The Turkish *Mission Civilisatrice*?
Governance of Dersim as an Internal Colony (1927-1952)

Murat S. Devres

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"The Turkish *Mission Civilisatrice*? Governance of Dersim as an Internal Colony (1927-1952)" a dissertation prepared by Murat S. Devres in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, has been approved on 13 January 2021 by:

Dissertation Advisor

Professor Cengiz Kırlı _____
Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History
Boğaziçi University

Jury Members

Professor Hamit Bozarslan _____

École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales

Professor Nadir Özbek _____
Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History
Boğaziçi University

Assistant Professor Seda Altuğ Bulut _____
Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History
Boğaziçi University

Assistant Professor Gözde Orhan _____
Altınbaş Üniversitesi
İktisadi, İdari ve Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi

Declaration of Originality

The intellectual content of this dissertation, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.

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Abstract

The Turkish Mission Civilisatrice?
Governance of Dersim as an Internal Colony (1927-1952)

Murat S. Devres, Doctoral Candidate at the Atatürk Institute
for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2021

Professor Cengiz Kırlı, Dissertation Advisor

Global modernity was achieved through the formation of nation-states that conducted respective versions of forced homogenization by implementing centralizing principles. This dissertation argues that the Republic of Turkey adopted many techniques of the famed mission civilisatrice of the French Third Republic; a discourse of superior core values was used to suppress the local culture and socioeconomic structure of a hitherto willingly stateless people in the mountainous region of Dersim. The quarter century considered in this dissertation coincides with the Inspectorates-General, which I argue was an internal colonial institution. Through an in-depth analysis of reports written in the late 1930s and early 1940s by Necmeddin Sahir (1898-1992), a journalist, bureaucrat and entrepreneur, as well as additional archival material, this dissertation presents a critical reading of Turkish history in relation to the Greater Dersim region, which includes present-day Tunceli. The contemporary polemic that continues to divide Turkish politics, centered around the events of 1937 and 1938, is a sensitive subject that deserves special attention in relation to contemporary identity politics in Turkey. The original contribution of this work resides in its mission to overcome political polemics surrounding these events by employing socioeconomic data from the reports of Necmeddin Sahir and interpreting them from the perspective of subaltern studies spotlighting those voices that would normally not be found in state records.

136,090 words

Özet

Türk Uygarlaştırıcı Misyonu mu?
Dersim'in İç Sömürge Olarak Yönetişimi (1927-1952)

Murat S. Devres, Doktora Adayı, 2021
Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü

Profesör Cengiz Kırlı, Tez Danışmanı

Modernite dünyaya, merkezileştirici ilkeler uygulayarak kendilerini zorla tek tipleştiren ulus-devletler sayesinde yayıldı. Bu tez, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin belli bir noktaya kadar Fransız Üçüncü Cumhuriyeti'nin meşhur Uygarlaştırıcı Misyonunu benimseyerek, o zamana değin dağlık Dersim'de devletsiz yaşamayı seçmiş olan insanların yerel kültürünü ve sosyoekonomik yapısını ortadan kaldırmak için merkezdeki üst yapının üstünlüğüne işaret eden bir söylem kullandığını savunuyor. Aşağıdaki sayfalarda incelenen çeyrek yüzyıllık dönem, bir iç sömürge kurumu olduğunu iddia ettiğim genel müfettişlikler dönemi ile örtüşmektedir. 1930'ların sonlarında ve 1940'ların başında, gazeteci, bürokrat ve girişimci Necmeddin Sahir (1898-1992) tarafından yazılan bölge hakkındaki raporların derin analizi ve ek arşiv belgeleri ile desteklenen bu tez, okura çağdaş Tunceli İlini de içeren büyük Dersim bölgesinin geçmişini Yakın Dönem Türk tarihinin eleştirel bir okuması ile sunmaktadır. 1937 ve 1938 olayları halen günümüzde Türk siyasetini bölmeye devam eden çağdaş bir polemiktir ve Türkiye'de mevcut olan kimlik siyaseti ile ilgili daha özel çalışmalar gerektiren hayliyle hassas bir mevzudur. Elinizdeki çalışmanın özgünlüğünün bir kısmı ise Necmeddin Sahir'in raporlarında bulunan sosyoekonomik verilerin kullanımıyla söz konusu meselenin siyasi polemiklerden ayrıştırılıp, tarafsız bir çerçeveye oturtulmaya çalışmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu gaye ise olağan koşullarda devlet kayıtlarında sessiz çığlıklarının belgelenmediği insanların tarihlerini yazmayı amaçlayan “ast” (subaltern) çalışmaları perspektifi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir.

136.090 kelime

Curriculum Vitae

MURAT S. DEVRES

Born 15 May 1987
in Istanbul, Turkey

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History Boğaziçi University 2021
M.A.	Faculté de Philosophie & de Lettres Université Libre de Bruxelles 2011 (Histoire à finalité approfondie)
B.A.	Faculté de Philosophie & de Lettres Université Libre de Bruxelles 2009 (Histoire de l'Epoque Contemporaine)

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS/EMPLOYMENT

- Adalar Müzesi (2011-2013)
- Can Yayınları (2015-2019)
- Sadberk Hanım Müzesi (2019)
- Dergâh Yayınları (2020-ongoing)
- Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (2020-ongoing)

PUBLICATIONS

- Marcel Mauss, *La Sociologie en France* (to be published)
- Lionel Jospin, *Napolyoncu Bela* (to be published)
- Huntington'ın izinde Allison: "Çin-Amerika çatışması mı?," *Birikim*, no:344, December 2017.
- *Anarşi, Coğrafya, Modernite: Élisée Reclus'nün Seçilmiş Yazıları* (2016)[Translator]
- *La Turquie en Transformation 1922-1932* (2016) [Author]

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- *ASN World Convention* 2-4 May 2019

Panel TK3: "The Securization of Turkey's Kurdish Question in Historical Perspective."

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ABG	Anatolian Black Goat
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi
BCA	Başbakanlık Cumhurbaşkanlığı Arşivleri
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
CUP	Comity of Union and Progress
EHESS	École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales
GNAT	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
İGD	İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü
KTC	Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti
MTA	Maden Tetkik ve Arama Genel Müdürlüğü
NEP	New Economic Policy
NSS	Necmeddin Sahir Sılan
NSSA	Necmeddin Sahir Sılan Archives
RPP	Republican People's Party
T.C.	Türkiye Cumhuriyeti
TİP	Türkiye İşçi Partisi

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The Université Libre de Bruxelles transformed me from a young adult filled with angst over my identity and prejudices that fueled a confused and defensive nationalism and sought to understand the past to build a better future. The Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, and especially the Department of History, gave me the tools to hone my craft. I had the honor of calling professors Pieter Lagrou and Serge Jaumain my advisors during the writing of my master's thesis.

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1

Introduction :

> *...partout la même foi se retrouve en la mission du peuple civilisé, de la race supérieure envers les populations qu'il fallait, pour leur bien, coloniser. ... Et cette passion humanitaire s'allie à la gloire d'accomplir cette mission plutôt que de l'abandonner au voisin.*
>
> – Henri Brunschwig, *Mythes et réalités de l'impérialisme colonial français, 1871-1914*

This study concerns a quarter century of Turkish state rule in Dersim. The periodization is in direct correlation with the creation and the dissolution of the administration of the Inspectorates General, which are perceived to be internal colonial institutions that were put in place in order to realize a European inspired Turkish *Mission Civilisatrice* in this isolated region. This period in world history following Hobsbawmian conceptions is essentially situated in the first half of the "Age of Extremes."[1] Our period coincides with the "Age of Catastrophe" that began with "Total War," which was followed by "Revolutions" across the globe, "Economic Abyss," "the fall of liberalism,"[2] and "the call to arms" for the Second World War.

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1 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1994).

2 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 112. "*political liberalism was in full retreat throughout the Age of Catastrophe, a retreat which accelerated sharply after Adolf Hitler became Germany's chancellor in 1933.*" In the whole world there were more than 35 constitutional and elected governments in 1920. In 1938 the number was 17, in 1944 12 out of 64 states.

The vast majority of this dissertation concerns how the Republic of Turkey governed a region with a mostly stateless history in this critical era of world history - in an age of catastrophe characterized by the fall of liberalism and increased militarism that led to and included the Second World War.

This is a socioeconomic study of a delicate, highly politicized subject. The intent is to employ an objective, rational approach supported by data. How did the society and economy of this region change? What is the historical transformation experienced by the people of Dersim during this period? Was the governance of Dersim as an internal colony a socioeconomic success for the republic? Did the Turkish civilizing mission achieve its intended purpose? These central questions are considered throughout the three chapters that follow this introduction, wherein we will first discuss the ideas of the Turkish civilizing mission and the internal colonial model.

1.1 The Turkish Civilizing Mission

The Republic of Turkey was founded with the underlying principle of *reaching the level of contemporary civilizations*. The republic tried to create a European style nation-state from a multiethnic and multi-confessional empire with a Muslim majority. Ergo the modernization of the early republican era was accompanied by Europeanization, which was implemented with greater zeal than in any time since the Tanzimat. This process, also called occidentalization in the late imperial era, was furthered in the new nation-state as certain European principles of statehood were adopted, such as public schooling, as imagined by Condorcet and implemented by Jules Ferry in France. The enlightened European state saw itself as burdened with an almost providential responsibility: a mission to liberate the people from the shackles of the dark ages and superstitious tradition. The very existence of this mission gave modern European statehood a colonial character even within the borders of a given nation-state. The Republic of Turkey, as a willful imitator of European states, adopted this model and hence created internal colonies. It was in this context that the discourse of the Turkish civilizing mission took shape during the second half of the 1930s.

In the process of internal colonization, the Republic of Turkey carried out overt *imitatio imperii* from various contemporary western states, most notably France. The republic matched the Jacobin fervor of centralization and departmentalization, mixing social liberalism with anticlerical trepidation. Ankara was consciously imitating the *mission civilisatrice* of the French Third Republic, which claimed to bring civilization to remote places as a pretext to exploit their resources. However, the Turkish case was peculiar, because the republic was trying to switch civilizations. The revolution sought to impose European values on a largely unwilling rural population that was accustomed to traditional values, and this proved to be especially difficult in the "East." However, there was a larger problem behind the Turkish civilizing mission because the republic embarked on a civilizing mission on the periphery before having consolidated that civilizational transformation at its core. Naturally, the late Ottomans were preoccupied with the concept of civilization and how theirs differed from that of the Europeans.

Mustafa Suphi, for instance, referred to the civilizing mission as early as 1910.[3] However, the *Vazife-i Temdin* to which Suphi referred was neither Turkish nor French; he was actually using the term in reference to the Italian invasion of Libya. The French term was championed much later in academia by Henri Brunschwig in his work on French colonialism.[4] What Brunschwig meant by *mission civilisatrice* was that, paired with an ardent nationalism, the French Third Republic saw and proclaimed itself, as having assumed the noble role of bringing western civilization to "primitive" people and foreign lands across the globe, all the while using this pretext as a means for political domination and economic colonization. Hence, the use of the Ottoman term by the leftist author is befitting of the Libyan case because colonial Italy was expanding into North Africa. Therefore, the civilizing mission cannot be separated from colonialism and imperialism.

3 Mustafa Suphi, *Vazife-i Temdin*, (1911).

4 Henri Brunschwig, *French Colonialism, 1871-1914: Myths and Realities* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

Turkey had lost almost all of its empire after ten years of nearly uninterrupted war. The successor unitary state formed by the Republic had no place for pluralism. Hence, a new civilization was imagined that would unite the country. It was conceived as being European, Turkish, and secular in its foundations. This meant a complete reconstruction of the Ottoman past in relation to the modern world order. Thus, the Turkish Revolution, which Toprak calls the first "post-modern revolution," implemented a series of reforms to this end.[5]

It was in this context that the Turkish civilizing mission was formed in relation to a region virtually untouched by the forces of modernity. Dersim had a history that was independent of the rest of modern Turkey due to its physical geography. The social structure was defined by tribalism, comparable to the tribalism that existed in Kurdistan. The late empire had brought “civilization” to most of the fertile lowlands, to quote Gökalp. He defined an *aşiret* as a nomadic community that lived in tents and was solely occupied with animal husbandry. The members of such tribes were related to each other through blood and kinship, being presided over by a chieftain. Gökalp identified five chronological stages in the submission of tribes to the central state. First were those who were fully nomadic, did not farm land, and hence did not pay taxes. They were armed and took tributes, called *huki* from settled villagers. When these tribes started to take an interest in farming, they became semi-nomadic tribes, composed of both farmers and herders. These, too, were armed. When favorable social conditions presented themselves, the semi-nomads became fully sedentary agriculturalists. In time, their settlements turned into villages dominated by local notables called aghas. And lastly, due to social atomization that broke primary tribal bonds, community villages emerged that paid taxes to the state.[6]

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5 Toprak, Zafer, "Antropolojik Irk Sorunu ve Dersim'de 'Uygarlaştırıcı Misyon'," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 202 (October 2010): 60-67.

6 Ziya Gökalp, *Kürt aşiretleri hakkında ictimai tetkikler* (Ankara: Komal, 1975). Chapter entitled "Aşiretler nizamnamesi hakkındaki yazı taslağı," concerns a proposal written in 1909, while the fifth chapter concerns the civilizing mission: "Aşiretler nasıl temdin olunabilir?."

This approach is fundamental in understanding the Turkish civilizing mission in Dersim. The state that was founded on ideas promoted by Gökalp who believed in the transformational capacity of social atomization. The author wrote that the mountains of Dersim could not sustain agriculture and therefore epitomized a topography where it would be difficult to establish governance. He describes the inhabitants as armed highlanders whose recourse was to pillage the wealthier villages of the fertile plains below. Therefore, said Gökalp, there was but one solution: to compel the tribes of the mountains to descend and give them land to facilitate their sedentarization on the plains.[7]

This perspective was by no means novel; the early modern historian Ibn Khaldoun had elaborated the fundaments of the relation between tribes and states in the Middle East centuries prior to Gökalp. His conception created a tradition of perceiving tribes as primitive communities that posed a potential threat to the stability of the state. Indeed, Ibn Khaldoun presented a cyclical understanding of Middle Eastern History in which nomadic tribes continually invaded sedentary empires. Events in the Ottoman Empire, for instance, fit his conception relatively well. Tribal Turks invaded the Byzantine Empire, conquered it, became acculturated and became a weak state in the end. The late Ottomans were aware of and convinced by the Khaldounian model. Their difference lied in the western colonial outlook that they adopted.

Perhaps this particular tincture of late Ottoman colonial outlook is rather maladapted for comparison with western colonialism. An article co-authored by New York University professors Robert Stam and Ella Shohat seeks answers to similar questions. In this article, the authors investigate "the role of comparison within the race and colonial debates as they play across various national and cultural zones-American, French and Brazilian," all of which claim a common Judeo-Christian European heritage.[8] But even in these

7 Also see İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolu'nun düzeni: sosyo-ekonomik ve etnik temeller* (Ankara: E. Yayınları, 1969).

8 Robert Stam & Ella Shohat, "The Uses and Abuses of Cross-Cultural Analogy," *New Literary History* 40, no. 3, (Summer 2009): 473-499.

somewhat related societies, the authors find that "cross-national comparison [tends to] provoke defensive objections along the lines of: 'But our situation is completely different; it is simply not comparable'." This is the issue with reading Turkish history through post-colonial lenses. Turks and social scientists interested in Turkey tend to put it on a pedestal with respect to the rest of the world. It was neither a colony nor was it a proper colonial empire. Although this view can be challenged. As the authors of the article convincingly put it "all national comparison takes place on transnational territory ... All nations are, on one level, transnations and that all cultures are transcultures with the boundaries of nation-states."[9] Therefore, the fact that Dersim lies within the borders of the Turkish republic, does not preclude it from being analyzed as a colony.

An Ottoman civilizing mission was undertaken in the late imperial era in most tribal regions of the empire, perhaps due to the Khaldounian tradition. The republic inherited this from the empire, which gave the Turkish civilizing mission a unique character. Although Toprak agrees that the *uygarlaştırıcı misyon* has a unique character, he is skeptical about a comparison between Turkey and European colonial powers. First, such an approach must have a Marxist understanding of colonialism as a type of capitalism, and the issue of "race" has to be addressed, along with the dilemma of assimilation and integration. He believes that because the state discourse of the Turkish civilizing mission in Dersim was not centered around race, it cannot be aptly compared with what the French or the Portuguese were doing in Africa.

While I share Toprak's skepticism, I disagree that a Marxist concept of colonialism cannot be applied to the Turkish case in Dersim. However, I agree that it does not perfectly correspond to the European colonial outlook. The Kurds were of the same race as Turks, which is to say the Turanian race that had emigrated from Central Asia. This, of course, was a time when physical anthropology and craniology were considered as real science.[10]

9 Stam and Shohat, "The Uses and Abuses of Cross-Cultural Analogy," 497.

10 Zafer Toprak, *Darwin'den Dersim'e: Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji* (Istanbul; Doğan Kitap, 2012).

The idea that the Turks and Kurds were of the same race also found proponents among Kurdish intellectuals such as Şükrü Mehmet Sekban.[11] Nevertheless, comparison is what enables us to establish links between local and world histories. Therefore, a closer look needs to be taken at the French Third Republic, which was a definitive model for Turkey.

The American historian James Cooke refers to the period between 1880 and 1910 as the era of New French Imperialism. This new form of French imperialism was embedded in a reactive patriotism following the empire's shameful defeat in 1870. France was trying to recover from the disgraceful end of the Second Empire. Unable to expand in Europe, the statesmen of the day fixed their gaze on Africa, towards the Congo, Chad and Niger. What differentiated this new imperialism from that of previous colonial ventures was that it was done above all for the benefit of the national interest of France, as a means to restore national prestige. Earlier French colonialism had been limited; for instance, Algeria was used as a diplomatic bargaining chip against the British in the 1840s. In fact, this early colonization of Algeria by the French was done with very little government planning.[12]

However, the new French imperialists ventured into colonialism as entrepreneurs. Colonies were perceived as businesses that had to be conducted both practically and prudently. This modern, rationalist, pragmatic approach to imperialism paved the way for the French *mission civilisatrice*. This new "republican" imperialism sought to overcome the failures of the First Republic.

The Third Republic was to bring French civilization to the four corners of the world, not solely for prestige but also more importantly for capitalistic accumulation. Some Frenchmen of the time actually said that colonial policy was a son of industrial policy, and industry was of great importance for the republic, given that it had lost the important industrial region of Alsace-

11 Chukru Mehmed Sekban, *La Question Kurde: des problèmes, des minorités* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1984).

12 James Cooke, *New French Imperialism 1880-1910: The Third Republic and Colonial expansion* (David & Charles, 1973), 9-13.

Lorraine to Germany. French expansionists could have agreed with later Marxist theorists that imperialism is in fact the highest state of capitalism. Empire meant the accumulation of immense wealth. In fact, some were so keen on its economic benefits that they argued against the assimilation of subjugated people altogether. The anti-assimilationists believed that the natives did not matter as much as the French colonists. The latter were perceived as comparable to American pioneers in the West; the natives, just like the indigenous Americans, were just a threatening obstacle to economic growth. This is why massacre of natives by colonial armies were common throughout this era of new imperialism. In fact, colonists and an effectively independent colonial army were the two pillars of French colonial rule. In this southern "department" of France, two hundred thousand colonists lived along the coast north of around two million indigenous Algerians.[13]

The Republic of Turkey was also recovering from the shame of a defunct empire; however, it had no means to invade overseas territories. Instead, the new nation-state turned its gaze inwards, albeit with a similar attitude as the French new imperialists. They had a different perspective on race and assimilation, but the capitalist nature of their venture is indisputable. For this reason, I believe that it is more befitting to compare the Turkish civilizing mission with other internal colonies. Almost all modern nation-states have had to undergo an initial period of internal colonization and we have to look no further than the example of France.

Eugene Weber showed in *Peasants Into Frenchmen* how the same French Third Republic integrated national minorities into a more or less cohesive union of peoples.[14] Before it was ever employed as colonial discourse, *la mission civilisatrice* was a discourse of internal colonialism.

13 Cooke, *New French Imperialism*, 15-17.

14 Eugen Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*, (1976): 124-127. Also see Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1992).

1.2 The Internal Colonial Model

The Republic of Turkey imitated the administrative organization of western colonial empires in its civilizing mission to internal colonies. The country had vast territories inside its borders that had not known direct rule for centuries. Internal colonial rule was to reverse this circumstance and unite a divided territory into a nation-state. Inspectorates-General were institutions with plenipotentiary powers over their administrative regions that resembled to the Governorate Generals in European overseas colonies. They were first instituted in 1927 and were dissolved in 1952. This quarter century can be called an internal colonial era in the history of the Republic, and it is within this era that we will explore the history of Dersim.

The internal colonial model is a methodological tool that allows scholars to make use of comparisons with both national and colonial histories from across the globe. The notion of internal colonies can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Populists in Russia originally used it to portray the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. Early twentieth century Marxist theorists such as Bukharin, Gramsci, Lenin, and Preobrazhensky used the term to refer to the economic underdevelopment that endured in certain regions. Along these lines, Dersim, as a region that has experienced sustained economic underdevelopment throughout contemporary history, is a fitting example of an internal colony from a Marxist point of view. Internal colonialism is characterized by uneven trade among certain privileged areas of a country vis-à-vis the rest, and it can be manifest as either an outcome of the invisible hand of the market or a consequence of economic intervention by the state. Either way, internal colonialism is understood as a necessary step in the development of imperialistic capitalism, even if local dynamics determine the peculiar evolution of internal colonial rule. Turkish internal colonial rule in Dersim has peculiarities compared to, say, English rule in Scotland.[15]

15 Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975; New Brunswick: Transcation Publishers, 1998): XIV-XVI. Also see Barbara Arneil, *Domestic Colonies: The Colonial Turn Inward* (2017).

Vladimir I. Lenin wrote in *Development Of Capitalism in Russia* that the formation of a national home market gave rise to internal "domestic" colonization. In Lenin's understanding internal colonies result from the development of modern capitalism and the establishment of a national economy.[16]

Nikholai Bukharin (1888-1938), declared in *Imperialism and World Economy*, the introduction of which was written by Lenin, that imperialism was nothing more than the reproduction of capitalist competition on a global scale. In other words, all states that compete in the world economy are imperialistic in nature, even though they might not be called empires. In these circumstances, it is natural for states to colonize lands situated within their borders in the name of global competition. In practice, this meant that the regions that became internal colonies lost ownership of their economies. In exchange, their means of production and subsistence became integral parts of national economies.[17]

Evgeny Preobrazhensky (1886-1937) was the most important figure in the conceptualization of internal colonialism. He coauthored a booklet with Bukharin in 1919 called *the ABC of Communism*, and later, as an associate of Trotsky, he was the economist of the leftist opposition to Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP). Preobrazhensky conceptualized internal colonialism as an intermediary step between primitive capitalist accumulation and modern capitalism, which gave rise to colonialism proper. His theories were implemented by Stalin who began to use coercive measures for grain requisition starting in the beginning of 1928. Two winters later his policies brutally forced countless peasants to abandon their land and work on collective farms. The process of dispossessing the peasants and collectivizing the land was completed by 1934. The cost of this was widespread famine and the deaths of millions.[18]

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16 Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia vol.3* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 562-565.

17 Nikolai Bukharin, *Imperialism and World Economy*, (London: Merlin Press, 1915, 1987), 120.

18 Evgenij Preobrazhensky, *The new economics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), XIII-XVI.

Antonio Gramsci referred to the concept of internal colonies in *The Southern Question*. Written in 1926, this work contextualized the issue from the point of view of the Italian communist movement: "The bourgeoisie of the North has subjected southern Italy and the Islands and reduced them to the status of exploited colonies."[19] This Italian communist perception of Northern Italy as having virtually colonized the south corresponds to our understanding of the internal colonialism in which the core of the modern state exploits the periphery. A Sardinian himself, Gramsci described the south "as an area of extreme social disintegration."[20]

South American social scientists have used this model to explain the relationship of indigenous regions with the central state. Starting in the 1960s internal colonialism was mostly used in reference to zones that are both economically underperforming and culturally different from the dominant core of the state. According to the internal colonial model, the core politically dominates the periphery in order to exploit it materially. The model suggests that modernization spreads through a region in a disorderly manner, which in turn creates advanced industrial urban pockets surrounded by a rural periphery. The unequal advancement of industrialization and modernity produces an imbalanced allocation of supplies and influence in the periphery. The core maintains its advantage by institutionalizing the prevailing system of stratification. It saves important administrative and political positions for its own members and denies members of the periphery access to these positions. Such a system of stratification provides the legal bases for the formation of the distinct ethnic identities of both groups. The two opposing groups are characterized by cultural markers that aid categorization with respect to their visible differences. The internal colonial model anticipates that these differences will continue to grow in importance, and that the culture of the periphery will form a reactionary discourse.

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19 Antonio Gramsci, *The modern prince: and other writings*, (New York: International Publishers, 1957), 28.

20 Gramsci, *The modern prince: and other writings*, 42. Also see *Ordine Nuovo* of 3 January 1920.

I argue that the internal colonial model is appropriate to explain the underdevelopment of Dersim. Michael Hechter proposes two distinct arguments in his book on the internal colonization of Celtic lands by England between 1536 and 1966: First, at the regional level, a lack of power on the part of the internal colonies resulted in dependent development. Second, at the individual level, labor was not divided according to social class but on the basis of ethnicity, a phenomenon he calls a cultural division of labor. Hechter perceives the Cromwellian Settlement, whereby Catholic land was confiscated for Protestant use and members of the Church of Ireland were barred from holding public office, to be a perfect example of the cultural division of labor. Based on this perspective, we can formulate the corresponding questions concerning Dersim: Was there a lack of power on the part of the indigenous population of the region that resulted in limited development entirely dependent on the central government? Was there a cultural division of labor in Dersim during this period? Was there confiscation of indigenous land for the exclusive use of the agents of the central government?[21]

Hechter himself defines the internal colonial model as a system where an indigenous population is conquered and dominated by an exogenous group that views itself as superior. Alongside the legal use of force, the core produces discursive stereotypes to legitimize the superiority of metropolitan culture. Important administrative positions in these areas are usually reserved for those belonging to the dominant culture, and those belonging to the peripheral culture cannot climb the social ladder because of the stratification system. Therefore, a persistent local ethnic identity is manifest in these regions.

If Dersim was an internal colony, its economy would have been based on the export of raw materials, its cities would have served as commercial way stations with the wider national market and its transportation system, instead of responding to the needs of the region, would have been constructed in the most efficient manner to benefit the national economy. [22]

21 Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 9-10.

22 Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 30-31, 39.

The internal colonial model allows the researcher to consider other transnational cases as points of reference, with which to contextualize a particular case study. Through the use of this model, I aim to reintroduce economics into the debate surrounding the history of Dersim, since internal colonialism was foremost an economic form of imperialism.

1.3 Historiography

Our methodological approach favors integrating republican historiography with postcolonial and subaltern studies, which is why a brief look at discussions concerning the Ottoman Empire and how Ottomanists deal with the postcolonial debate seems necessary. Ottoman historiography entered the domain of postcolonial studies in the 1990s. This historiographical turn places "Ottoman colonialism" and "Ottoman orientalism" at the center of its methodological concerns. [23] Selim Deringil a prominent figure of this postcolonial turn in Ottoman studies has come to take the view that the late Ottomans conceived of their "periphery as a colonial setting," and hence "borrowed" the European policy of colonialism as a mechanism of survival.[24] Ussama Makdisi, another Ottomanist who adopts the postcolonial perspective, argues that the Ottomans inescapably gravitated towards the dominant form of hegemony of the time, namely European imperialism, in their effort to build a modern nation.[25] He considers the Ottoman discourse towards the imperial periphery to be a form of orientalism. The director of the Orient-Institut in Istanbul, Raoul Motika adopts a similar terminology in "Orientalism Alla Turca."[26]

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23 Özgür Türesay, "L'Empire ottoman sous le prisme des études postcoloniales. A propos d'un tournant historiographique récent," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, no. 60-2 (2013/2): 127-145.

24 Selim Deringil, *The well-protected domains of ideology and the legitimation of power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

25 Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Secterianism*: *Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, (University of California Press, 2000).

26 Christoph Herzog, Raoul Motika, "Orientalism alla Turca: Late 19th / early 20th century Ottoman voyages into the Muslim 'outback'," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol:40, no. 2 (2000): 139-165.

Christoph Herzog of the University of Bamberg describes an "Ottoman civilizing mission" in nineteenth century Ottoman Baghdad, as does Isa Blumi of Stockholm University with respect to Ottoman Yemen.[27]

These authors are established scholars of the Ottoman Empire, yet it is still difficult for historians of the late imperial era to regard the Ottoman State as on par with European colonial powers.

Vangelis Kechriotis believes that, in the strict sense, Yemen was the only real Ottoman colony. Here, the Empire invested in a formidable narrative of a civilizing mission close to that of the White Man's Burden.[28] Kechriotis perceives a terminological inflation, whereby authors with differing historiographical agendas leaned towards studying the Ottoman state on par with European colonial empires. Ottoman and European colonial administrations were compared on equal footing in "*Comparing empires: The Ottoman domains and the British Raj in the long nineteenth century,*" a special issue of *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* edited by Dina Khoury and Dane Kennedy.[29] This revived interest in empire, aside from its colonial aspect is described as an imperial turn. My perspective fits within these historiographical frameworks.

In considering how world-capitalism infiltrated the Ottoman Empire and the consequences of this process, Şevket Pamuk situates the Ottomans in "the periphery of the nineteenth-century world-economy."[30]

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27 Christoph Herzog, "Nineteenth-century Baghdad through Ottoman eyes," *Historein* 13, (2013). & in Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber, "Arab provincial capitals in the late Ottoman Empire," in *The Empire in the City* (Wuerzburg: Ergonb, 2002), 311–328. Isa Blumi, *Rethinking the late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative social and political history of Albania and Yemen, 1878-1918* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010). Also see Thomas Kühn, "Ordering urban space in Ottoman Yemen, 1872–1914," in *The Empire in the City* (Wuerzburg: Ergonb, 2002), 329–348.

28 Vangelis Kechriotis, "Postcolonial criticism encounters late Ottoman studies," *Historein*, 13, no. 39 (2014).

29 Dina Khoury, Dane Kennedy, "Comparing Empires: The Ottoman Domains and the British Raj in the Long Nineteenth Century," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37, no.2 (2007): 231-242.

30 Şevket Pamuk, "The Ottoman empire in comparative perspective," *Review* 11, no.2 (1988): 127–150.

Referring to the work of Gallagher and Robinson, Pamuk perceives the Ottoman Empire as neither a formal colony nor an informal empire, but as a third category that was penetrated by "world capitalism under conditions of inter-imperialist rivalry."[31] Pamuk proposes that this category describes the Ottoman Empire along with Persia and China and that "the uniqueness of these societies lay in the fact that their central bureaucracies had the upper hand in the struggle during the nineteenth century. [32] From the perspective of economic history, Şevket Pamuk places the Ottoman Empire in the dialectic of postcolonial rhetoric. [33]

As the direct successor state of the empire, which had undertaken an immense effort to adapt to the dominant world power structure. The Republic emulated the dominant socio-political discourse as well as the political economy practiced at the core, while being in the periphery in regard to the capitalist world economy. This had the effect of transforming the Republic into an imperial colonial power within its own borders, for the ideals that the government was espousing were those of European colonial competitors.

Ottoman actions in Albania, Yemen, and Iraq and those in the early republican period - although similar in many aspects – clearly differed in practice, most notably with respect to their approach to modernity. Partha Chatterjee writes that "the world-wide sweep of 'the tidal wave of modernization'" was accompanied by the structural erosion of traditional society, defined as a relational system, followed by its restructuration into industrial society, “in which the classification of people by culture is [substituted by] the classification by nationality."[34] Following this logic the modernizing, industrializing republican culture sought to penetrate the periphery and overthrow traditional society.

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31 John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review* 6, no.1 (August 1953): 1–15. Pamuk, “The Ottoman empire in comparative(…),” 129.

32 Pamuk, “The Ottoman empire in comparative perspective,” 131.

33 Pamuk, “The Ottoman empire in comparative perspective,” 132.

34 Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist thought and the colonial world: A derivative discourse* (London, 1986): 4-6.

This logic rather takes into account that the process of industrialization is uneven across geographies, which is why human geographies needed to be transformed to correspond to a society appropriate for industry – meaning a homogeneous culture that could be converged into a cohesive political unit. Thus, in order to industrialize, modern states had to become more unified. And the unification of the nation became the foundation of the rebirth of the Empire.

Kumar argues that there are compelling similarities between empires and nation-states. In fact, nation-states can be analyzed as *empires in miniature*. The two concepts can "be thought of as alternative political projects, both of which are available for elites to pursue depending on the circumstances of the moment."[35] Conceiving of empire as a pre-modern construct - and the nation-state as a modern phenomenon - does not reflect reality. The point of the imperial turn is not about lumping empires and nation-states together, but rather realizing that imperialism is innate to the modern nation-state.

The ideology of nationalism conceives of the nation-state as a reflection of a common culture. The main principle is the ethnic or racial homogeneity of the state and the radical egalitarianism of all nationals. Nation-states tend to create a particularistic worldview, usually self-centered and inclined towards megalomania. This sense of superiority can be linked to a *providential mission*, and arrogance. Hence nation-states tend to be preoccupied by interior affairs more so than by world affairs. Therefore, nation-states do not conduct their providential missions in the outside world but within the boundaries of their established frontiers.

Our research on the Turkish civilizing mission and the governance of Dersim as an internal colony is situated in line with the imperial turn in Ottoman historiography due to the fact that I believe early republican history to be incomprehensible without taking imperial dynamics into consideration.

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35 Krishan Kumar, "Nation-states as empires, empires as nation-states: two principles, one practice?," *Theory and Society* 39, no.2 (March 2010): 119-121. Also see Michael Meeker, *A nation of empire: the Ottoman legacy of Turkish modernity*, (Berkeley, 2002).

An approach that puts political economy at the center of the analysis brings a fresh perspective to a highly politicized debate surrounding the history of Dersim. A subject which has inspired many works from authors with differing backgrounds and intentions. This naturally requires a heuristic analysis of this literature, which is surely a research subject on its own. We must put the analysis of this secondary literature aside for now.

Academic research on Dersim, especially historical research, owes a debt to the pioneers of revisionism of Turkish history, who dared to challenge the primacy of the official discourse. Although *geschichtsrevisionismus* would become mainstream in Turkey only by the end of the 2000s, some challenged the state in their publications even before the military coup of 1980. They put forward an indignant leftist discourse that confronted the official one.

One of these figures is İsmail Beşikçi, a sociologist who was imprisoned for seventeen years, who writes that the Tunceli Law of 1935 and its application was an act of defiance against the proletarian masses and the Kurdish nation by Turkish colonial imperialism.[36] While this is clearly a Marxist Kurdish nationalist discourse, Beşikçi nevertheless makes interesting points. With reference to an official publication, he states that the *Islahat* (reform) efforts in the East, including Dersim, can be separated into those before and after the First Inspectorate-General.[37] For Beşikçi, there was a clearly racist and colonialist mission, but it was disguised as battling *irtica* (reactionary forces). *Islahat* meant interior and exterior exile, assimilation, mass murder, and the destruction of villages, caves, crops, and animals.[38] Beşikçi even compares what he calls the "genocide of the Kurds" to that of the Hitler regime, and he perceives the Tunceli Law as a tool by which this genocide was legitimized.[39] Quoting Sait Kırmızıtoprak (also known as Dr. Şivan), Beşikçi speaks of an *Anschluss* of Kurdistan and Turkish occupation.[40]

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36 İsmail Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1990).

37 Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935), 14.*

38 Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935), 94-96.*

39 Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935), 119-126.*

40 Dr. Şivan, *Kürt millet hareketleri ve Irak'ta Kürdistan ihtilali* (Istanbul: *El Yayınları*, 2014).

Although some of his views might seem radical, much credit is owed to Beşikçi with regards to our central institutional focus and the postcolonial approach. Although his usage of the term genocide to describe events in Dersim, may be controversial, İsmail Beşikçi is a pioneer of the aborted *Historikerstreit* in Turkey, and the events that transpired in Dersim in the late 1930s have rightfully attracted the attention of genocide scholars.[41]

Hence, some publications concerning the Armenian Genocide also contain information about Dersim. One genocide scholar is Uğur Ümit Üngör,[42] who dates the origin of the ethnic engineering project concerning the displacement of the people of Dersim to Western Anatolia to 1913, when the CUP triumvirate took absolute control over the organs of the state. His periodization is a continuation of the one popularized by Erik Jan Zürcher.[43]

The state-inflicted mass violence conducted by a plenipotentiary institution. This certainly does resemble what we encounter during the internal colonial period. But the Inspectorates-General are scarcely present in the memories of their contemporaries. Some mention it briefly while others avoid it altogether. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir writes only a few lines about the institution,[44] which indicates that the institution is somewhat of a taboo. The memoirs of the founding elite of the republic are also silent on the subject, although there are some important logs on the Inspectorates-General in the notebooks of İsmet İnönü.[45] Another interesting factor is that in newspapers of the period, there are hardly any stories on the Inspectorates-General, which could be indicative of censorship. [46] Cemil Koçak's is the first published work on the subject, while there are a couple of unpublished works as well.[47]

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41 George Andreopoulos, *Genocide: conceptual and historical dimensions* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

42 Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

43 Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern history* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

44 Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İnkilâp ve kadro* (Ankara: Başnur matbaası, 1968).

45 İsmet İnönü, *Defterler: 1919-1973* (Istanbul: YKY, 2016).

46 Taha Baran, *Basında Dersim: 1937-1938 Yılları Arasında* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2014).

47 Cemil Koçak, *Umumi Müfettişlikler 1927-1952* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2010).

However, the issue received more attention in Turkish academic circles in the 2010s, although no English-language work in academic literature deals directly with this institutional history.[48] Compared to the political, sociological, ethnological, and anthropological as well as cultural studies concerning Dersim, there is a clear absence of works dealing with its political economy. There is not a single monograph on the economic transformation of Dersim in the early republican era. Our work sheds light on the transformation of the region before and after 1938 with an institutional outlook that sublimates nationalistic polemics. I do this through use of original primary sources.

The main documents on our subject are legal documents such as laws, decrees, and directives that can be found in the codes and transcripts of the Grand National Assembly as well as the official gazette (*Düsturlar*, *Zabıt Cerideleri*, and *Resmî Gazete*). As for primary archival sources, the state archives of the *T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü*, one can find the *Bakanlar Kurulu Kararları Kataloğu (1920-1944)*, the Başbakanlık *Özel Kalem Müdürlüğü Kataloğu (1923-1944)*, the *Müşterek Kararnameler Kataloğu (1923-1944)*, and the *Başbakanlık Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü Kataloğu (1924-1949)*. In addition, the duties of the Inspector-Generals included periodic reports to the Ministry of the Interior, and these reports can be used to further investigate the institution, as well. Most of these sources are utilized in the work of Cemil Koçak, whose periodization is directly appropriated by this study. Another source that could lead us to a more complete understanding of the functions and missions of the Inspectorates-General is the *Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd Başkanlığı*, but neither Hüseyin Koca nor Cemil Koçak were allowed into these archives, which are notoriously difficult to access.

Serap Taş, Umumi Müfettişlikler (Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1997).

Hüseyin Koca, *Yakın Tarihten Günümüze Hükümetlerin Doğu-Güneydoğu Anadolu Politikaları* (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi, 1998).

48 Engin Çağdaş Bulut, "Devletin Taşradaki Eli: Umumi Müfettişlikler," *CTAD* 11, no.21 (Spring 2015): 83-110.

The archives of the Ministry of the Interior are considerable, as well, although they are still not open to researchers. Researchers do not have sufficient access to the documents of this Ministry, most notably the registries of the Inspectors-General. This leads researchers of the Inspectorates-General to adopt more creative approaches to primary sources. For instance, Koçak found what he was looking for in the Prime Ministry's Procedural catalogs of the General Directorate (*Başbakanlık Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü Kataloğu*), which comprise the reports for which he accounts in his book. [49]

The Republican Archives, which belong to the Prime Ministry, contain nearly five hundred documents relating to the Inspectorates-General. Those pertaining to Dersim address the following subjects: administrative restructuring at the local level, the effects of negative environmental factors (floods, torrential rains, and earthquakes), Peoples' Houses and Peoples' Rooms, the local representative offices of the Republican People's Party (RPP), budgetary accounting, registered real-estates, the activities of the opposition, election rosters, complaints, reimbursement of loans given to farmers, settlement in the region, resettlement of locals in other regions, permission to enter forbidden zones, draft statutes, enactments, infrastructure, civil and military building projects, tribal activities, those fleeing conscription, banditry, military operations, public order, correspondence between the Inspectorates-General and the Prime Ministry, tax reports, the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture, statistical chronicles, annual statistics of the State Council, Ministry of the Interior reports, livestock inventories, intra-tribal relations and conflicts, mining and forestry, suspicions of foreign intervention in the region, expedition reports, foreign newspaper articles, specific agricultural reports of the First, and activities of the Fourth Inspectorate-General.

The primary source material of this dissertation however differs from the previously mentioned documents. It stems from the personal archive of a republican bureaucrat who happens to be the father of my grandmother Şen Sahir Sılan.

49 Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler (1927-1952)*, 15-23.

Born in 1896 in Trabzon, Necmeddin Sahir received his education from Kabataş Highschool (*Mekteb-i İdadi*) in Istanbul before graduating from the Ankara Law Faculty in 1928, though he would never practice law. After his high school education, he became a journalist and continued to write as he served as a court clerk in the Ottoman parliaments. He later interviewed Mustafa Kemal during the Great War and himself became a reserve clerk in the Fourth Army. He also became the scribe for the Inquiry Council of the Supreme Court concerning the cabinets of Sait Halim and Talat Pasha. Necmeddin left Istanbul following the occupation of the city for the capital of the Turkish resistance movement. Mustafa Kemal puts him in charge of the publication of the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* gazette, before he became the director of records and the secretary of the Grand National Assembly. Following the War of Independence, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey awarded him with the Independence Medal for his services. For the four years between 1923 and 1927 he was in charge of the Office of the Private Secretary to the Prime Ministers Ali Fethi Okyar and İsmet İnönü. At the end of his tenure, he left Ankara for Istanbul. After twelve years of involvement with businesses concerning banking, rail travel, wool textiles, and mining, he returned to state duty as deputy of the province of Bingöl during the sixth term. He subsequently represented Tunceli during the seventh and eighth terms of the assembly. The reports and documents that he authored and collected at this time in his life constitute the primary sources of this dissertation.[50]

Necmeddin Sahir's reports can be inscribed in a long orientalist tradition concerning Dersim starting in the nineteenth century. This tradition can be dated to at least the Derviş Pasha operation of the 1860s and can be considered as a militaristic, state-sponsored discourse designed to eliminate any local, independent form of governance.[51]

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50 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu: Necmeddin Sahir Sılan Raporları (1939-1953)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2010), XXIV-XXV.

51 Dersimi, "Derviş Paşa Hadisesi (1278-1282 H.)," in *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim* (Dam Yayınları, 2014), 75. Christoph Herzog, Barbara Henning, "Derviş İbrahim Paşa: Views on a Late 19th-

During the republican era the reports on the region multiplied, notably those of Speaker of Parliament Abdülhalik Renda, Interior Minister Cemil Ubaydın, Civil Inspector Hamdi Bey, and Ali Cemal Bardakçı as well as those of First Inspectorate-General İbrahim Tali, Field Marshall Fevzi Çakmak, and Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya.[52]

But it was İnönü's infamous Eastern Reform Plan (Şark Islahat Planı*)* that had the biggest effect on government policy.[53] The Eastern Reform Plan was followed by a report by the Fourth Inspector-General Abdullah Alpdoğan.[54] Nonetheless, Zafer Toprak declares that Necmeddin Sahir was the government official who wrote the most amount on the Eastern Question.[55]

The majority in the multiethnic Turkish nation were immigrants from the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Crimea. None of these ethnic communities resisted Turkification in the same manner as the Kurds. One reason was that Kurds were living in their native land, unlike the expatriated Muslim populations. According to the 1927 national census, approximately nine percent of the population of Turkey was Kurdish. If they had been scattered around the country like most other ethnic communities in Turkey, this number would be insignificant. But most Kurds lived in a specific region. The Kurds were the most significant ethnic element in the republic that lay outside the "Matrix of Turkishness." As both Kurds and Alevis, the people of Dersim were situated even further outside of this matrix.[56] Interestingly enough, even almost a hundred years after the declaration of the republic, Dersim remains difficult to govern. Why is it so?

Century Ottoman Military Commander," *Occasional Papers in Ottoman Biographies*, vol.1 (Bamberg: Otto-Friedrich-Universität, 2012).

52 Meclis Başkanı Abdülhalik Renda Raporu (1925), Dahiliye Vekili Cemil Ubaydın Raporu (1925), Mülkiye Müfettişi Hamdi Bey Raporu (1926), Vali Ali Cemal Bardakçı Raporu (1926), Umumi Müfettiş İbrahim Tali Öngören Raporu (1930), Fevzi Çakmak Raporu (1931), Dahiliye Vekili Şükrü Kaya Raporu (1931).

53 Başvekil İsmet İnönü Raporu (1935)

54 Umumi Müfettiş Abdullah Alpdoğan Raporu (1936)

55 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu,* XV.

56 Çağaptay, *Who is a Turk?*, 20-21.

Is it simply because of identity politics? Or is it because of economics? I suggest that the reason for this is purely economic. My hypothesis is that the Turkish *mission civilisatrice* has destroyed the traditional socioeconomic structure in Dersim, which created a sustained lack of development that persists to this day. To test this hypothesis, we will seek answers to the following questions: How did society and economy of the region changed during the internal colonial period? Did the Turkish civilizing mission pay off, or was it a failure? In order to answer these questions and a series of underlying structural problems we will delve into a three-part history of Dersim.

In the "stateless history of Dersim," we will try to describe a people's history of the region marked by the different eras of state relations, especially in regard to the progressive attempts to conquer and subjugate the area that ended with the Terror of 1938. This stateless history is told first through a general geographical, anthropological and sociological analysis of the region from both macro and micro levels.

In the state history of Dersim, we analyze the social history of the region during internal colonial rule beginning after the *Tertele*. The land question, demography, administrative and governmental proceedings, as well as a critical look at health and education, and the state of the judicial system is followed by an overview of the stratified nature of life in Dersim during this period.

In the third and final chapter of our history, we attempt to describe the economic transformation of Dersim as an internal colony, wherein we delve into the infrastructure, agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, commerce, finances and subsistence crisis that occurred in the region due to the centralist policies.

Finally, in our conclusion, we will return on the questions posed above and proceed to a critical reexamination of both the Turkish civilizing mission and the internal colonial model in regard to Dersim.

2

Stateless History of Dersim

> *Dersim ... kendiliğinden adam olmaz. Ne yapacaksa yine devlet yapacak, onu adam edecektir. Dersimli o dağlardan uzaklaştı mı, Türkiye'nin her köşesinde onunla teker teker her vatandaş boy ölçüşebilir.*
>
> – Naşit Hakkı Uluğ, *Derebeyi ve Dersim*

World history can be studied in various ways, depending mainly on the sources utilized for its writing. If based on bureaucratic records, it will be the story of the states. But this type of history can hardly be said to represent the story of humanity, for there are, and always have been, people without states. Ergo history constructed from state archives presents a particular challenge to our understanding of the history of people. This is why books such as Howard Zinn's *A people's history of the United States*, are so important for the evolution of historiography.[57] The modern state is not equivalent to the people; hence, the history of a modern state does not represent the story of the people over which it rules.

57 Howard Zinn, *A people's history of the United States* (New York: Harper, 2017).

But perhaps the two histories, of states and of people, are not diametrically opposed. They might instead be self-referential and complimentary, meaning that it is necessary to understand the people in order to make sense of the state and vice versa. Expanding states encounter previously self-governing people; this is a universal truth in world history. This encounter "is echoed in the cultural and administrative process of 'internal colonialism' that characterizes the formation of most modern Western nation-states," and notable instances of such internal colonization can be observed "in the imperial projects of the Romans, the Habsburgs, the Ottomans, the Han and the British."[58]

The Ottoman Empire underwent a great transformation during the nineteenth century. What was once a decentralized empire progressively tried to become a modern state, which meant increased centralization. The empire was losing territory at a terrifying rate, and regions that had been left to their own devices for centuries needed to be fully incorporated and administered by the state core. After the ten calamitous years from the beginning of the Balkan War in 1912 to the end of the War of Independence in 1922, the principal successor state of the empire, the Republic of Turkey was determined to finish what the Empire had initiated: to become a modern, "Western" nation-state. For this it had to internally colonize a region of previously self-governing people.

Dersim was autonomous for most of its history, and most of this history is neither that of a singular state nor that of a singular people. The reason is that not one, but many states have attempted to assert domination over the region, and not one but many peoples had called it home. Dersim came under the rule of many loose-knit empires over the millennia and the last one was, as mentioned, the Ottoman Empire. Before the adoption of distance-demolishing technologies such as railroads and aviation, it was virtually impossible for the state to assert control over this region and its people.

58 James Scott, *The Art of not being governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 3.

This is the reason that the state could not penetrate this periphery region during the nineteenth century or the first quarter of the twentieth. The belated internal colonization of this non-state territory by the Turkish state is the subject of this work, but before analyzing this republican project the region must be contextualized in time and space.

This chapter, which analyzes the history of Dersim as a stateless region, begins by deciphering the geography of Dersim, its mountains, rivers, plains, and forests and then describes how people adapted to its terrain in societal and economic terms. Lastly, a brief history of the region from ancient to modern times references the peculiarities of its culture. Only after this introduction is the failed attempt by the Ottoman State to enclose Dersim within its modern state apparatus beginning in the 1840s be described. An analysis of the polemic history of military interventions until 1938 follows.

Through this historical contextualization, the following questions are addressed: What constitutes the physical boundaries of the region of Dersim? What are the particular geographical traits of the region? How did human society adapt to life in Dersim? What are the characteristics of society in Dersim? What are the fundamentals of human survival in Dersim? How can we describe the economy of the region? How and when did Dersim come into contact with the Turks? What are the characteristics of Ottoman rule in Dersim? Was the region truly autonomous under the Ottomans? And finally, is its complex geography the underlying reason for the autonomy of this region?

2.1 Geography of Dersim

Geography, like history, has been and still is a tool for nationalism, and the region of the world analyzed in this dissertation can, and has been defined by a number of adjectives attributed to it by competing nationalisms.

The Republic of Turkey born from the ashes of the multi-continental empire had to be content with the borders of Eastern Thrace and Anatolia defined in the south principally by the Berlin-Baghdad railroad and in its east by deals struck with the Soviets and Persia. The newborn nation, with undeniably Balkan and hence European roots, now saw Anatolia, or Asia Minor, as the quintessential constituent of its national geography. The ancient Greek word meaning "the land from where the sun rises" was Turkified to *Anadolu*, which was part of a process of de-Hellenization. The land was divided into seven regions, three of which include the word Anatolia in their names. The other four are named after the seas that line their coasts.

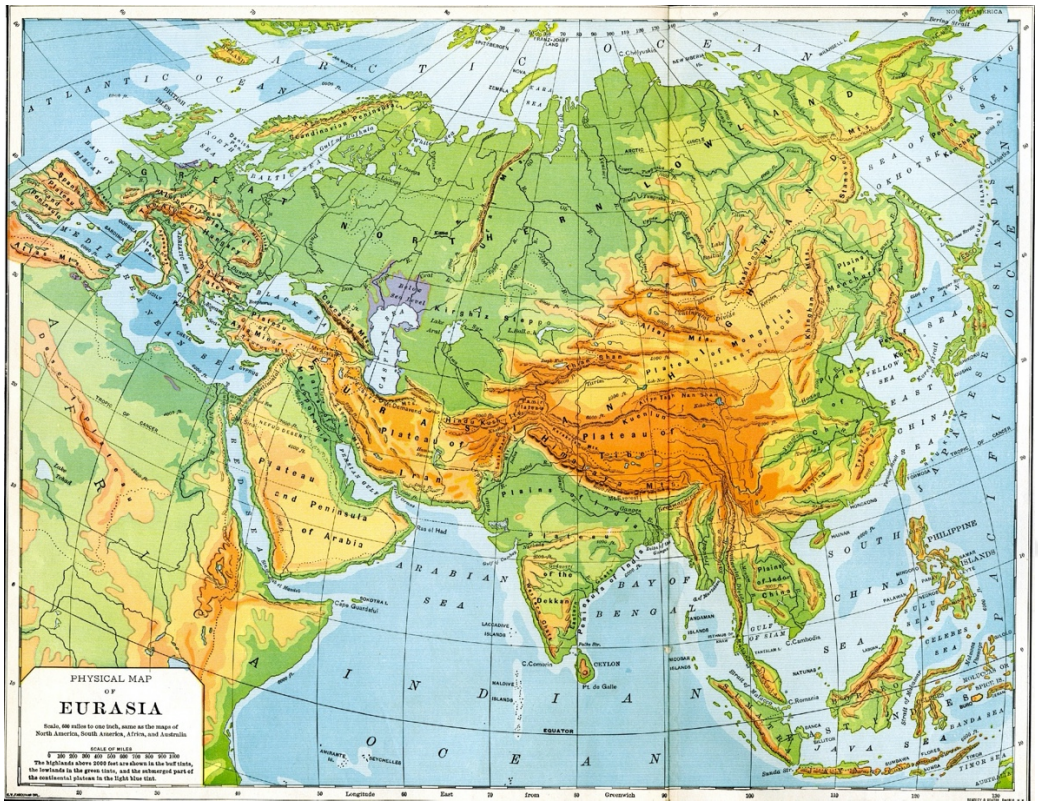
In this conception, Dersim is situated in the westernmost part of the region of Eastern Anatolia, though for the Armenian nationalists the same region is Western Armenia, and for the competing Kurdish nationalists, Dersim is North-Western Kurdistan. These three conflicting nationalisms clashed during the age of extreme nationalism from the last quarter of the nineteenth century until nearly the end of the first half of the twentieth. Turkish nationalist geography was finally imposed on this region through first a de-Christianization or de-Armenization, and then a tentative de-Kurdification and de-Alevization that were accompanied by attempted Turkification and Sunnification.[59]

In other words, the state intervention that transpired in the social geography of the region favored the dominant national-linguistic and religious leanings of the core. Today, geography must be reclaimed by the historian as a tool of even greater importance that renders the comprehension of the deep currents in history indelibly clear, in turn facilitating the comprehension of the

59 Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler, 1801-1900*, VIII.

socioeconomic as well as political realities of the past and present. Therefore, we must rid ourselves of the politicization of geography and simply understand it.

Dersim is not an isolated geography. It is but a small corner of the world. Just as no region in the world can be understood in isolation from the rest, Dersim's historical transformation cannot be understood without an elementary knowledge of its geographic characteristics.



Map 1 Physical Map of Eurasia. Source: Redway (1901)

The physical map of Eurasia in Map 1 was first published in 1901, by Jacques W. Redway (1849-1942), a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. There are no state borders on the map, which allows fifty-five million square kilometers of landmass called Eurasia to be approached more naturally. One can barely distinguish states, but there are three main variations in the terrain: plains, plateaus and mountains. [60]

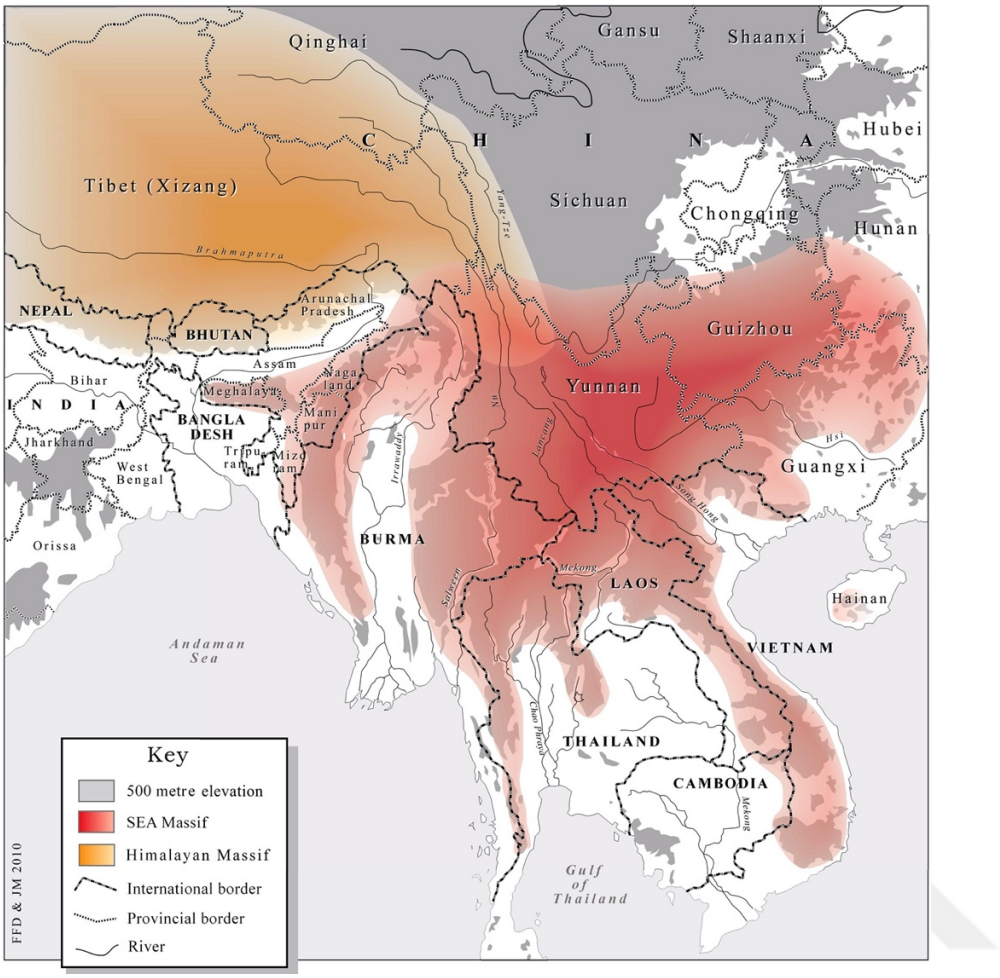
60 Jacques Redway, Natural Advanced Geography (New York: American Book Company, 1901). Downloaded from Maps ETC, http://etc.usf.edu/maps [map #02965]



Map 2 Physiographic regions of Asia. Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

This physiographic map of Asia clearly shows the distinctions among the various regions of the continent. In Western Asia, from west to east, are the Pontic Mountains, the Taurus Mountains, the Armenian Highland, the Caucasus Mountains, the Elburz Mountains, the Zagros Mountains, and the Hindu Kush Mountains which join the Himalayas along the Karakoram Range. There are two plateaus surrounded by these mountain ranges, the Anatolian Plateau and the Iranian Highlands. The average height of this massif of Southwestern Asia is around 1200 meters, which is comparable to the South-East Asian Massif as proposed by Jean Michaud. [61]

61 "Physiographic regions of Asia," digital Encyclopedia Britannica, (accessed February 14, 2018). Jean Michaud, *Turbulent times and enduring people: mountain minorities in the South-East Asian massif*, (London: Routledge, 2016).



Map 3 Zomia. Source: alchetron.com

Map 3 is a representation of *Zomia*, a term coined by Willem van Schendel of the University of Amsterdam in 2002 in reference to the region of the South-East Asian Massif.[62] This scientific term refers to an area above 300 meters in altitude covering 2.5 million square kilometers that is home to around one hundred million people. Schendel borrowed the common term from Tibeto-Burmese languages, where *Zomi* means highlanders and *Zomia* is used to describe an elevated, rugged terrain filled with various ethnic minorities that have remained outside state control. The historian of the Western Asian highlands cannot but succumb to the temptation to compare and perhaps add to this concept of a land of highlanders in Asia. [63]

62 Willem Van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia," in *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 20, no.6 (12/2002): 647-668.

63 "Zomia," alchetron.com, (accessed February 14, 2018).



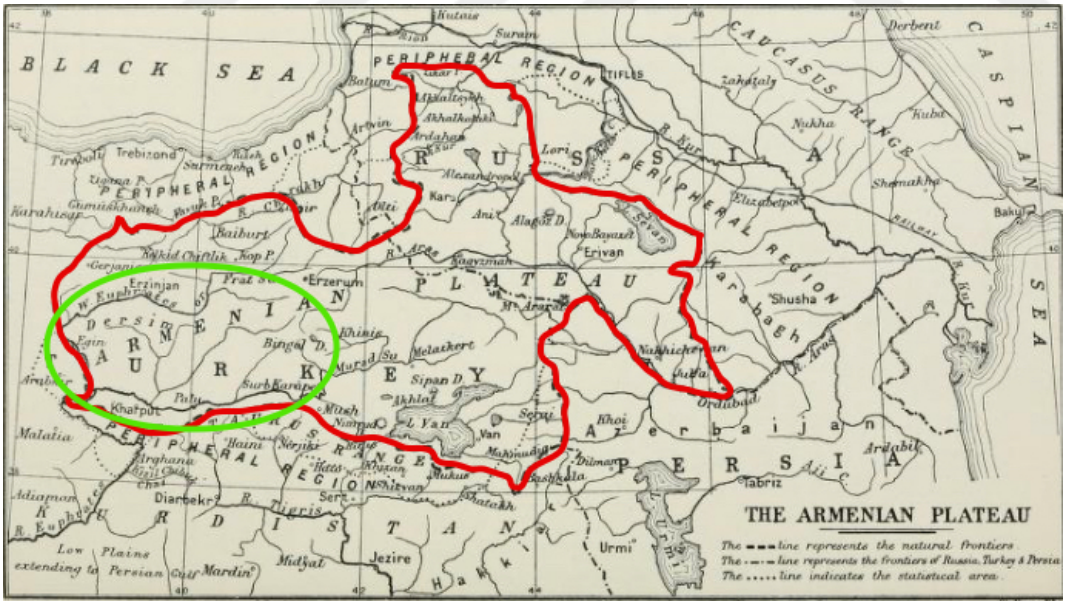
Map 4 Kovia in relation to Zomia. Source: Redway (1901)

Map 4 proposes that this land of highlanders has a correlate that begins to the southwest of the Tibetan Massif. This relative of Zomia includes the modern states of Afghanistan, Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey. It is a region above 500 meters in altitude that can also be referred to as the South-West Asian Massif and is home to around two hundred million people. Iranian languages are the most widely spoken language family in the region, and the Zaza language word for highlander is *Kovi*, which derives from the Persian root *Ko*(*h*) meaning mountain, as in the *Kohistan* district of Pakistan. Hence, concepts from Southeast Asia area studies can be used to understand certain problematics of Southwest Asia - or *Kovia*, if you will -, especially in relation to the complicated history of the Armenian highlands in contemporary history.



Map 5 Dersim within Kovia. Source: Google Earth

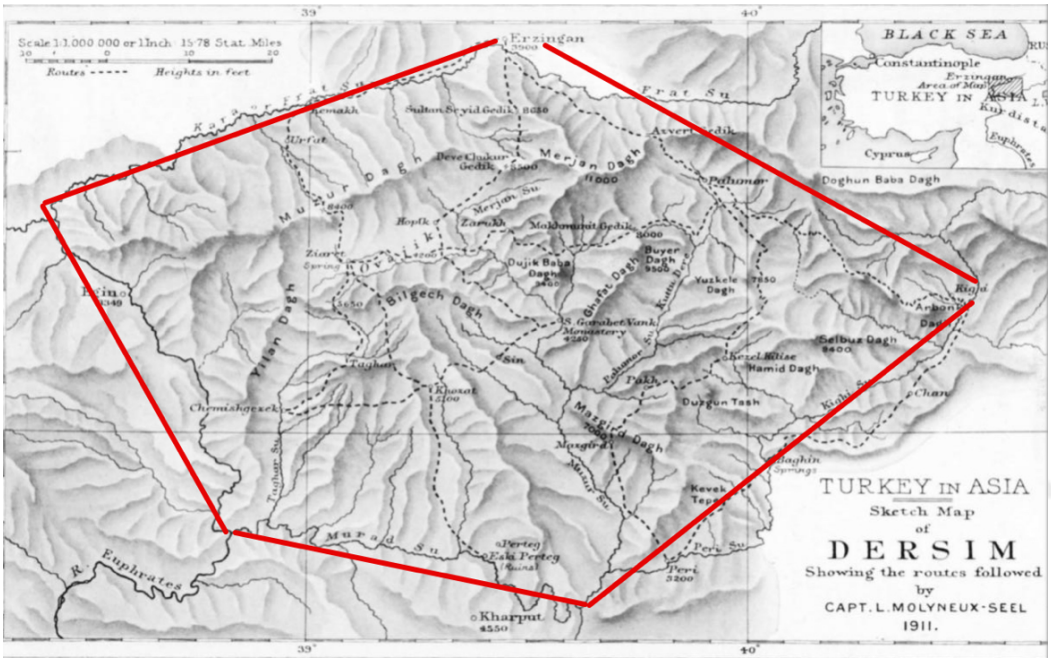
The white lines in Map 5 approximately trace the boundaries of Kovia, and in between the Pontic and Taurus mountains is the westernmost region of the Armenian Highlands, Dersim is encircled in red. A larger scale map from the turn of the last century was prepared by another Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Henry Finnis Blosse Lynch (1862-1913), a Cambridge educated Briton with Armenian ancestry who ran a business in Bagdad.[64]



Map 6 Dersim in relation to the Armenian Plateau. Source: Lynch (1901)

64 Henry Finnis Blosse Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and studies,* vol.1 (1901), 452.
Map 5 was created using the Google Earth Pro Application [19.02.2018].

Map 6 illustrates the boundaries that Lynch drew for the Armenian Plateau in red, and Dersim is situated inside the green ellipse in the Munzur Mountains just to the south of the Western Euphrates. The second volume of his work, which is entirely dedicated to Armenia in Turkey, describes the region generally but does not describe Dersim as he had not travelled there. He simply mentions the region as "unexplored." In a similar work published in 1914, *Travel and Politics in Armenia*, Baron Noel-Buxton (1869-1948), another Cambridge educated Briton also failed to mention Dersim.



Map 7 The Boundaries of Dersim. Source: Molyneux-Seel (1911)

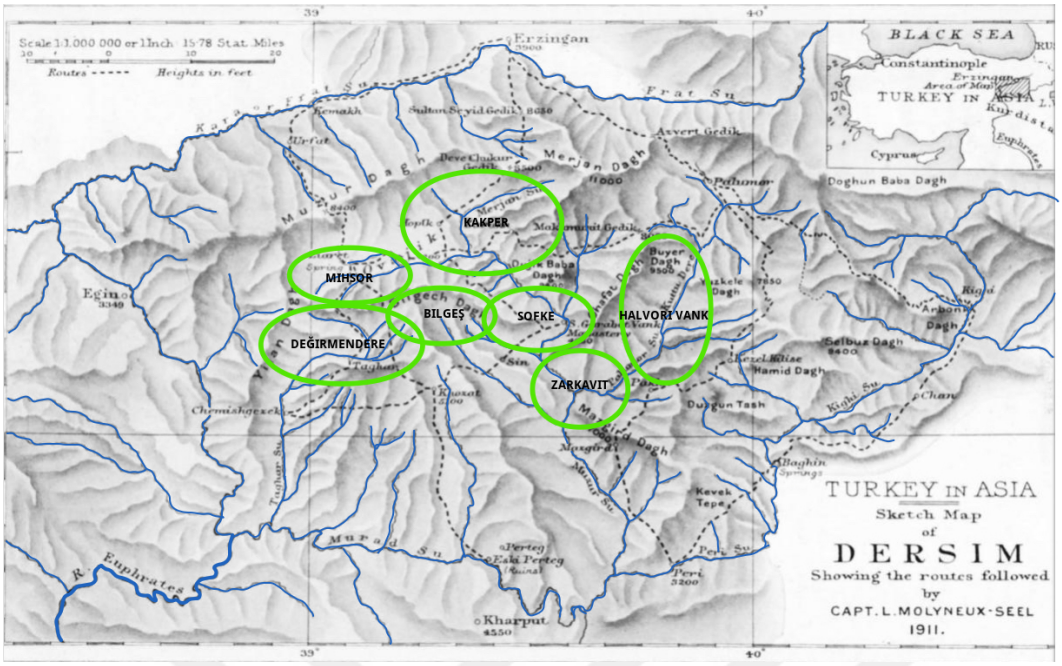
Map 7 is by Captain Louis Edmund Harington Molyneux-Seel (1857-1915). It makes sense that a military officer might go where a businessman and a politician would not dare. He defined the boundaries of Dersim as follows, which roughly corresponds to the red pentagon drawn on Map 7: "The country known as Dersim is geographically clearly defined. It lies in the angle formed by two large branches of the Euphrates, called Frat Su and the Murad Su, and a line drawn through Kighi, Palumor, and Erzingan would form the northeastern boundary."[65]

65 Louis Molyneux-Seel, "A Journey in Dersim," *Geographical Journal* 44, No.1 (July, 1914), 49. [Map - 51]

Considering that the Euphrates has such a determining role in the description of the region's boundaries, details about this ancient waterway seem pertinent. The Euphrates is formed by the convergence of two large west-flowing rivers. The Karasu River emerges north of Erzurum at a height of more than 2600 meters and flows towards Erzincan joined by many tributaries along the way. Its course drifts to the southwest through a rocky canyon towards Kemah and continues to flow through the valleys until joining the Murat River. The Murat River originates just south of Diyadin in Ağrı province at a height of more than 3500 meters, flows through the Arishkerd (*Eleşkirt*) plain, and runs through the mountains gathering the waters of tributaries left and right. Continuing across the plains of Bulanık and Muş, it merges with the Little Karasu. After Muş, the Murat River valley is constricted, and it is only after Palu that the river widens. In the territory of Dersim, the Murat joins with the Peri and Munzur rivers. Finally, the two main tributaries of the Euphrates join near the Keban mines. At this point the combined distance travelled by both rivers is well over a thousand kilometers (617 kilometers for the Murat River and 442 kilometers for the Karasu River). Even though it is shorter, it is the Karasu River that has long been considered the main tributary of Euphrates.[66]

Stretching between the two rivers, Dersim is a rough plateau of more than 6000 square kilometers. Mountains dominate the region, and the most important chain is the Munzur [Mercan] to the west. It is the source of the Munzur River, which flows through Dersim where, among the rocky valleys, the land is more easily tilled - although not comparable with to the fertile Uluova plain south of Elazığ. In most of the mountainous area referred to as Inner Dersim, agriculture is nigh impossible, and forests constitute the veritable bounty of the region. As Map 8 makes it clear, streams and rivers that feed a rich oak forest ecosystem are abundant in the region. In fact, compared to its arid surroundings, Dersim is an oasis: a geographically isolated green island surrounded by the mountains that overlook the plains.

66 Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 6.



Map 8 The Forests and Waterways of Dersim. Source: Molyneux-Seel (1911)

Molyneux-Seel wrote that: "Almost everywhere in Dersim, water is abundant." His map proves this, and the extent of the hydrologic wealth of the region is defined by the blue on Map 8. The principal rivers that water this land, as cited by Antranik at the turn of the last century, are the Aradzani (Murat River), Palu-Çur (Palu suyu), Sev-Çur (Karasu), and Agna-Çur (Eğin suyu). Meanwhile, the Lıçık and Munzur rivers form the Peri River which in turn joins the Murat near the village of Urig. Antranik described the Munzur and Lıçık rivers as bordering (Inner) Dersim like a moat surrounding a castle. Other than rivers the springs such as Soğukpınar, Ziyaret, and Sındamos are also an important part of the geography.[67] Logically, a land with such an abundance of water has many forests. Molyneux-Seel and Antranik mention forests but do not name them. However, the veterinary doctor Nuri Dersimli, named the famous forests of Dersim. Which are represented by green ellipses: the Zarkavit, Değirmendere, Halvori Vank, Belgeş, Kakper, Mıhsor, and the Sofke.[68] Map 8 clearly indicates that these are found in the center of the region bordered on each side by the two main branches of the Euphrates River and the high mountains.

67 Antranik, *Dersim: Seyahatname* (Istanbul: Aras, 2012), 85-88.
The first name Antranik, means firstborn in Armenian, as in Antranik Ozanian (1865-1927).

68 Dersimli, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 19.

The dominant species of trees that form these forests is the resilient oak. There are more than six hundred species of oak [*Quercus*] in the world, and Turkey is home to eighteen. The Dersim region in its broadest geographical sense contains seven of these species [*Quercus libani, Q. brantii, subsp. boissieri, subsp. pinnatiloba, Q. macianthera subsp. syspirensii, subsp. Pedunculiflora*, and *Q. hartwissiana*]. Oak forests in Turkey are spread over nearly six million hectares, most of which are spread along coastal regions with the notable exception of Dersim, which rises up like a green pillar over the rusty brown of its surroundings.[69]

The forests of Dersim are indeed an exception in the larger region because the area to the north of Lake Van is mostly devoid of trees. This is due to the fact that "much of the area is covered with rather recent volcanic overflows."[70] We will return to the specific characteristics of the forests and their significance for the region later on, but for now it is essential to understand that Dersim's physical character is distinct when compared to its immediate surroundings due to its emerald wealth. Moreover, until the turn of the nineteenth century, most of these mountainous forestlands remained virtually untouched. Hence, the Western tip of the Armenian Plateau is arguably characteristic of the "lack of physical unity in eastern Turkey."[71] That renders state governance problematic, which is a common feature of other regions in *Kovia*. Therefore, the study of Dersim is relevant for the study of other similarly isolated regions in the South-West Asian Massif.

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69 Faik Yaltırık, *Türkiye Meşeleri: Teşhis Kılavuzu* (Tarım Orman ve Köyişleri Bakanlığı Genel Müdürlüğü Yayını, 1984). ["*Meşe*" the word in Turkish for oak probably derives from the Persian "*bişe*," while the word in Zonê Ma (Northern Zazaki) is "*mazay*." The word for tree in the Zaza language is "*dare*" whereas the word for forest is "*birr*."]

70 William Bayne Fisher, *The Middle East: A physical, social, and regional geography* (New York: EP Dutton & Co, 1950), 303.

71 Felix Oswald, *A Treatise on the Geology of Armenia* (Iona, Beeston, Notts, 1906), 10.
E. Clayton, "The Mountains of Kurdistan," *Alpine journal* 13, no.97, (London, 1887): 296.
Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, p. 4.

Rivers, mountains, and forests characterize the terrain of Dersim. All traits that render transportation considerably difficult. It took around six days to cross Dersim on foot from east to west and four days from south to north. Molyneux-Seel wrote that "a march of from 12 to 15 miles [19 to 24 kilometers] will usually occupy the entire day." These figures expose the reason Dersim was impenetrable for the state for such a long time. Getting in and out of the region was also a challenge. Dersim's northern boundary is marked by mountains, over which there were four passes in 1911, none of which were "practicable in winter." "One ... leads from the west end of [Ovacık] valley to [Kemah]." "[The other called Deve Çukur Gedik], passes from the eastern end of [Ovacık] to [Erzincan], and forms a dividing line between" the Munzur and Mercan mountains. Meanwhile, the other two passes located between these two were "impassible for pack animals." Admiring the view from a high point in Harput, Molyneux-Seel was impressed by the mountains and inspired by a "fascination of mystery which hangs over an almost unknown and impenetrable land."[72]

The continental climate was another factor that made Dersim an "impenetrable land." Springtime starts around middle of April or beginning of May and is accompanied by heavy rainfall, which makes the rivers impossible to traverse. Summer starts around mid-June to early July and is hot and dry. Autumn comes around in mid-August and ends in October when rainfall starts again. This is followed by winter when the region receives heavy snowfall. The high plains of Northern Dersim have heavier and longer winters due to their altitude, requiring special snowshoes called *hedik*. Nearly all transportation and communication with the outside world ceases during the nearly six-month long winter.[73]

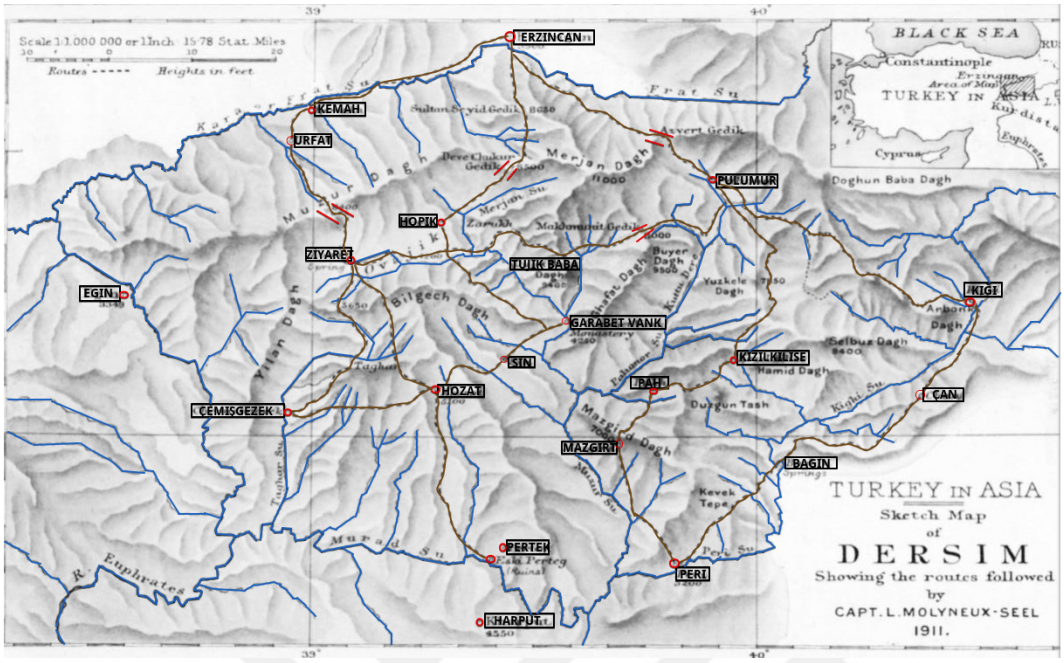
All these geographical factors have determined how the human species has adapted to life on the Dersim Highlands. A mountainous terrain, torrential rivers, wild forests and long cold winters, gave rise to a specific social geography.

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72 Molyneux-Seel, "A Journey in Dersim," 49-50.

73 Antranik, *Dersim*, 85-88.

2.2 Social geography of Dersim

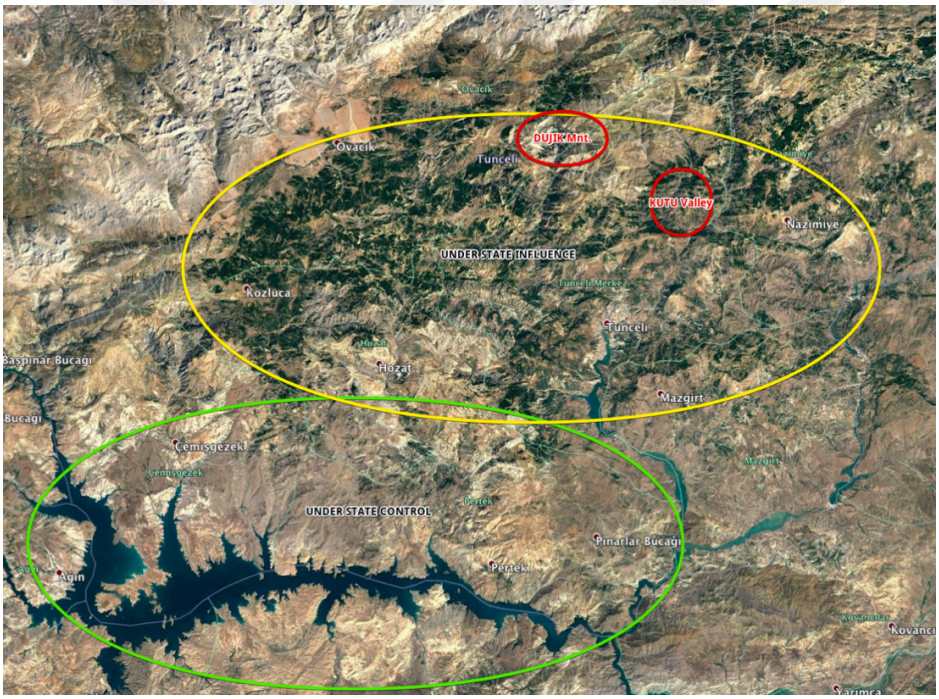


Map 9 Social Geography of Dersim. Source: Molyneux-Seel (1911)

Social geography, in the conception of anarchist geographer Elisée Reclus (1830-1905), refers to the idea that geography has a consequential effect on the constitution and evolution of human societies. People inhabiting a certain region have a specific relationship with their geography that allows social scientists to explain certain realities on the ground. Map 9 presented above shows the hydrology of the region of Dersim in blue, and important localities in black. The brown lines represent the roads travelled by Molyneux-Seel.

Nearly all towns are placed either along a waterway or on the top of a hill or mountain. Hence, the social geography of Dersim is dependent on two geographical elements: rivers and mountains. Within the broad frontiers of Dersim defined by the pentagon drawn by Molyneux-Seel, Erzincan, Kemah, Urfat, Egin, Çemişgezek, Pertek, Peri, Bagin, Kiği, Pülümür, Ziyaret, and Hozat are all situated close to rivers, while Çan, Harput, Sin, Pah, Hopik, Kızılkilise, and Garabet Vank monastery as well as the refuge of Dujik Baba are all situated on mountainous terrain. This dichotomous separation of the social geography of Dersim has obvious economic effects. Settlements near rivers are wealthier and more easily controlled by the state than those in the hills and mountains.

This last point is important for a historical analysis of Dersim vis-à-vis state control. From this perspective, Dersim can be divided into two main regions: the plains and the mountains. The mountains are in the center, with Dujik Baba Mountain serving as a point of reference for Inner Dersim. As for the plains, they are found in Tercan (Erzincan) in the northeast and Çarsancak (Elazığ) in the southeast where proximity to rivers is essential. This marked geographical difference is reflected in the social geography of the region in regard to state control. At the turn of the twentieth century and arguably until 1938, parts of Dersim that were under administrative control by the central state, other parts were close to being subdued to the state, and yet others were autonomous or rebellious, depending on the point of view.



Map 10 Regions of Dersim in relation to the state. Source: Google Earth

This division of the social geography of Dersim in regard to submission to state rule has a precedent in the work of Antranik. He wrote in the beginning of the twentieth century that the plain regions were naturally submissive to the state; meanwhile, the valleys, high mountains, and dark forests at the heart of Dersim was the domain of rebels and freemen.[74]

74 Antranik, *Dersim*, 98.

2.2.1 *Under State Control:*

The green ellipse seen on Map 10 represents areas described by Antranik as being under Ottoman state control. This, I argue, is directly related to geography. Munzur-Mercan Mountains constitute an east-west barrier separating Dersim from the city of Erzincan to the north and its surrounding region. Meanwhile, the southern mountains of Dersim are along a north-south axis allowing the cities of Harput and later Elazığ and their hinterlands to have easier access to Lower Dersim. Hence Peri, Pertek and Çemişgezek, the towns in close proximity to the Murat River, are in the subcategory of the plain regions subject to the central state.

The town of Peri, mostly inhabited by sharecroppers, was a considerable commercial hub in the Çarsancak district. It was home to more than fifty stores and six hundred Armenian houses, including autochthonous Orthodox and converted Protestants. The Protestants had a newly built church and primary school, both financed by the American missionaries in Harput, while the Turks had a mosque with a madrasa. There was a *Kaymakam* and a judicial court (*bidayet dairesi*). This court governed according to the constitution and included two Christian Armenian judges. Peri had the single greatest concentration of Armenian inhabitants in the whole of Çarsancak with more than five thousand. While administrative and commercial affairs were in the hands of Armenians, military and police affairs were controlled by the Turks and the Kurds.[75]

Pertek was the most important commune in Çarsancak at the time of Antranik's writing. There was an Old Pertek, which had been abandoned following the violence of the 1890s, and a New Pertek, which had been founded a few hours north of its former location. It had a Muslim majority comprised of Kurds and Turks. While the Armenians were fewer in number, they were also wealthier in this ancient town of possibly Armenian origins (as *pert* means castle in Armenian). The town naturally fell under the authority of the state.[76]

75 Antranik, *Dersim*, 98-102.

76 Antranik, *Dersim*, 104.

Pertek had an important weekly market. On Thursdays, Harputian artisans and traders would come to the old town with shoes, cloth, headscarves, iron, hats, buttons, needles, threads, cotton fabric, Kurdish-style clothing, and various armaments. The Kurds would bring; walnuts, *kudret helvası* [a sweet treat obtained from oak trees], cheese, butter, *çortan* [dry *ayran*], wool, cow and sheep skins, the skins of wild game, *kilims*, carpets, sheep, lambs, mules, and mares. Transactions started on Friday morning, and the Harputian traders had a relative advantage due to the interdiction of the Dersimi to go into the city. Some conflicts would arise during these Friday bazaars, so a Turkish *karakol* had been located near the old town next to the river in order to police the area.[77]

Çemişgezek was the western-most border town of Çarsancak. It was connected to the Hozat *mutasarrıflık* where resided a *kaymakam*, an army battalion, and half a battalion of gendarmes. The town had 1500 houses, and the Armenian minority had a church and a small school. There was a Turkish mosque and madrasa as well as around forty shops mainly owned by Armenian traders and artisans.[78]

In short, southern Dersim had both an agricultural and a commercial economy with a multiethnic population that was under police supervision. This region constituted a zone of exchange between Inner Dersim and the outside world, which in turn allowed for the state to exert greater control here than further north. Peri is the only town of the three that had an Armenian majority at the turn of the last century, and it is not chance that this town no longer exists while Çemişgezek and Pertek continue to be important urban centers in southern Dersim. In the Pertek bazaar, textiles and industrial "civilizational" goods were exchanged for animal products and forest goods. The history of this trade between the highlands and lowlands goes back for millennia and its nature is essential. Where trade flourished, the state had control. In other areas, it had only limited influence.

77 Antranik, *Dersim*, 105-106.

78 Antranik, *Dersim*, 106-107.

2.2.2 *Under State Influence*

The region under state influence is shown on Map 10 with a yellow ellipse. This region is comprised of the mountainous forestland of Inner Dersim. The geography did not allow the state to veritably govern this region, ergo the reference to influence rather than control. Therefore, instead of choosing the more accessible and prosperous Pertek, Çemişgezek, or Peri as its center of operations, the state implanted itself on the hilltop town of Hozat in Inner Dersim. This relatively populous town, situated on a wide plateau, had a *mutasarrıf*, two army battalions, and one gendarmerie cavalry battalion. At the turn of the last century, it was also home to a judicial and a penal court (*ceza dairesi*), on which sat two Armenian members. However, before the nineteenth century, Hozat was not even on the map. It first became a district and then a *mutasarrıflık* with the Tanzimat. All of Dersim was administratively linked to Hozat, which in turn fell under the jurisdiction of the governor of Harput. At the end of the nineteenth century there were around one and a half thousand mostly Armenian households. The town also had a barracks along the road to Harput through Pertek.

Mazgirt, another locality with an Armenian name -possibly derived from *Medzgerd*, meaning great fortress- is east of Hozat on the skirts of a mountain with a fortified keep (*içkale*) built for defense against tribal raids. The town at one point had around seven hundred mostly Armenian households, a school, and a church. There was a Turkish *kaymakam*, an army battalion and a gendarmerie battalion. This town was connected via roads with Peri to the south and Pah to the north. Pah had around two hundred houses and a kaymakam, a battalion under the command of a major, and a state armory that came under frequent attack by surrounding tribes. Pah was connected by road to Kızılkilise (Nazımiye) on the skirts of another mountain. It had around three hundred houses with a kaymakam. The Ottoman internal colonial penetration is clear: state influence in these towns meant a military presence able to inflict coercive measures at any time as ordered by the state.

Ovacık, on the westernmost plain in Inner Dersim where the Munzur River's source is located, was comprised of around forty Kurdish-Kızılbaş villages with no Armenians whatsoever, although the names of certain localities, such as Zeranik and Pulur, suggests Armenian origins.

The locality was controlled by two tribes who pillaged the surrounding urban centers such as Çemişgezek and Eğin and demanded taxes from the populace, though this did not prevent the Armenians of Çemişgezek and Eğin from going to Ovacık to trade in summer. In the village of Zerinig (Zeranik-Yeşilyazı), the former administrative center of the district, there was a Turkish *kaymakam* accompanied by a few military personnel. But in summer, battalions were sent from Harput to protect the roads and bridges, and conflicts with bandits were common. This meant that localities in this district submitted to the state only during summer, while in winter they were self-ruled.[79]

The further one went inland in Dersim, towards the north from Harput, the smaller the populations of the settlements, and the Armenian share of the population gave way to the Kurdish component. As the case of Ovacık demonstrates, the essential reason this region was not under state control but only under state influence was climate. The state lost control over Dersim in winter, and in spring and summer the state had only limited control in most areas of Inner Dersim. Tribal control was inversely proportional to state control. But there were two places in Dersim where the state had no authority whatsoever.

2.2.3 *Stateless zones*

The two stateless zones mentioned by Antranik at the turn of the twentieth century are circled in Map 10 in red ellipses: Mount Dujik/Dojik [*Sultan Baba*] and the Kuti/Kutu valley. It is unsurprising that these stateless zones are surrounded by Inner Dersim, which was only under state influence. They would not have existed if Inner Dersim was fully under state control.

79 Antranik, *Dersim*, 107-112.

Mount Dujik has a history as a place of refuge. Nearly each time the state made incursions into Inner Dersim, the people climbed this mountain to prepare their resistance. State forces were unable to conquer it until the rise of modern warfare in the twentieth century. *Tuj* means piercing in the Zonê Ma (Northern Zazaki) language, and indeed this mountain is among the tallest and least accessible in the region. Mount Dujik was the biggest autonomous zone in Dersim, with an estimated population of seventy thousand. The largest tribe was the *Kureyşanlı* (as in *Quraysh*), led by sayyids who had religious authority over most of the tribes in Dersim. At the time of Antranik's writing, their chief was Seyid İbrahim, the father of Seyid Rıza. He headed an estimated armed force of around forty thousand people. There were also Armenians of the Mirakyan tribe, especially in the region around the Havlor Surp Garabed monastery. Dujik Baba had a sacred significance for locals and was revered almost as a god. The mountain was also considered to be the home of *al-Khidr* (*Xızır*/*Hızır*, who Antranik thought referred to Saint Sarkis the Warrior), an immortal thaumaturge saint who was said to wear green.[80]

Apart from Dujik Baba, the other stateless zone in Dersim was a haven from government incursions not because of its altitude but because of its depth. The Kuti Stream is east of Mount Dujik and flows through a valley a along a north-south axis. *Qutî*, the equivalent of *kutu* in Turkish, means "box" in Zonê Ma, and upon close inspection, the valley can be observed as a tightly closed box. The mountainous left and right banks of the valley are dense with forests. At the time of Antranik's writing, he noted that right in the middle of the valley was a Haydaran village with nearly eight hundred houses of independent Kurds with a chief named Mamo Beg. The Haydaran were the dominant tribe in the region and coexisted in the valley with the Alanlı, Cibanlı, Cibranlı, and other smaller tribes which sought refuge in the valley from Ottoman rule and taxes. It was, and is to this day, the least accessible region of Dersim.[81]

80 Antranik, *Dersim*, 114-116.

81 Antranik, *Dersim*, 113-114.

Geographic inaccessibility for state forces, total tribal control by a considerable armed force, and an overwhelming mystical aura characterized stateless zones in Dersim. One aspect stood out: stateless zones in Dersim were dominated by tribal society. Seyid İbrahim and Mamo Beg were the rulers of these stateless regions, not Abdulhamid II.

This assessment compels a people's historian of Dersim to put tribalism at the center of their research. Who are the stateless tribes of Dersim? How did they live? Antranik mentions, for instance, that all the tribes living in Dujik and Kuti were sedentary. Furthermore, they were named for the lands on which they had settled, such as Hıran, İzol, and Bulanuğ. In other words, the people occupying these stateless zones had a profound relationship with their environment. Their self-identity was directly related to the land that they occupied. Antranik states that it was following the intrusion of the Ottoman government that neighboring Alevi Kurds came to this region and formed a city of refugees (*Arshakavan*). This concept – of a city/community of refugees - is crucial for explaining the people's history of Dersim. Stateless zones were not localities of chaos and violence but rather refuge from the indiscriminate use of violence by the state. Antranik estimates the Kurdish-Kızılbaş population in the stateless zones in Dersim at 100 thousand, though he admits no one can know the real number. He writes that they were divided into at least eighteen tribes, including the İzollu, Bulanuğlu, Hıranlı, Haydaranlı, Cibranlı, Alanlı, Dujikli, Kutili, Abasanlı, Halvoregli, Şeyh-Hasanlı, Mamıklı, Mirakyan, Kureyşanlı, Haraçollu, Yusufanlı, and Kuzuçanlı. But the religious leader of all of the tribes was Seyid İbrahim of the Kureyşanlı tribe who lived in Harug village near Havlor Surp Garabed monastery on top of Mount Dujik.[82]

Which is to say, the father of the leader of the 1937 resistance was the religious leader of all the tribes occupying Dujik Baba mountain, the most important stateless zone in Dersim. Therefore, to understand the contemporary history of Dersim, we need to take a close look at tribalism there.

82 Antranik, *Dersim*, 116-118.

2.2.4 *Tribalism in Dersim*

We defined Dersim geographically as being at the western tip of the Armenian Highlands, while referred to it as part of Eastern Anatolia. However, as the previous part concerning social geography indicates, Antranik wrote that the inhabitants of Dersim, especially in the stateless zones, were Kızılbaş-Kurds. Hence, to understand tribalism in Dersim proper, it is pertinent to briefly examine tribalism in Kurdish society in general, because the majority in the region's population were Alevi Kurds.

Kurds are divided into numerous tribes or *ashirats*. McDowall writes that Kurdish tribalism "derives from the largely nomadic and semi-nomadic existence of most Kurdish [people] in previous centuries." Indeed, the fact that the people were nomadic is a convincing explanation for the birth of Kurdish tribalism. Nomadic people have stronger inter-familial ties compared to people in cities, where even nuclear-family struggles to remain relevant. The chief element of tribalism is loyalty, and Kurdish tribalism also has "strong religious loyalties, especially to the local shaikhs." These sheikhs have extraordinary control over Kurdish tribal communities.[83] Loyalties along with blood relations and a distinct territory are the principal elements of the Kurdish tribal form of social organization. Nevertheless, politics and diplomacy also come into play when defining tribes, which can be divided into sub-tribes and grouped into confederations. McDowall sees tribal confederations as having been "originally created or fostered by the state, and formalized by the Ottomans and later the Persians in order to guard the border marches." The confederate tribal chief accepted by the local tribes "also received [an] official title," in an attempt to draw him closer to the state. The confederate chief "nearly always claimed foreign descent, sometimes including sayyid status." It was the *seyid*'s simultaneous recognition by the government and his claim to be a direct descendant of the Prophet, that reinforced his claim to power.

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83 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 17. Also see Christopher Houston, "An anti-history of a non-people: Kurds, colonialism, and nationalism in the history of anthropology," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15, no.1 (March 2009): 19-35.

When a confederate chief was recognized by the state and simultaneously claimed noble or religious origins, he could be considered to be "above and outside the internal politics of the tribe," and hence "his position as arbiter of internal disputes [became] immensely strong." The confederate chief was protected by a *praetory guard*, which was comprised of men recruited from outside the tribal confederation. The guard also constituted "the core of the confederation's fighting capacity." Nevertheless, tribal confederations did not eliminate the "effective political power" of lesser chiefs and aghas, who controlled either single villages or a group of localities. The power of the chiefs in tribal confederations therefore depended not only on government recognition, which became more important in later centuries, but also on the loyalty of these smaller chiefs.[84] The terminology used in Turkish to refer to tribalism consists of two words of Arabic origin: *aşiret* and *kabile*. An ashirat is formed of multiple kabiles, and hence have chosen equivalents in English: tribes and clans.

The Dersimi tribes were spread throughout Greater Dersim, and for various reasons, some were spread even further to the north, west and south. The gendarmerie's report on Dersim from 1934 is a valuable resource in this regard that facilitates our understanding of the perspective of the state with regard to tribalism in Dersim. First of all, the state possessed limited information about the tribes. While some fifty tribes are described in less than fifty words each, there is considerably more information concerning the larger tribes. Second, the vocabulary reveals the state discourse of a *mission civilisatrice*. Tribal loyalties towards the state are questioned, and there is extensive information on intra-tribal alliances and feuds.[85] There is no other comparable report on tribalism known to have been written and published during the single-party era, which demonstrates the importance accorded to this issue by the Turkish state. Understanding and controlling these tribes was obviously at the top of the state’s priorities in the mid-1930s.

84 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 18-21.

85 Çalışlar, *Dersim Raporu*, 103-149.

According to the report, there were 93 Dersimi tribes in Turkey in the early 1930s. 22 of these were further divided into multiple clans, the most numerous of which were the ten clans of the Karaballı tribe, the ten clans of the Kalan Tribal Confederation, the nine clans of the Maksur Uşağı Tribe, the eight clans of the Ferhat Uşağı Tribe, the eight clans of the Kureyşanlı Tribe, and the seven clans of the Koç Uşağı tribe. 71 of the 93 tribes were not large enough to be further subdivided into clans. Although some tribes were geographically widespread, some were concentrated in certain regions. Ten of them were present in Ovacık, six in Hozat, eighteen in Pülümür, six in Çemişgezek, six in Kemah, fifteen in Tercan, twenty in Erzincan, thirteen in Nazımiye, six in Hınıs, three in Varto, twenty-one in Kiğı, twelve in Mazgirt, four in Pertek, four in Elazığ, three in Palu, three in Kuruçay, two in Sivas, two in Hısnımansur, four in Malatya, and five in Refahiye. Only thirteen tribes were nomadic, and the rest were either partially or fully settled. In regard to their rapport with the state, thirty were considered hostile in varying forms, from potential threat to outright enemy of the state, thirty were considered neutral, and thirty-three were considered relatively loyal to the state.[86]

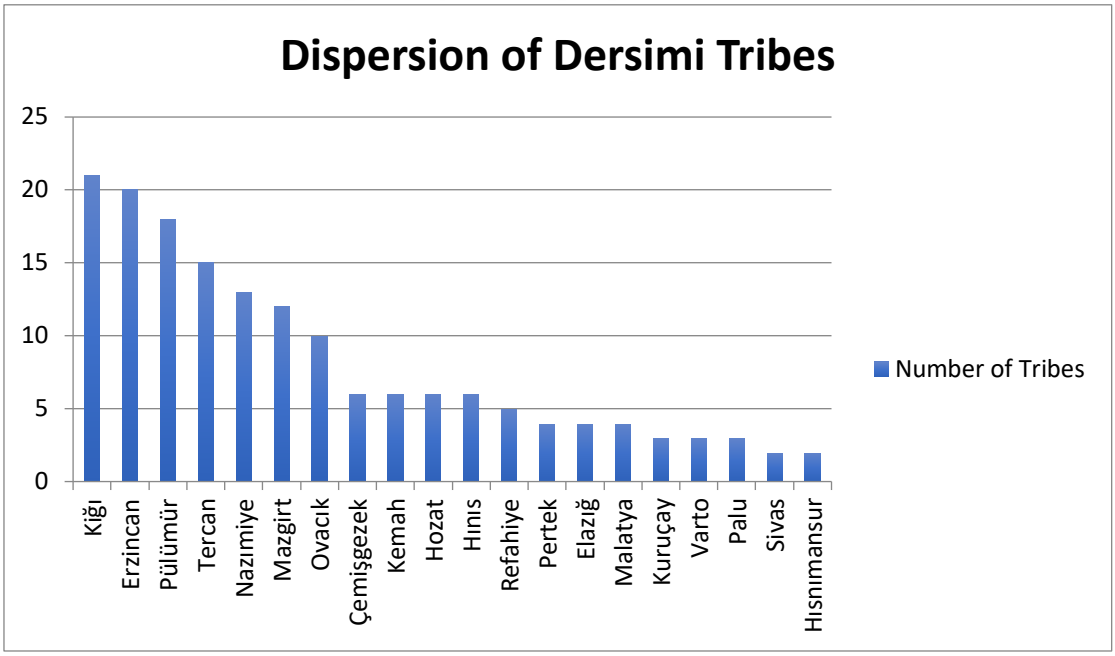


Chart 1 Geographic concentration of Dersimi Tribes. Source: Dersim Raporu (1934)

86 See Table in Appendix for further detail.

Most of what McDowall maintains about tribalism in Kurdish society rings true with the history of Dersim. However, although tribalism in Kurdistan and Dersim have evident parallels, there are remarkable dissimilarities. Geography again helps explain the disparity. Life in the lowlands differs from that in the highlands to such a remarkable extent that in "many respects it can be treated as a separate culture" altogether. In fact, McDowall argues that this cultural separateness was so marked that "lowlanders viewed the mountain Kurds with the same apprehension as they did the desert Arabs." In fact, tribalism in the deserts of Arabia and tribalism in Dersim share common features that distinguish them from Kurdish tribalism proper. In the plains of Kurdistan, the people became rather urbanized and gradually adopted the civilization of their surrounding culture. The converse was the case for tribal people living in the deserts and mountains, where until the 1920s, the tribal economy was mainly based on pastoralism and unlawful commerce. Therefore, they did not respect the economic and commercial terms imposed by state economy. The tribes that fell outside the reach of civilization effectively had a separate economy, "for example [they] would take ... salt to Iraq and bring back wheat."[87]

2.2.5 *Anarchical Economy*

In contrast with the integration of lowland Kurdish tribal society through the recognition of confederate chiefs and progressive adoption of the dominant civilization, those in the highlands mastered "the art of not being governed." For hundreds of years, until the nineteenth century, but anarchy was the rule in Dersim rather than governance by the state. And yet, while the anarchist history of Dersim is characterized by specific socio-cultural traits such as tribal organization, the more important factor was that the survival of the people depended on an economy that escaped state control. This anarchical economy stood on three pillars: a forest economy, sharecropping and pastoralism.[88]

87 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 19-20.

88 Scott, *The Art of not being governed*, (New Haven : Yale University Press, 2011).

The forest economy is perhaps the most characteristic aspect of the anarchical economy of Dersim proper. People in the region maintained their subsistence from the great highland forests. They collected and ate the fruits of a great variety of trees including walnut, pear, hazelnut, almond, hawthorn, rosehip, silverberry, Cornelian cherry, jujuba, sour cherry, plum, apple, mulberry, juniper, elderberry, and hackberry; however, it was the majestic oak trees that formed the backbone of the forest economy in Dersim. Not only were the acorns collected for human consumption, but during summer the leaves of the fruitless trees secreted a sweet honey-like substance known as *kudret helvası*.[89]

Furthermore, Dersim was a source of timber for the surrounding mostly treeless region. Most of the forested regions had "provided the great oak beams for many houses in Mosul, and some were floated downstream for the houses of Baghdad and Basra." This is why most of *the old forests* had gone in the rest of the surrounding region. Additionally, "oak galls sustained a trade for ink and for leather tanning."[90]

In the treeless plains surrounding the mountains, where arable land was put to use, anarchy gave way to hierarchy. The land was owned by landlords but worked by landless peasants. Before the *Tanzimat*, even some of these lands were owned communally by the tribes, but state interference in local affairs strengthened the position of the aghas who claimed ownership of the land. Of course, the extent to which central *Tanzimat* policies affected tribal organization in regard to land ownership is difficult to assess, but the general consensus is that class differences within the tribes were accentuated through increased stratification, and "a new class of absentee landlords" appeared. Hence, the modern state established a social contract not with tribes as a whole, but with this relatively new landowner class. In practice, this entailed a transition from a tribal to a capitalist economy. [91]

89 Antranik, *Dersim*, 89-90.

90 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 9.

91 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 22-23.

Land that was previously communal was progressively registered in the names of these local landlords. This transformation of tribal land ownership created what is commonly referred to as sharecropping. We know through the writings of Antranik that in the sixty villages of Çarsancak at the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of both Armenians and Kurds were occupied with *maraba*/*yarıcı* farming (sharecropping) – that, is working land belonging to begs and aghas. In sharecropping, as it was practiced in Lower Dersim, government representatives would collect half of the harvest as an *aşar* (tithe) tax, and the remainder would be given to the landowners. After giving the landowner his due, the sharecropper was left with less than half of the total produce, from which he had to further extract seeds for the next season. Thus, he was usually left with barely enough for sustenance.[92]

The highlands were a different story. Unquestionably, the land in the mountains belonged to the tribes. This was mostly due to the fact that not agriculture, but pastoral animal husbandry was the foundation of the highland economy. Pastoralism, which was a communal endeavor, went hand in hand with traditional tribalism in the highlands. The animals had to be protected from the elements, from wild animals, and from competing tribes. This protection and oversight required the efforts of a close-knit community. Unlike their agriculturalist counterparts, herdsmen had little or no contact with the outside world; there were no schools in their mountain villages and no tax collectors to rob them of their livelihood in the name of a distant sultan. Life in the mountains meant living "an isolated existence in symbiosis with [the] natural environment." In striking contrast to civilization, individualism is the exception to the rule here, as "'we' (the tribe) predominates." Some even describe the tribe as similar to a "proto-state," for "it manages production, keeps the peace internally and organizes defense." The executive power is in the hands of the chief "who often also fills the role of religious leader." The chief can also be seen "as a screen between the tribe and the outside world."[93]

92 Antranik, *Dersim*, 102-103.

93 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," in *A People Without A Country*, 16-17.

While the forest economy and pastoralism were the two main pillars of the anarchical economy of Dersim, sharecropping was the principal de-tribalizing and civilizing tool encouraged by the state. The parts of Dersim that were controlled by the state because of their more accessible geography could not fight the transformation of their economy, their loss of communal wealth and the destruction of their social traditions. They could not fight it because of the "legitimate" use of violence by the state, but they could escape it. The highlands of Inner Dersim had always been a refuge for those escaping the tyranny of the state, whether for economic reasons, as in the abandonment of agriculture (*terk-i ziraaat*) in favor of pastoral life, or for cultural reasons, because of the language that they spoke or the way that they worship.[94]

2.2.6 *Religion in Dersim*

The word religion is likely derived from the Latin word r*eligionem*, which means to show respect for what is sacred. Nearly all major religions claim to be the one, true religion and much blood has been spilled because of this discriminatory understanding of the sacred. There are two ways of understanding religion in Dersim. The first is to look at it from the point of view of the dominant, so-called "true" religion - in this case Islam. And the second is to discern what the people of Dersim believed was sacred enough to respect. From the first perspective, Dersim was situated in the *Dar al-Islam*. Pursuing this angle, a bit further, historically Dersim was under the influence of Shi'a rather than Sunni Islam, and in this context, Dersimis can be said to be of *Alevi* or *Kızılbaş* faith. From the point of view of Jwaideh, an Iraqi Christian, the*y* were described as "an extreme Shi'a sect," who believed in the resurrection of Christ - whom they identified with Ali. Alevis had no separate religious scripture and their tradition was mostly oral. Their religious leaders claimed direct descendance from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (677-733), the fifth Shia imam, who was supposedly related to both Hasan and Husayn.[95]

94 Nadir Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı'da vergi, siyaset ve toplumsal adalet (1839-1908)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2015).

95 Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 20-21.

When, in the beginning of the twentieth century, Major Noel asked the *Kızılbaş* Kurds how they came to be Shi'a, he was told that this history went back to the time of Sultan Selim and Shah Ismail. At the time, many Shi'a missionaries were active in Anatolia and some tribes converted. When Sultan Selim took permanent control of Kurdistan and asked them to reconvert to Sunna or else leave Ottoman lands in forty days' time, the Shi'a Kurds said "*Ferman padişahınsa dağlar bizimdir*" and retreated to the mountains.[96]

The *Kızıl-baş* or Crimson-Head were named as such because of their distinctive headwear. However, they "call[ed] themselves Yol Ushaghi," meaning "Servants of the Way." The perspective of Dilşa Deniz, who wrote her dissertation on the "Way," aligns with the second perspective with regard to religion in Dersim. Deniz characterizes religion in Dersim as an eclectic belief system combining Alevi heterodoxy with nature worship. Natural beings are believed to contain spiritual powers, and hence the religion resembles animism. There also are elements of ancestor worship present in their faith. Manifest in the saying *Erd a bav u kalê meye* (this is the land of our ancestors), there is a profound connection between the land and one's ancestors. S*eyids* hold immense power in the *Rêya Haq* (the Righteous Way) because they are the living embodiment of the ancestors and hence are living objects of worship. God is called *Xwadê, which* is etymologically related to the Persian word for God, *Huda*. *Xızır* is the holiest saint, and after him come lesser saints such as *Dızgun* and *Mızur*. We shall briefly examine these last two local saints. *Dızgun*/*Düzgün Baba* is a mountain of more than two thousand meters in Nazımiye named, according to legend, after the shepherd *Dızgun* who brought his goats to this mountain in winter and fed them with the fresh leaves that sprouted from oak trees when he touched them with his staff. This mountain still houses a shrine (*Ziyaret*) dedicated to the saint, and people still conduct pilgrimages here with such familiar practices as walking barefoot, animal sacrifices, and circling sacred stone mounts to have their wishes fulfilled.[97]

96 Noel, *Kürdistan 1919*, 18.

97 Dilşa Deniz, *Yol/Rê: Dersim İnanç Sembolizmi, Antropolojik Bir Yaklaşım* (2012), 266.

Another holy mountain in the region is the previously mentioned Mount Dujik Baba. Deniz notes that there is a veritable mountain cult in Dersim. Directly linked to the mountains are goats, which also have important symbolic significance in the region. *Mızur*/*Munzur Baba* provided the name of the principal river of Dersim. The character *Mızur*, like *Dızgun*, was a shepherd. He magically brought *helva* to his master during the latter's pilgrimage to Mecca. Upon his return, the master, aware of *Mızur*'s supernatural power to teleport, refused his tribesmen's signs of respect and declared that the person truly deserving reverence was his shepherd. *Mızur*, who was bringing milk to offer his master, was driven away by an overwhelming feeling of shame when the tribesmen turned to him in reverence. The milk that he spilled while running towards the mountains is said to be the source of the river that carries his name.[98]

Hence, the religion of Dersim is specific to the region and contains references to its physical geography: Mountains are sacred as are shepherds, whose miraculous stories include virtues such as humility and timidity rather than bravery or pomposity. The goat and its symbiotic relation with the oak tree as well as the milk that is produced are all sacred.

2.2.7 *Language and identity in Dersim*

Identity in modern nation-states is largely determined by religion and language. We have noted that the religion of Dersim was an idiosyncratic semi-Islamic heterodoxy called *Rêya Haq*, and we have introduced some local words and phrases in the language spoken in Dersim. But what exactly is spoken in Dersim and how does the naming of this language relate to identity politics? From general to specific, the language spoken in Dersim is an Iranian language belonging to the Indo-European language family. Geographically speaking, the area where the more than eighty Iranian languages are spoken largely corresponds to the region identified as *Kovia*. The language of Dersim is more specifically a Northwestern Iranian language, and as such can be grouped with Kurdish, or more specifically Zazaki, languages.

98 Deniz, *Yol/Rê*, 23-24 - 48 - 76 - 130 - 156 - 202 - 266.

Iranologist Ludwig Paul from Hamburg University demonstrated in the First International Symposium on the Zaza language that it is related to West-Iranian, an extinct language, which is simultaneously the ancestor of Old Persian, Proto-Kurdish, Proto-Baluchi, and Proto-Zazaki. Notably, Paul separates Proto-Kurdish, which gave rise to Sorani and Kurmanji, from Proto-Zazaki, which gave rise to modern Zazaki. Even though this classification renders the question obsolete, many continue to believe that Zazaki is a dialect of Kurdish. This is mostly due to the primacy of Kurdish nationalism over the less influential Zaza nationalism. Indeed, another Zazaki expert, Zülfü Zelcan from Tunceli University, who spoke at the same symposium in 2011, writes that these two languages are as distinct as English and German.[99]

The language spoken in Dersim is classified as a dialect of Zazaki: Northern Zazaki. However, there are two subdialects in the region, namely West Dersimi and East Dersimi. Those who speak the language call it *zonê Xizirî* (the language of *al-Khidr*), or *Kirmancê Dersîmî* (Dersimi Zazaki), or more intimately as, *zonê ma* (our language).[100]

This, of course, carries with it a problem of identity. Who are the people living in Dersim speaking "their language"? Are they Iranized mountain Turks, as the single-party republican regime suggested? Are they Kurds that speak a particular dialect? Or are they Zazas? The republic maintained that they were ethnically Central Asian Turks who came under the influence of Iran due to their proximity. The Zazas were, the official discourse willed, *Highlander Turks*. But the people who spoke Zaza belonged to two different religious sects; there were Shafii Zazas and Alevi Zazas. And the latter were considered more Turkish than the former. This in turn, related to their ritual language. The Alevis prayed and sang in Turkish, and most of the elders were fluent in the language. Therefore, Alevi Zazas, whose habitat roughly corresponds with the region of Greater Dersim, held a special place in the assimilation policies.

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99 Ludwig Paul, "Die Herkunft und Stellung des Zazaki und das Verhältnis von sprache zu ethnie," & Zülfü Selcam, "Zazaca, yeniden tanıtılması gereken bir dil (Türkçe Çeviri), *I. Uluslararası Zaza dili Sempozyumu* (Bingöl Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 15 - 170.

100 Serkan Oğur, *Farsça-Zazaca-Kurmancca Mukayeseli Gramer ve Temel Sözlük* (2014), XI-XV.

Uluğ, the foremost orientalist author on Dersim from the internal colonial era, did not use the adjective Kurdish in his work. However, he openly wrote of the Zazas, describing them as ethnically Central Asian. Delving into physical anthropology, he described them as brachycephalic: round headed with wide foreheads and nimble eyed.[101] Uluğ was referring to the cephalic index conceptualized by Anders Retzius (1796-1860) to classify ancient human remains, which was later appropriated by European racists. Jews, for instance, were considered to be brachycephalic, while the idealized, pure Northern European race was dolichocephalic.[102]

In short, the people of Dersim had no one nationalism; they defined themselves according to the tribe to which they belonged and the geography that they occupied. This is why, Armenians aside, all three nationalist currents (Turkish, Kurdish, and Zaza) still claim that the true ethnicity of the people of Dersim is their own.

Indeed, nationalist Turks still claim that the inhabitants of Dersim are the original Turks from Central Asia who became Kurdified over time. Some Armenians postulate a similar scenario where original Armenian inhabitants became Kurdified over time. Finally, even contemporary Zaza nationalists claim that a process of Kurdification is still under way in Dersim. The common denominator of these nationalisms is the issue of Kurdification. Therefore, before contextualizing the history of Dersim from an objective perspective, we propose a brief analysis of the origins of the people of Dersim through a parallel reading of the history of the people in the region at large.

101 Uluğ, *Tunceli medeniyete açılıyor*, 25 - 29 - 54-58. The Tuhar Turks laid the foundations of the Çemişgezek Beglik. The Beg of Pertek, Baysungur was also a Turk, the Sağman Beglik had Ottoman origins. During the Tanzimat, these begs played the roles of *muavin ve müşavir* collaborating with the *mutasarrıf*.

102 Carlos Closson, "The Hierarchy of European Races," *American Journal of Sociology* 3, No.3 (Nov. 1897): 314-327.

2.3 Origins of the People of Dersim

In the Turkish origin story called *Ergenekon*, the people left their *urheimat* situated in the highlands. The Kurdish story of ethnogenesis is almost a mirror image of *Ergenekon*; the people do not escape but rather find refuge in the highlands. Firdausi tells this story in *Shahname*. An ancient ruler named Azdehak/Zahhák, known as "the dragon king" carried two snakes on his shoulders. "Each night two youths ... were taken to the palace by the cook, who having slaughtered them took out their brains to feed the snakes." There was no family in the land that was not affected. One day, the brothers Armail/Irmá'il and Garmail/Karmaí'l, "two good high-born Persians," found a way to cheat the snakes' anthropophagous appetite. Together they "became the monarch's cooks and joyed in secret." The "murderous minions of the Sháh dragged to the cooks with violence two youths" but the brothers did not kill them both "they slew one of the youths and thought it best to mingle his precious brains with a sheep's and spare the other." Hence, they began to fool the snakes, and as a result they saved one person's life each day. Those rescued were sent to the highlands never to be seen again in the city. When their number reached two hundred, the brothers gave them goats and sheep so that they could sustain themselves in the mountains. "Thus sprang the Kúrds, who know no settled home, but dwell in woolen tents and fear not God."[103]

This story refers to a people who fled tyranny to find refuge in the mountains. The key to their survival was pastoralism, and they were nomadic. Of course, there are more scientifically based origin stories for the Kurdish people. The Kurds probably descended from Indo-European tribes that settled around Mount Zagros in the second millennium BCE. For some, there is little doubt that the Kurds are Aryans, like the Persians. They are possibly descendants of the Medes, whose occupation of Asia Minor is believed to predate the migration of both the Iberians (Georgians) and the Armenians.

103 Arthur & Edmond Warner, *The Shahname of Firdausí* vol. I (1905), 145-147; S. Aydınlu, *Firdevsi'nin Şahname'sinde Kürtler*, (Avesta, 2012); and Abdurrahman Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, (Avesta, 2009), 53.

The Medes were formed of tribes that united into confederations, although they had local chieftains. They had no supreme ruler, and their unity was based on their reverence for their priestly class: The Magi.[104]

Kurdish nationalist authors have fully embraced this Median ancestry, and authors such as Arfa refer to millennia old Sumerian and Assyrian inscriptions in their telling of Kurdish history. Indeed, the Kardaka, Kurtie, and Xenophon's Kardukai - whom he described as "a mountain folk who harassed his march towards the sea." [105] These people that the Greeks encountered "massing in the mountains," named *Kardokhoi* or *Kyrtys*, lived west of Lake Van.[106] Strabo also wrote about "the tribes of Media," and he describes "the Magi [who] follow with zeal a kind of an august life, whereas the Cyrtii and the Mardi are brigands and … farmers." And though the ancient author does not write this the region *per se*, on his map of Anatolia, as seen on Map 11, he named the region Derxene, which would mean "*der-hêni*" (the land of sources) in Zazaki.[107]



[108]

Map 11 Derxene. Source: Strabon, *Coğrafya* (1987)

104 Warner & Warner, *The Shahname of Firdausí*, 9.

105 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 2-3. Referring to the *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6, Istanbul, 1955, pp. 1089-91.

106 J.K. Anderson, *Xenophon*, (Duckworth, 1974), 126.

107 T.E. Page, *The Geography of Strabo* vol. VII (Harvard University Press, 1961), 155-157.

108 Strabon, *Coğrafya: Anadolu (Kitap: XII, XIII, XIV)* (Arkeoloji ve Sanat yayınları, 1987), 334.

Some commented that "the Kardakes were so called 'because they lived by theft; for Karda means manly and warlike' [and] in Assyrian qrdu means strong or hero and qaradu means to be strong." This warlike quality attributed to various tribal peoples around the world, ranging from the Celts to the Zulu, is almost a *cliché* in the imaginations of lowland civilizations. In the contemporary *Encyclopedia Iranica*, the *Kardakes* refers to the imperial infantry of Ancient Persia, and connection with Kurds is not well supported.[109]

This part of the world has a history of people escaping state rule in the lowlands in favor of a tribal life in the highlands where authority derives from the sacred. The origins of the Kurdish people point to a multi-ethnic descent of various persecuted peoples. Adhering to this hypothesis that Kurds, including the people of Dersim, are multiethnic descendants of the various refugees from empires in the region, as is the case in Southeast Asia, McDowall writes: "it is unlikely that they are purely aboriginal, or derive from one single source ... Supposedly they were the mountain people in conflict with the Mesopotamian empires." On the other hand, for political and religious reasons, Muslim Kurds generally claim that their leaders, like Seyid Rıza, are of Arab descent, because this has a profound and practical significance for establishing unity within their confederations.[110]

Following the Persian conquest of the Med Empire (550 BCE), the people continued their independent lives. During the Sassanian Empire, the dominant religion was Zoroastrianism; with the Arab conquest, the people were forcibly converted to Islam. However, it is doubtful that the people inhabiting this geography ever adhered to orthodox religion as dictated by the central creed of the empires that dominated the lowlands. Worship of the sun, trees, and stones have continued well into the present.[111]

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109 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 54 - Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 12; and http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kardakes, (accessed on March 9, 2018).

110 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 11.

111 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 54-55; and Jwaideh, The Kurdish national movement, 11; and G.R. Driver, "The name kurd and its philological connexions," *Royal Asiatic Society* 10 (July 1923): 393-403.

The people of Dersim are almost definitely descendants of various peoples who have found refuge in the mountains of Northwestern Asia, whose history in the region extends back three if not four millennia. These lands were included within the boundaries of one empire after another; the people themselves never fully became imperial subjects and retained their autonomy under tribal lines. Confederations, which tended to be short-lived, occurred only when a charismatic leader appeared. The people chose sides during imperial competitions throughout the centuries.[112]

We have more information concerning the Kurds following the Arab conquest, when another wave of refugees found their way into Dersim as Islam came to dominate in areas where Zoroastrianism had once prevailed. Dersim remained under Arab domination during the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE); however, tribal chiefdoms maintained their autonomy. Some tribes willingly participated in Jihad alongside Muslim armies while others abstained. Tribal loyalty was an issue, and the people rebelled many times under various Islamic regimes. For instance, the people rose up during "the great Zanj rebellion … [which] almost caused the downfall of the 'Abbasid Empire."[113]

It was the Arabs who first recorded the name "Kurd." In fact, the people concerned ignored this name given to them, they would rather call themselves by the name of their tribe or clan, which would be derived either from a prominent person, a particular region, or mountain chain, just like in Dersim. With time some tribes became stronger and more and more state-like. Native dynasties emerged in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries CE, which coincided with the end of Arab domination and the rise to prominence of the Turks. These dynasties included the Shaddadid, the Marwanid, the Hasanwayhid, the 'Annazid and the Ayyubids, founded by Saladin.[114]

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112 Arfa, The Kurds, 3-6; and T. Nöldeke, *Geschiechte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, (Leiden: Brill, 1879). Based on the writings of the historian Abu Ja'far Muhammed b. Jarir b. Yazid al-Tabari (838-923); and Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 6, pp. 1089-1091.

113 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 3 - 6-7; Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 13-14; and Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 8.

114 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 6; and Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 14-15.

Strong sayyid traditions in the region also originated during the pivotal tenth century, around which time Shi'a Islam began spreading among some tribes. "This situation lasted until the Seljuk Tughril Beg entered Baghdad in 1055 … [and became] the protector of the Khalifate."[115]

Most local rulers acknowledged the suzerainty of the second Seldjoukide ruler Alp Arslan (1029-1072) following the battle of Manzekert in 1071. However, at the time, Greater Dersim region was within Byzantine territory, where there were frequent incursions by the Turks. At this time, some tribes in the region expressed loyalty to Constantinople, as the authority of Bagdad had become almost obsolete. Notably, aside from a few incursions during the Seldjoukide period (1034-1194) the mountains were not a target for settlement. The Turks settled and Turkified Azerbaidjan, but "simply passed through the Kurdish lands," choosing instead to follow accessible roads that brought them "into the rich plains of Asia Minor, driving straight towards the Aegean Sea and the warm shores of the Mediterranean." [116] It was mostly because of this reluctance to enter the inhospitable mountains, inhabited by tribes, that between Azerbaijan and Anatolia, remains an area where Kurdish socio-cultural fabric has been mostly preserved. The people here were always free from direct state control, gathering a repute of lawlessness.

During Seljoukide times and the rule of Saladin "Kurdish lands were divided between the Atabegs (Seljuks' officers)," district governors who survived the collapse of the Seldjoukide order and became local lords. These relatively independent "Atabegs were Turks and, … they accepted the nominal suzerainty of the Abbasid Khalifs of Baghdad" (750-1258)."[117] Then came the Mongols (1206-1243), who conquered the region in 1213. However, like the Turks, the Mongols did not venture into the mountains. During the reign of Chengiz Khan's grandson Hulagu (1217-1265), founder of the Ilkhanate Empire, "the Kurdish highlands were not spared."[118]

115 S.L. Poole, *The Mohammadan Dynasties* (Pari: P. Geuthier, 1925); and Arfa, *The Kurds*, 7-8.

116 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 8-9.

117 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 10.

118 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 12.

During this time Muslim Kurds sided for a time with the Ilkhans under Mahmud Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304), who had converted to Islam. Approaching the second half of the fourteenth century, the Turkoman dynasty of Karakoyunlu became the dominant force in the region. Meanwhile "another Turkoman tribe, called the Ak-Kuyunlu, partly supplanted them and conquered all western Iran, Iraq, the Jazirah and Kurdistan."[119]

The common feature of these competing states was that they "considered themselves Iranian … and were not race-conscious." It was "the rise of the Safavid dynasty in Iran" and the increasing importance of sectarianism within imperial Islam that marked the "estrangement of the northern Kurds from the Iranian community."[120] There was a common Turco-Persian culture in the South-West Asian massif region for at least half a millennium, but the rivalry between Selim and Ismail ushered in a Sunni/Shia split that divided the region. Some Kurds became "estranged from Iran," because they "felt more sympathy for the Sunni Turks than for [those] of the Shia sect." Bayezid the Second (1447-1512) did not pursue the Armenian highlands, and the Ottoman Empire watched as the Safavid conquered Aq Qoyunlu lands. His son Selim lost no time in marching east "and, after dispersing the … contingents of the local chieftains, came close to the Iranian army and utterly defeated it."[121] The Çaldıran attle in 1514, northwest of Lake Urimiye, was a turning point. Afterwards Hekim Idris (1452-1520), a high-ranking Kurd from Bitlis, was appointed by the sultan to form vassals. Idris-i Bidlisi placed certain Kurdish tribes along the frontier and guaranteed that as long as they provided for the army of the sultan, they would not have to pay taxes.[122]

Tribal movements across the Turco-Persian border are well known, but the people that revolted against the state did not necessarily have to go into Iran; they could also go to Dersim.

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119 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 12-13.

120 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 13-14.

121 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 15.

122 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 57; and Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 15-16.

The latter geography contained a “population consisting of detribalized Kurdish and Christian townspeople, and Kurdish tribes [as well as] smaller divisions corresponding to clans, besides Armenian and Assyrian peasants in the country.”[123] It can be definitely be argued that the Greater Dersim region is a *zone of insubordination* to quote Scott - a "*shatter zone*" to quote White - where people sought "*sanctuary and opportunity beyond the reach of states or conquerors*.”[124]

2.4 Indirect Rule in Dersim 1517-1847

One after another, medieval states offered tribal chiefs a semi-autonomous position; others, such as the Marwanids, achieved absolute autonomy in their localities. Most tribes maintained a formalized “gift-exchange” relationship with the central state from the Seldjoukide period forward. The chiefs offered tributes and troops to the state and progressively established themselves as the principal actors in regional governance. This cooperation between the central state and local power holders created "a governing class of feudal lords which overlaid blood loyalties within the tribe with 'feudal' ones." Feudalism in the region, which was well established by the fourteenth century, consisted of an armed aristocracy that claimed rule over nomadic tribes, a provincial nobility, and civil servants and a religious class.

The Turkish and Mongolian raids destroyed much of the settled peasantry, and nomadic tribal life came to dominate the region in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. What were once fields, became large tracts of grazing land; the Kurds thus began penetrating deeper into Armenia. The Kurdish aghas sided with Sultan Selim at Çaldıran, and in return he made a pact with them and accepted sixteen self-governing emirates (principalities). These undertook the formal role of policing the Turco-Persian border. The influential princes of southern Kurdistan were given autonomy.

123 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 16.

124 Scott, *The Art of not being governed*; and Richard White, *The middle ground: Indians, empire, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), XIV.

In the inhospitable areas such as Dersim, where military control was impossible to maintain, Kurdish sanjaks were set up and Kurdish beys were designated. Many of these were tribal chiefs who became vassals of the Sublime Porte. The Beys were free to rule as they willed in their own territory. The only service they were required to fulfill was to participate in military campaigns. Each ruling family was "granted a hereditary title by the government which claimed, through its local governor, which family member actually held office as emir." This arrangement gave the "state an extremely important hold on key positions."[125]

In the state-supported feudal system of the region, the villages where the people lived, the pastures where the animals grazed, and all the fields belonged to one tribal chief or another. Peasants worked for them like serfs, either shepherding in the mountains or sharecropping on farms. In addition to the feudal relationship with the Ottoman state, there was also an intra-tribal feudal system where "the more important chiefs of tribal confederations had under them smaller chieftains as vassals." The progressive strengthening of the central state in both Iran and Turkey, however, gradually led to the disappearance of the Kurdish principalities. Although the tribes remained, the central state managed their autonomy through the appointment of tribal chiefs as the governors of their respective regions. The power structure established by the *Kurdo-Ottoman pact* was maintained until the nineteenth century, and the veritable *Pax Ottomana* brought calm to a region that had lacked stability for centuries, ushering in "the golden age of Kurdish feudalism" and engendering a Kurdish renaissance.[126]

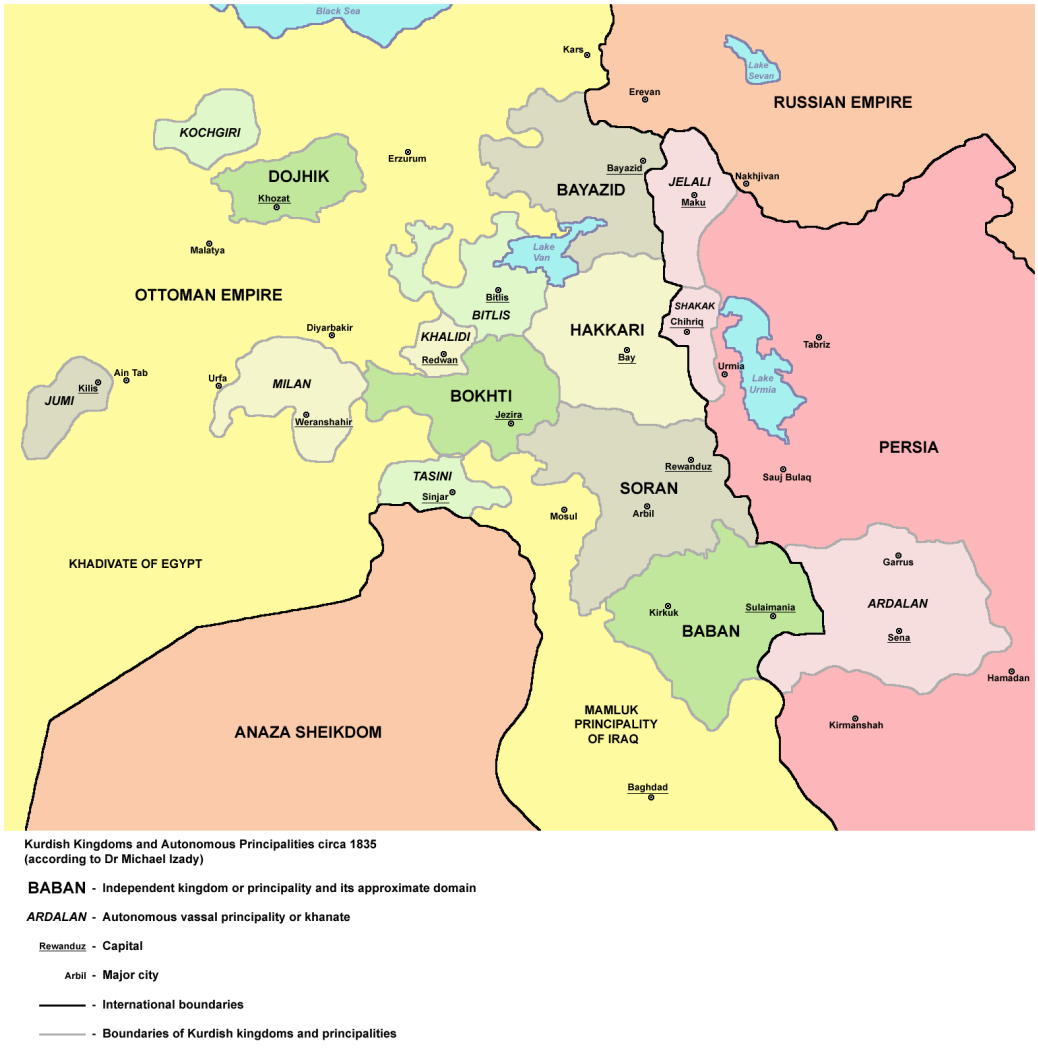
We know from *Şerefname* that Çemişgezek was the most important town of Dersim in the sixteenth century. The rulers of Çemişkezek claimed to be descended from the Abbasid. Şeref Han notes that the names of the Çemişkezek rulers were neither Kurdish nor Arabic and suggests this proves

125 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 14; and McDowall, *The Kurds*, 26-27.

126 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 17 - Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 8.

their Turkic origins. Hardly surprising since the geography of this part of Dersim, unlike Inner Dersim, allowed surrounding and dominant cultures to take root. The other locality of Dersim mentioned in Şerefname is Pertek, which was an autonomous entity created on the orders of Suleiman the Magnificent and given to Rüstem Bey of the ruling family of Çemişgezek. [127]

Thus, there was a Çemişgezek Beylik ruled by the Melkişi tribe that was so powerful that the sultan placed a challenger from within the family in Pertek as a precautionary measure. But this was Lower Dersim; breach of the power of Inner Dersim, which was called Dujik, depended on the weakness of surrounding entities.



Map 12 Kurdish Emirates circa 1835. Source: enacademic.com

127 Sharif Khan Bidlisi, M.E. Bozarslan, *Şerefname* (Istanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1971), 207-217.

Map 12 represents the Kurdish Emirates and Begliks in the 1830s, before the end of indirect rule by the Ottomans. Most were along the Persian border, but Dujik (Dojhik) and Koçgiri (Kochgiri), in stark contrast, were surrounded by state-controlled areas. Dujik is an island of autonomy in a sea of state authority, a remarkable shatter zone, located between important trade routes, target to banditry.[128]

Local notables of Çarsancak (Peri) wrote a petition in the summer of 1726 due to the rebellious, outlaw activities of "Kurdish bandits" (*Ekrâdı eşkıyâ*). Whether the looting targeted only nobles or also the peasantry is debatable, regardless the word *tuğyan*, which means, "to overflow," is remarkable. This imagery persisted into later centuries: Dersim was like an overflowing volcano. The petition also accuses local notables from other localities of cooperating with the raiders, more specifically, those of Kemah and Kığı clans. The tribes of Dersim/Dojik were also involved in the mines of Keban, as supplied by a document from January 1730 which mentions collaboration between some tribes and a local tax collector (*mütesellim*). A decree by the Governor of Diyarbakır from September 1733 mentions the Dersimli and Şeyh Hasanlı bandits' slave raids, looting, and pillaging. The envisioned solution was a strategy of forced exile "*tenkil ve tehcir*."[129]

In 1736 the influential Safavid dynasty was overthrown by the coup of Nadir Shah. This marked a new era of turbulence in the wider region as Nadir Shah (r. 1736-1747) used Kurdish soldiers in his further conquests. He also forcibly deported thousands of Kurdish families to Khorasan to secure the eastern frontier against the Turkmen. The link between Dersim and Khorasan was much older, and families found refuge from Qajar tyranny in the highlands.[130]

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128 enacademic.com/pictures/enwiki/75/Kurdish_states_1835.png (accessed March 15, 2018). Also see Michael Mehrdad Izady, *The Kurds*, "a concise history and fact book," Crane Russak, London, 1992.

129 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 15-18 (BOA C. DH, 286/14257), 19-24 (BOA C.ZB, 40/1783) (BOA C.DH, 331/16543).

130 Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 17.

Mines were of particular interest in the booty economy of Dersim. In a decree sent to the Governor of Diyarbakır concerning measures to prevent the raids in and around the Ergani Mines in February 1743, the sultan wrote to Vezir Ali Pasha to inform the bandits that they would be disciplined: *te'dîb ve gûşmal*.[131]

As modernization reached the East, the Ottoman state began to increase its efforts to centralize. A *ferman* in 1775 ordered that each emirate was henceforth obliged to settle the tribes under their jurisdiction in the leas (*mera*) so that they would cease infringing on the lives and property of the locals. The expression *te'dip ve gûşmal* was put forward again in July 1777 in a document authored by the *mutasarrıf* of Malatya, Rişvanzade Ömer Pasha, who had complained about despicable Kurdish tribal rule over the plains: *Ekrad-ı habâset-mu'tâda*. Five years later, the sultan ordered the execution of bandits - some of whom were cited by name - belonging to the Şeyh Hasanlı, Dersimli, and Guvanlı tribes living in Dujik, Letrik, and Ovacık. The lands where they lived were to be cleaned of these "ill-mannered Kurds" (*Ekrâd-ı bed-nihâdan*), and they would not be allowed to return. It was hoped that this would put an end to the looting of important towns such as Kiğı. The Ergani mines were another prime target of the booty economy of Dersim. The *Emin* of the Great Mines (*Maden-i Kebar*) of Ergani, Yusuf El-Hâc, wrote to the sultan in May 1787 that the ill-natured Kurds of bad ritual (*Ekrâd-ı bed-âyin ve bed-nihâdlar*) of the Dujik and Şeyh Hasanlı tribes were terrorizing (*tedhiş*) the non-Muslims and townsfolk. The document makes clear that the tribes were extorting the lowlanders. The Emin managed to capture and execute about sixty bandits, the heads of whom were sent to the Sultan.[132] In response to the bailee, the Sublime Porte used the adjective *şekâvet-pîşeler* in reference to the Şeyh Hasanlı and Dujik tribes. *Şekavet* means brigandage, but *pişe* denotes a craft, trade, profession, or an art form acquired through habit.

131 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 25-28 (BOA C. DH, 324/16193) (BOA C. ZB, 725),

132 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 29-31 (BOA C. ZB, 22/1094), 32-35 (BOA C. ZB, 70/3484) (BOA C. ZB, 15/576).

The use of this term signifies a cultural acceptance of a certain “art of looting” in the *longue durée*. In his response, the sultan called for solidarity among the locals. But a petition written in February 1793 by the "poor and weak subjects" of Çemişgezek and Çarsancak suggests that this strategy of solidarity was a failure and that the towns in and around the Imperial Mines (*Maden-i Hümayun*) had practically been razed.[133]

İzzet Mehmed Pasha wrote to Selim III in August 1797 that the Şeyh Hasanlı, Dersimli, and Dujik tribes needed to be exiled far away (*tenkil*) and disciplined (*te'dîb ve terbiye*). He further explained that it took more than two hundred hours to walk from one end of Dersim to the other. The problem was geographical: if the people were removed from this land and settled elsewhere, there would be no more raids. In summer 1797 government forces burned local villages, and the people found refuge on Mount Dujik and along the Zağki Stream. In November, the Dersimis retaliated. A united tribal confederation started raiding the lowlands near Eğin, burning 113 houses, local stores, and local courthouse, killing four civilians. Officials fled to Sivas. This resulted in a military operation organized in 1798 organized by Vezir Seyid Ahmet Pasha who was governor of Erzurum at the time. Istanbul was planning another one for the coming summer. The increased military pressure on Dersim was followed by a truce proposed by two members of the Şeyh Hasanlı tribe, who wrote to the sultan in June 1802 attesting that they would kneel before his authority. They would stop raiding the mines and become his vassals.[134]

But there was no permanent peace between the parties, and a letter dated November 1805 addressed to the sultan by his vizier indicates that many bandits belonging to the Dersimli and Şeyh Hasanlı tribes had been exterminated, although this did not stop raids on merchant groups passing through Erzincan. The booty- economy of Dersim was shifting from the mines to the south to the Northeastern Anatolian trade route to the north.[135]

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133 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 36-41 (BOA C. DH, 277/13821).

134 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 42-50 (BOA HAT, 83/3445) (BOA C. DH, 1746), 51-55 (BOA C. DH, 304/15197) (BOA C. ZB, 31522).

135 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 56-57 (BOA HAT, 103/4072).

It seems that because of the inability to put an end to the raids of the Dersimi tribes by conventional means, the local governors of Sivas and Diyarbakır were rewarding private soldiers (*nefer tatarlar*) for bringing in severed heads. A document from May 1814 attests that one head (*kaput*) of a bandit was worth 500 kuruş, while three was worth 1500. [136]

The increasing Russian presence in Greater Caucasia from 1804 onwards rendered the tribes a crucial actor in imperial competition. Settled tribes were treated differently than their nomadic counterpart. For instance, settled tribes were enrolled in the fourth, fifth, and sixth armies of the Ottoman military. Following the Russo-Turkish war of 1808-1812, they were organized under the supervision of British army officers, and after Tanzimat they were incorporated within the Redif regiments. Meanwhile a military operation by Salih Pasha was abandoned just as troops reached Inner Dersim because the 1827-28 war with Russia broke out. The Russians advanced down from the Caucasus reaching Erzurum in the summer of 1829. In August they pillaged the Sancak of Tercan, a neighbor of Dersim.[137]

The region became strategically important for the security of the empire. Sultan Mahmud II's policy of reforms, aimed at increased control over peripheral regions of the empire caused a reduction in the authority of most tribal chiefs and emirs. This resulted in a discontent among the feudal classes. Following setbacks when Turkish armies faced the Egyptians in 1832, rebellions broke out in the region at large. In the year 1834, Reşid Mehmed Pasha (1780-1836) was ordered to maintain order. Starting his campaign in Sivas with an army of twenty thousand and marching to Diyarbakır, he went on to serve as governor until his death. [138] His policies were rumored to be pro-Armenian and anti-Muslim [*dacig*], which eventually led to his poisoning in Diyarbakır. When governing from Harput, the Çarsancak Armenians sent him a petition signaling the abuses of local lords.

136 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 58-59 (BOA C. DH, 15/733).

137 Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler*, 1801-1900, 41 – 45; Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 59.

138 Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler*, 1801-1900, 48; Arfa, The Kurds, 22-23.

In response, all the begs, aghas, sheikhs, and prominent figures of Çarsancak were summoned to Harput one night and killed in Aslanpınarı on the outskirts of the city the following morning. He supposedly also offered the Armenians an option of a population transfer, in which the Armenians of Dersim would be sent to Diyarbakır and the Turks from that region would be settled in their place, but the Armenian council could not agree to leave their land. All was well for the Armenian populace until the departure of Reşid Pasha when the sons of former feudal lords took their fathers' places.[139]

Reşid Mehmed Pasha's mission was not limited to applying the reforms in Kurdistan; he was actually sent there to form an army strong enough to oppose the Kavalalı armies in Syria. But he also conducted a military operation in Dersim in September of 1835. Three battalions set out from north of Çemişgezek and advanced inward to Tahar village, which was traditionally considered the frontier town of Inner Dersim. He advanced as far as possible, but the forests stopped him. He wrote in his report that "God knew that these forests are unbelievable" (*Hüda bilir ki bu ormanlar görülmüş şey değildir*). He placed some troops in strategic locations and retreated, having captured and executed some thirty local chiefs. In the end, Reşid Pasha became the first Ottoman official in history to collect any sort of tax in Dersim.[140]

At the time, the most powerful tribal chief in Dersim was the agha of the Kuzuçan tribe, Shah Hüseyin Beg I. He assembled all the young Dersimis and confronted the Ottoman army. The conflict resulted in Ottoman retreat only after a month. The Dersimis, understanding that this would not be the last onslaught by the Ottomans, engaged in a reorganization of their own.[141] The display of regional power by Shah Hüseyin Beg in the 1830s was part of the reaction.

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139 Antranik, *Dersim*, 35-48. During his second voyage in 1895, Antranik arrived at Aydınlık (Mazgirt) [Canig], where he listened to the stories of a nonagenarian named Giro keya, who tells him of these events.

140 Fatih Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Osmanlı devleti'nin Dersim'de Merkezî Otoriteyi kurma çabaları," *Ankara Üni. Dil ve Tarih – Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 55, no.1 (2015): 218-224. Hatt-ı Hümayûn (HAT) 22311-B

141 Antranik, *Dersim*, 156-157.

Both in Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, Russian ambitions and cross-border attacks were cause for concern for the Ottomans, who increased their presence in the region. The passage from indirect to direct rule resulted in chaos. The replacement of feudal lords by Ottoman administrators did not respond to local needs and the "vacuum was filled by religious leaders [known as the] shaikhs [who] were being called upon increasingly to act as arbiters in disputes between aghas, villages, and tribes."[142] As the established feudal order was dissolving, figures such as Shah Hüseyin Beg were successful in forming a united front in Dersim.

New alliances were being formed at this time, as exemplified by the collaboration between the Kuzugüdenli and Afşar tribes. The name of the Kuzugüdenli tribe reappears multiple times in the archives during the 1840s. Around this time, a petition signed by 27 highly ranked tribesmen, apologized for the misbehavior of some among their tribes, offering to return looted goods and promising never to kill, racketeer, or steal again. They even agreed to pay taxes, suggesting that the tribes began to quickly understand how the Tanzimat worked. Submitting a petition, which can be considered an urban form of everyday resistance, was adopted by tribal notables.[143]

The Tanzimat began to be implemented in the region at large in spring 1845 (specifically in the provinces of Erzurum and Diyarbakır). Local power holders understood the implications, and so the begs revolted, headed by the powerful Bedirhan Beg. In the end, Bedirhan was defeated, captured, and taken as a prisoner to the capital along with the other rebellious begs. But the mountains welcomed most of his supporters. Dersim was a refuge for his partisans.[144] Following the revolt the religious chiefs, the shaikhs and the sayyids gained importance all over the region at large. These religious chiefs became the central political figures in tribal society.

142 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 27-29.

143 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 60-72 (BOA İ. MSMS, 2002/15) (BOA İ. MSMS, 69/2013/6).

144 Balsan, *Les surprises du Kurdistan*, 14; Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 225-226; and Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 60.

When the attention of the Anatolian Army, led by Osman Pasha, was diverted to suppressing the revolt, the tribes of Inner Dersim harassed the people of Çemişgezek. Ali Beg, son of Shah Hüseyin Beg, started looting in Erzincan and the surrounding districts in May 1847. His pillaging campaign reached Tercan and even Kiğı, resulting in the flight of the peasantry; *terk-i vatan* and *terk-i ziraat*. Their campaign ended when the governor of Erzurum, Izzet Pasha, sent two battalions to Erzincan. Meanwhile, Osman Pasha was to enter Dersim. He knew that the only way to apply the Tanzimat, go ahead with a census, extract taxes, and create legible revenues, was with a military operation. In autumn 1847, the sancak of Dersim was created.[145]

2.5 Tanzimat efforts in Dersim 1847-1879

The spirit of the Tanzimat entered Dersim as evidenced by a petition from fourteen people from Mazgirt reinforcements before an inevitable raid by the tribes. The authors attested that they had not known that they were subjects of the sultan before then: "*Şimdiye kadar* (…) *pâdişâh re'âyâsı olduğumuzu bilmez idik*."[146]

Istanbul was aware of the threat that the tribes presented to stability in the region. Their name was mentioned along with that of the Kurdish Mîr Bedirhan. The relentless Dujik Kurds were still not submissive and needed to be disciplined (*te'dîb ve gûşmâl*) and terrorized (*terhib*). The petition by local notables had an effect when the first kaymakam of Dersim, Mirliva Veli Pasha, was chosen to serve in Mazgirt. He immediately initiated a population census as soon as he entered Kuzucan (Pülümür). As he proceeded to Mazgirt and Ovacık, he obtained the allegiances of tribal chiefs. The population registries of Sağman and Mazgirt were prepared and sent to Istanbul, and the *cizye* tax started to be collected. According to Tanzimat measures a *sancak* council was organized in Dersim, the members of which received a pension from the state.

145 Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 17; Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 225-229 ; and Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 73-78 (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2011-3) (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2020.

Still uncertain of the trustworthiness of the tribes of Dersim, the commander of the Anatolian Army, Osman Pasha, sent two battalions to Kuzucan and one to Çemişgezek. In the Greater Dersim region only Kemah, Gürcanis and Kuruçay paid taxes in 1848; the rest of the mountainous land was judged "too recently conquered" (*feth-i cedid*) and hence excused for not fulfilling its fiscal responsibilities. The loyalty of the Inner Dersim (*Dujik*) tribes was only applicable in summer; when winter settled in and isolated the region, things returned to normal. Osman Pasha, the commander of the Anatolian Army, passed away at the beginning of 1848, and a power gap appeared in the region. Seizing this opportunity, the tribes began pillaging the villages of lower Dersim, and the Armenians of Mazgirt petitioned for military reinforcements, to assure their security. The governor of Harput, Mustafa Sabri Pasha, responded to their demands and sent another battalion to town, and the tribes retreated.[147]

In February 1848, local notables were anticipating a tribal raid, and implored the central government to send reinforcements. The governor of Harput wrote that unless the burrs were cleansed there would be no peace in Dersim (*Dersim Sancağı'nın pürüzü tathîr olunmadıkça*). His solution was *tenkil*.[148]

At the same time the government entered into negotiations with Shah Hüseyin's son, Ali Beg, and tried to persuade him to collaborate with state forces. In March 1848, a battalion was transferred from Erzurum to Kuzucan, and around 250 irregulars (*başıbozuk*) were placed in a mountain pass at Kılıklı as further reinforcements were needed at Mazgirt. The scribe of the Anatolian Army described the leader of the rebels as "the most powerful and esteemed of the Dujik and the spiritual guide and helper of all." Ali Beg, the son of Shah Hüseyin, attacked the soldiers stationed in Kuzucan with a force of at least a half thousand, but were met with a successful defense by state troops.

147 Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 229-230 (BOA İ.MSM, 69/2017-3)(BOA İ. MSM, 69/2015-2) (BOA C.DH, 291/14542) (BOA İ.MSM, 69/2020-2) (BOA İ.MSM, 69/2020-7).

148 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 95 (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2019) (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2020) (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2020) (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2020) (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2020).

The assailants, which only one-year earlier had pledged allegiance to the state, took to the mountains *en masse* to prepare for guerilla warfare, which involved the looting of a village near Kiğı. This commotion in Dersim also affected neighboring Koçgiri, and the order that was briefly established suddenly vanished.[149]

In March, a reinforcement battalion was sent to Pertek, but again the definitive solution was thought to be deportation: *Rumeli câhibinde mahâll-i münâsibeye tard ve iclâları*. Mehmed Reşid Pasha, the replacement for Osman Pasha, arrived in April and made the necessary preparations for an operation against the Dujik to take place in June. In 1835 forces had entered Dersim from the south and proceeded westward; in 1848, the army adopted a different strategy. This time they penetrated Dersim from the north and proceed eastward, which is why the troops were initially stationed in Erzincan. Ali Beg and his company had control the Kuti valley, and other rebels were stationed around Vank monastery. Mehmed Reşid Pasha acted accordingly, dividing his force into two. One, commanded by Ferik Ahmet Pasha, focused on the Kuti, and the other, commanded by Mirliva Veli Pasha, took on the monastery.[150]

The Kuti front proved more complicated than anticipated, and the main figure of the rebellion, Ali Beg, was nowhere to be found. The siege of Vank was also problematic, but state forces gained the upper hand. In the end, most of the aghas and local notables of Dersim pledged allegiance to the state, though some were directly sent to Istanbul. The pasha reported at the end of August 1848 that the operation had been a success. However, winter was coming and the fact that the pasha had sent some local notables to the Porte created a feeling of unease in the population. The people of Ovacık and Mazgirt took to the mountains. Focusing on what really interested the state, Reşid Pasha estimated that two hundred thousand kuruş in taxes could be extracted from the region if everything went according to plan.

149 Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 105-108 (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2019).

150 Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 230 (BOA İ.MSM, 70/2030-2). Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 122-124 (BOA İ. MSM, 69/2020).

They did not. In 1848, only 54.750 kuruş were collected in Dersim. The most profitable districts of the region in this respect were Mazgirt, Kuzucan and Kemah. Naturally the state was not only interested in fiscal issues; more important was manpower.[151]

The scribe of the Anatolian Army, Abdülaziz Agah Efendi, estimated that Dersim could man at least two battalions. But the main obstacle for the state was weaponry. As long as the people possessed their own arms, they would not accept the authority of the state. A countermeasure that the author suggested was the construction of permanent barracks in what was considered to be the center of Dujik, Ovacık. As long as state military presence assisted in winter, the region could be considered subservient. Following this *layiha* of Abdülaziz Agah, collecting weaponry and constructing barracks became the two main concerns of state policy towards Dersim. The government chose Hozat as the base for its operations.[152]

The central government objected that military personnel could not occupy public offices, so the Kaymakam of Dersim, Veli Pasha, was relieved of his duty. İbrahim Beg, a member of a notable family in Kemah, took on the position of Kaymakam in his place. In spring 1850, the commander of the Anatolian Army was repeatedly ordered, by the Porte to confiscate the weapons of the inhabitants of Dujik. Reşid Pasha decided to start from the Greater Dersim region and in April proceeded to organize tax and conscription affairs in Palu and Tercan. He then proceeded to Inner Dersim, where his principal objectives were to disarm the population, capture around a thousand men to incorporate into the army, and exile rebellious chieftains. The new operation, involving three forces stationed in Hozat, Mazgirt, and Kuzucan (Pülümür) would be commanded by *Reis-i Erkân* Ferik Ahmet Pasha. The total number of military personnel engaged in this second Tanzimat operation in Dersim was a little more than fifteen thousand. [153]

151 Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 232-233.

152 Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 232-233 (BOA MVL, 29/5).

153 Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 223-235 (BOA İ.DH, 223/13263-2).

The problem of the 1850 operation was evident. The tribes considered disarming to be collective suicide; they had to confront other hostile tribes on a regular basis and protect themselves against bears and wolves. Ottoman forces encountered violent resistance in Inner Dersim in June 1850. There was full mobilization among the people. Men fought head-to-head with the soldiers as women and children threw rocks from the hilltops. Another strategy was to divert streams to the mountain paths to make it impossible for the soldiers to use them. Towards the end of July, there was no sign of victory for the state. The frustrated Ferik Ahmet Pasha was unforgiving, killed all those who were captured, and set whole villages ablaze. *En revanche*, the Dersimi also kept no prisoners; furthermore, they relied on psychological warfare. Stories were circulated among state troops that the Dersimi would tear out their hearts and eat them. Winter was setting in, and the operation was a complete failure.[154]

There was another military operation in Dersim in 1851. This time, the commander of the Anatolian Army, Mehmed Reşid Pasha, was in charge with the additional support of Ferik Selim Pasha and his troops in Erzurum. No deals were to be made until the total surrender and submission of the tribes. But the operation was doomed to failure before it even began. A military convoy with 100 cavalrymen carrying weapons, ammunitions, clothing, and currency was attacked on the road from Harput to Hozat. Eight soldiers died, and the tribes captured all the goods. Mehmed Reşid Pasha went ahead with the operation, planning to attack from four bases: Hozat, Pülümür, Mazgirt, and Ovacık. He reached Hozat at the end of June 1851, relatively late from a strategic point of view. His army was comprised of seven thousand *mansure* soldiers, twenty cannons, and more than ten thousand *başıbozuk* soldiers, 2000 of whom were Albanians sent from Istanbul and at least 6000 of whom were formed of Christians volunteers from Dersim. The governors of Harput and Kurdistan were also present at the command-center in Hozat. [155]

154 Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 223-235 (BOA İ.DH, 223/13263-1) (BOA İ.DH, 223/13314-1).

155 Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 235 (BOA İ.DH, 238/14372-2).

Before the operations began, Reşid Pasha sent his *aide-de-camp* to the tribes telling them that if they abandoned their viciousness as the year before and submitted to the sultan, they would be treated with justice. The tribes sent him back in pieces, a gesture best understood in the context of the violent campaign of Ferik Ahmet Pasha the previous year. On July 3rd, the pasha initiated the campaign. Using an attack and retreat strategy, the Dersimi tribes began harassing the military units as soon as they left Hozat. The army forces were unsuccessful in their advance to the north. Local resistance was always one step ahead and would trap the forces in one of the mountain passes. The Mazgirt division, which faced a stout resistance, was not even able to leave the town. The forces in Ovacık joined the main forces pushing north, but the four-point strategy was a clear failure. The overall losses are unknown, but there were desertions among the *başıbozuk* and disease was a major factor in troops fatalities. The tribes repeatedly promised to surrender and turned in some of their arms, but this was a delay strategy to gain time until winter set in. Reşid Pasha completed his campaign at the end of October claiming that the rebel tribes had surrendered, that all their weapons had been confiscated, and that their conscription had begun. The reality was more complicated. Although some tribal leaders did comply with these demands, Inner Dersim still held on to its freedom.[156]

In 1855, during the Crimean war, a Kurdish revolt led by Yezdanşer in the region of Hakkari-Botan. The revolt had greater popular support compared to the Bedirhan rebellion, as the Christian population also offered its support. At the height of the rebellion, its forces were estimated at around a hundred thousand. The ultimately unsuccessful rebellion lasted two years, and there was revolt throughout Kurdistan in 1856, writes Avyarov. The movement started with the Reşkotan Kurdish tribes in Diyarbakır. The nomadic Yazidis later joined the movement, and the movement even reached Dersim. [157]

156 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 23 ; Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler, 1801-1900*, 47 ; and Gencer, "19. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında Dersim," 236-239.

157 Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler, 1801-1900*, 88 ; and Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 60.

At the time of the Crimean War, Ali Beg, son of Shah Hüseyin, became the *de facto* overlord of the tribes in Dersim. The Ottoman army wanted to move eastwards through the region towards Russia in the north. They entered Dersim en route, bombarded the mountains, and burned the forests. Ali Beg retreated into the Kuti valley and settled around Dujik Baba Mountain. Meanwhile, the army entered more accessible parts of Dersim and wreaked havoc, destroyed the Beg's mansion, and desecrated his family cemetery. The Ottomans placed Turkish police forces and governors in the lower regions of Dersim. As it advanced towards Russia, the army could not protect these initial Turkish settlements in the region from the Dersimi banditry and pillaging that increased thereafter. [158]

When the Paris Peace Treaty was signed in March 1856, the depleted Ottoman forces returning from Caucuses reentered Dersim and recaptured the areas of lower Dersim that they had previously subdued. This time, Ali Beg accepted Ottoman authority and returned to his family mansion, which now lay in ruins. He lost his authority in the eyes of the people.

Ali Beg, who was the father of Shah Hüseyin Beg II, witnessed the entry of the Ottoman Army into Kuzuçan after the peace treaty. They were destructive, burned down tens of villages, killed many men, and captured two to three thousand people from Kuzuçan and took them to Istanbul through Trabzon. Ali Beg did not resist the state in the end, which engendered rebellion within his confederacy. Indeed, the docility of the tribal chief was the cause for rebellion against him., and those who were outraged by their former chief retreated to the Kuti valley and Mount Dujik-Baba. They organized banditry and pillaging from these areas. In September 1856, the governors of Erzurum and Harput were informed that Bıliyanlı, Kureyşanlı, Sipanlı, and Romanlı tribes had united with the bandits of Dersim. They were intercepting foodstuffs sent from Erzincan to Erzurum.[159]

158 Antranik, *Dersim*, 156-158.

159 Antranik, *Dersim*, 16 - 158-160; Soylu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim ve Civarı*, 140-141 (BOA A. MKT-MVL, 81/74).

İsmail Hakkı Pasha (1818-1897), originally from Kars, was appointed governor of Kurdistan in Diyarbakır (r. 1868-1875). He was of such ill repute that even the Dersimis were afraid of him. However, İsmail Hakkı Pasha did not venture into the region and instead tried to establish good relations with the tribes by sending them gifts and promising sustained good relations. Together with Marshall Semih Pasha of Erzurum, they tried to lay the foundations for the possible conscription of the tribes. They offered distinctions and titles to the most influential chiefs, some amongst whom agreed to collaborate with the state and promised to provide soldiers, pay taxes, and participate in the construction of the Erzincan-Diyarbakır road. [160]

However, the people did not submit to the notables and during the '93 War (1877); Dersim provided neither soldiers nor taxes to the state. The pro-state begs of Dersim saw that they lost their authority over the people when they agreed to collaborate with the government, like Kaymakam Gülabi Bey, who perished in 1875 at the hands of his own people. The kaymakam of Kuzuçan, Hüseyin Beg, communicated Governor Semih Pasha in Erzurum that central Dersim was outside the scope of his authority. Some Dersim begs went to offer support to the Russian Embassy in Erzurum, as military barracks constructed in Hozat and Mazgirt were all destroyed. [161]

The state demanded extraordinary taxes for the war effort as well as conscription for the army. Shah Hüseyin Beg II declined the demand for taxation and conditioned the conscription of his men for the war effort on commanding the Dersimi forces himself. The sultan accepted these conditions, but some tribes parted ways with Shah Hüseyin Beg II and declined to money and men for the cause of the sultan. In the face of dissent among former allies, Shah Hüseyin Beg II nevertheless managed to assemble a force of ten thousand men and travelled to Erzurum. The Ottoman state, aware of the internal divisions seized the opportunity to invade Dersim.[162]

160 Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler, 1801-1900*, 90.

161 Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler, 1801-1900*, 91-92.

162 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 23; and Antranik, *Dersim*, 160-161.

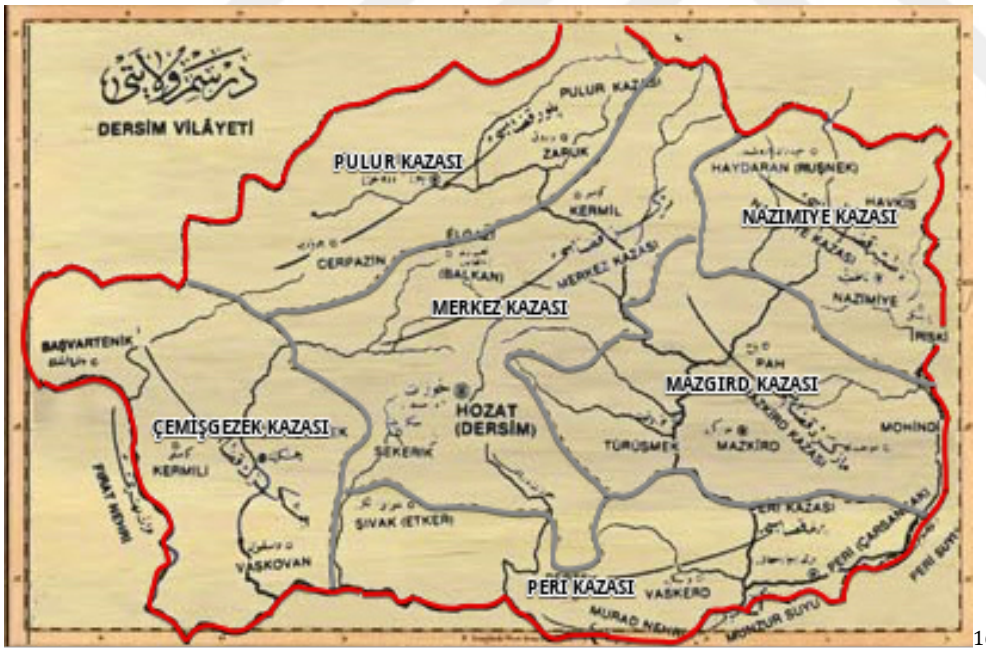
The Fourth army surrounded the mountains. The villages emptied out and the population settled in and around Kuti valley and Mount Dujik Baba. The ensuing guerilla warfare lasted weeks, and the army bombarded the hills and set the forests ablaze. Ottoman forces captured Hozat and reassembled their forces before a final push towards Mount Dujik Baba. The attack left the rebels in disarray, and they called for the help of other tribes. One of the rebel tribes trying to survive the Ottoman attack on Dujik was the Kureyşanlı tribe, the tribe of Seyid Rıza's ancestors. The Mirakyan and Hıran tribes came to their aid, and a decisive battle was fought on the Pağ plain. The Ottoman forces had to retreat in a temporary victory for the rebels at Dujik. But the Ottoman Army did not give up, the conflict ensued, and Dujik were conquered: *Dersim kaleleri alındı ve ıslahat kabul olundu*. Thinking that all of Dersim had been subdued (although the Kuti valley had not been) the sultan declared Dersim a province in 1879 with Hozat, a village of not more than five hundred households, as the administrative center. Four Ottoman army battalions would be present there at all times.[163]

The Tanzimat was thus a time of extensive conflict in Dersim due to the power struggle between autonomous tribes and a centralizing state. Tribes-state relations in Dersim at the time can be characterized as a constant renegotiation which was usually preceded by violence. One family from Kuzucan (Pülümür) came to the forefront of tribe-state relations in this period. Shah Hüseyin Beg I, Ali Beg, and Shah Hüseyin Beg II dominated parts of Dersim for three generations; however, these and other tribal chiefs lost their authority as soon as they became too lenient towards the Ottoman state. The tribal confederations of Dersim tended to break up when a leader became too compliant. Anarchy could not stand hierarchy.

163 Antranik, *Dersim*, 161-168; and Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 23.

2.6 Dersim under Hamidian rule 1879-1908

Between 1860 and 1877, the state had constructed one barracks each in Hozat and Mazgirt. This did not keep the tribes from periodically rebelling, and when the soldiers left these barracks during the '93 War, the tribes burned them down while raiding the towns. In 1880, Shaikh Ubeydullah of the Naqshbandi order, a predecessor of Shaikh Said, used his religious authority to unite the Kurdish tribes. Enjoying a broad support, he established control over the region between Lakes Van and Urmiye. Many see in him the first Kurdish nationalist figure. In the end, Turkey and Persia collaborated to crush his rebellion. The Dersimis did not follow Shaikh Ubeydullah because, just as with Shaikh Said, of religious differences. In the meantime, Dersim became a province and would remain so until 1888. Map 13 illustrates that the frontiers of the province largely correspond with the Molyneux-Seel pentagon. There were five districts, the central one, which included Hozat, with jurisdiction over Mount Dujik Baba.[164]



[165]

Map 13 Province of Dersim. Source: Pars Tuğlacı, Osmanlı Şehirleri

164 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 23-24; Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler, 1801-1900*, 96; McDowall, *The Kurds*, 29-30 ; Basil Nikitine, *Les Kurdes: étude sociologique et historique*, (Editions d'Aujourd'hui, 1978), 189; Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 60-61.

165 Pars Tuğlacı, *Osmanlı Şehirleri* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1985), 93-94.

The Karasu and Murat rivers formed most of the borders of this province, which did not include Pülümür or Kiğı. Already, the basis of the poor governance that was to come during the republican era is evident. The positioning of the provincial capital in Hozat rather than the much more developed Çemişgezek or Peri, is obviously a colonialist move. Hozat is close to the middle of the province, as is the current-day city of Tunceli.

Facing continuous rebellion, the province of Dersim was abolished in 1888, becoming one of the top five shortest-lived Ottoman provinces in the historical record. The parts of Lower Dersim where government authority was accepted were administratively bound to surrounding provinces. Tercan and Kuzuçan were bound to the *mutasarrıflık* of Erzincan, which was itself linked to Erzurum province, and Hozat became a *mutasarrıflık* bound to Harput province. Pağ, Mazgirt, Kızılkilise (Nazımiye), Peri, and Çemişgezek each had a kaymakam and were each bound to Hozat. Some eastern villages of Dersim were bound to the kaymakam of Kiğı, while the Kuti and Dujik regions remained autonomous.[166]

Hamidian policy was more pragmatic than the previous era of hardline, violent implementation of reforms. The new ruler sought to accommodate the tribes by integrating them into the system instead of annihilating them, giving them advantages and privileges. Abdulhamid II made use of what he had as caliph and sultan. He received tribal leaders at his palace and even "simple clan chieftains and notables ... benefited from the imperial magnanimity, receiving honors and titles to land." Abdulhamid II saw their incorporation into the state system as the last vital phase in the centralization of the Ottoman Empire. In general, Abdulhamid's policy towards the Kurds was a success, and not counting the local Dersim and Mosul revolts, "Sheikh Obeidullah's was the last major Kurdish insurrection" in the nineteenth century.[167] But the towering achievement of Abdulhamid in regard to gaining the loyalty of the Kurdish tribes were the Hamidian regiments.

166 Antranik, *Dersim*, 168.

167 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 24-26.

Established by imperial decree at the end of November 1890. Abdulhamid created these regiments as a counterweight to the Russian advance. The tribes were chosen from among those who had not been involved in the various revolts against the central state. The position of the tribal chiefs was central; they were pampered, well recompensed, and granted promotions and titles. The feudal system that was threatened in the past was instead reinforced along with the chief's hold over the peasant masses. With the power of the state and the caliph behind them, the tribal chiefs had acquired absolute power.[168] A new *Pax Ottomana* was established during the Hamidian era. A new indirect rule began with the establishment of a consensus between the central state and the Sunni Kurdish tribes at the expense of the autochthonous Armenian population. The Alevi tribes of Dersim stayed out of this arrangement and were not hostile towards the Armenians.[169]

Antranik published his book concerning Dersim in 1900 (*Dersim: Canabarhortutyun yev Değakrutyun*) that gives us a socioeconomic perspective on Dersim under Hamidian rule. For instance, the village of Altınhüseyin in Pülümür, which was home to three hundred mostly Armenian families, was relatively wealthy, and almost all the inhabitants were occupied with agriculture. The local priest had studied in Istanbul and pursued legal actions against the begs of Tercan and Kuzucan. The priest petitioned both the Armenian Patriarchy and the *Bab-ı Âli*, and he even went to Istanbul personally to defend his case. [170]

Nearly ten mountain guns and a few battalions commanded by Ferik İsmail Fazıl Pasha (1856-1921) and Müşir Derviş İbrahim Pasha (1817-1896) were sent to Dersim by Abdulhamid. They were ordered to take action just as they had done in the Balkans.

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168 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 25. Also see Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, (Stanford University Press, 2011).

169 Antranik, *Dersim*, 50-55.

170 Antranik, *Dersim*, 9-11. Also se Antranik Yeritsian, *Dersim: Carnets de voyage chez les Kizilbaches et les Mirakian en 1888 et 1895* (Société Bibliophile ANI, 2017).

In 1888 they arrived at Eğin on the Euphrates; however, the locals told them that Dersim could not be defeated as long as the forests stood: *Ormanlar var oldukça Dersim ... yenilmez*. The army decided to burn the forests that were allowing the rebels to hide on the mountains, and petroleum was brought in from Batoumi for this purpose. But rains protected the forests.[171]

Shah Hüseyin Beg II was invited to Erzincan and imprisoned on the spot. But he was freed after he paid off some high officers and declared allegiance to the sultan. Thereafter, he became the kaymakam of Pülümür (Kuzucan). While some tribal chieftains of Ovacık and Çarsancak joined the Hamidiye regiments, others followed in Shah Hüseyin Beg II's footsteps and became kaymakams of different localities. The young Antranik was hospitably received by the brother of Shah Hüseyin Beg II living on the outskirts of the village of Altınhüseyin.[172] The mansion of Shah Hüseyin Beg II himself was located in a forested valley near the small village of Ağayi-Şenlik [*Ağaşenlik*] in Pülümür. The thirty houses of the village were all Kurdish. Antranik met Shah Hüseyin Beg II just as he had returned from his imprisonment in Erzincan. His sons, Haydar, and Mustafa, would not go on to continue in their father's footsteps.[173]

The journey to the Havlor Surp Garabed monastery was perilous, but there were around thirty households of Armenians and Kurds living here. The village's name was Torud (Taşıtlı, Hozat). At the time of Antranik's visit, it was the only active monastery in Dersim and was revered by both local Alevis and Armenians. The chief priest, Der Boğos, had received his religious education in Harput, and he recalled a dubious military expedition to the monastery, which ended in humiliation for the Turks who encountered a massive resistance upon their arrival to the holy site. The reason for this expedition was the rumored wealth of the monastery which attracted the attention of the *mutasarrıf* of Hozat.[174]

171 Antranik, *Dersim*, 168-170.

172 Antranik, *Dersim*, 11 - 170.

173 Antranik, *Dersim*, 16-20.

174 Antranik, *Dersim*, 70-76.

The Hamidiye regiments, which outlasted the 1908 Revolution and came to be called tribal regiments of light cavalry (*Hafif Süvari Aşiret Alayları*), were organized and commanded by Zeki Pasha. They were useful for Abdulhamid's violent repression of the Armenians in the mid 1890s, but Dersim remained an exception - as a zone of refuge.[175] The Kuzucan (Pülümür) and Dersim Alevi tribes did not join in the Hamidiye regiments and generally remained hostile to them. The death of Shah Hüseyin Bey II marked the beginning of internal struggles. Taking advantage of the situation, Turkish forces organized an operation in 1893, but Dersim's begs negotiated with the governor of Harput to delay the operation. Ali Şefik Pasha was sent to Dersim but was not successful. Between 1893 and 1905 Dersim was overflowing again, and all the neighboring towns and cities complained of the raids. In 1896 the marshal of the Fourth Army Mehmed Zeki Pasha (1846-1929), opted to convert some of the tribes to the regiments. He invited them first to Erzincan and then to Hozat, where they finally declared loyalty and attested their will to join the regiments. This news was wildly propagated at the time.[176]

However, this loyalty to the state was again short lived. In 1907, the chief of the Kureyşan tribe, Ali Çavuş, and four thousand of his men descended towards Elazığ at the same time the Koçuşağı, Resik, and Şemkân tribes raided Hozat, Kemah, Kemali, and Çemişgezek. The Commander of Harput, Neşet Pasha, was called upon to reestablish order, and he ordered Miralay Halis Bey and seven battalions to face off with the Şemkân tribe. The tribal forces retreated to the Teğer and Ali straits and organized their defense. State forces suffered large losses at Değirmen Dere as the rebels had the high ground. Those captured were sent back to Hozat relieved of their armaments and carrying the corpse of Miralay Halis. The operation, which lasted four to five days, ended with the dispersal of the tribal forces. Neşet Pasha could not safely remain in Hozat and retreated to Elazığ to spend the winter.[177]

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175 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 26.

176 Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran savaşları'nda Kürtler, 1801-1900*, 129 - 141-142.

177 Suat Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza* (Ankara: Berikan, 2001), 11-12.

The 1907 operation was not successful, which sparked more arrogance on the part of the tribes. The son of Halil Agha from the Koçuşağı tribe was caught, and government forces confiscated grain and animals. They also prevented wheat from entering into Dersim, which further infuriated the tribes. On the other hand, Armenians were smuggling in arms and ammunition. Towards the middle of 1908, encouraged by the apparent disunity and lack of preparedness of government forces, tribal chiefs and local notables gathered and jointly decided on an uprising.[178]

In the beginning of April 1908, the chief of the Koçan tribe, İdare İbrahim Agha, formed and headed a new confederacy of the Karabal and other western Dersimi tribes. Their uprising began with intercepting military cargo being sent to Hozat and with disarming smaller gendarmerie units. These successes encouraged other tribes to join in. The Hozat-Ovacık and Hozat-Elazığ telegraph lines were cut and Pertek was occupied as tribal forces prepared for an offensive against Elazığ. Istanbul ordered forces to concentrate in Erzincan and the army clashed with the Pülümür and Ovacık tribes in the Munzur Mountains. Neşet Pasha advanced from the south as Atıf Pasha descended from Erzincan with the support of reinforcements. It was all-out the army and all of the tribes of western Dersim. As families retreated to the mountains, men pledged to fight until death. Naturally some found on Mount refuge in Mount Dujik. The commander of the tribal forces was Keko Agha, son of Alişir of the Ferhadan tribe. The main battlefield was along the Hozat-Pertek line. The fighting went on for four days and the army could not manage to recapture Hozat. Troops coming from the south were beginning to retreat to Elazığ as northern battalions were beginning to surrender, when Keko Agha was assassinated. His death led to the retreat of the tribal forces, as well, and state forces finally entered Hozat. Neşet Pasha regathered his troops there and, benefiting from the guidance of the chiefs of the Karaballı and Bahtiyar tribes, began a push towards Inner Dersim on June 15, 1908.

178 Suat Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza* (Ankara: Berikan, 2001), 13-14; and Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 76.

In 31 days, his troops reached Mount Dujik, which was the first time that state forces had approached this close to the formidable refuge. Neşet Pasha proceeded to install a command center in Seyid Rıza's village of Ağdat near the mountain. However, the army had logistical difficulties since the village had been emptied of all foodstuffs, and the troops were soon facing hunger. The seeds of revolution were being planted in Istanbul, and the ten-thousand-strong tribes of Ovacık forced the state's troops to surrender after destroying the dams the army had built near its headquarters and controlling the Hozat-Ovacık road.[179]

2.7 Second Constitutional Era in Dersim 1908-1913

23 July 1908 was the dawn of the Young Turk Revolution. The most important evolution in terms of the Kurdish national movement was the formation of the Association for the Elevation and Progress of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Teali ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) in the fall of 1908. The founding members included Emin Ali Bedirhan and Shaikh Ubeydullah's son, who was president of the Ottoman Senate, Shaikh Abdülkadir of Şemdinan. However, there was disunity within the Kurdish national movement, and rather than being coordinated from Istanbul, a dispersed Kurdish intelligentsia began setting up nationalist clubs in Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Muş, and Mosul. These militaristic nationalist organizations were inspired by the Young Turks, who had, in turn, modeled themselves on the Italian *Carbonari*. Some of these clubs made contact with tribes in their provinces.[180]

Meanwhile, in Dersim, Neşet Pasha was forced to discuss the terms of an armistice. He spoke with tribal chiefs and accepted their demands. Nuri, the son of Halik Agha of the Kalan tribe, convinced the chiefs of the Şamkân and Raşikân tribes, İdare İbrahimi of the Koçan tribe, and the future first term deputy, Diyap Agha of the Ferhat tribe, to come to Neşet Pasha's headquarters.

179 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 11-14; Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 77-79.

180 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 26-27; Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 19; McDowall, *The Kurds*, 30-31.

Through these chiefs, the commander tried to convince Seyid Rıza and the Ovacık tribes to agree to a full cease-fire. However, they did not comply, and Diyap Agha did not reply to Neşet Pasha, who then retreated to Elazığ and died of typhus four days later. The rest of the collaborationist tribal chiefs were imprisoned in Diyarbakır. This was a victory for the tribes who decided to pursue diplomatic relations with Istanbul following the revolution. Diyap Agha went to Trabzon and sent a protest telegram to the capital. He was then summoned, to which he complied, and went to the City where he spoke both with the Ministries of the Interior and Exterior. His purpose was to see that the culprits of military atrocities be punished, but instead he was arrested and sent to Diyarbakır prison. The new regime sent Ferik Ali Pasha and Mustafa Bey of the Supreme Court to the East. Ali Pasha arrived in Hozat and made a public apology for the military excesses of the past and assured that the new regime would respect their wishes. Diyap and Cemşit Aghas were released from prison. In the end, the tribes had acquired twenty thousand Mauser rifles, twelve cannons, three hundred mules, five hundred horses, and a mass of ammunitions.[181]

Following the March 31 incident, the Young Turk regime progressively distanced themselves from non-Turkish intellectuals. Kurdish nationalist clubs were forced to close. Dersim had been fighting against state forces since 1907 and continued to bleed until the end of 1909 when Ferik Ali Pasha returned to Istanbul. He prepared a general report on Dersim in which he advised a new operation to annihilate certain tribes in order to apply reforms. Following this intelligence report, the new constitutional government began planning with the Fourth Army and the Elazığ governorate. The Dersim operation was openly discussed in parliament and the people were fully aware of the government's intentions. The regime became less and less tolerant, and in mid-March 1910, Müşir İbrahim Pasha was nominated as commander of the Fourth Army and charged with realizing the Dersim operation.[182]

181 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 79-81.

182 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 81.

Once again tribal intelligence anticipated the attack and the western Dersimis passed over the Munzur Mountains to reach and pillage Turkish villages around Kemah and Erzincan. Meanwhile, İbrahim Pasha had the full support of the general staff of the Ottoman Army and gathered a force of nine battalions, two battery cannons, and a cavalry regiment. By the end of June 1910, additional troops were being transferred from Diyarbakır to Harput. On July 20, 1910, İbrahim Pasha and his troops passed over the Munzur Mountains, as the headquarters in Hozat reassured the remaining Dersimi tribes that the operation was directed towards the Ovacık tribes alone. On July 22, İbrahim Pasha set up camp in Hopik (Ovacık) and tried to disarm the tribes peacefully but failed.[183]

Once again, the Ovacık tribes had emptied their villages and retreated to the mountains and forests, encircling the troops on the plain and intercepting their provisions through the Mercan passage. Simultaneously the Maksudan, Şemîkân, and Resikan tribes established control over the Ovacık-Hozat road and prevented reinforcements from Diyarbakır and Harput from joining those under İbrahim Pasha's command. Fifteen days went by, and İbrahim Pasha desperately urged the father of Seyid Rıza, Seyid İbrahim and Seyid Kasım to help him. The pasha organized a feast to which the two sayyids managed to invite some neutral tribes; he made many them promises in great, amicable speeches. The tribes agreed to give a few hundred of their decrepit guns to the pasha, and the troops retreated to Erzincan mid-August.[184]

In 1912, a notable from Kemah became the governor of Hozat, Seyid Rıza did not recognize his authority, started a rebellion in western Dersim, and managed to gain the support of some eastern Dersimi tribes. In the end, Seyid Rıza's wish was granted, and the governor was withdrawn. In his stead a Kurdish nobleman, Bedirhan Paşazade Mithat Bey, was sent as governor. At the time, the government was trying to win back Kurdish support.[185]

183 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 81-82.

184 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 82.

185 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 82-83 ; and Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 28-29.

2.8 Dersim during the dusk of Empire 1913-1922

The focus of the empire shifted westward as the Balkans were on fire, and Dersim continued to reject state authority. As the Balkan War ended, the ruling dictatorial triumvirate, formed of Cemal, Enver, and Talat Pashas, decided to engage in war alongside the central powers. The Russian Army and irregular Armenian battalions were advanced in the east following Enver Pasha's defeat in Sarıkamış on January 15, 1915. As Talat Pasha took the infamous 24 April decisions, a wartime state was organized to its fullest extent to rid Anatolian geography of its Armenian population.

The Dersimis did not participate in the war effort; in fact, they gave refuge to Armenians fleeing genocide and took up arms only when their territories were invaded. Talat and Enver Pashas were told by Mehmet, son of Kango Agha of Western Dersim that because they were Alevi, the Dersimis revered Çelebi Cemalettin Efendi, the descendant of Hacı Bektaş Veli. If the government wanted their support, only he could lead the Dersimis into jihad. Cemalettin Efendi went to Sivas to visit the Koçgiri tribe, and Nuri Dersimi was named as adviser to convince the Alevi tribes to go to war. Seyid Rıza heard of his activities and invited the Çelebi to Dersim, who in turn invited the tribes to come to Erzincan in vain. Finally, a face-to-face meeting took place Baku Agha of the Kalan tribe and the confidant of the Çelebi in the village of Kesmekur. Baku Agha claiming to speak on behalf of all of western Dersim, wanted reassurance of their future autonomy if they were to engage in the war effort. In the end, even the descendant of Hacı Bektaş could not persuade the Dersimis to fight alongside the Ottoman army. As the empire was losing on the eastern battlefields, the Demenan, Haydaran, Kureyşan, Karsan, Alan, Şeyhan, Şuran, Yusufan, and Pilovank tribes of western Dersim were a united front of ten thousand men. This confederation of western Dersimi tribes, headed by Seyid Rıza, raided and occupied Çarsancak, Hozat, Mazgirt, Nazımiye, and Pertek and prepared to enter Elaziz in spring 1916.[186]

186 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 25-26 ; and Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 86-92.

The state nominated Ahmet İzzet Pasha (1864-1937) as commander of the Second army and named the Kurdish notable Cemilpaşazade Ziya as the *mutasarrıf* of Hozat. The latter managed to arrange a meeting with Seyid Rıza. The army no longer sought their help but rather urged an end to the tribal offensive. But the sayyid seemed unable to control the entirety of the tribes, so the commander of the thirteenth division Miralay Galatalı Şevket (1881-1956), was sent to the region to settle things. When he arrived in Elaziz, tribal forces were camped in the mountains north of Pertek. The two forces clashed near Pertek and Çarsancak, where the local notables supported the army, which behaved brutally, setting whole villages ablaze. Meanwhile Russian forces and surviving Armenians supported the tribal forces. An all-out rebellion in Dersim took place in 1916 when Miralay Şevket decided to retreat.[187]

Ahmet İzzet Pasha invited tribal leaders to negotiate, and although, they refused at first, the two parties met again at a feast at which İzzet Pasha convinced tribal forces to help the army oppose the Russians. Many promises were made as well as a concrete gift of Mauzer rifles. At the same time the commander of the Armenian forces in Erzincan, Gövdinli Murat Pasha, and the Russian general were trying to convince the Dersimis to collaborate with them instead of the Ottomans. According to Nuri Dersimi, Ovacık tribes then chased away the Turkish officers in Pülür and declared a regional "Kurdish" government affiliated with Erzincan. Hence, Dersim cast off Turkish authority and entered into a state of autonomy. When the Russians attempted to annex Pülümür, they met with resistance, and following the October Revolution, they proceeded to fully retreat from the region.[188] The main benefit of war for the tribesmen was the boon of firearms and ammunition "which they obtained by disarming small parties of … stragglers [in retreat], or by appropriating … war material abandoned by Russian soldiers weary of fighting and in a hurry to go back to Russia after the 1917 revolution."[189]

187 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 15.

188 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 15; Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 29; and Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 92-100.

189 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 26-28.

Nuri Dersimi reports that as the Russian forces left Erzincan in the January of 1918, the Armenian Murat Pasha tried to negotiate a deal with Alişir of the Koçgiri tribe, about a potential Armeno-Kurdish federation in Greater Armenia. However, finding Alişir unamenable, he also tried to partner with the chiefs of the Abbasan and the Lolan in Erzincan, also to no avail. The Turkish government took advantage of the situation and contacted the disillusioned Ovacık tribes. Dersimi tribal forces were sent to Erzincan in an agreement with the Turkish army to protect the Muslim population against Armenian attacks. Some tribal members pledged allegiance to the government in return for large pensions, though Seyid Rıza and the tribes closest to him remained neutral. In the end, Seyid Rıza was convinced to help save the people of Erzincan from being massacred by the Armenians, and he marched towards Erzincan accompanied by his relatively small tribal force, as many tribes chose not to follow him into battle. They passed over the Munzur Mountains and reached the city center on 13 February 1918, going on to reach Erzurum before Kazım Karabekir Pasha.[190]

Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points gave hope to the Kurdish intelligentsia. Many Kurdish organizations were set up after the Mudros armistice, such as the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (KTC), which was supported by the British. It was "founded by Mullah Sait [Nursi] and Khalil Hayali of Motki, and Hamza Bey of Mukus." This association was also comprised of Kurdish notables; Ottoman senator and son of Shaikh Ubeydullah Abdülkadir, was its president while Emin Ali Bedirhan was vice-president. Colonel Halil Bey of Dersim, who was the chief of police in Istanbul, was among the prominent members of this association. The association was close to the Istanbul government, and Emin Ali Bedirhan was even considered as a potential vali of Diyarbakır. Abdülkadir "defended the idea of autonomy [and] struggle alongside the Turks."[191]

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190 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 102-103; Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 30; and McDowall, *The Kurds*, 31.

191 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 31; and Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 26-27.

While the "younger and more fervent members of the organization went back to Kurdistan to set up local branches and establish links with the population."[192] A few months later, some managed to mobilize tribes between Sivas and Malatya. By the middle of 1919, a vast zone centered on Koçgiri was organized as an independent zone. Nuri Dersimi labels this episode – the "Koçkiri Kurdish War of Independence." As a member of the KTC himself, Dersimi met with associates in Istanbul following the end of the war and agreed on the necessity of a declaration of independence. [193] But this movement remained isolated, and in late March 1921, Turkish forces crushed it, condemning 110 people to death. However, Mustafa Kemal pardoned them in a gesture "to comply with a request from the Dersim tribes and so as not to antagonize the Kurdish chiefs at a time when his power was still very shaky."[194]

In the meantime, the *Hoybun* committee was formed in Paris, presided over by an Ottoman diplomat with Kurdish ancestry, Şerif Pasha. He had been a loyalist of Abdulhamid and an anti-unionist; having opposed Turkey's entrance into the Great War alongside the Germans. He went to Paris at the end of war and gathered sympathy at the peace conference, where he successfully became the president of the Kurdish delegation. At the beginning of February 1919, he issued a memorandum to Clemenceau, in which he asked for an autonomous Kurdistan to include Diyarbakır, Harput, Bitlis, and Mosul provinces as well as the sancak of Urfa. Meanwhile, the King Crane Commission had suggested the creation of a Greater Armenia, a smaller Turkish state centered in Anatolia, and a small Kurdistan covering only a fourth of Kurdish territories. These three ethno-national states were to be placed under American mandate. Şerif Pasha agreed on these conditions with the Armenian Boghos Pasha on December 20, 1919.[195]

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192 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 32

193 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 104-105.

194 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 17; and Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 32.

195 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 31 ; Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 23-24 ; and Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 33.

Delegates of Armenia, Turkey, and other countries, with the United States and a Kurdish delegation participating as observers, convened at Sèvres to discuss the terms of peace. Their decisions were signed in a treaty 10 August 1920. The third section of the Sèvres Treaty, Articles 62 and 63, concerned Kurdistan, while the fourth section dealt with Armenia. According to the treaty, the Armenian state would include majority Kurdish regions such as Bingöl, Bitlis, Erzincan, Erzurum, Iğdır, Karakilise (Ağrı), and Muş. What remained for the establishment of a Kurdish state was; Dersim, Hakkari, Harput, Mosul, and Siirt, with Diyarbakır as the capital. But In 1920 the KTC disbanded and divided into two: the Kurdish Social League presided by Emin Ali Bedirhan and the League of Kurds and Kurdistan presided by Abdülkadir.[196]

When the victorious powers began their occupation of Asia Minor, Kurdish notables worried about rumors that their lands would be incorporated into an independent Armenia. Furthermore, stories of Armenian cruelty vis-à-vis the local Kurdish populace were being spread from the frontier region of Kars. Amplifying Kurdish-Armenian tensions was also in the interest of Kurdish notables who seized Armenian property following the genocide.[197]

Nationalists were aware of the importance of Kurdistan. In fact, Kendal relates that when Mustafa Kemal "arrived in Kurdish territory, he immediately presented himself as the savior of Kurdistan."[198] The public relations campaign of Mustafa Kemal in this critical time of national struggle was pragmatic rather than idealistic. He was presented as the victorious general of the prisoner-Caliph who would deliver the Muslim lands from the Christian infidels. The national struggle at this time still referred to the Muslim nation or *millet*. This strategic use of the word served Mustafa Kemal's emphasis on solidarity between Turks and Kurds, as *Muslims*, which was in turn reinforced by the adoption of a common Christian enemy.

196 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 104-105; Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 33-35; and Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 29-32.

197 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 46.

198 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 47

The public relations campaign had concrete political results as a congress was organized concerning the eastern Provinces. This congress met at Erzurum between July 23 and August 6, 1919. Five out of the six provinces, with the exception of Kars, sent a total of 54 delegates. Dersim was not represented, probably due to the Sunni Muslim character. The congress was a remarkable achievement that enabled Kazım Karabekir to take the Kurdish forces under his command to fight against Dashnak Armenia and Menshevik Georgia. This resulted in the first military victory of the War of Independence, sealed with the Treaty of Gümrü (*Leninakan*).

Meanwhile, on his way from Erzurum to the congress of Sivas, Mustafa Kemal gathered intelligence on the activities of the Dersimi and Koçgiri tribes. He met with Alişan Bey, who was the only tribal leader who accepted his invitation to have a discussion. The two agreed that Wilson's map was obsolete. Mustafa Kemal urged the tribes to cooperate and accused the president of the KTC, Abdülkadir, of being a tool for the government and a British puppet. He also told Alişan Bey that they were aware of the English spy Noel who had come to Malatya and seeking collaboration with local Kurdish notables. Moreover, they were aware that the tribes were planning an attack on the congress. Sivas was essential for the continuation of the Turkish national struggle. After the congress ended in September 1919, the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Thrace was created, which broke off all ties with Istanbul. Ali Rıza Pasha formed a new government and sent the Naval Minister, Salih Pasha, to talk with the nationalists. The committee and the government in Istanbul signed the Amasya Protocol, the first article of which gave the impression of a future Kurdish autonomy. As Nuri Dersimi organized a collaboration between the Ovacık tribes led by Seyid Rıza and the Koçgiri tribes led by Alişir, seventy-two Kurdish deputies in Ankara declared in a telegram to the Western powers that they would not separate their destiny from the Turkish nation.[199]

199 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 19; Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 47-48; and Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 106-107.

Nuri Dersimi writes that he played a major role in the organization of the tribes that participated in the Koçgiri rebellion. Two brothers, Alişan and Haydar, headed the Alevi Koçgiri tribe, which was comprised of five settled clans living in Sivas and its surroundings. Excited about the prospect of an independent nation-state of their own, the tribes engaged in a series of attacks, the first of which was on the barracks of Çulfa Ali in Zara. In an attempt to pacify the tribes, two leaders of the Koçgiri were appointed to governmental positions in Refahiye and Ümraniye. Meanwhile, Alişir proceeded to loot Kemah. Haydar's forces, which were supposed to stop Alişir's banditry, turned a blind eye. Haydar Bey entered the KTC when the defeat of the empire became apparent, organized a chapter of the association in his town of İmranlı, and invited other tribal chiefs to become members. The association also printing the newspaper *Jepin* with articles about Kurdish independence.[200]

In early spring 1920, Alişan went to Ovacık to obtain the support of the tribes, then proceeded to Hozat where he convinced more notables from the region to join the movement. He was reportedly in constant communication with Seyid Abdülkadir, the president of the association in Istanbul, through the mediation of a certain Mıgırdıç. A tribal gathering took place at this time in the Hüseyin Abdal dervish lodge in Yellice, Kangal. Those present pledged to realize the independence of Kurdistan within the limits set by the Sèvres Treaty. However, Seyid Rıza did not participate. A tribal force of forty-five thousand was prepared to move in Western Dersim and Kurdish forces controlled the areas east and north of Sivas. During the summer, military barracks started to fall, and tribes took control of the Sivas-Erzincan road. As winter set, the tribes decided to wait.[201]

In the meantime, a memorandum was prepared in Hozat destined for the Ankara government, with five demands:

- The government of Mustafa Kemal had to declare whether they accepted the sultan's agreement with Kurdistan.

200 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 108-109.

201 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 20-22.

- The government had to make its position clear concerning the future autonomous administration of Kurdistan.
- All Kurdish prisoners in the penitentiaries of Elazığ, Malatya, Sivas, and Erzincan had to be set free.
- Turkish officers had to be recalled from regions with a Kurdish majority.
- The detachment of troops sent to the Koçgiri region had to be withdrawn immediately.

The chief of the Abasan tribe, Meço Agha, gave the memorandum to the mutasarrıf of Dersim, Rıza Bey, who communicated it to Ankara. The government ordered a delegation from Elazığ to go to Dersim and accept the demands in order to gain time, but the tribes of Western Dersim (namely the Şeydanlıs and Şeyh Hasanlıs) responded that if the Sèvres Treaty was not applied, they would take up arms. Ankara replied to this threat by inviting Meço Agha and Diyap Agha to represent Dersim in the Grand National Assembly. According to Nuri Dersimi, following their admission into the assembly, Seyid Rıza occupied Hozat and sent a telegram to Ankara, saying that the deputies in Ankara did not represent Dersim. The will of the region was an independent administration, and the only way they would cooperate with Ankara was as part of a Confederation. In the time being, government forces arrested Nuri Dersimi, who assured communication between the Koçgiri and Dersim, and then released him on account of Seyid Rıza's diplomacy. A disagreement about timing divided the two parties of the rebellion. While the Dersimi tribes wanted to wait for the traditional banditry season, the Koçgiri tribes wanted to take up arms right away. The rebellion was sparked in İmranlı in early March when deserters were captured by government forces and then rescued by rebels. The local official, Haydar Bey, who was chief of the Koçgiri tribe, did not interfere, so the Sixth Cavalry was sent to İmranlı to take control, but the rebels killed the regiment commander.[202]

202 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 22-24; and Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 110-113.

In early March 1921, a tribal force of twenty-five hundred left Ovacık and passed over the Munzur Mountains towards Kemah. After a violent struggle, they burned the mansions of the local notables and captured the local kaymakam and gendarmerie commander. Haydar Bey requested that each tribe in Dersim send fifty of their men to support the rebellion in Koçgiri. The tribal army of Dersim that answered the call was led by Bira İbrahim, chief of the Pezgâvır tribe, Polis Munzur, chief of the Maksudan tribe, Mustafa, the former director of the Çerpazin district, Mahmut Agha, the chief of the Arslanan tribe, and Alişir. Other tribes, such as the Drejan, Atma, and Perçikan, joined in. The provincial government tried to dissuade the tribes, but the latter were convinced that the army was conducting demographic surveys based on religion, suggesting that they had the intention of exterminating them. This meant for them, that the Koçgiri rebellion was an action of self-defense. On March 10, the government declared martial law in the province of *Mamûretü'l-Aziz*, Erzincan sancak, as well as in Divriği and Zara districts of Sivas Province. Three days later, the assembly chose the Commander of the Central Army, Nurettin Pasha, to suppress the Koçgiri rebellion.[203]

According to Nuri Dersimi, Nurettin İbrahim [Konyar] (1873-1932) despised Kurds and frequently said that after exterminating those that say -zo- , he would eradicate those that said -lo- (*Türkiye'de -zo- diyenleri imha ettik -lo- diyenleri de ben kökünden temizleyeceğim)*. On the side of the rebels Alişan Bey was confident enough about the future of Kurdistan that on April 8 he personally sent a telegram to Ankara concerning administrative matters. As the rebels continued their expansion, occupying more and more villages, the suppression of the rebellion (*tenkil*) began in earnest on April 11, 1921. During the military operation, the Dersimi tribes that continued to control Kemah and Erzincan, continuously supplied the rebels with additional forces. As the rebellion was nearing its end many rebels and their families flooded Ovacık and Inner Dersim.[204]

203 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 25-27.

204 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 118-130.

Government intelligence from the south suggested that the Dersimis were planning an attack on Elaziz. Nurettin Pasha wrote to the General Staff that the reign of calm in Kemah and Erzincan was directly dependent upon the fate of Ovacık and Dersim. He proposed that a decisive, results-oriented *tedibat-ı şedide* - vehement punishment - was necessary. If the *tedip* operation did not take place, administrative and political precautions would have to be taken. A Dersimi tribal force of five hundred was on its way to help the Koçgiri, as they had been defeated in the beginning of July 1921. On the seventeenth of the same month, Alişan Bey and his entourage surrendered. The rebellion was officially over, though not in Dersim. A tribunal was established in Sivas, where most of the accused deflected their guilt to Nuri Dersimi and Alişir. The two figures were registered as the main propagators of the rebellion. Telegrams from Dersim that rained on the capital imploring pardons, were accompanied by raids on Erzincan, Kemah, and Eğin. The assembly obtained a pardon, but Nuri Dersimi and Alişir did not benefit from it. They had not been captured, and together with Seyid Rıza, they continued to organize a resistance in Inner Dersim. On September fifth, 1921, a tribal gathering took place in Lerenk (Ovacık) where Alişir took center stage and preached for an independent Kurdistan formed of four provinces. At the time, Ankara was searching for peace through diplomacy. The government sent delegations and, according to Nuri Dersimi, a personal letter from Mustafa Kemal to Seyid Rıza urging for calm and restraint.[205]

Koçgiri was not an isolated case; there were numerous uprisings in Kurdistan in spring 1921. These local movements mostly started in reaction to the demands of the Kemalist war effort. At the same time, the British were supporting the activities of Major Noel and authorized Halil Bedirhan and other members of the Istanbul branch of the KTC to enter Bagdad. In an interview with the High Commissioner Percy Cox, Halil Bedirhan mentioned that preparations for the current revolt had been underway for over two years.

205 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 27-30. (ATASE: KI, 1122 D. 12F. 58.); and Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 132-136.

But in the end, Churchill told Cox to stop any encouragement of the Kurds. After the signing of the second agreement with France in October 1921, the Kemalist regime was sufficiently assured diplomatically to start acting internally. Cevat [Çobanlı] Pasha (1870-1938), who would become deputy of Elaziz in 1922, suppressed the Kurdish revolt between November 21, 1921 and February 22, 1922. Dersim - the last zone of statelessness - became a province in 1922.[206]

The Dersim deputy candidate for the second session of the assembly (1923-1927) was Feridun Fikri [Düşünsel] (1892-1958), a French-educated Doctor of Law from Istanbul. Seyid Rıza did not support his appointment. In response, Hasan Hayri [Kanko] (1881-1925) of the Şeyh Hasanlı tribe, one of the Dersim deputies from the first session, came to Dersim and met with Seyid Rıza. The sayyid vocalized their protest to the choice of deputy and wished for Hasan Hayri to represent them in the assembly. Nuri Dersimi even claimed that Seyid Rıza encircled the township of Hozat with more than a thousand men, only to be dissuaded from acting by the local gendarmerie commander.[207]

During his forty-day journey through Turkey, Hasan Arfa stayed with peasants and learned their concerns. They were interested in the religious prestige of the caliph. The peasants believed that this Sunni institution would be maintained by the republic and were satisfied as long as the religious aspects were being preserved. This was especially true for Kurds under the influence of the Nakşibendi order that was developed in the region under Hamidian rule. Meanwhile, Bitlis deputy Koçzade Yusuf Ziya (1882-1925) and Colonel Cibranlı Halit Bey (1882-1925) established the *Kürt İstiklal Komitesi* near the end of 1922. It was centered in Erzurum and soon established links with Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elaziz, Siirt, and Urfa. Even high-ranking military officers such as General İhsan Nuri Pasha (1893-1976) participated in its activities. The ranks were filled with notables, including religious leaders such as the Nakşibendi Shaikh Said of Piran, who joined as early as 1923.[208]

206 Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 40-43.

207 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* p. 31; and Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 137-138.

208 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 33; and Kendal, *A People Without A Country*, 51.

2.9 The Shaikh Said Rebellion

The roots of this rebellion reach back to the Kurdish Independence Committee founded in 1922. This committee expeditiously organized in most of the eastern provinces and established contact with Dersimi tribes as well. Many joined the cause from Darahini (Genç), Çapakçur (Bingöl), and Palu, along the Murat Valley. As the committee gathered support, a Turco-Kurdish congress opened its doors in Diyarbakır in the beginning of August 1924. It was intended to promote the brotherhood and inseparability of the two nations, though the proceedings were kept secret and there was no media attention. Later the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Nazi Germany, Nevile Henderson (1882-1942), wrote to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937) that: *the Kurdish delegates … demanded … a special administration …, amounting practically to autonomy, … a general amnesty, no taxation or conscription … for a period of five years, the restitution of the Sheri courts and of all arms confiscated in the country, as well as the removal of certain obnoxious Turkish military officers and officials*.[209] It was on these terms that the representative notables gave their word to the government to help them acquire Mosul as well as to keep religious zealots from rebelling in the name of the caliph.

It was apparent in 1924 that the Republic would adopt secularism as its official ideology. Many religious people were shocked, voiced their protest, and proclaimed their wish to see both Sharia and the caliphate be reinstated. Meanwhile, the Kurdish Independence Committee was planning an uprising. Yusuf Ziya was in contact with various opposition leaders, but he was caught in October 1924.[210] Cibranlı Miralay Halit Bey (1882-1925), a former leader of the Hamidiye regiments with deep connections to the movement, became the military strategist for the planned rebellion, but his arrest in late 1924 complicated matters. The Committee forces gathered at Karineş village in Karlıova (Bingöl) intending to rescue their imprisoned comrades in Bitlis.

209 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 31; Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeler... "Kürt Sorunu,"* 13 (F.O. 424/261), 44-48, (No.: 63 – 16 September 1924).

210 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 141.

Meanwhile, Shaikh Said, a descendant of the influential Shaikh Ali Septi who was also married to the sister of Colonel Halit, was determined to stick to the plan and to time the rebellion with the beginning of spring, which was traditionally celebrated on the March 21. When he received the news of Halit's capture, he was living in Hınıs (Solhan), but he took to the road in the middle of winter and travelled to Çapakçur and Darahini, eventually reaching Piran some thirty kilometers from Diyarbakır. The Shaikh was well connected throughout the region, his influence was particularly strong between the Euphrates and Lake Van, with important links to Shaikh Abdullah of Çüngüş and Halit Bey of the Dersimi Givran tribe. This, added to the fact that he was a religious chief of the Nakşibendi order, made him a true threat for the state, which naturally followed Shaikh Said's movements closely. A detachment was sent to Piran to arrest some of his entourage, but it was met with resistance, which resulted in the death of Turkish officers on February 8. The Shaikh immediately left the town and returned northwards to Genç. The news spread, and soon local gendarmes were captured in Hani. The rebellion had begun. Shaikh Said, proclaimed jihad following the occupation of Darahini on February 14. Ankara was not expecting the rebellion; Prime Minister Ali Fethi [Okyar], declared that their intelligence indicated that the revolt would not break out until March.[211]

The "Genç incident," became a full-blown insurrection. The rebellion spread rapidly, and Elazığ, Ergani, and Piran were all occupied. Even though the looting that accompanied it resulted in a loss of confidence on the part of the locals, Siverek, Diyarbakır, Lice, and Muş all fell to the rebels. The government responded by declaring martial law in the Eastern provinces of Bitlis, Genç, Dersim, Diyarbakır, Ergani, Hakkari, Mardin, Muş, Urfa, Siirt, Siverek, Van, as well as Kiğı and Hınıs in Erzurum. Some in the Assembly even urged for it to be instated in major cities such as Istanbul and Trabzon.

211 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 34; Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 142; Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi,* 27.; and Tahsin Sever, *Unutturulmaya çalışılan bir örgüt ve çarpıtılan bir tarih: 1925 hareketi ve Azadî Örgütü* (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 2010).

The rebellion crystallized the frustrations of the opposition. The government tried to gain support in the assembly by declaring that the rebellion was not solely religious but that it also aimed to create an independent Kurdistan with foreign, possibly British, support. They were indeed following this rebellion closely. The British Ambassador, Ronald Charles Lindsay (1877-1945), sent a telegram concerning the events to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Joseph Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937), on the February 23, 1925. The Kurdish issue directly concerned the British Empire, and a copy of the telegram was also sent to Baghdad. Lindsay's telegrams are evidence of to the extent of British intelligence concerning the rebellion.[212]

The center of the rebellion was the valley of the Murat River and its mountainous surroundings to the south, notably Dicle, Hani, Çüngüş and Ergani. There were conflicts in Hınıs and Genç to the east and Çemişgezek to the west. The tribes of Inner Dersim seem to have observed the rebellion from a distance, and Lindsay reported that the important chiefs of Dersim were "said to have sent loyal assurances [to the government]." Land and air forces were mobilized to repress the rebellion. The military strategy was to first concentrate five divisions (approximately 7500 troops) in Adana, before sending them east by railroad through French administrated Syria until Cerablus/Resulayn and then head north towards Diyarbakır. While they were preparing to attack from the south, troops from Sivas and Erzincan were waiting for favorable weather conditions before descending on the rebels from the north. Lindsay also informed London of the causes of the rebellion, namely "the deterioration in general standard of administration brought about by the change of system." His observation that "the large vilayets of olden days have been broken up [where] each sanjak has become a separate province," is an apt critique of the Jacobin inspired departmental approach of the republic.[213]

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212 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 34-36; and Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 33-35, (FO 424/262, p. 102-103, No: 103/2), 19-21 (F.O. 424/262, p. 80, No. 81) (F.O. 424/262, p. 91. No: 92), 26-27 (F.O. 424/262, p. 93, No. 92/2, p. 82, No. 86) (F.O. 424/262, p. 82-83, No. 87 – February 27, 1925).

213 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 27 (FO 424/262, 100–101. No.103. 38-38).

From a relatively decentralized system of governance, the country moved towards over-centralization. Marked bureaucratic delays resulted, and a new form of governor who was "more tyrannical, inefficient and incapable of controlling the population than the old Governors-General." The republican governorate was not selected organically with the consent of local notables; instead, nominations were made based on the degree of trust between the government and the individual officers. This institutional estrangement resulted in a sustained form of poor governance that increased exponentially during the internal colonial period.[214]

The rebellion involved five stages. The first battles involved Diyarbakır wherein the Mistan and Botan tribes occupied Lice, chased Turkish troops from the Hani straits, and, under the command of Shaikh Abdülrahim, took Ergani, Maden, and Siverek by the end of February. Diyarbakır was surrounded. After a five-day negotiation, an attack on the city began on March 2. But by March 27 they were obliged to retreat. The second stage was centered on Çapakçur, which became occupied by the Shaikhs of Çan, Mustafa and İbrahim, on the February 17. The same forces went on to capture Varto before being repressed. The forces of Hasananlı Halit Bey, on the other hand, occupied Solhan, Varto, Malazgirt, and Muş and were intent on conquering Erzurum and stretching towards Ağrı and Bitlis. News of the execution of Cibranlı Halit and Yusuf Ziya reached the ranks, when a battle took place on the Arpa River on March 23. As the Eighth Army Corps descended from Erzurum some tribes from Varto joined forces with them against the rebels. The fourth stage of battles began with the occupation of Palu by the forces of Shaikh Şerif and Yado, who ended up taking control of Elaziz on March 5. They later retreated to Palu and fought with Kazım Karabekir. At beginning of April, Shaikh Said and Shaikh Abdullah from the Melikan tribe were fighting in Solhan. Rebel forces continued to retreat towards the Muş plain as the month of April went by, by which point the sheikh was probably considering escaping into Iran.[215]

214 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 29 (FO 424/262, p. 104, No. 103/4).

215 Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 143-148.

By the end of March, the Turkish military had encircled the principal rebel forces with 35,000 troops, the main goal was to keep the rebels from retreating beyond state territory. The offensive by the army came at the beginning of April, as the rebels were easily pushed back. They attempted to retreat to the mountains around Palu and Çüngüş to organize a guerilla resistance, but they ended up being dispersed. Shaikh Said was finally captured, and "one of his former companions, a certain Major Qasem, afterwards claimed a reward."[216]

Shaikh Said was apprehended on the 15th of April 1925 and transferred to Diyarbakır. A day later, Hüseyin Cahit [Yalçın] (1875-1957) was imprisoned and the *Tanin* newspaper that he had founded in 1908 was closed. The government used the rebellion as an excuse to silence the opposition. The Independence Tribunals in Diyarbakır, and later Elazığ tried the perpetrators of the rebellion, while the journalist was sent to a tribunal in Ankara. In June, all branches of the Progressivist Party were closed. Following the capture of key figures, the remaining rebels were exterminated, imprisoned, or turned themselves in. By April 28, the rebellion was over. Shaikh Said and nine others were put on trial and executed, while others who were captured were incarcerated. The radical transformation of the country into a secular republic, dire economic hardship, the exclusion of tribal and religious chiefs from seats of local and national power, and the loss of feudal privileges granted by the sultan himself, are all valid points explanations for the provincial discontent that led to the rebellion that supposedly cost the government more than two million sterling. The state was now trying to detribalize the region; after all, it was tribal notables who were inciting rebellion. As a preemptive measure Ankara forced the relocation of some tribes to regions, such as Adana. Tribal allegiances were destroyed through the atomization of rural society, which was accompanied by both brute force and aggressive social policies.[217]

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216 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 36-37; Dersimi, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim*, 147-148.

217 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 37; Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 53-55 (FO 424/262 p. 153-154. No. 156).

Suppression of the rebellion required between 35,000 to 80,000 soldiers and 12 planes. The Turkish soldiers behaved like a colonial army, destroyed 206 villages, burned nearly nine thousand houses and killed more than fifteen thousand people. The cost of the operation was estimated at millions of pounds. Furthermore, the Kurdish issue did not disappear with the suppression of the rebellion. In summer of 1925, Seyid Abdullah a tribal chief from Şemdinli (Hakkari), took up arms with local support. His father, Seyid Abdülkadir – who was the son of Ubeydullah- was hung after the rebellion. Following an offensive by the Turkish Army, the rebels crossed the border into Iraq. The porous frontier between Turkey and Iraq was as yet undefined, as Ankara still insisted that the province of Mosul be included in the republic. However, the government's harsh anti-Kurdish measures on display by this time adversely affected tribal chiefs in the region. In the end, Mosul became an integral part of the Kingdom of Iraq under British rule.[218]

There was disagreement regarding the reasons for the rebellion that had just taken place. The article of *Vakit* writer Naşit Hakkı Uluğ on June 28, 1925, which reported the chief justice of the Diyarbakır Independence Tribunal, stated clearly that the uniting reason for rebellion was not restoration of the caliphate or protest of the corrupt administration of the state but creation of an autonomous Kurdistan. Turcophiles in Europe agreed with the official Turkish opinion that the revolt was mostly of a regressive (*mürteci*) nature. The author of *Mustafa Kemal ou L'Orient en Marche* (1929), Paul Gentizon, wrote in the *Revue de Paris* on the October 15, 1925, that the underlying causes that initiated the rebellion were administrative and religious. For Gentizon the events that followed were shaped by a combination of the reaction of Kurdish feudalists to the central state and the reaction of an "old" Turkey attached to Islamic traditions to the new, progressive, secular Turkey.[219]

218 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 38; and Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 73.

219 Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi*, 28; Celadet Bedirhan, *La question kurde: ses origines et ses causes* (Cairo: Paul Barbey, 1930).

The rebellion broke out because of two threats, one to the Kurdish identity and the other to established tribal and religious order. Discontent united both urban intellectuals and provincial notables. Shaikh Said was "a classic example of those shaikhs able to wield both secular and religious power." Notably, he had established matrimonial alliances with other tribes. Where he fell short was perhaps the linguistic and religious limitations of his movement, which was mostly a Zaza-Sunni affair. Even so, certain tribal chiefs, notably Yado (Yadın Mehmud Ebas) of Palu and Mala Eliyê Ûnis of Sasun, did not surrender and defended civilians against the suppression of the rebellion. Understanding that proximity to an international border would help them in their struggle, certain Kurds fled to Iraq and Iran and started to congregate around Mount Ararat. This was facilitated by the efforts of *Hoybûn*, the Kurdish National League formed in 1927 following a meeting in the town of Bihamdun in Lebanon. "It is worth noting that 'as symbol of the alliance between Armenians and Kurds' Vahan Papazyan, an Armenian leader from the Dashnak Party, attended the conference." This collaboration between the Dashnaksutyun and Hoybûn was another reason why Mount Ararat was chosen as the place for the next rebellion.[220]

Meanwhile Selahattin, the son of the Shaikh, entered the military academy in Bagdad "*with the help of an Englishman called Hamilton*." In the capital, he met others who fled Turkey and founded the Association of the Friends of the Kurds with branches in Aleppo and Damascus. Selahattin became politically active and dropped out of the Academy, determined to avenge his father's death. Following an amnesty proclaimed by Ankara he returned, first to Hınıs and then to Erzurum, where he participated in the foundation of the Northern Kurdistan Association before being captured in 1930.[221]

220 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 54-55; McDowall, *The Kurds*, 36-37.

221 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 39; Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 180-181 (FO 424/272, p. 132-133, No: 77).

2.10 The beginning of Internal Colonial rule

Ankara was determined to keep Kurdish lands within the borders of Turkey, but the events that transpired in the early 1920s proved that a different type of rule was needed in the region than in the rest of the country. The early republic saw the Euphrates River as a sort of frontier, as documented in the *Şark Islahat Raporu*, a secret plan concerning governance of the east designed following the Shaikh Said rebellion. West of the Euphrates River, the state had absolute control, but east of the river it was a different story. This "Eastern Reform Report" proposed a five-step plan:[222]

- A ban on the Kurdish language.
- The relocation of local notables.
- The improvement of governability by enhancing infrastructure.
- The institution of a special governance under an Inspector-General.
- The establishment of a military regime in the region.

Although a law had already been passed in the assembly concerning Inspectorate-Generals in 1925. The GNAT instituted the first *Umumi Müfettişlik* in Law No. 1164 on June 25, 1927. The second Inspectorate-General was established seven years later in Thrace by Decree No. 2/150. The third Inspectorate-General was established in the eastern Black Sea region in 1935. And the fourth Inspectorate-General, which directly concerns the Greater Dersim region, came into existence only a year after the constitution of the third. The Inspector-General was accountable to the Interior Ministry, and many of the reports produced by the institution were directed to the Interior Minister. In the beginning, correspondence between the eastern periphery and the administrative center was written in Ottoman script, and the Interior Ministry would subsequently transcribe them into the Latin alphabet before transferring and transferred the reports as such to the Prime Ministry.[223]

222 Çağaptay, *Who is a Turk?*, 108-109.

223 BCA, 69-454-25, 1. Um. Müf. Bölgesindeki illerin zirai vaziyetleri hakkında rapor (no 97/406).

The Inspectorate-General was all-powerful within the confines of its administrative boundaries, but because of the central and unitary form of the Republic, it was first and foremost accountable to the Interior Ministry. So, any financial or material demands first had to be addressed in the Interior Ministry, who would in turn communicate them to the relevant ministry (agriculture, public works, etc.) and the Prime Ministry. This was a complex governmental process and was a factor in the problematic governance of the region. The intermediary role of the Interior Ministry produced delays in the workings of the Inspectorates General and mirrored the governance of colonies where Governors-General were directly dependent on the foreign offices of their home countries.

The institution of the Inspectorate-General, which initiated internal colonial rule in the region, set out to put the eastern reform plan into effect. The Kurdish language, henceforth referred to as "mountain Turkish," was forbidden. Civil and military infrastructure projects were prioritized, and the Republic proceeded to indulge in ethnic engineering, inspired by the imperial tradition of uprooting people from their native lands for the strategic purposes. Thomas Bois, alias Lucien Rambout, estimates that between 1925 and 1928 more than half a million people were forcibly relocated to the west. British diplomatic correspondence documents that deportations in August 1927 were "taking place on a scale which to some extent recall[ed] the mass deportations of Armenians in 1915."[224] The martial law that had been declared in the eastern provinces was lifted in November 1927. However, the new Inspector-General centered in Diyarbakır maintained the right to declare martial law as he saw fit. He was "to be a kind of super-vali, not only with the usual powers over gendarmerie and police but also with the military forces under his orders."[225] The "super-vali" was a novelty in the state tradition of provincial governance, notably because of his control of the military.

224 Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi,* 30; and Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 107 (FO 424/267, p. 63, No: 24).

225 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 111 (FO 424/267, p. 228-229, No: 63).

A lapsus in British diplomatic correspondence reveals the colonial nature of the enterprise, as İbrahim Tali [Öngören] (1875-1952) is referred to as the *Governor-General of the Eastern Provinces*. The first Inspector-General, a former army doctor and a diplomat, was known as "*a calm and capable person*." Thus, internal colonial rule began in the hands of a westernized intellectual. Turkey's colonial wealth was not overseas, but on the eastern bank of the Euphrates and over the mountains. The Inspectorate-General, however, was primarily occupied with the lowlands, and calm seemed to be reigning in Dersim. İbrahim Tali Bey announced that those who had been transferred would be returning home in the summer of 1928. The announcement probably sought a rapprochement between the populace and the state, which were due to the number of troops that were mobilized there, the rebels that had been killed, and the villages destroyed.[226]

As the leading colonial power in the world, the British Empire was interested in this new Turkish enterprise of internal colonialism. They observed, correctly, that İbrahim Tali's policy was one of reconstruction and conciliation. The Inspector-General tried to achieve this, through a physiocratic agenda of promoting agriculture while engaging in limited land reform. This consisted of partitioning large estates owned by local notables for use by peasants who also benefited from agricultural credits that allowed them to, for example replace wooden ploughs with modern light-weight steel ploughs. Another issue that the Inspector-General took seriously was the urgent need to improve the region's infrastructure, namely by building roads, for the main problem was the inaccessibility of the region. Finally, his administration invested in education, which furthered the process of Turkification in the region. The educational model called for a primary school in each town and considerable village, and middle schools in vilayet capitals. However, this drive was desisted in the hamlets, where most of the people lived.

226 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye'de "Kürt Sorunu,"* 112-115 (FO 424/167, p. 121, No: 67) (FO 424/268, p. 30, No: 8) p. 119-121 (FO 424/269, p. 8 - 8, No: 2/1 & p. 20, No: 13) p. 168 (FO 424/272, p. 117-127, No: 68/1).

Since most of the population was indeed living in hamlets (*koms*). Turkification was more difficult, nigh impossible, in places where the concentration of population was lowest. The Turkification of adults was also furthered by the opening of *ocaks* in large towns and villages, whose function was the spread of civilization. The empire of Kipling, and *The White Man's Burden*, knew full well that the self-declared obligation of the modern central state was to propagate civilization. Education was the primary motor of this mission, but by no means the only one. Of course, the military remained the foremost tool for adult male Turkification. Many soldiers of Kurdish descent were sent to the west of the country for training.[227]

Provincial governors criticized the Inspector-General, but the British deemed both the institution and the system implemented by İbrahim Tali "to have met with the greatest success." This silent acclaim in the diplomatic correspondence of the world's greatest colonial power surely pleased Ankara. This was not a coincidence; the Turks had studied British colonial rule. Like the overseas service of the British Empire, Turkish bureaucracy developed a sense of an eastern service. The region was no longer seen as a place of banishment, but rather a necessary step in the career of a state official. Working in Kurdistan promised future opportunities and İbrahim Tali surrounded himself with competent people. The British held the Istanbulite in high esteem, described him as "a worker, ... genial, tactful and broadminded [who had also] been to Bombay, [and] studi[ed] Anglo-Indian administration and makes his officials start work at 7:30 and stop at 1." He was a Francophone and also knew a bit of English. Having served as a diplomat, he also "would [have] made a good Ambassador in London whenever change [was] wanted." [228] But when he was relieved of his position as Inspector-General, he became the deputy from Diyarbakır until 1946.

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227 Peter Jones, *Agricultural enlightenment: knowledge technology, and nature, 1750-1840* (Oxford University Press, 2016); François Quesnay, *Physiocratie: Droit naturel, Tableau économique et autres textes* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1991); and Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 169-173 (FO 424/272, p. 117-127, No. 68/1).

228 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 169-173 (FO 424/272, p. 117-127, No. 68/1).

2.11 Hoybûn and the Ararat Rebellion

As internal colonial rule a more civil approach followed the harsh military crackdown of the Shaikh Said rebellion, Kurdish nationalists south of the border joined to form *Hoybûn*. This party held its first congress in spring 1927 in Bihamdun, Lebanon. The Armenian Dashnaksutyun leader Vahan Papazian (1876-1973) also participated. The counter-revolutionary Armenians struggling against the Soviets for independence notwithstanding, Britain and France also showed interest in the new organization.[229] Kurdish nationalists decided to organize military units, command an armed resistance, and end all hostilities with the Armenian nation. As a result of this gathering, the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*, *Kürt Teşkilat-ı İçtimaiye Cemiyeti*, *Kürt Millet Fırkası*, and *Kürt İstiklal Komitesi* (*Azadî*) were dissolved on the 5th of October 1927, and the Kurdish national movement united. General İhsan Nuri Pasha from Bitlis was chosen as its commander in chief. *Hoybûn* unilaterally declared independence of Kurdistan on October 28, 1927, and the Kurdish flag was flown from the top of Mount Ararat where Haski Tello of the Celali tribe had been commanding a guerilla resistance since 1926. In September 1928, on Şehli Bridge thirty kilometers from Beyazit, the government delegates met with General İhsan Nuri Pasha.[230]

In 1929, General İhsan Nuri Pasha had gained control over an area between the Mountain and the area north of Bitlis and Van. The general entered into talks with Turkish officers, though this diplomacy was actually a tactic to gain time. As he was extending his influence Ibrahim Pasha Haski Tello was leading a civil administration. The choice of Ararat was not as the headquarters of the movement was not random; not only was the twin-peaked dormant volcano an excellent refuge for guerillas who could face an army habituated to regular warfare, but it was also close to international borders.

229 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 74-75.

230 Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi,* 31; Bedirhan, *La question kurde: ses origines et ses causes*, 44-48. Also see the mail correspondence between the governor of Beyazit and Haski Tello in February 1928.

The proximity to Iran was indeed a cause for concern due to the recent Simko rebellion (1918-1922).[231] There was genuine risk of a considerable, transnational Kurdish revolt. Hoybûn was closely monitored, as were the Bedirhans and the chief of the Hayderan tribe, Kör Hüseyin, and his sons just south of the border. Other intelligence included domestic gatherings of Kurdish notables, such as when some of the Cemilpaşazades fled to Aleppo and Emduh Süleyman hosted an assembly of tribal chieftains. Hoybûn was seeking international assistance. Hoybûn's propaganda also included some rumors, such as Mustafa Kemal's ill health, that the Qur'an was to be banned, and that bells would be hung at mosques. Similar to the discourse of the Shaikh Said rebellion, Hoybûn utilized the threat of secularism to its advantage.[232]

What was the nature of the relation between Hoybûn and Dersim? The Dersimi tribes did not directly participate in any congress of the organization; however, military intelligence of the time indicates that in September 1929 Cemilpaşazade Ekrem (1891-1974) visited Dersim to meet Seyid Rıza. The nature of their conversation, or if they actually met at all, remains a mystery, but the intention behind a visit of a Hoybûn official to Dersim, would almost certainly be to gather tribal support. The location chosen for the rebellion might have dissuaded Dersimi tribes from engaging in solidarity with Hoybûn. In fact, the powerful Haydaran tribe declared in November 1930 that it accepted the government's authority, which resulted in the withdrawal of a suppression operation. Meanwhile, the Abbasuşağı and Birman tribes remained rebellious. There were rumors circulating in the district of Kalan that the British were interested in taking control of Dersim and that they would suffer the same fate as the Armenians. [233]

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231 BCA, 69-454-16, 1. Um.Müf bölgesindeki askeri kıtaların kadrolarının azaltılmayarak gelecek seneye hazır durumda bekletilmesi gerektiği; Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 56.

232 BCA, 69-454-29, 1. Um.Müf. bölgesine ait üç aylık rapor Dah.Vek. 10/6/1929

233 BCA, 128.916.24, Yado çetesinde bulunan Cemilpaşazade Ekrem'in Dersim'e geçerek Seyit Rıza'nın yanına gideceği 21.09.1929; BCA, 128.920.12, Savur, Elazığ, Dersim, Pülümür ve Beşiri'de meydana gelen asayişi ihlal olayları ile ilgili 11.11.1930 tarihli istihbarat harekat raporu.

Inner Dersimi tribes did not declare loyalty to the state. Five years after the Shaikh Said rebellion, the region had again reached a boiling point. Hoybûn was making the final preparations as around five thousand insurgents entered Turkish territory from Russia and Persia at the end of February, when hostilities ensued. Only a fraction of them returned to the mountains alive. Mehmet Salih Omurtak (1889-1954), the commanding officer of the 9th Army Corps, a close confident of Mustafa Kemal, had fifteen thousand men, artillery, as well as five airplanes.[234] In May 1930, he led two armies to the skirts of Mount Ararat, and the assault began on June 11. The rebels were estimated at only a few thousand, however, they were being fed reinforcements from over the border. The Persians were complicit, when large bands of raiders assembled on their soil before crossing the border and joining rebellious tribes.[235] On June 20, 1930, the Celali tribe, with lands on both sides of the border, attacked Turkish positions in the valley of Zilan with the help of the Haydaranlı and Halikanlı tribes. Not only did they successfully capture Zilan and Muradiye, but they also occupied Çaldıran on June 24.[236]

In response, the government adopted destructive measures such as the burning of villages. In fact, in the valley of Zilan alone, it was estimated that government forces killed three thousand unarmed people. In return, at least four thousand casualties were suffered by the army by mid-July, and another four thousand recruits possibly switched sides. The Kurdish forces were estimated to be between five and eight thousand men, headed by İbrahim Beg, the tribal chief of the Celali tribe. Incapable of maintaining superiority in the mountains, the army advanced through the lowlands as they drove the rebels to the mountains before surrounding and blockading them. The problem was that Ararat could only be encircled from Persian territory.[237]

234 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 153 (FO 424/272, p.115, No. 67), 156 (FO 424/272, p. 116, No. 67/2).

235 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 184-186 (FO 424/273, p. 8-9, No. 11/2) 186-187 (FO 424/273, p. 4-5, No. 7).

236 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 39.

237 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 220-224 (FO 424/273, P. 52-54, No: 71/1).

Meanwhile the rebels were actively seeking international support. The British military attaché in Iran at the time, Percy C.R. Dodd, met with a certain "Reuben Pasha," who requested support. However, the search for support from the British was futile; the latter was well aware of the logistics details, which pointed to a definitive Turkish victory. The Soviets were helping the Turks by allowing supplies be transferred by rail through the USSR.[238]

Salih Pasha concentrated his troops between Van and Iğdır close to the border with the Soviets, pushing the rebels towards the east so as to keep them from descending into the areas previously affected by the Shaikh Said rebellion. This would have countered what the rebels were hoping for, which was to gain the support of locals awaiting a time for revenge. The Hoybûn forces were pushed back by the army back to Iran and suffered great losses during their retreat.[239]

Ankara was urging Tehran to prevent more Kurds entering into Turkish territory from Iran. Keen to maintain neighborly relations with the republic, Iran eventually sent a detachment to attack the Celali tribe around Musa Mountain. This signaled to the Turkish government that control of Mount Ararat could not be assured without the inclusion of Lesser Ararat within its borders. The change to the border was ultimately accepted by Tehran in 1932. Ararat rebellion was a veritable quagmire to the Turkish state; a whole new strategy was needed compared to the Shaikh Said rebellion. Instead of a relatively urbanized lowland region, they had to adapt to the twin Ağrı mountains, situated along the transnational border.

Fighting the rebels on the mountain was nigh impossible as an approach by the infantry was extremely risky. Hence, the Turkish Army adopted the strategy of using its air force. However, because the planes could not take aim at individuals, they targeted “encampments, inflicting heavy casualties on women and children and on the flocks.” There were no forests in

238 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle “Kürt Sorunu,”* 183-184 (FO 424/273, p. 8, No. 11/1).

239 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 39-40; and Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle “Kürt Sorunu,”* 154-155 (FO 424/272, p. 115-116, No: 67/1).

which to take cover, but the rebels did find refuge in caves. By late July, Turkish forces had still not cleared the northern slopes of Ararat of Kurdish rebels. The army was descending on them from Iğdır. Simultaneously, Kurdish tribes in Syria became agitated and sent up a force of two hundred. They crossed into Turkey but were soon pushed back into Syria. The French sent a strong message from Ankara, and they intervened to move the Kurdish leaders away from the border, put them under surveillance, and even expel some of them.[240]

A formal protest was presented to the Zürich session of the Second International, which accused Turkish military forces of attacking Kurdish villages in the lowlands, raining fire from their airplanes, and drowning people in the waters of Lake Van. Turkey pointed its finger back at the international community. Speaking at the inauguration of the Sivas railroad, İsmet İnönü pointed to the fact that the rebels had "enjoyed the support of … Reza Shah" until, "the Shah cut off assistance to the Kurds and allowed Turkish forces to move through Iranian territory to encircle the Kurdish forces." Even though victory was assured by the end of summer 1930, the effects of the suppression were felt well into December; villages and houses continued to be burned to the ground. Inspector-General Ibrahim Tali was so confident about public order in his region that in the summer of 1931, he allowed two Britons to journey through the eastern provinces, which were now more accessible due to the completion of the new Malatya-Diyarbakır railroad. Mr. Roberts and Ravensdale travelled almost two thousand kilometers throughout a third of the provinces of the First Inspectorate-General. After their trip, the two men seemed to agree that the creation of the extraordinary institution had "more than justified itself."[241]

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240 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 41-42; Also see *Turkisher Post*, 29 July 1930; and Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 182-183 (FO 424/273, P. 7, No: 11).

241 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 56; McDowall, *The Kurds*, 38; Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 263-290 (FO 424/273, p. 6-21, No. 6/1); Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 75; Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi,* 32-33; Also see *The Second International* Vol: 7, no: 40 and *Milliyet*, no: 1636, 31 August 1930.

The gentlemen observed that the province of Elazığ had a population comparable to that of wealthy Malatya and that the quintessential commercial crop grown on its plains was cotton. In fact, the local cotton spinning-mill had put in orders for "modern English machinery." The Britons described the Murat River as a natural barrier that separated Elazığ from Dersim, which was "a mountainous and purely pastoral district inhabited by Kurds, and distinguished by its oak and walnut woods, its bears and its boars." The gentlemen noted that there were physiocratic incentives; loans - mostly for agriculture - were available to venturous lowlands farmers, from the nationwide Ottoman Bank and the Agricultural Bank, which both had branches in the city as well as the local *Elaziz İktisat Bankası*. There was even somewhat of a nightlife, especially during the winter, when Dances were "regularly given." There was also a boy scout troop and a local soccer team. In terms of education, Elazığ had both an elementary and a secondary school, and there were other institutional projects at the time such as "a teachers' training school, an orphanage and a military school." The governor was the recently arrived Nizamettin Bey [Ataker], an Istanbulite who spoke French, he had previously been the governor of Van and Diyarbakır. The governor of Elazığ, who had just returned from a horseback visit to Dersim when he met Roberts and Ravensdale, told them "that the idea of this district entertained in Constantinople as a nest of brigands where no man could venture his head was quite erroneous." In fact, "a single mounted gendarme would traverse the length and breadth of the Dersim alone, and the Hungarian engineer employed by the vilayet frequently did so." However, even though Elazığ had remained unharmed since a couple of years, there had been a recent raid on Erzincan to the north. The travelers were convinced that these raids were mostly due to an economic reality on the ground: "the Kurds were occasionally driven by hard times to try a foray." They likened the situation to that of the Scottish borderland and the northwest frontier of the Raj.[242]

242 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 263-290 (FO 424/273, P. 6-21, No. 6/1),

The reemergence of resistance was a message to the government that conciliation alone was not going to achieve their goal. The first Inspector-General knew that internal colonial rule over the vast region could not be assured by only one administrator. There were instances, as in 1931, that he personally communicated his views about the creation of additional Inspectorate-Generals. The first Inspector-General also proposed that the governor and the provincial general council should have less decision power over the budget, accusing them of corruption and incompetence "*vazifelerine hakim olmamalarında görmekteyim*."[243] Corruption was present in the higher echelons of regional governance from the earliest days of internal colonial rule. İbrahim Tali noted that the reason why the expenses were overwhelming was that governors had absolute control over their budgets. Provincial governors spent frivolously, and the education department suffered the consequences.[244]

The republic was not successful at changing old imperial habits such as corruption. The rule of the First Inspector-General, İbrahim Tali Öngören, came to an end in 1932. Over five years he had greatly improved the transportation network in the southeast; notably under, his supervision a new road linking Erzincan to Elazığ was built, cutting through the length of Dersim. At the time of Öngören's departure, two regions remained outside of Ankara's absolute control: Dersim and the Sason valley.[245] The departure of Öngören represented a veritable regime change in the area east of the Euphrates. The time of conciliation was over. The government again employed mass deportations to pacify the area around Ararat. On May 5, 1932, a new law was debated in parliament to legalize mass deportations and the evacuation of certain areas. The *İskân Kanunu* would be adopted two years later, accompanied by the encouragement of Turks to settle the east. The intention was not solely the Turkification of the Kurds but also the seizure of the land itself.[246]

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243 BCA, 69-455-1, 1.Um.Müf.'in yeni kurulacak olan Um. müf.ler görüşleri 28-1-1931; BCA, 69-455-5, 1.Um.Müf.'in il um. meclis, özel muhasebeleri v.s. hakkındaki görüşleri 3-5-1931.

244 BCA, 69-455-5, 1.Um.Müf.'in il um.meclis, özel muhasebeleri vs hakkındaki görüşleri 3-5-1931.

245 Çağaptay, *Who is a Turk?*, 108.

246 McDowall, *The Kurds*, 37-38.

2.12 The Fall of Seyid Rıza

Assimilation was achieved through the forced emigration from the uncontrollable mountains of the east to the plains in the west. The government's intention through these measures was to disconnect the people from their land as well as to abolish feudalism. The state was actively seeking to destroy an indigenous social organization that had existed for centuries. This is a form of destructive acculturation, entailing the violent destruction of a cultural form of social organization and its replacement with blank canvases susceptible to modern nationalist indoctrination, which would then create ideal citizens with no loyalty towards anything but the state. This was the aim in Dersim through the killing of tribal chiefs, the deportation of their families, and the seizure of their land. The fall of Seyid Rıza testifies to this history.

Who was Seyid Rıza? Today, there is a sculpture of him in the middle of a square, previously known as Kışla Meydanı, in the center of Tunceli. This was erected in 2010, some hundred and fifty years after his birth. Rıza was the youngest son of Seyid İbrahim, chief of the Yukarı Abasan clan of the Şeyh Hasenan tribe. The title of *seyid* he inherited from his great-grandfather Seyid Kara Süleyman, who obtained this sacred title because of his wide religious knowledge and work as a spiritual guide (*rehber/rayber)*, even though he was not of the family of the prophet. From his father he inherited both the spiritual reverence given to a *rehber* and the political title of agha. His family did not recognize Ottoman authority until the reign of Abdulhamid II. Shaikh Süleyman mentions, that the grandfather of Seyid Rıza gathered around ten thousand men to oppose Müşir Zeki Pasha. Seyid Rıza was born circa 1860 in the village of Lertik near Mount Dujik (later rechristened Yalmanlar and emptied in 1994). He replaced his father as tribal chief around 1900. He benefited from the loss of power of the Şah Hüseyinoğulları in Pülümür (Kuzucan) and asserted himself as the dominant authority. He was aided in this respect by his marriage to Diyap Agha's daughter, Elif Hatun.[247]

247 Mahmut Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938* (Istanbul: Tarih Kulübü, 2016), 141-142; Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi,* 34.

The name Seyid Rıza was first registered during the rebellion of 1908 (1326). While Diyap Agha was the leader, Seyid Rıza was in charge of the armed forces. In 1912, Seyid Rıza retreated to Kuti Valley after one of his fellow tribesmen was accused of theft by the *mutasarrıf* Sabit Bey and a military operation ensued. He was even threatened with the death penalty, but things calmed down when the stolen animals were returned to their owner. During the Great War, Seyid Rıza headed the confederate tribal forces that fought against the Russians and played an active role in the liberation of Erzincan, where tribes confiscated many Russian arms. However, he also gave refuge to Alişir and Nuri Dersimi who were sought by the government following the Koçgiri uprising of 1920, and although he did not support Shaikh Said, he did receive refugees in 1926 during the Koç Uşağı Rebellion.[248]

As internal colonial rule began in 1927, Seyid Rıza had established himself as the proverbial leader of Dersim, which had not directly experienced a full-scale military operation since 1908. As a matter of fact, tribes in Dersim had not directly taken part in any of the recent revolts neither. They had thus far escaped the gaze of the republic, whose principles they had hitherto completely ignored. Near the end of the thirties, Dersim, and the modernist project of the republic, would soon come to a clash. Nearing his sixties, Seyid Rıza had risen to the highest rank of tribal society in Dersim. He had religious authority, his advice was sought and heeded in inter-tribal disputes, and he had proved himself a capable military strategist on multiple occasions. He had become the perfect target for a state intent on his downfall, which was also due, of course, to his involvement with the Kurdish national movement as well as the persistence of the booty-economy. Tribes continued their raids, especially on Pülümür and Erzincan. [249]

As the Ararat rebellion raged in the east, the military intelligence had been gathered concerning a pact put together by the Keçeluşağı tribe related to the various attacks of Pülümür tribesmen on the surrounding region.

248 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 143.

249 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 298 (FO 424/279, Part XXVXXX, p.41, No. 33).

In fact, a Hoybûn memorandum found in the Zilan Valley indicated Dersim was a sixth region in the organization. Alişir from the Koçgiri rebellion had actively propagandized among the Dersimi tribes and convinced Seyid Rıza to join the resistance movement. The Ararat rebellion was repressed, but the resistance in Dersim and the raids on Erzincan continued. The incident that initiated the eventual Pülümür Operation was an assault on the house of the district kaymakam of Pülümür. A military operation was initiated on October 8, 1930. The extent of the operation was widened to incorporate Nazımiye and Ovacık. Most of the tribes, notably the Briman, Haydaran, Demenan, Balan, Lolan, and Karsan, along with the support and benediction of Seyid Rıza, continued their offensives on Erzincan and Erzurum. Meanwhile, the gendarmerie convinced some non-hostile tribes to help on their side. The operation began making use of the air force on September 20, and the armed conflict ended on November 14, 1930.[250]

During the Pülümür Operation, Dersimi tribes experienced firsthand the change in the tone of internal colonial rule. From then on, they would experience the full terror of republican Jacobinism; however, this prospect of a coming terror did not keep them from engaging in the booty-economy. But from this time forward, bandits encountered extreme violence, as in the story of Zaza Hüseyin. In 1932, the governor of Dersim accused Zaza Hüseyin of twelve cases of theft and extortion, two raids on mills as well as one on a village. His activities extended even to parts of Muş and Erzurum. Government agents found out that Zaza Hüseyin was residing in the village of Karan in Gökdere, Palu. Soon after, he was killed along with his wife.[251] The case of Zaza Hüseyin is far from an isolated incident, but what is particularly significant is that he raided mills. This, in combination with the report of his capture at the beginning of October, suggests that banditry in the Greater Dersim region not only specifically targeted agricultural and infrastructure, but also that the banditry season coincided with the end of the harvest.

250 Akgül, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza,* 39-41.

251 BCA, 128-923-2, 1.Um.Müf. bölgesinin durumu hakkında asayiş raporu I.nci Teşrin 932.

The state's attitude vis-à-vis banditry is also interesting. In the middle of the following summer, in 1933, the Mustafa Kemal personally signed a decree concerning the deportation of five bandits caught in Dersim's Mercan pass, they were neither incarcerated nor executed, but deported, which gives an impression of tolerance. A double crescent decree from 1933, signed by the Gazi, indicates that 20 thousand lire were allotted to brigades to compensate for the extraordinary expense of a recent Dersim operation, referring to the Sin incident. Detachments from the 17th division of the 7th Army Corps participated in the operation that lasted for more than a month. This operation, which occurred four years before the 1937 operation, naturally took place following the long winter. At the end of May 1933, Seyid Rıza wrote a letter to the kaymakam of Hozat following a feud with another tribe. He threatened that his forces would confiscate government arms and ammunitions based on feelings of pure vengeance if authorities did not act to punish the criminal acts of the other tribe. This inter-tribal feud was due to the murder of one of Seyid Rıza's sons, Babo, by members of the Kırganlılar tribe. It is interesting that Seyid Rıza directly addressed the local kaymakam. Informing him that if the state did not help him obtain justice, he would take matters into his own hands.[252]

This was an important development. Normally, such an important tribal leader in Dersim would not hesitate to retaliate with an equivalent act of murder. However, there was a mitigating factor. While Seyid Rıza was the tribal leader of Dersim, his confederation did not comprise all of the tribes in Dersim, and some of the other received state support. In this respect, the murder of Babo marks an important turning point in Dersim. State authorities believed that Seyid Rıza, who was revered in Dersim and considered himself to be essential, was trying to increase his authority.[253]

252 BCA, 38-51-2, Dersim Mercan boğazında yakalanan ... 5 kişinin ... iskanları Temmuz 933; BCA, 38-60-11, Kararname [Çift hillalli] - BCA, 52-15-14

253 BCA 113.779.1 Seyit rıza kan davası 30/5/1933.

Diplomacy was to no avail. In the end Seyid Rıza sought justice without the intervention of the state, which resulted in the Sin incident. This act of frontier justice confirmed among state intelligence circles that Seyid Rıza was the principal authority figure in Dersim. Following the killing of his son, he descended on the village of Sin and conquered it, killing between nine and seventeen men of the Kırganlı tribe. This small-scale military operation in the summer of 1933 did little to ease the tensions between the Western Dersim Tribal Confederation headed by Seyid Rıza and the state-supported tribes to the east. The interference of the government in inter-tribal affairs disturbed his traditional authority as *sayyid*, because the tribes receiving state support were starting to become arrogant. In December 1934 two Hoybûn members were received by Seyid Rıza and reportedly inscribed him to the party. The news may have been heavily amalgamated with rumors, but from the state's perspective, it seemed as if Dersim tribes were preparing for a rebellion.[254]

This was the situation of tribe-state relations in Dersim during early internal colonial rule. The tensions led to the creation of the Province of Tunceli and the Fourth Inspectorate-General, which can be seen as a preemptive measure by a government that did not want to see another Hoybûn-supported rebellion in yet another mountainous region, like the Ararat rebellion. The Dersim uprising did not occur immediately after the institutional revisions of the region. For a few years, the two sides were at a standstill. In August 1934, General Kenan Pasha was bombarding mountains in Şırnak. Around the same time, the general commander of the army corps based in Diyarbakır was executing people in Elazığ (1934-35). A confrontation seemed inevitable when Dersim was included in the fourth zone for total evacuation in the Settlement Law. The state was taking its time in preparing the conquest of this last stateless region. Transportation infrastructure had to be effective.[255]

254 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938*, 144; BCA, 115-803-22, Hoybuncuların, Dersimlileri hükümete karşı kışkırtması hakkında 16-12-1934.

255 Çağaptay, *Who is a Turk?*, 23.

İnönü made a trip to the east and wrote his *Şark Seyahati Raporu*, following which he gave orders to Kâzım Orbay (1887-1964) and Abdullah Alpdoğan (1878-1972). These two figures were given the duty of making proposals to the Prime Minister on how to open Dersim up to civilization. The two commanders went to Diyarbakır to talk with the First Inspector-General, Zeynel Abidin Özmen (1890-1966), travelled through Dersim, made a fresh study of the region, and presented it to İnönü. They proposed that an administrative district (*vilayet*) be established and that Dersim be administratively tied to an Inspectorate-General; only through these measures could Dersim be opened up for civilization and construction: *imar ve temdin*.[256]

The Turkish *Mission Civilisatrice* in Dersim needed a base in a large city with civil facilities (*medeni tesis*) and cultural hearths (*kültür ocakları*). Elazığ, which had finally been linked to the countrywide train system, naturally became the base of operations. In 1935, three laws (Nos. 2884, 2885, and2887) were adapted by the GNAT concerning Tunceli. The infamous Tunceli law, which was formed on the basis of conclusions reached by İnönü, Orbay, and Alpdoğan following their travels in the region, created a new province. Tunceli was regrouped along with Elazığ, Erzincan, and Bingöl under the jurisdiction of the Fourth Inspectorate-General. Both this position and the Tunceli governorship were granted to Lieutenant General Alpdoğan. As Inspector-General he had plenipotentiary powers relating to the judicial and executive decisions. A four-year plan was arranged for 1935-1939 with a budget of around four million Turkish lire. This budget was intended for the construction of a 480-kilometer network of roads in Dersim, including major roads connecting Elazığ, Pertek, Hozat, and Pülür as well as concrete bridges in Pertek and Singeç. It also provided for the construction of barracks in Pülümür and the center of Ovacık (Pülür), while the first police stations were opened in Kahmut and Sin. [257]

256 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 57; Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 120; and *Şark Seyahati Raporu*, Başvekâlet Matbaası, Ankara, 1935.

257 Uluğ, *Tunceli medeniyete açılıyor*, 152-154.

On Monday August 3, 1936, Seyid Rıza descended to Elazığ and met with the establishment. Accompanied by a guide, he visited the local People's House, the train station, flour mill and timber factory. Seyid Rıza was told of the victories and important decisions of government leaders who were building a better future for the country through its effective administration. He was made aware of government orders aimed to help the people of Tunceli progress and that this would be achieved at any cost. From the government's perspective, the life of Seyid Rıza was divided into two periods. The first was when he fought along with the military to rid the fatherland of enemy forces as a loyal Turk: *sadık bir türk çocuğu*. While in the latter, under the influence of anti-Turkish propaganda, he compromised the security of the state by adopting a dissident stance. Seyid Rıza was asked if he slept easier while defending the Turkish fatherland alongside the military or when he was estranged from the Turkish state. He stood and said that he slept with ease while fighting the enemy alongside the Turkish army, no matter the weather or life-threatening situation. He added that he was not at all treasonous and alienated from the state; the government was suspicious of him only because of ill-founded rumors. He further added that he was thankful to the state for its clemency (*şefkat*) and promised to act accordingly for the rest of his life. He had only one wish that the village of Sin taken in exchange for the blood of his son be left in his possession. But no promise was made.[258]

Abidin Özmen wrote in September 1936 that public order was being better maintained than in any time in recent memory. Nonetheless, the region remained poor, and many villages were still without roads and bridges. The most striking poverty was in village and townships where the populations had shrunk by a factor of five or even ten. With the Armenians gone, their homes lay in ruins. Regarding the Kurdish issue (*Kürtlük mes'elesi*), Özmen proposed that they be better represented, and that the nationalistic propaganda be prevented from spreading. [259]

258 BCA 113-779-11 Seyit Rıza'nın hükümete teslim olması ve görüşmeye dair 26/8/1936

259 BCA, 70-461-1, 1.Um.Müf bölgelerin genel vaziyetini ve ihtiyaçları notları 28/9/1936.

To this end he proposed: the transfer of “dangerous elements” to the west, the settlement of Turkish refugees in their place, and the cultural Turkification of local children through education. Furthermore, state functionaries sent to serve the region should be encouraged to establish schools and install medical professionals. The administration had to fight absenteeism, which depended on the selection of capable personnel and the construction and maintenance of official buildings. State justice had to be firmly instituted. Turkification through settlement of people with no villages or land was essential. Özmen noted six categories of such people to be settled, all of which had one thing in common: they did not belong anywhere. The Brokililer from the Caucasus, the Güresonlular from Iran, those that had been brought down off Mount Ararat, those removed from Zeylan and Sason, and those that had left mountainous or overtaxed areas on their own. [260]

In 1937, the Dersim tribal council communicated an ultimatum to the government requesting that all military personnel including the gendarmes be withdrawn, all construction projects be halted, that they retain possession of their firearms, and that their taxes be reduced. This was in response to a demand by Alpdoğan that the people surrender their firearms to authorities. The tribes initiated their uprising on the night of March 21, 1937, which coincided with Newruz. The Demenan and Hayderan tribes burned the bridge constructed between Kahmut and Pah and cut the telephone lines. This was followed by an attack on the barracks of Sin on the 24th of March. In this second attack, the Demenan and Hayderan were joined by the Yusufan and Kureyşan tribes, all of which were headed by the Abasan tribe of Seyid Rıza. In the afternoon, after 150 armed men gathered around his house north of Sin, the house was bombarded by planes. Seyid Rıza's son, Şah Hüseyin, lost an arm, and in the hopes that modern medicine might save his life, Şah Hüseyin was entrusted to the government and escorted to Elazığ, where he was treated. [261]

260 BCA, 70-461-1, 1.Um.Müf bölgelerin genel vaziyetini ve ihtiyaçları notları 28/9/1936.

261 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 134-135; Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 58; and Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi,* 37-40.

Following this gesture of good will, Şah Hüseyin was interrogated and arrested. At the time, the government was reportedly in touch with Seyid Rıza's elder son, Şeyh Hasan, to negotiate the conditions of his surrender. There was as yet no all-out military operation, but aerial bombardment continued as a land operation was prepared. On April 26, the cavalry regiment of the 9th Mobile Gendarmerie Battalion stationed north of Pah came under attack, which triggered the military operation. The troops left Elazığ as additional planes were sent. Additional troops were redirected to Elazığ from other eastern provinces as well as the National Guard (*Muhafız Alayı*) from Ankara. Marshall Fevzi Çakmak (1876-1950), and his chief assistant Asım Gündüz (1880-1970), also came to the region to personally direct the operations. Around 25 thousand military personnel were active along with twenty warplanes. The army pushed the tribes north of the line connecting Nazımiye, Keçiseken, Sin, and Karaoğlan and proceeded to clear the region south of the line of all weaponry. The resistance was an alliance formed of the Abasan, Hayderan, Demenan, Kureyşan, Bahtiyar, and Yusufan tribes stationed in Halvori Vank, and Seyid Rıza was reaching out to other tribes to convince them to join the rebellion. The military operation officially began on May 8, 1937 when the Inspectorate-General was informed of a cabinet decision that martial law was being proclaimed. In May, rebellious tribes emptied their villages and retreated to the hills and caves. The military advanced into their territory, burning the empty villages such as Reskan, Gözerek, Varuş, Çökerek, and Çat. General Alpdoğan perceived Seyid Rıza as the root of the opposition to republican rule in Dersim and conducted psychological warfare directly against the chieftain, using Seyid Rıza's nephew Rehber, who was the prime suspect in the murder of Seyid Rıza's son Babo, against him. Rehber and his entourage were helping the army pass through the difficult terrain. As a double agent, Rehber infiltrated the caves where key tribal figures found refuge, assassinated them and returned their severed heads to Alpdoğan. [262]

262 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938*, 135-137; and Uluğ, *Tunceli medeniyete açılıyor*, 152-154.

This violence was mirrored in the actions of the rebels, as "the rebellious Kurds ... were mutilating savagely the bodies of officers who fell into their hands."[263] This was a war where psychological warfare played as much a role as the gathering of intelligence. A top-secret document reports the activities of the tribes between May 6 and 12, 1937, according to which the Hayderan were active in Pülümür. The intelligence gathering capacity was sufficient enough to give details. For example, the report claimed that Hüsso Seydi, the chief of the Şeyhan clan of the Kureyşan tribe, residing in Kalbosan village, was in frequent contact with Seyid Rıza, who gave him orders. He had also participated in a meeting with the rebellious tribes on the May 10, in Kürpık (thirty kilometres east of Mazkirt). As intelligence was being gathered in the region, the public was being kept in the dark. The Turkish press was mostly silent except for *Son Telgraf* which, on May 14, when the newspaper was suspended. The paper was then closed following another report on Dersim, on May 23. Meanwhile the Dashnaksutyun was closely following events in Tunceli, and articles on the subject were published in *Üniversal*, *Sedi Memeni*, and *Yatsatr* newspapers. On June 17, reports reached the capital that the rebels were surrounded, that five thousand had been exterminated, and that the final battlefield was likely to be Mount Dujik (*Sultanbaba*). Meanwhile the army had also suffered losses, including one airplane. [264]

İsmet İnönü arrived in Elazığ on June 18 and went directly to Dersim. Government forces launched an offensive on June 22, which forced the retreat of the rebel tribes to the cave networks of Inner Dersim. The Abasan, Bahtiyar, and Yusufan tribes found refuge in the Kalan Valley and on the skirts of the Mount Dujik, while the Demenan, Hayderan, and Kureyşan tribes retreated to Kuti Valley.[265]

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263 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 302-305 (FO 424/281, PART XXXIII, pp.132-134 No:90-91-91/1 - C), 396-307(FO 424/281, Part XIXIII, P.147, No. 103 - Part XXXIV, P. 5, No. 5)

264 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 43; Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 121 ; BCA, 111-745-2, Dersim'deki aşiretleri 4. Um.Müf. hazırladığı rapor 19/5/1937 İki Hilalli (gizli) ; BCA, 111-745-17, Dersim aşiretleriyle ilgili olarak 4. Um.Müf. günlük raporlar 30/9/1937 ; BCA, 263.775.18, - 15/7/37.

265 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 43-44.

Those that could not flee were captured and surrendered their arms. As planes flew over settled areas and distributed propaganda leaflets, Kalan, Şikeftan, and Kuti were being bombarded by air, and most of the civilians hiding in the caves were killed. Come July, many started to surrender. As the army assured its victory, a united front against the Kurds was established by the Sadabad Pact. Around this time, Seyid Rıza made a final diplomatic gesture. A typewritten letter in French dated July 31, 1937 and signed in his name in the archives of the Foreign Office. This was an act of desperation - a measure of last recourse - as Seyid Rıza was losing allies left and right. Alişir, the founding member of the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* and a central figure of the Koçgiri Rebellion, had found refuge in Dersim thanks to Seyid Rıza, but was killed in Ağdat cave by Rehber. The events in Dersim received little press coverage in Turkey and the rest of the world. One exception was *Rabitah el-Arabiyah*, an Iraqi newspaper, which published a declaration on the 11th of August 1937, in which "two Kurdish political leaders, Imam Qaem and Isma'il Hakki, of Kirkuk" demanded an intervention. The two figures made allegations of "inhuman treatment ..., including the use of poison gas, and asked the foreign powers to send a commission ... to investigate the situation in the Dersim area." [266] Civilians were being killed, but few seemed to be preoccupied.

The last stand for Seyid Rıza was the night of August 16, 1937, in Bahtiyar (Birdo) near Tokmakbaba. He was not captured that night, but his son Şeyh Hasan, his second wife, and three of his grandchildren were killed. The attention of government forces was turned towards Mount Dujik. Military planes bombarded the valleys and the clearings of the forest-covered mountain. Those hiding in the caves were exterminated one by one, allegedly with the use of poison gas. But there was no trace of Seyid Rıza. He had retreated to a cave south of Dujik, but following the death of his last ally, Şahin Agha of the Bahtiyarlı clan, on August 26, he decided to turn himself in.[267]

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266 Arfa, *The Kurds*, 43-44; Kutschera, *Le Mouvement National Kurde*, 122 – 126 ;Also see (FO 371-20-864) & *Le Temps*, 18 August 1937.

267 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 138-140.

On September 10, 1937 Seyid Rıza surrendered himself in Erzincan. The news made the front page of national newspapers such as *Tan*, *Kurun*, and *Ulus* on September 13, 14, and 15. Meanwhile, a report from September 1937 testifies that the embassy in Beirut reported that eighteen Kurdish notables supported by Hoybûn, including relatives of Shaikh Said, were travelling from Damascus to Aleppo en route to Turkey. Among them was Shaikh Abdurrahim, the younger brother of Shaikh Said, who had escaped to Syria in 1927 and later supported the Ararat Rebellion. Ten years after his self-imposed exile, he entered Turkish territory only to be intercepted. He and his company - along with Kör Cemil Şeyda, another veteran of the 1925 revolt - were captured in a field in Batman, after facing machine gun fire. The Military Operation of 1937 was nearly over, although it would continue until early October. Seyid Rıza was escorted from Erzincan to Elazığ and tried along with fifty-seven other tribal notables. On November 18, along with six others, he was hanged at dawn, on Wheat Square in Elazığ. The others were his last surviving son Şah Hüseyin, the chief of the Kureyşan, Use Seydi, the chief of the Demenan, Cebrail, and his son, Kureşanlı Hasan, and Hayderanlı Kamer Agha and his son, Yusufanlı Fındık. The head of the rebellion had been cut off, and the operation was over. "On 19 November funeral ceremonies were held at the Kurdish mosque in Damascus for the executed chiefs and other victims of the repression of the rebellion."[268]

268 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 138-140; Arfa, *The Kurds*, 43-44; BCA, 115-803-36, Hoybuncuların Suriye'deki Kürtler arasında yaptıkları propaganda; and *Al-Akhbar*, Damascus, 22 November 1937.

2.13 The Terror of '38

The pain and memory of loss is so great that each affected culture has given them certain names. The Armenians call it *Medz Yeghern* or the "Great Crime," the Assyrians call it *Seyfo* or the "Sword," the Jews call it *Shoah* or the "Destruction," and the Dersimis call it *Tertele* or "the Great Destruction."[269] All these crimes against humanity were committed in the name of the nation, born in countries with a history of militaristic modernization. The modernization mission of the state was fully supported by and initially implemented for the military. This, in turn, created modernity's proverbial monster of Frankenstein, ethnic engineering projects. Apart from the "final solution," implemented during the world wars, in the Armeno-Assyrian and Jewish cases, the central state was aiming for assimilation. In Turkey the promotion of Turkification was central. This Turkification discourse had ideologues such as Munis Tekinalp (1883-1961), who identified the elements of Turkish identity as the Turkish nation (*ulus*), the Islamic community (*topluluk*), and European civilization (*uygarlık*). However, Tekinalp was mainly interested in the Turkification of people geographically detached from their native land; not those who still lived on the land of their ancestors. [270]

Colonial officers were products of the Late Ottoman period and continued to uphold an imperialistic view of their country and the world. When they looked at the people, they did not see representatives of unique cultures and traditions, but rather saw them as robots ready to be formatted and put to in the service of the nation. *Ottoman intellectuals ... were colonized intellectuals who, because of their lifestyle and 'westernization,' had become strangers to their own people*.[271]

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269 The word *tertele* is not in *Ferhengê Kırmanckî (Zazakî)-Tırkî*, Weşanxaneyê Veteyî, Istanbul, 2009. But Haydar Işık suggested the following meaning in an interview: *Tertele*; vurma, imha etme, yakma, soy-sopunu ortadan kaldırma.

270 Çağaptay, *Who is a Turk?*, 26; Jacob Landau, *Tekinalp: Turkish Patriot 1883-1961* (Nederlands Historich-Archaelogisch instituut te Istanbul, 1984); Munis Tekinalp, *Türkleştirme* (1928)-(2001).

271 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 31.

In other words, alienation not only affected the uprooted proletariat of urban industrial centers of the West. The modern nation state produced technocrats and military officers who were estranged from the people they were supposed to represent. The attitudes of political and military figures from the early republican period correspond with respect to their approach towards people who did not fit in the matrix of Turkishness.

One such figure complicit in the internal colonial rule of Dersim was General Apdullah Alpdoğan, who was largely responsible for the 1937 operation. The task of crushing the rebellion in Tunceli was still not completed in 1938. In fact, just as the Shaikh Said Rebellion had prompted the dissolution of the cabinet of Ali Fethi Okyar, because of the relative difficulty with which the 1937 military operation was completed, Prime Minister İnönü was relieved of his duties. On September 20, 1937 the first Celal Bayar government was instituted. Seyid Rıza had fallen, but Dersim was still relatively free. The 1938 Operation was determined to achieve complete submission of the people: "Three army corps, certain additional troops and some forty aircrafts were employed." In the end “chiefs and possibly a small portion of the inhabitants [had] been transported elsewhere in Turkey and a quantity of arms (12,000 pieces, according to the press) [had] been confiscated.” This was no easy feat. However, "the complete pacification of the Tunceli region ... depend[ed] on the progress of the measures which the Turkish authorities are undertaking .... The Turks are now engaged on a £T. 3 million programme of construction. Two arterial roads are ... under construction, both connecting Erzincan with Elazığ." Furthermore, Marshall Fevzi Çakmak apparently told the British diplomat that they were planning on damming the Munzur River at "its source thus forming an artificial lake in pleasant scenery and presumably providing water power" (recalling contemporary efforts).[272] Though all this construction was part of the Turkish *Mission Civilisatrice*, it was preceded by a veritable *Mission Terrorisatrice* due to a profound alienation of the central state from the local population.

272 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle “Kürt Sorunu,”* 310-311 (FO 424/282, Part XXXVI, P. 17-18, No.16).

"*After the fall of Dersim, there were no more major armed uprisings in Kurdistan.*" [273] In the span of fifty years between 1876 and 1936, Dersim experienced eleven military operations. The Military Operation of 1937 was followed up by yet another. The '38 Operation, which was to end the Dersim issue once and for all, was declared by Prime Minister Celal Bayar in the national assembly. The 1937 operation had been chiefly concerned with the six rebellious tribes, while the 1938 Operation was aimed at solving superstructure issues[274]

On January 2, 1938, the Inspector-General decided to empty the area between Munzur and Mercan rivers as well as the Kalan Valley. Armed men belonging to the Körabas, Keçel, and Balan tribes, none of which had rebelled the previous year, killed seven gendarmes in Makşut Uşağı village. The Mercan barracks were raided and two soldiers killed. The tribes understood that they would be targeted the next spring and were displaying a united front against the government. The Inspector-General interpreted these events as tribes asserting authority in the absence of former rulers: the Koçan, Körabas, Balan, and Aşuran chieftains were taking leading positions. The General Staff communicated an order on March 21, 1938 that a weapons-gathering and deportation operation would start in June. This "pacification" operation would target remaining rebels, the capture of escapees, and confiscation of weaponry. According to the plan, around five thousand people would be deported, the boundaries of forbidden zones would be marked, and public construction and infrastructure works would be started. However, this time the forces of the Inspectorate-General would be supported by the Third Army, who would be conducting an exercise. The air force had proven its utility the previous year, and eighteen planes were stationed in Elazığ airport ready to take off.[275]. The central state was gathering intelligence in the region prior to the operation. Rumors were circulating that the French supported an independent Kurdistan.

273 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 62.

274 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 298-300 (FO 424/280, P. 41, No: 3).

275 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 152-154.

Intelligence agents also reported that the tribes were planning raids on barracks in the district centers of Ovacık, Pülür, and Zeranik (Yeşilyazı), aiming to seize weapons and ammunitions as well as the bakery. Whether these raids took place or not, the '38 Operation started on the first of June 1938. Like the previous year, a line was established connecting Nazımiye, Keçiseken, Sin, and Karaoğlan, and rebel forces were pushed north of the line. The Kalan region was surrounded on all four sides. The forces of the Inspectorate-General were to sequentially clear the Mercan, Merho, and Kalan valleys. It was planned that by August 5th the forces of the Inspectorate-General would end their operation and, on August 8th the Third Army would take over. The army would conduct search and detect operations in the region, leaving no stone unturned until the end of the operation on August 26. The air fleet would facilitate the task of the soldiers in the field by preemptively bombarding the river valleys.[276]

Aviation was embraced by the Ottoman Empire in 1911. The first use of aviation in a military setting was during the Libyan War when the Italians used both balloons and planes. This compelled the Turks to accelerate their aviation research. In partnership with the German firm Harlan, the Turkish military envisaged dropping bombs from planes, but in the end, Turkey failed to employ military aviation in Libya.[277] The first veritable military use of a Turkish air fleet was during the Great War when German aviators helped train new pilots. Turkish aviators were relatively useful on the Eastern front, gunning down two enemy planes. Erzincan, which was occupied by the Russians, was bombarded by the famous pilot Vecihi Hürkuş (1896-1969). At the end of the war, the allied powers that occupied the capital ordered the abolition of Turkish aviation. Reconnaissance missions as well as bombardments were conducted by air during the War of Independence and as occupying French and Italian forces left Anatolian territory, the Turkish Air Force confiscated the military planes they left behind.[278]

276 BCA, 115.801.10, Dersim aşiretlerinin baskın hazırlığında oldukları, 05/04/1938; Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 154-155.

277 Primi, *L'Aviation Turque,* 13-18.

278 Primi, *L'Aviation Turque,* 24-41.

The newly founded republic had further use for airplanes. During the Shaikh Said rebellion, Bréguet and Junkers planes were used. People were devastated by aerial attacks that destroyed their refuges in the mountains. The use of planes was instrumental in the brevity of both the Shaikh Said and the Ararat rebellions. It was during the Dersim operation, where the adopted daughter of Atatürk, Sabiha Gökçen (1913-2001), the world's first female combat pilot, completed 32 hours of combat missions in 1937.[279] The air fleet was busy during the '38 Operation, as well. The planes started bombarding Koçan, Reskan, and Şemkan villages, the Amutka zone, and the Tagar Valley on the 21st of June, continuing uninterrupted for three days. As the warplanes started lifting off from Elazığ's Vertetil airport, the people once again found refuge in the region's many caverns. A touch of soft power was likewise displayed: towards the middle of July pamphlets were again being distributed by air carrying a call to surrender in Turkish and Zazaki.[280]

Intelligence gathered suggested that bombs as well as *Hochkis* machine rifles were being transported from Damascus towards Dersim on the night of July 17, 1938. This was being done by the Şemdinan tribe in collaboration with Yusuf Oğlu Zülfo of the powerful Bedirhan tribe, allegedly aided by the French.[281] This foreign aid in ammunition could not have turned the current around; once again, caverns were discovered and all life within them exterminated. Kalan had been the center of the operations. Forces then turned their attention to the Haydaran, and they pacified the tribe. On August 10, the Third Army stepped in, and its operation continued well into mid-September. Villages, hamlets, fields, and forests were set ablaze during the operation in which nearly eight thousand people were captured. At the same time, two zones were declared forbidden: from the line connecting Kutudere, Kırmızıdağ, and Haçlıdere to Karacakale on the skirts of Mount Mercan, and the Koçan region near Ali Strait and Tagar Valley.[282]

279 Primi, *L'Aviation Turque,* 45-47.

280 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 155.

281 BCA, 264-781-19, Fransızlar tarafından Dersim'e cephane gönderildiğine dair 3/8/1938.

282 Akyürekli, *Dersim Kürt Tedibi: 1937-1938,* 156-157; Balsan, *Les surprises du Kurdistan*, 16-17.

In mid-October dozens more rebels surrendered in Çemişgezek, and towards the end of the month nearly fifty more turned themselves in. The remaining rebels endeavored to survive the harsh winter, getting by well into the end of December by raiding small villages. As they were hiding out in forests such as in the Zarkavut Forest 10 kilometers west of Mameki, the army adopted a strategy of burning them out, amidst the protest of the local chief forest engineer assistant. An order was put out to capture all bandits remaining in the region dead or alive, and the mobile gendarmerie squadron scoured the region to hunt out the remaining rebels. Surrenders continued well into January 1939.[283]

The ’38 operation accomplished what the central state had been striving to achieve for almost a century; direct rule in Dersim. This was accomplished with the use of "terror," as violence in the name of progress was legitimate in the eyes of the modern state. The land was conquered, the people were terrorized, and the civilizing mission of the republic could finally begin. However, there was an important question: who controlled the land, the state or the people?

283 BCA, 111-751-22, 111-751-23, 111-751-25, 111-751-27, 111-751-28, 111-751-31.

3

The State History of Dersim (1938-1952)

3.1 The Land Question

The land question is directly related to agriculture and cannot be separated from slavery and serfdom. Since the advent of grain agriculture in Southwestern Asia in the Neolithic Era, there have been landowners who controlled the land and those who sowed it. The hierarchical capitalist societies developed into proto-states dependent upon marked division of labor among different strata of the population. Irrigation was dependent on this division, as it was the first infrastructure necessary for the increase of production. Then came the construction of walls, temples, harbors and ships, all of which relied on slave labor. Civilization meant slavery, and even freemen who owned land had to serve the slave-based economy, as taxes became as certain as death.

A freeman tied to land was a serf, and as in Europe and Russia, his position was codified according to local culture. A rather different form of social organization arose in Kovia, with varying regional characteristics, that

became codified following its Islamization. Serfdom was less widely established because geographical factors rendered agriculture rather difficult; hence, the concept of private property was relatively alien, and a notion of communal ownership was more prevalent. As in the case of Dersim, much of the land belonged to no individual but to a community; in other words, the land was collectively owned. This was facilitated by the fact that there was no need for large irrigation projects that only a sovereign or feudal lord would have the capital to sponsor. Highland society was a mirror image of that of the lowlands, and the impenetrable geography of places such as Dersim constituted a refuge for those who left their land behind (*terk-i vatan*) to avoid paying taxes to a tyrannous state. These circumstances motivated a continuous movement of populations throughout centuries of chaotic state competition in Southwestern Asia. There are only a few tranquil centuries in the millennium-long history of this part of the world. For instance, during the Mongol invasions, farmers not only feared for their lives but had to pay nearly eighty percent of their produce in taxes.[284]

Land in the Ottoman Empire belonged entirely to the sultan. However, under the *tımar* system, use of land was granted for military and fiscal obligations. Aside from the military, religious and other local notables were also granted the use of land. These figures reigned over peasants who worked the land and paid taxes. Pamuk writes that the population of Anatolia in the early modern period, which numbered around 9 million, consisted primarily of rural peasants; only 20 percent of the population, composed mainly of tribes were pastoral nomads. The legibility of this portion of the population was low because of their transhumance; hence, they avoided paying "the cost of Empire," which fell on the shoulders of the peasantry. The state increased taxes whenever the treasury was in need. The peasantry was exploited through heavy taxes, price fixing, and loansharking. This vicious cycle led some to abandon sedentary agriculture and take up nomadic animal husbandry, over which the state had less control. In the seventeenth century, an episode called the *Büyük Kaçgun* (Great Flight) occurred following the Celali rebellions, as an

284 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 121-126.

ever-increasing number of peasants left their localities in the plains in favor of the mountains. This meant that the ratio of sedentary to nomadic peoples, which had been an order of 80-20, changed in favor of the latter. The highland tribes had an influx of new blood, which strengthened tribal ownership of land. In fact, according to Toprak, the tribes became the principal obstacle to state projects in the eastern provinces. The underlying issue of land ownership could not be solved, and a tabula rasa in the form of land reform was needed. Ömer Lutfi Barkan was assigned to research land reforms applied in Eastern and Southern Europe, and he concluded that the same reforms could not be applied in Eastern Turkey due to delicate political balances. He was referring to the tribe-state relations that had resulted in informally recognized tribal ownership of land. Indeed, most of the land in Dersim had never been in the possession of the sultan, except for Çemişgezek, where a law from 1541 indicates that the town had regular fiscal relations with the capital since the sixteenth century.[285]

Land reform in Turkey could not be accomplished without the destruction of tribalism, which in turn would upset the public order. Nomadic tribes constituted around a third of the Kurdish population in the middle of the nineteenth century. According to custom, land was collective property. Tribes had either been granted the land, which meant that they were under state protection, or they had nearly settled on and owned it independently of the state. Tribal ownership of land was confusing and illegible from the point of view of the state. The line separating land owned by a tribal chief or that belonging to the head of a clan within that tribe was virtually indistinguishable. The question of answering who owned a particular plot that belonged to a tribe was therefore complicated: was it the beg (tribal chief) or the agha (head of clan)? In principle, it belonged to neither of them but to the tribe as a whole, which made no sense to the modern state. Hence, we see again and again an effort to determine who was the local sovereign of the tribe, because from the

285 Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *XV ve XVI inci asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Ziraî Ekonominin Hukukî ve Malî Esasları* vol.1 (Istanbul: Bürhaneddin Matbaası, 1943), 188-191; Pamuk, "The Ottoman empire in comparative perspective," 37- 129; Toprak, in *Doğu Sorunu*, XII.

Ottoman point of view, the tribal chief and head of a clan resembled a micro version of the sultan. They had nearly unlimited power, and their titles were hereditary and restricted to the male lineage. The tribal chief even collected a type of tax, which consisted of limited animal products such as wool, butter, cheese, and meat.[286]

The tribal structure as redefined by the state in an attempt to increase its legibility resulted in a profound injustice vis-à-vis the masses. Most farmers had no land, and one percent possessed more than half of it. Nearly eighty percent of all arable land in the larger region belonged to landlords. With the emergence of capitalism, these landlords began to play the new role of moneylender. Sometimes they would also be involved in establishing the commercial link between the urban market and tribal products. These multiple roles made the landlord the absolute master over the peasants, at least in the lowlands.[287] The dominant mode of production was sharecropping, a pre-capitalist form of agricultural production with a feudal quality.

Serfdom in Kurdistan was mostly imposed by tribal and clan pressure, which made it impossible for the serf to leave the service of the beg or agha. Moreover, state powers in both Iran and the Ottoman Empire returned serves who left their land, which meant that tribal serfdom was legitimated by the dominant states. Other than, the land in the possession of the chiefs, the water supplied by nature, and the labor furnished by serfs, two more elements were needed for a successful harvest: animals and seeds. The return on the seeds sown was at least 1 to 5. Qasımlo estimates that 840 kilos of wheat were harvested from one hectare of land and that the sharecropper received two thirds of this produce, but at least twenty percent was needed for seeds for the next season. In other words, peasants always needed either more seeds or more foodstuffs. Qasımlo differentiates among four sharecropping practices in Kurdistan: *Nîwekara,* or equal cut; *Seyekbar*, where the peasant receives only a third of the produce; *Sekut*, where the sharecropper receives two thirds of the produce; and *Dawudu*, where landowners take twenty percent.[288]

286 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 132-133.

287 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 146-148.

288 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 161-167.

Sharecropping presented a problem for the modern state more than for the peasant. Whatever the case, the peasant would have to relinquish a considerable part of his produce. Under sharecropping, the tribal chief owned the land and could help his kin him with animals and seeds. The situation of the peasant was more difficult when this tribal chief was taken out of the picture, as he now had to rely on a far away, foreign administration and a ruthless banking system. The modern state, however, was happy to remove these tribal chiefs, who were taxing the peasants before the government could. In order to increase legibility, the government wanted to break up "the large estates of the chief and distributing them among the tribesmen."[289] The vision of an "egalitarian" rural society was deeply engrained in the Turkish republican bureaucracy.

However, this land redistribution was not direct. In places where land was seized from tribal chiefs, it was not directly given to the peasants. Instead, it entered the position of the state. For example, in Kadımatrak, a subdistrict of Çapakçur, 300 dunams of land fit for agriculture were owned by the state treasury. This meant that 30 hectares of land, which could potentially produce, more than 25 tons of wheat per annum, were left idle. A citizen of Kiğı, Dilo Mehmet Çakır, a father of five originally from Pertek, said of his lack of land that he needed 30 dunams to sustain his family. This can be articulated as follows: the yearly needs of a family of seven in the Greater Dersim region amounted to a little over two and a half tons of grain, or 360 kilograms per person. Peasants such as Cönek'li Ali from Arık and Yusuf Adem from Ili had only two dunams of land each, and harvests from such small plots would not even feed a family of three. Nonetheless, in the village of Arık, 100 dunams of land were left idle. Following the Dersim Operation there was a great deal of confusion among the peasants and certainly misuse of arable land. Abandoned properties, *emvali metruke*, were left behind by those who were killed, or exiled, and local peasants could not use of them without the prior authorization of the state. These abandoned properties in Kiğı were mostly found in the Armenian villages of Hugas and Hopuz. [290]

289 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu*," 122 (FO 424/269, p. 42, No. : 36).

290 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu,* 14 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

The locals were aware of the necessity of a title deed to legitimate their ownership of the land vis-à-vis the state, but one local attested that they were powerless to do so. He was referring to the registration fees..[291]

The Republic naturally wanted to regularize ownership of land via title deeds, which was relatively easy in the lowlands. For instance, title deed affairs in Çemişgezek were well organized compared to in the rest of Tunceli province. Each district had a title deed registration officer with direct links to the Diyarbakır office. However, in Hozat, the administrative center during the late imperial period, only 832 title deed forms were registered between 1936 and 1943 with a noticeable drop between 1937 and 1941, which corresponds to the military operations and their aftermath.

Title deeds had regained importance after 1941, which coincided with the mobilization and absence of the Fourth Inspector General. And even though increased importance was placed on title deeds by the people of Hozat, 60 percent of the land in the district remained untitled in 1943. Five years after the ’38 operation, the land question was still not resolved. However, the absence of deeds did not keep pro-government tribes from claiming ownership of the land. Rebel tribes were dispossessed, and the treasury allocated their lands to certain individuals. A local citizen in Mazgirt, Kâzım Tokat, claimed that the treasury had already given them land and that they wanted the title deeds as a guarantee. In Nazımiye, another district inhabited mostly by pro-government tribes, only some of the lands in the possession of the locals were registered in their names. Citizens who had inherited their land from their forefathers had not yet received title deeds in their own name, the reason for which was, again, the lack of financial means to pay bureaucratic fees. In contrast, there was virtually no advancement in title deed registration in Pülümür. The main reason was that the aghas had already registered most of the land in their own names. The state could not abolish tribalism. The most powerful chiefs were exterminated, but many local chieftains with lesser authority accepted the authority of the state and survived. There is an indirect correlation between surviving tribalism and title deed registration.[292]

291 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 18 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

292 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 233-235 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The land question cannot be understood without the settlement law. The *İskan Kanunu* (no. 2510) entered into effect in 1934, and some of its articles were changed in 1935 (by law no. 2848). The signification of *iskan* did not only signify, as it did in the past, the settlement of *muhacir* from outside the country. The description of the settlement law exemplified the Turkish *Mission Civilisatrice*, which was created to "remove the backwardness that have ruled the nation, put an end to nomadic living, and assume and propagate Turkish culture." In other words, the law was meant to end nomadism and the remnants of the Ancien Régime through cultural Turkification. Article 10 of the law stated that the legal personhood of the tribe as well as recognition of chiefs, begs, and aghas as well as sheikhs were rescinded and that nomadic forms of social organization were to be abolished. It was decided that all land formerly recognized as belonging to tribes or tribal chiefs, begs, aghas, and sheikhs were to enter the possession of the state. The exception to this was instances in which the land was generally known to belong to the tribe and in which individuals belonging to the tribe had no other land in their possession. In these cases, the decision was left to the local administrative council, and became official with the recognition of the governor. In relation to Dersim, the application of the settlement law was delayed and came into effect only with the military operations of 1937-38. [293]

The special law of Tunceli voted on the GNAT in 1935 detailed in Article 33 that the governor-commander had the extraordinary power to displace any individual or family as he saw fit within the borders of the province and even to banish them completely. The same year, the second article of the Settlement Law was changed by Law 2848, which declared that zone 3 was forbidden for settlement and residence. Necmeddin Sahir wrote that these legal measures were meant to end nomadic life in Dersim. Around a hundred tribes living in and around Tunceli were thus legally abolished. Some antigovernment chiefs were forcibly displaced while others were "disciplined and done away with."[294]

293 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 238-239 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

294 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 239-240 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943); T.C., *Resmî Gazete*, no.2733, (21 Haziran 1934), 4003.

The government began its reforms in 1936, and the armed bandits (*haydut*) started their resistance (*mukavemet*) in March 1937. In response to the uprising, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, Chief of the General Staff Field Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, Army inspectors, Inspector Generals, and other state agents met in Elazığ and decided to declare some localities forbidden zones to displace certain individuals. Following this meeting, Decree 2/6662, decided in May, determined that two thousand people were to be sent to the west. The unrest in Dersim continued during the winter of 1937, especially around Kalan where armed bandits acted out against the government. As the '38 operation neared its end, Decree 2/9409 declared Kalan and some surrounding zones to be forbidden. A further five thousand were sent west, some of whom were used as a labor force for mining and industry. Others did not comply and some of them took up arms against government forces. In the meantime, state officials had to deal with the problems resulting from dispossession.[295]

The Articles 26, 27, and 28 of the Settlement Law determined the terms of management. According to these measures, those deported from zone 3 were allowed to bring their belongings with them, but their properties were repossessed by the state. Those who possessed a *tasarruf vesikası* or title deed were given an *istihkak mazbatası*, an official certificate of claim. These measures were nearly identical to the Turkification of the Armenian and Greek properties. Those that left their land upon orders had to liquidate their properties within one year. Those who did not, saw their property repossessed by the state. The *istihkak mazbata* given by the state could be used as a debit note for settlement in their new province. These *mazbatas* could also be used to purchase the land and property of the treasury. This procedure not only resulted in an overburdening of state agencies but also created rumors and complaints of injustice among the people. An explanation for the overall confusion had its roots Law 1097 from 1927, which regulated the transfer of some individuals from the East to the West.[296]

295 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 240 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

296 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 241 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943); Nevzat Onaran, *Emvâl-i metrûke olayı: Osmanlı'da ve Cumhuriyet'te Ermeni ve Rum mallarının Türkleştirilmesi* (Istanbul: Belge, 2010).

In many instances, state agents were unclear about which law should be applied in particular cases, Law 1097 or Law 2510? As a result, a considerable number of properties could not be bought or sold. The reasons these properties were not liquefied were as follows:

1- There was no title deed or no *tasarruf vesika* proving possession.
2- The proof of possession was lost during transportation.
3- Properties were still registered under the names of ancestors and the registration of their hereditary transmission had not been done.
4- Multiple people, some of whom were lost, deceased, or had been transported to the West, owned a single property in common.
5- Lands registered in the cadaster could not be locally authenticated.
6- In some instances, the treasury ended up paying more than the value.
7- Lands that required to be liquidated did not find any buyers.[297]

Lands that could not be liquidated were to be nationalized. This, in turn, resulted in lawsuits by the former owners. The provision of the state was that if the plaintiffs had no other land, they would be treated as any other landless peasant and included in the land redistribution program. Except for lands in vacated, forbidden zones, the lands of deportees who possessed a title deed or *tasarruf vesikası* were to be liquidated. If sold, the revenue would be safeguarded until the former owners applied to the authorities. Meanwhile lands without official documentation remained in limbo, not yet nationalized and illegal to occupy. For all these reasons, the liquidation of lands in Dersim remained an unresolved issue as late as 1943. As long as the present laws were maintained the problem would remain unresolved. It could actually be easily resolved since arable lands were limited in the largely mountainous region. And it was a pressing issue that arable lands be put to use by the locals. For instance, in Çemişgezek land owned by deportees could not be put to use because of the lack of title deeds. On the other hand, in the zone surrounding the town, which had been emptied out, 600 hectares of land belonged to the treasury, and their redistribution to the landless farmers was under way.[298]

297 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 242 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).
298 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 242-243 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The number of individuals who applied for land redistribution was around 4,000 - or 780 families. But only 222 among them - 46 families – had been given land by 1941. The total amount of land given to them was 257 hectares and 9 acres. Things moved slowly because there was no *milli emlak* (national real estate) officer in charge of these affairs; people who already had other state functions were put in charge of land redistribution. Furthermore, many had to pay transportation fees out of pocket, so land redistribution reached a complete stop in 1942.[299]

In the district of Hozat, an anonymous citizen protested that the settlement affairs did not advance, and the villagers could not buy the properties. They were too poor, and the landless peasants remained as slaves. This outcry was justified; the situation benefited the wealthy. These measures did not help eradicate local serfdom; they only replaced those who owned the land. In Mameki (Kalan), farmers did own some land but proclaimed that it was insufficient and asked that the government give them more. In the Kocaoğlan village of Mazgirt, Ahmet Sünger said: "We work as sharecroppers, but we hardly get by. We have no land. They say that they will give us land, but we see no results." Most of the land, in and around Mazgirt effectively belonged to a limited group of people, but the landlords did not make sufficient use of the lands in their possession. Hence, much of the land was left idle. All three parties concerned - landlords, villagers, and even the state itself - were hurt by this situation.[300]

There simply were not enough people to plow the land possessed by the new landlords. In the most arable part of inner Dersim, Ovacık, Hızır Erer from the village of Zeranik explained his frustrations: "Our village is made up of sharecroppers. Our government has to give us land in order for us to abandon sharecropping. Aghas not only take fifty percent of our produce but also a seventh of the rest. They only give us seeds, and we sow and harvest. When they take more than half of the harvest, we are left destitute. We beg our government to save us from sharecropping."[301]

299 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 243-244 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

300 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 244 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

301 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 244-245 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The land issues in Nazımiye, Pertek, and Pülümür were not advancing according to plan, either. Arable lands in Nazımiye and Pülümür were few, and agriculture was far from sustainable.

The land distribution in these two districts was finalized, but people could not live off their land. And in any case, just like in most eastern provinces, liquidated lands in Tunceli were not purchased by poor peasants but by wealthy landlords, which strengthened the position of the aghas. The deputy of Tunceli thought that a new law was needed to stop the monopolization of the land and redistribute it for the benefit of landless peasants. Instead of their liquefaction, the lands left behind by those who were sent to the West could be directly nationalized by the state and then redistributed to the needy through the institution of commissions.[302]

The situation of forbidden, emptied zones was perhaps even more complicated. Article 2 of the Settlement Law defined these zones as places that were to be emptied for various reasons including health, economy, culture, politics, security, and discipline. The Article 13 of the same law stated that people who lived on marshland, infertile land, or land that was dangerous or forbidden by the military, as well as people implicated for cultural, political, administrative, social, economic, or military reasons, would be sent away and resettled.

Following these drastic legal measures and with the support of Decrees 2/6662 and 2/9409, declared on 20 May 1937 and 6 August 1938, certain parts of the province were declared forbidden zones to be emptied. People caught in these zones were arrested, and the natural wealth of these localities wasted away. In Çemişgezek, these zones were constituted of villages with good water, fruit trees, grasslands, and the most fecund land of the district. The inhabitants of the central town depended on these localities for their subsistence both in terms of agriculture and animal husbandry. There were fourteen villages in this emptied zone, where agriculture was forbidden, fruit was left uncollected, and the trees dried up because of neglect. The unharvested grasslands became nests for grasshoppers.[303]

302 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 245 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

303 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 246-247 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Furthermore, the inhabitants of the town of Çemişgezek possessed the title deeds to fields within the boundaries of the emptied zones, which were also within the jurisdiction of the local municipality. But the people could not legally make use of them for agriculture, for their fruits, or as feeding grounds for livestock. Many resorted to illegal actions, namely making use of these forbidden lands fully conscious of the repercussions that would follow. Meanwhile, grasshoppers nesting in the uncollected grass of the meadows hurt millet production in fields neighboring the forbidden zone. The case of wild animals was similar, because hunting in the zone was also forbidden. An anonymous citizen of Hozat exclaimed that they could not make use of the natural wealth in these zones. The yield of fertile walnut and other fruit trees stayed uncollected, the grass went to waste as harmful animals multiplied, especially boars and wolves. Administrative officers confirmed that hogs, wolves, and even bears had multiplied and presented a consequent danger to the surrounding areas. In Mameki, what is currently Tunceli city center, an anonymous citizen said: “The dense oak forest within the forbidden zone in our district lays wasted. We cannot make use of the walnut and almond trees. Aside from this, even arable lands are just standing there.” The deputy proposed that temporary police stations be established near fertile fields inside the forbidden zones and that agriculture be allowed under their supervision. The son of Muhtar Ali, Süleyman Kılıç from the village of Çanakçi Ulya in the Mazgirt district, stated that: "The land near the hamlets that were destroyed within the forbidden zones need to be allowed to be farmed.”[304]

Hamlets (*koms*), which were generally situated near fertile land, had been demolished, as the people were desperate. Hüseyin Sandal from Mameki complained that no land had been given to him in exchange for his land in the forbidden zone. An elder citizen from Ovacık named Lilo Erdil made a similar statement to the deputy: "We live in Şadular village near Munzur Baba. However, we cannot make use of our land since our original village of Susvenk was declared a forbidden zone after the operations. We have to be allowed to farm; we are miserable.”[305]

304 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 248-249 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

305 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 249 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

After the terror, local peasants were in a state of desperation. When the deputy inquired about the situation of Lilo Erdil, the authorities replied that his lands were not included in the forbidden zones but had only been emptied during the military operations. They were allowed to be cultivated. Nevertheless, hamlets could not be rebuilt in their proximity. So officially, it was forbidden to resettle these lands even if agriculture was allowed. The catch-22 was that agriculture in high-altitude areas far from lowland villages and towns was nearly impossible to accomplish without small residences in the form of traditional hamlets. The authorities, who did not want permanent residences for strategic purposes, allowed tents.[306]

At the end of the day, the people needed to eat. To survive, they resorted to illegal farming, as exemplified in the case of the emptied zones of Pülümür. The Bayburtlu Mezra and the lands of the villages of Göbürge Dere and Gersunut were secretly sown between the months of September and December 1942. Authorities became aware of the situation when the snow began to melt in spring 1943 and the seeds began to sprout. They had no legal right to confiscate the harvest from this illegal agriculture, but to discourage the continuation of such criminal cultivation, the fiscal directorate confiscated it with the permission of the Tunceli governorate. The produce was actually burned following an order of the governorate dated June 23, 1943. [307]

The people of Pülümür voiced their frustration at the destruction of their food supply, which they claimed to have grown on land to which they held title deeds and they had harvested for the previous four years with no such repercussions. The order of the assistant governor of Tunceli that the harvest of 1943 in the forbidden zones be burned was not only illogical but created great discontent and many complaints. The fact was that forbidding zones prevented the local people from benefiting from the natural wealth of their land. While indigenous people were forbidden, the report suggests that civil and military officers collected fruits in the forbidden zones, consumed or sold them, and even axed walnut trees for use in furniture.[308]

306 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 249 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

307 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 250 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

308 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 250-251 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

3.2 Administrative Inadequacy And Ill Governance:

The institution of the Inspectorate-General did little to improve the lives of the people. The only thing that mattered was the interests of the state. Considering the extraordinary wartime conditions, it was appropriate for the Fourth Inspectorate-General to govern Tunceli, even as some in the assembly had been proposing for a couple of years that the Inspectorate-Generals be eliminated. The arguments in favor of their elimination were financial - in relation to their heavy share of the budget - and administrative – in relation to the difficulties of governing the regions under their authority. To these arguments, the deputy of Tunceli responded that even if Inspectorate-Generals in other regions could be lifted, especially the Third in the North (Black Sea) and the Second in the Northwest (Thrace), the East was another story. Here, not only should the institution be maintained but perhaps more subdivisions were needed to better administrate the region, for the future lied in the East.[309]

The view of an idealist statesman that the future of the country lay in the East can be interpreted to mean that if the state failed in the East, its future would be compromised. The deputy of Tunceli was worried. Even though during the institution's first years, the Inspectorate-General made valuable contributions to progress in the region, it was apparent by the early 1940s that the administration was not functioning properly. There were two chief reasons. First was that; the governor-commander of Tunceli had additional duties in three neighboring provinces. Second, the same individual, who held the rank of lieutenant general, left the region for Maraş in accordance with the mobilization during the world war. Hence because of the tactical war effort, the person in charge of the governance of Tunceli had three separate duties: governor-commander of Tunceli, Fourth Inspector General, and Lieutenant General in the Turkish Armed Forces. He was conducting his civilian, administrative duties through orders wired from Maraş, a city that he could not leave for months on end.[310]

309 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 204 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943). [Çünki geleceğimiz doğudadır]

310 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 205 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

This naturally created a lax atmosphere in the administration of the four provinces, as military duties took precedence over civilian ones. In his absence, the chief advisor and other advisors were presumably to play an essential role in the governance of the region. But Necmeddin Sahir noticed that not only did they rarely leave Elazığ to travel and work in the four provinces under their authority, but some of the positions also remained vacant. The merging of the positions of governor-commander and Fourth Inspector General worked in the state's favor during the military operations. However, the military engagements of the Inspector General in the national war effort made it difficult for him to perform his duties in the region. Communication between Maraş and Elazığ was difficult. In his absence, the assistant governor saw to most urgent administrative matters, coming and staying in Elazığ for only a few days.[311]

The problematic governance increased when the Inspector General Alpdoğan quit because of health issues. The Ministry of the Interior proceeded to put his chief advisor in charge of the duties of the Inspector General and the assistant governor in charge of provincial affairs until the nomination of the next inspector general, who was to be Muzaffer Ergüder (1943-46). This created a situation in which a major administrative conflict arose between the two opposing figures. The chief advisor (*başmüşavir*), who de facto exercised the function of the commander-governor of Tunceli when the Inspector General was away from Elazığ, and the governor assistant (*vali muavini*) disputed the extent of each other's authority over provincial affairs. This dispute over administrative power by these interim state agents in the absence of a properly nominated Inspector General had its roots in the period in which the former Inspector General was not present in Elazığ. The chief advisor and assistant governor were working under the same roof in Elazığ, and their dispute - at the highest echelons of local governance - created ugly rumors among the people. The stand-in Inspector General and the stand-in governor each proclaimed jurisdiction based on the respective legal codes defining their positions. They acted without mutual consultation coordination. [312]

311 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 206. (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

312 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 206 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

This blatant display of poor governance at the provincial level was not hazardous. It resulted from a profound disconnect between the people and the regime imposed upon them by the state. The Greater Dersim region which roughly corresponded with the Fourth Inspectorate General, was not only governed by officials who did not hail from the region but had been divided into provinces that made little sense. This last point is evident not only in the creation of the province of Tunceli but also that of the neighboring province of "a thousand lakes," Bingöl. Arguably, both Erzincan, as a historic city situated along the northern trade route, and Elazığ, which had replaced the historic city of Harput as an important urban center in the south, deserved to be separate provinces. But Tunceli and Bingöl were the pure inventions of the republic with no substance whatsoever.[313]

Administrative divisions are supposed to be efficient and improve or at least facilitate governance. In theory, they are also supposed to make sense, both in name and definition. In name, they should relate to a historical past that constitutes and reinforces the imaginary community of the locals, and their definition should make sense in relation to biogeography. Historical Dersim is situated roughly between Karasu and Murat rivers and had ill-defined and malleable frontiers, which mostly ended at foothills of the mountains. But then again, the plains immediately surrounding the Dersim Highlands were arguably an integral part of the region's socioeconomic structure and can be referred to as the Dersim lowlands. The administrative revision of 1935 sought to divide a previously connected, related geography. New provinces with new frontiers and new names appeared. The highlands became Tunceli and the eastern lowlands, previously called Genç, became Bingöl. But both provinces were disconnected from their administrative pasts. The "land of a thousand lakes" presents an interesting perspective in relation to the civilizing mission in Dersim. Because there are no natural plains in the highlands of Tunceli except for Ovacık, Bingöl is more favorable for physiocratic development. If the state really wanted to develop agriculture, infrastructure, and commerce, Bingöl had to be the target.

313 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 133 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

There had been confusion concerning the chain of command since the 1930s. Writing from Diyarbakır in 1936, Zeynel Abidin Özmen expressed his concerns about the disconnection between his provincial administration, namely the First Inspectorate-General, and the bureaucracy of the massive ministries in Ankara. [314] In a telegram written in October 1936 Özmen expressed concern over the security of the region and reminded authorities in Ankara that there still were no kaymakams in Nutki, Eruh, Lice, Gürpınar, Şemdinli, and Erciş. These nominations were the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, which was also the direct superior of the Inspectorates General. The fact that the Inspector General was aware and worried about the empty kaymakam positions reflected a sustained disconnect between the capital and governance in the East. As a matter of fact, the language of the Inspector General is proof of a clear miscommunication if not disregard for the region in the capital: "I wrote twice before to no avail."[315] Ankara did as it pleased, which is apparent in the administrative division of the region.

The Grand National Assembly enacted laws concerning the administrative division of Tunceli on December 25, 1935 (Law 2885), and on June 6, 1937 (Law 3223). On January 1, 1936, Law 2885 entered into effect and the Article 6 outlined that the Çemişgezek, Hozat, Mazgirt, Nazımiye, Ovacık, and Pertek counties of Elazığ province and the Pülümür district of Erzincan province were being reorganized into Tunceli province. The Munzur mountain range and Euphrates river were its natural boundaries. To the east, the Peri River formed another natural boundary, and the eastern districts of Karakoçan and Kiğı district were left to Elazığ province, and Bingöl province, respectively. To the south, the Murat River formed the natural boundary with the province of Elazığ, and the western frontier was naturally drawn by the Euphrates. Law 3223 entered into effect on June 23, 1937 and Article1 declared Mameki to be the administrative center of the province and created the district of Kalan. With these administrative changes, Tunceli had 8 counties, 21 townships, and 388 villages. The landmass of the province was 7,604 square kilometers.[316]

314 BCA, 70-458-3, 1. Um.Müf.'in yol, yapı, kültür tahsisatına dair 23/3/1936 Diyarbekir.

315 [Daha önce iki defa yazdım. Cevap bile alamadım].

316 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 191-193 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Although certain administrative changes could be done to improve governance. First, Pülümür had long been a part of Erzincan province, and the locals insisted as late as 1943 that they wished to be reassigned to the province, although conditions did not allow it to take place. The administrative difficulties of Tunceli reached to the lowest levels: 20 villages connected to the Başvartanik subdistrict of Çemişgezek were 7-8 hours away from the district center, so habitants felt more connected to Kemaliye district 2-6 hours away. The muhtars and elected councils of the villages concerned wanted their villages to be tied to the Kemaliye district, and they reaffirmed this wish in 1942. The issue of administrative divisions not only concerned the possibility that some villages would be tied to other provinces; even within Tunceli there were difficulties. For instance, logically, the Pah subdistrict of Mazgirt should have been tied to Kalan district.[317]

Article 6 of Law 2885 declared that the city of Elazığ city, not Mameki, was to be the provisory provincial capital. The situation had not changed by 1943; however, the deputy of Tunceli thought that the move could be undertaken right away as new republican buildings in the present-day city of Tunceli had progressively eclipsed those in Hozat. The question of the new administrative center of the province was delicate. Those in Pertek thought that their town center was most appropriate, while in Mameki, a certain Ali Arslan recommended that the provincial capital be established there because Mameki was in the middle of the province, unlike the frontier town of Pertek. In Hozat, Mustafa Apaydın stated that Pertek was inappropriate and that Hozat needed to become the provincial center again. But some provincial authorities declared that the terrain of Hozat was not accessible for development and progress and that Pertek was the most suitable for a provincial capital as it was the "door" to Tunceli. The roads intersected there, it was suitable for construction development, and it had water and good air. However, Necmeddin Sahir was skeptical because Hozat was at the midpoint of the Pertek-Ovacık road and hence occupied a more central position. Moreover, the government building constructed in Pertek in recent years was relatively small and

317 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 193-195 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

insufficient to accommodate all of the departments of the provincial administrations. Furthermore, there were no lodgings for officials. In Hozat, on the other hand there was a government building, two large barracks, a gendarmerie, a primary school and a municipal building, 390 houses, 133 shops, 5 bakeries, and even a People's House. Thus, the deputy thought that Hozat was a more viable option for accommodating the temporary provincial capital.[318]

Two other towns were seen as possible candidates for the provincial capital. One was the small town of Sin in Hozat district, where the village of Deşt had once existed. The republican government had already constructed barracks, a school, and some lodgings in the town, which was on the Hozat-Mameki road in the middle of the province. Two disadvantages were that it was situated on low ground, which was a strategic disadvantage, and that there was not sufficient water. The second potential candidate at the time was the center of the Kalan district, Mameki, which was on the main road linking the railroads to the north and south. The government choice of the town's location during the military operations was strategic. It was located at the point where the Harçik and Munzur tributaries converged. There were already constructions there built by the republic, such as a government building, a school, barracks, and lodgings. These were favorable for the establishment of provincial administrative offices. An iron bridge over the Munzur was under construction, and the flatlands on the other side was sufficient to facilitate additional urban development. Moreover, it was at the intersection of several roads including the main road connecting Pülümür and Pertek, the one connecting Nazımiye and Mazgirt to the east, and the Mameki-Hozat road passing through Sin. Çemişgezek, Hozat and Ovacık could also be easily accessed from it. Climatic conditions were favorable, and water and electricity could be supplied by the Munzur River. There was a general consensus that the center of Tunceli province be situated in the district center of Kalan, Mameki. In 1946, law 4993 finally made this official, this and Mameki/Kalan became the city of Tunceli.[319]

318 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 195-197 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

319 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 198-200 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).



Map 14 Sancak of Dersim. Source: houshamadyan.org[320]



Map 15 Province of Tunceli. Source: kgm.gov.tr[321]

320 http://www.houshamadyan.org/tur/haritalar/mamuret-uel-aziz-vilayeti/dersim-sancagi.html, (accessed December 18, 2017).

321 http://www.kgm.gov.tr/Sayfalar/KGM/SiteTr/Bolgeler/8Bolge/Iller/IlTunceli.aspx, (accessed December 18, 2017).

Maps 14 and 15 show the drastic transformation of the administration of Dersim from a *sancak* connected to the province of Mamuret-ül-Aziz to the province of Tunceli. With regard to the former sancak center of Hozat and the new city center of Tunceli, both were strategically situated at the center of their administrative divisions. Their selection is not a reflection of cultural or economic preoccupations, but essentially military ones. This militaristic approach is evident in the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire and reflects the shortsightedness of civilian administration. This is clear when the legislative confusion that underlay the endeavor of integrating Dersim into the nation-state is examined.

The Tunceli Law 2884 entered into effect in 1936, and it was initially supposed to last for a period of four years, though it was decided in July 1939 to renew the law until the end of 1942. Near the end of 1942, it was prolonged for another two years. It would normally have ended on December 21, 1944 but did not. This lack of legislative forethought is indicative of the government's inadequate governance of the region. The special administration of Tunceli was unique in the country. The governor-commander had the powers of an Executive Council (*İcra Vekilleri Heyeti*) in terms of provincial affairs and complete control over his officers. He could change the boundaries and centers of districts and sub-districts. He could, unlike the First Inspector General, directly choose the kaymakams and district chiefs among active officers on the conditions of receiving the blessing of the Ministry of National Defense and presenting the nomination to the Ministry of the Interior. He could also apply legal sentences to civilian and military officers according to the law. The governor-commander could delay sentences and order executions. In accordance with laws 1164 and 5858 from 1927, the Fourth Inspectorate-General was created by Decree 4/3823 enacted on January 6, 1936. The Tunceli governor-commander thus also became the Fourth Inspector General, specified in the first article of Law 2884. The Fourth Inspectorate-General, which at first included Bingöl, Tunceli, and Elazığ provinces, was widened to include Erzincan province on June 17, 1937 by Decree 2/6812.[322]

322 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 200-203 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Unlike Erzincan, Tunceli had only recently come under the state's authority. Moreover, transport in Tunceli was interrupted during the long winter (October-May), and communication with the provincial center was maintained solely by telephone and telegraph. It was therefore essential that local administrations be inspected during the three-four month long summers when travel was possible. Inspections needed to be done periodically and not only in response to complaints. This was necessary for good governance and helped increase government presence in the region.[323]

The fact that some counties in the province went uninspected for a long time gave way to the increase and propagation of various rumors. Inspection depended on the Ministry of Interior, on one hand, and the Tunceli Governorate, on the other. The necessity of inspection was in part related to the special administration of the province. Public opinion in Tunceli, a far as the deputy could tell, was divided over the special nature of their administration. Some expressed contentment. A citizen in Mazgirt indicated that three elements periodically disturbed the peace in Dersim: armed Bandits, spiritual chiefs called Seyids, and ashirat aghas called reis. The citizen stated his appreciation of the government for ridding the region of banditry. People in Çemişgezek, Pertek, and even Pülümür conveyed similar sentiments, but some people expressed grief over the special administration of their region. In Mameki, one citizen voiced his feeling that the state perceived them as adopted children. In Mazgirt a citizen from Muhdu expressed that although their weapons had been collected, the sayyid and aghas maintained their power and continued to operate in secrecy, pointing to the inefficiency of the special administration in accomplishing the very purpose of its existence.[324]

Of course, these were the opinions of the people. The administration had a different perspective on the matter. By 1943, it was generally agreed that the special law had no reason to still be in place. Second the military operations of '37 and '38 had achieved a complete victory for the state, though the force and violence with which they were conducted had negative effects.

323 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 209 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

324 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 209 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943). [Biz Hükûmete baba demiyor muyuz?]

The general silence and submission of the locals were evidence of their trust of and subordination to the state. But there were also obvious traces of a will for revenge and insidious planning, which was felt in the diffidence mixed with fear and anxiety embodied in the overwhelming show of respect. It was necessary to return to normal governance to rid the inhabitants of the region of this feeling of fear.[325]

Third, the administration was convinced that ill will and harmful people had not been completely eliminated by the implementation of the Tunceli Law. The sayyids and aghas continued their traditional power hold in secrecy and eyed any opportunity to reassert their position in the region. Between fifteen and twenty aghas held all the land in Mazgirt in their possession and hence maintained their dominance. Moreover, those among them whose relatives had been killed or deported during the operations nourished a sense of revenge. Similar cases were said to exist in Nazımiye, Pertek, and Pülümür.

On the other hand, some in the administration deemed that it was unnecessary for Tunceli to be governed with a special law. An administrative chief said that it was unjust that peasants were manhandled when they reached out to the kaymakams about injustices inflicted upon them by the local gendarmerie. Since 1940, Tunceli had no permanent governor-commander, and the position was partly fulfilled by the local gendarmerie. The position should already have been removed because ever since 1940, there had been no governor-commander. Moreover, even during "ordinary" times, the person holding this title refused to take other's opinions under consideration because of his supreme authority as commander. Administrative chiefs were of the opinion that the provincial administration should be handed over to a proper civilian governor via a mandatory a transition phase by which the administration would pass from militaristic to civilian rule. Lastly, the establishment of an educational system, especially concerning primary schools, and a powerful cultural network would be essential for this transition. All these perspectives showed that the law needed to be amended.[326]

325 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 211 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

326 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 211-212 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

At the lower levels, district kaymakams were educated people. Two had graduated from the Political Sciences School, four were Law Faculty graduates, and another had received higher education. There were no complaints about the kaymakams of Çemişgezek, Hozat, and Pertek. But the same could not be said of the kaymakams of Kalan and Ovacık. The Ovacık kaymakam was accused of favoritism and corruption. He made personal use of grains collected in the name of the state, robbing the poor of their wheat supply. He also collected butter from villagers at a low cost and sold them fora profit. Similar accusations were directed toward the Mazgirt kaymakam, who had orchestrated a corrupt election for village headmen. For instance, the muhtar of Muhundu had been nominated in exchange for butter and cattle. The muhtars of Mazgirt collected butter without paying the villagers and sold it in Elazığ. There were also accusations of administrative misconduct in Nazımiye and Pülümür. In the eight districts of the province there were 21 sub-district directorates (*nahiye müdürlüğü*), two of which - Kahmut (Kalan) and Eşil (Pülümür) - had no permanent staff while three others – Sin (Hozat), Türüşmek (Kalan) and Kakbil (Ovacık) - had no directors. Of the sixteen subdistrict directors, one was a graduate of law, one had a high school diploma, one had a middle school education, and four had received a primary education. They earned fifteen lire a month, which was even lower than the salary of a police commissioner. The people made similar accusations of corruption against sub-district directors. For instance, a citizen in Mazgirt claimed that: "our villagers do not eat butter at home. The sub-district directors collect the butter of the villagers with the gendarmes. A kilo of butter is worth on average 125 *kuruş,* but they do not pay the villagers anything. These nahiye directors are like the kings of the villagers."[327]

The municipalities of the district of Tunceli were under the kaymakam's control; however, there were no visible signs of municipal activity. This was due not only to the extraordinary circumstances of a world war but also to the limited budget of the municipalities - even though aid collected from the people for the families of soldiers was being diverted to these budgets). For

[327] NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 207-208 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

instance, while the Çemişgezek municipality reached 3.848 lire in 1943, it was between 635 to 1.574 lire in the period from 1939-1942. These budgets were to finance the construction of a public toilet, repair old water ways, purchase some properties, establish a covered bazaar, fund a new water project, pave the main avenues, produce hydroelectricity, and construct a permanent cemetery. Of these projects, only a public toilet in the garden of the primary school was accomplished in the period 1941-1945. In Hozat, the municipality functioned much better. There is a gradual increase in the municipal budget, but the following crowned the municipality's accomplishments: a new building that later became the seat of the local People's House, roads, the repair of the town's springs and waterways, and the establishment of a permanent slaughterhouse. Mameki, Mazgirt, Nazımiye, Ovacık, and Pülümür all had significant municipal problems. But Pertek was an exception, and its municipality was perceived as a potential model for the rest of Tunceli. The visibility of state presence in the provinces depended notably on construction, and the most important building in this respect was the "Government Mansion." Of the province's eight districts, Hozat, Kalan, Nazımiye, Ovacık, and Pertek all had government mansions. Yet, there were none in Çemişgezek, Mazgirt and Pülümür.[328]

The principal preoccupation of state agents at the smallest level of local administration, was the application of the village law. This law from 1924, was designed to unify village administration throughout the country and was applied in 211 villages of the province (49 in Mazgirt, 43 in Pertek, 32 in Pülümür, 29 in Çemişgezek, 24 in Hozat, 17 in Nazımiye, 9 in Kalan, and 8 in Ovacık). In the remaining 177 villages of the province, the village law could not be applied. Moreover, in villages where the law was applied it did not yield the expected results. The muhtar of the village of Sap gave the following explanation: "Money collected in accordance with the village law to feed the village coffers is a burden on the people. Our people are poor. The money collected for the village muhtar (48 lire), village scribe (25 lire), and village guard (20 lire) is excessive. Money is also collected for the families of the military personnel. We cannot pay this money; we starve if we do."[329]

328 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 213-216 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

329 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 212-213 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Bingöl Province, situated in the lowlands, had a much greater physiocratic potential. This province of a thousand lakes was a new administrative structure, and for good reason. "These lands were neglected by past administrations, occupied by foreign forces during the war and shaken by the shocks of uprisings in the near past."[330]



Map 16 Late Ottoman provincial division of Greater Dersim. Source: NSSA

Ottoman neglect, Russian occupation during the Great War, and rebellions in 1921, 1925, 1930, 1937 defined Ankara's perspective on this region. Most of the lands constituting modern-day Bingöl Province were administrated by Palu (the hometown of Shaikh Said and a center of rebellion) as a *nahiye* in 1844. In 1872, Çevlig-Çapakçur the former name of the present-day city of Bingöl, became a district that would later be administrated by Bitlis Province in 1881 as Genç *sancak*. In 1926, following the Shaikh Said Rebellion, which greatly affected the region, Çapakçur became part of Elaziz Province. In 1929 it became part of Muş Province, and finally with the adoption of Law 2885 published in the Official Gazette on January 4, 1936, Bingöl Province was established.

330 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 5 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939). [Map is from 1927]



Map 17 Bingöl Province. Source: worldmap.com[331]

Bingöl, which took the shape seen on Map 17, was divided into five districts: the administrative center of Çapakçur (modern-day Bingöl/Çewlig), the district of Kiğı (which is today divided into four smaller districts), as well as Solhan, Genç and Karlıova. The province had a total landmass of 8.401 square kilometers. Communication among the districts, as in the case of Tunceli, was interrupted during the winter because the roads were blocked by snow well into spring. During his first official visit to the province as its elected deputy in the Grand National Assembly, Necmeddin Sahir observed that the center of the province would ideally be transferred from Çapakçur to Genç, which was notably traversed by the Murat River. He also noted that it would be apt, from an administrative point of view, if Kiğı be administrated by either Erzincan or Erzurum Province and the districts of Lice and Kulb be ascribed to Bingöl. Before Çapakçur was chosen as the provincial capital, Darahini and Kupar vilages were rival urban centers, both of which were on the shores of the Murat River. Necmeddin Sahir deemed that these villages had great potential because they had fertile plains that would greatly benefit from the construction of the railroad. Bingöl had few plains, which is why an administrative revision was proposed and the government was advised to transfer the administrative center to Genç where a government mansion was already under construction.[332]

331 http://www.worldmap1.com/map/turkey/bingol-map.asp, accessed April 29, 2018.

332 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 5-7 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

Karlıova, situated in the northeast at an altitude of 1.950 meters, was the highest and coldest district of Bingöl; it nevertheless lay claim to fertile plains. The Çapakçur plain and the Murat Valley, at much lower altitudes, were also fertile and suitable for the growth of all types of produce. Hence, Bingöl was divided into two with respect to altitude, the highlands to the north including Kiğı and Karlıova and the lowlands to the south. Taking the needs of locals and regional development into account, administrative divisions should have reflected these biogeographical factors. In fact, there was a lack of cohesion in the administration of the province of Bingöl which persists to this day, namely a North-South divide. But in 1939, this mattered little because the province of Bingöl fell under the administration of the Fourth Inspectorate-General. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Inspector General Alpdoğan kept close watch on the affairs of the province. The other key figure was the governor of Bingöl, M. Saip Okay, but the extent of his power at the time was limited. Necmeddin Sahir noted that both the Inspector General and the governor of Bingöl were generally well thought of by the people.[333]

Table 1 Governors of Bingöl 1936-1953. Source: bingol.gov.tr

M. Recai Türeli	-	1936
Şefik Bicioğlu	1936	1937
M. Saip Okay	1937	1940
Sadullah Koloğlu	1940	1941
Danış Yurdakul	1941	1942
Halis Bilaloğlu	1942	1944
M. Rıfat Şahinbaş	1944	1946
Cevat Ökmen	1946	1947
Nihat Danışman	August 14, 1947	October 2, 1947
H. Şinasi Turga	October 2, 1947	November 17, 1947
Ö. Naci Rollas	1947	1950
Fahrettin İnal	1950	1951
Turgut Başkaya	1951	1953

333 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 7 – pp. 31-32 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

The province had thirteen governors from the time of its foundation in 1936 to the end of the system of the Inspectorate-Generals in 1952. Most resigned, and this number of governors over sixteen years is not an indicator of stability and adequate governance.[334]

The local administration suffered from a lack of funds, means of transport and personnel. Except for Çapakçur (Bingöl), only Kiğı (the most populous district) had a Kaymakam in 1939. Meanwhile in Genç, Karlıova, and Solhan, official scribes known as *tahrirat katibi*, who were chosen from among locals, possessed the mandate of the kaymakams. Many administrative positions remained vacant due to the unwillingness of bureaucrats to serve in the province which lacked basic amenities such as housing and schooling for their children.[335]

Necmeddin Sahir proposed that Bingöl be reconfigured, relinquish Kiğı and Karlıova in the north, and assume Lice and Kulp in the south, as well as Camusgölü in the west. It would become a true lowland province with economic development potential.[336] The question of moving the provincial capital from Çapakçur to an area located between Darahini/Genç and the surrounding village of Kupar was still under consideration in Ankara. The main reason for this proposal was the wide, fertile plains of Darahini and Kupar nourished by the Murat River, though its irregular riverbed changed each year. But as far as the Ministry of Interior was concerned, the relocation of the provincial capital would necessitate considerable construction and capital, which would in turn result in the delay of railroad construction. It was decided that the district center of Karlıova be established in Kale, but conditions necessitated that it be established in Kanireşi/Karapınar. The village had thirty sun-dried adobe houses, and a bit further on, the village of Kanitat had six houses on the skirts of the Çavreşi Mountain. Kanireşi and, the provincial capital of Bingöl, Çapakçur, were separated by a 86 kilometer road, but only the 40 kilometers stretch long road was accessible to wheeled transportation.[337]

334 http://www.bingol.gov.tr/eski-valilerimiz, (accessed December 17, 2017).

335 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 32 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

336 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 45-46 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

337 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 82-85 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

The people hoped at first that the same efforts applied in Tunceli would also be applied in Bingöl. And even though the inspector general paid attention and took care in the beginning, the people had lost hope by 1941 because of the failure to build even the one small, planned bridge as well as the administration's inability to bring potable water to the provincial capital from a short distance away. This hopelessness about the effectiveness of the Inspectorate-General in Bingöl was immortalized in words of the Mayor of Çapakçur: "*Müfettişi Umumilik altı yıldan beri vilâyetimize fiilî hiç bir yardımda bulunmamıştır.*"[338] Since the creation of the institution, the Fourth Inspector General had not once visited the region. Those who benefited the most from fact that the headquarters were in the city of Elazığ, were the provinces of Elazığ and Tunceli. Erzincan, following the earthquake of 1939, was also being closely watched. Indeed, Bingöl was the proverbial black sheep of the Fourth Inspectorate-General. This is why it would be more appropriate to put the restructured Bingöl province into the First Inspectorate-General. Local governance in Bingöl was not only ineffective but also slow.[339]

During his third trip to Bingöl, Necmeddin Sahir observed that for the first time all the kaymakams were in place and on duty. Which is to say, Bingöl finally had all its local administrators in place five years after the creation of the province. One reason for this delay was that an appointment in these parts of the country was perceived as a sort of punishment. Since the formation of the province in 1936, not one civil inspector visited Bingöl. There were no administrative officers (*idare amiri*) and in many instances their duties were fulfilled by sub-district directors (*nahiye müdürleri*) or even clerks (*tahrirat kâtipleri*) who were chosen amongst the locals. Bingöl was not officially part of the Eastern region, the *şark bölgesi*, which meant that time spent there in the service of the state was not considered to fulfill eastern service, the *şark hizmeti*. In brief, Necmeddin Sahir observed a deep malfunctioning of the provincial administration.[340]

338 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 82-85 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

339 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 85-86 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

340 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 86-87 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

3.3 Health and Education

3.3.1 Health

There were two areas in which the republic seriously embraced its civilizing mission: health and education. The organization of health in Bingöl was a relatively small effort. In 1939 there was a health director (*sıhhat müdürü*), and there was a government doctor in Çapakçur (Çewlig/Bingöl). Two years prior, in 1937, a hospital with twenty beds was constructed on top of a hill in Çapakçur, but because of a lack of qualified personnel the hospital was not yet in service. There was a treatment facility (*tedavi evi*) and a government doctor in Kiğı, as well as two health officers (*sıhhat memuru*). The air and water in this district were good, and it was generally devoid of diseases. Ten years earlier, in 1929, the construction of a hospital began but was left incomplete. In Solhan there were permanent staff in the *tedavi evi*, which remained closed, and there was no government doctor. In Genç there was a "*küçük*" *sıhhat memuru* but no government doctor even malaria was present there. In Karlıova there was neither a *tedavi evi* nor a government doctor. Although the people were generally of good health, there were demands for government provided healthcare throughout the region.[341]

Ahmet Hamdi of Genç, who was working in Mersin, indicated that those in need of a medical attention had to travel to Çapakçur. Aware of these *lacunae*, the Fourth Inspectorate-General arranged a health vehicle and a paramedic based in the provincial capital to distribute necessary medications to surrounding villages. [342]

Bringing health facilities to the locals was a mission, but the results were not material. They were moral. The modern state's relation to the issue of health was a rational one. The capital wanted a population of sound stock, and the government's health policy reflected this. The health professional at the provincial capital was the *sıhhat müdürü*, and those who wanted to marry first had to travel to Çapakçur to undergo an examination by him. This medical examination was obligatory according to the *Hıfzıssıhha* – the Eugenics Law.[343]

341 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 8-10 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

342 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 48-49 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

343 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 49-50 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

The most prevalent diseases in the province were malaria and eye diseases like trachoma, both of which were related to flies and mosquitos that nested in lowland waterways. The issue of health also had a direct impact on settlement policy. For instance, immigrant settlers in the village of Habusu, a former Armenian town in Elazığ province, complained of malaria. [344]

In 1941 the only two government-sponsored health officials in the province of Bingöl were the *sıhhat müdürü* in Çapakçur and the *hükûmet tabibi* in Kiğı. The Health and Social Assistance Ministry had difficulty finding doctors. In 1941, in response to complaints in preceding years, the government doctor in Kiğı was sent to other districts to examine those engaged to be married. The mobility of this doctor, however, compromised the health of the inhabitants of Kiğı. Even though by August 1941 there were health officers in Solhan, Genç, and Karlıova, there was still no doctor, dispensary, or pharmacy in any of those counties. There were also cases of syphilis: twenty-one in Kiğı, one in Karlıova, and three in Solhan. [345]

The health officer administered smallpox vaccinations in Solhan, and the mobile health officer visited villages for twenty days each month. In Karlıova there were many rheumatism cases but no other illnesses because the air and water of the district were of high quality. There was urgent need for medicine as not even aspirin was available in the region. The report pointed to poorly constructed houses as well as a general lack of hygiene as possible risk factors. In Genç the muhtar of Garip village, Eyüp Kılıçarslan, mentioned that the eye diseases had increased among the locals. Necmeddin Sahir saw for himself that small children in this village situated along the Çapakçur-Darahini road had flies in the corners of their eyes and had become so used to them that did not even try to get rid of them. Further shipments of quinine to fight malaria, which affected the region near the Murat river, were expected. Malaria was indeed the biggest health hazard as the muhtar of Simsor near Çapakçur, Abdullah Göknaz, attested.[346]

[*Elde edilen netice maddî olmaktan ziyade manevî bakımdan çok değerlidir.*]

344 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 49-50 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

345 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 96-97 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

346 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 98-99 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

In Çan village in the Fahran subdistrict, forty households were affected by malaria. Fighting this disease was instrumental for settlement policy. The results of Turkish settlements on the Elazığ-Çapakçur road and in the Palu region were positive, and the deputy encouraged similar settlements be made in Bingöl.[347]

The issue of health was fundamentally related to the issues of settlement and Turkification. Other places that where Turkish settlers were welcomed were the villages along the Çapakçur-Solhan road between Simsor (Sevtsor) and Şeref Meydanı (Bozkanat). Most of these villages had been emptied either during the Great War or during repression of the rebellions. These villages were Harabe (Gözeler), Karainazik, İbrahiman, Koçan, and Tebyan. These were flat and amenable to agriculture, with water flowing from the surrounding mountains towards Murat Valley. They could be converted into model villages of up to two hundred households. Kadımatrak and Garip on the Çapakçur-Genç road were also deemed potential places for Turkish settlement, as were the villages of Terbasan and Tekveren. The Ottoman policy of *şenlendirme* continued under republican rule: "*Kayıt ve Göynik ve Murat sularının kucakladığı bu ova köylerinin bu suretle şenlendirilmesi bu bölge için çok verimli bir istikbal vaadedecek mahiyette görülmüştür.*" In most of these places, former Armenian villages were seen as potential Turkish settlements.[348]

In other words, the region had been de-Armenized, and its Kurdish-Zaza character later repressed. But before it could be progressively Turkified via the settlement of colonists, solving the issue of health was top priority of the state agenda. This is why the Turkish civilizing mission in the region was intimately linked to the development of health services in the region. The republic wanted the colonization of the area to start with a clean slate. Nevertheless, the process was slow, not only because the government's resources in terms of both manpower and capital were extremely limited, but also because military concerns took precedence over civilian matters.

347 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 99 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

348 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 100 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

Nevertheless, the hospital in the provincial capital was operational by 1942. In its first seven months, 800 male and 250 female patients received outpatient treatment there. In the same period, 41 male and 6 female patients received overnight care. The 10.602 lire budget of the hospital was not enough; furthermore, not all utilities had been installed. For instance, water was carried in tin cans from the town center, so a plumbing system was urgently needed. A pavilion was constructed to house the cleaning facility, kitchen, study room, and other needs. Resources were limited, and the hospital's microscope had even been endowed by the Red Crescent. Eye diseases prevailed in warmer parts of the province, but the problem was a lack of pharmaceuticals to treat them. While there was a doctor in the district center of Genç, no medicine was to be found. No doctor had ever come to Buğlan, the district center of Solhan, since the establishment of the district. Kiğı, the most populous district, had only one doctor, and there was no doctor in Karlıova. The mobile health officer in Çapakçur was unable to respond to the demand.[349]

Bingöl was an exception in the Fourth Inspectorate-General - a sort of *enfant mal aimé*. After all, the *raison d'être* of the Inspectorate-General was to dominate and control Inner Dersim. The clean air of Tunceli generally created positive living conditions. Large oak forests and gushing springs were sources of good health, but malnutrition and other difficulties did cause disease. The republican government decided to address the health issue parallel with the reform movement (*ıslahat hareketi*), namely by opening dispensaries. Dispensaries were intended to replace the thaumaturge *seyids* and the miraculous *ziyarets*. Doctors in the dispensaries and their effective use of modern medicine were seen as a civilizing factor by which locals were rid of superstitious beliefs.[350]

In the dispensary of Çemişgezek there was one doctor and one permanent and two mobile health officers, the latter of which travelled around the district where they diagnosed 1 case of diphtheria, 2 cases of measles, 4 cases of lung tuberculosis, and 61 cases of mumps in 1943. In the district center of Çemişgezek, 426 citizens had malaria and 1.326 grams of quinine

349 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 142-144 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

350 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 235 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

were distributed for their care. Syphilis was relatively rare, and the six patients that were diagnosed with it received care. Smallpox vaccinations were administered in the district, but thirty percent of these were ineffective. An outsider had brought smallpox to the village of Helmüge in Başvartanik subdistrict, and the disease infected 26 citizens, killing three. There was also a case of typhoid fever in a village near the center of Çemişgezek where vaccinations had been administered, which prevented deaths. Nevertheless, there was no pharmacy in Çemişgezek and obtaining medicine was nearly impossible. In the dispensary of Hozat, 1.726 patients received care in 1942, but there were no physicians and malaria was widespread. People who required quinine could not buy it because there was no pharmacy in Hozat neither. Meanwhile there were no dispensaries in Kalan and Nazımiye, and the one that had existed in Pülümür was closed for lack of doctors. Not a single health officer had visited Kalan since 1937. Before then, the people had limited access to the doctor of the *Jandarma Er Okulu* until he left town. The range of the district's mobile health officer was limited to a few villages. A citizen in Mameki complained of a malaria epidemic as well as eye diseases that required medical attention. During the summer, cases of conjunctivitis increased, other common diseases included bronchitis, lung infection, and influenza. An incubator was brought in by the municipality to fight against the diseases.[351]

General health was excellent in Ovacık district. In Kemerek village, on the road between Pülür (Ovacık), the district center, and the former district center of Zeranik (Yeşilyazı), a citizen named Mahmut Taş said: "Buralarda bizler yaylaya çıktığımız için esaslı hastalık bilmeyiz. Fakat bazı hastalıklar için doktorun, sıhhat memurunun yardımlarına muhtacız." This affirmation of the health benefits of nomadic life, followed by statement that they do need assistance for certain some health conditions, was pragmatic. Like in Ovacık, health conditions in Pertek were also relatively good, though typhoid fever cases were diagnosed in some villages of the district. For instance, in Serpiyan village the government doctor tried to combat the disease in two patients, for which a vapor machine was brought in.[352]

351 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 235-237 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

352 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 238 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

It seems that the civilizing mission in regard to health had a humble beginning in Dersim. Government strongholds such as Çemişgezek, Pertek, and Hozat were prioritized with respect to personnel, equipment, and medicine, while the rest of the province lacked these, even five years after the '38 operation. Another remarkable fact that emerges from this brief analysis of health during the internal colonial rule in Dersim is that in Inner Dersim, namely Ovacık, the people's health was better off than in the rest of the province; in stark contrast with the eye diseases and malaria that affected the lowlands. Especially the latter disease was of great concern for the people of Tunceli province. The hygiene policies enforced by the republic, notably recorded by the great Turcophile anthropologist Eugène Pittard, were aimed at eradicating malaria and trachoma from the country. Lilo Linke also notes this preoccupation in her travel book. However, malaria was mostly a lowland disease that existed in the marshes of Ankara as well as the plains of Adana and Aydın. The existence of the disease itself promoted upland living.[353]

The fight against malaria was one of the founding wars of the Republic. Early on, state organized conferences researched and published on the combat of this disease. Quinine was used both preventively and as a treatment. For children, about ten centigrams of quinine was prescribed, while adults took tablets of 25 centigrams. These were to be taken before the begin of the malaria season and continuously throughout the season. Adult took a gram of quinine per day be that could be administered in four separate doses. The administration of quinine was prioritized in places where malaria affected over forty percent of the population. Those working for the railroads, rice, and *kendir* (hemp) farmers, and soldiers in the affected areas were given priority. The medicine needed to be administered for a total of nine weeks.[354]

353 Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey* (London, 1937); Eugène Pittard, *Le visage nouveau de la Turquie* (Paris, 1931); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 238 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

354 *15 Eylül - 5 Teşrimi Evvel İstanbulda intikad eden Sıtma mücedele komisyonu mukarreratından kinin ve sivri sineklere karşı mücadele talimatnameleri* (Ankara: Vilayet Matbaası, 1924), 10.

3.3.2 Education

Another essential part of the civilizing mission was education. The Republic's approach was influenced by the French Enlightenment, notably by Condorcet. The author wrote the following after the French Revolution: *Our hopes for the future state of being of the human species can be reduced to three important points: the elimination of inequality between nations; the progress of equality among the same people; lastly, the real perfectioning of man*. The last two points were directly related to the matter of education, which was seen as necessary for any nation that wished to *one day approach the state of civilization attained by the most enlightened and free peoples*.[355] In other words the republic's mission of attaining contemporary civilization was directly related to the progress of equality among its subjects and their perfection, or to paraphrase the second line of the fourth verse from the Decennial March, "to create a united whole without privileges or classes." This ideal was to be achieved through republican state education that was to be the basis of social equality. Schools were the missionary outposts of the republic charged with forming the youth of the nation. In the case of Dersim this policy went hand in hand with Turkification.

The republic's *mission civilisatrice* was more zealous with regard to education, than health. Indeed, in the 1940s there was significant progress in the development of education in the province of Tunceli. However, the deputy of Tunceli expressed that it still far from corresponded to the needs and wishes of the local people. The use of the word "wish," suggests that the locals wanted to be educated. Among the localities of the province, the district of Çemişgezek was relatively advanced with regard to primary education. Out of 64 schools in the province, 33 were in and around this district, which placed Çemişgezek at the top of the list with respect to education in the province, as was also the case for health. The part of Dersim that was under state control for the longest period excelled in both these civilizational matters; after all, the Ottoman state had controlled the town since at least the sixteenth century.[356]

355 Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain* (Paris, 1970), 204.

356 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 251 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Schools either had teachers (*öğretmen*) or instructors (*eğitmen*). Of the 33 schools in Çemişgezek district, 12 had teachers and 21 had instructors, but the schools with teachers (which accommodated 334 girls and 461 boys) had higher student populations than schools with instructors (141 girls and 330 boys). There were also *ulus dershanes* (previously referred to as *millet dershaneleri*) that focused on adult literacy and operated within the schools.[357]

Turkification in the form of indoctrination through public education sought to eliminate the divide between the state and the people. Schools were propaganda machines that destroyed vernacular identities and replaced them with a singular, national identity. In the case of Çemişgezek, children who successfully finished their primary education could continue their education in Arapkir, Malatya, Elazığ, Diyarbakır, Ankara, or Istanbul. There were no middle schools or high schools in Tunceli, which resulted in the dislocation of students, who frequently emigrated from the province. Many did not return to their villages and towns.[358]

Moving toward Inner Dersim, the number of schools decreased. In Hozat there were only five schools, three with teachers and two with instructors. This was insufficient. Here, as in Çemişgezek, there was a genuine will on the part of the inhabitants to school their children. In Mameki there was one school with five classrooms, and the children of surrounding villages commuted there daily. This school was constructed in 1940 and nearly one hundred children received their education there. There were two other schools in Kalan district, although the one in Kahmut had no teachers. The one in Cihik had five classrooms and nearly sixty students. There were no schools in Mazgirt, but the people expressed interest in education. Yeni Erdoğan from Koman (Muhundu) asked the state to provide the possibility of a scholarship, as he wanted to pursue higher education but did not have the means to do so. The educational civilizing mission was successful in terms of its indoctrination of local youth, and the youth of Dersim actively sought to leave the region to acquire an education. [359]

357 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 252 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

358 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 253 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

359 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 253-254 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Even though there were none in Mazgirt, there were two schools in the neighboring Nazımiye district and another two in Pülümür. The establishment of a school required complete state control of the locality. For instance, there was a school in the new district center of Pülür in Ovacık but not in the old district center of Zeranik (Yeşilyazı). Local citizen Hızır Er expressed his community's frustration thusly: "Zeranik village has 70 houses and 450 inhabitants. ... There used to be a school in our village but along with the district center it moved to Pülür. There are nearly sixty children who want to go to school in Zeranik alone, and in the surrounding villages the number is almost two hundred. We need a school to be opened in our village in order to send these kids to school. We cannot accept sending them all the way to Pülür." Distances mattered in Inner Dersim, especially during winter, which corresponded to most of the school year. Here again, the government promoted education in the region with the deliberate, or perhaps unintended, effect of dislocating children from their villages. For the children of Zeranik, receiving primary education meant making a journey of up to four hours twice a day five days a week to Pülür. If they wanted to continue their education, they had to leave the province altogether. Education in Dersim meant dislocation. Dislocation, in turn facilitated Turkification.[360]

Table 2 Education in Tunceli 1943. Source: NSSA

	Schools	Personnel	Female Students	Male Students
With Teachers	35	53	265	754
With Instructors	29	42	534	2.063
Total	64	95	801	2.817

Table 2 shows that 64 schools staffed by 95 teachers and instructors taught 3.618 children. Was it enough? Given that the number of school-age girls in the province was 8.850 and the number of school-age boys was 11.933, we can infer that in 1943 only about 9% of girls and 24% of boys in Tunceli province were attending school. Furthermore, no schools accommodated professionalization of students in sectors essential for the economic development of Dersim. There were neither artisanal schools nor technical schools of horticulture in Tunceli.[361]

360 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 254-255 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

361 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 256-257 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The great discrepancy between the education of girls and boys resulted from cultural norms of gender discrimination prominent in most rural societies. However, state feminism sponsored by the republican ideology conceived of young girls as having a particular mission. Elazığ, the temporary provincial capital, was the closest city to Tunceli, so it was more acceptable for families to send their children there for higher education rather than to other cities. This was especially true for female students. The Girl's Institute of Elazığ opened its doors in 1937. It was a residential school meant to welcome girls from Tunceli with a dormitory capacity of 50 students. 48 girls graduated from the institute between 1939-1943. 19 of which moved on to the Village Institute in Akçadağ (Malatya). However, the main aim of the institution was to produce midwives and teachers that would later serve in Tunceli. Women were seen as instrumental in the Turkification process.[362]

This process is simply expressed in the following statement from a 1939 report by the deputy of Bingöl: "*Ben Turki bilmem başam hazretleri,*" which indicates that knowing how to say that you do not speak the language is the first step in learning the language. However, there is an important detail in this phrase reportedly uttered by an anonymous peasant of Bingöl. He does not end with "*ben Turki bilmem,*" but adds "*başam hazretleri.*" This exaggerated formula of politeness, typical of the formal language tradition of the Ottoman Empire, attests to the fact that contact between an official hailing from the center and a subject of the province was a cause for concern if not fear for the latter. This reflects the atmosphere in Bingöl before the Second World War: "I know that I am supposed to know Turkish, my gracious lord, but I don't, (please forgive me)."[363]

Thus, it is natural that the people who experienced these complicated emotions of fear and shame would encourage their children to learn the official state language as to prevent them from feeling the same way down the road. Turkification, for the peasant of Bingöl, meant deliverance from oppression. But how seriously did the state take its educational civilizing mission?

362 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 256 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

363 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 12 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

Chart 2 Budgets for education in the province of Bingöl 1936-40. Source: NSSA

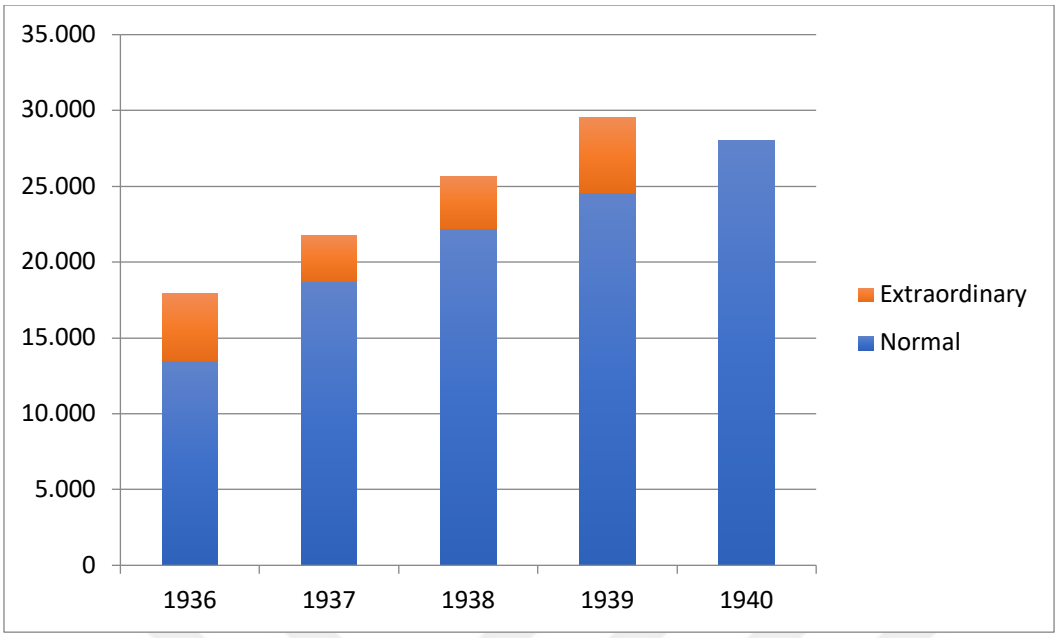
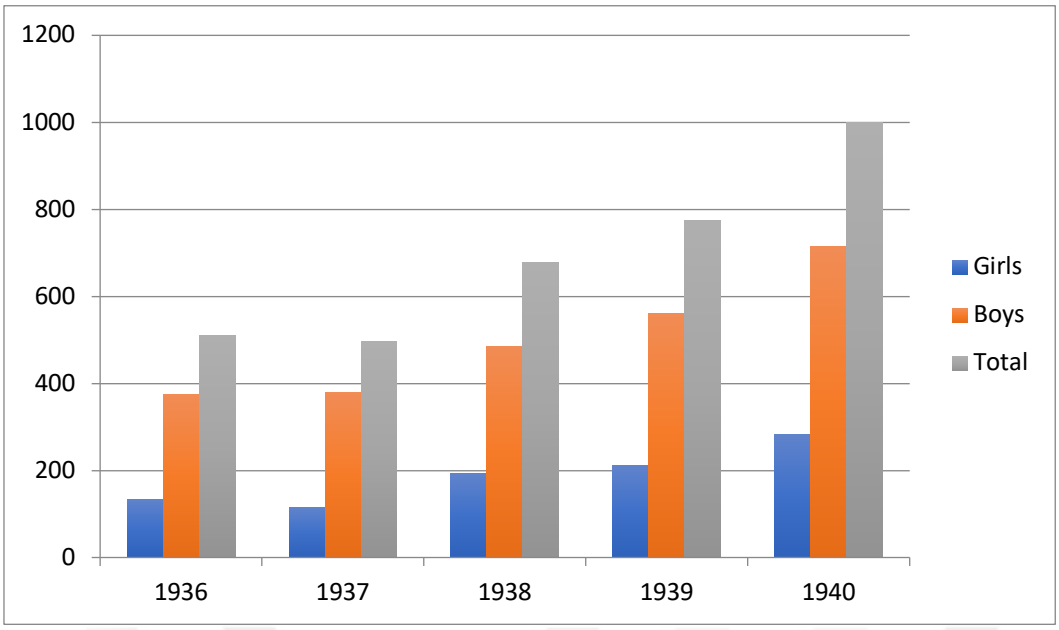


Chart 2 demonstrates that the normal budget for education in Bingöl province nearly doubled in the span of five years. Until the break of the Second World War, an additional "extraordinary" budget was also reserved for education in the province. And following the elimination of the additional budget, there is a slight drop in the overall budget reserved for education in Bingöl, which explains why there was no improvement to the organization of education in the province between 1939 and 1940. There were only thirteen schools in the province, two of which had five classrooms and the remaining eleven of which had three classrooms each. Nine of these were established in 1936 and four in 1937. Only five additional teachers were added between 1936 and 1940, when there were 26 teachers in the whole of the province. This was not enough to develop Turkish among children whose parents did not speak the language.[364]

These numbers starkly contrast with those of Tunceli, showing once again the precedence that the highlands took over the lowlands in the civilizing mission of the republican government. Nonetheless, there was overall progress in education during internal colonial rule, as the overall number of students in Bingöl increased two-fold between 1936 and 1940.

[364] NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 50-51 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

Chart 3 Annual school attendance in Bingöl 1936-40 (by gender). Source: NSSA



School attendance stayed steady in 1936 and 1937 at around five hundred, and the numbers truly increase after 1938. Families were much more likely to send their sons to school rather than their daughters. Nevertheless, the 510-student population of the province of Bingöl increased to 999 by 1940. This general ascending trend parallels the budget presented in Chart 3. The educational budget of the province tried to keep up, increasing from 17.994 lire in 1936 to 27.994 lire in 1940. This accounted for nearly 28 percent of the total budget of 100.000 lire given to the Special Administration. Bingöl did not receive more funds. The number of teachers was insufficient for the nearly one thousand pupils of the province, which accounted for a mere six percent of the 15.934 children of school age in the province. Eighty percent of the population of the province were illiterate. To encourage adult instruction, the Ministry of Education also opened *eğitmen kursları,* but only three people applied.[365]

Another pillar of provincial education in the republic was the famous Village Institutes, and ten pupils from Bingöl were sent to the *Köy Enstitüsü* in Akçadağ, Malatya. In Bingöl itself, a Village Institute was to be opened in Kadımatrak village along the Genç-Çapakçur road, a location chosen because it was on a wide plain, possessed wetlands, and was relatively close to the Elazığ-Van railroad.

365 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 52 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

In the four years since the creation of Bingöl province, 984 citizens learned to read and write in the Millet Mektepleri *dershaneleri*. The Fourth Inspectorate-General had opened three Millet Mektebi in Bingöl: one in Karapınar near the provincial capital and the other two in Hogas and Simhaç near Kiğı. 400 adults and children received education in these institutions in 1940. The primary school in Kadımatrak (Çeltiksuyu) village had three classrooms. The deputy of Bingöl was impressed by both the teacher Mehmet Kayalı of Sinop and his pupils; Selim Göneri, Zeki Ertuğrul, Hakkı, Mehmet Gültekin, Mehmet Kartal, and Rabıa Gan. They recited poems including two entitled *İnönü* and *Büyük Türkiye*, exemplifying the fervent nationalism and cult of personality that characterized the era. Such poetry recitals were also made in Simsor near Çapakçur. In Solhan, the teacher Vehpi Aygın of Erzurum and his student Mustafa Yıldırım, who was the son of a farmer from Ömeran village near Ardoşin attested that: *Cumhuriyet, halkın kendi kendisini idare etmesidir.* "The Republic was the self-rule of people," at least in theory. The deputy was perhaps aware of the innate hypocrisy of these words in regard to his position. The physical conditions of the schools in the province were deplorable.[366]

In 1941 the educational budget of Bingöl increased by 2.528 lire, to a total of 30.522 lire. Four new schools were opened in Çan village in Çapakçur, Şaban village in Po, and Darabi and Bilece villages in Kiğı. There were new school buildings in Fahran, in Çapakçur, in Azakpert (Hösnek) in Kiğı, and in the Ardoşin subdistrict center, Solhan. Meanwhile, repairs were made in the schools of Kadımatrak and Musyan villages in Çapakçur. And the dearth of schooling materials in Genç and Karlıova administrative centers was also remedied. The government concentrated the mass of its educational civilizing mission in Bingöl in the districts of Çapakçur, Kiğı, and Solhan. Even though these efforts were considerable, they far from satisfied demand, as the situation in Solhan demonstrated. There was a five-classroom school in the administrative center of Solhan with only three teachers; another school in the Ardoşin subdistrict had four classrooms but just one teacher.[367]

366 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 53-54 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

367 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 100-101 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

Chart 4 Numbers of primary school age children in Solhan. Source: NSSA

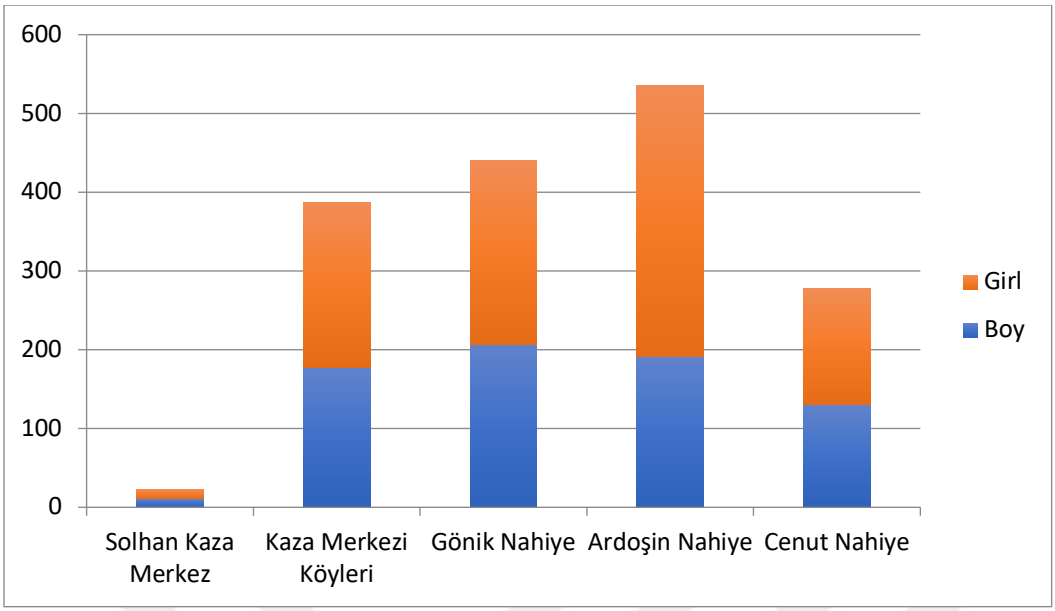


Chart 4 perfectly demonstrates the disconnect between the district center of Solhan and the more populous surrounding subdistricts. Here again, a purposeful relation was established between schooling and displacement. Given such data, reason would dictate that the prioritization for school construction would follow the numbers: schools would be established first in Ardoşin, then in Gönik, and so on. But the Jacobin centralist approach on which the republican ideology was founded put ideals before pragmatism. Of a total of 1.666 school-age children (950 girls and 716 boys) in Solhan, only 60 (27 girls and 33 boys) attended the primary school in Solhan center, and 30 (12 girls-18 boys) attended the school in Ardoşin. Did this attendance rate of 5,4 percent really reflect that "the people preferred to send their children to herd sheep rather than to learn to read and write?"[368]

This last observation is key for understanding the conflicting interests of the state and the local people. While the former wanted new "Turkish" citizens that would fight and die for their country, pay their taxes, and testify in court, the latter were basically concerned with their livelihood. Nevertheless, there were genuine requests for more education among the people of the province.

368 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 101 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

During a meeting with the people of Kanireş, the district center of Karlıova, Adil Eroğlu from Çerme communicated his desire to see a school in Viranşehir village along the road to Erzurum, a wish repeated by a citizen of Kale, Halil Karabulak. The only primary school in Karlıova, which had only two teachers for 55 students (24 girls and 31 boys), was far from sufficient to meet the educational needs of the district. Upon discussions with the senior teacher and the education officer (*maarif memuru*), noted that a five-classroom primary school could be opened in Kargapazarı, population 400, and another in Çirik, population 350. Interestingly, the teachers of Karlıova told him that children had little difficulty learning Turkish: "*iki ay içinde öz Türkçeyi konuşarak dersleri takip edebilmektedir.*"[369]

The budget of the province for 1942 was 150.000 lire, 39.000 (26%) of which was dedicated specifically to education. There were seventeen schools and 30 teachers by 1942. However, thirteen of these thirty teachers could not teach because of compulsory military service. The lack of teachers became more important than the lack of schools. In some instances, like in Ardoşin (Solhan), the school had remained closed since 1940 because there were no teachers. Furthermore, there was a great need and demand on the part of the people for a middle school in the province. The closest middle school and high school were in Elazığ, and distance kept many from pursuing their studies. Necmeddin Sahir thought that the solution was to open student dormitories - one each in Elazığ, Diyarbakır, and Erzurum. "*Doğu illerimizin birer kapısı olan Elazığ'la Diyarbakır ve Erzurum'da birer talebe yurdu açılması bu bölgelerde yaşıyanlara umut ve ferah verici bir hadise olarak telakki edilmektedir.*"[370]

369 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 102-103 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

370 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 144-146 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

3.4 Crime and Punishment

One of the most obvious domains in which the state manifests its power over a defined territory is the rule of law. This is especially true for the modern state, which puts the justice system at the foundation of its existence, manifest in the phrases *état de droit* or *hukuk devleti* still frequently used in the French and Turkish contexts.

In other words, assuring the rule of law was essential for the modern state's claim to absolute authority over any given territory. In regions such as Dersim, where there was a homegrown justice system, the state justice system had to make an extra effort. The popular culture of the republic was full of propaganda designed to discredit pre-modern tribal justice. One pertinent example was the widely popularized subject of the blood feud or *kan davası*, which became the subject of newspaper articles, novels, and films.

3.4.1 Justice in Bingöl

Crime and punishment during the internal colonial period reflect a transition between traditional and modern justice systems. This transition was no small feat and it required considerable capital and manpower. The people of Bingöl were complaining that the judiciary organization was not complete by 1939. Similar to the case for health and education policies, implementation in the provincial center topped the state's priorities. Nearly all judicial entities were situated and operated in Çapakçur. The notable exception was the heavy penalty court (*ağır ceza teşkilatı*). With respect to crimes that were awaiting trial in the summer of 1939, 42 of 136 legal files concerned the penal court of first instance (*asliye ceza*) while another twenty concerned the penal court of peace (*sulh ceza*) the remaining 74 files concerned other matters. Those under the jurisdiction of the heavy penalty court were transferred to Elazığ, which indicates that the Fourth Inspectorate-General's capital was also the judicial capital of Bingöl province. This situation displeased the locals. Furthermore, because there were no judges in Kiğı, the judicial affairs of that district had to be overseen by courts in Pülümür, an inconvenience considering the past relationship between the two localities.[371]

371 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 19 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

This judicial organization did not accommodate the people, because of the physical distance between their residences and the court. Not only was the provincial judicial system organized in a centrist manner, whereby provincial and district center took precedence over real demographic concentrations, but the lack of infrastructure and the climate made it difficult for the people to make use of the system and obey the law. For instance, in Kiğı there was only a penal court of peace and a criminal court. For other judicial matters the locals had to go to Pülümür. In other words, the inhabitants of Kiğı had to go to a neighboring province to resolve most of their judicial issues. The inhabitants of this district, which already differed from those of the rest of Bingöl, complained, just as locals in Solhan complained of having to journey to Çapakçur.[372]

Again, as with the case of education, the republican justice system promoted dislocation. If citizens wanted to comply with the judicial system imposed by the state, they had to leave their locality. Furthermore, as was the case for teachers, judges did not hail from the province. For example, the judge in Çapakçur in 1940 was Galip Yücel from Kalecik. What types of cases did he adjudicate? Most cases in the court involved struggles over water resources and the delimitation of fields, which sometimes resulted in murders. The second most frequent legal infractions were kidnappings, although the kidnapping of girls, was supposedly not as frequent as before. Setting the legal age of marriage to fifteen had had positive results in this respect. However, the act of kidnapping was difficult to counter because locals considered it a tradition to kidnap girls before marriage. In Solhan, most of the thirty cases awaiting trial were related to land disputes mostly triggered by a lack of title deeds. Hence the most significant number of crimes registered during internal colonial rule were directly related to land possession.[373]

Because there was no heavy penalty court in Bingöl, the people of Solhan had to go to Muş. Therefore, as late as 1941, the most pressing issue for the justice system in Bingöl province still was the establishment of a heavy penalty court. Nevertheless, the province did possess a prison in the provincial

372 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 19-20 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

373 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 62-63 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

capital of Çapakçur, but its state was dire in 1940, and a better one needed to be constructed. Furthermore, there was a shortage of bread for the prisoners. While there was another prison in Karlıova, it was not operational because, like dispensaries without doctors, it had no warden. Consequently, convicted criminals were sent to the prison in neighboring Varto (Muş). In this northeastern district, most judicial cases concerned animal theft and land disputes including trespassing: *çayırdan geçme ve çayır biçme ve saire*. This last statement is interesting: land disputes brought to court in Karlıova not only concerned disputes over possession but simple acts of trespassing or collecting grass from the meadows. In Solhan in 1941 there were two cases of animal theft, which was a serious issue because animals were the chief capital of the locals. In one case, the accused, who were originally from Karaca Mountain in Osmaniye district, stole a total of 54 animals (horses and mules) from the Beritan tribe on the Şerafettin upland near Solhan. The thieves, six men and six women were tracked and caught, and the animals were returned to the owners. Other cases brought before judges included the changing of one's age and other affairs related to population registration. [374]

In 1942 the infractions that occurred in the province of Bingöl were as follows: illegal activities, assault and battery, laceration, animal theft, theft, and kidnapping of women and girls. The deputy of Bingöl thought that most of these crimes were due to a lack of education; the mostly illiterate residents were not aware of the full extent of the law. In cases of battery and laceration, small-scale local security officers proved themselves irrelevant. Moreover, local customs were directly linked to crime. Animal theft often resulted from the fact that villagers left their animals out in the open without supervision. [375]

Seven years after the establishment of the province of Bingöl, its judicial organization still had many flaws: Kiğı district was dependent on Erzincan province in terms of heavy penalties. Karlıova district was dependent on Varto for its magistrate and trial court and on Muş for heavy penalties. Solhan and Genç districts were dependent on the trial court of Çapakçur, and both along with Çapakçur were dependent on Muş for heavy penalties. In a region where

374 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 92-96 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

375 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 139-140 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

road infrastructure was poor, this dependence on other provinces in terms of judicial affairs was a source of discontent. Travel was also risky. The muhtar of Şatos (Yazkonağı) in Genç, for instance, died on his return from Muş where he had gone on judicial business. Because of a lack of judges in Karlıova and Genç, the people had to travel to Çapakçur. This was especially hurtful to the citizens of Genç who were still upset because Çapakçur was preferred as the provincial capital over their own town. Most judicial cases in Bingöl in 1942 concerned unsupervised animals damaging crops, water disputes, and cases of assault and battery. Unauthorized religious marriages and underage marriages (of those under 14 years of age) constituted other frequently encountered crimes. There were no reported cases of kidnapping and rape, and there were only a few cases of theft in 1942. As a matter of fact, Bingöl's crime rate was relatively low, and its crimes were mostly related to economic and cultural clashes between the traditional and the modern. This tranquil region was deemed boring by the officials there under the compulsion of the capital. People were quick to leave soon after they were assigned to Bingöl: *Bingöl gibi doğu bölgesinde olan yerlerde vazife alanların, askerî teşekküllerde olduğu gibi, üç yıllık müddeti doldurmadan başka yerlere nakilleri bu müddeti göze alarak çalışanları inkisara uğratmaktadır.* Not only does his comparison between military and civilian duty reflect the militaristic vision of governance adopted by the republic, but those that left their positions before completing the duration of their service constituted a bad example for the rest of the provincial administration. The only acceptable reason for leaving one's duty was a lethal disease, but most officials tried to change their position after a short time. Judges in Genç, Karlıova, and even Çapakçur stayed in their positions for only a year and a half.[376]

Population growth was subject to crime and punishment, as well. This mostly concerned recordkeeping in relation to life's two greatest events. By the beginning of the 1940s, there was a noticeable increase in the timely declaration of births and deaths, although not everywhere. The muhtar of Pöçenek in the Ardoşin subdistrict, İbrahim Kaynar, wished for unregistered

376 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 140-142 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

individuas to be added to the public record. When the deputy of Bingöl questioned the census officer about these unregistered people, the officer told him that their status was illegal. In other words, their existence was itself a crime because they remained unregistered by the state. Furthermore, they had to remain living as such because of a technical legal conundrum. High officials of Bingöl such as the governor, the kaymakams, and judges explained the permanent illegality of the unregistered as follows: Law 2576 clearly detailed the procedures of population registration in 1934; however, there were those who entered into matrimony outside of the prescriptions of the law. Their children could not be registered because the union of their parents had never been made official.[377]

In other words, the unregistered people of Bingöl had failed to comply with state regulations, which is unsurprising given the dispersion of the judiciary throughout the province as well as the low rate of literacy. The application of civil law could not be thoroughly enforced in the province, and those who had married in a religious ceremony, because they were not recognized as married in the eyes of the law, were faced with a dilemma when it came to the registration of their infants. Their children were illegal at birth, which created a vicious cycle of illegality under which children born of unofficial unions could not and would not be registered in fear of reprisal by the state. Furthermore Articles 4 and 5 of Law 2576 (July 5, 1934) specified that starting on the first of June 1935, village muhtars and elected council members who did not inform authorities in due time of births, marriages, and deaths would be subject to financial penalties. But this had the opposite effect: the hiding of such demographic illegality increased further once village authorities faced personal liability.

Officials in the region were certain that most marriages there were still being conducted with religious ceremonies. Because this was considered illegal, the individuals concerned were still designated as *bekar* (single) in the records. A concrete example in Solhan concerns Sabriye, the daughter of Reşit from Hirbizon village, who married Ali, the son of Cevher from Azas, in a

377 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 89-90 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

religious ceremony. Their child would naturally have been considered illegal, and the way around this illegality at birth was complicated. The couple first had to get officially married. Only then could the father of the child, who was born during the time of the couple's religious union, apply to the judge and declare that he recognized his paternity of the child, who could only then be officially registered. This knotty legal process of legitimation resulted in an abundance of children considered illegal at birth. The muhtar of Hirbizon, Mecit Arayan, estimated their number at around one thousand.[378]

Undeclared births were decreasing in 1942. However, this demographic trend needs explanation. There were fewer births, fewer marriages, and more deaths in Çapakçur: 541 births in 1940 compared to 320 births in 1941, 190 marriages in 1940 compared to 104 in 1941, and 197 deaths in 1940 compared to 320 deaths in 1941. Marriages were decreasing in Bingöl, perhaps due to the process. Four conditions needed to be fulfilled to get married in a manner recognized by the state:[379]

1- *Nüfus Incelemesi*
2- *Sağlık Yoklaması*
3- *Ilân ve Fotoğraf*
4- *Evlenme İzin Kâğıdı.*

Those who wanted to marry first went to the village muhtar to give him notice. Then they went to the district center for the analysis of their registration. This often meant a long trip that would end with the failure to find their records in the population registry. Even if their registration was found, they often did not possess an identity card and would first need to obtain that document. Those whose records were not found needed to first be registered, and this usually took several days. If one of the couple was not of the age of consent, a legal process would begin by which their age was changed, but this usually took months.

Moreover, those who wanted to get married had to undergo a health inspection in a district center. But there were few doctors in Bingöl, so another journey had to be conducted to an administrative center that possessed a

378 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 90-91 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

379 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 135-136 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

doctor. The law also required those to be married to declare their intention and be photographed. The declaration had to be sent to the registry of both the groom and the bride, and a copy had to be taken from the registry. As there was not a photographer in every district center, an additional trip needed to be made for this purpose. The village muhtars received the marriage permission only after the inspection of the population records, their correction, a health inspection, the declaration, and a photograph. The permission documents were issued by the population bureau in the district center and provincial center and were written by a paid scribe because ninety percent of muhtars were illiterate, and the small proportion of those who were literate did not grasp the complicated process that allowed for civil unions to take place.

There was a profound disconnect between the needs of the people and the will of the state. These requirements made marriage especially difficult for women. The region ascribed to the Shafii tradition, under which it was frowned upon for unmarried women to be examined by a (male) doctor and sit in front of a (male) photographer, not to mention traveling alone. These measures created a situation in which traditional marriage prevailed over legal matrimony. Another element that contributed to the preference for traditional marriage concerned social and financial issues related to the union. For instance, a law concerning the abolition of squandering at weddings (*düğünlerde israfatın men'i hakkındaki kanun*) made it difficult for fathers of brides to receive a dowry. In other instances, legal marriage was confounded by complications such as the kidnapping of the usually underage bride. Such illegal unions made it especially difficult for children born of these unions, who were called children of inauthentic affiliation (*nesebi sahih olmayan çocuk*).[380]

Crime in Bingöl was relatively low in terms of homicide, and there were a few cases of suicide, mostly affecting women. An overwhelming majority of judicial cases concerned land and water disputes that would sometimes result in violence between the parties. Kidnappings were due to tradition and religious matrimony continued, so it is arguable that crime in Bingöl was due primarily to a clash between old and new ways of determining socioeconomic

380 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 136-137 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

rank and gender relations. While the punishment was the long and tedious process of justice, requiring long distance travels, served by unwilling state officials seeking to get away from the province.

3.4.2 Justice in Tunceli

Article 36 of Law 2884 established a Court of First Instance (*Asliye mahkemesi*) and a High Criminal Court (*Yüksek Ceza Mahkemesi*) in the provincial capital as well as trial courts in the districts. Of course, the provincial capital was still Elazığ, which made the smooth operation of judicial affairs in the province difficult. There was not even a trial court in Mameki, the Kalan district center, as late as 1943. The people there complained that it was both difficult and dangerous to go to Pertek or Mazgirt for trial or as a witness, especially during winter. Indeed, for all judicial purposes, the inhabitants of Kalan district had to go to Mazgirt. There were two roads from Mameki to Mazgirt district center. The first was a government-constructed road passing through Pertek, which was inaccessible to wheeled transportation for six months of the year and completely shut for two and a half months during the heaviest winter snowfall. The second was a road, that passed over the Munzur River and the Mazgirt mountain range. This was the shortest route from Mameki to Mazgirt, and the journey took four and a half hours. But again, the road was problematic because in winter the Munzur River tended to overflow and would not allow passage. In other words, the people in what would become the provincial center of Tunceli had great difficulty complying with the justice system imposed by the government, simply because of a lack of infrastructure.[381]

Judicial cases necessitating the intervention of the high criminal court were limited. However, considering the low population of the districts, the large number of judiciary cases was striking. In Çemişgezek, for instance, 257 legal cases were registered in 1943, while in Hozat the number was 130. The most frequent legal cases involved the abduction of girls, theft, assault, laceration, and strangulation. Most of the cases that resulted in violence were spurred by disputes over water and meadows. People died from exposure to snow and storms during winter and from torrential rivers during springtime.

381 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 229-230 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Suicides in the province were mostly women, as was the case in Bingöl. In the village of Zımbık, a woman called Cennet Kadın hung herself from a walnut tree with her belt to escape starvation. [382]

Hozat District was also a tobacco planting area, and there were cases of illegal tobacco trade. Other notable cases concerned village raids by members of the Demenan and Kalan tribes. In Kalan district, land disputes and kidnapping cases were prominent. Even though there were assaults, no murders were recorded. Illegal marriages were increasing in the province as elsewhere. In Nazımiye, most cases concerned intrusions on public land and age modifications. The jail in Çemişgezek district center hosted twelve detainees and 53 prisoners in 1942. 20 percent of the prisoners in 1943 were women. In Hozat district center the basement of the old government mansion was used as a jail. There was no prison in Nazımiye, so a rented house was used for this purpose.[383]

Tunceli's judicial landscape was more varied than Bingöl's. The First observation is that, more state control meant more recorded crime, which was directly proportional to confidence in the state as a source of justice. Hence more than 250 cases recorded in Çemişgezek, which also had the highest incarceration rate in the province. One similarity with Bingöl was the economic nature of most judicial cases in the province: however, the main difference concerns geography. Land disputes in Tunceli did not concern farmland, but pastureland. Other similarities include the kidnapping of girls and female suicides, and we will return to the tragic case of Cennet Kadın. But the most striking, unique element in Tunceli was the continuation of tribal raids.

In Büyüksu along the Çapakçur Kiğı road, Şükrü Coşkun of İngözik Village, spoke of when the citizens faced the dangers of banditry. He said: "Before we could not lay calmly in our homes due to the fear of Dersim; now we are tranquil."[384]

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382 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 230 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943); Soner Yalçın mentions the incident of Cennet Kadın in an article from 2014.

383 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 231 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

384 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 30-31 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939). *Eskiden Dersim korkusundan yuvalarımızda rahat yatamazdık; şimdi rahatız.*

Table 3 Tunceli Police Records 1943. Source: NSSA

Hozat	Çemişgezek	Nazımiye
(1) Public Inebriation	(1) Drowning	(2) Decimation of the Official Register
(1) Soliciting Prostitution	(1) Aggression	
(1) Harassment of guard	(1) Insubordination	
(1) Gambling	(4) Conflagration	
(1) Theft	(8) Theft	
(7) Infraction of the Law of National Defense	(14) Infraction of the Law of National Defense	

Table 3 shows the Tunceli Police Records in 1943. Notice that we only have data for the three districts. Çemişgezek was more active in terms of reporting criminality than Hozat and Nazımiye. The old provincial center of Hozat was rife with the crimes of civilization such as inebriation, prostitution and gambling. While in Nazımiye there were cases of decimation of the official register. However, the criminal activity that stands out is the "Infraction of the Law of National Defense." These constitute 21 out of the 43 total cases.

Banditry was entirely eliminated in Tunceli. The police department and the gendarmerie assured the security of the province. For a long time, there was no police department in the future provincial capital, and their duties were fulfilled by deputy officers. The police organization in the province required that each district center have an assistant commissioner along with three or four policemen. The police force in Tunceli was small; indeed, in Çemişgezek district center there were four policemen. In Nazımiye center there were supposed to be three, but one was attending the police academy, and another was in Kalan center; hence only one police officer was on active duty. This is why the gendarmerie assisted the policemen in the district.[385]

In subdistricts and villages, security operations were conducted by the gendarmerie. The gendarmerie forces were considerable relative to the police population in the province: each district was to have a team of military officers under the command of a captain, five to ten regular noncombatant officers (*gedikli*), and between 180 and 200 soldiers. The reality did not match these requirements, as there was a lack of active military officers in the province. In

385 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 216-217 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

many districts regular gediklis from Thrace, the Aegean region and Central Anatolia occupied the position of commanding officers. Other than the gendarmerie, there was one battalion (350 soldiers) each in Hozat, Kalan, and Ovacık district centers and an infantry battalion in the center of Pülümür. In addition to the military and gendarmes, there were also country and village guards (*kır ve köy bekçileri*), though they considerably lacked weaponry and ammunitions as well as proper uniforms. The activities of local power holders before the military operation were closely followed and lists of suspicious individuals were kept. Notably, reports were kept on the suspicious activities of the Kureyşan tribe in Mazgirt, Pertek and Kalan.[386]

The Law 2887 stated that those who were born between 1316 and 1331 (1900/1901-1915/1916) who registered within two years would be forgiven their penalties related to conscription on the condition that they turn themselves in to the local army office. There were military departments in nearly all districts of the province except for Kalan. Those in Kalan were sent to Mazgirt. The illiteracy of soldiers under command, made the distribution of administrative tasks to subordinates difficult if not impossible. In Çemişgezek, there was not a single draft dodger nor any absentees or arrears. In Hozat, the response rate was 75 percent and the remaining 25 percent constituted draft dodgers and those in arrears. In Kalan and Mazgirt, response was good. In Nazımiye, there were 536 males born between 1334-1336 (1918-1920), eight of whom were disabled and eight of whom were draft dodgers. In Ovacık, even the smallest villages were careful to send their young men to fulfill their military service. Pülümür district provided nearly 200 soldiers and for a response rate of 95 percent. The remaining five percent were living in other districts, and there were no draft dodgers. The means of transportation for the local military forces was poor. For instance, in Hozat there were 35 animals that could be geared with machine guns, 7 horses, 214 packhorses, 239 donkeys, and 546 oxen. In Mazgirt there were no animals for cavalrymen, and even though animal husbandry was relatively developed there, no animals were found to carry machineguns and cannons.[387]

386 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 217-218 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

387 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 224-227 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The military was a tool of Turkification for adults just as the schools were used for the Turkification of children: *askere giden Tunceli halkı için dahi kıt'a hayatı aydınlatıcı ve yetiştirici bir ocak, bir okuldur*. Some soldiers enlisted in the army to fulfill their obligatory military service subsequently inquired whether they could purchase Mauser ammunition, supposedly for hunting. Indeed, a trade in ammunition developed in some instances when the 5 to 15 bullets given to privates for target practice were not used but rather sold at 2-2,5 lire per bullet. Many of those who fulfilled their military service returned home without having acquired a sufficient knowledge of spoken and written Turkish. [388]

3.5 Demography

As briefly mentioned above, the internal colonization of medieval Europe was an anterior development to the rise of the various modern nation-states in Western Europe. The process of Internal colonial rule in Dersim during the early republican period was inverted; the modern nation-state produced internal colonization, not the other way around. We know that a net demographic increase accompanied the transformation of medieval Europe, which makes us wonder about the population concentration in the latter case. What were the demographic changes taking place in Dersim during internal colonial rule? To answer this question, we will look again at the two "least developed" provinces of the Fourth Inspectorate-General; Bingöl and Tunceli. What differences in terms of demography are apparent between the arable lowlands and the pastoral highlands of the region?

The region previously described as the Western Armenian Plateau had already undergone a drastic demographic transformation. The Armenian presence was forcefully eradicated by the state during the Great War. This fundamental change in the demography of the region, in fact, created an urban vacuum. Armenian cities, towns, and villages lay empty and deserted, which was another reason why the sedentarization of Kurdish nomadic populations central to the state's social engineering agenda. New cities had to be created.

388 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 228 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Naşit Hakkı Uluğ, for instance, described Elazığ as a potential model city and a future cultural hub of the region. In 1939 it had a health quarter (*sağlık mahallesi*) in the northeast with a general hospital and a sanitarium, as well as a cultural quarter (*kültür mahallesi*) with a stadium, a People's House, a girl's institute, and even a park. Meanwhile, there was no comparable urban center in Tunceli. The population living permanently in the six district centers of Dersim totaled no more than nine thousand in the 1930s. Only about one tenth of the whole population. Hozat, the biggest among these, had 2,300 residents in 1939.[389]

The earliest data on the demography of Dersim comes from the General Secretary of the administration of Ottoman Public Debt in Vital Cuinet's (1833-1896) *La Turquie d'Asie*. Cuinet estimated its population in 1891 to the total of 62,430 individuals, but at the turn of the twentieth century, the mutasarrıf Arif Bey of Mardin, estimated the number at around 59,000. The First Inspectorate-General estimated the population of Dersim at around 65,000 in 1929, and in 1935 the population was said to be 107,732 people. Only 9,551 Dersimis lived in towns, and the remaining 98,172 lived in small villages. The region's population was 8.86% urban and 91.14% rural.[390]

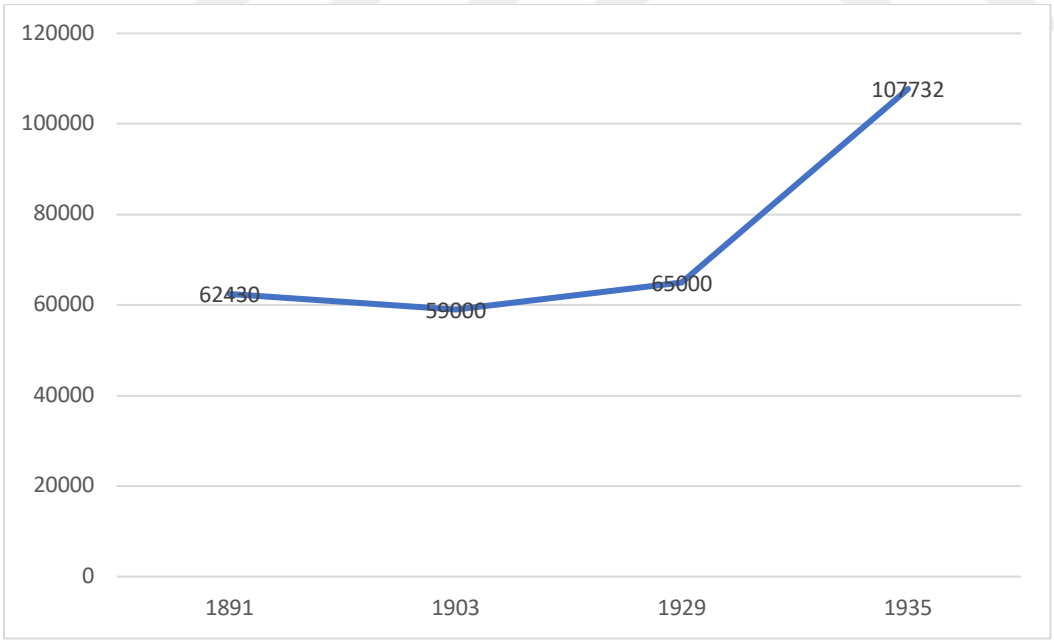


Chart 5 Demographic evolution of Dersim 1891-1935. Source: Cuinet et al.

389 Uluğ, *Tunceli medeniyete açılıyor*, (1939).

390 Vitali Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie: géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée*, (Paris: E. Leroux, 1890-1895).

These estimates hail from unreliable sources, because no matter the efforts of census takers, the geographic dispersion of the people, not to mention the people taking refuge in the region's caves, forests, and mountaintops, made it difficult to reach the inhabitants of Dersim. Even though there is a general upward trend, there was a small dip between the censuses of 1891 and 1929. In normal circumstances we would expect to see a consistent rise in the population, but anti-Armenian measures in late Ottoman times explain the drops on Chart 7.

The most important variable in the data is the Armenian population. Another explanation is that people fled under the radar of Ottoman officials, more readily than under those of foreigners. The 1929 census also reflects this possibility that locals, because of distrust, avoided state officials. We also know that Dersim was a zone of refuge for Armenians escaping genocide who probably would not have wanted their presence known. On the other hand, the increase of more than forty thousand between 1929 and 1935 does not make sense. Furthermore, the results of the 1891 and 1929 censuses are similar. Therefore, a brief analysis and comparison of the 1891 and 1935 censuses is called for. Forty-four years separate the two. What were the differences and similarities between them? What do they tell us about the general demography of Dersim? Finally, how can we characterize the demography of Dersim before internal colonial rule?

Vital Cuinet wrote in the preface of his monumental *La Turquie d'Asie, Géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de l'Asie Mineure*, republished by Isis Press in 2001, that his numbers were the result of a combination of statistical notes taken in the field during various "explorations" undertaken over the span of twelve years. The sixth volume of the contemporary edition concerns Central Anatolia, Ankara, Konya, Adana, Sivas, and Mamuret-ül-Aziz, in which we find the *Sandjak de Dersim*. Table 4 is his detailed demography of the sancak.[391]:

391 Cuinet, La Turquie D'Asie, vol.VI (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2001), 260-276.

Communities	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Muslims	7,460	8,000	15,460
Kurds	6,000	6,000	12,000
Kızılbaş	13,700	14,100	27,800
Gregorian Armenians	3,560	4,000	7,560
Protestant Armenians	300	310	610
Total	31,020	32,410	63,430

Table 4 Dersim's population divided according to religion. Source: Cuinet

Note the obviously guesstimated number for "Kurds" as well as the distinction among Muslim, Kurdish and Kızılbaş communities. How Cuinet differentiated among these communities is unclear, but he had a tendency to divide the population along sectarian lines, as in the distinction of the Armenian community.

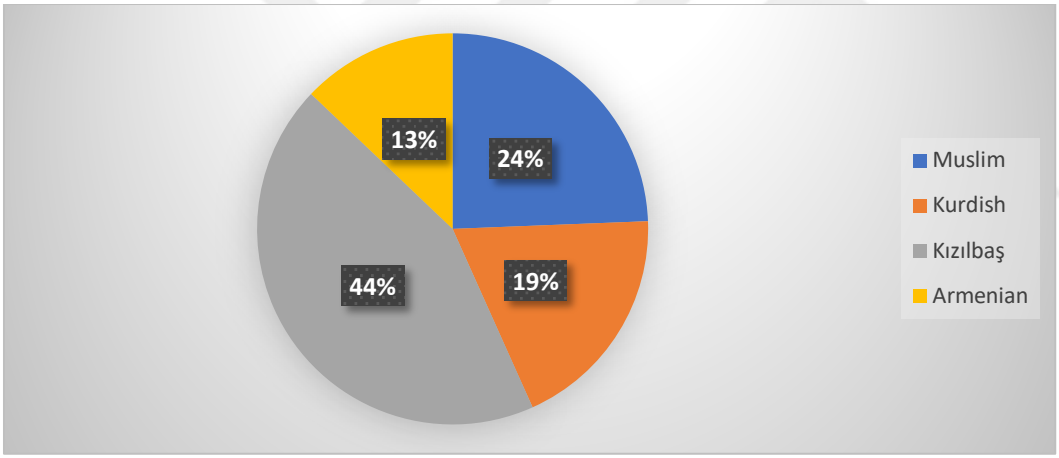


Chart 6 Communities in the Sancak of Dersim, 1891. Source: Cuinet

The Alevi population constituted the largest share of the population of Dersim with 44% followed by the Muslim community, which probably refers to Turkish-speaking Sunni Muslims, with 24%. Kurds, who were probably Kurmanji-speaking Shafii Muslims, Kurds formed 19% of the population, while the Armenian community made up 13% of the overall population.

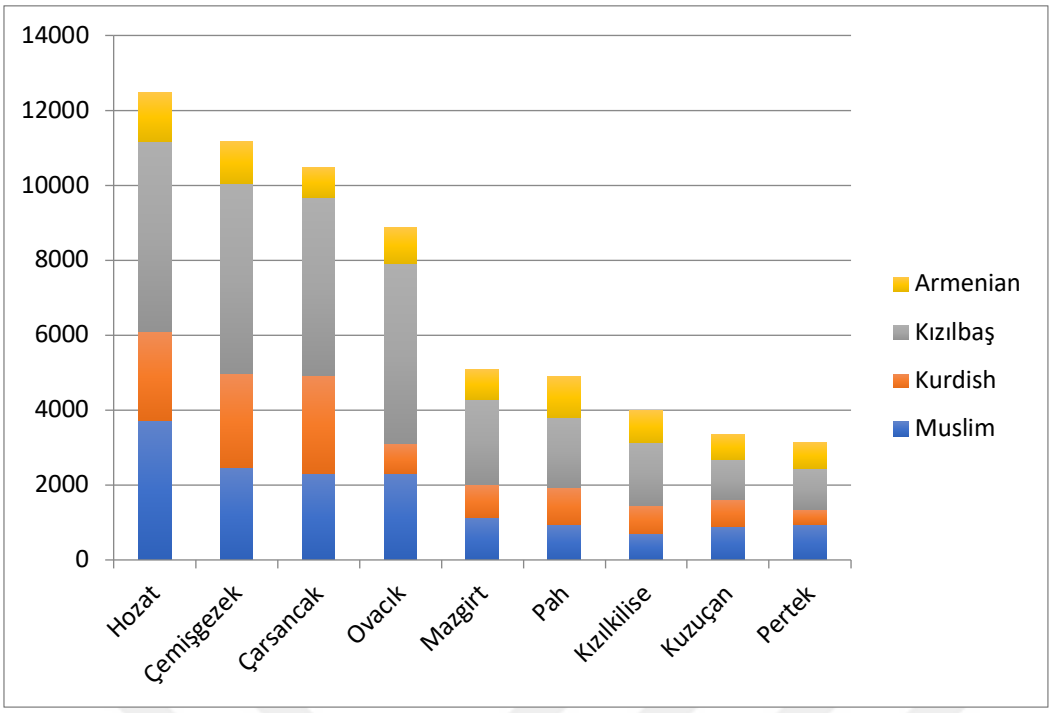


Chart 7 Communities in the Sancak of Dersim by district, 1891. Source: Cuinet

When we consider the spread of sectarian communities among the districts of the sancak, there are certain peculiarities. Naturally the population of Hozat, the administrative center of the region, importantly had the largest community of Muslims (3,734) but also the largest Alevi (5,086) and Armenian (1,324). As expected, the districts of Çemişgezek and Çarsancak north of the Murat River both had over ten thousand people, with Çemişgezek having the second largest Armenian (1,161) as well as Alevi (5,075) and Muslim (2,455) communities in Dersim. Pertek district, with the lowest population of the region at the time, would later benefit from the dismantling of the Çarsancak district. Finally, Ovacık was the fourth most populous district distantly followed by Mazgirt. Kuzuçan (Pülümür) was the second least populated district of the region, so the biggest demographic changes in Dersim could be expected in Pülümür and Pertek.

For the region soon to become Bingöl Province, the numbers are much less illuminating. This is due to the administrative discontinuity between the empire and the republic. For instance, at the time of Cuinet's census Kiğı was administratively attached to the central sancak of Erzurum Province, while Genç and Çapakçur were attached to the Genç sancak of Bitlis Province.

Meanwhile, there is no data concerning Solhan.[392]

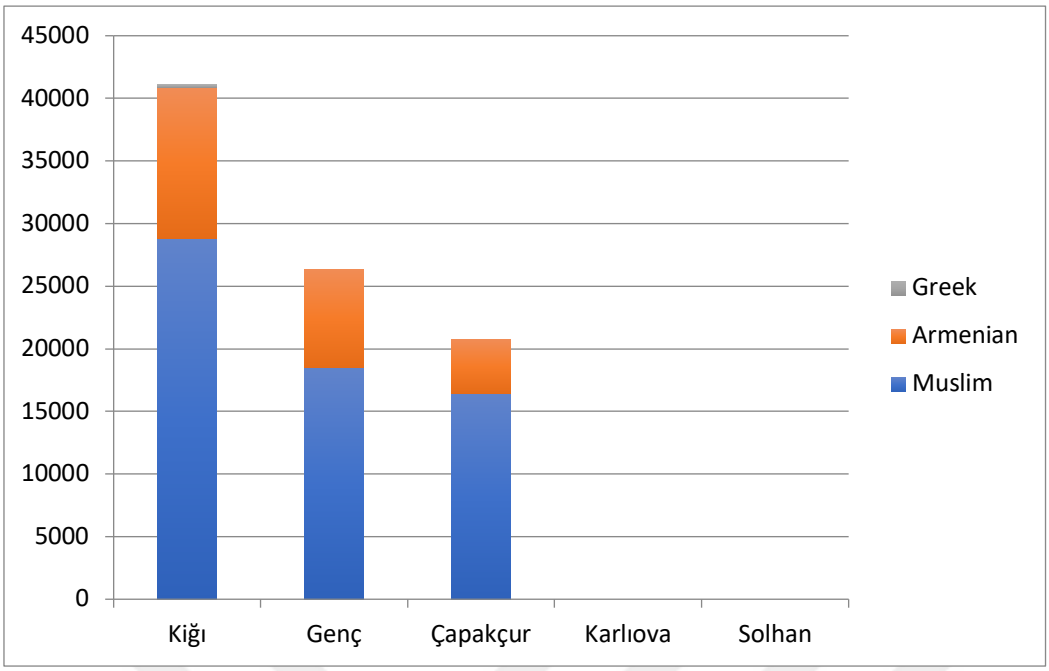


Chart 8 Communities in Bingöl, 1891. Source: Cuinet

The district of Kiğı, with more than forty thousand people, was arguably the most densely populated in all of Dersim with almost thirty thousand Muslims (28,836), twelve thousand Armenians (12,040), and nearly three hundred Greeks (276). Genç, the second most densely populated district of the region, had more than twenty-five thousand inhabitants with just five Greek citizens, around eight thousand Armenians (7,930), and almost nineteen thousand Muslims (18,467). In Çapakçur, the future provincial capital of Bingöl, there were no Greeks, about four thousand Armenians (4,335), and more than sixteen thousand Muslims (16,465).

Interestingly, Cuinet made no distinctions among Kurds, Muslims and Kızılbaş; however, considering the current constitution of the population in Bingöl, we can assume the Muslim category includes both Sunni and Shafii Muslims of mostly Kurdish and Zaza descent. This starkly contrasts with Dersim proper where he made a clear sectarian classification.

Continual administrative revisions make it difficult to construct a viable chart of the demographic evolution in the region. Nevertheless, the pertinent information is found in the general census of 20 October 1935, a fifty-eight-volume tome depicting the demography of the republic including the types of

392 Cuinet, *La Turquie D'Asie*, Vol.I, 148, 336-337.

building in which people lived, their nationality, and their religion as well as their mother tongue, other spoken languages, physical defects, sex, age, civil status, and literacy. The districts of the future province of Tunceli are found in volumes 20 and 21, concerning Elazığ and Erzincan, while the districts concerning Bingöl are contained mostly in volume 44, regarding Muş.[393]

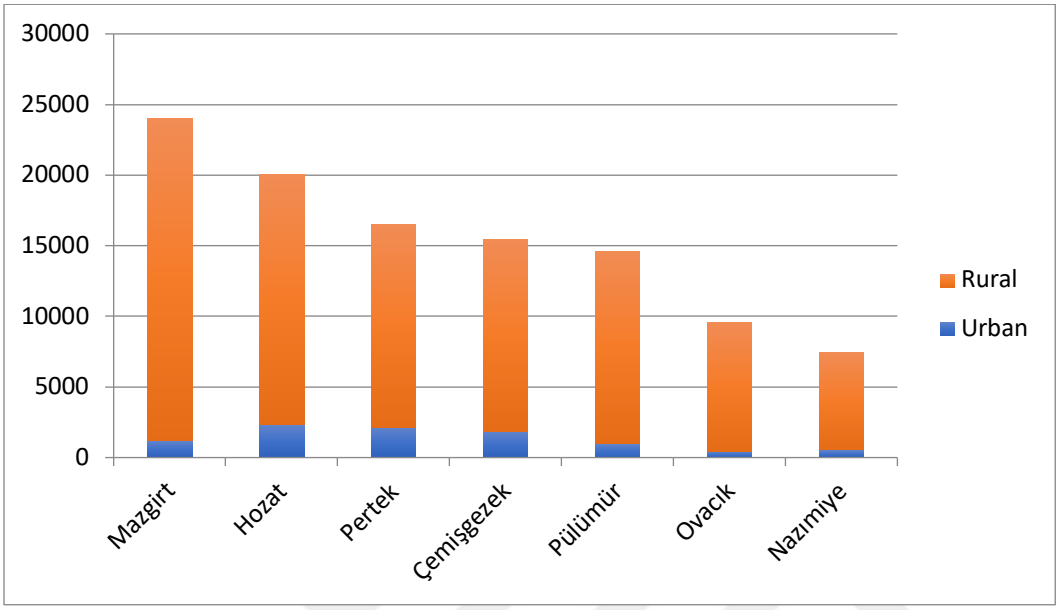


Chart 9 Urban concentration of Tunceli per district, 1935. Source: İGD

Interestingly, by 1935 Mazgirt was the most populous district with almost twenty-five thousand inhabitants, followed by Hozat, Pertek, Çemişgezek, and Pülümür. Ovacık and Nazımiye were the two least populated districts according to the census. However, considering the proportion of rural to urban residents, Hozat is naturally the district with the most important urban population in Dersim, followed closely by Pertek, Çemişgezek, Mazgirt, and Pülümür. Again, Ovacık and Nazımiye are at the bottom of the list. Given that the reliability of this data is related to the conditions in which the census was conducted, it is likely that the population of Inner Dersim was not properly calculated.

393 İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü, *1935 20 ilkteşrin genel nüfus sayımı*, "Türkiye nüfusu vilâyet, kaza, şehir ve köyler itibarile: muvakkat rakamlar," Ulus Basımevi, Ankara, 1935; and Fatih Tuğluoğlu, "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin İkinci Nüfus Sayımı," J*ournal of Modern Turkish History Studies* XII, no.25 (2012-Autumn): 55-78.

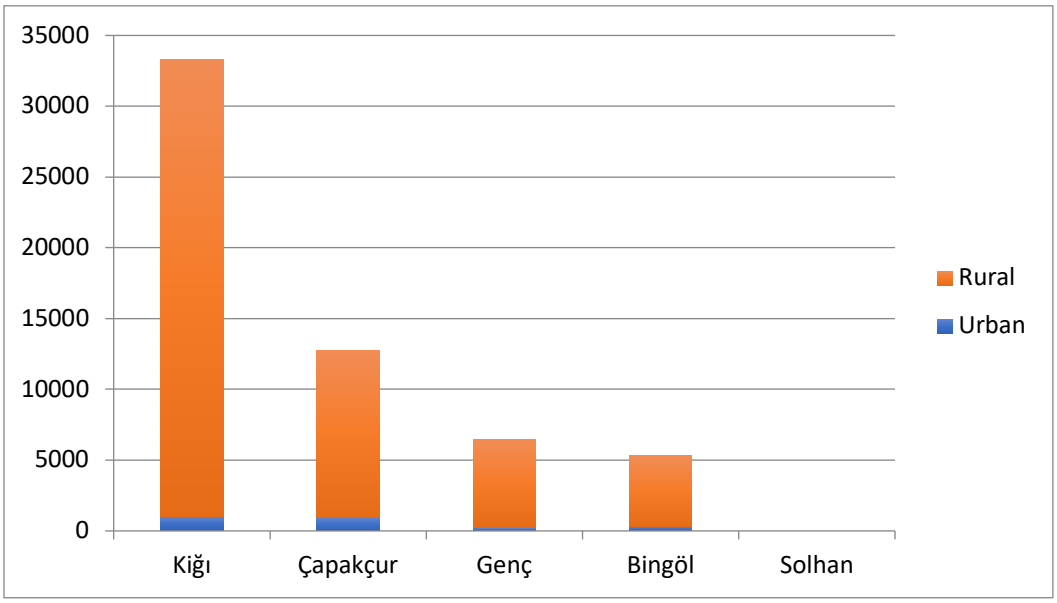


Chart 10 Urban concentration in Bingöl per district, 1935. Source: İGD

Once again, Kiğı was distinct in terms of a major difference in terms of its demographical weight with almost thirty-five thousand inhabitants, about one thousand of which were considered urban. Çapakçur, with a population not even reaching fifteen thousand in total and an urban population of almost one thousand, followed, while Genç and Bingöl (Karlıova) both had judt over five thousand people, an overwhelming majority of which were rural. The total population of Bingöl was 72,062, although the real population was probably higher. The logical deduction was that the mountainous terrain and nomadic nature of the people made precise figures difficult to produce. What is curious is that the province had a total official population of 70,027 in 1940. The districts from most to least populous were as follows: Kiğı (26,560), Çapakçur (15,192), Genç (13,227), Solhan (8,703), and Karlıova (6,345). Note the longstanding demographic imbalance between Kiğı and the rest of the province as well as the demographic advantage of Çapakçur vis-à-vis Genç, competitors for the position of the provincial capital. Furthermore, when compared with the 1935 population census, Bingöl had more than two thousand people less in 1940. How can these population fluctuations be explained? The answer can be ascertained with a comparative demographic chart starting again with Tunceli. [394]

394 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 47-48 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 87-91 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

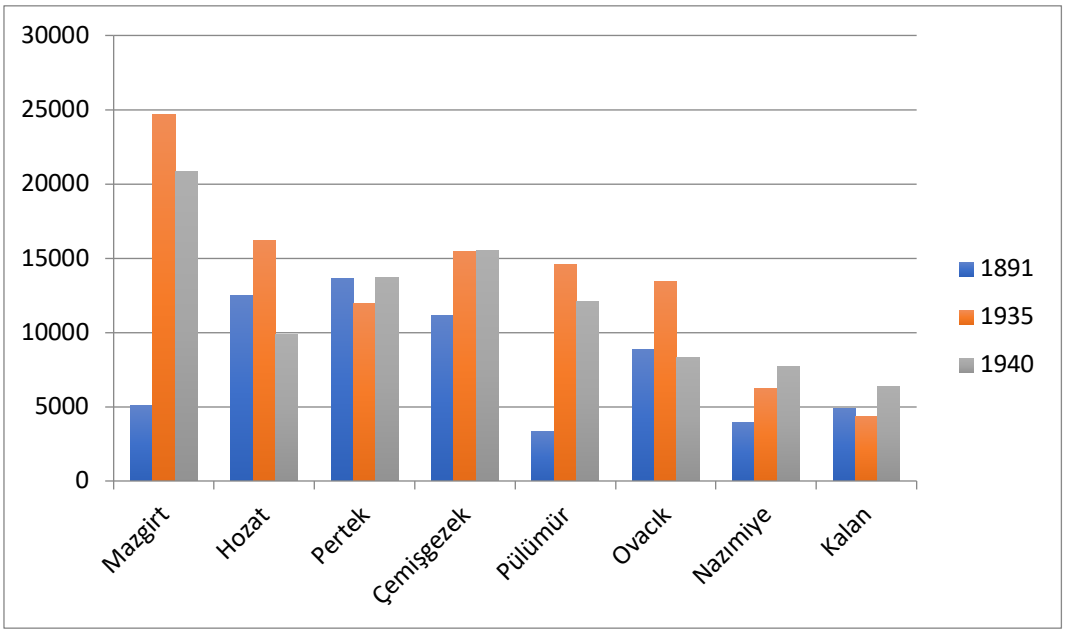


Chart 11 Evolution of Tunceli's Demography 1891-1935. Source: Cuinet et al

Almost fifty years separate the 1891 and 1940 censuses, and the 1935 census presents a point of reference from which to understand demographic changes following the military operations. The first remarkable element is the massive spike in the growth of Mazgirt between 1891 and 1935; the population increased by almost twenty thousand before decreasing by almost as much following the military operation. Hozat has a similar trend with a population increase followed by a decrease after the operations. Pertek lost its Armenian population between 1891 and 1935 but recovered by 1940. Çemişgezek and Nazımiye had the only two net demographic increases in the region. Meanwhile, Pülümür experienced a net increase between 1891 and 1935 before experiencing a fall by 1940. Remarkably, following the military operations, Ovacık had a lesser population in 1940 compared to 1891, as was the case for Hozat. The total population of the province declined by 12,461 from 107,100 to 94,639, meaning that there were 12.461 less people in 1940 than in 1935. The losses occurred primarily in Western Dersim, namely Hozat and Ovacık. Eastern Dersim was affected, though to a lesser extent, as seen in Mazgirt and Pülümür. These demographic irregularities spawn from loss of life, forced displacement, and the fact that some people were in hiding and/or unreachable during the censuses.[395]

395 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 219-223 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

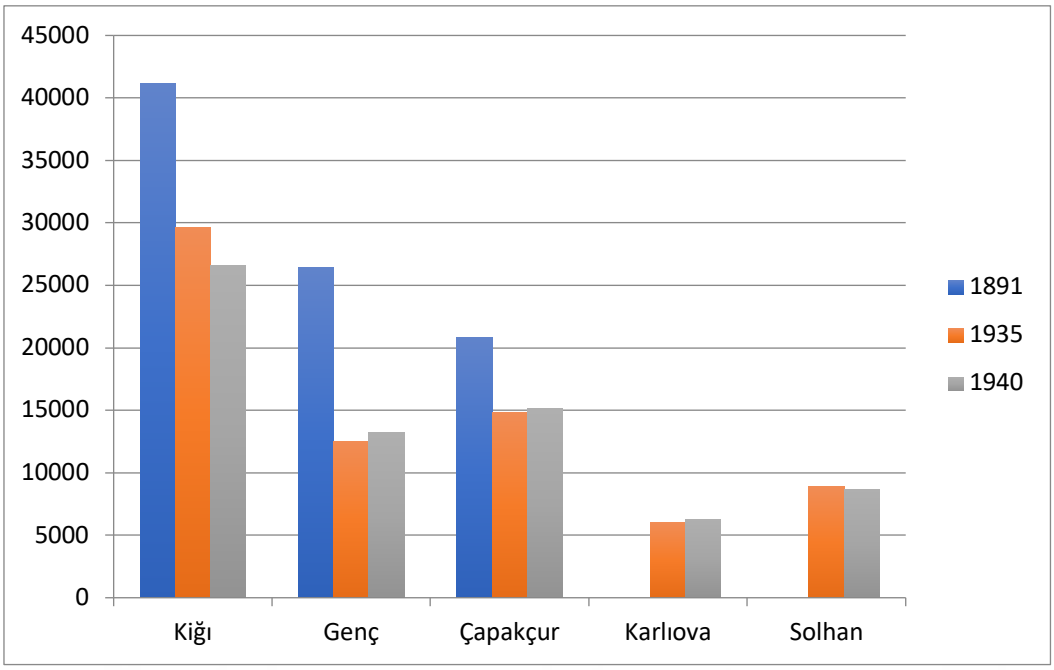


Chart 12 Evolution of Bingöl's Demography 1891-1935. Source: Cuinet et al

The numbers for Bingöl provide a better sense of the bigger picture. Kiğı lost almost ten thousand of its population following the *Medz Yedhern* and a further three thousand following the *Tertele*. Meanwhile, Genç, formerly the second most populous district of the region, and Çapakçur also experienced significant demographic decreases following the genocide, but both increased in population between 1935 and 1940, as did Karlıova. On the other hand, Solhan, where the Beritan tribe lived, experienced a slight decrease during this period. Due to poor living conditions, lethal diseases, and the forced migration of some locals. [396]

We can conclude that the demographics of the Greater Dersim region experienced two waves of population loss related directly to the social engineering projects of empire and republic. First, the Armenian segment of the population was eliminated through massacres and exile. This was followed twenty-two years later by the attempted elimination of the tribes through similar methods. In a period of almost half a century, Dersimis, whatever their ethnicity, experienced two waves of decreasing population which affected the socioeconomic structure of the region.

396 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 87-91 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

3.6 The Military, the Party, and the People

The state had turned its attention toward Dersim following the Ararat Rebellion, and in 1936, internal colonization began. But why did the uprising of Dersim occur in 1937 and not in 1936? The answer concerns the chief resource of Dersim: its forests. Not only were the trees and the forests watered by the innumerable rivers and streams, which were holy for the Dersimis, but they were also an essential part of the local economy. No one owned the forests, and anyone could benefit from them. Forests were the chief resource for the subsistence of the locals, especially during winter. Goatherds could be easily sustained with the fallen oak leaves in late autumn and early winter. So, it is unsurprising that the Forest Law of February 8, 1937 was the ultimate call to action. Dersim rose up following the appropriation of the forests by the state. In March 1937, Demenan and Yusufhan tribes attacked telephone lines and bridges, undeniable symbols of civilization and modernity. The Haydaran and Yukarı Abbasuşağı joined in on their efforts. In December 1937, gendarmes and outposts were attacked, the goal was to push out the military, which was enforcing the laws in Dersim. In 1938, the Third Army moved in and the military operation began in full force. If '37 was characterized by the fall of Seyid Rıza, '38 was a year of terror. Koç and Kalan regions were determined as forbidden zones and those living in these regions were sent to the West.

However, state terror vis-à-vis the rebellious Dersimis did not stop, as a guerilla type resistance continued. From 1939-1941, the remaining forbidden zones were dealt with and the whole region was purged of rebels.[397] The central government's efforts in Dersim can more easily be characterized as a terrorizing mission rather than a civilizing one, precisely because after the conquest was complete, and the area was subjugated and colonized, the state could and did not go beyond terrorizing the people. The progress of the reform program had been deplorable since 1941. Buildings constructed were neglected and the roads that had been begun were left unfinished and abandoned. The Fourth Inspectorate-General that paid close and continuous attention to the region, now seemed to have disregarded it.

397 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 185-187 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Dersim was situated in a nation-state founded by refugees trying to protect the territory that they had acquired with great effort following the defeat of the empire. In the Age of Catastrophe, the young republic chose to remain neutral, having received the lesson of not engaging in another great war of imperial competition. Nevertheless, it was terrified of losing territory. Necmeddin Sahir explained the situation to his "constituents" as follows: "today, at a period when all of Europe is faced with the catastrophe of war, our beautiful Turkey is being careful with an open policy, preserved from the war."[398]

In fact, on the cusp of the Second World War, Bingöl was perceived as susceptible to foreign intrigue. Ankara was still unsure about its hold on power in the region. Some parts of the province had been occupied during the Great War, and others were involved in the rebellions of 1925 and 1930. However, by 1939, the inclinations of the people towards the state were generally positive. From the deputy's perspective, this was related to his contact with the people, which were made under secure and sincere circumstances. He saw his own agency as instrumental and noted that with sustained aid, encouraging results could be achieved to transform this region into a piece of real Anatolia.[399]

To achieve the integration of the province with the rest of the nation-state and make it "come to life," the development of agriculture and animal husbandry as well as the improvement of infrastructure were central. In terms of infrastructure the most pressing matters were the road connections of the province with Elazığ and Diyarbakır and the rail connection with Sivas and Erzurum. Of course, in addition to these principally economic concerns, the health sector and socio-cultural facilities were also important.[400]

398 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 37 ("Millî Birlik ve Beraberlik" konuşması Bingöl 1940).

399 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 31 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939). [*bu mıntıkanın dahi kısa bir zamanda öz Anadolu parçası gibi canlanacağı anlaşılmıştır*.]

400 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 31 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

3.5.1 Life in Bingöl

It was easy to put economic matters aside on paper, but the reality on the ground showed just how important the issue was for the region. After all, it is difficult to study on an empty stomach. The economic and financial conditions of the people were extremely poor. Their sole occupations were farming and animal husbandry. Agriculture was limited, agricultural tools were primitive, output was barely enough for subsistence, and there was no possibility of additional revenue from trade. Generally, every village or field belonged to an agha, for whom the people worked as sharecroppers. Economic misery was reflected in their social situation. The people of the province generally lived in humble houses: "*kerpiçten, küçük pencereye benzer delikli, basık tavanlı evlerde.*" These adobe houses with narrow windows and low ceilings looked primitive to city dwellers, but they were the norm for locals. They were accustomed to a relatively simple life. In some mountainous places and where the rivers divided the terrain, - where there was limited land available for agriculture - the people lived sparsely and ate simple foods. The simplicity did not end there. Their clothing reflected this modesty. The women wore *entari* and had headscarves with tassels and fringes, while the men wore *şalvar* or *iç donu* with long tunics. There were those in the town centers who were dressed "properly," but most of the population was too poor to buy clothes.[401]

Hence, social class distinctions in Bingöl on the eve of the 1940s were material as well as cultural. Higher classes lived in town centers in modern houses, could afford to buy western clothes, and, as the local bourgeoisie, were probably fluent in Turkish. Lower classes were dispersed, lived in simple, sun-dried brick houses, were not involved in the textile industry as consumers, and as a yet-to-be proletariat maintained exclusive use of their mother tongue. However, there was another social class in between these urban, assimilated bourgeoisie and the raw, rural peasantry: Turkish settlers. Those that had come from Silistre and the Danube province were settled in various villages along the Elazığ-Çapakçur road. The deputy from Bingöl noted that while they were loyal to the state, they were also inclined to adopt local customs.

401 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 75-76 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

In other words, they became Kurdified by proxy. The Kurdification of these Turkish settlers, although alarming for the state, indicates that socio-cultural identity depended more on class relations rather than ethnicity. An immigrant from Silistre would find that he had more in common with the local rural peasantry than with the urban bourgeois. This fundamental point that the root of identity was economic participation rather than race was missed by the Republic of Turkey. The neglect of economic equity and obsession with cultural homogenization the late single-party rule in republican history in the eastern provinces was desperately concerned with Turkifying the local population. The cultural development of the province, in this sense, heavily depended on the People's Houses and Rooms, integral parts of the Kemalist cultural revolution. These provincial institutions were seen as bastions of Turkish civilization that would allow local populations to be transformed into modern Turkish citizens. This was perceived as an easy task because the local people, at least of Bingöl, were deemed "naturally smart" (*fitratan zeki*), had a clear veneration for officials, and exhibited genuine hospitality despite their utter poverty. However, some Armenian converts, aghas, sheikhs, and other religious fanatics were hiding, so the government had to be careful.[402]

Nonetheless, public safety in Bingöl was generally well maintained given that the province was established with the intention of assuring public order and national security in the eastern provinces of the republic. Although there were some reports of banditry in Kiğı committed by bands that crossed over from Tunceli.

The sense of security established by the republic was especially appreciated in the plains, as attested by the people of Darahini, center of the Genç district, who attested: "The greatest force that links us to our Government, National Assembly, National Chief, and Republic is the assurance of the safety of our lives and property." This statement is self-evidently revelatory of the general sentiment of the people. What mattered above all else for the people who supposedly articulated these words was "*mal ve can emniyeti.*" In other words, the relation between the people and the state was

402 NSSA (1), Doğu Sorunu, 76 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

based on the latter protecting the life and property of the former. The irony, of course, was that it was the state that killed and dispossessed the people during the years of terror.[403]

The maintenance of the prevailing public order and security was mainly maintained by the Turkish military. Accordingly, the local people were careful to comply with the general conscription. There had been ethnic discrimination in the army. For a time, locals of Bingöl province were only allowed to serve as foot soldiers (*piyade*). But more recently, perhaps due to the extraordinary time of war, they had been also been allowed to serve as *topçu* (artillerymen) and *süvari* (cavalrymen). Eleven soldiers of the province were trained in Thrace to be paratroopers, and some even rose to the ranks of corporal and sergeant. Extraordinary times called for extraordinary measures. The "democratization" of the Turkish military was done out of fear of invasion and necessity. But there was another reason why obligatory military service was particularly important in this region. The enrollment of Kurds and Zazas in the military was perceived as another step in the Republic's civilizing mission. The people of Bingöl were described as healthy and courageous by birth and by culture: in other words, invaluable assets for the military. However, they had to be trained and supplied with the "right" culture so that they would return to their villages with "beautiful Turkish" and set the "right" example for those who maintained "old ways of thinking."[404]

As one of the provinces of the young republic that suffered most during the Kurdish rebellions, the inhabitants of Bingöl were careful in their relations with the military. The rate of participation in Çapakçur was exceptionally high at 97 percent. This region had been under the authority of the Hamidiye regiments, in which the Beritan, Cibran, and Solhan tribes were involved.[405] In terms of numbers, between 1939 and 1941 nearly 1.400 men were enlisted in the military from Çapakçur, and those returning from service were said to be

403 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 92 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941). [*Bizleri Cumhuriyetimize, Millî Şefimize ve Millet Meclisi ile Hükûmetimize, Partimize bağlayan en büyük kuvvet, mal ve can emniyetimizin temin edilmiş olmasındandır. Büyüklerimiz sağ ola*!]

404 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 93 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941). [*Doğuşları ve yaşayışları itibarile sıçrayıcı ve tırmanıcı, iri ve diri, çevik ve cesur olan bu bölge halkının ordu camiasında … talim ve teçhiz edilmesi, askerden köylerine dönenlerin güzel Türkçemizi yaymaları ve eski zihniyet sahibi olanlara karşı iyi örnek olmaları ve iyi görenek göstermeleri* …]

405 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 138-139 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

more productive citizens in their villages. The process is indicative of the relationship between the military, the party and the people. Recruits were initially brought to the People's House, where the governor and chief military officer lectured them, before being sent on their way as servicemen. The People's Houses played a central role in military conscription as a midpoint between civilian and military life, that presented the party as the civilian expression of a militaristic modernization. During the proceedings, the People's Houses were decorated with flags in an orderly fashion, which served the theatrical purpose of demonstrating the order and power of the republic and the military. These processions were not only the recruit's first impression of the "orderly" military, but also presented them with a symbol of the supremacy of the army over the people.[406]

The civilizing mission of military conscription was above all a sociocultural mission. Even sending one's son to the military became a social event, as when the muhtar of Şirnan village of nearly forty years, a Mr. Veysi, accompanied his son to the recruitment office. In doing this, the muhtar was manifesting his full, unquestioning loyalty to the republic. Local people supported sons who went to fulfill their military duty by giving them what little money they had put aside as well as by knitting clothes for the occasion. However, there were also those who escaped the service. Conscription in Çapakçur and Genç was orderly, but no information was collected on the situation in Karlıova. Meanwhile conscription in Kiğı and Solhan needed inspection, and the Palu recruitment office acted discordantly.

Most of those who escaped military service in Bingöl found refuge in Palu, the town of Shaikh Said, which had still not been subdued to provincial authority. This was a time when the Age of Catastrophe was nearing its apex; the barely twenty-year-old republic was expecting the worst: invasion.

The Çakmak line of defense in Thrace is well documented, but Bingöl was no exception in the preparations for national defense. The local military in Çapakçur organized an offensive detachment (*taarruz bölüğü*) with 120 active personnel. They organized military simulations twice a month. Trenches were dug on the hills surrounding the city. The 28-strong personnel postal service

406 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 93 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

was informed about how to recognize and respond to aerial attacks. This air of preparedness in Bingöl was remarkable and deserves interrogation. If the Germans were to invade, this would certainly happen from the west - hence the Çakmak line. But who threatened to invade the country from the east? Could it be that by 1941, Turkish authorities were considering a Soviet attack on their eastern border? Were the preparations in Bingöl not for Hitler but for Stalin?

Perhaps this was due to the influence of Germanophiles in the country; indeed, until 1942 there was a possibility that Turkey would side with the Axis powers should the balance of power shift. And there were still those who dreamt of a Turanian empire at the expense of the Russians. While the republic was founded as an anti-imperialist sovereign nation with Lenin's help, it had been moving further to the right since the latter half of the 1930s. Putting aside the question of shifting Turkish loyalties at this time, national defense was a primary topic in the minds of all loyal bureaucrats. Emergency outposts (*can kurtaran*) were being constructed along important passes in the province by the order of the General Staff. These included the Kurnal pass in Genç, Buğlan-Kirvas breach along the Solhan-Muş road, and another on the so-called *meydan* between Solhan and Çapakçur. The *meydan* - still known by its old name – was situated on the road from Çapakçur to Buğlan and was beneficial during the Great War. Its new appellation was "Şerefmeydanı."[407]

2.5.2 Life in Tunceli

In Tunceli, perhaps more so than in Bingöl, there was clearer distinction between the general conditions of the people and those of officers. In Inner Dersim, more than in the surrounding flatlands, there was a distinction between "us" and "them." The living conditions of the people of Tunceli, except for a limited group living in district centers, were austere. Even in districts with considerable arable lands such as Çemişgezek, Pertek, and Mazgirt, citizens living in the mountainous terrain had great difficulties.

407 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 93-94 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

Those who did not have enough land for subsistence sent relatives to work on roads, mines, and in the service industry in larger towns. Those that did not want to be separated from their relatives worked as sharecroppers. But even with such added revenue sources, most were unable to satisfy basic needs. Their staple diet and nutrition were very simple: millet bread (*Darı ekmeği*), yogurt soup (*Ayran çorbası*), and dry cottage cheese (*çökelek*). Bulgur was the food of the wealthy and neither bulgur soup nor bulgur patties (*bulgur köftesi*) were to be found on the tables of the poor. Most animal products that they obtained were traded to meet other needs instead of being consumed directly.

In the west, in Çemişgezek and some sub-districts, dried mulberries and dried mulberry jerky were consumed, as were nuts like walnuts in Nazımiye and some sub-districts in the east. In times of scarcity, the people collected wild weeds from the mountains that resembled lily leaves, which locals called beets, that they would fry with a bit of butter. An alternative was to collect acorns from the oak forest, boil them until they lost their bitterness, and fry them before grinding and consuming them. Slaughtering a goat or sheep had been a sign of respect when hosting a seyid or agha, and fried, diced meat called *saç kavurma* was served as a sign of respect, but these feasts were a rarity following the military operation. It might be thought that due to the simplicity of their nutrition, the constitution of the people of Tunceli was weak, but perhaps because of the gushing streams and winds blowing down the steep mountains, the people here were strong and resilient. [408]

The situation of their clothing paralleled that of their nutrition. Except for a wealthy few in district centers, most people had limited clothing. Men paid particular attention to wearing modern hats, as ordained by law, an observation not found in reports concerning Bingöl, but most of their clothes remained traditional. Necmeddin Sahir noted that the people nevertheless paid special attention to their clothing when going to government offices when they would even borrow clothes from others to look proper. Were the people of Dersim dressing up out of fear? Could the hats and the suits have been a

408 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 334-335 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

nonverbal affirmation to the state that the Dersimi had accepted civilization?

After all, the measures of the Turkish standard of civilization were actually quite superficial: one had to wear western clothes, talk Istanbulite Turkish, and live in "proper" houses. There were two level houses in the district centers of Tunceli, but most citizens lived in one-story adobe houses, and some took shelter in caves. Having a carpet was a sign of wealth, and many houses lacked a "clean" bed or quilt. Barns for animals, haylofts, and grain storehouses were a symbol of relative wealth, but even those were mostly rudimentary.[409]

Notice the two words in quotes, "proper" and "clean." These and many other adjectives used throughout the reports reflect a preoccupation with hygiene. From the perspective of a western hygienist, hygiene and cleaning practices were not developed. For instance, laundry was done on the side of a road or a riverbank.

As for their temperament, the report defined the people of Tunceli as abstentious (*kanaatkar*), easy going (*uysal*), and idle (*başıboş*). These qualities were seen as remnants of their former tribal lifestyle. It was also noted that even though not as openly displayed as in the past, there was still reverence for the seyids and aghas. The deputy of Tunceli noted that some who escaped deportation to the west as well as young and old relatives of deported seyids secretly [re]claimed the title and collected money from their faithful followers. Such ancient practices such as worshipping the sun, water, and shrines called *ziyaret* were ongoing.[410]

Other than fear of the state, manifest in various cultural ways, the people of Tunceli managed to get by and go on with their lives. Knowing the lay of the land and accustomed to foraging as a means of subsistence, they had a relative advantage over those who came from outside.

Those who had tethered their destinies to the government - the clerks, administrative chiefs, officers, and military and gendarmerie personnel were in a state of deprivation in Tunceli, at least from the perspective of city dwellers. At a time when even city folk in the west of the country had difficulties maintaining their patterns of consumption, the government made

409 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 335-336 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

410 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 336 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

great efforts to support its officers by sending foodstuffs and clothing. Nevertheless, in certain district centers, officers lacked certain foods and experienced great difficulty, especially during the winter. Those in localities where lodgings were constructed stayed in modern houses, while those stationed in places without such facilities experienced great difficulties. Winter was most difficult due to the closing of roads and the lack of medical personnel and medicine. Officers with families also had difficulty with respect to the education of their children.[411]

There was a notable distinction between the people of Tunceli and the officers, due to cultural differentiation. They inhabited the same region, but their expectations for living were different. The indigenous population had generations of experience surviving the long winters, and civilizational facilities were a novelty. On the other hand, officers were newcomers who were unaccustomed to the climate and had a certain expectation about their standard of living that was discordant with the reality in the field.

Things might have been different if the two sides communicated. But this was a remarkable difficulty for officials in Tunceli. Communication with the local population, especially with women and with those who were older than fifty, who had difficulty understanding or speaking Turkish, required a translator. Who were these translators? And what proportion of officers actually made an effort to learn "Zonê Ma?"[412]

There is no information regarding these questions in the reports. What is present are interesting turns of phrase used by the internal colonial observer. The deputy of Tunceli wrote, using a long-standing Ottoman analogy, that Dersim, which used to periodically "boil up like a volcano" under the "ruthless rule" of the seyids and aghas during the *Ancien Régime*, had now become Tunceli. Nature itself was harsh: steep mountains, haunting caves, wild valleys, and neglected lands without structure, roads, and bridges surrounded by torrential waters. Dersim embodied an old and backwards mentality, banditry, and mischief (*şekavet ve mefsedet*), while Tunceli was an incarnation of new, "advanced civilization" that had dissolved the old.

411 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 337 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

412 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 338 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

However, this old Dersim requires study in order to better appreciate the present Tunceli. The land was far from knowing true peace and prosperity. It was still the home of seyids and aghas that would rise up in arms against the state and continuously inflict surrounding lands with banditry. The true enemy of the people was not the state, but these local notables. Taking a Jacobinist stance loyal to the French Revolution, republicans willed a clean cut with the *Ancien Régime*, which was reflected in Necmeddin's reports. He did not mention any of the numerous Ottoman operations aimed to subdue Dersim. Instead, an anti-republican and anti-revolutionary stance was emphasized. Notably, he wrote that in the first years of the War of Independence, agents of the Koçgiri rebellion against the Grand National Assembly found refuge in Dersim. This is of course true, but Dersim had been a place of refuge for millennia. Not only was Dersim perceived as a place of refuge for the antirevolutionary and antirepublican forces, but a clear mission to free the people of the authority of the seyids and aghas (*halkı seyitlerin ve ağaların elinden ve nüfuzundan kurtarabilmek*) was expressed. This struggle against local notables, like French anti-feudalism, was actually a continuation of a process that had started with the Tanzimat. Those living in Dersim that had abandoned tribal life and adopted a sedentary existence were content with the efforts. The Republic presented itself as a *force libératrice* for the victimized peasantry. [413]

2.5.3 Party Organization

We have already mentioned in passing the essential role of People's Houses with regard to the Turkish civilizing mission. These institutions were directly related to the Republican People's Party and its organization in the provinces. Their distribution across the territory of the empire and their function illuminate life in Dersim after terror. In a tradition that can be easily be brought back to the Committee of Union and Progress, all state finances were used for the benefit of the party.

413 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 185 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943). [Dersim'in içinde, aşiret hayatından ayrılarak çiftlikle uğraşanlar ... soygunculuk yapan, hayatlarına kıyan, evlerini yakan aşiret reislerinden, haydutlardan bezmişti.]

Because the party meant the state, there was no distinction between them in Turkey. For instance, state officers, the Inspector General, and the provincial governor were directly involved in the development of party organization in Bingöl.

This was surely deemed necessary as the only party organization in the province in 1939 was in Kiğı, once more showing the overwhelming importance of Kiğı vis-à-vis other districts in the province. The People's House in Çapakçur had three departments of performance, sports and villager affairs as well as classrooms. The performance department produced the plays *Yarım Osman*, *İstiklal*, *Yıldırım,* and *Kanun Adamı*. The villager affairs department invited neighboring villagers for conferences and talks in which around three thousand people participated. There were 772 books as well as radio in the library. The annual budget of the People's House was 1.900 lire, and the building, which housed the sports department, the people's classrooms, and library, was becoming insufficient. Kiğı was the most advanced district of the province after Çapakçur, and an additional building needed to be constructed to house the People's House there, as well. Solhan, Genç, and Karlıova possessed neither appropriate buildings nor qualified personnel to open People's Houses, so what were called "People's Rooms" were opened first, instead. Each was furnished with a radio, books, and newspapers in order enlighten the people. In fact, these houses and rooms existed for one specific reason, the indoctrination of the people. Functioning as a critical part of its civilizing mission, they allowed state propaganda to spread.[414]

These institutions were meant to help the republic take root, to explain the revolutions and to secure national culture and unity. Performances, conferences, books, newspapers, and the most advanced entertainment system of the day – the radio – were the tools used to attract people to the People's Houses as unknowing volunteers on behalf of the Turkish civilizing mission. However, even though attendance at conferences organized by the People's

414 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 32-34 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); Selçuk Çıkla, "1923-1950 yılları arasında yazılan köylü ve köylüyü konu edinen piyesler," *Milli Eğitim* 175 (Summer 2007): 98-113; and Aka Gündüz, *Yarım Osman: Köy Piyesi 3 Perde, 1 Tablo* (Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1933).

House in Çapakçur in 1939 was expressed in the thousands, the institution had only 154 members. It acquired only an additional 40 members in 1940. Four of these were women, newcomers to what was until then an exclusively male organization. They were by all means an energetic bunch, fully assuming their agency in the civilizing mission. In fact, the administrative council of the Çapakçur People's House requested a mobile cinema even before they had a new building. In 1940, two People's Rooms were opened in Darahini and in Solhan. [415]

The Çapakçur People's House moved into the local hotel. It organized conferences on history, the revolution, and administrative, social and health issues. Books were lent out. A foreign language course was offered in which fifteen citizens learned English. Even twenty inmates of the local prison were given lessons, and three learned to read and write. Courses on sewing (*dikiş, nakış, biçki*) were offered to women, but demand was low. The People's House operated as a middleman in terms of communication between families and servicemen and was an open address for the postal service. The People's House looked after poor children's educational and clothing needs and functioned as a philanthropic society. It had a band that played Turkish music, and a clean, beautiful park was created in front of the building. The building itself was perceived as a bastion of the enlightenment. The People's Rooms in Solhan and Genç, were enlightening the villagers as well, but it was the Çapakçur People's House that set an example for the rest of Bingöl. [416]

In 1942, weekly conferences continued, the band regained allure under a new director. Theatrical plays were being staged not only in the town center but also in villages. Philanthropic activities continued: clothing and social and health aid were given to the needy. Education was also on the list of its priorities. Local people were being educated in new agricultural methods to maximize economic production. The People's House in Kiğı was also active and gave aid needy children and the families of soldiers. Young girls received education in sewing. The *Halk dershane* taught reading and writing skills to five prisoners in Kiğı prison as well as legal and civil information to village

415 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 77-79 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

416 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 129-130 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

councilmen. The advancement of Solhan's People's Room was under the close observation of the kaymakam as a new building was being constructed. Darahini People's Room organized ceremonies, conferences, recitals, and plays. Three wedding ceremonies were held here, and thirteen poor children were clothed.[417]

Before the military operations, the closest *Halkevi* to Dersim was in Erzincan. Five years after the 1937 military operation, there was at least one People's Room in Tunceli, situated in Ovacık, to which the assistant to the Fourth Inspector General, Abdülhak Savaş, attests. However, in 1939 there was no such building. This indicates that there was rising interest on the part of the party in the region during the early years of the Second World War. After the end of the war there was an ever-increasing party presence in the region. But the only real estate owned by the party in the territories of the Fourth Inspectorate-General was the Elazığ *Halkevi*, for which a title-deed had been issued though it was uninsured.[418]

The Inspectorate-General and the party were collaborating at this time to implant these institutions in the region. The "national chief" had set a goal to construct 500 People's Houses and 10.000 People's Rooms by the end of 1944. This attention paid by the state to what was essentially a propaganda network for the party is significant. Their establishment correlates with the involvement of the party in the region. The Çemişgezek party representative would write to the Tunceli District Administrative Council President (*İl İdare Kurulu Başkanı*) who would then transmit the messages directly to the RPP General Secretariat in Ankara. Communication through the party hierarchy established in the region was restricted mainly to financial and material issues that included the furnishing of doors and windows for party buildings, magazines, books, nails, and the acquisition of a title deed. [419]

417 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 180-182 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

418 BCA, 70-459-1, 1. ve 3. Um.Müf bölgelerinde yaptırılacak halkevleri hakkında; BCA, Tunceli'deki, Partiye ait gayrimenkuller 18/7/1942; and BCA, 1705-931-1, Elazığ, Bingöl ve Tunceli illerindeki halkodalarına yapılan yardımlar.

419 BCA, 0-3-1950, *Tunceli'deki halkodası binaları için yardım*, 31/12/1947; and Mesut Özcan, *Tunceli'de Kurulan Halkevleri ve Halkodaları (1932-1951): Yazışmalar, Belgeler, Fotoğraflar* (Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2012).

The intensification of party activity in Tunceli was actually a sign of times to come. By 1945, Turkey had managed to keep out of the war and Dersim seemed to have been fully integrated. But in December 1946 martial law in Tunceli was extended, which Rambout sees as the continuation of an injustice that had caused the loss of forty thousand people. The precise figure of those killed by the state forces is disputable. The official figure based on official demographic data concerning mortality per annum was around seven thousand. That number aside, the fact that martial law was extended beyond the second world war shows that the state still was not confident of its hold on the region. However exceptional rule could not be maintained for long. The Age of Catastrophe was over, and Turkey was determined to prove itself to the rest of the free world that it could allow multiparty democracy to flourish. In the four years between 1948 and 1952, there was a slow transition from internal colonial to representative rule. As Turkey moved towards democracy, Dersim was headed towards "internal" decolonization. In actuality, the republic was going through a transformation. İnönü was not a popular leader and the people were about to express their discontent with their "national chief" at the ballot box. Dersim became a symbol of his regime's incompetence.[420]

Journalist Osman Mete's article in *Son Posta* newspaper in April 1948 is pertinent in this respect. Osman Mete, which was possibly the pseudonym for a special correspondent who visited the region in April 1948 on behalf of a left-leaning journal that opposed the policies of İnönü, wrote: *Tunc Eli, the old Dersim … was desolate*. The only officials present were policemen and tax collectors. He wrote that *very little remain*[ed] *from the period before the revolt* and that *there* [we]*re no more artisans, no more culture, no more trade*. He met *unoccupied people whose whole life now seemed to revolve around a flock of a hundred goats*. He also noted that *no trace of civilization ha*[d] *yet penetrated the area*, there were *no schools, no doctors*. Clearly referring to the failure of the Turkish civilizing mission and the reality of colonial exploitation, he protested: *We give the people of Dersim nothing; we only take. We have no right to carry on treating them like this.*[421]

420 Rambout, *Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi,* 41.

421 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 63.

In actuality the politicization of Dersim in this newspaper, which was to be closed after the 1960 coup, exemplifies the discourse being produced by the group that opposed the radical Turkish revolution, which was again manifest albeit in a different form during the early 2010s. Dersim became a rhetorical tool for those who wanted to make a point of the Republican People's Party's disconnect from the actual people of Turkey, which violently manifested itself in the *tertele*. The infamous slogan of the Democrat Party, *Yeter! Söz milletindir!*, reflected the frustration of an overwhelming majority of the people of Kemalist Turkey, and *Kurdistan ... was the Party's main stronghold*.[422]

As the Inspectorate-General system approached its end military and police repression died down. In what might be considered a radical turn of events those tribal leaders that had been exiled were allowed to return and for the most part recovered their properties. Which meant that the violent anti-feudal efforts of the republic had become obsolete. Naturally, these local notables were approached by the Democrat Party and many entered parliament, some became Ministers.

422 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 63.

4

Economic Transformation of an Internal Colony

Can we speak of economic development in Dersim between 1927 and 1952? Is the economic model of an Internal Colony applicable to this historical case? What differences can be detected between the economy of Dersim before and after the ’38 Operation? These general questions are answered through an analysis of agriculture, animal husbandry, infrastructure, forestry in the region as well as its commerce and financial sectors. In many respects, economic development in the modern nation-state de facto involves internal colonization. The initial economic development in medieval Europe that eventually gave rise to modern capitalism was directly related to internal colonization. This development, which took place between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, was accompanied by demographic growth and a relational transformation of the overarching feudal superstructure.

These trends brought about the rise of a new system. The rural economy changed, allowing for urban and commercial expansion. This transformation occurred as there was a population explosion which coincided with previously unfarmed areas being cultivated, and new townships created. The cultivation of previous idle lands was accompanied by the felling of forests and drainage of bogs. The state, helped by the church, "grasped communities formerly isolated by forest, marsh or mountain." [423] These were "Europe's inner barbarians" the Celts, Scandinavians, and Slavs, whose lands were habitually unknown. Western civilization began its ascent up the mountains which harbored "slopes formerly unoccupied or abandoned to the domain of hostile highlanders." [424] This "new accessibility of highlands to settlement" is explained by "a 'warm spell', which lasted from the late 10th to the mid-13th centuries, with effects which only began to fade when a 'little ice age' drove settlers from late-colonized uplands in the 14th century." [425] This time of environmental transformation was accompanied by a disturbance of the natural ecology, when "western Europe conquered the wild wood."

Internal colonization formed "the basis of subsequent overseas colonization" in Europe. Arguably, the form of modern capitalism that came to encircle the whole world emerged in the United Provinces during the seventeenth century, as the "Dutch created the first in a series of economic empires whose rise and fall have punctuated the development of the modern world." [426] In Wallerstein's world-system theory "hegemony, or the superior degree of core-status, has a crucial effect on the respective positions of all parties," along these lines, "the economic and political supremacy of a province, Holland, and even of a city, Amsterdam, was sufficient to hold a country together." [427] The United Provinces occupied this position of hegemony between 1625 and 1675, which coincided with their national economic development and colonial expansion.

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423 Felipe Fernandez-Armesto & James Muldoon, *Internal colonization in medieval Europe*, (Burlington: Ashgate/Variorum, 2008), IX.

424 Fernandez-Armesto & Muldoon, *Internal colonization in medieval Europe*, X.

425 Fernandez-Armesto & Muldoon, *Internal colonization in medieval Europe*, XIII.

426 Maurice Aymard, *Dutch capitalism and world capitalism* (Cambridge Uni. Press, 1982), 1-2.

427 Aymard, *Dutch capitalism and world capitalism*, 93.

World capitalism diffused through the Ottoman Empire under conditions of imperialist rivalry. It was neither an industrial-commercial power influencing the function of the world economy, nor was it a colonial country with no say in its own economic development. On the contrary, the Ottoman Empire belongs to a third category constituted by countries into which the world economy took root at a slower pace than either colonies or empires. Imperial rivalry among countries of this third type allowed state institutions to maintain jurisdiction over some sectors of the economy, the most vital sector of which was agriculture. This was an area of the economy where the infiltration of foreign capital was limited. In these countries, the agrarian system was mostly comprised of holdings of moderate size, and its excess production was easily seized. Therefore, the government tended to support smaller landholdings vis-à-vis hefty freeholds, the reasons for which were both budgetary and political. Smaller holdings were easier to tax, while large landlords often presented a challenge to the state.[428]

The government's agricultural strategy was therefore to promote small to medium scale landholding, and the republic maintained this imperial strategy. In fact, this agricultural policy was an essential part of the economic aspect of the Turkish civilizing mission, which sought to weaken local notables and supposedly favor the landless peasantry. In other words, the prime goal of the Republic's land reform was not to maximize agricultural production along physiocratic lines, but to eradicate local power holders that posed a potential threat to the supremacy of the central government.

This radical, Jacobin anti-feudalism *alla Turca* resulted in the terror of *tertele.* However, the state had economic intentions in Dersim, as well. The taxation issue, like banditry, was a burden inherited from the Ottoman administration. Taxes on cattle, real estate, and individual incomes were either not paid, or paid in minimal amounts. According to the secret Dersim report published in 1937, the amount of the state budget spent on Dersim exceeded 100,000 lire, an amount that exceeded state revenues from the region. Because the balance with regard to Dersim amounted to a net loss.

428 Pamuk, "The Ottoman empire in comparative perspective," 133-134.

The state sought to improve its tax collection. It was estimated that at least one hundred thousand animals were off the books. The scattered manner in which the area was inhabited, the lack of roads, and the preference of pastoralism over agriculture - or in other words, the traditional way of living of the people of Dersim - all constituted problems in the eyes of the state. Drawing on the same secret publication from 1937, there was a clear intention to transfer populations living in the mountains to the plains, and to promote a shift to sedentary agriculture. This was another reason for land reform. Moreover, the obstacle posed by the rugged geography was to be surmounted through public works projects, notably the construction of roads. Infrastructure is central to the idea of economic development, but the central state disregarded the traditional infrastructure, which was seasonal and adapted for use by pedestrians and mules. Instead, it created an all-weather resistant system of roads accessible to wheeled transportation.[429]

4.1 Infrastructure

The early modern infrastructure of the empire was mostly based on military needs supplemented by the construction of roads organized and executed by local notables. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the road system of the empire was in disarray, and one of the first acts taken after the proclamation of the *Gülhane-i Hattı-ı Hümayun* concerned roads and bridges: the *Yol ve Köprüler Nizamnamesi*. But even during the *Tanzimat* period, the principal preoccupation behind road policy was not socioeconomic necessities; on the contrary, the road network was constructed according to military and strategic concerns. This trend was also embraced by the republic in Dersim. In terms of discourse, the Turkish government presented the construction of roads and bridges as visible markers of its civilizing mission. This was obvious in statements such as: "eski devirlerden beri bakımsız kalmış olan bu vatan parçasını şenlendirmek ve medenileştirmek"[430] (to Turkify and civilize this piece of long neglected homeland).

429 Zafer Toprak, "Antropolojik Irk Sorunu ve Dersim'de 'Uygarlaştırıcı Misyon'," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no.202, (October 2010): 60-67.

430 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 304 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

4.1.1 Construction is civilization

The construction of roads and bridges was also perceived to demonstrate the power of the government and constitute a sort of proof that the government was serving the people. Construction physically manifested the state on lands largely devoid of civilizational edifices. Buildings such as government mansions, military outposts, and barracks as well as health facilities, schools, and lodgings for the government and military employees were signs of state control.[431]

The general outlook of the state in terms of infrastructure was colonial. For the government the concern was not to improve communication between local communities for their mutual benefit, but the fast, effective transport of soldiers and the security of supply lines. Travelogues indicate that the highlands of Dersim had narrow paths over the mountains that offered no passage in winter. The state did not develop these mountain paths; instead, roads were built where none had existed before. This is another example of the colonial approach in which the indigenous culture is negated, and the land is treated as virgin terrain.

The road system of the Ottoman Empire was neglected and especially in impenetrable Dersim. However, two main roads had long been in use in Dersim. The first linked Harput, Palu, Mazgirt, Nazımiye, Pülümür, and Erzincan avoiding Inner Dersim, and the second linked Harput, Pertek, Hozat, Pülümür, and Erzincan passing through the Kalan valley. These roads were primitive and barely accommodated oxcarts; importantly, they were under tribal control, which often meant that goods transported along them were confiscated.

There were almost no all-weather roads in Turkey following the Great War, and there was no preexisting infrastructure that could accommodate motorized transportation. Of the 18,335 kilometers of road, 13,885 needed repairs and 4,450 were dirt roads. The government's solution was the road tax of 1921, which required anyone who could not pay the tax to actively work on road construction. An additional law was promulgated in January 1925 called

431 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 304 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943); İsmail Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2001), 5.

the *Mükellefiyet-i Bedeniye Kanunu*. However, in 1927, the issue of road construction was relegated to Provincial Special Administrations. In June 1929, Law No. 1525 on Roads and Bridges (*Yol ve Köprüler Kanunu*) was enacted. This differentiated between National *Chaussées* and Provincial roads. The former was to be financed directly from the general budget and administered by the Ministry of Public Works; the latter was under the jurisdiction of Provincial Special Administrations. Meanwhile, village roads were left to the initiative of villagers.[432]

British diplomatic correspondence testifies that in Autumn 1928 *a system of roads* had begun being constructed: *A road from Kharput to Erzinjan, which* [will] *cut through the Dersim country, has already begun, and another is to be made at once between Ovajik and Hozat.*[433] The Republic did indeed cut through "Dersim country," surprisingly, in the ninety years since the writing of this report, the central state has still not managed a functioning road linking Ovacık with Hozat. Nonetheless, the diplomat made the remarkable observation, that infrastructure and domination are correlated: *As roads are extended eastwards the Kurds will come under more constant authority.*[434]

There are two distinct periods in direct state investment in Dersim under internal colonial rule, before and after the Law of Tunceli. Among the relatively small amount of archival material regarding infrastructure in Dersim before 1935 is notably a decree signed by Mustafa Kemal in January 1929 allocating ten thousand lire for public works in Dersim and a letter from the Inspector General Öngören to İnönü in which he communicated the need for urban planning in the nine provinces in his inspectorate.[435]

The archives also reflect that infrastructure in Dersim was placed higher on the list of priorities after 1935. In May 1936, the construction budget of the Fourth General Inspectorate was four million lire to be spent over three years. This budget was to cover among other projects, "the most needed road and bridge construction linking settlements to one another and to the

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432 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 55-57.

433 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 122 (FO 424/269, p. 42, No. : 36).

434 Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle "Kürt Sorunu,"* 122 (FO 424/269, p. 42, No. : 36).

435 BCA, 1-12-18, Dersim yoluna sarf edilmek üzere bütçeden 10 000 lira verilmesi; BCA, 69-455-6, 1. Um. Müf. bölgesinde şehir planlaması bir teşkilat kurulması, 18/5/1931.

provincial capital, thus facilitating the transport of produce and ensuring the income and sustenance of the people." This shows that economic development through the trade of agricultural produce was among the preoccupations of the central state. The lack of roads was not only seen as harmful to economic development but was even described as a cause of subsistence crises, which in turn gave way to the deterioration of public order. Aside from road and bridge construction, the remainder of the four million lire was to be spent on other construction projects, such as secure barracks, government mansions, schools, prisons, and lodgings for personnel.[436]

Construction meant civilization. The construction to be completed was in a modern style conceived to be a clear marker of civilization to the locals. Civilization is an immaterial concept, but construction allows it to become material and then it becomes real. The reality of civilization also entails labor. One of the benefits of construction projects in Dersim was the opportunity for employment. In fact, central state authorities were already planning for the local people of Dersim to constitute a low-cost labor force throughout the country.[437]

Another clearly documented reason behind the projected infrastructure projects concerned the emerald treasure of Dersim, a subject to which we will return in the discussion of forests further below. *Tuncelinin yol ve Köprülerle civar vilâyetlere bağlanması bu havaldeki ormanlardan istifade edilmesini mümkün kılarak bir taraftan Sivas-Erzurum Şömendüferine ve Erzincan ve Erzurum havalisine faydalı olacaktır.* This phrase not only indicates that the development of transportation infrastructure between Tunceli and surrounding provinces was related to the exploitation of the forests, but also hints that the timber to be extracted from Dersim was slated for use in the construction of the Sivas-Erzurum railroad.[438]

436 BCA, 71-469-2, 4. Um. Müf. bölgesinde bayındırlık işleri için tahsisat verilmesi, 8/5/1936.

437 BCA, 71-469-2, 4. Um. Müf. bölgesinde bayındırlık işleri için tahsisat verilmesi, 8-5-1936. "Bu fakir halk ilk önce ikametgahına yakın yerlerdeki inşaat işlerinde çalışmağa alıştırıldıktan sonra Tunceli haricinede iş aramağa gidecekleri tabiidir."

438 BCA, 71-469-2, 4. Um. Müf. bölgesinde bayındırlık işleri için tahsisat verilmesi, 8-5-1936.

A letter from İnönü at the end of June 1936 indicates that only half a million of the previously mentioned four million lire were sent to the Fourth Inspectorate-General; the remaining payments would be made in installments. The fact that İnönü personally communicated this to Alpdoğan is noteworthy, and it is clear from the archival documents that the prime minister took a special interest in the affairs of the region. A letter from March 1937 documents how half a million lire were budgeted in the region: 100,000 lire for the hospital in Elaziz, 100,000 lire for the construction of various district police headquarters and government buildings, 68,000 lire for the construction of schools, 60,000 lire for irrigation, 50,000 lire for the construction of the Bingöl government mansion, 40.000 lire each for the construction of houses for state functionaries in Pülümür and Pülür, 32,000 lire for various school related expenses, and 10,000 lire for telephone infrastructure. When we consider the ratio of the six items, as demonstrated in Chart 5, we perceive that the most prominent entry consists of civil and military building construction, which again corresponds with the maxim: "construction is civilization."[439]

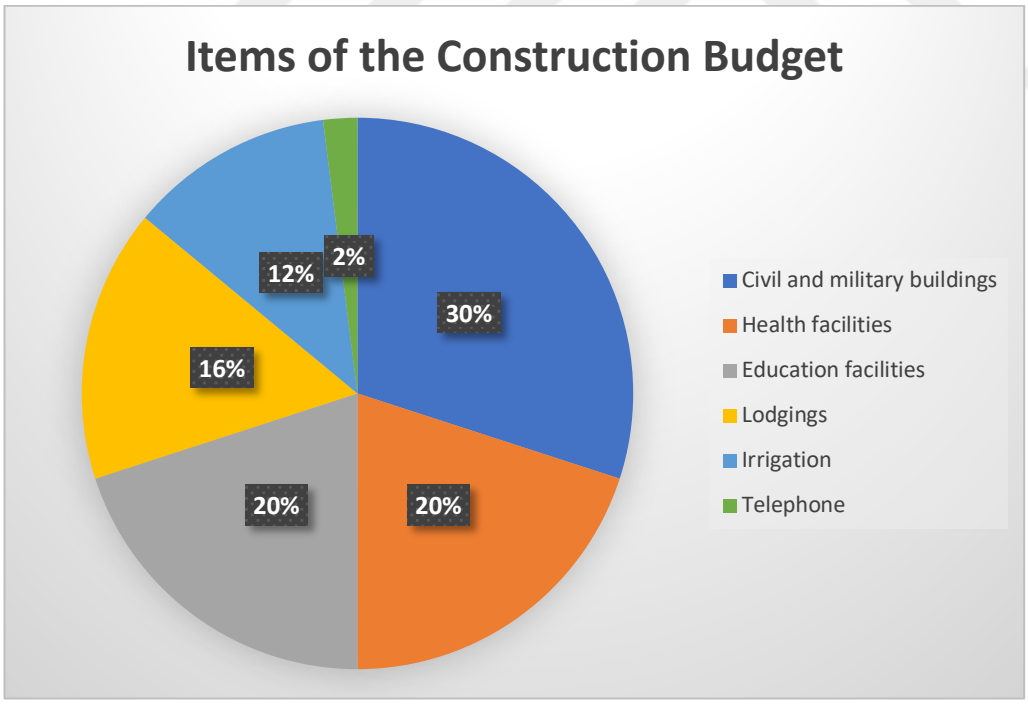


Chart 13 Fourth Inspectorate-General's Construction Budget 1937. SOURCE: BCA[440]

439 BCA, 71-469-3, 4. Um. Müf. bayındırlık işleri için 500 000 lira tahsis edildiği; BCA, 4. Um. Müf. Kazım Alpdoğan'a, İsmet İnönü tarafından yazılan takdir mektubu, 71-469-5.

440 BCA, 4. Um. Müf. Kazım Alpdoğan'a, İsmet İnönü tarafından yazılan takdir mektubu, 71-469-5.

Chart 13 suggests a veritable civilizing mission implanting the state on the territory in terms of its administrative and military capacities, as well as its civil capacity through health and educational facilities. There is even an irrigation project that would allow the irrigation of the Peri-Çarsancak plain, which constituted a remarkable twelve percent of the total budget. This 6 square kilometer plain was situated fifty kilometers northeast of Elazığ. 400 of the 600 hectares of land was arable, but agriculture could not be implemented without irrigation due to decreased precipitation and drought. [441]

As this budget was being debated, the Dersim uprising took place, and another million lire were added for construction. This additional million was to be spent for the construction of the Elazığ-Hozat-Pülür road, the construction of the Mazgirt bridge, the construction of the Gülüşkür, Pertek and Süngeç bridges, and the construction of barracks, police headquarters and government buildings in Pülümür and Pülür. Three of these four items directly concerned transportation infrastructure which was crucial for the military operation. İnönü communicated to Alpdoğan that he had the full support of the state behind him to complete the "Dersim reform," which could take up to three more years.[442]

As the first summer of fighting peaked in July 1937, the amount of money sent for construction in the Fourth General Inspectorate amounted to 3,300,000 lire. [443] Alpdoğan conducted inspections concerning the state of various construction in the region in mid-August 1937. During his travels he participated in the opening ceremony of the 17th Mountain Brigade's barracks in Hozat. Barracks in Pülümür, Nazımiye, and Mameki as well as government buildings in Pülümür and Mameki were all in different stages of construction. He also witnessed the inauguration of the 40-meter-long Dinar-Razik Bridge on the 10th of August; the 80-meter long Mameki-Razik Bridge was to be inaugurated on the 30th of August. A total of 360 meters of concrete bridges were being constructed simultaneously in Singeç, Pertek and Gülüşkür.[444]

441 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 327-328 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

442 BCA, 71-469-6, 4. Um. Müf. bölgesinde yapılacak yol ve köprü imarı, 30/5/1937.

443 BCA, 72-471-3, 4. Um. Müf. mıntıkasında yapılacak imar işleri için tahsisat istenmesi.

444 BCA, 72-470-1, 4. Um. Müf. Kazım Alpdoğan'ın imar işlerine ait seyahat raporu 17/8/1937.

As of the end of July 1937 the amount of money sent for construction totaled 5,082,085 Turkish lire - more than one million in excess of the original four million allocated. Six hundred thousand lire were spent on ten concrete bridges alone, comprising the Yağın, Seyithan, Mameki, Sıvacık, Gülüşkür, Pertek, and Singeç bridges. A pontoon bridge was built next to the existing wooden Pertek Bridge, which could not bear certain heavy loads. Other bridges, such as the one below the route between Hozat and Seyyithan were reinforced to bear more weight. Pole (*kazık*) bridges were being constructed in Kalosan, Mameki, Seyyithan, and Harçik. Bridges were exceptionally important on roads constructed along rives; in fact, there were six new bridges on the Pertek-Mameki road. Road construction was progressing, particularly on the Nazımiye-Seyyithan road which included a 60-meter-long pole bridge and a 30-meter-long tunnel. This road, which was accessible to automobiles, was instrumental in assuring supply lines for the considerable construction in Inner Dersim.[445]

Just like with agriculture, construction had to submit to the natural elements, such as torrential rains in November 1937 that disrupted construction work. Winter was anyway a time of non-action. The barracks in Pülümür were completed and occupied by a brigade, and the Nazımiye barracks, although unfinished, was also habitable. Two brigades occupied pavilions built in Seyyithan and Tüllük. The barracks in Mameki were nearly complete, and a government mansion and ten duplex houses for servicemen were being built. In Pülür, the government mansion and the barracks were complete, as were ten duplex houses. Work was continuing on the 110-kilometer-long Elazığ-Pertek-Hozat-Pülür road, and the 53-kilometer-long Pertek-Mameki road was already complete. The 36-meter-wide Pertek-Elazığ bridge was under construction, whilst the 185-meter-long Gülüşkür bridge was nearly done, as was the 50-meter-long tunnel in Seyithan for the Mameki-Seyithan-Nazımiye road. Eleven schools and a hospital in Elazığ were under construction. In the meantime, there was still not a building to house the administration of the Inspectorate-General in Elazığ.[446]

445 BCA, 72-470-4, Tunceli'nde yapılmakta olan genel inşaata dair rapor, 20/9/1937.

446 BCA, 72-470-6, 1937 iklim şartlarına rağmen yapılmakta olan inşaat raporu, 13/12/1937.

4.1.2 Roads in Tunceli

In the early forties the means of transportation were still extremely limited. Although motor vehicles could travel on some roads, animal power still comprised the main form of transport in many areas of the province. Even then, the use of ox carts was rare. The norm was horses, mules, and donkeys. Pertek was connected to Elazığ with a proper road and had a central position in that it linked the two main roads of the province (Pertek-Elazığ, Pertek-Pülür). Motor and wheeled vehicles could travel there easily. Additionally, this area was flatter than other districts of the province, which also rendered transportation easier in general. Wheeled transportation on the Çemişgezek-Elazığ road was limited to the summer season. The main Pertek-Pülür road passing through Kalan, with a spur to the district of Hozat, followed the Munzur River to the Ovacık Plain, but was inaccessible during winter. In fact, during winter even mules were of no use; and most transportation was restricted to one's own two feet. In the district of Ovacık, non-wheeled skids were used during summer, and sleighs called *tevik,* pulled by one person, were used in winter. There were also a few ox carts in the district, and limited wheeled transportation was possible on the Hozat-Pülür road, which was opened during the military operation. Meanwhile mules were the sole means of transportation in Mazgirt and Nazımiye; furthermore, there was not a single ox cart to be found in either district. Nor was there a road that would allow for vehicle transportation in Pülümür.[447]

It is worth noting that the essential Erzincan-Elazığ connection passing through Pülümür-Kalan-Pertek had not yet been established in the early forties. The fact that a major modern road connects Pülür (Ovacık) with Kalan (Tunceli) and Pertek, the most independent parts of Inner Dersim, before reaching Elazığ, the administrative capital of the Fourth Inspectorate-General, indicates its direct relationship to military preoccupations of domination and control. The connection to Elazığ was essential because it was the model center of civilization in the new republic, adorned with all the facilities of contemporary society.

447 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 329-330 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Elazığ Airport became operational in 1941, two years before the one in Van. Air travel at the time was mostly a state and military affair. It took two to three hours to reach the city of Elazığ from the airstrip. The railroad was arguably more accessible to the general public and there was a Tunceli station [today called Tanyeri] along the Erzincan-Erzurum railroad near the Pülümür district, but most people of Dersim could not use it. Mutu station, just north of Pülümür, was more important for the people of the region since the main road was projected to end there. However, in the early forties, the rest of Tunceli did not benefit, because Pülümür was not yet integrated with the rest of the province. Mutu station was important not only for travelers from around Pülümür, but also for people from Kiğı in neighboring Bingöl province that came there by the Pülümür-Şeteri road. In fact, Pülümür was better connected to Kiğı than to other districts in its own province. While both districts made use of the Mutu station, it had no enclosed waiting area for passengers which was inconvenient in both summer and winter. The trains usually passed after midnight and stopped at the station for only about a minute.[448]

In terms of communications infrastructure, the post and telegraph were running smoothly in the districts of Tunceli by the early forties. Nevertheless, postal transfer was still primitive; the mail was carried with pack animals during summer and by manpower during winter. The main reason for interruptions in the postal services was the weather, as it was virtually impossible to deliver mail to most of the province, with the exception of Pertek, during the long winters. Contracted carriers ran the postal affairs in the districts and carried the mail on their backs during snowfall and blizzards. Meanwhile, wired communications worked efficiently year-round. The telegraph lines were generally in good order except in Ovacık where repairs were needed. The various districts of Tunceli were also connected to Elazığ by telephone lines. The postal service was especially important for the local population, since the relatives living and working in western cities sent money back to their families. It was estimated that the total of funds transferred to Tunceli by post each year was between 15 and 20 thousand lire.[449]

448 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 331-332 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

449 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 332-333 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Locals were natural tracking specialists and found their way easily across the land. But the state had a need for wider, flatter roads that would allow motorized transportation. One relatively developed road was the one linking Elazığ and Hozat, which was opened to wheeled transport as early as 1928-29. The development of this road was natural considering that it linked the former provincial capital of Dersim with the late Ottoman capital of *Mamüret-ül-Aziz*. The plan was to continue the road from Hozat to Ovacık near the district center of Zeranik (Yeşilyazı), but by 1943 the road was not functional although the route had been leveled between Hozat and Ovacık. On the other hand, the historical connection of Harput with Eastern Dersim passing through Palu, Shaikh Said's hometown, was not being further developed because the balance of power had shifted west under republican rule and Pertek was now the gate of Dersim. The republic, therefore, concentrated on the Elazığ-Pertek road which it considered an essential asset to the region's infrastructure.[450]

This 25-kilometer-long road essentially tied the provinces of Tunceli and Elazığ. It passed across the Murat River over the Pertek Bridge *first great gift of the Republic to Tunceli*. The two main roads passing through Pertek were those of Pertek-Mameki(Kalan)-Mutu(Pülümür) and Pertek-Hozat-Pülür(Ovacık). The Pertek-Mutu road was 156 kilometers long. This road was essential in terms of connecting the northern Erzincan-Erzurum railroad and the southern Malatya-Diyarbakır railroad, which thus connected Elazığ and Erzincan.[451] The first stretch of this essential road that would cut through Dersim was the 62-kilometer-long Pertek-Mameki road, the construction of which started in 1929. This road between Pertek district center and Kalan's central village of Mameki also passed through the villages Mercimek and Yeniköy. However, these roads needed to be continuously protected and periodically repaired. By 1943, a total of 346,000 lire had already been spent on the road, and an estimated further half a million lire was necessary for its completion. Its importance was both commercial and military.[452]

450 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 305-306 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

451 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 305-306 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

452 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu,* 306-308 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The Mameki-Seyithan road to the north was originally opened during the military operation of 1938 as a service road for a battalion of the corps of engineers. It was 18 kilometers long and constituted an essential branch of the Elazığ-Pertek-Mameki-Mutu road. While parts of the road were still unconstructed in 1943, parts of the retaining walls were in place in other, and the road construction was quite advanced. The most important part of the road was the 80-meter-long tunnel near the Seyithan Bridge, which is still in use today and which cost 215,000 lire to build. Overall, the projected cost of the road construction between Mameki and Seyithan in 1943 was 671,573 lire. However, the contractor in charge of the construction failed to work in 1943, and the remainder of the road from Seyithan and Tahsini was entrusted to another contractor. This contractor also did not meet the deadlines. A total of 530,000 lire spent, and it was estimated that a further 833,959 lire were necessary to complete the road.[453]

The fourth and final stretch of the road connected Tahsini (Gökçekonak) with Mutu, passing through Pülümür district center. It connected the province with the northern railroad at Mutu Bridge. The road was 40 kilometers long, seven kilometers of which followed the course of the Şeteri River. The road work had already cost 201,000 lire by 1942, and it was estimated that a further 179,257 lire would be spent before it was complete. In the end, the Elazığ-Mameki-Mutu road linking the northern and southern railroads was 156 kilometers long and cost an estimated three million lire. There were difficulties with regards to the procurement of cement, for instance. The province had been promised 375 tons of cement in summer 1943, but only 125 tons were delivered. Work could not be done solely because of bureaucratic failings that resulted in 250 tons of cement not being delivered.[454]

The Pertek-Pülür (Ovacık) road, connecting Elazığ with Inner Dersim was another crucially important road. It began at the Murat River and continued until the Munzur Mountains, was 80 kilometers long, and divided the province of Tunceli along an east-west axis. It was developed and used during the military operation of 1937.

453 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 308 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

454 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 309-310 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The first part of this road, between Pertek and Hozat, was available for wheeled transport by the Republic as early as 1928. The road was 37 kilometers long starting at the Pertek Bridge. The main obstacle to efforts to enlarge and reinforce this road was erosion. Soil eroding from the mountain as well as alluvium brought by streams and rainfall progressively destroyed the road and attempts to fight off these erosive effects were insufficient. The second part of the road connecting Hozat and Pülür was leveled during the military operations and was available for wheeled transport in summers. It was 43-kilometer-long. Erosion and falling rocks blocked passage along some parts of the road. Furthermore, there was work left undone all along the road; cement drainage pipes and plaster bags ready for use lay on the sides of the road. The sight of these unfinished public works and wasted government resources hurt the conscience of the deputy of Tunceli.[455]

Some parts of the Hozat-Pülür road that the traces of even the road opened during the military operations had disappeared and it was impossible for it to provide passage for military equipment by 1943. Military engineering battalions would need to reenter the area as if it were virgin territory. In reality, this meant that the second main road of Tunceli Province was virtually nonexistent - no more than a project on paper.

The principal road in Ovacık district followed Pülür-Zeranik-Ziyaret and was available for wheeled transportation during summer. This main road connecting Ovacık to the rest of the province exists to this day, while the Hozat-Pülür road is still under construction. Thus, internal colonial rule managed to construct only one of the two main roads it saw essential for its policies. Hence the Pertek-Mameki-Mutu road, dividing the province along a north-south axis, became the backbone of Tunceli's infrastructure. Important side roads along on this main road include the Nazımiye and Mazgirt roads as well as the Hozat-Sin-Mameki road, which connected the former provincial center with the future provincial capital. Nazımiye road began a bit beyond the Seyithan Bridge at the Nazımiye Bridge barracks. The earth was leveled back in 1936, though it was barely usable by wheeled transportation even in summer 1943. [456]

455 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 310-311 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

456 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 312-313 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

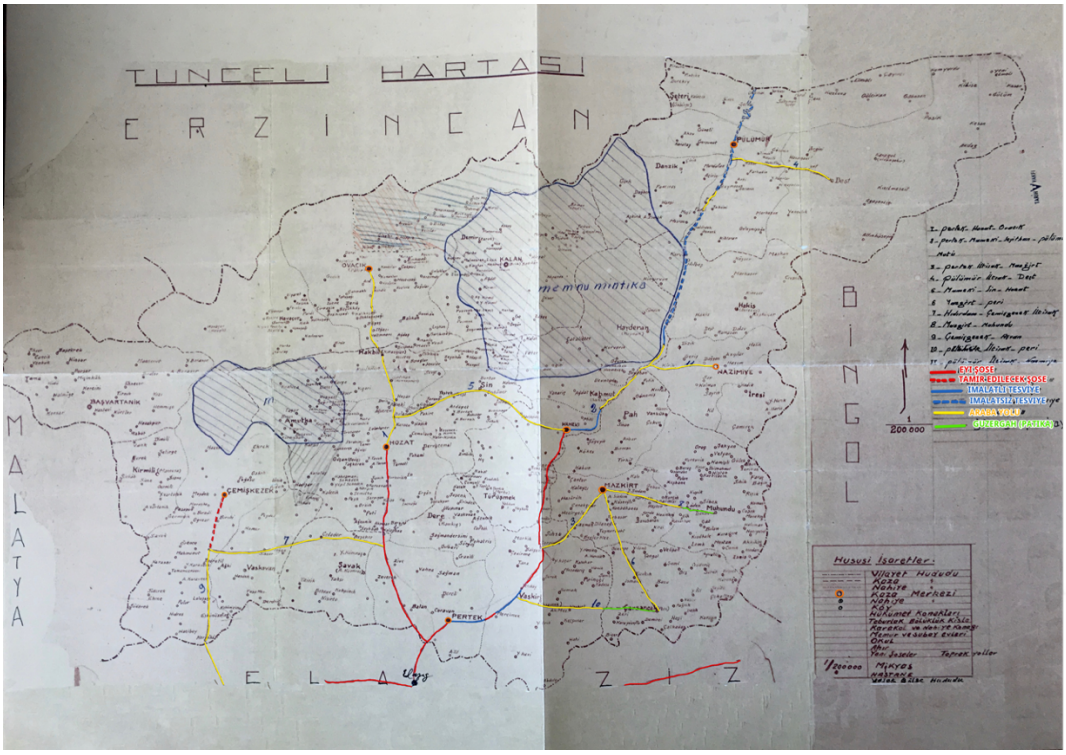
Meanwhile Mazgirt road was in such a poor condition that it was impassable. Citizen Mustafa Kantar told the deputy about rumors of corruption regarding road construction between Şeyhsu Bridge and Mazgirt. Money sent by the state was being diverted for personal gain. Luckily for the state, it had free labor for road works composed of *mükellef amele*; citizens who paid their taxes with their labor. However, five years after the military operation there still was no road to Mazgirt. On the other hand, the 50-kilometer road linking Hozat to Kalan opened in 1938 and was capable of handling wheeled transportation, but it would lay in a forgotten state by 1943, and there was virtually no way to travel from Mameki to Hozat. The Hıdırdamı location, situated on the Pertek-Hozat road, was chosen as the deviation point for the new Çemişgezek road in 1936.[457]

However, there was no need for this road to be constructed during the military operations, as Çemişgezek was historically loyal to the central state. The road starting from Hıdırdamı was projected to be 25 kilometers long and earth only began to be leveled in 1942, costing the state 23,000 lire. In Çemişgezek, like in Mazgirt, local people explained that the lack of progress was due to corruption. Citizen Hıfzı Saler from Germili said: *Derdimizin büyüğü yolsuzluktur*. There is a homonymy of the word *yolsuzluk* in the Turkish language, for it means both "the absence of roads" and "corruption," which compels one's philological curiosity to question if there is a link between the failure to build roads and corruption in Turkey. Other than the above-mentioned road, an older road linked Çemişgezek with Elazığ, where earth was leveled and was available for wheeled transport during summertime. A 30-kilometer portion of this road between Çemişgezek and the Murat River was maintained year-round. Passage over the Murat River was by boat, the passengers would arrive at Aşvan before making their way to Elazığ. The part of the road between Aşvan and Elazığ was more primitive, and Smaller roads in the district included the Germili and Başvartanik roads. Overall, the Fourth Inspectorate-General failed to pay sufficient attention to transportation between Elazığ and Çemişgezek.[458]

457 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 314-316 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

458 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 314-316 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

In Hozat and Kalan, village roads were basically paths (*patika*). The situation was not much better in Mazgirt and Nazımiye where roads had limited use due to the periodic flooding of riverbeds. Necmeddin Sahir suggested that villagers there would wholeheartedly work on road construction that they desperately needed themselves. While the old roads of Pertek were left to their own devices, Pülümür's old roads connecting the district's many villages to the Kiğı district of Bingöl were renewed by authorities.[459]



Map 18 Map of Tunceli, 1943. Source: Tarih Vakfı Arşivi

Map 18 shows the road system established by the Republic in the region of Dersim. The red lines indicate *chaussées* considered to be in good condition, while dashed red lines indicate *chaussées* that needed repair. Only three roads were considered important enough by the state to be constructed as *chaussées*. The shortest was the Elazığ-Pertek road; the incomplete Pertek-Mameki road also includes important sections considered to be *chaussées*; but the longest *chaussée* in Tunceli was the road to Hozat. The blue lines represent leveled stretches. The continuous blue lines indicate leveled roads that were in a better

459 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 317 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

state than the dashed blue lines. Notably, this category is only found on the main Pertek-Pülümür road connecting Elazığ with Erzincan. The yellow lines indicate roads capable of supporting wheeled transportation, which are clearly the most important category in the province in terms of overall length. Only two footpaths are indicated, with green lines, which are situated in Mazgirt district.[460]

4.1.3 Bridges in Tunceli

During internal colonial rule, the central state was more preoccupied with road construction in certain districts of Tunceli than others. Pertek, Ovacık, and Pülümür topped the list while others generally ignored, which suggests that what mattered in terms of state-sponsored infrastructure in Dersim was control of Inner Dersim and communication with Erzincan to the north and Elazığ to the south. Reports emphasized that throughout the region, the most important obstacle to road construction, other than the mighty mountains, were the torrential rivers.

Bridge construction was therefore a major facet of local infrastructure policy. Modern concrete bridges built with identical geometric designs symbolized the civilization presented by the republic. These were mostly arched bridges of concrete that were not in harmony with the environments and stood out as odd monsters of modernity. Traversing the Murat River on his way from Elazığ to Palu, the wool merchant Balsan observed that the new reinforced concrete bridge *brutally cusse*[d] *the heavenly scenery*. The perpendicular concrete supports dissecting the arches of the bridge seemed to Balsan to be *the geometrical seal of the pacifying Turkey, her marque of possession apposed on a strategic point of passage*.[461] The 336-meter-long, 36-meter-wide Gülüşkür Bridge, which today lies submerged beneath the waters of Lake Keban, was constructed by *Aral İnşaat* at an estimated cost of 180,000 lire and inaugurated in 1939.

460 Bülent Bilmez, Gülay Kayacan, Şükrü Aslan, *Belleklerdeki Dersim '38: Kuşaklararası sözlü tarih projesi alan, araştırması raporu* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2011).

461 Balsan, *Les surprises du Kurdistan*, 76.

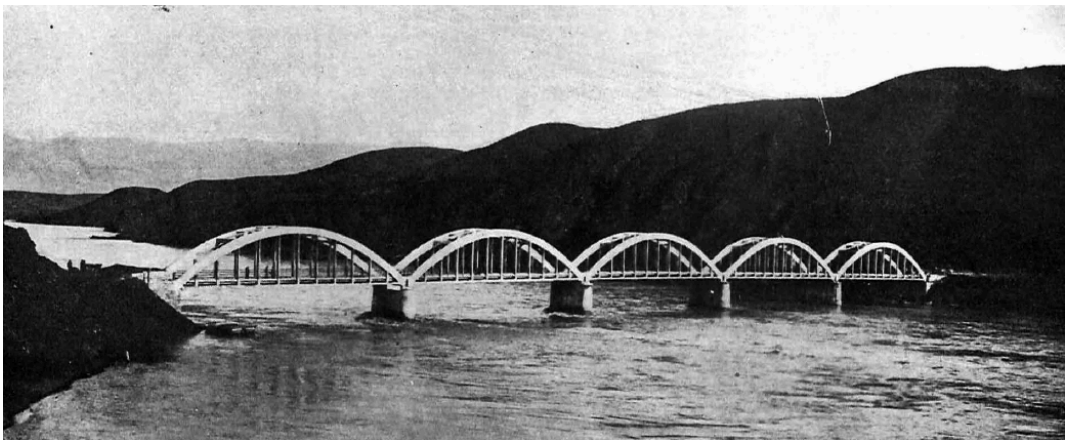


Image 1 The Gülüşkür Bridge. Source: kopriyet.blogspot.com[462]

Aral Construction, founded in 1933 by the engineers Ali Ragıp and Alim, was a notable contracting company under single-party rule, that was involved in the construction of the railroads and facilities of the Kayseri-Sivas, Boğazköprü-İncesu, Çankırı-Çerkeş, and Afyon-Kazanpınar lines as well as in irrigation projects in Adana and Tarsus. The Pertek Bridge, which is today underwater, as well, was also constructed by the Aral Company on the Murat River. This reinforced concrete arch bridge was 106 meters long and cost 155,818 lire to construct. Designed by the German construction engineer Emil Mörsch, it was an improvement over the previously existing wooden bridge.[463]

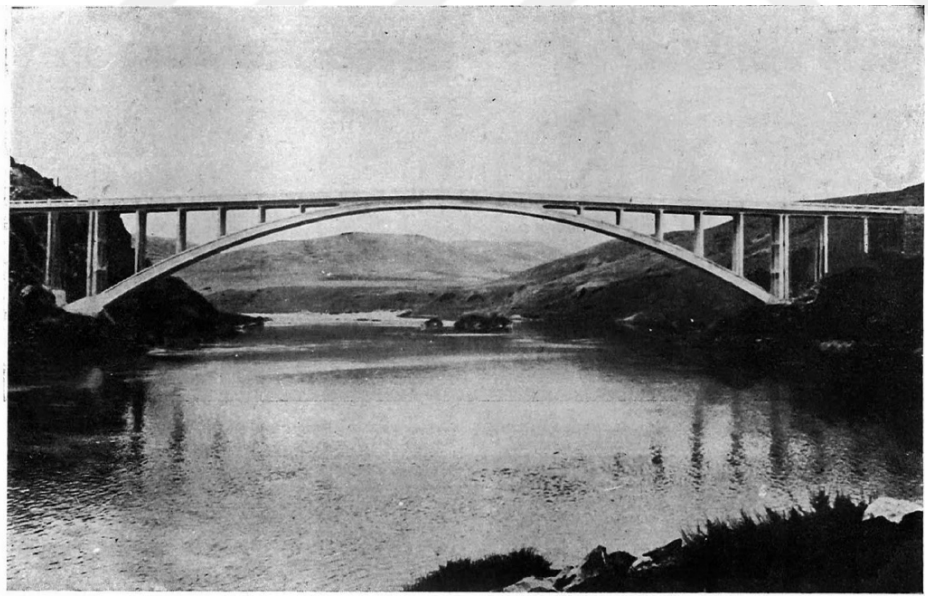


Image 2 The Pertek Bridge. Source: kopriyet.blogspot.com[464]

462 kopriyet.blogspot.com/2016/06/guluskur-koprusu.html, (accessed July 8, 2018).

463 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 318 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943); kopriyet.blogspot.com/2016/06/aral-insaat.html, (accessed July 8, 2018).

464 kopriyet.blogspot.com/2016/09/pertek-koprusu.html, (accessed July 8, 2018).

Singeç Bridge, also now underwater, was constructed by the Aral Company on one of the tributaries of the Munzur River. The company won the contracts for all three bridges from the state on March 1937, and while the construction of the first two bridges took two years to complete, Atatürk himself inaugurated the smaller Singeç Bridge, which was constructed in just eight months. The 60-meters-long reinforced concrete arch bridge was crucial for the Pertek-Hozat and the Pertek-Mameki roads. It was also the first public works project to be undertaken in Dersim proper since Ottoman times; hence its inauguration was ceremonious and was covered by all the national newspapers. It was attended by Mustafa Kemal and Sabiha Gökçen accompanied by Celal Bayar, Kazım Orbay, and the Inspector-General Alpdoğan. [465]



Image 3 Inauguration Ceremony for the Singeç Bridge. Source: kgm.gov.tr[466]

The Türüşmek Bridge, likewise underwater today, was situated on the Pertek-Mameki road. The 60-meters-long reinforced concrete bridge was completed in 1941 for a total construction cost of 37,484 lire. During the military operations, the Mameki Bridge was constructed where the Harçik (Pülümür) and Munzur Rivers join. It was a crucial part of the main road. It was 80 meters long, but as it was designed as a provisional piece of infrastructure, it needed urgent repairs and reconstruction in 1942. Other bridges of consequence at the time were the Şeyhsu, Seyithan, and Kutu bridges. The Şeyhsu Bridge, situated on the Munzur between Pertek and Mazgirt, was an iron bridge

465 NSSA (1), Doğu Sorunu, 319 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

466 www.kgm.gov.tr, (accessed July 8, 2018).

finished in 1941 at a cost of 59,796 lire. The bridge over the Kutu River was located at the intersection of the Kalan and Nazımiye districts. The reinforced concrete bridge was 32-meters-long and was completed in 1942 at a cost of 23,787 lire. The Seyithan Bridge was also built on the Harçik (Pülümür) River, was 35 meters long, and was completed in the same year for 17,957 lire. The central state managed the construction of these seven bridges in Dersim in the span of just five years, which is, a feat. The cost of these bridges in the province, meanwhile, totaled more than half a million lire (538,832 lire) with the foreign-designed Pertek Bridge constituting 29 percent of the total. [467]

4.1.4 Buildings in Tunceli

Another important physical sign of the Turkish *Mission Civilisatrice* in Tunceli was modern buildings. Government Mansions (statehouses) were architectural representations of the republic; the buildings represented the government, housed its officials and intimidated citizens. Arguably the most important of these buildings in the four provinces under the rule of the Fourth Inspectorate-General was the Inspectorate-General building in Elazığ, which also served as the headquarters of the Tunceli governorate. The building cost 160,378 lire and was primarily the domain of the Inspectorate-General, though it partially satisfied the needs of the Tunceli provincial government, as well, the remaining offices of which were dispersed throughout the town in mostly rented offices.[468]

Tunceli was still being governed from Elazığ but it was clear by 1943 that because of its central and strategic location along the main road, the village of Mameki in Kalan district was the most appropriate place for a future provincial capital. A government mansion large enough to house the provincial bureaucracy was to be constructed. In the meantime, there were already government mansions in Tunceli in the district centers of Hozat, Kalan, Nazımiye, Ovacık, and Pertek. However, the buildings in Nazımiye and Ovacık needed urgent repairs due to mishaps resulting from the heavy winters.

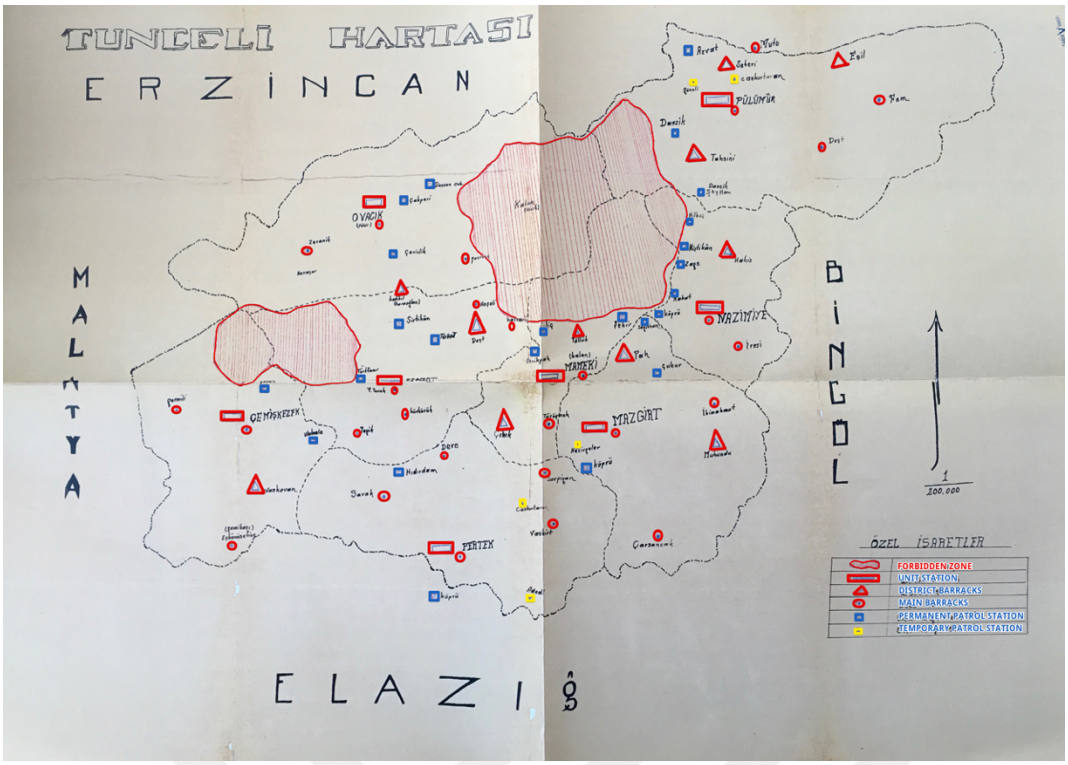
467 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 318-319 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

468 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 320 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943); Yasemin Avcı, Osmanlı Hükümet Konakları: Tanzimat Döneminde Kent Mekanında Devletin Erki ve Temsili (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2017).

The total cost of the government mansions in the province was 166,832 lire, just above six thousand lire more than the cost of the Inspectorate-General's building alone. However, there were no adequate government buildings in Çemişgezek, Mazgirt, and Pülümür. For instance, the old government mansion in Çemişgezek was far from the town center. The condition of the statehouse of Mazgirt, which was the center of the *mutasarrıflık* under the old regime, was in a deplorable state and a new one needed to be constructed. The Pülümür government house was damaged by recent earthquakes, and here again, a new, earthquake-resistant government mansion needed to be erected. Remarkably, the absence of appropriate government mansions in these districts paralleled their poor road infrastructure.[469]

None of these buildings survived the twentieth century; in other words, the government's investment was a short term one. Like bridges that became obsolete when they were submerged following the construction of hydroelectric dams, government mansions in Tunceli were left to decay and later replaced. Construction of modern buildings was directly related to infrastructure and works of civil engineering actually encouraged building construction. For instance, barracks and outposts were usually built near bridges in the region due to their strategic importance. Barracks and military lodges constituted a major part of state-financed building construction.

469 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 321-322 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).



Map 19 Military Map of Tunceli, 1943. Source: Tarih Vakfı Arşivi

Map 19 shows that military buildings in Tunceli were mostly along the main road linking Elazığ and Erzincan. On the other hand, each of the eight district centers had their own military unit stations (red rectangles). In turn there were eleven district barracks (red triangles): three in Pertek, two each in Hozat, Kalan, and Mazgirt, and one each in Nazımiye and Çemişgezek. Furthermore there are 27 main barracks (red circles) throughout the province as well as 24 permanent (blue circles) and five temporary patrol stations (yellow dots).[470]

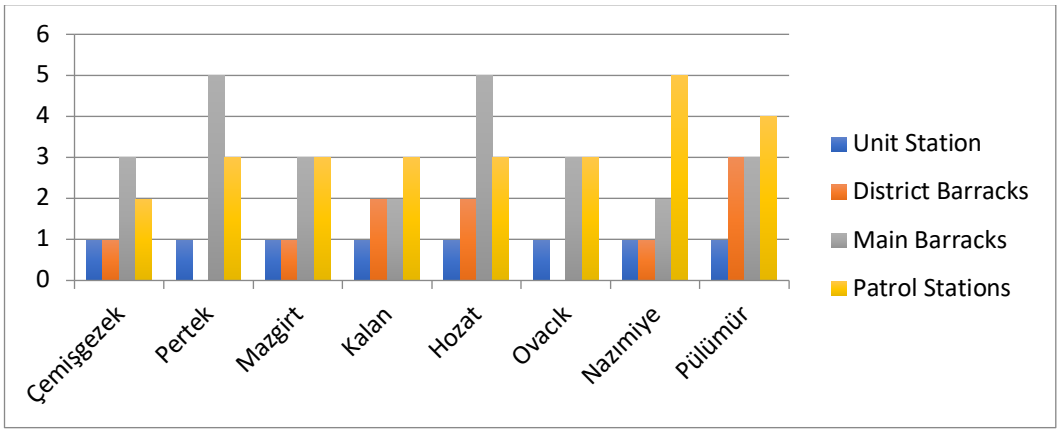


Chart 14 Military outposts in Tunceli 1943. Source: NSSA

470 Bilmez, Kayacan, Aslan, *Belleklerdeki Dersim '38*, (2011).

Chart 14 above clarifies the situation. The seventy military buildings shown on the map were distributed in the following manner: Çemişgezek and Ovacık districts both had seven military buildings, though the composition slightly differed; Ovacık lacked a district barracks but made up for it with an additional patrol station. Mazgirt and Kalan both had eight military buildings, while Pertek and Nazımiye both had nine buildings, although two of the patrol stations in Pertek were temporary. Pülümür was the only district in the province to have three district barracks. It and Hozat, both with eleven buildings, had the highest number of military structures in the province.

There was both a unit station and a main barracks in the Hozat district center, which *came at the forefront of the great works ... of the republic* in 1943. They also housed the Gendarmerie School. Their construction cost the government 498,592 lire, while the cost of barracks in Sin, Mameki, and Nazımiye totaled 737,959 lire. The combined cost of just five of seventy military buildings in the province came to 1,236,551 lire. The barracks in Mameki, which were also used as a Gendarmerie school, were in a better condition. Untended for years, the structure's chimneys were crumbling, zinc plates were ripped from its roof, its windows were broken, and rain and snow had caused the roof to collapse in several places, flooding the interiors. The necessary repairs were estimated at tens of thousands of lire. While the small barracks at Pülür(Ovacık) was in a good state, the barracks in northern Pülümür was still unfinished in 1943. The building had no plumbing, bathrooms, furnace, or kitchen. Astonishingly, the materials and fixtures were stored in the building itself; all that was needed was their installation.[471]

Temporary outposts were constructed in strategic places throughout the province starting in 1936. The first outposts were established in Kahmut (Kalan) and in Deşt (Sin) [Hozat]. In time, the latter location would host a district barracks while the former would disappear. The Kahmut outpost was linked to Pah (Mazgirt) by a suspension bridge over the Harçik (Pülümür) River. It was this bridge and outpost that were set on fire during the night of Nevruz 1937, marking the beginning of the Dersim rebellion.

471 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 322-323 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The Sin outpost was attacked a month later on 26th April 1937. The attacks on these two outposts were the reason the military operation began when it did, and the people living north of the Munzur River were later forced to surrender their arms to the gendarmes. Following these events, new outposts were constructed in Amutka and Karaoğlan in Hozat district, as well as in Tüllük village in the center of the Kahmut sub-district of Kalan. Both Karaoğlan and Tüllük would later have district barracks. Two more outposts were constructed. One was in Seyithan, situated on the border of Kalan, Nazımiye, and Mazgirt, and the other was in Danzik [Pülümür]. The Diztaşı and later Amutka outposts were attacked, and it was only through the combined efforts of the air force and gendarmerie battalions that state forces were able to recapture the outpost at Amutka.

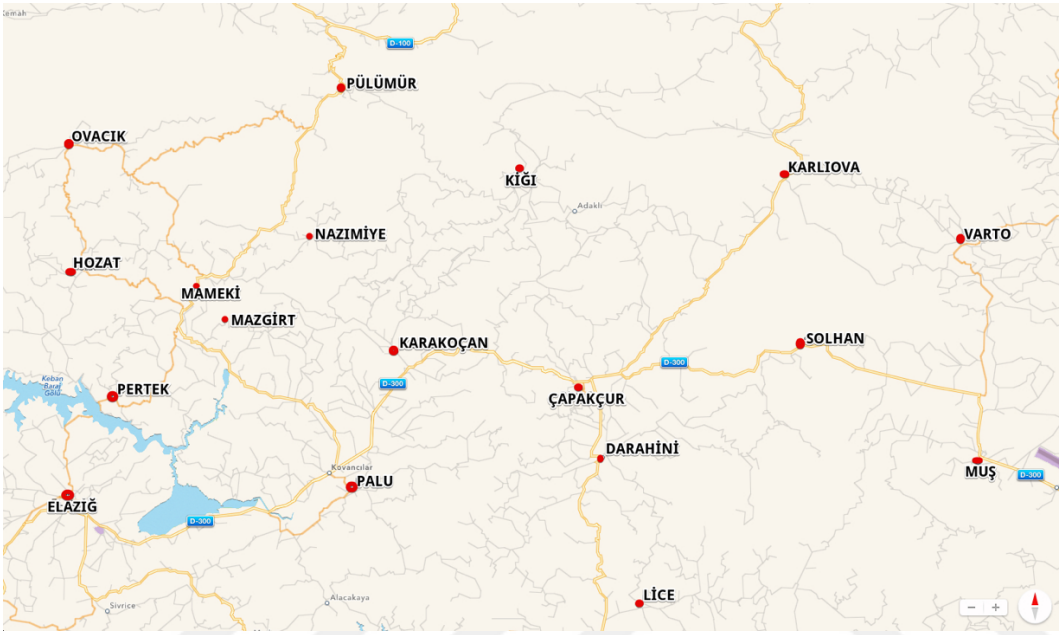
The construction of outposts and other military buildings continued beyond the military operations. By 1943, the construction of the Cevizlik outpost between Karaoğlan and Pülür situated on the Pertek-Hozat-Pülür road was almost finished. The cost of building an outpost was estimated at between 3,000 and 7,500 lire, while the total construction cost of the outposts in Amutka, Sin, Tüllük, Seyithan, Karaoğlan, and Danzik was 43,139 lire. In comparison to the gargantuan military expenditures, only 47,283 lire were spent on the construction of schools in the period between 1936 and 1943, a figure roughly equal to the construction of just these six outposts. Meanwhile the government built lodgings for civilian and military officers in Deşt (Sin) [Hozat] as well as in Mameki along the Munzur river. There were also lodgings in Pülür, Nazımiye, and Pülümür. A total of 44,000 lire were spent on lodgings in Pülür [Ovacık] alone.[472]

4.1.5 Roads and Bridges in Bingöl

The issue of infrastructure in Bingöl was more important than in Tunceli; these lowlands were the link between Elazığ and the fertile Muş Plain to the east. Another fundamental importance of the Bingöl lowlands was that the railroad was projected to continue from there to Lake Van. Indeed, the most expansive parts of the reports concerned infrastructure.

472 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 324-326 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Bingöl province was surrounded by high mountains which rendered relations with the rest of the nation difficult. Because the principal medium of communication was the railroads passing through Erzurum in the north and Diyarbakır in the south, the lowlands urgently needed to be connected to these localities. This entailed leveling steep mountainsides for roads and connecting them with bridges over the ravines. The local population was full of hope that the promises would be fulfilled.[473]



Map 20 Modern Road System in Tuncel-Bingöl. Source: Google Maps

The main road in the province was the Çapakçur-Elazığ road, that connected the seat of the Inspectorate-General with the provincial capital. Although expensive, an alternate route was proposed that would have followed the Murat River upstream through the valley because going through Palu and Genç was not an option. They were purposefully bypassed in the plans for the main road as both had been important centers that supported Shaikh Said.[474]

The Gülüşkür Bridge was an important milestone on the road linking Elazığ to Çapakçur, and along with the other "massive" bridges on the Murat River, it was a symbol of the Republic's public works effort: *Murat Nehri üzerinde muazzam köprüler inşa eden Cumhuriyet Nafiası*.[475]

473 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 20 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

474 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 20-21 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), Doğu Sorunu, 112-113 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

475 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 64 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

Rivers in the region were reminders of nature's power. Not only were they obstacles along the roads of civilization, but their flooding could ruin the local economy, as well. The overflowing of the Kayıt and Gönik rivers rendered agriculture difficult on the Simsor (Yenikova) plain - one of the few plains in the mountainous region - and it was beginning to lose its fertility.[476]

By 1939, the Fourth General Inspectorate had conducted several studies concerning bridges planned for construction or repair to improve the eastern half of its domain. Among those was a bridge over a small river near the village of Sekerat (Yazıbaşı) in the district of Palu, the state of which was dire in 1941. Although built by the Fourth Inspectorate-General, its repair was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Works and was operated by the Chief Directorate of Construction of the Elazığ-Van-Iran railroad (*Elazığ-Van-İran hudut demiryolu inşaat başmüdürlüğü*) in 1942. Also in bad condition was the Mendo Bridge, situated on the skirts of Mount Korucu in the district of Çapakçur along the Elazığ-Çapakçur road. It was also awaiting the attention of the Public Works Ministry. Meanwhile, the Çapakçur Bridge project was prepared by the inspectors of the Public Works Ministry for an estimated construction cost of fifteen thousand lire. The construction of the Mendo and Çapakçur bridges began by 1942. Bridges also needed to be constructed on the Kayıt and Gönik rivers. The Gönik was north of Simsor Village, and the Kayıt ebbed between Simsor and Çapakçur. A wooden bridge was planned by the governorate over the Buğlan River on the Çapakçur-Solhan road, while a bridge over the *Peri Su* linking Çapakçur and the Kiğı road had still not been planned. Another essential bridge for Kiğı was the Hacıhalil Bridge, which also had not yet been constructed. The Selenk Bridge in Kiğı needed urgent repairs, and a bridge needed to be constructed over the Hopus River. The Çapakçur-Kiğı road passing through Karakoçan (Elazığ) was neglected and no longer passable by 1942.[477]

476 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 64 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

477 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 20 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 115-117 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 161-163 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

This essential road in the province (Çapakçur-Kiğı) connected the provincial capital with the province's most developed district. It was created in 1938 and was suitable for wheeled transportation during the summer in 1941. The part of the road passing through Karakoçan (Elazığ) was damaged because of lack of maintenance and was one of the most problematic parts of the road. Karakoçan-Kiğı was an important trade route, but the fact that there was no bridge over the *Peri Su* (Büyüksu) made exchange with Kiğı extremely difficult. Crossing over the Peri was difficult even in August when the water was relatively calm. The Kiğı-Karakoçan road was important because it was connected to the main road, but the leveled road that was to connect Kiğı with Elazığ was closed in winter, isolating this district from the rest of the country for months on end. Kiğı also could not be linked to the provincial capital of Çapakçur. The necessary surveys were conducted by the Inspectorate-General and sent to the Public Works Ministry, but the process got stuck in the capital.[478]

This physical isolation of Kiğı was why Necmeddin Sahir proposed that the district be linked to the northern railroad through the Sansa Pass, which would connect the town with Erzurum via the *Peri Su* Valley. Residents of Kiğı applauded the idea that the locality be linked to the railroad, but complicated civil engineering was needed including major wall and bridge construction. A Kelhaç-Fem road had been opened by the state in 1303 (1888 CE), but the more than fifty-year-old road needed to be widened to facilitate automobile travel. The importance of the Kelhaç-Fem road was known in the Public Works Ministry in Ankara, but due to budgetary restrictions, construction had still not begun in 1941. Thus, the Kiğı district – which, with its nearly 26,000 inhabitants, had the highest economic potential of all the districts in Bingöl – was unable to interact with Erzurum, Elazığ, and Çapakçur.[479]

478 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 21 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 66 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 113 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

479 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 21 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 115 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

The third most significant in the province after Elazığ-Çapakçur and Kiğı-Çapakçur roads was the Çapakçur-Solhan road, which linked the region to Muş. This road was accessible during the dry season and in summer; however, bridges and culverts were needed at the points where it crossed the Murat, Gönük, and Kayıt rivers. Also, the drains along the road were not maintained by the Elazığ governorate, so villagers benefited from them by opening up channels to water their fields. The Fourth Inspectorate-General conducted studies in this regard and construction began on improvements to this road in 1940. Meanwhile, the Çapakçur-Genç road was largely accessible during the dry season and in summer, but the greatest problem was that in the district center Darahini 22 kilometers of road along the Murat River were periodically inundated. On some parts of the road, passage was accomplished with rowboats. Therefore, the construction of a bridge was of utmost importance, and again, the Fourth Inspectorate-General conducted studies of its feasibility. The go-ahead for construction of the bridge was dependent on approval from the Ministry of Public Works once a project based on the studies of the Inspectorate. An iron bridge was constructed in 1952, seen on Image 4.[480]

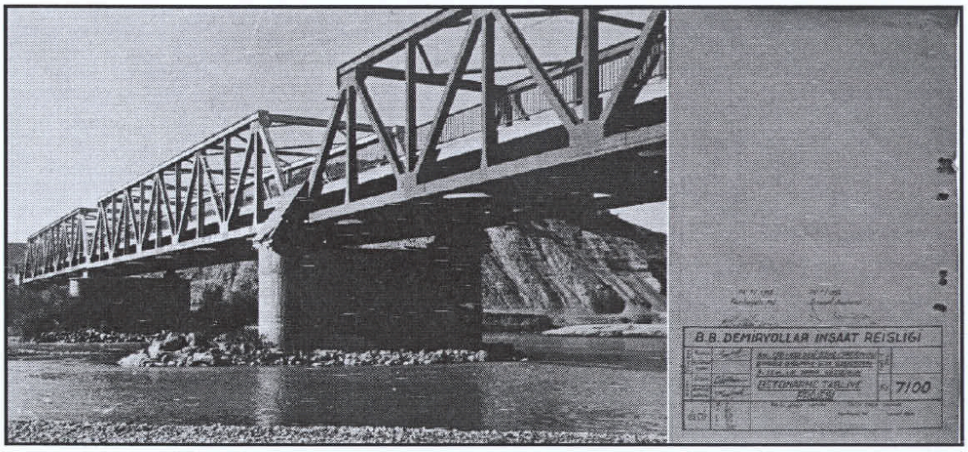


Figure 4.32 Right: Cover page of the project signed by the Department of State Railroads. Left: Genç Bridge in 1952. Source: Unclassified documents from the State National Archives-Republican Archives, KGM Fund, Binder no: 2939; KGM Archives, off-track bridge files, region 8.

Image 4 Genç Bridge. Source: kopriyet.blogspot.com[481]

480 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 22-23 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 66 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 113 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 161 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

481 https://kopriyet.blogspot.com/2017/10/genc-koprusu.html?q=genç, (accessed July 10, 2018).

At just over 35 kilometers, the Çapakçur-Genç road was the shortest road in the province and linked the provincial capital with the center of a district. It was important because of its proximity to the Elazığ-Van-Iran railroad. Another commercially important route for Genç was the 55-kilometer-long leveled but unpaved earth road between Darahini and Lice, which had been constructed by previous governments. Repairs and the construction of some bridges would have allowed Lice to be connected to Darahini and hence with Çapakçur. The relation of Genç to Lice was essential for commercial development in the region because the road was a former caravan road, central o the linking of Diyarbakır with Muş and Erzurum.[482]

Further north, the road between Çapakçur and Karlıova, which would eventually extend to Erzurum, was mainly used for transporting animals in the early 1940s. Only forty kilometers of the 86-kilometer-long road was amenable for wheeled transportation in the district of Çapakçur and the part of the road in Karlıova was in dire condition. The 40-kilometer road between Çapakçur and Çobantaşı was accessible in summertime, though the crossing of the Gönik River presented a major point of inaccessibility. The more difficult part of the road linking Çobantaşı to Karlıova was 46 kilometer long. The Fourth General Inspectorate's administrative chiefs, engineers, and technical personnel had already conducted surveys along the road, but the Inspectorate-General was not the sole authority with respect to road construction. It also depended on the Public Works Ministry. One had to journey 223 kilometers to go to Karlıova following the Çapakçur-Solhan road into Muş province and then passing through Varto, though the latter part of the road was in need of urgent repair. Because of its isolation, the governor of Bingöl visited Karlıova only once during his three-year tenure, and road works that had begun in 1939 were still not finished in 1942. All the roads in the province needed improvements although aside from the Çapakçur-Kiğı road, all were accessible for wheeled transportation during the summer.[483]

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482 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 23 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 113 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

483 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 23 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 67 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 114 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 162 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

There were not enough specialist engineers and technical personnel to effectively conduct all the studies and projects and manage the development and construction of roads and bridges in all the four provinces under the Inspectorate's authority. Meanwhile, the people were complaining about the slow progress of public works in the region. A citizen from Çapakçur emphasized the trouble they had engaging with other districts of the province, especially in winter and springtime, due to the overflowing of the rivers. He pointed out the overwhelming importance of bridges. In Kanireş, the center of Karlıova, seventy-year-old Sefer Bingöl vocalized that their only complaint was the absence of roads: *Yolsuzluktan başka şikâyetimiz yoktur. Cumhuriyet Hükûmetine güvenimiz vardır*.[484]

4.1.6 Buildings in Bingöl

The buildings in the Bingöl province were generally old. Official departments occupied buildings that were inappropriate in many aspects. The only new building constructed in Çapakçur since the creation of the province was a hospital, which was still awaiting will completion in 1939. The lack of architects and construction managers resulted in flawed buildings. Construction in Bingöl was an arduous affair due primarily to the difficulties of transportation. Companies with the necessary capital and knowledge, such as Aral İnşaat, were not interested, and locals with lesser qualifications assumed these ventures, resulting in remarkable problems. Because traditional construction was of stone, mud, and poplar or willow timber, it was rare to see buildings that passed down from father to son; they had usually caved in a few decades. The earth called *kaolin* in Kiğı could be used to make bricks and tiles, which could be the basis for a more solid construction. The residences of state officials working in Bingöl lacked conveniences and necessary sanitation, so the officials often got sick and sometimes died, especially in winter. This created a significant "housing crisis" (*mesken buhranı*) in Bingöl.[485]

484 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 22-24 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 68 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 114 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

485 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 26-27 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

The building of a hotel and casino (*gazino*) in Çapakçur was underway, although the complex had been under construction at a slow pace since 1936. The hotel was almost finished in 1941 when a slaughterhouse was also established. Meanwhile, a new avenue - 125 meters long and 13 meters wide - was built in the provincial capital in 1940 lined with *akasya* (acacia) trees instead of the traditional *söğüt* (willow) trees in order to repel the flies. The replacement of the willows with the acacias was seen as a development in the amelioration of hygiene issues. The one responsible for this public works project, gendarmerie captain Rıfat Ayaydın, also encouraged the plastering of the houses along the road.[486]

The construction of the government mansion in Kiğı began in 1938 and was essentially complete in 1941. This building was constructed according to strict specifications of the Public Works Ministry. It is noteworthy that Kiğı laid claim to such a building before Çapakçur and other district centers in the province. Meanwhile, the most pressing constructions in 1941 were government mansions in Genç and Çapakçur because their populations were expected to increase following the completion of the Elazığ-Van-Iran railroad. Construction of a government building in Çapakçur was planned and analyzed by the highest authorities but delayed because of speculation that the provincial capital would be relocated to Genç. Furthermore, there were difficulties in procuring construction materials because of the war effort in Europe.[487]

Like in Tunceli, the major modes of transportation in Bingöl were powered by animals. Even in the provincial capital of Çapakçur, pack animals and oxcarts were the principal modes of transportation. In Karlıova, there were also oxcarts in most places. In Kiğı, only the Çerme (Yedisu) sub-district possessed an oxcart, while other localities exclusively used pack animals. The same was true for the districts of Solhan and Genç. Locals also used a non-wheeled transport called *evrik* that was pulled by cattle.

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486 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 73-74 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 128-129 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

487 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 26 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 72 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 118 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

In terms of communications infrastructure, there were telegraph centers in Çapakçur and other districts, and the provincial capital also had telephone service connecting it with other districts and sub-districts. The telegraph lines were not established between Çapakçur, Kiğı, and Solhan, and there was no direct line between Çapakçur and Kiğı, so their communications passed through Karakoçan. The communication between Çapakçur and Solhan was done via Muş, resulting in much miscommunication. The post and telegraph center in Malatya closed in 1941, which naturally created problems, especially given that the train generally arrived there at night. Communications were even worse in the east. For instance, in the district of Solhan, telegraph services were suspended from the last week of July through the end of August; only postal services continued to be fulfilled. In 1942, there were significant delays in postal and telegraph communications in Bingöl, and there was still no telegraph line connecting Çapakçur and Solhan. Communication between the provincial capital and Solhan was done following the route Genç-Lice-Kulp-Muş. Furthermore, there was a shortage of the Manila paper used in telegraphy.[488]

The government, since its inception, had clear plans to utilize the hydroelectric potential of the province. The use of the natural flow of water to generate power had a considerable history in human civilization, although it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that recent developments in civil engineering enabled the building of modern hydroelectric power plants. This technology allowed states to domesticate mighty rivers and control their flow by restricting them with dams and forming strategic artificial lakes. In short, hydroelectricity was seen as another motor of the Turkish *mission civilisatrice* in line with the advanced societies of the time.

Çapakçur sped up the process of opening civil facilities "*medenî tesisler.*" Citizen Ahmet Atala proposed hydroelectricity as the solution to the energy requirements of the provincial capital.

The people of Çapakçur could not understand why the civil and health

488 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 25 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 70-71 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 127 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 180 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

facilities were being constructed while they still lacked clean water and electricity. A permanent member of the town council expressed his town's will to see Çapakçur illumed. The river passing through Çapakçur could be used in order to produce the necessary electricity, and the central administration began working on it in 1941 when the Ministry of Public Works ordered the 19th *Su İşleri Şube Müdürü* (Water Works Department Head) in Elazığ to conduct further studies in Çapakçur. According to the results, the Çapakçur River had hydroelectric potential with a flow of 200 liters per second, which was viable. The studies estimated that the capital needed for the project was around 30,000 lire. The provision of drinkable water would cost less. The water near Çapakçur was insufficient for consumption, and the transportation of water from the Mirzan River five kilometers away through iron pipes would amount to around 15,000 lire. Potable water was also an issue raised in Darahini.[489]

4.1.7 The Toll of Construction

In fiscal year 1944, a combined total of 2.5 million lire was budgeted for construction in the first, third, and fourth inspectorates.[490]:

	Official housing construction	Aid for construction	Total
First Inspectorate-General	410 000	340 000	750 000
Third Inspectorate-General	405 000	345 000	750 000
Fourth Inspectorate-General	300 000	200 000	500 000
Total	1 115 000	885 000	2 000 000

Table 5 Construction Budget of the Inspectorate-Generals 1944. Source: NSSA

489 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 25 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 71 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 119 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

490 BCA, 106-56-12, Nafia Vekaleti 1944 ödenekden ... 4. Um. Müf. ... verilmesi; BCA, 106-72-6, 1944 mali yılı Bütçe Kanunuyla Nafia Vekaleti'n[in] özel yardımı.

Noticeably, following the "pacification" of Dersim, the Fourth Inspectorate-General provided the smallest amount of aid among its peers, and component for official housing construction was the biggest line item. The Fourth Inspectorate-General, in other words, was an ugly duckling by the mid-1940s, being perceived as more and more irrelevant and dysfunctional.

Construction trends in Tunceli and Bingöl were clearly different. While the will to connect Elazığ and Erzincan resulted in the construction of infrastructure along the main road of Tunceli, the same zeal could not be observed in Bingöl. While a main road also absorbed most of the infrastructure resources, it lacked the endless series of outposts and military barracks deemed necessary to protect the road in Tunceli. Again, the government was more concerned with the construction of civilian as well as military buildings in Dersim than in Bingöl, where such constructions were limited. Also, bridge construction was prioritized in Tunceli, again as the result of military strategy in the highlands, while in Bingöl, the erection of important bridges took place much later. The unifying element in the infrastructure put in place by the republic in both provinces, however, was the erasure of the old and its replacement with the new. Instead of connecting old urban centers that had traditionally been local powerhouses, such as Palu and Darahini, the state consciously drew up new roads and chose lesser towns as provincial capitals, as in the case of Mameki. The overall infrastructure policy and public works projects in the Fourth General Inspectorate were distinctly colonial, as construction was used as a tool for the Turkish civilizing mission to domesticate nature for its own benefit. The importance of hydroelectric power was foreseen as early as the 1930s. By 2020, Tunceli hosts five active hydropower plants and Bingöl eight. Many more are being planned for construction. The biggest impact on the region was the construction of the Keban Dam, which flooded all the bridges that the Republic had constructed along the Murat River and wiped away earlier efforts to link Tunceli with Elazığ through Pertek and Çemişgezek.

4.1.8 Railroads

The history of railroads in Turkey is directly related to foreign investment during the late Ottoman era. Ottoman statesmen were persuaded that railroads would facilitate the development of agricultural production, which was hoped to create tax revenues to benefit the central government which was in desperate need of additional income. However, the enterprise was a strictly utilitarian endeavor on the part of various European powers aiming to extract resources from the fertile hinterland of export-oriented port cities such as Izmir. In other words, while the state hoped the railroads would develop agriculture for its benefit, the reality was that the foreign investment largely diverted local wealth to outside markets. Besides agriculture, it was hoped that two other economic sectors would be developed through the railroad policy, namely commerce and mining. Both of these sectors did develop, but again, they were primarily exploited for the benefit of the European companies investing in the land.

Railroad construction in the Empire accelerated after the constitution of the *Düyun-u Umumiye* Administration. Almost all of the lines constructed, except for the Hejaz line, were financed by foreign capital. The first Ottoman railroads were dependent on British, and then French capital. Eventually, the Germans were the champions of foreign investment in railroad construction in the Ottoman Empire, having been awarded the contract for the Anatolian Railroads in October 1888 and later the famous *Baghdadbahn* in 1903. In 1890, more than forty percent of all foreign investment in the Ottoman Empire concerned railroad construction; by 1914, this had risen to more than sixty percent. Nevertheless, the tracks constructed throughout the Empire were not solely used for the transportation of raw materials destined for European markets. Another use for the Ottoman state was the transport of troops and refugees. In fact, resettlement policies regarding Muslim refugees from the shrinking Empire, as well as later ethnic engineering projects that gave way to the nation-state, were influenced by the structure of the railroad network that had been set in place by European companies.[491]

491 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 3-6.

One of the distinguishing features of Ottoman railroad policy was that construction rights were granted as a privilege. Railroad companies were promised compensation for their investment through the collection of agricultural tithe taxes, but when these did not suffice, the Ottoman state took further loans from foreign governments. Hence, railroad construction became a vicious cycle of indebtedness. Meanwhile, the privileges granted to the railroad construction companies included the exploitation of forests and stone mines along the line without charge. Required materials were imported free of taxes, and investors also had the right to exploit any underground wealth discovered along the rail lines including petroleum. This tradition of the exploitation of the natural wealth in proximity to railroad tracks continued into the republican period, although under different circumstances. Instead of the foreign capitals, the exploiter was the state itself.[492]

The first railroad lines constructed in the Empire were in European Turkey: the 66-kilometer-long Cernovada-Köstence line in modern Romania, completed in 1856, and the 224-kilometer-long Varna-Rusçuk line in modern Bulgaria, completed in 1866. Nevertheless, it was only in 1888 that Istanbul was linked to European capitals such as Vienna and Paris via the famous Orient Express that also connected Edirne to Sofia and Niş. Meanwhile, the İzmir-Aydın line was the first railroad track in Anatolia. It was constructed by a British financial group that went on to establish the İzmir-Aydın Ottoman Railroad Co. in 1867. However, it was not the British that would complete the longest railroad construction project in Anatolia: the Anatolian Railroad Line. Construction of the Haydarpaşa-İzmit line started in August 1871, but in over a year, only 24 of 91 kilometers of tracks had been laid. Deutsche Bank took over the project and secured the contract to extend the line to Ankara. In March 1889 the Anatolian Railroad Co, which was controlled by the Bank, was founded, and the tracks reached Ankara four years later in 1893.[493]

492 Şevket Pamuk, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yabancı Sermaye; Sektörlere ve Sermayeyi İhraç Eden Ülkelere Göre dağılımı (1854-1914)," *ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi*, (1978), 143-144; and Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 8.

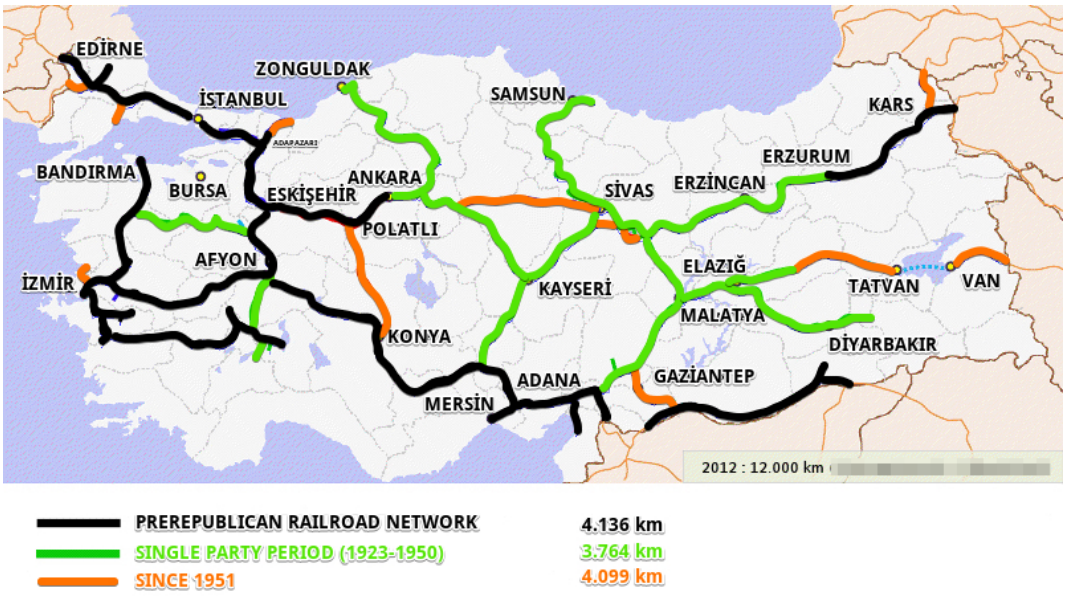
493 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 10-14.

Another important German contribution to the railroad infrastructure of the Ottoman Empire was the Baghdad railway, the first official mention of which was during the reign of Abdülaziz (1861-1876), who envisioned a line linking Istanbul to Baghdad. His successor Abdülhamid II, understood the geostrategic importance of such a project, as did the Germans. As expected, Russia and the British Empire profoundly opposed the pivotal infrastructural project that would irrefutably transform the power structure of the "Great Game". Nevertheless, at the end of 1899, Abdulhamid signed over construction privileges to the Deutsche Bank/Anatolian Railroad Co. This huge deal included ninety-nine years of exclusive operation of the track, which began in Konya and passed through Ereğli, Adana, Hamidiye, Kilis, Tel Habeş, Nusaybin, Mosul, Tikrit, Saciye, Baghdad, Kerbela, and Mecet Zubeyr and reached the Persian Gulf after Basra. The company also obtained warrantees of cooperation for sidetracks to Diyarbakır, Harput, Maraş, Birecik and Mardin, which constituted the emergence of what would become the southeastern line. However, financial problems prevented their completion; as at the outbreak of the Great War, only 887 kilometers of the 1,715-kilometer-long project had been completed.[494]

The Ottoman government confiscated all foreign railroad companies following the declaration of war in 1914 except for the two major German-operated ones of the Anatolian Railroad Co. and the *Bagdadbahn*. A government entity called the Military Railroads General Management was established to control the network, the direct ancestor of the present-day TCDD. At the end of the war, when the status quo was restored, Turkey inherited a rail network comprised of 3,756 of the 8,843 kilometers that had been constructed in the Empire; all of this network had been constructed by foreign companies. This number increased to 4,112 kilometers of tracks following the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in which Russia abandoned its rights over the Erzurum-Sarıkamış line. The Russians had constructed this line during their occupation of the region. The tracks reached Kars by 1899, Sarıkamış by 1914, and Erzurum after the Great War began.[495]

494 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 16-19.

495 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 22-23.



Map 21 Railroad Network of Turkey. Source: Author's illustration

Map 21 represents the railroad network of the republic. Black lines are the pre-republican network described above, while green lines indicate rail lines constructed during the one-party rule. While premature in 1933, the famous verse from the Decennial March "we have sown the fatherland with iron networks," has an element of truth, especially considering the orange lines constructed in the sixty years since 1951. The early republican zeal for railroad construction is striking; furthermore, part of this railroad policy was directly related to the 1937-38 military operations and internal colonization of Dersim.

After the inauguration of the Grand National Assembly, the Public Works Ministry confiscated the entire railroad network in Turkey and founded the Anatolia-Baghdad Railroads General Directorate (*Anadolu-Bağdat Demiryolları Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi*). This administration took over from the Military Railroads General Management and managed all railroad affairs from 1920 to 1924. On April 22, 1924, the Republican railroads administration was founded, which organized the purchase of tracks as well as the constructions of new lines. But it was only on the 23rd of May 1927 that the General Administration of State Ports and Railroads (*Devlet Demiryolları ve Limanları İdare-i Umumiyesi*) was founded, and eight days later the Turkish State Railways (*TCDD*) was established.[496]

496 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 63-66.

All of the railroad lines in the new republic were foreign-made and did not correspond to the needs of the regime in Ankara; hence, railroad construction topped the list of priorities of the Turkish government. In fact, fifty-seven kilometer of railroad tracks were even laid between Sivas and İzzettin during the War of Independence. The *Umuru Nâfıa* program established in 1923 created a new deal for railroad construction in Turkey. The republic started nationalizing foreign railroad companies with the purchase of Anatolian Railroad Co. in 1924. The Ankara-Sivas and Samsun-Sivas lines were the focal point of the government-sponsored railroad construction during its first years. By 1927, following the acquisition of foreign construction companies, the number of lines under construction had increased. In 1927 alone, four new lines were under construction: Kütahya-Balıkesir, Ulukışla-Kayseri, Ankara-Ereğli, and Fevzipaşa-Malatya-Diyarbakır.[497]

For a period of more than twenty years the Republic of Turkey favored rail transportation and wholeheartedly embraced a specific railroad policy based on military, economic, politic and sociocultural objectives. In context, this policy made sense from a militaristic point of view because railroads were the fastest, most economic means of mass transportation in the world. Military planners were directly involved in the itineraries for new lines as they judged their strategic importance for national security. Railroad projects that integrated the East with the national network had economic as well as political and military aims, including the exploitation of copper and coal mines in addition to the transportation of troops to suppress probable rebellions. This perspective of railroads facilitating the prevention or suppression of Kurdish rebellions was evident in parliamentary talks concerning the Sivas-Erzurum railroad in which it was suggested that it would assure "safety and public order" in the eastern provinces. From a sociocultural perspective, it was hoped that the railroad network would promote national integration in line with republican aspirations.[498]

497 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 36-41.

498 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 50-54; Orhan Conker, *Les Chemins de Fer en Turquie et la Politique Ferroviaire Turque* (Paris, 1935); and TBMM, *Zabıt Ceridesi*, Dönem 4, Cilt.15, 213.

The Great Depression naturally affected railroad construction. Infrastructure projects that had sped up between 1924 and 1930 slowed. Nevertheless, the Republican railroad policy was back on track by 1933 when new lines were planned for construction. Connecting the Erzurum line with the rest of the country was a primary objective of the republican railroad policy from the beginning; in fact, Mustafa Kemal had pronounced such hopes as early as 1924. The tracks departing from Ankara reached Sivas by the end of August 1930, but it was not until the May 20, 1933 that Law No. 2200 enacted on the construction of the Sivas-Erzurum line.

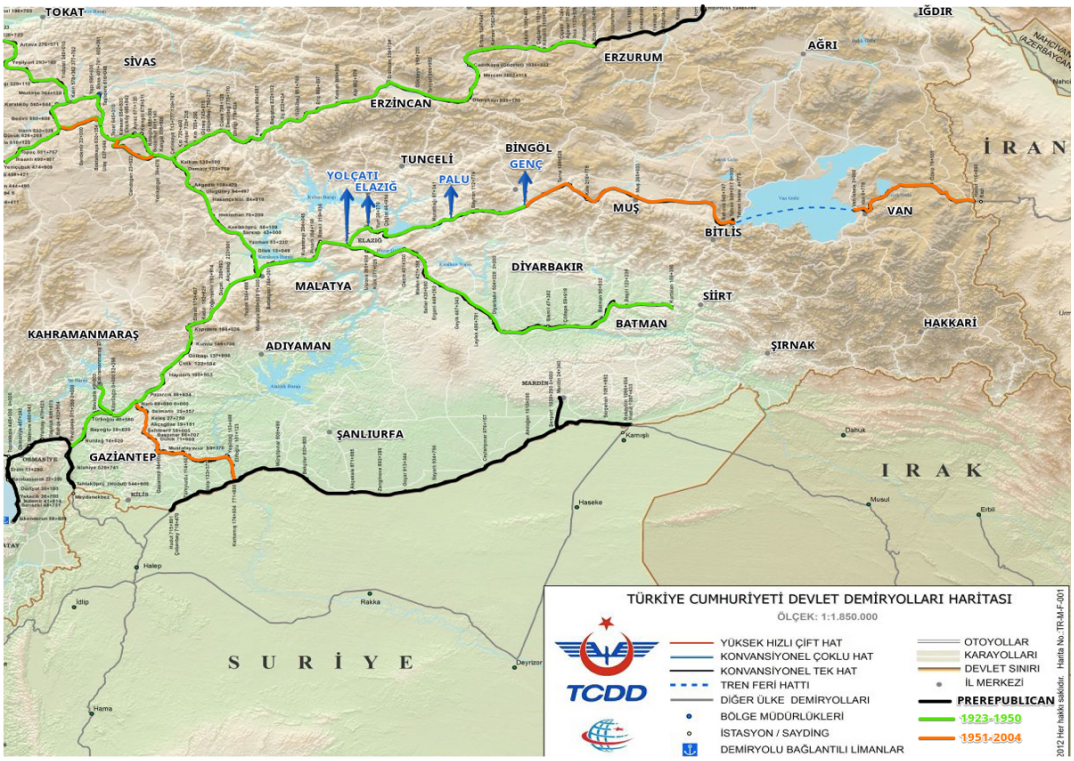
The eighty million lire project was awarded to *Mühürdarzade* Nuri Bey and his associates. At the time, the 537-kilometer-long line was the largest railroad endeavor entrusted to Turkish capital. Works started on September 4, 1933, the symbolic anniversary of the Sivas Congress. The first train reached Erzincan on 8th October 1938, and the tracks reached Erzurum on September 6, 1939, sixteen months before the scheduled date. The assembly voted in favor of 140-kilometer-long Malatya-Çetinkaya line on the same day it passed the law for the Sivas-Erzurum line. Law No. 2000 entrusted construction of the line to the same company. The construction of this line was begun on another symbolic date, namely the tenth anniversary of the republic on October 29, 1933. It was inaugurated on August 16, 1937.[499]

Both of these lines were passed through the western and northern regions of Greater Dersim. Between 1934 and 1937, the nationalization of foreign-owned rail lines accelerated, and the process that began in 1928 was finalized in 1948 with the purchase of the last, remaining stretch of the Baghdad line, even though the outbreak of the Second World War considerably slowed the expansion of the Turkish railroad network. In the meantime, in the late 1930s, plans were made for a new southeastern line that would continue from Elazığ to Lake Van. It only made it to Genç (Bingöl) during one-party rule before railroad-mania abruptly ended in 1948 following the famous *Hilts Report*, which asserted that all-weather roads that allowed for motor vehicle transportation were superior to railroads.[500]

499 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 99-104.

500 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 44-49.

The *Bagdadbahn* was initially to include sidetracks to Harput and Diyarbakır. These constituted the conceptual antecedent for the southeastern line. But the Germans were not alone in extending a rail line to the region; the Chester Project was another railroad project for the region that never saw the light of day. It was named after Admiral Colby M. Chester who developed an extensive mining and railroad ventures in Eastern Anatolia, that were to be beneficial for a future independent Armenia. Arguably an "Armenian" project, it was to connect Van with Harput and Harput with Yumurtalık on the Mediterranean. The project, which could not launch during imperial times because of German and British interests, was reintroduced after the War of Independence when company representatives came to Ankara to negotiate the revival of the project. But again, pressure - this time from France and England, - kept the project from being realized. But the project certainly provided the inspiration for the Elazığ-Van railroad.[501]



Map 22 Railroad Network in the East of Turkey. Source: TCDD

501 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 26-28; Yaşar Semiz, *Chester Projesi*, (Ankara: HÜ Atatürk İlkeleri ve Inkilap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1987); and John August De Novo, "A Railroad for Turkey: The Chester Project, 1908-1913," *The Business History Review* 33, No.3, (Autumn, 1959): 300-329.

Map 22, which develops the same color code as Map 21, is a close up view of the southeastern line that starts in Malatya and ends at the border with Iran. Above this line are the northeastern line connecting Sivas with Erzurum and the Çetinkaya-Malatya line starting at the junction between Sivas and Erzincan. The construction of both of these lines was key on the dynamic between the state and the tribes of Dersim in the early republican period. However, the most instrumental stretch of railroad for the military operations of '37 and '38 was the Yolçatı-Elazığ sidetrack, which would become an essential part of the southeastern line. The strategic southern line linking Fevzipaşa-Gaziantep with Diyarbakır was one of the essential railroads constructed by the republic as it allowed Turkey to bypass French controlled Syrian stretches of the *Bagdadbahn*. When this line neared Elazığ in April 1933, a bill was approved in the assembly that allowed for the construction of a sidetrack to the city of Elazığ. The 24-kilometer-long track was completed at the beginning of July 1934, and the line was inaugurated on August 11, 1934. The sidetrack started at Yolçatı at kilometer 345 of the Fevzipaşa-Malatya-Diyarbakır line.[502]

Initially another option for the southeastern line was considered in the direction of Diyarbakır-Kurtalan-Bitlis-Tatvan. This would have required the construction of only an additional seventy kilometers but would have necessitated the construction of some 95 tunnels, six viaducts, and four bridges. Instead, the government opted to extend the railroad from Elazığ and to lay an additional 350 kilometers of track linking Yolçatı to Tatvan. The train departing Diyarbakır was envisioned to join the *Bagdadbahn* in the south and directly link the city of Elazığ to Iran via Lake Van, which would be traversed with a train ferry. A major stretch of this line was announced in the Assembly on May 6, 1940 (Law No. 3262), and four companies (Haymil İnşaat, Yolyapı, Hasan Fehmi Dağlar, and Fomisin) took on the task of completing six parts of the railroad line.[503]

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502 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 94-95; and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 70 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

503 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 106-109; and Hüseyin Kalgay, "Elazığ-Van-İran Hudud Hattında Hummalı İnşaat Faaliyetinden," *Demiryolları Dergisi* 17, No.197-200 (July-September 1941): 715-716.

As it coincided with the Second World War, the construction of this line proved extremely problematic. For starters, the rails of the Yolçatı-Elazığ sidetrack had a narrower gauge, so the large cars of the main railroad line could not travel along it. This peculiar design fault is striking; the 24 kilometers of the line were weak and could not support heavy masses carried on the main track. Central authorities were aware of the situation, but the Ministry of Public Works declared that the issue concerned the Ministry of Transportation (*Münakalât Vekâleti*), which was in charge of the TCDD. The authorities claimed that the problem persisted because there was no clear indication in the law regarding jurisdiction over this aspect of railroad repairs. It was essential that the difference between the sidetrack and main track be corrected before the railroad be connected with Iran. The construction of the Yolçatı-Elazığ sidetrack, which was instrumental for military operations in the late thirties as well as for the operations of the entire southeastern line, affected military more so than commercial interests. As the line was not able to support the large locomotives operating on the main track, the temporary solution was to use two smaller locomotives on the sidetrack to pull military trains of 29 cars as well as civilian passenger trains.[504]

Studies began in 1940 for the southeastern line, and because its trajectory followed the Murat valley upstream, Necmeddin Sahir saw the railroad as an opportunity to develop the region's agricultural economy. In fact, his perspective differed little from the preceding imperial outlook. When speaking to the local population in Bingöl, he spoke with a modernizing zeal: "Many of our villages are enlightened with the railroad that will pass through the fertile Elazığ Plain, follow the Murat River, cross its waters and reach the skirts of Genç and Solhan before reaching Muş and Van." For the enthusiastic train spotter, the advancement of rail was equated with the spread of civilization: "Railroad policy is the focal point of economic activities and civil works that connect today to tomorrow for many of our cities".[505]

504 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 120-121 - pp. 126-127 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

505 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 69 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), Doğu Sorunu, 37 ("Millî Birlik ve Beraberlik" konuşması Bingöl 1940). [Demiryolu siyaseti] *bir çok şehirlerimiz* [için] *bugünü yarına bağlıyan medenî eserlerin ve iktisadi hareketlerin mihrakı oluyor.*

With preparatory works finished in 1940, work on the rails of the southeastern line started in 1941. Work on the first part began in April, while the *tesviyei türabiye* (leveling) and *imalâtı sınaiye* (industrial production) work for the second and third parts were executed in summer 1941. However, the laying of new tracks in Elazığ only began in November 1944, even though the prerequisite work had long been completed, because of a shortage of rails. The seventy-kilometer-long Elazığ-Palu line became operational in the beginning of July 1946, but the railroad reached Genç only by the end of 1947. The tracks were extended to Muş in 1955, and it was not until 1964 that the line finally reached Tatvan on the shores of Lake Van. The construction of the southeastern line proved unpredictably expensive. Just as with previous railroad ventures, the republic resorted to private capital and made use of public tenders for the completion of the project. Table 6 shows the parts of the railroad, their length in kilometers, location along the line, and the value of their perspective tenders.[506]

Part	Limit	Kilometers	Tender Value in Turkish lire	Length in kilometer
I	Elazığ-Hacerköprüsü	24.29-46	908,500	21.71
II	Hacerköprüsü-Gülüşkür	46-72	2,089,550	26
III	Gülüşkür-Palu	72-94	1,540,450	22
IV	Palu-Hün	94-114	3,810,600	20
V	Hün-Sonvaran	114-136.5	3,245,600	22.5
VI	Sonvaran-Bingöl	136.5-158	2,002,500	21.5
Total	Elazığ-Bingöl	24.29-158	13,601,200	133.71

Table 6 Finances of the construction of the Elazığ-Bingöl railroad. Source: NSSA

The 69.71 kilometers connecting Elazığ with Palu (parts I through III) were undertaken by the *Haymil* Construction Company for more than four and a half million lire. The same company had also previously constructed the General Directorate building of the TCDD in Ankara for one million lire. This is significant, as the contractors were also to construct the necessary railroad buildings. It also indicates that the early republic chose proven contractors.[507]

506 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 120-121 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

507 İlhan Tekeli, Selim İlkin, "Cumhuriyetin Demiryolu Politikalarının Oluşumu ve Uygulaması," *Kebikeç* 11 (2001): 125-163.

The station buildings on the Southeastern line were situated in Elazığ, Hügo (Yurt), Alişam (Çağlar), Gülüşkür, Karagedik (Muratbağı), Palu, Hün (Beyhan), Sonvaran (Suveren), and Bingöl (Genç). Construction was not limited to stations; other buildings included a two-story housing complex next to the Elazığ station, sixteen worker and passenger buildings, quarters for four department chiefs and six site attendants, a science officer building, sixteen worker and seven passenger toilets, six grain elevators, four wagon loading gauges, and two coal depots as well as eight wells and a weighbridge at the Bingöl-Genç station. However, most of these buildings were not constructed to last more than ten years.[508]

The priority, of course was the tracks themselves, as well as the bridges and tunnels that needed to be constructed. Iron materials were fabricated in the Karabük Factory and transported by rail to Elazığ. Iron was essential not only for the rails but also for bridges, such as in the iron bridge over the Murat River near Palu for which surveys were completed by the Swedish geologist Remien working for the MTA (founded June 14, 1935). Other materials required for railroad construction included cement, gasoline, diesel, various machine oils, lumber, and explosives. These had to be brought into Elazığ train station between June and September, as it was impossible to transport them during winter snow or the rainy spring season. Meanwhile, lumber was readily available from the forests of Dersim that were managed by the government. Lumber that was sold for 12-16 lire before the war was being sold for 60-70 lire by 1942, an increase of more than triple. In fact, war conditions increased overall construction costs almost fourfold over the projected figures. Many companies wanted to stop work until after the war because they were ill prepared to meet the challenges presented by such increases in the required capital. The contractors had entered into these government contracts estimating that position of a mere ten percent of the overall project value would be sufficient. But while the cost of the Elazığ-Palu line nearly quadrupled to almost 20 million lire, the initial capital of the contractors remained fixed.[509]

508 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 123 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

509 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 166 - pp. 172-175 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

Not only were their overall costs rising, but in 1942 contractors also had to supply wheat and fuel. Because they supplied food to their workers, they had to stock up on wheat. In fact, for each section of railroad a year's supply of between two and four hundred tons had to be stocked. At an approximate price of 60 kuruş per kilo, 120-240 thousand lire had to be spent on wheat and flour alone to continue work: nearly half of the initial capital of some contractors. The government either needed to give incentives to contractors to increase their capital by at least 25 percent or a new series of tenders needed to be organized to further divide the work among more contractors. Another difficulty for the contractors was the extraordinary measure taken by the government that mobilized all motor vehicles for the war effort, even as fifty to sixty trucks were needed to continue operations on the southeastern line.[510]

However, the principal element that the country lacked from the beginning was manpower. Precautions had been previously taken in this regard, when on 21st of February 1921 the Grand Assembly approved the *Tarik Bedeli Bakdîsi*, a law which made it obligatory for men between the ages of eighteen and sixty to pay a road tax. In practice, this meant that there was ample, obligatory labor (*amelei mükellefe*) for the construction of roads. The Provincial General Council (*Vilâyet Umumî Meclisi*) determined a road fee, which for the year 1941 was six lire, and those who could not pay the fee were sentenced to eight days of forced labor. In Bingöl alone, 1,028 citizens were compelled to work on road construction, generally on *chaussées* in urban areas. But these measures were not enough to fulfill the massive needs of the province, especially in terms of road building. Paid labor was the only sustainable option. Additionally, it is unclear the extent to which obligatory labor was used for railroad construction; the reports of the deputy of Bingöl suggest that its use on the construction of the southeastern line was limited. In other words, paid labor was the preferred option in this enterprise.[511]

510 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 175 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

511 Yıldırım, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Demiryolları 1923-1950*, 36-41; NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 67 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 115 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

In 1941 the labor force on the southeastern line was principally employed with leveling the terrain in preparation of the laying of the tracks. The value of this labor is indicated in the following table given of operations conducted by the Haymil Construction Company:

Part	Leveled Earth (m3)	Daily Wages (in TL)
I	257,000	95,220
II	100,092	38,270
III	32,067	12,567
Total	389,159	146,057

Table 7 Wages in the early stages of railroad construction. Source: NSSA

This means that the value of the labor to level a cubic meter of earth was 37.05 kuruş in the first part, 38.24 kuruş in the second part, and 39.2 in the third part. Overall, the average value of leveling one cubic meter of earth while working for the Haymil Company in 1941 was 37.5 kuruş for a worker. Table 7 is directly from the report of the deputy of Bingöl, and the fact that labor value is expressed in a direct comparison of salaries and volume in cubic meters is telling. The same report indicates that between the months of April and July the common *amele* received at most around 75 kuruş a day, which corresponded to the levelling of two cubic meters of earth. However, those occupied with excavation and loading received up to 99 kuruş and those who worked in industrial production received up to 110 kuruş a day. This hierarchical salary system was applied throughout the line; nevertheless, there were fluctuations in daily labor costs especially during harvest season when salaries were higher. There were three doctors and six health officials working in three dispensaries with fifteen beds, and six health offices on the Elazığ-Palu part of the southeastern line. The dispensary in the first section was a building in Elazığ. The dispensaries for the second and third sections were in Havik at the center of the second section. A worker that had an accident was given half a day's pay, while sick workers received no compensation at all. Meanwhile the dietary needs of the workers (*ekmek ve bakkaliye ihtiyaçları*) were provided by the company, but the cost was deducted from the workers' salaries.[512]

512 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 121-124 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

Workers' bread (*amele ekmeği*) was sold at a cost of 14.5 kuruş, the same price as in Elazığ in the summer. The wheat used in the fabrication of the bread was delivered to the contractors from the *Toprak Ofisi* at below market prices, which was used by contractors as a source of profit. Another source of unethical gain was the exaggeration of secondary costs in light of the difficult economic situation that enveloped the country because of the war in Europe. Necmeddin Sahir noted this injustice and pleaded for more inspection of the contractors, as well as the distribution of warm food: "*demiryolu amelesine topluca, sıcak yemek verilmesi imkânlarının dahi araştırılması uygun görülmüştür*." Workers on the railroad did hard labor, such as breaking stone for tunnel construction, up to ten hours a day. Although labor suffered on long summer days, in the months when daylight was less, work hours naturally followed and paralleled a decrease in the daily salary.[513]

Between 2,500 to 3,000 workers were needed per day for the Elazığ-Palu railroad to be completed on schedule. The estimate of this number was 4,000 workers for the fourth, 5,000 for the fifth, and 2,000 for the sixth part. This meant that anywhere between twelve and thirteen thousand fulltime workers were needed to complete the southeastern line in time. However, fluctuations in the seasonal availability of full-time labor made reaching these numbers difficult. In July and August, finding workers was nearly impossible. Construction season was also limited by the weather and took place between April and November, meaning that railroad construction could fully operate only for six months a year. Furthermore, the surrounding region could provide only a limited workforce of two to three thousand workers because children and the elderly were not qualified and all those in good health born between 1326 and 1339 had been called to arms. In other words, it was necessary to import labor for the project to advance. However, of the ten thousand workers needed for the southeastern line, at most 3.000 people could be brought in. In short, only six thousand workers, half locals and the half outsiders, were available for the construction of the southeastern line.[514]

513 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 124-125 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

514 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 167-169 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

It was families that possessed small properties that sent to work on rail construction, because there was no proper working class to speak of; *memleketimizde atelyelerde ve fabrikalarda çalışan küçük bir amele zümresinden başka belli başlı işçi sınıfı bulunmamak*[tadır].[515] The proletariat of Turkey was divided among four economic sectors; agriculture, private construction, government-sponsored construction, and mining. Mine workers and government sponsored construction workers had to pay income tax calculated according to their salaries, which effectively reduced their net daily income. Up to 80 kuruş a day was taxed at four percent, 80-120 kuruş a day was taxed at ten percent, and 150-200 kuruş a day was taxed at 22 percent.

What did employment in the construction of the southeastern line mean for the lives of the people doing the labor? From the perspective of the deputy of Bingöl; those that left their villages to work as *amele-işçi* received food at their place of work and had the opportunity to accumulate a bit of money during their work at most three month stint before returning to their villages. This type of "seasonal" worker received a daily salary of between 80 and 120 kuruş, which amounted to 24-36 lire a month. Before the war, the cost of bread was 12 kuruş, a pack of cigarettes was 7 kuruş, and the cost of *katık* (food eaten with bread) was 5 kuruş. This meant that around 24 kuruş a day or 7.2 lire per month was paid for subsistence. Under these circumstances the typical seasonal worker could accumulate between 16.8-28.8 lire a month, if he worked without a day's rest. However, wartime changed every variable in this picture. In 1942, bread was 46 kuruş, nearly four times more expensive than before the war. The value of a pack of cigarette rose to 11 kuruş, and the cost of katık tripled to 15 kuruş. The estimated daily expenditure of a worker almost tripled to around 70 kuruş a day or 20 lire per month during the war. In railroad construction 40 to 50 percent of the capital was for salaries. But contractors paid less than what they declared and were thus able to pocket some of the money that was supposed to go to laborers.[516]

515 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 169-170 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

516 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 170-171 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

4.2 Agriculture

Development of agriculture should have topped the agenda along physiocratic lines. The state should have encouraged agricultural production as the fundamental source of wealth in the country, but the agricultural practices and production promoted by the state did not always correspond to the necessities of local subsistence. In fact, not only was the agricultural development during internal colonial rule limited, but state-promoted agriculture came at the expense of the traditional subsistence economy practiced in Dersim.[517]

The economy of pre-colonial Dersim was largely dependent on physical geography. This indigenous subsistence economy that was appropriate for the local biogeography was destroyed by internal colonial rule. The issue of land reform was instrumental in this regard. Land that was owned in common or not owned at all was parceled among competing landowners based on an official agrarian ideology that promoted small land ownership. Uluğ, for example, thought that land reform would instigate an era of prosperity. But locals were not concerned with prosperity; what interested them foremost was subsistence. This is symptomatic of the distinction between the city and the hinterland, while the former is concerned with figures and projections, the latter is pragmatic and in tune with the perilous daily struggle for survival. It is less prone to illusions of grandeur based on extrapolated numbers. This is apparent in Uluğ's proclamation to parliament in which he complained that there were more than a thousand vacant farms and approximately six million dunam (*dönüm*) of idle land, with an estimated value of seven million Turkish lire. He backed government efforts to purchase these lands and redistribute them to landless farmers and celebrated the half a million lire spent by the government for the acquisition of 346,000 dunam of land which was redistributed to six thousand people or an average of 57.6 dunam per person. But these efforts only allowed a marginal portion of the population to thrive economically. For the most part, the landless peasantry remained landless.[518]

517 Bahri Dağdaş, *Türkiye'nin Tarım politikası* (1965).

518 Uluğ, *Tunceli medeniyete açılıyor*, 68-69, 70; and https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/td_v2.sayfa_getir?sayfa=67&v_meclis=1&v_donem=4&v_yasama_yili=&v_cilt=23&v_birlesim=065 (accessed May 5, 2015).

The human geography of the region at large required that most people relocated seasonally. For instance, during his time with the Sinemilli tribe, originally from Harput, during the summer of 1919, Charles Noel noted that although not accustomed to transhumance, they too relocated during heat waves. As farmers, they owned both winter [*deşte*] and summer [*zozan*] residences and possessed land fit for agriculture in both localities. In fact, Noel noted that the mountain terrain they occupied during the summer was more fruitful than the plains. For *deşte* he described the yield as 1 to 10 while for *zozan* the yield was 1 to 15; a fifty percent higher return on the same amount of labor. The plain fields were plowed in the spring, and the seeds sown at the beginning of August. During winter, snow covered the crops which stayed sheathed from the elements throughout the season. The produce matured only in June the following year coinciding with the return of the people.[519]

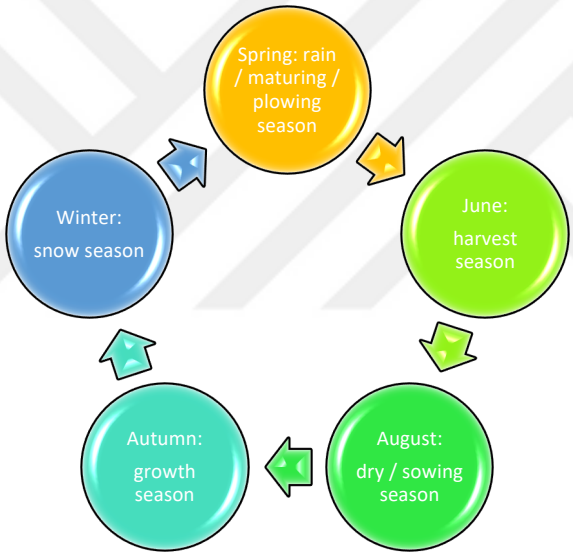


Image 5 Zozan Agricultural Cycle. Source: Noel

This yearly ten-month *zozan* agricultural cycle beginning in August and ending the following June was perfectly adapted to seasonal living, as observed in the case of the Sinemilli tribe, and it required minimal human intervention as the elements controlled the mode of production. A similar agricultural cycle was observable in Dersim.

Agriculture in Dersim was heavily dependent on environmental factors. Climatic conditions had a direct influence on the harvest. The importance of

519 Noel, *Kürdistan 1919*, 22.

the weather for the local economy can be observed in state records. Naturally, heavy winter conditions did not allow for agricultural production. From agricultural reports of the First Inspectorate-General, it is known that snow accumulation reached five meters in Ovacık in February, and it usually continued to snow well into March. This would be followed by heavy rainfall. Spring was a season of extremes, as well. In spring 1936, heavy rainfall led the Munzur and Harçik rivers to overflow by two meters, resulting in the destruction of all the wooden bridges between the more resilient Pülür (Ovacık) and Mameki (Kalan) bridges.[520]

Even suspension bridges, like the one in Mameki, could not necessarily resist such torrential rainfall. Suspension bridges still have difficulty surviving the floods of the Munzur River. Hailstorms occurred in Mameki, Hozat, and Nazımiye even at the beginning of spring. Storms wreaked havoc on towns like Nazımiye, where houses and stores were demolished in extreme weather events. The banditry season began in April when the snow season ended. The booty-economy was another essential part of the traditional economy of Dersim.[521]

The spring agricultural cycle started in early April when wheat was planted, notably in the fertile Genç plains. This first annual sowing in April would be harvested at the end of summer and was characterized as *yazlık zer'iyatı*. However, the melting of snow accompanied by rain could cause the river to overflow, ruining adjacent fields. The region received heavy rainfall even in June, and such torrential summer rains would result in a net loss of produce. The second cycle of agriculture called *bahar zer'iyatı* coincided with the end of summer and early autumn, which was again accompanied by plenty of rainfall. The second harvest season, in December, coincided with the beginning of winter.[522]

With regard to capital, three variables determined the types of ownership: the land, plow, and seeds. Since land belonged to the landowner,

520 BCA, 69-454-18; 69-454-19; and 69-454-12.

521 BCA, 69-454-18; 69-454-19; and 69-454-12.

522 BCA, 69-454-20; 69-454-21; 69-454-30; 69-454-32; 69-454-24; 69-454-25; 69-454-35; and 69-454-37.

the question concerning the two remaining variables was whether the peasant possessed a plow and seeds. Major Noel differentiated among three types of ownership of land in the region at large: *İcaraya/Ruba*, where the laborer procures both the seeds and the plow, and the landowner is entitled to a quarter of the produce. *Nivikar*, where the laborer only owns the plow, the landowner procures the seeds, and the produce is divided between them fifty-fifty. And *Maraba*, when both the seeds and the plow belonged to the landowner such that the laborer received only one third of the produce.[523]

	İcaraya/Ruba	Nivikar	Maraba
seeds	o	-	-
plow	o	o	-
share of landowner	1/4	1/2	2/3

Table 8 Land tenure in Kurdistan. Source: Noel

The republican project of land redistribution intervened in this established order and rendered the central asset of land transferable and purchasable. It was tantamount to the creation of a real estate market in a region stuck with a medieval structure of agrarian feudalism. Indeed, landless peasants who constituted 38 percent of the population controlled none of the land. Small landowners, meaning those who possessed between 0 and 50 dunam, constituted 45.4 percent of the population but controlled only twenty seven percent of the land. Meanwhile, "rich peasants," who possessed between 51 and 200 dunam, constituted 14.2 per cent of the population but controlled 40 percent of the land. But the biggest injustice in this distribution was the class of *Landlords, aghas and sheikhs*, who possessed more than 200 dunam; while they constituted only 2.4 percent of the population, they controlled 33 percent of the land.[524]

523 Noel, *Kürdistan 1919*, 37.

524 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 42-43.

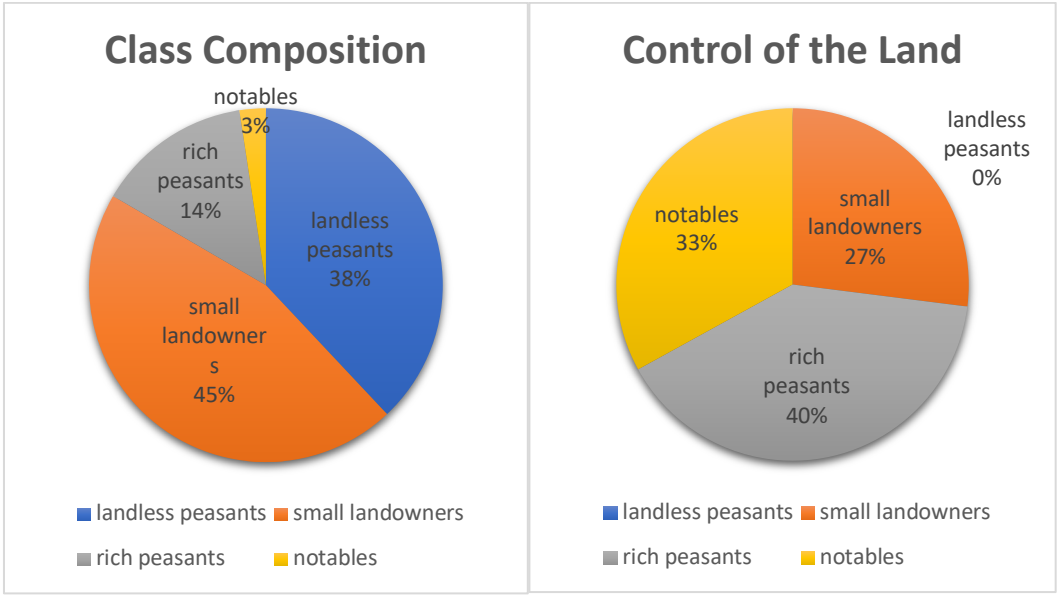


Chart 15 Class composition in relation to the control of land. Source: Kendal

Kendal claims that this inequality has increased since the adoption of the Swiss legal code that protects private property to the fullest extent. Maintaining their traditional, monopolistic interaction with the state, notables claimed ownership over previously communal lands. The central government dared not undertake a land reform that would undermine *the authority of those through whom it sought to ensure its power over the Kurdish masses.*[525] It did not matter that these same notables had been involved in *various conflicts* against the state. The region at large was being integrated into the national economy. A transformation was taking place. C*otton, sugar beet and tobacco, grown both for the Turkish market and for export,* [we]*re tending to displace the traditional food crops*. However, no analogous transformation was taking place in class relations, as *peasants still suppl*[ied] *the sheikhs and other religious dignitaries with what* [wa]*s effectively corvée labor*.[526]

A pre-modern class hierarchy based on a tribal conception of society explained by the segmentary lineage theory was the rule throughout the region at large. However, in Dersim this sort of hierarchical agrarian society was limited to the arable portion of the region. The peculiarity of Dersim is, of course, that there were no continuous areas of arable land. In some districts,

525 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 42.

526 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 42-43.

fields skirted the mountains, in others they were situated next to rivers, and in yet others they were in valleys and constituted little plains.

In Çemişgezek, fifty thousand dunam of land - enough for approximately a thousand farmers - was divided among the villages of Eşküni/Zimyan, as well as Hastek and Vaskovan on the shores of the Murat River. The arable land was limited, and after '38, some were declared forbidden. In other places, large landlords monopolized arable lands. Agricultural tools were primitive: plows to work the land and scythes to harvest the produce. The four principal grains produced were wheat, barley, millet, and rye. Villagers worked as sharecroppers, sustaining themselves only with great difficulty. The peasants without arable land resorted to slashing and burning forests and bushes to create land suitable for agriculture.[527]

However, not all the arable land in Dersim was even under cultivation. Vitali Cuinet estimated the surface area of the Dersim basin at fourteen million acres, eight million of which was mountainous and rocky, five million of which was arable, 560,000 acres of which was pastureland and 150,000 acres of which was forested. This meant that 36 percent of the land in Dersim could sustain agriculture, but of these five million acres, only 1.5 million were cultivated - roughly thirty percent of the arable land in the region. A significant part of this land was used as pastures for animals.[528]

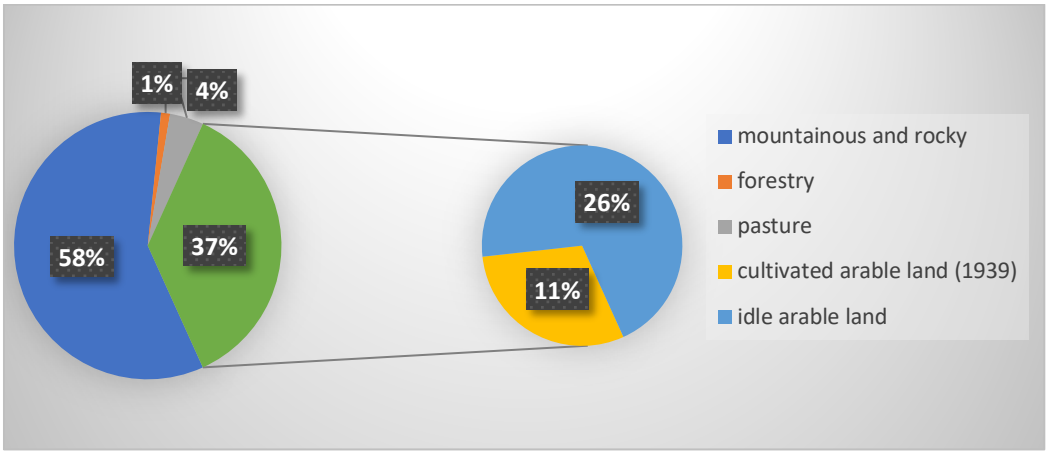


Chart 16 Composition of land in Dersim, 1939. Source: NSSA

527 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 257-260 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

528 Uluğ, *Tunceli medeniyete açılıyor*, 68-70; Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890-1895); and https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/td_v2.sayfa_getir?sayfa=67&v_meclis=1&v_donem=4&v_yasama_yili=&v_cilt=23&v_birlesim=065, (accessed May 5, 2015).

The above chart is the product of cross reading Cuinet and Uluğ, whose surveys are separated by more than forty years. According to Cuinet, 58% of the land in Dersim was unfit for agriculture as it was mountainous and rocky. For the Frenchman, who had high expectations about what constituted a forest, only one percent of the territory was covered by proper forests. This is a rather inaccurate depiction, but what concerns us is the proportion of arable terrain. Only 11% of the total arable lands in Dersim were being cultivated in 1939, and agriculture barely existed in Inner Dersim. The mountainous geography surrounding the small rocky plain of Ovacık and the high altitude were the principal reasons. Most of the district north of the Munzur River is gravely or sandy, rendering agriculture unviable, though south of the river the soil is arable.[529]

But what about those places in the rest of Dersim where the geography did allow for agriculture. What about idle arable land? Had the state not assumed a physiocratic civilizing mission? The answer to the latter question is not by 1939. Indeed, the history of agriculture in Dersim and the rest of the region during the early republican period traversed two distinct phases of government policy. During the early years of the republic and the first few years of the Inspectorate-General until the Ararat Rebellion, the republic did pursue a certain physiocratic civilizing agenda. This is evident in the Inspectorate-General's agricultural situation reports, the first of which date from the end of 1928. They were compilations of various reports from different localities and contained information regarding the agricultural situation in Bitlis, Elazığ, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Hakkari, Van, and Urfa. Dersim, of course, was much less fertile than these relatively prosperous lowlands and hence did not figure in the reports. When mentioned, it is generally in relation to its exceptional weather. Dersim had always been dependent on neighboring provinces for imports of wheat. The most fertile plain in the region was Genç, with more than eight million square meters of wheat fields. Other fertile plains in the immediate vicinity that interested the state included Palu, Çapakçur, Pertek, Keban, Baskil, Maden, and Çemişgezek, which are all also favored

529 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 266 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

targets for raids.[530]

The founder of the republic himself read some of them as proven by the agricultural report of March 1929, in which below the signature of Şükrü Kaya it is noted *Paşa Hazretleri görmüşlerdir*. In 1929, the republic did have a general physiocratic outlook that the wealth of a nation stemmed from its agricultural production.[531] The trimester report from 1929 shows the Turkish physiocratic civilizing mission in action, in line with the late imperial agricultural policy, as demonstrated by the testament of farmers who were thankful for the help of the Agricultural Bank founded by Mithat Pasha. The only obstacles to the development of agriculture were torrential rains and the destructive force of the rivers.[532]

The physiocratic approach was abandoned in favor of a militaristic approach, and whether it was prompted by the Great Depression, the Ararat Rebellion, or a combination of both, is a matter for speculation. According to the last agricultural report during the harvest season before Black Tuesday - October 29, 1929 -, everything was fine. Landowners were satisfied with the harvest which had not been harmed by excessive rainfall.[533]

The tradition of agricultural reports did not persist in the history of the Inspectorate-Generals, material proof that the central state abandoned its policy of agricultural development. A lapse in this regard is evident in the archives, and the subsequent agricultural report from January-December 1932 indicates very different preoccupations. There are financial evaluations, such as the total agricultural production, which was valued at 2,230,150 lire; however, most of the produce was consumed in the region itself. Exports from the region were valued at 217,549 lire and imports at 573,100 lire; indicating a net trade deficit in the economy of the region. During the Great Depression, Turkish agriculture was no longer the principal motor of the economy; industry became the priority. [534]

However, the government never completely abandoned support of

530 BCA, 69-454-4, 1. Um. Müf. zirai vaziyet hakkında rapor, 15/12/1928 & 26/12/1928.

531 BCA, 69-454-19, 1. Um. Müf. zirai vaziyet hakkında rapor, 27/3/1929.

532 BCA, 69-454-29, 1. Um. Müf. bölgesine ait üç aylık rapor, 10/6/1929.

533 BCA, 69-454-34, 1. Um. Müf. zirai vaziyet hakkında rapor, 11/9/1929.

534 BCA, 69-457-15, 1. Um. Müf. 1932 yılı zirai vaziyet ve icraatı.

agriculture. Even though the efforts of the central state during the physiocratic era were in the past, the provincial government did make overt efforts to support local agriculture. In 1942, a total of 20,000 lire was sent from the capital as seed money (*tohumluk parası*). More than half this amount was given directly to the farmers, facilitating ability of many to acquire seeds. The rest of the capital was used to purchase wheat, millet, corn, and potatoes for distribution to villagers in need of seeds. The amount was more than thousand kilos of wheat, nearly ten thousand kilos of corn, more than a thousand kilos of millet, and nearly ten thousand kilos of potatoes. In some places, landless farmers were even given land belonging to the treasury for the remainder of the growing season. Others who had been granted lands but had not worked them were cautioned to cultivate or that it would be taken from them.[535]

These measures encouraged production. Another measure was the promotion of agricultural work among consumers and officials. Vegetable seeds were distributed gratis, which contributed to an increase in gardening. 1942 was a tough year; up to 40% of the autumn agricultural was damaged by the long winter, and peasants instinctively resorted to planting millet on empty plots of land. This is how the millet culture was increased compared to past years. Millet farming in the region produced an amazing return of an estimated ratio of 1 to 30. The wheat harvest in Bingöl province in 1942 was estimated at 5,000 tons, and the millet harvest was at least as much. Another, less popular cultivar that was encouraged at the time was rice in the husk. There had been rice production in Bingöl before, so it was a question of re-instigating its cultivation. There were irrigation channels in Terbasan village and on the island on the Gönik river near Kadımatrak village. These as well as the village of Dik near the Murat River were all projected to be good locations for rice production, and 500 kilos of seeds were ready to be planted in Simsor (Çapakçur). Compared with Tunceli, the lowlands along the Murat Valley in Bingöl province were much more suitable for industrial culture.[536]

The figures provided on the previous pages coincide with and relate to the height of the "Age of Chaos." The republic and the "national chief," İnönü - a

535 NSSA (1), Doğu Sorunu, 148-149 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

536 NSSA (1), Doğu Sorunu, 148-149 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

veteran of the collapse of the empire -, abandoned early physiocratic concerns, and by the beginning of the 1940s the main concern was maintaining national sovereignty. This meant that the entirety of the national economy was at the service of the military. There was a definite shift in this direction in the Fourth General Inspectorate, as well. A decree signed by İnönü transferred the capable chief of the statistical directorate of the Fourth Inspectorate-General, Şefik İnan, was a graduate of not only the *Mülkiye* [Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences] but also the *Faculté de Droit de Paris* and the *Haute Institut Statistique*, to the Directorate of Agricultural Statistics in Ankara. This small but significant transfer reflects a change in the focus of agricultural policy from regional development to national defense. After all, Ankara was preparing for the worst-case scenario, namely invasion.[537]

The next report from the Fourth Inspectorate-General concerning anything related to agriculture dates from the end of the war. This eight-month report prepared in September 1945 started with a clear statement that the Turkish civilizing mission had still not reached its goals. Remnants of the old ways resisted, and the situation could only be changed through the expansion of education, sedentarization, and the passing of the last generation of raiders. Of these three solutions, the most important was thought to be sedentarization through land redistribution. A related law had already been passed and its hasty implementation was requested by the Ministry of Agriculture. The law to which the report referred was the controversial *Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanunu*, approved the previous spring. It was claimed to have been inspired by the *Reichserbhofgesetz* by the main opposition headed by Adnan Menderes.[538] The report also that the launch of a technical agricultural school and an agricultural enterprise to facilitate the spread of the Turkish Language and Turkish Culture was to be undertaken.[539]

4.3.1 Agriculture in Tunceli

537 BCA, 87-47-16, 4. Um. Müf. İstatistik Müdürlüğü Şefi Şefik İnan'ın tayini, 25/5/1939.

538 Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Bir Tepeden Reform Denemesi: Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanununun Hikâyesi," *Birikim* 107 (March 1998).

539 BCA, 72-471-12, 4. Um. Müf. bölgesindeki güvenlik, milli eğitim, ziraat, hayvancılık, ormancılık, bayındırlık, yol işleri, sağlık durumu ve memurların vaziyetinde dair sunulan rapor, 15/9/1945.

Agriculture depends on water and irrigation. The Murat River constitutes the principal source of irrigation for large-scale agriculture that was registered, fostered, and taxed by the central state. This is most notable in Bingöl where the river is, more so than in Tunceli, a life-giving branch flowing across the lowlands. On the other hand, the highlands are blessed with many small ravines and innumerable streams. However, large-scale agriculture, which requires a modicum of organized irrigation, is impossible because of the rocky terrain. Even in the water abundant Dersim, the most important agricultural districts are Çemişgezek and Pertek for which the Murat River serves as a southern border. However, even in Çemişgezek arable lands were divided; hence, there was no collective agriculture. Most of the plots belonged to small peasants; only nine citizens possessed more than 25 hectares and the sum of their lands was around 615 hectares. The grain of choice in Çemişgezek , as in the mountainous fields of Tunceli, was millet because it was easy to grow and lucrative (yielding 1 to 30). This grain also required less water than others. Sometimes, as was the case in 1943, villagers even resorted to growing millet in their vegetable gardens and orchards. However, millet was not the most important grain in terms of production.[540]

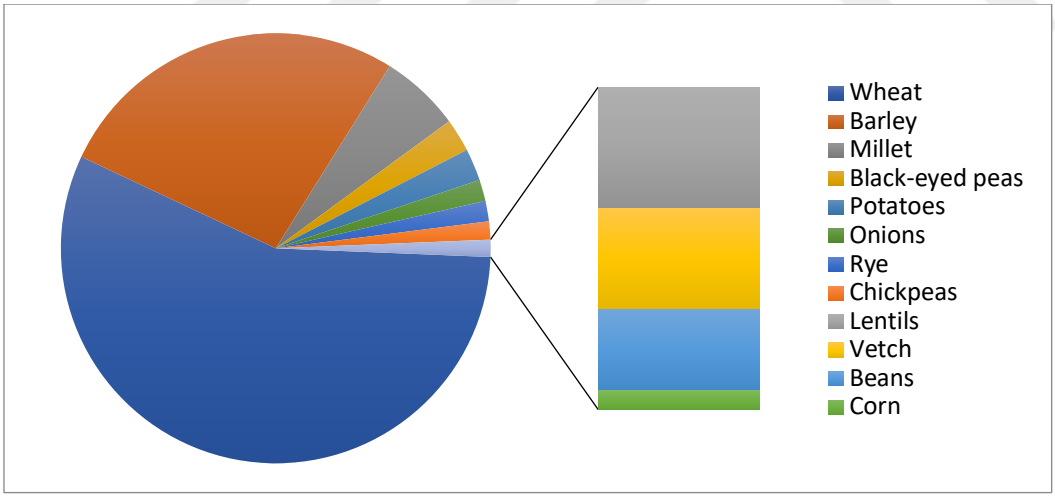


Chart 17 Agricultural production of Çemişgezek, 1942. Source: NSSA

There was little diversity in the overall agricultural production of Çemişgezek. At 700 tons, wheat was by far the most important grain produced in the district, comprising 56% of all agricultural production. The second most important was barley with 334 tons annually, constituting 27% of overall

540 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 258-259 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

agricultural production. All other produce accounted for only 17% of total annual agricultural production in Çemişgezek. Among the ten crops that comprise the remaining production in the district, the humble millet comes in third overall with 75 tons, a mere 6% of the total agricultural production. About thirty tons each of black-eyed peas and potatoes were followed by onions (20 tons), rye (19 tons), chickpeas (17 tons), lentils (6 tons), vetch (5 tons), beans (4 tons), and corn (1 ton). In other words, 83% of the production in the district of Çemişgezek was comprised of industrial grains (wheat and barley), most of which was probably collected for the sustenance of military personnel during the precautionary defensive mobilization of the time. By contrast, only 17% was destined for immediate local use and sustenance. Two New World crops, relatively new to the region, were also being cultivated: potatoes and corn.

The aforementioned trends also applied in Pertek district, defined by Necmeddin Sahir in his report as the most advanced locality in the province in terms of agriculture. The overall division of agricultural production in this district followed the same lines as in Çemişgezek. Wheat, barley, and millet were the most widely grown grains. The five thousand hectares of land reserved for grain production in Pertek produced two thousand tons of wheat, 800 tons of barley, and 40 tons of millet. A supplementary 156 hectares of arable land in Pertek was used to produce 14 tons of chickpeas, 12 tons of lentils, 9 tons of beans, 6 tons of fava beans, 8 tons of *vicia ervilia* (*burçak*), and 7 tons of *vicia sativa* or vetch (*fiğ*). The cultivation of potatoes and onions was also advanced. In 1941, for instance, one hundred tons of onions, 60 tons of potatoes, and 12 tons of garlic were produced.[541]

541 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 270-271 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

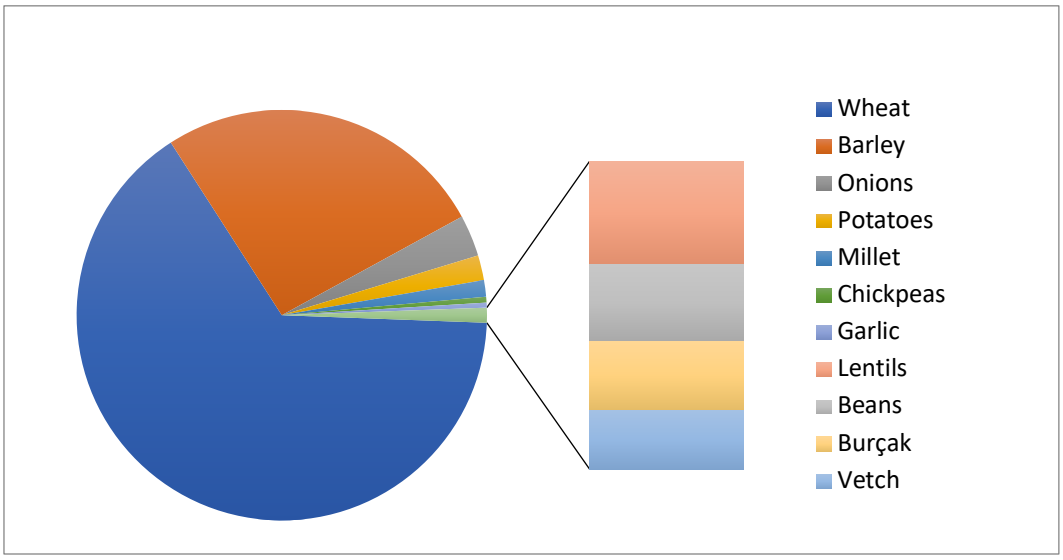


Chart 18 Agricultural production of Pertek, 1941. Source: NSSA

Compared to Çemişgezek, more potatoes were produced in Pertek than nutritious millet. Again, wheat at 65% was the most intensively cultivated produce followed by barley at 26%, constituting 91% of all agricultural production in the district. Of course, agricultural production was not limited to subsistence crops. A promising industrial cultivation of cotton was being pursued on the banks of the Murat River. Cotton cultivation had gained in importance since the opening of a cotton treatment facility in Malatya in 1939. Another economically significant agricultural product was tobacco, which was also planted close to the Murat River in the villages of Dereköy and Şeyh Su. Most of this fertile land that had been adjacent the river is now under the Keban Dam Lake. In other words, the republic knowingly flooded and sacrificed some of the most fertile land in the province of Tunceli.[542]

Further north, in Mazgirt, there was considerable agricultural potential in the sub-districts of Çarsancak (Akpazar) and Muhundu (Darıkent). These two localities are essential for deciphering the economic history of the region. Çarsancak/Akpazar as well as Muhundu/Darıkent were historically important Armenian townships in the region and kept their former names until the 1960s. However, their economic importance is reflected in their modern Turkish names. Çarsancak is an important market (*pazar*) near the Murat River and Muhundu is an important center of millet (*darı*) production.

Land holdings in Mazgirt district were mostly large and in the hands of

542 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 270-271 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

a few people. The agricultural production in Mazgirt was as follows: 500 tons of wheat, 450 tons of barley, 4 tons of rye, and 10 tons of millet were grown on two thousand hectares of agricultural land. Lesser agricultural products included lentils, beans, chickpeas as well as potatoes, onions, and to a lesser extent garlic. Tobacco was also grown in Peri by the Murat River.[543]

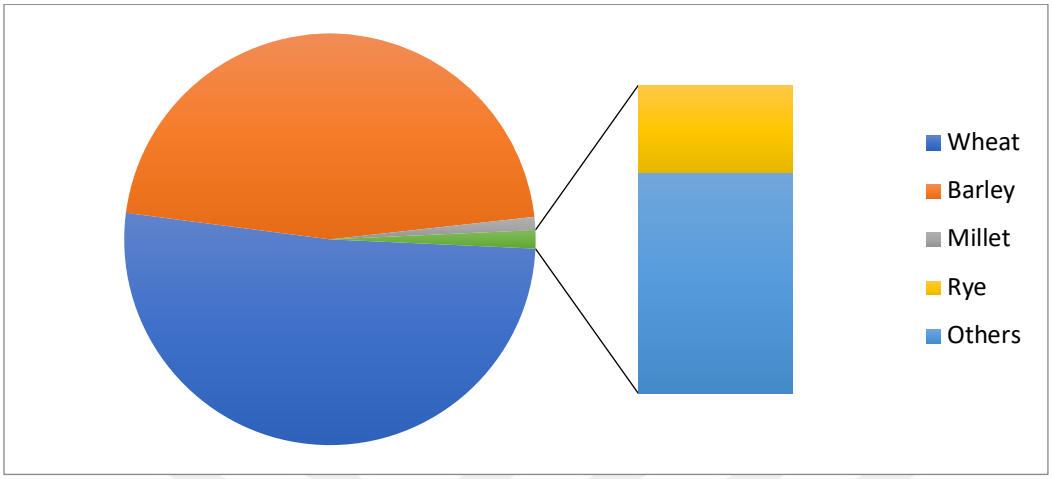


Chart 19 Agricultural production of Mazgirt, 1941. Source: NSSA

Chart 19 nearly contrasts with the former two. The first remarkable difference is the importance of barley production in Mazgirt, which at 450 tons a year constitutes roughly 45% of its total agricultural production. It is nearly as much as the 500 tons of wheat production which comprised 50% of nearly the total. Meanwhile millet production was remarkably low at only ten tons per annum. Rye production has been added to the mix. As animal husbandry increases in a district, so does the production of feed grains such as barley and rye. There is also less diversity in agricultural production in Mazgirt. This is also true for Nazımiye district to the north, where the overall agricultural production for 1941 was broken down as follows: 350 tons of wheat, 150 tons of barley, and ten tons of millet. Noting that the region is heavily forested with oak trees, the report states that to develop agricultural diversity, the creation of new fields through deforestation was necessary. The subsistence of the people through agriculture would otherwise rely on imports of diverse pulses such as chickpeas and lentils.[544]

543 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 264 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

544 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 265-266 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

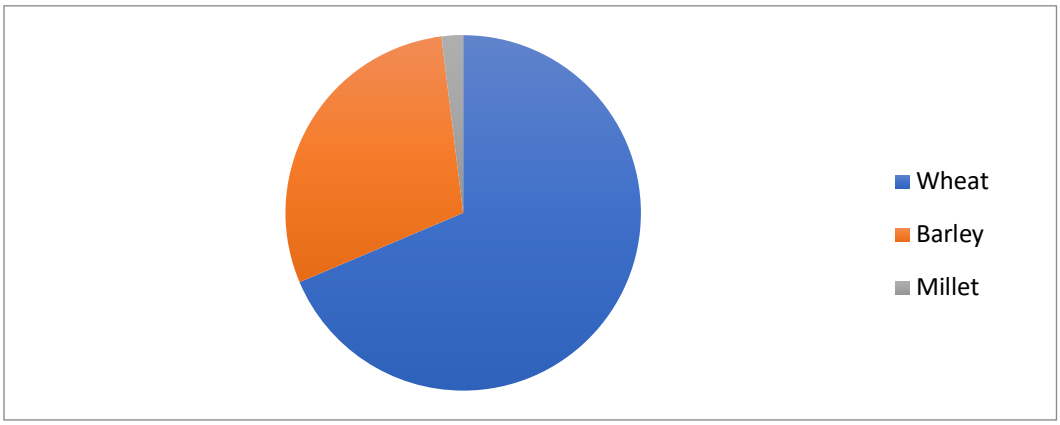


Chart 20 Agricultural production of Nazımiye, 1941. Source: NSSA

While less diverse than the three previous regions, Chart 20 shows a similar distribution of arable land among the three dominant grain crops. Wheat constitutes the lion's share with almost 70% of overall agricultural production. Almost 30% of the land is dedicated to barley and only 2% to millet. As we move further north from the Murat River, the amount of arable land decreases as does the diversity and quantity of the produce.

On the small plain of Ovacık wheat and barley as well as millet and a little rye was being planted. The production was 120 tons of wheat, 60 tons of barley, 30 tons of, millet and 2 tons of rye. However, the harvest of 1943 exceeded that of preceding years, the reason for which was explained by an anonymous citizen in Karaoğlan village at the center of the Kakbil sub-district: the *kımıl* bug had devastated the produce during recent years but subsided without any conscious human effort. In terms of pulse agriculture, the three products were beans, chickpeas, and vetch (*fiğ*/*burçak*). The bean culture in Ovacık was the most important of the districts of the province. In 1941, one hundred tons were produced here compared to just one ton in Hozat, 8 tons in Çemişgezek, and 9 tons in Pertek. Small bean species being grown in the Adakale village between the Munzur and Haçovar rivers that had come so renowned that most of the harvest was sold outside of the province. It was estimated that 150 tons of this bean was produced in the locality in 1943. Ovacık was also the second most important producer of vetch in the province after Çemişgezek, with 7 tons produced in 1941. Other produce included 2 tons of chickpeas, 20 tons of potatoes, and around 2 tons of onions.[545]

545 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 267-268 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

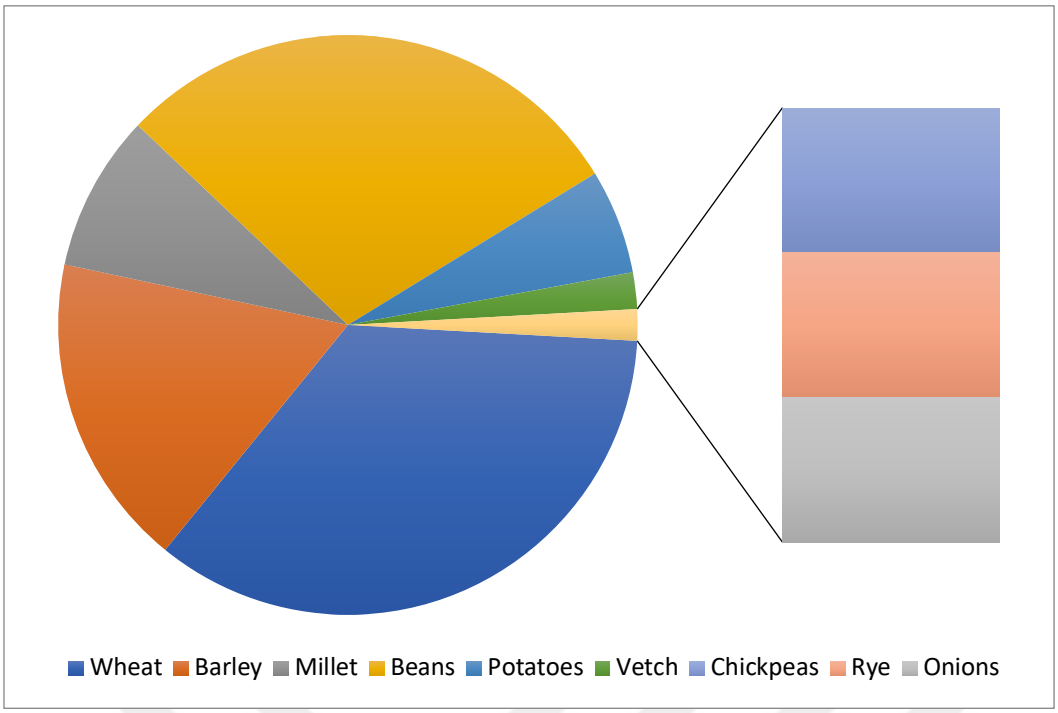


Chart 21 Agricultural production of Ovacık, 1941. Source: NSSA

Chart 21 reflects the distinctive agricultural economy of Ovacık compared to the rest of the province. Wheat, the grain of "civilization," occupies less space and constituted only 35% of the overall agricultural production in Ovacık in 1941. At 9%, the proportion of millet relative to the total production in the district is the highest in the province. Export-oriented bean production makes up almost 30% of agricultural production; however, agricultural production overall is relatively restrained. No single produce exceeded 120 tons in 1941.

Further north of Ovacık, just south of Erzincan, is the Pülümür district which has a mountainous terrain most of which is not arable. Nevertheless, it was the third most productive district of the province in terms of grain agriculture after Pertek and Çemişgezek. Here again, the state observed that fertile land in the district was monopolized by a few wealthy individuals, and poor peasants were having considerable difficulties. Production in 1941 on 1,787 hectares was comprised of 900 tons of wheat, 75 tons of barley, 14 tons of millet, 7 tons of Einkorn wheat (*kaplıca buğdayı*), and 2 tons of rye.[546]

546 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 272 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

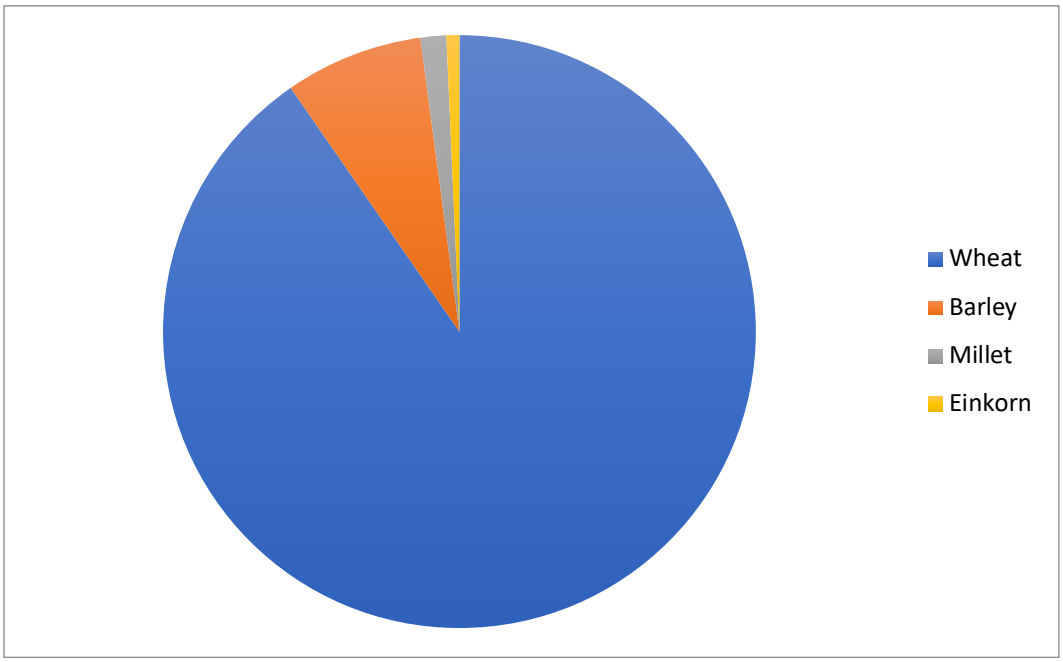


Chart 22 Agricultural production of Pülümür, 1941. Source: NSSA

The picture in Pülümür is once again a very different picture; indeed, there is no unity in the agricultural production of the province as a whole, as data for most districts are markedly varied. Accounting for 90% of overall production, wheat is the champion of agriculture in Pülümür. This can again be used as a marker of the degree of "civilization" of the district. When wheat is king, the locality is "civilized." On the other hand, millet production can be taken as an indicator of the local peoples' food sovereignty, then we can state that in terms of grain cultivation millet is for the folk and wheat is for the state. Geographically closer to such an important "civilizational" center as Erzincan, Chart 22 can be explained by the domestication of Pülümür's agriculture by the state.

In the former provincial capital of Hozat, situated just southeast of Ovacık, agriculture was generally poor. Nevertheless, the three main cultivars were again wheat, barley, and millet. The main difficulties of agriculture in the district were limited arable land and limited water, which resulted in frequent disputes among farmers. But overall, Hozat's agricultural production was limited. In 1941, a scanned one hundred tons of wheat, another one hundred tons of barley, and 18 tons of millet were produced in the district. There were also small-scale potato and tobacco farms, but among recent, rising entrants

the most popular was onions with a production of nine tons in 1941.[547]

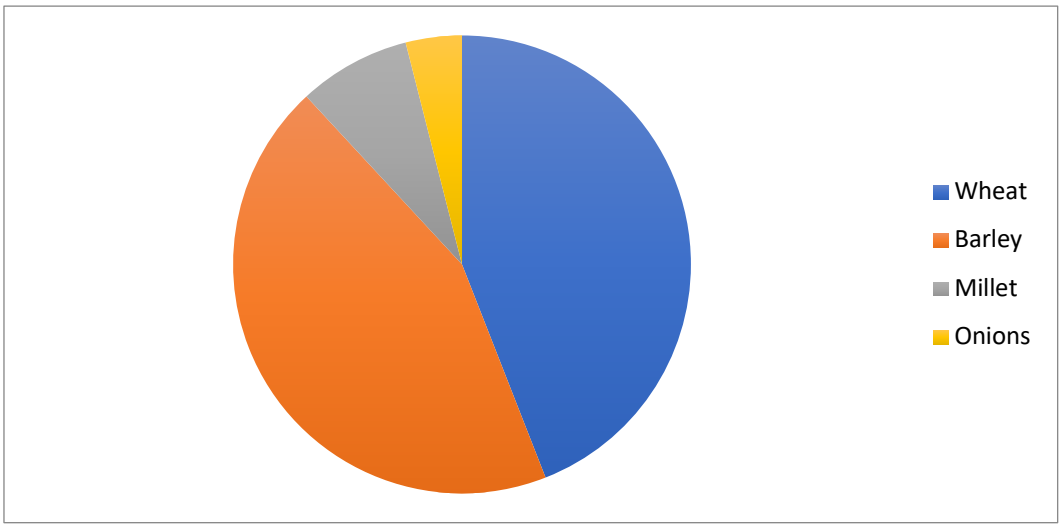


Chart 23 Agricultural production of Hozat, 1941. Source: NSSA

The simplicity of Chart 23 is directly related to the poverty of agriculture in the old provincial capital. Hozat shared this trait with the future provincial capital of Kalan, where agriculture was similarly primitive. The report suggests that this was due to the fact that the district's people previously earned their livelihoods from banditry and that the concept of property had never existed. Gradually, people were becoming attached to their plots of land and trying to earn a livelihood from agriculture. Although the district produced three grains, the harvest was only sufficient to feed a third of the local population. The rest of the necessary grains were imported from Mazgirt and Pertek. On a land of 300 to 400 hectares, 80 tons of wheat, 125 tons of barley and 14 tons of millet were produced in 1941.[548]

547 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 261(Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

548 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 262-263 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

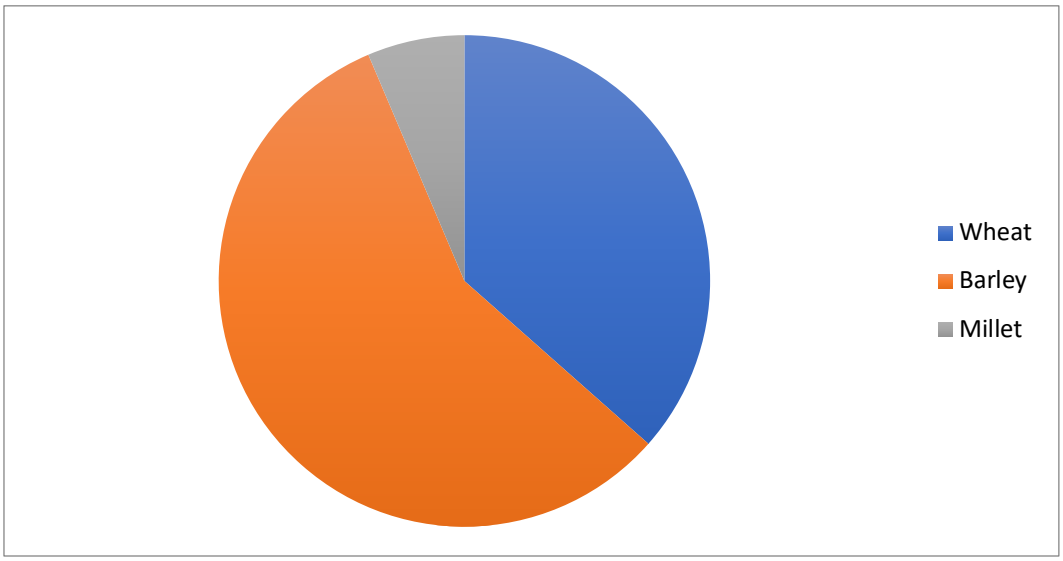


Chart 24 Agricultural production of Kalan, 1941. Source: NSSA

Note that charts 24 and 25 are similar, noticeably with respect to the relative importance of millet production. Another similarity is the competition between wheat and barley. In Hozat, their production was equal, but 57% of all overall agricultural production in Kalan was constituted of barley. This indicates the greater importance of animal husbandry, a detail to which we will return. However, before progressing to other issues it is imperative to compare wheat, barley and millet production in the province of Tunceli as a whole.

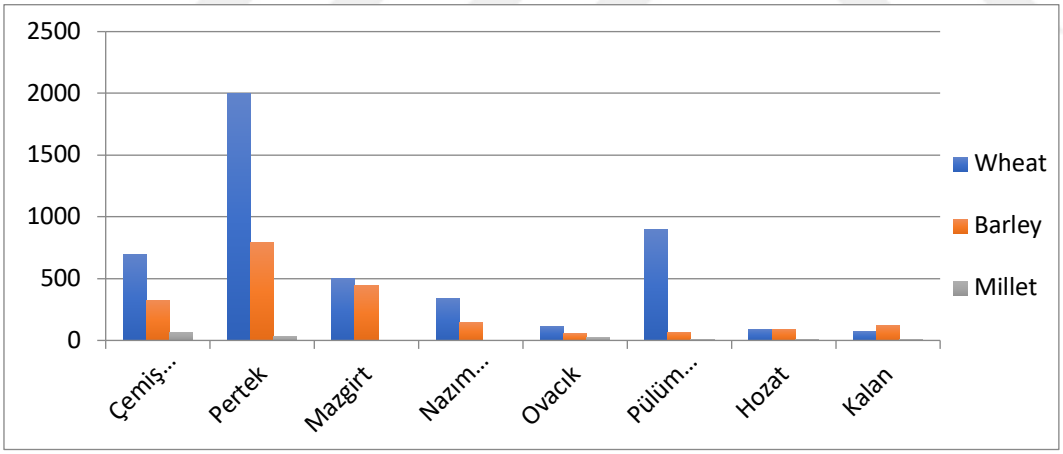


Chart 25 Agricultural production of Tunceli, 1941. Source: NSSA

Chart 25, expressed in metric tons of grain production, clarifies a few essential facts concerning agriculture in the province under internal colonial rule. First, the greatest priority of the central state with respect to grain production was wheat. Second, barley was the second most cultivated grain in Tunceli, though its production never surpassed 500 tons in any district except for Pertek. Third, millet production in Tunceli was dwarfed by wheat and barley, although its

persistence in local agriculture hints at its importance for traditional local sustenance. Finally, if 500 tons of grain production per annum is indicative of a developed agriculture sector, Çemişgezek, Pertek, Mazgirt, and Pülümür had developed agricultural economies, while agriculture in Nazımiye, Ovacık, Hozat, and Kalan was more restricted. This division in the agricultural economy of Dersim, roughly corresponds with the geographical division of the region into Inner and Outer Dersim. Whereas Outer Dersim had more developed agriculture, Inner Dersim relied on other sectors to maintain a functioning economy.

4.3.2 Agriculture in Bingöl

The case in the province of Bingöl, with its mountainous geography, was similar. Agriculture was again limited to certain districts, done using primitive means, and restricted to wheat, barley, and millet. The overall production allowed for the self-sustenance of the province. The central district of Çapakçur cultivated solely wheat and barley despite the fact that the Çapakçur plain and Murat Valley were fertile enough to grow anything. No millet was grown here in contrast to Kiğı, where millet was grown as well as wheat and barley. On the other hand, only barley and rye were grown in Solhan and Karlıova, again pointing to the importance of animal husbandry in the region. Agriculture was more diverse in Genç where wheat, barley, millet, chickpeas, and some cotton were grown. However, the most fertile land in Bingöl the plain at its center which was traversed by the Murat River.[549]

The development of a modern agricultural economy in the region faced many obstacles. Chief among these were insects, disease, and animals. *Aelia rostrata* (*kımıl*), also known as the wheat stink bug, and *lop hastalığı*, a vaguely defined grain disease, hurt general grain production in Çemişgezek in the early forties. According to Mustafa Apaydın, the *Aelia rostrata* appeared every fifteen to twenty years and disappeared after five to six years of havoc. Since '38, a new danger had emerged: locusts that bread in the untamed grasslands of the forbidden zones that the state had emptied of their inhabitants.[550] Wild boars were also an ever-present threat to farming. In 1942, 169 boars were spotted

549 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 12-13 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

550 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 259-261 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

in the district of Kalan, 120 of which were killed. Their tails were sent to the Agriculture Directorate as proof. The reason that central state agents needed proof was that this "economic" threat could only be combatted through the use of firearms. Fourteen relatively old rifles were produced and registered in Kalan solely to fight boars.[551]

In fact, the disarmament effectuated in 1938 increased the existing boar problem. Ali Çelik, the headman of Kedek (Koyungölü), situated on the road connecting the new center of Pülür (Ovacık) to the old center of Zeranik (Yeşilyazı), complained that they had only two old Martini-Henry rifles in the village, but no cartridges. They were unable to water their fields because the wild boars, which used their muzzles to dig into the wet ground and eat the plants from their roots, damaged watered fields even more. Furthermore, he pointed out that wolves attacked their cattle and urged the government to give them guns and cartridges to fend off these harmful animals. Citizen Yusuf Baykal from Zeranik adhered to these views and elaborated that they guarded their fields at night by lighting bonfires in the cold. Their collective frustration about the lack of guns to counter the menace was expressed by the headman of Pardi, Süleyman Ayata: *We want guns to fight, but we cannot buy them.*[552]

The people and the administration agreed on the necessity of fighting the wolves, bears, and wild boars but disagreed on the method. These animals could be killed with hounds (*sürek avı*), but authorities did not allow this to take place without permit. The situation was similar in Bingöl where the village headman of Halikan in Solhan, Ali Şener, requested arms for the struggle against such wildlife. The *muhtar* of Hacıyan, Mehmet Bedir, communicated that the best season for killing bears was August-September, which contrasted with the official season as delineated by the Ministry of Agriculture, which was from December to April. Again, there was a disconnect between realities on the ground and policies dictated by the central state. The hunting needed to be conducted before the harvest, and the best period was August-September.[553]

551 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 264 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

552 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 268 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

553 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 12 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu,* 106-107 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

Another obstacle to agricultural development was the idleness of both the land and the people. In Darahini a citizen named Haydar explained that the reason why agriculture was underdeveloped in Bingöl was because the farmers did not work (as much as they should) and that a practice of forced agricultural labor should be administered. The local headman, Said Göker, made a similar statement on people's laziness: *Halkımız tembeldir*. Of the 40-50 families in the town, only three were involved in agriculture.[554]

However, Necmeddin Sahir saw landlessness and not idleness as the real problem among the inhabitants of Genç. Three or four citizens possessed most of the land in the region, which *de facto* meant that most of the land was left unused. Mustafa Yurtsever from the Çapakçur Municipal Council noted that the land redistribution planned by the government would benefit farmers that were already engaged in agriculture. He pointed out that those who were in need of land had been unable to work on land until then and were therefore involved in other professions instead. It was also important to discourage the use of the *saban* (walking plow) and promote the *pulluk* (rake plow) instead. Interestingly, the four ploughs sent to the province had been left to rust. When asked for the reason for this disinterest, the people claimed that the *pulluk* weighed heavily on the animals pulling it. The animals available were not strong enough to pull the plough. In theory, the farmers could purchase stronger animals through financial incentives offered to them, but the Agricultural Bank credit at the disposition of the people in Çapakçur was not well liked. Furthermore, Fettah Bayram from Çapakçur complained that those who wanted to become farmers could not get loans from the Agricultural Bank, which apparently only loaned to those who were established farmers. However, credit was not the main issue. As it transpired in Çapakçur's village of Garip near the Murat River, the villagers wanted to use abandoned Armenian land. The main issue was not idle people, but idle land. [555]

Another obstacle to agricultural growth in the region was the fluctuating climate. Heavy winter conditions affected agriculture in Bingöl in 1942. The late melting snow was aggravated by the fact that many farming

554 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 107 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941).

555 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 56-59 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

families had been compelled to send their men to the army. Delays in seed provisions caused general agricultural output to further regress that year. The main agriculture in Bingöl was limited to the summer season, when wheat, barley, and millet were grown. But in 1942, the summer agriculture did not meet expectations. Autumn and winter agriculture was concerned with wheat and rye, the latter of which was in especially demand in higher altitudes, such as Kiğı, Solhan, Karlıova, and the mountainous regions of Genç.[556]

4.3.3 Horticulture

Other than grain cultivation, fruit production was also essential for the region's economy, and the central state made conscious efforts to increase its production. Various fruit trees were grown in and around Dersim. In Elazığ, where a winery would be opened in 1942, almost fifteen thousand tons of grapes were being produced by 1932. While its apples and pears were famous, Elazığ was also home to eight silkworm production houses. The central town was a powerhouse for the immediate region. We see this in the pistachio graft administered to fifteen hundred mastic trees in Elazığ, Pertek, and Çemişgezek, the success rate of which was 30%. In fact, fruit seeds and grafts were distributed to neighboring garden and fruit farmers from a nursery (*vilayet fidanlığı*) in Elazığ, where there were eight thousand *zerdali* [*Armeniaca vulgaris*], 1,600 almond, 200 pomegranate, and 160 grafted apricot trees.[557]

The state foresaw that its efforts in Elazığ would increase fruit production in the region where there was already a long-standing fruit growing tradition. For instance, in Çemişgezek center and in the surrounding mountains, apples, pears, almonds, walnuts, apricots, and plums were being grown as well as mulberries. However, fruit trees in the forbidden zones were drying up because of neglect and the disuse of these lands was damaging the local economy.

556 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 146-147 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

557 BCA, 69-457-15, 1. Um. Müf. 1932 yılı zirai vaziyet ve icraat raporu.

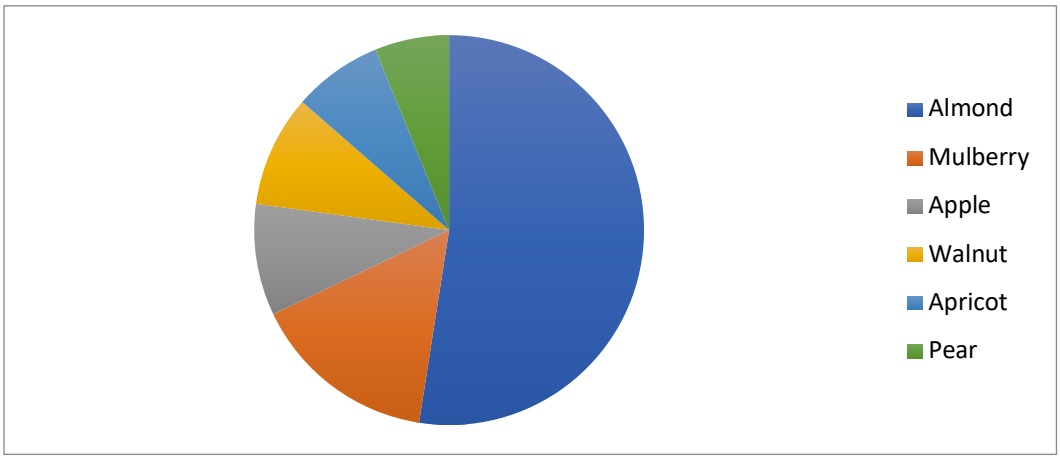


Chart 26 Fruit production of Çemişgezek, 1941. Source: NSSA

More than half of the total fruit production in the district consisted of almonds (85 tons), a product amenable to long-distance trade in its dried form, as were the walnut and apricot. This fits with the pattern of integration into the national economy. Attention in fruit production was directed towards export rather than subsistence consumption. The same was true for the mulberry (25 tons), which was also commercially viable product in its dried form that has the added value of being related to silk production. In fact, the local silkworm industry brought hundreds of lire of revenue to the district economy. Considering that apples and pears could only be consumed fresh and hence were more directly related to local consumption, only 15% of the total fruit production in Çemişgezek was for local sustenance. The tendency of the central state to transform local agriculture was not limited to encouraging the growth of certain plants; the state also sought to engineer more profitable crops from existing plants. There were efforts starting in 1939 to graft pistachios to *menengiç* [*Pistacia terebinthus*] or turpentine trees, as well as to turn "*alıç*" [*Crataegus monogyna*] or hawthorn trees into quince trees.[558]

The natural predisposition in the district of Pertek was to facilitate the development of fruit and vegetable agriculture. Fruit production in 1941 was as follows: 110 tons of almonds, 95 tons of mulberries, 81 tons of pears, 37 tons of walnuts, 29 tons of cherries, 24 tons of zerdali apricots, 8 tons of plums, 7 tons of quince, 5 tons of sour cherries, 4 tons of apricots, and 2 tons of peaches.[559]

558 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 260 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

559 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 270 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

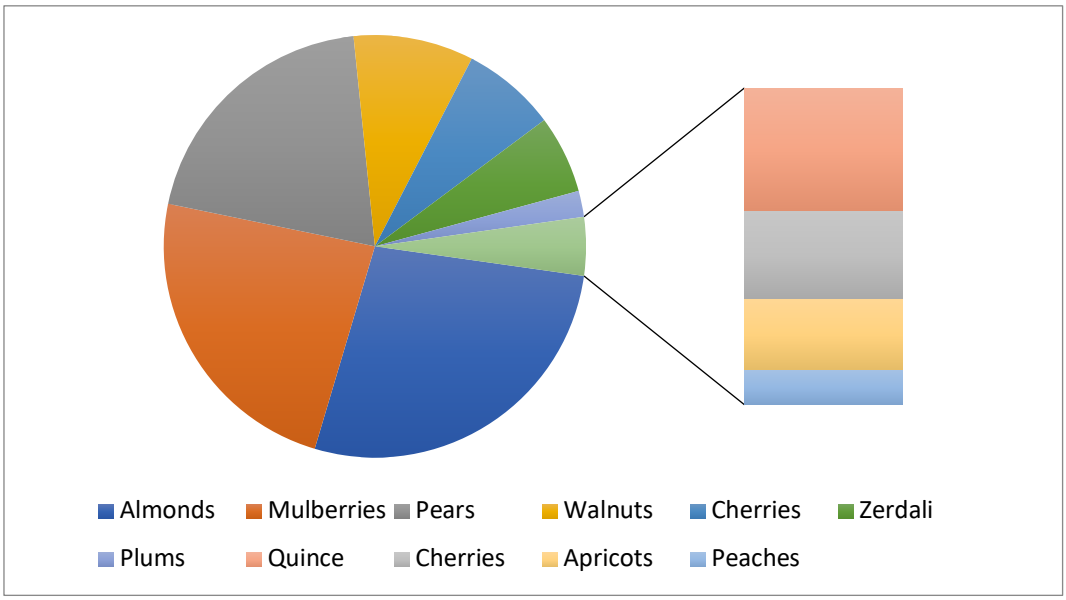


Chart 27 Fruit production of Pertek, 1941. Source: NSSA

Fruit production in Pertek was more varied; nevertheless, almonds, at 27% of overall production, and mulberries, at 24% of overall production, were the two most important fruits in the district. The quantities produced were comparable to Çemişgezek. Whereas apples occupied the third position in Çemişgezek, pears followed mulberries with 20% of overall production in Pertek. There were 25 tons of mulberries produced in Çemişgezek versus 95 in Pertek. This was especially important for silk production; however, the silkworm industry, which had been relatively advanced in Çemişgezek and Pertek in the past, had almost disappeared by 1943. This was because there were no facilities to treat the silk cocoons in the vicinity of production sites north of the Murat River.[560]

In Mazgirt, on the other hand, fruit production was much less developed in. It was limited to 29 tons of pears, 22 tons of mulberries, three tons of apples, three tons of walnuts and almonds, seven tons of zerdali apricots, two tons of plums and one ton of apricots. In Nazımiye, overall fruit production was similarly deficient. Twelve tons of pears, nine tons of sour cherries, four tons of walnuts, two tons of apples, and one ton of mulberries were collected there in 1941.[561]

560 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 271 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

561 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 264-266 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

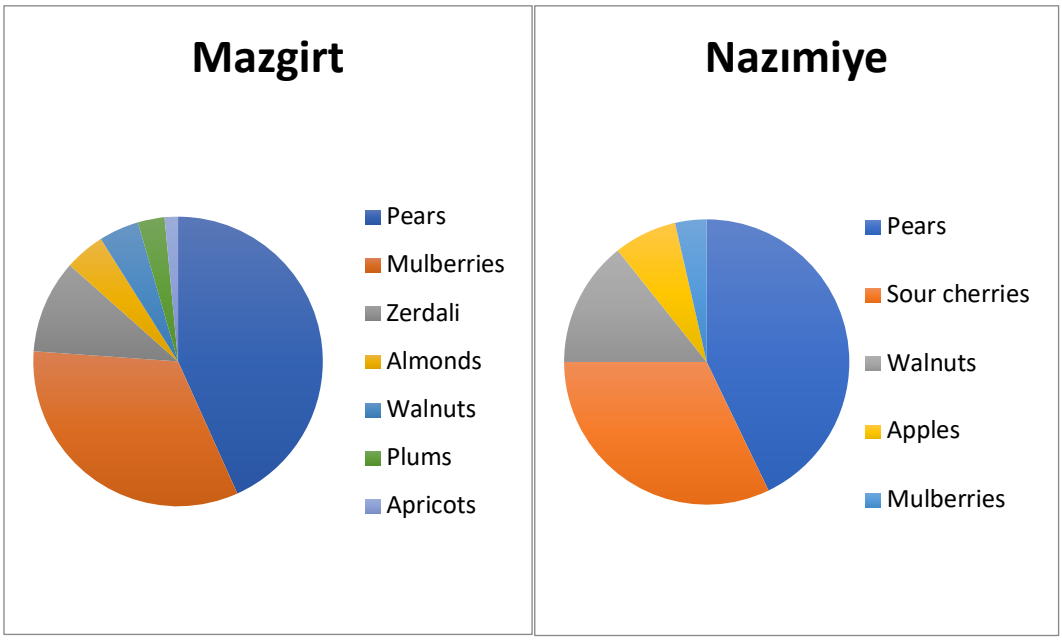


Chart 28 Fruit production of Mazgirt and Nazımiye, 1941. Source: NSSA

We know from the previous section concerning agricultural production that these two districts share features in common, which is also perceived in the record of their fruit production. Both districts' leading produce is pears; in fact, the percentage of total fruit production accounted for by pears in both districts was 43%. One huge difference was the place occupied by mulberries: whereas in Mazgirt they constituted 33% of total fruit production, in Nazımiye they comprised only 4%. In the latter district, the second ranking fruit was sour cherries, but at only 9 tons per annum, their production was hardly impressive. Fruit production was especially poor in terms of diversity and output in Inner Dersim. The only fruit tree in Ovacık was the walnut, and there were only around 500 trees, which produced about 6 tons of walnuts in 1941. Where the district differentiated from the rest of Tunceli was the cultivation since '38 of New World berries such as eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes.[562]

Meanwhile, fruit production in Pülümür was more varied but just as poor in terms of output: five tons of pears, four tons of plums, three tons of walnuts, two tons of zerdali apricots two tons of apricots and a ton of sour cherries.[563]

562 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 270 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

563 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 272-273 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

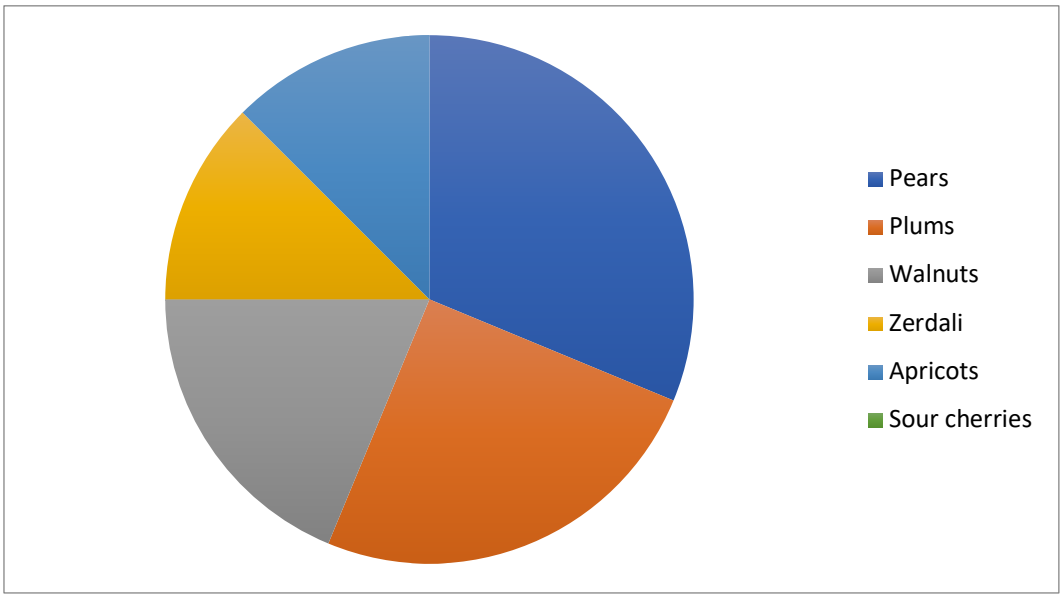


Chart 29 Fruit production of Pülümür, 1941. Source: NSSA

Again, pears were the most important fruit produced in Pülümür, as was the case in Mazgirt and Nazımiye, constituting 31% of overall production. Mulberries were absent, and plums and walnuts were relatively more important. Like Ovacık, Hozat was also poor in terms of fruits, with the significant exception of walnuts. In fact, Hozat had the highest walnut production in the province: 130 tons were collected in 1941. Necmeddin Sahir suggests that the name Hozat originated from the plural of the Turkic word *Koz,* which means walnut [Kozat->Hozat].

Most fruits and vegetables were imported to Hozat from Elazığ. Nevertheless, the district had apricot and plum trees as well as sour cherries to a lesser extent. But the annual production of these fruits was only a few tons each. Fruit production in Kalan was also very low. The mulberry and walnut trees in the district yielded just five tons of mulberries (450 trees) and only two tons of walnuts in 1941.[564]

In order to see the general picture of fruit production in Tunceli in 1941, consider a comparative chart of the most important fruits, namely almonds, mulberries, pears, and walnuts in the various districts.

564 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 261-263 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

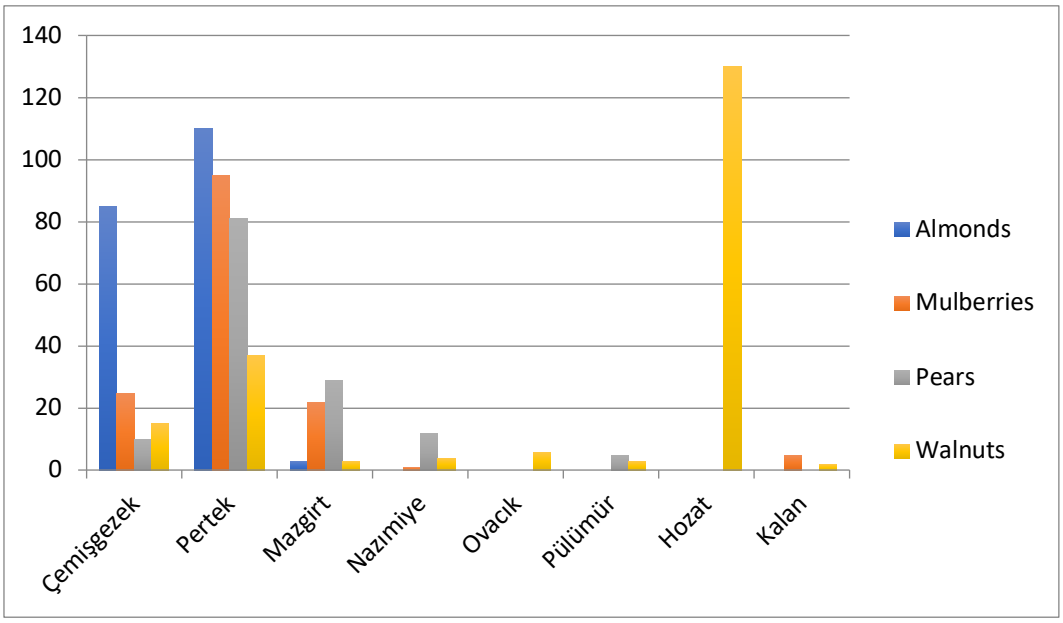


Chart 30 Fruit production of Tunceli, 1941. Source: NSSA

Çemişgezek, Pertek, Mazgirt, and Hozat are all dynamic districts in terms of fruit production, with Pertek being the most varied and Hozat the most specific in terms of produce. We also note that Nazımiye, Ovacık, Pülümür, and Kalan are the least productive districts in terms of fruit. Almonds and mulberries did not flourish north of the Murat Valley, and the only fruit produced in all the districts of the province was the humble walnut. Given that both grain and fruit production in Inner Dersim were rather poor, how did the people survive? What did they eat? Leaving animal products, to which we will return shortly, aside, the peasants of Dersim also collected and cooked wild weeds that grew on the mountain slopes.

Such local, edible plants included *kenger otu*, *keberez*, *pancar*, *höyük*, *banker*, *gülik*, *günebulut*, and *güldik*. The people would cook these, sometimes with bulgur, as was also the custom with *çiriş* an onion like plant of which both the root and the stems are good to be consumed. *Kenger otu* was especially vital in the Ovacık district. All along the north shores of the Munzur, between Zeranik and Pülür, were fields of *kenger*. Other than the benefit of this thorny "escape crop," which grew naturally in the rocky plains of Inner Dersim, for sustenance, it had the added benefit of being able to produce gum. There was a viable trade of this gum sold under the name *çengel/kenger sakızı*.[565]

565 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 272-273 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

In fact, edible weeds and forest fruits were important for the local food sovereignty. Agriculture in Inner Dersim, both in terms of grain and fruit production, was directly related neither to local sustenance nor to the development of the regional economy. Rather, it was encouraged by the central state in order to develop the national economy. Indeed, the purpose of the central state's nursery garden (*fidanlık*), was to produce saplings that were then attributed to certain farmers who would become the pioneers of "state-farming" in their localities. In 1940, for instance, the province of Bingöl distributed four thousand fruit saplings and promoted the development of vegetable gardening through the nursery. There were many applications for garden and vineyard developments, the latter of which was especially encouraged by the state. Vine stocks were imported from Lice and Diyarbakır. Another fruit production encouraged by the state in Bingöl was Kırkağaç melons, which yielded results, although its cultivation was hurt by flies, as well as the *Sam yeli* wind.[566]

Honey, of course, was another viable produce in the region, and apiculture was encouraged in 35 villages of Çemişgezek where around 1,800 hives produced nine tons of honey. In Pertek, there were 2,413 old and 8 new hives in 35 villages, which produced 8,600 kilograms of honey. In Mazgirt, nearly three tons of honey was produced from 650 old hives. In both Nazımiye and Ovacık, 1.5 tons of honey were produced. Hozat produced two tons of honey from 450 hives.[567]

566 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 57 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

567 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 270-272 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

4.3 Animal husbandry

> *Kurdistan is the main source for cattle, sheep, goats, and animal products in Turkey.*[568]
>
> Kendal Nezan

The above statement, written by the president and cofounder of the Kurdish Institute in Paris, states a clear historical reality: that the region at large was mostly occupied with animal husbandry. Dersim, along the northwestern frontier of this region, was no exception. Antranik lists of the variety of the local animal stocks around the turn of the twentieth century. There were cows, oxen, sheep, goats, buffalo (in Çarsancak), *kıvırcık* (a special goat with silky coat), horses, mules, and donkeys.[569]

A traveler from a distant land, François Balsan, traversed the region a couple of decades later just after the Dersim rebellion. His observations began with Elazığ, the westernmost point reachable by rail. The local veterinary director told the wool merchant that to find sheep he would need to go to Pertek, but the current state of public order would not allow him to go. Of course, the most valuable international commodity related to animal husbandry was wool. Hence, sheep represented, as did wheat for agriculture, a preferred species in the civilizational mission. It is noteworthy that the French traveler inquiring into the matter was directed to Pertek, a district generally better integrated into the national economy than the rest of the province. The fact that the central state allowed Balsan to travel through the region at all during the troubled rule of the single party in the region is proof of the economic importance of wool. This essential material for the textile industry was collected twice a year in the lowlands south of Dersim in Elazığ and Palu, first from late June to early July and second in August. However, it was only collected once a year in the highlands due to the shorter summertime.[570]

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568 Kendal, *"The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," A People Without A Country*, 42.

569 Antranik, *Dersim*, 92.

570 Balsan, *Les Surprises du Kurdistan*, 52 - 72.

The characteristics of Animal husbandry changed depending on geographical factors. While sheep were mainly raised in the lowlands, highlanders preferred animals such as goats. For them, wool was not the main reason for their possession of livestock. The variance in animal husbandry is clear in the distribution of livestock throughout the districts of Tunceli in the year 1943. These figures are analyzed in the same order as is done for agricultural production in the province.

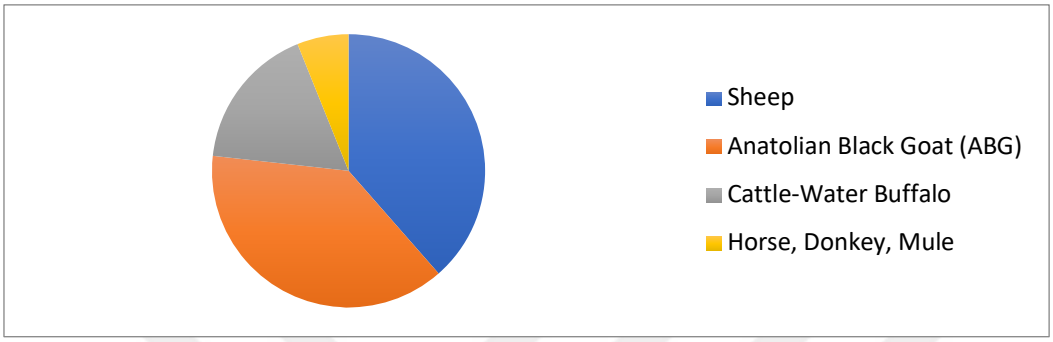


Chart 31 Livestock in Çemişgezek, 1943. Source: NSSA[571]

Sheep and goats were the most economically important animals in Çemişgezek. At 16,626 head, sheep were the most numerous accounting for 39% of the total livestock of the district. Anatolian Black goats followed closely with 16,484 head, comprising 38% of the total. In stark contrast, the cattle population, which included water buffalos, was a mere 17% of the total with 7,403 head. Meanwhile, working animals such as horses, donkeys, and mules numbered 2,629 head, which made up 6% of the total livestock population of the district. Sheep and goat populations were equally important, together comprising 77% of overall livestock, working animals and cattle combined did not even account for a quarter of the total.

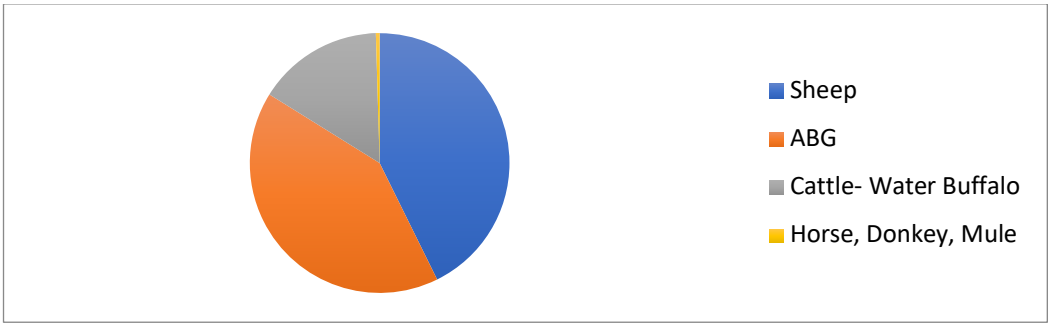


Chart 32 Livestock in Pertek, 1943. Source: NSSA[572]

571 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

572 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The picture was similar in Pertek, where sheep, at 19,930 head, made up the majority of animals in the district, constituting 43% of the total livestock. The 19,212 head of goats made up another 41%. On the other hand, cattle, at 7,316 head, constituted 16% of the total. What is markedly different in Pertek compared to Çemişgezek is the proportion of working animals; the 218 horses, donkeys, and mules do not comprise even one percent of the total in Pertek.

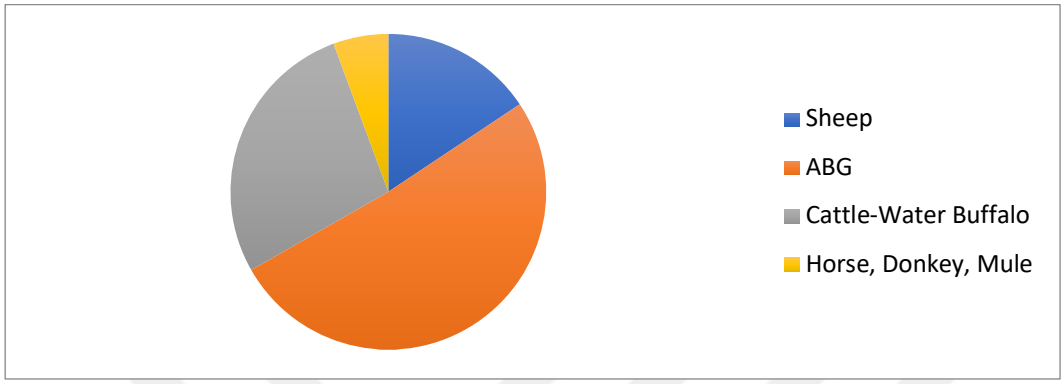


Chart 33 Livestock in Mazgirt, 1943. Source: NSSA[573]

Moving away from the lowlands just north of the Murat River, the balance favors goats. In Mazgirt, 20,653 goats constitute 51% of the overall animal population. Meanwhile, cattle and not sheep make up the second largest animal population in the district. Cattle and sheep, at 11,159 and 6,326 head each, respectively represent 28% and 16% of the total. We also notice that horses, donkeys, and mules in Mazgirt, numbering 2,281 head, are much more important than in Pertek.

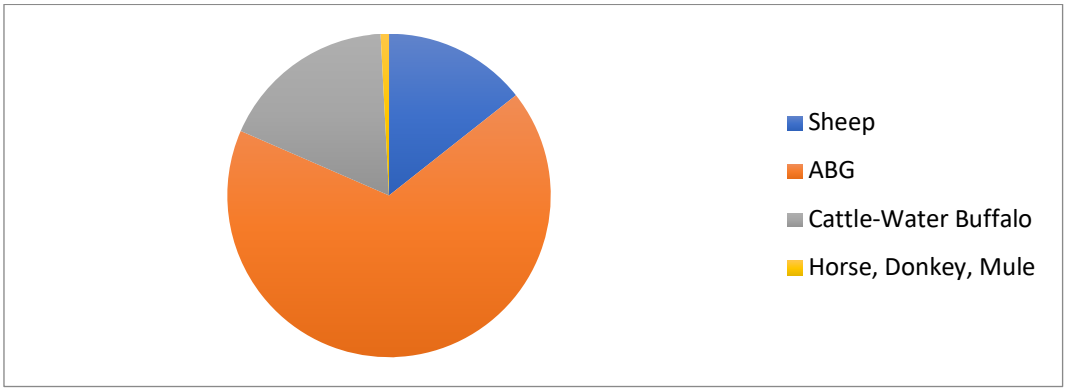


Chart 34 Livestock in Nazımiye, 1943. Source: NSSA[574]

The balance favors goats even more in Nazımiye, where the population of 16,858 of these animals made up 67% of the total livestock population,

573 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

574 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

followed again by cattle which numbered 4,428 and constituted 18% of the total. Yet again, the sheep population lags behind; 3,605 head made up 14% of the total. And similar to Pertek, the horse, donkey and mule populations were extremely low with a mere 209 head barely making up one percent of the total.

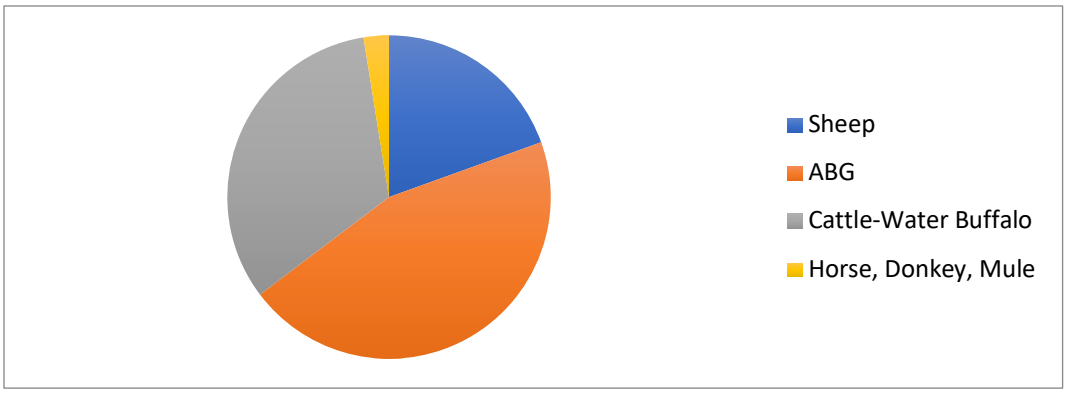


Chart 35 Livestock in Ovacık, 1943. Source: NSSA[575]

Ovacık, the district at the heart of Inner Dersim, was again in a poor position with the least livestock pf those accounted for so far. However, in terms of proportion, it is goat population primarily competes with that of cattle. The former, at 6,968 head, made up 45% of the total, and the latter, at 5,051 head, was 33% of the total. The sheep population was less than 20% and the horse, donkey and mule population just 3%, of the total.

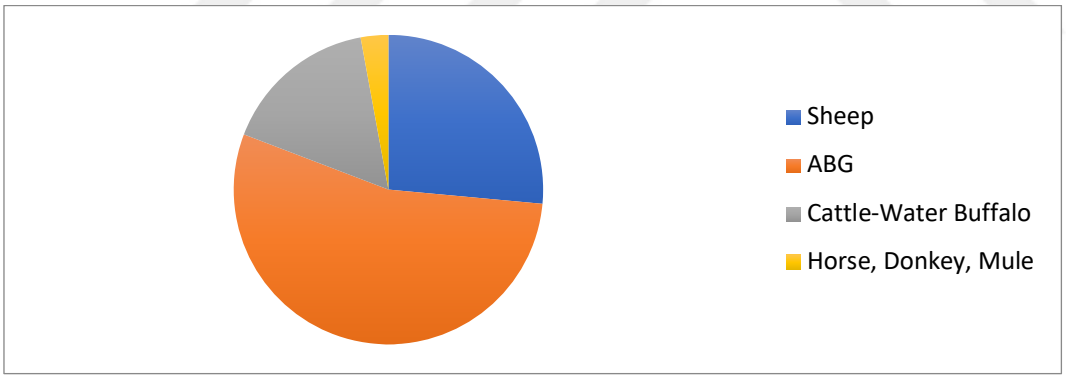


Chart 36 Livestock in Hozat, 1943. Source: NSSA[576]

The goat was champion in Hozat, as well, with a population of 10,574 making up 54% of the total livestock in the district. They were followed by sheep at half that number: 5,250 head, comprising 26% of the total. Cattle were less important at 3,174 head and just 16% of the total. Horses, donkeys, and mules numbered at 561 head and accounted for 3% of the total, similar to Ovacık.

575 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

576 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

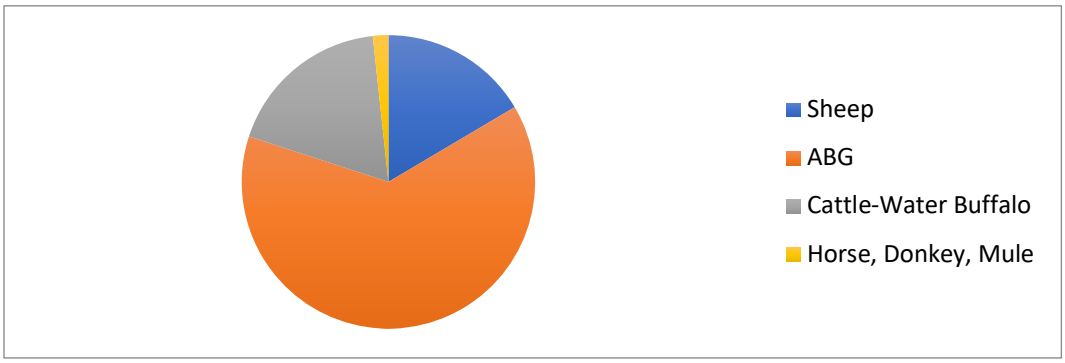


Chart 37 Livestock in Kalan, 1943. Source: NSSA[577]

Goat also ranked first in Kalan where they had the highest proportion listed so far. At 8,345 head, the goat population constituted 64% of livestock in the district overall. The second most important was the cattle population with 2,401 head making up 18% of the total, followed closely by the sheep population with 3,005 head making up 16% of the total. The horse, donkey, and mule population were as insignificant as in Pertek and Nazımiye with only 224 head.

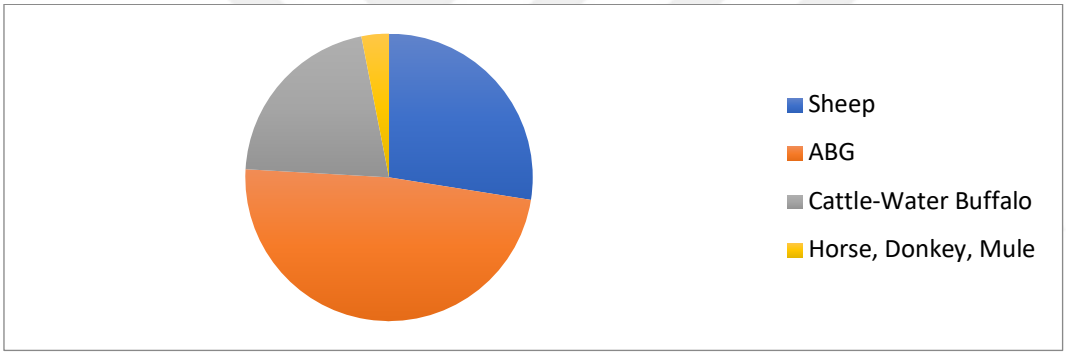


Chart 38 Livestock in Pülümür, 1943. Source: NSSA[578]

Even though this number is almost twice that for Kalan at 15,419 head, the goat population in Pülümür made up only 48% of all livestock in the district. The rest was composed of 8,763 sheep and 6,693 cattle at 28% and 21% of the total respectively. Meanwhile, the population of horses, donkeys, and mules in Pülümür totaled 984 head accounting for 3% of the total, the same percentage as in Ovacık and Hozat.

577 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

578 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

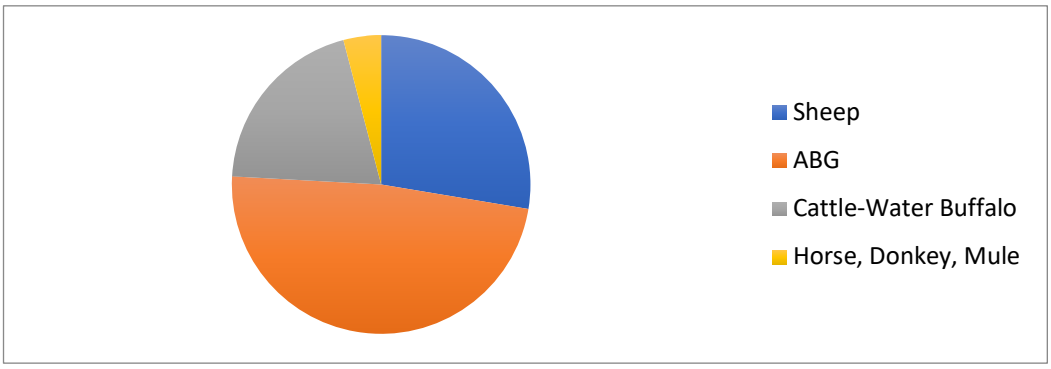


Chart 39 Livestock in Tunceli, 1943. Source: NSSA[579]

The total livestock population in Tunceli in 1943 amounted to 237,376 head, with 114,513 goats making up 48% of the total, followed by 65,572 sheep making up 28% and 47,625 head of cattle at 20%. Finally in Tunceli overall in 1943, there were 9,666 horses, donkeys, and mules which accounted for the province's animals.

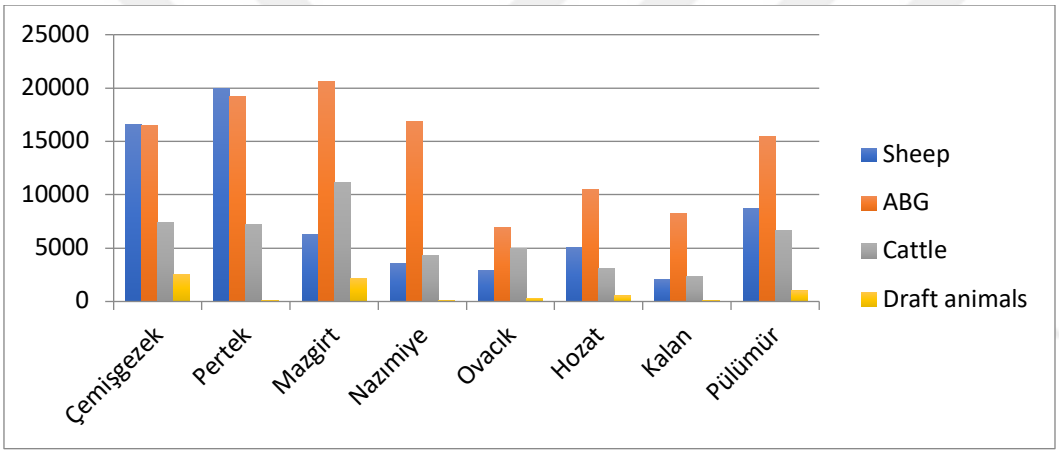


Chart 40 Livestock in Tunceli per district, 1943. Source: NSSA[580]

Çemişgezek and Pertek were similar, except for the fact that Çemişgezek had a high number of horses, donkeys, and mules – indeed, the highest in the province. Ovacık, Hozat, and Kalan resembled one another, notably in terms of the lower overall numbers of their animal populations. Regarding the most important animal species of the province, the Anatolian black goat, Mazgirt is the only district to exceed the twenty thousand mark, though Pertek, Nazımiye, Çemişgezek, and Pülümür all had more than fifteen thousand goats. In terms of sheep populations only Çemişgezek and Pertek surpassed the fifteen thousand mark and together accounted for more than 55% of the total sheep

579 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

580 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

population in Tunceli. Only Mazgirt exceeded the ten thousand mark for cattle, while Çemişgezek, Pertek, and Pülümür all exceeded the five thousand mark. The three districts shared features in common in terms of animal husbandry, as they did in agriculture. It is clear from the previous charts that the Anatolian black goat [*Capra aegagrus hircus*], also known as the hair goat - as in the Turkish appellation *kıl keçi*, although it was sometimes also called *kara keçi*, was the most important livestock in Tunceli. Bred for its hair, hide, meat, and milk, this generally dark, medium-haired Anatolian goat breed is believed to have originated in Syria. Its domestication is supposed to have taken place somewhere in the Zagros mountains during the Neolithic period.[581]

In six of the eight districts of Tunceli, the Anatolian black goat is the most numerous species of livestock, which shows its central role in the local economy. Products derived from goat herding (milk, butter, cheese, and yogurt) are also an essential element of the local diet.

The reason goats and not sheep constitute the majority in Dersim is related to the environment. Goats feed off the oak forests and pastures on the highlands. The former point is essential. Goats survive winter by digesting dried oak leaves and small branches; however, the Forest Law that came to effect at the beginning of 1937 forbade the entry of goats into oak forests. Most districts of Tunceli did not have the geography for sustaining large populations of sheep. However, where sheep strained to survive, goats thrived. They were much less picky eaters, and their ability to turn dried oak leaves into milk made them perfect for animal husbandry in the highlands. But the Forest Law made it difficult for goat herders. Mehmet Temiz, the village headman of Sap in Nazımiye, the district with the highest proportion of goats, summep up the situation succinctly, saying that due to the mountainous terrain, they could only keep a few sheep. If it were not for the oaks, they would not even be able to maintain goats. Permission should be granted to feed the goats in the oak forests, he argued. [582]

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581 Melinda Zeder & Brian Hesse, "The Initial Domestication of Goats (Capra hircus) in the Zagros Mountains 10,000 Years Ago," *Science* 287, Issue 5461 (24 Mar 2000): 2254-2257.

582 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 274-275 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943). *Buralarda koyun az besliyoruz, çünki topraklarımız dağlıktır. Meşeler olmazsa keçilerimizi de besleyemeyiz. Bunun için keçilerimizin meşeliklerde otlatılmasına izin verilmelidir.*

Most sheep raised in Çemişgezek district were raised by sedentary herders around Vaskovan (Akçapınar), a sub-district just north of the Murat River. Meanwhile, some villagers - notably those from, Sinsor, Nordik, Komer, and Doğan - practiced nomadic shepherding. They left their winter homes before the hot spell of summer and migrated to Ovacık, Kemaliye, and Kemah districts along the Havaçor valley. This practice meant that each year around 15,000 animals from Çemişgezek and 20,000 from Pertek migrated to the plains of Fikrik, Katıkasık, Gölbaşı, Koçbaşı, and Karagöl before making the journey back to the lowlands, where finding feed during winter was not an issue, in December or January. In Ovacık, almost every house had around 20 to 25 animals; however, feed was a major problem especially during the six months of winter. Animal feed was an important issue throughout Tunceli. Indeed, it had a direct influence on the varieties of livestock in Mazgirt and Nazımiye, districts in which the main economic activity was animal husbandry.[583]

This lack of animal feed caused many animals to die of starvation during the winter of 1942. It was no wonder that goat herders trespassed on and made illegal use of the oak forests to sustain their animals. Cattle were fed in the grasslands, but ownership of these unpopulated areas was heavily disputed. These disputes generally set nomadic populations against semi-sedentary villagers. For instance, Mahmut Taş from Kedek (Koyungölü) on the Pülür (Ovacık)-Zeranik (Yeşilyazı) road complained that the Şavak tribe was allowed by the government to use the plain in Kemah district. Citizen Ali Toprak from Ziyaret village also complained about a dispute concerning this plain that lay between Ovacık and Kemah, saying that though the meadow was only at a distance of an hour and a half from his village but seven hours from Kemah, the people of his village could not legally use it while the people of Kemah were allowed to graze their animals there. Farmer Hüseyin Güngörey from Munzur stated it clearly: *Our villages are very poor. This meadow is our prairie. Our cattle feed here. If we do not have the right to feed our cattle here, our village will disband. We have no other means of subsistence*.[584]

583 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 275 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

584 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 276 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

These statements do not give the impression of government support is of animal husbandry in the province of Tunceli. However, the state did care about the development of livestock. Sheep, water buffalo, and cattle were encouraged, and there were also efforts to organize transhumance to assure public order during the seasonal movements. For instance, the meat exporting Beritanlı tribe that took their herds to Bingöl each year, was often targeted by bandits, and the state took measures to prevent these attacks.[585]

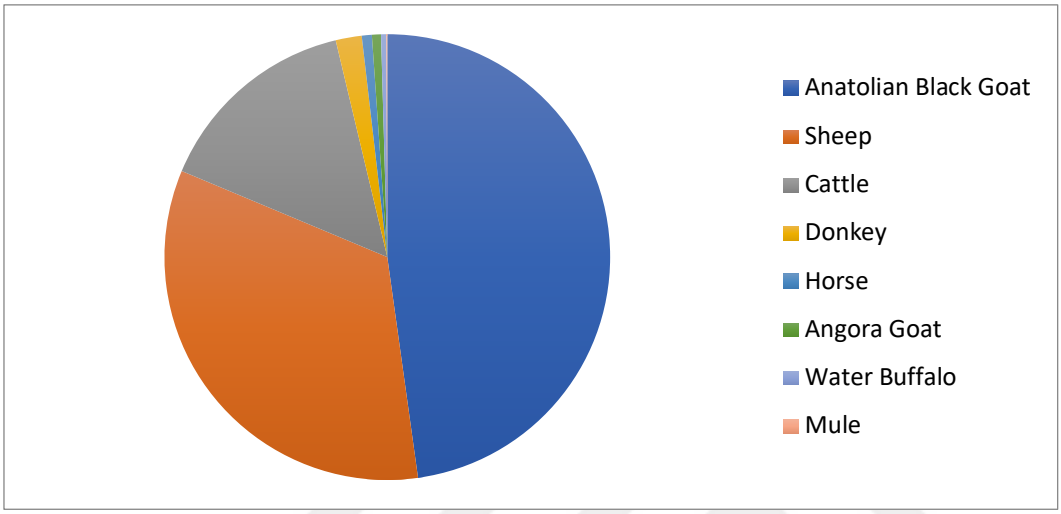


Chart 41 Livestock in Bingöl, 1942. Source: NSSA[586]

Chart 41 indicates that animal husbandry in Bingöl during internal colonial rule was broadly similar to that in Tunceli. With 155,168 head and accounted for 48% of the total, the Anatolian Goat was the dominant species in Bingöl, as well, followed by 108,800 head of sheep making up 34% of the total. Third place was again occupied by 48,600 head of cattle that made up 15% of the overall livestock population in the district. But reports of the central state indicate its discontent with this picture and that state agents actively sought ways to encourage shepherding instead of goat herding. Another species that the government actively encouraged was the horse. There was a stable in Çapakçur, and horses encouraged agricultural production due to their quality as work animals in the fields. In fact, the government even distributed alfalfa (*yonca*) in 1940, a plant widely used as horse feed.[587]

585 BCA, 72-471-12, 4. Um. Müf. bölgesine dair sunulan rapor, 15/9/1945.

586 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 155 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1942).

587 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 105 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine dair 1941). *keçileri azaltmak ve fazla koyun yetiştirmek için bu bölgede çalışılması.*

Bingöl, by comparison, was in a much better situation in terms of animal husbandry. Livestock was the foremost economic activity of locals. The official number of head of all livestock in the province was around 320,000, but this was not sufficient for a population of 72,000 (roughly four and a half head per capita). In fact, the whole of the province's livestock population equaled that of just a single district of Eskişehir, Sivrihisar. Locals sold their animals, butter, and wool to itinerant merchants from the surrounding provinces, called *çerçi*. Kiğı and Solhan were the two principal districts of intensive animal husbandry, comparable to Çemişgezek and Pertek in Tunceli. In fact, Kiğı and Solhan districts exported meat to surrounding regions. In Kiğı there were sheep of the *mor* and *karaman* species, as well as Anatolian black goat, cattle, and water buffalo. Transhumance in the region followed a path from the east to the south. In Solhan, the prominent Beritan tribe migrated thusly and grazed their animals in the plains of Bingöl. Severe winter conditions had a direct effect on livestock numbers as seen when the severe winter of 1938-39 affected the feed supply which resulted in diminishing numbers of livestock. The harsh winter of 1941-42 had also made feed scarcer than usual, which was reflected in the numbers of animals in 1942. The total livestock population in Bingöl decreased by a thousand head between 1941 and 1942, down from 326,000 to 325,000. However, the most pressing issue for Bingöl was concerned the symbiotic relation between goats and the forests. Here again, the people complained that their goats were forbidden by state authorities from grazing in the forests. [588]

588 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 16-17 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 60-62 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

4.4 Forestry

Apart from providing food and shelter to animals and humans, forests also provide one of the essential building blocks of civilization. As timber extraction is the principal economic use for forests, woodlands on our planet consequently change over millennia. There have been periods of intense deforestation, usually related to construction of ships and towns as well as clearing for agricultural purposes, followed by periods of reforestation due to either the inactivity of weaker states or due to the development of conscious silviculture on the part of stronger states. Forest preservation efforts by certain states over the past few centuries confound a direct correlation between civilization and deforestation; however, such a correlation can be clearly seen in the period preceding the eighteenth century.

The forests of Europe are a good historical case because of the vast clearing of forested lands during the Middle Ages. This deforestation, which principally had agricultural motives, was fueled by a growing population and a parallel increase in the number of cities and markets. It also had a spiritual undertone. This "was a sacred undertaking – a kind of Reconquista, reclaiming for God part of the terrain of paganism."[589] Following much persecution during its formative centuries, Christianity had become a state religion in Europe and ruled supreme over men and nature. There was no tolerance for deviance from the path of God, and the "forest was stained with pagan sensuality"; the people viewed it as "alive with the sprites, demons, and 'wild men of the woods'." It was during the Middle Ages that "trees hallowed by unenlightened generations fell to pious axe-strokes." This "domestication of little-exploited and under-exploited environments" was part of the internal colonization in medieval Europe. The "Great Deforestation" of Europe even gave birth to Gothic architecture, whose economical use of wood "was a style adapted to shrinking forests."[590] The Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Age of Enlightenment, and Industrialization were all products of a Western civilization that consumed forests and thus colonized pagan land with religious zeal.

589 Fernandez-Armesto & Muldoon, *Internal Coloniziation in Medieval Europe*, XIV.

590 Fernandez-Armesto & Muldoon, *Internal Coloniziation in Medieval Europe*, XIV.

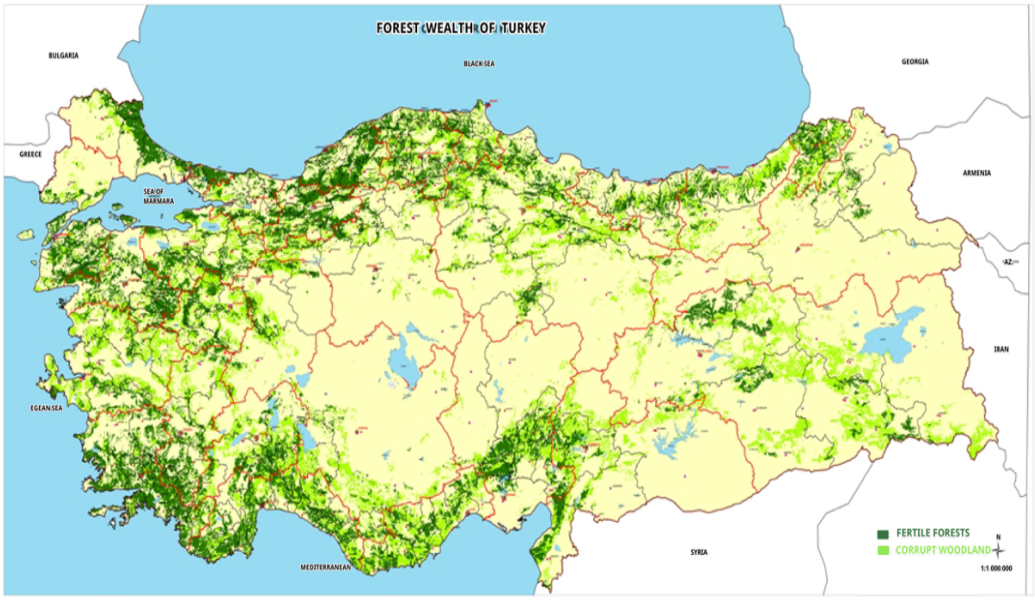
The Ottoman state had a somewhat different approach towards forests. Leaving construction aside, it is unclear that much forestland was cleared for agricultural purposes during the empire. Given the poor state of urban development under imperial rule and the stagnant population, the Ottomans did not feel the need to clear forests.

The question of whether there was a similar correlation between forests and pagan beliefs in the minds of Ottoman statesmen is difficult to answer, but there was definitely a difference of opinion about forests between the two main Muslim sects in the Empire. Urban Sunnis exploited the forest for its timber, and the wealthy went there for hunting trips. On the other hand, centuries old plane trees (*çınar*), the symbol of the empire, were planted along the Büyükdere-Bahçeköyü road from the Bosphorus to Belgrade Forest to indicate the city's special relation to the forest. Rural Alevis had a more spiritual relationship to the forest and its animals, one of reverence and respect rather than exploitation and management. Perhaps this dichotomy explains why deforestation in Ottoman Anatolia was less intense than in medieval Europe. The principal difference between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, in the modern period, was that after vast clearing of land, Western states began to develop a defined forest policy and undertook silviculture.

One tree was particularly promoted for cultivation above others: *Quercus*, the sacred tree of Jupiter during Roman times, was also appreciated by modern empire builders. Britain and France were both well aware of the economic importance of the oak tree early on in the modern era. These countries had specific silviculture policies aimed to increase both the quantity and quality of their oak forests. Following the example set by the Minister of State Colbert under Louis XIV, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, Britain experienced "a frenzy of oak planting ... in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, … the reason for this was simple Britain had the world's most powerful navy and nearly all of her ships were made of oak," such as the "HMS Victory famous for defeating the French fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar ... product of nearly six thousand oak trees."[591]

591 BBC, *Oak Tree*, "Nature's Greatest Survivor," presented by Dr. George McGavin. (13:35-13:40), (13:52-14:00), (14:04-14:16).

The oak tree, the bent branches and innate resistance of which were ideal for shipbuilding, allowed for transoceanic transportation even in the face of the strongest of Atlantic storms. Hence, imperial Western European states involved in reforestation were not considering twenty-first century environmental concerns but clear, imperialistic goals. Indeed, European colonization was rendered possible by the oak. It is only natural that the Republic of Turkey in its quest for Westernization, would become conscious of the importance of this tree. In fact, one perceives this while walking from the Ankara train station to the Grand National Assembly, where oak trees planted on either side of Cumhuriyet Avenue. While the plane tree was the symbol of the empire, the oak tree became the symbol of the Republic.



Map 23 Forest Wealth of Turkey. Source: Forest Ministry

Map 23 shows Turkey's wealth in terms of forests in the early 2010s; dark green indicates fertile forests while the lighter shade shows crooked woodlands. This distinction, adopted from the discourse of current government forest policy, is mainly oriented towards economic exploitation. The country is currently undergoing regional deforestations near great cities due under the influence of neoliberal "mega-projects," even as total forested area is allegedly increasing. This map shows that the republic has dense forests on its northern, western, and southern shores, while the interior, especially the central, eastern, and southeastern parts of the country, are devoid of forests with the notable exception of the Greater Dersim region.

Most of the mountains in Dersim are covered by forests, and most of the trees in these forests are oaks. This is hardly surprising since oak trees constitute 26,34% of all forests in Turkey. The forests of Dersim also contain a varied natural wealth of consumable products such as walnuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, almonds, and various hawthorn species (*sakızlı alıç, kırmızı alıç, sulu alıç*) which have a special significance in the Alevi faith. Another tree, the valonia oak (*palamut meşesi*), the acorn of which is suitable for human consumption, produces a honey-like substance every two summers called *kudret helvası*. The galls of this tree were also used in ink production. Locals used the fruit of certain trees as medicine. For instance, the fruit of the turpentine tree [*pistacia terebinthus*] (*menengiç*), called *çedene*, was used as a balm. Other fruit trees included rosehip, silverberry, cornelian cherry, jujube, sour cherry, wild cherry, wild pear, plum, apple, mulberry, juniper, elderberry, blackberry, and hackberry. Bears inhabited these forests. One could also find plane trees (*çınar*), wild apple and pear trees (*ahlat*), ashes (*dişbudak*), aspens (*kavak*), European aspens (*titrek kavak*), maples (*akçaağaç*), and junipers (*ardıç*) as well as wild roses, salt cedars (*ılgın*), oleanders (*zakkum*), spartiums (*katırtırnağı*), and sumac trees. There were also mastic trees in Nazımiye and pines in Ovacık. Willow trees were to be found not only near the source of the Munzur River but also along the Murat River from Bingöl to Elazığ. During the early thirties, the main items extracted from the region's forestry were galls for ink, tragacanth (*kitre*) gum, edible Asphodelus (*çiriş*) plant, and orchis (*salep*) used in a traditional drink. The internal colonization of Dersim also meant the colonization of these forests. Dersim's oaks, were integral to the republic's railroad policy because of their use as sleepers and their use in the construction of stations. The oak is a hardy tree, and so are the people who inhabit its woodlands. The oak resists without plying, and is well rooted, like a warrior who does not budge.[592]

592 BCA, 69-457-15, 1. Um. Müf bölgesindeki illerin 1932 yılı zirai raporu; Antranik, *Dersim*, 89-90; Balsan, *Les surprises du Kurdistan*, 67; OGM, *Türkiye Orman Varlığı* (2015), 1-36; NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 280 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943); and Ernst Rudolf Zürcher author of *Les arbres entre visible et invisible*, 2016; "Le chêne résiste sans pilier, il est bien enraciné, comme le guerrier qui ne plie pas."

On the eighth of February 1937, roughly a month and a half before the events that precipitated the '37 Operation, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey enacted the Forest Law (No. 3116). Before this law, the forests, at least those of Dersim, belonged to no one; hence, anyone could make use of them. But in this law, the state claimed exclusive ownership of all forests in Turkey. This coercive measure threatened the subsistence of the people of Dersim and left them with no choice but to rebel. An analysis of this law further explains its implications.[593]

The first article defined the forest as any ensemble of trees and shrubbery that yielded any type of forest product, and article two stipulated that any woodland not defined as a forest in the first article could be treated as such through the decision of the cabinet council. Even though article three divided forests into four categories - state, common, endowed, and private forests -, in reality the government had absolute legal control over all forestlands.

In fact, article four declared that all forests owned by anyone other than the state would be placed under the control of the state through this law, and that this control would be exercised in the name of the state by the forestry administration. State forests proper would be delineated through the decisions of commissions constituted of one forestry officer, one legal expert, and two locally elected experts, and presided over by a forest engineer. In forbidden zones, a representative of the Ministry of National Defense would be added to these commissions.

The law projected that the totality of the country's forested territory, some 250 thousand hectares, would be delineated by these commissions within five years. Decisions in these commissions were based on an absolute majority, and in case of an impasse, the president's vote would be definitive. This meant that in reality, the elected local experts had little agency in the decision-making process concerning the fate of the forests.

Article 15 stated that villages, hamlets, and fields in or near forests or situated in places where forests would be grown were to be emptied and its

593 *Resmî Gazete* (18 February 1937), no.3537.

inhabitants dispossessed and displaced. Before the military operations, the people of Dersim lived both in and around forests, but they were deported following the operations. Dispossession is no exaggeration – the people were not legally promised any real estate in return. However, for those lucky enough not to be displaced, Article 18 specified certain advantages for villages within five-kilometer of a forest.

The new law also stipulated that nearly every citizen would have to pay certain fees with regard to forest products; indeed, Article 20 of the law actually recognizes a traditional forest economy. Those who traditionally gathered forest products for commercial purposes would be allowed to exploit the forest at certain time periods with the obligation of paying the tariff. Yet some products, such as *salep*, mushrooms, *kitre*, strawberries, *kocayemiş*, and hawthorn as well as various fruits and wild weeds were exempt from any charge.[594]

The protection of forests was another issue to which the law referred in Article 23. All forest activities were subject to the permission of the forestry administration. This was especially important because a forest officer could use this article to arrest a goat herder for gathering dried oak branches and leaves for his animals. In fact, the state was aware of this symbiotic tradition between animal husbandry and forests.

Article 25 reads that all construction, cattleguards, and the keeping of animals in forests, as well as the clearing of forestland for fields, were forbidden. Goats were especially singled out in Article 41 of the legal text, which stipulated that goats and camels were specifically forbidden from making use of forest clearings. Those responsible for upholding the law in forests were armed forestry officers.

In brief, the Forest Law of 1937 legally dispossessed people who had a substantial, intimate relationship to their local forests, put armed outsiders in charge of a part of nature that previously belonged to no one in particular, and implement the will of people who had never walked among its trees.

594 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 283 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

At the end of 1942, one engineer and three assistant engineers were appointed to take care of the forest affairs of the province. Two of these assistants left to fulfill their military obligations in 1943, so there was just one forest engineer and one assistant for 350,000 hectares of forest. Furthermore, their office was not even in the province but in Elazığ. Of the eight districts, only Çemişgezek, Kalan, and Pülür had land-surveying officers; a fourth officer in Kalan was sent to prison for extortion. The limited personnel were far from sufficient to manage the substantial area under their jurisdiction. The forest administration divided the province into four zones consisting of Pülümür-Nazımiye, Kalan-Mazgirt, Pertek-Hozat and Ovacık-Çemişgezek.[595]

The deputy of Tunceli expressed his qualms regarding the government's inability to fully enforce the Forestry Law. Nonetheless, he also worried about the precarious situation of locals who were now forbidden even from collecting the wood necessary for surviving the harsh winter.

In Çemişgezek district, for instance, only a few villages were allowed to use the *Hadişar* oak forest because they were within a five-kilometer radius. The more than two thousand townsfolk of Çemişgezek center were left without wood to burn; they had to pay for wood, though most of had no money. Locals therefore resorted to burning manure as well as dried fruit trees, willow or poplar branches, or even debris left behind by floods. Those who had no recourse to any of these resorted to smuggling wood from emptied zones, and many were penalized. Furthermore, 65 illegally grazing animals were seized in 1942. Although not specified, a considerable proportion of these can be assumed to have been goats, which means that herdsmen risked being penalized rather than abandoning their tradition of letting animals graze on the forest canopy. [596]

In fact, locals did not respect the law at all. In Kalan, trees on the slopes of the Munzur and Harçik valleys were raided daily, while in Nazımiye the branches and leaves of the trees were cut and collected. In these cases, the material was not used for heating but as feed for goats.

595 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 280 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

596 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 281 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The dense forests of Pülümür district were not yet fully analyzed by the forestry administration in 1943. The Dujik forest in the Eşil sub-district was controlled by the government and was being utilized for timber extraction. The forests of Tunceli were of prime importance for the surrounding arid provinces of Erzurum, Erzincan, and Elazığ. The timber extraction from Pülümür was considerable due to the ease of transportation offered by the Erzurum railroad. However, the townsfolk of Pülümür, just eight hours from the Dujik forest, were not permitted to use its timber. As a result, the oak forests immediately surrounding the district center were depleted for firewood.[597]

This extraction of timber in accordance with a national agenda and the dispossession of the local people from their wood sources is a prime example of internal colonization.

The ease of transporting timber was key to the extraction of this primary resource. The logistics of forestry operations in the province were planned and managed from Kalan, the future provincial capital. Timber suitable for cartwheels, agricultural tools, sleepers used in railroad construction, and poles for telephone and telegram lines were planned to be transported south on the Munzur and Harçik rivers, but it is uncertain if the transportation of logs on these waterways was actually practiced. However, *meşe traversler* - the horizontal wooden beam sleepers used in railroad construction – were the most important due to the fact that timber extraction from the oak forests of Dersim was mainly linked to the republic's railroad policy. The Mutu-Pülümür-Kalan-Pertek-Elazığ main road, linking the northern and southern railroads, was of paramount importance in this respect, but how much timber was actually extracted? The estimated timber production per annum in the forests of Dersim was between fifteen and twenty thousand tons destined for surrounding provinces and to provide firewood for locals. [598]

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597 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 282 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

598 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 279-283 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943). *kerestelik ağaçlarla araba tekerleğine ve ziraat aletlerine elverişli ufak çaplarda kerestelerin ve demiryollarında kullanılmak üzere meşe traverslerile telgraf ve telefon direklerinin adı geçen sular* [Munzur, Harçik] *ve şoselerle kuzey ve güney istikametlerine kolaylıkla gönderilmesi mümkün görülmekte*[dir].

In the 1940s, 350,000 hectares corresponding to 45% of the province were covered in forests, while contemporary data suggestions that 206,740 hectares, or 27,28% of the province, is forested. In almost eighty years, the forests of Tunceli have diminished by nearly twenty percent. To understand where the losses occurred, there is one constant throughout the decades: most of the forests have flourished in the north and west of the province. Çemişgezek has remained the poorest district in terms of forests, and 11,200 hectares of forests were lost in neighboring Hozat. Kalan, the district with the most forest wealth in the province, lost almost as much, but the greatest loss can be observed in Nazımiye where almost twenty thousand hectares have perished over the last eighty years. Forestland that used to cover 55,500 hectares of Pülümür, had diminished to 37,463 hectares. Ovacık is the only district of the province to have gained forestland, increasing from 30,700 hectares to 47,158 hectares. This can be explained partly by the still difficult logistics as well as the fact that Inner Dersim had the most villages emptied and people displaced over the decades.[599]

A report of the Fourth Inspectorate from autumn 1945 indicates that due to the fact that the related staff had only started work that year, the Forest Law had been executed poorly so far. In the eight years following the promulgation of the law, little been accomplished. Affairs were disrupted by extraordinary military operations, and it is difficult to imagine forest officers strolling around during World War II when even forest officers were called to arms. The forest nursery in Elazığ proves the centrality of the city of Elazığ in all aspects of the Turkish civilizing mission.[600]

599 https://elazigobm.ogm.gov.tr/TunceliOIM/Lists/Orman%20Varl/AllItems.aspx, (accessed January 22, 2018) ; and NSSA (1), Doğu Sorunu, 278-279 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

600 BCA, 72-471-12, 4. Um. Müf. bölgesindeki vaziyete dair rapor. 15/9/1945. *Şimdiye kadar bakımsızlık ve sahipsizlik yüzünden Ormanlarımız tahribe maruz idi. Bu yıl teşkilat kadroları kabul edilmiş ve memurlar işe başlamıştır. ... Elazığdaki Orman fidanlığı çok muntazam bir surette genişlemekte ve çalışmaktadır.*

This concept of the civilizing mission is more clearly observed in the of the lowlands of Bingöl. In Çapakçur and other district centers of the province, nursery gardens had already been established by 1939. While this awoke interest throughout the province, saplings, and vines suffered from harsh winter conditions. Nurseries were important because most districts of the province, especially Kiğı, produced fruit, and the government was encouraging the growth of fruit trees like walnuts that already existed in the region. Walnut silviculture was encouraged not only for fruit but also for quality timber. The forests of Bingöl were limited to the mountains which were dense with short oaks. There were no proper forests in the lowlands around Çapakçur, in Kiğı, or around Karlıova. The Hovit forest in Solhan contained wild poplars (*akkavak*) in addition to oaks. In Genç, the only forest was in the Silvan sub-district. Two years after the promulgation of the Forest Law, a local told the deputy of Bingöl that animals needed to feed in the forests. Şerif Yalaman, from the Ardoşin sub-district also communicated this to Necmeddin Sahir, saying that the animals needed to enter the forests to eat during the long winter season and that they suffered because of its prohibition.[601]

On the subject of mineral wealth, the region at large has a "sub-soil … rich in a variety of minerals, such as phosphates, lignite, copper, iron and chrome, [as well as] some oil." In fact, "the chrome deposits mined at Maden, halfway between Diyarbekir and Elazig, are amongst the world's largest [, and with an] output of 915,000 tons in 1967 ... Turkey [was] the world's second largest producer of this mineral after the USSR."[602] Dersim, in specific, was known to be rich in mineral wealth. Antranik, at the turn of the twentieth century, mentions gold, nitrate, salt, and petroleum (naphtha and gasoil). There was a gold mine found about fifty feet south of the Havlor Surp Garabed monastery near Dujik-Baba Mountain that had supposedly been exploited even in Roman times. Nitrate was plentiful in the region, which allowed Dersimis to essentially produce their own gunpowder. Petroleum was found in Tercan region and could be seen along the rivers towards Erzincan passing through Mamahatun. But the most important mineral for the locals was salt. Dersim

601 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 17-18 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

602 Antranik, *Dersim*, 56-57.

had six salt mines: Kemir *Tuzlası*, Ağa *Tuzlası*, Pülümür *Tuzlası*, Vartenig *Tuzlası*, Mazgirt *Tuzlası*, and *Tuzla Deresi*. Kemir, close to Kemah, had a red colored salt. It was an established mine that exported salt to various neighboring regions. The Tuzla River ran by five different salt mines, and the whole valley was a giant salt mine under the control of the Turkish government at the turn of the twentieth century. The state, which had been increasingly penetrating Dersim since the late nineteenth century, was of course as interested in the mineral wealth of the region as it was in timber potential. Naturally, the state progressively seized the salt mines due to the mineral's importance for the economy, as herbivorous pack animals need vast quantities of salt for digestive purposes. The Mazgirt salt mines were established by the government in the early 1890s. The government created pools near the salt-water source, began drying out and merchandising the white salt, and made it illegal for the local population to extract salt from the source without the payment of taxes. Furthermore, a two-story tall tavern with ten rooms was constructed nearby for government functionaries.[603]

The state was also eyeing other mineral extraction possibilities in the region. It was known that there was lignite coal in Çemişgezek and that Nazımiye's Hakis sub-district had silver-lead which was thought to be part of a vein that followed the Harçik River. It was surmised that copper may also have existed in the proximity. Pülümür district had an interesting geological structure with deep, narrow valleys, and caves, formed of clay and limestone as well as sodium chlorite layers. The Bağırpaşa-Bağırbaba Mountain was mineral rich, with chrome found on its western slopes. There was also diatomite to the south of Kale Mountain. The potential mining of diatomite was especially valuable as in 1943 Turkey was dependent on Germany, Italy, France, Great Britain and the United States for the importing of this mineral.[604]

603 Antranik, *Dersim*, 92-96; and Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 43.

604 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 288 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

4.5 Commerce

As the region at large became more integrated into the world economy in the latter part of the nineteenth century, its trade with the outside world decupled. In fact, the volume of foreign trade in the region tripled preceding the Great War, between 1900 and 1913. This was also a period of urban development, which necessitated vast amounts of timber. In fact, forest products were the region's most important export as far back as 1863, when five million rubles worth of forest products were exported. The commercial importance of Dersim, as the timber reserve of the region at large, increased. Aside from timber, the other chief exports from the region to world markets were wool, leather, beef, walnuts, gum, cotton, rugs, and eggs. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the twentieth century, twenty million eggs were being exported through the Samsun port every year. There was also an important commerce with Russia based on animal products such as butter, leather, and wool estimated at more than six hundred thousand rials.[605]

In Peri (Çarsancak), Antranik joined a caravan of forty to fifty mules to Harput, which suggests that substantial trade was conducted between Peri and Harput. The absence of a bridge over the Peri River made the voyage difficult, but Armenian villagers used the river for fishing, navigated it downstream to the Murat [*Aradzani*] River for trade with Keban-Maden, followed the Euphrates for trade with Malatya following the Euphrates and even with Mosul and other cities further south in Iraq. This river trade included wheat, barley, cotton, dried mulberries, wine, raisins, and wood. In exchange for these exports, they imported dates and mutton from Mesopotamia. But having sailed downstream on the current of the Tigris, their return was necessarily by land. The crossing of the Peri River, unlike that of the Murat River, was accomplished by immersing oneself in the waters. On the latter river there were boats called death cradles (*ecel beşiği*), so-called because they were sometimes lost to the current and crashed on the rocks.[606]

605 Qasımlo, *Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, 130-131. Also see A.G. Akopov, *K Voprosu O Natsional'noi Konsolidatsii Kurdov* (Moscow, 1952), 251-252.

606 Antranik, *Dersim*, 31-34.

Commerce in animal products was a natural fit for the region's social geography as "most of the mountain villages and semi-nomadic (or semi-sedentary) tribes barter[ed] their animal products such as wool, goat's hair, butter and cheese for finished products such as sugar, tea, jewelry, toys etc. or for certain fruits and vegetables."[607] Itinerant traders who connected the plains with city markets assured this trade. In the most important commercial hubs of the region, Diyarbakır and Erzurum, affluent merchants often dealt directly with neighboring states such as Russia and Iran. But what defined commerce in the region at large more than anything else was its relationship with the national economy of Turkey. Just as European capitals extracted raw materials from their colonies and exported finished goods to protected markets without competition from foreign powers, "the flow of trade between Kurdistan and Turkey [was], on the whole, quite in keeping with metropole-colony relations in general."[608]

In 1932 the First Inspectorate-General had enumerated the products that were of commercial interest in the greater Dersim region. There were agricultural goods such as wheat, millet, rye, corn, rice, poppy seeds, chickpeas, lentils, bulgur, and flour, as well as fruits like grapes, raisins, dried apricots, walnuts, fruit leathers, almonds, *zerdali* pits, and bitter almonds. Considering the importance of animal husbandry and game-hunting in the region, it is unsurprising that the report also mentioned hides, various raw leathers, intestines, and suet as viable commercial products of the time. Live sheep, goats, and cattle as well as products such as clarified butter, honey, beeswax, and eggs were also important trade goods. The region also produced goods related to the textile industry such as cotton, wool, fleece, goat hair, silkworm larvae and cocoons, silk *mantin* and *puşi*, superior silk (*top kamçı başı*), unrefined hemp, and rope. Among the region's exports were forest products such as galls, timber, and tragacanth gum. Even scrap copper was mentioned as an export item. Half of all exports from Dersim were destined for the national market while the rest were exported to neighboring countries.[609]

607 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 44.

608 Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire," *A People Without A Country*, 45.

609 BCA, 69-457-15, 1. Um. Müf. bölgesindeki illerin 1932 yılı raporu.

Although the list of export items was significant, Dersim was hardly self-sufficient or independent of the rest of the country. Among the items imported into the region were textile goods such as drapery, baize and serge fabric, fine rope and industrial hemp, thread, sacks and gunnysacks, buffalo leather, stout and refined leather, refined items such as soap, sugar, coffee, and tea, hardware, petty goods and furniture, wooden bolts, glass, kerosene, gasoil, ammonium chloride, and metal goods such as tin, tinplate, raw copper, iron shovels, horseshoes, iron nails, iron furnace plates, iron panels and girders, lead, and zinc. Nearly half of all imports originated from the important Mediterranean port of Mersin or from the industrial hub of Istanbul, while the rest came from French-mandated Syria. These goods were transported over two main trade routes going in and out of Dersim "one [was] inland and [went] through Elazığ, and the other [was] maritime trade [went] through the Black Sea."[610] The commercial picture presented in the 1932 report of the First Inspectorate-General suggests that Dersim was already dependent on the national economy prior to the start of military operations and the beginning of internal colonization. Commercial colonization preceded direct rule.

Once greater control was exercised over Inner Dersim, commerce between its districts became more manageable due to the decrease in banditry resulting from mass disarmament during the military operations. For instance, the agriculturally advanced district of Çemişgezek started to export its surplus produce to the adjacent districts of Ovacık and Hozat as well as to Kemaliye in Erzincan and Arapkir in Malatya. However, the commerce of the district was still being managed from Elazığ in 1943. This meant that the products from Çemişgezek district center and the Germili (Gedikler) and Vaskovan (Akçapınar) sub-districts were collected by the Fourth Inspectorate-General in the city of Elazığ before being forwarded to the previously mentioned localities in Erzincan and Malatya. There was an advanced textile industry in the historically Armenian sub-district of Başvartanik, which had direct commercial relations with Kemaliye and Arapkir. These two sub-districts of neighboring provinces were the essential trading spots for local merchants who purchased

610 BCA, 69-457-15, 1. Um. Müf bölgesindeki illerin 1932 yılı raporu; Balsan, *Les Surprises du Kurdistan*, 72.

textiles, kerchiefs, and shoes. Another item imported to Çemişgezek was rice from the Ağın sub-district of Elazığ province. In fact, trade with the neighboring Arapkir and Ağın districts was especially important for Germili, while Başvartanik was mostly dependent on trade with the Kuruçay and Ilıç sub-districts of Erzincan. The main agricultural export items from Çemişgezek were dried mulberries, fresh cheese, and butter. Dairy production was in the hands of nomadic villagers who would lead their herds to the Munzur mountains to the north. Naturally the most important markets for their products were districts in close proximity such as Ovacık, Kemah, and Kemaliye. In fact, dairy trade was so important that there were periodic butter shortages in Çemişgezek.[611]

Trade in Çemişgezek in 1943 fits with the general trend characterized by the export of raw materials, in this case mostly dietary products, namely dairy, and the import of finished goods, mostly finished textiles and leather goods, such as drapes and shoes. Hozat produced dried mulberries, walnuts, and timber, as well as butter and cheese, which were sent to Elazığ and destined for the national market. The picture in Kalan in 1943 was similar, but it was hoped that commercial relations with Erzurum and Erzincan provinces to the north would flourish upon the completion of the main Elazığ-Pertek-Kalan-Pülümür-Mutu road for motor vehicles. Although there was a mountain trade route accessible for mules that connected Mazgirt to Nazımiye and Pülümür to the north, this was disregarded. Not Erzincan but Elazığ was the main market used for commercial extraction from the region. Mazgirt provided most of the wheat and barley needs for the districts of Nazımiye, Kalan, Pertek, and Palu. The other main product of Mazgirt sold at the Elazığ market was between 25 to 30 tons of butter each year. This level of production was achieved despite primitive butter making techniques. On the other hand, cheese production was mostly for local consumption with no commercial value. Wheat and butter, the most basic ingredients of sustenance for the people, were being exported out of the region at a time when food shortages were not uncommon.[612]

611 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 289-290 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

612 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 290 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Butter was sold in the Elazığ market, grains such as wheat were purchased from Muhundu (Darıkent), and salt was mined in Pülümür. While salt was sometimes purchased in exchange for money, bartering and particularly exchanging walnuts for salt was not an uncommon practice. Ovacık and Pertek were both dependent on Elazığ in terms of commercial relations. Pülümür, the northernmost district, imported subsistence goods such as grains from Kiğı in Bingöl and Tercan and Cencige in Erzincan while exporting a limited amount of butter. The future of the district's commercial activities depended on the mining of chrome and lignite as well as on the exploitation of forests.[613]

Dersim was not economically advanced, and the flow of commerce was not sufficient for regional development. Raw materials were transformed into finished goods outside the province, and this needed to be changed. The development of the region's economy depended on three sectors: forestry, mining, and the textile industry. Çemişgezek was the most advanced in the last respect, with fifteen new weaving looms and 350 well looms (*kuyu tezgahı*) in 1943. There had been notable progress in the local textile industry. In 1941, there were only two operational modern looms in the district operated by two to three citizens McClung by 1943 there were fifteen such looms with more than 25 workers. There was labor related emigration from Çemişgezek to other major cities in the country, and the development of the textile industry development in the district was as a means to end this delocalization. There is substantial evidence that locals were interested in the textile industry, but investment in textiles by local capitalists, who were mostly landholders, as in the case of Niyazi Ateş from Hozat, was met with suspicion on the part of the state.[614]

In the agriculturally developed Mazgirt, locals used and older type of weaving loom, and there was textile production on a small scale. While in Nazımiye district economic activity had been limited to just animal husbandry, the exploitation of the forest wealth, marble, silver-lead from the Hakis sub-district would change this. Meanwhile, the main natural wealth of Ovacık

613 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 290-291 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

614 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 284-285 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

district was its gum fields on either side of the Munzur River. These fields produced gum from a yellow thorny plant called *kenger*, whose roots had to be dug up and cut in order to extract the white, gum like substance. It was estimated that locals earned around 25 to 30 thousand lire each year from this gum which was sold in Kemah, Erzurum, Kars, and even Istanbul. Other than its consumption as food or as a flavoring agent, this *kenger-çengel* gum was also used as a substitute for rubber. Pülümür district was an important center for animal husbandry; however, its future economic development would also be based on the mining sector. There was a rich, pure chrome mined on the western slopes of Mount Bağırbaba east of the village of Fergini in Deşt sub-district. Diatomite (*moskof toprağı*) was found in the village of Rabat south of Pülümür where there was also a lignite coal reserve.[615]

On the whole, in agriculturally advanced districts the textile industry was more developed, while in those districts where animal husbandry was the principal occupation, the secondary commercial sector was either forestry or mining. Kalan (*Tunceli*) is demonstrative in this respect. In the 1940s it lacked any economic activity whatsoever. There was little agricultural land to speak, and its people were dispersed throughout the territory. However, the resource that allowed Kalan to develop economically was its forests. Kalan was the richest district of the province in terms of natural forest wealth. State Forestry Operations would be based here to facilitate the production of various timber products ranging from railroad sleepers to telegraph and telephone poles, lumber for furniture, and firewood. It is also worth noting that the forests of Kalan were mostly situated in an emptied, forbidden zone.[616]

This means that timber trade was controlled by the state both in terms of production and distribution. The colonization of the forests through the displacement and dispossession of its inhabitants gave way to the commercialization of timber. This was the principal change to commerce in Dersim between 1932 and 1943. Agricultural and animal related products were already being exchanged between the region and the national market, but internal colonial rule changed the proportion of timber in its exports.

615 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 286-287 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

616 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 285-286 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Bingöl's trade dominated by the markets of Diyarbakır and Elazığ. The influence of Diyarbakır contrasts with trade in Dersim because the city of Diyarbakır was historically the most important trading center connecting the highlands with the plains below. This connection is also apparent in Bingöl, in exchanges between the pastoralists occupying the highlands and the agriculturalists of the plains below. While this commerce was developing, local traders were not satisfied with their dependance on Diyarbakır *Yerli Mallar Pazarı*, which was affiliated with the *Sümerbank* General Directorate. There were many complaints concerning this from the inhabitants of Çapakçur, Genç, and Solhan. Bingöl's dependence on the Diyarbakır market was creating a dearth of finished textile products (*basma, patiska, elbiselik kumaş*). Şemdin Gözalan from Tarpaçur in Genç proclaimed that they could not even bury their dead with cloth.[617]

Diyarbakır was the primary distributer of textile goods to Bingöl, for geographic reasons, but administratively it was bound to Elazığ. This mismatch between the reach of the market and the jurisdiction of the administration contributed to the commercial unease. National goods such as cotton fabric, unbleached muslin, flannel, and cotton print was being brought in from Diyarbakır, but the commercial demand of the local people was not being met. The Ministry of the Economy and the General Directorate of *Sümerbank* were made aware of the situation, though the problems of the citizens remained unresolved for some time. In fact, commercial relations did not take hold during the internal colonial period; there was no noticeable development in Bingöl in the forties. One reason was that goods were neither being delivered on time nor in the demanded quantities. For instance, cotton prints (*basma*), a popular import in the province, was not being supplied in sufficient quantities, and unbleached muslin (*kaput bezi*) was in arrears for months at a time. The other problem, of course, was the limited amount of local business. In the provincial capital of Çapakçur in the early forties there were just three drapers (*manifaturacı*) and five traders.[618]

617 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 157-158 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942). *Bir ölü olunca saracak kefenimiz yoktur.*

618 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 110-111 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

The whole province did not have even fifteen traders, which meant that most trade was controlled by urban traders. Bingöl's population had imported bulgur, rice, beans, chickpeas, and lentils from Elazığ and Diyarbakır, but in 1942 this alimentary trade was interrupted. Butter prices rose as its producers had to match the price increases of grain products. The plains of Bingöl were known for producing butter of exceptional quality; traditionally they were exported to Diyarbakır and Elazığ. Hundreds of traders called *çerçi* from these neighboring provinces would come seasonally to purchase the butter. They bought the butter in exchange for either cash or goods needed by the villagers. They came to the plains around the middle of May and stayed until the end of September. The trade was discrete, and tin cans were filled with the butter and then transported back at night on pack animals.[619]

Producers preferred such transactions. They had no habit of taking their butter to the local market and did not possess the necessary containers. Traditionally, it was even considered inappropriate to sell one's butter. The yearly estimated butter production in Bingöl was 250 tons, and in 1941, one kilo of butter was bought for 100-125 *kuruş*. In 1942, the Ministry of Commerce placed restrictions to the commerce of pure butter. The sale of butter within the borders of the province was allowed, but butter could not be exported. The Ministry put the Turkish Commerce Bank in charge of the purchase, sale, and transport of butter. Representatives of the bank immediately increased the price to 155 *kuruş* and put a trader from Istanbul in charge of butter collection facilities throughout the east. However, the collection of butter was problematic. The mayor of Çapakçur told that, of the estimated 250 tons of butter, only six tons had been collected in July. The reason for this was the low price offered to the producers. The villagers did not want to undersell their product and resorted to burying their butter. It seems that the trader indirectly appointed by the state presented a worse deal than the traditional *çerçis*.[620]

619 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 16 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939); NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 152-153 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

620 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 153-154 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

4.6 Finances

Taxation is of utmost importance to the modern state. Dispossession based on the idea of statehood as well as authority accompanied by coercive measures are norms in modernity. The central state extracts resources from the people with the supposed intention of improving the common good. The Ottoman imperial state grew more and more inefficient in tax extraction in the early modern period. During the Tanzimat, the Ottoman state tried various approaches to modernize its tax collection system, and some historians like Nadir Özbek, argue that this success for the central state was a great detriment to the people of the empire who suffered the consequences of providing for a shrinking empire.

Pamuk writes in the introduction to *The Cost of Empire* that in the second half of the eighteenth century, two European states collected the least amount of taxes per capita. One, Poland, ended up being absorbed by neighboring states whose central authority was less disputable. The Ottoman Empire endured a similar risk according to Pamuk; however, it was not that the taxes were not being collected, only that they were not reaching the capital. Local notables were absorbing most of the state's finances. During the centralization phase of the state, which coincided with increasing outside threats to the Empire from the 1780s up until the Great War, there was a tenfold increase in taxes collected per capita. This was accompanied by a net decrease in the influence of local notables. The paradox pointed out by Pamuk is that this incredible increase in tax revenues occurred concurrently with an alarming growth in military expenditures of the central state. In the end, European capital intervened in the form of significant amounts of credit given to the Ottoman treasury, which eventually resulted in a complete loss of financial control by the Empire. It was a combination of these factors that allowed the Sick Man of Europe to survive another century. Özbek analyzes exactly how the Ottoman state increased the proportion of collected taxes.[621]

621 Nadir Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı'da Vergi, Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet (1839-1908)* (Boğaziçi University Press, 2015), X-XI.

In competition with industrial European countries, the Ottoman Empire tried to match their fiscal spending. However, lacking the invaluable industry-related taxes that boosted state power in the West, agriculture-related taxes were the sole basis of Ottoman fiscal policy. This had the effect of the pauperization of the rural peasantry, and in fact, there was a direct correlation between stronger fiscal policy and nationalist independence movements throughout the Empire. However, this fiscal structure, which relied on the lowest echelons of society for the smooth functioning of the state apparatus, calcified a specific type of class structure. While the tax-paying masses were comprised of a silent and helpless peasantry, the state handpicked a partisan bourgeoisie whose wealth was built on the coercive exploitation of the peasantry. The dispossessed peasant youth had no option but to migrate to the cities and form an alienated proletariat. Such was the social structure and the related fiscal policy inherited by the Republic. To function properly, the state had to exploit the rural peasantry.

This was the reality during the First Inspectorate-General, as well. Citizens involved in agriculture suffered most. Not only did they pay the regulated taxes, but they also had to give donations. The President of the *Tayyare Cemiyeti* and Rize Deputy Fuat Bulca (1881-1962) corresponded at length with the First Inspector General İbrahim Tali Öngören concerning the "*mahsulatı arziye ianesi*" agricultural produce donation, the collection of which strongly recalls the Ottoman tax collection system. It was collected at harvest time and, according to Öngören, was conducted the "old-fashioned way": *bazı taraflarda halktan eski şekilde mahsulatı arziyeden iane alınmakta olduğu görülmektedir* [bu durum] *kanaatı acizanemce, kanunsuz olduğu kadar suistimalin devamını muciptir*. The Inspector General alerted authorities of the abuse: "*tatbikine devam olunan usulün sakatlığı hakkında müteaddit deliller vermiştir. Bu yüzden memur ve gayri memur bir çok kişiler mahkemelere verilmiştir.*" The solution he proposed was that the "donation" be converted into a regulated form of taxation.[622]

622 BCA, 69-454-23, Tayyare Cemiyeti için toplanan mahsulat-ı arziye yardımının kaldırılarak vergilere zam yapılması üzerine Tayyare Cemiyeti Reisi ve Rize Milletvekili ile Birinci Umumi Müfettiş'in yazdığı yazılar, 27/4/1929.

The region covered by the First Inspectorate-General was considerable, and it would require a substantive bureaucratic apparatus to adequately organize tax collection across what amounted to almost a third of the country. It is no surprise that tax evasion or failure to meet the required tax targets were the norm in the region.

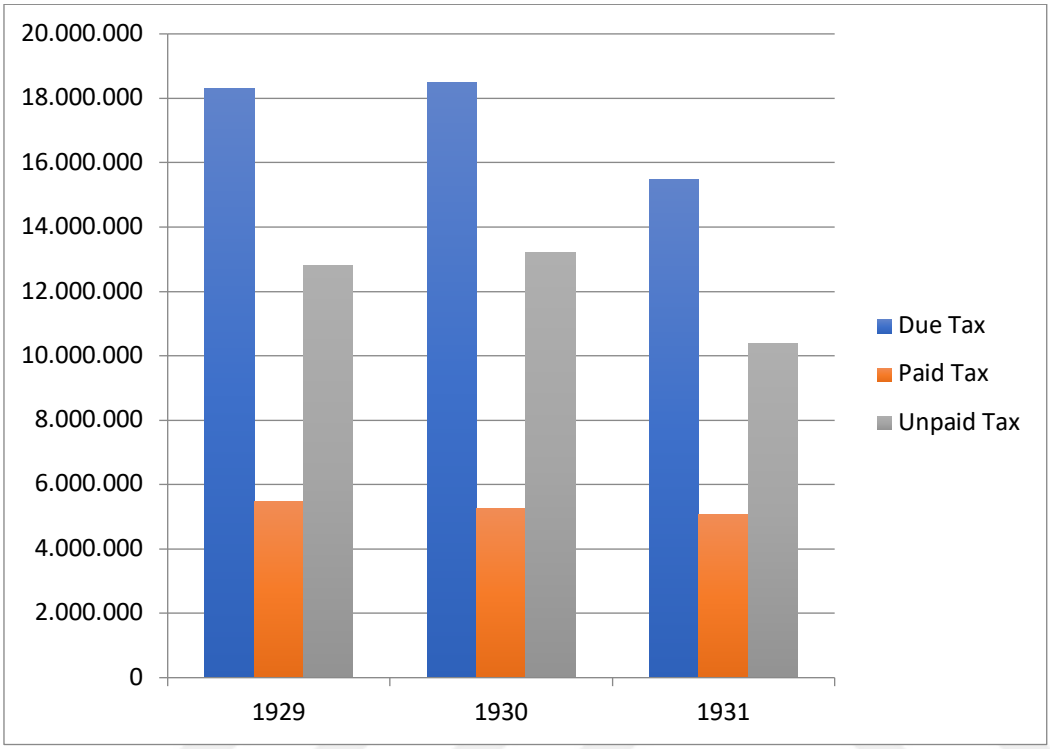


Chart 42 Tax collection under the First Inspectorate-General. Source: BCA

Eighteen million lire was the rough amount of tax that the state wanted to extract from the region's inhabitants in 1929 and 1930. In 1930 the fiscal income of the republic was 222,732,000 lire. So in relation to the whole, this amount was small. But given that the actual taxes in 1930 amounted to just above five million lire, one can confidently say that fiscal organization during early internal colonial rule was relatively weak. What is remarkable in the above chart is that net taxes paid steadily decreased over three years, from almost five and a half million lire in 1929 to barely 5.1 million lire in 1931. The state could not achieve its desired results in terms of tax collection from the region. Perhaps this was due to the same problem the Ottoman Empire encountered in the eighteenth century, the influence of the local notables.[623]

623 Hasan Türkal, "The Evaluation of the Budget Policies and Practices in Respect of Tax Policies and Practices in the 1923-1930 Period," *Amme İdaresi Dergisi* 44, no.3 (September 2011): 85-107.

Even though the state could not extract the estimated amount of revenue from the region in the form of taxes, internal colonial rule was implemented without reserve. The Republic spent 6,714,282 lire for the First Inspectorate-General in 1929, and a bit more in 1930 (6,755,186 lire), and reached almost seven million in 1931 (6,903,686 lire). In short, even as fiscal revenue from the region was decreasing, state expenditures in the region were increasing. The two to three million lira deficit in the budget of the Inspectorate-General was being remedied through monthly support payments of two hundred thousand lire issued every month by the Ministry of Finance.[624] Why did the Inspectorate-General fail to collect taxes? Let us analyze the fiscal year 1931-32 for the province of Dersim to better understand the local tax structure.

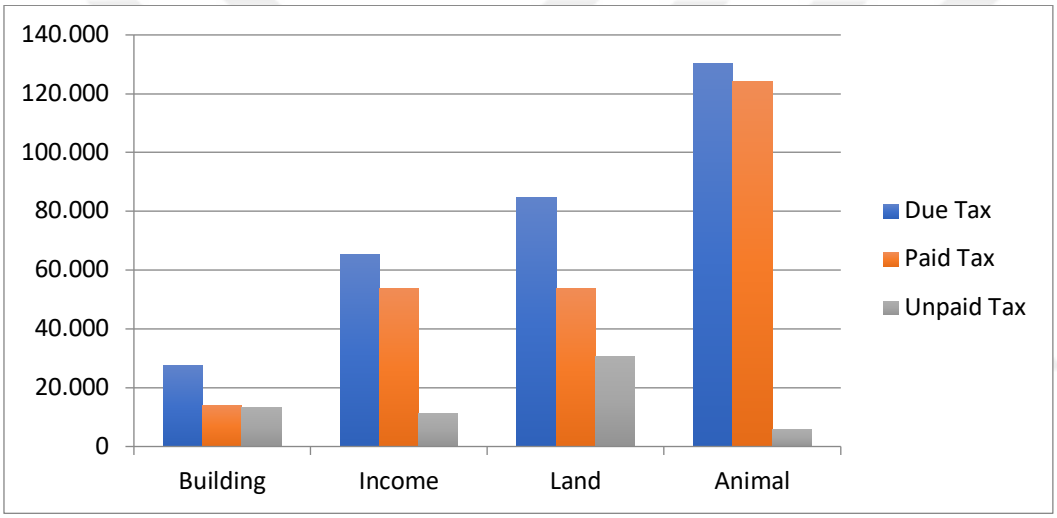


Chart 43 Tax collection under the First Inspectorate-General per kind. Source: BCA

Four principal types of tax were collected in the region, the most important of which was the animal tax worth nearly 125,000 lire, which had a higher-than-average rate of collection. Then came, the land tax which had the highest rate of evasion. Income tax, on the other hand, also had a higher rate of collection. Finally, the building tax was the least important form of fiscal revenue with a noticeably high rate of evasion. The animal tax was largely paid by the peasantry, and income taxes were mostly paid by labor. Land and building taxes affected notables, making the relation between fiscal situation and class structure apparent.

624 BCA, 69-457-17, Birinci Umumi Müfettişlik bölgesindeki vatandaşların devlet masrafına iştiraki, 1929-1930-1931 yıllarına ait üç senelik mukayeseli mali raporu, 22/5/1933.

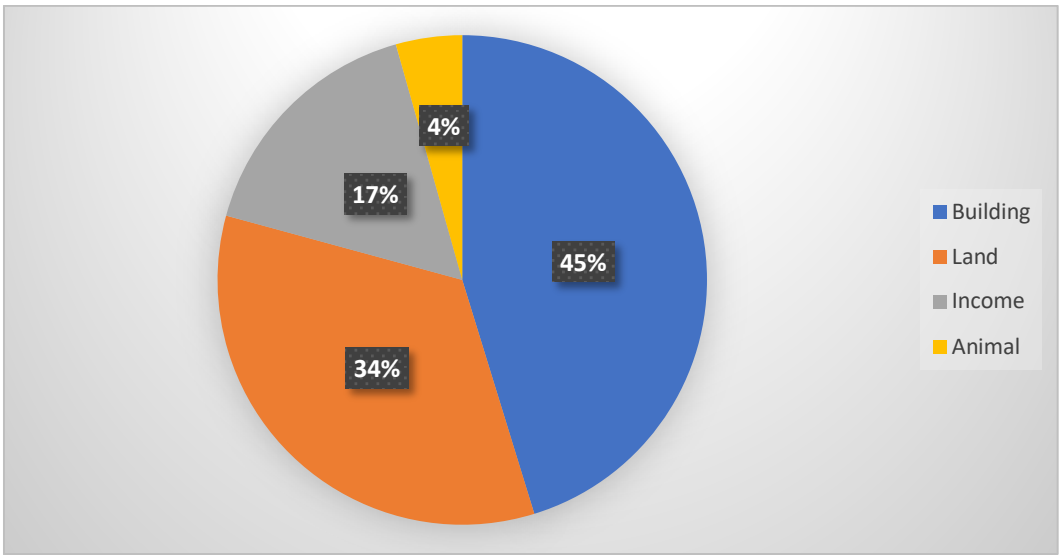


Chart 44 Unpaid taxes per kind under the First Inspectorate-General. Source: BCA

Chart 44 better demonstrates the situation. 79% of unpaid tax in Dersim province belonged to landowning, capital possessing upper classes. This fact, coupled with the fact that local notables still had more authority in the region than state representatives, were the main motives for the targeting of Dersim's notables during the military operations.[625]

By the time of the Fourth Inspectorate-General, the words tax and terror had become synonymous to the people of the region. They had learned the hard way that "nothing is certain but death and taxes." There is incessant repetition in the reports concerning taxes; locals "showed much care and attention" to respectfully fulfill their fiscal duties. The people of the province took paying taxes seriously. For example, the amount of tax that the people of Bingöl had to pay in 1939 was 147,000 lire, and by July of that year a total of 87,000 lire had already been collected, which was a collection rate of 58% in three months. Local notables complained about the land tax, while peasants in Kiğı complained about the road tax and wanted it to be lowered in order that they could afford to pay it, instead of being obliged to do forced labor. The budget of the special administration reserved for the province was 142,947 lire. This meant that to govern Bingöl, the Fourth Inspectorate-General administration needed financial assistance from the capital, just as the First Inspectorate-General did in the early thirties.[626]

625 BCA, 69-457-6, Birinci Umumi Müffettişlik bölgesindeki illerin vergi işleri, 2/8/1932.

626 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 28-29 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

One proposed solution was credit mechanisms that would allow a certain accumulation of capital and eventually aid in the rise of a local bourgeoisie. Developing banking and credit opportunities for locals was to help develop commerce and businesses in the region as well as encourage the improvement of agriculture, which was key to the economic development of the region. Of course, Agricultural Bank had been created during the late imperial era with exactly this purpose in mind.

There was a *Ziraat Bankası* branch in Çapakçur, and although locals needed and showed interest in receiving credit, the Agricultural Bank failed in that it was unable to provide credit to those in need. Once again, the physiocratic ideal failed. Nusret Erem from Uvaz village in Kiğı communicated his wish to see the local branch of *Ziraat Bankası* reopen to the deputy. Local authorities attested to the fact that locals had failed to pay their debts. In Darahini, while talking to locals about agricultural credit, the deputy of Bingöl encountered another reason for the Agricultural Bank's losses and why it could not properly maintain its existence in the region. Talip Aradıcı from Mudan village, the son of Hasan Fıkıhî, who had been hanged, told the deputy how during the time of the Shaikh Said rebellion his father was involved in the robbery of the Darahini *Ziraat Bankası* branch. The son had to pay for the crime of his father, as he was later fined half of the sum that was robbed in 1925 - an amount of 1,855 lire. The family could only come up with 400 lire through land sales, but the bank still pursued him to pay the remaining 1,455 lire.[627]

On the other hand, local interest in banking and credit was by no measure enthusiastic. There was no change in credit demand and even a lack of applications for the available credit, due to the fact that the people did want credit from a bank branch that had difficulty managing its own finances. The people of Bingöl were exhibiting financial conservatism; vice items such as *rakı* and *tobacco* were sold less and less, while there was a surge in the demand for sugar. Meanwhile the state was already dispossessing them of a considerable portion of their wealth; risk was not an option for the people.[628]

627 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 15-16 (Bingöl Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1939).

628 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 60 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).

The most important element of taxation in Bingöl was related to cattle and sheep herds. Çapakçur Municipal council member Mustafa Yurdsever communicated to the deputy that the people were mostly complaining about the animal tax. A shepherd had to pay 150 lire a year. The cost to reap grass was 60 *kuruş*, while the cost for a single sheep was two lire. All this was too expensive for the locals, so the taxes had to be lowered. Tax officers visiting the villages witnessed women hiding their goats in their bedrooms to evade taxation. In the four years of animal taxes collected in Bingöl, there is a division into two categories: *Davar ve Deve* and other animals. Davar refers to economically important species. Other animals probably included asses, mules, and horses, which were very limited in number.[629]

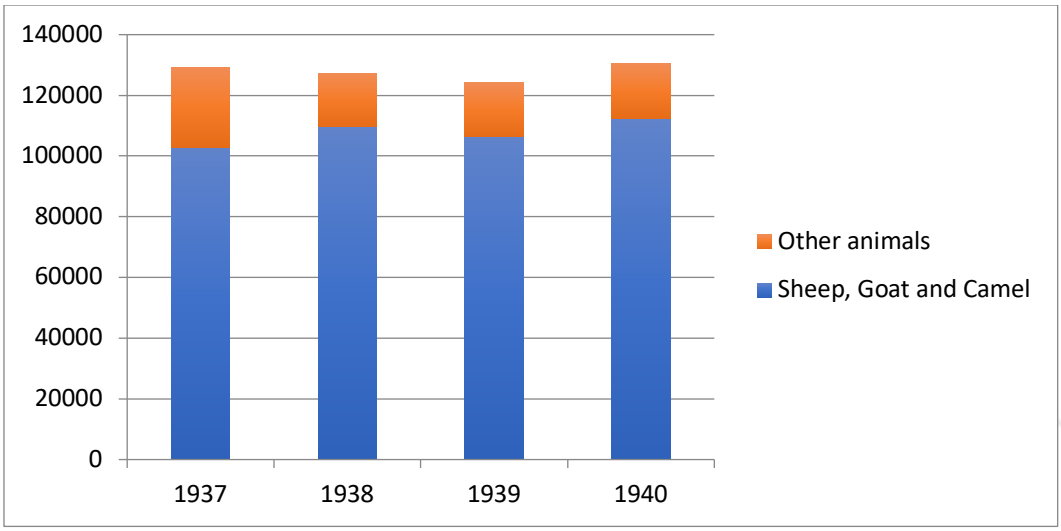


Chart 45 Species of taxable animals in Bingöl. Source: NSSA

The animal tax collected in Bingöl throughout this period was above 120,000 lire per year, more than one hundred thousand lire of which came from sheep, goat and camel herds. Taxes for this category increased by about ten thousand lire over the span of four years (102,657 lire in 1937 to 112,208 lire in 1940), while the relative tax value of other animals decreased by about eight thousand lire in the same period (26,898 lire in 1937 to 18,401 lire in 1940). Overall, tax collection was increasing, both in terms of total volume of taxes collected and percentage of taxes paid. However, Bingöl, lacked in Karlıova and Solhan where there was not even a single fiscal director.[630]

629 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 74-75 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 111-112 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

630 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 112 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

The people paid particular attention to the due payment of their fiscal debts. Animal taxes were the most important portion of state revenues, and this dependence was planned to be curbed through land redistribution, which was expected to engender additional agricultural revenues. Some land owned by the treasury was given to landless peasants in the late 1930s, but there were irregularities. Some plots of land that were distributed did not have title deeds and those that did have title deeds were not registered in the central records. Land distribution records did not match the title deed records, on one hand, or tax records, on the other, which is one potential explanation for fiscal irregularity of this era.[631]

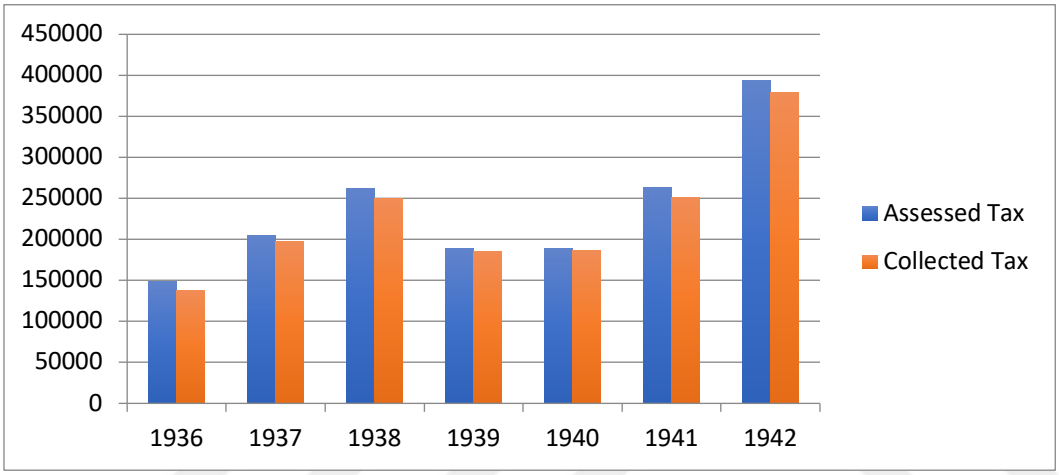


Chart 46 Tax collection under the Fourth Inspectorate-General. Source: NSSA

The tax collection rate was high during the first six years of the Fourth Inspectorate-General regime in Tunceli. The nearly 140,000 lire collected in 1936 compared with the 250,000 collected in 1938, at the height of the military operations in Tunceli, as well as the drop to below two hundred thousand in 1939 and 1940 followed by sharp increases in 1941 and 1942, force us to conclude that the population of Tunceli had to pay more taxes during times of war. This is another link between tax and terror: the terrorizing mission manifested itself in tougher fiscal responsibilities. In 1942, the General Inspectorate managed to collect nearly 380,000 lire from a region that just six years earlier could only pay about 140,000 lire; an increase of about 170%. Certainly, this was a success, in the eyes of the state.[632]

631 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 160 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

632 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 74-75 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 111-112 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

How did the state manage to extract this significant sum from a relatively impoverished province such as Bingöl. The total amount of taxes collected was 379,691 lire, of which tax items worth more than 10,000 lire were: animal tax 142,136 lire, wealth tax 47,455 lire, other animal tax 29,375 lire, commercial and industrial income tax 20,898 lire, employee income tax 19,963 lire, stamp tax 19,151 lire, measurement tax 16,904 lire, aid to the Air Forces tax 15,560 lire, and tax fines 11,109 lire.[633]

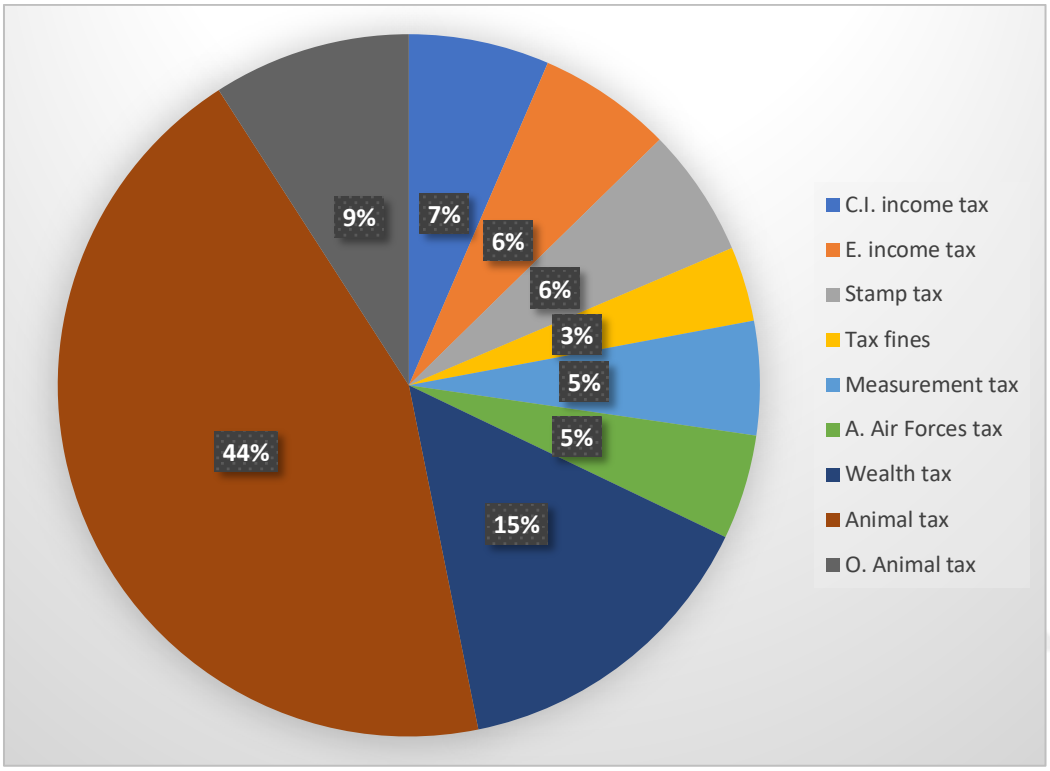


Chart 47 Taxes per kind in Bingöl. Source: NSSA

It is apparent also from Chart 47 that the animal tax was the most important with a 44% share of the whole of taxes collected in 1942. Second was the wealth tax at 15%. Of the total of fifty thousand lire of wealth tax imposed on the province, only three thousand lire remained unpaid in 1942. Third is the other animal tax at 9% of the whole. That this tax, together with the primary animal tax, accounted for more than 50% of tax revenues from Dersim, was the reason special attention was placed on animal taxes. The bulk of the tax burden was on the peasantry. All these taxes were concurrent with a famine in the region.

633 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 74-75 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940); and NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 111-112 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

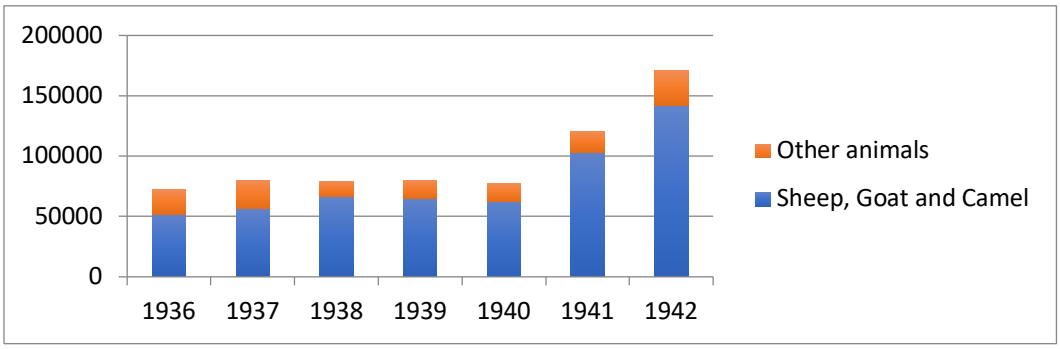


Chart 48 Animal tax in Dersim. Source: BCA

The animal tax in Dersim generally increased throughout the thirties then fell in 1940, before beginning to spike from barely eighty thousand that year to above 170,000 lire just two years later. Since they were the closest districts to the city of Elazığ and easier to reach geographically, it is no surprise that the neighboring districts of Pertek and Çemişgezek paid most of the taxes collected in the province. Geographic reasons also played a role in the fact that the districts least affected by the animal tax were Ovacık and Kalan, for their inhabitants were more dispersed and the terrain was more difficult terrain.[634]

Another financial issue related to animal husbandry, was the issue of salt, a common source of complaint across territories. For instance, in Solhan, Şerif Yalaman said that they had to go to Muş during the winter to buy salt; a depot with a 25-30-ton capacity was needed to be constructed in the locality. Although there were plenty of salt mines in the highlands that had been exploited for centuries, the republic monopolized salt production and distribution. Lowlanders in Bingöl had even more of a disadvantage because of their distance from mountain salt mines.[635] Salt was a problem not only in the provincial capital of Çapakçur, but also, due to the intensification of animal husbandry in the Bingöl plain, in Karlıova and Solhan. Salt was important for animal husbandry because most species of animals that consume plants are in danger of not consuming enough salt. Since sodium (Na) in plants is usually low, salt licks were critical for the survival of such herbivores. This meant that in order to assure the extraction of the animal tax, the state had to procure salt in sufficient quantities for the proliferation of the animals.[636]

634 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 299-300 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).
635 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 74-75 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1940).
636 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 108 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

The responsible authority was the Ministry of Customs and Monopolies (*Gümrük ve İnhisarlar Vekâleti*). However, like most other businesses this too was outsourced to a contractor. 120 tons of salt needed to be transported to Çapakçur in 1940, but the contractor only brought fifty tons before winter conditions set in, which compromised the townsfolk and animals for the rest of winter. This meant that while salt was sold for 6-7 *kuruş* a kilo in Çapakçur during springtime, the price of a kilo of salt in winter increased fivefold to 30 *kuruş*. This was due to the fact that in winter salt was brought in from Elazığ, which was in turn imported from Foça (İzmir). Genç depended on Çapakçur for the procurement of salt, as well, and the salt crisis in further places such as Karlıova and Solhan was even greater.[637]

One solution was a three-hundred-ton salt depot in Çapakçur which was under construction in 1941 for a budget of 28,000 lire. It was being coordinated by the Bitlis directorate which was in charge of the monopoly affairs of Bingöl. This meant that the salt of Bingöl had to be ordered from Siirt, but there was no proper transportation between Çapakçur and Siirt. Furthermore Solhan, located along the road from Çapakçur to Muş, also had to request salt from the Bitlis monopoly directorate, but did so in vain because the requested salt never arrived from Muş. Muş had seized the salt for its own use. Solhan finally resorted to bringing in salt from Erzurum's *Muhlıs* salt depot with great difficulty.[638]

Karlıova, another district where sheep herding was developed, also had great difficulty procuring salt, although it was relatively closer to Erzurum's Aşkale and Yadı sub-districts and the Muhlıs salt mine compared to its southern neighbor, Solhan. In Karlıova, a kilo of salt was sold for 12-13 *kuruş*, six *kuruş* more expensive than in Çapakçur. The solution was to construct two salt depots, one in Solhan and one in Karlıova. Karlıova's need for salt was around fifty tons, which was the same amount needed by the nomadic Beritan tribe travelling through Bingöl plain and concentrating around Solhan. [639]

637 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 108-109 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

638 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 109 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

639 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 109-110 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

Meanwhile there was plenty of salt in Tunceli. The salt needs of the province were satisfied by salt mines in Göneli, Hiver, and Ağa in the district of Pülümür, and all were operated by the Monopoly Administration. Ten workers worked the Göneli salt mine, which was in a forbidden zone. 1,500 tons of salt were mined in these mines every year, but the cost of the salt increased by the time it reached the district centers where the monopoly retailers were located. The problem was not that there was not enough salt, just that legal salt was too expensive. Even the people of the neighboring district of Nazımiye to the south thought that Pülümür salt was too expensive.[640]

In Tunceli, too, the high cost of salt especially affected districts where animal husbandry constituted the principal economic activity, such as Pertek, Çemişgezek, and Mazgirt. The mismanagement of salt distribution in both Bingöl and Tunceli are yet another case of administrative malfunctioning that crippled the Inspectorate-General institution. In the Kiğı district of Bingöl, twenty-three villages in the sub-district of Cönek (Sarıtosun) were situated just four to five hours from the Ağa salt mine in Pülümür, which they had continued to use until 1942. But the monopoly administration dictated that instead of buying salt for 4 *kuruş* a kilo from the Ağa *Tuzla* five hours away, villagers had to go to Kiğı half a day away to buy it at 14 *kuruş* a kilo, more than thrice as expensive.[641]

In total, Bingöl needed about two hundred tons of salt and was dependent on the Erzurum Monopoly. Other than this most basic need, the monopoly administration also controlled alcohol and tobacco. The people of Bingöl were not really interested in alcohol but consumed a lot of tobacco. The tobacco sold in Çapakçur was sent there from Bitlis. The chief road for the transportation of monopoly goods was through Diyarbakır-Bitlis-Muş, for which the transport cost was 20 *kuruş* per kilo.[642]

Bingöl was the proverbial backwater of the Fourth Inspectorate-General and received less attention from the colonial capital of Elazığ. This administrative incongruity is an echo of the disavowal of an artificial province.

640 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 303 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

641 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 304 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

642 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 110 (Bingöl Vilayeti İşlerine Dair 1941).

There was no monopoly organization in Bingöl, so it was connected to the Bitlis Main directorate. The monopoly materials needed in Bingöl were supplied from Diyarbakır, Elazığ, and Muş only after obligatory communications with Bitlis. Transport from Diyarbakır was done by mule over the Lice-Genç road during summer, while transport from Elazığ was done between May and September with wheeled transport. Meanwhile transport from Muş was carried by hand with great difficulty even in summer. There was a lack of certain key items like spirits and tobacco. Sometimes there was no *ispirto* in Çapakçur for months and no cigarettes for weeks.[643]

The lack of a local monopoly branch meant immense difficulties during the isolating winter months. There was no monopoly purchase point in Kalan, Mameki in 1943, and the people had to wait for items to be delivered from Mazgirt. This meant that during the long winter people simply did not have access to monopoly items. Just as with salt, the monopoly administration created an absurdity regarding tobacco. The plant was grown in Çemişgezek, but its sale was illegal, and the product being sold by the monopoly was imported from outside the province. The people complained that the tobacco and cigarettes sent to their district did not satisfy them and requested better quality tobacco. On the other hand, there was a limited tobacco agriculture along the riverside in Hozat, and this was encouraged by the state. The farmers of thirteen villages who farmed tobacco had access to a model practice field situated in "*İn*" village. Overall, almost 84 tons of tobacco were consumed from 1936 to 1943 - almost ten tons per year. Since 22,395 lire worth of tobacco was sold in 1942, a kilo of tobacco in 1942 was about two lire, which was two months' worth of the average per capita income in the province. But the locals liked their tobacco and were used to growing it themselves. Citizen Mahmut Alp from Danaburan village in Mazgirt said that ten to fifteen years earlier they were growing tobacco but that it was no longer allowed.[644]

643 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 156-157 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

644 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 300-301 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

4.7 Subsistence Crisis

1942 was a difficult year for Tunceli in terms of subsistence. Even the district of Çemişgezek, with its relatively well-established agricultural sector, had difficulty feeding its own population. One citizen Rif'at Gencer, testified to Necmeddin Sahir that in order to prevent a crisis of subsistence they had even sown millet in their vegetable gardens; this was the only way to avoid famine. The situation was worse in Hozat where grain harvests were not sufficient for subsistence and the district had to import grain from Mazgirt and Çemişgezek. The township faced considerable difficulties once heavy winter conditions set in, rendering further transportation of grains nearly impossible. This subsistence crisis was not limited to Hozat; the entire province was experiencing famine-like conditions. Some families could not even find millet bread to eat.[645]

It was during this time that Dame Cennet - out of desperation and starvation - hung herself by her waistcloth on a walnut tree in the village of Zımbık in Hozat. The writings of Necip Fazıl reveal that in 1938 a particularly violent scene transpired in the village of Zımbık, which was stripped of its entire male population. Perhaps Cennet Kadın had lost her male relatives in '38, barely surviving between then and 1942 when the situation became unbearable.[646]

The situation in Kalan was not much better; local grain production was sufficient for only a third of the population. The government was not oblivious to the situation, and in 1942 distributed ten tons of wheat for the autumn, although five tons of this wheat was sold and the other five was given as a loan. A further five tons of barley was given as seed to be used in springtime. This restricted subsistence aid was limited to Kalan, where the need was actually much greater. The report claimed that a total of fifty tons of grain needed to be distributed to prevent famine in the province.[647]

645 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 291 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

646 Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, "Büyük Doğu Dergisi," no.17 (3 Şubat 1950), in *Vesikalar Konuşuyor*, (Istanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 2009).

647 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 292 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

The situation in Nazımiye was even more deplorable. Hasan Arslan from Azgılar (Güneycik) implored to Necmeddin Sahir, saying: "We are hungry and naked. People ate grass this year; they are all lying sick." Kego Dağdeviren from Dağban village attested that: "Our people are lying down in hunger. If it does not rain, I will get 4 or 6 measures [tin cans/*teneke*] of produce from two measures of seeds. The government helped, with 25 kilos, but this was not enough." Ali Değirmenci from Ballıca village, who was stationed in Muğla, said: "We do not have enough to eat in our villages, but they look after us well in the Army corps." The government was diverting grain to military personnel while simultaneously providing limited subsistence aid to certain districts. The village headman of Panen (Yazgeldi), Hüseyin Atik, said: "We were even given a thousand kilo of subsistence aid in addition to seeds. But it's not enough."[648]

Subsistence aid in the district of Nazımiye amounted to no more than twenty tons of grain. By comparison, the provincial government had distributed eighty tons of wheat to the district of Ovacık - four times more than to Nazımiye. However, forty tons of this aid was redirected to Hozat, so in the end Ovacık had received only forty tons of wheat as well as a further eleven tons of barley. Meanwhile, Necmeddin Sahir noticed that the amount of grain received in the district did not match the amount distributed, proof of irregularities in the distribution of aid in Ovacık. Government officials were probably taking a portion of the aid for their personal benefit. Süleyman Ayata, the village headman of Pardi, said in a town hall meeting in Zeranik (Yeşilyazı): "The government will come and take its share from our produce. But our produce is not even enough for us; we would like more grain and seeds." The state did not care about local subsistence and took its share of the grain. The fiscal abuse comes clear when we consider that just a single village in Ovacık, Kakbil (Buzlutepe), owed the state 65 tons of tax in produce, while the aid given to the entire district was only forty tons. Collecting this grain was top priority for the state, and even school buildings were transformed into silos to store it.[649]

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648 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 293-294 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

649 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 293-294 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Meanwhile there was no famine in the district of Mazgirt. Indeed, the Mazgirt municipality helped other districts with its own grain stocks. 70 tons of wheat and 90 tons of barley were distributed for seeding, while the amount of grain owed the State was 600 tons. In other words, there was no shortage of grain production in Mazgirt, and the central state diverted a substantial portion of its production to the rest of the region. A citizen from Muhundu (Darıkent) described the situation as follows: "The predictions made by the village headmen played against the people, this is why some villages suffered from famine. Because fields were not measured properly and the accusers not taken into consideration by those who were responsible, some farmers resorted to eating grass." In other words, production was overestimated which led to increased seizure of grain by the state powers which in turn resulted in famine.[650]

The least affected part of the province was the agriculturally well-disposed Pertek. But the overall miserable condition of the people of Dersim was clear; some roamed the streets of Elazığ in a state of total depravation. In March 1943 a thousand people from Tunceli were counted in the center of the city by the authorities of Elazığ. Some perished while others escaped to the outskirts of the city. Reports indicate that among the homeless in Elazığ city in the 1940s were those who escaped famine up north in Dersim. There were children and disabled people begging in the streets. Bread and soup were distributed, but there was no proper facility in which to lodge them and provide adequate hygiene. The central government was aware of the famine in the province, and two hundred tons of barley was provided for Tunceli upon a decision of the Ministry of Commerce dated March 30, 1943. Another strategy of the government was to control of the sale of flour by municipalities at the local level. Prices were kept constant and only be modified when there was a change in local purchasing power. This was designed to prevent inflated prices created by constant demand.[651] Why did the famine take place?

650 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 292 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

651 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 294-295 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Despite its neutrality, Turkey, had tremendously increased the number of soldiers in its standing army by the early 1940s, which reached around a million and a half soldiers from just over a hundred thousand in the 1930s. To adapt its logistical capacity to this unprecedented increase, the central government issued the National Protection Law in 1940, which allowed the state to determine prices, confiscate produce, and introduce and enforce obligatory labor. This situation created the conditions for famine.

The fiscal hunger of the leviathan grew as the war progressed, and in 1943 the tithe, which had been eliminated in 1925, was reintroduced in the form of the *Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi*. Although it was ostensibly an attempt to preclude the over taxation of the peasantry by increasing the burden on large landowners, this tax on "land produce" had a converse effect on the peasantry. Two distinct practices of tax collection had emerged during the previous years. The first was confiscation. The sudden change in grain prices in 1941, combined with the underdeveloped state of agriculture both in and out Tunceli and bad harvests, resulted in a crisis of subsistence even in the relatively well-developed Çemişgezek in early spring 1942. The government proceeded without hesitation to confiscate "surplus foodstuffs." The second practice was indebtedness. This meant that after separating out the amount needed by the farmer, the remainder of the grain he had produced was confiscated by the state. The amount to be confiscated was determined according to previous harvests, which meant that if the actual harvests was less than estimated, the farmer would be indebted in the following year. For example, the people of the district of Çemişgezek had to give to the state 170 tons of wheat, 57 tons of barley, 1.2 tons of rye, and 177 kilos of corn. These amounts, calculated based on earlier estimations, could not be paid in full. Nevertheless, the state ended up collecting 143.6 tons of wheat, 51 tons of barley, 2,8 tons of rye, and in order to compensate for remaining debt, confiscated a further 1.114 kilos of mixed grains (*mahlut*), ten tons of beans, a ton and a half of chickpeas, 36 kilos of lentils, 63 kilos of corn, and 72 kilos of fava beans.[652]

652 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 295-296 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

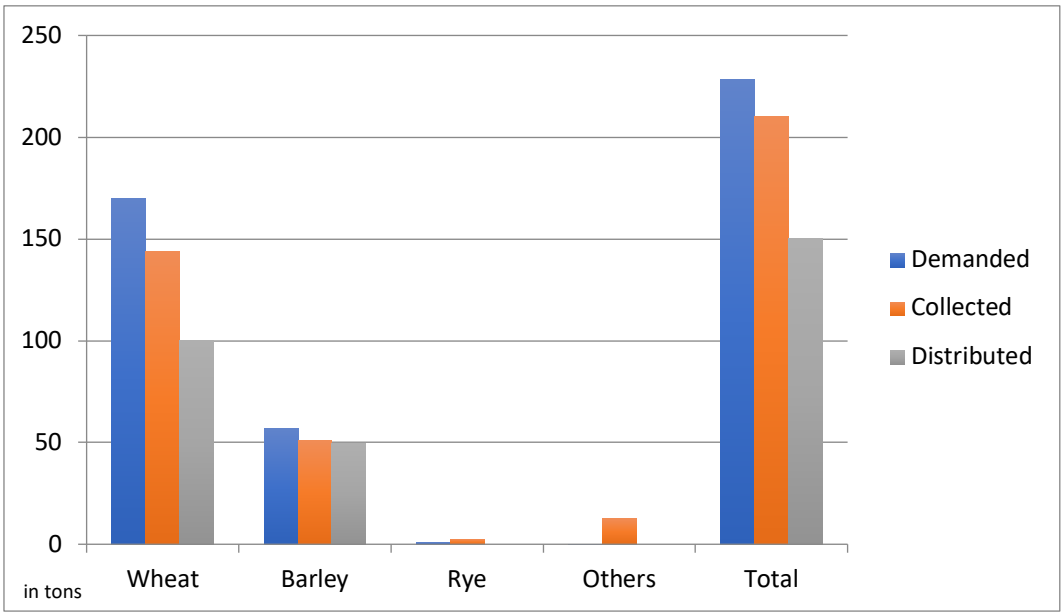


Chart 49 Grain collection and distribution. Source: NSSA

Chart 49 shows the situation in Çemişgezek in terms of the taxation and redistribution of grain production. What interested the state was wheat and barley, and the output for these products in 1942 was 700 tons and 334 tons, respectively. This means that the tax amounted to 24% of all the wheat and 17% of all the barley produced in Çemişgezek. In the end, the state confiscated 20% of all the wheat produced in Çemişgezek in 1942 as well as 15% of all the barley, meaning that the people were left with 557 tons of wheat and 283 tons of barley. In the meantime, the government redistributed a hundred tons of wheat and fifty tons of barley, although the credibility of such round numbers is suspect. As an agent of the central state, Necmeddin Sahir was concerned with figuring out why the government had not collected nearly 25% of its due. He ascertained two principal reasons: 1) the *subaşıs* had overestimated the volume of grain production, and 2) the *Kımıl* insect, grasshoppers, and lop disease, as well as drought in certain localities, were detrimental or production. 210 tons of 228 owed were collected, but only 194 tons of this was wheat and barley. The category "others" constituted nearly thirteen tons of foodstuff unrelated to either of the demanded grains. This in practice equated to robbing the locals of their food sovereignty.[653] How did the state *subaşıs* make estimations?

653 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 296 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

Surveys took place during the sowing season. For instance, in the district of Çemişgezek, the *subaşıs* counted 2,404 head of cattle, 939.5 hectares of wheat, 377.4 hectares of barley, 50.7 hectares of rye, and 8 hectares of mixed grain. They estimated that one hectare of land produced 699 kilos of wheat or 650 kilos of barley. According to this logic, the output of the land in 1943 should have been 565 tons of wheat, 245 tons of barley, 25 tons of rye, and four tons of mixed grain. The government's share was 20%, which meant 113 tons of wheat and 49 tons of barley. The area sown was less compared to 194,2 but precipitation was higher and there were no pests or diseases afflicted the crops, so overall the 1943 crop was relatively bountiful. This created the question of whether farmers should pay for what they had failed to deliver the previous year. Producers who had suffered in 1942 because of the overestimation of fertility understandably reported lower numbers to the authorities, which became apparent in springtime. While the state overestimated final production in 1942, it underestimated it in 1943. The estimations were done during the sowing season because the measurement of production during harvest entailed additional costs and created conditions for smuggling as well as opportunities for corruption by both the local people and officers afflicted with avarice and greed.[654]

In the district of Çemişgezek, seven estimation vanguards were set up manned by seven regional chiefs, fourteen officers, ninety measurement officers, and thirty wardens. Their employment cost the state fifteen to twenty thousand lire, which was more than the value of the produce collected, which meant that it was an inefficient organization. The estimation method was designed to make things easier and more cost effective, but it was nearly impossible for a single measurement officer to calculate the harvest of an entire village in a single day; as suggested in the *Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi* law. Officers took longer to count the total village production, which took farmers away from their work. Meanwhile, the harvest, which needed to be urgently collected and preserved, was at risk of perishing.[655]

654 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 297 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

655 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 297 (Tunceli Vilâyeti Genel Durumu 1943).

In terms of the subsistence crisis, the situation was relatively better in Bingöl. However, agricultural production of Bingöl still did not supply the consumption of grain in the province. Subsistence aid was thus important. The provincial center and local municipalities organized grain stocks, though they were not sufficient to meet need throughout winter. This was because of the difficult transport conditions in winter and also because the grains were stored in grain form and needed to be milled into flour. Other difficulties included the fact that their sale was not properly structured and organized. The provincial capital Çapakçur had an excess of consumers. Poor people could not afford wheat from the market while others purchased more than they needed and resold it at high prices. In August 1941, Bingöl province was included in the expropriation list - *el koyma mıntıkası* -, and the governor who had not yet served a full year was replaced. Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Erzurum, and Muş had long been providing Bingöl with wheat for bread. Historically dependent on grain imports from neighboring provinces, Bingöl's grain production was further hurt in summer 1941 by insects (*kımıl ve çekirge*). In December, a change of governor coincided with the request of at least 30 tons of grain by the governorate. This led to considerable difficulties; ordinary bakeries in the provincial and district centers were closed because of insufficient or belated deliveries of flour. The mills could not operate and reduce flour in winter. As mentioned, grain stocks in province and district centers remained in unprocessed form. Gendarmes and other soldiers, as well as state officers, were left without bread. In the provincial center alone, 300 had no bread. To restrict bread consumption, stale (*bayat*) bread was sold and those who purchased bread from the bakeries were identified, registered, and given a moderate amount. However, in January and February of 1942 the need of non-producers for bread was met and even the producer population benefited from food supplies. It was worse in Sivan (Genç), which had less grain production compared with other parts of the province: One thousand people were left without bread.[656]

656 NSSA (1), *Doğu Sorunu*, 149-150 (Bingöl Vilâyeti İşlerine Dair 1942).

5

Conclusion

Western civilization was a fundamental ideal of the republic. The republic represented itself as the last in a line of Turkic states who brought civilization to the world. The Sun-Language theory even claimed Central Asians to be the true founders of Western Civilization. Relegating Turco-Islamic Civilization to the past, what the republic tried to achieve was a Turco-Western Civilization. Had it been successful, it might have resembled the historical case of Hungary, whereby a Central Asian culture became integrated with the West. The single party era gives a glimpse of what such a civilization might look like in its infancy, which renders this period of study especially interesting. Indeed, the Republic of Turkey was a strange synthesis of Jacobin, Third French Republican ideology, contemporary fascist and communist regimes, and a dose of Central Asian tribalism. This Turco-Western Civilization had a mission, which was to transform a geography that even Rome had difficulty controlling.

Establishing control over Dersim was an essential part of early republican rule east of the Euphrates. Just like in the region at large, in the Pontus and in Eastern Thrace, Ankara imposed a strict rule. These were parts of the country in which central state rule was deemed weak. Kurdish territories were prioritized in terms of internal colonization. This is why the First Inspectorate-General, which was centered in Diyarbakır preceded the others. However, it was clear from the start that the Greater Dersim region needed special attention. The Fourth Inspectorate-General was the only internal colonial entity of the republic not situated along an international border. This is why here, more than in the other cases, the implementation of the Turkish mission was most radical.

We have attempted to introduce the reader to the subject with a stateless history, which began with an attempted people's history of Dersim that delved into the geographical realities on this terrain in the mountainous Southwestern Asian massif, to which we referred to as Kovia. Adopting the bioregional approach, we analyzed the social geography of Dersim that was adapted to this peculiar geography. Followed by a critical history on the origins of the people of Dersim. All this in the name of overcoming nationalistic discourses on the region's history. Although in all these domains more research needs to be conducted in order to truly appreciate the uniqueness of this region's history.

We saw that following Ottoman victory in Çaldıran the tribes of "Dujik" lived in a state of almost perpetual autonomy vis-à-vis the Sublime Porte. That Ottoman actions in the region could be described as mere imperial intrusions into an independent tribal highland. We saw how during indirect rule the principal preoccupation of Constantinople was to discipline and punish the occasional outbursts of banditry that emanated from the region which had developed almost an "art of brigandage". We noticed how the tenure began to change following the Tanzimat, when military operations started to be organized in order to conquer Dersim. Followed by the Hamidian policy of trying to convert the tribes into collaboration through the *mise en place* of the Hamidiye regiments. However, we merely scratched the surface in this domain.

We then delved more closely into the forces of union and progress, whereby the Young Turk regime, having lost the Balkans, was set to keep the region east of the Euphrates in its possession no matter the cost. This era came to an end in 1938 when state forces, having achieved the fall of Seyid Rıza, the last tribal leader of free Dersim, violently conquered the region with terror. Here we noted that the main paradox was tribe-state relations.

The events of 1937 and 1938 can be understood as the attempted elimination of undesired tribal entities that refused allegiance to the central state, even though members of loyal tribes were hurt during these events as well. Hence, we can divide internal colonial rule in Dersim into two. When we analyze the tribe and state relations between 1927 and 1937, we see an effort by the state to win over the tribes in Dersim, a region of historical statelessness. However, between 1938 and 1952 we see a complete disregard for even "non-hostile" tribes. This allows us to conclude that that the state acted with and not against tribal ideology. In other words, tribe-state relations were not characterized by the dismissal of the former by the latter but rather by the imposition of a hierarchy in which the state was chief.

The Republic was founded and administered by a minority, as idealized by Plato. However, its administrators were not philosophers but military men. In a country ruled by a militaristic minority that proclaimed a social contract without consensus, the people were swift to show their discontent. The consequences of disobedience to republican rule first became apparent when thousands were killed, and villages were set ablaze during the repressions of the Shaikh Said and Ararat rebellions.

The Republic could not wish away tribalism, especially to the east of the Euphrates. Instead, individuals at the core of the nation-state developed a form of tribal democracy. This new ideology was both Western and Turkic. Realizing that the Turks were themselves a union of previously disparate tribes in Central Asia, the founders of the new state attempted to unite the disparate elements of post-imperial Asia Minor with the unifying concept of the Turk. The new Turkey was to be a supratribal nation headed by the sacrosanct veteran chief of the people. There could be no challenge to the chief or his policies - no opposing to his justice. All other tribes had to submit.

The fact is that the state was trying to win over every tribe including the rebels, and when it was unable to convince the tribes of Inner Dersim, where the people were accustomed to living without the state, it proceeded to alienate the people from their lands. It was after this, that the people took up arms against the state. In other words, the *Tertele* was caused by a rebellion provoked by the state, which threatened the subsistence of the people. Stateless tribes of Inner Dersim refused the state's claim of ownership of the land. The state than came back with a vengeance in 1938 because the 1937 operation was not exactly a success. After all, not only did the main leader, Seyid Rıza end up surrendering himself to the authorities, but according to eyewitness accounts, he might have even knocked over his own chair at the gallows, in effect killing himself. His death was symbolic because the state was indeed trying to annihilate tribal civilization of Dersim, in all its forms.

Our study has demonstrated that there was a collective ownership of land in Inner Dersim before the Tertele. In fact, we can argue that the events of 1937 and 1938 allowed both land alienation and the enclosure movement to simultaneously transpire in Dersim. So, who owned the land in Dersim before and afterwards?

Certain tribes controlled certain areas of the region collectively, meaning that the land in tribal possession could be used by all members of the tribe. This tribal ownership was especially important with respect to farmland and pastures, but water sources, forests, and salt mines were also used by multiple tribes at a time. This is why heterarchical ownership of the land rather than anarchic collective ownership is a more apt description. This traditional heterarchical ownership of land was violently replaced by hierarchical private ownership. As the old mode of land ownership was destroyed, the tribal leaders that did collaborate with the state claimed ownership over previously collectively owned land, which increased the dependency of the peasantry on the local notables through the reinforcement of sharecropping.

Land that once belonged to the many now belonged to the few. Increased division of land tenure augmented hierarchical behavior, which reinforced class division among tribes that had had a tradition of relative egalitarianism.

Through the redefinition of land ownership in Dersim, the local tribal system itself experienced a change manifested by increasing class distinctions within the tribes themselves. The land no longer belonged to the people; the state had violently conquered it. The land belonged to the state and to those who respected its bureaucratic institutions. That is why the name change was so symbolic. Dersim belonged to the people, Tunceli to the state. This symbolic change in toponymy was reflected in the administration of the region. In the stateless history of Dersim, people who for centuries and possibly millennia found refuge in the region from the tyranny of states and invaders developed a suitable administration for themselves that was embodied in the tribal ideology and economy. This autochthonous stateless administration was in tune with the bioregional realities of the terrain, and it had allowed human existence in Dersim for countless generations. What replaced it was an administration that disregarded everything.

The Republic divided Turkey into artificial units of administration which achieved an almost complete severance with the Ottoman past. The provinces of Bingöl and Tunceli are perfect examples of the artificiality of republican administration. These provinces were drawn up in Ankara without taking the history and culture of the place into account. Not do they only reflect this artificiality in name, but, as we have demonstrated, their borders do not even correspond to the geographical realities of the terrain.

Again, and again, the reports bear witness to profound mismanagement in the administration of Dersim. This was not only due to the artificiality of the boundaries discussed above. The administration imposed by the republic also failed the people because of its foreign, colonial nature. Instead of allowing the people to represent themselves, the republic nominated outsiders to key positions in the local administration, as was the case with Necmeddin Sahir Sılan, a Trapezuntine, being appointed as deputy of Bingöl and Tunceli. Almost all of the interactions between the indigenous population and the central state took place in a culturally foreign setting wherein outsiders held key positions. The clerks at the land registry and the bank, forest officers and monopoly officials, conscription officers and judges, were all foreigners to the region.

Hence, the artificiality of the administration was not only physical in terms of boundaries, but also psychological in terms of agency. The result has been decades of sustained underdevelopment, cultural degradation, and a loss of identity. Administrative mismanagement in Dersim actually caused a proportion of the population to starve, not to mention the rampant corruption that became systemized.

Turkish civilizing mission in Dersim had the main goal to create a people who felt at one with the rest of the nation, shared the same ideals and values, and became Turks. We argue that the overwhelming artificiality of the administration was the underlying reason that the Turkish Mission Civilisatrice failed in Dersim. Another evident reason was the preceding period of terror. In practice, the Republic was trying to bring civilization to a people that it had just recently terrorized. The profound disconnects between the reality on the ground and the agenda of the central state condemned the mission to fail.

Central states and strong governments tend to use health and education facilities to prove their worth to the population. Hospitals and schools supposedly serve as concrete evidence that taxes are being utilized for the welfare of the taxpayers. The numbers of teachers, students, graduates, doctors, nurses, in-patient and out-patient cases all serve the modern state statistics department, which are in turn used in political rhetoric. This is why the reports of Necmeddin Sahir Sılan contain such numbers. As an agent of the state apparatus, he sought to understand the progress of civilization through the quantification of data. If numbers were increasing, then could the civilizing mission be qualified as a failure? Because the diseases being treated by the few health officers in Tunceli and Bingöl were caused by novel practices that were not in tune with the region's ecology.

Increasing the concentration of the population near rivers created an increase in malaria and eye disease. Furthermore, state education tended to encourage urbanization. It was organized in such a manner that studious pupils ended up being dislocated first from their village, then from the province, and finally from the region as a whole. Civilization was idealized as social progress and economic development, but Turkish rule in Dersim

concentrated populations in wet lowlands that, while certainly fertile, posed considerable health risks to the people. Hospitals were situated here, as well, where most of the sick were living. The same applied for schools. In a land where the population had long been dispersed over the land, going to school meant travelling at least ten kilometers on foot every day, twice.

Can we then conclude that the health and education policies of internal colonial rule were actually just to maintain a constant flow of human capital from the hinterland towards the core of the economy? Cities did not exist for the people, but for the capital; hence, the selection of the provincial centers of Bingöl and Tunceli was not effectuated on the basis of the health and welfare of the people on the maximization of profit and accumulation of capital. Meanwhile, schools were tools for dislocating young people destined for labor or bureaucratic proletarianization. The Turkish civilizing mission failed to bring civilization to the people; instead, it conceived of people as a primary resource.

Ethnic engineering was one of the most problematic concepts developed following social Darwinism. Combined with positivistic nationalist ideologies embraced by most of Western Civilization, it gave rise to catastrophe after catastrophe. The group of people who by their ambition and efforts found their way into the central institutions of the state believed that they were capable of manipulating the power at their disposal to inaugurate a rational scientific for the road to progress. States were to tame and grow their populations like a natural resource. They were disillusioned by power to such a degree that they conceived of certain populations living in the boundaries of their states as undesirable and deserving of being done away with to achieve national harmony. Dersim is directly related to the project of homogenization in Turkey as a Hanafi-Sunni Turkish majority nation-state. This region experienced the Armenian Genocide firsthand. Indeed, the urban center of Peri had simply been erased from the maps by the time of the internal colonial era. The events of 1937 and 1938 are related to this history of genocide. Some Dersimis refer to the first and second *terteles*, the first being the Armenian genocide. Although Inner Dersim had been a place of refuge for Armenians escaping genocide, the state would bring terror to even here.

The interesting situation of the people of Dersim is that although they identified themselves according to tribe, they were also considered to be both Alevi and Kurdish, so the republic was convinced that their Turkification would be more easily achieved if tribal chiefs were convinced to collaborate with the state. For this reason, in Dersim state forces sought to destroy the upper echelons of the Dersimi tribes. The aim was to reconfigure tribal hierarchy under the rule of a central chief who would collaborate with the state.

A citizen of a modern state is limited in their own liberty by the rule of law. The expression *état de droit* and its Turkish counterpart *hukuk devleti* refer to this concept of justifying the legitimacy of the state through the objective implementation of a legal code. Citizens not only play no direct role in the configuration of the legal system but are expected to abide by it without protest or challenge. This tyranny of the legal therefore reinforces the position of the state while disregarding the freedom of the individual.

The rule of law is elementary to the life of the city. However, the profound disconnect between the legal system imposed by the state and the liberty of individuals becomes clearer in the countryside. The judicial data on Dersim during the internal colonial period are sufficient to understand this disconnect.

The rule by law, in contrast, did nothing but disrupt in the traditional way of life in the Greater Dersim region. One only needs to be reminded of the cases in Bingöl, where children born out of wedlock were considered illegal at birth and therefore not considered citizens of the republic. Imposing civil marriages did not change the tradition of kidnapping the bride; it only created a situation in which the people had to live avoiding state officials as much as possible. Instead of eradicating violence, the law in Dersim mainly alienated locals from each other. And while a minority adapted to the modern judicial system to their own benefit, the lives of others were undermined by the same system just as those of their ancestors.

The republic sought to destroy a tribal justice system and replace it with its own "superior" legal system. The problem, of course, was that the state wanted to change the way that the people organized themselves and encountered common, everyday forms of resistance. The rule of law interfered

with the traditional way of life in Dersim. As a consequence, the dispersed population was reconfigured such that towns were flooded with dispossessed, broken families. Land redistribution was mainly achieved by killing or relocating tribal chiefs and their families.

The oak covered mountains were ideal for goats. But the central state did not encourage goat herding, instead, sheep were the animals of choice. Because goat hair could not compete with wool on the international market. The story is similar for agriculture. The tribal economy in had long since relied on millet as an essential subsistence grain. It contained a higher proportion of protein than wheat and was able to grow at much higher altitudes with greater returns, but the central state encouraged and even imposed the cultivation of wheat, instead. This preference for wheat over millet even created a subsistence crisis in 1942. The traditional economy was shattered, and the people suffered the consequences.

Roads and bridges were built for the state by the people and, not vice versa. Barracks, housing and even schools and sanitary facilities were primarily destined for agents and officers of the state. The central state acted as if it were in virgin territory, treating the local infrastructure as nonexistent. The mountain paths were adapted for goat herds and mules and were perfectly suited to the tribal economy and seasonal transhumance. However, instead of improving on these, the state created new roads, most of which served a military strategy.

We had set out to research the physiocratic ideal of the Turkish civilizing mission and to explain the governance of Dersim as an internal colony. Our research has revealed that the physiocratic ideal was largely abandoned following the Ararat Rebellion. The Fourth Inspectorate-General's mission was almost entirely militaristic. Initially, rule in Dersim was imposed using terror, and the period that followed showed clear signs of administrative mismanagement and corruption. This, in turn, led to a subsistence crisis during the Second World War. After the terror came disregard, as indicated by the response of a Republican People's Party official to Necmeddin Sahir's pleas for immediate action in the region: "Your Kurds? Let them die!"

My hypothesis was that the Turkish civilizing mission destroyed the traditional socioeconomic structure in Dersim, which then created a sustained lack of development. It was more than this. When we look at how the society and economy changed during the internal colonial period, when we ask the question did the Turkish mission civilisatrice pay off? The above quoted citation resumes reality. This was a mission that destroyed more than it created, a sort of *mission décivilisatrice*.

This was not about economics, but it was about identity. Why is Dersim difficult to govern? Because the people there are all about their own identity. Call them Kurd, call them Alevi it doesn't matter because either way they lie outside the matrix of Turkishness. They were living on their native land which was being invaded by a foreign army. A militarily organized genocide cost the lives of thousands of men, women and children in 1938. This was in line with the project of a Turkish nation that welcomed Muslim immigrants from the Balkans, Caucasus and Crimea in the Anatolian fatherland.

An orientalist state discourse developed concerning the East in general and Dersim in particular, that viewed the region at large as a *lebensraum*, to be cleaned of undesirable elements. A handful of people formulated this discourse which is recorded in their reports. It would be interesting to write their prosopography. These were men born mostly in the 1880s, most of them were born near the central mandala of power in the Empire, only two of them were born outside the boundaries of modern Turkey. Both of them, Abdülhalik Renda and Şükrü Kaya were involved in the Armenian genocide and were imprisoned in Malta, both of them became ministers during the Republic. İbrahim Tali had met Mustafa Kemal back during the Tripolitan War and had accompanied him to Samsun in 1919. Abdullah Alpdoğan had worked for his father-in-law Sakallı Nurettin during the repression of Koçkiri rebellion.

In a tradition that can be traced back to the *Fırka-i Islahiye* and the subsequent Dervish Pasha operation of the 1860s. Those who wrote about Dersim and its people came to perceive it as a boil to be surgically removed. The mission was not about bringing civilization to a people but destroying a people's independent civilization in the name of union and progress of the Turkish nation. But this truth has been stubbornly denied for almost a century.

Historikerstreit was aborted in Turkey. İsmail Beşikçi spent seventeen years of his life in jail, notably for pointing out the shared history between the Armenian genocide and the events that transpired in Dersim. In his line we perceive all the necessary steps that allow for what happened to be classified as a genocide. The tribes of Dersim were classified, their culture was symbolized, their representation dehumanized, this was followed by a military organization that started in 1935 with the law of Tunceli, whose origins can be dated back to 1913 as proposed by Uğur Ümit Üngör. Tribal intelligence allowed the state to polarize the tribes while preparations took place for the final extermination to take place. The Germans had to come to terms with their Nazi past, they suffered through their *tätertrauma*. While the Young Turk legacy has never been truly exposed to the Turkish public. The Inspectorates General as a plenipotentiary institution that facilitated state-inflicted mass violence remains somewhat of a taboo as it is in the memoirs of its contemporaries.

Although we had set out to expose the political economy of an internal colony on par with French New Imperialism. Following Beşikçi and Dr. Şivan, we do see similarities between the national-socialist regime in Germany and the national-defense regime in Turkey, such as exile, assimilation, mass murder and destruction. We have indeed observed a clearly racist and colonialist mission and a social scientist who reads the archival documentation can have no other option but be indignant by what has transpired.

In what can be viewed as the foundations of a Turkish New Imperialism, the modernizing, industrializing republican culture sought to penetrate the periphery and overthrow traditional society, using terror. In fact, this was directly connected to the foundations of the new Turkish military-industry complex that were being laid at the time. In order to industrialize, modern states had to unify and subsequently this unification of the nation became the foundations for the rebirth of the empire.

Nation-states can be analyzed as empires in miniature, these are just alternative political projects that are available of elites to pursue depending on the circumstances. Conceiving of the Ottoman empire as pre-modern and the Republic of Turkey as modern does not do justice to reality. The imperial turn

means realizing that imperialism is innate in the idea of the nation-state. Nationalism conceives of the state as a reflection of a common culture and thinks that a radical egalitarianism needs to be based on a principle of ethnic or even racial homogeneity. Nation-states create a particularistic worldview, tend to be self-centered and inclined towards megalomania. They tend to reflect a sense of superiority linked to a providential mission and arrogance, which leads them to be more preoccupied by interior rather than exterior affairs. Therefore, they conduct their mission within their boundaries.

Who were the men behind this mission? They were born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the Ottoman Empire, along with Persia and China was penetrated by world-capitalism under conditions of inter-imperialist rivalry. Almost all of their parents earned their bread through the central state either through the military or bureaucracy, it was this connection that might have made them more loyal to the state which was neither a formal colony nor an informal empire.

These were the Young Turks, the founders of the New Turkish Empire. They were to depose their father in the name of union over the disparate territories with the promise of progress. After their revolution of 1908 they lifted the Ottoman ban on languages such as Albanian and Kurdish. In 1911 they were disarming the people in the mountains of northern Albania and banning the use of the Latin script. Make no mistake this was the beginning of a policy that directly resulted in the Dersim genocide.

Chatterjee says that the tidal wave of modernization was accompanied by a structural erosion of traditional society. What the Young Turks did was to accelerate this process through forcing unity in language and religion in the name of progress, which resulted in the death and forced displacement of millions of people. When one looks at republican history through postcolonial and subaltern glasses, one realizes how much continuity there is with the late imperial and early republican era. In line with Deringil, who wrote of the Ottomans as having conceived of their periphery as a colonial setting, and Makdisi, who wrote that the Ottomans gravitated towards the dominant form of hegemony, namely European imperialism, creating a form of orientalism *alla Turca*, with a discourse on par with European colonial powers of the time.

To reach the level of contemporary civilizations meant imperialism. Turkey was to do what all modern states had done: first colonize the interior. We laid out in the introduction that if Dersim was an internal colony: Its economy would have been based on the export of raw materials. Its cities would be commercial way stations with the wider national market. -Its transportation system, instead of responding to the needs of the region, would be constructed to benefit national economy. When we reexamine these criteria, it seems apparent that they do not fit with the extent of what occurred in Dersim. Dersim's economy, existing cities and villages, the preexisting transportation system were all destroyed for the supposit benefit of the unitary nation-state and progress. Perhaps the internal colonial model sets the bar too low, it seems that using a colonial model could me more appropriate to examine the history of Dersim. The underdevelopment of Dersim is not to be blamed on economics and a Marxist understanding of internal colonialism.

The economic underdevelopment in Dersim is due to the destructive colonization by the state and military. What happened in Dersim went beyond the internal colonization of Celtic lands. In Scotland, for instance there was a lack of power on the part of the indigenous population, but there was also a development, even though it was dependent on the English.

In Dersim, central state policies discriminated against the autochthonous population, and there was taxation without representation. Cultural practices were criminalized, an alien culture was imposed, and assimilation was encouraged. There was a clear class distinction between the indigenous population and a class of officers from state strongholds. There were instances of power abuse. People were alienated from their land by the emptying and creation of forbidden zones. There was a reconfiguration of the economy, which had previously responded to the needs of the local people but was changed to correspond to the needs of the state. Roads that had been utilized by the people for ages were disregarded, and new roads were created where none had existed before. Towns were created from nothing as older urban centers were disregarded due to distrust of their residents. Because of the combination of wartime conditions, administrative inadequacy, and centralized planning, the genocide of 1937-38 was followed by a persistent

subsistence crisis, tragically manifested in the story of Dame Cennet from the village of Zımbık in Hozat, who hung herself on a walnut tree.

Indeed, Turkish rule in Dersim seems to have more in common with the British Raj, than with the Highlands of Scotland. This was a colony in the interior, not an internal colony. In the internal colonial model in the lines of Hechter, Gramsci and the Soviet writers, the core dominates the periphery politically to exploit it materially which results with the formation of a reactionary discourse. In the case of Dersim there had always been a reactionary discourse against the very idea of a state. What occurred has more in common with the Holocaust rather than with the Holodomor.

The Inspectorates-General were in fact colonial institutions, they directly imitated the Governorates-General, but their peculiarity perhaps lied in their relation to the deep state-military connection that is idiosyncratic to Turkey.

Although it certainly imitated contemporary European colonial imperialistic institutions, this also was very much rooted in a Turkish-Muslim tradition of conquest followed by pillaging and indiscriminatory violence. This renders a direct comparison with the French Third Republic, rather problematic. The French were turning peasants into Frenchmen and colonies into enterprises. Their approach was modern, rationalist and pragmatic.

We had looked at the French Third Republic as a model, in the lines of James Cooke who describes the New French Imperialism, which was constructed with a reactive patriotism following the shameful defeat of the French Second Empire in 1870. New Imperialism meant recovery from disgraceful defeat, unable to expand in Europe, the French ventured into Africa as entrepreneurs. In contrast, New Turkish Imperialism was also constructed with a reactive patriotism following the shameful defeats of the Old Ottoman Empire. Being a Young Turk meant recovering from disgraceful defeat, unable to expand in Europe, the Turks arrived in Kurdistan as conquerors.

There clearly was an Ottoman civilizing mission in the late imperial era, with regard to tribal regions, perhaps influenced by the Khaldounian tradition. However, we have failed to see a Turkish civilizing mission on par with the French *mission civilisatrice*. In that sense, Toprak is right to be skeptical about

comparisons between Turkey and European powers. Although we do not share his skepticism for the same reasons. He wrote that "the Turkish civilizing mission in Dersim was not centered around race", so it cannot be compared to French West Africa. Supposedly because Kurds and Turks both belonged to the Turanian race. This is simply not true. Dersim cannot be compared to French West Africa, not because race was not an issue, but because the French actually did achieve some form of an economic progress, while the Turks were obsessed with assimilation, not economic development.

At the end of the day, nationalist authors just might be right. The argument "Our situation is completely different" might just explain everything. This is the Turkish *Sonderweg* and its story is still being written. The Turkish-Muslim nation that once stretched from the Balkans to Bengal, shall one day rise again all throughout the *Turan*. This is why it is so easy for contemporary politicians to talk about the republic as an interlude and democracy as a train.

Because the Turkish *Sonderweg* was created at a time when Turkey lost almost all of the empire. Toprak speaks of "the first post-modern revolution" in reference to the Turkish revolution, we object. The French revolution was the first modern revolution in the Christian world, the Turkish revolution was the first modern revolution in the Islamic world. Both had consciously modeled themselves with a historicist understanding.

Like Ibn Khaldoun, Ziya Gökalp studied tribalism. He enunciated a mission to bring civilization to the fertile lowlands. In his view there were five stages in the submission of tribes who lived here, this was his difference with Ibn Khaldoun, who perceived the *'asabiyyah* of the barbarous tribes to be held at high esteem and preserved, not destroyed. While the early Ottoman empire acted more pragmatically with a Khaldounian approach, the early Turkish republic believed in the transformational capacity of social atomization as a way to subdue nomadic tribes, along Gökalpian precepts. With regards to the Dersim Highlands, Gökalp proposed the view espoused by the state that the mission was to compel the tribes of the mountains to descend by giving them land in the plains. This was a characteristic of the Turkish mission.

There were indeed remarkable cases of *imitatio imperii* from France. Especially the French Revolution was studied by all idealistic Young Turks.

Jacobin fervor admired, centralization and departmentalization taken as a model, social liberalism favored along with anticlerical trepidation. This was not an imitation of the French Third Republic, but the Terror of the First Republic. Had Mustafa Suphi survived his assassination in 1921, he might have called out the Turkish state for its actions in Dersim as an instance of *Vazife-i Temdin*, but it certainly would have been an insult as a colonial intrusion.

Henri Brunschwig had characterized French colonialism as being paired with an ardent nationalism. He was describing the noble role of bringing western civilization to primitive people, using this pretext as a means for political domination and economic colonization. This was the *mission civilisatrice*. The Turkish civilizing mission in contrast was all about reaching the level of contemporary civilization. In France, the enlightened state adorned itself with a providential responsibility to liberate the people from the shackles of the dark ages and superstitious tradition.

In Turkey, the despotic state sought to impose its own modernity to a people who held on to their own tradition. What did Turkish state rule look like in Dersim? It looked more like the Terror in the Vendée, than the *mission civilisatrice* in Africa. Brunschwig spoke about "the mission of the civilized people towards populations who had to be colonized for their own good", this was "a humanitarian passion."

The Turkish mission was not done for the good of the population being colonized, and it certainly was not a humanitarian project. This was a mission to destroy the preexisting way of life, the existing civilization. This decivilizing mission occurred in the "Age of Extremes", it was a child of the "Age of Catastrophe" and the time when all around the world liberalism was falling following an "Economic Abyss."

Arguably, the mission did not achieve its goals, and a great divide in terms of culture and socioeconomic standards continued between the East and West. The state deemed it necessary to reinstate internal colonial rule at the end of the twentieth century. The names of many localities were changed in this second colonial period, and some disappeared altogether. Because the public had not confronted the horrors inflicted by the state during the initial colonial period, the second internal period was almost as violent.

Appendix *The Tribes in Dersim According to a 1932 Gendarmerie Report.*[657]

Tribe	No. of Clans	Location	Settled	Rapport with the State
Lâçin	2		yes	hostile
Karaballı:	10		yes	hostile
Aşağı Karaballı				
Yukarı Karaballı				
İksor		Hozat	yes	hostile
Ferhat Uşağı	8	Çemişgezek	no	hostile
		Zenci		
		Kalecik		
		Havişar		
Gilâbî		Kemah	yes	hostile
Kolik		Kemah	yes	hostile
Koçgiri		Zara	yes	hostile
		Refahiye		
		Kuruçay		
Kırganlı	3	Hozat	no	hostile
		Pülümür		
		Tercan		
Aşağı Abbas	2	Hozat	yes	hostile
Yukarı Abbas Uşağı	3	Kalan	no	hostile
Kalan	10	Erzincan	yes	hostile
Confederation:		Pülümür		
Bozukanlı-Keçel		Ovacık		
Birmanlı				

657 Dersim. *Jandarma Umum Kumandanlığı Raporu (1932)*, (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2012), 111-152.

Bal uşağı				
Aşuranlı				
Kalan Yukarı Abbas				
Damanlı		Ovacık Erzincan	yes	neutral
Perihan		Kalmanlı	no	neutral
Beyit	5	Ovacık	yes	hostile
Arslan Uşağı	4	Ovacık	yes	neutral
Bezgevir-Bezgâr	3	Ovacık	yes	neutral
Topuzoğlu		Ovacık	no	hostile
Koç Uşağı	7	Çemişgezek Hozat	yes	hostile
Maksut Uşağı	9	Ovacık	yes	hostile
Resik Uşağı		Hozat Çemişgezek	yes	hostile
Şem Uşağı		Hozat Çemişgezek	yes	neutral
Karsanlı		Nazımiye Pülümür Erzincan Tercan	yes	loyal
Lôlanlı	2	Pülümür Erzincan Tercan Nazımiye Hınıs Varto	yes	hostile
Rotanlı	2		yes	hostile
Sisanlı		Pülümür Erzincan	yes	loyal
Kemanlı		Pülümür Tercan	yes	hostile

Maskanlı-Karsikanlı		Pülümür Kiğı Erzincan Nazımiye	yes	neutral
Sür Uşağı		Mazgirt Pertek	yes	loyal
Haydaranlı	2	Nazımiye Erzincan Haydaran Mnt.	no	hostile
Şeyh Mehmedanlı-Mamdanlı	2	Tercan Nazımiye Mazgirt Erzincan	yes	loyal
Zernaklı		Pülümür Refahiye Hınıs	yes	hostile
Çerekli-Çarıklı	3	Pülümür Tercan	yes	hostile
Yusufanlı		Mazgirt	yes	neutral
Hizoli		Mazgirt Malatya Elazığ	yes	loyal
Caferli-Sivanlı		Kemah	yes	hostile
Beyhanlı		Hınıs	yes	neutral
Kismurlu		Tercan Nazımiye	yes	neutral
Şokeri		Kiğı	yes	loyal
Hörmekli-Horlik		Varto Kiğı Nazımiye Kuruçay	no	loyal

		Refahiye		
Demenanlı		Mazgirt	yes	hostile
Zerkavik		Dereçıkaran - Temkin Mts.	no	neutral
Pilvenk	2	Pertek	yes	neutral
Beritanlı	5	Elazığ	no	hostile
		Palu		
Şeyhan		Mazgirt	yes	loyal
Kodan		Mazgirt	yes	loyal
Balabanlı	4	Pülümür	yes	loyal
		Tercan		
		Erzincan		
Derviş Cemal Evladı		Ovacık	yes	loyal
		Kemah		
		Erzincan		
		Pülümür		
Saai Sultan-Sarı Saltık Evladı	-	Hozat	yes	loyal
Ali Abbas Evladı		Kemah	yes	neutral
		Erzincan		
		Ovacık		
Şadilli		Kiğı	yes	neutral
		Mazgirt		
		Palu		
		Refahiye		
		Erzincan		
		Nazımiye		
		Kuruçay		
Kâz		Kiğı	yes	loyal
Gransor		Kiğı	yes	hostile
Karabaş		Kiğı	yes	loyal
Baba Mansur		Mazgirt	yes	neutral
		Nazımiye		

		Pülümer Erzincan Tercan Sivas		
Sultan Munzur		Ovacık Erzincan	yes	neutral
Ağuçan		Elazığ Erzincan	yes	loyal
Kureyşanlı	8	Kemah Pülümür Nazımiye	no	hostile
Şükranlı		Kiğı Hınıs Varto Sivas Mazgirt Hısnımansur Kiğı Muş	yes	loyal
Şeyh Mehmed Dede Evladı		Malatya Dersim Erzincan	yes	loyal
Pir Sultan Evladı		Pülümür Erzincan	yes	loyal
Şevalanlı		Pülümür Erzincan	yes	hostile
Cibranlı		Kiğı	yes	hostile
Abdalanlı		Pülümür Tercan	yes	neutral
Seteri		Kiğı	yes	hostile

Arilli	5	Pülümür Erzincan Tercan Nazımiye	yes	neutral
Alanlı		Nazımiye Mazgirt Elazığ	yes	loyal
Hiranlı		Mazgirt	yes	neutral
Pütikânlı		Hınıs Kiğı	yes	loyal
Cambeğli		Hınıs Tercan	yes	loyal
Şekaklı		Çemişgezek Pertek	yes	loyal
Alhanlı		Pülümür Erzincan Tercan	yes	neutral
Badilli		Palu Kiğı Pertek Refahiye Kelkit	yes	loyal
Millî		Diyarbakır Syria	no	neutral
Izoli		Malazgirt Malatya	yes	neutral
Beles		Nazımiye Kiğı Tercan Amasya Çorum	yes	loyal
Kubatlı		Kiğı	yes	neutral

	Tercan		
Hasenanlı	Kiğı	yes	loyal
	Van		
Mala	Kiğı	yes	loyal
Yelci	Kiğı	yes	loyal
Şavak	Hozat	no	neutral
Sertik	Kiğı	yes	neutral
Kirtako	Kiğı	yes	neutral
Kümsun	Kiğı	yes	loyal
Puh-Pug	Çapakçur	yes	loyal
Az	Çapakçur	yes	loyal
Atma-Atmalı	Arapkir	yes	loyal
	Behisni		
	Divriği		
Hitsor	Hısnımansur	yes	loyal
Eşref	Ergani	yes	loyal
Harun	Ergani	yes	neutral
Bekir Uşağı	Elbistan	yes	neutral
Sine Millî	Elbistan	yes	neutral
Alhas-Alhasan	Elbistan	no	neutral
Bolyan	Malatya	yes	neutral

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