

Teacher organization in Turkey and TÖB-DER in the 1970s

Filiz Meşeci-Giorgetti

e-mail: filizmeseci@gmail.com

Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Turkey

Gözde Çeven

e-mail: cevengozde@gmail.com

Yıldız Technical University, Turkey

Abstract: This study aims to reveal the activities of the All-Teachers' Union and Solidarity Association (TÖB-DER), one of the most influential education associations between 1971 and 1980, to achieve the goals determined in its statute. The study attempts to answer two fundamental questions about the association's mission and the activities it intends to carry out. The first question is what the organization undertakes to ensure organizational cohesion. The second question is what the association does to tackle the professional concerns of education service employees and ensure their professional development. In this study, document analysis was used as a qualitative research technique. The authors analysed the work programs, by-laws and regulations, reports, documents of the congress, journals, and the work programs of the provincial organizations, as well as brochures and declarations prepared by the central organization of TÖB-DER. The findings for the first question show that TÖB-DER increased the number of members and branches, ensuring that teachers and the public attend regional and branch meetings, and informing about the importance of the organization through seminars and forums. The findings for the second question demonstrate that TÖB-DER organized meetings on solutions for teachers' professional issues and needs, used bulletins, magazines, newspapers, brochures, and leaflets as a source, and conveyed the solution suggestions and demands put forward in these publications to the relevant institutions and the public. This study concluded that TÖB-DER activities succeeded in raising awareness of the organization to a certain extent in the field of education but were limited in bringing solutions to teachers' professional problems.

Keywords: the 1970s; Turkey; teacher organizations; TÖB-DER; union; association.

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1. Introduction

Several teacher unions across the United States and Europe appeared in the 1970s. American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education

Association (NEA) are today the most influential ones in the United States. AFT was the first education union in the US to let Afro-American teachers become full members of a union. (Dewing, 1973). While AFT negotiated working conditions, teachers' wages, and partly school-related staff, NEA played an important role in improving public education and women's rights and influencing federal laws between the 70s and 80s (Murphy, 1991). England is one of the countries having the most organized teachers. As of the late 1970s, about 85 percent of all teachers employed in the primary, secondary, and further education sectors were members of one or more teachers' organizations (Thornton, 1982). NUT (National Union of Teachers), the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), The Union for Education Professionals (VOICE), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) are well-known teacher unions in Britain.

Despite the mild stance earlier, NUT called teachers' strikes during the 1960s and 1970s with the demand for a rising salary (Thornton, 1982). The increasing militancy in NUT costed member numbers in the following years. The teachers separated from NUT and founded new unions. However, NUT, which won a % 30 salary increase for teachers in 1974, is still one of the most influential unions in England (The Daily Telegraph, 2005; Thornton, 1982). The other noteworthy unions in Europe are the Education and Science Union (GEW), the Teacher's Union (DL), the Education Union (VBE) in Germany, the National Union of Educators in French, Teachers' Union in Sweden.

In a comparative analysis, Asan et al. (2021) hold that the teacher unions in the US and Europe were more active in influencing politicians in producing and influencing education policies than their Turkish counterparts. The activities of Turkish teacher unions were primarily limited to pay increases and personal rights. The teacher unions in Europe were more advanced in supporting each other in their work. Other unions could help and even participate in actions or organizations carried out by a union on any issue concerning education and training workers. In Turkey, it was a scarce situation for unions to come together to achieve a single purpose. The reason for that was highly polarized unions. They had difficulty showing a common stance due to ideological discrimination, resulting in little or no collaborative work.

The formation of unions in Turkey is more recent than the ones in Europe, The UK, and The USA. The establishment and history of civil servant unions started later (Tortop, 2005). The 1961 Constitution granted civil servants the right to unionize for the first time in Turkey.

Teacher organizations in Turkey emerged in 1908, about eighty years after their European counterparts. They made significant contributions to the dissemination of education and consensus in society with their congresses and publications. However, according to many researchers (Altunya, 1998; Akyüz, 2012), these associations and unions cannot solve teachers' professional and economic problems.

In the 1960s, workers in Europe and the United States were experiencing a bright period in terms of unionization, wages, and working conditions. The 1961 constitution, prepared after the May 27, 1960, military intervention in Turkey, gave all employees the right to unionize. The right to organize provided favorable conditions for the politicization and social influence of the workers' movement (Buyruk, 2015). In the 1961 constitution, unlike workers' rights, the right to collective bargaining

and strike by public servants was left to the legislator's discretion without being constitutionally guaranteed. In 1965, Law No. 624 on *State Personnel Unions*, which did not grant public officials the right to strike, engage in collective bargaining, or engage in politics, was passed. In the environment of relative freedom provided after 1960, graduates of village institutes began to have a say in teacher associations. Under the leadership of this group, which defines itself as a working class rather than a white-collar urban teacher, a great teacher meeting was held in 1963, which led to the resignation of the Ministers of Finance and National Education and significant improvements in teachers' salaries. Ninety-two teachers established The Turkish Teachers' Union (TÖS) in July 1965, right after the enactment of the union law. Teachers found more than 100 unions in the field of education services during the six years between 1965 and the March 12, 1971, military coup, when the army government deprived public officials of their right to unionize. TÖS, which has the highest number of members (72,000 members), took necessary actions with the *Revolutionary Education Council* (1968), the *Great Teacher's Walk* (1969), attended by 40,000 teachers, and the *Great Teacher Boycott* (1969), followed by 110,000 teachers. The members disagreed and could not sit at the collective bargaining table (Altunya, 2006). With the constitutional amendment made because of the military intervention of March 12, 1971, the right of civil servants to form unions was abolished, and TÖS members were accused of making communist propaganda and were tried in military courts.

After the unions were closed, the teachers were reorganized under the umbrella of associations. Teachers founded 16 associations between 1971 and 1980 (Akyüz, 1980). In the context of Turkey at the time, most of these associations adopted a harsh rhetorical approach and action patterns based on a particular political-ideological perspective, such as leftist or nationalist. Teachers could not form associations or participate in union activities until the 1990s due to the military coup on September 12, 1980.

In September 1971, TÖS administrators established the All-Teachers' Union (TÖB) while imprisoned. This association, whose name would later be changed to All Teachers' Union and Solidarity Association (TÖB-DER), was dominated by left-wing members and made almost half of the teachers in Turkey members until 1980, when the association was closed. TÖB-DER, as in TÖS, from which it inherited, was against the government and could not sit down with its employer (Altunya, 2006). On the other hand, TÖB-DER differs from teacher organizations before it and in its period in terms of the high number of members, the diversity of the groups formed within itself, their publications, discourse, and initiating relations with international education organizations. On the other hand, TÖB-DER constitutes a typical example of the social, political, and cultural context of 1970s Turkey.

This study aims to reveal the activities of the All Teachers' Union and Solidarity Association (TÖB-DER), one of the most influential education associations between 1971 and 1980, to achieve the goals determined in its statute. As stated in the association's charter, the purpose of TÖB-DER is to ensure its members' unity and solidarity by protecting and developing all economic, social, and personal rights. The work to be done to achieve this aim in the charter of the association is summarized as follows: a) to work for solving the professional problems of the employees in the

education and training service, ensuring their professional development, benefiting from the rights of the members arising from the personnel law and obtaining new rights, and defending these rights; b) to make investigations, to prepare proposals for the development of the education profession, to try to have these proposals accepted by the relevant institutions and the public; c) to ensure the livelihood security of its members who have suffered losses due to judicial and administrative proceedings; d) to provide mutual and unrequited financial assistance to its members and their relatives in the face of death, accident, illness, natural disasters; e) to establish and manage non-profit resting places and libraries for the benefit of its members and their relatives; f) to acquire immovable properties to meet the needs of the headquarters and branches of the association; g) to organize conferences, seminars, meetings, publications and entertainments in order to improve the professional knowledge, general culture and abilities of its members and to establish good relations among them (TÖB-DER 1974a).

This study aims to answer two main questions. The first question is what the association does to ensure solidarity within the organization. To unfold this question, the authors attempt to answer the following sub-questions: On whom does the association build its discourse about «us» and «others»? With which national and international organizations does it have relations? What tools does it use to provide solidarity, and how? The second question of the study is what the association does to solve the professional problems of the employees in the education service in general and to ensure their professional development. The authors try to answer this question by answering the following sub-questions: How has the association determined the professional problems and development needs of teaching? What are the solutions he developed for the needs and concerns? What resources did it use to develop solutions to these needs? What methods did he use to get these proposals accepted by the relevant institutions and the public? The views and activities of TÖB-DER on inequity and opportunity in Turkish education, textbooks, and programs are beyond the scope of this article.

TÖB-DER consists of 14 groups, 7 of which are active. These groups have prepared work programs, brochures, and leaflets according to their understanding. The authors analyzed the work programs, by-laws and regulations, reports, and congress documents prepared by the TÖB-DER central organization within the scope of the study. The authors reached all these sources at state libraries and scanned all 170 issues of the bulletin published by the TÖB-DER. To publish scientific articles on education, TÖB-DER published 24 points between 1975 and 1977. The authors used the books written by those who took an active role in TÖB-DER on the organization's history as essential reference sources.

2. The founding principles of TÖB-DER

As explained in the 1st Ordinary Congress of TÖB-DER, when TÖS executives were arrested on charges of making communist propaganda, they had 40 TÖS members founded TÖB (later TÖB-DER) on September 3, 1971, to preserve the organizational existence and unity of the union. TÖS transferred its buildings, movable and immovable properties, and money in every province and many districts to TÖB-

DER. This situation created an excellent infrastructure for the newly established association. Thus, the members of TÖS, which were closed, quickly adopted the association, and the association became stronger by rapidly increasing the number of its members (Coşkun, 1999). Until 1980, when the association was closed, almost half of the teachers in Turkey (about 200,000 members) were members and opened 670 branches (Çelenk, 1990).

Those who have completed the age of 18, dealing with education and training at universities, those who have earned the title of teacher, and those who have these qualifications and are retired, can become members of TÖB-DER. Starting from 1974, the students of the institutions that train teachers were also accepted as full members without making any changes in the statute (Coşkun, 1999). The most authoritative body of the association is the General Assembly, composed of members sent by the branches and convenes every two years. Twenty members elected by the General Assembly form the Board of Directors. The chairman of this board is the chairman of the association. 9 members elected by the general assembly from among the members of the association working in Ankara, where the headquarters of the association is, form the Central Executive Board. The Audit Board, Honor Board, Branches, and Bodies are the other organs of the association (TÖB-DER 1974a). Branches form the primary organization of the association (TÖB-DER 1971). The organization collects dues from its members through branches to fulfill its objectives. This is the association's primary source of income.



Figure 1. No to imperialist education (The Banner of TÖB-DER) [Emperyalist Eğitime Hayır]

TÖB-DER defines itself as a *progressive, democratic mass organization* in all its publications. It can be said that all groups accept three basic principles within the association. These include being anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, anti-chauvinist,

having a democratic centralized organizational functioning, and organizational independence. Being anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, and anti-chauvinist and joining forces in the fight against them constitute the standard working conditions of groups with different views within the association. This principle, which is defined over the others in the work programs of the headquarters and branches of the association, in newspapers, brochures, and notices, is the basic principle on which the organization's discourse forms. In the texts issued by the association (TÖB-DER, 1976b; TÖB-DER Ankara Branch, 1977a; Yurtsever Öğretmen, 1979), NATO is defined as the aggression pact of imperialism. It is argued that the secret agreements made by TÖB-DER with the imperialist USA should be canceled, and its military presence in Turkey should be thrown out. Economic and political integration with the EEC, which TÖB-DER defines as imperialist, is opposed. The Nationalist Front government, formed by the ruling right-wing coalition, is defined as a reactionary, fascist mixed, racist, chauvinist, mass murderer, colonialist, and assimilationist policymaker.

The second principle of the association is to have a *democratic centralized* organization. According to the work programs prepared by the central organization, this principle is a principle of a revolutionary organization that emerged from the gathering of the Communist International under the leadership of Marx and existed in the formation of all organizations that took part in the proletarian revolutionary struggle. It is essential when sophisticated solutions to complex problems are required. Although sometimes democratic and sometimes centralism outweighs their inseparableness, they are in a complete dialectical whole (TÖB-DER, 1979b). Branches are independent within themselves without forgetting that they are a part of the whole in all their work. This type of organizational understanding was used by parties that defined themselves as socialist and revolutionary in Turkey in the 1970s and by many leftists, especially the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey [(DİSK) Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu], which TÖB-DER took as its guide. The visionary organization has also adopted it (Coşkun, 1999).

The organization's third principle is expected to be adopted *organizational independence*. This principle means being independent of political parties so as not to narrow the group and not be isolated from others. In light of the declaration of independence, it is expected to avoid giving the impression that the organization is the teacher's branch of any party and to engage in activities and solidarity with such organizations and other unions, professional organizations, and all progressive forces and organizations in line with the principle of mutual respect and benefit (TÖB-DER 1976c).

In all texts, socialism stands out as the basic ideology of the association. The discourse of the texts suppressed by the headquarters and branches of the association is about the praise of socialism. In these texts, the world is in the age of transition from capitalism to socialism; the victories won against imperialism and capitalism in Africa and Latin America, the enmity between the Soviets and China, and the rivalry between European, American, and Japanese imperialism are explained in detail. The discourse is that socialist countries develop as much as possible in the field of science and technology, increase their schooling rates at all levels, get more vital day by day, live in an environment with free and democratic rights and prosperity and that the socialist system is the guarantee of world peace against the aggression

of imperialism is processed. For the liberation of Turkey, which is in the capitalist system, it is necessary to fight for the overthrow of the government, which they define as reactionary fascism, and the establishment of a democratic government from the progressive people instead. However, since this excellent task would exceed the size of a professional organization, it is necessary to act together with the working class (Demokratik Merkezîyetçiler, 1977a; TÖB-DER Ankara Branch, 1977a; TÖB-DER, 1979b). The bond with the working class is rationalized by stating that the teacher is against the ideology of the dominant classes because the teachers come from the lower classes and reflect their tendencies to protect and defend the interests of the working class. The teacher will either become the loyal slave of the bourgeoisie like a bureaucrat-technocrat or enter the proletarianization process as a working-class intellectual (Devrimci Demokratik Birlik, 1976). Although democratic mass organizations are not political parties, they are defined as practical schools of socialism in which the masses are taught why and how to take a stand against imperialism, fascism, and chauvinism. Accordingly, professional organizations such as TÖB-DER, one of the democratic mass organizations, cannot propose their political principles and propaganda. They can offer programs and regulations according to their professional type (TOB-DER, 1979b).

TÖB-DER positioned itself alongside the working class to strengthen its mass character and took the working class and DİSK, the most influential trade union organization of the time, as a guide, primarily to obtain the right to collective bargaining and strike unions (TÖB-DER Ankara Branch, 1977a). It is stated that the problems of teachers can be solved in unity and solidarity with all workers and by an organized mass struggle on the path illuminated by the working class (TOB-DER İzmir Branch, 1977). In addition to DİSK, the association has been in solidarity with organizations that it defines as democratic mass organizations such as TÛM-DER (All Officers Unification and Solidarity Association), community centers, in the context of rallies, demonstrations, education, broadcasting, cultural and artistic activities (Demokratik Merkezîyetçiler, 1977a). Based on the publications of TÖB-DER, it can be easily said that the association strongly believes that teacher problems can only be solved by making solidarity with the working class and changing the way of production. For this reason, it would not be wrong to say that it positions itself as the organization of the working classes rather than the organization of teachers. Although this situation encountered opposition from within the association from time to time, the discourse of the working class was dominant until the association was closed.

Although TÖB-DER followed the revolutionary ones among international teacher organizations, it neglected its relations with them until 1976; perhaps, as Coşkun (1999) stated, it did not deliberately enter these relations to avoid accusations of 'externally rooted.' In the 1976 work program of TÖB-DER (1976e), it was stated that the headquarters of the World Federation of Teachers Unions [Federation Internationale Syndicale de L'Enseignement (FISE)] and its member national teacher organizations would be contacted. Afterward, an intense campaign was carried out to adopt the communication with FISE at the association's base (TÖB-DER, 1976b). Since 1976, articles promoting FISE and other international organizations and emphasizing their solidarity have begun to appear in the TÖB-DER bulletin and the central and branch work programs. At the same time, the correspondence process

with FISE started. TÖBDER, FAT (Federation of Arab Teachers), FISE, UGEP (La Unión General de Estudiantes Palestinos) and FTEC (Fédération des Travailleurs de l'Éducation et de la Culture) organized in Algeria on 4-6 April 1977. He was invited to the International Solidarity Seminar with Palestinian Teachers and People (TOB-DER Bulletin, no:145). After this meeting, which May 15 was recognized as Palestine Teachers' Day, meetings were held in TÖB-DER branches to commemorate this day. After the Algerian seminar, a membership request was made to FISE. The FISE Executive Board meeting in Moscow accepted the membership request on 26 June 1977 (TOB-DER Bulletin no: 146). Following this, the General Secretaries of FISE and FAT attended the 4th Ordinary General Assembly of TÖB-DER (TÖB-DER Bulletin, no: 164). The relations between FISE and TÖB-DER have generally developed within the framework of informing each other about their actions and the problems they face and giving a message of support.

However, within the scope of joint actions with FISE, the pressures on Jordanian and Chilean education workers were protested, and the wishes of friendship and solidarity were conveyed to the teachers here. Apart from FISE, there were primarily left-wing organizations, such as Romanian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian education workers' unions, attending the meetings. TÖB-DER administrators could not participate in many conferences, such as the USSR Education and Science Workers' Unions Congress, to which they were invited due to financial difficulties or difficulties in going abroad, but they sent a message of solidarity. (Coşkun, 1999; TÖB-DER Bulletin, no: 198).

3. Activities to strengthen intra-organizational solidarity

The duties of the Headquarters and branches of the Association are specified in the statutes and regulations. In addition, working methods and in-organization activities of branches and members are determined in the work programs prepared for two years. The program is sent to all branches and regional representatives. Based on this program, a Branch Work Program is ready to consider local conditions (TÖB-DER Board of Directors, 1975; TÖB-DER, 1976e). When the work programs of the headquarters and branches are examined, it is evident that all of them are adorned with long ideological discourses. Generally, it covers three-quarters of the program booklets on how to fight imperialism and fascism and why we should act together with the working class. The work to be done is summarized in a few pages. The program prepared by the branches is essentially the summary of the central program.

Working programs of Torbalı and Giresun branches (TÖB-DER Giresun Branch, 1979; TÖB-DER, 1979a) are examples of this determination. Organization comes first at the beginning of the work of the headquarters and branches. They are increasing the number of members and branches, ensuring that teachers and the public attend regional and branch meetings, informing about the importance of the organization and the association through seminars and forums, announcing the work of the organization frequently in the press, making legal initiatives about local administrators who prevent the organization. (TÖB-DER, 1974a). Intensive efforts to recruit village teachers and female teachers, who have low representation in

the association, are frequently mentioned in the central and branch programs of the association (TÖB-DER 1976c; Demokratik Merkezietçiler, 1977a; TÖB-DER Diyarbakır Branch Freedom Group 1977; TÖB -DER Adana Branch 1977; 1978).

From the end of 1975 onwards, solidarity within the association began to weaken, and divisions began to emerge. The opposition movement rose among 14 groups within the TÖB-DER administration. The groups started forming coalitions among themselves, creating various work programs, and accusing each other of the brochures and leaflets they prepared. Intense discussions began to be carried out over the meetings held and canceled in the organization's broadcasts, whether it should be a professional or class organization, and the level of relations with political parties. The groupings were sharpened in new theoretical covers with scientific problems, and all those discussions began to be presented as the Leninist-Maoist conflict. The groups accused each other of expressions such as social fascist, Maoist gray wolf, revisionist opportunist, and goshist in their publications and slogans (Devrimci Demokratik Birliği, 1978; Halkçı Eğitimciler, 1978; Yurtsever Öğretmen, 1979). The conflicts within the association also spread to the base of the organization. Branches began to issue publications separately from the headquarters, organize different training activities, and act decisions themselves. Thus, instead of close and healthy relations between the office and branches, conflicts and frictions came to the fore (TOB-DER Dayanışma Ekibi 1975).

Some branches went to enroll students in violation of the statute. As a result, young people belonging to different leftist organizations, who were not related to the organization, started to hire the branches, chanting slogans and fighting on the association's boards (Yurtsever Öğretmen, 1978). In two years, four thousand members were expelled from the Istanbul and Ankara branches. Those searching for a solution to this situation have considered the crisis of solidarity in the organization as a reflection of the general crisis created by the imperialist systems. Based on the similarities in the division processes of the working class unions and left unions in France, Spain, and Portugal, they evaluated the expulsions and conflicts in TÖB-DER as a part of the general strategy of imperialist liquidationism (TÖB-DER, 1979b). Despite all this turmoil, TÖB-DER contributed to its members and the teaching profession within the framework of general principles. To ensure solidarity among the members and to spread the branch's work to the base, importance was given to the establishment of a club in each branch where the members can be heard, suitable for educational studies in the professional and organizational field, and a library branch that organizes conversations about books and shows the members about books and publications (TÖB-DER, 1974b; TOB-DER, 1976e). Theater, folklore, and choir clubs were also established in the branches. It is impossible to say that each branch carries out all these activities. Still, it is evident that the activities and the books read remain within the revolutionary progressive discourse and that the collaborating community centers, cultural associations, and amateur theater groups do not contradict the association's ideology. These activities have sometimes faced obstacles due to their content (TOB-DER Bursa Branch, 1977).

Headquarters and branches also carry out training and publication activities. The central organization publishes the TÖB-DER Bulletin and the journal *New Society*. Since the bulletin includes local news from the branches and information

about the significant organization, it is an essential tool in providing multi-directional communication within the organization. In the bulletin glossary and education column sections, members are given theoretical information on concepts such as revolution, revolution, political economy, capitalism, and economic crises. Thus, it aims to strengthen the organization's scholarly communication and appeal to the intellectuals (TÖB-DER, 1976e). The *New Society Journal* has only 24 issues and aims to scientifically approach education and teacher problems. However, it is determined that the qualities of the articles published in the journal do not meet this purpose (Altunya, 1998).

Legal aids and social aids have an essential role in connecting the organization members and providing solidarity. Those who are members of the association for at least six months and pay the association dues regularly can benefit from the legal and social assistance of the association. Legal and social aids constitute essential items in the expenditures of the association. According to the Töb-Der Social Assistance Regulation (TÖB-DER, 1974a), those whose pensions are terminated from their workplace due to administrative or judicial proceedings are provided with monthly benefits to pay 50% of them when they start working. Suppose the member dies or incurs loss due to natural disasters. In that case, non-repayable financial assistance is provided to those who are retired and have not paid a pension because their service period has not expired and their families. Requests for assistance are made to the branch to which the member is affiliated, and the head office decides on help.

With a circular published in 1975 (TÖB-DER Board of Directors, 1975), some articles of this regulation were amended, and it was decided to provide more aid to those who died or became disabled in organizational and revolutionary efforts. In addition, a social assistance fund was established to help members who were killed, exiled, or maimed due to their organizational measures, and 477 teachers benefited from this fund, of which 230 branches contributed. In addition, as it is understood from the work programs of the branches (TÖB-DER Adana Branch, 1978), the branch can start a campaign to help its members who have been harmed as a result of death, accident, disaster, and stands by their members for solidarity on important days such as illness, marriage, engagement, death. It provides material and moral support to members in democratic resistance and actions. For example, Bursa Branch Primary School teachers established a health social aid fund, and aid was collected as a branch for the aid campaign created for the Van earthquake region (TOB-DER Bursa Branch, 1977). On the other hand, the Ankara branch carried out guidance activities to help newly appointed teachers find housing and provide their members with cheap food, clothing, and fuel (TOB-DER Ankara Branch, 1977b).

According to the TÖB-DER Legal Aids Regulation, legal assistance is provided to members in duty-related cases, events arising from organizational or scientific thoughts and actions, and administrative transactions that harm all personal rights. The organization's lawyers follow the claims brought before the Council of State, while the others are followed by local lawyers (TÖB-DER, 1974a). In addition to the central law office, contracted lawyers were also worked with; regional lawyers were organized. Regional law offices were opened to monitor the legal problems in the regions immediately. In addition, a Law Handbook that will provide practical solutions to the issues faced by teachers, whether members of the association or

not, has been prepared and published by a law firm (TÖB-DER, 1976b). Legal aid and information activities carried out by the branches at the local level are stated in their programs. For example, Bursa Branch made 15 legal aid decisions in a year, its members were followed by lawyers affiliated with the branch office in the court, and many members' exile and massacre decisions were overturned, but the ministry did not implement them. In addition, the number of teachers who lost their promotion was investigated, the headquarters and the press were informed, and a member's personality tried to create a case study. Information about the legislation has been mailed to all members. Delays in the side payments and wage payments were given to the press in statements, and the function of being a pressure factor was fulfilled (TÖB-DER Bursa Branch, 1977). Establishing a law and personnel affairs office of the Adana Branch, it is aimed at organizing conversations with the members' legal personnel problems (inspection, rank, promotion, degree, fringe benefits, investigation), information about the legislation related to teachers, working conditions, personal issues with TÖB-DER member administrators, and personal and legal guide. (TÖB-DER Adana Branch, 1977, 1978). As TÖB-DER reported from the work programs published, a total of 4073 cases were followed between 1971-1978 by central and provincial law offices and assigned lawyers. The number of lawsuits has increased rapidly since 1975, and most of these were concluded in favor of TÖB-DER members. First martial law between 1971 and 1978, and then the right-wing coalition government led to the intensification of harsh judicial and administrative practices on TÖB-DER members, because of which a large part of the association's income was allocated to legal and social aids (Coşkun, 1999). The social and legal aids provided are announced in a separate column in the TÖB-DER Bulletin distributed to all members. This way, solidarity became visible by conveying that the association supports its members. In addition, there is a Law section in the bulletin where members are informed about various legal terms and legislation. In this column, informative articles are published on topics such as confession in criminal cases, relations between the arrested accused and lawyer, the right to organize, and the law of associations.

4. The association's work on general teacher problems and their professional development

TÖB-DER is defined as a revolutionary professional organization that represents teachers in the broadest way in Turkey and struggles to solve their economic, democratic, and professional problems (Özcan, 1975). It is stated that TÖB-DER aims to protect and develop the economic, democratic, social, and personal rights of its members, as well as to fight for the solution of professional problems of all teachers and even all employees who provide education and training services and to develop their profession (Coşkun, 1999). It is stated in the bylaws of TÖB-DER that it considers a purpose and duty to identify and define the professional problems of its members and to produce opinions and suggestions for their solution and that it will try to have them accepted by the relevant institutions and the public (TÖB-DER 1978c). Until 1974, TÖB-DER focused on organizing teachers, solving professional

problems, and improving personal rights, while in the following years, it focused on solving general policy problems (Coşkun, 1999; Yalçın, 2017).

The TÖB-DER charter established a Research Bureau in 1974 as a scientific advisory board. The works of this office; include preparing reports on education, social events, and organization; establishing relations with the State Institute of Statistics, universities, and democratic research institutions; writing scientific reports; exchanging information with foreign professional organizations; Educational books for educational problems were determined as making books by making scientific researches and studies (Töb-Der, 1974a). However, as it can be understood from the criticisms from within the organization, the research bureau was left to its own devices after its establishment and did not carry out a single study within six months of its establishment (TÖB-DER Dayanışma Ekibi. 1975). While he did not have a single survey of concrete problems, he prepared two publications, first aid, foreign capital exploitation, and the problem of nutrition, away from teacher problems.



Figure 2. Forward to Collective Bargaining Union (The Banner of TÖB-DER) [Grevli Toplu Sözleşmeli Haklar için İleri]

TÖB-DER organized the Democratic Education Congress in Ankara between 4-11 February 1978. It is possible to make some inferences when the text of the congress and the text of the final declaration presenting the decisions of the congress are examined. It is understood that the participants invited to the congress are members of ideologically dominant groups, associations, and, more importantly, political parties (TÖB-DER 1978a). However, the lack of experts in the field of education is striking. For this reason, it is seen that heavy political content and language predominate in the text of the congress (TÖB-DER 1978b). As a result, congress could not develop scientific and constructive suggestions for teacher problems.

Apart from these ineffective attempts, the organization has taken initiatives at the local level. As a result of the literature review, it is evident that TÖB-DER holds many district, branch, and representative meetings to identify the professional problems and development needs of teaching receives the opinions of its members, and creates reports, study programs, and various publications containing solutions to the issues based on these opinions (TOB-DER). DER 1979b; TÖB-DER Torbalı Branch 1979; TÖB-DER Adana Branch 1978; TÖB-DER 1976a; TÖB-DER Opposition Movement 1976a; TÖB-DER Opposition Movement 1976b). In the report prepared by TÖB-DER Bursa Branch, the need for kindergarten of teacher children was seen as a priority problem, and concrete steps were taken towards preparing to open a kindergarten. A questionnaire was applied to get the opinions of the members on this subject, and meetings were held with female teachers. Their views were taken to contribute to the evaluation of the questionnaire results. However, due to the deficient number of kindergarten applications due to the meeting, the preparation for the opening was postponed to the next academic year (TOB-DER Bursa Branch 1977).

As a result of the analysis of the study programs and reports of the association, low teachers' salaries, inadequacy in teacher training, unaccountable side cuts in teachers' salaries, additional tuition payments against classroom teachers, difficulties experienced by village teachers, teachers' housing and nursery problems, the advisory unit of the Ministry of National Education. It is understood that the issues of deprivation of democratic rights, such as not having enough representatives from teacher organizations, electing administrators, participation in decisions, forming a union, making strikes, and the right to lockout, are noted in the councils (TÖB-DER 1976a; TÖB-DER Istanbul Branch, 1976; TÖB-DER Muhalefet Hareketi 1976b; TÖB-DER Devrimci Demokratik Birlik 1976; TÖB-DER Ankara Branch 1977a; 1977b; TÖB-DER Kadıköy Branch 1977). Economic problem experienced by teachers is another critical issue. It is emphasized that the teachers' wages are determined by Law No. 657, to which the teachers are bound, the additional fee arrangement made against primary school teachers, and the fact that they have no say over their wages (TÖB-DER 1978a). In addition, it is asserted that even the economic rights of teachers, which are claimed to be limited by the association within the framework of bourgeois law, are exercised at the discretion of the political powers (Seferoğlu, 1975b; TÖB-DER 1979b).

The primary solution suggestions for the problems presented by TÖB-DER are the construction of an adequate number of houses and kindergartens for teachers in healthy conditions, fair taxation, the election of school, district, and provincial, national education administrators, giving additional training allowance to teachers working in villages, changing the paid lesson order, ending the side cuts, democratizing the council law, developing and expanding in-service training, and increasing the participation of teachers in decision-making (TÖB-DER 1975a; TÖB-DER 1975b; TÖB-DER 1975c; Helvacı, 1975; Seferoğlu, 1975a; TÖB-DER; TÖB-DER Giresun Branch 1979; TÖB-DER İzmir Branch 1977). The association organizes meetings on teachers' professional problems. It publishes bulletins, magazines, newspapers, brochures, and leaflets, and the solution proposals and demands put forward in these publications are sent to the prime ministers, the Ministry of National Education, the

political parties in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, and those with a teaching background among them. It is understood that he conveyed it to the deputies and the public (Coşkun, 1999). In the 1973-1974 Working Report, in the letter written by the President of the Association to the Minister of National Education of the period, the essential factor causing professional problems is expressed as the «widely restricted freedom of seeking rights» of teachers (TÖB-DER 1974b, p. 121). In the 1974-1975 Work Report, it is stated that the demands for improving the economic conditions of teachers were conveyed to the authorities in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Ministry of National Education (TÖB-DER 1975a). In addition, it is understood that the association conveyed the professional problems of teachers to the relevant authorities and attracted the attention of the public with the brochures titled 'Our Urgent Requests' and 'Teachers' Personnel and Occupational Problems,' which it claims to have been created as a result of grassroots screening and in-depth research (Coşkun, 1999; Seferoğlu, 1975a; TÖB-DER Muhalefet Hareketi 1976a). It is underlined that when teachers are restricted in participation in the decision on their rights and electing representatives, their members and branches are supported with financial and legal aid, and anti-democratic practices are protested. It is stated that studies have been carried out on the Teaching Basic Law, which is thought to provide the realization of objectives such as appointment, relocation, promotion, registration and disciplinary procedures of teachers, selection of education administrators by teachers, representation of teachers in the decision and advisory boards. On the other hand, it is stated that although the teachers' housing and nursery problems are mentioned, concrete gains cannot be achieved, the unfair tax system and the corrupt management of the pension fund are constantly criticized, booklets are printed and sent to the branches, but the authorities do not make the desired regulation. As a result of the struggle, it is understood that the primary school teachers could do their military service at school and that the primary school teachers were paid for the lessons they taught for more than 18 hours a week.

TÖB-DER held mass and regional rallies and expressed its demands regarding teacher problems and achievements through reports, brochures, handouts, and correspondence. Many of these rallies were with labor unions, resulting in right-left conflict and many people being arrested, injured, or killed. The action, which started in closed halls in all provinces on 15-16 February 1975, continued with regional marches and ended with a right-left fight; Fascist Repressions were held in different cities in December 1975, protest meetings against the cost of living; The rally in Istanbul on May 1, 1977, in which nearly half a million people participated under the leadership of labor unions, and 34 people, 6 of whom were members of TÖB-DER, were killed. Although TÖB-DER seems to have dealt with teacher problems and achievements as secondary in its work reports and in-organization activities, it voiced teachers' concerns more concretely and powerfully in the declarations it prepared at rallies (TÖB-DER. 1975d; TÖB-DER. 1975e). The association increased the number of its members after each meeting. However, when these rallies combined with political uncertainties and the economic crisis, they started to harm TÖB-DER, which has many left-wing factions. The conflict between leftist groups at the TÖB-DER Ankara rally on February 5, 1977, led to the deepening of the organization's polarization and the association's closure for a while.

In the mid-1970s, Turkey was one of the countries most affected by the oil crisis and changing economic policies in the world due to its political uncertainties. With the rise of privatization in general in the world, there was a decline in the power of the organized working class. This was reflected in Turkey as a right-left organization fight. The ten-year period between 1970 and 1980 created a period in which the country's government was constantly changing, and political instability was dominant. In the period following the 1971 military intervention and especially towards the 1970s end, political violence reached an inextricable level (Akça, 2020; Atılğan, 2020). Ever-changing governments, multiple governments, the actions of radical 'left' and 'commando' (extreme nationalist right) groups focused on university dormitories, the counteractions against them, events such as political turmoil, terrorism, and the Cyprus Operation pointed to a tense, depressed, and difficult period (Bek Arat, 2014; Özcan, 2020). Differences of opinion in the country quickly turned into anarchy due to political gaps, and the army seized power on 12 September 1980.

Leftist organizations have been shown as the main ones responsible for the turmoil in the country. Some of the managers of the association fled abroad, those who remained in Turkey were tried in martial law courts, and tens of thousands of teachers, whose numbers are unknown even today, were dismissed by enacting additional laws. As a result of the trials, TÖB-DER was closed, and all associated assets were confiscated (Altunya, 1998; Coşkun, 1999). Until the 1990s, teachers could not organize an organization at the level of TÖB-DER.

5. Conclusion

This study sought answers to two basic questions based on the purpose of the association in its charter and the activities it aims to carry out. The first question is what the association does to ensure solidarity within the organization. It is possible to summarize the answer to this question and its sub-questions as follows: In the analysis of TÖB-DER's publications, the authors found that this association defined itself as a progressive, democratic mass organization. The characteristics accepted as standard by all groups within the association are an anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, and anti-chauvinist identity. The discourse of «the others» is divided into internal and external others. NATO and EEC are defined as imperialist and constitute «the external other.» With these two formations, efforts for Turkey's economic and political integration are opposed. The Nationalist Front government, formed by the ruling right-wing party coalition, is positioned as «the inner other» by defining it as a reactionary, fascist mixed, racist, chauvinist, mass murderer, colonialist, and assimilationist policymaker.

TÖB-DER positioned itself alongside the working class to strengthen its mass character. It considered the working class and DİSK, the most influential trade union organization of the time, as its guide to obtaining the right to unionize with strikers. Although TÖB-DER followed the revolutionary international teacher organizations, it neglected its relations with them until 1976. After 1976, it met international organizations such as FISE and Romanian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian education workers' unions. TÖB-DER increased the number of members and branches, ensuring that teachers and the public attend regional and branch meetings, and

informing about the importance of the organization through seminars and forums. The branches of TÖB-DER established reading, theater, folklore, and choir groups. It is impossible to say that each branch of TÖB-DER carried out all these activities. However, it can be noted that the activities and the reading groups remained within the revolutionary progressive discourse, and the collaborating community centers, cultural associations, and amateur theater groups did not contradict the association's ideology.

The second question of the research is what the association does to solve the professional problems of the employees in the education service in general and to ensure their professional development. It is possible to summarize the answer to this question and its sub-questions: In 1974, TÖB-DER established a Research Bureau to work as a scientific advisory board under its statute to determine the professional problems and development needs of teaching. The duties of this bureau include

- preparing reports on education, social events, and organization;
- establishing relations with the State Institute of Statistics, universities, and democratic research institutions;
- writing scientific articles;
- exchanging information with foreign professional organizations.

To identify the professional problems and development needs of teaching, TÖB-DER held many regional, branch, and representative meetings, received the opinions of its members and prepared reports, study programs, and various publications containing solutions for the problems based on these opinions. It is evident that the association organized meetings on solutions for teachers' professional issues and needs, used bulletins, magazines, newspapers, brochures, and leaflets as a source, and conveyed the solution suggestions and demands put forward in these publications to the relevant institutions and the public. The leading solution suggestions for the problems presented by TÖB-DER are the construction of an adequate number of houses and kindergartens for teachers in healthy conditions, fair taxation, democratizing the council meeting law, and increasing the participation of teachers in decision-making. To make these proposals accepted by the relevant institutions and the public, TÖB-DER expressed its demands regarding teacher problems and achievements through reports, brochures, leaflets, and correspondence and held mass and regional rallies. Many of these rallies were with labor unions, resulting in right-left conflict. Although TÖB-DER seems to have dealt with teacher problems and achievements as secondary in its work reports and in-organization activities, it voiced teachers' concerns more concretely and firmly in the statements it prepared at the rallies.

In summary, similar to the findings of Asan et al. (2021), the authors found in this study that the actions of TÖB-DER, an influential Turkish teacher union, were mostly focused on pay raises and personal rights. Unlike European teacher unions that more effectively evolved in supporting one another in their profession, TÖB-DER and its branches mostly failed to band together to achieve a common goal. That was due to the severely polarized union culture. The study concludes that TÖB-DER's activities have succeeded in raising awareness of the organization to a certain extent

in the field of education but are limited in bringing solutions to teachers' professional problems.

6. References

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