

EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS IN TURKEY

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This study which examines employers' organisations in Turkey is divided into two main sections.

In the first section, the theoretical approach is applied to employers' organizations in general and the development of this kind of organizations is briefly studied in three selected modern industrial societies.

Since it can be observed that in our times economic relations or events have also a political side, employers' organizations possess this political aspect as well. In this case, although they have economic ends, there will be a political characteristic of the relations of labor unions and employers' associations both among themselves and with the government. On the other hand during the historical change from traditional social structures to modern industrial societies, social power appears. The ways and shapes of the formation and development of these powers take place under the control of the political authority which is a different form of existence of political power. These social powers generally assume a political or economic characteristic depending on their spheres of influence. Since generally economic power functions within a given institutional structure while political power realizes itself by influencing these institutions, these two social powers get differentiated. To-day political power is mostly supported by economic power and it consists of social power which desires or succeeds in meaningfully changing the distribution of the outcome of the «authority» used by political authority. This gets realized in the policies which are either actually carried on or desired to be adopted. Therefore, interest or pressure groups, which want to change the above mentioned distribution, become political power. On the other hand, when the loose internal ties of interest groups become formal and get tightened in an organization, pressure groups appear.

Employers' organizations are pressure groups because they are foundations formed by individuals at certain places in the eco-

economic sphere or in production. They defend the interests originating in these certain places and want to influence the political authority in this way. Besides in this kind of organizations political power is supported by economic power.

Employers' organizations appear in history together with capitalism. England where the industrial revolution has taken place, has witnessed the birth of the first employers' associations in the first half of XVIII. century. In France, employers' associations are seen in the second half of XIX. century; in the U.S.A. they are about the same age as the state. It is possible to observe that in all three countries employers' organizations have been influential on political authority, on other groups and on the public opinion. But these influences change according to the objective conditions of each country and the subjective conditions of each organization.

The second section is a study of employers' organizations in Turkey.

This kind of organization is not very old in this country; however it finds its social and material roots in the existence of the employer-entrepreneur class and especially in its development. In this country, the development of this class has taken place in two important stages. 1923-1950 has been a period when the bureaucracy was accepted as the engine of the economy while the purpose was «independent economic and social development». In this period the employer-entrepreneur class has realized its first accumulation since it was not seriously handicapped at all. In other words, this period set the stage for the employer-entrepreneur class to be the leading power under the protection of the bureaucracy after 1950.

The leading power has really been the private sector from 1950 to this day. Between 1950 and 1960, during the confusion of the lack of policy of the Democratic Party government, this sector lived out the tumult of its adolescence. The period after 1960 is one of mixed economy. There is an important characteristic of this period on the political plan: a democratic and pluralistic social structure has been chosen. This choice has been the main reason for the birth of employers' associations in this country. Because in this structure labor unions had gained importance. On the other hand the social and economic rights and duties given to the workers by the 1961 Constitution strengthened the labor unions.

Faced with these, the separate employers' organizations, which had been in existence without a function or an activity since 1947, came together in 1962 with the influence of the 1961 Constitution and formed the Confederation of Turkish Employers' Organizations. In its life up to the present, this Confederation has tried to be influential in legal changes which would affect itself. At first this was done, together with other organizations of capital, but later it functioned on its own. This central organization, which formally appears as a classical type of confederation, has a vertical formation from above and covers 20 % of the workers under social security system. It is however the only Confederation of the employer-entrepreneur class on matters of work and employment. As a result its activities has been carried on in an ever increasing magnitude. It has developed a consistent and realistic behavior towards legislative changes since 1962. It has really tried to use its influence to the very end at the face of legislation and administration; when new practices or laws were enacted it accepted them; but it started to try to change them.

Although the Confederation has been quite mild towards the labor movement until 1968-1969, it has become more severe since then. The main reasons for this change are the increasing strength of the employers' organization, the increasing magnitude changing characteristic of the labor movement, the realization of the highest average real increases in wages in these years, and a political climate favorable for the employers' organizations to intensify their activities.