

STATE AND SOCIETY INTERACTION AT THE INTERSECTION OF
AGRICULTURE, SETTLEMENT AND POLITICS IN IZMIR, 1924-1939

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ABSTRACT

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Having been designed as two staged research, this dissertation basically explores the societal elements during the formative years of the Turkish Republic. Departing from the idea that societal aspects and localities are crucial elements of history; and the fact that these elements have been analyzed insufficiently in the historiography of the early years of the Turkish Republic, this study focuses on Izmir and its hinterland to strengthen this part of historiography. The first stage of the research is to discover the local themes which reflect the societal realities of the determined period in the region. Utilizing from broad local resources such as local newspapers, this research points out three main local and societal themes as the most comprehensive and frequently recurrent elements to have a more nuanced analyze of the formative years of the Turkish Republic in Izmir. These themes are agricultural segment, the settlement related issues and the local politics. The second stage of the research is to understand and determine a path to define the interaction between the newly founded Turkish state and society by treating these above-mentioned themes as the common grounds of these

two actors' interactions. In this regard, this research underlines the crucial place of space-specific societal aspects rather than existing and identificatory themes which are unsighted to local differentiations to analyze the Republican state and society. Also, for the case of Izmir the findings of this research suggest that material realities of the everyday life which breed unstable and day-to-day positions are one of the main components in the interaction between the state and society.

Keywords: Izmir, agricultural segment, settlement, local politics, early Republican Turkey.

ÖZ

İZMİR'DE TARIM, İSKAN VE SİYASETİN KESİŞİMİNDE DEVLET TOPLUM
ETKİLEŞİMİ, 1924-1939

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İki aşamalı bir araştırma olarak tasarlanan bu tez, temel olarak Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluş yıllarındaki toplumsal unsurları incelemektedir. Toplumsal unsurların ve yerelliklerin tarihin önemli bileşenlerinden biri olduğu düşüncesi ve erken Cumhuriyet dönemini ele alan tarih çalışmalarında bu unsurların yetersiz olduğu gerçeğinden yola çıkan bu çalışma, İzmir ve hinterlandına odaklanmaktadır. Araştırmanın ilk aşaması, bölgede, ele alınan dönemin toplumsal gerçekliklerini yansıtan yerel temaların keşfedilmesidir. Yerel gazeteler gibi geniş kapsamlı yerel kaynaklardan yararlanan bu araştırma, İzmir'de Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluş yıllarının daha incelikli bir analizini yapmak için en kapsamlı ve sıklıkla tekrar eden üç temel yerel ve toplumsal temayı işaret etmektedir. Bu temalar tarım kesimi, iskana ilişkin sorunlar ve yerel siyasettir. Araştırmanın ikinci aşaması, yukarıda belirtilen temaları iki aktörün etkileşiminin ortak karşılaşma zeminleri olarak ele alarak, yeni kurulan Türk devleti ile toplum arasındaki etkileşimi anlamak ve bu etkileşimi

tanımlayabilmek için bir çerçeve belirlemektir. Bu bağlamda, bu araştırma, Cumhuriyet devleti ve toplumunu analiz etmek için yerel farklılaşmalara karşı yeterince hassas olmayan mevcut ve tanımlayıcı temalardan ziyade, mekâna özgü toplumsal unsurların önemini altını çizmektedir. Buna ek olarak, İzmir örneği için, bu araştırmanın bulguları, günlük hayatın istikrarsız ve günlük olarak belirlenen konumları besleyen maddi gerçekliklerinin, devlet ve toplum arasındaki etkileşimin ana bileşenlerinden biri olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İzmir, tarım sektörü, iskân, yerel politika, erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi.

To my family,

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCA	Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivi
CHF	Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası
SCF	Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası
GNA	Grand National Assembly
TpCF	Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On July 3, 1929, Abidin Daver, a well-known columnist of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper and who had visited Izmir previously, penned an article titled as Izmir memoires, *Izmir Hatıraları*, in his column namely “*Hem Nalına Hem Mihına.*” He compared the 1930’s Izmir with the previous Izmir which he visited following the promulgation of the Constitution. He described the streets of Izmir as dilapidated and dusty, but more beautiful and cleaner. Because it is Turkish Izmir to the core, now. Daver contentedly continued to sort out the differences which he could observe in the city, as follows:

I visited Izmir 21 years ago and found it colloquially referred to as infidel, *Gavur*, Izmir... *Palikaryas* were running wild in the city, and I heard the Greek language all over the city. Sellers were yelling in Greek language and Greek songs were being heard from the clubs. So, a man was asking himself if I am not in Turkey. Now, although the city is not prosperous, not crowded and not sociable as it was before, it is Turkish Izmir, no more *Gavur*. There is no Greek language anymore. On September 9, Izmir was not only freed from the invasion, but this title, as well. Izmir, you are prettier now.¹

What Abidin Daver observed and narrated in his column is the radical transformation of Izmir from a cosmopolitan port city of the Ottoman Empire to a city experiencing a reconstruction in every aspect, after a destruction, in the newly founded Turkish Republic. Although the city was burnt and ruined in the Great Fire of 1922, and it lost the wealth and the attraction for economic and social life that had accumulated for almost four centuries, the author declared that he prefers the new Izmir to the old one.

¹ “Izmir Hatıraları,” *Cumhuriyet*, 03.07.1929.

In the papers of local press of the city, there are plenty of articles in the same tone which underlines the salvation of Izmir from the non-Turkish components of the city and remembers the pre-Republican period angrily. The mentioned quotation can be seen as exaggerated and personal praise of an author to the new regime. However, those who investigate the local press of early years of the Turkish Republic can clearly observe that there was an obsessive intention to change the perception of *Gavur* Izmir in the eyes of the public community and impose the new essence of the city. For example, even opening of a simple urban square was reported in the press as one of the initial steps and as a symbol towards the construction of the Turkish Izmir.

The overstress of demographic component of the city by the contemporary intellectuals is continued by a tendency to over-identification of the city with demography and demography related issues by the scholars for both the Ottoman background and the Republican history of Izmir. This identification breeds some intellectual outlooks such as the paradigm of cosmopolitanism and end of cosmopolitanism, paradigm of multiculturalism and the demographic homogenization or Turkification paradigm. It is an unignorable fact that all these paradigms point out the historical reality of the region. The cruciality of Izmir's being a cosmopolitan port city of the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Mediterranean World with multinational inhabitants, experiencing almost unending demographic change due to the forced or unforced migrations, and population exchange, which resulted in the transformation of the ethnic component of the city cannot be denied. However, overemphasizing the ethnic/religious component of the demography and other aspects related to this fact causes some limitations. Because this approach treats the society and individuals as a frozen entity, which remain unchanged even when the society underwent drastic social

and economic changes during the Republican era. Whereas politicians, intellectuals, and writers share optimism about the actual conditions of the people and stress the “Turkification” of the city, to be labelled as a *Gavur* or not may not be the most striking concern for people in Izmir, who at the time were experiencing the economic, political, and social consequences of larger historical and economic developments. This study aims to go beyond the grand narrative of demographic homogenization reality and reach the experiences of the inhabitants of Izmir.

Those who study the local press in the early years of the Republic, can observe the frequency of the letters which were written to the local power holders and journalists by the peasants or workers to complain about their material living conditions in newspapers including starvation. Surprisingly, even in Western Anatolia, where agricultural production had changed the history of a small town to a port city with export-based agricultural production and made a significant amount of wealth, starvation was an issue to discuss in the press. In fact, there was a well-known incident, namely the Trial of Wild Pear, *Ahlat Davası*. This case was between the manager of the *Yeni Asır*, Abdurrahman Şeref who made news about the peasants who had to eat wild pear due to the lack of bread in *Ahmetbeyli* Village, and İsmail Efendi, the tax collector, who rejected that the villagers eating wild pear. Journalists made a tour to observe the living conditions of peasants and aim to hear about the villagers’ opinion concerning their living conditions around the Izmir district and the tour was ended up with a claim that there was a common nourishment problem among the villagers. Upon these claims, the governor, Kazım Paşa, had to write a letter to the newspaper and

denied journalist's allegations about the adverse conditions in the villages including starvation.²

Although, the daily life circumstances like the above-mentioned case indicate challenging socio-economic realities which requires more nuanced analysis, the paradox of contemporary intellectuals like Abidin Daver can be seen also in the works investigating Izmir in the first years of the Turkish Republic. There are various works, challenging the dominant state centered perspective and focusing on social dimensions of the historical process in the current historiography. Izmir, like other parts of Western Anatolia, is generally associated with the demographic transformation which is a concrete form of the high politics of the Republican elites. In other words, the ethnic “homogenization/Turkification” paradigm is probably the most frequently used theoretical tool to explain the formative years of the Turkish Republic in Izmir. For this reason, the “post-homogenization/Turkification” era is still an issue to be dug out by exploring the following question “what was there in the inner pages of the papers” in other words “what happened in Izmir after the population was “homogenized/Turkified.”

It can be suggested that there are three reasons behind this fallacy. First one lays on established domination of the state-centered perspectives in historiography which exclude the societal aspects from the historical analysis. Looking at society with the lenses of the state policies and elite ideology, and the intentions of political elites led to a narrow assumption. In the Izmir case, this deficiency becomes visible as a form of

² “Açlıkla Mücadele,” *Yeni Asır*, 05.01.1930.

total generalization of the individuals about their collective identity such as being a refugee from Balkans, even though every new inhabitant of Izmir has a diverse background, class, language, wealth, and immigration status which is a very crucial element for the everyday life of the people. They are equated with numbers who were relocated and homogenized by the state elites in accordance with the ideological base of the Turkish Republic. The second point is the lack of one of the major constructors of history, space, which societal factors arise from. By saying space, the local contexts which are unique to a geographically specific presence including production relations, realities of everyday life, local level interactions like alliances and rivalries among the society can be understood. For instance, the existence and capacity of the foreign companies in Western Anatolia including Izmir for the running of the economic regime of the city is a locally based phenomenon due to the nature of the agricultural production in the region. This differentiates the region from the other parts of the country in many aspects such as reactions towards economic policies of the state. Companies' role to determine the prices of agricultural production like tobacco and fig in the stock market or in the direct purchases from the producers is a very explanatory example. This displays the necessity to differentiate the locally based actors in a coastal region, which produces cash crop to the global market, from the inner parts of the country where the agricultural production regime depended on domestic consumption. The third point is a combination of the above-mentioned two points. That is, even though there are accounts focusing on more societal aspects with the emergence and rise of the new sources and paradigms prioritizing the ordinary people's life and adopt more relational approach between state and society in the Early Republican historiography, most of them follow these relational paths within the limits of reaction/response paradigm. For instance, visible themes like modernizing reforms

of the Kemalist regime and their implementation, the nation-state building processes in the non-Turkish/Muslim geographies, and violence in the formative years are the most known themes to understand the relation between state and society. Selected themes impose and assign a single and uniformed social, political, and economic context rather than revealing the individual's agenda. In Izmir's example, the search for a conflict zone between the state and individuals causes a kind of approach that there was nothing to examine due to the lack of an apparent conflict matter with the newly founded Turkish State with its all nationalist and secular nature. There is an exceptional case, the case of the Free Republican Party. (Hereafter, SCF) The unpredictable local support towards SCF during the Global Depression years in the Western Anatolia and the economic path towards this social explosion is a crucial element to understand the region's socio-economic and political structure. This case is a very sufficient example to follow the paths which emerged from the societal aspects and the realities in everyday life rather than a major and state-related incident.

This dissertation takes its starting point from the mentioned critiques in the current historiography on the history of early Republican Turkey and aims to explore the "post-Turkification/homogenization" era in Izmir. In the direction of the mentioned aspects, this study was designed as two-stage research. Revealing the societal and local aspects including local actors, agendas, contexts, and networks by digging out the local resources is the first step of this research. In other words, the present dissertation aims to display the grounds which are specific to the socio-economic and socio-political complexities emerged in Izmir during the formative years of the Turkish Republic. After detecting these grounds, the second phase of the study comes into view which is to understand the state and society interactions on these grounds by

discussing the following points: i: How the state/society interactions occur on those grounds. More clearly, which themes these interactions were experienced around? ii: Are there any paths which can be drawn around the specific complexities to the region and can be helpful to understand the state and society relations in this period in Izmir?

Consequently, it is a fact that along with the macro processes, there are alternative contexts in which society, from peasants to merchants and from local elites to the working class or refugees, is experiencing. In the Izmir case, the discoveries of this study indicate three main contexts as the most common grounds to observe the above-mentioned two research inquiries in terms of state and society interactions. These three grounds are upper categories, and each has various sub-contexts pointing out a particular matter in the daily life of people. These grounds are:

1. The countryside of Izmir, specifically the conditions around agricultural production to observe the state/society interactions.

2. The settlement of the population both in rural and urban centers to observe the state/society interactions.

3. The working/nature of the politics by the local elites, the local figures attitudes towards the Republican People's Party (hereafter, CHP) and other public debates in local institutions like municipality to observe the state/society interactions.

In this study, these grounds were presented as the daily and most common meeting places of society with the state in Izmir. What meant by state in this study is a more concrete and visible form of the definition of the state such as institutional presence to serve a function in the course of the daily life of the people by organizing the daily spheres of life such as Agriculture Bank, local branches of Monopolies, Municipality,

the representatives of the CHF, Ministry of Settlement, and officials of these institutions. These three grounds, within the limitations of this study, draw a meaningful path to analyze the interplays between society and the state for the case of Izmir. That is, the day-to-day positions of both in state front and society front rather than an assertive and stable stance are the key factors in terms of the drawing the interactions between state and society in that period. Since this period was a post-crisis and re-establishment period when the material needs came to the fore.

These positions mostly originate from the acute and material concerns of the two sides such as agricultural prices or housing problems of the population. The examination of these local level interactions also displays the reason for this type of relational path which is mostly about problem solving on a daily basis. The historical and geographical specifications of the city, namely being open and more fragile against global and national crises, pushed these two actors, both the population and the state, to be in a more frequent and more multifaceted relation due to the frequency of the issues needed to be solved. Because these complexities present a wide range of individual and collective identities to the population such as being a *mübadil* or *muhacir*, but at the same time being a tobacco producer or a fig producer or being a worker in the Monopoly workshops or other workshops. This is a very explanatory case for Izmir, each inhabitant in this society was holding extraordinarily interwoven and multiple identities with different agendas. For example, one had to solve his/her problems concerning the legal immigration status of his/her family in the related Ministry; on the other hand, the other day s(he) had to be a tobacco producer applying to Agriculture Bank to get credit and seed. In fact, these micro identities with their

own problems, interests, and conflicts were the key factors in this path to understand the social history of the city and the experiences of the society and the state.

As was pointed out briefly in the previous part of the chapter, the departure point of this dissertation is the lack of societal aspects, lack of localities and lack of Western Anatolia in the historiography of the early years of the Turkish Republic. The following part of this chapter moves on to describe inspirational and critical theoretical insights for this dissertation in more detail with a special reference to the literature on Modern Turkish history, the literature on the case of Izmir, and the debates about the state/society relations and social history.

The formative years of the Turkish Republic, the Kemalist Period or Single Party period, have been written by focusing on various aspects of the era with the lenses of different point of views such as modernization paradigm, continuity paradigm between late Ottoman and early Republic and the paradigm of the strong state tradition. However, the state-centered and elite-centered perspectives which see the high politics as the main research unit such as the ideological nature of the single-party state, intellectual background of the Republican elites, both collective and individual background, state-building processes and the modernizing reforms formulated and implemented by the Republican regime are the dominant issues on the scholarship on Contemporary Turkish history. The missing part of the process is the experiences of society, especially the everyday experiences of the course of life.

Until the 1960s, this narrow focusing is the fact of historical explanation, indeed. Despite the existence of the tradition in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century under the umbrella of social historical approaches such as the British economic

history and the Annales School, the turning point for social history is the Second World War.³ Peter Burke explains this shift as the result of the people's search for their roots, especially their collective roots like their family, town, village, ethnic or religious group at a time of rapid social changes to orient themselves to this change. To him, in the 1960s, history and social theory started to make a closer relation which resulted in a tendency towards social history.⁴ Following the social history tradition, different theoretical challenges to the established insights pushed the non-elite actors such as peasantry and working class to the front in the research agenda of scholars such as Subaltern Studies in Indian history and the history from below approach by the British Marxist historians.⁵

In this respect, there are some pioneer accounts which go beyond the narrow focus of political history and address the societal aspects of the historical processes in Turkish historiography. Firstly, Şevket Pamuk's article demonstrates the reflections of politics in the everyday life of society. Pamuk's article, which is significant for present study due to its focus on agricultural producers, shows how the government's policies regarding the food supply during the Second World War affected the agricultural producers and it displays the formulation and also the implementation of state

³ Thomas Welskopp, "Social History," in *Writing History Theory and Practice*, ed. Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, Kevin Passmore, (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 205.

⁴ Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.19.

⁵ For a more detailed approaches see: Vinayak Chaturverdi, "Introduction" in *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, Vinayak Chaturverdi (ed.), London: Verso, 2000, pp. vii-xix and Harvey J. Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians: An Introductory Analysis*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984).

policies.⁶ Cem Emrence's study locating the foundation of the SCF and mass support towards the party into the global context of the Depression clearly illustrates the underlying social environment of the mass support to the newly founded opposition party and points out the economic and geographic composition of the supporters regarding the opposition in Western Anatolia.⁷

In fact, the Great Depression was a turning point for historians. Since this deprivation related to the Depression obliged society to have more contact with the power holders or press; there are more sources for scholars aiming to concentrate on the societal experiences of the macro processes. Similarly, Elif Akçetin's study is an example of focusing on the peasantry at the time of Global Depression. Akçetin analyzes the export-oriented towns of Western Anatolia between 1929 and 1933 and presents how peasants experienced that period and adopted state policies to survive in the time of crisis.⁸ Murat Metinsoy's study about the impact of the Second World War on society is a significant example which displays the reflections of the socio-economic conditions of the war in the everyday life of the people, even the Turkish Republic did not join the War.⁹ Again, Metinsoy's very detailed work regarding the everyday experiences of the peasants and workers in the early years of the Republic clearly

⁶ Şevket Pamuk, "War, State Economic Policies and Resistance by Agricultural Producers in Turkey 1939-1945," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 2, p. 19-36.

⁷ Cem Emrence, "Politics of Discontent in the Midst of the Great Depression: The Free Republican Party of Turkey (1930)." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): p. 31-52.

⁸ Elif Akçetin, "Anatolian Peasants in Great Depression, 1929-1933," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 23 (Fall 2000), p.79-102.

⁹ Murat Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaş'ında Türkiye: Savaş ve Gündelik Yaşam*, (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2007).

displays the realities of the everyday life of the ordinary people including taxation, monopolies, crime and working conditions of the labor. Metinsoy discusses the informal ways of politics of the lower classes to manifest their dissenting opinions about the state's policies and gaining their demands from the high politics.¹⁰

Although there are several accounts of working class in the Modern Turkish history, most of them deal with the formal and organized movements of the labor force rather than the everyday life of the workers in which they produce and present their demands. On the other hand, one who examines the 1930s press can observe daily contacts of workers with the power holders which can be seen as trivial things in terms of the organized labor movements. These contacts explain the extent of the labor's capacity in changing the organization of daily urban life such as workers' transportation, childcare, and their health and feeding. For example, a worker living in Buca had to write a letter to a newspaper in response to a request to forbid the train whistle in the morning time and stated that this whistle is a form of an alarm clock to start the day and go to work for workers.¹¹ Furthermore, the municipality had to permit selling food on the street due to the high number of workers in the neighborhoods. Therefore, the daily realities can reveal daily grounds between the state agencies and society based on fulfilling remarkably simple needs. In this respect, Görkem Akgöz's study analyzes citizenship, class, and national identity by focusing on the working and living journey of two weavers working at the state-owned Bakırköy Cloth Factory,

¹⁰ Murat Metinsoy, *Everyday Politics of Ordinary People: Public Opinion, Dissent, and Resistance in Early Republican Turkey, 1925-1939*, (Unpublished Phd. Dissertation, Boğaziçi University, Department of History, 2010).

¹¹ "İşçilerin Aydın Kumpanyasından," *Yeni Asır*, 07.01.1931.

namely Ahmet and Enver from the different regions of the Anatolia, is a crucial account in terms of displaying the people's opinion and their way of claiming about the class and the national identity.¹²

In Izmir case, the social history of the post-Turkification period is a neglected sphere, as well. Despite the very fertile environment of the city in terms of the social course of life, as mentioned previously, the demography related, specifically the population exchange, occurrences were the primary theme for the scholars to analyze the case of Izmir. Most of the studies focus on the international and national bureaucratic process and legal issues about the settlement during and after the population exchange such as the numbers of the newcomers, arrival of these people to their settlement places, and political discussions regarding the population exchange. On the other hand, a comprehensive account which presents social aspects of the settlement process along with the bureaucratic procedure of the population exchange is Ellinor Morack's study named *The Dowry of the State? The Politics of Abandoned Property and the Population Exchange in Turkey, 1921–1945*. Morack focuses on one of the significant and controversial issues of the entire population exchange process, which is abandoned property. While Morack clearly follows the legal procedures regarding the abandoned properties, which were exceedingly difficult to chase, the study also presents reflections of these legal processes in the real life of the people. Morack examines the petitions and complaints penned by the different contested groups among society like locals and exchangees to the state authorities with the purpose of claiming over the

¹² Görkem Akgöz, "Citizens on the Shop Floor: Negotiating Class, Citizenship and National Identity in a Turkish State Factory," *Labor History*, 61:1, p. 24-35.

properties in the city, which is a very sufficient example to observe the diverse groups and identities, and also their relations among the society.¹³

In addition to the narrow focus on politics, those who read the pieces concerning the formative years of the Republic also might see that both the nationalist and liberal readings of early Republican history share the very same attribution to the Turkish state and the society, despite their different ideological positions about the single-party era of the Turkish Republic. They depict the state as a strong and coercive actor to transform society in the direction of modernization; and depict society as the receptors of social change. On the one hand, there are traditional accounts which underlines the modernizing process of the Republic with a special emphasis on the Republican elites and locating the state as the independent tool of the elites to actualize the change.¹⁴ On the other hand, the other accounts which are more critical to the single-party period of the Republic also distinguish the state as the main and central actor and treat it as a power which does not need to struggle to gain its legitimacy, to strengthen its authority and to cooperate with the societal actors because of the strong state and weak society presumption.¹⁵

However, the idea of clear-cut borders between the strong state and the weak society is challenged by the newly emerged theoretical insights and field studies which

¹³ Ellinor Morack, *The Dowry of the State? The Politics of Abandoned Property and the Population Exchange in Turkey, 1921–1945*, (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2017).

¹⁴ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

¹⁵ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, (Beverly: Eothen Press, 1985).

criticized the ways of evaluating the state and the society in formative years of the Republic. Hale Yılmaz's *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey 1923-1945* presents the everyday experiences of the modernization period through the reforms of clothing of the men and women, language, and national celebrations. Yılmaz demonstrates how the state's policies regarding the mentioned spheres were experienced in the grounds. Yılmaz questions the widely accepted idea of the scholars about the gap between the reforms and the society by displaying the ways these reforms reached society.¹⁶ Similarly, Sevgi Adak's dissertation is one of the important contributions challenging the elite-centered perspectives and focusing on the societal aspects of the policies with a more relational lens to the modernization period of the Republic. Focusing on the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s, Adak indicates how state policies were experienced at the local level and more importantly the capacity of the local actors in shaping the state's policies.¹⁷ Another account criticizing the binary approach to state and society is Lamprou's study dealing with the People's Houses, *Halk Evleri*, in which Lamprou discusses the local and social dynamics of the Houses rather than ideological and discursive dimensions. Lamprou examines the People Houses of Kayseri and Balıkesir as the grounds to observe the forms of interplay between the state and other social forces in the provinces and underlines the use and consumption of the state reforms by the social actors. For example, in the case of Kayseri House, he determines six members of the House and analyzes their writings to understand their individual

¹⁶ Hale Yılmaz, *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey 1923-1945*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013).

¹⁷ Sevgi Adak, *Kemalism in the Periphery: Anti-Veiling Campaigns and State-Society Relations in 1930s Turkey*, (Unpublished Phd. Dissertation, Leiden University, 2015).

perspectives and experiences about the House project. Moreover, in Balıkesir example, Lamprau investigates the local power relations by centralizing the journey of a local notable, Esat Adil, from being the chairman of the House to his exile from Balıkesir after a court trial due to his articles. This study enriches our understanding about the local contexts in this period.¹⁸

In conclusion, these studies provide a place to see the real-life experiences of the modernization and nation building processes during the formative years of the Republic from different aspects rather than the narration of politics around the elite cadres of the regime; and they also offer alternative theoretical insights discussing the established definitions and assumptions about the state and society such as strong/weak and coercive/passive and introduced new sources to observe the people's agenda such as petitions and complaint letters.

On the other hand, it should be noted that studying society through the lenses of some approaches which aim to hear the voices of ordinary people by proving or showing the people's active role in politics like resistance or negotiation in terms of the relations with the power holders might cause some problematic pre-assumptions. Examining the societies under the authoritarian regimes attributes some total and essentialized status to the people such as the members of subaltern and repressed groups, which causes some inadequacies. To illustrate, there can be a risk of assigning voices to people rather than hearing the voices of the people by reading their actions as

¹⁸ Alexandros Lamprau, *Between Central State and Local Society. The People's Houses Institution and the Domestication of Reform in Turkey (1932-1951)*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation., Leiden University, 2009).

conscious acts of ideologized principles in every phase of life. This fact is a significant matter for this study. Since it suggests changing harsh and material challenges of everyday life brought by the global and domestic contexts as the primary motivation of the relations rather than the deliberate actions of given statuses like being a subaltern.

In this respect, the social history of the crisis period, the period until 1940s can be evaluated as the crisis period in Izmir –not a war, but a resettlement of all aspects of life- requires readings which are more extended over time to see the actors' positions against the changing conditions and over concrete and mostly simple cases. Apart from the discussions on Modern Turkish history, a distinct perspective about the politics and history of everyday life can provide this perspective. Shannon L. Fogg's *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France: Foreigners, Undesirables, and Strangers* provides an alternative and outside insight to understand the everyday interacts within a separate economic, political, and social context from the Turkish example. This study underlines the importance of material needs regarding the shifting of relations among society rather than ideological positions. In this account, Fogg focuses on a rural community in France between 1939 and 1944 and examines the interactions of local people with outsiders like Gypsies and refugees during the War. Fogg presents an alternative frame in explaining the attitudes towards outsiders; and demonstrates the material conditions such as food, housing, and shortages rather than ideological stances as the major determinant in interactions among the society. Fogg explicitly

explains the role of the material needs in shifting the French people's attitudes to the outsiders and underlines the capacity of daily life in shaping the politics.¹⁹

Due to the nature of the research topic of this study, this work focuses on the period between 1924 and 1939. Because the research line of the study necessitates an environment without any severe and extreme situation in the city. Pre-1924 period is a very intense period in terms of the acute outcomes of the war and Greek invasion, the fire, and the refugee crisis in the city; on the other hand, post-1939 is also the beginning of the Second World War. Therefore, the identified period was selected due to the relatively stable and ordinary daily life.

This study uses a variety of primary sources. In addition to the materials from the Republican state archives, it benefited mostly from the sources in which the societal aspects could be caught, because the main aim of the study is to localize the historical processes and its actors and to understand the relationship between them. Thanks to the developed and widespread local press activities in Izmir, which was inherited from the Ottoman past, contemporary newspapers and journals made it possible to determine and, most importantly, trace the agenda of the city. At this point, it should be underlined that a study, using the press as a source, should inevitably be aware to what extent the papers reflect the public opinion of ordinary people whose literacy level is limited. However, in Izmir, the local newspapers are quite effective at expressing the voices of the ordinary people, especially peasants' voices. Because of the export-oriented agricultural production in Izmir, the rural segments of the city were

¹⁹ Shannon L. Fogg, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Vichy France: Foreigners, Undesirables, and Strangers*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

strongly bonded with the urban segments. That is, the agricultural production in rural Izmir did not remain limited to those villages and the producers of these goods. There was a group of people who were holding a part of agricultural production process with farmers in the city such as merchants, representatives of the foreign firms or the workers working on the port or the factories and workshops to process this agricultural production. For this reason, the agricultural producers frequently found place in the press, for example there are several letters written by the peasants and sent to *Yeni Asır* which presented their demands from the government about the agricultural policies CHF. This is another reason to see why the press underlines the conditions of rural population. There was a strong opposition group to the policies of CHF, and they were mostly the editors or owners of these papers. The newspapers namely *Yeni Asır*, *Serbes Cumhuriyet* and *Işık* provide a place to give voice to the rural population with the intent of discussing and criticizing the economic policies of the regime. Therefore, the issues of the newspapers and journals between the period of 1924-39 namely *Ahenk*, *Türk Sesi*, *Işık*, *Yeni Asır*, *Hürriyet*, *Serbest Cumhuriyet* and *Anadolu* newspapers, and *Yeşil Tire* and *Yeni Ödemiş* journals were studied for this study. The complete collection of the papers used in this study is in the Ahmet Piriştina City Archives (APIKAM) in Izmir. The second source which discloses the voices of the people from different regions of the country is the petitions which were penned to the Petitions Commission of the Grand National Assembly, (hereafter, *Arzuhal Encümeni*). The lists of these petitions were published by the Grand National Assembly (hereafter GNA) with the name, occupation, and the place of residence of the applicants, a summary of the petition indicating the wish of the applicant and the final decision of the commission. These publications could be reached from the library of the Grand National Assembly. For the present research, the petitions which were sent from Izmir and its periphery

and published in the yearbooks of the National Assembly between 1926 and 1939 were scanned. The other source is the minutes of the city council meetings. These meetings were organized monthly with the participation of the city council members and chaired by the city's mayor. The minutes of the meetings which were conducted in the period between 1930 and 1938 were used for this research. This source presents a great amount of information about city life from the issues related with infrastructure of the city to urban taxes, from issues about the taxation of urban artisans to public health issues. They also display micro level political debates based on the local agenda. The other significant source is the wish lists of the people. These lists were prepared in the local CHF congresses by the local representatives according to the demands and necessities of the districts and the villages of the city; and they were categorized according to the subject of the demands like economy or internal affairs and submitted to the Ankara, the general secretariat of the party.

This dissertation is structured in five chapters. Following the Chapter One which is the introduction part indicating the research question and the departure points of the present study with reference to the current Contemporary Turkish historiography, the second, third and fourth chapters consist of the body of the study. Each of them focuses on one of the above-mentioned themes, namely the rural segment, the settlement in practice and the political opposition, and follows the research inquiries of the study which is to make a path for the understanding the interactions between the state and society.

Chapter Two begins with a detailed examination of the countryside of Izmir with a special emphasis on the reflections of the CHF's economic policies in the daily life of

the people who were living and producing in the countryside of Izmir. In this direction, the archival research of this study reveals following issues as the primary fields to observe, namely the agricultural prices, taxation processes of the producers and heavily indebted agricultural sector for the inhabitants of the rural part. Examining the cases and chasing these cases in time, this part discusses the people's perceptions about the state's place in this rural deprivation and problem-solving mechanism of them. In this part, it can be concluded that the peasants were experiencing a wide range of complications which were very urgent in terms of the maintenance of their production and their livelihood such as procuring seed to catch up the next harvest season, paying the land taxes, reducing the interest expenses and negotiate with the foreign companies or State Monopolies to get higher prices for their production, especially after the Great Depression. In this regard, the presence of the state in the rural areas of Izmir was very visible through institutions. The state agencies were perceived as the creator of the deterioration due to the malfunctional economic organization such as the incapacity of the Agricultural Bank for providing credit for the production by peasants. However, at the same time, these agencies were also perceived as the authorities where the state was requested to intervene in economic matters in the cases of unexpected economic developments to the detriment of the peasants, for example during the fluctuation in the agricultural prices. The state agencies were also perceived as the protectors of the peasants when there was an unfair attitude of the foreign companies' middleman in the course of purchasing agricultural production. For that reason, it can be considered that the interplay between state and the people was a more target-oriented and changeable position for each rather than a fixed and ideologized stances such as an opposition to the state intervention in economy, around the material needs.

Chapter Three focuses on one of the identificatory elements of Izmir which is demographic dynamism of the city. By dynamism, the ongoing settlement processes, and the daily outcomes of the relocation of the people including forced or voluntarily migration starting from the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century can be understood. This chapter examines how these relocations which were one of the outcomes of the ideological foundations of the Turkish nation-state building process were experienced in the daily life of people. Rather than tracing the legal procedures of the migration which was settled by international and national law, specifically the Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey, this research focuses on the daily reflections of this macro process, namely the demographic transformation. The aim of this chapter is moving beyond the Turkification/homogenization argument and discuss the effects of the newly emerged microenvironment due to the demographic mobilities to society. In this regard, this research deals with one of the crucial outcomes of the settlement issue, which is the distribution of the source of living, in other words the abandoned property, *emvali metruke*. The findings of this research demonstrate that the settlement process led to the emergence of new struggle spheres for people who were affected from the migration movements, which was the struggle over property and compensation process. This struggle over property among society is the key factor in understanding the social formation of Izmir during formative years of the Republic. In addition to the property issue, the settlement process could not be completed due to the incapability of the Turkish state, even in Izmir. This incapability accumulated people's acute concerns such as finding a house, gaining land to cultivate and to complete the compensation process. These concerns come to daily politics as the cornerstone in the interaction between the state and people. This chapter also discusses the two sides of

the settlement process to underline the difference between the image of the state and the real capabilities of the state. On the one hand, there were the legal procedures which were arranged by the power holders in international and national law. On the other hand, there was the actualizing of these procedures in the field. These two sides were very opposed to each other, and it led to an unended settlement until the 1940s.

Chapter Four traces the local politics and scrutinizes the local elites who are participating in the public discussion about national politics such as Monopolies and the economic policies of the CHF. Following the local elites' opinion in the determined period who were generally in a critical stance towards some specific policies of the ruling party, this chapter seeks how politics worked in Izmir. In more detail, the nature of the opposition will be depicted by focusing on the programmes and workings of the independent candidates and deputies in 1931 elections at the local level, concept of the *fırka/fırkacılık* which frequently used within the opposition circle, and the perceptions of some concepts such as statism, socialism, and state socialism, which were emerged in local press after the economic crisis. Izmir and its inland are generally marked as the center of the economic-based opposition which was manifested in the case of the local support to SCF. In doing so, the study indicates the swaying economic positions of the local elites from the supporter of more liberal economic policies which criticize the state intervention in the economic system via monopolies to an advocate of state socialism and state planning; and also depicts their adaptation to the CHF's economic policies depending on the changing economic conditions, especially after the Great Depression.

To sum up, this dissertation is an attempt to add a layer to social history of early Republican Turkey by distinguishing Izmir as the space of analysis. It focuses on the local contexts of everyday experiences of society in the contexts of rural segments, settlement, and the opposition, and aims to understand whether there is a meaningful path in the relation between the state and society or not.

CHAPTER 2

THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND THE STATE: AGRICULTURAL PRICES, TAXATION, AND INDEBTEDNESS IN IZMIR, 1924-1939

In the official report which was compiled by the governor of Izmir to submit the Agricultural Congress of Turkey in 1938, Izmir and its agrarian environment was portrayed as follows:

Izmir province is one of the most exceptional parts of Turkey in many respects. Nature has been very generous to this province. For this reason, there are so many varieties of production in this region. Because of this variety of production, producers have too many demands and too many sufferings.²⁰

“Too many demands and too many sufferings” might be the most convenient term to define and to understand the running of agricultural production in rural parts in Izmir including its agricultural inlands. Given the diversity in production range which was mostly market-oriented, it is hard to determine a single narration and analysis concerning the agricultural segment of Izmir. However, it is possible to determine that regions such as Çukurova and Black Sea Region, Western Anatolia was more fragile to economic fluctuations which was the main reason of the demands and sufferings in the rural segments of the city. Cem Emrence underlines this geographical differentiation among the regions according to their production features and stated that the peasants of these regions were the most affected ones from the economic crisis in Turkey with the impact of Global Depression. In addition to the nature of production,

²⁰ Ankara’da açılacak Ziraat Kongresi’ne sunulmak üzere hazırlanan Zonguldak ve İzmir illerinin zirai ve iktisadi durumu hakkında raporlar. BCA. 30-10-0-0. 184-267-3, 14.04.1938

peasants of these regions who were producing for the global market were more dependent on the market to meet their consumption needs.²¹ Therefore, agriculturally speaking Izmir and its inlands can be seen as an economic district with a diverse product range in agricultural manner and a fragile economic organization which was open to any kind of global and national crisis.

In addition to the nature of agricultural production in Izmir, which accelerates the impact of the economic crisis in rural segment, there is one more key factor to understand the rural parts of the Western Anatolia. The massive demographic changes are the most distinctive factors regarding the socio-economic structure for the rural segment in these regions. Following the National Struggle and the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the population exchange was a key factor for political and ideological targets of the newly founded Turkish state in terms of realizing the demographic homogenization ideal. On the other hand, this demographic change affected the socio-economic life in rural areas radically. Even though demographic exchange caused an increase in agricultural production due to the substitution of the labor shortage after years of wars, the implementation of this extensive mobilization which was supposed to start with the transportation of thousands of immigrants and complete with the settlement of immigrants into proper regions according to immigrants' profession, this demographic movement brought some issues into the daily life of the society, which were directly related with the agricultural segment. These two features, namely the nature of the agricultural production and the demographic movements which were experienced by the society during the formative

²¹ Cem Emrence, *99 Gnlk Muhalefet Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), p. 63.

years of the Republic, can be determined as the most crucial points to observe the socio-economic conditions of the rural segment in Izmir.

Given the fact that these two factors as the determinant force in the agricultural area in Izmir, it is possible to see how the issues experienced by the agricultural producers in the field were interwoven and complicated. The report mentioned above strongly underlines this reality in the daily life of producers. The primary sources like the report in 1938 clearly display the total portrait of the production and the rural life which was built around the production in Izmir in the formative years. Besides, these resources also demonstrate how the agricultural sector was dominant in the regions' socio-political agenda.

To be more explicit, it is not an exaggeration to argue that the issues in agricultural sector was could not be solved with a specific policy without causing or increasing any other issue due to the above mentioned two features of agricultural production in this region. This fact makes Izmir a geographical entity which can be defined as the center of agricultural production but also a center of demands and malfunctions of the state policies, which pushed the rise of demands by the society from the state. For example, it should be kept in mind that while an agricultural producer in Izmir was in a struggle to maintain and derive a profit from her/his producing activities, s/he was probably holding a migration/settlement status such as *muhacir*, *mübadil* or *harikzede* who was also in a struggle to arrange his/her immigration status and to gain his/her allocation from the state revenue. In addition to this fact, s/he was probably producing one of the products such as tobacco, grape, fig, or cotton, but these products required diverse

ways of taxation processes, different purchasing processes, different production costs and different purchasers such as foreign companies or state Monopolies.

In this part of the study, the principal findings of this research which was conducted in the local resources regarding the rural parts and agricultural production will be addressed due to the significance of this sector as the determinant factor of the socio-economic and socio-political contexts of the city. Unlike many other regions of Anatolia, there was such an economic organization in Izmir that the agricultural production was not only related to the production, consumption, and trade in the city. In addition to economic organization, the social and political organizations were also an outcome of the economic structure emerged from the agricultural production. This chapter has three major themes obtained from the primary resources as the most articulated issues in these local resources. These themes are agricultural prices, taxes, and indebtedness. Even though there were numerous issues on the daily agenda of the city to raise and discuss, these three themes namely agricultural prices, taxation and indebtedness were the most repeated issues raised by the local citizens including peasants, publicists, intellectuals, and politicians. Besides, these three themes present considerably convenient grounds in order to achieve the present study's research question. All were a meeting ground of the state and the society which were emerged from the everyday issues by the ordinary citizens themselves.

This chapter starts with a brief historical background to remind how agricultural production had played a role in the making of modern Izmir and continues with a concise recall about policies of the state towards agricultural segment to grasp the presence and the disposition of the other side of this mutual relation. Following this

part of the chapter, each of the three themes will be addressed by presenting actual cases related with the issue and these cases will be discussed within the frame of how the state agencies like institutions or authorities responded these cases which emerged from the society's actual, and material demands.

2.1. Agricultural Production and Izmir in pre- Republican period

The history of Izmir can be defined as the history of agricultural production, in a sense, because of agricultural production's role in accumulating wealth and turning it into a port city of the Eastern Mediterranean world. Until the fifteenth century, Izmir is a sparsely populated small town with a responsibility for securing the foodstuff of the capital which is known as provisionism. For this reason, Izmir and its hinterland's production activities were tightly controlled by the center at that time. There are several edicts by the Ottoman center which warned the local authorities about smuggling and not selling production such as grape and wheat to other ships rather than those sent from Istanbul.²² Daniel Goffman explains this position of the Western Anatolian coast in the economic system of the Empire as the "fruit basket" for the capital of Ottoman Empire whose commercial relations were intentionally kept in limited to maintain provisioning duty to the capital.²³ However, this limited position did not stay the same. It is thanks to the geographically advantageous location of the city, which makes it a quick adopter for the long-term developments of the global trade

²² Neslihan Ünal, *İki Osmanlı Liman Kenti: İzmir ve Selanik*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2015), p. 77.

²³ Daniel Goffman, "Izmir from Village to Colonial Port City," in *the Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 86.

and production conditions, Izmir's rise as a port city began in the seventeenth century. The transformation of the city from a small Turkish-Muslim port town into an important *entrepôt* began in 1550 and 1610.²⁴ Starting from the late seventeenth century, the increasing need of the European industries for raw materials made agricultural production the driving force of Izmir. The demand for agricultural production such as cotton, grape and opium caused a meaningful increase in agricultural growth in the nineteenth century. For example, while the volume of agricultural production had increased four times and exports more than five times in Western Anatolia,²⁵ the income per person which was generated from the agricultural sector had increased from 1.9 to 6.5 pound in 30 years, 1845-1876, per person.²⁶

Therefore, agricultural production is a milestone for the region in numerous ways including economic integration of the Western region to the World economy, demographic and cultural fabric of the city and the political positions of the inhabitants due to the region's portion in the financial and taxation system of the Ottoman Empire. It is necessary to clarify how this wealth expanded to the countryside and to what extent this wealth was shared with the peasants who were the creator of the wealth. According to Kasaba, an extremely limited amount of wealth was shared with the villages in the hinterland. There was a discrepancy between the large city, especially Izmir, and the countryside in terms of their contribution to production and their profits

²⁴ For a detailed information about the case of Izmir see: Hank Driessen, "Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered," *History and Anthropology*, Vol: 16, 1 (2005), p.132.

²⁵ Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century*, (Sunny: State University of New York, 1988), p.94.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

from the trading of production. The intermediaries who were trading the agricultural production had the capacity to change the peasants' purchasing power temporally and relatively if they channelized the high prices into their transactions in the countryside. Moreover, the payments by the intermediaries to the producers were the one and only channel to distribute the money to the countryside.²⁷ Therefore, it should be noted that the presence of the intermediaries in agricultural production relations and their ability in affecting life conditions in the countryside is a well-grounded feature in this region. Because this fact also continued in the Republic with the foreign companies and their capacity to affect the peasant's life conditions. For example, like many others, foreign Tobacco Companies had a very direct affect over the tobacco producers' living conditions due to their ability to fix prices in a low level in market during the 1930s. Therefore, in the presence and dominance of intermediaries in agricultural production, it can be drawn a parallelism between the Ottoman Izmir and the Republican Izmir.

Attaining its pioneer position in agricultural production in the nineteenth-century economic structure, Izmir, like other parts of Anatolia, experienced a series of political crises which directly affected the city and the rural segment. The process starting with the Balkan Wars continued with the First World War, the Greek Occupation and the Turkish War of Independence which ended with a destruction of the city in terms of infrastructure and demography. This process impacted the agricultural sector by losing the labor force in the country. Most producers were conscripted, and the other ones hesitated from producing activities due to the risk of confiscation of their production by the state. Because of the unpleasant experience of the Balkan Wars, in which

²⁷ Ibid., p. 96.

peasants had to give their production for household consumption to the state, the peasants gave up production for the market. Coercive methods of the state to maintain supplying the food for army and big cities had deteriorated the relationship between the state and the peasants. In fact, peasants started to hide what they had in their hands.²⁸

The wars and the massive changes brought by wars like migration changed demography radically. The population fell to 13 million from 17-18 million and agricultural production declined sharply during the war years.²⁹ In the case of Izmir and the Aegean Region, Keyder indicates that this region managed to maintain its production for the market during the First World War and was not affected as much as the inner and Eastern parts of Anatolia.³⁰ Keyder points out the period between 1919 and 1922 as the destructive period, rather than the First World War, due to an additional loss for the region. In addition to the war losses, almost 500.000 Greek agricultural producers who mostly produce for the market had to leave the country. The Greek census conducted in 1926, shortly after the population exchange, can clearly display how significant this lost labor force for production. According to this census in 1926, refugees had produced the two-thirds of the total production of tobacco in Greece.³¹ Additionally, the Great Fire was also a factor in terms of the deterioration

²⁸ Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye 'de Milli İktisat*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012), p. 441.

²⁹ Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk, *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 11.

³⁰ Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey, A Study in Capitalist Development*, (London; New York: Verso, 1987), p. 91.

³¹ Çağlar Keyder, *The Definition of a Peripheral Economy 1923-1929*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 26.

of economic structure of the city by destroying the trading infrastructure of the city.³² As a result, even though the Izmir district as an agricultural unit was damaged from wars, the population losses were the major factor which affected agricultural production adversely by causing labor shortage. On the other hand, this decrease was not permanent. Muslim immigrants who were mostly from the Balkan regions were determined to fill this labor gap by the authorities.

Having looked at the population exchange from the aspect of agricultural production, Izmir and its hinterland were designated as the fourth settlement area by the Turkish authorities. According to the regulation, Turkish tobacco producers from Drama and Kavala, and the Turkish immigrants from the coastal part of the Greece and the islands, specifically Crete Island, would be settled in the region.³³ In addition to the demographic homogenization expectations of the state authorities from the population exchange process, there was also a major expectancy from immigrants, in economic sense. The immigrants were expected to contribute to the restoration of the countryside and increase agricultural production. The state authorities frequently were frequently referring the exigency of turning the newcomers into agricultural producers, *müstahsil*, as soon as possible.

In brief, by 1923, Izmir and other parts of Western Anatolia were experiencing the effects of the devastating decades. The countryside in Izmir and its hinterland at that time can be portrayed with its destroyed and abandoned villages with uncultivated

³² Keyder, *State and Class*, p. 92.

³³ Kemal Arı, *Suyun İki Yanı, Mücadele*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015), p. 56.

lands. On the other hand, there were scores of newcomers who were waiting to be resettled into their new living habitats, who were mostly without land, seed, and draught animal and very stranger to their new living and producing space. While the objective conditions were such in agriculture related spheres, the Turkish state was in a struggle to execute this multifaceted and over scaled process by settling inhabitants in the appropriate lands according to their production skills. However, even though there were regulations and commissions to conduct the process smoothly, in practice, this process could not be executed as planned and expected. There were several cases indicating that immigrants who were settled unsuitable lands for their production backgrounds. This was the portrait of the agricultural production of Izmir in the very early stage of the Turkish Republic. Having completed the National Struggle, the Turkish state launched to design crucial policies in terms of agricultural production. In the following part, the economic policies of the Turkish state will be addressed with a special reference to its intervention in agricultural production in order to understand interactions between the state and peasants on these meeting grounds.

2.2. State in Economy: A Panoramic Look Towards the State Intervention in Agricultural Sector

By the mid-1920s, it is possible to say that there was relatively a stable atmosphere, apart from the ongoing settlement process of the newcomers in the rural areas. Similarly with the other parts of Turkey, Izmir was in search of the restoration of the economic structure in many ways. Both two sides of the process, the state, and the peasants, were experiencing the restoration process. The current structure of the economy was remarkably like that of the late Ottoman era. Commercial agriculture

and trade were the main activities in the economy. While coastal areas produced cash crops for the world market, central Anatolia continued to be more integrated into the internal market by producing cereals. The total population was around 13 million, 80 percent lived in rural areas and 6 million people worked in the agricultural sector. In the mid-1920s, the share of agriculture in total production was around 48 percent.³⁴

As regards production methods, the technology used in production could be considered predominantly primitive compared to the period's technological advancement. According to the agricultural census conducted in 1927, in which the number of farmers, the agricultural land in use, amount and value of the production, livestock and agricultural tools were counted by the Statistical Office of the state, the number of total agricultural tool was 15.711.³⁵ However, there were 1.751.239 families in agricultural production.³⁶ Moreover, the primitive plough was still the main tool used by the farmers. There were 501 tractors in 1923-1924, 486 of which were state property in use.³⁷

While the material conditions like this, the Republican cadres' expectations from the peasants were to produce. In the very early years of the Republic, agricultural

³⁴ Şevket Pamuk and Zafer Toprak, "Sunuş" in *Türkiye'de Tarımsal Yapılar (1923-2000)*, (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1988), p.12.

³⁵ İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, "Devletçilik Dönemi Tarım Politikaları (Modernleşme Çabaları)," in *Türkiye'de Tarımsal Yapılar (1923-2000)*, (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1988), p. 84.

³⁶ Haluk Cillov, İktisadi İstatistiklerimizde 50 Yıllık Gelişmeler, p. 35, available online: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/8585>

³⁷ Oya Silier, *Türkiye'de Tarımsal Yapının Gelişimi, (1923-1938)*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 1981), p. 20.

production increased and reached the pre-war level.³⁸ This increase was the result of returning the labor force to production and immigrants being able to fill the labor force gap rather than the contributions of some specific policies within the intervention principles of an economic roadmap. In addition to the increase in production, agricultural prices were also in favour of producers until the devastating impact of the droughts in 1927 and the Great Depression in 1929. Prior to these two developments, the prices increased in favour of the peasants due to the high demand in markets. However, high prices in the global market during that limited period were the first steps of the economic troubles which producers were to deal with in the following years. Most of the peasants remember these years as the years of abundance, *geniř yillar*, but with adverse consequences for the next years.³⁹ However, the role of state policies in these relatively well conditions and the recovery of the agricultural sector, in terms of production volume and prices, was limited. Before the devastating impact of the Global Depression in 1929, the state's role in the agricultural segment was indistinct. There were some initiations to modernize the taxation of agricultural production, modernization of agricultural production methods, modernize the finance of peasantry. However, they were not based on a systematic frame which was adopted by Republican cadres. Three crucial attempts of the governments in this period were the abolishment of the tithe, *ařar*, the initiation of some scientific research to modernize the agricultural production methods and expanding the amount of credit to peasants via Agricultural Bank. Also, monopolies in various production spheres were another intervention of the Turkish state in agricultural sector. It should be noted here

³⁸ Oktay Yenal, *Cumhuriyet'in İktisat Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2017), p. 71.

³⁹ "Köylünün Derdi," *Yeni Asır*, 06.06.1933.

that all these steps were initiated to increase production rather than a systematic reform and change.

Firstly, although, the Turkish state was strongly dependent on the agricultural surplus for the economy of the Republic, the most important agricultural tax which contributed to the state revenue namely tithe, *aşar*, was abolished in 1925. This was a revolutionary step for the public finance system due to the important share of this tax in total budget. Because at the year it was abolished, 22 % of total budget revenues were derived from tithe, *aşar*. The motivation behind the abolishment of such a crucial revenue source by the state was multifaceted. As a newly founded Republic, the Turkish state needed the population and especially the peasant's support, but the collecting method of tithe based on delegating the tax collection made the relation between the state and the society more fragile. For this reason, this step can be seen as a way of modernization of taxation procedures and a symbolic break from a feudal taxation practice which collected through the intermediary rather than state. In addition to this strategic and symbolic motive, the Turkish state expected that the producers, who were freed from the tax burden, would increase their production, and pay more taxes. On the other hand, to what extent this reform meets the objective of enhancing production and living conditions of the peasants is indefinite. Despite it is a fact that the abolishment of tithe can be correlated with the Republican regime's stance in favor of the peasantry, the compensation of tithe revenues was essential for government. Unaffordable prices of daily needs such as sugar, coffee, gas, and salt caused the disappearance of what the abolishment of tithe provided them.⁴⁰ On the other hand, according to Boratav, this

⁴⁰ "Türk Köylüsü," *Yeni Asır*, 13.10.1932.

crucial tax regulation which was a very essential step to reduce the tax burden of agricultural producers accomplished transferring the tax load from the agricultural producers to consumers via new indirect taxes on sugar and kerosene. Therefore, it is possible to say that with the abolishment of tithe, the income transfer from the urban, working, and consuming classes to the agricultural sector.⁴¹

The second presence of the state in the agricultural sector was various initiations to modernize production methods and to introduce the agricultural technologies of the time to the farmers. Because of the primitive features of the production methods at that time, the principal attempts of the authorities to educate specialists on agricultural technologies. For instance, with the law of 254 which was enacted in 1922, agricultural middle schools were founded in 12 regions within 2 years. Furthermore, in parallel with the aim of agricultural mechanization, agricultural schools, which accepted primary school graduates, were established in Ankara and Adana in order to raise machinists. Following these attempts, a radical step was taken in 1928. All of agricultural middle schools, together with Halkalı Agricultural School, were closed and all the instructors were sent to Europe, mostly to Germany, to receive a modern education.⁴² Mustafa Kemal in his speech which was made due to the opening of the parliament accepted this deficiency regarding the agricultural education and stated that “we should bravely say that we do not have enough experts who are qualified to realize the agricultural development which our country deserved.”⁴³ Therefore, the early

⁴¹ Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi, 1908-2002*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi), p. 54-55.

⁴² Tekeli and İlkin, *Devletçilik Dönemi Tarım Politikaları*, p. 37-89.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

years of the Republic can be interpreted as a period of legal regulations and search in terms of being familiar to the modern agricultural technologies and importing them into the agricultural regimen of the country with the leading role of the state. Another legal regulation to encourage the mechanization of agricultural production was enacted. Some production inputs such as some tools, fuels and chemicals were exempted from custom fees and tax reliefs were launched for these tools by the state between 1926 and 1930.⁴⁴ However, many of the observations in the rural areas illustrate that the production and living conditions of the villagers were still primitive in the mid-1930s. As İsmail Hüsrev Tökin stated regarding the agricultural mechanization in Anatolian villages who was an Agricultural Bank inspector making tours in Anatolian villages in 1930s with the aim of detecting where to establish credit cooperatives and also a writer in *Kadro*, the mechanization of agricultural production and usage of modern technical tools like tractor, sowing machines, thrasher and trieur was extremely limited. Primitive plough was still the dominant tool used by the peasantry. As he addressed, according to 1927 agricultural census, the number of ploughs was 1.187.007. Tökin observed that technical base of the agricultural production was primitive and added this dramatic definition about the conditions in rural segment that in the struggle with the nature, Turkish peasants were equipped with the labor tools which were holdover from the Noahic period.⁴⁵

The third and one of the most significant presences of the Turkish state in agricultural sector was its effort in expanding financial support and providing credits to the

⁴⁴ İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *1929 Dünya Buhranı'nda Türkiye'nin İktisadi Politika Arayışları*, (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi 1983), p. 189.

⁴⁵ İsmail Hüsrev, *Türkiye Köy İktisadiyatı*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), p. 42-43.

peasants. Prior to the establishment of the credit cooperatives, the Agricultural Bank was holding a key role in this duty. The reason behind the necessity for credit lies in the emergence of the division of labor between the urban and the rural. Prior to that peasantry fall under the influence of market economy, agricultural production activities were limited with covering the family needs in kind. Also, the relation between these agricultural producers with the market was inconsiderable. For this reason, there was no need for money as a tool for circulation. On the other hand, with the impact of integration to the world economy and the division of labor between rural and urban, monetization of the peasantry was started. Even in 1860s, the need of an organization to provide credit to peasants was on the agenda and a fund to finance the credit needs of the peasants was founded by Mithat Paşa under the name of *Memleket Sandıkları* in 1863. As these funds' successor, the Agricultural Bank remained its unique position in agricultural credit providing until 1929.⁴⁶ Designed to provide credit to the agricultural segment, the transactions of the Bank became a center of complaints by the producers. Since, with the reorganization of the Bank in 1924, the Bank's field of activity was expanded, and it was allowed to provide credit to other sectors.⁴⁷ On the other hand, most of the producers criticized the Bank due to its inability to provide enough credit resources to maintain production and also for the imbalance between the credits which were devoted to agricultural production and the commercial credit. As regards this imbalance, Tezel stated that almost 60 and 80 percent of the total credit resources were given as commercial loans rather than

⁴⁶ Asım Süreyya İloğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Kredi ve T. C. Ziraat Bankası*, p. 95, available online: <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/9376>

⁴⁷ Yusuf Saim Atasagun, *Türkiyede Ziraî Borçlanma ve Ziraî Kredi Politikası*, (İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943), p. 27.

agricultural production by the Agricultural Bank.⁴⁸ This scarcity of credit turned into a prevalent and serious indebtedness reality which directly affected the daily life in the rural segment. Because most of the producers had to borrow from the individual credit providers namely usurers, *murabahacı*, with high rates of interest in order to fulfil the financial needs to continue production activities. Consequently, given the fact that the incapacity of the peasantry in the early Republican years in meeting financial necessities, the credit policy, and the main actor of this policy namely Agricultural Bank was not able to carry out a proper and balanced loan policy towards the producers which was designed according to their income and current production conditions. The issues related to the peasantry's financial expansion by getting loans were to be one of profound problems in the following years with the Global crisis's impact.

Having inherited from the Ottoman Empire's traditional monopoly system on some specific production and trading activities, the Republican state also adopted and sustained the Monopolies. To illustrate, production and trade of some agricultural products and consumer goods such as tobacco, cigarettes and cigarette papers, salt, alcoholic beverages, matches, and lighters were monopolized by the Turkish state. Monopolization of the production and trading of these items and also administrative monopolization like running of the ports brought a significant amount of income in the state budget. It is an indisputable fact that the monopolies were holding a crucial role in the financing of the state's financial programme in the early years of the Republic.

⁴⁸ Yahya S. Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015), p. 493.

In fact, the monopolies consisted of %10-14 total state revenues in that period.⁴⁹ The reflection of the monopolies on the daily life and producing activities of the agricultural segment can be seen as a kind of indirect taxation mechanism by imposing additional fees and restrictions on producing activities, and also raising additional costs to consumption needs of peasants. However, as can be understood from the following chapters of this research, the relation between the producers and the Monopoly system, in other words the state, was complicated and layered relation which can transform based on global and domestic economic conjuncture. For example, it is possible to observe how people as an agricultural producer or consumer tried to avoid Monopolies restrictions by producing and trading some items such as tobacco, cigarettes, and alcoholic beverages illegally. Also, it is possible to witness several smuggling activities of the producers and traders to improve their profit from production and to avoid taxation. According to Metinsoy's research, these activities could be seen as a kind of resistance to challenge the coercive, exploitive, and restrictive implementation of state through the Monopolies.⁵⁰ On the other hand, it is also should be taken into consideration that one who investigate the complaints and demands of the producers from the Monopoly Administration probably comprehend that these positions were quite changeable according to economic conjuncture, which will be discussed in afterwards. Consequently, the Monopoly system was an institutional intervention of the state in agricultural production. Because of the nature of the agricultural production of Western Anatolia, the working mechanism of Monopolies is very crucial for this

⁴⁹ Fatma Doğruel and A. Suut Doğruel, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Tekel*, (İstanbul: Tekel, 2000), p. 151.

⁵⁰ Murat Metinsoy, "'Social Smuggling': Resistance to Monopolies in Early Republican Turkey," *SIYASAL-JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCES*, vol.29, no.2, p. 247-269, 2020.

research. Since, in the present study, monopolies are treated as the institutional presence of the state in the everyday life of the rural segment. For this reason, it is necessary to address how this system worked and in which aspects the agricultural segment was affected in more detail.

The years after 1923, several economic activities including production, importing, and trading, which were under the state monopoly, were passed to some licensed private and foreign companies which was very designed for the period's economic atmosphere.⁵¹ For example, Match and Lighter Monopoly, responsible for producing, importing, and distributing the matches, was founded in 1925 with a partnership of a Belgian company namely *Societe General Allumettiere et Forestiere*. In the following years, because of the disagreement between the government and the company regarding the establishment of a match factory in Sinop which was a requirement of the agreement, the privilege passed to an American Company in 1930.⁵² Although these economic activities were given to the company, the state's control over the activities continued. For example, Turkish government demanded price rearrangements according to global prices. After the Global Depression deteriorated the financial balances in the country, in 1934 the Turkish government declared that the price of matches should have been reduced thirty *paras*. As a result of this pressure by the state, the prices decreased gradually from 100 *paras* to 50 *paras* within almost one year in 1934-35.⁵³ Therefore, even though the state did not involve the process

⁵¹ Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye'de Devletçilik*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2006), p. 47.

⁵² Ayşe Eryaman, "Cumhuriyet'in İlk Yıllarındaki İnhisar Uygulamalarına Bir Örnek: Kibrit İnhisarı (1924-1943)," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* XXXVII, no. (2021), p. 200.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

directly, in a specific conjuncture like economic crisis, it kept pressure on the companies in favour of society. Another branch under the monopoly system is the producing and trading of spirit and alcoholic beverages. This was taken under state control in 1926. According to the law, the authorization of producing, importing, and selling all kinds of spirits beverages including wine, beer and all kinds of liqueur was taken to the state monopoly.⁵⁴ Existing factories were also taken under the control of the state. The government delegated all authorization to a company namely The Turkish Incorporated Company of Sprits and Alcoholic Beverages, *İspirto ve Meşrubatı Küüliye İnhisarı Türk Anonim Şirketi* which was established with the partnership of a Polish Company namely *Naçelya Organizaçya*.⁵⁵ However, the company went bankrupt after one year due to illegal production and high license fees, so the state regained the monopoly in 1927.⁵⁶ For the case of Western Anatolia and specifically for Izmir, this monopoly was truly relevant because of the grape, fig, and aniseed production in the region. Salt was another crucial item for peasants due to the fact that it is an agricultural and husbandry input and also an input for weaving and leather industry. In 1927, the directorate of Salt Monopoly was established to monopolize producing and exporting the salt and producing and trading of salt were limited with the licensed traders.⁵⁷ It is possible to see in the press the importance of salt for the farmers from the complaints regarding the prices.

⁵⁴ Doğruel, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Tekel*, p.144.

⁵⁵ Cezmi Emiroğlu, *Türkiyede Vergi Sistemi: Vasıtasız Vergiler*, (Ankara: Damga Matbaası, 1932), p. 77.

⁵⁶ Metinsoy, "Social Smuggling," p. 251.

⁵⁷ Emiroğlu, *Türkiyede Vergi Sistemi: Vasıtasız Vergiler*, p. 64.

At this point, the Tobacco Monopoly should be underlined due to Izmir's place in tobacco production. Following the abolishment of *Régie*'s monopoly in 1925, which is a private company authorized for the production, processing, and trading of tobacco in the Ottoman Empire in 1884, the government took over the authorization for the entire process of producing, processing, selling, and importing and exporting tobacco and the related items. The General Directorate of Tobacco Monopoly, *Tütün İnhisarı Umum Müdürlüğü* was established. Tobacco was an irreplaceable product for the state budget. To be more specific, the contribution of the Tobacco Monopoly to finance the construction of railroads and the industrialization project of the state was essential.

⁵⁸ On the other hand, the tobacco business was also a controversial issue on the political and economic agenda of the political figures of the period. Since there were separate groups who supported different sides. While some of them supported monopolizing of the tobacco business under the authorization of the state, the other side criticized the protectionist policy and suggested the elimination of all restrictions over the tobacco business.⁵⁹ The entire process of tobacco production was strictly controlled by the state. Each step of the process was under the supervision of the state institutions. In the very first phase, the cultivation of tobacco seed was subject to state permission. The Monopoly Administration had the authority to restrict or allow to cultivate tobacco in certain regions. Also, the institution had the authority to specify the type of tobacco seed to cultivate, quantity of tobacco and the farmers of tobacco. Each producer had

⁵⁸ Bilsay Kuruç, *Belgelerle Türkiye İktisat Politikası, Vol. 1*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1988), p. 251.

⁵⁹ Neslisah Leman Basaran Lotz, "The Merchant Bourgeoisie Fighting for Liberal Economy: Discussions on Tobacco Monopoly in the First Decade of the Republic of Turkey," *Journal of Applied and Theoretical Social Sciences* 4 (2), p. 216.

to get a license which indicates the amount of their plantation and their cultivation areas. The administration also had the power to determine the prices, and which licensed merchants and companies could trade the tobacco. The process which started with buying tobacco from peasants and completed with the transporting tobacco to foreign countries was under the full control of the Monopoly officials. According to law, merchants, even after they completed their transaction and stocked tobacco in their warehouses, had to be open to control of Monopoly Administration in any time. Any kind of transportation had to be reported to the officials and obtaining a transportation license was compulsory.⁶⁰ When it comes to the effect of Monopoly Administration on tobacco producers, it was generally the center of complaints due to fixing low prices. To illustrate, while a small package of cut tobacco was sold for 120 *kuruş*, the Administration paid only 10 *kuruş* for per kilo of tobacco.⁶¹ Moreover, like other companies, the Monopoly Administration also lowered the price while purchasing from producers by claiming that the tobacco was of an inferior quality. Therefore, when it is looked at from the producers' side, smuggling became a way of avoidance from the restrictions and increase the profit from the production for tobacco producers. In addition to low prices, the process was full of difficulties for a tobacco producer in terms of bureaucracy and fees in every step of the trading. For instance, a producer had to pay 15 *kuruş* to declare his cultivation, 15 *kuruş* to present a petition, 15 *kuruş* to take a transportation license.⁶² On the other hand, as will be mentioned in the next part, the presence of the state in the agricultural production sphere as the form

⁶⁰ Emirođlu, *Türkiyede Vergi Sistemi: Vasıtasız Vergiler*, p. 44.

⁶¹ Metinsoy, "Social Smuggling," p. 252.

⁶² Metinsoy, *Everyday Politics of Ordinary People*, p. 67.

of Monopoly Administration should be evaluated as a more comprehensive and nuanced reality. Since, the Administration's role was a kind of regulatory authority which could intervene the market in favor of producers, as well. Therefore, while the smuggling activities were realities of the sector for profit making by bypassing restrictions imposed by Monopoly Administration, the institution was also perceived as a kind of protector at certain times between the market conditions and the producers.

Administrative Monopolies, like monopolizing the operation of the ports, was another form of the monopoly system in the 1930s. The operation of the Istanbul, Izmir, Trabzon, and Mersin Ports was under the monopoly of the state in 1925 and the operation of these ports was assigned to the companies.⁶³ It should be noted that ports were an input for agricultural production. As a hub to move production out to the foreign markets, they imposed extra fees to the production and trading activities, which was a very heavy burden for producers especially for those whose production was export-based.

The impact of the Monopolies was not remained restricted with the debates over economic dimensions of the system, on the contrary, the Monopolies became a political debate among the political figures and brought major historical outcomes for the history of Modern Turkey. For instance, the emergence of the SCF was directly related to the opposition towards the Monopolies. Fethi Okyar, the leader of the party, criticized the operation of the Monopolies with the private companies.⁶⁴ The massive

⁶³ Boratav, *Türkiye'de Devletçilik*, p. 48.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

support to SCF in Western Anatolia, where the monopolies were everywhere due to the nature of products, can be analyzed from the strong critiques regarding the Monopolies by the SCF.

In conclusion, the Turkish economy until 1929 was not totally differentiated from the economic structure of late Ottoman period. This period can be evaluated as a period of rebuilding in the circumstance of an open economy.⁶⁵ The expectation from the agricultural segment in the early years of the Republic was to increase production. A quick rehabilitation of the rural part was the major desire of the Republican cadres. In parallel to this expectation, the state launched crucial tax regulation and abolish the tithe which was a very essential step to reduce the tax burden of agricultural producers, tried to expand credit capacity, promoted to modernization of the agricultural production methods, and sustained its control over some agricultural production to improve the incomes of the budget via Monopolies. Here it should be underlined that unlike the industrial segment, in which the prices were fixed at a high level via protectionist policies, the prices in the agricultural sector were not protected.⁶⁶ All in all, the presence of the Turkish state in agricultural segment, at that period, was not based on a specific and well-designed agricultural policy. But when global developments hit agricultural prices, and the impoverishment of society, mostly rural poverty, became evident, the ruling elites had to create a solution. The first steps towards the protectionist policies on the agricultural segment were released, not surprisingly, after 1929. The first direct intervention of the state was the establishment

⁶⁵ Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*, p. 39.

⁶⁶ Tekeli and İlkin, *Devletçilik Dönemi Tarım Politikaları*, p. 41.

of the credit cooperatives in 1929 with the law of 1470 to suppress the effect of the individual credit providers and to reduce the costs of credit.⁶⁷ Other direct intervention by the Turkish state to the agricultural sector was the launching of direct purchasing of wheat from the producers in 1932. According to the law of 2056, to protect and regulate wheat prices, the government started to purchase at the determined prices via the Agricultural Bank.⁶⁸

2.3. A Selective Invitation to the State in Agricultural Segment

2.3.1. Agricultural Prices in Crisis

After profiting from the high and stable agricultural prices before 1929, the Anatolian producers were destroyed by the sharp declines with the Great Depression in 1929. A peasant compared the financial conditions of the producers in these different periods and explained the situation as follows: “We could not know that the production which had been sold in 200 liras one year before was to be sold in 60 liras. Our production was of excellent value.”⁶⁹ Nationally speaking, decline in products such as grape, fig, cotton, tobacco, and hazelnut was destructive because of the share of these products in total export income of the Turkish Republic. They constituted four-thirds of the total export revenue. The impact of the decline in prices of these products in the budget of

⁶⁷ Hülya Kendir Özdiñ, “Tarımda Kamu Politikalarının Başlangıcı: “Buğday Meselesi”, 1932-1945.” *Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 10 (2010), p. 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁹ “Köylünün Derdi,” *Yeni Asır*, 06.06.1933.

the Turkish State was a decrease from 224 million in 1929 to 205 million in 1933.⁷⁰ When it comes to the effects of this sharp drop of the Turkish export products' prices in the global market, Izmir and its inland as an export-based producing region and the peasants who were producing to the market in this region were devastated. Long-term effects of this crisis began to come to the political agenda of the Republican elites as economic, social, and political consequences.

Basically, the Great Depression, which was one of the most influential events of the 20th century's political, social, and economic contexts, means the collapse of Wall Street in September-October in 1929. As soon as the fluctuations started on the New York Stock Exchange, its deteriorating effect started in financial circles. Production and trading volumes began to slow down, and the unemployment rate rose to 25 %. However, the hit was not limited to a small-scale business circle. It exceeded the national borders and business circles and also its time of occurrence. The impact of this event was so enormous that the intellectual and emotional consequences of it could not disappear from people's minds until the 1980s. In terms of agricultural segments, even a small-scale agricultural producer was pulled down by the effects of the crisis. Because of the decrease in trading volumes and the deceleration in production, the agricultural products could not be sold in the market. To illustrate, thousands of tons of coffee stocks could not be depleted by the producers in Brazil and Cuba, and so products were set to fire to increase the prices.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Taner Timur, *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2013), p. 137.

⁷¹ Ali Çimen, *1929 Dünya Ekonomik Bunalımının Dünyaya, Türkiye'ye ve İzmir'deki Üzüm Fiyatlarına Etkisi*, (Unpublished Master Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 2007), p. 21-22.

In national level, economic, social, and political impact of this major event were overt as well. Economically, the reflection of the Crisis in Turkish economy was the decline in the agricultural prices due to the decrease in demand. The export revenues of Turkey between 1928 and 1933 fall at the rate of 48 on the basis of Turkish lira. Furthermore, even though farmers procured 10 % more than the production amount of 1929, their income from products was less than one in three. Because of the scarcity of foreign credits, imports also decreased half and half.⁷² In economic manner, the loss of the state budget was so significant that the state had to impose new taxes in 1931. The Economic Depression Tax and Equalization Tax were imposed to compensate loss of tax revenues at that period. The following table demonstrates the impact of the Global Economic Depression on the state budget between 1928 and 1932.⁷³

To be more specific regarding the agricultural prices, the fluctuations on tobacco prices as one of the major export items of the Republic and also a primary export products of Izmir region, can be particularly useful to notice the deterioration experienced by the producers. Reaching their highest level in 1927, the tobacco prices gradually declined. Within 5 years, the prices fell by 66%. The decline continued after 1932, as well. Prior to Depression, tobacco was priced at 300 to a minimum 100 *kuruş* per kilo, after that time price was 20-30-40 *kuruş*. As a matter of fact, in Izmir region, most producers had to sell their tobacco at the price of 10-15-20 *kuruş*.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the grape prices

⁷² Yenal, *Cumhuriyet'in İktisat Tarihi*, p. 77.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁷⁴ Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraat Buhranı*, (Ankara: Yüksek Ziraat Enstitüsü, 1936), p. 35.

also showed a drop tendency, almost 73.4 %, in 8 years, compared to the high prices in 1927. Even in the Izmir region, grape growers sold their grape for 5-8 *kuruş*, while the price was 50-60 before.⁷⁵ The other impact of the crisis was the reduction in value of the vineyards in the Aegean economic district. Before and during the crisis in 1929, the value of a decare of vineyard in Kemalpaşa was 500 *liras*. On the other hand, in the following years, in 1933, a decare of vineyard was assessed as only 20-30 *liras*.⁷⁶ In addition to the revenue loss and the impoverisher effects of the Depression, the Turkish lira also started to lose its value. For example, English lira increased from 900 *kuruş* to 1070 *kuruş* between 1927 and 1929.⁷⁷

Table 1. Impact of the Global Depression on the State Budget

	Change (Million Turkish Lira)	1928 Budget (Total %)
Total Loss of Tax Revenue	38.3	17.3
Customs	25.7	
Transaction Taxes	9.9	
Income Tax	2.3	
Total Decrease in Regular Income	51.0	23.0
Emergency Taxes	43.0	19.4
Total Loss of Budget Income	7.7	3.5
Increase in Debt Payment	41.1	18.5
Decrease in Public Expenses (Except debt payment)	48.8	22.0

Source: Oktay Yenal, *Cumhuriyet'in İktisat Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2017), p. 78

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 45

⁷⁶ Çimen, *1929 Dünya Ekonomik Bunalımının*, p. 115.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

Turkish state should have responded immediately to the negative impacts of the Depression. To this end, direct intervention to the sector started and the first political precautions regarding the economic crisis enacted by the government. Reaction of the bureaucracy against the economic difficulties was prohibitions, restraints and closing the domestic economy to external world.⁷⁸ As mentioned previously, the direct buying of wheat from the producers to fix the prices at a prominent level started.⁷⁹ Also, the credit cooperatives were founded in 1929 in order to provide credit in more affordable conditions to the sector.⁸⁰ What necessity for emergence of the credit cooperatives while there was a Bank which was founded exactly for this reason is the unbalanced distribution of the loan by the Bank. According to a report written by Mr. Schmidt in 1925, an expert from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Bank mostly had provided credit to business firms rather than farmers. He also underlined that farmers had to borrow from individual credit providers with % 30 rates, while even the Agricultural Bank's interest rates, almost % 12, were unaffordable for peasants.⁸¹ Also, the law of protection of the value of Turkish currency was enacted and the Central Bank was founded in 1930 to prevent instability and to control the foreign currency transactions.

⁷⁸ Keyder, *State and Class*, p. 97-98.

⁷⁹ Zvi Yehuda Hershlag, *Turkey: An Economy in Transition*, (The Hague: Uitgeverij Van Keulen N.V., 1958), p. 145.

⁸⁰ Bülent Varlık, "1930-1940 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Tarımsal Kooperatifler Üzerine Bir Deneme," *Ekonomik Yaklaşım* 1, no.3 (1980): p. 105.

⁸¹ Atasagun, *Türkiyede Ziraî Borçlanma*, p. 106.

Even in political sphere, the Turkish state needed to take some steps to soften destructive effects of the crisis and prevent these effects from turning into a political and social unrest. In this respect, the establishment of the opposition party should be located in this socio-economic context. At the period of the effects of the crisis, Mustafa Kemal decided to establish an opposition party to criticize and to inspect the government, which could be kept under control.⁸² The party program of SCF shows how the economic conjuncture was the basis of the opposition. The fundamental issues in the daily realities such as scarcity of credit, usurer issues, monopolies and the reorganization of the Agricultural Bank perfectly matched the party's programme. The renovations in the electoral system such as allowing independent candidates in 1934 elections can also be evaluated as the outcome of this socio-economic and socio-political context. To be sure, the economic crisis was not the only motive behind these political regulations, however, impoverishment in rural segments was at the edge of social and political unrest in 1930s.

In more regional, the sharp drop of the Turkish export products' prices in Izmir and its inland was devastating. The abundant years, *geniş yıllar*, of peasants ended. Reflection of the crisis in daily life was traumatic for society and individuals experiencing the crisis. The press gave a headline as "There is a suicide outbreak." Several suicide incidents in the city which were associated with the financial burden such as debt, bankruptcy, and poverty were reported by the local press. For instance, a well-known stockbroker Alaaddin Bey who was known with his business ethic committed a suicide on August 15, 1930, and Moralizade Abdi Bey, an opium merchant, who has been very

⁸² Ahmet Demirel, *Tek Partinin İktidarı Türkiye'de Seçimler ve Siyaset (1923-1946)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018), p. 107.

depressed lately because his business began to worsen also committed suicide. Also, a worker committed suicide on an olive farm due to poverty and starvation.⁸³

While the daily reflections of the deprivation were overt, the economic crisis became a subject of discussion in the political sphere, as well. Local opposition figures in the city criticized the economic policies of the government in penned articles publicly. The ruling party, CHF, *Halk Fırkası*, and its improper economic policies became the focus of critiques. Since, these critiques claimed that the reason of the deprivation in city was not a result of the Global Depression. Because the depression in global markets was an outcome of overproduction, *sürprodüksiyon* which means production increased, and prices fell. However, they claimed that there was not an overproduction issue in Turkish agricultural segment. We produce less and more expensive. Therefore, the crisis in Turkey emerged because of the CHF's fiscal and economic policies.⁸⁴ Muhittin Bey, an expert on cooperatives, also differentiated Turkey's conditions from the global context and stated that "the depression in our country is not the same depression in the global system which is an industrial and speculation crisis. Our depression is an outcome of an economic structure without any kind of economic organization, *iktisadi teşkilatsızlık*."⁸⁵ Whether this argument of the local political figures is enough accurate to explain the causal relation between these two developments is questionable. But it should be noted that inadequate agricultural policies of the Turkish state towards agricultural segment before 1929 made the

⁸³Alev Gözcü, "Bir İntiharın Sosyo-Ekonomik Arkapları: Dünya Ekonomik Bunalımının İzmir Örneğinde Gündelik Yaşama Yansımaları," in *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6 (2007), p. 86.

⁸⁴ "Bizdeki Buhran," *Serbes Cumhuriyet*, 02.12.1930.

⁸⁵ "Bizdeki Buhran," *Yeni Asır*, 16.12.1930.

agricultural segment more fragile against effects of the Global Depression. Moreover, it should also be noted that the economic crisis was not the only challenging factor at that time, the settlement in the rural part of Izmir was continuing. For this reason, it was not only the prices which hit society, specifically the agricultural segment. The demographic mobilizations including migration and their outcomes such as housing and land distribution deteriorated the society's resistance capacity against the crisis. Therefore, it should be addressed that there were two separate, but simultaneous processes in the rural segment, which made the socio-economic and socio-political conditions more complex. As the most affected region of these two processes, Izmir was at the intersection of the economic and settlement crisis in the formative years of the Republic. Not surprisingly when the crisis in society arose, the interaction between the state and society began to be more frequent and visible in daily life. The following part will focus on these interactions regarding agricultural affairs. The archival research of the present study suggests three major meeting grounds of the state and society, in terms of agricultural aspects, in Izmir will be examined. The negotiations, demands, conflicts and responses between the state and society which arose around the themes namely agricultural prices, taxation of the agricultural segment and the indebtedness of the producers will be analyzed.

“Who protects Peasants, Zürra?”

Whether and to what extent the state should be involved in agricultural production is a controversial issue even after the 1930s when the necessity of protectionist policies became evident. As a subject of intellectual and political discussion, protectionism and its borders were pretty popular among the local publicist or politicians in the 1930s.

On the other hand, repercussions of this debate in the real-life experiences of people were vital. With this part, it is aimed to demonstrate how the idea of protectionism became concrete in daily life. To be more specific, it will be examined that how the term of protection interpreted by the agricultural segment by asking that what was the relation between the state and the agricultural segment on the basis of the issue of protection.

In the case of Izmir, the Monopolies and tobacco production were the most convenient spheres in which the interactions around the term of protection were very evident. Before the first steps of the protectionist intervention to economy in 1930s, the Turkish state was already an actor of the tobacco production as a planner of production, purchaser, processor of the tobacco and exporter of the tobacco, and most importantly the regulator of the market via different methods. Robert Carey Goodman's account about the tobacco trade and its effects on the American and Turkish relations between 1923 and 1929 explains how and what extend the Turkish state involved in tobacco business. According to his research, Monopoly already had power on the tobacco market. The consulate reports in Izmir shows that "Monopoly purchases in August 1925 of 4.4 million pounds supported the market and firmed prices, and the monopoly anticipated making total purchases of over 22 million pounds." Moreover, Monopoly bought directly from the producers in some areas, which was a different implementation from the previous implementation. According to him, this also means an increase of the state's capability to implement a more politically minded purchasing program.⁸⁶ The question of whether this direct buying attempts could be evaluated as

⁸⁶ Robert Carey Goodman, *The Role of The Tobacco Trade in Turkish-American Relations, 1923-29*, (Unpublished Master Thesis, 1988), p. 102.

a way of protection of producers or not by the producers is an also open to discussion and very hard to answer, while there were other actors in the market which increased the prices. But it is also quite explanatory to show how this perception was content and conjuncture based.

By enjoying a monopoly over some certain products like tobacco, the Turkish state obviously aimed to increase state revenues for the realization of industrialization and infrastructure projects. But how to maximize revenue and what was the cost of this increase in terms of the agricultural sector are crucial to ask. The debates, both intellectually and practically, over the low prices and restrictions of the state which prevented free production and sale came into view at this point. Since some accounts like Metinsoy's one evaluates the perception of Monopolies by individuals including consumers, producers, and traders within the paradigm of exploitation and resistance. According to him, most of the producer and consumer used smuggling activities as a way of survival method to avoid from the Monopoly's restrictions and a way of life-improving action for society in the early Republican era. In terms of tobacco producers, the major tension against the Monopoly was that Monopoly Administration tried to determine low prices. For example, in the market a little package of sliced tobacco was priced as 120 *kuruş*, the Monopoly was giving 10 *kuruş* for a *kilo*.⁸⁷ The low prices by the Monopolies were the fact of Izmir's tobacco cultivators. There was a difference between the foreign companies' prices and Monopoly's prices. For example, the American companies were the first buyers in Izmir with the highest

⁸⁷ Metinsoy, "*Social Smuggling*," p. 252.

prices. In 1928, while the American firms bought tobacco at with an average price of \$.30 per pound, libre, the tobacco monopoly was giving \$.045 to the producers.⁸⁸

Even though, it may be argued that Monopolies restricted the free production and implemented a low-price policy which resulted with smuggling activities, one should also take the differences in perceptions based on the economic conjuncture. Archival evidence of the present study demonstrates that in some certain contexts such as that the foreign companies dominated the market with low prices or stop purchasing to manipulate the market, monopolies were invited to the market to protect producers. For example, even in a newspaper which was in the liberal side of economic policy debates by criticizing the state's role in economy, there was a demand that the start of the purchasing of grape and fig by the Monopoly of the Spirits and Alcoholic Beverages immediately, if the state aimed to rescue the producers.⁸⁹ Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that flexible stances which are changeable according to socio-economic conditions present more nuanced causal explanation containing local and current contexts. In other words, concepts like resistance or exploitation ignore the economic and social contexts regarding the existence of Monopolies in agricultural production.

Looking in more focused lenses to tobacco cultivation which was the most prevalent agricultural activity for Izmir and the inland of Izmir shows that the relation between producers, foreign firms, and the state. Firstly, it should be reminded that in 1927, the "Big Four" firms of tobacco business had offices in Izmir to purchase tobacco. They

⁸⁸ Goodman, *The Role of The Tobacco Trade in Turkish-American Relations, 1923-29*, p. 149.

⁸⁹ "Müstahsilin Sıkıntısı," *Yeni Asır*, 13.09.1932.

were Alston which represented P. Lorillard, Gary, Liggett & Myers; American of the Orient, American Tobacco and Glenn, R. J. Reynolds.⁹⁰ It is a fact that firms were very capable of price determination, and not surprisingly they mostly offered high prices. When this kind of case is taken into consideration, one can be suspicious about the role of the state, Monopoly Administration, however the organization of the state in tobacco business was not limited with the prices and the protection issue became concrete at this point. An example from the 1927 harvest in Izmir and its inland clearly shows the position of the state in this producing and purchasing activities. This example also portrays growers' perspective. Edward M. Yantis, the manager of the Gary Tobacco Firm in Izmir began to buy tobacco from the producers secretly in August, before the opening of the market. Besides, the firm offered 40 kuruş, 10 *kuruş* higher than the average price. This started a competition between the American firms and the rivalry made the prices "48 piasters in a within a few days, 83 piasters in a few weeks, and to as much as 107 piasters per pound for some tobacco."⁹¹ But it should not be forgotten that these prices were offered for the crops which were still growing in the fields, not harvested products. Producers' expectation of benefiting from the rivalry in the market was an obvious advantage. The local press also reported this case in an incredibly positive tone and praised the manager's cleverness. But the end of this story was not as positive as it was in the beginning. The case turned into a tension between producers who wanted to use guns and the company. When the delivery deadline came, the American firms declined the payment due to the low quality of the products and did not make the payment.

⁹⁰ Goodman, *The Role of The Tobacco Trade in Turkish-American Relations, 1923-29*, p. 137.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Thereupon, the vice president of the local branch of the Turkish Hearth Organization, *Türk Ocağı*, in Akhisar, inland from Izmir, gave a speech to the tobacco growers in a very nationalist tone and said:

Farmers, you know that the American tobacco companies must have your tobacco. Are you men? Are you Turks? If the foreigners do not take it, let us drive them out of our country. You have guns; don't you know how to use them? Prove that you are Turks.⁹²

The withdrawal of the American Company from buying can be understood as a kind of exploitation strategy to maximize their profits by ensuring their purchasing in the initial stages of the harvest season. In fact, using the low-quality accusations as a reason to hesitate from paying the offered amount was a quite common policy of the companies. İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, reported in his observations that this tactic was used in the tobacco cultivating regions by the foreign companies and merchants repeatedly. As Tökin narrated, a merchant rejected almost 20-25% of the production as wastrel, *iskarta*, and as a discount, *iskonto* during the acceptance of the production. Also, foreign companies mostly rejected 6 of 20 units tobacco as wastrel, *iskarta*, and 2 of them were counted as discount, *iskonto*. Thus, producers could only get paid for 12 units. Besides, the products which were counted as wastrel were not given back to the producers.⁹³ On the other hand, when the production skills and the methods of the Turkish agricultural segment in that period are taken into consideration, it might be true that the quality was an issue, especially for the American firms with clear standards about tobacco and a business type made over the estimated numbers. The reports portrayed the production quality in Izmir as follows:

⁹² Ibid., p. 145.

⁹³ Tökin, *Türkiye Köy İktisadiyatı*, p. 149.

In the Izmir region many growers who had sold their crops in the field, did not put great effort into timely harvesting, carefully curing, or selectively sorting their tobacco. Instead, they delivered much unripened, poorly dried leaf to the purchasers, a portion of which was rain and disease damaged. The entire crop was regarded as inferior; as much as 25% of it was damaged. Naturally, the foreign buyers, and especially the Americans who demanded the highest grades of tobacco, would not pay for inferior goods, and returned the low-quality leaf to the growers. The growers demanded the agreed upon price for their entire crop, waste, and all.⁹⁴

In fact, the production and cultivation methods of the farmers were not sufficient for some companies. For that reason, even in 1938 almost ten years after this case, American Tobacco Companies had to manifest their expectation from the production and suggest the methods of cultivating in a newspaper. The manifest stated that “American tobacco companies and other tobacco buyers in Izmir advise tobacco growers to carefully read the following advice, if they want to sell their products at good prices.”⁹⁵ They explained the entire tobacco cultivation step by step to the producers who were producing the same plant for almost a decade. Their manual starts with the selection of the land to seed the tobacco and continues with instructions for each step such as how to plough, how to select the seed, and how to cut and clean, and bale the harvest. For this reason, while the quality issue was a practical tool to press the prices, it is an undeniable fact that there was a quality and standardization issue in the production activities.

Two points in this case should be emphasized. The standpoint of the producers is the first thing. The example shows that tobacco business became a national issue when the

⁹⁴ Goodman, *The Role of The Tobacco Trade in Turkish-American Relations, 1923-29*, p. 144.

⁹⁵ “Amerika Tütün Kumpanyaları,” *Yeni Asır*, 23.09.1938.

payment was declined and also demonstrates that the producers were sharing the same goal with the firms, to maximize the profit. Therefore, flexible, and profit-oriented actions of the peasants due to the acute and heavy conditions of Izmir might be more explanatory to depict the total countryside of Izmir and inland of the city rather than consistent stances such as accommodation of the state policies and the resistance towards the state's policies. The second point is that the capability of the state to monopolize should be reconsidered. Since, as can be seen from the example that the monopoly was not able to limit the negotiations between the producers and the firms, even in a supposedly "rigidly controlled sector." These companies, at the same time, were limiting the Monopolies' capability to administrate and maintain the services by giving high salaries to the skilled experts "who scouted the tobacco as it grew and provided estimates of the production and crop damage." They paid 200 to 1000 liras per month to an expert, while the Monopoly Administration paid 80 and 100 liras.⁹⁶

Despite their different aims and organizations, both Monopoly and the foreign companies in the tobacco business were criticized regarding the low prices they offered. Those who investigate the local press can see news and articles about prices in every day for a long period starting from the mid-1920s and to the late 1930s, which is that "the companies are reducing the prices." At this point, the inquiry of the present study should be asked. What was the expectation from the Turkish state regarding the protection issue? The following cases from the inland of Izmir and Izmir's countryside might provide a point of view about the producers' perception about the state role in this issue.

⁹⁶ Goodman, *The Role of The Tobacco Trade in Turkish-American Relations, 1923-29*, p. 151.

Contrary to the accusations of exploitation, which led to formation of a kind of resistance strategy in society towards Monopoly, the Monopoly administration was evaluated as an institution to protect the producers in some contexts. To illustrate, a letter written to *Yeni Asır* by a cultivator from *Kuşadası*, Mustafa's son Mehmet, *Mustafa oğlu Mehmet*, shows that producers expected an immediate intervention to the market from the state authorities namely Monopoly Administration by starting to purchase. He explained the current situation in the village and demanded from the authorities that:

A few people, who were in a hurry to dispose of their third and fourth type of tobacco out of their hands immediately, sold their tobacco to the purchasers of the Glen Company for 100 *kuruş*. Unfortunately, this instancy damaged the entire Tobacco market in *Kuşadası*. The experts of the Glen Company who were alone in the market lowered the price after they bought some tobacco. Then they continued to buy from the 70 or 80 *kuruş*. Considering that the other companies did not come to our region, it can be seen that our producers, *zürra*, were unprotected. If this continues and the Monopoly Administration does not start to buy immediately, the producers will be faced with more disastrous results.⁹⁷

This case is a very explanatory and crucial example to see that the prices were crucial. On the other hand, it is also more crucial in terms of seeing how the state and its institutional tool were internalized by the producers as a kind of protector of peasants when the unfair implementation of the merchants or foreign companies raised.

Glen Company was also accused of using an underpayment tactic by reducing the amount of production. According to the newspaper, the Company paid for only 500 *okkas* of 1000 *okkas* of total production and counted half of amount as wastrel, *ıskarta*,

⁹⁷ “Kuşadası’nda Tütün Piyasası Nasıl Açıldı,” *Yeni Asır*, 03.10.1932.

in Akhisar. The reason for this mistreatment, according to the peasants, was because peasants were unprotected.⁹⁸

What peasants demanded from the authorities was an organization against the companies unfair and exploitative strategies. Because producers suffered from the lack of a capability for resisting low prices. According to an expert, who was authorized for the region's tobacco business, "if there is an organization which protects the producers and stands against the companies, our tobacco would not be sold under a dollar which means 185 *kuruş*." ⁹⁹

In addition to the protection duty of the state in the minds of the people, the Monopolies were also expected to bring competition to the market by buying products, when there was no competition between the companies. One publicist added his comment about the issue as "Even the ones who criticizing statism concluded that there is not any solution during that time of crisis." In fact, the merchants also demanded Monopoly to purchase their stocked tobacco in their warehouses. There were 70-80 merchants in Izmir region whose tobacco had to be purchased.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, even the merchants, who strongly opposed the presence of the state in the economic organization and said that "the state cannot be a merchant", paradoxically demanded a solution that made the state a merchant after the crisis. For this reason, day to day positions which changed

⁹⁸ "Zavallı Tütüncüler," *Yeni Asır*, 04.12.1930.

⁹⁹ "Ecnebi Kumpanyalar," *Yeni Asır*, 06.11.1932.

¹⁰⁰ "Merhun Tütünler," *Yeni Asır*, 19.05.1931.

according to the daily developments might provide a better understanding about the society's positions and relations with the state policies.

When the economic conditions worsened, and an extremely limited amount of tobacco was sold by the producers after the 1931 harvest, even in *Yeni Asır* newspaper, it is recommended that unsold tobacco be purchased by the state. Producers who could not sell their tobacco were in debt and they were suffering from poverty. The newspaper added that in these conditions the Turkish state cannot say that it is impossible to buy more. Turkish state could not have left the producers alone and unprotected in these conditions. The state should have depleted the stocks in order to prevent the harmful effects on next year's market.¹⁰¹ The tobacco producers were not the only ones; the grape producers also invited the state into the market to dominate the market. Grape producers in Manisa, which is a part of Izmir's economic region, strongly demanded that Monopoly and the Agricultural Bank should enter the market. However, according to some experts penned articles to the newspapers, this request was mistaken. Cooperative expert, Muhittin Bey defended that this was not a solution for the low prices. He suggested the foundation of the purchasing organization, *satış kooperatifi*, as a solution.¹⁰²

In the other side of this connection, the government took steps in the direction to block the companies' mistreatments. For example, in 1934 İsmet Paşa personally gave an order to take some measures against the merchants who were trying to drop the fig

¹⁰¹ "Satılmayan Tütünler Devletçe Satın Alınmalıdır," *Yeni Asır*, 22.12.1931.

¹⁰² "Üzüm Niçin Düşüyor," *Yeni Asır*, 01.05.1933.

prices in Izmir. He said that although the production is less than that of the previous years, the prices are also lower; and he added that the Monopoly Administration should transact over the scrap fig.¹⁰³ On the other hand, demands from the producers were not welcome every time by the authorities. A request from the grape producers from Bornova in terms of increasing the prices was declined by the General Manager of the Monopoly Administration. Because the administration already planned to buy grapes as a favor to the producers and the prices were already determined and submitted to the producers. Therefore, there cannot be a rearrangement in the prices.¹⁰⁴

In addition to manipulating prices for producers' benefit, a structural reorganization of the entire agricultural production was also at the top of the local agenda. Organization of the production, *teşkilatlandırmak* was the immediate suggestion of the local figures in order to prevent fluctuations in the prices, to stabilize the prices and to break the power of intermediaries. The cruciality of production and consuming cooperatives was an accepted idea among all actors of agricultural production as a key concept in solving all the difficulties. Actually, there was a good example to see how the cooperative contributed to the production and improve the producer's living conditions. The Cooperative of Fig Producers in Aydın seemed like proof of the necessity of the cooperatives in terms of producers.¹⁰⁵ In fact, the Aydın Cooperative was able to prevent price reductions in the Global Depression by purchasing figs and distributing

¹⁰³ İzmir'de tüccarın incir fiyatlarını düşürmesine karşı tedbir alınmasına dair İsmet İnönü'nün talimatı, BCA, 30.10.0.166.154.9, 27.08.1934.

¹⁰⁴ "İnhisar Umum Müdürü Gitti," Yeni Asır, 28.07.1933.

¹⁰⁵ "Satış Kooperatifleri," Yeni Asır, 03.12.1933.

money to its partners. Also, when the prices dropped, the Cooperative paid 12.3 *kuruş* per kilo to the partners.¹⁰⁶

The establishment of an export cooperative for producers also was requested by the producers from the authorities. The tobacco producers from Alaçatı expressed their wishes to the governor, Kazım Paşa, in a meeting. The representative of the 543 producers said “I am begging you on behalf of the producers to you for rescuing our production which we produced under the sun with our whole family from the intermediaries and the profiteers. You saved us two years ago from the moneylenders and made us producers. Provide us an outlet to export to be able to sell our production in true value.”¹⁰⁷

The capability of the peasants to negotiate over prices also should be addressed. The low prices were offered; but what was the peasants’ response to these offers? In some cases, they had to sell their production. On the other hand, when they have some buffer zone, they can wait or choose the merchants to sell their products. For instance, when the producers of Çeşme allied with each other and decided to not sell their tobacco to the small merchants who did not make wholesale purchasing, the market was not able to be opened. Producers waited for American firms to start buying.¹⁰⁸ The capacity of the state, on the other hand, in controlling tobacco production was a controversial

¹⁰⁶ Özlem Yıldırım Kocabaş, “Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Aydın İncir Müstahsilileri Kooperatifi’nin Durumu,” *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2 (1994) p. 107.

¹⁰⁷ “Müstahsilin Sesi,” *Yeni Asır*, 06.04.1932.

¹⁰⁸ “Müstahsilin Sesi,” *Yeni Asır*, 06.04.1932.

issue. Regarding the state's control over tobacco production, Goodman depicts the actual conditions as follows:

In Turkey, the regime's efforts to control the tobacco trade were unsuccessful, despite the tobacco monopoly's continuing regulation of all phases of the tobacco industry. Much more influential were factors such as weather, growing conditions, international demand for Turkish leaf, and especially American buying habits. The drastic swing from peak production in 1927 to low in 1929 vividly demonstrates the Turks' lack of control over the trade.¹⁰⁹

However, Turkish state used different tools to keep the foreign companies in the tobacco trade under pressure in the very early years of the Republic such as extraordinary taxation of the companies which made purchases from the market. For example, in 1925 the local director of finance, *defterdar*, decided that most of the American tobacco companies in Izmir had to pay a school tax. In the same year, local authorities in Izmir again imposed on the Gary Tobacco Company a military transportation tax. The amount was 15.000. The company stated that the amount of the tax was illegal. Since a Turkish firm holding a comparable capitalization value would only pay 30 or 40 Turkish Lira.¹¹⁰

All in all, regarding the state's role in agricultural sector and the producer's point towards this role should not be analyzed only within the borders of the whether the prices low or high and the impact of the state's agricultural policies over the prices. The protection was a key concept during the formative years of the Turkish Republic. Although the state's control over some production and prices via Monopolies can be understood as a repressive mechanism of the Turkish state, the producers selectively

¹⁰⁹ Goodman, *The Role of The Tobacco Trade in Turkish-American Relations, 1923-29*, p. 156.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

invited the Turkish state to intervene to the market in the production and purchasing process in favor of the peasants against the other actors of the market. In Izmir, this invitation might be a little higher because of the domination of market-oriented production which necessitates more protection from the state than the other regions.

2.3.2. Taxation of the Agricultural Sector

It is a fact that the Turkish government relied on the agriculture as the foundation of the economy and also as the financial provider of the modernization projects. In order to catch the agricultural surplus, taxation of the crops and livestock were the crucial tools. When the current conditions of the peasantry in the formative years of the Turkish Republic are considered, this much of responsibility on the agricultural segment could not be sustained without causing a burden on peasantry. As mentioned previously, in the very early years of the Republic, the abolishment of the tithe was the major step to decrease the tax burden of the peasantry and contributed to transfer of tax load to consumers rather than agricultural sector. The apparent reason behind the abolishment was to decrease the cost of production and remove the tax burden of the peasants.¹¹¹ However, additional taxes on the agricultural segment increased the tax load of the peasantry in practice. The Land Tax, *arazi*, the Livestock Tax, *ağnam or sayım*, and the Road Tax, *yol*, were the sources of the burden on the peasantry.

¹¹¹ İzzettin Önder, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Tarım Kesimine Uygulanan Vergi Politikası,” in *Türkiye’de Tarımsal Yapılar (1923-2000)*, (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1988), p. 119.

All the owned lands within the borders of the Republic were leviable unless it was exempted from the tax with a special decree. The assessment of this tax was the value of the land. The tax rate was 10 ‰ for the lands with income, while the rate was 5 ‰ for lands without income.¹¹² These rates were increased by the state with the same law which eliminated the tithe in 1925. The contribution of the land tax to the budget revenues was 2.5 % between the years of 1925-1935. Nevertheless, the value of the lands could not be determined accurately, and this made this tax full of setbacks. Even in the time of the Depression, which was the period of the sharp drops of the agricultural prices, the rates of the Land Tax did not decrease, and it continued to be paid according to the value. This means that while peasants gained less income from the same land, they paid the same amount of tax because the value of the land was the same.¹¹³ In the following table, it can be seen how the Land Tax assessment became challenging for peasants. Table 2 shows three types of land with different values and how the equivalent of the imposed tax increased in time in the form of wheat/kilogram.

As can be seen from the table, the Land Tax became another financial burden which took the place of tithe. According to a survey which was published in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, about the agricultural taxation in 1930, most peasants generally yearned for the tithe due to the difficulties brought by the new taxes.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Emirođlu, *Türkiyede Vergi Sistemi: Vasıtasız Vergiler*, p. 40-43.

¹¹³ Hatipođlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 76.

¹¹⁴ M. Asim Karaömerliođlu, "Elite Perceptions of Land Reform in Early Republican Turkey," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2000, 27:3, p. 116.

Table 2. Types of Lands and Tax Equivalent in Years

Year	Type 1 Land Kilogram/Wheat	Type 2 Land Kilogram/Wheat	Type 3 Land Kilogram/Wheat
1927	2,32	1,55	0,77
1928	2,07	1,38	0,70
1929	2,32	1,48	0,74
1930	3,48	2,32	1,28
1931	6,00	4,00	2,00
1932	5,66	3,75	1,88
1933	5,08	3,40	1,70
1934	6,71	4,47	2,23
1935	5,08	3,40	1,70

Source: Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 76

Like the Land Tax, Livestock Tax, *Ağnam or Sayım*, was one of the taxes imposed on the peasantry. It was a kind of a wealth tax which was collected for per animal.¹¹⁵ In 1926, the content of the tax was extended to all animals, prior to this regulation it comprises limited kind of animals. Also, the tax increased in 1926 and 1929. For example, while, in 1925 the amount was 23, it was 30 in 1926. And it increased to 60 per sheep in 1929. Therefore, it is possible to see a gradual increase in the amount of tax. The reflection of this tax in daily life was significant. As Metinsoy's article shows, there was a joke among the Anatolian peasants which can clearly demonstrate how this tax became a burden and how peasants tried to overcome the tax. The joke as follows:

One day a peasant named Çavuş Emmi (Uncle Sergeant) says to İbik Dayı (Uncle İbik), "If my donkey dies, I will skin it and cover my cow with its skin

¹¹⁵ Önder, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Tarım Kesimine Uygulanan Vergi Politikası*, p. 125.

so that I can escape from the livestock tax.” Thereupon, İbik Dayı suggests that Çavuş Emmi wears this skin to avoid the road tax.¹¹⁶

The impact of this tax on the peasants was noteworthy. In fact, most livestock owners had to sell their animals and also most were in search of a person to give the animals temporarily in return for paying the livestock tax in Central Anatolia.¹¹⁷

The Road Tax, *yol parası*, was another direct obligation of peasants. The underlying logic of this obligation was to contribute to the economy by benefiting from unproductive labor force, especially agricultural labor.¹¹⁸ In this respect, it is directly related with the agricultural sector due to the mentioned aim which was utilizing the unproductive labor force in the agricultural sector. The Road Tax was not a newly invented tax by the Republican Regime. Starting from the late Ottoman period to the time of Independence War in 1921, it was a devastating reality for peasants. After the Independence War ended, it was again imposed as a source to finance the country's reconstruction. According to the law enacted in 1925, all males between the ages of 18-60 and living in Turkey, apart from disabled ones, poors, soldiers and the those who had 6 and more children, had to pay the tax annually. The amount of the tax was determined as the equivalent of the labor force which an ordinary person could do in 6-12 days.¹¹⁹ It was expected to be paid either money or labor force. According to the

¹¹⁶ Murat Metinsoy, “Negotiating the Price of the New State and Republican Modernization: Resistance to the Agricultural Taxes in Modern Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 63 (2020), p. 80.

¹¹⁷ Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 79.

¹¹⁸ Önder, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Tarım Kesimine Uygulanan Vergi Politikası*, p. 127.

¹¹⁹ Yol Mükellefiyeti Kanunu, No, 542, Date. 23.02.1341. https://www.kanunum.com/file/cid6019_vid26743_fid17229

last version, issued in 1929, a taxpayer had to work ten days on construction or had to pay eight liras.¹²⁰ In daily life, this tax might be the most dramatic tax due to the collection methods. Those who could not pay the tax in cash had to pay their transportation fees to arrive at the working places which made this tax heavier. The significant point here is that most peasants choose to pay the tax with physical force rather than cash. This was probably not a voluntary choice but a result of the shortage of cash and impoverishment in the rural part due to the drop agricultural prices. Although the regulation had fixed the conditions of physical working, this was open to abuses. That is to say, most peasants were abused by the contractors, highway officials, engineers, and local administrators. Peasants were forced to work in more distant places and also forced to work long hours than the law fixed. There were several cases regarding this misconduct of the officials. For instance, according to *Köroğlu* newspaper, some peasants from the İsabeyli Village of the Çal district in Denizli reported that officials had forced them to work 18 days while the law says 12.¹²¹

The mentioned three taxes were the source of financial burden in peasants, but there were other additional fees which made peasants and, specifically agricultural producers' life insufferable in terms of financial matters and solvency. In Izmir region, a villager, Sefer Çavuş, from Ahmetbeyli Village complained about the additional costs after his tobacco harvest and at the stage of selling by saying that "I am an exchangee, mübadil, from Langaza and I have been living here for seven years. I produced tobacco and sold it to the Ostro Company. I paid for transportation and other

¹²⁰ Önder, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Tarım Kesimine Uygulanan Vergi Politikası*, p. 126.

¹²¹ Metinsoy, *Negotiating the Price*, p. 88.

things. Now I have nothing left. When I went to the Company to settle accounts, I could not pay the *hanci*'s pay."¹²² Besides, peasants had some local obligations. To illustrate, the Village Law dictated obligatory works in village which means more financial burden. The law expected the peasants to support the infrastructural improvement of the villages by building a village square, roads, a place for village council, a guest room, planting trees and building a school.¹²³ Similar to extra fees in tobacco production, extra inputs such as salt were another indirect financial burden to peasants. In an article in the press, which complained about the financial burden on the peasantry, salt, as an essential substance for animal husbandry, was defined as a crucial item for peasants, even more crucial than bread. Since bread could be made by peasants, while salt required money to buy. Therefore, 90 % of the total revenue of the Salt Monopoly was derived from agricultural producers. For this reason, salt prices were very related to producers, and they complained about the burden on their budget coming from the salt prices. Because, while the salt's price for one *okka* was 10 *kuruş*, the price of the barley was 50 or 60 *paras*.¹²⁴ The Monopolies and the officials of the Monopolies were the symbol of being squeezed by the brunt of the financial obligations. During a visit of the local journalists in the villages of Izmir, this bias became apparent, which was probably an outcome of the memories of tax collection methods. During this visit to Bulgurca Village, journalists came over to the village coffeehouse. Being tired of tax collectors or monopoly officials, the owner of the coffeehouse asked journalists whether they were state officials or merchants. Peasant

¹²² "Köylerde Tetkikler, Köyler Ne Halde," *Yeni Asır*, 7.12. 1930.

¹²³ Köy Kanunu, No, 442, Date. 07.04.1924. <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.442.pdf>

¹²⁴ "Beş Okka Arpa," *Yeni Asır*, 13.10.1933.

continued as follows: “If you are merchants our tobacco is at your service, but if you are state officials, now we are not in a mode to meet with a state official.”¹²⁵

To sum up, despite there were some attempts to eliminate the financial burden on the agricultural segment by eliminating major tax of the sector, the newly levied taxes namely Land, Livestock and Road Taxes, and also other additional costs on production and consumption prevented financial relief in the agricultural segment. With the impact of economic deprivation in 1929 and onwards, the demands regarding tax rates, methods and payment capacity of the peasantry became a focus point in the connection between the state and society.

“Who Pays the Taxes, Only Those Who Earn Less and the Peasants”¹²⁶

As previously addressed, taxation of agricultural production, obviously, was the primary instrument in the hands of the government for increasing the state revenue. In political debates, this instrument and reflection of this implementation on the daily life were at the top of the political agenda, as well. Following the financial burden deepened and the first opposition attempt gained mass support shortly after the Global Depression, taxation of peasantry and the actual material conditions of peasants came into political debate, even within the ruling party. In the third Congress of CHF, for instance, Emin Bey, a deputy from Eskişehir, criticized the policies of the government by defending the peasantry’s interests like supporting the tax amnesties, shares his ideas about the effects of the taxes on the peasantry. According to him the total amount

¹²⁵ “Köylerde Tetkikler,” *Yeni Asır*, 09.12.1939.

¹²⁶ “Vergileri Kim Ödüyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 11.11.1932.

of the taxes collected from peasants did not seem to exceed 5-6 million liras. However, the reality was different. Because there were other financial burdens on peasants such as fees on salt and fees on customs, which made the charged amount of tax responsibility much more than the estimated amount. He criticized the implementation and stated that “we are adding the amount of the reduction we gained from the direct taxes on the indirect taxes.”¹²⁷ On the other hand, Hasan Bey, a deputy from Kars, defended that it was not the taxes itself which deteriorated the burden of peasants, but the developments which limited the financial capacity of peasants. To him, taxes are not heavy. Since peasants were paying the Land Tax for 5-6 years. But they had difficulty in the last 2 years due to the low prices of their productions.¹²⁸ This argument can be consistent to some extent. Because it is a fact that while the production volume of peasants was 10% higher in 1931 than that of the 1929, the income was almost one-third.¹²⁹ Unsurprisingly, the budget revenues also dropped drastically. This led to the introduction of new taxes. The Economic Depression Tax, *İktisadi Buhran Vergisi*, and the Equalization Tax, *Muvazene Vergisi*, were levied by the government in 1931 and 1932.¹³⁰ But it should be noted that these taxes were collected from the wages and salaries rather than the agricultural segment.

When the conditions indicated this kind of squeezing in agricultural sector due to the heavy taxes, society became more demanding and open to connection with the state authorities who were related to tax related issues. Complaints about taxation arose

¹²⁷ Kuruç, *Belgelerle Türkiye İktisat Politikası*, p. 151.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹²⁹ Yenal, *Cumhuriyet'in İktisat Tarihi*, p. 76.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

from society via letters and petitions. In Izmir, *Yeni Asır* newspaper, which was at the opposing view of the economic policies of the ruling party and a manifested supporter of the more liberal economic views and SCF, gave place to these complaints frequently. Those who examine these complaints can coincide with three major bases related to the taxation procedures in the early years of the Republic in Izmir. Not surprisingly, the first one is that the taxes were heavy for peasants. The second one is that peasants believed that the taxation policies of the state were blind to pay regard to fairness and balance among society. The third complaints about the state's inability to arrange the tax rates according to the current conditions. While peasants sent their complaints, they also demanded from the authorities. These demands can be analyzed in two categories. The first group of demands is more urgent and more palliative demands such as tax amnesties and discounts on tax debt. The second group consisted of more fundamental requests; they targeted the taxation policy of the state itself. In short, the title of an article which was penned in 1933 by a local journalist clearly demonstrates the expectation of peasants. It says: "The Republic should launch the period of 'giving' to the peasantry, anymore."¹³¹ As regards to tone of the peasants in these complaints, Metinsoy who analyzed several petition and letters of peasants from the different regions of the Anatolia states that:¹³²

Rather than using anti-government or seditious language, the peasants generally grafted their opinion on to the official discourse by *praising the new regime* in order to present their demands and complaints as legitimate and to invite the leaders to live up to their commitments and the RPP's principle of populism.

¹³¹ "Köylüye Vermek Devri Artık Açılmalıdır," *Yeni Asır*, 12.01.1933.

¹³² Metinsoy, *Negotiating the Price*, p. 94.

An article which was titled as “Who pays the taxes?” is a typical example to see peasant’s perception about the unfairness in the taxation practices of the Republican regime. According to this article, reductions in some taxes like livestock tax was an essential step for the improvement of the peasants’ financial conditions, but the main issue was not the amount of the taxes. The main issue was the unfair sharing of taxes in society. The article defended that the duty of filling the state budget belonged to the peasants. Unsurprisingly, all the land and livestock taxes were paid by the peasants, but also other payments such as duties on customs, monopolies and consumption taxes were also paid by peasants.¹³³

In another example, the state was alleged for being indifferent to the destructive impact of the Depression on the financial capacity on peasants. According to peasants, tax assessments were calculated wrongly. Even though the peasants earned less than in previous years, the tax assessments remain the same as the previous years. Furthermore, the amount of the taxes did not match up with the real value of the items. This was another point of the critiques from the society. For example, the livestock tax of a goat was 50 *kuruş*, while the total value of it was the same today.¹³⁴

Unfairness issues continued in collection of the Road Tax, as well. Since it was collected as the same amount from the people without making a distinction between poor and wealthy people. In other words, it was an unfair policy to collect the same amount for individuals with 100.000 lira wealth and a worker or peasant who could

¹³³ “Vergileri Kim Ödüyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 11.11.1932.

¹³⁴ “Köylüye Vermek Devri Artık Açılmalıdır,” *Yeni Asır*, 03.04.1931.

not afford a bite of bread. So, it damaged the justice of taxation. The governor of Izmir, *Vali Paşa*, should have conveyed this demand of justice to the National Assembly.¹³⁵ Upon this demand, the local officials including the provincial treasurer, local manager of the revenue and other officials from the finance offices hold a meeting to discuss and prepare a report about this unfair and primitive tax law. This example shows that it is a clear fact that the amount of the taxes was unaffordable for peasants in the economic conditions of the country and, specifically in the region. In Izmir, there were almost 5000 taxpayers who could not pay the Road Tax and were sent to constructions in 1931.¹³⁶ However, this perception is not limited with the heaviness of the taxes, and it also demonstrates that in societal level, the socio-economic classes and unfair implementations among these classes were concrete issues in public debates, despite the Republican regime strongly claimed that Turkish Republic is a classless society comprised of different professions, rather than classes. Also, it depicts that poor peasants' perception about the Republican regime's stand in terms of which segment of the society was favored in economic policies and it might be useful for understanding agricultural/industry or peasant/workers dichotomies in the formative years of the Turkish Republic.

In addition to the letters and articles in newspapers, personal petitions were also another instrument for conveying personal sufferings regarding the taxation by peasants. Even at the time of war, petitioning as a form of tool to inform the authorities about their problems and demand solutions for these problems was used by different

¹³⁵ "Yol Vergisi Haksızlık," *Yeni Asır*, 01.11.1931.

¹³⁶ "Yol Parası," *Yeni Asır*, 01.11.1931.

social and economic status. Therefore, in the formative years of the Turkish Republic, this practice continued. In 1933, according to a petition which was sent from Izmir to the petition commission of the GNA, there was a demand from a person for a solution to a 4-year tax debt due to the Road Tax. Şamil Efendi penned a petition to commission and explained his conditions. Şamil Efendi came from East, *Şark* provinces and made his own shed on their own. And he did not have any capability to pay the taxes, so he asked for mercy for Road payment. However, this request was declined by the commission. Because there was not any reason to be exempted from this obligation.

¹³⁷ The case of Şamil Efendi displays how complicated the socio-economic status of that period, being an immigrant and a taxpayer with difficulties in tax paying at the same time demonstrates the intertwined identities with their own complications.

Three years after this petition, Road Tax was still on the political agenda of the politicians. In the CHF's provincial congresses organized in 1936, there were still demands from the society and conveyed to the local authorities to be sent to the center of the ruling party. The requests sent from Izmir were the necessity of a reassessment of Road Tax in accordance with people's income and also remission of the tax debt left from the previous years.¹³⁸

In the other side of the taxation practices, there was the Turkish state with an enormous need of revenue for budget making. As mentioned before, the debate about the rearrangements of the tax system and the discount on the taxes was always on the

¹³⁷ TBMM, Arzuhal Encümeni Haftalık Karar Cetveli, 25.11. 1933, p. 29. <https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/handle/11543/2647>

¹³⁸ CHP 28/12/936 Tarihinde Toplanan Vilâyet Kongresi Zabıtnamesi, (İzmir: Anadolu Matbaası, 1937), p. 139-148.

political agenda. Most of the political figures were aware of the harsh realities of taxation policies on the living and producing capacity of the peasants. Those who aimed to understand to what extent this awareness reflected on the policies might not find an exact response. On the other hand, those who examine the government programmes during that period, fourth in 1930 and fifth in 1931 İnönü governments, can probably see that there was a specific emphasis on the taxes, especially the taxes on the peasantry. İsmet İnönü declared that the government is aware of the particular difficulties experienced by the agricultural producers and added the projected attempts regarding taxation policies. According to programme: i. Methods to calculate the value of the Land Tax were to be renovated. ii. Taxes of lands without income, marshes and shrubberies were to be discounted. iii. Those who cultivated forests, vineyards and fruit trees were to be exempted from the tax for a long time. iv. Livestock Tax was to be rearranged by considering the balance between income and tax assessment. If the current prices damage the balance between income and the tax, the tax will be rearranged.¹³⁹

As these demands arose, the government enacted renovations on tax rates. For example, tax rates on livestock in 1931 and 1932 were reduced.¹⁴⁰ In the table 3, it can be seen the reduce of the livestock tax per animal within years.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ İsmail Arar, *Hükümet Programları*, (İstanbul: Burçak Yayınevi, 1968), p. 57-58.

¹⁴⁰ Metinsoy, *Negotiating the Price*, p. 96.

¹⁴¹ Ali Rıza Gönüllü, "Milli Mücadele Ve Cumhuriyet Döneminde Hayvanlar Vergisi (1920-1962)," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1, (38), p. 69-102.

Table 3. Livestock Tax in Years¹⁴²

	1924	1926	1929	1931	1936	1938
Sheep	23	30	60	60	40	40
Hair Goat	23	30	60	60	40	40
Angora Goat	20	25	50	40	30	25
Camel	100	150	230	200	100	100
Pig	200	200	350	350	100	100

Source: Ali Rıza Gönüllü, “Milli Mücadele Ve Cumhuriyet Döneminde Hayvanlar Vergisi (1920-1962),” *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, p. 84-85

Tax amnesty was another major demand from peasants. With the law of 2566, the law of the liquidation of arrears of some taxes, *vergi bakayasının tasfiyesine dair kanun*, which was enacted in 1934, some debts were erased.¹⁴³ As the most devastating taxes on agricultural segment, the land and livestock taxes were one of these taxes. According to law, some arrears of these two taxes were erased. On the other hand, after two years of this liquidation, which was a kind of amnesty with specific conditions, the provincial party congress of CHF in Izmir demanded an amnesty for land tax debt in 1936.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, it can be concluded that the tax debt issue became an unresolvable social phenomenon. On the other hand, in 1939, another law was enacted with the number of 3586 namely the law of the cancellation of arrears of land tax until the end of the 1935 fiscal year, *arazi vergisinin 1935 malî yılı sonuna kadar*

¹⁴² The table was prepared and summarized by the author.

¹⁴³ Vergi Bakayasının Tasfiyesine Dair Kanun. No.2566, Date. 04.07.1935, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/2750.pdf>, p. 4126.

¹⁴⁴ CHP 28/12/936 Tarihinde Toplanan Vilâyet Kongresi Zabıtnamesi (İzmir: Anadolu Matbaası, 1937), p. 253.

olan bakayasının terkinine dair kanun. The law imposed that the Land Tax debt and fines which were assessed until the end of 1935 and not paid would be erased. ¹⁴⁵

Whether these reforms or rearrangements were able to change the financial capabilities of the peasantry who was squeezed by the heavy taxes and whether the peasants' pressure over the state was able to change the entire taxation system/policies in the agricultural segment completely in favour of agricultural segment could be answered by checking the rural conditions of the country. Even at the end of the 1930s, it cannot be seen a visible improvement in the countryside of the country. The tax liquidations initiated by the state in the middle and late 1930s, in fact, might demonstrate that how the setbacks which started at the end of the 1920s in the agricultural segment deteriorated ability of peasantry to pay their taxes and how these setbacks accumulated in ten years. At this point, it should be noted that the indebtedness of the peasants, to state, to bank or individual credit providers, in 1930s, became a social, economic, and political issue because of this destruction on the balance of payment capacity.

As regards the relation between the state and peasants in this ground based on taxes, tax burden was the fact of the rural poor. The tax policies of the Turkish state were the focus of critiques by peasants. Petitions and letters penned to authorities to reflect their demands were the major tools of peasants. Moreover, the unequal distribution of the tax obligations among the social groups and unfunctional mechanisms of tax assessments were seen as the source of the problem by peasants. However, as the executive of this unfunctional mechanism, the state and its officials were the only

¹⁴⁵ Arazi Vergisinin 1935 Mali Yılı Sonuna Kadar Olan Bakayasının Terkinine Dair Kanun. No. 3586, Date.07.11.1939.
https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc019/kanuntbmmc019/kanuntbmmc01903586.pdf

authority to apply and to demand individually rather than collective action. On the other hand, the government, which was already in search of fiscal policy for agricultural segment, made attempts to solve the problems which were experienced by the peasantry in terms of tax rates and tax collection in rural areas. Therefore, even though, these initiatives were mostly designed to solve daily and urgent needs rather than structural reforms for tax burden on the agricultural sector, it can be said that the Turkish state was not indifferent to the demands of the society.

2.3.3. Indebtedness in the Agricultural Sector

While sharp drops in agricultural prices and heavy taxes which exceeds the peasant's payment capacity were the harsh realities in the early years of the Turkish Republic in terms of agricultural segment, inevitable consequences were indebtedness and usurers, *murabahacı*. To begin with, it should be addressed the indebtedness reality of peasants after the Great Depression in 1929. When the objective conditions of the Turkish peasantry are considered, peasants needed for money for two reasons. The first reason was the lack of capital in the agricultural segment. The structure of the peasantry, during the formative years of the Republic, was not capable of obtaining the production inputs such as agricultural machinery, fertilizers, and seeds without borrowing money. For this reason, borrowing money was a routine part of the production process. Secondly, borrowing was a necessity so that peasants could continue to pay their payments such as taxes.

A contemporary expert, Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu explained the relation between the capital and the agricultural production in the country, the capital was an issue for the

current structure of agricultural production at that period. He stated that “agricultural production had been working on with a limited amount of capital. The primary role in agricultural production was nature. The business was holding second place. While the place of capital was third.”¹⁴⁶ Therefore, it is possible to say that there was a lack of capital in the agricultural segment during that period. Actually, when the agricultural prices were at a satisfactory level, the flow of capital to production started with the purpose of establishing new firms or renovating and organizing old ones. For example, thanks to the capital, there was an improvement in terms of cultivation of cotton and tobacco in Adana and Izmir region during that period. The Depression also hit this capital flow to the agricultural segment. In addition to this pause in capital flowing, the previously invested money was also withdrawn from the sector. The withdrawal of the capital from the sector caused the peasants to melt their own capital.¹⁴⁷

The stopping of capital from flowing to production caused a credit crisis. As a matter of fact, those who looked at the existing credit mechanism at that time could see that the credit mechanism was very primitive. Peasants had borrowed money and repaid it at the time of payment. The borrowed money was not used for establishing an agricultural business or improvement of the business. On the contrary, the mechanism worked within the limits of the borrowing and repaying the money. Here, it should be noted that the reason behind the borrowing money was generally for meeting an urgent need. The peasants borrowed loans to pay debt and taxes to the state, when the crop yield was not decent, and to meet an urgent need. In short, most of the credit was used

¹⁴⁶ Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 89.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

for consumption rather than any investment in the agricultural business and Turkish peasants were living with loan which was taken and paid annually.¹⁴⁸ Even worse, this primitive running of the money borrowing became much poorer with the impact of Great Depression and the mechanism totally collapsed due to the decrease in repayment of credits. Since, most of peasants could not pay their debts. In the meeting of the Budget Law in 1931, Enver Bey, a Balıkesir deputy, described this debt crisis among the producers as follows: that “Look at the producers. They are in a debt spiral. Debt and debt interest have been loading on the debt for years. By borrowing and paying the debt, their debt is growing like an avalanche.”¹⁴⁹

The political, economic, and social reflection of collapse in credit providing system was noticeable. That is to say, at the economic level, it caused a disruption of the maintenance of production. Politically speaking, Agricultural Bank became a matter of political debate due to the critiques towards its operational incapability in providing credit to agricultural sector. The impact on the social level is it caused a serious usuriousness, *murabahacılık*, issue in society which was the result of incapacity of the state institutions such as Agricultural Bank. In the next section, the issues around the indebtedness in the rural side of Izmir will be explained by asking the how the peasant located the state and the state policies in these issues.

¹⁴⁸ Hatipođlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 89.

¹⁴⁹ Kuruç, *Belgelerle Türkiye İktisat Politikası*, p. 172.

“Again, Farmers are at the Hands of Usurers”¹⁵⁰

There were three ways of getting credit used by peasants in the early years of the Turkish Republic namely Agricultural Bank, some private institutions and individual credit providers. Despite the Agricultural Bank being the specific institution to meet the credit needs of the agricultural sector, the capital of the Bank was not sufficient to meet the credit needs. In addition to this incapacity, when repayment rate of the credit to the Bank decreased, the Bank restricted the credit amounts and also aggravated the conditions.¹⁵¹ The complaints about the Bank were prevalent among society. In the third Congress of the CHF, Vasıf Bey, an Izmir deputy, explain the conditions that “wherever we went, when we asked what the complaints were, it was the Agricultural Bank which collected most of the complaints.”¹⁵² The gap was filled by individuals. For this reason, individual credit providers became more available and inevitable actors in the loaning process of peasants. The individual credit worked in two ways. The first one is purchase on credit. In this system, peasants were making purchase all the annual necessities from merchants with interest rates in towns or cities, which could not be paid in cash. Peasants paid debt to merchants at the time of harvest with their products, but from the merchant’s prices. In addition to low prices, merchants also manipulated peasants by under assessment of the products. So, the debt became a deadlock which devolved on the next year and never ended. The second way, on the

¹⁵⁰ “Çiftçi Yine Murabahacının Elinde Kalıyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 02.07.1931.

¹⁵¹ Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 90.

¹⁵² Kuruç, *Belgelerle Türkiye İktisat Politikası*, p. 143.

other hand, was directly money providers rather than in kind loaning. These are the typical usurers, and they were the disruptive ones.¹⁵³

As an institution which was devoted to the agricultural sector specifically, the role of the Agricultural Bank should be addressed in this issue. It is an obvious fact that the scarcity of credit sources was strongly related to the economic conditions of the bank and low repayment capacity of peasants. In fact, according to the report written by the Agricultural Bank in 1935 namely Turkey Agricultural Bank: A General Report on the Accounting Period, *Türkiye Ziraat Bankası: 46 ıncı Hesap Devresine Ait Umumi Rapor*, the reason for the minimizing the credit sources to peasants was related to the fact that the Bank could not collect the payments from the peasants. The Bank was able to collect only 39.26% of the total debt in 1933. This amount included all the forms of repayment such as cash, in product or renewing of the bill.¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, distribution of credit resources by the Bank was also an issue in this controversial issue. Because even though the bank was the main responsible body for providing the credits to the agricultural sector, the main clients of the Bank were merchants rather than the producers during the 1920s and 1930s due to the low interest rates in agricultural credit. It is also possible to say that the Bank minimized the agricultural credit to make more profit. In between 1923 and 1940, almost 60 and 80% of the total amount of the credit provided by Agricultural Bank was commercial credit.¹⁵⁵ According to Tezel, the credits which were marked as agricultural credit were mostly

¹⁵³ Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 90.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 94-95.

¹⁵⁵ Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin*, p. 493.

granted to the big landowners, who were merchants at the same time, and they mostly supported their trade business.¹⁵⁶ As Keyder noted, the picture looked like as follows: “Agriculture did not receive a significant share of the total bank credit; close to nine-tenths of the credit disposed of by institutional loan suppliers was received by merchants.”¹⁵⁷ In the political sphere, the Bank was the target board, in a sense. Besim Atalay’s, a deputy in GNA, words about the issue clearly show how the Agricultural Bank’s position was evaluated in politics. He stated that “We called it Agricultural Bank, we robbed the *zürra*.... The title is Farmer Bank, but the farmer has never benefited from it. Search it and you will see that the people who have received money so far are the city-dwellers.”¹⁵⁸

In the absence of a well-organized and functioning credit providing system, despite peasants trying to find alternative ways to overcome the outcomes of this situation and solve credit needs, production was unable to escape from the setbacks. Peasants with none or limited capital could not maintain production. The first reason is that agricultural inputs such as seed could not be afforded by producers. To illustrate, a producer, *Süleyman oğlu Muharrem*, from the *Seydiköy*, could not obtain seed for the next harvest season because it seemed like he could not pay his debt.¹⁵⁹ In addition

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 493.

¹⁵⁷ Keyder, *The Definition of a Peripheral*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁸ Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin*, p. 493.

“Ziraat Bankası dedik zürraı soyduk.... Adı Çiftçi Bankası, fakat çiftçi katiyen bundan istifade etmemiştir. Tetkik ediniz, göreceksiniz ki şimdiye kadar para alanlar şehirlilerdir.”

¹⁵⁹ “Tohum İstiyorlar,” *Yeni Asır*, 28.12.1930.

to that, the indebtedness also affected production in a different way. Sequestration of the peasants' production means and production itself became the everyday reality of the agricultural segment. *Işık* newspaper, a supporter of SCF, demonstrates the situation as follows: Almost 90 % of peasants' land and property were sequestered or pledged in Izmir. Also, the production of peasants was under seize by creditors. Peasants did not have any assets to maintain their life. Moreover, if these assets were to be sold for a bargain price, peasants were to be homeless next year with debt. Most importantly, the author pointed out the usuriousness and defines the usurers as the owner of almost one million captives in Turkey at the twentieth century. Furthermore, the usury issue was defined as an administrative problem rather than individuals' problems. The author says the debts of peasants are not debts of Ahmet or Mehmet Ağa's anymore, it became an administrative problem. For this reason, the state should have intervened and regulated the relation between the creditors and peasants in debt via several financial regulations. In this way, peasants would begin to breathe like a free person who is loyal to party and government and would become a productive citizen. However, these are temporary precautions. The major point is that legal measures should be taken to prevent repeating these issues. For example, sequestration of the land and estates of peasants should be prevented, and cooperatives should be established. The article ended with a call to Prime Minister Paşa, İsmet İnönü, who had taken radical steps and brought revolutions to the country to do the same thing for peasant's debts.¹⁶⁰ These calls were able to reach the politicians and some steps were taken in favor of peasants in debt. In 1935 the Agricultural Bank accepted and implemented a new plan for agricultural debts and prepared a new five-year instalment

¹⁶⁰ "Köylü Nasıl Kurtarılabilir," *Işık*, 15.10.1932.

plan.¹⁶¹ In another example from *Torbali*, the Agricultural Bank seized a peasant's harvest without leaving a little amount for the household and animals' consumption. Moreover, all products were sent to the warehouses of the Bank in Izmir. Accordingly, the peasant asked, "what will we eat and what will our animals eat?"¹⁶² All in all, having been seized by the creditors, peasants found themselves in a vicious circle. On the one side, there was an accumulated debt burden, on the other side there was the fact that their production means which were essential to eliminate the debt such as lands or directly their products were captured.

While peasants were in struggle to keep their production means such as land and livestock and products at their hands and to clear their debt, due to the non-functioning and unorganized banking system, unofficial mechanisms of credit providing could take more place from this system. In practice, this situation means extremely high interest rates reality and dependency of the peasants to usurers with the exploitative interest rates. The abovementioned example from *Işık* newspaper in which usurers are defined as the owner of millions of captives clearly demonstrates to what extent the usuriousness was a severe problem. In fact, high interest rates were the destroyers of the agricultural segment. However, it should be indicated that the exorbitant rates were not only those of usurers. According to Murat Metinsoy's research on the official report of CHF, a peasant had to pay averagely 9-10% interest rate for loaning from bank, but there were other additional fees like commission. Therefore, the real rates equated with between 15 and 25 %. Also, interest of some local banks in Anatolia was

¹⁶¹ Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 95.

¹⁶² "Bir de Müstahsili Dinleyelim. Ziraat Bankası Köylüden Tahsilatını Nasıl Yapıyor," *Yeni Asır*, 19.08.1932.

35 % per year.¹⁶³ Complaints from peasants indicate that these rates were unaffordable for peasants. The following quotation clearly demonstrates how the Bank was criticized for neglecting its responsibility and also for its extortionate interest rates.

The expectation from the Bank was as follows:

“The interest rate should be 3 or 4. The Agricultural Bank should be Agricultural Bank, if it can accomplish, it can reduce the interest rate to 3 or 4. The Bank should totally withdraw from the commercial credit. The state should provide 100-million capital to the cooperatives.”

Indeed, these rates were not the worst ones. In the unofficial process of loaning, interest rates were variable according to region and individual. But it is a fact that when the farmers' financial circumstances deteriorated, their income dropped and they were in debt burden, the interest rates increased.¹⁶⁴ For example, in Tire, usurers charged interest between 5 % and 12 monthly, depending on the individual. Sometimes, they charged interest of 5% per week. A famous moneylender from Tire clarified this situation by saying that our one *kuruş* works for one para in a day. According to Tökin's calculation this means that while the regular interest rate was 9%, the interest rate of usurers was 900%.¹⁶⁵

In every step of the indebtedness and usuriousness issues in the agricultural society, especially after 1929, there was a role of the Agricultural Bank's, in a sense. As mentioned previously, the Bank was criticized by society and politicians due to providing credit to merchants rather than peasants. Individuals who could get credit

¹⁶³ Metinsoy, *Everyday Politics of Ordinary People*, p. 88.

¹⁶⁴ Hatipoğlu, *Türkiyede Ziraî Buhran*, p. 91.

¹⁶⁵ Tökin, *Türkiye Köy İktisadiyatı*, p. 146.

from the Bank, mostly merchants and big landowners, used these loans to provide credit to small producers with high interest rates.¹⁶⁶ In a sense, the Bank feeds the illegal mechanism of money borrowing while its duty was to fight with the usuriousness. Furthermore, another implementation of the Bank also pushed peasants into the hands of individual credit providers. Because small producers could not give enough personal guarantee for getting credit from banking system owing to the fact that most of peasants did not have a title deed due to the lack of land registry and cadaster.¹⁶⁷ According to the wish list, which was compiled by the local branches of CHF, the peasants demanded from the government to do more cadastral work in their villages or towns. For example, in 1936, peasants from Izmir region demanded a mobile deed officer from the government and registration transactions.¹⁶⁸

For the very reason of this problem, foundation of credit cooperatives was encouraged by the Turkish state with a new and easier guarantying methods for loaning such as joint surety, *zincirleme kefalet*. In 1929, the Turkish state enacted the law of 1470, which established the credit cooperatives with the aim of offering credit in a more affordable form.¹⁶⁹ The enactment of this new law, despite there was already a law which was regulate the small-sized and local agricultural credits enacted in 1924, indicates that the Turkish state reached the conclusion that this law did not perform its duty and there was a new organization in agricultural credit mechanism. On the other

¹⁶⁶ Metinsoy, *Everyday Politics of Ordinary People*, p. 86

¹⁶⁷ İbrahim İnci, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde Tarımsal Kredi Konusundaki Gelişmeler (1923-1938)," *SAÜ Fen Edebiyat Dergisi (2010-1)*, p. 103.

¹⁶⁸ CHP 1936 İl Kongre Dilekleri, Ankara, p. 255.

¹⁶⁹ Varlık, *1930-1940 Yılları Arasında*, p. 105.

hand, the intervention of the Turkish state to the credit related problems by establishing credit cooperatives in country did not solve the problem completely. According to Tökin's observations, similarly with the abuse in banking system, cooperatives were also captured by some merchants and usurers. They became members of administration boards and benefited from cooperatives in their favor.¹⁷⁰ According to the wish list of Izmir district, there were still demands from peasants who were in debt to cooperatives regarding the reorganization of their debt in 1936.¹⁷¹ Therefore, indebtedness issue continued even after some policies were initiated by the state.

In the Izmir press, usuriousness, *murabbahacılık*, was one of the main topics. While the articles and news defined this reality as a struggle between society and the usurers, the state was generally invited to solve the problem. The title of the article shows how important the society evaluates this situation, the title was "there is a need for wide and cheap credit to fight with the usurers." One of the suggestions from the press was involvement of another state institution. It was suggested that the Central Bank should provide more credit to the Banks.¹⁷² Actually, from the beginning of the economic crisis in the early 1930s, various articles can be seen in the press to call attention to this chaotic and ongoing reality of daily life with serious social outcomes. Even in 1938, after several precautions were taken, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, Izmir deputy, penned an article about this issue in *Yeni Asır* and defined a usurer as a threat to nation not only individuals. He stated:

¹⁷⁰ Tökin, *Türkiye Köy İktisadiyatı*, p. 150.

¹⁷¹ CHP 1936 İl Kongre Dilekleri, Ankara, p. 255.

¹⁷² "Tefecilerle Çarpışmak," *Yeni Asır*, 17.04.1933.

The usurer is an enemy of the Republic and the nation. The usurer is a robber with the money of the people. The usurer is a thief, and a bandit. He is a thief who waggles his arms around the city streets and wanders around the city parks. He is a bandit who gave epidemics to the cities. Hundreds of thousands of people are taking their last breaths under his feet.

Bozkurt also depicted the impact of this issue on the life of people. He underlined the fact that the usurers seized the assets of the people and pushed the next generations into nothingness. However, he also added that peasants had to do this. They went to usurers by accepting the results of this transaction because there was not any other chance.¹⁷³ Bozkurt continues by saying that we should be transparent about the problem to solve. He gives very tragic examples of people who lost everything to a usury and a young man who had to kill the usury.¹⁷⁴

A tobacco producer from Çeşme namely Necmettin, had to send an open letter to *Yeni Asır*. Actually, the letter was written to the manager of Izmir branch of Agricultural Bank and said that farmers are again in the hands of the usurers. According to Necmettin, despite the manager had made an announcement that 750 liras credit was to be paid to the partners of Çeşme Central Cooperative and this announcement was taken kindly by the farmers, the payment was not made to the partners of the cooperative after 15 days from announcement. Necmettin also warned the manager that unless the payment is not realized properly, peasants probably will fall into the hands of usurers.¹⁷⁵ Another open letter was written to the governor, *Vali Paşa*, from Çeşme and informed him about the delay in the formation of the Cooperative in

¹⁷³ “Ellerimiz Tefecilerin Yakasında,” *Yeni Asır*, 18.08.1938.

¹⁷⁴ “Ellerimiz Tefecilerin Yakasında,” *Yeni Asır*, 18.08.1938.

¹⁷⁵ “Çiftçi Yine Murabahacının Elinde Kalıyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 02.07.1931

Çeşme. Since, despite all the bureaucratic works done by partners of the Cooperative, the Agricultural Bank did not approve the foundation. But the situation is urgent. The only solution which could save peasants from usurers and eliminate the usuriousness issue was the foundation of the Çeşme Cooperative immediately. Because producers who pay 300 lira interest for 100 liras could not overcome this burden. ¹⁷⁶

Examples which were referred so far depict the social context in where the agricultural price crisis in agricultural segment, deterioration of the payment capacity of peasants and the absence of well-organized and functioning credit mechanism were overlapped. In this context, the Turkish state attempted to solve the issue by introducing different policies. The Law on the Affairs of Lending Money was enacted in 1933 in order to regulate the credit providers. With this legal regulation, the state aimed to keep the pressure on these providers by imposing clear borders. The first thing the law brought is that each credit provider had to get permission from the government to provide credit. The second thing is that the law fixed a maximum interest rate as 12%. Besides, those who provide credit without an official permit and exceed the interest rates were to be sentenced to monetary fine and most importantly sentenced to imprisonment. ¹⁷⁷ But in practice, the above-mentioned examples in terms of the interest rates show that the rates could not be decreased, and dominance of the unofficial credit providers could not be demolished.

¹⁷⁷ Ödünç Para Verme İşleri Kanunu, No. 2279, Date. 08.06.1933.
https://www.kanunum.com/file/cid2028_fc_fid7334

At this point, the relation between the drop in agricultural prices, indebtedness, and usuriousness should be emphasized in order to understand the effect of this relation to Izmir's socio-economic context. That the departing point of this issue is the radical drop in agricultural prices which intensified the rural deprivation and made the position of Izmir and its hinterland more critical. As one of the main producing and exporting points of some agricultural items such as tobacco and grape, one of the most affected products in this decline, more credit was needed by the producers in Izmir and its inlands. As the necessity and search of credit increased and met with the absence of well-organized and well-functioning credit providing mechanism, this reality turned into social crisis, which is indebtedness and usuriousness, *murabacılık*. On the other hand, it should also be underlined that the state and its inabilities became the target of criticisms among peasants and also local political figures such as publicist in local press in managing the economic and indebtedness crisis and planning and executing the proper economic policies in favor of agricultural segment. The state was still pointed out as the force to find a solution. In this direction, the expected move from the state was more intervention to the credit providing system by monopolizing the right to give permission to be an individual creditor, regulating interest rates and introducing more accessible credit institutions for small peasantry like credit cooperatives. However, that unending debt and usury agenda in the city shows that these intervention attempts could not overcome the dominance of unofficial credit mechanism in practice.

2.4. Conclusion

Based on the local sources, this chapter demonstrates three major contexts of the agricultural segment in Izmir and its hinterland during the formative years of the Turkish Republic which are agricultural prices, taxation, and the indebtedness realities. With a specific emphasis on the idea of these three contexts are the most explanatory grounds to understand the societal dimension of the early Republican Turkey and the interaction between the state and society in Izmir, this chapter underlines the flexible positions which can change according to the material realities of the socio-economic context rather than politically driven intentions in terms of the interaction between the state and society. More clearly, when the socio-economic realities in the everyday life like when the foreign companies abuse agricultural producers by imposing low prices or high interest rates crushed the small peasantry, state institutions and state sanctions were invited to intervene in the agricultural production relations, which can be summarized as a selective invitation of the state to intervention in the economy.

Given the well-known image of Izmir as the supporter of opposition in politics of the early Republican Turkey, it might be concluded that those who suffered from the economic policies of the Turkish state and did not approve the state's role in economy canalized their political and mass support to SCF due to new party's critical position about the state's presence in economy. However, examples which this research provide reveal that when the economic parameters indicate an economic crisis with a risk of turning into a social crisis, the state agencies, in a form of new institution or a new law which were designed according to problem were called to intervene in economy as the protector of the people, as the organizer of the market and as the solver of the problems.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIMITS OF THE GRAND NARRATIVE OF DEMOGRAPHIC HOMOGENIZATION: THE SETTLEMENT IN THE EVERYDAY LIFE IN IZMIR

The Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish nationals in Greece and Turkey was signed in Lausanne on January 30, 1923. According to the first article of the Convention:

As from the 1st of May 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory.¹⁷⁸

With this article, millions of people became officially refugees in the coming years and both two states and societies experienced a massive transformation. The exchange involved relocation of nearly 1.5 million people. As indicated in the third article, the Greeks and the Muslims who moved from their territories during the Balkan Wars were also considered as the subject of exchange. Article 3 of the Convention states:

Those Greeks and Moslems who have already, and since the 18th of October 1912, left the territories the Greek and Turkish inhabitants of which are to be respectively exchanged, shall be considered as included in the exchange provided for in Article 1.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ https://www.mfa.gov.tr/lausanne-peace-treaty-vi_-convention-concerning-the-exchange-of-greek-and-turkish-populations-signed-at-lausanne_.en.mfa

¹⁷⁹ https://www.mfa.gov.tr/lausanne-peace-treaty-vi_-convention-concerning-the-exchange-of-greek-and-turkish-populations-signed-at-lausanne_.en.mfa

Such an enormous event can be analyzed with different stresses on distinct aspects of it. The literature usually reads this event as the last move of a macro project with highly motivated ideological expectations. Demographically speaking, the Convention was the last phase of this project which is Turkification. However, by Turkification, it can be understood that a wide scope of policies which were designed to impose Turkish ethnic identity as the hegemonic identity in every sphere of social life.¹⁸⁰ The scope of the implementation of Turkification policies was broad. Almost every sphere of daily life from education to working life was the target of this motivation. For example, the campaign of “Citizen, Speak Turkish” is a pretty telling example to see the Turkification policies in practice and to see also the aspects of the nation building process of Turkey. This campaign was organized in 1928 by the Law Faculty Students’ Association of Istanbul University.¹⁸¹ The campaign was supported by the state and continued in the 1930s. The motive of the campaign was to spread of the Turkish language and to prevent the usage of native languages of minorities, and finally to eradicate the presence of non-Turkish languages. In economic sphere, the reflection of this project was an intention to discourage the economic activities of non-Muslim minorities. The Turkish State imposed some measures to foreign companies like forcing them to keep their books in Turkish and employing Muslim Turks rather than non-Muslims in 1920s. But, with the law of Restricting certain Professions and Trades to Turkish Citizens only in 1932, the economic and working spheres of life became

¹⁸⁰ Ayhan Aktar, “Homogenizing the Nation, Turkifying the Economy: Turkish Experience of Population Exchange Reconsidered” in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, ed. Renee Hirschon (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), p. 29.

¹⁸¹ Senem Aslan, “‘Citizen, Speak Turkish!’: A Nation in the Making,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 13, no. 2 (2007), p. 250.

legally center of the Turkification policies. This law imposes restrictions over some professions and open these professions to only Turkish citizens such as barbering, being workers on some industries, being a waiter, being a veterinary and being a chemist and so on.¹⁸² In addition to social and economic sphere, the most compelling sphere for the state and most painful sphere for people was the demographic phase of Turkification, but the most essential stage of the process. Settlement policies were the way of practicing the Turkification ideal of the Republican regime in demographic manners. With different official and unofficial implementations, Turkish state aimed to define and limit the borders of citizenship. To be able to transform of population within these limits which is projected by the Republican cadres, the population exchange was crucial. Izmir, as one of the major regions with a population to be exchanged, experienced the repercussion of this move intensely. In this chapter, daily reflections of this comprehensive and ideological move of the Turkish Republic will be the focus. The departing point of selection of this focus rather than high politics of the demographic Turkification is that the archival investigation of this research presented that the settlement and settlement related circumstances were crucial elements in the daily life of the people until 1940s. Whereas, most of the studies regarding the population exchange/settlement issues ignored the major setbacks in the realization of the process. On the other hand, those who follow the local resources of that time might clearly observe that the process produced several setbacks in practice. The departure point of this chapter is reflecting the real-life experiences of ordinary people who were the subjects of the nation-state's homogenization or Turkification ideal. In short, this chapter seeks an answer to what can be said about the life of these

¹⁸² Türkiye'de Türk Vatandaşlarına Tahsis Edilen Sanat ve Hizmetler Hakkında Kanun, No. 2007, Date. 11.06.1932, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/2126.pdf>, p. 1564.

people after they migrated or were forced to migrate to Izmir, the center of the exchange.

In his significant research about the population exchange, Onur Yıldırım explicitly explains the point of this research. Yıldırım states “Where refugees figured in the picture, they were studied not on their behalf but due to the importance of their activities to the cause of the political agency, namely the nation-state.”¹⁸³ Izmir case is an exact example of this kind of approach. The demographic transformation in the very early years of the Republic is usually pointed out as the final stage of the history of Izmir. Because it is generally believed that the Turkification project of the Turkish nation-state was completed by relocating thousands of people. In societal level, the picture was different and the reflections of the process in the daily life had just begun. The most crucial stage of the Turkish nation state’s macro plan turned into a sphere of society to struggle over the distribution of the source of income and struggle of mostly poor peasants over the resources such as abandoned properties or lands. These struggles also were the meeting grounds of the interactions of the state and society, and also grounds of the interactions among the society.

So far, very little attention has been given to these societal aspects of the last stage of the Turkification of demography. To date, only a limited number of accounts focus on how the demographic transformation, specifically the population exchange was experienced by people in practice rather than following the bureaucratic steps. Ellinor Morack’s study is one of the primary accounts which goes beyond the classical

¹⁸³ Onur Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations, 1922–1934*, (New York & London: Routledge, 2006), p. 16.

understanding of the literature which evaluates the Turkification process as a way of capital/wealth transformation and enrichment of the Muslim middle class or business class. Because the Turkification process and the departure of the Greeks and Armenians were generally seen as the loss for the most useful labor and business know-how for the country. With this article, Morack underlines that not the wealth but also the poverty of the poor classes was Turkified.¹⁸⁴ To me, this article spreads the envisagement regarding impacts of a very extensive ideological ideal such as Turkification on unpredicted areas of daily life. Based on the case of bread issue in the city, Morack discusses the loss of non-Muslim population and the effects of this to the emergence and expansion of the bread question in 1924 and 1926. Again, Morack's other comprehensive research on the population exchange presents cases from society, while it discusses the legal frame of the exchange. Focusing on the abandoned property issue of the population exchange, Morack presents reflections of the legal process in the life of the people.¹⁸⁵

Before passing to the findings of this research, it should be emphasized two things to provide more explicit understanding of the cases. First one is that what was the goal of the newly founded Turkish state by realizing the population exchange and secondly, what was the socio-economic conditions in Izmir before and during this massive migration was occurring.

¹⁸⁴ Ellinor Morack, "Turkifying Poverty, or: the Phantom Pain of Izmir's Lost Christian Working Class, 1924–26," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 55:4, p. 499.

¹⁸⁵ Ellinor Morack, *The Dowry of the State? The Politics of Abandoned Property and the Population Exchange in Turkey, 1921–1945*, (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2017).

3.1. Settlement Policies and the Crisis of Izmir Prior to the Population

Exchange

Prior to the Population Exchange in 1924, there were a substantial number of official and unofficial attempts of relocation of inhabitants of a specific region in the country. Having inherited the late 19th century's policies about interventions to demography, the newly founded Turkish state continued to benefit from migration and settlement as the ways of designing the demography. In addition to the exchange of Anatolian Greeks with the Muslims of Greece after the War of Independence, the inner inhabitants of the country such as nomadic tribes and rebellious groups in Eastern regions were also subject to interventions with the Settlement Laws of 1926 and 1934. In other words, in the nation-shaping aims of the Turkish Republic, settlement was a key instrument. Basically, the desire of the Turkish state from the settlement policies were constructing culturally and linguistically homogenous nation by locating strategies to distribute the people into the different areas of the country according to their ethnic and linguistic identities.

Turkification of some specific regions like Izmir with a significant amount of non-Muslim population and experienced an occupation and fire had unique outcomes, mostly setbacks. When the effects of already started demographic movements of the non-Muslim inhabitants in Western Anatolia before the population exchange and the flow of thousands of people to Anatolia with the population exchange was overlapped, Izmir turned into a place of several crisis like housing and production. Since as the executer and the regulator of this migration, the Turkish state's organization was

insufficient. As can be said before, the demographic movements and changes had already taken place in Izmir before the signing of the Convention in 1924.

Change of demography in Western Anatolia can be analyzed in four stages. The first stage is the period between 1913 and 1914. In that period, the Greek inhabitants of the Western Anatolia including Izmir and its inland were forced to migrate with different methods such as violence, economic boycotts and settling new inhabitants to the neighborhoods of the Greek inhabitants.¹⁸⁶ During that period, almost 100.000 refugees, *muhacir*, were settled in Izmir, while the numbers of the outgoing Greeks were 98.552.¹⁸⁷ The second stage can be marked between 1915 and 1918. In that period, the Greek inhabitants of the Western Coast of the Anatolia were forced to move to the inner parts of Anatolia. In the third stage, the Greek Occupation of Izmir caused the Turks living in the Western Coast to migrate.¹⁸⁸ According to the reports, almost 120.000 refugee had to migrate.¹⁸⁹ By October 1919, almost 30% of the total Turk population had to migrate due to pressure of the Greek Army.¹⁹⁰ The fourth stage started in the last days of the War of Independence and the start of the Fire in 1922. When the Turkish Army recaptured the city, the local Greek inhabitants of the region

¹⁸⁶ Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi: İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), p. 197-211.

¹⁸⁷ Engin Berber, *Sancılı Yıllar: İzmir 1918-1922: Mütareke ve Yunan İşgali Döneminde İzmir Sancağı*, (Ankara: Ayraç Yayınları, 1997), p. 58.

¹⁸⁸ Mesut Çapa, "Anadolu'da Yunan İşgalinin Sebep Olduğu İç Göçler," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* X, no. (1994), p. 379.

¹⁸⁹ Hatice Yıldırım, *Mütareke Döneminde Göç ve İskân (1918-1923)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2020), p. 16.

¹⁹⁰ Berber, *Sancılı Yıllar*, p. 59.

fled to the coast. They were waiting to go to the Aegean Islands and Greece to avoid a potential revenge of Turks.¹⁹¹

Experiencing these massive population movements, the city's demographic structure had changed in many aspects. Numerically speaking, while Izmir's population in 1912 was almost 300.000, in 1927 it decreased to 154.000. Further, in terms of social and economic fabric of the population, almost 50% of the total exchangees who were sent to Greece were urban based residents with professionals and artisans rather than agricultural producers. On the other hand, most of the incoming were from the rural segment who were agricultural producers.¹⁹² Therefore, turbulence might be the most matching term to explain the demographic structure in Izmir in the period between mid 1910s and until the population exchange.

In the eve of the population exchange's official start, Izmir was experiencing a kind of chaos. Following the victory of Turkish Army and the Great Fire, city, and its inlands of it were totally destructed and most of the Greek inhabitants of the city were on move to leave the city. In addition to these developments, the abandoned property of the leavers became a target for many people. When this target and the insufficient control of the authorities to ensure security combined, the term of chaos became the reality for that period. In more detail, Kemal Arı describes the conditions, of Izmir after the victory of Turkish Army as follows:

After the victory, Izmir became a city of immigrants and refugees due to internal and external migrations. Being a trade and production city until

¹⁹¹ Arı, *Suyun İki Yanı: Mübadele*, p. 35.

¹⁹² Biray Kolluoğlu, "Excesses of nationalism: Greco-Turkish population exchange," *Nations and Nationalism*, 19(3), 2013, p. 540.

recently, having fertile lands and especially the excitement of getting a share from the abandoned properties which were left by the Greeks, started an intense migration campaign towards Izmir.¹⁹³

Therefore, even very before from the start of a massive migration flow from Greece, the city was totally suffering from the effects of fire and effects of domestic migration to reach the abandoned properties, and absence of an authority to provide stability. These chaotic conditions, which had already been on the surface, were to be the foundations of serious problems in the settlement process.

At this stage, it is essential to identify the groups of people in the city at that time, which is prior to the Exchange. While Muslims who fled from Greece were waiting to arrive in Izmir even before exchange's start, there were various groups of people in city with different reasons being in Izmir. The first reason is the domestic migrations to Izmir from different parts of the country because of the expectation to reach better living conditions. For example, according to news from *Ahenk* newspaper, there were people in Izmir who came from Konya to find a better life conditions.¹⁹⁴ The other group was the old inhabitants of Izmir, who had previously fled from Greeks to the inner sides of Anatolia, and they were returning to Izmir after the occupation ended. Inhabitants of the inner part of the Western Anatolia who were damaged by the Fire were also migrating to Izmir. Looking at this demographic mobility, it can be said that prior to the population exchange and the settlement process, demographic movements were already existing in Izmir. Those who look at the status of the people in Izmir at

¹⁹³ Arı, *Suyun İki Yanı: Mübadele*, p. 37.

¹⁹⁴ *Ahenk*, 16.07.1339.

that period can clearly understand the complicated conditions. These statuses are the victims of the Fire, *harikzedes*, victims of the disaster/war, *felaketzedes* and the refugees, *mülteci*. Some resources show these numbers as follows: There were 20.000 victims of the disaster/war *felaketzede* in Izmir in 1924, 3773 victims of the Fire, *harikzede* and 1931 refugee, *mülteci* in Izmir. ¹⁹⁵

In addition to the city's chaotic demographic structure, there was another major factor in the city which accelerated disorder. The abandoned property issue was at the top of the city's agenda. In such a context where there was a limited state control over the administration, the looting became one of the major troubles in the city.

The debates of politicians in the parliament about the developments in Izmir are very telling about the picture of Izmir which mentioned as a chaotic situation previously. Salih Efendi, a deputy of Erzurum addressed a question to Hasan Fehmi Bey, the Minister of Finance about the looting in Izmir. He asked that "Efendim, who stole all that money? Four refugees? So much has been looted, who is this doing this?" Further, another deputy from Mardin İbrahim Bey also asked the following question:

We heard that many officers and army commanders participated in the plunder of Izmir. Is this real? Is it true that the Commander of the First Army took all the cash and goods and distributed many of them. Is this real? How much is that cash? Then, many of our deputies entered the houses with their furniture and they have been living in those houses until now, is this true? I am asking these.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Arı, *Suyun İki Yanı: Mübadele*, p. 39.

¹⁹⁶ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT03/gcz01003147.pdf>, p. 1134

Hasan Fehmi Bey replied to these questions with a shy tone and said that it is essential to identify the looters, but it is impossible. But he accepted that there were all kinds of people who participated in looting. Besides, the housing crisis was also on the agenda of political debate. The minister explained the situation as follows: “Izmir burned, almost 20.000 houses. A housing crisis began in the city. Everyone who entered the city including officials, army and even those from refugees from Manisa, Salihli and Kasaba had to find a place to live.”¹⁹⁷ Therefore, it is obvious that properties which were identified as the settlement place of the Muslims who came from Greece as exchangees, *mübadil*, were already under the occupation of some other groups of people. All in all, prior to the beginning of the difficulties of the population exchange in terms of organization and implementation, there were already several problems such as occupation of houses and unorganized migration. When the flow of thousands of people from Greece started, the chaos became apparent. The archival research of this study revealed that settlement and settlement related developments remained as the major topic of the local political and social agenda in Izmir almost until 1940s due to the reflections of the society. These reflections are addressed in the following sections.

3.2. The Compulsory Population Exchange: The Legal Frame and the Implementation

With the signing of the Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish nationals in Greece and Turkey after long negotiations between Turks and Greeks sides, those who were to be included and excluded as exchangee, *mübadil* were

¹⁹⁷ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT03/gcz01003147.pdf>, p.1131

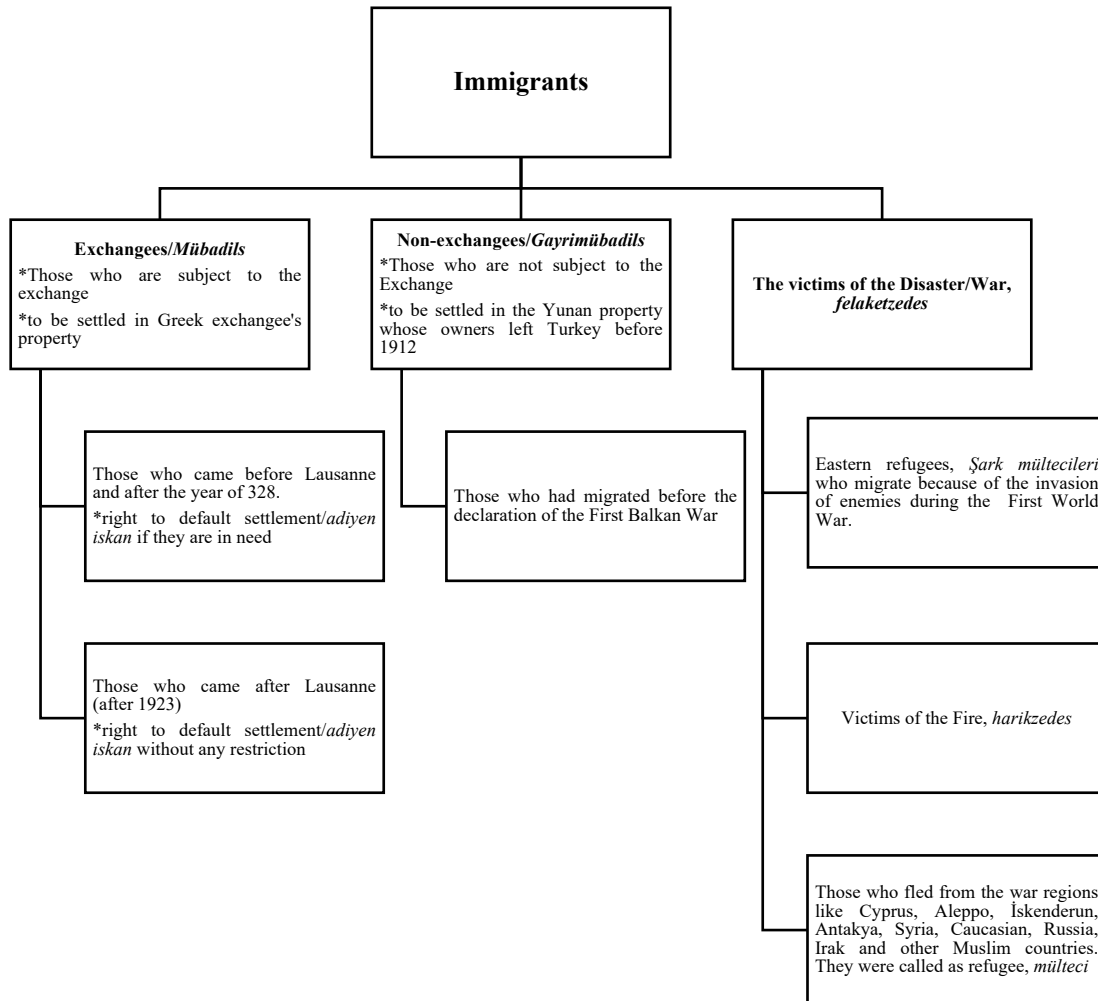
specified. The agreement affected almost 1.5 million people from Greece and Turkey. However, it was not the only people who were to be exchanged, but the properties also were subject to exchange. Agreement imposes the establishment of a Mixed Commission including Greek, Turkish and neutral members. This Commission was responsible for registering, valuing, all of the property left by the exchanges and also for documenting this value. Thus, exchangees, *mübadils*, would take the property which was of equal value to their left properties.¹⁹⁸ Whether these regulations could be implemented in practice or not is a considerably important question for the following questions of this study. However, at this point it should be noted shortly that the picture was different in different.

In the Turkish side of this massive movement, as mentioned previously, the migration had already started. Therefore, the newcomers from Greece with the Population Exchange Convention were not the only ones who were supposed to be settled in the city. Unlike the other regions, in Izmir, it is possible to see three groups of people in the entire settlement process. Basically, these groups can be categorized as: i. those who were subject to exchange, ii. those who were not subject to exchange and iii. those who were the victims of the disasters/war/fire. Each of these categories were granted different rights and also different obligations in terms of the distribution of property/income and settlement rights. This diversity of rights and obligations is very crucial for this study. Because these different implementations/rights/obligations caused the arise of struggle grounds among the individuals and also caused turning the

¹⁹⁸ Ellinor Morack, "Refugees, Locals and 'The' State: Property Compensation in the Province of Izmir Following the Greco-Turkish Population Exchange of 1923." *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 2, no. 1 (2015), p. 148.

process, which was aimed to homogenize the individuals, into a conflict zone. In the following table which was prepared by benefiting different sources, it can be seen the settlement categories and rights of these categories to settle and take property.¹⁹⁹

Table 4. Different immigrant status



At the legal basis, a separation was made between the immigrants based on the state's role in the settlement process. Those who were settled by the state is defined as immigrant with settlement, *iskanlı göçmen*, and those who were not settled by the state are categorized as free immigrants, *serbest göçmen*. The exchangees, *mübadils*,

¹⁹⁹ The table was prepared by the author.

belonged to the first group who had a right for property compensation. According to the law, settlement of the exchangees, *mübadils*, had to be maintained and concluded by the state without any exception, '*ale'l-ıtlāk*. They were under the legal arrangements of the default settlement, *iskanı adi*.²⁰⁰

As regards the distribution of property and land, the regulation was issued on July 6, 1924. This regulation indicated how the abandoned properties were to be distributed to the exchangees. According to this regulation, the abandoned properties including lands, gardens, vineyards, and trees were to be distributed, *adiyen*, default. By default, *adiyen*, it should be understood that providing of 20 % of the land which the exchangee had a right to take. That is to say, the regulation was protecting the exchangees by giving the guarantee of their property could not be under the 20% value of their previous property left behind in Greece. The regulation also clearly identified the phases of the distribution of the properties. According to these steps, the Distribution and Allocation Commissions, *Tevzi and Taksim*, were in charge for identifying the borders and drawing the borders in the villages by consulting the community councils, *ihiyar heyeti*, who were familiar with the borders and the current situations of the lands.²⁰¹ The values of the land were determined according to the lands' productivity. After the value was fixed by the committees, the lands were granted to the families by paying regard to number of people in the families. However, such an uncontrolled authority was open to corruption. In fact, in the rural areas, many of the local people attempted to use this openness. To illustrate, many villagers laid a claim on the lands

²⁰⁰ İskan Tarihçesi, (İstanbul Hamit Matbaası, 1936), p. 36.

²⁰¹ Kemal Arı, "Türkiye'de Toprak Mülkiyeti ve Tarımsal Değişmede Mübadiller," in *75. Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), p. 109.

left by Greeks by stating that lands belonged to them. Villagers explained this complicated claim as before the Greeks left the lands, they bought these lands from them. But they could not make legal procedures as Greeks had to leave the country.²⁰² This was a particularly good example to see how abandoned lands became a conflict zone.

At this point, it should not be forgotten that properties of the exchangees left in Greece, were documented by their declaration in their liquidation documents, *tasfiye talepnamesi*. These documents can be seen as a declaration of people which indicate information about moveable and immovable properties of the exchangees to compensate. These documents were supposed to be filled by the exchangees under the surveillance of the Mixed Commission in the original country of the exchangees, before arriving to Turkey. But, in practice this picture was also different. Morack's study shows that these documents were not filled properly by following the instructions and steps. Most of them were filled in Turkey, while the instructions suggested to be filled in Greece.²⁰³ Another setback was that the legal regulations followed the implementations. For example, soon after the arrival of the exchangees in Izmir, the distribution of land or house to the exchangees had already started, but the law organizing the actual property compensation was issued four months later, in April 1924.²⁰⁴ This was the result of the acute problems in the city, the primary aim was to provide a house for newcomers rather than organizing the legal arrangements.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 109

²⁰³ Ellinor Morack, "Claiming "imagined property": Tasfiye Talepnames and the Lost Material World of Migrants after the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923–24", *Diyâr* 1, 1 (2020), p. 129.

²⁰⁴ Morack, *The Dowry of the State*, p. 239-240.

All in all, the properties, even at the very early phase of the population exchange, looked like the attraction and conflict point of the process. On the other hand, it can be very helpful to take a glance to Izmir's current situation in terms of the vacant properties to be distributed the immigrants. As Hasan Fehmi Bey states as the head of the National Property, there were three types of property in Izmir. First one is the properties which belonged previously to those who were subject to the exchange, the second one is the properties of the Armenians and some missing Jews' properties, and the third group is the properties which had belonged to the foreigners and now under the control of the government.²⁰⁵ The state officials generally believed that the properties including lands and houses in Izmir were sufficient to compensate the exchangees' left properties. In some parliament discussions deputies were saying that "if 100.000 people plundered Izmir for two months, these properties would be impossible to finish."²⁰⁶

This statement can be evaluated as an exaggeration obviously to underline the failure of the politicians regarding the looting of Izmir after the Fire and to criticize the losing control of the officials in the city. The distribution of the properties was planned in three stages. According to plan, the properties of Greeks who were subjected to the exchange would distribute to the exchangees, *mübadils*. The non-exchangees, *gayrimübadils*, would take the *Yunan* properties who were not included in the population exchange. Armenians' properties were to distribute to the victims of the

²⁰⁵ Tülay Alim Baran, *Bir Kentin Yeniden Yapılanması İzmir 1923-1938*, (İstanbul: Arma Yayınları, 2003), p. 110.

²⁰⁶ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT03/gcz01003147.pdf>, p.1137

Fire, *harikzedes*.²⁰⁷ However, these projects, which were very direct and clear turned into a problem in practice and became a settlement crisis which could not be solved until the 1940s.

Consequently, those who look at Izmir and its inland with lenses of property issue might see three realities in the field. First is that other inhabitant of the city and its inlands such as locals and other immigrants who had no right to take property, demanded property. Secondly, there was occupation of the properties by people such as state officials and locals. Third one is the incapability of the Turkish state to conduct the distribution and allocation regulations properly and to prevent the corruptions over the properties. When these realities in the practice are taken into consideration, it can be comprehended that regulations like mentioned above could not catch the realities of the settlement in the field.

Another point here should be noted, as well. Most of the newcomers were peasants at the same time. This is a key factor of the socio-economic dimensions of Izmir in the early years of the Turkish Republic. Because rural deprivation in the 1930s became a catalyzing factor for the conflict over economic resources like abandoned property. To put it more simply, while landless peasantry was the fact of agricultural segment at that period, on the other side, there were available economic resources left from the outcoming Greeks. Therefore, this kind of overlap in socio-economic conditions made conditions more convenient for struggle and conflict over the resources. This is such an important aspect that this struggle over economic resources turned into a collective

²⁰⁷ Alim Baran, *Bir Kentin Yeniden Yapılanması*, p. 111.

position. That the non-exchangees established an association namely the Association of non-exchangees and also organized a congress in 1930 is a good example to see this collectiveness.²⁰⁸ The reason for the Association's emergence was to protect non-exchangees' rights and eliminate the injustices and mistreatments which they suffered in terms of their property rights. In this direction, the Association compiled a report to explain their current mistreatments by the state in terms of their property rights. Not surprisingly, the demand was the lands which were allocated them, the *Yunan* properties. According to the report, almost 2000 pieces of the *Yunan* property which belonged to non-exchangees legally were given to the exchangees.²⁰⁹ This collectiveness which arises from different micro identities with their own interests which were wanted to be protected by these micro groups demonstrates a very telling picture regarding the local societal factors which the state and society interactions take place on. Also, the emergence of these kind of micro groups among the society with their own interest like non-exchangees shows that how a large-scaled policy like Turkification of the population created indirect and unintended conflict zones rather than the conflict zones which emerged from Turkification related identities. In societal level, as previously said, homogenization of the population reflected to society as a struggle over resources at the time of economic and settlement crisis.

Returning to these conflict zones, as previously indicated, migration waves of diverse groups to Izmir at various times complicated the projected implementation of the settlement and as a result of these migration waves, diverse groups with different

²⁰⁸ "Gayri Mübadiller Ne İstiyor," *Milliyet*, 14.06.1930.

²⁰⁹ Anadolu'da Yunanlılardan kalma mal ve gelirlerin bir an önce gayri mübadillerin ihtiyaçlarına göre dağıtılması gerektiğine dair Türk Gayri Mübadiller Cemiyeti Raporu, BCA. 30.10.0.0.140.3.5., 29. 08. 1929.

interests and expectations came into view to the social, economic, and political agenda of the city. For instance, there were refugees in the city from some specific parts of the country and they were categorized as Eastern Refugees, *mültecis*, who had migrated to Izmir between 1914 and 1923 from Erzurum, Trabzon and Gümüşhane. Also, there were refugees in the city from Erzurum and Diyarbakır in 1926 and 1927, refugees from Erzurum, Bayburt, Bitlis and Trabzon in 1929 and 1932 and demanding property from the state.²¹⁰ Another group was the victims of the Fire, *harikzede*, who demanded compensation for their damage. According to projected regulation, they would be settled in the properties of the missing people, *eşhası mütegayyibe*.²¹¹ However, the dissimilarity in practice and regulation was visible here, as well. A petition written by three exchangees from Urla, clearly shows this contrast in practice and on paper. These exchangees indicated in their petition that their assigned houses were under the occupation by a victim of the Fire, *harikzede*.²¹²

Institutional responsibility of the execution of the population exchange, when it is looked from the side of state, was allocated to the Department of Refugee Affairs in the Ministry of Finance. On the other hand, such a gigantic process with different aspects from transportation to housing, necessitated a specific institution which was designed to deal with the current and future issues of the immigrants more properly. This necessity was highlighted frequently and recommended by several politicians and journalists. In fact, there were several suggestions and discussions regarding the need for a specific institution. To illustrate, Mazhar Bey, a deputy of Denizli, strongly

²¹⁰ Alim Baran, *Bir Kentin Yeniden Yapılanması*, p. 112.

²¹¹ İskan Tarihçesi, p. 32.

²¹² Morack, *The Dowry of the State*, p. 283.

defended that a directorate could not be enough to conduct such a massive work. For this reason, in order to execute the process properly and on time, a specific Ministry with experts on this issue was essential. So, Mazhar Bey presented his legislative proposal for establishment of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Resettlement, but this proposal was declined. The issue of property was also on the political agenda in this situation. Several political figures from different political sides addressed that properties which were left from Greeks should be protected carefully and the state agencies should be prepared for potential problems due to the migration movements.²¹³ Despite the proposal being declined, political discussion on this issue continued. Upon these discussions, the Ministry of the Exchange, Reconstruction and Resettlement, *Mübadele, İmar ve İskan Vekaleti*, was established in October 1923.²¹⁴ The duties of the Ministry were arranged by the Law of Exchange, Reconstruction and Resettlement in November 1923. The Ministry was responsible for the transfer, settlement, and provisions of the exchangees. But this institution was also responsible for all the settlement processes of the immigrants, refugees, victim of the fire, victim of the disaster/war and the members of the tribes who had arrived since 1912 and not subject to settlement process.²¹⁵ In practice, the ministry formed local branches to execute the settlement works; namely, Commission of Exchange, Reconstruction and Resettlement, *Mübadele, İmar ve İskân Komisyonu*. These commissions were composed of five members including the governor, two officials from the center and

²¹³ Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement*, p. 99.

²¹⁴ Mübadele, İmar ve İskân Vekâleti İhdasına Dair Kanun, No. 352, Date. 13.10.1339.
https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc002/kanuntbmmc002/kanuntbmmc00200352.pdf

²¹⁵ Nedim İpek, *Mübadele ve Samsun*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2001), p. 35.

two officials from the local administration.²¹⁶ In spite of these legislation and organization, it is very interesting to see that the ministry could not survive more than one year, and it was abolished in December 1924, after changing three ministers in one year. Shortly after one year from establishment, deputies in the parliament began to criticize the Ministry and express the idea that ministry should be turned into a directorate within the Interior Ministry. Discontent among the deputies regarding the Ministry, as previously mentioned, was strongly related to the malfunction in the exercising the settlement procedures. Specifically, abolishment was related to the unnecessary occupation, *fuzuli işgal*, of the abandoned properties in Izmir. Thus, the process which led to the emergence of a new political party began. The Ministry was being criticized by the press and politicians for a long time due to the failures in the settlement process in practice and the accusations for the misuses and the abuses in the local branches. Most of the critiques and the discontent were towards the officials of the Ministries in local branches, especially in Izmir, due to the misconduct and favoritism in the distribution of abandoned property.

Upon these discontents, a motion of no confidence, *gensoru*, was presented to the Assembly regarding the actions of Ministry of the Exchange, Reconstruction and Resettlement by Hoca Esat, Menteşe deputy. Accusations towards the Ministry's incapability did not stop with this confidence motion. Again, Hoca Esat criticized the Ministry in a parliamentary session by indicating a very significant statement. He said, "Those who came from mountain were settled in plains, but those who came from plains were settled in mountains." Moreover, he also stated that exchangees and

²¹⁶ Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement*, p. 171.

properties which belonged to them became ruinous and various corruptions were created but removed from the agenda.²¹⁷ This movement against the Ministry and harsh critiques towards its insufficient works affected political history of the Turkish Republic. Ali Fuat Cebesoy commented this case as “one of the factors which led to the emergence of a party.”²¹⁸ Accusations about corruption and critiques for incapability of the Ministry were sufficient to intimidate the government and the Ministry was abolished on December 11, 1924, and its duties were delegated to the Department of Settlement which was under the Ministry of Interior with the Law of 529.²¹⁹ All in all, foundation of the Progressive Republican Party (hereafter TpCF) accelerated with these accusations and the opposition within the party regarding the settlement process. The cruciality and the fragility of the settlement and abandoned property issues for both society’s side and the state’s side can be understood from the abolishment of the Ministry and emergence of a new political party. More importantly it shows how these issues could break in the resilience of the single-party regime.

In 1930, the directorate was also abolished, and the small offices were founded under the General Directorate of Population Affairs, *Nüfus İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü*. In February 1931, the entire practices of the exchange of population and property allotment were ended.²²⁰ However, in practice the remnants of the population

²¹⁷ Erhan Çelebi, *Mübadele, İmar ve İskân Vekâleti (Kuruluşu, Teşkilât Yapısı Ve Faaliyetleri)*, (Unpublished Phd. Dissertation, On Dokuz Mayıs University, 2005), p. 269.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 268.

²¹⁹ Mübadele İmar ve İskan Vekaletinin Lağvile Vazifesinin Dahiliye Vekaletine Devri Hakkında Kanun, No. 529, Date, 11.2.1340, https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc003/kanuntbmmc003/kanuntbmmc00300529.pdf

²²⁰ Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement*, p. 173.

exchange remained and accumulated as a series of socio-economic and socio-political problems, as will be explained below.

In conclusion, settlement and abandoned property, the most significant aspect of the population exchange, were supposed to be put into practice in the direction of the mentioned regulations. However, even after the exchange was seen as completed on bureaucracy, the course of daily life in Izmir indicates that it was not completed. On the contrary, this led to the rise of new spheres of interaction between the state and society such as struggle over property. The following part focuses on these struggles of the individuals and groups who were affected by the settlement. Focusing on these struggles, it is aimed to display “settlement in the field” by discussing state’s incapability to maintain and to complete the process, and also to indicate the property related conflicts over the abandoned property among the inhabitants of Izmir such as exchangees, non-exchangees, locals, refugees, and other categories like victims of the Fire or Disaster/War.

3.3. The State and the Society: Settlement in Practice

After six years of signing the Convention, a letter was published in a local newspaper of Izmir. In this letter which was penned to the governor of Izmir in *Ahenk* newspaper, Izmir’s settlement affairs were complained by stating “Although we established a state in six years, the settlement affairs of Izmir have not finished for five years.”²²¹ As a matter of fact, the settlement affairs in Izmir were in a chaotic order due to the above-mentioned issues such as scarcity of the properties due to the unnecessary occupation,

²²¹ “Izmir’in İskan İşleri,” *Ahenk*, 07.02.1929.

fuzuli işgal, complicated legal procedures, the limited capacity of the state, variety in the legal status of the immigrants, and the remaining problems of the locals from the occupation and war periods. While this is the portrait of one side, on the other side of this issue, the society was in an effort to find a way of maintaining their life including immigrants and locals. These efforts of people to reach an economic resource like lands revealed two kinds of interaction. Demands of society from the state over the economic resources can be counted as the first type of interaction ground, while the second one is interaction within the society to reach the economic resources. The following cases demonstrate these interactions around these efforts.

3.3.1. Demanding from the State

It is not surprising to see conflicts in such a problematical process which caused a political fraction even within a single-party regime. Suffering from the adverse impacts of socio-economic developments of the period, most of immigrants were deprived of economic resources and full of demands. Changing settlement area and demanding to be settled in a new region was one of the recurrent requests of the newcomers. Because the petitions which were sent to the authorities generally complained about the settlement regions due to several reasons. For example, one of the migrants, *muhacir*, from Crete, Hasan oğlu Ahmet, asked to be relocated to Izmir where his brother lived in 1927. This request was accepted by the authorities.²²² Relocation to the regions where the petitioners' relatives were living was a prevalent demand from the

²²² Girit Resmo muhacirlerinden Hasan oğlu Ahmet'in Bornova'daki biraderinin yanında iskanının uygun olduğu. BCA, 272.0.0.12.52.119.32.

newcomers. Archival research also displays conditional acceptances of relocation demands. In some cases, petitions of those who wanted to change their settlement locations and demanded to move another place were accepted if they renounce their rights such as property allocation, if they pay their own expenses, if they built their own houses, if they do not benefit from any of the state resources and if they do not want anything from the state. For example, the request of an exchangees, Bekir ođlu Nail, to be relocated in Izmir was accepted and approved under the condition that he does not want anything from the government, *hükümetten bir şey istememek şartıyla*.²²³

However, demands to be relocated and complaints about settlement locations were not the reason for tensions, in spite of restrictions imposed by state and also the permission was mandatory. Since these were not directly related to abandoned property. Claim over an asset, and generally more than one claim over an economic resource were the procuring reason for the showing up conflict grounds.

3.3.1.1. A Violent Demand from the State: The Case of the Serçin Village

It is probably the Serçin Village Case which was the most clarifying incident in which all actors related to the abandoned property were involved. Most importantly, all actors were present with holding the socio-economic and socio-political circumstances of their class/profession/social status in this case. There were peasants as the representative of landless or small landowners who were in need for land, former party

²²³ Selanik mübadillerinden Bekir ođlu Nail'in bir şey istememek şartıyla İzmir'de iskanının uygun görüldüğü, BCA. 272.0.0.12.62.180.16., 06.06.1929.

trustee of CHF, *mutemed*, as the representative of the ruling party and an economic resource which was a 5000 acre of land in Söke. The mentioned land was indicated as an abandoned property, *emvali metruke*, which had belonged to a missing person, *mütegayyib*, by peasants.

According to peasants' claim which was sent to the Ministry of Interior, 5000 acres of land around the Dalyan district was under the unnecessary occupation of Hüseyin Bey who was the former, *mutemed* of CHF. Further, peasants were forced to work as sharecroppers in this land. At this point, it is necessary to briefly explain what the *mutemed* was and what the function of this position was. As can be comprehended from the regulations of 1923 and 1927 of CHF, *mutemeds* were the representatives of CHF in the cities and towns, and they also head of the administrative committee of local CHF branches. They were appointed by the center of the party. While this organization had administrative duties within the party, it should also be understood what a *mutemed* mean for society of the that time. Local officials of ruling party's administrative boards such as *mutemed* in cities and towns, were pretty triggering figures which fed the displeasure of society. According to reports, *mutemeds* were generally identified with nepotism and corruption, and also seen as the reason of disconnection between the party and society due to their arrogant and negative attitudes.²²⁴ For example, during the well-known and important incident, Fethi Okyar's visit in Izmir, those who were at the streets to welcome and support Fethi Bey manifested their reaction to the *mutemeds*. Upon the cheering of Salih Bey, *mutemed*

²²⁴ Döndü Sena Göndürü, "1930 Yılı Sonlarında Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Taşra Teşkilatı: Heyet Raporları Üzerinden Bir Değerlendirme," *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* 0 (2020), p. 135.

of CHF, as “Long Live CHF,” those who were in the streets replied to him by saying “Down with *mutemeds*, Long Live Fethi Bey.”²²⁵ Again, an example from the visit of Vasıf Bey, a deputy of İzmir, evidently explains the meaning of these party officials, specifically *mutemeds*, to society. Vasıf Bey made a press statement and admitted that the party was aware of the disturbance of people due to the *mutemeds*. He also stated that the *mutemed* would be abolished. Instead of the appointment, party members would elect the local committee of CHF and any candidates would not be nominated by the center.²²⁶ This protest and statement reflect that local political figures with significant positions and authorizations within the ruling party became a target of people who were suffering from the socio-economic shortcomings of the period.

Turning back to the Serçin incident, peasants of Serçin Village applied to the district governor, *kaymakam*, to report the illegal occupation of the land which belonged to Directorate National Estate and requested Hüseyin Bey to end this occupation. But, district governor, *kaymakam* refused the peasants’ legal requests out his respect to Hüseyin Bey. After these requests and declines, while Hüseyin Bey and the *kaymakam* were visiting the land, peasants prevented them. The gendarme was invited, and there was a clash between the gendarme units and the peasants. Upon this and following clash, some peasants were arrested. The accusations against Hüseyin Bey were not limited to this land. According to the paper, there were two other lands which belonged to the National Property in *Sarı Kemer* and *Çiksort* under the occupation of Hüseyin Bey and his relatives. At this point, it would be very helpful to recall the corrupt and

²²⁵ Necdet Aykaç, “Yönetmel Alanda Değişimler ve Devrim Hareketlerine Karşı Gerici Tepkiler “Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası – Menemen Olayı,” *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* 11 (2009), p. 15.

²²⁶ “Vasıf B. Ve Arkadaşları İzmir’de,” *Vakit*, 23.11.1930.

nepotistic image of *mutemed* in society, which referred previously. The paper added this comment to the news: “The power of the government protects the occupation of Hüseyin Bey.”²²⁷ Hence, while there was a former local figure with political power and strong connections with current administrators on the one side of the picture, there were peasants who claimed that they were subjected to injustice on the other side. The aim was, on the other hand, same for both.

Discussions continued in the following days. A person named Efendizade Mehmet Ali from Söke wrote a letter to the paper. According to his letter, he is not a peasant from the village, but he could explain the case because a peasant from Serçin Village explained the case to him in detail. While he was reading news about what happened in Serçin Village from the newspaper and discussing this case with a friend that whether such an injustice could be in a democratic country or not, a peasant from the Serçin village heard their conversation and explained the case to him. Upon peasant’s explanation about the case, he wrote the peasant’s explanation to the newspaper.

Peasant said to Mehmet Ali bey follows:

There are 120 households in our village. Our village was surrounded by the Menderes River and the *dalyan*, which belongs to Hüseyin Bey, the clerk of Söke. Except one or two, all peasants have to work in Hüseyin Bey’s *dalyan*. We heard that the government enacted a law and would give land from the abandoned property, *emvali metruke*, to the peasants without land. We always prayed to the founders of the Republic and thought that the government would give these lands to us. For this reason, we cultivated land. We were extremely excited to be able to be producers and landowners. Two days later, the kaymakam, Hasip Bey, and the gendarme commander came to the land and forbade us. We told them about the law, but they did not listen to us. But how could we know that Hüseyin Bey had occupied these lands. We could not understand how these lands, which are registered to the name of Kiryako, son of İspiro and Dimitri, son of Sokrat, can be captured by Hüseyin Bey. Also, the gendarmes used force against the peasants. There was a wounded peasant. They took us here, arrested us. finally released us. However, we will protect our

²²⁷ “Söke’de Bir Arazi Meselesi,” *Yeni Asır*, 4.12.1930.

rights and prove that these lands belonged to these missing persons not Hüseyin Bey. The allegations of the newspaper about the other lands under the occupation of Hüseyin Bey were also true. All the property of the Revenue was looted.

After explaining the incident, peasant also added that “I hope my words would be published in paper and an inspector come here and listen the helpless peasants and we would tell him other cases, as well.” As a reply, Efendizade Mehmet Ali who wrote the letter said to peasant that “I will write these words to paper. Also, in the time of the Republic, a whole village could not be sacrificed for a person’s good. Before the law, there is not any difference between you and Hüseyin Bey.”

As center of the accusations of nepotism and corruption, Hasip Bey, *kaymakam*, needed to explain the situation to the public. He sent a response letter to the newspaper and denied the peasants’ claims. According to his explanation, peasants claimed that the land which was cultivated by Hüseyin Bey was an abandoned property, *emvali metruke*. They also demanded land to take back from him and give to the peasants. However, according to *kaymakam*, it is an obvious fact that the land belonged to Hüseyin Bey with a deed registration. Therefore, there was not any unfair and illegal implementation. In spite of the fact that they informed peasants about the situation, peasants invaded the land and prevented the cultivation in land. This illegal action, not surprisingly, required a gendarme intervention to surpass. After two days, the peasants did the same thing again. They were warned and also informed about the law and punishments of their actions. However, peasants ignored warning and attempted to invade the land again with their guns and slingshots very next day. Thereupon, gendarme forces were sent to the district. However, peasants did not obey the law and what is worse, they resisted the gendarme forces, beat them, and tried to take

gendarme's weapons. For this reason, these peasants were arrested because of breaking the law. Hasip Bey strongly underlined that "This land does not belong to peasants; it belongs to the state or Hüseyin Bey. There is not any right of peasants over this land. Despite this reality, they are trying to take the land with the force of gun."²²⁸

In his letter's second article, Hasip Bey denied the favoritism accusations made against him and stated that all of his actions were based on law. He also blames the peasants for having other aims rather than having land. Because he offered another land to peasants, but they insisted on taking Hüseyin Bey's land and continued their demands. Hasip Bey also denied that peasants needed land. Because there are 9000 acres land, 1200 acres range, 10.000 acres olive grove in this village. According to his claims, almost 90% of the peasants are not landless.

The most critical point in this case is the following words of Hasip Bey. He explains the situation as an illegal and violent riot against the government by the peasants who were provoked by those with secret aims and factious. Since, there were other villagers who benefited from the government's policy by following the legal procedure within the legal arrangements. He said "the people's government, the Republican administration" gives the properties left from the abandoned property, *emvali metruke*, as a favor and help to the needy and poor peasants. Yeniköy, Balat and Batnaz villages of the district benefited from this policy. However, in this case the condition was quite different due to the violent and illegal actions of the villagers. He underlined their actions as a riot to Republic and supported the gendarme's implementation and the

²²⁸ "Köylü ve Toprak," *Yeni Asır*, 10.12.1930.

arrest of the peasants by stating the following: “The government can show only the prison corner to this kind of people, not land. The beneficences of the Republic belong to the Republicans and those who obey and trust the laws of the Republic.”²²⁹

This case is immensely telling to see the existence of the alternative and simultaneous micro and macro contexts at the same time. It depicts how a macro policy turned into micro struggles in daily life. In this case, a specific policy of the Turkish nation-state to actualize the demographic Turkification turned into a struggle over the property among the peasantry with the state. This case also illustrates another major point which is the intersection of different socio-economic and socio-political contexts. In this case, while the settlement process and property distribution to the newcomers was continuing in the region, there was also a fundamental problem about the landless peasantry in the rural part. Apart from the newcomers with the property right, there was one more actor in this equation to be considered, which was the local peasants, mostly the landless peasants. The issue of abandoned property, *emvali metruke*, should also be considered in the landless peasantry context in the early years of the Republic.

3.3.1.2. A Critique to Liquidation Law for the Equality Against Class Privileges

In addition to the conflicts between the individuals for land owning, another fragile issue was the compensation methods of the properties. The unended property distribution and chaotic compensation issues of the right owners including exchangees and other immigrants were another tension ground for those who believed that some implementations of the process were against the sense of equality. This was the focus

²²⁹ “Köylü ve Toprak,” *Yeni Asır*, 10.12.1930.

of the complaint from the group of immigrants. As mentioned previously, even after years, there were considerable and various issues which were in a pending position regarding the settlement and property allocations. Settlement affairs remained as one of the topics on the local agenda. In 1930s, it is possible to meet with harsh critiques in local press towards the Office of Settlement Affairs because of the incapability to provide deed registrations to the immigrants and also for the open dossiers of individuals which could not be closed in years. While the regulations indicated clear steps in distribution of properties by imposing specific policies and criteria such as valuation of properties and the criteria of allocation, the reason behind why these issues could not be resolved and distribution process could not be completed lays on the Izmir's very unique conditions.

The liquidation law which was enacted in 1931 was one of these implementations which was evaluated as a kind of violation of equality between the exchangees who all in a difficult position were. Those who look at the newspaper headings concerning the law can comprehend that although the law was enacted to find a solution and to complete some gangrened problems about the compensation, it was criticized in public. Before moving to a detailed analysis of this law and discuss how this law became a notion of inequality in public, it might be useful to glance at background in the property compensation.

The first law for property distribution to exchangees was enacted in April 1924, after the first group of exchangees reached the city. With this law of 488, which comprised of ten articles, property rights of exchangees and the procedure of property distribution

to exchangees, also known as *tefviz*, were put in an order.²³⁰ This law indicated a temporary allocation of abandoned property from Greeks not a permanent allocation with full property rights including deed registration which is *temlik*. The second article of the law indicates that those who were holding documents showing that the value of their possessions left in Greece is up to 50.000 *liras* would take property, but only the value of 20 % of what their documents indicate. Those whose declaration of value excess 50.000 *lira* would wait for the end of the process to compensate the rest of the value. Because *tefviz* procedure relies on the exchangee's declaration about the value of property left in Greece, the law implied a sanction on this issue. Article 4 states that allocated properties would be able to be taken back or extra payment would be able to be demanded from the exchangee if the declaration of exchangees about their possessions was not consistent. As regards identifying which property would be given to which exchange, article 6 states that the property which would be allocated to an exchange would be within the borders of settlement location of the exchange. Most importantly, the law indicates that quality, reputation, and status, *nevi, şeref and mevkii*, of the previous properties of the exchange left in Greece would be taken into consideration in the allocation of new properties. This means that those who had owned land, ranch, store, all sorts of real estate, mill or factory would be given the very same properties, with same quality, reputation, and status. Besides, as addressed previously, those who took property with *tefviz* procedure did not have a full authorization over the properties like transferring to another person, *bey'ü ferağ*, mortgaging these properties, *terhin*, or making any maintenance works on properties.

²³⁰ Mübadeleye Tabi Ahaliye Verilecek Emvali Gayri Menkule Hakkında Kanun, No.488, Date. 16.04.1924.
https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc002/kanuntbmmc002/kanuntbmmc00200488.pdf

According to the seventh article, any change in the shape of properties, *tebdil ve tağyir*, any destruction, *hedim* or demolition, *tahrib*, were forbidden. For any necessary reparation, permission and approval from the authorities is compulsory. Those who violate these regulations would be punished in the same way that they destroy another one's property. At this point, it is important to note that while this law was enacted and discussions about the law and regulations such as rule of 20 percent, the works of commission to document and valuation of the previous properties of exchangees were not completed. However, house and livelihood need of exchangees were immediate. For this reason, preliminary distribution had become essential.²³¹ In political sphere, this law which imposed the rule of twenty percent was also on the agenda. In a parliament discussion, Hasan Fehmi Bey, the Minister of Finance, opposed the rule of 20 percent rule “[Let's say] I leave behind property worth 50,000 Lira, but you are only giving me 15,000. Such a law is totally inadequate.”²³² All in all, the law of 488 regulated the *tefviz* procedure which was temporary allocation of the abandoned property of the Greeks until the new law's introduction to the implementation.

Despite, there was a law which was issued in 1926 concerning term and conditions of pay back, of the properties and other kinds of economic resources such as land, seed, or agricultural implements, the law of 1331 can be counted as the second legislative attempt in regulating the property distribution. The point of the law which necessitated a highlight is that this law imposed the providing deed registration of the properties

²³¹ Morack, *The Dowry of State*, p. 243.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

which allocated temporarily with the previous *tefviz* procedure. More simply, with the first article of this law, the temporary allocation documents of the exchangees turned into a deed registration with permanent rights over their properties. This law gives the right of deed registration to exchangees within the limits of their previous properties' value and documentation type which were used in the *tefviz* procedure as a way of documentation of previous property possessions, for example of their procedure declaration document, *tasfiye talebnamesi*, deed registration with value or deed registration without value. With the second article of the law, exchangees who had not left any property in Greece, non-exchangees, refugees, individuals with tribal affiliations, *aşiret efradı*, and victims of Fire, *harikzede* were able to take title deed for their assigned properties, but servient deed. Further, article five of the law imposed an obligation to the settlement bureaucracy by indicating a deadline for the completion of the procedure which was one year. However, the law of 1331 dated 1928 could not meet the expectations to end the procedure. According to law, the process of settlement would have been completed in one year, but in practice this could not be made happen. Contemporary newspapers of Izmir frequently reported insufficient workings of the bureaucracy. In Izmir, *tefviz* procedures continued to be processed even after the deadline. The press mostly criticized the offices and the officials which were responsible for processing the dossiers of the exchangees by complaining about the excessive paperwork of the dossiers which they called *kirtasiyecilik*. In Izmir, there were many cases in which the exchangees and other immigrants were dissatisfied with their allocated properties. Also, there were other exchangees, *mübadil*, with different problems. For instances, there were those who had to pay the excessing amount of their rights, those who had to pay a rent for their houses because of the unended process and those whose rights to property was decreased because the value of their property

in Greece was evaluated as disproportional. The liquidation law in 1931 was issued to overcome these issues certainly during the Turkish economy was experiencing the impact of Global Depression which directly affected the capability of individuals to pay their debt. In addition to the standard and usual payment related with the production and taxes, those who were granted property also had to pay additional fees for property distribution process such as rent for their allocated houses, extra payments for properties because of incorrect valuation of the properties and transaction fees for official registration processes. Therefore, it is possible to say that there was a financial burden on individuals which was an outcome of remaining payments from property distribution and also the ongoing impacts of Global Depression. In such a condition, there emerged a need for a solution. The law of liquidation was enacted in March 1931.

Before addressing how this law turned into a controversial topic against the sense of equality, it is very beneficial to see the reflection of the law in press in order to understand the expectation from the law. The article which criticized the current conditions of the settlement and property distribution process presented this law as an attempt to overcome the challenging works between the government, the National Treasury, and the people, but in favor of people.²³³

Given the accusations for introducing new inequalities and causing new unrest among society, it is necessary to ask what novelty this law brings in the procedure. Here, free distribution, *meccanen temlik*, and social status, *içtimai durum*, were the key concepts

²³³ “Biraz da İnsaf Etmeli,” *Yeni Asır*, 10.05.1931.

which needed to be addressed.²³⁴ That the law approved free distribution, *meccanen temlik*, under some conditions and that the social status, *içtimai vaziyet*, was put as a criterion in the distribution process were considered as the violators to the sense of equality among individuals those who were affected from the difficulties of the entire migration process. As a matter of fact, the complaint about new implementations which was introduced by the law was intense, even the law was evaluated as, in an exaggerated tone, a threat to the new Turkey's ideal of classless society.

Basically, liquidation means the state's withdrawal from ongoing debts of some individuals which emerged from the property distribution. The fourth article of the law indicates that exchangees who did not submit their application within the limits of the previous law about the property allocation and those who came from Bulgaria under the law of 1341 and refugees, *muhacir*, would be given to them free, *meccanen temlik*, regardless of the origin of property. By saying free, it should be understood that it is limited with their standard rights, the amount which exceeds their standard rights to take property would be debited. The fifth article of the law is about the victims of the Fire, *harikzede*. The article imposed that the properties which were under the occupation of victims of the Fire, who were in need of property, would be given to them regardless of the origins of the property. In a similar vein to the those who fourth article mentions, the excessive amount of their standard allowance would be debited in this case, as well. There were also other articles which provided some conveniences such as exemption from extra fees such as deed registration. However, the fourth and

²³⁴ Mübadele ve Tefiz İşlerinin Kat'i Tasfiyesi ve İntacı Hakkında Kanun, No. 1771, Date. 19.03.1931. <https://www.kanunum.com/content/673256#.ZBLDV-zMKWA>

fifth article were the main concerns. Upon these concerns, a person felt a need to explain how the law would affect two people with different immigrant status by sending a letter to the newspaper.

According to two cases in this comparison, there is an exchangee, *mübadil*, who was settled in Alsancak neighborhood and granted for *tefviz* which means he/she had left property in home country. As the second case, there is a refugee, *muhacir*, who was living in the same area and in need of property. The contested thing in this comparison is that while the former one who had property in Greece had to pay the excessive amount of their right, the latter one could benefit from the right of free distribution, *meccanen temlik*, which was imposed by the liquidation law. Further, such an among immigrants was addressed by this person as the potential conflict for the following days.²³⁵ Indeed, this projection regarding that the free distribution would be a disturbance came true in the following days. Various complaints about the liquidation process came to the agenda.

Another key concept was social status of the family, *içtimai vaziyet*. According to the chart indicating the criteria to be used for property distribution, *içtimai vaziyet* became an indicator to calculate the standard/default right for property distribution. What should be understood from social status, *içtimai vaziyet*, of a person or a family is ambiguous. It might be understood as an instruction which states that those who had a higher social status were able to take larger houses. An additional note in the law might be useful to grasp the social status, *içtimai vaziyet*. This note suggests that if one of the

²³⁵ “Tasfiye Meselesi,” *Yeni Asır*, 06.05.1931.

immigrants had an education of agriculture, medicine and veterinary, or higher education would be given more property. Therefore, it is not wrong to assume the term of social status, *içtimai vaziyet*, could be understood as an indicator of the immigrant's profession. At this point it should be noted that before the liquidation law, the social status, *içtimai vaziyet*, was already a problem for the procedures. Since there were some cases in which allocated houses were retrieved from migrants' possession. Because of the unsymmetrical property allocations in accordance with the social status and legal status of the person. Therefore, these wrong transactions mean new problems and new difficulties for the working of the institutions.²³⁶

In a similar vein with the mentioned article, another article also highlighted this controversial aspect of law in a very strong critical tone. The title of the article is "We cannot stay silent against class and status privileges in our country." In this article where the author compares two cases, the liquidation law was discussed in a very political and exaggerated tone by stating that accepting the concept of social status, *içtimai mevki*, mean that there are classes and class privileges in Turkish country. As regards cases, the author took two victims of the Fire, *harikzede*. On the one side, there was a worker or artisan *harikzede* with a burned house. This person was living in a five-roomed house in Izmir with three family members. On the other side, there was another victim of the Fire, *harikzede*, whose house was burned in the same way as those of the previous *harikzede* and also has the same number of family members. The only dissimilarity between the cases of these two homeless people is their profession. While the former one was a worker or artisan, the latter one was not a worker, but a

²³⁶ İskan Tarihçesi, p. 118.

merchant, a manager of a bank or a well-known writer. The impact of the liquidation law comes into view here. While the former one was charged with mortgage debt due to the low social and legal status, the second one could get the property in which s/he was living without any mortgage debt, *meccanen*, because his social status was sufficient for the house.

The perception of this implementation turned into a very serious critical stance which is not limited only to the law and its implementations, but also a political critique. In the article, before making the comparison between two cases, author also addressed why social status, *içtimai mevki*, was unacceptable for Republic. Because each individual of the nation is treated equally before the law and courts. Countries where democracy was in command class dominance and class supremacy could not be present. The author dispraised the concept of social status very strongly and addressed it as a trouble for humanity from of old. Accepting this concept indicates that there are classes and class privileges; however, even dynasty, *saray zümresi*, was destroyed by Turkish people and class privileges were removed. Thanks to abolishment of class differences, citizenship consciousness and public sovereignty could be realized in the country.

While these politically intense critiques are like this, the author defined Turkey as a country where there was not any social status in society in the time of the Republic, but only professions. According to him, each profession held distinct roles in the country and the rights of the people could not be shaped according to the professions. The author added none of the state institutions such as the property commissions, the Governorship or the Ministries could say to citizens that their social status was not

high. He continued “the class distinction and class privileges cannot exist in Turkey. These are the things of the past.”

In conclusion, this example provides two points of view for the settlement and abandoned property issues. First, although new regulations were initiated by the state to overcome the difficulties of settlement in practice, the chaotic and multidimensional features of the entire settlement and the abandoned property politics prevented these attempts. Secondly, instead of bringing a solution, the law was considered as a new ground which caused a new and a crucial problem, which was a threat to equality. All in all, it can be said that when the economic conditions such as debt were combined with some of the controversial implementations such as free distribution, *meccanen temlik*, with a reference to the status in the society, *içtimai vaziyet*, there emerged new contested grounds among the individuals. The abandoned property was a pretty sharp example of these contested grounds.

3.3.1.3. A Demand for a Collective Interest

As explained in the previous parts, there were sub-categories in the population exchange. The category of non-exchangee, *gayribübadil*, was one of these subcategories which were specified with the settlement regulations. To remind who non-exchangees, *gayri mübadil*, were, these people were the ones who had moved off from Greece before the First Balkan War. In the other side, there were also other people who were in the very same position. They are the ones left Turkey before the First Balkan War. Here, the crucial point is that the properties left from these people in Turkey was specified as *Yunanlı* or *Yunan* property. Regulations prescribed that these

properties would be allocated to the non-exchangeables.²³⁷ However, as in many other cases, these properties were not properly distributed to the legal owners within the legal frames. In Izmir most of exchangeables were settled in these properties with the aim of solving the housing crisis in the city at the very early months of the exchange. Contrary to this, non-exchangeables were not settled in other properties, for this reason the non-exchangeables defended that they should benefit from properties of Armenian and Rum. ²³⁸ In fact, most of the property which was supposed to be given to non-exchangeables was allocated to other individuals. These individuals were asked to pay rent for their occupancy. Upon these rent requests, there emerged other complaints from those who had to pay rent. Therefore, this conflict over the non-exchangeables' properties which can be defined as Yunan property became a point of conflict which waited for an urgent solution in the settlement affairs in Izmir. Auctions and bonds were presented as the solutions to solve this issue. The policy was that bonds would be distributed to the non-exchangeables, and they would buy Yunan properties with these bonds from auctions which were organized by the Agricultural Bank. At this point it should be noted that, until these properties were presented for auctions, operation was carried out by the Agricultural Bank. Hence, the rental income from these properties was accumulated in the Bank, but non-exchangeables claimed that this income also belongs to them and demanded it from the Bank.²³⁹ In November 1931, the first auction was launched in Izmir with ten pieces of property. ²⁴⁰ According to some news, in

²³⁷ Alim Baran, *Bir Kentin Yeniden Yapılanması*, p. 154.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

²³⁹ "Gayrimübadillerde Hoşnutsuzluk Uyandıran Bir Karar," *Yeni Asır*, 13.11.1931.

²⁴⁰ "Yunan Emvali," *Yeni Asır*, 10.11.1931.

Izmir there were 1267 pieces of the Yunan properties which were identified as pieces to sell at auctions.²⁴¹ Unsurprisingly, this solution based on auction and bond could not be implemented in practice without causing new problems. The problems were mostly results of corruption and malfunctions in the system. For example, in a similar vein with the problem in agricultural segment, the fact of usurers was in presence in this issue, as well. There was a possibility that these bonds might be taken possession of by some usurers with 40-50 % discount by exploiting their needy situation. For this reason, the specific bonds which are written for a name was recommended.²⁴² Indeed, this possibility of usurers' takeover of bonds became reality. Some news in the local press reported that most of the non-exchangee lost their bonds to someone with a 25% loss in their value.²⁴³ Further, auctions became a kind of looting place of properties. Because most of the non-exchangee could not buy any property from these auctions due to the speculations over prices. Many of the properties were bought at very low prices from these auctions and sold with higher ones.

In conclusion, it is not incorrect to say that like many others the non-exchangees were one of the sufferers of the property politics and the difficulties brought by the legal procedures. However, the unique aspect in this case, which is also significance for this research, is that when the entire migration process is taken into consideration which had begun during the Balkan Wars and ended with the compulsory population exchange, the non-exchangees were the only group who aimed to protect their allocated rights in a collective base. By saying collective, actions such as the

²⁴¹ Alim Baran, *Bir Kentin Yeniden Yapılanması*, p. 157.

²⁴² "Gayrimübadillerin İşleri," *Yeni Asır*, 01.01.1931.

²⁴³ Alim Baran, *Bir Kentin Yeniden Yapılanması*, p. 157.

establishment of an association as a pressure group in order to follow and protect the rights of non-exchangees can be understood. In fact, this association was established and made contacts with political figures to lobby for the rights of the group. A document in the archive indicates that this pressure on the political sphere could reach its goal. According to a document in the archive, a committee directly applied to Mustafa Kemal and explained their demands to him. Upon this demand, Mustafa Kemal wrote an instruction to the Prime Ministry which ordered a quick solution and to complete the non-exchangees property procedures in five or six months.²⁴⁴ Moreover, members of the Association frequently visited Ankara to discuss the non-exchangees' issues and to present their demands to the related Ministries. For example, the Association applied to Ministry of Finance and demanded an increase in the determined value of the non-exchangees' lands and also requested almost 1.000 pieces of the properties which were under the occupation of the migrants, *muhacirs* in Izmir in 1930.²⁴⁵ Also, there is another important example to see how this pressure group chases the interest of the group. According to a clipping from Cumhuriyet newspaper, in 1937 Şehab Bey, the general secretariat of the Association, visited the Ministry of Finance in Ankara and informed the authorities about their demands. Unsurprisingly, a considerable amount of the demand was related to property issues such as valuation of the properties, which were very usual demands. On the other hand, this visit differentiates itself from the other ones because Şehab Bey requested another and important economic resource from the authorities, which was the revenues of coal mines. Because the coal mines belonged to a missing person and the properties of

²⁴⁴ Gayrimübadillere yapılmakta olan mal dağıtım şeklinin değiştirilerek hızlandırılmasına dair Cumhurbaşkanı Gazi Mustafa Kemal'in Başbakan İsmet Paşa'ya direktifi. BCA. 30.10.0.0.140.3.8, 30.12.1930.

²⁴⁵ "Gayrimübadiller, Cemiyet Hükümetten Yeni Bazı Temenniatta Bulundu," *Cumhuriyet*, 07.01.1930.

missing persons transferred to the non-exchangeables, the Association demanded from the revenues of these mines which were under the administration of Etibank.²⁴⁶ In addition to political contacts, when there was a political context which overlapped with their agenda, the association sent telegrams to the authorities. For example, during the negotiations between Greece and Turkey in 1926 for Ankara Agreement, the association sent a telegram to İsmet Paşa which demanded protection of their rights in the negotiations.²⁴⁷ Besides, when the Ankara Agreement was signed with Greece in 1930, a telegram was sent to Prime Minister which was signed by Hüseyin Bey, the chairman of the Association and also an İstanbul deputy in the GNA. According to this agreement in which the three problems between Turkey and Greece were aimed to be solved, together with *etabli* and patriarchate issues, assets which were left behind was probably the most significant issue on the agenda. The issue about assets left by Greeks in Turkey is that according to Greek side, Turkish government should pay an indemnity for their valuable assets left in Turkey. The claim of the Greek side was that their immovable assets in Turkey were very valuable. On the other hand, Turkish government defended that the lands were ruined due to the wars, especially the Western coast, therefore there were not any valuable asset in Turkey now also Turkish side claimed that the assets which were left in Greece by Turkish more valuable than those of Greeks.²⁴⁸ Therefore, it might be said that negotiations were continuing about the assets and values of these assets at the international level. While this negotiation

²⁴⁶ “Gayrimübadillerin Ankara’da Yaptıkları Temaslar,” Cumhuriyet, 08.04.1937.

²⁴⁷ Morack, *The Dowry of the State*, p. 313.

²⁴⁸ Damla Demiröz, “The Greek-Turkish Rapprochement of 1930 and the Repercussions of the Ankara Convention in Turkey,” *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 19, no. 3 (2008): 3, p. 314.

was continuing, the association reminded their presence by sending this telegram and demanded quick and full compensation process.

In addition to the establishment of an association as a pressure group and passing the collective demands to the politicians to chase their interest, another attempt which is to establish a company by exchangees might be counted as a second collective effort to protect their group interests. The attempt was directly related with the aim of protecting the value of bonds and properties. The authorities in the exchange groups believed that the establishment of the company was essential to solve the massive issues about the exchangees' properties. Because, as mentioned formerly, properties would put on the auctions. When such a big amount of property such as houses, lands and mines came up for sale, it was impossible for non-exchangees to buy these properties during such an economic depression period. Also, the owners of a small amount of bond would not afford anything and this huge amount of supply would decrease the value of the properties.²⁴⁹ On the other hand, the fact that above mentioned demand in 1937, was made by the name of president of Association might show that the attempt of establishment of a company remained as a project.²⁵⁰ But it also demonstrates the consciousness of these people about their status and its legal and practical impacts on their life. It seems that they were aware of how political and legal attempts would affect them and what they should do to get maximum profit from these developments.

²⁴⁹ "30 Milyonluk Şirket," *Yeni Asır*, 17.08 1931.

²⁵⁰ Morack, *The Dowry of the State*, p. 313-316.

This might raise a question about the composition of this group which enables them to organize a pressure group and make political contacts. At this point a minor note should be put here to understand the composition of the group, the chair of this Association was also a deputy in GNA. As regards to this issue, Morack compares two immigrant groups which are exchangees, *mübadil*, and non-exchangees, *gayri mübadil*, in terms of their social statuses and their political activities. As a result, Morack concludes a very clear explanation about this comparison which is as follows:

All documents concerned with this group suggest that the average *gayrimübadil* had, as a rule, a higher social status and was politically better connected than the *mübadils*. This point may partly be explained by the fact that many among the *gayrimübadils* had either left Greece before 1912 (thus having more time to adapt) or had been absentee landlords who lived in Thrace or Anatolia already.²⁵¹

The example of non-exchangees who organized around their immigrant status, being a *gayrimübadil*, indicates two things in terms of how the settlement policies affected the daily life of people. First, this case shows that how a sub-category in the massive settlement process turned into a collective identity and secondly it shows that the existence of a pressure group which aimed to chase and protect the group's interest via Association and Company.

3.4. Conclusion

With a particular emphasis on three examples which reflect the impacts of the population exchange in practice, this chapter displays that how a population homogenization project of the Turkish state experienced in daily life of the people.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 317.

Rather than underlying homogenization paradigm, the aim of this part is to discuss the reflection of this policy in daily life. The findings of the research demonstrate that despite that the population exchange with Greece was a crucial point of the nation building process of Turkish Republic, this macro process had different impacts on societal level.

The first impact is that while the Turkish state's project is to homogenize the population by intervening the ethnic and religious composition of the population throughout the migrations, this intervention, namely the population exchange, revealed non-homogenous categories in the society. Indirectly, demographic homogenization policy of the Turkish state pushed the emergence of new micro identities among society such as exchangee, non-exchangees, refugees and victims of fire with various rights and obligations regarding the settlement rights in Izmir. Therefore, it might be said that there emerged, even in a different base, a new kind of heterogeneous society. The second impact is probably the most crucial one which is that these examples show that the homogenization project caused new conflict grounds between state and society and society itself, the abandoned property distribution was the major ground in this connection. Based on the three chosen examples from Izmir and hinterland, it can be concluded that the abandoned property and related issues with these properties such as legal regulations became one of the most prevalent and contested issues in the daily life of the people as a landless peasant, as an exchangee with a debt of property allocation or as a group of people who could not receive the properties which were prescribed to them.

CHAPTER 4

THE OPPONENT AEGEAN IN QUESTION: HOW THE POLITICS WORKED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?

The Turkish Republic was ruled by a single party in two decades following the foundation, 1923 and 1945. With a charismatic revolutionary leader and a ruling cadre with the power of legitimacy, which was inherited from the victory of Independence, this period might be marked as a period having a limited political sphere. However, together with a formal form of exercising politics via two political parties namely SCF and TpCF, the single party period had its unique ways of exercising politics. By saying exercising politics, in an informal form, a kind of action of conveying ideas and presenting alternative outlooks publicly can be understood. Izmir and its inhabitants, with a wide range of press organs which were the sufficient tools to present ideas publicly, could use these tools efficiently to carry critiques and alternative point of views to the state and its policies. Therefore, even though the political sphere of the single party regime might be evaluated as sparse in terms of political activities of ordinary people, it should be noted here that until 1946 there was not a direct electoral system which provided a firsthand participation of people to politics, there were remarkable number of examples of presenting points of views raised by ordinary people including merchants and publicists. This part of the present study treats these examples as a way of exercising politics and observes these examples to reach out that in which bases the politics was exercised. Drawing on a variety of local sources including newspapers such as Yeni Asır, Serbes, Cumhuriyet, Hizmet and Işık, this

part asks how politics worked at a local level during a single party regime rule of the Turkish Republic. The reason behind chasing these papers specifically is the fact that these press organs were directly attached to the political side, which was in a more detached position to the single party and its policies. For example, the editor in chief of Hizmet Zeynel Besim and the editor in chief of Yeni Asır, İsmail Hakkı Bey, were very close names to Fethi Bey, the chair of SCF. In fact, during Fethi Bey's visit to Izmir to organize the local branch of the new opposition party Zeynel Besim Bey accompanied the leader of the party. Further, these two publicists were invited to SCF by Fethi Bey in person.²⁵² Hence, press and politics were very interwoven during the period. This interwoven relation provides an extremely helpful stage to follow politics. Together with presenting daily developments, articles penned by the local publicists, interviews with significant local figures, and the interpretation of the local/national news regarding economic, social, and political developments explain a great deal about the outlooks of the people who were mostly in the critical stance in the political conjuncture of the period. In short, it might not be wrong to treat these newspapers as a kind of local place where politics was exercised. On the other hand, those who benefit from these resources to grab some clues about politics should be aware that it is a definite fact that there were limits in publicly discussing politics and being a side in politics in a single party regime. However, archival research on these resources can indicate that even very fragile issues regarding the single party regime, such as the Party itself, became a matter of debate.

²⁵² İhsan Sabri Balkaya, *1930 Sonun Başlangıcı Serbest Fırka'nın İzmir'de Teşkilatlanma Serüveni*, (Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi, 2016), p. 53.

Another point is that those who were familiar with the region and the developments of the early years of the Turkish Republic know that the Western Anatolia, specifically Izmir, and the political stance of the inhabitants of this region are generally associated with an opposition position during that period. The concept of “opponent Aegean” is a prevalent assumption in Modern Turkish historiography. This argument relies on the massive support from the region towards SCF during the rural deprivation. In his very inspiring study, Emrence locates the Party and the massive support gained from society into the economic crisis of the period and presents very sufficient explanation about the social dynamics of this massive support. Emrence explicitly defines the SCF case as a kind of politics of unrest/dissent.²⁵³ The other account which focuses on the SCF case by centralizing its lenses on Aegean region to read the journey of opposition party in the region is Eyüp Öz’s “*Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası ve Muhalif Ege.*”²⁵⁴ While Öz addresses the larger political developments which caused the emergence of the party, his focus on socio-economic realities of the daily life in the city such as excessive costs of living, unending problems in the settlement process and the abuse of local party figures such as *mutemeds*, presents a very comprehensive local and societal contexts which were very specific to Izmir.

On the other hand, the politics, both in the form of opposition or not, should not be limited to the SCF’s journey. Because the archival research of this study on the above-mentioned sources shows that there were several issues related with politics and policies of the ruling party from the international politics to a micro policy about the

²⁵³ Cem Emrence, 99 *Günlük Muhalefet Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014).

²⁵⁴ Eyüp Öz, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası ve Muhalif Ege*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019).

peasantry in the press. Because this study treats these sources as grounds for politics, aims to see the workings of the politics by going beyond the SCF experience and also aims to correlate the politics and daily life realities, it presents alternative subjects and developments as the cases of politics at the local level. The present study grabbed three subjects from these resources in terms of exercising politics by local actors at a local level during the single party rule.

The first one is the election of 1931. This election is significant because of two reasons. Firstly, it is a historically significant case because for the first time in the single-party regime, non-party candidates could run in elections. Secondly, it was the first stage in which individuals could reflect their political positions after the SCF withdrew from politics in such a context where the independent candidates were permitted to participate in elections. This step by the CHF which opened the political sphere to non-party candidates found an important place in the political circles of Izmir. Those who aimed to be a deputy with an independent position used the press to display their opinions and more importantly their programmes. In the first part of the study, these programmes of the people who differentiated themselves from the ruling party and the workings of the elected deputies for the independent seats will be examined to see the borders of the opposition and the grounds in which they were differentiated themselves from the ruling party. Secondly, those who take a glance at the local press in Izmir will encounter a very specific term in use by the local elites such as publicists, this term is *fırkacılık* which can be called partisanship. By chasing this concept and its usage by the individuals, this part aims to reach how the ruling party and its working were perceived by individuals and also to understand in which themes the party was associated and not associated. The third subject which was determined as one of the

frequent themes in the local political circles is the introduction of some concepts to public discussions such as socialism and state socialism. By focusing on the reasons why and how these concepts started to find a place in these discussions, this part underlines the changing positions in politics.

4.1. The Elections of 1931: The Independent, *Müstakil*, Candidates, and the Borders of Opposition

Shortly after experiencing the existence of a formal canal to canalize the social dissents with the SCF and also experiencing the abolishment of this mechanism, the ruling party initiated a new policy in 1931. This mechanism was independent candidates, *müstakil*. By allowing non-party candidates to run for election, an alternative mechanism was presented to society as another form of tool to reflect their point of views. The mechanism would work as follows: CHF would leave some spots in specific polling districts for the non-CHF candidates. In accordance with this aim, in twenty-two polling districts, thirty seats were left for non-CHF candidates. The motivation behind this attempt to introduce a new mechanism for the electoral system was to bring a kind of opposition and supervision mechanism to the parliament and to the party, however with individuals rather than groups such as SCF. This is the same motivation as the emergence of SCF. According to Demirel, the party preferred individuals rather than a group as an opposition and supervision mechanisms with the aim of preventing the emergence of an alternative organization to CHF. The expectation from the independent deputies was not turning their opposition into an

organized opposition movement with social support.²⁵⁵ The motivation of this attempt was explained by the party secretariat as follows:²⁵⁶

In the election, no candidates would be presented on behalf of the party for 30 seats in the 22 polling districts determined by the General Secretariat of the Party. The purpose is to allow room for the citizens who aim to work in the parliament as a deputy, but with a different programme from other than that of CHF. In this way, CHF would continue to expect to benefit from the critiques and examinations of those who embrace different principles than CHF and also expect to benefit from the comparison of these principles on the public.

As a matter of fact, at that period of the single party regime it is possible to see the pursuit of such mechanisms to supervise the party and the government, and also to direct popular discontent of people which came to light with the SCF to another, but a controlled group. In 1939, this pursuit turned into an official mechanism within the ruling party and parliament. The independent group in the party and parliament was formed officially in 1939 with the Fifth Congress of the CHF.²⁵⁷ Upon the request of İsmet İnönü and with a change in the regulation of CHF, an independent group which consisted of twenty-one deputies was established. This group was allowed to make their own decisions in accordance with their group decision in parliament. The group members could participate in CHF's parliament discussions but could not vote, make speeches, or participate in the government. Members of the independent group, *müstakil* group were selected by the Congress of CHF.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Ahmet Demirel, *Tek Partinin İktidarı*, p. 116.

²⁵⁶ Esat Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları,1992), p. 170.

²⁵⁷ CHP Beşinci Büyük Kurultay Zabıtları, Ulus Basımevi, Ankara, 1939, p. 31.

²⁵⁸ Hakkı Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, (İstanbul: Boyut Yayınları, 2012), p. 125.

On the other hand, prior to the independent group in parliament and in the party, the independent individuals could be seen as the first attempt to create a separate group with the duty of supervision of the government. In the direction of the decision made by CHF's cadres, in 1931 elections, independent candidates were presented on the CHF's list. As mentioned previously, the Party did not indicate candidates for thirty positions in twenty-two polling districts. For Izmir elections, two places were left vacant for the independent candidates. At this point, it should be remembered that the electoral system during the mentioned period was indirect, which means the second-round voters could vote for candidates. There was no mass voting reflecting the general will, which was one of the main opposition subjects. Hence, in such a context voting became a confusing action for these voters. Because most did not comprehend how they could vote for other candidates rather than CHF candidates. As can be seen from the examples in the following parts, elections with non-party candidates became a controversial issue among the second-round voters. Upon raising these confusions, Mustafa Kemal made a personal declaration which indicated his request from second-round voters to vote for independent candidates in April 1931. In this declaration, Mustafa Kemal stated that it is expected from the voters to vote for candidates who are not supporters of the Party's programme by the Party. Because the Party believe that they should be a subject of criticism. However, there were essential features to be expected from these candidates, being secular, republican, nationalist, and sincere. ²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ İkinci Seçmenlere Beyanname, 20.04.1931, <https://atam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/tamim-son-Onar%C4%B1ld%C4%B1.pdf>

In addition to the attempts of opening the parliament to non-CHF deputies, there was another initiation in this election. The Party also aimed to expand the scale of representation in parliament. In this direction, like independent candidates, the Party also decided to nominate peasants and workers as candidates in the elections. In fact, this decision had broad repercussions in the press and several names were discussed as candidates and as representatives of peasants and workers. To illustrate, according to a statement in the press, Memduh Şevket Bey would interview workers who work in the underground in Zonguldak and select one literate candidate among these workers as the representative of the workers. Also, peasant deputies would be selected among the citizens who personally plow the lands.²⁶⁰ According to Demirel, giving places to the ordinary workers and peasants in the parliament is a way to prevent the bureaucratization of the parliament. This initiation could also be read as a message to ordinary people that ordinary people also could be a deputy in the parliament.²⁶¹ While this argument is a very consistent one, it should also be considered that peasants and urban poor like workers were experiencing a destructive economic crisis at this period, as previously explained. Therefore, giving a place to workers and peasants could be considered from the lenses of receiving public support by giving voices to these classes, specifically, after seeing the massive support towards SCF.

Following these decisions and declarations which encouraged voters to vote for independent candidates and also encouraged the ones who wanted to be an independent candidate, several individuals made an application to be a candidate, especially in big

²⁶⁰ “Çiftçi ve İşçi Mebuslar Seçiliyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 10.04.1931.

²⁶¹ Demirel, *Tek Partinin İktidarı*, p. 118.

cities like Izmir. Those who wanted to be a candidate sent letters to the press. These letters included their programme and their ideas about specific issues such as electoral law and critiques of the economic policies of CHF. These letters and programmes which were penned by the candidates are very valuable tools to examine politics directly and to realize differences in the programme of those who differ from CHF.

The first candidate, Halif Tevfik Bey, was a lawyer in Izmir. In the beginning of his letter written to *Yeni Asır*, Halil Tevfik Bey first introduced himself as a devoted citizen to his country and an extreme supporter of the Republic. After this introduction, he presented his position as an opponent to economic affairs and sorted out his opinions about the economic policies of the CHF. Monopolies were the pivotal subjects of his opposition. To him, monopolies should be eliminated, lavishness in Monopolies should be ended, and the taxes which were collected on behalf of the Monopoly Administration should be used for the wealth and improvement of people. In addition to the Monopolies, another point which he underlined is the Agricultural Bank. Because the Agricultural Bank should have provided enough support to agricultural producers seasonally, which was one of the most crucial issues of the agricultural segment during the economic crisis. Halil Tevfik Bey presented various suggestions about exporting, which is a very coherent suggestion with the region's economic features. He highlighted the need to find new export channels for national production and an organization promoting national production in the international market. In spite of the fact that he declared his opposition within the borders of economic aspects, he also addressed some political concerns as well. The electoral system is one of the points of his concern. He underlines the necessity of the power of the people in the laws and stated his critiques about the electoral system by saying that

“Turkish nation did not need a guardian and an intermediary in order to elect a deputy.” To him, Turkish nation proved its competence in interiorizing new and the most civilized laws in the past five years.²⁶² When the socio-economic context of the period and the region is taken into consideration, it is a fact that Halil Tevfik Bey’s programme referred to the economic conditions of Izmir.

The second candidate was one of the well-known political figures from the opponent side in Izmir, Dr. Mustafa Ali Bey, also declared his candidacy for parliament. As the previous chair of the Tire branch of SCF, Dr. Mustafa Bey was a noteworthy political figure in the city. According to the newspaper, he was a notable individual in Tire, Bayındır and Ödemiş districts for his idealistic personality, *mefkureci*. Dr. Mustafa Bey also sent his three-article programme to the newspaper. The first article was an introduction part and the candidate introduced himself as a liberal, secular, and Republican. Following this introduction part, he strongly addressed what he would in the parliament. In his programme which included very political ideas, he stated that he would defend freedom of thought and any kind of personal liberties in parliament. The second article in the programme was about the political system and he suggested a new governmental system. In his letter, it is suggested that the legislative power, *kuvve-i teşriye*, should be divided into two units namely *Mebusan* and *Ayan*, and that a separation between the executive power, *kuvve-i icraiye*, and the legislative power, *kuvve-i teşriye*, and an independent justice system, *kuvve-i adliye*. It is also proposed that the president of the Republic should be elected by the general will, *re'y-i âm*, and should be in an independent position from the political parties. The third point of the

²⁶² “İzmir Ve Aydın'da Müstakil Olarak Namzetliklerini Koyan Zevatın Fikirleri,” *Yeni Asır*, 20.04.1931

programme is about the economic aspects. The candidate located his outlook about the economy into individualism rather than statism. According to him, the state's intervention in the economy should be of minimum level. After Mustafa Ali Bey's programme arrived in the newspaper, an interview with Dr. Mustafa Bey was conducted. In this interview, Mustafa Bey declares his attitudes toward the CHF and the CHF's policy regarding independent candidates. He stated that CHF's decision to give a place to the independents in the parliament demonstrates that CHF considered presence of an opposition in the parliament as a legitimate and an essential aspect of our democracy. He also declared that they had to believe that CHF would be tolerant towards its opponents. Finally, Dr. Mustafa Bey underlines that he would advocate his ideal which was defended by millions of people around the world, despite there being limited numbers of liberal deputies. Upon the question of in what aspects are you opponent to CHF's programme and policies, Mustafa Bey pointed out several aspects of CHF in terms of political and social organization. To him, while the ruling party is a democrat party which internalizes the ideals of the unity, *vahdet*, and homogeneity, *tecniis*, in the political and social organization, liberals like him support the improvement of the social organization through diversities, *tenevvi*. Personal liberties and individualism were also highlighted by him as the key factors for the improvement of Turkish society.²⁶³

Hulusi Bey who defined himself as Republican, secular and populist was one of the candidates for the independent positions and also a proponent of liberalism. He objected to the indirect electoral system (two-level elections) and the single-party

²⁶³ "Liberal Bir Mebus Namzetinin Fikirleri," *Yeni Asır*, 22.04.1931.

regime. Hulusi Bey defended the necessity of the opposition in parliament and an assembly of notables, *ayan*, which was elected by the people. Monopolies and other restrictions were the other issues criticized by Hulusi Bey. In addition to the critiques with a political tone, Hulusi Bey also questioned some implementations which were exercised by the state, the military recruiting process was one of them. According to his outlook, a youth organization could be responsible for military training. In this way, military service can be completed in a brief time. He was also of the opinion that there was a need for foreign capital in the country. ²⁶⁴

Another programme which was sent to be published publicly belonged to lawyer, Ömer Bey. In his very brief and goal-driven programme, Ömer Bey suggested the necessity for reforms in the educational system, abolishment of the bureaucratic procedures in the state offices and bringing prosperity to the peasants. According to his programme, Monopolies should be abolished as far as possible, the freedom of the press should be raised, taxes should be reduced, and the state should struggle against corruption. ²⁶⁵

The tobacco Monopoly should be maintained with the banderol system. He is a defender of long-term loaning in the fiscal system and suggested educational system reforms. This programme is significant because it targeted the state's officials directly. İsmail Hakkı Bey criticized the bureaucratic processes and the state officials. The law of the public officials was considered as the source of corruption by İsmail Hakkı; in

²⁶⁴ "Yarın İntihap Var," *Yeni Asır*, 23.04.1931.

²⁶⁵ "Yarın İntihap Var," *Yeni Asır*, 23.04.1931.

addition to this law, the civil law and some of the laws he laws regarding debt enforcement and bankruptcy were also pointed out as the points which should be changed according to the current conditions of the life. Reorganization of the state offices such as civil registry, rearrangement of the taxes, a new and direct electoral system rather than a two-levelled system and the importance of the freedom of press and thought were also included in İsmail Hakkı Bey's programme.²⁶⁶

These were the names of the ones whose political positions were separated from the ruling party and prepared a political programme to represent in the parliament. When these programmes were examined, it is possible to see that while some of them were more detailed and more ideologically oriented with truly clear alternatives to the existing policies in the direction of an ideological principle, the other ones mostly resembled a kind of wish list. Regardless of their contents, these declarations are very telling documents to see the political discussions and/or opposition at a local level. As regards the content of these documents, it is possible to observe that after the elimination of SCF, which made it possible to canalize the social dissent of people to an opposition movement, similar issues were raised by these political figures. On the other hand, some different points which were mostly political issues such as electoral system were also addressed in these documents to be defended in the parliament.

In addition to these names who sent their programmes, another twenty names ran for an independent candidacy. According to the declaration signed by Sezai Bey who was the Mayor of Izmir and the responsible official for the elections, the other independent

²⁶⁶ "Yarın İntihap Var," *Yeni Asır*, 23.04.1931.

candidates as follows: Lawyer Halit Tevfik Bey, lawyer Ömer Fuat Bey, author Raif Nezih Bey, author Abdullah Abidin Bey, Sürmeli Z. Yusuf Ziya Bey, farmer Mehmet Nuri Bey, Dr. Mustafa Ali Bey, dentist Ahmet Hakkı Bey, retired colonel Mehmet Hulusi Bey, Hidayet Keşfi Bey, İsmail Hakkı Bey, lawyer Hasan Reşat Bey, reserve officer Hamdi Bey, lawyer Alemdar Z. Lütfi Bey, dentist Refik Şevket Bey, Dr. Kayyum Z. Suat, Sabri Bey from Urla, lawyer Emin Aslan Bey from Torbalı, Hüsnü Bey from İsmet Paşa neighborhood and owner of Yavuz library Hüsnü Bey.²⁶⁷

Following the announcement of independent candidates, the election was held on 24 April 1931. However, although the headquarter of CHF suggested second-round voters to vote for the independent candidates, the voting process was painful for both second-round voters and the independent candidates. On the election day, there was a confusion regarding the independent candidates, most of the second-round voters including the head of the stock market of Izmir and instructors at the schools in Izmir discussed whether they should vote for independent candidates or not. According to the reporter who followed the elections in the field, second round voters thought that they should not vote for independent candidates by referencing the 81st article of the Party's regulation. On the other hand, they also tried to take Mustafa Kemal's declaration into consideration which suggested voting for independents. The voting process was started with 336 second-round voters by Sezai Bey, mayor of the city. According to the reporter, there were individuals who accused the second-round voters of disobeying Mustafa Kemal's declaration. At the end of the voting, independent candidates received forty-three votes. Halil Bey, Halil Menteşe, who was one of the

²⁶⁷ "Yarın İntihap Var," *Yeni Asır*, 23.04.1931.

significant political figures of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic and acted as the minister of foreign affairs and minister of justice between 1915 and 1918, and Şekip Bey were elected as the independent deputies from the Izmir district. At this point, it should be noted here that both names did not stand as a candidate in elections. These names were elected with the votes of the second-round voters who were members of CHF at the same time. However, with the votes from Seferihisar district, Şekip Bey lost his position. One of the independent candidates Hüsni Bey, owner of Yavuz library, was elected as deputy from Izmir. ²⁶⁸

“The deputies were chosen, but not elected” ²⁶⁹

Although, election was completed and one of the independent candidates became a deputy in the parliament with the duty of bringing a different programme from CHF, reflection of the election continued in the press in a form of disappointment. The ruling party, electoral system, local representatives of CHF, and most importantly Mustafa Kemal’s ideal and his declaration to bring non-CHF deputies to the parliament were the most discussed points in the press organs. Most publicists who were also political figures in the city strongly criticized the entire election process. However, the most stressed aspect of the election was second-round voters and their disobedience to the decision of the leader of CHF which suggested voting for independent candidates.

²⁶⁸ “İzmir İntihap Dedikoduları,” *Yeni Asır*, 26.04.1931.

²⁶⁹ “İntihabattan Sonra,” *Yeni Asır*, 27.04.1931.

The result of the election makes clear that most of the second-round voters hesitated to vote for independent candidates, even though they were encouraged to do by the very head of the Party. This conflict between the representatives of CHF at the local and those at the center of CHF is an interesting point to understand the relation between the local representatives of the party and the center of the party. There can be several interpretations regarding why second-round voters did not follow the directions from the top of the ruling party. According to Koçak, it was the result of the second-round voters being more partisan than the headquarter of the party.²⁷⁰ However, it can also be a key factor that the second-round voters could not have taken the possible risk of being labelled as those who voted for opponent figures in the limited political and social environment in which they were living and working. When the social and economic compositions of these voters were examined, it can be seen that most of the voters were state officials such as teachers in Izmir. According to Hakkı Uyar's analysis regarding the socio-economic bases of the second-route voters of the 1935 election in Denizli, Konya, Bursa and Mardin, state bureaucrats and the local notables were the core of the second-route voters. These figures can change according to the socio-economic features of the district; for example, while the small artisans were the local notables in Bursa, in Mardin they were the leaders of the tribes who were counted as the local notables.²⁷¹ Consequently, it was a fact that voters who had various political and economic relations with the central government abstained from voting for non-CHF candidates, despite the directions from the center of the party. For example,

²⁷⁰ Cemil Koçak, "Parliament Membership during the Single-Party System in Turkey (1925-1945)," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], 3 | 2005, <http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/497>.

²⁷¹ Hakkı Uyar, "Türkiye'de Tek Parti Döneminde Chp'nin Toplumsal Kökenleri: İkinci Seçmenler Örneği (1935)," *Bilgi ve Bellek*, no.2, 2004.

in the Istanbul elections, none of forty-eight independent candidates received even a single vote from the second-round voters and four seats left empty, in spite of the fact that one vote was sufficient enough to be elected as deputy.²⁷² Unlike Istanbul, two independent positions which were reserved for independent candidates were filled in Izmir with the votes from Seferihisar, not from the center of Izmir. But this could not be sufficient to eliminate the reaction in the press, on the contrary, the critiques became bitter.

It is thanks to Mustafa Kemal's declaration, which indicates the necessity of an independent group in the parliament, the party became the principal target of political critiques by the local opponents. Because the declaration provided a ground on which the party and Mustafa Kemal separated from each other. Therefore, any criticizing comment which targets the electoral system gained legitimate ground. Because both the opponents and Mustafa Kemal, the Saviour of the nation and the leader of the Republic, were aiming the same thing which was bringing a supervision force to parliament and government. But second-round voters who were the members of CHF failed this shared aim. This was a very proper starting point to build the opposition on it. From now on, the opposition enabled to find an opportunity to build their critiques on the idea that the Party's members, especially in the local organizations, deviate from the leadership's instructions. Many of the second-round voters were accused of not being able to figure out Mustafa Kemal's ideal. In an article, for example, narrow-minded politicians who could not understand the intent and advanced thoughts of the head of the state and the partisans, *firkacılar*, were blamed for

²⁷² Demirel, *Tek Partinin İktidarı*, p. 135.

preventing the realization of the leader's ideal.²⁷³ Accusations about neglecting the leader's ideal against the Party and the members of the Party did not stop. On the first day of the fourth term of the Assembly, *Yeni Asır* gave a headline as "A narrow-minded party which cannot be deemed worthy of its Great Leader." In the same article, second-round voters were demonstrated as the ones who were tied to the party with personal benefits. Also, while Mustafa Kemal was depicted as the one who prioritizes the prosperity of the nation, the second-round voters were depicted as those who acted only for themselves and ignored the ideals of the leader.²⁷⁴

Examples which were presented so far might be useful to interpret the making politics in the single-party regime of the Turkish Republic. These examples tell that the opposition side put a clear distinction between the party and government, and Mustafa Kemal to raise a reaction or a critique. Mustafa Kemal was separated from the discussions. The discourse of the opposition side shows that while there was the Gazi, founder of the Republic and the Saviour of the nation, with a great horizon for his nation on one side, on the other side, there was the party and party members which were depicted as the responsible of the absence of well-functioning economic and political system. This separation between the leader and the party provided a legitimate ground for opposition. In addition to legitimacy, this separation also provided another concept for the opposition circle in the city, which was partisanship, *firkacılık*. The concept of *firkacılık* turned into a very safe and useful tool of making politics, specifically making opposition in Izmir. Thanks to this concept which was a way of

²⁷³ "Gazi Muhalefet İstiyordu," *Yeni Asır*, 03.05.1931.

²⁷⁴ "Meclis Açılırken," *Yeni Asır*, 04.05.1931.

challenging the policies of the ruling party, opposition made exercising politics possible by abstracting the target of the opposition while underlining the issues. Because this concept was very prevalent in the political agenda, it will be the focus of the next part. However, before mentioning this useful and pragmatic concept, which was used by the opposition, the following part will deal with the two independent deputies of Izmir and their works in the parliament to be able to see the borders of the independency from the ruling party.

The Independents in the parliament: Halil Menteşe and Hüsni Kitapçı

Turning back to the elections of 1931, as indicated before, two independent deputies namely Halil Bey (later Menteşe) and Hüsni Bey (later Kitapçı) became the representatives of the Izmir in the fourth term of the GNA. Nationally speaking, twenty independent deputies were elected, but two of the deputies from Kütahya were not approved by GNA. Hence, there were eighteen independent deputies in the parliament. However, ten of them participated in CHF shortly after, which means only eight deputies served as independent deputy in the parliament between 4 May 1931 and 23 December 1934.²⁷⁵ The deputies who were elected from Izmir remained independent until the end of the term. That one of the aims of this chapter is to see the borders of the differentiation from the ruling party, it is essential to ask to what extent these deputies acted as opposition in the parliament. But it should also be noted that one of the deputies Halil Bey was not an official candidate in the elections,

²⁷⁵ Yasemin Türkkân Tunali, “Tek Partili Siyasi Hayatta Demokrasiyi Yaşatma Çabaları: IV. Dönem Bağımsız Milletvekillerinin Meclis Faaliyetleri (1931-1934),” *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 20 (2020), p. 670.

but he was elected by the initiative of the second-round voters. This aspect should be kept in mind.

This makes these two candidates remarkable for two reasons. First it enables us to grasp an example of ones who differed from the CHF's programme and remained independent in parliament. Hüsnü Bey's works in parliament might demonstrate how a non-CHF deputy worked in politics. In addition to this, Halil Bey is significant because of another aspect which is that he was a very major political figure from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic, and also, he was not an official independent candidate but elected as deputy. Given the fact that despite not being a candidate, he was in the polling building during the election, he might know that he would be elected. According to reporter, Halil Bey was not pleased with the number of votes to him.²⁷⁶ When these clues are taken into consideration, it is not wrong to assume that Halil Bey as one of the pioneer figures of the Committee of Union and Progress, a minister of the Ottoman governments the president of the Council of State of the Ottoman Empire and holder of many important political positions in the previous periods, did not share the same political outlook with the CHF's cadres and he had personal frictions with the other major figures within the ruling party. On the other hand, he wanted to be a candidate but did not want to make propaganda with other candidates as a very pivotal political figure in history. Therefore, voting for Halil Bey might be a result of local connections and discussions within the party and other state officials. As regards politics in practice, the works of these deputies such as speeches and

²⁷⁶ "İzmir İntihap Dedikoduları," *Yeni Asır*, 26.04.1931.

legislative proposals might be quite pointer to understand what their political positions which differentiate them from CHF's programme was, if there were any.

To begin with, Halil Bey was a significant figure in the late Ottoman politics. Also, he was a very assertive political figure in the early years of the Republican period, as well. He was a deputy candidate of TpCF in the midterm elections of Izmir district in 1924. Considering these aspects, his political opposition to CHF can be evaluated as an obvious fact. However, after his first term in parliament, Halil Bey participated in CHF and continued to be a CHF deputy in the fifth, sixth and seventh terms of the Assembly. What this tells about the features of politics might be that it shows how unstable the political positions are.

In the session in which Mustafa Kemal was elected as the president for the third time in 4, May 1931, Halil Bey made his first move parliament by opening a methodological debate regarding the presidential election. Claiming that the election of 1931 was an immediate election, the presidential election should be held in November, not in May; otherwise, the term of presidency would have been expanded by six months.²⁷⁷ Claims of Halil Bey were disaffirmed by other deputies, especially Recep Bey, the General Secretariat of CHF, strongly opposed the claim. Following the methodological discussion, Mustafa Kemal was elected as President in the same session. However, this case did not remain limited with this parliament discussion. A telegram which was sent to parliament with the signature of Mehmet Ali Bey, the interior minister of Damat Ferit Paşa's government and one of the 150 people who were exiled from the Republic

²⁷⁷ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c001/tbmm04001001.pdf>, p. 3-4

of Turkey shortly after the War of Independence, on behalf of the Association of the Political Refugees, *Siyasi Mülteciler Cemiyeti*, created more discussion and disturbance. The telegram was sent shortly after Halil Bey launched a discussion about the presidential elections and sent directly to Mustafa Kemal. Then, it was forwarded by Mustafa Kemal to the parliament to respond. The telegram was protesting the parliament and presidency elections by claiming that they were against the Constitution.²⁷⁸ As soon as telegram was read in the session, most of the deputies criticized the telegram and protested these names by stating that those were traitors, impertinent ones, betrayers who accepted Sevres.²⁷⁹ Upon this telegram, as the initiator of a debate over the presidential elections, Halil Bey had to explain his position in this issue, after a long introduction with a full of historical information about these names and indicated that his criticisms were about the procedure of the election, not to legitimacy of the election.²⁸⁰ In parallel vein with this instance, upon the question of a deputy to government regarding the damaging activities of some newspapers, Halil Bey made a speech. In this speech which included historical and legal references to the Ottoman Empire's political developments and his memoirs about these periods, Halil Bey stated that the presence of opposing press increased the

²⁷⁸ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c001/tbmm04001003.pdf>, p. 35

Mustafa Kemal Paşa, Çankaya, Ankara

Kanunu Esasiye mugayir olan teşriî intihabat ile gayri kanunî Riyaset intihabım şiddetle protesto ederiz.

Türkiye Siyasî Mültecileri Cemiyeti

²⁷⁹ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c001/tbmm04001003.pdf>, p. 36

²⁸⁰ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c001/tbmm04001003.pdf>, p. 38

security crisis in the country. In the time of the Depression, the most harmful thing was the security crisis. For his reason, he stated that if the press intentionally threatened the authority of the state, according to him, this was a betrayal.²⁸¹ As can be seen from these declarations, Halil Bey's position when the issue was regime and security was in the same alignment with CHF.

The distinctive point, but also a limited distinction, which differentiated Halil Bey's position from CHF policies might be a small number of economic policies. The economic depression in the 1930s was one of the most stressed issues in his agenda. His speech about the 1933 budget included very crucial points such as the Agricultural Bank, taxes, agricultural indebtedness in the agricultural segment and interest rates of the credits.²⁸² Therefore, it is accurate that the material realities of people were on the agenda. However, this is not specific to him, most of the deputies echoed these issues in parliament. The major point which can be seen as a distinction can be the distinction in the outlook on foreign capital. According to Halil Bey, the purpose of the national economy is to provide economic balance, to improve the national industry and reduce the need for import. However, the resources of the country were not sufficient for realizing these purposes, because this aim required expertise and technology, which there was not in the country. Halil Bey suggested that foreign expertise and capital should be invited to the country without any hesitation and fear of foreignness. Besides, he also suggested borrowing foreign loans in the direction of this programme.

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²⁸¹ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c003/tbmm04003022.pdf>, p. 42

²⁸² <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c015/tbmm04015050.pdf>, p. 81-84

²⁸³ Türkkan Tunalı, *Tek Partili Siyasi Hayatta Demokrasiyi Yaşatma Çabaları*, p. 679

The parliament discussions on the legislative proposal to monopolize importing tea, sugar, and coffee by the government in 1932 is a very explanatory example which provided a picture regarding the perception of Halil Bey's in the state's position in the economic system. In the discussions between Mustafa Şerif Bey, the Minister of Finance, Halil Bey declared his opponency to the law. According to him, monopoly policies in the different areas of the economy limited business circle of country, *iş sahası*. Those who had invested capital for doing business in these areas would be affected undesirably from these policies. Contrary to this policy, expanding the business circle is the thing which should be done in the time of the crisis. Upon these claims, the Minister, Şeref Bey, declared that “with the existing law, the state has never intervened in trade.”²⁸⁴ He strongly added that these precautions were the necessary steps which had to be taken according to the conditions of the economic situation. The liberalism and statism discussions began at this point. While the Minister accused Halil Bey of not understanding the precautions which were taken according to economic conditions and necessities due to his liberal way of thinking. Halil Bey denied this accusation and defined his point of view about economic affairs as a supporter of national economy and not a liberal. He also added that he is also a defender of protectionism but within some limitations. But according to him, the government exceeded the statist principles and intervened in the economy even if there was no need.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c009/tbmm04009076.pdf>, p. 446

²⁸⁵ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c009/tbmm04009076.pdf>, p. 447

The existence of Halil Bey in the parliament can be evaluated also from the points of class and the state. Based on Halil Bey's declarations regarding the Agricultural Bank in 1937, Gücüm claims that Halil Bey was the representative of the opposition towards statist policies in economy on behalf of the big landowners together with Hüsni Bey, the second independent deputy of Izmir (Muğla deputy in 1937). In this discussion, Halil Bey defended that transforming the saving funds into a state bank in 1888 was a mistake. According to him, the state should provide financial resources to the agricultural segment via the specific institutions of farmers, not via the Agricultural Bank. He also supported the idea that the Agricultural Bank should provide credit to big landowners who had sufficient guarantee rather than small-land owners who did not have any guarantee. But, to him, credit cooperatives should provide credit for small peasantry.²⁸⁶ Actually, prior to this law and discussion about Agricultural Bank, that Halil Bey appreciated the changing of economic administration in 1933 when Celal Bayar became the Minister of Finance and thanked Bayar for declaring his support to private enterprise. He also presented his support to Bayar's new economic programme which made the borders of the statism brighter.

On the other hand, Halil Bey also presented a legislative proposal to the parliament which suggested a form of direct intervention of the state to the economy. His proposal included banning importing some products which can be produced in the country as long as the crisis continues, but his proposal was declined by the committees.²²⁵ This can be seen as a contradiction to his ideas criticizing the state intervention, but this

²⁸⁶ Kuntay Gücüm, "Türkiye'de Devletçilik ve Sınıflar," in *Teori*, Kasım (2016), p. 36-38.

case also demonstrates the determinant power of the daily developments like crisis in shaping and changing the stances regarding the economic policies.

When these actions of Halil Bey in parliament are taken into consideration, it can be concluded that Halil Bey's statism, he defined himself as a statist in discussions, indicated a limited state intervention in economy which provides a sphere for private enterprise. It can also be understood that his idea about statism is in a flexible form which was open to change according to the daily conditions. At this point, the significant question is that in what extent the local agenda of Izmir brought by him into the politics. This question can be answered in two ways. The impacts of economic depression which was undergone by society could find a place in some speeches, but not with a special focus of Izmir's socio-economic conditions such as tobacco producers/workers or immigrant's problems. On the other hand, given the fact that Halil Bey's political background, it might not be surprising to see high politics and some personal and historical debates in his agenda.

The second independent deputy from Izmir was Hüsnü Bey. On the contrary to Halil Bey, Hüsnü Bey did not have a background in politics, and he was a candidate in the elections. He was a merchant in Izmir who had served as judicial official in the Ottoman Empire. In the parliament, Hüsnü Bey actively participated in the discussion, especially about the taxes, monopolies, legal regulations about the settlement and debts. Before detailing these points individually which were very crucial issues of Izmir at that period, it might be helpful to mention the basic opposition points of Hüsnü Bey. As can be estimated, the monopolies were the point of his critiques. But his speeches explain that his opposition is due to the absence of these state institutions'

capacity for trading. In a discussion regarding the budget of the Administration of Tobacco Monopoly in 1932, Hüsni Bey clearly explained his critiques about the Monopolies. According to him, the Tobacco Monopoly could not make a profitable trade due to the absence of business knowledge. For instance, the Administration should have considered selling more products at cheaper prices in order to prevent smuggling and supporting peasants. Further, because the Monopoly Administration could not manipulate the prices, the foreign companies bought very high-quality tobacco at a low price. Hüsni Bey demanded that the Administration would buy tobacco from producers. Based on his conversation with some peasants, he stated that peasants would accept even sale on instalments. Finally, he stated that it is the government's duty to save these producers from the hands of merchants.²⁸⁷ Therefore, in his point of view, the Monopoly Administration should be criticized due to the absence of business mindset in the organization rather than the state's intervention. The proposal obviously proves that he accepts state protection over agricultural producers under some conditions. As an addition to Tobacco Monopoly, during the budget discussion of the Administration of Gunpowder and Explosive Substance Monopoly, he said that there was no need to maintain this Administration by underlining the financial conditions of the institution. According to him, factories which belonged to Administration consumed all their revenues. Therefore, disposing of these institutions was more profitable.²⁸⁸ Another critical position of him was the law regarding the postal services between ports of Turkey, he overtly opposed to the law which took these services under the state control and impose the establishment of

²⁸⁷ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c008/tbmm04008052.pdf>, p. 261-262.

²⁸⁸ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c008/tbmm04008053.pdf>, p. 298-299.

ta company. Because several people invested in this business and bought ferries for this business, even the state encouraged this sector and gave them some exemptions. There was no need to establish a Monopoly in this sector.²⁸⁹ Consequently, Hüsni Bey believed that the state should not intervene in every business sphere; if the private sector was insufficient, the state should exist. Actually, this was the CHF's policy, but he claimed that the government prevented private sector in every year and limited the business area of the private sector.²⁹⁰

In more regionally speaking, those who examine the activities of the deputy of Izmir can observe that his positions on some issues were perfectly matching with the Izmir's socio-economic conditions and inhabitant's agenda such as high taxes, exchangees' debts, problems related to settlement and abandoned property procedures, and high interest rates in the agricultural segment. He suggested a reduction on the debts of exchangees, *mübadil*, within the limits of their default settlement rights.²⁹¹ He also opposed some calculations and implementations of Equalization Tax, *muvazene* by stating that the ministry of Finance counted each income and each salary as a subject of taxation. His suggestion was to increase the minimum wage to be exempted from this tax from 20 to 40 *liras*.²⁹² In a similar vein to the suggestions regarding some reductions over the debts and taxes, Hüsni Bey also proposed a new regulation regarding the Economic Depression Tax, which was supposed to be collected from

²⁸⁹ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c009/tbmm04009081.pdf>, p. 523-525.

²⁹⁰ Türkan Tunali, *Tek Partili Siyasi Hayatta Demokrasiyi Yaşatma Çabaları*, p. 686.

²⁹¹ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c003/tbmm04003028.pdf>, p. 125.

²⁹² <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c008/tbmm04008052.pdf>, p. 251.

buildings. To him, buildings with income should be taxed rather than those used for living.²⁹³ In 1934, again Hüsni Bey strongly objected to the excessive and unequal taxation of people by defending that when a tax is levied on people, society's conditions and fairness should be considered. Again, he defended that properties without income should not be subject to tax. Moreover, this speech is a particularly good example to see the reflection of the socio-economic realities of people to the politics. Because it shows that Hüsni Bey aimed to describe the economic and living conditions of the people. He stressed a very crucial reality of society and described the situation as "those who visited villages and towns know that there are numerous of people who could not afford salt, it is a proven fact that there were citizens who could not pay the Road Money and consented the imprisonment."²⁹⁴

As a result, the 1931 election with independent candidates was an unusual incident which made room for those not affiliated with the CHF to engage in politics. The reflection of this attempt was intense in Izmir. Following the elimination of SCF and such a period of search for a new way to channel the very harsh socio-economic conditions, the independent candidates received considerable attention from local figures who were already in political circles in Izmir. Most of them tried to be a deputy from the Izmir polling district and made their endeavor visible by writing programmes to be published publicly. In fact, two places which were left for independent candidates were filled in Izmir. Hence, at the local level, this attempt to expand exercising politics reached its target in Izmir. However, when the second stage of the new policy which

²⁹³ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c008/tbmm04008054.pdf>, p. 358.

²⁹⁴ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c021/tbmm04021039.pdf>, p. 68.

is bringing opposition to the parliament individually is examined, it can be said that within the limits of the single party regime, economic policies of the government such as taxes and Monopolies could be addressed and criticized. More importantly, alternative policies and implementations were suggested by the deputies. However, it should be noted that these critiques and suggestions were mostly related to economic policies of the single party regime. After chasing the politics which surfaced from local politics and went to parliament, the next part will deal with the politics in more local level, it will be about the politics against the Party, *fırka*, in Izmir.

4.2. *Fırka/Fırkacılık*: A Discursive Way of Opposition

As the previous part which briefly stressed the fact that there was a line separating the Party, CHF, and Mustafa Kemal, in terms of being a subject of opposition, the party, *fırka*, was a quite practical discursive apparatus in politics to declare any dissent. Especially, after the elimination of SCF from the political sphere, the Party, *fırka*, was located into the center of the politics and socio-economic difficulties by those who were critical of the ruling party. For instance, shortly after the SCF was closed, the Party was defined as: “For years, the People's Party had fallen into a deep sleep in the narrow space of its own thoughts and perceptions of its own environment. It had put an enormous wall of negligence against the critiques and objections.”²⁹⁵ According to the supporters of SCF, with the impact of SCF, the ruling party had to change its indifferent attitudes towards the people’s concerns and produce some policies for these concerns. For example, the abolishment of the party trustees, *mutemed* can be

²⁹⁵ “Maziye ve Hale Bir Bakış,” *Yeni Asır*, 16.03.1931.

evaluated within this framework. Because during Fethi Bey's visit to Izmir, massive protests showed that this position was at the center of public anger.

Those who examined the local press after the SCF was closed can see the impact of it on society. Fethi Bey and the SCF were seen as a kind of rescuer. On the other hand, when the party programme is examined, it is not surprising to see this impact. Having a perfectly matching programme with the daily realities of people, SCF could easily reach its target group in Western Anatolia and in Izmir. At this point, it might be particularly useful to briefly explain these matching points to understand the reason for this massive support which will turn into a dissent against the CHF, *fırka*, after a short time. For example, the second article of the programme underlines the tax issue. It suggests that taxes should not exceed the people's economic capacity and they should be reduced. This suggestion should not be surprising, because taxation was a crucial issue for Fethi Bey. The tithe, *aşar*, was abolished at the time he was the prime minister.²⁹⁶ The sixth article also highlighted another major trouble of the peasants' economic conditions which needed to be improved, which is the Agricultural Bank. The Bank's reorganization was suggested by the party's programme. Besides, the eighth article was also very crucial for Izmir's conditions. As a city experiencing several problematical issues related to settlement and abandoned property, the article which indicates the cruciality of the decreasing the bureaucratic procedures and struggling against misconduct and corruption clearly overlaps with the features of the city. When the abundance of the allegations towards corruption in settlement and

²⁹⁶ Osman Okyar and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, *Atatürk, Okyar ve Çok Partili Türkiye Fethi Okyar'ın Anıları*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014), p. 73.

abandoned property issues in Izmir is taken into consideration, this article presented a well-suited solution to people of Izmir. Hence, massive support was not very unsurprising. The most important thing here is that this programme obviously demonstrates how the realities of daily life were determinant factors in the shaping of politics. In practice, the reflection of this programme was overt. The municipality election in 1930 was a success for the new party. SCF won the election in Kuşadası, Seferihisar, Bergama, Menemen, Urla, Buca, Armutlu and Kınık.²⁹⁷ However, the journey of SCF could not continue for a long time, but its impact remained in the public opinion and public debates in Izmir. It constituted a base for politics, and the local figures who had supported SCF started to locate their criticism into this foundation. Even after the party was closed, seeing articles which deal with the question of why SCF was closed might be very telling to grasp the expectations of the public figures, who were mostly local elites, from the new party.²⁹⁸ That the expectation was enormous the conflict became extensive. It seems that while difficulties like economic crisis were sufficient reasons to be opponent, with the elimination of the SCF who was believed to be solver of these difficulties boosted the presumption against the CHF, *fırka*. Henceforth, the Party was assumed not only as the responsible organ of economic difficulties, but also a preventer of the solutions to people's problems.

At this point, an emphasis on one of the local elites Zeynel Besim Bey, chief editor of Hizmet newspaper and a supporter of SCF, should be quite beneficial to see how a local elite withdrew from CHF. It is essential to understand this withdrawal, because

²⁹⁷ Cemil Koçak, *Belgelerle İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), p. 311.

²⁹⁸ "Tarihten Bir Yaprak Serbes Fırka Nasıl Açıldı, Nasıl Kapandı," *Yeni Asır*, 22.04.1931.

when the societal foundations of CHF are examined, it is possible expect that from an intellectual in Izmir being closer to the Party, which was the case actually. However, Zeynel Besim Bey resigned from the party. He explained his reasons of withdrawal as follows: “I attacked the reign of *mutemeds*, I opposed Monopolies, I criticized the economic policies. And finally, I left the issues which can be solved in time, but I asked, at least, to end of the reign of *mutemeds*.”²⁹⁹ In his letter of resignation, he also stated very clearly the foundations of his disengagement from the party as follows:

My proposal for dismissal of the *mutemeds* who act like a tyranny and oppressed the people by violating the law, and as a start the dismissal of the *mutemed* of Alaşehir was declined. Also, my proposal which suggests that the party should gain back the people’s attachment via an important cleaning in the party was declined. Protecting the tyrant by ignoring the people is the worst thing, to me.³⁰⁰

After indicating his critiques, Zeynel Besim Bey declared his loyalty to Mustafa Kemal by saying: “I am a man of principles and ideas, and a follower of Gazi.”³⁰¹ Zeynel Besim Bey’s letter pointed out one more prominent issue which is that the socio-economic conditions which sharply hit society, were not the only reason behind the support towards the SCF. Even though these difficulties can explain the massive support, the dynamics within the CHF also contributed to the unrest among local intellectuals and elites. At this point it should be underlined that, with the Regulation of 1931, the trusteeship, *mutemedlik*, was abolished by article 70 which imposed the

²⁹⁹ “Zeynel Besim B. Tasrih Ediyor Halk Fırkasına Dönmedim Diyor,” *Son Posta*, 08.10.1930.

³⁰⁰ Eyüp Öz, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası ve Muhالیf Ege*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019), p. 123.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

election of the local committees of party.³⁰² Therefore, CHF and the concept, which is used to criticize the party, *fırka* and *fırkacılık* became a widespread theme in the politic environment of the city. In the local press, these concepts *fırka* and *fırkacılık* turn out to be practical tools to direct the complaints. While, in some cases there was a concrete target by indicating *fırka* or *fırkacılık*, in some cases, they were used to indicate an ambiguous target. Turning back to the local affairs, the response of CHF to the massive support towards the SCF from a wide range of social groups such as peasants and local intellectuals was rapid. Four deputies namely Celal Bey, Münir Bey, Vasıf Bey, and Halit Bey visited the city, shortly after the closure of SCF in December 1930. As *Yeni Asır* reported, the reasons for this tour were rehabilitating the organization of the Party and to understand the reason of the opponency.³⁰³ This tour and the meetings organized by the deputies are good examples of the grounds to observe the relation between the Party and people. The committee visited Ödemiş, Tire, Bayındır and Torbalı. The reporter of *Yeni Asır* depicted the arriving of the committee as follows; they were encountered with an indifference, *lakaydı*. According to the reporter, the reason behind this indifference from society is complaints about Dr. Mustafa Bey, *mutemed*. Besides, according to the reporter, the connection between the commission and the people was also limited. To illustrate, there were only a limited number of supporters and only state officials in the meetings. Further, in another meeting, also there were only 80 people, even though the meeting was declared before and local intellectuals were invited to the meeting. Like the previous meeting, also in

³⁰² CHF Program ve Nizamnamesi, (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1931), p. 15.

³⁰³ “Ağır Mesuliyetler,” *Yeni Asır*, 07.12.1930.

this meeting most of the attendees were officials, teachers and those who were CHF supporters all along. In this meeting, Vasıf Bey made a speech and admitted mistakes and that the Party neglected the youth and intellectuals. But he also added that in the new organization of the Party, youth and intellectuals would be the ones which the Party rely on. Relying on his observations on the tour, the reporter evaluates the meetings and the visit as a limited connection. To him, deputies reached only a limited number of people who were already the supporters of CHF. The reporter also underlined that the visit did not inspire confidence in the people.³⁰⁴

After Ödemiş, the committee visited Tire and organized a meeting here, as well. Security forces invited the people from the coffee houses and a crowd gathered in the meeting places. Then, the meeting turned into a conference. According to the reporter there was not any intellectual who could explain the difficulties experienced by people by presenting proof. While people knew their problems, they could not analyze and convey to the deputies. A tobacco producer Sait Ağa complained about the tobacco merchants and Monopoly Administration and explained their actions to Vasıf Bey and a young namely Muammer demanded a middle school for Tire. According to the reporter, the meeting was unsuccessful because the sufferings of the region could not be conveyed adequately to the authorities.³⁰⁵

While the mentioned stops of the tour demonstrate how the representatives of the Party were received by the local people, the committee's visit to Menemen is a more

³⁰⁴ “CHF Teşkilat Heyeti Ödemiş’te Lakaydı ile Karşılandı Halk Fırkanın Samimiyetini Sözle Değil İşle Ölçüyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 03.12.1930.

³⁰⁵ “Tire’de CHF,” *Yeni Asır*, 07.12.1930.

explaining case to see this connection between the Part and the people. In the meeting, people complained about agricultural prices, the Agricultural Bank, heavy taxes and neglect of the youth. However, they also complained about the ones who represented the party at the local level. According to their claims, some people from the Party prevented an exhibition which would be organized by the Turkish Hearth, *Türk Ocağı*, because of personal concerns. They also stated that as long as these kinds of people were in power, success could not be realized. In addition to this, a young person who defined himself as a supporter of SCF, *Serbestçi*, also spoke in the meeting and asked whether it is a crime to support this party. This young person also claimed that some people from CHF insulted them, and they did not have the right to behave like this.³⁰⁶

On the other hand, even though the tour was reported as an unsuccessful attempt by the reporters, Vasıf Bey evaluated this tour as a successful visit, and he also stated that he was pleased because of the people's sympathy towards the committee. He also declared that he believed that the committee's explanation regarding the conditions of the country would affect the perception of the party in a positive way.³⁰⁷ Following the tour in the peripheral regions in Izmir, the committee arrived in Izmir and organized a series of meetings with diverse groups of people. As can be understood from the article, teachers and doctors of the city were one of the groups. However, the other major group in the city targeted by the CHF deputies were the merchants. The city's merchants were invited to the meeting, and 15 of them joined. In the meeting, Vasıf

³⁰⁶ "Menemen'de Halk Dertlerini Döktü," *Yeni Asır*, 09.12.1930.

³⁰⁷ "Vilayette Bir İçtima," *Yeni Asır*, 07.12.1930.

Bey's speech was very remarkable. Vasif Bey said that in every region in the tour, they see that there was propaganda to accuse the Party as the only responsible for the crisis of country, but, to him, the crisis was global. Further, with this speech, Vasif Bey declared that in the new organization attempts initiated by the party, it is aimed the participation of all people from the lowest strata of the society to the highest one. For this reason, he invited merchants to participate in the Party. In doing so, he believed they could dictate their economic needs to the politicians. This is an interesting example which challenge the established perception regarding the nature of the single-party regime of the Turkish Republic. It shows that the Party needed social support. Rather than being an autonomous entity, CHF's attempts to reorganize the party branches, to invite the merchants to the party in Izmir shortly after the case of SCF and to organize a tour to the city in order to explain the projected attempts shows that the single party regime did not feel safe enough to be blind to the popular support, but instead, there was a search of explanation of policies, accepting the responsibilities and expanding the popular support for the Party. As Metinsoy stated, the single-party state of the Turkish Republic should not be evaluated as a rigid bureaucratic entity which is autonomous from the society, contrary, it should be seen as an entity which needed to paid attention to social conditions and popular opinion.³⁰⁸ In this respect, the tour of CHF deputies in Izmir and their meetings in such a context when the dissent was at top level due to the end of SCF is a significant case.

³⁰⁸ Murat Metinsoy, "Fragile Hegemony, Flexible Authoritarianism, And Governing from Below: Politicians' Reports in Early Republican Turkey," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 43 (2011), p. 699–719.

Several well-known merchants of Izmir participated in the meeting and presented their complaints to the CHF committee. Their complaints were predictable, such as taxes, monopolies, and economic policies. However, after the meeting merchant Fevzi sent a letter to *Yeni Asır* and explained why he did not attend the meeting and the reasons for his position against the Party. These documents explain very clearly the other side's perceptions in this relation. The letter started with very well-defined statement: "We do not believe in their truthfulness." According to the letter, it is believed that CHF deputies could not learn the merchants' problems from this meeting, because the authorities of the party did not learn from several meetings, reports, newspaper articles and applications to the government. Secondly, these meetings were nothing, but only party propaganda, for him. Merchant Fevzi toughly criticized Vasıf Bey's invitation to merchants to the party and evaluates this invitation as a kind of condition to pay attention to merchants' problems. To him, this meeting was organized to push merchants to participate in the party, not to understand their problems.³⁰⁹ Merchant Fevzi Bey continued to display his ideas about this meeting between the Party and merchants. In this article, published after 2 days, we learned that the name, Fevzi, was not his real name. In his second article, according to Fevzi Bey, CHF's desire to everyone became a party member, even though they had different political ideas is an attempt to form the tower of babel in political manner.³¹⁰ In his final letter, Fevzi Bey continued his critiques regarding the organization and the administration of the Party. He claimed that the administration system of the party was based on a kind of military discipline which did not accept any objection to any decision made in the center of the

³⁰⁹ "Niçin Bulunmadılar," *Yeni Asır*, 10.12.1930.

³¹⁰ "Ne İçin Halk Fırkasına Girmiyoruz," *Yeni Asır*, 16.12.1930.

Party. According to him, those who hold a position in the party were chosen from those who could not object to any decision. Secondly, he criticized the party for not being confident enough and defended that the center administration of the Party did not trust even their own members and approached everyone with suspicion. The expectation of the Party, to him, was to obey the orders. Because of the distrust towards people, the party could not nominate more than the quota in the elections. In addition to these ideas of merchants about the Party, the local press also shows that merchants as the ones whose voices against the Party's economic policies were the loudest one hesitated from the possible negative effects of these conversations with the deputies. In a similar vein to the anonymously signed letters as indicated above, one of the reasons for not attending was stated as the risk of being labelled and preventing their business such as getting credit from Business Bank. Because they claimed that those who supported SCF in municipality election lost their jobs after the election.³¹¹ All in all, it is an obvious reality that the merchants did not evaluate this communication with the CHF deputies as a helpful step for their problems by assuming that the party was indifferent to these complaints.

On the other hand, while the tour of CHF deputies depicts the relation between the individuals and the Party as a mistrustful one by criticizing the Party and the workings of the Party, in daily life the impact of *firkacılık/fırka* is an evident reality. Mostly, these concepts were associated with corruption and nepotism. In an article penned by İsmail Hakkı, the municipality was the center of critiques; it was accused of being a resource of distributing beneficence to the members of CHF, *firkacı*. In the minds of

³¹¹ "Ne İçin Gitmemişlerdir," *Yeni Asır*, 11.12.1930.

municipality officials, priority was the Party, *fırka*, because the party was the resource of their prosperity, while the law was secondary in their mind. However, the reason behind this accusation was the mayor's absence from his office during the daytime. According to İsmail Hakkı, as an institution who took its power from people, the mayor did not concern about the people's problems and was not attentive to the people's works in the Municipality.³¹² Another case also displays that people's perception about CHF. Upon the whisperings about the resignation of Behçet Salih Bey who was the head of CHF in Izmir, the press asked what the relevant thing for people in this news is. According to the news, 999 of total 1000 total citizens would ask what the relevant thing to us is. Since the Party could not be interiorized by people.³¹³

In addition to this kind of perception regarding CHF, another point of critique is about the trade and party relationship. Local networks which include politics and trade are very related issues in Izmir's political and economic agenda. As one of the major centers of trade, dealing with trade in Izmir was very profitable, but also competitive, as well. There were many merchants and companies in the city from various sectors. In such a context, the political power and connections can put some merchants in front in this competition. The impact of the Party in trade was also evident. To illustrate, being a member of the local branches of CHF might have been useful to conduct trade activities. When the composition of the local administrators of CHF in Western Anatolia is examined, it is possible to see that they were mostly local entrepreneurs.

³¹² "Vazife Aşkı," *Yeni Asır*, 06.03.1931.

³¹³ "CHF Teşkilatı," *Yeni Asır*, 20.07.1931.

To illustrate, in Aydın most of the upper party administrators were entrepreneurs, especially those in the textile industry.³¹⁴ Therefore, it is not a wrong assumption to say that trade and politics were very interwoven. To illustrate, in the case of timber trade party connections were pointed out as the reasons of corruption. According to article, titled as the “the claw of the Party reaches even to the trade, the accusation was that being a Party member opened the ways of gaining license to import timber. Şerif Şerif Remzi Bey, who was a member of CHF’s administration could not obtain the required license to import the timbers in time. According to the writer, somehow by benefiting from a law, he could get the license. The reason behind this, for the author, is because he is from CHF. For this reason, he was not subject to the law; the law was subject to him.³¹⁵ In another case in which the trade, politics, the Party, and the Monopoly Administration were interwoven with each other, Talat Bey was accused of being protected by the Monopoly. According to claims of the newspaper, Turgut Bey who was a member of administration board of CHF, had 250.000 kilogram of tobacco and stocked these products in his warehouse since 1928. This tobacco was to be bought by the Monopoly Administration. The accusation started at that point. The author criticized the Administration for buying from such a rich merchant rather than buying from small producers such as Hasan Ağa with 1500 kilograms and Mehmet Çavuş with 2000 kilograms. In a very satiric tone, author asks what a coincidence that the Monopoly Administration run to help Talat Bey who was from the Party’s administration board.³¹⁶

³¹⁴ Murat Metinsoy, “Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet ve Toplum,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, 2010. p. 31.

³¹⁵ “Fırka Pençesi,” *Yeni Asır*, 11.06.1931.

³¹⁶ “Halkçılıkları Tersine Geyilmiş Plütokrasi Küllahına Benziyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 14.06.1931.

In conclusion, the concepts of *fırka/fırkacılık*, were very frequent concepts on the agenda of the city's daily life from politics to trade. Politics, mostly opposition, was generally located on these concepts by the opposition. While the Party and the people who were engaged to it were associated with corruption and also with indifference towards the society by the local opposition, these concepts provide very practical discursive tools to opposition to raise their criticisms towards the ruling party by separating the Party from the leadership. The portray of the opposition and politics in Izmir, shortly after the SCF experience was ended, looked like this. On the other hand, the opposition towards CHF was not the only feature to describe the politics within the political circles in the city. It is interesting to see that when the crisis deepened, the search for an economic paradigm surfaced in the following years and the state increased its protectionist economic policies, the politics/opposition was shaped differently in Izmir. This change is the next part's inquiry.

4.3. What the State Should Do: Unstable Positions between Statism and Liberalism in Economy

Despite Izmir is known for its economic-based opposition to CHF during the early 1930s, this political position was not a stable position during the single-party period. At the time of searching for economic strategies during the 1930s, Izmir's well-known image of supporting liberal views in economy and criticizing the state's presence in economy did not remain same. The intellectual debates regarding the economic principles of liberalism and that of statism were very prevalent in the press. In fact, such an existence of this kind of economic and intellectual discussion in press should

not be unexpected. In more detail, the Monopolies, trade licenses, quota implementations in trading activities, restrictions on some importing activities and state support towards the agricultural sector can be counted as the subjects of these discussions. In Izmir, the above-mentioned issues were the main subjects of the city's economic agenda. Especially, in *Yeni Asır* newspaper, most of the local intellectuals discussed the economic principles of socialism, capitalism, statism, and other economic outlooks from the point of searching the well-suited programme for Turkish economy. To illustrate, there was a debate between Burhan Asaf Bey and an anonymous author of the *Yeni Asır* regarding the principles of liberalism and socialism.³¹⁷ This kind of polemic was also on a national scale. The most known example was the one between Şevket Süreyya Aydemir and Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın. As the representatives of two different *ecole*, respectively, in *Kadro* and *Fikir Hareketleri* journals, political and economic paradigms of statism and liberalism were debated.³¹⁸

In that time of search of economic paradigm in 1932, Celal Bayar became Minister of Finance. The expectations of the press in Izmir from this change were expanding the business circle, increasing the exporting and industrial activities and free importing of some items.³¹⁹ Whereas, after the declaration of Celal Bayar which explained his projected economic policy, the expectations were declined in the press. The disappointment was explained as “after all, İsmet Paşa's cabinet belongs to

³¹⁷ “Biz Liberal Miyiz,” *Yeni Asır* 13.07.1931.

“Bizim İstediklerimiz,” *Yeni Asır* 20.09.1931.

³¹⁸ Temuçin Faik Ertan, *Atatürk Döneminde Devletçilik-Liberalizm Tartışmaları, Şevket Süreyya(Aydemir)-Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın) Polemiği*, (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınları, 2010).

³¹⁹ “İktisat Vekili Celal Bey İşe Başladı,” *Yeni Asır*, 11.09.1932.

CHF.” When these intellectual debates which were very related with the actual issues of people including trade and agricultural segments were evident in public, the Turkish state increased its intervention to economy in the early 1930s. The agricultural sector was aimed to be protected via different policies such as direct purchasing. In such a context, there was an unexpected change in İzmir’s press, the concepts of planning and some other related concepts such as state socialism were brought to debate by contemporary intellectuals. According to Kazgan, the concept of planning was introduced by some intellectuals in journal of Kadro namely Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, Vedat Nedim Tör and Burhan Asaf Belge and they defended the statist policies in economy.³²⁰ At this point, the significance of İsmail Hüsrev Tökin should be emphasized, his observations in the villages of Anatolia in 1930s were frequently used in this research. In short, planning which means more state presence in economy was on the political and intellectual agenda. This policy can seem contrary to that of İzmir’s public opinion which was previously in a critical position towards the state intervention to economy, especially the trade circles. However, state interventionism was the distinctive point of the 1930s, together with the promotion of domestic industry.³²¹ The statism basically was based on the principle that the state’s leading role as producer and investor in the urban sector.³²² Prior to the first five-year plan which was prepared and implemented between 1934 and 1938, there were some references to planning and state socialism in the press. What the publicists understand from these concepts was actually some concrete economic policies which will be

³²⁰ Gülten Kazgan, *Tanzimat’tan 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye Ekonomisi*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006), p. 60.

³²¹ Owen and Pamuk, *A History of Middle East*, p. 10.

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

addressed below. On the other hand, it should also be underlined that when the Russia and its economic paradigm such as planning became familiar to the public opinion, these concepts such as planning were emphasized by the press. The local press showed an interest on Russia and its method in economy, which was planning, *planlaşmak*.³²³

Those who investigated the local discussions about the economy at the end of 1931 can see how political positions such as being liberal or being opponent were changing in accordance with the economic realities. The mentioned article was the most explaining document for this fact. As the leader of the principles of liberal economies and the supporter of the minimum existence of the state in business, especially in trade, *Yeni Asır* newspaper, admitted that the principles of liberal ecole and that of the capitalist economy failed to overcome to difficulties brought by the economic depression. According to article, even in England, France and America, state was called to control economy, to put it in an order, and to administrate the economy. Besides, even those who objected to socialism were treating it as a way of salvation. In the article, planning, which was designed according to new conditions of the global economy, was addressed as the reason behind the success of the Soviets. According to writer, this is the deficiency of Turkey's economy, not having a plan. The author gave a very significant example of this deficiency. To him, when the tobacco companies abuse the tobacco producers, most people demanded that the Tobacco Monopoly would intervene in this issue similarly with other cases such as fig, grape, cotton or Japan and Russian dumping cases. All people say: "state should intervene." However, the intervention could only be realized if and when there was a plan." The author who

³²³ "Acele Bir İhtiyaç," *Yeni Asır*, 15.10.1931.

signed the article by A.A. concluded his article by saying “It is needed a plan to protect our agriculture and promote our industry.”³²⁴ In another article which criticizes the tobacco policies of CHF, Russia and the steps which were taken in economic sphere were indicated as the sample case to see the contribution and improvements which brought by the plan.³²⁵ The interest on Russia and the economic program imposed by Russia continued in press. Upon the visit of Litvinof to Turkey, the commissar of foreign affairs of Russia, it is suggested that rather than seeking help from America to organize the economy, it should be followed Russia’s step of planning. Further, this visit was seen as way of benefiting from the experiences of Russia.³²⁶

In addition to the interest on the term of planning policy in search of economic strategies, another term which was discussed by the previous opposition circles is the concept of state socialism. Those who examine the local press in İzmir at the end of 1931 could probably realize the frequent use of the concept of state socialism. Within the context of period, this term was used mostly as the equivalent of statism by the publicist. It is interesting to see that while the complaints about the state’s presence in the economy were the center of the dissent, now the local press, who had been the liberal side of the political scale, strongly defended the state’s existence in the economy. Even more, the economic system which is under the state administration was defended and recommended by the authors.³²⁷ The impact of Russia on the İzmir’s

³²⁴ “Acele Bir İhtiyaç,” *Yeni Asır*, 15.10.1931.

³²⁵ “Muvaffak Olmak İçin,” *Yeni Asır*, 28.10.1931.

³²⁶ “Litvinof Yoldaş Ankaraya Gidiyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 26.10.1931.

³²⁷ “Yıkılan Dünya Yakında Yapılan Dünya,” *Yeni Asır*, 29.11.1931.

press was not limited with these opinion articles, in the following days, newspaper published a series of article about the new life in new Russia, which explained various aspects of the economic structure in Russia such as agricultural structure in the country and collective and state farms, *soykoz* and *kolhoz*.³²⁸

In practice, this interest towards Russia's economic advancements through planning from the press, turned into a plan in Turkey, as well. The first five-year plan was launched in 1934 with the guidance of Soviet advisors.³²⁹ Turkey became the first country which adopted planning after Russia.³³⁰ In more detail, with adaptation of statist policies in 1932, the Turkish state took the duty of primary actor as the capital accumulator with a series of industrialization policies. The five-year industrialization plan was designed to coordinate the investment programs of the state economic enterprises.³³¹ The plan included industrial investment projects in different sectors which were mostly consumer goods and imported goods.³³² The investments were to be in textiles, sugar, mining, paper and cellulose, ceramic, glass, and simple chemical products. At this point, it might be beneficial to mention the period after the initiation of the first plan in 1934. Even such a responsibility in the hands of the state was welcomed by the local press in İzmir. This plan was evaluated as the step towards the major aim of the Turkish Revolution which is the realization of *Yüksek Hayat* by

³²⁸ "Yeni Rusya'da Hayat," *Yeni Asır*, 17.12.1931.

³²⁹ Owen and Pamuk, *A History of Middle East*, p. 18.

³³⁰ Kazgan, *Tanzimat'tan 21. Yüzyıla*, p. 60.

³³¹ Şevket Pamuk, "Political Economy of Industrialization in Turkey," *MERIP Reports*, Jan. 1981, No. 93, Turkey: The Generals Take Over (Jan., 1981), p. 2.

³³² Mehmet Gökhan Polatoğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyet Devleti'nin İlk Planlı Dönem Sanayileşme Faaliyetleri (1934-1938)*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2020), p. 89.

providing an opportunity to vast majority of people to gain vital and civilized needs. Turning back to the period prior to the five-year plan and to İzmir, there is one more point to emphasize at this point. In addition to the power of the material realities in the political positions including economic policies, the other point is that looking at the expectations of the society from the state socialism, socialism or planning could be very helpful to understand how these concepts were understood by people in practice. Examples from the press demonstrates that the authors mostly assess these concepts as tools for contributing to living conditions of the life of people with very concrete implementations such as enacting a Labor Law to regulate the working conditions of the workers. For instance, from the following article in which the terms of socialism and statism were mentioned, it can be understood that socialism was seen as a power to provide work for everyone. In the same article which penned to discuss the speech of İsmat Paşa in the Congress of Medicine regarding nutrition, the author discussed the food issue with references to socialism and statism. To him, in a well-organized statist economy, everyone could reach work and, hence, food. In order to provide this, the state capital was needed. Another interesting point in this article is that the tone of the statement was very strong and full of analogies. To illustrate, the author defined socialism as a power which takes dessert and champagne from one's table but puts many others' table bread and soup.³³³ In another article, surprisingly, CHF was accused of not being statist and also accused of not escaping from the influence of capitalism by the author in *Yeni Asır* who had been strongly against the statist policies.

³³³ "Herkese Tam Gıda," *Yeni Asır*, 25.09.1931.

The reason of this accusation was the incapability of CHF to provide a labor politics and also the indifference of the party in protecting the port workers' rights.³³⁴

In conclusion, the political positions of the public figures in the local press who were generally assumed as the opposition side should not be seen as fixed entities. Debates around the concepts such as statism, socialism and state socialism and their potential effects to Turkish economy in İzmir's press illustrate that when the crisis deepened political positions were changed.

4.4. Conclusion

The region of Western Anatolia and İzmir as the urban center of the region were generally approached as the heart of the opposition towards CHF in the formative years of the Republic. In some respects, this is a valid interpretation. As the most beaten region of the country by the Global Depression, individuals channeled their support to an alternative organization whose principles and programme were perfectly matched to their complaints. On the other hand, evaluating political positions, in this case the position is opposition, within this limited sample case caused an ignorance of the multifaceted aspects of opposition.

This chapter demonstrated the complexity of the opposition. Utilizing from specific cases, the elections of 1931, concepts of *fırka/fırkacılık* and some concepts which were new in the public debates such as socialism, state socialism and statism, this part

³³⁴ "Herkese İş, Herkese Hayat ve Herkese Refah," *Yeni Asır*, 16.9.1931.

portrayed different figures from several social groups and different cases in which individuals separated themselves from the ruling party and in which they criticized the ruling party. These examples provided three points regarding the nature of the politics and opposition in the city. The first one is that, as can be understood from the first case, after the opposition channel was closed, the new channel, independent candidates, gained attention from people in Izmir. While the independent candidates presented their programme to the public and tried to be in parliament, the election was perceived as a failure because of not voting for independent candidates. Secondly, in local level politics, the Party, CHF was located into the very center of the critiques. It was generally associated with corruption and indifference to society by referring to the *fırka* and *fırkacılık* concepts. The third point is that the local press and the debates on these organs clearly show that how the concepts and political positions could change in accordance with the economic and social realities, even from being a supporter of liberalism to that of socialism.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The present study aims to explore the societal aspects of Izmir in the formative years of the Turkish Republic. Utilizing from local resources and the Modern Turkish historiography related to the region, the study aims to reveal local themes which can provide more nuanced understanding of the early Republican Turkey and also provide a local and micro processes in Izmir which undergo simultaneously with the macro processes. This is the departing point of the present study. Generally associated with the city's demographic components, Izmir and Western Anatolia are still discussed in the homogenization/Turkification paradigm. While the exodus of the Greek inhabitants of the region and the massive population exchange has changed the city's socio-economic and socio-political conditions radically; this paradigm limits to reveal socio-economic realities of the period. Thanks to an extensive local press collection in Izmir, it is possible to reach and follow the agenda in the city. With an examination on these local press organs, the study suggests that three major and local themes to understand the socio-economic and socio-political realities in Izmir by going beyond the grand narrative of demographic homogenization and reach the experiences of the inhabitants of Izmir at the period of “post-Turkification/homogenization.”

The results of the investigation on these local sources show that agricultural sector, abandoned property issue and local politics were the most embracing themes to explain and to analyze the local socio-economic and socio-political realities in the city. These

themes and the sub-themes clearly portray the impacts of the macro processes in the local contexts. After this investigation, the second phase of the study comes into view. The second aim of this study is to investigate the interaction between the state and society on these themes. The major inquiry to be asked about these themes is how society located state and state related entities such as institutions, laws, and the ruling party into these grounds. In Izmir case, these entities are unique and local to the region such as the Monopoly Administration, the Agricultural Bank, the law which regulates the abandoned property politics, local officials of the ruling party.

As the center of export-based agricultural production, the agricultural sector in Izmir's occupies a considerable place in the city's socio-economic dimensions. In parallel to this crucial place, the agricultural sector, including producers and other actors in these production activities is full of issues to be discussed. The findings of the study indicate three major themes to be identified as the most crucial themes in the agricultural sector. The agricultural prices, the taxation of the agricultural segment and the highly indebted agricultural segment are these sub themes which can provide a full depiction of the agricultural segment of Izmir in the early years of the Republic. As the most frequent issues in the local press and in the local complaints sent to state officials, these themes were examined in detail by Chapter 2. By treating these themes as the most frequent reality of the daily life in the agricultural sector, this chapter counts these themes as the most frequent grounds of the relation between the state, related institutions or officials, and the individuals. In this chapter, each sub theme was dealt with by questioning the same question which is the how the state was located in this issue by individuals. Each of the sub themes indicates different perceptions and expectations. In more detail, given the fact that the agricultural prices which is the first sub theme

were the major agenda and they declined sharply after the Global Depression, it can be concluded that the state institutions like the Monopolies were called to intervene the prices with various methods such as price manipulations. In addition to the price issue, the state was expected to have another duty in some specific cases such as the foreign companies' abuse/exploitation became reality, which is the very particular component of the agricultural production and the trade in Izmir. Protection of the producers against the foreign companies' actions was another responsibility of the state. The related state institutions were frequently invited to this business relation as the protector of peasants. Taxation, on the other hand, can be marked as one of the sufferings in daily life. Even though the Turkish state aimed to reduce the tax burden from the agricultural sector, the cumulative effects of the crisis which had started with the Global Depression made this burden unbearable. The taxation policies of the Turkish state were the focus of complaints. Demands of society were tax reductions and tax amnesties. When the question is asked the question of what the state's position in this issue was, the answer might be both, the creator, and the solver of the problem. While the state was blamed for unequal distribution of the tax obligations among the social groups and unfunctional mechanisms of tax assessments, it was also evaluated as the authority to apply individually. On the other hand, the position of the state against this social burden in this segment of society is not counted as indifference. Tax reductions and tax amnesties were presented as the solution, mostly to solve daily and urgent needs rather than structural reforms for tax burden on the agricultural sector. Indebtedness, as the result of the previous two developments in society, was destructive for the agricultural segment. Almost every producer had a tax or a credit debt to the state institutions such as the Agricultural Bank. In addition to the official loaning, the disruptive element of this issue was individual credit providers which were

known as usurers or *murabahacı*. Usuriousness was prevalent in the rural part of the region, and it also became a social crisis. The absence of a well-organized and well-functioning credit providing mechanism by the state institutions caused the state and the individuals to come face to face in this point. While the Agricultural Bank was at the center of complaints, the demand was an intervention from the state to the credit providing system by monopolizing the right to give permission to be an individual creditor, regulating interest rates and introducing more accessible credit institutions for small peasantry like credit cooperatives. However, these mechanisms could not be realized by the state. In conclusion, while this chapter reveals the three major societal realities of the inhabitants in Izmir's rural segment in the early years of the Turkish Republic, it also provides an outlook about the interplay between the individuals and the state on these grounds. The study highlights the daily realities which emerged from the society itself, as mentioned three themes, and also the significance of the material realities in analyzing the relations between the state and society.

Examination of the local resources also displays the reflections of the population exchange in practice. The reflection of the population exchange in daily life is the revealing of the new conflict zones between the state and society, and among the society itself. This contested ground is the politics of abandoned property. As the originator of new interests, new collective and personal identities, new legal regulations, and new alliances, abandoned property became a conflict ground in the early years of the Republic in Izmir. In order to benefit from this economic resource, individuals both with rights to benefit and other ones without rights claimed share over these properties. With a special focus on three cases which represent different aspects of the distribution policies of the abandoned property, this part claims that even though

the population exchange, which is evaluated as one of the instruments by Turkish nation-state to homogenize the population in the process of Turkish nation building process, in societal level it caused new micro differences. The mentioned cases indicate that complexities which were brought by migration and population exchange processes, led to the birth of new complexities. While the first case indicates how the fact of abandoned property overlapped with the landless peasantry reality of the early Republican Turkey, the case also underlines another major point of the Turkish Republic in the formative years. Local power relations of the single-party state in daily life surfaced in distribution of the abandoned property. A party trustee, *mutemed*, and peasants had a disagreement over an abandoned property and claimed right over this land. Second case underlines the fact that how Turkish state was incapable of ending the property allocation process without causing new contested grounds. Focusing on the liquidation law in 1931, this case illustrates how the legislation attempts of the state to end and solve the ongoing problems of the property distribution process constituted new conflict zones which were perceived as threat to the equality notion in the society. The third case was selected to display another indirect impact of the population exchange, which is the emergence of the new collective identities which were built around the abandoned property. When some implementations of the state were perceived as unfair in the property issue, an interest group was formed with the aim of protecting rights against the deficient implementations of the state institutions. This is a very telling case in order to comprehend the significance of property issues in the relation between the state and society. To sum up, this chapter aims to highlight the significance of the reflections of the macro policies in daily life. In the demographic homogenization process, the reflection was surfacing of the new conflict zones such as abandoned property between individuals.

Those who investigate the local press in Izmir can see that politics was a dominant subject in the press. Almost every day a specific issue from the national or local agenda was discussed by the publicists. The interesting point here is that these publicists were also, in a sense, political figures. For this reason, following these public discussions provides explicit data to observe the political insights of these figures. When politics and especially the opposition became a question, SCF experience in Izmir and Western Anatolia was generally addressed. SCF and its programme was perfectly matched Izmir's local agenda. By presenting exact solutions for settlement related problems, economic crisis and rural deprivation, the party could reach its target group. On the other hand, evaluating the exercising politics within the frame of the massive support to SCF and limiting the political activities in the city with the SCF experience might cause a wrong presumption about the nature of politics in the city by generalizing the entire political activities within the opposition paradigm. Locating the city into a natural opposition position towards the current politics might be misleading to understand the dynamics of politics in the city. Because when articles of the public figures who discussed politics such as economic policies of the CHF in the press are examined, it is hard to specify a fixed political position. On the other hand, it is not that hard to specify the changes in accordance with the subject and context. Out of this big amount of data, which consists of many articles about politics in almost every aspect, three topics were selected for this part to understand in what grounds the local politics/opposition arose. The first one is selected to see the separation from the CHF. With the new regulation in CHF, the independent candidates could be nominee to the deputy elections in 1931. In Izmir, those who wanted to be an independent deputy sent their personal programmes to the newspaper and specified their split from the CHF

policies. In this part which examines the entire process of the election from the beginning of the preparing the programmes of these candidates to the workings of the “elected” candidates in the parliament, the exercising of the politics and opposition are questioned. In addition to the politics in national and parliamentary level, the second concept was specified to see the local level politics. The concept of partisanship, *fırka*, *fırkacılık*, was selected because it was frequently used terms in usage to make politics and criticize the policies of the ruling party. By treating these concepts as the discursive way of exercising politics, this part focuses on how the ruling party was located into politics. These concepts were helpful to see local connections around trade activities, politics, and CHF. Within the secure limits of the concept of *fırka/fırkacılık*, local opposition was prevalent. Mostly criticized for being indifferent to society and being the center of corruption, the ruling party was intensely targeted by the local figures. Following the articles in the press over time provided an opportunity to see the changes of the positions according to the context. The third case of this part was selected to expand the borders of the idea of opposition by indicating unstable positions of those who were known for their opposition towards the ruling party. This part basically underlines the fact that when the crisis deepened, economic policies and principles were reviewed, and positions fundamentally changed. In Izmir case, this change was a transition from being an opposite to the statist economic policies of the state by challenging the state’s position in economy to defending more interventionist policies in economy. Due to the changing economic conditions of the period, most people who were engaged in politics had to reorient their point of views about economic policies and defended more state intervention to the economy. Therefore, the existence of changing positions rather than fixed positions in politics, specifically in opposition, in

accordance with the current economic conditions might be a useful outlook to understand the politics and opposition in such a context.

Focusing on the before-mentioned three contexts, this dissertation is an attempt to add a layer to social history of early Republican Turkey by differentiating Izmir as a space of analysis. Although the mentioned contexts namely the agricultural sector, settlement in practice and the politics were not the peculiar context to only Izmir's socio-economic and socio-political conditions, the uniqueness to Izmir is the combination of these three contexts in the same place and time. In other words, the intersection of these themes such as abandoned property crisis, tobacco production or having an established press tradition to allow space for political debates were the unique condition of Izmir. Therefore, the combination of these local contexts constituted a meaningful portrayal to analysis the socio-economic developments of the city during the early years of the Republic. Such a combination, which was full of complexities experienced by individuals, led to the establishment of a relation between state and individuals on demands to eliminate acute material problems. In a similar vein with Cem Emrence's suggestion which is the politics of discontent in examining the SCF experience, these problems which covered every sphere of the life of people are the main foundation in the relation between the state and society in Izmir during the formative years of the Turkish Republic. All in all, politics of everyday realities which were emerged from the socio-economic and socio-political peculiarities of Izmir; and also, day-to-day expectations and critiques towards the state can be marked as one of the key insights to deepen the understanding about the social history of the Modern Turkish history and also for the relational researches on this topic.

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A. CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

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B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

İZMİR'DE TARIM, İSKAN VE SİYASETİN KESİŞİMİNDE DEVLET TOPLUM ETKİLEŞİMİ, 1924-1939

Bu çalışma, 1923-1939 yılları arasında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun ve aynı zamanda yeni kurulan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin en önemli kentsel ve tarımsal üretim merkezlerinden biri olan İzmir kentini ele almaktadır. On yıllarca süren savaş ve nüfus hareketlerinin ardından, Batı Anadolu Bölgesi ve özellikle bu bölgenin merkezi olan İzmir kenti kökten bir yıkım ve bu yıkımın ardından köklü bir değişim yaşamıştır. Kentin hemen hemen her alanında görülen yıkım ve değişim, kendine özgü sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-politik bağlamlar oluşturmuştur. Bu çalışmanın ortaya çıkış noktası bu bağlamlara ulaşabilmektir. Genellikle sahip olduğu kozmopolit nüfus yapısı ve bu nüfus yapısının değişiminden yola çıkılarak yapılan çalışmalarla ele alınan İzmir kentinde, Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde toplum tarafından tecrübe edilen çok farklı ve kente özgü gelişmeler vardır. Bu çalışma İzmir ve Batı Anadolu'nun yoğun şekilde demografik bileşenleriyle ele alınmasına ve yukarıda da değinilen farklı iktisadi ve politik gelişmelere yeterince yer almadığı fikrinden yola çıkarak, İzmir kentini ve kentin art bölgesinde yer iktisadi mntikasına odaklanarak, bu açığı kapatmayı ve erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde bahsi geçen bölgede tecrübe edilen yerel bağlamları ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Çıkış noktasını, İzmir kentinin demografik bileşenlerle ve bu bileşenlerin Türkleştirilmesi paradigmasıyla fazlaca ilişkilendirilmesinden dolayı, toplumsal

olarak tecrübe edilen önemli mikro süreçlerin göz ardı edildiği fikrinden alan çalışma, İzmir kentinde oldukça köklü bir basın geleneğinin varlığından yola çıkarak, yerel kaynakları kullanmak ve bu kaynaklardan kentle ilgili dönemin toplumsal güçleri tarafından üretilen gündemlerine ulaşmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu doğrultuda, İzmir Kent Arşivi'ndeki birincil kaynaklardan yararlanılmış ve Yeni Asır, Işık ve Serbes Cumhuriyet gibi gazeteler bahsi geçen dönem içinde takip edilerek, bu sürede basında yer alan ve toplumsal olarak sıklıkla kullanılan bazı temalar belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Yerel basın kaynaklarına ek olarak, bu çalışma aynı zamanda Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin yerel çalışma organları tarafından hazırlanan ve kentteki ve çevre ilçelerindeki parti yetkilileri tarafından Parti'nin merkezine sunmak üzere hazırlanan, dilek listelerine ve buna ek olarak bireyler tarafından Meclis'e gönderilen dilekçelerin yer aldığı kaynaklardan da yararlanmıştır.

Sıradan insanların günlük yaşam tecrübelerine ulaşarak makro süreçlerle eş zamanlı olarak giden mekâna, coğrafya diye de özetlenebilecek olan, özgü mikro süreçler olduğunu gösteren bu arşiv araştırmalarında dikkat çeken nokta İzmir ve iç bölgelerinde yaşanan günlük yaşamla ilgili sorunların fazlalığı ve kentin politik ve ekonomik gündeminin bu sorunlar üzerinde inşa edildiği gerçeğidir. İleriki kısımlarda detaylandırılacak olan bu gerçeklik, bu çalışmada toplum ve devlet arasındaki ilişkiyi belirleyen önemli temellerden biri olarak değerlendirilmiş ve bu temelde gerçekleşen değişimlerin aynı şekilde devlet ve toplum arasındaki ilişkiyi de değiştirici bir faktör olduğu gerçeğine ulaşılmıştır.

Yerel kaynakların kullanılarak yerel ve toplumsal gerçekliklere ulaşma amacını taşıyan çalışma iki aşamalı olarak tasarlanmıştır. Bahsi geçen kaynakların detaylıca

araştırılması ve bu araştırmanın sonucu olarak kentin sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-politik durumu hakkında açıklama yapılmasına yardımcı olabilecek temaların belirlenmesi aşamasından sonra, çalışmanın ikinci aşaması olan bu temalar üzerinden, erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde ve belirlenen bölge sınırları içinde devlet ve toplum arasındaki etkileşimi nasıl anlayabileceğimiz sorusunu sorma aşamasına geçilmiştir. Devlet ve toplum arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamaya yönelik birçok çalışma, genellikle gözlem zemini olarak Türk Devleti'nin modernleştirici reformları ya da etnik şiddet gibi temalara odaklanırken, bu çalışmada toplumun günlük şikâyet ve taleplerinden ortaya çıkan zeminler bulunmuştur. Bu zeminler, toplumsal olarak neler yaşandığını gözler önüne seren kaynakların izlenmesinin ardından, devlet ve bireyler ve aynı zamanda bireylerin kendi arasındaki iletişim zeminleri olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu çalışma yerel ve günlük yaşamla ilgili toplumsal, ekonomik ve politik bağlamların toplumsal tarih ve devlet ve toplum etkileşimlerini anlamakta daha incelikli ve isabetli yaklaşımlar sunabileceğini savunmaktadır.

Belirlenen dönem içinde yukarıda adı geçen yerel kaynaklar incelendiğinde bazı temaların açıkça göze çarptığı görülebilir. Öncelikle genellikle kent merkezinin ticaret ağları ile tanımlanan İzmir'de tarımsal kesimin kent ekonomisi ve siyaseti de dahil olmak üzere önemli bir yere sahip olduğu ve tarımsal kesimin sorunlarının kentin basın organları tarafından sıklıkla değinilen konular olduğu görülebilir. Sıklıkla tarımsal üreticilere ve köylülere yer veren Yeni Asır gibi basın organları, kentin kırsal kesimi ve kent merkezi arasındaki bağlantıyı sağlamış ve kent ekonomisinin kır ve kent olarak iç içe geçtiğini göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla bu iletişimden anlaşıldığı üzere, kırsal kesimle ilgili olarak üç önemli zemin ve bu zeminler üzerinde kurulmuş olan devlet/toplum ilişkisi belirlenebilir. Bu araştırmanın arşiv çalışması, İzmir ve iktisadi

mıntikasının tarım sektörünün içinde bulunduđu kořulları en kapsamlı řekilde iřaret edilebilecek temalar olarak tarımsal fiyatları, tarım kesiminin vergilendirilmesi sũreçlerini ve tarım kesiminde bulunan yüksek borçluluk gerçeđi olarak belirlemiřtir. Tarım kesimi ve içinde bulunduđu kořullara ek olarak, arřiv çalıřmaları bölgenin sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-politik kořullarını kapsayıcı ve tanımlayıcı bir diđer unsur olarak demografik deđiřimin ortaya çıkardıđı iskân ve iskanla ilgili geliřmeleri toplumsal kořulları yansıtıcı tema olarak iřaret etmektedir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kurulması ile bařlanan demografik homojenleřtirme politikasının bir yansıması olan nüfus mübadelesi, İzmir kentinde toplumsal alanda bazı yeni zeminlerin ortaya çıkmasına sebep olmuřtur. Türk Devleti'nin ulus devlet inřası sürecinin önemli adımlarından biri olan demografik homojenleřtirme politikasının toplumsal alandaki yansıması iskân ve göç sũreçleri ile ortaya çıkan yeni talep ve çatıřma zeminlerinin ortaya çıkmasıdır. Bir bařka deyiřle, bu politikanın devlet tarafından uygulanmasındaki amaç nüfusun etnik olarak homojenleřtirilmesi iken, etnik olarak homojen olarak algılanan bireyler, iskân ve göç sũreçlerinin ortaya çıkardıđı yeni alanlarda karřı karřıya gelmiřtir. Bu alanlardan en önemlisi, iskân siyaseti ve göçün ortaya çıkardıđı terkedilmiş mal politikasıdır. Bölgenin eski yerlileri olan Anadolu Rumları tarafından gerek zorunlu nüfus mübadelesi öncesi gerek zorunlu nüfus mübadelesi sonrası sũreçte terk edilmiş mallar toplumsal ve devletle çatıřma alanına dönüşmüřtür. Dolayısıyla, iskân siyaseti ve buna ek olarak Yunanistan ve Türkiye arasındaki zorunlu nüfus mübadelesiyle hedeflenen homojenleřmiş toplum, bu politikanın ortaya çıkardıđı iktisadi bir laynak üzerinde mücadele etmeye bařlamıřtır. Çünkü yukarıda bahsedilen göç ve iskân politikaları çođunluđu kente yeni gelmiş, iskân edilmeyi ve geldiđi bölgede bıraktıđı mal karřılıđında iskân edildiđi bölgede mülk edinmeye çalıřan ve genellikle tarımsal üretici olan yođun bir kitleyi etkiliyordu.

Dolayısıyla, emvali metruke yani terk edilmiş mallar üzerindeki iddialar demografik homojenleşme siyasetinin günlük yaşama yansıması olmuştu. Tarımsal kesim ve iskân dışında, arşiv araştırması kentte yoğun bir siyasi gündem olduğuna da işaret ediyor. Genellikle, ele alınan dönemde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi politikalarına muhalif ve muhalefetin desteklendiği bir kent olarak algılanan İzmir’de siyaset günlük yaşamın oldukça içinde bir kavramdı. Çoğunlukla yerel muhalefet ağlarında da bulunan gazetecilerin yazdığı yazılar kentteki politik gündem ve tek parti yönetimi altında politika yapmanın sınırlarını gözlemleyebilmek açısından oldukça faydalı zeminler sağlıyor. Yukarıda belirtildiği bu çalışma üç temel zemin üzerinden İzmir kentinin toplumsal dinamiklerinin ve bu toplumsal dinamiklerin devletle olan ilişkisinin analiz edilebileceğini ileri sürmektedir.

Geç Osmanlı Dönemi’nden devraldığı tarım üreticisi ağırlıklı nüfus yapısı ve üretim teknikleri ve koşulları ile ilintili olarak oldukça sıkıntılı koşulları tecrübe eden tarımsal nüfusuyla Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi’nin tarımsal sektörü ülkenin iktisadi yapısı için en önemli kaynaktı. Uzun süreli savaşlar ve bu savaşları takip eden göçlerle kaybedilen işgücü gücü, zorunlu nüfus mübadelesi ile Anadolu’ya gelen Müslüman nüfus sayesinde yeniden elde edilebilmiştir. Kaybedilen iş gücüne ek olarak, üretim teknik ve teknolojileri açısından Cumhuriyet’in ilk yılları oldukça sorunlu bir üretim biçimine sahipti. Dönemin birçok uzmanına göre, ülkedeki üretim teknikleri oldukça ilkel seviyedeydi. Buna rağmen, kaybedilen iş gücünün yerine konmasıyla, Cumhuriyet’in ilanından kısa süre sonra tarımsal kesim üretime geri dönebilmiş ve üretici hale gelmeye başlayarak, bütçeye önemli katkıda bulunmaya başlamıştır. Gerçekten de kaynaklara göre 1927 yılında yaşanan kuraklık ve 1929 yılında yaşanan Büyük Buhran’a kadar geçen süre zarfında, tarım sektörü kendini toparlayabilmiş ve üretim de hızlıca

artmıştır. Bu yılların İzmir’de köylüler tarafından geniş yıllar olarak anıldığı dikkate alınırca, tarımsal kesimin de hem üretimden hem de ürün fiyatlarından memnun olduğu anlaşılabilir.

Tarımsal kesimin durumu kısaca bu şekilde iken, yeni kurulan ve üretimi hızlıca arttırarak kırsal kesimi restore etmeyi amaçlayan Cumhuriyet ise, bu üretim mekanizmasında 1930’lu yılların başına kadar doğrudan bir müdahalede bulunmamıştır. Tarım kesimine yönelik uygulamaya geçen önemli yenilikler aşar vergisinin kaldırılması ve sonucu olarak tarım üreticileri üzerindeki vergi yükünün azaltılması, tarımsal üretim metotlarını modernleştirmeye yönelik çeşitli araştırmaların yapılması ve yasal düzenlemelerin yapılması ve tarım kesimine yönelik kredi politikalarının düzenlenerek, üretimde artışın sağlanmasıdır. Hem İzmir hem de ülke açısından tarımsal kesimin dönüm noktası, 1929 yılında yaşanan Büyük Buhrandı. İhracata yani pazara yönelik tarımsal üretimin merkezi olan Batı Anadolu ve İzmir bu büyük ve global ölçekli ekonomik krizden sarsıcı şekilde etkilendi. 1927 yılındaki kuraklıkla zaten kendini hissettiren ve bu mega olayın etkisiyle iyice belirgin hale gelen fiyat dalgalanmaları İzmir’de üretim yapan çoğunluğu küçük ölçekli üreticileri derinden sarstı. Üzüm ve tütün gibi bölge için hayati öneme sahip olan ürünlerin fiyatlarındaki keskin düşüşler, üreticilerin on yıllarca sürecek olan ve kar topu gibi büyüyerek devam edecek olan iktisadi açıdan bozulmalarını başlattı. Dönemin kaynaklarını inceleyenler net şekilde fiyat ve fiyatlarla ilgili diğer iktisadi ve sosyal problemlerin yaygın şikayetler olduğunu görebilir. Tarımsal fiyatları toplum ve devlet arasında bir gözlem zemini olarak ele alan bu çalışmada, devletin bu yıkıcı kriz ve krizin etkileri konusunda üreticiler tarafından nasıl algılandığına bakılmıştır. İzmir ve çevresinde devletin tarımsal kesimdeki varlığı Tekel İdareleri (İnhisar) aracılığıyla

oldukça görünürdür. Genellikle tütün gibi üretim ve satışı devlet tarafından sıkı şekilde kontrol edilmeye çalışılan ve üzüm gibi Tekel İdaresi tarafından alımı yapılan bir üretim rejimine sahip olan bölgede, devlet ve devlet kurumları seçici şekilde fiyatlara müdahaleye davet edilmiştir. Tekel İdareleri çoğunlukla düşük fiyat teklifleri sebebiyle üreticilerin olumsuz algıları ile tanımlanırken, bu çalışmanın verileri gösteriyor ki üreticiler özellikle tütün üreticileri devlet kurumlarını yani Tekelleri piyasaya müdahale etmeye sıklıkla çağırmıştır. Kimi zaman piyasanın altında fiyatlarla tütün alımı yapmakla eleştirilen Tekel İdareleri, çok oyunculu ve oldukça kırılğan piyasa koşullarında sıklıkla piyasaya müdahale etmeye çağrılmıştı. Çeşitli şekillerde piyasaya dahil olan Tekellerden beklentiler şöyleydi: Alım başlatarak piyasayı manipüle etmesi, koruyucu bir figür olarak yabancı şirketlerin kötü muamele ve fiyatlandırmalarına karşı üreticiyi koruması ve satılmayan ürünleri alarak üreticiye destek olması. Dolayısıyla devlete üreticiler tarafından, üreticiyi koruyucu ve piyasayı düzenleyici bir rol verilmiştir.

İkinci olarak tarımsal kesimin tecrübe ettiği ve bir talep/şikâyet ve cevap mekanizması yarattığı diğer konu ise vergilerdir. Vergiler yukarıda bahsedilen fiyat dalgalanmalarının etkisiyle yıkıcı bir şekilde tarım üreticilerinin gündemine oturmuştur. Aşar gibi köylüler üzerinde büyük bir olumsuz etkisi olan verginin kaldırılmasının bu kesim için dönüştürücü ve rahatlatıcı bir etki yaratması beklentisi gerçekleşmemiştir. Aşarın kaldırılması, köylü üzerindeki finansal yükü azaltmamıştır. Aksine Arazi, Hayvan ve Yol Vergisi gibi tarımsal sektör üzerine salınan vergiler, bu kesimde büyük bir yük oluşturmuştur. Vergiler ve devlet ilişkisi konusunda tarımsal kesimin algısı ise şöyleydi: Vergilerin yüksek olduğu çok açık şekilde beyan edilirken, bir diğer önemli unsurun da altı çiziliyordu. Köylüler vergilerin toplumsal kesimler

arasında adil şekilde dağıtılmadığını savunuyorlardı. Buna göre, vergi yükü haksız şekilde köylüler üzerindeyken, asıl vergi ödemesi gereken kesimlerin vergi ödemediği algısı hakimdi. Yukarıda bahsedilen talep mekanizmasının işlediği bu zeminde de köylülerin talepleri vergi indirimler, vergi afları ve en önemlisi vergi hesaplamalarının ve düzenlemelerinin adil şekilde yapılmasıydı. Bu mekanizmanın diğer tarafından bulunan devlet ve kurumlarının bu talepler karşısında kayıtsız olmadığı görünmektedir. Vergi indirimleri, vergi afları ve vergi yükünün Buhran Vergisi gibi çeşitli yeni vergilerle ücretliler üzerine aktarılması devletin bu konu açısından sunduğu politikalarıdır. Fakat bu çözümlerin sistematik bir reform yerine acil ve birikmiş sorunları çözmeye yönelik politikalar olduğu da bir gerçektir.

Tarım fiyatlarının çakıldığı ve vergi yükünün ödenemez boyutta olduğu böyle bir iktisadi durumda, iktisadi, fakat sonrasında sosyal bir krize de dönüşecek olan, bir başka yıkıcı gündem tarım sektörüne girdi; borçluluk. Oldukça çok yönlü bir sorun olan borçluluk, kriz sonrası tarım sektörünün baş etmek zorunda olduğu yıkıcı bir sorundu. İzmir'deki yerel gazetelere göre neredeyse her üreticinin ya kredi ya da vergi borcu vardı. Kredi ve borçlanma konularındaki köklü yapısal eksiklikler nedeniyle köylüler bireysel kredi sağlayıcılar gibi büyük bir sosyal krizle de mücadele etmek zorunda kalmışlardı. Tarım kesimine yönelik kredi sağlama görevi ile donatılmış olan Ziraat Bankası'nın eksik ve düzgün işlemeyen kredi sağlama mekanizmaları sebebiyle, çoğu üretici bireysel kredi sağlayıcılara yani tefecilere borçlanmak durumunda kalmışlardı. Çok yüksek faiz oranları ile tarımsal üreticilere kredi sağlayan tefeciler kentin gündeminde sıklıkla rastlanabilen bir sosyal ve iktisadi gerçeklikti. Bireysel kredi sağlayıcıların gücü kredi kooperatiflerin kurulması ve bazı yasal düzenlemelerle kırılmaya çalışılmışsa da basında çıkan haberler gösteriyor ki çok

yüksek faiz oranlarıyla bile olsa tefeciler tarımsal sektöre finans sağlamaya devam ettiği görülmektedir. Ayrıca şu da kentin bir gerçekliği idi: Tarımsal kesim ve içinde buldukları fiyat, vergi ve borçluluk dairesine ek olarak, birçok üretici aynı zamanda göç sürecinin de bir öznesi olarak iskân siyaseti ve getirileriyle mücadele ediyordu. Tahsis edilen malların alınabilmesi ve istihkaklarından fazla olan kısmın ödenmesi gibi bir diğer finansal zorluk da toplum tarafından tecrübe ediliyordu.

Türk ulus-devlet inşa sürecinin demografik projesinin bitiş ayağı olan zorunlu nüfus mübadelesi İzmir için kilit bir tarihsel gelişmeydi ve kente çok sayıda yeni insan, yeni sorun, yeni yasal düzenlemeler, yeni sorunlar ve yeni gündemler getirdi. Rum ve yabancı nüfusun kentin çoğunluğu olduğu İzmir’de on dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonlarından itibaren başlayan ve mübadele ile tamamlanması planlanan göç hareketleri dönemin önemli gelişmelerinden biriydi. Zorunlu nüfus mübadelesinin başlamasından önce İzmir kenti zaten köklü nüfus değişimleri yaşıyordu. Kentin Rum nüfusunun bir kısmı zaten süregelen savaş ve çatışmalardan dolayı zaten göç etmişken, İzmir’deki Yunan işgalinin son bulması ve takip eden Büyük Yangınla kent bir kaos alanına dönüşürken, Rum nüfus göç etme hazırlıklarına başlamıştı. Geride bıraktıkları taşınmaz mallar daha sonra Yunanistan ve Türkiye arasında imzalanan zorunlu nüfus mübadelesi anlaşması ile Yunanistan’ı terk edip İzmir’e yerleştirilmesi kararlaştırılanlara verilecekti. Çeşitli yasalar ve düzenlemelerle sınırları belirlenen terk edilmiş mal politikasının pratikteki uygulamalara yansımaları sorunsuz olmadı. Uluslararası alanda ve önemli uzmanlar tarafından oldukça iyi tasarlandığı iddia edilebilecek olan mübadele süreci, en başından itibaren aksaklıklar ve gerçekleştirilemeyen yasal prosedürler yüzünden 1940’lı yıllara kadar çözülmeyen kalan bir dizi sorun bıraktı. Bu sorunların çoğu mülk tahsisleri ile ilgiliydi. Dönemin

yerel basınını izleyen arařtırmacılar, bahsi geen dnemin sonuna kadar olan srede ok sayıda terk edilmiř mlk ve bu mlklerin kullanım hakkıyla ilgili soruna rastlayabilir. Yukarıda bahsedildiđi gibi, Anadolu Rumlarının bir kısmı mbadele ile kenti terk etmiř ve mlklerini geride bırakmıřlardı. te yandan, bu kiřiler iskn siyasetinin znesi olan yegne giden grup deđildi ve bu İzmir'in kentsel durumu iin ayrı bir kriz alanı daha oluřturuyordu. İzmir'de mbadeleye tabii olan Rumlara ek olarak, Mbadele Anlařması ncesinde kenti terk eden Rumlar, yine aynı Őekilde g eden Ermeniler ve mlklerinin idaresini devlete bırakan yabancılar vardı. Bir diđer taraftan, aynı Őekilde kente yeni gelen ve geliř yerleri ve zamanlarına gre gruplandırılabilir ok sayıda yeni gelen vardı. Bu farklılařmanın yarattıđı sorun her bir gruba mensup bireyin hakkı ve ykmllkleri farklıydı. rneđin, mbadeleye tabi bir Rum tarafından bırakılan malın hangi Őartlarda kime ve nasıl tahsis edileceđi gibi farklı ve aynı lde karmařık bir sreten bahsetmek mmkndr. G ve mbadelenin getirdiđi bu gibi geliřmelere ek olarak, İzmir kenti yařadıđı Byk Yangın ve i kesimlerinin Yunan iřgalinin sona ermesiyle beraber yařadıđı yıkımın da etkisiyle i g dalgası da yařamıřtı. Bu kaotik ortamda, mlkler planlanan adımlar gzetilerek tahsis edilmedi. Birok mlk hakkı olmayanlar tarafından fuzuli iřgal altına alınırken, birok mbadil bařka bir gmen grubuna tahsis edilmesi gereken mlke yerleřtirildi. Dolayısıyla, 1924 yılındaki İzmir'e baktıđımızda grlecek Őey: Yıkım, iřgal edilmiř mlkler, iskn edilmeyi ve hakkı olan mlk yani geim kaynađını almaya alıřan eřitli gruplar ve bu sreci ynetmeye alıřan sınırlı bir devlet aygıtından bahsetmek mmkndr. Bu Őartlar altında, terk edilmiř mlkler ve bu mlklerin tahsis Őartları yukarıda belirtildiđi gibi toplumsal aıdan bir atılma alanı haline geldi. Bu alıřmanın bulguları  rnek zerinden demografik homojenleřtirme politikasının ayaklarından biri olan nfus mbadelesinin uygulamada nasıl byle bir

alana dönüştüğü ve ayrıca mikro kimlikler yaratarak farkı çıkar grupları ve rekabetleri oluşturduğunun anlaşılabilirliğini gösteriyor.

Ele alınan birinci örnekte terk edilmiş mülk, topraksız köylülük ve tek parti iktidarının yereldeki temsilciler vasıtasıyla işleyişi bağlamının örtüşmesiyle ortaya çıkan rekabet alanının görülmesi mümkün. Söke ilçesindeki bir arazinin geçmişte kime ait olduğu ve şimdi kime ait olacağı sorusundan ortaya çıkan ve jandarmanın müdahale etmesini gerektirecek kadar ciddileşen bu örnekte, Kiryako ve Dimitri adında kayıp bir şahsa ait olduğu iddia edilen ve bu menşei dolayısıyla civardaki topraksız köylülere tahsis edilmesi gerektiği köylülerce iddia edilen bir arazi, kendilerine tahsis edilmesi gerektiğini savunan topraksız köylüler ve üzerinde hak iddia eden yerel bir siyasi isim var. Köylülerin iddiasına göre adı geçen arazi bu önemli isim tarafından haksızca işgal edilmişti ve topraksız köylüler olarak bu arazi Cumhuriyet idaresi tarafından köylüler tahsis edilmeliydi. Arazi üzerindeki hak iddiaları ciddi boyutlara ulaşmış. Köylülerin araziyi işgal etmesi üzerine jandarma olaya müdahale ederek bazı köylüleri göz altına almıştı. Bu örnek, büyük ölçekli bir politikanın yerel düzeydeki yansımaları görmek ve oluşturduğu yeni sorunları görebilmek açısından oldukça önemli olmasının yanında, aynı zamanda topraksız köylülük ve tek parti rejimindeki yerel düzeydeki politik ağların bu gibi konulardaki etkisini de göstermesi açısından oldukça önemli bir örnek teşkil etmektedir. İkinci olarak bu çalışmanın işaret ettiği örnek ise tahsis edilen mülklerin ödemesi sürecinde ortaya çıkan bir mikro rekabet. 1931 yılında karmaşa haline gelen mülk tahsisi ve bu tahsislerin ödenmesi süreci ile ilgili olan bu örneğimizde, Tasfiye Kanunu tarafında getirilen bazı uygulamaların aynı şartlarda mülk tahsis edilen bazı küçük gruplar içinde eşitliğe aykırı uygulamalar oluşturduğu iddia edilmektedir. Daha detaylıca bakacak olursak, yeni çıkan kanuna göre devlet

mülk tahsisinde hakkı olan bazı alacaklardan vazgeçmiş ve bazı şartlar dahilinde tahsislerin meccanen yani para ödemeksizin yapılmasına karar vermişti. Kimin meccanen bu tahsisten yararlanacağı ilgili kişiler arasında haksızlık duygusu uyandırmıştı. Çünkü meccanen tahsis hakkı verilmesi sürecinde kriter içtimai vaziyetti. Bu kriter, konunun muhatapları tarafından Cumhuriyet'in getirdiği eşitlik anlayışına çığneyen bir uygulama olarak, eleştirilerin merkezinde yer aldı. Dolayısıyla, devletin tam bir kaosa dönüşen bir sorunu çözmek üzere hazırladığı yeni bir yasal prosedür yeni bir soruna ve rekabete yol açmadan hedefine ulaşamadığı görülebiliyor. Oldukça ideolojik bir üslupla ele alınan eleştiri yazılarında mülk tahsisindeki bir uygulamanın Cumhuriyet rejimi ve getirdiği ideallere referans verilerek ele alınması konunun toplumsal açıdan algılanış biçimini anlayabilmek açısından oldukça önemli bir noktadır. Nüfus Mübadelesinin toplumsal kentin gündemine taşıdığı bir diğer konu gayri mübadiller konusuydu. Bu çalışmanın ele aldığı üçüncü vaka olan bu örnekte, terk edilmiş mülklerin dağıtılması politikasının nasıl bir grup çıkarı ve grup bilinci oluşturduğunu görüyoruz. Bu örneğe göre, mübadeleye tabii olmayan göçme grubu olarak gayri mübadiller kolektif olarak haklarını korumak ve taleplerde bulunmak üzere bu kimlikleri üzerinde bir ilişki geliştirmişlerdi. Mülk dağıtımını düzenleyen yasalara göre, Yunan mallarından pay alması gereken gayri mübadiller, fuzuli işgal ve düzensiz şekilde yapılan iskanlar gibi yukarıda değinilen çeşitli sebeplerden dolayı mallarının tahsisleri gerçekleşmediği için bir dernek kurarak kolektif şekilde çıkarlarını korumaya ve almaları gereken mülkler üzerinde hak iddia etmişlerdir. Kolektif şekilde geliştirdikleri bazı yöntemlerle siyasi güçlerle ilişki kurmuş, kendilerini ilgilendiren hem ulusal hem de uluslararası gelişmelere sırasında taleplerini yetkililere iletmışlerdir. Bu noktada önemli ve ayırıcı olarak değerlendirilebilecek özellikleri, haklarını ve çıkarlarını takip edecek ve

taleplerini iletebilmelerini sağlayabilecek bir dernek kurmaları ve eylemlerini bu dernek üzerinden sürdürmeleri idi. Kolektif bir talep mekanizması kurmaları ve siyasilerle görüşmeler yapabilecek bir kapasiteye sahip olmaları da dönem için oldukça dikkat çekici yönlerden biridir. İskân ve iskân siyasetinin en tartışmalı noktalarından biri olan terk edilmiş mülk siyaseti, İzmir kenti için hayati bir noktaydı. Çok geniş kapsamlı ve çeşitli yönlerden değerlendirilebilecek olan nüfus mübadelesi ve demografinin homojenleştirilmesi projesinin uygulamadaki yansımaları yeni farklılaşmalar ve farklılaşmaların getirdiği yeni çekişmeli alanların ortaya çıkmasıydı, terk edilmiş mülk siyaseti de bu alanlardan en önemlisi olarak İzmir ve bölgede yıllarca sürececek bir gerçeklik olarak toplum ve devlet tarafından tecrübe edildi.

İzmir'in gelişmiş bir kent merkezi olması ve yine gelişmiş ve yaygın bir basın ağına ve geleneğine sahip olması ile yukarıda bahsedile problemlerli gelişmelerin kesişmesiyle, İzmir'in basın organları aynı zamanda bir eleştiri merkezi haline gelmişti. Çoğunlukla, iktisadi politika açısından hükümet politikalarına karşı biraz daha eleştirel bir pozisyonda bulunan isimlerin sahibi olduğu ve/veya yazı yazdığı bu iletişim araçları politika kentte yerel düzeyde politika alanlarıydı. Dolayısıyla, politik tartışmaların ve eleştirilerin buralarda sıklıkla yer aldığı görünebilir ve bu tartışmaların kentin politik atmosferini anlayabilmek açısından oldukça yol gösterici olduğu da değerlendirilebilir. Bu çalışma, önemli yerel isimler tarafından kaleme alınan yazı ve haberlere bir politika alanı olarak ele almayı ve bunu yaparak kentin politik koşulları ile ilgili değerlendirmeler yapılabileceğini savunuyor. Dolayısıyla, belirlenen dönemde bu yazıları inceleyenler politika yapmanın ya da muhalefet yapmanın temellerini gösterebilecek bazı vaka ve kavramlara rastlayabilirler. Bunlardan birincisi, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi dışında kalan bazı bağımsız adaylara yer verilmesinin kararlaştırıldığı 1931 seçimleri ve bu seçimlerde uygulanacak olan

bağımsız adaylık politikasının kentte bulunduğu yankıdır. Bağımsız adaylık kentte kendini Halk Partisi'nin politikalarının dışında tanımlayan kişiler tarafından büyük bir ilgiyle karşılanırken, bu isimler kendilerini ve benimsedikleri ilkelerini açıkladıkları programları basın organlarına göndererek kamuoyuna sunmuşlardır. Bu programların gösterdiği konular ise kendilerini Halk Partisi dışında tanımlayanlarının büyük bir kısmınının Tekeller olmak üzere iktisadi muhalefeti açıkken; aynı zamanda en çok dile getirilen nokta seçim sistemine yönelik eleştirilerdir. Bu programlara göre, iki dereceli seçim sistemi değişmeli ve tek dereceli seçim uygulanmalıdır. İzmir'den iki bağımsız adayın seçildiği seçim süreci ve bu adayların meclis çalışmalarına bakıldığında ise iktisadi politikaların merkezde olduğu ama aynı zamanda İzmir kentinin vergi ve borçluluk gibi gündelik yaşam sorunlarının sınırlı ölçüde de olsa yansıtılabildiği bir süreç olarak bağımsız adaylık girişimini okumak mümkündür. Kentte politik tartışmalarda sıklıkla görülebilecek bir diğer konsept ise yaygın şekilde kullanımda olan fırka ve fırkacılık söylemiydi. Bu kavramlar üzerine kurulan politika ve özellikle muhalefet, kentte oldukça yaygın. Çünkü bu tip bir söylemsel tercih, muhalefet çevrelerine çok kullanışlı bir eleştiri zemini kurma imkânı sağlıyordu. Daha detaylı şekilde bir inceleme yapacak olursak, bu kavramlar bazı temalar ile ilişkilendirilerek kentte iktidar partisine karşı olan eleştiriler dile getirilebiliyordu. Fırka ve Fırkacılar genellikle yolsuzluk ve kayırma gibi kavramlarla eşleştiriliyordu. Bu kavramlar üzerinde yapılan eleştirilere bakıldığında, tek parti siyasetinin ve bunun yereldeki yürütücüsü parti örgütlerinin ve bu örgütlerde görev yapan kişilerin nasıl algılandığını görmek oldukça faydalı bir bakış açısı sağlamaktadır. Yerel düzeyde parti ve parti içinde görev yapan kişiler topluma kayıtsızlıkla ilişkilendiriliyordu. Öte yandan yerel kaynaklar üzerinde ve yine yukarıda bahsedilen aynı kaynaklarda yapılan uzun vadeli incelemeler bir diğer gerçeğe daha dikkat çekiyor. İlk iki kısımda bahsedilen ve

kentteki siyasetin eleştirel bir duruştan kaynaklandığını gördüğümüz bu iki örnek, kentteki politik gelişmeler ile ilgili kısıtlı bir bakış açısı sunuyor, çünkü genellikle muhalefet kavramı ile ilişkilendirilen İzmir ve İzmir'deki siyaset, uzun vadeli bir araştırmanın ardından yeniden gözden geçirilmelidir. Çünkü bazı iktisadi ve politik koşullarda, örneğin iktisadi krizin derinleştiği ve kent ekonomisinin krizinin çözülemediği durumlarda, muhalif olmak ya da iktisadi açıdan liberal olmak gibi net ve sabit politik pozisyonların değişime uğradığı görülebilir. Basının gündemine giren planlama ve devlet sosyalizmi gibi yeni kavram ve tartışmaların gösterdiği gibi, iktisadi gerçekliklerden beslenen politik değişimler bu örnekte net şekilde görünmektedir. Daha önceleri iktidar partisini ve hükümetini devletçi ve müdahaleci iktisadi politikaları sebebiyle sıklıkla eleştiren muhalif basın, kriz derinleşince bu tutumunu değiştirmek konusunda bir engel görmemiştir. Aksine, devletçi ve müdahaleci iktisadi politikalarını arttıran hükümet politikalarını yeteri kadar müdahaleci olmamakla eleştirmiştir. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmanın göstermek istediği temel noktalardan biri olan günlük yaşamın materyal gerçekliklerin politik pozisyonların değişiminde oynadığı rolü gösteren bu örnekte olduğu, devlet ve birey arasındaki ilişkide de günlük ve materyal gelişmelerin belirleyici olduğu faktörlerden biri olduğu gerçeğidir.

Sonuç olarak, iki aşamalı bir araştırma olarak tasarlanan bu çalışma temel olarak Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluş yıllarındaki toplumsal unsurları incelemektedir. Toplumsal unsurların ve yerelliklerin tarihin önemli bileşenlerinden biri olduğu düşüncesi ve erken Cumhuriyet dönemini ele alan tarih çalışmalarında bu unsurların yetersiz olduğu gerçeğinden yola çıkan bu çalışma, İzmir ve hinterlandına odaklanmaktadır. Araştırmanın ilk aşaması, bölgede, ele alınan dönemin toplumsal

gerçekliklerini yansıtan yerel temaların keşfedilmesidir. Yerel gazeteler gibi geniş kapsamlı yerel kaynaklardan yararlanan bu araştırma, İzmir'de Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluş yıllarının daha incelikli bir analizini yapmak için en kapsamlı ve sıklıkla tekrar eden üç temel yerel ve toplumsal temayı işaret etmektedir. Bu temalar tarım kesimi, iskana ilişkin sorunlar ve yerel siyasettir. Araştırmanın ikinci aşaması, yukarıda belirtilen temaları iki aktörün etkileşiminin ortak karşılaşma zeminleri olarak ele alarak, yeni kurulan Türk devleti ile toplum arasındaki etkileşimi anlamak ve bu etkileşimi tanımlayabilmek için bir çerçeve belirlemektir. Bu bağlamda, bu araştırma, Cumhuriyet devleti ve toplumunu analiz etmek için yerel farklılaşmalara karşı yeterince hassas olmayan mevcut ve tanımlayıcı temalardan ziyade, mekâna özgü toplumsal unsurların önemini altını çizmektedir. Buna ek olarak, İzmir örneği için, bu araştırmanın bulguları, günlük hayatın istikrarsız ve günlük olarak belirlenen konumları besleyen maddi gerçekliklerinin, devlet ve toplum arasındaki etkileşimin ana bileşenlerinden biri olduğunu göstermektedir.

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