

A BRIDGE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE STATE: THE REPUBLICAN
PEOPLE'S PARTY IN ZONGULDAK (1935-1946)

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ABSTRACT

A BRIDGE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE STATE: THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY IN ZONGULDAK (1935-1946)

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The state and ruling elites appear as the main subjects in the researches about RPP, which was at the center of Turkish political history. From this perspective, studies on the single-party period and the RPP often emphasize the party's governing functions, such as domestic and foreign policy-oriented administrative activities, republican elites and their discourses, the Turkish Revolution and its characteristics, social, political, and economic policies, and the implementation of modern laws. However, the RPP, on the one hand, tried to fulfill the function of reflecting the expectations, demands and grievances of the people from the periphery to the center, and on the other hand, it also tried to transfer the policies implemented by the political power to the periphery in order to adopt them and gain social support.

From this point of view, our study tries to reveal the political, ideological, socio-cultural and organizational activities of the RPP in Zonguldak between 1935 and 1946 from the point of view of being a "social bridge" between people and the state. One of the main institutional mechanisms that the RPP Zonguldak organization resorted to mediate between the people and the state was the "wish

system" and the provincial congresses. Another pillar of the RPP's "bridge mission" was the inspection system. During the single-party period, the inspection system monitored provincial organizations and mediated to determine society's expectations from the state. The final component of this mission was People's Houses, which took on not only a socio-cultural mission but also an ideological one.

Keywords: Republican People's Party, Zonguldak, Provincial Congresses, Inspectorate Mechanism, People's Houses.

ÖZ

HALK İLE DEVLET ARASINDA BİR KÖPRÜ: ZONGULDAK'TA CUMHURİYET HALK PARTİSİ (1935-1946)

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Yakın dönem Türk siyasi tarihinin merkezinde bulunan CHP hakkında yapılan araştırmalarda genel olarak devletin ve yönetici elitlerin özne olarak belirdiği görülmektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, tek parti dönemi ve CHP üzerine yapılan çalışmalarda sıklıkla iç ve dış politika merkezli yönetim faaliyetleri, Cumhuriyet elitleri ve söylemleri, Türk inkılabı ve nitelikleri, sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik politikalar, modern kanunların uygulanma süreci gibi daha çok partinin hükümet edici fonksiyonlarına vurgu yapılmıştır. Oysa tüm bunların yanında CHP tek partili siyasal yaşam boyunca bir taraftan halkın devletten beklentilerini, talep ve şikayetlerini çevreden merkeze yansıtma işlevini yerine getirmeye çalışırken, diğer taraftan siyasal iktidar tarafından yürütülen politikaların çevreye aktarılması, benimsetilmesi ve toplumsal destek kazanılması için de çaba göstermiştir.

Bu bakış açısından hareketle bu çalışma, CHP'nin 1935-1946 yılları arasında Zonguldak'ta yürütmüş olduğu siyasal, toplumsal, kültürel, ideolojik, ve örgütsel faaliyetlerini halk ile devlet arasında üstlenmiş olduğu aracı misyon perspektifinden yola çıkarak ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir. CHP Zonguldak

örgütünce 1935-1946 yılları arasında halk ile devlet arasında üstlenilmiş olan aracı misyonun ifa edilmesinde başvurulan en önemli kurumsal faaliyetlerden biri dilek sistemi ve bunun taşradaki uygulama alanı olan vilayet kongreleri olmuştur. Doğrudan parti içi bir müessese olmakla birlikte, bir taraftan taşra örgütlerini organize ederken diğer taraftan ise halkın beklentilerinin ortaya konulması, devlet politikalarının ve siyasal ideolojinin taşrada ne ölçüde uygulanabildiğinin takibinin yapılmasına aracılık eden teftiş sistemi ise CHP'nin görmüş olduğu köprü vazifesinin taşıyıcı ayaklarından bir diğerini teşkil etmektedir. Üç ayaklı bir taşıyıcı kolon üzerine oturtulmuş bulunan bu misyonun son ayağını ise şüphesiz yalnızca sosyo-kültürel değil aynı zamanda yüklenmiş olduğu ideolojik misyon ile halkevleri teşkil etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), Zonguldak, Vilayet Kongreleri, Teftiş Mekanizması, Halkevleri.

TO MY WIFE and GIRL...

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xviii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Concepts and Theoretical Framework	14
1.1.1. Single-Party System In Terms of Political Party Systems.....	27
1.1.2. The Ways of Defining RPP Within The Single Party System and Theoretical Approaches	36
1.2. Method and Scope of the Research	45
1.3. Literature Review	52
1.4. Sources of the Research	66
2. TURKEY AND ZONGULDAK IN TRANSITION TO SINGLE PARTY RULE	74
2.1. From The Association For Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia to the Party State.....	75
2.1.1. Founding of the Republican People’s Party.....	81
2.1.2. Turkey Before 1935.....	95
2.1.3. The Republican People’s Party Before 1935	99
2.2. The Birth of a Mining City: Zonguldak in Historical Process	115
2.2.1. From Fishing Village to Modern City: Zonguldak.....	117

2.2.2. From “ <i>Karye</i> ” to “ <i>Liva</i> ”: Administrative Organization in Zonguldak.....	120
2.3. Zonguldak Before 1935: Inheritance From Empire to the Republic.....	129
2.3.1. Zonguldak: As the First Province of the Republic.....	130
2.3.2. Social Life in Zonguldak in the First Years of the Republic	137
2.3.3. Urbanism in Zonguldak in the First Years of the Republic.....	145
2.3.4. Political Life in Zonguldak in the First years of the Republic	151
3. THE PRESENCE OF REPUBLICAN PEOPLE’S PARTY IN ZONGULDAK AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE STATE.....	164
3.1. The Process Leading to Party-State Integration and Its Reflections in Zonguldak.....	169
3.2. Components of Party Administration and Intra-Party Struggle.....	174
3.3. One of the RPP's Ways of Reaching the Public: Party Membership Policy.....	199
3.3.1. Party Membership in Terms of Single Party Systems.....	199
3.3.2. Party Membership in terms of RPP Organizations	202
3.3.3. Difficulties Encountered in Determining the Member Numbers of the RPP Provincial Organizations and Basic Data Sources	206
3.4. From Theory to the Practice: The Functioning of the Party Membership Mechanism in Zonguldak.....	209
3.4.1. A Discourse Describing RPP's Membership Policy in Zonguldak: "A Party Organization Consisting of the Chairman Himself"	215
3.4.2. Understanding Foreign Membership Policy in RPP over the Example of the Hungarian Engineer "Kirş"	219
3.4.3. The RPP Membership System in Zonguldak During the National Chief Period.....	223
3.4.4. Orientation from Quantity to Quality: Efforts to Determine the Qualifications of the Members in Organizations and Its Reflections in Zonguldak	229
3.4.5. “Using Gaps in the Party Statutes” to Overstate Number of Party Members.....	236

3.5. The Functioning of the Membership Dues System in Zonguldak	
Organization.....	243
3.5.1. The Concept of Membership Dues in Terms of Political Parties	243
3.5.2. Party Membership Dues within the RPP Structure	244
3.5.3. An Alternative Suggestion for Collecting Membership Dues	249
3.5.4. An Extreme Point in the Autonomy of Local Organizations: RPP	
Bartın Organization's "Head Money" (<i>Kafa Parası</i>) Practice	251
3.5.5. Benefiting From the Mediators for the Collection of Membership	
Dues	255
3.5.6. Tracking Membership Dues in Party Budgets	259
4. A BRIDGE FROM PERIPHERY TO THE CENTER: PROVINCIAL	
CONGRESSES AND INSPECTORATE MECHANISM IN	
ZONGULDAK.....	268
4.1. RPP Provincial Congresses as the Social Negotiation Platforms	270
4.1.1. Provincial Congresses within the RPP Organization	274
4.1.2. RPP Provincial Congresses in Zonguldak During the Single Party	
Period.....	279
4.1.3. Functioning of the Provincial Congresses and Main Topics Dealt	
With at the Congresses	283
4.1.4. The "Wish System" as the Conveyor of the Voice of the	
Periphery to the Center	284
4.1.5. Functions of the RPP Provincial Congresses in Zonguldak	289
4.2. "The Satellite of the Centre" in the Province: Inspection Mechanism	291
4.2.1. Establishment and Historical Development of the Inspection	
Mechanism.....	291
4.2.2. Institutionalization Process and Function of the Inspection	
Mechanism Under the RPP Structure.....	295
4.3. Provincial Congresses and Inspection Reports in Zonguldak as	
Bridges Carrying Social Expectations to Political Power	306
4.3.1. Provincial Congresses and Inspection Reports to Understand the	
Results of the Implementation of Republican Laws	311

4.3.2. The Experience of the 1937 Forest Law in the Zonguldak Scale and the Efforts of the Provinces to Reach the Center	313
4.3.3. From the 1936 Labor Law to the Implementation of the National Protection Law: The Efforts of the Zonguldak Miners to Reach the State	326
4.3.4. Looking Zonguldak Economy From The Perspective of Intermediary Institutions	347
4.3.5. Provincial Congresses as a Mediating Institution for Political Demands	356
4.3.6. One of the Chronic Problems of Zonguldak: The Hope for Help from Intermediary Institutions in Solving the Problem of Animal Theft and the " <i>Copts</i> "	368
4.3.7. The Attempt to Maintain the Moral Structure and Unity of the Family Through Provincial Congresses and Inspection Reports.....	382
5. ZONGULDAK PEOPLE’S HOUSE AS A SUPPLEMENTARY INSTITUTION TO CARRY OFFICIAL IDEOLOGY TO THE PROVINCES AND TO PROVIDE SOCIAL ENLIGHTENMENT.....	387
5.1. Founding Process of the People's Houses and Prominent Activities	389
5.2. Foundation and First Activities of the Zonguldak People's House	400
5.3. One of the Means to Bring the Official Ideology to the Public: Conferences	406
5.3.1. Revolution and Independence Conferences in Zonguldak	406
5.3.2. Other Conferences of the Zonguldak People's House for Social Enlightenment	415
5.4. From the People's House to the Village: "Peasant Days" and Village Trips in Zonguldak as a Bridge between Villagers and Citizens.....	425
5.5. Using Local Memory to Awaken National Consciousness: From the Legend of "Santa Barba" to the "Uzun-Mehmet Coal Festival".....	447
5. CONCLUSION	455
REFERENCES	467
APPENDICES	
A. TABLES	503

B. FIGURES	518
C. CURRICULUM VITAE	520
D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET	521
E. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU	540

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Population of Zonguldak and Other Districts in 1918.....	126
Table 2. Registered Members in RPP Zonguldak Provincial Organization as of 1935.....	166
Table 3. Registered Members of the RPP and Its Ratio to Population Between 1930-1936.....	210
Table 4. According to the Inspection Report Prepared by RPP Zonguldak Regional Inspector Edip Ergin, Registered Members in the RPP Zonguldak Organization as of 1936.....	216
Table 5. Distribution of the Number of Registered Members of the RPP Zonguldak Organization over District Organizations (1935-1939)....	226
Table 6. The Number of Registered Members to the RPP by the End of 1940 and Its Distribution on District Organizations	230
Table 7. Registered Members and Educational Status of the RPP Zonguldak Organization as the end of 1941	235
Table 8. Income Budget Approved at the 1935 Provincial Congress of the Zonguldak Provincial Administrative Committee	261
Table 9. The Membership Dues Envisaged as the End of 1942	265
Table 10. The Projected/Actual Ratio of Membership Dues in the Party Budget Between 1945-1947	267
Table 11. Wishes Expressed at the Provincial Congress of the Zonguldak RPP Organization Held in 1936	351
Table 12. Wishes on the Agenda of the 1946 Provincial Congress and Their Distribution Among the RPP District Organizations.....	364
Table 13. Zonguldak People's House Conference Series in Winter 1936	416
Table 14. Wishes Determined At The 1938 Provincial Congress And Left To The General Secretariat Of The RPP In Order To Solve.....	503
Table 15. The RPP Zonguldak Provincial And District Executive Board Members And Their Professions (1939)	504

Table 16. The RPP Zonguldak Provincial Administrative Committee Between 1935-1946	507
Table 17. Registered Members To The RPP in Zonguldak And Its Districts As Of June 1941	509
Table 18. Number And Gender Status Of Party Members Registered To Zonguldak RPP Organization As Of The End Of June 1942.....	510
Table 19. Education Status of Party Members Registered to Zonguldak RPP Organization as of the end of June 1942	510
Table 20. Registered Members to the RPP Zonguldak Organization Over the Age Of 22 As The End of 1942.....	511
Table 21. The Membership Status of RPP Zonguldak Organization Between 1939-1946	512
Table 22. Change in The Number Of Members Registered in The RPP Zonguldak Organization Over the Years	515
Table 23. Calendar of the Provincial Congresses of the RPP Zonguldak Organization (1927-1946).....	515

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Peasants' Day Organized by Zonguldak People House on June 30, 1937.....	436
Figure 2. Peasant's Day Souvenir Photo Organized by Zonguldak People's House.....	437
Figure 3. Peasants' Day Organized by Zonguldak People House on June 26, 1938.....	439
Figure 4. The Provincial Board Members of the RPP Zonguldak Organization.....	518
Figure 5. Administrative Division of Zonguldak At The End of Single-Party Rule	519

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADNRAR	Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti
APS	American Political Science
BCA	Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivi
CA	Cumhurbaşkanlığı Arşivi
CİİA	Cumhurbaşkanlığı İsmet İnönü Arşivi
CUP	İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti
ECC	Ereğli Kömür İşletmesi
FRP	Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası
GDRAR	Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Grubu
GNAT	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi
KISF	Karabük Demir Çelik Fabrikası
NPL	Milli Korunma Kanunu
PRP	Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası
RPP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to shed light on the political, ideological, socio-cultural and organizational activities of the Republican People's Party¹ in Zonguldak between 1935 and 1946 from the point of view of being a "social bridge" between people and the state. In this regard, while our study should be seen as historical research focusing on the existence of the RPP in a specific geographical area and time period, it also includes reflection on the socio-cultural, political and economic politics of the early republican period in the locality of Zonguldak.

As it is known, political structures within political systems are entities that have certain functions and tasks. For a political system to survive, each political structure must fulfill its role.² As an indispensable element in both democratic parliamentary and authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, political parties also have certain functions in political systems. In this context, it should be noted that in almost all regimes, political parties act as a bridge between the masses and the government. Thus, the demands and expectations of society and the influencing of activities are implemented through political parties.³ However, the qualifications of the above functions vary depending on the competitiveness or non-competitiveness of the political systems. In other words, although parties

¹ Hereafter RPP.

² Ergun Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayınları, 1977), p. 91.

³ Münci Kapani, *Politika Bilimine Giriş*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2010), p. 182.

perform similar functions in both political systems, there are some differences in the meaning and purpose of these functions.⁴

In competitive political systems, political parties serve as one of the instruments that bring various popular demands and wishes to political power by combining different social and ideological views. On the other hand, political parties in non-competitive systems are designed as instruments to control and regulate political life and to mediate the identification of state and society. Whereas parties in non-competitive totalitarian systems mobilize society along the lines of a particular ideology, in developing societies they function as a social bridge between the central government and the people to ensure modernization and national integration.⁵

The famous political scientist Maurice Duverger also argues that political parties in single-party systems establish a direct and continuous link between the people and the state. According to Duverger, this link is established through the parties' organizational units, such as clubs and cells, which are scattered throughout the country and social circles. In this way, the government can listen to the voices of the masses and learn the thoughts and opinions of the people about the administration. On the other hand, this channel of communication between the public and the government also allows the government to position itself according to the people's expectations. In this regard, the single-party functions similarly to "radio stations that act as both receivers and transmitters." Because the established communication channel ensures the flow of data not only from the periphery to the center, but also from the center to the periphery.⁶

⁴ Esat Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992), p. 13.

⁵ Öz, pp. 13-14.

⁶ Maurice Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1974), p. 338.

From this perspective, it can be said that the RPP, as the founder of the single-party system in Turkish political life, also functioned as a tool, as a connecting organ between the state and the people. The basis for such a mission of the party should be sought in the political, social and economic developments before 1930. This is because in the history of the RPP, the period before 1930 has the characteristics of a transitional period in which activities were aimed at establishing a single-party rule and strengthening power. Later on, however, the party acted as a bridge between the people and the state and took on more concrete tasks, especially the supervision and regulation of social life. In addition to reorganizing the party organization, especially after the experience of the Free Republican Party⁷ (FRP), a political ideology was also to be created. During this period, when single-party administration was becoming more and more important, there was also a growing desire to shape social life within the framework of party principles and doctrines. In order to convey the values and principles of the republic and give society an ideological direction, an intensive process of social formation was initiated, which also involved subsidiary party organizations such as "people's houses" and "public rooms".⁸

Based on this "bridging function" of political parties in single-party systems, our study argues that the RPP Zonguldak organization fulfills the "task of being a bridge between the people and the state" through three basic institutional activities. Firstly, it should be noted that this evaluation does not mean that there are no other fields of activity that bring citizens and the state together, apart from the intermediary institutions, which will be discussed later. However, this expression should be understood to mean that the RPP Zonguldak organization intensively preferred these channels of communication when bringing society's concerns to the state. At the same time, the cadres who administer the state also carry their policies and the ideology of political power to the country through these institutions.

⁷ Hereafter FRP.

⁸ Öz, pp. 13-16.

One of the main institutional mechanisms that the RPP Zonguldak organization resorted to in order to fulfill its mediating role between the citizens and the state was the "wish system" and the provincial congresses in which this system was implemented. Another pillar of the RPP's "bridge mission" is the inspection system. During the single-party period, the inspection system monitored provincial organizations and mediated to determine society's expectations of the state. The final component of this mission, standing on a three-legged supporting pillar, was undoubtedly the People's Houses, which took on not only a socio-cultural mission but also an ideological one.

It can be seen that the state and the ruling elites appear as the main subjects in the researches on the RPP, which was at the center of recent Turkish political history. Behind the dominance of the above perspective in the historiography of this period, the central-periphery theory of Turkish historiography has an inevitable effect with state- and elite-centered theories of modernization.⁹ From this perspective, studies on the single-party period and the RPP often emphasize the party's governing functions, such as domestic and foreign policy-oriented administrative activities, republican elites and their discourses, the Turkish Revolution and its characteristics, social, political, and economic policies, and the implementation of modern laws. However, the RPP as a single party, on the one hand, tried to fulfill the function of reflecting the expectations, demands and grievances of the people from the periphery to the center, and on the other hand, it also tried to transfer the policies implemented by the political power to the periphery in order to adopt them and gain social support. For this reason, it can be said that a very intense period of activity was attempted to be managed through the institutions established directly in the party and its sub-organizations. Thus, attempts were made to identify society and the state through some institutions and mechanisms established within the party. In this context, it can be said that the communication gap between society and the state, which is

⁹ Murat Metinsoy, "Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet ve Toplum", *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 118 (2010), p.125.

typical of single-party systems, was one of the main problems that the RPP tried to overcome during the mentioned period. In other words, while the Turkish single-party system itself was the main obstacle for society to reach the state, the same system on the other hand tried to remove these obstacles through the communication channels established within itself. Moreover, this process was considered necessary to consolidate the legitimacy of political power and to educate and orient society in accordance with the ideology of the government. Therefore, from 1931 until the beginning of the multiparty political system, the RPP functioned as the main actor of a two-way communication mechanism between the public and the state.

From this point of view, the first starting point of our research is to reveal the political and social mission of the RPP between the public and the state in Zonguldak between 1935 and 1946, which is an area that remained untouched due to the political elite-oriented and centrist historiography approach. At this point, when the existing literature is examined, it is observed that there has been a significant increase in research that try to reveal the history and organization of the RPP through local organizations.¹⁰ Among these researches which were made usually based on party inspectorate reports, many provincial and district organizations of RPP such as İzmir, Kütahya, Kocaeli, Kırıkkale, Kırşehir, Balıkesir, Bursa, Malatya, Aydın, Uşak, Erzincan, Ordu, Antalya, Isparta, Çorum, Sivas, Yozgat, Maraş Keskin, Taşköprü, Bolvadin were examined. In addition, it should be mentioned that there are some studies that deal with the

¹⁰ Some of the studies on the provincial organizations of the RPP are as follows: Murat Turan, *CHP'nin Doğu'da Teşkilatlanması 1923-1950*, (İstanbul: Libra Yayınları, 2011); Mehmet Serkan Şahin, *Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Malatya Teşkilatı (1923-1950)*, (İstanbul: Libra Yayınları, 2016); Ayşe Gürkan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin Gaziantep'teki Faaliyetleri (1939-1950)*, (unpublished Master Thesis), (Gaziantep: Gaziantep Üniversitesi, 2004); Faysal Mayak, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Antalya Teşkilatının Faaliyetleri (1931-1951)*, (İstanbul: Libra Yayınları, 2015); Mehmet Pınar, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mersin ve İçel'de Siyasi Hayat (1923-1950)*, İstanbul: Hiperlink Yayınları, 2018); Cengiz Şavkullu, Tülay Aydın, "Tek Parti Döneminde CHP'nin Yozgat Teşkilatı (1939-1942)", *I. Uluslararası Bozok Sempozyumu 5 -7 Mayıs 2016 Bildiri Kitabı*, (Yozgat: Bozok Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016), vol. 2, pp. 329-337; Hakkı Uyar, "Tek Parti Dönemi'nde Denizli'de Siyasal Hayat", *Uluslararası Denizli ve Çevresi Tarih ve Kültür Sempozyumu(6-8 Eylül)*, (Denizli, 2006); Savaş Sertel, *Tek Parti Döneminde Bingöl'de Kurulan CHP Teşkilatları, Halkevleri ve Halkodaları*, (İstanbul: Libra Yayınları, 2016); Seda Bayındır Uluskan, *CHP Parti Müfettişliği ve Raporlarla Bursa Teşkilatı (1936-1945)*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 2020)

provincial organization of the RPP from a holistic point of view. As the examples of these we can mention Ayşe Güneş Ayata's research entitled "CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji" which is considered a premise for later researches, Murat Metinsoy's article entitled "Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet Toplum", as well as the dissertations "Tek Parti Döneminde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez-Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945)" by Tülay Aydın and "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Vilayet/İl Kongrelerinin Parti Politikalarına Etkileri (1930-1950)" by Sezai Kürşat Ökte.

The opening of new documents related to the institutionalization process of the RPP played an important role in bringing the provincial organization of the RPP into the realm of academic interest. Among these documents, the inspection reports and the reports of the electoral districts, which had to be sent regularly to the RPP General Secretariat, stand out. These reports contain data not only about the institutionalization process of the RPP in the provinces, but also on the political, socio-cultural and economic developments of the time and their local impact. As mentioned earlier, researches about the RPP's axis in the early republican era, reflecting the integration of the party and the state, have written the administrative, socio-cultural, and economic history of the state, rather than the history of the RPP itself. In this account, party activities mostly took place as part of government activities, and central cities such as Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir formed the geographical boundaries of the story in general. However, in most of these studies, the RPP's mediating function between the public and the state in the single-party period was either not mentioned or could only occupy a superficial place in the general narrative. For this reason, this study discusses the RPP's mediating role between the center and the periphery in Zonguldak, which is outside the relatively developed major cities of the single-party era in terms of socio-cultural, economic, infrastructural, and demographic development.

It can be said that the RPP's role as a bridge between the people and the state was mainly the result of an unsuccessful policy between 1923 and 1930. For this reason, it is necessary to examine the political and economic developments that

brought the RPP closer to society. As is well known, the failure of the policies pursued by the RPP between 1923 and 1930 has been clearly evident since the end of 1930. Because, although the social discontent that emerged with the experience of the FRP seems to have been due to its inability to solve people's economic problems, this experience led the political power to undertake not only economic but also new political searches. Thus, at the end of 1931, the political power began to make the RPP a more functional institution between society and the state, believing that the country's problems should be solved through a new perspective and renewed institutions. For this reason, the process that began with the Third Grand Congress of the RPP (1931) represents an important turning point in Turkey's public life. This is because it was at this congress that it was officially declared that Turkey's political system was single-party rule. Therefore, the Third Great Congress of the RPP was also a period in which a new "style" prevails in Turkey.¹¹

The 1930s were the time when the regime was thought to be in danger and propaganda activities were intensified in order to create a revolutionary ideology and spread it to the public. During these years, the single-party government grew stronger and the authoritarian nature of the RPP became more and more evident. Therefore, measures were taken to strengthen the single-party administration in this direction. From that time on, the RPP banned some social and cultural organizations that dated back to the time of the Union and Progress Committee and carried out activities to bring the entire cultural and intellectual life of the country directly under its control.¹² Thus, the process that started with the closure of the Turkish Hearths was followed by the closure of associations such as the Turkish Women's Union (*Türk Kadınlar Birliği*), the Turkish Masonic Lodges (*Türk Mason Locaları*), and the Turkish Journalists' Union (*Türk*

¹¹ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012), p. 318

¹² Eric Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020), p. 213.

Gazeteciler Birliđi). In coordination with this process, organizations such as the Turkish Aeronautical Association (*Türk Hava Kurumu*), the Child Protection Agency (*Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*) and Red Crescent (*Kızılay*) were placed under the control of the RPP.

The process that began with the renewal and expansion of the party organization also continued with the establishment of a political ideology. In this sense, Zürcher points out three important factors that explain the changing role of the RPP since the early 1930s: The Great Depression, the Menemen Incident (*Menemen Hadisesi*), which showed that the party's social and cultural modernization message could not reach the broad mass of the population, and the influence of the discourses of authoritarian regimes.¹³ Social unrest due to problems that the government could not solve and resistance to social and cultural revolutions increased due to the authoritarian structure of the party and the lack of communication channels. Meanwhile, the political power was strangely unaware of this growing unrest. However, Fethi Bey's visit to İzmir will show this disconnection between political power and community. It must be mentioned that Fethi Bey's trip to Izmir is important to fully expose the weak link between the political power and the society. As it is known, Fethi Bey will organize a trip to Izmir after the establishment of FRP and will be welcomed by a large crowd. Although this crowd will wait for the port of Izmir to meet Fethi Bey, the administrators of the RPP have considered these crowds as a protest against him and for this reason they wanted the governor of Izmir to take protective measures.¹⁴ Therefore, both the FRP experience and the Menemen incident awakened the idea that political power should show its power over the masses. For this reason, after these trials, intensive educational and propaganda

¹³ Eric Jan Zürcher, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Atatürk Türkiye'sine Bir Ulusun İnşası*, (Ankara: Akılçelen Kitapları, 2015), pp. 405-407.

¹⁴ Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi (1930-1945)*, (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1983), p. 19.

activities were undertaken by the RPP to spread the values and principles of the Republic to the public.¹⁵

In this process, as part of the renewal and expansion efforts for the RPP organization, the activities of the Zonguldak organization were also reviewed. In this context, an inspection committee was also sent to the RPP organization of Zonguldak in the days following the dissolution of the FRP. This delegation of party representatives, which had been formed "to examine the situation that had arisen in the provinces"¹⁶ arrived in Zonguldak a short time later and began its work. Under the chairmanship of Bolu Deputy Mr. Cevat Abbas, the delegation tried to identify the demands and expectations of the people to the government, as well as their complaints about the policies implemented. For this reason, the delegation met with the administrative committees of all institutions such as the members of the municipality and the provincial council, the members of the chambers of agriculture, commerce and industry, as well as the citizens and workers of the city.¹⁷ The organization of such committees in the early years of the institutionalization of the single-party era marks an important beginning for the history of the RPP. The establishment of direct contacts between the people and the state in the countryside by the party is indeed an important official attempt to feel the pulse of the people. Moreover, these inspections are also noteworthy as the first concrete step taken by the RPP government to restore communication between the people and the state.

During the single-party period, one of the most important mechanisms that made the RPP's bridging mission between the people and the state effective was the party inspection institution. This system, which was tried to be used effectively

¹⁵ Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi (1930-1945)*, p. 19; Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 16.

¹⁶ Döndü Sena Gündürü, "1930 Yılı Sonlarında Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Taşra Teşkilatı: Heyet Raporları Üzerinden Bir Değerlendirme", *Ankara Üniversitesi Tük İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, no. 66, (Bahar, 2020), p. 123.

¹⁷ *Zonguldak*, 18 Sonkanun (January) 1931, p. 2.

by both regional inspectors and deputies who supervised in their electoral districts, provided bidirectional data flow. In this sense, on the one hand, demands, wishes and complaints were conveyed from the people to the government; on the other hand, data was transferred from the provinces to the government. Thus, the government could question the effectiveness of pursued programs and policies and could determine new policies if it was necessary. The inspection mechanism, which has been institutionalized within the RPP, has essentially been placed on a legal basis since the first regulation of the party. Subsequently, the inspection mechanism addressed in the statute was put into practice and by mid-1925, 74 provinces of the country were divided into 14 inspection districts. According to this regulation, Zonguldak province was included in the first inspection area.¹⁸ In the following period, the inspection mechanism functioned as an effective element of the party structure and maintained its importance as one of the most important organizational activities of the RPP throughout the single-party life. Accordingly, inspections in Zonguldak became more frequent especially in the second half of the 1930s. Undoubtedly, the new era that started with İsmet İnönü along with the process leading to the integration of the party and the state had a significant impact on this. Thus, considering the period between 1935 and 1945 of the single party rule, more regular inspections directed to Zonguldak organization started to be carried out by the regional inspectors compared to the previous periods. As a result of these inspections were mostly about the functioning of party organizations, the reports highlighted organizational demands, expectations and complaints rather than daily issues. However, the observations and evaluations on socio-cultural or economic expectations and their transfer to the government were mostly made through inspections carried out by RPP Zonguldak deputies in their election districts. In this sense, many inspections were carried out by Zonguldak deputies especially between 1939-1945 in order to determine the

¹⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 3 Haziran (June) 1341 (1925), p. 2; Mete Tunçay, “CHF’nın 1927 Kurultayının Öncesinde Toplanan İl Kongreleri”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi Atatürk Özel Sayısı*, vol. 36, no. 1, (1981), p. 282.

problems, demands and complaints of the Zonguldak people and their expectations from the government and to convey them to the relevant authorities. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the internal inspections carried out by the RPP Zonguldak organization can be evaluated within this inspection mechanism. As it is known, in addition to the aforementioned inspection procedures within the RPP structure, another inspection mechanism was also established within the provincial organizations. This mechanism did not function as the control of the periphery by the center. It was a control and surveillance mechanism that established within the periphery itself. Because as it is known, according to the party statutes each lower level has some responsibilities towards the upper levels in the provincial organization. Similarly, higher levels are obliged to monitor and supervise the organizational functioning of lower levels in certain periods. It is thought that these inspections are often instrumental in listening and identifying the problems of local people as well. This process also appears to be an important opportunity for party leaders to convey political ideology and introduce government policies to the public. At the final stage, the results of these inspections were combined with the reports of the lower levels and sent to the General Secretariat of RPP every six months. Thus, with such reports, the political aspect of which is more prominent, the center has the opportunity to feel the pulse of the environment. In terms of Zonguldak , it should be noted that these semi-annual work reports were much more organized than the other two types of reports. In fact, the researches has revealed that RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee sent at least one work report to the General Secretariat for each year between 1936 and 1945.

As can be seen, when the inspection mechanism is evaluated as a whole, it was carried out not only through the regional inspectors assigned by the RPP headquarters, but also carried out by the Zonguldak deputies in their own constituencies as well. And these two inspections often complemented each other. All these inspection mechanisms functioned in Zonguldak throughout the single party period as institutional elements that mediated between people and the state. From a functional point of view, even though it was a design of

extraordinary conditions, the RPP inspection committee assigned in the provinces after the FRP experience also adopted the methods of the regional inspection mechanism. Therefore, the aforementioned inspection committee operated as an adapted version of the existing inspection boards within the RPP for extraordinary periods.

Within the authoritarian single-party system created by the RPP, one of the most important channels of communication between the people and the state was undoubtedly the petition system. As one of the best examples of party-state integration, this mechanism mediated the transmission of social demands, complaints, and expectations from the lowest units of the RPP in the provinces to the General Secretariat and from there to the Grand Congress. The provincial congresses, which were the highest levels of provincial organizations, performed an extremely important task in this respect. In these congresses, where a holistic evaluation of public wishes was made, it was ensured that the demands that could not be overcome with local resources were conveyed to the party headquarters. For this reason, it was necessary to convene the provincial congresses regularly and at the times stipulated in the party statutes to establish an uninterrupted communication between the people and the state. Besides, it was also important in terms of solving the basic needs of the society and learning people's values and opinions about the party and the government. For this reason, tracing the provincial congresses in Zonguldak is essential for defining the mediating role of the party between the people and the state. In this context, it is possible to say that the provincial congresses organized by the Zonguldak RPP organization mostly convened at the times stipulated by the party's statute in 1931 and afterwards and strived to fulfill the political and social mission assigned to it. In other words, the Zonguldak RPP organization, which has been regularly convening the provincial congress since 1931, seems to have fulfilled one of its most important missions: "bringing the people and the state together." During the single-party period, the People's Houses operated effectively as one of the tools for the transferring of political ideology to the provinces and socio-cultural modernization. People's Houses also made significant contributions to

the "*process of being a bridge between the central government and the society*"¹⁹ carried out by the RPP in ensuring national integration. In this context, People's Houses were decided to be established at the Third Grand Congress of the RPP convened between May 10-18. Its official establishment was realized on February 19, 1932 in 14 cities in the first stage. On June 24th of the same year, the Zonguldak People's House was officially opened and began its activities. On the one hand, Zonguldak People's House's activities in many fields such as history, literature, representation, sports, social welfare, libraries, publications, public lectures, courses, museums and exhibitions introduced the society to the modernizing elements of the Republic, on the other hand, it was instrumental in carrying/transmitting the official ideology and government policies to the remotest parts of the country. In this sense, the peasant days organized especially for the villagers and the conferences to sensitize society within the framework of republican values and ideology seem to be the main tools used by the center to reach the periphery.

In the light of all these evaluations; while the electoral district inspections and wish system, which were tried to be used effectively during the single-party period, seem to have been designed mostly for the determination of the wishes, demands, expectations and complaints of the people and conveying them to the centre; it is understood that the inspections of the party inspectorate and the internal local inspections mainly focus on issues related to party institutions and their functioning. Here, it is also necessary to avoid considering the inspection and wish mechanisms as practices that focus on only one issue and separate from each other with sharp boundaries. Indeed, it is often witnessed that both the party inspectorate reports and election districts reports address both social and organizational issues at the same time. Similarly, the agenda of the provincial congresses, which is a very important platform for determining the wishes of the people, also devoted a lot of time to issues related to party organizational activities. Finally, it should be noted that the People's Houses which emerged as an auxiliary institution of the RPP, came to the fore in this period as a

¹⁹ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 14.

practitioner of the modernization movement and a carrier of the official ideology.

Based on tells so far, in this study answers will be sought to the basic questions such as the conditions that reveal the bridge role that the RPP has undertaken between society and the state, the meaning that the RPP has attributed to this task during the single-party period and what extent it has been achieved. Thus, the activities of the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1935 and 1946 will be examined from the perspective of the “social bridge mission” carried by the party. In this context, since no such study has been conducted in Zonguldak, our research aims to fill the gap in this field and contribute to the literature.

1.1. Concepts and Theoretical Framework

In all social formations from the beginning of human history to the present day, there has always been a small group of people, "*whether they are spiritualists or magicians, heads of families or elders*"²⁰, who have been in charge of the whole society. For this reason, all societies have always witnessed divisions between the rulers and the ruled. This phenomenon, which is also called as political regime, arises from this separation between those who govern and those who are governed within any social organization.²¹ Criterias such as how the rulers are

²⁰ Maurice Duverger, *Siyasi Rejimler*, (trans.) Yaşar Gürbüz, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1963), p. 5.

²¹ Duverger, *Siyasi Rejimler*, pp. 5-7. Yaşar Gürbüz, in his study titled *Siyasal Sistemler*, states that the concepts of "political regime" and "political system" are used interchangeably in many studies. For this reason, he thinks that the concepts of "political system" and "political regime" should be defined separately. According to Gürbüz there are some political institutions in the state. For example; presidency, parliament and ministries are institutions and take place within the state mechanism. The arrangement of the relations of all these institutions with each other constitutes the regime of that country. For example; parliamentary or presidential regime is evaluated in this context. In addition to the arrangement of all political institutions in a country and their relations with each other, the combination of all factors such as the country's history, culture, ideology, socioeconomic structure and development level forms the political system of that country. Therefore, Gürbüz states that these concepts are listed as “institution, regime and system” from the narrowest frame to the widest one. See Yaşar Gürbüz, *Siyasal Sistemler*, (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1980), p. 17.

elected, the division of duties among themselves and the limits of their authority to rule are among the basic elements that determine the characters of political regimes.²² From this perspective, it must be said that the most widely accepted political regime of the modern period has emerged as democracies in which rulers are elected and determined through democratic procedures.

As the social beings, people are incapable of displaying a common intellectual and actional will on every issue by their nature. At this point the formations called political parties come to scene. Because, political parties have emerged as formations that represent the different ideas and opinions exhibited by people who do not agree with each other on some social, economic, cultural or political issues.²³ For this reason, the first form of political parties is a formation where individuals who share common interests and similar worldviews come together. While the history of humanity contains many examples of people grouping together and uniting around a leader or a team of leaders to achieve political power, it should be noted that modern political parties are a relatively new phenomenon.²⁴ In fact, it would be necessary to wait until the mid-19th century to talk about parties in the modern sense. The modern political parties, which will appear for the first time in America on this date, will operate as an important part of all democratic political systems in the middle of the 20th century.²⁵

²² Duverger, *Siyasi Rejimler*, p. 10.

²³ Naki Cevat Akkerman, *Demokrasi ve Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler Hakkında Kısa Notlar*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1950), pp. 7-8.

²⁴ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 19. While the authorities such as Leslie Lipson and Tarık Zafer Tunaya defended party institutions has existed in the first democracies in history and the Roman Empire, some political scientists, including Maurice Duverger and Ergun Özbudun, stated that such organizations cannot be evaluated within the framework of the concept of party. See Murat Yanık, *Parti İçi Demokrasi*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2002), p. 14.

²⁵ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 19.

Throughout history, all societies have always witnessed the existence of formations such as factions, cliques and pressure groups that have emerged in order to seize political power. However, as political scientists agree, political parties differ from their predecessors by being one of the most fundamental and important institutions of modern political life. In addition to this, the notion of party is still used to refer "*to the popular organizations that shape public opinion in modern democracies, as well as to the factions that emerged in ancient republics or the clubs where members of revolutionary assemblies gathered*".²⁶ Although this identity in conceptualization stems from the fact that the ultimate goal in both cases is the seizure of power, it is important not to confuse the parties of the modern world with the factions of the early period.²⁷

Regarding the concept of political party many definitions, theories and typologies have been developed. Especially, the post-World War II period, increasing interest in political parties and the developments in political science were reflected in the number of studies. Within this context, a lot of research has been done about the characteristics of political parties and their functions in political systems. Today, it can be said that the definitions made by Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner in their review of "The Origin and Development of Political Parties" are mostly taken as reference among political party theories.²⁸ La Palombara and Weiner argue that four important criteria must be provided for any social formation to be considered a party:

²⁶ The meaning of the word of party which has been translated into our language from French is "*fırka*". Conceptually, party means "section", "part", "part of a whole". By the seventeenth century, the term came to mean faction and interest group in addition to its existing meaning. It is stated that today's modern meaning originates from the Whigs and Tories that emerged in England.

²⁷ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 15.

²⁸ Ahmet Kotil, "Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7-8, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), p. 2000; Esat Çam, *Siyaset Bilimine Giriş*, (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1998), p. 417.

A permanent organization that is not limited by the lifespan of its leaders (organizational continuity), a well-established and enduring local/regional organization, a goal not only to influence power but also to seize it, and an aim to win public sympathy or support through elections or otherwise.²⁹

Another political scientist Maurice Duverger, whose name is frequently mentioned in researches on political parties, provides an unusual definition of political parties in his work titled *Siyasal Partiler* and aims to create a new general theory of parties. In the aforementioned study, Duverger defines political parties in terms of three main variables: party structure, party systems and electoral systems.³⁰ According to him;

Modern parties can be distinguished more by the nature of their organizations than by their programs or the class to which their members belong. A party is a group of people with a certain structure. The main distinguishing feature of modern parties is their anatomy. The twentieth century party, with its complex and differentiated structure, has replaced the single-celled creature of past ages.³¹

The party in Duverger's definition is an association of many communities. This union, which is scattered throughout the country, consists of small groups that are connected to each other through some intermediate institutions.³²

Depending on the worldwide interest in political parties, researches on political parties have increased in Turkey as well. After the World War II, with the impact

²⁹ J. LaPalombara ve Myron Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties", *Political Development and Political Parties*, J. LaPalombara ve Myron Weiner (eds.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 6.

³⁰ Ergun Özbudun, "M. Duverger'in Siyasal Partiler'i ve Siyasal Partilerin İncelenmesinde Bazı Metodolojik Problemler", *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 21, no. 01 (1964), p. 26.

³¹ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 10.

³² Gökhan Göktürk, *1946-1980 Yılları Arasında Siyaset Sosyolojisi Açısından Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2012), p. 19.

of the changing domestic and foreign conjuncture, the single-party regime that had dominated Turkish political life for a long time came to the end. Thus, the establishment of other parties became possible in an environment of political freedom. In this respect, studies on political parties have gained momentum following the experience of multi-party political life. Although the tradition of political parties has existed for many years in Turkish political life, political studies began to increase especially after 1946. It is not possible to explain the progress in research on the basic concepts of politics only with the change of the political system. At the same time, it should be noted that the understanding of "American Political Science"³³ has an impact on the worldwide interest in political science as well.³⁴ As a result, most of the early researches on political parties was conducted by social scientists who were influenced by the APS school.³⁵ In this period, conceptual and historical studies on political parties were made by both representatives of the APS school and social scientists who were distant to this approach in our country. For example, social scientists such as Niyazi Berkes, Tarık Zafer Tunaya and Şerif Mardin have highlighted history and historical sociology in their analyses.

The first of these studies was put forward by the famous Turkish sociologist Niyazi Berkes in the process following the beginning of the multi-party political life. In his study titled *Siyasi Partiler* in which he tried to explain the history and

³³ American Political Science is based on a positivist and empirical science understanding. For this reason, it foresees the application of empirical science understanding in political research. In essence, this approach means that political science should focus on what actually happens, not on what should be. Therefore, in this approach, cases that cannot be measured and expressed in numbers are considered speculative. Rather, it is argued that statistical data on political life should be collected. For detailed information see Tanel Demirel, *Türk Siyasetini Anlamak*, (Ankara: Liberte Yayınları, 2019), pp.19-75. Hereafter APS.

³⁴ Demirel, *Türk Siyasetini Anlamak*, pp. 33-36.

³⁵ There are important names such as Kemal Karpat, Nermin Abadan Unat, İlter Turan, Ergun Özbudun, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, Metin Heper among the social scientists who have shaped political science research in our country with the influence of this school. For detailed information see Demirel, *Türk Siyasetini Anlamak*, pp. 33-73.

organization of the British, American, French and German parties, Berkes also clarified the concept of party. He defines the party “as a form of union that consists of people who are united in their views and goings, and that these people always differ from others in the face of certain issues.” Besides, he draws attention to the fact that in order for any formation to be defined as a party, the unity between people with similar views and opinions should aim to seize power in the final stage. In this respect, the party expresses not only a unity of ideas but also a unity of will. In addition, in order for any formation consisting of people who adopt the same view to be defined as a political party, the ultimate goal must be to gain political power.³⁶

Another important political scientist, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, draws attention to the fact that although political parties are such an active institution in political life, it has been desired not to be recognized for a long time in Turkey. For this reason, Tunaya states in the preface of his book *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*³⁷ that it was late in the evaluation regarding political parties.³⁸ Tunaya mentions three important social requirements/preconditions that enable the formation of a political party within a community: the existence of different views and interests, solidarity and an environment of freedom. As a social being, every society is made up of individuals with different worldviews and different solutions to social or political problems. Therefore, these people inevitably diverge on fundamental issues of political, social, economic or universal values. At this

³⁶ Niyazi Berkes, *Siyasal Partiler*, (İstanbul: Yurt ve Dünya Yayınları, 1946), pp. 1-4.

³⁷ This work was later expanded by T. Z. Tunaya and published in three volumes. The author died in 1991 while working on the fourth volume. These works, which were published in three volumes, were first published by the Hürriyet Vakfı and later by İletişim Yayınları, under the names of the *İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi, Mütareke Dönemi ve İttihat ve Terakki: Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partinin Tarihi*. For detailed information see M. Ö. Alkan, “Gogol’un Paltosu: Tarık Zafer Tunaya ve Siyasi Partiler”, *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, no.3 (2004), pp. 475-481.

³⁸ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1995), p. V.

point, if individuals decide to act together with other people who share similar ideas about any issue, they fulfill one of the most important requirements of being a political party. Thus, the party above all is seen as “*an expression of unity, solidarity around ideas and programmes.*”³⁹ Although for the formation of a political party sharing similar ideas in the face of various issues is the first step, it is not sufficient. At the last stage, there is a predetermined program, the goal of obtaining power and governing the state will give this formation the spirit of a political party. From this point of view, Tunaya's definition of a political party is similar to the previously mentioned definitions. According to him, a political party is “*an association of people united on a specific political program with the aim of realizing this program especially through normal elections.*”⁴⁰

Ergun Özbudun, on the other hand, underlines that “*political parties are one of the most important elements of modern political systems*” in the introduction of his work titled *Siyasal Partiler*. After mentioning on the inclusive and limiting aspects of the definitions developed by many theorists, Özbudun tries to define a unique political party. According to Özbudun, who points out the common components in the definitions made by many political scientists, a political party is “*...a political group with a permanent and stable organization that tries to take control of or maintain of the state mechanism by securing the support of the people.*”⁴¹ Similarly, the political scientist Münici Kapani in her study titled *Politikaya Giriş* criticized the definitions made by some Western political scientists as they contain exclusionary elements. Then, he stated that a more comprehensive definition of political party is needed. Therefore, he tries to more inclusive definition and defined political parties as “*formations with a permanent*

³⁹ Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Tunaya, p. 3.

⁴¹ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, pp. 1-5.

organization, united around a specific program whose objectives are to gain or share political power.”⁴²

It is possible to further increase the definitions of the concept of political party. However, as can be seen, the concept of political party lacks an agreed definition in both Western and Turkish political science studies. Thus, it should be noted that the conceptualizations put forward many common criteria. For this reason, most of political scientists generally believe that some criterias must be provided for any social formation to be considered as a political party. Based on the theories and definitions mentioned earlier, it is possible to summarize these conditions under a few points: Firstly, people who have come together intellectually and voluntarily need to be gathered around a specific program. This social formation must also seek to win political power in order to implement its predetermined programs on the ground. Besides, this criteria is necessary for political parties to become a party in the real sense. Another common point emphasized in the definition of political parties is the method that followed in the process of gaining power. Political scientists on the other hand point out that formations whose ultimate goal is to seize political power should gain social support. Because, as mentioned before, most political scientists are of the opinion that formations that have seized political power by using military coups or force without social support cannot be accepted as parties. Finally, according to political scientists, in order for any social structure to be defined as a political

⁴² Kapani, *Politika Bilimine Giriş*, p. 176. As mentioned before that the literature on political science has been enriched in parallel with the increasing interest in political science especially in the post-World War II period. For this reason, many sources other than mentioned here have been examined. However, it should be stated that in all these studies, similar aspects and qualities of political parties are highlighted. Some of these studies are as follows: Bülent Daver, *Siyaset Bilimine Giriş*, Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1976; Esat Çam, *Siyaset Bilimine Giriş*, (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1998); Davut Dursun, *Siyaset Bilimi*, (İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım, 2012); Nazif Akçalı, *Siyaset Bilimine Giriş*, (İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1995); Cemal Fedayi, *Siyaset Bilimi*, (Ankara: Kadim Yayınları, 2020); Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Siyasi Partiler ve Sosyalizm*, (İstanbul: Anıl Yayınevi, 1963); F. Hüsrev Tökin, *Türk Tarihinde Siyasi Partiler ve Siyasi Düşüncenin Gelişmesi*, (İstanbul: Elif Yayınları, 1965); Erdoğan Teziç, *100 Soruda Siyasi Partiler*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1976); Ahmet N. Yücekök, *Siyasetin Toplumsal Tabanı*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1987); Naki Cevat Akkerman, *Demokrasi ve Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler Hakkında Kısa Notlar*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1950); Muzaffer Sencer, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partilerin Sosyal Temelleri*, (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1974).

party it must also have an organizational continuity. In this respect, it is the common opinion of many theorists that the formations which have a limited organization life cannot be considered as a political party.

The diversity in the theories regarding the concept of political party is also valid for the theses put forward about how the parties were born. As it is known, political parties and party systems are mainly the product of social developments in North America and Western Europe in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Therefore, the groupings that had formed around a certain leader or an idea until then were mostly in the form of factions.⁴³ A number of factors played role in the institutionalization of these separatist formations over time and becoming the basic institutions of political systems. These dynamics which played role in the emergence of political parties have been grouped under three different theories by La Palombara and Weiner: Institutional Theory, Historical Crisis (Situation) Theory and Modernizationist (Developmental) Theory.⁴⁴

The general framework of institutional theory is determined by Duverger's views on the emergence of political parties. This theory argues that there is a close relationship between the emergence and development of parties and the development of the parliamentary system and general suffrage. According to Duverger, modern political parties emerged as the result of the establishment of the representative government principle in Europe in the 19th century and the expansion of the right to vote. With the gradual removal of barriers on the right of political participation, parliament has become increasingly important and autonomous institution in the Western European political system. Hence, the need to establish a stronger and more regular relationship between the representatives who constituted the parliament and the electorate that determines them. Thus, the factions that had emerged in the era of limited suffrage now had

⁴³ Sabri Sayarı, “Siyasi Partiler ve Parti Sistemleri” *Karşılaştırmalı Siyaset*, Sabri Sayarı and Hasret Dikici Bilgin (eds.), (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2018), pp.125-126.

⁴⁴ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 19; Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 24.

to go beyond the walls of the parliament and began to establish permanent organizations in every constituency. Once the relations between these organizations and parliamentary groups becoming more orderly and more regular over time, modern political parties emerged. Duverger summarizes this process as "*first parliamentary groups are created, then electoral committees appear; finally a permanent link is established between these two elements.*"⁴⁵ While the political parties which was born within the parliament followed such a development, the emergence and development of the parties born outside the parliament is completely different. Non-parliamentary parties, which have not been able to find representation in parliament as their social base, are characterized by their centralized structure. They mostly rely on formations such as labour unions, opinion clubs (such as student clubs and university groups), agricultural cooperatives and professional organizations of peasants, industrial and commercial groups (such as banks, employers' unions, large enterprises) and churches. In addition to these, parties born outside parliament are ideologically more consistent and disciplined.⁴⁶

In political systems, while transitioning from traditional forms to modern ones, some historical crisis situations are often encountered that make the functioning of the system difficult. According to La Palombara and Weiner, such historical crises are important determinants of the emergence and subsequent development of parties.⁴⁷ According to this theory, political parties in western democracies generally emerged at the establishment stage of the new state, during the periods of changes in the sense of legitimacy and when parliamentary democracy was in crisis or collapsed.⁴⁸ In other words, the historical crisis periods that paved the

⁴⁵ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 16.

⁴⁶ Duverger, pp. 23-29.

⁴⁷ LaPalombara and Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties", pp. 14-19.

⁴⁸ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 25.

way for the emergence of political parties are periods of legitimacy crisis, integration crisis and participation crisis. The crisis of legitimacy arises when the social consensus on how and by whom society should be governed breaks down. From this perspective, Association For Defense of the National Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (*ADNRAR*), which was the nucleus of the RPP, emerged in a similar process as an organization and that initiated and led the struggle for independence against imperialism and colonialism. The crisis of integration refers to the crisis of trying to create a national state out of different linguistic, religious and racial groups. One of the methods of minority groups, who oppose the efforts of the dominant culture to achieve national unity and strengthen the central authority, is to found a party in order to protect their own cultural characteristics. Such parties can be seen more common in societies that are not homogeneous in terms of race, language and religion. Crises of participation however occur when the ruling elite deems the aspirations of individuals or groups seeking to participate in the political system illegitimate. In this sense, it can be said that most of modern political parties were born out of a crisis of participation. For example, the birth of the Democratic Party (DP) in Turkey can be seen as the efforts of the rural bourgeoisie, merchants, artisans and peasants to increase their share in political power. Because they could not have a voice in the state administration under the RPP rule.⁴⁹ Lastly, according to the social modernization theory, the emergence of political parties is a result of social modernization. Therefore, the political parties in modern sense cannot be expected to emerge in traditional societies that have not reached a certain level of modernization. Because the secularization of cultural elements in modernizing societies has paved the way for people to develop a conscious and organized political action. In this sense, the transition from a village economy to a monetary and market economy, or developments in the fields of transportation and communication, have prepared the appropriate environment for the creation of nation-wide political organizations.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 26.

⁵⁰ Özbudun, pp. 21-23.

Another issue that needs to be addressed in terms of political parties is party classifications. As it is known, there are many differences between political parties in terms of internal structure, organization, social base or ideology.⁵¹ For this reason, these characteristics have made it inevitable to evaluate parties under different typologies. The most well-known of these distinctions are those made by the French political scientist Maurice Duverger and the German political scientist Sigmund Neumann.⁵²

Duverger examines the parties under two separate headings in terms of their structures: direct and indirect.⁵³ According to this classification, which is based on the source of party membership, in "direct parties" members form the party community themselves without the help of other social groups. On the other hand, "indirect parties" are not composed of party supporters or members, but the members of constituent groups (such as trade unions, cooperatives, mutual aid associations). In this respect, a party is not a single community, but an association of small groups scattered throughout the country and linked together by a superstructure. It is possible to classify the basic forms of organization seen in such parties as "committee", "militia", "hearth" and "cell" types. Liberal parties are examples of committee-type organizations consisting of a small number of members, while socialist parties are examples of hearth-type organizations that seek to increase the number of members and increase their total power. On the other hand, cell-type organizations which was based on a professional basis are found in communist parties, while militia-type organizations that organize their members on a military basis are found in fascist

⁵¹ Kapani, *Politika Bilimine Giriş*, p. 184.

⁵² Kapani, p. 185.

⁵³ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, pp. 37-38.

parties. According to Duverger in modern political systems, direct parties are the rule and indirect parties are the exception.⁵⁴

Duverger proposes the typology of "cadre" and "mass" parties in terms of recruitment of party members. In this typology, the structural differences of the parties are taken into account rather than the number of members. In Duverger's typology, cadre parties are the first examples of parties that emerged in Western democracies in elections based on wealth. In such parties, where the quality is at the forefront rather than quantity, no special effort is made to increase the number of members. Rather, it is intended to bring the wealthy and influential elites in constituencies together. In this sense, cadre parties correspond to committee parties which are decentralized and weakly connected in terms of their structure. However, the concept of membership and the number of members are very important in mass parties. Duverger clarifies the importance of members for mass parties with the analogy that "*a party without members is like a teacher without students*". Because for such parties, membership recruitment is both politically and financially fundamental. The members, who are the core material of the party in terms of politics, are also the most important financial resources of the party with the dues they have paid. Unlike cadre parties, mass parties stand out with their centralized and disciplined structures.⁵⁵ Within the scope of Duverger's classification, the RPP showed the characteristics of a cadre party. Because it was founded by a narrow military-bureaucrat political cadre and was initially introverted. However, the policy of recruiting members, the existence of a party financial system based on membership dues, and the adoption of the hearth type organization model show that the RPP has evolved into a mass party over time.

⁵⁴ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 47.

⁵⁵ Duverger, pp. 106-115.

In the party typology proposed by Sigmund Neumann, political parties are analyzed in two categories: "individual representation party" and "social integration party". According to this typology, social integration parties are further divided into two subclasses: "democratic integration parties" and "total integration parties". In this sense, individual representation parties, which operate in a narrow and limited political participation environment and only at election times, correspond to Duverger's definition of a cadre party. In these parties, which are weak in terms of discipline and ideology, there is no expectation of active participation from members. Social integration parties however are the parties that have emerged as a result of the expansion of political rights. These parties, which are not only visible during election times, ideologically educate their members, gather them under an organizational roof and take a close interest in their social lives. Democratic integration parties, on the other hand, emerged to reintegrate the masses, who were separated from their natural environments as a result of the rapid industrialization and urbanization process experienced in social life with the modern period. In total integration parties, where the ideology is a heavier and more important element, a totalitarian worldview is adopted and a broad mechanism of regulation and control over the behavior of members is established. In such parties, which adopt a totalitarian worldview rather than a program of ideas and action, members are expected to be very strictly committed and loyal to this "systemic" worldview.⁵⁶

1.1.1. Single-Party System In Terms of Political Party Systems

The single-party system of government and its characteristics, which constitute the conceptual framework of our research, will be emphasized in this part of our study. Because it is known that parties not only by themselves, but also by their coexistence affect the functioning of the system they are in. In this respect, the identity that a single political party or multiple parties bring to political systems

⁵⁶ Sigmund Neumann, "Toward A Comparative Study of Political Parties", *Modern Political Parties*, Sigmund Neumann (ed.), (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 395-421.

is closely related to their qualities, structural and functional characteristics. Indeed, according to many political scientists, the system of political parties and the structure of parties in a country are important criteria for evaluating the political regime in that country. For example, modern democracies are characterized by multiple competing political parties, whereas modern totalitarian regimes have allowed the emergence of a single-party political life. For this reason, basic institutional issues such as political parties, their structures and the party system are very important for understanding contemporary political systems.

As it is known, the number of parties operating in a country, their power and the level of their relations with other parties vary depending on the social, economic and political conditions of each country. Due to these differences, each country has a party system which was created by its own conditions. In defining these systems, different criteria have been put forward by many political theorists who pioneered the study of political parties. It is understood that many criteria such as the number of parties, the strength of parties, party organizations, the type of party leadership and the position of parties in the ideological spectrum are taken into consideration.⁵⁷ However, it should be noted that the classification of party systems is mostly based on the criteria of the number of parties, which is also referred to as the “classical distinction”.⁵⁸ Although it has been stated that this criteria alone will not be sufficient in the classification of party systems, the concepts based on the mentioned distinction such as single-party, two-party and multi-party systems are still used today.⁵⁹ Single-party administration, which was one of the classifications based on this criteria, has been one of the most

⁵⁷ Jean Blondel, “Party, Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June 1968), p. 183.

⁵⁸ Murat Yanık, “Parti Sistemleri ve Türkiye Uygulamaları”, *Atatürk Üniversitesi Erzinan Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi(AÜEHFD)*, vol. VII, no.1-2, 2003, p. 271.

⁵⁹ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 111.

controversial issues among political party systems.⁶⁰ Therefore, in this chapter we will focus on the concept of "single party system" which also defines the process that our research topic deals with.

The single-party system is defined as a form of government that leaves the functioning of political life to a single dominant party and does not allow other parties to compete for power.⁶¹ From this point of view, it is possible to define the single-party regime as the opposite of the mentality that forms the basis of the multi-party and democratic regime.⁶² Maurice Duverger, defines single-party governments which was a phenomenon unique to the 20th century as “*the adaptation of a method born within the framework of democracy to dictatorship*”.⁶³ Based on the acceptance that the masses cannot govern themselves, the aim of single-party governments is to create a new ruling class instead of traditional social elites and train political leaders who can organize the country. In this sense, during a single-party rule, the state administration is completely goes under the control of the dominant political party. On the other hand, one of the most important functions of the dominant political party in single-party systems is to ensure a direct and continuous relationship between the government and the people. As it is known, one of the main challenges in authoritarian regimes is the communication gap between the leader and the people. Duverger states that in such political systems the disconnection between people and the state is resolved by the dominant political party. As the result, the communication channel that appeared is like “*radio stations that act as both*

⁶⁰ Aslı Altun, *Türkiye’de Tek Parti Dönemi’nde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nin Örgütlenmesi*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Hatay: Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi, 2006), p. 12.

⁶¹ Şükrü Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2011), p. 11.

⁶² Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, p. 65.

⁶³ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 335.

receiver and transmitter.” Because, this two-way contact is realized not only from people to the leader but also from top to bottom as well.⁶⁴

The elections in single-party governments in which the candidates are determined directly by the party organs do not go beyond a plebiscite that mediates "*approval of party candidates rather than a political mechanism that provides a change in power.*"⁶⁵ Apart from these, in single party administrations where the real power is in the hands of the party administration, senior state officials, especially deputies, ministers, senior judges and bureaucrats are also elected from among party members and party administrators. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that a strong disciplinary mechanism is established in single-party administration systems that operates from top to bottom. Thus, it is ensured that the decisions taken by the upper levels are conveyed to the public and the society is directed.⁶⁶

As mentioned before, in order to make the dynamics of party systems more understandable, different classification criteria were determined by political party theorists and Maurice Duverger pioneered these definition studies. Duverger classified party systems as two-party system, multi-party system and single-party system.⁶⁷ As an alternative to this, a new typology of political party system accepted by the wider masses was put forward by the Italian political scientist Giovanni Sartori.⁶⁸ However, because of the fact that single-party systems are highly diverse and many political theorists propose different

⁶⁴ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, pp. 337-338.

⁶⁵ Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, pp. 7-12; Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, p. 70.

⁶⁶ Karatepe, p. 12.

⁶⁷ Sabri Sayarı, “Siyasi Partiler ve Parti Sistemleri”, p. 135.

⁶⁸ Altun, *Türkiye’de Tek Parti Dönemi’nde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nin Örgütlenmesi*, p. 13.

typologies of single-party systems naturally requires a systematic evaluation of them. Based on this reality, Özbudun tried to divide single party types into subtypes in his work titled *Siyasal Partiler*. In the aforementioned study, Özbudun examines the single-party types under three separate headings mainly in terms of the existence and functions of opposition parties, their ideological characteristics, and their social and institutional dynamics.⁶⁹

According to Sartori's classification, single-party systems are divided into three categories: "dominant party", "hegemonic party" and "real single party". The main distinguishing feature of the dominant party system is that it allows the formation of small opposition parties that can compete against the dominant party. However, the dominant party can maintain its presence in the parliament for a long time due to its power over the electorate. However, this does not mean that one day the dominant party will not lose its power. Indeed, the Congress Party in India and the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan can be showed as examples of this. In the hegemonic party system however there is no real struggle for power. Because in such systems, the existence of parties other than the hegemonic party is only allowed as satellite parties. Such satellite parties can only exist to the extent of the tolerance and powers given by the ruling party. Therefore, it is not possible for these parties to compete politically on equal terms with hegemonic parties. Finally, it should be noted that in countries where hegemonic party systems are active, it is not possible power change neither *de facto* nor theoretically.⁷⁰

It is possible to examine the real single-party systems, in which the existence of more than one party is neither legally nor *de facto* allowed, under three sub-headings depending on the intensity of the ideology: "totalitarian",

⁶⁹ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, pp. 113-123.

⁷⁰ Giovanni Sartori, "The Typology of Party Systems-Proposals for Improvement", *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology*, E. Allardt ve S. Rokkan (eds.), (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 326-332.

"authoritarian" and "pragmatic".⁷¹ In totalitarian single-party systems, where no other party or view is allowed to exist, there is an intense ideology and strong state repression on society.⁷² This is used to manipulate the masses and mobilize them in line with the regime's goals rather than a physical repression. It has been argued that such governments, where the private life are largely under state control, are more likely to occur in non-Western societies because of the individual and privacy are not valuable.⁷³ In pragmatic single-party systems however ideological density and social mobilization capabilities are weaker.⁷⁴ This weakness in the internal ideology of pragmatic party systems leads to organizational laxity and gives it a pluralistic appearance.⁷⁵ The authoritarian single parties however are not strict and disciplined in terms of ideological intensity and social mobilization. The main nature of this type of administration is not determined by totalitarianism but by exclusion.⁷⁶ In other words, it is a party system that only restricts groups outside itself and does not aim to destroy them.⁷⁷ For this reason, there is no obstacle for sub-groups outside politics to do what they wish.⁷⁸

⁷¹ Hakkı Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, (İstanbul: Boyut Yayıncılık, 2012), p. 18.

⁷² Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 116.

⁷³ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Özbudun, p. 116.

⁷⁵ Tunçay, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Tunçay, p. 4.

⁷⁷ Uyar, p. 17-18.

⁷⁸ Tunçay, p. 5.

Another political scientist Clement H. Moore's classification about single-party system focuses on ideological qualities rather than numerical criteria. Moore, according to whom the distinctive feature of the single-party system is being a new source of legitimacy, proposes a new typology by classifying single-party ideologies according to their aims and functions. According to this, in terms of purpose ideologies can aim for a collective or partial change. On the other hand, ideologies in terms of their social functions are divided into instrumental and narrative. While instrumental ideology guides its adherents in the field of practical action, narrative ideology is far from the world of practical action and is based more on myths. When the single-party system is legitimized with an instrumental ideology that foresees a total social change, a totalitarian system emerges. Thus, if it is justified by a partial ideology, a "tutelary" single-party system exists. Although tutelary ideology legitimizes the removal of certain social groups from power, it does not lead to the complete abolition of the old pluralistic structure as in totalitarian systems. Since such ideologies are not a permanent source of legitimacy, they lose their legitimacy basis after achieving their limited goals. In such cases, the regime is either overthrown by the social forces that are excluded from power or it transforms into an administrative or institutional single party by changing its character. According to Moore's classification, it should be said that the RPP's single-party administration can be included in the definition of the tutelary single-party system.⁷⁹

Finally, Özbudun also mentions the social and institutional conditions that were effective in the emergence of the single-party system. At this point, it is stated that there are two opposing views in order to explain the relationship between the single-party system and the social structure in general. According to first view, single-party systems are accepted as a natural political system in terms of socially homogeneous and consensus-based societies. In contrast to this, the opposite view argues that the single-party system is a necessary tool for the

⁷⁹ Clement H. Moore, "The Single Party as Source of Legitimacy", *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society*, S.P. Huntington ve C.H. Moore (eds.), (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 48-72; Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, pp. 117-118.

existence of societies that are not yet integrated and homogeneous. According to Samuel P. Huntington, who opposed both of these theses, if a society was divided into two camps by a deep division, the probability of the emergence of single-party systems there increases. If these divisions intensify, the conditions that prepared the birth of the single-party system will have matured. If one of the social divisions dominates the other after an intense struggle and establishes the monopoly of governance in the country, the *de facto* single-party system is established. According to Huntington's classification, weak and failed single-party systems emerge when the social divisions and conflicts were not severe while deep social divisions are found in the birth of stable single-party systems. However, the policy pursued by the party which came to power after the establishment of the stable single -party system reveals two other types of single-party system. The first of these policies is that instead of eliminating the division in society, party leaders use this conflict as to keep their supporters awake and to monitor the political activities of the other side. The single-party systems that will emerge in such a situation are called "restrictive single-party systems" because they are content with keeping defeated social power away from political power instead of eliminating it. The second policy to be pursued is to eliminate social segregation is to eliminate the social forces on the other side of the social distribution or incorporate them into their own partisan mass. The single parties that emerge in this case are defined as "revolutionary single parties".⁸⁰ Özbudun states that Huntington's uses the term "*restrictive one party based on cultural foundations*" in terms of the nature of single-party rule in Turkey. Because, as mentioned above, with the disappearance of social dualization in Turkey, the presence reason of the single-party system has also disappeared and thus the system has acquired a pluralistic character.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems", *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society*, Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore (eds.), (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 3-47; Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, pp. 119-121.

⁸¹ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 121.

Here, it is necessary to mention some of the differences of opinion that exist among the political science authorities in terms of defining a single-party system. The most important of these differences of opinion is the question of whether a single party can be considered as a party.⁸² Some political theorists who have developed ideas around this issue think that in pluralist/competitive political systems, where more than one party competes, it is possible to talk about the existence of political parties in the real sense. For example, according to famous political party theorists Sigmund Neumann, the presence of at least one more competitive group in the system is essential to talk about the existence of a political party.⁸³ Similarly, the Italian political scientist Giovanni Sartori put forward ideas that a single party cannot be considered as a party. Özbudun states that Sartori supports his thesis with "semantic" and "functional" reasons. In this sense, Sartori's thesis can be summarized as follows: Sartori from a linguistic point of view argues that the concept of party corresponds to the meanings of "part". If there is a whole consisting of a single piece, it is impossible to talk about other pieces. Moreover, while competing parties functionally allow the public to express themselves freely, a single party will suppress public expression by performing a contrary task. Consequently, based on these ideas Sartori tries to express that a single party cannot be counted as a party.⁸⁴

On the other hand, some political scientists are of the opinion that a single party fulfills similar functions with the competitors one. So, these two party types should not be considered as completely different entities. For example, according to the criteria set forth by Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner, there is no

⁸² Esat Öz states that the most important point of disagreement among political scientists about the definition of political party is whether a single party can be considered a party or not. See Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 22.

⁸³ Sigmund Neumann, "Toward a Comparative Study of Political Parties", *Modern Political Parties*, S. Neumann (ed.), (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 395.

⁸⁴ Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 3-51.

obstacle to consider single party as a political party. These authors in their work *The Origin and Development of Political Parties*⁸⁵ state that in order for any social formation to be considered as a party, four important criteria must be met: A permanent organization, a well-established and permanent local organization that is not limited to the lifetime of the leaders, acting not only to influence power but also to pursue the goal of seizing it and to win the sympathy or support of the people through elections or otherwise.⁸⁶ When we look at these criteria, it is understood that the first political groupings in Turkey lacked the characteristics of a political party. These formations which were lack of social support and local organizations led political movements aimed to seize power by using the power of state apparatus.⁸⁷ Lastly, the famous Turkish political scientist Ergun Özbudun, who is accepted as one of the authorities in this field, is of the opinion that a single party can be accepted as a political party provided that the differences between them are kept in mind.⁸⁸

1.1.2. The Ways of Defining RPP Within The Single Party System and Theoretical Approaches

While the definitions and typologies put forward about the single-party system in the dominant literature are as follows, some of the researches mentioned above make some analyses and definitions in terms of the RPP and its single-party rule. From this point of view, when we look at the studies that directly or indirectly deal with the RPP, it is seen that the evaluations about the administration system adopted by RPP are mainly evaluated around two theoretical approaches. At the

⁸⁵ La Palombara and Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties", pp. 3-42.

⁸⁶ La Palombara and Weiner, p. 6.

⁸⁷ Kotil, "Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler", p. 2000.

⁸⁸ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 2.

heart of these assessments the question sought to be answered is whether RPP's administration is authoritarian or totalitarian. According to a group of political theorists and historians, the RPP, which adopted an authoritarian form of government, mostly worked to modernize the society and adopt a democratic culture. On the other hand, the authorities advocating the opposite view define the RPP as a totalitarian party that does not aim at democratization.⁸⁹

Mihail Manoilescu is the first of the authorities who share the basic views of the first group about the single-party rule of the RPP. Murat Turan points out that in terms of being an "external criticism" of the RPP, studies in Turkey usually include Maurice Duverger's evaluations of the RPP's single-party rule. However, the analyses made by Romanian journalist Mihail Manoelisco on the single-party Turkey long before this are not referenced in these studies.⁹⁰ The evaluations made by Manoilescu in her study titled "Le Parti Unique, Institution Politique Des Regimes Nouveaux" published in 1936 are very important because they were made when the RPP single-party rule was directly experienced in Turkey. As can be understood from the citations made by Turan, Manoilescu compares the single-party rule of the RPP with the practices of the socialist and fascist parties in Italy and Germany at that time. The first point emphasized in this comparison is that the RPP is not added to the state and the nation as a third element as in the German or Italian parties. Besides, it is represented in the parliament by the candidates elected by the public in accordance with democratic procedures. Another democratic features of RPP highlighted in the study is the fact that the it is open to all Turks with almost no restrictions. The following sentence clearly summarizes the author's point of view on the RPP single-party rule: "*To put it in one word, the climate of Turkey's single party is completely*

⁸⁹ Murat Turan, *CHP Yönetiminin Dünya Partileriyle İlişkileri (1923-1950)*, (İstanbul: Libra Yayıncılık, 2017), p. 103.

⁹⁰ Turan, p. 98.

different from that of the prototype parties: fascist or nationalist socialist."⁹¹

According to Manoilescu, all these structural and ideological characteristics differentiate the single-party rule in Turkey from the contemporary totalitarian parties.

Another political scientist who argues that the single-party regime Turkey experienced from 1923 to 1946 was not totalitarian is Maurice Duverger. According to Duverger, the RPP is not totalitarian either philosophically or in terms of its structure. The main difference of the party from other regimes is its democratic ideology. Because the RPP does not have an ideology that is inclusive enough to mobilize its members totally as its contemporary fascist or socialist parties have. Apart from this, the defense of authority which is encountered every day in fascist regimes, has been replaced by the defense of democracy in Kemalist Turkey. The party, unlike its contemporaries, derives its legitimacy to govern from the majority which won in elections. In the political life of Turkish single-party rule, elections are a kind of ones where the results are guaranteed only by nominating enough candidates to win. But this situation is not an ideal, but a temporary and regrettable necessity. Because the Turkish single-party has never been based on a single-party doctrine, has never given an official character to the monopoly, and has always felt discomfort and even shame because of the monopoly it has. The monopoly of political life and power by a single party has been a result of the special political conditions in Turkey and from time to time some attempts have been made to remove this monopoly. For example, the establishment of the Progressive Republican Party⁹² (PRP) in 1924, the FRP in 1930 and then the separation of independent parliamentary quotas in the 1935 elections show that the Kemalist regime had a pluralist state

⁹¹ Turan, *CHP Yönetiminin Dünya Partileriyle İlişkileri (1923-1950)*, p. 99. For detailed information about Mihail Manoilescu's evaluations about the Turkish single-party rule see Murat Turan, "Korporatif Kuramcı Mihail Manoilescu'nun Gözünden Tek Partili Rejimler ve Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi (1936)", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal ve Toplumsal Çalışmalar (1923-1950)*, (İstanbul: Libra Yayıncılık, 2020), pp. 167-192.

⁹² Hereafter PRP.

philosophy. On the other hand, from a structural point of view Duverger states that the RPP's organization does not show a totalitarian character. Because, as in the fascist or socialist parties, the party does not have militia or cell structures. Besides, there is not even a real hearth organization. In this context, the party can even be regarded as “*a committee party in which the executives are of greater importance than the members.*”⁹³ On the other hand, although there was a membership system open to everyone in the party, there was no direct recruitment to the party as in the case of fascist parties. In addition to this, as in contemporary single-party systems, it was not possible to talk about uniforms, parade or harsh discipline in the RPP administration. Another assessment of Duverger's was whether democratic procedures were operated in intra-party democracy and intra-party promotion. According to him, under the RPP administration, inner-party democracy was at a very advanced level. As a concrete proof of this, it could be shown that the executives at all levels within the party came to power through elections. Ultimately, according to Duverger, although Kemalist regime is not fascist, it could not be described as democratic. Because, in Kemalis regime, the most important indicator of political participation elections do not go beyond plebiscites in practice and basic political freedoms were severely restricted.⁹⁴

Tarık Zafer Tunaya, who defines the RPP's single-party rule as a period of "tutelage", states that some single-party regimes are bridges to reach a democratic and civilized order. Although there is no constitutional obstacle to the establishment of other parties in such systems, the political power refuses to allow this right to be exercised. However, it is not correct to characterize such parties as totalitarian. As mentioned before, these parties can also be defined as the parties that prepare their own demise by creating the basis of a democratic

⁹³ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 361.

⁹⁴ Duverger, pp. 359-362.

system.⁹⁵ According to this point of view, the RPP can be characterized as a political party that prepares Turkish political life for the multi-party order and thus transfers political power to the DP as a result of democratic elections. According to Zafer Toprak, who shares similar views with Tunaya, “*although the single-party period in Turkey lacks political democracy, and even enters an increasingly authoritarian line, does not fail to create the objective conditions of democracy with its modernizing function.*”⁹⁶ Based on Toprak's assessment, although RPP has an authoritarian party appearance, it can be defined as a party that prepares the ground for Turkish political life to reach democratic maturity.

S.P. Huntington, who has similar views with Tunaya and Toprak, describes the RPP's single-party rule as a "restrictive single-party system based on cultural foundations." According to him, with the disappearance of social separation in such systems, the existence reason of the single-party system will also disappear. Therefore, the single-party system which was replaced by a pluralistic political life as of 1946 in Turkey can be evaluated within this scope.⁹⁷ According to Hakkı Uyar, although the RPP has an authoritarian identity, it is completely different from its contemporary single-party systems. Because although the RPP came into prominence with its central and disciplined structure in this period, this rule did not go beyond being *de facto*. Thus, democracy was not among the priority issues under single-party rule. Because, RPP single-party rule wanted to achieve development or modernization through more pragmatic methods than to create an authoritarian official ideology. In addition, during this period although

⁹⁵ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Siyasi Müesseseler ve Anayasa Hukuku*, (İstanbul: Sulhi Garan Matbaası, 1969), pp. 511-516.

⁹⁶ Zafer Toprak, “Türkiyede Sol Faşizm ya da Otoriter Modernizm 1923-1946”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, no.100, (Bahar, 2004), pp .84-89.

⁹⁷ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 121.

opposition formations were allowed to active from time to time, this never had the character of a general pluralism.⁹⁸

According to Feroz Ahmad, the administration system established under the RPP government was never democratic. Because it was difficult to expect the establishment of a democratic regime in Turkey within the political conditions of the period. In the aforementioned period, the Kemalist administration was making a revolution against the old order and it was only after that the political system could gain a democratic character.⁹⁹ On the other hand, Eric Jan Zürcher points out that although there are some similarities between the Italian fascist regimes and the RPP administration, the differences between the two regimes are greater. Zürcher states that fascism is a reactionary popular movement against political actions seen as a threat to traditional society. On the other hand, the Young Turk Revolutions in Turkey is a forcefully imposed political movement that lacks social support. Apart from this, Zürcher especially points out that the ideological line of the RPP is different from that of the totalitarian parties. In this sense, unlike the fascists, the Kemalist administration never attempted to mobilize the society as a whole or permanently for its own purposes.¹⁰⁰ Andrew Mango, who stated that although totalitarian ideas sometimes infiltrated the Turkish single-party system, they were never allowed to influence the country. So, he evaluates the system of governance in Turkey during the last period of Mustafa Kemal's presidency as follows: "... *Turkey with no opposition was a disciplined country under a pragmatic government and respecting constitutional democracy.*"¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* , p. 356.

⁹⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1986), pp. 160-161.

¹⁰⁰ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020), pp. 220-221.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, (İstanbul: Yeni Bin Yıl Sabah Kitapları, 2000), p. 462.

Although as in some official and semi-official discourses of the period remarks the democratic characteristics of the government system, according to Bülent Tanör the single-party system established under the RPP administration had an authoritarian character. However, Tanör states that the Kemalist single-party rule sees this as a temporary necessity rather than an idealization or perpetuation of authoritarianism, which is common in totalitarian regimes. On the other hand, compared to totalitarian regimes, principles such as national sovereignty, elections and parliamentary supremacy were taken into consideration in the RPP administration. Moreover, race, class or party hegemony did not exist as well. According to Tanör, one of the most important distinguishing features of the Turkish single party is that the regime was envisaged as a temporary model. Because, the Kemalist regime's attempts to transition to a multi-party political life are the most concrete evidence of this. Based on all of these, the single-party rule of the RPP was not democratic in terms of pluralist and libertarian sense, but it was not totalitarian either.¹⁰²

Münci Kapani states that the RPP can also be evaluated within authoritarian pragmatic single-party systems that are not based on a strict and inclusive ideology and have specific goals such as achieving national integration, economic development and political modernization. Because such systems sometimes carry the core of the future's pluralistic order within themselves. Therefore, according to Kapani, the single-party period of the RPP in Turkey can be considered within pragmatic single-party systems. Because it has prepared a pluralistic democratic environment after its rule.¹⁰³

Finally, it is acknowledged by Murat Turan that the regime adopted by the RPP is authoritarian. Turan, in his work titled *CHP Yönetiminin Dünya Partileriyle İlişkileri (1923-1950,)* states that the RPP's regime is unquestionably

¹⁰² Bülent Tanör, *Kurtuluş Kuruluş*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2017), pp. 345-350.

¹⁰³ Kapani, *Politika Bilimine Giriş* , pp. 195-196.

authoritarian. According to him, both the nation-state building process and the developments in world politics have been decisive in the authoritarian character of the RPP administration. This regime, which was necessary for the realization of a number of transformations in the first years of the Republic, was also deemed necessary to ensure internal and external security in the face of the increasing aggressive threats of totalitarian regimes in Europe after the 1930s.¹⁰⁴ The first of the authors who shared the views that the management system adopted by the RPP is incompatible with the tutelary single-party concept is Esat Öz. In other words, he thinks that the Turkish single-party system is designed as a permanent regime. In his work titled *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım* he points out that the single-party system in Turkey is intended to be transformed into a permanent structure. Because the legal and institutional arrangements made in the 1930s and the forms of meaning attached to the idea of Kemalism show this intention. In the book, especially the constitutional amendment made in 1937 and the amendments made to the Law on Societies (*Cemiyetler Kanunu*) in 1938 are seen as regulations that serve this purpose. As a matter of fact, Öz interprets these arrangements and changes as the legalization of the single-party system under the RPP government. For all these reasons, it is not possible to define the RPP as the "tutelary party" that sets democratization as the ultimate goal.¹⁰⁵

Another researcher who argues that the RPP administration designed a permanent regime is Ahmet Demirel. According to Demirel, international cyclical changes during and after the Second World War were effective as the main reason for the rapid abandonment of the single-party rule and the transition

¹⁰⁴ Turan, *CHP Yönetiminin Dünya Partileriyle İlişkileri*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁰⁵ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, pp. 223-224.

to a pluralistic political system which was designed to be permanent from the very beginning.¹⁰⁶

On the other hand, Mete Tunçay defines the Turkish single-party experiment adopted between 1923 and 1945 as dictatorship which was a form of government against democracy. After all, he states that the specific components that define fascism are unlikely to exist in Turkish single-party.¹⁰⁷ In other words, Tunçay argued that the single-party regime under the RPP government is opposed to democracy. Because single-party systems are naturally a dictatorship. However, he states that the Turkish single-party system does not fully contain components that can be described as fascism as well.

Şükrü Karatepe in his work titled *Tek Parti Dönemi* states that although they do not have a specific doctrine and where there are legal regulations and institutions that ensure the full dominance of the party in political life, Italian Fascist Party and German National Socialist Party influenced the RPP both in terms of organization and political struggle. In other words, Karatepe states that the RPP is greatly influenced by its contemporary totalitarian parties in terms of its organizational model and the methods that it has used in its struggle in the political field.¹⁰⁸ Çetin Yetkin, who is known for his work on single-party rule in Turkey, makes similar evaluations with Karatepe. However, he states that no matter how much the RPP is inspired by the forms of organization of fascist or communist parties, the basic policy of party is to follow a line outside and even against these systems when necessary.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Ahmet Demirel, *Tek Partinin İktidarı Türkiye’de Seçimler ve Siyaset (1923-1946)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), p. 307.

¹⁰⁷ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetimi’nin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, p. 16, 338.

¹⁰⁸ Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi* , pp. 22-23.

¹⁰⁹ Yetkin, *Türkiye’de Tek Parti Yönetimi (1930-1945)*, p. 42.

When the evaluations made so far are taken into consideration, it is clearly seen that the evaluations made by both political scientists and historians regarding the RPP's regime are far from consensus. However, although the RPP consisted of a narrow cadre in terms of its emergence, it went to an organizational structure adopted by the contemporary mass parties. For example, considering its structural features such as recruitment policy, membership dues, and adopting a hearth-type organization model, it can be said that RPP adopted an organization model peculiar to contemporary mass parties. In this sense, the single-party regime adopted by the RPP seems to have been inevitably influenced by its contemporaries both structurally and ideologically. Especially the Eurocentric political, economic and ideological tendencies made it inevitable for the RPP to be influenced by its contemporary ideas, ideologies and political structures. However, although the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes increased in the West in this period, the RPP has not refrained from its attempts to transition from a single-party regime to a pluralistic political life. However, with the second experience of multi-party political life experienced in the late 1930s, the attempts to transition to a pluralistic political life were shelved for many years. When we look at the RPP regime from an ideological point of view, it is understood that the Turkish single-party experience lacked a totalitarian and inclusive ideological basis. The private life were not under the control of the state in a broad sense. However, in our opinion, it is also difficult to define the RPP administration as "tutelary single-party rule" as accepted by some researchers. Because the adoption of a pluralistic system of governance in Turkish political life in 1945 should be seen as the result of the cyclical change that took place in the domestic and foreign world. So, it does not directly show that the RPP reached a certain democratic maturity.

1.2. Method and Scope of the Research

Throughout our research, the RPP's social bridge mission between the people and the state is considered as a two-dimensional process. Therefore the hypotheses put forward are tried to be matured within the framework of this pre-

acceptance. As it is known, the party institutionalization for the RPP gained a new dimension in the early 1930s. In this change and transformation, along with the global economic and political conjuncture, the complaints about the RPP policies and managers after the establishment of the FRP were also effective. Therefore, the RPP was re-equipped according to the requirements of the single-party regime after the experience of the second opposition party. Thus, on the one hand, it acted as a bridge to overcome the “lately noticed” disconnection/non-communication between the public and the state. At the same time it functioned as a tool to carry out the modernization mission. This communication, which is being established between the center and the periphery through the RPP, has emerged as a process of "awareness". During the single-party period, the communication between the people and the state through the RPP meant that the people were informed of the policies and practices of the new regime and the state was informed about the expectations of the people. In this period, in order to eliminate the disconnection between the people and the state and to meet both sides on a common platform, the inspection and wish system were established within the party institution and the People Houses operated as subsidiary party organizations. The feature of the communication established through these interaction platforms has changed according to the direction of the messages whether it was from periphery to the center or vice versa. In this process, some intermediary institutions seem to be more effective in carrying the messages of people to the center (such as the wish system and the constituency inspection reports). On the other side, the regional inspection system, the lower-level inspections and the People’s Houses are seen designed to carry the directives of the center and the political ideology to the provinces. In addition, the People’s Houses have carried the ideology and policies of the political power to the provinces through various activities in order to ensure socio-economic modernization and national integration. In this respect, it should be noted that in our research, the ideological aspects of Zonguldak People’s House will be emphasized.

It was mentioned that the feature of the RPP's role as a bridge between society and the state varies according to the source of the message. As a result of the evaluations, it is understood that the messages carried from the periphery to the center are more related to social conditions, demands, complaints and expectations arising from this rather than political or ideological one. However, it must be said that the qualities of the messages conveyed by the political power from the center to the periphery through the party serve the purpose of the mental and ideological transformation of society. Therefore, when evaluating the functions of the institutions that have emerged within the party or as subsidiary organizations to the party, it is very important and necessary to take direction of the messages into account in order to put forward a systematic and logical narrative. For this reason, it should be stated that the activities carried out by the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1935-1946 have a two-dimensional meaning. These are being a "social" and "ideological" bridge between the public and the state.

The rich resources left behind by the RPP about the provincial organizations have been influential in the formation of the aforementioned perspective about the activities of the RPP Zonguldak organization. There are many primary sources within the mentioned rich heritage such as; correspondences between the RPP General Secretariat and the party organization, circulars sent from the RPP General Secretariat to the party organization, party inspectorate reports, election district reports, six-month activity reports of the provincial administrative committee, RPP Grand Congress Reports, RPP Statutes and Programs, official party publications and magazines. However, these sources have been used in many academic studies about RPP provincial organization and activities as the elements of descriptive narrative. However, the way the mentioned sources are handled in this research also constitutes the difference of our study from the previous ones. Because in this research, the RPP's Zonguldak organization and provincial structure were not discussed as a categorical historical narrative, but from a problem-oriented and analytical point of view. In this context, our research tries to reveal that what kind of mission all these activities serve and

what kind of function do they have. In this context, our research tries to find an answer to a specific question rather than examining the social, cultural or political works carried out by the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1935-1946. Therefore, in our study, unlike the classical narrative historical studies on RPP provincial organizations, it is aimed to deal with a specific issue with a certain perspective.

However, when the social and political conditions of the single-party period are taken into consideration, it can be argued that all the mechanisms designed for the biring the people and the state together were directly formed by the state or party. Therefore, it can be argued that the research would reflect a state-centered point of view. Considering the conditions of single-party rule and the limited possibilities of a provincial city far from the center, it is obvious that such a risk is always possible for Zonguldak as in other republican cities. However, in our research, the mentioned risk was tried to be minimized by comparing primary sources reflecting the official point of view with different sources. In this sense, in addition to party official documents and publications, these sources have also contributed to our work: Local and national newspapers and magazines, literary sources consisting of memoirs, novels, stories and travel writings, articles, books and publications on the period and RPP, official institution publications such as statistics, contributed to our work.

Through the internal dynamics of the city, it is possible to explain why our research focuses on Zonguldak as a subject. As it is known, since the years of the National Struggle, Zonguldak was an important mining basin that had been in the closely followed by the military and bureaucratic staff especially Mustafa Kemal Pasha. After the foundation of the new regime, the economic and geopolitical importance of the region gradually increased for the Turkish State. The ruling cadres of the new regime, who were of the opinion that national independence could only be possible by ensuring economic independence, thought that the Ereğli coal basin should be nationalized as soon as possible. Because, Zonguldak coal basin had been operated by foreign capital for many year. For this, the

young republic entered the Zonguldak coal basin through national investment vehicles. On the other hand, in order to adopt the revolution principles and ideologies in the region, it was strived to complete the political organization. (RPP) Because it was very important and necessary to establish an intermediary political institution in the region in terms of raising the Republican regime on solid base, directing people ideologically and consolidating political power.

From another point of view, Zonguldak was a province that has transferred large mass of workers to the Republic. For this reason, Zonguldak was soon affected by the freedom movement created by the Second Constitutional Period and witnessed the first workers' organizations and strikes since early times.¹¹⁰ Besides Zonguldak, with its significant worker and labor population, appears as one of the closest and most prone places to the formation of class consciousness in Turkey. The political cadres who proclaimed the Republic were also aware of this potential of the city. However, in the political ideology advocated by the RPP cadres, the Turkish people were characterized and accepted as a classless and privilegeless society. Mustafa Kemal had always drawn attention to this issue in his trips in country before the establishment of the People's Party. From this point of view, a formation that would contradict the republic's notion of a classless society was not allowed anywhere in the country. Therefore, leaving the political life to its own fate in an important workers' city Zonguldak, where class consciousness is not sufficiently formed in, was to contradict the principle that formed the basis of the People's Party. For this reason, one of the first places where the RPP started to organize was Zonguldak. Thus, with the presence of the RPP in the city, the mass of workers and laborers was included in the party. In this way, workers were prevented from participating in different intellectual and

¹¹⁰ One of the areas that affected by the freedom and equality discourse created by the Second Constitutional Period was working life. The days following the Second Constitutional Period brought the most interesting days for the history of the labor class in Turkey. Ereğli mine workers were one of the sectors that went on strike during these dates. See Fatih Zengin, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Emekçiler, Grevler ve Emekçi Örgütleri", *Iğdır Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 5, (2020), p. 17; Mehmet Attila Güler, "Zonguldak Havzasında İşçi Hareketleri ve 1990-1991 Büyük Madenci Grevi", *Çalışma ve Toplum Dergisi*, (2019/1), pp. 510-511.

separatist movements. Because, in the following years, the registration of underground and ground workers as members of the RPP in masses, the unification of workers under the roof of the RPP, which adopts the concept of a classless society as a principle, seems to be an approach that mediates the identification of workers with the party. Because, in the following years, underground and overground workers were registered as members to the RPP in masses. Therefore, the unification of workers under the umbrella of the RPP, which adopts the classless society as a principle, also seems to mediate their identification with the party.

In addition to all these, when the RPP operates as an organized political structure in Zonguldak, it became possible to adopt social, cultural, economic and political revolutions to the people at the same time. Besides, the presence of RPP in Zonguldak was also necessary for the spread of the Republican ideology and to follow its reflections. Because of these reasons, it is important to reveal the mission of the RPP between the people and the state in Zonguldak as the representative of the political power and the implementer of its policies. At the same time, the fact that the RPP Zonguldak organization has not been examined so far makes Zonguldak special/important as well.

On the other hand, considering the geographical map of the 1930s, Zonguldak is located in a wide geography including today's Bartın and Karabük provinces. Therefore, although Zonguldak was the largest province of the region in terms of geographical width and population after Kastamonu, it does not have a deep-rooted and historical Ottoman heritage as in many Anatolian cities. In this respect, Zonguldak was a candidate for the modern Republican cities that the Kemalist cadre wants to shape with inspiration from Western culture and civilization. In this direction, Zonguldak was the first place where the republic declared as a province. Zonguldak would become a modern city only if the modern and civilized conceptions of the Republic were introduced and adopted to the public. The realization of modernization by the state was directly related to the organizationally effective and complete formation of the RPP which is the

provincial implementer and follower of Ankara's policies. Therefore, revealing the organizational process and the mission of the RPP in Zonguldak will shed light not only on the history of the party, but also on the course of the republican modernization in the provinces.

It is also necessary to clarify why the term of our study was determined as between 1935-1946. As it is known, the party-state integration, which has existed since the foundation of the RPP, has become an official phenomenon with the new party regulation adopted at the 1935 congress. Thus, the RPP-state integration was officially decreed in the new party statute with the statement that "*The RPP sees its own governmental organization and its own organization as a complementary unity.*"¹¹¹ Thus, the RPP's single-party rule was well established in the country and the party-state integration was completed when the six principles in the party program became constitutional principles in 1937. As a reflection of this unity, the highest civil authority representing the party government was ensured to participate in the party's sub-district (*nahiye*), district (*kaza*) and provincial (*vilayet*) congresses. These local officials, who did not participate the voting, were there to inform the public about the party wishes when necessary. Therefore, the renewal process that the RPP has entered since the end of 1930 has reached a new dimension both organizationally and ideologically by 1935. However, the party-state integration experienced in Turkish political life, contrary to the party-state relationship in modern totalitarian regimes, has moved in a direction where the state system limits the party organization. Thus, from 18 June 1936, the interior minister has been appointed as a member of the General Board of Directors of RPP and the provincial governors have been appointed as RPP's provincial party presidents.¹¹² Thus, the social bridge mission of the RPP became more visible and important as of 1935. On the other hand, the efforts to expand the

¹¹¹ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü 1935*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935), p. 27, (Art. 95).

¹¹² Yılmaz Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2001), p. 185.

organizational and ideological network carried out by the party throughout the country reached a certain level. For this reason, in this period, the social and political functions undertaken by the party were carried out much more planned and regularly through the intermediary institutions. In this respect, the year 1935 is an important beginning to understand the social and ideological mission of the party between the people and the state.

Finally, whether the multi-party political life had a positive or negative effect on the bridge mission of the RPP made it necessary to include the year 1946 in the study. In addition, another reason behind the inclusion of the first year of the multi-party period in the study is to see the reflections of the new political life on the RPP Zonguldak organizations. Furthermore, it should be noted that the time period of the study do not constitute an important breaking point in terms of the RPP's organization and ideology.

1.3. Literature Review

Our research titled “A Bridge Between People and the State: Republican People’s Party in Zonguldak (1935-1946)” necessitated an interdisciplinary literature search, specifically in political science, political sociology and history. Since the subject is directly related to one of the most important concepts of political science and political sociology, firstly the references sources in the mentioned disciplines were examined in order to establish the conceptual and theoretical infrastructure of the research. When the subject is political parties, political scientists and sociologists point to Duverger's reference work "Siyasi Partiler" as a direct source. This work, which was translated into Turkish by Ergun Özbudun, differs from the previous studies on political parties in terms of the method it used. Because before Duverger, studies on political parties could not go beyond analyzing party programs and ideologies or explaining their historical processes. Those who write on political parties approached like a historian when talking about the future of party leaders, party policies, ideologies

and programs.¹¹³ What makes Duverger different from previous studies of political parties is that his method is in real terms comparative. From this point of view, Duverger's generalizations are systematically applicable to different countries and parties.¹¹⁴ Although some methodological criticisms have been brought to the Duverger's study, it remains the main work used in today's political parties research.¹¹⁵ Post-Duverger period, the studies about political parties have continued with the publication of "Modern Political Parties" prepared by Sigmund Neumann in 1956 with the compilation of many monographs.¹¹⁶

In this process, the studies about political parties have increased throughout the world and especially in Europe. Similarly, more comprehensive researches have

¹¹³ Frederick C. Engelmann, "A Critique of Recent Writings on Political Parties" *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 19, no. 3, 1957, p. 423. Engelmann positions pre-Duverger research on political parties as follows: "The pre-Duverger era in stasiology (study of political parties) has been called the 'political-biography-cum-political-ideology' phase." See p. 426. However, two studies written long before Duverger, Moisei Ostrogorski's "Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties" published in 1902 and Roberto Michels's "Political Parties A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy (1911)" differs from the others in terms of its methodologies.

¹¹⁴ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 10.

¹¹⁵ Özbudun, p. 11.

¹¹⁶ Engelmann, "A Critique of Recent Writings on Political Parties", p. 424. Since the mid-1950s, important works have emerged around the world, both in monographic studies about a single party and country and political party theory. Some of these studies are; Leon D. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (New York: Frederick A. Prager Publishers, 1967); Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966); Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems- A Framework for Analysis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Kenneth Janda, "A Conceptual Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Political Parties", *Comparative Politics Series*, vol. 1, (California, 1970), pp.77-126; Robert R. Alford, *Party and Society: The Anglo-American Democracies*, (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963); Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, (New York: The Free Press, 1967); E. Allardt and Y. Littunen (eds.), *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems: Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology*, (Helsinki: The Academia Bookstore, 1964); S. P. Huntington and C. H. Moore (eds.), *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970); Neil A. McDonald, *The Study of Political Parties*, (New York: Random House, 1963); Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Development of Parties in Turkey", *Political Parties and Political Development*, Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 107-133.

started to be carried out in Turkey as well. The new political system order that emerged as a result of the post-Second World War, the adoption of democratic systems by many countries and especially in Europe has increased. As a result, in terms of political systems, the importance of political parties, which are one of the indispensable elements of democracies, has increased. The impact of this political change in the world, combined with the social reaction to the long-standing single-party rule, has also caused profound changes in the Turkish political system. The most concrete result of these changes in political life was undoubtedly the establishment of the Democratic Party and the transition to multi-party life. Thus, the single-party regime which had been continued from the foundation of the Republic removed. Instead, the competitive/pluralist political system that was being implemented in modern democracies was established.

Although the political environment in which more than one party could compete in Turkish political life could only be created after the mid-1940s, a long-standing tradition of political parties could not be ignored.¹¹⁷ Despite this, there was pretty limited research on political parties in the country. The deprivation in studies was in a sense because of the single-party regime. Because, RPP who had ruled country for many years did not allow the formation of another party.¹¹⁸ Therefore, with the establishment of the DP, there was a need to conduct historical, theoretical and descriptive researches on political parties. In particular, the studies of political parties which started to increase from the early 1950s, coincided with a period when political science was still in its infancy in Turkey.¹¹⁹ For this reason, the early research on political parties in Turkey tried

¹¹⁷ Sabri Sayarı, “The Turkish Party System in Transition”, *Government and Opposition*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1978), p. 40.

¹¹⁸ Berkes, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ Sabri Sayarı, “The Study of Party Politics in Turkey”, *Party Politics in Turkey: A Comparative Perspective*, Sabri Sayarı, Pelin Ayan Musil and Özhan Demirkol (eds.), (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 12.

to explain political parties as an institution. Besides, these reseraches were shaped by theoretical, conceptual and methodological approaches developed on Western European parties and party systems. In this sense, M. Duverger's "Political Parties:Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State" (1951) and G. Sartori's "Political Parties and Party System: A Framework for Analysis" (1976) was referenced in studies on Turkish political parties.¹²⁰

The first of the researches that discussed the institution of "political party" in Turkey theoretically was "Siyasi Partiler" published by Niyazi Berkes in 1946. However, Berkes' research was written not to make an analysis about Turkish political parties, but to create detailed information about parties and party systems in Europe and America. For this reason in the book; the emergence and development, social base, political ideologies, organizational structures, election activities and propagandas of the parties that emerged in England, America, France and Germany were analyzed comparatively.¹²¹

As it is mentioned before, although Turkey's political party experience has a long history, it will be necessary to wait for Tarık Zafer Tunaya's work titled "Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler 1859-1952" in order to form a comprehensive study in this field. The first reformist political uprisings that began to sprout in the Ottoman Empire constituted the starting point of this study. Later, political parties that emerged in the atmosphere of the Constitution, the Republic and the multi-party period were evaluated through a rigorous analysis of their statutes,

¹²⁰ Sayarı, "The Study of Party Politics in Turkey", pp. 13-14.

¹²¹ Berkes, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 1. Some of the other studies that deal with political parties at the theoretical level are as follows: Naki Cevat Akkerman, *Demokrasi ve Siyasal Partiler Hakkında Kısa Notlar*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1950); Arif T. Payaslıoğlu, *Siyasi Partiler*, (Ankara: İstiklal Matbaacılık ve Gazetecilik Kollektif Ortaklığı, 1952); Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Siyasal Partiler ve Sosyalizm*, (İstanbul: Anıl Yayınevi, 1963). See Göktürk, *1946-1980 Yılları Arasında Siyaset Sosyolojisi Açısından Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 3. The preparation of many works in this field in a short time is due to the need to enrich the studies on "political parties" in Turkey and to have general and explanatory information about these institutions and organizations. Authors such as Payaslıoğlu and Berkes drew attention to this issue in the prefaces of their books.

ideologies and programs within the historical context.¹²² It can be said that after Tunaya's study, more systematic research on Turkish political parties was conducted at national and international level. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, in the academic atmosphere dominated by the "modernization theory"¹²³ in the USA, Turkish political parties were focused on.¹²⁴ Later, especially since the 1970s, the studies in this field have progressed in terms of quantity and quality both in Europe and Turkey.¹²⁵ It should be noted that researches about political parties are not restricted by the studies conducted by political party theorists. Besides, the concept of political parties has also been addressed as an important topic in studies conducted by political sociologists as well.¹²⁶

¹²² Sayarı, "The Study of Party Politics in Turkey", p. 12.

¹²³ After the Second World War, the change process of non-Western societies became interesting in American academic life. The issue of the development of non-Western societies, which was initially handled in an economic framework, has also been discussed in social, cultural and societal contexts over time. Therefore, not only economists, but also sociologists and political scientists have begun to be interested in these studies. According to modernization theory, which reflects the dominant perspective of the 1950s and 1960s, the course followed by the West in the modernization process is presented as a model to be followed in overcoming the backwardness in non-Western societies. For detailed information about the theory see Fahrettin Altun, "Modernleşme Kuramı ve Gelişme Sorunu", *Divan Dergisi*, vol. 5, no. 8 (2000/1), pp. 123-186.

¹²⁴ The following studies can be cited as examples of these studies: Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Development of Parties in Turkey", pp. 107-133; Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*, Cambridge: MA:MIT Press, 1965; Frank Tachau, "Turkish Provincial Party Politics", *Social Change and Politics in Turkey: A Structural-Historical Analyses*, Kemal Karpat (ed), (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), pp. 282-315. See Sayarı, "The Study of Party Politics in Turkey", p.12.

¹²⁵ In parallel with this progress, in 1970, M. Duverger's cult work "Les Partis Politiques" was translated into Turkish by Ergun Özbudun. Özbudun also published his work titled "Siyasal Partiler" in 1977, which is still important and referenced in terms of political parties research.

¹²⁶ Some of such studies are; Nur Vergin, *Siyasetin Sosyolojisi Kavramlar, Tanımlar, Yaklaşımlar*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap Yayıncılık, 2019); İlder Turan, *Siyasal Sistem ve Siyasal Davranış*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayını No:2263, 1977); Ali Öztekin, *Siyaset Bilimine Giriş*, (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 2010); Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, *Siyaset Bilimi*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2011); Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Siyasal Sosyoloji*, (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1996); Musa Taşdelen, *Siyaset Sosyolojisi*, (İstanbul: Kocav Yayıncılık, 1997); Server Tanilli, *Devlet ve Demokrasi*, (İstanbul: Say Yayıncılık, 1985); Nazif Akçalı, *Çağdaş Siyasi Rejimler*, (İzmir: Bilgehan Basımevi, 1989); Mehmet Turhan, *Siyasal Elitler*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 2000); Doğu Perinçek, *Anayasa ve Partiler Rejimi*, (Ankara: Kaynak Yayınları, 1985); Erdoğan Teziç, *100 Soruda Siyasal Partiler*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1976).

When political party researches in Turkey are examined, it can be said that they generally focus on issues such as party organization, party systems and parties in the electoral process.¹²⁷ Within these studies, it is also necessary to mention the studies on a one party which have started to increase since the 1960s. Göktürk states that the literature on a one party can be divided into several classes within itself.¹²⁸ In addition to these, it can be said that today many postgraduate studies on political parties concentrate on the establishment and organization of the RPP in the provinces, its functioning and the central-provincial relations¹²⁹ The making of the RPP archive available for the researchers has played a major role in the shift of researches away from a general RPP history perspective towards the provincial axis. Thus, despite all its deficiency, the RPP archive has provided to access new primary sources on the party politics in the provinces. Thanks to this access, the issues began to be studied that could not be addressed in previous researches.

¹²⁷ Sabri Sayarı, “The Study of Party Politics in Turkey”, p. 15.

¹²⁸ These studies can be grouped into four groups: studies focusing on party history: studies that try to define political parties in a factual framework, studies that use the comparative method and those that are conducted indirectly as a study of party leaders and political history. See Göktürk, *1946-1980 Yılları Arasında Siyaset Sosyolojisi Açısından Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁹ Some of these studies are as follows: Çilem Çetin Filiz, *CHP Parti Müfettişleri Raporlarına Göre Kütahya (1935-1950)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Uşak: Uşak Üniversitesi, 2019); Nedim Yılmaz, *CHP Teftiş Raporlarına Göre Sivas (1923-1950)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Sivas: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, 2019); Zeynep Yılmaz, *CHP Parti Müfettişlik Raporlarına Göre İzmir (1935-1950)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Uşak: Uşak Üniversitesi, 2019); Hüseyin Çetin, *CHP Parti Müfettişlik Raporlarına Göre Tek Parti Döneminde Aydın*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Aydın: Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, 2015); Hasan Yapıcı, *Tek Parti Dönemi Kütahya CHP Örgütlenmesi (1930-1950)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Kütahya: Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, 2015); Refika Göksu Sayar, *CHP Kocaeli Teşkilatlanması (1923-1938)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Kocaeli: Kocaeli Üniversitesi, 2020); Doğan Kırış, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Kırıkkale Teşkilatı (1940-1950)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Kırıkkale: Kırıkkale Üniversitesi, 2018); Ercan Gül, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Keskin Teşkilatı (1930-1950)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Kırıkkale: Kırıkkale Üniversitesi, 2018); Mehmet Çiloğlu, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin Konya'daki Faaliyetleri (1923-1938)*, Unpublished Master Thesis, (Gaziantep: Gaziantep Üniversitesi, 2014); Fevzi Çakmak, *Bursa Yerelinde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1946-1960)*, Published PhD Dissertation, (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi, 2012); Murat Turan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin Doğu Örgütlenmesi (1923-1950)*, Published Master Thesis, (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, 2010).

One of the early studies on the RPP is prepared by İsmail Hüsrev Tökin named as *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin İktisadi Sistemi*.¹³⁰ Considering that Tökin was a member of the Kadro Movement, it can be said that the fact that he produced a work dealing with the economic system of the RPP and developed a party analysis on the axis of the economic policies that the movement he came out of was a party to. If it is considered that Tökin is a member of the Kadro Movement, he more likely to make a party analysis on the axis of the economic policies that the movement he belongs. However, Fahir Giritlioğlu's study *Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinin Mevkii* is the most comprehensive work on the party until then. Because, it examines the history of the RPP from the years of the national struggle until the mid-1960s.¹³¹ Celal Bozkurt's work *CHP'nin İç Yüzü, Siyasi Tarihimize CHP*¹³² which is characterized as an oppositional research¹³³ is also among the important works that deal with the party from a historical perspective. Hikmet Bila's book titled *CHP 1919-1999*¹³⁴ mainly covers the issues such as the events experienced by the party throughout its history, the administrative cadres, conflicts and debates, major party meetings, party programs and statutes, ideological approaches and attitudes in a chronological manner.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinin İktisadi Sistemi*, Ankara, 1946.

¹³¹ Fahir Giritlioğlu, *Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinin Mevkii*, (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1965).

¹³² Celal Bozkurt, *CHP'nin İç Yüzü, Siyasi Tarihimize CHP*, (İstanbul: As Matbaası, 1967).

¹³³ Göktürk, *1946-1980 Yılları Arasında Siyaset Sosyolojisi Açısından Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 6.

¹³⁴ Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 1999).

¹³⁵ Bila tried to put forward the history of the RPP from a holistic perspective by making additions to his work in the following years. Thus, the expanded edition of the work covers between 1923- 2009.

In addition to the studies that focus specifically on the history of the RPP, it is seen that term studies dominated by a historical perspective also cover the history of the party to a large extent.¹³⁶ In these studies, the RPP was considered as a political institution that was responsible for the adoption of the republican revolutions and the socio-cultural development. Therefore, in these works; organizational and ideological changes and transformations within the party, provincial organizations, communication between the party headquarters and the provincial organization, provincial congresses, the social composition of the provincial organization, the social base of party administrators, the struggle within and around the party, factions, and the relations between the party and the state bureaucracy were not addressed.

There has been an increase in the number of studies that analyze the RPP and the single party period from a specific perspective through the provincial organization. The dissertations titled *CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez-Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945)* and *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Vilayet/İl Kongrelerinin Partisi Politikalarına Etkileri (1930-1950)* can be shown as the examples that bring a new perspective on RPP provincial organizations. For this reason, these two academic studies differ from the master's and doctoral studies that focused on the provincial organization of the RPP so far. If we summarize in a few sentences, Aydın's doctoral dissertation is remarkable in that it aims to offer a different perspective on RPP-centered studies through local organizations. From this point of view, unlike the studies that emphasize only the governmental function of the RPP, Aydın has tried to reveal the institutional

¹³⁶ Some of these studies are as follows: Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012); Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015); Şükrü Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2011); Mahmut Goloğlu, *Tek Partili Cumhuriyet (1931-1938)*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009); Mahmut Goloğlu, *Milli Şef Dönemi (1939-1945)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009); Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi (1930-1945)*, (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1983); Esat Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım (1923-1945)*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 19929; Yılmaz Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, (İstanbul: Alfa Yayıncılık, 2001).

functioning of the party as an organization throughout the country by using a rich archival document. On the other hand, Ökte has analyzed the impact of provincial congresses on party politics which were an active element of provincial political life during the single-party period. It should be noted that common features of both studies is that they place the activities of the RPP provincial organizations in a specific context rather than a form of publishing a documentation.

Apart from all these, some remarkable studies on the provincial organization of the RPP in recent years should also be mentioned. The first of these studies is *CHP ve Taşra (1930-1950) Akdeniz Bölgesi* published by Cemil Koçak, who is known for his research on recent Turkish history and the single party era. Koçak, who started his work series with the Mediterranean Region, focused on the activities of RPP provincial organizations in order to x-ray the RPP provinces. By using all of the party inspectorate reports, election district reports and provincial administrative committee work reports Koçak tries to make a comparative analysis. Thus, he tried to analyze the political activities and the conditions of the education, health, economy and working life of Adana, Antalya, Burdur, Hatay, Isparta, Maraş and Mersin on archival documents. In this study, as stated in the book, the RPP's organization in the Mediterranean Region is not analyzed around a specific problem. Instead, the book analyzes this region under certain sub-headings in order to take an x-ray of the republican provinces. In Seda Bayındır Uluskan's study titled *CHP Parti Müfettişliği ve Raporlarla Bursa Teşkilatı (1936-1945)*, which was based on the reports of inspectorate, firstly evaluated the emergence and development of the party inspection within the RPP structure. Afterwards, the situation and activities of the RPP Bursa organization in the single-party years were tried to be revealed through the inspection and election district reports. Another important study that attempts to evaluate the RPP's organization level in a specific region is Murat Turan's *CHP'nin Doğu'da Teşkilatlanması (1923-1950)*, which is based on his master's thesis. This study examines the change and transformation in the RPP's organizations in the Eastern Anatolia Region between 1923 and 1950. The

research examines the issues such as the positioning of the RPP's organizations in the eastern provinces after the 1925 Eastern Rebellion and the social base of the party in the region from a holistic perspective.

Finally, it necessary to mention the researches and studies about Zonguldak because of the fact that the social and ideological mission of the RPP in the single-party period will be analyzed in there. First of all, it should be noted that there is no research in the literature that directly or indirectly deal with the organization and activities of the RPP in Zonguldak. In this respect, our research is the first study on this subject. When the current literature is examined, it is seen that the studies that determines Zonguldak as a subject mostly aim to reveal the development of the city in the historical process. In this context, the topics such as the emergence and development of the city, its economic importance, the administration periods of the coal basin, educational activities in the city, working, housing and health conditions of mine workers are the main subjects of these studies. Thus, most of these researches has been carried out by amateur regional historians who have embraced the regions' history.¹³⁷ In addition to all these, the number of academic researches dealing with different aspects of Zonguldak province is increasing. In this sense, it should be said that there have

¹³⁷ Some of these studies are as follows: Cemaleddin Bildik, *Kömür İşçileri*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş Yayınları A.Ş. ,1950); Abdullah Cemal, *Türkiye'nin Sıhhi İctimai Coğrafyası Zonguldak Sancağı*, Cemal Güven (pre.), (Konya: Aybil Yayınevi, 2011); Erol Çatma, *Asker İşçiler*, (İstanbul: Ceylan Yayıncılık, 1998); Erol Çatma, *Zonguldak Taşkömürü Havzası Tarihi*, (Ankara: Sistem Ofset Yayıncılık, 2006); Sina Çıladı, *Taşkömürü Havzasının Devletçilik Dönemi*, (Ereğli: Yaman Matbaası, 1999); Sabire Dosdoğru and Hulusi Dosdoğru, *Sağlık Açısından Maden İşçilerimizin Dünü, Bugünü*, (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1990); Sadrettin Enver, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzamız*, (Ankara: Eti Bank Yayınları, 1941); Turgut Etingü, *Kömür Havzasında İlk Grev*, (İstanbul: Koza Yayınları, 1976); Hüseyin Fehmi İmer, *Ereğli Maden Kömürü Havzası Tarihçesi*, (Zonguldak: CHP Zonguldak Halkevi Yayını, 1944); Hamit Kalyoncu, *Kömürde Açan Çiçek*, (Ankara: Pervaz Yayınları, 2005); Ahmet Naim and Celal Edip, *Türk Kömürünü İlk Bulan Türk Uzun Mehmet*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1938); Ahmet Naim, *Zonguldak Havzası Uzun Mehmet'ten Bugüne Kadar*, (İstanbul: Hüsnütabiyyat Matbaası, 1934); Ahmet Ali Özeken, *Ereğli Kömür Havzası Tarihi Üzerinde Bir Deneme 1848-1940*, (İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1944); Bahri Savaşkan, *Zonguldak Maden Kömürü Havzası Tarihçesi 1829-1989*, (Zonguldak: TTK Eğitim Daire Başkanlığı Yayını No. 59, 1993); Kadir Tuncer, *Aguila Barbara Kıvırcık*, (Zonguldak: Tusak Yayınları, 2004); Osman Yalçın, *Zonguldak*, (İstanbul: Özyürek Yayınevi, 1959); Ekrem Murat Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı*, (Ankara: TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri Odası Yayını, 2004).

been many studies and thesis about Zonguldak, including the periods covered in this research. Since it is not possible to mention all these studies here, it will be sufficient to mention the main ones. One of the most important studies on the Zonguldak coal basin is Donald Quataert's *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire (1822-1920)*, which sheds light on the history of the basin in the late Ottoman period and the working conditions of miners. In this study, Quatert examined the working conditions of Zonguldak miners and their relations with the state from a perspective outside the official view and placed Zonguldak miners at the center of study. In this sense, because of the Quatert's sources were produced directly in the coal basin, it gives the work a local perspective as well. Another important study on coal basin workers is E. Attila Aytekin's *Tarlalardan Ocaklara, Sefaletten Mücadeleye Zonguldak-Ereğli Kömür Havzası İşçileri 1848-1922*, which was produced from his master's thesis. In his study, Aytekin tried to reveal the changing living and working conditions of workers in the Zonguldak coal basin between 1848 and 1922. It is also necessary to mention the work titled *Türkiye'nin Sıhhi İctimai Coğrafyası Zonguldak Sancağı*, which is a very important source in terms of revealing the economic, administrative, historical, cultural and social structure of Zonguldak. This work, which was still being an important source of reference for information about Zonguldak was prepared in 1922 by Dr. Abdullah Cemal who was the director of Zonguldak Health Directorate. Due to its strategic and economic importance, Zonguldak became an even more important region during the War of Independence. Because of this importance, the role of Zonguldak and its surroundings in the National Struggle was revealed by Ali Sarıkoyuncu in his study titled *Milli Mücadele'de Zonguldak ve Havalisi*, based on archival documents. This study completed in 1990 as a doctoral dissertation and was published by the Ministry of Culture in 1992. In the meantime, the work is still an important source of reference for understanding the National Struggle period of Zonguldak and its contribution to the national war of independence. Nurşen Gürboğa, who brought a different perspective to the history of Zonguldak by discussing the early Republican period of Zonguldak, through the developing relations between the public, the state and the mining companies. In this respect, Gürboğa's doctoral

dissertation titled *Mine Workers, The State and The War: The Ereğli-Zonguldak Coal Basin As The Site of Contest 1920-1947*, is one of the most comprehensive studies on the early republican period in Zonguldak. In this study Gürboğa attempts to reveal the complex relations between the people of the basin, who provided the underground labor force in the early republican period, the state and mining companies. Besides, another important topic of the study was the tensions between people and the state caused by the Wage Labor Obligation (*Ücretli İş Mükellefiyeti*) imposed in the region during the Second World War. Because of this aspect, the study seems to be quite seminal especially in terms of labor history researches. Apart from these, Erinç Erdal Yıldırım's work titled *Savaş Sonrası Zonguldak'ta Devlet Madenci ve Hayat (1946-1960)*, is valuable in understanding the life of miners in post-war Zonguldak. In this study Erdal tries to reveal how the new political and socio-economic conditions affected Zonguldak miners emerged after the Second World War.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Some of the academic studies on Zonguldak are as follows: E. Atilla Aytekin, *Tarlalardan Ocaklara, Sefaletten Mücadeleye Zonguldak-Ereğli Kömür Havzası İşçileri 1848-1922*, (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap Basım ve Yayın Evi, 2006); Ayça Erinç Yıldırım, *Savaş Sonrası Zonguldak'ta Devlet, Madenci ve Hayat (1946-1962)*, Zonguldak: Bülent Ecevit Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017; Emre Dölen, “Zonguldak Maden Mühendis Mekteb-i Âlisi (1924-1931)”, *Zonguldak Kent Tarihi '05 Bienali Bildiriler Kitabı*, (İstanbul: Ezgi Matbaası, 2006); Hamdi Genç, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarında Zonguldak’ta Nüfus, Ticaret ve Sanayi (1920-1932)”, *ZKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 6, no. 12 (2010), pp. 137-152; Nurşen Gürboğa, “Zonguldak Kömür Havzasında Amele Köyleri Projeleri”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 164 (Ağustos. 2007), pp. 58-65; Bilge İmamoğlu, “Seyfi Arkan ve Kömür İşçileri İçin Konut: Zonguldak; Üzülmez ve Kozlu”, *Fabrika’da Barınmak Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi’nde Türkiye’de İşçi Konutları: Yaşam, Mekan ve Kent*, Ali Cengizkan (ed.), (Ankara: Arkadaş Yayınevi, 2009); Murat Kara, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi’nde Ereğli Kömür Havzası (1920-1940)”, *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vol. 14, no.1, pp. 111-137; Murat Kara, “Ereğli Kömür Havzası’nda II. Mükellefiyet (Zorunlu Çalıştırma 1910-1947)”, *ZKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 7, No. 14 (2011), pp. 412-436; Murat Kara, *Son Mükellefler- Ereğli Kömür Havzası’nda Zorunlu Çalıştırma (1940-1947)*, (İstanbul: Ares Yayınları, 2010); Yücel Namal, “Zonguldak Halkevi’nin Faaliyetleri ve Karaelmas Dergisi”, *Karadeniz Araştırmaları Dergisi*, No.34 (2012), pp. 97- 134; Yücel Namal, *Atatürk’ün Zonguldak Gezisi*, (Ankara: Zonguldak İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2010); Yücel Namal, *Zonguldak Türk Ocakları 1923-1931*, (Ankara: Türk Yurdu Yayınları 2014); Yücel Namal and Hasan Karakuzu, *Zonguldak’ta Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti (1911-1938)*, (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2017); Ahmet Öğreten, “Ereğli Kömür Havzasında Bahriye Nezareti Dönemi (1865-1908)”, *ZKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 3, no. 5 (2007), pp. 139-178; Ahmet Öğreten, “Ereğli Kömür Madeni Havzasında İlk Üretim”, *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vol. 31 (2006), pp. 135-159; Necdet Sakaoğlu, “Tarihe Yerleşen Hayal: Uzun Mehmet”, *Tarih ve Toplum Dergisi*, no. 10 (Ekim, 1984), pp. 21-25; Hamdi Genç, *Ereğli Kömür Madenleri (1840-1920)*, (Unpublished PhD diss.), (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, 2007); Çağlar Tan, “Tek Parti Dönemi Demokratikleşme Çabaları ve Taşra Merkez Mücadelesine Bir Örnek: 1945 Zonguldak Münhal Mebusluk Seçimi”, *2. Zonguldak Kent Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı*, (Zonguldak: Kardelen Ofset Matbaacılık, 2015), pp. 105-109. ; Ahmet Efiloğlu and Çağlar Tan, “Tek Parti Dönemi Uzun Mehmet Kömür Bayramı

Apart from these, it is also necessary to mention the master's and doctoral theses on Zonguldak in the single-party era. In this sense, firstly, we can mention the thesis studies on the Zonguldak People's House and its publishing activities. Among them, the master thesis titled *Zonguldak Halkevi'nden İzlenimler: Karaelmas Dergisi*, completed by Melda Or is quite remarkable. In the study, the activities which was realized in order to adopt revolution principles and nation-state ideology to the public through the Karaelmas magazine are discussed. Another research about Zonguldak People's House is the master's thesis titled *Zonguldak Halkevi ve Faaliyetleri (1932-1951)* prepared by Özcan Aldıbaş. In this thesis, an evaluation of the activities carried out by the Zonguldak People's House in order to raise individuals compatible with the new social order. In the master thesis titled *Toplumsal Bellek ve Mekan: Zonguldak Halkevi Binası*, Duygu Tekin analyzed the emergence process of the Zonguldak People's House building in terms of the creating a social memory. Apart from these, it is also necessary to mention theses that focus on the political and social aspects of Zonguldak during the single-party era. The master thesis titled *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset* prepared by Çağlar Tan, Tuğba Daşkiran's *Atatürk Dönemi Zonguldak (1923-1938)*, Zafer Çil's doctoral dissertation titled *Tahir Karauğuz ve Zonguldak Basınındaki Yeri*, Dilşad Yirsutimur's master's thesis titled *Zonguldak Basın Tarihi (1923-2007)* and Faruk Temel's doctoral dissertation titled *Cumhuriyet İdeolojisinin İnşasında Basının Rolü: Zonguldak Gazetesi (1923-1954)* are some of the prominent studies on Zonguldak.¹³⁹

Kutlamaları”, *History Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3 (September, 2016), pp. 21-35; Yücel Namal, “Zonguldak Halkevinin Faaliyetleri ve Karaelmas Dergisi”, *Karadeniz Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 34 (Yaz, 2012), pp. 97-134.

¹³⁹ Apart from these, some thesis studies on Zonguldak are as follows: Feza Uncu, *Osmanlı Sanayileşme Hareketleri İçerisinde Zonguldak Kömür Havzası*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1992); Kamuran Karabalık, *Zonguldak'ta Yükseköğretim (1924-1992)*, (Published Master Thesis), (Tokat: Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi 2014); Rabia Yıldız, *Zonguldak Milletvekilleri ve TBMM'deki Faaliyetleri (1939-1950)*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Zonguldak: Bülent Ecevit Üniversitesi, 2018); Mine Alp, *Milli Mücadele'de Zonguldak ve II. ve III. TBMM'de Zonguldak Milletvekillerinin Hayatı ve Faaliyetleri*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Ankara: Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi, 2019).

The studies on the history of Zonguldak have not remained only at the amateur or academic level. In this sense, literary works such as travel writings, novels, stories and memoirs also include observations about the social, political, economic and cultural structure of the city. At the first glance, among these kind of works, the stories and novels that chose Zonguldak as a venue attract attention. Among these, it is necessary to mention especially the two-volume novel *Yanartaş*, written by Mehmet Seyda. The author of the novel worked as a civil servant in the mining companies in Zonguldak between 1937 and 1943. And thus, he presented the political developments of the period to the reader by combining them with his daily observations. Unlike any fiction novel, *Yanartaş* is important due to the fact that it contains direct witnessing of the author. In addition, the stories and novels such as Mehmet Seyda's *Zonguldak Hikayeleri*, Nahid Sırrı Örik's *Eve Düşen Yıldırım*, *Kıskanmak* and *Kırmızı ve Siyah*, Metin Köse's *Göldağı* and Doğu Karaoğuz's *Karaelmas'ın İlk Madencileri* contain rich observations on the social and cultural structure of Zonguldak.

Apart from these, it is necessary to briefly mention the literary sources such as travel writing, memoirs and letters about Zonguldak. In this sense, British traveler Clare Sheridan's observations on Zonguldak in the early 1920s in her book *Sade Türk Kahvesi* and İsmail Habib Sevük's observations on his trip to Zonguldak in the mid-1930s, which he collected under the title of *Writings from the Country*, are among the first travel writings that come to mind. It should also be noted that many national newspaper reporters published travel notes on Zonguldak. On the other hand, as the samples of memoirs and letters related to Zonguldak; Kerim Yund's *Seçkin Türk Ormancısı Hüseyin Fehmi İmer Hayatı-Hatıraları (1871-1960)*, Kadri Yersel's *Madencilikte Bir Ömür Anılar-Görüşler*, İrfan Yalçın's *İçimdeki Zonguldak*, Osman Atilla Poshor's *Fener'in Çocukları*, Ahmet Naim's *Yeraltında Kırkbeş Sene* based on interviews with a mine worker, and Behçet Necatigil's *Mektuplar* can be shown.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ It is possible to increase such resources: Ali Bahadır, *Yola Dökülen Yıllar*, (Zonguldak: Uyanış Yayınları, 2003); Sevim Belli, *Boşuna mı Çiğnedik? Anılar*, (İstanbul: Cadde Yayınları, 2006); Tunç Çelebi, "Bizim Fener Mahallemiz", *Zonguldak Kent Tarihi '05 Bienali Bildiriler Kitabı*, (Zonguldak: Ezgi Matbaası, 2006), pp. 251-258; Abdullah Hüsrev Guleman, *Madencilik*

1.4. Sources of the Research

It is possible to categorize the sources utilized throughout our research into four main groups. Within the mentioned resource group, official institutional archives come first. As it is known, Zonguldak had been influence zone of the French-funded Ereğli Company for many years. For this reason, it is possible to see French influence in the city until the basin was nationalized. Thus, firstly considering the possibility of leaving documents behind by the French, an online catalog search was made in in the French National Archive. However, there were not found any documents related to the period covered by our research topic in the searches. The most utilized archive throughout our research was Republican Archieve in Ankara. Here, among the official party records under the *Political Parties Fund*, it is possible to find so many documents on most of the political and organizational issues such as the RPP's foundation, organization, activities, and relations with provincial organizations. In this sense, the most utilized group of documents throughout our research were the inspection reports, election district reports and semi-annual activity reports of the provincial administrative committee. These were closely monitored by the RPP General Secretariat and were one of the most important communication channel between the center and the periphery. On the other hand, it should be noted that funds such as *the General Directorate of Public Relations* (Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü) were also utilized to follow the decisions taken about Zonguldak. Another official institutional archive benefited from our research is *the Presidential Archive* (Cumhurbaşkanlığı Arşivi). It should be noted that the official correspondence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü during their presidencies is kept in separate archives there. *Atatürk Archieve* (Atatürk Arşivi) provided very valuable data in order to have an idea about the dates of the provincial congresses held in

Hayatımdan Birkaç Hatıra”, *Maden Tetkik ve Arama Enstitüsü Mecmuası*, Year: 3, no. 4, (1938), pp. 25-32; Doğu Karaoğuz, *Kuvay-ı Milliye Ruhuyla Bir Ömür*, (İstanbul: Truva Yayınları, 2011); M. Halil Tunçer, *Hayat Safhalarından Tunçer'in Hatıraları*, (Zonguldak: A. Rıza İncelemdaroğlu Matbaası, 1944).

Zonguldak during the Atatürk Period.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, the *İsmet İnönü Archive* (İsmet İnönü Arşivi) also contains reports on some political activities that realized in Zonguldak after 1939. In particular, it is necessary to mention the comprehensive report prepared about the results of the vacant parliamentary elections, which were allowed to be held freely throughout the country in 1945. RPP General Secretary Nafi Atuf Kansu had a remarkable report prepared. This report contains a different perspective and evaluation of the struggle for influence within the party. Apart from all these, the *Document Collection* and *Postcard Archive* in the *Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Atatürk Library* was also utilized in order to make a visual contribution to our research. In this sense, it is necessary to mention the visual album prepared for the activities of the Zonguldak RPP organization and People's House in 1936. It is understood that this album title *Zonguldak Halkevi* was prepared to be presented to Deputy of Mardin Edip Ergin, who came to inspect the city in 1936. The album is important because it contains visual records of many organizational and political activities carried out in Zonguldak in the mid-1930s and especially the physical facilities of the RPP and the People's House. Finally, it should be noted that the *Archive of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey* (TBMM Arşivi) was also utilized to gather information about the backgrounds of some deputies.

In our research in the Republican Archive, it was understood that the earliest regional inspection report about RPP Zonguldak organization is dated June 1936. In addition, the inspection reports carried out by party inspectors in 1937, 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943 about Zonguldak were also obtained from this archive. Considering Ankara's interest in the region and the geopolitical importance of the city, the number of reports still seems small. Several reasons can be put forward for this. As many researchers especially those investigating the organization of the RPP have complained, the first of these seems to stem from the methodology used in document classification. Indeed, as we have experienced in our research,

¹⁴¹ In this archive, the contents of the accessed documents are as follows: The telegrams sent by the RPP Zonguldak organization to the presidency on various occasions, reports on the results of various elections and copies of some circulars sent by the RPP General Secretariat regarding the RPP Zonguldak provincial congresses.

the title of the document and its content often do not match or only a few pages out of hundreds are relevant to the topic under investigation. In addition, more important than the first reason, many inspections, election district reports and minutes of party provincial congresses were mixed among other RPP documents and classified under a different title. For this reason, these reports are tucked among tens of thousands of RPP documents, waiting to be discovered by researchers. Another possibility for the paucity of reports is that RPP documents may have been lost during or before their delivery to the archive. All these reasons prolong the archival research process and reduce the chances of the researcher to reach the right document. For this reason, evaluations regarding the periods when inspection reports were not available were necessarily based on other sources. In this sense, the other sources such as provincial administrative committee work reports, election district reports, official RPP publications, local newspapers and magazines, memoirs, travel writings, statistics, and provincial yearbooks filled this gap.

It is understood that the Zonguldak inspection reports sent to the General Secretariat of RPP were quite regular especially between 1940 and 1943. In fact, compared to previous periods, it is seen that regional inspections were carried out twice a year in this period. This is thought to be closely related to the political and social conditions of the period. Because, in this period the political, social and economic effects of World War II were felt very heavily on the population. As a necessity of the war conditions, the National Protection Law (*Milli Korunma Kanunu*), which obliged the people living in the Zonguldak coal basin to work in the mines, was also enacted during this period. Therefore, it can be said that the political power made the inspection mechanism to function more regularly in order to determine the wartime practices which were the main subject of many complaints by the people.

When the election district reports on Zonguldak are analyzed, the situation was not much different from the inspection reports. The earliest dated election district report on the city available in the Republican Archive dates back to 1935. Apart

from this, it is understood that Zonguldak deputies made inspections in their constituencies in 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942 (twice), 1944, 1945 (twice). As it can be seen, these reports were likewise increased during the Second World War. These reports, which focus more on the social and economic problems of the people compared to the inspection reports, is very valuable in understanding the socio-economic effects of World War II practices and the National Protection Law enacted during this period on society. In other words, these reports are like a "damage assessment studies". Because, by using these reports, the state will be able to learn the level of destruction on society caused by the laws enacted. It should also be noted that when consider with the inspection reports, both reports complement each other and function as reciprocal control mechanisms. This seems to have been an attempt to prevent the transmitting of the inaccurate, exaggerated or incomplete information from the provinces to the center.

Another type of report sent to the General Secretariat is the semi-annual activity reports of the provincial administrative committee. It is clear that a different mechanism was intended to conduct with these reports. In fact, these reports prepared by the provincial administrative committees envisaged a hierarchical control practice within the provincial levels of the party. In this respect, these semi-annual reports have not a centralized character and therefore contains rather sloppy and repetitive data. Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to follow the development and transformation of the RPP's provincial organization without these reports. Because they compile and summarize the status and activities of the party's provincial organization with data taken from lower levels. For this reason, it is possible to say that these reports on Zonguldak province, which contain valuable information for our research, were sent to the party headquarters more regularly. In this respect, within the scope of our research, we were able to access almost all of the reports sent to the RPP General Secretariat between 1934 and 1945. In this way, it was possible to follow the development of the RPP Zonguldak Organization (especially in terms of numbers such as members, membership dues and party budget) from the the institutionalization of the single party regime to the beginning of multi-party life.

The second group of sources utilized in our research is periodicals. Newspapers and magazines constitute the first pillar of this resource group. As it is known, the press life in the center of Zonguldak was almost monopolized by a single newspaper until 1940s. *Zonguldak* newspaper, which started its publishing life a few months before the proclamation of the Republic, maintained this monopoly until the end of 1940. Considering the political conditions of the period, in addition to the daily issues, *Zonguldak* newspaper's columns mostly focused on the issues on the agenda of the regime that was trying to consolidate its legitimacy. Therefore, *Zonguldak* newspaper provides researchers very important data on the political, socio-cultural and economic structure of Zonguldak. After this date, press life in the city began to diversify with the publication of the *Kömür* newspaper. As of 1942, *Yeni Zonguldak* and *Ocak* were also included in Zonguldak's press life. During the first years of multi-party political life *Türkün Sesi* and *Türk Sesi* newspapers began to share the pulse of political, social and economic developments in Zonguldak with their readers. In the same years, *Bartın* newspaper was publishing in Bartın which was the one of the largest districts of Zonguldak. When the political atmosphere of the single-party period is considered, most of the mentioned newspapers continued to publish in a line that defended the official ideology and Republican values until the beginning of multi-party political life. Among these, especially the *Zonguldak* newspaper, published by Tahir Karaoğuz, was an ardent defender of the RPP and the Republican revolutions during these years. Although almost all of these newspapers were located at the side of official ideology, the local newspapers still have been very useful in this research in order to access the details that are not available in official documents and records. Because, in order to follow the ideological and social activities of the RPP who wanted to reach out more people, a story based solely on official documents can not go beyond to reflect official point of view. At this point, the social and ideological mission of the RPP between the people and the state has been comparatively analyzed as reflected in the local press. On the other hand, Zonguldak, which embodies an important source of energy for the industrialization and development of the Republic, was also under the close scrutiny of national newspaper correspondents in this period.

For this reason, Zonguldak sometimes visited by correspondents from national newspapers such as *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam*, *Kurun* and *Son Posta*. By the means of these writers, change and transformation story that the city has experienced with the Republic was announced to the whole nation. Therefore, in order to have an idea about the socio-cultural life of Zonguldak and to follow the political developments in the country, many national newspapers were utilized in this research.

Zonguldak press life was not shaped by only local newspapers during the single-party years. Apart from these, the *Karaelmas*, which began to be published in 1938 as the publication organ of the Zonguldak People's House, and *Doğu*, which began its publication life in 1942, also actively engaged in publishing activities in Zonguldak. By the means of articles in *Karaelmas*, which was continued to be published until February 1949, Zonguldak people were tried to be enlightened. Some of these articles were related to the ideology of revolution, political leaders, literature and history, education, art, health and social issues. On the other hand, *Doğu*, which was a culture, art and literary magazine, has left deep traces in the cultural life of not only Zonguldak but also whole country. So, the magazine, which reached a significant readership not only locally but also nationally, published the writings of many famous names such as Behçet Kemal, Peyami Safa, Orhan Şaik Gökyay and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul.¹⁴² In this sense, *Doğu*, which includes evaluations and articles about the history, culture and literature of Zonguldak and as well as the general politics and problems of the country, has been one of the important sources consulted throughout our research. Apart from these two magazines mentioned above, it should be noted that other national and local magazines were also utilized when necessary.

Another group of sources that utilized in this study are literary works such as novels, stories, travel writings, letters and memoirs. Among these, it is necessary

¹⁴² For detailed information about *Doğu* and its publication life see Sinan Ateş and Yücel Namal, *Türkçü Neşriyatın Etkili Bir Örneği: Doğu Dergisi Bibliyografyası*, Yunus Emre Tansü (ed.), (Ankara: İksad Yayınları, 2021).

to mention the novels, stories and memoirs of the writers who lived directly in Zonguldak or chose Zonguldak as a place in their works. The novels, stories, letters and the memoirs of people who has been as the officers in Zonguldak due to their civil service can be included in this group of sources. In this sense, as one of the most important sources of historical research, memoirs have been consulted not only in matters concerning Zonguldak locality, but also in conveying the political, social, cultural and economic transformations of the period. On the other hand, in our research, the memories of statesmen and politicians who took part in modernization movement and held important positions in the political life of the single-party years were consulted as well. The last type to be mentioned in this group of sources is travel writings. As mentioned in the previous section, as a result of the growing interest which started as early as the National Government period in Zonguldak coal basin, the trips were organized by both foreign and Turkish travelers and journalists to the region. Especially following the proclamation of the Republic, it is known that many travel notes were published by national newspaper correspondents in order to show the experinced change and transformation in Zonguldak to the public. Based on these notes, it was possible to make some inferences about the socio-cultural and economic condition of Zonguldak, especially in the Early Republican Period.

Finally, the official party and institutional publications utilized in the study have to be mentioned. The RPP official publications such as; RPP Statutes and Programs, RPP Grand Congress Reports, RPP Zonguldak Provincial Congress Reports, RPP Zonguldak District Congress Wishes, Correspondence between the RPP General Secretariat and the party organization, RPP official brochures and publications (such as *CHP Halkevleri Halkodaları (1932-1942)*, *Halkevleri 1935*, *Halkevleri 1940*, *CHF Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, *CHP Teftiş Talimatnamesi 1939*, *RPP Teftiş Talimatnamesi 1943*, *18. Yılında CHP*, *On Beşinci Yıl Kitabı*, *Millet Hizmetinde 40 Yıl CHP*, *Cumhuriyet'in On Yılında Zonguldak ve Maden Kömürü Havzası*, *Cümhuriyet'in XV. Yıldönümü Hatırası Zonguldak (1923-1938)*) have been utilized in this sense. It should be noted that

some of these sources can still be found under the *Political Parties* fund of the Republican Archive today. In addition to these, it should be noted that in this study we have also benefited from official institutional publications such as; *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, *TBMM Milletvekili Mazbata ve Tanıtma Formları*, *Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Yayınları*, *Resmi Gazete*.

CHAPTER 2

TURKEY AND ZONGULDAK IN TRANSITION TO SINGLE PARTY RULE

The period between 1923 and 1945 in Turkish political history was marked by single-party rule. Although 1923 was an important beginning of the transition to single-party rule, attempts to institutionalize the regime would intensify after the FRP experience. Esat Öz expresses the breakpoint in the political history of the Republic which starts with 1923 as "*one of the important steps*" in the transition to single-party rule.¹⁴³ 1923 was also the beginning of the transition from the spirit of The Association For Defense of the National Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia¹⁴⁴ to the struggle for political power. Therefore, in order to understand this process, it is necessary to look closer the conditions under which the political power was established and the differences of opinion among the cadres who carried out the National Struggle. For this reason, in this section we will look the process of the emergence of the ADNRRAR firstly, which started with the occupation of Anatolian lands after the Armistice of Mudros and became the locomotive of the national liberation war. The groupings within the Grand National Assembly of Turkey¹⁴⁵ and the formation of the People's Party, which was an important threshold in the founding of political party, will be another issue to be discussed in this section. The Sheikh Said Rebellion, which has given a great opportunity to reformist cadre to consolidate the single-party regime and intimidate the opposition within the country, and the new atmosphere created by

¹⁴³ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁴ Hereafter ADNRRAR.

¹⁴⁵ Hereafter GNAT.

the political, social and cultural revolutions carried out afterwards will be the last topic to be discussed in this section.

2.1. From The Association For Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia to the Party State

In order to make an evaluation about the formation of the RPP, firstly it is necessary to know the historical conditions that prepared the emergence of the ADNRRAR. This is because the People's Party (*Halk Fırkası*), which was to be established after the victory of the National Independence War, was a political party that flourished in the soil of the ADNRRAR. Therefore, unlike the formation of other political parties, the People's Party was the result of certain historical and national necessities.¹⁴⁶ The history of the struggle against the imperialist and colonialist forces that wanted to sever the historical and cultural ties of the Turkish people with the Anatolian geography and end their national independence is also the history of the People's Party. In this respect, developments after the First World War are important for understanding the historical continuity between the ADNRRAR and the People's Party.

Ottoman Empire's struggle in the First World War officially ended with the armistice signed in the fall of 1918. At the end of the war, with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros, the defeat of the Ottomans in the war was registered. Thus, the Turks, who had been uprooted from Europe, were now seen as a very close possibility to be exiled from Anatolian lands to the steppes of Asia.¹⁴⁷ For this, the imperialist powers had divided the "*Sick Man*" Ottoman Empire's appetizing

¹⁴⁶ Sezai Kürşat Ökte, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Vilayet/İl Kongrelerinin Parti Politikalarına Etkileri (1930-1950)*, (Unpublished PhD diss.), (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 2019), p. 26.

¹⁴⁷ Zeki Çevik, *Milli Mücadele'de Müdafaa-i Hukuk'tan Halk Fırkası'na Geçiş (1918-1923)*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2002), p. 48; Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Tek Adam*, vol. 2, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2020), p. 64.

lands long before the war.¹⁴⁸ However, this armistice agreement, which registered the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, also sparked a long but successful liberation struggle for the new Turkish State.

The Armistice of Mudros provided the Allied Powers states with a ground on which they could act as they wished. The terms of the armistice were such that the Ottoman Empire would annihilate even before a peace treaty was concluded.¹⁴⁹ Under the terms of this agreement, which made the Ottoman territories open to occupation, the Allied Powers began to occupy Anatolian territories from the beginning of November. As a result of these developments, complete disorder and chaos prevailed in the Ottoman capital, and "*an unstable, cloudy, poisonous air*" descended on the Turkish nation like a nightmare.¹⁵⁰ The fate of the country depended on getting out of the maelstrom as soon as possible. For this, some ideas were put forward to determine the policy that would determine the future of the country. These views, one completely opposed to the other, differed from each other in terms of whether they had a "surrenderist" or "liberationist" vision.¹⁵¹ According to those with a surrenderist view, there was no alternative aside from submitting the wishes of the imperialists. The palace and the government was acting along this line and call people to remain calm in

¹⁴⁸ For the secret agreements between the Allied Powers see İzzet Öztoprak, *Türk ve Batı Kamuoynunda Milli Mücadele*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), pp. 1-6.

¹⁴⁹ Afet İnan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ve Türk Devrimi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2020), p. 21.

¹⁵⁰ Çevik, *Milli Mücadele'de Müdafaa-i Hukuk'tan Halk Fırkası'na Geçiş (1918-1923)*, p. 71.

¹⁵¹ Çevik, p. 71. It should be said that the following three ideas were mainly accepted for liberation in Istanbul during the occupation period: those who wanted British protection, those who supported the American mandate and those who advocated the option of saving sovereignty with regional separations. Şerafettin Turan, on the other hand, states that four different solutions or liberation proposals have matured in the period from the armistice to the integration in the environment of the liberation war in Anatolia. See Şerafettin Turan, *Türk Devrim Tarihi (I. Kitap)*, (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1991), pp. 123-147.

the face of the occupations.¹⁵² The other view, in favor of a free and independent state within national borders, would later form the nucleus of the Associations for Defence of Rights.

In contrast to this gloomy atmosphere that descended on the capital of the Empire, the people of Anatolia had no choice aside from actively resist against the invaders who were threatening their lives and honor all over the country. For this reason, local resistance organizations were created in a very short time. These associations, which were organized by provincial notables under the leadership of military-civilian bureaucrats¹⁵³ who embraced Turkish nationalism, initially used the names such as “*Redd-i İşgal*”, “*Redd-i İlhak*”, “*Muhafaza-i Hukuk*”, “*Müdafaa-i Hukuk*”. Associations for Defence of Rights were the pioneers of the struggle¹⁵⁴ based on freedom and independence despite the surrenderist attitude of the Istanbul government which invited the people to calm down in the face of the occupations by sending “*heyet-i nasiha*”¹⁵⁵ (delegations

¹⁵² Cevdet Küçük, “Milli Mücadele”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30, (Ankara: 2020), p. 77, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/milli-mucadele> [accessed January 12, 2020]

¹⁵³ Esat Öz, in his work titled *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, states that there are two different social bases of the Associations for Defence of Rights. According to him, this movement is a joint struggle between the new middle class graduates (military-civil bureaucrats, self-employed people, etc.) who graduated from Ottoman modern schools and the local notables who understood that the invasion and disintegration of the country would not leave them a chance to live. his social composition, which forms the core of the National Struggle, reflects the agreement between the provincial representatives of the state and the notables. Therefore, this structure will be preserved in the same way and will form the social base of the RPP that will be established in the future. See Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁵⁴ Sencer, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partilerin Toplumsal Temelleri*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁵ The increase in the discourse that supporting the Greek government at the Paris Peace Conference caused the Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire to create more outrage. These outbursts were sometimes offensive. When the Istanbul government failed in its attempts to prevent these outbursts, it was decided to establish committees that would appease the minorities living in the empire, especially the Greeks, and inculcate tranquility in the Turks. Thus, it was decided to send two separate advisory boards to Anatolia. For detailed information about the “delegations of advice” (heyet-i nasiha) see Mevlüt Çelebi, *Heyet-i Nasiha Anadolu ve Rumeli Nasihat Heyetleri*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2020).

for advice). Therefore, in the early days of the occupation, many independent and local organizations took the leadership of this movement.

The Greek army's occupation of Izmir in May 1919 turned the fire of struggle burning within the Associations for Defence of Rights into an unquenchable flame.¹⁵⁶ In a very short time, the need to unite the scattered associations around common goals and to be guided by a certain center against the occupations of the imperialist powers arose. Therefore, first of all, regional congresses were organized to ensure this unity.¹⁵⁷ However, it was so important for resistance organizations in Anatolia and Thrace to gain a national identity on a national scale in order to manage the national struggle from a single center effectively. In the days Mustafa Kemal, who was assigned to Anatolia for an official duty¹⁵⁸, had pointed to this issue and emphasized the necessity of uniting the disorganized national associations in order to protect national rights and independence.¹⁵⁹ After all these developments, attempts to organize local resistance organizations at the national level would intensify and the will to act

¹⁵⁶ Çevik, *Milli Mücadele'de Müdafaa-i Hukuk'tan Halk Fırkası'na Geçiş (1918-1923)*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁷ Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, p. 475. For a detailed evaluation of the congresses held in Turkey starting with the Armistice of Mudros until the opening of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey see Bülent Tanör, *Türkiye'de Yerel Kongre İktidarları (1918-1920)*, (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 1992). In this study, Tanör evaluates the local congresses, which were formed outside the influence of the Kemalist leadership, in terms of state and power problems.

¹⁵⁸ After the Armistice of Mudros Allied Powers claimed that, the Turks carried out attacks on the Christian people in Samsun and its surroundings. And they asked the Ottomans to prevent this situation. Thereupon, it was considered that a high-ranking soldier would be sent to the region. Mustafa Kemal, who was deemed appropriate for this task, was appointed by the government of Damat Ferit Pasha to eliminate the disorder in the region and to determine its causes. In addition, the collecting of scattered weapons and ammunition and the prevention of resistance movements were among the duties expected of him. M. Kemal had an opportunity to realize the idea of the independence struggle to be started from Anatolia in order to save the country from the situation it was in. Kemal Pasha was making an assessment of the solution in the face of the scene he had encountered in Samsun: "*Gentlemen, there was only one decision in the face of this situation. And that is to establish a new fully independent Turkish state based on national sovereignty.*" See Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk*, vol. 1, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2019), p. 19.

¹⁵⁹ Mehmet Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1991), p. 85.

against the occupations as a nation would be put into practice with the Sivas Congress. The congress convened in Sivas between 4-11 September 1919 and the decisiveness on this issue were put forward.¹⁶⁰ The decisions taken at the Erzurum Congress were accepted in Sivas as well. Besides, all the Associations for Defence of Rights and Redd-i İlhak societies operating throughout the country were brought together under the roof of the ADNRRAR and organized for a single goal from a single center.¹⁶¹ The ADNRRAR, which constituted the nucleus of the RPP, avoided any kind of factionalism¹⁶² in the early days and emphasized that there was no connection between them and the political party formations of the past. On the other hand, according to the statute of the ADNRRAR, the main goal of the organization was “*to make national forces effective and national will dominant in order to ensure the integrity of the Ottoman homeland, the inviolability of the supreme caliphate and sultanate authorities and national independence.*”¹⁶³ For this reason, all Muslim citizens who would work towards the aforementioned goal were considered natural members of the organization. With Mustafa Kemal’s transition to Anatolia, the national struggle which was wanted to be organized and managed from a single center, had achieved this goal with the decisions of the Sivas Congress. However, the primary goal of Mustafa Kemal and the Representative Committee (Heyet-i Temsiliye) was to ensure the reconvening of the parliament (Meclis-i Mebusan).¹⁶⁴ On 30 September 1919, Ali Rıza Pasha's government decided to

¹⁶⁰ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 74.

¹⁶¹ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p. 6.

¹⁶² This was stated in the statutes of the ADRAR as follows: “... *This national society stays away from all kinds of partisan movements.*” See Mahmut Goloğlu, *Sivas Kongresi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2017), p. 248.

¹⁶³ Goloğlu, *Sivas Kongresi*, p. 248.

¹⁶⁴ Kabasakal, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, p. 90. Thus, it is desired to make the National Movement dominate on both military and political grounds. See Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 75.

open the Ottoman parliament and the broken ties between the Representative Committee and Istanbul would be re-established. As the result, a protocol signed between the representative of the Istanbul Government and ADNRAR in Amasya on 20 October 1919 that envisaged the reconvening of the Meclis-i Mebusan.¹⁶⁵

Despite all the negativities that the Istanbul Government imposed on the elections, the members of the ADNRAR were largely successful in the elections to the Meclis-i Mebusan.¹⁶⁶ After this, Mustafa Kemal left Sivas and reached Ankara, where he could follow the political and military situation more closely. From now on, Ankara would become the center and heart of the national will.¹⁶⁷ Meanwhile, in the parliament which convened on 12 January 1920, the Group of Defence of Rights, could not be established and instead a group called Felah-ı Vatan was formed. In addition, the National Pact , whose principles were determined at the Erzurum and Sivas Congress and final edits were made by the Felah-ı Vatan group, was approved on 28 January 1920. The Allied Powers, who were very uncomfortable with the parliament's approval of the decisions of National Pact, put pressure on the government and had some ministers dismissed from their assignments.¹⁶⁸ This process would continue until the official occupation of Istanbul by the British on 16 March 1920. Despite all this, the next

¹⁶⁵ Ergün Aybars, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi I*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1994), pp. 185-186.

¹⁶⁶ Sabahattin Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol. 1, (İstanbul: Kastaş Yayınevi, 2010), p. 330. This election were held in accordance with the “İntihab-ı Mebusan Kanunu Layihası” dated 1876 which was published and enacted in 1908. According to this law, which was basically prepared on the basis of two-stage elections, only men were taken into account in terms of the number of deputies, voting and being elected. According to Goloğlu, the last Ottoman Parliamentary Election held with this election law was realized in an environment that has extremely impartiality and freedom. See Mahmut Goloğlu, *Üçüncü Meşrutiyet*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014), pp. 47-49.

¹⁶⁷ Aybars, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi I*, p. 190.

¹⁶⁸ M. Tayyip Gökbilgin, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken*, (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2019), p. 537.

step in the face of all these developments was clear: to convene a new parliament.¹⁶⁹ After long consultations with the commanders, it was announced with a circular that a parliament with extraordinary powers would convene in Ankara. With this circular, which also included regulations on elections, a new era had begun for the National Independence Struggle and a significant progress has been made in the establishment of the new Turkish State.¹⁷⁰ Because, the occupation of Istanbul rendered all the arguments put forward by the Istanbul government against the political and military organization in Anatolia meaningless. From then on, Ankara and Mustafa Kemal would be the sole hope for many who had looked to Istanbul and British patronage to save the country. In particular, many patriots who fled arrest attempts of the British, crossed to Ankara and joined the Anatolian movement. From now on, the struggle in Anatolia would be carried out under the roof of a national parliament.

2.1.1. Founding of the Republican People's Party

The GNAT was inaugurated on 23 April 1920 with the deputies who were able to come to Ankara.¹⁷¹ These people, who united in the ideal of national independence and the liberation, had quite different social, political and cultural codes.¹⁷² After bringing these people together, who have different educational

¹⁶⁹ Kemal, *Nutuk*, vol.1, p. 562.

¹⁷⁰ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p.13.

¹⁷¹ Elections for the extraordinary assembly to be convened in Ankara began on 19 March 1920. The country was divided into 66 constituencies and 5 deputies would be elected from each constituency. Accordingly, the new assembly would consist of 330 deputies. However, only 115 deputies were able to attend the first meeting of the assembly. Another issue that should be noted is the difference in how many deputies attended the First GNAT. In this regard, according to A. Fuat Cebesoy 337, according to F. Rıfki Atay 381 and according to Yılmaz Altuğ 390 deputies constituted the first assembly. See Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p. 15; İhsan Güneş, *Birinci TBMM'nin Düşünce Yapısı (1920-1923)*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), p. 74.

¹⁷² Güneş, *Birinci TBMM'nin Düşünce Yapısı (1920-1923)*, pp. 78-79; Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *İlk Meclis: Milli Mücadele'de Anadolu*, (İstanbul: Yeni Gün Haber Ajansı Basın ve Yayıncılık, 1990), p. 16; Aydemir, *Tek Adam*, vol. 2, p. 319.

levels, socio-cultural backgrounds, and ideological inclinations, on the idea of being a free and independent state, the GNAT put the establishment of a new government on its agenda. Thus, the members of the Council of Ministers (İcra Vekilleri Heyeti) were determined following the “*Büyük Millet Meclisi Vekillerinin Suret-i İntihabına Dair Kanun*” that approved on 2 May 1920.¹⁷³ On the other hand, Mustafa Kemal Pasha was elected as the president of the parliament on 24 April 1920. With the opening of the national assembly without delay, the struggle in Anatolia was placed on a legitimate basis. Henceforth, the Representative Committee had completed its mission by handing over the national duties that it had carried out since the Sivas Congress to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Thus, the new parliament which adopted the principle of unity of powers, also filled the power vacuum created by the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷⁴ However, some measures had to be taken in order to suppress the struggle against the expanding enemy occupations on the one hand and the uprisings against the Anatolian movement on the other hand. In this sense, in order to strengthen the position and authority of the GNAT, to consolidate its authority and to overcome the claims that the national assembly was not legitimate, the “*Hıyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu*” (The Law of Treason) was approved on 29 April 1920.¹⁷⁵ As a result, the legitimacy of the

¹⁷³ The first Council of Ministers consisted of 12 people, including the head of government: Prime Minister: Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Ministry of Sharia and the Foundations: Mustafa Fehmi Efendi, Ministry of Internal Affairs: Cami Bey (Aydın), Ministry of Court: Celalettin Arif Bey (Erzurum), Ministry of Public Works: İsmail Fazıl Pasha (Yozgat), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Bekir Sami Bey (Amasya), Health: Adnan Bey (Istanbul), Economy: Yusuf Kemal Bey (Kastamonu), Ministry of National Defense: Fevzi Pasha (Kozan), Erkan-ı Harbiye: İsmet Bey (Edirne), Ministry of Finance: Hakkı Behiç Bey (Denizli), Ministry of Education: Rıza Nur Bey (Sinop). See Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p. 16; Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *İlk Meclis: Milli Mücadele’de Anadolu*, p. 32.

¹⁷⁴ Ahmet Demirel, *Cumhuriyet Tarihinin Bilinmeyen Gerçekleri*, (İstanbul: Ufuk Yayınları, 2014), p. 15.

¹⁷⁵ The bill of law was submitted to the Presidency of the GNAT by Mehmet Şükrü Bey, Deputy of the Karahisar- Sahib on 25 April 1920. According to this bill, which consists of a two-article motion, all Ottoman subjects must comply with the principles to be accepted by the Grand National Assembly in order to achieve its goal. In this respect, those who oppose or do not obey the decisions of the National Assembly can only be traitors, and such people should be accused of treason. See *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, Devre:1, Cilt: 1, 24.4.1336, p. 63; Goloğlu, *Üçüncü Meşrutiyet*, p. 186.

GNAT was legally guaranteed and those who obstructed the objectives of the National Assembly or acted outside the established principles were considered as traitors according to this law.

The Anatolian movement led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha gained a legitimate ground with the opening of the Grand National Assembly and the legal arrangements that followed. These arrangements also contributed to his emergence as a leader.¹⁷⁶ Meanwhile, while the First Assembly was making legal arrangements to consolidate its authority, it was also witnessing the emergence of differences of opinion the core of which was determined by the issue of political regime. Because, the deputies who were united with each other and acted in the same direction in the cause of the liberation and independence of the homeland, gradually broke away from this spirit of unity and solidarity and began to voice different ideas and opinions. In the parliament, where the political identities and ideologies were set aside the members who were close to each other began to come together over time and started to act collectively. In fact, these divisions among the deputies even led to groupings under various names. In this sense, in addition to the main groups such as the “Tesanüt” (Solidarity), “İstiklal” (Independence) , “Müdafafa-i Hukuk Zümresi” (Group of Defence of Rights), “Halk Zümresi” (Public Group) and “İslahat ” (Reform Group), some small organizations with common special purposes started to be active in the parliament.¹⁷⁷ Although these groups were established with the aim of unifying votes in parliamentary debates, their existence had the opposite effect to what

¹⁷⁶ Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Mecliste Muhalefet İkinci Grup*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), p. 211.

¹⁷⁷ Apart from these, there were two political parties that were officially established in the late 1920s: “Türkiye Komünist Fırkası” (Turkish Communist Party) and “Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası” (Turkish People's Participation Party. For detailed information see Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009); Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, pp. 531-533; Erden Akbulut and Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası (1920-1923)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016); Aydemir, *Tek Adam*, vol. 2, pp. 324-338; Güneş, *Birinci TBMM’nin Düşünce Yapısı (1920-1923)*, pp. 165-174.

was expected.¹⁷⁸ These groupings began to become more evident as a result of the "Law of the Constitution" (Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu) adopted on 20 January 1921 and because of the difference in its interpretation.¹⁷⁹ The struggle between the factions made it difficult to achieve national unity and common views over time and prevented the parliament to function efficiently.¹⁸⁰ Although Mustafa Kemal tried to unite these factions or to work by supporting one of them, he was convinced that the results obtained in this way would not be long-lasting.¹⁸¹ Eventually, some deputies who were uncomfortable with the deterioration of the atmosphere of unity in the parliament came together and agreed to form a new group. This intention, which was conveyed to Mustafa Kemal through Refet Bey, was realized upon Gazi's moderate approach.¹⁸² Thus, a group was established in the parliament under the name of "The Group of Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia"¹⁸³, also known as the "First Group" or the "First Defense of Rights Group", under the presidency of Mustafa Kemal. On 10 May 1921, the group convened at the Ankara Muallim Mektebi (Ankara School of Teacher) and

¹⁷⁸ Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk*, vol. 2, p. 794. Tarık Zafer Tunaya emphasizes that the first factor that revealed the grouping in the First Assembly was the differences in mentality. According to him, the first differentiations in the parliament emerged from the clash of "conservative" and "revolutionary" views. See Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, p. 529. According to Samet Ağaoğlu, the ideological movements that emerged in the parliament are gathered around three main groups: "Unionists", "Nationalists" and "Communists". See Samet Ağaoğlu, *Kuvayı Milliye Ruhu*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981), pp. 26-28.

¹⁷⁹ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 78.

¹⁸⁰ Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, p. 93.

¹⁸¹ Kemal, *Nutuk*, vol. 2, p. 794.

¹⁸² Fatma Yurttaş Özcan, "Birinci Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde Muhalefet: İkinci Grup", *Bilgi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 1 (Haziran, 2011), pp. 43-44; İhsan Güneş, "Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Grubu", *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi*, https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/Anadolu_ve_Rumeli_M%C3%BCdafaa-i_Hukuk_Grubu, [accessed October 10,2020]

¹⁸³ Hereafter GDRAR.

adopted a statute and began its work.¹⁸⁴ Following this grouping, the members of the parliament who were left out would later form the Second GDRAR together with those who opposed Mustafa Kemal within the First Group. Thus, the members of the First Assembly, who agreed on the “National Pact” (Misak-ı Milli) and prioritized the problem of national independence by staying away from all kinds of partisanship, were divided into two parts as the First and Second Groups.¹⁸⁵ After a period of unorganized opposition, the deputies of the Second Group organized under the name “*Second Group of Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia*” in July 1922.¹⁸⁶

The Second Group's opposition, especially to the “Law of Commander-in-Chief” (Başkomutanlık Kanunu), would continue until the dissolution of the First Assembly.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, in order to eliminate this turmoil which constituted a major obstacle to parliamentary work, it was needed to develop new policies for peace conditions. Therefore, Mustafa Kemal decided to transform the GDRAR

¹⁸⁴ 133 deputies attended the first meeting of GDRAR. Later, the number of members of the group increased to 261. See Güneş, *Birinci TBMM'nin Düşünce Yapısı (1920-1923)*, p. 198; Çevik, *Milli Mücadele'de Müdafaa-i Hukuk'tan Halk Fırkası'na Geçiş (1918-1923)*, p. 401; Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, p. 94. For the deputies of the First Group see Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler (1859-1952)*, pp. 536-537.

¹⁸⁵ According to Ahmet Demirel the struggle between the First and Second Groups is explained through some stereotypical concepts in the literature. He describes these stereotypes as “secular, democratic, revolutionary and radical” identities for the First Group, while concepts such as “religious, conservative, pro-sharia, reactionary” for the Second Group. According to him, there is no difference in principle between these two groups. See Demirel, *Birinci Mecliste Muhalefet İkinci Grup*, pp. 14-18.

¹⁸⁶ Among the prominent members of the group are as follows: Mr. Ali Şükrü, Mr. Hüseyin Avni (Ulaş), Kara Vasıf, Rıza Nur, Süleyman Necati (Güneri), Besim (Fazlıoğlu). Tarık Zafer Tunaya states that the number of deputies who were members of the Second Group is about 40. İhsan Güneş, on the other hand, states that the number of members was 120 at the beginning, gradually decreased. He states that after the abolition of the sultanate, the group has disappeared completely. See Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler (1859-1952)*, p. 538; Güneş, *Birinci TBMM'nin Düşünce Yapısı (1920-1923)*, p. 208; Demirel, *Birinci Mecliste Muhalefet*, pp. 395-401.

¹⁸⁷ Çevik, *Milli Mücadele'de Müdafaa-i Hukuk'tan Halk Fırkası'na Geçiş (1918-1923)*, p. 416; Aydemir, *Tek Adam*, vol. 2, p. 353.

into a political party, the People's Party (HF), which would act within a specific program and party discipline. On the other hand, the necessity of renewing the parliament whose current structure was an important obstacle to the decisions to be taken, has emerged. For this reason, it was decided to renew the elections in April 1923. This paved the way for the liquidation of the Second Group from the parliament which had maintained an aggressive opposition to Mustafa Kemal and his government.

As it mentioned earlier, the existing structure of the First Assembly was a major obstacle to the government's ability to take the decisions it wanted. At the same time this situation is making difficult to "*implement Kemalist programs easily* " and "*find a certain solution to the problem of the political regime*".¹⁸⁸ In particular, the solution of the political regime problem that emerged after the abolition of the sultanate and the pursuit of a policy in accordance with the terms of peace were not possible with such a parliament. Moreover, it was even more difficult for Mustafa Kemal and his cadre to maintain and consolidate political power when there was an effective opposition movement against them. Mustafa Kemal believed that the activities of the government should be carried out through a political party formed on the basis of certain principles and programs. In this direction he shared his thoughts with the public for the first time on 6 December 1922 in a statement that he gave to *Yenigün*, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and *Öğüt* newspapers.¹⁸⁹ Mustafa Kemal, who stated that he had the idea of founding a political party under the name of People's Party when peace was achieved. Besides, the principle of "populism" would be taken as a basis in the party he would establish.¹⁹⁰ There was not any indication in this speech given to the press

¹⁸⁸ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 79.

¹⁸⁹ Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 1999), p. 33. For this speech that published in the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* on 7 December 1922 see *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, vol. 2, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, pp. 50-52.

¹⁹⁰ *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, vol. 2, pp. 50-52. Mustafa Kemal Pasha's close colleagues Rauf Orbay, Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Pashas opposed his decision to continue his political struggle as a party leader. In his memoirs Rauf Orbay stated that he did not find it right that

that the People's Party would be formed by transforming of GDRAR.¹⁹¹ However, this statement shared with the public through the Ankara press was the first official announcement regarding the official establishment of the People's Party. Mustafa Kemal firstly pointed to the conditions of the people and the country in his statements regarding the founding of the political party. He stated that in order to get rid of the backwardness in the country and to reach the level of a modern and advanced society, a political party with a program that could be followed and implemented for many years was needed.¹⁹² For this reason, all patriots and intellectuals were asked to contribute to the program of the party that is going to be founded. The party program which is going to be prepared should meet the real needs of the country. At this point, it was tried to get opinions from competent people in determining the problems of the people and the villagers.

Opponents, who has learned the idea of founding a party called the People's Party, started a new debate over the name of the party and the concepts of "people" and "populism" which are the basis of the party. They argued that the new party to be established would initiate a class struggle in Turkey.¹⁹³ Contrary to these ideas of the opposition, it was stated that Mustafa Kemal's envisioned party would aim to ensure the welfare and happiness of all classes. Consequently, it was emphasized that the concept of "*people*" was not used to defend the interests of any particular class as it has been claimed, but it was inclusive for all classes.¹⁹⁴ In the meantime, while the contribution of the

Mustafa Kemal Pasha was actually at the head of any political society or sect that would be entered after the peace. See Feridun Kandemir, *Hatıraları ve Söyleyemedikleri ile Rauf Orbay*, (İstanbul: Yakın Tarihimiz Yayınları, 1965), p. 126-127.

¹⁹¹ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, p. 40.

¹⁹² Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 65.

¹⁹³ Tunçay, p. 40.

¹⁹⁴ Mustafa Kemal, who stated that the People's Party would be aimed at the interests of the whole people rather than the interests of a certain class, expressed this issue as follows: "I

country's intellectuals to the formulation of the party program was important, the public opinions on this issue was also wondering. For this reason, the long Western Anatolia tour on 14 January 1923 was an important opportunity for Gazi to understand the attitude of the public. This travel is also important to enlighten the public about the party he intended to found, to see the effects of the counter-propaganda against the party on the public and to eliminate them.¹⁹⁵ Gazi during these trips has met with the people in cities such as Eskişehir, İzmit, Bursa, Balıkesir and İzmir and in some towns. In these meetings he talked about the developments in the country and the People's Party to be established.¹⁹⁶ Thus, with the statements made in this process, the party's qualifications, founding philosophy and principles were more clearly revealed and shared with the society.

In this travel process, Gazi's first station in Western Anatolia was Eskişehir. Gazi has arrived the on January 15 and was welcomed by the city's notables.¹⁹⁷ The next stop of the trip was Izmit. On 16/17 January 1923, Mustafa Kemal met with Istanbul journalists at the Izmit Pavilion (İzmir Kasrı) and made statements on

envision establishing such a party that it will have a program aimed at ensuring the welfare and happiness of all classes of the nation.” See Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, vol. 2, p.54.

¹⁹⁵ Mustafa Kemal in his speech to the "İleri" newspaper reporter Celal Nuri states that his country tour to see the situation of the armies after the last victory will be an opportunity to enlighten the public who have concerns about the establishment of the People's Party. This trip ended with the famous speech made at the Izmir Economy Congress on 17 February 1923. See *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, vol. 2, p. 54.*

¹⁹⁶ *Millet Hizmetinde 40 Yıl CHP, (Ankara: Ankara Basım ve Ciltevi, 1963), p. 7; Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi On Beşinci Yıl Kitabı, p. 3.* For detailed information about Gazi Mustafa Kemal's trip to Western Anatolia between 14 January and 20 February 1923 see Mehmet Önder, *İzmir Yollarında: Atatürk’ün Batı Anadolu Gezisi, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1989).*

¹⁹⁷ Mustafa Kemal before meeting with the people, has met with the governor, the high officials of the province, the mayor, members of the municipal council and the president and board members of the Associations for Defence of Rights.

curious issues.¹⁹⁸ In this interview, Gazi also made statements about the founding purpose of the People's Party. He stated that the People's Party would not be an organization based on class and it would work for the progress of the whole society in the following words:

When I say that I will establish a party under the name of the People's Party, it should not be assumed that I will pursue an aim to ensure the benefit and welfare of one or two classes of the nation. There is no such thing. The program of the party will aim to ensure the welfare and happiness of the whole nation.¹⁹⁹

Besides, Gazi has met with the people at the Izmit Movie Theater on January 19. Here, he made a long speech to convince the citizens who were hesitant and cautious about the the formation of the People's Party. Because the people had experienced political factions in the past and suffered a lot from them. For this reason, Mustafa Kemal knowing the people's history with parties and their concerns, said that a party that defended only the interests of a certain class or group in the country could not be beneficial for the nation and the country. According to him, the real need of the country was a political party that would enable the whole nation to work hand in hand. Because, as Mustafa Kemal Pasha's says, the People's Party was to be established on the idea of “...to ensure the interests and happiness of the whole nation”.²⁰⁰ Therefore, it was understood that the People's Party would be built on a classless basis that is not working for the benefit of any class or caste, but for the benefit and happiness of the whole people. This new understanding was expressed by the concept of populism. It

¹⁹⁸ The following names were included in the interview with Mustafa Kemal: Istanbul Deputy Adnan Adıvar, Halide Edip Adıvar, Chief Reporter of *Vakit* Ahmet Emin Yalman, Chief Editor of *Tevhid-i Efkâr* Velid Ebüzziya, Chief Reporter of *İleri* Suphi Nuri Bey, Reporter of *İkdam* Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Reporter of *Tanin* İsmail Müştak Mayokan, Correspondent of *Akşam* Falih Rıfki Atay and Correspondent of *İleri* Hakkı Kılıç. See Arı İnan, *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün 1923 Eskişehir-İzmit Konuşmaları*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2018), p. 39.

¹⁹⁹ İnan, *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün 1923 Eskişehir-İzmit Konuşmaları*, p. 80.

²⁰⁰ İnan, p. 119.

was essentially a solidarist corporatism that rejected class conflict and evaluated the people on the basis of professional groups and on solidarity between them.²⁰¹ Indeed, this concept would later find a place in the party program drafted in 1931 as follows: “*There are no classes, there is a division of labor.*”²⁰²

Three weeks after his Izmit meetings, Mustafa Kemal again took the opportunity to explain his People’s Party conception to the people at the pulpit of the Balıkesir Pasha Mosque on 7 February 1923. He touched upon similar issues in there.²⁰³ Therefore, throughout his entire trip, Gazi tried to relieve public concerns by emphasizing that the People's Party would represent the interests of the whole nation. In these meetings, the understanding of a classless society which constituted the basis for the foundation of the party, was concretized in the example of Turkish society. And it was stated that all interests of these classes would be defended by the People’s Party.

While the public was being informed that a new party was to be founded, the Lausanne Peace negotiations reached an impasse in the meantime and the Turkish delegation returned to the country. Although the government wanted the peace treaty to be signed as soon as possible, the Allies wanted to take advantage of the power struggle in Turkey and insisted on signing the terms of the treaty in the way they wanted.²⁰⁴ When the Lausanne Peace Conference came to the

²⁰¹ For detailed information about solidarist corporatism see Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm*, (İstanbul: Deniz Yayınları, 2005).

²⁰² *CHF Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1931), p. 32. The meaning attributed to populism is expressed in the party program as; “It is one of our main principles to regard the people of the Republic of Turkey as a community that is not composed of separate classes but to consider a community devoted to various workers. See Bkz. *CHF Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, p. 32.

²⁰³ *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, vol. 2, pp. 98-103.

²⁰⁴ Ömür Sezgin, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Siyasal Rejim Sorunu*, (Ankara: Birey ve Toplum Yayınları, 1984), p. 119.

agenda of the parliament, the tension between the First and Second Groups has increased. Thus, the severe criticisms against the government and the executive committee made the assembly inoperable. The disappearance of Ali Şükrü Bey, a prominent member of the Second Group, strained relations between the two groups.²⁰⁵ Meanwhile, after the delegation to Lausanne was approved by the parliament, Mustafa Kemal went on a trip to Anatolia on 13 March 1923. In this process, he continued to make statements about the People's Party in his meetings with the people and in his speeches. After a two-week trip, Mustafa Kemal has returned to Ankara started to work on the statute of the party.²⁰⁶

The Parliament was no longer able to function due to the debates on the issues outlined above. Thereupon, it was decided to renew the elections on 1 April 1923. The decision was notified to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in a memorandum on the same day. Based on the taken decisions, it was requested to start elections immediately and to report results.²⁰⁷ A week later, Mustafa Kemal as the Chairman of the GDRAR, published an election declaration under the name of "Dokuz Umde" (Nine Principles) on 8 April 1923. In this declaration, it was announced that the GDRAR in the parliament would be transformed into the People's Party.²⁰⁸ The principles in the declaration determined by considering the urgent needs of the country, especially the

²⁰⁵ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 64.

²⁰⁶ In this trip Mustafa Kemal has visited Adana, Mersin, Tarsus, Konya, Afyon ve Kütahya. For detailed information about this trip see Önder, *Atatürk'ün Yurt Gezileri*, pp. 13-17, 32-33, 246-248, 256-257, 277-279.

²⁰⁷ *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2006), p. 514.

²⁰⁸ Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler*, p. 580.

decisions taken at Izmir Economics Congress which was held with the participation of all country representatives.²⁰⁹

These principles, which were determined to address the most prominent problems of the country during the establishment process, was also the first election manifesto of the People's Party. All legal, political, economic, cultural, administrative and social steps to be taken within the framework of the Nine Principles will also form the basis for the party programs to be prepared from now on. However, even though the Nine Principles Declaration which was sent to all ADRAR offices in the country, they were met with reactions by some branches. These opposition groups were not high-toned and dismissed with the intervention of the center.²¹⁰

According to the results, the First Group led by Mustafa Kemal won the election, and left behind all three groups that were likely to oppose it.²¹¹ Thus, another important threshold was crossed in the establishment of the People's Party and the GNAT began its second term on 11 August 1923. In addition to all these developments, works for the establishment of the People's Party had begun long before the opening of the new parliament. Therefore, the members from their constituencies gathered in the parliament on 7 August 7 1923 to discuss the

²⁰⁹ Hulusi Turgut, *Atatürk'ün Sırdaşı Kılıç Ali'nin Anıları*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), p. 197.

²¹⁰ Mete Tunçay states that one of the reactions against the decision came from the Trabzon branch of the association. Former Governor Hamit Bey, Mayor Gazazzade Hüseyin Efendi, Head of the Trabzon Branch of the Association Barutçuzade Ahmet Bey and his son Faik Ahmet Bey are in this opposition group. Those who oppose to this transformation think that the transition from the association to the party will bring personal rule along with. See Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, p. 45; Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, pp. 72-73.

²¹¹ Ahmet Demirel mentions three groups that are likely to rival Atatürk and therefore the First Group in the parliamentary elections: The first group led by Erzurum Deputy Hüseyin Avni Bey (Ulaş), the Independent Group led by Kastamonu Deputy Abdülkadir Kemali (Öğütçü), and the members of the former CUP, which were not part of the opposition organizations and were scattered. See Ahmet Demirel, *Tek Partinin İktidarı Türkiye'de Seçimler ve Siyaset (1923-1946)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), pp. 31-35.

party. The party statute that was already prepared distributed to the members attending the meeting for discussion.²¹² The next day, Mustafa Kemal gave a long speech at the group meeting and informed the members in detail about the political developments since his arrival in Anatolia, the functions of the ADRAR and the conditions that necessitated the establishment of the People's Party. After about a month of consultations, the final party statute was approved by the parliamentary group on 9 September 1923. Thus, 9 September 1923 was accepted as the founding day of the People's Party.²¹³ However, the foundation of the People's Party became official with the petition submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 23 October 1923.²¹⁴

The first important task of the new assembly, which started its work on 11 August 1923, was to approve the Lausanne Peace Agreement on 23 July 1923. Thus, Turkey became an independent state recognized by the whole world. After the ratification of Lausanne Peace Treaty and the establishment of the peace, there remained to determine the form of government. Now it was time for Mustafa Kemal to put into practice the "belief of the republic"²¹⁵ which he believed in since his young officer years. For this purpose, the first step to

²¹² Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 86; Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 74.

²¹³ *Millet Hizmetinde 40 Yıl CHP*, p. 11.

²¹⁴ According to the official establishment petition, the first board of directors of the party consisted of the following people: "General President: Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Grand National Assembly President), Deputy General İsmet Pasha (Head of Council of Ministers), General Secretary: Recep Peker- Kütahya Deputy, Member: Sabit Sarıoğlu - Erzurum Deputy, Member: Celal Bayar- İzmir Deputy, Member: Cemil Ubayaydın- Tekirdağ Deputy, Member: Refik Saydam- İstanbul Deputy, Member: Saffet Arıkan- İzmit Deputy, Member: M. Hüsrev Görele- Erzurum Deputy, Member: Mr. Kazım Hüsni - Konya Deputy, Member: Mr. Zülfü - Diyarbakır Deputy. See Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p. 75.

²¹⁵ Mazhar Müfit Kansu states in his memoirs that the ideas about the proclamation of the republic in Atatürk's mind matured before the Erzurum Congress. See Mazhar Müfit Kansu, *Erzurum'dan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk'le Beraber*, vol. 1, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), p. 72.

change Turkey's political structure was to abolish the sultanate. Thus, although the problem of the existence of the sultan was solved, new problems arose due to the uncertainty of the regime and the absence of a head of state. The country's regime problem ended with the proclamation of the Republic on October 29. Thus, with the proclamation of the Republic, an existing but unnamed situation was clarified.

After the proclamation of the Republic and the election of Mustafa Kemal as president, a vice chairmanship was established within the People's Party.²¹⁶ Mustafa Kemal asked İsmet Pasha to represent as the head of the People's Party.²¹⁷ İsmet Pasha sent a circular to all ADRAR branches on 20 November 1923 immediately after his appointment as the vice chairmen of the People's Party. In the circular informing the organizations that the People's Party had been officially established and it was reported that İsmet Paşa had been appointed as the chairman of the party in accordance with the party statute. The executive boards of the ADRAR branches, which had played a crucial role in the liberation and independence of the nation, would henceforth continue to serve as the executive boards of the People's Party.²¹⁸ Thus, with this circular, the Associations for Defence of Rights which had fulfilled their duties in the liberation and national independence process, were transformed into party centers. These organizations, which would constitute the provincial structure of the RPP in the following period, would also be responsible for carrying and adopting the revolution and reforms to the people. On the other hand, the People's Party would continue to exist "*with a strong organization inherited from the ADRAR, a program named Nine Principles and a statute*".²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p. 78.

²¹⁷ Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 75.

²¹⁸ Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, pp. 42-43.

²¹⁹ Uyar, p. 76.

2.1.2. Turkey Before 1935

In the early years of the Republic, political reforms were at the top of the agenda of the political cadre that established the Republican administration. Therefore, between 1920 and 1925, the political dimension of the restructuring process in the country was completed with the abolition of the sultanate, the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, the declaration of Ankara as the capital, the proclamation of the Republic and the abolition of the caliphate in general terms. In the following period, the political power's efforts focused more on reforms to regulate social and cultural relations.²²⁰

Although the proclamation of the Republic meant the resolution of an important political crisis for the new regime, this decision also brought with it new crises.²²¹ Because the rumors that emerged after the proclamation of the Republic that the caliph would resign drew the reaction of many different segments and the opposition press in a short time. In the same historical period RPP continued its organizational activities throughout the country. Besides, it was busy preparing legislative proposals through the parliamentary faction group primarily for the abolition of the caliphate, keeping the army and religion away from politics and unity in education. Especially, the abolition of the Caliphate was considered essential for the healthy functioning of the newly established Republican administration. Because, although the traces of the Ottoman monarchy had been erased with the abolition of the sultanate, the existence of the caliphate raised concerns that the ties with the old regime had not been completely severed.²²² Before taking a decision in this direction, Mustafa Kemal Pasha wanted to know the opinions of institutions such as the press, the army and

²²⁰ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 98.

²²¹ Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, p. 26.

²²² Levent Börklüoğlu, *Tanzimat'tan Günümüze Türk Siyasal Hayatı*, (Bursa: Dora Basım Yayın, 2020), p. 35.

universities.²²³ After a series of meetings with the representatives of these institutions on 3 March 1924, " *The Law of the Abolition of the Caliphate and Expulsion of the Ottoman Dynasty Outside the borders of the Republic of Turkey*" (Hilafetin Kaldırılması ve Osmanlı Hanedanının Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Memleketi Sınırları Dışına Çıkarılması Kanunu) was approved by the GNAT.²²⁴

The abolition of the Caliphate was followed by the approving of the 1924 Constitution which was deemed insufficient to respond to the needs of the state. The opposition to the proclamation of the Republic and the abolition of the sultanate was also present during this process. Because of the many objections brought by the opposition group at the drafting stage, most of the powers given to the president were transferred to parliament and other relevant authorities.²²⁵ Thus, according to the new constitution which adopted a parliamentary system of government, the presidency became an office with symbolic powers. In addition to all these, the political reforms carried out by the new regime in the first half of the 1920s led to a deeper ideological differences among the cadres who had been acting together since the period of the War of Independence.²²⁶ This ideological divergence paved the way for Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Cafer Tayyar and Refet Pashas to resign from their military career and come together under an organized political opposition called the Progressive Republican Party. On 17 November 1924, it was decided to change the name of the People's Party to the Republican People's Party with the proposal made by Kütahya Deputy Recep Peker on 10 November 1924.²²⁷

²²³ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, p. 89.

²²⁴ *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, Devre II, C: VII, 3 Mart 1924, pp. 24-69.

²²⁵ Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, p. 27.

²²⁶ Börklüoğlu, *Tanzimat'tan Günümüze Türk Siyasal Hayatı*, p. 36.

²²⁷ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p. 81.

When it is looked at the program and statute of PRP, which emerged as an opposition party from within the RPP, it had typical qualities of Western European liberal parties. PRP, mainly in favor of secular and nationalist policies, openly opposed the fundamentalist, centralist and authoritarian tendencies of the RPP. Instead, the RPP adopted a decentralized administrative approach and a liberal economic policy.²²⁸ Another prominent point in the party manifesto and program was that religious thoughts and beliefs would be respected. In a way, all these criticisms brought by the opposition within the RPP against the functioning of the political system.²²⁹ The PRP, the first opposition party in the history of the Republic, gained public support in a short time. This support was becoming more evident with the increasing number of deputies who left the RPP and joined the PRP. Thus, on the one hand, the PRP was carrying out organizational activities throughout the country, and on the other hand, it was preparing for the upcoming by-elections. While all these developments were taking place, İsmet Pasha's government resigned and Ali Fethi Okyar's government, which was recognized as more moderate, was formed in its place. Although the PRP deputies also voted for a vote of confidence in the newly formed government, criticism about PRP continued within the RPP. This criticism was to intensify with the results of the by-elections held in the same year.

After the establishment of the PRP, a major rebellion broke out in the East. The emergence of this rebellion has changed the dimension which began with the establishment of the RPP. The Sheikh Sait Rebellion, which emerged as a religious and ethnic revolt, soon spread to the Southeastern and Eastern provinces and became a threat to national security. As a result of the proposal made by a group of politicians within the RPP, who thought that more severe measures should be taken against the rebellion, the government of Fethi Okyar was declared distrustful. Thus, the new government was formed under the prime ministership of İsmet Pasha. The first action of the government, which received a

²²⁸ Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi* , p. 201.

²²⁹ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım* , p. 91.

vote of confidence from the GNAT, was to enact the *The Law on the Maintenance of Order* (Takrir-i Sükun Yasası) and to re-establish the courts of independence.²³⁰ One of the first actions of this period which called the *Maintenance of Order* in Turkish Political History, was to silence the opposition press. On the other hand, trials were initiated by the Eastern Independence Court on accusations that the uprising was indirectly incited by PRP members. After the PRP's Urfa officer was sentenced to five years in prison, the Eastern Independence Court closed all RPP branches in the region. Similarly, trials were held at the Ankara Independence Court on the grounds that PRP used religion as a tool for politics and the government was also warned about the work of the PRP.²³¹ In the final stage, in Tunçay's words; " *the single opposition party in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey would also be eliminated as part of the general act of intimidation undertaken by utilizing the The Law on the Maintenance of Order on the occasion of the Sheikh Said Rebellion.*"²³² All these trials, the association of some party members with the rebellion and the court decisions in a sense prepared the legitimate ground for the closure of the party. Thus, the Council of Ministers, which convened on 3 June 1925, decided to close the PRP based on the Law on the Maintenance of Order.²³³

The Sheikh Sait uprising was an important turning point for the establishment of single party rule in the country. Indeed, with the Law on the Maintenance of Order adopted to suppress this uprising, an authoritarian rule was established in the country and multi-party political life was suppressed at its nascent stage.²³⁴

²³⁰ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 100.

²³¹ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 97.

²³² Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması*, p. 152.

²³³ Öz, p. 97.

²³⁴ Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, p. 30.

The June 1926 assassination attempt on Mustafa Kemal in Izmir was another effort to intimidate the political opposition. Following the decision of the Independence Court, which revealed that there was a relationship between the assassination attempt perpetrators and former Unionists who were trying to reorganize, a number of former Unionists including former PRP members were arrested.²³⁵ Although a significant number have subsequently been released, the widespread arrests and trials have been characterized as a significant attempt to intimidate potential opposition.²³⁶

The Maintenance of Order period also coincides with a term in which many new regulations were made regarding social and cultural life. The closure of Dervish Lodges and Zawiyas, the dress reform and the change of clocks and calendars were among the most important of these. On the other hand, secular laws regulating socio-cultural life were also enacted during this period.²³⁷ Another important reform implemented during this period was the adoption of the Latin Alphabet on 1 November 1928. In order to increase the number of literate people in the society, an intensive effort was made by both national schools and other public institutions.

2.1.3. The Republican People's Party Before 1935

This period, in which western-secular values began to be substituted instead of traditional way of life²³⁸, was also a period of important developments in terms of RPP organizations. Following the fall 1927 parliamentary elections, the

²³⁵ Şükrü Karatepe states that the İzmir Assassination created the expected opportunity for Mustafa Kemal, who wanted to get rid of the supporters of the Unionists and PRP. See Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, p. 32.

²³⁶ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 97.

²³⁷ In this sense, the Criminal Code was adopted on 1 March 1926; the Commercial Code on 29 June 1926; the Civil Code and Obligations Code on 4 October 1926.

²³⁸ Öz, p. 99.

Second Grand Congress of the RPP, which had not been convened for a long time, convened on 15 October 1927. At this congress, where Gazi Mustafa Kemal's Great Speech was also read, the party's new statute was adopted. According to the statute, Mustafa Kemal became the natural president of the grand congress, the party council, the general board of directors and the parliamentary group. Thus, by giving all organs of the party in the hands of a single person, a legal basis was prepared for authoritarian rule within the country and the party.²³⁹ The congress also clarified the ideological basis on which the RPP was founded. Here, it was stated that the RPP was a party based on the principles of republicanism, nationalism, populism and secularism.

There was an increasing social discomfort against the reforms carried out by the government and the authoritarian administration approach in 1929. Besides, When the effect of the 1929 world economic crisis on the Turkish economy is added to these, Mustafa Kemal began to find new remedies to overcome the current crisis. From this date on, there will be transformations concerning the party structure and ideology. At the same time, in order establish and legitimize the single-party system, some practices will also be implemented. Mustafa Kemal thought that an opposition party was primarily needed in order to get out of the depression that emerged in 1929 due to domestic and foreign conditions and to be able to control the policies of the ruling party. On the other hand, the discomfort felt by the establishment of an authoritarian government by a country who took the West as a model was also effective in the establishment of a new party.²⁴⁰ Moreover, by allowing the establishment of a new opposition party, it would be possible to reveal the power of the opposition which was already operating secretly in the public sphere.²⁴¹ Thus, with the support of Mustafa Kemal, Fethi Bey founded the Free Republican Party (FRP) on 12 August 1930.

²³⁹ Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, p. 33; Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 101.

²⁴⁰ Öz, pp. 101-102.

²⁴¹ Karatepe, p. 33.

The Free Party was led by people whom Mustafa Kemal personally knew and trusted but who were known to be against İsmet Pasha's policies. Thus, it was intended to influence the government's activities and to create an opposition party that could be kept under control.²⁴² However, as it is expected, the FRP did not only remain a passive political party within the GNAT. It became an alternative power option instead RPP in a little while. Especially the interest shown by the public during Fethi Bey's visit to Izmir indicated that the FRP would become a new political option in the near future. The RPP cadres, who were disturbed by all these developments, would eventually succeed in bringing Mustafa Kemal back to their side.²⁴³ Thus, Fethi Bey, who did not want to make politics against Mustafa Kemal, decided to abolish the party. Thus, the second multi-party experience in Turkish political history ended on 17 November 1930. A month after the closure of the FRP, a group of citizens led by Derviş Mehmed attempted to declare sharia law. This event provided the political power another important opportunity to eliminate anyone who might oppose the revolutions. On 23 December 1930, rioters killed lieutenant Mustafa Fehmi (Kubilay) and two guards who were trying to prevent the riots in Menemen. Besides, the silence of the people of Menemen against the rebels angered the administrators. As a result of severe measures, after the Menemen Incident which was suppressed in a short time, 35 people including Sheikh Esad Efendi, were executed in the trials.²⁴⁴ These two events brought about a new breakthrough in the structure of the RPP in late 1930. In this sense, the main issue raised especially by the writers supporting the RPP was the need for a political system that would ensure discipline in the country. Besides, it would not deviate from the principles of the revolution and would be able to instill them in the society. The message that the political cadres took from these events was that they should act with a stronger

²⁴² Karatepe, p. 34.

²⁴³ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 145.

²⁴⁴ Karatepe, p. 36.

understanding of political power.²⁴⁵ Because of all these reasons, as Mete Tunçay points out, “a different style” prevailed in Turkey between 1931 and 1945.²⁴⁶ In this respect, the Third Grand Congress of the RPP is regarded as the end of an era as well as the beginning of a new one.

As it is known, the political power had implemented many political and social reforms by 1930. However, the experience of FRP revealed that these reforms were not sufficiently accepted by the society. Therefore, a number of new measures and mechanisms were needed to adopt the values of the Republic and the reforms to the public. These measures have become a necessity especially in terms of the adoption of the revolution ideology. The most concrete evidence of this is that after the Free Party experience, the RPP focused on educating a large political mass and developing Kemalist ideology.²⁴⁷ The reason behind Mustafa Kemal's three-month long trip after the Free Party was dissolved, was the desire to reveal the reasons behind this failure. During his trip, which lasted for about three months, Gazi listened to the demands, expectations and complaints of the people and tried to learn their opinions about the policies and revolutions implemented. For this reason, all segments of society were tried to be listened to wherever they went during the trip. Besides, RPP organizations and Turkish Hearths were visited and meetings were held with youth, workers and businessmen.²⁴⁸ In fact, it was tried to compile information about the current problems of the country by interviewing even the former managers of the closed FRP. At the end of this process, in which the wishes of the people were listened

²⁴⁵ Yetkin, *Türkiye’de Tek Parti Yönetimi*, p. 41.

²⁴⁶ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, p. 318.

²⁴⁷ Emre Kongar, *İmparatorluktan Günümüze Türkiye’nin Toplumsal Yapısı*, (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1976), p. 151.

²⁴⁸ This trip was also very successful in bringing new people to the party. Adnan Menderes, who served as the head of the SCF Aydın province, was also one of the people brought to the party at the end of this trip. See Uluskan, *CHP Parti Müfettişliği ve Raporlarla Bursa Teşkilatı*, p. 51.

to more closely, Mustafa Kemal's idea was to completely overhaul the RPP organization. At the end of the process, it will be seen that the agenda of the single party regime was dominated by the changes to be made both in party organizations and in administrative and cultural terms.²⁴⁹

Gazi returned to the capital having synthesized the social observations he had made during his trip and determined the steps to be taken.²⁵⁰ During this long trip, he had listened to the people's concerns and was now able to foresee what was expected from the party and the state. In a sense, this contact with the public reminded the rulers of the fact that in order to adopt reforms, it was necessary to know the society well. Therefore, in order to regain the interest and sympathy that the party had lost, it was necessary for the deputies to communicate more closely with the public. Besides, the provincial organization of the party must be kept under more control and supervision.²⁵¹ After his trip, Gazi Mustafa Kemal did not wait for the Third Grand Congress to make changes within the RPP and his first action was to appoint Recep Bey (Peker) as the general secretary of the party.²⁵² Another important decision taken without waiting for the RPP Grand

²⁴⁹ Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi*, pp. 126-127.

²⁵⁰ At the end of the trip, a report covering Mustafa Kemal's investigations, observations and suggestions was prepared and submitted to the Prime Ministry. As one of the members of the committee that prepared the reports Ahmet Hamdi Başar's says; "This report, which will be given to the government, will be prepared in a way that will collectively comprehend all the problems of the country". Thus, it is understood that these reports prepared as a recipe that will find solutions to the problems identified throughout the country. See Ahmet Hamdi Başar, *Atatürk'le Üç Ay*, (İstanbul:AİTİA Gazetecilik ve Halkla İlişkiler Okulu Basımevi, 1945), pp. 119-122. In order to see original reports see Cumhurbaşkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivi (BCA), 30. 10. 0. 0 / 2. 11. 1, 5 Mayıs 1931 [5 May 1931].

²⁵¹ Uluskan, *CHP Parti Müfettişliği ve Raporlarla Bursa Teşkilatı*, p. 52.

²⁵² During his official duty as General Secretary of RPP, Recep Peker struggled to bring the RPP to a power that would control the state organization and the government as in the totalitarian administrations in the West. For this reason, Peker made some organizational and doctrinal arrangements in the party and tried to enlighten both the party organizations and the public with the conferences he organized directly. See . Karatepe, *Tek Parti Dönemi*, p. 37.

Congress was the renewal of the parliamentary elections.²⁵³ In this sense, Gazi's proposal to the party for the renewal of the elections was accepted in the parliamentary session on 4 March 1931 and the elections were completed all over the country on 24 April 1931.²⁵⁴ In the 1931 elections, which were completed calmly throughout the country, for the first time independent candidates were allowed to compete alongside RPP candidates. Another aspect that made these elections different from the previous elections was the election of deputies among the peasants, laborers and farmers which was directly instructed by Gazi. In this sense, it is known that a total of 22 peasant-farmer and laborer deputies were elected at the end of the 1931 elections and 2 of them was representing Zonguldak as miner deputies.

1931 would be a period of recovery for the RPP in every respect. It is known that especially after the FRP experience, the RPP became more sensitive to the demands of the public and sought ways to establish closer relations with the public.²⁵⁵ The process of incorporating new cadres into the RPP, which started with the parliamentary elections, continued with the Third Grand Congress convened between 10-18 May 1931.²⁵⁶ In this congress, which coincided with the RPP's recovery process, a new direction was thought to be given to the party and measures were taken to eliminate the deficiencies. One of the most important decisions taken at the congress was the decision to close down the Turkish Hearths, which had gradually become a political force, and to join it to the party.²⁵⁷ After the closure of the Turkish Hearths, it was decided to replace it

²⁵³ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, p. 318.

²⁵⁴ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, pp. 162-164.

²⁵⁵ Gülcan, p. 166.

²⁵⁶ Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, p. 126.

²⁵⁷ C.H.F. *Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları (10-18 Mayıs 1931)*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), pp. 279-280.

with a new institution called People's House, which would be directly affiliated with the party.²⁵⁸ The issue of the closure of the Turkish Hearths which constitutes one of the founding stages of the single-party system in recent Turkish history, is important in terms of understanding the political power's intolerance towards an organization independent from the RPP.²⁵⁹ In addition, for the first time a program other than the statute was established at the congress and the six principles that would be included in the constitution by 1937 were included together for the first time in this program. Thus, "statism" and "revolutionism" were added to the four principles of the RPP. Thus, the the six arrows of the party was completed.

The first section of the People's House was opened in February 1932 which were designed as a "*mass political education organization*"²⁶⁰ and would operate directly under and within the party administration. People's Houses, which were designed as a tool for the adoption of the RPP ideology and aiming to gather the whole public, continued their activities with increasing numbers throughout the single-party period. Zonguldak People's House, which started its activities officially on 24 June 1932, is also located in this ring. The Zonguldak People's House, like other people's houses, tried to fulfill the "ideological bridge mission" assigned to it through a number of activities. The total number of people's houses and people chambers across the country reached 4,521 as from 1945.²⁶¹ Apart from the establishment of the People's Houses, another important steps to adopt the revolutionary ideology was the establishment of the Turkish Language Association in 1932 and the introduction of Turkish Revolution History courses

²⁵⁸ C.H.F. *Nizamnamesi ve Programı 1931*, p. 16.

²⁵⁹ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, pp. 306-308.

²⁶⁰ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 111.

²⁶¹ C.H.P. *1945 Yılında Halkevleri ve Halkodaları*, (Ankara, 1946), p. 5.

in universities and colleges in 1934. In terms of establishing the principles of the Turkish revolution, another remarkable step taken in these years was the university reform. In this process, faculty members of *Dar'ül Fünun* who did not comply with the values of the regime in terms of ideology were eliminated. Besides, Istanbul University was established instead of *Dar'ül Fünun* (1933) and the teaching staff was renewed with people who adopted the ideology of the revolution or were thought to adopt it.²⁶² In the aforementioned period, another important stage in the process leading to the institutionalization of the single-party system was the termination of the activities of other associations and organizations just like the Turkish Hearths and to transfer their assets to the RPP or the People's Houses. Among these associations, which ceased their activities due to the fact that the goals they had set forth had already been realized by the RPP, were such as the Association of Mason and the Women's Union.²⁶³

The RPP's Fourth Grand Assembly convened at its usual time in the GNAT hall between 9-16 May 1935. One of the most important decisions taken at the Grand Congress was to formalize the party-state integration. This integration was expressed by General Secretary of RPP of the time as follows: “*The most striking feature of the new program is that the RPP entity, which has been working together with the state since the beginning in Turkey, will come closer to the state entity.*”²⁶⁴ The new statute approved at the congress also laid out how the party-state unity would work in practice. According to this, a closer relationship

²⁶² Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi*, p. 72. In the mentioned period, evaluations are made that the ideology of revolution could not be placed in *Dar'ül Fünun*, on the contrary, counter-revolutionary thoughts were put forward. For example, Şevket Süreyya, one of the writers of *Kadro*, complains that since the first day of the Turkish revolution, there has not been a single original work about the foundation process of the Turkish revolution in there. See Şevket Süreyya, “*Darülfünun-İnkılap Hassasiyeti ve Cavit Bey İktisatçılığı*”, *Kadro*, Year: 2, no. 14, (Şubat, 1933), p. 8.

²⁶³ Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi*, p. 78.

²⁶⁴ C.H.P. *Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Görüşmeleri Tutulgası (9-16 Mayıs 1935)*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935), p. 45.

was envisaged between the party and state institutions and it was decided that the highest local authority would be present at local congresses to give explanations when necessary.²⁶⁵ (Art. 64) However, it should be noted that this party-state integration did not realize in the way Peker envisioned. Because while Peker desired the RPP to establish a domination over state institutions, at the point reached in 1936, it is seen that the state system had limited the RPP organization.²⁶⁶ Mustafa Kemal who recognized that Peker was attempting to elevate the RPP organization above the state organization, he terminated his position as general secretary of the party. Later, on 18 June 1936, RPP Vice Chairman İsmet İnönü issued a declaration. In this declaration, it was announced that the Minister of Internal Affairs would also serve as the party's general secretary and the governors would assume the role of provincial party presidents.²⁶⁷ In 1937, with the inclusion of the six principles of the RPP's program into the constitution, the last phase of the party-state integration was completed.²⁶⁸

It is also necessary to mention the fundamental changes in the structure of the RPP during the institutionalization of the single-party system in Turkey. The lesson that the RPP should learn from the FRP experience is too big to be overcome with minor changes within the party. For this reason, another important change in the party organization after Recep Peker was appointment as

²⁶⁵ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935)*, p. 16.

²⁶⁶ Murat Turan, *CHP Yönetiminin Dünya Partileriyle İlişkileri*, (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2017), p. 231.

²⁶⁷ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İkinci Kanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936'ya Kadar)*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1936), p. 20.

²⁶⁸ For detailed information about the process leading to party-state integration in the Early Republican Period see Nihan Yükseliman, *Parti Devlet Bütünleşmesi*, (İstanbul: Gelenek Yayıncılık, 2002).

RPP general secretary²⁶⁹ was the abolition of the “*mutemetlik*”²⁷⁰. It should also be said that with the amendment in party statute, some institutional changes were put on the agenda. These changes have aimed to supervise the organizations, strengthen the connection between the people and the party and enlighten them. In this context, according to Mustafa Kemal's suggestions, the party organization was expanded and some arrangements were made in its organizational components.²⁷¹ The new specialized bureaus created in the party's central organization are one of them. This important formation was notified to all organizations by Recep Peker with a decree. In the aforementioned circular, it was reported that a division of work was made to ensure that each member of the General Administrative Board would be personally involved in a different task within the party. This division of work would also apply to the provincial organizations of the party and all party affairs, as in the center, would ultimately be gathered in the head of the administrative committee. Therefore, these specialized offices were established as follows.²⁷² The circular also emphasized

²⁶⁹ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 116.

²⁷⁰ This concept is used to describe the RPP provincial presidents of the period.

²⁷¹ Kabasakal, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi*, pp. 127-128.

²⁷² *CHF Katib-i Umumiliğinin Fırka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı (Mayıs 1931’den Birinci Kanun 1932 Nihayetine Kadar)*, vol. 1, (Ankara: Hakimiyet-i Milliye Matbaası, 1933), p. 18; Kabasakal, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi 1908-1960*, p. 128. **Group A: Office-1:** Organization, Elections, Party Congresses, **Office-2:** General wishes and applications, **Office-3:** To examine and follow the duties of societies and parties other than Republican People’s Party.(RPP). (This office will deal with monitoring all kinds of associations and unions other than Hilal-i Ahmer, Tayyare, Himaye-i Etfal, Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf, İdman Cemiyetleri İttifakı and Maarif Cemiyetleri.), **Office-4:** Inspection of the Party Organization. **Group B: Office-5:** National culture, scientific movements and publications on this subject (After the People's Houses were established, they were attached to this office.), **Office-6:** Sports and Youth, **Office-7:** Public classes, literacy, public orators. **Group C: Office-9:** Work, workers, craft organization and self-employment, **Office-10:** Examination and observation (mütalaa) of the economic situation, **Group D: Office-11:** Social welfare organization, **Office-12:** Confirmation of the activities of the party on the basis of law, **Office-13:** Preparation and follow-up of budget, dues, grants (bağış), revenues and accounts in the center and provinces. Arrangement and follow-up of the transactions (muamele) and records of the party estate and its goods. For detailed information about these offices see Ahmet İlyas and Ebru Çoban, *CHP Genel Sekreterlik Büroları*, (Ankara: Kadim Yayıncılık, 2020), pp. 133-242.

that this division of work was necessary “for a well-functioning, well-hearing, well-speaking, vocal and vibrant party life in the country.”²⁷³ This statement can be understood as a warning to the RPP organizations that had failed to pay sufficient attention to the demands and expectations of the society. Besides, it should also be accepted as an admission of the lack of communication between the people and the state.

Because of the fact that the RPP was interested in the statutes and programs of political parties in some Western countries during these years brings to mind the possibility of external influence in the new arrangements made within the party organization.²⁷⁴ However, although there is no concrete evidence that Mustafa Kemal was interested in these statutes and programs, it is known that there were politicians among the party members, such as Falih Rıfkı, who had the idea to organize the RPP by taking the example of some fascist and communist parties.²⁷⁵ Ultimately, this change in the party's central organization was the result of the need to carry out internal party affairs with a more specialized staff. On the other hand, all these developments shows the party's desire to monitor, control and at the same time direct the functioning of political and social life.²⁷⁶

As mentioned earlier, the multi-party political life experiment that ended with disappointment in 1930 and the developments that took place afterwards incite the RPP leaders to ask themselves: “*How can society be transformed in line with*

²⁷³ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Katibiumumiliğinin Firka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı (Mayıs 1931'den Birincikanun 1932 Nihayetine Kadar)*, p. 21.

²⁷⁴ Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, p. 128. Likewise, Mete Tunçay draws attention to the statutes and programs of the political parties of some Western countries that he found in the Library of GNAT. See Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması*, p. 322.

²⁷⁵ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 115; Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi*, p. 34.

²⁷⁶ Öz, p.117.

the goals of the republic and how can the reforms be made permanent?"

Because, the interviews with the people revealed that the state and the party failed to establish sufficient contact with the people. Besides, they were not successful in identifying and solving their problems and complaints as well. For this reason, another important part of this renewal process initiated within the party. Thus, a mechanism called the "*Wish System*" was established. Basically, the system seems to be designed to act as a bridge between the people and the party and to encourage the state to make policy in line with the needs of the public.

Three main factors played a role in the emergence of this system: Lack of civil society, the principle of populism and the FRP experience.²⁷⁷ One of the prominent features of single-party regimes is the restrictive attitude towards the activities of civil society organizations. This attitude of the regime also blocks the transmission channels of the social and economic problems of the society to the relevant institutions. In such an environment, the wish system has a very important role in conveying the wishes, requests, complaints and problems of the people to the center. Moreover, principle of populism as one of the fundamental characteristics of the Republic will be fulfilled through this channel. As it is well known, in Early Republican Era, while the ruling cadres of the state remarks that the source of political power is the people, on the other hand the decision-making mechanism was managed by the military and civilian bureaucracy. However, citizens will now be included in the decision-making mechanism with this system. In this way, the party and the state would come into closer contact with the people, the gap between the government and the people would be filled, and the people would not remain insensitive to government affairs.²⁷⁸ As it can be predicted that the last point which made the wish system desirable was the

²⁷⁷ Sevda Mutlu, "Tek Parti Döneminde Parti Devlet Bütünleşmesine Bir Örnek: "Dilek Sistemi", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, vol. 29, no. 86 (July, 2013), p. 65.

²⁷⁸ Mutlu, p. 68.

experienced social developments after the establishment of the FRP. Because FRP has played an active role in the expression of the general dissatisfaction of the society. After the abolishment of the party, in order to investigate the reasons for the public's dissatisfaction with the RPP and the government, Atatürk has traveled most of the region and had an opportunity to learn the complaints and problems of the people. As a result of the investigations, M. Kemal has seen that people were dissatisfied with the single-party rule. Thus, he has decided to implement the wish system, which had been in existence since the establishment of RPP, to work more effectively and regularly.

In these years, when the single-party administration began to institutionalize, the RPP was trying to make the people recognize and adopt the principles of the Turkish revolution. Besides, at the same time it wanted to educate the public politically and ideologically. In this respect, Mustafa Kemal, who always preferred organizational work rather than individual work,²⁷⁹ decided to create another institution called the "People's Orators Organization" (*Halk Hatipleri Teşkilatı*) within the organization of the party. According to the 1931 party statute, among the most important duties of the organization and members of the party is to explain the principles of the party to the public at every opportunity.²⁸⁰ (Art. 3) It is understood that such an organization was deemed necessary, especially in an environment where the need to inform the public about the revolutions was felt more especially after the FRP experience. Therefore, the establishment of the Public Orators Organization (*Halk Hatipleri Teşkilatı*) was announced to the public with a circular dated 22 September 1931.²⁸¹ The issues such as the purpose of the organization, among whom the orators will be selected, where they will be assigned and how the organization will be

²⁷⁹ Cengiz Akseki, "Atatürk Devrimlerinde Yöntem III: Kurumlar ve Araçlar", *Belgi*, no. 8, (2014/2, Yaz), p. 988.

²⁸⁰ *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, p. 3.

²⁸¹ Uluskan, *CHP Parti Müfettişliği ve Raporlarla Bursa Teşkilatı*, p. 57.

established have been clarified with an instruction published on the same date.²⁸² In the first part of the instruction, the purpose of the organization was stated as follows: “*The oratorical organization of the Republican People's Party will be established in order to explain the principles of the party, its ideals, ideas and purposes according to the daily political situation with the most effective indoctrination tools: word.*”²⁸³

Henceforth, speeches about the party will not be made by random and unprepared individuals, but by orators who will be carefully selected and trained by the party and who have eloquence. These orators would mention foremostly the principles of the Turkish revolution, the program and principles of the party, and the virtues of the republic in every speech. They will also organize the lectures on Turkish civilization, history, culture and heroism in a way that does not bore the audience with details as they are taught in schools. Finally, these orators would prepare the speeches in order to enlighten the public on important events such as the Republic Day and Victory Day. In this sense, gatherings of people, whether national days and festivals or local gatherings were seen as good grounds for orators to convey the principles of the party.

One of the issues addressed at the Third Grand Congress in terms of RPP organization was the party inspectorate. In the statute prepared at the end of the congress, there is only one article related to inspection. The party inspectorate, which was given very important duties and powers in the previous statute and was at the highest level of the party's provincial hierarchy, was not included in the party organization as an institution this time. Besides, in the statute it was stated that even the members of the general administrative board, party deputies or party members could be assigned to the internal party inspection.²⁸⁴ Moreover,

²⁸² C.H.F. *Halk Hatipleri Teşkilatı Talimatı*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

²⁸³ C.H.F. *Halk Hatipleri Teşkilatı Talimatı*, p. 1.

²⁸⁴ C.H.F. *Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, p. 10.

in the *Nizamname ve Program Encümeninin Nizamname Hakkındaki Mazbatası*²⁸⁵ the abolition of the inspectorate was stated as follows:

As a result of these amendments, the appointment of *mutemets* and the organization of inspectors are abolished and the duties allocated to them are assigned to the elected bodies of the party such as the administrative committees in the provinces and the general administrative committee in the center...²⁸⁶

However, the statute also stipulated that the party deputies should visit their constituencies at least twice a year including all district centers.²⁸⁷ It seems that although the party inspectorate had lost its institutional influence within the party organization, province organizations and local administrations would continue to be monitored and supervised by the deputies who were expected to visit the electoral districts at regular intervals. Although the party inspectorate as an institution within the party structure was abolished, the RPP General Secretariat published a report in the same year. This report laid down certain rules on how inspection and supervision should be carried out in the provinces. It can be said that this report, titled *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Teftiş Raporu*²⁸⁸ is based on the "Semiannual Work Reports" that the provincial administrative committees were obliged to prepare every three months at first, and then every six months. Because many of the questions in the report are similar to those in the "Semiannual Work Reports" prepared by the General Secretariat of the Party and sent to the provincial organizations.²⁸⁹ It is understood that the RPP General Secretariat wanted to "x-ray" the provincial organization with these questions.

²⁸⁵ In order to see aforementioned council report see *C.H.F. Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları*, pp. 227-240.

²⁸⁶ *C.H.F. Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları*, p. 228.

²⁸⁷ *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, p.22.

²⁸⁸ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Teftiş Raporu*, (Ankara: Yenigün Matbaası, 1931).

²⁸⁹ For example, for the similarity of the prepared questions, it can be seen "Quarterly Working Report" prepared by the Zonguldak Provincial Administration Committee in 1934 in BCA. 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

Apart from this, it is obvious that the main purpose of the text prepared by the General Secretariat is to learn the issues that the society is not generally satisfied with through the inspection system. Because, transmitting these data to the center is extremely valuable for the administrative cadre in terms of being aware of the problems and expectations of the people and contributing to the development of new policies towards them.

The party inspectorate was not accepted as an institution in the newly adopted party statute by 1935. Instead, the statute only included an article on internal party control. Although the party leadership envisaged that the inspection process would be supervised from within the party, it reorganized the inspection districts after the congress and prepared a new "*Teftiř İşlerini Yürütme Plan* " to manage the inspection process within certain rules.²⁹⁰ According to this plan, it was stated that the party executive board had decided to keep the party institutions under inspection without interruption. Within the framework of these principles and rules, the RPP General Secretariat redefined the provinces to be inspected and the deputies' responsibility regions in the summer of 1935. This was not the last arrangement of the party for inspection affairs. Because the RPP General Secretariat continued to make many regulations and changes regarding the inspection mechanism and its functioning which was one of the most effective way of data transfer between the provinces and the center until the end of the single-party period. Consequently, these changes caused the activities of the Zonguldak RPP organization to differ from time to time as in the other provincial organizations.

²⁹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 3. 11. 2, 11 Haziran 1935 [11 June 1935]; *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliđinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İkincikanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 tarihine kadar)*, pp. 36-39.

2.2. The Birth of a Mining City: Zonguldak in Historical Process

Anatolia is one of the rare regions that reflects the harmony between ancient cities with rich historical and cultural heritage and modern cities that do not go back very far. The fact that this geography has been the cradle of many civilizations since ancient times has enabled many ancient cities to reach the present day with their riches. While some of them have served as administrative, artistic and commercial centers for many civilizations in history, others have gained importance due to their location on important transit and trade routes. For this reason, in this geography, it is possible to see cities with an ancient past such as Konya, Kastamonu and Bursa together with those belonging to the modern period such as Zonguldak, Kırıkkale and Adapazarı.²⁹¹

The emergence and development of modern Anatolian cities was mostly influenced by their economic, strategic and geopolitical importance. In fact, some of these cities were born and developed as a result of the utilization of their rich underground resources, while others were born and developed as a result of the becoming an important industrial base. For example, Kırıkköy, a village of twelve households in 1925, was transformed into Kırıkkale with the establishment of artillery and ammunition factories in the region by the state. The story of Karabük's transformation from village to a city similar. Because, it gained strategic importance with the opening of the Ankara-Zonguldak railway in 1934. The region's transportation facilities and closeness to coal deposits were the most important reasons for the establishment of an iron and steel plant in the region. Thus, Karabük, which would assume an important mission in the industrialization process of the country from 1937 onwards, first became a sub-district, then district, and finally a separate province in 1995.²⁹²

²⁹¹Metin Tuncel, "Zonguldak", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/zonguldak#2-gunumuzde-zonguldak> [accessed February 11, 2021]

²⁹² Ahmet Apaydın, "Zonguldak Şehrinin Kömüre Bağlı Tarihi ve Talihi Üzerine Bir İnceleme", *Madencilik Türkiye Dergisi*, Year: 8, no. 8, (July, 2020), p. 2. For detailed information about the

While the most important factors in the birth and development of these two modern cities were their strategic locations and transportation facilities, the emergence of Zonguldak followed a process directly parallel to the discovery of its underground riches. In this sense, although Zonguldak is not as young as Karabük, it appears as a "*relatively young*" city with an average urbanization adventure of 150 years. However Zonguldak, which would have to wait for the establishment of the Republican regime for both its administrative organization and the basic elements of a modern city, contained a very important internal dynamic for the beginning of the urbanization adventure: the hard coal.

In the second part of this section, which is about the historical background of our research, the emergence process of Zonguldak as a settlement and the administrative, social, economic and cultural transformations that it has undergone before the discovery of hard coal will be tried to be mentioned. In this narration, it has been deemed necessary to consider the story of change and transformation that Zonguldak has experienced as two separate periods. This is because all the developments that took place between the discovery of the coal mine by Uzun Mehmet and the proclamation of the Republic should be considered as a separate historical period since they were experienced under the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, it is known that the process of change and transformation experienced under the Republican regime and as the first province of the Republic was carried out in parallel with the modernization project. For this reason, it seems essential to evaluate the political, social, cultural, economic and administrative change and transformation that has experienced with the proclamation of the Republic under a separate heading.

birth and development of Karabük and the establishment of the Karabük Iron and Steel Factory see Ali Karatay, *Demir Çelik Karabük: Bir İşçi Kentinin Hikayesi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018)

2.2.1. From Fishing Village to Modern City: Zonguldak

Present Zonguldak looked like a small village covered with reeds and swamps where the people were mostly trying to make a living by fishing in the middle of the 19th century.²⁹³ The people preferred to settle on the banks of the swampy land at the mouth of the Üzülmez Stream, on which they built simple dwellings and which is considered to be the first nucleus of today's city.²⁹⁴ This was also the place where the wooden pier was built to load the wood and timber to be sent from Ereğli and Amasra to meet the wood needs of Istanbul. Doğu Karaoğuz, in his documentary novel *Karaelmas'ın İlk Madencileri*, describes this core point where the city was born as follows: “Zonguldak was a place where ships enter to take shelter when they see rocks, where there are a few fishing shelters on this reed-covered shore, where there is a stream coming out of Üzülmez and flowing into the sea, and where there is no sign of life other than two wooden piers...”²⁹⁵ This small fishing village that built around a wooden pier will wait for the discovery of coal to transform into a modern city.²⁹⁶ Therefore, one of the most prominent issues in the historiography of a Zonguldak has inevitably been when and by whom this process was initiated. There is even an important accumulation in the literature on this subject. For this reason, it is difficult to find a consensus among researchers when and by whom hard coal was discovered. Despite all the differences of opinion, the prevailing view in the literature is that the coal was discovered by Uzun Mehmet, a naval private from the Kestaneci Village of

²⁹³ A. Cemal, *Vilayetlerimiz-Kastamonu ve Zonguldak*, (İstanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1932), p. 63; Doğu Karaoğuz, *Bir Zamanlar Zonguldak*, (Zonguldak: Çaycuma Belediyesi Kent Kültürü Yayınları, 2017), p. 3.

²⁹⁴ Nezih Başgelen, *Bir Zamanlar Zonguldak*, (İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 2000), p.5.

²⁹⁵ Doğu Karaoğuz, *Karaelmas'ın İlk Madencileri*, (İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 2014), pp. 29-30.

²⁹⁶ Çağlar Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 2015), p. 12.

Ereğli.²⁹⁷ It is known that the determination of the date of the discovery of coal in the Ereğli basin as 8 November 1829 is the result of long studies carried out by the Zonguldak People's House Literature Committee.²⁹⁸ The presentation of Uzun Mehmet as a village worker and his murder by a feudal lord emphasizes the anti-feudal nature of the Republican revolutions.²⁹⁹ However, the same story seems to have been designed to denigrate the sultanate and feudal system and to glorify the value given to people and peasants under the administration of the Republic.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, another important detail in this story created by the intellectuals of the Republic is that Uzun Mehmet, who was murdered by Ereğli tax collector Hacı İsmail Ağa, was given the value and reputation he deserved not during his lifetime, but with the Republican regime. In fact, as a young political regime, in order for the Republic to consolidate its legitimacy, it is considered extremely important to protect the people and the heroes emerging from among the people. Hence, this was the main impulse behind the creation and appropriation of a hero like Uzun Mehmet.

²⁹⁷ Saim Çıladı, *Karadeniz Ereğli'nin Tarihi*, (Kdz. Ereğli: Demokrat Yayınları, 1994), pp. 28-32.

²⁹⁸ The aforementioned People's House Literature Committee consisted of Miner Hüseyin Fehmi İmer, Journalist Tahir Karaoğuz and Zonguldak Chamber of Commerce Accountant Ahmet Naim. See Recep Çetin, *Uzun Mehmet*, (Ankara: Ses Reklamcılık ve Matbaacılık, 2015), p. 114. The story of Uzun Mehmet was first mentioned in the *Sabah* newspaper which was published in 1903. See Donald Quatert, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Madenciler ve Devlet*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2009), p. 27.

²⁹⁹ Çetin, *Uzun Mehmet*, p. 112.

³⁰⁰ The following works are the products of official historiography and try to reveal the value that the Republic gave to people and villagers in particular the story of the discovery of coal. The fact that the first one was published as a RPP publication and the other one was designed as a school textbook is one of the most important proofs that the story was used as an element of official history. See Ahmet Naim and Celal Edib, *Türk Kömürünü İlk Bulan Türk Uzun Mehmet*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1938); Ahmet Naim, *Zonguldak Havzası Uzun Mehmet'ten Bugüne Kadar*, (İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Matbaası, 1934); Turhan Oğuzkan and Emin Çakıroğlu, *Uzun Mehmet*, (İstanbul: MEB Halk Eğitimi Yayınları, 1964). Diğer taraftan, Uzun Mehmet ve Zonguldak'ta kömürün keşfine ilişkin ayrıntılı bilgi için bkz. *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Onuncu Yıl Dönümünde Zonguldak Halkevi*, (İstanbul: Holivut Matbaası, 1933); Sakaoğlu, "Tarihe Yerleşen Hayal Uzun Mehmet", pp. 21-25; Efiloğlu and Tan, "Tek Parti Dönemi Uzun Mehmet Kömür Bayramı Kutlamaları", pp. 21-36.

On the other hand, the story of Uzun Mehmet also provided a great opportunity for the creation of national days and festivals, which were needed by the rulers of the Republic and which aroused and reinforced national sensitivities among the people. Because, as it is known, Zonguldak was a city that was introduced to balls and musical entertainment before many Anatolian cities. Especially the French and Italians, who came to the city to carry out mining activities, continued their cultural activities and traditions here as well. These peoples used to organize balls in the first week of December in honor of Saint Barba every year because according to their culture, Saint Barba is the guardians of the miners. These events, which were called *the Feast of Santa Barbara*, turned into a miner's holiday that was attended not only by Christian citizens but also by Turks from the Zonguldak notables.³⁰¹ After the proclamation of the Republic, Zonguldak people still showed interest in these celebrations which were foreign to national culture and values.³⁰² This situation did not go unnoticed by the intellectuals of Zonguldak. Therefore, attempts were made to transform this celebration into a national spirit. Thus, Ahmet Naim, Hüseyin Fehmi İmer and Tahir Karaoğuz, who set out to investigate the day the first coal was found in Turkey. Consequently, they determined that 8 November 1829 was the day the coal was found by Uzun Mehmet and from then on, this day was celebrated every year in Zonguldak as Coal Day.³⁰³

Regional historians are far from unanimous on the origin of the name Zonguldak which has no direct or indirect connection to coal. Therefore, the rich rumor about the discovery of coal is also valid for the origin of the name Zonguldak. According to some of these rumors, the "Zongura" plant, according to others the concept of "Zone Guel Dagh", which the French used to describe the region

³⁰¹ Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı*, pp. 89-90.

³⁰² Karaoğuz, *Kuvay-ı Milli Ruhuyla Bir Ömür*, p. 194.

³⁰³ *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Onuncu Yıl Dönümünde Zonguldak Halkevi*, p. 42.

turned into the name Zonguldak over time. In some rumors, it is stated that the name Zonguldak derives from the "throbbing" of the human body in the face of malaria, which developed as a result of the high number of mosquitoes in the region.³⁰⁴ These and similar rumors about the origin of the city's name can be multiplied. However, it should be noted that one of the strongest arguments for the origin of the name Zonguldak is the conceptualization used by the French to describe the region.³⁰⁵

2.2.2. From “*Karye*” to “*Liva*”: Administrative Organization in Zonguldak

The production of hard coal from the 1840s onwards and the following administrative, economic and socio-cultural transformation contributed significantly to Zonguldak's transformation from a small fishing town into a modern city. In this sense, the first attempt to operate the coal mines in and around Ereğli was the establishment of a six-share company called Ereğli Coal Mine Company (*Ereğli Kömür Madeni Kumpanyası*) in 1841. This company, in which Sultan Abdülmecid became a partner in 1846, operated the hard coal mines in the basin until the beginning of the Crimean War. During the war, the management of the mining basin was left to Britain in order to provide the needs of the British and French navies that sided with the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the war, the mine administration was transferred back to the *Hazine-i Hassa* (Ministry of Finance) and it was transferred to the administration of the *Bahriye*

³⁰⁴ Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı*, pp. 18-19; Hamdi Genç, “Zonguldak Kazası”, *Zonguldak Kent Tarihi 05 Bienali Bildiriler Kitabı*, (İstanbul: Ezgi Matbaası, 2006), p. 317. For detailed information about the theories and rumors about the origin of the name Zonguldak see Sadrettin Enver, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzamız*, (Ankara: Eti Bank Yayınları, 1941); Erol Çatma, *Zonguldak Taşkömürü Havzası Tarihi*, (Ankara: Sistem Ofset Yayıncılık, 2006); Hamit Kalyoncu, *Kömürde Açan Çiçek*, (Ankara: Pervaz Yayınları, 2005); Bahri Savaşkan, *Zonguldak Maden Kömürü Havzası Tarihçesi 1829-1989*, (Zonguldak: İlkadım Matbaası, 1993); Osman Yalçın, *Zonguldak*, (İstanbul: Özyürek Yayınevi, 1959); Hüseyin Namık Orkun, "Zonguldak Sözü'nün Aslına Dair", *Doğu Dergisi*, no.1, (İlkteşrin (Ekim) 1942), p.35; Saim Ali İlemre, "Zonguldak Adı Hakkında", *Doğu Dergisi*, no. 7-8 (Mayıs-Haziran 1943), p. 26.

³⁰⁵ Apaydın, “Zonguldak Şehrinin Kömüre Bağlı Tarihi ve Talihi Üzerine Bir İnceleme”, p. 6.

Nezareti (Ministry of Marine) in 1865.³⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the first foreign capital inflow to the coal basin was realized in 1885 by the Kurci Company founded by French Engineer Meunier. Subsequently, the flow of foreign capital accelerated, and many foreign investors obtained mining privileges in the coal basin. When it is looked at the origins of the companies that were established until 1908 and those who had operating licenses, the Zonguldak coal basin had already “*been under the grip of the European bourgeoisie.*”³⁰⁷

In particular, one of the mentioned privileges was given to the French Ereğli Şirket-i Osmaniyesi (Societe d'Heraclee) towards the end of the 1800s, would influence not only coal production but also Zonguldak for many years with the urban bourgeoisie they created.³⁰⁸ The palace architect Yanko Yoannides who initially entered the region with the authorization to build a port, docks and a railway for the transportation and marketing of Ereğli coal, eventually acquired the privileges to operate coal mines with the Ereğli Company.³⁰⁹ The appearance of Zonguldak and the habits of the people began to change visibly since the early 1900s. Because other capital owners who wanted to get a share of the wealth of the city did not waste time and stepped into the region.³¹⁰

The foreign capitalists who entered the Zonguldak mines as investors not only touched the economic values of the city but also had a significant impact on its

³⁰⁶ Hamdi Genç, *Ereğli Kömür Madenleri (1840-1920)*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, 2007), pp. 5-88.

³⁰⁷ Ferruh Niyazi Ayoğlu, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının Tarihsel Gelişimi: Boyunduruktan Egemenliğe*, (Ankara: Türk Tabipleri Birliği Yayınları, 2008), p. 69.

³⁰⁸ Apaydın, “Zonguldak Şehrinin Kömüre Bağlı Tarihi ve Talihi Üzerine Bir İnceleme”, p. 4.

³⁰⁹ Enver, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzamız*, Etibank Yayınları, pp. 15-24.

³¹⁰ For detailed information on foreign and local mining enterprises operating in the region in the early 1900s and in which region they operate see Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı*, pp. 46-48.

silhouette. In this sense, the fact that most of the mines were operated by the French exposed the city to intense French influence. The reflection of this effect on the city silhouette was not limited to the railroad, new breakwater and coal transportation lines. On the other hand, it was only after the Ereğli Company entered the region that Zonguldak was able to acquire the facilities such as hotels, casinos and restaurants.³¹¹ Apart from all this, these companies also built new settlements in this coastal town where they thought they would stay for many years. These living space separated from others to the extent that their privileges were visible.³¹² This region, where was designed to provide French entrepreneur, engineers and their families with everything they might need in Zonguldak, was located within the borders of the Yayla Neighborhood of today's Zonguldak.³¹³ This neighborhood, which was established on a point overlooking the city, was full of "*typical French houses with large gardens and surrounded by large shady groves*", and reflecting the foreign concessionaires' view of the locals of Zonguldak.³¹⁴ This settlement which was described in some sources as a "*colonial neighborhood*"³¹⁵ clearly reflected French prosperity and privilege. For example, the houses with large and small gardens were completely isolated from the outside world by surrounding them with wooden fences.³¹⁶ This privileged

³¹¹ Tunçer, *Hayat Safhalarından Tunçer'in Hatıraları*, p. 81.

³¹² Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 2, 17.

³¹³ Osman Atilla Poshor states in his memoirs that the Fener District, which was built by the French, has almost all kinds of facilities that can meet a human need. This campus apart from the two-storey houses has all the facilities that can meet the daily needs such as a tennis court, a cinema and an "ekonoma" (market). See . Osman Atilla Poshor, *Fener'in Çocukları*, (İstanbul: Promat Yayınları, 2012), pp. 20-47.

³¹⁴ İrfan Yalçın, *İçimdeki Zonguldak*, (İstanbul: Heyamola Yayınları, 2008), p. 27.

³¹⁵ Clare Sheridan, *Sade Türk Kahvesi*, (trans.) Zeynep Güden, (İstanbul: Arion Yayınevi, 2004), p. 103.

³¹⁶ Mehmet Seyda, *Yanartaş*, vol. 1, (İstanbul: Ararat Yayınevi, 1970), p. 17.

campus, also known as "Fener Neighborhood" today and its isolation from the society, has even been the subject of period novels that chose Zonguldak as the place. For instance, Nahid Sırrı Örik in his novel named *Kıskanmak* introduced the French neighborhood to his readers as a settlement where "*no one lived except a few high-ranking Turkish officials*".³¹⁷ The same author described this privileged and closed neighborhood in another story as follows: "*It was completely against the principles that an unqualified Turkish officer should interfere in this privileged and completely separate world of European engineers.*"³¹⁸ In fact, beyond a literary fiction, these evaluations about this privileged neighborhood were in line with the realities of Zonguldak of the period.³¹⁹

The introduction of new living spaces which contains the traces of Western culture and architecture to Zonguldak and the people of Zonguldak had another meanings beyond the visual richness. The privileged foreign elite, who brought their own culture and values to the region along with their European-style architectural living spaces, soon succeeded in changing the social and cultural atmosphere of Zonguldak. In this sense, the most important symbols of Western culture and life such as balls, cinema and tennis competitions were quickly penetrated the social life of Zonguldak people. For this reason, Zonguldak was comparable to Istanbul's Moda, Nişantaşı and Suadiye districts which at the time stood out in Turkey for their colorful culture and social life.³²⁰ Moreover, the

³¹⁷ Nahid Sırrı Örik, *Kıskanmak*, (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık, 2008), pp. 28-40.

³¹⁸ Nahid Sırrı Örik, *Kırmızı ve Siyah-Hikayeler 2*, (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık, 1997), pp.34-35.

³¹⁹ İsmail Habip Sevük, *Yurttan Yazılar*, (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1987), p. 199.

³²⁰ Çelebi, "Bizim Fener Mahallemiz", p. 251.

cultural activity in the city was so vibrant and rich that Zonguldak could be described as "*Turkey's Paris*" at that time.³²¹

The most important factor in the emergence of Zonguldak as a modern city and its transformation was the investments on Zonguldak-Çatalağzı railway and the Zonguldak Port.³²² In fact, the acquisition of coal mining privileges in Ereğli coal basin by foreign investors began to change the appearance of Zonguldak which at the time was a village in the Hamidiye district of Bolu Sanjak. For this reason, it became necessary to make a change in the administrative structure of the village of Zonguldak especially since the 1880s. Because, this region had become a residence for mine workers. Various attempts to organize Zonguldak as a district in 1888-1889 before the state were not successful at first. However, in order to solve the problems of the French citizens living in the city, France appointed a consul to there and the consulate residence was located in Zonguldak. This appointment has increased the political importance of the region along with its economic significance. Following these developments, the initiatives made before the Ministry of Internal Affairs resulted in successful and Zonguldak became a district in 1899.³²³ Thus, the municipal organization was established in Zonguldak on the same date.³²⁴

This change in the administrative structure of Zonguldak was soon deemed insufficient by regional administrators and leaders to protect the economic and political values of the city for the benefit of the state. Because, the Ereğli

³²¹ Tan, 20. *Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 57.

³²² Hamdi Genç, "Maden Havzasında Modern Bir Şehrin İnşası: Zonguldak (1840-1920)", *Selçukludan Cumhuriyete Şehir Yönetimi*, Erol Özvar and Arif Bilgin (eds.), (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Belediyeler Birliği Yayınları, 2008), p. 409.

³²³ Genç, "Maden Havzasında Modern Bir Şehrin İnşası: Zonguldak (1840-1920)", p. 404.

³²⁴ *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Zonguldak- 1973 İl Yıllığı*, (İstanbul: Sulhi Garan Matbaası, 1973), p. 125.

Company, which had preferred the Ereğli district as its administrative center since the day it stepped into the mining basin, moved its mining administration center first to Kozlu and then to Zonguldak in 1910. This planned change was made because of the fact that most of the mines were located in Zonguldak and it was a district center. After this development, Zonguldak entered a very rapid change process. In this sense, the population of Zonguldak, which was a small fishing village in the mid-1800s, had exceeded 30 thousand by 1914. In Zonguldak, the majority of population was Muslims (28.540). Except for this, 1.462 non-Muslims were living in the city including 1.175 Greeks, 259 Armenians, 17 Jews, 5 Greek Catholics, 2 Armenian Catholics, 2 Protestants, 1 Latin and 1 Syrian.³²⁵ Accordingly, besides Turkish, the most spoken foreign languages in the city were French, Italian, Croatian, Greek and Armenian. Company managers, who mostly spoke French among themselves, spoke Turkish only when they had to communicate with officials and laborers.³²⁶ On the other hand, the movement of the headquarters of the Ereğli Company to Zonguldak also created visible and palpable urban distortions in the city and brought with it an increase in the cost of living. On the one hand, wooden and tin houses and shops made randomly by locals and foreigners began to appear all over the city. On the other hand, the move of the mining administration here also caused an increase in housing rents and consumption prices.³²⁷

Considering these and similar developments, the leaders of the city first applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to transform Zonguldak into a “*liva*” in 1909. This issue, which was rejected on the grounds that the Bolu Sanjak was made an independent *liva* a short time ago, became one of the main agendas of the

³²⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914) Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, (trans.) Bahar Tırnakçı, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003, p. 222.

³²⁶ Abdullah Hüsrev Guleman, “Madencilik Hayatımdan Birkaç Hatıra”, *Maden Tetkik ve Arama Enstitüsü Mecmuası*, Year: 3, no. 4 (1938), pp. 25-32.

³²⁷ Genç, “Maden Havzasında Modern Bir Şehrin İnşası: Zonguldak (1840-1920)”, pp. 404-410.

Zonguldak administrators and people in the future. In this sense, a similar attempt was made in October 1915 but the negative response necessitated postponing the issue until the end of the war. Various applications regarding the transformation of Zonguldak into liva could only be decided in mid-May 1920 and from this date on, the Zonguldak district was transformed into a liva organization.³²⁸ According to the new administrative organization Zonguldak become an independent liva consisting of Ereğli, Bartın, Devrek and the central Zonguldak districts.³²⁹ Field surveys conducted after this date revealed that Zonguldak had not only grown and developed administratively, but had also grown significantly in terms of population since the early 1900s. In the research completed by Zonguldak Health Director Dr. Abdullah Cemal in 1922, the general populations of Zonguldak and the districts of Devrek, Ereğli and Bartın, which would later be connected to it, were determined as follows:³³⁰

Table 1. Population of Zonguldak and Other Districts in 1918

Districts	Turkish and Muslim		Non-Muslim		Total
	Female	Male	Greek	Armenian	
Zonguldak	15.330	13.007	1.100	756	30.193
Ereğli	21.036	19.531	1.000	227	41.794
Bartın	39.880	34.094	546	280	74.800
Devrek	26.118	27.052	405	674	54.249
Total	102.364	93.684	3.051	1.937	201.036

³²⁸ Genç, "Maden Havzasında Modern Bir Şehrin İnşası: Zonguldak (1840-1920)", p. 406.

³²⁹ *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Salnamesi 1925-1926*, (İstanbul: Matbua-i Amire, 1926), p. 634.

³³⁰ Cemal, *Türkiye'nin Sıhhi-i İctimai Coğrafyası Zonguldak Sancağı*, p. 35.

The alliance between the Ottoman Empire and the Germans in the First World War has concluded with the pass of control of the Ereğli basin into the hands of the Germans. The administration of the region, which had reduced its activities due to the war, was transferred to the "War Coal Center" consisting of a German commission.³³¹ During the years of the War of Independence, the French occupied Zonguldak on 8 March 1919 to protect the capital of the Ereğli Company and to ensure its security.³³² The French, who did not encounter any resistance in the city at first, planned to take the coal basin under complete control by landing troops in Ereğli on 8 June 1920. However, as a result of the struggle of local resistance organizations operating in Devrek, Ereğli and Zonguldak, the French forces could not hold on in the region and had to leave Zonguldak on 21 June 1921.³³³ In addition to all this, the conditions of occupation and war during the years of the National Struggle did not seem to affect the economic and social life of the basin much. For example, there was no interruption in the activities of the mines during this period and foreign capital owners and company directors in the basin continued their luxurious habits.³³⁴

After the National Struggle and the establishment of the Republic administration, other companies based on French and Western capital continued to carry out their commercial activities in the city. However, unlike foreign companies, which often ignored issues directly related to human life such as occupational and worker safety, housing, nutrition and worker health, the national government

³³¹ Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı*, p. 62.

³³² Rahmi Doğanay, *Milli Mücadele'de Karadeniz (1919-1922)*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2017), p. 135.

³³³ Ali Sarıkoyuncu, *Milli Mücadele'de Zonguldak ve Havalisi*, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1992), p. 182.

³³⁴ Yasin Kayış, "1930'lu Yılların İlk Yarısında Zonguldak'ı Ziyaret Eden Gezi Muhabirlerinin İzlenimleri", *Cihannüma Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. VI/1, (Temmuz, 2020) , p. 127.

was closely concerned with the Ereğli Coal Basin and the problems of the workers during the years of the National Struggle. In this context, one of the important regulations concerning the Zonguldak coal basin and the mine workers was the Laborer Law (*Amele Kanunu*).³³⁵ This law, which regulates the working conditions and living spaces of the mine workers, also prohibited the employment of labor under the age of 18 in the mines and drudgery as well. From this point of view, this law was considered by some writers as " ... *the symbol of the first compassionate hand reaching out to its own citizens, whom the sultanate had neglected for years.*"³³⁶ The most important result of the aforementioned law was the establishment of the organization named "Zonguldak Amele Birliđi İhtiyat ve Teavün Sandıkları", which was put into operation on 22 July 1923. This fund was intended to meet the needs of workers injured in the mine and their families and the basic needs of the workers.³³⁷ In December 1923, the "Laborer Union" (Amele Birliđi) was established.³³⁸ After the National Liberation War was won and national unity was achieved, a new era began for Zonguldak. In this context, the political, administrative, socio-cultural and economic policies carried out by the Republican elites for the consolidation

³³⁵ <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.151.pdf>. This law was approved on 10 September 1921 and named as "*Ereğli Havza-i Fahmiyesi Maden Amelesinin Hukukuna Mütteallik Kanun*". The first regulation regarding the operation and working conditions in the basin was the "Dilaver Pasha Regulation" prepared in 1867. While this regulation basically gave individuals and companies the right to operate mines, it prohibited the ownership of the mines. On the other hand, another important issue regulated in this regulation was related to the working conditions of the workers employed in the mines. However, the rights brought by the regulation for workers remained only on paper for many years. Working, feeding and sheltering conditions of the workers in the mines remained in an extremely primitive condition for many years. Even in the early 1940s, after the proclamation of the Republic, many workers were complaining about this situation. or detailed information on the working and sheltering conditions of the workers after the aforementioned regulation see Ahmet Naim, *Yer Altında Kırk Beş Sene*, (pre.) Sina Çıladı, (Zonguldak: Defne Yayınları, 2010.)

³³⁶ Enver, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzamız*, p. 37.

³³⁷ Murat Kara, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Ereğli Kömür Havzası (1920-1940)", p. 117.

³³⁸ Tunay Karakök, "Zonguldak Kömür Havzasında Bir Yardım Sandığı: Amele Birliđi", *ZKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 7, no. 13 (2011), p. 358.

of the new nation-state would have initiated a multi-faceted change and transformation process in Zonguldak.

2.3. Zonguldak Before 1935: Inheritance From Empire to the Republic

Poet Nazım Hikmet, who went to Zonguldak via Düzce with his friend Vala Nureddin (Va-Nu) to join the National Struggle in Anatolia before the Republic was proclaimed, made very important sociological determinations about Zonguldak, which the Republic would take over a few years later. The famous poet expressed the society, human and place impression he witnessed in Zonguldak as follows:

The decor of Zonguldak at that time left a mark on my imagination: A mountain by the sea. Villas on the beautiful ridges of the mountain. Caves on the outskirts. Bosses in the villas, miners in the caves. Bosses, but what a boss! Most concessionaires are foreigners. In fact, there were Greeks among them, and we were fighting with their compatriots at the front. Intellectuals from Zonguldak, for whatever reason, invited us to the magnificent villa of the “refined” Greeks. There is everything on the table except bird's milk. From caviar to champagne... The miners living in the lower part of the city live the life of stone age people. I've had it in my mind ever since: They eat black beetroot all the time, morning and evening... We are ashamed in front of decors and people.³³⁹

In Zonguldak, foreign privileged people continued their daily lives during the National Struggle years as they did in the pre-war period. Because, their economic and social life did not seem to be affected much by the war and occupation.³⁴⁰ In this context, when the Republican administration came to power, it inherited a Zonguldak city that embodied the above observations of the famous poet Nazım Hikmet. At that time, Zonguldak was a place where the social relations bearing the traces of Western culture and traditions. Its' underground resources and wealth were under the hegemony of a privileged group of foreign enterprises. There was no trace of domestic capital contribution

³³⁹ Zekeriya Sertel, *Mavi Gözlü Dev Nazım Hikmet ve Sanatı*, (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1977), p. 87.

³⁴⁰ Kayış, p. 127.

behind most of the gains in infrastructure and superstructure facilities. While the mining bosses offered primitive working conditions to Turkish workers in order to have the riches of the city, they probably felt proud and valuable because they introduced the dancing and drinking balls to the people of Zonguldak for the first time. However, a group of elites in Zonguldak probably felt more fortunate than most of the Anatolian cities, as they had been acquainted with elements of Western culture and life before them. Besides all these, Zonguldak is a candidate for irregular and distorted settlement. Finally, it was a city in which the cost of living was becoming a growing problem in his daily life.

It is possible to analyze the activities of the young Turkish Republic in the Zonguldak coal basin under two periods. The first period covers the years 1923-1930 and policies carried out by the Republican ruling to become more visible in the basin and to increase coal production. After this preparatory (incubation) period, more radical policies were followed in the 1930s in terms of both mining management and urbanization. Because, in terms of the history of Zonguldak the 1930s constitutes an important breaking point when the nationalization process in mining operations was completed, modern urbanism services were started to be provided and the socio-cultural life was colored according to the ideology of the new regime.³⁴¹ In this respect, it is essential to know to what extent the existence of the Republican administration in Zonguldak was reflected in the economic, socio-cultural and political life until the end of the 1920s.

2.3.1. Zonguldak: As the First Province of the Republic

One of the most important decisions of the Republican administration concerning the Zonguldak region and affecting the future of the city was to turn Zonguldak into a province on 1 April 1924. The provincial borders of the city, which deserved the title of the first province of the Republic, were further

³⁴¹ Kayış, pp. 124-125.

expanded in 1927 with the addition of Safranbolu district.³⁴² Thus, Zonguldak became a province consisting of the central district, Ereğli, Devrek, Bartın and Safranbolu. Due to these developments and the increase in employment opportunities, the population of the city has also began to increase. According to the results of the general population census conducted in 1927, the population of Zonguldak had reached 268. 909.³⁴³ 268. 329 of them were Muslims and 580 of them were non-Muslims. The non-Muslim population, mainly consisting of Italian and French citizens, generally worked as civil servants, machinists and engineers in local and foreign companies in the basin.³⁴⁴

The following step after this important decision was to extract the mines with local resources and trained manpower. Because, it was considered a national issue by the new regime. For this reason, the first higher education institution of the Republican era, Zonguldak Mining Engineering School (20 October 1924) was established "*to train mining engineers with the desired theoretical and practical knowledge in the extraction of minerals and in the operation of mines in industry.*"³⁴⁵ Four years after its establishment, the school gave its first graduates, including famous author Behçet Kemal Çağlar and the expenses of all students were covered by the state. The Zonguldak Mining Engineering School, which was an important initiative to nationalize the Zonguldak coal basin and to meet the need for technical staff as soon as possible, had to be closed in mid-

³⁴² Musa Şaşmaz, *Türkiye'nin İdari Taksimatı (1920-2013)*, vol. XV, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), p. 231.

³⁴³ *28 Teşrinî Evvel 1927 Umumi Nüfus Tahriri*, (Ankara: T.C. Başvekalet İstatistik Umumi Müdürlüğü, 1929), p. 140.

³⁴⁴ Genç, "Cumhuriyet'in İlk Yıllarında Zonguldak'ta Nüfus, Ticaret ve Sanayi (1920-1932)", pp. 139-140.

³⁴⁵ Dölen, "Zonguldak Maden Mühendis Mekteb-i Alisi (1924-1931)", p. 21.

1931 by the Ministry of Economy.³⁴⁶ According to representatives of the RPP Zonguldak organization who closely followed the process, the school's short educational adventure was entirely related to "*the desire to train engineers in Europe*".³⁴⁷ However, while the Republic was celebrating its fifteenth anniversary, the vast majority of 56 engineers working in the basin were still foreigners.³⁴⁸

In these years, one of the most important projects regarding the Zonguldak basin initiated by the Republican administration was the transportation of the railway to the basin. When this project was completed, the railway connection between Zonguldak and Ankara would be provided.³⁴⁹ The first excavation for the Irmak-Filyos railway line, which is the first part of the project, was dug in 1927 and as a result of these works, Filyos in 1935³⁵⁰, Zonguldak in 1937³⁵¹ and Kozlu in 1943 were connected to the national railway network. Thus, an important infrastructure problem of the Zonguldak coal basin has been solved.³⁵²

³⁴⁶ Nadir Avşaroğlu, *Türkiye'de Maden Mühendisliği Eğitimi Tarihiçesi*, (unpublished report), (Ankara, 2001), https://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/5ba7c3bbe8402a4_ek.pdf, p. 27, [accessed November 5, 2021]; Kadri Yersel, *Madencilikte Bir Ömür*, (İstanbul: Maden Mühendisleri Odası Ortak Yayını, 1989), p. 47.

³⁴⁷ 923-938 *Cumhuriyet'in XV'inci Yıldönümü Hatırası Zonguldak*, (İstanbul: Tan Matbaası, 1938), p. 95.

³⁴⁸ 923-938 *Cumhuriyet'in XV'inci Yıldönümü Hatırası Zonguldak*, pp. 96-97; Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 23.

³⁴⁹ *Kömüre Giden Demiryolu (Kelebeğin Rüyasına Yolculuk)-Proje Raporu*, (Ankara: T.C. Batı Karadeniz Kalkınma Ajansı, 2017), p. 28.

³⁵⁰ *Zonguldak*, 12 Sontışrin (November) 1935, p. 1.

³⁵¹ *Zonguldak*, 12 İkteşrin (October) 1937, p. 1.

³⁵² İsmail Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları (1923-1950)*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2001), pp. 112-114; Kayış, "1930'lu Yılların İlk Yarısında Zonguldak'ı Ziyaret Eden Gezi Muhabirlerinin İzlenimleri", p. 128.

In the mid-1920s, the first intervention of the Ankara government in the coal industry was to enter the basin through the establishment of two companies, “*Maden Kömür İşletmeleri T.A.Ş.*” and “*Kozlu Kömür İş T.A.Ş.*”³⁵³ Although one of the reasons for İşbank's entry into the basin as an investor was to increase production, this initiative was also important as the first step towards the nationalization of the basin.³⁵⁴ After İşbank's entry to the region the mines were equipped with modern equipment and that significantly increased the amount of coal produced in the basin.³⁵⁵ In addition, with the entrance of İşbank to the coal basin, significant improvements were made in the living spaces that could meet the social and daily needs of the workers. In addition to the barracks built for sheltering, the social settlements designed for the workers also offered social facilities for daily needs such as cinemas, public radios and libraries.³⁵⁶

In the early 1930s, the emergence of Zonguldak as a developin city attracted the attention of newspaper reporters traveling in the region. Zonguldak with its narrow valleys, thousands of people working in mines, and the sound of train whistles until the morning was described as the "Cardiff of Turkey" at that time.³⁵⁷ During this period, there were five major companies operating in the Zonguldak coal basin. With the entry of Turkish companies into the basin, coal

³⁵³Sina Çıladır, *Taşkömürünün Devletçilik Dönemi*, (İstanbul: Kültürkent Kuledibi Yayınları, 2018), p. 13. Kozlu Kömür İş T.A.Ş. was established with the partnership of İşbank-Ereğli Company. 51% of this company was owned by İşbank and 49% by Ereğli Company.

³⁵⁴ Kayış, “1930’lu Yılların İlk Yarısında Zonguldak’ı Ziyaret Eden Gezi Muhabirlerinin İzlenimleri”, pp. 128-129.

³⁵⁵ Before İşbank entered the basin as an entrepreneur, coal production was 957.625 tons in 1925, reached 1.216.008 tons in 1926. At the beginning of 1930, the total amount of coal mined in the Zonguldak reached 1.595.359 tons. For detailed information see Ekrem Murat Zaman, *Zonguldak İnsan Mekan Zaman*, (Zonguldak: TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri Odası Yayınları, 2012), p. 221; Enver, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzamız*, p. 39.

³⁵⁶ *Cumhuriyet'in On Yılında Zonguldak ve Maden Kömürü Havzası*, (İstanbul: Sanayi Nefise Matbaası, 1933), pp. 150-151.

³⁵⁷ *Milliyet*, 5 Kanunisani (January) 1930, p. 5.

production has also increased considerably compared to previous years. The use of modern production techniques and equipment by large companies was effective in this rise. On the other hand, the majority of small Turkish enterprises were still in their infancy due to lack of capital. Despite all these negativities, the Zonguldak coal basin was able to create its own bourgeoisie albeit in small numbers. For example, Mr. Süleyman Sırrı and Mr. Rıfat Kamil were among the entrepreneurs who were influential in the rise of Zonguldak coal mining. However, in order for the entire coal basin to develop and especially for small capitalized entrepreneurs to be able to exist/compete in the basin, a large power plant was needed in the region. Similarly, it was very important to extend the railway project to Ereğli and export the produced coal to foreign countries in order to contribute to the national economy. In order to realize this, a port had to be built in Ereğli.³⁵⁸ The most important obstacles to increasing production in the coal basin were the lack of permanent labor in the basin, the lack of modern equipment in the mines, and the lack of modern methods of coal loading and unloading. It was thought that if the mentioned problems were overcome, it would be possible to double the amount of coal produced in Zonguldak in a short time.³⁵⁹

In the Zonguldak coal basin, the increase or decrease in the amount of coal production was closely related to the working, feeding and sheltering conditions of the miners as well. By the early 1930s, a significant progress had been made regarding this issue, which had been on the agenda of the government since the years of the National Struggle. Ali Fuat, the correspondent of *Cumhuriyet*, summarized the progress taken by the Republican administration in this regard with the following words: “*In our country, Zonguldak is the place where laborers' life is first considered and best organized.*”³⁶⁰ Ragıp Kemal, who was

³⁵⁸ *Milliyet*, 20 Kanunisanı (January), 1930, p. 3; *Cumhuriyet*, 10 Kanunisanı (January) 1930, p.4.

³⁵⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 10 Kanunisanı (January) 1930, p. 4.

³⁶⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 9 Kanunisanı (January) 1930, p. 4.

in Zonguldak at the same time as *Milliyet* correspondent, had similar views on the living conditions of Zonguldak mine laborers.³⁶¹ Ali Fuat stated that especially after the "Labor Law" enacted on 10 September 1921, there were significant improvements in the social and health conditions of Zonguldak workers. Zonguldak Laborer Union was very interested in the health of the mine workers. There was a dispensary each in Kozlu and Kilimli and a clinic center in Ereğli which belong to the Zonguldak Labors' Union. These clinics have provided health services to mine workers through modern dispensaries. Ali Fuat, who had the opportunity to visit one of these dispensaries in Kozlu, gave the following information to his readers about the health services and facilities offered in this institution:

A very talented doctor, Dr. Reşat Lütüfi is managing Kozlu Laborer Dispensary. The dispensary has an excellent operating room, pharmacy, beds... an average of 4 thousand lives are saved here every year. Sincere gratitude to its founders and those who work in it is a debt of humanity.³⁶²

Similarly, Ragıp Kemal paints a much rosy picture about the working, feeding and sheltering conditions of the laborers. According to him, the living conditions of the laborers are pretty good. In this context, Ragıp Kemal stated that all the sheltering, clothing and nutrition needs of the workers were provided by the government. On the other hand, a 2% deduction was made from the rights of the enterprises. On the other hand, it was pointed out that if the enterprises did not make regular payments to the labor, the government plays an intermediary role between them.³⁶³ Although some of these observations and assessments made by the aforementioned reporters based on economic, urban and social changes seem exaggerated, since the early 1930s, the Zonguldak coal basin was expecting

³⁶¹ *Milliyet*, 12 Kanunisani (January) 1930, p. 5.

³⁶² *Cumhuriyet*, 9 Kanunisani (January) 1930, p. 4.

³⁶³ *Milliyet*, 12 Kanunisani (January) 1930, p. 5.

significant changes and transformations in terms of urbanization and cultural activities.

According to the liberal economic model that the Republican administration followed until the early 1930s, there was no objection to granting new long-term concessions to companies operating in the coal basin and establishing partnerships with foreigners. However, both the global economic crisis and the unique conditions of the country made it necessary to adopt a new economic model. This new economy model, called the policy of statism, completely changed the Republican administration's approach to the coal basin.³⁶⁴ Therefore, this new period of statist approach in the economy would be marked by a series of decisions that would result in the nationalization of the coal basin.

Related to the new economic model followed, the state started to become much more visible in the Zonguldak coal basin from the 1930s on. As an indication of the importance of the basin for the Republican administration, Zonguldak was visited many times by statesmen after this date. The most important of these was the visit made by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on 26 August 1931. Atatürk, who will leave Zonguldak on the same day, made investigations in the Zonguldak mining basin and received information from the authorities about coal production and the lives of coal workers.³⁶⁵ In the following periods, visits to Zonguldak were continued at the level of the prime minister and ministers. In particular, İsmet Pasha visited Zonguldak several times at the prime minister level until the coal basin was nationalized by the state.³⁶⁶ All these visits were preparations and

³⁶⁴ Kayış, p. 129.

³⁶⁵ Namal, *Atatürk'ün Zonguldak Gezisi*, pp. 13-17. While leaving the city, Mustafa Kemal will use the following famous statements about Zonguldak: “*The more valuable the mineral wealth under the deep lands of Zonguldak is, the more valuable Zonguldak is in our eyes.*” *Zonguldak*, 16 Ağustos (August) 1931, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 30 Eylül (September) 1931, p. 1.

³⁶⁶ Hasan Karakuzu and Yücel Namal, “Başbakan İsmet İnönü’nün Zonguldak Kömür Havzası Ziyaretinin Türk Basınına Yansımaları”, *Cappadocia Journal of History and Social Sciences*, vol. 2, (2014), pp. 2-3.

harbingers of important steps to be taken in the future. First of all, Ereğli Company was purchased and the coal basin was nationalized in 1937. Later, all of the mines in the Ereğli Coal Basin were transferred to state management in 1940.³⁶⁷

2.3.2. Social Life in Zonguldak in the First Years of the Republic

The process of change and transformation that started primarily in the administrative structure of Zonguldak in the post-1923 period soon spread to the socio-cultural life of the city. In this sense, one of the most important events that marked the cultural life of Zonguldak in the first years of the Republic was the balls. The tradition of the ball, which has existed in the region for a long time, was continued during the republic period within the framework of fundraising activities for various institutions and organizations. In this sense, balls as being one of the important elements of the Western lifestyle, became one of the most important cultural events used by the Republican administration to modernize the Turkish people socially.³⁶⁸ From this point of view, many forms of entertainment especially the balls began to seem in the life of Turkish society in the early years of the Republic. Similarly, balls in Zonguldak whose history is older than the Republic, continued to exist as an important instrument of socialization and a form of entertainment for Zonguldak society.³⁶⁹ In this sense, the preparations of balls started a month ago and being invited was considered an important privilege. Besides, they were also one of the rare struggle areas in which Zonguldak high society competed within itself.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Hikmet Sami Türk, “Madenlerin Devletleştirilmesi”, *Prof. Dr. Akif Erginay Armağanı*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayınları, 1981), pp. 192-194; Kara, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi’nde Ereğli Kömür Havzası (1920-1940)”, p. 133.

³⁶⁸ Doğan Duman, “Cumhuriyet Baloları”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, vol. 7, no. 37 (Ocak, 1997), pp. 44-49.

³⁶⁹ Naim, *Yer Altında Kırkbeş Sene*, p. 109; Örik, *Kırmızı ve Siyah*, p. 44.

³⁷⁰ Örik, *Kıskanmak*, p. 28.

The balls became one of the cultural activities frequently used by Zonguldak Turkish Hearth which was one of the important institutions that shaped the social and cultural life of Zonguldak in the early Republican periods. In this sense, Zonguldak Turkish Hearth branch started its activities in May 1923 in order to integrate the society and bring them around the common values.³⁷¹ The Zonguldak Turkish Hearth, which pioneered the organization of many conversations, shows, balls, concerts and sports competitions and conferences, had a significant impact on the social life in the city. In this regard, Zonguldak Turkish Hearth sometimes held balls for various purposes in order to bring the people of Zonguldak together. Although these activities were not considered much different from the miners' balls organized by foreigners in terms of their content, they were different from them in terms of the purpose they pursued.³⁷² For example, Turkish Hearths organized two different balls in February and March of 1927 and many foreigners alongside Turks attended to this event. The income obtained at the end of the ball was spent to build a large meeting place on the land next to the Zonguldak Turkish Hearth building.³⁷³

In the early years of the Republic, one of the most important events organized by the Zonguldak Turkish Hearth in the city was conferences and debates. Yusuf Akçura, one of the pioneers of the Turkism movement, has also attended one of these conferences about Turkishness and Turkism ideals, national history and values. Akçura, who started his speech by noting that although there are coal mines in other parts of the country, especially the Zonguldak coal basin is exploited. He especially emphasized the idea that the capital that has been

³⁷¹ Namal, *Zonguldak Türk Ocakları 1923-1931*, p. 32. *Turkish Hearths* opened branches not only in the center of Zonguldak, but also in other districts of the province in a short time. According to this; Devrek Turkish Hearth branch was opened on 13 February 1925, Bartın Turkish Hearth branch was opened on 15 March 1925 and Ereğli Turkish Hearth branch was opened on 29 October 1925. See Namal, *Zonguldak Türk Ocakları 1923-1931*, pp. 90-127.

³⁷² Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 31.

³⁷³ *Zonguldak*, 7 Mart (March) 1927, pp. 1-2.

exploiting the country for many years should be replaced by Turkish capital. According to Akçura, this was not an opposition to the entry of Western capital into Turkey but it was essential for foreign capital to accept Turkish nationality. In the speech, which was strongly opposed to the hegemony established in the coal basin by foreign trained personnel, it was pointed out that a Turkish engineer was not inferior to any foreign engineer. Akçura also strongly objected to the neglect of Turkish by employees in foreign companies.³⁷⁴

The conference activities of the Zonguldak Turkish Hearth will began to revive after the beginning of 1931. On the other hand, another important activity carried out by Zonguldak Turkish Hearth in the city was to organize sports competitions. Zonguldak Turkish Hearth was offering football feasts to the people of Zonguldak by inviting the most important and biggest football teams of Turkey to the city. In this sense, the matches were organized with football clubs such as Beşiktaş, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe aiming to increase the interest of the people and youth of Zonguldak in sports.³⁷⁵ Moreover, during this period tennis became known among the sports activities of Zonguldak elites with the arrival of the French in the region. As mentioned before, French coal company directors, engineers and their families has created their own unique living spaces in Zonguldak by bringing their own cultural and social habits. Especially in the mentioned campus, “tennis courts surrounded by heavily shaded trees” were designed for foreign engineers to play tennis. This settlement started to take attraction of people who came to watch the tennis game of the French and thus tennis became widespread among Zonguldak residents over time.³⁷⁶ After the proclamation of the Republic, tennis sports clubs were established especially within the Zonguldak Turkish Hearth.

³⁷⁴ “Türk Ocağında Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Beyin Hitabesi”, *Zonguldak*, 12 Teşrin-i Sani (November) 1924, pp. 1-2.

³⁷⁵ Namal, *Zonguldak Türk Ocakları 1923-1931*, pp. 54-68.

³⁷⁶ Zafer Kalafat, “Zonguldak’ta Tenis”, *Zonguldak’ta Spor ’07 Bienali*, (Zonguldak: Halkın Sesi Matbaası, 2010), p. 152.

Apart from all these, organizing dance nights and concerts on national holidays and anniversaries of official institutions, preparing plays and performances that will attract the attention of the public were also among the social and cultural activities organized by the Zonguldak Turkish Hearth throughout the 1920s.³⁷⁷ As a result, Zonguldak Turkish Hearth continued its activities as an institution that colored the socio-cultural life of the city and carried out activities for the education of the people until the Turkish Hearths were abolished on 10 April 1931.

Another important event in the social life of Zonguldak in the 1920s is the movie screenings. While the ordinary people of Zonguldak mostly used the movie theater "changed from an old coffee house" located by the pier, the upper class of the city mostly prefers the movie theater located in the Fener campus of the Ereğli Company. Nahid Sırrı Örik, who also mentions the cinema opportunities that the city offers to the people of Zonguldak in his stories, states that "*first class engineers, civil servants and respected guests are shown once a week or fortnight in the movie theater established by the French.*" Apart from this French cinema, which is attended by Zonguldak high society and high-ranking people, the city cinema next to the pier is packed with workers and porters.³⁷⁸ Apart from these, new movie theaters will be opened at the beginning of the 1930s and the public will benefit more from these opportunities. The famous "Zevk Cinema" is the most well-known of these, which has served the people of Zonguldak for many years.

Undoubtedly, Zonguldak People's House was one of the most important institutions shaping social and cultural life in Zonguldak in the 1930s. As it is known, the People's Houses were established as 14 branches on 19 February 1932 with the decision taken at the Third Great Congress of the RPP which was

³⁷⁷ Namal, *Zonguldak Türk Ocakları 1923-1931*, pp. 68-70.

³⁷⁸ Örik, *Kıskanmak*, p. 28.

held between 10-18 May 1931. People's Houses, whose main purpose is to explain and adopt Atatürk's principles and reforms to the public tried to create a Turkish nation that is conscious and committed to common ideals; to ensure the unity of culture, ideals, and purpose of the society; to reveal and develop cultural elements that form national unity and strengthen the national spirit. Besides, it carried out activities to regulate the relations between villagers, urbanites, and intellectuals, and to realize the social and cultural development in a short time by explaining the basic principles of the RPP to the public.³⁷⁹ The People's Houses, which carry out their educational activities through language and literature, fine arts, representation, sports, social aid, public classrooms and courses, library and publication, ruralism and history, and museum branches³⁸⁰, were able to open branches in many parts of the country in a short time.³⁸¹ One of these branches, Zonguldak People's House, was opened on 24 June 1932 with the enthusiastic speech of Mithat Akif who served as the head of RPP Provincial Administrative Committee and head of Zonguldak People's House.³⁸² The remaining branches of Zonguldak People's House, which carried out its first period activities through language-history and literature, fine arts, representation, sports, social aid, library and publication branches, started their work on 13 March 1933.³⁸³

Finally, it is necessary to mention the Zonguldak Newspaper, which was another important element that colored the cultural life of Zonguldak in the 1920s and kept the people informed about the regional, country, and world agenda for many

³⁷⁹ Anıl Çeçen, *Atatürk'ün Kültür Kurumu Halkevleri*, (İstanbul: Tarihçi Kitabevi, 2018), p. 121.

³⁸⁰ *CHF Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, pp. 3-5.

³⁸¹ On this date, with the ceremony held in Ankara, following branches of People's Houses were opened: Ankara, Afyon, Samsun, Eskişehir, Diyarbakır, İzmir, Konya, Denizli, Vani Aydın, Çanakkale, Bursa, İstanbul and Adana. See Çeçen, *Atatürk'ün Kültür Kurumu Halkevleri*, p. 116.

³⁸² Namal, "Zonguldak Halkevi'nin Faaliyetleri ve Karaelmas Dergisi", p. 103.

³⁸³ Because the activities carried out by the Zonguldak community center will be discussed in detail in the last section (Chapter 5), details of activities are not mentioned here.

years. Zonguldak Newspaper, which is not only a local newspaper but also an ardent defender of the values of the Republic, played an important role in conveying and adopting these to the public. In this respect, it is possible to describe it as a "Revolution Newspaper".³⁸⁴ The owner of the newspaper, which started its publication life in March 1923 before the Republic was declared, is Akın Karaoğuz. Karaoğuz was appointed to Zonguldak as the Director of the Military Police. The Zonguldak, which describes itself as the "Social, Economic, and Literary Homeland Newspaper"³⁸⁵, has also influenced the intellectual world of the people of Zonguldak by publishing local news about the region as well as a series of poems and novels until the early 1930s. Since the early 1930s, the newspaper acted just like the official publication of the RPP. In this sense Zonguldak newspaper tried to convey the principles of the party and revolution to the public and to educate and guide the people ideologically. RPP Zonguldak organization has also benefited from this situation of the newspaper which has been directing the press life of Zonguldak for many years and under its hegemony. In this sense, the potential of the Zonguldak newspaper has been frequently used, especially in terms of conveying party policies to the public and informing the masses about party activities.

The social life that experienced in Zonguldak in the 1930s was shaped and directed by the influence of basic institutions of the Republic which had existed in the region for a long time. However, even before the administration of the Republic, some social and cultural activities (such as balls, cinema and tennis) had existed in the social life of the people did not have a place in the daily life of ordinary people. Because, they appealed to a very limited group. On the other hand, the economic conditions of the period were the determining factors in the daily life of the majority of the people. Especially, the cost of living in

³⁸⁴ Faruk Temel, *Cumhuriyet İdeolojisinin İnşasında Basının Rolü Zonguldak Gazetesi (1923-1954)*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2017), p. 80.

³⁸⁵ Dilşad Yirsutimur, *Zonguldak Basın Tarihi (1923-2007)*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Sakarya: Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2008), p. 9.

Zonguldak was felt so prominently that it was reported in national newspapers many times. For example, Ragıp Kemal in his article published in *Milliyet* on 5 Kanunisani (January) 1930, drew attention to the high cost of living in the city with following words; "*If there is something that is not pleasing in Zonguldak, it is the high rents and food prices.*"³⁸⁶ Ragıp Kemal, who came to Zonguldak later, mentioned that the cost of living became more palpable in daily life this time. According to the reporter, the most important reason behind this expensiveness is the fact that Zonguldak as a laborer city has to meet all its needs from outside. This necessity naturally gave birth to a trade group that took advantage of this situation. Ragıp Kemal describes this "profiteering group of artisans" which especially dominates the mining workers as follows:

Those who had some money came here, they started a small business and they made great money thanks to profiteering. Because they know that the existing thousands of workers and their families have to spend the money they receive here. Those who receive their salary and weekly wages directly goes to pay off their debts and cannot send them to their hometown.³⁸⁷

In addition to all these, the cost of living that experinced in Zonguldak in the early 1930s had become more clear compared to other big cities. This expensiveness, which was embodied in the newspaper lines as "*They sell cheese for 30 cents in Istanbul, 120 cents for laborer in Zonguldak*", was supported by the official reports as well. In the statistical yearbook for the year 1930-1931 prepared by the General Directorate of Statistics of the Prime Ministry, the cost of living index in Zonguldak was ranked fourth with an average of 1.439 *kuruş*

³⁸⁶ *Milliyet*, 5 Kanunisani (January) 1930, p. 5.

³⁸⁷ *Milliyet*, 6 Mart (March) 1932, p. 6.

and above Istanbul.³⁸⁸ Although this index had decreased somewhat by 1935, it was still above Turkey's average.³⁸⁹

On the other hand, especially after the Ereğli Company's relocation to Zonguldak, the need for housing and increased rental fees were felt in the daily life of Zonguldak people. As the population of the city and the number of institutions and civil servants has increased, the rental fees of the dwellings also increased. Although food, cleaning and heating expenditures were taken into account in the calculation of the cost of living index of Zonguldak, the city stood out with its high-rent dwellings in these years. For this reason, one of the most annoying issues in the city in these years was the high rents of the houses.³⁹⁰

In the aforementioned years, coffee houses were among the places which were preferred by a significant part of the Zonguldak people and especially by the miners in their daily life. Besides, the backgammon and card games were among the most prominent activities of these people. The tendency of the people to such activities was not only the result of personal preferences or curiosity, but also was a necessity. Because there were no public spaces in the city where the public could acquire the habit of reading.³⁹¹ For this reason, the people of Zonguldak preferred the places such as the Kilburnu Casino in order to play backgammon and cards in their spare time.³⁹² In fact, the habit of gambling in Zonguldak

³⁸⁸ The top five places with the highest cost of living are respectively; Ankara, İzmir, Elazığ, Zonguldak and Eskişehir. See *İstatistik Yıllığı (1930-1931)*, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, vol. 4, (İstanbul: Hüsnü Tabiat Matbaası, 1931), p. 226.

³⁸⁹ According to the data of the Prime Ministry General Directorate of Statistics, the average cost of living index including 20 provinces was 975 kuruş, while the cost of living index of Zonguldak in 1935 was 1.061 kuruş. See *İstatistik Yıllığı (1935-1936)*, vol. 8, (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1936), p. 341.

³⁹⁰ *Kurun*, 25 Ağustos (August) 1935, p. 5.

³⁹¹ *Milliyet*, 19 Mart (March) 1932, p. 5.

³⁹² *Milliyet*, 19 Mart (March) 1932, p. 5.

coffeehouses has gradually become a social problem in these years. For this reason, some demands to prevent this issue have begun to be expressed on various platforms. For example, one of the wishes conveyed to the RPP Zonguldak Sixth Provincial Congress, which convened on 18 January 1935, was to take prohibitive measures to prevent the increase in the habit of gambling in coffeehouses.³⁹³ Thus, Zonguldak people wanted to restrict the activities of the coffeehouses which are quite numerous on Gazipaşa Street.³⁹⁴ Although some district municipalities forbade gambling in coffeehouses in the future, this decision was cancelled as a result of the objections of coffee shopkeepers to the Council of State.

2.3.3. Urbanism in Zonguldak in the First Years of the Republic

When the mining administration moved from Ereğli to Zonguldak, houses and shops started to be built in various areas of the city even in the places where coal is extracted and on the roads. Although the Ministry of Forestry, Mining and Agriculture prohibited the construction of houses and fields on the mine land without permission to prevent this unplanned settlement in 1910, this decision could not prevent the construction of buildings in the center of Zonguldak.³⁹⁵ One of the important urban problems that remained from the Ottoman Zonguldak to the Republic was the fact that the living spaces of the people who came to the region to work. Before the Republican administration took over Zonguldak, the following features stood out in the settlement areas of the city: While the

³⁹³ Upon this request, gambling in coffeehouses in Bartın was prohibited by the municipality. Thereupon, the coffee shopkeepers applied to the Council of State (Şura-yı Devlet) to reverse the decision. As a result of the investigation, it was decided that the municipality did not have the authority to ban card games played in local coffee houses and it was cancelled. See *Bartın*, 26 Mart (March) 1936, pp. 1-2.

³⁹⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497-2003-2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939]. The minutes of the congress were also published in the Zonguldak newspaper. See *Zonguldak*, 28 Sonkış (February) 1935, p. 3, 6.

³⁹⁵ Genç, “Maden Havzası’nda Modern Bir Şehrin İnşası: Zonguldak (1840-1920)”, p. 409.

buildings in the city center were architecturally different from each other, the rural dwellings lacked any architectural diversity and they were mostly designed with the force of geographical conditions. While the people of Zonguldak generally resided in such dwellings, separate structures were built for the living spaces of the miners. These barracks built by the mine owners stood out as they were narrow, dark, stuffy and flat. However, with the Republican regime, the existing conditions were tried to be improved by building barracks called “pavilions” for the miners. On the other hand, there were also facilities such as hotels, inns, and Turkish baths in the city where the outsiders could meet their shelter needs.³⁹⁶

Two factors were very influential in the urban development of Zonguldak: the railway passing through the middle of the city and the mines. While the city of Zonguldak was developing in areas close to the mines, on the other hand, the area around the railway dividing the city into two had turned into settlement centers with the administrative buildings of mining companies and other civil residences.³⁹⁷ In the first years of the Republic, as the coal production has increased, the population and settlement units began to increase accordingly. On the other hand, as a result of the change in the administrative status of Zonguldak, the public buildings were now more visible in the city's silhouette compared to previous periods. In addition to this, the Soğuksu Mosque and the New Mosque were built in the early period (between 1925 and 1930) for the meet the needs of Zonguldak people. For a long time after this date, there was no need to build a mosque in the city until the Democrat Party government.³⁹⁸ However, the change that started with the republic would be heavily reflected in the city's silhouette in the 1930s. In these years, especially public works and infrastructure services will gain importance. In this sense, both Zonguldak

³⁹⁶ Cemal, *Türkiyenin Sıhhi İctimai Coğrafyası Zonguldak Sancağı*, pp. 35-78.

³⁹⁷ Apaydın, “Zonguldak Şehrinin Kömüre Bağlı Tarihi ve Talihi Üzerine Bir İnceleme”, p. 11.

³⁹⁸ Ümit Özcan, *Zonguldak'ın Hikayesi*, (s.l., s.n., n.d.), p. 40.

Municipality and the Special Provincial Administration will try to solve the city's infrastructure problems.

In the first half of the 1930s, one of the biggest obstacles to the development of Zonguldak in terms of urbanization and infrastructure was the frequent change of mayors. For example, between 1931-1935, respectively Dr. Nihat Arkat, Dr. Necati Duman, Dr. Hayri Necati, M. Reşat Tankut and Hüseyin Hilmi Uluğ were the mayors of Zonguldak.³⁹⁹ This instability in the local administration of the city also prevented the people from accessing many public services. For example, in the early 1930s, one of the most important infrastructure problems of Zonguldak, which "*painted everywhere and everyone black and is hostile to white*", was the lack of plumbing.⁴⁰⁰ Another important problem of Zonguldak in the same years was the train routes passing through the middle of the city. Because the first thing that noticed by someone who came to the city center was the environmental pollution caused by the black oily water flowing from the coal wagons. The only precaution that the Zonguldak municipality could take to prevent this environmental pollution from turning into tuberculosis was to put up signs saying "*don't spit on the ground*" in every corner of the city. Because, the another solution to remove the railway from the middle of the city, was a costly task that the municipality could not afford.⁴⁰¹

The most notable change in landscape of Zonguldak in the early 1930s was the construction of new buildings. The most striking of these were the government office built by the sea, a primary school built next to the hospital and a hostel for

³⁹⁹ Özcan, *Zonguldak'ın Hikayesi*, p. 56.

⁴⁰⁰ *Milliyet*, 6 Mart (March) 1932, p. 6.

⁴⁰¹ *Akşam*, 14 Temmuz (July) 1932, p. 4. One of the main complaints of the Zonguldak people in the early 1930s was the noise, visual and environmental pollution caused by the railway passing through the middle of the city. In this regard, an application was made to the Ministry of Economy for the removal of the railway. For this, a report was submitted to the ministry by the municipality science committee as well. See *Zonguldak*, 30 Eylül (September) 1931, p. 1.

teachers next to it. Also, the small garden next to the government office was built in Zonguldak in the last five years. On the other hand, the electricity infrastructure of the city has been partially resolved. However, the electricity could not be delivered to many quarters in Zonguldak.⁴⁰²

Zonguldak city center became more prominent around the two-way railway line which connecting the port and coal production facilities in the 1930s.⁴⁰³ This street, which is named as Gazipaşa in accordance with the urban fiction of the Early Republican period, was connected to the coastline of the city and the area organized as Republic Square. In this line it was possible to see the city park, coastal directorate, health directorate, workers' directorate, police station, customs, municipality, Ali Barlı Apartment and post office buildings as well. Republic Square had an official appearance surrounded by buildings such as the government office, people's house and RPP building and İşbank.⁴⁰⁴ The government office, which was quickly completed and put into service, was reflecting the social perspective of the period. Because this region was surrounded by activity areas such as a square, playground, tea garden, which provided people to come together.⁴⁰⁵ On the other hand, an ostentatious building was built in a short time so that the Zonguldak People's House, which aims to raise the human type of the Republic⁴⁰⁶, can continue its activities more effectively. A location that dominates the road, the city and the square was

⁴⁰² *Akşam*, 14 Temmuz (July) 1932, p. 4.

⁴⁰³ The railway, which shaped the city center of Zonguldak, took place as one of the symbols of the city in many stories, novels and travel writings describing the Early Republican Era Zonguldak. See Duygu Tekin, *Toplumsal Bellek ve Mekan: Zonguldak Halkevi Binası*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 2017, p. 79.

⁴⁰⁴ Tekin, *Toplumsal Bellek ve Mekan: Zonguldak Halkevi Binası*, p. 79.

⁴⁰⁵ Özcan, *Zonguldak'ın Hikayesi*, p. 57.

⁴⁰⁶ C.H.F. *Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, p. 3.

preferred for the Zonguldak People House. It was determined in accordance with the common attitude in the location selections of the People's Houses throughout the country. On the other hand, as can be observed in other People's Houses in coastal cities, the perception of the building from the sea was also taken into account when determining the location of the building. Thus, the Zonguldak People House, foundation of which was laid on 4 July 1933, was quickly completed for the 1934 Republic Day.⁴⁰⁷ In the building, except for the bedroom for Atatürk, there was a winter garden, dining, resting rooms, a large movie theater and a music hall.⁴⁰⁸

The interest towards Zonguldak had increased since the early 1930s by the state. In this period, a living space that has not been seen before in the coal basin was designed in order to improve the sheltering conditions of workers. The first of these projects, which designed by the famous architect Seyfi Arkan, was for the workers of the Turkish Mining and Coal Affairs Company (Maden ve Kömür İşleri Türk Anonim Şirketi). In this living space designed near Üzülmez Village, there were houses with gardens for engineers, civil servants and married workers. For single and temporary workers, however, there were workers' dormitories, a Turkish bath, a cafeteria, a laundry and a primary school. Similarly, on the campus planned to be prepared for the worker, civil servant and engineers in Kozlu there were houses with gardens. In this living space, there were designed dormitories, a primary school and a tennis court for single and temporary workers.⁴⁰⁹ The design of such a large worker living space in Zonguldak was not only a project to improve the housing conditions of workers, but also a part of the modernization project of the Republic. Because with these

⁴⁰⁷ Tekin, *Toplumsal Bellek ve Mekan: Zonguldak Halkevi Binası*, pp. 183-185; *Zonguldak*, 5 Ağustos (August) 1934, p. 1.

⁴⁰⁸ Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı*, p. 88.

⁴⁰⁹ Bilge İmamoğlu, "Seyfi Arkan ve Kömür İşçileri İçin Konut: Zonguldak; Üzülmez ve Kozlu", *Fabrika'da Barınmak Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde Türkiye'de İşçi Konutları: Yaşam, Mekan ve Kent*, Ali Cengizkan (ed.), (Ankara: Arkadaş Yayınevi, 2009), pp. 131-132.

living spaces, not only did Zonguldak gain some new buildings, but also the living habits associated with it were wanted to be changed. However, despite all this importance, a very small part of these projects that were expected to be completed between 1934-1936 could be realized.⁴¹⁰

The gained momentum in the public works in Zonguldak since the early 1930s was also reflected in the notes of the correspondent traveling to the region. Kadri Kemal, one of the correspondents of *Kurun* newspaper, described this change and transformation that Zonguldak experienced in a short time as follows: “*The Zonguldak I saw three years ago has become a completely different place today. While I knew every corner of Zonguldak if I closed my eyes, this time I lost my direction, I couldn't find my destination.*”⁴¹¹ Indeed, Zonguldak has been changed significantly when it is compared to the correspondent’s last visit. In the past three years, a two-storey concrete pier was built towards the sea and the dirty appearance of the city was removed by laying stones on the main streets where the railway passed. Apart from this, an ostentatious People’s House building was built in the city center. Besides, Uzun Mehmet Park was built in order to keep alive the memory of Uzun Mehmet. The wide field in front of the government office was transformed into Republic Square.⁴¹²

The new public works which would enable the “*people to mingle like an anthill*”⁴¹³ in the city center of Zonguldak in the 1930s could be immediately distinguished by someone who had been to the city before. In particular, the Zonguldak Government Office and People’s House buildings, which represent

⁴¹⁰ İmamoğlu, “Seyfi Arkan ve Kömür İşçileri İçin Konut: Zonguldak; Üzülmez ve Kozlu”, p. 133, 139.

⁴¹¹ *Kurun*, 24 Ağustos (August) 1935, p. 5.

⁴¹² *Kurun*, 24 Ağustos (August) 1935, p. 5.

⁴¹³ *Tan*, 16 Birinci Kanun (January) 1935, p. 9.

the concrete examples of the modern urbanism of the Republic, stood out with all their magnificence at first glance. The mentioned public buildings and their surroundings were not only places where the public carried out their official business with the state. They were also communal spaces designed for important events that would enable the community to come together and mingle. On the other hand, common public spaces such as parks and squares in the city center were also products of this understanding. The devoted efforts of Governor Halit Aksoy⁴¹⁴, who is also known as the "*Governor Who Revived the Province of Zonguldak*", and Deputy Mitat Altıok⁴¹⁵, Chairman of the RPP Zonguldak Provincial Administrative Committee, were effective in bringing all these services to the city. Especially after Governor Aksoy, public works were given importance in the city and the road and school construction was prioritized.⁴¹⁶

2.3.4. Political Life in Zonguldak in the First years of the Republic

As it is known, the People's Party was officially established on 9 September 1923 and the first statute of the party was adopted on the same day.⁴¹⁷ After the proclamation of the Republic and the election of Mustafa Kemal as the president,

⁴¹⁴ Halit Aksoy, who was born in Antalya in 1882, was appointed as the Governor of Bitlis in 1926 after being the governors of Kozan and Maraş. In December of the same year, he was temporarily appointed to Ankara Municipality by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Halit Aksoy, who performed this duty in place of Ankara Mayor Asaf Bey until the end of May 1927, later continued his duty as governor in Denizli. Aksoy has remained as a governor in Denizli between 1927-1932 and then became the governor of Zonguldak on 26 August 1932. He continued this duty until 13 July 1947 as the longest-serving governor in Zonguldak. See Yüksel Yıldırım, "Süper Vali Halit Aksoy", *Pusulula*, (June 28, 2017), <http://www.pusululagazetesi.com.tr/m/7306/super-vali-halit-aksoy/>, [accessed November 15, 2021]

⁴¹⁵ For detailed information about Mitat Altıok's life see *TBMM Albümü (1920-1950)*, vol. 1, (Ankara: TBMM Basın ve Halkla İlişkiler Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2010), p. 293.

⁴¹⁶ *Kurun*, 25 Ağustos (August) 1935, p. 5.

⁴¹⁷ For the discussions on the founding date of the RPP see Orhan Özacun, "CHP'nin Kuruluş Tarihi Üzerine", *Tarih ve Toplum*, vol. 24, no. 141 (September, 1995), pp. 4-8.

a vice chairmanship was established within the party and this task was entrusted to İsmet Pasha on 19 November 1923. İsmet Pasha, as the Vice Chairman of the Republican Party, has sent a circular to all Association for Defense of Law on 20 November 1923. In this circular, it was stated that all *ADNRAR*, which worked for the liberation and independence of the homeland, turned into Republican Party after that day. Besides, all administrative boards of the association would continue their duties as Republican Party administrative boards from now on.⁴¹⁸ From the summer of 1924 on, the party tried to organize throughout the country and started to register members in the provinces.⁴¹⁹

As in the whole country, Zonguldak was one of the provinces where RPP started to be organized in these years. As a matter of fact, RPP district administrative committees began to be formed as of October 1924 in Zonguldak.⁴²⁰ RPP had completed its organization in Devrek, Ereğli, Bartın, Safranbolu and centre districts by 1927.⁴²¹ Apart from this, Zonguldak, whose administrative organization prevented it from being represented in the First GNAT, was represented by four deputies in the Second GNAT.⁴²² In the general elections held on 1 September 1927, the number of deputies of Zonguldak was increased

⁴¹⁸ Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1946)*, p. 78.

⁴¹⁹ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, p. 95.

⁴²⁰ Zonguldak Deputy Ragıp Bey, who visited Bartın in October 1924, gathered the notables and people of Bartın at the municipality office and asked him to take part in the structuring of the RPP in Bartın. As a result of the elections, the RPP Bartın district administrative committee consisted of the following people: İnce Alemdarzâde Halil, Yigirmibeşzâde Hasan, Mehmed Hocasâde Kadri, Turanzâde Said Ali ve Belediye Reisi Hüseyin Sabri Beğ. See *Bartın*, 11 Teşrin-i Evvel (October) 1340 (1924), pp. 2.

⁴²¹ It is understood that the RPP, which completed its organization in the district centers of Zonguldak as of 1927, was also organized in some sub-districts. One of these sub-districts was Çaycuma. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721-464-2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 Nov. 1937].

⁴²² The first deputies of Zonguldak province were; Mr. Halil (Turkmen), Mr. Ragıp (Ahmet Ragıp Özdemiroğlu), Mr. Tunalı Hilmi (Abdullah Hilmi Tunalı) and Mr. Yusuf Ziya (Özenci). See *TBMM Albümü (1920-1950)*, vol. 1, p. 122.

to six.⁴²³ Representation of the city in the GNAT in Fourth Legislative Period (1931-1935) was continued with the same number of deputies.⁴²⁴ However, as it was practiced in many provinces in the Early Republican Period, most of the Zonguldak deputies did not have an organic connection with the city. It should be noted that it was more effective to prioritize the commitment to party principles and the values of the Republic over local representation while determining the parliamentary candidate. Moreover, many of the Zonguldak deputies came from different professional groups such as lawyers, soldiers, doctors, engineers, teachers and district governors. A few exceptions to this will occur after the "peasant and worker deputies" decision to be taken before the 1931 elections.

Among the general parliamentary elections held during the Single Party Period, the 1931 elections differ from the previous elections in two aspects. The first of these was to allow independent candidates to compete in some electoral districts⁴²⁵, and the other was to elect "peasant and worker deputies" to the parliament with the directive of President Mustafa Kemal.⁴²⁶ The practice of

⁴²³ Mr. Celal Sahir (Ahmet Celal Erozan) became the new Zonguldak deputy in the by-election held for the Zonguldak deputyship, which was vacated after Tunalı Hilmi Bey death on 26 July 1928. Apart from this, the other deputies of the city were: Mr. Halil (Türkmen), Mr. Hüsnü (Kortel), Mr. Mehmet Nazif (Sirel), Mr. Ragıp (Ahmet Ragıp Özdemiroğlu) and Mr. Rıfat (Mehmet Rıfat Vardar). See *TBMM Albümü (1920-1950)*, vol. 1, p. 174; *Zonguldak*, 8 Nisan (April) 1931, p. 1.

⁴²⁴ The deputies who represented Zonguldak in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey between 1931 and 1935 were as follows: Mr. Celal Sahir, Mr. Esat (İbrahim Esat Çakmakkaya), Mr. Halil, Mr. Hasan (Karabacak), Mr. Ragıp and Mr. Rıfat. See *TBMM Albümü (1920-1950)*, vol. 1, pp. 227-228.

⁴²⁵ In the general parliamentary general to be held on 25 April 1931, the RPP decided not to nominate 30 candidates in 22 provinces. These provinces were; Adana, Afton, Aksaray, Antalya, Aydın, Balıkesir, Bolu, Burdur, Bursa, İstanbul, İzmir, Isparta, Kayseri, Kastamonu, Kocaeli, Konya, Kütahya, Manisa, Niğde, Samsun, Sinop and Tekirdağı. See *Cumhuriyet*, 16 Nisan (April) 1931, p. 1,3.

⁴²⁶ Tansu Barış Mahmutoğlu, *CHP'nin Belediye ve Genel Seçim Çalışmaları ve Propagandaları (1923-1957)*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2017), pp. 160-161; Fahrettin Altay, *10 Yıl Savaş ve Sonrası*, (İstanbul: İnsel Yayınevi, 1970), pp. 441-449.

“peasant-worker deputies”, which claimed that the party represented the whole society, was essentially a result of the restructuring of the RPP after 1930.⁴²⁷ As a result of the election of laborers and farmers, on which the idea of professional representation has been influential, a total of 22 people, including 13 peasant-farmers, 7 artisans-workers, and 2 miners, were elected as deputies.⁴²⁸ Among these deputies, there were two deputies representing the mining workers of Zonguldak. However, before that, investigations were made by people whom Gazi trusted in the city as to who should be a candidate. The first of such examinations was made by Memduh Şevket Esendal, the father of the idea of professional representation, and the names of three people were reported to Gazi.⁴²⁹ On the other hand, İşbank General Director Celal Bey had been in the region to conduct investigations on the individuals who were to be nominated by the party as a deputy among the workers.⁴³⁰ The fact that the party decided to represent the Zonguldak mining workers in the parliament created great pleasure among the workers.⁴³¹ After the elections, Mr. Hasan (Karabacak) and Mr. Esat (Çakmakkaya) became the first labor deputies of Zonguldak. Thus, these two deputies who elected on behalf of the workers were sent off to the Parliament on 3 May 1931. Before they leave Zonguldak, they stated that they would work to defend the labor law in the parliament and especially for the enactment of the Labor Law.⁴³²

⁴²⁷ Murat Yılmaz, “1931 Seçimlerinde Köylü ve Amele Mebusların Seçimi”, *Emek ve Toplum Dergisi*, Year: 1, vol. 1, , no. 2 (2012/2), p. 102.

⁴²⁸ Yılmaz, “1931 Seçimlerinde Köylü ve Amele Mebusların Seçimi”, p. 102.

⁴²⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 16 Nisan (April) 1931, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 1 Nisan (April) 1931, p. 1.

⁴³⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 16 Nisan (April) 1931, p. 4.

⁴³¹ *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 17 Nisan (April) 1931, p.1.

⁴³² *Son Posta*, 3 Mayıs (May) 1931, p. 3.

The general parliamentary elections of 1931 were completed in Zonguldak in accordance with the single-party rule and election approach. In this sense, firstly, the registrations in the electoral registers were finished as of 29 March 1931. Besides, the election of second voters started in Ereğli as of March 31, in Bartın and Safranbolu on 1 April 1931 and Safranbolu and in central district on 5 April 1931. The male electoral population of the province was 117.122 and the number of second voters was 1.586.⁴³³ In the news published in Zonguldak newspaper on 8 April 1931, it was stated that the second electoral elections were completed in the province of Zonguldak and the RPP candidates were unanimously elected.⁴³⁴ The turnout in the elections in the country was 45%.⁴³⁵ According to the results of the elections, all of the deputies nominated on behalf of the RPP in Zonguldak were elected as in the whole country.

One of the important developments that marked the Turkish political life of the 1930s was the 1930 municipal elections with the experience of the FRP which became massive in a short time. However, during these years, the political life of Zonguldak was quieter compared to the places where the opposition party was organized. Because the political life of the FRP did not last long enough to be organized in Zonguldak⁴³⁶ and the party was abolished by the decision of its founder Ali Fethi Okyar on 17 November 1930. However, some individuals who pretended to act on behalf of opposition party managed to publish articles in the Istanbul newspapers stating that the elections were not held freely in the city. On the other hand, counter-articles were written to eliminate these allegations in

⁴³³ *Zonguldak*, 1 Nisan (April) 1931, p. 1.

⁴³⁴ *Zonguldak*, 8 Nisan (April) 1931, p. 1.

⁴³⁵ Mahmutoğlu, *CHP'nin Belediye ve Genel Seçim Çalışmaları ve Propagandaları (1923-1957)*, p. 173.

⁴³⁶ It is understood from the news about the election results in the Zonguldak newspaper that the FRP was not organized in the Zonguldak. See *Zonguldak*, 15 İlkteşrin (October) 1930, p. 2.

Zonguldak newspaper which operates as an ardent defender of the RPP. In these articles, it was stated that the RPP did not have any influence on the free voters in Zonguldak. Beyond that, it is claimed that the citizens were even encouraged for those who would serve the country in the elections.⁴³⁷

Although the FRP did not engage in any organizational activities in Zonguldak, one of the delegations formed "*to investigate the situation in the provinces*"⁴³⁸ after the FRP experience was assigned to make investigations in Bolu and Zonguldak. The delegation consisting of Cevat Abbas, Hasan Cemil and Zonguldak Deputy Mr. Halil, which had more powers than the party inspectors⁴³⁹, came to Zonguldak on 14 January 1931.⁴⁴⁰ The members of delegation was greeted by Zonguldak Governor Akif Bey and a large mass of people from the districts and they accepted the meetings in the RPP hall. The delegation, which will stay in the city for a long time, has listened to the complaints coming from the society and tried to determine the needs of Zonguldak. In this meetings, they directly met with the administrative committees of all establishments, the members of the municipality and the general provincial council, the members of the chamber of agriculture, commerce and industry, people and the workers. The delegation, which made investigations according to a comprehensive program to reach all segments of the society, announced to the public that they would listen to the problems of all workers, townsman and peasants.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁷ *Zonguldak*, 15 İlkteşrin (October) 1930, p. 2.

⁴³⁸ Gündürü, "1930 Yılı Sonlarında Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Taşra Teşkilatı: Heyet Raporları Üzerinden Bir Değerlendirme" p. 123.

⁴³⁹ *Zonguldak*, 20 Sonteşrin (November) 1930, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁰ *Zonguldak*, 18 Sonkanun (January) 1931, p. 1.

⁴⁴¹ *Zonguldak*, 18 Sonkanun (January) 1931, p. 1.

In this process, the members of the delegation not only investigated the complaints of the people and institutions, but also carried out activities to enlighten the society on national history and values. For this purpose, about six hundred people including many foreign guests, benefited from the conference given by Mr. Cevat Abbas in the hall of Turkish Hearth. In the speech, it was stated that the Turks were the nation that brought the first civilization to the world. Besides, it was emphasized that the homeland of the Turks was Asia and that the Turkish race dispersed from these lands to many parts of the world. This conference, which was aimed to contribute to national unity consciousness among Zonguldak people, was met with the appreciation of the Prime Minister İsmet Pasha and the party administration.⁴⁴² Cevat Abbas Bey, whose investigations in Zonguldak spanned a long time, also presided over the provincial congress of the RPP in Zonguldak which started on 6 February 1931 and ended on 9 February 1931.⁴⁴³

One of the most encountered political scenes in the provinces of the Single Party Period was undoubtedly the local congresses held periodically by the RPP provincial organizations. Among these, the most striking and the most comprehensive one in terms of representing the whole province was the provincial congresses. The provincial congresses began to be held in Zonguldak following the organization of the Republican Party as well. The earliest examples of this were before the Second Great Congress of the party. Since the early 1930s, depending on the progress made in the provincial organization and the changes made within the party after the FRP experience, provincial congresses were held regularly every two years by the RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee. RPP provincial congresses stood out as negotiation platforms. Because, they were held with the participation of not only party leaders and notables, but also local people. Provincial congresses were founded

⁴⁴² *Zonguldak*, 8 Şubat (February) 1931, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁴³ *Zonguldak*, 1 Mart (March) 1931, p. 1.

on two basic working principles. The first one was to determine the administrative committee and to discuss the party budget. The other was to discuss the services provided to the public in the city and social wishes.

The RPP Zonguldak organization convened the Fourth Provincial Congress in February 1931. As it reflected in the local press, the congress officially opened in the city's movie theater on 6 February 1931. The hall of the movie theater was decorated with the pictures of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal and the statesmen and flags. Three delegates representing each district attended the congress and the congress was met with an “*unprecedented interest until then*”. The congress was chaired by RPP Deputy Mr. Cevat Abbas. Except for Mr. Cevat Abbas, deputies Mr. Halil and Mr. Hasan, governor Mr. Arif, civil servants, party leaders, delegations from other institutions, students and scout clubs also took part in the congress. The congress was opened after speech of congress chairman. In this speech, the general evaluation made regarding the political and social issues and the importance of the basin in terms of the region and the country. Then, the congress continued with the election of the second chairman and clerks as determined in the party statute. As a result of the elections, Dr. Reşat, Karauğuz and İbrahim Cemal were elected as the clerks. After the work of the council and the election of provincial administrative committee, the congress process ended on 9 February 1931.⁴⁴⁴

RPP Zonguldak Fifth Provincial Congress convened in January 1933 in the hall of Memleket Cinema. In the congress convened under the chairmanship of provincial administrative committee Mitat Akif Bey and an evaluation about the party activities and the government affairs in the last two years was made. At the end of the congress, the new provincial administrative committee was formed.⁴⁴⁵

The Sixth Provincial Congress held by the RPP Zonguldak organization

⁴⁴⁴ *Zonguldak*, 1 Mart (March) 1931, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0 .0. / 233. 919. 1, 26 Mayıs 1951 [26 May 1951].

convened on the 18th January 1935. In order for the congress to open, more than half of the congress members had to be present. For this, the Chief of the Provincial Administration Committee Dr. Mitat Altıok was made a poll and it was understood that the required number of members was provided for the opening. Thus, the congress process started with the singing of the National Anthem. Dr. Altıok made a short speech before the election of the second chairman and clerk. In his speech he stated that they are ready to give an account of the country and party affairs that they had responsible for past two years. Party Chairman Altıok pointed out that the people of Zonguldak were behind the success of the party's administrative committee, which carried out the works of the party and the government in full harmony without separating them from each other. After this short speech and the expressions of endless respect and devotion to the founder and permanent president Mustafa Kemal, the congress started its routine working.⁴⁴⁶

Apart from all these, the political activities carried out in Zonguldak in the first half of the 1930s were undoubtedly not independent of the general political agenda of the country. In this sense, the work and preparations for the municipal elections to be held in 1934 and the parliamentary elections to be held in 1935 occupied the political life of Zonguldak in this process. For this reason, as of August 1934, the preparations have started for the second local elections in the history of the Republic.⁴⁴⁷ For this, first of all the instruction for municipality election named as "1934 Belediye İntihabı İçin Çalışma Talimatı" was published. The regulation referred to the procedures to be followed during the election process and the regulations on how party propaganda should be made. Thus, as of 22 September 1934, party chairmanship has started to determine the

⁴⁴⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 January 1939].

⁴⁴⁷ Mahmutoğlu, *CHP'nin Belediye ve Genel Seçim Çalışmaları ve Propagandaları (1923-1957)*, p. 193-194.

candidates for the city council members.⁴⁴⁸ During the election process, which was completed on 10 October 1934, Zonguldak was decorated with party flags and various speeches were given about the elections and RPP candidates in the public rostrums. At the meeting held in the central district one day before the election, speeches aimed at influencing the people were made by the party leaders and especially the head of the party's administrative committee. As a result of all these activities, the participation rate in the elections in Zonguldak was above expectations. In this sense, the rate of participation in the elections was 75% in the central district, 70% in Bartın, 58% in Devrek and Ereğli, and 55% in Safranbolu. All party candidates in the city were elected to the municipal council. Upon this success, RPP General Secretariat Mr. Recep (Peker) sent a greeting telegram to the party chairmanship. In his telegram Recep Peker wished success to the party members who were elected as a member of the municipality. Besides, he stated that the members of the municipal council should work with a duty to protect the party principles and the Turkish revolution. On 20 October 1934, the members of city council elected to the mayor of Zonguldak. According to election results; Muhittin Reşit for Zonguldak, İncealemdaroğlu İbrahim for Bartın, Cöbekoğlu Hakkı in Ereğli, Borluluoğlu Nuri in Devrek and Kadartaloğlu Osman in Safranbolu were unanimously elected as the new mayor.⁴⁴⁹

The parliamentary elections of 1935 have an important place in Turkish political history just like the 1931 elections. Because, with the constitutional amendment made just before these elections, Turkish women were given the right to elect and be elected as a member of parliament.⁴⁵⁰ As a result of this change, the rate

⁴⁴⁸ *Zonguldak*, 22 Eylül (September) 1934, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁹ *Zonguldak*, 22 İlkteşrin (October) 1934, p. 1.

⁴⁵⁰ Hatice Güzel Mumyakmaz, “Kadın Temsiliyeti ve 1935 Seçimleri”, *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi*, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/kadin-temsiliyeti-ve-1935-secimleri/>, [accessed December 2, 2021]

of female candidates who applied to the RPP center until the end of January of the same year reached 10%.⁴⁵¹ Zonguldak women, who welcomed the news with great pleasure like all women, immediately gathered in Zonguldak People's House and wanted to share their happiness. The women of Zonguldak, who filled the meeting hall of the Community Center, talked about the values given by the Republic to the Turkish women there. Besides, while there are women in many parts of the world who are deprived of even the most basic rights, they expressed their loyalty and gratitude to Atatürk who gave them this right.⁴⁵²

According to the results of the election which was completed on 8 February 1935, 17 women deputies entered the GNAT for the first time.⁴⁵³ Although Zonguldak was not among the cities represented by the first female deputies in Turkish political history, as a reflection of this decision, a female citizen was elected as a member of the Zonguldak provincial council for the first time in these elections.⁴⁵⁴ At the same time, these elections were remarkable in that they were the first elections in which six peasant citizens could enter the Zonguldak provincial general assembly.⁴⁵⁵ For the 1935 parliamentary elections, Celal Sahir Erozan, Halil Türkmen, Ragıp Özdemir, Rıfat Vardar, Hasan Karabacak, Esat

⁴⁵¹ Mahmutoğlu, *CHP'nin Belediye ve Genel Seçim Çalışmaları ve Propagandaları (1923-1957)*, p. 209.

⁴⁵² *Zonguldak*, 24 Aralık (December) 1934, p. 1.

⁴⁵³ 17 female deputies were elected from the following provinces: Afyonkarahisar, Ankara, Antalya, Balıkesir, Bursa, Çankırı, Diyarbakır, Edirne, Erzurum, İstanbul, İzmir, Kayseri, Konya, Malatya, Samsun, Seyhan, Sivas and Trabzon.

⁴⁵⁴ After the amendment made in the Constitution on 5 December 1934, women had to be included in the political life. For this reason, RPP General Secretary Recep Peker published a circular on 2 December 1935 which enabling women to take an active role in the party. After this circular, the number of women who were both second voters and party members increased. Kaniye Selahattin from Zonguldak was elected to the party's administrative committee for the first time. See İhsan Güneş, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi (TBMM V. Dönem 1935-1939)*, vol. 1, (Ankara: TBMM Vakfı Yayınları No: 33, 2003), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁵⁵ *Zonguldak*, 28 Şubat (February) 1935, p. 5.

Çakmakkaya, Recep Zühü Soyak and Dr. Mitat Altıok was nominated by the party.⁴⁵⁶ The candidates of the party were also successful in the general provincial council elections held after the parliamentary elections. In the city, the turnout rate of the second voters was quite high. The rate of second voters who voted was 98.5%. To celebrate the success of the RPP in the elections, a big feast was held in the hall of the People's House on the night of February 8. In addition to governor of Zonguldak, government dignitaries, voters, Zonguldak villagers and women also attended the feast. At the end of the meal, a speech on the name of Atatürk was given by the new deputy Mitat Altıok.⁴⁵⁷ This kind of celebration continued in the following days. Thus, the 1935 elections were completed without any opposition movement against the RPP in Zonguldak as well as across the country.

Finally, it should be said that the political activities carried out by the CHF in Zonguldak in the early 1930s were also supported by cultural activities. Thus, in order to integrate the society, various activities organized for the benefit of the party. For this reason, the political atmosphere of Zonguldak in the Early Republican Period went beyond the classical political activities formed only by local and general elections and party congresses. In this sense, horse races, oil wrestling and sailing competitions, which were an important income for parties and people's house, were at the forefront of community-oriented activities organized by the RPP Zonguldak organization.⁴⁵⁸ These activities also attracted the attention of the local people. Such events, in which the prominent people of the city also participated, were mostly held under the auspices of sports clubs

⁴⁵⁶ Güneş, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi (TBMM V. Dönem 1935-1939)*, p. 37. After Celal Sahir Erozan's death on 18 November 1935, Raif Dinç was elected for the vacant Zonguldak deputy position on 22 January 1936. Similarly, With the appointment of Dr. Mitat Altıok to the governorship of Diyarbakır, Necati Güneri will be elected as the deputy of Zonguldak on 26 November 1937. See Güneş, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi (TBMM V. Dönem 1935-1939)*, p. 58.

⁴⁵⁷ *Zonguldak*, 28 Şubat (February) 1935, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁸ *Zonguldak*, 11 Haziran (June) 1929, p.1; *Zonguldak*, 6 Temmuz (July) 1930, p. 4; *Zonguldak*, 9 Eylül (September) 1931, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 22 Eylül (September) 1934, p. 1.

and youth organizations affiliated with people's houses. Such social events, which were frequently organized under the auspices of the RPP, served to gather people around common values. On the other hand, these activities also served to develop the physical and moral values of the citizens according to national and revolutionary goals. To sum up, these social and cultural activities under the auspices of the RPP, whose contents became more enriched over time, fulfilled the social and political mission imposed on it during the single-party period.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRESENCE OF REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY IN ZONGULDAK AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE STATE

As mentioned before, RPP was registered as a political party in the autumn of 1923 and started its organizational activities throughout the country as of the summer of 1924.⁴⁵⁹ As can be understood from the local press, the efforts to establish party administrative committees within the Zonguldak province were continuing at the same time.⁴⁶⁰ Organization activities had expanded to the level of sub-districts in Zonguldak as of 1927.⁴⁶¹ By the beginning of the 1930s, when the single-party period began to be institutionalized, the RPP was active in all districts of Zonguldak.⁴⁶²

In terms of party activities, the RPP Zonguldak organization had the following appearance in the first half of 1930: First of all, in the mentioned period, one of the most important activities followed by the RPP Zonguldak organization was to convene the provincial congresses on time. Because, when the local press and

⁴⁵⁹ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması*, p. 95.

⁴⁶⁰ *Bartın*, 11 Teşrin-i Evvel (October) 1340 (1924), p. 2.

⁴⁶¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁴⁶² In a report prepared by the RPP General Secretariat, the following information is given about the district administration committees of RPP in Zonguldak as of 1931-1932, the persons who headed these committees and their professional status: Mr. Esat, the head of the Zonguldak Provincial Administrative Committee, was also a Zonguldak deputy. Besides; the head of the central district administrative committee was Müderrisoğlu Mr. Ahmet, the head of the Bartın district administrative committee was Mr. Mehmet Niyazi who was also a member of the municipality. On the other hand, the head of the Devrek district administrative committee was merchant Mr. Fuat, the head of the Ereğli district administrative committee was the municipality member Mr. Hakkı and the Safranbolu district administrative committee head was Mr. Abdülkadir. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 284. 1138. 2, 16 Haziran 1930 [16 June 1930].

congress minutes are followed, it is understood that provincial congresses have been held regularly in the city especially since the early 1930s. On the other hand, one of the party affairs that the Zonguldak RPP organization is sensitive about is the participation in all the grand party congresses. In this respect, the RPP Zonguldak provincial organization participated regularly in all grand congresses including the Second Grand Congress that convened during and after the establishment of the single-party system.⁴⁶³ Another prominent feature of this period in terms of party organizational activities was the importance given to People's Houses activities. Zonguldak People's House, which was operating as an auxiliary organization to the RPP, started its social, cultural and ideological activities in the early period of the Republic. Another organizational activity carried out by the party in Zonguldak in the first half of the 1930s was the operation of the inspection mechanism, which served as a bridge between the public and the state. When the official records were examined, although it was not regularly, Zonguldak was inspected by the inspectors and deputies appointed from the party headquarters. In this sense, many Zonguldak deputies and inspectors inspected the region from the early to mid-1930s. Thus, the institutions and mechanisms that mediated communication between the public and the state in the first half of the 1930s were activated one by one in Zonguldak.

The organizational model of the RPP developed in harmony with the civil structure in Zonguldak where there was no significant change in its administrative structure between 1926 and 1943.⁴⁶⁴ In this respect, the RPP was organized primarily in the central district, as well as in Safranbolu, Devrek, Ereğli and Bartın districts as from 1935. As a result of the recruiting policy followed by local organizations, the number of official members of the RPP in

⁴⁶³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 210. 833. 3, 1931.

⁴⁶⁴ Şaşmaz, *Türkiye'nin İdari Taksimatı (1920-2013)*, vol. 15, p. 232.

Zonguldak province reached 37.979 at the end of 1935.⁴⁶⁵ These members were distributed numerically and proportionally over the district organizations as follows:⁴⁶⁶

Table 2. Registered Members in RPP Zonguldak Provincial Organization as of 1935

District	Total	Proportion to Total Number of Member (%)	Proportion to Zonguldak's Population ⁴⁶⁷
Bartın	11.225	29.55	15.52
Devrek	3.747	9.86	5.65
Ereğli	6.354	16.73	12.63
Safranbolu	10.278	27.06	15.92
Zonguldak	6.375	16.78	9.39
Total	37.979	100	11.79

In the process going to party-state integration, the situation of RPP in Zonguldak in terms of organization and number of members is as outlined above. In this sense, the governor of Zonguldak took over a RPP organization, which is almost tried to be explained above, at the time when the decision was taken to leave the provincial administrative committee chairmanships to the governors in the provinces. The organizational activities of the Zonguldak governor as the party chairman for about three years and the level of organizational development achieved afterwards constitute the general framework of this part of our research. In this respect, the second part of our study will focus on the process of building and maintaining RPP's presence in Zonguldak as being a bridge between the people and the state. As can be expected, this process did not always proceed on

⁴⁶⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

⁴⁶⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

⁴⁶⁷ *Genel Nüfus Sayımı 20 İlkteşrin 1935 Kat'ı ve Mufassal Neticeleler Zonguldak Vilayeti*, vol. 58, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü, (Ankara: Mehmet İhsan Basımevi, 1937), p. 5.

a linear plane and the party organization had to take initiatives outside the legal limits in some cases. In this context, during the single-party period, the RPP Zonguldak organization has been successful in creating its own escape ramps. This often took place as going beyond the legal limits determined by the statutes in order to maintain its presence. In this process many “illegal”⁴⁶⁸ methods have been witnessed. The most notable of these were intra-party competition, exaggerating the number of members, providing party resources without legal basis and resorting to intermediaries in the collecting of membership dues. Therefore, in this section, the existence and organizational activities of the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1935-1946 will be evaluated through the examples of free movement areas and escape ramps that it created for itself. Thus, it will be possible to make a general assessment of the organizational level reached by the RPP organization in Zonguldak between the years 1935-1946. This process, which started with the party-state integration and its reflection in Zonguldak, will be tried to be put forward through a basic argument. For this reason, this research will not transmit the party inspection reports, constituency reports and provincial administrative committee work reports chronologically as in many researches did on RPP local organizations.

As it is known, the political cadres ruling the country in the single-party regime *"have fallen into the illusion that the RPP has a monolithic and homogeneous integrity that dominates all its local organizations."*⁴⁶⁹ However, the real world of the party in the province and the imagined state and party organization in Ankara are quite different from each other. In other words, the provincial organizations of the RPP have a more colorful identity in terms of ideology and politics.⁴⁷⁰ The studies and research based on the official records of the period

⁴⁶⁸ By using this concept we mean “out of party statute”.

⁴⁶⁹ Metinsoy, “Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet ve Toplum”, p. 124.

⁴⁷⁰ Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 82.

clearly reveal this difference.⁴⁷¹ In this respect, the structural changes based on party organization especially since the early 1930s, should be accepted as an indication that things are not going as Ankara wanted in the provinces.

Despite the party center's desire to establish a strict control over the local organizations through inspection mechanisms and instructions, the provincial organizations somehow seem to have succeeded in creating autonomous areas where they can act freely outside the party statutes and procedures. In this sense, the RPP Zonguldak organization was able to discover the free movement areas by not obeying the party's statutes and instructions even during the strongest single-party rule. Although this situation took place by acting outside the party's statute most of the time, it sometimes went to practices that lacked any legal basis. In this context, when the reports about the RPP Zonguldak organization are examined, it is understood that local units can act more freely in some organizational activities and they can easily go out of the legal areas determined by the statutes. Thus, the legal limits set by the center in the process of carrying out some organizational activities especially the operation of the membership system and the collecting of membership dues were somehow exceeded. Here, the fact that local organizations have a relatively autonomous action should not be perceived as a political structure located opposite the party center and in conflict with it. This autonomy should be understood as exceeding the fields of activity determined by party statutes and circulars for some practical/pragmatic reasons.

Based on this perspective, the organizational activities of the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1935-1946 will be evaluated through the aforementioned point of view in this part of our research. For this, first of all, the reflections of the process leading to party-state integration on the scale of Zonguldak will be discussed. Then, the evaluations will be made about the social characteristics of

⁴⁷¹ In this regard, Murat Metinsoy's work titled "*Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet ve Toplum*" is important in that it shows how the provincial organizations of the RPP actually work. In this sense, it presents examples from the RPP's organizations throughout the country.

the RPP administrators in Zonguldak who were trying to create an autonomous field of activity and the power struggles among them. After these, the organizational level and development of the RPP in Zonguldak will be examined within the framework of some organizational indicators such as membership policy, party income and expenditures. Thus, it is foreseen to have an idea about what kind of organizational ground the RPP had tried to carry out its “bridge mission” between the people and the state in Zonguldak.

3.1. The Process Leading to Party-State Integration and Its Reflections in Zonguldak

The year 1935, which constitutes the starting point of our research, does not evoke an important structural change and transformation for the RPP Zonguldak organization. However, it is not difficult to predict that the changes made in the general structuring of the party will also have an impact on the Zonguldak organization. In this respect, 1935 for RPP is the date when the party-state integration was officially declared. This decision was announced by the RPP General Secretary Recep Peker at the party's Fourth Great Congress. The second important step of this union, which was to be completed in 1937 with the entry of the main principles of the RPP into the constitution, was taken on 18 June 1936. On this date, a circular was sent to the party organizations with the signature of İsmet İnönü and it was declared that “*it was decided to establish a closer relationship between the party activity and the government administration.*”⁴⁷² This administrative method change within the RPP is also the first concrete step taken towards the party-state integration decision. Thus, as of 18 June 1936, the Minister of Internal Affairs was appointed as a member of the RPP General Executive Board and henceforth, he was also given the duty of general secretary of the party. In the provinces, governors were appointed to the party provincial presidencies. On the same day that the decision was taken, a

⁴⁷² *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İkcikanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 Tarihine Kadar)*, p. 20.

circular was also sent to the governors and the head of the provinces on duty. In the circular, the current provincial presidents were thanked for their work until that day and they were asked to hand over their duties to the provincial governors. The governors, who will also serve as the provincial heads of the RPP from this date on, have been instructed to fulfill this duty in accordance with the provisions of the party statute.⁴⁷³

Following the decision, a new circular was sent to the organizations in order to eliminate the uncertainties about how the change in party administrative management would be implemented locally. In this circular dated 23 June 1936, the governors were reminded that from now on, they had all the powers that the party statute gave to the chairman of the provincial administration committee. Therefore, they were reminded that they had to fulfill all the duties that the statute gave to the heads of the provinces. It was also stated in the circular that the duties of the deputy provincial presidents, who were both appointed from the center and elected by the provincial administrative committees came to an end. Apart from this, it has been stated that no substitute members will be invited to the vacant provincial administrative committee. Besides, it was informed to wait until the congress time in order to make changes in the provincial administrative committee whose number of members is above the amount determined by the statute.⁴⁷⁴

Based on the aforementioned decision, one of the ceremonies for the transfer of RPP provincial presidencies to the governors was held in Zonguldak on 19 June 1936. After this ceremony, head of RPP Zonguldak Administrative Committee Dr. Mitat Altıok handed over his duty, which he had carried out for nearly two

⁴⁷³ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İncikanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 Tarihine Kadar)*, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁷⁴ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İncikanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 Tarihine Kadar)*, pp. 26-27.

years, to the Governor Halit Aksoy.⁴⁷⁵ A few days after Aksoy appointed as provincial chairman of the party, he attended the meeting of governors in Ankara chaired by the President İsmet İnönü.⁴⁷⁶ The meeting, which started on 23 June 1936, was attended by the governors of 28 provinces as well as all the deputies and members of the general board of the party. The meeting was planned to inform the governors, who are the provincial representatives of the party-state unity, about the importance of the issue and to give them directives. Therefore, Prime Minister İnönü chaired the meeting and made a statement regarding the decision giving the party chairmanship to the governors and its importance. The second part of the meeting was chaired by the Secretary General Şükrü Kaya.⁴⁷⁷

Although the decision of party-government integration was a central decision taken against the domination that the RPP wanted to establish on the state apparatus, it was needed to explain the issue to the public and party organization at the local level. Although a text was sent to the governors how the decision would be implemented, it was clear that the Zonguldak party organization and the public could not fully understand the issue. For this reason, Governor Halit Aksoy tried to explain to the public what the decision meant and the reason for it with a statement he published in the Zonguldak newspaper. In his statement Aksoy stated that the aim of the last change in the administration of the RPP, which was designed as a school for the people to gain political education and reach political maturity, was to ensure that the party and the government work as one and whole force. Aksoy also expressed that the success of the work carried out in line with party principles is possible with the moral and physical cooperation of all party members and this is a duty for the whole people. In the essence of the declaration, it was pointed out that the doors of the RPP are always open to everyone. In this sense, the party appeared not only as a place

⁴⁷⁵ *Zonguldak*, 20 Haziran (June) 1936, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁶ *Zonguldak*, 27 Haziran (June) 1936, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 24 Haziran (June) 1936, p. 1,6.

where the affairs of the country were discussed, but also as an institution operating to listen and resolve the complaints, grievances and wishes of the people. For this reason, Aksoy had determined meeting hours every day to meet with the people and listen to their grievances.⁴⁷⁸ Thus, it was aimed to recruit people from all sections of society such as civil servants, workers and peasants to the party. Making such a call/invitation as the representative of both the government and the party in the province should be seen as a very important step taken in order to break the shyness of the people in applying to the party and government institutions. Besides, it can be said that this invitation has aimed to eliminate the communication gap between the state and the people as well. Although it is not possible to measure what extent this call affected the people's orientation to the party in case of any demand or expectation, it should be mentioned that this call, as reflected in the local press, aroused a deep interest in the people of Zonguldak. In response to this public's interest, Governor Aksoy's work in the party building will gradually increase.

In this declaration, the party center was pointed out in solving all kinds of problems of the people. However, Aksoy was not an administrator who only listened to the problems of the people at the party building, but he often preferred to go to the public and carried out activities directly in the field. Therefore, it is possible to say that Governor Aksoy carried out an effective activity process in bringing the people and the state together during the period when he was the provincial head of the RPP in Zonguldak. In this process, inspections on lower-level organizations during the single-party years of Turkey was not only as a routine work, but also as important encounter areas where contact with the public is made. In this sense, Governor Aksoy during his party presidency, which will last for about three years, inspected the district organizations besides the regular meetings of the party provincial administrative board. Thus, he turned these encounters into an important opportunity to listen and learn about the problems of the people. In addition to all these, the events organized by the Zonguldak People's House for the public also provided an important opportunity for the

⁴⁷⁸ *Zonguldak*, 27 Haziran (June) 1936, p. 1.

administrators to communicate with the citizens. Because, in the news reflected in the local press of the period, it is mentioned that such events directly serve to determine the expectations and complaints of the people.⁴⁷⁹

During these years, one of the main agendas of the inspections was also how the new management approach, RPP-state integration, was applied locally. It is understood that the RPP administration wanted to gather more detailed information about the implementation of the decision in the provinces and the difficulties encountered. For this reason, Mardin Deputy Edip Ergin, who inspected the Zonguldak party organization in August 1936, started his inspection from the city center to understand the application of the decision.⁴⁸⁰ It is understood that after the governors became responsible for the party administration in the provinces, the struggles to seize the power within the party came to an end. For example, the Zonguldak deputies who inspected their constituency in November 1937, stated in their reports with great satisfaction that the power struggle within the party extinguished after the governors took over the provincial chairmanship. This situation was reflected in the inspection report with the following sentences:

Since the party administration was left to the governors, the rumors ended and the normal way of working was kept. Because the hopes of those who wanted to occupy that position among the party members were lost. The fact that no complaints or gossip is made about this issue in any district shows that this practice is correct.⁴⁸¹

During the period when Governor Aksoy was head of RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee, the party organization showed a significant improvement. The increase in the number of members registered to the party day

⁴⁷⁹ *Zonguldak*, 2 Eylül (September) 1936, p. 1; *Zonguldak* 10 Mayıs (May) 1939, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁴⁸¹ BCA 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

by day is one of the most important indicators of this. Official sources indicate that the number of registered party members in the city exceeded 42 thousand during the Governor Aksoy period.⁴⁸² This number is quite high compared to the number of party members reached in other provinces in the Western Black Sea region.⁴⁸³ On the other hand, during the single-party period, the number of members registered the RPP in Zonguldak was higher than in many provinces as well. In this respect, when Governor Aksoy took over the party chairmanship in Zonguldak, he actually took over the management of one of the most developed party organizations in the country as well.

3.2. Components of Party Administration and Intra-Party Struggle

Before making an assessment about the organizational level reached by the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1935-1946, it is necessary to look at the social qualifications of the organization's administrators. Because, the social base and qualifications of the party administrators in the Republican provinces has been one of the important criteria affecting the success of all organizational activities, especially the determination and follow-up of social demands, the presence of the party there and its future. As it is known, the provincial organization of the RPP was built on the legacy of the Associations for the Defense of Rights. The founders of these associations continued their existence as active and influential people in the region after the War of Independence. For this reason, the provincial administrations of the RPP remained mostly in the hands of these administrators who were regional notables and landlords.⁴⁸⁴ In other words, this alliance between the Kemalist cadre and the notables before the war was

⁴⁸² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1396. 630. 1, 1948.

⁴⁸³ The province with the closest party number to Zonguldak in the region was Kastamonu organization with 34.115 members. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1396. 630. 1, 1948.

⁴⁸⁴ Tülay Aydın, *Tek Parti Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez- Taşra İlişkileri*, p. 247.

maintained after the war with agreements to protect and strengthen the *status quo* in the countryside.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, notables and landlords preserved their existence and influence as an important element within the People's Party after the establishment of the Republic. This union, which will last for many years between the RPP and the aforementioned section, will start to deteriorate when the notables and merchants, who are the tripartite coalition legs of the Republic, are disturbed by the attitude of the bureaucracy towards them during the Second World War.⁴⁸⁶

It is known that the Kemalist regime used the intervention of the notables of the region to communicate directly with the people during the single-party period. Thus, on the one hand, communication between the society and the state was tried to be ensured, on the other hand, "*the possible reactions of the people against the superstructural reforms wanted to be prevented from the very beginning by giving a share of this new order to the notables.*"⁴⁸⁷ In this sense, bringing the notables of the provinces to important positions within the People's Party can be seen as one of the blessings of the new order. Thus, the political power both benefited from the influence of the notables and chose to rule the country by making them partners in power. For this reason, it is accepted that the RPP in single-party years were rather a party of civil servants and notables.⁴⁸⁸ From this point of view, the RPP Zonguldak organization was managed by the notables of the region in terms of economic, cultural, and educational level as were the most of the rural organizations of the RPP during the single-party period. According to the dominant economic activity and traditional structure of the region they live in, local actors with titles such as "aga" and "landlord" are

⁴⁸⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye'nin Oluşumu*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2012), p. 96.

⁴⁸⁶ İsmail Cem, *Türkiye'de Geri Kalmışlığın Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1974), p. 324.

⁴⁸⁷ Cem, p. 311.

⁴⁸⁸ Turan Güneş, "Demokrat Parti Neydi?", *Yön*, , Year: 1, no. 4 (10 Ocak 1962), p. 15.

mostly known in Zonguldak with titles such as "engineer", and "general manager of coal mine" and "journalist". These actors, who have gained significant power from their social positions, also shaped the political activities in their regions as in many other things. These people also played an active role in the provincial administration of the RPP. It should be particularly noted that the desire of these influential people to take part in the party administration is not only a political choice of their own, but also a result of the membership policy followed by the RPP center. Because the RPP General Secretariat worked to bring the notables of the region to the party during the single-party period and local organizations were canalized in this direction.

Although the FRP experience is accepted as a recovery and renewal process for the rural structuring of the RPP, it is understood that the RPP party administrative committees formed after the closure of the party could not remedy the expectations of the people in most places. At this point, in their report dated 14 September 1931, Erzincan Deputy Mr. Saffet and Antalya Deputy Doctor Cemal, members of the RPP General Administration Committee, made interesting observations about the social character of the party administrative. In the report, it was pointed out that Mr. Cevat Abbas, who visited Zonguldak after the FRP experience, constituted the party administrative committees in a way to represent the interests of various companies and workers. For example, Lawyer Mr. Tevfik, as a lawyer for the Italian coal company and also a legal consultant for, was among the members of this new administrative committee. Apart from this, a mine owner and a few other officers who had connections with mining companies took part in the party's administrative committee. This appearance of party organization in Zonguldak has been summarized by the inspectors as follows: "*At first glance, the party board appears to be an elected committee to protect the bosses.*"⁴⁸⁹ These statements in the report will be better understood when the professional status of the people who constituted the RPP Zonguldak

⁴⁸⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 655. 182. 1, 21 Ağustos 1935 [21 August 1935].

provincial administrative committee in 1931 is examined closely. For example, Esat Bey, to whom the inspectors draw attention was the head of the new provincial administrative committee also fulfills the duty of general director of Trki and Kmri Companies at the same time. Among the other members of the delegation, Mr. Halim Cavit was the director of the People's House, Mr. Tevfik was a lawyer and simultaneously a member of the general assembly, Mr. Hseyin Fehmi was the former mayor and also the General Manager of Mines and Mr. Őevket was a civil servant at Ereęli Coal Company.⁴⁹⁰ The fact that the party administration in Zonguldak is predominantly under the auspices of mining bosses or under the influence of people who have connections with mining companies can be seen as a result of the elitist perspective of the Republican administration. The most concrete indicator of this was the fact that the appointment of *mutemets* by the party center for many years.⁴⁹¹ Apart from these, it was foreseen in the report that this "boss patronage" characteristic of the party organization would bring with it another danger for Zonguldak in the mentioned years. According to the deputies, such an administrative committee will cause the miners who were working under severe conditions. Therefore, in the face of any problem, workers will try to seek different solutions instead of resorting to the party administrative committee which is mostly composed of influential bosses. In fact, at a time when a dangerous political intellectual movement such as communism has just begun to sprout among the miners, the establishment of such a party administrative committee may even lead to undesirable results. For this reason, the inspectors suggested to the party headquarters that the Zonguldak party administrative committee should be urgently changed.⁴⁹² However, it is understood that the new administrative committee formed at the RPP Zonguldak Fifth Provincial Congress convened in 1933 is not much different from the

⁴⁹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 284. 1138. 2, 16 Haziran 1930 [16 June 1930]. Hereafter ECC.

⁴⁹¹ Cemil Koak, *CHP Genel Sekreterlięi (1930-1945)*, (İstanbul: Alfa Yayıncılık, 2018), p. 116.

⁴⁹² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 655. 182. 1, 21 Aęustos 1935 [21 August 1935].

previous one in terms of the professional and economic levels of the members. On this date, Dr. Mitat Altıok⁴⁹³ was appointed to the provincial presidency of the party directly by the party headquarters. However, Mr. Esat as the general manager of Türkiş and Kömüriş Companies, Mr. Bekir Sıtkı as a lawyer, Mr. Fevzi as an Ziraat Bank officer, Mr. Taşçioğlu İbrahim as a merchant, Mr. Şeref as the correspondent of Labour Union and Akın Karauguz as the journalist and as the general council of the province were took place in newly elected administrative committee.⁴⁹⁴ As can be seen, most of the upper echelons of the Zonguldak party organization were composed of people who had consolidated their influence in the region through institutions such as the press, private companies, civil servants and commercial establishments.

During the single-party period, although the administration of many provincial organizations of the RPP was in the hands of one or a few families, this was not valid on the scale of Zonguldak. However, making a few changes in the membership of the administrative committee membership shows that the party administration is managed by an influential group here too. This situation sometimes did not escape Zonguldak deputies and inspectors notice. One of the most important issues that especially inspectors focused on during the inspection process was to investigate how the party administrative committees were perceived by the people and whether the party's influence was abused by these administrators. However, the deputies who inspected in their constituency also made some observations about this issue. For example, Zonguldak deputies

⁴⁹³ Mitat Altıok was born in Kayseri in 1884 and graduated from Military Medical School in 1907 as a captain doctor. Altıok, who was elected as a Van deputy for the CUP in the elections held in 1912, joined the Balkan Wars after the closure of the parliament. In 1932, Altıok was elected as the Chairman of the Bolu Republican People's Party and from there he was appointed as the chairmanship of the Zonguldak Republican People's Party based on the decision of the RPP General Administrative Committee. While in this office, Altıok was elected as a Zonguldak deputy in 1935. Later, he resigned from his parliamentary position in 1937 because of the fact that he was appointed to the Governorship of Diyarbakır. Altıok, who continued her later life as the governor of Kastamonu and Zonguldak, died on 9 February 1962. See Güneş, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi TBMM V. Dönem (1935-1939)*, vol. 2. , pp. 768-769.

⁴⁹⁴ C.H.F. *Zonguldak Beşinci Vilayet Kongresi Açılma Nutku*, (Zonguldak: Karaelmas Matbaası, 1933) in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 233. 919. 1, 26 Mayıs 1951 [26 May 1951].

Hasan Karabacak, Rıfat Vardar and Esat Çakmakkaya, who conducted inspections in election districts in 1935, drew attention to the fact that the RPP Safranbolu district organization was always under the administration of the same people. This situation was recorded in the reports of the deputies with the following sentences: “*The Safranbolu administrative committee consists of three or five people. Besides, it is always in the hands of the same individuals and that is the most important obstacle to the progress of the party.*”⁴⁹⁵ Indeed, most of the people who took place in the RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee between 1935-1946 almost established a "monopoly" on the party administration. In this sense, the attached table is interesting in that it shows how the Zonguldak RPP provincial administrative committees preserved their current structure often with minor touches. It is also important to understand the continuity between administrative committees.⁴⁹⁶

The province of the early republican period is a field of political competition in which many local actors try to use the power and opportunities of the state for their own interests through their positions within the party. However, it is a known fact that the influence of regional actors is used to increase the power and authority of the party as well. A similar process was witnessed in Zonguldak especially recruiting senior administrators in mining companies to the party. Because, with the inclusion of these people on the party administrative committee, who had the responsibility of thousands of workers, a significant number of new members could be registered and membership dues could be collected more regularly. In this sense, one of the people on whom the RPP General Secretariat insisted on bringing in the party in Zonguldak was ECC General Manager Engineer Bedri Hüsni Bekiroğlu. It was very important for the party organization to bring Bekiroğlu into the party because he had a say over all engineers and civil servants in the basin and over twenty thousand workers. For

⁴⁹⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁴⁹⁶ See Table 16.

this reason, he was included in the membership of the new administrative committee at the provincial congress held on 22 December 1940.⁴⁹⁷ Bekiroğlu's inclusion in the party administration seems to have benefited the party more than anticipated. Because, in the provincial congress convened on 3 December 1942, it was stated that a large mass of workers from Kandilli region of Ereğli Coal Company became the members of the RPP. The main factor behind the high number of members reached compared to the previous period was the mass of over 17 thousand workers, laborers and masters, who were recruited by ECC to the RPP central and Ereğli district organizations.⁴⁹⁸

While the RPP General Secretariat was trying to increase the influence of the party on the people by including the notables of the region in the party administration, on the other hand, it closely followed whether there were administrators who abused their position within the party in order to consolidate their influence. For this reason, in the single-party period, one of the most important struggles given by the RPP center was to prevent the local party bureaucracy from establishing their own power in the countryside. The most important duty here was given undoubtedly to the party inspectors. For this reason, in every inspection period, evaluations were made regarding the provincial organizations and the members of the administrative committee of lower levels. Afterwards, a report was sent to the general secretariat including the measures to be taken even if there were those who abused the party's influence. For example, Mardin Deputy Edip Ergin, who inspected the Zonguldak party organization in June 1936, pointed out the existence of individuals acting in order to ensure their personal interests within the party administrative committee and among the party presidents. For this reason, he

⁴⁹⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 668. 247. 1, 10 Eylül 1941 [10 September 1941].

⁴⁹⁸ The number of members, which was 41.496 at the end of 1940 has increased to 75.567 at the end of 1942 as a result of the work of the new administrative committee which included Engineers Bedri Bekiroğlu and Rauf Alpsoy. This increase is one of the most remarkable activities of the people who have influence over the mine workers in terms of party interest. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943]; *C.H.P. Onuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zonguldak*, 3 İlkanun (Aralık) 1942, pp. 17-18 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

advised the party headquarters to seriously consider this issue in the next administrative committee elections.⁴⁹⁹ In Zonguldak, this was not the only example that showed the existence of administrators who tried to exploit the party's influence for their personal interests. Because, as in many RPP provincial organizations, such party leaders were considerably higher in Zonguldak as well. For example, in the inspections he made at the beginning of 1940, Zonguldak region inspector Şerafettin Karacan mentioned that there were members of the provincial administrative committee who abused the party's influence. In the report, it was stated that some of the members of the party administrative committee had taken some actions that "*harmed the prestige of the party*". Besides, these party members was also benefited from their positions in the party. In the report, the following determinations were made for the head of the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee at the time:

This situation of the party chairman, who devotes almost all of his time to party affairs rather than his real profession, is perceived by the people of Zonguldak not as a sincere desire for public service, but as a desire for personal interest. In addition, being in dept of the party leader damages his commercial and political reputation as well.⁵⁰⁰

In the same report, it was stated that the chief of the provincial administrative committee was not welcomed due to the low level of education in Zonguldak. Because, while there were many highly educated people in the city, the appointment of a party chairman with a lower education was not welcomed. Behind the negative image of the party chairman in the eyes of the public was the widespread belief that he was making an "artificial partyism". According to Karacan, the fact that the party chairman used his duty for his personal benefit had an important role behind this widespread opinion as well. For example, even though there were other printing houses in Zonguldak, the aforementioned party chairman had all the printing works of the party and the People's House done in his own printing house. In fact, he was exploiting party resources by doing a

⁴⁹⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁵⁰⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

printing job although it was not necessary. Similarly, all stationery materials of the party and People's House were supplied from his own sales house. On the other hand, another activity of the party provincial chairman that damaged the prestige of the party was to receive hundreds of liras every year from coal companies and institutions for the local newspaper he owned.⁵⁰¹ According to the party inspector, all these actions were damaging the prestige of the RPP in Zonguldak.

In the same inspection report, there were informations about other members of the administrative committee. For example, in the report it was stated that the member of party administrative committee Dr. Nihat Arkat was a person known for prioritizing the interests of the company over the rights of workers while he was the doctor of the Ereğli French Coal Company. It was known that during the Arkat's mayoralty, he provided some favors to the French company and was dismissed from his position due to his failure to act in accordance with party principles in municipal affairs. On the other hand, the negative attitude he took against the National Struggle was among another information gathered about Arkat. Apart from these, in the report it was mentioned that Lütfi Balık, one of the members of the Bartın district administrative committee, was a "*weak character whose word cannot be trusted*". It was written about Pharmacist Hidayet Derman, who is a member of the Safranbolu district administrative committee and also the head of Safranbolu People's House, that he had a "*bad character*". According to the report, the head of the Devrek district administrative committee Seyfi Tokgöz was an administrator who neglected party affairs and had relations with people who were not well known in the region. It was even revealed that this person had negligence in some party revenues that would constitute a crime. Rıza Taşkıran, one of the members of Devrek district administrative committee, was not deemed worthy of this position in the region due to his being a simple tradesman and illiterate. Another Member Fuat Can, on the other hand, was a person whose national feelings were suspected in the region as he was the labor dispatcher of the Italian coal

⁵⁰¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

company in Kozlu. The head of the Ereğli district administrative committee Hakkı Gulerman was mentioned in the report as "*a simple and uncultured man, a puppet in the hands of the mayor Hakkı Cöbek*". According to the inspector report, notary Ahmet Cöbek, one of the members of the administrative committee and also the head of the Ereğli People's House, was mentioned as a person with the stamp of "sodomy".⁵⁰² There were also rumors about this person that he had made improprieties in the follow-up of the compensation money given to the family of the worker who died in mines as a result of the accident. Another member of the administrative committee Fikri Cimit had almost established a monopoly in the follow-up of the land registry works of the villagers and he was sued for it.⁵⁰³

As can be understood from the report of party inspector Karacan, the RPP center attached great importance to who represented the party authority locally. For this reason, it was tried to conduct regional inspections at regular intervals. If such situations were encountered during inspections, individuals who disrupted party activities or damaged the party's image would be eliminated from the administrative committee in the next activity period. For example, most of the executives and members who had taken an active role in the RPP Zonguldak provincial organization until 1940 were eliminated at the provincial congress held on 22 December 1940. Karacan, who apparently played an active role in the elimination of the old administrative committee⁵⁰⁴, has pointed out the necessity of this elimination as follows:

⁵⁰² In the report of the next inspection period, Karacan states that these accusations made against Notary Ahmet are baseless. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 469. 1, 21 Temmuz 1942 [21 July 1942].

⁵⁰³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

⁵⁰⁴ Karacan in his inspection report dated 1 February 1941 states that he personally attended the organizational congresses held in 1940 and that he paid attention to form of new administrative committee as much as possible from people loved by the society. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 469. 1, 21 Temmuz 1942 [21 July 1942].

The Zonguldak provincial administrative committee was visibly weak in the face of the neighborhood's wealth of highly cultured people. The antipathetic attitude of its leader, especially in the eyes of these people, further undermined the committee's ability to bring people together. For this reason, it was necessary to make fundamental changes both at the head and in the composition of this committee and to give a larger place to the intellectual community. The congress took these points into consideration in the new organization of the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee.⁵⁰⁵

As a result of this necessity, members of the former executive committee Akın Karaoğuz, İhsan Soyak, Nihat Arkat, Talat Tan, İzzet Çakmaklı and Refet Güneş, were not elected to the newly formed committee at the ninth provincial congress held in 1940. Instead, it was given importance to select the majority of the new committee from among the targeted intellectual mass. For this reason, the congress elected Eti Coal Enterprise Bedri Hüsni Bekiroğlu "*whose authority extended to the all people of the basin*", Dr. Saffet Öktem who was both a physician and "*a representative of the virtuous and intellectual Turkish woman*", Tevfik Bilgin who was the head of the bar association and a lawyer "*sympathized by all lawyers*", Engineer Rauf Alpsoy, and Ali Rıza İncealemdaroğlu who was "*a merchant with a good reputation in the market*". Thus, many members of the old committee, some of whom were "*poorly cultured and dimly sympathetic*", were dismissed from the administration. Afterwards, Ahmet Gürel was appointed as the chairman of the administrative committee of the party and the People's House. Because he was experienced in these affairs and had no other job other than being a member of the general assembly. Thus, the dissatisfaction of the people of the region towards the party leaders was largely eliminated.⁵⁰⁶ On the other hand, some eliminations were carried out in the district organizations affiliated to the Zonguldak organization in the same period. As a result, , Safranbolu district administrative committee member and head of the People's House Hidayet Derman, head of Devrek district

⁵⁰⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 668. 247. 1, 10 Eylül 1941 [10 September 1941].

⁵⁰⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 668. 247. 1, 10 Eylül 1941 [10 September 1941].

administrative committee Seyfi Tokgöz, and members Rıza Taşkıran and Fuat Can were excluded from the administrative committees during this period.⁵⁰⁷

The RPP Zonguldak provincial congress, which convened in December 1942 in accordance with the provisions of the party statute, did not make so many changes in the existing structure of the new provincial administrative committee. Because, the previous administrative committee members has worked in harmony. For this reason, it was not deemed necessary to make any significant changes in the structure of the administrative committee. In this sense, the new board most of which was made up of the members of the previous period, was largely formed by the notables of the city. For this reason, the board members were mostly influential people of the province such as engineers, journalists, teachers, lawyers and merchants. During the same activity period, a great deal of harmony was achieved among the members of the party's district administrative boards. This harmony was also confirmed by the report of inspector Karacan who inspected the party organization in 1942. In his report Karacan stated that there was nothing bad heard about the political, moral and social conditions of the members of the party's administrative committee.⁵⁰⁸ However, there were also rumors about the members of some district administrative boards as in every inspection period. In fact, an investigation conducted by the party inspectorate revealed that the rumors about Ahmet Albayrak, a member of the Devrek district administrative committee and also the mayor, went beyond the rumors. According to the investigation, when the mayor of Devrek Ahmet Albayrak was a petitioner, he attempted to collect the receivables of a citizen who could not collect from another person and donated to the Turkish Aeronautical Association. Albayrak has agreed with the citizen for half of the money and succeeded to collect his share. However, when the government was informed about the situation, he had to return the collected money to the relevant

⁵⁰⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 469. 1, 21 Temmuz 1942 [21 July 1942].

⁵⁰⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

institution. Although the mentioned incident was confirmed by the district governor and judge, Albayrak somehow managed to become the mayor from the party. According to party inspectorate however this person who "*pursued his own interests instead of a national institution*" should not have been nominated again in the next municipal election and party congress.⁵⁰⁹ However, when Karacan inspected the Zonguldak party organization once again in 1943, he noticed that although Albayrak was dismissed from the mayor's office, he succeeded in re-entering the administrative committee in the elections.⁵¹⁰ Similarly, although Tahir Karaoğuz had been suspended from the chairmanship of the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee in 1940 on the account of the fact that using party influence for his own, he was also re-elected as a member of the provincial administrative committee in 1942. These examples show us that although the RPP headquarters tries to be involved in forming the provincial committees, the last word is said by the regional actors at the local level. Because, even though these people were not approved/supported by the party headquarters, they succeeded in electing themselves to the party administrative committee as a result of the alliances they had established in the provinces. This example is also an indication that the understanding of the single-party authoritarian rule has not been sufficiently established on provincial organizations.

As it is known, the first half of the 1940s was a period when the conditions of war were felt most severely for Turkey as well as for the rest of the world. One of the most important tests given by the RPP government in this period has been to manage the war economy. The government made great efforts to prevent hoarding and black market, especially after many products including basic consumer goods fell into the black market. The hoarders who had sprung up all over the country during this period emerged in Zonguldak as well and many necessities became unavailable. In fact, hoarders even existed in the provincial

⁵⁰⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

⁵¹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

organizations of the political power which struggled against profiteering during the war years. For example, during the inspections conducted by inspector Karacan on the Zonguldak organization in 1943, it was revealed that a member of the administrative committee had been engaged in profiteering. When it was revealed that this person was convicted of the crime of profiteering, he was directly invited to resign from his position in the party. Besides, the head of the district administrative committee was instructed to do this.⁵¹¹

The example that can be shown to party members who wanted to benefit from the opportunistic environment created by the war conditions is not limited to this alone in Zonguldak. In fact, the event that will be mentioned a little later is extremely important in terms of showing how the party's influence is used for personal interests in the region. The incident occurred when Hakkı Cöbek, a member of the RPP Ereğli district executive committee and also the mayor of Ereğli, submitted his resignation petition to the party office on 8 January 1944 due to his health problems. The party leadership, which was informed about the resignation petition, instructed the district administrative committee not to accept the resignation. Since Cöbek had served as mayor for many years and was one of the oldest members of the RPP. Eleven months later, the Zonguldak provincial administrative board convened in November and decided to finalize the matter after consultation with the provincial authority. However, the truth of the matter became clear after the information provided by the provincial authority. Because, according to the information received from the provincial authority, it has been understood that Ereğli Mayor Cöbek had to resign not because of an illness as it was thought. On the contrary, he resigned because of the fact that he abused his authority. Thereupon, the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee reconvened on 18 January 1944. The committee has decided that no matter how old his party affiliation was, a person accused of such a suspicion could not take

⁵¹¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

part in the party. Thus, the resignation of Cöbek was accepted and a ferry agency Mustafa Demir was unanimously elected as mayor.⁵¹²

One of the most common scenes among RPP organizations in the single-party period was the power struggles within the party. Because, in these years, it has been witnessed that there is a competition between local powers “*that use party organizations as a political wing*”⁵¹³ that complements their socio-economic power in many provincial cities.⁵¹⁴ Although it was not reflected in the party inspectorate reports, it is understood that local actors who wanted to keep the party administration in their hands were engaged in an open or secret power struggle in Zonguldak. In some cases, this struggle was not limited to intra-party competition, but it went beyond a local struggle and caused the confliction between the center and periphery. The most concrete example of this is the 1945 vacant parliamentary election for the Zonguldak province. Although this election seems to be a process that concerns only Zonguldak, the local struggle for candidacy and the support of a different candidate in the region by some political circles in Ankara have carried the issue beyond the local scale. The traces of this struggle however can only be seen between the lines of the petitions sent by the local organizations to the party headquarters for various reasons.

As it is known, the governors who assumed the task of provincial head of the RPP in the provinces continued this duty until the middle of 1939. After this date, according to the party statute, the heads of RPP provincial administrative

⁵¹² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 265. 1055. 1, 12 Aralık 1945 [12 December 1945].

⁵¹³ Tülay Aydın, “Tek Parti Dönemi’nde CHP’nin Taşra Örgütlerinde Güç ve İktidar Mücadelesi: Maraşlı Kadızade Ailesi”, *Asia Minor Studies Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2019), p. 184.

⁵¹⁴ For examples of political struggle in the republic's provinces see Murat Metinsoy, “Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet ve Toplum”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 118, (2010), pp. 124-164; Tülay Aydın, *Tek Parti Dönemi’nde CHP’nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez- Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945)*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), (Kahramanmaraş: Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi, 2018); Aydın, “Tek Parti Dönemi’nde CHP’nin Taşra Örgütlerinde Güç ve İktidar Mücadelesi: Maraşlı Kadızade Ailesi”, pp. 184-200.

committees could be appointed directly from the party headquarters or elected from among the members of the party executive boards. (Art. 84)⁵¹⁵ Based on this decision, governors started to hand over their provincial chairmanships one by one. Thus, after the resignation of Governor Halit Aksoy as provincial chairman in Zonguldak, Tahir Karaoğuz was appointed as vice chairman.⁵¹⁶ Karaoğuz, who took over the duty on 31 July 1939 left it on 22 February 1940 due to his military service.⁵¹⁷ For this reason, head of Zonguldak People's House Ahmet Gürel was elected instead of him. The existence of the secret struggle for influence within the RPP in Zonguldak was revealed by Karaoğuz's petitions. In this petition, Karaoğuz, who had been in the administrative committee of the party and People's House for many years, said a lot of things about the party administrators who replaced him. Tahir Karaoğuz as the owner of the only local newspaper in Zonguldak for many years, also made a significant contribution to the intellectual world of the period with the *Doğu* magazine. In this magazine, he has published articles in line with the ideology of Turkishness. As a result of its approbation by the government as a useful magazine, *Doğu* was included in the libraries of all People's Houses and public institutions across the country.⁵¹⁸ However, the adventure of the magazine being purchased by official institutions and People's Houses ended in 1945. Because, Karaoğuz received a letter in 1944 informing him that the *Doğu* would no longer be purchased by the People's Houses. Thereupon, Karaoğuz made several attempts to continue the purchase of his magazine by the public houses. In this time period he especially visited to the former RPP Secretary General Memduh Şevket Esendal and other high-ranking

⁵¹⁵ *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi (1939)*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1939), p. 21.

⁵¹⁶ *Zonguldak*, 25 Temmuz 1939, p. 3.

⁵¹⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 327. 1352. 1, 20 Nisan 1940 [20 April 1940]; BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 327. 1353. 1, 3 Nisan 1942 [3 April 1942]; BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 327. 1354. 1, 18 Şubat 1943 [18 Feb. 1943].

⁵¹⁸ The publication life of *Doğu*, which followed a Turkist publication policy, lasted for two periods. (1942-1951 and 1974.) See Ateş and Namal, *Türkçü Neşriyatın Etkili Bir Örneği: Doğu Dergisi Bilbiyografyası*, p. iii.

members of the party bureaucracy in Ankara. However, he could not get positive result from these attempts. As a last resort, Karaoğuz sent a petition to the RPP Vice Secretary General Nafi Atuf Kansu on 23 June 1945. In this petition he stated that this decision was influenced by the people who were against him in the Zonguldak RPP provincial administrative committee. Because, according to him, people who replaced after he left his position within the party due to his military service, saw him as a rival and did their best to "*make him fall from the eyes and hearts*" of the party center. Besides, according to Karaoğuz, the fact that Doğu was no longer purchased by People's Houses shows that those within the party who were struggling for power against him were successful in this endeavor.⁵¹⁹ Although Karaoğuz could not be elected as the chairman of the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee again and was somehow eliminated by other local actors in the intra-party power struggle, he was determined to continue his political career as a deputy in Ankara. Because, it will be seen that his name is frequently mentioned in the by-elections held for the Zonguldak deputy between 1940-1945. However, Karaoğuz will be eliminated in this political competition by the powerful political actors of the region. Because, while many people who were elected as the head of the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee were able to become deputies⁵²⁰, the candidacy of Karaoğuz was never warmly welcomed by the party headquarters.

Those who see Karaoğuz as a political rival do not seem to be content with merely removing him from his position within the party. Because, in a petition sent to the General Secretariat of the RPP on 5 March 1945, it was mentioned that head of RPP Zonguldak organization A. R. İncealemdaroğlu was working for the elimination of Karaoğuz and some former members of the administrative committee from the general assembly membership. A group of party members, including Tahir Karaoğuz, Refet Güneş and İzzet Çakmaklı, has sent a petition to

⁵¹⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 327. 1356. 1, 7 Nisan 1950 [7 April 1950].

⁵²⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. /1383. 591. 3, 14 Temmuz 1950 [14 July 1950].

the RPP General Secretariat to learn the truth. According to the petition, İncealemdaroğlu summoned many members of the general assembly and informed them that they should be replaced in accordance with a secret order from the general secretariat. Besides, İncealemdaroğlu stated that this should be kept confidential as a party secret and also requested support for the names identified by him. However, the former members of the executive committee were aware of the political rivalry and elimination efforts of the party chairman against them. So, they were suspicious of the situation and decided to report the matter to the RPP General Secretariat. Because, as people who have gained the love and trust of the people of the province, the party, the governor and the parliament, they did not even think that such a request would be made directly from the party headquarters.⁵²¹ It seems that there was no such request from the RPP General Secretariat to the Zonguldak provincial presidency as well. Because, apart from İzzet Çakmaklı, Karaoğuz and Refet Güneş continued to take an active role in the provincial council in 1946.⁵²²

Although Karaoğuz could not get the opportunity to continue his political career in Ankara, some of the administrators succeeded in eliminating their rivals and reached to the deputyship from the provincial bureaucracy step by step. Among these, the example of Ahmet Gürel and Ali Rıza İncealemdaroğlu are very important in terms of understanding the nature of the intra-party power struggle in Zonguldak. These names are also the rivals of Karaoğuz and he describes these people as “*those who take my place after me*”. These two names are also noteworthy in terms of showing how the RPP provincial bureaucracy was used as a tool to rise to a higher position.⁵²³ As mentioned earlier, Ahmet Gürel was elected instead of Tahir Karaoğuz as the RPP Zonguldak provincial executive

⁵²¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 265. 1055. 1, 12 Aralık 1945 [12 December 1945].

⁵²² *Zonguldak*, 19 Ocak (January) 1946, p. 2.

⁵²³ Tan, 20. *Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 97.

committee chairman and continued in this position for many years. Before being elected as the chairman of the RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee in 1940, Gürel took part in many national societies such as “Zonguldak Turkish Hearth”, “Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti” (Turkish Association for Protection of Children), “Türk Hava Kurumu” (Turkish Aeronautical Association). Besides, he served at various levels of the RPP Zonguldak organization and the People's House. In addition to these, until the parliamentary general elections to be held on 28 February 1943, he also served as the chairman of the RPP Zonguldak provincial executive committee and Zonguldak People's House.⁵²⁴ In this process, Gürel first strengthened his authority over the Zonguldak provincial organization by eliminating his rivals and then climbed up the political career ladder one by one. In this way, he continued to serve within the party as Zonguldak deputy and RPP regional inspector⁵²⁵ until the 1950 elections.

The most interesting example of the intra-party power struggle in Zonguldak in the years mentioned above is A.R. Incealemdaroğlu's political adventure that will culminate in a parliamentary seat. Because, this adventure is an example that should be emphasized both in terms of understanding how intra-party influence is used for personal interests at the local scale and in terms of bringing some political cadres who have power in periphery and the center against each other. Another interesting aspect of this political phenomenon is that this was the first time that the power struggle and the central-periphery conflict on Zonguldak scale had been clear to such an extent. İncealemdaroğlu constitutes a typical example of the regional notables who took part in the RPP executive boards in the provinces of the early republic. İncealemdaroğlu, who was born in Istanbul in 1905, became a member of the RPP (1928) when his father was a merchant in Izmir. In addition to this political affiliation, İncealemdaroğlu served as a party

⁵²⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 327. 1354. 1, 18 Şubat 1943 [18 Feb. 1943].

⁵²⁵ Ahmet Gürel will be appointed as the party inspector responsible for the provinces of Siirt, Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa in July 1945. See *Zonguldak*, 6 Temmuz (July) 1945, p. 2.

candidate in various organizations, especially in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in İzmir. Furthermore, he is a typical provincial notable who carries out many commercial activities in Bartın such as timber trade, shipownership and printing. In addition to all these, İncealemdaroğlu was also involved in activities that gave direction the local press of the period and started publishing the political newspaper *Ocak* in Zonguldak. İncealemdaroğlu was elected as a member of the RPP Zonguldak administrative committee in 1940 and also served as the provincial chairman of the party until 1945.⁵²⁶

1945 marked the beginning of a new era in İncealemdaroğlu's political career. Because, in the mentioned year, a by-election was held for the Zonguldak deputyship, which was vacant due to the death of Hasan Karabacak. As mentioned earlier, between 1935 and 1945, Zonguldak province's parliamentarians left their posts due to various reasons such as death, resignation, illness, etc., and by-elections were held to elect new deputies to replace them. In this sense, it is known that the first election for a vacant parliamentary seat in the city was held to replace Celal Sahir Erozan who died in 1935.⁵²⁷ Besides this, there were several elections held for the vacant seats in Zonguldak between 1940 and 1945. However, the 1945 by-election differs from the previous ones in Zonguldak in several aspects. First of all, the party headquarters in this election liberalized inter-party competition and allowed many candidates to compete for the first time with the influence of the democratization trend of the period.⁵²⁸ Another important feature of the aforementioned by-election is that for the first time in the city, a political rivalry that brought the center and the periphery came to light.

⁵²⁶ *TBMM Arşivi*, Hal Tercümesi, Kutu No: 1329-17.

⁵²⁷ Tan, “Tek Parti Dönemi Demokratikleşme Çabaları ve Taşra-Merkez Mücadelesine Bir Örnek: 1945 Zonguldak Münhal Mebusluk Seçimi”, p. 106.

⁵²⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 424. 1350. 2, n.d.; *Zonguldak*, 16 Haziran (June) 1945, pp.1-2.

The RPP headquarters did not nominate any candidate for the Zonguldak parliamentary seat, and many people in the city entered the election race on 17 June 1945. However, the nature and intensity of the election propaganda suggests that the election was essentially between two strong candidates. The first of these was A.R. İncealemdaroğlu who had consolidated his authority within the party organization due to his economic influence in Zonguldak and its surroundings. The other was an experienced politician Tevfik Rüştü Aras who had served as foreign minister for many years and was personally supported by Celal Bayar. From this point of view, it can be said that the 1945 election for the vacant parliamentary seats turned into a kind of political competition between the center and the periphery.⁵²⁹ In addition, in the 1945 by-elections, the Zonguldak RPP organization faced an important test in terms of both the candidate selection process and party discipline. However, it seems that this exam has turned into a failure story for the organization in every respect. Because, one of the most important events that marked this election period was the abuse of party influence in the political propaganda process. Moreover, another noteworthy aspect of this process was the fact that due to some personal issues, almost all party lower levels went beyond party discipline and nominated their own candidates. All these developments regarding the electoral process have been clearly stated in the letters sent to the RPP General Secretariat by some candidates. For example, one of the candidates Halim Cavit Arcak sent a letter to the party headquarters. In this letter the election period was described as a period in which "*members of the Zonguldak province party organization broke a record in terms of working against each other*". At this point, Arcak's most common complaint was that the party's influence was abused for personal interests and this was ignored by the provincial bureaucracy.⁵³⁰ According to Arcak, immediately after announcing his candidacy, İncealemdaroğlu embarked on a propaganda tour in the region. Thus, by using the influence of his position as the party's provincial chairman, he gathered second voters and instructed them to

⁵²⁹ Tan, 20. *Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 102.

⁵³⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 424. 1350. 2, n.d.

support his candidacy. After this propaganda activity, which was undertaken without the decision of the provincial administrative committee, the members of the administrative committee began to propagandize against İncealemdaroğlu "by breaking the party loyalty and discipline, which was very weak in this district and where personal interests clashed". For example, one of these party member was İsmail Ergener. Ergener, after ran as a direct candidate, began to engage in propaganda activities against İncealemdarğlı in the central, Devrek, Çaycuma and Ereğli districts. Other party members who see this took action and started to support different candidates. Following this "anarchic situation" in the center, the Ereğli district administrative board nominated the Governor of Giresun, İbrahim Ethem Bozkurt, "who was an overlord and a tyrant". Thereupon, the Devrek district organization, which was said to be in constant conflict with the Ereğli district executive board, nominated Nuri Tarhan as its candidate. In Çaycuma, however, many candidates struggled to gain support especially Tevfik Rüştü Aras who had the support of the center. However, Safranbolu, Ulus and Bartın districts remained mostly within the influence of İncealemdaroğlu. In this process, İncealemdaroğlu took advantage of his position in the party bureaucracy and his wealthy background to "do with money what he could not do with party power". For this reason, throughout the entire election process, İncealemdaroğlu spent a considerable amount of money to influence second voters and used his party influence. Because İncealemdaroğlu seems determined to win the election at all costs. However, in the face of all these behaviors of İncealemdaroğlu, the candidates competing in the election had the impression that the municipality, governorship, district governorship and even the head of the inspection committee were indifferent. And, they thought that the complaints of the other candidates were ignored.⁵³¹

⁵³¹ The RPP General Secretariat asked the bureau to conduct a comprehensive investigation regarding the consequences of 1945 by-elections held in six electoral districts including Istanbul, Kocaeli, Sivas, Çorum, Burdur and Zonguldak. In the report prepared by the First Bureau Chief and Çoruh Deputy Ali Rıza Erem attention was drawn to the fact that "these elections, which are a new test for the party organisations, faltered the organisations". Because, it was stated that most of the party organizations in the provinces where the elections were held acted as if they were unaware of their duties in this process. Among these, it was stated that during the election process in Zonguldak, the party members left the party policies and principles aside and fell into

Tevfik Rüştü Aras, the strongest rival of İncealemdaroğlu in the elections, also conducted an intensive propaganda campaign. Thus, Aras, with the support of Celal Bayar, gained important propaganda opportunities that the other candidates never had access to. According to Arcak's letter, Celal Bayar, who was a powerful influential figure in Zonguldak, gifted his 85 thousand liras share in the İş Bank aid fund to the Zonguldak Labour Union when the election process began and sent it with Tevfik Rüştü Aras. In addition to this donation, Bayar also sent 15 thousand liras to Aras through Zonguldak Regional Trade Director Cemal Zühtü in order to cover election expenses. Thanks to Bayar's support, Aras had all the financial opportunities necessary to make propaganda in and around Zonguldak. For example, while some candidates waited for lumber trucks to get from one district to another in Zonguldak, Aras had the opportunity to travel around Zonguldak with two vehicles during the campaign period. However, Aras' disadvantages during the election campaign were the limited time to make propaganda and the fact that the Zonguldak bureaucracy stood behind İncealemdaroğlu. According to Arcak, if İncealemdaroğlu had not had the support of the local bureaucracy, especially the governor of Zonguldak, he would have lost the elections. Because it was considered certain that Aras would win the election with the material and moral support of Celal Bayar, who had influence in the basin. Even Tahir Karaoğuz, who had applied to become a deputy in every by-elections and general elections for many years, did not run in this election thinking that he had no chance against Aras. Moreover, along with Karaoğuz, Refet Güneş and İzzet Çakmaklı, saw this election as an opportunity to take revenge on İncealemdaroğlu. For this reason, throughout the election process, the printing house owned by Karaoğuz turned into Aras's "headquarters", where activities were carried out to split the votes of İncealemdaroğlu as much as possible.⁵³²

feelings such as "citizenship", "localism" and "foreignness". See *Cumhurbaşkanlığı İsmet İnönü Arşivi (CİİA)*, Yer No: 2/2-30, Fihrist No: 557-2, pp. 1-9.

⁵³² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 424. 1350. 2, n.d.

In addition to all these, although Aras tried to gain support by giving public lectures in many districts of Zonguldak and received significant political and economic support, he was not successful in the election. Even more interestingly, even though the entire election process seemed to be between Aras and İncealemdarođlu, he only received 58 of the 675 valid votes. However, İncealemdarođu as the winner of the election received 336 votes and Nuri Tarhan, who finished in second place, received 136 votes.⁵³³ Thus, the election was won by İncealemdarođlu, who had the support of local alliance. On the other hand, although the party headquarters declared that the elections would be held in a democratic environment by not nominating a candidate, Aras fought in this election as the representative of the center in the provinces.⁵³⁴ However, the winner of the election was determined by the distance of the people from being represented by a stranger to the city and the local alliances established between the provincial bureaucracy.

In the elections held after İncealemdarođlu became a deputy, İsmail Ergener was elected as the head of the provincial administrative committee.⁵³⁵ Besides, Cemal Türkili was elected as the provincial executive board membership vacated by İncealemdarođu.⁵³⁶ After Ergener won the 1946 parliamentary elections and resigned from this position, the General Director of ECC İhsan Soyak, was appointed in his place.⁵³⁷ Thus, Soyak and the members of the provincial administrative committee continued to serve until the provincial congress to be held on 14 December 1946. The only change in the new provincial administrative committee was the replacement of agent Süreyya Ayyıldız with

⁵³³ *Zonguldak*, 23 Haziran (June) 1945, p. 1.

⁵³⁴ Tan, 20. *Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 105.

⁵³⁵ *Zonguldak*, 23 Haziran (June) 1945, p. 1.

⁵³⁶ *Zonguldak*, 17 Temmuz (July) 1945, p. 1.

⁵³⁷ *Zonguldak*, 22 Ağustos (August) 1946, p. 1.

journalist Tahir Karaoğuz. Thus, the current composition of the administrative committee, including RPP Zonguldak Provincial Chairman İhsan Soyak, was almost completely preserved.

In conclusion, throughout the single-party period and in the early years of multi-party political life, the RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee existed under the administration of the notables who had influence in the region through various economic activities. Thus, the party administration in Zonguldak, as in many provincial cities, was maintained by those who were also responsible for the management of the most important economic institutions of the region. In Zonguldak, the fact that the managers responsible for the mining enterprises are included in the provincial administrative committee, seems to be related to the party's desire to establish authority over the workers that constitutes a very important mass in the city. Apart from all these, in these years when the authoritarian single-party rule was felt most intensely, the administrative cadres in RPP Zonguldak organization were engaged in an important power struggle within themselves, even if they did not reflect this struggle to the party headquarters. This necessitates a re-questioning of the evaluations made on the authoritarian character of the single-party years in Turkish historiography at the provincial scale. Because in these years, a struggle for power was waged despite the party center, and the local actors who waged this struggle found the courage to confront even the center in order to realize some of their political interests in Zonguldak. The source of this courage has often been regional alliances and personal spheres of influence that established in the region with various dimensions. Thus, many politicians who grew up in the RPP provincial bureaucracy had the chance to complete their political careers in higher positions.

3.3. One of the RPP's Ways of Reaching the Public: Party Membership Policy

3.3.1. Party Membership in Terms of Single Party Systems

In single-party systems, one of the most important elements of the party organizational mechanism is the party membership and the number of members recruited to the party. In this sense, in single-party systems where mass membership is important, member recruitment is not only a source of prestige for the party but also necessary for group identification and solidarity. On the other hand, the operation of the party membership mechanism also contributes to the creation of a disciplined network of local organizations. However, this often forces party administrators to make a choice between “*having more or more qualified members.*” A similar concern will be seen in the RPP administration from the 1930s onwards.⁵³⁸ Apart from all these, it should also be noted that the policies pursued by the RPP in order to gain more members will indirectly contribute to the party's mission of bringing the people and society together. Because, it is known that party members registered in village and quarter hearths are natural members of the local congresses as well. For this reason, the increase in the number of party members participating in congress means an increase in the rate of social representation and the number of social demands voiced as well.

Party membership is a concept that is far from a single definition and takes on different meanings within the functioning of each political party. In this regard, the famous political scientist and sociologist Maurice Duverger states that each party has its own understanding of party membership. For this reason, it is difficult to talk about a single definition of a party membership.⁵³⁹ In this sense,

⁵³⁸ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 179.

⁵³⁹ Duverger expresses the difference in meaning attributed to the concept of party member with these words:” *Party membership is not the same for Communists and Radicals, the French*

party membership is “a consequence of the evolution from cadre parties to mass parties” that emerged with the socialist parties in the early 20th century and was later imitated by other parties. However, it is possible to define the concept of party member as “someone who favors party doctrines, signs a pledge to the party and then pays his/her dues regularly”.⁵⁴⁰

In his famous study on political parties, Duverger categorizes parties into two groups on the basis of quality/quantity in terms of membership recruitment: the “mass” and “cadre” parties. According to this classification, membership registration is politically and financially fundamental for mass parties based on “hearth” organizations. For this reason, a party without members, who are considered the core of the party, is “like a teacher without students”. In addition, most of the mass parties, which are usually based on hearth organizations, set some rules about membership and establish some membership rules. However, such rules often remain theoretical in the hearth system and it is often enough to be willing to register to the party. The mass parties, which derive their financial support mainly from the dues paid by their members, are authorized the hearths to collect these resources regularly. The method of collecting dues is important in that it creates a democratic source of finance rather than capitalist financing of elections. For cadre parties, based on “committee” organizations, it is more important gathering the elites to prepare for the elections and run the election campaign rather than increasing the number of members. In this sense, the primary characteristic of the committee is its limited nature. For this reason, increasing the number of members is not among the priorities for committees

Socialist Party and the British Workers' Party, the Belgian Catholic Bloc of 1920-36, and the Christian Social Party of 1945. In fact, it has no meaning in terms of American parties... Moreover, several kinds of membership can be found within a party itself...” See Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 104.

⁵⁴⁰ Duverger, pp. 104-108.

that consist of a small number of members. Therefore, propaganda is not used to increase the number of members.⁵⁴¹

It is possible to categorize parties into two classes as "*indirect*" and "*direct*" in terms of the ways of gaining members. Accordingly, "*individuals who have signed a membership form, pay a monthly fee and attend local hearth meetings regularly*" constitute the direct parties. The members of direct parties constitute the party community without the help of other social groups. The indirect parties, on the other hand, consisted of "*trade unions, cooperatives, charities and intellectual groups united to form a common electoral organization.*" In such parties, there are not party supporters or members, but members of the founding elements such as trade unions, cooperatives and the charities. In this party, one is not a member of a party in a real sense, but of a social group that is collectively affiliated to the party.⁵⁴²

In order to be able to talk about membership status in political parties, some formal procedures must be fulfilled. Duverger calls these membership criteria as "*formal registration mechanisms*". According to this practice, which is only valid in mass parties, people who will participate in the party signs a letter of commitment and agrees to pay an annual fee. The procedure usually followed to become a member of such parties is to sign a form in which the candidate approves to abide by party discipline and disseminate party doctrines. Through this method, which is also called "*Declaration of Entry*", the membership process becomes concrete. Furthermore, party units were provided to be given an information fiche about the new member as well. However, in practice, two types of member registration can be mentioned beyond this: "*Open*" and "*Limited*" membership. For open membership, there are no restrictions or formalities for becoming a party member other than signing the membership form and paying

⁵⁴¹ Duverger, pp. 106- 108.

⁵⁴² Duverger, pp. 38-39.

dues, while limited membership can only be realized at the end of a two-stage process. In this membership process, the first step is to apply for membership. Later, the application is decided by the authorized organs of the party.⁵⁴³

From this point of view, it can be said that the RPP, which had the characteristic of a cadre party in its initial form, mostly conforms to the definition of a mass party developed by Duverger during the single-party period. In terms of the method of recruitment, the RPP is a party that recruits its members directly. Because, it consisted of individuals who sign a membership form, commit to pay a certain amount of membership dues and try to attend regional meetings organized by party units. Apart from these, the method followed in recruiting members both in the province of Zonguldak and across the country and the functioning of the membership system, the number of members the party reached throughout the country shows that the RPP is a mass party.

3.3.2. Party Membership in terms of RPP Organizations

The RPP, which accelerated its organizational efforts not only in the parliament but also throughout the country as of 1924, laid down concrete principles regarding party membership with its first statute. In this sense, the right to become a member of the party is quite broad in the 1923 statute of the party. In this statute, it is stated that any Turk and anyone who comes from abroad and accepts Turkish nationality and culture can be member of the party. (Art. 3) The only condition required for the membership is to submit a signed document by the person who wishes to become a member stating that he/she will adhere to the party regulations and program. (Art. 4) This principle also constitutes one of the main criteria of the open membership system as defined by Duverger and applied by mass parties. Apart from the principles set out in the statute, it is also known that when the party began to organize among the people, some conditions such as not having engaged in corruption and harmful activities in the recent past, not having taken a stance against the War of Independence, and not arousing the

⁵⁴³ Duverger, pp. 115-117.

suspicion that they now want to enter the party for personal gain for a special purpose and to disrupt unity and solidarity were sought.⁵⁴⁴

With the new statute adopted at the end of the 1927 Grand Congress, the party's membership admission was made more difficult and a very strict membership system was established compared to the previous one.⁵⁴⁵ In this sense, it should be noted that a transition from an open membership to a limited one has been realized by the authorized committees of the party. Because the requirement of "bail" to register to the party is the most prominent feature of this. In the new membership principles adopted at the Third Grand Congress, in addition to the basic criterias approved in the previous statute, new criterias such as "*not being under seizure*" and "*allowing time for the administrative committees to complete the registration procedures*" were set as new criterias to become a member. In this context, the relevant administrative committees are given two months to complete the registration process and are requested to inform the relevant person of the outcome at the end of this period. (Art. 9) On the other hand, in line with the inclusiveness of the single party rule, the party accepted all Turkish youth who had not yet reached the age of political engagement as its natural candidates. At the RPP's Fourth Grand Congress (in May 1935), the new qualifications for membership were defined as "*speaking Turkish*" and "*being recommended by two friends who have been as members in the party for at least two years.*" (Art. 9-10) On the other hand, the membership process is envisaged to be completed within three months with the new statute.⁵⁴⁶ Apart from these, it was also stipulated that newly admitted members should be introduced to other party members through an entrance ceremony. Thus, the party membership in

⁵⁴⁴ Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, pp. 215-216.

⁵⁴⁵ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım* , p. 180.

⁵⁴⁶ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935)*, p. 4.

RPP was ceremonialized with all these changes and long procedures.⁵⁴⁷ According to the new membership, party members whose membership process has been completed will be invited to the party and informed that they have been accepted to the party. It is envisaged that these meetings will be held on a regular starting at the beginning of each year. (Art. 12) While no changes were made in terms of the principles of the party membership at the Extraordinary Congress held by the RPP in December 1938, the Fifth Grand Congress convened on 1 June 1939 raised the age of party registration from 18 to 22. (Art. 11) It must be said that the Law of Societies (Cemiyetler Kanunu) adopted in 1938 was influential in this change.⁵⁴⁸ In the 1943 statute of RPP however, membership principles were preserved with only a minor change in the amount of aid to be paid by party members. According to the new regulation, the amount of dues to be paid was determined "*not to exceed one hundred and twenty liras per year.*"⁵⁴⁹ (Art. 13)

As can be seen, in the first phase of the RPP's country-wide organization process (1923-1927), it preferred the "*open membership system*"⁵⁵⁰ which is called as one of the two membership recruitment methods used by mass parties in political science literature. This system, which theoretically has no conditions and formalities other than signing the membership form and paying dues, is described in the 1923 statute of the party as follows: "*Every individual who*

⁵⁴⁷ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım* , p. 181; Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* , p. 217.

⁵⁴⁸ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 181. According to the 3rd article of the " Law of Societies " which was adopted on 28 June 1938, it became necessary to "*have the right to elect a deputy in order to be a member of political societies*". Accordingly, the voting age was increased from 18 to 22. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of this law, the age of being a member of the RPP, has been increased to 22 as well. See *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, 14 Temmuz 1938, no. 3959; *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, 11 Aralık 1934, no. 2877.

⁵⁴⁹ *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi (1943)*, (Ankara: Zerbemat Basımevi, 1943), p. 5.

⁵⁵⁰ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 116.

participate in the People's Party will sign that he/she will be subject to the statute and program of the party."⁵⁵¹ However, the 1927 statute set more extensive qualifications for party membership and the admission to party membership become more difficult. In particular, the 1931 Grand Congress, where the single-party rule began to be institutionalized and the seeds of party-state integration were sown, was the scene of debates on membership policy. Because, some of the delegations thought that "*the RPP as a revolutionary party was following an unsuitable membership policy*".⁵⁵² For this reason, it should adopt a more homogeneous and rigid membership policy.⁵⁵³ Although the new membership system that was intended to be established with these proposals and criticisms did not find any response in the general assembly of the congress, it was revised and finalized. Thus, it has gained a ceremonial dimension similar to that of totalitarian parties.⁵⁵⁴ The RPP's transition from a flexible party membership system (open membership system) to a rigid one (limited membership system) in a short period of time (about ten years) can be considered normal for a young party that has not yet established its organizational mechanism. Besides, it can be read as a reflection of the change in the party's political vision as well.

⁵⁵¹ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi (1923)*, (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1339 (1923)), p. 1.

⁵⁵² *C.H.F. Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları*, p. 230.

⁵⁵³ Although 1931 statute of the RPP did not make radical changes in the membership policy of the party, one of the main topics of discussion in the Third Grand Congress, was made about party membership policy. The delegate of Kütahya Mr. Alaeddin, who spoke in the negotiations about statute draft, pointed out that the RPP is a revolutionary and ideology party. For this reason, he wanted it to be difficult to become a member of the party. See *C.H.F. Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları*, pp. 230-233.

⁵⁵⁴ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 181.

3.3.3. Difficulties Encountered in Determining the Member Numbers of the RPP Provincial Organizations and Basic Data Sources

The importance of the membership system for political parties and their organizations has already been mentioned. However, in order to establish a planned and disciplined membership system, it is required firstly and foremost to implement a well-developed registration system. In this respect, the existence of a healthy and uniform membership system in any political party depends on the preservation of basic informations about the members such as name, gender, age, place of residence, occupation, date of joining the party, the number of them. However, it is often difficult to determine hem regularly and according to Duverger, there are two kinds of difficulties in determining the exact number of registered members of the party: Parties do not always publish their membership numbers, and these counts are often not based on coherent principles.⁵⁵⁵

The RPP, which tried to institutionalize the party membership system with various regulations throughout the single party period, did not have any restrictions on sharing the numbers of party members with the public. On the contrary, the number of party members within the RPP was periodically shared with the public through official party publications.⁵⁵⁶ These publications also included other party services in order to showas how much the party was embraced by Turkish society. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about a difficulty for researchers in determining the number of members of the RPP as Duverger points out. However, the main issue that needs to be emphasized here is to what extent the data on the number of members received from RPP local organizations reflect the truth. As a matter of fact, according to Cemil Koçak, the fact that the number of members shown in the reports prepared directly by the party

⁵⁵⁵ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, pp. 124-125.

⁵⁵⁶ *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi XV. Yıl Kitabı*, pp. 8-9; *C.H.P. XVIII. Yıl (1923-1941)* in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1396. 630. 1, 1948.

organizations reflects the reality is a controversial issue. He draws attention to this situation with the following sentences:

The debates about how much the number of members reflected the reality were also seen in the reports of many party inspectors and deputies. Therefore, some deputies approached these numbers with skepticism. For this reason, even the data on the number of members remained only on paper and was seen as just a formality.⁵⁵⁷

Based on these evaluations, it is possible to say the fact that the reports of party local organizations, often reflect what should be rather than what is. It should be considered that the laziness of the party administrators as well as some personal concerns may be behind this. In this sense, the difficulty in determining the number of members registered in RPP organizations can be caused following factors: the lack of regular inspections towards lower levels, disconnection between party units, failure to send reports that should be forwarded to higher levels regularly, failure to keep membership records in accordance with the statute and personal interests of party administrators such as preserving their existence position or rising within the party ranks. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that one of the areas of responsibility in which RPP provincial organizations could act most freely was the registration of members. Here, it is necessary to briefly mention which sources should be consulted in determining the number of registered members of RPP provincial organizations and what kind of risks these involve. As it is known, during the single party rule, the RPP General Secretariat was provided with data about the functioning and activities of provincial organizations through three different communication channels. Two of these were reports based on the inspection mechanism. The other is the work reports of the provincial administrative committees, which were prepared quarterly at first and then began to be prepared semi-annually. The reports built on the inspection system however are divided into two categories: the reports of deputies about their constituency and the inspection reports. Although the inspection reports among these include the social and

⁵⁵⁷ Cemil Koçak, *CHP ve Taşra (1930-1950)*, (İstanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım, 2019), p. 31.

economic problems of the people in the region, they are mainly constructed to supervise the functioning of the party organizations. Therefore, in these reports, information about the number of members registered to the party organization, whether the registrations are made in accordance with the statute, the status of the member registry books, and the deficiencies that determined in the collecting of member dues are indicated in detail. However, it should be noted that most of the time, the data in these reports do not match with the work reports of the provincial administrative committee. It is noteworthy that the number of members reported by party inspectors is often less than the numbers in the reports prepared by the provincial administrative committee. The reason for the difference between these two official reports is the possibility that the party administrations overestimated these numbers. Because, it is predictable that these administrators, many of whom would later rise to the position of deputy, would not be welcomed by the party center if they showed that they were unsuccessful at the local level. On the other hand, the reports of the deputies who inspected their constituency, it is seen that almost all of them include the problems and wishes of the people rather than party affairs. However, in some inspections, it is seen that the Zonguldak deputies also visited the party organizations and reported the deficiencies that they detected to the General Secretariat. Therefore, it is possible to come across warnings about the low number of members and deficiencies in registration procedures in some constituency reports. Finally, it is necessary to mention the semi-annual work reports of the provincial administrative committees. These reports contain the most concrete data on the number of members registered to the party, registration procedures of membership and the collecting of membership dues. While these reports contain the most concrete data on the mentioned issues, they are also the sources that should be approached carefully. Because, these reports which began to include more comprehensive data on the number of members especially after the İsmet İnönü period, are equally full of mistakes and omissions as well. For this reason, it is essential to use the data in these sources cautiously and to compare them with other auxiliary sources in order to produce an acceptable research result.

3.4. From Theory to the Practice: The Functioning of the Party Membership Mechanism in Zonguldak

The RPP statutes, which remained in force from the foundation of the People's Party until the beginning of multi-party political life, concretely defined the procedures regarding how and by whom the membership procedures would be carried out. However, although the functioning of the party's affairs was determined in detail in theory, the operation in practice often took place outside the limits and rules determined by the party central administration. However, in practice, the functioning of party affairs has often taken place outside the boundaries and rules set by the party leadership. The RPP, which started to register members in the summer following its official establishment, followed a parallel line with the evolution of single-party rule in terms of membership registration. So, it gradually adopted a ceremonial method similar to that of totalitarian parties. Local implementation of the adopted system however has not been as easy as envisaged.

The acceptance of membership to the RPP began in the summer of 1924 after completing RPP's official establishment. This process came to the stage of completion in the fall of 1925.⁵⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the RPP divided the 74 provinces in the country into 14 regions and has adopted a general organizational model as of 1925 by appointing an inspector for each region.⁵⁵⁹ The RPP continued its organizational development on the basis of the aforementioned model and reached 800,000 members in the early 1930s. At this time, the number of

⁵⁵⁸ As Kabasakal stated, the People's Party's administrative committees of the hearth, sub-district, district and province continued to register members throughout the country as of September 1924. Besides, the member registration procedures would be completed by the end of September and then, in accordance with the statute, quarter hearth congresses would convene and later a committee would be elected consisting of three people. See Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, p. 112.

⁵⁵⁹ Mete Tunçay, "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923-1950)", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 8, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), p. 2019.

registered RPP members was 5.5% of the country's population. The number of registered members of the party had reached 1 million 89 thousand by 1933, while its share in the population rose to 7%. According to Öz, reaching such a high number of members between these two periods could be explained by the mission assigned to the administrative committees to increase member numbers and restructure the organization. The number of members registered by the RPP's local organizations reached 1 million 260 thousand by 1936. Accordingly, the ratio of the number of registered party members to the country's population increased to 7.8%. In these six years (1930-1936), the number of RPP members across the country, the rate of increase in the membership and its ratio to the general population are as follows:⁵⁶⁰

Table 3. Registered Members of the RPP and Its Ratio to Population Between 1930-1936

Years	Total Members	Rate of Increase (%)	General Population	Ratio to the General Population
1930	800.000	-	14.448.000	%5.5
1933	1.059.000	%32.5	15.392.000	%7
1936⁵⁶¹	1.260.000	%19	16.158.000	%7.8

Zonguldak was one of the places where the RPP first started to organize and tried to recruit new members to the party. Official figures indicate that by the end of 1935, as a result of the recruitment policy pursued by local organizations, the number of registered RPP members in Zonguldak was 37.979.⁵⁶² According to

⁵⁶⁰ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, p. 182.

⁵⁶¹ In the official party publication titled “*C.H.P. XVIII. Yıl (1923-1941)*” prepared by the RPP General Secretariat, it is stated that the number of registered members of the party throughout the country was 1.237.504 as of 1936. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1396. 630. 1, 1948.

⁵⁶² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

this report, the highest number of party members in Zonguldak was in Bartın. In Zonguldak, which has approximately 322 thousands of population⁵⁶³, the highest ratios of registered party members to the city population were Safranbolu and Bartın with 15.92% and 15.52% respectively. In addition, the ratio of the registered RPP members to the total urban population was 11.79%, which is approximately 3 percentage points higher than the party's ratio in 1936.

There was intensive communication between the RPP General Secretariat and local organizations regarding the establishment of membership procedures in the provinces throughout the single-party period. In this sense, many correspondences were made between local organizations and the party headquarters to establish membership procedures in 1935 and afterwards. This communication could take place in the form of direct circulars sent by the party headquarters to the organizations, it could be in the form of consultations with the party headquarters on some ambiguous issues by local organizations. In this sense, the circulars sent to local organizations are particularly important in terms of showing and understanding the broken/faulty aspects of the membership mechanism. Because of the mentioned reason above, the RPP General Secretariat sent many instructions to local organizations in 1935. For example, in a circular sent to all organizations on 31 July 1935, it was stated that a sample was prepared for the party register, in which the names of party members and the dates of their entry into the party were recorded. For this reason, it was stated that the party register books should henceforth be printed according to this sample.⁵⁶⁴ Similarly, on 13 August 1935, it was requested to wait for membership procedures until the new commitment and offer papers were

⁵⁶³ *Genel Nüfus Sayımı 20 İlk Teşrin 1935*, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü, vol. 59, (İstanbul: Hüsnü Tabiat Basımevi, 1937), p. X.

⁵⁶⁴ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi 17 Mayıs 1935'den Birincikanun 1935 Sonuna Kadar*, vol. 7, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1936), p.16.

received by the organizations.⁵⁶⁵ Thus, by using uniform examples of commitments and offer papers, it is aimed to ensure uniformity in the pre-membership process and in all party organizations.

Another important issue that the RPP General Secretariat followed regarding the functioning of the membership mechanism was whether the new *ceremonialized* membership model was followed by local organizations or not. As it is known, according to the 1935 statute of the party, it was requested to organize meetings every three months for members whose party membership was approved. Although how much this was followed by the local organizations were not mentioned in the inspection and provincial administrative committee reports, it is understood that the General Secretariat attached great importance to these meeting ceremonies. For this reason, a circular sent to all provincial presidencies on 27 January 1936. In this circular, it was requested that the meetings and ceremonies that should be held regularly every three months for the new members of the party should not be disregarded and that the General Secretariat should also be informed about the results of the ceremonies.⁵⁶⁶

It should be stated that the activities carried out by Zonguldak organization in terms of introducing and integrating new party members with each other can only be followed through the local press. For example, the earliest news about this event appears in the Zonguldak newspaper which was published on 6 June 1936. According to the news, the party board of directors and newly registered members attended the ceremony held in the RPP meeting hall. Before the event, Akın Karauğuz gave a speech on behalf of the party provincial administrative committee. In this speech Ksraoğuz pointed out the importance of the introduction ceremonies and the responsibility to work for the party principles.

⁵⁶⁵ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi 17 Mayıs 1935'den Birincikanun 1935 Sonuna Kadar*, vol. 7, p. 17.

⁵⁶⁶ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İkincikanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 Tarihine Kadar)*, p. 9.

Afterwards, the new party members were congratulated and wished success in their "sacred mission". After the introductory ceremony, which was held as an organizational routine of the party, the party members mingled with each other and left the hall "in a friendly manner".⁵⁶⁷ However, it is observed that the number of ceremonies organized in Zonguldak to introduce party members to each other began to increase especially from 1939 onwards.⁵⁶⁸ This is thought to be related to the changes made within the RPP after İnönü.

The RPP General Secretariat has made great efforts to ensure that the membership system can be carried out regularly. For this reason, it meticulously examined the activity and inspection reports sent to it, and warned the organizations step by step to eliminate the deficiencies that identified. The General Executive Board of the RPP, which examined the reports with this sensitivity, sent a circular on 28 April 1936 to the entire party organization to correct the deficient or unlawful transactions detected in most party organizations. Two of these deficiencies were directly related to the problems observed in the operation of the party membership mechanism. The first issue that party inspectors determined was that the commitment papers were not obtained from the members in some of the hearths and sub-districts organizations. The General Secretariat of the RPP, considering this as a major deficiency, instructed the organizations to make up this deficiency with the commitment papers sent to all provinces in sufficient quantities. On the other hand, as a result of the inspections, it was also observed that party registers were not kept or were incomplete in many districts and hearths. For this reason, the General Secretariat, which had previously sent a sample of these books to local

⁵⁶⁷ *Zonguldak*, 6 Haziran (June) 1936, p. 1.

⁵⁶⁸ For some of these types of events, see *Zonguldak*, 1 Nisan (April) 1940, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 6 Mayıs (May) 1940, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 6 Nisan (April) 1942, p. 2.

units of the party, instructed that the party registers should be kept regularly in each hearths and copies should be kept.⁵⁶⁹

In the context of these circulars, the RPP Zonguldak provincial organization also discussed the issue of recruiting members to the party at the provincial congress held in 1935. In this sense, at the Sixth Provincial Congress od RPP Zonguldak organization, it was firstly discussed the number of members registered to the party and the responsibilities of the local organizations to increase this. At the congress, it was mentioned that all party units were mahkin efforts to gather everyone under the roof of the party organization. Besides, it was also stated that this was accepted as one of the most important tasks of the party organizations. In the congress, this goal was expressed as follows: "...*expanding our organization and bringing all citizens within the framework of the party organization through guidance and enlightening is one of our primary tasks*". On the other hand, this statement is also important because it means that the local representatives of the RPP are aware of the ideological role of the party in enlightening the society. Because, it is a known/accepted fact that the party organizations were unsuccessful in the provinces from the proclamation of the Republic until the early 1930s in terms of public guidance and enlightening. In this period, another important developments in terms of party membership was the right of women to vote and be elected. As a result of this, it is known that a significant number of female members were registered in the RPP Zonguldak organization in the days following the enactment of the law.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İkcikanun1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 Tarihine Kadar)*, p. 13.

⁵⁷⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939]. The mentioned minutes does not contain any information on the number of female members registered to the RPP.

3.4.1. A Discourse Describing RPP's Membership Policy in Zonguldak: "A Party Organization Consisting of the Chairman Himself"

According to the six-month work report of the provincial administrative board, the number of registered members of the party reached 42 thousand as of June 1936. Besides, the ratio of the party members in Zonguldak to the country's population seems to have increased to 13.03%.⁵⁷¹ However, when the city population stated in the congress minutes is taken into account, the ratio of the number of members of the RPP to the total population is calculated as 13.24%.⁵⁷² However, it was stated in the six-month activity report sent to the the General Secretariat on 15 July 1936 that this figure did not reflect the exact number of registered members of the party. This situation was expressed in the report as follows:

According to the charts and information received from the districts and sub-districts, the number of registered members of the party in our province is approaching 42 thousand, but we are not convinced that this is a substantial number. Because our registration work has not yet been organized and completed in accordance with the provisions of our statute as we would like...⁵⁷³

These statements show that although the RPP General Secretariat sent sample charts for all organizations to keep a uniform party record book and these were delivered to all levels in the province, the lower levels of the party did not attach sufficient importance to this issue. However, the inspection report prepared by Mardin Deputy Edip Ergin, who was assigned by the RPP General Executive Board to inspect the Zonguldak organization on 11 June 1936, points to more

⁵⁷¹ *C.H.P. XVIII. Yıl (1923-1941)* in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1396. 630. 1, 1948. In this calculation, the result of general census conducted in 1935 was taken into account. In this period, the highest number of members registered to RPP throughout the country were Ankara (57.757), İzmir (51.278), Samsun (45.864), Kayseri (44.942) and İzmit (43.869).

⁵⁷² *C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri*, 1937, p. 400.

⁵⁷³ *C.H.P. Zonguldak İl Yönetim Kurulunun Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (Haziran 1936)* in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

remerkable deficiencies and failures in membership procedures. Edip Ergin came to the city to inspect the Zonguldak party organization in the summer of 1936. He prepared a report which contains many interesting findings about the functioning of membership procedures.⁵⁷⁴ The first of these findings was related to the discrepancy between the data on the number of members submitted to the General Secretariat through the semi-annual work reports and the figures written in the party registry books of the organizations. In fact, when a table is made within the scope of the data in Ergin's report, the number of registered members of the party in Zonguldak as of the first half of 1936 is approximately 5 thousand less than the number of members stated by the provincial administrative committee. This number appears to be even lower than the number of members reached at the end of the previous year. The number of members identified by Ergin and their distribution over organizations is as follows:⁵⁷⁵

Table 4. According to the Inspection Report Prepared by RPP Zonguldak Regional Inspector Edip Ergin, Registered Members in the RPP Zonguldak Organization as of 1936

Districts	Total Population	Total Registered Member	Ratio to Total Registered Member (%)	Ratio To 1935 Population ⁵⁷⁶ (%)
Bartın	72.327	11.655	30.82	16.11
Devrek	66.238	3.547	9.38	5.35
Ereğli	50.244	6.644	17.57	13.22
Safranbolu	65.297	10.278	27.18	15.74
Zonguldak	68.002	5.683	15.03	8.35
Total	322.108	37.807	100	11.73

⁵⁷⁴ Ergin, who inspected the party organizations in the city for a long time, inspected the Ereğli district organization for the last time on 7 August 1936 and left Zonguldak on 8 August 1936. See *Zonguldak*, 8 Ağustos (August) 1936, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁵⁷⁶ *Genel Nüfus Sayımı 20 İlkteşrin 1935 Kat'ı ve Mufassal Neticeler Zonguldak Vilayeti*, p. 5.

Another noteworthy point in Ergin's report shows that the number of members in the registration books kept by the RPP Zonguldak organization cannot be accepted without hesitation. For example, while 1.046 members were registered in the party registry book kept by the central sub-district organization of Zonguldak, in reality only 437 of them had their registrations renewed. If the issue is to be explained in a more concrete way, only 70 out of 259 members in Soğuksu, and only 143 out of 563 members in Karaelmas has renewed their membership. Thus, it is understood that more than half of the members of the central sub-district organization, which had over a thousand members in the previous period, did not renew their membership in the new registration period. For this reason, when talking about the net number of members, unregistered members should not be taken into account. It is seen that some of the problems experienced in registration renewal processes are due to the delays directly caused by the members themselves, as in the Karaelmas sample. Here, as mentioned in the report, the fact that the members did not give their identities to the party organization was effective in the failure to renew the membership. Another noteworthy point in the report is that the provisions stipulated by the statute were not fully fulfilled in the party membership procedures. In this context, while the Zonguldak central district organization seems to have started to organize member registration procedures according to the relevant articles of the statute, membership registration in Bartın, Safranbolu and Devrek districts is not carried out according to the relevant articles of the statute. In this sense, it is clear from the practices of the lower levels that the provisions of the statute on membership registration are not being fulfilled. For example, in the Safranbolu district organization, the lower levels did not take the opinions of the higher party units into consideration and the applications were not sufficiently examined. In fact, it was stated in the activity report submitted to the upper level by the district organization that membership transactions were not carried out in accordance with the statute. This situation was admitted in the report with the following words: “...Although the number of members was shown as a thousand-odd in the previous report, since these were not kept according to the statute and

were not kept according to the sample and most of them were worn, it is being tried to determine the total number of members again.”⁵⁷⁷

The situation in the Devrek district organization is not much different. Because, there were not being followed the relevant procedures in membership transactions and the number of members was very low. The party inspector summarized this situation in the following words: *“If we want to briefly describe the situation of our party in Devrek, we can say that Devrek party organization consists of the president himself. The fact that 5% of the population of Devrek was registered to the party is a proof of this statement.”⁵⁷⁸* Undoubtedly, there are two important organizational problems behind this statement: The first one is the unsuccessful policy and activities of the Devrek district organization in terms of recruiting members to the party. Another one is the concentration of multiple positions on a single person such as party clerk, accountant, member of the general assembly, president of the Turkish Aeronautical Association and member of the municipal council, despite it is prohibited by party statute. The second issue pointed out by Ergin, the fact that a person who holds a position in the party organization is active in more than one institution at the same time, has been an issue that the party center has been trying to overcome for many years. However, the RPP administration did not impose any sanctions on those who were on the administrative committees of the party or other organizations in most cases, even if they were prohibited by the statutes. In fact, this non-intervention should be seen as a requirement of the desire to keep all organizations outside the party under party control. In other words, it should be seen as a requirement of the authoritarian nature of the single-party rule.

Another important problem that uncovered by Ergin during his inspections of party organizations was that the party registry books, which were stated to have

⁵⁷⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁵⁷⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

been sent to all organizations by the RPP General Secretariat on 31 July 1935, had not yet been delivered to the lower levels. Besides, during the inspections, it was understood that some party levels were not inspected at all by the district organizations⁵⁷⁹ and the books that would be the basis for keeping membership records were never sent to the lower levels. However, according to the report sent to the party headquarters by the provincial administrative committee, these samples had already reached the lower levels. Some sub-units, which did not receive any help from higher levels in the preparation of party registers, took matters into their own hands and succeeded in a short period of time "*to a degree that deserves appreciation*". For example, the Çaycuma sub-district organization, which was formed in 1927 under the Devrek district organization, was able to register 1.131 members in 1936 without any assistance.

3.4.2. Understanding Foreign Membership Policy in RPP over the Example of the Hungarian Engineer "Kırş"

When the membership policy followed by the RPP Zonguldak organization until 1936 is evaluated, it is known that the party units could not show sufficient performance in terms of member registration procedures and the collecting of membership dues. This was also accepted and admitted by the party administration. However, party membership process has different dimensions. For this reason, local organizations sometimes encountered problems that could not be overcome by using local initiative. In such cases, organizations preferred to report the situation directly to the party's General Secretariat rather than taking the initiative. As it might be expected, such rare problems often arose when party

⁵⁷⁹ However, in the six-month work report prepared at the end of June, it is stated that each sub-district is inspected at least once. In the report, it was stated that the main issue that was determined during these inspections and that had to be overcome was that the membership registration and account affairs were not carried out in accordance with the provisions of the statute. According to the party administrators, the main reason for this was the lack of personnel which will follow party affairs and explain them to the villagers. In order to overcome the issue, it was aimed to enlighten the party administrators, especially the heads of the sub-districts, on how the party works should be done. See *C.H.P. Zonguldak İl Yönetim Kurulunun Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (Haziran 1936)* in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

statutes failed to provide a solution. In this sense, the Zonguldak provincial organization encountered an interesting example that was also encountered by other party organizations in April 1936. In this date, Dr. Mitat Altıok wrote a petition to be sent to the party headquarters as the chairman of the provincial administrative committee. As it is understood from Altıok's petition, an engineer of Hungarian origin named "Kırş" had been registered as a member to the party before and paid ten liras in a year. This situation was revealed while party organizations were renewing his membership registrations. This person who saw that the offer and commitment papers were sent to the other parties, applied to the party administration again in order to renew his registration and to get the offer paper. The request to renew the registration of this person, who had somehow become the member of the party despite being ineligible in terms of the party statute, was stalled by the party organization on the pretext that there were no more offer papers. Because the issue seems to be too sensitive for the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee to decide. For this reason, in order to avoid taking a wrong decision, the local organization tried to bring the issue to the agenda of the General Executive Board.⁵⁸⁰ Apart from this, many people who were Hungarian, Bulgarian, German and Italian nationals and became Turkish citizens during these years applied to the Zonguldak organization to register to the RPP. Therefore, it is understood that local units hesitate to decide on their own to evaluate the applications of such persons who *"freely participate in balls, tea dances, concerts, and demonstrations; who closely understand that being a party member is a political duty"*.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 242. 962. 1, 9 Aralık 1936 [9 December 1936].

⁵⁸¹ In fact, the RPP General Executive Board had previously reviewed similar applications and made decisions. For example, at the General Executive Board meeting convened in January 1934, it was decided that "Corş", who accepted Turkish nationality while being an Austrian, would not be admitted to the party. But, it would be appropriate to continue as a member only in the People's House. Similarly, the membership application of Dr. Refet's wife from Samusn, who is a German national, was also dismissed on the grounds that a general decision would be taken on this issue in the future. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 242. 962. 1, 9 Aralık 1936 [9 December 1936].

The RPP General Executive Board convened to discuss the issue on 7 May 1936. The executive board decided that non-Turks, especially those who were not culturally Turkish, should not be admitted to the party. For this reason, the Hungarian engineer named "Kirş", who had somehow been registered to the party before, should be deregistered. On the other hand, the party headquarters requested that the Hungarian engineer be informed of the decision in an appropriate manner. Although such examples are not common in the Zonguldak organization, it is understood that the party headquarters has dealt with similar questions before. For example, an application which has similar content made to the General Secretariat by the head of RPP İzmir organization in September 1932. In the petition it was stated that in recent months, a large number of Jews in Izmir have shown interest in the party, and some of them have even submitted offer papers. The party's provincial leadership, on the other hand, initially adopted a stalling tactic instead of taking the initiative. However, as the number of applicants gradually increased, the party presidency made investigations limited to the Izmir center and concluded that about a hundred Jews met the requirements for admission to the party. The issue was put on the agenda two months after it was referred to the General Administration Committee and could be examined. As a result of the investigations of the party's authorized committee, İzmir provincial organization was advised to "*manage the situation*", as it has been until then. Since it has not been decided on this issue which has occupied the agenda of the party for a long time. Despite all these stalling tactics, the interest of Jewish citizens in the RPP in Izmir did not cease, and the issue was still very much alive in 1935. This time, the Izmir provincial organization again refrained from taking the initiative and waited for directives from the party headquarters to finalize the membership applications of Jewish citizens. The response from the center this time was that it was impossible for the party center to make a decision on such issues while a new election process was taking place. For this reason, it was informed that the issue would be discussed in detail after the election process was completed.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 242. 962. 1, 9 Aralık 1936 [9 December 1936].

The political attitudes taken by the party's local organizations and central administration regarding the membership of non-Turkish citizens to the RPP, as experienced in Zonguldak and Izmir, need to be evaluated separately. In the case of Zonguldak, the statute that should be taken into consideration regarding the membership status of a Hungarian citizen is the RPP's statute of 1931. Because, the registration was realized before 1935. The 7. Article of the relevant statute sets out the conditions for becoming a party member. It stipulates that in order to become a member of the party, in addition to being over 18 years of age and not having a bad reputation among the public, one must also be a Turkish citizen, speak Turkish, and embrace Turkish culture and the principles of the party.⁵⁸³ When the petition sent to the General Secretariat is examined, it is understood that "Kırş" did not meet the mentioned membership conditions but somehow managed to enter the party as a member. For this reason, the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee appealed to the party headquarters to prevent this wrong practice. As it can be seen, despite the party statute has clear provisions for becoming a party member, Zonguldak organization wanted to take into account the decision of the party headquarters in this matter. This situation shows us that local organizations cannot take the initiative in some special situations that arise in party affairs, even if there are clear provisions in the party legislation. On the other hand, it is understood that the party's authorized committees, which are the main addressee of the problem and the final decision-making authority, do not follow a general principle in the face of such kind of issue. For instance, while it was decided that a Hungarian citizen in Zonguldak would be expelled from the party, in another place, despite meeting the conditions stipulated by the statute, "Corç's" application for party membership was rejected. However, it was decided that he could become a member of the People's House. On the other hand, the demands from Izmir in this direction were not officially turned down but it was postponed to a later date because of the upcoming general elections.

⁵⁸³ *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, (Ankara: T.B.M.M. Matbaası, 1931), p. 4.

3.4.3. The RPP Membership System in Zonguldak During the National Chief Period

In the last years of the Atatürk era, Isparta Deputy Kemal Ünal was assigned by the RPP General Secretariat to inspect the party activities in Zonguldak. Ünal, who inspected all district organizations starting from the Zonguldak central organization, prepared a report and sent it to the party's central office. In this report, he made important evaluations about the activities of party organizations such as increasing the number of members and the collecting of membership dues. In this context, it is noteworthy that during this period, new policies were determined by the Zonguldak organization to increase the number of registered members and new target groups were identified. Among these groups, self-employed people and young people working in mining enterprises were primarily aimed to make party members. It is understood that the social status and position of the members of the party executive committee were utilized to achieve this. For example, administrative committee members Engineer İhsan Soyak, who was also the director of the coal company, and Nihat Arkat, the doctor of the Labour Union, were very effective in recruiting workers as members of the party. When we look at the membership procedures carried out by the district organizations during this period, it should be noted that the Bartın organization, which already had a high number of members according to the district population, could not register many new members. Because, based on the data in the report, the proportion of party members in the district, which was 16.11% in June 1936, increased to 18.64% by the end of 1937.⁵⁸⁴ It is difficult to say that this positive impression of the Bartın district organization is valid for Safranbolu. Because the number of people registered to the party among the population in this district proves that the organization has not carried out any

⁵⁸⁴ In the report prepared by Ünal, it is stated that the population of Bartın district is 79.329 and 14.789 of this population is registered with the RPP. According to these data, the ratio of party members to the district population in Bartın seems to have reached a high level of 18.64%. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

activities to increase the number of members. It is understood that only 9.85% of the population in the district, which has 6.799 members for a population of 69.000, is registered to the RPP. According to this data, when compared to the data of June of the previous year, it is seen that the number of party members has decreased from 10 thousand to 6 thousand in a year. Consequently, the proportion of the population registered to the party in the district also declined from 15.74% to 9.85%. According to Ünal, one of the main reasons why the number of members of the Safranbolu organization is not at the desired level is that a mass registration policy is not followed for the employees in the Karabük factory, as in Zonguldak. The report, however, does not provide a comprehensive evaluation of the number of members and the membership policy followed by the Ereğli district organization. It was only stated that the attempts were made by the organization to register self-employed workers and mine laborers to the party. Besides, the report did not include any data about Devrek district organization.⁵⁸⁵

As it is known, upon the death of Mustafa Kemal on 10 November 1938, an extraordinary congress was convened to elect a new party leader. Thereupon, the First Extraordinary Congress of the RPP convened on 26 December 1938, and İsmet İnönü was declared as the "National Chief" and "Unchangeable General President". Mustafa Kemal will henceforth be referred to as the "Eternal Chief" of the RPP. İnönü's rising to the presidency of the RPP also heralded important changes to be made within the party organization. The most important consequence of this change of leader in terms of party functioning was to make the inspection and reporting mechanism more effective and regular. The first step taken in this regard was the reorganization of the General Executive Board, which had been operating with 8 offices since February 1938, into 14 offices as of January 1939. On the other hand, the new party statute approved at the RPP's Fifth Grand Congress (May 29, 1939), also included provisions to include the party inspectorate within the party organization. According to this, 55. article of

⁵⁸⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

the statute stipulated that members of the General Administrative Board, party deputies or members of the party could be assigned to inspections and investigations. Furthermore, 58. Article of the statute stipulates that the duties and powers of party inspectors will be determined by a directive prepared by the General Administrative Board and approved by the General Chairmanship. Thus, the party inspectorate, which had not been considered as a separate institution within the party organization since 1931, became a party organ again. Following these developments, the party's general secretariat published a new list of inspection regions and inspectors responsible for them on 21 June 1939. The most important reflection of these and similar developments will be that the party headquarters will be more aware of the activities of local organizations. Therefore, both the activity reports of the party organizations and the inspection reports began to be sent more regularly in 1939 and afterwards. President İnönü's fondness for bureaucratic mechanisms and his meticulousness in administrative affairs played a role in this.⁵⁸⁶

These changes in the RPP's organizational structure had a noticeable impact on the activities of the Zonguldak organization, as they did on all local organizations. In parallel with the regulations, activity reports prepared by the provincial administrative committees started to be sent to the party headquarters more regularly.⁵⁸⁷ There was also a noticeable increase in the number of inspection reports and trips made by Zonguldak provincial parliamentarians in their constituencies.

The number of registered members of the RPP in Zonguldak was reported to have exceeded 43 thousand by the end of the first six months of the National

⁵⁸⁶ Murat Metinsoy, "Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları", *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, no. 3 (243), (Bahar, 2006), p. 107.

⁵⁸⁷ It should be noted that among the six-month activity reports prepared by the RPP Zonguldak organization between the years 1939-1945, except for the First Semi-Annual Activity Report for 1940 and the Second Semi-Annual Activity Report for 1945, other reports were found in the reseraches made in the Republican Archive in Ankara. Besides, except for two reports prepared by Zonguldak deputies between 1935 and 1938, more than ten reports of elections district in 1939 and later.

Chief Period.⁵⁸⁸ However, the activity report prepared in the same year reveals with more concrete data that the number of members in the city was well below this figure. According to this report, the number of members registered to the Zonguldak organization as of the end of 1939, their distribution over the district organizations, and the increases and decreases in the number of members compared to the previous "*comprehensive activity report*"⁵⁸⁹ were as follow.⁵⁹⁰

Table 5. Distribution of the Number of Registered Members of the RPP Zonguldak Organization over District Organizations (1935-1939)

Districts	1935	Ratio to Province Population (%)	1939	Ratio to Province Population (%)	Increase- Decrease Rate (%)
Bartın	11.225	15.52	14.820	20.49	4.97+
Devrek	3.747	5.65	3.572	5.39	0.26-
Ereğli	6.354	12.63	6.560	13.04	0.41+
Safranbolu	10.278	15.92	6.972	10.80	5.12-
Zonguldak	6.375	9.39	6.096	8.98	0.41-
Total	37.979	11.79	38.020	10.86	0.10+

Considering the data in the activity reports prepared by the provincial administrative board, there was a very low increase in the number of members registered to the party organization between 1935 and 1939. However, when the number of registered members until June 1939 is accepted as 43 thousand, it can be said that the party lost 13.09% of its members in the second six months of 1939. The fact that the party organizations lost such a high and unnoticeable number of members in such a short period of time was not due to a mass

⁵⁸⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

⁵⁸⁹ The aforementioned report has been named as the "comprehensive annual report" because it contains more detailed data on the number of members. It should be stated that the conceptualization here is made by us.

⁵⁹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

defection. On the contrary, it was because of the fact that in the last six months "*party members who died or transferred elsewhere*" were not removed from the party registers. In other words, the decrease in the current number of members of the RPP Zonguldak organization is due to the failure of the organizations to fulfill some organizational procedures. It is understood that ignoring these organizational procedures is in some cases the result of a conscious choice. Because, it is observed that the local units affiliated with the RPP Zonguldak organization have created a free movement field within their administration region, often by ignoring the provisions of the statutes. In this sense, although the reports from lower levels often indicated that registration of members was carried out in accordance with procedure, investigations by higher levels revealed that this was not the case. For example, inspections towards the lower levels often revealed that the books in which membership transactions were recorded were not kept in accordance with the sample. However, instead of introducing any sanction mechanism for these illegal practices, the RPP General Secretariat rather preferred to warn the relevant units. For this reason, it is necessary to be cautious about the authenticity of the statements that membership registers are kept in order. Similar findings were also reflected in the reports of the Zonguldak deputies. In line with the RPP General Secretariat's orders dated 4 July 1939, Zonguldak deputies Rıfat Vardar, Hüsametdin Okan, İbrahim Ethem Bozkurt, Hasan Karabacak and Mustafa Bozma met in Ereğli on 13 August 1939 to conduct inspections in the election districts. One of the stops of the deputies, who met with many people from villagers to townspeople, workers to civil servants and listened to the expectations and demands of the people, was the RPP Zonguldak provincial chairmanship.⁵⁹¹ In this process, one of the important issues that drew the attention of the deputies was the membership registry books used by the party organizations. In this report, the deputies pointed out the fact that "*most of the organizations were using books that had been kept five or ten years ago*" and "*the names of members who left the party were not removed from the register*". For this reason, it was suggested to the

⁵⁹¹ *Zonguldak*, 1 Eylül (September) 1939, p. 1.

party headquarters that the existing membership registers be renewed everywhere and that the old membership procedures be reviewed.⁵⁹²

According to local party officials, in the early years of the National Chief Period, the activities of the Zonguldak organization were not yet at the desired level. According to the party's provincial administrators, this situation was closely related to the fact that most of the district organizations did not have a secretary to organize party affairs.⁵⁹³ For example, during his inspections towards the lower levels in September 1939, the head of the provincial administrative committee of the time closely witnessed the malpractices arising from the lack of a party secretary. For this reason, the head of the administrative committee submitted a report based on his observations to both the relevant district presidency and the RPP General Secretariat. In this report, he explained why a party secretary was needed to organize party affairs in accident centers with the following sentences:

It is a necessity and need to have a strong secretary in the district centers. Although the delegations see party and People's House activities as temporary, their personal and business affairs do not allow them to devote a large amount of time to national service. It is therefore necessary to have a strong secretary under their responsibility as an assistant to these selfless friends who have many merits in terms of serving the party. Through these secretaries, the meetings and activities of the entire organization, from the centers to the most remote village centers, will be followed with full attention and seriousness. And all the services specified by the statute will be able to be provided. My observations and impressions have supported this conviction since the beginning.⁵⁹⁴

As it can be seen, the fact that secretariat task which was carried out by a member of the provincial administrative committee caused significant problems in practice. Because it was often not possible for the members of the

⁵⁹² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

⁵⁹³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

⁵⁹⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

administrative committee to follow party affairs. Because, their main duty was not only party affairs and they also practiced their own professions. For this reason, it was important and essential to employ a salaried secretary within the party organizations in order to organize membership procedures and other party affairs. It seems that the party headquarters had taken notice of this request from the lower ranks. Because, important steps will soon be taken to solve this problem and secretaries' salaries will begin to take place as a separate expense item in the party budgets.

3.4.4. Orientation from Quantity to Quality: Efforts to Determine the Qualifications of the Members in Organizations and Its Reflections in Zonguldak

The semi-annual activity reports of RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative of 1940 do not include clear data on the number of members. In the first of these reports, it was stated that there was a "*slight increase*" in the number of members registered to the party.⁵⁹⁵ Besides, similar statements were made in the second report and it was stated that "*according to the reports received from the districts, there was no significant change in the number of members within six months*".⁵⁹⁶ The detailed data on the number of members, however, was announced at the RPP Zonguldak Organization's Ninth Provincial Congress held on 22 December 1940. According to the congress minutes, the number of members reached within the province and its distribution over the organizations by the end of 1940 is as follows:⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

⁵⁹⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

⁵⁹⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

Table 6. The Number of Registered Members to the RPP by the End of 1940 and Its Distribution on District Organizations

Districts	1935	Ratio to District Population (%)	1939	Ratio to District Population (%)	1940	Ratio to District Population (%)	Increase/Decrease Rate Compared to the Previous Year (%)
Bartın	11.225	15.52	14.820	20.49	11.225	15.58	-4.91
Devrek	3.747	5.65	3.572	5.39	3.737	4.89	-0.50
Ereğli	6.354	12.63	6.560	13.04	6.564	12.61	-0.43
Safranbolu	10.278	15.92	6.972	10.80	13.600	18.44	+7.64
Zonguldak	6.375	9.39	6.096	8.98	6.370	8.45	-0.53
Total	37.979	11.79	38.020	10.86	41.496	10.82	+9.14

Based on these data, when compared to the previous year's figures, more than 3 thousand members were registered to the party in the last one year. This means an increase of 9.14% in the total number of members. However, this upward trend in the number of members did not lead to a significant change in the number of members to city population ratio. In this sense, it is possible to say that there has been an increase in membership in parallel with the growing population of the city.⁵⁹⁸ However, it should be noted that the data on the number of members presented to the general assembly of the congress should be approached with caution. Because, in the inspection report prepared by the party inspector Şerafettin Karacan on 3 April 1940, some interesting findings were made regarding the reliability of the number of members.⁵⁹⁹ According to the report, when the registration books of the district administrative committees were examined, it was understood that the party organization had not registered members for many years. In this sense, it has been revealed that the last

⁵⁹⁸ Considering the results of the general census conducted in 1940, the population of Zonguldak increased by 9.63% compared to the previous census results (1935).

⁵⁹⁹ Karacan, started his inspections of the provincial party organization and People's Houses in January 1940. At the end of the inspection process, all the district organizations affiliated to the Zonguldak provincial organization, the committee of 9 sub-districts and 35 hearths, and all the People's Houses within the province were inspected. See *Zonguldak*, 17 Sonkanun (January) 1940, p.1.

membership process in the Zonguldak central accident organization was carried out on 18 May 1937. In this context, there were not accepted members of the party until 30 December 1939. Similarly, the report states that the Safranbolu district organization had not registered new members for nearly a year (since 1 November 1938), while the Ereğli district organization had registered only two members in the last year. The most interesting and remarkable one among these is the failure of the Devrek district organization to register members. Because, it has been determined that the last membership of the Devrek organization was in 1932. On the other hand, it is understood that the situation in the Bartın district organization is not much different. According to the inspector's investigation, the previous administrative committee in Bartın did not make any effort to register new members for the party. As a result of this, all membership transactions were carried out against the statute. In addition to all of these, the failure to keep registration books in accordance with the sample forced the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee to approach the issue more cautiously. For this reason, the provincial executive committee, which could not be sufficiently sure whether the lower levels kept the party registry books in accordance with the sample, started to state that the registrations were carried out within the rules set by the statute by referring to the reports of the lower levels. In other words, the provincial administrative committee started to avoid taking direct responsibility in case of any failure in this matter. Because, the inspections carried out for the lower levels in 1940 justify these concerns of the administrative committee. As the result of these inspections, it was revealed that the lower ranks of the party were acting outside the statute regarding member registration.⁶⁰⁰

During the National Chief Period, the failure of the RPP Zonguldak organization in recruiting members to the party did not go unnoticed by the regional inspectors. For this reason, one of the main purposes of the inspections was to

⁶⁰⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].; BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

reveal the main reasons for the failure of member registration. In this sense, Kars Deputy Şerafettin Karacan, who inspected the Zonguldak party organization in 1940, made important determinations. In this process, he realized that the works that carried out for the collecting of membership dues in Zonguldak, which is seen as “*the most important and in any case the safest source of income among party revenues*”, are not very encouraging. In Karacan's opinion, the reason behind the failure to collect membership dues at the desired rate was that party organizations turned to other sources of income other than member dues. This issue is stated in Karacan's report as follows:

... the importance of collecting membership dues was not understood to the extent that it deserved by our Zonguldak province organization. Rather, it was decided to continue political activities with the donations made by the special provincial administration, municipalities and the coal companies in the city center.⁶⁰¹

According to Karacan, such a tendency by the party organizations has directly weakened the one of the most fundamental tasks of the organizations: increasing members. Besides, the Zonguldak party organization has become so dependent on these resources that if they were to disappear for any reason, it would be financially very difficult. This orientation also has a directly negative impact on the collecting of membership dues. In particular, many public and private institutions, especially the special provincial administration, provide significant amounts of money to the party organization. This causes the membership fees not to be collected and also prevents the members from acquiring political habits. Therefore, the fact that party organizations are financially fed from many different sources prevents them from working in recruiting new members. As a result of this, the membership revenues of the party organizations decline.⁶⁰² Although Karacan's observation alone is not enough to explain why the party organizations were reluctant to recruit members and failed to collect membership

⁶⁰¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

⁶⁰² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

dues, it is one of the most important reasons for this. Because, when the party revenue budgets are examined, it will be seen that large amounts of aid and donations are received from such institutions and organizations. For this reason, almost all of the party revenues will be obtained from the mentioned sources. Within this, the share of member dues have been very low from the all along. This situation led party administrators to knock on the doors of large institutions and organizations to gain various sources of income instead of collecting the small amounts of money that should have been collected from members.

As previously planned by the RPP General Secretariat, a second inspection of Zonguldak party organizations was carried out in 1940. These inspections by Kars Deputy Şerafettin Karacan began in mid-November and continued until the end of December. During this time, not only party organizations were inspected. At the same time, Karacan has also attended the district and provincial congresses of the Zonguldak organization.⁶⁰³ In this process, even though the entire organization seemed to be engaged in a total struggle to improve membership procedures, some units within the party were still causing the process to be blocked and prolonged. Because the habit of working together and regularly, which is necessary for the lower levels in terms of increasing the number of members, was still not adopted by some party units. This indifference shown by the Zonguldak party central office also reduced the lower levels' desire to register members. Because during the inspections, it was found that most of the member registration offers prepared by the quarry committees and sent to the higher levels for approval were either not processed at all or were left in a corner. Because Karacan reported that he had personally witnessed some membership offer papers being "*forgotten in a corner*" without being processed.⁶⁰⁴ According to the same report, the central party office did not fulfill

⁶⁰³ *Kömür*, 31 İlkkanun (December) 1940, pp. 1-3.

⁶⁰⁴ During his inspections, Karacan found many membership offer paper that were not processed. He drew attention to this situation with the following words in his report: "...*some of them have been revealed from their forgotten corners as a result of the researches made by me.*" See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

its duties in terms of following up on the processed documents and informing the lower levels of the results. This, however, created a laxity in the hearths that did not receive a response from the upper units for a long time and prevented them from paying enough attention to membership registration activities. The report also included an interesting example of the party's central office's indifference to membership procedures. Accordingly, the Karaelmas, Üzülmez, Soğuksu and Kozlu district hearths registered a total of 255 members in 1940 and sent their registration documents to the upper committees. However, among these documents, only those belonging to the Karaelmas and Üzülmez district hearths were approved by the district administrative committee. However, some of the documents of the other two district hearths were not delivered to the higher committees due to the aforementioned reasons. In fact, there were many documents that were not sent back to the hearths committees, although they were approved by the district administrative committee. Considering that any membership application that was not approved by the upper units could not be finalized, citizens who applied for membership to the party had to wait for months for approval.

In mid-1941, the number of members registered to the RPP Zonguldak organization had increased significantly compared to the previous year. Accordingly, as a result of the activities carried out in the last six months, the number of registered members of the organization has increased by over 71% and reached over 71 thousand.⁶⁰⁵ Although it seem impossible to reach such a high number of members in such a short activity period, the official data prepared by the local organizations indicated that there was a very high increase in members. However, it should also be noted that the data on the number of members in the minutes of the provincial congress convened in 1940 and the figures in the annual report do not match.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

⁶⁰⁶ In the provincial congress minutes, in which the number of members registered to the party at the end of 1940 is shared it was stated that there were 6.370 members registered in the Zonguldak

The RPP General Secretariat started to pay attention to the qualifications of the members in addition to their numerical presence as of 1941. In this context, the tables kept by the administrative committees regarding the number of members will also need to be updated. In other words, the routine of determining the number of members in the provincial organizations will now change. Thus, from now on, the level of education of the members will also be determined and reported to the party headquarters. For this purpose, the RPP General Secretariat made a new arrangement regarding the content of the tables to be sent to local organizations from the beginning of 1941. Accordingly, RPP Secretary General Dr. A. F. Tuzer sent a circular to the party organizations in January 1941. In this circular, “*in order to know better the value of the organization in terms of quality and to always keep that value in mind as a measure*”, it was requested to include the education level of the number of members in the semi-annual work reports to be sent after this date.⁶⁰⁷ In the annual report prepared according to this new model, the number of registered members and their educational status is as follows:

Table 7. Registered Members and Educational Status of the RPP Zonguldak Organization as the end of 1941

Districts	Number of Educated Member			Primary School or Literate	Illiterate	Total
	University	High School	Secondary School			
Bartın	2	5	279	3.187	23.049	26.522
Devrek	1	1	30	1.528	2.185	3.745
Ereğli	17	17	390	5.849	2.453	8.726
Zonguldak	320	101	500	18.700	929	20.550
Safranbolu	98	135	158	6.329	8.370	15.090

central district and 11.225 members registered in the Bartın district. However, according to the semi-annual work report of administrative committee Zonguldak central district has 10.350 members while Bartın has 16.118. See *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak (22 İlkanun 1940)* in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946]; BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

⁶⁰⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 5. 24. 3, 30 Ocak 1941 [30 January 1941].

Total	438	259	1.357	35.593	36.986	74.633
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According to the table, the number of registered party members increased by 5.1% in the last six months. In terms of the educational status of the registered members in the province, only 2.75% of the members had secondary education and above. While 47.69% of the rest were primary school graduates or only literate, 49.55% of them were illiterate. However, the proportion of higher education graduates among all members was even less than 1%. At the lower levels, the most developed district organization in terms of the educated members was the Zonguldak central district. On the other hand, Bartın was the district organization which had the highest number of illiterate members. Because 86.9% of the party members registered to the Bartın organization could not read or write at all.

All these data are important in terms of making it easier for us to make some inferences about the members of the RPP Zonguldak organization during the single party period. Based on this, it is possible to say that the backbone of RPP members in Zonguldak consists of illiterate or primary school graduates. Considering that literacy rates decreased from the city center to the countryside, it would not be an exaggeration to say that membership activities were more prominent in rural areas. In this respect, the hearths, the lowest unit of the party's provincial organization, were pioneers in registering members. Apart from all these, it is possible to explain the low rate of highly educated people in the party membership structure with the social conditions of the period, rather than reading it as a political preference. Because the number of people with higher education in the mentioned years is also quite low in the general population.

3.4.5. “Using Gaps in the Party Statutes” to Overstate Number of Party Members

Another inspection towards the RPP Zonguldak organization was carried out by Şerafettin Karacan between April 25- June 22, 1941. During the inspection, like

many other party activities, it was also looked at efforts to increase the number of members and collect membership dues.⁶⁰⁸ According to Karacan's findings, all other organizations continued their normal activities in terms of increasing the number of members except for Devrek. Especially the Bartın and Kozlu organizations had carried out remarkable activities in recruiting members to the party. Bartın district administrative committee also accelerated the regulation of member registration procedures in villages. However, a significant procedural mistake was being made in this process, especially regarding the registration of new members. Because, the membership registers of some village hearths had not yet been approved by the higher levels. However, as mentioned earlier, the approval of one or two higher levels was required to complete the party membership process. In this framework, even though the Bartın district organization initiated the registration process for those who applied to the village centers, these applications could not be considered finalized without the approval of higher levels. Therefore, in terms of a correct calculation of the number of members, it seems quite problematic to accept every application approved by the lower levels as a final member without obtaining the approval of the upper level. However, according to the report, there were more than 10.000 new memberships applications received through village centers but not approved by the higher levels. Even more interestingly, in the data sent to the general secretariat, those whose membership was not confirmed were also shown as party members. This initiative, which local organizations took by going beyond the legal procedures, was also inconsistent with the limited membership policy determined in the party statute.

A similar situation was reflected in the work reports of the provincial administrative committee prepared in mid-1942. According to the report, the number of members of the RPP Zonguldak organization increased by 1.25% to 75.567 compared to the previous period.⁶⁰⁹ However, in the same activity period,

⁶⁰⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 468. 1, 26 Mart 1942 [26 March 1942].

⁶⁰⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942].

the Zonguldak central accident organization lost 1.75% of its members. However, it is difficult to characterize this decrease as a real loss of members. Because behind this decrease, there was a procedural mistake that has been made by party organizations before.

In this process, likewise in the previous ones, the lower levels of the party accepted every membership offer that had not yet been approved by the higher units. In addition to this, they included these in the counts when determining the net number of members registered in the organization. However, subsequent investigations revealed that the persons who submitted offer paper to the party did not meet the conditions for the party membership. For this reason, these numbers had to be corrected in the reports prepared in the following period. In the new picture that emerged as a result of these controls, a significant number of members seem to have left the party organization. In short, such a procedural mistake was behind the decrease in the number of members of the Zonguldak central district in the first half of 1942. Because, 1.130 citizens whose membership was not finalized in the previous period were accepted as party members. However, as a result of the investigations, it was understood that some of them did not meet the conditions set forth by the statutes for party membership. So, when their records were deleted from the party in the following period, the situation was reflected in the reports as if there was mass resignation from the party. Nevertheless, this kind of procedural mistake was not made only once by Zonguldak party organizations. Moreover, it seems that this is not an unintentional mistake, but a conscious act. Because many party cadres in Zonguldak often preferred to inflate the numbers by claiming that thousands of people were party members although their membership registrations had not yet been finalized. In this respect, it has become somewhat of a habit for party organizations to make deliberate changes in the number of members. Therefore, although the upper-level approvals were needed to become a party member, they have become a detail that can be easily ignored by the local organizations.

During the National Chief Period, one of the most important policies followed by the RPP Zonguldak organization in terms of recruiting members to the party was to ensure that workers, craftsmen, laborers, civil servants and engineers somehow became members of the party. In this sense, especially since the beginning of 1941, there has been an important development in terms of mass membership of the aforementioned classes in the party. In these years, thousands of workers from both the Zonguldak mines and the Karabük Iron and Steel Factory (this figure was stated in the report as 3.000 in the Kilimli Region, 1.942 in the Kozlu Region and thousands in the Üzülmez Region) signed the membership offer paper and submitted them to the party.⁶¹⁰ The approval of these applications would mean a significant increase in the party's members in the region. Moreover, the registration of workers in mining and iron and steel factories to the party was also important in terms of the political monitoring and limitation of a group that was prone to the formation of class consciousness and can act *en masse*.

The problems that the RPP had experienced in Zonguldak in the early 1940s in terms of the establishment of membership procedures and collecting of membership dues were similarly being experienced in other provincial organization. For this reason, the developments related with the membership policy were reported to the headquarters through party inspectors. The RPP General Secretariat, on the other hand, sometimes preferred to warn organizations which had similar organizational problems individually, and sometimes sent a single circular for common issues that concerned all organizations. In this sense, these circulars which were sent to the party organizations by the RPP General Secretariat during the single-party period reached 22 volumes.⁶¹¹ In general, the number of members of the RPP

⁶¹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 468. 1, 26 Mart 1942 [26 March 1942].

⁶¹¹ For detailed information about these circulars see Hakkı Uyar, "CHP Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütü ile Yazışmaları: Durmayalım, Düşeriz!", *Toplumsal Tarih*, no.118 (October, 2003), pp. 80-83.

throughout the country was far behind the target in the early 1940s. On the other hand, the ratio of the registered members of party organizations to the urban population varies between 2% and 17%. More interestingly, the number of members did not even reach 10% of the city population in about half of the RPP provincial organizations. This failure of the party organizations to increase the number of members necessitated the party headquarters to intervene in the matter from the beginning. In this direction, RPP General Secretary Dr. A. F. Tuzer sent a circular to all party organizations and to the Fourth General Inspectorate on 24 January 1941. In the circular, it was draw attention to the fact that the number of members registered in party organizations was quite low compared to the regional populations. In addition to this, the circular pointed out that "*despite being a political party that embraces all the people of the Great Turkish Nation*", this could not be reflected in the membership structure/number of local organizations. Beside, it was stated that the administrative committees did not fulfill one of their most important duties. For this reason, the administrative committees were asked to be more careful and work harder than ever before in order to recruit especially intellectuals who were not members of the party. For this purpose, first of all, the provincial organizations whose party membership did not reach 10% of the regional population were asked to take action.⁶¹²

This circular of the RPP General Secretariat is extremely important as it points to a "chronic" organizational problem for RPP local organizations. However, this issue did not enter the party agenda in the early 1940s. Because one of the issues that the RPP General Secretariat focused on the most during the single-party period was to warn local organizations that failed to recruit enough new members to the party and to collect membership dues regularly. For a political party that claims to cover the whole of society, such a low number of members was not acceptable. However, the organizational experience gained between the

⁶¹² For the table prepared by the RPP General Secretariat see *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Teşkilatına Umum Tebligatı (1. İkinci Kanun 1941'den 30 Haziran 1941 Tarihine Kadar)*, vol. 18, (Ankara: Ulusal Matbaa, 1941), pp. 7-8; BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 15. 24. 3, n.d.

summer of 1924 and the mid-1940s was not yet at the desired level to increase the number of party members. For this reason, local units were frequently warned about this issue during the inspections. The party headquarters was aware that behind the failure, especially in the collection of membership money, there were the administrative committees that did not follow the work. In the end, however, the party center had no sanctions or incentives to mobilize local dynamics.

There were some significant changes in the data sent by the RPP Zonguldak organization to the party headquarters regarding the number of members in mid-1942. In this sense, a new data on the qualifications of the number of members began to be shared in the activity reports: the gender distribution of members. Accordingly, 27.48% of the registered members of the Zonguldak RPP organization were women. When it is evaluated in numerical terms, the number of registered female RPP members in the city was over 20 thousand.⁶¹³ On the other hand, the district organization with the highest proportion of female members in the city was Bartın. In this sense, more than half (50.76%) of the members of the Bartın organization were women. Ereğli, Devrek and Zonguldak districts were far behind in terms of the number of women members. This situation drew the attention of the Zonguldak provincial administrative committee, and especially Devrek and Ereğli district organizations were asked to produce new policies to increase the number of female members.

On the other hand, the failure of some organizations to carry out an effective policy in terms of recruiting new members was reflected in the inspection reports of the period. According to the report of the inspector Şerafettin Karacan's on Zonguldak organizations in 1942⁶¹⁴, Devrek was one of the district organizations

⁶¹³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942].

⁶¹⁴ The mentioned inspection was carried out between 22 February and 11 April 1942 and the report on the results of the inspection was submitted to the general secretariat on 14 May 1942. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471.1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943]; *Zonguldak*, 22 Şubat (February) 1942, p.1.

that still cannot pursue an effective policy in terms of recruiting members. In the report, it was draw attention to the failure to register any members to the organization. Besides, it was stated that local organizations attributed this failure the fact that they lacked of a secretary to organize party affairs. However, the low member numbers of Devrek organization compared to its population, seems to be due to the lack of a coherent membership recruitment policy rather than a lack of personnel. Because many organizations within the province were able to register a significant number of members even when they did not have secretariat staff. Therefore, Devrek organization's failure story in recruting members was based on entirely on the lack of staff and it seems to be an attempt to obscure the real reason.

The events that marked the National Chief Period in terms of increasing the number of members in the RPP Zonguldak organization took place in the direction described above. When İsmet İnönü became the president of the RPP, Zonguldak organization has around 38 thousand members. This has increased to over 77 thousand by the end of 1946. In this process, although the party headquarters continued to urge, warn and remind local organizations to increase their member numbers, it is difficult to say that local organizations pursued a successful policy in this regard. Although the RPP Zonguldak organization experienced a significant success in the number of its members in the first few years of this new period, it could not be sustained. Accordingly, the activities of the Zonguldak provincial organization and all lower levels in recruiting new members to the party were stagnant from 1942 to the end of 1946. In order to understand the development in number of members in the first and last years of the National Chief Period in Zonguldak and to understand the stagnation in the membership policy followed by local organizations, the attached table and graph provide very enlightening information.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹⁵ See Table 21 and Table 22.

Another noteworthy aspect of this period in terms of membership policy is that local organizations overestimated the number of their members. It is thought the fear of losing their position and the concern for their future has forced local organizations to act outside the legal procedures of the party and use their own initiatives to overestimate number of the members. Considering the fact that many administrators from the party ranks rose to become deputies, it is conceivable that RPP Zonguldak administrators resorted to such actions in order to avoid create a failed administrator profile at the local level.

3.5. The Functioning of the Membership Dues System in Zonguldak Organization

3.5.1. The Concept of Membership Dues in Terms of Political Parties

The existence of a real membership system in a political party requires a regular functioning dues collection mechanism in addition to a member registration system. Some political scientists state that political parties without any of the mentioned criteria cannot have a membership system.⁶¹⁶ In this respect, membership dues are very important for mass parties which are composed of members who sign a membership form at the first entry to the party, pay a certain amount of monthly dues and regularly attend local hearth meetings. Because these parties are financially based on direct membership dues. For this reason, regular collecting of dues is essential to ensure that political activities are not interrupted.

In mass parties, the hearths are primarily authorized and responsible for the collection of dues. When it is looked at the use of the revenues obtained from membership dues in such parties, it can be said that, , these resources firstly provide the necessary funds for the party's political educational activities , daily

⁶¹⁶ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler* , p. 108.

activities, and sometimes for meeting electoral expenses.⁶¹⁷ In terms of their collection, the following method is generally applied: After someone was accepted as a member, he/she was given a special card that concretizes his/her party membership and a dues system was organized through these cards. The first card, which differs according to the payment period and amount, was issued annually and does not require a great financial responsibility for the member. On the other hand, the members with other cards with higher dues are charged on a monthly basis.

In addition to all these functions, Duverger states that the dues payment procedure is not only a political practice developed to meet financial needs, but dues are also the psychological element of membership and participation. Because, regular payment of dues both as a sign of loyalty and as a source of loyalty, demonstrates the strength of the ties between the member and the party and strengthens the bonds between them.⁶¹⁸ In the light of Duverger's financial and psychological significance and evaluations of the system of regular dues payment, it is necessary to take a closer look at how membership dues is positioned and what meaning is attached to it in the organizational functioning of the RPP. Because, before making an assessment of how the system works in practice, it is necessary to know where this system is positioned in party statutes in terms of organizational functioning, membership system and party finance, and which direction it has evolved in the historical process.

3.5.2. Party Membership Dues within the RPP Structure

In the first statute of the People's Party dated September 9, 1923, there was no provision on membership dues. However, in the last provision of the statute, which is regulated under the heading "general article", it was stipulated that

⁶¹⁷ Duverger, p. 107.

⁶¹⁸ Duverger, pp. 117-119.

"members of the party must give one percent of their personal earnings to the party as a charity fund".⁶¹⁹ (Art. 104) Thus, there was not a provision in the statute on the timing of the payment. In the new statute approved during the Second Grand Congress, the charity funds to be collected from the members on a monthly or yearly basis. Besides, the amount of these charity funds were going to be determined by the administrative committee of each district according to the provisions of the relevant statute. In addition, regular payment of membership dues was a condition for party members to be able to take active part in the organization and to be elected. (Art. 79) Furthermore, in order to complete the transfer from one location to another, proof of fulfillment of commitments must be provided by the members.⁶²⁰ (Art. 80)

In the new statute of the party approved at the Third Grand Congress (1931), it was stated that the members of the party were obliged to give more or less membership dues to the party. The amount of this due will be determined by the members themselves and can be paid monthly, semi-annually or annually. For this purpose, a letter of commitment will be submitted to the local hearth committee and payments will be made through a receipt. The membership dues above the amount determined by the members can also be paid, and a receipt will be given for such payments as well. Avoiding membership dues or failing to fulfill the commitment was seen as a disrespect to the bond of the party.⁶²¹ (Art. 10) The same provisions will apply to transfer to another location. On the other hand, according to the statute, the deputies of the party were also obliged to pay the membership dues in which hearths they were registered. In addition to this,

⁶¹⁹ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi (1923)* in "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)", p. 385.

⁶²⁰ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi (1927)*, in *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)*", p. 408.

⁶²¹ *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, pp. 4-5.

the deputies will be able to pay the membership dues in an amount to be determined by themselves.⁶²² (Art. 94)

Apart from all these, the General Administrative Board of the Party also prepared a circular as a guideline on the implementation of the provisions about the collection of the membership dues. Accordingly, the follow-up and collecting of membership dues was left to the responsibility of village, quarter and district centers. At this point, the main duty of sub-district, district and provincial administrative committees is to take accounts from the lower levels at certain times, to correct any misunderstandings and to continuously inspect the lower levels. The General Administrative Board of the RPP determined some procedures regarding the collecting times of the membership dues, which would be collected in amounts determined by each party member himself/herself. Accordingly, new members would not be asked to pay membership dues for the month in which they registered to the organization, and the collecting would begin in the following month. Besides, June will be accepted as the beginning of the year and collectings will start in July according to the form of installments. On the other hand, the membership dues debts of the party members who did not pay aid money to the party until the end of 1931 would be canceled. After the renewal of the commitment letters, the necessary disciplinary actions will be taken in accordance with the relevant provisions of the statute for those party members who do not commit to pay the membership due or who do not pay the debt even though they have given a commitment letter. The commitment letters will contain information including the name of the party member, the date of the commitment letter, the number of installments and the amount of each installment. These information will be recorded in a book and the process will be followed through this book. Finally, the membership dues to be collected by the hearths will be allocated to the upper levels in certain proportions. Accordingly, the shares of the party organizations as follows: village, quarter and district-

⁶²² C.H.F. *Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, p. 20.

quarter organizations 50%, sub-district organizations 15%, district organizations 15% and provincial organization 20%.⁶²³

Some additions were made to the relevant article of the 1935 statute regulating the provisions on the membership dues. Accordingly, the timely payment of the membership dues was seen as a proof of loyalty to the party as well as a way to ensure the party's success in serving the country. Apart from this, the amount of membership due cannot be changed before one year has passed. An instruction to be prepared by the General Administrative Board will guide party units in collecting these funds.⁶²⁴ (Art. 13-14) In the 1939 statute, the provisions of the previous statute regarding the amount of membership dues, the collection period and how to collect it were preserved. However, a minor change was made in the 1943 statute regarding the membership dues to be paid by party members. According to the amendment, while the previous statute did not contain any provision on the amount of dues, it was decided with this amendment that the amount of membership dues "*shall not exceed one hundred and twenty liras per year*".⁶²⁵ (Art.13)

In summary, it can be said that the policy followed regarding the collection of membership fees within the RPP organization has passed through the following historical stages: As it can be seen, the authority to determine the membership dues, which was set as "one percent of personal earnings" in the first statute of the party, was left to the district administrative committees with the second statute. However, this practice did not last long and it was replaced by the method of "self-determination of the amount of membership dues" which was valid from 1931 to 1943. With the 1943 statute, however, the RPP headquarters felt the need to set an upper limit on the amount of dues and decided to collect up

⁶²³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 2. 7. 24, 26 Aralık 1931 [26 December 1931].

⁶²⁴ C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935), p. 5.

⁶²⁵ C.H.P. Nizamnamesi (1943), p. 5.

to a maximum of one hundred and twenty liras per year from members. In the meantime, some amendments were made in order to regulate collecting periods of the membership dues. Accordingly, while the first statute did not include a provision on how the dues would be collected, the second statute stipulated that membership dues would be collected "monthly or annually". As can be seen, the party headquarters offered several payment options to facilitate members in paying their dues. These options for regular and periodic dues payments indicate that RPP has implemented both types of dues collection systems that are commonly used in mass parties. Thus, this method of collection was used to fund RPP organizations for many years.

When the RPP statutes from its foundation until 1946 are examined, it is seen that the party's authorized committees did not make many changes to the provisions on membership dues which was one of the most important elements of the membership system. Because, in order to establish and maintain a properly functioning dues collection mechanism, it was aimed to establish a mechanism that can respond to organizational needs for a long time with minor changes. However, despite all efforts, one of the organizational problems that the RPP leadership spent the most time on was the lack of regular collection of membership dues. At this point, many correspondences made between the center and local organizations in this direction and the local organizations were warned many times by the RPP General Secretariat. On the other hand, the findings in the reports prepared by the inspectors and the share of membership dues in the party budget items show us that "collecting membership fees" was an important organizational problem for the RPP to overcome. In this sense, the Zonguldak organization like many other provincial organizations, followed a very unsuccessful policy in collecting member dues, and sometimes tried to cover these failures with practices that had no legal basis. For this reason, it can be said that, despite all these efforts, one of the most unsuccessful organizational activities of the RPP organization in Zonguldak during the single-party period was the failure to collect membership fees.

3.5.3. An Alternative Suggestion for Collecting Membership Dues

It is observed that both semi-annual working reports and the inspection reports contain a significant amount of data and evaluations regarding the collection of membership dues, which was an important condition for party membership. Because, both party inspectors and provincial administrators were requested to report on whether the membership dues were collected regularly or not. In addition, these reports should also be included how much membership fees could be collected. In this respect, according to the reports prepared by the RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee, it is possible to say that the local units of Zonguldak organization failed to make sufficient progress in collecting membership dues during the single-party period. For example, when the activity report of June 1936 is examined, it is understood that although the membership dues were collected regularly in Zonguldak sub-district, it was not collected regularly in the other seven sub-districts affiliated to the central district. In particular, it was observed that in Kozlu Sub-district there was not made any attempt to collect membership due.⁶²⁶ Despite all these, in the annual report prepared at the end of the year, it was stated that the collection of membership dues was not at the desired level. This situation was recorded in the report with the following words: *“Although our party organization within the municipal boundary partially collects membership dues, this work could not be organized as desired. For now, the membership dues collected from the villages is also very little.”*⁶²⁷

During the single-party period, the failures in the collection of membership dues were also reflected in the inspection reports. In some cases, even new models have been suggested by party inspectors instead of the existed one. One of the inspectors who made such a suggestion was Mardin Deputy Edip Ergin. During

⁶²⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁶²⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

his inspections in 1936, Ergin determined that only Üzülmöz sub-district organization was collecting membership money regularly. In Filyos district, which consists of 9 village centers and has 850 members, the membership dues have been collected only since the last two years.⁶²⁸ According to Ergin's findings, as a result of the indifference of the Bartın district organization to the issue, the results obtained from the collection of membership dues was not satisfactory. Similarly, it did not seem possible to mention such an item among the revenues of the Safranbolu and Devrek district organizations. In this regard, the failure of other district organizations was also valid for the Ereğli district organization. Because, Ergin reported that it Ereğli district organization had not followed the collection of membership dues in previous years and for this reason it could collect only 76 liras in 1936. Based on all these inspections and observations, Edip Ergin sent a report to the RPP General Secretariat with his impressions and suggestions, and made a new suggestion. Ergin thought that "*it was necessary to comply with the requirements of the result shown by the actuality*" and clarified this suggestion in his report as follows:

It is very clear that the collection of the membership dues remains in words and can not be collected. This inefficiency arises from the lack of effort (not working) in quarters and district hearths. It is possible to achieve this by working diligently. In village centers, this is due to the impossibility of collecting membership dues. Our peasant's loyalty to our party should not be based on the membership due that he/she is burdened with, but on his/her very pure heart and very strong faith. And for this, it should be sufficient for every party-affiliated peasant to carry a party badge.⁶²⁹

As it is understood from this observation, the main reason for the failure in the collection of the membership dues in the organizations is seen as the party administrators who did not follow their duties as of 1936. While this was valid for the quarters and sub-district hearths, the reason for behind the village hearths failure was mostly the financial impossibilities of the villagers. For this reason,

⁶²⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁶²⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

Therefore, Ergin states that party loyalty cannot be measured solely by the amount of money paid to the party. Thus, he suggests that for a person to be a RPP member, it may be sufficient for him/her to wear a party badge. From this point of view, the membership dues should be presented as a choice, not an obligation. It should be noted that the failure in the collection of membership dues in the aforementioned years was not unique to the Zonguldak organization, but was the case for many RPP organizations across the country. For this reason, as in previous years, the General Secretariat has closely monitored the issue of the collection of membership dues by organizations. Indeed, a number of situations had arisen that required a warning to all organizations by the end of 1935. Because the reports of the parliamentarians who visited the election district and inspection regions clearly mentioned that many organizations did not/ could not collect the membership money. In response to this situation, the party headquarters pointed out that it was above all a sign of loyalty for every party member to pay more or less money to his/her party. For this reason, commitment papers were printed and sent to local units in order to operate a uniform mechanism. The main expectation of the party center was that these papers were signed by all party members and that the promised due was paid on time.⁶³⁰ However, the circulars sent to party provincial chairmanship throughout the single-party period clearly demonstrate that all these warnings and measures did not work.

3.5.4. An Extreme Point in the Autonomy of Local Organizations: RPP Bartın Organization's "Head Money" (*Kafa Parası*) Practice

As of 1936, the Zonguldak organization had not made any significant progress in collecting membership dues compared to the previous year. In fact, membership due collection rates were still low in organizations outside the Zonguldak center and Bartın districts. In 1937, only the Bartın district organization was able to

⁶³⁰ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (17 Mayıs 1935'den Birincikanun 1935 Sonuna Kadar)*, p. 157.

regulate the collection of membership due. In this sense, the amount of dues collected by the Bartın district organization had reached 813 liras by June 1937. Similarly, in the working report covering the activities of the RPP Zonguldak provincial administrative committee between January and June 1938, it was pointed out that many party organizations were inadequate in the collection of membership dues. Especially, collection of the membership due performance of the organizations outside the Zonguldak center and Bartın districts was quite low throughout 1937.⁶³¹ In late 1939, the Bartın district organization has continued its successful course and increased the amount of membership dues collected from the village hearths up to 80%. However interestingly, Bartın district organization could not collect any dues in this term. In Ereğli, on the contrary, while the rate of collected membership dues in the central town was around 75%, it was thought that this rate could reach up to 80% if a salaried collector was appointed in the villages. In terms of Zonguldak central district organization, the rate of membership dues collected in the Üzülmöz district hearth had reached 60%. On the other hand, a separate officer was appointed for the regular collection of membership dues in Kozlu, Kilimli and Hisarönü sub-districts. However, no membership dues were collected in other districts organizations.

In early 1940, the organization's activities had not yet reached the desired level in terms of the collection of the dues, which were seen as "*the most important and in any case the surest source of income*" among the party revenues. Therefore, this failure, which was concretely reflected in the semi-annual working reports, did not go unnoticed by the party inspectors as well. In order to overcome this failure, the Bartın district organization had developed an interesting method. The new method of collecting membership fees adopted by the aforementioned district administrative committee was unprecedented and astonishing. For this reason, the party inspector Karacan wrote following sentences about this practice and the attitude of the district organization: "*This*

⁶³¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

district has gone to the extreme in this matter".⁶³²The RPP Bartın district organization, which used the space they have created as they wish with a method that had no place in any party statute or even the law. In this respect, it was lacked of a valid legal basis. For this reason, this practice constitutes the most extreme example of the freedom of action that the RPP provincial organizations had.

According to this practice, the RPP Bartın district administrative committee found the dues collected from the members insufficient. For this reason, in order to increase this source of income, they started to collect 10 cents per year from all men and women living in the villages and over the age of 18 under the name of helping the party. In a short period of time, the notions related to this practice were formed among the people. This indicates that the party organization, which started to act like a lawmaker, adopted this method for a long time. As a result of this, this practice began to be perceived as a kind of tax in the eyes of the people in the region. So, it began to be referred to as "*head money*" and the collectors as "*head money collectors*".⁶³³ This practice, which was deemed to have exceeded its purpose and reached a dangerous level, was immediately stopped when it was realized. However, the fact that the party organization determined its own methods and set a new practices is not only an important example for questioning the authority of the RPP headquarter over the local organizations. But it is also extremely valuable in terms of showing to what extent the organizations were in an autonomous field of activity. It is understood that the increase of the membership dues in Bartın district organization up to 80% in late 1939 is closely related to this "illegal" practice. Thus, the administrators in Bartın organization tried to subsidize their failure with a different source of income.

⁶³² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

⁶³³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

As previously planned by the RPP General Secretariat, a second inspection towards Zonguldak party organizations was carried out in the same year. During this period, party inspector did not inspect only the party organizations, but he was also busy with the district and province congresses.⁶³⁴ One of the issues emphasized in this inspection was the rate of collected membership dues. Karacan also inspected whether the local organizations maintain the "head money" practice or not. During the inspections, it was understood that the practice of randomly collecting ten kurus a year from everyone over the age of 18 in the Bartın district was terminated. Besides, the membership dues were started to be collected in accordance with the procedure. However, the activities of other district organizations in collecting membership dues were still rather uninspiring. For example, since the previous inspection in Devrek district organization, in the words of the party inspector, "*there was not even an inch of collection in the name of membership dues.*" Similarly, the membership dues were not collected in Safranbolu except for the Karabuk district organization. Although some membership dues had been collected in Ereğli and the central district organizations since the last inspection, this was behind the targeted amount.

As can be seen, some of the lower levels sometimes resorted to excessive practices in membership procedures and the collection of dues. The "head money" practice adopted by the Bartın district organization was the last point that local organizations could reach in this extreme. Such negative examples noticed by party inspectors, however, were not included in the annual reports prepared by the upper levels. This brings to mind the possibility that the mentioned practices are ignored or somehow allowed by local organizations. Because, in a small provincial city and party organization like Zonguldak, it seems unlikely that the party's upper administrations would not be aware of such a practice. Moreover, although such extreme practices and methods are banned when they are detected by the party headquarters, provincial

⁶³⁴ *Kömür*, 31 İlkkanun (December) 1940, p. 3.

organizations seem to have already created spaces for themselves where they can freely engage in such activities.

3.5.5. Benefiting From the Mediators for the Collection of Membership Dues

In the early 1940s, warnings and reminders made by party inspectors to local organizations about the regular collection of membership dues were effective in the recovery of some organizations. Although this effect reflected as a relative increase in the collection of membership dues, in some regions, institutions and individuals mediated between the party and the members in collecting these dues came to the fore. For example, RPP administrators in Zonguldak asked the coal company accounting departments to mediate in the collection of membership dues. These were also party members working in the coal basin and Karabük Iron and Steel Factory. In this way, high rates of member dues could be collected in a very short time. However, despite all this, the amount of collected dues was far behind the target. For this reason, the party administrators sought to find other sources rather than the membership dues. Because, it was too low to be a financial source on its own.

As it is known, the main source of income for mass parties was the dues collected from registered members. Therefore, for this parties, which are financially dependent only on membership fees to sustain their organizational activities, the failure in this process was directly reflected in the work of the organizations. Similarly, for RPP provincial organizations, and it is not difficult to predict that the inability to collect these revenues regularly will negatively affect organizational activities at the local level. For example, Zonguldak deputies who inspected the election districts in December 1941, pointed out the failures of the local organizations in collecting enough membership dues.⁶³⁵

⁶³⁵ The mentioned inspection was carried out in September 1941 by Zonguldak deputies Hasan Karabacak, İbrahim Ethem Bozkurt, Rıfat Vardar, Mustafa Bozma, Hazım Atıf Kuyucak and Yusuf Ziya Özenci. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

According to the deputies, the inability of gaining sufficient income in some districts and sub-district organizations has also limited their activities. On the other hand, Zonguldak was a financially self-sufficient organization, although it has not been successful in collecting membership dues. It should be noted that this was largely due to the fact that the organization was more advantageous and successful in finding ancillary resources.⁶³⁶

Although there were some regional successes in the collection of dues in Zonguldak, in general terms, the policy pursued in Zonguldak and other organizations across the country was not successful. For this reason, the RPP General Secretariat sent a circular to all provincial chairmanships and inspectors on 30 January 1941. In this circular, the local party units and inspectors were warned and reminded of the fact that the collection of the membership dues was not at the desired rate. The circular stated that the reason behind the failure to collect the promised dues was not the unwillingness of the party members, but the fact that the hearth administrative committees did not consider this matter seriously and the administrative committees did not follow up on it regularly.⁶³⁷

Because, in the reports sent to the party headquarters for some provinces, it was mentioned that nearly 80% of the promised dues had been collected. Therefore, it was very important that the administrative committees of the hearths, who were responsible for this practice, must handle this duty carefully, continuously and regularly. Similarly, account controls to be carried out by the upper levels during inspections could also have prevented the party from turning to other sources for income. Only in this way it could become a party that could sustain its activities with its own resources. On the other hand, the circular drew attention to the social and conscientious bond of the membership dues between the party and the citizens, in addition to the economic meaning of it. In this regard, a citizen's

⁶³⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

⁶³⁷ *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı (1. İkinci Kanun 1941'den 30 Haziran 1941 Tarihine Kadar)*, pp. 13-14.

contribution to the party within his/her financial opportunity was not only a means to ensure the party's success in serving the country, but also a proof of conscientious loyalty to the party. For all these reasons, party administrators were asked to make the utmost effort on this issue, and party members were asked to pay more or less the amount of membership due they had pledged.⁶³⁸

In mid-1942, while Bartın and Ereğli district organizations reported rates of 80% to 60% in terms of membership dues, it was difficult to say the same for as Devrek and Safranbolu.⁶³⁹ Because some inspection reports stated that in some district organizations, the ratio of the number of registered members to amount of the collected dues was even below 1%. For example, the Devrek district organization was one of them. Although 3.764 people were registered in Devrek organization, only 11 members could paid their membership dues as of the end of June 1942.⁶⁴⁰ According to the provincial administrative committee, the failure of the party organizations in collecting member dues was due to the fact that they have lacked a strong party organization. Especially for the organizations which had a high workload, it was not possible to find a civil servant to work with a low salary. As a result of this, the party activities, especially collecting of dues, could not be arranged as it desired. For this reason, it seemed essential for all party organizations to create clerk and collector positions in order to speed up and organize the collecting process.⁶⁴¹ In order to meet the new costs that would arise, it was necessary for the party organizations to have the financial sources.

⁶³⁸ *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı (1. İkinci Kamun 1941'den 30 Haziran 1941 Tarihine Kadar)*, pp. 13-14.

⁶³⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942].

⁶⁴⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

⁶⁴¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942].

The regions where the collection of membership dues was more regular and at a higher rate stood out as places where the party organization benefited from some institutions as mediators in collecting. For example, by mid-1942, the Safranbolu district organization had experienced an uninspiring activity period in terms of the collection of membership fees. Those who were successful in the collection in the region were the managers of the factory area and station hearths. In the central district organization, the places where membership dues were regularly collected were mostly the mines regions. It seems that the accounting departments of the mining companies were successful in fulfilling the mediator mission expected of them in these regions. Although it is not clearly known how the accounting departments of these mining companies mediated in the collection of member dues, however, it is possible to make some guesses on this subject. It seems that the membership due of a party member was collected directly from workers' wages through the accounting offices of the mining companies in which he or she was working.⁶⁴²

In the inspections conducted by Şerafettin Karacan between November 24, 1942 and January 23, 1943, it is understood that the members who were living in the regions close to coal mines were continuing to pay membership dues. For example, the membership dues were collected more regularly by the party hearths within the Zonguldak and Kozlu regions. Because, these regions were densely populated with mines. At this point, it is understood that there were not many problems in the collection of membership dues in the regions where the majority of people working in the mines were employed. Similarly, the membership dues were collected more regularly in the Ereğli district center and the mining settlement of Kandilli. Accordingly, the Safranbolu district organization was more active in the Karabük region where the iron and steel factory was located.⁶⁴³ On the other hand, in cases where there were no

⁶⁴² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

⁶⁴³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

mediators between party members and the organization, there were still many difficulties in collecting member dues. For example, in the last inspection, it was understood that not a single income was obtained under the name of dues in Devrek district organization.

3.5.6. Tracking Membership Dues in Party Budgets

According to the RPP statutes the collecting of membership was one of the main duties of the hearths. Among these dues, each unit were given a certain share. Within this share, the provincial administrative committee had a 20% share, while the sub-district and district administrative committees each had a 15% share.⁶⁴⁴ In other words, only half of the membership dues collected by the village and quarter hearths was used for their own needs. RPP statutes also stipulated that the party budgets prepared by the executive boards should be discussed at the congresses organized by the relevant party level. Accordingly, the budget of the hearth was discussed and approved in the congress of the hearth. For this reason, each upper unit would discuss and decide on the budget determined by the lower levels.⁶⁴⁵ (Art. 71-ç) In this respect, monitoring the proportional change of membership dues in the budgets of the lower levels of is also necessary in order to draw conclusions about how successful the party organizations have been in this practice. For this reason, it is necessary to look at the budget and account committee reports of the provincial congresses organized by the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1935 and 1946, where the budget negotiations of the entire party organization were held. However, the absence of discussions on the party budget in some congress minutes makes it difficult to comment on this issue for some periods. Yet, the fact that the minutes of the congresses, especially from early 1940 onwards, contain comprehensive tables of

⁶⁴⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 2. 7. 24, 26 Aralık 1931 [26 December 1931].

⁶⁴⁵ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935)*, p. 18.

the budgets of the local organizations seems to be sufficient to draw a general conclusion in this regard.

As it is known, one of the issues dealt with in RPP provincial congresses regarding party activities was the inspection of the party's accounts and the determination of the party budget. For this purpose, a council of 3-7 people was formed to deal with accounts and budgetary affairs. The reports prepared by these committees, including balance sheets and budgets for the coming period, were discussed and approved by the congress. Provincial congresses were obliged to examine and approve the accounts and budget reports prepared in this sense.⁶⁴⁶ However, the party budget approved by the local congress must be also approved by the Grand Congress in order to be finalized. In addition, the party headquarters periodically inspected the provincial party accounts to keep provincial accounts under control and supervision. Until June 1935, these inspections were carried out every four months, after which they were conducted every six months. It was the responsibility of the provincial administrative committees to submit the reports prepared on the results of the inspection to the party general secretariat at the end of every six months.⁶⁴⁷

RPP statutes also included provisions regulating the financial affairs of party organizations. Therefore the party income and expenditure budgets approved by local congresses were expected to be prepared in accordance with these provisions. Besides, the main sources of income of organizations are also included in the sections of the statutes that include financial provisions. The membership dues to be collected from the party members was in the first place among these incomes. However, it is understood from many inspection reports and provincial administrative committee activity reports that the collection of

⁶⁴⁶ *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı 1931*, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁴⁷ *Cumuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (17 Mayıs 1935'den Birincikanun 1935 Sonuna Kadar)*, p. 150.

membership dues was left to the last by the party organizations. For this reason, the revenue rates expected to be obtained from the membership dues in the revenue budgets were considerably behind compared to other sources. For example, according to the party budget approved at the RPP Zonguldak Sixth Provincial Congress⁶⁴⁸, the share of membership dues in the provincial budget was only 1.78%. The other sources of income and their weights within the total budget of the Zonguldak provincial administrative board as of June 1, 1935 were as follows:⁶⁴⁹

Table 8. Income Budget Approved at the 1935 Provincial Congress of the Zonguldak Provincial Administrative Committee

Revenue Items	Total (Liras)	Ratio in Income (%)
• Rents from party buildings	5.000	17.85
• Provincial share taken from lower levels	500	1.78
• Donations	500	1.78
• From People's Houses for the construction of People's Houses Building	12.000	42.85
• Donations from companies and institutions for the construction of People House's and Party Building	8.000	28.57
• Demonstration, Concert, Ball and Other Minor Incomes	2.000	7.14
Total Revenue (Liras)	28.000	100

⁶⁴⁸ With the circular dated August 14, 1934 sent to all provincial presidencies by the RPP General Secretariat, all organizations were asked to convene provincial congresses by the end of January 1935, since the RPP Grand Convention would convene in 1935. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 2. 9. 16, 19 Aralık 1934 [19 December 1934].

⁶⁴⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

As can be seen from the table, the budget of the Zonguldak provincial administrative board, which would be valid until the end of 1936, was almost entirely based on donations and aids from various institutions and organizations and rental incomes rather than the membership dues. In addition, the share of membership dues in the budgets of some of the Zonguldak district organizations was also quite low. In a way, this meant that party leaders accepted from the beginning that they would not be able to collect much from the members under the name of membership dues. Because the targeted amount of dues were underestimated when the number of members registered in district organizations was taken into account. For example, the rate of membership due in the budget of the Bartın organization approved by the congress was determined at 16.61%, this rate was 15.57% in the budget of the Safranbolu district administration. In addition, it was envisaged that the most revenue in the aforementioned organizations would be obtained from aids from various institutions and organizations. On the other hand, it should be noted that the amounts that the Ereğli and Devrek district organizations foresee to be collected were far from reality. For example, although the Devrek district organization had been the most unsuccessful organization in collecting membership dues in Zonguldak during the single-party years, it projected that it would obtain 300 liras out of 683 (43.94%) of the party budget from membership dues.⁶⁵⁰ Similarly, although the Ereğli organization has planned to get a significant portion of its budget from the membership dues, it was one of the most unsuccessful organizations in the province in this regard. As it is descended to the lower levels, it is seen that the only source of income of the organizations were membership dues. For example, all incomes of Gaca, Karamusa, Beycuma, Hisarönü, Kumtarla and Kozlu sub-districts organizations consisted of dues to be collected from the members. For this reason, in the congress it was drew attention to the amount of membership dues in the district budgets which was quite low and could not be collected. According to the general assembly of the congress, the administrative

⁶⁵⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

committees did not follow up this matter sufficiently. In this regard, Dr. Mitat Altıok Altıok, as the chairman of the provincial administrative committee, had expressed the importance of the membership dues for the functioning of the party with the following words: “*I wish our friends and administrative committees will work sincerely in the regular paying and collecting of membership dues in order to prove our loyalty to our party not only in word but also in deed.*”⁶⁵¹ Lawyer Hilmi Yüksel, one of the delegates who took the floor after the congress chairman, stated that all party members would gladly fulfill this duty if the aid money was collected in installments rather than in one go and suggested that the issue should be worked on for a solution in this direction. Among the delegates, Lawyer Hilmi Yüksel began to speak after the congress chairman. In his speech Yüksel stated that all party members would gladly fulfill this duty if the dues were collected in installments rather than in once. Although the head of the congress stated that the proposal was on the agenda of the General Administrative Board and that a study in this direction could even be on the agenda of the Grand Congress, the RPP 1935 Grand Congress did not make any arrangements regarding the method of payment of the dues to be collected from party members.⁶⁵² In this regard, only a new provision regarding the timely payment of the dues was added to the statute.⁶⁵³ (Art.14)

Within the framework of the circulars sent by the RPP General Secretariat to the party's local organizations and the principles set by the party's statute, the RPP Zonguldak Seventh Provincial Congress convened at the party conference hall on December 26, 1936.⁶⁵⁴ The reports prepared by the accounts and budget

⁶⁵¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

⁶⁵² *C.H.P. Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Görüşmeler Tutulgası 9-16 Mayıs 1935*, p. 90.

⁶⁵³ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü* (1935), pp. 5-6.

⁶⁵⁴ The provincial congresses across the country were generally held in this term in November and December. For example; Amasya Provincial Congress held on 24 December 1936, Edirne Provincial Congress held on 1 December 1936, Gaziantep Provincial Congress held on 29 November 1936, Istanbul Provincial Congress held on 20 December 1936.

committee of the congress did not include data how much of the targeted membership dues was collected. However, in the activity report sent to the RPP General Secretariat on January 26, 1937, it was stated that although some membership dues could be collected within the municipal boundaries, the amount collected from the villages was quite low.⁶⁵⁵ In this period, it was also admitted by the party inspectorate itself that all units of the Zonguldak provincial organization followed a failed policy in the collection of membership dues. For example, Edip Ergin, who inspected the region in June 1936, pointed out in his report that the collection of membership dues remained in words and could not be fulfilled by the local organizations. Because, the district administrative committees failed to carry out a successful activity period regarding the membership dues that was envisaged to be collected at the provincial congress convened in 1935. In this sense, only Safranbolu organization was able to collect 76 liras⁶⁵⁶ although it was considerably less than the amount targeted by the organization. Since the minutes of the RPP Zonguldak Eighth Provincial Congress⁶⁵⁷ could not be found, it is not possible to put forward concrete data on the membership dues that was expected to be collected between 1936 and 1938. However, if we look at the provincial administrative committee working reports, we can say that the collections from party members were only good in Zonguldak center and Bartın districts, while the other districts failed in this regard.⁶⁵⁸ It was also reflected in the inspection reports that the Bartın district organization followed a successful policy of collecting membership dues in this period. For instance, when Isparta Deputy Kemal Ünal inspected the RPP Zonguldak province organization in 1937. In this inspection process, he has

⁶⁵⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁶⁵⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

⁶⁵⁷ The congress convened on December 15, 1938. See *Bartın*, 15 Kanunuevvel (December) 1938, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

witnessed that the membership dues were collected regularly from party members in Bartın. Because according to the report, only in June, 813 liras was collected from party members.⁶⁵⁹

One of the most important topics of discussion in the provincial congresses convened by the RPP Zonguldak organization between 1940 and 1946 was undoubtedly the determination and approval of the party budget. For this reason, one of the most important tasks of the Zonguldak Ninth Provincial Congress convened on December 22, 1940⁶⁶⁰ was to discuss the budgets of the district organizations. Thus, as of the end of 1942, the membership dues envisaged in the budgets of the party district organizations and its ratio in it were as follows:⁶⁶¹

Table 9. The Membership Dues Envisaged as the End of 1942

Districts Organization	Targeted Income Budget by the End of 1942 (Liras)	Estimated Membership Fee	Ratio in the Budget
Bartın	6.000	1.700	28.33
Ereğli	2.070	200	9.66
Devrek	1.000	150	15
Merkez	700	200	28.57
Safranbolu	2.450	250	10.20

Although some district organizations predicted that the highest income item would be membership fees in 1942 budget, the amount collected at the end of 1942 was still far behind the targets. For example, the amount of membership due

⁶⁵⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

⁶⁶⁰ *Kömiir*, 31 İlk Kanun (December) 1940, p.1; BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

⁶⁶¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

collected by the Devrek administrative board during this period was only 780 kurus. In the Ereğli district, however, 65 liras could be collected from 80 members in the town, while in the Safranbolu it was revealed that no party committee was interested in this work except for the factory and station hearths.⁶⁶²

It seems that the RPP Zonguldak organization and its affiliated district organizations have never achieved the rates they had targeted for the collection of membership dues throughout the single-party period. The envisaged share of membership dues and the realized revenue budgets for the last two years of the single-party period clearly demonstrates this. However, even in the budget proposal adopted by the Zonguldak provincial organization at the first provincial congress of multi-party political life, the high target was set in terms of membership dues. This target of the organizations shows that there was no renunciation at least on paper. In fact, considering the number of registered members in Zonguldak at the end of 1945 and 1946⁶⁶³, the possibility of realizing targeted budget proposals does not seem impossible. However, it would not be an exaggeration to state that there is a huge gap between the targeted amount and the actual collection. The table below illustrates this concretely:⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

⁶⁶³ See Table 21.

⁶⁶⁴ *C.H.P. Onbirinci Vilayet Kongresi Zaptı Zonguldak*, 25 Senteşrin (Kasım)1944, pp. 24-25; *C.H.P. Zonguldak Onikinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı*, 14 Aralık 1946 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

Table 10. The Projected/Actual Ratio of Membership Dues in the Party Budget Between 1945-1947

District Organizations	Estimated Membership Fee (1944)		Collected Membership Fee (1945)		The Ratio of Membership Fee that is Foreseen to be Collected at the end of 1947
	Total (Liras)	Ratio in the total budget (%)	Total (Lira)	Ratio in the Total Budget (%)	Predicted Ratio in Total Budget (%)
Bartın	3.500	31.81	2402.2	23.59	4.800 (%60.75)
Devrek	300	1.28	0	0	500 (%20)
Ereğli	1.150	31.97	140.95	6.20	1.500 (36.91)
Merkez	3098.60	70.44	622.78	64.65	500 (%33.33)
Safranbolu	500	17.54	335.35	6.73	500 (%29.41)
Ulus	600	23.43	40.67	6.50	-
Çaycuma	500	12.50	51.55	1.51	1.000 (%35.71)
Provincial Administrative Committee	1.000	2.35	91.25	0.13	-

As can be seen from the table, Bartın and Safranbolu were the organizations that came the closest to the targeted collection of membership dues as of the end of 1945. However, the Devrek district organization, which had 3.785 members as of June 1944 according to official figures⁶⁶⁵, could not collect a single penny of membership due. In the Ereğli, central, Ulus and Çaycuma district organizations, however, the amount of collected dues did not even reach 7% of the total district budgets. Despite all these failures, the lower level organizations did not refrain from raising the targets for the membership dues to be collected for the next period at the provincial congress convened in 1946. For example, nevertheless the Devrek district organization had not received a penny of membership due by the end of 1945, it included 500 liras of membership dues in its 1947 budget.

⁶⁶⁵ See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723 .472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944].

CHAPTER 4

A BRIDGE FROM PERIPHERY TO THE CENTER: PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES AND INSPECTORATE MECHANISM IN ZONGULDAK

The growing interest in the activities and functioning of RPP provincial organizations in the Early Republican period has resulted in many academic studies in this field. In these studies, which are generally based on party inspectorate reports, it is understood that the provincial congresses and how they operated in the provinces were not sufficiently covered or were handled superficially.⁶⁶⁶ However, the provincial congresses were the platforms where the RPP's activities and works in the provinces were shared with the public. In addition to this, in provincial congress, the policies to be pursued locally and the political cadres to carry them out were determined. Moreover, the wishes, expectations and complaints of the people were identified and conveyed to the center through provincial congress. In this respect, they served as a bridge between the periphery and the center, people and the state during the single-party period.

⁶⁶⁶ It is understood that the provincial congresses does not attract enough attention in most of the studies that specifically focus on the provincial organizations of the RPP. For example, Seda Bayındır Uluskan, in her study titled “*CHP Parti Müfettişliği ve Raporlarla Bursa Teşkilatı (1936-1945)*” which is a very comprehensive research on the RPP Bursa Organization recently, she examines the activities of the Bursa organization between 1936-1945. However, she does not analyze the provincial congresses held in the city in this period. Similarly; there has not been made a comprehensive assessments on provincial congress in the studies of Mehmet Serkan Şahin's named “*Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Malatya Teşkilatı (1923-1950)*” and Savaş Sertel's titled “*Tek Parti Dönemi'nde Bingöl'de Kurulan CHP Teşkilatları, Halkevleri ve Halkodaları*” as well. Beside these, although the studies of Hakkı Uyar's “*Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*”, Esat Öz's “*Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Türkiye'de Siyasal Katılım*”, Mehmet Kabasakal's “*Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*” deal with the single-party RPP organization as a whole, it is seen that general information about the provincial congresses are given in these studies. For detailed information about this subject see Ökte, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Vilayet/İl Kongrelerinin Parti Politikalarına Etkileri (1930-1950)*, p. 16.

On the other hand, it should be noted that most academic research on the local organization of the RPP ignores the role of the inspection system, which performed a similar political and social function in the provinces, as a link between society and the state. Because the studies centered on the inspection reports could not go beyond the chronological narration of the reports. However, the inspection system had similarly been one of the main instruments that enriched the limited communication between the political power and the people, which was characteristic of single-party systems. Although the inspection reports and the constituency inspection reports seem to serve the same purpose, it should be noted that they differ from each other in terms of content. As it is known, the party inspectorate was utilized as an important control and supervision mechanism for the RPP throughout the single-party period and thus it focused mainly on political and organizational developments. In this way, it can be said that the inspection mechanism functioned as the satellite of the party center in the provinces. On the other hand, the constituency reports were prepared by the RPP deputies, *“who were obliged to go to their constituency offices every year and to visit all district centers at least twice in a full constituency period”*.⁶⁶⁷ These reports stood out with their social aspects rather than their political qualities. Because, in this inspection process the deputies were meeting with all segments of the public and were preparing a report including their observations on social expectations and demands of the public. In this sense, in these reports, it is possible to come across the expectations and complaints about many social needs such as education, health, transportation, agriculture, public order and especially infrastructure services. These are largely in line with the demands and expectations raised in the RPP provincial congresses and often complement each other. In this respect, the constituency inspections undertook an important mission throughout the single-party period by keeping the pulse of every segment of society, from urbanites to peasants, from workers to civil servants, from public institutions to private sector representatives. Thus, throughout these reports, the government and relevant institutions were directly informed about

⁶⁶⁷ C.H.P. *Tüzüğü* 1935, p. 22.

the social complaints, demands and expectations. Thus, the RPP, on the one hand, was able to learn the demands of the periphery through its deputies, on the other hand, it was able to formulate policies according to the expectations of the provinces.

From this point of view, in this chapter, the social, economic, cultural and political expectations of the people of Zonguldak, which were reflected in the RPP Zonguldak provincial congresses held between 1935-1946 and the party inspectorate reports, will be evaluated from the perspective of the bridge mission undertaken by these institutions. For this purpose, it is envisaged to make a general evaluation of the emergence of each institution in the historical process, its function within the RPP structure and its functioning in Zonguldak. Then, what kind of function these two institutions perform as a bridge between the people and the state in Zonguldak locality and to what extent they were successful will be discussed through concrete examples.

4.1. RPP Provincial Congresses as the Social Negotiation Platforms

For political parties, congresses are meetings where issues related to the country and the party are discussed, political roadmaps are determined and meetings are held with the broad participation of the party base.⁶⁶⁸ The congresses, which are the highest organs of political parties at all levels, are the authorities where the decisions that will guide the party are taken and policies are determined.⁶⁶⁹ From this point of view, it should be said that congresses had a very important function in the organization of the central and provincial organizations of the RPP, which was the main actor of the single-party rule experienced for a long time in Turkish political history. Based on this importance, the procedures for organizing

⁶⁶⁸ Hakan Uzun, “ Tek Parti Döneminde Yapılan Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Kongreleri Temelinde Değişmez Genel Başkanlık, Kemalizm ve Milli Şef Kavramları”, p. 233.

⁶⁶⁹ Ahmet İyimaya, “Siyasal Parti Kongrelerinin Yargısal Denetimi”, *Türkiye Barolar Birliği Dergisi (TBB Dergisi)*, no. 64 (2006), pp. 191-192.

congresses in the history of the RPP began to be prepared long before the founding of the party. These principles were further expanded with the statutes after the official establishment of the RPP.

According to the RPP's organizational model, two types of congresses had to be convened within the timeframe determined in the party statutes. The first of these was the "Grand Congress" organized by the party's central organization and held with the participation of representatives designated by the central and local organizations. The other was the local congresses that the provincial organizations were obliged to convene at the hearth, sub-district, district and province level. While the Grand Congress was the highest organ at the center where party policies were determined and which had the authority to make organizational arrangements in case of need, the provincial congresses were the most authorized body responsible for party organization and activities in the provinces. For this reason, the timely convening of the mentioned congresses was very important in terms of determining party policies in the provinces and periodically renewing the political core cadre responsible for the local organization. In addition to all these, congresses were also one of the party organs that enabled political parties to form public opinion. The congresses in the provinces were the most authorized party committees where the problems, expectations and demands of the people were voiced and discussed. On the other hand, they were also the platforms where the party and government activities were discussed as well. In this respect, the congresses at provincial levels were extremely valuable political activity areas in terms of spreading the party ideology, identifying organizational deficiencies, ensuring political participation and internal party democracy, and identifying and solving public problems.⁶⁷⁰

Provincial congresses were organized by the provincial organizations with the participation of the representatives selected at the district congresses. The provincial congresses were basically based on two working principles: The first

⁶⁷⁰ Ökte, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Vilayet/İl Kongrelerinin Parti Politikalarına Etkileri*, p. 10.

of these principles was the election of the administrative committee and making party budget. The other one was to discuss the wishes and demands of the people and public policies. In addition to the delegates, the highest administrative authority of the region and the heads of local organizations were also required to take part in these negotiations. Because the problems concerning the public were mostly in the responsibility of the municipality, special provincial administration or governorship. For this reason, provincial congresses were expected to be attended by governors, heads of departments, mayors, members of city council and the members of provincial general assembly. Thus, the personal or social requests of the delegates attending the congress would be answered directly by the administrative organs. Apart from these, another important task on the congress was to explain to the party representatives which of the wishes determined in the previous congress were realized, which were rejected or postponed to the future, together with their reasons. The agenda of the provincial congresses was often determined by the wishes of the people which have been discussed at the hearth, sub-district, and district congresses. The requests except for those concerning the village or municipality were delivered to the provincial congress to find a solution. This negotiation area was also very valuable in terms of bringing up the problems of the people in the health, welfare and public works. At the final stage, issues requiring legislative change or government action were referred to the Grand Congress and the decisions taken there were sent to the Grand National Assembly to be implemented by the government. In this sense, these congresses differed from the party practices established in the West. Because they allowed citizens to discuss regional problems with administrative authorities on a broad basis starting from the village to the province.⁶⁷¹ The congresses were also recognized as one of the important means of Turkish people's participation in political life. In this respect, they also differed from the Ottoman period by creating a society that could voice its wishes and problems and make demands from the state. This distinction was

⁶⁷¹ Kemal Turan, "Parti Vilayet Kongreleri", *Ulus*, 23 Birincikanun (December) 1940, pp. 1-2.

even described by some party members as "*the biggest difference in spirit of the two period*".⁶⁷²

When the congress activities of the RPP during the single-party-period are examined, it is understood that the Grand Congress mostly convened at the times specified in the statute.⁶⁷³ One exception to this is that the Second Grand Congress, which was supposed to be convened in 1925, could only be held in 1927. In the first years of the republican regime, the political powers have given a priority to the policies followed in response to the resistance against the regime and the revolutions in some parts of the society. This inevitably caused a compulsory delay in party organizing activities.⁶⁷⁴ In terms of party local congresses, the situation is slightly different. As it is known, the People's Party inherited the legacy of the Association for the Defence of The National Rights that organized the National Struggle. In this respect, the RPP had the appearance of a cadre party when it was first established. Later, it started to attempt to organize countrywide beyond being a parliamentary group in the summer of 1924. Prior to this, although *mutemets* were responsible for party administration in the provinces, it is known that the party did not make enough progress in terms of registering members.⁶⁷⁵ From this perspective, it should be noted that there is insufficient data on the extent to which provincial congresses, as an important element and one of the main indicators of provincial organization,

⁶⁷² S. Barım, "Parti Kongreleri", *Zonguldak*, 5 Sonkanun (January) 1937, p. 1.

⁶⁷³ When it is looked at the history of the RPP's congresses that held during the single-party period, it is seen that the party convened two extraordinary congresses. The first of these was the 1st Extraordinary Congress, which was convened on December 26, 1938 after Atatürk's death, and İsmet İnönü was elected as the "unchangeable leader" and "National Chief" of the party. The other is the 2nd Extraordinary Congress, which convened on May 10, 1946, in which the unchangeable general presidency was abolished and replaced by the general presidency.

⁶⁷⁴ Mete Tunçay states that the extraordinary conditions of the period were effective on the late meeting of the Grand Congress. See Mete Tunçay, "CHF'nin 1927 Kurultayının Öncesinde Toplanan İl Kongreleri", p. 281.

⁶⁷⁵ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, p. 95.

could be convened at the national level as stipulated in the 1923 statute. However, one of the most important sources on the subject, the official party publication titled " *CHF (1927) Büyük Kongresi Raporları Tetkik Encümeni Mazbatası*" contains some clues on this issue. The aforementioned source states that party congresses were convened in many provinces across the country prior to the 1927 Grand Congress.⁶⁷⁶ Considering that as of 1927, the RPP had 57 provinces, 290 districts, 606 sub-districts and 23.897 hearths organizations across the country,⁶⁷⁷ it is clear that the number of congresses convened is at an important level for a party organization that is "still in its infancy". After this date, it will be seen that provincial congresses will be convened more regularly throughout the country. As will be seen in the following chapters of our research, especially from the early 1930s onwards, a certain standard will be achieved by the RPP organizations in this regard.

4.1.1. Provincial Congresses within the RPP Organization

The Early Republican Era in Turkish political history is a very dynamic period in which a new nation-state sprouted and took root. Besides, many political, social, cultural, and economic revolutions were also realized in this period. For this reason, some segments of the society resisted accepting these innovations, which meant a transition from a traditional lifestyle to a modern one in this process. For this reason, individual or mass reactions to the new regime have sometimes targeted the revolutions, institutions and even the leader of the Republic. Under these circumstances, the new regime, on the one hand, worked for the adoption of the revolutions and to ensure domestic peace in the first years of its establishment. On the other hand, it reshaped and reorganized state institutions according to the needs and requirements of the period. In this sense, the RPP, as

⁶⁷⁶ Mete Tunçay, based on the report submitted to the Grand Congress, which includes requests from provinces for various ministries, concludes that congresses were held in 46 provinces across the country in this period. See Tunçay, "CHF'nin 1927 Kurultayının Öncesinde Toplanan İl Kongreleri", p. 305

⁶⁷⁷ Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 220.

one of the most important institutions that the Republic brought to Turkish political life, was also subjected to some regulations and changes according to the social and political conditions of the period. Some of these periodic changes within the party were related with the congresses convened at the central and local levels. It is understood that the regulations regarding local congresses in the statutes were generally based on issues such as the congress calendar, the procedures to be followed in determining the representatives, the obligations to be fulfilled in order to take part in party affairs and to vote at the congress and the position of government representatives at the congresses. Therefore, in this section, the regulations regarding provincial congresses in the party statutes valid from the ADNRRAR statute adopted at the Sivas Congress until the beginning of multi-party political life will be outlined. Because, this evaluation seems to be essential for understanding the position and function of the provincial congresses within the party organization.

After the Sivas Congress, all the resistance organizations against the occupation was united under the name of the ADNRRAR and a new statute was put forward. Although, this statute determines the organizational and administrative structure of the ADNRRAR at the first glance, it also constitutes the basis of the first organizational model of the RPP, which is seen as the continuation of this organization.⁶⁷⁸In addition to this, although the statute did not include provisions on the establishment and functioning of a political organization, it adopted an organizational model in line with the existing administrative structure of the country.⁶⁷⁹ Accordingly, the ADNRRAR organization consisted of villages and quarters, sub-districts, districts, sanjak, provinve and independent sanjak. The ADNRRAR statute also defined the decision-making bodies of the association and the related procedures. Accordingly, the decisions to be taken in the

⁶⁷⁸ Caner Erdoğan, “Tek Parti İktidarı Döneminde (1923-1950) Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nin Örgütlenme Yapısının ve Yönetim Anlayışının Çözümlemesi”, *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, vol. 10, no. 52 (October, 2017), p. 367.

⁶⁷⁹ Aydın Erdoğan, *CHP Tüzükleri Dünü Bugünü (1923-2000)*, (Ankara: V Kitap, 2000), p. 18.

provinces were to be discussed by the provincial congresses, while the central decisions were to be discussed by the general congress. Provincial congresses were to convene once a year in March, April and May in the provincial centers in order to achieve general and comprehensive consensus around national goals and to take the necessary measures. These congresses were to be opened with the participation of two members elected by the district and sanjak delegations.⁶⁸⁰ According to the first charter of the People's Party approved in 1923, the highest level of the organization of the party in the provinces was also the provincial organization. The provincial organization was envisaged to operate the decision-making and administration mechanism through the "*provincial congress*", "*provincial administrative committee*", "*provincial mutemets*" and "*provincial election organization*".⁶⁸¹ According to the statute, the provincial congress would convene once a year on the 23rd of January with the participation of three delegates from each district organizations. Besides, provincial chairman of the party (*mutemets*) were considered a natural member of the congress. The way followed in the Grand Congress was to be followed in the elections of the congress leaders, clerks and commissions. (Art. 42-47) According to the RPP 1927 statute, the provincial congress was the highest level of decision-making bodies in the provincial organization of the party. Provincial congresses had to convene once a year on a predetermined date. Besides, the congress could be opened with the participation of three representatives determined at each district congress and with more than half of the designated members. It was necessary to appoint a first and second chairman and two clerks to run the congress. If an inspectors attend a congress, the chairmanship of it would be fulfilled by the inspectors. After the opening of the congress, the one-year activity report of the provincial delegation would be discussed. Then, the statute, plan and budget committees, consisting of three to five members, would be formed. In addition to

⁶⁸⁰ Faik Reşit Unat, "Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyetinin Kuruluşuna Ait Vesikalar", *Tarih Vesikaları*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Ağustos, 1941), p. 89.

⁶⁸¹ Erdoğan "Tek Parti İktidarı Döneminde (1923-1950) Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin Örgütlenme Yapısının ve Yönetim Anlayışının Çözümlemesi", p. 369.

these, the members of the provincial administrative committee and the representatives of the Grand Congress to be appointed would also be determined at the end of the congress. According to the RPP statute of 1927, among other duties of the provincial congresses were to examine the opinions on the general needs of the region and to prepare a report on this issue and submit it to the inspectorate. (Art. 68-71)

An important change was made in the RPP 1931 statute regulating the convening times of provincial congresses. Accordingly, the congresses that were supposed to convene once a year would henceforth convene every two years. In this sense, the congresses would be completed by February following a hierarchical sequence. Besides, in order to take part in the congresses, the members of the party had to complete the registration process three months before the congress convened.⁶⁸² Before the congress, the works to be discussed would be put in an order and this order would be followed through the congress process. The quorum for taking decisions was one more than half of those present at the congress. Unless otherwise specified, elections were to be held by secret ballot. In any election where an absolute majority was not achieved, the second most votes would be the winner. In addition to all these, the statute also included a regulation on the deputies who would attend the congresses. Accordingly, although members of the party could participate in the congress to be held in the province in which they were registered, they were not entitled to vote unless they were a representative (Art. 64) According to the 1935 party statute, the congress process in the provinces would start from the hearths and end with provincial congresses. Thus, it was expected to be completed in between September-December. The statute stipulates that ordinary district and provincial congresses shall start within fifteen days following the end of the sub- district congresses and be completed within one and a half months at the latest. (Art. 54) It was

⁶⁸² In the 79th article of the previous statute, it was stipulated that financial commitments must be fulfilled in order to take active responsibility within the party and to be elected in congresses. See *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi (1927)* in “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931”, p. 408.

decided that the highest administrative authorities of the region could participate in the sub-district, district and provincial congresses to be held from 1935 onwards, without having the right to vote or express an opinion. Thus, congresses were transformed into an important platform where the people and government representatives could come together to discuss social demands and expectations. Because, after the discussion of the party's wishes, these authorities will be able to make statements, if necessary, without engaging in any debate with the participants. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the mayor, members of the municipal council and members of the provincial general assembly will be able to attend all party congresses as listeners. However, no one other than the highest administrative authority and the delegates shall be allowed to attend the sessions that have been decided to be held in secret. (Art. 64)

The RPP's Fifth Grand Congress, which convened on May 29, 1939, did not make any significant changes in the new party statute about the functioning of provincial congresses. In the RPP's 1943 statute the traces of the party-state integration were erased.⁶⁸³ In this respect, the articles that ensured that the party secretary general would be a natural member of the government and that the highest local official could attend secret meetings in local congresses were removed from the statute. In addition, party inspectors were authorized to preside over all provincial congresses to be held within their regions. (Art. 60) In order to ensure that the congresses were held in accordance with the party statute, the procedure of sending observers by the higher administrative committees was also maintained. According to the statute, it was the duty of the congress leader to ensure that congresses were conducted in peace and according to a certain order. The head of the congress is obliged to warn and, if necessary, to expel from the meeting those who disrupt this order, those who try to prevent the members from freely expressing their opinions and those who argue over individuals. Except for these, other processes regarding the congress were similar to the previous statute.

⁶⁸³ Erdoğan, "Tek Parti İktidarı Döneminde (1923-1950) Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin Örgütlenme Yapısının ve Yönetim Anlayışının Çözümlemesi", p. 375.

4.1.2. RPP Provincial Congresses in Zonguldak During the Single Party Period

Although there is no clear data on when exactly the first provincial party congress convened in Zonguldak, we learn from the official party report submitted to the Second Grand Congress that at least one provincial congress convened in the city before October 15, 1927.⁶⁸⁴ This report includes the wishes that discussed in the provincial congresses of the party and decided to be submitted to the Second Grand Congress of the RPP. The fact that the demands determined by the Zonguldak provincial congress are also included in the report shows that a party congress was held in the city before this date. However, it is difficult to determine when these wishes were negotiated based on this data alone. When it is considered that the local organizations have to convene congresses in January of every year according to the party statute⁶⁸⁵, it is possible that these discussions may have taken place during the last provincial congress just before the Grand Congress. On the other hand, the fact that the Grand Congress of the RPP could not convene until 1927, brings to mind the possibility that these wishes from the party base may have accumulated in the lower levels of the party for a long time.

Another source that helps to estimate the convening time of the RPP Zonguldak provincial congresses is an official document sent from the party organization to the RPP General Secretariat on April 1, 1929. This report basically contains the wishes determined by the provincial congress.⁶⁸⁶ Based on this document,

⁶⁸⁴ The aforementioned report was printed as the official publication of the party under the name of “;“*CHF 1927 Büyük Kongresi Raporları Tetkik Encümeni Mazbatası*”. It was Mete Tunçay who talked about such a report. It was Mete Tunçay who firstly talked about such a report. See Tunçay, “CHF’nin 1927 Kurultayının Öncesinde Toplanan İl Kongreleri”, pp. 304-333.

⁶⁸⁵ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi (1923)*, (Art. 42)

⁶⁸⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 498. 2004. 1, 16 Nisan 1930 [16 April 1930].

although the exact date is not clear, it can be said with certainty that the party organization convened another provincial congress in 1928. In addition to this, based on all this information, it can be said that three party congresses were held in Zonguldak until 1930. Details on this will be provided in the following sections of our research.

Another provincial congress was convened by the Zonguldak provincial party organization in the period between the RPP's Second and Third Grand Congress (1927-1931). As reflected in the local press, the RPP Zonguldak 4th Provincial Congress' official opening was realized in the city's movie theater on February 6, 1931 and in this respect, it was convened outside the schedule determined in the charter. Besides, three delegates represented each district in the congress, and a total of 15 delegates attended.⁶⁸⁷ Available sources indicate that the next provincial congress of the RPP Zonguldak organization was held in 1933. According to the congress minutes, this congress is referred to as the RPP Zonguldak Fifth Provincial Congress.⁶⁸⁸ The Sixth Congress of the provincial organization was held in 1935.⁶⁸⁹

There are two main starting point for a reliable estimation of the timetable of the congresses organized by the RPP Zonguldak provincial organization: The first of these is to consider the meeting schedule determined in the party statutes. The second and more consistent one is to make an estimation based on the dates in the congress minutes. In both the 1923 and 1927 statutes of the RPP, it was foreseen that the provincial congresses would convene once a year. In the 1931 and 1935 statutes, however, it was foreseen that the congresses would conce every two years. For this reason, according to the normal congress calendar, the Zonguldak provincial congress should have convened every year since October

⁶⁸⁷ As of 1931, Zonguldak consisted of five districts: Zonguldak, Bartın, Devrek, Ereğli and Safranbolu. See Musa Şaşmaz, *Türkiye'nin İdari Taksimatı (1920-2013)*, p. 232.

⁶⁸⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 233. 919. 1, 26 Mayıs 1951 [26 May 1951].

⁶⁸⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

1924. Thus, it was necessary to convene the Fourth Provincial Congress in the city by 1927. However, from the later Congress minutes, it appears that the Fourth Provincial Congress of the Party was convened in 1931. Moreover, the available congress minutes show that the RPP organization convened only three provincial congresses in Zonguldak by 1930. Therefore, it is not sufficient to take the dates set forth in the party statutes as a starting point to draw a healthy conclusion on its own. For this reason, it seems more logical to start from the official congress minutes. The official party congress minutes show that the Fifth Provincial Congress of RPP Zonguldak was convened in 1933 and the Sixth Provincial Congress in 1935. The previous congress was held in 1931, as mentioned above. With the amendment of the statutes made in the same year, the possibility of convening a congress in the city was abolished in 1932. According to this backward way of thinking, the Fourth Provincial Congress should have met in 1931, the Third Provincial Congress in 1930, the Second Provincial Congress in 1929, and the First Provincial Congress in 1928. However, available data suggest that the first congress in Zonguldak may have convened in 1927 or earlier. Thus, when these two methods are used together, a clear statement can be made about the timing of the congresses: The party organization held three provincial congresses in the city before 1930. It should be noted that in order to determine these dates accurately, new sources are needed in addition to those already available. It is hard to say that the early local press of Zonguldak was closely involved in this process. However, the fact that the party congress process before 1930 did not function according to the timetable laid down in the statutes seems to be more related to the following reasons: It seems that in the early stages of the RPP organizational process, the provincial organizations were able to act outside the limits set by the statute. This is above all an indication that the institutionalization of the party had not yet reached the desired level in the early years. In other words, in the process following the establishment of the RPP, it is assumed that local organizations were granted "relative" freedom of action by the party headquarters and that the rules established by the headquarters could be extended under certain conditions.

In accordance with the new party statute adopted in 1935, the Seventh Provincial Congress of Zonguldak convened on 26 December 1936.⁶⁹⁰ In addition to this, it is understood that until the beginning of the multi-party political life, the Eighth Provincial Congress met in Zonguldak in January 1938, the Ninth Provincial Congress on 22 İlkanun (January) 1940⁶⁹¹, the Tenth Provincial Congress on December 3, 1942⁶⁹², the Eleventh Provincial Congress on November 25, 1944⁶⁹³ and the Twelfth Provincial Congress on December 14, 1946.⁶⁹⁴ Compiling the dates of the provincial congresses organized in the following years, one comes across the following calendar of provincial congresses held in the city between 1927 and 1946.⁶⁹⁵

To sum up, in the period after the proclamation of the Republic, the People's Party was still "in its infancy" organizationally, but on the other hand, efforts were made to win the people over to the revolutions and to secure internal peace. Thus, although the early 1930s experined a successful sociopolitical and cultural revolution, this period coincided with a more passive period in terms of party activity. From the perspective of Zonguldak, however, it should be noted that parallel to the beginning of the institutionalization of single-party rule in early republican Turkey, some routine organizational activities of party organization were carried out more regularly and according to the schedule set out in the statute.

⁶⁹⁰ *C.H.P 1936 İl Kongreleri*, pp. 397-415.

⁶⁹¹ BCA 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202-802-1.

⁶⁹² *Ocak*, 27 İkinci Teşrin (November) 1942, p. 1.

⁶⁹³ *C.H.P. Onbirinci Vilayet Kongresi Zaptı Zonguldak*, 25 Sonteshrin 1944.

⁶⁹⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946]; *Türk Sesi*, 13 Aralık (December) 1946, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁵ See Table 23.

4.1.3. Functioning of the Provincial Congresses and Main Topics Dealt With at the Congresses

As already mentioned, the provincial congresses were held according to a specific agenda. According to this agenda, more than half of the members of the congress had to be reached for the opening of it. There followed a brief speech by the chairman or one of the members on behalf of the provincial executive committee before the election of the congress president and secretaries. These speeches mainly contained an assessment of the party's activities at the national and local levels. For example, the Sixth Provincial Congress of RPP Zonguldak, which was held on January 18, 1935⁶⁹⁶, was opened with such a speech.

After the election of the congress president and the secretaries, the provincial administrative committee routinely informed the General Assembly of the Congress about the activities carried out in the past two years and the actions taken by the Party and the Government in the city. These reports, which can be seen as the first reflections on the integration of party and state, also included government actions. It should be noted that the provincial organization of Zonguldak adopted this tradition of preparing reports in later years as well. For this reason, these reports included not only institutional issues related to party affairs, but also government activities. From this point of view, it can be said that two important issues, party affairs and social demands, were discussed at the RPP's provincial congresses. However, since the previous chapter already discussed the organizational process of the RPP in Zonguldak, this chapter will focus on the social bridging function of the provincial congresses between the people and the state. In order to reveal this, it is first necessary to know how the petition mechanism worked at the RPP provincial congresses.

⁶⁹⁶ The RPP General Secretariat's circular of August 14, 1934, to all provincial chairmanship called on all organizations to convene provincial congresses by the end of January 1935. Since the RPP's Grand Party Congress would convene in 1935. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 2. 9. 16, 19 Aralık 1934 [19 December 1934].

4.1.4. The "Wish System" as the Conveyor of the Voice of the Periphery to the Center

As mentioned in the introduction to our study, the miscommunication between the state and society became increasingly clear at the end of 1930 with the events that followed the creation of FRP. In order to remedy this disconnection from the people, which was one of the chronic problems of single-party governments, political power immediately sought solutions. In this process, the RPP, which claimed to represent all social classes in the country, developed and implemented policies typical of single-party systems. This included a model that incorporated people's wishes and desires into decision-making: "The Wish System". Put simply, this system was a small platform of democracy that conveyed the wishes and concerns of the people through the party units to the party's highest decision-making body, the Grand Assembly.⁶⁹⁷ This practice, which became more systematic after the Third Grand Congress of the CHF (1931), soon became a method encouraged and even necessitated by party-state unity. For this reason, the party leadership was more sensitive to the operation of the wish mechanism, and many of the wishes expressed at the congresses were later published as official party publications.⁶⁹⁸

The operation of the petition system, which was very functional in terms of voicing and discussing local problems and conveying them to the government, was as follows: Firstly, the wishes, demands and expectations of the party members, which were determined in the hearths, sub-district, district and provincial organizations, were renegotiated at a higher-level congress. The demands and expectations that could not be resolved at the local level were forwarded to the party's general secretary for discussion at the Grand Party Congress. These petitions and requests, which came from many parts of the

⁶⁹⁷ Sevda Mutlu, "Tek Parti Döneminde Parti-Devlet Bütünleşmesine Bir Örnek: Dilek Sistemi", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, vol. 29, no. 86 (2013), pp. 55-56.

⁶⁹⁸ Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 239.

country, were sorted in terms of their importance as "solvable" and "extremely important" before the Great Congress opened. Later, they were forwarded to the petitions committee formed in the congress structure. In the meetings which were attended by the petitions committee, the ministers and the officials of the institutions, the petitions were decided positively or negatively, and the provincial organizations were informed of the result.⁶⁹⁹

In the period of single-party rule, political power seems to have been aware of the need for a platform where the people's wishes and demands to be freely discussed. In this regard, the congress were one of the important and rare meetings places between the people and the government and the basis for the party's existence and power. For this reason, local administrations, which are primarily responsible for the functioning of the petition system in the provinces, have been warned and reminded from time to time. These warnings and admonitions are important to understand the meaning and function of the wish system. Some of these circulars were sent, for example, by the RPP's secretary general Şükrü Kaya, to all provincial organizations before the convening of the provincial congresses in 1936. The purpose of these articles was to ensure that the party congress process was conducted in accordance with the party statutes and that the petition system was properly operated. For this reason, some reminders were sent to party executives. The first of these circulars is dated July 28. In the circular, the party organization was first asked to clearly understand and take into account the unity that exists between the party and the government. It was stated here that the integraion of the party and the government is not aimed at reducing the importance of the party organization for the functioning of the state, but, on the contrary, at strengthening the party and thus helping it to achieve its goals. The circular also provided some important guidance on the congressional process and the operation of the petition system. Firstly, the party's provincial administrators were reminded that all party members have the right to

⁶⁹⁹ Mutlu, "Tek Parti Döneminde Parti-Devlet Bütünleşmesine Bir Örnek: Dilek Sistemi", p. 64; Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, p. 239.

freely express their opinions and make their choices at the congress. It was reminded that it was the duty of the party administration to ensure that party members freely express their wishes and grievances during this process and that they can vote for whomever they want during the election process. Because in order to be a government of the people, one must first and foremost know what the people think, what their desires and grievances are. For this reason, the party leaders, as the highest representatives of the local organizations of the party and at the same time responsible for them, are primarily responsible for ensuring that the congresses are held in accordance with the spirit and idea of the party statutes. At this point, party leaders were urged to ensure that as many party members as possible participate in party congresses that give the people the opportunity to have a say in state administration.⁷⁰⁰ In another circular sent to the provincial executives of the party on September 2, 1936, similar problems were pointed out. In this sense, it was requested that the state institutions also show interest in the Congress. In addition, Ankara reminded its organizations that wishes and issues to be determined at the congresses should be carefully considered and those that cannot be resolved by local means should be forwarded to the General Secretariat without delay.⁷⁰¹

The circular sent to local organizations on November 1936 on the congress process and administration of it is more comprehensive. The circular demanded that "*the wishes and grievances of the people, which form the basis of the existence and power of the party, be openly and freely discussed and debated at the congresses, and that all elections within the party be freely conducted.*"⁷⁰² Moreover, the provincial congresses of 1936 operated a new control mechanism that had not existed at other times. Accordingly, it was decided that a party

⁷⁰⁰ C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri, pp. 9-10.

⁷⁰¹ C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri, p. 10.

⁷⁰² C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri, p. 10.

member should attend the congresses as an observer to examine the work of the party levels and observe the extent to which the party is approaching the goals to be realized in the social and political life of the country. At the end of the congress, these deputies will prepare a report of their observations and investigations and submit it to the General Secretariat. This report usually includes investigations and observations about where the convention met, whether delegates were designated by the authorized conventions, whether the convention opened with a quorum, and whether the newly elected executive committee was freely elected. In addition, as is well known, according to the party statute, the highest official representing the party government, the party mayor, and the members of the municipal council and the general assembly must also be present at the provincial congresses.⁷⁰³ (Art. 64) In this regard, the governors, as party leaders, were expected to adhere more closely to this principle and to ensure that all provincial department heads were present at the congress.⁷⁰⁴

In the years that followed, circulars continued to be sent to party organizations on congressional procedures and the operation of the petition system. For example, the RPP's provincial congresses, which were to be completed by the end of 1942, coincided with the municipal and provincial general assembly elections that were to be held that same year. For this reason, the organizations had more than ever the task of ensuring that these two important political processes were completed smoothly and in the manner desired by headquarters. The General Secretariat's circular of June 16, 1942, contained important warnings and admonitions to party organizations on such matters as local elections, general elections at the provincial level, general elections, Grand Congress, and provincial congresses. Party executives were asked to pay attention to the following issues related to the management of the congressional

⁷⁰³ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935)*, p. 16.

⁷⁰⁴ *C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri*, pp. 10-12.

process: Firstly, the sections of the party's statutes that constitutes the operation of local congresses and the provisions that define the duties of the administrative committees should be read several times. Besides, it should be ensured that the proceedings were conducted fully in accordance with the statutes. The hearth congresses, on the other hand, should be attended by all male and female party members who are registered in the party while all delegates should attend the congresses of the other levels. To ensure that the wishes and ideas of the people, which are one of the fundamental principles of the republican order and of the party, are known and taken into account in all decisions. Besides, the greatest attention should be paid to the free speech and election of party members at the congresses.⁷⁰⁵ This was seen as both a guarantee and a clear indication that the people's participation in state affairs was not only through general or local elections.

The RPP provincial congresses of 1946 differed from the congresses of the previous period in terms of the political environment. In a letter to party organizations dated September 3, 1946, RPP Secretary General Nafi Atuf Kansu pointed out this difference in all congresses held that year. With the starting of the multi-party political life, the fact that new political parties are running against the RPP and elections are held in single-tier ballots, the local congresses of the new period are different and more important than their predecessors. Because, with the starting of the multiparty political system, new political parties competed against the RPP and it was decided that elections should be single-tier. This made the local congresses of the new period different and more important than the previous ones. For this reason, all party units were asked to make the necessary preparations before the start of the congress, taking into account the reality of the "*new competitive political environment*." Within this framework, it was important, among other things, to ensure the participation of all members in the congresses and to ensure that the elections took place in a free environment. On the other hand, local party administrators were urged to establish close contact with the people in the villages of the provincial and district centers and to

⁷⁰⁵ C.H.P. *Onuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zonguldak*, pp. 10-11 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1.

go as far as possible into the villages to ensure this communication. This was intended, on the one hand, to attract new members to the party and ensure a high level of participation in the congresses, and, on the other, to convey a sense of unity and the ideal of fighting on the same front.⁷⁰⁶

From the circulars that the RPP General Secretariat sent to local organizations throughout the single-party period to ensure public participation in congresses and the free expression of their wishes, some conclusions can be drawn about the congressional process and petition system. The provincial congresses were primarily aimed at involving the public in the social decision-making process. Congresses also seem to be conceived as instruments expected to contribute to the formation and development of a political and democratic culture through citizen participation. In this sense, the RPP's provincial congresses can also be defined as places where democracy-specific practices were tested in the provinces. Another significance of the public's involvement in this mechanism through the petition system is that the public is wanted to be a partner in governance. In this way, an attempt was made to involve the public in a democratic platform in which they could have a direct say in the affairs of the country, apart from the general and local elections, which consisted only of a plebiscite. The provincial congresses and the petition process, which allowed the people and the state to meet and communicate, were also an important practice in making the public a partner in government and establishing the tradition of intra-party democracy. On the other hand, the fact that local administrators and party executives, appointed by the party headquarters until the mid-1930s, were appointed directly by local organizations shows that the political cadres who founded the Republic began to move away from the elitist view.

4.1.5. Functions of the RPP Provincial Congresses in Zonguldak

According to the work plan of the provincial congresses, the requests coming from the party levels were dealt with and decided upon before the election of the

⁷⁰⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

provincial administrative committee and the representatives to be sent to the grand congress. It was the task of the administrative committee of the party to forward the wishes decided at the congresses to the higher authorities and to follow them up. In the period between the two congresses, the administrative committees of the provinces that followed up the social demands and expectations. They were also obliged to inform the general assembly of the congress about the result of the follow-up of the previous wishes. In this sense, the petition system, which was an important part of the functioning of local congresses and conveyed social demands and expectations from the most remote village organization to the Great Congress, was used as an effective mechanism within the provincial congresses of Zonguldak. In the congresses that mediate the sorting of a compiled "bundle of requests" to reach the highest decision-making authority, attempts were made to evaluate each request by the relevant commissions within the legal limits. Thus, some requests were rejected for specific reasons before being placed on the congressional agenda. However, those that could be resolved with local resources and facilities were referred to a higher authority. In cases where provincial resources were insufficient, it was ensured that requests were evaluated directly before the relevant members of the Grand Congress. When evaluating social demands, party and government representatives often took into account the state's financial resources. For this reason, many regional applications had to be rejected, citing financial constraints. It must be noted that, however, each congresses fulfill their mission by raising the voice of society to the state.

An analysis of the minutes of the provincial congresses of the Zonguldak RPP shows that the social demands determined in the hearths organizations were dealt with in the general assembly of the congress in two different dimensions: "the wishes decided at the previous congress" and "the new wishes decided by the congress." Considering the political, social and economic conditions of the single-party years, it must be mentioned that very few of the demands determined at the provincial congresses were political in nature. However, the issues discussed on these platforms mostly concern the expectations of the

people in the region in relation to their social, economic, cultural and infrastructural problems. In this sense, it can be stated that the provincial congresses, although they were an important element of the provincial organization of the RPP, were mostly distinguished by their social aspects. Statistically, about 1% of the petitions dealt with at the provincial congresses were of a political nature. For this reason, it is possible to divide the social demands, expectations and complaints that the people in the region wanted to address to the authorities/government into two different categories: "those related to government affairs" and those that are political in nature".

The congress minutes show that the demands that the people of Zonguldak wanted to convey to the government through the congresses of the RPP concerned many governmental matters, especially the economy, public works, transportation, justice, education, health and welfare, agriculture, monopolies, and internal affairs. While some of these expectations were general problems at the national level, others require direct regional solutions. On the other hand, the political demands raised in some congresses are expressions of some organizational expectations. This section, therefore, analyzes the social demands and expectations raised at the provincial congresses in Zonguldak, as well as their contents and qualities. In this way, it will be possible to assess the nature and functioning of the communication channel that the RPP created between the people and the state through the local congresses, and to what extent it was successful.

4.2. "The Satellite of the Centre" in the Province: Inspection Mechanism

4.2.1. Establishment and Historical Development of the Inspection Mechanism

Institutions such as the "inspection system" and the "party inspectorate," which are frequently mentioned in historical and political science studies of the organization of the RPP, came to the fore as a bureaucratic control apparatus

within the party from the 1930s until the rule of DP. However, the first examples of the control mechanism institutionalized within the RPP organization under names such as "inspectorate" and "reporting system" were the reports sent from Anatolia and Rumelia to the capital after the promulgation of the Tanzimat Edict. As might be expected, these reports are situation reports that contain society's reactions to the reforms that have been implemented. It is known that some of the changes deemed necessary for the restructuring of the state administration after the promulgation of the Tanzimat Edict met with reactions due to the problems encountered during the implementation phase. While some of these reactions returned to the capital in the form of letters of complaint, it was not enough for the public in some parts of the empire to express their reaction only in writing. For this reason, some social unrest has even reached the level of revolt. For this reason, a control and monitoring mechanism was needed in the remote regions of the empire to deal with basic problems such as the suppression of protests against some of the rights and regulations introduced by the Tanzimat, the following of irregularities committed by administrators in the implementation of the new order, and the proper collection of taxes. The practice of inspection in the Ottoman Empire thus arose from these requirements: "... *to better carry out reforms, to observe the results of reforms, to control local administration, in short, to govern more successfully and effectively.*"⁷⁰⁷

According to the inspection instructions prepared by the parliament, which allowed inspections to be carried out within the framework of certain predetermined rules, inspectors were required to report on the problems they found in each region they visited and to forward them to the government. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, in addition to the inspection and reporting system, spies were assigned to mingle with the people and "*listened to the conversations between people in public places such as the bazaar, the Turkish bath, and the*

⁷⁰⁷ Murat Metinsoy, "Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları", p. 109.

coffee house..."⁷⁰⁸ In addition, inspection committees (Heyet-i Teftiſiye) were established to better control the provinces.⁷⁰⁹ The inspection system in the Ottoman Empire, which followed a developmental process as summarized above, continued to function after the establishment of the republican regime. However, the last stop of this system before its transfer to the early republican period was the CUP. In this context, the CUP has made the final changes to the inspection mechanism adopted by the Republic. In this respect the committee institutionalized the party inspectorate with its statute of 1909⁷¹⁰, and the inspection mechanism was also included in the statutes issued in the following years.⁷¹¹

The party inspectorate, which continued to be one of the most important functional elements of the political structure with the Committee of Unity and Progress, was also included in the organizational scheme of the RPP. This practice, which was modernized the by the RPP and became functional within its

⁷⁰⁸ Metinsoy, "Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiſ Bölgesi Raporları", p. 110. The reports produced by the spies were then called "journals," and the information they provided to the administration was very valuable.

⁷⁰⁹ When Sultan Abdulhamid II ascended the throne, the main problems such as the regular collection of taxes, especially security, and the recruiting of soldiers were still among the most important problems to be solved for the state. During this period, the belief persisted that these problems could be overcome with competent, loyal administrators and. But at the same time, the practice of monitoring practices and requesting reports from the provinces continued. For this reason, inspection committees were established in 1879 to identify the problems that arose in the provinces, especially in the implementation of the Provincial Ordinances of 1871 (Vilayet Nizamnamesi), and to conduct some investigations on the gendarme organization. For detailed information see Musa Çadırcı, " II. Abdülhamid'e Sunulan Bir Layiha: Heyet-i Teftiſiye'nin Geſt – Güzar Eylemiſ Olduđu Mahallerin Ahvaliyle Heyet-i Mezkur'un Harekatı ", *Osmanlı Tarihi Araſtırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* (OTAM), no. 3 (January, 1992), pp. 413-485.

⁷¹⁰ Uluskan, *CHP Parti Müfettiſliđi ve Raporlarla Bursa Teſkilatı (1936-1945)*, p. 42. The first statute of CUP, to which Uluskan also referred, was published by Ali Birinci. See Ali Birinci, "Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin II. Meſrutiyet Sonrasındaki İlk Nizamnamesi", *Tarık Zafer Tunaya'ya Armađan*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Barosu Yayınları, 1992), p. 416.

⁷¹¹ See "1911 (1327) Kongresinde Düzenlenen Nizamname", (Art. 20-22, 49 and 144); "1913 (1329) Kongresinde Kabul Edilen Nizamname", (Art. 43-44); "1916 (1332) Kongresinde Takkarrür Eden Siyasal Program ve Nizamname Tadil ve Ekleri" pp. 83- 120.

own structure, was inspired by the model developed by the CUP. According to some historians, the People's Party took the institution of the party inspectorate directly from the charter of the CUP.⁷¹² However, the inspection and reporting system became one of the functional institutional bodies of the RPP, especially from the early 1930s. In line with these developments, some rules and bodies were created, such as inspection instructions and the establishment offices in the RPP General Secretariat. Thus, the information provided to the center through the inspection reports become more comprehensive and detailed.⁷¹³

Many factors contributed to the creation of a more advanced version of the inspection system, which performs a very important task within the RPP. However, the social reactions against the RPP, especially after the founding of the FRP, were the most triggering among them. The FRP had become the new hope of the people in many provinces, who were disturbed by the practices of the party administrators. Therefore, in order to restore the loyalty and trust of society, which had been overwhelmed by the People's Party and its practices, the solution was sought within the party itself. For this reason, Mustafa Kemal, seeing the cause of the problems in the organization and functioning of the party, took de facto measures shortly after the closure of the Free Party and embarked on a three-month tour of the country, taking with him some of the People's Party officials. Mustafa Kemal, who saw the cause of problems in the party organization itself, took action soon. For this reason, shortly after the closure of the FRP, he organized a trip of about three months to the country with some officials of the People's Party. During this travel process, the social problems and expectations identified in one-on-one meetings with citizens were crucial to the restructuring of the Republican People's Party.

⁷¹²Cemil Koçak, “Tek Parti Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nde Parti Müfettişliği”, *Geçmişiniz İtinayla Temizlenir*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), p. 132.

⁷¹³ Metinsoy, “Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları”, p. 107.

4.2.2. Institutionalization Process and Function of the Inspection Mechanism Under the RPP Structure

The institution of inspection was an important tool developed by the RPP during the single-party period to supervise and control its provincial organizations and the state bureaucracy and to gather information about public opinion. For this reason, the party's first charter announced the establishment of a comprehensive control and monitoring network in the country.⁷¹⁴ This practice, which began with the division of the country into specific inspection regions⁷¹⁵ and the appointment of an inspector responsible for each region, underwent serious changes and transformations over time and remained in place until DP came to power. The early 1930s, considered in the literature as the beginning of the institutionalization of single-party rule, were also a turning point in terms of the inspection system, one of the instruments effectively used by the government. As is well known, in the early republican period there were some events that reminded the political power that the regime should be built on solid

⁷¹⁴ Mustafa Kemal had already thought about the establishment and functioning of the inspection system before the founding of the People's Party. In the "Nine Principles Declaration," published shortly before the end of the second term of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The declaration states that the people's affairs can be handled more quickly, but only if all officials from bottom to top comply with the laws and regulations and do their jobs properly. For this reason, it was envisaged that all government departments would be subjected to comprehensive control in order to achieve the aforementioned goals. See *Dokuz Umde Beyannamesi*”, in “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)”, pp. 366-368.

⁷¹⁵ By a decision of the General Administrative Committee of the People's Party on June 3, 1341 (1925), the country's existing 74 provinces were divided into 14 inspection region and a competent party inspector was assigned to these regions. Accordingly, the inspection regions created were arranged as follows: District 1: Ankara, Kastamonu, Sinop, Çankırı, Zonguldak, Çorum, Kırşehir, Yozgat, Kayseri; District 2: Karahisar-ı Şarki, Tokat, Amasya, Sivas, Samsun; District 3: Gümüşhane, Rize, Trabzon, Giresun, Ordu; District 4: Ardahan, Kars, Beyazıt, Erzurum, Artvin, Erzincan; District 5: Van, Hakkari, Muş, Bitlis, Siirt; District 6: Genç, Ergani Madeni, Diyarbakır, Siverek, Mardin, Urfa; District 7: Dersim, Elaziz, Malatya; District 8: Adana, Kozan, Cebel-i Bereket, Gaziantep, Maraş, Mersin, İçel; District 9: Aksaray, Niğde, Konya, Isparta, Burdur, Antalya; District 10: Bolu, İzmit, Ertuğrul, Eskişehir, Kütahya, Afyon; District 11: İzmir, Saruhan, Aydın, Denizli, Mentеше; District 12: Bursa, Karesi, Çanakkale; District 13: İstanbul, Üsküdar, Beyoğlu, Çatalca; District 14: Kırkkilise, Edirne, Tekfurdağı, Gelibolu. See *Cumhuriyet*, 3 Haziran 1341, p. 2; Tunçay, “CHF’nın 1927 Kurultayının Öncesinde Toplanan İl Kongreleri”, p. 282.

foundations. In particular, the establishment of the PRP and the subsequent Sheikh Sait Uprising, as well as the FRP and the subsequent Menemen Incident, have brought this reality to light once again. For this reason, Kemalist cadres who wanted to build a state on solid foundations needed to obtain information about society and the functioning of the state in order to preserve its legitimacy and prevent the existing centers of opposition. Therefore, one of the main motivations of the new regime was to gather information about the work of the party and the state in the remote corners of the country, about the functioning of the local bureaucracy, about people's desires, complaints, and needs, and about their cultural, political, and ideological tendencies. For this reason, with the institutionalization of the single-party era, the Kemalist cadres made efforts to solve the problems of the administration, to meet the demands of the people, and to learn about the political tendencies of the public.

It was precisely at this point that a bureaucratic control apparatus came into play that had already existed since the early republican period: "Inspection and Reporting System." This mechanism, as already mentioned, is the result of a process whose roots go back to the time of the Tanzimat. The system was developed over time by various political organizations and modernized by the cadres who founded the Republic, in accordance with the social and political conditions of the time. This system, set up to monitor RPP organizations and to control and direct the functioning of the party organization, essentially had to function within certain rules in order to be efficient. For this reason, the General Secretariat of the RPP has worked intensively on this issue since the founding years of the Republic. Numerous guidelines, including party statutes, inspection instructions, plans for conducting inspections, specialized offices established in the General Secretariat, inspection districts and inspectors lists, have been put in place to make the system work effectively. At the end of all this, the parties' inspectors should prepare reports on the results of the inspections and forward them to Ankara. Thus, the inspection activity of the party inspectors ended, and the report was forwarded to the relevant bodies of the party general secretariat for the necessary investigations and conclusions.

As is well known, the RPP government carried out numerous administrative, social and cultural revolutions in the first seven years after the proclamation of the Republic.

However, the Kemalist cadres, who acted with the mission of modernizing society, had limited knowledge of the masses they sought to change and influence in the early days. However, the information that the political power had about the socio-economic, cultural, administrative, demographic and intellectual situation of the country was limited.⁷¹⁶ For these reasons, the government wanted to be informed about many social and political issues, especially the public perception of the revolutions. In the early days, however, the new regime did not establish sufficient channels of communication between the state and the public. In the final phase, the world economic crisis of 1929 and the short-lived attempt at political opposition in 1930 led to the emergence of widespread discontent in the country and a decline in sympathy for the RPP.⁷¹⁷

Authoritarian single-party regimes are known to be characterized by not allowing the formation of an opposition party, taking strict measures against the press, and viewing free elections as a threat to their existence. Consequently, in such regimes, the data channels from the provinces to the state headquarters are also very limited. Nevertheless, political rulers in such regimes are very curious about the needs of the people, their ideological inclinations, and the nature of the relationship between the political/administrative institutions and the people. It should be noted that the same situation is valid for early Republican Turkey. Because the republican regime, which was to build a new nation-state on the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, abolished many traditional institutions and replaced them with Western ones. It quickly carried out some social and cultural

⁷¹⁶ Metinsoy, “Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları”, p. 118.

⁷¹⁷ Zürcher, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Atatürk Türkiye'sine Bir Ulusun İnşası*, p. 406.

revolutions in order to explain to the people the principles and virtues of the republic and to strengthen the bond between the new government and the people. Nevertheless, since the proclamation of the Republic, there have been some mass reactions against the revolutions and the rulers of the state. The experience of FRP, on the other hand, reminded the rulers once again that in order to change and transform society, it was necessary to reach out to the people and get to know them well. For this reason, as in some fascist and communist countries between the two world wars, the RPP introduced the reporting system as an important data transmission channel to "*compensate for its insufficient and weak political, ideological and administrative presence in the provinces, to monitor the provinces, the party and state organization, to be informed about the needs, wishes and complaints of the people, their political tendencies, in short, to know public opinion...*"⁷¹⁸ Thus, the RPP was able to observe and monitor the provinces and their extensions, actively using a system that could guide both the party organization and its social policies for many years.

The RPP established an inspection and reporting system in the early Republican period which carried out by three different formations. These reports, which are produced in a variety of formats, fall into two distinct categories in terms of function. The reports in the first part refer mostly to the activities of the party organizations, namely the "Semi-Annual Activity Reports of the Provincial Administrative Committees and the Inspection Reports". These reports contained "technical information" about party work that was important to party officials but unknown to most citizens. Because most of the data in these reports are directly related to the activities of the party organization rather than social issues. Nevertheless, it is possible to find important evaluations or clues about the functioning of social life inside inspections reports. Because, the RPP General Secretariat expected the party inspectors to investigate and follow up on the wishes expressed at the provincial congresses, which of them were implemented and for what reasons they could not be realized. The reports in the second group,

⁷¹⁸ Metinsoy, "Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları", pp. 116-117.

on the other hand, are "constituency/election district reports" that focus primarily on social problems. In these reports, instead of technical findings about the party, the problems that were on the agenda of the people, their wishes and complaints were included.

As mentioned earlier, according to the RPP statutes, the administrative committees of the provinces had to submit reports to the General Secretariat every six months about their activities.⁷¹⁹ It should be noted that these reports, which are called as the "semi-annual activity reports", originally planned to be quarterly, were a compilation of reports that were to be prepared by the lowest levels of the party organization in the provinces and hierarchically forwarded to the higher organization.⁷²⁰ The content of the report and the questions to be answered were determined by the General Secretariat and sent to the organizations in printed form. After receiving information from all lower levels, these booklets are completed by the party's administrative committee in the provinces and returned to the General Secretariat in Ankara. In practice, however, it is difficult to determine that these reports prepared by the General Secretariat are accepted in full earnest by local organizations. This is because most of the answers to the questions in these reports do not contain satisfactory information, but rather seem to have been written in an effort to show the Secretariat General that the work is adequate. In this sense, some historians argue that these working papers were not intended to fulfill an official duty, but rather to serve personal interests, such as the risk of not being reelected at the next congress.⁷²¹

⁷¹⁹ *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi (1931)*, (Art. 75-i) p. 17; *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935)*, (Art. 86-h), p. 23; *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi (1939)*, (Art. 91-h), p. 24, *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi (1943)*, (Art. 84-j), p. 18; *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1947)*, (Art. 50-j), p. 61.

⁷²⁰ See *Teftiş İşlerini Yürütme Planı 1935*, (Art. 4-g).

⁷²¹ Koçak, *CHP ve Taşra (1930-1950)*, p. 12.

The reports that the deputies prepare as a result of the audits and inspections they conduct in their constituencies are called "constituency reports". As it is known, the deputies, who were not entrusted with any other duties by the GNAT, were obliged by the party statutes to visit their constituencies every year and to travel to all district centers at least twice in an election period.⁷²² (Art. 111) Therefore, the data on many subjects, especially social, political, cultural and economic, that the center needed about the provinces were transmitted through this channel. In this way, society had the opportunity to communicate its requests, complaints and needs to the center, and the government had the opportunity to measure the visibility and effectiveness of the state in the provinces through these communications. In this respect, the reports of the electoral districts, which focus on social issues, appear at first glance like a petition composed of people's complaints, needs and expectations.

The procedure of constituency inspection and reporting process worked as follows: Firstly, deputies should mingle with the people in their constituencies, listen to their demands, needs, and shortcomings, and take notes. The activities of official institutions and organizations were also examined in this process. In some special cases, the persons or institutions against whom the public has complained are questioned and the complaint is investigated. Unlike region inspectors, constituency inspections did not have a set procedure for reporting. The inspections were sometimes carried out with the participation of all deputies and sometimes individually. In analyzing the Zonguldak case, it becomes clear that inspections were sometimes conducted with the participation of one deputy and sometimes with the participation of all deputies in the constituency. In the final phase, the findings and recommendations that resulted from the inspections were sent to the headquarters after being classified and signed. The timely transmission of reports to the General Secretariat was strictly monitored by party headquarters. This was because party headquarters kept a list for each year of which deputies sent reports and which did not. For example, in a list dated 1934

⁷²² *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi (1931)*, p. 22.

stated that Celal Sahir Erozan, one of the deputies for the Zonguldak constituency, has not submitted a report since 1931. If a deputy was unable to send a report, he had to notify party headquarters with an excuse. Because, it also happened that reports were occasionally not made because of such excuses.⁷²³

As can be seen from the constituency reports, which can be described as an extension of the policy of reaching to the people, the social issues of the province visited were dealt with to a greater extent. Thus, it was desired to establish a bridge between the people and the state. The inspection reports, on the other hand, were aimed primarily at establishing the link between the party and the state. In other words, this system was a channel that ensured regular communication between the party center and the provincial organizations, strengthened the center's control over the periphery, transmitted its directives, and helped the provinces make their voices heard by the center. Unlike other types of reports, it was not possible to deviate from the previously established official patterns when preparing the party inspection reports. The reason for this was that all the details concerning the issues to be dealt with during the inspection, the responsibilities of the inspectors, and the format of the reports were laid down in the instructions drawn up by the General Secretariat. These instructions, on the one hand, regulated the reports to be prepared by the inspectors and, on the other, facilitated the work of party headquarters, which was to examine and follow up on these reports. The first directive serving this purpose was prepared in 1931.⁷²⁴ The content of this text consisted mainly of questions intended to provide data about the organizations.⁷²⁵ However, in

⁷²³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 730. 504. 1, n.d.

⁷²⁴ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Teftiş Raporu (1931)*, (Ankara: Yenigün Matbaası, 1931) in "CHP ve Taşra", pp.761-763.

⁷²⁵ The content of the 1931 inspection report is quite similar to the "Semi-Annual Activity Reports", which the provincial administrative committees were obliged to prepare every three months at first and then every six months. For example, for the similarity of the prepared questions, the "Quarterly Activity Report" prepared by the Zonguldak Provincial Administrative Committee in 1934 can be looked at. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937].

addition to the questions that reflect these basic concerns, the report also includes a section that focuses directly on social problems and attempts to gather information about them. Undoubtedly, it is clear that a data collection technique that focuses exclusively on the work of the party and ignores social issues would not be useful for the regime. In particular, the recent experience with FRP and the ensuing social opposition has once again shown the government how intertwined political and social issues are. In this regard, apart from the questions about the local organization and its functioning, one of the most interesting questions of the report was aimed at identifying the complaints of all citizens, whether they were registered in the party or not. Accordingly, the degree of satisfaction of the population with the affairs of state intended to be revealed by answering questions such as;

- a) How satisfied are the people with the laws and practices, the taxes, the officials, the party, the party headquarters, and the activities of local organizations such as the municipality and the general assembly?
- b) The origins and sources of all these complaints and to what extent they are justified and correspond to the facts. What feelings do the people feel towards the spiritual personality of our party?⁷²⁶

The remarkable increase in the number of inspection reports during the period of the National Chief has again highlighted the need for the system to be carried out in a specific program and in a healthy way. So, during this period, the General Secretariat has tried to deal with this problem through its inspection instructions and the arrangements that it has made in terms of inspection regions and party inspectors. Therefore, after the first report on regulation of inspection works, on June 12, 1935 “The Plan for Carrying Out Inspection Works” (*Teftiş İşlerini*

⁷²⁶ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Teftiş Raporu (1931)*, in “CHP ve Taşra”, p. 762.

Yürütme Planı)⁷²⁷, “The Inspection Directive of 1939” (*1939 Teftiş Talimatnamesi*)⁷²⁸ and “The Inspection Directive of 1943” (*1943 Teftiş Talimatnamesi*)⁷²⁹ were prepared. The aforementioned inspection plans have been regularly updated by the General Secretariat, taking into account the decisions taken at the party congresses, the renewed party statutes and the changes in the central administrative organization of the party, as well as the changes deemed necessary for the better functioning of the organization. These instructions, which have never lost their original philosophy, have been enriched over time in terms of the subjects to be examined. As mentioned above, the number of reports on inspections increased considerably, especially after the İnönü Period. According to Metinsoy, İnönü's interest in bureaucratic mechanisms and his attention to administrative matters, as well as his desire to supervise and control the new parliament were also effective in this. On the other hand, parallel to the increasing state intervention in social and economic life during the years of World War II, the need of political power for information on social issues has also grown. This also seems to be the cause of the increase in reports during this period.⁷³⁰ The increase in the number of regional inspections and the increase in reports naturally required a solid procedural basis on which to build the system. It was precisely at this point that the inspection instructions issued at regular intervals by the RPP's General Secretariat come into play. For this reason, it is necessary to evaluate the inspection instructions before and during the time of the National Chief, in this context.

⁷²⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 3. 11. 2, 11 Haziran 1935 [11 June 1935] ; *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İkinçikanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 tarihine kadar)*, pp. 36-39.

⁷²⁸ *CHP Teftiş Talimatnamesi (1939)*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1939).

⁷²⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1005. 881. 1, 28 Haziran 1943 [28 June 1943].

⁷³⁰ Metinsoy, “Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları”, p. 107.

From the above instructions, it is clear that every procedure that inspectors would need during the inspection process was stated very clearly and understandably. For this reason, it is possible to find answers to all questions in this guide, such as the points to be inspected, the inspection plan to be followed, and the way the reports on the results should be designed in these instructions. Therefore, it can be said that from now on the General Secretariat of the RPP has put the responsibility on the shoulders of the inspectors and is waiting for a magnificent building to be constructed on the solid ground it has prepared. However, it is clear from the warnings to local organizations that the process does not always work the way the center wants it to.⁷³¹

Finally, the party inspectors who conducted the necessary inspections and audits in the inspection regions submitted to the General Secretariat the reports they had prepared regarding the directives.⁷³² In this case, after review by the Fourth Bureau, which was responsible for inspection, the reports were divided into categories and forwarded to the appropriate bureaus according to the subject matter. In the next stage, the request/expectation in question was forwarded to the relevant ministry, which then conducted an investigation of the request and informed the result to the General Secretariat. Although most of the returns made by the ministries were ejected for reasons such as financial constraints⁷³³, the reports were not waiting on the dusty shelves of the General Secretariat without any action. Because, these reports were an important source of information that actively influenced the policies of the state and were used by the government in

⁷³¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1. 60. 7, n.d.

⁷³² Cemil Koçak expresses the important task of the RPP General Secretariat in single-party period with regard to the relationship between the center and the periphery as follows: "The RPP General Secretariat was the center of the organization. All mutual contacts, correspondence and contacts of the RPP center with the province organizations were handled through the General Secretariat." See Cemil Koçak, *CHP Genel Sekreterliği (1930-1945)*, (İstanbul: Alfa Yayıncılık, 2018), p. 8.

⁷³³ Koçak, *CHP ve Taşra*, p. 16.

its decision-making and legislative processes. In other words, for the political power these reports served as "*consultations before making laws and decisions*."⁷³⁴ The existence of such a system within the RPP structure is also a concrete indication that not all decisions were made from the top down in the early Republic. With this mechanism, the state has clearly shown that it was willing to get to know the provinces, to understand the social, cultural and economic conditions and dynamics there, and to take into account the needs, desires and complaints of the population.⁷³⁵

In this context, the inspection and reporting system can be defined as a bureaucratic control mechanism that emerged from the inception of the RPP but became more effective from the mid-1930s onward. This mechanism was based on three basic pillars, each pillar supporting the other in certain respects and at the same time controlling each other. The basis for the planned and healthy functioning of the system was created by the party headquarters. However, it is difficult to say that the inspection mechanism has functioned uninterruptedly and as desired throughout the single-party period. Because each of the pillars on which the system rests has sometimes exploited the gaps created by its own domain and weakened the implementation. For example, during this period, the work reports of the provincial administrative committee were usually prepared as a copy of the previous period, the inspection reports lacked many of the items expected in the instructions, or the constituency reports were sometimes not sent to party headquarters. Despite all this, during the single-party rule, these reports remained one of the most important data transmission channels of the RPP and one of the few means of communication through which the state interacted with the public.

⁷³⁴ Metinsoy, "Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları", p. 119.

⁷³⁵ Metinsoy, "Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları", p. 127.

4.3. Provincial Congresses and Inspection Reports in Zonguldak as Bridges Carrying Social Expectations to Political Power

When the Republican administration took over Zonguldak, the city was almost primitive in terms of its infrastructure. Because there was a great difference in infrastructural development between the Fener district, which is home to foreign capital owners who have created their own private living space by exploiting the riches of the basin, and Zonguldak below. The gap between these two different spheres of life was obvious enough to be the subject of Nahid Sırrı Örik's stories. In his narrative of the early days of the new regime, Örik depicts this city, built around a narrow street through which wagons passed, as "*coal-black workers in tattered clothing*."⁷³⁶ Because the city lacks public services, to the extent that even this privileged neighborhood was not accessible by car.

The primitive condition of Zonguldak in terms of public works and infrastructural services in the pre-republican period came to light more and more when the society was given the opportunity to express itself. Analyzing the minutes of the provincial congresses, which provided an important opportunity for citizens to convey their wishes, demands and expectations to the state, and the reports on the inspections carried out by the RPP deputies, we find that the demands for the infrastructural needs of the region are in the first place. In this regard, throughout the single-party period, a significant portion of the expectations, demands, and complaints of the people of Zonguldak, reflected in both the Congress agenda and the inspection reports, were directed toward the development of infrastructure services such as municipal administration, public works, transportation, and communications. For example, while about 55% (73) of the 135 requests placed on the agenda of the provincial congress convened in 1935 concerned the expectations of the people of Zonguldak for infrastructure

⁷³⁶ Örik, *Kırmızı ve Siyah- Hikâyeler* 2, p. 30.

services⁷³⁷, 25% of the 24 requests submitted to the Zonguldak provincial authority by the end of 1936 concerned the improvement of infrastructure facilities.⁷³⁸ It can be seen that the expectations and needs of people living in Zonguldak and the surrounding area in terms of infrastructure services have increased over time. According to official data from the RPP, 173 of the 525 requests placed on the agenda of the 1946 provincial congress consisted of the demands of the people of Zonguldak to improve their infrastructural facilities.⁷³⁹ Although these demands, many of which can be met by local means, have changed with each congress and each inspection period according to changing needs. However, it should be noted that some of them have not been resolved even though they have been voiced for many years. In other words, the people of Zonguldak strove to solve their chronic infrastructure problems, which were on the agenda of almost every congress and inspection throughout the single-party period. The issue of clearing Bartın Port of sunken ships and the non-taxation of wind mills were some of these chronic problems expressed by the people of Zonguldak throughout the single-party period.

The expectations of the people of Zonguldak in the early republican era were similar to those of many other cities and were focused on meeting the daily needs that local governments could handle. In this context, the city needed regulations to improve the quality of individual and public life, such as the implementation of urban and environmental health regulations, the creation of electricity and water infrastructures, the organization of marketplaces and the focus on policing. On the other hand, it can be said that among the issues related to public works, demands such as the renewal or repair of old and non-functional bridges in the city, the completion of land and railroad lines connecting the

⁷³⁷ C.H.F. *Zonguldak Altıncı Vilayet Kongresi Zabtı (18 Sonkanun 1935)*, pp. 78-104 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

⁷³⁸ C.H.P. *1936 İl Kongreleri*, pp. 406-407.

⁷³⁹ C.H.P. *Zonguldak On İkinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı*, pp. 107-186 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

cities, districts and the city center, the elimination of the defects of the roads currently in use, were expressed at every opportunity. In the areas of transport and communications, the public was mainly concerned with the difficulties of communication due to the lack of postal and telegraph lines and insufficient personnel, as well as with the expectations for the improvement of transport facilities. The city's main expectation in terms of health care was to provide treatment services for infectious diseases such as syphilis, malaria, and tuberculosis, which were the most common diseases at the time, and to address the deficiencies in the health care system. As in many other provinces, Zonguldak experienced problems in meeting the need for new schools, classrooms, and teachers during this period, which was one of the main shortcomings of the early republican education system.⁷⁴⁰ In addition, the problems and expectations that were spreading throughout the country in many areas such as economy, justice, agriculture, internal affairs, land registration, security and trade also valid for Zonguldak.

The problems that arose in Zonguldak in the early republican period in many areas, from the economy to agriculture, from public order to health care, from education to transportation, and the demands that were put on the agenda were essentially in line with the general public expectations and problems of the time. Over time, however, Zonguldak has emerged as a city with its own unique "endemic requirements." It is assumed that the reasons for these endemic demands were mainly because of the republican laws and their implementation, which affect the Zonguldak region and its population. As the most important mining and labor city of the republic, home to tens of thousands of miners, Zonguldak had problems and demands related to production and labor relations

⁷⁴⁰ For example, it was stated that a new high school building was needed in Malatya and a new secondary school in Adıyaman was among the wishes submitted to the RPP Fifth Great Congress. See. BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 498. 2004. 2. Similarly; providing aid for the school to be built in Eskişehir, appointing a new teacher to Ordu on condition that the salary is paid by the villagers, and increasing the number of classrooms in schools in Eskişehir, Manisa and Tranzon were among the wishes submitted to the congress. See *C.H.P. Büyük Kurultayına Sunulan Vilayet Kongresi Hülasası*, (Ankara: 1935), p. 18.

that would occupy the agenda of political power over time. It is known that early regulations were made to improve the working conditions of miners in the region where working life began with the discovery of coal. In this sense, it is known that with the Dilaver Pasha Decree of 1867⁷⁴¹, which was the first decree on working life in the Ottoman Empire, regulations were made in favor of workers, such as the limitation of daily working hours and the immediate payment of workers' wages. However, one of the most important regulations for the working life of the workers in the mines of Zonguldak was implemented during the period of the National Government, before the proclamation of the Republic. For example, the "Ereğli Havza-i Fahmiyesi Maden Amelesinin Hukukuna Müteallik Kanun"⁷⁴² has regulated the working conditions of workers in the Ereğli Coal Basin, introduced important changes in working life, such as limiting daily working hours to 8 hours, prohibiting drudgery, and employing minors under 18 in mines.⁷⁴³ However, it would be necessary to wait until 1936 for the enactment of a law that would reorganize and regulate the labor relations in a new and comprehensive way not only in the mines of Zonguldak, but in all of Turkey. The Labor Law, passed on June 8, 1936, for the first time considered measures such as limits on working hours, workers' wages, workers' health and safety, the minimum wage, and the protection of children and female workers as a whole. In this sense, despite its prohibitive provisions, it was presented as a modern and systematic labor law in terms of the conditions of the time.⁷⁴⁴ With the passing of the bill in the parliament, many demands and expectations have arisen in the

⁷⁴¹ Büşra Yüksel, "Çalışma İlişkilerine Yönelik İlk Düzenleme: Dilaver Paşa Nizamnamesi ve Çalışma Hayatına Etkileri", *İş ve Hayat*, vol. 3, no. 6 (2017), p. 155.

⁷⁴² *Düstur*, Tertip: 3, vol. 2, p. 91.

⁷⁴³ "Ereğli Havza-i Fahmiyesi Maden Amelesinin Hukukuna Müteallik Kanun" in *Düstur*, Tertip: 3, vol. 2, p. 91, (Art 2).

⁷⁴⁴ Ali Güzel, "3008 Sayılı İş Yasasının Önemi ve Başlıca Hükümleri", *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları Dergisi*, no.35 (1986), pp. 176-178.

region regarding the law and its implementation, which has caused great pleasure and expectation among all the workers who work in the Zonguldak coal basin.⁷⁴⁵

As the need and demand for coal, the locomotive of the country's industry, increased even further with World War II, the National Protection Law was enacted, which arose because of wartime conditions and gave the government many extraordinary powers, including the power to use forced labor.⁷⁴⁶ In terms of its implementation and impact on society, the law has led to many complaints and expectations endemic to Zonguldak. Because, even before the full implementation of the Labor Law, which provided for the improvement of working conditions for workers, the obligation to work in the mining industry was reintroduced in the region. The paid employment obligation, enacted under the National Protection Law, enacted as part of the National Protection Law, caused one of the main social discomfort of Zonguldak people during the war years. In this sense, many of the expectations and demands reflected in the provincial congresses organized in 1940 and later, as well as in the inspections conducted during the same period, related to the elimination of social concerns that had arisen in connection with the National Protection Law and its implementation.

During this period, one of the most important problems of the people of Zonguldak was that they could not benefit from the state forests as they wished. Because, while for centuries there was no obstacle for people to use these forests the way they wanted, a new problem arose in the region when the republican administration regulated the way and principles of people's use of the forests under a law: Forest Law. The Forest Law enacted in 1937, created major bureaucratic obstacles for the people of Zonguldak, who had benefited from the

⁷⁴⁵ *Zonguldak*, 6 Haziran (June) 1936, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁶ With the National Protection Law dated on 18 January 1940, the state introduced the practice of "paid employment obligation" (*ücretli iş mükellefiyeti*) in order to "increase coal production to meet the needs". See Murat Kara, "Ereğli Kömür Havzası'nda II. Mükellefiyet (Zorunlu Çalıştırma, 1940-1947)", p. 414.

state forests for centuries. In this regard, both the restrictions imposed by the law and the arbitrary behavior of the officials responsible for its implementation have led to significant social unrest in the region. For this reason, the people of Zonguldak, who could not simply give up their traditional customs, tried to convey to the government their problems with the implementation of the Forest Law through party congresses and the inspection mechanism.

From this point of view, in this part of our research, we will make an evaluation of the social expectations and demands reflected in the provincial congresses and inspection reports, which are not found in any other Anatolian city and are more likely to be found in Zonguldak, as well as the way they are expressed, the way they are followed up and how they are concluded. These may be region-specific problems of public order, some traditional practices that have emerged due to the mode of production and living, political demands, expectations for the protection of social morality and family life, and social reactions and reflexes against Zonguldak-specific practices or laws. An attempt is then made to draw conclusions about the extent to which the provincial congresses and the inspection system were able to fulfill the social bridging function, the extent to which the social demands were accepted by the state, and the extent to which the demands and expectations of the people of Zonguldak were met. This will provide an answer to the question of the extent to which the RPP Zonguldak organization was successful between 1935 and 1946 in its bridging function of transmitting the demands of the periphery to the center.

4.3.1. Provincial Congresses and Inspection Reports to Understand the Results of the Implementation of Republican Laws

The 1930s were a period of institutionalization of the republican regime and single-party rule.⁷⁴⁷ The successful administration of such a process depends

⁷⁴⁷ Murat Metinsoy, “Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Mebusların İntihap Dairesi ve Teftiş Bölgesi Raporları”, p. 112.

primarily on a well-functioning administrative mechanism and bureaucracy. The *Nine Principles*, the source for the founding of the Republic, states that a bureaucratic structure of industrious, talented, honest, law-abiding and methodical officials is necessary to conduct the affairs of the people in a simple manner. From the second half of the 1920s, however, a certain discontent spread through society, due to the uncontrolled use of authority and power by party representatives and state officials in the provinces. These social discontents, which took shape with the experience of the FRP, clearly showed the need to establish a stricter control and monitoring mechanism for local government and provincial organizations. In fact, the party leaders, known at the time as *mutemets*, who were responsible for the RPP's provincial organizations and who were mentioned in some sources as “*the architects of the public's distant attitude toward the party*”⁷⁴⁸, drew public reaction because of their illegal actions and abuse of their authority. As a result of these developments, the political power, on the one hand, dismissed party members who were causing public displeasure and, on the other, intensified inspections on the party organization and the provincial bureaucracy. For this purpose, inspection methods were introduced that could eliminate the vacuum of authority that had arisen in the provincial bureaucracy and ensure the control and supervision of the party organization and the state apparatus. Although there were no articles in the provinces about the laws and their executors except for *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Teftiş Raporu (1931)*, the political power always tried to learn the views and opinions of the public through the above-mentioned reports. Within this framework, an attempt was made to find answers to the question of how the laws are perceived in the provinces and whether there may be arbitrariness in their implementation, especially through inspection reports. From this point of view, it can be said that

⁷⁴⁸ Hilmi Uran, *Meşrutiyet, Tek Parti, Çok Parti Hatıralarım (1908-1950)*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2017), pp. 201-202. In Ahmet Ağaoğlu's memoirs, there was an event that shows how tired the people and the villagers are from the *mutemets*: After the FRP set foot in İzmir, things were mixed up and a villager's son was shot by the police. The villager took his son, who was shot, in his arms and threw it in front of Fethi Okyar: Here is a victim for you. We give others too! Only you save us... Only you save us from the hands of these mutemets.” he exclaimed. See Ahmet Ağaoğlu, *Serbest Fırka Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), p. 63.

during the single-party rule, the people of Zonguldak complained mainly about the Labor Law, Forest Law and the National Protection Law and their implementation. Therefore, a closer look at these laws and the process of their implementation is required because each of which had specific mean for Zonguldak.

4.3.2. The Experience of the 1937 Forest Law in the Zonguldak Scale and the Efforts of the Provinces to Reach the Center

The use of the state forests has become an important problem for the Turkish people since February 8, 1937. Because, the Forest Law⁷⁴⁹ approved on the above date, has imposed certain restrictions on the people who have been using the forests at will for centuries, and certain rules for the way they use them. Because of the way the rules laid down in the law were implemented and the behavior of the officials who enforced them, the Forest Law was one of the most objected to republican laws by the Turkish people during the single-party period. Even before the law came into effect, the people of Zonguldak, who had profited at will from the forests around them, attacked the state forests, fearing that they would no longer be able to profit from them. As concern grew among the villagers in many parts of the country, the Ministry of Agriculture sent a decree to the forestry directorates to inform them that the right of the people to use the forests had not been completely abolished, but that the procedure, which had hitherto proceeded in an irregular manner, would henceforth be carried out according to certain rules.⁷⁵⁰ On the other hand, it is understood that the

⁷⁴⁹ *Resmi Gazete*, 18 Şubat 1937 Perşembe (Thursday), no. 3537. This law, which is considered the beginning of technical and scientific forestry in Turkey, is also the beginning of state forest management. With the Forest Law, the state forests became important resources of the national economy and it was envisaged that these resources would be managed by the state for the benefit of the general public. The law, also restricted the rights of millions of villagers who had freely used the forests for hundreds of years. See Erdoğan Atmış and Gökçe Gencay, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarındaki Ormancılık Politikalarının Yerel Yansımaları: Bartın Örneği”, *Journal of the Faculty of Forestry Istanbul University*, 2014, vol. 64, no. 2, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁵⁰ Atmış and Gencay, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarındaki Ormancılık Politikalarının Yerel Yansımaları: Bartın Örneği”, p. 3.

provisions of the law were strictly implemented in Zonguldak at the proposal stage. Because, Edip Ergin has already listened the complaints of the villagers of Bartın during his inspections in the region in the fall of 1936. The inhabitants of Bartın, who had the opportunity to submit their demands to the party inspector, complained that they could not obtain the wood they needed to repair their destroyed houses and that the problem had not yet been solved, although it had previously been placed on the agenda of the congress. Investigations revealed that the directive prohibiting villagers from cutting down trees was issued to the Forestry Directorate directly by the Ministry of Agriculture. Considering that this decision puts people in a very difficult situation, especially during the winter season, Ergin advised the party headquarters to relax the ban.⁷⁵¹

The transmission of data from the provinces to the center on the implementation of the law and its perception by the public continued through the reports of the parliamentarians from Zonguldak and the regional inspectors. In this framework, the deputies of Zonguldak, who were in their constituencies at the end of 1937, received numerous complaints about the Forest Law and the problems in its implementation during their contacts with the public. Investigations and interviews on these complaints found that people were generally satisfied with the laws enacted by the state, but the main complaint was that officials tried to enforce the laws to the detriment of the people. Besides, in the report it was stated that the people, which was "*accustomed to act very freely with regard to the use of the forests*"⁷⁵², was concerned about the arbitrariness of the officials in the implementation of the forest law. Because, the officials in charge of protecting the forests did not carry out their inspections in the forests, but in the cities and district centers, where they appeared in squads. It is understood that that the forestry officials, whose arbitrary actions were not limited to this, became a focal point of power and pressure that even the district governors could

⁷⁵¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], p.19.

⁷⁵² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], p.2.

not control. Since, they did not even allow people to transport the previously procured firewood from one place to another within the municipal boundaries. Because of the power derived from their position and the unsatisfactory salaries, these officials charged with the protection of the forests even resorted to smuggling. In their reports, the deputies from Zonguldak also pointed out that forestry officials are also among the main complaints of the other people. During the meetings with the population, the deputies were complained that the forestry officials did not inform the population about the instructions of the headquarters.

The struggle of a Safranbolu resident in the early years of the implementation of the Forest Law to move the wood from his summer garden to his house in the city is an interesting example to understand the officials' treatment of citizens and the arbitrariness in the implementation of the law. This example is also valuable in understanding the helplessness of the people of Zonguldak in the face of the state bureaucracy. A citizen named İsmail İpci from the city of Bağlar in Safranbolu wrote a petition to the office of the district governor of Safranbolu asking for permission to transport the wood from his garden in the Bağlar district to his house in the city. The district office forwarded the petition to the forestry department, and after it had gone through various bureaucratic steps, it finally reached the hands of the commissioner of agriculture. The agricultural official, the last link in the bureaucratic chain, first requested payment of his travel allowance and the provision of a motor vehicle for his trip to the region. The citizen, realizing that the money he must expend to meet the official's demands exceeds the value of the timber to be transported, will be forced to withdraw the petition.⁷⁵³

The people of Zonguldak have brought their problems with the implementation of the Forest Law, which has been in effect for almost two years, to the RPP provincial congresses to convey them to the government. Because the people

⁷⁵³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], p.4.

know that their wishes, which cannot be solved at the congresses within the limits of local possibilities, can go all the way to the Grand Congress of the RPP. In this sense, some of the wishes discussed at the Eighth Provincial Congress of RPP Zonguldak on December 15, 1938⁷⁵⁴, were forwarded to the General Secretariat of RPP, since they could not be solved by local means.⁷⁵⁵ These wishes, which were discussed by the “Wishes Committee of the Provincial Congress” and forwarded to the party headquarters, were mainly related to the economy, public works, justice, internal affairs, education, agriculture, health, monopoly, Council of the State and party affairs.⁷⁵⁶ However, it is understood that significant part of the wishes gathered from Bartın, Ereğli, and Zonguldak and discussed in the local congresses are aimed at solving the problems arising from the forest law. Among these requests, permission to cut the wood needed for the repair and construction of houses and agricultural tools and the free use of the forests for the villagers to meet their basic needs were in the foreground.⁷⁵⁷

The demands and requests from many parts of the country regarding the implementation of the Forestry Law finally reached the agenda of the Fifth Grand Congress of the RPP, held on May 29, 1939. During the discussions, which took place in the presence of the Minister of Agriculture, Muhsin Erkmen, it was acknowledged that there was a social reaction to the law in the provinces and that this was due to the mistakes that had occurred during the implementation phase. At the same time, the ministry stated that "*the work on the protection of forests is still in the trial phase*" and that the reactions and complaints of the public on this issue are unnecessary. In fact, the ministry

⁷⁵⁴ *Bartın*, 15 Kanunu Evvel (December) 1938, p. 1.

⁷⁵⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939], pp.1-18.

⁷⁵⁶ See Table 14.

⁷⁵⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939], p. 14.

believes that the forest protection works, which are still in an experimental phase, are improving day by day. Regarding the solution to the problem, it is understood that the Ministry of Agriculture responded that solutions are being sought to facilitate the collection of forest products by the people, that the requests made by the villagers to satisfy their basic needs are being examined, and that attempts are being made to remedy the administrative shortcomings within the limits of the available resources.⁷⁵⁸

In August 1939, the deputies of Zonguldak who came to the city for inspections found that in all the villages and towns they visited, the main complaints and concerns of the people were still related to their need for firewood and timber, which was restricted by law. In the interviews with villagers, the most common complaint was that the forestry administration does not even issue timber licenses for repairing houses and hayloft, and that they are not even issued licenses for timber they need for agricultural work. In addition, townspeople and shopkeepers also complained that they could not find firewood and charcoal. The situation even went so far that the inhabitants of the province, surrounded by forests, began to meet their needs for charcoal and wood from Istanbul. On the other hand, during the inspections, complaints were heard from all the districts and villages that the villagers had to come collectively to the Forestry Administration to benefit from the forests, and that those who could not join this group for certain reasons were left without firewood. In addition to all these difficulties, the soldiers of the forest guard still caused difficulties for the people in transporting their licensed firewood and timber. In the end, this indifference of the forestry officials seems only to have encouraged public corruption, as the deputies noted in their reports.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁸ C.H.P. *Beşinci Büyük Kurultay Dilek Encümeni Raporu*, (Ankara: 1939), p. 26.

⁷⁵⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], p. 77.

The villagers' demands to facilitate the use of state forests and to exempt from taxation the wood used for the construction of agricultural equipment were also raised at the 1939 district congresses, and the issue was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture. The ministry's responses were shared with the public at the Ninth Provincial Congress of RPP Zonguldak, held on December 22, 1940. Accordingly, the Ministry of Agriculture stated that the right to use the forests free of charge had been abolished and that instead a very reasonable fee would be charged, based on the needs of the villagers. On the other hand, it was reported that the forests enabled people to satisfy their basic needs.⁷⁶⁰ In addition, some of the problems encountered in the district congresses related to the implementation of the Forest Law have been reported to the provincial authority. At the district congresses in Safranbolu, for example, people demanded the provision of firewood and timber. In addition, similar complaints were made at the RPP's Bartın and Zonguldak central district congresses. The provincial administration, on the other hand, followed up on these requests from the district congresses, and the results were informed to the public at the 1940 provincial congress. Accordingly, it was stated that the Forestry Administration determined the firewood and timber needs of the villagers of Safranbolu and issued licenses to the applicants, while the villagers who did not receive licenses despite being notified through the Council of Elders could not be helped. Moreover, in order to meet the timber needs of the Bartın population, the Bartın Forestry Directorate has been tasked to help in accordance with the relevant legislation.⁷⁶¹

The wishes committee of the Ninth Provincial Congress, which informed the public of the results of the wishes of the district congress, then began its work to determine new wishes. Here it was decided that some of the requests that could

⁷⁶⁰ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, pp.18-19 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

⁷⁶¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 469. 1, 21 Temmuz 1942 [21 July 1942], pp. 127-131.

not be fulfilled by local means would be reported to party headquarters so that the RPP General Secretariat could follow them up. In this sense, according to the congress minutes 38⁷⁶², according to the official party publication named *C.H.P. 1940 Vilayet Kongreleri*⁷⁶³, 21 wishes were reported to the general secretariat. Social demands that could be solved within local possibilities were reported to the provincial authority and the mayor's office, depending on their jurisdiction. A significant part of these demands was in turn related to the social expectations arising from the Forest Law and its implementation. In this sense, the General Secretariat of the RPP asked for the free provision of the wood needed for the district buildings, the answer of the Ministry of Agriculture was that this was not possible.⁷⁶⁴ In addition, public complaints about officials in Zonguldak continued to increase. A significant portion of the complaints reported to the provincial authority were related to forestry officials that they were not adequately interested in people's problems. In some villages in the central district of Zonguldak, for example, villagers who had applied to the forestry administration for the supply of timber for the construction and repair of buildings said that their demands had not been met for a long time, and called on the provincial authority to follow up on the matter. The inhabitants of the town of Devrek, who applied for wood and charcoal to the Forestry Administration, also complained that the Forestry Administration put many obstacles in their way. In a complaint from the villages of the Ereğli district, it was reported that the officials of the forestry administration made it difficult for the villagers to profit from the trees they had planted on their land.⁷⁶⁵ Similar complaints are found in the reports of the deputies from Zonguldak who conducted inspections in their constituencies in September 1940. The deputies noted that one of the most common complaints

⁷⁶² *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, pp. 25-29.

⁷⁶³ *C.H.P. 1940 Kongre Dilekleri (İkinci Kısım)*, (Ankara:Recep Ulusoglu Basımevi, 1940), p. 2.

⁷⁶⁴ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, p. 26.

⁷⁶⁵ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, pp. 29-36.

of the people in all villages and towns was the difficulty of state institutions and officials in allowing citizens to use the forests. For this reason, they reminded the authorities that such a restriction of people's needs would lead to unethical means. All these developments show us that even three years after the Forest Law was passed, the people of Zonguldak still face considerable bureaucratic obstacles in using the forests.

The inspection of Zonguldak province by the inspector Şerafettin Karacan, which began in mid-November 1940, lasted until the end of December. Karacan submitted his report on his observations and suggestions during the inspection process to the RPP General Secretariat on February 2, 1941, devoting a large space to the "chronic problems" of the population of Zonguldak. The most important of these problems were those of the villagers and townspeople of Zonguldak, who did not receive licenses for wood, coal, and timber in time. According to Karacan, it was too optimistic to believe that the villagers would remain inactive in the face of the denial of the forest use licenses they needed. Because, it was not difficult to foresee that this necessity would ultimately lead people to illegitimate means. On the other hand, the fact that the protection of forests was left to soldiers, most of whom had no idea of forest legislation and were unfamiliar with the task, further complicated the solution of the problem. Therefore, Karacan recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture find a solution to this problem, which has long been destroying the forests and the morale of Turkish farmers. Thus, this would put an end to "*the sad stories that have been heard everywhere and in every congress for years.*"⁷⁶⁶

In the inspections carried out by the Zonguldak deputies in the province at the beginning of 1941, the forest guards and the forest administration were again the most complained about points. In a report sent to the RPP General Secretariat on February 1, 1941, the deputies stated that they had heard many complaints from

⁷⁶⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 469. 1, 21 Temmuz 1942 [21 July 1942], pp. 82-83.

the public about the forest guards. In particular, the report reiterates that these soldiers, who served in the cities in groups of five soldiers each and were often not led by an officer, did not listen to the orders of either the forestry administration or the local authorities. Due to the arbitrariness of forest guards acting outside the existing laws and regulations, the public is forced to act outside the law. Another problem people complained about during the inspection was the difficulty of finding firewood in the towns and villages. According to the deputies, the most important reason for this was the failure of the forest administration to complete the permitting process in a timely manner. For this reason, the deputies of Zonguldak recommended in their report that measures be taken as soon as possible to resolve these legitimate complaints of the people.⁷⁶⁷

These requests, which were forwarded to Office X by the RPP General Secretariat, were soon forwarded to the Ministry of Agriculture, where the requests and complaints were reviewed and responded to directly by the Minister of Agriculture Muhlis Erkmen. The ministry's response first states that soldiers entrusted with forest protection under the Forest Protection Organization Act, try to perform their duties in good faith, but that they have become the subject of public complaints due to some misunderstandings. Besides, it was explained that the ministry conducts inspections of forest protection organizations, including the smallest units, at certain times to avoid such misunderstandings and prevent complaints and corruption. On the other hand, it was reported that all measures have been taken to ensure that permits for wood for the villagers are issued quickly and on time. Besides, it was stated that the necessary instructions have been given to the relevant directorates, and that the matter is being followed up. Although the relevant authorities assigned special officials to meet the demands of the villagers, it was stated that the people of Zonguldak did not satisfy their needs through official channels but through other means and did not seek permission.⁷⁶⁸ As can be seen, the ministry believes that it has taken the

⁷⁶⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d. , p. 36.

⁷⁶⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d. , p. 15.

necessary measures as an institution at this point. At the same time it believes, first and foremost, that the people of Zonguldak cannot get away from their traditional habits regarding the use of forests.

In early March 1942, the deputies of Zonguldak again came to Zonguldak to conduct inspections in their constituencies.⁷⁶⁹ The deputies met with all strata of the population, especially with the mine workers and the members of the municipal, trade and general councils of the province. They discussed with the administrative bodies of these institutions the issues related to agriculture, forestry and coal mining, which are among the most important problems of Zonguldak. In the meetings with the citizens, it was complained that people still have difficulties in obtaining wood. In addition to this, the wood provided by the Forestry Administration was far from meeting their needs. On the other hand, deputies received many complaints that state-owned enterprises were selling timber in open auctions and at very high prices. The report pointed out that timber sales that exceed the purchasing power of the population put citizens in a difficult situation, and called for the necessary measures to be taken. In addition, the Directorate General of Forestry should provide people with more easiness in terms of wood supply.⁷⁷⁰

These demands, which were included in the report sent by the Zonguldak deputies from their electoral districts, were forwarded directly to the Ministry of Agriculture by the RPP General Secretariat. In its reply to the RPP General Secretariat, the Ministry of Agriculture, which had investigated the demands and complaints of the people of Zonguldak, stated that the fuel needs of all the inhabitants of Zonguldak had been met for the year 1942 and that the laws and regulations had been simplified and eased for the benefit of the villagers.

⁷⁶⁹ The deputies who participated in the mentioned inspections consist of the following names: Hasan Karabacak, Şinasi Devrin, İ. Ethem Bozkurt, Rifat Vardar and Hazim Atuf Kuyucak. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942], p. 21.

⁷⁷⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942], p. 30.

According to the ministry, after the regulations, villagers did not even need to come to the city to obtain permission and the declarations that had to be submitted by the villagers were collected by civil servants and the forest protection organization. The permits prepared according to the official procedures were also given to the representatives appointed in each village, who were to pass them on to the citizens. On the other hand, it has also been reported that the forestry administration provides wood without auction and at a very low price to meet the needs of the villagers.⁷⁷¹ In a way, the ministry's answer indicated that the villagers' complaints that they could not get firewood and timber because of the high prices were not true. Similar complaints of the people of Zonguldak about the problems arising from the implementation of the Forest Law were also on the agenda of the Provincial Congress of the RPP Zonguldak on December 3, 1942⁷⁷² and were followed up by the provincial administration. In response to these requests submitted to the forest management, the administration stated that the needs of the population with respect to the supply of firewood have been met.⁷⁷³

The problems arising from the Forest Law and its implementation continued to be one of the most important topics at the district congresses of RPP Zonguldak convened in late 1943. Because, the agenda of the congress included numerous requests and complaints to be sent to the Ministry of Agriculture through the RPP Secretariat. Although the Ministry of Agriculture has taken many initiatives to solve the problems arising from the implementation of the Forest Law in the region, the people of Zonguldak still seem to face bureaucratic obstacles in the

⁷⁷¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942].

⁷⁷² *Ocak*, 9 Birincikanun (December) 1942, p. 1.

⁷⁷³ *C.H.P. Onbirinci Vilayet Kongresi Zaptu*, p. 1.

use of forests, are unable to use their own land to the extent they desire, and state that they still do not receive sufficient easeness in terms of wood supply.⁷⁷⁴

The deputies of Zonguldak, who carried out inspections in their constituencies in April 1944⁷⁷⁵, pointed out that, contrary to the reports of the Ministry of Agriculture, the complaints about the implementation of the Forest Law in the region had began to gain a general character. At this point, it becomes clear that the people of Zonguldak complained primarily about the soldiers of the forest protection organization. As the report indicates, since the law came into force, the soldiers of the Forest Protection Organization have continued to receive money for the trees cut down on the people's land, which belongs to them. There were also many complaints that these soldiers, who obviously benefited greatly from the power and authority they had in the region, did not spend their income accordingly and sent substantial amounts of money to their families every month.⁷⁷⁶ This complaint, which was sent to the Ministry of Agriculture through the General Secretariat of the RPP, was responded by the Minister of Agriculture Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu after investigations and examinations. Hatipoğlu said that strict measures had been taken to ensure that the organization responsible for forest protection could do its work more seriously and that the protection work would be taken away from the soldiers, as the state forestry organizations would cover all state forests in a short time.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁴ C.H.P. 1943 Kaza Kongreleri Dilekleri, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliği Yayınlarından, 1944, pp. 487-506.

⁷⁷⁵ Hazım Atıf Kuyucak, Ahmet Gürel, Yusuf Ziya Özenci, Hasan Karabacak, Rıfat Vardar and Şeref Tansan attended in the inspection. The report on the inspection was sent to the RPP General Secretariat on April 15, 1944. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 85.

⁷⁷⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 93.

⁷⁷⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 81.

At the Eleventh Provincial Congress of the Zonguldak RPP, held on November 25, 1944⁷⁷⁸, the people of Zonguldak put forward their demand for forest management directorates to facilitate their use of the forests. Indeed, from the complaints made at the congress, it appeared that forestry organizations were still causing difficulty meeting the winter wood needs of the population. The response of the Ministry of Agriculture was nothing more than sending an instruction to the relevant institutions to respond to the needs of the villagers.⁷⁷⁹ The actions taken by the Ministry of Agriculture have been clearly reflected in the number of complaints received by congress over the years. For example, among the public petitions on the Forest Law submitted to the RPP General Secretariat in 1944, there was only one complaint. From the reports of the Zonguldak deputies who conducted inspections in the constituency offices, it is also understood that the problems of the people in Zonguldak regarding forestry laws have decreased over time. For example, in the inspection report that Rebi Barkın sent to the RPP General Secretariat on October 20, 1945, there was no mention of public complaints about the Forest Law.⁷⁸⁰ Despite all this, of course, the problems and complaints arising from the implementation of the Forest Law have not completely disappeared. Because, it is understood that the issue was again put on the agenda of the Twelfth Provincial Congress of the RPP Zonguldak Organization.⁷⁸¹ Moreover, it is known that the restrictions and problems arising from the Forest Law are still an important problem for the inhabitants of the forest villages of Zonguldak today. Traceable primary sources, however, show that by the mid-1940s, the number of complaints and petitions

⁷⁷⁸ *Karaelmas*, no. 26-27, (Aralık 1944- Ocak 1945), p. 2.

⁷⁷⁹ *C.H.P. 1944 İl Kongreleri Dilekleri*, CHP Genel Sekreterliği Yayınlarından, p. 418.

⁷⁸⁰ *BCA*, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], pp.14-39.

⁷⁸¹ *C.H.P. Zonguldak Onikinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı*, pp. 108-170 in *BCA*, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

related to the Forest Law in Zonguldak had declined significantly compared to the early years of its implementation. It is clear that the inspection reports, which allowed the public to submit their demands and complaints directly to the executive, and the petition system, which was an important element of the RPP's provincial congresses, played an important role in this. This is evidenced by the fact that both the reports of the deputies who conducted inspections in the constituencies and the complaints submitted through congress were separately examined by the competent institutions and intervened in matters when it is required.

4.3.3. From the 1936 Labor Law to the Implementation of the National Protection Law: The Efforts of the Zonguldak Miners to Reach the State

Shortly after the discovery of coal in Zonguldak, work and labor life began, and the first company to operate the mines in the region was the British Coal Company.⁷⁸² In the coal mining in the basin, which gained momentum since the 1850s, Montenegrin and Croatian stone workers were brought in and employed instead of the population of Zonguldak, which had never been in contact with mining before.⁷⁸³ However, the increasing demand for labor due to the expansion of the mining basin made the mines a new source of income for the villagers of Zonguldak over time. The coal production in the region began to increase with the establishment of the French-financed Ereğli Company in 1896. By the late 1890s, coal production in the region reached 200,000 tons per year as more local and foreign companies began operations.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸² Karakök, “Zonguldak Kömür Havzasında Bir Yardım Sandığı: Amele Birliği”, pp. 352-353.

⁷⁸³ Savaşkan, *Zonguldak Maden Kömürü Havzası Tarihçesi 1829-1989*, p. 11. ; Karaoğuz, *Karaelmas'ın İlk Madencileri*, p. 23; Kalyoncu, *Kömürde Açan Çiçek*, p. 117; Hüseyin Koca, "Sanayileşme Sürecinde Zonguldak Kömür Havzasında Nüfus ve Kentleşme Sorunlarının Genel Değerlendirmesi", *Zonguldak Kent Tarihi '05 Bienali Bildiriler Kitabı*, (İstanbul: Ezgi Matbaası, 2006), p. 229.

⁷⁸⁴ Donald Quatert, “Zonguldak Maden İşçilerinin Hayatı 1870-1920: Başlangıç Niteliğinde Bazı Gözlemler”, (trans.) Tansel Demirel, *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 83 (2000), pp. 80-85.

It should be noted, however, that the working conditions of the miners, who were the main element of coal production in the region, were determined "*not according to a specific order, but according to customs and traditions*" until the enactment of the Dilaver Pasha Decree of 1867. According to this irregular order, the working hours of the workers, "*who were employed in the mines like a farm laborer*", were set from sunrise to sunset.⁷⁸⁵ During this period, the housing conditions of the miners were as primitive as the working conditions. For this reason, the Dilaver Pasha Decree, which came into force in 1867, made some regulations to improve the rights of miners. Accordingly, the working hours of the laborers working in the Ereğli coal mines were set at ten hours per day in two shifts, and the necessary infirmaries were to be built for their accommodation. Besides, according to this regulation, which forbids workers to work outside the mines, the treatment of sick workers is carried out by the doctors of the basin. In addition to these, the decree also introduced regulations regarding the religious life of workers. Accordingly, both Muslim and Christian workers were allowed to take leave on religious holidays, Muslims were allowed to go to mosque on Fridays and Christians were allowed to attend church on Sundays.⁷⁸⁶ It should be noted, however, that the purpose of the regulation was to increase coal production rather than to protect workers' rights.⁷⁸⁷

It is understood that the working and living conditions of miners in the Ereğli coal basin remained primitive during the period when foreign companies were intensively operating in the region since the late 1890. The statements of Ethem Çavuş, who worked in the mines for forty-five years, are noteworthy in that they

⁷⁸⁵ Karakök, "Zonguldak Kömür Havzasında Bir Yardım Sandığı: Amele Birliği", p. 353.

⁷⁸⁶ Özkan Demir, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Maden İşletmelerinde İşçi Haklarını Belirlemeye Yönelik Bazı Düzenlemeler (Ergani Bakır İşletmesi ve Ereğli Kömür İşletmesi Örnekleri)", *Yer Altı Kaynakları Dergisi*, Year: 8, no. 18 (July, 2020), p. 44.

⁷⁸⁷ Karakök, p. 355.

reveal the primitive working conditions of the workers during the period of the foreign companies:

In those days, miners did not build huts to provide shelter for the workers. Each group of workers wove something from brushwood and covered it with clay...At night we slept on the mud floor of the hut. We put a log under our heads as a pillow...Newcomers who had not yet built their huts, as I said, either slept in the open or, if it was winter, dug under a hill with pick and shovel to create a cave-like structure and slept there.⁷⁸⁸

Unlike the foreign mine owners, the National Government had already made some legal provisions for the working and living conditions of miners during the period of the National Struggle.⁷⁸⁹ In this sense, on May 2, 1921, a bill was drafted and placed on the agenda of parliament "*to protect the rights of mine workers, who bring wealth to the capitalists but have always been oppressed and to provide them with a more decent life.*"⁷⁹⁰ This law numbered 151 introduced important regulations on the working age of workers, working hours, health and housing conditions. It also ended the practice of forced labor under the Dilaver Pasha Decree. In addition to this, it also introduced another important regulation, the establishment of the Labour Union. The Labour Union, as the first social welfare institution established by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, aimed to support workers socially.⁷⁹¹

Despite all the legal regulations, it is difficult to claim that working and living conditions in the mines, most of which were in the hands of foreign capital in the early 1920s, had reached the desired level. In fact, from the second half of the

⁷⁸⁸ Naim, *Yer Altında Kırkbeş Sene*, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁸⁹ Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 3.

⁷⁹⁰ *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi (1337-1921)*, Devre: 1, Yasama Yılı: 2, Birleşim: 28, vol. 10.

⁷⁹¹ Demir, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Maden İşletmelerinde İşçi Haklarını Belirlemeye Yönelik Bazı Düzenlemeler (Ergani Bakır İşletmesi ve Ereğli Kömür İşletmesi Örnekleri)", p. 45.

1920s onward, the nationalization of the mines, in addition to improving working and living conditions for the workers, was also an objective of political power. In this regard, it is difficult to argue that the improvements made in the 1920s to the working conditions of miners were implemented in a short period of time.⁷⁹²

The entry of İşbank as an investor in the region significantly improved the working and living conditions of the miners. On the one hand, the company equipped the mines with modern production facilities, and on the other, it built housing complexes that meet all the sanitary and social needs of the workers. Workers' houses and workers' pavilions, equipped for all the needs of the workers, were completed at a pace that would change the face of the city in a short time. As one of the first places to catch the eye of outsiders entering the city, these settlements did not escape the attention of journalists who wanted to get an idea of the Republic's works in the province. One of these journalists was İsmail Habip Sevük, who traveled to Zonguldak in 1936. Sevük, who followed the tracks of the coal railroad along the Üzülmez stream to the Asma district, described these newly built settlements and their surroundings in his work *Yurttan Yazılar* as follows:

...At the top of the hill we climbed, four large, newly finished pavilions stretch back and forth in a harmonious assembly. It's a labor palace. These pavilions will house 640 laborers. It's not shelter, it's something higher. The palace has heating, bathrooms, everything... We take the worker from pity to envy.⁷⁹³

As can be understood from Sevük's descriptions, the Republican administration took important steps to improve the conditions of workers in the Zonguldak coal basin. However, the regime's first legal regulation in Turkey that created a general and comprehensive legal framework for labor-employer relations was Labor Law in 1936. This law for the first time regulated labor relations throughout the country and established the methods and principles to be followed

⁷⁹² Nurşen Gürboğa, *Mine Workers, The Single Party Rule and War- The Zonguldak Coal Basin As The Site of Contest 1920-1947*, (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2009), pp. 124-125.

⁷⁹³ Sevük, *Yurttan Yazılar*, pp. 211-212.

in resolving any problems that might arise. The Labor Law, which came into force on June 15, 1937, hoped to solve the long-standing problems of the miners of Zonguldak in terms of work, food, housing, and wages.⁷⁹⁴ For this reason, when the bill was presented to the parliament, it caused great pleasure and expectation in the Zonguldak coal basin. However, it is difficult to say that the Labor Law has completely eliminated the problems of basin workers in practice.

The majority of the workers in the mines of Zonguldak were peasants who worked half of the month in the mines and the rest of the month in the fields. The rest were workers from neighboring provinces such as Trabzon, Giresun and Erzurum who stayed in the region for a longer period of time.⁷⁹⁵ This led to a significant labor shortage in the basin. This was because workers who worked in the mines for fifteen days would return to their villages after receiving their daily wages. This "rotating" mode of operation, which resulted in low coal production, did not escape the notice of the party inspectors who carried out inspections in the region. For example, inspector Edip Ergin, who conducted inspections in Zonguldak in 1936, pointed out that the biggest obstacle to the normal course of business in the region was the rotating work habits of the miners and the poor nutritional conditions. The reason for this was that by deducting a certain percentage of wages from the meals in the state-owned enterprises, the miners were forced to consume local foods called "bazlamac" and "malay," which were often made from cornmeal and "could not meet the effort of using the pickaxe." For this reason, Inspector Ergin suggested in his report that one solution would be to provide free meals to workers in all coal basin mines and put an end to the rotation principle.

Another issue raised in Ergin's report was the negative impact of the conflict in the Zonguldak Labour Union on workers. In fact, there were two classes of workers in the region: miners and coal shippers. While there were no restrictions

⁷⁹⁴ Güzel, "3008 Sayılı İş Yasasının Önemi ve Başlıca Hükümleri", pp. 176-177.

⁷⁹⁵ Karakök, "Zonguldak Kömür Havzasında Bir Yardım Sandığı: Amele Birliği", p. 54.

on the miner's profession, coal shippers had to wait weeks for their turn to work. However, for the Labour Union fund, 2% was deducted from the earnings of underground workers and 8% from the earnings of coal shippers. So these two situations have caused unrest among workers. The reason was that a part of the workers wanted to allow them to work as the coal shipper, while the coal shippers demanded that the same wages be deducted from them as from the workers underground. Although the Ministry of Economy, which was informed about the situation, corrected this rate to 6%, Ergin stated that this rate should be reduced to 2% in order to ensure peace among workers.⁷⁹⁶

After the labor law came into effect, deputies Raif Dinç, Hasan Karabacak, Rıfat Vardar and Esad Çakmakkaya from Zonguldak conducted inspections in their constituencies at the end of 1937. One of the issues raised by the deputies during their inspections was coal production, labor issues, and problems with the implementation of the Labor Law. As it is known, the French-financed Ereğli Company operated the mines in the Zonguldak, Gelik, and Üzülmez regions, as well as the Zonguldak railroads and the port of Zonguldak.⁷⁹⁷ However, with the contract signed between the Ereğli Company and the Ministry of Economy on November 28, 1936, all shares of the company were acquired by the government and the authority to operate the mines was transferred to Etibank.⁷⁹⁸ The takeover of the company on behalf of Etibank was greeted with great pleasure, especially in Zonguldak, where "*those who had been unjustly sanctioned by the company*" saw it as an opportunity to take revenge.⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], pp.26-28.

⁷⁹⁷ Murat Kara, *Ereğli Kömür Havzası ve Cumhuriyet Dönemi Şekillenışı*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Bolu: Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi), 2009, p. 61.

⁷⁹⁸ Zaman, *Zonguldak Kömür Havzasının İki Yüzyılı*, p. 99.

⁷⁹⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], p. 5.

When the French-financed Ereğli Company was transferred to Etibank, the company's management team was not changed. So the old board, including the company's directors, was still at the helm of decision-making. The reason for this decision is probably that the state, which entered the basin with Etibank as the operator, lacks competent and experienced personnel to manage the mining companies. It appears that until the basin was fully nationalized in 1940, the plan was to benefit from the operational experience of previous personnel and to completely sever ties after training experienced personnel. Despite all this, several Turkish administrators were sent to the Etibank in addition to the old ones. So the expectation that the administration would make decisions in the interest of the workers increased in the basin. However, with the entry of Etibank as operator in the basin, the satisfaction of the miners was quickly disappeared. Because, although the shares were purchased by the state, the managers and officials of ECC, the majority of whom were still in office, were not able to completely break away from the old management methods. For this reason, as can be seen from the reports of the deputies of Zonguldak, the number of workers employed in the mines and the production decreased in a short time due to the "*unfair treatment*" by the officials of Etibank. Because company officials deducted money from workers' wages on behalf of Etibank and that caused many workers to quit their jobs. On the other hand, interviews with labor inspectors revealed that these officials were not enforcing the recently enacted labor law and were overworking workers in the mines.

When Etibank entered the basin as an operator, enforcement of the labor law was expected to be more competent and effective, but RPP Zonguldak deputies admitted that more burdens were placed on workers. This was because the company did not issue work cards to the workers, and the workers who were allowed into the quarries "for the sake of agha" were condemned to work in the mines without knowing how much they would earn. Disappointed by this situation, the deputies of RPP Zonguldak made the following recommendations to the authorities in their report. In order to increase coal production, which had declined due to the policies pursued by the Etibank leadership, it was necessary,

above all, to "respect the labor law." In this regard, special care should be taken to give workers a rest period every fifteen days. On the other hand, the nutritional conditions of workers also had to be improved so that they could work more efficiently. In order to achieve this, the workers, who mostly fed on cornmeal bread that they brought from their villages, had to be strengthened by hot meals.⁸⁰⁰

Not only the miners of Zonguldak complained about the non-application of the labor law, but also the workers who worked on the construction of the Karabuek Iron and Steel Factory (KISF), the construction of which had begun in 1937. The KISF was founded on April 3, 1937 with the participation of Prime Minister İsmet İnönü. The construction of the factory took 2.5 years and all the work during this period was done not with machines but with tools requiring physical strength, such as hoes and shovels. In this regard, the construction of the factory "*did not take place under easy conditions.*"⁸⁰¹ For this purpose, experienced technical workers and craftsmen were first brought from the eastern provinces to be employed in the construction of railroads, bridges and tunnels. However, the workers who refused to accept the daily wage of 60 kuruş returned to their hometowns, and the construction work had to be continued with "unskilled" labor. The deputies of Zonguldak, who encountered one of these workers in a workers' cafe during their inspections on the factory region, witnessed the desperation of this worker with the following sentences:

If you are a laborer, you are not worth as much as an animal. Because, there is no one who cares for us, who looks after our rights, who listens to our complaints. For the last three or five days I have been looking for ten lira to pay my debt. Although I showed my wife's telegram asking me to send money urgently for the treatment of my child who is sick and in the hospital, I did not

⁸⁰⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], pp. 6-7.

⁸⁰¹ Ali Karatay, *Demir Çelik Karabük Bir İşçi Kentinin Hikayesi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018), p. 53.

get any money. I told him that I would quit my job. They didn't cut my account...⁸⁰²

The above complaint by the KISF construction worker is an important example to understand the resistance of local employers to the labor law. On the other hand, it seems that employees are also unaware of the law, which has only recently come into force. So the task of enlightening the worker who complains in the corner of the coffee house seems to have fallen to the deputies. Because, the worker who was waiting in the corner of the coffee house, unaware of his rights, was informed by the deputies that the government had enacted the Labor Law to ensure the right to work, and he was referred to the Zonguldak Labor Office.

With the outbreak of World War II, due to increasing global isolation and the need for coal, all companies operating in the coal basin were purchased from private capital and completely nationalized by 1940.⁸⁰³ Moreover, although the government was not involved in the war, it had to make some legal arrangements to overcome the conditions it had created. The National Protection Law (NPL) was one of the most influential regulations of the time. In terms of its implementation and impact on society, the law has led to many complaints and expectations endemic to Zonguldak. The social discontent caused by the compulsory wage labor imposed by law was one of the major social problems and grievances in Zonguldak during the war years.

Adopted on January 18, 1940, the NPL entered into force by decision of the Council of Ministers on February 19, 1940.⁸⁰⁴ Although the law was intended to satisfy the basic needs of the state and society, especially defense, it can be said

⁸⁰² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], p. 8.

⁸⁰³ Çıladır, *Taşkömürü Havzasının Devletçilik Dönemi*, p. 19.

⁸⁰⁴ Alev Özbil, *Türkiye'de Savaş Ekonomisi Uygulaması Olarak Milli Korunma Kanunu*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2015), pp. 36-43.

that the government was not successful enough in its implementation. This is because in many parts of the country the cost of living has risen and the black market has emerged. For this reason, large segments of society have had difficulty meeting even their basic needs. Moreover, the implementation of the law has been to the detriment of workers, farmers, and similar employees, especially those with low incomes.⁸⁰⁵ It can be said that the miners of Zonguldak were the most affected by the provisions related to industrial and mining enterprises. In this sense, the obligation to work in the mines imposed by the NPL, colloquially referred to as "mükellefiyet" applied not only in the coal mines of Zonguldak, but is said to have been applied in Zonguldak "*in the harshest and most widespread manner*."⁸⁰⁶ It is known that during this period almost 60 thousand workers in the coal basin were affected by this law, alternately.⁸⁰⁷ As a result, there was a lot of social unrest among the people in the region, related to the demands and complaints about the implementation of the law. In this context, efforts have also increased to inform the relevant authorities of the problems encountered in implementing the law, and the people of Zonguldak have tried to use all possible channels of communication to make their voices heard by the authorities. In this sense, the problems arising from the compulsory wage labor was one of the main themes of the complaints reflected in the inspection reports and in the provincial congresses, especially since 1940. While the problems faced by workers in Zonguldak have been longstanding, they were exacerbated with the introduction of the NPL in 1940. For this reason, the impact of wartime practices on workers was one of the most important issues in inspections conducted in the 1940s. In this sense, it should be noted that the Zonguldak parliamentarians who conducted inspections in their constituencies in

⁸⁰⁵ Mehmed Korkud Aydın, "Milli Korunma Kanunu'nun Hayata Geçirilişi (1940) ve Tek Parti Dönemi Uygulamaları", *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 29, no. 1, p. 419.

⁸⁰⁶ Yalçın, *İçimdeki Zonguldak*, p. 29.

⁸⁰⁷ Ahmet Makal, "Zonguldak ve Türkiye Toplumsal Tarihinin Acı Bir Deneyimi Olarak İş Mükellefiyeti", *Zonguldak Kent Tarihi '05 Bienali Bildiriler Kitabı*, (İstanbul: Ezgi Matbaası, 2006), p. 79.

late 1940 met directly with the miners and listened to their complaints. In the meetings, employees complained primarily about low wages. This is because the minimum wage set by law did not even satisfy the basic needs of most miners during this period. During the research of the parliamentarians from Zonguldak on this issue, it was found that the workers in the coal basin are still receiving the wages they received almost 14 years ago. Although wages have been increased in some mines on the basis of bonuses, it has been pointed out that this practice leads to inequalities among workers because it does not apply in all mines in the basin. Another problem that the miners complained about to the parliamentarians was that they did not get enough to eat. Workers complained about the lack of food provided to them and stated that they had to spend extra money to feed themselves. However, the parliamentarians who conducted inspections at some mines found that the food given to the workers was not inadequate and that it was normal for war-related price increases to be reflected in the amount of food given to the workers. However, it is understood that despite all these conditions, the parliamentarians agreed that the workers should be provided with enough food to fill their bellies.

Another complaint of the mine workers reflected in the reports was related to the functioning of the health organization. In this sense, the parliamentarians from Zonguldak stated that the main complaint of the workers in all the mines they visited was the health organization. The main complaints about the health organization were that it does not function well, that doctors were rude to employees, and that it is difficult to get doctors to treat those who were too sick to come to the health facility. On the other hand, compulsory mine workers complained about being kept waiting at the stations by officials, even though they had been sent to the mines three days in advance. In addition, there were also complaints about irregularities in determining who was required to work in the mines. In particular, complaints have been received that the *mukhtars*, who draw up lists of compulsory workers in the villages, have written the names of many people on these lists, even though they are not compulsory workers. In fact, there were complaints that these lists contained the names of many villagers

who had been farming for years and had never worked in the mines. For this reason, the parliamentarians pointed out that it was necessary for the labor compulsory officers to go to the villages and make determinations in order to draw up accurate lists.⁸⁰⁸ The RPP General Secretariat forwarded the report of the Zonguldak deputies, which contained the demands and complaints of the mine workers, directly to Hüsni Çakır, the Minister of Economy, for consideration. While most requests on other demands were answered, it is not known if or how these requests were answered.

The work obligation introduced under the NPL also contributed to the formation of a literary tradition related to the local history of Zonguldak.⁸⁰⁹ As can be seen, the village leaders (mukhtars), who were also mentioned in the reports of the parliamentarians of Zonguldak, were one of the main characters in many works written in this tradition, such as memoirs, stories and novels. In local memory and literary tradition, the mukhtars, who are believed to cooperate with the gendarmerie and report workers fleeing the mines, have a negative image. In particular, the experience of the villagers of Zonguldak, who preferred to flee from the mines as the least reaction they could show to the imposition of obligations, played an important role in the creation of this image.⁸¹⁰ As it is well known, the village mukhtars, who were the administrative pillar of the compulsory work in the villages, were at the center of the practice as official representatives of the state especially in drawing up the lists of workers and reporting them to the gendarmerie, regulating the flow of workers between the

⁸⁰⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d. , pp. 119-121.

⁸⁰⁹ Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 66. Some of these works are: İrfan Yalçın, *Ölümün Ağzı*, (İstanbul: Gölge Yayınları, 1989); Metin Köse, *Göl Dağı*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012); Metin Köse, *Mükellefiyet*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010).

⁸¹⁰ Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 68.

mines and the villages, and recording and punishing illegal workers.⁸¹¹ For this reason, most literary works of the period seem to focus more on the conflicts between the village chiefs and gendarmes and the villagers. As the deputies of Zonguldak point out in their reports, conflicts seem to have arisen repeatedly, from the drawing up of the lists of compulsory workers. For example, in İrfan Yalçın's naturalistic novel *Ölümün Ağzı*, similar to the inaccuracies in the reports of the deputies of Zonguldak, it is stated that the names of many people, from women to the village madman to old men over sixty, were on these lists.⁸¹²

On December 22, 1940, the Provincial Congress of RPP Zonguldak met in Zonguldak and included issues of compulsory labour. The villagers, who were obliged to work in the mines, therefore demanded that the authorities divide their work shifts so that they would work two months in the village doing agricultural work and one month in the mines. In addition, compulsory workers complained that their relatives in the village were not being taken care of while they worked in the mines.⁸¹³

In the report sent by the Zonguldak deputies to the RPP General Secretariat on November 1, 1941, more space is devoted to labor problems. In this regard, the main complaints and demands of workers in the report are generally as follows: During the meetings with the mine workers, the main complaint was that the workers who were picked up from their villages as part of the work obligation had to wait for a long time at the railroad stations until they were dispatched to Zonguldak. It was noted that this situation becomes an important problem especially in cold and rainy weather. Although it had previously been decided to build barracks in these areas to house the workers, investigations revealed that construction had not yet begun. The deputies pointed out to the party

⁸¹¹ Nurşen Gürboğa, “Zonguldak Havzasında İş Mükellefiyeti ve Mükellef İşçilerin Mücadeleleri: 1940-1947”, *Mete Tunçay'a Armağan*, Mehmet Ö Alkan, Tanıl Bora and Murat Koraltürk (eds.), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 305.

⁸¹² Yalçın, *Ölümün Ağzı*, pp. 25-51.

⁸¹³ *C.H.P. 1940 Kongre Dilekleri*, pp. 668-677.

headquarters that the barracks should be completed as soon as possible to protect the health of the villagers. Another issue that the deputies from Zonguldak highlighted in their reports was workers' wages. The deputies pointed out that there would be a significant labor crisis after the end of the war in the region, where 22,000 workers work every day, and cited low wages as the main reason. In their opinion, since the day it entered the basin, national capital has accomplished many important things in terms of improving the conditions of workers, but has fallen short only in raising the wages of workers. According to the data cited in the report, the increase in daily wages for mine workers over the past five years has been only 10-15%, with older workers benefiting the most from this wage increase. For this reason, the miners, who stated that the money they earned could not even satisfy their basic needs, began to pay more attention to the amount of money they received than to the improvement of working and health conditions. The deputies of Zonguldak pointed out the difficulties of the workers who have to live for two months on the money they earn in one month and that these people cannot make a living by working in the mines alone.

The parliamentarians from Zonguldak, who were in favor of improving the working and nutritional conditions of the mine workers, felt that the punishment imposed in the case of desertion was not a deterrent. In fact, it takes at least four to five months for fines to become legal for those who have left the mines or fail to show up. The deputies, predicting that most of the workers would go to jail after some time because the penalties imposed at the end of the trial were not deterrent and the workers did not have the strength to pay, stated that this would increase the need for workers at the mine. Pointing out that the main purpose of the work obligation was to provide permanent labor, the deputies argued that the penalty should be paid by working in the mines themselves.⁸¹⁴

At the beginning of March 1942, the complaints and demands of the mine workers were one of the most important topics in the reports of the

⁸¹⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], pp. 29-31.

parliamentarians from Zonguldak, who again made visits to their constituencies. The nutritional problems of workers, already highlighted in the previous period, were again on the agenda of the deputies. The parliamentarians from Zonguldak received complaints from workers in the mines they visited that they were not satisfied with 750 grams of bread per day. The deputies felt that the amount of bread provided to the miners, who were even more tired than the heavy surface workers, was insufficient and demanded that the workers' demands be met as much as possible. This demand of the miners was also on the agenda of the committee of wishes of the Sixth Grand Congress of the RPP in 1943 and was discussed. In response to the request examined here, it was stated that the daily caloric needs of workers in the mines were met with 900 g of bread and other foods.⁸¹⁵ On the other hand, the parliamentarians' reports also pointed out that the ECC, which fed about 20,000 workers a day, had problems with food supplies. This was undoubtedly due to the food crisis caused by wartime conditions. For this reason, the parliamentarians asked the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Commerce for help in solving this problem. Apart from all these points, the report also refers to the problem of permanent labor. In fact, this problem goes back to the beginnings of coal processing in Zonguldak. This is because the miners, most of whom come from the villages of Zonguldak, return to their villages after working in the mines for a month and stay there until the money they earn is used up. In order to solve the problem permanently, the parliamentarians suggested improving the roads connecting the villages and the mines, by the means of transportation, instead of settling the miners with their families near the mines. They felt that in this way, and through a more generous wage structure, it would be possible to make the miners permanent employees in their own villages as well.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹⁵ C.H.P. VI. Büyük Kurultayı Dilek Encümeni Raporu ve 1942 Vilayet Kongre Dileklerinin İncelenen Cevapları, 1943, p. 31.

⁸¹⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942], p. 25.

The problems encountered in implementing the NPL were raised for the second time at the Zonguldak provincial congresses in 1942. In the petition, which apparently belonged to the district organization of the Bartın RPP, villagers from the Melentçayır subdistrict complained that the torture by the gendarmes who had come to pick them up and take them to the mines had reached intolerable levels, and asked the authorities to prevent it. The complaint sent to the provincial authority was forwarded directly to the gendarmerie command, which was asked to investigate and report the names of the allegedly tortured gendarmes. Since there is no record of the results of the investigation, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the complaint is true. However, the fact that a similar problem was also raised in the reports of deputies from Zonguldak who conducted inspections in their constituencies in August 1942, before congress convened, strengthens the possibility that the complaints were not unfounded. Accordingly, in their meetings with locals and mine workers, the parliamentarians heard complaints that the gendarmes mistreated and even beat the families of workers who were forced to work in the mines.⁸¹⁷ In addition to the repression by the gendarmerie, the congress also discussed the demands and expectations of workers in terms of wages, working hours, food and transportation.

During World War II, the gendarmes responsible for transporting compulsory laborers to the mines were also responsible for apprehending workers who had escaped from the mines. In this sense, the negative public perception of the gendarmes, complained about both in the congresses and in the inspection reports, seems to be more due to the problems encountered in these two processes. In this regard, the perception of the gendarmerie was also highlighted in the literary works produced to keep the local memory of the World War II period alive in Zonguldak. For example, the aforementioned naturalistic novel *Ölümün Ağzı* is one of these works that shows the perception of the gendarmerie by the people of Zonguldak during the war years in all its nakedness. The story

⁸¹⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942], p. 81.

of Niyazi, the protagonist of the novel, which will end tragically, begins in one of the villages of Zonguldak. After his father's death, Niyazi had decided to flee the mine, but when his last attempt to escape failed and he could not be found, the gendarmes went so far as to take his wife instead. But Niyazi is still determined not to surrender. Because he knows that if he surrenders, he will be sent to Edirne or Erzurum to the fortress as punishment. For this reason, even the discovery of his wife's body a few days later was not enough to free Niyazi. His last escape attempt also fails and he is killed by a gendarmerie bullet.⁸¹⁸ Although what Niyazi goes through appears at first glance to be fiction, it would not be correct to evaluate the events in this story as completely independent of the social reality of the time. Because, Niyazi's experiences are corroborated by the reports of contemporary witnesses.⁸¹⁹

Under the conditions of World War II, it was very important that production in the Zonguldak coal basin was not interrupted. This was essentially the goal of the compulsory work under the NPL. The peasants of Zonguldak, however, who did not want to work in the mines by force, often found the solution in desertion, as the above examples show. This process, which was crucial for the continuity of production, was therefore closely monitored by the authorities, and the convictions of those who somehow managed to escape from the quarries were publicised through the local press.⁸²⁰ In this context, it was considered important to identify and eliminate the factors that caused the problem of desertion, which had significant consequences for the state in terms of disruption of production and for workers after desertion. From this point of view, the Zonguldak parliamentarians also felt compelled to do some research on the subject. Because, during their inspections of the mines in September 1942, the parliamentarians

⁸¹⁸ Yalçın, *Ölümün Ağzı*, pp. 7-152.

⁸¹⁹ Kara, *Son Mükellefler- Ereğli Kömür Havzası'nda Zorunlu Çalıştırma (1940-1947)*, pp. 155-199.

⁸²⁰ Murat Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye- Savaş ve Gündelik Yaşam*, (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2007), p. 239; *Zonguldak*, 22 Eylül 1942, p. 4.

had personally seen for themselves that the number of workers had decreased significantly.

The report sent to the RPP General Secretariat on October 8, 1942, states that the following motives were generally effective for the escape of miners from the mines: According to the deputies, one of the most important reasons for the migration of workers from the mines was that they had no relatives to take care of them during harvesting and plowing times. This was because the workers, who could not live on the money they earned in the mines alone, also had to cultivate their fields and for this purpose had to leave the mines at certain times. According to the deputies, it did not seem possible to prevent these desertions in the short term due to economic necessities. To do this, one would have had to wait until wages had been raised to a level that would have covered the entire needs of workers. The second group of workers who fled the mines were people who were engaged in agriculture, commerce, or the arts, but were brought into the mines out of necessity. These people, who had never worked underground, indeed seemed to have no choice but to flee. Another problem that parliamentarians believed led to desertion was that workers whose relatives were ill were not granted compassionate leave. For this reason, the workers, who could not be indifferent to the loneliness of their families, finally resorted to desertion. In addition, parliamentarians felt that the penalties for desertion were not deterrent and encouraged workers to desert. Because, according to the law, a worker was deducted only one-fifth of his wages for each day he was absent from the mines. For this reason it seemed more deterrent and advantageous to let the deserters themselves work in the mines instead of punishing them.

In their report, the deputies from Zonguldak pointed out another important issue in addition to all these measures to prevent desertion: educating workers. Apparently, it was felt that the people of Zonguldak, especially the mine workers, were not sufficiently educated about national issues through party channels. For this reason, cooperation between coal companies and local organizations was considered essential, and the organizations of RPP Zonguldak

should intervene at this point. If this were realized, workers would also realize the importance of the task they perform for the country.⁸²¹

In April 1944, the parliamentarians who conducted inspections in their constituencies had again sent to the Ministry of Economy the miners' complaints and demands concerning wages, working hours, food, and working conditions. But the parliamentarians had also discovered a new aspect that had not been mentioned in the reports until then and that facilitated the escape of the workers from the mines: the mine officials. During investigations in the region, it was heard that some mine officials let workers go to their villages and received bribes in return. The fact that the Ministry of Economy did not deny the rumors mentioned on this issue confirmed what the deputies had heard. Because, in its response, the Ministry simply stated that the necessary measures would be taken to prevent officials from participating in such corruption cases and that officials involved in bribery cases would be investigated immediately.⁸²²

The minutes of the congress convened on November 25, 1944, show that the tense relationship between the gendarmerie, which was authorized to transfer the forced laborers to the mines, and the population continued. The complaint, which probably first appeared on the agenda of the Bartın District Congress convened in 1943, mentioned that compulsory laborers in the Taşhan area, where they gathered to be transferred to the mines, were beaten by gendarmes and that the only way to escape these beatings was to give the gendarmes money. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Melentçayır sub-district also complained that the gendarmerie did not act in accordance with the law and arrested and mistreated non-compulsory laborers. The reply of the gendarmerie command, which carried out the investigation in this matter, read in the agenda of the congress. In this

⁸²¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942], pp. 83-84.

⁸²² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 57, 77.

response it was stated that contrary to the statements of the villagers, the workers were neither forcibly taken to the mines nor mistreated.⁸²³

On April 15, 1944, the deputies of Zonguldak, who sent their reports on the inspections carried out in their constituencies to the party headquarters, informed that the population complained about the organization of the gendarmerie almost everywhere in the province. Because, it is heard that the gendarmerie often prefers to take bribes by tormenting the people on small occasions. Especially in the Devrek district, there are many rumors that workers who are subject to a work obligation are released in exchange for 15-20 liras. According to another rumor that circulated among the population, the income of the gendarmes, through bribery, reached a level that allowed them to send their families several times their salary at the end of the month.⁸²⁴ The Ministry of the Interior, however, which investigated the request, did not address the complaint.

The problems of the miners during the war years became apparent in the 1945 by-elections, which some candidates used as election propaganda. For this reason, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, who was supported by a group of politicians from the center, stated in his election propanda that he would conduct some studies on "*the extraction of coal in order to bring the country and the nation to the highest level of civilization.*"⁸²⁵ Aras's election manifesto, which was characterized as "demagoguery" in the post-election report⁸²⁶ and in this sense did not seem plausible to the party executives, is nevertheless important in terms of bringing workers' problems into the arena of political competition for the first time.

⁸²³ C.H.P. Onbirinci Vilayet Kongresi Zaptı, pp. 34-37.

⁸²⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 94.

⁸²⁵ Zonguldak, 16 Haziran (June) 1945, pp. 1-2.

⁸²⁶ Cumhurbaşkanlığı İsmet İnönü Arşivi (CİİA), Yer No: 2/2-30, Fihrist No: 557-2, p. 5.

After the end of the World War II, the belief of the people of Zonguldak in the abolition of compulsion and their demands in this direction grew. For this reason, during the inspection trip of Rebi Barkın, which coincided with the end of the war, the main wish and complaint of the people was again the compulsion. In his conversations with the population, Barkın had observed that people in places like Çaycuma, which are much more dependent on the land, complained about having to work in the mines for 45 days. The fact that villagers work in the mines, especially in summer, weakens agricultural activities, and in villages where there are no more men, women have to work in the fields. Faced with this situation, Barkın felt compelled to explain to the people that coal mining was a sacred duty. Because, according to Barkın, a soldier's complaint about the duty to bear arms was as unjustified as the Turkish peasant's complaint about the compulsory work in the mines. In spite of all these suggestions, most of the villagers were in favour of abolishing the obligation they had endured for so many years. In the face of this determination of the people, the deputy of Zonguldak informed the party headquarters that "*the case of compulsory working in the basin should be taken up as soon as possible. This issue should be seriously considered and an urgent measure should be taken.*"⁸²⁷

The wage labor obligation in the coal basin imposed by the NPL was abolished by an act of August 19, 1946.⁸²⁸ However, most workers continued to work under the same conditions until September 1947.⁸²⁹

For the RPP, this practice had several important practical consequences. In this sense, it can be said that the RPP played an important mediating role. Because the people's problems arising from forced labour were conveyed the government

⁸²⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], pp. 33-34.

⁸²⁸ Alev Özbil, *Türkiye'de Savaş Ekonomisi Uygulaması Olarak Milli Korunma Kanunu*, p. 251.

⁸²⁹ Ayça Erinç Yıldırım, *Savaş Sonrası Zonguldak'ta Devlet, Madenci ve Hayat (1946-1962)*, (Zonguldak: Bülent Ecevit Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017), p. 72.

through the provincial congresses, party deputies, and regional inspectors. However, it is understood that all the problems that the miners of Zonguldak complained about in connection with the implementation of the law continued to exist in their lives until the law was abolished. The persistence of problems in this area should not be seen as a result of the RPP's failure to fulfill its role as a mediating institution, but rather as a consequence of the government's failed policies. Because the RPP headquarters, especially through the deputies in Zonguldak, intensively collected data on the results of the implementation and transmitted them to the government. In addition to these inspections, the inhabitants of Zonguldak also had the opportunity to express their problems with the implementation of the law in provincial and lower-level congresses and to convey them to the authorities. However, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the local authorities, especially the mukhtars who drew up the lists of compulsory workers and the gendarmes who supervised them, often ignored or disregarded the public's complaints.

The political bill for the political power's "deaf ear" to the demands from Zonguldak through various communication channels, especially with regard to the NPL, will be felt heavily in the first multiparty elections soon to be held. Because in these elections, there will be an irreparable rupture between the RPP and the workers and farmers affected by the practices of NPL. Thus, the people of Zonguldak would prefer to show their reaction to NPL and the RPP's wartime practices in political life, and the miners of Zonguldak, who were most affected by the coercive practices, would vote Democratic Party.⁸³⁰

4.3.4. Looking Zonguldak Economy From The Perspective of Intermediary Institutions

⁸³⁰ Ahmet Makal, "65. Yılında Koruma Kanunu, Çalışma İlişkileri ve İş Mükellefiyeti", *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Gelişme ve Toplum Araştırmaları Merkezi Tartışma Metinleri*, no. 76, (Ankara: Ankara University Publishing House, 2004), p. 36.

As is well known, a considerable part of the state revenue in early republican Turkey came from taxes levied on the population. For this reason, in the first years of the Republic, the main attempt was to adapt taxes according to the structural features of the new regime and to nationalize them. For this purpose, numerous steps have been taken to replace the traditional tax system with a model that corresponds to the structural features of the new system. Thus, while some taxes inherited from the Ottoman Empire were completely abolished, others remained in force for many years.⁸³¹ Therefore, it was clear that more time was needed to create a tax system that was compatible with the new style of government.⁸³²

One of the most radical changes in tax law in the early republican period was the abolition of the “Aşar” on February 17, 1925, which had placed a heavy burden on farmers. However, various types of taxes continued to be levied on animals and agricultural products.⁸³³ In fact, taxes on livestock still accounted for a significant portion of budget revenues.⁸³⁴ The regulation of taxes continued intensively during the transition period. After the Great Depression of 1929, however, public complaints about taxes increased. In fact, Mustafa Kemal had personally witnessed the people's complaints and demands on this issue during his trip through the country in 1931.⁸³⁵ The people tried to voice their complaints

⁸³¹ For example, the "Road Tax", which came into force on February 21, 1921, abolished on February 25, 1952. The "Animal Tax", however, was converted into the “Agnam Tax” in 1931 and abolished in 1962.

⁸³² Cemil Adar Yılmaz and Cihan Yüksel, “Türkiye’de Tek Parti Dönemi Vergi Politikaları”, *Milli Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi (MİKAD)*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Haziran, 2019), p. 86.

⁸³³ Yılmaz and Yüksel, “Türkiye’de Tek Parti Dönemi Vergi Politikaları”, p. 86.

⁸³⁴ Berrin Şentürk, “Türkiye’de Canlı Hayvanlardan Alınan Vergi Uygulamalarının Sosyo-Ekonomik Analizi”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Veteriner Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 64, no. 1, p. 28; Ali Rıza Gönüllü, “Milli Mücadele ve Cumhuriyet Döneminde Hayvanlar Vergisi (1920-1962)”, *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi (SÜTAD)*, no. 38 (2015), pp. 85-89.

⁸³⁵ Sevda Mutlu, “Tek Parti Döneminde Parti Devlet Bütünleşmesine Bir Örnek: “Dilek Sistemi”, p. 88; Başar, *Atatürk’le Üç Ay*, p. 64.

about the high taxes and their abolition wherever they dared. In this sense, the local congresses were one of the most encouraging places for the people of Zonguldak to express their wishes. In fact, for various reasons, the RPP General Secretariat had sent circulars to provincial organizations stressing that the people should be allowed to freely express their wishes at the congresses. In the party circular of November 10, 1936, for example, the organizations were instructed to "*openly and freely discuss and debate the wishes and grievances of the people at the congresses, which form the basis of the party's existence and power...*"⁸³⁶ Aware of this function of the congresses, a large part of the wishes of the people of Zonguldak discussed at the provincial congresses of 1935 related to taxes.⁸³⁷ Even during inspections by party inspectors and Zonguldak deputies, the population repeatedly complained about the high taxes.

In this context, during the inspections carried out by the deputies of Zonguldak in 1935, it was found that one of the main expectations of the people to the government was the reduction of the tax on animals and salt. The prime minister's public statement on this issue had raised public expectations.⁸³⁸ Moreover, the people of Zonguldak saw the provincial congress convened by the RPP Zonguldak Organization on January 18, 1935, as a new opportunity to convey to the government their demands regarding the excessive taxes. The general agenda of the congress therefore included the abolition of taxes on race horses, the cancellation of the tax registers on abandoned fields, the abandonment of the high taxes on overvalued village houses, the abolition of taxes on water mills in the villages, and the reduction of taxes on cleaning and

⁸³⁶ *C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri*, p. 10.

⁸³⁷ Among the requests submitted to the Fourth Grand Party Congress of the RPP, which convened in 1935, it appeared that the people made demands mainly on the following types of tax titles: Land Tax, Building Tax, Income Tax, Transaction Tax, Excise Tax, Animal Tax, Stamp Tax and Grain Protection Tax. See *C.H.P. Büyük Kurultayına Sunulan Vilayet Kongresi Hılasası*, p. 13.

⁸³⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], p. 72.

lighting. However, many of these demands were rejected in the course of the congress. Because, the request for taxes on abandoned fields was found to be in violation of the provisions of the law, the law on taxes on water mills was found to be sufficiently clear, and the requested ordinance on taxes on overvalued buildings was rejected because it was not considered worthy. Congress also rejected the municipality's request to reduce the taxes it levies for public services such as cleaning and lighting.⁸³⁹

Some of the requests that exceeded the resources of the local administration and local government organs and were therefore forwarded to the General Secretariat of the RPP were discussed at the Grand Congress in 1935. Because some of the desires discussed here required legislation, many legal agreements were made after congress. In this sense, in 1937, many laws were enacted to meet the demands of the population, such as the reduction of the prices of salt and sugar, the reduction of farmers' debts to the Agricultural Bank in installments, the reduction of the tax on buildings, the reduction of the tax on animals, the reduction of farmers' credit cooperatives' debts in installments, and the reduction of the prices of cement needed for construction works.⁸⁴⁰ The people of Zonguldak also applied to the Provincial Congress convened on December 26, 1936, to find solutions to their economic problems. Therefore, they brought many financial problems to the agenda of the congress. The demands submitted to the committee on the wishes of congress are as follows:⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁹ C.H.F. *Zonguldak Altıncı Vilayet Kongresi Zabtı*, pp. 79-106.

⁸⁴⁰ C.H.P. *1936 İl Kongreleri*, p. 410. In addition, for the laws enacted depending on the decisions of the provincial congresses between 1931-1947 see Ökte, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Vilayet/İl Kongrelerinin Parti Politikalarına Etkileri (1930-1950)*, pp. 389-393.

⁸⁴¹ C.H.P. *1936 İl Kongreleri*, pp. 412-414.

Table 11. Wishes Expressed at the Provincial Congress of the Zonguldak RPP Organization Held in 1936

Which Institutions the Wishes Are Related	Number of the Wishes	Percentage of Total Wishes (%)
Public Works	5	8.77
Education	4	7.01
Agriculture	6	10.52
Health	5	8.77
Interior Affairs	4	7.01
Safety and Public Order	2	3.50
Finance	10	17.54
Transportation and Communication	9	15.78
Land Registry	1	1.75
Municipality	1	1.75
Courthouse	3	5.26
Forest	3	5.26
Foundations	3	5.26
General Secretariat of the RPP	1	1.75
Total	57	100

As can be seen from the above table, most of the demands addressed to the 1936 Provincial Congress concerned the expectations of a tax regime. The demands such as the tax exemption for village houses, the non-imposition of income tax on the wages of miners, the abolition of the depression tax⁸⁴² and the consideration of property as a basis for the road tax were among them.⁸⁴³ The number of wishes discussed at the Provincial Congress convened in 1938 and sent to the government through the General Secretariat of the RPP increased. The

⁸⁴² "Economic Depression Tax" (İktisadi Buhran Vergisi) has been in effect since Dec. 1, 1931 to mitigate the effects of the economic depression in our country for the taxation of the salaries of servants who are believed to be in better condition than the commercial and artistic sectors. For detailed information see Fatih Saraçoğlu, "1930-1939 Döneminde Vergi Politikası", *Maliye Dergisi*, no. 157 (July- December 2009), pp. 131-149.

⁸⁴³ *C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri*, pp. 412-414.

share of economic desires among these demands reached 25.45%.⁸⁴⁴ However, most of these requests, which could be solved by legal regulations, were peasants' demands for direct abolition or reduction of certain taxes. For example, the farmers demanded that flood mills, which they could only use for a few months, should either not be taxed at all or be taxed at a reduced rate. Because the government had not yet found a final solution to this issue, which was discussed at the 1935 congress. On the other hand, the villagers considered the tax rate on livestock too high and therefore they demanded a reduction of the tax on hairy goats.⁸⁴⁵

In addition, a local practice that economically forced the villagers of Zonguldak was a major complaint at this congress: "gezek usulü". The "gezek" method, which seems to have been frequently practiced in the Black Sea region of Ereğli, means that the land that belonged to the villagers was shared and the same land was cultivated by others each year.⁸⁴⁶ For this reason, the villagers of Zonguldak called on the government to find a solution to this practice, which was causing problems for the population in the cultivation of agricultural land. All these wishes were discussed at the Fifth Grand Congress of the RPP in the presence of the Minister of Finance Fuat Ağralı. In response to public expectations of tax cuts, it was stated that the Republican government had made tax cuts in favor of farmers on every occasion, and that all changes made since 1931 had been aimed at reducing the burden on farmers. Therefore, previous steps taken by the government in favor of the peasants were considered sufficient. On the other hand, it was emphasized that the exemptions for village mills, which covered the

⁸⁴⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939], pp. 1-29. It is understood that a total of 55 wishes were sent to party headquarters by the RPP administrative committee in Zonguldak province.

⁸⁴⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939], pp. 1-29.

⁸⁴⁶ İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, *Türkiye Köy İktisadiyatı*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), p. 26.

personal needs of peasants and poor people, were further improved in favor of the citizens.⁸⁴⁷

At the Provincial Congress of 1936, the "gezek" method, which was one of the main problems and requests of the villagers and which they repeated every year and at every opportunity, was defined as a practise that "*always causes disputes and controversies among the villagers*". For this reason, the government was asked to send land registry committees to the region in order to put property rights on a solid basis.⁸⁴⁸ The aforementioned form of land cultivation was conveyed to the government during the inspections carried out by the deputies of Zonguldak in the following periods as a social problem that needs to be urgently solved. In this sense, the deputies of Zonguldak pointed out in their constituency reports of December 29, 1940, that these agricultural lands had reached a point where none of the owners could use them properly. Thus, these lands, which no one could manage at will, also led to conflicts between the shareholders. For this reason, this practice, where beneficiaries only get their turn every 20-30 years, had to be solved by the government. Because attempts to resolve the issue among shareholders failed every time. If the problem could be solved by the state, one of the most important obstacles to the development of the peasantry would be removed.⁸⁴⁹ People who were very concerned about the problem had also put the issue on the agenda of the district congresses that took place a year before the inspections. It was understood that the request was forwarded to the RPP General Secretariat, which replied that the matter was under investigation.⁸⁵⁰ However, it can be assumed that the government was not able to find concrete solutions to the "gezek" practice, as the issue came back on the agenda in the following

⁸⁴⁷ *C.H.P. Beşinci Büyük Kurultayı Dilek Encümeni Raporu*, pp. 14-15.

⁸⁴⁸ *C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri*, p. 413.

⁸⁴⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d. , p. 133.

⁸⁵⁰ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, p. 12.

years. The subject seems to have appeared last in the inspection reports of the Zonguldak deputies of October 8, 1942. In drafting this report, the Zonguldak parliamentarians were apparently aware that they could go no further than addressing a problem they had heard from landowners every year during their inspections. At the same time, they have been tireless in their efforts to keep drawing attention to the problem, knowing that they are the few channels of communication that can convey the public's intense complaints to the government.⁸⁵¹ It should be noted that it is not known what kind of response the ministry has given to this issue, as the response documents are not available.

As can be seen from the reports of the deputies of Zonguldak who conducted inspection in their constituency in July 1939, people from all sections of society, especially peasants, workers, artisans and farmers, were still complaining about the excessive taxes. For example, farmers engaged in cattle raising complained about the high taxes levied on sheep and goats, while workers in the mines were dissatisfied with the daily tax on their earnings. On the other hand, the barbers complained about the high tax rate in relation to their earnings.⁸⁵² In addition, the peasants of Zonguldak had the opportunity to present to the authorities another important economic problem through the parliamentarians,: "salma parası".

Village Law adopted on March 18, 1924 provided that many village affairs would be governed by the cooperation (*imece*) method. However, if the income of the village was not sufficient to carry out the obligatory works within the village boundaries, a sum of money not exceeding 20 liras could be levied, depending on the situation of each inhabitant or person who had a financial connection with the village.⁸⁵³ The villagers reported to the parliamentarians of

⁸⁵¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942], p. 99.

⁸⁵² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], pp. 85-86.

⁸⁵³ Köy Kanunu”, *Resmi Gazete (RG)*, 18 Mart (March) 1924, Tertip: 3, vol. 5, no. 68, p. 336.

Zonguldak that the amount of money collected through this practice, known as "salma parası," was too much for them to handle. In addition, the villagers also complained about the excessive amounts of money levied under the names of health guard, gardening, breeding and telephone money, which were also based on the village law. Because, according to the report, neither breeding animals nor telephone equipment were brought to their villages in return for the money they received for these services.⁸⁵⁴

After the outbreak of World War II, the expectation continued that the tax burden on the people of Zonguldak would be alleviated. Although villagers engaged in cattle raising continued to demand a reduction in the sheep tax, they were told that such a reduction was not possible under the extraordinary wartime conditions. Another request made to the Ministry of Finance was the abolition of taxes on village mills, for which the villagers of Zonguldak had been waiting a long time for a solution. The villagers expected that these mills, which could be actively used only in the winter months, would be taxed only for the time of use. The Ministry of Finance, which reviewed the request, said that these mills were already taxed for the period in which they were active. In addition, according to the ministry, grain products imported for non-commercial purposes and to meet the basic needs of the population were already exempt from taxation. In this case, the tax deduction was deemed inappropriate by the ministry because the claimants of the tax deduction were primarily engaged in commercial activities. These wishes were identified at the district congresses convened in 1939 and submitted to the RPP General Secretariat for solution. In addition, many new requests were discussed at the 1940 Provincial Congress and it was decided to forward them to the RPP General Secretariat. As might be expected, among these requests there was a demand for taxes. However, this time this demand came not from the citizens but from the municipality. Indeed, the municipality of Zonguldak had requested that the municipality receive a share of the revenues from the coal mines and the port tax, but this request was not approved by the

⁸⁵⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], p. 71.

Ministry of Economy. It is interesting to note that there were no complaints on the congressional agenda or in the inspection reports about other taxes, particularly the property tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) and the tax on land crops (*Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi*), which were imposed during World War II. The fact that there was no trace of these taxes in the documents mentioned does not necessarily mean that the public welcomed them.

To summarize, the 1930s were a time when the people of Zonguldak, not wanting to be crushed under the burden of taxes, tried to express this at every opportunity and with effective use of the communication channels provided by the regime. Besides, it is understood that the process of transmitting the messages of the periphery to the center was not blocked, since the requests reached the Great Congress and the competent ministries and were answered. The political power, clearly hearing the message of the environment, tried to address the problems in a solution-oriented way within the limits of possibilities. However, in a country with an economic infrastructure dependent on taxes, the measures that could be taken in response to the social demands were limited.

4.3.5. Provincial Congresses as a Mediating Institution for Political Demands

As is well known, during the single-party period, Zonguldak provincial congresses stood out as political activity areas that devoted their agenda mostly to government affairs due to the party- state integration. For this reason, it had become a tradition for the Zonguldak organization to talk about governance first in each congress period. In fact, this tradition could not be fulfilled only in 1940, because the party secretary was in the military.⁸⁵⁵ Thus, congresses have become places where the government's actions are described in detail and the people's expectations of the government are determined, while political activities and demands are less discussed. In fact, the above concrete examples clearly show that congresses tend to work in this direction.

⁸⁵⁵ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, p. 10.

In addition to the above-mentioned topics, routine party matters were of course also discussed at the congresses. These routine tasks included informing party members about the activities and work of the previous two years, verifying that the budget of the previous period had been spent appropriately and approving the budget for the new period, electing new administrative committees and representatives who would go to the Grand Congress. However, at the congresses where many social demands of the people of Zonguldak were discussed and solutions were sought, the political demands of the people were rarely heard. On the other hand, there were significant differences between the political petitions placed on the congressional agenda during the first period and those placed on the agenda at the end of the single-party period. Because, while the demands of the first period were primarily directed at improving the party's material resources, it will be seen that by the mid-1940s ideology and organizational culture were gaining in importance at the party base. Therefore, this section will focus on the political demands of the people of Zonguldak, their content, and the function of the congresses in conveying these demands to the authorities.

The Sixth Provincial Congress of Zonguldak opened with a speech by Mitat Altıok in which he expressed his satisfaction that the affairs of the party and the government were conducted in complete harmony.⁸⁵⁶ Before the general assembly of the congress was informed about the actions of the party and the government, Akin Karauğuz, a member of the provincial executive committee, gave a long speech about the foundation of the party and the reforms achieved so far.⁸⁵⁷ At the congress, which then began its work, the answers to the wishes decided at the previous congress and submitted to the party headquarters were

⁸⁵⁶ The RPP General Secretariat's circular of August 14, 1934, to all provincial presidiums called on all organizations to convene provincial congresses by the end of January 1935, since the RPP's Grand Party Congress would be held in 1935. For this reason, the Sixth Provincial Congress of the Zonguldak CHP convened on January 18, 1935. See . BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 2. 9. 16, 19 Aralık 1934 [19 December 1934].

⁸⁵⁷ C.H.F. *Zonguldak Altıncı Vilayet Kongresi Zabtı*, pp. 4-14.

first read out. After the party budget was discussed, the wishes identified by the congressional committee were placed on the agenda. In total there were 135 new wishes at the congress, and only 2 of them concerned party matters. The first of these requests, which apparently came from the lower levels of the party, was for support for the construction of the party building in the Beycuma district of Zonguldak and for radios, magazines, and newspapers from party headquarters for the public reading room. The second demand of the party base was the need for a party building in the Üzülmez district.⁸⁵⁸

Before the 1936 Provincial Congresses, which were the first local congresses in which the governors were to participate as RPP Provincial Chairmen, a circular was sent to all party chairmen. In this circular of July 28, 1936, party organizations are expected first and foremost to ensure that the unity created between the party and the government is clearly understood. For this reason, the circular signed by Minister of Interior and RPP Secretary General Şükrü Kaya and stated that the goal of the integration between the party and the government is not to diminish the importance of the party organization for the functioning of the state, but on the contrary, to strengthen the party and thus help it achieve its goals. In the circular, which also contained important information on the conduct of the congress, party members were urged to express their wishes and complaints freely and to vote for the person of their choice at the election. Because, *“in order to be a government of the people, it was first of all necessary to know what the people thought, what their wishes and complaints were.”* In this sense, one of the most important tasks of the party leaders was to ensure that as many party members as possible participated in the congresses of the RPP, which was one of the most important means to be involved in the functioning of the party apparatus and, at the same time, to have a say in the state administration.⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁸ C.H.F. *Zonguldak Altıncı Vilayet Kongresi Zabtı*, pp. 79-105.

⁸⁵⁹ C.H.P. *1936 İl Kongreleri*, pp. 9-10.

In this context, at the Seventh Provincial Congress held on December 26, 1936, under the chairmanship of Governor Halit Aksoy, the provincial board tried to fulfill the responsibility imposed on it by the party statutes. In general, many of the problems that the people of Zonguldak brought to the congressional process could be solved with the measures to be taken or the policies to be followed regarding financial matters. In addition, a total of 57 petitions were placed on the congressional agenda, focusing on transportation and communications, agriculture, public works, health, education, and domestic affairs. An analysis of these wishes shows that social, economic and infrastructural problems rather than political issues were on the public agenda. This is confirmed by the fact that only one demand of a political nature was placed on the agenda of the congress. Despite all this, the provincial congress of RPP Zonguldak convened at the end of 1936 was one of the most important party meetings, where an unprecedented political demand was made. In numerical terms, this demand, which accounted for 1.75% of all wishes, was actually more of a complaint. Because, the villagers of Zonguldak had complained that the party's deputies, who were in their constituencies at certain times of the year to conduct inspections, did not visit them. For this reason, the people who brought their discontent over this issue to the congressional agenda demanded that parliamentarians visit the regions where they live during the summer vacations.⁸⁶⁰ In February 1944, a petition from Bartın complained to Abdülhalik Renda, the president of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, on behalf of all the inhabitants of Bartın about a similar situation. The petition complains that the deputies who came to Bartın to meet with the people and listen to their problems did not meet with anyone except the head of party and the mayor and did not listen to the people's problems. This caused great sadness and confusion among the people, and they decided to address their complaints to the speaker of parliament.⁸⁶¹ The public's interest in

⁸⁶⁰ *C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri*, p. 414.

⁸⁶¹ *BCA*, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 104.

the inspections, which provided an important opportunity for the public to communicate their complaints and demands directly to the state administration and government, is also extremely important in showing the public's search for access to the state within the possibilities of the single-party system and their efforts to take advantage of the existing opportunities. On the other hand, although it is not known how the RPP General Secretariat and the GNAT Presidency responded to these requests, it is clear from the reports of the Zonguldak deputies that they made an effort to visit all the villages and settlements, most of the time.

The provincial congress of the RPP organization Zonguldak convened in 1938 was also rather uninspired in terms of political demands. Among the requests discussed at the congress general assembly and left to the RPP General Secretariat for solution, economic ones were most prominent, while political demands, expected to be discussed more at congresses, were at the bottom of the list. In this sense, the only political demand placed on the congress agenda was the addition of a new paragraph to Article 56 of the statute regulating the election of delegates to congresses at the local organizational level. The main purpose of this amendment was to ensure the participation of the members of the general assembly in the provincial congresses and of the members of the municipal council in the district congresses as representatives. At first glance, it seems to be only a demand for organizational changes, but this demand from local organizations seems to be related to making the wish mechanism more effective. Because it may be more effective to negotiate requests, many of which can be solved locally, in the presence of executive officials. In this sense, the demand of the local organizations did not remain unanswered, and the 1939 Statute made it possible for the members of the general assembly and the local councils to participate in the district, accident and provincial congresses. Therefore, these members, who were expected to work for the realization of the

party's wishes, began to attend the congresses as listeners, even though they had no say in the discussions.⁸⁶²

On December 22, 1940, the Ninth Provincial Congress was convened, with an agenda dominated by social demands. It is understood that 3 demands of a direct political nature were submitted to the RPP General Secretariat. The first demand of the Devrek party members was to sell the party building, which was not centrally located, and to build a new party and people's house. The General Secretariat, which made no provision for the construction of a party building anywhere during wartime because of the budgetary constraints and iron shortages, stated that the request would be reevaluated later. On the other hand, the RPP Safranbolu district organization requested to unite some hearths in the district due to the small number of members. The request was discussed and approved by the RPP General Administrative Committee and the district administrative committee was informed of the outcome. The demands of the central district organization to the RPP General Secretariat were mainly aimed at improving the physical facilities. These expectations include, for example, supporting the party building under construction in Hisarönü, constructing a party building in Beycuma, and providing a radio for the Hisarönü People's Club.⁸⁶³ The RPP General Secretariat also cited budgetary constraints and iron shortages as reasons for rejecting applications from these regions. In order to meet the needs of the people's clubs for radios, it was informed that the needs of the people's houses, who had no radios, should be met first. In this sense, the political demands that came on the agenda in the late 1940s did not go beyond the demand to meet the concrete needs of a party that was still organizing at the lower levels.

⁸⁶² *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi (1939)*, p. 18, (Art. 69).

⁸⁶³ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, pp. 28-29.

While the minutes of the Tenth Provincial Congress convened on December 3, 1942, did not contain any wishes of a political nature, it mainly shared responses to the wishes expressed at the district congresses convened the year before. Among the newly identified desires of this congress, however, there were no political demands.⁸⁶⁴ At the congresses of the RPP Zonguldak district organizations in 1943, only 2 of the 94 requests sent to the RPP General Secretariat were of a political nature. In one of the demands sent by the Ereğli district organization to party headquarters, the need to improve the party's infrastructure was again pointed out. Accordingly, the party headquarters was asked to provide funds for the construction of the party building in the Alaplı district. The General Secretariat's response stated that it had already been determined which of the party and people's houses should be built first and that action should be taken accordingly. Although the wish of the residents of the village of Serdar in Bartın was not considered appropriate by the centre, it is valuable as an expression of an important political expectation that has developed in society. The residents of Serdar village even demanded that the party nominate a candidate for the "mukhtar" elections as well. This shows us that people attach great importance to consult with the party to nominate candidates who are honest and hardworking people at the head of the villages. However, headquarters rejected the request on the grounds that the rules for elections of mukhtars and committees of elders held outside municipal boundaries were clear.⁸⁶⁵

On December 14, 1946, the XII. Congress of RPP Zonguldak convened in the cinema hall of the People's House, which is significant as the first provincial congress of the multi-party political system.⁸⁶⁶ For this reason, on September 3, 1946, the RPP General Secretariat sent a letter to the party organizations

⁸⁶⁴ See *C.H.P. 1944 İl Kongreleri Dilekleri*, pp. 415-420.

⁸⁶⁵ *C.H.P. 1943 Kaza Kongreleri Dilekleri*, pp. 493-499.

⁸⁶⁶ *Zonguldak*, 19 Aralık (December) 1946, p. 1.

indicating that the congresses to be held this year would be different from those of the previous year. The fact that, with the advent of the multiparty political system, new political parties would compete against the RPP and that elections would be held at one level made the local congresses of the new period different and more important than their predecessors. Therefore, before the start of the congress work, all party units were asked to make the necessary preparations, taking into account the reality of the "*new competitive political environment.*" The circular primarily called on all local organizations to ensure that all members participate in the congresses and that the elections take place in a completely free environment. On the other hand, it was also reported that it was important that the administrators to be elected by the village centers and the representatives to be sent to the Grand Congress be chosen among people who are ready for the party's struggle in all fields. Another point emphasized by party headquarters is that elections, one of the fundamental features of multiparty political life, should be given special importance at party congresses. The incidents in the last parliamentary elections, which were "*not in line with the party's mentality and ethics,*" made such an assessment necessary. For this reason, the role of the congresses in determining the party members was emphasized, and it was requested to be careful and meticulous in this regard. On the other hand, it was also one of the directives of the party headquarters that close contact should be established with the people in the villages of the provincial and district centers. To ensure this communication, however, it was necessary to go as far as possible into the villages. In this way, on the one hand, a high level of participation in the congresses was to be ensured by recruiting new members to the party, and on the other hand, a sense of unity and the ideal of fighting on the same front was to be conveyed. The last expectation of the RPP General Secretariat to the organizations was the public announcement of the newly formed government program. Because, in the local struggle between the DP and the RPP, the orientation of the public was of great importance in order to expose the "*false propaganda of the opposing parties.*"⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946], pp. 237-238.

After the general assembly of the congress approved the budget and the final balance sheet, a number of petitions that had not been on the agenda of the congress until then were presented to the Twelfth Provincial Congress of Zonguldak. According to the report of the wish committee, the total number of wishes received from the lower levels and their distribution among the district organizations are as follows:⁸⁶⁸

Table 12. Wishes on the Agenda of the 1946 Provincial Congress and Their Distribution Among the RPP District Organizations.

District Organizations	Number of Wishes	Ratio in Total Wishes (%)
Bartın	96	18.28
Çaycuma	62	11.80
Devrek	36	6.85
Ereğli	65	12.38
Safranbolu	107	20.38
Ulus	24	4.57
Zonguldak	135	25.71
Total	525	100

As can be seen from the above table, according to the report of the wish committee, most of the demands were determined by the Zonguldak central district organization. Proportionally, 25.71% of the total applications submitted to Congress belong to this organization. The Safranbolu district organization follows with over 100 applications. The Bartın party organization also submitted a large number of wishes to the congress. The remaining 12.38% of wishes were identified by Ereğli, 11.80% by Çaycuma, 6.85% by Devrek and 4.57% by Ulus district organizations. In this sense, it seems that the agenda of the congress was mainly determined by the wishes of the central district organization of Zonguldak. The least amount of time was spent discussing the demands submitted by the Ulus district organization. Of all these wishes, the percentage of political ones was 5.33%. In this sense, a total of 28 petitions were submitted to

⁸⁶⁸ C.H.P. Zonguldak On İkinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı, pp. 107-186.

the agenda of the congress, including 3 from Bartın district organization, 2 from Çaycuma, 4 from Devrek, 1 from Ereğli, 12 from Safranbolu and 6 from Zonguldak central district. This is almost as much as the total number of political demands made at provincial congresses in Zonguldak since the mid-1930s. The increase in demands was also reflected in their content, and at the provincial congresses new demands were made with a hitherto unknown political content.

All 3 wishes put on the agenda of the congress by the district organization of the RPP Bartın were related to the affairs and functioning of the party. Two of these wishes, representing 3.52% of all wishes identified by the Bartın district organization, were related to some adjustments in the district organizations. The last demand of the Bartın organization regarding party affairs and functioning is important to understand the inadequacies of the RPP's physical facilities in Zonguldak. As can be seen from the written request to the party headquarters, many organizations such as Mentşepiri, Hasankadı, Melentçayır, Tuzcular, Gürgenpınarı have still not a party building. For this reason, it was mentioned that in some districts, party affairs had to be handled in the houses of the mukhtars and the presidents of the public chambers. The party administrators of the RPP-Bartın organization stated that it was important to build small party and people's houses in a short period of time in order to better educate the public and bind them to the party. For this reason, they demanded that this shortcoming be remedied as soon as possible. On the other hand, it is understood that in some lower levels in Bartın the items necessary for party work have not yet been fully provided. For this reason, the demands for the provision of secondary needs such as radios as well as the basic needs of the party organizations were in the foreground at the Bartın district congress.

The Twelfth Provincial Congress of Zonguldak was also included a sign of "*organisational consciousness and responsibility*"⁸⁶⁹, which was different from the congresses held in Zonguldak until then. As mentioned above, the party's

⁸⁶⁹ The term was developed by us and is used to refer to party members who are "aware of party issues and can raise them in party committees."

provincial congresses were meetings where national and party issues were discussed and political roadmaps were set. However, the RPP's provincial congresses in Zonguldak often focused on social and economic problems rather than organizational issues and attempted to find solutions to them. Thus, they served as a mediating institution, a bridge to help the public access official institutions and the government. For this reason, the issues that were on the agenda of the congress were social issues rather than organizational problems/demands. This can be seen in the content analysis of the demands made to congresses.

Whereas at the provincial congresses before 1946 there were at most a few demands to satisfy political needs, at the 1946 congress this number rose to more than 20. However, the importance of these demands lies not only in their numerical diversity, but also in the fact that some of them also differ in content from earlier organizational demands. In this context, a request put forward by the Safranbolu district organization is noteworthy in that it has never occurred before. Analyzing the report of the wishes committee, it is clear that 11.21% of the wishes discussed in the general assembly were directly related to the General Secretariat of the RPP. Some of these requests, as might be expected, were more concerned with improving physical and infrastructural facilities.

Among the lower-level requests of the Safranbolu district organization to improve the physical facilities of party organizations and overcome their shortcomings were; the allocation of funds for the construction of the RPP building and public's room in Zora village, the construction of a people's house in Karabük, and the providing of a building for party activities in Başköy, which has sixty households. On the other hand, the main wish that should be highlighted refers to one of the "*chronic organizational problems*" that the RPP had to face from the beginning, when it tried to organize itself in the provinces. As is well known, since the beginning of the institutionalization of the single-party system, the RPP has made efforts to carry out effective party propaganda in the provinces and to create units within party organizations for this purpose.

Despite all these efforts, party propaganda in the provinces was limited to congresses or tried to be carried out only by the highest party units in the provinces.⁸⁷⁰ However, this lack of propaganda, similarly expressed in many regional inspection reports, was felt at the local level from the mid-1940s onward. At this point, the Karabük RPP sub-district organization, believing that party propaganda was not being carried out sufficiently at the local level, issued demands to higher party units through the provincial congress to "*strengthen party propaganda.*" This call was valuable in that it was the first time that the lower levels of the party in Zonguldak have made efforts to develop the party's ideology outside of the physical impossibilities. The new political competition with the DP is supposed to be the reason for this demand from the lower levels of the party. Therefore, in this new competitive political environment, the need for a more effective propaganda process for the RPP to reach the people in the provinces became both more apparent and a necessity.

The political demands placed on the agenda of the 1946 Congress by other district organizations were directly related to the RPP's organizational needs. To avoid repetition, therefore, it has been deemed appropriate to quote the more original content of these demands here. However, all these wishes expressed during the congress show us that the main concern of the people in Zonguldak during the single-party period, as in many other places, was to focus on social needs and find solutions to them. For this reason, even though the people participating in the congress were all official party members, they have always prioritized social needs and expectations. As a result, people in Zonguldak saw platforms such as the provincial congress as a social space in which they could find solutions to their basic problems and expectations rather than as a political arena, and this often supplanted their party identity. Precisely for this reason, the provincial congresses often did not make any significant demands with political content. On the other hand, the question arises to what extent the political

⁸⁷⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], p. 118; BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 471. 1, p. 116.

maturity needed by the population to make certain political demands on the government has developed under the single-party system. In a political environment where elections were no more than plebiscite and competition was only between party members, it does not seem reasonable to expect the public to have political expectations. For this reason, although the provincial congresses functioned as an important instrument for the formulation of some rare and important political demands during the single-party rule, they were never the place for marginal demands that went beyond the above examples.

4.3.6. One of the Chronic Problems of Zonguldak: The Hope for Help from Intermediary Institutions in Solving the Problem of Animal Theft and the "Copts"

One of the most important social problems of the people of Zonguldak, expressed and awaiting solution in both the inspection reports and the provincial congresses throughout the single-party period, was the public security problem that troubled the people of the region. The most important of these problems is the theft of livestock, which disturbs the peace of people in rural areas. In fact, animal theft was one of the most important public security problems in Turkey in the 1930s. Since the Izmir Economic Congress, some measures have been taken to prevent these incidents, which are known to be committed mostly by roving Copts. When the issue came up on the agenda of GNAT'S in 1933, Minister of Internal Affairs Şükrü Kaya pointed out that the country had large lands and a wide variety of animals and that animal theft had been a problem for the country since the constitutional period. Therefore, the law of 1329 (1913) was amended in several points to prevent thefts. According to the new regulation, if a trace of the stolen animal is found in a village, neighborhood or near a house and the inhabitants cannot prove otherwise, they are accepted to pay the price of the animal.⁸⁷¹ At the end of the same year, article 17 of the 1329 law was further

⁸⁷¹ Sümeyra Bulan, *Türkiye'de Hayvancılık (1923-1950)*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Sivas: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, 2019), p. 99.

amended so that those who stole or harbored livestock could be expelled from the province for six months.⁸⁷²

The legal regulations thus adopted did not act as a sufficient deterrent to prevent thefts, and the theft of animals remained one of the main problems in Zonguldak, as in the country as a whole, for which the public long awaited a solution. Therefore, the villagers of Zonguldak constantly complained about this problem and asked for a solution, both to the provincial congresses and to the parliamentarians who came to the region for inspections. For example, the demand for the prevention of animal thefts, which was on the agenda of the 1935 Provincial Congress, was forwarded directly to the provincial authority. Before the congress, a two-year activity report on government affairs was presented to the public, mentioning that serious measures had been taken to prevent or eradicate cattle thefts. While no information was provided on the content of the measures taken, it was emphasised that the security forces caught the perpetrators of the theft and quickly handed them over to justice. Similarly, in response to the public's complaint about the theft of livestock, the provincial authority stated that the theft in the area was completely prevented thanks to the fight and the follow up.⁸⁷³ However, the fight against cattle rustling was not prevented, as stated by the provincial authority. As can be seen from the inspection reports and the congressional minutes, this problem became more and more worrying for the people of Zonguldak and could never be completely prevented. For this reason, among the new wishes determined at the Congress of December 26, 1936, there were also wishes in this direction to the Ministry of Justice. At this point, the public complained about the slow pace of the investigation and trial of the thieves and demanded that justice be served quickly. On the other hand, the idea was widespread in society that the existing laws did not contain deterrent punishments and that harsher punishments should be imposed. Therefore, as demanded by the population, criminals involved in

⁸⁷² *Cumhuriyet*, 8 Kanunu Evvel (December) 1933, p. 3.

⁸⁷³ *C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri*, pp. 400-407.

animal thefts should be punished more severely.⁸⁷⁴ The reason was that there had been a significant increase in individual cases of cattle theft in the region, especially since the beginning of 1936. For example, in the Bartın newspaper of January 23, 1936, it was reported that the number of people brought to trial for animal theft had reached 15 in recent days.⁸⁷⁵

At the provincial congress convened on December 15, 1938, one of the topics on the agenda was animal theft. Because, the inhabitants of Zonguldak had renewed their demand for more deterrent measures against animal theft, from which they have long suffered. To achieve this, it was requested to add articles to the "Law on Theft" (*Sirkat Kanunu*) to ensure that criminals are punished more severely. This demand of the people of Zonguldak to increase the punishment for animal theft was discussed at the wishes committee of the Fifth Grand Congress of the RPP. In response to this request, which was discussed under the supervision of the Minister of Justice Fethi Okyar, it was announced that the six-month suspension for animal theft was appropriate. Nevertheless, the ministry decided to amend the law so that the offender, who is sometimes sent to nearby places, returns and threatens the complainant, damaging his house and threshing, so that the transport is carried out over long distances.⁸⁷⁶

This decision of the Ministry of Justice seemed to prevent possible social unrest after the theft and to play an encouraging role in identifying the thieves. Because, the Zonguldak deputies, who conducted inspections in their constituencies immediately after the Great Congress, noted some signs of discouragement among the village elders' committees, which had played an important role in detecting cattle thieves. This was because, according to the law, the minutes drawn up by the village elders' committees were not considered sufficient for

⁸⁷⁴ C.H.P. 1936 İl Kongreleri, p. 412.

⁸⁷⁵ Bartın, 23 Sonkanun (January) 1936, p. 1

⁸⁷⁶ C.H.P. Beşinci Büyük Kurultayı Dilek Encümeni Raporu, pp. 7-8.

those known to steal livestock, and were also expected to identify them in court. When the mukhtars and elders who had originally written the report testified again in court against the thief, this often resulted in the thieves taking revenge on them by burning their haystacks or stealing their livestock. This inevitably discouraged them from testifying against the thieves.⁸⁷⁷ In the meantime, not even two months after the decision of the Great Congress, organized cattle thefts were still occurring in some villages of Zonguldak. For example, during the investigations into the theft of an animal in the village of Çormanlı in Zonguldak, three people were arrested, two of whom were from the same village. Similarly, two people, one from the same village, caught red-handed stealing cattle in the village of Ramazanoğlu, were arrested by the court.⁸⁷⁸

During their inspections, the Zonguldak deputies also heard many complaints about the so-called "Copts," who were seen as the main cause of many public order problems and disturbed the peace of the people in the region. Because these people cause many public order problems, such as cattle theft, stealing sheaves from the threshing floor at night, setting mills on fire, and stealing grain from the fields. The villagers of Zonguldak, who suffered greatly from the above-mentioned cases, demanded from the parliamentarians that the penalties in the law be increased, especially the penalty for animal theft. The reason was that many villagers have come to believe that the existing legal provisions cannot ensure safety in their areas. One of the most important steps that the government would have to take in this context would be to expel the "Iranian Coptic nomads"⁸⁷⁹, who were considered to be the main perpetrators of such thefts, from

⁸⁷⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], p. 72.

⁸⁷⁸ *Bartın*, 27 Temmuz (July) 1939, p. 4.

⁸⁷⁹ Kadir Tuncer explains how these nomadic communities (Gipsies) living in Zonguldak, also called "Copts", came and settled in the region as follows: The first group came to this region 350-400 years ago. At that time, in the Turkmen tribes of Anatolia, those who did the blacksmith and entertainment work of the tribe were called "Gipsies", and those who came from Egypt were called "Copts". These first arrivals spread throughout the districts and towns of Zonguldak over the centuries. While some of them continued their nomadic life until the 1920s, some of them became settled in a way... The second group migrated as tribes from Georgia to Erzurum in the

the region or to remove them from their daily lives through some other solution.⁸⁸⁰

From the demands on the agenda of the provincial congress convened in 1940, it is clear that the expectations of the people of Zonguldak regarding security and public order have not yet been met. In this context, many residents of Tuzcular, Serdar and Kozcuğaz districts in Bartın complained that Gypsies still roaming freely in the villages and stealing. For this reason, the demand for a ban on the roaming of Gypsies in the villages, which was also expressed during the deputy inspections, was again brought to the authorities by congress. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Devrek complained that the Coptic nomads who roamed freely in the villages were causing all sorts of mischief, and demanded that the necessary measures be taken. Because during this period, animal thefts seem to have increased in many villages of Bartın and Devrek. On the other hand, the villagers also brought another issue to the agenda of the congress. According to this, villagers who knew who had stolen the animals in the villages, but could not prove it for lack of sufficient evidence, stated that they were victimized by collecting the cost of the stolen animals from them in accordance with the law. Another issue that was put on the agenda of the congress in connection with public order and safety requirements was the haystack fires, a common problem of the Bartın and Devrek districts. Because, it was complained hat in many

1850s due to the Ottoman-Russian wars and again to Erzurum during the war of 93. After the tribes were expelled on the grounds that they were too crowded and unsuitable for settlement, a group of these tribes went first to Bolu, then to the villages of Zonguldak in the early 1920s and to the region known as the "Second Scissors," which had been designated as a buffer zone during the occupation of Zonguldak by the French. They were resettled... The third group, the "Romans", were sent to Anatolia from various Balkan countries, either as exchanges or as immigrants, as part of the population exchange in 1923 and in the following years. With the Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923, the Roman refugees who were sent first to Istanbul and then to Zonguldak were initially settled in the Rüzgarlımeşe district by the state providing them with houses and land. These people, referred to in the report as "Iranian Coptic nomads," are likely "Copts" who came and settled in the Zonguldak region with the first group. See Kadir Tuncer, "Çingene Olmak-Yaşam Tarzı", *Halkın Sesi*, 08.05.2015, <https://www.halkinsesi.com.tr/cingene-olmak-yasam-tarzi-makale,1761.html>, [accessed 15 April, 2021]

⁸⁸⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], pp. 72-73.

villages in Bartın haystacks were burned, but the perpetrators could not be found. Similarly, the people of Devrek called for increased measures to prevent haystack fires.⁸⁸¹ These incidents, which have been occurring in the rural areas of the city for many years, were frequently reflected in the local press during this period. For example, in the Zonguldak newspaper of March 9, 1937, it was mentioned that the haystack and four pastures of a citizen living in the village of Osmanoğlu in Bartın were deliberately burned down by someone living in the same village.⁸⁸² Similarly, in the Bartın newspaper of September 7, 1939, it was reported that a married man who wanted to marry his neighbor's daughter burned the haystack of his neighbor, who refused to give it to him.⁸⁸³ The haystacks of two brothers from the village of İsabey in Devrek were burned down by another inhabitant of the same village with whom they had a territorial dispute.⁸⁸⁴

One of the most important problems of the villagers of Zonguldak, which was repeated almost every year and on almost every occasion, but has not yet been solved, was also on the agenda of the party inspector Şerafettin Karacan, who inspected the Zonguldak region in January 1941. In his report, Karacan, who himself was convinced that these people were the cause of many security problems during his inspections, stated that the Copts, who "*did no work, moved from village to village to sell their produce, stole what they found, and thus lived more prosperously than the Turkish peasants,*" intimidated the Turkish peasants by committing all kinds of misdeeds. Karacan stated that he had personally felt the pain of hearing at the congresses that "*a handful of Copts had intimidated the heroic Turkish peasants, who were the masters of the land, in a beautiful part of the country*". For this reason, he approved the decision taken at the congresses

⁸⁸¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], pp. 72-73.

⁸⁸² *Zonguldak*, 9 Mart (March) 1937, p. 2

⁸⁸³ *Bartın*, 7 Eylül (September) 1939, p. 2.

⁸⁸⁴ *Zonguldak*, 18 İlkkanun (December) 1941, p. 2.

for a solution. According to this decision, the population of Zonguldak could be saved from these people either by preventing them from moving from village to village or by resettling them in other parts of the country.⁸⁸⁵ Because in most cases the security services have failed to catch the perpetrators, and because the courts need witnesses, these people have been able to get away with what they have done. This was the most common complaint of the villagers in this period.

In the report sent by the deputies of Zonguldak to the RPP General Secretariat at the end of December 1940, it was stated that there were many public order problems in the villages, especially the burning of threshing and hay. Besides, it was also mentioned that the society's demands for a solution to these problems had taken on a general character.⁸⁸⁶ However, since the archive file of deputies' reports does not include the Ministry of Agriculture's response to the complaint, it is difficult to know what the response was. Moreover, during the re-inspection conducted by the deputies of Zonguldak about a year later, it was emphasised that the issue of animal theft and the Copts were among the most important complaints of the population. The report, noting that security problems have increased recently, especially in Devrek district, affirms that more fundamental measures should be taken against the Coptic nomads who "*wander from district to district and even from province to province and cause a lot of damage.*" Because, even the relocation of these people, who had become a major public problem in Zonguldak, to certain regions could not make them give up their old habits.⁸⁸⁷ So it seems that the settlement of these people alone was not enough to solve the problem.

⁸⁸⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 469. 1, 21 Temmuz 1942 [21 July 1942], p. 82.

⁸⁸⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d. , p. 130.

⁸⁸⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 467. 1, n.d. , p. 66.

The issue of rehabilitating these people who threatened the safety of lives and property of the people of Zonguldak and the surrounding area and preventing them from posing a threat to the people of the region seems to have been discussed at the district congresses. For example, at the Bartın district congress convened in 1941, a different solution to the problem was proposed. Accordingly, it was suggested that those persons working freely within the boundaries of the district should be subjected to compulsory labor under the control and supervision of the committees of elders, and that women should be employed in the fields. The Ministry of the Interior, which apparently did not look favorably on the proposal, simply said that the relevant bodies had been warned to prevent Gypsies from causing harm to the public.⁸⁸⁸ The Devrek district organization had made a similar proposal, suggesting that Copts be resettled in mining areas. In this way, it was thought, the thefts could be prevented and these people could be made useful people for the country. This demand was also rejected on the grounds that the legislation was not suitable for the resettlement of these people in mining areas.⁸⁸⁹

In the inspection reports sent by the deputies of Zonguldak to the General Secretariat on March 3, 1942, the question of public security was not mentioned again.⁸⁹⁰ During their inspections, which began in August 1942, the deputies, again confronted with such complaints from the population and thus they had to inform the problem to the center again. Because citizens had complained that the number of animal thefts had increased significantly recently.⁸⁹¹ The inhabitants of Zonguldak, who still considered the measures against cattle theft insufficient,

⁸⁸⁸ *C.H.P. 1941 Kaza Kongreleri Dilekleri*, p. 709.

⁸⁸⁹ *C.H.P. 1941 Kaza Kongreleri Dilekleri*, pp. 712-713.

⁸⁹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 720. 470. 1, n.d. , pp. 21-31.

⁸⁹¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 720. 470. 1, n.d. , p. 81.

brought the issue again to the provincial congress convened on December 3, 1942. The people demanded that more measures be taken to prevent cattle rustling in the region, and this demand was forwarded to the provincial gendarmerie command, but despite the two years that have passed, no response has been given.⁸⁹²

Since the measures taken were not sufficient to prevent the security problems, the inhabitants of Zonguldak increasingly turned to the intermediary institutions to reach the state and tried to provide more concrete justifications. For this reason, during the period when the party inspector was carrying out inspections in the region, many villagers of Devrek successfully petitioned him. Based on these petitions, Inspector Şevket Torgut began to investigate what might be behind this growing security problem in the region. He finally found some concrete reasons that had not been mentioned before. Investigations revealed that some district directors and gendarmerie commanders collaborated with the thieves and accepted bribes, as villagers stated in their petitions. The petition submitted to the party's inspector was not only interesting as a complaint, but also reflects the state of mind of the villagers of Zonguldak who, despite all the complaints and numerous remedies, could not find a solution to their problems and thus gave up hope in the state. Because many of the villagers who signed the petition stated that they even turned away from the nearest government gate because the thefts had not only been prevented, but on the contrary had become a source of income. This situation, which also undermined the peasants' confidence in the state, naturally forced people to fend for themselves. For this reason, many theft cases in the villages were solved between the owner and the thieves without informing the government. Inspector Torgut stated that this made people feel unattended. Arguing that the loss of public trust in the government would endanger national unity, the villagers of Zonguldak urgently demanded the dismissal of the district director, who was abusing his office and authority for his own interests.

⁸⁹² *C.H.P. Onbirinci Vilayet Kongresi Zaptı*, p. 19.

The villager wanted to show the relationship of the district director to the theft cases not only verbally, but also with concrete examples. The party inspector was therefore confronted with many examples of concrete cases of theft and the connection between the district director. According to villagers, for example, the person who stole the cattle of a citizen from the village of Kayıkçıklar was saved from a lawsuit by giving 70 liras to the district director. Similarly, an animal thief nicknamed "Ağabey" from the village of Başat was caught with many animal skins in his house, but was released for a bribe of 150 liras. Two people whose horses were stolen from the village of Helvanlar reached the thief without informing the government and solved the problem for money. However, when the case was reported to the district, the thief was released for bribes. As can be seen, the concrete examples in the villager's petition can be multiplied. For this reason, people felt that as long as the district director remained in office, such examples would become more frequent and wanted the party inspector to mediate in finding a solution.

In response to all these complaints, Party Inspector Torgut instructed the provincial leadership to prepare a report on the number of security incidents such as thefts and fires. The number of cases in this report, which was also submitted to the RPP General Secretariat, seems high enough to cause the villagers of Zonguldak to revolt. To give an idea of the number of incidents, 24 horses, 167 oxen, 161 cows, 58 buffaloes and 131 sheep were stolen in 24 villages of Çaycuma sub-district. In addition, it was reported that in 47 haystack fires in the above villages, 4400 bundles of hay were also destroyed.⁸⁹³ When the data of other villages are added, these numbers go into the thousands. Torgut forwarded the matter to the RPP General Secretariat, stating that "*the villagers were right to complain about the administration where they dared.*" The report stated that in order to prevent the increasing cases of animal theft, especially in Çaycuma and Yenice districts, the heads and commanders of police stations working in these

⁸⁹³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944], pp. 34-49.

regions should be dismissed. This was important not only so that villagers could identify thieves without hesitation, but also to increase the people's confidence in the government. On the other hand, the report stated that not only the transfer of officials, but also their punishment would help maintain order in the region.

On September 27, 1943, Torgut again came to Zonguldak for inspections and conducted investigations in the Çaycuma subdistrict and the village of Perşembe Pazarı, where complaints were concentrated. In conversations with the people here, it was also complained that in some places the commanders of the police stations collaborate with thieves and accept bribes.⁸⁹⁴ After a thorough investigation of the matter, the Ministry of Interior, as a first precautionary measure, changed the posts of police commanders Sergeant Haşim and Corporal Hilmi and opened an investigation against them. On the other hand, the files of the gendarmes, who were allegedly negligent in preventing the theft, were handed over to the Regional Command of the Gendarmerie in Kastamonu for investigation.⁸⁹⁵

In addition, the number of thefts in the region has not decreased since the last inspection by party inspector Torgut. Towards the end of 1943, it was noted at the district congresses that cattle theft had increased even more in the Zonguldak region. For example, people in many sub-districts of Bartın complained that despite the increasing number of thefts, the perpetrators could not be found. So, they demanded harsh punishments to prevent this. The Ministry of Justice, which reviewed the request, responded that the penalties provided in the Penal Code for the theft of animals were sufficient and rejected the people's request. The Ministry of the Interior, on the other hand, stated that positive results would be achieved if the law was fully implemented and that there was no need to amend

⁸⁹⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944], p. 5, 35.

⁸⁹⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p.100.

the law.⁸⁹⁶ Similarly, at the RPP Devrek district congress in 1943, there was a call to take action against public security incidents, such as cattle rustling and fire incidents. In its response, the Ministry of the Interior stated that almost all of the perpetrators of the cattle theft in the district had been apprehended. So, there were no cases that were not prosecuted. Moreover, the necessary criminal measures would be taken against the state officials who had acted negligently. In addition, criminal proceedings were initiated against two village muktars who supported animal thieves in the region.⁸⁹⁷

Although the district director, who had been dismissed during the last inspection for bribery and collaboration with thieves, the fact that he still had not left the district had a negative impact on the population. This was because people did not have the courage to identify the thieves while the district director was still there. Despite all this, the regional inspector Şevket Torgut believed that the problem of theft, which has been widespread and entrenched in the region for many years and was increasing day by day, cannot be solved only by changing the district director. In his opinion, the appointment of an "*honest and experienced*" gendarmerie chief for the Çaycuma district, even if only temporarily, was essential to solve this problem once and for all.⁸⁹⁸

As can be seen, after a long struggle, the residents of Zonguldak succeeded in having the director of the Çaycuma district removed from office by the party inspector. It was not until the end of 1944 that legal proceedings were initiated against the director.⁸⁹⁹ However, as the regional inspector noted in his report, the

⁸⁹⁶ C.H.P. 1943 Kaza Kongreleri Dilekleri, p. 497.

⁸⁹⁷ C.H.P. 1943 Kaza Kongreleri Dilekleri, p. 501.

⁸⁹⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944], p. 5.

⁸⁹⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 98.

dismissal of the district director from his post has not led to an end to animal thefts in Zonguldak. This public order problem, which affected many villagers of Zonguldak, would continue to be one of the most important social issues discussed at future inspections and congresses. In this context, the issue was raised again during the inspections of the deputies of the Zonguldak in 1944. On April 15, 1944, in their report to the RPP General Secretariat, the deputies noted that the incidents of cattle theft and haystack burning had reached epidemic proportions, especially in the Devrek and Bartın districts. Besides, they pointed to the negligence of the gendarmerie that had led to the incidents reaching such serious proportions. Because, according to the deputies, follow-up by the gendarmerie was as important as the deterrence of the penalties to eliminate this public order problem. However, the Ministry of Interior, which investigated the matter, reported that there had been no cases of animal theft in the region for a long time. On the other hand, long-standing cases in the region whose perpetrators could not be found were solved, and those who were negligent in preventing the incidents and apprehending the perpetrators were transferred to other regions and legal proceedings were initiated against them.⁹⁰⁰ Despite all these developments, however, it would not be surprising to find a complaint about animal theft at the Provincial Congress convened on October 25, 1944. The petition, which was apparently placed on the congressional agenda by the Bartın RPP district organization, stated that the problem of animal theft, which was increasing day by day, was even damaging agricultural production. For this reason, people complained that the penalties currently imposed are not a deterrent. Although the demand for increasing punishments for such crimes was again put on the agenda at the congress, the Ministry did not accept this proposal and only issued instructions to the gendarmerie to toughen the measures.⁹⁰¹

⁹⁰⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944], p. 79, 95.

⁹⁰¹ *C.H.P. 1944 İl Kongreleri Dilekleri*, p. 416.

In his report sent from the constituency to party headquarters on October 20, 1945, Zonguldak deputy Rebi Barkın made similar observations on the issue. Barkın explained that while there were many cases of theft in another parts of Turkey, nowhere else in the country were there as many incidents as in Zonguldak. For this reason, although the local authorities were working hard on the problem, the incidents can not be prevented. Therefore, it was essential to seriously address this incident, which also damaged public confidence in the government.⁹⁰² The government, which never seemed indifferent to the impressions of the deputies in the region and the demands of the people, tried to take the necessary measures to prevent cattle rustling in Zonguldak in the mid-1940s. The acts of this theft network, which included civil servants, were prevented mainly by the suspension of officials who were negligent and complicit in the incidents. However, these measures alone were not enough to prevent thefts in the region. For this reason, the public had always believed that the problem could be solved by increasing the penalties and prohibiting free movement in the villages. These persistent and repeated demands of society, however, were never considered appropriate by the state. Indeed, according to the authorities, the penalties provided for in the law for the theft of animals had a deterrent effect. Other proposals for the permanent settlement of Copts in one place or for forced labor in the mines were rejected, mostly because they were not considered in conformity with the law. Despite all these negative reactions, however, the villagers of Zonguldak did not give up insisting on their demands and raising the issue with the authorities at every opportunity and on every platform. In this sense, one of the items on the agenda of the first provincial congress of the multi-party political life in Zonguldak was the prevention of animal thefts and the increase of penalties. The villagers of Zonguldak also again called on the authorities to prevent the Copts from wandering.⁹⁰³ Although it is not known how these demands were met, the theft of animals is still one of the

⁹⁰² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 34.

⁹⁰³ *C.H.P. Zonguldak Onikinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı*, p. 113.

main complaints of the people in the region. On the other hand, the Copts, who were once considered a source of major public order problems, are now mainly located at the entrance to the city of Ankara.

4.3.7. The Attempt to Maintain the Moral Structure and Unity of the Family Through Provincial Congresses and Inspection Reports

The provincial congresses and the inspection mechanism, which acted as a bridge between the people and the state throughout the single-party period, transmitted social demands and complaints to the executive authorities in areas such as the economy, health, transportation, justice, communications, as well as expectations regarding the protection of social morality and family unity. From this perspective, although the provincial congresses of the Zonguldak RPP were often a political platform for discussing the public's demands for public services, the congresses also discussed issues that would contribute to the formation of a social consciousness. In this sense, the provincial congress convened on January 18, 1935, was one of the most important platforms where problems related to social life and the protection of the family structure were put on the agenda. In this sense, the congress first called for efforts to be made to protect the rights of women who, for minor reasons, were turned out the door with their children by their husbands and remained on the streets until the legal process was completed. On the other hand, it is understood that the inhabitants of Zonguldak were also disturbed by the prostitutes who settled in the city quarters during this period. Therefore, the authorities were asked to remove these women from family quarters, as they were considered a threat to social morality and family cohesion. Indeed, the existence of prostitutes was the subject of complaints in many places in early republican Turkey. Since a solution at the local level was not possible, this question was sometimes even put directly on the agenda of the Great Congress.⁹⁰⁴ It is understood that families in Zonguldak at this time complained

⁹⁰⁴ At the Grand Congress in 1931, among the wishes concerning the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it was discussed how to prevent the health and moral dangers of the "Law on Prostitution Prohibition". At the Grand Congress in 1935, Muş delegate Hakkı Kılıçoğlu asked the Minister of Internal Affairs to explain the situation in combating prostitution. See C.H.F. *Üçüncü Büyük*

about the incentives for lotteries and fortune telling on foods such as chocolate and cookies, which led to children developing bad habits. Considering the number of coffee houses in Gazipaşa, the busiest and only main street in Zonguldak, and the fact that the gambling culture is increasing day by day, the families wanted to convey to the authorities through the congress their desire to ban such elements that encourage their children to gamble.⁹⁰⁵

The habit of gambling in Zonguldak did not go unnoticed by the party inspectors who carried out inspections in the region. For example, Inspector Edip Ergin, who conducted inspections in the city in mid-1936, noted in his report that public life in the center of the Bartın district was characterized by gambling in coffee houses. Although the municipality exceeded its legal authority and banned gambling in coffeehouses in order to prevent this situation, the coffeehouse owners appealed to the Council of State to have the decision annulled, and were successful in doing so.⁹⁰⁶ However, it is not difficult to guess that the gambling addiction, which seems to be spreading more and more every day in Zonguldak, disturbs especially the women. Because in the years that followed, there were many complaints that agricultural work was falling behind because men spent all day in coffee houses.⁹⁰⁷ This, in turn, also means a higher workload for women. For this reason, there have often been calls for a ban on gambling in coffee houses, as it disrupts the functioning of social life and family cohesion.

Kongre Zabıtları (10-18 Mayıs 1931), p. 93, 113; *C.H.P. Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Görüşmeleri Tutulgası (9-16 Mayıs 1935)*, pp. 144-145.

⁹⁰⁵ *C.H.F. Zonguldak Altıncı Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtı*, pp. 78-104.

⁹⁰⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 464. 2, 8 Kasım 1937 [8 November 1937], p. 19; *Bartın*, 26 Mart (March) 1936, p. 1.

⁹⁰⁷ *C.H.P. Onbirinci Vilayet Kongresi Zaptı*, p. 20.

It can be observed that the habit of gambling in Zonguldak has spread to school-age children over time. For this reason, in the provincial congress convened in 1940, it was stated that preventive measures were needed to prevent the habit of gambling, which appeared to have spread to school-age children.⁹⁰⁸ Congress also called for action against children who roamed the streets late into the night and turned alleys into gambling dens. The provincial congress of RPP Zonguldak in 1940 seems to have provided an opportunity to discuss social demands that would contribute to the formation of a social consciousness. The demand of the people of Zonguldak for a review of films with immoral content shown in the municipal cinemas before they are screened can be evaluated in this framework.⁹⁰⁹ Society's sensitivity to the content of films shown in the city has not changed over the years. At the provincial congress convened at the end of 1946, the people of Zonguldak still expressed their unease about the content of films and demanded that films with content that undermined moral values should not be shown. Moreover, the establishment of a continuous control mechanism for the content of films is another expectation on which there was a social consensus.⁹¹⁰

As is known, during the period of single-party rule, many wishes were put on the agenda of the provincial congresses of Zonguldak to reduce the financial burden of the people, especially the reduction of taxes. However, congresses also included demands that seemed to protect citizens from financial burdens, but were more social in nature. Such a wish was the demand of the population for the exemption from fees of marriage papers, which was also put on the agenda of the provincial congress convened in 1938. This problem, which can be solved with a small change by the Ministry of Interior, is remarkable in that it shows that

⁹⁰⁸ Entertaining family gatherings are found to have an important influence on the spread of bad habits, especially gambling, among young people, which became a social problem in Zonguldak in the 1940s. See B. Sidal, "Masum Aile Oyunları ve Kumar", *Zonguldak*, 8 Mart 1942, pp.1-2.

⁹⁰⁹ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, pp. 29-36.

⁹¹⁰ *C.H.P. Zonguldak Onikinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı*, p. 116.

people in rural Zonguldak still maintain their traditional customs. In fact, many people who cannot afford the cost seem to resort to traditional rather than formal marriage procedures. As mentioned in the congressional petition, many villagers who have difficulty raising money maintained their ancient traditions in the name of village marriage without the need for an official marriage. Therefore, the free providing of marriage certificates is considered by the public as an important step towards the abolition of this traditional form of marriage, which does not set a good example for the general public.⁹¹¹ This important wish of the peasants was discussed in the wish commission of the Fifth Great Congress of the RPP. During the negotiations, which took place in the presence of the Minister of the Interior, Faik Öztrak, this demand of the villagers of Zonguldak was positively received and it was decided that no marriage papers price would be required. In this way, the government was able, on the one hand, to relieve the population financially and, on the other hand, to involve citizens who could not break away from traditional ways of life in modern practices.

Another important complaint of the people in the villages of Zonguldak regarding the issue of marriage is reflected in the reports of the deputies of Zonguldak who conducted inspections in their constituencies in July 1939. The practice, now known as "bride price" and then called "weight money" in the region, seems to have been a daily problem for every single inhabitant of the villages of Zonguldak in those years. According to the deputies, the obligation of the man who wanted to marry did not end with the payment of a large sum of money to the woman. This is because marriage requires the consent of village elders, such as the mukhtar or village headman. Therefore, the only hope for the villagers, whose marriage seems almost impossible under the circumstances, is that a story similar to a rumor that circulated in the region years ago will spread again. Because according to rumors, the villagers of Zonguldak were come

⁹¹¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939], p. 2.

together only after it was said that German girls would marry Turks and Turkish girls would marry Germans.⁹¹²

Although the examples reflected in the congressional minutes and inspection reports are limited, the efforts and demands of the people to protect the family unit and social morality in Zonguldak in the early republican era were also largely relayed to the relevant authorities through the RPP. The responses of the competent authorities to these requests show that political power also takes into account social expectations in order to protect and preserve the values of society. The closure of coffee houses in Bartın by municipalities in response to complaints from the population, or the refusal to charge fees for marriage papers because they would lead the population back to traditional practices, are concrete examples of the state's response to concerns about protecting social morality and family structure. In this sense, it can be said that, above all, the provincial congresses contributed to the social consciousness that was formed with regard to the unity of the family and the protection of social morality.

⁹¹² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940], p. 71.

CHAPTER 5

ZONGULDAK PEOPLE'S HOUSE AS A SUPPLEMENTARY INSTITUTION TO CARRY OFFICIAL IDEOLOGY TO THE PROVINCES AND TO PROVIDE SOCIAL ENLIGHTENMENT

Up to this point in our research, we have tried to convey the role of the RPP Zonguldak organization as a bridge between the people and the state through the messages that the party carried from the periphery to the center. In other words, what has been described so far concerns the RPP's process of transmitting the demands, expectations and complaints of the grassroots to the top, and the results obtained. Throughout the period of single-party rule, however, the RPP acted as a bridge, transmitting the people's opinions and ideas to the government on the one hand, and the government's decisions and policies, as well as the ideology of political power, to the provinces on the other. In this sense, during the period of single-party rule, the RPP provided the political power with the opportunity to learn about what was going on in the provinces in all its diversity, and at the same time mediated the transmission of the official ideology to the provinces.

As is well known, political parties and governments play an important role in the development and adoption of political culture in societies. In this sense, one of the most important activities of political parties, which are formed by people who came together around a particular program and doctrine, is to adopt their political programs in society.⁹¹³ As the party that held political power throughout the period of single-party rule in Turkey, the RPP, on the one hand, attempted to implement the project of social transformation and modernization and, on the other hand, continued its activities to convey and impose the official ideology

⁹¹³ Aydın, *Tek Parti Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez-Taşra İlişkisi (1935-1945)*, p. 126.

and party principles on society. As it soon became clear that these activities could not be carried out by the party alone, the need for an auxiliary to political power became even more apparent, especially from the late 1930s onward. As İsmet İnönü was to express years later, immediately after the great reforms of the first seven years of the Republic, political power needed a national organization to spread and explain its principles to the public. It was at this point that the People's Houses, to be founded in 1932, emerged as an institution that sought to spread the principles of the RPP throughout society and to explain and adopt the policies pursued to the masses.⁹¹⁴ The People's Houses, which had to be organized in Zonguldak as in the whole country in a short period of time, tried to fulfill their task of educating and enlightening the Turkish society with their activities in various fields. And on the other hand they worked to bring the official ideology to the public and to adopt it. This ideology, adopted at the RPP's Third Grand Congress and called Kemalism, was framed by the RPP's "republican, nationalist, populist, statist, secular, and reformist" characteristics.⁹¹⁵ The most important helper of political power in the process of transferring Kemalist principles to society, not just for a few years but permanently and with integrity and continuity⁹¹⁶, were the People's Houses.

In the formation and consolidation of the Kemalist discourse, which viewed the Turkish nation as a classless and homogeneous entity, the first thing that stood out was the disconnection between the bureaucracy and civil society. This is because Kemalism was not a structure that was supported by civil society and seeking public support was not a priority for political power in the early stages of the modernization process. The developments that led Kemalist cadres to seek social support were primarily the political, social, and economic changes of the early 1930s. In this sense, the two important social developments that accelerated

⁹¹⁴ Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi (1930-1945)*, pp. 88-89.

⁹¹⁵ C.H.F. *Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, pp. 30-31.

⁹¹⁶ C.H.F. *Nizamnamesi ve Programı (1931)*, p. 29.

the strengthening and institutionalization of Kemalism as a central discourse in political and social terms during the aforementioned period were the experience of FRP and the Menemen Incident. As a result of these developments, the need for an institutional structure became increasingly apparent so that Kemalist principles could find support in civil society, a close dialogue with the public could be established, and revolutions could be embraced by the people. Under the special conditions of the single-party era, when the channels of communication between the people and the state were kept to a minimum and under control, the People's Houses thus fulfilled an important function. Because through these institutions, the state sought to strengthen the very limited channels of communication with the public, but more importantly, it was also able to mobilize society in the way it envisioned.⁹¹⁷

From this point of view, this part of our study attempts to illustrate the RPP's bridging function between the state and the people through the activities of the Zonguldak People's House, which originated as an auxiliary organization of the RPP. In this sense, we will focus on the conferences⁹¹⁸ that the Zonguldak People's House effectively used in its activities to convey the official ideology of the society and educate the public, the peasant days and peasant journeys that contributed to the cohesion of the society, and other activities that were carried out with the aim of conveying the official ideology to a broader mass.

5.1. Founding Process of the People's Houses and Prominent Activities

After the victory in the War of Independence, the Kemalist cadres began a rapid restructuring of the administration, and the social revolutions necessary to "awaken the people who had fallen asleep in the process of the collapse of the

⁹¹⁷ Esra Dicle Başbuğ, *Resmi İdeoloji Sahnedeki Kemalist İdeolojinin İnşasında Halkevleri Dönemi Tiyatro Oyunlarının Etkisi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), pp. 36-37.

⁹¹⁸ It should be noted that the conference activities carried out in the schools, which were the official educational institutions of the state, will not be focused because of the inadequate primary sources.

empire." This was because the elites of the Republic, who met with society from time to time, found that the practices introduced at the center did not reach the masses with the same speed. On the other hand, the gap between the intelligentsia and the public became more pronounced and began to cause some problems in the administration of the country's affairs. Therefore, a new structure was needed to establish a link between the cadres who led the revolutions and the mass of the people, and to educate and guide the people in accordance with the principles of the revolution.⁹¹⁹ In fact, The Turkish Hearths, which had been founded with similar expectations before the Republic, continued their activities in this direction even after the establishment of the new regime. However, the conflict with the views of the political rulers and the inability to establish a dialog with the public at the desired level led in time to the closure of the Turkish Hearths.⁹²⁰ However, the institutional and spiritual heritage left by the Turkish Hearths was used to build a new institution for culture and public education.

As is well known, the nationalist ideas that arose in Europe as a result of the French Revolution soon spread to the Ottoman lands, and separatist movements gained momentum within the empire. After ideas such as Ottomanism and Islamism, which were supposed to prevent the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, failed, a new intellectual movement arose with the aim of raising the consciousness of Turks. This movement, which sought the political and cultural unity of the Turkish people on the basis of Turkish nationalism and was called Turkism, passed from the idea phase to the implementation when political pressure on Turkish intellectuals eased after the reign of Abdulhamid II.⁹²¹In the

⁹¹⁹ Anıl Çeçen, *Atatürk'ün Kültür Kurumu Halkevleri*, (İstanbul: Tarihçi Kitabevi, 2018), pp. 89-92.

⁹²⁰Yasemin Doğaner, "Halkevleri", *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi*, <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/halkevleri/>, [accessed April 18, 2022]

⁹²¹ Kenan Akyüz, "Türk Ocakları", *Bellekten*, vol. 50, no. 196, (Nisan ,1986), p. 201.

following period, Turkish youths and intellectuals, seeing the national existence in danger and believing that not the empire but the Turkish people must be saved, began to work at the Military Medical School on the establishment of the Turkish Hearths.⁹²² As a result of these efforts, the Turkish Hearths was officially established on March 25, 1912, in order to realize the above-mentioned goals.⁹²³

The purpose of the Turkish Hearths was stated in the statutes of the association as the improvement of the national education, social, scientific and economic level of the Turks, and the rising of the Turkish race and religion.⁹²⁴ For this purpose, it was stated that the society would try to realize its goals by opening clubs called Turkish Hearths, organizing lectures, conferences and performances, and publishing books and pamphlets.⁹²⁵ Although during the process of disintegration of the empire the Turkish Hearths had developed important activities with regard to the emergence and spread of a national consciousness in society, after the proclamation of the republic they fell in disfavor with the political power over time. Because, although the generations that grew up in the hearths in the early years of the Republic were benefited widely⁹²⁶, the Turkish hearths were thought to have fulfilled their historical function. The first sign in this regard came from Gazi Mustafa Kemal, who visited many Turkish Hearths during his trip in late 1930. Based on the idea that "*forces of the same kind*

⁹²² Yusuf Sarımay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1993), p. 106.

⁹²³ Sarımay, pp. 112-113.

⁹²⁴ Tefik Çavdar, "Halkevleri", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 4, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986), p. 879.

⁹²⁵ Sarımay, p. 121.

⁹²⁶ Nurcan Toksoy, *Halkevleri: Bir Kültürel Kalkınma Modeli Olarak*, (Ankara: Orion Yayınevi, 2007), pp. 23-24.

should unite for a common goal,"⁹²⁷ Gazi declared that the Turkish Hearths should cooperate with the RPP. Thus, this idea of Gazi was soon put into practice, and the Turkish Hearths decided to unite with the RPP and abolished on April 10, 1931.⁹²⁸ This decision, taken at the last congress of the Turkish Hearths, was adopted at the Third Great Congress of the RPP on May 15, 1931, and at the same time it was decided to found the People's Houses which was to build on its heritage.⁹²⁹

Within a year of this decision by the Third RPP Grand Congress, the first People's Houses were opened throughout the country.⁹³⁰ The opening ceremony of the People's Houses on February 19, 1932 in Ankara was attended by many ministers, deputies and bureaucrats, especially the Prime Minister İsmet Pasha.⁹³¹ In a speech there, RPP Secretary General Recep Peker stated that RPP's goal in establishing the People's Houses was to "create a mass of people who are conscious, who love and understand each other, and who are committed to the ideal."⁹³² On the other hand, in *C.H.F. Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, it is stated that the main goal of the People's Houses is to train citizens with the necessary skills

⁹²⁷ Ergun Özbudun, "Atatürk ve Demokrasi", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, vol. 5, no. 14, (1989), pp. 294-295.

⁹²⁸ Toksoy, *Halkevleri: Bir Kültürel Kalkınma Modeli Olarak*, p. 26.

⁹²⁹ *C.H.F. Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları (10-18 Mayıs 1931)*, p. 280.

⁹³⁰ These were Afyon, Ankara, Aydın, Bolu, Bursa, Çanakkale, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Eminönü, Eskişehir, İzmir, Konya, Malatya and Samsun People's Houses. See *CHP Halkevleri Halkodaları 1932-1942*, (İstanbul- Ankara: Alaeddin Kirel Basımevi, n.d.), p. 2; Çeçen, *Atatürk'ün Kültür Kurumu Halkevleri*, p. 106.

⁹³¹ Melda Or, *Zonguldak Halkevinden İzlenimler: Karaelmas Dergisi*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2002), p. 9; Zeki Arıkan, "Halkevlerinin Kuruluşu ve Tarihsel İşlevi", *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, vol. 6, no. 23, (1999), p. 268; *Milliyet*, 20 Şubat (February) 1932, p. 1, 5.

⁹³² Recep Peker, "Halkevleri Açılma Nutku", *Ülkü Halkevleri Mecmuası*, vol. 1, no. 1, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, Şubat 1933), p. 6.

to help the party's principles. In this sense, the People's Houses were intended as places of gathering and unification for idealistic citizens who wanted to work on this path, where courageous, assertive, and tireless generations would be trained for the long years that Turkishness had lost on the way to civilization.⁹³³

It is not possible to evaluate the emergence and development of People's Houses independently from the political and social needs of the time. As it is well known, the world economic crisis of 1929 severely damaged the coalition between the military, the bureaucracy, the merchant bourgeoisie and the big landowners in Turkish society and thus the weight of the bureaucrats among them gradually increased. On the other hand, during this period, the gap between the people and the bureaucracy became more evident through measures such as the prohibition of democratic rights and freedoms and the obligation of peasants to pay high taxes. Faced with these problems, the political power had two options before it and opted for an authoritarian regime instead of democratizing governance. The government, which had failed to solve the economic problems of the people, therefore decided to establish people's houses to eliminate the disconnection between the state and the people, fearing that the economic shock would cause great debates throughout the country.⁹³⁴

Another reason for the establishment of the People's Houses was the need for the people to accept the revolutions carried out by the new regime. Because the experience of FRP has shown that the revolutions were not accepted by the population to the desired extent.⁹³⁵ For this reason, the basic principles of the founding ideology, known as Kemalism, were first established at the Third Great Congress of the CHF in 1931. In order for revolutions carried out at the

⁹³³ C.H.F. *Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, (Ankara: Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1932), p. 5.

⁹³⁴ Çeçen, *Atatürk'ün Kültür Kurumu Halkevleri*, pp. 106-107; Çavdar, "Halkevleri", p. 879.

⁹³⁵ Kongar, *İmparatorluktan Günümüze Türkiye'nin Toplumsal Yapısı*, p. 116.

institutional level to become part of social life, intermediary institutions were needed to bring the official ideology to the people. For this reason, the People's Houses were established to provide ideological and political education to the public.⁹³⁶

The People's Houses, which were established with the aim of spreading the principles of Kemalist ideology, establishing the reforms in the society, creating the new society and lifestyle of Kemalism, and educating the society through indoctrination and education, continued their activities within the framework of certain rules and principles.⁹³⁷ In this sense, the *C.H.F. Halkevleri Talimatnamesi* stipulated that the activities of the people's houses should be carried out in nine branches: Language and Literature, Fine Arts, Representation, Sports, Social Aid, Public Lectures and Courses, Library and Publication, Peasantry, History and Museum.⁹³⁸ At the end of the first year, the number of registered members of the People's Houses reached 34.541 by the end of 1933. During this period, 2.626 female citizens became members of the People's Houses. Besides, they attracted the interest of many social classes, especially professional groups such as lawyers, doctors, teachers, merchants, farmers and workers. According to the activity report of the People's Houses, during this period it was mainly the uneducated people who made up the majority of society showed interest in the People's Houses.⁹³⁹ Looking at the activities of one year, the People's Houses

⁹³⁶ Taner Timur, *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2018), p. 172.

⁹³⁷ Neşe Gurallar Yeşilkaya, *Halkevleri: İdeoloji ve Mimarlık*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), p. 61.

⁹³⁸ *C.H.F. Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, p. 6.

⁹³⁹ *Halkevlerinin 1933 Senesi Faaliyet Raporları Hulasaları*, (Ankara: Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1934), pp. 118-119.

have organized 915 conferences, 373 concerts and 511 performances for the public nationwide, from which a total of 478.837 people have benefited.⁹⁴⁰

By the tenth year of its founding, the number of people's houses had increased to 383 and that of public rooms to 198 throughout the country. In addition, the number of people who benefited from the activities and events of people's houses reached 10 million, and the number of members approached 150 thousand.⁹⁴¹ One of the most important activities carried out in the People's Houses to convey the Kemalist principles and the party principles in the last ten years were conferences that took into account the conditions of the time and the interest and level of the public. In this regard, according to the needs and the level of the society, the number of conferences held by 183 people's houses reached 3.446 and the number of listeners 700 thousand at the end of the first decade. These conferences, organized by the department of language, literature, and history of the People's Houses, aimed to increase the people's knowledge of public issues, to root the principles of republic and reform and to develop a love of country and a sense of civic duty.⁹⁴² On the other hand, the conferences and discussions were also aimed at making known the national political and economic problems and the corresponding measures taken by the government.⁹⁴³ In this regard, the first conferences organized by the people's houses took the form of an appeal to inform the public about the war and to seek support for the government's policies at the outbreak of World War II.⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴⁰ *Halkevlerinin 1933 Senesi Faaliyet Raporları Hulasaları*, pp. 120-123.

⁹⁴¹ *C.H.P. Hakevleri Halkodaları 1932-1942*, pp. 16-32.

⁹⁴² *C.H.F. Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, p. 10.

⁹⁴³ Walter F. Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey: The Free Party and Its Aftermath*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 172.

⁹⁴⁴ Aydın, *Tek Parti Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez- Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945)*, p. 147.

The conferences of the People's House ceased over time to be an event whose content and speakers were determined by local elements. In this sense, in the early days, only the head of the people's houses or certain individuals could speak, but over time the variety of topics and speakers increased. Thus, the pulpits of the people's houses became places where "*any knowledgeable and faithful citizen could speak.*"⁹⁴⁵ The RPP General Secretariat was directly involved in the content and planning of the conferences by distributing conference lists to people's houses branches and attempting to manage the process within the limits set by political power.

During the ten years of activity of the People's Houses, care was taken to celebrate national days and festivals, which not only helped to raise national consciousness, but also served as a means for political power to express itself to society. In this framework, as part of the tenth anniversary activities, 1.370 celebrations were organized by the language and literature departments of people's houses throughout the country, with the participation of about 750 thousand citizens.⁹⁴⁶ Apart from that, the people's houses continued their activities of indoctrination and enlightenment through their representations, and care was taken that the demonstrations held in these places always inspired the people to the good, the right and the beautiful. Indeed, the representational branches not only brought a new vitality to people's houses, but also aimed to satisfy social needs, such as meeting the theatrical needs of cities and towns and training good orators. In addition, the representative bodies undoubtedly had the task of providing useful indoctrination to the country and society through artistic elements such as theater, performances, drama and cinema.⁹⁴⁷

⁹⁴⁵ C.H.P. *Hakevleri Halkodaları 1932-1942*, p. 4.

⁹⁴⁶ C.H.P. *Halkevi ve Halkodaları'nın 1942 Çalışmaları*, (Ankara, 1943), p. 4.

⁹⁴⁷ C.H.P. *Halkevleri Çalışma Talimatnamesi*, (Ankara: Zerbemat Basımevi, 1940), pp. 13-14.

The Kemalist cadres, who saw art as an instrument for disseminating official ideology, tried to make intensive use of artistic activities such as theater, especially during this period when social change had not yet taken place and ideological structuring had not yet penetrated all strata of society. In this sense, the representational branches, as places where modern and traditional elements of representation were used together, played an important role in the communication and adoption of official ideology in the public sphere. Care was taken to ensure that the plays of traditional Turkish theater could also be used as an ideological element, and for this purpose the content of many traditional plays was reshaped in accordance with the principles of the revolution. For example, in the late 1930s, under the leadership of the People's Houses and the RPP, "the Karagöz" plays were rewritten from the perspective of official ideology at the request of the political power.⁹⁴⁸ On the other hand, the plays, which played an important role in communicating the ideology of political power to society, had to be approved by party headquarters in terms of content.⁹⁴⁹ The representational activities, which took place under the strict supervision and control of the political power and were used by the RPP as an ideological apparatus through the people's houses were therefore an important instrument of the state, which allowed it to reach out to society as never before.⁹⁵⁰

The peasantry branches, which were founded within the people's houses with the aim of "*strengthening the feelings of mutual love and solidarity between the villagers and the townspeople through the social, sanitary and aesthetic development of the villages*"⁹⁵¹, also carried out important activities during this

⁹⁴⁸ Bünyamin Aydemir, *Sanatta Dirijizm: Devrimden Telkine Halkevleri İnkılap Oyunları*, (İstanbul: Mitos Boyut Tiyatro Yayınları, 2017), p. 49.

⁹⁴⁹ Aydemir, *Sanatta Dirijizm: Devrimden Telkine Halkevleri İnkılap Oyunları*, p. 83; C.H.P. *Halkevi ve Halkodaları'nın 1942 Çalışmaları*, pp. 5-6.

⁹⁵⁰ Aydemir, *Sanatta Dirijizm: Devrimden Telkine Halkevleri İnkılap Oyunları*, p. 91.

⁹⁵¹ C.H.P. *Halkevleri Çalışma Talimatnamesi*, p. 27.

decade. Founded in the early 1930s and tasked with bridging the gap between society and the intelligentsia, peasantry branches were expected to organize activities in the following areas: First and foremost, this branch ensures that the population of the surrounding villages could participate as much as possible in the performances organized in the people's houses. On the other hand, the members of the people's houses were also expected to participate in the activities taking place in the villages at appropriate times and to mingle with the villagers. At this point, especially the intellectuals were asked to try to understand the needs, desires and feelings of the villagers and to help them. Because only in this way can all parts of society merge with each other and solidarity becomes possible. In addition, it was envisaged that the peasantry branches would offer regular courses for illiterate people and, for this purpose, cooperate with the village teachers, take care of official matters, which the villagers find difficult to comply with, and organize performances for the villagers.⁹⁵²

To accomplish these important tasks, 325 of the 383 people's houses had active peasantry branches over the course of ten years. In addition to branch representatives such as doctors, teachers, dentists, veterinarians, and farmers, administrators also participated in village visits organized by these branches to identify villagers' complaints and demands on the ground. The ideological activities of the peasantry branches consisted in organizing events under the name of "peasants' night". In this sense, on Sundays, when the villagers gathered in the cities, many people's houses organized peasants' nights with performances, plays and shows that emphasized national values. During these nights, enlightenment activities were also carried out by organizing conferences on various topics.⁹⁵³ According to the official activity reports of the people's houses, over 100 village visits were organized in 1935, and this number increased to over 1.000 by mid-1941. On the other hand, the number of performances organized by

⁹⁵² C.H.P. *Halkevleri Çalışma Talimatnamesi*, pp.28-29.

⁹⁵³ C.H.P. *Halkodaları 1932-1942*, pp. 14-15.

the people houses, including the peasants' nights, reached almost 1.500 by mid-1941.⁹⁵⁴

In addition to their activity of disseminating and adopting the official ideology in society, the people's houses were also an important element of social change and the process of modernization. Because they were the first places where society came into contact with modern institutions and structures.⁹⁵⁵ In order to carry this positive effect of the People's Houses to the villages and towns, which were active in all areas that society needed, the opening of public rooms began in 1940.⁹⁵⁶ Thus, the number of people's houses and public rooms in the country reached 437 and 2.688, respectively, at the end of the single-party rule. During the aforementioned period, the RPP conducted its public education and enlightenment activities in Zonguldak through 9 people's houses and 32 public rooms.⁹⁵⁷ On the fifteenth anniversary of the People's Houses and in the early years of the multiparty political life, the number of People's Houses reached 463 nationwide, while this number remained stable in Zonguldak. On the other hand, it is known that 80 of the 4.170 people's houses that operated in the country in 1946 were located in Zonguldak.⁹⁵⁸

⁹⁵⁴ C.H.P. *Halkeleri Halkodaları 1932-1942*, pp. 31-43.

⁹⁵⁵ Aydın, *Tek Parti Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez- Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945)*, p. 162.

⁹⁵⁶ Kabasakal, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Parti Örgütlenmesi (1908-1960)*, p. 156.

⁹⁵⁷ C.H.P. *Halkevlere ve Halkodalarının Yurd İçinde Dağılımları (1945)*, (Ankara: Doğu Matbaası, 1945), p. 3, 74.

⁹⁵⁸ *XV. Yıldönümünde Halkevlere ve Halkodaları*, (Ankara, 1947), p. 19.

5.2. Foundation and First Activities of the Zonguldak People's House

One of the peoples houses opened on June 24, 1932 was the Zonguldak People's House.⁹⁵⁹ With an enthusiastic speech of the provincial president and chairman of the People's House, Mitat Akif, the Zonguldak People's House was inaugurated. In the first nine months, the Zonguldak People's House was active in the branches of language, history and literature, fine arts, representation, sports, library and publications, social aid and peasantry.⁹⁶⁰ However, it would be necessary to wait until March 13, 1933, until all branches become active.⁹⁶¹ Based on the regulations on *Halkevleri İdare ve Teşkilat Talimatnamesi*, it is thought that at least 25 members would sign up for the opening of the other three branches in Zonguldak.⁹⁶²

The doors of the People's Houses, which were to operate according to the basic principles of the RPP, were open to all citizens, regardless of whether they were party members or not. For this reason, there were no requirements for working in the branches of the people's houses.⁹⁶³ The people's house committees, in which every citizen could participate according to his abilities and interests, were founded and started their activities in Zonguldak in a short time.⁹⁶⁴ Accordingly,

⁹⁵⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1005. 879. 1, p. 33, 27 Kasım 1933 [27 November 1933]

⁹⁶⁰ *Cumhuriyet'in On Yılında Zonguldak ve Maden Kömürü Havzası*, p. 257.

⁹⁶¹ *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Onuncu Yıl Dönümünde Zonguldak Halkevi*, p. 17-48.

⁹⁶² *Halkevleri İdare ve Teşkilat Talimatnamesi*, (Ankara: Zerbamat Basımevi, 1940), p. 4.

⁹⁶³ *Halkevleri İdare ve Teşkilat Talimatnamesi*, pp.3-5.

⁹⁶⁴ The first board of directors of the Zonguldak People House, elected from the members of the aforementioned nine branches, was composed as follows: Mr. Mitat Akif, Chairman of the Peasantry Committee, Mr. Bedri, the Chairman of the Language, History and Literature Committee, Engineer Cemal Zühtü, the Chairman of the Fine Arts Committee, Fauz Nafiz, the Chairman of the Representation Committee, Şekip Bey, the Chairman of the Sports Committee, Ali Fahri, the Chairman of the Social Aid Committee, Ahmet Naim, Chairman of Library and Publications Committee, Mr. Ziya, Chairman of the People's Classrooms and Courses

the number of registered members of the Zonguldak People's House increased to over a thousand by the end of the one-year period of activity. The sub-branches with the largest number of members among these were the committees for fine arts, sports and peasantry.⁹⁶⁵ The branches of the Zonguldak People's House, which began their work immediately after their establishment according to the work plan set by the committees, could not meet regularly in the first years due to insufficient material resources. Nevertheless, during its one year of activity, the People's House provided many important social services, such as studies on the history of the basin, the compilation of folk songs and manuscripts, representational activities, the creation of sports clubs, the support of needy students and workers.

Conferences were one of the most important activities of the Zonguldak People's House in the first period in order to carry the message of political power to the provinces. In the first years after its establishment, the Zonguldak People's House tried to convey the ideology of political power and the principles of the party to the public through conferences held in the halls of the People's House and in the "Memleket Cinemas". In addition, conferences were organized by experts in local and national history, literature, health, family life, Turkish women, and the Republic to raise social awareness and to enlighten population.⁹⁶⁶

Committee, and Mr. Necati, Chairman of the Museum and Exhibition Committee. See *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, p. 8.

⁹⁶⁵ According to official data, at the end of 1933, 175 members registered in the Committee for Peasantry, 60 members registered in the Committee for Language, History and Literature, 207 members registered in the Committee for Fine Arts, 86 members registered in the Committee for Representation, 207 members registered in the Committee for Sports, 122 members registered in the Committee for Social Aid and 62 members registered in the Committee for Library and Publications, 66 members registered in the Public Courses and Instruction Committee, and 57 members registered in the Museums and Exhibitions Committee. See *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, p. 8.

⁹⁶⁶ In this framework, Zonguldak People's House organized the following events between 1932 and 1933: "The General History of Coal" by Mr. Hüseyin Fehmi Bey on September 23, 1932, "Child Care" by Handan Ziya on October 6, 1932, "National History" by Mr. Ali Halit on October 13, 1932, and "Virtue of Womanhood and Turkish Womanhood" on October 27, 1932, "National Literature" by Mr. İhsan on November 2, 1932, "National History and Gazi Day" by Engineer Rauf on December 31, 1932, "Infectious Diseases" by Dr. Hayri on February 2, 1933,

In order to inform the public about the activities of the people's house, especially about the conferences, the newspaper Zonguldak, which was "*connected to the people's house with its whole being*", was mainly used. In addition, leaflets and brochures were used to announce events such as conferences, meetings, national holidays and festivals, which were very effective in raising national consciousness in society. In addition, to keep the people of Zonguldak informed about what was happening in the country and in the world, national and foreign newspapers and magazines were made available in the public library. Within this framework, the Zonguldak People's House also undertook activities to marginalize the Ottoman period in line with the doctrines of official ideology through the print media. For this purpose, publications were regularly issued in the Istanbul press "*highlighting the evil side of the Ottoman Empire, the neglect of Anatolia, and the oppression of the sultans.*"⁹⁶⁷ During this period, instructive articles were also written in the local press in a language that could be understood by everyone, focusing on reason and science to refute superstitious ideas such as witchcraft and sorcery, which were respected by the public.

As is well known, October 29 was recognised as a national holiday by a bill submitted to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on April 19, 1925. Since that date, the Republic Day have had an important function in clarifying the values of the newly established regime and making society adopt them.⁹⁶⁸ In this

"Tuberculosis and Malaria" by Health Director Mr. Zühtü on February 9, 1933, "Language Reform" by lecturer Mr. Nazif on February 27, 1933, "Public Education" by lecturer Mr. Sıtkı on March 6, 1933, "Children and Family" by lecturer Mrs. Azize on March 23, 1933, "The Party's Program" by Mr. Mitat Akif on April 21, 1933, and "Uzun Mehmet Festival" by Mr. Mitat Akif, Ahmet Naim and Hüseyin Fehmi on November 8, 1933. See *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, pp. 8-11.

⁹⁶⁷ *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, p. 11.

⁹⁶⁸ Yasemin Doğaner, "Cumhuriyet'in Onuncu Yıl Kutlamaları", *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi*, <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/cumhuriyetin-onuncu-yil-kutlamalari/> , [Accessed April 21, 2022]

sense, more attention has been paid to the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the Republican regime than ever before, and to ensure that all segments of society experience the joy of this holiday. For this reason, the Republic Day celebrations, which until then had been held only in the city centers, were extended to the villages for the first time. Therefore, the festive commission established under the "Law on the Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic," enacted on June 11, 1933, called on all intellectual and artistic circles in the country to enthusiastically organize the celebrations. In this call, "*artists were asked to write works, speeches, plays and poems that would explain the great importance of the revolution and the breakthroughs in the first decade of the Republic.*"⁹⁶⁹ Considering the low literacy rate in the society, it is understandable that the political power tried to convey the ideological message of the holidays through theatrical performances, which were a very effective channel of communication. For this reason, writers were asked to write suitable works to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the new regime, especially those that dealt with the themes of "revolution" and "independence" in an exciting way. Thus, in a short time, the plays to be performed by the representation committee as part of the celebrations were decided and sent to the towns and villages.⁹⁷⁰

As part of the Republic Day celebrations, the representative committee of the Zonguldak People's House also performed the plays whose content was determined by the political power. In this sense, the pieces such as "Akın", "Özyurt", "İkizler", "Köy Muallimi" and "Beyaz Kahramanlar", "Mavi Yıldırım", "Şer'iyeye Mahkemesi" were staged by Zonguldak People's House in October 1933. These pieces were primarily aimed at connecting society with national sentiments, reminding the conditions under which the Republic was founded, emphasizing the superior characteristics of the Turkish nation, and

⁹⁶⁹ Başbuğ, *Resmi İdeoloji Sahnedeki: Kemalist İdeolojinin İnşasında Halkevleri Dönemi Tiyatro Oyunlarının Etkisi*, p. 123.

⁹⁷⁰ Başbuğ, p. 129.

encouraging society to work in accordance with the goal of the Republic.⁹⁷¹ In addition, mobile cinema machines were used to reach people in the most remote villages and towns of Zonguldak, where films about Mustafa Kemal's domestic travels were shown to villagers. On the other hand, films intended to arouse national consciousness were shown free of charge at public meetings in the "Memleket Cinema".⁹⁷²

Another important activity of the Zonguldak People's House in the early period was to find out when coal was first found in Zonguldak and by whom. As a result of this investigation, which will be discussed in the following sections, it was determined that the coal in Zonguldak was discovered by Uzun Mehmet on November 8, 1829. With this discovery, although it was an old Christian tradition, the miners' holiday called "Saint Barba", which had been celebrated in Zonguldak for many years, acquired a national identity. Thus, from November 8, 1932, Uzun Mehmet Coal Day was celebrated in the city instead of Miners' Day.⁹⁷³

In the early republican period, the political power attached great importance to uniting villagers and townspeople under one roof through the peasantry branches of the people's houses. At this point, the Zonguldak People's House pioneered other people's houses in the area with its first Peasants' Night, organized on June 3, 1933.⁹⁷⁴ Firstly, to determine the services to be provided to villagers, the peasantry branch first requested preliminary reports from village representatives

⁹⁷¹ Başbuğ, p. 159; *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim 1933, p. 9; *Halkevlerinin 1933 Senesi Faaliyet Raporları Hulasaları*, p. 80.

⁹⁷² *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, p. 11.

⁹⁷³ Tan, *20. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p.36; Efiloğlu and Tan, *Tek Parti Dönemi Uzun Mehmet Kömür Bayramı Kutlamaları*, p. 28; *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, p. 11.

⁹⁷⁴ *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, p. 12.; Melda Or, *Zonguldak Halkevinden İzlenimler: Karaelmas Dergisi*, p. 67.

on health, agricultural, moral, social, and economic conditions in the villages. The results show that the peasants of Zonguldak have more important needs than those that can be satisfied with money and time. It was understood that these basic needs of the peasants could only be satisfied by enlightening measures. As a result, the peasant branch of the Zonguldak People's House began its activities with educational activities that seemed to be more urgent than the needs of the villagers that could be solved with money and time. For this reason, it was decided to focus on issues such as the importance of the republican regime, the laws of the republic, civil law, the rights that the republic grants to villagers, and protection against contagious diseases. For this purpose, it was decided to organize conferences and lectures to educate the villagers on the above issues.

In order to reach the mentioned goal, delegations of six men and women who could read and write were formed from 29 villages to participate in the Peasants' Night organized on the evening of June 3, 1933. These delegations, together with the teachers representing the people's houses in the villages, arrived at the provincial center on the night of the event. The villagers of Zonguldak, who were housed in the homes of townspeople, later attended a performance organized at the "Memleket Cinema". Here, the peasants of Zonguldak and the city dwellers sit side by side to symbolize the unity of the townsman and the peasant, the fusion of the modern type of man of the Republic and the traditional Turkish peasant. On the other hand, the governor of Zonguldak invited some women from the village to his house at the same night and they ate together at the same table. Thus, the value attached by the republican regime to the peasantry and the difference with the sultanate rule was illustrated by the example of the republican governor and the peasant at a table and in a car. In addition to these events, conferences on the Republican Regime by party chairman Mr. Mitat Akif, on "Village Treasuries and Cooperatives" by lawyer Mr. Bekir Sıtkı, and on "Village Law and Peasant Morality" by lawyer Mr. Tevfik were held the same evening. The texts of the conference were also reproduced and distributed to other villagers through the participants of the night. Following the speeches, the plays "Köy Hocası" and "Beyaz Kahraman" were performed by the

representation branch of the people's house, and films about the travels of Gazi Mustafa Kemal were shown. In this first peasants' night of the Zonguldak People's House, which met with great public interest, 127 peasants, including 18 women, and 17 village teachers from the villages, and 410 people, including 100 women, from the city participated.⁹⁷⁵ The peasants' night, which was held for the second time in the same year, continued to be an important tool in Zonguldak in the following years. In this way, the people were taught the principles of the Republic, and the villagers were educated on various subjects. For this reason, it is necessary to evaluate separately the peasants' nights in Zonguldak and the ideological-social mission they undertook.

5.3. One of the Means to Bring the Official Ideology to the Public: Conferences

Conferences, which were an important propaganda tool for the political power to reach out to the society, were organized at the Zonguldak People's House on various occasions throughout the single-party period. In this sense, the society was tried to be channeled in line with the official ideology through conferences with intense ideological content such as national days and holidays, the Republican regime, laws and party principles, which were mostly held within the language, history and literature branch. On the other hand, public education also served through speeches on social issues such as health, agriculture, economic life, literature, family and community life. Moreover, the peasant nights, which symbolized the modern and traditional fabric of society, brought peasants and townspeople together and provided an important opportunity for political power to enlighten the public. For this reason, an intense ideological transfer activity was carried out towards society through the conferences organized at the above-mentioned organizations.

5.3.1. Revolution and Independence Conferences in Zonguldak

⁹⁷⁵ *Zonguldak*, 29 Ekim (October) 1933, p. 12.

The conferences organized by the Zonguldak People's House between 1935 and 1946 were mostly organized by party organizations and with the participation of experts in their field. In this sense, it is understood that the Zonguldak People's House organized 28 conferences on various social issues until the end of 1935.⁹⁷⁶ These conferences were particularly aimed at communicating the principles and values of the Turkish Revolution to the public. The most prominent conferences in this process were undoubtedly those whose content was determined directly by the RPP General Secretariat. In this sense, the main theme of the series of conferences to be organized by the provincial organizations in 1935 was determined by party headquarters as "Revolution and Independence." The RPP General Secretariat requested that these conferences, planned for 1935, be continued in 1936 and commissioned deputies from Ankara to make speeches.⁹⁷⁷ The first guest of Zonguldak during this period was Cevdet Kerim İncedayı⁹⁷⁸ who was a member of the RPP General Board. İncedayı, who set out to lecture in Zonguldak on February 22, 1936⁹⁷⁹, was greeted by the governor of Zonguldak, government dignitaries, party committees and a large crowd. İncedayı was

⁹⁷⁶ *Halkevlerinin 1935 Senesi Faaliyet Raporları Hülasesi*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1936), p. 134.

⁹⁷⁷ Aydın, *Tek Parti Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez- Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945)*, p. 147.

⁹⁷⁸ Cevdet Kerim İncedayı was born in Sinop in 1893 and graduated from the Military Academy on July 30, 1914. İncedayı, who served on the Caucasus Front during World War I, participated in the work of the national societies established in Istanbul to support the movement in Anatolia after the Mudros Armistice. He held various posts until the end of the War of Independence and then joined the RPP after his retirement in 1927. He also held various posts within the RPP, including party inspectorship and Istanbul provincial chairman and later he was appointed as a member of the RPP General Executive Committee in 1934. He was elected a RPP deputy in Sinop in 1935, continued as a deputy until Nov. 12, 1941. He was also elected deputy from Sinop in the 1950 elections and died on May 29, 1951. In addition to all these, İncedayı was commissioned in 1927 by Minister of Education to explain the struggle for independence to the public and organized a series of conferences on the subject. It is assumed that İncedayı continued these conferences, which were summarized in the book "Türk İstiklal Mücahedesı", in the following years. See Cevdet Kerim İncedayı, *Türk İstiklal Mücahedesı Konferansları*, Yusuf Kodaz (ed.), (Konya: Palet Yayınları, 2021), pp. 14-37.

⁹⁷⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 77, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948]

welcomed with great enthusiasm by the people of Zonguldak, and on the night of the day of his arrival, a great feast was held at the house of the Miner Süleyman Sırrı.⁹⁸⁰

On the other hand, on the same days, the chairman of the RPP Zonguldak organization, Dr. Mitat Altıok, was sent to Kastamonu to hold conferences on "Independence and Revolution," and the lawyer Tevfik Bilgin was sent to Bartın.⁹⁸¹ It is understood that the conferences held by Altıok in İnebolu and Kastamonu and by lawyer Bilgin, at the Bartın People's House aroused great interest and curiosity among the public.⁹⁸² Due to the great interest of the public in the conference, which took place for two nights in Bartın, some of the audience stayed outside.⁹⁸³ After the conclusion of the conferences in the surrounding provinces and districts, the provincial organization of RPP Zonguldak decided on the schedule for the Independence and Revolution conferences to be held in the province. According to this calendar, conferences were to be held in all district centers and some sub-districts determined, and speakers were appointed.⁹⁸⁴ As might be expected, most of the speakers were chosen from among the members of the provincial organization who were qualified to enlighten the public about the republican regime and reforms. In this context, the first conference after the calendar was determined was given by Mitat Altıok at the Üzülmez sub-district center and was followed by a large

⁹⁸⁰ *Zonguldak*, 25 Şubat (February) 1936, p. 1.

⁹⁸¹ *Zonguldak*, 18 Şubat (February) 1936, p. 1.

⁹⁸² *Zonguldak*, 25 Şubat (February) 1936, p. 2.

⁹⁸³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, pp. 73-74, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

⁹⁸⁴ For detailed information on those appointed by the RPP Zonguldak Provincial Organization at these conferences and their places, see BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 72, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

crowd. Altıok's speeches mainly touched on the themes of revolution and independence which were the two symbols of founding and liberation.⁹⁸⁵

İncedayı's conferences on reform and revolution met with much greater interest among the people of Zonguldak. Because, the people of Zonguldak who came to listen to the two-day conference series, filled the "Memleket Cinema" hall with a crowd of more than a thousand people.⁹⁸⁶ The texts of the conference were later published in the newspaper of Zonguldak to reach more citizen. In this sense, İncedayı's first lecture on the night of February 24, 1936, dealt with the concept of revolution and the characteristics of Turkish Revolution. İncedayı began his speech by saying "*Turks are the oldest and most honorable nation in the world*" and stated that for this reason Turks are the nation that founded the civilization on earth. İncedayı stated that behind the achievements of the Turkish nation with the Republic was the Turkish Revolution beyond the national liberation struggle and that the victory of independence could only be achieved with the Turkish Revolution. Besides, in the conference, it was pointed out that another feature that distinguishes the Turkish nation is independence. Because according to İncedayı, revolution and independence are two elements that complement each other like the earth and the sun. For this reason, just as there would be no life on earth without the sun, the sun would be irrelevant in a system without the earth. Therefore, these two elements, which complement each other and form the basis of national power, must be well understood, explained and protected by society. For this reason, the RPP has decided to organize a series of conferences so that all citizens can understand these two concepts that form the basis for the existence of the Turkish state.

Before mentioned the specific characteristics of the Turkish Revolution, İncedayı gave a general definition of the revolution to the people of Zonguldak. For this

⁹⁸⁵ *Zonguldak*, 3 Mart (March) 1936, p. 2.

⁹⁸⁶ *Zonguldak*, 3 Mart (March) 1936, p. 6.

definition, he resorted to Recep Peker's lecture notes on the "History of the Revolution" taught in universities and explained the concept as follows:

Revolution is the removal from a social structure of all that is backward, crooked, bad, old, unjust, and harmful, and its replacement by that which is progressive, right, good, new, and useful. And having thus established them, we must set up and operate a system that ensures that the things that have been removed do not return, that the things that have been put in settle down and live.⁹⁸⁷

İncedayı, who continued the process that led to the Turkish Revolution with the discourses of marginalization of the Ottoman period and its rulers, attributed the developments in this sense to two main reasons. The first of these was the Ottoman sultans' immersion in the realm of pleasure and indulgence and the resulting administrative and political negligence. The other was the state's descent into religious fundamentalism with increasing religious indoctrination over time. On the other hand, the West gradually reached a significant level of development in the fields of culture, economy, technology and politics. Thus, the Empire began to collapse and disintegrate. In this process, according to İncedayı, the only thing that the "*sluggishes who ruled the state*" did was to lock themselves in a lodge and wait for God's help. On such a dark day, Atatürk revived a decaying state and managed to raise the Turkish nation to the level of those who had hitherto been superior to the Turks. Moreover, the speech emphasized the nationalistic and universal aspect of the Turkish revolution, which eliminates the components that left the society behind and will raise the country to the level of the civilized world. It was also stated that Turkish Revolution differs from other revolutions due to its unique character. For this reason, it was pointed out that the Turkish Revolution, which could be realized only with great sacrifices and after long painful experiences, must be thoroughly explained and accepted by the society and must be rooted in the minds.

Another focus of the conference was social resistance during the Turkish Revolution. Because, as is well known, the Turkish Revolution, which envisaged

⁹⁸⁷ *Zonguldak*, 3 Mart (March) 1936, p. 3.

profound changes in all areas of social life, met with considerable social resistance. According to İncedayı, the measures taken against these resistances so that the revolutions could be realized and take root in society point to another aspect of the Turkish Revolution. Because the Turkish revolution did not show mercy for a moment and hesitated to use force, which was the most dangerous thing in revolutions. In this sense, the Turkish Revolution was one of the revolutions that required the use of force. Moreover, one of the most important features that distinguishes the Turkish Revolution from other revolutions is its depth and integrity. Because while many revolutions in history had the narrower goal of changing a political regime or an economic system, the Turkish Revolution was able to affect all areas of national, social, political, economic and cultural life at once.

Perhaps the most interesting of the assessments İncedayı makes in his speech regarding the peculiarity of the Turkish Revolution is that it arose from a social demand. According to this, Thus, the Turkish Revolution differs in one important respect from the authoritarian and unidirectional revolutions that Peter the Great wanted to realize in Russia or the Austrian Emperor Joseph II in Austria. This is because authoritarian revolutions carried out in a single direction and to achieve a single goal will always meet with resistance from the mass of the people, and if adequate measures are not taken, they are unlikely to fail. However, in the face of revolutions "*that literally emanated from the people,*" such as the Turkish Revolution, political authorities often had to accept. Moreover, as in the case of the Turkish Revolution, political powers can take on an authoritarian character in order to take root in society and be accepted by the masses. Because, for the Turkish Revolution, this characteristic has become a necessity to eliminate the "*various diseases within the national structure*" and to overcome the difficulties in foreign policy.

One of the topics that İncedayı emphasized at length during his conferences in Zonguldak was the concept of independence. Because for the realization of the Turkish Revolution it was first of all necessary that it became an independent

nation and state. As is known, at the beginning of the liberation struggle, the Ottoman Empire had lost its independence in many areas and had become a state subjugated by all the material and spiritual weapons of the West. Therefore, it was necessary to take measures to become an independent state, so that the great revolutions that would later be realized were not just words, but could be put into practice. For this reason, the Turkish nation won the Turkish War of Independence at unprecedented sacrifice to regain its independence. However, according to İncedayı, it was the Turkish Revolution that made this struggle even more meaningful and brought the Turkish nation to the achievements of that day. Because, in a society where traditional ways of life still prevail, where reason and science do not take precedence, where *madrasas* replace modern educational institutions, and where some mendacious ascetics are accepted as intellectuals, independence is bound to collapse "*like a wooden bridge built before a flood.*" If one considers the independence struggles that did not result in revolution, of which there were many examples in Turkish history, it becomes more understandable that revolution and independence are inseparable elements. Therefore, it is very important that these concepts, which are two important pillars of Turkish social life, are accepted by society with the same understanding and value.

According to İncedayı, who highlighted the features of Turkish independence in his speech, the first of these was that the Turkish state provided security and order within its own national borders without the help of any other state. Because, the first condition for the independence of a state was the existence of a territory within national borders, established and protected on the basis of national power and forces. In this sense, a country that is supported by another state to ensure its security on its territory and the peace and order of the country cannot be called independent. In addition, an independent country must also have a national domestic policy that meets the needs and characteristics of the nation. Because the presence of a group in a country that was under foreign influence was a sign that there was no independence. Another prerequisite for the independence of a state is that it be able to raise, operate, and maintain its army

according to its own national conditions and needs. From this point of view, one can speak of complete independence only when the land, sea and air of a state are protected by the national army of that country according to its will. One of the most important pillars of an independent state is the establishment of a national judicial system. If the judicial affairs of a nation are not administered according to its national laws, by national courts, and by independent judges, one cannot speak of the existence of complete independence. Furthermore, the complete independence of a country can only be achieved if it is independent in the field of culture. In this sense, it is so important, especially in terms of securing freedom and sovereignty, to make use of national history, traditions and memories, which are elements of national culture, and to free them from the pressure of foreign culture. Later in his speech, İncedayı also emphasized the need for a national financial organization to achieve full independence. In this regard, the determination, collection, and expenditure of taxes should be based solely on national considerations and calculations, and the budget should be determined in accordance with the resources and needs of the state.

Apart from all these issues, the conference emphasized above all the question of economic independence. İncedayı, who gave the people of Zonguldak a lot of insightful information about this phenomenon, which he called "*the deepest topic in the issue of independence*," stated that "*the beginning of corruption in the issue of independence is laxity in economic independence*."⁹⁸⁸ In his speech, İncedayı emphasized that full independence was possible only through economic independence. For this reason, he pointed out that those who believe that actions threatening a country's independence can be achieved only by sending troops across its borders or by invasion are subject to a great mistake. Because, there is no difference whether an enemy crosses the borders of a country in this way or whether its markets are flooded with foreign goods. Therefore, under the leadership of the founding cadres who proclaimed the Republic, efforts were

⁹⁸⁸ *Zonguldak*, 4 Nisan (April) 1936, p. 3.

made to create a new Turkish economic model that would be independent and self-sustaining with national labor, national wealth, and national technology.⁹⁸⁹ İncedayı's conferences in Zonguldak on the topics of revolution and independence were concluded with his final speech on the importance of economic independence. In all his conferences, İncedayı informed the public about the conditions that led to the Turkish Revolution and the basic principles of the republican regime. Thus, he tried to create social awareness for the public's acceptance and protection of these principles. Besides, he emphasized the importance of being an independent state in order to realize all goals. In this sense it should be said that İncedayı carried out an important propaganda activity by carrying the ideology of political power to Zonguldak, explaining it and providing social support for the new regime. On the other hand, such nationwide conferences are believed to be aimed not only at raising public awareness and maintaining public excitement and engagement, but also at transmitting the values of the Turkish Revolution and independence to future generations. Cevdet Kerim İncedayı, who spent a week in Zonguldak performing the tasks assigned to him by the RPP General Secretariat for this purpose, left the city on March 1, 1936.⁹⁹⁰ Moreover, the conferences on the revolution and independence organized by the RPP provincial organization for the lower levels in Zonguldak province continued even after İncedayı left the city. One of these conferences was held in Kilimli on March 6, 1936 by lawyer Tevfik Bilgin.⁹⁹¹ The head of the RPP Zonguldak provincial organization Dr. Mitat Altıok, on the other hand, resumed his revolution and independence conferences in Ereğli on 23 March. The second and third places of these conference events, which last until the beginning of April, were Devrek and Safranbolu.⁹⁹² In addition, Akın Karaoğuz,

⁹⁸⁹ *Zonguldak*, 3 Mart (March) 1936, pp. 1-6; *Zonguldak*, 17 Mart (March) 1936, pp. 2-3; *Zonguldak*, 24 Mart (March) 1936, p. 3; *Zonguldak*, 4 Nisan 8 (April) 1936, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁹⁰ *Zonguldak*, 3 Mart (March) 1936, pp. 1-6.

⁹⁹¹ *Zonguldak*, 17 Mart (March) 1936, p. 1.

⁹⁹² *Zonguldak*, 24 Mart (March) 1936, p. 1.

a member of the provincial board of RPP's Zonguldak organization, was assigned to organize these conferences in Çaycuma, and Sıtkı Goekçen, while the party's vice provincial chairman, was assigned to organize them in Kozlu.⁹⁹³

Finally, on February 13, 1936, RPP Secretary General Recep Peker sent a letter to all RPP provincial presidents outlining what the provincial chairmans should do after the conferences concluded. Accordingly, after the Revolution and Independence conferences are concluded, an evaluation of who held the conferences, how many people benefited from them, and what effect they had on the public will be sent to party headquarters and to the newspapers in Istanbul and Ankara.⁹⁹⁴ In this sense, after the conclusion of the conferences in Zonguldak, an evaluation telegram was sent to the RPP General Secretariat, the Ulus newspaper and the Ankara Agency. Thus, it was ensured that a wider audience was aware of the issues discussed at the conference.⁹⁹⁵

5.3.2. Other Conferences of the Zonguldak People's House for Social Enlightenment

The Zonguldak People's House carried out intensive conference work and was able to make a name for itself that was appreciated by the local press in 1936.⁹⁹⁶ In this sense, a total of 13 conferences on various topics were planned for the winter of 1936, and in order to arouse the interest of the public, each conference was followed by a performance, a music concert or a film screening. These conferences, which were planned in many different areas, from the basic

⁹⁹³ *Zonguldak*, 4 Nisan (April) 1936, p. 1.

⁹⁹⁴ *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (1 İkincikanun 1936'dan 30 Haziran 1936 Tarihine Kadar)*, p. 109.

⁹⁹⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 62, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

⁹⁹⁶ In 1936, 26 conferences were organized by the Zonguldak People's House. See 923-938 *Cumhuriyet'in XV. Yıldönümü Hatırası Zonguldak*”, İzzet Öztoprak et al. (pre.), *Cumhuriyet'in XV. Yılında Türkiye*, vol. VIII, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2015), p. 4452.

principles of RPP to health, family and social life, history, national education, and architecture, were intended to enlighten society and raise public awareness in accordance with republican values. For this purpose, the Zonguldak People's House planned the following conferences during the winter months of 1936.⁹⁹⁷

Table 13. Zonguldak People's House Conference Series in Winter 1936

Guest/Profession	Conference Topic
Dr. Mitat Altıok- Head of Party	Explanation of RPP's Main Qualifications
İbrahim Özdal- Primary School Inspector	Toxic Gases
Dr. Nimet- Internal Diseases Specialist	General Information on Infectious Diseases and Special Information on Typhoid
Hilmi Uluğ- Letterman	Turkish History
Bekir Sıtkı Gökçen- Lawyer	National Economy and Basin
Hilmi Yüksel- Lawyer	Family and Women Against Civil Law
Nihat Özar- Engineer	Old and New Construction

As can be seen, these conferences, which have very different contents and are held by experts in their field, aimed to raise the cultural level of society in almost all areas and to get an idea of what was happening at the national and world level. On the other hand, as reported by the Zonguldak press, the People's House conferences contributed significantly to social enlightenment and the adoption of the principles of the revolution by society.⁹⁹⁸ Considering that 30.751 people

⁹⁹⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, pp. 82-83, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

⁹⁹⁸ *Zonguldak*, 3 Mart (March) 1936, p. 1.

benefited during the year, it can be said that the conferences were followed by a significant part of society and the messages were able to reach a large audience. From the local press of Zonguldak and the activity reports of the people's house, it is clear that the conference activities carried out by the Zonguldak People's House continued intensively in the following years. Because, according to official data, 22 conferences were organized by the Zonguldak People's House in 1937.⁹⁹⁹ In the local press of Zonguldak, however, only one of these conferences could be followed. In March 1937, the history teacher İzzet Arın organized a conference on "The War of Independence" in the conference hall of the People's House with the aim of improving the population's knowledge of history and contributing to the formation of a national historical consciousness. According to the Zonguldak press, the conference was attended by a large audience.¹⁰⁰⁰

In the first half of 1938, the Zonguldak People's House continued its conference activities without interruption and organized a total of 8 conferences in the first six months of the year, in which 7.950 people participated.¹⁰⁰¹ With the outbreak of World War II, the conference content was revised to reflect the changed world situation. During this period, conferences were organized to inform the public about general topics such as health, history, society and family life, agriculture, technology, law and reforms, as well as events arising from special circumstances, such as the situation of the country and the world during World War II and Turkish politics during the war period. In this sense, the Zonguldak People's House, which endeavored to hold a conference every week, organized 96 conferences in one year at the end of 1940, and more than 100.000 people in the city benefited from these lectures.¹⁰⁰²

⁹⁹⁹ 923-938 Cümhuriyet'in XV. Yıldönümü Hatırası Zonguldak", p. 4452.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Zonguldak*, 9 Mart (March) 1937, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰¹ "923-938 Cümhuriyet'in XV. Yıldönümü Hatırası Zonguldak", p. 4452.

¹⁰⁰² *Karaelmas*, vol. 1, no. 4-5, (Aralık (December) 1940- Mart (March) 1941), p. 26; *Zonguldak*, 1 Nisan (April) 1940, p. 1.

In the 1940s, the political power, which frequently held conferences to inform Turkish society about developments in the war in its neighbourhood, also used conferences to educate the public about how to act in the event of a possible attack. Thus, on June 11, 1940, the RPP General Secretariat sent a circular to all local units, governors, presidents of people's houses and public rooms, and regional inspectorates, asking them to inform the public, and especially villagers, about the parachute as one of the possible attack threats.¹⁰⁰³ After receiving the instructions from the RPP headquarters, the Zonguldak governor's office wasted no time and mobilized the district governors, the sub-district directorates and the gendarmerie command to take the necessary measures. Besides, all village *mukhtars* and committees of elders within the boundaries of the central accident were also informed.¹⁰⁰⁴ On the other hand, the RPP General Secretariat assigned Bursa Deputy Muhittin Baha Pars to enlighten the people of Zonguldak about this issue. On June 14, 1940, before Pars' lecture, the Zonguldak People's House organized a peasants' day, and the first lecture was given by Governor Halit Aksoy to the assembled crowd, mainly district directors and village leaders. In the night of the same day, a large audience from all parts of society, from the intellectuals of Zonguldak to the mine workers, attended the conference organized by Deputy Pars. From the report sent to party headquarters after the conference, it appears that these speeches, which were delivered in areas of high population density in Zonguldak, especially in the mines, had a very positive effect on the population.¹⁰⁰⁵ On the other hand, these activities that were carried out to prepare the people of Zonguldak for a possible attack and to keep them alert were also continued by organizing village tours, one of the activities that

¹⁰⁰³ *Cümhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı (İkincikanun 1940'dan 30 Haziran 1940 Tarihine Kadar)*, vol. 16, (Ankara. Zerbemat Basımevi, 1940), p. 214.

¹⁰⁰⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 48, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

¹⁰⁰⁵ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, pp. 49-51, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

could reach the villagers more easily. Thus, the people of Zonguldak were taught what to do when they were exposed to a form of attack that they may have heard about for the first time.

While the RPP General Secretariat was trying to save the Society from a possible threat of war, it continued without interruption its activities of communicating and explaining the party's principles to the public. In this context, history conferences on various periods and processes of Turkish and world history have also been organized to increase the historical awareness of the people of Zonguldak. In this sense, on the evening of April 30, 1941, two separate conferences for the integration of new and old members took place at the party evening organized by the provincial leadership of the party. The first of this was mostly performed by the local officials to explain the party program and principles to the newly admitted members. Following this speech, the famous historian Enver Ziya Karal, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Language, History and Geography in Ankara, gave a lecture on "Attempts to Invade Europe in History" at the People's House Cinema hall. This speech, which was apparently followed with great interest by the public, have been attended by about 750 "*prominent men and women*". Immediately after the conference, a theater performance entitled "Girl from the City" was played by the Kozlu Public House theater group.¹⁰⁰⁶

Although the organization of conferences in Zonguldak marked by wartime conditions and began in 1940¹⁰⁰⁷, these activities continued intensively throughout 1941. The policies and guidelines of the party headquarters undoubtedly had an influence on the development of the process in this direction.

¹⁰⁰⁶ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, pp. 53-55, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948]; *Zonguldak*, 6 Mayıs (May) 1940, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰⁷ For example, one of the deputies of Zonguldak, Hazım Atıf Kuyucak, held a conference on "Our Homeland Against the World Situation" at the Zonguldak People's House on October 17, 1940. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 39, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

In this sense, the RPP Secretary General Dr. Tuzer informed all charimaships, inspectorates and governors of the party, People's Houses and public rooms, that the party headquarters was planning a series of conferences that urgently needed to be held on March 15, 1941. For the organization of these conferences, which were to inform the society about the general situation, especially about the measures of the state and the war preparations, the party organizations and community centers were asked to take immediate action. In this sense, the administrative committees of the provinces were expected to gather the people in the cities and towns, especially in the people's houses and public rooms, and to enlighten them through conferences within the framework of the above principles.¹⁰⁰⁸ Deputies from party headquarters will also speak at the conferences, which are expected to conclude in about a month. The RPP General Secretariat has instructed Niğde Deputy Cavit Oral to hold this conference in Zonguldak, as it is felt that it is more appropriate to start the conferences with competent people from the center.¹⁰⁰⁹ In this context, on the evening of March 26, Cavit Oral spoke to a large audience in the cinema hall of the People's House and informed the people of Zonguldak about the situation of Turkey in the face of world events.¹⁰¹⁰

On the other hand, the RPP provincial administrative committee constituted a conference group consisting of members of the provincial administrative committee that met with the public in many places in the province during this period. Dignitaries from the region participated as speakers in these conferences on "Turkey in the Face of the World Situation." For this purpose, RPP provincial and district presidents and heads of people's houses, as well as people with titles such as district governor, sub-district director, engineer, government doctor

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Cümhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı (1 İncikanun 1941'den 30 Haziran 1941 Tarihine Kadar)*, pp. 186-187.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Cümhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı (1 İncikanun 1941'den 30 Haziran 1941 Tarihine Kadar)*, p. 197.

¹⁰¹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 26, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

made efforts to enlighten the people of Zonguldak. This series of conferences, which began on March 25, 1941, was thus completed by April 15, 1941, as the party headquarters announced.¹⁰¹¹

Although the content of the conference texts is not available, it is understood that the people showed great interest in the events organized in many parts of the city. For example, more than a thousand participants listened to the conference held by the RPP provincial chairman Ahmet Gürel, in front of the Devrek People's House on the evening of March 31, 1941.¹⁰¹² Feedback to party headquarters revealed that the conferences held at the level of the other district and subdistrict organizations were also closely followed by the community. From this point of view, the high turnout at conferences organized by the party organization can be seen primarily as a sign of the population's loyalty to the government and the party. On the other hand, the high level of participation in such activities in Zonguldak is also important in demonstrating the population's desire for learning.

During the same period, the Zonguldak People's House organized another series of conferences under the direction of the RPP General Secretariat. In this process, conferences were organized not only on concrete issues such as education and health, domestic and foreign government policies, but also on more abstract concepts such as nation and nationality. Scholars from the country's prestigious educational institutions, as well as prominent intellectuals and statesmen, were invited to many of these conferences. On April 22, 1941, for example, Ercüment Ekrem Talu, professor of political science in Ankara, gave a speech in the hall of the People's House entitled "Nasreddin Hodja, the Philosopher of the People." This conference was apparently followed mainly by the intellectuals of Zonguldak, and about a thousand men and women from

¹⁰¹¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, pp. 15-17, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

¹⁰¹² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 25, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948].

Zonguldak attended this event. In July 1941, the statesman and politician Mahmut Esat Bozkurt was a guest in Zonguldak. About 770 people benefited from the speech, and most of the participants were intellectuals. Thus, the conference was very exciting and generated great interest in society. On September 15, 1941, Professor Vasfi Raşit Sevik from the Faculty of Law in Ankara gave an enlightening lecture to the residents of Zonguldak on the meaning of the concepts of nation and nationality. Similarly, it was noted that the people of Zonguldak showed great interest in this conference. Following the speech, as usual, a film prepared by the representation branch was shown to the participants.¹⁰¹³

In general, 1941 seems to have been a very productive period for the Zonguldak People's House in terms of conference activities. According to the report from the RPP provincial administrative committee to the party headquarters, 74 conferences were organized in the city in one year and more than 60.000 citizens benefited from these events.¹⁰¹⁴ In the following years, the Zonguldak People's House continued its conference activities aimed at enlightening society with the contributions of both local intellectuals and guests from outside the city.¹⁰¹⁵ In this sense one of the important guests of the language and literature branch of

¹⁰¹³ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 1013. 911. 1, p. 10, 12, 30, 9 Haziran 1948 [9 June 1948]; *Zonguldak*, 4 Ekim (October) 1941, p. 2.

¹⁰¹⁴ "C.H.P. Zonguldak Vilayet İdare Heyeti İkinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (1 Temmuz (July)-31 Birinci Kanun (December) 1941" in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 721. 468. 1, 26 Mart 1942 [26 March 1942], p. 16; *Yeni Zonguldak*, 4 Şubat (February) 1942, p. 1.

¹⁰¹⁵ By the end of 1942, the Zonguldak People's House organized 56 conferences and 44.385 people attended these events. See "C.H.P. Zonguldak Vilayet İdare Heyeti İkinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (1942)", in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943], p. 16. Some of these conferences were reflected in the local press as follows: "Konferans", *Zonguldak*, 11 Haziran (June) 1942, p. 1; "Halkevi Konferansları", *Zonguldak*, 7 Temmuz (July) 1942, p. 1; "Halkevinde Konferans", *Zonguldak*, 28 Temmuz (July) 1942, p. 1; "Yeni Seçim Münasebetiyle Ali Rıza İncealemdaroğlu Dün Akşam Halkevinde Bir Hitabede Bulundu", *Ocak*, 12 Şubat (February) 1943, p. 1; "Konferans", *Ocak*, 7 Ağustos (August) 1943, p.1; "Konferans", *Zonguldak*, 10 Ağustos (August) 1943, p. 1.

Zonguldak People's House, which had 232 members at the end of 1943¹⁰¹⁶, was the famous poet and Erzincan Deputy Behçet Kemal Çağlar. In order to strengthen the national and patriotic feelings of the people of Zonguldak, Çağlar gave a speech in the Zonguldak People's House in which he informed about general issues of Turkish history and pointed out that Turks are the oldest and bravest people in Asia. In another part of his speech, Çağlar emphasized the need for the mingling of intellectuals and peasants and stated that one of the most important services that the Zonguldak People's House could provide for the country was to work towards it.¹⁰¹⁷

The content of the conferences organized by the Zonguldak People's House throughout 1944 also depended on current events and the needs of the region.¹⁰¹⁸ In fact, in determining the content of the conferences, care was taken to consider the issues highlighted by the people's houses branches. For example, when malaria was on the rise, the peasantry and social aid branches immediately put the issue on its agenda and organized conferences on the disease and prevention methods. Similarly, if the peasantry branches encountered a mentality opposed the primary education during the village tours, the content of the conferences to enlighten society about the importance of primary education was determined accordingly.¹⁰¹⁹ In addition to the members of the community center, the tradition of inviting outside guests to speak at these informative events, which

¹⁰¹⁶ "C.H.P. Zonguldak Vilayet İdare Heyeti İkinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (1943)", in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944], p. 16.

¹⁰¹⁷ "Behçet Kemal Çağlar'ın Konferansı", *Zonguldak*, 14 Aralık (December) 1943, p. 1; "Halkevimizde Konferans", *Ocak*, 11 Aralık (December) 1943, p. 2. According to official data, the Zonguldak People's House held 21 conferences in 1943, which were attended by 8.010 listeners. See "C.H.P. Zonguldak Vilayet İdare Heyeti İkinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (1943)", in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944], p. 16.

¹⁰¹⁸ At the end of 1944, the number of registered members of the Zonguldak People's House was 4.446. See "C.H.P. Zonguldak Vilayeti Parti Teşkilatının 1 Temmuz 1944 Tarihinden 31/12/1944 Tarihine Kadarki Durumunu Gösterir İkinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu", in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 23.

¹⁰¹⁹ *C.H.P. Halkevleri ve Halkodaları (1944)*, (Ankara, 1945), pp. 6-7.

would contribute to raising social awareness, was also maintained. In this sense, Nureddin Artam, one of the authors of the newspaper *Ulus*, was in the city several times in the summer of 1944 to give lectures. Artam, who was known for his broadcast "Radyo Gazetesi" (*Radio Newspaper*) on Ankara Radio for ten years from October 12, 1940, held his first conference on the evening of May 20, 1944.¹⁰²⁰ In his speech in the hall of the People's House, Nureddin Artam used various memoirs to describe the process that led to the liberation struggle. He stressed that the Turkish youth who filled the hall should firmly adhere to the principles of Kemalism in the face of harmful ideas such as racism and Turanism that disrupt national unity.¹⁰²¹ On July 22, 1944, Artam came to Zonguldak again, and on the evening of the same day, he informed the people of Zonguldak about concepts such as homeland, nation, patriotism and nationalism in the cinema hall of the People's House.¹⁰²²

According to the local press, it was decided that some of the conferences to be held in Zonguldak in 1945 would be related to the protection of public health. In this context, the board of RPP Zonguldak organization decided to organize conferences on malaria and prevention methods in all public buildings and people's houses in the city. Based on this decision, information conferences were held in many districts and sub-districts from the beginning of April by the doctors registered in the people's houses. On the other hand, the doctors of the provincial organization participated in the events organized by the lower levels of the party and used these visits as an opportunity to educate the public. According to a report in the *Ocak* newspaper, for example, party delegate Dr. Muammer Keskinel's trip to Çaycuma to celebrate the Second İnönü Victory

¹⁰²⁰ "Nurettin Artam", *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü (TEİS)*, <http://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/artam-nurettin>, [Accessed April 29, 2022]

¹⁰²¹ *Zonguldak*, 26 Mayıs (May) 1944, p. 1.

¹⁰²² *Zonguldak*, 24 Temmuz (July) 1944, p. 1.

was an important opportunity for him to explain the measures taken to protect public health.¹⁰²³

It should be noted that the conference activities were still going on in the first year of the multi-party political life in Zonguldak, where the society benefited greatly from intellectuals and scientists, technicians, experts, experienced people and artists. However, when analyzing the local press of the time, it becomes clear that the conference activities organized by the Zonguldak People's House were not carried out as intensively as before. In particular, conferences held for the adoption of official ideologies and reforms by society during the institutionalization process of the Republic are almost absent in this period. The reason for this could be the belief that the reforms were accepted by society to some degree, or it could be because the local press no longer reported on such activities. Therefore, apart from the speeches at the National Day celebrations and the official ceremonies in 1946, the news of the conference reflected in the local press in Zonguldak is rather scanty and limited.

5.4. From the People's House to the Village: "Peasant Days" and Village Trips in Zonguldak as a Bridge between Villagers and Citizens

When the young republic came to power, the Turkish villages were known to have been devastated by years of warfare. The Turkish peasants, who had supported all these wars, especially the First World War and the National Struggle, with labour and taxes, were waiting for a helping hand that would reach them in many areas, especially in the economy. Until the early 1930s, however, the political power's intellectual and practical knowledge of the Turkish peasantry did not go beyond the discourse that "*the peasant is the master of the nation.*" However, in order to broaden the political base for the new regime and achieve economic development based on agricultural production, it was essential to reach out to the peasantry and turn them into citizens committed to

¹⁰²³ Ocak, 6 Nisan (April) 1945, p. 1.

the values of the Republic.¹⁰²⁴ For this reason, it was tried to benefit from institutions such as people's houses and public rooms in order to inform the citizens living in rural areas and to adopt the republican revolutions.¹⁰²⁵ In this sense, the peasant branches of the People's Houses played the leading role in the cultural, social and economic development of the villages and the creation of conscious, well-informed citizens committed to the principles of the regime. As mentioned above, another important task of the peasant branches of the People's Houses, in addition to promoting the development of villages in sanitary, civilizational and aesthetic terms, was to strengthen the feelings of mutual love and solidarity between villagers and townspeople.¹⁰²⁶ To ensure the integration of these two segments of society, which differ considerably in their social lifestyles, the peasant branches will advance their work in two directions. The first of these was to ensure that villagers participate as much as possible in the demonstrations organized by the people's house. Another task of the People's Houses in terms of ensuring social integration was to take initiatives to ensure that the members of the People's Houses participate in the programs prepared in the villages.¹⁰²⁷

Within the framework of the above-mentioned basic principles, the first conspicuous and resounding activity of the peasantry, which started its activities for the social, cultural and economic development of the villages of Zonguldak since the first year of its establishment, was the organization of peasant nights. At the end of 1933, the Zonguldak People's House organized two peasants'

¹⁰²⁴ Fahriye Emgili, "Halkevlerinin Köy ve Köycülük Faaliyetleri", *Atatürk ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi Dergisi*, no. 8, (2021 Kış), p. 197.

¹⁰²⁵ Hilal Tuğba Örmecioğlu, "Cumhuriyet'in İlk Yıllarında Köycülük Tartışmaları ve Numune Köyler", *Belleten*, vol. 83, no. 297, (2019), pp. 752-753.

¹⁰²⁶ C.H.F. *Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, p. 19.

¹⁰²⁷ C.H.P. *Halkevleri Öğreneği*, (Ankara: Recep Ulusoğlu Basımevi, 1938), p. 18; XV. *Yıldönümünde Halkevleri ve Halkodaları*, p. 15.

nights and worked to enlighten the villagers through these events and visits.¹⁰²⁸ The peasants' night continued to be one of the most important events in Zonguldak in the following years. On the one hand, it mediated the mingling of society, but on the other hand, it also tried to convey the principles and tenets of the Republic and to enlighten the villagers on various topics. According to the activity reports of the People's Houses, the Zonguldak People's House held three peasant nights and organized numerous village visits to examine the agricultural, health and social conditions of the peasants and to inform society about the republican revolutions in 1935.¹⁰²⁹

One of the peasants' nights organized by the Zonguldak People's House in 1935 was planned as part of the celebrations to be held in the city on the opening day of the RPP's Fourth Grand Congress. As is known, the RPP Grand Congress were one of the decision-making bodies in which the party program and statutes were reviewed and revised in the context of current political, social, and economic conditions. For this reason, the RPP's Grand Congresses and the decisions made there were closely followed by the provincial organizations throughout the single-party period. In addition, the preparations that had already begun in the provinces before the party congress continued with various activities on the days of the meeting. In this way, it was aimed to inform the public, especially party members, about the issues discussed at the congress, party policy, and changes made in the party statute and program.¹⁰³⁰ In this

¹⁰²⁸ *Halkevlerinin 1933 Senesi Faaliyet Raporları Hulasaları*, p. 81.

¹⁰²⁹ *Halkevlerinin 1935 Senesi Faaliyet Raporları Hulasaları*, p. 135; *C.H.F. Altıncı Vilayet Kongresi*, p. 44.

¹⁰³⁰ In addition, the RPP General Secretariat also made some preparations to announce the changes made in party congresses to the public. For example, the party statute and program drafted after the 1935 congress were published in the form of brochures and sent to the party levels. Similarly, in order to announce and explain the party program and principles to the public, the speeches of RPP Secretary General Recep Peker were to be read out at the meetings of party executive committees, provincial general assemblies and municipal councils, sports and charity organizations, and all institutions affiliated with the party. Besides, it was frequently asked to give lectures and speeches on the subject. See *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğinin Parti Örgütüne Genelgesi (17 Mayıs 1935'ten Birincikanun 1935 Sonuna Kadar)*, p. 10, 13; Aydın,

sense, the RPP Zonguldak organization has made many preparations in the city before the convening of the Fourth Grand Congress. In this framework, leaflets were prepared and distributed to the villages to inform the society about the convening of the Great Congress. In addition, with the support of the local press, which is one of the most important means of reaching out to society, it was ensured that the Zonguldak newspaper published a special issue on the day of the congress describing the National War of Independence and the revolutions of the RPP. In order to arouse public interest in the Congress, the following words were written in large type in this issue: "*Citizens! Take an active part in the congress. Listen to what our party, which has been listening to you for years, has done for you! Hear how our party, which has relied on you for years, will fulfil your wishes!*"¹⁰³¹ Before the Great Congress, students were also required to attend lectures in schools on the role of political parties, the Association for the Defence of the National Rights, the RPP, and the emergence of party ideals.

On the day of the congress, all official institutions, especially the government building, the RPP provincial headquarters and the People's House building, will be decorated with Turkish flags and party flags. In addition, the slogans "Sovereignty belongs to the nation," "How happy is the one who says I am a Turk," and "The people of Zonguldak wholeheartedly congratulate the great party congress" were put up to the party building, the municipality building, the Labour Union, mining companies, and bank buildings. Besides, the party asked the public and institutions to display banners showing their commitment to the party's principles, such as "*The Zonguldak people declares its commitment to the ideals of Six Principles*". The opening of the Grand Congress is followed by the officials and civilians from the People's House. Here, conferences will be given to the people gathered to follow the congress process about the national liberation struggle and the revolutionary work of the RPP. On that day, all

Tek Parti Dönemi'nde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez- Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945), pp. 135-136.

¹⁰³¹ *Zonguldak*, 9 Mayıs (May) 1935, p. 2.

schools remained closed, and the teachers explained the RPP and its work to the children only in an intellectual and idealistic way.

One of the preparations for the congress made by the RPP Zonguldak provincial organization was to organize a peasant's night on the night of 9 May 1935 through the villagers' branch of the People's House. The goal of the program was expressed in the local press of the time as "*to increase the loyalty of the peasants to the party, to illuminate the great revolutions that the party has accomplished.*"¹⁰³² For this purpose, it was decided to invite one woman and one man from each village to the program. These invitations were delivered to the villagers of Zonguldak through village teachers, party leaders, and mukhtars. As before, the members of the People's House were responsible for hosting the villagers who would participate in the program. In this way, on the one hand, the society was informed about the political developments in the country, on the other hand, it also contributed to the mingling of the peasant and urban citizens by bringing them together. The program of the peasants' night began with the history of the ADNRR and the RPP and the revolutions achieved by the party up to that time by head of the peasant branch of the People's House Ahmet Gürel, and then continued with the activities of other branches of the People's House. These events also include the play "Yarım Osman" performed by the representation branch of the People's House. This play, written by Aka Gündüz on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Republic, was about the struggle of a villager named "Yarım Osman" and the people gathered around him against a brutal tax-farmer (*mültezim*). The story of these people, who would later participate in the War of Independence, was concluded with the emphasis on the victory of the war and the proclamation of the Republic.¹⁰³³

¹⁰³² *Zonguldak*, 9 Mayıs (May) 1935, p. 4.

¹⁰³³ Selçuk Çıkla, "Cumhuriyet'in Onuncu Yıl Dönümü Anısına Yapılan Edebi Yayınlar", *Turkish Studies-Language and Literature*, vol. 1, no. 1, (Yaz 2006), pp. 51-52.

On December 26, 1936, the peasant branch of the Zonguldak People's House decided to organize another peasant night that contributed to the mingling of society. It seems that it was particularly decided to hold the event on the same day as the provincial congress of RPP Zonguldak convened. In this way, it was envisioned that the members of the congress, peasants, civil servants and the public would come together under the roof of the People's House. According to local press, the event included a large celebration in honor of the congressmen and villagers. The Zonguldak newspaper also announced that a rich entertainment program would be prepared for the night.¹⁰³⁴

On the one hand, the Zonguldak People's House organized events that brought together peasants and townspeople, and on the other hand, before and after these events, it made efforts to explain the Republic's village and peasant policies to society through various means. For this purpose, articles were written by the intellectuals of the city in the People's House magazine and in the local press of Zonguldak. In addition, brochures and books enlightening the villagers were published through the publication branch of the People's House.¹⁰³⁵ One of these remarkable articles was written by the one of the intellectual writer of Zonguldak Ahmet Naim Çıladı, in July 1937. In this article, which was to be published in both the Zonguldak newspaper and the People's House magazine, Çıladı conveyed to his readers the importance that the republican regime attached to village and peasant politics through comparisons with the Sultanate period. In the aforementioned article, the Turkish peasant was portrayed as "*a miserable subject who pays his taxes on time, but in times of war leaves his slingshot in the field and takes up arms*" under the rule of the Sultanate. In this regard, when the Republic was proclaimed, the new regime took over a peasant population that was "*poor, landless, without schools, and plagued by contagious diseases such*

¹⁰³⁴ Zonguldak, 15 İlkkanun (December) 1936, p. 4.

¹⁰³⁵ In this sense, for example, in 1938 it was decided to publish a series of booklets entitled "Advice of the People's House to the Villager", and the first part of this series was prepared by a doctors of the People's House. See Zonguldak, 8 Ağustos (August) 1938, p. 4.

as malaria and syphilis." For this reason, the republican government prioritized the issue of the village and the peasantry in the implementation of reforms. For this, it was essential that the republican revolution, which gave Turkish society a new direction and a new life, spread among the people. At this point, the People's Houses came into play and carried out important activities to "*unite the society, the majority of which lived in villages, in a common vision, way of life and understanding, and accelerate the course of the revolution.*"¹⁰³⁶

In order to bring Turkish peasants together in a common vision, way of life and understanding, another peasants' night was organized by the Zonguldak People's House around the time of the publication of the Çıladır article. Within the framework of these activities, a group of 200 people from different villages of Zonguldak were hosted in the city as guests of the People's Houses on June 30, 1937. In the evening of the same day, a banquet was held in honor of the villagers, attended by the governor of Zonguldak and RPP provincial chairman Halit Aksoy, as well as other government dignitaries. After these entertainments, which contributed to the mingling of peasants and townspeople, the head of the People's Houses and the peasant branches gave speeches explaining the village and peasantry policies of the Republic. In this sense, the head of the People's House Akın Karaoğuz emphasized in his speech that one of the most important and significant policies of the republican regime was the peasant issue. In the speech of the head of peasant branch of People's House Ahmet Gürel, it was emphasized that thanks to such events organized within the framework of the People's Chamber, the views and knowledge of the peasants and the urban population about each other increased and the mutual needs could be identified.¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³⁶ A. Naim Çıladır, "Halkevi'nden Köye Köy ve Köylü", *Karaelmas*, no. 1, 1937, pp. 74-75; *Zonguldak*, 20 Temmuz (July) 1937, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰³⁷ *Zonguldak*, 20 Temmuz 1937, p. 2.

Throughout the single-party period, the activities of the Zonguldak People's House for the villages and the peasants were not limited to the Peasants' Day and village trips. In addition, delegations of party leaders and government officials visited villages on various occasions, and these visits often took the form of party propaganda events. As is well known, the statute of the RPP has assigned to the party executives, among other things, the task of educating party members about the party program and activities. In addition, one of the tasks of the party's provincial administrators was to establish close contacts with the public in order to strengthen the sense of loyalty and solidarity in society.¹⁰³⁸ In this sense, the inspections carried out by the party administrators for the lower levels often became an activity in which government works and the official ideology were tried to be explained and adopted by the society. One of these trips was made on June 16, 1935, by a delegation that included Zonguldak Governor Halit Aksoy and Provincial Party Chairman Mitat Altıok to check the road infrastructure in the villages. The delegation observed the infrastructure works carried out in many villages and sub-district centers of Zonguldak and also met with the villagers. At these meetings, which were attended by the villagers of Zonguldak as well as the village elders' councils and the administrators of the party hearths, the party chairman made speeches in which he emphasized the blessings of the republican regime and the government's achievements for the villagers, especially the reduction of salt and sugar prices. In the meetings with the villagers the necessity of the union of people and party for the progress of the country was emphasized and also the work to be done by the society for this purpose was mentioned.¹⁰³⁹ Immediately after this trip Altıok, the chairman of RPP Zonguldak organization, traveled again to visit the villages and sub-districts.¹⁰⁴⁰ During his visits this time, Altıok made inspections in Bartın,

¹⁰³⁸ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935)*, p. 23.

¹⁰³⁹ *Zonguldak*, 17 Haziran (June) 1935, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Zonguldak*, 24 Haziran (June) 1935, p. 1.

Amasra, Kurucaşile, Safranbolu and Ulus regions and had close contacts with the party members and the public. As might be expected, the RPP's accomplishments and the policies planned for the future were on the agenda at these meetings. In these meetings, the responsibilities of the society as citizens and party members were also reminded for the rise of the country in all respects.¹⁰⁴¹

In August 1935, the first address for the lower level inspections was the Çaycuma district organization. During these inspections, Altıok was accompanied by Zonguldak Deputy Hasan Karabacak. Although party organizations were the focus of the inspections, government officials and the people of Çaycuma were also interviewed and the deficiencies, needs, and expectations of villagers were identified. In this meeting, the peasants were also informed about the republican regime, the principles of the party and the duties and responsibilities of society in the revolutionary process.¹⁰⁴² During the same period, Mitat Altıok also conducted inspections for party organizations such as Devrek, Ereğli, Beycuma and Alaplı and met with people especially village leaders and party members. In addition to identifying social needs and demands, the issues of strengthening the people's ties to the government and the RPP and raising the cultural level of the youth were emphasized at the meetings.¹⁰⁴³

In mid-1936, after the governors were appointed RPP provincial chairmen, lower-level inspection committees were established under the chairmanship of the governor of Zonguldak. Governor Halit Aksoy, after his appointment as the provincial chairman of the party in Zonguldak, has rearranged his work routine to take care of the party affairs in the building of the provincial chairman of the

¹⁰⁴¹ *Zonguldak*, 1 Temmuz (July) 1935, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁴² *Zonguldak*, 14 Ağustos (August) 1935, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁴³ *Zonguldak*, 26 Ağustos (August) 1935, p. 2.

party.¹⁰⁴⁴ In this process, the issue of inspection of lower levels and meetings with the public as part of party affairs was also handled closely, and inspections of lower level organizations continued without interruption.

Throughout the single-party period, the People's Houses not only propagated the RPP and the principles of the revolution, but also educated the peasants on various issues and met their needs through the peasant branches. In this sense, one of the most notable activities of the People's Houses across the country from the mid-1930s onward was visiting villages. During this period, the Zonguldak People's House also made a name for itself with its activities for villages and peasants.¹⁰⁴⁵ According to the official activity report of the People's Houses, the Zonguldak People's House organized two trips to villages in 1936.¹⁰⁴⁶ One of these trips, which was also reflected in the local press, took place in early 1936. With a delegation of professional groups such as doctors and agriculturist, the peasant branch of the People's House visited the villages in the Beycuma region and stayed there for a few days, participating in the work of the villagers. During this time, the delegation's doctors cared for the sick peasants and distributed medicines free of charge, while the agricultural experts tried to improve the villagers' practical knowledge in such matters as planting seedlings and inoculation.¹⁰⁴⁷

On July 18, 1937, a large delegation organized a new village tour in Zonguldak within the framework of the peasant work of the People's House. In addition to the governor, the party leader, the mayor and the head of the People's House, the

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Zonguldak*, 15 Ağustos (August) 1936, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴⁵ It is understood that this success of the Zonguldak People's House, which has entered the official records, was due to its aid of the villagers who were damaged by natural disasters. See *1937 Yıldönümü Broşürü Geçen Yılda Halkevleri Nasıl Çalıştı?*, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, n.d.), p. 17, 21.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *1937 Yıldönümü Broşürü Geçen Yılda Halkevleri Nasıl Çalıştı?*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Zonguldak*, 3 Ocak (January)1936, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 28 Ocak (January) 1936, p. 1

delegation also included experts such as the government doctor, the head of forestry and agriculture, who were able to inform the villagers of Zonguldak in the areas where they need help the most and find solutions to their problems. Even the famous poet Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, who was in Zonguldak to give lectures on Abduehlik Hamit, would join this delegation. The delegation began its first visit in the village of Gaca, where it mingled with villagers, learned about their needs and expectations, and provided technical information to villagers through experts. Afterwards, the delegation went to the village of Hacali and mingled with the population. Thus, the people had the opportunity to address their demands, complaints and expectations directly to the authorities. On the other hand, during these visits the health and social affairs of the villagers were examined, the sick villagers were examined by the doctors of the People's House and their medicines were provided free of charge. Other officials of the delegation also informed and advised the villagers on matters that concerned them. The interest of the people in this trip, where the villagers often expressed their loyalty to the Republic and Atatürk, and the atmosphere created were reflected in the lines of the Zonguldak newspaper with the following sentences:¹⁰⁴⁸

... A large crowd of villagers had gathered in the square of this village, which was covered from top to bottom with pines and had the beauty of a paradise... The town band, which had arrived with the delegation, played national tunes, and all hearts rejoiced... Everywhere there was a festive mood. The square and the trees were decorated with our flags.

Peasants and townspeople together; the head of the People's House and the governor of the Republic among the peasants!... This is a picture worthy of the Turkish Revolution, virtue and nobility of the Turkish Republic.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Zonguldak*, 20 Temmuz (July) 1937, p. 3.



Figure 1. Peasants' Day Organized by Zonguldak People House on June 30, 1937.

Source: Zonguldak, 20 Temmuz (July)1937, p. 3.



Figure 2. Peasant's Day Souvenir Photo Organized by Zonguldak People's House

Source: İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı, Kartpostal Arşivi, No: 25757

The Zonguldak People's House, which considers the integration of Turkish villagers and city dwellers as a priority task, continued its activities in this regard in the following years. Some of these studies which included a large area, was reflected in the local press. For example, the first comprehensive trip to the Filyos region on June 26, 1938, conducted by the peasant branch of the People's House, was described in the local press of the time as "*a really peasant's day*".¹⁰⁴⁹ This delegation, which included the governor of Zonguldak and the provincial leadership of the party, government officials, the boards of the people's houses, and prominent figures from Zonguldak, was welcomed in Filyos by an enthusiastic crowd with their traditional costumes. Before the delegation from Zonguldak and the villagers mingled, informative speeches were made, as usual, about the republican revolutions that brought such an important work to

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Zonguldak*, 8 Temmuz (July) 1938, p. 1.

the society. In his speech, the head of the peasant branch of the People's House Ahmet Gürel emphasized that such trips, which integrated the two masses of Turkish society, the peasant and the urban, were one of the most important works of the republican revolutions. In his speech, Gürel also made a comprehensive assessment of the value given to the Turkish peasant during the rule of the Sultanate and what the republican administration had brought to the peasantry. The reason for the presence of the delegation, which had come to Filyos with numerous professionals such as agricultural, population and cadastral officials, judges, veterinarians, doctors and lawyers, was made clear in the speech of Gürel with the following sentences:¹⁰⁵⁰

The People's Houses have worked ceaselessly to fulfill their roles as cultural resources of the RPP. For this purpose and to accomplish this high task, the Zonguldak People's House has come here today with a large group of townspeople and joined you. Our villagers will be enlightened with the words spoken in the name of the People's House... Professionals such as agriculturalists, veterinarians, census takers, land registrars, lawyers, jurists who are closely connected with your affairs will talk to you, listen to you, answer your questions, show you good, right and useful. People's House doctors take care of your patients and give them their medicines for free. The books, magazines and newspapers brought by the People House will be distributed to you and your children in the schools...

As can be seen, the peasant branch of the People's House conducted its visits with an expert group who could provide information on any topic that the villagers of Zonguldak needed. Besides, they made an effort to find the solutions to many problems that the villagers faced. Despite the activities of the People's House branches representing the modern side of the Republic, villagers continued to emphasize the cultural richness of their traditional way of life, such as dress, folks, and traditional dishes. In this process, the Kemalist administrators sustained their propaganda activities and tried to carry party and regime

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Zonguldak*, 8 Temmuz (July) 1938, p. 2.

propaganda into society through the press by distributing the newspaper *Ulus*, the mouthpiece of the single-party policy pursued by the RPP.¹⁰⁵¹



Figure 3. Peasants' Day Organized by Zonguldak People House on June 26, 1938.

Source: *Zonguldak*, 8 Ağustos (August) 1938, p. 3.

The peasants branch of the Zonguldak People's House decided to expand its trips towards villages and organized a second visit to the villages of Kozlu sub-district in mid-1938 in order to listen to the wishes, demands and problems of the villagers and to find solutions. The social demands identified by the experts in the delegation, which could be solved on the spot, were solved there immediately, while the other demands of the villagers were registered for forwarding to higher authorities. During this trip, for example, the women of the

¹⁰⁵¹ Kadri Unat, *Ulus, Yeni Ulus ve Halkçı Gazeteleri Işığında Nihat Erim'in Siyasi Kişiliği ve Gazeteciliği (1945-1955)*, (Unpublished Master Thesis), (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 2008), p. 21.

village were examined by the obstetricians of the people's house and provided with free medicines. These activities, often coordinated by the people's house social welfare brance, met the needs of poor villagers and distributed notebooks, paper, and pencils to needy students. In addition to all this, the Zonguldak People's House planned a much more extensive trip in October 1938. For this purpose, the Zonguldak People's House informed the villagers through peasant branch and intended not only to identify and meet social needs, but also to conduct studies on the history and folklore of the villages with their subdivisions.¹⁰⁵²

The content of the peasant trips organized by the Zonguldak People's House remained unchanged during the period of the National Chief İnönü. For example, during the visits to the villages of the Gaca region in April 1939, experts who could find solutions to the current problems of the villagers participated in these delegations and tried to meet the demands and needs of the villagers. In this context, many people were examined by the doctors of the People's House, while the villagers were provided products such as salt, soap, stationery and envelopes, pens, notebooks and tires, which were difficult to access at the time. Moreover, this event, which mediated to mingle peasants and townspeople, provided an important opportunity for party leaders to explain and convey to the public the peasant ideal of the Republic. In this sense, the chairman of RPP Zonguldak organization Governor Halit Aksoy, gave an important speech to the villagers. In his speech, Aksoy emphasized that Atatürk's reforms were built on the peasants, who were the real owners of the land and the foundation of the fatherland. The speech also pointed out that, in accordance with the words of National Chief İnönü, "*All our ideals are centered on service to the village,*" the people's houses can only fulfill their duty to serve the country by serving the peasantry which were the essence of the country.¹⁰⁵³ In August of the same year, Zonguldak People's House organized a much larger and more comprehensive village tour in

¹⁰⁵² *Zonguldak*, 8 Ağustos (August) 1938, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰⁵³ *Zonguldak*, 10 Mayıs (May) 1939, p. 1.

the Tuerkali region and was greeted by a large and enthusiastic crowd of villagers. According to the Zonguldak Newspaper, 1.000 citizens from the city and nearly 1.500 citizens from the villages took part in the trip, alongside a large number of party members and People's House and as well as members of the party's provincial administration committee. The peasants, on the other hand, were enlightened by experts in all matters concerning the general condition of the peasantry and expressed their loyalty to the regime and the government.¹⁰⁵⁴

The Zonguldak People's House seems to have used some organizational opportunities during its trips to the villages in order to convey the message of the political power to the masses more and to increase the social participation. For example, the peasant branch of the People's House took advantage of the hearths and district congresses of the RPP, which took place in late 1939, and organized peasants' nights on the days of the congresses. Almost four thousand villagers from different villages in Zonguldak participated in these events, including the highest government representative, experts and the members of the party's administrative committees and People's Houses. The fact that the congresses were held in the square, in the presence of the governor and the relevant department heads, and in front of the entire public, was taken as a sign of the party's compassion and care for the villagers. During the events, which began with speeches on the principles of the party and the work of the People's House, enlightening information was given to the public and efforts were made to meet the needs of the people, as in every peasant day.¹⁰⁵⁵ The Zonguldak People's House and the RPP's lower level administrations carried out these two important activities in a coordinated manner. Thus, it appear to have helped increase social representation at the congresses by increasing mass participation in the party congress. On the other hand, this coordination also provided an important

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Zonguldak*, 12 Ağustos (August) 1939, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Zonguldak*, 20 İlkanun (December) 1939, pp. 1-2.

opportunity for the villagers to communicate their common demands, expectations, and desires to the executive authorities through the party.

Although the outbreak of World War II had negative impact on the activities of the peasant branch of Zonguldak People's House, the village and peasantry policies continued at the same pace during this period. In this sense, according to the one-year activity report of the Zonguldak People's House, 15 peasants' days were organized in the People's House by the end of 1940. These events were attended by thousands of villagers and included lectures and plays on various topics. In addition, Zonguldak People's House, which attached great importance to village visits in order to integrate into society, organized 16 village visits at different times and tried to identify and meet the needs of the villagers.¹⁰⁵⁶ During these trips to the villages, conferences were also organized to enlighten and raise public awareness, taking into account the conditions of the villagers and the time. In this sense, the conferences that took place during this period focused mainly on agriculture, health, and explaining Turkish policies to the public in light of the world situation. In addition to providing useful information to the peasants, other goals of these conferences were to strengthen their loyalty to the party, the regime, and the government by taking into account their requests, complaints, and demands.¹⁰⁵⁷ In addition to provincial administrators, party and people's houses executives, deputies from Ankara also participated in some of these events organized for the villagers. Such an event, which was an important opportunity for the provincial organization to present itself to the party headquarters, took place on January 10, 1940. On that day, in addition to the deputy from Zonguldak, numerous deputies from Seyhan, Sivas, Afyon, Edirne, Erzurum, Rize, Bingöl, Malatya and Kars came to the city for various examinations. This delegation, which was welcomed by the RPP provincial

¹⁰⁵⁶ For some of these trips see *Zonguldak*, 8 Haziran (June) 1940, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 9 Ağustos (August) 1940, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Karaelmas*, vol. 1, no. 4-5, (I. Kanun (December) 1940- II. Kanun (January), Şubat (February), Mart (March) 1941), p. 29.

administration with a great feast, also participated in the peasant day events organized at the People's House. While some of these parliamentarians expressed their satisfaction with such events that contributed the mingling of villagers and townspeople, some of them also made speeches to enlighten the villagers. At the event, participants also had the opportunity to hear a lecture by Dr. Aziz Yergök in which he explained Turkish population policy.¹⁰⁵⁸

In the first half of the 1940s, the Zonguldak People's House continued its work for the social, cultural and economic development of the villages. The people's houses, defined as the human type of the Turkish Revolution and the administrators of the peasant branch of them, strove to abolish the difference between peasant and city, trying to bring the concept of the city to the village and to bring the village to the city at every opportunity.¹⁰⁵⁹ However, the economic problems caused by the wartime conditions began to have a negative impact on the activities of the people's houses. For example, many community centers were unable to organize village visits because it was difficult to find transportation vehicles. As a result of this, one of the most important activities of the Zonguldak People's House, the village visits, began to decline during this period.¹⁰⁶⁰ On the other hand, during this period there were some indications that the village and peasant policies followed throughout the country were not being implemented to the desired extent. For this reason, some intellectuals began to advise administrations through various channels to solve this problem. In this sense, in the official publication of Zonguldak People's House *Karaelmas* and some Zonguldak-based magazines began to publish articles on topics such as

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Zonguldak*, 10 Sonkanun (January) 1940, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Rifat Büke, "Köye Doğru", *Karaelmas*, no.32-33, (Ocak-Şubat (January-February) 1946), p. 37. In this direction, for the work carried out by the Zonguldak People's House in the 11th year of the establishment of the people's houses see *Ocak*, 24 Şubat (February) 1943, pp. 3-5.

¹⁰⁶⁰ For some of the village tours of the Zonguldak People's House reflected in the local press during this period, see *Ocak*, 1 Aralık (December) 1942, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 30 Mayıs (May) 1942, p. 1; *Zonguldak*, 4 Haziran (June) 1942, p. 1; *Ocak*, 24 Şubat (February) 1943, pp. 3-5; *Ocak*, 20 İkinci Teşrin (November) 1943, p. 3.

village and peasant politics and how to go to the village. Although these articles did not directly target the activities of the peasant branch of the Zonguldak People's House, in recent years it has not been as active as in the past.¹⁰⁶¹ In particular, the decline in the number of news items in the local press of Zonguldak in 1943 and later shows that a passive political period had begun on this issue.

In line with these developments, during this period some magazines began to publish important articles criticizing and proposing the village and peasant policies of the Republic. One of these articles was published by İsfendiyar Barunönü in Karaelmas magazine in September 1943. In this article titled "Köye Nasıl Gitmeliyiz" Barunönü tried to draw attention to the measures that the republican government should take in the face of the village and peasant question through a letter from a friend who was a tax official in the village of Emirdağı in Afyon. The letter contains a remarkable observation about the Turkish peasantry. According to this evaluation "*there were no features such as bigotry and hypocrisy in the villages, and the only fault of the villagers was their excessive imitation*". Because, any action taken by well-known intellectuals in the villages was quickly adopted and imitated by the community. For this reason, the letter tried to draw attention to the need of sending intellectuals with good qualities to imitative villages, based on the bad qualities of the two republican intellectuals who came to the village. After sharing the letter with her readers, Barunönü stated that despite all the measures taken and all the plans and

¹⁰⁶¹ According to the work report of the RPP Administrative Committee of Zonguldak, the peasant branch of the Zonguldak People's House organized 20 village tours by the end of 1942, during which 9.865 villagers were interviewed. On the other hand, 2.520 villagers participated in the 2 rural festival events in the same year. In the first six months of 1943, 2 village tours and 1 rural party were organized and a total of 1.100 villagers were attended. In the 1945 work reports, it was stated that the peasant branch of the Zonguldak People's Houses "did not carry out any significant activities." In 1946, it was found that the situation was no different. The situation was not different in terms of 1946 activities. See *C.H.P. Zonguldak İl İdare Heyeti Birinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (1945)*, BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945], p. 16; *C.H.P. Zonguldak Vilayeti İdare Heyeti İkinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (1942)*, BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943], p. 17; *C.H.P. Zonguldak Vilayeti İdare Heyeti Birinci Altı Aylık Çalışma Raporu (1943)*, BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944], p. 16; *Karaelmas*, vol. 3, no. 32-33, p. 41.

programs, the village and peasant policy could not reach the desired level. Because, according to him, the plans and programs drawn up at the table for the development of villages and peasants were far from matching the reality of villages and peasants. However, in order to develop the village, the Republic needed intellectuals who would personally go to the villages and engage with the villagers on the ground instead of giving dry advice. According to Barunönü, the wartime conditions gave an important opportunity for the government. Because, the intellectuals sent by the state to the villages to collect taxes were also important tools that could be equipped and used for the village policy. Besides, according to Barunönü, for the well functioning of the republican peasant policy it was necessary to avoid a harmful pressure of the intellectuals on the peasants. This required eliminating intellectuals who knew the village and the peasants "from the pages of novels " and distinguishing the good from the bad among those sent to the village. Because "the false intellectual could play the dangerous role of spoiling the health of the village with the ruins of the cities." In this respect, the main secret of success in the village and peasant policy was to protect the villages from the danger of false intellectuals and to send them idealists who kept the peasants away from any sense of self-interest.¹⁰⁶²

Barunönü would write again about the village and peasant policy of the Republic about a year later in *Doğu* magazine. In his article titled " Köy ve Köylü Davası," Barunönü stated that the case of the village and the peasant is crucial in Turkey, which is primarily an agricultural country. Besides, according to Barunönü, although this issue has not yet been fully resolved, it was approached with a rational view for the first time in the Republican era. However, the article underlines that the Turkish peasantry of that time lagged behind the modern concept of peasantry in many respects. Because, Turkish peasants still need the help of many intellectuals, especially teachers, doctors and veterinarians, who can help them and their villages to develop. On the other hand, according to him,

¹⁰⁶² İsfendiyar Barunönü, "Köye Nasıl Gitmeliyiz", *Karaelmas*, vol. 11, no. 11, (Eylül (September), 1943), p. 2, 5.

the policy pursued in Turkish politics to reach the peasantry was misunderstood by some circles. So, he mentioned that the only way to reach the peasantry was to provide the Turkish peasantry with modern equipment. An important part of the article deals with the status and perception of the peasant in the eyes of the state during the rule of the sultanate and in the republican era. These assessments were based on the assertion that "*during the rule of the Sultanate, the peasant was an unbearable burden to the state.*" In this sense, the article states that the peasant class, which met the country's needs for food and military supplies, was seen in the Ottoman Empire as "*a productive class that could meet the needs of the palace and a source of exploitation*". For this reason, the peasant class was turned into "*servants working for a full belly at the state gate.*" On the other hand, the peasant policy of the republican administration was essentially not to crush the peasants with a high tax burden, but to introduce them to modern agricultural techniques and to prevent their exploitation.¹⁰⁶³

Despite the shortcomings and inadequacies in peasant politics identified by the Republic's intellectuals, the peasant work carried out by the government through the peasant branches of the People's Houses continued in the early multiparty political life. In this context, the people's houses and public rooms did not consider the issue of peasantry as a one-sided policy of enlightenment, teaching and education. So, they tried to maintain their ideal of going to the villages with limited opportunities. Although the peasant activities of the Zonguldak People's House entered an uninspired phase during this period, the activities of some district people's houses were still successful enough to gain the appreciation of party headquarters.

¹⁰⁶³ İsfendiyar Barunönü, "Köy ve Köylü Davası", *Doğu*, Year: 2, vol. 3, no. 19-22, (Haziran-Eylül (June-September) 1944), p. 36.

5.5. Using Local Memory to Awaken National Consciousness: From the Legend of "Santa Barba" to the "Uzun-Mehmet Coal Festival"

One of the most important achievement of the Zonguldak People's House was to nationalize the festival of "Santa Barba", which had occupied an important place in the local culture and memory of Zonguldak, and to celebrate it under the name of Uzun Mehmet Coal Festival. For this purpose, the Zonguldak People's House started its research without delay and firstly began to determine exactly when and by whom the coal was discovered in Zonguldak. Because a national hero was needed to replace Santa Barba, who had existed in the region for a long time and was no longer looked upon favorably because of being a Christian tradition. Undoubtedly, it was the political, cultural and ideological trends of the time that prompted the Zonguldak People's House to engage in such activities. In this sense, it is understood that the Turkish intellectuals of Zonguldak, who had themselves often participated in these celebrations after the proclamation of the Republic, began to be irritated by the miners' festival of "Santa Barba". Because, after the proclamation of the Republic, the intellectuals of Zonguldak began to think that these balls, which took place every year on December 4 and were attended by Turkish engineers dressed as priests, were no longer compatible with national values.¹⁰⁶⁴ Moreover, the nationalist understanding of history in the 1930s led to the need to rewrite the history of the Zonguldak coal basin as well. After the proclamation of the republic, as is well known, the need for a national historiography became loud. In this context, the "Turkish History Thesis", which Atatürk himself advocated, was asserted. In some works, which were written according to the understanding of national history, besides the advanced civilization built by the Turks in Central Asia, their close relationship to mining was also mentioned.¹⁰⁶⁵ This new understanding of history and the stage reached

¹⁰⁶⁴ Karaoğuz, *Kuvay-ı Milliye Ruhuyla Bir Ömür*, p. 164.

¹⁰⁶⁵ For detailed information about this issue, see Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih, Türkiye'de Resmi Tarih Tezinin Oluşumu (1929-1937)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011).

by the ancient Turks in mining was explained to the public by people appointed by the political power directly in Zonguldak.¹⁰⁶⁶

Based on the ideological and cultural reasons mentioned above, a research commission was first established under the roof of the Zonguldak People's House.¹⁰⁶⁷ The commission included Ahmet Naim and Tahir Karaoğuz, members of the library and publishing committee of the People's House, as well as Hüseyin Fehmi İmer, the head of the Chamber of Commerce.¹⁰⁶⁸ Karaoğuz, began his work by researching the identity of the Saint Barbe, whom they wanted to replace with a national hero. A French engineer told the story of how the feast of Santa Barba became a holiday of the miners, according to a legend common among Christian miners, as follows:¹⁰⁶⁹

In İzmit, formerly known as Nicomedia, the ruler's daughter Barbe secretly converted to Christianity. Her father, a pagan, wants her to marry a pagan like him. When she vehemently refused, he imprisoned her in a cave and had the entrance walled up. The girl wept for years in this cave, begging God. Finally, with great effort, he breaks through the wall and escapes. However, the ruler had his daughter arrested and executed. Over time, word of mouth spread and Barbe was elevated to the status of a saint in the eyes of the people as a monument of perseverance and strength. Thus, this event gradually turned into an annual Christian holiday called the "Feast of Sainte Barbe"...

¹⁰⁶⁶ In this context, on January 30, 1931, the deputy of Bolu Cevat Abbas Gürer, came to the city and held a conference before the people of Zonguldak on how far the ancient Turks had advanced in mining. This conference was then celebrated every year as Gazi History Day in the city. See Efiloğlu and Tan, "Tek Parti Dönemi Uzun Mehmet Kömür Bayramı Kutlamaları", pp. 21-22.

¹⁰⁶⁷ According to Donald Quatert, this commission was initially established under the roof of Zonguldak Turkish Hearths. Although Quatert draws such a conclusion by citing the memoirs of Hüseyin Fehmi İmer, there was not such an information in İmer's memoirs. See Donald Quataert, "Masallar, Öyküler, Gerçekler.. Zonguldak Kömür Ocakları", *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 139, (2005), p. 60; Kerim Yunt, *Hüseyin Fehmi İmer Hayatı ve Hatıraları (1871-1960)*, (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1973).

¹⁰⁶⁸ Naim, *Zonguldak Havzası Uzun Mehmetten Bugüne Kadar*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Naim, pp. 164-165.

Ahmet Naim, on the other hand, conducted direct fieldwork and interviewed people in the village of Kestaneci in Ereğli, which is mentioned in the sources as the place where coal was first discovered. Based on the research conducted, the People's House investigation commission concluded that coal was first discovered in Zonguldak on November 8, 1829 by Uzun Mehmet, a resident of Kestaneci village in Ereğli. Thereupon it was decided to celebrate this date from now on as Uzun Mehmet Coal Festival. Thus, the feast of Saint Barbara, long considered incompatible with national values, was replaced by the celebration of the Coal Festival in memory of a national hero, Uzun Mehmet.¹⁰⁷⁰

As is well known, national ceremonies and holidays were one of the most important means of legitimizing political power during the republican era.¹⁰⁷¹ On the other hand, RPP provincial organizations and people's houses brought regional and national heroes out of the dusty pages of local memory. Thus, on the one hand, the city histories were rewritten in the sense of a national understanding of history, and on the other hand, political power was given new instruments to consolidate its legitimacy. The Uzun Mehmet Coal Festival, which is regularly celebrated every year in Zonguldak, is one of the events that should be evaluated in this framework. Because the discovery of coal was considered an important event for the history of the country, and for this reason there was even an attempt to make this day a national holiday.¹⁰⁷² Although the Coal Festival could not go beyond the celebrations held at the local level, the commemorative events held in the city in this framework were as remarkable as the national organizations. In this regard, Uzun Mehmet Coal Festival was celebrated with great enthusiasm and extensively throughout the single-party period. On the other hand, it is understood that official institutions tried to keep

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Zonguldak*, 12 Songüz (Sontęşrin- November) 1934, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷¹ Sibel Özbudun, *Ayinden Törene- Siyasal İktidarın Kurulma ve Kurumsallaşma Sürecinde Törenlerin İşlevleri*, (İstanbul: Anahtar Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1997), p. 138.

¹⁰⁷² Tahir Karaoğuz, "Notlar: Zonguldak-Ereğli Kömür Havzası İçin Çalışmalarımın Bir Özet", *Doğru*, vol. 17, no. 97-6, (June,1974), pp. 14-15.

the memory of Uzun Mehmet alive in the social memory by giving his name to some streets and parks in the city.¹⁰⁷³ In addition, the play "Türk Kömürünü İlk Bulan Türk Uzun Mehmet" written by Ahmet Naim and Celal Edip, should soon be published as an official publication of the RPP and included in the performance program of the people's houses.¹⁰⁷⁴

The intellectuals of the republic considered the story of Uzun Mehmet to be very valuable for adopting the national culture and values into the society and ensuring their protection. On the other hand, the story of Uzun Mehmet created a new space for the intellectuals of the Republic to come to terms with the past through local heroes. From this perspective, this day, which was presented to the people of Zonguldak as a new festival, also seems to have been intended as an important symbol for the political power's coming to terms with the past. In this respect, the story of Uzun Mehmet became one of the most important tools of political power to raise national consciousness and propagate the new regime, even if the authenticity of the story is doubted.

From this perspective, the Uzun Mehmet Coal Festival was basically seen as "returning the dignity" that the republican regime gave to Uzun Mehmet, who did not receive the dignity he deserved during the rule of the sultanate.¹⁰⁷⁵ For this reason, it was attempted to explain the sultanate's view of the ordinary people and the value they presented through the example of Uzun Mehmet during the annual celebrations. For example, in an article published in the Zonguldak newspaper on the occasion of the 1935 Coal Festival it was stated that "*Uzun Mehmet, who left a huge treasure of riches to the country, drowned in a corner of an inn.*" In the rest of the article, the living conditions of the Turkish peasantry are described as a mass "*crushed under taxes in order to meet the*

¹⁰⁷³ *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Onuncu Yıl Dönümünde Zonguldak Halkevi*, s. 42-43.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Zonguldak*, 13 İlkkanun (December) 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Tan, 20. *Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Zonguldak: Gündelik Yaşam ve Siyaset*, p. 36.

extravagances of the palace.” However, it was pointed out that one of the most important things that the republican regime did in this basin was to determine the discovery of coal by Uzun Mehmet and declare him a national hero.¹⁰⁷⁶ Similar approaches were followed in the following years. For example, a minin engineer Niyazi wrote an article in the magazine *Karaelmas* on the occasion of the anniversary of the Uzun Mehmet Coal Festival, glorifying the Turkish peasant through Uzun Mehmet. In this narrative, Uzun Mehmet was portrayed as a cautious, resourceful, and enterprising Turkish peasant and as a figure who used the potential of an ordinary peasant to revitalise Turkish mining.¹⁰⁷⁷

It was A. Turgut Etüğü, one of the authors of the newspaper *Ocak*, who most clearly analyzed and expressed the message that was to be conveyed to Turkish society thorough the personality of Uzun Mehmet. In this sense, Etüğü's evaluations, which reflect the republican regime's view of Uzun Mehmet, are very important. On July 27, 1945, in his article published in *Ocak* newspaper, Etüğü explained the message that was to be delivered to the society through the personality of Uzun Mehmet in the following words: “... *However, through the personality of Uzun Mehmet, we wanted to reveal the vigilant andenlightened intelligence of the Turkish peasantry. We wanted to give the peasants and the people the awareness to believe in themselves and to value themselves...*” Apart from these evaluations, Etüğü believes that the memory of the coal explorer is not given the respect it deserves in Zonguldak. According to him, the park that was built in the heart of the city to keep Uzun Mehmet alive in the social memory clearly reflects this through its neglect and mediocrity. For this reason, Etüğü ends his evaluation with the following sentences: “... *I see the*

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Zonguldak*, 8 Sontęşrin (November) 1935, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁷⁷ A. Niyazi Durusoy, “Kömür Bayramı”, *Karaelmas*, no. 24, (İlkteşrin (October) 1944, p. 14.

indifference to the esteemed personalities who have emerged from the bosom of this nation and for this I am ashamed.”¹⁰⁷⁸

Although the neglect of the monuments commemorating Uzun Mehmet in Zonguldak and the state's failure to take care of the family he left behind have drawn some criticism, the Coal Festival celebrations organized under the auspices of the RPP and the People's House have attracted much attention in the city since the first day. In this sense, it should be noted that the celebrations organized in the early 1930s continued in a similar way in the mid-1940s. For example, the commemorative program prepared on November 8, 1945 began with a ceremony in Uzun Mehmet Park in the morning. The speeches about the meaning and importance of the day continued in the evening with a conference and various activities at the People's House. On the other hand, on the same day, a delegation from Ereğli visited the village where Uzun Mehmet was born and honored his memory.¹⁰⁷⁹ A similar commemorative program was organized by the Zonguldak People's House in 1946, and the people of Zonguldak were given lectures on the history of the discovery of coal and its importance. Local authorities, dignitaries from political parties and state institutions, as well as workers and students attended the ceremony, which took place at Uzun Mehmet Park.¹⁰⁸⁰

The story of Uzun Mehmet was also considered as an important historical fact with which the political power can explain its view of the Ottoman period to the public. Because the Sultanate presented to the public in this story is often

¹⁰⁷⁸ A. Turgut Etüğü, “Uzun Mehmed’e Dair”, *Ocak*, 27 Temmuz (July) 1945, p. 2. Etüğü is not the only one who believes that the memory of Uzun Mehmet was not adequately protected by the state during those years. According to Mustafa Tunç, one of the writers of *Ocak* newspaper, the memory of Uzun Mehmet, who sacrificed his life for the development of the country, is not taken up. Because, the family that Uzun Mehmet left behind is being ignored by the state while they live in financial hardship. See *Ocak*, 13 Kasım (November) 1945, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Ocak*, 9 Kasım (November) 1945, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Zonguldak*, 8 Kasım (November) 1946, p. 1; *Ocak*, 8 Kasım (November) 1946, p. 1.

portrayed as a government that is not even aware of its own resources and is unable to use them. Therefore, the sultanate administration, which is said to have adopted a similar approach in Zonguldak, was unable to profit from the coal for many years and turned the basin into a semi-colony by making most of these resources available to foreign companies. One of the authors who think along these lines is Akın Karaoğuz, a prominent journalist from Zonguldak known for his commitment to the principles of the Republic. In his article entitled "Cumhuriyet'in Yirmi Yılı ve Zonguldak" published in 1943 in the magazine of *Karaelmas*, Karaoğuz wrote an article based on the above view. This article pointed out that the Sultanate, which had turned the Zonguldak coal basin into a semi-colony, was too late to benefit from it. In this sense, the republican administration was defined as the will that restored the independence of the coal basin and freed it from foreign domination.¹⁰⁸¹ On the other hand, the play "Uzun Mehmet" written by Ahmet Naim and Celal Edip tried to show the worthlessness of the peasant under Ottoman rule, which was marginalized by the republican discourse. In this sense, the play *Uzun Mehmet*, premiered by the Ankara People's House, was considered one of the greatest achievements of the People's Houses¹⁰⁸² and was described as "*not only a historical story of coal discovery, but also a reflection of the primitive order and life of the Ottoman institution*".¹⁰⁸³ In the play, the Sultanate's view of the peasantry is conveyed through the scene in which the representative of the state in Ereğli, *the mütesellim*, "hunts peasants" with his rifle in hand. However, the Turkish peasantry is glorified as a mass that does not hesitate for a moment to sacrifice its life like Uzun Mehmet when the interests of the country are at stake.¹⁰⁸⁴

¹⁰⁸¹ A. Karaoğuz, "Cumhuriyet'in Yirmi Yılı ve Zonguldak", *Karaelmas*, vol. 1, no. 12, Birinci Teşrin (October) 1943, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸² *Ülkü*, vol. X, no. 57, (İkinci Teşrin (November) 1937), p. 283.

¹⁰⁸³ *Zonguldak*, 22 Sontişrin (November) 1937, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Başbuş, *Resmi İdeoloji Sahnedey*, pp. 222-232.

Finally, it should be noted that the "artificial historical narrative" about the discovery of coal in Zonguldak was written in accordance with the nationalist understanding of history of the republican regime. For this reason, the speeches delivered during the Uzun Mehmet Coal Festival celebrations and the articles written about this day emphasize discourses and events that correspond to the historical thesis pursued by the political power. The most striking of these discourses is the emphasis that the Turks are the first people in history to take an interest in mining and coal extraction. For example, one of the young mining engineers Cemal Kıpçak, who spoke at the 1936 celebrations, expressed the view in his speech that it was the Turks who discovered and operated the first coal mines not only in Turkey but also in the world.¹⁰⁸⁵ Similarly, the main theme of Engineer Talat Tan's speech at the 1938 celebrations was that the Turks were the first nation on earth to discover and utilize coal.¹⁰⁸⁶ Another mining engineer, Niyazi Durusoy, in his article written on the occasion of the 12th anniversary, tried to draw attention to the fact that Turks were the first nation to take interest in mining and were the first to use coal mines.¹⁰⁸⁷

As can be seen, the political power tried to use the story of Uzun Mehmet and the discovery of coal in Zonguldak to come to terms with the past and create a national consciousness. For this reason, some intellectuals under the leadership of the Zonguldak People's House, realizing that an old miner tradition was not in line with the values of the newly established nation-state, wrote a history in a short time that was in line with the national values and codes. Thus, they have made attempts to adopt it at the national level. Within this "artificial historical narrative" built on the discourse that the Sultanate did not give peasants the value they deserved, the story of Uzun Mehmet functioned as an important propaganda element of the Kemalist government's on peasant discourse.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Zonguldak*, 10 Sontesrin (November) 1936, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Zonguldak*, 15 Sontesrin (November) 1938, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Durusoy, "Kömür Bayramı", p. 14.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The state- and elite-centred perspective of early republican historiography inevitably ignored the provinces and the political, sociocultural, and economic activities carried out there. The history of the RPP, to which political power belonged, was also frequently discussed from this point of view during this period. The RPP's mission "as a bridge between the people and the state" in the early republican period therefore remained in the shadow of research that focused on the party's governmental functions, the discourses of its political leaders, and its domestic and foreign policy activities, and could not be noticed. On the other hand, most of the recent studies in the literature dealing with the provincial organization of the RPP could not go beyond repeating the official documents left by the RPP. However, in addition to all these, the RPP also fulfilled a very critical and important task such as bringing the wishes, demands and expectations of the society to the center and reaching the people to the state throughout the single-party life. On the other hand, the RPP was one of the most important channels of communication during this period to spread the politics of political power and official ideology in the countryside. In this sense, it does not seem possible to evaluate and present the history of the RPP, which is interwoven with the history of the early republican period, with a narrow perspective as a political organization whose activities are limited to Ankara or a few major cities. For this reason, it is inevitable and necessary to include the provinces in this narrative in order to show and understand both the early Republican period and the history of the RPP with all its dimensions.

Based on the foregoing realities, the purpose of this study was to examine the history of RPP from a perspective outside the relatively developed cities of the Republic. Therefore, this study attempted to show the existence of the RPP and

its history in one of the most important provincial cities of the single-party era, Zonguldak, and the mediating role that the party undertaken between political power and the people. In this sense, this study argues that, contrary to the studies on the RPP and its local organization, the party functioned as an important social and ideological bridge in the countryside and this was realized through three main institutions. The provincial congresses, the inspection mechanisms, and the People's Houses, all of which are an important element of the party's organizational functioning, proved to be the institutions that contributed most to the RPP's mission of bringing society and the state together.

Although cannot be compared to cities like Istanbul and Ankara, which developed in many ways in the early period of the Republic, Zonguldak also existed as an important provincial city with its "relatively" active socio-cultural and economic life during those years. For this reason, this city, which owes its existence and all its acquisition to coal, became perhaps one of the most conspicuous and important provinces of the Republican period. Behind this interest of the political power towards the city was, as expected, the possession of rich coal mines which were very valuable for the development and industrialization of the country. However, this interest, which began long before the proclamation of the Republic, went beyond the economic character with the proclamation of the new regime. Because, the cadres who proclaimed the republic wanted to direct and control not only the social, cultural and economic life of Zonguldak, but also the political life. For this reason, the cadres who carried out the Turkish Revolution sought to establish the RPP immediately in an important workers' and mining city like Zonguldak and to control political life there. The RPP's presence in Zonguldak was not only an organizational expansionist policy for the Kemalist cadres, but was also closely related to the desire to keep the region's population, and especially the miners, away from ideas and thoughts that had the potential to threaten political power. For this reason, it did not take long for the RPP to be organized in the city, which would strive to bring political, socio-cultural and economic revolutions to the people.

Thus, Zonguldak became a candidate for one of the modern cities that the Kemalist cadres wanted to build in a short time.

Although the RPP's organizational and expansion efforts were overshadowed by the rapid revolutions in the early days of the Republic, Zonguldak completed all of its organizational activities before the early 1930s. However, for the party to become a social bridge between people and the state both in the country and in Zonguldak, the need for such a connection would first have to arise. Because, the political cadres who founded the Republic had not yet realized that their administration system was becoming more authoritarian day after day and created a great communication gap between society and the state.

As is well known, authoritarian single-party systems, whose social communication channels are quite limited because of their characteristics, have interestingly tried to overcome this handicap created by the system itself. The RPP, which would officially establish a single-party system in the country from the early 1930s, sought to diversify these limited channels of communication that the system had established between political power and society and felt the need to learn more about the society it governed. Because some political and social events that made the state and party officials question their previous policies showed that the political power was quite detached and had no idea about the society. The assessments and decisions made on this issue have, on the one hand, paved the way for the institutionalization of the single-party system in the country and, on the other hand, paved the way for the RPP to become an important bridge between society and the state. In other words while the RPP implemented the regulations and decisions that made its single-party rule permanent, it did not fail, on the other hand, to establish channels of communication that would ensure the flow of data between it and society within this form of government. For this, efforts have been made to make the wish system and inspection mechanism more active which has existed since the founding of the party but could not be operated effectively. On the other hand, the need to transfer and adopt the values and principles of the Republic to society

required the establishment of institutions such as the people's houses that would carry the official ideology to the provinces.

The single-party system established by the RPP was inevitably influenced by the practices and methods of its contemporaries. For this reason, the party's organizational activities in Zonguldak focused on actions such as the policy of increasing membership, which is specific to authoritarian single-party regimes, and the regular collection of membership dues, which are an important resource for keeping the party financially alive. On the other hand, the alliance formed during the years of the National Struggle between the nobility of the provinces and the cadres of the National Struggle was maintained even after the proclamation of the Republic, in order to maintain the *status quo* in the provinces and to consolidate the legitimacy of the new regime. For this reason, the Associations for the Defense of the National Rights continued to operate as provincial organizations of the party with their existing structures even after the founding of the People's Party. Thus, in many provinces, the notables continued to play an active role in the RPP's provincial and district committees. This policy, which aimed to preserve the current *status quo* in the province, was reflected in Zonguldak by the fact that the cadres of the party leadership were occupied by the city's leading figures for many years. As a result, the organization of the RPP in Zonguldak was largely left to the direction of a staff composed of the city's leading merchants, journalists, lawyers, and especially the managers who were effective and influential in the mining companies. These cadres, who fought among themselves for gain power in party administration, managed to maintain their supremacy and authority in the provinces despite the center in some periods with the help of the local alliances they had established.

The RPP headquarters spent most of its time on the organizational activities of the Zonguldak organization in the single-party period in order to conduct a regular membership policy. Despite all the directives, instructions, and directions from the party center, the Zonguldak organization managed to establish tension-free communication with the center by taking advantage of the free spaces it

created during this period. The RPP Zonguldak organization, which managed to exploit the loopholes in the party's statutes and instructions in carrying out many organizational activities, thus created a relatively "autonomous" space for itself by transgressing the boundaries drawn by party headquarters. This relatively autonomous scope of action of the Zonguldak organization sometimes extended to marginal applications. In this sense, although the provincial organization's activity reports stated that party activities in Zonguldak were progressing as desired by headquarters, non-legal practices were often behind this success of local organizations.

The first half of the 1930s was a time when the RPP started-up the institutions and mechanisms that acted as intermediaries to establish communication between the public and the state. The provincial congresses were one of the mechanisms that the RPP cadres effectively used during the single-party period to identify the social expectations, demands, and grievances of the people of Zonguldak. For this reason, the agendas of the congresses, which were a routine organizational process of the party provincial organization, were mostly reserved for social demands and complaints. Therefore, the local congresses held during the single-party period were almost never the scene of political discussions. Because, the basic expectation of the people of Zonguldak in the early republican period, whose political culture was not yet sufficiently developed, was to provide services that facilitated their daily lives and to be relieved of heavy tax burdens as soon as possible. As an indicator that it is a people's government, since the mid-1930s it has been made compulsory for all heads of the institutions that constituted the provincial administration to attend provincial congresses. Through this decision, which was also accepted as an expression of reaching the people, the people of Zonguldak had the opportunity to bring their demands and expectations directly to the government representatives, often without getting stuck in the bureaucratic obstacles of the single-party era. On the other hand, in this process, the pressure on the local organizations was increased so that the society could participate as much as possible in the congresses. Because it was intended to remind the public that elections were not the only way to participate

in state affairs under the RPP single-party rule. Thus, throughout the single-party rule, the congresses in Zonguldak were places where democracy-specific practices were tested in the provinces.

The fact that the issues discussed in the provincial congresses during this period were able to reach the Great Congress is one of the most important indicators that the system is working in the direction expected by the political power. However, some chronic problems related to Zonguldak that were put on the agenda of the congress became one of the most important heritage that the single-party era left to the multiparty political life. Because, although the wish mechanism functioned effectively within the framework of the provincial congresses and was effective in identifying and transmitting the social demands and expectations to the authorities, for many years the political power did/could not satisfy some of these demands for various reasons. The provincial congresses, on the other hand, offered the political power the opportunity to learn directly how the policies implemented during the single-party period were reflected on the provinces and how they were responded to there. In this way, political power was able to reposition itself in the face of societal expectations and to review the policies it pursued.

In the mid-1940s, political demands began to be discussed at Zonguldak provincial congresses alongside social demands. The period in which these demands arose also coincided with a period in which single-party rule began to evolve toward a multiparty political system. On the other hand, the emergence of such demands undoubtedly shows that a political culture is beginning to emerge in Zonguldak society. Despite all this, the provincial congresses devoted much of their time to bringing society and the state together on a common platform and to define society's expectations, after the routine organizational issues had been discussed and decided. With the start of the multiparty political life, neither the content nor the function of congress changed. The provincial congresses, adopted as an important means of reaching the people, gained in this period a character in which social demands were more discussed. In fact, the number of social

demands and expectations discussed at the first congress of the multiparty political life was greater and more diverse than ever before in the single-party era.

The RPP's function as an effective channel of communication between the people and the state was not limited to the provincial congresses. Because, some events in the early 1930s showed that the unrest in society was not only directly related to government policies, but also to the provincial organizations of the RPP itself. For this reason, the political power that wanted to achieve complete dominance and control over the provincial organizations tried to make the control mechanisms that have existed in the RPP since its inception more effective. This mechanism, established to control the party's provincial organizations, also largely transmitted data to the government on the general political, social, cultural, and economic situation in the provinces. Because, this mechanism was intended not only for the control of party organizations, but also for the transmission of information about society to the centre.

The social demands and expectations reflected in the inspection reports of the first period pointed to the general problems of Turkish society at that time and attracted attention. However, the content of the social demands reflected in the inspection reports changed over time depending on the national and international developments of the time. For this reason, social demands and expectations, reflected in both provincial congresses and inspection reports, began to increase, especially with the onset of World War II. Since some of the national measures taken against the needs of wartime conditions directly affected and changed the daily habits of the people living in the Zonguldak basin. The Forest Law and the National Protection Law, which came into force mainly in the second half of the 1930s, led to endemic demands unique to Zonguldak on the one hand, and to a tense relationship between the population and the official authorities on the other. Although some reports sent to the party headquarters stated that people complain about local authorities enforcing local laws rather than the laws of the republic, the compulsory waged labour law tht was implemented over many

years in the coal basin has directly worried the people of Zonguldak. For this reason, one of the most important social issues that inspection reports and provincial congresses have tried to solve since the early 1940s has been the problems arising from the compulsory waged work and its implementation.

Besides, the new order created by the wartime conditions put relations between the population and the local representatives of the state in Zonguldak in a tense situation. During this period, the inhabitants of Zonguldak often complained about two local authorities: the village chiefs (mukhtars) and the gendarmes. For this reason, the memories of this period, which occupied an important place in the memory of the people of Zonguldak, even contributed to the formation of a literary tradition in the city's collective memory. Although some circles believed that the writings about this period were exaggerated, in the reports written directly by the representatives of the state, many of the facts, all told as memories and stories, were directly witnessed.

The social demands and expectations that were brought to the RPP headquarters through the party inspectors and deputies of Zonguldak were also processed immediately and forwarded to the relevant offices. In this sense, although not all demand and requests determined by the regional inspectors could be answered positively, they were not kept in the party headquarters without any action being taken. Thus, the party headquarters had fulfilled its task of "gathering information from the countryside," which was the first goal of this communication channel it had established between the center and the periphery. The way in which the social demands and expectations brought from the provinces to the center of the state were to be decided afterwards was closely related to the measures to be taken by the government and, moreover, to the financial resources of the state. Because, most of the demands brought to the center through the provincial congresses and the party inspectorate were evaluated and decided within the framework of the degree of organization of the state in the provinces, the social composition of the provinces, the laws and the financial possibilities. For this reason, in the early republican period, many

requests from the provinces had to be refused because of financial impossibilities. In this sense, the response of the political power to the material demands of the provinces, especially in the economic conditions of the Second World War, was mostly negative.

The ideological activities of the bridging mission that the RPP has undertaken between the people and the state have been carried out through the people's houses that were established as the party's auxiliary organization. After the RPP completed its organizational process in Zonguldak, it made an effort to establish a people's house in the city at the same pace in mid-1932. In this sense, Zonguldak was included in this ring not long after the establishment of the people's houses. The Zonguldak People's House, which mediated the implementation of socio-cultural modernization with the activities of transferring and adopting the official ideology to the provinces, carried out important activities in this direction throughout the single-party period in the city. While the society was introduced to the basic principles of the Republic through the activities carried out by many sub-branches, on the other hand, the pursued policies and official ideology were carried to the remotest corners of Zonguldak.

In the initial period, the Zonguldak People's Houses activities consisted mainly of consolidating the legitimacy of the new regime and carrying the official ideology into society. For this purpose conferences were held and content of these speeches was mainly determined by the party headquarters. In this way, it was aimed for the society to have an idea about the Turkish Revolution and its ideology and to adopt it. Particularly, through these activities carried out under the name of "Revolution" and "Independence" conferences, on the one hand, it was mediated the mingling of the society, on the other hand, it was aimed to understand the character of the new regime and the conditions that created the Republic by the society. In these speeches, the focus was on the discourses that marginalized the Ottoman period and glorified the new regime. In addition, the Zonguldak People's House, which has the task of enlightening the society in all fields, aimed to raise the general culture and knowledge level of the society by

organizing conferences on many different topics, from education to health, from national and local history to family life, from agriculture to economy. The RPP headquarters, which attaches great importance to educating society, has assigned statesmen from the party's political staff, as well as experts in their field working in many prestigious institutions in the country, to educate the public.

On the other hand, in the first activities of the Zonguldak People's House, priority was given to the policy of bringing together and integrating citizens and villagers, as this is an important element of the Republic's policy of reaching out to society. In this sense, the Zonguldak People's House was recognized as the first people's house to launch an important event that other people's houses have taken as an example, through the peasant branch established within it. Through these activities, which took place regularly in the form of peasant nights and village tours, especially until the early 1940s, the Zonguldak People's House served to disseminate the values of the Republic and the official ideology to society and to promote social mingling. In these activities, particular attention was paid to the use of certain symbols, highlighting the differences between the rule of the Sultanate and the perception of the peasants of the new era. For this purpose, the Zonguldak People's House was also supported by the local press and used the symbols such as "the governor and the women of the village ride in the same vehicle," "the governor of the republic and the peasants eat at the same table," "villagers and townspeople attend demonstrations together in the same movie theater" in order to explain the difference between the two periods.

In the early days of the Republic, the Zonguldak People's House tried to convey the difference in understanding between the two eras not only through symbols but also through local heroes. In this sense, the local hero that the Zonguldak People's House needed was undoubtedly Uzun Mehmet, who helped change the fate of the basin. Uzun Mehmet, who was announced by the Zonguldak People's House as a coal explorer, appeared as an important figure that local intellectuals applied since 1932 to create a national consciousness and remove traditions that contradicted national values from society. The story of Uzun Mehmet, which was

influenced by the political, cultural and ideological tendencies of the time, was presented to the public in a short time by all the people's houses as an example of the value that the Republic attached to the common peasant.

While the quality of the activities carried out by the Zonguldak People's House has changed, especially since the early 1940s, the number of activities in the first period aimed at teaching society the basic characteristics of the regime and the party also decreased significantly. Especially the village trips and peasant nights activities decreased significantly due to the economic constraints caused by the war. In addition, the content of the enlightening activities that the state realized over the Zonguldak People's House in the environment of the Second World War also changed. The conference activities of this period, the limits and content of which were determined by RPP headquarters, sought to acquire knowledge and skills that would keep society alert in the face of a possible threat of war. Speakers at these conferences, which were heavily attended by the society, were also designated by party headquarters. In addition, despite the ongoing war conditions, the Zonguldak People's House tried to continue its activities to enlighten the public in other areas that society needs. However, towards the beginning of multi-party political life, it was difficult to find similar activities carried out by the Zonguldak People's House with the enthusiasm and desire of the first period.

In short, during the single-party period, the RPP tried to be the voice and ear of the people of Zonguldak by trying to create a social and ideological bridge, as outlined above. Most of the time, all kinds of data that the party organization needed could be transmitted to the center through the mechanisms that were established within party organization. In this sense, the aforementioned intermediary mechanisms have often been successful in fulfilling the mission imposed on them by the headquarters. In the early years of the multiparty political life, on the other hand, the RPP continued this bridging mission between the people and the state. However, the special conditions brought about by the wartime circumstances seem to have led to some decline in the activities of the

people's house. With the beginning of the multi-party political life, the question that to what extent the RPP could bring social demands and expectations to the center can be answered by other studies. This research, brought a different perspective to the history of the early Republican period and the RPP and has attempted to show that this period can be viewed from a different perspective in the light of the available sources.

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Bartın

Cumhuriyet

Hakimiyet-i Milliye

Kadro

Karaelmas

Kömür

Kurun

Milliyet

Ocak

Son Posta

Tan

Türk Sesi

Ulus

Ülkü

Yeni Zonguldak

Zonguldak

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APPENDICES

A. TABLES

Table 14. Wishes Determined At The 1938 Provincial Congress And Left To The General Secretariat Of The RPP In Order To Solve¹⁰⁸⁸

Relevant Authority	Zonguldak	Bartın	Ereğli	Devrek	Safranbolu	Total	Ratio in Entire Wishes (%)
Justice	2	2	-	-	-	4	7.27
Finance	3	1	-	-	-	4	7.27
Education	2	-	1	-	1	4	7.27
Economy	10	3	1	-	-	14	25.45
Public Works	7	1	2	-	-	10	18.18
Interior Affairs	2	3	-	2	-	7	12.72
Agriculture/Forest	1	2	1	-	-	4	7.27
Health	3	-	1	-	-	4	7.27
Monopoly	-	1	-	1	-	2	3.63
Council of State	-	1	-	-	-	1	1.81
RPP	1	-	-	-	-	1	1.81
Total	31	14	6	3	1	55	100

¹⁰⁸⁸ BCA, 490.1.0.0 / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939], pp.1-18.

Table 15. The RPP Zonguldak Provincial And District Executive Board Members And Their Professions (1939)¹⁰⁸⁹

Name of Members	Status in Party	Profession	Position Outside of Party
Sezai Ünyeli	Chairman	Merchant	Member of City Council
Cemal Aliş	Secretary	Journalist	Mayor and Head of People's Houses
Ali Torlak	Accountant	Merchant	Member of City Council
Ali Galip Turna	-	Merchant	Member of City Council
Cemil Kocabaş	-	Lawyer	Member of City Council
Hasan Altınok	-	Agent	-
Saim Kahramanoğlu	-	Pharmacist	Member of City Council

Bartın

Name of Members	Status in Party	Profession	Position Outside of Party
Seyfi Tokgöz	Chairman	Merchant	Member of Provincial Council
Fuat Can	Secretary	Grocer	Member of City Council
Rıza Taşkiran	Accountant	Tailor	Member of City Council
Ahmet Albayrak	-	-	Mayor
Nuri Tarhan	-	Building Contractor	Member of City Council
Rahmi Dangaz	-	Lawyer	Member of City Council
Neşet Uslu	-	Lawyer	Member of City Council

Devrek

¹⁰⁸⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 20. 104. 1, 21 Aralık 1939 [21 December 1939].

Name of Members	Status in Party	Profession	Position Outside of Party
Kadri Ganioglu	Chairman	Mercant	-
Hidayet Derman	Member	Pharmacist	Member of City Council and Head of People's Houses
Mustafa Hidayetoğlu	Member	Merchant	Member of City Council
Hakkı Ađar	Member	Tailor	-
Osman Paçacı	Member	Merchant	-
Bekir Dizdar	Member	Merchant	-
Nuri Iřitan	Accountant	Merchant	Member of City Council

Safranbolu

Name of Members	Status in Party	Profession	Position Outside of Party
Hakkı Gülerman	Chairman	Merchant	Member of Provincial Council
Ahmet Cöbek	Sayıřman	Notary	Member of City Council and Head of People's Houses
Fikri Cimit	Secretary	Merchant	Member of City Council
Hüseyin Cıbrı	Member	Merchant	Member of City Council
Nuri Çimen	Member	Lawyer	Member of City Council
Nazmi Cimit	Member	Merchant	Member of City Council
İsmail Aydoğan	Member	Draper (Manifaturacı)	-

Eređli

Name of Members	Status in Party	Profession	Position Outside of Party
Tevfik Bilgin	Chairman	Lawyer	Member of Provincial Council
Memet ivi	Secretary and Accountant	Agency	-
Cemal Trkili	Member	Pharmacist	Member of City Council
Ltf Tmer	Member	Lawyer	Member of City Council
Mahir Ede	Member	Merchant	-
Ali Tuna	Member	Merchant	-
İlyas akat	Member	Merchant	-

Zonguldak

Table 16. The RPP Zonguldak Provincial Administrative Committee Between 1935-1946¹⁰⁹⁰

Activity Period	Chairman of the RPP Provincial Trustees	Members of RPP Provincial Trustees	Prominent Professions
1935-1936 ¹⁰⁹¹	Dr. Mitat Altıok Governor Halit Aksoy	Esad Türkiş, Bekir Sıdkı Gökçen, Akın Karaoğuz, Kaniye Salahaddin, Fevzi Alptekin, Şeref Ünal, Rıza Resneli, İbrahim Taşçı.	Engineer, Journalist, Teacher, Merchant
1936-1938 ¹⁰⁹²	Governor Halit Aksoy	Akın Karaoğuz, Cemal Pehlivanoğlu, Esat Kerimoğlu, İhsan Soyak, İbrahim Bozkurt, Kaniye Der, Dr. Nihat Arkat, Süreyya Ayyıldız.	Journalist, Agency, Engineer, Governor, Teacher.
1938-1940 ¹⁰⁹³	Governor Halit Aksoy Akın Karaoğuz	İbrahim Bozkurt, İhsan Soyak, Dr. Nihat Arkat, İzzet Çakmaklı, Akın Karaoğuz, Refet Güneş, Süreyya Ayyıldız, Cemal Pehlivanoğlu	Governor, Doctor, Engineer, Agency, Journalist.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Sources are indicated in the table.

¹⁰⁹¹ *C.H.F. Zonguldak Altıncı Vilayet Kongresi Zabtu*, 18 Sonkanun (Ocak) 1935, p. 105 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 497. 2003. 2, 16 Ocak 1939 [16 Jan. 1939].

¹⁰⁹² *C.H.P 1936 İl Kongreleri*, p. 412.

¹⁰⁹³ *Bartın*, 26 Kanunuevvel (December) 1938, p. 1.

Table 16. (continued)

1940- 1942 ¹⁰⁹⁴	Ahmet Gürel	Ahmet Gürel, Cemal Pehlivanoğlu, Süreyya Ayyıldız, Bedri Hüsnü Bekiroğlu, Faik Ertaman, Avukat Tefvik Bilgin, Dr. Saffet Öktem, Rauf Alpsoy, Ali Rıza İncealemdaroğlu	Engineer, Teacher, Agency, Lawyer, Doctor, Merchant, Journalist and Mayor.
1942- 1944 ¹⁰⁹⁵	Ahmet Gürel A.R. İncealemdaroğlu	Ahmet Gürel, Faik Ertaman, A. R. İncealemdaroğlu, Tefvik Bilgin, Rauf Alpsoy, İsmail Ergener, İhsan Soyak, Nafiz Güniz, Tahir Karaoğuz.	Teacher, Merchant, Journalist, Lawyer, Engineer, Lawyer and Mayor.
1944- 1946 ¹⁰⁹⁶	A.R. İncealemdaroğlu İhsan Soyak (General Manager of Ereğli Coal Plant (EKİ))	Zehra Ataman, Rauf Alpsoy, Fuat Sirel, Cemal Türkili, Süreyya Ayyıldız, Kemal Gürel, Nuri Soyer, Dr. Reşat Tanyeri.	Engineer, Banker, Pharmacist, Merchant and Doctor.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları Zonguldak*, 22 İlkkanun (December) 1940, p. 49 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Ocak*, 4 Aralık (December) 1942, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *C.H.P Zonguldak On İkinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı*, 14 Aralık (December) 1946, p. 12 in BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0. / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946].

Table 16. (continued)

1946- 1948 ¹⁰⁹⁷	İhsan Soyak	Dr. Reşat Tanyeri, Zehra Ataman, Fuat Sirel, Cemal Türkili, Rauf Alpsoy, Tahir Karaoğuz, Nuri Soyer, Kemal Güler.	Doctor, Banker, Journalist, Engineer and Pharmacist
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Table 17. Registered Members To The RPP in Zonguldak And Its Districts As Of June 1941¹⁰⁹⁸

District	Number of Members Registered to the Party (1940)	Ratio to City Population (%)	Increase- Decrease Rate Compared to the Previous Year (%)	1941 Number of Members Registered to the Party (June 1941)	Ratio to Populat ion (%)	Increase- Decrease Rate Compared to the Previous Year (%)
Bartın	11.225	15.58	-4.91	26.522	36.82	+21.24
Devrek	3.737	4.89	-0.50	3.747	5.65	+0.76
Ereğli	6.564	12.61	-0.43	6.586	12.65	+0.04
Safranbolu	13.600	18.44	+7.64	13.600	18.44	0
Zonguldak	6.370	8.45	-0.53	20.550	27.26	+18.81
Total	41.496	10.82	+9.14	71.005	20.29	71.11

¹⁰⁹⁷ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 December 1946]¹⁰⁹⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

Table 18. Number And Gender Status Of Party Members Registered To Zonguldak RPP Organization As Of The End Of June 1942¹⁰⁹⁹

Districts	Number of Members Registered to the Party (June 1942)	Gender		Ratio to City Population (%)	Increase- Decrease Rate Compared to the Previous Year (%)
		Male	Female		
Bartın	27.197	13.390	13.807	37.75	+2.54
Devrek	3.764	3.704	60	4.91	+0.50
Ereğli	9.018	9.008	10	17.32	+3.34
Safranbolu	15.398	9.297	6.101	20.88	+2.04
Zonguldak	20.190	19.401	789	26.78	-1.75
Total	75.567	54.800	20.767	21.60	+1.25

Table 19. Education Status of Party Members Registered to Zonguldak RPP Organization as of the end of June 1942¹¹⁰⁰

Districts	Educated Members			Primary School or Literate	İlliterate	Total
	University	High School	Secondary School			
Bartın	3	9	307	3.598	23.280	27.197
Devrek	1	1	30	1.528	2.204	3.764
Ereğli	17	17	390	5.949	2.645	9.018
Safranbolu	98	137	199	6.525	8.439	15.398
Zonguldak	320	101	500	18.340	929	20.190
Total	439	265	1.426	35.940	37.497	75.567

¹⁰⁹⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942].

¹¹⁰⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942].

Table 20. Registered Members to the RPP Zonguldak Organization Over the Age Of 22 As The End of 1942¹¹⁰¹

Districts	Number of population over 22 years old	Number of Members Registered to the Party	Ratio to City Population (%) (according to total population ratio)	Ratio to City Population (%) (over 22 years old)
Bartın	47.268	27.307	36.05	57.77
Devrek	40.893	3.785	4.99	9.25
Ereğli	24.507	9.062	11.96	36.97
Safranbolu	45.800	15.398	20.32	33.62
Zonguldak	23.923	20.190	26.65	84.39
Total	182.391	75.742	21.65	41.52

¹¹⁰¹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943].

Table 21. The Membership Status of RPP Zonguldak Organization Between 1939-1946¹¹⁰²

Year/Period	Zonguldak	Ereğli	Devrek	Bartın	Safranbolu	Ulus	Çaycuma	Total
June 1939 ¹¹⁰³	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43.000 +
December 1939 ¹¹⁰⁴	6.096	6.560	3.572	14.820	6.972	-	-	38.020
June 1940 ¹¹⁰⁵	6.370	6.564	3.737	11.225	13.600	-	-	41.496
December 1940 ¹¹⁰⁶	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
June 1941 ¹¹⁰⁷	20.550 ¹¹⁰⁸	6.586	3.737	26.522 ¹¹⁰⁹	13.600	-	-	71.005
December 1941 ¹¹¹⁰	20.550	8.726	3.735	26.522	15.090	-	-	74.623

¹¹⁰² The data in the table have been compiled from the "Semi-annual Working Reports of the Provincial Administrative Committee".

¹¹⁰³ Although it is stated that the number of party members exceeded 43.000 as of the end of June 1939, it was stated in the work report at the end of December that this number was 38.020. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 721. 465. 1, 8 Ocak 1940 [8 January 1940].

¹¹⁰⁴ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 721 .466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

¹¹⁰⁵ In the work report prepared in June of this year, a clear number was not given, and the general secretariat was informed that there was no significant change in the number of party members compared to the previous year. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 721. 467. 1, n.d.; The numbers in the table are taken from the "CHP Zonguldak Dokuzuncu Vilayet Kongresi Zabıtları (22 İlkanun 1940)". See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 Dec. 1946].

¹¹⁰⁶ The report prepared at the end of December avoided giving a clear figure and informed the General Secretariat that the number of members had increased slightly in line with the information on district organization. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 721. 466. 1, 6 Ocak 1941 [6 January 1941].

¹¹⁰⁷ The total number of members registered to all district and provincial centers in the report is given as 64.419. However, the number of party members appears to be 71.005 when the data given is added. See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 721. 467. 1, n.d.

¹¹⁰⁸ In this six-month period, 10.200 new members were registered in the central district of Zonguldak.

¹¹⁰⁹ In this six-month period, 10,404 new members were registered in the district of Bartın.

¹¹¹⁰ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 721. 468. 1, 26 Mart 1942 [26 March 1942].

Table 21. (continued)

June 1942 ¹¹¹¹	20.190	9.018	3.764	27.197	15.398	-	-	75.567
December 1942 ¹¹¹²	20.190	9.062	3.785	27.307	15.398	-	-	75.742
June 1943 ¹¹¹³	20.264	9.062 ¹¹¹⁴	3.785	27.307 ¹¹¹⁵	15.398	-	-	75.816
December 1943 ¹¹¹⁶	20.396	9.164	3.785	27.342	15.398	-	-	76.085
June 1944 ¹¹¹⁷	20.525	9.620	3.785	27.401	15.398	-	-	76.729
December 1944 ¹¹¹⁸	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77.615

¹¹¹¹ See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 722. 470. 1, 3 Aralık 1942 [3 December 1942]. By the end of June 1942, 675 new members were registered in Bartın, 19 in Devrek, 292 in Ereğli, and 308 in Safranbolu, for a total of 1294 new members. In addition, the records of 360 people from the Zonguldak central organization were deleted. Thus, the total increase in the number of party members was 934.

¹¹¹² See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 722. 471. 1, 20 Nisan 1943 [20 April 1943]. At the end of 1942, the number of male and female members registered in the organization is as follows: Bartın: 14.445 men-13.862 women, Devrek: 3.725 men- 60 women, Ereğli: 9.052 men- 10 women, Safranbolu: 9.297 men-6.101 women, Zonguldak: 19.401 men- 789 women.

¹¹¹³See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944]. During this process, only 74 members were registered to the Zonguldak central organization. As of the end of June 1943, the number of male and female members registered in the organization are as follows: Bartın: 13.445 Men- 13,862 Women, Devrek: 3.725 Men- 60 Women, Ereğli: 9.052 Men- 10 Women, Safranbolu: 9.297 Men- 6101 Women, Zonguldak: 19.466 Men- 798 Women.

¹¹¹⁴ The number of registered female members in the Ereğli party organization is only 10.

¹¹¹⁵ In June 1943, the number of female party members in the Bartın district was 13.862.

¹¹¹⁶ See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944]. In the last six months, a total of 269 people have registered with the party, including Bartın: 35, Ereğli: 102 and Zonguldak: 132.

¹¹¹⁷ See BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 723. 472. 1, 3 Ağustos 1944 [3 August 1944]. By the end of June 1944, a total of 644 new party registrations had been made, including Ereğli: 456, Zonguldak: 129 and Bartın: 59.

¹¹¹⁸ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945].

Table 21. (continued)

June 1945 ¹¹¹⁹		-	-	-	-	-	-	82.109 1120
						-	-	77.171 1121
December 1945 ¹¹²²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82.109
December 1946 ¹¹²³	19.614	12.433	2.690	23.769	13.314	1.083	4.712	77.615

¹¹¹⁹ BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945]. If we add another 4.449 registered members to the number of party members we calculated in the last report, we find that the total number of party members in June 1945 was 77.171, contrary to the figures in the report.

¹¹²⁰ This is the figure given in the first semi-annual report in 1945.

¹¹²¹ This is the number of party members determined by us on the basis of the data in the previous reports.

¹¹²² BCA, 490. 1. 0. 0 / 723. 473. 1, 2 Kasım 1945 [2 November 1945].

¹¹²³ *C.H.P. Zonguldak On İkinci İl Kongresi Tutanağı*, 14 Aralık 1946, s. 21, in BCA 490. 1. 0. 0 / 202. 802. 1, 14 Aralık 1946 [14 Dec. 1946].

Table 22. Change in The Number Of Members Registered in The RPP Zonguldak Organization Over the Years¹¹²⁴

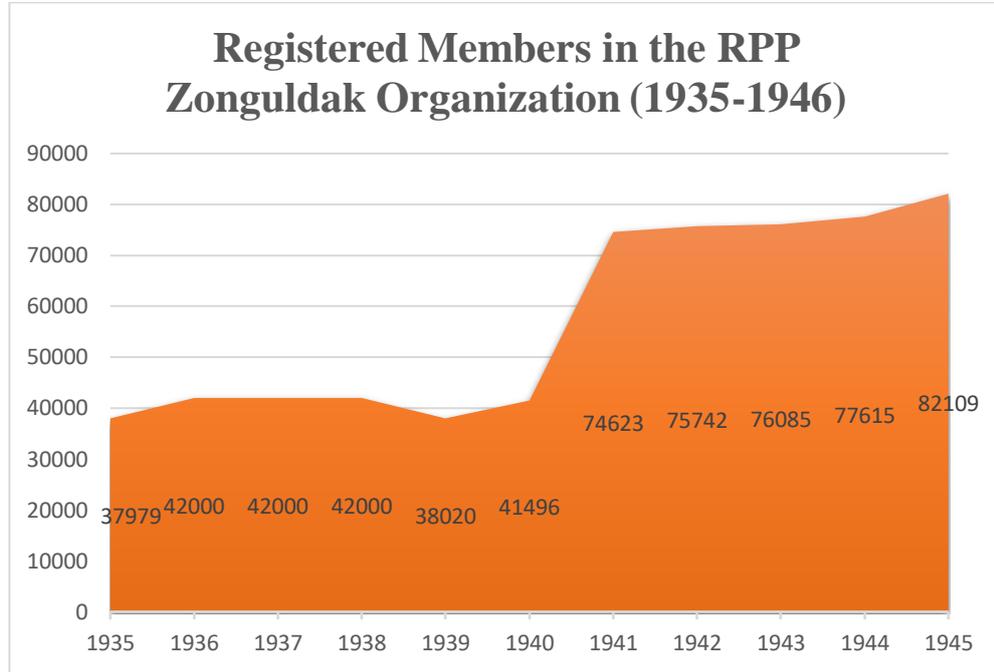


Table 23. Calendar of the Provincial Congresses of the RPP Zonguldak Organization (1927-1946)¹¹²⁵

Year	Normal Congress Calendar	Date of Convention	Congress Number
1927	Once A Year on 23 January ¹¹²⁶	Unknown	Unknown
1928	Once A Year Between September-January ¹¹²⁷	Unknown	Unknown

¹¹²⁴ The data in the graphic have been compiled from the "Semi-annual Working Reports of the Provincial Administrative Committee".

¹¹²⁵ Sources are indicated in the table.

¹¹²⁶ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1923*, Art. 42

¹¹²⁷ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1927*, Art. 68,75, p. 31,35.

Table 23. (continued)

1929	Once A Year Between September- January ¹¹²⁸	Unknown	Unknown
1930	Once A Year Between September- January ¹¹²⁹	Unknown	Unknown
1931	Once A Year Between September- January ¹¹³⁰	February 6, 1931	IV. Provincial Congress
1933	Biennial Between September- February ¹¹³¹	January 1933	V. Provincial Congress
1935	Biennial Between September- February ¹¹³²	January 18, 1935	VI. Provincial Congress
1936	Biennial Between September- December ¹¹³³	December 26, 1936	VII. Provincial Congress
1938	Biennial Between September- December ¹¹³⁴	December 15, 1938 ¹¹³⁵	VIII. Provincial Congress
1940	Biennial Between September- December ¹¹³⁶	December 22, 1940	IX. Provincial Congress

¹¹²⁸ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1927*, Art. 68,75, p. 31,35.

¹¹²⁹ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1927*, Art. 68,75, p. 31,35.

¹¹³⁰ *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1927*, Art. 68,75, p. 31,35.

¹¹³¹ *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı 1931*, Art. 47, p. 10.

¹¹³² *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı 1931*, Art. 47, p. 10.

¹¹³³ *C.H.P. Tüzüğü (1935)*, Art. 54, pp. 13-14.

¹¹³⁴ *CHP Tüzüğü (1938)*, Art. 56, p. 12.

¹¹³⁵ BCA, 490.1.0.0. / 4. 19. 27, 15 Aralık 1938 [15 December 1938].

Table 23. (continued)

1942	Biennial December ¹¹³⁷	Between	September-	December 1942 ¹¹³⁸	3,	X. Provincial Congress
1944	Biennial December ¹¹³⁹	Between	September-	November 1944	25,	XI. Provincial Congress
1946	Biennial December ¹¹⁴⁰	Between	September-	December 1946	14,	XII. Provincial Congress

¹¹³⁶ *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi 1939*, Art. 60, p. 16.

¹¹³⁷ *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi 1939*, Art. 60, p. 16.

¹¹³⁸ *Ocak*, 3 Birinci Kanun (December) 1942; *Zonguldak*, 8 İlkkanun (December) 1942.

¹¹³⁹ *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi 1943*, Art. 53-54, p. 12.

¹¹⁴⁰ *C.H.P. Nizamnamesi 1943*, Art. 53-54, p. 12.

B. FIGURES



Figure 4. The Provincial Board Members of the RPP Zonguldak Organization¹¹⁴¹

¹¹⁴¹ C.H.F. Zonguldak Beşinci Vilayet Kongresi Açılma Nutku, (Zonguldak: Karaelmas Matbaası, 1933) in BCA 490. 1. 0. 0. / 233. 919. 1, 26 Mayıs 1951 [26 May 1951].

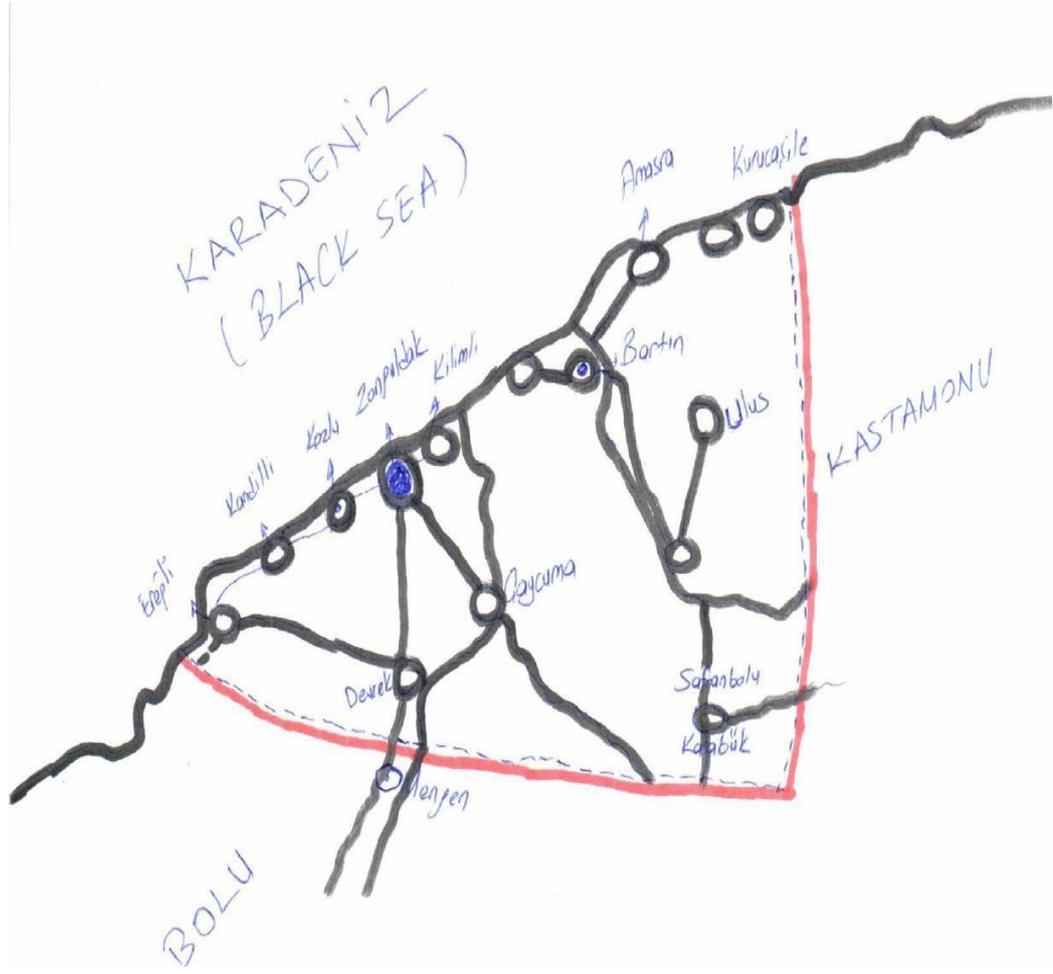


Figure 5. Administrative Division of Zonguldak At The End of Single-Party Rule¹¹⁴²

Source: Musa Şaşmaz, *Türkiye'nin İdari Taksimati*, vol. XV, pp. 231-312.

¹¹⁴² During the mids of 1945, Zonguldak province consists of seven districts. These were; Zonguldak central district, Ereğli, Safranbolu, Bartın, Devrek, Çaycuma, Ulus.

C. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Tan, Çağlar

Nationality: Turkish (TC)

Date and Place of Birth: 2 September 1989, Kaman

email: caglartan40@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ph.D	METU History	2022
MA	Hacettepe University	2015
BA	METU History	2012

AWARDS

TÜBİTAK BİDEB Undergraduate Scholarship 2007-2012

WORK EXPERINCE

Research Assistant at Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University (2012- Still Working)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English (Advanced), Ottoman Turkish, German (Beginner)

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

HALK İLE DEVLET ARASINDA BİR KÖPRÜ: ZONGULDAK'TA CUMHURİYET HALK PARTİSİ (1935-1946)

Bu çalışma, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin (CHP) 1935-1946 yılları arasında Zonguldak'ta yürütmüş olduđu siyasal, toplumsal, kültürel, ideolojik, ve örgütsel faaliyetlerini halk ile devlet arasında üstlenmiş olduđu aracı misyon perspektifinden yola çıkarak ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir. Bu bakımdan çalışmamız ilk bakışta CHP'nin belirli bir coğrafi alan ve zaman dilimi içerisindeki mevcudiyeti üzerine odaklanmış bir tarih araştırması olarak görünse de, Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nin siyasal, sosyo-kültürel ve iktisadi politikalarının bir taşra kenti özelinde yansımalarını da içermesi bakımından önemlidir.

Bilindiği üzere siyasal sistemler içerisinde siyasal yapılar belirli işlev ve misyonu bulunan oluşumlardır. Bu nedenle siyasal sistemlerin varlığını sürdürebilmesi için her siyasal yapının üzerine düşen fonksiyonu yerine getirmesi gerekmektedir.¹¹⁴³ Gerek demokratik parlamenter rejimlerin, gerekse otoriter ve totaliter rejimlerin vazgeçilmez unsurlarından biri olan siyasal partilerin de siyasal sistemler içerisinde belirli işlevleri bulunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda siyasal partilerin, hemen hemen bütün rejimlerde halk kitleleri ile iktidar arasında bir köprü işlevi gördüğü belirtilmelidir. Böylece toplumdaki istekler, beklentiler ve bunların gerçekleştirilmesi noktasında yürütülen etkileme faaliyetleri siyasal partiler üzerinden gerçekleştirilmektedir.¹¹⁴⁴ Bahsedilen işlevlerin nitelikleri ise, siyasal sistemin yarışmacı ve yarışmacı olmayışına göre değişmektedir. Bir başka deyişle, her iki siyasal sistemde de partiler benzer

¹¹⁴³ Özbudun, *Siyasal Partiler*, p. 91.

¹¹⁴⁴ Kapani, *Politika Bilimine Giriş*, p. 182.

işlevleri yerine getirmekle birlikte, bu işlevlerin anlamları ve amaçları açısından bazı farklılıklar söz konusu olmaktadır.

Yarışmacı siyasal sistemler açısından değerlendirildiğinde siyasal partiler, birbirinden farklı toplumsal ve ideolojik görüşleri birleştirerek halkın çeşitli istek ve dileklerini siyasal iktidara taşıma araçlarından biri olarak vazife görmektedir. Diğer taraftan, yarışmacı olmayan sistemler içerisindeki siyasal partiler ise daha çok devletle toplumun özdeşleştirilmesine aracılık eden, siyasal hayatı denetleyen ve düzenleyen bir “araç” olarak tasarlanmışlardır. Bu anlamda yarışmacı olmayan siyasal sistemlerde partiler; *“totaliter tek parti rejimlerinde toplumun belirli bir ideoloji doğrultusunda yönlendirilmesi; gelişmekte olan ülkelerde ise sosyo-ekonomik modernleşmenin uygulanması ile milli bütünlüğü sağlamada merkezi yönetimle toplum arasında belirli bir toplumsal köprü oluşturmaları”*¹¹⁴⁵ gibi nitelikleriyle öne çıkmaktadırlar.

Tek parti yönetim sistemlerinde partilerin halk ile devlet arasında dolaysız ve sürekli bir bağ kurduğu ünlü siyaset bilimci Maurice Duverger tarafından da ifade edilmektedir. Duverger’e göre bahsedilen bağ bütün ülkeye, halk tabakalarına ve sosyal çevrelere dağılmış parti örgüt birimleri olan ocak ve hücre gibi yapılar aracılığıyla kurulmaktadır. Böylece hükümet, kitlelerin sesine kulak verebilmekte, halkın yönetim hakkındaki düşünce ve kanaatlerini de öğrenebilmektedir. Diğer taraftan, halk ile hükümet arasında kurulan bu iletişim kanalı hükümetin kendini halkın beklentileri doğrultusunda yeni bir noktada konumlandırabilmesine de olanak sağlamaktadır. Bu noktada tek parti *“hem alıcı hem verici ödevi gören radyo istasyonlarına”* benzer bir işlev görmektedir. Çünkü, kurulan iletişim kanalı aracılığıyla sadece çevreden merkeze değil aynı zamanda merkezden çevreye doğru da veri akışı sağlanmaktadır.¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹⁴⁵ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁴⁶ Duverger, *Siyasi Partiler*, p. 338.

Bu çerçeveden bakıldığında, Türk siyasi hayatında uzun yıllar benimsenmiş olan tek partili yönetim sisteminin yürütücüsü olarak CHP'nin de iktidarda bulunduğu dönemde halk ile devlet arasında bir vasıta, birleştirici bir organ olarak işlev gördüğü söylenebilir. Partinin bu yönde bir misyon yüklenmesinin zeminini ise daha çok 1930 öncesi deneyimlenen siyasal, toplumsal ve iktisadi gelişmelerde aramak gerekmektedir. Zira CHP tarihi açısından 1930 öncesi dönem, tek parti yönetiminin kurulması ve iktidarın güçlendirilmesine yönelik faaliyetlerin öncelik kazandığı bir geçiş dönemi özelliği göstermektedir. Bundan sonraki süreçte ise parti, halk ile devlet arasında bir köprü işlevi görerek başta toplumsal hayatın düzenlenmesi ve izlenmesi olmak üzere daha somut görevler yüklenmiştir. Bu süreçle eş zamanlı olarak, özellikle SCF deneyimi sonrası, parti örgütünün yenilenmesine ilişkin yapılan yeni düzenlemelerle birlikte siyasal bir ideoloji de yaratılmak istenmiştir. Yine bu dönemde, tek parti yönetiminin dozunun artmasıyla birlikte, toplumsal yaşamı parti prensip ve doktrinleri çerçevesinde biçimlendirmek isteği de artmıştır. Böylece topluma yönelik, Cumhuriyet değer ve ilkelerinin aşılması ve ideolojik bir yön verilmesi adına “halkevleri”, “halkodaları” gibi parti yan örgütlerinin de dahil edildiği yoğun bir toplumsal formasyon süreci başlatılmıştır.¹¹⁴⁷

Tek partili yönetim sistemlerinde siyasal partilerin yüklenmiş olduğu bu “köprü” misyonundan hareketle araştırmamızda CHP Zonguldak örgütünün, yönetim sisteminin bir gereği/zorunluluğu olarak üstlenmiş olduğu “*halk ile devlet arasında bir köprü olma misyonunu*” üç temel kurumsal faaliyet üzerinden gerçekleştirdiği ileri sürülmektedir. CHP Zonguldak örgütüne 1935-1946 yılları arasında halk ile devlet arasında üstlenilmiş olan bu aracı misyonun ifa edilmesinde başvurulan en önemli kurumsal faaliyetlerden biri dilek sistemi ve bunun taşradaki uygulama alanı olan vilayet kongreleri olmuştur. Doğrudan parti içi bir müessese olmakla birlikte, bir taraftan taşra örgütlerini organize ederken diğer taraftan ise halkın beklentilerinin ortaya konulması, devlet politikalarının ve siyasal ideolojinin taşrada ne ölçüde uygulanabildiğinin takibinin yapılmasına

¹¹⁴⁷ Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, pp. 13-16.

aracılık eden teftiş sistemi ise CHP'nin görmüş olduğu köprü vazifesinin taşıyıcı ayaklarından bir diğerini teşkil etmektedir. Üç ayaklı bir taşıyıcı kolon üzerine oturtulmuş bulunan bu misyonun son ayağı ise şüphesiz yalnızca sosyo-kültürel değil aynı zamanda yüklenmiş olduğu ideolojik misyon ile halkevleri olmuştur.

Yakın dönem Türk siyasi tarihinin merkezinde bulunan CHP hakkında yapılan araştırmalarda genel olarak devletin ve yönetici elitlerin özne olarak belirdiği görülmektedir. Dönemin tarih yazımında bahsedilen bakış açısının hakim olmasında Türk tarihçiliğinin devlet ve elit merkezci modernleşme kuramlarıyla birlikte merkez çevre kuramının kaçınılmaz bir etkisinin olduğu belirtilmektedir.¹¹⁴⁸ Bu açıdan bakıldığında, tek parti dönemi ve CHP üzerine yapılan çalışmalarda sıklıkla iç ve dış politika merkezli yönetim faaliyetleri, Cumhuriyet elitleri ve söylemleri, Türk inkılabı ve nitelikleri, sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik politikalar, modern kanunların uygulanma süreci gibi daha çok partinin hükümet edici fonksiyonlarına vurgu yapılmıştır. Oysa tüm bunların yanında CHP tek partili siyasal yaşam boyunca bir taraftan halkın devletten beklentilerini, talep ve şikayetlerini çevreden merkeze yansıtma işlevini yerine getirmeye çalışırken, diğer taraftan siyasal iktidar tarafından yürütülen politikaların çevreye aktarılması, benimsetilmesi ve toplumsal destek kazanılması için de çaba göstermiştir. Bunun için doğrudan parti yapılanması içerisinde teşkil edilen kurum ve müesseseler ile parti yan örgütleri aracılığıyla oldukça yoğun bir faaliyet döneminin yönetilmeye çalışıldığı söylenebilir. Böylece, CHP ve bünyesinde işlevsel kılınan birtakım kurum ve mekanizmalar aracılığıyla toplum ile devlet özdeşleştirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu bakımdan, tek partili yönetim sistemlerine özgü toplum ile devlet arasında var olan iletişim kopukluğunun söz konusu dönemde CHP'nce üstesinden gelinmeye çalışılan en temel meselelerden birisi olduğu söylenebilir. Bir başka deyişle Türk tek parti yönetim sisteminin kendisi bir taraftan toplumun devlete ulaşmasının önündeki en önemli engel olmuş iken, aynı sistem diğer taraftan kendi içerisinde tesis etmiş olduğu iletişim kanalları aracılığıyla bu engelleri ortadan kaldırmak için

¹¹⁴⁸ Metinsoy, "Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet ve Toplum", p.125.

çaba göstermiştir. Tüm bunların yanında bu süreç siyasal iktidarın meşruiyetini sağlamlaştırması, toplumun iktidarın ideolojisi doğrultusunda eğitilmesi ve yönlendirilmesi için de oldukça gerekli görülmüştür. Dolayısıyla tek parti sisteminin kurumsallaşmaya başladığı 1931'den, çok partili siyasal hayatın başlangıcına değin CHP, halk ile devlet arasında yürütülen çift yönlü bir iletişim/etkileşim mekanizmasının baş aktörü olarak faaliyet göstermiştir.

Bu araştırma, CHP tarihine Cumhuriyet'in görece gelişmiş şehirlerinin dışından ve belirli bir perspektif üzerinden bakmayı hedeflemiştir. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada, tek partili dönemin önemli taşra kentlerinden birisi olan Zonguldak'ta CHP'nin mevcudiyeti ve tarihi partinin siyasal iktidar ile halk arasında üstlenmiş olduğu aracılık misyonu perspektifinden ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu anlamda bu araştırma, CHP ve yerel teşkilatlanması üzerine yapılan çalışmalardan farklı olarak partinin taşrada önemli bir toplumsal ve ideolojik köprü olarak işlev gördüğünü ve bunun ise üç temel kurum üzerinden gerçekleştirildiğini öne sürmektedir. Her biri parti örgütsel işleyişinin önemli birer unsuru olan vilayet kongreleri, teftiş mekanizması ve halkevleri bu süreçte CHP'nin toplum ile devleti bir araya getirme misyonuna en çok katkıda bulunan kurumlar olarak belirmişlerdir.

CHP'nin halk ile devlet arasında bir köprü vazifesi yüklenmesinin, daha çok 1923-1930 yılları arasında takip edilen başarısız siyasaların bir sonucu olduğu söylenebilir. Bu nedenle, öncelikli olarak CHP'ni topluma yaklaştıran, parti yöneticilerinin zihnine halk ile kopuk olan bağların düzeltilmesi fikrini yerleştiren siyasal ve ekonomik gelişmelere yakından bakmak gerekmektedir. Bilindiği üzere CHP tarafından 1923-1930 yılları arasında takip edilen siyasanın başarısızlığı 1930 yılının sonlarından itibaren açıkça ortaya çıkmıştır. Zira, SCF deneyimi ile gün yüzüne çıkan toplumsal hoşnutsuzluk, temelinde halkın ekonomik sorunlarının çözülememesinden kaynaklı görünse de, sonuçları itibariyle bu tecrübe siyasal iktidarı yalnızca iktisadi değil aynı zamanda yeni politik arayışlar içerisine de sokmuştur. Böylece, ülkenin sorunlarının yeni bir anlayış ve yenilenmiş kurumlar aracılığıyla ele alınması gerektiği fikrinden

hareket eden siyasal iktidar, 1931 sonu itibariyle CHP'nin toplum ile devlet arasında daha işlevsel bir kurum haline getirilmesi için harekete geçmiştir. Bu nedenle CHF Üçüncü Büyük Kongresi (1931) ile başlayan süreç Türkiye'nin kamusal yaşamında önemli bir dönüm noktasını teşkil etmektedir. Zira, bu kongrede Türkiye'nin siyasal sisteminin bir tek parti yönetimi olduğu resmen ilan edilmiştir. Bu nedenle CHF Üçüncü Büyük Kongresi aynı zamanda Türkiye'de yeni bir "biçemin" egemen olduğu bir başlangıç dönemidir

Rejimin tehlike altında olduğu düşünülen 1930'lu yıllar, devrim ideolojisi üretilmesi çabaları ile bunların halka benimsetilmesi için propaganda faaliyetlerinin arttığı bir dönem olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Tek parti yönetiminin giderek pekiştiği bu yıllarda CHF'nin otoriter niteliği daha da belirginleşmiş ve bu yönde tek parti yönetimini pekiştirici uygulamalara gidilmiştir.¹⁰ Bu andan itibaren CHP, İttihat ve Terakki döneminden miras kalan bazı toplumsal ve kültürel örgütleri yasaklayıp, ülkenin tüm kültürel ve düşünsel yaşamını doğrudan kendi denetimine alacak faaliyetlerde bulunmuştur. Böylece, Türk Ocakları'nın kapatılmasıyla başlayan süreci Türk Kadınlar Birliği, Türk Mason Locaları, Türk Gazeteciler Birliği gibi derneklerin kapatılması izlemiştir. Bu süreçle eş güdümlü olarak ise Türk Hava Kurumu, Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu, Kızılay gibi kuruluşlar ise CHP'nin kontrolüne girmiştir.

Parti örgütünün yenilenmesi ve genişletilmesi ile başlayan süreç aynı zamanda siyasal bir ideolojinin temelini atılmasıyla da sürdürülmüştür. Bu anlamda Zürcher, CHP'nin 1930'ların başlarından itibaren değişen rolünün temelinde üç önemli etkene işaret etmektedir: dünya ekonomik krizi ve buna bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan finansal kriz ortamının hükümeti daha aktif ve müdahaleci bir politika takip etmek durumunda bırakması; SCF deneyimi sonrasında ortaya çıkan Menemen olayının partinin sosyal ve kültürel modernleşme mesajının geniş halk kitlelerine ulaşamamış olduğunu ortaya çıkarması ve Batı demokrasilerinin ekonomik krizle başa çıkmakta başarısız olmasıyla birlikte bu konuda daha etkili çözüm önerileri öne süren otoriter rejimlerin söylemlerinden etkilenilmesi. Zürcher'in ana hatlarıyla işaret ettiği, toplumun önemli bir kesimi

arasında CHF'nca çözüme kavuşturulamadığı düşünülen ekonomik temelli sorunlardan kaynaklı ortaya çıkan hoşnutsuzluk ile toplumsal ve kültürel devrimlere karşı konulan mesafeli duruş, partinin otoriter yapısı ve tek parti yönetimi içerisinde kurulamamış olan iletişim kanallarının da yokluğuyla giderek artmıştır. İşin tuhaf yanı ise, siyasal iktidarın artan bu huzursuzluktan bihaber olmasıdır. Zira CHP yöneticileri, SCF lideri Fethi Bey'i İzmir limanında karşılamaya gelen kalabalığın muhalefete yönelik bir tepki olacağı kanısıyla hareket ederek İzmir valisine koruma önlemleri aldırarak kadar bu gerçeğin bilincinde değildir. Dolayısıyla, sonuçları itibariyle gerek SCF deneyimi ve gerekse Menemen hadisesi, siyasal iktidarın kitleler üzerinde gücünü göstermesi gerektiği fikrini uyandırmıştır. Bu nedenle, bu süreçlerin ertesinde Cumhuriyet değerlerinin ve ilkelerinin halka benimsetilmesi adına parti kanalıyla yoğun bir eğitim ve propaganda faaliyetine girişilmiştir.

Türkiye'nin deneyimlemiş olduğu tek parti yönetim sistemi sürecinde, CHP'nin halk ile devlet arasında yüklenmiş olduğu iletişim/etkileşim misyonunu etkin kılan en önemli mekanizmalardan birinin parti teftiş kurumu olmuştur. Gerek vilayetleri teftişe memur edilen, gerekse seçim bölgelerinde denetim ve gözetimde bulunan milletvekilleri aracılığıyla etkin olarak kullanılmaya çalışılan bu sistem çift yönlü veri akışı sağlamaktaydı. Bu anlamda bir taraftan halktan hükümete istek, temenni ve şikayetler taşınırken diğer taraftan ise hükümete taşradan veri aktarımı sağlanarak takip edilen siyasi program ve politikaların etkinliğinin sorgulanmasına ve gerekli durumlarda yeni politikaların belirlenmesine aracılık etmiştir. Tek parti döneminde, CHP bünyesinde kurumsallaşmış olan teftiş mekanizması esas itibariyle partinin ilk nizamnamesinden itibaren yasal bir zemine oturtulmuştur. Bunu takip eden süreçte, tüzükte öngörülen teftiş mekanizması pratikte de uygulanmaya konularak 1925 yılı ortalarında ülkenin 74 vilayeti 14 teftiş bölgesine ayrılmıştır. Böylece, tespit edilen teftiş bölgelerinin sorumluluk alanları içerisinde Zonguldak vilayeti birinci teftiş bölgesi içerisinde yer almıştır.¹⁶ Bundan sonraki süreçte teftiş mekanizması, ileride üzerinde ayrıntılı olarak durulacağı üzere, doğrudan parti yapılanmasının etkin bir unsuru olarak işlev görmüş ve

CHP'nin en önemli örgütsel faaliyetlerinden biri olarak tek partili yaşam boyunca önemini korumuştur. Buna bağlı olarak, özellikle 1930'lu yılların ikinci yarısından itibaren Zonguldak vilayetine yönelik teftişler de sıklaşmıştır. Bunda şüphesiz, parti devlet bütünleşmesine giden süreçle birlikte İsmet İnönü ile başlayan yeni dönemin de önemli bir etkisi olmuştur. Böylece, tek parti yönetiminin 1935-1945 yılları arası dönemi dikkate alındığında, CHP Zonguldak teşkilatına yönelik bölge müfettişlerince 1937-1943 yılları arasında önceki dönemlere kıyasla daha düzenli teftişler yapılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu teftişlerin daha çok parti örgütünün işleyişine yönelik aksaklıkları tespit etmeye dönük olması ise, tahmin edileceği üzere, müfettişlerin gündelik meselelerden ziyade siyasal ve örgütsel talep, beklenti ve şikayetler üzerine daha çok yoğunlaşmalarını gerekli kılmıştır. Gündelik hayat içerisinde daha sık karşılaşılan toplumsal, kültürel ya da ekonomik temelli sorun ve beklentilere ilişkin gözlem ve tespitlerin yapılması ve bunların hükümet merkezine aktarılması ise daha çok CHP Zonguldak milletvekillerinin kendi seçim bölgelerinde yapmış oldukları teftiş ve denetimlerle sağlanmıştır. Bu anlamda, 1935 senesinden başlamakla birlikte özellikle 1939-1945 yılları arasında Zonguldak vilayeti mebuslarınca, bölge halkının sorun, talep ve şikayetlerini, hükümetten beklentilerini tespit etmek ve bunları ilgili mercilere iletmek üzere birçok intihap dairesi teftişi gerçekleştirilmiştir.

CHP'nin yaratmış olduğu otoriter tek parti sistemi bünyesinde, halk ile devlet arasında kurulan en önemli iletişim kanallarından bir diğeri ise şüphesiz dilek sistemidir. Parti-devlet bütünleşmesini yansıtan en iyi örneklerden biri olan bu mekanizma, CHP'nin taşradaki en alt birimlerinden gelmekte olan toplumsal talep, şikayet ve beklentilerin CHP Genel Sekreterliği'ne ve oradan da Büyük Kurultaylara gönderilmesine aracılık etmiştir. Taşra örgütlerinin en üst kademeleri olan vilayet kongreleri ise bu bakımdan dileklerin bütüncül bir değerlendirmesinin yapılabildiği yerel olanaklar ile üstesinden gelinemeyecek olanların parti merkezine iletilmesini sağlayan son derece önemli bir görev ifa etmiştir. Bu nedenle, parti örgütsel işleyişinin en önemli unsurlarından birisi olan vilayet kongrelerinin parti tüzüklerinde öngörüldüğü zamanlarda ve düzenli

olarak toplanması, halk ile devlet arasında kesintisiz bir iletişimin kurulması; toplumun temel ihtiyaçlarının, parti ve hükümet hakkındaki değer ve kanaatlerin öğrenilmesi ve çözüme kavuşturulması bakımından oldukça önemlidir. Bu nedenle Zonguldak ölçeğinde vilayet kongrelerinin izinin sürülmesi partinin halk ile devlet arasında yüklenmiş olduğu aracı rolün tanımlanabilmesi açısından elzemdir. Bu bağlamda, Zonguldak CHP teşkilatınca düzenlenen vilayet kongrelerinin, 1931 yılı ve sonrasında çoğu zaman parti tüzüğüne öngörmüş olduğu zamanlarda toplandığını ve kendine yüklenen siyasi ve toplumsal misyonu yerine getirmek için çaba gösterdiğini söylemek mümkündür. Bir başka deyişle, 1931 yılından itibaren her iki yılda bir vilayet kongresini düzenli olarak toplayan Zonguldak CHP teşkilatı bu yönüyle parti üzerine yüklenmiş bulunan en önemli misyonlardan birini, halk ile devletin bir araya gelmesini/kaynaşmasını “teoride” yerine getirmiş görünmektedir.

CHP'nin bir yan kuruluşu olarak, kapatılan Türk Ocakları'nın mirası üzerinde kurulan Halkevleri de tek parti dönemi yönetiminde, siyasal ideolojinin taşraya aktarımı ve sosyokültürel modernleşmenin uygulama araçlarından biri olarak etkin olarak faaliyet gösteren kurumlardan birisi olmuştur. Halkevleri aynı zamanda, milli bütünleşmenin sağlanmasında CHP'nce yürütülen “merkezi hükümetle toplum arasında bir köprü olma sürecine” de önemli katkılar sağlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, CHF'nin 10-18 Mayıs tarihleri arasında toplanan Üçüncü Büyük Kongresi'nde kurulması kararlaştırılan halkevleri, ilk etapta 14 şehirde faaliyet göstermek üzere 19 Şubat 1932 tarihinde resmen kurulmuştur. Aynı yılın 24 Haziran'ında ise, Zonguldak Halkevi resmi olarak açılarak faaliyetlerine başlamıştır. Zonguldak Halkevi'nin tarih, edebiyat, temsil, spor, ictimai yardım, kütüphane, neşriyat, halk dersaneleri, kurslar, müze ve sergicilik gibi pek çok alanda yürütmüş olduğu faaliyetler bir yandan toplumu Cumhuriyet'in modernleştirici unsurları ile tanıştıırıp kaynaştırırken, diğer taraftan ise resmi ideolojinin ve hükümet politikalarının memleketin en ücra yerlerine kadar taşınmasına/ulaştırılmasına aracılık etmiştir. Bu anlamda özellikle köylülere yönelik gerçekleştirilen köylü günleri ile Cumhuriyet değerleri ve ideolojisi çerçevesinde toplumsal bilinç oluşturmak amaçlı verilen

konferanslar merkezin çevreye ulaşmasında kullanılan en belirgin araçlar olarak görünmektedir.

Cumhuriyet'in erken döneminde pek çok bakımdan gelişmiş bulunan Ankara, İstanbul gibi şehirlerle mukayese edilemese de, bu yıllarda kendi iç dinamiklerinin ortaya çıkarmış olduğu "görece" aktif sosyo-kültürel ve iktisadi yaşımıyla Zonguldak da önemli bir taşra kenti olarak varlık gösterdi. Bu nedenle varlığını ve kazanımlarının tümünü kömüre borçlu olan bu şehir, Cumhuriyet döneminin belki de en dikkat çeken ve önem verilen vilayetlerinden biri oldu. Siyasal iktidarın şehre yönelik bu ilgisinin gerisinde ise tahmin edilebileceği üzere ülke kalkınması ve sanayileşmesi açısından oldukça kıymetli olan zengin kömür madenlerine sahip olması bulunmaktaydı. Bununla birlikte, Cumhuriyet'in ilanından çok daha öncesinde başlayan bu ilgi, yeni rejimin ilanıyla birlikte yalnızca iktisadi bir mahiyet taşımanın da ötesine geçti. Çünkü Cumhuriyeti ilan eden kadrolar, Zonguldak'ın sadece sosyal, kültürel ve iktisadi hayatını değil aynı zamanda siyasal hayatını da tümüyle yönlendirmek ve kontrol altına almak istedi. Bunun için Türk Devrimi'ni gerçekleştiren kadrolar, CHP'nin vakit kaybetmeden Zonguldak gibi önemli bir işçi ve maden kentinde teşekkül etmesi ve buradaki siyasal hayatın kontrol altına alınması için çaba gösterdi. CHP'nin Zonguldak'ta varlık göstermesi Kemalist kadrolar açısından sadece örgütsel bir genişleme politikası değil, aynı zamanda bölge halkını ve özellikle maden işçilerini siyasal iktidarı tehdit etme potansiyeline sahip fikir ve düşüncelerden uzak tutmak istemekle de yakından ilgiliydi. Bu nedenle siyasal, sosyo-kültürel ve iktisadi devrimlerin halka benimsetilmesi için gayret gösterecek olan CHP'nin şehirde teşkilatlanması uzun sürmedi. Böylece Zonguldak kısa zamanda Kemalist kadroların yaratmak istediği modern şehirlerden birine aday duruma geldi.

CHP'nin örgütlenme ve genişleme çalışmaları Cumhuriyet'in erken döneminde süratla gerçekleştirilmekte olan devrimlerin gölgesinde kalmış olsa da Zonguldak, 1930'lu yılların başlarına gelmeden bütün teşkilatlanma faaliyetlerini tamamlamıştır. Bununla birlikte partinin gerek ülke çapında gerekse Zonguldak

özelinde toplumsal bir köprü niteliği kazanması için siyasal iktidarın öncelikle bu tür bir bağa ihtiyacının belirmesi gerekecektir. Zira Cumhuriyet'i kuran siyasal kadrolar, gün geçtikçe otoriter bir nitelik kazanan yönetim anlayışlarının toplum ile devlet arasında önemli bir iletişim kopukluğu yarattığını henüz idrak edememişti.

Bilindiği üzere, nitelikleri itibariyle toplumsal iletişim kanalları oldukça sınırlı olan otoriter tek parti yönetimleri ilginç biçimde sistemin kendi yaratmış olduğu bu handikapı aşmaya da çalışmıştır. 1930'lu yılların başlarından itibaren resmi olarak ülkede tek parti yönetimi tesis edecek olan CHP de sistemin siyasal iktidar ile toplum arasında tesis etmiş olduğu bu sınırlı iletişim kanallarını çeşitlendirmeye çalışmış ve yönetmiş olduğu toplum hakkında daha çok bilgi edinme ihtiyacı hissetmişti. Zira, devlet ve parti yöneticilerine o zamana değin takip etmiş oldukları politikaları da yeniden sorgulatan olan bazı siyasal ve toplumsal hadiseler, siyasal iktidarın toplumdan oldukça kopuk ve habersiz olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştı. Bunun üzerine yapılan değerlendirmeler ve varılan kararlar ise, bir taraftan ülkede tek partili yönetim sisteminin giderek kurumsallaşmasının önünü açarken, diğer taraftan CHP'nin toplum ile devlet arasında önemli bir köprü olarak belirmesine de zemin hazırladı. Bir başka ifadeyle, CHP bir taraftan kendi tek parti iktidarını kalıcı hale getiren düzenleme ve kararları hayata geçirirken, öbür taraftan ise bu yönetim biçimi içerisinde toplum ile arasında veri akışı sağlayacak iletişim kanallarını tesis etmekten de geri kalmadı. Bunun için, partinin kuruluşundan beri var olmakla birlikte etkin olarak işletilemeyen dilek sistemi ve teftiş mekanizmasının daha aktif olarak işletilmesine çalışıldı. Diğer taraftan, Cumhuriyet'in değer ve ilkelerinin topluma taşınması ve benimsetilmesi noktasında ortaya çıkan ihtiyaç, halkevleri gibi resmi ideolojiyi taşraya taşıyacak bir kurumun hayata geçirilmesini zaruri kıldı.

CHP'nin kurmuş olduğu tek parti yönetim sistemi kaçınılmaz olarak çağdaşlarının uygulama ve yöntemlerinden etkilendi. Bu nedenle partinin Zonguldak'ta yürütmüş olduğu örgütsel faaliyetlerinde otoriter tek parti yönetimlerine özgü üye sayılarını artırma politikası, partiyi finansal açıdan

ayakta tutabilmek adına önemli bir kaynak olan üyelik aidatlarının düzenli olarak toplanması gibi eylemlere ağırlık verildi. Diğer taraftan, henüz Milli Mücadele yıllarında taşra eşrafi ile Ulusal Mücadele'yi yöneten kadrolar arasında kurulan ittifak, Cumhuriyet'in ilanından sonra taşradaki mevcut statükoyu sürdürmek ve yeni rejimin meşruiyetini sağlamlaştırmak adına sürdürüldü. Bu nedenle Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyetleri, Halk Fırkası'nın kuruluşu sonrasında mevcut yapıları korunarak partinin taşra örgütleri olarak faaliyetlerine devam etti. Böylece pek çok vilayette bölge eşrafi ve yörenin önde gelenleri CHP il ve ilçe yönetim kurullarında etkin olarak görev almayı sürdürdü. Taşradaki mevcut statükonun korunmasına yönelik güdülen bu politikanın Zonguldak özelinde yansımaları ise parti yönetim kadrolarının uzun yıllar şehrin önde gelenlerince doldurulması olarak belirdi. Bunun neticesinde CHP'nin Zonguldak teşkilatı çoğunlukla, başta maden şirketlerinde etkin ve söz sahibi olan yöneticiler olmak üzere şehrin önde gelen tüccar, gazeteci ve avukatlarından oluşan bir kadronun yönetimine bırakıldı. Her biri kendi arasında önemli iktidar mücadelesi vermekte olan bu kadrolar kurmuş oldukları yerel ittifaklarla bazı dönemlerde merkeze rağmen taşradaki hakimiyet ve otoritelerini sürdürmeyi başardı.

CHP genel merkezi tek partili dönemde Zonguldak örgütünün yürütmüş olduğu örgütsel faaliyetler üzerinde en fazla mesaiyi düzenli bir üyelik politikasının yürütülebilmesi noktasında harcadı. Parti merkezinin bütün direktif, yönlendirme ve talimatlarına rağmen Zonguldak örgütü bu dönemde kendi yaratmış olduğu serbest hareket alanlarını kullanarak merkez ile gerilimsiz bir iletişim kurmakta başarılı oldu. Pek çok örgütsel faaliyetin gerçekleştirilmesinde parti tüzük ve talimatlarının boşluklarını kullanmakta başarılı olan CHP Zonguldak teşkilatı böylece parti merkezince çizilen sınırları aşarak kendine görece "otonom" bir hareket alanı yarattı. Zonguldak örgütüne yaratılan bu görece otonom hareket alanı kimi durumlarda örneğine çok az şahit olunacak marjinal uygulamalara kadar vardı. Bu anlamda, her ne kadar vilayet örgütünden parti merkezine gönderilen faaliyet raporlarında Zonguldak'ta parti faaliyetlerinin merkezin istediği şekilde ilerlediği beyan edilse de, yerel örgütlerce erişilen bu başarının gerisinde çoğu zaman tüzük dışı uygulamalar etkili olmuştu.

1930'lu yılların ilk yarısı, CHP'nin halk ile devlet arasında iletişim kurmaya yönelik aracılık eden kurum ve mekanizmaları birer birer devreye aldığı bir dönemdi. Yönetmek için bilmek şiarından hareket eden CHP kadrolarının bu anlamda Zonguldak halkının tek partili dönemde ortaya çıkan toplumsal beklenti, talep ve şikayetlerini tespit edebilmek için etkin biçimde kullandığı mekanizmalardan birisi vilayet kongreleri oldu. Bu nedenle parti taşra yapılanmasının rutin bir örgütsel işleyişi olan kongre gündemleri çoğu zaman toplumsal talep ve şikayetlere ayrıldı. Dolayısıyla, tek partili dönemde gerçekleştirilen yerel kongreler siyasal tartışmalara neredeyse hiç sahne olmadı. Zira erken Cumhuriyet döneminde, siyasal kültürü yeterince gelişmemiş olan Zonguldak halkının temel beklentisi daha çok gündelik yaşamlarını kolaylaştıracak hizmetlerin sağlanması ile ağır vergi yüklerinden bir an önce kurtarılmaları yönünde oldu. Halk hükümeti olabilmenin bir göstergesi olarak 1930'lu yılların ortalarından itibaren vilayet kongrelerine, taşra yönetimini teşkil eden bütün kurum yöneticilerinin katılımı da zorunlu hale getirildi. Halka inme politikasının bir tezahürü olarak da kabul edilen bu karar neticesinde Zonguldak halkı, çoğu zaman tek partili dönemin bürokratik engellerine takılmadan talep ve beklentilerini doğrudan hükümet temsilcilerine iletme imkanı elde etti. Diğer taraftan bu süreçte toplumun kongrelere azami ölçüde katılım sağlaması için yerel teşkilatlar üzerindeki baskılar da artırıldı. Çünkü halka, tesis edilen tek parti yönetim sistemi içerisinde devlet işlerine iştirak edebilmenin tek yolunun seçimler olmadığı hatırlatılmak istenmişti. Bu haliyle kongreler tek partili dönem boyunca Zonguldak'ta, demokrasiye özgü uygulamaların taşra özelinde sınımanmaya çalışıldığı toplumsal mecralar olarak önemli bir varlık gösterdi.

Bu dönemde vilayet kongrelerinde tartışılan meselelerin Büyük Kongre'ye kadar ulaşabilmesi sistemin çıktıları itibariyle siyasal iktidarın beklediği yönde çalıştığı en önemli göstergelerinden biridir. Bununla birlikte kongre gündemine getirilen Zonguldak'a ilişkin bazı kronik sorunlar ise tek partili dönemin çok partili siyasal hayata bırakmış olduğu en önemli miraslarından biri oldu. Çünkü vilayet kongreleri içerisinde etkin olarak işletilen dilek mekanizması, toplumsal talep ve beklentileri tespit edip ilgili makamlara

iletmekte etkin olarak işlemişse de, siyasal iktidar bu taleplerden bir kısmını çeşitli gerekçelerle uzun yıllar boyunca çözüme kavuştur(a)madı. Vilayet kongreleri diğer taraftan siyasal iktidara tek parti döneminde yürütülen politikaların yerele nasıl yansıdığı ve burada nasıl karşılık bulunduğunu da doğrudan öğrenme imkanı sundu. Böylece, tek taraflı bir veri akışının sağlanmadığı bu kanal vasıtasıyla siyasal iktidar kendini toplumsal beklentiler karşısında yeniden konumlandırabilmiş, takip ettiği politikaları gözden geçirebilmişti.

1940'lı yılların ortalarında vilayet kongrelerinde toplumsal taleplerin yanı sıra artık doğrudan siyasal talepler de tartışmaya başlandı. Bu taleplerin belirdiği dönem aynı zamanda tek parti yönetiminin çok partili siyasal yaşama doğru evrilmeye başladığı bir sürece de denk düşmekteydi. Diğer taraftan, bu tür taleplerin ortaya çıkması şüphesiz toplumda giderek siyasal bir kültür oluşmaya başladığını da göstermekteydi. Fakat tüm bunlara karşın vilayet kongreleri rutin örgütsel meselelerin konuşulup kararlaştırılmasının ardından vaktinin önemli bir bölümünü toplum ile devleti ortak bir platformda buluşturmaya ve toplumsal beklentilerin tespit edilmesine ayırdı. Çok partili siyasal hayatın başlamasıyla da kongre içeriklerinde ya da işlevinde herhangi bir değişiklik yaşanmadı. Hatta, halka inmenin önemli bir aracı olarak benimsenen vilayet kongreleri bu dönemde toplumsal taleplerin daha çok tartışıldığı bir mahiyet kazandı. Nitekim, çok partili siyasal yaşamın ilk kongresinde tartışılan toplumsal talep ve beklenti sayısı, tek partili dönemde hiç olmadığı kadar çok ve çeşitlilik göstermişti.

CHP'nin halk ile devlet arasında etkin bir iletişim kanalı olarak faaliyet göstermesi, sadece vilayet kongreleri üzerinden gerçekleşmedi. Çünkü, 1930'ların başlarında yaşanan birtakım hadiseler toplum içerisinde baş gösteren huzursuzlukların yalnızca hükümet politikalarıyla değil, aynı zamanda CHP'nin bizatihi taşra örgütlenmeleriyle de doğrudan ilgili olduğunu ortaya çıkardı. Bu nedenle, taşra örgütleri üzerinde tam bir hakimiyet ve gözetim tesis etmek isteyen siyasal iktidar, CHP içerisinde kuruluşundan beri var olan denetim mekanizmalarını daha etkin kılmaya çalıştı. Partinin taşra örgütlenmelerini

denetlemek üzere tesis edilmiş olan bu mekanizma iktidara aynı zamanda büyük oranda taşranın genel siyasi, sosyal, kültürel ve iktisadi manzarasına ilişkin veriler de ilettiler. Çünkü bu mekanizma sadece parti örgütlerine yönelik teftişleri değil, aynı zamanda topluma ilişkin bilgilerin merkeze iletilmesi için de tasarlanmıştı.

İlk dönem teftiş raporlarına yansıyan toplumsal talep ve beklentiler esasında Türk toplumunun o dönemde yaşamış olduğu ortak sorunlarına işaret etmekte ve dikkat çekmekteydi. Bununla birlikte parti içi bürokratik bir denetim organı olan teftiş raporlarına yansıyan toplumsal taleplerin içerikleri dönemin ulusal ve uluslararası gelişmelerine bağlı olarak zamanla değişti. Bu nedenle, özellikle İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın başlamasıyla birlikte gerek vilayet kongrelerine gerekse teftiş raporlarına yansıyan toplumsal talep ve beklentiler artmaya başladı. Çünkü, savaş koşullarının ortaya çıkarmış olduğu ihtiyaçlara karşı alınan ulusal önlemlerden bazıları Zonguldak havzasında yaşayan insanların gündelik alışkanlıklarını doğrudan etkiledi ve değiştirdi. Özellikle 1930'lu yılların ikinci yarısından itibaren yürürlüğe konmuş olan Orman Kanunu ve Milli Korunma Kanunu, bir yandan Zonguldak'a özgü endemik taleplerin ortaya çıkmasına sebep olurken, diğer taraftan ise halk ile resmi otoriteler arasındaki ilişkileri gerilimli bir boyuta taşıdı. Her ne kadar parti merkezine gönderilmiş olan raporlarda halkın Cumhuriyet kanunlarından ziyade kanunların yerelde uygulayıcıları olan yerel otoritelerden şikayetçi oldukları belirtilse de, özellikle kömür havzasında uzun yıllar uygulanacak olan ücretli iş mükellefiyetine ilişkin kanunun kendisi doğrudan Zonguldak halkını rahatsız etmişti. Bu sebeple, 1940'lı yılların başlarından itibaren gerek teftiş raporları gerekse vilayet kongreleri aracılığıyla çözüm bulunmasına çalışılan en önemli toplumsal meselelerden biri ücretli iş mükellefiyeti ve tatbikinden kaynaklı sorunlar oldu.

Savaş dönemi koşullarına bağlı ortaya çıkan yeni düzen Zonguldak'ta halk ile devletin yerel temsilcileri arasındaki ilişkileri gerilimli bir noktaya taşıdı. Bu dönemde Zonguldak halkı özellikle iki yerel otoriteden oldukça şikayetçi oldu: köy muhtarları ve jandarmalar. Bu sebeple, Zonguldak halkının hafızasında

önemli bir yer edinmiş olan bu döneme ilişkin hatıralar zamanla şehirde savaş dönemi uygulamalarının toplumsal hafızada bırakmış olduğu izleri taşıyan bir edebi geleneğin oluşmasına dahi katkıda bulundu. Her ne kadar kimi çevrelerce bu döneme ilişkin yazılanların abartılı olduğu düşünülse de, doğrudan devletin temsilcileri tarafından hazırlanan raporlarda bugün hepsi birer anı ve hikaye olarak anlatılan olguların pek çoğuna doğrudan şahit olunmuştu.

CHP genel merkezine Zonguldak parti müfettişleri ve bölge mebusları aracılığıyla gelen toplumsal talep ve beklentiler de zaman kaybetmeden işleme alınmış ve yetkili birimlere iletilmişti. Bu anlamda, her ne kadar bölge müfettişleri aracılığıyla gelen dilek ve taleplerin hepsine olumlu yanıt verilemese de, bunlar parti merkezinde hiçbir işleme tabi tutulmaksızın da bekletilmemişti. Böylece parti merkezi, çevre ile merkez arasında kurmuş olduğu bu iletişim kanalının ilk hedefi olan “taşradan bilgi devşirme” misyonunu önemli ölçüde yerine getirmişti. Taşradan devlet merkezine kadar iletilen toplumsal talep ve beklentilerin bunun sonrasında ne yönde karara bağlanacağı ise hükümetin atacağı adımlarla ve daha da ötesinde devletin maddi imkanlarıyla yakından ilgili oldu. Çünkü, gerek vilayet kongreleri gerekse parti müfettişliği aracılığıyla merkeze iletilen taleplerin bir çoğu devletin taşradaki teşkilatlanma seviyesi, taşranın toplumsal kompozisyon, kanunlar ve maddi imkanları çerçevesinde değerlendirilip karara bağlanıyordu. Bunun için erken Cumhuriyet döneminde taşradan gelen pek çok talep, maddi imkansızlıklar sebebiyle geri çevrilmek durumunda kalmıştı. Bu anlamda, özellikle İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın ortaya çıkarmış olduğu ekonomik koşullar altında siyasal iktidarın taşranın maddi kökenli taleplerine ilişkin yanıtı çoğu zaman olumsuz oldu.

CHP'nin halk ile devlet arasında yüklenmiş olduğu köprü misyonunun ideolojik faaliyetleri ise partiye yardımcı bir kuruluş olarak teşkil edilen halkevleri aracılığıyla gerçekleştirildi. Zonguldak'ta ivedi bir şekilde teşkilatlanma sürecini tamamlayan CHP, aynı hızda 1932 yılı ortalarında şehirde bir halkevi kurulması için de çaba gösterdi. Bu anlamda Zonguldak, halkevlerinin kuruluşunun üzerinden çok geçmeden bu halka içerisine dahil oldu. Resmi ideolojinin taşraya

taşınması ve benimsetilmesi faaliyetleri ile sosyo-kültürel modernleşmenin uygulanmasına aracılık eden Zonguldak Halkevi şehirde tek partili dönem boyunca bu doğrultuda önemli faaliyetler gerçekleştirdi. Pek çok alt koldan gerçekleştirilen faaliyetler ile siyasal iktidar bir yandan toplumu Cumhuriyet'in temel prensipleri ile tanıştırdı, diğer taraftan ise takip edilen politikalar ve resmi ideoloji Zonguldak'ın en uzak noktalarına kadar taşındı.

Zonguldak Halkevi'nin ilk dönem faaliyetleri daha çok yeni rejimin meşruiyetini sağlamlaştırma ve resmi ideolojiyi topluma benimsetme faaliyetlerinden oluştu. Bunun için çerçevesi çoğu zaman parti merkezince çizilen konferanslar verilerek toplumun Türk Devrimi ve ideolojisi hakkında fikir sahibi olması ve bu ideolojiyi benimsemesi hedeflendi. Özellikle "İnkılap" ve "İstiklal" konferansları adı altında yürütülen bu toplu etkinlikler vasıtasıyla bir taraftan toplumun kaynaşmasına aracılık edilirken diğer taraftan ise yeni rejimin karakteri ve Cumhuriyet'i ortaya çıkaran koşulların toplum tarafından anlaşılması hedeflendi. Bu konuşmalarda özellikle, Osmanlı devrini ötekileştirirken yeni rejimi yücelten söylemlere yer verilmesine önem verildi. Bunun haricinde, toplumu her konuda aydınlatma misyonu yüklenen Zonguldak Halkevi eğitimden sağlığa, ulusal ve yerel tarihten aile yaşamına, tarımdan iktisadi yaşama kadar pek çok farklı konuda konferanslar düzenleyerek toplumun genel kültür ve bilgi seviyesini artırmayı hedefledi. Toplumun aydınlatılması meselesine oldukça önem veren CHP genel merkezi bunun için ülkenin pek çok prestijli kurumunda görev yapan alanında uzman kişiler ile birlikte partinin siyasal kadrosu içerisinde yer alan devlet adamlarını halkı aydınlatmak için görevlendirdi.

Zonguldak Halkevi'nin ilk dönem faaliyetlerinde diğer taraftan Cumhuriyet'in topluma inme politikasının önemli bir unsuru olarak şehirli ile köylüyü bir araya getirme ve kaynaştırma politikasına da öncelik verildi. Zonguldak Halkevi bu anlamda bünyesinde teşkil edilmiş olan köycülük şubesi aracılığıyla diğer halkevlerince de örnek alınan önemli bir etkinliği ilk başlatan halkevi olarak takdir kazandı. Köylü geceleri ve köy gezileri altında özellikle 1940'lı yılların başlarına kadar düzenli olarak gerçekleştirilen bu etkinlikler aracılığıyla

Zonguldak Halkevi Cumhuriyet değerlerinin ve resmi ideolojinin topluma aşılmasına ve toplumun kaynaşmasına önemli ölçüde hizmet etti. Özellikle saltanat devri ile yeni dönem köylü algısının farklarının vurgulanmak istendiği bu etkinliklerde birtakım sembollerin kullanılmasına özen gösterildi. Bunun için Zonguldak yerel basınının da desteğini alan Zonguldak Halkevi gazete satırlarında “vali ile köylü kadınlar aynı araçta seyahat etmelerini”, “Cumhuriyet valisi ile köylü vatandaşların aynı sofrada yemek yemelerini”, “köylü ile şehirli halkın aynı sinema salonunda birlikte gösterilere katılmalarını” iki dönem arasındaki anlayış farkının topluma anlatılması noktasında önemli birer sembol olarak kullandı.

Cumhuriyet’in erken döneminde Zonguldak Halkevi iki devir arasındaki anlayış farkını yalnızca semboller üzerinden değil, aynı zamanda yerel kahramanlar üzerinden de topluma aşılama çalıştı. Bu anlamda, Zonguldak Halkevi’nin ihtiyaç duyduğu yerel kahraman şüphesiz havzanın kaderinin değişmesini sağlayan Uzun Mehmet oldu. Zonguldak Halkevi tarafından kömür kaşifi olarak ilan edilen Uzun Mehmet, 1932 yılından itibaren yerel aydınların ulusal bilinç oluşturmak ve milli değerlere ters düşen gelenekleri toplumdan söküp atmak için başvurduğu önemli bir figür olarak belirdi. Dönemin siyasal, kültürel ve ideolojik temayüllerinin tesiriyle şekillenen Uzun Mehmet hikayesi kısa zamanda tüm halkevlerince Cumhuriyet’in sıradan köylüye vermiş olduğu değeri gösteren bir örnek olarak topluma sunuldu.

Zonguldak Halkevi’nce yürütülen etkinliklerin nitelikleri özellikle 1940’lı yılların başlarından itibaren dönüşüme uğrarken, rejimin ve partinin temel niteliklerini topluma aşılama yönelik gerçekleştirilen ilk dönem faaliyetlerinin sayıları da önemli ölçüde azalmaya başladı. Özellikle, köy ve köylüye yönelik gerçekleştirilen gezi ve köylü geceleri savaş koşullarının çıkarmış olduğu ekonomik kısıtların etkisiyle görünür ölçüde azaldı. Bunun yanında İkinci Dünya Savaşı ortamında devletin halkevleri aracılığıyla topluma yönelik yürütmüş olduğu aydınlatma etkinliklerinin içerikleri de değişti. CHP genel merkezince sınırları ve içerikleri belirlenen bu dönemdeki konferans etkinliklerinde toplumu

olası bir savaş tehdisi karşısında teyakkuzda tutacak bilgi ve beceriler kazandırılmaya çalışıldı. Toplum tarafından önemli ölçüde katılım sağlanan bu konferansların konuşmacıları da yine parti merkezince belirlendi. Tüm bunların yanında her ne kadar savaş koşulları devam etse de Zonguldak Halkevi, toplumun ihtiyaç duyacağı diğer alanlarda halkı aydınlatıcı içerikte etkinliklerini sürdürmeye çalıştı. Fakat ilk dönem heyecanı ve arzusuyla yürütülen etkinliklerin sayıları çok partili siyasal yaşamın başlarına doğru giderek azaldı.

CHP tek partili dönemde, ana hatlarıyla yukarıda ifade edildiği üzere bir toplumsal ve ideolojik köprü yaratmaya çalışarak, Zonguldak halkının taşradaki sesi ve kulağı olmaya çalışmıştır. Her biri nitelik itibariyle parti bünyesi içerisinde teşkil edilmiş olan mekanizmalar aracılığıyla çoğu zaman parti örgütünün ihtiyaç duyduğu her türden veri merkeze iletilebilmiştir. Sistem bu haliyle genel merkezin üzerine yüklemiş olduğu misyonu yerine getirmekte başarılı olmuş görünmektedir. Çok partili siyasal hayatın ilk yıllarında da CHP halk ile devlet arasında yüklenmiş olduğu bu misyonu sürdürmüştür. Fakat, savaş şartlarının ortaya çıkarmış olduğu özel koşullar özellikle halkevlerinin faaliyetlerinin bir nebze gerilemesine neden olmuş görünmektedir. Çok partili siyasal yaşamın başlamasıyla birlikte parti içerisinde teşkil edilen bu kurumlar aracılığıyla toplumsal talep ve beklentilerin ne ölçüde merkeze yansıtılabildiği ise yapılacak olan diğer çalışmalarla ortaya konulabilecek ölçüde kapsamlı ve önemlidir. Bu araştırma bu haliyle, erken Cumhuriyet dönemi ve CHP tarihine farklı bir bakış açısı getirerek dönemin mevcut kaynaklar ışığında farklı bir perspektiften bakılabileceğini göstermeye çalışmıştır.

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