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**Book Review — Published Version**

## Demet Ş. Dinler, Workers Existence Problem [İşçinin Varlık Problemi]

Journal of Economic and Social Thought

*Suggested Citation:* Güney, Alptekin (2014) : Demet Ş. Dinler, Workers Existence Problem [İşçinin Varlık Problemi], Journal of Economic and Social Thought, ISSN 2149-0422, KSP Journals, Istanbul, Vol. 1, Iss. 1, pp. 32-33.,  
<https://doi.org/10.1453/jest.v1i1.91> ,  
<http://kspjournals.org/index.php/JEST/article/view/91>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/105841>

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Journal of  
**Economic and Social Thought**

www.kspjournals.org

Volume1

December 2014

Issue 1

**Demet Ş. Dinler, *Workers Existence Problem [İşçinin Varlık Problemi]*, Metis Publications, 2014, 176 pp.  
\$11 Paperback**

By Alptekin GÜNEY<sup>†</sup>

### **Book Review**

**D**emet Ş. Dinler presents her studies as expository essays on the subject of other than her doctoral thesis in her book named as “İşçinin Varlık Problemi (Workers Existence Problem)” published by Metis Publishings in October 2014. She conducted her studies in 2007 – 2011 period when she focused on doctoral thesis writing and organizing processes. On the essays, she collected in eight different categories, Dinler investigates the workers who gather waste paper depending on their class feelings.

The book *Workers Existence Problem* consists of eight essays which names are Class, Body and Performance, When a Worker Moves upto The Social Ladder, Collective Act and Feelings, Union Status Quo, Pavilion Door, A Letter from A Western Academician to The Eastern Worker Leader, In The Market, The Feelings Building the Class in The Street and The Work Place.<sup>2</sup>

Dinler analyzes the male workers whose job is to gather waste papers as his natural working area on the subjects of class division, masculinity and his feelings. She puts the workers who gather waste papers, the old workers who try to become (capitalist) depot owners, a labor union president and a worker leader who makes organization efforts on their working subjects to her book's centre.

We can mention some examples from eight different essays. She depicts organizational developments as stating that all of the events taken issue is fictional in “Sendika Koltuğu (Union Status Quo)” which is one of her essays. In this essay, Dinler narrates a union president who does not create better working conditions within collective work agreements and even more he does not read the collective work agreements which are built by other labor unions. Furthermore he makes strategic plans in order not to lose his status quo and without hesitation acting with the employers, he fires the workers who are about to be a problem for himself. I think that the prototype of the mentioned union president in the book represents many union presidents in Turkey. The feelings of unionists who care about only their interests are shown through a union president who says; “*I can not be coming*

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<sup>2</sup> Ç.n. : Sınıf, Beden ve Performans, İşçi Sınıf Atlayınca, Kolektif Eylem ve Duygular, Sendika Koltuğu, Pavyon Kapısı, Doğulu İşçi Liderine Batılı Akademisyenden Mektup, Piyasada, İşyerinde and Sokakta Sınıfı Kuran Duygular.

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*this world to be a worker and to languish on this bench. I have dreams.*” (Dinler; 98).<sup>3</sup>

Another essay that we can mention is named as “Pavyon Kapısı (Pavilion Door)” and in this essay, the reasons of why waste paper collectors are going to pavilions are explained. Here, depending on the worker’s feelings the author depicts clearly the worker who is ashamed his job and feels himself worthless<sup>4</sup> goes to pavilions because from the beginning of entering from pavilion’s door to hostesses coming to his table, he gets interest and importance and he feels himself worthy for even short time, thus he can behave like a boss.

In the essay of “Doğulu İşçi Liderine Batılı Akademisyenden Mektup (A Letter from A Western Academician to The Eastern Worker Leader)”, author narrates the emotional intensity of the workers and their feelings of being togetherness and especially the built sensationalism between workers’ leader and the workers whom the author met when she studied on her doctoral thesis.

The book of Demet Ş. Dinler tells us the waste paper collecting workers, whom we are passing by without realizing and even sometimes we get angry because they are messing up the garbages, emphasizing the class awareness with their human aspects and feelings. The citations, references, footnote disclosures and her writing language makes the book conveniently and fluently readable. The book, which is written in a narrative but didactic style, fills the gap as focusing on an important subject, the feelings of workers which had not been examined heavily in working life.



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<sup>3</sup> Ç.n. : “Ben bu dünyaya işçi olmak ve bu tezgâhta çürümek için gelmiş olamam. Başka hayallerim var.” (Dinler; 98).

<sup>4</sup> Ç.n. : “yaptığı işten utanan, kendini değersiz hisseden işçinin” (Dinler; 103)