Zonguldak'ı Sadece TKK'ya Mahkum Edemeyiz," in 2. *Zonguldak Kurultayı* (Zonguldak: Genel Maden-İş, 1992), 19

underscored assumed importance of the breaking of the dependency of the city economy on coal industry for efficiency purposes. That endeavor would mean to aim dissolution of the identity of *Zonguldaklılık* as an economical – spatial category within which the discourse of labor resistance equalized defending the coal industry, the labor rights and living in the city.

As I stated in the previous chapter, GMİS and its predecessor labor unions have organized and were instituted in the basin and represented the Zonguldak mineworkers. After the constitutional obligations that restricted the local unions and forced to form national type of unions, the other small unions in the basin joined GMİS after 1983. However, the workers refused to unite with then the second biggest mineworkers' union, Türk Maden-Sen. In a possible unification the headquarters of the union would had to move to the capital city. Hence, GMİS continued to be the union of Zonguldak despite it was officially a nationwide organized union. On the other hand, DİSK affiliated Dev-Maden-Sen is the other union organizing mineworkers. However, the number of its members form the basin is almost negligible, especially there is almost no TTK worker who is a Dev-Maden-Sen member. In short, GMİS is the only union of Zonguldak mineworkers and it is the union of only Zonguldak.

What is the contemporary signification of the identity of *Zonguldaklılık* and how does GMİS relate to this identity? Is it still both an industry-oriented identity and identity of inhabitancy? If yes, is GMİS still capable to represent such identity? As the following lines illustrate, the capacity of *Zonguldaklılık* as a industry-oriented identity is challenged by the processes of deindustrialization and privatization.

The workers and union leaders I interviewed with also express the strong ties with *Zonguldaklılık* - mine working and GMİS. Workers refer to the problems of the

city of Zonguldak when they are asked about that of coal production. And the GMİS leaders refer to their solutions for the problems of the city when they are asked about their proposals for the revival of their union. However, when reminded the increasing employment in the private sector and the absence of GMİS' representation in the private sector, GMİS' declining capacity to represent Zonguldaklılık as an industry-oriented identity and identity of inhabitancy is discernible.

We had bonuses before the *bayram*. But they recruited workers in the private companies. Nobody said anything. Of course we need to organize there. Not getting organized there is a mistake.<sup>140</sup>

First, GMİS cannot represent the industry-oriented identity due to its absence in private sector mining. When the unionized public sector workers and the GMİS representatives still hold to the assumed identification of GMİS with *Zonguldaklılık*, the private sector mineworkers remain as an excess over the signification of the identity of *Zonguldaklılık*. Second, the private sector miners are also the inhabitants of the city. Thus, GMİS' capacity to represent of *Zonguldaklılık* defined on the basis of inhabitancy also decline.

Workers' relation to *Zonguldaklılık* rest on identifications based on a mixture of industry-oriented and inhabitancy oriented forms. There are two contemporary trends: (i) Industry-oriented identity seems to give way to inhabitancy oriented identity. Given the rate of increasing migration out of Zonguldak the latter seems to be fading away. (ii) The industrial-oriented identity seems less likely to coalesce with the identity of inhabitancy due to the decreasing traits of working culture in the city.

(i) Workers identification with Zonguldak in industrial-oriented form had

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<sup>140</sup> Interview with a 45 year old E.R., an experienced union official from Kozlu branch of GMİS (6 January 2009).

been based on not only their employment in the mines, but also on conjoining their personal history on the basis the their miner generations.

Mine working is inherited from our father to us. We work in the mines like we work on the field that we inherit from our father. (...) They made me chocker (*domuzdamcı*) because my father was a chocker. I have four kids. If I cannot make them have education they will go in the mines. They will be chockers because I am a chocker.  
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Almost fifteen years after the above quoted lines were stated, take the note of the difference in a hewer's statements.

I did not like studying and I found a job in the mines. My father is an honest man, people liked him. He put me to this job. My grandfather worked in these mines. He was carrying the extracted coal from the mines. My son is not hard working, but will he find a job here. I hope so. You see the Zonguldak youngsters in the streets unemployed, useless...<sup>142</sup>

Herein, a possible rupture in the generations of miners is indicated. His past is told on the axis of the minor elders, but his future generations is regarded as in the threat of being unemployed. He defines a category of unemployed and useless, and attaches the Zonguldak identity based on inhabitancy (unemployed youngster who inhabit in Zonguldak.) In his account, the rupture in his generation is between working in the mines (Zonguldaklılık as an industrial identity) and living in Zonguldak but not working in the mines (Zonguldaklılık as an identity of inhabitancy). However, the later—inhabiting in Zonguldak but not working in the mines—seems less likely. Since mining continues to be the dominant sector on which the city economy rests, it is more likely that his son will migrate out of Zonguldak which would be the caesurae of Zonguldaklılık as an identity of inhabitancy. As the report of Ankara

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<sup>141</sup> Genel Maden-İş, "Satılmış Canbaz: "Üretim İçin Başçavuşların Görüşü Alınmalı"," *Genel Maden-İş*, no. 39 (June-July 1992): 27.

<sup>142</sup>Interview with 37 year old hewer from Karadon pit (8 May 2008).

Chamber of Commerce states, the unemployment rate has declined in Zonguldak due to the migration from Zonguldak to the other cities.<sup>143</sup>

ŞB, around 40 year old miner from Karadon district also approached to *Zonguldaklılık* as an identity formed through living in the city, however he also referred to the working class culture that derives from working and living together that makes that identity a welcoming for the new comers to the city:

The Zonguldak people gets everyone in itself. We worked together, lived together here for many years. Kurds, Lazs took brides, gave brides here, they socialized (*kaynaşmış*) together, Zonguldak people gets the newcomers in itself too.<sup>144</sup>

Third, before I conducted the above quoted interview I was talking with two young Kurdish miners from Karadon pit who were newcomers to the basin. These two miners welcomed ŞB when we were conducting the interview in a public park in Kilimli. What they told me before ŞB joined the conversation was contradicting with ŞB's words. They told me that they experience exclusion mostly because of they status as newcomers and their ethnic origin. They mentioned the expression of "Zonguldak people" as a category that they do not include themselves in. When I asked them whether they experience such exclusion at work, they told me that the other workers were friendly to them. Herein, work and daily lives were taken two distinct social spheres, whereas they feel at home in the former, they mention exclusion in the latter. Although they feel included the working class identity at work, such identity cannot get beyond to the daily life. *Zonguldaklılık* is regarded as an identity defined on the basis of inhabitancy, which cannot be linked with working class culture.

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<sup>143</sup> Ankara Ticaret Odası, *İşsizlipin ve Göçün Coğrafyası Raporu*, 7 4 2007, <http://www.atonet.org.tr/yeni/index.php?p=1058&l=1> (Retrieved on 05.12. 2009).

<sup>144</sup> Interview with ŞT, around 40-year-old mechanic from Karadon pit.

## The Country

The theme of the country and nation is recurring in GMİS publications, leaders' and workers' discourses. The theme is located in three related yet distinct discursive spheres: (1) GMİS allude to the central importance of the state administered hard coal reserves for the development of the national industry and regards protecting the rights of workers as protecting the coal mine production therefore the national industry. The workers' rights, the coal industry and development of national industry is believed to be opposed by the new world order / globalization /imperialism. And GMİS regards itself as the guardian of the nation against such forces. (2) The leaders as well as workers have a sensual link to the country in addition to / rather than a perceived material links between the worker rights, the mining industry, and the nation. (3) GMİS believes to protect the national interest through its *responsible* union practices. GMİS in that sense appropriates a solidarist perception of the nation and regards the worker rights as equivalent with national rights. Corporatist unionism affiliated with TÜRK-İŞ is at work here. Below I describe such discursive spaces in their intertwined forms and analyze their conditions of possibility.

### Material Attachment to the Country

As discussed in Chapter 2, the coal production in the basin has had central importance for the national industrial development after its nationalization in 1940 and especially after the establishment of the Iron and Steel factories in the region that hold crucial significance for the nation's industrial production. The institutions in Zonguldak underscore the importance of the basin for the national industrial growth and Mustafa Kemal's words that he told during his visit to the city in 1936 may be seen in the framed large fonts on the walls of city hall, TTK, Chamber of Mine

Engineers, GMİS central office: “Just as much as the treasured mines under the depth of Zonguldak’s earth, for us Zonguldak is our city with such importance.<sup>145</sup>”

GMİS mobilized such an idea during its labor militancy in 1990 and 1991 by claiming that closure of the coal mines would not only do mischief to the coalminers’ interests but also to the national interest by harming the national industrial development:

Nobody mentions (...) if the iron and steel production ceases whole industry would cease (...) if we close [the pits] we cannot find the necessary funds to reopen them. We cannot then find coal for the cement industry, power plants, homes, and other industry. Nobody says the national interest is being left aside, national wealth is buried.<sup>146</sup>

GMİS has equalized the miners’ class interest with national interest without dissolving the former in the latter. For GMİS, preserving the coal production in the basin would both serve the working class and national interest. Within the globalization discourse—as discussed in the beginning of this chapter—the global forces has be blamed for the projects of deindustrialization in the basin. The imperialists or the systemic forces of global capitalism are regarded as the villain whereas both the country and the mineworkers were regarded as the victim. However, despite the lack of the GMİS’s necessary critique of Turkish bourgeoisie and locating the labor militancy along the lines of class antagonism in the country, one may not pass directly to the argument that GMİS had a nationalist agenda without taking the note of how the discourse of “national interest” functioned as an instrument of working class mobility. Two points are worth mentioning in this respect:

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<sup>145</sup> T.C. Zonguldak Valiliği, *Atatürk ve Zonguldak*, <http://www.zonguldak.gov.tr/index-1.htm> (Retrieved on 16 May 2009).

<sup>146</sup> Genel Maden - İş, «Demokratik Kurumlar Medya Tehdidi Altında,» *Genel Maden - İş*, no. 42 (September 1993): 6-7.

First, “nation” was a realm of contestation. Whereas GMIS defined workers’ interests as identical without subsuming the former under the latter, it contested the nationalism of power elites through giving a new content to the notion of “national interest”. It was explicitly opposing the constitution and the legislation that concerns labor relations that were the products of the military intervention of 1980.

“Democracy” was a frequent motive during the mobilization, and the legal universe was marked as being undemocratic due to their “labor and people oppressive” nature. In that respect, GMIS’s critical stance against the post-1980 regime led it to take a distance from the official nationalism. Whereas the state elites were referring to the vocabularies of “efficiency” and “economic necessities” when they argued to that deindustrialization serves national interest, GMIS has assigned a new content to the “national interest” by underscoring the importance of “national industrial development”, “labor rights”, “people’s interest.”

Second, GMIS took a distance from its nationalist-corporatist union perspective during 1970s and 1980s (Chapter 4.) Under the expression of “new union approach” it criticized the union practices that are subservient to government and capitalist practices. GMIS leaders occasionally alluded to the miners as a social class, the term absent in its discourses in the previous two decades. Rather than the union held a perspective of society that takes it as an organic whole that mantled conflicting class interests. Au contraire, GMIS’ “new union approach” assigned priority to safe guarding working class interest which is taken as a rudimentary step to accomplish the national interest.

#### Responsible Unionism: Subsuming Workers Interest Under National Interest

As I discussed in Chapter 2, there was a shift in governmental policies regarding the future of coal mining industry with the 2000s. Rather than policies that aimed

deindustrialization, policies that aimed preserving the industry with lower labor costs and private entrepreneurship were taken into their agendas. The elites referred to Zonguldak's importance for the country's economy more often. However, rather than the vocabularies of national interest, national sovereignty, and national industrial movement; a vocabulary suitable for privatization and market rationality such as commercial intelligence, commercial abilities, entrepreneur power. Take a note of Köksal Toptan's words and how they differ from what he said 16 years before (cited in footnote 19.): "We will altogether realize Turkey's big development by mobilizing the mines and Turkey's basic wealth, Turkey's commercial intelligence, Turkey's productive intelligence, Turkey's entrepreneur power."<sup>147</sup>

Whereas in the early 1990s, GMİS equated the mineworkers' interest with national interest through the demand of defending the industry, with the early 2000s, the same demand has been framed in a relationship that equated mineworkers'/working class interest, national interest and entrepreneur/capitalist interest. In such discourse, essentially conflicting interests were taken as identical and the role attributed to GMİS was being a part of an alliance between the state-capital through governance practices rather than following the principles of working class unionism.<sup>148</sup> As Köksal Toptan continues his speech quoted above: "We know GMİS's love of Turkey, love of Zonguldak, patriotism. We know how important services it did, how altruistic it was when it is necessary."<sup>149</sup> Toptan refers to

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<sup>147</sup> İhlas Haber Ajansı, *TBMM Başkanı Köksal Toptan Genel Maden-İş'i Ziyaret Etti*, 17 September 2007, <http://www.haberler.com/tbmm-baskani-toptan-genel-maden-is-i-ziyaret-etti-haberi/> (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

<sup>148</sup> For a classical debate on class unionism see Eugene Debs, "Class Unionism," *Debs: His Life, Writings, and Speeches* içinde, 401-426 (Girard, KS: Appeal to Reason, 1908).

<sup>149</sup> İhlas Haber Ajansı, *TBMM Başkanı Köksal Toptan Genel Maden-İş'i Ziyaret Etti*, 17 September 2007, <http://www.haberler.com/tbmm-baskani-toptan-genel-maden-is-i-ziyaret-etti-haberi/> (Retrieved on 17 May 2009).

altruism of GMİS, that is to say devoting the workers interests to the nation. The position GMİS is called into is “responsible unionism” that the union has taken in the period between 1970-1989.

In 2009, two years later than the above quoted words of Toptan, TTK recruited workers however with 55 % (app. 950 YTL) of the wages of the current workers. GMİS leaders also signed the protocol that approves such conditions: “Why did we sign the protocol? The workers were retiring the workers one by one and the institution needed workers. Our shortages were critical, new recruits were required immediately.”<sup>150</sup>

Arising from this may be argued that GMİS leader refers to the needs of TTK as the needs of the union. Identifying the union’s interest with the institution’s interest seem appropriate given that GMİS’ membership rates are dependent on the number of workers employed in TTK. However, not all union leaders approach to TTK as the only alternative for the city economy’s survival and the union’s revival. Rather, promotion of private sector is a supported with a specific emphasis to the employment opportunities private investments will bring:

What does it mean to prevent the loads and lees on the state enterprises? That is the way it is. There is only TTK, there is not another form. (...) But the state should operate its own sources, if there is anyone who demands—this is what I emphasize—should not exploit any part of the state but should create its own employment opportunities. When doing that, it should be supported by the state. The state should show hm the write place, support him with water sources, human force, money and so on.<sup>151</sup>

Herein, the governmental discourse that equates national interest, workers’

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<sup>150</sup> Interview with EK, 37 year old unionist from Kozlu branch of GMİS (6 January 2009)

<sup>151</sup> Interview with a 45 year old E.R., an experienced union official from Kozlu branch of GMİS (6 January 2009).

interest and entrepreneur interest is welcome. However, with a caution of the necessity of protecting the state against private sector's parasitic economic actions. The union leaders give a different content to "responsible unionism" when asked about the union's future strategy in private sector. They do not refuse the private sector totally, rather regard the union's responsibility to act as a controlling mechanism against private sector's misconduct and as a protective belt to protect the workers.

### Sensual Attachment to the Country

The rhetoric of love of country is commonplace among mineworkers. Such sensual attachment to the country is located in the personal affiliation of the worker subject with the imagined nation-community. However, this sensual attachment converges with previously discussed material attachment to the country. Workers assume a material linkage between themselves and the country as an economic unit, through emphasizing the central role of coal mining for the national industry.

The workers interviewed with, recurrently criticize their co-workers for not being conscious of their material attachment to the country: "Miners are the honor of the homeland my friend. They stood against the ones who wanted to sell this country in bits and pieces. Now they only care about themselves but that's another thing."<sup>152</sup>

Herein, the theme of "honor" functions as a node that converges the material and sensual attachment. On the one hand, the worker refers to the lack of awareness of the material linkage between the mineworkers and the nation. At this point, the word "honor" is employed to describe labor's such awareness and movement in 1990-1991. On the other hand, he criticizes his co-workers for not having necessary sensual affiliation to the country. "Honor" at this context, is used to mark the main

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<sup>152</sup> Interview with a 35 year old K.K., a hewer from Karadon pit (5 May 2008).

motivation that would lead to possible labor action to guard the nation, the community in need.

As the below lines illustrate, crucial roles are attributed to the union in such sensual and material linkages.

Now the workers care about their own problems. They think how they will survive until the payment day, how they will pay their credit card debts (...) The union has to educate the workers. It should tell the workers that they have common problems. It should protect the homeland, the people.<sup>153</sup>

Here, the worker interests and national interests are taken as identical, protecting the former is regarded as the same endeavor to guard the latter. “The community in need” at this point is not regarded as abstract entity that the workers should protect, rather it is the workers themselves that correspond with such a community. Thus, for workers, guarding themselves is guarding the nation. However, the workers cannot accomplish this goal by themselves, rather need the union as an internal entity which is the workers’ own organization thus a undistinguishable part of such a community, and as an external entity which can bring awareness and knowledge through educative actions. Thus, the union has a dual role: First is derived from the love of county. At this point, the country is regarded as a community in which workers are regarded as a remarkable element. By doing this, the union is coded as capable of amalgamating the individualities of workers to form the communal unity. Second is derived from the awareness of assumed material linkages. At this point, country is regarded as the totality of the material links among workers and the nation’s other constituents.

The assumed correspondence between guarding the nation and protecting the coal industry is also registered in the perceptions of the young miner from whom I

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<sup>153</sup> Interview with a 42 year old above ground worker from Kozlu mines. (3 January 2009).

quote below.

Zonguldak mines have critical importance for the national industrial movement of great leader Atatürk's republic. However, after 1980 when the economy became dependent on external sources Zonguldak lost its importance. (...) However the consciousness of national sovereignty among the mineworkers is weak.<sup>154</sup>

What lacks here is the recognition of the mineworkers' rights in the references to national sovereignty. Rather worker interest is subsumed in the nation's interests. The word consciousness, which is usually affiliated with workers' consciousness of their class interests in the jargon of labor movements, is attributed to awareness of the national interests here. Although such perception is similar to the commonplace argument of the course of 1990-1991 that equates class interest with the national interest, it differs from it as long as it dissolves the former in the latter. Once the labor movement withdraws from the scene, the rhetoric of "national interest" floats without references to class interests, that leaves the workers with sensual affiliations to the country without references to the material linkages between themselves and the country. Hence, without the labor mobilization, the rhetoric of guarding the nation gets closer to the nationalist ideology that assumes nation as an organic unity rather than being an arena of the existence of the conflicting social classes.

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with a mechanic from Kozlu pit, aged around 30, university graduate (2 January 2009)

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The title of this study points to the object of this research: It is on the underground and aboveground mineworkers in the Zonguldak basin. It raises the question of how the mineworkers' organized strength has been affected through the course of post-1980. In order to answer this question it analyzes the objective and subjective determinants of the workers organized strength with a specific emphasis on the course of post-1980. It does not only focus on the structural and institutional dynamics that have affected workers' hence their unions' structural and associational power, but also inquires the discursive spaces that effect workers' class identity. The title of this study also points to its underlying approach to working class: It is on the working class underground and aboveground, that is to say on class as a potentiality and actuality. It approaches the working class as a position in the relations of production on the one hand, and as a formation of class identity on the other. In that sense, it regards the workers' union as a medium to actualize their potential power, a catalyst of formation of working class identity and action out of working class position.

In the second chapter, the diminishing structural power of Zonguldak mineworkers is studied. There are three major findings: First, the trends of gradual deindustrialization and indirect privatization in the basin that took place during the post-1980 era have declined and fragmented production processes and labor market. The diminishing capacity of production with severe declines in the number of workers melted the member base of GMİS. Moreover, the establishment of private sector in the basin through *rodövens* system introduced new free labor types: Mineworkers employed in private and subcontracting sectors. Since GMİS'

organizational structure rests on the unified web of bureaucracy of the public sector coalmining and its member base is composed of the mineworkers in government service who are unlikely to be dismissed for union membership, such fragmentation of labor market challenged GMİS' traditional unionism methods.

Second, the linkages between coalmine industry in Zonguldak and iron-steel industry in Karabük and Ereğli have loosened with the latter's increasing access to imported coal. When such linkages were rigid, a possible strike had the potential effect to halt production in iron-steel industry, which then would affect the productive activities in construction, durable goods, and automotive sectors. The mineworkers hence GMİS lost such a potential power in the course of post-1980.

Third, industrialization of coalmine sector had integrated with the urban growth and urban setting in Zonguldak, which consolidated mineworkers' work and daily lives. Such consolidation helped the mineworkers have common practices not only in but also outside of the workplace. Homogenization of workers' daily life practices led to a worker culture, which has a great potential for formation of working class identity. However, due to the shrinking of TTK and the facilities it provided to workers, such consolidation has separated, the elements of class culture has been crumbled, hence ground for class identity has eroded increasingly after 1980.

In the third chapter, GMİS, the only labor union now organized among the public sector mineworkers in Zonguldak basin is studied. This chapter analyzes its traits through the course of its history through the lenses of its relation to four elements: the legislative framework in Turkey, TÜRK-İŞ, inter-party relations in Turkey, and GMİS member base. This chapter has four findings:

First, although the legislative framework regarding labor relations has been the major occluding factor for processes of unionization after 1980 in Turkey, it did not directly acted upon the declining numbers of dues-paying unionists organized in GMİS. Rather, GMİS continued to be organized among all of the public sector mineworkers in the basin. However, the legal thresh-hold that requires the union to be organized among the 10 % of the workers in that particular sector raised great challenges. GMİS reported more workers than it actually has to TÜRK-İŞ and Ministry of Labor. That meant paying dues to TÜRK-İŞ for the fake members who do not actually pay dues to GMİS. This led GMİS to have great financial problems.

Second, GMİS has been affiliated to TÜRK-İŞ not solely through organizational but also through ideological links. TÜRK-İŞ's solidarist-corporatist, nationalist, anti-communist, anti-DİSK and class compromiser unionism perspective had also been present in GMİS until 1989. However, with the labor movement GMİS organized in 1990-1991, it had a declared antagonistic position against TÜRK-İŞ. It appropriated a class unionism perspective that not only challenged neo-liberal state elites and capitalist class but also the obedient and passive union bureaucracy of TÜRK-İŞ. Nevertheless, when the enthusiasm of the labor movement withered away, GMİS' class unionism perspective evaporated and the spirit of 1990-1991 gave ay to necro-nostalgia.

Third, GMİS' predecessor union had been highly influenced by the RPP-DP competition between 1946-1960. The disputes within the union along the lines of such inter-party conflict were present until the military intervention in 1960. DP's closure and TWP's (TİP) establishment changed the form of intra-union disputes. Until 1970, TİP and DİSK affiliated unionists challenged GMİS bureaucracy adherent to elite parties and TÜRK-İŞ. However, after 1971, suasion had cave into

surrender: stalwart supporters of elite parties dominated GMIS' bureaucracy. Despite the social democratic turn among GMIS' cadres during the first half of 1990s, the right-wing parties have increased their dominance since the second half of 1990s. Contemporary political affiliation of the cadres is mixed between JDP and RPP lines. In short, in the absence of working class parties, the elite parties with populist rhetoric politically dominate GMIS. Union's such fragility to intra-party vying for power in the union, is an incapacitating as reflected by a union member miner: "Politics finished the union."

Fourth, GMIS' member base has declined due to the declining number of mineworkers employed in public sector mining in the basin. GMIS is only organized in the basin and among the public sector workers. GMIS did not organize the new forms of labor that emerged with the private sector mining and subcontracting work. However, workers' official affiliation to GMIS and their actual affiliation should be distinguished. The former question regards the number of dues-paying unionist whereas the latter the workers attitudes towards their union. As the following paragraphs point out, there is a lack of confidence among the mineworkers towards their unions, which makes a collective class action framed with GMIS' associational structure less likely.

In short, GMIS had a defensive strategy against the structural challenges it faced. In the course of labor movement in 1990-1991, it resisted to the neo-liberal attacks on the wages, labor rights and continuity of industrial production. However, such resistance could not last long. It has not been successful neither in its defensive position against deindustrialization and privatization, nor in developing new instruments to adapt to the new structural circumstances in the production and labor

market. As it began to lose its member base, its relation to present members has weakened and intra-union conflicts dominated its agenda.

The fourth chapter studies GMIS representatives' and mineworkers' perceptions and the discursive spaces that these perceptions are embedded in. Due to the recurring references to spatial categories such as "globalism", "world", "country", "nation", "city", "locality", and "workspace" the perceptions are categorized and presented in spatial axes. The perceptions and discourses that circulate among the mineworkers that inform the subjective dimension of union power and forms of belonging with class identity are analyzed within three spatial axes:

The union leaders refer to the global factors whereas the mineworkers mostly to local even individualistic circumstances when asked to locate the problems before their unions. Union leaders' blame the global factors as responsible for their union's decline. They refer to "world order"/"globalization"/"imperialism" as if they unified, totalistic and holistic self-regulating mechanisms. Such perceptions affiliated with globalization discourse have three major functions: (1) Union leaders posit union's problems to conceptual space that is external to the union which functions to veil the problems derive from its internal culpabilities. (2) The problems the union face are located to an external source that is beyond the union's reach. Once the problems located as such, union's repertoire of action is regarded very limited legitimizes the immobility of the union. (3) The union leaders refer to globalization as if an automatic process without agents making it possible. However, the term globalization *per se* has not explanatory power for the decline of GMIS. Rather the neo-liberal governments have institutionalized and fostered the structural problems (Chapter 2). Such a conceptualization without national agents function to make the

union inactive and obedient to the state and capitalist elites, rather than waging a class struggle against such forces.

Whereas the union leaders externalize the problems, the mineworkers interviewed with do not refer to the factors in global and national scale when they are asked to locate the sources of their problems. Rather they refer to workplace and individual relations among workers. Such perceptions point to three interlinked phenomena: (1) The mineworkers cannot establish the casual links between the dynamics in global, national and local scale. In the absence of education seminars that GMİS should organize, workers only relate to the problems they individually experience. (2) The GMİS' shop stewards function only as a formal requirement. Thus the union is absent in the workplace level, cannot communicate with the workers at the very micro scale, which results. This means detachment and lost of confidence on the workers side, and lack of awareness of the mineworkers' problems in the shop floor level. (3) Workers refer to individualism within the relations among their co-workers. This points to lack of cooperation among workers as well as lack of trust to the collective action. Such a lack of cooperation and distrust mark the low levels of identification with class identity, awareness of objective class interests,

The industrial growth in Zonguldak has intertwined with the urban growth. Whereas the developing coal industry demanded more labor power, the city—which was previously an uninhabited territory—have magnetted migrating populations. The inhabitants of the city was there due to the mining sector, that is to say they attached to the city because they attached to the city. Thus the identity of *Zonguldaklılık* (being from Zonguldak) signified not only a form of belonging through inhabitation but also that of through adherence to the industry. The theme of *Zonguldaklılık* was

also present in the union's and the workers' discourses interviewed with. There had been two functions of this identification, which are now under transfiguration. First, the worker identity intertwined with the identification with the city. The interviewed mineworkers used Zonguldak and coal mining industry interchangeably. GMİS mobilized such identification and equated defending industry with defending the city during the course of 1990-1991. Moreover, GMİS was only organized in Zonguldak, which lead it to refer itself as the guardian of the city. *Zonguldaklılık* functioned as if the identity that simultaneously derives from working in the coal sector and inhabiting in the city. However, as GMİS did not organize among the laborers employed in the emerging private sector, it lost its character of being the union that represents all of the workers. For GMİS defending the rights of its members, now do not mean that it defends the right of Zonguldak miners.

Second, due to the dependence of the population in Zonguldak to a single industry of mining, GMİS mobilized the identity of *Zonguldaklılık* as the basis of an inter-class alliance in 1990-1991. Defending the labor rights and industry was then become identical with defending the interests of the whole populace. However, as the share of the public sector employee and their dependents in the population decrease through the course of deindustrialization, as well as the city's slowly diminishing dependence on the mining industry, the potential mobilizing power of such identity of *Zonguldaklılık* would have decreased.

“Country” and “nation” are recurring themes in unionists' perceptions. Such themes are framed in two forms each with distinct ideological connotations and discursive functions:

First, the unionists had equated workers' interests with national interest in the early 1990s on the axis of the necessity of protecting and improving the coalmine

industry. However, GMİS and neo-liberal state elites as well as capitalists encompassed the discourse of national interest differently: Whereas the former was emphasizing the strategic importance of the Zonguldak basin for the development of national industry when advocating the preservation of industry, the latter was emphasizing TTK's losses and mobilizing the rhetoric of "efficiency" when advocating the agenda of deindustrialization. Now such difference seems to vanish. The government elites also emphasize the importance of coal mine sector and underline the importance of workers cooperation with the government in that process. Such an alteration of governmental discourse is highly related to the new governmental strategies of preserving industry by limiting the labor costs. Moreover, it is now not appropriate for GMİS to equate labor rights and national interest through defending the preservation of coal production because the share of the private sector coalmining in the industrial coal is increasing with the help of limited labor rights.

Second, GMİS referred to the class interest as identical with national interest in the early 1990s on the axis of defending the workers and the country against the imperialist attacks. It depicted that international organizations such IMF and World Bank were attacking the labor rights and the national interest. Thus, GMİS then was referring to material relations between its labor movement and its love for the country. However, the present affiliation of GMİS and the mineworkers to the nation are more likely to take a sensual form in the absence of references to such material connections.

In short, the power of mineworkers in Zonguldak decreased not solely due to the structural and institutional factors, which brought the trends of deindustrialization and privatization. Rather the diminishing power and activity of GMİS left

mineworkers defenseless against the challenges they face. Under such circumstances, workers identification with their class identity and their propensity for collective action seems less likely which may be summed up under the term class deformation.

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