

POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE
THE CASE OF SİVAS (1919 – 1925)

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Abstract

Thanks to the influence of *Nutuk*, the power struggle within national struggle is either disregarded or perceived from the viewpoint of Mustafa Kemal by the Turkish historiography.

In this paper, the period between 1919 – 1925 is taken into consideration from the revisionist approach which was developed by Mete Tunçay, Erik J. Zürcher and Ahmet Demirel. It was argued within this thesis that the period of 1919 and 1925 witnesses a power struggle. After displaying that the national struggle era also served as the stage of a power struggle and the purge of the opposition, this perspective was applied to the local dimension by looking at the events in Sivas.

Özet

Nutuk'un da etkisiyle Milli Mücadele dönemi içindeki iktidar mücadelesi büyük oranda göz ardı edilmiş ya da Mustafa Kemal'in bakış açısından ele alınmıştır. Bu tezde ise Milli Mücadele dönemi Mete Tunçay, Erik J. Zürcher ve Ahmet Demirel gibi araştırmacıların geliştirmiş olduğu revizyonist bakış açısıyla ele alınmış ve dönemin iktidar mücadelesine sahne olduğu dile getirilmiştir. Milli Mücadele'nin aynı zamanda bir iktidar mücadelesine sahne olduğu ortaya konduktan sonra benzer bir bakış açısıyla yerel boyutta Sivas'ta neler yaşandığına bakılmıştır.

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PREFACE

From October 15 to 20 Mustafa Kemal delivered a six-day speech that lasted 36 hours and 31 minutes at the General Congress of the Republican Party and gave his own account of the War of Independence. This speech, called *Nutuk* (the speech), has been very influential in modern Turkish historiography. The victories of 1922 gave Mustafa Kemal the title *Halaskar Gazi* (the Savior Ghazi) and as Hale writes “swept him into a position of unchallengeable national authority”¹, which helped him consolidate his power. Due to his prestige this speech “has become the basis for nearly all Turkish historiography on the period to the present day.”² Thanks to the translation into German, French, and English in 1928-29 *Nutuk* has also influenced foreign historiography on the period.³ Although *Nutuk* was presented by Mustafa Kemal as the true history of the period of 1919 to 1927, and by and large, this claim has been accepted in Turkey as well as abroad, Zürcher writes that “it is not a really survey of modern Turkish history at all”, but a “vindication of the purges of 1925-26, and criticizing the former leaders of the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) is its main theme.”⁴

Students of modern Turkish history are familiar with the fact that between 1919 and 1926 Mustafa Kemal gradually seized power and eliminated his

¹ William Hale. *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* (London : Croom Helm, 1981), p.33.

² Erik J. Zürcher. *Turkey A Modern History* (London. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), p.175.

³ Erik J. Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905 – 1926* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), p.30.

⁴ Zürcher. *Turkey A Modern History*, p.175.

adversaries. After the opponents' discharge from the political scene (the Second Group of the First Grand National Assembly through "elections"; the Progressive Republican Party through the Independence Tribunals ; the prominent members of the Committee of Union and Progress and some leaders of the PRP "through a series of political show trials"⁵ subsequent to the assassination attempt on Mustafa Kemal in İzmir), in *Nutuk* Mustafa Kemal had the opportunity to legitimize what had happened to his former comrades and other prominent political figures of the country by giving his own view of the events.

Throughout *Nutuk* Mustafa Kemal presents his former colleagues as doubters, incompetents, and traitors. In fact, his assessment of the closure of the Progressive Republican Party founded by his former comrades exemplifies this representation:

What happened, Gentlemen? The Government and the Committee found themselves to take extraordinary measures. They caused the law regarding the restoration of order to be proclaimed, and the Independence Courts to take action. For a considerable time they kept eight or nine divisions of the army at war strength for the suppression of disorders, and put an end to the injurious organization which bore the name "Republican Progressive Party." The result was, of course, the success of the Republic. The insurgents were destroyed. But the enemies of the Republic did not consider this defeat the last phase of the controversy. In an unworthy manner they planned their last card which took the form of the İzmir attack. The avenging hand of Republican justice again mastered the army of conspirators and saved the Republic.⁶

In this citation, Mustafa Kemal rules out any distinction between the insurgents who had participated in the Sheikh Said Revolt and the opposition. While the military crushed the rebels, the dissidents were purged by the judiciary.⁷

⁵ Erik J. Zürcher. "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Osmanlı Mirası: Yeni Bir Dönemselleştirme Denemesi", in *Savaş, Devrim ve Uluslaşma Türkiye Tarihinde Geçiş Dönemi (1908 - 1928)* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005), p.48.

⁶ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *The Great Speech* (Ankara: AKDİTK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2005), pp.712-713.

⁷ Taha Parla. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları Cilt 1 Atatürk'ün Nutuk'u* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), p.151.

The dissidents who were again pursuing conspiracies such as the Conspiracy of Pashas⁸ were nothing but enemies of the Republic. Essentially, the crime committed by the opposition was actually to oppose Mustafa Kemal. In *Nutuk*, which is a first-person narrative in essence, all other characters were placed in two opposing categories: those who were with him and those against.⁹

However, we should also pay attention to how the person to be with or against, Mustafa Kemal, is presented in *Nutuk*. Mustafa Kemal depicts himself as the one who alone had known the accurate decision from the outset and who alone had been able to lead the movement:

Therefore, what could be a serious and correct solution?
In these circumstances, one solution alone was possible, namely, to create a New Turkish state, the sovereignty and independence of which would be unreservedly recognized by the whole world.
This was resolution we adopted before we left İstanbul and which we began to put into action as soon as we set foot on Anatolian soil at Samsun.¹⁰

Therefore, the relations between Mustafa Kemal and his opponents emerge as tension between a leader who is aware of what is bound to happen and acts accordingly; and those who either fail to comprehend or lag behind him. This is expressed in Mustafa Kemal's words:

Some of my companions who had entered into the national fight with me went over to the opposition, due to the limitations of their mentality and the failure of their moral courage in the effort to develop national life, to proclaim the Republic and enact its laws. So that you may be informed, so that the public opinion be enlightened. I shall refer to these cases individually as I proceed with my statement.
To summarize what I have been saying, I may add that it was incumbent upon me to develop our entire social organization, step by step, until it correspond to the great capacity for progress which I perceived in the soul and in the

⁸ See p.42.

⁹ Toni Alaranta. "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Six-Day Speech of 1927: Defining the Official Historical View of the Foundation of the Turkish Republic," *Turkish Studies*, 9:1, 2008, p.18

¹⁰ Atatürk, p.9.

future of the nation and which I kept to myself in my own consciousness as a national secret.¹¹

This approach toward opposition in *Nutuk* was appropriated by Turkish historiography. For decades *Nutuk* monopolized the writing of the history of the Independence Struggle of Turkey as well as the establishment of the Turkish Republic.¹² Mainstream historiography regards *Nutuk* as a source that constitutes virtually empirical evidence instead of a reinterpretation of the events that came to pass in the period between 1919 – 1927 from Mustafa Kemal’s position of sovereignty in 1927. Thus, works dealing with the period either ignore the opposition or approach it from Mustafa Kemal’s viewpoint.¹³ Consequently, *Nutuk* which was delivered by Mustafa Kemal upon his “desire to make the task of the historian easier by pointing out the successive stages of the revolution,”¹⁴ became a direct determinant of Turkish historiography instead of contributing to it since *Nutuk* was never regarded a text to be analyzed in Turkish historiography.

The initial manifestation of this fact is constituted by the History of the Revolution courses that first came up on the 1930s. The first lesson of the History of the Revolution course was held in Istanbul in 4 March 1934 and simultaneously, an Institute of Revolution was founded. The initial four individuals to rank among the staff of this institute were Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, Yusuf Kemal Tengirşenk and Recep Peker, who also figured prominently in the political scene of

¹¹ Ibid., pp.11-12.

¹² Hülya Adak, “National Myths and Self-Narrations: Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* and Halide Edib's *Memoirs* and the Turkish Ordeal” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102.2/3 (2003), p.509.

¹³ Erik Jan Zürcher. “Siyaset Adamı Tarihçi Olunca: Atatürk’ün *Nutuk*’u Üzerine,” in *Savaş, Devrim ve Uluslaşma Türkiye Tarihinde Geçiş Dönemi (1908 – 1928)* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005). p.10.

¹⁴ Atatürk p.368.

the time.¹⁵ The main aim of these Revolution lectures was to present the Kemalist ideology and to teach the history of Revolution from an official perspective.¹⁶ The 1930s again witnessed the drawing up of textbooks in order to convey the History of the Revolution in a “true” fashion. The first official history textbook for high schools consisted of four volumes, one of which focused on the Turkish Revolution and was published in 1932. The essential inspiration for this book was the work *Türk Tarihinin Anahatları* (Essential Lines of Turkish History). All authors of this work except Afet İnan, who was a party member, and Yusuf Ziya, who was to become a deputy two years later, were deputies in the Parliament. Albeit not an exclusive trait of Turkey, the intellectuals that initiated the nationalist movement also assumed the duty of writing history. These people were expected to provide intellectual rationale for this newly emerging nation state. They were used as vehicles for the state official rhetoric.¹⁷

Creating a nation was a goal that was blatantly marked by the political atmosphere of these politician historians and it is clear that the progress toward that goal could not tolerate a dissident potential.¹⁸ Therefore, the perception of opposition remained within the frame drawn up for it by Mustafa Kemal in accordance with the needs of the regime. Essentially, all nations have these kinds of mythical self-narrations, but nowadays many of them have been put under scrutiny by academic

¹⁵ Bülent Tanör, Zafer Toprak, and Halil Berktaş. *İnkılap Tarihi dersleri Nasıl Okutulmalı* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1997), pp.17-18.

¹⁶ Süleyman İnan, “The First ‘History of the Turkish Revolution’ Lectures and Courses in Turkish Universities (1934-42)”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43, no. 4, July 2007, p.593.

¹⁷ Büşra Ersanlı. *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye’de “Resmî Tarih” Tezinin Oluşumu (1929 - 1937)*, (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1992), p.108.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.116-117.

research.¹⁹ Yet, such a tendency lacks the necessary intellectual endeavor in Turkey. Thus, in order to understand the period treated by Mustafa Kemal, it is imperative to take into account that *Nutuk*, as much as it designated the historiography of and on the period, is an attempted legitimization of the purge of important commanders that figured within the ranks of the National Struggle such as Rauf Orbay, Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuad Cebesoy, Refet Bele and Cafer Tayyar Eğilmez and thus, a distorted version of the historical picture.

The works of Mete Tunçay, Erik Jan Zürcher and Ahmet Demirel which are drawn upon extensively in the second chapter exemplify this sort of revisionist approach. The power struggle in the period between 1919 – 1925 is examined in the second chapter. The ousting of the Unionist elements that were perceived as potential rivals to begin with is examined. Next, the opposition presented by the Second Group and their purge in the light of Ahmet Demirel's contributions to the matter are elaborated. Lastly, the brief history of the Progressive Party and its retreat from the political scene are discussed.

Sivas is examined in the third chapter in order to see how power proceeded in the local context. The main sources are composed of local press and memoirs. After analyzing the discourse of the National Struggle embraced by the people devised as part of a political strategy by *İrade-i Milliye* (National Will) published in Sivas, the mouthpiece of the national movement, how this discourse was appropriated by local historiography will be examined. Following an assessment of the historiography that is based on the imagination of a coalescent people of Sivas and relies on various memoirs and anecdotes, the Sheikh Recep incident will receive focus. After dwelling

¹⁹ Adak, p.515.

on this incident which took place while Mustafa Kemal was in Amasya meeting delegates from the Istanbul government and which caused a stir in Istanbul press, attention will be given to the altercation between the newspapers *İrade-i Milliye* and *Gaye-i Milliye* (National Goal), both of which favored the National Struggle. Finally, how the Independence Tribunal that was erected in Sivas upon the posting of a declaration in a central spot progressed with debates regarding a multiparty system and resulted in the purge of local opposition will be studied.

CHAPTER 1

POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

Elimination of the Unionists

Nutuk begins with Mustafa Kemal's arrival in Samsun in May 1919, disregarding the earlier phase of the national resistance movement. Nevertheless, the war was not over for the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Even in 1915, as Zürcher points out, the CUP planned a guerilla movement and established arms depots at Eskişehir and/or Konya, fearing that the Allied forces would pass through Çanakkale. Zürcher points at the possibility that these plans of 1915 may have laid the foundation of the resistance in 1918 - 1919.²⁰

As Nur Bilge Criss indicates, the author of *İstanbul Under Allied Occupation*, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (the Special Organization), the intelligence service formed by Enver Pasha, which had been reconstituted as the *Umum Alem-i İslam İhtilal Teşkilatı* (General Revolutionary Organization of the Islamic World) in October or November 1918, had issued strict orders to begin a resistance movement.²¹ *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* transferred their activities to resistance and functioned clandestinely from the Ministry of War during the first years of the Armistice.²² Aware of the coming defeat, the CUP also established a secret underground network, namely *Karakol* (the Guard), in October 1918 to protect former CUP members, setting up resistance

²⁰ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.169

²¹ Nur Bilge Criss. *İstanbul Under Allied Occupation 1918 - 1923* (Leiden.Boston.Köln: Brill, 1999), p.4

²² Ibid., p.94.

organizations in Anatolia and smuggling men and materials to Anatolia.²³ However, the line between *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* and *Karakol* was not clear-cut.²⁴ *Karakol* was mainly dependent on *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* in terms of its cadres and organization. Another vital source for *Karakol* was the *esnaf* (Guilds) of İstanbul, which were controlled by Kara Kemal, the founder of *Karakol*.²⁵

The fact that the war was not over for the CUP can easily be seen in the following statements:

İstanbul was in a chaotic state, the guns were being laid down, but, we, the CUP people were determined not to lay our guns down. CUP members who congregated in İstanbul decided that war was not over. The Armistice was just another phase of the war. We decided to begin our fight in Eastern Anatolia.²⁶

Furthermore, anti-nationalist observers, such as Ali Kemal (1853-1922), Damat Ferit Pasha (1853-1923), and British intelligence were convinced that the nationalist movement was a Unionist plot.²⁷ Foreign journalists were also aware of the fact that the CUP was preparing to resist:²⁸

Le Temps of January 24, 1919, for instance, said:

Many members of the Committee have left for the provinces to reinforce their comrades and eventually to organize bands.

On February 5, 1919 the same paper said:

²³ For detailed information about *Karakol*, see Fethi Tevetoğlu. *Milli Mücadele Yıllarındaki Kuruluşlar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), pp.3-52

²⁴ Criss. p.99.

²⁵ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, pp.81-82.

²⁶ Hüsamettin Ertürk, "Milli Mücadele Senelerinde Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa," (Type-written MS) ed. Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, translit. General Tevfik Apay (Ankara: Institute for Strategic Research and Military, n.d.), p.14. Quoted from Criss., pp.97-98

²⁷ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.68

²⁸ These newspapers are quoted from Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, pp.85-86.

The organization of the Committee of Union and Progress continues to function in Asia Minor, where the Young Turks have left the demobilized soldiers with their arms and where a vast system of gangs is being organized.

The Times of April 14, 1919 reports:

Much unrest persists also in inner Anatolia. There the government, being unable to dismiss the officials who are still partisans of the CUP, are unable to prevent demonstrations. The CUP are doing their utmost to keep fanaticism at the boiling point in the massacre areas.

There are indications that Mustafa Kemal's decision to leave for Anatolia also was influenced by the CUP's underground organization. According to Zürcher, the nationalist resistance that appeared during the year following the armistice was the outcome of the endeavors of certain organizations and individuals known for their Unionist background and their collaboration in May 1919 was instrumental in ascension of Mustafa Kemal to national leadership of the resistance movement that was in its inception phase in Anatolia.²⁹ *Karakol* was unable to make a decision about the leadership before they contacted Mustafa Kemal Pasha.³⁰ At first they considered Halil Pasha (Kut, 1881 - 1957), Enver's uncle, and then Yenibahçeli Nail Bey and Hilmi Bey.³¹ İzzet Pasha, the Grand Vizier, had also been asked to lead *Karakol*. However, İzzet Pasha rejected that offer because he thought that any action in Anatolia would be doomed to failure under the current conditions.³²

Quoting these memoirs does not mean that this was the real situation. On the other hand, these memoirs are very important in that they show how the members of

²⁹ Ibid., p.118

³⁰ Criss. p.101

³¹ Yenibahçeli Şükrü, "Memoirs," (handwritten MS) (İstanbul: Taha Toros Archives, n.d.) Quoted from Criss, pp.100-101

³² Interview with Burhan Oğuz, Yenibahçeli Şükrü Bey's stepson, Nişantaşı, İstanbul, June 25,1988. Quoted from Nur Bilge Criss, ibid., pp.102-103.

Karakol saw themselves. Their self-perception and understanding of the relation between Mustafa Kemal and them confirm Zürcher's approach:

. . . Mustafa Kemal's authority was far from being unchallenged. Several groups and organizations within the movement considered their own credentials just as good or better and accepted Mustafa Kemal's leadership only because of the emergency. They always remained conscious of the fact that they did so voluntarily and that Mustafa Kemal had them to thank for his position.³³

Nevertheless, the relationship between Mustafa Kemal and *Karakol* is puzzling. Mustafa Kemal mentions *Karakol* in *Nutuk* as follows:

While we were trying to find a way at Erzurum to make the meaning of the decisions that were passed by the congress intelligible to everybody and secure their unanimous acceptance, we received the news that certain circulars, called the "Regulations of the Organization of the Karakol Society" and "Instructions concerning the General Authority of the Karakol Society," had been distributed among the commandants and officers. In fact, they were circulated everywhere.

All who read them – even the commanding officers who were closely associated with me – were perplexed, because they thought that I was the author of them. On the one hand, they thought that all through the congress I had displayed open and systematic endeavors in a national sense; but, on the other, that I was trying to form a committee of some mysterious and formidable character. In reality, this propaganda emanated from certain men in İstanbul who, apparently, were acting in my name.

According to the regulations of this "Karakol Society," the names of the members of the committee, their number, the place and manner of their meeting, as well as their election and their objects, were kept absolutely secret.

Moreover, the circulation, even in part, of anything concerning it or any intimation that it was in any way dangerous – or was considered to be so – was punishable with instant death.

In the instructions relating to its general powers a "National Army" is mentioned, and it is clearly expressed that the "Commander-in-Chief" of this Army, the officers on his Staff, the officers commanding the troops, the Army Corps and the Divisions, with their Staff officers, had been selected and appointed. Their names were not divulged. In the same way, their duties were carried out secretly.

Gentlemen! I enlightened the commanding officers immediately by instructing them that they were on no account to obey such orders and instructions. I added that an inquiry had been instituted for the purpose of discovering the origin of the enterprise.

³³ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.118.

After I had arrived at Sivas I learned from Kara Vasıf Bey, who had come there, that he and his companions were the authors of these circulars. In any case, they had been acting without authority. It was a dangerous thing to try to make people obey the orders of an anonymous committee, with an unknown chief in command and a host of commanding officers, by threatening them with the penalty of death if they dared to disobey. Signs of mutual distrust and fear began, indeed, to make their appearance among the military forces. For instance, it was not improbable that the commanders of some of the Army Corps might ask with perfect right, "Who is in command of my Army Corps? When and how will he take over the command? What will my position be then?"

When I asked Kara Vasıf who constituted the committee and who were the superior officers and anonymous high persons on the General Staff, he replied:

"You and your comrades, of course!"

His answer took me completely by surprise. It had neither reason nor logic in it, because no one had spoken to me about such an enterprise or such an organization, nor had I given my assent to it in any form.³⁴

It is obvious that Karakol's attempt to politicize the army perturbed Mustafa Kemal. However, this attitude of Mustafa Kemal towards *Karakol*, according to Criss, was due to the fact that "*Karakol* was an offspring of the Committee of Union and Progress and might pose a challenge to his authority"³⁵ Nevertheless, Mustafa Kemal was also a registered member of the CUP. Despite his opposition to some of the politics of the CUP leadership Mustafa Kemal functioned as a normal member of the military inner circle of the Committee for the first four years after the revolution. In the years that followed Mustafa Kemal grew more and more estranged from the Unionist leadership due to his quarrel with Enver and his objection to military involvement in politics and to the policies of Enver and his German advisers.³⁶ But Mustafa Kemal never left the CUP.³⁷

³⁴ Atatürk, pp.55–56.

³⁵ Criss, p.103.

³⁶ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.66

³⁷ Ibid., p.53

Nevertheless, in the Congress of Sivas (September 4, 1919) the nationalists declared their independence from the CUP because they were aware of the fact that an identification of their movement with the CUP was an added handicap in their dealings with the İstanbul government and the representatives of the Entente, making a compromise peace nearly impossible. Moreover, as Rıza Nur indicates in his memoirs, many people one of whom was Ali Galip, who attempted to suppress the Congress of Sivas and to arrest Mustafa Kemal, were against the National Movement because they had suffered much from the CUP.³⁸ For these reasons all of the delegates in Sivas were required to swear that they “would not pursue any personal goal besides the happiness and well-being of the fatherland and the nation, would not work for the resurrection of the CUP or for the political aims of any existing party.”³⁹ This decision was then confirmed by Mustafa Kemal at the request of *Mersinli Cemal*, the minister of war, in a telegram to the War Office of October 9, 1919. In this telegram, Mustafa Kemal, on behalf of *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Heyeti Temsiliyesi* (the Representative Committee of the Association for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia) was asked to declare that they were not related to the Unionism and Mustafa Kemal said that they took an oath that they would nor revive the CUP.⁴⁰

These declarations, according to Zürcher, should be considered as tactical moves.⁴¹ Many political organizations, including even *Teceddüt Fırkası* (Innovation Party), found it necessary to deny officially all links with the CUP. *Müdafaa-ı Hukuk*

³⁸ Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım*, Vol.3, (İstanbul: Altındağ Yayınevi, 1968), p.577.

³⁹ *İrade-i Milliye*, 14 September 1919.

⁴⁰ Nimet Arsan (ed.), *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III*, Vol.1, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1997), p.38.

⁴¹ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, p.68

Cemiyetleri (Societies for the Defense of the National Rights)⁴² also emphasized their non-partizan, national character.⁴³ Therefore, the Unionists “often tried to get figureheads in the form of local notables or religious dignitaries on the boards” of these organizations.⁴⁴

At the same time when Mustafa Kemal was asked by Cemal Pasha to declare the nature of the relation between *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti* (the Association for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (ADNRA-R)) and the CUP, he also said:

We essentially do not approve the unequivocal animosity toward Unionism regarded by non-Muslim elements and Entente Governments among political ends. There is a minority faction composed of the Unionists which led the homeland to ruin through their misdeeds in administration and corruption and those are the truly accused in the eyes of the people and us, indeed. Other than not accepting the exposure of those with virtue who preserved equity, were not instruments to evil among members of the Union and Progress and particularly the seizure of the general parcel of the common people that cannot distinguish between good and evil as it is in every nation by allegations, we also consider these a menace in respect to the law and order of the interior and the future of the homeland.⁴⁵

In the same telegram Mustafa Kemal was also asked to declare that it was not true to enter the World War. Mustafa Kemal, however, did not agree with that idea:

⁴² In a number of provincial centers, especially in those areas where most threatened by Armenian claims, like Eastern Anatolia, or by Greek claims, such as the West Coast and Thrace, “Societies for the Defense of the National Rights” had become into being on the initiative of the local CUP branches. Ibid., p.88

⁴³ Ibid., p.73.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.93

⁴⁵ Arsan (ed.), Vol.1, p.38

“Biz anasır-ı gayri müslime ve İtilaf Hukumatının maksad-ı siyasiye tahtında gördükleri alelülak İttihatçılık düşmanlığını esas itibariyle doğru görmüyoruz. İttihatçılardan seyyiat-ı idaresi ve suiitmalleri ile memleketi harabeye sürükliyenlerden ibaret bir hizbi kalil vardır ki işte asıl millet ve bizim nazarımızda müttehem olanlar bunlardır. Yoksa İttihat ve Terakki mensubininden olup muhafaza-ı bitarafı etmiş, fenalığa alet olmamış eshabı namusun bu suretle suizan altında kalması ve bilhassa her millette olduğu gibi nikübedi lüzümlü derecede temyiz edemeyen alelumum avam kısmının duçarı töhmet olmasını doğru görmedikten başka memleketin asayiş ve intizam-ı dahilisi ve atisi itibariyle de tehlike addeyiyoruz.”

This subject is worth contemplation and suitable for debate in various aspects. For instance, it even pertains to future considerations. Certainly, it was extremely desirable not to participate in the World War that called forth the discontent of the people now because it resulted in disasters that are impossible to amend and have painful outcomes. But, the material opportunities for this [respect] did not exist. Because no participation required armed neutrality, namely keeping the Straits closed. However, the geographical location of our homeland, the military conditions Istanbul was in, Russia standing on the side of Entente Governments were not appropriate for us to observe passively. Other than these, the money, the arms, the industry, in short the instruments that were necessary for the maintenance of armed neutrality were not present.

[Even] If we leave it aside that the Entente States and especially the British, didn't lend [us] money, the confiscation of our ships and the usurpation of the seven millions that the people had amassed by pinching and scraping dedicated to the construction of the navy and the declaration four months before our entering into the war of the Entente States with the proclamation of the war that the establishment of an Armenian Republic at the expense of the Ottoman State had been decided and the proposition of Istanbul to Tsarist Russia according to what is understood from the confidential accords disseminated by the Bolsheviks were among the overt evidences indicating that entering war against the Entente States was unavoidable. About the point regarding the instigators of war: It might not be accurate to embark to allegations against this or that one before the matter passes the examination of the Sublime Council considering that it is His Majesty' right to proclaim war who is irresponsible and that the cabinet of the time obtained confidence upon the explanation they delivered in the National Assembly that gathered four months after the declaration of war.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 39.

"Bu husus şayanı teemmül ve muhtelif suretlerle münakaşaya kabiliyetlidir. Mesela, mütalaa-i atıye dahi varittir. Gayri kabili tamir felaket ve netayici elimeye müncer olduğundan bugün milletin ademi memnuniyetini celbeden Harbi Umumiye iştirak etmemek elbette son derece şayan-ı arzu idi. Fakat buna imkanı maddi mevcut değildi. Çünkü ademi iştirak müsella bir bitaraflığı, yani Boğazların mesdud bulundurulmasını icabettiriyordu. Halbuki vatanımızın mevki-i coğrafisi, İstanbul'un vaziyet-i sevkulceşşiyesi Rusların, İtilaf Hükümetleri yanında ahzı mevki etmiş olması bizim seyirci kalmamıza asla müsait değildi. Bundan başka müsella bir bitaraflığın idamesi için paramız, silahımız, sanayimiz, hulasa lazım olan vesaitimiz mevcut değildi. İtilaf Devletlerinin ve bilhassa İngilizlerin para vermemesinden sarfı nazar gemileimizi zabt ve milletin dışından turnağundan artırarak biriktirdiği inşaat-I bahriyeye ait yedi milyon liramızı gaspeylemeleri ve Düveli İtilaflıye'nin ilanı harble beraber bizim harbe duhumümüzden daha dört ay evvel tamamen Hükümet-i Osmaniye zararına bir Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti teşkiline karar verdiklerini ilan eylemiş olmaları ve hatta bolşeviklerin neşrettiği gizli muahedetten anlaşıldığına göre İstanbul'un Çarlık Rusyasına vadedilmiş olması harbe İtilaf Devletleri aleyhine girmekliğin gayr-i kabil-i içtinap olduğunu gösterir delaili vazihadandır.

Harbin müsebbileri hakkındaki noktaya gelince: İlanı harb gayri mesul olan zatı şahaneninin hakkı olduğuna ve o zamanki kabinenin ilanı harbden dört ay sonra içtima eden Meclisi Milli'de verdiği izahat üzerine alkışlarla mazharı itimat olmuş bulunmasına nazaran mesele Divan-ı Alinin tetkikından geçmeden alelülak şu veya bunun aleyhine ithamata kalkışmakta isabet olmayabilir."

While keeping a distance between the CUP and the national movement Mustafa Kemal was conscious of the fact that the institutions organized by the CUP would provide the organizational framework of the national resistance movement. The nationalist resistance recruited manpower from the military,⁴⁷ *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, *Karakol*, artisans' and manufacturers' guilds, Ottoman Red Crescent Society, and women's associations.⁴⁸

That the national movement was built on Unionist organizations and initiatives was the reason behind the fact that the Kemalist group perceived the Unionists as potential competitors. According to Zürcher, the story of the National Struggle is at the same time the story of the growing dominance of Mustafa Kemal and the step by step elimination of all possible competitors for the leadership of the national movement.⁴⁹

Karakol was one of the first potential competitors to be eliminated. Mustafa Kemal was suspicious of *Karakol*'s loyalty because it was possible that *Karakol* would defy Mustafa Kemal's authority on grounds of its descent.⁵⁰ In fact, despite Mustafa Kemal's demand that *Karakol* dissolve itself and recognize *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti* (the Association for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (ADNRA-R)) as the only legitimate authority, *Karakol* kept conducting independent policies after the congress, even, culminated in negotiations with the Bolsheviks in İstanbul in January 1920.⁵¹ Because of its independent

⁴⁷ According to Zürcher, instead "The army" we should use "a closely knit group of Unionists colonels or brigadiers. Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.96.

⁴⁸ Criss. p.5.

⁴⁹ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, Preface.

⁵⁰ Criss. p.103

⁵¹ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.119-120.

initiatives, Mustafa Kemal, on March 12, 1920, sent messages to all branches of the ADRA-R to warn against the activities of *Karakol*.⁵² However, it was very difficult for Ankara to control Karakol, for it operated from occupied İstanbul. But, thanks to the renewed Allied occupation of Istanbul on March 16, 1920, Karakol collapsed. By the end of May 1920, many “nationalist undesirables” in İstanbul had been arrested and exiled to Malta. Among them were leading members of Karakol.⁵³ “On April 23, 1920, Karakol assumed the name *Zabitan* (Officers), which was changed to Yavuz (Courageous) in October 1921. Devoid of energetic leadership and in Ankara’s disfavor, Karakol no longer played an effective role in the resistance after 1920.”⁵⁴ On April 23, 1920 it was officially announced that Karakol had been disbanded and it had been replaced with, as Zürcher indicates, “an obedient instrument of Ankara”, known as *Müdafaa-i Milliye* or *Mim Mim* group (the National Defense Group).⁵⁵

The fact that the Entente increased their pressure in İstanbul after its re-occupation on March 16 strengthened Mustafa Kemal’s position in Ankara. The parliament was replaced with the Great National Assembly, convened in Ankara and made up of members of parliament who had managed to escape from İstanbul, supplemented with the newly elected representatives of the National Movement. The parliament in occupied Istanbul could not be easily influenced by Mustafa Kemal. In fact Mustafa Kemal could not manage to establish *Müdafaa- Hukuk Grubu* (the Group of Defense of the Rights) and convince the parliament to make himself president of the parliament. Yet the nationalist in the parliament established another

⁵² Ibid., p.122.

⁵³ Criss. p.113.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.114.

⁵⁵ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.122.

group, *Felah-ı Vatan*⁵⁶ (Deliverance of the Fatherland), and often went their own way and Mustafa Kemal did not become the president of the parliament.

The British re-occupation led to the strengthening of Mustafa Kemal's position but the political life subsequently was not serene. In 1920 and 1921 Mustafa Kemal's position was threatened both from left and right. In these years a clear left wing opposition against Mustafa Kemal in *Yeşil Ordu* (Green Army) and then *Halk Zümresi* (People's Faction) in the assembly took place. In the spring of 1920, Yeşil Ordu was founded with the approval of Mustafa Kemal.⁵⁷ Yeşil Ordu became a serious political force when it was joined by Çerkez Ethem. As Niyazi Berkes indicates, Mustafa Kemal was one of political figures involved in serious contest to seize the power. By the time Mustafa Kemal increased his power all other contestants had put their hope in the Yeşil Ordu, which was expected to vanquish Mustafa Kemal.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Mustafa Kemal, warned by his experiences with Karakol, had Yeşil Ordu disbanded in July, 1920.

In the same month that Yeşil Ordu was disbanded, the leftist radicals in the assembly established Halk Zümresi (the People's Faction). To counter the left wing opposition Mustafa Kemal in October 1920 founded his 'own' communist party, which is known as '*resmî*' (official) *Türkiye Komünist Firkası* (the Communist Party of Turkey). But members of the left wing of the nationalist movement who did not

⁵⁶ This group annoyed Mustafa Kemal so much that he on purpose called them *Fellah-ı Vatan*. Fellah means Egyptian peasant.

⁵⁷ Falih Rıfkı Atay notes the following regarding the Green Army in his memoirs: "Mustafa Kemal favored the movement initially [thinking that] it would be beneficial. He also installed some of his trusted allied into the organization. Later on, Çerkes Edhem was deemed the main anchor of the Green Army. The newspaper that was run by the man named Arif Oruç in Eskişehir assumed quite a leftist character. When the circumstance signaled danger, Mustafa Kemal was forced to disband the Green Army Association, with many difficulties. Falih Rıfkı Atay. *Çankaya*, (İstanbul: Dünya Yayınları, 1961), p.257. Quoted from Fethi Tevetoğlu. *Milli Mücadele Yıllarında Kuruluşlar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), p.211.

⁵⁸ Niyazi Berkes. *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* (Yayına Hazırlayan: Ahmet Kuyaş), (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2004), pp.491–492.

recognize this party founded the *Halk İştirakiyun Firkasi* (the People's Socialist Party) in December 1920. Mustafa Kemal Pasha took steps to crush the left wing movement in January 1921. First he ordered Çerkez Ethem to disband his troops and let them be integrated in the regular army. When Ethem refused, troops were sent against him, most of his men were taken prisoner and he himself fled and went over to the Greek side. In the same month *Halk İştirakiyun Firkasi* was dissolved and a number of its leaders tried.⁵⁹

The situation in Anatolia in 1920 and 1921, as Zürcher indicates, probably encouraged Enver Pasha to attempt to re-establish himself in Anatolia relying on the great prestige he preserved in the army and among various local and regional Unionist groups. Therefore, both Bolsheviks and left wing of the national movement regarded Enver for the leadership of the nationalist resistance as a viable, left-wing and radical alternative to Mustafa Kemal. A group of former Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa members joined him in the establishment of the *İslam İhtilal Cemiyetleri İttihadı* (the Union of Islamic Revolutionary Organizations) and subsequently, he founded a Turkish branch, *Halk Şuralar Fırkası* (the Party of People's Soviets). He maintained contact with a number of individuals in Ankara to ensure the circulation of propaganda material within Turkey. Nonetheless, the dissemination of Enverist propaganda was prevented via measures taken by Mustafa Kemal, which reached as far as replacement of unreliable officers in critical offices.⁶⁰

Enver's last attempt at a come back coincided with the Sakarya War. In August 1921 Enver was refused entry into Turkey, but supporters from Anatolia met him in Batum and he was in constant touch with leading members from the

⁵⁹ Zürcher. *Turkey A Modern History*, pp.157-158.

⁶⁰ Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, pp.127-130.

nationalist organization in Trabzon. Early in September his group held a congress in Batum, in the name of the Committee of Union and Progress. This, according to Zürcher, shows that he “aimed at the support of the Unionists in the nationalist organization”⁶¹ However, by September 15 it became clear that the troops under the control of Mustafa Kemal had beaten the Greek army. This victory saved Mustafa Kemal’s position and Enver left Batum to embark on an adventure to establish a new Islamic\Turkic empire, but he died in June 1922 while fighting against the Red Army at the head of Turkic guerilla bands near the Afghan border.⁶²

Elimination of the Opponents in the First Grand National Assembly

The *de jure* occupation of İstanbul by the Entente took place on the morning of March 16, 1920. On the evening of March 16 British soldiers went to the parliament and arrested deputies Rauf Bey and Kara Vasif Bey. On March 18, the parliament dissolved itself. Mustafa Kemal, who from the beginning wanted the parliament to convene not in İstanbul but in Anatolia, announced that an assembly with extraordinary authority would convene in Ankara. According to this announcement, the deputies who would manage to arrive at Ankara and those who would be newly elected would constitute the new assembly. In the elections every constituency, regardless of its population, would elect five deputies and these new comers would be elected by the members of town councils and of the Societies for the Defense of the Rights.⁶³ On April 23, 1920, the Grand National Assembly convened in Ankara.

⁶¹ Zürcher. *Turkey A Modern History*, p.158.

⁶² Zürcher. *The Unionist Factor*, p.131.

⁶³ Bülent Tanör. *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2000) s.191-192.

Although there was a consensus among the members of the Grand National Assembly on national independence, serious political differences eventually came across.⁶⁴ As Bertrand Russell states, “without some degree of homogeneity government by discussion is unworkable”. Nevertheless, “a sense of solidarity sufficient to make government by discussion possible can be generated without much difficulty in . . . a nation at war.”⁶⁵ This was true for the first National Assembly.

Nevertheless, as time passed, different opinions constituted different groups in the assembly. Mustafa Kemal, in *Nutuk*, mentions *Tesaniüt Grubu* (the Solidarity Grup), *İstiklal Grubu* (the Independence Group), *Müdafaa-i Hukuk Zümresi* (the Group for the Defence of Rights), *Halk Zümresi* (the People’s Group), and *Islahat Grubu* (the Reform Group). Besides these parties, he adds, there were other minor ones which had no names and had been formed for personal aims.⁶⁶

According to Mustafa Kemal, “all the parties . . . , although formed for the purpose of maintaining discipline and securing unanimity of voting during the debates, brought about contrary results through their existence.” As a result, Mustafa Kemal “felt compelled personally to interfere. “Eventually [he] took recourse to forming a party [himself] under the name of the Party for the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia”. Consequently, the Group for the DRA-R was founded on May 10, 1921. The goal of the party was to “secure the integrity of the country and

⁶⁴ Ahmet Demirel. *Birinci Meclis’te Muhalefet: İkinci Grup*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), p.9. The heterogeneous structure of the first National Assembly was expressed by many contemporary observers. See. Falih Rifki Atay. *Çankaya*, (Dünya Yayınları, 1961), p.256. Mahmut Soydan (Hazırlayan: Nejdett Bilgi). *Milli Mücadele Tarihine Dair Notlar Ankaralı’nın Defteri*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006), p.21. Hulusi Turgut (ed.). *Atatürk’ün Sırdaşı Kılıç Ali’nin Anıları*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2005), p.122. Turgut Çarıklı (Yayına Hazırlayan Y. Hakan Erdem). *Babam Hacı Muhittin Çarıklı Bir Kuvay-ı Milliyecinin Yaşam Öyküsü*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2005), p.100. Fethi Okyar. *Üç Devirde Bir Adam*, (İstanbul: Tercüman Yayınları, 1980), p.

⁶⁵ Bertrand Russell. *Power: A New Social Analysis*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.14-15.

⁶⁶ Atatürk, p.495.

the independence of the nation on the principles laid down in the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*)⁶⁷

After its foundation the Group for the DRA-R started to dominate the Assembly. The deputies who were not included in the group acted as an unorganized opposition, but in July 1923 they founded The Second Group for the Defence Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia. According to Ahmet Demirel, the First Group had been composed of 202 deputies, the number of deputies belonged to the Second Group was 63 and 90 deputies were neutral.⁶⁸

The first National Assembly and the opposition to it are very important issues in the history of Turkish Republic. Yet, as Demirel indicates, the literature on the Second Group is not preserved from clichés, which were backed by the approach that the competitors of Mustafa Kemal were “reactionaries or self-serving politicians who tried to stand in the way of Mustafa Kemal’s vision of the new Turkey.” Demirel summarizes the clichés pertaining to the First and Second Groups as follows:

The First Group was the group of the secular, democratic radicals who aimed at abolishing the old-fashioned Ottoman institutions and culture, replacing them with modern, secular, democratic institutions and a rational ideology, and who finally succeeded in realizing this aim. The second Group which stood against them had the aim of preserving the Ottoman institutions, and consisted mainly of the fundamentalists, conservative and reactionary members of the GNA, who were in favor of Shariat. They were mainly against the formation of a secular, modern state.⁶⁹

In his book, *Kemal Atatürk ve Milli Mücadele* (Kemal Atatürk and the National Struggle), Enver Behnan Şapolyo, who, according to Demirel, was one of

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp.495-496.

⁶⁸ Demirel, p.14.

⁶⁹ Demirel, p.15.

pioneers of these clichés, states that the First Group was composed of radicals who supported Mustafa Kemal, and the Second Group was composed of conservatives most of whom were Islamic clerics.⁷⁰ In Hamza Eroğlu's book, *Türk İnkılap Tarihi* (The History of the Turkish Revolution), of which 150,000 copies were published as the official textbook for the universities, the same clichés are repeated: the First Group is depicted as a group which gave great importance to the national will, whereas the Second Group is depicted as a group that wanted to preserve the Sultanate and Caliphate and that was against the unconditional national sovereignty because it implied restrictions on the Sultan's authority.⁷¹

In his classical work, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* (The Development of Secularism in Turkey), Niyazi Berkes states that the Second Group had a supporting society out of the assembly, namely *Muhafaza-yı Mukaddesat Cemiyeti* (Society for the Preservation of Holy Things). This implies that Berkes saw the Second Group as a reactionary organization.⁷² According to Samet Ağaoğlu, another author who considers the groups in the first Grand National Assembly in terms of progressivism-reactionism dichotomy, the Second Group was composed of conservatives who wanted to preserve the organization and the institutions of the empire.⁷³ Another researcher of the period, Sabahattin Selek, also repeats the clichés that "the first group under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal represented the future progressive cadres of new Turkey and the Second Group was the representative of the

⁷⁰ Enver Behnan Şapolyo. *Kemal Atatürk ve Milli Mücadele Tarihi*, (Ankara: Berkalp Kitabevi, 1944), p.416.

⁷¹ Hamza Eroğlu. *Türk İnkılâp Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1982), p.283.

⁷² Berkes. p.502.

⁷³ Samet Ağaoğlu. *Kuvayı Milliye Ruhu*, (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1973), s.59.

conservative ideas with its majority being proponents of the Sultanate and the Caliphate.⁷⁴

Some researchers attempted to explain these two groups on the basis of social classes. Since these class based analysis are relied on the dichotomy suggested by the official historiography, they identified the First Group with petty bourgeoisie (military and civilian bureaucracy), who represented “progressiveness”, and the Second Group with the local notables, landowners and clerics that represented “conservatism”.⁷⁵ According to Demirel, however, there is no justification of such explanations based on class structure. His detailed analysis on the social origins of the members of the groups does not confirm such clear-cut distinctions.⁷⁶

As a matter of fact, the dichotomy of the progressive (*ilerici*) First Group and the reactionary (*gerici*) Second Group cannot be detected in Mustafa Kemal’s narration. In *Nutuk* he does not mention the Second Group in such a way that can be seen as a justification of official approach.⁷⁷ In the early 1923, when he met with some journalists in İzmit, Mustafa Kemal noted that “the difference between those groups was not rooted on principles but on personal and emotional reasons”.⁷⁸

The approaches of some other contemporary observers also do not confirm the Kemalist historiography. In an article published in *Akşam* on January 26, 1923, Falih Rıfkı accused the Second Group of have departed from the First Group for

⁷⁴ Sabahattin Selek. *Anadolu İhtilali*, (İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 1982), s.592.

⁷⁵ Demirel., p.25. For the examples of such approach see Erdoğan Teziç. *100 Soruda Siyasi Partiler:Partilerin Hukuki Rejimi ve Türkiye’de Partiler* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınları), p.25. and Stefanos Yerasimos. *Az gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye, Bizans’tan 1971’e* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1979), p.676.

⁷⁶ See Demirel. pp.136-150.

⁷⁷ Atatürk,. pp.525-527

⁷⁸ Arı İnan. *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’ün 1923 Eskişehir – İzmit Konuşmaları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1982), s.10.

personal reasons.⁷⁹ On February 5, Falih Rıfkı on the same newspaper wrote that “it [was] not true that we attribute[d] to the opposing group [being] “reactionary”.”⁸⁰

In his comprehensive work on the Second Group, Ahmet Demirel, exploring how the newspapers contemplated the opposing group, concludes that the press did not regard a difference between the groups pertaining to the basic principle of the national sovereignty. However, the Second Group was considered as an “emotional” opposition which was in pursuit of personal matters.⁸¹ In an article entitled “Halk Fırkası – İkinci Grup – İttihatçılar”, published in the journal *İleri* on April 6, 1923 by Suphi Nuri (İleri), it was stated that “those who became members of the First Group were friends of Mustafa Kemal, and those who had no choice but to form the Second Group were the ones who could not get along with him.”⁸²

Unlike the Kemalist historiography, Mustafa Kemal and other contemporary observers did not consider the Second Group to be “reactionary”. If that is so, why did the Kemalist version of Turkish history writing denounce the Second Group as “reactionary”? Every attempt at historical imagination is nonetheless, as Nadir Özbek states in his illuminative article on Turkish historiography, conditioned by the needs of the present.⁸³ And, needless to say, Kemalist history writing is not an exception. The history and the policies and the purposes of the governing elite, therefore, must be kept in harmony regardless of the fact that this required distortion of the history. As Zürcher asserts:

⁷⁹ For the whole article see Demirel. pp.533 – 536.

⁸⁰ For the whole article see Ibid., pp.538 – 543.

⁸¹ See Ibid. p.533 – 570.

⁸² Ibid., p.549.

⁸³ Nadir Özbek. “Modernite, Tarih ve İdeoloji: II. Abdülhamit Dönemi Tarihçiliği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme,” *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, Cilt 2, Sayı 1, 2004, p.75.

The elite of authoritarian modernizing regimes, such as that of Kemalist Turkey, which try to accomplish a modernization leap without broad grass-roots support, need to monopolize not only power but also political legitimacy. In order to push through the changes envisaged by the elite, power has to be concentrated in the hands of the dominant group, but at the same time this power monopoly must be shown to be for the good of the country and the nation. To a certain extent this is true of all governments, but a modernizing regime's claim to be acting in the nation's best interest depends on the claim that its vision of the future is correct – in other words, that is uniquely able to identify the nation's problems and to show the way works for the people, even if and when it goes against its wishes (*halka rağmen halkçı* [for the people, in spite of the people] was a Kemalist slogan). Competing ideological approaches and other social projects are then by definition invalid (they are not based on a correct interpretation of the present and the future) and illegitimate in that they endanger progress.⁸⁴

History plays a crucial role in determining what is illegitimate. The role of the history in Turkey has been to brand the opponents of the Kemalist vision of modernity throughout 85 year history of the republic “as supporters of *irtica*”⁸⁵ (religious reaction), the very antithesis of everything for which the Kemalist modernization stands”.⁸⁶ As Gavin D. Brockett, a Canadian historian of modern Turkey, states:

“Turkish elite frequently raised the specter of Islamic “reaction” justifying a harsh repression of all forms of opposition; and since that time the historiography of Turkey has reified the idea by pointing to moments of

⁸⁴ Erik J. Zürcher. “ ‘Fundamentalism’ as an Exclusionary Device in Kemalist Turkish Nationalism,” in: William van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), *Identity Politics in Central Asian and the Muslim World: Nationalism, Ethnicity and Labour in the Twentieth Century* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris; New York: In the U.S.A. and in Canada distributed by St. Martin's Press, 2001), p.214.

⁸⁵ “[T]here exists an “*irtica* paradigm” in modern Turkish historiography which postulates an endless and inevitable conflict between the forces of secular progress and those of reactionary religious conservatism. It casts Atatürk in the positive role of modernizing the nation and rescuing it from backwardness; in contradistinction it stresses the role of aggrieved leaders of the Muslim community – those whose roles were threatened by modernization – in stirring up opposition to change among an inherently conservative and tradition-bound populace. The paradigm, therefore, takes it for granted that Atatürk's vision for the nation was the only one appropriate and that all means were justifiable in order to implement it. It follows that those opposed to Atatürk's vision were, in essence, betraying their own nation and consequently were deserving of both harsh punishment and public denigration.” Gavin D. Brockett. “Revisiting the Turkish Revolution, 1923-1938: Secular Reform and Religious “Reaction”, *History Compass*, 4/6, 2006, pp.1061-1062.

⁸⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher. “The Core Terminology of Kemalism: Mefkure, Milli, Muasır, Medeni,” in: François Georgeon (ed.), *Les Mots de politique de l'Empire Ottoman a la Turquie Kemaliste* (Paris: EHESS/ESA 8032 (CNRS), 2000), p.63.

Islamic “reaction” not only during the Turkish revolution but in subsequent decades. The result has been the indiscriminate application of a paradigm to events with little actual relationship to each other and hence the misrepresentation of Republican history.”⁸⁷

One of the indiscriminate applications of the irtica paradigm can be seen in the Kemalist approach to the Second Group. Although Mustafa Kemal and other contemporary observers did not consider the Second Group as “reactionary”, the Kemalist historiography, some examples of which mentioned above, denounce the group as reactionary.

The “irtica paradigm” has shortcomings for analyzing the Second Group. Then, what were dynamics behind this political opposition? In order to clarify this situation it is necessary to examine the basic points of contention between the fundamental sentiments of the Second Group and the government.

At the head of the list of criticisms made by the Second Group is their attitude towards personal domination. The study by Ahmet Demirel explains this point clearly. According to Mete Tuncay, who exhibits a similar stance, the main aim of the Second Group was to oppose the personal ascendancy of Mustafa Kemal.⁸⁸ Zürcher makes the same assessment and states that the members of the Second Group “ranged from radicals to conservatives but they were united by one aim, i.e. to safeguard the authority of the National Assembly and to prevent Mustafa Kemal from gaining dictatorial powers”.⁸⁹

Aside from these names, which lie outside the predominant approach usually found in writings about Turkish political history, it is possible to come across similar

⁸⁷ Brockett. pp.1068.

⁸⁸ Mete Tunçay. *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetimi’nin Kurulması 1923 – 1931*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2005), p.39.

⁸⁹ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, p.129.

emphases amongst some Kemalist writers. Sadi irmak, who was a MP for Konya during the single-party period, states that the Second Group was made up of conservatives who were “anxious about the formation of a dictatorial regime”.⁹⁰ Another Kemalist writer, Suna Kili, speaks of the Second Group as “being in direct opposition to Mustafa Kemal himself and viewing him as a ‘tyrant’ (dictator) (“*buyurgan*” (*diktatör*)) and an ‘absolutist’ (*saltıkçı*).”⁹¹ When classifying the different groups in opposition to Mustafa Kemal, Falih Rıfkı speaks of a current of “National Sovereignty” trying to prevent the increase in the individual authority of Mustafa Kemal.⁹²

The attitude of the Second Group towards individual domination finds clear expression in the first of the seven articles of their first program. According to this article, the aim of the Second Group was the “abrogation of all authority, privileges, organization and works that were contrary to fundamental principles of the central law of and that are incompatible with national sovereignty.”⁹³ The seventh article also aimed at prohibiting the president of the assembly to join or collaborate with a group in the parliament.⁹⁴ The clear stance of the Second Group on individual authority can be found in an article entitled “An Explanation” (*Bir İzah*) published in Tan newspaper, considered to be the publishing organ of the group and run by the MP for Trabzon, Ali Sukru Bey, one of the leading members of the group. In this

⁹⁰ Sadi Irmak, *Devrim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası, 1967), p.133.

⁹¹ Suna Kili, *Türk Devrim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2007), p.185.

⁹² Atay, p.262.

⁹³ Demirel, p.396. The article number one: “*Hukuk-ı umumiyenin ahkam-ı esasiyesine mugayir ve hakimiyet-i milliyeye münafi salahiyyat, imtiyazat, teşkilat ve icraatın ref'i.*”

⁹⁴ Ibid., The article number seven: “*Meclis reisi ve reis vekillerinin, zümre, fırka ve cemiyet-i siyasiye ile iştigal ve intisabdan azade kalmaları ve bir vaz-ı bitaraifi ahz ve muhafaza etmeleri hususunda nizamname-i dahiliyeye bir madde ilavesi.*”

article written as an answer to the open letter which addresses the questions about the Second Group by Falih Rifkî Atay, the attitude of the group towards personal sovereignty is clearly expressed:

The Second Group is the most sincere beloved of national sovereignty and the most passionate fan and servant of the case for the oral transferral from paper to the arena of action of this lofty aim. The group is forever opposed to the authority and power implied in sovereignty being concentrated or becoming a puppet in the hands of one person or a group. This country now nourishes an opinion which cannot tolerate the existence of personal government in any form.⁹⁵

Anxious about a growing trend from parliamentary sovereignty towards personal sovereignty, the Second Group, with their parliamentary activities, were the unflinching defenders of the idea of parliamentary sovereignty. The occasional removal from power of the parliament by the Council of Ministers was the cause of violent debates. One of the main topics of debate in relation to the way in which power was used was the legal framework of the Law of Supreme Military Command. On 5 August 1921 when the situation was not going well on the frontlines, Mustafa Kemal Pasha was brought to the Supreme Command and given permission to actively use for a period of three months the powers that were the legitimate right of the Parliament. With the acceptance of this law, the commands given by Mustafa Kemal Pasha were now to be accepted as law. The opposing deputies did not oppose the appointment of Mustafa Kemal Pasha to the Supreme Military command and in fact supported it. However, they objected from the start the allowance for the use of parliamentary authority for personal use by the supreme military commander. On 31 October 1921 and in February 1922 after long debates this Law was extended twice for periods of three months each with the same conditions. The extension of the

⁹⁵ Tan, 9 February 1923. Quoted from Demirel, p.545. “İkinci Grup hakimiyet-i milliyenin en samimi aşığı ve bu maksad-ı ulvinin de kağıt üzerinden fiiliyat sahasına nakli hususunun en har taraftar ve hadimidir. Hakimiyetin tazammun ettiği bütün salahiyet ve kuvvetlerin bir elde veya bir zümre elinde baziçe olmasına, temerküzüne ebediyen muhaliftir. Artık bu memlekette her ne şekilde olursa olsun hükümet-i şahsiyelerin vücuduna tahammül etmeyecek bir kanaat beslemektedir.”

period of the Law for the third time was on the agenda again on 4 May 1922 in another secret meeting on which occasion the contrary stance towards parliamentary authority being transferred to an individual was put forth very forcefully relative to previous meetings.

In the open meeting following these secret talks, the opposition obstructed by not voting and for this reason a majority could not be attained. Since the proposal to extend the period for another three months did not pass through parliament, the supreme military command of Mustafa Kemal was legally brought to an end. This situation activated Mustafa Kemal and on 6 May 1922 he held a secret meeting in which the ideas brought up in the previous session were addressed and a solution was searched for. After a long meeting the supreme military command law, under the same conditions, was extended for the third time and this topic was transferred to the next period as the main point of conflict between the government and the opposition.⁹⁶ At the meeting for the next extension however after the Second Group became an organized opposition, Article No 2, which had always caused a reaction amongst the opposition and which gave the Supreme military commander exceptional powers was annulled . Once these powers were removed, the title of Supreme Military Commander given to Mustafa Kemal Pasha was extended indefinitely.⁹⁷

The sensitivity of the Second Group on the issue of placing parliamentary sovereignty over personal sovereignty also showed itself in how the ministers were to be elected. With the change in law made on 4 November 1920, abandoning the essential primary principle, the members of the Council of Ministers were to be selected only from candidates that the parliamentary president nominated. The

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.260-281.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.434.

application of nominating candidates led to occasional hardened debates which went on for a long time between the opposition, which described the process as limiting the powers of the parliament, and supporters of the government.

The opposition would in time refuse to vote for any of the candidates nominated and, remaining noncommittal, adopted a path of preventing any of the candidates from obtaining a majority of the votes. As a result, it became virtually impossible to obtain a result in the first round of elections.⁹⁸ Abstaining from voting and remaining noncommittal, trying to prevent undesirable laws was the biggest weapon the minority opposition had. They used this strategy so well that in March 1922 in his memoirs İsmet İnönü conveys that Mustafa Kemal expressed his opinion that ‘it no longer seemed possible to work with the parliament’ and wanted to learn İsmet’s opinion on “how the situation would be in the army and the country after bringing the activities of the parliament to an end.”⁹⁹

After the Second Group became an organized opposition, the method of nominating candidates was abolished on 8 July 1922 and there was a return to the principle of direct ministerial elections without candidates as had been carried out in the beginnings of the Parliament. Once this method of nominating candidates was abolished, the opposition abandoned its stance of abstinence by remaining noncommittal in the elections and in this way the deadlocks frequently experienced during this period came to an end.¹⁰⁰

The Second Group was also sensitive on the issue of the establishment of an administration based on the law. In January 1923 during meetings made concerning

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.324-327.

⁹⁹ Sebahattin Selek. (ed.). *İsmet İnönü, Hatıralar*, Vol. 2, (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1987), pp.107-108.

¹⁰⁰ Demirel, p.411.

the Individual Freedom Act (*Hürriyet-i Şahiseye Kanunu*), which targeted the guaranteeing of individuals' fundamental rights and freedom, the efforts of the Second Group led to the acceptance of this Act and the leading members of the Second Group had the opportunity to clearly express their attitude on this issue. After declaring that people's personal freedoms in the country and the sovereignty of the law were not up to scratch and that those responsible for this were those members who considered themselves above the law, Huseyin Avni Bey clearly expressed the approach towards this issue by making the statement: 'the rights and law of this nation are our honor'.¹⁰¹

Another member of the Second Group who made a statement during the proposal of this law, Ali Sükrü Bey expressed his sensitivity on this issue with the following words:

I personally believe that since we say that we have sovereignty of the people and we move forward based on this principle, then the essence of people sovereignty is personal sovereignty and immunity. As long as a law that will ensure this does not get accepted here, I personally believe that all other laws are of no value because the basis for all of those is this law. If a people (are not confident that) their rights are going to be protected and if they cannot see a power and force that is going to protect them against the assaults of aggressors, that is if that people do not possess freedom and liberty then they will become the slaves of tyrants and despots. Sirs, we must give the people their identity. They must know that they are free in order that they can act under the guidance of their own conscience. In order to show the manifestations of national sovereignty we must first ensure the freedom of its people.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ TBMM ZC, Vol 26, p.389. Quoted from Demirel, p.466. "*milletin hakkı hukuku bizim namusumuzdur.*"

¹⁰² TBMM ZC, Vol 26, p.391-392 Quoted from Demirel, p.467-468. "*Bendeniz zannediyorum ki; mademki hâkimiyet-i milliye vardır diyoruz ve bu esas üzerine yürüyoruz, hâkimiyet-i milliyenin esası kişi hâkimiyeti, kişi dokunulmazlığıdır. Bunu sağlayacak şu kanun buradan çıkmadıkça bendenizce diğer kanunların hiçbirinin değeri yoktur çünkü hepsinin temelini bu kanun oluşturur. Bir halk hakkını muhafaza edeceğini bilmezse ve saldırganların saldırısına karşı kendini savunacak bir kuvvet ve kudret görmezse, yani o halk, hürriyet ve serbestisine sahip olmazsa, mutlaka müstebitlerin, mütegalibenin esiri olacaktır. Efendiler; biz halka benliğini vermeliyiz, halk hür olduğunu bilmeli ki kendi vicdanı doğrultusunda iş görsün. Hakimiyet-i milliye tecellisini göstermek için önce halkın hürriyetin sağlamak gerekir.*"

The fact that out of the 27 articles of the program of the Second Group, 10 of those articles are dedicated to personal rights and freedom shows the groups sensitivity on this topic.¹⁰³ The sensitiveness of the opposition is apparent from their protests they expresses in face of the implementation of the Independence Courts.

Equipped with extraordinary powers, the Independence Courts were established on 11 September 1920 as a result of the “Law relating to Deserters” (*Firariler Hakkında Kanun*), in order to solve the growing problem of army deserters and the implementations carried out by these Courts became another fundamental point of contention amongst those members in favor of the government and the opposition. The expansion of the Independence Courts, on 26 September 1920, to incorporate crimes such as treason, espionage, and any efforts to destroy in whatever manner, the material and spiritual power of the nation served to add fire to the flame of the debates amongst these groups. During talks held in parliament in July 1922 Huseyin Avni bey expressed his opposition to the Independence Courts from the beginning, and stated that it being given powers such as hanging a man based on personal opinion, power which was not even given to the parliament, amazed him, thereby summarizing the attitude of the Second Group.¹⁰⁴ The implementations of the courts were frequently brought to parliament by the opposition as a topic of criticism. Amongst these implementations included enlisting as soldiers into the army the relatives of deserters, and in cases where there were no relatives the levying of fines from the deserters’ village or neighborhood, or the burning or seizure of possessions and property belonging to the deserter. This situation led to the

¹⁰³ See Ibid., pp. 398-399

¹⁰⁴ TBMM GCZ, Vol. 3, pp.607-609 Quoted from Ibid., p.444.

strengthening of opinion in Parliament against the Courts and various proposals were made from limiting the Courts powers to removing them completely.¹⁰⁵

On 17 February 1921 a resolution made by Parliament to end the activities of The Independence Courts, with the exception of the Ankara Independence Court, was accepted based on the opinion of the parliament that there remained no need for the Independence courts and in cases of necessity and with the decision and approval of the Parliament they could be reestablished where necessary. Thus the Courts were discontinued. However, with the defeat that came about during the battle of Kutahya-Eskisehir, the reestablishment of the Independence courts returned to the agenda and on 23 July 1921 it was decided to establish three Independence Courts in Kastamonu, Konya and Samsun.

On 5 August 1921 when Mustafa Kemal Pasha was brought to the office of Supreme Commander, the Independence Courts were linked directly to the Supreme Command and new Courts were established. In addition, the new members of the Courts were appointed by the Supreme Commander. The designation of the members of the court to be assigned by the supreme commander as opposed to the Parliament and the resolutions made by these Courts to remain outside the control of the Parliament became subject to criticism by the opposition, who were not willing to compromise their principle of parliament sovereignty. The Opposition refused to recognize the members appointed by the Supreme Commander and struggled to absolve the Courts or at least bring them under the control of the Parliament.¹⁰⁶

On 20 July 1922, with the changes made in the Supreme Commander Law and as a result of the removal of powers of the Supreme Commander the duties of the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.370.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.371-372.

Independence courts, which had been established by the Supreme Commander and which had acted outside the control of the Parliament, came to an end. On 31 July 1922, as a result of the efforts of the Second Group, the Law of Independence Tribunals was accepted and with this law, parliamentary control over any independence court which was to be formed after that date was ensured.

Meanwhile the Second Group demonstrated a great degree of reluctance towards the formation of any new Independence courts. Attempts by the Council of Ministers to form new Independence Courts in Amasya and the Western Anatolian region came to naught as a result of the obstruction by the Second Group. During this period and with the support of the Second Group, only one Independence Court was set up and that was in El-Cezire and limited to a problem regarding army deserters.¹⁰⁷

According to Ahmet Demirel, due to the endeavors of the Second Group, the First Parliament became one of the most successful democratic parliaments in Turkey's history. The first Parliament had its final meeting on 16 April 1923 following which the country was plunged into an atmosphere of elections. The Second Group decided to abstain from the elections as a group and thus the candidates from the First Group were left on their own in the elections. After the dissolving of Parliament, some deputies, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal in Ankara, formed an election bureau consisting of members from the Board of Directors of the Defense of Rights Group. Working with this group Mustafa Kemal produced a list of candidates. While forming the lists the number of candidates shown equaled the number of deputies in most election zones and thus the selection of all candidates was guaranteed. In addition there wasn't even the need to discover the sentiments of the candidates found on the lists. Ord. Professor Dr. Hifzi Veldet

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.463.

Velidedeoglu, the honorary head of the Society for Kemalist Thought (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*), makes the following assessment of the controlled elections of 1923 and the single-party elections which followed:

In actual fact in all regions MP candidates were selected according to the law regarding two-stage elections, but this was merely a formality. Candidates nominated by the People's Party were always selected. In that case it can be said that rather than 'these candidates being presented for selection to the people' it would be more correct to say that they were 'being presented for approval by the people.'¹⁰⁸

As a result of the elections which ensured the certain success of the First Group Candidates, out of 437 members of the First Parliament, 125 members were selected for the Second parliament. Of these, 114 were members of the First Group, five were independent initially after the elections were conducted under the directorship of Mustafa Kemal they entered the elections as candidates for the first group. Six members who cut all ties with the Parliament before any groups had formed with the First Parliament, were nominated by the elections committee and selected for the Second Parliament. In contrast, none of the members of the Second Group were able to enter the Second Parliament. The only non First Group candidate to win a seat in the elections was an independent candidate from Gumushane called Zeki Bey.¹⁰⁹

Following the elimination of the Second Group after the 1923 "elections" steps were taken towards the rapid formation of an authoritarian single party administration in the country. During the next phase in this period, which is the topic

¹⁰⁸ Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu. *İlk Meclis, Milli Mücadelede Anadolu*, (İstanbul : Çağdaş Yayınları, 1990), p246. "Gerçi iki derceli seçim yasasındaki yöneme göre bütün illerde milletvekili seçimlere yapılıyordu, ama bu seçim için formalite yönüydü. Halk Partisi tarafından gösterilen aday mutlaka seçiliyordu. O halde bu adaylar 'halkın seçimine sunuluyordu' demektense 'halkın onayına sunuluyordu' deyişini kullanmak belki daha yerinde olur."

¹⁰⁹ Demirel. pp.584-585.

of the next chapter, the silencing of the opposition was made easier particularly as a result of the Law for the proposal of peace which was passed in March 1925.

The Last Phase of the Elimination of the Opponents: The Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*)

The elections of 1923 were manipulated not only to exclude the Second Group members, but also the former notables of Union and Progress and the results signified the absolute victory of the A-RDRA nominees. Despite this outcome, “a completely amenable assembly could not be created”.¹¹⁰ In fact, the issue of the newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar*, dated 19 October 1923, points at the fragmentation within the People’s Party by the following:

This recent circumstance and experience indicates that the effort in the previous elections not to have a single opposing deputy elected was in vain, indeed. Was there any point in not holding the election freely when its outcome would emerge like [that of] a free election? At least, it would not have entered the glossary of politics that the word “election” is a synonym of the word “appointment” in our homeland.¹¹¹

Zürcher draws attention to the same issue and states that Mustafa Kemal “had [not] been able to fill the assembly exclusively with people who were dependent on his will and would be prepared to follow him in the wide-ranging reforms he envisaged.” Certain nationalist leaders were too powerful and esteemed to be cast aside.¹¹² Thus, disagreements in the assembly surfaced right at the beginning. In fact, Prime Minister Rauf Bey who constantly disagreed with İsmet Paşa who served

¹¹⁰ Tunçay. p.49.

¹¹¹ *Tasvir-i Efkar* 19 October 1923. Quoted from Faruk Alpaya. *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin Kuruluşu (1923 - 1924)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), p.76. “Bu son vaziyet ve tecrübe gösteriyor ki geçen intihabatta tek muhalif mebus intihab ettirmemek gayreti pek beyhude imiş. Netice serbest bir intihab ile aynı şekilde tecelli edecek olduktan sonra intihabı serbest yapmamakta mana mı vardı? Hiç olmazsa bizim memlekette (intihab) kelimesi ile (tayin) kelimesinin müteredif olduğu siyasi lügatlere girmemiş olurdu.”

¹¹² Erik Jan Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic The Progressive Republican Party 1924 - 1925*, (Leiden, New York, Kobenhavn, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1991), p.30

as the head delegate and the minister of foreign affairs during Lausanne meetings, resigned shortly after the conference came to a conclusion.

However, the proclamation of the republic was among the true sources of tension that led to the emergence of an opposition party. The dissenters criticized the fashion in which the republic had been proclaimed. Mustafa Kemal seized the opportunity provided by a crisis in government to switch to a mode of governance based on the election a president, the appointment of the prime minister by the president and the appointment of the ministers by the prime minister from a conventional system where each minister was elected by the assembly for himself. Rauf Orbay, Refet Bele, Adnan Adıvar and Ali Fuat Cebesoy were not present in Ankara while the Assembly was enacting this decree of substantive importance. In fact, the dissidents-to-be declared that this alteration took place without resorting to adequate deliberations and in great haste.

Rauf Orbay delivered an interview published in 1 November 1923 in the newspaper Vatan expressing his opinions that he was not principally against the republic but its proclamation without it having been adequately discussed in the assembly and in the country. There were only two modes of government according to him: democratic and despotic. He stated that he favored democratic principles and that the change of name did not matter as long as these [principles] were adhered to.¹¹³ Kazım Karabekir uttered similar views in a statement he delivered in Istanbul on November 11:

All along, I have been thinking in this manner: personal and faction reign have been the source of bane of peoples. The reason for our homeland to tumble into this condition is the non-existence of national sovereignty. Considering that republic means national sovereignty, I regard the Republican

¹¹³ Vatan. 1 November 1923 Quoted from Yücel Demirel, Osman Zeki Konur (eds.), *CHP Grup Toplantısı Tutanakları (1923 - 1924)*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002), pp. 23 – 30.

mode fine for our homeland. I have read in the newspapers that there has been a headfirst decision regarding the Republic, I haven't [had] substantive inspections. I am aware of the details.¹¹⁴

The critiques of the Istanbul press and esteemed pashas prompted the People's Party to act and Rauf Bey was summoned to Ankara to depose on his words that appeared in the press. The matter was addressed in the meeting of the People's Party's parliamentary group on November 22. Among the accusation directed at Rauf Bey was the allegation that he was a constitutional monarchist. This allegation was so severe that he could be tried under the jurisdiction of the High Treason Act of April, 1923. Rauf Bey took his defense in the group meeting, stating that he favored the republican mode of government and his true aim was the sovereignty of the nation. Although some party members including Mustafa Kemal demanded his expulsion from the party, the argument was sealed by declaring that there was no disunity within the party.¹¹⁵

Even though the radical group within the People's Party failed to have Rauf expelled, they focused on the status of the caliphate and the attitude of the press. Ten days later, the president of the Istanbul Bar, Lutfi Fikri Bey, addressed the Caliph via an open letter published in the newspaper Tanin and enounced: "My heart wishes that this word of resignation be buried forever, because it would be a disaster for the world".¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Tanin. 11 November 1923 Quoted from Nevin Yurdusever Ateş. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Kuruluşu ve Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası, (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınları, 1994), p.72. "*Öteden beri şöyle düşünürüm; şahsi ve zümrevi saltanat milletlerin daima bais-i felaketi olmuştur. Memleketimizin bu hale düşmesinin sebebi hakiki hakimiyet-i milliyenin mevcut olmamasıdır. Cumhuriyet hakimiyet-i millie demek olacağına nazaran, Cumhuriyet şeklini memleketimiz için iyi bulurum. Cumhuriyet hakkında alelacele bir karar verildiğini gazetelerde okudum esaslı tetkikatım yoktur. Teferruata vakıf değilim*"

¹¹⁵ See Yücel Demirel, Osman Zeki Konur (eds.), pp.17-107.

¹¹⁶ Tunçay.p.74. "*Gönül istiyor ki bu istifa sözü ebediyen gömülsün kalsın, çünkü dünya için bir felaket olur*"

Some Istanbul newspapers published on 5 December 1925 a letter from the Indian Muslim leaders Emir Ali and Aga Khan addressed at İsmet Pasha in which they requested the elucidation of the legal status of the caliphate and called attention to the necessity of the preservation of the religious leadership of the Islamic world as a means of spiritual and moral connection between Muslim peoples. İsmet Pasha and the radical group interpreted the contents of the letter as a foreign intervention into the internal affairs of Turkey and the status of the papers that published the letter as high treason. In the end, it was decreed by 156 votes in favor for 22 votes against that the Independence Tribunal be re-erected and sent to Istanbul.

This incident was the first where the would-be members of the future Progressive Republican Party cast a block vote against the government. Consequently, Lütü Bey was sentenced to five years of imprisonment, but all the journalists were acquitted.¹¹⁷

An attempt to establish peace with the press has been made ensuing the acquittal of the journalists before Istanbul Independence Tribunal. In order to achieve this, Mustafa Kemal invited the journalists that have been tried in the aforementioned case and the editors of the newspapers that favored the government to Izmir and called them “to bring into being a fortress of steel encompassing the Republic.”¹¹⁸ However, the air of rapprochement that arose from this meeting did not last long.¹¹⁹

According to Tunçay, the underlying cause of these negotiations with the journalists was to rally support in advance before the upcoming meetings in March, 1925 where the abolition of the caliphate was to be addressed. Faculty members and

¹¹⁷ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic* p.36.

¹¹⁸ Ahmet Emin Yalman. *Yakın Tarihte Görüp Geçirdiklerim*, vol. III, (İstanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1970) p.106 Quoted from Tunçay. p.89.

¹¹⁹ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, p.37.

most importantly the military were other institutions whose favor was highly sought. Mustafa Kemal participated in the field maneuvers that took place in Izmir in 15 – 20 February 1925 and sat down with the commanders.¹²⁰

The abolition of the caliphate carried great weight for the position of the opposition. Some impressions arose in the period from the abolition of the Sultanate to the proclamation of the Republic that the Caliph would be regarded the president of the state. Nevertheless, the abolition of the caliphate, the political status of which had been greatly degraded with the proclamation of the republic, signified an important landmark in the path to personal supremacy Mustafa Kemal sought.¹²¹

Tunçay argues that an understanding of at what those who objected to the abolition of the caliphate in the last months of 1923 and the first months of 1924 might have aimed truly should be sought in the conditions that determined the transition from “constitutional monarchy” (*saltanat-ı meşrua*) to “absolute republic” (*cumhuriyet-i mutlaka*) in respect to the formation of the single party.¹²² Even though certain rumors about the fragmentation in the People’s Party and the establishment of an opposition party frequented the political agenda right after the abolition of the caliphate, the actual establishment of the opposition party was to begin later.¹²³

As of March, rumor had it that the new party was on the way.¹²⁴ On the other hand, Zürcher claims that the first serious negotiations pertaining to the formation of a new party occurred among the pashas which gathered that summer.¹²⁵ The foremost

¹²⁰ Tunçay, p.90.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.72.

¹²² Ibid., p.73.

¹²³ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, p.38.

¹²⁴ Tunçay, p.104.

¹²⁵ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, pp.40–41

item on the agenda of the opposition leaders was the nature of their relation to the president. However, Mustafa Kemal's approach to this matter crystallized prior to the party's establishment in a statement he delivered in Trabzon in 16 September 1924 that follows:

Friends, let those who in this context keep harping on the point of the relation between the presidency of the republic and that of a party, let the whole world, know that I am partisan: partisan to the mental and social revolution. I cannot conceive of any individual in Turkey as being an outsider with respect to this point which forms the ideal and basic principles of the People's Party. Therefore I am proud to maintain my position as general president of the party, even though I am president of the republic. This was I think I shall serve the strengthening of the new Turkish state, the Young Turkish republic.¹²⁶

Mustafa Kemal makes a similar address in Samsun four days later and expresses more overtly his views on opposition:

... Today we stand at the head of a clear-cut road. The distance covered is too small to influence our plans. All positions must first acquire the necessary clarity and precision. Until that has been happened, the thought of having more than one party is common partisanship and, ladies and gentlemen, from a point of view of order and safety of country and nation the condition to open the way for the establishment of more than one party have not been met yet. To make use at such a time, at what has to be the very beginning, starting today, of positions which will be attained in due course, has no other result than to rupture the unity of the nation to prove a theoretical point. At all the places I have visited and seen, my conclusion was that this truth has been grasped completely.¹²⁷

These statements plainly specified the position of the president and rendered expectations of a non-partisan president false hopes.

The incident that triggered the rupture with the People's Party and the foundation of the Progressive Republican Party was a motion for a question dated 20 October 1924. Kazım Karabekir Pasha resigned from his military office the same

¹²⁶ Arsan, Vol.II, p.195. The translation was quoted from Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, p.42.

¹²⁷ Arsan, Vol.II, p.195. The translation was quoted from Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic* , p.43.

day, Ali Fuat Pasha ten days later. Mustafa Kemal refers to this in his Great Speech as “The Conspiracy of Pashas.”¹²⁸ However, it should be taken into consideration that the dissident pashas would be greatly advantaged in their military office should they have aimed at seizing power by using the military as an instrument.¹²⁹ Upon his discomfort because of this “conspiracy”, Mustafa Kemal withdrew commanders that adhered to him from the Assembly and reinforced his control on the military.¹³⁰

The argument that started with the motion for a question in October 20 led to a censure motion regarding a minister. However, İsmet Pasha extended the scope of the motion to regard the government on the grounds that the motion pertained to the rest of the ministries as well. The underlying cause of this decision was to play on the hesitancy of the Assembly to remove the whole government from power.

Consequently, the government obtained vote of confidence with 148 votes against 19. Rauf Bey and ten of his allies resigned from People’s Party after the vote.¹³¹

Contrary to wishful expectations, no flood of resignations from the People’s Party ensued. The number of resignations peaked at 42 or 43 at the end of November and 32 of those who resigned joined the opposition party.¹³² Upon the dissemination of the rumors that the new party would display the word “Republic[an]” in its title, the People’s Party renamed itself the Republican People’s Party on November 10. Yet, more sanctions against this dissident formation were on the way. Mustafa Kemal pursued a very cautious policy toward Progressive Republican Party. This caution resulted in the appointment of Fethi (Okyar) who was deemed a moderate

¹²⁸ Atatürk, pp.678 – 688.

¹²⁹ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, p.46

¹³⁰ Tunçay, p.105.

¹³¹ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, pp. 48 – 50.

¹³² Ibid., p.53.

figure prime minister on November 21.¹³³ This temperate and conciliatory approach was declared by publishing an interview made by Maxwell Macartney, who operated as the Istanbul correspondent of the *Times* magazine at the time, with Mustafa Kemal in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* in 11 December 1924. Mustafa Kemal stated the following in this interview:

In the countries which are based on the principle of national sovereignty and especially in those which have acquired a republican administration, the existence of political parties is a natural phenomenon. In the Turkish Republic, too, competing parties will undoubtedly come into existence. Faced with this normal situation, the Ghazi's attitude will be none other than normal.¹³⁴

According to a document dispatched to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the British Embassy the original version of the interview deviated from this edition and indicated that Mustafa Kemal's opinions on the opposition part had not changed and he strategically appeared to accede to opposition. Macartney returned to Istanbul on November 21 and informed the Embassy of the content of his interview with the President. The British Ambassador reported the accounts of Macartney from the interview as follows:

If I have been wondering what the President will do next, here is an answer for me in this very remarkable document. The Progressives are insincere in their republicanism, their programme is a fraud, and they are mere reactionaries. Everything reported implies that the President will have nothing to do with the new opposition, and his language to Mr. Maccartney, not reported, and the tone of his remarks indicated clearly that he meant war to knife. The Ghazi worked himself into a perfect frenzy; he turned red in the face as he tiched off each member of the opposition in turn, characterizing them as ungrateful to himself, to whom they owed all, and as traitor to their country. The deputy who acted at the interview as introducer and half as interpreter interrupted more than once, exclaiming: "Be check the flood of indignation. Mr. Macartney has come away from Angora thinking that pistols will be going off in earnest in a very short time, and that Vassif and Nejati have left the government in order to come down to Constantinople at the head

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 55 – 58.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.60.

of a more businesslike tribunal of independence which will decorate the Galata Bridge with hanging corpses.¹³⁵

However, Mustafa Kemal objected to the original version of the interview to be published and it was altered before being published in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. The *Times* never published the text that was censored in this fashion.

The Progressive Republican Party was officially opened on November 16 and declared a program that was advocating democracy in politics and liberalism in economy.¹³⁶ The activities regarding the organizational structuring of the party commenced. According to certain newspaper, the party faced no challenges whatsoever in opening offices. The party had opened offices in 11 districts of Istanbul, in Urfa, Trabzon, Sivas, Samsun and Eskişehir two and a half months later after its establishment.¹³⁷ However, the PRP failed to display success in the by-elections organized in order to designate new deputies to replace the commanders that withdrew from the Assembly and held between December 1924 – February, 1925. This failure may be attributed to the fact that the party was newly founded. In addition, the electoral system that was in effect at the time was based on the vote of the secondary electorate. The party's success was determined by the number of the second-tier electors that considered abandoning the People's Party.¹³⁸

The short-lived PRP did not possess significant influence in the Assembly against the RPP which strengthened the internal discipline of the party in the process of the formation of an opposition party. The opposition in the Assembly persistently attacked the undemocratic exercises of the government (the extensive authority of the

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.61.

¹³⁶ Tunçay. p.108.

¹³⁷ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, pp. 62-63.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp.65-66.

Interior Ministry, the closure of newspapers, the prevention of a dissident candidate from winning the election and government intervention in the elections).¹³⁹ However, this democratic attitude was not reflected in the imposition of martial law or the amendment of the High Treason Law because of the atmosphere that emerged upon the outbreak of the Sheikh Sait Revolt in February, 1923. The motions for the imposition of martial law in the provinces where uprisings prevailed and the widening of the scope of high treason to include utilization of the religion and religious holies for political motives were passed unanimously. Kazım Karabekir, who addressed the Assembly during the deliberations on behalf of the opposition, expressed support for the government by declaring that the nations stood as a single body against the present menace.¹⁴⁰

The radicals that favored rigidity were not satisfied with the measure of sanctions and removed Fethi Bey from power with a censure motion. The first exercise of the new government formed on March 4 under the leadership of İsmet Paşa was to pass the Law on the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun*) and erect two Independence tribunals. The first application of the Law on the Maintenance of Order was the closure of the Istanbul based newspapers and periodicals *Tevhid-i Efkar*, *İstiklal*, *Son Telgraf*, *Aydınlık*, *Orak Çekiç* and *Sebilürreşat* by the government on 6 March 1925. *Tanin* found itself on the list one month later. In the era of the Law on the Maintenance of Order, numerous newspapers were closed in various regions of the country.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.79.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.81.

¹⁴¹ Tunçay, p.149.

The PRP got its share of the suppression policies pursued because of the Sheikh Sait Revolt. Many PRP members in Eastern provinces were arrested. The Istanbul headquarters of the PRP were searched and documents were confiscated on April 13 on the grounds that PRP members were being tried before the Ankara Independence Tribunal on the allegation of using religion as an instrument of politics. This tribunal called for the government's attention and appropriate action by the reason that it has been proven that *irtica* was fomented with the principle of being "respectful to religious views and creed" in the PRP program with its verdict that sentenced the convicts of the respective case with imprisonment from 5 – 15 years to life. Reflections arguing that this article of the party's program served as solicitation for the counter-revolutionaries appeared in the press favoring the government. Consequently, the government decreed the closure of the main and subsidiary offices of PRP in its meeting on June 3.¹⁴²

The parliamentary group of the PRP continued to operate since the status of the deputies was not lifted. It only ceased to function following the assassination attempt on Mustafa Kemal in Izmir.¹⁴³ An assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal had been unearthed in Izmir on 15 June 1926 and this development was utilized to dispose of possible adversaries. 21 PRP deputies were among those apprehended. Six of these deputies were executed. Rauf (Orbay) and Adnan (Adıvar) were sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment, but they avoided persecution because they were abroad. Kazım Karabekir Pasha was acquitted due to popular support and signs of discontent in the military.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid., p.153.

¹⁴³ Zürcher. *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, p.92.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.93.

The 19 remaining deputies (after the loss of six) of the PRP have never sat in the Assembly again. Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Refet Bele returned to the Assembly while Mustafa Kemal was still healthy and alive. Seven of former PRP members including Rauf Orbay, Kazım Karabekir and Adnan Adıvar only returned to the Assembly upon the endeavors of İsmet İnönü to reconcile with former opposition leaders.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Tunçay, pp.114. 115.

CHAPTER 2

SİVAS IN THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

The National Struggle and the Nation

The first bit of information that is available to us about Sivas¹⁴⁶ during the National Struggle Era is the “passionate reaction” displayed by the people of Sivas upon the occupation of İzmir. According to what we gather from a paper presented at a *Sivas Congress International Symposium* in Sivas, the first of which was convened in 2002, following the occupation of İzmir, the people of Sivas “rained the Sultan, the government and the Entente Powers’ representatives with protests” and “assumed the state of an absolute solidarity and uprising.”¹⁴⁷

This paper enlightens us further on the subject:

Upon learning that İzmir had been occupied by the Greeks from the telegraphs of İzmir Defense of Rights Society dated May 14 and various press agencies, the notables of Sivas gathered in the Defense of Rights Society and started to contemplate what was due. At the end of the meeting it was decided to organize a large meeting on 17 May 1919. A huge demonstration with the participation of one hundred thousand people was held on the day agreed.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Sivas was the center of an Otoman *beylerbeylik*, which was called Rumiyye-i Suğra or Eyalet-i Rumi. Amasya, Bozok, Canik, Çorum, Divriği, Arapkir ve Sivas were sanjaks of that province. Sivas became a vilayet with a decree passed in 1863. Amasya ve Tokat sanjaks were parts of this vilayet. Later, these sanjaks were also detached and became separate vilayets. Sivas was composed of following kazas until the end of 1926: Sivas, Koçhisar, Yıldızeli, Darende, Kangal, Aziziye, Şarkışla, Divriği, Gürün, Zara. Rıdvan Nafiz – İsmail Hakkı, *Sivas Şehri*, Sivas: Seyran Yayınları, 2005, p.113. What we refer to as Sivas in this paper is the central kaza of Sivas.

¹⁴⁷ Haluk Selvi. “İzmir’in İşgali Üzerine Sivas’tan Çekilen Protesto Telgrafları”, in *Sivas Kongresi III. Uluslar arası Sempozyumu* 2-3 Eylül 2004, edited by Nilgün İnce, (Ankara: AKDYYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2005), p.64.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.65.

“İzmir’in Yunanlılar tarafından işgal edildiğini İzmir Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Osmaniye Cemiyeti’nin 14 Mayıs [1919] tarihli telgraflarından ve çeşitli ajanslardan öğrenen Sivas’ın önde gelen kişileri hemen Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti’nde toplanarak yapılması gerekenler üzerinde düşünmeye başladılar. Toplantı sonunda 17 Mayıs 1919 tarihinde büyük bir miting düzenlenmesine karar verildi. Belirlenen tarihte yüz bin kişinin katılmasıyla Sivas’ta büyük bir miting tertiplendi.”

If scientific validity is to be claimed in academic historiography, that is, it is not immune to the effects of daily political, social concerns, etc., it can be argued that it is limited to the technical requirements of the craftsmanship of historiography only.¹⁴⁹ In terms of the paper above, a mass meeting encompassing some one hundred thousand demonstrators held only three days after the advent of the news of İzmir's occupation to Sivas without noting any reference whatsoever can be regarded within this context since the population of Sivas' center was composed of 37,883 Muslim males, 36,595 Muslim females, 13,525 non-Muslim males and 13,145 non-Muslim females, thus 101,148 residents in total at the time according to 1903 yearbook.¹⁵⁰ According the 1927 census, the city's population was 57,053, of which 28,347 were male and 28,706 were female.¹⁵¹ A demonstration with some one hundred thousand participants on 17 May 1919 could not have taken place in Sivas, the population of which included 74,478 Muslims in 1903, yet fell to 57,053 according to the 1927 census due to prolonged warfare and migrations.

Furthermore, the exact date the meeting took place is debatable. Historian Afet İnan notes May 27 as the date of the demonstration in Sivas to protest the Greek occupation of İzmir.¹⁵² A historian from the city with previous works on Sivas during

¹⁴⁹ Özbek. p.75.

¹⁵⁰ Ramazan ÖZEY. "20. Yüzyıl Başlarında Sivas'ın Tarihi Coğrafyası", in *Cumhuriyetin 80. Yılında Sivas Sempozyumu 15-17 Mayıs 2003 – Sivas Bildirileri*, (Sivas: Sivas Hizmet Vakfı Yayınları, 2003), p.137.

¹⁵¹ Gülpınar Akbulut. "Sivas İlinin Başlıca Nüfus Coğrafyası Özellikleri" *C.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, May 2007, Vol. 31 No:1 p.87.83-100.

¹⁵² Afet İnan. *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Türk Kadını*, (Ankara: TBMM Yayınları, 1985), p.11.

the National Struggle Era denotes that the news item from *Hadisat Gazetesi*, a newspaper of the period, reporting the demonstration is dated May 25.¹⁵³

As each and every act of imagination regarding the past is conditioned by the instant in which it exists, so is the historiography is essentially an act of construction.¹⁵⁴ It is obvious that the imaginings related to the War of Liberation in Republic's Turkey were shaped accordingly. Within this context, the concept of a nation coalescing around the idea of independence appeals to many. In fact, thanks to the appeal of the aforementioned concept, the National Struggle is defined as a quite “smooth” movement which encompassed the totality of the “Turkish” nation mobilized around “national emotions.”

The cadres leading the National Struggle asserted from its inception that the movement rested upon an aggregate nation. In a speech delivered at the end of the Sivas Congress, Mustafa Kemal said that the Sivas Congress manifested that the “homeland [was] monolithic” and the “nation [was] aggregate.”¹⁵⁵ The emphasis on the nation's support of the movement was considered important political leverage for establishing legitimacy.

The newspaper *İrade-i Milliye*¹⁵⁶ (National Will), which started to be published immediately after the Sivas Congress by Mustafa Kemal with the

¹⁵³ Necip Günaydın. “Milli Mücadelede Atatürk'ün Temas Kurduğu İlk Sivaslılar”, in *Cumhuriyetin 80. Yılında Sivas Sempozyumu 15-17 Mayıs 2003 – Sivas Bildirileri*, (Sivas: Sivas Hizmet Vakfı, 2003), p.88.

¹⁵⁴ Özbek, p.72.

¹⁵⁵ *İrade-i Milliye*, 14 September 1919.

¹⁵⁶ *İrade-i Milliye*, the first issue of which was published on 14 September 1919 ensuing a decree of the Congress committee in Sivas Congress, served as the official publication of the National Struggle until Mustafa Kemal and the Representative Committee left Sivas (21 December 1919). Later, this function was passed to *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* following its inception in Ankara on 10 January 1920. Afterwards, *İrade-i Milliye* donned the character of a local newspaper in Sivas. Its last known issue is the 254th, dated January 3rd, 1922. The first forty-one issues excluding the 40th are present in Turkey. Also the library of Chicago University currently holds the issues 67, 84, 95, 118, 134 and 254.

subheading “the Advocate of Demands and Deeds of the Nation” and served as the mouthpiece of the national movement until the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* (National Sovereignty) was founded later in Ankara, bears the mark of a concern for legitimacy from its first issue. In fact, the editorial of the first issue discusses the efforts of the Istanbul government presided over by Damat Ferit Pasha which unjustifiably accused the National Struggle of disguising “the national tumult in Anatolia” as “Unionism and Bolshevism” and how the government regarded the movement a “band of highwaymen.”¹⁵⁷

Upon allegations of Unionism all delegates in Sivas were required to swear that they “would not pursue any personal goal besides the happiness and well-being of the fatherland and the nation, would not work for the resurrection of the CUP or for the political aims of any existing party.”¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, during its inception, a license holder who wasn’t a Unionist was sought for the National Will. Rasim Bey,¹⁵⁹ who figured among the notables of the Sivas Defense of Rights Society and also depicts the incident in his memoirs as follows,

The necessity that its concessionaire and responsible manager would not be affiliated by any possible means to Union and Progress or other parties and cliques in order to display that the newspaper was not serving the deeds and purposes of any party or clique but representing the will and the deeds of the whole nation, was articulated by some delegates of the congress, particularly Bekir Sami Bey and it was entrusted upon me to find a neutral man fulfilling these requirements.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ *İrade-i Milliye*, 14 September 1919.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Rasim Bey (Başara): Born in Sivas, 1886. Başara, who completed his higher education in Istanbul School of Literature, served as deputy of Sivas for two terms after 1909. He played an active role in the Association of Defense of Rights after returning to Sivas upon the dissolution of the Assembly in 1918. He joined the Turkish Great National Assembly in 23 April 1920 as deputy of Sivas. Rasim Başara who represented Sivas for consequent five terms of office died in 1945. İbrahim Aslanoglu. *Sivas Meşhurları*, vol.1, (Sivas: Sivas 1000 Temel Eser, 2006), p.192. Besides, his Unionist character is mentioned in Yularkiran, p.31.

¹⁶⁰ “Gazetenin bir fıkranın veya zümrenin amal ve maksadına hadim olmayıp bütün milletin irade ve âmâlını temsil ettiğini göstermek için de sahib-i imtiyaz ve müdir-i mes’ulünün İttihad ve Terakki ve diğer zümre ve fıkralarla uzaktan yakından bir alâkası olmaması lüzumu kongre murahhaslarından

Mustafa Kemal also denied these allegations in a statement he made for the newspaper *Yenigün* on 11 October 1919.

Those who accuse us of being Unionist forget that the national operations are executed by the whole nation. If there were supposed to be Unionism at play, the whole nation would be alleged with Unionism. With our declarations broadcast so far and the oath endorsed in the general assembly, we have announced to the universe in excess that we are not affiliated to any party and not related with Unionism.¹⁶¹

So declared Kazım Karabekir Pasha in a telegraph that was published in *İrade-i Milliye* on September 21, he reported to the Sultan that the truth was being distorted by “denial and intentional misinterpretation of the combined force and legitimate aspirations of the whole nation and disguising them as a Unionist maneuver.”¹⁶² In fact, according to the editorial dated September 28 of *İrade-i Milliye*, to present the national movement as a “unionist uprising” is tantamount to refuting the Sultan. For the Sultan himself declares that this movement is “born solely of national motives.”¹⁶³

Another leading claim that placed the National Struggle in confrontation with legitimacy question was the accusation of being a “band of highwaymen.” In fact, the governor of Sivas was ordered through a telegraph dispatched by the Minister of Internal Affairs (*Dahiliye Nazırı*) to apprehend Mustafa Kemal Bey and Rauf Bey

bazılarının, bilhassa Bekir Sami Bey tarafından serdedilmiş ve bu şeraiti haiz bitaraf bir adam bulmak da bana tevdi edilmişti.” Vehbi Cem Aşkun. Sivas Kongresi, (İstanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka, 1963). The first edition of this book was published in 1945 in Sivas.

¹⁶¹ “Bize ittihatçı diyenler unutuyorlar ki Harekât-ı Milliye bütün millet tarafından icra edilmektedir. Eğer işin içinde İttihatçılık olmak lazım gelse bütün millet İttihatçılıkla itham edilmiş olur. Fazla olarak gerek şimdiye kadar neşrettiğimiz beyannamelerle ve gerekse umumî kongrede kabul edilen yemin suretiyle, hiçbir fırkaya mensup olmadığımızı ve İttihatçılıkla alakamız bulunmadığını kâinata ilan ettik.” Nimet Arsan (ed.). *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III*, Vol.3, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1997), p. 3. This interview was also published by *İrade-i Milliye* on 12 October 1919.

¹⁶² *İrade-i Milliye*, 21 September 1919.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 28 September 1919.

and see to their delivery to Istanbul.¹⁶⁴ We come across the perception in the *Times* that the movement was in fact an outlawed one as well. A news article dated 21 August 1919 regarding the Erzurum Congress was published under the heading “Outlawed Turks Organizing against Mandates and Partition”. Again on November 25, 1919 the *Times* describes Mustafa Kemal as a “rebellious general.”

We come upon a series of political maneuvers to counter the allegations of brigandage described in *İrade-i Milliye*. One of these was to declare that the proceeding operations were legal since they were being undertaken by an association ratified by the government.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, it was stated that the concept of gang was not included in the charter of Anatolia and Rumelia Defense of Rights Society and there was no relation whatsoever to gangs except “the venerable holy warriors shedding their blood” at Aydın front.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, articles hinting at the Sultan’s support for this movement “[that] is determined to protect the caliphate and the sultanate” took place to facilitate legitimacy.

His Grace the Caliph, as earlier, by emerging before a foreign correspondent who achieved the honour and stating in a royal declaration that They “are together with the nation” and “stand ready with their claws to defend that which is holy to the nation,” They granted their appreciation to the national movements and declared tacitly that They preside over the movement, and voiced the protection of the government present. The most recent royal declaration can in fact be regarded a historical document exciting the popular conscience and gratitude by joyously disseminating His royal point of view on this matter immediately and perfectly to the nation.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Cevdet R. Yularkıran (ed.), *Reşit Paşa’nın Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitabevi, 1939), p. 24.

¹⁶⁵ *İrade-i Milliye*, 14 September 1919.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19 October 1919.

¹⁶⁷ “Zat-ı hazret-i hilafetpenahi, bundan evvel de, şerefi-mesule nail olan bir ecnebi muhabirine vaki olup bütün cihan matbuatına inikas eden beyanat-ı mülikanalarında “milletle beraber” olduklarını ve “milletin mukaddesatını müdafaa için pençeleşmeye amade” bulunduğunu söyleyerek harekatı milliyeyi lütfen takdir etmiş ve hatta cereyanın başında bulunduklarını zımnen ilan buyurmuş olmakla beraber, hükümeti hazıranın sıyanetinden bahsetmişlerdi: Son beyannameyi hümayun ise hemen

In addition, in a statement he made to *Yenigün* newspaper also Mustafa Kemal notes that he accepts that the Sultan situated the national movement on legitimate grounds by saying “even His Royal Highness announced in Their royal declaration that the national organization is born exclusively of national motives.”¹⁶⁸ The emphasis that the Sultan approves of the national movement can also be found in news items of the paper:

Yesterday, certain men from Istanbul corresponded with the Anatolia and Rumelia Defense of Rights Society Representative Committee in Sivas for 8 hours on the machine. It has been inferred from this correspondence that the national operations are deemed genuinely legitimate and justified as established by the grave faults of the Ferit Pasha cabinet by His Holiest Royal Majesty.¹⁶⁹

Even agents of the Entente Powers in Istanbul were invoked alongside the Sultan to abate legitimacy concerns. Along the lines of this trend we come across a news item dated October 12 1919 in *İrade-i Milliye*, which goes as follows: “It has been obtained from a reliable source that the representatives of the Allies are approving of our national operations.”¹⁷⁰ The newspaper of the same date reports that American political quarters are appreciative of national operations and “acknowledge [that this movement] possesses a national and civilized nature.”¹⁷¹ Another example can be found in an editorial drawn up by Mustafa Kemal of the 9th issue of the

kamilen bu mesele hakkındaki nokta-i nazar-i şahaneyi millete tebşir etmek itibariyle umumun ibret ve minnetini tahrik edecek bir vesika-yı tarihiye addolunabilir.” İrade-i Milliye, 28 September 1919.

¹⁶⁸ Arsan, Vol.3, p.3.

¹⁶⁹ “Dün İstanbul’dan bazı rical Sivas’ta Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Heyet-i Temsiliyesiyle makine başında 8 saat muhabere eylemiştir. Bu muhaberede zat-ı akdes-i hümayunca hareket-ı millîyenin pek meşru ve muhik görüldüğü Ferit Paşa kabinesinin müthiş hatalarının teeyyüd eylediğine dair olduğu istidlal edilmiştir.” *İrade-i Milliye*, 2 October 1919.

¹⁷⁰ “İstanbuldaki itilaf devletleri temsilcilerinin harekât-ı milliyemizi takdir ettikleri bir menba-ı mevsuktan istihbar edilmiştir.” *İrade-i Milliye*, 12 October 1919.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. “... milli ve medeni bir mahiyeti haiz olduğunu tasdik ...”

newspaper in which he notes “the pleasant reaction in the European public opinion brought upon by the national movements.”¹⁷²

However, the basis for this discourse regarding legitimacy was constituted by the presupposition of popular recognition by all of the nation. This is blatantly apparent in an article that was published in the issue dated September 17, 1919 of the newspaper *İrade-i Milliye* with the signature “General Congress Committee”. “The homeland being exposed to the grave danger of surrender due to subjection to external partition and the treason of the central government officials, and especially the government observing the passing events idly alongside enemies trampling that which is holy to the nation have left no other hope to the nation than taking care for itself and thus has been the Anatolian National Organization born of this holy exigency.”¹⁷³

Therefore, it is stated in a telegraph dispatched to the Sultan by the Anatolia and Rumelia Defense of Rights Society Representative Committee that the national movement defined through blotting out of the truth by the cabinet as possessing illegitimate designs is a culmination of the nation’s demands.¹⁷⁴ According to the discourse of the national movement the nation has combined all its energy and capabilities in Anatolia. Therefore, “National Forces (Kuvay-ı Milliye) are in fact Anatolia combined in a single force.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² “... hareket-ı milliyenin Avrupa efkarında hasıl ettiği tesir-i mesudi ...” *İrade-i Milliye*, 27 October 1919.

¹⁷³ “Vatanın haricen taksime maruz olması ve dahilen de hükümet-i merkeziye erkanının hiyaneti sebebiyle en büyük bir tehlike-i teslim altında bulunması ve bilhassa takip edilip duran fiil-i vakiler karşısında hükümetin mukaddesat-ı milliyeyi ayaklar altına alan düşmanlarla beraber seyirci kalması millet için kendi başının çaresine bakmaktan başka bir ümit daha bırakmamış ve Anadolu Teşkilat-ı Milliyesi işte bu ihtiyac-ı mukaddesten tevellüt etmiş idi.” *İrade-i Milliye*, 17 September 1919.

¹⁷⁴ *İrade-i Milliye*, 24 November 1919.

¹⁷⁵ *İrade-i Milliye*, 1 DEcember 1919. “Kuvay-ı Milliye müttehit bir kuvvet halinde birleşmiş Anadolu demektir”

In another article drawn up on the prompting of the elections the following is stated:

We do not doubt that all parties who happen to possess more or less a degree of organization in Anatolia ignoring the few exception who have gone as far as treacherous and debased insurgencies, favor completely the national organization and stand together with the Defense of Rights Association that aims for today only the independence and the integrity of the homeland.¹⁷⁶

Thereby, the national movement that claims to have all of Anatolia in its ranks and bases its legitimacy upon this presumption completes its strategy by categorizing its adversaries as “traitors and debased”. It is not beyond comprehension that the leaders of this movement came up with this strategy and believed it sincerely. However, we hold that its appropriation by historiography without questioning, thus “the traitor vs. patriotic hero” dichotomy built around the imagination of a monolithic nation, hinders us from understanding the National Struggle, the social forces that constituted it, the power struggles among those powers, their differences and the groups that opposed those forces.

The Sivas Congress as a Unifier of All Associations for the Defense of the Rights

This model of a unified, unitary Turkish nation that was utilized by the leading cadre of National Struggle to overcome the legitimacy crisis within the period’s conditions was embodied in and articulated through the history of the National Movement.

In the fourth volume of the first official textbook¹⁷⁷ prepared for high schools at the beginning of 1930s, this issue is handled as follows: “The aspiration for

¹⁷⁶ *İrade-i Milliye*, 17 November 1919. “Biz Anadolu’da az çok teşkilata malik olan bütün fırkaların hainane ve fücürane kıyamlara kadar ileri giden bir iki istisnasından kat-ı nazar olunursa kamilen Teşkilat-ı Milliye taraftar ve bugün için yalnız memleketin istiklal ve tamamiyetini istihdaf edinen Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti il beraber olduklarından şüphe etmiyoruz.”

¹⁷⁷ The first official history textbook for high schools consisted of four volumes and was published in 1932. The essential inspiration for this book was the work “Türk Tarihinin Anahatları” (Essential Lines of Turkish History). All authors of this work except Afet İnan, who was a party member, and Yusuf Ziya, who was to become a deputy two years later, were deputies in the Parliament. Though not

national defense that was born in the spirit of the Turkish nation began to manifest in a united and orderly manner under the direction and control of a genius such as Mustafa Kemal [as of May, 1919].”¹⁷⁸

In this context, the Sivas Congress bears particular relevance. According to the predominant historical approach, Mustafa Kemal succeeded in “assemb[ling] the forces of the whole land in one centre” through this congress.¹⁷⁹ He realized this success by “transforming [local organizations] into branches of the Association for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (ADRA-R).” Here we see that historiography unequivocally appropriates the amendment which states that “the Representative Committee is the representative of the whole country” decreed during the Sivas Congress to the decree of the Erzurum Congress that stated that “the Representative Committee is the representative of the Eastern Anatolia.”¹⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the representative capacity of the Sivas Congress was deficient. There were present delegates from neither occupied Western Anatolia and Rumelia nor the provinces represented at the Erzurum Congress. The delegate count of the initial day did not surpass twenty. In that present case, Mustafa Kemal appointed ten persons from those accompanying him as delegates for a province. Although the exact figure remains unknown numbers of participation between 31-38 have been

an exclusive trait of Turkey, the intellectuals that initiated the nationalist movement also assumed the duty of writing history. These people wearing politicians’ garbs simultaneously were expected to provide intellectual rationale for this newly emerging nation state. They were used as vehicles for state official rhetoric. See Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye’de “Resmî Tarih” Tezinin Oluşumu (1929 - 1937)* (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1992)

¹⁷⁸ *Tarih IV Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1934), (reprinted by İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2001), p.38.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ See İsmet Giritli, “Sivas Kongresi’nin Milli Mücadeledeki Yeri ve Önemi”, in *Sivas Kongresi I. Uluslararası Sempozyumu (2-4 Eylül 2002 - Sivas)*, (Sivas: SiskavYayınları, 2002), pp.25-33. Toktamış Ateş, *Türk Devrim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: DEr Yayınları, 1993), pp.134-135. Berkes, p.480. Ahmet Yücekök, *100 Soruda Türk Devrim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1984), p.50. Suna Kili, *Türk Devrim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), p.49.

uttered. Yet, three delegates from each province were called upon. This required at least 120 delegates attending.¹⁸¹

According to Bülent Tanör, Mustafa Kemal was not satisfied with the representative capacity of the Sivas Congress. In fact, Mustafa Kemal notified Hacı Muhittin Bey, one among the notables of the group of Balıkesir Congresses, that “the need for the General Assembly to gather as an emergency [convention] may arise” in a telegraph he dispatched one week after the closing of the Congress. Again according to Tanör, via the Amasya Negotiations and Protocol (20-22 October 1919)¹⁸² the Istanbul government recognized the Sivas Congress as “the General Congress.” Thus, the members of the Representative Committee could continue to regard themselves as “the representative of the nation”.¹⁸³

Tunçay states that this federative structure was not recognized by associations which were the “member[s]” of ADRA-R, particularly those in the East. So it can be argued that these associations undertaking military, civil and political roles were not fully integrated in the Sivas Congress, not even in terms of formation. Numerous ADRs outside the supervision of ADRA-R and the Representative Committee,

¹⁸¹ Bülent Tanör. *Kurtuluş Kuruluş*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2003), p.81.

¹⁸² Ali Rıza Pasha formed the new cabinet on October 2nd upon the resignation of Damat Ferit Pasha Cabinet in 30 September 1919. The new cabinet harbored sympathy for the national movement. Mustafa Kemal dispatched a telegraph to the Sadrazam on October 3rd, to declare the following: “1. If the new cabinet will recognise the organisation formed by the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses and the aims decided by them, the national forces will support it 2. The new cabinet will not undertake anything of a binding nature regarding the fate of the nation until the National Assembly has met and actual control has been permanently established 3. The delegates who will be sent to the Peace Conference must be selected from among those who are cognizant of the aims of the nation and who enjoy its confidence”. The door of dialogue opened thanks to the Amasya Meeting. Salih Pasha, the Minister of Navy, who came to Amasya on behalf of Istanbul government and Mustafa Kemal were to agree on issues of internal and external policy and even on convening the Assembly outside Istanbul. See Atatürk, p.160.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p82.

ADRA-R's central organ, continued to exist and convene individual congresses at least until the inauguration of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara.¹⁸⁴

"The Unified Sivasians" for the National Struggle

The discourse of a unified Turkish nation can be found in works treating Sivas during the National Struggle Era. These works allude to a people of Sivas collectively supporting the National Struggle. The first among local works to stand out is the book *Sivas Kongresi* (the Sivas Congress) by Vehbi Cem Aşkun.¹⁸⁵ The author who holds "national solidarity and cooperation" to be the greatest weapon there is, states in his foreword the following: "The congress that has been opened on 4 May 1919, Thursday at 14 o'clock is a conscious move of Turkish national existence against all sorts of adversaries. This move relying on Turkish national existence is a live certificate indicating the nobility in the blood and the purity in the spirit of our nation".¹⁸⁶

In another work authored by an academic dealing with the same era it is said that the nation overcame the difficulties through unity and cooperation. According to the author, "The Sivasians who comprehended Turkish state tradition 'in a manner that is fitting to the wise' acted in consciousness of having as guest the future leader of the new state the establishment of which they foresaw."¹⁸⁷ In addition, it is noted

¹⁸⁴ Tunçay. pp.20 -25.

¹⁸⁵ Vehbi Cem Aşkun. *Sivas Kongresi*, (İstanbul: İnkılap ve Aka, 1963). The first edition of this book was published in 1945 in Sivas.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.5. "4 Eylül 1919 Perşembe günü saat 14'de açılan kongre, Türk milli varlığının her türlü düşmana karşı şuurulu bir hamlesidir. Türk milli varlığına dayanan bu hareket, milletimizin kanındaki asaleti ve ruhundaki temizliği gösteren canlı bir vesikadır."

¹⁸⁷ "Türk devlet geleneğini 'arif olana yakışacak şekilde' kavrayan Sivaslılar, kurulacağını sezdikleri yeni devletin önderini misafir etmenin bilincinde olarak davranmışlardır." Ahmet Necip Günaydın. *Milli Mücadelede Sivas ve Mustafa Kemal Paşa (2 Eylül – 18 Aralık 1919)*, (Sivas: 2000), pp.7–8.

in an article titled “Atatürk’s Visits to Sivas” that the people of Sivas did not lag behind in joining ranks with Mustafa Kemal and supported “the national movement with all its cadres”.¹⁸⁸

The reception of Mustafa Kemal in Sivas is presented as the most important indication of the view claiming that the people of Sivas embraced the National Struggle unanimously. The image that the people of Sivas claimed the National Struggle as their own from its beginning on is being cast by deducing it from the enthusiastic welcome Mustafa Kemal received from the people of Sivas when he made a stop there on 27 June 1919 while he was en route for Erzurum Congress and when he came to Sivas on 27 September 1919 for Sivas Congress. Mustafa Kemal describes his first arrival in Sivas as follows, “When we arrived at the gates of Sivas, a dense crowd lined both sides of the road. The troops stood under arms. We got out of our car, and as I walked through them I greeted the soldiers and inhabitants.”¹⁸⁹

According to Cem Vehbi Aşkun, “the lines above [are] noteworthy in terms of displaying the faith of people of Sivas in the *Ata* (the Father) and his exalted ideal”.¹⁹⁰

However, the initial advent of Mustafa Kemal in Sivas occurred in a heavy atmosphere. A telegraph signed by the Minister of Internal Affairs notifying him that Mustafa Kemal Paşa had been discharged and admonishing him against engaging in any sort of correspondence or official proceedings with the Pasha was dispatched to the governor of Sivas on June 23. But according to this telegraph, the task of returning Mustafa Kemal to Istanbul was entrusted to the Ministry of War.

¹⁸⁸ Hüseyin Yıldırım. “Atatürk’ün Sivas’ı Ziyaretleri” *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol.XII, No:36, November 1996. Available online: <http://www.atam.gov.tr/index.php?Page=DergiIcerik&IcerikNo=700>.

¹⁸⁹ Atatürk, p.30.

¹⁹⁰ Aşkun, p.40.

Meanwhile, certain attempts were at play against Mustafa Kemal within the province of Sivas. These attempts were led by Ali Galib Bey, who recently had been appointed the governor of Elazığ and was about to depart. Ali Galib desired the immediate apprehension of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his dispatch to Istanbul. According to him, Mustafa Kemal was engaged in an action of “uprising” against the state. On the other hand, Reşit Pasha, the governor of Sivas, was convinced the telegraph from Istanbul clearly conveyed that the matter of Mustafa Kemal’s return was none of their concern. It was stated in the telegraph that “it is the duty of the Ministry of War, of which [Mustafa Kemal] is a member, to recall him to İstanbul”. Therefore, the governor informed Ali Galib that he had no intention of apprehending Mustafa Kemal.¹⁹¹

In the meantime, Ali Galib and Halid Bey, the president of the Sivas branch of the *Freedom and Accord Party* (Hürriyet ve İtilaf Partisi), succeeded at having declarations proclaiming Mustafa Kemal “a dangerous man, a mutineer, a traitor” posted in the most crowded spots of Sivas. Moreover, it was stated on these declarations that “Mustaf Kemal Pasha was discharged and his dispatch to Istanbul ensuing his apprehension is a matter of a day”.¹⁹² However, the local historian is very cautious in not compromising the people of Sivas.

This move was made solely upon incentive from Ali Galib. His accomplice was the president of the Accord Party. The real people of Sivas were neither aware of this nor did it arouse the desired impact. For, whole people believed that salvation was to be born solely by following him and from that leader only. For that reason, both Ali Galib and the frail figures of the Liberty and Accord party left the scene one by one. Therefore, this ordinary incident cannot be considered a flaw of Sivas as some suppose. The possibility of one Halid Bey’s presence among the huge population of Sivas is similar to the

¹⁹¹ Yularkıran (ed.), p.44 – 47

¹⁹² Ibid., pp. 48 – 49.

presence of a single rotten fruit in a big basket, which should be regarded as natural...¹⁹³

Local historians, who deduced from the fashion in which Mustafa Kemal was received in Sivas that the people of Sivas supported Mustafa Kemal also utilize a set of anecdotes to demonstrate the concept of a coalescent Sivas. Lionel Gossman puts it in his article titled “Anecdote and History”, published in periodical “History and Theory”, that anecdotes are generally used in historiography in a conventional manner to epitomize a more common and general understanding of a situation or trend instead of casting doubt on established historical notions, and their individuality as unusual cases are downplayed.¹⁹⁴ I believe that works dealing with Sivas exemplify this understanding well.

A quotation from the memoirs of Reşit Pasha who served as governor of Sivas during that period is intended at amplifying the desired impact:

Mustafa Kemal Pasha had fanned the capacity of outbreak that perhaps survived as a mere spark, had transformed it into an intense fire. I witnessed him achieving this in some short contacts and talks, with a few signs. Rasim Bey was the foremost among those in Sivas who were animated and inspired by those contacts and signs. He set out to expand the organization of defense of rights, extend the act of propaganda upon the departure of the Pasha.¹⁹⁵

Also Rasim Bey assesses Mustafa Kemal’s first arrival in Sivas similarly.

¹⁹³ Aşkun, p.34.

Bu hareket tamamen Ali Galib’in teşviki üzerine yapılmıştır. Suç ortağı da İtilâf fırkasının Sivas başkanıdır. Asıl Sivas halkının bundan haberi olmadığı gibi, umulan tesiri de yapmamıştır. Çünkü bütün halk, kurtuluşun ancak Mustafa Kemal’in ardından gitmekle ve yalnız o baştan doğacağına inanmıştır. Onun için gerek Ali Galib, gerekse Hürriyet ve İtilâf partisinin zayıf şahsiyetleri birer birer sahneden çekilmişlerdir.

Binaenaleyh bazılarının sandığı gibi, bu basit hâdise Sivas için bir kusur sayılamaz. Koskoca Sivas halkı içerisinde bir Halid Efendinin bulunabilmesi, bir büyük sepet meyva içerisinde tek bir çürüğün bulunması gibi bir şeydir ki, onu da tabii görmek gerektir...

¹⁹⁴ Lionel Gossman. “Anecdote and History”, *History and Theory*, History and Theory 42 (May 2003), p.155.

¹⁹⁵ Aşkun, p.53., Yularkıran (ed.), p.64.

Mustafa Kemal Paşa, Sivas muhitinde belki bir kıvılcım halinde yaşayan feveran kabiliyetini yelpazelemiş, kuvvetli bir ateş haline getirmiş bulunuyordu. Onun bu işi kısa birkaç temas ve görüşte basit bir, iki işaret ile yaptığımı görmüştüm. Rasim Bey o temaslardan ve o işaretlerden şevk alan, feyz alan Sivaslıların başındaydı. Paşanın ayrılmasıyla beraber müdafaa-i hukuk teşkilâtını genişletmeğe; propaganda işini büyütmeye koyulmuştu.

The first time Atatürk came to Sivas from Samsun, he stayed at corps chamber. His directives were to gather the majority of the people, particularly the enlightened and young elements around intent and aim, to prepare them for active resistance; to take appropriate measures against disruptive propaganda and circulations/currents; to give and receive information on important issues and conditions via their ciphers by maintaining very intense and constant contact with the corps commander and the minister of war, also to reinforce the good relations with the governor in order to keep track of the communication between the vilayet and the two centers; to ensure the election of two delegates for Erzurum Congress and their immediate dispatch.¹⁹⁶

But it didn't prove easy to elect a delegate from Sivas for the Erzurum Congress. The representative of Sivas during Erzurum Congress, Fazlullah Bey, confessed that he had been exposed to "insistence and coercion" regarding his becoming a delegate. Fazlullah Bey who called for relocation upon Maraş's occupation by the British and who was appointed teacher in Sivas, recounts that the local administrator of Koyulhisar, a district of Sivas, conveyed to him the following: "Hoca Efendi , it is required to send some individuals from here to be present in Erzurum Congress, too, I can send you only. Inform me about how much money is needed." Fazlullah Bey replied upon this prompt by declaring : "I won't be able to answer you now as long as I haven't brought my family member from Maraş invaded by the enemy." When Fazlullah Bey came to Sivas to receive his family that would be arriving in Sivas, he encountered a similar reaction. In his words, the notables of Sivas National Defense Association "refrained from departing for Erzurum, some excused themselves due to their office, some due to their business, some their family members, some their land and estates, some their physical deficiencies, and some the remoteness of destination, its being out of reach/at the limits of borders, in short –

¹⁹⁶ Aşkun, p.55.

Atatürk Samsun'dan Sivas'a ilk gelişinde kolordu dairesinde misafır kaldı. Verdiği direktifler halkın ekseriyetini, bilhassa münevver ve genç unsurları maksat ve gaye etrafında toplamak fiilî mukavemete hazırlamak, menfi propaganda ve cereyanlara mukabil tedbir almak, kolordu kumandanı ve erkân-ı harbiye reisile çok sıkı ve daimî temasta bulunarak, onların şifresiyle mühim meseleler ve vaziyetler hakkında malûmat alıp vermek, vali ile de mevcut hüsnü münasebeti takviye eyleyerek iki merkezin vilâyete yapacağı tebligattan haberdar olmak, Erzurum kongresine iki âzanın intihabı temin olunarak derhal yola çıkarılmak

each of them expressed all sorts of excuses and obstacles, although all of the were capable of undertaking this duty.” Fazlullah Bey mentions that the notables of Sivas Defense of Rights Association “beseeched and insisted him to leave by soundly promising him all sorts of aid and assistance regarding his person as well as his family members.”¹⁹⁷

The second most important incident epitomizing the coalescent support of Sivas for Mustafa Kemal and his movement was again a welcome ceremony. The reception of Mustafa Kemal when he returned to Sivas on 2 September 1919 after the Erzurum Congress carries weight in terms of local historiography. In July Mustafa Kemal resigned from his office as inspector and from the military. In fact, this development concerned Reşit Paşa and he commented upon Mustafa Kemal’s resignation, noting that “Mustafa Kemal’s involvement in nation’s matters as inspector, honorary aide [of the Sultan] and commander would bring forth a different effect; his lunge as a insurgent a completely different one.”¹⁹⁸ However, Reşit Pasha notes that he was distressed by a telegraph he received notifying him that Mustafa Kemal had been discharged and he was to avoid contact with him prior to Mustafa Kemal’s departure for Erzurum. For, in his own words, Mustafa Kemal was willing to “convene a revolutionary assembly and an insurgent association under the title of congress in the center of the city”¹⁹⁹ he was the governor of. In fact, Governor Reşit Pasha conveyed the following in his memoirs regarding the next day of his arrival in Sivas on 12 June 1919:

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 55 – 57.

¹⁹⁸ Yularkıran (ed.), p.72.

“Mustafa Kemal’in müfettiş, fahri yaver ve kumandan olarak millet işleriyle uğraşması başka sırf ihtilalci olarak ortaya atılması başka tesir yapacaktı.”

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.27.

“ ... vilayet merkezinde bir ihtilal meclisi toplamak ve kongre namı altında bir kıyam derneği kurmak istiyordu.”

My opinion had not yet crystallized on the day I received the letter of Mustafa Kemal informing that a congress was to be opened in Sivas and the letter of Minister of Interior Ali Kemal Bey prohibiting even contact in writing with the aforementioned [individual]. I regarded Mustafa Kemal Pasha both righteous and mighty. Yet, I couldn't project that right and might to prove effective enough to result well, to make the victorious Allied states forsake their verdict, to deliver the Palace and the Sublime Porte from slumber. What was I to do, how was I to determine the step that would benefit the country?²⁰⁰

Reşit Pasha explains the method he came up with as follows:

For this reason, I had started to pursue a temperate mode of administration. While I was trying to execute orders from Istanbul, I was refraining from bothering those carrying out Mustafa Kemal Pasha's biddings. I even did not object to designation of charities head clerk Ziya [Efendi] and teacher Fazlullah [Efendi] who were appointed delegates for Erzurum Congress, to raising of money to cover their travel expenses. But I did not abstain from investigating who dared to engage in an act, representing Sivas in Erzurum Congress – I'm saying this remembering the conditions of that period - that was possible to be regarded a crime against the state.²⁰¹

The situation of Reşit Pasha would be exacerbated when he received an order dated July, 29th to apprehend Mustafa Kemal and Rauf Bey from the Ministry of Interior. The governor declares that "he cannot acquiesce to people who overtly brew opposition and furthermore a revolution".²⁰² Thus, he did not allow the printing of a declaration regarding the congress on behalf of Sivas headquarters of the Association

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

Mustafa Kemal Paşanın Sivas'ta bir kongre açılacağını bildiren mektubuyla dahiliye nazırı Ali Kemal Beyin müşarîniyle tahrîrî teması dahi men eden telgraflarını aldığım gün de kanaatim, henüz tebellür etmiş değildi. Mustafa Kemal Paşayı hem haklı hem kuvvetli görüyordum. Lâkin o hakkın ve o kuvvetin müspet netice verecek, galip itilâf devletlerini kararlarından döndürecek, sarayı ve Babîâliyi miskinlikten kurtaracak kadar müessir olacağını tahmin edemiyordum. Ne yapmalıydım, yurda faydalı olacak adımı nasıl kararlaştırmalıydım?

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.38.

Bu sebeple mutedil bir idare, usulî takip etmeğe başlamıştım. İstanbul'dan gelen emirleri infaza çalışmakla beraber, Mustafa Kemal Paşanın istediklerini yapanlara da ilişik etmekten uzak kalıyordum. Hatta Erzurum kongresine murahhas tayin olunan evkaf başkâtibi Ziya ve muallim Fazlullah efendilerin seçilmesine, yol masraflarının temini için para toplanmasına da ses çıkarmadım. Fakat kimlerin, devlet aleyhine işlenmiş bir suç olarak telâkki edilmesi muhtemel bir harekete, Erzurum Kongresinde Sivas'ı temsile, o günkü vaziyeti düşünüp söylüyorum — cüret ettiklerini de araştırmaktan geri kalmadım.

²⁰² Ibid., p.107.

"... ulu orta muhalefet ve hele bir ihtilal hazırlamakta olan kimselere itaatte bulunamayacağını..."

Defense of Rights in the printing house of the vilayet.²⁰³ His response to Rasim Bey, who went to meet him upon this incident, manifests the governor's ambivalent situation:

If you had agreed with the manager of the print house and had your papers printed without me being officially notified, I wouldn't have said anything. Moreover, you are furnishing, adorning the huge high school building for the congress. I act as if I'm unaware. But, if you'd have asked me for that school [building] with an official [application] paper, I would turn it down.²⁰⁴

There is no trace of this ambivalence Governor Reşit Pasha experienced in the people of Sivas according to the literature regarding Sivas during the National Struggle Era. According to Aşkun, "Sivas was having one of the happiest days in its history on 2 September 1919. There [was] a collective joining together in the province; the lights of a happy delight were visible on faces of all. For, Mustafa Kemal was coming to Sivas".²⁰⁵ According to what Reşit Pasha writes, prior to the reception, the mufti of Sivas was charged with organizing a bright ceremony of reception for Erzurum journeyers and he was circuiting from house to house, from shop to shop for this duty.²⁰⁶ Reşit Pasha mentions in his memoirs that "on September 2, all horses and carts that were in Sivas carried the people in the direction of the Erzincan road and those who couldn't find a horse, procure a cart also went in the direction on foot."²⁰⁷ Mustafa Kemal also noted in the Great Speech

²⁰³ Ibid., p.103.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p.104.

"Eğer bana resmen haber verilmeksizin matbaa müdürüyle uyuşup kağıtlarınızı bastırsaydınız, bir şey demezdim. Kaldı ki, koskoca idadi mektebini (lise) kongre için döşüyorsunuz, süslüyorsunuz. Ben, haberim yokmuş gibi, davranıyorum. Fakat o mektebi benden resmî bir kâğıt ile isteseydiniz red cevabı verirdim"

²⁰⁵ Aşkun. P.106.

"2 Eylül 1919 günü Sivas tarihinin en mutlu günlerinden birini yaşıyordu. Şehirde genel bir kaynaşma, herkesin yüzünde mutlu bir sevincin ışıkları görülüyordu. Çünkü Sivas'a Mustafa Kemal geliyordu."

²⁰⁶ Yularkıran. P.72

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p.126

that “on the September 1919 long before [they] reached the town, the inhabitants came out to meet them and greeted [them] with great enthusiasm.”²⁰⁸

We are not casting away the existence of such an enthusiastic welcoming ceremony – even though there is no mention of this in the National Will newspaper that came out only 12 days after that date and asserts that the people supported the National Struggle. But we hold that the imagination of a unified Sivasians supporting the National Struggle based on the reception of Mustafa Kemal and his entourage is problematic. The aim is to analyze the narratological representation of a unified Sivasians via invoking anecdotes that confirm that imagination. Though, we have come across anecdotes that do not confirm this imagination in the works investigated. The appointment of Fazlullah Bey, delegate for Erzurum, and the hesitation of Reşit Pasha are dealt with above. In addition, Reşit Pasha notes that Rasim Bey conveyed to him that their numbers were thin in Sivas. However, these sorts of anecdotes do not inflict any harm on the imagination of a unified Sivas. Yet, we are convinced that their inclusion nevertheless in these works have a function of underlining the importance of leadership. In fact, again Rasim Bey mentions that the Sivas Defense of Rights Association held only a few meetings when he came to Sivas in May. Nevertheless, as Reşit Pasha states, by his arrival in Sivas, “Mustafa Kemal Pasha had fanned the capacity of outbreak that perhaps survived as a mere spark, had transformed it into an intense fire.”²⁰⁹

“2 eylül günü Sivas’ta ne kadar at ve araba varsa halkı Erzincan yolu istikametine doğru götürdüğünden ve at bulamayan, araba tedarik edemeyenlerin de yaya olarak o istikamete dökülürken...”

²⁰⁸ Atatürk, p.66.

²⁰⁹ Yularkıran (ed.), p.53.

“Sivas muhitinde belki bir kıvılcım halinde yaşayan feveran kabiliyetini yelpazelemiş, kuvvetli bir ateş haline getirmiş bulunuyordu”

Interpretations based on reception should be more thorough. According to what we learn from the *İrade-i Milliye*, Mr. Harbord, an American general, was welcomed enthusiastically when he came to Erzurum on 25 September 1919.²¹⁰ A reception doesn't convey a meaning alone, however, what sort of an image is being made up based on the reception ceremony and what this image serves to cloud is that matters, which was the very focus of the analysis above.

Sheikh Recep, a Traitor

The Sheikh Recep Incident is regarded in historiography as a significant event against the National Struggle. Sheikh Recep and his companions dispatched a telegraph to the Sultan; Salih Pasha, the representative of the government and Mustafa Kemal Pasha while Mustafa Kemal Pasha was in Amasya to meet envoys of Ali Rıza Pasha cabinet which replaced Damat Ferit Pasha cabinet and was more tolerant toward the National Struggle. Mustafa Kemal recounts this event as follows:

On our arrival at Amasya, we heard that Entente Liberals, together with some foreigners, were carrying on intrigues which practically amounted to treason. I immediately spread this news by sending out a circular. I also heard at Sivas that they intended to send a telegram to the Sultan about me, but I did not believe it. However, I felt sure that the watchfulness of our comrades on the Representative Committee, the officers at our headquarters, the Valis and others, would undoubtedly prevent it. But it appears that three persons, Sheikh Recep and his two companions, Ahmet Kemal and Celal by name, through a telegraph operator who was one of their adherents, had discovered a way to send the telegram they wanted to transmit.²¹¹

The following was stated in a telegraph to Salih Pasha: "In the interest of the country and the nation we beg you to do us the favour of coming to the chief town in the vilayet, so that you may understand the actual conditions that have been prevailing in our country for several months and obtain a clear view of the state

²¹⁰ *İrade-i Milliye*, 2 October 1919.

²¹¹ Atatürk, pp.205-206

affairs.” It was also declared in this telegraph that another 160 signatures of persons among scholars, town notables and artisans were included in the telegraph beside the signatures of the three aforementioned individuals. The dispatch to Mustafa Kemal read as follows: “Our people cannot consider that the existing discord has been allayed until they have received from Salih Pasha himself or some other trustworthy person a statement as to what the Sultan and the Government think about the matter. Therefore, we have the honour to inform you that you are facing a difficult alternative.”²¹²

Also Rauf Orbay retells the incident in his memoirs as follows below: On the day we arrived at Amasya, some Entente and Liberale adherents stormed the telegraph office, had some telegraphs dispatched against the Representative Committee and National Movements to the Sultan and some other recipients by threatening the clerks. The Telegraph Post Director, who arrived at the telegraph office the next morning, dispatched a telegraph to upon discovering the situation informing that “the ringleader of these raiders [were] the individuals named Sheikh Recep of Şemsettin Sivasi’s descent, İlyaszade Ahmet KEmal and Zaralızade Celal; prosecution regarding them [was] put to progress” and at the same time he also delivered a facsimile of the telegraph they succeeded in having dispatched to the Sultan.²¹³

The following was voiced on this telegraph:

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Chairman of the Congress, which was held in our district of Sivas under the title of the “Union for the Defense and Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia,” by circulating the report that he is provided with letters from Your Majesty, and with the aid of a small number of followers who are endeavoring to conceal their criminal actions in the country, tries to proclaim himself the representative of the will of the nation. Actuated by our religious duty, however, we are in every way subject and entirely devoted to our glorious Caliph and our dearly loved Sovereign. We have been informed that Salih Pasha, Minister of Marine, and Naci Bey, Your

²¹² Ibid., pp. 206 – 207.

²¹³ Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu (ed.). *Rauf Orbay’ın Anıları (1914 - 1945)*, (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2005), p. 237

“Biz Amasya’ya vardığımız gün, Sivas’taki bazı Hürriyet ve İtilafçılar, gece yarısı telgrafhaneyi basarak, memurları tehdit ile Padişaha vesair yerlere, Heyet-i Temsiliye ve Milli Hareketler aleyhine bir takım telgraflar çektiler. Ertesi sabah telgrafhaneye gelen, Posta Telgraf müdürü durumu anladınca, Amasya’ya bize çektiği telgrafla; “Bu baskıncıların elebaşlarının Şemsettin Sivasi evladından Şeyh Recep, İlyaszade Ahmet Kemal ve Zaralızade Celal isimli kimseler olduklarını, haklarında takibat yapılmağa başlandığını” bildirmiş ve aynı zamanda Padişaha çektiirmeğe muvaffak oldukları telgraf suretini de göndermişti”

Majesty's A. D. C., had been sent to [Amasya]. We have been unable to obtain a reply to the telegram we had addressed to you, signed by 200 mullahs, notables and tradesmen praying you to alleviate the indignation felt by the people. We pray Your Majesty, urgently and respectfully, to send this commission to Sivas, in order to that they may personally convince themselves of the actual state of affairs prevailing here. We have the honour to be at all times, Your Majesty's devoted and obedient servants.²¹⁴

The Sheikh Recep incident ignited debates in Istanbul newspapers as well. A telegraph signed by Sivashlı Hamza Beyzade Abdullah Behçet (Abullah Cevdet, Son of Hamza Bey from Sivas) and Sivashlı Osman Paşazade Halid Cevdet (Halid Cevdet, Son of Osman Paşa from Sivas) titled *Bir Hakikat Dolayısıyla* (Due To A Truth) was published in *Peyam*. These two individuals, after expressing their resentment about how Sheikh Recep had been described as a half-lunatic person and noting that Sheikh Recep was a patriot who had received higher education and had been appointed a member of the municipal government two years earlier, stated the following:

We, Anatolians, do neither know nor acknowledge a lord other than our religion, our Sultan. The essence of the voice that is being raised behind the curtain is understood by coming in touch with the nation. It is hoped that the government which agreed to a voyage to Amasya for the sake of a handful of daring persons would choose to condescend itself to see and hear the just outcry of the nation so that it would bring forth an opinion as to what sort of a comedy it is facing.²¹⁵

In the face of the passing events, Mustafa Kemal touched the following points in his telegraph from Amasya to the members of the Representative Committee in Sivas: "The newspaper Alemdar published today the telegraph dispatched to the Sultan by Sheikh Recep and his comrades in Sivas and added analyses that Sivas is in a state of excitement and agitation. The lie that we forcibly collected a lot of

²¹⁴ Atatürk, p.208.

²¹⁵ Peyam, 27 October 1919. Quoted from Tayyip Gökbiçgin. *Milli Mücadele Başlarken*, vol. 2, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1965), pp. 122 – 123

"Biz Anadolu'dan dinimizden, Padişahımızdan başka bir hakim bilmeyiz ve tanımıyoruz. Perde arkasından yükseltilmekte olan sesin mahiyeti milletle temas ile anlaşılır. Ümid ederiz ki üç beş cüretkar için Amasya seyahatini kabul eden hükümet, milletin meşru feryadını görmek ve dinlemek tenezzülünü ihtiyar eyler de nasıl bir komedyaya karşısında kaldığına kanaat hasıl eder"

money from the population is included within these analyses.” It was also called for in the telegraph that “the dispatch of an disclaimer, under which the signatures of the Central Committee of the Vilayet and required artisans and notables shall be provided, to Velid Bey, the president of the Press Association, should be ensured to be published in all newspapers”.²¹⁶ Consequently, the residents of Sivas who favored the National Struggle dispatched a telegraph regarding the issue to Istanbul newspapers. A telegram from Mufti Abdür-rauf Efendi , Mayor Abdülhak, members of ulema, people among notables, some of local assembly members and some merchants and 45 persons in total was published in Istanbul newspapers in 28 October 1919:

We have discovered to our amazement the meaning and the unfounded content of the telegraph which an individual of short wit who doesn't represent even a minute minority got signed [by some] by declaring that he will invite the Highness of Salih Pasha, Minister of Marine who resided in our province before for a long time and by deceiving some gullible people and dared to dispatch to His Royal Residence (*Mabeyn-i Humayun*) by distorting [its] content and [his] standing. We definitely declare that the three individuals who have signed this telegraph possess neither an intellectual nor a social standing whatsoever in this province and therefore, the document of delirium they have drawn up may only constitute a manifestation of their own opinions. As the existence of a possibility of an ill agitation in our homeland, which presents a scene of temperance and unity in the name of defending the nation and maintaining the law and striving with an unfading determination and an unwavering faith for the realization of national aspirations, cannot be conceived, we, the residents of these lands who have determined all together to sacrifice their absolute entities for the preservation of their integrity and their home, deny and refute with absolute abhorrence and severity the despicable allegation and slander of raising funds. Anyway, the era of law, which we are proud to witness unfold in our homeland through the fact that justice has laid its hands on the matter due to the allegations and slanders, will doubtlessly exercise the requirements of justice regarding the braggadocios. We beseech from our honorable press that the circumstance be presented to public opinion and those vicious who desire to encroach the

²¹⁶ Atatürk Özel Arşivi, Klasör 10, Dosya 33, Fihrist 14. Quoted from İzzet Öztoprak. “Milli Mücadele’ye Tepki: Şeyh Recep Olayı”, *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, vol. V, no:13, November 1988. Available online: <http://www.atam.gov.tr/index.php?Page=DergiIcerik&IcerikNo=922> “Şeyh Recep ve hempalarının Sivas’ta padişaha çektikleri telgrafnameyi Alemdar gazetesi bugün neşretmiş ve Sivas’ın hal-i heyecan ve galeyanda bulunduğu dair mütaalatla ilave etmiştir. Bu mütaalat meyanında ahaliden cebren birçok para topladığımız yalanı da munderiştir.”

decent current of national unity be delivered to the pure judgment of public conscience.²¹⁷

Türk Dünyası, İfham, Yeni Gün and some other Istanbul newspapers published this telegraph.²¹⁸ However, *Peyam* newspaper noted in its issue of the same date that it will not publish the telegraph on grounds that “[it] arrived from a location under suppression and coercion”.²¹⁹

The leading cadres of the national movement that derived their legitimacy from the people and based it on being an outcome of the demands of the people were to take this incident very seriously. In fact, Mustafa Kemal assessed this incident in *the Great Speech* as follows:

It was surely significant that the dispatch of the telegram could be accompanied by threats, trying to prove that all the inhabitants of Sivas were in a state of revolt against the chairman of a body that had been speaking everywhere about the unity and concord of the nation and the outspread of the national organizations, had overthrown the Cabinet and which at that very moment was about to enter into negotiations with the delegates of the present government, having on that same day started from Sivas from this purpose. Even if the population of Sivas itself, in the midst of whom the Representative Committee was established, showed such an antagonistic attitude, it was indeed difficult to prove that the whole nation shared the same feeling and opinion.²²⁰

²¹⁷ İkdâm, 28 Ekim 1919. Qouted from Gökbilgin, pp. 124.

“Sivas’ta küçük bir azınlığı bile temsil etmeyen kısa akıllı bir şahıs daha önce şehrimizde uzun süre ikamet eden Bahriye Nazırı Salih Paşa Hazretlerini davet edeceklerini beyan ederek ve bazı safdilleri kandırarak imza aldıkları ve konu ve makamı çarpıtarak mabeyn-i hümayuna çekmeye cüret ettikleri telgrafnamenin anlamını ve aslı olmayan içeriğini şaşkınlıkla öğrendik. Bu telgrafa imza koyan üç şahıs bu muhitte ne fikri ne de içtimai bir mevkileri bulunmadığını ve binaenaleyh yazdıkları hezeyannamenin ancak kendi şahıslarının fikirlerinin tercümanı olabileceğini katiyetle beyan eyleriz. Millet ve memleketin müdafaa ve hukukunun muhafazası namına baştan başa bir sükun ve birlik manzarası arz eden ve milli emellerin gerçekleşmesi için sönmez bir azim ve sarsılmaz bir iman ile çalışan memleketimizde makus bir heyecanın mevcudiyetine imkan tasavvur edilemeyeceği gibi namus ve yurtlarının muhafazası için bütün mevcudiyetlerini fedaya hep beraber azmetmiş olan bu yerler ahalişi para toplamak gibi hasis bir isnat ve iftirayı da kemal-i nefret ve şiddetle red ve tezkib ederiz. Zaten bu gibi isnat ve iftiralarından dolayı meseleye adalet el koymuş olduğu cihetle vatanımızda açıldığını görmekle müftechir bulunduğumuz kanun devri hiç şüphesiz mütecasirler hakkında adalet icabını ifa edecektir. Keyfiyetin umumi efkara arz ile vahdet-i milliye’nin nezih cereyanına el uzatmak isteyen şerirlerin amme vicdanının pak hükmüne tevdiini muhterem matbuatımızdan rica eyleriz”

²¹⁸ Öztoprak. End note no:12.

²¹⁹ Gökbilgin, p.124.

²²⁰ Atatürk., pp.208 – 209

Mustafa Kemal states further that “[the] enemies attributed important role to Şeyh Recep”.²²¹ He argues that Sheikh Recep and the British were operating in collaboration relying on the following sentences written by Sait Molla who was the founder of The Association of the Friends of England in Turkey in a letter to Father Frew: “What do you think about the incident in Sivas. It is rather disorderly but it will slowly straighten up”.²²² Moreover, it is mentioned in the records of Representative Committee dated 20 November 1919 regarding the discussion about the reports of the Sivas police about foreigners that an Italian military officer has been in contact with certain Armenians and with Sheikh Recep and his associates since the day he arrived at the province. It is noted that the British Sulter was also occupied with these.²²³

Sheikh Recep, who was apprehended consequent to this incident, was bailed out by the governor. This caused unrest among the Representative Committee and it was decreed that this matter should be pursued and the governor must be consulted about it.²²⁴ But the trial of Sheikh Recep was conveyed to Samsun and he there left for İstanbul, where he was free from a legal investigation.²²⁵

In conclusion, the national movement that accused Damat Ferit Cabinet of “prohibiting the people from submitting their matters to the Sultan”²²⁶ was in dire

²²¹ Ibid., p.208.

²²² Ibid., p.208.

²²³ Uluğ İğdemir (ed.), *Heyet-i Temsiliye Tutanakları*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989), p.76.

²²⁴ Ibid., pp.76 – 77.

²²⁵ Oğuz Aytepe. “Yeni Belgeler Işığında Şeyh Recep Olayı ve Şeyh Recep Kamil Özgüneş”, *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, No. 55, Vol.XIX, March 2003. Available online: <http://www.atam.gov.tr/index.php?Page=DergiIcerik&IcerikNo=189>

²²⁶ *İrade-i Milliye*, 17 SEptember 1919.

discomfort before few individuals who were reaching their submissions to the Sultan. For, in that circumstance, “it was indeed difficult to prove that the whole nation shared the same feeling and opinion”, as Mustafa Kemal put it.²²⁷

The Quarrel of Newspapers

We are not in possession of a great deal of information except that the Yenihan and Koçgiri revolts that took place in districts of Sivas regarding the history of Sivas during the National Struggle Era after 18 December 1919, on which date the Representative Committee left the province. The fact that population, judiciary and municipal records were lost irretrievably at the end of journey sealed in SEKA²²⁸ necessitates that we consult the local newspapers alone for this period.²²⁹ These newspapers have the capacity to cast some light on the history of Sivas, however.

Only 41 issues of *İrade-i Milliye*, one of these newspapers of which the last known issue was the 254th and was dated December 22, are available in Turkey. There is an interesting piece titled “Why Should It Remain Secret?” in the issue dated April 19, 1921, one of the five issues held by Chicago University. In this piece it is argued that “the National Struggle” of the newspaper proceeds just as it started except two interruptions.²³⁰ That particular issue was published after two months of

A draft to be sent to the Sultan was discussed in the meeting of the Sivas Congress dated September 9. The main theme of the writing consisted of the crimes of Damad Ferid and the setting up of a new government. The government prevented the draft from reaching the Sultan. This move on the government’s side found its place in the list of allegations by the national movement about the government. See. Atatürk, pp.112 – 113.

²²⁷ Atatürk, p.209.

²²⁸ SEKA: *Türkiye Selüloz Ve Kağıt Fabrikaları A.Ş* (The Factory of Cellulose and Paper of Turkey). Used papers are taken by this company to reproduce paper.

²²⁹ A. Turan Alkan, “Birinci Dünya Harbi’nde Sivaslı Bir Zabitan Hatıra Defterinden,” *Revak/91*, Sivas, 1991, p. 8.

²³⁰ We are unaware of the reasons behind these interruptions. However, we find out that it has been censored in a later date from records of the Grand National Assembly. During deliberations regarding

silence. According to the newspaper, the reason behind their decision not to publish the paper for two and a half months was the determination to adhere to the ideal of “not compromising the profession before any power.” Again, the newspaper claimed that the forces desiring to divert it from its fight were antinationalist and unconscious. The paper requested its reader to read the previous issue which was the 67th in order to grasp the essence of the matter. The piece continues as follows:

Our intent is not personal gratification. It is only to defend our National Will and its pure and decent solemn silence. We request our readers, they shall read the paper numbered (67) and titled *İrade-i Milliye* that was published two and a half months ago.

The first holy page... is completely of *İrade-i Milliye*.

Then turn to the second page. Under the heading “The Inside of the Province’s Accounts”.. slanders fabricated at the expense of the nation and homeland... These very lies occupying these columns; thievishly drawn up in order foul the pure and clean columns of *İrade-i Milliye*; to defile its immaculate history, have been published at our distress and under coercion. Indeed! Why should we hide it?

The robust supervisors of the province’s printing house violated the homeland only with the desire to operate the paper for their own ways.

For, they held power that day.

For, *İrade-i Milliye* stood at attention before their post for the sake of the homeland.

It is regretted that the very ones who were charged with applying the law trampled it. And they violated the legally preserved right of the paper to freedom.

It is understood from this explanation that the paper published two and a half months ago and numbered (67) is not *İrade-i Milliye*. That piece of newspaper that is a translator of personal gratification and slanders, donning a belying mask is not *İrade-i Milliye*, but the first copy of *Gaye-i Milliye* which is an agent of wicked intentions.

Those who have doubt of our claim should read the first issue of the *Gaye-i Milliye*.

I shall say this much: Those who have defiled the exalted name of *İrade-i Milliye* with low desires and obscured that beautiful name during the publication period of *İrade-i Milliye* that had withdrawn from glory and prosperity as well as the publication circle in order to preserve its purity and nobility, have today, thank God, collapsed and vanished.

Indeed, the patient and righteous people of Sivas have once again spectated and beheld the tumbling down of those who have utilized *Gaye-i Milliye* for personal desires; the collapse of oppression and the triumph of truth.

the Ministry of Interior in 1 April 1922, Hüseyin Avni Bey declares that *İrade-i Milliye* was censored because it published the writing that follows as: “*The national taxes were not enforced well, the rich were protected, whereas the poor suffered heavier taxes*”. TBMM ZC, Cilt 18, p.193. Quoted from Demirel. p.376.

We supplicate this from the Heaven; may our homeland never again be the scene for the appearance of such decayed and stinking ideas. And may our Sivas never again witness this misery. Putting an end to our word here, we extend our unending thanks and appreciation to the Grand National Assembly that displayed its enormous affection for Sivas, the first child of the holy struggle, and its great government; and we wish them major accomplishments on the course of governance of the homeland.²³¹

As can be inferred from the piece, the second page of the 67th issue of *İrade-i Milliye* is in fact *Gaye-i Milliye* and this event occurred under coercion. We are unaware of what went by between these two newspapers and the reason for this situation. But in an article titled *İrade-i Milliye*, it is noted that the newspaper was the agent of a group drifting toward separatism and facing personal contestation. The article deals with the incident as follows:

Upon the closure of *İrade-i Milliye*, the newspaper *Gaye-i Milliye* began to be published in 2 March 1921 to speak for another group. In the most critical days of the National Struggle, the people of Sivas had bifurcated and these papers were pursuing a publication policy that was fomenting this division. *İrade-i Milliye* under the direction of Halis Turgut aggravated its separatist activities particularly six months prior to the Great Assault; attached itself

²³¹ *İrade-i Milliye*, 19 April 1921.

Maksadımız şahsiyat değildir. Yalnız *İrade-i Milliye*mizi ve onun pak ve nezih sükutunu müdafaa etmektir. Okuyucularımızdan rica ediyoruz, bundan iki buçuk ay önce çıkan (67) numaralı *İrade-i Milliye* başlığıyla çıkan gazete numaralı *İrade-i Milliye* başlığıyla çıkan gazeteyi okusunlar.

Birinci sayfa-ı kudsi . . . tamamı tamamına *İrade-i Milliye*'nindir.

Bir de ikinci sayfayı çevirin. "Muhasebe-i Vilayetin İç Yüzü" başlığı altında altında . . . millet ve memleket zararına uydurulan iftiralar . . . işte bu sütunları dolduran yalanlar *İrade-i Milliye*'nin pak ve temiz sütunlarını kirletmek, onun lekesiz tarihini kirletmek düşüncesiyle hırsızca derç edilmiş, kahren ve cebren neşredilmiştir.

Evet! Niçin saklayalım!

Vilyet matbaasının cabbar amirleri gazeteyi sırf kendi yollarına çalıştırmak hevesiyle, memlekete tecavüz ettiler.

Çünkü o gün kuvvet onlardaydı.

Çünkü *İrade-i Milliye* memleketin selameti namına onların oturduğu makama ihtiram ediyordu.

Teessüf olunur ki kanunun tatbikine memur olanlar onu ayakları altında çiğnedi. Ve gazetenin kanunen muhafaza olan hakk-ı hürriyetine tecavüz etti.

Şu izahattan bundan iki buçuk ay önce çıkan ay evvel çıkan (67) numaralı gazetenin *İrade-i Milliye* olmadığı anlaşılmıştır. O şahsiyat ve iftiraların tercümanı olan yalancı bir maskeye bürünen gazete parçası *İrade-i Milliye* değil vasıtayı ağız olan *Gaye-i Milliye*'nin ilk nüshasıdır.

İddiamızın isabetinde şüphe edenler *Gaye-i Milliye*'nin ateşler kusan ilk nüshasını okusunlar.

Şurasını söyleyeyim ki: saffet ve ulviyetini muhafaza için izzet ve ikbal ile meydan-ı intişardan çekilen *İrade-i Milliye* gazetesi müddet-i intişarınca yüksek namını pek alçak hevesat ile kirletmiş ve bu güzel namı püshude-i müsavi edenler lehü'l-hamd bugün yıkılıp gitmiştir.

Evet, Sivas'ın sabır ve hakikat perest halkı *Gaye-i Milliye*'yi hevasat-ı şahsiyeye alet edenlerin yuvarlandığını, zulmün yıkılıp hakkın galebe ettiğini bir daha seyr ve temaşa etmişlerdir.

further to personal altercations pertaining to the municipal elections in the spring of 1922.²³²

This article that does not provide us with the exact dynamics of this clash attempts at explaining the issue with Halis Turgut's "separatist activities". Halis Turgut, who was a member of the Terakkiperver Party in the Second Assembly and was later hanged because of the İzmir Assassination against Mustafa Kemal, is retrospectively accused of "separatist activities". In reality, an individual who would be involved in such actions stood no chance of being elected for the Second Assembly. For, it is known that all candidates except one were nominated by the first group for 1923 elections. It is impossible that a person engaged in supposedly separatist activities would be nominated.

We are not in possession of adequate information to check the accuracy of what *İrade-i Milliye* wrote about *Gaye-i Milliye*. But we can argue that the claims of *İrade-i Milliye* regarding the antinational character of *Gaye-i Milliye* are absolutely unfounded. For, *Gaye-i Milliye* took a stance favoring the National Struggle in its publications. In an article titled "National Government: How It Was Born, How It Developed, How Will It Develop" published in the second issue of the paper, it is stated that "the Entente Powers [were] contemplating tying the hands and feet [of the nation] with Montreux to slaughter [the nation] like lambs". After summarizing the events of the period thereafter, it is mentioned that the happenings "brought our national government built on the being of Turkish nation into existence". It is voiced that the government which consequently started to struggle "demonstrated that there

²³² Hüseyin Yıldırım. "İrade-i Milliye", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, No: 23, Vol: VIII, March 1992 Available online: <http://www.atam.gov.tr/index.php?Page=DergiIcerik&IcerikNo=575>
"İrade-i Milliye'nin kapanması ile diğer bir gurubun sözcülüğünü yapmak üzere Gaye-i Milliye gazetesi, 2 Mart 1921 de çıkmaya başladı. Milli Mücadele'nin en buhranlı günlerinde Sivas halkı ikiye ayrılmış ve bu gazetelerde bu ikiliği körükleyici neşriyat yapıyorlardı. Halis Turgut'un idaresi altında olan İrade-i Milliye özellikle Büyük Taarruz'dan altı ay önce bölücü faaliyetlerini şiddetlendirmiş, 1922 ilkbaharındaki belediye seçimlerinde şahsi kavgalara daha da bağlanmıştı."

is a Turkish existence in the world.”²³³ As can be clearly understood from this article, *Gaye-i Milliye* supported the Ankara government. In various issues this newspaper published speeches of Mustafa Kemal Pasha in the assembly; news on the oppression occurring under invasion and favored national struggle as a rule.

As much as we are in the dark regarding the details of the matter, the presence of tension between two local newspapers both favoring national struggle manifests the impossibility of comprehending the period through the imagination of a “monolithic nation”.

Elimination of Opponents in Sivas

Emir (Marşan) Pasha,²³⁴ Mustafa Taki (Doğruyol),²³⁵ Rasim (Başara),²³⁶ and Ziyaettin (Başara),²³⁷ who represented Sivas in the First General Assembly, were admitted as deputies in the new elections and they were all natives of Sivas. In addition to them, Kara Vasıf (Karakol) and Rauf (Orbay) who were members of the

²³³ *Gaye-i Milliye*, 3 March 1921.

²³⁴ Emir Marşan Pasha (1860 – 1940): His family migrated to Sivas from Caucasia in 1855. He purchased the title of pasha in 1894. After his term of office as deputy in the First Assembly ended, he travelled to Europe to receive treatment and later returned to Sivas to tend to his manor. He was active in organizing the Sivas branch of the Progressive party. He was relegated to exile for three years by the Independence Court. He lived in Sivas until his death. Aslanoğlu. vol.2.,p.107. Besides, Reşit Pasha mentions Emir Pasha in his memoirs as a figure who was initially hesitant toward national struggle, however, gradually grew to support the national struggle. Yularkiran (ed.), pp. 47-48, 91-93, 123.

²³⁵ Mustafa (Taki): He was born in 1873 in Sivas. He was a religious scholar, mainly focused on Islamic philosophy. He wrote articles in some Islamic journals, namely Sırat-ı Mustakim, Sebilürreşad, Bıyanu'l Hak. He wrote some religious books, namely Tarih-i Nur-i Muhammedi and Kırık Hadis. He was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress. He represented Sivas in the first national assembly. He died on 1 August 1925 in Sivas. Cemal Ağırman, *Sivas Mebusu Mustafa Taki Efendi Hayatı, Eserleri ve Bazı Düşünceleri*, (Sivas: Sivas 1000 Temel Eser, 2006), pp.21-27.

²³⁶ See footnote: 14

²³⁷ Ziya Başara (1870 – 1943): He belongs to one of the most ancient houses of Sivas, the Mütevellizade family. After graduating from the secondary school of the Faculty of Administration (Mülkiye) he assumed various civil offices in Sivas. He was elected deputy of Sivas in 1923. He stayed in office uninterruptedly for 20 years until he died. He left behind a library he founded in 1908 named after him. Aslanoğlu. vol.1, pp. 192-193.

Ottoman Parliament were also elected to represent Sivas although they were not among residents.²³⁸ Other than these figures, Ziya (Bacanak) Bey²³⁹ and Hayri Sığircı,²⁴⁰ of whom the former resigned from office without giving any notice of his reasons and the latter preferred civil service, were also among the first term deputies of Sivas. Rasim (Başara) and Ziyaettin (Başara) were members of the First Group, whereas Mustafa Taki and Emir Pasha detached themselves from the First Group and remained independent. Although Emir Pasha was independent, he is considered among those favoring the Second Group.²⁴¹

As expected, the two cousins that were members of the first group maintained their offices as deputies in the second term. Other than them, Abdurrahman Rahmi (Katoğlu) Bey, Ahmet Muammer (Kardaş) Bey, Halis Turgut (Tarıkahya) Bey²⁴² and

²³⁸ In this chapter where we concentrate on regional figures we will not dwell on Vasıf Bey and Rauf Bey.

²³⁹ Ziya Bacanak (1886 - 1944): He received his primary education in Sivas, this secondary education in Erzincan. He continued his education in cadet school and joined military ranks as staff captain. He was promoted to the rank of major after WWI. The Representative Committee asked him to participate in the Assembly of Deputies in Istanbul. Therefore, he resigned from his military office and arrived at Istanbul. He retreated to Ankara due to British invasion in Istanbul. He represented Sivas in the inauguration of the Grand National Assembly in 23 April 1920. But he resigned three months later. He figured among the founders of the Sivas office of the Progressive Party. He was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment because of his actions and the incidents during the hat revolution. He was absolved after a few years. He never engaged in politics again. He even refused propositions of Recep Peker with whom they were class mates. His nickname was "General Staff Ziya". Aslanoglu, vol.1, pp. 171-172

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²⁴¹ Demirel, pp.100-101.

²⁴² Halis Turgut (1886 - 1926): In his autobiography written for the Grand National Assembly, he states that he graduated from the School of Administration in 1913 and assumed various civil services in Sivas including management in Teşkilat-ı Hususiye afterwards. He went to the front in 1917 – 18, collaborated with Sivas Congress in 1919 and became the judge of the Central Committee in Sivas.

Ömer Şevki Bey²⁴³ were among the deputies representing Sivas in the second term.

Şemsettin Günlaltay was inaugurated as deputy in 15 January 1927 upon the hanging of Halis Turgut in 13 July 1926.²⁴⁴

None other than Halis Turgut among Sivas deputies supported the Progressive Republican Party. It is within our knowledge that the regional office of Progressive Republican Party had been opened in Sivas and some among notables of Sivas supported the party before the Republican People's Party opened an office in town. Our foremost source of information regarding this is the issue of the newspaper *Kızılırmak*, dated 3 December 1925, which published abstracts of records of the proceedings in the Independence Tribunals erected and heard in Sivas between November, 26 and 27.

The Court of Independence left Ankara on November, 23 and arrived at Sivas in November, 25 upon the hanging of a declaration on 14 November 1925, which displayed statements against Revolution regarding the hat revolution and Mustafa Kemal, on Taşhan wall, a very central building in Sivas.²⁴⁵ Mustafa Kemal had already initiated the hat revolution by saluting the people of Kastamonu donning a

He became the governor of Zara in 1921. He served as member of the General Council of the Vilayet, judge of the Defense of Rights Association and judge of Chamber of Agriculture until he was elected deputy in 1923. Aslanoğlu, vol.I, pp.416-417

Rauf Orbay mentions in his memoirs that Mustafa Kemal intended to use Halis Turgut in the Ali Galip affair. Orbay recounts that Halis Turgut who was a Unionist retreated to the mountains to avoid apprehension due the forced emigration of Armenians and was called upon for assistance with his soldiers by Mustafa Kemal. When Mustafa Kemal, Rauf Orbay and Halis Turgut first met, Turgut said that and they first of all should know that he was a Unionist and Turkist. Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu (ed.), *Rauf Orbay'ın Anıları (1914-1945)*, (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2005), p.207.

²⁴³ Ömer Şevki (1871 - ?): He completed his education that started in the Medical School according to his certificate of identification in TBMM dated 17 January 1923 in France. He joined military ranks with the rank of captain upon his return to İstanbul after his graduation in 1894. He sat in the Assembly as deputy of Sivas in 1908, 1912 and 1913. He was elected deputy for the Grand National Assembly in 1923 and later in 1927, however, he couldn't complete the duration of this second term and passed away in 1927. Aslanoğlu. *Sivas* vol.2., p.237.

²⁴⁴ Işıl Çakan, *Türk Parlamento Tarihinde II. Meclis* (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1999), pp.74-86.

²⁴⁵ *Kızılırmak*, 3 December 1925.

Panama-style hat on August, 24. The Cabinet enacted a decree “on the Closure of [Dervish] Lodges and Corners and the Attire of All Civil Servants” in 2 September 1925 and obligated civil servants to wear hats. This decree also expressed that this requirement also assumed an incentive function for citizens. The use of hats was declared mandatory for the general population with the “Law on the Use of Hats” dated 25 November 1925.²⁴⁶

The Court of Independence that arrived at Sivas on November, 25 and started to operate the next day. The members of judiciary were Kılıç Ali, Reşit Galip, Ali (Küçük), who served as the prosecutor, and they were presided over by Ali (Çetinkaya). As we learn from the issue of the newspaper *Kızılırmak* dated 3 December 1925, which published the abstracts of the court proceedings, the court embarks by questioning the mukhtars²⁴⁷. The fact that the mukhtars also didn’t wear hats at the time was brought to attention by the court although they were encompassed by the decree of the cabinet since the headmen qualified as civil servants. It was expressed by the court that this behavior resembled the declaration in meaning. The mukhtars, who stated that they were waiting for “the hats to be ordered from Bursa,” were released by the court.²⁴⁸

The second part of the summaries of the trial records is titled “The Trial of the Members of the Administrative Council of the Municipality” (*Meclis-i İdare-i Belediye Azalarının Muhakemesi*).²⁴⁹ The allegation with which the council members were tried read as “to venture to alter the mode of government by insubordination

²⁴⁶ Tunçay, pp.155-157.

²⁴⁷ Mukhtar: In Turkey, the head of the local government of a town or village; a minor provincial official.

²⁴⁸ *Kızılırmak*, 3 December 1925.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

and hanging [a] declaration”.²⁵⁰ The judiciary was convinced that the written statement hung on the Taşhan wall could not be the doing of an individual; in fact, it was a conscious design reaching as far as “altering the mode of government”.²⁵¹

It is gathered from the interrogation of Abbas Bey, who served as mayor at the time, that Deputy Governor Zeki Bey and Hayri Sığircı acted for the enactment of a decree in the municipal council regarding the “extending [the use of] hats to the [general] population”. The mayor and the rest of the council proved hesitant to enact such a regulation and pleaded not to wield such authority. According to the deposition of Abdürrahim Bey, one of the members of the municipality, Deputy Governor Zeki Bey declared that “[People] everywhere have donned the hat, we are lagging behind. We shall attempt and make the people wear [it]”.²⁵²

Member of the municipality who were far from volunteering for such a course of action claimed that it was appropriate for the National Assembly to issue a decree on the matter. In other words, the extension of the obligation to wear hats to general population that was decreed with the enactment of November 25 had been attempted to be passed in the municipal council of Sivas in November 8 or 9 through an endeavor led by Deputy Governor Zeki Bey and Hayri Sığircı Bey. However, this attempt did only come through in the General Assembly of Sivas in November 24 ensuing the event of the suspension of the declaration in order to exonerate Sivas. This decision read as follows: “The extension of the use of the civilized attire to general population has been unanimously decreed to come into force after one month

²⁵⁰ Ibid. “*Heyet-i Vekile kararnamesine adem-i itaat ve beyanname taliki suretiyle şekl-i hükümeti tağyire mücaseret*”

²⁵¹ Ibid. “*şekl-i hükümeti tağyir*”

²⁵² Ibid. “*Her yer şapka giydi, biz geri kalıyoruz. Biz de çalışalım halka giydirelim*”

in the center of the vilayet; one and a half months at most in county centers/ *kaza* centers; two months in districts and villages from this declaration on”.²⁵³

The questioning of Abdürrahim Efendi followed that of Mayor Abbas Bey. The first question of the judge of the judiciary Abdürrahim Bey faced was the following: “There is an achievement acknowledged by the world. There is a government that attained its right by law of equal nations in the Lausanne Congress. Don’t you recognize them? Why did you join that party?”²⁵⁴

The reference to “that party” adds a new dimension to the suit. The party to which Judge Ali Bey alluded was the Progressive Republican Party. The party that had been established on 17 November 1924 was closed on 3 June 1925, months before the hearings. The tribunal that acted upon the hanging of the declaration on Taşhan wall assumed a new role by directing questions at members of the Progressive Party regarding their intent in adhering to the party and resulted in the eventual purge of opposition in Sivas.

One of the hearings that occurred that Friday night was that of Çil Mehmed accused of posting the declaration on the wall. Following the inquiries pertaining to the declaration, the Judge asked Çil Mehmed whether he was involved in politics and Çil Mehmed stated that he wasn’t. He answered the question of the justice about his actions in the municipal elections as follows:

The Deputy Rasim [Başara] Bey called for me when the municipal elections [were about to] happen, he gave me a list, told [us to] vote for these, so we did.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Ahmet Turan Alkan, “İstiklâl Mahkemesinin Sivas Günleri ve Muhaliflerin Tasfiyesi”, *Tarih ve Toplum*, No: 62, February 1989, pp.19-20. “*Merkez-i Vilayette bir, kaza merkezlerinde nihayet bir buçuk, nevahi ve karyelerde iki ay zarfında, tarih-i ilanından muteber olmak üzere kisve-i medeniye iksasının bilimum halka teşmili müttefikan kabul olundu.*”

²⁵⁴ Kızılırmak, 3 December 1925.

“*Cihanın teslim ettiği bir mazhariyet var. Lozan kongresinde müsavi devletler hukukuyla hakkını kazanmış bir hükümet var. Onları görmüyor musunuz? O firkaya neden giriniz?*”

²⁵⁵ Ibid. “*Belediye intihabı olduğu zamanda Mebus Rasim [Başara] Bey beni sesletmişti, bana liste verdi, bunlara reylerinizi veriniz dedi, biz de verdik*”

The deposition continues as below:

The Judge - What is this list?

Mehmed - Ethem beside Şekeroğlu İsmali Efendi brought and gave this to me, [but] we didn't accept.

The Judge - How come you didn't accept, you wrote appropriate party above, corrupt party below?

Mehmed - Sir, I did not.

.....

The judge - So, you [stated that you] weren't involved in politics? What sort of a duty did you assume in this municipal election, explain now?

Mehmed - Sir, I don't communicate with the [members of] the Progressive [Party]. In our district, our friends and acquaintances, we voted for Rasim Bey. The [members of] the Progressive [Party] don't condescend to me.

.....

The judge - Hey Çil Mehmed, the long and the short of it, you posted up that declaration; the spelling errors and so on [indicate] your writing. You spelled "mebus" as "mabus" on the declaration. *Mebus* is also spelled as *mabus* in the text we had you write later. We conducted analyses within the limits of the [appropriate] methods. This is your writing. Glue has been found at your residence, too.

Mehmed - No, sir, by no means. Sir, may I lose my faith and religion if I possess any prior knowledge. I have a hodja, bring him in and ask. Sir, I am sweating before you.

The judge - Which one of these men passing as Progressive are you in contact with?

Mehmed - I don't communicate with Progressives, except Evliya Efendi [who] lives in my district; I [occasionally] pay a visit there only.

The judge - Are you in contact with İsmail Efendi and Ziya Bey, Attorney Ahmet Efendi, İlhami Bey?

Mehmed - I only salute İsmail Efendi, Gani Bey, Ziya Bey and Ahmed Bey. İlhami Bey and I visit each other, he is from our neighborhood.

The judge - What do you converse with İlhami Bey about, do you drink together?

Mehmed - We drink raki with İlhami Bey seldom if ever.

The judge - Now, tell the truth, where did you make this arrangement?

Mehmed - I swear, I don't know anything [about it]. May I topple on my back, I don't know anything, this glue must have remained from my father's days.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

Reis - Bu liste nedir?

Mehmed - Bunu benzenize Şekeroğlu İsmail Efendi'nin yanındaki Ethem getirdi verdi, biz de kabul etmedik.

Reis - Nasıl kabul etmedin, yukarı muvafık parti, aşağı bozuk parti yazmışsın?

Mehmed - Efendim ben yazmadım.

.....

Reis - Hani sen siyasetle iştigal etmiyordun? Bu Belediye intihabında ne gibi vazife aldın, anlat bakalım?

Mehmed - Efendim, ben Terakkiperverle konuşmam. Mahallemizde eşimiz dostumuz Rasim Bey'e verdik. Terakkiperverler bana tenezzül etmezler.

.....

The following part of the summaries of the proceeding records consist of the depositions of the members and adherents of the Progressive Party. In fact, the interrogations in this part witnessed almost an argumentation between the judiciary and the defendants regarding “the multiplication of parties” and the defendants faced more questions about their reasons for and their expectations from joining the Progressive party rather than questions pertaining to the declaration.

Emir Pasha who was asked a similar question answered that “he did not become a member of the Progressive party, but his son joined the party without obtaining his permission, they lived in separate residences anyway”. He replied the Judge inquiring the nature of the documents found during the search in his residence as below:

- I’m not sure, sir. These must have been written during the feverish activities in Ankara... There are some men which served for years in the period of the Sultanate, gained their favor; also served them [after the implementation of] the constitutional administration; have again been regarded of the elite under the national government; [now] There is the Republic [established], those men are still in power. Your obedient servant argues that the homeland must be purged of these.²⁵⁷

Reis - Ey Çil Mehmed, uzun lafın kısısı bu yaftayı sen yapıştırdın, imla hataları falan senin yazındır. Yaftada mebusu mabus yazdın. Bilahare sana yazdırdığımız yazıda da yine mebus yerine mabus yazılıdır. Biz usulü dairesince tetkikat yaptık. Bu senin yazındır. Evinde çirişi (zâmk) de çıkmıştır.

Mehmed - Hayır, efendim estağfurullah. Beyim eğer benim haberim varsa dinimden imanımдан olayım. Benim hocam vardır, getirin sorun. Beyim, ben sizin huzurunuzda terliyorum.

Reis - Bu Terakkiperver geçinen adamların hangisiyle görüşürsün?

Mehmed - Terakkiperverlerle ben konuşmam, yalnız Evliya Efendi mahallemdendir, yalnız oraya gider gelirim.

Reis - İsmail Efendi ile Ziya Bey’le, Dava vekili Ahmed Efendi’yle, İlhami Beyle görüşür müsün?

Mehmed - İsmail Efendi’yle, Gani ve Ziya beylerle, Ahmed efendi’yle yalnız selam alıp veririm. İlhami Beyle görüşürüm, semtimizdendir.

Reis - İlhami Bey’le ne görüşürsünüz, işret eder misiniz?

Mehmed - İlhami Bey’le bindedir rakı içerim.

Reis - Şimdi sen doğru söyle bu tertibatı nerede yaptın?

Mehmed - Vallah benim haberim yoktur. Yiğit arkam yere gelsin haberim yoktur bu çiriş babamın zamanından kalmıştır.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. “Bilemiyorum efendim. Ankara’da hummalı bir faaliyet içinde iken yazılmıştır. . . Bazı adamlar vardır ki, saltanat zamanında senelerce hizmet etmiş onlara yaranmış; Meşrutiyet-i idare olmuş onlara da hizmet etmiş, milli idarede yine güzidelerden sayılmış, Cumhuriyet olmuş, o adamlar hala iktidarda bulunuyorlar. Bendeniz memleketi bunlardan temizlemeli diyorum.”

Later on, Emir Pasha claimed that documents found in his residence belonged to prior days, they were not against the present government, and indeed they were against the former government. He again replied to the inquiry of the Judge of the court regarding what he intended to convey by mentioning “irresponsible hands, national sovereignty...” (gayr-ı mesul eller, hakimiyet-i millye) by declaring that they were matters of the past. He said his opinion on the declaration upon being prompted by the judge as follows:

- I have witnessed a great deal of dishonesty and unfairness. Because Ghazi [Mustafa Kemal] Pasha is the crown on our heads. I, your humble servant, have perceived nothing in this respect. If we desire the wellbeing of the nation in the homeland, sentiments of this sort against Ghazi Pasha are beyond [legitimate limits of] expression.²⁵⁸

The questioning proceeds as below:

Judge – The Committee of Justices recognizes that one person cannot instill these ill inculcations and none indeed can do so. This must be the doing of those passing as the enlightened.

Emir Pasha – By no means sir. I beseech you to grant toleration. Do not besmirch the homeland. For, there are no people in this land to dare to and commit that. I assure you with my absolute being and integrity.

Judge – To be exclusive to a few limited individuals in Sivas.

Emir Pasha – I [...interrupted] not to foster any ambition against Ghazi Pasha

Judge – Listen. Let me tell you; why have you let your son to the Progressive [Party], why haven't you prohibited him? But, rest assured that you will not be able to achieve anything. You are tantamount to nothing. Is there anything left to say?²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Ibid. *Çok namussuzluk ve vicdansızlık görürüm. Çünkü [Mustafa Kemal] Paşa Hazretleri bizim baş tacımızdır. Bendeniz bu hususta hiçbir duyduğum yoktur. Eğer memlekette milletin refahını istiyorsak Paşa Hazretleri'ne karşı bu gibi mütalaalar beyan edilemez*

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

Reis – Heyet-i Hakime bu gibi su-i telkinatı ahadd-i nasdan hiçbir kimsenin yapamayacağını bilir ve yapamaz. Bunu münevver geçinenler yapmıştır.

Emir Paşa – Estağfurullah efendim. Müsaade buyurunuz rica ederim. Bu memleketi lekelemeyiniz. Çünkü memlekette buna cesaret edecek ve yapacak kimseler yoktur. Bütün mevcudiyetimle namusumla sizi temin ederim.

Reis – Sivas'ta mahdut birkaç şahsa münhasır olmak üzere.

Emir Paşa – Paşa hazretlerine karşı bir emel beslemeyeceğime . . .

Reis – Dinle. Ben de size söyleyeyim; oğlunuzu Terakkiperver'e niçin bıraktınız, niçin men etmediniz? Fakat şuna emin olunuz ki hiç bir şey yapamayacaksınız. Hiç mesabesinde kalırsınız. Başka bir diyecek var mı?

The session proceeds with the questioning of Evliya Efendi. He states that he served as mayor during the beginning of the National Struggle, he supported none of the parties, he was registered as a member of the Progressive which was indeed warranted by the Republic without his consent. It had appealed this, but he had been unavoidably included since the declaration had been already forwarded. He answered the Judge's inquiry into the activities and the goals of the party as follows:

- I swear it had no activities. Everyone strives for his own interest [as] you would grant acknowledgement. It is to work in the vicinity of the Government of the Republic. I would like to say one or two words if permission is granted. I am the first to sign the telegraph to withdraw from contact with Istanbul while Ghazi Pasha was in Sivas. It is preserved in the post office.²⁶⁰

The Judge grills Evliya Efendi to find about their original goals. Evliya Efendi endeavors to explain that he didn't join the Progressive Party with ulterior motives and the party had operated according to a program approved by the government. However, the justice points at the foreordained undesirable outcomes of multiparty system by uttering: "We are trying to recover your convictions, your mentality at that time. What were you planning to do; You would lead people of Sivas in a direction, others in another direction, this is a blatant fact".²⁶¹ He invokes history to witness for him by reminding that Entente Liberals also had established a party. The questioning of Evliya Efendi ends with inquiries regarding Çil Mehmed and the declaration.

When it was the turn of Şekeroğlu İsmail Efendi among the prominent figures of the Progressive party in Sivas, he stated that he had been active in the Defense of Rights from its inception to its end, he came across the announcement of the

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

"Vallahi bir faaliyeti yok idi. Malum-u ihsanınız herkes kendi menfaati için çalışır. Hükümet-i Cumhuriyenin etrafında çalışmak içindir. Müsaade buyrulursa bir iki kelime söyleyeceğim: Gazi Paşa Sivas'ta iken İstanbul ile ilk kat-ı alaka telgrafını imzalayan benim. Postanede mahfuzdur."

²⁶¹ Ibid. *"O zamanki kanaatinizi, zihniyetinizi anlamak istiyoruz? Ne yapacaktınız; Sivas ahalisini siz bir tarafa çekeceksiniz, diğerleri bir tarafa çekecek, bu bariz bir hakikattir."*

Progressives in the newspaper, joined the party in order to “advance the Republic” since the founders of the party were close allies of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha. An altercation between Şekeroğlu İsmail Efendi and the judge of the court about multiparty system commences:

Judge – How would you go about advancing the party?
İsmail – We would fulfill whatever the government bid us to.
Judge – The People’s Party is the true government.
İsmail – The People’s Party was not organized here. The multiplicity of parties is the requirement of the Republic.
Judge – What would you say if parties proliferated, Armenians, Rums established parties, claimed to send deputies to the Assembly?
İsmail – No, evils of this sort are no more present in our homeland. Hopefully, their existence shall cease as well.
Judge – Disclose your true aim, why did you establish a party?
İsmail – I have no aim. Mister, we have planted a sapling, we will eat its fruit. The sapling of the Republic.
Judge – After setting the land afire?
İsmail – No, we do nothing of that sort.
Judge – Who did you take alongside here?
İsmail – We have given eight [names] to the government. We haven’t recorded the individuals.
Judge – Did you embark on an elections campaign?
İsmail – Each district strive in the elections by saying that a candidate from [their] district should rise. I was leading the workers in this endeavor. We engaged in no elections campaign whatsoever. People had already nominated their candidates. Naturally, people voted for those they wished. Election is the right of the people. They vote for whomever they desire.²⁶²

²⁶² Ibid.

Reis – Fırkayı nasıl ilerletecektiniz?

İsmail – Hükümet vazife ne emrederse onu yapacaktık.

Reis – Asıl hükümet Halk Fırkası’dır.

İsmail – Burada Halk Fırkası teşekkül etmemişti. Fırkaların taaddüdü cumhuriyet icabıdır.

Reis – Fırka taaddüt ederse, Ermeniler, Rumlar da bir fırka teşkil ederse, Meclis’e aza göndereceğiz derlerse ne dersin?

İsmail – Hayır memleketimizde bu gibi fenalıklar kalmamıştır. İnşallah onların da vücudu ortadan kalkar.

Reis – Asıl maksadını söyle, niçin fırka teşkil ettin?

İsmail – Maksadım yoktur. Beyefendi biz bir fidan yetiştirdik, onun meyvesini yiyeceğiz. Cumhuriyet fidanı.

Reis – Memlekete kundağı soktuktan sonra mı?

İsmail – Yo, biz öyle şeyler yapmayız.

Reis – Burada kimleri yanına aldın?

İsmail – Hükümete verdiğimiz sekiz kişidir. Efrad-ı kaydetmedik. [yani hükümete verdikleri listede 8 kişi var]

Reis – İntihab mücadelesine giriştiniz mi?

İsmail – İntihabda mahalleler benim mahallemden bir aza çıksın der, çalışırlar. Ben bu yolda amelenin başında idim. İntihabda hiçbir mücadele yapmadık. Millet namzedlerini göstermişti. Tabii millet arzu eylediklerine reylerini verdi. İntihab milletin hakkıdır. Kimi isterse ona reyini verir.

Upon being prompted by the Judge to elaborate on his connection to Çil Mehmed, İsmail confessed that they were from the same place of origin, although he didn't employ him. He also declared that he was in no way related to the declaration. However, the justice expressed that his deposition is regarded suspicious by the judiciary.

The following questioning was of Attorney Sabuncuzade Ahmed Efendi. Although he admitted that he was “respectful to the Ghazi”, the depictions of Mustafa Kemal discovered in his pocket raised the suspicions of the judiciary. This led the Judge to deliver the following statement: “You have drawn photographs of the venerable Ghazi Pasha. It is the aim of all of you, but rest assured that you will achieve nothing ... Today, an Armenian, a Greek, an Englishman, and a French thinks similarly. You think like this, too.”²⁶³ The judge continued to explain his views on the multiplication of parties:

— Of course, you will remember what had occurred in the Assembly of Deputies since Constitutionalism. A party was formed then. Arabs, Albanians, Greeks, Armenians were on one side, Turks on the other side. Your party naturally sought a force to rely on. Its consequences are evident.²⁶⁴

Afterwards, it was the turn of Ziya (Bacanak) Bey for questioning. He stated that he was not involved in politics; he had been a member of the Progressive Party which had closed upon the government's command at the time; he believed that the establishment of a new party was a requirement of the Republic. He also noted that he had acted in coordination with the Ghazi from the invasion of the homeland to the abolition of the Sultanate; the party was not intended for ill designs, instead was

²⁶³ Ibid. “Gazi Paşa hazretlerinin fotoğraflarını çizmişsiniz. Hepinizin maksadı odur, fakat emin olunuz ki hiçbir şey yapamayacaksınız” der ve ekler: “ Bugün bir Ermeni, bir Rum bir İngiliz, bir Fransız böyle düşünüyor. Siz de öyle düşünüyorsunuz.”

²⁶⁴ Ibid. “Siz Meşrutiyet devrinden itibaren Meclis- i Mebusan'da cereyan eden şeyleri bittabi hatırlarsınız. O zaman bir fırka teşkil etmişti. Araplar, Arnavutlar, Rumlar, Ermeniler bir taraf, Türkler bir taraf. Sizin fırka da bittabi istinad edecek kuvvetler aradı. Asarı meydandadır.”

exposed to abuse by some. His reply to the justice uttering that the “People’s party is closer to Ghazi Pasha, [it] is the governing party”²⁶⁵ sounds “we regarded Ghazi Pasha above parties”²⁶⁶. The Judge declared that the incident of the declaration was an outcome of the party they aimed at establishing. The prosecutor addresses the court during the questioning and elaborates on his opinions regarding multiplicity of parties:

- Ziya Bey argued that “the multiplicity of parties is regarded an imperative”. Doubtless, multiplicity of parties cannot yield any benefit in governments administered by the republic[an system]. A British scholar who was engaged in the study of the political life for years clearly displayed the greed of parties against each other. We have not forgotten what this land suffered because of the parties either. The actual damages we were exposed to because of the hassle of the parties considered self-evident. We give these points over to the conscience of Ziya Bey.²⁶⁷

The multiplicity of parties also constituted one of the themes during the deposition of Gani Bey, who declared that he had been a delegate of the Union and Progress during WWI. The fragments below are worth attention:

Judge – The Liberty and Union Party depended on Armenians and Greeks.

Which were the forces you relied on for your emergence?

Gani – People’s Party was not present in the homeland at the time. Not as an opposition party. Your obedient servant confesses ignorance on delicate points. If I had received an order of that sort, I would have warned my allies. Your obedient servant is Turk; naturally, I don’t depend on those [you have mentioned].

Judge – It is stated in your program that the party is respectful to religious creed. What does this mean: [It means] we will revive the patriarchate for Armenians, Greeks.

Gani – May God forgive, sir, by no means...²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Ibid. “*Halk fırkası Gazi Paşa’ya daha yakındır, hükümet fırkasıdır.*”

²⁶⁶ Ibid. “*Gazi Paşa’yı biz fırkaların fevkinde görüyorduk*”

²⁶⁷ Ibid. “*Ziya Bey fırkaların taaddüdü adeta zaruriyattan maduddur*” dedi. Herhalde cumhuriyetle idare edilen hükümetlerde fırkaların taaddüdü faide temin edemez. Senelerce siyasi hayatı tedkikle meşgul olmuş bir İngiliz âlimi, fırkaların yekdiğerine yapmış olduđu ihtirasatı açıkça göstermiştir. Fırkalar yüzünden bu memleketin neler çektiğini de henüz unutmadık. Fırkaların mücadelesi yüzünden maruz kaldığımız hüsrân-ı hakikat bedahet cümlesindendir. Bu cihetleri Ziya Bey’in vicdanına terk ediyoruz”

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Reis – Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası Ermeni’ye, Rum’a istinad etmiştir. Siz hangi kuvvetlere istinad ederek teşkil ettiniz?

The interrogation proceeded with questions pertaining to the issues of hat and the declaration. The letters written by Gani Bey to Kara Vasıf were brought to attention. Gani Bey admitted that he had known Kara Vasıf beforehand.

The multiplicity of parties again stood at the forefront in the hearing of Hamid Bey, one of the members of the Progressive Party.

Judge – What was it that your party objected?

Hamid – There is freedom of speech, freedom of conscience in the civilized law. My aim is to strive for the national desires.

Judge – Why did you join the Progressive party?

Hamid – I hold the conviction that multiplicity of parties in a Republic is beneficial from the point of view of welfare of the homeland.

Judge – In other words, to oppose People's Party.

Hamid – I rose against the rag of the caliphate. I worked for the establishment of the Republic, sir.

...

Prosecutor – The party established by these became an instrument to *irtica*.

Hamid – Sir, we suspended our activities when *irtica* emerged. We declared that we are at the disposal of the government in all respects by invoking Naci Bey, sir.²⁶⁹

The questioning of Aziz Bey among the notables of the Progressive party proceeded in a similar fashion.

Gani – Memlekette o zaman Halk Fırkası yok idi. Muhalif fırka olarak değil. Bendeniz ince noktaları bilmem. Öyle bir emir alsaydım arkadaşlarımı ikaz ederdim. Bendeniz Türk'üm, tabii o gibi şeylere isnad etmem.

Reis – Programınızda fırka itikad-ı diniyeye hürmetkardır diyor. Bu ne demektir: Ermenilere Rumlara patrikliği ihya edeceğiz demektir.

Gani – Estağfurullah efendim estağfurullah . . .

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Reis – Sizin fırka neye karşı idi?

Hamid – Hukuk-u medeniyede hürriyet-i kelam, hürriyet-i vicdan vardır. maksadım amal-ı milliyenin hususuna çalışmak.

Reis – Terakkiperver fırkaya niçin intisab ettiniz?

Hamid – Cumhuriyette fırkaların taaddüdü selamet-i memleket nokta-i nazarından faideli olur kanaatindeyim.

Reis – Yani Halk Fırkası'nın karşısına çıkmak için.

Hamid – Hilafetin paçavrasına isyan ettim. Ben cumhuriyetin tesisine çalıştım beyefendi.

...

Mudde-i Umumi – Bunların teşkil etmiş oldukları fırka irticaa alet olmuştur.

Hamid – Efendim irtica çıktığı zaman tatil-i faaliyet ettik. Her hususta hükümetin emrine amade olduğumuzu Naci Bey'e müracaatla söyledik beyefendi.

Following the depositions of the defendants, Prosecutor Necib Ali assumed the floor to convey his final deliberation on the case. The declaration that served as the most important piece of evidence during the case was read aloud. Then, the prosecutor declared his indictment. The verdict was reached half an hour later after the indictment was heard. The verdict read as below:

I [hereby] enunciate the judgments we have passed in the name of the revolution and welfare of the homeland and the future of the Republic: The execution of Çil Mehmed; the relegation of Şekeroğlu İsmail [Efendi], Gani [Efendi], Evliya [Efendi] to the Edirne penitentiary for fifteen years of imprisonment; former general Ziya [Bey], Hamid [Bey], Attorney Sabuncuzade Ahmed [Bey], Kurd Aziz [Bey], Baytarzade Hakkı [Bey] to the Kırklareli penitentiary for ten years of imprisonment each; mayor Abbas [Efendi], [Council] Member Sheikh Ömer [Efendi], Abdürrahim [Efendi] to the Kütahya penitentiary for seven and a half years; exile of Nalbandzade Ali Bey to Sinop for three years, Emir Pasha to Isparta for three years; the acquittal of the remaining defendants have been decreed.²⁷⁰

According to the note at the end of the summaries of the proceeding records, Çil Mehmed was executed the next morning (28 November 1925) and the rest of the convicts were transferred on the following Wednesday night.

Consequently, it is understood from the proceeding records that the court did not regard the suspension of a declaration criticizing Mustafa Kemal, the government and the decree pertaining to the use of hats a stand-alone incident. On the contrary, they deemed it a large-scale conspiracy perpetrated by the opposition. Thus, the court tried the multiplicity of parties and the motives of the members of the Progressive party as much as, in fact more than it did the incident of the declaration. The judiciary, which was composed of prominent figures of the single party government, openly declared its discontent with the multiplicity of parties.

²⁷⁰ Ibid. “İnkılap ve selamet-i vatan ve cumhuriyetin istikbali namuna verdiğimiz hükümleri okuyorum:

Çil Mehmed’in idamına, Şekeroğlu İsmail, Gani, Evliya Efendilerin on beş sene küreğe (hapse) Edirne hapishanesine, Sabık Erkan-ı Harb Ziya, Hamid, Dava vekili Sabuncuzade Ahmed, Kürt Aziz, Baytarzade Hakkı Beyler onar sene küreğe Kırklareli Hapishanesine, Belediye reisi Abbas, Aza Şeyh Ömer, Abdürrahim efendiler yedi buçuk sene Kütahya hapishanesine, Nalbandzade Ali Bey 3 sene müddetle Sinop’a, Emir Paşa 3 sene müddetle Isparta’ya nefy, diğer maznunların da beraatına karar verilmiştir.”

This incident signified the purge of local opposition through penalizing notables of the opposing factions in Sivas. The purge of these figures who contributed heavily to national struggle in Sivas hints at the inadequacy of approaching the events of the National Struggle era and its aftermath as a “struggle of a unified nation” by disregarding tensions that prevailed and the power struggle. It is self-evident that studying this power struggle that was composed of a combination of political, ideological and even personal contestations will contribute substantially to our understanding of the national struggle era.

In fact, we cannot ignore the connection between the purge of the opposition through this tribunal and the ideological and personal contentions of the opposition with Hayri Sığircı Bey. We are aware that Hayri Bey, the editor of the newspaper *Kızılırmak*, which favored People’s Party that had not opened an office in Sivas yet at the time, attempted to have a legislation passed from the municipal council obliging the general population to wear hats on November 8 or 9. However, it is a fact that the mayor and the rest of the council dragged their feet on this enactment. Moreover, Hayri Bey complained about the disguised nomination of the Progressives in the municipal elections in August although the party was closed.²⁷¹ The ensuing result was that the mayor, certain members and some prominent individuals of Sivas were punished because of the declaration issue and “the offense of being a member of the Progressive”. And Hayri Bey obtained the seat of mayor in 1927.

The newspaper that published the summaries of the proceeding records also added the statement Ali (Çetinkaya), the judge of the court, delivered in the conclusion. In this statement, Ali Bey enounces that the seat of Sivas in the history of the revolution would always remain high and all the people of Sivas were entitled to

²⁷¹ Alkan, p.105.

take pride in that. Yet, this honor conferred upon the people of Sivas entrusted certain obligations on them regarding the preservation of the revolution according to Ali Bey. He continued as below:

This time, we have witnessed with absolute frustration that a few individuals had embarked upon corrupt endeavors aimed at violating the composure and peace of the people of Sivas by establishing a den of corruption. We were obliged to exercise the terms of the law about these those of this sort in the name of the welfare of the homeland. No power or influence to prevent the terms of the law [from] securing the government of the Republic, the peace of the people and the wellbeing of the revolution can exist.²⁷²

The judge of the judiciary paid special attention not to identify the incidents with the people of Sivas and projects the guilt to a few individuals by referring to a “den of corruption”. Actually, this discourse is quite tangible. However, the point of importance is, simultaneously the main problematique of this paper, is the unequivocal appropriation of this discourse into historiography. In fact, Ergün Aybars, who has drawn up a work on the Independence Tribunals, draws attention to the arguments we have touched on above and notes that the deputy governor has admonished the Mayor and the council members about hat; yet, he was countered by a member named Sheikh Ömer. Aybars gives the name of Sheikh Ömer among many who were indicted and punished because of an important trait of Sheikh Ömer. “Sheikh Ömer was the brother of Sheikh Recep who was a member of “Entente Liberals” and embarked on opposition and desertion during National Struggle”. Furthermore, Aybars notes that the court reached the verdict of the guilty for the former Progressives because the declaration was posted by a person who was encouraged by the hesitation of the municipal administration and was considered to

²⁷² Kızılırmak, 3 December 1925.

“Bu defa beş-on kişinin bir fesad yuvası teşkil ederek bütün Sivaslıların sükân ve huzurunu ihlale matuf teşebbüsât-ı fasidaneye girişmiş olduklarını kemal-ı teessüfle gördük. Memleketin selameti namına bu gibiler hakkında ahkâm-ı kanununiye tatbiki mecbur olduk. Cumhuriyet hükümetini, halkın huzurunu ve inkılabın selametini temin namına ahkam-ı kanuniyeyi men edecek hiçbir kuvvet ve tesir mevcut olamaz.”

be in contact with the Progressive party by the court.²⁷³ It is impossible to come across any sort of reference to the elimination of the opposition and the underlying power struggle in Aybars' accounts. Although the possibility that the author was unaware of the existence of the records we have touched above can be regarded to lead to that specific nature of his accounts; yet, we tend to believe that the prevailing paradigm played out a more decisive role in comparison to lack of sources.

²⁷³ Ergün Aybars. *İstiklal Mahkemeleri 1920 – 1927*, vol.I-II, (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988), p.408.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

Nutuk was presented by Mustafa Kemal as the true history of the period of 1919 and 1927, and this claim has been accepted by many historians. However, in order for *Nutuk* to be comprehended, it should be approached as an attempt at legitimizing the purge of the opposers who also happened to be leading commanders of the National Struggle. In fact, being aware of the fact that *Nutuk* was affected by the political atmosphere of the time it was delivered, Kılıç Ali, one of Mustafa Kemal's close allies, stated in his memoirs that if *Nutuk* had not been written in 1927 but in 1937, Kazım Karabekir would have been considered in a different way.²⁷⁴ On the other hand, many Turkish and foreign historians see *Nutuk* as a true representation of the events and as a source, capable of providing empirical evidence about that period but not as a distortion of history for temporal concerns and not as a focus of study.

Thanks to the influence of *Nutuk*, the power struggle within the National Struggle is either disregarded or perceived from the viewpoint of Mustafa Kemal by the Turkish historiography. Thus, the opposition is handled through clichés such as being motivated by, for example, opportunism, *irtica*, treason.

It was argued within this thesis that the period of 1919 and 1925 witnesses a power struggle. This power struggle progressed until the monopolization of power was completed through an encompassing purge of the opposers and the aggrandizement of Mustafa Kemal. First the Karakol, which was perceived as a

²⁷⁴ Hulusi Turgut (ed.), *Atatürk'ün Sırdaşı Kılıç Ali'nin Anıları* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2005), p.233.

potential rival, was ousted and then, in Berkes' terms, the Green Army that was "the hope of all other contestants of Mustafa Kemal" was disbanded. The purge of the Second Group that opposed any form of dictatorial power through the 1923 elections, or "appointments" to put it in other words, followed. Finally, the Progressive Republican Party, founded by esteemed commanders of the National Struggle, was closed in the aftermath of the Sheik Said revolt.

Yet, the fact that a power struggle was staged does not necessarily indicate the non-existence of a national struggle. The imagination of a unified nation may prevent our understanding of the era; nevertheless, the people of Turkey united around certain "national" emotions and undertook a national struggle. The necessity to meditate on whatever the concept "national" may have meant or actually did mean within that particular historical context and to avoid approaching the matter from within a contemporary conceptual framework is obvious. Even though we have focused on the other side of the medal, the final analysis suggests that the Turkish and Muslim elements of Anatolian population have actively supported and upheld the national struggle.

The ousting of the opposition that took place at the period is of significance for attempts to understand the period, yet, neither particular nor exclusive to this region. The purges can be regarded a product of revolutionary epochs. The study of the period with a global scope and in comparison with other revolutions would definitely bring about a more coherent picture of the period. In conclusion, an elite that aimed at establishing its domination and launching social, political and cultural revolutions through that domination intends to restrain the mobility of those it domineers over to the greatest extent possible. After displaying such attitude towards

opposition, they designed a historical narrative from their own perspective in order to acquire legitimacy.

In this thesis, after displaying that the national struggle era also served as the stage of a power struggle and the purge of the opposition, this perspective was applied to the local dimension by looking at the events in Sivas. First, we witnessed the construction of the imagination of the national struggle that was supported by a unified nation. Then, we moved to analyze a “smooth” narrative of the national struggle that was embraced by the people of Sivas and manifested their inherent excellence. This approach that dominates local historiography refers to a unified Sivas that clustered around national struggle and obscures different aspects of the matter. What it doesn’t enshroud, it forces into the frame of clichés as in the case of Sheikh Recep. The Sheikh Recep incident that delivers no deeper understanding from the perspective of the hero-traitor dichotomy only bears importance in as much as it manifests that there were tensions present in Sivas indeed. Essentially, tensions also prevailed among the people of Sivas, who favored the National Struggle. In fact, there were quarrels between *Gaye-i Milliye* and *İrade-i Milliye*, both supporters of the National Struggle. The power struggle followed a similar pattern on the local scale and the Independence Tribunal that arrived at Sivas in 1925 purged the dissenters in Sivas who had been members of the Progressive.

In conclusion, it is evident that an historical account written by the prevailing side erected on presuppositions of the dichotomy between heroes and traitors and a homogenous nation’s support does not lend us a picture that makes sense. In Mark Mazower’s words, “a different kind of history is needed – less useful as a political instrument but bringing us closer to past realities – which sees the present as just one

possible outcome of our predecessors.”²⁷⁵ If we can manage to regard the issue in this fashion and radicalize our sense of contingency we can progress toward a more pacific historiography. We can approach history more calmly if we comprehend that history is not linear and predictable but one of the infinite possible outcomes of certain struggles, confusions and tensions.

²⁷⁵ Mark Mazower. *Dark Continent Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), pp. x – xi.

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