

WARS OUTSIDE THE WAR:
THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON TURKEY

by

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ABSTRACT

Title: Wars Outside the War: Social Impact of the Second World War on Turkey

The social impact of Second World War on Turkey has not attracted the attention of scholars because of the politico-historical approach in Turkish historiography, which holds the state, elites, macro-economic developments and diplomatic events as its focal point. However, although Turkey did not participate in the war, the people were affected by it profoundly. This thesis describes the effects of the war on the small peasants, working class, poor people, children and women.

In addition, because the domain of high politics was stable, the state has been regarded as the main actor of the period and of the developments in the post-war era. Accordingly, the people have been regarded as the passive and silent objects of the socio-economic conditions and the state policies.

This thesis shows that the people were not passive objects and that they resisted the state policies and socio-economic conditions created by the war. It is argued that their everyday life experiences and resistance should be taken into account in the interpretation of the post-war liberal-turn and institutionalization of the social policy.

As for the state, which was called a strong state, the war revealed its weakness in the face of the problems in the social field and social resistance in everyday life. In a nutshell, this thesis opens to question the orientalist conceptualization of the Turkish people as passive objects and the state as strong.

KISA ÖZET

Başlık: Savaş Dışındaki Savaşlar: İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın Türkiye Toplumuna Etkileri

İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın toplumsal alanda yarattığı etkiler, sıradan insanların deneyimleri ve sorunları döneme ilişkin literatüre hakim olan siyasal tarih perspektifi nedeniyle pek ilgi çekmedi. Devlet, elitler, makro ekonomik gelişmeler, diplomatik olaylar temel ilgi konusu oldu. Halbuki Türkiye savaşa katılmamasına karşın, insanlar savaştan derin bir biçimde etkilendiler. Ayrıca, savaş yıllarında yüksek siyaset alanının durgun ve sakin olması nedeniyle, kitleler, devletin ve içinde bulundukları sosyoekonomik koşulların karşısında sessiz ve pasif olarak resmedildi. Devlet ve elitler de savaş yıllarının ve savaş sonrasındaki gelişmelerin temel özneleri olarak kurgulandı.

Bu tez ilk olarak İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın küçük köylülük, işçi sınıfı, yoksul insanlar, çocuk ve kadın üzerindeki etkilerinin altını çizmekte ve onların yaşam mücadelelerini hatırlatmaktadır. Tezin diğer bir amacı da savaş yıllarına gündelik yaşam perspektifinden bakarak, insanların, içinde bulundukları koşullara ve devlet politikalarına gündelik yaşam içindeki direnişlerini ve meydan okumalarını göstermektir. Türkiye savaşın dışında kalmasına rağmen insanlar savaştan etkilenmişler ve gündelik yaşam içinde kendi savaşlarını vermişlerdir. Bu anlamda, tez, savaş sonrası ortaya çıkan gelişmelerde, gerek çok partili siyasi yaşama geçişte, gerekse sosyal siyasetin kurumsallaşmasında ve örgütlenmesinde, insanların savaş yıllarındaki direnişlerinin ve gündelik yaşam deneyimlerinin hesaba katılması gereğini ileri sürmektedir. Ayrıca, gündelik yaşam perspektifinden bakıldığında, genellikle güçlü bir devlet olarak nitelenen dönemin devletin savaşın yarattığı koşullar ve insanların direnişleri karşısında sanıldığı kadar güçlü olmadığı görülmektedir.

Özetle, bu tez, erken Cumhuriyet döneminde kitlelerin, devlet ve içinde bulundukları koşullar tarafından belirlenen pasif nesneler olduğunu, devletin ve elitlerin ise güçlü ve yegane tarihsel özneler olduğunu iddia eden, kitlelerin yaşam deneyimlerini, seslerini ve direnişlerini dışlayan yaklaşımları tartışmaya açmayı amaçlamaktadır.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Before the nineteenth and especially twentieth centuries, war was an event that involved only uniformed soldiers, many of whom were mercenaries, and showed its violence and brutality only at the front.¹ Making war and peace was the profession of kings, princes, and their soldiers. War was not as destructive as in the twentieth century.² The impact of war was limited to the soldiers fighting at the front generally due to the lack of destructive weapons, developed war technology, transportation and communication means widening the battle field and nationalist ideology mobilizing the masses for total war. Fighting took places on relatively small battlefields.

Events at the front determined the result of the war. The war did not involve the other segments of the population.³ In addition, it may be postulated that a war in one part of the world did not affect the other parts because of the lack of global economic, social,

¹ See Mehmet Gönübol, *Uluslararası Politika, İlkeler-Kavramlar-Kurumlar*, (Ankara: Attila Kitabevi, 1993), p. 395.

² Nicholas Hooper and Matthew Bennet, *The Cambridge Illustrated Atlas of Warfare: The Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 152.

³ See Faruk Sönmezoğlu, *Uluslararası Politika ve Dış Politika Analizi*, (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1999), p.342.

political and cultural inter-dependence between societies like in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

From the nineteenth century onwards, whereas the concept of the war remained the same semantically, its characteristics, forms and means, and so its impact on society, started to change. War was no longer an event involving only soldiers and professionals at the front. It became socialized in respect to its actors and impact, and started to affect the society behind the fronts very deeply. These centuries witnessed the emergence of a new concept, the “home-front.” In other words, all society became a part of war.

War became total and general from the nineteenth century onward. In his book, *On the War*, Karl von Clausewitz, who participated in the Napoleonic Wars, created and strongly emphasized the concept of “total war,” according to which war is related to society and has many social dimensions.⁴ Consequently, the fragile barriers separating war from peace and soldiers from civilians had already eroded by the First World War, to virtually disappear between 1939 and 1945.⁵

There were many reasons behind the transformation of the war and its impact on society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. After the mid-nineteenth century, the new technologies of industrialization also provided the means to produce new and more deadly weapons, which further changed nineteenth and twentieth century warfare.⁶ Developments in the war and communication technologies increased the mobilization of the armies and the capacities of the armies to reach any place in the world easily.⁷ The industrial

⁴ see Robert Nispet, *The Social Philosophers*, (n.p.: Paladin Books, 1976), p. 82

⁵ Brian Bond, *War and Society in Europe, 1870-1970*, (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), p. 168. In addition, see Bronislaw Malinowski, “An Anthropological Analysis of War,” in *War: Studies from Psychology, Sociology Anthropology*, Leon Bramson- George W. Goethals (ed.), (New York: Basic Books Inc. Publishers, 1964), pp. 263-264

⁶ Peter Browning, *The Changing Nature of Warfare: The Development of Land Warfare From 1792 to 1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 92-93

⁷ As Oral Sander writes, “indeed, even at the beginning of the nineteenth century the length of the road traveled by Napoleon's armies one day was not much longer than Alexander the Great did. However, the industrial revolution changed the world within a very short time, like fifty years, that maybe fifty thousand years could not make this change.” Oral Sander, *Siyasi Tarih İlkçağlardan 1918'e*, vol. 1, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, n.d.), p. 190

civilization of coal and steel allowed the mobilization of soldiers, tanks and airplanes.⁸ The effect of the weapons started to reach the big cities and the great numbers of people behind the war zones.

Second, in the nineteenth century a series of developments engendered by the industrial revolution, communication technologies, railroads, telegraph and the expansion of capitalist world economy meant societies became much more dependent on each other economically, politically, and culturally. In such a world, it is not difficult to think that when a war occurred in a distant part of the world, even the societies outside the wars started to be affected by it.

Third, nationalist ideologies, developments in the means of propaganda and of social control by the modern state that became highly capable of social control over its populations made war a question of all citizens of the country. The relations between the battlefield and home-front increased and almost became united through the advent of compulsory military service. In this process, many symbols and ideologies encouraged citizens to participate in the armed forces for the national good.⁹ A war in which populations and nationalistic feelings were mobilized could not be limited like the earlier aristocratic wars.¹⁰

In addition, after the mid-nineteenth century, the number of participant states in wars started to increase, and wars started to become much more general. So the impact of any one war spread to all parts of the world, becoming global, like the world economy. War started to affect not only participant countries, but also neutral peoples. And finally, as Hobsbawm points out, the First World War and especially Second World War became completely global wars.¹¹

⁸ Raymond Aron, "War and Industrial Society," in *War: Studies from Psychology, Sociology Anthropology*, Leon Bramson- George W. Goethals (ed.), (New York: Basic Books Inc. Publishers, 1964), p. 380

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 52

¹⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *Kısa 20. Yüzyıl, 1924-1991: Aşırıliklar Çağı*, (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınları), p. 70

¹¹ Hobsbawm, p. 38

Another factor behind the increased importance of society or of the home-front in wartime was related to the change in state-society relations and in the understanding of politics, power and legitimacy. Especially owing to social changes and social transformations in the nineteenth century, there emerged a governmentality that sought social control and the welfare of the society to legitimize and strengthen the political power. During the nineteenth century the fact that social welfare measures became a must for the legitimacy of the political power led to the emergence of a new understanding that took the masses into account.¹² Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the rise of the importance of the home-front coincided with the raise of the social field as an intervened, regulated and controlled field for the legitimacy and strength of the state.

Indeed, class struggles, the labor question, and social revolutions in nineteenth century Europe brought the masses into the center of political life. In this process, as Charles Tilly argues, wars, which progressively increased their effects on society, played a partial role in the revolutions and mass movements.¹³ Consequently, the home-front emerged as an area in which the state sought to increase economic productivity, social welfare and order, which were not only a part of the war against the external enemies, but also against the internal enemies, revolutionary factors, opponent forces and all risk factors in society for the political power during the war. In a nutshell, in the modern age, when the economic and social conditions of the masses and their welfare became the main components of the legitimacy of political power, the political consequences of the social and economic impact of war became critical for states.

In the twentieth century, war created very deep economic, social, political and cultural upheavals in the participant countries. For instance, after the destruction of the

¹² Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyal Devlet, Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşruiyet, 1876-1914* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), p. 16

As Cengiz Kırılı has also argued in his article, “Kahvehaneler ve Hafiyeler: 19. Yüzyıl Ortalarında Osmanlı’da Sosyal Kontrol,” even the Ottoman rulers did not ignore the public opinion after the mid-nineteenth century. See Cengiz Kırılı, “Kahvehaneler ve Hafiyeler: 19.Yüzyıl Ortalarında Osmanlı’da Sosyal Kontrol,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 83, (Winter 1999/2000)

¹³ Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492-1992* (Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995), p. 6, 12, 14

First World War, many intellectuals questioned the enlightenment philosophy based on belief in progress, freedom and the development of mankind.¹⁴ The social impact of World War I played a role in the socialist revolution in Russia. The Second World War also played a key role in various social, political and cultural transformations in many countries.¹⁵

In Ottoman-Turkish history, wars constituted critical milestones. Those in the late nineteenth and especially early twentieth centuries brought not only diplomatic and administrative changes, but also many social, economic, political and cultural upheavals and transformations. The Balkan Wars, World War One and the Independence War lay the foundation of a relatively new society and regime.¹⁶

However, in general, Ottoman-Turkish historiography disregards the social impacts of war on Turkey. As Karaömerlioğlu points out, despite the common belief that every Turk is born a soldier, our historiography ignores the war periods. In particular, the social and economic impact of the wars has received inadequate attention in Ottoman-Turkish historiography.¹⁷

Indeed, works on this subject are exceptional. Ahmet Emin Yalman's *Turkey in the World War*, written in 1930, remains one of the most important books on the impact of the

¹⁴ See David Ohanna, "The "Anti-Intellectual" Intellectuals as Political Mythmakers," in *The Intellectual Revolt against Liberal Democracy, 1870-1945*, Z. Sternhell (ed.), (Jarusalem, 1996); Zeev Sternhell, "Modernity and Its Enemies: From the Revolt against the Enlightenment to the Undermining Democracy," in the same book. In addition, see Allan Megill, *Aşırılığın Peygamberleri, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, (Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, 1998), pp. 179-181

¹⁵ See Harold L. Smith, *Britain in Second World War: A Social History*, (Manchester University Press, 1996); Francis E. Merrill, *Social Problems on Home Front, A Study of War-time Influences*, (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, n.d.); William Moskoff, *The Bread of Affliction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Mark Harrison (ed.), *The Economics of World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons (ed.), *The Home Front War: World War II and American Society*, (Wesport: Greenwood Press); Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1981); Lloyd, E.M.H., *Food and Inflation in the Middle East, 1940-1945*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1956)

¹⁶ For the social impacts of the Balkan Wars, First World War and War of Independence on Turkish society, see Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Turkey in World War*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930); Zafer Toprak, "The Family, Feminism and the State During the Young Turk Period (1908-1918)" *Première Rencontre Internationale sur l'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne*, (Istanbul-Paris, Éditions ISIS, 1991), pp. 441-452; *Türkiye'de "Milli İktisat"*, (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1982); *İttihat-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye'de Devletçilik (1914-1918)*, (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2003)

¹⁷ See M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Bugünü Anlamak İçin Kritik Bir Not," *Virgöl*, no.38 (Eylül 2003).

First World War on Turkey. In addition to this, Zafer Toprak's recent work, *Union and Progress and the World War* (İttihat-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi) can be regarded as the most important book bringing new documents and sources about the economic impact of the First World War and state economic policies during the war to light. No other works in Ottoman-Turkish historiography offer much deeper or detailed data and interpretations on the economic, social, and cultural aspects of the war on Turkey. However, these two works remain within the modernization paradigm. They regard the destructive impact of the war deterministically as the emergence of a new and much more progressive, modern, national and capitalist society.

But there has been no detailed work interpreting the social impact of the war from the fronts of the other parts of society, such as the working class, small peasants, marginal groups, the poor and people resistant to the changes accelerated by war, who are referred to in general as ignorant masses in modernist and state-centrist Ottoman-Turkish history writing.

As for the Second World War, which coincided with the last years of the single-party era, it receives even less attention than the First World War since Turkey did not participate in the conflict despite the fact that in the age of globalization all countries were much more susceptible to the effects of a total, general and destructive war even if they did not participate in it. In Turkish historiography, the Second World War period is handled under the heading of "the National Chief Period," from the viewpoint of the elites and their high politics, diplomacy, administration, state economic policies, the development of the bourgeoisie and macro-economic developments. When the social effects of the war are mentioned, observations remain short, superficial and descriptive. In addition, these effects have not been documented in detail or interpreted from the perspective of state-society relations in the early Republican era. When they are given attention and interpreted, the interpretations remain within the modernization paradigm and political history approach.

Except for the state and mercantile elite, the other side of the coin, in other words the experiences and the historical role of the people, to be more specific, the poor people, working class, small peasants, women and children have not been taken into account.

Republican history writing, particularly the history writing of the Second World War years in Turkey, be it official or liberal and leftist, does not include their experiences, behavior and resistance in their own terms. Their living conditions, sufferings, their resistances, voices, complaints, demands and their relations with the state in everyday life have not been a theme of republican historiography. Official, liberal and leftist historiographies shared the view that the main actors of Republican history were the state, the elite, and the bourgeoisie. In this context, the story of the Second World War period and its effects on the post-war era recounts generally the elites, state, rising of the bourgeoisie, macro economic developments, administrative and diplomatic events and progress of modern state, as stated below.

This situation is linked to the common modernization paradigm and politico-historical approach in Turkish historiography. Because Ottoman-Turkish historiography focuses on the elite and the state, the people have been regarded as unorganized, passive and silent objects under the state hegemony and power.¹⁸ In turn, again, the social

¹⁸ Indeed, the Ottoman-Turkish historiography considers the people as passive objects of the ruling elite since they had no organizational, ideological, public politics or party politics. In addition, the Ottoman state is generally considered to have been a strong, centralist, omnipotent, omnipresent entity that controlled its subjects who were passive objects of the Sultanate.

For these kinds of approaches, see Halil İnalcık, "Comments on Sultanism: Max Weber's Typification of Ottoman Polity," *Princeton Papers on Near Eastern Studies*, p. 53. Additionally, see Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu: Toplum ve Ekonomi* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1996), p. 12. In addition, see Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu: Toplum ve Ekonomi*, (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1996), p. 9.

Emphasizing the principles of the economic policies of the Ottoman State, Mehmet Genç also argues that the "Ottoman state was centralist and strong state." Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2000), p. 55, 72, 73, 76

Şerif Mardin argues that the Ottoman Empire epitomized Asiatic despotism and the central-strong state. In this direction, he suggests that the Ottoman Empire can be described with the term of "Eastern Despotism" (Doğu Despotizmi). Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset, Makaleler I*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), p. 24. The Ottoman Empire for Mardin was thus patrimonial and statist in character. This state tradition was passed on to Kemalism and the Republican regime. *ibid.*, p.59. According to Mardin in Ottoman Empire social classes were passive and did not show any resistance to the state. Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset, Makaleler I*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), p. 104.

According to Ahmet Güner Sayar, Ottoman culture and state tradition meant an authority that hindered the formation of a passionate and critical individual, and necessary grounds for the emergence of this kind of individual. Ahmet Güner Sayar, *Osmanlı'dan 21. Yüzyıla Ekonomik, Kültürel ve Devlet Felsefesine Ait*

scientists and historians have preferred to focus on the state, state institutions, elite and their high politics to understand the history of Turkey and Turkish politics.

In a similar vein, the Republican state is considered to be strong and centralist state as a continuation of the Ottoman Empire. The mainstream approach to the Republican era, be it nationalist, liberal and leftist, interprets the past as a scene covered by the elites and state. Whereas some historians and social scientists argue that the state and elites have had a progressive and democratic role in Turkish history, others argue the reverse. However, both sides share the view that the elite, state, bourgeoisie and their high politics occupy the most importance role in the history of the Republic. They argue or imply that the people were not able to participate in the political life due to the lack of ability to organize against the strong, central and organized state. Therefore, the people were silent and passive objects under full hegemony and authority of the early Republican state without any effect in the course of the history and Turkish politics.¹⁹

Gelişmeler, (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2001), p.25. The individual was thus rendered ineffective. He was not a subject, but an object determined by state. *ibid.*, p. 140.

Criticisms of these approaches and show the role and resistance of the people in the Ottoman history, see Halil Berktaş, “Köylü Ayaklanmaları ve Oryantalizmin “Yok”lar Listesi,” *STMA* 6 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları); Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler (1841)* (İstanbul: Eren, 2002); S. Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam: Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), p. 63; Karen Barkey, *Eşkiyalar ve Devlet: Osmanlı Tarzı Devlet Merkezileşmesi*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), pp. 8-9; Salih Aynural, *İstanbul Değirmenleri ve Fırınları, Zahire Ticareti (1740-1840)*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001), p. 148.

¹⁹ For example, Metin Heper also believes that the people were passive object of the ruling elite in Turkish history. In Turkey an organized civil society did not develop as in the West. This was a legacy from the Ottoman Empire, where the political, economic and social power coalesced in the center. Metin Heper, “Strong State and Economic Interest Groups with Special Reference to Turkey,” in *Strong State and Economic Interest Groups, The Post-1980 Turkish Experience*, Metin Heper (ed.), (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), p.17; additionally see Metin Heper, “The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics,” *Journal of International Affairs*, 54, no.1, (Fall 2000), p.63. Whereas civil society was always weak and unorganized, the state did have a strong organization and control over society. Metin Heper, *State Tradition in Turkey*, (Washington: The Eothen Press, 1985), p. 98. Thus the state in Turkey has placed emphasis on rule from above; keeping civil societal elements at bay has not been a major issue; no need has been felt to let civil societal elements participate in government; and the state has not felt itself obliged to be responsive to civil society. Heper (1991), p. 17. Moreover, the transition to democracy was adopted by the conscious decision of the state elites rather than a consequence of rising social groups. See Heper (1991), p.17; and see Heper (2000), p. 78.

While explaining the main features of Turkish political and social life, Ayşe Kadioğlu also bases Turkish politics on political behaviors of the Turkish citizens who cannot decide themselves, but only consents to decisions made by others. Kadioğlu also explains the Turkish identity and Turkish politics with reference to the strong state tradition oppressing civil society. Ayşe Kadioğlu, *Cumhuriyet İdaresi, Demokrasi Muhakemesi*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1999), p. 15, 34.

In his recent book, Çağlar Keyder argues that the Republican state was independent entity from the society and had a great authority over the society which was weak. Çağlar Keyder, *Memâlik-i Osmaniye’den Avrupa Birliği’ne*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları), p. 110.

To conclude, despite their differences in explanation of the characteristics of the Kemalist state, both official historiography and liberal or leftist history writings have much in common in their approach to the past. Overlooking the everyday realities, they share the state-elite centrist and discourse-based approach, looking at the elite mentalities, ideals, principles, discourse, behaviors, institutions and policies in interpreting Turkish history. The main actors of Turkish history, be they good or bad, are none but the strong, omnipotent and omnipresent state and elite. Thus, the state power and the historical role of the rulers are exaggerated. The people, especially the lower classes are generally excluded from history because they are considered passive and ignorant objects that are subjected to state policies.

But, I think that that they fall short of understanding the social history of the state and society relations and of Turkish politics during the early Republican era. In this approach, the historical developments in western history are recognized as a level of excellence regarded as being progressive. Due to the absence of formal class conflicts, revolutions, public uprisings of workers and peasants, organizational resistance of the lower classes, social movements with well-defined aims such as those that took place in western history, Turkish society is considered backward, passive and ineffective in comparison. This causes the illusion that there are no social dynamics in the history of Turkey other than the state, elite and external forces.

Many other social scientists shared this view in general. For example, see Ahmet İnel, *Düzen ve Kalkınma Kısacasında Türkiye* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1996), p. 82; Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1990), p. 68; Emin Fuat Keyman, *Türkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi*, (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları), pp.186-187; Ömer Çaha, "Sivil Toplum-Devlet Karşıtlığında Türkiye'de Cumhuriyet," Nuri Bilgin (ed.), *Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve Kimlik*, (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları), pp. 257-261; İlkay Sunar-Sabri Sayarı, *Turkish Democracy: Changing and Persistent Problems, and Prospects*. Paper delivered at the ECPR Workshop on "Late Democratization in Southern Europe," Aarhus, Denmark, 29 March-3 April, 1982, pp.7-8, 11, 14

Another version of the state and elite-centrist approach to Turkish history is official history-writing, which emphasizes the struggle of the nationalist and progressive leadership against the internal and external enemies and backwardness. In this version of the statist-elitist approach, the state and elite are first in history. The difference of this version is that the belief that the Kemalist elite and the RPP were progressive, democratic, and good overall. See Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınları, 1973); Niyazi Berkes, *Batıcılık, Ulusçuluk ve Toplumsal Devrimler*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitap, 1997); Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'nin Siyasi Hayatında Batılılaşma Hareketleri*, vols. 1 and 2 (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1999); T.Z. Tunaya, *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde Atatürkçülük*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1998).

This characteristic of the mainstream historiography is also reflected in the history writing of the Second World War, or National Chief, period. Despite the great social upheavals, class struggles and resistances in social field, this period is handled from the elite behavior, ideals, discourse, high politics limited to the elites, macro-economic developments and development of the bourgeoisie. The social impact of the war, suffering, experiences, voices of the people, social problems, the battle of the people for survival, their relations and interactions with the state, their resistance in everyday life against the wartime social and economic conditions and state policies have been overlooked.

In this context, the role of the people in the development of the social policy measures and in the liberal turn of the single-party regime in the post-war era has not received the attention they deserve. In many works on the war period and developments of the post-war period, the elite factor²⁰ and external factors²¹ are emphasized.

Nevertheless, all of these works mention the increasing social discontent caused by the war in one way or another, although generally these are limited to superficial, short and

²⁰ For example see Erik J. Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), pp. 300-302. The main factor was the break in the Jön Türk coalition. Especially Wealth Tax and Land Reform worried the bourgeoisie and landowners. Additionally, international context forced the elite the democratization.

Mahmut Goloğlu (1972), Cemil Koçak (1996), Taner Timur (2003) and Çetin Yetkin (2003), Kemal Karpat (1956 and 1996), who examine the period specifically, share the elite-centrist and modernist approach in spite of their different interpretations. Their stories do not include the ordinary people's experience, resistance and ordinary people factor in the history.

The most vulgar examples of the modernist-nationalist approach, such as Metin Toker's book, emphasize İsmet İnönü's infatuation with democracy and western civilization, and, as mentioned by Metin Heper, his infatuation with English political culture. See Metin Toker, *Demokrasimizin İsmet Paşalı Yılları, Tek Partiden Çok Partiye* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1990), p. 17. Metin Heper, *İsmet İnönü: Yeni Bir Yorum Denemesi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999).

For Ş. S. Aydemir and Bülent Tanör, the democratization in the mid-1940s was a result of Kemalist ideology, constitution and state structure. See Ş.S. Aydemir de, *İkinci Adam İsmet İnönü, 1938-1950*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2000); Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri* (İstanbul: YKY, 2001), p. 338.

In addition to this, Cem Eroğul, who makes multi-factors analysis, also emphasized the İnönü's drive for democracy. See Cem Eroğul, "Çok Partili Düzenin Kuruluşu," *Geçiş Döneminde Türkiye* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1998).

²¹ Many writers argue that the external factors played a key role in democratization of the regime in the post-war period. Çetin Yetkin, for instance, strongly emphasized the external factors. See *Karşı Devrim, 1945-1950* (İstanbul: Otopsi Yayınları, 2003), pp. 150-178, 151-153. In addition see Hakan Yılmaz, "Democratization from Above: In Response to the International Context: Turkey, 1945-1950," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no.17, (Fall 1997)

However, Doğan Avcıoğlu and Bülent Tanör open these arguments to question. According to them there were no any external pressure or factor. See Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Milli Mücadele Tarihi*, vol. 3, (İstanbul, 1974), p. 1565; and *Türkiye'nin Düzeni*, (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1998), p. 519. Additionally, see Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2001), p. 338

general statements and descriptions. These works also generally give priority to state policies and conflicts among the nationalist elites as subject matters.

At this point, Şevket Pamuk's emphasis on the peasant resistance to the state economic policies in an article is exceptional.²² But, although Pamuk mentions the burden of the tax policies for the peasants during the war and the resistance by the peasants, the sufferings of the peasants, their daily life experiences and the everyday practices of the Soil Product Office in the village and the implementation of the Soil Product Tax are not discussed.

The most important work that puts emphasis on the social discontent and the social and economic impact of the war in the transition process is Kemal Karpas's *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System*. Karpas claims that the social discontent produced by the war affected the transition decision. However, he does not explain how this social discontent emerged or how it affected the political power in any detail. The everyday life experiences of and resistance of the small peasants, working class and poor which affected the political power indirectly are not described deservedly.

Since Republican historiography, including Karpas's work, focuses on high politics, intellectual life and macro-economic developments, the political aspects and implications of everyday life of the people cannot be seen. It is thus claimed indirectly that there was no resistance or politics made by the people under the single-party regime, which dominated all aspects of political life. Since there was no political organization with stated aims, a program, and ideology, it is assumed that there was no politics and opposition. Karpas, for instance, claims that the peasants were ineffective and passive in these years because they lacked their own political organization and doctrine.²³

²² Şevket Pamuk, "War, State Economic Policies, and Resistance by Agricultural Producers in Turkey, 1939-1945," in *Peasants & Politics in The Modern Middle East*, Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury (ed.), (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991). For the Turkish version, "*İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında İaşe Politikası ve Köylülük*" 75 Yılda Köylerden Kentlere (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999).

²³ See Kemal Karpas, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi Party System*, (Princeton & New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 108. For its Turkish version see *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Kültürel Temeller*, (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1996).

By the same token, the perspective of high politics captured the history writing of the Turkish working class in the war period. From the perspectives of high politics, it may be claimed that without the organizations like the Communist Party of Turkey (CPT) (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*), there was no resistance from or struggle of the working class. From this perspective, the resistance and the historical role of the working class were limited to the institutional and organizational, open, public and ideological movements.

Thus, almost in all works on the lower income people and working class politics in Turkey, they were regarded as passive and unvoiced during the Second World War under the National Chief Regime.²⁴ Şehmus Güzel, who focuses especially on working class experiences during the Second World War, does not give information about them.²⁵ Again, in his article on the working class movements during the early republican period, Erdal Yavuz argues that there were no working class movements from 1938 to 1946.²⁶ Many other writers underestimate the effects of the working class resistance or struggle on the development of certain social policy measures taken by the state and private employers during the war and post-war period.²⁷

In a nutshell, the institutionalist and elite-centrist Turkish historiography and leftist intelligentsia, who have had a sort of fetishism about state and power, ignore the everyday experiences and struggles of the people. Therefore, the social impact of the war and stories of the people melt into the elite stories.

²⁴ Kemal Sülker argues that with the Second World War the workers had to adjust themselves to the war conditions and suffered many difficulties because of the absence of their organization. See Kemal Sülker, *İşçi Sınıfı'nın Doğuşu*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitap, 1998), p.77

²⁵ See Şehmus Güzel, "Capital and Labour During World War II," *Workers and The Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and The Turkish Republic, 1839-1950*, Donald Quataert and Erik Jan Zürcher (ed.) (London and New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1995)

²⁶ Erdal Yavuz, "Sanayideki İşgücünün Durumu," *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sine İşçiler (1839-1950)*, Donal Quataert and Erik Jan Zürcher (ed.), (İstanbul: İletişim, 1998), p.173

²⁷ Yıldırım Koç, "İşçi Hakları ve Sendikacılık," 11. Tez, no.5 (1987); Cemil Koçak, "1940'ların İkinci Yarısında Sosyal Politika, Devlet, Sınıflar, Partiler ve Dayanışmacı/Vesayetçi İdeoloji," *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyete Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar*, I. Uluslararası Tarih Kongresi, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları); Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Tek Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1920-1946*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1999); and Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1946-1963*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002)

Consequently, as mentioned above, in Ottoman-Turkish historiography, even in leftist versions, the everyday life experiences of the people, which may indirectly affect the political power, are generally ignored. The focal point for Turkish social scientist is the organized, ideological, elitist party politics. Also, since the state and state-society relations are analyzed from the perspective of the elite ideals and discourse, the gap between the state's plans and its practices and resistance of the people are overlooked. The capacity of state is not taken into account in analyzing its strength. Therefore the state appears to be omnipotent, omnipresent and powerful, whereas the people, especially the working class, small peasants, lower income people and marginal segments of the population, are regarded as passive and ignorant objects without any subjectivity in their behavior.

However, there are different forms of the political activism being carried out in every day life and there are different paths through which the historical are constituted. In this point, Michel Foucault proves that politics cannot be limited to the high politics carried out by only governmental institutions. He points out that politics, the relations of power, legitimization, and resistance are everywhere in the modern societies of modern times. Power is not controlled by one hand, but diffused throughout society and everyday life.²⁸

From this point of view, Foucault points out that it is not sufficient to take into account state and high politics in order to understand the power relations and historical changes in society. In the same vein, it may be argued that it is not sufficient to look at high politics in order to see the elements of many resistances and oppositions diffused throughout society, like power. In a nutshell, it is possible to say that Foucault opens up different modes of criticism and alternative models of resistance by raising objections to the way in which we describe human agency.²⁹

²⁸ Randal McGowen, "Power and Humanity, or Foucault Among Historians," in *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body*, Colin Jones and Roy Porter (ed.), (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 99

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 98

Mahmut Mutman also argues that there are different kinds of criterion and dimensions of being a subject in history. He proposes that the concept of subject should not be described in the modernist-westernist sense, as a subject who claims his right and is organized, but as a subject who makes endless efforts and struggles to survive and reproduce himself in the course of every day life.³⁰

In this context, Scott's concept of "everyday forms of resistance" has potential for the construction of the everyday behavior of the people as a different criterion of being historical subject. From this perspective, it is fruitful to construct the everyday behaviors of the people concerning political power directly or indirectly as a politics, or infra-politics as Scott puts it, in order to go beyond the limitations of the institutional, elite-centrist, intellectual, and political history and the modernist concept of historical subject, and finally to show that there may be different dimensions of being a subject. In lieu of the modernist, exclusive and elite-centrist approach, it can promote the revelation of the historical role of the popular classes and groups as independent subjects behaving on their own terms and release Turkish historiography from the chains of the strict criterion of being the historical subject of modernist and elitist political history. In other words, Scott's approach opens new perspectives on the criterion of being a historical subject other than the existing criteria such as open, organized, ideological, programmatic behaviors launching open political initiatives and the setting of revolts openly.³¹

Scott claims that there is a different kind of resistance in everyday forms that are also the real basis for classical forms of resistances and politics. According to Scott, everyday forms of resistance require little of no coordination or planning, they make use of

³⁰ Mahmut Mutman, "Özne: Bir Başka Arşiv," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no.73 (Yaz 1997), p. 23

³¹ From this point of view, some social scientists and historians from other parts of the world interpret the the role of everyday experiences and resistance of the people in politics. For example, see Tanya Korovkin, "Weak Weapons, Strong Weapons? Hidden Resistance and Political Protest in Rural Ecuador," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 27, no.3 (April 2000); Forrest Colbourn, "Footdragging and Other Peasant Responses to the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13, no.22 (1986); Rodrigo Montoya, "Class Relations in the Andean Countryside," *Latin American Perspectives* 9, no.3, (1982); Benedict J. T. Kerkvliet, "Claiming the Land: Eveyday Politics in the Phillipinnes with Comparisons to Indonesia, Peru, Portugal, and Russia,"

implicit understandings and informal networks; they often represent a form of individual self-help, they typically avoid any direct, symbolic confrontation with authority.³²

In this respect, for Scott, in order to grasp the core of political life “one must look rather at the constant, grinding conflict over work, food, autonomy, ritual –at everyday forms of resistance...It is rare for peasants to risk an outright confrontation with the authorities over taxes, cropping patterns, development policies, or onerous new laws; instead they are likely to nibble away at such policies by noncompliance, foot dragging, deception. In place of attacks on public or private grain stores, they prefer pilfering.”³³

He shows that the small resistances of the people may cause macro problems for the political power. For example, “poaching and squatting on a large scale can restructure the control of property. Peasant tax evasion on a large scale has brought about crises of appropriation that threaten the state.”³⁴ In similar way, “armies are undone and revolutions facilitated by the desertions of infrapolitics. De facto property rights are established and challenged. States confront fiscal crises or crises of appropriation when the cumulative petty stratagems of its subjects deny them labor and taxes.”³⁵

According to Scott, the calm and stable political life in the domain of legal-political relations and the lack of their political organization with well-defined aims do not mean necessarily that the people are passive object under the full hegemony of the rulers and superior classes. They can challenge to the rulers and superior classes in everyday life and express their complaints, desires and demands in many informal and anonymous ways. For example, Scott said that “we are all familiar with grumbling or muttering as a form of veiled complaint. Usually the intention behind the grumbling is to communicate a general sense of dissatisfaction without taking responsibility for an open, specific complaint...

Journal of Peasant Studies 20, no.3 (1993), p. 481; Gillian Hart, “Engendering Everyday Resistance: Gender, Patronage and Production in Rural Malaysia,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 19, no.1, (October 1991)

³² Scott (1987), p. 419

³³ Scott, (1985), p. xvi

³⁴ Scott, (1990), pp. 191-192. In addition, see Scott (1985), Chapter 7

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.200

Much of the day-to-day political communication from highly vulnerable subordinates to their superiors is conducted in terms of just such grumbling.”³⁶

In a nutshell, the fact is that the ideological insubordination of subordinate groups also takes a quite public form in elements of folk or popular culture.³⁷ Moreover, these anonymous behaviors do not only transmit the common discontent and complaint of the lower classes, but also affect the practice of life and high-politics in the long run.³⁸ Indeed, the rumors and folk culture transmitted from one to the other justify some behaviors among the lower-classes by constituting an extended group of people that is informal, unorganized and atomistic, but with similar interests and concerns, who interact and remain in informal contact with each other through rumors and folk culture. “It is no exaggeration to say that much of the folk culture of the peasant ‘little tradition’ amounts to a legitimation- even a celebration- of the evasive and dissimulating forms of resistance examined here. In this and other ways the subculture of the peasantry helps to create a ‘climate of opinion’ that often underwines tax evasion, poaching, theft, avoidance of conscription, and so forth.”³⁹

It can be claimed that the lower-classes’ everyday forms of resistance, complaints by means of rumors and folk culture reveals the fact that their consciousness are not completely dominated by the hegemonic culture, morality and ideology. They have an autonomous consciousness shaped by their life conditions and experiences.⁴⁰

In a nutshell, the main point Scott criticizes is that “the historiography of class struggle has been systematically distorted in a state-centered direction.”⁴¹ For Scott, it is in vain to look for the same criterion in all class struggles continuing beneath to surface in everyday life. At this point, he draws attention to the fact that Marx, the most important theorist of the class-conflict, regarded the theft of wood in mid-nineteenth century

³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 154-155

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 157

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 146

³⁹ Scott, (1987), p. 452

⁴⁰ Especially Guha determines out the ordinary people’s consciousness, to be more specific, the Indian peasants’ autonomous consciousness is not fully dominated by the elites. See Ranajit Guja, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

Germany as a form of class-conflict.⁴² Scott gives another example, of the “Italian Strike” in history for the lower-class potential for resistance. “Where the consequences of an open strike are likely to be catastrophic in terms of permanent dismissal or jail, the work force may resort to a lowdown of to shoddy work on the job...In industry, the slowdown has come to be called an Italian Strike.”⁴³ In this respect, a situation in which the working classes seem to be passive and in harmony with the social and political order in the visible political scene of the country may comprise various class conflicts and resistance in everyday forms.

On this point, English historian E.P. Thompson’s criticisms of the sociological and conceptual perception of class should be taken into account. For Thompson, while there was class struggle there was not class in its nineteenth century form. The point is that ‘class is a historical formation, and it does not occur in ways prescribed as theoretically. Because in other places and periods we can observe “mature” (i.e., self-conscious and historically-developed) class formations, with ideological and institutional expression, this does not mean that whatever happens less decisively is not class.’⁴⁴

Indeed, from this point of view, the concept of everyday forms of resistance is very functional in going beyond the narrow conceptual and institutional perception of class struggle and of resistance, which is very exclusive for the boundless class experience.

In other words, the lack of a well-defined aim, plans and ideals or a political organization of the lower classes did not necessarily mean the lack of class struggle and resistance. Therefore, it may be misleading to focus on the intentions that lie behind the behaviors of the lower classes so as to understand their historical role and political dimensions of their daily behaviors. In order to understand the actual role of the lower classes in politics at the first stage requires seeing their practices in everyday life rather

⁴¹ Scott (1987), p. 422

⁴² Scott (1990), p.195

⁴³ *ibid.*, p.34

than the people's intentions and existence of their representatives in the domain of high-politics that aims to take over political power. In terms of peasant politics, as Chatterjee argues, "the domain of legal-political relations constituted by the state cannot be regarded as the exclusive, perhaps not even the principal, site of peasant struggle."⁴⁵ Again, as Guha shows in *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, the struggles, resistances and discontent of the ordinary people may appear in anonymous forms in everyday life without any formal organizations, party-politics, leadership or ideology which are regarded as the sign of the political consciousness of the people in narrow terms.⁴⁶

In addition, in the analysis of the state society relations and the history of the early Republican era, there is another point overlooked by many Turkish historians and social scientists are the state capacity. Because the elite aims, plans and laws were overemphasized instead of state capacity and state performance in everyday life, the state has been seen as a strong structure over society.

In this point, first of all, Michael Mann's distinction between two kinds of power, despotic power and infrastructural power, has explanatory force for state-society relations in early Republican era.⁴⁷ For Mann, in the infrastructural sense of power, logistical techniques which have aided effective state penetration of social life, literacy, enabling stabilized messages to be transmitted through the state's territories by its agents, coinage, and weights and measures, allowing commodities to be exchanged under an ultimate guarantee of value by the state, rapidity of communication of messages and of transportation of people and resources through improved roads, ships, telegraphy, and so

⁴⁴ See Harvey J. Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians, An Introductory Analysis*, (New York: St. Martin's Press), p. 202

⁴⁵ Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments, Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 170

⁴⁶ See Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999)

⁴⁷ Michael Mann, *Sources of Social Power, The Rise of Classes and Nation-States (1760-1914)*, vol. 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 59-60

forth are the most important components of power.⁴⁸ However, despotic power has not been effective because they have lacked the effective logistical infrastructure for penetrating and coordinating social life⁴⁹

According to Weiss and Hobson, the strong states are also those which rely at least on arbitrary and unstable forms of control such as terror or physical force. Infrastructural capacity has thus been identified with the increasing ability to penetrate and extracts as a share of national income. Besides, the coordinating capacity of state is very important measurement of its power.⁵⁰

Joel S. Migdal suggests that the state image should not be confused with state practices while examining state and society relations. He argues that states are shaped by two elements, image and practice. In the press and in everyday speech, the state has been represented as if were a coherent, integrated, and goal-oriented body.⁵¹ After image, the second key aspect of the definition of state is practices.⁵²

For Migdal, there are three main criterion of state power. First, *compliance*: at the most elementary level, the strength of the state rests on gaining conformance to its demands by the population. Second, *participation*: in practical terms, the leaders may want peasants to sell produce to the state cooperative or to employ state-licensed clinics instead of unauthorized healers. Participation denotes repeated voluntary use of and action in state-run or state-authorized institutions. And third, *legitimation*: the most potent factor accounting for the strength of the state, legitimation, is more inclusive than either compliance or participation. State leaders want citizens to comply with their authority not

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 9

⁴⁹ Michael Mann, *States, War and Capitalism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 29

⁵⁰ Linda Weiss- John M. Hobson, *States and Economic Development: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 4

⁵¹ Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 13

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 18

from the inertia of unreasoning routine or the utilitarian calculation of personal advantage, but from the conviction that compliance is right.⁵³

In a nutshell, state capabilities include the capacities to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways.⁵⁴ Strong states are those with high capabilities to complete these tasks, while weak states are at the low end of the spectrum of capabilities.⁵⁵

It is possible to measure the state power in Foucauldian terms. Indeed, social control in the Foucauldian terms is the most important feature of the modern state. So the degree of social control and to what extent the state penetrates the society in Foucauldian terms can be an indicator of state power.

According to Foucault, the functions of the state in modern times have been enlarged since the Medieval Ages because from the end of the Medieval Age onward, the modern state started to take care of the maintenance of public health, the welfare, potentials and productivity of the population rather than the strict obedience for its own legitimacy and strength. According to Foucault, institutions for homeless children, orphanages, courses of apprentices, monasteries, factories, protection societies, works of moralization, foundations of charity, workers flats have the function of discipline diffused throughout modern society.⁵⁶ Policies of education, health and social welfare emerged as the state's tools for normalization and social control. Thus, Foucault calls teachers, instructors, and doctors the judges of normalization, who subordinate bodies, desires, moralities, and the performance of people to power.⁵⁷ In the modern age, "governments were no longer content with mere obedience. They desired a large and productive

⁵³ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in The Third World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 32-33

⁵⁴ Migdal also takes into account the financial extraction capacity of the state as an indicator of state power and social control. In this direction, the tax effort (that means the ratio of actual collected tax to expected tax by government can give some clues about the social control and financial capacity of the state. From this point of view, Migdal expresses the state capacity with the following formulation: *Relative Political Capacity (RPC)* = actual extraction / expected extraction. see *ibid.*, p.283

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 4-5

⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, *Hapishanenin Doğuşu*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2000), p. 440

population. They became concerned to promote the health of the people, less from any particular concern for humanity than from a regard for the strength of the state. This change of focus entailed a transformation of governmental power which appears no longer in the form of control by repression but that of control by stimulation.”⁵⁸ As Gordon also argues, “from the modern age on, real basis of the state’s wealth and power lies in its population in the strength and productivity of all and each.”⁵⁹

For this aim, many regulations, institutions, and agents of the state, which Paul Rabinow calls “police,” emerged.⁶⁰ From this point of view, the main criterion for the state power is not related to police in usual terms, or gendarme force of the state, but the availability and sufficiency of police, in the terms Rabinow mentions above, such as educational resources and techniques, teachers and instructors, hospitals, doctors, government health officials, a well-organized social welfare practices, crèches, orphanages, well-educated and qualified government officials, workers, organized and influential administrative organizations, and other social services and so forth.

In this context, it is possible to say that the most important indicator of the strength of the modern state is effectiveness of its social control. Thus, the strength of the state can be tested much more accurately as to the whether or not it provided the requirements of the social control and its relations with the people in social field instead of the elite discourse or laws.⁶¹

As mentioned above, Ottoman-Turkish history writing, to be more specific in respect to our subject, the history writing of the Second World War period in Turkey, does

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.440

⁵⁸ Randal McGowen, “Power and Humanity, or Foucault Among Historians,” *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body*, Colin Jones and Roy Porter (ed.), (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 99.

⁵⁹ Colin Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies on Governmentality*, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (ed.), (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 10

⁶⁰ Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 277

⁶¹ As Dinges warns us, the discourse based analysis of the social control process “overestimates discourse and neglects everyday realities.” Martin Dinges, “The Reception of Michel Foucault’s Ideas on Social Discipline, Mental Asylums, Hospitals and the Medical Profession in German Historiography,” in *Reassessing*

not take the unorganized resistance, state-society relations in everyday life and state capacity problems into account in interpreting the period. So the importance of the social impact of the war, the sufferings, struggles and resistances of the people in everyday life, the state practices in social field have been overlooked.

Indeed, as will be shown in this thesis, the Second World War affected Turkey, especially the ordinary people, in many ways. They encountered great difficulties. The war exacerbated the existing problems in society and added new ones. In this period, the Turkish government introduced a number of economic and social measures in order to neutralize the effects of the war and find solutions to its financial problems originating from military expenditures. The working classes, small peasants, and the poor were affected most by these measures. The government tried to obtain agricultural production from producers by means of a practice of forced purchases and the Soil Production Tax (*Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi*) in order to feed the cities and the army, and to create new financial sources for the increasing military expenditures. In order to fill the gap between the increasing needs for industrial production and the lack of sufficient labor force because of conscription and high turnover rates in the work force, the government resorted to waged compulsory work (*ücretli iş mükellefiyeti*) and a ban on leaving the workplace by means of the National Security Law (*Milli Korunma Kanunu*).

In this process, Turkish society experienced a covert war in everyday life between the state, employers and the working class, small peasantry, and the poor rather than tensions between the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie that have been overemphasized by Turkish historiography. They challenged the state and state policies despite its monopoly in legal political life. The people gave their wars against the social and economic conditions.

In this context, I think that the characteristics of the relations between state and society under the rule of the single-party government became much clearer during the war. The war destroyed the image of the single-party government and revealed its weaknesses. The state tried to intervene in society much more than ever before, and in turn the society resisted to it much more. The limitations of the state capacity to intervene in society and the resistance and subjective behavior of the ordinary people as independent subject within the everyday life became clearer than ever before, as will be discussed in this thesis. The people resisted the socio-economic conditions and the state policies in everyday life.

Therefore, I think that the examination of the state and the ordinary generally the war period will be a litmus test for state-society relations, the strength of the early Republican state, and the role of the people as an independent subject of the history of the early Republican era. In addition to this, in order to understand the transition to multi-party politics and the wave of social policy developments in the post-war era, an examination of the state-society relations in everyday life during the war will be illuminating

Within this framework, in Chapter Two specifically, the economic impact of the war on Turkey, inflation, food problems, scarcities, malnutrition, black-marketing, the bread question, rationing, price controls in the cities, especially in İstanbul and the state and society responses to these problems are examined. By examining the price controls, the rationing program and relations between the state and bakers, who were very important in the solution of the bread shortage and problems and so the food question, the state capacity to penetrate economic and social life, its social mobilization capabilities, and the responses of the people to state policies are examined.

Chapter Three and Four look at how the conditions of small peasants and workers were deteriorated by the war. Again, the state intervention into their lives, labor and working life, the capacity of the state in this intervention and the resistance of peasants and workers to this intervention receive focus in these chapters. By explaining the independent

reasoning of them and their resistance in their own terms, the most important point I wish to make here is that the small peasants and working class behaved with an independent subjectivity and an independent conscious from that of the Kemalist, nationalist, “hegemonic” principles of the state. I will show how they did not give priority to nationalism, secularism, civilization, the father state or some the goals imposed by Ankara, but to their own everyday needs imposed by their conditions of life. In addition, these chapters aim to show how the small peasants and working class suffered from the state much more than the victims of the Wealth Tax and so-called sufferings of the bourgeoisie from the bureaucracy.

In Chapter Five, in a similar vein, along with the social crisis created by the war, the state social policies and social welfare measures against the economic and social problems created by the war are analyzed. First, a theoretical background is presented in order to reveal how the state motivation for social policies is related to legitimization, power and economic productivity. Second, the social policy and welfare practices by the state and “civil societal organizations,” which were strongly encouraged by the state and in touch directly or indirectly with the state and bourgeoisie, are examined. However, for a comprehensive interpretation of the state and society relations of the period, not only the state’s aims for social policies and welfare programs, but also the gap between the state’s aims and practices, the complaints, demands and resistance of the people who were subjected to these policies are centered in this chapter. To what degree the state had the necessary means, equipment, organization and personnel for its social policies, and to what degree social measures met the needs in order to eliminate social effects of the war are discussed.

In this context, first, this chapter opens the question of the orientalist conceptualization of the early Republican state as strong and of the people as passive and silent about their problems and the state policies concerning them by showing the voices of

the people. Second, it shows the groundless of the populist and etatist characteristics of the early Republican state by underlining the insufficiencies of the social policies and welfare programs of the RPP. Third, this chapter deals with especially the governmental aid to the state employees, not from the point of view of the decisions and law, but of the practices. Indeed, I will examine to what extent the aid pleased the state employees and created a privileged official class unaffected by the social impact of the war. I think that the answer to this question lies in the practice of the governmental aid rather than in the decisions and plans of the state.

And finally, this chapter sheds light on the background the post-war social policy measures and regulations, pointing out the complaints, demands of the people, bureaucrats and the intellectuals compelled the state to take some social measures. In this respect, it aims to open the external factors thesis about the post-war wave of social policy enactments and regulations to question by underlining the internal, local and social needs and the role of the working people's resistance.

As for the sources of this thesis, rather than the elite discourse, laws, regulations which matched to the elite ideals and plans instead of the social and historical realities, this thesis is based on the middle pages and back pages of the newspapers in which the stories, voices and resistance of the people, everyday practices of the state and the details of the everyday life were hidden. In addition, the petitions of the people sent to the General Secretariat of the Republican People's Party and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and the reports of the deputies in their election districts based on the interview with the people or the observations of the social life are the main basis of this thesis. Indeed, it is possible to grasp the social impact of the war, the people's resistances and consciousness in their own terms, their discontent and public opinion from these documents.

In addition, memoirs, which are always an important sources for understanding any historical period in detail, also sources in this work. Finally, although the place of the

literature as a historical source is a controversial issue among the historians, I agree with Ömer Türkeş's argument that literature, especially novels, enables us to see the details of the everyday realities and social life in the past, instead of the abstract concepts of the social sciences.⁶² Thus, I refer to the novels and poems in the description of the people's everyday life realities during the war period.

This thesis describes the social impact of the war on Turkey, but it is not limited to this description. It aims also to shed light on Turkish politics, state-society relations, its subjects and its characteristics in the early Republican era, first by showing the role of the resistance of the people; and then by discussing the limitations of the state power and hegemony, and the gap between state plans and practices during the war. So, this thesis tests the validity of the basic assumptions and arguments of Turkish political history, which give honor to the bourgeoisie and elites as the main actors in Republican history, and the orientalist arguments of a strong state and the passive-ignorant masses. Accordingly, it aims to shed light upon the social background of post-war developments.

⁶² Ömer Türkeş, "Taşra İktidarı!", *Toplum ve Bilim*, no.88, (Spring 2001), p. 224.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE WAR THE FOOD QUESTION AND THE PROVISIONING OF THE CITIES

The General Economic Effects of the Second World War in Turkey

For Turkey, the Second World War came after a decade in which the global economic crisis was experienced deeply. The economic and social upheavals starting from the beginning of the twentieth century with the Balkan Wars and continuing with the First World War, the War of Independence and the economic crisis of the 1930s made the social effects of the Second World War much more severely felt by society. In addition, Turkey's underdeveloped economy, in respect to those of the west, rendered it more vulnerable to the social impacts of the war despite the country's neutral stance. As a result, although Turkey managed to avoid the violence and widespread devastation that other countries experienced during the period, the war did not leave the country unscathed. As Morris Singer comments, "the war further had a highly adverse effect on the country's

economic development. This can be seen first and probably foremost in the fate of the plans which awaited realization during this time.”⁶³

The first effects of the war appeared in foreign trade, which was all but brought to a standstill. Many goods produced by the combatant countries could no longer be received by buyer countries that were neutral during the war.⁶⁴ Furthermore, upon the occupation of the twelve islands and the laying of mines in the Aegean Sea by German battleships in 1941, the ports of İzmir and İstanbul were closed to foreign trade de facto.⁶⁵

With the onset of the war, foreign trade decreased to levels reminiscent of the hard times of the 1930s. In the first ten months of 1940, the amount of export of agricultural goods, which were the main export items, was 276 million kg less than that of 1939 and 344 million kg less than that of 1938.⁶⁶ In 1948 prices, the value of export goods decreased from 724 million TL in 1938 to 277 million TL in 1944.⁶⁷

The proportion of the value of agricultural export goods to agricultural value-added reveals the changes in the degree of the marketing of agricultural goods. This proportion, which was 0.19 between 1926 and 1930, and 0.17 between 1931-35, declined to 0.11 between 1936 and 1940 due to the boom in agricultural production because of good harvest conditions. The decrease in exports because of the war’s effect on foreign trade decreased this proportion to 0.08, its lowest level.⁶⁸

As for imports, the amount in the first ten months of 1940 was 248 million kg less than that of 1939, and 327 million kg less than that of 1938. This was 48 and 63 million TL less, respectively, than that of 1939 and of 1938.⁶⁹ The rate of imports continued at these low levels for the duration of the Second World War. In 1948 prices, the value of imports

⁶³ See Morris Singer, *Economic Development in the Context of Short-Term Public Policies (1938-1960)*, (Ankara: Turkish Economic Society Publications, 1977), pp.7-9

⁶⁴ Prof. Dobresberger, “Harpte İktisadi Teşkilat”, *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.5, (December 1940), p.13

⁶⁵ A. Başer Kafaoglu, *Varlık Vergisi Gerçeği*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2002), p.22

⁶⁶ Tevfik S. Atalay, “Harbin Tesirleri ve Dış Ticaretimiz”, *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.25, (December 1940), p.10

⁶⁷ Yahya S. Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisat Tarihi (1923-1950)*, (Ankara: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2002), p.114

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.330

⁶⁹ Atalay, p.10

decreased in 1938 from 850 million TL to 257 million TL in 1941. This rate remained at approximately 300 million TL in 1944 and 1945.⁷⁰

So economic development suffered during this period because of the reduction in the quality and the availability of the necessary inputs. The mobilization led to a shortage of skilled labor, while supply and shipping difficulties resulted in the decline of imported goods, such as textile machinery.⁷¹ Goods from overseas were simply not available in the Turkish markets. The lack of necessary tools, machines, and spare parts for new industrial investments and the refurbishment or expansion of the existing industrial units disrupted the industrialization process.⁷² Especially in 1941 and 1942, a decline in foreign raw materials and capital goods as well as an increasing diversion of potential investments funds to national defense interfered with industrial production.⁷³ Some industrial projects, such as the İzmit Paper Factory, were left half finished. In addition, the construction industry was sidelined by the war. The state had to put many construction projects off until later.⁷⁴

Another reason for the decline in the industrialization process was the costs of national defense and military mobilization. During the time, military and other administrative expenditures increased. As Singer notes, only a small portion of the four year-plan could be implemented. The government now assigned top priority, moreover, to those segments of the plan which would help to heighten the country's military power.⁷⁵

The costs of national security climbed from 163 million TL in 1938 to 710 million TL in 1944. Military mobilization caused not only labor shortages in agriculture and industry, but also a great financial burden on the public because the state took on the costs

⁷⁰ Tezel, p.115

⁷¹ Singer, p.10

⁷² For instance Hacı Ömer Sabancı decided to establish an oil factory, but he was not able to do it because of the lack of necessary machines, tools and material. The war hindered the imports of the necessary materials to establish such a factory. See Nimet Arzık, *Ak Altının Ağası: Hacı Ömer Sabancı'nın Hayatı*, (İstanbul: Faik Yolaç Basımevi, 1972), p.85

⁷³ Singer, p.19

⁷⁴ See Hüseyin Avni, "Harp Senesi İçinde Fabrikalarımızın Faaliyeti Arttı mı Azaldı mı?", *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.28, (January 1941), p.22

of the feeding and clothing of nearly one million soldiers. The national security costs in the state budget increased. Rising inflation also decreased the economic capacity of the Special Administrations of Provinces (İl Özel İdareleri). Their public services became a burden to the central budget.⁷⁶ Whereas the cost of national security increased, the social expenditures such as health, education and other the share of social services in the general decreased considerably.⁷⁷

Men were conscripted into the armed forces unsystematically. Many qualified individuals were conscripted by the military, which resulted in a decrease in the qualified labor force, which had been very limited to begin with before the war. In the National Assembly, Saffet Arıkan, in response to Hikmet Bayur, who had criticized the government for not providing the necessary capital goods and tools, said that: “If we bring them and construct factories, we cannot benefit from them because of the lack of technicians. Moreover, it is impossible to construct the factories on account of the war.”⁷⁸

In a speech in the National Assembly, Kazım Karabekir underlined the lack of skilled workers because of military mobilization. He criticized the unsystematic conscription of skilled workers, which rendered some factories unable to continue their production efficiently.⁷⁹

In addition to skilled labor, some entrepreneurs were conscripted and their factories were left idle. In this situation, many of the entrepreneurs demanded that the government intervene in their factories in order to keep up production and employment. But the government did not confiscate or intervene in these production units.⁸⁰

Apart from the effects of the military conscription, the real values of the credits for industry, agriculture and trade decreased during the war. The real values of credits from

⁷⁵ Singer, p.9

⁷⁶ Kafaoğlu, pp.32-33

⁷⁷ See Tezel, p.447

⁷⁸ Karabekir, p.376

banks for the 1942-1945 period were lower in real terms than they had been in the 1930s. Deposits in banks remained low from the increased number of bank notes produced during the war. The proportion of deposits to the volume of total money and deposits in the economy decreased from 61 % in 1938 to 35 % in 1944 and 1945. People avoided deposits because inflation and emission caused the loss of the real value of the money.⁸¹

However, during the Second World War, in spite of the war's effect on industry and trade, the merchants, big landowners and industrialists found ways to profit. The economic policy of the government paved the way for capitalist accumulation among merchants and industrialists. Especially importers benefited from inflation during the war period. Indeed, whereas the prices of imported goods in the customs houses increased proportionally by 189 %, according to an index compiled by the İstanbul Chamber of Commerce (İstanbul Ticaret Odası), these prices increased approximately by 380 %.⁸² This means that importers enjoyed very high profit margins. As Tezel writes, although the Refik Saydam government increased the taxes from imported goods at the beginning of the war, in the course of time, the rate of tax revenues from imported goods to all tax revenues decreased and the government did not intervene in this process.⁸³ Instead the government opted to intervene in the business of small guilds and tradesmen in order to prevent a rise in prices. This policy would meet with resistance from many small guilds and tradesmen.

Merchants made money by mediating in the sale of goods produced by the state enterprises during the period.⁸⁴ In spite of some costs, such as transportation, taxes and increasing international prices, merchants reflected their costs to consumers thanks to

⁷⁹ See Kazım Karabekir, *Ankara'da Savaş Rüzgarları: İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, yay.haz. Faruk Özerengin, (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2000), p.372

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.386

⁸¹ Tezel, p.125

⁸² *ibid.*, p.258

⁸³ *ibid.*, p.181

⁸⁴ Consumption goods, especially the monopoly products (tobacco, cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, salt, and matches) were sold mainly through privately owned firms with some profit margin left to the dealers. See Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi Party System*, (Princeton & New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), p.89

inflation.⁸⁵ It was reported that the number of merchants increased steadily in the period under study as well.⁸⁶

In the industrial sector, in spite of some adverse effects of the war, such as the slow-down of industrialization, the establishment of new factories and extension of existing factories, the out-put of existing industrial units increased. Industrialists also enjoyed high profits in these years. The main factors of this situation were the decrease in imports, high prices and the lack of competition with imported goods in domestic markets. As Hüseyin Avni reported, many industrial units dominated the domestic market because of the decrease in imports and lack of competition. So they started to work at full productivity. Moreover, they enjoyed high profits thanks to the National Emergency Law, which prohibited workers leaving from their workplaces, introduced the right to overtime work, and canceled the weekend holiday.⁸⁷

As for large landowners, they profited from the high agricultural prices in 1942 and 1943. After the Saraçoğlu government's decision to free price policy, the prices of agricultural goods increased. Although the government put some agricultural taxes into effect, the large landowners were able to produce to sell in the market and to make money. Some of them entered into black market activities.⁸⁸ In this process *hacıagas*, the large landowners who made money in a short time and spend it extravagantly, emerged in cities.

In this context, it is not difficult to estimate that the war affected peasants and the working classes in the cities most. The most important effect of the war on the peasants and agriculture of the country was the military mobilization that removed many able men from the production process. Of the nearly 1.000.000 soldiers in the standing army 750.000

⁸⁵ See Singer, p.114

⁸⁶ See Hüseyin Avni, "Tüccarlar Çoğalıyor," *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.19, 1942, s.231-233

⁸⁷ Hüseyin Avni, "Harp Senesi İçinde Fabrikalarımızın Faaliyeti Arttı mı Azaldı mı?," *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.27, (December 1941), p.11

⁸⁸ Çağlar Keyder-Faruk Birtok, "Türkiye'de Devlet Tarım İlişkileri (1923-1950)" *Toplumsal Tarih Çalışmaları*, (Ankara: Dost Yayınevi, 1983), p.210

were peasants.⁸⁹ In fact, this segment of the population felt the most adverse effect of the war. Their productive capacities and life-standards decreased for the duration of the war.

The military mobilization of men who were mostly peasants also affected low-waged city-dwellers, the working classes and the poor in the cities. The shortage of labor in agriculture and some industries such as mining, which required peasants as labor force, played a key role in the decrease in agricultural production. In addition the great demand of a large army to the agricultural products also gave rise food shortages in the cities.⁹⁰ Labor shortages in some industries affected the provisioning of the cities and caused food shortages, the high cost of living and poverty in cities. As shown in Table 1, the total agricultural production decreased and remained low with regards to the pre-war period except for 1942.

Table 1- Gross Agricultural Production Index ⁹¹

Years	Index
1938	100.0
1939	103.8
1940	102.6
1941	86.0
1942	102.4
1943	89.0
1944	79.8
1945	60.7

In addition, military mobilization also negatively affected transportation throughout the country. The confiscation of draft animals, oxens and some vehicles by the state created difficulties in transportation and circulation of goods. The transportation projects in the Economic Plan of 1938 were not able to be implemented until the end of the war. For instance, the construction of Zonguldak and Trabzon ports, which were critical for the trade between north Anatolia and İstanbul was delayed to the 1950s. Ships which were employed in domestic transportation were insufficient in number, and were old and of

⁸⁹ Kafaoglu, p.74

⁹⁰ Asım Us, *Hatıra Notları (1930-1950)*, (İstanbul: Vakit Matbaası, 1966), p.498

limited capacity. Many ships that departed from Zonguldak, Rize and Trabzon ports arrived in İstanbul with great difficulty in winter. As a result, neither the Blacksea nor the Aegean were able to be used for transportation effectively.⁹²

The transportation difficulties had such an important role in the scarcities and high cost of living in the cities that the head of the National Assembly, Abdülhaluk Renda said:

Even if the wheat stores in the central Anatolia were overflowing, İstanbul would have some difficulties in feeding. The matter is not related to only the amount of wheat production, but also to its transportation. It is not possible to feed the people and soldiers of İstanbul and Thrace by means of a single railway line.⁹³

Therefore many businessmen complained about the insufficiency of capital goods and raw materials because of the transportation difficulties during the war.⁹⁴ This affected the costs of the industry and trade, and in turn, the prices of consumer goods, and thus contributed to the provisioning problems in the cities. The provisioning of the cities became much more difficult in such a way that lower income, working class and poor people became unable to cope with the increasing cost of living and the scarcity of consumer goods in the market.

As for finance, the increasing military and administrative expenditures compelled the government to seek new revenue sources. During the war the government increased tax rates several times, as in the case of various indirect taxes which collectively were known as national defense taxes. Moreover, the state put many new taxes in effect.⁹⁵

By the end of the war, the tax structure was in a state of chaos. Given Turkey's level of per capita income at the time, it was to be expected that direct taxation would provide a small percentage of the total tax revenue, but the taxes on gross earnings were levied primarily on wages and salaries. In its entirety, the tax structure became

⁹¹ Tezel, pp.306-307

⁹² See Minutes of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), 12-14 May 1943, pp.19, 57, 84

⁹³ Us, p.525

⁹⁴ Hüseyin Avni, "Harp Senesi İçinde Fabrikalarımızın Faaliyeti Arttı mı Azaldı mı?", *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.27, (January 1941), p.11

⁹⁵ For these various new taxes and increase in the rates of existing taxes see Tefik Alanay, "Yeni Vergi ve Resimler I," *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.14, (July 1940); Tefik Alanay, "Yeni Vergi ve Resimler II," *İktisadi*

considerably more regressive during the war than it had been during the 1930s. In addition, many of the indirect taxes were imposed on a specific rather than on an ad valorem basis. In such instances, not only did the taxes have no price elasticity and low income elasticity, but the revenue from them might fall during the hostilities because of a decline in the number of transactions which they taxed.⁹⁶ Since many taxes did not have income and price elasticity, no doubt fixed wage earners were affected adversely by these taxes, whereas merchants and industrialists were not affected substantially.

Indeed, especially the Soil Production Tax (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi Vergisi), which did not have income elasticity, and the Animal Tax (Hayvan Vergisi), and the Road Tax (Yol Vergisi) shook the small peasants. Faik Ökte, who wrote his memoirs and observations in *The Disaster of the Wealth Tax* (Varlık Vergisi Faciası), says that the burden of the Soil Product Tax on the peasants was as great as that of the Wealth Tax on the minorities.⁹⁷

One of the sources of revenue for the government was printing money, emission. During the war period, the government was not unable to prevent the money supply from rising rapidly as it struggled to finance the increasing expenditures. Whereas in 1939 the total money supply was 190 million TL, this amount reached one billion by the end of the war. In other words, the amount of currency in circulation increased proportionally almost five-fold. This became one of the main factors fuelling the rises in prices.⁹⁸

Another source of revenue for the government was raising the prices of the State Economic Enterprises' goods. The government resorted to this method in order to finance the budget and national security expenditures. The prices of Sümerbank goods and sugar

Yürüyüş, no.15, (July 1940), and Tefik Alanay, "Yeni Vergi ve Resimler III," *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.16, (August 1940)

⁹⁶ See Singer, p.12. In addition, see Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System*, Princeton & New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959, p.92

⁹⁷ Faik Ökte, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*, (İstanbul: Nebioğlu Yayınevi, 1951), p.36. See especially A.Başer Kafaoglu, *Varlık Vergisi Gerçeği*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2002).

⁹⁸ See Stefanos Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye*, cilt.3, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1992), p.149

were raised several times during the period.⁹⁹ These price rises became a burden for the working class, small peasants and poor people by contributing the inflationist trend.¹⁰⁰

A comparison between Tables 2, 3 and 4 shows that general prices in Turkey increased more than those in the combatant countries such as Britain, the USA, Germany and Japan, and some Middle East countries, such as Palestine, Egypt, Cyprus, Iraq and Sudan during the period under consideration.¹⁰¹

Table 2-Price Index of Turkey during the War¹⁰²

Years	Price Index
1938	100
1939	103
1940	124
1941	165
1942	280
1943	457
1944	420
1945	400

Table 3-Price Indexes of Combatant Countries During the War¹⁰³

Years	United Kingdom	United States	Germany	Japan
1939	103.3	98.6	100	140.5
1940	117.0	99.3	104	163.1
1941	128.8	104.3	106	165.1
1942	137.3	115.6	109	169.9
1943	141.8	122.7	110	180.3
1944	145.1	124.8	113	201.9
1945	147.7	127.7	-	-

Table 4-Wholesale Price Index in Middle Eastern Countries During the War

Countries	Wholesale Prices in 1944 (December 1939 = 100) ¹⁰⁴
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⁹⁹ Kafaoğlu, p.53

¹⁰⁰ These rises in prices of the goods and services produced by the public enterprises were criticized by the press. The government was accused of contradiction with itself because it struggled with the price increases and increased the prices of some goods and services at the same time. See "Yeni Zamlar Karşısında," 23.2.1944, Tan

¹⁰¹ E.M.H Lloyd, *Food and Inflation in the Middle East 1940-1945, One of Group Studies on Food, Agriculture, and World War II*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1956), pp.181-186.

¹⁰² Singer, p.11

¹⁰³ See Mark Harrison (ed.), *The Economics of World War II: Six Great Powers in International Comparison*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). I compiled this index from the statistical data in the book.

¹⁰⁴ See Lloyd, p.190

Egypt	273
Sudan	202
Palestine	297
Cyprus	286
Syria and Lebanon	812
Iraq	431
Persia	500

As shown by Tables 5, 6 and 7, in Turkey, the prices of foodstuffs and some basic consumption goods soared during the war. Between 1939 and 1943, the prices of foodstuffs consumed by low-income people such as wheat, flour, rice and eggs rose steadily.¹⁰⁵

Table 5-Price Index of Four Basic Foodstuffs

Goods	Prices (kuruş)		Rate of Price Increase (%)
	1939	1943	
Wheat	6	110	1733
Flour	15	110	966
Rice	35	185	428
Egg	1.5	9	500

Because it was the main food of the people, especially of the poor, bread was the most important problem during the wartime. The increase in the price of bread was almost four-fold in big cities such as Ankara and İstanbul between 1939 and 1943, as can be seen from Table 6.

Table 6 - Bread Prices in Ankara and İstanbul.¹⁰⁶

	1939 (kuruş)	1943 (kuruş)
Ankara	10.09	40.90
İstanbul	9.01	39.08

It is possible to see the expensiveness in İstanbul during the period under study from a price index conducted by the İstanbul Chamber of Commerce and Industry

¹⁰⁵ 1.5.1943, Son Posta

¹⁰⁶ See TC Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, Fiyat İstatistikleri (1933-1943), Ankara, 1944, p.4

(İstanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası). The index in Table 7 indicates the foodstuffs and main consumer goods' price movements from 1938 to 1944 in detail.¹⁰⁷

Table 7-The Price Movement of the Basic Goods and Foodstuffs (1938-1944)

Goods and Foodstuffs	Nominal Prices		1944 Prices (as 1938=100)
	1938	1944	
Bread	10.05	30	298.5
Meat	45.52	225	494.5
Vegetable	7.51	27.50	366.2
Beans	18.61	82.50	443.3
Chickpeas	17.62	88.50	502.3
Oil	98.82	464	469.5
Olive oil	51.85	294.50	568
Sugar	28	208.50	744
Rice	26.64	155.50	583.7
Cheese	48.78	183.50	376.2
Egg	1.71	7	409.7
Coal	5.33	13.75	258
Wood	370.08	1400	378.3
Soap	34.76	172	494.4

According to an estimation taking 1913 as a base, in 1941 Turkey experienced its highest price levels in twenty eight years. Accepting 1913 as 100, the 1941 average price level was 1328. This amount was more than the highest level reached in 1929 in wholesale goods prices of 1317.¹⁰⁸

While prices were increasing rapidly, real wages were in decline during the war. For instance, the share of wages within the budget decreased proportionally from 25 % in 1938 to 15 % in 1945.¹⁰⁹ As can be seen from Table 8 prepared by Şevket Pamuk, the recovery in the real wages which was accomplished by the Republican state in 1920s and 1930s after the First World War, the Second World War reversed this positive trend. Despite the nominal wages advanced between 1939 and 1945, the real wages of the working classes progressively decreased.¹¹⁰ And finally, in the same way, as can be seen

¹⁰⁷ *İstanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası Mecmuası*, no.6, 1944, c.60, p.127

¹⁰⁸ 13.5.1942, Tan

¹⁰⁹ Cemal R. Eyüpoğlu, "Memur Maaşları Meselesi," *Türk Ekonomisi*, no.31-32, 1946, p.68

¹¹⁰ See Şevket Pamuk, "Ücretlerin Gelişimi", *Türkiye Sendikacılık Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı-Tarih Vakfı Ortak Yayını, 1998), p.459

from Tables 9 and 10, in spite of the decline in the population increase, the GNP per capita diminished during the war.¹¹¹

Table 8-Nominal and Real Wages from 1914 to 1950

Years	Nominal Wages	Prices	Real Wages
1914	100	100	100
1918	-	-	30-40
1935	778	957	81
1939	841	988	85
1941	959	1313	73
1945	2272	3338	68
1950	3600	3403	106

Finally, although the GNP in 1948 prices increased almost 45% proportionally between the mid-1920s and the end of the 1930s, it decreased during the war.¹¹² If the decline in population growth rates during the war period is taken into consideration, it can be argued that there was a considerable reduction in per capita income. The following table indicates a decrease in population growth and in Turkey during the war. Table 9 shows the decline in per capita income in spite of decrease in population growth.

Table 9-Trend in the GNP Per Capita during the Second World War¹¹³

Source	Per capita income (in 1938 Prices)		Average Annual Decline (%)
	1939	1945	
UN	93	76	3.3
Some Research Columbia University	94	77	3.3
State Planning Organization	102	78	4.4
	102	69	6.3

Table 10-Average Annual Rates of Population Growth¹¹⁴

Period	Total	Urban	Rural
1927-35	3.4	2.9	3.6

¹¹¹ Singer, p.18

¹¹² Tezel, p.111

¹¹³ Singer, pp.17-18

¹¹⁴ Z.Y. Hershlag, Turkey: The Challenge of Growth, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p.329

35-40	2.0	2.7	1.7
40-45	1.1	1.5	0.9
45-50	2.2	2.3	2.2
50-55	2.8	5.7	1.8

The War, The Provisioning Question, State and Society

As can be seen from above, the Second World War shook the economy of Turkey. Although merchants and industrialists benefited from the economic conditions created by the war and took advantage of high prices and high profits, the reverse was true for low-income people, the working class and the majority of the peasants. They were not able to compensate for the increasing taxes and costs. They faced many hardships such as the high cost of living, food scarcity, malnutrition and hunger. As a matter of fact, they were the real victims of the Second World War in Turkey. However, they did their best to confront the conditions created by the War in order to survive.

The state also encountered many hardships in this period. The provisioning of the cities and the diminishing of the burden of the high cost of living on the people in cities were important questions for the state. It sought to provide the basic food for the survival of the lower income people in the cities who are suffered from malnutrition and hunger. So it introduced economic measures such as the rationing of bread and price controls, and struggled against the growing blackmarket for the provisioning of the cities. It also resorted to levying new agricultural taxes in order to solve the feeding problems in the cities. Despite these efforts, the government encountered many resistances and capacity problems in carrying out the provisioning policies. The traders and merchants explored many ways to cope with the state policies and regulations. The lower income people also resisted the limits placed by the rationing on the consumption of necessary goods such as bread. They also illegally manipulated the bread rationing in order to acquire much more bread.

The High Cost of Living and Food Scarcity in the Cities

From the first days of the war, prices began to rise and the blackmarket emerged and proliferated throughout the country. Prices started to increase due to declines in agricultural and industrial production which stemmed from the labor shortage, the transportation hardships created by the military mobilization and from the decrease in foreign trade and imports. Some goods disappeared from the market. Whereas many consumer goods became much more expensive, they also became poorer in quality. New taxes and price controls affected the quality of the goods and pushed many industrialists and traders to cut costs and so quality. For instance, during the period under study, the bread became so bad that it became the symbol of the social impact of the war in Turkey as will be described below.

The quality of many consumer goods became so poor that in some cases they threatened the people's health. In 1942 Vecdi Keyn said:

For a long time, it has not been possible to find unadulterated goods in the market. Especially I mean the goods that threaten our health. We cannot remember even the taste of cheese, milk and yogurt.¹¹⁵

Indeed, it is possible to see similar news and articles in the periodicals and newspapers of the period. The poor quality of the goods became a common grievance of the people in this period.¹¹⁶ For instance, in *Tan* newspaper, dated 9 June 1944, it was reported that consumer goods of poor quality such as blunt razor blades and broken clocks had become much more common in the market than ever before.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, because medicines could no longer be imported, the available medicines also had become so poor in quality that they were not effective.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Vecdi Keyn, "İhtikâr," *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.56, (April 1942), p.13

¹¹⁶ See Selman Cafer, "Gaz Kokan Peynirler," *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.11, (May 1940), p.15

¹¹⁷ 9.6.1944, *Tan*

¹¹⁸ "Yerli İlaçlar," *Yeni Ses*, no.2, 1939

However, the most important problem for the low-income peoples, working classes and the poor brought by the war was the food problem. This problem went beyond the malnutrition and reached constant hunger for some of the poor. It is possible to see this situation of the lower income poor people from the newspapers of the period, memoirs, and novels and stories reflected the period.

The memoirs of people who lived through the period under study illustrate the food scarcity, malnutrition and hunger during the wartime. In his memoirs, Faik Ahmet Barutçu wrote as follows:

The hunger was gradually becoming much more pressurized everywhere in the country. There were many cities which were not able to provide some foodstuffs such as rice, oil, and meat. İstanbul, as the most important center of the country, suffered from the food scarcity.¹¹⁹

Cahit Kayra's memoirs also point out the scarcities in main foodstuffs in İstanbul during the war years. In this period Kayra was an official in Anatolia. On the eve of the Wealth Tax, he received a letter from one of his relatives with a requests as follows.

The Wealth Tax will start to be implemented soon. All inspectors are assigned to the İstanbul. Please bring beans, rice, chickpeas, oil, cheese and whatever you can buy to us, when you come to İstanbul. It is not possible to find them in İstanbul.¹²⁰

Aslan Başer Kafaoğlu, a witness of the period, also described the food question in the cities. He described the hunger in the Black Sea region:

In big cities to skip meals became a rule of everyday life...In the Black Sea region the people had to eat the seeds of brooms because of hunger. In villages malaria, and in the Black Sea and İstanbul tuberculosis increased because of malnutrition and the lack of medicine.¹²¹

Said Kesler's articles on everyday life in İstanbul during the war are striking. He wrote that the cost of living was so high and food scarcity so widespread in İstanbul that some women from the city had started to go to the villages nearby to gather pieces of

¹¹⁹ Faik Ahmet Barutçu, *Siyasi Anılar (1939-1954)*, (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1977), p.250

¹²⁰ Cahit Kayra, *'38 Kuşağı*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), p.102

¹²¹ Kafaoğlu, p.17

wheat-remains in the fields left by the peasants for birds and worms. They gathered these pieces of wheat in their bags one by one every day.¹²²

In her memoirs, Zehra Kosova, who was a tobacco worker during the war time, also wrote of the scarcities and hunger in İstanbul in 1942 and 1943:

In the war years, surviving in İstanbul was very hard...The streets of İstanbul were full of hungry people. Those who were looking for a piece of food in garbage cans, begging for a piece of bread, those who were deserters from the army, the extreme poverty and scarcity became natural sights in the streets of İstanbul.¹²³

Extreme poverty, scarcities and hunger were all portrayed in the novels and stories telling about the war period. Sait Faik's story, *The Child in the Tunnel* (Tüneldeki Çocuk) tells about a poor child who tries to eat the muddy and dirty food dropped to the floor in the street by a waiter.¹²⁴ In his novel, *Çakrazlar*, Muzaffer Arabul depicted the struggle of a poor family to survive during the war period. In this novel, some women wait at the door of the municipality for the leftover food, stall meat and food, low weight and poor quality bread which has been confiscated by the municipality.¹²⁵

Kemal Tahir, in *Namusçular*, described the very high cost of living and decline in the purchasing power of the people in Anatolia.¹²⁶ In *Dying a Little More* (Biraz Daha Ölmek), Pınar Kür wrote that despite the fact that Turkey did not participate in the war, thousands of the people had died from hunger and malnutrition. The people were forced to eat the seeds of broom in these years.¹²⁷ In Orhan Kemal's *Struggle for Bread* (Ekmek Kavgası), the main subjects are poverty and the scarcities the urban lower income working people experienced in the wartime. Similar to events in Muzaffer Arabul's *Çakrazlar*, many people wait for scraps of food from some associations. In a striking example of people waiting for the scraps he wrote:

¹²² Said Kesler, "Köylünün Kurt Kuş Hakkı Diye Tarlada Bıraktığı Buğdaylar," 19.8.1942, Tan

¹²³ Zehra Kosova, *Ben İşçiyim*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), p.118

¹²⁴ Alev Sınav Çılgın, *Türk Roman ve Hikayesinde İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2003), p.36

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p.40

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p.44

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p.46

The land is transformed into mud made up of foods and worms. Children who are barefooted and older women with their rusty tins which are full of food-remains are leaving the place...The barefooted children and old women fight with each other to pick up and fill their rusty tins. There are fights for food between dogs...Sometime the dogs and people fight each other over a piece of bone.¹²⁸

Adnan Binyazar who experienced social and everyday effects of the Second World War as a child, in a novel based on his life, *The Giant Who Lost Its Tale* (Masalını Yitiren Dev), depicts his childhood in the war period. He suffered from extreme hunger and poverty. Binyazar writes about his sufferings as follows:

I gnawed some wood because of hunger. This is not a literary meaning, I really gnawed wood...We [he and his brother] were much better in respect to those who stayed at home because we could look for some food in the dustbins in the street. Once, when we were looking for food in a dustbin, we found a strange thing which smelled nice and tasted it. Since we thought that maybe it could be eaten with some bread, we brought it to home. My stepmother and stepbrothers laughed at us as soon as they understood this thing we had brought home to eat, toothpaste.¹²⁹

Binyazar states that he saw how hunger affected the relations between people and how it made them selfish and ruthless. In the war period, because of the widespread effects of the food scarcity and hunger on people life, he understood that the hunger made people enemies of each other.

In this period, I came to terms with the fact that hunger makes people hostile to each other and that hungry people do not have any merits, love, justice or compassion. In hunger, all of the egoism of people comes to light...Hungry people become a mob which assaults everything for a bite of food.¹³⁰

As Binyazar noted, the hunger and scarcities were not only physical facts, but also sensed psychologically and affected the relations between people. Indeed, poverty, scarcities and hunger pushed many lower income people into illegal acts to survive. Many state employees began to accept bribes, misuse their positions and abuse their rights and duties. Some workers resorted to pilfering, slowdowns the work, and absenteeism, and many peasants resorted to tax evasion and so on.

¹²⁸ See Orhan Kemal, *Ekmek Kavgası*, (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1968), pp. 6-7

¹²⁹ Adnan Binyazar, *Masalını Yitiren Dev*, (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2003), pp.82-83

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, pp.80-81

These behaviors can be seen from the news and literary writings, as will be shown throughout this thesis. For instance, in *Çakrazlar* of Muzaffer Arabul, Tehvit's mother, who is a nurse in a hospital, pilfers some American cloth and bread, and she sells some of them in the blackmarket. Tehvit is not pleased with mother's behavior. However, when he become an official and has to accept a bribe because his salary is so low, he begins to understand his mother. Moreover, he takes much more bread by means of the ration cards of dead people. However, he does have a prick of conscience because of these unlawful acts. But the struggle to survive inevitably brings some negative changes in the characters and the ethics of people. Some actions that have been considered illegitimate before the wartime become normal and legitimate in order to survive in wartime.¹³¹

In his book, *The Door of the Court* (Mahkeme Kapısı), Sait Faik described the individuals judged by the courts in this period. The thieves constituted of the large part of the accused people. These were generally poor people who suffered from hunger. Therefore they sometime had to resort to theft.¹³²

Indeed, the poverty, high cost of living, and food scarcity gave rise to property crimes by poor people; and the number of thefts increased constantly. Indeed, reports on the thefts are common in the newspapers of the period.¹³³ Another source of this subject is the *Statistics of Criminals of the General Directorate of Statistics of the Turkish Republic* (T.C. Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü'nün Hükümlüler İstatistiği). According to

¹³¹ Çılgın, p.43

¹³² ibid., p.37

¹³³ "Şehirde Hırsızlık Çoğalıyor mu?" 22.12.1943, Vatan; "Bu ne Hırsız Bolluğu !" 17.12. 1944 Cumhuriyet; "Azılı Bir Hırsız Yakalandı," 12.7.1943, Vatan; "Bir Hırsız 5 Ay Hapse Mahkum Edildi," 17.7.1943, Vatan; "Değirmen Bekçisi Hırsızlar Tarafından Öldürülmüş," 17.7.1943, Vatan; "Gümrük Antrepolarında Hırsızlık Almış Yürümüş," 9.7.1943, Vatan; "Bir Kasa Hırsız Yakalandı," 20.7.1943, Vatan; "Bir Gece Hırsız Yakalandı," 25.7.1943, Vatan; "Bir Karne Hırsız Mahkum Edildi," 18.9.1943, Vatan; "İki Küçük Hırsız Dün Yakalandı," 6.9.1943, Vatan, "Çamaşırcının Üstü Aranınca Çaldığı Eşyalar Meydana Çıktı," 20.9.1943, Vatan; "Karne Çuvallarını Delip Karne Çalmışlar", 21.9.1943, Vatan; "30 Bavul Kaçıran Bir Hamal Yakalandı," 6. 11.1943, Vatan; "Bir Hırsız 2 sene Hapse Mahkum Edildi," 11.11.1943, Vatan; "İki Kadın Çocuk Elbisesi Çalmışlar," 12.11.1943, Vatan; "Basma Çalarken Yakalandı" 20.11.1943, Vatan; "Küçük Bir Hırsız Yakalandı," 22.11.1943, Vatan; "Arkadaşının Cebinden 50 Lirasını Çalmış," 3.12.1943, Vatan; "Hastaneden Eşya Çalan Kadınlar," 28.12.1943, Vatan; "Bir Mahkumiyet," 13.2.1944, Tan; "Postayla Gönderilen Para Ulaşmıyor," 12.1.1944, Tan; "Evinde Yakmak İçin Kok Kömürü Çalmış" 1.1.1944, Vatan; "Hamamda Elbise Çalan Biri Yakalandı," 4.1.1944, Vatan; "Bir Amele Arkadaşının Parasını Çalarken Yakalandı," 5.1.1944, Vatan.

the data given by the statistics, whereas the total number of the people who were sentenced because of theft was 10.722 in 1939, this number climbed to 15.606 in 1943 and 15.223 in 1944. The rate of theft in the society increased almost 50% in the war period.¹³⁴

Indeed, it is possible to see from the newspaper the hunger and poverty as a cause of the thefts in this period. The poverty and hunger caused by the war made thieving much more acceptable and inevitable for poor people. For example, a poor washerwoman and her husband, whose child had tuberculosis because of malnutrition, resorted to stealing in order to feed and so provide improvement for their child. Since they could not afford the medicine in the prescription written by the doctor, first, they sold some of their household belongings to buy medicine. However, this was not enough to cure the child, who was suffering from malnutrition. The doctors told them that the child must be fed meat and fruit, so father of the child entered a garden near their home to steal some chicken and fruit. He thought that God would forgive him because he was trying to save a person whom God had created. He stole some meat and fruit two times, but the third time owner of the garden shot and killed him.¹³⁵

In her memoirs, Sabiha Sertel wrote about the interrogation of a woman arrested for stealing, by a judge. The judge asked why she had stolen. She replied that although she had three children and had to feed them. The woman added that she was a widow and could not find a job.¹³⁶ As can be seen from these examples, people resorted to stealing and illegitimate ways to survive, but thought that they had legitimate subjective reasons for their actions.

Other kinds of theft emerged with the food shortages during the war period. One of them was the stealing of rationing cards which had become coveted items.¹³⁷ In some

¹³⁴ See Hükümlüler İstatistiği, “Onuncu Bap: Mal Aleyhine Suçlar- Birinci Fasıl: Hırsızlık,” (Ankara: T.C. Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1956), p.92-94.

¹³⁵ “Allahın Verdiği Canı Yaşatmak İçin Çalacağım,” 21.7.1944, Tan

¹³⁶ Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1966), p.365

¹³⁷ “Adamın Elindeki Ekmeği Zorla Kapmaya Kalkmışlar,” 16.4.1943, Son Posta; “Karne Hırsızlığı,” 25.8.1942, Tan; “Karne Çuvallarını Delip Karne Çalmışlar,” 21.9.1943, Vatan; “Bir Karne Hırsız Mahkum Edildi,” 18.9.1943, Vatan.

cases, in packages and bags some foods and clothes carried by trains were opened and stolen by the thieves.¹³⁸

In addition, many poor women who could not feed their children resorted to abandoning them. For example, a woman who left her child was arrested by the police. During the interrogation, she said that she could not feed her children who were hungry and without clothes.¹³⁹ In another example, a woman killed her child because she was unable to feed it. In the same way, a man killed his child because of the economic depressions.¹⁴⁰ As will be examined in detail in Chapter Five, the number of abandoned and homeless children increased during the wartime in accordance with the increasing poverty and hunger.

As can be seen, the people resorted to some ways of survival which were illegitimate and unlawful. In this period, bribes among poor officials, thieving, pilfering, and child abandonment among poor people increased. What is important here is that in their actions the people had independent reasoning about interpretations of the usual social moral and religious codes. They reasoned according to their life conditions. Indeed, as will be explained in Chapter Three and Four, the peasants and workers, confronted with agricultural obligations and taxes and hard living and working conditions, also had similar independent reasoning in order to cope with the difficulties in which they found themselves. They perceived their illegitimate and immoral acts as legitimate and moral acts forced on them by their living conditions.

The food shortages and poverty in the cities caused many social problems during this period. As will be explained in detail in Chapter Five, the increase in divorces, the squatter's houses that emerged first in this period, diseases such as tuberculosis and typhus, students absenteeism in schools, the rising of vagrancy and juvenile crimes were also related to the rising of poverty and hunger.

¹³⁸ "Bagaja Verilen Çuvaldan Çalınan Maddeler," 20.4.1943, Tan

¹³⁹ Yavrusunu Soğuk Bir Gecede Sokağa Atmış," 18.4.1943, Vatan

The Food Question and The Political Power

Food and nutrition are the main needs of human beings, and as such provisioning is critical for the political power. First of all, having adequate supplies of food is important for the maintenance of the social and political order and the legitimacy of a political power in a country. It is especially critical in times of war. Scarcities, hunger, malnutrition and poverty may lead to social unrest, upheavals, and uprisings. If the country is involved in a war, these questions may cause the loss of the war or some difficulties in foreign policy at least. The reduction in the productivity of labor stemmed from malnutrition and hunger may cause a downturn in the economy and capitalist accumulation process as well. In other words, scarcities, hunger and malnutrition may pave the way for the destruction of the legitimacy of and power of a state. Therefore states take measures to address these questions in exceptional times like war. These measures range from social policies and social welfare programs to economic policies such as price control, rationing and some extraordinary taxes distributing the burden of the economic crisis more equally. As will be seen below, the main motivation for these policies is the legitimacy of the power, the fortification of the state power against internal and external risk factors, and economic productivity.

It is clear that there is a relation between economic conditions and “social problems.” People who cannot satisfy their main needs cause some events which are regarded by the political power as problems.¹⁴⁰ As Castro says, “hunger is a social force capable of leading human societies down strange paths. They blindly rush towards an

¹⁴⁰ “Çocuğunu Öldüren Ananın Muhakemesi,” 21.2.1944, Vatan ; See Minutes of the GNAT, 17.5.1943, p.97

¹⁴¹ Josué de Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955), p.63.

unknown destination, lured on by the beckoning hope that in some way, somehow, their desperate and torturing instinct to eat may be satisfied.”¹⁴²

In bad living conditions, a person may commit crimes, steal, prostitute him or herself and behave contrary to the existing law and morality.¹⁴³ For instance, an official whose salary does not meet the needs of his family may accept a bribe or resort to the other ways of misuse and abuse of his position, rights and duties. In this case, the state is the loser and the working of the state mechanism becomes ineffective, which may break the social and economic control of the state over society. Again, some workers engage in slow-downs, or cannot work effectively because of the effects of malnutrition on their body. Briefly, the solving of the feeding problems is critical for economic productivity and functioning of the state apparatus effectively which is necessary for social and political control over the society.¹⁴⁴

Indeed, a glance at history shows hunger, scarcities and poverty fuelling uprisings, revolts and revolutions. For Josué de Castro, hunger and scarcities were and are the most important factors behind the social upheavals:

Hunger has been from time to time the most dangerous force in politics. It was hunger which precipitated the French Revolution. A mob of women from the slums of Paris marched to the Parliament House demanding bread. The politicians fled... The revolutionary movement in the “hungry forties” of the nineteenth century was due to the same cause. The Chartist mob in England cried “bread or blood”. With the free import of cheap food the revolutionary spirit in England evaporated... A revolt cannot be stopped by guns so long as these people believe that their hunger and poverty are unnecessary evils.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² *ibid.*, p.161

¹⁴³ For links between poverty, economic problems and these kind of social problems in the context of experiences of American society of the Second World War see Francis E. Merrill, *Social Problems on the Home Front, A Study of Wartime Influences*, (New York, London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1948).

Moreover see Josué de Castro, *Geography of Hunger*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955). Castro argued that there was a close relationship between the social and political problems and hunger. See Castro, 65

¹⁴⁴ For instance, in an article titled “Why Cannot Blackmarket Be Prevented?” it was stated that the economic conditions of the state officials who struggled against the blackmarket were not good. Therefore, for the prevention of the blackmarket their living conditions should be improved. “İhtikâr Neden Önlenemiyor?” 30.1.1944, Tan.

¹⁴⁵ Josué de Castro, p.5

Before the Revolution of 1789, the French peasants extremely impoverished. The general prices increased sharply between 1733 and 1817. The prices of wheat increased 127 percent. In 1788 and 1789 the poor people suffered hunger because of the decline in total production levels. This contributed the social base of the Revolution. See Murat Sarıca, *100 Soruda Fransız İhtilali*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1995), p.43

Hunger, then, has unquestionably been regarded the most potent source of social misfortune.¹⁴⁶ In the October Revolution, one of the most known components of the popular slogan by Lenin was “bread” addressing the poor and hungry people.¹⁴⁷

In Turkey on the eve of 1908 Revolution, bread riots were frequent. The people protesting lack of bread, poor quality of bread and the high cost of living spread throughout the country and contributed to the emergence of the social dynamics and bases of the 1908 Revolution.¹⁴⁸

During the Second World War, bread riots and uprisings broke out in some neighboring countries, in the cities of Teheran, Ahwaz and Damascus. There were two occasions when the bread supply was in jeopardy in Cairo and Alexandria. Unrest in the towns and complaints about the high food prices became sources of continual anxiety to governments in Egypt, Palestine, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Persia and Iraq.¹⁴⁹

It is reasonable to think that these events in neighboring countries, together with the role of hunger, scarcities and poverty in history were factors that pushed the Turkish government to take measures against the threat of hunger. In a nutshell, the main motive for the policies of feeding the people and preventing hunger and scarcities was not humanist or progressive concepts. Rather they were connected with legitimacy, social control and the strength of the political power, and against social and natural risk factors for the political power.

In addition, it can be said that the capacity of the population was of critical importance for even a neutral country that might at any moment become a combatant. In an era of total war it is reasonable to think that states need much stronger and healthier bodies which can fight effectively. For this reason, the removal of food supply problems and especially hunger should be critical for the political power. Again, nourishment was the

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.15

¹⁴⁷ The original slogan was: *Peace, Soil and Bread*

¹⁴⁸ see Zafer Kars, *1908 Devrimi'nin Halk Dinamiği*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1997), p.24, p.38

first and minimum requirement for the productivity of the labor for the necessities of the front and home front, the reproduction of the workforce,¹⁵⁰ and the more effective armed forces constituted by energetic and combative soldiers. As Castro says, “the fuel utilized is food, which upon combustion in the complicated human motor supplies the energy necessary to the body’s vital functioning, just as coal or petroleum feed the various types of engines.”¹⁵¹

In this context, it can be said that for a modern state which aimed to strengthen the society for its own sake, public health takes first place among the sources of strength of the population, and so of the state.¹⁵² In this context, it can be said that the first requirements of public health are food and nutrition. Many writers show the connection between the health of the body and sufficient food intake, or between diseases and malnutrition and hunger.

Castro explains that poverty, scarcities, and malnutrition cause many health problems and works indirectly by reducing the organism to a state of debility in which it is no longer able to resist fatal infectious.¹⁵³ David Grigg also points out that there is a connection between malnutrition and diseases. As Grigg underlines, poverty, malnutrition and infectious disease are interlocked and interrelated.¹⁵⁴ In this respect, it can be argued that the minimum requirement of the public health and struggle against diseases that make the population unproductive and weak is the prevention of scarcities and extreme poverty, including hunger and malnutrition.

Indeed, the Kemalist elite was well aware of this fact. Hunger was a source of social threat and disorder for the Kemalist elite. Hungry people did not regard high ideals

¹⁴⁹ See Lloyd, E.M.H., *Food and Inflation in the Middle East (1940-1945)*, (California: Standort University Press, 1956), p.327

¹⁵⁰ See David Grigg, *The World Food Problem (1950-1980)*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.7

¹⁵¹ Castro, p.35

¹⁵² “From the modern age on, real basis of the state’s wealth and power lies in its population in the strength and productivity of all and each.” Colin Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies on Governmentality*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.10

¹⁵³ Castro, p.34

and moral values. They looked out only after their own interests. For example, according to Prime Minister Refik Saydam, hunger was a threat to social morality and the social order because it created people who disregarded everything except for their stomachs:

It is not possible to find moral strength in a man who cannot satisfy his basic needs easily. A man worrying about his food for tomorrow every day is nothing more than an unconscious and unfeeling being.¹⁵⁵

According to President İsmet İnönü, the scarcities, food supply problems and malnutrition harmed people biologically and morally: “*The troubles such as scarcities and expensiveness caused by the wars upset the moral values rather than bodies.*”¹⁵⁶

Many bureaucrats stated that hunger was a great threat to the national economy, productivity, national security and nationalistic feelings. One of them was a public prosecutor, Baha Akel, who examined the food question, the high cost of living and blackmarket in Turkey during the Second World War. He underscored the dangers of these questions for the political power:

Even though the nationalist feelings and national solidarism are very strong in a country, the insufficient distribution system of basic needs, and the people’s consideration of this distribution system as unequal effects people physically and morally. The main indicators of these effects emerge in a decline in economic productivity and political and military losses.¹⁵⁷

In another place, Akel again noted that the hunger could endanger the all nationalist feelings during the war. In addition, food shortages created a hothouse for the emergence of the opposition by multiplying political thoughts:

The malnutrition of the lower-income people who cannot reach the most basic needs such as bread and sugar, for instance, causes extreme poverty and social misery. In addition to the lack of basic foods, the lack of clothes brings certain diseases accompanying the hunger. The First World War showed that hunger and poverty could shake nationalist feelings, no matter how strong they are. The results of hunger and malnutrition can emerge in an increase in death rates, loses in production, and the finally, the rise of some multiple political opinions.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ David Grigg, *The World Food Problem (1950-1980)*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.33

¹⁵⁵ “Başvekilin Yeni Nutku,” *Ayın Tarihi* (hereafter *AT*) quoted from Tasviri Efkar dated 8.1.1941. *AT*, no. 86, (1-31 January 1941)

¹⁵⁶ “Milli Şef İsmet İnönü’nün Türk Gençliğine Hitabesi,” *AT*, no.102, (1-31 May 1942), p.19

¹⁵⁷ Baha Akel, *Fevkalade Zamanlar Ekonomisi ve İhtikâr*, (İstanbul: Ak Ün Basımevi, 1942), p.17

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.30

Furthermore, it is not difficult to see from the elite discourse that they perceived the solving of the food problems as a strategic factor in the foreign policy during the war. Indeed, measures against hunger and food scarcities played a key role in the prevention of the effects of foreign propaganda. As Falih Rıfkı Atay put it, “the home-front is shot morally by propaganda and in the stomach by hunger and scarcity.”¹⁵⁹

Ahmet Emin Yalman’s perception of the food question and provisioning is a good example in order to understand how the state and elite perceived the high cost of living and food shortage and some economic policies devised to solve these problems such as price control and rationing. In an article in *Vatan*, Yalman discussed the importance of the prevention of scarcities and of hunger for the “social, economic and national security.” In his words;

Our social order, the health of the nation, the productivity, honesty of state officials and even national security are dependent on the living conditions and means of subsistence.¹⁶⁰

In a nutshell, in an age in which war became a national question, and so in an age in which the success in the war and security were based on the mobilization of the society by nationalist ideology, the prevention of hunger and social discontent was very important for the confidence and obedience of the people to the nationalist elite. In addition, the provisioning of the people was important for the reproduction of the war force. In short, hungry people were a risk factor for the political power before both its internal and external enemies.

The Provisioning Policy:
“The Struggle against the Black Market,” Price Controls, and
Bread Rationing

From the outset of the war, the state took some measures in order to solve the food problems of the cities to prevent hunger and malnutrition. First of all, the government tried

¹⁵⁹ Falih Rıfkı Atay, “İaşıya Dair Tedbirler,” *AT* quoted it from *Ulus* dated 17.2.1941. *AT* no.87, (1-31 February 1941), p.13

to investigate the price of consumer goods in order to diminish the high cost of living. Second, bread as the main element of the diet of the lower-income people was rationed, followed by the rationing of other consumer goods, such as sugar, coffee and flour. In order to feed the cities, the government also resorted to the forced purchases of crops and the taxes on the agriculture, which will be examined in the following chapter. During the implementation of all of these policies, the state ran into structural insufficiencies, its own capacity problems, and social resistance.

“The Struggle Against The Black Market” and Price Controls

The Question of The Blackmarket or İhtikâr

From the first years of the war on, the blackmarket emerged throughout the country and became the most common grievances of the people. Thus, during the war *ihtikâr* was one of the most used terms in Turkey. It was reflected in the novels, stories and poems as well.¹⁶¹ The black market reached so high degree that some intellectuals examined the black market activities and published book and pamphlets on it. In 1942, Ziyaettin Fahri Fındıkoğlu wrote a pamphlet titled *İhtikâr*. In this pamphlet the meaning of the concept was stated as “to stock any good in order to make it much more expensive for much more profits.”¹⁶² In this definition, the *ihtikâr* meant blackmarket. However, Baha Akel also published a book on the *ihtikâr* titled *The Economy of the Exceptional Times and İhtikâr* (Fevkalade Zamanlar Ekonomisi ve İhtikâr) in 1942.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ahmet Emin Yalman, “Yiyecek Maddeleri Niçin Pahalılaşıyor?”, 24.11.1943, Vatan

¹⁶¹ For example, see Orhan Kemal, *Dünya'da Harp Vardı*, İstanbul: Ataç Kitabevi, 1963, p.76; and Kemal Tahir, *Bozkırdaki Çekirdek*, (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınları, 1991), p. 71.

The first seven lines of a poem of Rıfat Ilgaz titled *Kahveler, Gazeteler* is like that: Kimini vurguncu yaptı 39 harbi/ Kimini karaborsacı/Laf olur diye dost çayı içmeyenler/ Mahkemelik oldu rüşvet yüzünden/Gaz fişi, ekmek karnesi derken/Kimler karışmadı ki piyasaya/Kimini sefil etti 39 harbi/Kimini şair etti...

¹⁶² Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu, *İhtikâr*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Felsefi, Harsi ve İçtimai Araştırmalar Merkezi Kitapları, Bühraneddin Yayınevi, 1942), p.1

¹⁶³ Baka Akel, p.87

The main reasons for the increase in the blackmarket activities were the cutting off of importation and the reduction of total supply. Another reason was price control without rationing in the first year of the war. Unsuccessful price control without the rationing, after that a bad rationing practice because of the weak, ineffective and ill-equipped state administration and of some inconsistent economic policies, as will be explained below, stimulated and encouraged the blackmarket activities.

From the beginning of the war on, many actual *ihdikâr* activities, including speculation and stock piling did occur. Some goods and materials disappeared from the market. Stationery materials,¹⁶⁴ tin,¹⁶⁵ paper,¹⁶⁶ carpets,¹⁶⁷ coal,¹⁶⁸ construction tools and materials,¹⁶⁹ medicines and medical materials,¹⁷⁰ drapery and haberdashery,¹⁷¹ and increasing number of other goods, including capital goods and materials, were subjected to the *ihdikâr*.¹⁷²

During the war similar news appeared in the newspapers. Many of these activities were conducted by small tradesmen. Others were much more inclusive, and large jobs undertaken by collective gangs and which much more fit the term of *ihdikâr*. For instance, in 1942 a gang dealing in blackmarket of drapery and haberdashery in İstanbul sold satin at 330 kuruş, when its market price was 169 kuruş.¹⁷³ In same year *Tan* reported on blackmarket for rice.¹⁷⁴ The biggest rice profiteer was reportedly Ahmet Çanakçalı, who was the best known of the *muhtekir* of the period. Although he made money in the blackmarket, he was protected by the political elite and operated above the law.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁴ 6.10.1939, *Tan*

¹⁶⁵ 15.10.1939, *Tan*

¹⁶⁶ 18.10.1939, *Tan*

¹⁶⁷ 14.10.1939, *Tan*

¹⁶⁸ 20.10.1939, *Tan*

¹⁶⁹ 30.10.1939, *Tan*

¹⁷⁰ 16.10.1939, *Tan*; 4.11.1939, *Tan*

¹⁷¹ 5.12.1939, *Tan*

¹⁷² “Ham ve İhracı Mümkün Olan Bütün Maddelerde Spekülasyon Var,” 17.12.1939, *Tan*

¹⁷³ “Bir Vurguncu Şebekesi Ortaya Çıkarıldı,” 1.3.1942, *Tan*

¹⁷⁴ 4. 7.1942, *Tan*

¹⁷⁵ See “Pirinç Kralı,” *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.18, 1943

In similar way, a coal merchant stocked twenty tons brazier coal and sold it at blackmarket prices.¹⁷⁶ Again, it was reported that three importers were arrested in the act of selling blackmarket cardboard at 250 kuruş which should have been sold normally at 140 kuruş.¹⁷⁷ Whereas in 1944 the official price of a tin of gas was 430 kuruş, in the blackmarket this price increased to 60 TL.¹⁷⁸ These were only a few of the instances ranging from very small to very big, of blackmarket activities. During the war many goods transferred into the blackmarket. There were many black market activities and many prosecutions by the courts.¹⁷⁹

Although some manufacturers did not raise the prices of their products, they tried to make profits by reducing their costs and sometimes reducing the quality of products. This was also defined as *ihdikâr*. For instance, seven manufacturers who produce thread were accused of this kind of *ihdikâr* and brought before the courts for *ihdikâr* on the grounds that they had been found to have sold spools short twenty meters of thread each.¹⁸⁰

However, as explained above, most of the *ihdikâr* events, prosecuted by the state involved were the small activities by tradesmen. Most of the news about the blackmarket transactions covered by newspapers and sentenced by the courts involved in these small activities. For instance, according to *Tan* on dated 2 October 1942, thirty butchers and grocers had been taken to court on account of *ihdikâr*.¹⁸¹

Indeed, many events called *ihdikâr* were only price rises. For instance, in *Tan* newspaper it was reported that four people had been accused of *ihdikâr*. One of them had sold coal at 7 kuruş instead of 6.5 kuruş. A grocer had sold soap at 50 kuruş instead of 48

¹⁷⁶ “2 Vurguncu Çapakçura Sürgün Edilecek,” 30.1.1942, *Tan*

¹⁷⁷ 5.8.1942, *Tan*

¹⁷⁸ *Us*, p.576

¹⁷⁹ “İhtikâr Yapan Bazı Müesseseler Mahkemeye Verildi,” 21.1.1941, *Tan*; “İhtikâr Yapan Tüccarla Mücadele,” 26.1.1941, *Tan*; “Dört İhtikâr Vakası Daha,” 18.2.1941, *Tan*; “İhtikâr İle Mücadele Afişleri Yapılıyor,” 25.2.1942, *Tan*; “Makarna İhtikârı Yapan Üç Kişi,” 9.3.1941, *Tan*; “Yeniden Dört İhtikâr Suçlusu Yakalandı,” 28.3.1941, *Tan*; “İhtikâr Suçu ile Milli Korunmaya Verilenler,” 22.10.1943, *Vatan*; “İki Vurguncu Çapakçura Sürgün Edilecek,” 30.1.1942, *Tan*; “Çimento Vurgunculuğu,” 27.8.1943 *Tan*; “17 Vurguncu Mahkemeye Verildi,” 27.7.1944 *Tan*; “İki Vurguncunun Sürgün Edilmesi İstenildi,” 9.1.1942 *Tan*; “Tıbbi Müstahzarat Karaborsada,” 2.5.1944, *Cumhuriyet*.

¹⁸⁰ “Yedi Muhtekir Fabrikatör Mahkemeye Verildi,” 12.10.1943, *Vatan*

kuruş.¹⁸² Lütfi Arif Kenber, in an article, wrote about the ineffective characteristics of the struggle against *ihdikâr* and noted that the many events called *ihdikâr* that were punished by the courts was very insignificant cases. Moreover, there was very little reference to big speculation or stock piling among these *ihdikâr* accusations and prosecutions in the courts.

Most of the cases of *ihdikâr* which are prosecuted by the courts are very small events that cannot be considered as *ihdikâr*. For example, a man who sold loaves of bread at 40-45 kuruş in İstanbul who had bought them at 35 kuruş in Küçükçekmece was arrested and punished on the grounds that he was *muhtekir*.¹⁸³

There however were some big instances of blackmarketeering. For instance, a chemist charged 3 TL for medicine, which was to have been sold at 145 kuruş.¹⁸⁴ During the sugar and nail shortages in 1942, it was reported that many tradesman marked up their goods unlawfully.¹⁸⁵ In the food scarcities of 1943 in İstanbul macaroni, which was to be sold at 15 kuruş, was sold at 75-80 kuruş on the blackmarket.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, it was reported that cheese was also sold on the blackmarket in 1944.¹⁸⁷

Practices of Price Control and the “Struggle against Blackmarket”

The government resorted to the National Security Law (NSL) in the struggle against inflation and the black market.¹⁸⁸ In July 1940, the government of Refik Saydam introduced the price controls and limits for maximum profit (*azami kâr haddi*) on the agenda under the 31st and 32nd articles of the NSL which gave a great authority to the government in controlling and leading the economic life of the country. According to the 31st article, “the government can determine the price, quality and sorts of goods, whatever it wants...the government can ask for written statements of the sales in the forms of the

¹⁸¹ “Bazı Şehirlerde Et Narhına Riayet Edilmiyor,” 2.10.1941

¹⁸² “Dört Kişi İhtikârdan Mahkûm Oldu,” Tan, 15.3.1941

¹⁸³ Arif Lütfi Kenber, “İhtikârla Bundan Sonraki Müvadele Nasıl Olmalıdır?” 16.10.1943, Tan

¹⁸⁴ “Bir Eczacı İhtikâr Yaparken Yakalandı,” 19.9.1941, Tan,

¹⁸⁵ “2 Vurguncu Çapakçura Sürgün Edilecek,” 30.1.1942, Tan

¹⁸⁶ “Makarna Karaborsası,” 2.12.1943, Vatan

¹⁸⁷ “Beyaz Peynir Karaborsada,” 1.2.1944, Cumhuriyet

recipient.” And according to the 32nd article, raising the prices of goods and foodstuffs without any basis, stock piling and speculation were banned.¹⁸⁹

The government decided to establish an Undersecretariat of Provisioning (İlaçe Müsteşarlığı) on 28 October 1940. After that, the Price Control Commission (hereafter the PCC) was established on 28 June 1940 as a bounded unit to the Undersecretariat of Provisioning. So the state determined the limits of profits and the prices, and started to control prices of commodities. After some unsuccessful experiences in price control, in order to control the prices properly, the state obliged tradesmen to give receipts to their customers on 6 October 1942.¹⁹⁰ Thus, by looking at the copies of these bills, price inspectors could ascertain whether or not the tradesman had obeyed the official fixed prices and limits of profits.

However, the price control policy of the government proved unsuccessful. Even Prime Minister Refik Saydam admitted that the prices could not be investigated and controlled properly in the National Assembly as follows:

The investigation and control of prices has not been successful. The people have difficulties getting accustomed to it. Those who have not wanted to obey to it have resisted it. State administration has difficulties in this process because of the lack of sufficient equipment.¹⁹¹

As can be seen in detail below, this situation continued to predominate the state and economy relations throughout the war period. Neither the price controls nor the rationing policy commenced by the Refik Saydam government solved the feeding problems, high cost of living and blackmarketing. The lack of a stable economic policy, improper implementation of the economic policies and decisions, ineffective and insufficient administration, lack of necessary equipment, personnel and tools for the implementation of the price investigations caused the failing of the economic schemes of the government

¹⁸⁸ The National Security Law was passed by the government in 1940 because of the war. By this law, the government gained the right to intervene in all fields of the economic and social life.

¹⁸⁹ See “Milli Korunma Kanunu,” *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.5, (February 1940), p.19-20

¹⁹⁰ *Üs*, p.461

against the economic impact of the war. In the beginning price controls and limits of profits put in effect without a rationing system. In this case, some commodities transferred into the blackmarket.

The first problem for the state in the implementation of price controls was shortcomings in the necessary equipment, tools and administration. In this period, many intellectuals in the newspapers emphasized that the laws and decisions were insufficient in the struggle against high prices and the blackmarket. They said, however, that it was not enough to make good laws and make good decisions, these had to be implemented. In the newspaper of the period, it is not difficult to find criticisms and complaints about the lack of equipment, qualified personal and good organization. Another problem was the inability of the government to make people, be they sellers or buyers, understand the necessity, importance and benefit of price controls for society. This was a kind of hegemony crisis for the state. Neither tradesmen and consumers, nor the state personnel employed in the price control obeyed the state regulations.

According to the reasoning of tradesmen, the high cost of living could not reduced by laws and price control, but by increasing and cheapening imported goods and other economic measures reducing costs. Turkey was dependent on many import goods which could not be brought into Turkey because of the war. Indeed, many combatant countries had banned the exportation of the basic goods.¹⁹² Moreover, as mentioned above, international trade had been hit by the war. So the scarcity of imported goods had an inflationary effect on the economy. As a matter of fact, high prices, which were called sometimes blackmarketing, were the aftermath of the decrease in import goods in the market and their consequent high cost.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ “Başvekil Dr. Refik Saydam Milli Koruma Kanunu’nun Bazı Maddelerinin Değiştirilmesi Münasebetile Mecliste Beyanatta Bulundu...” *AT*, no.84, (1-31 November 1940), p.40

¹⁹² For instance see “İhtikârı Nasıl Önlemeli?”, 18.12.1939, *Tan*

¹⁹³ See Mustafa Elmalı, *Harp ve Fiyat Siyaseti*, (İstanbul: Aydınlık Basımevi, 1943), p.9, 20

For example, an owner of a drapery and haberdashery shop in Sultanhamam argued that since the prices of imported goods which were used as war materials had increased, their costs had increased as well as this naturally affected the prices of the final goods. A manager of an export firm complained about the rise in the price of war materials all over the world. A manufacturer of leather in Yedikule underlined the price increases in raw materials due to the lack of sufficient imported raw materials.¹⁹⁴ In same vein, another merchant suggested much more imports in order to lower prices and overcome the blackmarket instead of laws.¹⁹⁵

Many writers also criticized the government's ways of fighting against high prices and blackmarket that was based on increases in fines and forced methods by police and courts instead of introducing a successful control mechanism. Deficiencies and the weakness of the state apparatus and organization were seen as the heart of the problem. In an article titled *Why Can't Black Marketeering Be Prevented?* (İhtikâr Neden Önlenemiyor?) some reasons behind the failure of the government were explained. The problems the state ran into did not originate from insufficiencies or shortcomings in the laws and decisions, but from ineffective practices, lack of means and insufficient and unskilled personnel. For an effective implementation of state policies, first, much more qualified officials should be employed. Second, price controllers should be satisfied materially by giving them much higher salaries. Third, there should be much greater degree of coordination between the state departments.¹⁹⁶

Even some of the political elites criticized the lack of coordination and ineffective state administration. About the matter Prime Minister Refik Saydam said:

When the organization of the state meets the needs of society much more fully, we can relax. But today the state is not so...From the beginning of the war on, we see that entire state organization should be revised from first to last.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ "İhtikârı Nasıl Önlemeli?", 18.12.1939, Tan

¹⁹⁵ ibid.

¹⁹⁶ "İhtikâr Neden Önlenemiyor?", 30.1.1944, Tan

¹⁹⁷ See *AT*, no. 102, 25 May 1942, (1-31 May 1942), p.41

In addition, Saydam also complained of the lack of sufficient and qualified state personal in the struggle against the resistances to the official fixed prices, stock piling and high cost of living.¹⁹⁸

Necmettin Sadak, a representative of parliament and owner of *Akşam* (Evening) newspaper, also pointed out the inability of the state to intervene in the economy properly. He explained the causes of the problem by saying that despite the good decisions and laws of the government, their practices had ground to a halt because of the ineffective state apparatus.¹⁹⁹

Another reason behind the failure in the struggle against excessive prices and the blackmarket was the inconsistent state economic policies of price. Indeed, prices often increased according to the pressures of tradesmen. This unstable price policy pushed the tradesman and merchants to stockpile their reserves in the hope of a much greater rise in prices in the future. For this reason, some tradesmen withhold goods from the markets.²⁰⁰ Again, after the rigid price policy of the Refik Saydam government, Saraçoğlu released prices for a while. Although Saraçoğlu gave up this policy within a very short time, after this policy change, it is possible to think that many producers and tradesman waited for a new relaxation of price in the near future.

One of the problems in this process was for the state to determine fixed prices. The lack of insufficient technical equipments and of a proper organization for statistics caused some instances of unsuccessful price determination. Therefore, it was very difficult to fix the prices, which had been fixed in theory, in practice. In this respect, some writers and specialist stated that the prices should be fixed systematically, but not casually. According to Baha Akel,

¹⁹⁸ See “Dr. Refik Saydam’ın vefat etmeden birkaç saat önce İstanbul şehrinin iâşe vaziyeti hakkında yaptığı beyanat,” *AT*, no.104, 2 July 1942, (1-31 July 1942), p.16

¹⁹⁹ Necmeddin Sadak, “Her sahaya tatbik edilen bir iktisadi sistem ve becerikli teşkilat” *AT* quoted from *Akşam* dated 22 November 194. *AT*, no.97, (1-31.12.1941), p.33

²⁰⁰ Baha Akel, *Fevkalade Zamanlar Ekonomisi ve İhtikâr*, (İstanbul: Ak Ün Basımevi, 1942), p.101

When determining the prices, the balances and relations between some goods which are related to each other because of some technical reason or raw materials should be taken into account... For instance, when determining cheese price, milk and yogurt prices should be taken into account. But, the reverse is true in the Turkish experience. Indeed, in 1941 despite the fact that cheese price is fixed, yogurt and milk prices are not fixed. For this reason, it is inevitable to fix cheese price in practice or it is not possible to find cheese at the fixed price in the market because of the rise in the costs of producing the cheese.²⁰¹

Indeed, İsmail Hüsrev Tökin also pointed out that the state failed in price determination. Prices were not determined according to any principles or basis in general. Some economic factors connected with these fixed commodities were not taken into account.

When the price of a good is fixed, the prices of other goods which are in the same family as the fixed good increase steadily. So the price balance between them is broken down. For instance, similar to the milk-cheese relations, while the price of thread is fixed, the price of cotton is free. Again, although the price of sugar is fixed, the prices of some goods that cannot be substituted for sugar are not fixed. The prices of commodities are not fixed, but the prices of services are free.²⁰²

In some cases, because the PCCs were under the effect of the local authorities and local interests, they determined the prices at levels much higher than they should have been. Sometimes prices were determined by the center of the Undersecretariat of Provisioning in Ankara.²⁰³ These prices also might have been higher than they should have been. This caused many complaints among the people. For example, *Yeni Adana* on 29 September 1943, reported that prices which were said to have been fixed were very high; it was not believed that these prices had been fixed. Therefore, *Yeni Adana* criticized the PCC for being ineffective and unsuccessful.²⁰⁴

In some cases, the local governments did not announce the price announcements by Ankara, which was unaware of local economic conditions, when especially these

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.100

²⁰² İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, "Türkiyede Fiyat Politikası," *Türkiye Ekonomisi*, no.1, p.158

²⁰³ *ibid.*, p.157

²⁰⁴ 29.9.1943, *Yeni Adana*

announced prices were higher than the existing ones, so as to protect the local economic balances.²⁰⁵

Statistics and knowledge about the population and economy of the country were another deficiency of the state in this period. To implement the economic policies such as price fixation and control, it is not difficult to estimate the critical place of statistics in the determination of prices. As Şevket Süreyya Aydemir pointed out, the Turkish state was very poor in respect to statistics and knowledge about the economy and population of the country.

We had no serious organization in the field of statistics, which was essential for the determination and implementation of laws and policies of the exceptional times. The numbers in our hands told us nothing about the country. It was not possible to believe these numbers. No province had any department concerned with statistics or an organization or even a state official who could collect the numerical data on the country. All plans, schemes, announcements, necessities and requirements were not dealt with other than waiting in the registration files of a governor or even in the files of a simple official. Some numbers collected so-called did not tell the real story in even central institutions.²⁰⁶

The ineffective characteristic of the PCC became the focal point of the complaints about the food policies of the state and about the failure of the state in controlling the high cost of living. The insufficiency of the PCC became a common grievance in the press and among many writers such as Hüseyin Avni, Zekeriya Sertel and Ahmet Emin Yalman.

The Price Control Commissions focus on a limited field by paying attention only to some discrete events. However, the Commissions are not efficient in this field...For instance, one time when the prices of wood determined not as to the kinds of wood, seller of wood objected to the Price Control Commissions. As a result, the prices of wood were determined again and again hardly. In a similar vein, the prices of drapery and haberdashery also took a long time. The lists of price waited for confirmation by the Ministry of Trade. Moreover, the Commissions were not able to follow market movements...So many regulations made by the NSL were not able to be implemented due to lack of sufficient organization.²⁰⁷

The state did not have personnel of sufficient quality and of quantity to investigate the prices as needed. At the Bureau of Price Control in İstanbul only fifteen officials were

²⁰⁵See Tökin, p.157-158

²⁰⁶Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam İsmet İnönü (1938-1950)*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2000), p.215-216

employed. One of them was chief, and the others were inspectors. This bureau could inspect only thirty stores a day.²⁰⁸ On account of the weakness of the bureau in inspections, it was fortified with an allowance of 100,000 TL in July 1943. The number of inspectors was increased to 30.²⁰⁹

Despite some efforts at the fortification of the bureau by increasing the number of personnel and financial resources, the bureau remained ineffective throughout the war because the problem was related not only to the quantity of the personnel, but to their knowledge and skills as well. Faik Ökte in the memoirs about the experiences of the Wealth Tax during the war period, complained of this problem and underlined the weakness of the state organization.

The Bureau was not able to inspect and control the market even for a moment. Needless to say that a jerry-built organization of which most of its personnel were graduated from high school a little while before, cannot control the economic life and accounts of the firms. Among the personnel, those who were not able to note some simple matters or to calculate basic costs were in the majority.²¹⁰

Zekeriya Sertel also underlined the inefficiency of price controls and the weakness of the related-organization. Sertel said that the state was not able to fulfill price investigations effectively.

The Price Control Bureau works with an apparatus which is so weak that it is not able to regulate the economic life in İstanbul. For that reason, it determines prices mistakenly and cannot fulfill its duties properly. In fact, the Municipality of İstanbul has an Economic Directorate which focuses on the struggle against stock piling and the blackmarket. However, its organization and performance also does not meet those needs.²¹¹

In addition, there were many other complaints about the Bureau and about the implementation of the price controls in the newspapers of the period under consideration. For instance, in ways similar to that of the above mentioned criticisms, in *Tan* on 13 January 1944, it was reported that the number of officials who worked in the control of

²⁰⁷ Hüseyin Avni, "İhtikârla Mücadele Niçin Müspet Netice Vermedi?", 24.1.1941, *Tan*

²⁰⁸ "Şehir Meclisi Dün Toplandı," 2.11.1943, *Vatan*

²⁰⁹ "Murakabe Teşkilatı Takviye Ediliyor," 7.11.1943, *Vatan*

²¹⁰ Faik Ökte, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*, (İstanbul: Nebioğlu Yayınevi, 1951), p.37

²¹¹ Zekeriya Sertel, "Halkın Zaruri İhtiyaçları Nasıl Temin Edilebilir?", 17.10.1943, *Tan*

outdoor markets was not enough to cover all of the sites. Even if their number was enough and they were able to reach all of the sites, they would not be able to do their duties properly because of their poor quality.²¹² According to an anonymous article in *Vatan* dated 23 December 1943 titled, *We Ask: Do Not the Municipality Inspectors Control the Prices?* (Soruyoruz: Fiyat Murakebe Mufettişleri Fiyatları Kontrol Etmiyorlar mı?) prices were still high in spite of the so-called price controls because the inspectors did not perform their duties.²¹³ The situation was similar in other places in Turkey. For example, according to *Yeni Adana*, because the price control and fixed price policy did not work out in Adana, the food supply problems could not be solved. In a similar vein, here the problem originated from the insufficient staff and organization in the price control process.²¹⁴

Other causes of problems in price controls were the acceptance of bribes and abuses made by the personnel who were employed as inspectors and whose real wages remained behind inflation during the war period. Indeed, many fixed income state officials resorted to bribes and other abuses of their rights and duties because of the hard living conditions. A report on the blackmarket prepared by the RPP, stated that the many officials resorted to bribes because of the failure in the struggle against the blackmarket and high cost of living.²¹⁵ It is possible to see many news items in the newspapers of the period about widespread bribery and abuses by the state personnel and interpretations about their bad living conditions as causes of these offences.

In 1942, in his pamphlet titled *İhtikar*, Fındıkoğlu argued that the actions of the state personnel determined the success of the struggle against the blackmarket and high prices, so the government should increase the punishment of the abuses made by the state officials.²¹⁶ Many writers and politicians stated that the failure in the price controls and struggle against the blackmarket stemmed from the bad living conditions of the state

²¹² 13.1.1944, Tan

²¹³ “Soruyoruz: Fiyat Murakebe Mufettişleri Fiyatları Kontrol Etmiyorlar mı?” 23.12.1943, *Vatan*

²¹⁴ “Hep Teşkilat Meselesi,” 12.4. 1944, *Yeni Adana*

²¹⁵ 28.1.1944, Tan

personnel employed in these works. Therefore, the living conditions of the state personnel should have been better in order to prevent these offences and to make possible the implementation of the decisions and policies of the government.²¹⁷

Another factor in the failure of the price controls by the state was the lack of support from society. The people did not cooperate with the state in the implementation of the price policy. The state was not able to stimulate the people support for its policies. Many politicians complained of the lack of social support for the economic policies of the government. Minister of Trade Mümtaz Ökmen said:

We are not successful in the struggle against the blackmarket. In spite of our continuous propaganda and warning about the blackmarket among the people, our citizens do not help us.²¹⁸

It can be followed some other statements which offer clues about the lack of social support for the state's fixed price policy and for the struggle against the blackmarket. For instance, Falih Rıfkı Atay stated that the citizens also had to struggle against black marketer.²¹⁹ Zekeriya Sertel stated that the blackmarket had become a normal situation in society; and so "*the people had to cooperate with the state.*"²²⁰

In *Cumhuriyet*, in an article titled *We Do Not Want to Struggle!* (Uğraşmak İstemiyoruz!) it was stated that the people were indifferent to the struggle of the state against the high prices and the blackmarket: "The people and the authorities should help each other in this great struggle [against the blackmarket], but we do not want to struggle."

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²¹⁶ Fındıkoğlu (1942), p.18

²¹⁷ For example see Sabiha Sertel, "Nile Kurban Kabilinden," Tan, 14.1.1944. In this period many writers stated that the living conditions should have been improved for much more effective practices of the state economic policies. See Zekeriya Sertel, "Suiistimalin Kökünü Kurutmak Lazımdır," 30.1.1944, Tan; "Memurları Korumak ve Daha Verimli Hale Getirmek Lazımdır," 26.5.1944, Tan.

²¹⁸ "Büyük Millet Meclisinde Ticaret Vekilinin Bütçesi Müzakere ve Kabul Edildi. Ticaret Vekili Mümtaz Ökmen İzahat Verdi," AT, no.90, (1-31 May 1941), p.74

²¹⁹ "Başvekilin Bahsettiği Misal", AT quoted from Ulus dated 1.2. 1942. AT, no.99, (1-28 February 1942), p.32

²²⁰ Zekeriya Sertel, "İhtikâr Normal Bir Hal Almıştır," 18.9.1943, Tan

²²¹ "Uğraşmak İstemiyoruz," 7.3.1944, Cumhuriyet

Baha Akel, a public prosecutor during the period who wrote a book on the war economy, the blackmarket and food question in Turkey, also stated that despite the great importance of the social support for the decisions and policies of the government to implement them properly and successfully, the people did not help the state staff in order to make them much more effective in their duties. Akel wrote that the success of the economic policies of the government depended on effective propaganda over the citizens in order to be supported by them.²²² In this respect, it can be thought that the government failed also in producing effective propaganda to convince the people.

There were some other reasons for the lack of social support to the state. First of all, the procedure followed in the denunciation of a blackmarketer or of a price higher than that of the fixed price was too long and too difficult. When a citizen denounced any offence, he ran into many difficulties in court and at the police station. For one thing, according to a new item titled *Is This How the War against Profiteers Is Fought?* (Vurguncu İle Böyle mi Savaşılır?) in *Tan*, a citizen who had witnessed an event of blackmarketeering was invited to the police station and the court house, or was called out by the police and watchman twelve times in one day. First, he was called up two times by watchman. After that, he was invited to the police station and to the court house to sign a report about his witness to the blackmarket or unlawful price. In this news, this procedure was criticized as red tape and an obstacle to the participation of citizens in the struggle against the backmarket and higher prices.²²³ In the same vein, Aydemir wrote: “From the point of procedure in the law, a citizen could not denounce an unlawful event in a store, because he had to go too long way from one police station to another for the confirmation of his identity. After that, he had to crawl through the courts for days.”²²⁴

Furthermore, to some degree, it can be argued that the lack of confidence in the state personnel, who accepted bribes with much greater frequency in this period, caused a

²²² See Akel, pp.119-120, 123

²²³ “Vurgunculukla Böyle mi Savaşılır?”, 13.12.1941, *Tan*

lack of social support for state personnel in the price controls and struggle against the blackmarket. In addition, some cases which were called blackmarketeering became a survival strategy for the people. For instance, in this period, in order to buy some basic needs such as bread and other food items, the poor and fixed income people had to sell the goods such as cloth, shoes, coffee, and sugar which they had received as governmental aid to another or a shopkeeper. This also was regarded as blackmarketeering by the state.²²⁵ In this situation, it was difficult to expect the support of many poor people who had to resort to selling their some secondary goods distributed by the Domestic Products Market (Yerli Mallar Pazarı) to another.

Finally, although the state undertook the distribution of some important goods such as bread, sugar, flour, and cloth, as will be discussed below in detail, the state was not able to perform all of these undertakings properly, at the right time and in the right quality and quantity. So the people resorted to the blackmarketers and the stores, even though their goods were sold at prices higher than those fixed by the state. As can be seen, again, the deficiencies of the state mechanism and distribution channels were also factors which pushed the people to accept the blackmarketers and high prices.

Furthermore, there was widespread resistance to the price controls. One form of this resistance was to lower costs and quality so as to maintain profit margins before the fixation of the prices. Indeed, poor quality and fraudulent goods became a widespread subject of grievance among the people and caused widespread discontent. In some cases, employers reduced the wages of their workers with the same motive.²²⁶ Those who resorted to lowering costs were regarded as blackmarketers. For instance, seven manufacturers who sold incomplete goods were accused of blackmarketing.²²⁷ Again, as will be showed below, many bakery owners were prosecuted and punished because of the

²²⁴ Aydemir, p.216

²²⁵ See Nusret Safa Coşkun, "İhtikâr Hadiseleri Karşısında," 24.8.1944, Son Posta

²²⁶ Celal Akyürek, "Milli Koruma Kanunu ve Piyasalar," *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no. 50, (January 1942), p.14

²²⁷ "Yedi Muhtekir Fabrikatör Mahkemeye Verildi," 12.10.1943, Vatan

low weight and poor quality of their bread. In this situation, the price control policy and fixed prices lost their meanings and functions.

The state resorted to the receipt system in its efforts to control the price movements. According to the 31st article of the NSL, for each sale involving more than 100 kuruş, the vendors had to give a receipt to purchasers listing the kinds, prices and quantity of the commodities sold. However, as most vendors did not obey this obligation, the receipt system did not function in practice properly.²²⁸ Indeed, it is not difficult to find reports in the newspapers about receipt crimes. For instance, according to a news published at the late date of June 1944, in the space of one week, six firms were sent to court on account of false receipts, selling without receipts and high prices.²²⁹ Again, according to a case involving the twenty-five firms, two of them had used fraudulent receipts and sold their goods above fixed prices, eight had never used receipts, four had not taken receipts in buying, one had used fraudulent receipts again, seven sold goods above the fixed price, two stockpiled some commodities, and one had not put price tags on their goods.²³⁰ Similar receipt resistances occurred throughout Anatolia.²³¹

Sometimes consumers also colluded with the vendors in their resistance to the receipt system, reaching to an agreement on price which might be higher than the official price. In this situation, the vendors wrote the receipt for the official prices, although the actual purchase prices in shopping were very different.²³² Thus the receipt system lost its function in the price control policy.

Furthermore, the receipt system could be manipulated to hide fraud and stockpiling. Those wholesalers who sent goods to Anatolia from İstanbul, had to submit one copy of the receipt of these goods to the Bureau of Control. In October 1941 it was reported that

²²⁸ Akel, p.102

²²⁹ 10.6.1944, Tan

²³⁰ "25 Tacir Mahkemeye Verildi," 16.5.1944, Tan

²³¹ "Bir Fatura Sahtekarlığı," 29.9.1943, Yeni Adana

²³² Cavit Oral, "Başvekilimizin Nutku Üzerine," *AT* quoted from Bugün dated 12.1.1941. *AT*, no.86, (1-31 January), 1941

these bills were increasing steadily. There was a great deal of fraud and evasion because the goods listed in the receipts had not been sent the Anatolia in reality. Some wholesalers pretended that they were sending their goods elsewhere in Turkey, but instead they stockpiled these goods so as to sell them at much higher prices.²³³

For instance, in order to stockpile cheese and sell it above the official fixed prices, cheese traders in İstanbul claimed that they had sold the cheese in their cold-storage units to traders in Anatolia and were keeping the cheese in the name of buyers in Anatolia, who did not have cold-storage units. The inspectors examined the case, but they were unable to find any fraud in the receipts of these dealings as the traders had prearranged everything so that it appeared as if the cheese was sold on paper, but not in reality.²³⁴

Many shopkeepers and tradesmen did not put a price tag on their goods or provide a price list informing the consumers and inspectors about the fixed prices, in spite of the obligation of the NSL.²³⁵ This indicates that the vendors charged higher prices than the fixed prices, and that the actual prices of goods that were agreed upon by buyers and vendors were different from the fixed prices.

As for rents, the fixation of them was also challenged by the landlords in many ways. The government banned the rise of rents, but the landlords resisted this policy, found other ways to raise rents. According to Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu and many reports in the newspapers, these ways were: To demand the vacating of the house by alleging that he himself was going to live there; to claim that repairs were going to be made to the house; to demand extra money for central heating; to demand the price of a fully furnished house by putting a few pieces of furniture in the house; to write a lower price on the rental contract than the real price by an agreeing with the tenants, and so on.²³⁶ The conflicts and struggles

²³³ “Yeni Bir İhtikâr Sistemi,” 16.10. 1941, Tan

²³⁴ Hüseyin Avni, “İhtikâr Hareketlerini Nasıl Takip Etmeli?,” 4.3.1941, Tan

²³⁵ *ibid.*

²³⁶ Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu, “Kira *İhtikârı* İle Mücadele,” 31.3.1943, Cumhuriyet

between landlords and tenants during the war period appeared frequently in the pages of the newspapers.²³⁷

The Bread Question: Bread Rationing, Bakers and the State

Bread was the cheapest, most abundant and important component of the diets of the lower income people in Turkey. With the effects of the war on agricultural production and wheat, in turn, on the provisioning of the people in cities, bread became the most important item in the provisioning policy of the state during the war period. The state tried to determine the prices, quantity and composition of bread. The first foodstuff which was rationed by the state was bread. Thus, control of the price of bread, the rationing of bread, and the relations between the bakers and the state may give some clues about the provisioning policy of the government, its failures, success, and social and economic control capacities during the War.

Bread, which was the most important component of the diet for the masses, became very poor in quality and decreased in weight and volume during the war period. At the beginning of the war, the price of bread started to advance steadily. In İstanbul, whereas it was 10.05 kg/kuruş in 1938, it climbed to 38.67 kg/kuruş in 1943. The prices increased almost four hundred percent from 1938 to 1943.²³⁸

The most important reason for the rise in the prices was related to the overall decrease in the gross agricultural production. As explained above, many peasants were conscripted by the army in the process of military mobilization, creating a labor shortage in rural areas to some degree. Moreover, the lack of necessary agricultural inputs, and the confiscation of draft animals by the army also affected agricultural production adversely.

²³⁷ “Kıracısının Odasını Ateşlemiş,” 9. 9.1943, Vatan; “Kıracısını Evinden Çıkartmak İçin Damdaki Kiremitleri Söktürmüş,” 23.10.1943, Vatan; “Kıraları Arttırmak Maksudıyla Kaloriferi Bozan Ev Sahibi,” 12.3.1944, Cumhuriyet; “Kira İhtikârı,” 14.1.1944, Cumhuriyet.

Because of the decrease in the internal terms of trade, agricultural production took a turn for the worse.²³⁹

In addition, to the decline in agricultural production, the transportation of foodstuffs, wheat and flour the cities, and especially to İstanbul, became much more difficult because of military mobilization. Indeed, although the state tried to extract a share from agriculture with forced purchasing and the Soil Product Tax in order to solve the feeding question in the cities throughout the war period, agricultural products were not able to be transported to İstanbul properly since the necessary storage facilities and transportation means were not available. Thus despite the fact that harvested crops were waiting in the open fields and perished, the people in İstanbul suffered from the lack of sufficient bread and flour. The scarcity of wheat contributed to the rise in the price of bread.

Moreover, as soon as the war broke out, the people in İstanbul rushed to the bakeries in order to buy as much bread as they could. They started to desiccate this bread and stock up. So the price of bread jumped and bread scarcities appeared.²⁴⁰ The bread needs of the army, comprised almost one million soldiers in this period, also contributed the bread problems.²⁴¹

The government took some measures in order to meet the demand for bread of the society and remove the bread question in the urban areas. For this aim, state started to purchase some parts of crops at lower prices and to levy on new taxes on agriculture. It resorted to also some measures other than the purchasing and the taxation of agriculture.

²³⁸ See Table 6. T.C. Başvekalet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, *Fiyat İstatistikleri (1933-1943)*, Ankara, 1944, p.4.

²³⁹ Wheat production decreased approximately 40 percent during the war period. See Korkut Boratav, "İktisat Tarihi 1908-1980" *Türkiye Tarihi: Çağdaş Türkiye*, Sina Akşin (ed.), vol. 4, (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1995), p.304

²⁴⁰ Asım Üs, p.498

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.491

First, in February 1941, on the basis of the 21st article of the NSL,²⁴² the government declared that the bakeries would produce only one kind of bread in İzmir, Ankara and İstanbul. Because of the difficulties of wheat supply, this bread would contain 15% rye and so would be saved from wheat flour.²⁴³ In June 1941, the rate of rye increased to 20%. In addition, this type of bread contained 30% barley maximum. In 1942, a new composition of bread was introduced which stipulated that bread would contain 20% cornflour.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, many bakers mixed some other materials and resorted to other methods such as adding much more water to the dough of bread to reduce costs and maintain their profit margins. Consequently, during the war, bread became a strange thing other than bread.

The Bread Rationing Experience

Rationing is a policy resorted to by states in times of war or economic crisis in order to guarantee that a certain quantity of consumer goods reaches the people. As Anderson writes, “rationing is the superimposing of a permit system upon a price (or some other) system for the distribution of goods or privileges. Food may be distributed through the price system where each purchaser allocated his funds at will and supplies respond to relative prices offered. Food may instead be distributed in kind without charge on a communal or selective basis.”²⁴⁵

Actually, rationing is not an alternative to the price controls, but is complement. In rationing, the state restricts the demand and consumption of some goods. Thus rationing functions as a tool for price controls.²⁴⁶ One negative aspect of price control alone is that

²⁴² According to Article 21 the government could determine the consumption levels of the people in some basic foodstuffs which were important for the national security. See Hüsnü Bengi (der.), *Milli Korunma Kanun ve Kararları*, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Matbaası, 1945)

²⁴³ Hüsnü Bengi (der.), *Milli Korunma Kanun ve Kararları*, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Matbaası, 1945), p.143

²⁴⁴ See Cumhuriyet, 14.4.1942

²⁴⁵ C. Arnold Anderson, “Food Rationing and Morale,” *American Sociological Review*, vol.8, Issue 1, 1943, p.23

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.24

even if price controls are successful, price controls without rationing mean “first come, first served” until the supplies run out at the fixed price.²⁴⁷

Rationing also makes the feeding of the army easier. In wartime it is necessary to restrict civilian consumption of foods in order to release resources for the production of munitions and to set aside food for consumption by the military forces.²⁴⁸

For the state, the most important reasons for rationing are related to the moral, economic and military power of the country. On this subject, Anderson writes that “everyone must be fed enough so that he can work and fight efficiently, and sacrifices of war should be shared fairly. While hunger and malnutrition limits efficiency and lowers morale, the primary contribution of food rationing to morale flows from the revealed determination to insure equity in distribution. Equity is the first axiom of rationing policies.”²⁴⁹

The principal sociological function of rationing is the maintenance and improvement of public morale through the insuring of orderliness and equity in the distribution of food. Among its secondary functions, rationing enlists a more complete participation of every citizen in the war effort.²⁵⁰ Thus society does not complain about the scarcities and limitations in reaching consumption goods. In this context, for a political power which called itself populist, rationing may function to enforce the image of populism of the regime by lessening the burden of the scarcities on the society.

However, the relations between rationing and morale are reciprocal and complex.

A high degree of morale would be indicated by the achievement of the necessary coordination of effort and universality of belief with a minimum of evasion and private reservation.... Effective operation of rationing depends in turn upon the level of morale. Where the usual condition is one of law obedience and civic spirit evasion will be rare, accusations of inequality will be few, and administrative fumbling will not so readily be taken as a signal of withdrawal of confidence...In addition to this, conditional inspection and policing will be required to prevent

²⁴⁷ Anderson, p.24

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.24

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.23

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.24

breakdown of rationing. A poorly administered ration plan is perhaps worse in its effects upon morale than no rationing, unless shortages become extreme.²⁵¹

If people are baffled by the complexity of rationing or suspicious that others are evading the rules, their insecurity impels them to individualized behavior...Evasions in turn undermine confidence in the equity of rationing. At the worst the result is complete chaos of food distribution and rapid deterioration of social cohesion.²⁵²

A successful rationing policy requires a sufficient and well-equipped administration and organization. As Anderson says, “a rationing system must have minute regulation, a simplifying uniformity of procedure, and elaborate checks against evasion...A poorly administered ration plan is perhaps worse in its effects upon morale than no rationing.”²⁵³

Rationing requires some storages, means and an efficient organization. As Akel noted, it requires to buy or collect the rationing goods and to gather them in certain centers; to transport them from these centers to the distribution units; pots, tins, storages, some tools and qualified personnel.²⁵⁴ In this respect, the success of the rationing policy is dependent on the infrastructural sufficiency and power of the state administration.

Looking at the Turkish experience of rationing during the Second World War from the framework mentioned above, it is clear that the state administration and organization encountered many insufficiencies and shortcomings. There was unsystematic organization and distribution. So many people resisted the rationing in many ways. Some inequalities and resistances shook the confidence in the system and in turn rationing became ineffective and a source of complaint.

In January 1942 the rationing system for bread started to function in order to guarantee the availability of bread for all people equally and to prevent shortages of bread by restricting excessive consumption. The people would take their allowances of rationed

²⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.25

²⁵² *ibid.*, p.33

²⁵³ *ibid.*, p.25

²⁵⁴ Akel, p.53

bread with rationing card distributed by the local governments. In Ankara and İstanbul the rationing cards started to be distributed on 11 January 1942.²⁵⁵

The allowance of the children younger than seven years of age was 187 grams a day, and that of people older than seven years old was 375 grams a day. The allowance of handworkers was more than two times that of other people, 750s gram a day. In the course of time, these rates would be diminished according to the wheat and bread supplies. In April 1942, the allowances of those who were older than seven years old were reduced from 350 grams to 175 grams a day. In May, this rate became 150 grams a day.²⁵⁶ In other words, in May 1942, the allowances of the adults went down to a level which was lower than the allowances of children.

With the rationing system, the government banned the use of flour in the making of other pastries such as cookies, pies, cream-cakes and buns. Moreover, the sale of these pastries was banned by the government, even in restaurants and official dining halls and soup kitchens.²⁵⁷

In 1942, The Office of Distribution (Dağıtma Ofisi) was established by decree no. 295, dated 16 March 1942, in order to distribute bread more effectively. The main duty of the Office of Distribution was to buy all foods and commodities for the needs of the army and the people and to distribute them.²⁵⁸ In May 1942 People's Unions of Distribution (Halk Dağıtma Birlikleri, hereafter the PUD) were established with decree no. 319. The duties of each PUD comprising of 250 houses and 1000 people approximately were: to distribute the rationing cards; to distribute the rationing goods, and to inform the members of the People's Unions of Distribution and the people about the places and times of distribution, if some goods are distributed by the shopkeepers.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ See Cemil Koçak, "Karneli Yıllar," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no.25, 1986, p.442

²⁵⁶ Koçak (1986), p.443. In addition, as Asım Us said, the people who did not satisfy with the amount of the rationed bread started to roasted chickpea. Asım Us, p.512

²⁵⁷ "Pasta Çörek İmalı Men Edildi," 30.1.1942, Tan. In addition, see Bengi, p.248

²⁵⁸ Bengi, p.291-293

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.328-331

The rationing experience was also constrained by the structural features of the Turkish state apparatus such as weakness, bad organization and lack of sufficient qualified personnel and of means, like the price control experience of the state described above. Many necessities and prerequisites to the rationing system were not available throughout the war period. These were also many limits to the state capacity. Equality and the belief in equality of the rationing system among the people were not assured. In PUDs there were many cases of misuse, bribery, and embezzlements. That there was no effective price control process supporting the rationing to prevent the blackmarket also undermined the effectivity of the rationing policy. Again, the people manipulated the rationing system to their favour. The rationing system did not function as desired. Consequently, the reciprocal relation between popular belief in the rationing system and its success was never established.

The first factor which was determined the functioning of the system was insufficient capacity of the state apparatus. The state apparatus was not capable of keeping track of to whom how much food was to be given, or the bureaucratic and statistical organization to organize and distribute these in an effective manner. Thus the state could not adjust the allowances according to the different income groups. Those who did not need the goods rationed or those who already had these goods also acquired these goods, if they had a rationing card.²⁶⁰

The PUDs in neighborhoods which were working out all of the operations in the rationing system confronted many hardships. As Baha Akel wrote, the lack of coordination between the PUDs, excessive bureaucracy, and unskilled and insufficient personnel, their negligence in the works of the PUDs caused the bad functioning of the rationing program.²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ see Hüseyin Avni, "Karne Sistemi," *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.56, 1942, p.20

²⁶¹ See Akel, p.57

Some of the PUDs were deprived of means and tools to carry out their activities. For instance, in a center like Asmalımescit, the PUD no.1 was deprived of seals, stamps, ink, rubber and paper. Therefore it had to demand 25 kuruş from each person who had rationing card that caused complaints among the people. Upon investigation of the case because of suspicion of abuse and bribery, it was seen the PUD needed to collect some money in order to carry out its works.²⁶²

Another cause of the bad functioning of the rationing system was the Soil Products Office (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi, the SPO). Since the role of the SPO in the functioning of the rationing system was very important, its capacity problems analyzed in following chapter were reflected in the rationing system. For the production and distribution of the rationed bread at the right time and in the right quantity, the supplying of flour by the SPO was critical. However, the SPO confronted many hardships in the matter throughout the war period and were not able to supply the necessary flour and wheat on many occasions.²⁶³

In spite of a decision concerning the daily distribution of flour in İstanbul, many bakeries were not supplied by the SPO. Thus many people were unable to receive their allowances of flour distributed by the state.²⁶⁴ This problem influenced the bread supply and bread quality. As can be seen from the press during the War period, the bread was generally of poor quality, diluted, insufficient in quantity and low in weight. For instance, upon the complaints that breads were very poor in quality and quantity in 1943 summer, the bakeries alleged that the SPO did not give necessary flour and the flour that was given by the SPO was of poor quality and diluted. In addition, they alleged that since the SPO did not give the flour to the bakeries at the right time, they did not have time to let the

²⁶² “Ekmek Karneleri ve Birliklerin Vaziyeti,” 8.1.1943, Tan

²⁶³ Us, p.467

²⁶⁴ “Un Tevziatında Aksaklıklar,” 12.11.1943, Vatan

bread rise properly. The local government of İstanbul acknowledged that the bakeries were right in this matter.²⁶⁵

Indeed, the SPO was not able to bring the wheat for bread to İstanbul on time. The main cause of this problem was the hardships in transportation,²⁶⁶ which made the distribution of the wheat to the mills late. For instance, in July 1943, because of the delays in the transportation of wheat from Anatolia to İstanbul, which retarded the distribution of the wheat by the SPO to the mills, the bakeries suffered from the lack of flour, and thus some districts in İstanbul did not receive bread.²⁶⁷

In the problems experienced in the provisioning of İstanbul, to be more specific, in bread the question and in bread rationing, the bad functioning of the SPO played a key role. Many writers in the press criticized this situation. So far as F. Fenik said, problems in the storage of agricultural taxes collected by the Office were one of the most important reasons for the feeding problems and high cost of foods. The organization concerned with these questions was only a spectator of the situation due to the lack of knowledge and of strength.²⁶⁸ In an article in *Tan*, it was said about the SPO as below.

The SPO does not have an organization which is appropriate for its responsibilities and works. In order to keep the citizens from the worries, delays and stress, it requires that the Office should be developed, extended and empowered.²⁶⁹

Briefly, the SPO that had very critical role in bread question and function of the rationing lacked organizational skills and was a weak state apparatus. In this weakness, the peasant resistance to the Office alongside with the structural problems and deficiencies of the Office, also played a role, as will be examined in following chapter.

In addition to deficiencies in state capacity, the resistance of the people to the rationing program also affected its functioning. The people, whose diet was based primarily on bread, invented some ways to increase their bread allowances. They

²⁶⁵ “İstanbul’un Ekmek İşini Aksatan Sebepler,” 14.7.1943, *Tan*

²⁶⁶ A. Emin Yalman, “Nakliye davamız I: Plana ve Hesaba Göre Kurulmamış Bir sistem,” 12.11.1943, *Vatan*

²⁶⁷ 14.7.1943, *Vatan*

²⁶⁸ F. Fenik, “Hayat Pahalılığı Hakkında Anketimiz,” 23.9.1943, *Vatan*

manipulated the system in their interests by taking advantage of the deficiencies in state capacity.

Indeed, in the newspaper of the period it is possible to see frequent news about offences of rationing, which took various forms. The first and foremost offense was to produce or use forged rationing cards.²⁷⁰ These forged rationing cards were produced by gangs for profit or poor individuals for their own needs. For instance, one gang which forged rationing cards by imitating the signs and seals of the PUDs collected some goods and sold them on the blackmarket.²⁷¹ In Haydarpaşa Railway Station, thousands of fake bread rationing cards for heavy workers were found in a box.²⁷²

According to *Tan*, many forged bread rationing cards for heavy workers were being sold for between 75 kuruş and 3 TL in İstanbul.²⁷³ Metin Toker points out the dysfunction of the bread rationing by saying that “although the bread rationing cards were for those who worked at very hard physical labor, these cards were sold on the blackmarket abundantly.”²⁷⁴ Another offence of bread rationing was the theft of bread ration cards, especially among poor people. It is possible to follow the news about the theft of rationing cards.²⁷⁵

The lower-income people, whose main diet was bread and were unhappy with the limitations on their bread consumption, tried to by-pass the allowances in many ways. The poorer classes, for whom the sharing of bread was a subject of fights in the home,²⁷⁶ resisted being limited by the card system. There were four ways of resistance: The first way was to register nonexistent household members on the official written statement of the

²⁶⁹ “Toprak Ofisi İşlere Yetişemiyor,” 18.1942, *Tan*

²⁷⁰ “Sahte Karne Yapan Bir Şebeke,” 4.5.1943, *Tan*; “Ekmek Karnesi Vurguncuları,” 20.3.1943, *Tan*

²⁷¹ “Sahte Vesika Tanzimi Suretiyle Yerli Mallar Pazarından Mal Alan Bir Şebeke Meydana Çıkarıldı,” 23. 11.1943, *Vatan*

²⁷² Aydemir, p.212

²⁷³ 3.5. 1942, *Tan*

²⁷⁴ Metin Toker, *Demokrasimizin İsmet Paşalı Yılları: Tek Partiden Çok Partiye(1944-1950)*, (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi), 1990, p.23

In a news, it was reported that a people who sold many ration card for bread approximately 5000 or 7000 to the bakers was arrested by the police. See “İnsaf Yahu !”, 20.9.1943, *Vatan*

number of people in the household. Thus the head of the family could acquire more ration cards for his family. Indeed, considering the capacity of the state knowledge on the population and statistics, as stated above, it can be understood that the prevention of this kind of fraud was difficult for the state. The second way was to register multiple times for ration cards. The third method was to register the names of people who did not live in İstanbul, as if they were living there.²⁷⁷ The fourth method was to use the ration cards which were out of date by renewing and falsifying them.²⁷⁸ Thanks to such method, the people went beyond the limitations of the rationing system and acquired much more bread.

This resistance was not limited to a number of discreet instances, even if they seemed to be so. As a matter of fact, these were widespread and frequent. As a result of investigations in 1944, the inspectors identified more than a hundred cases in two days in İstanbul.²⁷⁹ In addition, according to the Minister of Trade, the government distributed almost 1.200.000 ration cards in the city of 800.000, which demonstrates that instead of the limitation and control of the bread consumption, bread consumption increased and could not be limited by the rationing system.²⁸⁰

Of course, the negligence and abuses of their positions by the officials working in the PUDs also contributed to the people's resistance to the rationing system. The majority of these officials was generally from lower-income groups and had low salaries. They accepted bribes and sometimes abused their positions and rights in order to survive in the inflationist conditions of the war. About this situation, the following statement of Falih Rıfkı Atay indicates the great extent of the resistance and the corporation of some officials with the resistant people: "*An honest official can do nothing against the resistance of the*

²⁷⁵ See "Karne Hırsızlığı," 25.8.1942, Tan; 3.1.1944, Tan; "Bir Karne Hırsız Mahkum Edildi," 18.8.1943, Vatan

²⁷⁶ See Metin Toker, p.23

²⁷⁷ "Bütün Mahalle Birlikleri Teftiş Ediliyor," 24.2.1944, Tan

²⁷⁸ "Günü Geçmiş Karneleri Kullanma Çaresini Bulmuş," 27.4.1943, Vatan.

²⁷⁹ "Bütün Mahalle Birlikleri Teftiş Ediliyor," 24.2.1944, Tan

²⁸⁰ AT, no.98, (1-31 January 1942), p.33

majority of the people and some officials in the PUDs.” He called these events “*a conspiracy of the people and some officials to the state.*”²⁸¹

Indeed, some officials dealt in ration cards. It is not difficult to find newspaper reports about the misuses, bribery, pilfering and other offences by the officials of the PUDs almost every day. For instance, one official was arrested in the act of selling bread cards.²⁸² Again, in the Süruri quarter in Beyazıt, investigators revealed some unlawful actions and abuses in the PUDs. In this case, the officials in the PUDs pretended that they had given some bread cards to certain individuals, who in reality were deceased. Thus they took these cards and sold them.²⁸³ Many heads of the PUDs were accused of bread card dealing, bribes and abuses, and taken before the National Security Courts.²⁸⁴

As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five, although the state took some social welfare measures in order to prevent the bribes, abuses and other unlawful actions by lower-level officials, these measures fell short to great extent. Thus, some officials whose salaries did not meet their basic needs and remained very low in real levels according to the rise in prices resorted to the unlawful actions as a survival strategy. Alongside that the state social welfare measures did not meet the needs, these welfare measures caused some discontent and widened the unlawful actions among the officials. Even the distribution of the governmental social aids was also subjected to the misuses, thefts and bribery.²⁸⁵

The state perceived the officials employed in the practices of the provisioning policy of the government, of rationing system and of price controls as important for the country as soldiers at the front and borders.²⁸⁶ Indeed, if how the state perceived the food question is taken into account, it can be said that the proper functioning of state officials

²⁸¹ 28.11.1943, Vatan quoted from the article of Falih Rıfkı Atay in Ulus newspaper.

²⁸² 15.5.1942, Tan

²⁸³ “Yeni Bir Ekmek Karnesi Sahtekarlığı Daha mı?”, 28.11.1943, Vatan

²⁸⁴ “Karne Satan Bir Mahalle Birliği Reisi Yakalandı,” 21.9.1943, Vatan; “Bir Mahalle Birliği Reisi Tevkif Edildi,” 22.9.1943, Vatan; “Bir Birlik Reisi Daha Tevkif Edildi,” 12.12.1943, Vatan; “Karne Satan Bir Mahalle Birliği Reisi Yakalandı,” 21.9.1943, Vatan; “Bir Mahalle Birliği Reisi Tevkif Edildi,” 22.9.1943, Vatan.

²⁸⁵ These were described and discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

²⁸⁶ See “Ticaret Vekilimiz Mümtaz Ökmen’in *ihtikâr* Mevzuu Etrafında Bir Konuşması,” *AT*, no.92,

who were employed in the rationing process was very important for the state. However, in spite of this fact, the state officials behaved contrary to the state interests by abusing their rights and duties, dealing in bread cards, and accepting bribe. In the newspapers of the period, it was argued that the struggle against the blackmarket and the solution to the food supply problems failed because the officials working in these field were not satisfied by the state and so they did not carry out their work “honestly.”²⁸⁷ This was also true for the officials involved in rationing.

In the Turkish experience of rationing during the war, the reciprocity between the public’s confidence in rationing, in its merits and equalitarian characteristics and the successful functioning of the rationing were not able to be established. Although the main goal of the rationing, and the very condition for its success, was the people’s trust in the equality of the system, this trust, however, did not emerge fully in the Turkish case. This situation became a hothouse for resistance to the rationing system by both officials and people, which caused increasing discontent and dissatisfaction with the rationing and destroyed the belief that the rationing made bread consumption equal.

One of the reasons behind the widespread lack of belief in the equality of the rationing system was the fact that wealthier people had access to qualified bread on both the market or on the blackmarket, whereas the bread which was rationed to the lower classes was of poor quality, diluted with rye, cornflour and barley, and underweight. The white and high quality bread were available on the blackmarket and in some bakeries for wealthier.²⁸⁸ In addition, the wealthier people had access to qualified white bread in whatever quantities they desired, whereas the bread rationing limited the consumption of the lower-income people. The bread rationed did not meet the need of all consumers.²⁸⁹ Some wealthier peoples demanded and consumed white bread from the blackmarket.

26 July 1941, p.26

²⁸⁷ “İhtikâr Neden Önlenemiyor?”, 30.1.1944, Tan

²⁸⁸ “Karaborsa Yolu İle Herkes İşini Yoluna Koymuştur,” See A.E.Yalman, “Yapan Kurtulur Diyen Kurtulamaz,” 14.10.1943, Vatan; “Kaçak Ekmek Çıkaran Bir Fırıncı...,” 7.11.1943, Vatan

Moreover, even the ban on the making and selling of pastry, pies, buns and cream-cakes from white flour failed. These kinds of pastries were available for the wealthier people.²⁹⁰

In this respect, the bread rationing did not provide an image of equality in consumption of the most important food among the people. This fact was reflected in complaints in newspapers, as shown in these words of a writer in *Tan*:

I am troubled by bread. While I am eating bread which is black, sour, sticky and not fully baked, if I see that another person is eating white, unadulterated, and fully baked bread, the bread which I try to eat sticks in my throat. And, while I am eating white bread which is qualified and baked, if I see a person who is trying to swallow a bite of bread which is unbaked and poor quality, which looks like mud, this inequality kills my appetite.²⁹¹

These words of the writer illustrate the clear inequality in the consumption of the bread in these years. It is possible to think that this inequality contributed to the resistance to the rationing system. The people did not believe in its equality and benefits for themselves. Indeed, the poor-quality, deficient ration bread became a matter of complaint among the people during the war period. They were aware that whereas they had to eat the poor-quality ration bread, those who knew how to work the system were eating much higher quality bread in greater quantities.

Indeed the rationed bread had many deficiencies and problems, the first of which was the missing in the weight of bread. The low-weight loaves were not exceptional, but common problem. The newspapers of the period featured many news about the low-weight breads which were confiscated frequently.²⁹²

In addition to their low weight, the rationed breads had poor taste, thickness, form, and color. The rationed bread of the Second World War in Turkey became, as Kazım Karabekir expressed it, dark, unbaked bread containing 20% rye, 30% barley, and 50%

²⁸⁹ 3. 6.1942, *Tan*

²⁹⁰ See Karabekir (2000), p.343

²⁹¹ S.G. Savcı, "Bir Dokun...", 8.10.1943, *Vatan*

²⁹² The low-weight breads were very widespread. It is possible many reports about the missing bread in newspapers. "11 fırında 149 Noksan Vezinli Ekmek Bulundu," 22.10.1943, *Vatan*; "Bir Haftada Ceza Gören Esnaf," 29.9.1941, *Tan* (507 ekmek noksan olması dolayısıyla müsadere edildi); "Bir Ayda Tam Bozuk ve Noksan 1320 Ekmek Müsadere Edildi," 31.7.1944, *Tan*

flour containing bran.²⁹³ Upon the decline in the prices of boiled and bounded wheat, the bakeries started to add it to the bread.²⁹⁴

Leaving aside additives such as rye, barley, bran and boiled and bounded wheat, the rationed bread was not hygienic. Complaints were made about the bread being not fully baked and that it contained twigs, sand, and excessive bran.²⁹⁵ For instance, according to *Kocatepe* newspaper in Eskişehir, many bakers mixed much more water than needed into the dough in order to increase the weight and save on flour.²⁹⁶

The people displayed their complaints about about the poor-quality of bread by writing letters to the newspapers. In newspapers, complaints about the bread can be seen frequently. For instance, Gökhan Adanır from Nizip explained in a letter that bread contained stones, sand, bark, and chip. He said that in spite of the many complaints about breads in Nizip, the local government did not pay attention to the problem.²⁹⁷

Newspapers reported that the bread was so bad that sometimes it was not possible to eat it and that this was a threat not only to the nourishment of the people, but also the public health. For instance, according to *Vatan* on 10 July 1943, “Bread has become so awful that it is not possible to eat and digest it. Bread containing uncertain additives threatens the public health.”²⁹⁸ What is more important is the fact that “whereas the people had to eat this bad bread, wealthier people were able to buy white bread at 3-4 TL on the blackmarket.”²⁹⁹

Finally, many poor people who relied on this bad bread were excluded from the rationing system. They also complained about the bread rationing system. Some poor people alleged that although they were in need of bread rations, they were not received. These complaints also contributed to the shaking of the belief in the equality of the

²⁹³ Karabekir (2000), p.343

²⁹⁴ 13.7.1944, *Tan*

²⁹⁵ See 30.9.1943, *Yeni Adana*

²⁹⁶ “Ekmekler taşlı ve hamurlu !”, 20.4.1943, *Kocatepe*

²⁹⁷ 5.7.1943, *Tan*

²⁹⁸ “Fırıncıların Yolsuzluğu,” 10.7.1943, *Vatan*

²⁹⁹ “Fırıncıların Hilesi Yüzünden Ekmekler Dün de Bozuk Çıktı,” 14.7.1943, *Tan*

rationing system. For instance, a poor man excluded from the bread rationing complained by telling his story to *Son Posta* newspaper:

Is it not normal for a citizen who is the head of a poor family with six children and a wife to benefit from the ration card? However, it is very interesting that a man living in Küçükpazar, Hacıkadın Türbe Street and who is a porter and earning only thirty or forty kuruş a day has not received a ration card for bread.³⁰⁰

In addition to excluded people, some lower income people did not receive ration card because of long and excessive bureaucratic procedures, even though the rationing program included them. For example, a worker named Angelos Kalaycioğlu, who wrote a letter of complaint to *Tan*, had not acquired a bread ration card because of some bureaucratic mechanisms. In the letter he wrote:

I was a worker in a factory. My daily wage was very low. I became ill, and was sent to Istanbul for a change of air. I rented a room temporarily. I obtained a bread ration card by showing this room as my residence. But I was asked to show a rental contract. I had not made a written rental contract because I was poor. Therefore I was unable to acquire a ration card.³⁰¹

The distribution of the rationed bread also created complaints and dissatisfaction among the people. People had to wait in queues for hours for small pieces of bread which were of poor quality because of the organizational deficiencies. Sometimes soldiers and police tried to take their allowances as soon as they came to the place of distribution by disregarding the people in the queue. There were many fights in front of the bakeries which ended at the police station.³⁰² This situation is illustrated in the literature reflecting the difficulties of the era. For example, in the Muzaffer Arabul's novel, *Çakrazlar*, the difficulties and hardships of the people in bread queues are described in detail very impressively.³⁰³

In short, for many reasons the bread problem was not solved throughout the war period and caused complaints and discontent among the people. Minus the fact that the state intervention in the question did not meet the needs, the rationing practices did not

³⁰⁰ 28.2.1943, *Son Posta*

³⁰¹ "Okuyucu İstekleri," 10.9.1943, *Tan*

³⁰² 24.3.1943, *Yeni Adana*; "İstanbul'un Ekmek İşini Aksatan Sebepler," 14.7.1943, *Tan*

function properly and caused new problems and discontent. Many people were obliged to eat rationed bread, which was very substandard and in very limited amount.

Furthermore, the people had to wait in queues for long period of time at the door of the bakeries for this breads. In these places they experienced their low status. Sometimes soldiers or police disregarded the people in the queues and received privileged treatment. Sometimes the people waited at the front of the bakeries for the poor rationed bread, while wealthier people brought their dough in trays to the bakeries in order to have it baked. The people, seeing this kind of events became angry and grumbled that “whereas we do not eat a piece of bread, they eat pastries and buns made from white flour,” as can be seen from the memoirs of Eser Tutel.³⁰⁴

Again, in Nazım Hikmet’s *The Sights of the Men from My Country* (Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları), the poor laborers of rice raid the building of the Soil Product Office and demand bread and wheat. These laborers say that the managers of the Office eat white bread.³⁰⁵ This is also a sign of the inequality experienced during the war period reflected in a poem. Many poor people who were in need of rationed bread were excluded from the rationing system. They also complained about their situation.

As a last reason, but not least, the type of rationing system also affected the success of the rationing. During the Second World War there were two sorts of rationing systems: The German system of rationing and the Anglo-Saxon system. According to the former, the quantities of allowances distributed by the state were determined strictly for each person. This system did not give the people choice in the rationing goods, according to their needs and interests. Allowances were determined in advance by the administration and then distributed to the people. This was a rigid system which required an effective and

³⁰³ See Çılgin, p.41-42

³⁰⁴ Eser Tutel, “İkinci Dünya Savaşında Beyoğlu,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, no.133, January 1995, p.28

³⁰⁵ “Ekmek isteriz / Buğdayı çıkarın ortaya, kime saklıyorsunuz? / Kendileri has ekmek yer domuzlar / Elbette yiyecekler, buğday ellerinde / Buğday almadan şurdan şuraya gitmem...” Nazım Hikmet, *Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002, p.420

disciplined organization. Its success was also dependent on the public support.³⁰⁶ The Anglo-Saxon system was a much more flexible one in which the people could choose the rationing goods according to their needs and interests. For instance, a person could not take his bread, and could take meat, sugar or coffee instead of the bread by giving his bread coupons. In other words, there was a substitution possibility between the goods. This system was much more suitable to individual needs.³⁰⁷

Turkey practiced the former sort of rationing system, with no possibility of substitution or of choice between the rationed goods. However, the lack of a disciplined and organized administration as a requirement of this system, and the lack of public support for the system meant that it did not function properly. As mentioned above, some people who did not need the rationed goods also took their allowances. In short, as Kemal Turan noted, ration cards did not meet the real needs and did not affect the prices. These cards became pieces of paper which were only a source of consolation and hope.³⁰⁸

Against the resistance to the rationing system, the state did not resort to the methods other than police force, prosecution and some punishment. This cannot be read as an indicator of the state power inherited from the Ottoman Empire or the eastern state tradition, but powerlessness in social control and in intervention in the economic life.

The Bread Question, Bakers and the State

Bakeries were the most important agents in the feeding of cities as suppliers of the bread. Bakeries should produce bread sufficiently in quality and quantity in order to feed the majority of the city-dwellers and so maintain the social order. In addition, the bread supply was very important for the proper functioning of the rationing policy since bread

³⁰⁶ Turgut İhsan Tükel (Kitap Eleştirisi), "Alimentation, Famine et Sources, John Lindberg..." *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, no. 1-4, 1946-47, p.154

³⁰⁷ Turgut İhsan, p.155

³⁰⁸ Kemal Turan, "Karneler," *AT* quoted from *Ulus* dated 2.4.1942. *AT*, no.101, (1-30 Nisan 1942), p.30.

was the first substance rationed by the state. In this respect, the success of the rationing policy depended on the bakers to a great extent. Their actions affected the rationing program. In this context, the relations between the state and the bakers is very important in order to understand both the provisioning policy of the state, the state power of social control, and the place of resistance by the social elements in the state and society relations in the early republican era.

Indeed, the cost of bread increased during the period under study. The first reason behind this increase was the agricultural impact of the war on Turkey. Agricultural production, to be more specific, wheat production levels, started to decrease from the first years of the war on. Accordingly, wheat prices started to skyrocketed. This meant a decrease in the availability and an increase in the expensiveness in the main raw materials of the bakers, wheat and flour.

In addition to this, transportation inside the country became difficult and expensive, as described before. This was also a factor in the cost of bread.³⁰⁹ Another factor was the rise in the prices of firewood and coal, the main energy sources of the bakeries in baking bread.³¹⁰ The prices of coal also affected the price of firewood. Since the coal production had reduced proportionally and transportation to the cities became difficult because of the lack of sufficient mine pillars, labor, machines, resistance of workers and transportation problems on the Black Sea from the first years of the war, the price of fire wood increased.³¹¹

The lack of sufficient bags in the market and the subsequent rise in their price also contributed to the costs of the bakers during the war and was reflected in the prices of wheat and flour prices indirectly.³¹² Before the war, bags had been imported from India, but the war hindered this importation because the other countries started to demand many

³⁰⁹ Rıza Çavdarlı, *Neden Ekmekçiler Şirketini Müdafaa Ettim?*, (İstanbul: Aydınlık Basımevi, 1942), p.5

³¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.3

³¹¹ See Akel, p.22

more bags in order to make sandbags.³¹³ Upon the rise in the prices of bags, the bakers applied to the local government and demanded raise the price of bread because of the bag costs. Indeed, flour sellers also had increased prices of flour because of bag costs.³¹⁴ What is even more important is the fact that the bakers alleged that the bags of flour given the bakeries by the mills were six to seven kilograms light.³¹⁵

As can be seen, bread costs increased considerably in comparison with the costs before the war. Inflationist economic conditions in the county also put pressure on the price of bread. Therefore, bakers also demanded some increases in the price of bread. When the state did not accept their demand, they resorted to reducing their costs or they protested the situation and put pressure on the state with the slowdown of production and creating bread shortages sometimes. In some districts in İstanbul, the bakers declined to produce bread sometimes on given a day and the people could not find bread at such times.

During the events of 1941, the Association of Bakers sought a price increase from the Directorate of the Economy of the Municipality (Belediye İktisat Müdürlüğü), but the Directorate refused this demand. Upon this refusal, bakers went into slowdown and did not produce bread. Some bakers did not produce bread only for evening. Others produced at night and sold white bread on the blackmarket. At the end, the local government of İstanbul was obliged to increase the price of bread 10 kuruş, after the reconsideration of cost factors such as bags, fire wood, labor wages and salt.³¹⁶

One of the foundations of the bread problem throughout the war was the bakers' attempts to resist the fixed prices in times when they believed prices were not keeping pace with inflation or that their losses from inflation were not being compensated. At such times they did not produce bread or they tried to decrease its quality. Indeed, in Zonguldak, for

³¹² The price of sacks was 45 kuruş before the war. This price rose to 110 kuruş when the war broke out. See "Fiyat İhtikârına Karşı Şiddetli Tedbirler Alınması Bekleniyor," Tan, 16.12.1939

³¹³ 8.11.1939, Tan

³¹⁴ 12.11.1939, Tan

³¹⁵ 4.1.1944, Tan

³¹⁶ See "Ekmek Narhı Tekrar Tetkik Ediliyor," Tan, 1.10.1941

example, because of a disagreement between the local government and bakers, bakeries did not produce bread for a week in Zonguldak and the people suffered from the bread scarcity.³¹⁷ Again, in 1943 in İstanbul, the Association of Bakers demanded a rise in prices 10 kuruş for each 600 grams of bread, but the local government did not accept this demand again.³¹⁸ However, the bakers found many ways to increase or keep their profit margins.³¹⁹ They generally resorted to fraud. This fact can be seen from increase in the number of reports about bread which was lacking in weight, quality, and proportion of flour after mid-August 1943.³²⁰

First of all, bakers produced much smaller and lower weight loaves of bread. To increase the weight of bread they diluted the bread with water. As can be seen from the newspapers of the period, this was a common resistance to the costs and the state's price policy. Consequently, the bad bread became a common grievance of the people in these years. Therefore, the state resorted to confiscations of these breads. For instance, the officials confiscated nearly 900 loaves of bread a day found to be lacking in weight and of poor quality as a result of an investigation. In the newspapers, it is possible to see many similar confiscations.³²¹

Second, bakers mixed more rye, barley, boiled and pounded wheat and water into the bread in order to save flour. Furthermore, there were also some bakers who added sand and ash to bread. For example, a baker who had mixed 10% soil into the flour of bread was

³¹⁷ 16.1.1940, Tan

³¹⁸ "Fırıncıların Zam Talepleri Reddedildi," 14.8.1943, Vatan

³¹⁹ See Çavdarlı, p.5

³²⁰ "Ekmeğe Fasulya Unu Karıştıran Bir Fırıncı Tevkif Edildi," 18.8.1944, Vatan; "Noksan Ekmek Satan İki Fırıncı Mahkemeye Verildi," 21.8.1943, Vatan; "Noksan Ekmek Çıkaran Fırıncılar," 22.8.1943, Vatan; "Ekmeğe Kül Karıştıran Fırıncı," 26.8.1943, Vatan

³²¹ See Rafik Halid Karay, "Olmaya Devlet Cihanda...", 1.10.1941, Tan. In addition, see "11 Fırında 149 Noksan Vezinli Ekmek Bulundu," 22.10.1943, Vatan; "507 ekmek noksan olması dolayısıyla müsadere edildi. "Bir Haftada Ceza Gören Esnaf," 29.9.1941, Tan; "Bir Ayda Bozuk ve Noksan Tam 1320 Ekmek Müsadere Edildi," 31.7.1944, Tan

sentenced to three months in prison.³²² Again, in Kınalıada a baker who was arrested in act mixed bran into his bread.³²³

Another example of the baker's resistance to state regulations was to take a share from the profits of cream cakes and of white bread selling them on the blackmarket at higher prices than that of the rationed bread. Some of them started to sell their flour to pastryshops and makers of pies, who paid higher prices for flour. Upon some investigations in four pastry-shops, officials found 270 bags that were full of white bread and 100 bags of white flour. During interrogation, the shopkeepers confessed that they had bought this flour from bakers at high prices.³²⁴ Contrary to the regulations, some bakers even did not sell their flour to pasty-shops, but produced white bread for the blackmarket.³²⁵

One of the main factors behind these attempts by the bakers was the weakness of the investigations of the state. Attempts at price controls and investigations of the market accomplished little because of the insufficiency of the organization. According to *Tan*, the municipality was not able to prevent the stockpiling of flour by bakers. There were 200 bakeries and it was not possible to investigate all of them in one day.³²⁶

The state was not able to control the resistance of the bakers against state regulations and provisioning measures. As a most basic condition of the provisioning policy, there was no coordination between the SPO and the bakeries.³²⁷ In this regard, the SPO played a role in the failure to solve the bread question and provisioning problems properly as it did not supply the bakeries flour for the production of bread at the right time and in the necessary amounts.³²⁸

³²² "Halka Ekmek Yerine Toprak Yediren Bir Fırıncı," 29.7.1943, *Vatan*

³²³ 5.10.1943, *Vatan*

³²⁴ Refik Halid Karay, "Ekmek Yerine Pasta Bolluğu !", 20.11.1941, *Tan*.

In a report in *Tan* dated 13.11.1941 it was stated that "the people who made and sold the pasty, pie, biscuit and dessert bought flour from bakeries. They paid 38 TL for the flour which must be 11 lira in the market."

³²⁵ "Fırıncılar Ne Diyor," 17.7.1943, *Vatan*

³²⁶ 16.11.1941, *Tan*

³²⁷ 30.7.1943, *Vatan*

³²⁸ "Fırıncılar Ne diyor?", 17.7.1943, *Vatan*

The weakness of the state's investigation into the bakeries was so serious that the state thought of selling bread 24 hours after its production. This would give the opportunity to the state to investigate all of the bakeries and their bread. Moreover, another advantage of this procedure was that it was that it made possible to weigh all of the loaves before distribution to the people. In addition to this, 24 hours after its production, the bread would dry out and no longer be dough. But some representatives opposed this opinion, arguing that old bread contained fewer vitamins. Moreover, because of the easy digestion of old bread, it would not satisfy the people. In this respect, the consumption of bread would increase rather than decrease.³²⁹

In a nutshell, the political power put great emphasize on the provisioning, and especially nutritional conditions of the people in order to maintain its legitimacy, labor productivity, and social moral in the dangerous political atmosphere of World War II. It attempted to control the prices and the quality of goods, especially those of bread. In order to guarantee the feeding of all citizens it tried to solve the bread scarcity by means of rationing. Therefore it changed the composition of the bread and investigated and control prices of bread. It prohibited the use of white flour in the making of pastries such as pies, cookies, and buns.

The bakeries behavior was critical for the success of state effort to feed the people. In this regard, bakeries considered economic agents in the formation of the state legitimacy and maintenance of social morale and order. The success of the state effort in feeding the people depended on their consent to state regulations and restrictions. In other words, the successful functioning of the system required harmonious cooperation between the bakeries and the state. But for many reasons, the state was unable to control the bakeries. The bakeries followed their own interests and resisted the state's regulations and restrictions. In this case, because the weak capacity of state to control the economy and even small economic agents in the market, and the insufficient investigations, the bakers

³²⁹ "Ekmek Meselesi," *AT*, no.101, (1-30 April 1942), p. 4-5

were free from the state regulations and resisted the restrictions and state policies. In addition to this, the state was unable to arrange the prices of other goods such as bags, flour, wheat, and firewood affecting the bakeries directly. In this respect, the bakeries that were affected adversely by rising costs behaved according to their interests and did not obey the state regulations and restrictions. Therefore, the state resorted to the use of force and increased punishments.³³⁰ The bread question in many forms continued to the end of the war. The newspapers of the period were full of news about the bread problems and constituted a ground for complaints of the people.³³¹

Indeed, the bread problem in the Second World War period is depicted in the memoirs and literature of the literature. For instance, one day the governor of İzmir opened his safe and held up a loaf of bread which looked like mud or rubble and showed it to Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, saying: “Here! Here it is! It was produced by the bakeries yesterday. I will preserve one of them as a souvenir!”³³²

The bread problem was reflected in stories. Oktay Akbal’s book, *First The Bread Went Bad* (Önce Ekmekler Bozuldu), illustrates how the bread problem was so important that it lodged in the memories of the people.³³³ In Mustafa Arabul’s *Çakrazlar*, the people fought over bread in front of the bakeries. In the book, when Tevhid who had been discharged from his compulsory military service saw the bakeries and the people’s efforts to acquire a piece of bread, he said: “It is not possible to get a loaf of bread from the bakery. Women, men and children are quarreling with each other. A disaster! How easy to be soldier!”³³⁴

³³⁰ see “Noksan Ekmek Yapan Fırınlara Çoğaldı”, 30.9.1941, Tan

³³¹ “Zonguldak’ta Ekmek Buhranı Var,” 28.1.1940, Tan; “Ekmek Fiyatı Bir Miktar Artacak,” 7.12.1940, Tan, “Ekmek Derdi Tanzim Ediliyor,” 15.11.1941, Cumhuriyet, “Fırınlara Önünde İzdiham Dün de Devam Etti,” 17.11.1941, Cumhuriyet; “Ekmek İşi Nasıl Halledilebilir?” 16.11.1941, Tan; Said Kesler, “Ekmekğin Fırınlarda Satışını Yasak Etmeli,” 22.11.1941, Tan; Said Kesler, “Ekmek Tevziyatında Son Sıkıntının Sebepleri,” 2.1.1942, Tan; Said Kesler, “Ekmek Karnesi Almak İçin Bir Öğretmenin Başından Geçenler,” 22.6.1942, Tan; “Yeni Bie Ekmek Çeşnisi Tecrübeleri Yapılıyor: Ekmeke Kuru Bakla Unu da Karıştırılacak,” 14.3.1942, Tan; “Ekmek Tevziyatı Bir Türlü Düzene Giremiyor,” 2.9.1942, Cumhuriyet

³³² Aydemir, p.203

³³³ Oktay Akbal, *Önce Ekmekler Bozuldu*, (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1984)

³³⁴ Çilgin, p.41

Concluding Remarks

The war showed its effects on the economy of the country, hitting the foreign trade first, which brought shortages of imported goods and inflation by decreasing the total supply. Military mobilization caused not only labor shortages in agriculture and industry, but also a great financial burden on the public. During the wartime, military and other administrative expenditures of the state increased. The government looked for new revenue sources to compensate for its increasing expenditures. The new taxes on gross earnings were generally levied primarily on wages and salaries. Another source of revenue for the government was printing money, emission. In addition, the government raised the prices of the State Economic Enterprises' goods to provide resources for the administrative and defense expenditures.

In this context, Turkey experienced higher inflation rates than even the combatant countries. The general prices index between 1939 and 1945 increased approximately 450%. The black market emerged within a short time after the war broke out. Many commodities disappeared from the market. The poverty and food shortage increased to great extent. While the lower income people were negatively affected by this process, in spite of the war's effect on industry and trade, the merchants, big landowners and industrialists found ways to profit.

The war aggravated agricultural production, to be more specific, wheat production. This caused food and especially bread problems in the cities. In cities, the threat of hunger and malnutrition emerged. The poverty, the high cost of living, and food scarcity gave rise to social problems among the poor people. As will be described in detail in the following chapters, the high cost of living brought some social problems such as squatter's houses,

homelessness, increasing divorces, vagrancy, the child question, epidemics and similar problems all of which are described in the following pages.

For the political power the provisioning of the city had great importance for many reasons. Hunger, as mentioned above, was a source of political, social and economic threat for the Kemalist elite. Furthermore, it is not difficult to see from the elite discourse that they perceived the solving of the food problems as a strategical factor in the foreign policy during the war.

Therefore it intervened in the food supply problems in many ways. First of all, the government tried to fix and control the price of basic consumer goods. Second, bread, as main element of the diet of the lower-income people, was rationed, followed by the rationing of other consumer goods such as sugar, coffee, flour and so on. In order to feed the cities with the agricultural product, the state also resorted to the forced purchases of crops and the taxes on the agriculture, which will be examined in the following chapter.

During the implementation of all of these policies, the state ran into structural insufficiencies, capacity problems and social resistance. As the state intervention into the economy increased, the problems and weakness in the state capacity came to light. In this process, there emerged various problems, defects, disorganization and lack of necessary infrastructure in almost all of the practices of the state policies. In addition, it was unable to lead successfully the agents who were to be take part in the solving of the food problem, such as its own personnel who investigated prices, traders and bakers.

Consequently, in the press, it was subjected to several criticisms as stated above. The bad practice of rationing policy affected negatively the prestige of the government. As Süreyya Temel said, “because of the failure of the rationing policy in the war period, within five years the government lost the credit which had been won in twenty years.”³³⁵

³³⁵ Süreyya Temel, *Harp ve Sosyal Davalarımız*, (İstanbul: İktisadi Yürüyüş Matbaası ve Neşriyat Yurdu, 1947), p.49

Moreover, the fact that the governments followed inconsistent and unstable economic policies increased the economic problems and difficulties. First, a policy of price controls was put into action without a rationing policy. This contributed to the blackmarket. After that, the Saraçoğlu's free price policy gave rise to prices. After the failure of this policy, the government gave up free price policy. As Metin Toker says in his memoirs,

Briefly, the fact that the government did not have a consistent economic policy and lacked the means for effective investigations and interventions in the economy, abandoning the decisions taken within a few days increased the difficulties ten times.³³⁶

The other element that ruled out the success of the state policies was the resistance factor. First of all, the state was not able to lead and control its own personnel actions such as pilfering, stealing, misuses, embezzlement and bribes. Even state personnel who had to function in the implementation of the state policies challenged the state indirectly. Officials with low salaries misused their positions, pilfered rationed breads and accepted bribes in order to survive in the hard times of the war years. In this regard, the state was not able to provide full internal integrity in the everyday life practices of the power.

In addition, the people resisted the state regulations and manipulated the state practices in many ways according to their own interests. This meant that the state power of persuasion over the people was also open to question. The small traders resisted the fixed prices and price controls. The lower income people and poor people resisted limitation of their bread consumption and resorted to forging ration cards in order to take more rationed bread. Some gangs produced fake ration cards and sold them on the blackmarket. In this process, sometimes they cooperated with state officials. The bakers, which were attached an important role by the government in the solving of the bread question, also resisted the state regulations, decisions and fixed prices in many ways. In parallel to the inflation, they demanded an increase in the price of bread. Upon the refusal of their demands by the state,

³³⁶ Toker, p.24

they lowered the quality and weight of the bread. They mixed many additives into the bread. Sometime they did not produce bread and caused bread shortages and social pressure on the state indirectly. So they accomplished to increase the prices of bread.

In this process, upon the failure of the government to bring down the inflation and bring an end to the shortages and food supply problems, it increased forcible methods and resorted to much more to punishments. Even a member of National Assembly, Rasih Kaplan, suggested the reestablishment of the Courts of Independence (*İstiklâl Mahkemeleri*) against the rise in prices.³³⁷

By all accounts, the main conclusions to be drawn from this chapter are that the war affected the Turkish society negatively and aggravated its economic condition. The lower income people suffered from malnutrition and hunger. The state tried to diminish the economic effects of the war, especially the feeding question, but its authority, power and capacity fell short in this process. The economic effects of the war and the state's response to these effects prove that the single-party state was not as effective and strong as assumed by many writers. In addition, the people and economic agents were not passive, silent and dependent objects over which the state and elite established the full hegemony and authority.

³³⁷ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi: Milli Şef Dönemi (1939-1945)*, (Goloğlu Yayınları: Ankara, 1972), p.164

CHAPTER THREE

THE PEASANTS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN TURKEY

This chapter deals with the experiences of the small peasants during the Second World War in Turkey. The war aggravated their life conditions. As will be shown, to great extent, they bore the burden of the war. However, the sufferings of the peasants have generally been ignored by the elite centrist historiography of Turkey. Whereas the literature on the period focused generally on the experiences of the elite and bourgeoisie, and the Wealth Tax has been analyzed in detailed studies,³³⁸ the peasants' life experiences, sufferings, the effects of the military mobilization, the gendarme pressure, the forced purchases by the state and the Soil Product Tax have not been discussed deservedly.³³⁹ In the literature about the period, the life experiences of the peasants are barely mentioned. The lack of their own political organizations and movements in the modern meaning has given rise to the belief that the peasants did not struggle against the state policies in rural areas. The modernist, orientalist and elitist perspectives are blind to the different kinds of

³³⁸ See Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000); Rıdvan Akar, *Aşkale Yolcuları: Varlık Vergisi ve Çalışma Kampları*, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2000)

³³⁹ There is only one exceptional study of Şevket Pamuk, "War, State Economic Policies, and Resistance by Agricultural Producers in Turkey, 1939-1945," in *Peasants & Politics in The Modern Middle East*, Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury (ed.), (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991). However, this article contains only the state policies and peasants' response to these policies, but not life experiences of the peasants. In addition it does not show these how these resistances functioned.

struggles and resistance that involved the peasants in the rural areas in everyday life. In the same vein, since the everyday practices of the political power have not been taken into account, the state has been regarded as very powerful and the main dynamic of Turkish history.

First, this chapter focuses on the small peasants' experiences, sufferings and resistances to the state and economic conditions brought by the war. Indeed, the small peasants were affected negatively by the war and the state economic policies during the war. However, they did not remain passive under the effects of the war and state policies. On the contrary, they resorted to many ways, resistances and strategies of survival, and determined the success of the state policies such as the forced purchasing of agricultural production and the Soil Product Tax. In addition, they expressed their complaints and demands by means of petitions and letters sent to the government.

Second, this chapter aims to show that the state was unable to follow through on many of its projects, such as the forced purchases of agricultural products and the Soil Product Tax because of the capacity problems and because of the resistance to these projects. In contrast to orientalist interpretations of Turkish history and politics which focus only on the elite intentions or ideals, by focusing on the implementation of the state policies in rural, this chapter argues that the state, which is regarded mistakenly as a strong state, was not actually strong and the unique agent of Turkish history, and that the small peasants were not passive objects of the nationalist elite and state, without any subjectivity and independent reasoning in their actions.

The Reflections of the War on the Peasants

Turkish agriculture was sideswiped by the effects of the Great Depression of 1929 in the last years of the 1930s. In spite of the low terms of internal trade, the state protected

the producers from the crisis by means of the purchasing policies of the Agricultural Bank (Ziraat Bankası).³⁴⁰ In the second half of the 1930s agricultural production increased and marketing conditions were relatively good. But this trend reversed with the war. The proportion of the value of agricultural export goods to agricultural value-added displays the changes in the rate of the marketing of agricultural goods. The decrease in exports because of the effects of the war on foreign trade decreased this proportion to 0.08, its lowest level since 1926.³⁴¹

Because of insufficiencies in the means of production and of the decrease in the opportunities of trade that stemmed from the war, the military mobilization and the confiscation of the draft animals, and the price and taxation policies of the government,³⁴² agricultural production decreased from 1941 on. As shown in Table 11, the first drop in the levels of agricultural production came in 1941 when wheat and total cereals production fell approximately fifteen percent below their 1937-39 levels. Except for 1940 and the conjunctural recovery in 1942, during the world war agricultural production remained lower than those in the pre-war period, as shown in the gross agricultural production index below.³⁴³

Table 11-The Gross Agricultural Production Index³⁴⁴

Years	Index
1938	100
1939	103.8
1940	102.6
1941	86.0
1942	102.4
1943	89.0
1944	79.8
1945	60.7

³⁴⁰ See Nadir Özbek, "Kemalist Rejim ve Popülizmin Sınırları: Büyük Buhran ve Buğday Alım Politikaları, 1931-1937," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no.96, (Spring 2003),

³⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.330

³⁴² Pamuk, pp.130-131

³⁴³ *ibid.*, p.129

³⁴⁴ See Tezel, p.350

Moreover, the trade terms of the agricultural production of the peasants declined in this period. The peasants had to give a greater proportion of their production in order to satisfy their needs. Alongside the drop in production, the internal prices and terms of trade hit the peasants before the taxation policies. Indeed, the low terms of trade in agriculture continued throughout the war period, except for 1942 and 1943.³⁴⁵

Thus the peasants were affected adversely by this process. Halil Aytakin described the difficult situation of the peasants as follows, and in this context, as can be seen from Table 12, the index of living increased rapidly in these years.

If there is any one truth today, it is that the peasants are in much greater difficulties and poverty than ever before. Before the war, for every kilo of wheat he sold, he could buy at least eight meters of cloth, two tins of plain oil; for a sheep, he could get an overcoat; for a chicken, a scythe, a kilo of soap; for a kilo of cheese, for a kilo of spring wool a measure of shoe leather; for sixty kilos of wheat, two pairs of cattle drover goods. In today's conditions, in order to meet these needs, he would have to give five times as much of these goods today and the goods that he is able to buy are more rotten, more spoiled.³⁴⁶

As shown from the index below, the cost of living in the village increased between 1939 and 1944 approximately five times. And the years in which the SPT was in effect, in other words 1943, 1944 and 1945 were the most difficult years for the peasants.

Table 12-The Index of Living in Village³⁴⁷

Years	Living Index
1939	10.61
1940	11.16
1941	13.65
1942	16.02
1943	29.56
1944	47.32

The main victims of this scene were the small peasants. In spite of the price imbalances between the agricultural goods and means of production, those who made money in this period were only large landowners.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.381

³⁴⁶ Halil Aytakin, "Köyde Yaşayış," 16.7.1945, Tan

With respect to the large landowners, the state economic policies were not a great obstacle to make profits. According to Keyder and Birtek, the state policy of forced purchases of agricultural products by the state at low prices and taxes did not affect the large landowners very adversely because there remained a great quantity of products in the hands of the large landowners even after the purchasing. Hence, they were able to sell these at high prices in the market. However, there remained nothing in the hand of the small peasant to sell in the market after the purchases.³⁴⁹

In addition, as Kafaoğlu said, large landowners were able to overcome the limitations on the trade that stemmed from the war, as follows:

As far as I heard from a large landowner, the *agas* transported cereals and legumes into the cities such as Istanbul and Eskişehir by means of hard to find trucks because the transportation of commodities in railway had been banned except for the goods of the SPO. Hence they made money from this trade with trucks. But, naturally the small and middle peasants did not have this kind of opportunity. They had to sell their products in the nearby markets at low prices.³⁵⁰

In addition, only the large land-owners benefited from the recover of the internal terms of trade of agriculture in 1942, but not small peasants. In this period, Hüseyin Avni reported that despite a discourse claiming that all peasants became wealthier, only a minority of them became wealthier thanks to black-marketing or rises in agricultural prices.³⁵¹ A peasant interviewed by Zekeriya Sertel also said as follows: “There are some peasants who have made money, but the number of those peasants who are impoverished is much greater than that of the wealthier.”³⁵² In a nutshell, it is possible to say that the recover of trade terms in 1942 and high prices did not necessarily mean that the all segments of the peasants made money. The small and middle peasants did not have the

³⁴⁷ Yıldırım Koç, *Türkiye’de Sınıf Mücadelesinin Gelişimi (1923-1973)*, p.153

³⁴⁸ “Yakın ve Ortadoğu Bölge Toplantısı,” *Çalışma*, no.24, 1947, p.51

³⁴⁹ Çağlar Keyder-Faruk Birtek, “Türkiye’de Devlet Tarım İlişkileri (1923-1950),” *Toplumsal Tarih Çalışmaları*, (Ankara: Dost Yayınevi, 1983), p.210

³⁵⁰ A. Başer Kafaoğlu, *Varlık Vergisi Gerçeği*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2002), p.73

³⁵¹ Hüseyin Avni reported that the large landowners enjoyed profits, but not the small and middle peasants in this period. Hüseyin Avni, “Hangi Köylü Zenginleşiyor?” *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.20, 1942.

³⁵² Zekeriya Sertel, “Köylü Hakikaten Zengin Oldu mu?”, 8.6.1943, Tan

same opportunities as the large landowners to take advantages of the high prices in the market. Thus the war affected them negatively, as will be shown in detail below.

The most adverse effect of the war on the peasants was the military mobilization, as it created a labor shortage in the villages. With the military mobilization, the number of soldiers in the army increased to 1.000.000 of which 750.000 were peasants.³⁵³ The families of the soldiers in the village encountered many hardships.

Kafaoğlu, who witnessed the events while he was a tax official in villages, says that after the conscription of peasants, who were sole bread winners for their families, their relatives and families at the home faced many difficulties.³⁵⁴ In this period, Mediha Berkes also said that because some of the men were recruited into army, their wives were unable to plant all of their arable fields and they suffered economic difficulties.³⁵⁵ Indeed, the mobilization of the peasants was destructive for the lower income small peasants. Because of the labor shortage, the village inhabitants, the elderly, women, children and other persons who were not yet conscripted had to work in difficult conditions which were destructive bodily in comparison with the pre-war period.³⁵⁶

Ş.R. Hatipoğlu, the Minister of Agriculture, also said that the because of compulsory work and military conscription, those who remained in the villages faced great difficulties in getting continuing agricultural works. They were unable to complete all of their works in the village. In addition, their need to gather firewood for winter throughout the harvest season hindered their agricultural work.³⁵⁷

Thus, the government put in effect Article 13 of the Village Law, which brought the obligation of help by the villagers to the agricultural work of the families of soldiers. According to the law, “the villagers were obliged to plant and look after the fields, vineyards and orchards of those villagers who were in the army.”³⁵⁸ However, it was very difficult to look after the soldiers’ farms for the peasants, who were unable to find the necessary equipment and means for their own production activities and their subsistence.

³⁵³ Kafaoğlu, p.74

³⁵⁴ Kafaoğlu, p.17

³⁵⁵ Mediha Berkes, “Köyde Yaşayış,” *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.30, 1943, p.194

³⁵⁶ “Yakın ve Ortadoğu Bölge Toplantısı,” *Çalışma*, no.24, 1947, p.51

³⁵⁷ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 513.2061.2, (3.1.1943)]

³⁵⁸ “Yardım işleri: Dahiliye Vekili Faik Öztrak BMM’de Asker Ailelerine Yardım Meselesi Hakkında Beyanatta Bulundu,” *AT*, 16 November 1940, no.85, (1-31 January 1940), p.34

In this respect, it is not difficult to estimate that Article 13^{of} the Village Law did not function properly.

In addition, some peasant families whose men had been conscripted complained that the assistance which was to have been made to soldiers' families had not been made to themselves. They demanded state assistance by means of petition. For instance, one of the demands of the peasants from Safra Village which were transmitted to the Head of the Province Congress of the RPP (CHP İl Kongresi Reisliği) in İstanbul was state help for the families of soldiers. This demand indicates that the peasant families were not assisted by the state as regulated by the Village Law.³⁵⁹

Another factor that made the living conditions of the peasants much more difficult was the compulsory work policy of the government. Many peasants in the regions in which the factories and mines were located were subjected to compulsory labor. For instance, the farming of many peasants in Karabük was hindered by this practice. Again, according to a Party Inspector from Gelibolu, some of the peasants who had been sent to distance places from their homes and who were unable to continue their agricultural work, complained about this situation.³⁶⁰

The peasants also regarded the compulsory work as detrimental to their interests and did what they could to resist it. For instance, according to a report by representatives, in Zonguldak, the peasants who were subjected to the compulsory work escaped from the mines or did not go to the mines if they didn't have relatives or family members who continued to work in their land or if their families suffered from the food scarcity.³⁶¹

Because of these escapes, the peasants encountered pressure from the gendarme and local governments. In some cases, their homes were searched, and their children and wives were put in jail by the gendarme. In other cases they were tortured. Some runaway

³⁵⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 162.646.1, (1943)]

³⁶⁰ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 468.1918.1, (1944)]

³⁶¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 722.470.1, (1942)]

peasants would not go back to their villages, but hid from the gendarme and local government for a certain time.

There were some open instances of peasant protests and resistance to local government. For instance, some village chiefs (muhtar) did not accept the list of those declared obligated to work because the list was contrary to the law. In return, they were insulted by the head official of the district (kaymakam) and their names included in the list of compulsory laborers as punishment. But they escaped from the compulsory work.³⁶²

One of the most important problems of the peasants in the war period was involved feeding and provisioning. Contrary to popular assumptions, the nutritional conditions in the village was not much less problematic than in cities. The peasants also had some difficulties in feeding themselves. In some cases, these problems took the form of starvation. In this case, they sold their household goods in order to buy food such as flour, bread and wheat. In 1943, Halil Aytakin described the conditions of the feeding problem of the peasant as follows:

Like in the cities, the living conditions in the villages were unusual for two years. With the outset of the war, the feeding problems and hard living conditions affected the villages as well as the cities. From 1942 on, contrary to some arguments, the feeding problems affected many villages severely and caused hunger and misery much more than in the cities.³⁶³

Mediha Berkes, who also observed the village life in this period, wrote of the hard living conditions and feeding problems of the peasants. Berkes noted that the food scarcity even in the villages reached such a great extent that some infants died and people had to eat their seed.

In Turhal, many bakeries cannot produce bread because they do not have flour...The poor masses suffer from hunger...A village in Yozgat suffers from a severe scarcity of food. In this village some peasants try to sell their household goods in order to buy some flour. They are subsisting from day to day. Those who are unable to find basic foods suffer from hunger. In this village, there was nothing to eat in one of the homes we visited...In this home, we found a woman after childbirth. But her child had died because the women had had no milk.³⁶⁴ In some

³⁶² PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 491.1978.1]

³⁶³ Halil Aytakin, "Köylülerin İaşe Durumu," *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.36, 1943, p.487

³⁶⁴ Mediha Berkes, "Köyde Yaşayış," *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.30, 1943, p.192

villages the food scarcity was extreme that the peasants had to eat the seeds distributed by the Office after washing off the chemicals.³⁶⁵

It is possible to see the food scarcity and feeding problems in the villages from the reports prepared by the RPP representatives. Representatives who made inspections in the villages of Zonguldak noted the food shortage and complaints of the peasants about this matter in their report as follows:

The people who inhabited all of sub-districts (nahiye) and villages complained about the shortages of flour for wheat and wheat. Some of them said that although they had been looking for food with immense industry for days, they had been unable to find any food or cereal for bread, and had returned empty-handed to the village. Some said that they had barely managed to procure food by selling some household goods. Those who sold their goods for bread and food said that there then was left nothing in their hand to sell for a piece of bread.³⁶⁶

In his memoirs, Cahit Kayra also depicted the hunger in the villages in the Black Sea region, where he went as an official. Kayra and his colleagues could not find a piece of bread in Vakıfkebir. There was no food other than fish, which was also not enough.³⁶⁷ Kemal Karpat also mentions that because of the starvation in some villages of the Black Sea region, some people died.³⁶⁸ Another witness of the period, Kafaoğlu, noted that some persons ate broom seeds in the Black Sea region because of lack of food.³⁶⁹

Furthermore, the available foods and bread were often substandard. Even if bread was available and sufficient in quantity in the villages, it was not satisfactory as much as in the cities. For example, Turgut İnal says that bread was a problem for the peasants during the world war.³⁷⁰

In these economic and social conditions, the peasants did not remain passive and silent. They complained about the lack of their basic necessities to the state and demanded food, seed, bread, public services and assistance. They wrote and sent petitions detailing their complaints and demands to the RPP and the National Assembly. Hence, they made their living conditions, complaints and demands heard by means of petitions. From these

³⁶⁵ ibid., p.194

³⁶⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 722.470.1, (1942)]

³⁶⁷ Cahit Kayra, '38 *Kuşağı*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), p.98

³⁶⁸ Karpat, p.102

³⁶⁹ Kafaoğlu, p.17

³⁷⁰ Turgut İnal, www.radyoilkhaber.com/site/turgut/28022002.asp, (28.02.2002),

petitions, it is possible to see the widespread food scarcity in the villages and the complaints of the peasants about the scarcity and the state, which failed to help them.

For example, Sinan Dursak from Taşlı village, Hüseyin Cebe from Kemah Camour village, Süleyman Ağin from Hüseyin Saracık village, Salih Desteci from Olucak village and many other peasants from various villages submitted petitions to the National Assembly, including demands of “removing the feeding problems and distribution of seed at the right time.”³⁷¹ The chief of Çavuşlu village from Mersin in his petition said that the peasants remained without food and demanded assistance from the SPO.³⁷² In the Yearbooks of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, it is possible to see similar short summaries of many petitions by peasants from the various regions of the country about the solving of the feeding problems and the provision of enough bread.³⁷³

In the war years, some diseases such as typhus, typhoid, malaria, and tuberculosis increased and spread in parallel to the high cost of living.³⁷⁴ However, the peasants were not provided with effective health services to resist the diseases. The state health services and struggle against the epidemics, which were not sufficient even in the cities, let alone reaching the peasants, who made up eighty percent of the population. Indeed, many villages did not even have a midwife, doctor, health organization or health official.³⁷⁵

Malaria, which had decreased to 11% in the pre-war period, increased to 32% duration of the Second World War.³⁷⁶ The government took some measures against the disease by establishing special districts which received special focus of the malaria struggle of the state. These districts where the struggle against the malaria was intensified were generally economically productive places. Many villages and districts suffering from malaria were excluded from the struggle. Therefore, the peasants requested inclusion in the

³⁷¹ The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.11.1940-31.10.1941), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1943), pp.320, 321, 323

³⁷² *ibid.*, p.273

³⁷³ İslam Öztürk from Babaeski Celihli village requested food, seed and oil (p.277); Villages of Altınoluk district requested cereals and flour (p.280); Peasants from İstavri village of Of requested provisioning of their village by the state (p.290); Eoğlu village of Maraş requested bread (p.291); Kılındamavran village of Of requested bread (p. 291); Teke Sarmaşık villagers of Bafra requested cereals (p. 293); Karacurun villagers of Urfa requested seed and food (p.310); Şekerli Taş villagers of Siverek requested provisioning of the village and seed (p.318); Camoluk, Ağin Hüseyin Saracık and Araç Olucak villagers of Kemah requested food and seed ((p.321)...For many other brief summaries of petitions see the Yearbook of the GNAT (1.11. 1940-31.10. 1941), Ankara, 1943.

³⁷⁴ In this subject, see Chapter Five, pp.273-300

³⁷⁵ See Kafaoğlu, p.17

anti-malaria campaign of the state, health officials, medicine and equipment to help them in struggle against malaria by means of petitions. These petitions show the sufferings of the peasants from malaria.

For example, in the Minutes of the Districts and Province Congress of the RPP in Konya in 1944 (*CHP Konya Vilayet ve Kaza Kongreleri Tutanakları*) it was reported that malaria was widespread and increasing rapidly in all villages. But there were no malaria health officials (*sıtma memuru*), despite the urgent need for them. So it was stated that the malaria health officials should be sent to the villages.³⁷⁷

As can be seen from the minutes of the Congress of the RPP in the districts and provinces, reports by the representatives and from the short summaries of petitions sent to the RPP and National Assembly, many similar complaints and demands about malaria came from all regions of the country.³⁷⁸

Again, as Fay Kirby, who made observations on Turkish villages and the Village Institutes in these years, also pointed out the bad health conditions of the Turkish village. According to Kirby, it was difficult to find even fifty students who did not have an endemic disease even in the villages of the most developed regions. In addition, because there was not sufficient x-ray film because of the war, from the first years of the war on, the incidence of children with tuberculosis in the rural areas increased.³⁷⁹ A director of a village institute told Kirby that “there were hard times when I had nothing but a cup of aspirin for the treatment of almost a thousand students.”³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ Rıdvan Ege, *Türkiye'nin Sağlık Hizmetleri ve İsmet Paşa*, (Ankara: Türk Hava Kurumu Basımevi, 1992), p.15

³⁷⁷ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 511.2053.1, (1.7.1944)]

³⁷⁸ In the archival documents, there were many complaints and demands of the peasants about malaria. For instance, see the complaints of the Erzurum villagers, PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 650.162.1, (1943)] In Minutes of the Province Congress of the RPP in Afyon, there were demands of the inclusion of the some villages of Afyon into the Malaria Struggle, and of doctor and midwife. See PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 133.539.1.]

In addition, there were many demands of malaria struggle and quinine among the Summary of Demands of Provinces Presented to the Great Sixth Congress of the RPP. See *CHP 6.Büyük Kurultayına Sunulan Vilayet Kongreleri Dilekleri Hülasası*, (Ankara: CHP Genel Sekreterlik Neşriyatı, 1943), p.55-63

³⁷⁹ Fay Kirby, *Türkiye'de Köy Enstitüleri*, (Ankara: Güldiken Yayınları, 2000), p.228

³⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.229

Yıldız Sertel, who experienced village life in these years, also emphasized the widespread malaria and tuberculosis in the village. In addition, there was no medical treatment of these diseases. Villagers had to bring the patients to the cities in order to see a doctor, but many patients died on the road, because travel to the city was very difficult.³⁸¹

Another indicator of the bad living conditions and poverty in the villages brought by the war was the increase in the theft of animals and crops. Impoverishment and scarcities in rural areas caused the increase in the incidence of theft. Mostly animals were the subject of theft because the value and prices of animals increased sharply with the war. First, because 20% of all draft animals and 40% of all horses were confiscated by the government for the military mobilization,³⁸² there remained a limited numbers of animals for agricultural work. Thus, the price of an ox increased from 150 TL in the pre-war period to 500 TL in 1942; and that of a water-buffalo increased from 250 TL to 1000 TL in the same interval.³⁸³

In these conditions it is reasonable to anticipate the increase in theft of animals. It is possible to see the reports about animal theft in the archival documents. For example, according to a report by a representative dated 1942, in Burdur the theft of animals had become epidemic in recent times. This situation stemmed from rise in the value of animals.³⁸⁴ Another document, dated October 1943, reported that in Zonguldak there had been some complaints about the increase in the number of thefts.³⁸⁵ Not only animals, but also crops were stolen frequently. For instance, according to one document, there was widespread theft of crops in Nazilli.³⁸⁶

The problem of the peasants whose animals or crops were stolen was not only theft, but also the struggle against thieves by the gendarme. The fact that the gendarme did not

³⁸¹ Yıldız Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.113

³⁸² See Pamuk, "War, State Economic Policies,..." p.130

³⁸³ Asım Us, *Hatıra Notları (1930-1950)*, (İstanbul: Vakıf Matbaası: İstanbul, 1966), p.522

³⁸⁴ See PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 508.2040.4, (2.12.1942.)]

³⁸⁵ See PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 723.472.1, (3.10.1943)]. In addition see PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 723.432.1]

³⁸⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 509.2043.1, (30.12.1944)]

prosecute some thefts aroused the discontent of the peasants. Some peasants wrote a letter to the party inspector about the matter and they alleged that some thefts were not prosecuted deliberately because the gendarme and the directorate of the district benefited from this situation in some ways. For the party inspectors, this situation was very dangerous for the regime, threatening the loyalty of the peasants to the government. According to the inspectors, “this lack of peace and harmony gives rise to pessimistic emotions among the people. Voices of rebellion were raised in cries like, “the government is absent, and our protectors are nonexistent.”³⁸⁷

Another problem of the peasants was The Institution of Forestry Enterprise (Orman İşletmeleri Kurumu). It tried to control over the forest to benefit from it much more productively. The state banned the cutting of firewood from the forests. The Institution of Forestry Enterprise (Orman İşletmeleri Kurumu) was established to protect the state’s forests and to plant trees throughout the country. The entrance of grazing herds of animals into the forests was banned. But the peasants resisted these regulations and the law on the forests and struggled with this institution continuously.³⁸⁸

But, the peasants challenged the restrictions of the state against the use of the forests and cutting firewood. The state was unable to cope with these challenges of the peasants against its control over the forests. This situation can be seen from Abidin Binkaya’s statements about the matter in the National Assembly:

The peasants do not know the importance of the forests. This should be explained to the peasants. But the state efforts in this subject are insufficient and fruitless.³⁸⁹

Memoirs, newspapers and archival documents provide example of the peasants’ challenge to the state control over the forests. Indeed, the peasants continued to cut wood secretly, in spite of the ban. This act was done at night in order to conceal the wood from the gendarme or forest rangers. As soon as they piled up all of the firewood at the door of

³⁸⁷ The urgent demands of Zonguldak, a report presented by Party Inspector of Zonguldak to the General Secretariat of the RPP. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 723.432.1]

³⁸⁸ Karpat, p.103

the store or of the home, they moved them into the store or house before morning.³⁹⁰ According to a report of a representative, in Mihallıçık in Eskişehir, many peasants were caught with illegal wood supplies and taken to court by the forest rangers.³⁹¹ Again, in *Son Posta*, it was reported that some peasants who had cut wood had been arrested while transporting it to their villages.³⁹²

Yıldız Sertel also says that despite the ban and the forest rangers, because the peasants needed firewood, they continued to cut wood from the forests. Therefore, the one of greatest threats to the peasants were the forest rangers.³⁹³

From archival documents, it is possible to see the challenge of the people to the forest policy of the government because the government failed to solve the heating problems of the people. In some cases, bribery and misuse of authority arose and the forest rangers allowed whom they wanted to cut wood.

Although Mihallıçık have a good source of firewood, the Forestry Enterprise distributes the wood late because of official procedures. Therefore, many people, children and women cut firewood illegally. They were frequently arrested and sent to the courts. But, the forest rangers accepted bribe and close their eyes some evasions.³⁹⁴

The peasants complained not only of the food shortage, diseases and other difficulties, but also of the unequal sharing of the burden of the war and inequalities made by the state. In spite of the adverse effects of the war on the peasants, the state did not make any effort in order to eliminate these effects in rural areas like in urban areas. As Hershlag says, little was done to improve the standard of living of the population, especially of the peasants, who constituted about 85 % of the total.³⁹⁵ When it is taken into account the fact that even in urban areas the social welfare measures and services did not meet the needs as will be shown in Chapter Five, it is not difficult to estimate that the

³⁸⁹ The Minutes of The GNAT, 28.5.1942, p.407-408

³⁹⁰ Naime Karanfil ile röportaj (17.5.2003)

³⁹¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (1943)]

³⁹² 5.9.1945, *Son Posta*

³⁹³ Yıldız Sertel, p.120

³⁹⁴ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (1943)]

³⁹⁵ Z.Y. Hershlag, *Turkey: The Challenge of Growth*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p.124

situation in the villages was worse than the cities. The peasants were excluded from the social assistance program of the government in 1943. There were not any doctor, midwife, health organization and health official in the villages.³⁹⁶ The social welfare activities of the People's Houses (Halkevleri) and the People's Rooms (Halk Odaları) did not meet the needs of the most of the poor peasants.

In this respect, their complaints and discontent were not related only the lacking in some material needs, but also inequalities in the state practices of social aid, social services and provisioning policy. They saw themselves as people who were excluded from the state's social policies. According to them the state discriminated against them because they did not receive the same goods as those distributed to the city-dwellers by the state.

According to a report by a representative of Manisa dated 1942, "the peasants complained that whereas the cloths produced by Sümerbank were distributed to the city-dwellers, they did not benefit from these distributions and were deprived of cloth."³⁹⁷ In a similar vein, according to a report of a representative, some Sümerbank goods were not distributed to the peasants. The report stated that the peasants should benefit from these distributions.³⁹⁸

In Eskişehir the peasants from the districts of Seyitgazi, Sivrihisar and Mihaliççık complained about the inequality in the distribution of oil. According to the peasants, whereas the city-dwellers were given a half liter oil, they received none.³⁹⁹ In Denizli, party inspector Fazıl Ş. Burge described the peasants' perception of the state's social assistance in cities in his report as follows:

Despite the existence of electricity in the cities, the people living in cities receive two kilos of oil per household. But the peasants in the villages, who are without

³⁹⁶ About a general picture of the poverty and lackings in the Anatolian villages, see Nihat Eyriboz, "Plansız Köycülük Yerine Planlı Köycülük," *Hep Bu Topraktan*, no. 5, (April 1944).

In addition, the poverty, various shortages and lack of health facilities in the villages can be seen in archival documents. Therefore, there were many complaints and request by the peasants. For instance, see PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 508.2039.1; 511.2052.3; 650.162 511.2053.1]

³⁹⁷ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 684.322.1, (1942)]

³⁹⁸ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 511.2053.1, (1.7.1944)]

³⁹⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (1943)]

electricity, are given only a half kilo of oil per house. The peasants perceive this situation as a great injustice.⁴⁰⁰

In Zonguldak, many peasants complained about their exclusion from the distribution of oil.⁴⁰¹ In the villages, the oil shortage was so great that the oil lamps and sailor lanterns that had been used in old times could not be used because of the lack of oil in that period. Some peasants started to burn resinous piece of wood for light.⁴⁰²

Mediha Berkes said that there were many rumors among the peasants about the rationing, distribution of some goods at lower prices as social aid to the city dwellers. The peasants perceived the rationing policy and social welfare programs in urban areas as a protection of the state for the city dwellers. They regarded their exclusion from the rationing policy and social aid campaigns as unequal treatment by the state to themselves.

According to the peasants, there was no poverty in the cities. Above all, in their hands the state employees held all sorts of papers so that wherever they went, they could buy practically free or very cheap goods and food by means of these papers. According to them, their bellies were full and their backs strong.⁴⁰³

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir also pointed out that in its all efforts the government focused on only problems of the city dwellers. So the government tried to exploit the peasants in order to supply the cities. The following statement of Aydemir shows that some intellectuals shared the peasants' complaints.

All things were considered from the point of the city-dwellers...The government did not look for a way other than to supply the cities with cheaper wheat, meat and agricultural products.⁴⁰⁴

Leaving aside the social assistances, peasants were not supplied with the necessary equipment and seeds for their farming. Many small peasants complained of the lack of seed, the means of production, and equipment. They demanded that the state distribute seeds and other agricultural inputs at the right time in the petitions sent to the National Assembly.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁰ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 509.2043.1 (1944)]

⁴⁰¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 722.470.1, (1942)]

⁴⁰² Mediha Berkes, "Köyde Yaşayış," *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.30, 1943, p.194

⁴⁰³ *ibid.*, p.194

⁴⁰⁴ Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam*, vol.2, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2000), p.210

⁴⁰⁵ See The Yearbook of the GNAT (1.11.1940-31.10 1941), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1943)

In short, the peasants complained not only of scarcities but of the unequal distribution of it and their exclusion from the governmental social aid programs from which the city-dwellers benefited. This situation aggravated the living conditions of them. Therefore, they thought that they were neglected by the state. It is possible to say that they became much more aware of the fact that, contrary to the popular saying, *the peasants were not the master of the nation*. However, they were not silent or passive in this process. They resisted the state policies and the difficulties they ran into. They tried to make heard their complaints and demands by sending petitions to the state.

The Peasants and State Economic Policies

The Forced Purchases and the Soil Product Tax

The most important experiences of the peasants during the war were the forced purchases of agricultural products at prices which were fixed lower than the market prices, and the Soil Product Tax (hereafter the SPT) which was enacted in 1943 and revised in 1944 and continued to 1947. These were permitted by the war in order to find a solution to the state's extraordinary expenditures for the national defense, for the provisioning of a large army, and for the food supply problems in the country. However, peasants resisted the forced purchases and the SPT. Therefore because of social resistance and capacity problems, the state was unable to extract all expected agricultural sources.

The state policy of provisioning was to use up the existing stocks in the first step. Once the stocks were exhausted, it resorted to the forced purchases of agricultural products at fixed prices by means of the Soil Product Office (the SPO) from February 1941 to July 1942. Until the 1941, the producers were left free to sell their crops either to the Office or the private merchants because of the optimism created by existing stocks and large harvest. But the cereal prices increased as a result of hoarding by merchants and that at the prices it

offered, the Office would not be able to purchase enough of the 1940 crop. In October the government issued a decree enabling it to purchase at its own prices all cereal stocks in the hands of merchants and middlemen. In February 1941, it initiated the policy of requiring all producers to sell their entire cereal crop, after allowances were made for household subsistence, seed, and animal feed, to the Office at determined below-market prices.⁴⁰⁶

But this policy did not meet the needs, and bread shortages emerged in the cities. As Pamuk writes, as purchases by the Office remained substantially below target levels, the food supply situation in urban areas continued to deteriorate. In 1942, bread rationing was initiated in the three largest urban centers, Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir and in Zonguldak.⁴⁰⁷ Upon the failures of these policies, the government enacted the 25 percent rule. The Şükrü Saraçoğlu government decided to follow the free-price policy in agriculture in order to increase the production. Because the state collected a certain part of the production by means of the 25 percent rule, this free-price policy would not be a problem for solving of the feeding question. In August 1942, the new government of Şükrü Saraçoğlu announced that producers would be allowed to keep part of their harvest for sale to private merchants. The share of the cereal crop to be delivered to the government was defined as 25 percent for the first 50 tons, 35 percent for the next 50 tons, and 50 percent of the output above 100 tons.⁴⁰⁸

However, in this process, the market prices of wheat soared to 100 kuruş, whereas the government paid 20 kuruş per kilo of wheat. Purchases in this context had indeed become seizures, as Pamuk points out. The new policy provided little incentive to producers to surrender their crops to the state...Second, while incentive to shift the burden toward large landowners, the new policy actually increased the burden of poor peasants.

⁴⁰⁶ Pamuk, "War, State Economic Policies...", p.133

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.135

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p.135

Although the earlier policy had provided allowances for substance, seed, and animal feed, the 25 percent rule did not include such a clause.⁴⁰⁹

When it encountered the resistance by the peasants, the government removed the self-declaration system. Instead of self-declaration by the written statements of the peasants, crops would be taxed on the estimations by the state officials called *subaşı*s. But the system did not function as the state desired. Upon the failure of the 25 percent rule, because it did not supply to the state with the necessary crops and prevent the food supply problems, and it was resisted by the peasants, the government turned to a tax which was highly reminiscent of the tithe, the SPT. Indeed, it should be escaped from the notice that the year of the enactment of the SPT was the year of 1943 that the state intensified social assistance program in the cities. In other words, the SPT would provide a source for the state social policies. Indeed, Prime Minister Saraçoğlu declared that the SPT revenues would be used in the social aid programs and the provisioning of the cities.⁴¹⁰ Indeed, some of the crops were used in the distributions of social assistance goods by the state to the state employees and the poor during the war.⁴¹¹

At the beginning, the rate of the SPT was changeable between 8 % and 12 % according to sort of the crops. But it was determined as 10 % approximate account. The tax would be collected nominally. Thus this tax was called the return of the tithe.⁴¹² The draft was enacted on 4 June 1943. However, upon the some shortcomings and drawback in even the first year of its practice, the government went to amend the law. A new law of the SPT was enacted on 26 April 1944, which brought the method of estimation, instead of the preceding method of weight.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p.135

⁴¹⁰ "The Discussion on the Bill of Law of the Soil Product Tax," The Minutes of the GNAT, vol.29-30, 4.6.1943, p.19

⁴¹¹ As *Tan* reported, the agricultural products came from the Spoil Product Tax were to be used as social aid goods to the lower income people and the poor. See 26.2.1944, *Tan*

⁴¹² Suat Başar, "Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi Kalkınca," *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, vol.7, no.1-4, 1945-1946, pp.88-89

⁴¹³ The Minutes of the GNAT, 19.04.1944, S.Sayı:89

In the first draft of the law, for crops which would be taxed according to self-declaration by a written statement of the taxpayers, the correctness of the written statements would also be inspected by a committee in land. They would investigate the planted land before the crops were matured and would estimate the probable amount of the product and share of the state. According to the method of weighing, the crops which are reaped by the peasants would be harvested in certain places. In these places, these crops would be weighed by the officials and the share of the state, 10 %, would be taken by the Office. Moreover, the taxpayers were obliged to transport the share of the state to the places of tax collection by their own means.⁴¹⁴

After the amendment, the Office would estimate the potential products in land and determine the share of the state for all crops. The Committees of Estimation (Tahmin Komisyonları), would be established in each provincial and district center, and the officials of this committee would go the villages and estimate the share of the state as 10 %.⁴¹⁵

The Office would employ teachers, instructors, persons graduated from high schools, and high school students for the estimation and weighing work. The state would pay them approximately 90 TL.⁴¹⁶

In this process, the SPO, which estimated, collected, stored and transported the share of the state in the forced purchases and the SPT, played a key role in all stages of the state effort of purchases and of tax and relations with the peasants. The terms of the Office became very popular among the people, especially among the peasants. It determined the effectiveness and success of the provisioning policies and social aid programs of the government on account of its critical role in extracting the revenues from the producers. At the end of the war, the SPO became the most important institution in the relations between the producers and the state. Whereas the Office purchased 157.000 tons that made up 4 % of total wheat production in 1940, in 1944 this quantity reached to 912.000 tons,

⁴¹⁴ Düstur, 3. Tertip, vol.14, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Matbaası, 1964), pp.665-673

⁴¹⁵ The Minutes of the GNAT, 19.04.1944, S.Sayısı:89

which made up 28 % of the all of the wheat production.⁴¹⁷ In this respect, the SPO became the most important agent in the relations between the state and the peasants, and determined the state-society (of which majority were peasants) relations during the war. For this reason, the examination of its functioning will be fruitful to understanding the state-society relations and state power during the Second World War.

The Soil Product Office during the War and the State Capacity of Extraction

The activities of the Office increased rapidly in the years of war in parallel to the agricultural taxes and forced purchasing. Although the Office controlled much more agricultural product at the end of the war in comparison to the prewar years and the first years of the war, purchases by the Office remained generally below target levels because of capacity problems of the Office alongside peasant resistance. In addition, the Office, which was the main institution of the state in the closest relation with the peasants, became the main subject of the complaint among the peasants during the war.

During the implementation of the forced purchases and the SPT, the Office ran into many problems. The first problem of the Office was the lack of sufficient storage in order to collect all of the products taxed by the state. In his memoirs, Cahit Kayra, who was an official in the Ministry of Finance and worked in the collection of the tax, mentions that there were many problems that stemmed from the Office in purchases and collection of the SPT as follows:

The Office did not possess the sufficient storage areas to keep the wheat and barley collected from the peasants. We covered and preserved the crops which had spilled on the ground near the railway stations with soil and mud. The Soil Product Office was not ready for the organization of these kinds of work. The crops, which were stored in mosques, decayed. The wheat which spilled on the land was walked on.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ 11.06.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁴¹⁷ Tezel, p.406-407

⁴¹⁸ Kayra, p.110

Because of the lack of sufficient storage, the Office was not able to accept some of the crops which were the part of the state share and the SPT at the right time. For instance, in Adana, the Office did not take delivery of the taxes of leguminous because of the lack of a place to keep them.⁴¹⁹ Some peasants who carried the state share and the SPT from their villages far from the collection centers were turned back in some cases. Because the Office was unable to take the crops brought by the peasants, the peasants were getting into debt to the state involuntarily. This debt constituted a burden for the peasants for the following year.⁴²⁰

Because the peasants could sell their products only after they had paid the tax and state share, the delay in the acceptance of the state shares and the tax delayed the putting of the crops on the market by the peasants. This was a cause of discontent among the peasants. *Yeni Adana* newspaper reported the situation as follow:

The Office did not have the strength left to collect the state share and tax. Hence, in many places the permission for the sale of the crops by the state was late because the share of the state was not carried into the stores.⁴²¹

The sufferings of the cotton producers in Adana that originated from the lack of sufficient storage of the Office were an epitome of the bad results of the SPT. Indeed, the Office seized the cotton on the land, but was unable to take delivery of it because of the lack of places to store it. Therefore many peasants were regarded as indebted to the state.⁴²² In addition, due to the lack of permission of sale in the market, many institution and factories in need of cotton had to resort to the black-market.⁴²³

In some cases, the crops accepted by the Office were piled up on the ground in the open air.⁴²⁴ Thus some of the crops rotted, disappeared or were walked on. Indeed, local newspapers made frequent reference to the loss and decay of the crops because of the lack

⁴¹⁹ 14.11.1944, *Yeni Adana*

⁴²⁰ 12.10.1944, *Yeni Adana*

⁴²¹ "Ofis Nazım Rol Oynayamamakta," 28.9.1943, *Yeni Adana*

⁴²² 1.12.1943, *Yeni Adana*,

⁴²³ A. Emin Yalman, "Yaratıcı Beraberlik," 24.10.1943, *Vatan*.

⁴²⁴ Lütfi Arif Kenber, "Buğday Yığınlarını Yağma Edenler," 22.10.1945, *Tan*

of store. According to news, some districts smelled rotten because the crops collected by the Office decayed in the streets, making impossible to stay in these places. For instance, according to a news of *Yeni Adana*,

The grains collected by the Office as the state share are still waiting in plain sight in the center of our district. Recent rains have caused the decay of these thousands of tons of grain. The pile of grains has turned green because its surface has become covered with grass. The smells of rotten grain make living in the Kadirli and nearby quarters insufferable.⁴²⁵

Again, according to *Kocatepe* newspaper in Eskişehir, one of the most important grain centers in Anatolia, there were wheat piles exposed to rain, rotting because of improper storage.⁴²⁶

The government tried to solve the problem by using schools as storage places. For instance, in İstanbul the grains collected by the SPO which were brought into the district centers began to be stored in schools.⁴²⁷ The second way was to use the mosques. Kayra and Kafaoğlu write that the mosques were used as the storage areas of the SPO. Kafaoğlu says that the use of the mosques in this manner caused uproar among the people and became political material referred to constantly by the Democrat Party against the RPP in the post-war period.⁴²⁸ Indeed, this method in Anatolia caused a popular discontent among the people and they complained of the occupation of the mosques in petitions sent to the RPP.⁴²⁹

The grains stored in the mosques also perished because of improper storage, as Kayra said and reported by the newspapers. For instance, in an article it was reported that because the flour and grain were not kept in mosques properly, they began to decay. Therefore the Office tried to find a way to mash this flour, which had become lumpy.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁵ 15.11.1944, *Yeni Adana*

⁴²⁶ 1.9.1942, *Kocatepe*

⁴²⁷ "Tahsil Edilen Hükümet Hissesi," 1.9.1943, *Cumhuriyet*.

⁴²⁸ Kafaoğlu, p.34

⁴²⁹ For example see a telgraph from Commission of Administration of RPP in Fethiye to General Secretariat of the RPP dated 20.8.1945. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3]

⁴³⁰ "Hububat Stokları Bozulmak Üzere," 14.5.1944, *Tan*

Another problem the SPO came face to face with was difficulties in transportation. This problem affected not only the SPO, but also the peasants. Whereas the lack of the necessary vehicles affected the tax effort of the state, the peasants, who had to transport their crops to the Office center in the district or the city centers, encountered difficulties.

There remained a limited number of railway cars because of the military mobilization. The army had confiscated many vehicles and draft animals. Thus some grains collected by the Office were kept waiting too long for transportation to a store or a city suffering from the food shortages. Therefore these grains began to rot and suffer from attrition. For instance, according to a report by Mebrure Gönenç and Haydar Gerçel, who were representatives of Afyon province, wheat collected by the Office had begun to decay due to the lack of vehicles to transport it.⁴³¹ Again, *Yeni Adana* reported that “whereas the means of transportation had been met the needs in the pre-war period, recently it has not been as fast and regular as in old times.”⁴³² According to another report by representatives, because the grains were not transported for a long time, they begin to decay as follows:

Crops were at the railway stations, in front of the stores in the open air and unprotected. They were not unable to be transported at the right time. Therefore, we saw that at the Biçer railway station in Kaymaz sub-district the hundreds of tons of crops were on the point of sprouting and were dispersed lost. The top layer of the crops had become mouldy and spoiled.⁴³³

This situation was a problem not only for the government, but also for the peasants because they had to carry their crops to distant places from their village because of the lack of collection places of the Office in nearby villages or districts. They had great difficulties in transporting their crops into the district center and to the storage area of the Office. For instance, according to a report by representatives, in Eskişehir, the peasants had great difficulties in carrying their wheat to the tax collection places of the Office.⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 613.3.1., (1942)]

⁴³² 25.1.1943, *Yeni Adana*

⁴³³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (1943)]

⁴³⁴ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 651.167.1, (1940)]

One of the main factors of failure and difficulties in the Office activities during the wartime stemmed from the personnel. The Office personnel cooperated with the peasants for some interests or closed their eyes to evasions sometimes. They accepted bribes, resorted to misuse, pilfering of the Office materials and crops, and evasion. The salaries of the Office personnel employed in the estimation and collection of the SPT, for instance, were between 80 and 100 TL.⁴³⁵ However, the cost of supporting a family exceeded the boundaries of these salaries. In 1944, the average cost of living for a family of five was 320 TL. It was regarded as very difficult to maintain a family on less than 320 TL.⁴³⁶

From this point of view, it is not difficult to understand why the tax officials in villages tend to accept bribe, misuse of their positions, pilfering and evasion. The bad living conditions of the Office employees can be seen from the reports by the representatives. For example, according to a report, in the villages of Zonguldak the state personnel were suffering from the scarcity of foodstuffs and in need for the support of the peasants, reported as follows: “The state officials, who led lives of privation in remote villages, were under obligation to and begged food from the peasants.”⁴³⁷

According to *Yeni Adana*, the state personnel were obliged to get on well with the peasants for their needs. In this way, the producers were able to evade the forced purchases and taxes. There were officials who reached agreements with peasants in return for boiled and bound wheat for winters.⁴³⁸ In this context, the tax collectors often stole crops from the stores of the Office, misused and embezzled funds of the Office. Furthermore, they sometimes tried to cheat the peasants.

There is much evidence of these acts in the press and archival documents. For instance, so far as *Tan* reported, in Çatalca some Office staff had been caught while stealing grains by the bagful from many Office stores. They put sand in the place of the

⁴³⁵ “Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi Cibayet Heyetleri Kuruluyor,” 11.6.1943, *Tan*

⁴³⁶ Zekeriyâ Sertel, “Bir Çare Lazım,” 29.4.1944, *Tan*

⁴³⁷ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 722.470.1, (1942)]

⁴³⁸ Nurettin Ünen, “Bir Ahlak İmtihani,” 2.8.1943, *Yeni Adana*

grain.⁴³⁹ Again, it was claimed that some state personnel had embezzled approximately 100.000 TL in the construction of the Office storages and other buildings.⁴⁴⁰

In another event, the director of the Hasköy mill, the Office specialist, mill owner and their friends were prosecuted by the court for concealing 4800 kilos of Office wheat. They also stole from the wheat after its grinding. Although each sack of wheat increased by two kilos after grinding, those persons who were accused had appropriated for themselves two kilos from each sack of flour.⁴⁴¹

In Edirne, the peasants, the weighing officials and the chief of the villages colluded to conceal the crops. 400 kilos of wheat were found in the home of the weighing official. As a result of the prosecutions, the chief of the village, the tax officials, the Office watchman and twenty peasants were arrested by the gendarme on charge of tax evasion.⁴⁴²

In Adana, an Office watchman was arrested in the act of stealing a sack of wheat from the Office store in Kadirli.⁴⁴³ According to *Kocatepe* newspaper, in Eskişehir and Bolvadin, a great amount of money had been stolen by the Office employers from the local stores of the SPO.⁴⁴⁴ A case in Adapazarı, which a chief specialist of the SPO, store personnel, weighing official were involved, summaries all such similar events experienced throughout the country.

First, they had weighed the crops collected by the Office dishonestly and collected hundreds and thousands of kilos of extra wheat and corn from the peasants. For example, they registered the 350 kilos of wheat as 300 kilos. Upon the objections of the farmers to the weighing, they had replied to them that they had said that “our steelyard does not make mistake.” Thus, they had then sold this excess to merchants. Second, they had not given back the wheat samples which had been submitted by the peasants, and had sold them as well. Third, they had accepted bribes from the indebted farmers who had never been paid the state share and the tax and helped in their evasion, registering them in the same list as the peasants who had paid their taxes and the state shares and arranging fake documents. Fourth, they had given wheat to the flour factory in Adapazarı without receiving money from factories and before the crops brought to the store. Fifth, they had given or

⁴³⁹ 14.1.1944, Tan

⁴⁴⁰ “Yüzbinlerce Liralık Yeni Bir Yolsuzluk,” 27.4.1944, Tan

⁴⁴¹ “Toprak Ofisten 4800 Kilo Buğday Saklamışlar,” 9.10.1943, Vatan

⁴⁴² “Edirne’de Bir Memur, Köy Muhtarı ve Yirmi Köylü Tevkif Edildi,” 26.9.1943, Vatan

⁴⁴³ “Kadirli Ofisinde Hırsızlık,” 18.9.1943, Yeni Adana.

⁴⁴⁴ See “Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi,” 12.10.1943, Kocatepe

sold 2776 bags which belonged to the SPO, and embezzled one canister oil. And finally, the weighing official, Hasan, and his brother, Hilmi, had received 14.000 tons of corns from the state arranging fake documents...Reportedly; they stole 250.000 TL of the state treasure.⁴⁴⁵

A representative who made an inspection in Afyon also reported that there were many cases of misuse of position and bribery among the Office personnel. He also pointed out that because the state employees were in need, they resorted to such illegal ways.

First, as we hear everywhere in Turkey, our young and even our highschool students are harmed morally in the process of collecting the state share and taxes because they resort to some cheating in the works of the state and are accustomed to making money illegally...But they ruin their moral values and harm the state by registering the crops lower in quantity than they should be, and by lying to the state about the amount of the state share and taxes, because they are in need of some money for survival.⁴⁴⁶

Along with the widespread misuse, bribery and stealing which were common among the Office personnel, the number and skills of the Office personnel were insufficient to perform the forced purchasing policy and SPT effectively. First, the number of the personnel was not enough to undertake all of the works of the Office. Second, because they were selected quickly and casually, the majority of them had inadequate knowledge about their jobs. These factors caused many problems during the estimation, weighing and collection of the state share and the tax. In addition, the taxation system and methods were also source of problems and discontent. The estimation method caused many complaints and rumors because it paved the way for favoritism, bribery and evasion.

According to Ali Rauf, who observed the practices of the SPT, “the tax officials of whom the majority were hired quickly and casually, are unskilled and insufficient.” Some of the Office employees estimated the quantity of the peasants’ crops as much less than it was because they did not want to be unfair to the peasants.⁴⁴⁷

Therefore, according to Ali Rauf, “the tax officials estimate less than it should be due to the doubt about the probable productions in the future. Hence, the state revenues

⁴⁴⁵ “Büyük Bir Suiistimal: Adapazarı Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisinde Memurlar Çiftçiye Soymuşlar,” 17.3.1944, Cumhuriyet.

⁴⁴⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 613.3.1, (1943)]

diminish in this process.” As can be seen, not only the illegal actions of the Office personnel, but also the procedures and methods followed in the taxation also caused that the Office personnel’s underestimation of the crops which were subjected to the SPT and state purchases. This negatively affected the implementation of the purchases and the tax.⁴⁴⁸

As reported by representatives inspecting the SPT practices, many of the problems stemmed from the Office personnel and the lack of proper organization. The employment of unskilled people in the taxation process caused mistakes and ignorance made by the Office personnel unwillingly.

In spite of the abundant crops in Afyon province, many hardships encountered due to the lack of organization and ignorance... Those Office personnel who had never seen a harvest or a pile of wheat until that time made mistakes unwillingly sometimes.⁴⁴⁹

The problem was not related to the quality of the personnel, but to their quantity. For example, a chief of the weighing in a village complained about the insufficient number of personnel in the work of weighing the taxes.

There are twenty or thirty harvest collection places in each village. But the Soil Product Office assigns only one official for weighing all of the crops in each village. It is not possible for this single official to control all of the crops in entire village.⁴⁵⁰

As a matter of fact, this situation was a source of problem and discontent not only for the state, but also for the peasants. The lack of necessary personnel also caused hardships for the peasants, as noted in the reports of the Eskişehir representatives:

The disorder and organization problems in the Office administration are a source of complaints among the citizens. The harvests, which had been stamped by the tax officials, waited too long a time. Because the officials did not weigh the crops at the right time, these long waits made the peasants very unhappy and anxious.⁴⁵¹

In some places, the peasants kept guard over the harvests which had been stamped by the Office personnel night and day in order to protect the state share and the tax. In

⁴⁴⁷ Ali Rauf, “Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi Nasıl Tahsil Ediliyor?”, 22.2.1944, Tan

⁴⁴⁸ ibid

⁴⁴⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 90.1.613.3.1, (1943)]

conclusion, the fact that the Office personnel did not reach all works at the right time due to mostly the lack of sufficient amount of personnel paralyzed the collection of the state share and the tax properly.

More than that, it can be thought that the fact that some Office personnel exploited the peasants and misused their rights caused the discontent among the peasants. Indeed, they sometimes demanded their meals and basic needs from the peasants. For instance, the peasants of Danacıoğlu village in Adana complained about the tax committee which demanded food from the peasants although it neglected its some duties. Upon this event, *Yeni Adana* newspaper reported that the Office personnel should be effectively supervised.⁴⁵²

Indeed, against the all negative factors mentioned above, the state was unable to inspect and control its personnel. To some degree, it can be argued that the negligence, slowdowns, and illegal behavior of the Office personnel originated from the state's inability to inspect the practices of its policies. Indeed, Hikmet Bil, in an article, emphasized the lack of auto-control of the state with respect to the great dimensions of the practices of the SPT. According to him, during the war-time, "leaving aside the inspection of the Office personnel comprising of 4000 officials, the inspectors were busy with only the determination of a few events."⁴⁵³ In this respect, it is reasonable to argue that the lack of the state supervision of the practices of the SPT and forced purchases gave rise to the nonconformist behaviors, negligence and illegal acts by the state personnel. This situation increased the peasants' discontent and accordingly their resistance to the forced purchases and SPT.

⁴⁵⁰ Ahmet Emin Yalman, "Köy Aleminde Duyduklarım," 7.9.1943, *Vatan*

⁴⁵¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (1943)]

⁴⁵² "Toprak Komisyonları Murakabeye Muhtaç," 28.12.1944, *Yeni Adana*

⁴⁵³ Hikmet Bil, "Çelik Silolar," 10.10.1945 *Tan*,

The state's inability to control and supervise its personnel led to arbitrary treatments by them in some cases. For instance, a report by Afyon representatives described this fact in this way:

Some officials went to work very late and stopped work very early due to the lack of any inspection. They made the peasants who came to the Office pay the tax during these most valuable workdays of the fall for the peasants, wait for along time. This causes anxiety among them. Even at the Office storage in the city center of Afyon, these long waiting periods reached so a great extent that these could not be excused.⁴⁵⁴

In the same vein, as reported by *Yeni Adana*, the Office specialist came to the work late continuously and he took a long lunch break and made the peasants wait. Furthermore, he behaved arbitrarily in his work. This situation caused widespread complaints among the peasants.⁴⁵⁵

Finally, since the rights and duties of the state personnel were not clear in the law, some conflicts occurred over the sharing of rights and duties between them. This conflict reflected in the reports of the representatives. According to the reporters, it was an urgent necessity to make clear and regulate the right and duties given by the NSL to the chiefs of administration.⁴⁵⁶

To sum up, the experience of the forced purchasing and the SPT disclosed shortcomings and weaknesses in the state capacity, to be more specific, its inability of extraction of tax, during the war period. There were some infrastructural limitations before the state such as lack of insufficient storage facilities, of transportation means, of an effective body of law and of skilled personnel, whose living standards would enable them to work effectively and "honestly." In this process, before the resistance by the peasants, which is examined below, the state was challenged by its own personnel. The officials employed in the forced purchases and collection of the SPT accepted bribe, resorted to evasion, embezzlement and underestimation of the crop by joining forces with the peasants

⁴⁵⁴ Afyon, PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 613.3.1, (1943)]

⁴⁵⁵ "Ofisin Mubayaa İşlerinden Şikayet," 13.6.1944, *Yeni Adana*

⁴⁵⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (1943)]

for some foodstuffs. Sometimes they overestimated the taxed crops and caused social discontent and sufferings among the peasants. All these were factors gave rise to the peasant resistance to the forced purchase and the SPT by creating the discontent and inconvenience to the state among the peasants and by creating the suitable ground for resistance in everyday forms.

Peasants' Resistance to the Forced Purchases and the Soil Product Tax

Alongside the capacity problems, the state was confronted with social resistance to the forced purchasing and the SPT. The peasants did not comply with the state agricultural policies. Although the peasants was unable to affect the enactment of the laws and decrees about the forced purchases and the SPT because the legal-political life were close to them, but they played a key role in their practices in everyday life, where they resorted to a wide range of resistance.

One reason for the resistance was the fact that the prices the state paid during the forced purchases were lower than the market prices. With this policy, the state sought to obtain agricultural products cheaply for the provisioning of the cities and army. In 1941, the Office paid the producers 5 kuruş per kilo for wheat, which was sold between 13-15 kuruş per kilo in the market.⁴⁵⁷ In 1942, the government paid 20 kuruş per kilo for the wheat it purchased while the market price approached 40 kuruş. The price differential increased considerably during the following year as the government insisted on the same price while inflation, and more importantly, cereal shortages pushed the market price above 100 kuruş in April 1943. Purchases by the government had indeed become seizures.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ Kafaoglu, p.72

⁴⁵⁸ Pamuk, p.135

As Pamuk points out, it became clear that this policy would face considerable resistance from all strata of the peasantry. Peasants tried to surrender as little of their crops as possible. They attempted to smuggle the harvest from the field and hide it. They tried to bribe the state personnel to underestimate their obligations. They tried to deliver less than the assessed amount. They tried to deliver grains of lower quality.⁴⁵⁹

Indeed, the resistance of the peasants points out that they did not behave according to a consciousness imposed by the state and elite, but according to their life conditions and interests. It is possible to see from their discourse that they regarded the forced purchases and the SPT as an injustice. Therefore they resorted to illegitimate and illegal actions which they regarded as legitimate against this injustice. In this respect, there was a discrepancy between the actions classified by the law of the elite as legitimate and the actions called legitimate by the peasants.

The peasants expressed fairly that they regarded the illegitimate action as legitimate due to their bad economic conditions and the injustice of the state agricultural policies. As can be seen from the following statements of a peasant, he confessed that they had to hide their crops from the state.

After the sale of our crops to the state as the state share, we have few crops to sell in the market...Most of us become thieves of our own crops. Behaviors which were regarded as illegitimate by our consciences have become legitimate in the course of time.⁴⁶⁰

The following statement of an old peasant from a village in Eskişehir implies the resistance and the peasants' own consciousness against the state.

The decisions of the government should not make us thieves of our own crops. They should not make us people who consider unlawful and illegitimate behavior to be lawful and legitimate.⁴⁶¹

These statements indicate that the peasants interpreted the terms of legitimate and of what was lawful relatively, according to their living conditions. Thus it can be said that

⁴⁵⁹ Pamuk, p.133-134

⁴⁶⁰ A. E. Yalman, "Ege'den Notlar 3: İstihsal Adamının Hükümetten Şikayetleri," 18.9.1943, Vatan

⁴⁶¹ A. E. Yalman, "Yaratıcı Beraberlik," 24.10.1943, Vatan

they had an autonomous consciousness. And finally, these statements imply that there was resistance to the state.

In his memoirs, Cahit Kayra, who was an official in the finance administration, also mentioned that the peasants deemed the forced purchases and the SPT unjust, because of the difficult living conditions in the rural areas and conscription of their sons by the army.

Their sons were doing their military service. There was a labor shortage in the village. Oil and salt were not available. In this respect, in their eyes, it was a great injustice to take their crops, more or less.⁴⁶²

In addition, in respect to the peasants, many events in the practices of the forced purchases and the SPT made these policies a seizure, injustice and unequal act of the state. First of all, there were many mistakes and inequalities made by the tax officials. In the practice of the forced purchase called 25 percent, for instance, *subaşı*s made many mistakes that were detrimental to the peasants. Complaints about the *subaşı*s and about how they determined of the state share of 25 percent can be seen from the press of the time and archival documents. For instance, according to the report by the representatives, there was widespread discontent among the peasants everywhere in Zonguldak province with the mistakes and injustices perpetrated in the determination of the state shares.⁴⁶³

Ahmet Emin Yalman, who observed the practices of the collection of the state share, interviewed the peasants. An interview by Yalman with a peasant demonstrates the peasants' independent reasoning which criticizes the state policy because of the unequal and harsh treatment of the officials to especially small peasants. Especially the pressures of the taxes and unjust treatment of the officials on small peasants compelled them to hide their crops from the state.

The *subaşı*s tolerated the wealthier farmers and oppressed the small peasants whose production was low-level and who are his enemy in many places...There were many peasants who were treated unfairly and they had many difficulties in paying their debts. Because the list of debts was accepted as a unique point of action, even though the peasants had surrendered all of their crops to the state, they were unable to pay all of their debts. Therefore, the peasants resorted to cheating and hiding their crops which this situation caused disquiet among the all peasants in the

⁴⁶² Kayra, p.111

⁴⁶³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 722.470.1, (1942)]

village. Moreover, the peasants indebted to the state were prosecuted and sometimes imprisoned.⁴⁶⁴

In addition to this, it can be thought that in the practices of the forced purchase and the SPT, misuse, bribery, favoritism by the officials, the pressure by the gendarme, the resistance by the peasants of evading, cheating, mixing additives to the crops given to the state, underreporting, and bribing the officials damaged the fragile reciprocal trusts between the peasants and the state. In turn this lack of reciprocal trust gave rise to the bad treatment of the state personnel and in turn the evasion by the peasants.

Indeed, the small peasants were suffered from the dishonest and unequal actions of the chief of villages. Many chief of villages (muhtar) benefited from their own status in order to manipulate the forced purchases and the SPT for their own interests. Peasants complained of this situation to the government. In a complaint letter written by peasants from Akpınar village in Bartın, they charged the chief of the village with underreporting his land and crops. In their words, “a lot of the poor are paying much more Soil Product Tax than the chief of the village.” Although their complaints were in vain, the peasants continued their complaint. They said that the chief had punished them for reporting him by exaggerating the amount of their crops.⁴⁶⁵

According to a report by a representative, in some cases there were false estimations between 10 percent and 20 percent. The estimations were sometimes made by local elements such as the chiefs of the village who made false and dishonest estimations by underestimating the crops of their relatives and friends and overestimating those of their enemies. Many producers were harmed by this situation. Some of them had to give their seed to the state as state share. Thus, they affected adversely not only persons, but also the state because the total agricultural plantation and crops diminished.⁴⁶⁶ Again it is possible much information about the false and mistaken estimations in some provinces, such as Denizli and Zonguldak. In addition, as is understood by the reports of the representatives

⁴⁶⁴ A.E. Yalman, “Egeden Notlar-7,” 6.5.1943 Vatan; A.E. Yalman, “Köylüden Haber,” 27.4.1943, Vatan

⁴⁶⁵ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 491.1978.1, (1944)]

⁴⁶⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 133.539.1, (1943)]

and the minutes of local congress of the RPP, the most important complaints of the peasants were false and overestimation.⁴⁶⁷

When the peasants resisted the forced purchasing and taxes, the state officials taxed them arbitrarily or behaved harshly. The peasants resisted these arbitrary behaviors as well. Therefore, many peasants confronted the harsh behavior of the officials and the gendarme. Some of them were put in jail. In some cases, their houses were searched forcibly. This caused hostility between state and peasants. According to a report written by a representative inspecting the practices of the SPT, the arbitrary and harsh behaviors of the state officials and gendarme caused the hostility between the state and society.

Alongside the social and moral dangers, this lack of order paralyzed the respect the belief in the law and justice. Consequently, this situation had some results that have a potential to break the social order. Indeed, in some places, administrative authorities who saw the amount of the state share and of tax lower than estimated amounts, resorted to the levy, sometimes on the basis of the order of the government and sometimes arbitrarily. They wanted the peasants to give some part of their crops to the Office, or the state officials would search their houses, stores and stables. They said to the peasants that they would confiscate whatever they found during the search. Because some of the peasants resisted and objected to this demand of the administrative authorities, they were punished harshly. In this context, in Yeşilyurt village of the Seyitgazi in our elections districts, the houses of the peasants were raided at midnight in an illegal manner by the gendarmes. The peasants had a rough time for fifteen days...Again, in Göçenbuluk village in the same district, houses were searched. When the gendarmes found a little crop which was hidden, they applied to the Article 65 of law No.4156 and implemented it widely and roughly. Thus all of the goods in the stores of the peasants were confiscated. Thirty-one households of this village were dragged into the courts and suffered from starvation.⁴⁶⁸

According to the observations of Ahmet Emin Yalman, the villages were full of peasants who were not able to pay all of their taxes in spite of giving their all crops to the state. Even though they had to sell their oxen in order to remove their tax debts, they were not able to pay and were put in jail sometimes.⁴⁶⁹

Many peasants whose crops were very small in quantity because of topographical conditions had great difficulties in paying the tax. According to the observations of

⁴⁶⁷ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 509.2043.1; 722.470.1 (1943)]

⁴⁶⁸ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1. (1943)]

Selahaddin Demirkan, for many peasants, the SPT was a catastrophe. For example, in the districts such as Şile, Çatalca, Beykoz, and Yalova, the peasant families in the villages of woodsmen in the forested and arid areas, living on and planting only five to ten acres of lands were only able to raise enough crops to feed themselves for two or three months at a time. Because of the state policies, these peasants requested the help from the government during the eight months a year or bought flour by selling their all goods in order to save themselves from starvation.⁴⁷⁰

In this process, rumors spread among the peasant about the unequal and unfair determination and collection of the forced purchases and the SPT by the state officials. These rumors laid the ground for the resistance and fueled it. In the National Assembly, Nuri Demirağ, a representative, reported the rumors among the peasants and its functioning in the fuelling the peasant incomppliance to the government as follows:

The estimation by the officials always became a subject of the rumors and complaints among the people...Although the government decided to collect 25 percent of the crops from some peasants, it was able to collect only 22 percent. In spite of this situation, the peasants criticized the government. Why? Because some villages had paid 20 percent and some peasants had paid 10 percent instead of 25 percent because of the underreporting by the *subaşı*s and of the peasants' bribe to the *subaşı*s. This situation has caused widespread rumors and complaints like, "Oh, when they paid this little, why should we pay more?"⁴⁷¹

Indeed, as mentioned above, the mistakes, made willingly or unwillingly, and the false reporting were widespread. These became the subject matter of rumors and complaints throughout the country. It can be said that these rumors transmitted informally among the peasants stimulated the resistance by functioning as a network of informal communication among the peasants and giving the discrete resistances of the peasants a collective character.⁴⁷² The rumors carried the news about evasions and underestimations

⁴⁶⁹ A.E.Yalman, "Köylü Hakkında Yanlış Kanaatler," 22.8.1943, Vatan; In addition see A.E. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim Geçirdiklerim*, (1922-1944), vol.3, (İstanbul: Rey Yayınları, 1970), p.359

⁴⁷⁰ Selahaddin Demirkan, "Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi ve Hükümet Hisseleri," *Köye Doğru*, no.72, 1943, p.3

⁴⁷¹ The Minutes of The GNAT, vol.7, 19.4.1944, p.64

⁴⁷² The role of the rumour and folk culture as an informal communication means among the masses see See J.C. Scott, Scott, James C. "Resistance Without Protest and Without Organization: Peasant Opposition to the Islamic Zakat and the Christian Tithe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.29, Issue 3 (Jul.,

and resistance from one peasant to other. Thus, the peasants legitimated their nonconformist behavior against the state by means of these rumors about the other peasants' nonconformist behavior. No doubt they also drew courage from these rumors.

In addition, the rumors about the injustice and unequal behaviors of the officials disturbed the consent of the peasants to the forced purchases and the SPT, and fuelled the resistance by making the pilfering, cheating, evading and bribery very normal morally for their interests in order to defend themselves and their own interests against the inequality and injustice of the tax officials. In this context, it is possible to say that the peasant resistance gained a hidden collectivity by means of a network that functioned through the rumors.

As a result, the peasants resisted the forced purchases and the SPT in ways that were feasible in their social, economic and cultural environments. It is possible to find many reports of the peasants' resistance to the forced purchases and the SPT in the press, archival documents and the discourse of both the state elite and the peasants.

The most common way to resist the state was to hide crops. For instance, a peasant interviewed by Yalman described their resistance as follows: "The peasants did not give the estimated amount of crops at the fixed prices and hid their crops in the mosques sometimes."⁴⁷³

There was frequent news about the crops found by tax officials as a result of search. For example, in a village 450 kilos of wheat that had been hidden by a peasant were found

1987), p.452 and Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of the Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), especially see Chapter Five (Solidarity) and Six (Transmission).

Indeed, that the rumors and folk culture transmitted from one to the other justify some behaviors among the lower-classes by constituting an extended group of people that is informal, unorganized and atomistic, but with similar interests and concerns, who interact and remain in informal contact with each other thanks to rumour and folk culture. Scott says that "it is no exaggeration to say that much of the folk culture of the peasant "little tradition" amounts to a legitimation -even a celebration- of the evasive and dissimulating forms of resistance examined here. In this and other ways the subculture of the peasantry helps to create a "climate of opinion" that often underwines tax evasion, poaching, theft, avoidance of conscription, and so forth." p.452.

⁴⁷³ A.E.Yalman, "Bir Çiftçiyle Mülakat," 9.4.1943 Vatan

under a haystack.⁴⁷⁴ Another peasant from Karabağ village in Afyon, Yusuf Mevlut Doysak, hid 232 kilos wheat so as to evade the tax. He was punished by the National Emergency Court.⁴⁷⁵ In Adapazarı, in Çaybaşı Fuadiye village, which had seventy-two households, twenty of them did not give the state share in 1942. Moreover, operating on a tip, the tax officials found corn crops hidden by the peasants in six houses. The mother-in-law of the village teacher was discovered to have declared only fifty kilos of her stock of 250 kilos of wheat.⁴⁷⁶

Among the people who were sent to the National Emergency Courts and about whose cases decision summaries were announced in the newspapers, there were many similar events. For instance, according to one of these announcements, the officials found some cereals in the house of a peasant from Göcenoluk village.⁴⁷⁷

Punished by the courts because they had refused to comply with the National Emergency Law were Himmetoğlu Mehmet Ucaş from Yeşiyurt village in Seyitgazi, “on grounds of evading tax payment on his wheat crops from the harvest place;” Musaoğlu Mehmet Can from Göcenoluk, “on grounds of hiding 240 kilos of smuggled wheat and 40 kilos of smuggled barley in his house;” in the same village, Ahmetoğlu Mustafa Çam, “on grounds of hiding 367 kilos of smuggled wheat and 108 kilos of smuggled barley in his house;” İbrahimioğlu Aziz Özyavuz, “on account of hiding 343 kilos of smuggled wheat in his house;” and Mehmetoğlu Halil İbrahim Uzun, “on account of hiding 576 kilos of smuggled wheat in his house.”⁴⁷⁸

Some producers sold their crops to the merchant before paying the state share and tax. For example, three peasants in Çerkezköy, Sabri, Ahmet and Ali sold two tons of their corn crops to macaroni factory owner Yahya and to merchant İhsan before paying the state

⁴⁷⁴ 8.2.1944, Tan

⁴⁷⁵ “Afyon Bolvadin Müddeiumumiliğinden,” 4.12.1943, Vatan,

⁴⁷⁶ 28.6.1943, Tan

⁴⁷⁷ 8.2.1944, Tan

⁴⁷⁸ See 29.12.1943, Tan

share and tax.⁴⁷⁹ Again, it was very common to sell wheat, the selling of which was banned until after the collection of the state share and tax. This wheat was smuggled into the İstanbul market by means of ships and trains and sold on the blackmarket.⁴⁸⁰

More evidence implying the widespread tax resistance appears in the lists of the petition summaries in the *Yearbooks of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey*. In this period many peasants who did not pay the tax demanded that the government delay their tax debts or to collect these debts in installments. Indeed, there were many petition summaries that came from the various regions of the Anatolia. Moreover, the majority of the peasants in certain villages and regions sent many petitions altogether to the National Assembly. To some degree, this may be interpreted as an existence of the collective complaint, refusal and resistance in those villages.⁴⁸¹

Among the reports of the representatives in the archival documents there was numerical data on the resistance by the peasant. For example, a representative reported the collection of the SPT as follows:

Although the total production of Aydın province was approximately 20.000.000 kilos, the tax assessment remained 11.144.131 kilos according to the Financial Office of the Province (Defterdarlık). This means that $20.000.000 - 11.144.131 = 8.855.869$ kilos of crops were not taxed and were a part of the tax evasion.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ “Ektikleri Mısırın Hükümet Hisselerini Vermemişler,” 18.12.1943, Vatan

⁴⁸⁰ “Bir Vagon Kaçak Buğday Müsadere Olundu,” 16.10.1943, Vatan; 7.1.1944, Tan; 5.1.1944, Tan. In these news it was reported that the smugglers brought the wheat and other cereals to İstanbul by showing it as boiled and pounded wheat.

⁴⁸¹ Havza Rasim Şakar and his friends from Havza requested to become exempt from the SPT debts of 1945 (p.299); Bostan Falay and his friends from Hatay Kırıkhan Mahmutlu village requested to become exempt from their SPT debts (p.301); Mustafa Ergün and his friends from Biga requested to pay their SPT debts in three instalments (p.307); Yusuf Baru and his friends from Sungurlu Karaçay village requested the government to clear their SPT debts (p.307); Kadir Çelik from Havza Salariç village in Havza requested postponement of paying their SPT debts and (p.308); Mehmet Kaçar from Kamlık village in Havza requested the government to clear their SPT debts (p.308); Dursun Güngör from Bolayık village in Yozgat in Akmağdeni requested to become exempt from their SPT debts (p.308); Veli Şahin from Körük village in Yozgat in Akmağdeni requested to become exempt from the 1945 SPT debts of 1945 (p.308); Ali Demirci from Ozan village in Akmağdeni, Mahmut Özkan from Yazı Kaplancı village, Ömer Demir from Tarhane village, Veli Aytemiz from Bozhöyük village, Mustafa Bozdağ from Konacı village, Hacı Eser from Babu village, Mehmet Karadavut from Kirsinkavağı village in Yozgat, Akmağdeni requested to clear their SPT debts of 1945 (p.311-315); Bahri Çakır from Kuşçu village in Polatlı requested to pay his SPT debts by instalments. For many brief summary of this kind of petition about the SPT see The Yearbook of the GNAT, (5.8.1946-31.10.1946 and 1.10.1946-21.10.1947), (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1948)

⁴⁸² PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 622.43.1, (1944)]

Another report indicates that the taxation was not effective and that the tax revenues in the districts of Denizli were much too low relative to the estimated tax revenues. In Göney district, only 30 tons of the estimated 80 tons of the Soil Product Tax were barely collected. In Buldan, only 30 percent of the estimated tax revenues and in Babadağ 50 percent were barely collected by the state. In Acıpayan, whereas the estimated tax revenues were 424.200 tons, the state was able to collect 639 tons. According to reporter, it was not viable to collect all of the estimated tax revenues because of the widespread tax evasion. In a similar vein, in Kızılcahöyük whereas the tax revenue was estimated 200 tons, it realized only 90 tons; and in Çal, 300 tons, instead of 1000 tons.⁴⁸³

In addition to tax evasions, another way to diminish the state share and tax was to mix some additives to the crops or to give rotten crops. For instance, peasants in Eyüp were prosecuted by the court on grounds that they had not given the state share, 25 percent of their crops. In fact, they had given the state share, but these crops were rotten.⁴⁸⁴ Similarly, it was reported from Malatya that producers mixed soil and sand into the crops given to the state.⁴⁸⁵

In some cases, the peasants offered bribes to the chiefs of the villages or state personnel in order to have their crops underestimated and to tolerate their evasions. They sometimes tried to take advantage of their kinship relations. According to Nurettin Ünen, along with people who were hiding their crops, there were some state personnel who reached agreements with peasants in return for their need of boiled and bound wheat for winter.⁴⁸⁶ Again, according to an article in *Cumhuriyet*, in Edirne in İskender village, a weighing official and the chief of the village accepted bribes from the peasants and misused their positions.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 509.2043.1, (1943)]

⁴⁸⁴ “Hububat Borcunu Ödemiyen 42 Köylü Mahkemeye Verildi,” 16.3.1943, Vatan

⁴⁸⁵ “Malatya’daki Buğday Yolsuzluğu,” 26.7.1944 Tan

⁴⁸⁶ Nurettin Ünen. “Bir Ahlak İmtihani,” 2.8.1943, Yeni Adana

⁴⁸⁷ 24.09.1943, Cumhuriyet

A representative inspecting the state work in Eskişehir also underscored the corporation between tax officials and the peasants in the tax evasion and said:

In many places, the peasants and the tax officials hand in hand stole the state share as if they were doing something legitimate.⁴⁸⁸

Representatives who inspected the taxation process in Afyon reported that the Office personnel, together with the producers caused the loss of tax revenues of the state by accepting bribe, and underestimating the crops subjected to the tax in turn.⁴⁸⁹

The peasants expressed their discontent at the forced purchasing and the SPT not only by resisting them, but also by lodging official complaints against the local administrative authority and sending petitions to the National Assembly and the RPP. There were some peasants who went to the head of the finance office (malmüdürü), the head of the financial department (defterdar) and the governor in the city center to object to the mistakes in estimations.⁴⁹⁰ These attempts were fruitful sometimes, but not in all.⁴⁹¹ For example, peasants from Beykoz and Sarıyer objected to the practice of the SPT in their districts. They alleged that the rate of the tax was nearly 40 percent instead of 10 percent in practice. First, these peasants resorted to the Adjudicator Board (Hakem Heyeti), but they returned empty-handed. Upon this, they expressed their discontent and complaints about the implementation of the SPT to *Tan* newspaper.⁴⁹²

In order to see the fact that the complaints, objections and demands about the forced purchases and the SPT were widespread, the petition summaries in the *Yearbooks of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey* are very illuminative. In these petitions, the peasants claimed that the 25 % was too heavy a rate to pay and that there were some injustices and inequalities about the estimations. They also claimed that they did not possess the amount of crops the state wanted from them or that if they gave the state the 25

⁴⁸⁸ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (1943)]

⁴⁸⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 613.3.1, (1943)]

⁴⁹⁰ Ali Rauf, "Taşra Halkı ve Mahalli İdareler Mekanizması," 11.1.1944, *Tan*

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁹² "Beykoz ve Sarıyer Halkının Dilekleri," 25.9.1945, *Tan*

% or the SPT, they would starve. They also complained about the unfair behaviors and wrong estimations of subaşı and of other tax officials.

For example, Mehmet Işık, in the name of peasants of Birlik and Mermere villages of Samsat, sent a petition to the National Assembly and complained about the forced purchase by the government by saying that “if they surrender the wheat the state demanded as a state share, they would be suffered hunger.”⁴⁹³ The peasants from Yumruviran village in Aşkale sent a complaint petition to the National Assembly and said that “the taxation of their products by the state caused food shortages in their village.”⁴⁹⁴ It is possible to see many similar petitions among the list of the summaries of petitions sent to the National Assembly in *the Yearbooks*.⁴⁹⁵

In conclusion, neither the forced purchases including the 25 percent rule nor the SPT were welcomed by the peasants in practice. They perceived them as a great injustice and they regarded the illegitimate ways of cheating, stealing, hiding their crops and so on, as possible ways to resist the state policies. Thus, the forced purchase and the SPT were criticized and rendered by the peasants to an ineffective decision within everyday life to certain degree. The main indicator of this situation was appeared as discrepancy between the estimated revenues and realized ones. Indeed, following statement of Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu in 1942 shows that the state was unable to reach its target-level in forced purchases:

⁴⁹³ The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.11.1940-31.10.1941), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1943), p.322,

⁴⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p.310

⁴⁹⁵ See the Section of the Petitions (Arzulaller) of The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.11.1940-31.10.1941), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1943), pp.257-332.

Hüseyin and his friends from Metik village in Şekerli complained of the injustice in the estimations of the crops which was taken by the Office (p.321); Memet Özkan from Kestel village in Sivas complained of the overestimation of their crops which would be surrender to the Office (p.322); Muharrem Avcı from Hudud village in Kemah requested the government not to take their crops (p.322); Ali Çuluk and his friends from Aslanlı village in Kozan and Abdullah Kartal and his friends from Barıska village in Tokat requested the government to take their former requests about the crops which they had to surrender to the Office (p.323). Ahmet Yiğit and his friends Yaruşağı village in Elazığ complained of the mistake the estimations of their crops by the *subaşı* (p.324); The peasants from Mirze village complained that the amount of 25 % was very high. (p.324); Mecit from Tendürek village in Malazgirt claimed that the villagers did not have the amount of crops which was demanded by the Office (p.326). Osman Demirkan from Ahiviran districts in Konya complained of overestimation of his crops by the Office personnel (p.329). Of course, this list can be made longer.

We hoped that we would collect the cereal crops in such great amounts that we would feed both the army and the big cities. We even hoped that there would remain enough cereal crops to distribute everywhere. Because the statistics indicate that the total production was approximately 7-8 million tons, we estimated that it was possible to collect one and half million tons of cereal crops of this amount at least. But there were many slips twixt the cup and lip. As a result, we saw that the total debt of our farmers to the government amounted to only 600,000 tons.⁴⁹⁶

The figures about the SPT given by the Suat Bařar indicate the extent of resistance and the state capacity of the tax extraction. According to these figures, the state expected from the SPT 120 million TL for 1943, 124 million TL for 1944, and 75 million TL for 1945. In total, it expected 319 million TL in tax revenues. However, the tax revenues for these years realized were 59.6 million TL in 1943, 47.2 million TL in 1944, 66.7 million TL in 1945, and 60 million lira in 1946. In total, this amount was 233.5 million TL. Although the government expected 319 million, it was able to collect only 233.5 million TL.⁴⁹⁷ According to Bařar, in spite of the relatively abundant production in 1943, much of it was not taxed. The main cause of this situation was widespread tax evasion, which was proportionally 61 percent in cereals and 73.5 percent in legumes.⁴⁹⁸

Concluding Remarks

The experiences of the state and the peasants during the Second World War give us clues about state-society relations in the early republican era. The social impact of the Second World War in Turkey disclosed the main characteristics of the state and society relations.

To begin with, although the peasants did not organize a political party, ideological movement or open rebellions and protest, they resisted the forced purchase and the SPT in

⁴⁹⁶ “Bařvekil řükri Saraçoęlu Büyük Millet Meclisinde İaře Durumumuza ve Alınan Tedbirlere Dair Bir Nutuk Söyledi,” *AT*, no.109, (1-31 December 1942), p.35

⁴⁹⁷ Suat Bařar, “Toprak Mahsulleri Vergisi Kalkınca,” *İktisat Faköltesi Mecmuası*, vol.7, no.1-4, 1945-1946, p.100

⁴⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p.101

everyday forms, as suggested by James C. Scott. In a political environment in which the high-politics was limited to the elite, political organizations and open movements would have had great risk. Therefore, they developed common ways of resistance in everyday life. Although the peasants' resistance appeared non-political, it affected the political life indirectly in such a way that the state was unable to collect all of the taxes it expected and needed in order to provision the cities, a great army, and to finance the social aid programs, which were very important for the legitimacy and strength of the political power and for the maintenance of the social order. Thus, it remained incapable of solving the food supply problem, hunger, bread question and the black-market in the cities as shown in Chapter Two. Because the state did not provide the necessary resources for its social aid programs either, the various complaints and social problems increased as described in Chapter Five.

In addition to resistance, the peasants expressed their complaints, criticisms and demands in various ways. One of them was to send letters and petitions to the General Secretariat of the RPP and to the National Assembly, expressing their dissatisfaction with the state policies or their practice, and submitted their demands to the state.

With some anonymous ways, they expressed their criticisms of the Soil Product Office as the most important agent of the state with relations with the peasants. For instance, a play written by a peasant student in a Village Institute is an expression of the peasant's perception of the state and its most important agent, the Office. The Office, as the representative of the state in the village, in other words, the state, became such a hated and feared institution that the peasants in the play began to lament and weep together because they misheard that typhus (tifüs) as the Office (Ofis) would come to the village soon. After they found out that they had confused the terms, they felt relieved and became very happy, crying, "Thank God!...We thought "the Office" was coming to the village! It's not important if "typhus" comes to our village."⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁹ Yalçın Kaya, *Bozkırdan Doğan Uygarlık: Köy Enstitüleri*, (İstanbul: Tıglat Matbaacılık, 2001), p.84

Bringing this peasant's resistances, critical consciousness and voices to light also indicates that the approaches of the modernist paradigm and of elite-centrist historiography to the peasants which regard them as the objects of the state and as passive elements of history of Turkey, open to question. The peasants' behaviors in everyday life, their resistance, rumors or their petitions imply for Turkish historiography that the peasants had an autonomous and critical conscious. They behaved according to their life conditions, interests, autonomous conscious, but not to a dependent conscious occupied by the state.

Another characteristic of Turkish politics unveiled by the effects of the war was related to the state power. Close scrutiny of the implementation of the forced purchase and the SPT allow us to see the gap between the state plans and performance in the early Republican era and to open the strong state theory to question. Indeed, this experience became a litmus-test for the state power and disclosed its incapability, the shortcomings of organization, of means, of tools and of personnel to implement its policies properly.

In terms of Joel S. Migdal, we can take into account the proportion of the actual tax revenues to expected tax revenues as an indicator of the state power and capacity. In Migdal's formula, Relative Political Capacity (RPC) = Actual Extraction / Expected Extraction. From this point of view, we can see the RPC of early Republican state is: actual SPT/ expected SPT = 233.5 / 319 = 0.73. This is below the normal line, which is 1.⁵⁰⁰

Moreover, in this period, many elites, bureaucrats and intellectuals complained about the weakness and shortcomings of the state. They became much more aware of the limits of their power. As Barutçu said, in the years of the war, the weakness and inabilities of the state were common subjects of the criticisms and complaints.⁵⁰¹ Briefly, the effects

⁵⁰⁰ Relative Political Capacity (RPC) = Actual Extraction / Expected Extraction. For these calculations see Migdal, *Strong States and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp.279-286

⁵⁰¹ See Faik Ahmet Barutçu, *Siyasi Anılar (1939-1954)*, (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1977), pp.243-250

of the Second World War in Turkey unveiled the limits of the power and socio-economic control of the single party state.

Of course, the peasants were affected very negatively by the state policies and economic conditions of the period under study. The resistance did not mean necessarily that they did not encounter a number of difficulties. The terms of trade of the agricultural products decreased and prices paid by the state remained under the market prices. Some inputs disappeared in the market. The state was unable to supply the peasants with seed. In addition, because the state did not initiate social welfare measures or distribute some goods in the villages, they suffered from hunger, malnutrition and shortages of some basic materials as much as lower income city dwellers.

In this condition, the burden of the economic sacrifice in the period of war rested on the peasants by means of forced purchases and the SPT, which they had great difficulties in paying the state share and the SPT. The experiences of the peasants proved that the populist and peasantist discourse of the political power were groundless in practice. Indeed, the burden of the peasants was so great that Faik Ökte, in his book, *The Disaster of the Wealth Tax* (Varlık Vergisi Faciası), said that “the burden on the peasants was not less than that of those who were affected by the Wealth Tax.”⁵⁰² A. Başer Kafaoğlu’s estimation is very striking at this point. The peasants paid the state 330 million TL as the Animal Tax and the SPT. This amount was almost two times that of the Wealth Tax.⁵⁰³

Sometimes, they had to confront with the pressures and arbitrary actions of the tax officials and gendarme. The peasants who did not give the state share, the SPT or objected to it were put in jail. Many peasants had to sell their household goods in order to pay their debts. It is not difficult to think that the relations between the peasants and the state were affected adversely, and the peasants were estranged because of the widespread bribes, misuse, stealing of the crops from the Office by the personnel, the rotting of the crops

⁵⁰² Faik Ökte, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*, (İstanbul: Nebioğlu Yayınevi, 1951), p.36

⁵⁰³ Kafaoğlu, p.71

collected by the Office in the streets in the open air, the hardships by the Office in the collection of the crops and harsh behaviors of the officials.

Finally, the experiences of the peasants in these years provided grounds for the rise of the opposition of Democrat Party. In 1947 the peasants who was not able to pay all of the SPT, demanded that the state allow them to delay their debts or collect them in small installments. Upon the refusal of their demands, 150 peasants joined the DP as members and supported to it.⁵⁰⁴ In other words, the peasant support for the Democrat Party in the post-war era can be understood by referring not their so-called false-consciousness, but to their life experience.

⁵⁰⁴ 6.1.1947, Demokrat İzmir

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WORKING CLASS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN TURKEY

The working class was the social class which was most exposed to the adverse effects of the Second World War. The high cost of living, the decline in real wages, overtime work, compulsory work, the banning of the right to leave the workplace in spite of the deterioration of the working conditions, the lack of social rights and insurance aggravated their living standards and the working conditions. They encountered many difficulties and painful experiences. However, they did not remain passive and silent in the face of these conditions even though they did not struggle with the state and dominant classes on the level of the law and high-politics in parliament or form their own political organization and public demonstrations challenging the dominant classes. In a political environment in which open political movements had many risks and being represented in the parliament was not possible, they resorted to their own common methods, such as leaving their workplaces, absenteeism, slowdowns, pilfering goods from the workplace, escaping from the compulsory work and so on. These actions indicated that the working class had an independent subjectivity in their actions instead of being passive object under the hegemony and social control of the state completely. In other words, in these years

when being hard-working was praised by the elite, the working class did not act according to this conscious and values imposed by the elite.

Another result of the experiences of the working class in these years involved the fact that the early Republican state was not populist in reality. The social and economic conditions of the working class, their life experiences, and the state intervention in the working relations in favor of the interests of capital exposed the baselessness of the RPP's principle of populism.

Finally, as another result, the resistance of the working class to the hard working and living conditions compelled the employers to take some social measures. In this respect, as argued below, some of the social policy measures and regulations that were adopted in the post-war period were not in response to international relations, as is often argued, but in response to social needs, resistances and the local needs of the employers.

The National Security Law and New Regulations on Labor

The greatest factor which determined working conditions during the war was the National Security Law (the NSL). As mentioned before, the NSL gave the government all legal bases to intervene in all fields of the economic life with every means deemed necessary. The NSL enabled the government to suspend all of the social rights of the working classes and the social obligations of the state.⁵⁰⁵ On the basis of this law, the government banned the leaving of workplaces, increased working hours and cancelled the weekend holiday in many public and private factories, military factories, ports, railways, and mines.⁵⁰⁶

In the NSL there were three articles concerning working conditions and relations which determined the working and living conditions of the workers during the wartime.

⁵⁰⁵ For these regulations see Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Tek Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri (1920-1946)*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1999), pp.392-407

These were the 9th, 10th and 19th articles. According to Article 9, in order to raise the productions of the industrial and mining enterprises and to increase the working hours in these and other workplaces, to supply them with necessary amount of workers and experts, the state could oblige the citizens waged compulsorily work. Article 9 stipulated the obligation of all citizens to work paid overtime in industrial and mining firms.⁵⁰⁷

According to Article 10, those who did leave their workplaces without an acceptable pretext were to be punished according to clauses 4 and 5 of Article 9. In common with the compulsory labor, this ban on leaving the premises of one's workplace meant a denial of one's right to not work, and furnished the authorities with the legal means to put people to work against their volition. Seen from this vantage point, the NSL exemplified best how to coerce people to work harder and longer.⁵⁰⁸

Article 19 was very inclusive. According to the article, a) If necessary, the working hours could be increased in some workplaces, b) the restricting articles in the laws numbered 151, 1593 and 3008 concerning with the working of the women, and children over 12 years old in industry, and of boys over 16 years old in mines, could not be executed, c) the laws concerning the weekend holiday and national days holidays and other general holidays could not be executed.⁵⁰⁹

In order to oversee the implementation of these laws a Coordination Committee (Koordinasyon Kurulu) was established. It would decide which article would be executed, where and when. One of the first decisions of the Coordination Committee was to extend the working day to 11 hours. Women and children workers were forced to work 11 hours as well, while in practice the working day often stretched to 12 or 13 hours. Under the third clause of Article 19, the weekend holiday and other days off from work such as national

⁵⁰⁶ Hüsnü Bengi, *Milli Korunma Kanun ve Kararları*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1943), pp.142-143

⁵⁰⁷ Şehmus Güzel, "Capital and Labour During World War II," *Workers and The Working Class in The Ottoman Empire and The Turkish Republic, 1839-1950*, Donald Quataert and Erik Jan Zürcher (ed.), (London and New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1995), p.130

⁵⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p.134

⁵⁰⁹ Makal (1999), p.413

observance days or general holidays might not, in part or in toto, be allowed. Under the law of 3 April 1940, weekend holidays in military factories were forbidden, as were those of the employees of the State Railway and Ports Company. The employees of the state mints and printing houses were similarly deprived of their weekend breaks. Furthermore, one could interpret Article 25 of the NSL as a virtual ban on weekend holidays in all industrial enterprises. The one day vacation thus became a thing of the past. It was during this period that some authors started to attack even the very idea of a day off.⁵¹⁰

The NSL brought a wide employment and exploitation of women and children, who played key roles in filling the void created by the conscription of male workers into the army. The emergence of a workforce of women and children without the protection of the Labor Law created a cheaper and a more docile workforce suffering under considerably increased rates of exploitation.⁵¹¹ So with the onset of the war, the number of (adult) male workers between 1937 and 1943 declined from 191.863 (78 percent) to 166.275 (61 percent) while that of children (between the ages of 12 and 18) increased from 23.347 (8 percent) to 51.871 (19 percent)...This same scenario holds for women workers: their numbers increased from 50.131 (15 percent) in 1937 to 56.131 (20 percent) in 1943.⁵¹²

The employment of women and children was related to not only the shortage of male labor because of the military conscription, but also to the cheapness of the female and child labor. As a result, the NSL pushed women to participate in working life during the war period. For example, tobacco store owners said that they preferred female labor because of their cheapness.⁵¹³

As can be seen, the NSL made much heavier the working conditions by removing some of the limited rights and restrictions brought by the Labor Law dated 1936 in favor of the workers.

⁵¹⁰ Güzel (1995), p.135-136

⁵¹¹ *ibid.*, p.136

⁵¹² *ibid.*, p.136-137

⁵¹³ Aziz Nesin, "Tütün Depoları Sahipleri Söylüyor," 5.7.1945, Tan

In addition to this, the working conditions in practice were much worse because of not only the regulations of the NSL, but also the lack of state inspection in workplaces. In the last years of the war, there were many work places exceeding the Labor Law and even the regulations of the NSL that managed to avoid inspection by the state. In many workplaces, the regulations made by even the NSL about the maximum working hours and working at night were not in effect. The lack of inspection of these workplaces by the state played an important role in this situation.⁵¹⁴

The Working and Living Conditions of the Working Class

Decline in Real Wages

The real wages and purchasing power of the working class decreased considerably during wartime because of the dramatic rise in general prices. Considering the general prices index as 100 in 1938 prices, it soared to 449 in 1944.⁵¹⁵ The index given by the Muvaffak Şeref is more striking. “When the price index of foodstuffs and index of wages were considered 100 in 1938 prices, the former climbed to 406 in 1943, whereas the latter reached slowly 141.”⁵¹⁶ In other words, the increase in wages was approximately three times less than the increase in the prices of foodstuffs.

In his memoirs, Vehbi Koç also mentions the radical decline in wages of the railway workers in wartime as follows. As can be seen, although the price of wheat increased ten times, the wages of the workers increased only four times.

The Second World War began. The prices started to increase. When we initiated our work, one kilo of wheat was 10 kuruş, the daily wage was 1 lira. After two years, whereas the price of wheat was 1 lira, the daily wage of the workers was 4 TL.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ Makal (1999), pp.406-407

⁵¹⁵ Taner Timur, *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2001), p.228

⁵¹⁶ Muvaffak Şeref, *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm*, (İstanbul: Acar Basımevi, 1968), p.131

⁵¹⁷ Vehbi Koç, *Hayat Hikayem*, İstanbul, 1973, p.53

When looked at from the front of the purchasing power of the wages of the miners for bread, which was the primary food for the working class, whereas a daily wages was tantamount to the prices of 11.6 kilos of bread in 1939, this decreased sharply to 5.4 kilos of bread in 1942.⁵¹⁸

It is possible to see the rise in prices and high cost of living from Table 7 in Chapter Two, conducted by the İstanbul Chamber of Commerce and Industry (İstanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası). The index indicates sharp increases in the prices of basic consumption goods of the working classes between 1938 and 1944.⁵¹⁹ Indeed, as shown before, the prices of many foodstuffs multiplied much more than even in the combatant countries.

With such a high cost of living, the nominal wage increases fell short of compensating the purchasing power of the working class and were not able to counterbalance the rise in prices. In 1942 Orhan Tunaoglu underlined the low wages of the miners in Zonguldak and tobacco workers in İstanbul:

The average daily wage of the workers in Zonguldak coal mines was 112.31 kuruş. In İstanbul the average wage of a tobacco workers was 84.45 kuruş...It is understood that the average daily wages in certain sectors were too low.⁵²⁰

The wages of the workers in textiles can be taken to represent the important parts of the working class because an important part of the workers was employed in this sector. In accord with the general picture, the wages of textile workers also eroded in this period. As Zaim noted, in the private sector, the real wages index considered as 100 in 1938, dropped to 59 in 1943.⁵²¹

As Ahmet Makal pointed out, real wages of the employees in the public sector were much less affected by the melt of real wages in comparison with those in the private sector. In the public sector, even though there was a decline in real wages, this was much less than

⁵¹⁸ Erol Çatma, *Asker İşçiler*, (İstanbul: Ceylan Yayıncılık, 1998), p.168

⁵¹⁹ *İstanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası Mecmuası*, 1944, no.6, vol.60, p.127

⁵²⁰ Dr. Orhan Tunaoglu, "İş İstatistikleri," *İş*, no.29, 1942, p.58

⁵²¹ Sabahattin Zaim, *İstanbul Mensucat Sanayisinin Bünyesi ve Ücretler*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1956), p.279

the average decline in real wages of other workers.⁵²² Nevertheless, there was a considerable decline in their real wages. Indeed, the share of wages and salaries in the state expenditure in budget shrank from 25 percent in 1938 to 15 percent in 1945.⁵²³

Working Conditions

Along with the decline in real wages, the working and living conditions of the working class deteriorated during the wartime. The conditions in the workplaces became much worse than ever before because of overtime working hours and the lack of social measures. The lack of the inspection of the workplaces by the state exacerbated the exploitation of the workers in the worst working conditions. In order to raise their profits, some firms sought to benefit from the related articles of the NSL, suspending the provisions of the Labor Law both by dismissing the workers and by increasing the working hours. For example, Şirket-i Hayriye discharged approximately half of its workers and raised the working hours to 16 hours a day so that it maximized its profits.⁵²⁴

Indeed, hard work and heavy working conditions became matters of frequent complaint of the workers. Some wrote complaint letters to the newspapers about their harsh working conditions. For example, in a letter to Tan newspaper, a sock worker in a textile factory complained about the heavy working conditions in their workplace as follows: “I repeat by addressing laws and conscience that we are exhausted by thirteen hours working night and day!”⁵²⁵

Some workers used the nationalist rhetoric of the state against the state in order to show the severity of their sufferings. They compared themselves to the victims of the “massacres” by the Armenians and they said that even the “Armenian massacres” remained a mere cipher in comparison to the cruelties in the workplaces:

⁵²² Makal (1999), p.440

⁵²³ Cemal Eyüboğlu, “Memur Maaşları Meselesi,” *Türk Ekonomisi*, no.31-32, 1946, p.68

⁵²⁴ 5.7.1944, Tan

⁵²⁵ “Çorap İşçileri Adına,” 2.6.1945, Tan

The Turks in Erivan were not cut down like this. The Turks who were gathered in the mosques and massacred there, died much more comfortably.⁵²⁶

Some of them expressed their complaints about their working and living conditions which worsened with the war by writing poems and sending them to the General Secretariat of the RPP without any signature. The poem below which illustrates the bad conditions of the working class in Adana was sent to the General Secretariat of the RPP in 1945.⁵²⁷

İşçiler

Adana'da İşçiler	İşçinin sağlığına
Ne acıklı hayat sürer	Kıymet vermek ne lüzum
Toz toprak ciğerlere	Matlup olan işçi değil
İşledikçe yapıyor	Onun hayat kıymeti nedir
Ciğeri bere bere	Kim düşünür işçiyi
Öksürenkan tüküren	Doktor yok ilaç da yok
Çürüyen bu gövdeler	Yaşayış tarzı da yok
Bakımsız ve perişan	Ne altında ne üstünde
Muttasıl çalışıyor	Bir insan kılığı yok
Kol bacak kuvvetini nafile tüketiyor	Doktor ezberden bakar
Hastalanır bakan olmaz	Patron kalbini yakar
Halini soran da yok	Bu yurtta işçi olmak
Doktorun adı anka	En büyük noksan mıdır?
İşçiye niçin baksın	Bir işçi ölse bile
Elverir aylık gelsin	Onu soran yoktur bile
Bir işçi ölse bile	Bir hayvan ölse eğer
Kim umursar bak hele...	Sorusundan oynar yer...

Indeed, in some factories workers had to work late until midnight. In such cases, the workers had difficulty of getting homes. Suat Ağralı, who worked in the printing house of the Education Ministry, wrote about the long working hours and its effects on their life in his memoirs:

In most workplaces, such as the printing house of the state mints and railways, and the printing house of the Education Ministry where I worked, whenever it was necessary, we worked overtime. Since cities were routinely blacked out at night, we had extreme difficulty in returning home in dark. Those who worked during these though periods will recall them very vividly.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3, (1945)]

⁵²⁷ PMRA CARPP [490.01 /50.199.3, (30.1.1945)]

⁵²⁸ Güzel (1995), p.135

The problems the workers experienced in their workplaces were not only too long working hours and harsh working conditions, but also the unequal and harsh treatments of their chiefs. A complaint letter written and sent by a worker who was employed in the Station of Seed Betterment in Yeşilköy (Yeşilköy Tohum Islah İstasyonu) to the General Secretariat of the RPP indicates that the workers were affected by unfair and bad treatment by the administration. According to the letter, the self-respect of the workers was harmed by this treatment of the administration. Although the daughter of a parliamentarian had been assigned to the factory and received a large salary without doing any work, the workers' demand of an increase in salary was not accepted. They resented this situation, which hurt their self-respect.⁵²⁹

In addition, as will be described in the related section, especially in the mines the workers were subjected to severe treatment and were insulted by the employers. These experiences of the workers were reflected in the novels.⁵³⁰ In other words, as can be seen, the workers resented not only the material difficulties, too long working hours, but also the bad and unequal treatments, privileges in workplace, which harmed them psychologically.

The Nutritional Problems of the Working Class

The food shortages and sufferings of the people in urban areas and its affects such as illegal behaviors and theft among the urban poor and lower income people were described in Chapter Two. Indeed, both in workplace and in daily life the working people suffered the food scarcity and poor quality of food. The provision of food for the workers in workplaces was much worsened in respect to taste, nutrition, calories, and protein content. In some workplaces, the workers were not given even a meal a day. In workplaces

⁵²⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3]

⁵³⁰ See İrfan Yalçın, *Ölümün Ağzı*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2002)

which gave a meal to their workers, the food was far from satisfactory, failing to meet their caloric and protein needs. As described in Chapter Two, the food shortages, the lack of sufficient bread in quality and quantity, the rise in prices of foodstuffs also affected the nutritional status of the working class adversely. Nutritional deficiencies would be the cause of many health problems among the lower income wage earners in these years.

According to the inspections of deputies in some workplaces, workers were not given food even once a day in many workplaces. In some workplaces although a meal was provided for workers once a day, this meal had a bad taste and did not include necessary calorie for the workers.⁵³¹

As will be described below in detail, especially workers in the mines were subjected to very bad diets in spite of their heavy conditions of work.⁵³² Although agricultural workers received four meals a day, whether or not these meals met their caloric needs was open to questions.⁵³³

Indeed, although in this period it was assumed that the agricultural workers spent much less money on food, the share of food expenditures in their budgets took a considerable place. Although they secured some of their food from their small farms, they had to spend money for milk, meat, oil, sugar and salt.⁵³⁴ In general, their incomes barely met their living costs.⁵³⁵

The nutritional condition of the working people outside the workplace was not much better. The memoirs of Zehra Kosova, a worker in a tobacco store, illustrate the nutritional deficiency of the workers.

Our situation was heart breaking. We were not able to eat meat. We bought some gut (mumbar) and made a food called kaçamak by frying it with corn flour and oil. Sometimes we cooked mamaliga by mixing corn flour with grape molasses. In our room there was not a heating system. We warmed the room by burning pieces of

⁵³¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 728.495]

⁵³² The living conditions and life experiences of the miners will be described in detail in following pages.

⁵³³ Cemil Çalgüner, *Türkiye’de Ziraat İşçileri*, (Ankara: Ankara Yüksek Ziraat Enstitüsü Rektörlüğü Yayını, 1943), p.42

⁵³⁴ Mehmet Önder, “Tarım İşçisinin Geçinme Durumu,” *Çalışma*, no.18, 1947, p.40

⁵³⁵ *ibid.*, p.41

wood in a zinc bowl. We also used its fire in order to light the room and cook our meals. First, we fed our children, and then we ate what was left.⁵³⁶

Worsening of Health Conditions

The bad working and living conditions of the workers were soon reflected in their bodies. Indeed, some health problems and diseases increased in this period in parallel to the aggravation of the nutritional and working conditions of the working class. The lack of sufficient medical means, medicines, doctors and hospitals, the expensiveness of medicines, deteriorated hygienic conditions because of the lack of clean water and soap, the expensiveness of firewood and coal for heating and the negligence of the hygienic and health measures by the employers caused the destruction of the bodies of the working class.

In this period, tuberculosis and malaria were widespread among the working people. Work-related accidents were part and parcel of the work scene.⁵³⁷ During the time span in which the worker-density in workplaces increased from 42 in 1937 to 86 in 1943, the work-related accidents jumped from 4.691 in 1937 to 11.958 in 1943.⁵³⁸

Table 13-Work-Related Accidents (1937-1943)

Years	Total Work-Related Accidents
1937	4691
1938	7246
1939	7482
1940	8620
1941	9669
1942	9668
1943	11.958

⁵³⁶ Zehra Kosova, *Ben İşçiyim*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996, p.124

⁵³⁷ Güzel, p.138

⁵³⁸ Lütfi Erişçi, *Sosyal Tarih Araştırmaları*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 2003), p.105 ; in addition, see Orhan Tuna, “İş İstatistikleri”, *İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, vol.6, no.1-2, (October 1944-Ocak 1945), p.343

In spite of the increase in work-related accidents, there was no legal obligation for the employers to compensate the workers for damages.⁵³⁹ There was no established social insurance system for workers in cases of disease, pregnancy or death. For instance, in an interview with Aziz Nesin, a worker whose wife had tuberculosis complained of the lack of any assistance.

I am a father of two children. My wife has tuberculosis. I went to the administration and said that my wife had tuberculosis and I asked their help. But they replied that there was no obligation of employers about such help in the law. Well, I requested an increase in my salary in order to treat my wife. They again refused.⁵⁴⁰

According to the explorations of Kazım Karabekir, in the chrome mines of Fethiye run by a French company, many workers died or became physically disabled because of the negligence of the company and the state. The condition of these workers was tragic. Karabekir reported that the workers demanded the compensation for their losses.⁵⁴¹

Indeed, although there were many persons who were exposed to illness, accident or death, there was no insurance system. So they or their relatives wrote and sent complaint letters and petitions demanding social assistance, insurance or compensation for their damage to the RPP and the National Assembly. It is possible to see the brief summaries of these petitions in the Yearbooks of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. For example, Satılmış Uyan from Sungurlu requested a premium because he had become disabled while working.⁵⁴² Süleyman Gürel from Gerede requested a premium because he had become disabled after his service of 17 years.⁵⁴³ Niyazi Babaoğlu,⁵⁴⁴ Tevfik Uşan from Maltya,⁵⁴⁵ Recep Üstün from Taksim,⁵⁴⁶ Sıtkı Özyurt from Divrik,⁵⁴⁷ Recep Akarsoy from

⁵³⁹ Orhan Tuna, p.344

⁵⁴⁰ Aziz Nesin, "Çalışma Bakanına Açık Mektup," 6.8.1945, Tan

⁵⁴¹ See The Minutes of the GNAT, 14.4.1942, p.159

⁵⁴² See The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.10. 1940-31.10. 1941), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1942), p.290

⁵⁴³ *ibid.*, p.298

⁵⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.303

⁵⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.318

⁵⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.321

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.329

Kırıkkale⁵⁴⁸ and Yunus Katılmış⁵⁴⁹ demanded a compensation, stipend or help because they had been subjected to work accidents or diseases while working.

Some women requested stipends or compensation because their husbands had died while working. For instance, Faika Özturğa requested help upon the death of his husband who had worked in the Hereke Factory.⁵⁵⁰ Hafize Erdem from Bozuyük also requested a stipend because her husband had died while he was working.⁵⁵¹

In the Yearbook of 1943, many similar summaries of petitions can be found. For example, Emine Dönmez, Şadiye Şen, Hüsniye Tezcanlı requested compensation for deaths of their husbands while they had been working.⁵⁵² Durmuş Kirişçi from Bolu⁵⁵³ demanded a stipend because he had become disabled on the job. Again, Ahmet Eke requested compensation for the death of his son while he was at work.⁵⁵⁴

The Law of Social Insurance, which obliged employers to compensate the injuries of the workers exposed to industrial accidents, would be enacted in 1946 as a result of sharp increase in industrial accidents.⁵⁵⁵ These social demands should be taken into account while explaining the development of the post-war social policy regulations.

Indeed, maybe one of the most important indicators of the increase in disease and health problems among the working people was the discussion about Workplace Doctors (İş Hekimliği) in the Congress of Medicine in 1943. Dr. Baha Erkan, who lectured about the matter, underscored the importance of the workers' health as follows:

Unless the workers' health is protected, unless the struggle against tuberculosis is enforced and regulated with scientific principles and unless the worker who have been under medical treatment are restored to their former productivities, the productivity in the workplaces, which are worth millions of liras, will decrease and this situation will threaten the economy of the country and national security.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.331

⁵⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.356

⁵⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.308

⁵⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.295

⁵⁵² See The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.11.1941-31.10.1942), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1943), p.330

⁵⁵³ *ibid.*, p.258

⁵⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.300

⁵⁵⁵ Orhan Tuna, p.344

⁵⁵⁶ "Tıp Kongresi," 20.10.1943, Vatan

After Dr. Erkan emphasized how important the matter was for the country, he criticized the lack of health measures for workers:

Generally, workers are treated when they become ill or before they become ill in workplaces. Their health conditions do not receive the necessary rational and scientific attention there.⁵⁵⁷

Indeed, in spite of the increase in diseases and accidents in workplaces, many workplaces which were required to employ doctors and establish infirmaries according to the law, did not have even one doctor. The individuals employed as doctors in these places did not actually work on the premises or worked in other places. Employers did not pay the doctors for their work, but just to fulfill the legal requirements of the Law of Public Hygiene on the paper. Therefore, workers did not receive real medical treatment or medical examinations.

According to one report, the employers established token infirmaries with a tiny room each with only one bed in order to appear to be in compliance with the law.⁵⁵⁸ As reported by Kemal Binbaşar, who was witness to the working conditions in İzmir, the health services in workplaces were left to the employers who were indifferent to health conditions. In general, there were no doctors or hygienic measures in small and mid-sized firms.

Another mistake of the government is that it gave the right of employment and dismissal of the doctors of the workplace to the employers. In this situation, because these doctors were under the control of the employers, they had to close their eyes to the shortcomings in the health conditions and negligence in the practices of the laws.⁵⁵⁹

According to Binbaşar, who inspected tobacco storages in İzmir, the medical services which were provided to the workers by the employers were almost nonexistent:

According to Article 180 of the Public Hygiene Law, firms which employ between 100 and 500 workers are obliged to establish an infirmary and to employ a doctor. Firms in which the number of workers exceeds 500 are obliged to establish a hospital. But there was not even a doctor who work continuously in the tobacco storages...Although some of these tobacco stores employ approximately 1000

⁵⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 728.495.5]

⁵⁵⁹ Kemal Binbaşar “İzmir’de İş Müesseselerinin Sağlık Durumu ve İşçi Hastanesi Davası,” 10.7.1945, Tan

workers, nevermind a hospital, there was not even an infirmary with two beds...Nevermind medical treatment for the workers, these firms do not even buy medicine for their ill workers.⁵⁶⁰

The inspections of the factories and workplaces were not effective. Upon his observations about the inspections process at the Yunus Cement Factory, the RPP secretary in Kartal reported to Sabiha Sertel that the working conditions in factory were very bad and that the inspections of the working conditions in factories by the inspectors were not effective. In general, the inspectors were in collusion with the employers:

This factory does not take care of its workers' lives and destinies. The Labor Law is not in use here...Upon our complaints, inspectors have come to the factory many times. But the factory is informed that the inspectors will inspect it one week beforehand. The factory administration gives a welcoming dinner with rakı (a drink with alcohol and anise) for the inspectors in the evening as soon as they arrived at the factory. Thus all the problems are solved in favor of the employer. The problems are veiled in one way or other.⁵⁶¹

After Sabiha Sertel reported this news, she wrote that this case was not exceptional:

The complaints from the Yunus Cement Factory are not exceptional, but general complaints. The RPP Secretary in Kartal conveyed only one of these complaints. The health of the workers, the working conditions in workplace, industrial diseases, the general living standards of the workers and their wages are not regulated by the law until today. Along with the lack of effective implementation of the Labor Law, many rights and regulations are not included in the law.⁵⁶²

As for the health conditions and medical treatment facilities outside the workplace, they also were very poor and limited. The workers were not able to afford the necessary medicines when they or their family members became ill. Again, it will be fruitful to look at the memoirs of Zehra Kosova, who was a worker in tobacco storage in İstanbul. The Second World War made Kosova and her family much poorer. Because of malnutrition, her daughter became ill. In spite of medical examination by a doctor, they were not able to buy the medicines for treatment because of financial problems.⁵⁶³

In this period, tuberculosis and typhus proliferated among the poor masses and the working class. As will be shown in the next chapter, typhus, tuberculosis and malaria

⁵⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁶¹ Sabiha Sertel, "İşçilerin Çalışma Vaziyeti," 27.9.1945, Tan

⁵⁶² *ibid.*

became an epidemic during the war among them. The main causes of these epidemics were malnutrition, lack of public hygiene, health facilities, medicine, fuel for heating and cleaning. Indeed, it is not difficult to estimate that the increase in squatters' houses and bad housing conditions gave rise to the diseases among the poor working class.

In addition to this, as will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Five, those persons who had tuberculosis had to wait a long time for medical treatment in sanatoriums. The following complaint of a worker with tuberculosis illustrates the health conditions and possibilities of the working class in this period:

I am 34 years old and have five children. I have been ill for five years. I have exhausted all the means for my medical treatment. No good remained unsold in my hand. When I got tuberculosis, my wife started to work. Yet her wage does not suffice to support our family of eight people, let alone my medical treatment. What makes me worry most is that my five lovely kids are imprisoned with this disease as we all live in one room together. They told me of an Association of Struggle against Tuberculosis. I have looked for it, but I have not been able to find it. My application to the Directorate for Health gave no result.⁵⁶⁴

As can be seen from this statement of the diseased people, the access of the working people to the health facilities was very limited. Therefore they suffered many diseases during the war period. They sometime sent petition to the RPP to receive the medical treatment. Their voices were also reflected in the newspaper.⁵⁶⁵

The Housing Question and the Emergence of Mushroom Houses or Squatters' Houses

In the cities, rents increased in parallel to the general rises in prices, despite the fact that it was banned by the NSL. Especially the rents of the workers and state officers advanced during the war because their rents were not bound to contracts.⁵⁶⁶ Hence, the costs of housing of the working class rose. In conclusion, there emerged squatters' houses,

⁵⁶³ Kosova, p.121

⁵⁶⁴ 6.1.1944, Tan

⁵⁶⁵ See Chapter Five, pp.276-300

⁵⁶⁶ Muvaffak Şeref, *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm*, (İstanbul: Acar Basımevi, 1968), p.167

called mantarevs (mushroom houses) because of the high cost of living and housing rather than the flow of population from the villages to the cities.

In this period, there was no housing policy of the state and of the companies be they public or private. The so-called prevention of the rise in rents was not effective. The landlords resisted the stabilization of rents by the state in many ways. As mentioned above, because especially the working class houses were not rented according to contracts, it was easy to increase the rents.

The state decided to give rent aid to some lower income state employees. But some of them, such as teachers, did not receive this aid. Even 1943, the most teachers were not able to receive rent aid which had been decided to be distributed by the state in 1932.⁵⁶⁷ In this process, the government passed a housing act in 1944. That the state had to pass this housing act for lower income state employees indicates the rising of the housing problems.

Sometimes municipalities intervened in the question by means of social assistances to people who had difficulties in housing. But these interventions and social assistances fell short in general. For example, an elderly man who supported his family by selling water was evicted because of his inability to pay the rent, which was seven liras. Upon this situation, the municipality undertook their housing for a short time. But with the end of the municipality's help, his family became homeless again.⁵⁶⁸

The state and private enterprises also did not have any housing policy. For example, according to a report of the Sümerbank Leather and Shoes Factory, there was no housing policy of the factory to keep the workers at the factory.⁵⁶⁹

Consequently, squatters' houses first emerged in the period of the Second World War. Approximately thirty to fifty five thousand squatters' houses had been built in the big cities before 1948, when the first law was enacted to control their growth.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ "İlkokul Öğretmenlerinin Mesken Bedelleri," 20.7.1943 Tan.

⁵⁶⁸ 19.3.1943, Vatan

⁵⁶⁹ See Nusret Ekin, "Memleketimizde İşçi Devri Mevzuunda Yapılan Araştırmalar ve Ortaya Koydukları Neticeler," *İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları, 9-10-11. Kitap*, 1960, p.134

Those who did not have shelter and could not afford the high rents of the period were forced to choose between either living far away from the city or erecting a squatter-house near their workplace. In both cases, however, their living quarters did not have the necessary infrastructure, and they survived despite the absence of electricity, heating, gas and a sewage system; never mind proper roads linking their housing sites to any other part of the city or their workplaces. To be sure, the conditions characterizing these sites were hazardous from the point of view of health. Those who lived far from the city were forced to face the problem of transportation; and in order to cut down on these costs, they spent hours on their way back and forth from work. This daily commuting, it goes without saying, made the working day even longer. What is worse, those who lived in the squatter settlements were also forced to fight for their houses, since, every now and then, there were confrontations between the officials given the task of demolishing their homes. A letter-writing campaign by the workers to the leading dailies was one of the ways in which the workers tried to prevent their homes from being leveled.⁵⁷¹

Some workers rented out a room of the houses in which they lived in order to pay the high rents. For example, Kosova said that in the months she was unable to work because of pregnancy, her husband's weekly wage was 13 liras, whereas their rent was 9 liras. Therefore, they had to rent one of the rooms of their house.⁵⁷² The house in which they lived was of low quality. Again in her former house, in which they had stayed with her friends, had not had a heating system. Therefore they had burned wood in zinc bowls to be warmed. They used this fire to cook and light the room.⁵⁷³

Again, many working people had to live in the rooms of cheap hotels and inns which were in ruins and within extreme poverty. Ertuğrul, Şevket who made observations about the matter, reported on the situation as follows:

⁵⁷⁰ Ruşen Keleş, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Şehirleşme, Konut ve Gecekondu*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1972), pp.183-184

⁵⁷¹ Güzel (1995), p.137

⁵⁷² Kosova, p.118

From the old inn in the old and bumpy streets of Ankara to the large and small hotel rooms on the main streets, all were occupied completely by the working people in Ankara. They spend their lives looking for a house to dwell in. Moreover, the situation of the families with children who live in these rooms of the hotels and inns is worth seeing!⁵⁷⁴

There were even some people suffering from the lack of housing who committed petty crimes in order to be imprisoned so they could escape from the high cost of living and housing problems. For example, a person, alias Çopar Ahmet, who was unemployed and very poor, wanted to be put in prison because of the food shortages, expensiveness, the lack of affordable house, and heating problems in winter. To this aim, he attempted to rob people on the tram.⁵⁷⁵

The memoirs of Nermin Abadan-Unat show that this situation was not exceptional. She encountered an interesting event during her training period to become lawyer. A young man who had stabbed a friend confessed his crime quickly, describing it in detail. He then entered into an argument with the judge about the depth of the wound. Abadan wrote,

I understand that these previously convicted persons knew some articles of the Criminal Law. In order to protect themselves from the cold and from being homeless in winter, they would start a small quarrel to commit a crime which required only three months imprisonment...I said to myself that in a country in which social security and unemployment insurance had not been developed, the problems can be solved only in such ways.⁵⁷⁶

As will be explained in detail in coming pages, housing conditions of the workers in coalmines was much worse.⁵⁷⁷ According to Özek, even the thirty percent of the permanent workers in the mines, who had much better conditions than the temporary workers, had to live in shacks near the mines in very bad conditions.⁵⁷⁸

The Struggle for Living:

⁵⁷³ *ibid.*, p.117, 124

⁵⁷⁴ Ertuğrul Şevket, "Mesken Bıhranı Ankara'da Günüñ Meselesi," 29.1.1944, Tan

⁵⁷⁵ Mahmut Atilla Aykut, "Suçlunun İtirafı," 2.12.1943, Vatan

⁵⁷⁶ Nermin Abadan-Unat, *Kum Saatini İzlerken*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), p.158

⁵⁷⁷ See Y.N. Rozaliyev, *Türkiyede Sanayi Proleteryası*, (İstanbul: Yar Yayınları, 1974), p.174

⁵⁷⁸ Ahmet Ali Özek, *Türkiye Kömür Ekonomisi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1955), p.194

Resistance of the Working Class to the Hard Living and Working Conditions

One of the ways of survival for the working class was to sell their household belongings in return for some foodstuffs or money because of the low wages and high cost of living. The story of Zehra Kosova gives some clues about the lower income people's response to the hard living conditions. In her memoirs, she wrote that they got so much poorer that they were unable afford the medicine for their daughter. So they had to sell some households belongings to survive.

We earn 70 kuruş a day. I had worked for one month here. We were confronted with great difficulties because I earned too little money. We could not nourish ourselves properly. My daughter fell ill. The doctor said that her bones were too weak and prescribed strengthening injections. But I didn't have enough money to buy these injections...and there was nothing in my house I could sell. Moreover, I had not sold any household belongings before then. I was not accustomed to that kind of thing. But, from that time on, I was helpless...I decided to sell my bedstead and my husband's suit inherited from his father.⁵⁷⁹

One of Kosova's friends, who was also a worker, had to sell her household belongings because her husband was in the military service and she was unable to nourish her children with only her small wage.⁵⁸⁰

In 1943, Kosova was in extreme poverty, and now was unemployed. Therefore, selling her household belongings became the only way to survive. She traveled to the villages in order to sell their goods in return some food:

We gave a teacup and tea plate, we took two kilos of chickpeas or two kilos of beans in return. Again, in return for a pair of socks made in İstanbul, we took foodstuffs such as flour, soup with dried yogurt (tarhana), lentils and boiled and pounded wheat...These foodstuffs were not available for us in İstanbul.⁵⁸¹

Another way to survive for some workers was to pilfer goods from their workplaces. It is possible to see reports of these kinds of events in the newspapers. For

⁵⁷⁹ Kosova, p.121

⁵⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.121

⁵⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.123

example, two workers in the Bakırköy Cloth Factory, Gani and Süleyman were caught while pilfering 70 meters of cloth from the factory.⁵⁸²

In another event, women workers employed in a storage of the Monopoly Administration (İnhisarlar İdaresi) in Kabataş stole tea and coffee from the storage by hiding the goods in bags in their underwear. They were arrested while selling these goods in the blackmarket. In this way, it was understood that the storage employees stole many goods from there by the kilo.⁵⁸³

In a cigarette factory of the Monopoly Administration, some of the workers stole cigarettes from the factory. Upon the inspections, it was understood that they had been stealing for a few years.⁵⁸⁴ The workers in small workplaces such as bakeries resorted to similar activities. For instance, dough kneader Muharrem and baker Mehmet, who worked in a bakery in Feriköy, stole twelve loaves of bread from their workplaces and sold them for 43 kuruş in the market. After their arrest, they were taken to the NS Court.⁵⁸⁵

In Mersin, the poor workers employed in road construction also resorted to pilfering. In her letters from Turkey to America, Georgiana Mathew Maynard, who was teaching English in Turkey, wrote about her Mersin travels and her observations on this road construction by the British government. According to one of her letters, in her talk with Mr. Johnson, who was the head of the project, Mr. Jhonson emphasized their extreme poverty and complained about the Turkish workers' frequent pilferage.

On Sunday we had a very interesting visit with Mr. Johnson at the Seven-Kilometer Camp. You probably have heard about the British government's building a road for Turkey, from Mersin through Cilician Gates...Mr. Johnson told about his problems with his Turkish workmen. The buildings of the camp look more permanent and of better construction than many houses in Tarsus. Mr. Johnson's horse had a stable which was larger and cleaner than a good many village houses. I think the horse had more food than such a family too...One of the biggest problems of the job, so we gathered from our afternoon's conversation, was stealing. Anything removable

⁵⁸² "Çalıştıkları Fabrikadan Bez Çalmışlar," 27.4.1943, Vatan

⁵⁸³ "İnhisarlarda Mühim Bir Yolsuzluk Daha," 14.7.1943, Vatan

⁵⁸⁴ "İnhisarda Bir Hırsız Şebekesi," 7.10.1943, Vatan

⁵⁸⁵ "Çalıştıkları Fırından Ekmek Çalıyorlarmış," 4.3.1943, Vatan

would be removed and sold, from tins of gasoline to the gas from the tank, spark plugs or the belt from a rock-crusher.⁵⁸⁶

The lower income state employees also pilfered some goods and money from the workplace. Crimes such as pilfering, accepting bribes and embezzlement by the lower income state officers increased in these years. As explained above, the state personnel employed in price inspections, rationing, tax collections and the Soil Product Office misused their rights and duties, pilfering the materials belonged to the state, accepting bribes and embezzlement, because of dramatic decline in their purchasing power.

Incidents of theft, bribery, embezzlement and other such illegal actions by state personnel increased to such a level that the RPP established a commission in order to bring it under control. According to the reports of this commission, the main reason for these actions by the low-income state personnel was their low living standards. They committed these crimes to survive. Therefore, the measures were needed to better their living conditions in order to remove such illegal actions.⁵⁸⁷

Another response of the workers to the decrease of their purchasing power was the entrance of family members who previously had not worked outside the home. The social and economic environment, poverty, high costs of living and decrease of purchasing power of the working class caused by the war brought the employment of the women and children.

In İstanbul, there emerged worker families in which not only the head of family, but also other members of the family, children and women, went out to work. In particular, the number of the female workers in the textile, tobacco, cigarette and food factories multiplied.⁵⁸⁸ For example, in Bakırköy in 1942 the proportion of female workers to all workers exceeded 85 percent. In Kayseri, this proportion had been approximately 5-7

⁵⁸⁶ Georgianna Mathew Maynard, *Letters From Turkey (1939-1946)*, (Chicago-Illinois: The Oriental Institute of University of Chicago, 1994), pp.154-155

⁵⁸⁷ Zekeriya Sertel, "Suiistimalin Kökünü Kurutmak Lazımdır," 30.1.1944, Tan

⁵⁸⁸ Oya Baydar, "Osmanlı'dan 2000'e İstanbul İşçileri," *75 Yılda Çarkları Döndürenler*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), p.211

percent in pre-war period, this reached to 20 percent in the war years. The numbers of female workers employed in factories of Sümerbank increased considerably. Whereas this number was 1820 in 1939, it climbed to 5911 in 1944 and reached 5503 in 1945.⁵⁸⁹

Children also started to work and their share in the workforce increased to great extend. The percentage of children in the workforce had declined from 15 percent in 1927 to 3 percent in 1934. With the onset of war, the number of adult male workers between 1937 and 1943 declined from 191.863 (78 percent) to 166.275 (61 percent), while that of children (between ages of 12 and 18) increased from 23.347 (8 percent) to 51.871 (19 percent). That is, the number of children employed by industry had more than doubled.⁵⁹⁰

The employment of women and children caused some problems for the working class and the state. This situation interrupted the education of the children. Women had less time for the training of their children. The separation of the families in this way started to break the usual links between the children and families. In this context, that there were no sufficient institutions such as foster-home care centers and day-care centers for the supervision of these children of the women workers broke the discipline and training process of the children and increased the number of homeless and vagrant children, as will be examined in Chapter Five in detail.

One worker expressed his complaints on the matter in the name of tobacco workers by sending a letter to Aziz Nesin:

We can barely afford the rationing bread with our wages. In order to eat bread with olive oil once or twice a week, we send our wives to the tobacco storages to work. Thus our children become miserable. They wait for us in the streets, in the dust, with empty stomachs. The children who you see under the bridges and near the ruins are our children. Forty thousand tobacco workers are bringing up vagrant children for you. We are in need of day-care centers.⁵⁹¹

In this setting, cases of truancy and cutting classes among the school children of families which depended on the wage also increased remarkably in the war period. So the

⁵⁸⁹ Cemil Koçak, "Sayılarla Sosyal Politika Tarihi," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no.92, (August 1991), p.121

⁵⁹⁰ Şehmus Güzel, "Capital and Labour During World War II," *Workers and The Working Class in The Ottoman Empire and The Turkish Republic (1839-1950)*, (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1995), p.137

education of the children of the lower income working people also limped by during the war years.

According to a middle-school director, the children had to work in order to support their families in these bad economic circumstances. Therefore, absenteeism among the students had reached high levels. He also complained of the lack of an institution to assist to these children.

I have 440 students. Of them, 140 students have demanded to be exempted from the research class. I looked into their situations officially and personally. They were right in their demand. All of them support themselves and their families by working as paperboys, shoe-blacks, porters, milkmen, yogurtmen and in factories. Some of them sell cucumbers and onions in the street. Keeping them at school for one and half or two hours every day would rule out not only their livings, but also their educations. As long as we have no organizations for social assistance for these children, we cannot prevent their working outside school.⁵⁹²

Finally, as explained above, it is possible to interpret the emergence of the squatters' houses in this period as a form of resistance to the high rents and high cost of living. Indeed, the most important characteristics of the emergence of the squatters' houses and shanty towns in this period were not the migration from the rural to urban areas because in this period because of the war danger some people left the Istanbul and big cities, and went to Anatolia, but the poverty and inflation fuelled by the war.

Compulsory Work in the Mines

The most important experience of the working class and peasants, which left its mark in their collective memory during the Second World War, was the waged compulsory work ( cretli iř m kellefiyeti). The workers and peasants were forced to work in the mines with a decree dated 28 February 1940.⁵⁹³ The labor shortage, which traced back to the pre-war period, became much more apparent in especially heavy and dangerous areas such as

⁵⁹¹ Aziz Nesin, " alıřma Bakanına A ık Mektup I," 4.8.1945, Tan.

⁵⁹² Said Kesler, "Mekteplerdeki Yoksul Talebeler," 25.4.1943, Tan

⁵⁹³ Sina  ıladır, *Zonguldak Havzasında İř i Hareketlerinin Tarihi (1848-1940)*, (Ankara: Yeryaltı Maden İř Yayınları), 1977, p.174

mining, because of the conscription of men by the army and the lower worker wages⁵⁹⁴ in the mines. In addition, the war conditions and the threat of the war made the continuation of the production process, the high level of output and the high-productivity as soon as possible of great strategical importance for the state. Thus the state resorted to the waged compulsory work on the basis of Article 9 of the NSL.

According to Article 9, “in order to raise the productions of the industrial and mine enterprises and to increase the working hours in these and other working places, to supply them with necessary amount of workers and experts, the state can oblige the citizens waged compulsorily work.”⁵⁹⁵ Article 9 of the NSL stipulated the obligation of all citizens to do paid overtime in industrial and mining firms...In this context; the compulsory work policy was more strictly implemented in the mining sector.⁵⁹⁶

There were some factors which determined the working conditions and the government’s resort to the compulsory work in coalmines. The need of the city-dwellers, industry, and the state for coal as a source of energy and of heating increased in this period. The question of the continuation of the coal production caused the strict and painful implementation of the waged compulsory work system in the mines. That the workers resisted the compulsory work in many ways, as will be shown below, does not necessarily mean that they did not suffer from it.

From the first year of the war on, the shortage of coal stemming from the production slowdown caused some problem in the railway transportation and increased the government’s pressures on the mines to increase production levels.⁵⁹⁷ Moreover, the

⁵⁹⁴ Gerhard Kessler views the main cause of the compulsory work the lack of sufficient workers because of the low wages in the mines. See Gerhard Kessler, “Türk İş İstatistikleri,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, vol.4, no.1, 1942, p.247

⁵⁹⁵ “Milli Korunma Kanunu,” *İktisadi Yürüyüş*, no.5, (February 1940), p.18

⁵⁹⁶ Güzel (1995), p.130

⁵⁹⁷ Ayşe Berkay Hacımirzaoglu, “Madencilikte Bir Ömür: Kadri Yersel,” *75 Yılda Çarkları Döndürenler*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), p.55

factories and electric powerhouses which used diesel oil, started to use coal because of the shortage of diesel oil stemming from the war.⁵⁹⁸

In addition, a rise in prices of firewood and brazier coal increased the need for coal in the cities. Coal became the main fuel for heating because of its low cost in comparison with firewood (see Table 14).⁵⁹⁹ Therefore the consumption of the coal increased during the period (see Table 15). All of these factors necessitated increases in the levels of coal production and the provision of the necessary labor to work in the mines at the lowest cost. The need of the state, industry and city-dwellers for coal brought the increasing exploitation of the working class in the mines and determined the working conditions.

Table 14- Prices of Sources of Heating (kuruş)⁶⁰⁰

	Firewood (Three kinds of quality)			Brazier Coal (Three kinds of quality)			Mine Coal
	I	II	III	I	II	III	
1939	321	-	220	5	4.5	3	24
1944	1500	1200	900	15.5	14	12.5	40

Table 15-Consumption of Firewood and Coal in the Second World War in İstanbul⁶⁰¹

	Brazier Coal (1000 ton)	Firewood (1000 çeki)	Mine Coal (1000 ton)
1938-39	42	385	65
1939-40	43	370	77
1940-41	37.5	284	92
1941-42	33	280	105
1942-43	32	265	112
1943-44	27	255	119

The cut in imports of the some materials which were used in mines and coal production also made the workforce much more important. As Kadri Yersel noted in his memoirs, the lack of necessary material and means of production increased the importance

⁵⁹⁸ Ahmet Ali Özekten, *Türkiye Kömür Ekonomisi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları), 1955, p.123

⁵⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.133

⁶⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.131

of the labor and brought the extra-ordinary exploitation of the labor, overtime work and compulsory work in the mines.⁶⁰²

In this context, the severe need for coal in the country brought the extreme exploitation and hard working in the mines called zar-zor (hardly) by the mine management. Efforts were made to increase production levels as much as possible by means of zar-zor,⁶⁰³ which meant a hard working without any protection and support and at any cost in order to fill the gap in production level.⁶⁰⁴ İrfan Yalçın wrote in his book, *The Mouth of Death*, that in every zar-zor, three or five workers died.⁶⁰⁵

Indeed, according to the correspondences between the administration chief of the mines presented briefly by Erol Çatma, it is understood that the overtime work in the mines sometimes reached as many as 18 hours a day.⁶⁰⁶

These hard working conditions and excessive workings were accompanied by the decrease in the real wages and impoverishment. In this process, the real wages of the workers in the mines decreased, as in other sectors.⁶⁰⁷ As can be seen from the Table 16, from 1938 to 1943 the real wages decreased by half.

Table 16-Index of Real Wages of Coal Miners during the War Period⁶⁰⁸

Year	Index
1938	100
1943	49
1945	56

As for the nutritional conditions of the workers in the mines, there were many problems as well. The meals were satisfactory neither in taste nor in the calories needed by

⁶⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.130

⁶⁰² See Kadri Yersel, *Madencilikte Bir Ömür: Anılar, Görüşler*, (İstanbul: Yurt Madencilği Geliştirme Vakfı ve Maden Mühendisleri Odası Ortak Yayını, 1989), p.23

⁶⁰³ Hacımiraçoğlu, p.55

⁶⁰⁴ İrfan Yalçın, *Ölümün Ağzı*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2002), p.58.

⁶⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.63

⁶⁰⁶ Çatma (1998), p.126. By the way, the working conditions in the other mines were also very bad. In the chrome mines of Fethiye run by a French company, many workers died or became physically disabled because of negligences of the company and the state. The conditions of the these workers were very tragic. The workers who were subjected to the accidents and injured requested the compensation for their loses. See The Minutes of the GNAT, 14.4.1942, p.159

⁶⁰⁷ Muvaffak Şeref, p.155

the workers. The amount of bread which was given to them was also not enough, 750 grams of bread a day. So the workers complained of this small amount bread and claimed that they were not satisfied with the bread which was given to them.⁶⁰⁹

The workers in the mines in Ereğli received two meals a day. One of them was breakfast, comprised of soup and bread, and dinner, comprised of malayı, which was made from corn flour, water and salt and which was very tough, devoid of nutrition, and bad in taste. As a food eaten with malayı, boiled and pounded wheat with chickpeas and broadbeans, which was so tough and tasteless that the workers complained that they could not bite these braodbeans, were given to the workers. Therefore, the necessary calories for their heavier work were not provided. Furthermore, protein, which was critical for their health was lacking in these meals. Therefore, tuberculosis and anemia were widespread among the workers.⁶¹⁰

Indeed, the harsh working conditions, low wages, and poor meals weakened their bodies and made them much more vulnerable to diseases. Especially the rate of tuberculosis among the mine workers increased during the war. As can be seen from the Table 17, tuberculosis among the workers in the coalmines increased eight times from 1938 to 1944.⁶¹¹

Table 17- The Numbers of Tubercular Coal Miners

Years	Coal Miners With Tuberculosis
1938	121
1939	298
1940	286
1941	396
1942	652
1943	756
1944	960

⁶⁰⁸ ibid., p.248

⁶⁰⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 513.2061.2, (23.3.1942)]

⁶¹⁰ Hulusi Dosdoğru, "Maden İşçimizin Bugünkü Yaşayış Durumu," 1.10.1945, Tan

⁶¹¹ Sabire ve Hulusi Dosdoğru, *Sağlık Açısından Maden İşçilerimizin Dünü Bugünü*, (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1990)

The situation in other mines such as chrome mines was not different. For instance, in the Enterprise of the Guleman Eastern Chrome (Guleman Şark Kromları İşletmesi), in July 1943 many workers were not able to continue to work because of malaria and malnutrition. Only 116 of 402 workers continued to work 30 days while 118 of them worked 20-30 days, 63 of them worked 15-20 days and 105 of them worked 10-15 days. This is also an indicator of the harsh working conditions the mine workers experienced.⁶¹²

The lack of sufficient doctor controls in the coalmines and the lack of knowledge of health among the workers contributed to the bad health conditions and health problems among them.⁶¹³ Another factor worsening the health of the workers was the bad hygienic conditions in the mines. The workers did not receive systematic cleaning. Although the monthly amount of soap given to them increased from 75 grams to 150 grams, this amount was not sufficient to clean a mine worker.⁶¹⁴ Besides this, some of hygiene procedures such as the louse iron (bit ütüsü) were very difficult for the workers. Indeed, they had to get undressed quite naked in the cold of the winter in the open air and wait a long time in a queue for louse iron. Therefore, while they were trying to become clean, they became ill. Thus the workers did not welcome it, and they avoided it as much as possible⁶¹⁵

The correspondences between the administrative chief in the Ereğli coalmines presented by Erol Çatma also indicate the bad health conditions in the mines. For instance, according to these documents, in 1941 there was an epidemic of typhus and scabies among the workers. In a document dated 22 March 1944, it was reported that even injured workers were forced to work.⁶¹⁶

The housing conditions of the workers were also very bad and primitive in the coalmines. They stayed in large tents. According to Hulusi Dosdoğru, who made

⁶¹² See Kurthan Fişek, *Türkiye’de Kapitalizmin Gelişmesi ve İşçi Sınıfı*, (Ankara: Doğan Yayınevi, 1969), p.79

⁶¹³ Sabire Dosdoğru, “Maden İşçileri,” 12.9.1945, Tan

⁶¹⁴ Hulusi Dosdoğru, “Mükellef Münavebeli İşçiler Meselesi,” 3.10.1945, Tan

⁶¹⁵ See Yalçın, p.45

⁶¹⁶ Çatma (1998), p.126.

observations in the coalmines of Ereğli Enterprise, which was biggest enterprise in Turkey, the housing facilities did not meet the needs, and the workers had to stay at uncomfortable places.

Because the existing tents do not meet the needs of all workers, some workers live in neighborhood huts, sheds and coffeehouses under miserable conditions...Lack of sufficient beds for the workers, sometimes they go to bed in turns. Sometimes two or three workers are in the same bed together.⁶¹⁷

Ahmet Ali Özeken also noted that even the permanent workers, who enjoyed relatively in good conditions, lived in bad housing conditions:

Much more than thirty percent of the permanent workers, whose conditions were much better in comparison with those of the temporary workers, had to live in very poor rented sheds near to the mines.⁶¹⁸

In archival documents it is possible to read complaints about the living conditions of the workers in the mines. According to a complaint letter which was sent to the General Secretariat of the RPP from the coal mines in Bartın, the workers complained of the lack of sufficient beds in the tents in the coal mines, the lack of water, and the widespread thefts among the workers. For these reasons, many workers became miserable and opted to live in the mountains in open air.⁶¹⁹

Resistance to the Compulsory Work in the Coal Mines

The working class in general did not possess an organization to make its demands and complaints heard to the political power or to put pressure on it in order to realize its demands. It could not organize a political party or trade union. It could not express itself publicly, politically and ideologically on the domain of high politics. However, this situation did not necessarily mean that the working class was a passive, backward and ignorant mass. They acted according to their interests and life conditions as much as

⁶¹⁷ Hulusi Dosdoğru, "Maden İşçimizin Bugünkü Yaşayışı II," 2.9.1945, Tan

⁶¹⁸ Ahmet Ali Özeken, *Türkiye Kömür Ekonomisi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları), 1955, p.194

⁶¹⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 491.1978.1]

possible. They did not act according to a political or ideological consciousness which was determined by an ideological or political movement. To some degree, they did not act collectively. But these do not mean that their actions were apolitical and insignificant which did not cause some political and economic consequences. Of course, their resistance did not have revolutionary affects, but it played a role in the emergences of some problems such as coal shortage in the cities which caused social discontent, slowdowns in the factories and sometime shortage of bread.

The Republican regime became much stricter in the years of the Second World War. On 23 November 1940, the government declared Martial Law in İstanbul, Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, Çanakkale and Kocaeli. The press was censored much more strictly.⁶²⁰ Thus the legal expression of the working class interests through the press or other ways of public and collective actions was not possible. In these years, many intellectuals and artists were exiled into Anatolia from the provinces within the scope of the Martial Law.⁶²¹

The laws did not permit working people to organize legal parties, trade unions or associations in order to express their complaints, demands and interests. There was no any right of trade unionism or strike in the law. Article 141 and 142 of the Criminal Law (Ceza Kanunu) enacted in 1936, which was taken from the Fascist Italian Law as a model, reflected the state's fear of class-based organizations, movements and class conflict. This law banned organizations based on class. Therefore, to establish trade unions based on class interests was impossible with respect to this body of law. In these conditions, it was not possible to express class interest collectively and publicly in the political arena.⁶²²

The Law of Associations, dated 1938, also consolidated the banning of the organization of workers. According to Article 9 of this law, it was forbidden to establish

⁶²⁰ About the Turkish press during the world war see Orhan Murat Güvenir, *II. Dünya Savaşında Türk Basını: Siyasal İktidarın Basını Denetlemesi ve Yönlendirmesi*, (İstanbul : Gazeteciler Cemiyeti, 1991)

⁶²¹ Kemal Sülker bunlardan biriydi. Bu dönemdeki anılarını kaleme aldığı kitabında Konya, Hatay ve Tokatta'ki sürgün hayatını anlatır. see Kemal Sülker, *Savaş Yıllarında Bir Sürgün*, (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları,1986)

⁶²² Kemal Sülker, *Türkiye'de İşçi Hareketleri*, (İstanbul: Geçek Yayınevi, 1973), pp.50-51

any association based on kinship, race, gender or class. In this situation, the workers did not organize any associations to act with solidarity and collectively for their class interests.
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In addition to the legal restrictions, there were some everyday and local restrictions and pressures put on the working people by the employers in their workplaces. The employers, who did not want to encounter a collective action or expression of demands and complaint by the workers, put pressure on the workers in workplaces by means of some informal ways. For instance, according to one worker, there were various slanders made by the employers about the complainants:

They do not want workers who have a quick mind, are clever, and who know the laws and can speak up. When three workers gather and talk about a matter, or when we complain of something rightly and insist on our rights, they cast all kinds of aspersion on us.⁶²⁴

Furthermore, for the workers it was fruitless to turn to the administration, which was interested in the relations between employees and employer. For example, the workers who resorted to the Bureau of Labor (İş Bürosu) on grounds that they were forced to work on the weekends and received incomplete daily wages; but, the officials of the bureau advised them “to come to an agreement with your employers.”⁶²⁵ As can be seen, there was no legal way to solve their problem. In conclusion, there were only four appeals to the High Adjudicator Committee (Yüksek Hakem Kurulu) because of the disagreement between the workers and employers between the 1939 and 1945.⁶²⁶

In the workplace, the discourse that the world was in conflict or that war was at the door also functioned as a tool of discipline and pressure on the workers. The employers tried to legitimate the overtime work and harsh working conditions by means of this discourse in daily life. It is possible to see that the employers resorted to this discourse in

⁶²³ Makal (1999), p.477

⁶²⁴ Aziz Nesin, “Çalışma Bakanına Açık Mektup,” 6.8.1945, Tan

⁶²⁵ “Daimi İşçinin Hafta Mesaisi Kaç Gündür?”, 2.6.1945, Tan

⁶²⁶ See Makal (1999), p.442

İrfan Yalçın's novel, *The Mouth of the Death* (Ölümün Ağzı). But the workers did not accept this discourse. A worker said that

Who thinks about whether he has a mother or a father, a wife or children? Whatever you say, they reply that there is a war on; the infidels are at our door... As if we would suffer more than this by going into battle. If only they'd get us into the war!⁶²⁷

In these conditions, in every day life the workers created various ways of resistance to the working conditions and excessive exploitation. They used the store of the common ways of coupling with the hard situations. In terms of James C. Scott, among the workers in the mine there were everyday forms of resistance to the compulsory work.

First of all, they reduced their productivity with slowdowns and procrastination. The statistical data on the productivity of the workers in the mines illustrates the decrease in productivity of workers during the war. According to Lütfi Erişçi, when the worker productivity was regarded as 100 in 1940, this rate decreased to 81 % in Western Lignite (Garp Linyitleri), 78 % in The Mines of Divrik (Divrik Madeni), and 34 % in Eastern Chrome (Şark Kromları) in 1944.⁶²⁸

Ahmet Ali Özeken also underlined the decrease in productivity of workers in this period. In Ereğli coalmines, the productivity in the first nine months was 613 kg per worker. This amount decreased gradually in the first years of the war period. This rate which was 595 kg in 1938 went down to 490 kg. in 1941.⁶²⁹

This decrease in the productivity was related to the workers slowdowns and procrastinations to great extent. Indeed, they were able to act passively in the mines and went on what was called Italian Strike, which meant a covert strike to a certain degree. From İrfan Yalçın's novel *The Mouth of the Death* which depicted the life of the workers in the mines, it is possible to see how the workers went to the slowdown, when they were

⁶²⁷ Yalçın, p.36

⁶²⁸ Erişçi, p.105

⁶²⁹ See Ahmet Ali Özeken, "Türkiye Sanayiinde İşçilik Mevzuunun İktisadi Problemleri" *Prof. Dr. İbrahim Fazıl Pelin'in Hatırasına Armağan*, (İstanbul: İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1948), pp.245-246.

far from the control and surveillance of the chiefs and watchman under the ground.⁶³⁰ In a similar vein, Berç Türker pointed out in the National Assembly that some workers in the coal mines did not continue to work properly and thus interrupted the coal production.⁶³¹

Ahmet Ali Özeke said also the productivity of the workers was low because of their psychology and the compulsory character of the work in the mines. He emphasized especially the psychological aspects of the hardships the workers experienced. With workers whose aim was nothing more than to finish the shift, it was not possible to increase the productivity of the mines:

Separation from their families, their economic and moral ties with their village which are different environment from the mines and city, and the compulsory character of the work decreased the labor productivity of the workers and made them feel like prisoners. Especially the permanent workers who were employed compulsorily had this psychology.⁶³²

With the permanent workers who regarded themselves as prisoners sentenced to row under the compulsory labor regime, and with the temporary workers, who shared the same psychology as the permanent workers and who were not conscious or did not have an aim other than waiting for the days to pass by, was it possible to raise the productivity, to realize the requirements of technical rationalization, to follow a better wage policy with respect to productivity?⁶³³

Their psychological situation and their discontent were reflected in the folk songs. For instance, one song complained of the compulsory work in the mines among the compulsory workers of the Western Lignite Company in Ereğli (Ereğli Garp Linyit İşletmeleri).⁶³⁴ This song can be regarded as a hidden and unwritten program of the compulsory workers which made their resistance a collective action indirectly.

Mükellefiyetin urganı, terli olur yorganı;
Mükelleften kurtulan, çifte kessin kurbanı.

Another widespread form of resistance to the hardworking conditions and compulsory labor regime in the mines was to escape. The escape from the mines was not

⁶³⁰ See Yalçın, pp.58-67

⁶³¹ The Minutes of the GNAT, vol.25, 25.5.1942, p.264

⁶³² Özeke (1955), p.193

⁶³³ *ibid.*, p.195

⁶³⁴ Makal (1999), p.415

discrete events, but widespread forms of resistance. In many case, it was a collective action of escape instead of an individual matter. From the minutes of correspondences between the chief of administrations documented by Erol Çatma, it is possible to see these escapes and their continuity from the first years of the war onward.⁶³⁵

Dates of Correspondences	Subjects of the Correspondences
7.5.1940	: Application about 42 persons who escaped from Türk-İş and Kilimli
7.5.1940	: About 125 workers who escaped from Kozlu Köm-İş
7.5.1940	: About 149 lists of persons who came to work after the first day of the month
8.5.1940	: About 53 persons who escaped from Köm-İş and İnağzı
11.5.1940	: About 7 persons who changed their residences in Tunceli
14.5.1940	: About 6 persons who escaped from the working.
11.6.1941	: About the escapes from compulsory work
4.10.1941	: About 1647 workers who returned to their villages and about the reporting of them to officers of compulsory labor and gendarme and taking measures of the matter.

In spite of the measures such as social assistances or pressure on the workers escaping from the mines, the escapes continued throughout the period. As late as 1944, there were many workers who escaped from the mines and then were punished by the administration. Some workers escaped repeatedly although they were caught by the gendarme and officers as listed below.

15.7.1944	: About the refusal of postponement of the request of Hasan Turan and about sending to Service Battalion from Penpeçiler Village,
28.7.1944	: About Mecit Birinci, who was sent to the Enforcement
28.7.1944	: About Sabri Şapar, who was sent to the Enforcement
5.8.1944	: About Mustafa Sarı, who was sent to Service Battalion
8.9.1944	: About Bayram Çevik, who was sent to the Enforcement
5.10.1944	: About Davut Öztürk, who was sent to the Service Battalion because of escape from the mine.
5.10.1944	: About Ahmet Yıldırım, who was sent to the Enforcement ⁶³⁶

Çatma wrote that there were many similar events in these correspondences and the list can be lengthened. In these lists, the workers who were sent to the Service Battalion

⁶³⁵ Çatma (1998), pp.125-126

⁶³⁶ *ibid.*, p.133

were worked in the mines without any wage under the status of soldiers for a year.⁶³⁷ In order to prevent and punish the escapes from the mines an Enforcement Headquarters (Tahkim Komutanlığı) was established by the army.⁶³⁸ Workers who escaped from the mines three times were sent to the Enforcement Headquarters. In other words, these workers were generally sent to Erzurum or Edirne and were worked forcibly as soldier in the constructions of roads or airports without any wages for one year.⁶³⁹

These punishments of sending to the Enforcement Headquarters or the Service Battalion meant that there were workers who tried to escape repeatedly even though the gendarme caught them. In this process, some runaway workers clashed with the gendarme as well. For example, because Hasan Doğru, fled from the mine, and during pursuit, he came at the gendarme with a gun, he was sent to the Service Battalion and his compulsory work period was extended.⁶⁴⁰

The harsh working conditions were one reason for the escapes. Especially for the peasants, who were brought by force to the mines from the villages nearby, working in the mines was very difficult and unbearable. Yaşar Şen, a peasant-worker living in a mountain village of Ereğli called A. Kocaeli, told his story about the working conditions in the mines and his escape from there:

In 1940, I was sent to the mine because of compulsory work. I was a tırkacı.* We transported the coal from the ore bed to the gutter by means of a tırka. In the mines where we worked there were fan blowers which were moved by hand. Therefore, inside the mine was very hot. The air was turbid. We were naked while working. One week after I entered the mine, I ran away from there. I was very depressed. I went to my village and hid myself. Within less than two days, mounted gendarmes came to the village. Since the gendarmes did not find me, they took my wife to the gendarme station. They did not release my wife until my surrender.⁶⁴¹

Among the workers forced to work in the mines were some who were forced unjustly or arbitrarily. They resisted these actions of the state officials and gendarme.

⁶³⁷ *ibid.*, p.133

⁶³⁸ Turgut Etingü, *Kömür Havzasında İlk Grev*, (Koza Yayınları, 1976), p.114

⁶³⁹ *ibid.*, p.54

⁶⁴⁰ For the story of the Hasan Doğru see PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 491.1978.1, (31.7.1944)]

* *Tırkacı* means the worker drove a transportation means used in the mines, called tırka.

According to an event, seven chiefs of a village did not accept the lists of the peasants who were to be subjected to the compulsory work in the mines. Therefore, they were insulted by the head official of the districts (kaymakam) and sent to the Enforcement Headquarters on the grounds that they had opposed the law. Upon this decision, these chiefs of the village hid and the gendarme searched in every nook and cranny in the village.⁶⁴² The chiefs of the village complained of this situation to the RPP by means of letters and petitions. They complained of the illegal and unjust actions of the officials and gendarmes.

Though the regulations were clear in the written decree and they know that our involvement in compulsory work means unjust treatment of us, we were sent to work in the mines by threat and forcibly methods. Therefore, many families in the village were ruined and many people have been sent to the Enforcement Headquarters. These people had never worked in the mines previously.⁶⁴³

In another archival document, the reporters wrote of the frequent escapes of the compulsory workers from the mines and the causes of these escapes. Indeed, for a peasant-worker there were many reasons for the escape from the mines. So they resisted the compulsory work as can be seen from the summary of this document below

In September [1942], we understood that workers were absent from the mines. And investigated the reasons for this absence and escapes from the mines... We saw the reasons lay behind the escapes as follows:

1-The workers who did not have any relatives in the village to work in the period of harvest and to plough the land, did not go to the mines. Of them, those workers who were sent to the mines escaped from there...Therefore, it seems to be not possible to stop the escapes until their wages are increased to a level which will satisfy them.

2-According to the NSL, those persons who have worked in the mines for a while previously can be subjected to compulsory work. But, contrary to the law, it was understood that some persons who had never been in the mines were also subjected to the compulsory work in the mines because they had the same surname as their relatives who were subject to the compulsory work...These men who were obliged so, also escaped from the mines because they were not accustomed to the working conditions of the mines and they did not want to work there.

3-It is not difficult to understand to what degree it is possible to keep in the mines a person who was subjected to compulsory work whose family suffers from lack of food in the village, and to what degree it is possible prevent his escape.

4-In comparison with the 1941, in April 1942 857 workers are absent a day. This number was 804 in May, 916 in June, 366 in July, 306 in August, 432 in September...This situation is related to the bad feeding conditions in 1942 in comparison with the 1941. Therefore, some workers escaped from the mines in order look for food in nearby towns to provide to their families with the necessary bread.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Sina Çıladır, *Zonguldak Havzasında İşçi Hareketlerinin Tarihi (1848-1940)*, (Ankara: Yeraltı Maden İş Yayınları, 1977), p.175

⁶⁴² PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 491.1978.1, (9.10.1943)]

⁶⁴³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴⁴ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 722.470.1, (8.10.1942)]

As can be seen from the above statements, there were high frequencies of escape and absenteeism in the mines for many reasons, ranging from the bad living conditions of their families in the village to the injustices wrought by the officers in the determination of who was obliged to serve in the mines.

The main way to keep the workers in the mine and to stop the escapes was pressure by the armed forces. Gendarmes searched the village and houses of whom the runaway worker. If they did not find the workers, they took their wives or children to the gendarme station. İzzet Çatma, who worked in the mines during the era, confirms the widespread complaints of events such as holding the workers' wives or children as hostages or the rape of the workers' wives or daughters by the gendarmes.⁶⁴⁵

Turgut Etingü, who worked in the Ereğli as an upper miner also wrote that there was excessive pressure on the workers and their families:

Many a rape in the villages, beatings in gendarme stations until the injury of the soles of the feet, by pleading the escapes from the compulsory work. Many workers were sent into exile from place to place like thieves, murderers, traitors by the Enforcement Headquarters which was established to dissuade the runaways.⁶⁴⁶

A worker named Yusuf Şen, who was subjected to compulsory work in mine, but escaped from there, also said that there was widespread violence against the runaways and their families. His story also confirms this fact:

Because the gendarme did not find me, they took my wife to their station. They did not release her until my surrender to them. Sometimes they hold the babies of the runaways as a hostage. In the gendarme stations there was beating. As soon as they arrested the runaway, first they bastinadoed him.⁶⁴⁷

The archival documents also give information about the pressure and violence against the runaway and their families. According to a report by deputies, there were widespread severe treatments such as beatings of the runaway workers and their family

⁶⁴⁵ See Çatma (1998), p.132

⁶⁴⁶ Etingü, p.114

⁶⁴⁷ Çıladır, p.175

members by the gendarme.⁶⁴⁸ In the report, it was stated that the workers and their families were taken into the courts and “the children and wives of these workers had no peace in the village.”⁶⁴⁹

The pressures on the workers become a subject matter of novels. In abovementioned novel of İrfan Yalçın, *The Mouth of the Death*, it is often stated that there was continuous pressure on the workers and their families. Some workers in the novel mentioned that the gendarme raped the wives of the workers. At the end of the book, upon the escape of some workers from the mine, the gendarme took the wife of one of them and the woman was later found dead by the peasants.

At this point, under these forcible methods and brutality of the gendarmes and the state officials, the resistant workers found different ways to shirk and to remove their obligation practically. For example, some workers tried to obtain doctor’s report by giving bribes to the doctors in order to be exempted from the working in the mines. There were two ways to obtain a doctor’s report. The first was to give a bribe to the doctors in the infirmaries of the mines. The second was to wound themselves seriously. And the third, they infected themselves with some diseases. In his memoirs, Turgut Etingü mentions about these actions of the workers.

Those officers in the Directorate of Compulsory Labor and in the Hospital of the Enterprise who accepted bribes and so become wealthier constituted many list...There were many workers who wounded their feet, arms, and fingers with a sharp stone or an axe or who cut some of their parts in order to be taken to the hospital and to escape from their obligations. There were many who made their wounds gangrenous because they kept their wounds and lost their hands or feet.⁶⁵⁰

In his novel, İrfan Yalçın also referred to the peasants who cut their thumbs from their hands in order to escape from entering the mines.⁶⁵¹ In similar way, as quoted by Etingü, a local newspaper in Zonguldak, Ocak, reported similar methods workers resorted to in order to avoid compulsory mine duty:

⁶⁴⁸ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 513.2061.2, (1942)]

⁶⁴⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 491.1978.1, (1943)]

⁶⁵⁰ Etingü, p.114

Most of the compulsory workers resort to some means in order to save themselves from working in the mines, which are regarded by them as drudgery. Sometimes they unreasonably even infect themselves with scabies and typhus microbes.⁶⁵²

The prisoners who were subjected to compulsory work in the mines also resisted the severe working conditions during the war. According to Çatma, almost one-third of all the prisoner workers obtained doctors' reports. This situation was described in a report by the inspectors:

It is understood that prisoner-workers employed at Derebaca for seven days did not work proportionally 31.5 percent of the total working hours. Although the administration follows the work of these prisoner-workers seriously, we hesitate to send those with doctor's report to work. As a result of investigations, it was understood that these workers obtain their doctor's reports illegally by an agreement between workers and doctors.⁶⁵³

In conclusion, the pressure on the workers did not prevent their resistance. Throughout the period, these events continued and the productivity of the workers decreased. Therefore, in order to diminish the resistance and increase the productivity, the state began to introduce social assistances to the workers and their families. In one example, the administration of Ereğli Enterprise introduced social welfare measures to improve the conditions of the workers who were subjected to the compulsory work in the mines. Kadri Yersel, an engineer in Ereğli coal mines, stated that the management of the Enterprise initiated some social assistance in order to obviate such actions of workers.

Along with the punishments, some encouraging measures were taken. In the places such as Çaycuma, Devrek and Ereğli, where the workers were collected, we started to distribute cereals and cloth in return at normal prices to the families of the workers who worked hard and continuously.⁶⁵⁴

Again, in order to increase the productivity and obviate resistance, İhsan Soyak, who was the director of the Ereğli Coal Mines Enterprise, proposed some social measures which should be taken by the Ministry of Economy: to give an attention to providing food;

⁶⁵¹ Yalçın, p.76

⁶⁵² Gündüz Nadir, "İş Mükellefiyeti Kaldırılıyor," Etingü quoted it from *Ocak* newspaper dated 4.2.1942. See Etingü, p.116

⁶⁵³ Erol Çatma, *Zonguldak Madenlerinde Hükümlü İşçiler*, (Zonguldak: KESK/Maden Sen Zonguldak Şubesi, 1996), p.47

⁶⁵⁴ Yersel, p.21

to establish a social insurance system for the workers in the Ereğli river basin; to give premiums to the personnel as to their productivity and the production level.⁶⁵⁵

But the problems of the workers in the mines were not only economic and material conditions. Moreover, the compulsory work upset the workers morally. Most of those workers who were brought from the nearby villages had to work at a job in terrible conditions in which they did not want to work. Furthermore, they were separated from their families.⁶⁵⁶ As mentioned above, the compulsory work made them feel like prisoners in the mines because of their strong ties with the economic and cultural life of their villages.

In *The Mouth of the Death*, which is very illuminative to understand the daily experiences and feelings of the workers, a worker declared that he preferred being a prisoner to a worker in the mines.⁶⁵⁷ These kinds of complaints were not related to the economic conditions or hard working conditions. As expressed above, they stemmed from the strange environment which was different from their villages, separation from the family, and the compulsory character of the work, which was so different from the farming to which they were accustomed.

In the novel, morally degraded in the mines, these men came together in their complaints and in turn, formed their resistance. In this context, their complaints and resistance did not originate solely from the economic hardships, but also from the insults and humiliation to which they were subjected. For instance, Veli Kavas, a watchman in the mines, constantly insulted the workers. He frequently spat at them and beat them. Other officers treated the workers coldly and badly as well. The workers witnessed many injustices and inequalities in the mines by the administration, which made them feel belittled, secondary and insulted persons. They were aware of their lower class status by comparing themselves with the other persons from the administration or the managers,

⁶⁵⁵ See Çatma (1998), p.128

⁶⁵⁶ Makal (1999), p.415

such as the engineers. A worker said: “Have you ever seen an engineer die in the mines? ...Only the poor like us were always dying.”⁶⁵⁸ These peasant-workers would escape from the mines as soon as possible.

In this context, despite the all measures by the administration, be it forcible or social, the resistances in everyday forms continued for the duration of the war period in such a way that, as Kadir Yersel said, the armed forces were not able to cope with the runaways.

It was not sufficient to pursue arrest and bring the runaways back to the workplace. They escaped again and again. The gendarme forces fell short in the struggle against the runaways. It was reinforced. Runaways were conscripted. A worker battalion was constituted from these runaway workers.⁶⁵⁹

In addition, some amendments were made in the law in order to prevent to workers' escapes, and the punishment increased. A new law passed on 11 August 1944 imposed imprisonment or monetary fines for the offense of leaving work. That these kinds of punishment were not the order of the day before 1944 did not only imply that the government was keen on putting more people to work for longer periods of time without carrying a big stick. It also implied that by 1944 “desertions,” so to speak, had become so widespread that the government felt the need to employ the harshest methods to withstand this tide of flight.⁶⁶⁰

There were certain economic results from the resistances of the workers in the coalmines. The shortages of fuel, and especially mine coal, in the cities contributed to the heating problems and the shortage of bread to a certain degree. Towards the end of 1942, according to the report by Manisa deputy Refik İnce, the activities of the factories in Manisa, Salihli, Turgutlu, Soma and Kırkağaç stopped due to the lack of coal. Hence, some flour factories were not able to function. Therefore, the governor of Manisa had to

⁶⁵⁷ Yalçın, p.64

⁶⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.63

⁶⁵⁹ Yersel, p.21

⁶⁶⁰ Güzel, p.134

confiscate the coal of the State Railways (Devlet Demir Yolları) in order to supply coal for the flour factories. Similar cases were experienced in İzmir, too.

The coal problem was the most important subject of the crisis in the İzmir and Manisa regions. The Soma coalmines could not be run properly, so the work of factories that depended on the production of this mine ceased. Neither the electrification of the region nor flour production was possible. Five days ago, the governor of the Manisa had to confiscate the some coal in the depot of the State Railways Enterprise in order to solve the problems of flour production and bread question. In spite of this, in my opinion, these works were not regulated yet. I saw that the flour factories in Turgutlu and Salihli were in the same situation. Kırkağaç and Akhisar, located near Soma, a coal center, could not receive electricity... In İzmir, because of the coal shortage the factories ceased production for six days and thousands of workers remained unemployed and without wages.⁶⁶¹

In Istanbul, the shortage of coal also impacted industry adversely. For instance, as reported by Tan, the enterprise producing coal gas for the city came to a cessation of its production due to the lack of coal.⁶⁶² Coal was in great demand for heating and industry in other places as well. For instance, as registered in minutes of the provincial congress of the RPP in Afyon, one of the most important needs of Afyon was coal in 1944.⁶⁶³ In Eskişehir, the representatives reported that coal shortages and of poor quality caused many problems such as slowdowns in factories and high cost of living because of the rise in the prices of commodities these factories produced.⁶⁶⁴ In many provinces, the coal supply problems became a common complaint of the people and the bureaucrats.⁶⁶⁵

Resistance in Other Workplaces

In other sectors other than the coal mines the working people resisted the harsh working and living conditions and resorted to absenteeism, leaving of their workplaces, slowdowns, and pilfering. In these years, they often left their jobs and entered to other workplaces, which offered a little more money. In consequence, as Nusret Ekin showed in

⁶⁶¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 684.322.1, (1944)]

⁶⁶² Müfit Necdet Deniz “Neden Kömür Sıkıntısı İçindeyiz,” 21.1.1943, Tan

⁶⁶³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 133. 539.1, (1944)]

⁶⁶⁴ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (26.11.1943)]

detail, the turnover rates reached its peak point during the war years.⁶⁶⁶ This high labor turnover rate affected the firms adversely in many respects, gave rise to the opinion about the importance of social policies for maintaining the relations between workers and works, keeping the workers in the workplace, and increasing productivity. It is reasonable to think that these effects of the high turnover rates contributed the increase in concern about the social policy in the post-war period.

The main cause of leaving the workplace was low wages. Because of the high cost of living, the marginal value of a little more money for the worker increased. So the workers went to those workplaces that offered a little more money. For example, an employer complained of the same situation by saying that “our workers go to another workplace where they found five kuruş more money”⁶⁶⁷

Another employer also complained of the high turnover rates and said about the matter as follows: “We cannot keep our workers in the workplaces. They go wherever they find better wages and working conditions.”⁶⁶⁸

Some workers demanded the acceptance of their resignations by pointing out the insufficiency of the low wages and the high cost of living. In some cases, their resignation demands were refused by the employers, since the employer had right to refuse the resignations of the workers on the basis of the NSL.

For example, Hüseyin Çömez, who had started work in the Aslan Cement Factory in Darıca in the 1930s, wanted to resign from his job. In his petition, he wrote that he was not able to live on with the low wages, which had been reduced to nine kuruş after the war.

⁶⁶⁵ For instance for the demands about the coal see these archival documents. PMRA CARPP [490.1/ 660.206.1, (1942)]; [490.1/ 509.2043.1, (30.12.1944)]; [490.1/ 511.2053.1, (1.7.1944)]

⁶⁶⁶ See Nusret Ekin, “Memleketimizde İşçi Devri Mevzuunda Yapılan Araştırmalar ve Ortaya Koydukları Neticeler,” *İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları, 9-10-11. Kitap*, 1960 p.140

⁶⁶⁷ Aziz Nesin, “Tütün Depoları Sahipleri Söylüyor,” 5.7.1945, Tan

⁶⁶⁸ 11.3.1944, Cumhuriyet

But the management of the factory refused this demand, explaining that his reason was not valid.⁶⁶⁹

In this situation, the workers had no way other than the leaving of their workplaces. Indeed, even in the places in which the leaving of the workplace was banned by the NSL, they left their job and made null the law in practice. Many workers were arrested and taken to court.

For instance, in Eskişehir, an important industrial city where the rate of labor intensity was 176, which meant that it followed Zonguldak, which had the highest rate of labor intensity in Turkey, the “railway factories, vehicle factories and many other factories of sugar, and some factories about the national security took place.”⁶⁷⁰ In other words, there were many factories for which the workers’ leaving was banned by the NSL.

However, many workers resisted this ban and left their workplaces despite the ban. It is possible to follow these cases from the announcements of the Court of First Instance in Eskişehir (Eskişehir Asliye Ceza Hakimliği), presented in the back pages of Kocatepe newspaper. For example, according to an announcement of the Court on 1 May 1943, workers named Osman Ay, Şükrü Kaya, Nasuh Gülmez, Hasan Demirdöven, Osman Hisar, Mustafa Efe, Osmanoğlu Ehliman, were punished by the court for leaving their workplaces contrary to the law.⁶⁷¹

Similarly, according to the announcements in Kocatepe dated 4 May 1943, various punishments were meted out to Mahmut Dunbil, on the grounds that he had left the workplace; İsmail İlhan, İzzet Santur, on grounds that they had left their workplaces in the State Railways Enterprise without any reason; Cevat Soytekin, Hamdi Akdarmaz, Zafer Karadal, İbrahimioğlu Mehmed, Satılmışoğlu Ramazan, Hüseyin Özyüce, on the grounds

⁶⁶⁹ Murat Koraltürk, “İşçi Sicil Dosyalarının Dili: Aslan ve Eskişehir Çimento Fabrikaları İşçi Sicil Dosyalarından Notlar,” *75 Yılda Çarkları Döndürenler*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), p.224

⁶⁷⁰ Orhan Tuna, “İş İstatistikleri,” *İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, no.1-2, vol. 6, (October 1944-January 1945), p.337

⁶⁷¹ 1.5.1943, Kocatepe

that they had left their jobs in the Eskişehir Airplane Factory; and Mehmedoğlu Ahmet, on the grounds that he had left his workplace in a vehicle factory.⁶⁷²

In Istanbul, the workers left their workplaces, as can be seen from similar announcements in the backpages of Tan. According to one announcement dated 25 February 1944 by the Üsküdar National Security Prosecuting Attorneyship (Üsküdar Milli Korunma Müddeiumumiliği), workers named Mustafa Neşter, Ahmetoğlu Hüsametdin, Saim Göksoy, and İrfan Alpman were punished on the grounds that they had left the workplace without permission.⁶⁷³ It is possible to follow the similar announcements which appeared in the backpages of the newspapers during the war period.

So the turnover rates increased during the war years in spite of the ban on leaving the workplace. For example, in the sugar industry, which was seasonal, the directors complained of the high turnover rate. According to a report by the Inspection Board, “it was reported that although 1500 worker are required for a season of work, 5000 workers worked and left the factory within a short time.”⁶⁷⁴ In a similar vein, “in the report of the Iron and Steel Enterprise of Turkey (Türkiye Demir Çelik Fabrikaları Müessesesi), dated 1942, it was understood that the daily turnover rate was 86 percent.”⁶⁷⁵

The turnover rate in the textile industry, in which the large part of the working class was employed, can give some clues about the general situation. Indeed, as Sabahattin Zaim wrote, the proportion of the number of workers in textile industry to total number of the workers who were employed in industries subjected to the Labor Law was 17.68% in 1938, and 18.23% in 1943. In other words, textile workers represented one-fifth of the total workers.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷² 4.5.1943, Kocatepe

⁶⁷³ “Üsküdar Milli Korunma Müddeiumumiliğinden,” 25.2.1944, Tan

⁶⁷⁴ Ekin, p.136

⁶⁷⁵ ibid., p.136

⁶⁷⁶ Sabahaddin Zaim, *İstanbul Mensucat Sanayiinin Bünyesi ve Ücretler*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1956), p.49

In this sector, the decrease in real wages reached to 59% in comparison with 1938 wages. In same period, the production capacity reached its maximum level and factories started to work two or three shifts a day.⁶⁷⁷ In this process, according to Zaim, in textile industry the workers left the workplace because of the low wages. In his words, “indeed, in the year of 1943, when the most considerable decrease in real wages was recorded, the turnover rates in the state sector reached its peak point.”⁶⁷⁸

According to a report by the Social Office of Sümerbank Factories dated 1940, “7826 workers had left the seven Sümerbank factories which had 10.000 workers, and again 8679 workers were hired.”⁶⁷⁹ According to another report, in 1942, 85% of 20.000 workers of the Sümerbank factories had left their jobs.⁶⁸⁰ In 1944, the 25.194 workers were employed in Sümerbank factories. In same year, the total number of the workers who left their jobs was 23.578; in other words 93.58% of all workers had left from the factories. As can be seen, the high turnover rates continued to increase during the period.⁶⁸¹ In reports from factories in Adana and Malatya dated 1943, it was stated that the labor circulation was abnormally high.⁶⁸²

This movement of the workers caused some problems and losses for the employers. In the report by the Iron and Steel Enterprise of Turkey dated 1942, it was stated that this situation had increased costs and affected entire structure of the enterprise adversely and interrupted the rational working of the factory. This also prevented the training of the workers and the growth of skilled workers with high productivity.⁶⁸³

Again, according to the report of the Social Office of Sümerbank Factories dated 1940, the high turnover rates harmed the factories in many respects:

⁶⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.158

⁶⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.313

⁶⁷⁹ Nusret Ekin, “Memleketimizde İşçi Devri Mevzuunda Yapılan Araştırmalar ve Ortaya Koydukları Neticeler,” *İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları, 9-10-11. Kitap*, 1960, p.137

⁶⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.138

⁶⁸¹ *ibid.*, p.139

⁶⁸² *ibid.*, p.136

⁶⁸³ *ibid.*, p.136

Because of the high turnover rates, the great amount of workers of the company was changed...That thousands of workers left their factories every year affected adversely the economic and technical structures of the factories.⁶⁸⁴

Suat Kazma, who examined the labor question in Karabük, also stated that the continuous entrance and exit the factories prevented the training of the workers. Thus the factories remained dependent on the unskilled workers. This situation affected the factories by reducing productivity of the workers.⁶⁸⁵

In addition to the leaving of workplace, the workers did not continue their jobs and resorted to absenteeism. This also caused the complaints of the employers. In the factories in which the turnover rates were at high levels, there was also widespread absenteeism among the workers. In this case, although the workers did not leave their jobs, they did not come to work sometimes.⁶⁸⁶

The main causes of the absenteeism were “the bad health conditions and overtime working hours.”⁶⁸⁷ Moreover, disease, death, marriage, military service, and the abusive treatment of the chiefs in the workplace also caused the absenteeism and the leaving of the workplace.⁶⁸⁸

Absenteeism was also a great cost factor for the companies. An Investigation Committee Report stated this fact:

Accompanying the high turnover rates, the workers do not come to the job on certain days, although they do not cut their relations with the companies. This situation was also the one of the most important elements which had negative effects on the economic and technical structure of the factories, along with the high turnover rate...The absenteeism of the workers everyday without any reasonable cause and without any permission broke up the continuity of the production.⁶⁸⁹

In the workplaces in which the NSL banned the leaving of the workplace and absenteeism, workers who left their jobs and absentee workers could be returned to the workplace by force. According to the law, the employers could report their runaway

⁶⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p.137

⁶⁸⁵ Suat Kazma, “Karabük,” *Ülkü*, 16 May 1944, p.11

⁶⁸⁶ Ekin, p.151

⁶⁸⁷ Zaim, p.317

⁶⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p.312

workers to the police. Upon this report, the police could arrest and return them to the workplace on the basis of a court decision. But the employers did not prefer this method because the workers who were returned to the factory by force did not work efficiently. They generally resisted passively and decreased productivity by neglecting their jobs.

This passive resistance was so efficient that the workers made the article of the NSL which banned the leaving of the workplace ineffective de facto. For example, a tobacco storeowner said as follow:

Our workers go to another workplace where they found five kuruş more in wages. We report these workers to the National Security Courts. The police bring them to the factory. In return, they do not work and procrastinate. Therefore, we do not report the workers who left the workplace and found another job with much higher wages to the court.⁶⁹⁰

Consequently, such actions of the workers compelled the private and public enterprises to introduce certain social measures to keep the workers in the workplaces, to prevent their negligence and decrease in their productivity and to decrease the rate of pilfering. In the Prime Ministry General Investigation Reports, it was proposed that social policy measures such as building worker houses, increasing wages, and distributing cloth, bread and hot meals to the workers should be initiated in order to keep them at work.

For example, in 1945, it was stated that in the Ereğli Coal Company of the Etibank, “the amount of money which will be allocated for social measures and institutions will be as great as the amount of money which will be allocated for the industrial base. This amount will be one-third of the all expenditures.”⁶⁹¹

Sümerbank also allocated some resources for the social measures such as providing housing facilities for its workers, increasing wages, distributing cloth and free meals to counter the high turnover rates and absenteeism in 1942. Nevertheless, as it failed to prevent the workers’ continuous entrance and exit the factories, high turnover rates

⁶⁸⁹ Ekin, pp.151-152

⁶⁹⁰ Aziz Nesin, “Tütün Depoları Sahipleri Söylüyor,” 5.7.1945, Tan

⁶⁹¹ Ahmet Makal, “Türkiye’nin Sanayileşme Sürecinde İşgücü ve Sosyal Politika,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, no.92, (Spring 2002), pp.45-46

continued throughout 1943. Upon this failure, in 1943 the administration of the enterprise assigned a new unit to deal with social matters as Nusret Ekin noted.

The instability in the personnel regime seriously occupied the Sümerbank administration in 1943, compelling the establishment of a new service called the Service for Social Matter (Sosyal İşler Servisi) within the central administration of the bank. This service undertook the following tasks: to determine and investigate criterion of wages and premiums, to train the workers, to regulate the internal services by means of punishment and discipline, to control the internal and external security of the companies, to monitor and implement industrial health and body training, the feeding policy, the housing policy and to inspect its practice.⁶⁹²

According to Nusret Ekin, the main factor for this kind of social measures undertaken by the companies was the pressure of the workers changing their jobs continuously.

The emergence of this kind of service was of course a consequence of the severe pressure of the circulation of workers. That the problem turned into a chronic situation pushed the administrators to take some measures. The causes of the high turnover rates were sought by means of this service in order to decrease the high turnover rates. According to the Investigative Committee, “the aim of the social service of Sümerbank is to remove the instability in personnel regime, which is the most important problem of the enterprise.”⁶⁹³

Similarly, as Sabahattin Zaim argued, the high turnover rates in the textile industry which employed an important part of the workers compelled employers to increase wages and social expenditures.

As a consequence of the terrible decline in real wages, the turnover rate increased constantly and reached to 101% in the Defterdar Factory, and 96% in Bakırköy factory. Therefore the factories had great difficulties in finding skilled workers. As a result, because this situation was criticized repeatedly by the Prime Ministry General Investigation Committee Reports and some obligations of social measures were introduced by the “Regulations of Social Assistance” (Sosyal Yardımlar Yönetmeliği), efforts were made to increase wages in the public sector at least.⁶⁹⁴

Some employers began to give a free lunch to their workers in order to keep them at work. For example, a tobacco store owner explained why they had begun giving a lunch to their workers as follows:

⁶⁹² Ekin, p.138

⁶⁹³ *ibid.*, p.138

⁶⁹⁴ Zaim, p.159

We had two thousands workers in the company last year. In order to keep them at work, we started to give them a launch.⁶⁹⁵

In Karabük, the Iron and Steel Factory provide some social facilities and assistance to its workers in order to keep them on the job, because the high turnover rates prevented the specialization of the workers and diminished the productivity by forcing the factory to employ unskilled workers. In this respect, worker housing was constructed with a garden, electricity, and running water. These houses were rented to the workers at a low price. Those workers who lived in these houses received coal inexpensively as well.⁶⁹⁶

However, these social facilities and assistances were limited and insufficient and did not change the harsh working and living conditions of the workers during the wartime. As shown, the main motivation laid behind them to obviate the resistance of the working class and increase their productivity by keeping their relations with their workplace. But, what is the more important is that even these small social measures were brought by the workers' daily actions based on their self-interests in daily life.

Concluding Remarks

The Second World War created living conditions similar to war conditions for the working class. The workers underwent great difficulties and bore the social and economic burden of the war, conscripted as labor, forced to work overtime, forbidden to leave the workplace, with no regular or systematic social policies, a dramatic decline in real wages and the high cost of living during the period. Industrial accidents and diseases increased rapidly. Diseases and sickness among the working class increased, as will be also discussed in the following chapter. Many workers had to sell their household goods because of poverty. Family members such as children and women entered into the working

⁶⁹⁵ Aziz Nesin, "Tütün Depoları Sahipleri Söylüyor," 5.7.1945, Tan

life. Female and children labor were severely exploited in this period. In some factories female labor multiplied. As will be seen in the next chapter, the lack of orphanages and care houses interrupted the training and disciplining of the children and increased the number of vagrant children in the street. Among the children there was a great rate of absenteeism in schools because they tried to support their families financially by working outside the school. They were excluded from the state social welfare measures initiated especially in 1943, as will be examined in the next chapter.

In these conditions, they tried to survive and resisted these conditions. The lack of an organizational and ideological movement, political party, and public demonstration does not mean that there was no class struggle and resistance by the working people. It is true that they were not represented by a political party or movement in the parliament on the domain of legal political life. And they were unable to determine and affect the laws and regulations on paper concerning them.

However, they challenged the implementation of the decisions and laws enacted by the government in everyday life. They resisted to the economic difficulties they ran into in everyday life. For instance, they pilfered goods sometimes from the workplaces and sold them in the black-market in order to meet their needs in return. In order to solve their housing problems, they built squatters' houses in the state land. They did not remain passive against the lower wages. Because they looked for better wages, they changed their jobs continuously. Sometimes, they implemented slowdowns at work, procrastinated, and left the workplaces despite the ban. Indeed, although they did not have any social insurance, compensation system, and paid holiday, and sometimes weekend rest, they resorted to absenteeism sometimes. They resisted also the compulsory work by escaping from their workplaces and even clashing with the armed forces. Thus, in practice they challenged many regulations and arrangements by the NSL such as banning the leaving of workplace, compulsory work, and overtime working.

⁶⁹⁶ Suat Kazma, "Karabük," *Ülkü*, 16 May 1944, p.11

These challenges increased the costs of the employers and deprived them from the skilled and productive workers. Thus the state and private employers tried to keep the workers at work and increased their productivity by social measures as well as forcible methods. But, as pointed out above, some employers confessed that the forcible methods were not effective because of the passive resistances of the workers in the workplaces. Thus, some of them did not resort to forcible measures to keep the workers at work and introduce some social measures such as free lunch.

In this respect, this wide range of resistances of the workers played a role in the emergence of social policy measures initiated by the government in post-war period. Indeed, during the war period, the many intellectuals in newspapers and labor inspections emphasized the importance of social policy for social and economic order and productivity. In this period, Sümerbank established a Service for Social Matters concerning social measures in order to keep the workers at the factories and increase their productivity.

Many social scientists, such as Orhan Tuna, Cemil Koçak and Yıldırım Koç, argue that the relative developments in the social policy in the post-war era were related to Turkish foreign policy and the response to the climate of international relations.⁶⁹⁷ Yıldırım Koç argues that the social policy measures put on the agenda in 1943 and in the post-war period were result of the employers' aims to keep the workers at work and to prevent high turnover rates, but not result of struggle or resistance of the working class. According to the Koç's argument, the working class seems to have been the passive

⁶⁹⁷ For interpretations of the increase in concern about the social policy measures, legal regulations in social policy field and emergence of the Ministry of Labor with emphasize on the external effects and international climate see Orhan Tuna, "Türkiye'de Sendikacılık ve Sendikalarımız," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 20. Kitap, 1969, p.256; Cemil Koçak, "1940'ların İkinci Yarısında Sosyal Politika, Devlet, Sınıflar, Partiler ve Dayanışmacı/Vesayetçi İdeoloji," *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyete Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar, I.Uluslararası Tarih Kongresi*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p.230

Yıldırım Koç argues that the social policy measures put on the agenda in 1943 and post-war period were result of the employers' aims to keep the workers at the work and to prevent high turnover rates, but not a result of struggle of the working class. For Koç, the working class seem to be passive objects of the dominant classes. See Yıldırım Koç, "İşçi Hakları ve Sendikacılık," *11. Tez*, no.5, 1987, pp.44-47.

objects of the dominant classes. Indeed, some writers who examined the working class politics focused on organizational and elitist domain of class struggle and overlooked the everyday resistances and struggles of the working class. For example, again, according to Erdal Yavuz, there were no any working class movements from 1938 to 1946. Implication of this view is that the working class was not active during these years because of the lack of organizational movement.⁶⁹⁸

These arguments are the result of a high-politics and Euro-centric perspective which looks for the European criterion of working class resistance and struggle in Turkey. It underestimates the social struggles, many actions of the workers and the different forms of resistances in everyday life. The argument that the main aim of the social policy measures was to keep the worker at the work and prevent the high turnover rates is true. But it should be asked why they tried to keep the workers at work and to increase their productivity. At this point, as described above, it can be seen that the role of subjective actions and resistances of the workers for their interests played key roles.

In this respect, rather than the foreign dynamics, the local resistances of the workers and the local needs of the employers and state to the social measures played important roles in the increase in concern for social policies in the post-war era. Indeed, during the war, it is possible to see that the employers started to understand the importance of social measures in order to keep the workers at work and tried to implement them in some workplaces.

In same vein, as will be examined in the next chapter, because of the lower income state personnel's' actions such as bribery, pilfering and embezzlement, the state also understood that some social welfare measures were necessary for productive and good functioning of the state personnel and for the protection of the social order. So the state initiated some social assistance for its own personnel and poor people. This also was a sign

⁶⁹⁸ See Erdal Yavuz, "Sanayideki İşgücünün Durumu," *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sine İşçiler (1839-1950)*, Donal Quataert and Erik Jan Zürcher (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 1998, p.173

that the need for social policies appeared during the wartime, because of the adverse social and economic effects of the war on the working people.

In addition, the social and economic conditions and sufferings of the working people affected the post-war process. As Cahit Talas argued, because the Second World War destroyed the Turkish economy and the living standards of the masses were aggravated, a social security system became a necessity for the state in the post-war era.⁶⁹⁹ According to Şehmus Güzel, because the RPP became a widespread subject of complaint among the working class, it aimed to diminish this social discontent with the RPP and to limit the potential worker opposition and movement by preparing the Trade Union Law.⁷⁰⁰

Consequently, in the post-war era there were many regulations and developments in social policy and labor relations. With the establishment of the Ministry of Labor social policy started to become institutionalize from 1945 onward. The Law of Social Insurance for Workers No.4792, enacted on 9 June 1945, came into force on 1 January 1946. The Law of Industrial Accidents and Diseases, and the Maternity Insurance No.4772 were enacted on 27 June 1945. With the new Law of Associations, dated 5 June 1946, the legal obstacles before the organization of workers were removed. On 20 February 1947, the law concerning the trade unions of workers and employers was enacted. In 1949, the Law of the Retirement Fund was accepted by the National Assembly. Other evidence of the increasing concern about the social policy in post-war era was translation of the Social Policy (İçtimai Siyaset) of Gerhard Kessler by Orhan Tuna in 1945.

Another historical consequence of the experiences of the workers during the Second World War was the alienation of the RPP government from great parts of the society. The aggravation of the living conditions of the working class, the practice of compulsory work, bureaucratic pressure on the workers, and their exclusion from the state

⁶⁹⁹ Cahit Talas, *Sosyal Ekonomi (İkinci Kitap)*, (Ankara: A.Ü.Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1972), p.597

⁷⁰⁰ Mehmet Ş. Güzel, "İşmet İnönü, Sosyal Politika ve Grev," *Yapıt*, no.10, (April-May 1985), p.75

social assistances left negative marks in the minds of the working class. This also contributed to the social base of the opposition to the RPP in the post-war era.

It is possible to interpret the widespread nonconformist behavior of the workers, such as leaving the workplace, escaping from compulsory work, and slowdowns in everyday life, as signs of discontent among them. In addition, there were some signs of their voices and discontent in the folk culture. When the stimulating effects of the folk culture on the resistance are taken into consideration, it can be said that they utilized the folk culture as a tool of resistance. The folk songs which criticized the compulsory work can be regarded as an informal and covert expression of the compulsory workers' consciousness against compulsory work and expression of their discontent.

Indeed, they were not silent about their living and working conditions. Their complaints appeared in the sphere of the folk cultures. They made their voices heard by sending complaint letters to the newspapers, by sending their petitions and sometimes satirical poems to the National Assembly and the RPP as expressed above.

The compulsory work especially aroused widespread discontent among the affected workers and served the formation of the social base for the post-war opposition of the Democratic Party. As Turgut Etingü said, “the eight years of compulsory work was a period filled with the most suffering in the history of the region. In the 14 May 1950 elections, the miners traveled 100-150 kilometers through mountain passes without food or water, in fear of being caught, in order to vote for the opposition.”⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰¹ Etingü, p.113

CHAPTER FIVE

STATE RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE WAR SOCIAL POLICY MEASURES

The Second World War aggravated the economic conditions of the people in Turkey. Therefore, although Turkey did not participate in war, the social problems inherited from the past decade of the Great Depression increased considerably during the war period. In addition, new social problems emerged. The government initiated social policy measures in order to neutralize the social impact of the war and to maintain legitimacy and strength of the state. However, these social policy measures were not able to eliminate the social problems which stemmed from the war because of financial restrictions and the lack of sufficient tools, well-equipped state organizations and qualified state personnel. In addition the people did not remain silent about the social policies and social services of the state. They demanded much more effective and sufficient social policies and services and they made their complaints and demands heard in many ways. This chapter looks at the social measures taken by the state and charitable associations, the ability of these measures to meet the needs and to prevent social problems and discontent and the voices of the people about these social policies and their social problems.

Focusing on the state capacity of intervention and penetration in society and of social control, the one of the main aim of this chapter is to show to what degree the social

welfare measures meet the needs. Correspondingly, this discussion will shed light on the state-society relations in the last years of the single party era. Examining the social policies applied by the state during the period under study, and especially a study of the state capacity of the social policy will show the limits of the state power much more clearly than merely examining elite motivations, aims and discourses. Thus the main aim of this chapter is to contribute to the criticism of modernist and orientalist conceptualizations of state-society relations in the period of the early Republican era. These conceptualizations generally consider the state as strong, omnipotent and omnipresent and the people as passive and silent before the state. This kind of understanding of state-society relations originates from the elitist perspectives focusing only on the state aims, motivation and actions. However, this chapter will deal with not only the state motivation for social welfare measures, but also the practices of social policies and welfare measures and their interactions with the ordinary people.

This view will provide more insightful view of the dynamics and actors of the social and political change in early Republican history. As will be seen from this chapter, the masses were not passive objects of the state. Although they did not organize political parties, public demonstrations or ideological movements, in some ways, such as writing petitions, letters to the newspapers and to the RPP, some everyday forms of behavior and resistance, they complained, criticized and resisted the state practices within everyday life.

Finally, in this context, it will be argued that the developments of social policies in post-war period in Turkey after the Second World War were not a result of the international climate of the post-war era.⁷⁰² As will be shown in this chapter, it is possible to trace the basis and background of the social policies and social welfare measures in the period of Second World War in Turkey. Indeed, worries about the social problems

⁷⁰² For an interpretation of the development of social policy after the Second World War in Turkey, with an a strong emphasis on the importance of the international climate and Turkish foreign policy and importance of the solidarist ideology, see Cemil Koçak, “1940’ların İkinci Yarısında Sosyal Politika: Devlet, Sınıflar,

increased among the intellectuals and elites. The people complained of the lack of social policies, social insurance and bad practices of existing social measures or social aid, and demanded much more and effective social policies by means of their letters and petitions during the war. Many people and intellectuals in the press and bureaucrats often demanded and proposed a much more organizational, systematic and effective social policy.

In addition, focusing on the state practice of social policies, this chapter will show that it is difficult to classify the early Republican state as a populist and solidarist state. When the appearance of the everyday practices of the state policies are examined, instead of the state motivations, principles and aims, the classification of the early republican state as populist and solidarist state open to question. As can be seen from this thesis, in my opinion, the exclusionary aspects of the state social measures, their limits, insufficiencies, financial and organizational insufficiencies exposed the baselessness of these principles of the state.

Finally, this chapter opens the theories of dichotomy between civil society and state into question by emphasizing the role of the voluntary associations and philanthropic societies in the social control process and their various links with the state, elite and bourgeoisie. As can be seen from this chapter, many associations initiated social aid programs in corporation with the state and elites. They contributed to the social measures of the state and were encouraged by the state.

Motivations behind the Social Policy

The emergence of the social state has been seen as a progressive step in the so-called emancipatory progress of the history of man by the modernist paradigm. It has been

Partiler ve Dayanışmacı Vesayetçi İdeoloji, " *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar, Birinci Uluslararası Tarih Kongresi*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p.230

regarded as a part of the emancipatory and egalitarian process of history.⁷⁰³ However, many philosophers criticized the emancipatory claims of the liberal and modernist views from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. Especially, Michel Foucault showed how the mechanisms of discipline, control, and surveillance function in the modern age. According to Foucault, rather than liberty and democracy, the main characteristic of modern society was “social control.” In his words, “the age of enlightenment, which invented liberty, invented discipline, too.”⁷⁰⁴ Foucault showed how the power was diffused to all of the capillaries of society by means of the doctors, charitable organizations, hospitals, health centers, mental hospitals, instructors, teachers, schools, orphanages, day nurseries and so and so on. Policies of education, health and social welfare are the state’s tools for normalization and social control. Foucault calls teachers, instructors, and doctors judges of normalization, who subordinate bodies, desires, moralities, and the performance of people to power.⁷⁰⁵

For the social scientists who were inspired by the Foucauldian concept of governmentality and social control, the main motive for the social policies lies behind the change in the mentality of the government of the modern state. In this context, the distinctive characteristic of the modern state was to increase the population and improve its potentials of production and war, and to maintain social welfare for the legitimacy and political strength. In this context, that the social policy apparatuses and agents of the state diffused into the society were very important and strategic as well as the security forces for the strength of the modern state.

Thus the social welfare and health became the main targets of the modern state. These targets were not so much to meet any humanitarian aims as to maintain the state’s

⁷⁰³ See Robert van Krieken, “Social Theory and Child Welfare: Beyond Social Control” *Theory and Society*, no.15, (May 1986), p.401; George Steintmetz, *Regulating The Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.31

⁷⁰⁴ Michel Foucault, *Hapishanenin Doğuşu*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2000), p.325

⁷⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.440

own strength, hegemony and legitimacy.⁷⁰⁶ Briefly, in the modern age, “governments were no longer content with mere obedience. They desired a large and productive population. They became concerned to promote the health of the people, less from any particular concern for humanity than from a regard for the strength of the state. This change of focus entailed a transformation of governmental power which appears no longer in the form of control by repression but that of control by stimulation.”⁷⁰⁷ As Gordon argues, “from the modern age on, real basis of the state’s wealth and power lies in its population in the strength and productivity of all and each.”⁷⁰⁸

In this context, historians in Europe started to examine the history of social welfare and the social state in the context of the social control process rather than that of the emancipatory and liberal process. For instance, Danzelot argues that, the purpose of social policies about the family “is to ensure the good fortune of the state through the wisdom of its regulations, and to augment its forces and its power to the limits of its capability.”⁷⁰⁹

In addition, the emergence of the social policies and welfare programs are related to the labor question and the revolutionary threat to the political power. According to George Steintmetz, the social state measures in Germany in the end of the 19th century were related to the labor question and social risk factors for the state. The state’s motive for the social policy was to prevent the social problems and revolutionary class conflicts.⁷¹⁰

Jacques Danzelot also argues that the progressive republicans in France considered social policy as insurance for the existing order.⁷¹¹ According to Dorothy Porter, in

⁷⁰⁶ See Colin Jones and Roy Porter, “Introduction” in *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body*, edited by Colin Jones and Roy Porter, (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp.1-2

⁷⁰⁷ Randal McGowen, “Power and Humanity, or Foucault Among Historians”, in *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body*, edited by Colin Jones and Roy Porter, (New York: Routledge, 1998), p.99

⁷⁰⁸ Colin Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies on Governmentality*, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (ed.), (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.10

⁷⁰⁹ Jacques Danzelot, *The Policing of Families*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p.7

⁷¹⁰ See George Steintmetz, *Regulating The Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp.46, 60, 69

⁷¹¹ See Jacques Danzelot, “The Mobilization of Society,” *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (ed.), (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.171

America, “major strikes between 1877 and 1892 and the assassination of President Garfield in 1881 indicated the potential for civil disorder. In such an atmosphere social reform took on a new urgency.”⁷¹²

Piven and Cloward have also argued that public aid programs serve a social-control function in times of mass employment and social problems by diffusing social unrest. They have argued that under the social crisis of the Great Depression some social relief programs are initiated or expanded by government.⁷¹³

In Turkish history, recently, Nadir Özbek has approached social welfare and charity in the Ottoman Empire from the last quarter of the 19th century to the 1914 from the viewpoint of the power relation, legitimacy of the political power and the Foucauldian concept of social control in the public sphere. He conceptualized the social state practices and motivation as a tool for the legitimacy, hegemony and social control of the state. In addition, he did not overlook the function of the social policy of the rising reproduction and productivity of the population. In this context, social policy was the strategy of the power.⁷¹⁴

However, social control is not a one-sided process constituted by the state controlling society and society subjected to the social control. The social masses are not passive objects of the social control schemes of the state. The people subjected to the state social policies play a key role both in the success and failure of the social control plans of the state.⁷¹⁵ Another factor determining the social control process is the state capacity and

Briefly, according to Danzelot, “by breaking down antagonistic attitudes” the welfare measures of state “aims at the gradual realization of a consensus society, which will satisfy the demands of democracy as much as those of socialism.” *ibid.*, pp.173-174

In addition, see Henry Cohen, “Poverty and Welfare: A Review Essay,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.87, no. 4, 1972, p.648. He says that “expansive relief policies are intended to mute civil disorder and restrictive ones to reinforce work norms.”

⁷¹² See Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health From Ancient to Modern Times*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), p.155.

⁷¹³ Stanley Eitzen, *Social Problems*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1980), pp.355-356

⁷¹⁴ see Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyal Devlet (1876-1914), Siyaset, İktidar, Meşruiyet*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003)

⁷¹⁵ In this respect, Dinges’s criticisms of Foucault’s one-sided analysis of social control which focuses on the domination side should be taken into account. See Martin Dinges, “The Reception of Michel Foucault’s Ideas on Social Discipline, Mental Asylums, Hospitals and the Medical Profession in German Historiography,” in

its infrastructural power.⁷¹⁶ Briefly, the only factor in the social control process was not elite and state motivation, plan and rhetoric, but the state performance and social resistance to it. So, as Dinges points out, the discourse based approach to the social control process “overestimates discourse and neglect everyday realities.”⁷¹⁷

In this context, it is possible to reevaluate the strength of the early Republican state and state-society relations according to its capacity of social policy. Again, since the people’s behavior in the social field became much more important for the modern political power, state and society relations should be analyzed according to the state and society interactions in this social field, rather than to the domain of high politics and elite ideals.

The War, the RPP and Social Policy

The Republican People’s Party took some social measures and implemented some social policies during the war. It aided the poor and lower-income people financially and in kind. It tried to prevent aggravation of the social hygiene and health which was brought by the war, by means of health policies and struggle against the epidemics which had increased with the war such as malaria, tuberculosis and typhus. It also cooperated with the some associations and charitable organizations in this process by encouraging and supporting them. The main motive for these social measures and policies was to keep the legitimacy of the state by providing social welfare, empower it by increasing the productivity and strength of the population, and to prevent that the extreme poverty, inequalities and social problems which constituted a risk factor for the state.

Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body, Colin Jones and Roy Porter (ed.), (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp.195-197

⁷¹⁶ Nadir Özbek who has analyzed the social welfare and social policies in the Late Ottoman Empire pointed out that the social control requires a certain state capacity and means. Moreover, by comparing the social control capacity and means of the Ottoman Empire and some European states, Özbek points out that the social control capacity of the Ottoman Empire was much more limited than that of European states. See Özbek (2003), p.87, 114

⁷¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.197

First, the social policies in such areas as health, education, population and social aid and the social welfare were a source of prestige among the people for the Republican regime as a modern state and power. The RPP always claimed that the important developments and progresses in all these fields were realized by the republican regime and the RPP since the foundation of the Republican regime.⁷¹⁸ In other words, the RPP considered social welfare as a main component of its power and legitimacy. Indeed, there were important articles in the laws about the social welfare, health and quality and quantity of the population.⁷¹⁹

By reason of the onset of the war and its social effect, the attention of the state on social matters increased. The government aimed to prevent the development of social problems and social discontent that might present political risk. This aim was reflected in Article 37 of the RPP Program. According to this article, “the difficulties that stemmed from the war hit the city-dwellers, property owners, and lower and fixed income people. Thus one of the main aims of the government is to protect the patience and endurance of the citizens and increase their power.”⁷²⁰

In this respect, the social policy and welfare measures gained importance for the government, which sought to protect the social and political order and to ameliorate the social effects of the war, poverty and high cost of living. The bureaucrats and elite regarded social policy as an insurance against the risks to the social and political order. As Necmi Osten wrote, social policy was the first condition of social peace which had a

⁷¹⁸ For example see *T.C. Devlet Yılığ*, 1944-1945, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basım ve Yayın Umum Müdürlüğü Yayınları, no.10, 1945), pp.208-216. Here the success of the Republican regime about the population increase, health, struggle against the diseases, and education and literacy were listed.

⁷¹⁹ For instance, the 6th section of the RPP program dated 1931 was titled “Social Life and Public Health.” In this section, the RPP expressed that it aimed to increase the population, protect the children, homeless and the needy people and to struggle against malaria, tuberculosis, syphilis and other various diseases as a mission of the party. See Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Tek Parti İdaresinin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1981), p.453.

In addition, the social welfare aims of the RPP were reflected in the Public Hygiene Law No.1593, on 30 April 1930, and the Law of Municipality No.1580, on 3 April 1930. See Alaaddin Cemil, “Kanunlarımızda Nüfusu Teşvik Eden Hükümler,” 15.2.1941, Tan.

⁷²⁰ *CHP Program ve Nizamname*, (Ankara: Zerbamat Basımevi, 1943)

certain cost to be paid by the wealthier classes. In other words, the continuation of the social and political order requires social expenditures.

Peace is a commodity which can be obtained in return for a price like every valuable commodity. And this is done with sacrifice. Just as every good thing is purchased at a price, the price of peace must be paid by those with wealth⁷²¹

Ahmet Emin Yalman also said that the negative effects of the unsuccessful economic policies of the government, and the failure in the struggle against the black-market, the rises in prices, the misuses and poverty could be removed by means of social policies. The social policies, to be more specific, the social aid were beneficial to the wealthier classes as well as poor people. In this respect, Yalman called on the wealthier peoples to initiate social welfare measures for their own interests and benefits:

Because we are not able to establish a modern administration, to eradicate the profiteers, immoral individuals, masked thieves, we need to constitute a solidarity and balance between the wealthier and the poor... These are not only the moral duty of the wealthier people, but also a requirement for their own interests today. In a society in which one eats, and the other only watches, there will be conflict sooner or later... In order to prevent this conflict, social solidarity must be created and the wealthy must be made to think of the poor the great gap between the wealthy and the poor must be diminished for their interests.⁷²²

In the war years, the social aid and feelings of solidarity often were identified with being Turkish and Turkish history in order to encourage the social aid activities in society. The social aid was promoted as a component of being a Turkish in the history.⁷²³ As can be seen from Yalman's statement above, "the senses of social solidarity and social aid have been one of most praiseworthy characteristics of the Turkish society since the old ages." The identification of the social aid with being Turkish indicates that the nationalist state attributed great importance to the social welfare measures in this period.

⁷²¹ Necmi Osten, "Sosyal Politika ve Barış," *Çalışma*, no.11, 1946, p.18

⁷²² 18.1.1944, *Vatan*

⁷²³ In 1944, in radio broadcasts and in the press, there were many examples of this kind of identification between the social aid and being Türk. In the newspaper *Türksözü*, M.E. Aktan argued that the concept of social aid had imbued Turkish society since ancient times. "Şarkta Sosyal Yardım," 7.11.1944, *Yeni Adana*

The high cost of living, the food question, scarcities and poverty increased, creating a risk factor in foreign policy for the RPP, which tried to keep Turkey neutral and to follow a middle-of-the road or neutrality policy between the warring states. According to Falih Rıfkı Atay, “the home-front was under fire morally by propaganda and from the stomach by hunger and scarcity.”⁷²⁴ In this context the prevention of the poverty by means of social welfare measures had strategical importance for the state with respect to the success in foreign policy.

To the state, poverty was the source of threat to the norms and moral values on which its power was based. İsmet İnönü commented that, “troubles such as scarcities and the high cost of living caused by war upset moral values more than bodies.”⁷²⁵ In this respect, extreme poverty, hunger and scarcities should be prevented and minimum living conditions should be provided for the poor and lower and fixed income people.

For Falih Rıfkı Atay, the high cost of living and poverty produced a “crisis of morality.” In his words, “very few morals can withstand poverty.”⁷²⁶ And for him, “anarchy means a family without a house, a house without coal, a child without school, an ill person without a hospital or doctors.”⁷²⁷ In a similar vein, Prime Minister Refik Saydam, hunger was a threat to the social morality and order:

“It is not possible to find moral strength in a man who cannot satisfy his basic needs easily. A man worrying about his food for tomorrow everyday is nothing but an unconscious and unfeeling being.”⁷²⁸

Another motivation for the social policy was to increase the effectivity of state apparatus and economic productivity. The productivity of the state officials and of the workers, and the efficient functioning of the state apparatus and the economy were aimed at by the social policy and aid, because, as explained above, both workers and state

⁷²⁴ Falih Rıfkı Atay, “İaşıya dair tedbirler,” *AT* quoted it from *Ulus* dated 17 February 1941. *AT*, no.87, (1-31 February 1941), p.13

⁷²⁵ “Milli Şef İsmet İnönü’nün Türk Gençliğine Hitabesi,” *AT*, no.102, (1-31 May 1942), p.19

⁷²⁶ F. Rıfkı Atay, *Pazar Konuşmaları, 1941-1950*, (İstanbul: Dünya Matbaası, 1965), p.298

⁷²⁷ *ibid.*, p.37

⁷²⁸ “Başvekilin Yeni Nutku,” *AT*, no. 86, (1-31 January 1941)

employees resorted to illegal activities such as leaving of workplace, absenteeism, bribery, misuse, embezzlement, and resisted the state policies and regulations about the economy in order to survive.⁷²⁹

These worries were not baseless. Indeed, such behaviors of the state employees decreased the effectiveness of the state and in some cases made its actions null. For example, as examined above, the state was unable to estimate and collect the Soil Product Tax effectively because of bribery and misuse of office. The Soil Product Office was also not an effective apparatus of the state because of widespread embezzlement, misuse of office, and theft from the Office stores. The rationing policy, investigation and stabilization of the prices, and the struggle against the blackmarketing were not effective because of the illegal behaviors of the state officials. In addition, this situation negatively affected state and society relations by increasing distrust in the state. At this point, for improved rule and performance, the state employees' patience and ability to withstand the high cost of living should be increased for their proper functioning.

It is possible to see many news and reports suggesting social measures to be taken to improve the living conditions of the state employees for the effective functioning of the state administration. For instance, according to the Commission for the Struggle against

⁷²⁹ It is possible many news about the embezzlement, bribery, stealing, pilfering, and misuse of the right and duties by the state officials. "Toprak Ofisten 4800 Kilo Buğday Saklamışlar," 9.10.1943, Vatan; "Bir Mağazadan Zorla Para Almak İsteyen Bir Zabıta Memuru...", 26.10.1943, Vatan; "Asker Ailelerinin Parasını İhtilas Eden Bir Memur Tevkif Olundu", 11.11.1943, Vatan; "Rüşvet Alan Bir Temyiz Mahkemesi Katibi," 20.11.1943, Vatan; "Kumkapı Nahiyesinde Geniş Karne Yolsuzluğu", 22.11.1943, Vatan; "Yerli Mallar Pazarında Kaput Bezi Sahtekarlığı," 24.11.1943, Vatan; "Bir Birlik Reisi Daha Tevkif Edildi," 6.12.1943, Vatan; "Gümrük Antrepolarında Hırsızlık Almış Yürümüş", 9.7.1943, Vatan; "İnhisarlarda Yolsuzluk," 18. 7.1943, Vatan; "Rüşvet Alan Bir Memur 6 Ay Hapse Mahkum Edildi" 27.2.1943, Vatan; "Yerli Mallar Pazarında Bir Rüşvet Teklifi Hikayesi", 17.2.1943, Vatan; "Ortaköyde Bir İlaş Memuru Tevkif Edildi", 11.2.1943, Vatan; "İşten El Çektirilen Murakabe Memurları," 11 İlkteşrin 1941, Tan; "Üniversitenin Kömürünü Satan Mutemet," 9.7.1944, Tan; "Yedi Birlik Reisi ve Azası Korunma Mahkemesine Verildi", 8.7.1944, Tan; "Parayı Yutan Ormancı," 2.7.1944, Tan; "Reşadiyedeki Ofis Şubesinde Meydana Çıkan Yolsuzluklar," 7.6.1944, Tan; "Yüzbinlerce Liralık Yeni Bir Yolsuzluk," 27.4.1944, Tan; "Bir Nahiye Müdürü ile 3 Nüfus Müdürü Adliyeye Verildi," 26.2.1944, Tan.

Tan newspaper dated 28.1.1944 published a statistics of the officials who were dismissed because of bribery. According to the statistics, the Ministry of Public Works sent its 46 official to court because of bribery. The Ministry of Monopoly and Customs sent 62 officials of ministry, 26 officials in Monopoly Administration and 328 customs officers to court. The Ministry of Communication accused 88 officials of bribery. In addition, it dismissed 65 officials. It also sent 205 officials of the administration of the Post, Telephone and Telegraph to court. In the administration of the Maritime Lines, 43 officials of the 298

Misuse, state personnel frequently resorted to these illegal actions for their survival. Therefore, their performance and proper functioning without getting involved in misuse were dependent on the betterment of their living conditions.⁷³⁰ In the report, it was suggested that it was necessary “to promote the officials who made small misuses by way of aiding them in kind”⁷³¹

In a report of a representative, the causes of misuse and accepting bribes or gift by the state employees were stated. According to the report, they resorted to these illegal activities because of their low living standards. In the report, it was emphasized that “their betterment is dependent on the allowances given to them by the state and their becoming able to purchase the basic consumption goods.”⁷³² In another report, it was proposed that the state officials should be supported financially in order to enable them to work honestly.⁷³³

In *Tan*, in an article titled *It is Necessary to Protect the State Officials and Make Them Much More Productive* (Memurları Korumak ve Daha Verimli Hale Getirmek Lazımdır), it was suggested that the living standards of the state officials should be improved “for the much better working of the state apparatus.”⁷³⁴

Ahmet Emin Yalman in his book *The Travel to the Turkey of the Tomorrow* (Yarının Türkiye’sine Seyahat) written in 1944, pointed out the necessity of the betterment of the state officials’ living standards for their proper working, self-sacrifice and idealist actions.⁷³⁵

The same logic was working for the workers and their productivity. For example, it seemed to be a necessity to give free hot meals with abundant calories for health of the workers, to increase their productivity in the coalmines and other workplaces. Otherwise,

suspicious officials were put in jail and others were dismissed. The Ministry of Finance also dismissed 18 officials by reason of bribery.

⁷³⁰ Zekeriya Sertel, “Suiistimalin Kökünü Kurutmak Lazımdır,” 30.1.1944, *Tan*

⁷³¹ Zekeriya Sertel, “Suiistimal ve Vurgun İşinde,” 29.1.1944, *Tan*

⁷³² PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3, (25.5.1945)]

⁷³³ Investigations of the Representatives of İzmir, PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 510.2050.1, (4.9.1943)]

⁷³⁴ “Memurları Korumak ve Daha Verimli Hale Getirmek Lazımdır,” 26.5.1944, *Tan*

“if the workers lose their strength, because they are not satisfied by the meals and suffer from hunger, the productivity may decrease.”⁷³⁶ In addition, as a response to the high labor circulation, some social welfare measures were devised to keep the workers at their jobs as stated in the former chapter.

In *Ülkü* there were many articles about social aid during the war years. From these articles, it is possible to understand the underlying logic of the social aid. It was generally stated that the social aid was necessary in order to increase the quality of the population and to create more functional and skilled individuals for society. According to *Ülkü*, the most important criterion for receiving social aid was to become functional and useful for society: “The first condition for social aid is that the individuals who are assisted should have been in the past or will be in the future beneficial to society...”⁷³⁷

As can be seen in this statement above, rather than humanitarian goals, the ambiguous concept of “the benefits of the society” was the most important goal of the social aid. It was thought that social aid should benefit society and the economy. Thus it was stated openly that in the first step was that those who considered able to contribute to society should be given priority in the social aid.

In the war period, many men were recruited in the army and the number of soldiers increased sharply, to approximately one million. Another target of the social welfare measures were the families of soldiers, who struggled against the poverty, scarcity and high cost of living at home. The state and some associations such as the Red Crescent (Kızılay), the Charitable Association of Turkey (Türkiye Yardımsevenler Cemiyeti) helped the families of soldiers financially or in kind. This aid also did not have a humanitarian aim, but was to prevent the destruction of the soldiers’ families in hard economic times and keep the soldiers’ morale as high

⁷³⁵ A.E.Yalman, *Yarının Türkiye’sine Seyahat*, (İstanbul: Vatan Matbaası, 1944), p.153

⁷³⁶ See “Hem Nalına Hem Mihına, Büyük Şefin Emri,” 10.2.1939, Cumhuriyet; In addition, in the Congress of Medicine in 1943, Dr. Baha Erkan who lectured about the importance of the workers’ health for the economic productivity. “Tıp Kongresi,” 20.10.1943, Vatan

as possible. In other words, in a period which the economic and social difficulties and problems increased, the soldiers were not to worry about their families back home.

In this respect, parliament member Hüseyin Sami emphasized the importance of social aid to the families of soldiers. His emphasis on the importance of in which forms and how this aid would be made illustrates the elite perception of social aid. According to him, the social aid would be appreciated by the soldiers and would increase their gratitude to the state:

It's impossible to assess the great spiritual effects of the contact of the state representatives with the families of the impoverished soldiers in order to investigate their living conditions. Letters which were sent to the soldiers stating that "the governor and head official of the districts came to our village and they asked how we are doing," gave the soldiers a transcendent sense of gratitude to the state.⁷³⁸

For Kazım Karabekir, the removal of the soldiers' worries about their families was strategic for the war potential and strength of the state. He said,

Surely, the soldiers who will go off to their deaths should be sure of the protection of their families. An army of soldiers who are thinking that back home is fun, or about prostitution, and are worried about bad things happening to their families cannot fight.⁷³⁹

In addition, another underlying motivation for the social policy was the population policy. The government attached great importance to the increase of the population, both in quality and quantity, by following a pronatalist population policy. This would give much more strength to the state by increasing the numbers of working people and soldiers. The increase in population was regarded as a "national question" by the elites.⁷⁴⁰ In this respect, the social policy was also backbone of the population policy. This "national question" was reflected in laws such as the Public Hygiene Law and Law of Municipality. As Alaaddin

⁷³⁷ "Sosyal Yardım," *Ülkü*, 1941, p.65-66.

⁷³⁸ Hüseyin Sami, "Milli Tesevüt," *AT* quoted from the *Ulus* dated 12.8.1941. *AT*, no.93, (1-31 August 1941) p.18

⁷³⁹ Kazım Karabekir, *Ankara'da Savaş Rüzgarları*, yay.haz. Faruk Özerengin, (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2000), p.423

⁷⁴⁰ See Falih Rıfkı Atay, "Milli Davamız Çoğalmak," *AT* quoted from *Ulus* dated 21.10.1940. *AT*, no.83, p.24; Sadi İrmak, "Sağlık Politikasında Yeni Cereyanlar," *Ülkü*, no.73, 1944, p.2. İrmak said that "There is a

Cemil stated in his article titled *The Articles in Laws Encouraging the Population Increase* (Kanunlarımızda Nüfusumuzu Teşvik Eden Hükümler), there were many laws article about the hygiene, health, children, family and the population increase in Turkish laws.⁷⁴¹

Indeed, these were not the product of the war, but the war intensified the concern about the population because manpower was one of the most important components of military power. In these years, the elite perception of the social policies about the population, health and children become much clearer. Indeed, the main motive for these social policies was to increase the state strength and legitimacy of the state.

For the Kemalist elite, the population was a source of military power. Especially the importance of the population as soldier and fighting potential of the state increased with the war. In this respect, Şükrü Kaya emphasized on the importance of population as a war force:

Although today wars are made with machines, the populations are still, in the first place, the military force of countries...In all wars, the first and last material which is used is men; in other words, the population of the country. An increase in population means an increase in warrior forces and in the capacity for war... The first role of the population in the constitution of the national army and security of the country was related to its quantity.⁷⁴²

In this context, the child question had a great importance for the state, because the increase in population lay in the increase in births. The child was the citizen, workforce and soldier of the future and the base of the state power. In addition, by reason of Second World War, the child question gained importance. Indeed, “especially, in an era of mass

competition of population between countries. It is a matter of life and death not to remain behind in this competition.”

⁷⁴¹ “Many articles of the Public Hygiene Law are the legal framework for the pronatalist population policy. The articles contain measures encouraging and increasing births and preventing infant mortality, aid to mothers with many children, and the health and hygiene of the young, the protection and proper development of the health of children... In the Municipality Law, articles 15 and 16 also are full of measures about the protection of the population and encouraging population increase. The most important ones of these measures are to open and run orphanages, maternity hospitals, mental hospitals and other health organizations. In Article 43, another duty of the municipalities is to help orphans, poor and homeless children, to provide medical treatment, medicine, clothes, food and housing form them, to take care of poor diseased people, to open and run homes for sucklings, hospitals, dipecaries, drugstores and homes for old people, and to build inexpensive housing.” Alaatin Cemil, “Kanunlarımızda Nüfusumuzu Teşvik Eden Hükümler,” 15.2.1941, Tan.

⁷⁴² Şükrü Kaya, “Nüfus: Harp Vasıtası,” *Yedigün*, no. 424, 1941, p.5

war, no country could look on a declining birthrate or widespread ill health among children with equanimity.”⁷⁴³

Above all, children were regarded as the most important base for the new regime and the source of state power. In Turkey, as Kathryn Libal says,

The child viewed, as a citizen-in-the-making, symbolized a nation-state embarked on a progressive march toward future prosperity and greatness. Thus the state promised public assistance to children and families.⁷⁴⁴

According to Dr. Fuat Umay, who was a representative and founder of the Children’s Protection Society (Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu, the CPS hereafter), “*A nation’s strength is measured by its children’s health.*”⁷⁴⁵ So the state assigned the opening day of the National Assembly, 23 April, as the Day of National Sovereignty and Children (Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayramı). In a nutshell, the child question was the main component of the pronatalist population policy. In this respect, birth was encouraged and increased by the state and the children should be protected morally and bodily. Otherwise they might be a source of threat to the state. It is possible to see the elite perception of the child question from the following statements of Kazım Karabekir.

The neglected child is a threat to the nation, because many immoral and wicked people mix in to the nation and participate in the army every year. In other words, the quality of the nation and of the army decreases every year... The owners of the motherland in the future are the children of today. Thus it is a question of today how these neglected children will protect this motherland... The neglected children are a source of disaster. All kinds of diseases, offences and crimes will gush out of them easily.⁷⁴⁶

In addition, education was viewed as the most important policy for the state in shaping children. As Libal said, “educating children was a key to transforming society and building a strong republic.”⁷⁴⁷ In order to inculcate nationalist feelings, the principles of the RPP and some skills, the state attached great importance to education.

⁷⁴³ Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origin of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.77

⁷⁴⁴ Kathryn L. Libal, “The Children’s Protection Society: Nationalizing Child Welfare in Early Republican Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (Fall 2000), no.23, p.58

⁷⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.57

⁷⁴⁶ Kazım Karabekir, *Kürt Meselesi*, (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 1995), pp.197-198

⁷⁴⁷ Libal, p.59

Another important tool to increase the population and develop its quality was health policy. Dr. Muhtar Berker expressed the importance of the health policy and the necessity of a great organization for this policy as follows:

The first and foremost basis of the population question is the health question. To increase our population, increasing the number of live births and to ensuring their healthy survival are our first and foremost ideals. As you know, it requires a great social and health organization in order to reach this ideal.⁷⁴⁸

As Fahrettin Kerim Gökay said, the health policy was the basis of the “mother and child question” (ana ve çocuk davası), in other words, the pronatalist population policy. In his own words,

Increasing births, providing the healthy development of the bodies and spirits of children, and making it easy for people to marry, are the basic social components of the mother-child question.⁷⁴⁹

For the state, the health of the individual was critical importance in the national defense of the country. Prime Minister İsmet İnönü expressed the importance of healthy population for national defense and the economy in a speech in the Fourth National Medicine Congress in 1931: “The energetic man is the base of economic life, social life and everything in the country as well as the defense of the country.”⁷⁵⁰

In this respect, İnönü regarded doctors as the most important agent and missionaries of the health policy, and so the state power: “We consider our doctors as pioneers of the national struggle to make progress and develop the country, and to become a strong state which our age necessitates.”⁷⁵¹

In same way, Nadir Nadi compared healthier people with guns for effective national defense and gave top priority to the former. In this respect, according to him, a robust person was the most important component for a strong state: “The cannons and

⁷⁴⁸ Muhtar Berker, “Büyük Millet Meclisinde Bütçe Müzakereleri,” *AT*, no.102, (1-31 May 1942), p.49

⁷⁴⁹ “Milli Türk Tıp Kongresi açılmıştır...” *AT*, no.119, (1-31 October 1943), p.16

⁷⁵⁰ Rıdvan Ege, *Türkiye'nin Sağlık Hizmetleri ve İsmet Paşa*, (Ankara: Türk Hava Kurumu Basımevi, 1992), p.14

⁷⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.21

airplanes which we will buy are secondary in comparison to the robust generations who will grow up.”⁷⁵²

In addition, diseases were perceived as a threat to the social and political order. According to Remzi Oğuz Arık, diseases caused many problems for the social order by diminishing the workforce and moral codes of the society:

Illness disables us, and not only excludes us from the ranks of productive society: whatever moral values there are, are removed from us like a borrowed dress. And we, like the first people in history, are face to face with natural laws: naked! With no shame, no compassion. Trouble... trouble... trouble... They turn people into animals: they look after only themselves, they think only of themselves.⁷⁵³

In this context, protecting the public health was related to protect the social, economic and political order and to enforce the state. In the period of the Second World War, the state’s struggle against epidemic was “the other war...It refers to the public-health front, the struggle against an invisible enemy capable of sudden and overwhelming attack nullifying the achievements of an entire nation.”⁷⁵⁴ This war was not only against the diseases, but also hunger, high cost of living and shortages which were potential threats to the state.

In this respect, although Turkey did not participate in the war, there was a war between the state and the diseases, illness and hunger caused by the social and economic effects of the war. In other words, it is important to analyze this war in order to understand state and society relations and the state power during the period as well as the struggle against the political “threats” such as communism. This analysis offers clues about what the boundaries of the state were in its penetration into the social field; in other words, about the gap between the state aims and performance under the most interventionist years of the single-party regime. In addition, the complaints and demands of the people in this process will show their life experiences and their roles in the early republican history.

⁷⁵² 26.5.1939, Cumhuriyet

⁷⁵³ Arık, p.191

⁷⁵⁴ Jay Winter and Jean-Levis Robert (ed.), *Capital Cities at War, Paris, London, Berlin (1914-1919)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.421

Governmental Social Aid during the Second World War

Aids to Fixed and Lower Income People and the Poor

From the first years of the war, the government initiated some small social aid program for the lower income people and the poor, because some basic goods such as foodstuffs, cloths, firewood and coal either disappeared partly from the market and general prices soared. The government distributed some basic consumption goods to the poor and lower-income state officials for the 1939-40 winters.⁷⁵⁵

But the first social aid program was initiated in 1941 with law No. 4718. This law brought financial support to the lower-income state personnel by increasing their salaries. According to the law, the government increased salaries under 100 TL 25 %, between 100-170 TL 20 %, and over 170 TL 15 %.⁷⁵⁶

However, from the year of 1941 on, the government initiated some aid in kind to lower-income state personnel and the poor in the cities. They were given a certain amount of sugar, macaroni, flour and olive oil, and coal at lower price.⁷⁵⁷ It is possible to follow this aid from the newspapers. For example, in the winter of 1941, which was very cold, firewood and coal were distributed to the poor.⁷⁵⁸ Again, in the first months of 1942, free medicine was distributed to the poor.⁷⁵⁹ Upon the rise in sugar prices, it became a subject of social aid which was distributed to the poor and state officials at lower-level price.⁷⁶⁰

These activities of the government were intensified in the year of 1943 and 1944, when the social and economic effects of the war and poverty became much more intense. Towards the end of 1942, when prices soared because of the free price policy of the

⁷⁵⁵ Zekeriya Sertel, "Kış Yardımı," 27.10.1939, Tan

⁷⁵⁶ Sungur Tekin, "Hayat Pahalılığı ve Devlet Memurlarına Yapılan Yardımlar," 13.7.1944, Tan

⁷⁵⁷ Kemal Turan, "Beremdeki Değişiklikler ve Memurlar," *Ülkü*, no.68, 1944, p.4

⁷⁵⁸ 30.11.1941, Tan

⁷⁵⁹ 30.11.1941, Tan

Saraçoğlu government, the government put on the agenda a new and very inclusive social aid program for 1943.

Furthermore, there was a special meaning of 1943 for the state: it was the twentieth anniversary of the Republic. Indeed, the most inflationary and difficult years of the republic until that time coincided with this anniversary. Thus it was thought that these, the negative affects of the war and the discontent of the people should be relieved to some degree for the legitimacy of the Republican regime by showing the RPP in the service of the nation.

In this respect, the second inclusive social welfare program of the war years was the “Law of Aid for Lower and Fixed Income People,” No.4306, which was passed on 13 November 1942. According to the law, the government prepared a social aid package composed of eight basic consumption goods such as cloth for clothing, shoes, cereal, boiled and pounded wheat, oil, rice, sugar and coal. These goods would be distributed to certain people at lower prices in certain quantities. Another item in the package was the Wealth Tax so as to distribute the burden of the war equally and prevent excessive profits,⁷⁶¹ which is beyond the scope of this thesis.⁷⁶²

This aid program included the distribution of some basic consumption goods to the lower-income state personnel whose salaries were paid by the general budget, the poor, retired people, widows and orphans in kind and at prices below market-level. The government determined the target groups of the social aid as Saraçoğlu explained, as follows:

While examining the official statistics, we saw that there were 110.000 salaried peoples who received their salaries and wages from the general budget. We estimated their total numbers with their family member as 500.000. After our investigations, we estimated the total number of widows, orphans and retired peoples as 60.000 and most of them were alone. We took the average number of the members of this group as 100.000. After that, we looked for the total number of the

⁷⁶⁰ 10.5.1942, Tan

⁷⁶¹ See AT, no. 108, (1-30 November 1942), pp.25-41

⁷⁶² There are some valuable studies about the Wealth Tax, see books of Ayhan Aktar (2000) and Rıdvan Akar (1992).

officials who were employed in the local governments, municipalities, state economic enterprises and annexed-budgeted enterprises and found that to be 140.000. By the way, we added their family members such as children and wives to this number, and determined their total number as 700.000. Thus we determined easily 1,300,000 lower and fixed income people, whom we estimate as 1,600,000 in total. In addition to these 1.300.000 people, there are three or four hundred thousand poor people without any income.⁷⁶³

The social aid program of the government did not include the poor in rural areas. More than that, as will be explained below, the distribution of some social aid goods did not include all of the abovementioned target groups. For example, sometimes officials in local government and municipalities, retired people and widows were excluded from the distribution of some kinds of social aid goods.

Throughout 1943 and 1944, the distribution of the social aid goods was implemented by means of Domestic Product Market or local grocers. It is possible to follow distributions of the social aid from the press of the time.⁷⁶⁴ In addition to this, the

⁷⁶³ *AT*, no. 108, (1-30 November 1942), p.32-33

⁷⁶⁴ The distribution of the goods started in the first months of the 1943. In İstanbul and İzmir bread was distributed to the poor and lower and fixed income peoples at below-market prices or for free (31.1.1943, *Tan*). After that, flour was distributed (25.2.1943, *Tan*). The distribution of free and lower-price bread to the poor was aimed to be continued in summer (15. 4.1943, *Tan*). In same year, towards Republic Day (Cumhuriyet Bayramı) one kilo of flour would be distributed to the poor per person (19.9.1943, *Vatan*). In İstanbul, this flour was not able to be distributed before the national day. And its distribution was delayed until after Republic Day (30.9.1943, *Vatan*).

Another foodstuff which disappeared from the market and became very expensive for lower income working people was sugar. Its distribution started in January 1943 (8.1.1943, *Tan*). Another distribution was to be held in April. In this month, it was decided to distribute 900 grams sugar per person for three months (31.3.1943, *Vatan*). But this distribution was made with difficulty in May with only 600 grams per person allowed (15.5.1943, *Tan*).

Macaroni was another foodstuff which was allowed to the people who were subjected to the social aid. According to the news of *Tan*, the government declared it would distribute macaroni in April and November 1943 (11.4.1943, *Vatan*; 30.11.1943, *Vatan*), at a price of 74 kuruş in coupons ("Memurlara Makarna Tevziyatına Başlanıyor," 27.11.43, *Vatan*). In the end, in April 1943, two kilos of macaroni per person were distributed. In December 1943 and March 1944, one kilo of macaroni was distributed to only state personnel in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir.

In February 1943, the government announced that three liters of olive oil per person would be distributed to lower and fixed-income people (13.2.1943, *Tan*). The olive oil was distributed barely three months later, in May.

Cloth was given to state officials and the poor at lower prices in January. For the allowances specials coupons were given to the people. The Union of Import of Drapery and Haberdashery (Manifatura İthalat Birliği) distributed five meters of cloth in return for this coupon (3.1.1943, *Tan*).

As for shoes, especially the shoes became much more expensive in comparison with the pre-war shoes prices. This was a big problem for lower-income people and the poor. So in November 1943, the government announced that state officials would be given shoes in accordance with the social aid package ("Memurlara Ayakkabı Tevziyatı," 15.11.1943, *Vatan*). In addition, in the same period, İstanbul Municipality decided to assist its own officials by distributing free cloth and shoes to them in February 1943 ("Belediye Memurlarına Bedava Elbise ve Ayakkabı Verilecek," 18.2.1943, *Tan*).

The social aid in kind continued in 1944. The state decided to use the certain amount of cereals which were collected as the Spoil Product Tax in social aid (26.2.1944, *Tan*). For winter in 1944, some goods were to be

government tried to distribute basic foodstuffs such as bread, flour, and macaroni to the poor and lower income people as often as possible.

The social aid was not limited to this program. Additionally the government aided the officials in financially by increasing their salaries, promotions, and premiums and payments for each child. These kinds of financial aid were resorted to in 1942 and after that, in 1944, when the some problems emerged in the distribution of aid in kind in 1943.

From the first years when the effects of the war became intense, the government supported the state officials, retired people, widows and orphans by aiding to them in cash such as increase in salaries, promotions, premiums, salary bonuses and additional payments or stipends for children. In 1941 the government increased the salaries of state officials, retired people, and widows 15, 20 and 25 percent, respectively. From 1941 on, the government started to give 2.5 TL for each child after the fourth children as a premium to the lower income officials. Officials, who lived in places at an elevation of 1500 meters and above it from the sea level, received additional money between 15-30 TL for heating.⁷⁶⁵

Towards to the end of 1943, in October, the state decided to give salary bonuses to the officials who were dependent on the general budget and annexed-budget administrations. A decree about the distribution of salary bonuses was notified to the Head of the Financial Department of Istanbul on 18 October, before the Republic Day. Again, retired people, widows, orphans and elderly war veterans also received monetary help in this month.⁷⁶⁶ In the same period, the pensions and the payments to orphans were increased by 40 percent. The salary of war veterans was raised by 100 percent.⁷⁶⁷

distributed to the officials who were needies such as primary school teachers, employees in printhouses, porters and waiters (9.2.1944, Tan). Again brazier coal and firewood were to be given to the poor and lower-fixed income people (6.1.1944, Tan). In addition, five meters per person of canvas and calico were to be given to state officials (6.1.1944, Vatan). For winter, it was decided that free shoes were to be distributed to state officials. (14.1.1944, Tan).

⁷⁶⁵ “Beş Yıl İçinde,” 15.7.1944, Tan

⁷⁶⁶ “Memur İkramiyelerinin Tevziine Başlandı,” 19.10.1943, Vatan

⁷⁶⁷ 13.11.1943, Vatan

Indeed the timing of this aid is meaningful. This was coincided with the Republic Day, that year marked the twentieth anniversary of the republican regime. No doubt this social aid was devised to legitimate the regime by satisfying the people under the Republican regime and increasing their consent of the state.

In 1944, the government preferred to make financial aid rather than aid in kind because of the problems experienced in the distribution of the goods such as unsystematic distributions and misuse in 1943. As Kemal Turan said, because this aid in kind in 1943 had not been satisfactory for the officials, the state had prepared a big monetary help plan such as amendment in the Scales of Salaries.⁷⁶⁸ In addition, giving money was much easier and lower in cost than distributing goods. And finally, it can be thought that because the money lost its purchasing power, aid in cash were much more economic for the government. Thus, in this year, the government increased salaries,⁷⁶⁹ gave salary bonus to the personnel with many children, and increased the premiums and compensations. On February 1944, the government decided to give a one time only payment of 10 TL to officials who were married with children as aid for winter.⁷⁷⁰

One of the most important initiatives of the government to support its employees financially during the war was to change Scale of Salaries Law. The new Scale of Salaries Law, No. 4599, was passed in 1944. By this law, in order to relieve the adverse effects of the war on children and the families of the poor officials, the government made some changes to the scale of salaries and put on the agenda the social aid to lower and fixed income people who were married with children. Indeed, the social impact of the war on families was devastating. As will be show in the following pages, the child question became much more apparent in these years because of the war.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁸ See Kemal Turan, p.4

⁷⁶⁹ 3.1.1944, Tan

⁷⁷⁰ "Memurlara Yardım Projesi," 27.2.1944, Tan

⁷⁷¹ See the section of "The War, the Breakup of the Family, Incresae in Divorce and the Child Question."p.

The monetary aid for a child of an official which had been 2.5 TL before that time, increased to 5 TL by the new Scale of Salaries Law. Moreover, whereas the monetary aid for children had been in place for exceptional times in the old law, according to the new law, this aid became continuous and unconditional. In addition, there were many regulations about the premium, compensation and payment for medical treatment.⁷⁷²

With the new law, as an economic support, the government made the promotion of the state officials easier. This would provide monetary support for the lower-income officials. Moreover, to advance in the scale might have been devised by the government as a psychological support for lower income officials who felt themselves weak and poor in this period.

In addition, there were some indirect financial supports of the state personnel. For example, in 1942, the tram tickets were sold at a discount for lower-income state officials.⁷⁷³ In addition, in some departments of the state, a free lunch started to be given to lower-income state officials as well.⁷⁷⁴

The government tried to relieve the housing problems of the state personnel. With the outset of the war and the interruption in the import of the necessary tools, equipment for building, and a downturn in homebuilding caused a shortage of affordable housing for the poor and lower income people. In addition, the high cost of living put pressure on rents. So the housing problem for lower-income people was very real during the war. As mentioned before, the fact that squatter's house appeared in this period for the first time is no coincidence.

⁷⁷² The new Law of Scale of Salaries included these amendment: 1) 5 TL every months for each child, 2) when a new child is born, a one-time salary bonus equal to one month's pay , 3) when the spouse of an official died, a one-time salary bonus equal to one month's pay, 4) when the official died, monetary help in the form of a one-time payment of two month's salary to his family, 5) when the state officials needed medical treatment, the costs of that treatment and travel expenses would be paid by the state. Kemal Turan, "Baremdaki Değişiklikler ve Memurlar," *Ülkü*, no.68, 16.7.1944, p.4 ; "Yeni Barem Kanunu Meclise Veriliyor," 14.5.1944, Tan

⁷⁷³ 7.8. 1942, Tan

⁷⁷⁴ Kemal Turan, p.4

Therefore the government had banned the rise in rents on the basis of the National Security Law and tried to protect the lower-income state officials from landlords.⁷⁷⁵ From that time on, the government undertook to rent houses. The keys of the houses would be kept in the municipalities and they would take care of the renting.⁷⁷⁶ But this ban did not solve the problem. As noted in Chapter Two, the landlords resisted this ban in many ways and achieved to increase the rents in practice.

In addition to this, the government passed the Housing Act for Officials (Memur Konutları Kanunu), No. 4626, in 1944. According to the law, the Ministry of Public Works (Bayındırlık Bakanlığı) had the right to allot as much as 25 million TL in order to build houses for state officials.⁷⁷⁷ Those state officials who lived in hotel rooms, boardinghouses, guesthouses or lived in unhealthy and crowded places as to the numbers of their family members would first benefited from these houses.⁷⁷⁸ This statement indicates also the housing conditions of the lower income state personnel in the period under study.

Governmental Aid to the Families of Soldiers

The great number of the men, approximately one million of the total eighteen million, was conscripted into the army. This meant that one of each eighteen people was soldier. And these were men, who were heads of their families at home and the sole source of income for their families. With respect to the families of soldiers, the conscription for long years brought many economic hardships. As Asım Us noted, even early year like 1940, when the high cost of living, inflation and economic difficulties were not in effect yet, “the families of the hundred thousands soldiers who guard the borders of the country

⁷⁷⁵ Fehmi Yavuz-Ruşen Keleş-Cevat Geray, *Şehircilik, Sorunlar-Uygulama ve Politika*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1978), p.616

⁷⁷⁶ 17.1.1944, Tan

⁷⁷⁷ Yavuz-Keleş-Geray, p.615

⁷⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.632

were in difficult straits materially and morally.”⁷⁷⁹ Especially when those people who earned very little money to support their families went to the army, those who were left behind encountered many difficulties.⁷⁸⁰ Again, the difficulties the families of soldiers encountered with can be seen in the memoirs of Sarkis Çerkezian.⁷⁸¹

In these conditions, the government decided to support the poor families of soldiers and passed the Law of Aid to the Families of Soldiers (Asker Ailelerine Yardım Kanunu) in 1941. Thus on the basis of the law, cinema and theatre tickets were taxed about 5-10 % and the prices of trams and steamships were increased in order to create a financial source for aid to the families of soldiers.⁷⁸² In Istanbul, the municipality started to give a stipend to the destitute families of soldier in 1941.⁷⁸³ In the villages, Article 13 of the Village Law stipulated communal help for planting and the maintenance of the fields, vineyards, and orchards of the villagers who had been called into the army.⁷⁸⁴

The government tried to protect the children of the soldiers who did not have any relatives. For this aim, the Children’s Protection Society would take care of these children in return for a payment by the local government to the Children’s Protection Society, in accordance with the Law of Aid to the Families of Soldiers.⁷⁸⁵

The families of the runaway soldiers were excluded from this social aid.⁷⁸⁶ In addition, if a family member of the soldiers worked and earned even a little money, this family also could not benefited from this financial aid.

⁷⁷⁹ See Asım Us, “Başvekilin Nutku,” *AT* quoted from *Vakit* dated 4.2.1940. *AT*, no.75, (1-28 February 1940), p. 44

⁷⁸⁰ 6.11.1941, Tan

⁷⁸¹ “The conscription ruined not only the men who were conscripted into the army, but also their families. Because men were in the army, the wife of some, sister of some, or fiancé of some worked in the shops and carried the goods into the shops. Women and girl replaced their husbands or brothers. They tried to earn their living and survive by undertaking the work of a tradesman. There was extreme poverty in the homes of everybody.” Sarkis Çerkezian, *Dünya Hepimize Yeter*, yay. haz. Yasemin Gedik, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2003), p.123

⁷⁸² 1.5.1942, Tan; “Asker Ailelerine Yardım Mükellefiyeti,” 5.9.1941, Tan

⁷⁸³ 8.11. 1941, Tan

⁷⁸⁴ “Dahiliye Vekili Faik Öztrak TBMM’de Asker Ailelerine YARDIM Meselesi Hakkında Beyanatta Bulundu” *AT*, no.84, (1-31 November 1940), p.34

⁷⁸⁵ 17.11.941, Tan

⁷⁸⁶ “Dahiliye Vekili Faik Öztrak BMM’de Asker Ailelerine Yardım Meselesi Hakkında Beyanatta Bulundu,” *AT*, no.84, (1-31 November 1940), p.34

Aid Shortcomings and Complaints of the People

1943 was both the twentieth anniversary of the Republic and the most difficult year for the people under the Republican regime because of the social and economic effects of the war. Thus the year of the twentieth anniversary of the Republic witnessed widespread social aid and increase in salaries and wages. But this policy of the government excluded great number of the lower and fixed income people and the poor. Workers, officials who were paid by special budget, the poor peasants, and marginal segments of the population were excluded from the social aid. Sometimes although those peoples such as the retired, who were included in social aid, they were excluded from the distribution of some social aid materials. In addition, bad practices in the application of the social aid and insufficient implementation of the social aid program caused widespread discontent, dissatisfaction and complaints among the people both those who are recipients and those who were excluded, instead of a happiness and gratitude to the government. In addition, although the target-number of the social aid initiated by the Saraçoğlu government seemed to be very high such as 1.600.000 people, this did not mean necessarily that the social aid reached and satisfied all these people. As can be seen below, many people included in the social aid complained of often late, insufficient, poor quality, unsystematic, unequal and heart-breaking distributions. Some of them were not able to reach to their allowances which were announced to be distributed.

First of all, the social aid program of the government in 1943 did not include all of the lower income officials. For example, whereas the officials who depended on the general budget received a salary bonus for once only, the officials of the municipalities and of the special administration did not. The employees who took a daily wage also did not

benefit from the salary bonus.⁷⁸⁷ Although the government thought about the giving them a salary bonus, it was unable to allot the necessary money, 630.000 lira, as a salary bonus to the officials of the municipality and of the special administration and to teachers.⁷⁸⁸

The social aid program also did not comprise the poor workers who were employed in public administrations and enterprises and poor workers in the private workplaces. The government thought that the workers and small tradesmen could adjust themselves to the changing conditions, and they were excluded from the lower-fixed income category.⁷⁸⁹

These excluded people did not remain unvoiced. They criticized this decision of the government and demanded social aid. In the press, it was reported that the exclusion of the tram workers from the distribution of an extra-salary in 1943 caused discontent and complaints among them.⁷⁹⁰ In a similar vein, in 1944, it was stated that the exclusion of workers and porters from the governmental social aid which was distributed to the state officials became a source of complaint and that they criticized their exclusion.⁷⁹¹

Sometimes, they wrote their complaints and demands to the newspaper. For instance, a worker who was employed in the factories and pools of the State Maritime Lines wrote as follows:

Along with the state officials who received a high protection of the state against high cost of living, we cannot think that our government does not take us into account... We would like you to express our request that the state give us, daily workers, each a one-month bonus as it has the workers and officials at the beginning of winter in order to help us been our basic needs.⁷⁹²

Again, a *muezzin* (a clergyman, müezzin) who could not benefit from the social aid of the government because of their exclusion, expressed the insufficiency of his income for

⁷⁸⁷ “Memur İkramiyelerinin Tevziine Başlandı”, 19.10.1943, Vatan

⁷⁸⁸ “Belediye Memurlarıyla Öğretmenlerin İkramiyesi”, 28.10.1943, Vatan

⁷⁸⁹ AT, no.108, (November 1942)

⁷⁹⁰ 23.10.1943, Vatan

⁷⁹¹ “İşçiler ve Hamallar Hariç,” 19.2.1944, Tan

⁷⁹² “Yevmiye İle Çalışanlara Neden İkramiye Verilmiyor,” 22.10.1943, Vatan

supporting his family and complained of the exclusion of the *muezzins* in spite of their adverse living conditions:

I have been a clergyman for 15 years. I am a father of four children. My salary is only 19 TL. It is needless to say that maintaining a family with this amount of money is difficult and that we suffer. Can we not benefit from the distribution of cloth and shoes which are made for the other state officials and fixed-income citizens?⁷⁹³

There was an interesting case of exclusion among the state officials as well. The female state personnel could not receive any social aid if their husbands had a job even if the earnings of their husbands were low. These female officials complained of this situation and claimed that this was discrimination against the female personnel. For instance, a woman official who was excluded from the social aid of the government wrote his complaints to the newspaper as follows:

I am a woman official. My husband is not a state official. He is self-employed person. The best evidence of the fact that his earnings are not high is that I have to work...The male officials can benefit from the distribution of goods such as rationing cards, clothes and provisions for their wives, but the female officials cannot benefit from them for their husbands. I cannot understand the cause of this situation. If the matter is to aid the needy, I think that I have expressed my need for this aid in the two sentences mentioned above.⁷⁹⁴

Retired people were not excluded from the governmental social aid program, but were from certain specific distributions of social aid goods which were to be needed by the state personnel more. For instance, they did not receive the cloth which was distributed to the state officials. In a report of a representative, it was stated that “retired people were grieved because they did not receive cloth which was distributed to the officials.”⁷⁹⁵

They also expressed their complaints and demands by writing letters and petitions to the General Secretariat of the RPP.⁷⁹⁶ Some retired people complained of the

⁷⁹³ 5.3.1943, Tan

⁷⁹⁴ 14.3.1943, Tan

⁷⁹⁵ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 663.219.1, (1945)]

⁷⁹⁶ For the petition of Hayri Gençoğlu who was retired from the Ministry of Finance. He requested increase in his salary PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 835.299.1]

Again retired people complained of their exclusion from distributions of some goods. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 663.219.1]

Another retired people claimed that he did not afford to buy by his salary and requested aid. 9.4.1943, Tan

insufficiency of their pensions, the lack of social insurance because they did not have any pension fund. They said that they had great difficulties in maintaining their living owing to the lack of sufficient social support of the government.⁷⁹⁷

Again, the exclusion of the some poor officials who were employed in private companies from the social aid program of the government caused discontent among these people. They expressed their discontent in similar ways mentioned above and alleged that they were also in need of the governmental aid. Muhittin Karaca, who was an official in a private company, pointed out their difficult living conditions and concluded his letter with a call to the state to aid them too:

There is a class which suffers most from the high cost of living. This class comprises waged officials and white collar workers who are working in private enterprises. There is no state bureau which takes care of these poor people. Their wages remained at pre-war levels and they did not benefit from the 25 percent increase in salaries some state officials received from the government. They are not regarded as lower and fixed income people. Total number of these officials exceeds 15.000-20.000. Like all of the citizens, I wish that the government will take an interest in and help this hopeless group in poor living conditions.⁷⁹⁸

Red tape and procedures also prevented many poor people from receiving their allowances. For instance, in *Tan*, it was reported that because various difficulties were raised by the officials during the distribution of coal, many peoples were not able to receive their allowances.⁷⁹⁹

In order to take allowances of coal it was necessary to show a rental contract. This requirement also caused an informal exclusion of many people from the coal distributions and widespread complaints among the lower income state employees who were not able to their allowance of coal. In his letter published in *Cumhuriyet*, a lower income state official

In an article in *Tan* it stated that the retired people should be protected by the state. See "Eski Emeklileri de Koruyalım," 28.3.1943, *Tan*.

The Yearbooks of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) were full of the lists of petition by the retired people to request salary increase or aid of the government. See The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.10.1940-31.10.1941), Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1942, and The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.11.1941-31.10.1942), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1943)

⁷⁹⁷ For a petition of Osman Kabtan who was a retired and complained of the lack of social insurance and of difficult living conditions, see PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 474.1938.1]

⁷⁹⁸ "Sıkıntı Çeken Bir Zümreyi de Düşünelim," 30.11.1943, *Tan*

⁷⁹⁹ "Kömür Tevziyatında Çıkarılan Zorluklar," 1.8.1945, *Tan*

expressed his complaint about the unnecessary complexity and lengthy of the procedures in distribution process.

The distribution of coal to the state employees has commenced. I cannot receive my allowance of coal because I have not been able to renew my rental contract because my landlord is not here. One of my friends has been unable to receive his allowances of coal because the contract of rent was made by his wife. One of my friends has been unable, because he lives in a house owned by his wife. Another friend had been unable because he stays at the house of his wife's father. And another friend had been unable because he stays at the house of his wife's mother. One official is in the same situation because he stays at my house because he is my good friend. And a many similar obstacles... I wonder who is able to receive this coal?⁸⁰⁰

In similar vein, Cemalettin Şenyüz, who was an official in the PTT (Post, Telegraph and Telephone Administration) in Beyoğlu, could not receive his share of coal for similar reasons. He stayed at his father's house without paying any rent and naturally without any contract. Thus the officials of the coal distribution refused to give him his share. He complained of this situation by sending a letter to *Tan*.⁸⁰¹

Not all of the poor were included in the social aid program of the government, because the state did not have sufficient knowledge about population. Indeed, as Şevket Süreyya Aydemir said, statistics was not useful in these years. The state did not have a functional statistics organization.⁸⁰² Because of insufficient knowledge of the population and the lack of accurate statistics, it can be thought that many poor people were not identified unintentionally. These people who were not involved in the social aid program expressed their complaints as much as possible. It is possible to find their voices in the middle pages of the newspapers. For instance, a poor woman who was the wife of a martyr

⁸⁰⁰ "Acaba Bu Kömürü Kim Alabilecek?" 23.07.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁸⁰¹ 5.11.1943, Tan

⁸⁰² As Şevket Süreyya Aydemir pointed out, the Turkish state was very poor in respect to statistics and knowledge about the country in statistical terms. Aydemir says that in the war period "we had no any serious organization in the field of statistics, which was necessary for the determination and implementation of laws and state policies of the exceptional times. The numbers which were in our hand told us nothing about the country. It was not possible to believe these numbers. No province had bureau or an organization concerned with statistics, and even an official who could collect the mathematical data on the country. All plans, schemes, announcements, necessities and requirements were not dealt with other than waiting in the registration files of a governor or even in the files of a simple official. Some numbers collected did not tell the real story in even central institutions." See Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam İsmet İnönü, 1938-1950*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi), 2000, pp.215-216

in the Independence War wrote that they had been forgotten by the state. She claimed that the real poor who should be aided were themselves.

I am a wife of a martyr of the Independence War. The newspaper announced that ration card for bread at lower-price would be distributed to us, too, but my name did not appear in the list of 60.000 poor people... If I am not regarded as poor, who is the poor?⁸⁰³

The exclusionary aspects of the social aid were often criticized in the press. For instance, upon the economic support of the government to the state personnel, *Tan* suggested that “not only the state officials, but also other lower and fixed income people except for state officials, should be aided by the government.”⁸⁰⁴

In addition, as criticisms of the social aid programs continued into 1943, the government was warned by the newspapers about the people who were in need outside the state personnel.

There is a great majority of the people with lower and fixed income beyond those who receive their wages from the government. The needs and difficulties of these peoples have also been increased day by day much more than that of the people called fixed income people.⁸⁰⁵

Cumhuriyet also underlined that there were many lower and fixed income peoples who were in need of state help, not only in the public sector, but also in the private sector.⁸⁰⁶ Similar complaints and criticisms took place in the newspapers of the period.

The exclusion of some social classes and groups from the social aid was related to the financial capacity of the government. The amount of tax revenues of the state did not enable the government to help to many more people. The transfer of the taxes from the agriculture to the cities as social aid remained below the expectation of the government because of the peasant resistance and the capacity problems of the state. Indeed, the insufficient capacity and bad functioning of the Soil Product Office during the war affected

⁸⁰³ 22.2.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁰⁴ 22.10.1941, *Tan*

⁸⁰⁵ “Yeni Meclis ve Sabit Gelirliilere Yardım Meselesi,” 1.4.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁰⁶ 25.3.1943, *Cumhuriyet*

the tax collection process adversely and made the government unable to collect the all of tax revenues it estimated.

Consequently, the government did not have necessary funds and resources to carry out a great and much more inclusive social aid program. According to Hasan Fikret, the municipalities were unable to help every person because of the insufficient resources.

In the public, one reason for the criticism of the municipality is related to social aid of the municipalities for the poor...But, in this big city there are many poor people. If the municipality wanted to help all these poor people, not only the resources of the social aid, but also its entire budget would not suffice to fulfill such aid.⁸⁰⁷

In addition, although the government increased the share of the expenditures for the social aid, this was not sufficient because of the inflation. In other words, the sources were increased nominally, but not in reality. As Lütü Kırdar, the governor of Istanbul, said:

While we spent 1.397.000 TL for the social aid in the pre-war period previously, this amount increased to 2.877.000 TL after the outset of the war. Nevertheless, even this amount is not sufficient because of the high cost of living.⁸⁰⁸

As explained above, because of capacity problems and resistance, the state was not able to collect all of the taxes it had planned to use on the social aid and on the provisioning of the cities. Indeed, the official government target for purchases of wheat from the 1942 harvest was 800.000 tons, approximately 25 percent of the crop... It appears that despite all efforts, the government purchases of wheat in 1942 remained below 500.000 tons, less than 15 percent of the total production.⁸⁰⁹ Prime Minister Saraçoğlu in 1942 stated that the government did not reach its target-level in forced purchases.⁸¹⁰

Again, the government had planned to use the SPT revenues in social aid. Prime Minister Saraçoğlu declared that the tax revenues would be used in the social aid programs and provisioning of the city.⁸¹¹ But, in the same vein, although the government planned to

⁸⁰⁷ Hasan Fikret, "Halk ve Belediye," *AT*, 1940, no.82, (1-30 September), p.109

⁸⁰⁸ 3.12.1943, *Vatan*

⁸⁰⁹ See Şevket Pamuk, "War, State Economic Policies..." p.134

⁸¹⁰ "Başvekil Şükrü Saraçoğlu Büyük Millet Meclisinde İaşe Durumumuza ve Alınan Tedbirlere Dair Bir Nutuk Söyledi," *AT*, no.109, (1-31 December 1942), p.35

⁸¹¹ "TMV Kanun Layihasının Müzakereleri," Minutes of the GNAT, 4.6.1943, p.19,

use the cereals which would be provided by the SPT,⁸¹² the SPT revenues also remained below the target-level, as explained in Chapter Three.⁸¹³

In addition, as described below, leaving a side the exclusion of some social groups, the government was not able to carry out the existing social aid program. Its resources were eroded by many factors. The resources of social aid were subjected to the widespread misuses, embezzlement and pilfering by the officials who were employed in the distribution process. For instance, an official stole the money allotted to the families of soldiers. Bahattin Pınar, a purser in the Beyoğlu Municipality, took the 1644 TL from the pay-office by arranging false payrolls and documents and by imitating the signs and seal of the families of soldiers.⁸¹⁴

Officials who were employed in distribution of coal weighed the coal dishonestly and stole some coal from the share of each person.⁸¹⁵ In Konya, officials embezzled 200,000 worth of cloth which had been allotted to the poor as social aid using false documents and bills.⁸¹⁶ Some officials embezzled many drapery and haberdashery goods which were allotted to the lower and fixed income officials.⁸¹⁷ This also compounded the insufficiency, absence and exhaustion of the goods which would be distributed to the lower income people.

In this process, the image of the “officials’ state” was formed in public opinion because many lower-income peoples were excluded from the state help, whereas the state officials were receiving help. According to A.Başer Kafaoğlu, “the distributions of sugar and cloth to the state officials caused accusations that the state protected only its own

⁸¹² As *Tan* reported, the agricultural products came from the Spoil Product Tax would be used as social aid campaigns. See 26.2.1944, *Tan*

⁸¹³ Suat Başar, p.100

⁸¹⁴ “Asker Ailelerinin Parasını İhtilas Eden Bir Memur Tevkif Olundu,” 11.11.1943, *Vatan*

⁸¹⁵ “Halkın Eksik Tartılan Kömürleri,” 11.3.1944, *Cumhuriyet*

⁸¹⁶ 14.8.1944, *Tan*

⁸¹⁷ “Sahte Vesika Tanzimi Suretile Yerli Mallar Pazarından Mal Alan Bir Şebeke Meydana Çıkarıldı,” 23.11.1943

officials. This accusation was directed at the RPP and to İsmet İnönü in the election periods in the post-war era.”⁸¹⁸

From the comics of the time, it is possible to see how the state officials who received governmental social aid were perceived by the popular opinion in these years. In the comics such as *Akbaba* and *Karikatür*, these officials were represented as a class privileged and protected by the state. To some degree, this situation gives clue us about the limited character of the social aid. In other words, the other social groups outside the officials received much less state help.

For instance in a caricature in *Karikatür* there is an old, poor man holding a bag which is full of foodstuffs and goods distributed by the state as social aid. As soon as his friends see this bag, they ask him whether he has become a state official.⁸¹⁹ Again, in a caricature in *Akbaba*, while two young and beautiful women have a chat, there is a dialog as follows:

-Nermin got engaged with an official.
-You see! That is to say that she has won free cloth for a dress.⁸²⁰

This social aid to the officials caused rumors among the people. So far as Turgut İnal reported, in this period, one widespread rhyming slogan went: “*İsmet is great, İsmet is great, and the officials are slaves of İsmet*” (*İsmet uludur, İsmet uludur, Memurlar İsmet’in kuludur*). Many people perceived the official as a privileged class of the state.⁸²¹

For the peasants who were not involved in the social aid program, the aid was seen an unequal policy of the state. As Mediha Berkes wrote, the peasants

⁸¹⁸ Kafaoglu, p.53

⁸¹⁹ *Karikatür*, no.371, p.4

⁸²⁰ *Akbaba*, no.474, p.7

⁸²¹ Turgut İnal(28.02.2002), www.radyoilkhaber.com/site/turgut/28022002.asp

interpreted the governmental social aid distributed to the officials as the protection of the city-dwellers by the state.⁸²²

But this does not necessarily mean that the state official were protected and privileged fully as was represented in these magazines and in popular opinion. This does not mean that the state official had a good living standard thanks to this aid. The abovementioned representation expresses only the perception of the people, especially perception of the excluded poor and lower income people who were jealous of the recipients of the governmental social aid, but not reality accurately.

As will be described below in detail, in contrasts to the popular perceptions like that “the officials were the slave of the İsmet,” and the argument of Kemal Karpaz, who shared the popular representation and argued that the official were in abundance,⁸²³ many lower income officials had great difficulties in gaining access to the social aid and they did not benefit from the aid efficiently. The general picture of the practices of the governmental aid and the experiences of the lower income officials in this process show that the governmental aid does not enable us to classify the regime as official’s regime which provide a comfortable life for the state personnel.

First, when the living conditions of the state personnel are examined, it should be kept in mind that the state personnel were not a homogenous entity. Looking at the salaries of the state personnel, it can be seen that there were great differences of income between them. Except for a minority, most of them belonged to the lower-income groups, as can be seen from the Table 18.⁸²⁴ From this view, the officials did not constitute an aristocratic or

⁸²² “According to the peasants, there was no poverty in cities. Above all, in their mind, the city dwellers had some papers [coupons for social aid goods wherever they went they could buy practically free or very cheap goods and food. According to them, their bellies were full and their backs strong.” Mediha Berkes, “Köyde Yaşayış,” *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.30, 1943, p.194

⁸²³ See Kemal Karpaz, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1996), p.120.

⁸²⁴ N.Ayral, “Türk Memurları,” *Belediye Mecmuası*, no.182, 1940, p.112

Muvaffak Şeref argued that the proportion of the state official whose salaries were between 100-150 TL, to overall state officials was 0.5 %. The proportion of the officials who earned 40-60 TL was 10 %, 25-35 TL

privileged part of the society whose economic conditions was good. This argument was not true except for the small marginal upper-level state officials.

Table 18- The Scale of Salary of the State Personnel in 1940

Degree of Scale	Basic Salary	Number of Officials
1	150	25
2	125	58
6	70	594
14	20	9495
19	10	5762

As can be seen from the table, there was a great difference between officials in scale of salary. The majority of the state officials belonged to the lower-levels of the salary scale. The basic salary of an official who was at the 19th level was 10 TL. This basic salary was equal to 40 TL in reality. But in this period, it was not possible to get by with a family on this salary in the big cities such as İstanbul, İzmir, or Ankara.⁸²⁵

58.000 of 88.000 state officials had children. Of all these officials, 13.000 had to maintain and feed three persons, 16.000 officials four; 16.000 five; 11.000 six; 6.000 seven; 3.500 eight; and 3.000 nine persons. As shown by these data, the average number of persons the great majority of the state officials had to support was between four and six. Of these officials, only 31.7 percent had their own houses. When the fact that 55.000 officials rented homes is taken into consideration,⁸²⁶ it can be estimated that they were exposed directly to the raises in rents during the war and the pressures of landlords.

In addition, if it is taken into consideration that of the most important tax, the Income Tax, 82 % was paid by salaried workers by taking out of their paychecks,⁸²⁷ the state officials constituted the most important social segment which shouldered the this tax.

26 %, 20 TL 36 % and 15 TL 27 %. Muvaffak Şeref, *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm*, (İstanbul: Acar Basımevi, 1968), p.179.

⁸²⁵ Ayrıl, p.112

⁸²⁶ *ibid.*, p.114

⁸²⁷ Kafaoglu, p.14

And they did not have the chance to reflect this tax to other people as shopkeepers and trades could.

The following statistics given by Yahya Tezel allow us to understand the economic conditions of the lower-income state officials. The proportion of those officials who were employed in administrations dependent on the Central Budget, on the annexed-budget, the Special Administrations of Provinces and the municipalities to the total number of working people in was 1.8 % in 1927 and 1.7 % in 1935. The proportion of their income which was not taxed to the GNP was 3.6 % between 1926-1929, and 5.5 % between 1933 and 1935. But, the proportion of the numbers of the state officials to the total workforce in Turkey increased to 2.7 % in 1945. The proportion of their income which was not taxed to the GNP decreased to 2.6 %. In this process, including the war years, the real income of retired people, widows and orphans decreased radically. In 1938 prices, the real income of the retired peoples was decreased from 1420 TL in 1938, to 274 in 1945.⁸²⁸

Many writers emphasized on the poor living standards of the state officials. Falih Rıfkı Atay, for instance, wrote that it was necessary to look at written statements from state officials about how state officials whose salaries were under 100 TL were able to survive with these low salaries, instead of the written statements of their property and wealth.⁸²⁹

As a low-level army officer, Alparslan Türkeş emphasized the difficult living standards of the army officers during the war period. He wrote that “the high cost of living and scarcities have made the army officers miserable and depressed.”⁸³⁰ It is understood that even though the army officers received higher salaries than the ordinary state officials, they also had difficulties of living and were belittled because of their low income status.

The army officers were treated as secondary persons everywhere. The basements of the apartment houses in Ankara were called by the people “the staff officer floor.” In places of entertainment, the nickname for army officers was *gazozcu* (fizzy lemonade drinkers), because they could not afford to buy expensive drinks. And

⁸²⁸ Tezel, p.234

⁸²⁹ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Pazar Konuşmaları (1941-1950)*, (İstanbul: Dünya Matbaası, 1965), p.298

⁸³⁰ Alparslan Türkeş, *1944 Milliyetçilik Olayı*, (İstanbul: Kutluğ Yayınları, 1975), p.25

because they could not compete with the black-marketers and profiteers, these names were deemed proper for the self-sacrificing children of the motherland.⁸³¹

In 1944, when the governmental social aid program continued, Zekeriya Sertel, in an article titled *A Solution is Needed* (Bir Çare Lazım), wrote that the total average monthly expenditure of a family of five was 320 TL and that it is was not possible to survive on less than this amount of money despite the governmental support. Sertel added that policemen, teachers and even judges whose salaries ranged between 80 and 100 TL, were not able to satisfy their basic needs.⁸³²

Indeed, majority of the state officials lived in bad living standards and suffered economic difficulties. The state was unable to protect them from the effects of the war in spite of the social aid programs, because this social aid became a problem on its own, as will be described in detail below. Sometimes this aid was not distributed; sometime it was distributed in amounts less than announced. Sometimes it was distributed unequally and unsystematically. Sometimes the social aid goods were of poor quality. In addition, the methods of distribution, and experiences and events during the implementation of the distribution, were heart-breaking rather than pleasing to the recipients. Leaving a side these problems, the state officials who were subjected to the social relief programs sensed their poverty much more because they were in need of help. This social aid publicly exposed their poverty.

In this respect, I think that it is not possible to characterize the Republican regime as an officials' regime. Again, the governmental aid in kind or in cash did not make them an aristocratic and privileged segment of the population without discontent and complaint. On the contrary, they complained of the experiences of the social aid and of their bad living standards.

Some social aid goods did not meet the basic requirements of the lower and fixed income people and brought additional costs to them. For example, to make a dress from the

⁸³¹ *ibid*, p.25

cloth which was distributed as social aid, it was necessary to pay to a tailor. In some cases lower income people could not afford to buy even the goods of social aid. For all these reasons, many recipients had to sell their allowances or the coupons of aid to tradesmen or black-marketers. Especially coupons for sugar, coffee and cloth were sold in order to meet primary needs such as food, housing, heating or medical treatment.⁸³³ Streets near the Domestic Product Market where the social aid was distributed were full of women who sold their allowances.⁸³⁴

This situation became a subject of novels and stories. In Kemal Binbaşar's story, *The Creamy Chicken Breast Pudding* (Kaymaklı Tavukgöğsü), the tragedy of a man whose children was ill was described. The child, named Engin, was in the early stages of tuberculosis because of malnutrition. The man sold his allowances to the black-marketers near the Domestic Product Market to pay for the medical treatment of his children. He spent this money on a medical examination and medicine.⁸³⁵

In the memoirs of Rıfat Ilgaz, *The Yellow Handpainted* (Sarı Yazma), some lower income officials had to sell their allowances of social aid goods such as cloth and shoes in order to buy basic foodstuffs for their families.⁸³⁶

In an article in *Cumhuriyet*, Burhan Felek also underlined the fact that some lower and fixed income officials and retired people could not afford to pay the lower prices of the social aid goods and that they had to sell off these goods. Therefore, he concluded that the social aid did not reach its target:

A retired person who is supporting three people will receive sugar and olive oil. He has to pay 22.5 TL for these. This retired person cannot pay this price. Therefore, he is able to receive only some part of his allowances. He sells the other part of his allowance cheaply to the grocer...The social aid of the government did not reach its target.⁸³⁷

⁸³² "Bir Çare Lazım," 29.4.1944, Tan

⁸³³ Jülide Ergüder, "Karneli Yıllar," *Hürriyet* no.10, 11 September 1989.

⁸³⁴ "Sokakları Pazar Yerine Çevirenler," 3.3.1943, Vatan; Refik Halid Karay, "Fiş Alım Satımı," 3.7.1944, Tan

⁸³⁵ Alev Sınay Çılgın, *Türk Roman ve Hikayesinde İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2003), p.35

⁸³⁶ *ibid.*, p.35

⁸³⁷ Burhan Felek, "Dar Gelirli Hükümet Yardımı," 28.8.1943, *Cumhuriyet*

Many people complained that they were not able to pay the prices of the social aid goods and that they had to pay extra money to benefit from the social aid, by sending letters to the RPP. Briefly, they claimed that their budgets did not allow them to receive or to use their allowances. For instance, Nihat Sürar, a state accountant, expressed that he was not able to pay the prices of their allowances. He demanded a system in which the payment for their allowances was made in installments:

I am the head of a family of eight people, five of these children. My total income is only 87 TL, which I receive monthly. In order to buy the vital and basic foods such as sugar, olive oil and macaroni, which are distributed by our governments to the state officials, I need approximately 60 TL. If it is possible, I request that the payments for our allowances be made in three installments because officials with overcrowded households like me receive our allowances quarterly.⁸³⁸

In the same vein, the coal distributed as social aid was also not useful or economical for the lower income officials because of its extra costs such as transportation and giving bribe for better coal instead of coal powder. Ziya Karamürsal, a representative of Istanbul, reported this situation as follows:

Many officials cannot take their allowances of coal because the coal which is distributed to them is 40 TL. The transportation cost of this coal is 20 TL. This cost also should be added to the total cost. Furthermore, the lower income officials have to pay some money to the officials who are employed in coal distribution in order to receive real coal, instead of coal powder.⁸³⁹

As for the cloth distributed by the government, in general, even if it was not a problem to pay for it, but all costs did not finish with this. According to the complaints of the state officials, their budgets did not allow for them to pay to tailors to make their cloth into clothes. According to *Tan*, the tailors charged prices that the lower income officials were unable to afford.

The government gives the state officials free cloth. But it requires 35 TL to sew a dress from this cloth. How can the officials who pay for their clothing by installments, hire a tailor to sew his clothes?⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁸ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 459.1884.2, (15.4.1943)]

⁸³⁹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 662.218.2, (7.9.1943)]

⁸⁴⁰ “Memurlara Tek Tip Elbise Yaptırıp Dağıtılmalıdır,” 25.2.1943, *Tan*

Some people sent petitions to the RPP and demanded monetary help in order to benefit the cloth which was distributed by the government. For instance, Viktor Genoğlu, who was in teacher's training school, wrote a petition to the RPP by detailing his difficult economic situation and demanding the help of the government although he received the social aid of the government. In his petition he said that he was not be able to make use of the cloth distributed by the government because he could not afford to have clothes made out of it. He thus faced great difficulties in meeting his clothing needs.

I have passed to the third class in the teacher's training school for men. I have not yet been able to have sewn the three meters of cloth I received... In addition, my shoes are very bad and old. I do not know what I will use as shoes in this summer. I suffer from the lack of underwear. You can be sure that this year I made do with one undershirt and one shirt. I request monetary help as far as possible in order to have some clothes made and to buy a pair of shoes, underwear, and a shirt.⁸⁴¹

Therefore, instead of this unfunctional governmental aid, *Tan* newspapers suggested that a uniform dress should be produced and distributed by the state to the state officials.⁸⁴²

The amount of the goods distributed by the government to the lower income peoples was also a subject of complaints among the recipients of the social aid and press. In the instance of cloth, the length of the cloth was not insufficient for two or three sets of clothes, but it was also too long for one dress.⁸⁴³

Another subject of complaint was about the late distributions. Sometime the distributions began a long time after their announcement and some times none at all. In addition, even when the distributions began at the right time, in some cases many people were not able to receive their allowances, because the social aid goods ran out. In *Tan*, it was stated that "the coupons which were given by the government remained useless papers

⁸⁴¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3, (25.5.1945)]

⁸⁴² "Memurlara Tek Tıp Elbise Yaptırıp Dağıtılmalıdır," 25.2.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁴³ "Kuponlarla Dağıtılan Eşyalar İşe Yarar Hale Getirilmeli," 18.1.1943, *Tan*

in the hand of these lower income officials and other poor people who were allowed to the governmental aid.”⁸⁴⁴

For example, it is understood from the news in *Tan* that there were many people who was not able to take their sugar allowances or able to take barely after the scheduled time. According to the news, there were many complaint letters about this problem which were sent to the newspaper.⁸⁴⁵

By the same token, although the period of distribution of flour expired, there were approximately 30.000 lower-income people who had not been able to take their allowances because there was no sufficient flour for days in the bakeries which were charged by the state to distribute the flour.⁸⁴⁶ Similar events were experienced in the distribution of coffee and cloth. Although many people had the coupons for these goods, they were not able to receive them. In *Tan*, in September 1943 the situation was reported as follows:

Like the coupons for cloth which waited in our pockets since last year and were announced by the government to be invalid, the coupons for coffee became a pieces of paper for which coffee was not taken in exchange.⁸⁴⁷

There were many complaints about late distributions. Some poor people expressed their complaints by reporting the situation to the newspapers. For instance, although it was announced that gas would be given to the poor people lived in the houses without electricity in İstanbul. Because this distribution was late, the people became discontent. A man who lived in Kasımpaşa, named Nail Tokoy, said that they had great difficulties because of the lack of gas in his letter to *Tan*. He demanded the distribution of gas as soon as possible.⁸⁴⁸ Again, it was reported by *Tan*, the cloth distribution to the teachers was too late. Many teachers did not receive the cloth distributed by the Domestic Product Market. They also complained of this situation.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁴ “Ellerinde Kuponları Olanlara Kolaylık Göstermek Lazımdır,” 10.3.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁴⁵ 12.2.1944, *Tan*

⁸⁴⁶ “Un Tevzii Müddeti Bugün Sona Eriyor,” 6.11.1943, *Vatan*

⁸⁴⁷ “İşe Yaramayacaksa Niçin Dağıtıldı?” 25.9.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁴⁸ 16.7.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁴⁹ See “İlkokul Öğretmenlerinin Mesken Bedelleri,” 20.7.1943, *Tan*.

The distribution of coal became also common subject of complaint among the lower income and poor people. Recipients had to wait a long time for the distribution of coal. In his letter to *Tan*, a people criticized the long waits and procedures experienced during the coal distribution, as follows:

Everybody who will take coal is assigned a waiting-number. The place where they will receive their allowances is shown...After that you can do nothing more than wait your turn patiently and count the beads on your prayer beads because you do not know when your turn will come. It is uncertain that your turn will come after two or three months.⁸⁵⁰

Because of the capacity problems and lack of systematic organization in the distribution process, the timing of the distributions of the social aid also was not able to be made according to the government's aim. Indeed, although the government aimed to gladden the lower-income people and the poor on religious and national days, the distributions which were expected to be made before these days were suspended to the weeks after these days. For instance, in 1943, although the government declared it would distribute macaroni to lower-income people before the Ramadan Holiday, it was not able to do it. Therefore, the distribution of macaroni was suspended to the weeks after the Ramadan Holiday.⁸⁵¹ Again, although the government planned to distribute flour before the Republic Day, its distribution was made after weeks.⁸⁵²

Another factor for discontent among the people was the method of distribution. Even though sometimes the recipients took their allowances on time and with no problem in the quantity or quality, the way they reached to the social aid goods was often difficult, tiring and heart-breaking.

The distribution of some foods such as flour and macaroni was made by groceries, bakeries, and other goods such as drapery and haberdashery, cloth and shoe by the Domestic Product Markets. From the 1941 on, the state increased the number of Domestic

⁸⁵⁰ "Buna Halka Kömür Vermek Denilebilir mi?", 26.9.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁵¹ 30.11.1943, *Vatan*

⁸⁵² 30.9.1943, *Vatan*

Product Markets in order to facilitate the distributions.⁸⁵³ Nevertheless, they were not sufficient in number and in organization.

It was very difficult to get the social aid goods from the Domestic Product Markets. The people had to wait for their turns too long. Many times, there was no order or a line, but pushing and shoving between the people during the distribution. Distributions were very unsystematic and unorganized. For example, a people described and criticized the distribution of social aid by the Nazilli Domestic Product Market as follows:

All the people wait from the early hours of the morning until night in front of the door of the Market, as in their waiting for bread. They stay there until evening, pushing and shoving each other. There is nothing to do but look with hatred at those who come and push their way to the front of the line and take whatever they want. Their days pass by without receiving one meter of printed cotton.⁸⁵⁴

After the presentation of this letter in the newspaper, it was stated that the situation in the distributions of the governmental aid in İstanbul was the same with the case in Nazilli. Therefore, it was recommended that the distribution methods of the social aid at the Domestic Product Markets to be organized by the government.⁸⁵⁵

Indeed, in İstanbul, “the nearby streets around the Domestic Product Market in Bahçekapı and its front looked like the last judgment day. The police had to disperse the people at front of the Market continuously.”⁸⁵⁶ Said Kesler, in his article *How Was the Food Distributed?* (Yiyecek Tevziatı Nasıl Yapıldı?) depicted the great confusion and disorder during the distribution of the social aid as follows:

Everywhere, the recipients who achieved to take their allowances leave; the others who want to get their allowances try to push themselves into the Market. But neither the former nor the latter feels relieved. There is such great confusion that it is worth seeing. Those who are shouting, making a lot of noise, whose bowl was broken, whose headscarf has gone askew, who stick pins in the rear ends of others, in short, a seething mass...⁸⁵⁷

⁸⁵³ “Yerli Mallar Pazarları Açılacak,” 22.10.1941, Tan. In addition, see İlhan Tekeli-Selim İlkin, “Savaşmayan Ülkenin Savaş Ekonomisi: Üretimden Tüketime Pamuklu Dokuma,” *ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi*, 14 (1), 1987, p. 38

⁸⁵⁴ “Bu iş bir nizamla konulamaz mı?”, 3.1.1944, Tan

⁸⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁵⁶ 3.3.1943, Vatan

⁸⁵⁷ Said Kesler, “Yiyecek Tevziatı Nasıl Yapıldı,” 27.5.1942, Tan.

It is possible to find the marks of the great confusion during the distributions of the social aid in Turkish literature reflecting the war period. For example, in a story by Sait Faik, *The Man with a Crutch* (Koltuk Değnekli Adam), he tells about the chaotic situation experienced during the distributions of social aid during the war. The people push one another to get their allowances as soon as possible before the other people, because they worry about the exhaustion of the provisions in the stores and fear shortages of such goods.⁸⁵⁸

Therefore, the officials and the police intervened in the crowds severely and disrespectfully. Sometime the police dispersed the people who waited at the distribution places by force. In addition to the bad treatment of the police, the officials insulted the people heartbreakingly and hurt them.

Thus, the people complained of the treatment of the police and officials during the distribution. In one event, the officials of the Domestic Product Market dumped water with wood shavings from the second floor window onto the people below who were waiting in the front of the Market to get their allowances in order to disperse them. A man with his wife who got wet and hurt by this incident went to the head office of the *Tan* newspaper and complained about it.

You see our condition! We went to the Domestic Product Market to get our provisions. The front of the door was very crowded. The officials dumped water with wood shavings onto us and made wet us from head to foot.⁸⁵⁹

During the distribution process, the officials treated the people so badly that Burhan Felek titled an article, *Let's Not Torment* (Eziyet Etmiyelim!). According to the article, the officials who were charged with the distribution of the social aid did not fulfill their duties properly. They raised many difficulties during the distribution of the goods to the old and retired people, widows and orphans. Many people who came from distant places to get

⁸⁵⁸ Çilgin, p.37

⁸⁵⁹ "İster İnan İster İnanma," 28.2.1943, Son Posta

their allowances were sent back without receiving their allowances because of many unimportant procedures.⁸⁶⁰

One more factor of complaint and discontent among the people who experienced the social aid of the government was the misuses and unequal distributions made by the officials in the distribution centers. The people thought that they were unjustly treated during the distribution process. For instance, in Konya the distribution of coal as a social aid was practiced badly. There occurred many unjust, illegitimate distributions and dishonest transactions. One person who experienced the distribution of coal expressed his complaints and dissatisfaction in a letter he sent to *Tan*, as in below:

One ton of coal for each directorate of State departments, 500 kilos of coal were given to each chief official of the second rank. On the other hand, the other officials and teachers received only 20 or 40 kilos of coal as if it were a joke. What is more interesting is that the wealthier persons of the region took one or two tons of social aid coal... Isn't it odd to distribute a fistful of coal to one part of the nation, whereas distributing coal by the ton to the other part, in a nation without classes and privileged people?⁸⁶¹

In the same vein, according to a letter sent from Nazilli to *Tan*, it was reported that everybody other than the lower-income people and needy benefited from the distributions of the Domestic Product Market.⁸⁶²

These instances should not be seen as an exceptional complaint and feelings, but the appearance of the general picture of the social discontent, complaints and dissatisfaction. Therefore, these experiences of the people and their complaints should be seen as the experiences and feelings of the great part of the lower income people. Indeed, the deputies who made investigations in their election districts reported that there were widespread rumors about the distribution of social aid among the people. As a result of their investigations, for instance, the deputies of Eskişehir reported that “there were many

⁸⁶⁰ Burhan Felek, “Eziyet Etmiyelim,” 19.5.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁸⁶¹ 12.11.1943, Tan

⁸⁶² 23.1.1944, Tan

rumors about the unequal distribution of the social aid and about how some people easily received much greater quantities of allowances than others.”⁸⁶³

The poor quality of the provisions caused another kind of dissatisfaction among the lower income people. Set aside all of the negative factors mentioned above, even though the people reached their allowances easily, they were not satisfied with them sometime because of the poor quality of the goods.

Indeed, for example, it was reported by *Tan* in 1944 that the sugar which was distributed by the government included soil and sand.⁸⁶⁴ As for the cloth, this was also in poor quality. So far as Nimet Arzık said, the cloth which was of the poorest quality was distributed to the people as social aid. “The rough roll of cloth, the faded piece of cloth, the loosely woven piece of cloth were sold to the “our masters, the people,” who were kept waiting for a long time since early morning.”⁸⁶⁵

Again, although the government announced that it would distribute cloth made from cotton and distributed coupons for this cloth, sometimes the people did not receive this cloth. In addition, among the cloths which were distributed by the government, there were not the kinds of cloth the people needed.⁸⁶⁶

One of the low quality goods among the social aid was coal. Leaving aside its unequal distribution and additional costs, the quality of the coal was so poor that recipients wrote complaint letters to the newspaper about its poor quality.

Everybody who will take coal is assigned a waiting-number. The place where they will take their allowances is shown... When your turn comes, the coal you receive is almost useless. The coal which is given to you is coal powder called *tuvaşan*, or a kind of coal in powder form which has been washed called *marin leve*, or *coke*. You cannot use these kinds of coals in a stove or the boiler of a central heating system because this coal in powder form will fall through the grates.⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 642.169.1, (26.11.1943)]

⁸⁶⁴ 23.4.1944, *Tan*

⁸⁶⁵ Nimet Arzık, *Bitmeyen Kavgâ*, (Ankara: Kurtuluş Matbaası, 1966), p.54

⁸⁶⁶ “Ellerinde Kuponları Olanlara Kolaylık Göstermek Lazımdır,” 10.3.1943, *Tan*

⁸⁶⁷ “Buna Halka Kömür Vermek Denilebilir mi?” 26.9.1943, *Tan*

In another source about the unjust and poor coal distribution, in his report based on his investigations in the election districts, one representative noted that the people had to bribe the officials in order to get coal that was of relatively good quality. The reporters said that, therefore, some people on low income were unable to get their coal allowances.⁸⁶⁸

As for the financial aid of the government such as increases in salary, salary bonuses, premiums, and payments for children, these also were not effective because of the high rate of inflation. A look at the general price movements and a comparison of the prices and salaries will help us to understand to what degree this aid in cash compensated the rise in general prices during the war.

According to the Wholesale Price Index in İstanbul, the general prices increased approximately 450-500 percent during the war.⁸⁶⁹ When this inflation rate is taken into consideration, it is not difficult to estimate that the government aid in cash to the lower and fixed income people, widows, the retired, the orphan, the poor and even the war veterans whose payments were increased 100 percent remained inadequate. As can be seen from the Table 19, the purchasing power was eroded by the high cost of living.

Table 19-Purchasing Power of the State Personnel (1938=100)⁸⁷⁰

Years	Index of Purchasing Power
1938	100
1939	99
1940	91
1941	75
1942	55
1943	38
1944	41
1945	47

⁸⁶⁸ According to the report, some official who were employed in coal distributions demand some money to give coal instead of coal powder. So some lower income officials were not able to take their allowances. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 662.218.2]

⁸⁶⁹ 1.5.1943, Son Posta. Also see Tables 5, 6 and 7

⁸⁷⁰ Cemal R. Eyüboğlu, "Memur Maaşları Meselesi," *Türk Ekonomisi*, no.31-32, 1946, p.16

The most important of the financial aid was the increase in salaries in 1941 and 1944. In 1941 the salaries increased between 15-25 percent. Again in 1944, the government increased salaries and other aid and payments such as stipend for children and compensation of the costs of medical treatment. Nevertheless, by all accounts, there was no real increase in salaries and effective financial aid of the government to compensate the high cost of living. Despite the all of the governmental financial support, the purchasing power of the state officials decreased dramatically, much more than half during the period.

The self-criticisms of the representatives in the National Assembly are also proof of the ineffective character of the financial support of the government. For instance, in a speech during the discussion of the general budget in the Assembly, a representative stated that in spite of the increases in salaries and premiums in 1941, the money which had been paid as financial support to judges with many children was not sufficient or effective.⁸⁷¹

In the newspapers, the premiums and salary bonuses were satirized. In an anecdote of S.G.Savcı in *Tan*, about the amount of money which was given by the government to the officials as premiums in 1943, an official said that the wind and water had taken away his money. In the end this official said: “Nevertheless, may God be pleased with the Father State. If this money had not come to my aid, what would I have given to the wind and water!”⁸⁷²

In addition, it is possible to see some complaints of the officials about the insufficient salaries. In their letters to *Tan*, primary school teachers in İzmit stated that they had great difficulties in subsisting because the government had not increased their salaries for a long time. Moreover, they wrote that they could not afford to take even the social aid materials distributed by the government. They said that they could not go out in the public because of their poverty.⁸⁷³

⁸⁷¹ *AT*, no. 90, (1-31 May 1941), p.46

⁸⁷² S.G. Savcı, “Yel üfürdü, Su götürdü,” 16.9.1943, *Vatan*

⁸⁷³ “Bu Biçareleri İçine Düşükleri Sefaletten Kurtarmalısınız,” 25.8.1943, *Tan*

Retired people complained of the insufficiency of their pensions. Indeed, in the war years, the real income of the retired people decreased sharply. In 1938 prices, the real income of retired people decreased from 1420 TL in 1938, to 274 in 1945.⁸⁷⁴ From this cause, they transmitted their complaints and demand by letters and petitions to the government.⁸⁷⁵ In the end, the government had to increase their pensions 40 percent. But when the decline in the purchasing power of their pensions is considered, even this 40 percent increase was very small.

In a petition of a people who had retired from the Ministry of Finance, the retired alleged that his basic pension of 40 TL, in reality 31 TL after taxes, was not sufficient to buy even bread for a family of four people. He demanded 60 TL as pension.⁸⁷⁶

In another letter sent to *Tan*, an old and retired people expressed his difficult living conditions as follows:

I am a retired person who is 80 years old. With our earning we cannot afford to buy even our daily bread. Both you and we should be amazed at how we survive with our earnings in spite of the high cost of living today.⁸⁷⁷

The government aid for housing, for example, was also not without problem. Although the government had initiated a social aid campaign for the housing of the lower and fixed income people at the beginning of the 1930s, it did not give the housing stipend until the war years. The government had not yet been paid the housing stipend of the teachers which was to have been paid in 1932. Although the government decided to begin payments in December 1939, this payment had remained incomplete. Moreover, although the government was to pay 8 TL monthly, that is to say that it was 92 liras for a year, it could pay only 5 TL monthly, in other words 60 TL for a year. By making a reduction of

⁸⁷⁴ Tezel, p.234

⁸⁷⁵ See The Yearbooks of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) were full of the lists of petition by the retired people to request salary increase or aid of the government. See The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.10. 1940-31.10. 1941), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1942), and The Yearbook of the GNAT, (1.11.1941-31.10.1942), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1943)

⁸⁷⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 835.299.1]

⁸⁷⁷ 9.4.1943, Tan

taxes from this amount, the teachers were able to receive only 42 TL for a year.⁸⁷⁸ In addition, most of the teachers did not receive this housing aid even in 1943.⁸⁷⁹

Another measure of the government about the housing problem of the lower and fixed income peoples was the ban on the increase in rents. But this ban remained only on paper. As stated above, the landlords resisted this ban in many ways.⁸⁸⁰ In addition, because of the war, the import of construction tools and materials was cut. This also caused an increase in rents by decreasing the supply.⁸⁸¹ Therefore some lower and fixed income people tried to solve their housing problem and high cost of housing by building squatters' houses (mantarevler or gecekondu). Thus, the first squatters' houses emerged and number of squatters' houses increased in the war period in İstanbul.⁸⁸² As Yavuz-Keleş-Geray argues, the emergence of squatter's houses was related to rising of poverty rather than migration from rural to urban areas in this period.⁸⁸³

In addition to the squatters' houses, many lower-income officials endured very bad housing conditions in this period. According to one observer, many state employees even in Ankara, the capital city, had to live in the rooms of old and cheap hotels and inns in miserable conditions.⁸⁸⁴ Therefore, as mentioned above, the government passed the

⁸⁷⁸ See. "Günün Meseleleri: Muallimlerin Mesken Bedeli," 21.12.1939, Tan

⁸⁷⁹ "İlkokul Öğretmenlerinin Mesken Bedelleri," 20.7.1943, Tan.

⁸⁸⁰ "To demand the vacating of the house by alleging that he himself was going to live there; to claim that repairs were going to be made to the house; to demand a extra money for central heating; to demand the price of a house completely furnished by putting a pieces of few furniture in the house; to write a lower price on the rental contract than the real price by agreeing with the tenants, and so on." See Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu, "Kira İhtikarı İle Mücadele," 31.3.1943, Cumhuriyet

Ruşen Keleş also underlined the fact that the dwellers of the squatter's houses were generally lower income and poor people. In other words, the proliferation of the squatter's hoses indicates the impoverishment of the people. See Ruşen Keleş, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Şehirleşme, Konut ve Gecekondu*, (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1972), p.178

⁸⁸¹ Mimar Zeki Sayar, "Buhran ve Bina İnşa Etmek Mecburiyeti," 21.12.1939, Tan

⁸⁸² Ruşen Keleş, pp.183-184. In addition, for housing problem in the press of the period, see Tan; Mediha Berkes, "Şehirlerde Nesebi Gayri Sahih Çocuklar," 4.08.1944, Tan; Behice Boran, "Mücrim Mahaller", *Yurt ve Dünya*, no.7, 1941

⁸⁸³ See Yavuz-Keleş-Geray, *Şehircilik, Sorunlar-Uygulama ve Politika*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi), p.662. In addition see Keleş, p.178

⁸⁸⁴ Ertuğrul Şevket, "Mesken Buhranı...", 29.1.1944, Tan

Housing Act for State Officials, No. 4626, in 1944.⁸⁸⁵ This also indicates that the problem increased and forced the state to take measures to solve the problem.

As for the governmental aid to the families of the soldiers, it was also unfunctional. First of all, there were many obstacles before the families of soldiers to benefit from it. The families of the runaway soldiers were excluded from this social aid.⁸⁸⁶ Second, if one of the family members of a soldier worked and earned even a small money, the family could not benefit from this aid.

However, the aid was so insignificant like 5 TL a month that it was not possible for a woman to maintain herself and her children unless she worked and had an income source other than this little money. In one case, upon the exclusion of the poor wife of soldier who worked as washerwomen from the governmental aid, because she had a source of income, this condition of the aid to families of soldiers was criticized:

According to the Law of Aid to the Families of Soldiers, it requires that the women of soldiers do not have a source of income to benefit from the aid. But the amount of the aid is 5 TL. Because the wives of soldiers cannot subsist with 5 TL monthly given by the Municipality, they have to work in part-time jobs as washerwomen or charwomen. If these women earned even a half lira daily, they were regarded as owners of income by the government and excluded from the aid. This is wrong!⁸⁸⁷

It is possible to see many complaint letters and petitions sent to the newspapers, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the RPP by the families and wives of soldiers. In these petitions they complained about their exclusion from the aid of the government to the families of soldiers and demanded the help of the government. Petitioners stated that they were in hard living conditions, owing to the conscription of their head of family, husbands or children by the army. This indicates that the exclusion practices from the aid were not exceptional, but a widespread fact.⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁵ Yavuz-Keleş-Geray, p.615

⁸⁸⁶ “Dahiliye Vekili Faik Öztrak BMM’de Asker Ailelerine Yardım Meselesi Hakkında Beyanatta Bulundu,” *AT*, no.84, (1-31 November 1940), p.34

⁸⁸⁷ 14.3.1942, Tan

⁸⁸⁸ Leyla Özdiç from Yozgat requested the salary of his husband who was conscripted into the army (p.290). Sabriye Çınar from Ilgaz requested the salary of his husband who was conscripted into the army (p.301). Meliha and her friends from Yozgat complained of the lack of implementation of the governmental aid for the families of soldiers (p.356). Fikriye Baltacı from Erzincan requested the help of the government because she

For instance, a poor woman named Safiye Arçın, from Şehremini, could not benefit from the aid because her daughter earned 21 TL monthly. So she wrote a complaint letter to *Cumhuriyet* and claimed that this was unjust:

Upon the conscription of my son, who supported his young brother in primary school and me, I applied to the state administration in order to benefit from the governmental aid to the families of soldiers. But my application was rejected on the grounds that my daughter who worked in the Tobacco Factory of the Monopoly Administration earned 21 TL monthly. In my opinion, these people who rejected my application are wrong.⁸⁸⁹

According to a petition sent to the RPP, a man named Tevfik Çağlar had a similar story. His two sons who were married and had children were recruited in the army. Therefore, their wives and children depended on him for their living, because they did not have any source of income. He had applied for benefits from the government's financial aid for the families of soldiers twice before but he did not receive any response. He applied to the RPP once again by means of a petition and requested financial aid.

I want to remind you of my petitions dated 12 December 1940 and 25 February 1941. I have not received your reply I waited until today. If you taken into consideration that because I sent my two sons whom I raised as a patriots for the safety of our country, the living of their wives and children are shouldered by me, you will see that I am the citizen deserving of the aid of the our RPP.⁸⁹⁰

According to an investigation report of a representative about the administrative works in his election district, he encountered many people's complaints about the governmental aid to the families of soldiers. According to the report sent to the Head of Congress of the RPP in İstanbul,

Among the demands and complaints of Safra village, a point attracted our attention and upset us at all the same time. This point is that they wanted the government to aid the poor families of the peasants who were conscripted into the army. This demand indicates that in spite of the legal obligation of the government such as

was poor and wife of a soldier (p.321). Hüseyin Yavuz from Kadıköy requested the help of the government because he was disabled and his son was in army (p.310). Emine Özkaya complained of the poverty because her husband and son were conscripted at the same time and requested help (p.322). It is possible to make list much longer. For the brief summaries of these kind of petitions see the Yearbook of the GNAT (1 October 1940-21 October 1941), (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1942)

⁸⁸⁹ "Bu Kadın Yardıma Muhtaç Değil midir?", 23.07.1943, *Cumhuriyet*

⁸⁹⁰ "To Memduh Şevket Esenal, the General Secretary of the RPP," PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3, (25.2.1945)]

aiding to the poor families of soldiers, this has not been implemented up to now. We think that this aid should be extended to the families of soldiers, who have not received such financial aid, not only in this village, but also in the other districts of the city, if there were such families who do not receive this aid.⁸⁹¹

Finally, people existed not only with their bodies and material needs, but also their psychology. When the fact that the poverty is sensed not only bodily, but psychologically is considered, it can be said that the social aid may prevent the material deprivation and harm of the poverty to the human body, but not prevent that the people feel poverty. On the contrary, as Necmi Erdoğan said, the poverty was much more sensible and public for the people, when they received aid.⁸⁹² From this point of view, it can be said that the state officials felt their poverty much more in this period, not only because of their poverty, but also the social aid they received. Leaving aside the material problems experienced during the social assistances, especially it can be thought that the hearth-breaking practices, transactions and bad treatment by the officials who distributed the social aid materials, and other problems stated above contributed their discontent rather than satisfaction.

The Activities of the Social Aid Department of the Peoples Houses during the War

The Social Aid Department of The People's Houses contributed to the poor relief programs of the government during the war period. It aided those poor people who did not benefit from the social aid program of the government mentioned above. More than that, the main object of the People's Houses was described as being to organize the social aid made by other charitable organizations and voluntary associations and to determine the

⁸⁹¹ Among the Demands of the Safra Village there was a demand for social aid to the families of soldier. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 162.646.1, (1943)] From Çatalca, it was demanded the social aid to the families of soldier PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 162.646.1, (1943)]

⁸⁹² See Necmi Erdoğan, *Yoksulluk*, (İstanbul: Demokrasi Kitaplığı, 2002), p.23, 26.

poor and lower income people who should be helped for the benefit of the nation.⁸⁹³ The People's Houses created a sphere between the interaction of the RPP and other charitable organizations by assisting these organizations. For instance, In January 1943, the People's Houses Social Aid Department, the RPP and other charitable organizations prepared together a list of the poor who would be helped.⁸⁹⁴ In this context, it provided the cooperation between the charitable associations and the RPP contributing the social aid activities of the associations. In addition, the People's Houses had to increase their social aid by reason of the social impact of the war.

It is possible to follow the social aid activities of the People's Houses during the war period from *Ülkü*. The social aid activities of the People Houses increased in 1942, 1943 and 1944 when the social and economic impact of the war was severely felt by the poor and lower income people. For instance, the People's House in Şişli started to provide free hot meal once a week to the poor lived in the district in January 1942.⁸⁹⁵ In addition, it distributed soap and beans to poor people.⁸⁹⁶ The People's House in Eminönü started to distribute 25 kilos of coal per house and two soaps per person in March 1943.⁸⁹⁷ In January 1944, the People's House in Beyoğlu gave clothes, rice and soap to 300 poor people.⁸⁹⁸ Besides this, the Social Aid Department enabled the medical treatment of the poor who were deprived of medical treatment, to some degree.⁸⁹⁹ The People's Houses in Anatolia also contributed to the poor relief programs of the government by initiating similar social aid campaigns.⁹⁰⁰

In spite of these aid activities, the extent of the social aid of the People's Houses remained limited during the war in comparison with the great dimensions of the poverty and high cost of living. The attempts of the People's Houses at the social aid accomplished

⁸⁹³ "Halkevleri ve Sosyal Yardım," *Ülkü*, (October 1939), p.165

⁸⁹⁴ 10.1.1943, Tan

⁸⁹⁵ 24.1.1942, Tan

⁸⁹⁶ 5.5.1942, Tan

⁸⁹⁷ 4.3.1943, Tan

⁸⁹⁸ 25.1.1944, Tan

⁸⁹⁹ 30. 11.1943, Vatan

little. For instance, it is understood from an article of a newspaper titled *Şişli People's House Should Be a Model for the Other People's Houses*, (Şişli Halkevi Diğerlerine Numune Olmalıdır) that the social aid activities of the People's Houses were generally insufficient to meet the needs. The article reported that the Şişli People's House distributed a hot meal once a week to the poor. And, according to article, this activity of the Şişli People's House should be an ideal model for the other People's Houses.⁹⁰¹

In an article, Zekeriya Sertel also criticized the People's Houses because of their insufficient social aid. He argued that it would be much more in accordance with reality and much more reasonable to call the People's Houses culture centers because they were not interested in social matters and social aid.⁹⁰²

The insufficiency of the social aid activities of the People's Houses can be seen from the reports of the deputies who made investigations in their election districts. For example, in a report on the social aid of the Party for the poor in İstanbul, the ineffectiveness and shortcomings of the Social Aid Department was emphasized by the reporter. According to the report, the People's Houses' role in the social aid to the families of soldiers was ineffective and unsatisfying due to certain limitations. First of all, the number of officials who were employed in the Social Aid Departments was not enough. They were not specialized in social aid and did not have sufficient knowledge about their job because they had their own personal occupations and concerns. Moreover, the boundaries of the districts for which the People's Houses were responsible were not definite. Because some quarters had not yet been named, the People's Houses did not keep in touch with the many quarters and know the people who lived in there. Therefore, the People's Houses were not able to determine all of the poor in their districts. Last but not least, because there was a great discrepancy between the fund set aside for social aid and

⁹⁰⁰ For example, see the list of these aid campaigns see *Ülkü*, (January 1940); *Ülkü*, (March 1941).

⁹⁰¹ "Şişli Halkevi Diğerlerine Numune Olmalıdır?", 24.1.1942, Tan

⁹⁰² 7.3.1943, Tan

the number of poor families, the People's Houses were unable to aid properly even the determined poor peoples.⁹⁰³

In addition, the poor relief programs of the People's Houses were implemented unsystematically and without consultation with the Social Aid Departments in sometimes. From the People's House in Adapazarı, Naci Bakırağ, who was a member of the Committee of the Social Aid Department, informed the head of the RPP in the district about this matter by letter. According to his letter, the People's House aided many people without informing the Social Aid Department unsystematically. He wrote that the social aid made by the People's Houses should be under the supervision of the Social Aid Department.⁹⁰⁴

The lack of effective organization and resources of the People's Houses set aside for the social aid to the poor was reflected in a novel, *There is No Cloud in the Sky* (Havada Bulut Yok) by Cevdet Kudret. Kudret who was a teacher of literature in Kayseri during the Second World War wrote at length about the efforts of the Social Aid Departments of the People's House in Kayseri during the war. Indeed, his novel illustrates properly the sufficiency of the People's Houses efforts of the social aid and the limitations and difficulties they encountered during the wartime. In addition, the novel underlined that this kind of local and palliative social aid activities accomplished very little to prevent the poverty, unless the state did not intervene in the poverty effectively.

Two years after the onset of the war, there appeared a scarcity in Kayseri. Poor people started to demand from the People's House jobs, coal and bread because the People's House symbolized the state to them. Therefore, the Social Aid Department of the People's House tried to increase its financial resources for social aid...After the collection of some money, it distributed boiled and pounded wheat, potatoes, grape molasses, and carrots to the people. But it was unable to satisfy all of the poor because of their great number...Because the People's House was not able to settle the social aid, a commission was established in order to determine the real poor systematically.

⁹⁰³ From the General Secretary of the RPP, A. F. Tüzer, to the Head of Committee of the Province Administration of the RPP, PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 468.1938.1, (3.12.1941)]

⁹⁰⁴ From the General Secretariat of the RPP to the Head of Committee of the Province Administration of the RPP in Adapazarı, PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3, (8.7.1944)]

...The poor people were called to take their allowances. But among these people there were those who were not registered on the list of the chief of the neighborhood (muhtar). Because they did not receive the goods which were distributed by the People's House, they made a big fuss and got angry at the officials and demanded flour and cereals...Women thought about nothing but food. They did not understand the official procedures...Women who were given a piece of food, came to the People's House together with a group including fifty women the following day. The People's House sent them to the Municipality. The Municipality oriented them to the chief of the neighborhood. Finally, they raided the bakery and snatched bread.

Some women came to the People's House the next day and said that their children suffered from hunger. They invited the officials of the People's House to their quarter, Güllük, to show their poverty. This quarter was highly populated by Kurdish people. The poverty was much higher than in the other quarters. In every house, there were partly naked women, children without pants, bedridden older people. Thin mattress filled with grass spread on the floor, which was marble, which had turned black with mud, oil, urine, feces, and all kinds of dirt.

The Social Aid Department gave these people ration cards for social aid and registered people who lived in inns, the ruins of *medrese* and the public baths, on the list of recipients. They amounted to two thousand. But the resources of the People's House were not adequate for these people. Therefore, the Social Aid Department lessened the allowances of each person in order to distribute aid to many more people. As for Armainans who lived in the ruins of churches in the distant part of the city, they did not apply to the People's House. They remained unknown to the People's House.

Süleyman, a teacher who made effort mostly in the social aid of the People's House started to worry about how the war affected the poor in other parts of the country. He thought that the poverty should be removed instead of the palliative acts of the social aid. The efforts of the People's House were striking. Without state support, this local kind of struggle with poverty functioned only for a short period. The social aid efforts of the People's House and the difficulties experienced during these efforts indicate that the state did not reach all the parts of the country because of its limited budget.⁹⁰⁵

Social Aid and the "Civil Society" The Social Aid of the Charitable Association of Turkey (Türkiye Yardımsevenler Cemiyeti) during the War

In addition to the state, many non-governmental organizations took their part in the social aid process during the Second World War. Among these organizations, the Charitable Association of Turkey (Yardım Sevenler Cemiyeti) was one of the most significant ones. This institution was established in 1928 under the name of the Women's Aid Society before it took the name of the Charitable Association of Turkey in 1938. The

center of the Charitable Association of Turkey was in Ankara. The founder of the association was Mevhibe İnönü while the presidency of the association was held by Hayriye Kırdar, who was the wife of Lütfi Kırdar, the mayor of İstanbul.⁹⁰⁶

The Charitable Association of Turkey dealt extensively with social aid activities through manipulating all the opportunities provided by the government. Especially, it managed to mobilize women in order to provide medical supplies and to sew clothes for the military. In doing this it worked on the popular perception of women's role in Turkish society.

The poverty and the perception of external threat created by the war encouraged the Charitable Association to broaden its field of activity and establish a branch in İstanbul. The decision to establish this branch was taken in a meeting held in the residence of Hayriye Kırdar by the leading women of İstanbul. Lütfi Kırdar, the governor of İstanbul and the Head of Administrative Committee of the *RPP* (Parti İdare Heyeti Reisi) Reşat Mimaroglu were also attendants of the meeting. The Board of Directors was decided to be composed of some elites, wealthier persons and bureaucrats such as Hayriye Kırdar, Naile Tevfik Sağlam, Safiye Hüseyin, Hasene Ilgaz and Dr. Semiramis.

The Charitable Association would carry out its activities in a bureau organized within the Eminönü branch of Peoples' Houses. It would take steps so as to ease the tasks undertaken by the non-governmental social aid activities during the war. It would improve the current voluntary courses of nurse and the infrastructural capacities of the local hospitals, set up shelters in the wartime, inform people about passive protection and camouflage, help indigent children, provide clean water and food in neglected districts, and convince women to work in the strategic services such as telephone, telegraph and mail

⁹⁰⁵ See Çılgın, p.38-40

⁹⁰⁶ Vedat Dicleli, "Yoksulluk ve Sosyal Yardım Şekilleri", *Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, no.1, 1946, p.118

services.”⁹⁰⁷ Thereby the Charitable Association defined its sphere of activity on a plane shared with the government. On this plane it would serve the similar targets with the state.

In 1941 the Society issued a manifestation calling women to take responsibility in the social matters. Mevhibe İnönü invited women to work in the production of military-medical materials such as bandages and first aid kits, and in the ateliers producing bed sheets. She also called women to “take their sides in the defense of the motherland by healing their husbands, attending courses training nurse’s aid, and helping the needy.”⁹⁰⁸ Some women from İstanbul University, including many assistants and associate professors, declared that they were ready to fulfill every duty in the national defense.⁹⁰⁹

In addition to providing technical training of service behind the front, the Charitable Association concentrated its efforts mainly in the field of social aid.⁹¹⁰ Parallel to the government’s concerns, in the winter of 1942, it took serious measures to guarantee the expansion of activities of social aid such as the organization of balls, conferences and various campaigns.⁹¹¹

As noted by Vedat Dicleli, the organization dealt mainly with the problems of employment of the poor by opening workhouses and dispensaries, providing medical aid to poor women before and after birth, protecting indigent people who were not able to work and neglected children, showing concern for the conditions of young women, and providing social service for “the general good of society.”⁹¹² The Charitable Association distributed medicine for the needy patients, placed tuberculoses patients to the sanatoriums, provided cloth for the little children, helped the young women who were about to marry and neglected people who were hard hit by earthquakes and fires.⁹¹³

⁹⁰⁷ “İstanbul Kadınları Dün Partide Toplandı”, 29.4.1941, Tan

⁹⁰⁸ “Türk Kadını İş Başında”, 26.4.1941, Tan; “İstanbul Kadınları Dün Partide Toplandı”, 29.4.1941, Tan

⁹⁰⁹ “Vatan Hizmetinde Vazife Alacak Kadınlarımız”, 29.4.1941, Tan

⁹¹⁰ Dicleli, p.118

⁹¹¹ 15.9.1941, Tan

⁹¹² Dicleli, p.118

⁹¹³ *ibid.*, p.118. In addition see “Memlekette Vatan,” 7.1.1944, Vatan

The Association carried out special activities for the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the Republic. For instance, it carried out an extended social program for poor children in Muş.⁹¹⁴ It also provided clothing for 105 poor children on the Marmara islands.⁹¹⁵

The Association also sought to create job opportunities for the poor.⁹¹⁶ For the women and little girls whose husbands or fathers were conscripted into the army, the Association provided opportunities to work in the sewing and handicraft ateliers and thus earn their livings.⁹¹⁷ Thus the poor people would be disciplined in the work and would not become a threat to social morality. Being a part of the production process would make them a part of society.

In an article in *Tan*, a member of the association, Rabia Tevfik Başoku called everyone to help the poor wives of soldiers and children, and praised the Charitable Association for its activities in the field. A central concern of the Association was “to find convenient jobs for the wives of soldiers and to listen the sorrow of the poor.”⁹¹⁸ She stated how the Association managed to help a little poor child as follows: “He will grow up, become educated and trained; and he will wear his sword. Then he will fly after the enemy planes and shoot hundreds of them.”⁹¹⁹

One of the most important conclusions drawn from the acceleration of its activities during the war years is the fact that the war affected negatively Turkish society and compelled the elites and middle classes to accelerate charity work. The Charitable Association was pioneered by the elites, urban-based middle classes, bourgeoisie and university students, and in close relationship with the government, sought to mobilize the public to support and contribute to social aid programs of the state because of the social

⁹¹⁴ “Muşta Yardımsevenler Faaliyeti,” 1.11.1943, *Vatan*

⁹¹⁵ “Yoksul Çocuklara Yardım,” 1.11.1943, *Tan*

⁹¹⁶ Dicleli, p.118

⁹¹⁷ See *ibid.*, p.118

⁹¹⁸ Rabia Tevfik Başoku, “Yardıma Muhtaç Ana ve Yavruları da Düşünelim,” 10.9.1941, *Tan*

⁹¹⁹ *ibid*

effect of the war. It especially tried to push women into the public sphere in order to widen the public sphere about social aid activities. It was a good example of cooperation and interaction between the government and “civil society” during the war years.

The Social Aid Activities and the Soup Kitchens of The Association of the Red Crescent of Turkey

The Red Crescent expanded its activities during the war in order to ensure that the extreme poverty and the natural disasters which increased in wartime would not become a source of social risk. Compared to other organizations' social aid activities, the Red Crescent concentrated its activities on the cases of extreme poverty and natural disasters. It provided food for the people who are in the state of extreme poverty and the victims of disasters by establishing soup kitchens. The Red Crescent also provided tents and clothing for these people. The RPP and wealthy people, businessmen were the biggest donors to the Red Crescent. The Red Crescent often emphasized their role in its activities and thus served for their legitimacy. But its activities remained mostly unsatisfactory and were subjected to many criticisms by the recipients dissatisfied by the social aid, excluded people from social aid, and the press of the period.

The primary activity of the Red Crescent in the war years was the establishment of the soup kitchens. The soup kitchens served mainly for the urban poor and districts hard-hit by earthquakes, which occurred more repeatedly in the war period. Before the establishment of soup kitchens, the Red Crescent had been helped the needy people by distributing food, clothing and money. In May 1942, the total worth of aid made for the poor reached 4900 TL, while it was 1082 TL and 27.212 TL for the tubercular and children, respectively.⁹²⁰

⁹²⁰ “Bir yılda Kızılay”, *Kızılay*, no.5, (May 1942), p.44

However, these aid programs proved to be unsatisfactory could not meet the need in view of the growing poverty especially in 1942 and 1943. From 1943 on, the Red Crescent expanded its activities towards ensuring the minimum living conditions of the poor who are struggling against hunger. The periodical of the Red Crescent announced that it would start helping the poor of Istanbul “as the food deficiency and the increasing cost of living have increased the difficulties for the poor families.” Accordingly, soup kitchens would be established for the feeding of the poor.⁹²¹

These soup kitchens were financed by the RPP and by some leading figures from among the industrialists and merchants. As of February 1944, the financial aid of the RPP for the soup kitchens amounted to 460.000 TL. When the issue first came into the agenda, the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce agreed to donate 200,000 TL to the Association. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce would encourage its members to support the soup kitchens.⁹²² In November 1943 the Committee called for a new campaign to increase the number and the capacity of the kitchens so as to serve for up to 30.000 people.⁹²³ In 1944 the Chamber of Commerce and declared its support for the campaign by donating 600.000 TL.⁹²⁴ Later the local notables would also give support to the soup kitchens. For instance, in Adana the committee of the newly established kitchens was composed of members of these local elites.⁹²⁵ It is worth noting that the names of the donors who were industrialists or merchants mostly were declared to the public by the press.⁹²⁶

In 1943, a meeting was organized in the Istanbul mayoralty in which the forms of aid to the poor and neglected children were discussed. The Minister of Trade, Dr. Behçet Uz, some members of the RPP, the People’s Houses, the presidents of Chamber of Commerce and Tradesmen, the members of Stock Exchange, the representatives of the Red

⁹²¹ “16.000 Yoksul Vatandaşa Sıcak Yemek Veriliyor”, *Kızılay*, no.7, (October 1942), p.3

⁹²² “16.000 Yoksul Vatandaşa Sıcak Yemek Veriliyor”, *Kızılay*, no.7, (October 1942), p.22

⁹²³ “Yoksullara Yardım”, 16.11.1943, *Vatan*

⁹²⁴ “Sönmiyen Ocaklar Karşısında,” 26.1.1944, *Tan*

⁹²⁵ “Adana’da Zenginler Yardıma Başladı,” 13.4.1943, *Yeni Adana*

⁹²⁶ See “Yoksullara Yardım,” 16. 11.1943, *Vatan*

Crescent attended the meeting.⁹²⁷ In the meeting the feeding of the poor in the soup kitchens by Red Crescent was decided. In addition, Red Crescent would distribute soap and underwear to the poor.⁹²⁸

The soup kitchens started operating in January 1943, at the same time with the government's aid program for the poor. The kitchens established in Laleli, Eyüp, Karagömrük, Topkapı, Kartal and Beşiktaş provided hot food for 16.300 people in January.⁹²⁹ In a short period the number of these kitchens rose to 20 in Istanbul, serving for some 5.000 people in a day.⁹³⁰ Along with İstanbul, the soup kitchens were also established in the urban centers of İzmir, Ankara, Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, Bursa, Samsun Trabzon, Maraş and Malatya.⁹³¹

The people who benefited from the soup kitchens were chosen by the government and the RPP and were distributed coupons and cards against which the foods were distributed. Only those who had obtained the coupons could regularly get food from the soup kitchens.⁹³² The soup kitchens gave a fixed one kind of meal consisted of beans, boiled and pounded wheat, chickpeas or lentil for each day.⁹³³

The soup kitchens were symbolic in the sense that they made visible the rising of poverty and hunger during the Second World War. The public sphere around the soup kitchen indicates the poverty of the people during the war. There were many people who came to the soap kitchens with copper pots without tins. Some of them who did not possess any pots or saucepan came with a piece of paper, ewer and even colanders. Some people ate their allowances with their hand as soon as they received them.⁹³⁴

⁹²⁷ "Yoksullara Yardım", 18.9.1943, Vatan

⁹²⁸ ibid

⁹²⁹ F.Fenik, "Kızılayın Yoksullar İçin Kaynıyan Kazanları", *Kızılay*, no.8, (February 1943), p.8

⁹³⁰ Ahmed İhsan, "Yoksul Üniversite Talebesi İçin", *Kızılay*, no.8, (February 1943), p.6

⁹³¹ See 6.2.1943, Son Posta; 8.1.1943 Son Posta; 30.1. 1943, Son Posta; Ahmed İhsan, "Yoksul Üniversite Talebesi İçin..." *Kızılay*, no.8, (February 1943), p.6

⁹³² "16.000 Yoksul Vatandaşa Sıcak Yemek Veriliyor," *Kızılay*, no.7, (October 1942), p.22

⁹³³ Fenik, p.8

⁹³⁴ ibid, p.8

As noted before, the Red Crescent also tried to diminish the poverty by providing various aids in the form of delivering food, clothing and money to the needy. For example, in 1941 it provided aid to the poor people in the Black Sea region worth of 90.000 TL. Aid worth of 58.000 TL was provided for the homeless children in Ankara and İstanbul.⁹³⁵ Financial aid worth of 2000 TL was distributed to the poor peasants of Trabzon.⁹³⁶ A number of aid programs were carried out on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Republic. 5500 pieces of cloth were distributed to the People's Houses to be distributed by the Social Aid Departments. Another 1200 pieces were made available to the poor students. There were also woolen skirts and shirts prepared for women.⁹³⁷

The Red Crescent also dealt with the problems of the victims of natural disasters. During the war Turkey witnessed many disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides which brought together numerous social problems and aggravation. The Red Crescent's ability to take immediate action in these cases was crucial in the sense of diminishing the potential of social risk.⁹³⁸

In addition, the Red Crescent was active in mobilizing the citizens for launching campaigns to collect clothing and donations for the military, which had an ever-expanding financial burden on the government expenditures because of the military mobilization. In 1942, the total value of the donations collected amounted approximately one million TL.⁹³⁹ Thus it served to socialize the government expenditures for social services.

It is noteworthy that the actions of the Red Crescent proved to be insufficient in view of the growing social problems stemming from the threat of hunger and natural disasters during the world war. In the press, the Red Crescent was subjected to criticism

⁹³⁵ "1 Cumhuriyet Yılında Kızılay...", *Kızılay*, no.1, 1941, p.3

⁹³⁶ *Kızılay*, no.10, (August 1943), p.7

⁹³⁷ See "Fakir Halka Giyecek Eşyası Dağıtılacak," 29.10.1943, *Vatan*

⁹³⁸ "Kızılay Yurdun İçinde ve Dışında Muhtaç Olan Kimselere 2.772.572 Liralık Yardım Yaptı," *Kızılay*, no.1, 1941, p.3; *Kızılay*, no.10, (August 1943), p.7; "Kızılay Haberleri," *Kızılay*, no.13, (April 1944), p.38; Yardımların listesi için See *Kızılay*, no.17, 1945, p.121

⁹³⁹ "Bir yılda Kızılay", *Kızılay*, no.5, (May 1942), p.4

because of the disorganized and unsystematic nature of its actions and abusive usage of its funds.

In many cases, the Red Crescent was unable to take immediate action because of its infrastructural inadequacy. The 1939 earthquake was exemplary in this sense. Many people died in the mountain villages from cold and hunger before the arrival of Red Crescent.⁹⁴⁰ Besides, the foodstuffs delivered to the victims of disasters were reported to be spoilt. Because of unsystematic distribution of the aid materials, some people could not even get a piece of shirt while some received get a bag of aid materials.⁹⁴¹ Again, in Tokat, many people who survived were reported to be in miserable conditions. It was written in the press that “many citizens are suffering from the insufficiency of the service of the Red Crescent.”⁹⁴²

The Director of Health in Kırklareli, Dr. Asaf Aydunal, who reported his observations after the Düzce earthquake in the early 1944 pointed out the inadequacy of the actions of Red Crescent. He reported that “tents are quantitatively insufficient. 200 tents distributed do not meet the need here. Over a thousand tents are needed immediately... Many people have become ill because of the rain and the heavy storm”⁹⁴³

In her article entitled “Organization, Organization, Organization” (Teşkilat, Teşkilat, Teşkilat), Zekeriya Sertel recorded that the Red Crescent lacked the required equipment such as tents and vehicles, and personnel to tackle the earthquakes of 1943 and 1944, and other natural disasters.⁹⁴⁴

The practice of soup kitchens was not less problematic. There were many people who were close to the borderline of hunger and could not obtain the soup kitchen coupons.

⁹⁴⁰ “Dağ Köyleri 10 Gündür Yardımsız,” 7.1.1940, Tan

⁹⁴¹ “Felaketzedelere Yapılan Tevziat Çok Bozuktur,” 17.1.1940, Tan

⁹⁴² “Çok Hazin Levhalar,” 2.1.1940, Tan

⁹⁴³ “Dahiliye Vekili Düzceye Gitti,” 8.2.1944, Tan

⁹⁴⁴ Zekeriya Sertel, “Teşkilat, Teşkilat, Teşkilat,” 30.1.1944, Tan

According to Faruk Fenik, many poor people were waiting in front of the soup kitchens with empty cans in their hands, begging for “a piece of food.”⁹⁴⁵

Those who benefited from the provisions were not happy either. A common grievance about the soup kitchens was the small quantity of food distributed. For example, an 80 years old poor man complained to İmre Servet about the meagerness of the bread distributed and said that the food kept them alive, but did not satisfy their hunger. A child waiting in the queue for food asked him for money to buy bread.⁹⁴⁶

These examples exhibit clearly the dissatisfaction of the poor both those who benefited and those who were excluded from the provisions of the soup kitchens. Those who were excluded from the system were trying to voice their grievances by writing to the newspapers. For example a poor woman, Hacer, wrote a letter to *Cumhuriyet* and complained that the soup kitchens refused to help her:

There is no one that I can lean on. I am a poor woman. Although I obtained certificates from Fatih municipality and from the district association that proves my needfulness, I cannot get food from the soup kitchen in our district. The soup kitchens should help people like us.⁹⁴⁷

A 12 year old boy, İsmail, who was interviewed by Said Kesler said that the Red Crescent and the soup kitchens did not give food his family any help even though his parents were too old and sick:

We are five with me, my father, mother and two brothers. My father is old and very ill. He works as a porter to earn money. But he cannot earn enough. My mother works too. But she earns less. But the prefect in our district does not give them food. He says, ‘You should work to earn your food.’ ‘I give food only to children.’⁹⁴⁸

A young woman waiting at the same soup kitchen with her baby protested the exclusion of her husband and her mother-in-law from the provision list:

They do not give food to my husband and his mother, who is living with us. My husband is disabled, he cannot see. Although he cannot see he makes baskets at home. I cannot work because I have children. The prefect gives food to me for the

⁹⁴⁵ Fenik, p.8

⁹⁴⁶ İmre Servet, “Laleli İmarethesinin Canlı Sefalet Levhaları Arasında,” 2.8.1944, Tan

⁹⁴⁷ “Halkın Şikayeti,” 12.2.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁴⁸ Said Kesler, “Kızılay ve Parti Yoksullara Nasıl Yardım Ediyor,” 19.11.1943, Tan

children. He says, 'your mother-in-law should work like your husband.' But she cannot, she is too old.⁹⁴⁹

On the other hand, the Red Crescent was subject to criticism for the illegal use of its resources and donations. It was claimed that 100.000 TL had been stolen from the budget of the organization. In a speech in the National Assembly, Kazım Karabekir claimed that corruption might have captured the institution as a whole.⁹⁵⁰

To conclude, the Red Crescent tried to serve the legitimacy of the government and prevent the social and natural risk factors by contributing to the poor relief. The social aid of the Red Crescent was portrayed as a kindness and service of the elite to the people. The consent and confidence of the poor in the party and regime were sought in this way. Indeed, sometimes the leading figures of the party, such as governors participated in the opening of the soup kitchens. In some places the head of the party attended the distributions of the meals in the soup kitchens.⁹⁵¹ Again the recipients of the soap kitchens were determined by the party. The coupons of the meals were distributed by the party. In some national days the Red Crescent organized extra social aid activities.

However, it ran into many structural problems, capacity restrictions and a general lack of sufficient financial resources and equipment. It was not able to reach and assist all of the poor and disaster victims. From another point of view, the soup kitchens which proliferated during the war period symbolized and indicated the rising of poverty and inequality in Turkish society. As Refik Halid Karay noted, "there were shopwindows displaying appetizers, pastry-shops on one side, and soap kitchens on the other side."⁹⁵²

The War, Health Problems and the War against Disease

⁹⁴⁹ ibid.

⁹⁵⁰ Kazım Karabekir, *Ankara'da Savaş Rüzgarları*, yay.haz. Faruk Özerengin, (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2000), p.270

⁹⁵¹ "Edirne'de Kızılay'ın Aşevleri," 6.2.1943, Son Posta

⁹⁵² Refik Halit Karay, "Bir Yanda Aş Ocakları, Bir Yanda Mezeci Vitrinleri," 28.2.1944, Tan

Warfare and disease are closely linked. The historical record is crowded with association between war and the outbreak of major epidemics.⁹⁵³ In Turkey, the health problems and epidemics jumped because of the Second World War.

Table 20-Causes of Death in İstanbul between 1940-1944.⁹⁵⁴

Causes	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	
Typhus		71	121	166	93	70
Old Age		846	859	1116	1099	920
Tuberculosis		1493	1585	2060	2105	1972
Other Tuberculosis		344	354	474	500	494
Heart Diseases		2806	2682	3304	2990	2839
Pneumonia		1899	1550	2111	1825	1802
Alcoholism		208	250	434	656	337
Intestinal Diseases such as Dysentery		68	587	1072	662	836

As can be seen from the Table 20, in 1941 and 1942, the incidence of typhus increased approximately two times. In 1942 the reports of intestinal problems doubled. Compared to 1940 and 1941, tuberculosis and cardiac problems advanced to higher levels in 1942 and 1943. As will be described in the following pages, although the government struggled against malaria and decreased its frequency considerably in the pre-war period, it increased rapidly during the period under study. This increase in health problems indicates that the war aggravated the social and economic conditions of the people.

As recorded before, the human body and the population have become the main field on which modern state established its authority and reproduced its legitimacy and power in the modern age. The population and its capacity were considered as the source of power by the modern state. As Gordon says, “the real basis of the state wealth and power lies in its

⁹⁵³ Alexander Alland, “War and Disease:An Anthropological Perspective,” in *War, The Anthropology of Armed Conflicts and Agression*, Morton Fried, Marvin Harris and Robert Murphy (ed.), (New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1968), p.65

⁹⁵⁴ S.Yerasimos, *Az gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye*, vol. 3, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1992), p.153

population in the strength and productivity of all and each.”⁹⁵⁵ In this respect, the enemies of the modern state are not only external states and revolutionary movements, but also the diseases, epidemics and some microorganisms which destroy the human body and the strength of the population on which the state is constructed. In this respect, the struggle against these enemies is related to the economic productivity and power of the state. Since the modern power and the RPP perception of health was recorded before, I only give an example of following words of the Prof. Muhittin Erel, as an elite perception of the health policy and of struggle against the disease here. According to Erel:

It can be argued easily that in countries where the struggle against insects is not implemented properly, the financial losses might double the state budget.⁹⁵⁶ It is possible to estimate the great losses in the general and private budget due to the costs of the medical treatment of ill people and due to the decrease in productivity and profits of the national capital as a result of losses of working days or death. For example, when we take into account that the national security might be under threat because malaria would decrease the population growth and make the country a desert, and that the nation might be defeated by the enemies in a war because typhus destroyed a triumphant army, and that the human life have a spiritual value, we can say that the harm of the insects has great importance.⁹⁵⁷

In this context, the strength of the state and state’s relations with the society cannot be understood with respect to the high-policy and foreign politics, but also the health policy and struggle against the diseases. In this respect, the state in Turkey during the wartime struggled against the increasing health problems and epidemics. But it ran into many capacity problems, structural insufficiencies and shortcomings. Thus the insufficiencies in the social control capacity state and in its penetration into society became much more apparent.

The state was unable to allot sufficient financial resources to the health policy and struggle against epidemics. The health expenditures in the state budget halved because of

⁹⁵⁵ Colin Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies on Governmentality*, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (ed.), (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) p.10

⁹⁵⁶ Muhiddin Erel, “Şehirlerde Haşerat Mücadelesi,” 2. *Üniversite Haftası*, Diyarbakır, 1.6.1941-7.6.1941, İ.Ü. Yayınları, no:151, (İstanbul: Kenan Basımevi, 1941), p.99

⁹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp.100-101

rise in national security costs.⁹⁵⁸ Even in 1943, when epidemics increased considerably, the financial resources which were allotted to the struggle against the epidemics decreased. Muhtar Berker, a representative from İçel, underlined that the financial appropriation of the government for the struggle against epidemics was not sufficient and had decreased during the war.

There were many epidemics in many places of the country and in İçel, which is my election district, last year. I saw local organizations and local means fall short in the struggle against these epidemics. While examining the general budget, I saw also that the appropriations for the struggle against the epidemics were less than in the previous year. Whereas it was 112.000 TL, it was reduced to only 98 TL this year.⁹⁵⁹

There were not sufficient hospitals, beds in hospitals, doctors, health officials, dispensaries, sanatoriums or medicines. As Dr. Emin Kıcıman recorded in the pages of *The Periodical of the Municipality* (Belediye Mecmuası),

The numbers of the diseased peoples and patients and their aftermaths caused many caustic disasters every day. The capacities of the hospitals in İstanbul do not suffice for existing diseased peoples and patients.⁹⁶⁰

In addition, the 500 doctors of the Ministry of Health were recruited in the army because of the war. Thus, many districts in Turkey were deprived of even one doctor. In the National Assembly, it was recorded that the conscription of the doctors into the army intensified the deprivation of doctor throughout the country during the war.⁹⁶¹

In addition, because Turkey did not have sufficient industrial complexes to produce many important medicines and medical means in this period, it was dependent on imported medical means and medicines. Therefore, cuts in imports also caused a shortage of medicine.⁹⁶² Domestically produced, ineffective and poor quality medicines dominated the

⁹⁵⁸ See the Table given by Yahya Sezai Tezel, p.447

⁹⁵⁹ The Minutes of the GNAT, 25.5.1943, p.198

⁹⁶⁰ See Dr. Emin Kıcıman, "Sihhat İşleri," *Belediye Mecmuası*, no.180-181, 1940, p.15

⁹⁶¹ The Minutes of the GNAT, 25.5.1943, p.200

⁹⁶² Dr. Yaşar Aksoy, *Bir Kent Bir İnsan, İzmir'in Son Yüzyılı*, N.F. Eczacıbaşı'nın Yaşamı ve Anıları, (İstanbul: Dr.N.F. Eczacıbaşı Yayınları, 1986), p.247

market.⁹⁶³ The people and the government suffered from the lack of sufficient medicine for epidemics such as typhus, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases.

The struggle against three epidemics, typhus, tuberculosis and malaria, which increased owing to the war, was one of the most important fronts of the Turkish state and the people during the Second World War in Turkey. In general, Turkish historiography remind the success of the Turkish government in foreign policy and political control over the high politics, but not the struggle against the epidemics and diseases which were much nearer enemies than the Nazis to the Turkish people in everyday life during the war. Therefore, in spite of the successful maneuvers in diplomacy in order to keep out of the war, it can be though that the insufficient health services of the state and insufficient struggle against the epidemics and diseases which caused great difficulties for the people, determined the attitude of the people to the RPP in post-war period.

The War and the War against Typhus

A historian of medicine, Dorothy Porter, writes that the origin of typhus is related to the economic conditions of the people. For her, “typhus was a disease of overcrowding and poverty, and it expanded along with the urban expansion of the European trading cities and centers. It was thus only one of a host of new infectious indigenous to urban poverty...”⁹⁶⁴ Indeed, during the Second World War in Turkey, especially in 1943, because of the high cost of living and poverty, typhus reached epidemic proportions. In 1943, there were 167 cases in January, 269 in February, 436 in March, 747 in April and 698 in May and 398 cases in the first half of the June.⁹⁶⁵ As of the first half of the year, the number of

⁹⁶³ “Yerli İlaçlar,” *Yeni Ses*, no.2, 1939

⁹⁶⁴ Dorothy Porter, p.48

⁹⁶⁵ “Tifüs Mücadelesi,” 16.6.1943, *Cumhuriyet*,

typhus cases amounted to 2715. News about the rising of typhus was frequent in the newspapers of the period.⁹⁶⁶

As a first measure, the Ministry of Health appropriated 250 beds in certain hospitals and two vehicles for the typhus carriers. The organization of health established a telephone line in order to be informed about typhus cases.⁹⁶⁷ In addition, the Health Commission which gathered in June 1943 took some decision in order to prevent the disease:

- 1) Rags were to be confiscated and stored in certain places. These would be sold in only certain places.
- 2) The trade of the secondhand goods was banned. Ragmen and junk dealers were forbidden to do business in the streets.
- 3) Third class cinemas were to be closed down for a month,
- 4) Dirty coffeehouses were to be closed down
- 5) It was forbidden for dirty and lousy people to take shelter in coffeehouses, ports, and steamships.⁹⁶⁸

In Ankara, a plan was prepared for the struggle against typhus. According to the plan, the Ministry of Trade would make efforts to decrease the price of soap; the Ministry of Agriculture would facilitate the distribution of coal and firewood to the needy; the Ministry of Communication would improve hygienic conditions in mass transportation and solve the extreme crowding of trams in İstanbul.⁹⁶⁹ Indeed, during the war period, the crowded trams became a problem for the people, because of the insufficiencies in transportation means stemming from the lack of imported spare parts. So the vehicles which broke down could not be repaired.⁹⁷⁰ In addition, according to the plan, a steam box which was to be used to kill the louse in clothes would be provided to all villages.⁹⁷¹

In İstanbul, the municipality started to investigate the hygienic conditions in the slums and to collect the dirty and lousy people to be cleaned in the public baths. The porters in the marketplace of vegetables were collected by the police. After that, they were

⁹⁶⁶ “Tifüsle Çok Şiddetli Mücadele Lazım!” 27.5.1943, Cumhuriyet; R.Halit Karay, “Kaşınandan ve Kaşınmaktan Korktuğumuz Günler,” 30.5.1943, Tan.

⁹⁶⁷ “Tifüsle Mücadele,” 29.5.1943, Vatan

⁹⁶⁸ “Tifüsü Önlemek İçin İstanbul Sıhhat Meclisi Mühim Kararlar Aldı,” 8.6.1943, Vatan

⁹⁶⁹ “Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Bir Program Hazırlandı,” 17.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁷⁰ See Eser Tutel, “İstanbul’da Atlı Tramvaylardan Modern Metroya,” *75 Yılda Değişen Yaşam Değişen İnsan: Cumhuriyet’in Modaları, Bilanço ’98*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), p.290

⁹⁷¹ “Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Bir Program Hazırlandı,” 17.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

sent to the public baths after their hair were cut.⁹⁷² Similarly, beggars and vagrants in the streets were collected by the police and subjected the similar procedures. Their hairs were cut and they sent to the public baths group by group.⁹⁷³ In June 1943 in İstanbul, the police searched some houses in the slums and sent 780 people to the public bath.⁹⁷⁴ In accordance with the Law of Public Hygiene, medical examination reports of those who sold foodstuffs and those people who were barbers, waiters, porters, carters or engaged in similar jobs came under the close scrutiny of the municipality.⁹⁷⁵

In addition, the government started to check people newly arrived to İstanbul, in order to prevent the flow of dirty and lousy people into the city. So people arriving from Anatolia were subjected to medical inspections. For this aim, cleaning bureaus were established in the ports of Galata, Tophane, Sirkeci and the railway station in Sirkeci.⁹⁷⁶ Moreover, those dirty and lousy people who came from Anatolia were sent back to Anatolia as soon as they were caught by the police.⁹⁷⁷

The government made an effort to educate the people about typhus, its symptoms and palliative measures against it. Indeed, the government encountered difficulties that originated from the lack of support of the people to the struggle. As will be described in the following pages, the people did not obey the measures and the Law of the Public Hygiene and resisted the measures taken by the state. Therefore, the government needed propaganda to convince the people to join in the struggle against typhus. For example, Tevfik Sağlam made a speech about typhus and typhus prevention methods on Radio İstanbul (İstanbul Radyosu).⁹⁷⁸

In addition, the newspapers published posters, notices and illustrations about the damage of typhus, louse and about the preventive measures in order to stimulate the public

⁹⁷² “Tifüsle Mücadele,” 15.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁷³ 29.5.1943, Vatan.

⁹⁷⁴ “Tifüs Mücadelesi,” 16.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁷⁵ “Tifüse Karşı,” 2.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁷⁶ “Tifüsle Mücadele,” 26.7.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁷⁷ “Tifüs Mücadelesi,” 16.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁷⁸ “Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Bir Program Hazırlandı,” 17.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

attendance and interest in the struggle against the disease. They often educated the people about the typhus and advised to them to clean their bodies, clothes and to kill the louse.⁹⁷⁹ As propaganda instruments, some posters and notices which illustrated the louse, their damage to the human body, and some cautions and advice about the typhus struggle were posted in public places.⁹⁸⁰ As of January 1944, the government distributed 130.000 posters and pamphlets about the matter.⁹⁸¹

In order to inform the people about the typhus struggle to eradicate it and the importance of the typhus vaccine, a film was made in by the People's House in Ankara to be shown in the cinemas before films began.⁹⁸² Another film about the typhus struggle made by the General Directorate of the Press (Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü) started to shown in July 1943 in the Cinema Marmara.⁹⁸³

The People's Houses also contributed to the war against typhus by means of some social aid. They delivered soap to the poor and sanitized their clothes and underwear in steam boxes so as to kill the louse.⁹⁸⁴ The People's House in Eminönü came to an agreement with two public baths to allow the poor to bathe free of charge. Other People's Houses also started to distribute soap to the poor.⁹⁸⁵

In this process, wealthier peoples, industrialists and merchants also financially supported the government's war against typhus. For example, traders in Eyüp donated 5000 TL for the struggle against typhus.⁹⁸⁶ The many other merchants in İstanbul merchants donated 1500 TL for the purpose of the distribution of soap to the poor.⁹⁸⁷

⁹⁷⁹ "Bitten Kendimizi Koruyalım," 6.6.1943 Tan; 29.5.1943 Tan

⁹⁸⁰ "Hastalıklar ve Tabelalar," 8.8.1943, Tan

⁹⁸¹ 8.1.1944, Tan

⁹⁸² "Tifüs İçin Bir Film Hazırlandı," 11.7.1943, Vatan

⁹⁸³ 15.7.1943, Vatan

⁹⁸⁴ "Tifüs Mücadelesi Hayli Hızlandı," 29.5.1943, Tan

⁹⁸⁵ "Tifüsle Mücadele," 15.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁸⁶ "Tifüsü önlemek için İstanbul Sıhhat Meclisi Mühim Kararlar Aldı," 8.6.1943, Vatan.

⁹⁸⁷ "Tifüse karşı yoksullara parasız sabun vermeliyiz," 7.6.1943 Tan.

The soap and delousing were considered the most important weapons against typhus⁹⁸⁸ because the cost of these ways of struggle was less than the cost of medical treatment, medicine and vaccine. There were no sufficient medicines in the market or in the hands of the state. Moreover, the government was able to appropriate only a limited amount of financial resource to the health services in the general budget. Therefore, in the discourse of the bureaucrats, the struggle against the typhus was the struggle against the louse and filth.⁹⁸⁹ However, as the prices of soap increased sharply, and it disappeared from the market because of the black-market.⁹⁹⁰ Thus soap became the most important item among the goods which were distributed as social aid to the poor.

However, the war against typhus encountered many difficulties such as the capacity problems of the state and the resistance of the people. Many newspaper writers criticized the typhus campaign of the government. Notwithstanding the plans and regulations of the government, there was so much widespread resistance that these plans and regulations became ineffective in practice. Glancing at the press of the time, it can be seen that the Law of Public Hygiene was not in effect in practice. In an investigation made by the municipality, many shopkeepers had to pay fines because of their noncompliance with the rules about the hygiene, selling food in the open, or dirtying the street. Some people were punished because of behavior against the Law of Public Health, such as smoking in cinemas.⁹⁹¹

During the collection of the poor, dirty and lousy people from the streets and their houses by the police, many resisted the police. Some of them managed to escape. Others who were sent to public baths escaped from there. In addition, because the public baths were crowded, many of them were not able to have baths.⁹⁹²

⁹⁸⁸ See Refik Halit Karay, "Sabun! Yine Sabun," 10.6.1943, Tan

⁹⁸⁹ "Tifüse Karşı Daha Ciddi Mücadele Etmek Lazım," 18.6.1943, Tan; "Tifüsü Önlemek İçin Bitle Mücadele," 19.6.1943, Vatan.

⁹⁹⁰ "Şehrin Göbeğinde Sabun Sıkıntısı Çekenler Arasında," 7.6.1943, Tan

⁹⁹¹ S.G.Savcı, "Belediye Nizamlarına Aldırmayan Ne Kadar da Çok," 30.7.1943, Vatan; "Belediye Tarafından Cezalandırılanlar," 11.11.1943, Vatan; "15 Günde Cezaya Çarptırılanlar," 20.12.1943, Vatan.

⁹⁹² "Tifüsü Önlemek İçin Alınması Lazım Gelen Tedbirler," 6.6.1943, Vatan

Again, the ban on the residence of vagrants, poor and dirty people in public places such as ports, coffeehouses and street was not enforceable. Thus, their appearance in these places became one of the main complaint matters in the press and indicator of the weakness of the measures.⁹⁹³

Despite all of the state's efforts to vaccinate the poor, the vaccine was not sufficient. Besides this, some poor avoided the vaccination.⁹⁹⁴ By the same token, in spite of the propaganda mentioned above, according to investigations made by Ziya Karamursal in İstanbul, the people avoided reporting diseased people to the state as well.⁹⁹⁵ What is more striking is that there were even some doctors who avoided reporting typhus cases to the officials of the typhus struggle.⁹⁹⁶

Indeed, there were so many people who resisted the state measures that Tevfik Sağlam called these people "lousy brains." He implied that there were less "enlightened people" who obeyed the measures and regulations about the public hygiene and who collaborated with the state.⁹⁹⁷

As for the ban on the trade of secondhand household goods and rags, this ban also was not obeyed. Ragmen continued their job in the slums. When a policeman asked what they were doing, they gave evasive answers, saying "I pick up only bottles, tin and iron household goods."⁹⁹⁸

Another problem in the struggle against typhus was the lack of sufficient resources and funds. For instance, although the government attached great importance to public hygiene, the street cleaners did not work properly because the state did not satisfy their economic needs in spite of their demands for an increase in their salaries. In addition to

⁹⁹³ Zekeriya Sertel, "Tifüsle Mücadele Böyle mi Olur?", 16.6.1943, Tan; Said Kesler, "Tifüsün Bu Salgın Zamanında Üstü Baş Kirlı ve Bitli İnsanların Vapur İskelelerinde Yatmalarına Ne Vakte Kadar Göz Yumacağız?", Tan, 17. 6.1943; Said Kesler, "Ankara Caddesini Mikrop Saçan İnsanlardan Kurtarmalı," 26.6.1943, Tan

⁹⁹⁴ "Tifüs ve Çiçek İle Mücadele," 23.4.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁹⁵ See the report of the İstanbul representative Ziya Karamursal, PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 662.218.2, (7.9.1943)]

⁹⁹⁶ "Tifüsü Haber Vermeyen Doktorlar Aleyhine Takibata Başlandı," 27.7.1943, Tan

⁹⁹⁷ "Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Bir Program Hazırlandı," 17.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

their dissatisfaction with the salaries, they were unable to work productively, because they were not skilled at their job.⁹⁹⁹

Again, the cutting of payments of the officials who were employed in the struggle against typhus diminished the performance of the struggle process. In *Tan*, it was stated that the collection of the dirty and lousy people from the street and public places and sending them to the public baths limped along with the cutting of payments of 10-15 TL to the officials.¹⁰⁰⁰

The struggle against the vagrant, the homeless and beggars who came from Anatolia to İstanbul, was not effective. The capacity of *Süleymaniye Medresesi* in where the vagrants and beggars were gathered by the police was only 400 people. Once this limit was reached, the government was not able to collect more. Therefore, many of them continued to appear in public places and to threat on the public hygiene by challenging the measures taken by the state.¹⁰⁰¹ In addition, even when they were arrested and expelled from İstanbul, many found ways to return to the city and continued their old activities.¹⁰⁰²

As for the public baths, which were one of the most important means in the struggle against typhus, their capacity also fell short of fulfilling their mission given to them by the state. First of all, although they needed much more coal for the hot water, it was very difficult for them to find it during the wartime. When the government tried to supply the necessary coal for the public baths, the problems did not end. As the government did not undertake the transportation of the coal to the public baths, the public bath owners were not able to transport it on account of difficulties and the high costs in transportation process. As a result, sometimes the public baths suffered from the lacked fuel.¹⁰⁰³

⁹⁹⁸ “Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Sarfedilen Gayretler,” 29.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

⁹⁹⁹ “Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Sarfedilen Gayretler,” 29.6.1943, Cumhuriyet.

¹⁰⁰⁰ “Tifüsle Mücadele İşi İhmal Etmeye Gelmez,” 24.9.1943, Vatan

¹⁰⁰¹ “Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Sarfedilen Gayretler,” 29.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

¹⁰⁰² Said Kesler, “Sokaklardaki Çocuklarla Savaşma Usulleri,” 2.4.1943, Tan

¹⁰⁰³ ibid.

The public baths which the government assigned for the struggle against typhus were also unable to serve all of the people who were sent to them. Their capacities were not sufficient all the people sent by the police. Some people were not able to have baths because the police jammed many more people than the capacity into the public baths.¹⁰⁰⁴

Coal was vital and indispensable for not only the public baths, but also the people. It was necessary to heat the water in order to disinfect the clothes and body. Additionally, because the prices of firewood had increased considerably, the people started to substitute coal for firewood and needed greater quantities of coal than ever before. However, it was not easy to provide the coal to the poor during the war period, as noted before. Because poor and lower income people were unable to pay 14 kuruş for coal per kilo, they were unable to clean their clothes and bodies. In the press, it was argued that the struggle against typhus limped and that the price of coal should be lowered for the sake of public hygiene.¹⁰⁰⁵ As noted before, although state distributed coal to the lower income and poor families, it remained a problematic to access to the coal allowances for these people. The coal problem continued throughout the war.

As for water, the most important component for the cleaning and hygiene, the state was not able to provide clean and sufficient quantities of water. In İstanbul, the project to improve the water supply system was postponed to the post-war era because of the war.¹⁰⁰⁶ So during the wartime, the people often suffered water cuts.¹⁰⁰⁷ There was no water in many districts. In some months, the water was provided in turns in some districts.¹⁰⁰⁸ This problem was not peculiar to İstanbul. Many cities of Anatolia suffered from water cuts as well. Therefore, many people complained of the lack of water even in districts of Ankara,

¹⁰⁰⁴ “Tifüsle Daha Ciddi Mücadele Etmek Lazım,” 18.6.1943, Tan

¹⁰⁰⁵ “Aman Gevşemiyelim,” 7.7.1943, Vatan

¹⁰⁰⁶ 17.2.1944, Tan

¹⁰⁰⁷ “Yeniçarşı ve Boğazkesen’de Terkos Suyu Yok,” 31.10.1943, Tan; “Topkağı’da Terkos Çeşmeleri Akıyor,” 21.11.1943, Tan; “Okuyucu İstekleri: Kurtuluştaki Mahallemizde Terkos Suyu Akıyor,” 5.12.1943, Tan.

The water cuts reflected the poems of the periods. For example, in the poem of Rıfat Ilgaz titled “*A Much More Patience!*” there was a line like that: “*Not worry about the water cut...*” See Rıfat Ilgaz, *Toplu Şiirler, Yaşadıkça*, (İstanbul: Çınar Yayınları, 1992), p.38

the capital city. In his letter to the General Secretariat of the RPP, a person wrote: “This is a cry of the people who are under the threat of all kinds of diseases which are caused by the lack of water in a district of Ankara where 3000 people lived.”¹⁰⁰⁹

According to reports of Zonguldak representatives, in Karabük, which was an important center of industry, there was no potable water.¹⁰¹⁰ Similarly, it was stated in a local newspaper that Eskişehir lacked water for weeks.¹⁰¹¹ In *Vatan* newspaper, an anonymous article titled “Good News for the Louse” reported that the lack of water for days in Gelibolu was a great handicap in the struggle against typhus.¹⁰¹² From the archival documents, it is possible to see that in many places in Anatolia water was lacking.¹⁰¹³

Along with the shortages, the quality of the existing water was questionable. It is possible to understand the poor quality of the water from Emin Kıcıman’s statements below. In his article in *the Periodicals of Municipality*, according to Dr. Emin Kıcıman,

Water should be provided permanently in all homes. All families should receive water in return for a small amount of money...When it is in the glass, larva should not be seen. It should not include microbes and nitrogenous items.¹⁰¹⁴

In addition to the lack of potable and sufficient quantity of water, the people, especially lower income and poor people were deprived of having bath sufficiently in their homes. As reported by Dr. Kıcıman, the bad living conditions made it difficult to have a bath for the majority. Along with shortages of soap and frequent water cuts, the houses of many lower income people and poor were not equipped with facilities for taking a bath. By reason of the high cost of living advancing day in and day out, this need also was not able to be satisfied like other needs.¹⁰¹⁵

So the Ministry of Health which advised the people to clean their clothes and bodies, was criticized in *Cumhuriyet* as follows:

¹⁰⁰⁸ 12.1.1944, Tan

¹⁰⁰⁹ “To the General Secretariat of the RPP,” PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 459.1884.2]

¹⁰¹⁰ A Reply to the Investigation Reports on Zonguldak, PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 513.2061.2, (1942)]

¹⁰¹¹ “Eskişehir Elektriksiz ve Susuzdur,” 16.11.1943, Vatan

¹⁰¹² “Serbest Kürsü: Bitlere Müjde!” 18.7.1943, Vatan

¹⁰¹³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 509.2043.1; 622.43.1; 513.2061.2]

¹⁰¹⁴ Dr. Emin Kıcıman, “Sıhhat İşleri,” *Belediye Mecmuası*, no.180-181, 1940, p.12

We cannot bathe, Mr. Minister! We cannot become clean! We do not have water. We came to this city together with our vegetables with typhoid fever, our mosquitoes with malaria, our louses with typhus, and we will go on with them. If the water does not flow from our fountains, your good advice will just go in one ear and out the other. Please don't talk in vain, Mr. Minister!¹⁰¹⁶

In addition, the absence of sufficient medical equipment and means played a key role in the struggle against the typhus. There was not a sufficient amount of vaccine in the hands of the government. In 1943 and 1944, along with the shortages and the excessive high cost of living, not only the typhus vaccine, but also other many medicine disappeared. The government banned the trade of medicine in the market and tried to control the supply of medicine by obliging all pharmacists to submit written-declarations of their stocks of medicine in order to prevent the black market. However, this policy was also challenged and even the medicine which belonged to the Red Crescent was seen in the black-market.¹⁰¹⁷

Leaving aside satisfying the needs of the people, the government was unable to vaccinate all of the health personnel who were employed in the struggle against the typhus. For example, the Ministry of Health sent typhus vaccine to the organization of typhus struggle in İstanbul for the vaccination of the personnel. But this vaccine did not suffice to vaccinate all personnel. The organization demanded vaccine enough for the vaccination of all of the personnel.¹⁰¹⁸ This indicates that, minus the vaccination of the people, the state capacity to vaccinate even its own personnel of typhus struggle was limited thus far.

The organization of the typhus struggle also did not function properly. In addition to the people's avoidance of the reporting of diseased people, even if there were reports about typhus cases, the organization was not able to undertake rapid intervention in the case, and the health personnel did not always take the needed measure.¹⁰¹⁹ It was very

¹⁰¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.13

¹⁰¹⁶ 7.9.1944, Cumhuriyet

¹⁰¹⁷ 30.5.1944, Tan

¹⁰¹⁸ "Tifüsle Mücadele İçin Sarfedilen Gayretler," 29.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

¹⁰¹⁹ "Tifüs Mücadelesi," 16.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

difficult to bring diseased people to the hospital because of the red tape, and anyway, too late.¹⁰²⁰

In conclusion, as can be seen from the press, although the government took some decisions and made some legal regulations about the question, it had a limited capacity to struggle against typhus in practice. Many writers criticized the state practices which fell short in the struggle. In addition, they challenged the government's reduction of the typhus struggle only to cleaning and the killing of louse. They emphasized that the typhus was indicator of the rising of the poverty. For this reason, the struggle against typhus was not unrelated with the betterment of the social and economic conditions of the people, but the government overlooked this aspect of the typhus struggle.

In one article, Zekeriya Sertel pointed out the wide gap between the aims and legal regulations of the government and the practice. For Sertel, although the government took important decisions on paper, but these were not reflected in practice.

There are still many cinemas which have poor hygienic conditions and these have not been closed down. The trams, trains and steamships have not been yet disinfected. Ragmen, junk dealers and street hawkers continue to spread louse. The streets and docks of the city are still full of miserable and lousy people.¹⁰²¹

In another article, Sertel argued that the government overemphasized the role of cleaning and the struggle against louse, and took forcible measures such as raids on dirty houses in the slums and sending dirty and lousy people to the public baths. But these were not enough to provide public hygiene and health. He argued that the government should take the social and economic measures. He said that "we should struggle against 'the louse of high cost of living and of hunger,' as well as struggle against the louse."¹⁰²²

Nadir Nadi also underlined the importance of the living conditions of the people in struggle against typhus. He argued that the protection from typhus required the social and economic improvement of the poor and lower income peoples. He said that because of the

¹⁰²⁰ "Soruyoruz: Mücadele Böyle mi Olur?", 7.6.1943, Vatan

¹⁰²¹ Zekeriya Sertel, "Tifüsle Mücadele Böyle mi Olur?", 16.6.1943, Tan

¹⁰²² Zekeriya Sertel, "Tifüse Karşı Yalnız Sıhhi Değil, İhtimai Tedbirler Lazım," 31.5.1943, Tan

high cost of living, a family which earned 40 TL a month could not clean themselves, so the all measures were ineffective.¹⁰²³

Ahmet Emin Yalman reported that all of the measures only hoodwinked the people. His main point of criticism was the divergence between the laws and the practice. He stressed that all measures remained on paper. He argued that the existing measures could not be called as “struggle.”¹⁰²⁴

In *Tan* in an anonymous article titled *Difficulties Which Appeared in the Typhus Struggle*, (Tifüs Mücadelesinde Ortaya Çıkan Güçlükler) it was again stressed that in spite of the new and good decisions by the government, these were not fruitful due to the absence of good implementation. Besides, medical tools and means were insufficient in typhus struggle.¹⁰²⁵ Finally, the fact that the struggle against typhus was unsystematic and unorganized was another subject of criticism.¹⁰²⁶

The War and the War against Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis has existed in the pre-war period, but increased along with the rising of social and economic problems during the war period. The actions of the state against tuberculosis also revealed the weakness of the state organization. As shown in the typhus struggle, once again the gap between the state plans and its achievements became apparent. Therefore, tubercular people were deprived of the medical treatment. To look at the tuberculosis in Turkey during the Second World War gives important clues about the

¹⁰²³ Yunus Nadi, “Tifüs İçtimai Hastalık,” 20.6.1943, Cumhuriyet

¹⁰²⁴ A.E. Yalman, “Mücadele Böyle Olmaz,” 19.6.1943, Vatan

¹⁰²⁵ “Tifüs Mücadelesinde Ortaya Çıkan Güçlükler,” 21.6.1943, Tan

¹⁰²⁶ “Tifüsü Önlemek İçin Alınması Lazım Gelen Tedbirler,” 6.6.1943, Vatan

social impact of the Second World War on Turkey, and the state power and social control capacity during the early republican era.

Tuberculosis especially became widespread in 1943 and 1944, when the social impact of the war and poverty became much more severe. One of the most important indicators of the increase in the number of tubercular in the war period was the increase in the numbers of those people who resorted to the dispensaries, sanatoriums and hospitals to receive medical treatment for the tubercular. In 1943, although there were 129 beds in the sanatorium in Erenköy, the number of tubercular who were put in the sanatorium were 482 within a year. In 1943, the sanatorium accepted the most diseased people within a year since 1932.¹⁰²⁷ Said Kesler also pointed out the rapid proliferation of tuberculosis among the little children. Among the little children aged between 3 and 15, tuberculosis increased proportionally 30 percent in comparison with the pre-war period.¹⁰²⁸

Of course, this trend was related to the rising of poverty, food scarcities, hunger and malnutrition, owing to the social impact of the war. Many writers, specialist and doctors often underlined the relation between the bad living conditions and tuberculosis. In 1944, a series of articles titled *Why is the Tuberculosis Proliferating? How Can We Prevent It?* (Verem Niçin Çoğalıyor? Nasıl Önleyebiliriz?) was published in *Tan*. In one of these articles, Dr. İhsan Rıfat Sabar argued that tuberculosis was advancing because of poverty and the high cost of living.¹⁰²⁹ In another article of the series, Dr. Zeki Sıtkı Köseoğlu, a specialist of tuberculosis, cited the malnutrition and hunger as responsible for the proliferation of tuberculosis:

The poverty and hunger brought about by the war plays a key role in the proliferation of tuberculosis...Especially the number of people who resort the sanatoriums is increasing day by day. The Sanatorium of the Ministry of Education opened seven years ago. The number of beds in the sanatorium was 60 at that time. The number of people who resorted to the sanatorium and who waited for their turn for medical treatment was about 20 or 30. Today, although the sanatorium has 100

¹⁰²⁷ “Verem Hastalığı Günden Güne Artıyor,” 24.3.1944, Cumhuriyet

¹⁰²⁸ Sait Kesler, “Verem Nispeti Çocuklarda Yüzde 30 Arttı,” 31.12.1943, Tan

¹⁰²⁹ Dr.İhsan Rıfat Sabar, “En Az 5000 Yatak Mutlaka Lazımdır,” 20.7.1944, Tan

beds, the number of people who wait their turn for medical treatment has risen to approximately 60-70.¹⁰³⁰

As recorded by Dr. Köseoğlu, the bad living conditions in the war period gave such a rise to tuberculosis that the number of people who resorted for medical treatment and who waited their turns exceeded the pre-war records, in spite of the increase in the number of beds in sanatorium. This situation was not peculiar to the urban areas.

Cahit Kayra's memoirs illustrate the widespread nature of tuberculosis and poverty, which were hand in hand in Anatolia as well. Kayra says that he had witnessed the widespread tuberculosis in the Vakıfkebir district in the Black Sea region, where the people suffered from food scarcities and lack of bread.

We cannot find even bread in Vakıfkebir. There was some fish, but the other foods were almost nonexistent. If we did not give an order for fish, we could not find even it. The idealist doctors of the town traveled to all of the villages through mountain passes and tried to help his patients from morning to the night. So far as he said, tuberculosis and syphilis were terribly widespread.¹⁰³¹

During the war period, upon the proliferation of tuberculosis, the government and voluntary associations tried to accelerate the health measures and war against it. The most prominent voluntary organization in the struggle against tuberculosis was the Association for the Struggle against Tuberculosis (Veremle Mücadele Cemiyeti). The government left the war against Tuberculosis to the Association to great extent.

The first dispensary of the Association was established in 1928 in Eyüp. From this year on, the Association did not establish another dispensary until the war years. But, in the war years, it had to open six new dispensaries in response to the increase in the disease. In 1941, the Beykoz dispensary, in 1943 Üsküdar, Unkapanı and Şehremini dispensaries and 1945 Kasımpaşa and Edirnekapı dispensaries were opened.¹⁰³²

The financial resources of the association were charity from the people, aid from the RPP and the government. In addition, the Association received some money from the

¹⁰³⁰ Zeki Sıtkı Köseoğlu, "Verem Niçin Çoğalıyor? Nasıl Önleyebiliriz?" 18.07.1944, Tan

¹⁰³¹ Cahit Kayra, '38 *Kuşağı*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), p.98

sale of the stamps of tuberculosis.¹⁰³³ Wealthier persons donated the association in cash. Upon the proliferation of the tuberculosis, the Ministry of Health and Social Aid also financed the Association. In 1942 it gave 100.000 TL to the İstanbul branch of the Association. It also gave 50.000 TL to the İzmir branch.¹⁰³⁴

Although the Association for the Struggle against Tuberculosis was the foremost relatively well-equipped and best-known organization in the war against tuberculosis, it was unable to expand its activities into the whole country. Therefore, the other parts of the country, especially the rural parts of Anatolia were deprived of the efforts against the tuberculosis carried out by this Association.¹⁰³⁵

However, although the Association intensified its activities in İstanbul, its efforts did not meet the needs even there. Because of the war, the expenses of the association increased. For example, in the pre-war period the Association had been able to give 10 TL of food aid each month to each needy tubercular person. But the cost of this help rose to 20 TL monthly in the war-period.¹⁰³⁶ Therefore, the Association requested 10.000 TL from the government on the grounds that the cases of tuberculosis proliferated and cost of the Association increased because of inflation.¹⁰³⁷

Despite increase in measures and the number of the dispensaries, the war against the tuberculosis fell short in comparison with the proliferation of the disease. The tuberculosis proliferated so much that many diseased people did not have the opportunity to receive medical treatment in the sanatorium in the war period. As Dr. Kösoğlu recorded, in some sanatoriums, tubercular people had to wait for their turns seven or eight months. In all hospitals, the number of beds which were allotted to tubercular people did not exceed

¹⁰³² Dr. Bedi N. Şehsuvaroğlu, *İstanbul'da 500 Yıllık Sağlık Hayatımız*, (İstanbul Fetih Derneği Neşriyatı, 1953), p.175

¹⁰³³ Tevfik Sağlam, "Verem Savaşı," 4. *Üniversite Haftası*, Samsun, 14.9.1943-20.9.1943, (İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943), p.23

¹⁰³⁴ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 215.852.1]

¹⁰³⁵ Dr. İhsan Rıfat Sabar, "En Az 5000 Yatak Mutlaka Lazımdır," 20.7.1944, Tan

¹⁰³⁶ Bkz. Tevfik Sağlam, "Verem Savaşı", 4. *Üniversite Haftası*, Samsun, 14.9.1943-20.9.1943, (İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943), p.23

¹⁰³⁷ "Verem Gittikçe Artıyor," 25.6.1944, Tan.

seven hundred. There were no nurses to explore and look after diseased people in the slums. In addition, although one of the most important parts of the war with the tuberculosis was to separate the diseased people from healthy people, this was also neglected.¹⁰³⁸

Dr. Sabar also stated that the number of people infected by tuberculosis was much more than it estimated. He also pointed out the lack of sufficient beds in the hospitals for the diseased people. As for the sanatoriums, many tubercular people had to wait two or three months for medical treatment.¹⁰³⁹

In another article titled *A Planned Struggle was Necessary?* (Planlı Bir Mücadele Yapılması Zaruridir) it was stated that there had been at most 1000 beds in the sanatoriums for the 100.000 people infected by tuberculosis in the pre-war period. Thus, the article implied the great deficiencies in the struggle against the tuberculosis in the war period by pointing out the number of beds had not been sufficient for even the pre-war period.¹⁰⁴⁰

Prof. Dr. Tevfik Sağlam, who was the rector of Istanbul University, also acknowledged that the war against the tuberculosis fell short, underscoring the importance of the protection from the tuberculosis for the country:

The war against the tuberculosis is very backward in our country. The state does not deal with the problem necessarily. The state possesses some dispensaries for tuberculosis in Ankara, İstanbul, Bursa, İzmir and Trabzon. The Association of the Struggle against the Tuberculosis in İstanbul has five dispensaries. Overall, there are nine dispensaries... In spite of their great efforts, it is clear that number of them is insufficient... You see! We have such a small and limited organization.¹⁰⁴¹

There were some campaigns against tuberculosis in the schools, but they were also ineffective due to the lack of financial resources. For example, the Directorate of Education (Maarif Müdürlüğü) made a simple study of tuberculosis among some students in the primary schools in İstanbul, revealing approximately 400 tubercular students. The

¹⁰³⁸ Zeki Sıtkı Köseoğlu, "Verem Niçin Çoğalıyor? Nasıl Önleyebiliriz?" 18.07.1944, Tan

¹⁰³⁹ İhsan Rifat Sabar, "En Az 5000 Yatak Mutlaka Lazımdır," 20.7.1944, Tan

¹⁰⁴⁰ "Planlı Bir Mücadele Yapılması Zaruridir," 21.7.1944, Tan

¹⁰⁴¹ Tevfik Sağlam, "Verem Savaşı", 4. *Üniversite Haftası*, Samsun, 14.9.1943-20.9.1943, (İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943), pp.21-22

Directorate of Education was able to provide medical treatment in sanatoriums for only 50 tubercular students by reason of the lack of necessary financial resources.¹⁰⁴²

The people experienced these insufficiencies of the state in their daily life. They encountered many straits due to the lack of medical treatment. Sometime they expressed their complaints by sending petitions to the RPP requesting medical treatment from the government. Sometimes poor tubercular people resorted to illegal ways such as the theft of food in order to save themselves from the disease. Their sufferings, complaints and demands were reflected in the press, their petitions and novels.

Tubercular people who wanted to receive medical treatment were not able to reach the related-organizations. As Said Kesler reported, the tuberculosis devastated the people. In an interview by Kesler, a diseased person named Halim Tanış said that he had resorted to all ways in order to get medical treatment, but he had not succeeded.¹⁰⁴³

The story of Halil Yeprem, a primary school teacher, illustrates insufficiency of the war against tuberculosis. Yeprem, who was aware of all opportunities for medical treatment as a teacher, he was unable to get treatment. Indeed, this example also gives a picture about the lack of health care facilities for even low income state officials such as teachers, who were considered as the most important agent of the state.

Halil Yeprem is a primary school teacher in Gelibolu. He has been a teacher for twenty-five years. He lost his daughter, who was 17 years old, last year. One week later, his house burned down. Because he could not find a house, he had to live in a tent in the rain and mud for one and a half months. In the end, he contracted tuberculosis. Upon his medical examination in the Country Hospital in Çanakkale on 6 December 1942, the head doctor decided to place him in the Sanatorium of Validebağ for medical treatment. The Directorate of Education in Çanakkale sent a related report and teacher's petition for the free acceptance to the Sanatorium to the Ministry. The Ministry did not give a response to the teacher as of February... Therefore he wrote another letter to the Minister. He reported his case and wrote that his wife and two children might be infected with his disease... The Minister became concerned about the case and replied to the teacher. According to the reply of the Ministry, numbered 6/4561, it had been decided that the patient needed to be sent to the sanatorium. His name was put on the list and he was told that he would

¹⁰⁴² "Planlı Bir Mücadele Yapılması Zaruridir," 21.07.1944, Tan

¹⁰⁴³ 6.1.1944, Tan

be called when his time came. The sick teacher was left in that position for seven months.¹⁰⁴⁴

Among the petitions sent to the RPP it is possible to see similar experiences of people with tuberculosis. It is understood that many people suffered from lack of medical treatment and that they sent petitions about their suffering, the difficulties they encountered, their complaints and demands to the government. Şeref Gürbüz from Balıkesir was one of these people who informed the government about his situation by means of petition. His story was also similar to the abovementioned cases.

I graduated from Balıkesir Highschool. Just as I was about to go university, I became ill. On the basis of my report, the doctors sent my official documents so I could receive medical treatment in Heybeli Ada Sanatorium. They told me that I had to wait two or three months for my turn. But my health condition is not suitable and good to wait for my turn.¹⁰⁴⁵

Not only the insufficient beds in sanatoriums or medical treatment, but also poverty and malnutrition were important obstacles in the war against the tuberculosis. Lower income people and the poor suffered not only the lack of medical treatment, but also the lack of necessary nutrition, which was the most important requirement of the betterment of the tuberculosis people. According to a doctor of tuberculosis, because of the absence of sufficient beds in the state hospitals, they had to be content with writing prescription for their patients. But the problem did not end at this point for the tubercular children from poor families especially. Due to the poverty and malnutrition, they could not get better.

It is generally not possible to save these children, because, they are undernourished. I examined the problem and see that the tubercular children belong to poor families who do not have any social support or well income. For one thing, after a porter died, his wife and three children were left behind. The income of this woman is not enough to feed the children. However, in order to cure a child with tuberculosis, the main measure to be taken is to nourish the child sufficiently. There are some state hospitals but we can only make medical examinations in these hospitals. We are deprived of the necessary equipment to treat the diseased people. In this case, all we can do is to prepare a prescription and a list of food. The food we write in the list contains artificial nourishment. So these are very expensive... Their fathers and mothers who have a limited budget cannot provide these foods. Moreover, today

¹⁰⁴⁴ “Veremli Bir Öğretmenin Başına Gelenler,” 14.5.1943, Vatan

¹⁰⁴⁵ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 468.1938.1, (14.4.1941)]

people cannot feed their children with eggs, meat and meat products, milk, and yoghurt which should be given to children.¹⁰⁴⁶

Consequently, tuberculosis increased during the war because of poverty and high cost of living. The attempts of the state and Association in the war against tuberculosis accomplished very little because of capacity problems and insufficient financial appropriations. In addition, many people were not able to reach the necessary nutrition for their betterment because of the high cost of living. Therefore, many tubercular people suffered from the lack of medical treatment and undernourishment.

The tuberculosis experience of Turkey during the war showed that the principle of populism and etatism of the RPP was only discourse to great extent. Especially in the war time the government hesitated to allot necessary financial resources to the health services. In order to minimize the state expenditures of health, the state left the great parts of this war against tuberculosis to “civil society,” to be more specific, to the Association for Struggle against Tuberculosis. In other words, the government encouraged “civil society” to minimize the social expenditures. As will be noted in the conclusion part of this chapter, many writers, intellectual and bureaucrats criticized this situation arguing that instead of local associations the state should undertake the social welfare measures.

The War and the War against Malaria

Although Turkey did not participate in the Second World War, it was in a war against malaria. This war can be traced back to the first years of the Republic in fact. The RPP attached great importance to the struggle against malaria. The war against malaria was materialized by the Law of Struggle against Malaria in 1926. This law aimed to decrease cases of malaria on the basis of the aims of economic development and population policy

¹⁰⁴⁶ Said Kesler, “Verem Nispeti Çocuklarda Yüzde 30 Arttı,” 31.12.1943, Tan

of the government.¹⁰⁴⁷ Indeed, as the most widespread epidemic malaria decreased the capacity of the population and the productivity of labor and was a source of weakness for the state. Prof. Dr. Arif İsmet Çetingil's perception of malaria epitomized the elite perception of malaria and war against malaria:

The prevention of malaria among our farmers, who are the main production factor in agriculture, has great importance similar to the making sure that the machines don't break down in a factory.¹⁰⁴⁸
Malaria is a devastating disease which lessens the capacity of productive, capacity of defense of the country.¹⁰⁴⁹

Therefore, the war against malaria was intensified in the crowded places of the country that were the basis of the agricultural sector and in the places that had great economic and political importance.¹⁰⁵⁰ Consequently, the rate of the malarial population decreased from approximately 70-80 percent in 1923 to 11 percent in 1940. But this rate rose from 11 percent to 32 percent during the war period, especially between 1942 and 1944 due to the effects of the world war.¹⁰⁵¹ Upon this upset in the trend of the rate of the malarial population, the government passed two new Laws of Struggle against Malaria in 1945 and 1946.¹⁰⁵²

In general, the malaria struggle fell short during the war period. Two of the most important tools which were lacking in the struggle against malaria during the war were diesel oil and quinine. Quinine, which was the most important and best-known medicine for malaria, was not provided in 1940 and 1941.¹⁰⁵³ The total consumption of quinine decreased from 46.000 kilos in 1941 to 12.120 kilos in 1942 and to 7600 kilos in 1943. In 1944 there were only 5000 kilos of quinine.¹⁰⁵⁴

¹⁰⁴⁷ See. Erdem Aydın, "Türkiye'de Sıtma Mücadelesi," *III. Türk Tıp Tarihi Kongresine Sunulan Bildiriler*, İstanbul:TTK, 1999

¹⁰⁴⁸ Arif İsmet Çetingil, "Sıtma İçtimai ve İktisadi Tesirleri ve Mücadele Tedbirleri" 2. *Üniversitesi Haftası*, Diyarbakır, 1.6.1941-7.6.1941, İ.Ü. Yayınları, no:151, (İstanbul: Kenan Basımevi, 1941), p.145

¹⁰⁴⁹ Çetingil, p.147

¹⁰⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.154

¹⁰⁵¹ Ege, p.15. It is possible to see the malaria invasion from the reports in the newspaper. "Sıtma Salgını," 9.9.1943, Yeni Adana; "Çukurova'da Sıtma Salgını," 7.7.1943, Yeni Adana

¹⁰⁵² See Ege, p.15

¹⁰⁵³ "Kinin Vaziyeti," 7.1.1944, Tan; "Adana'da Kinin Darlığı," 17.12.1943, Yeni Adana

¹⁰⁵⁴ The Minutes of the GNAT, 5.1.1944, p.17

The shortage of quinine doubled its price. The price of quinine, which had been 21 TL before the war rose to 61 TL at an early date like 1940.¹⁰⁵⁵

As for diesel oil, it was an effective chemical which was utilized in killing the mosquitoes. It also became scarce during the war because of the difficulties in importation. This also caused the loss of the affectivity of the struggle against mosquito and so malaria.¹⁰⁵⁶ Indeed, whereas the diesel oil which was utilized in 1939 was 117.215 kilos, this amount was recorded as 71.694 kilos in 1941.¹⁰⁵⁷ Furthermore, *parisyeşili*, which was another chemical used in struggle against the larva of the anopheles mosquito, was also not able to import during the war.¹⁰⁵⁸

All these factors hindered the war against malaria during the world war. This situation caused widespread complaints among the people. For example, it was stated that the malaria struggle was not sufficient in Adana, which was an important agricultural center. According to *Yeni Adana*, the Malaria Struggle Organization (Sıtma Mücadele Teşkilatı) in Adana did not function effectively.¹⁰⁵⁹ In an article titled *What is the Malaria Struggle Organization in Our District Doing?* (Bölgemizde Sıtma Mücadele Teşkilatı Ne İle Meşguldur?) it was reported that the Malaria Struggle Organization in Adana was not successful because it did not work properly. It was asked “whether it was the job of the Malaria Struggle Organization to work only on paper,” and it was pointed out that the struggle against malaria and mosquitoes remained on only the paper.¹⁰⁶⁰ Another problem in this regard was the lack of sufficient quinine. In spite of an epidemic outbreak of malaria in July 1943 in Çukurova, the people were not able to acquire enough quinine because of the quinine shortage.¹⁰⁶¹

¹⁰⁵⁵ AT, no.84, (1-31 November 1940), p.20

¹⁰⁵⁶ “İsmet İnönü Samsunda...” AT, no.105, (1-31 August 1942), p.51.

Again, according to the news of *Vatan*, “because of lack of diesel oil and quinine the malarial people increased throughout the country.” “Sıtma Mücadelesi,” 19.8.1943, *Vatan*

¹⁰⁵⁷ See Şehsuvaroğlu, p.145

¹⁰⁵⁸ The Minutes of the GNAT, 5.1.1944, p.20

¹⁰⁵⁹ 13.11.1944, *Yeni Adana*.

¹⁰⁶⁰ “Bölgemizde Sıtma Mücadele Teşkilatı Ne İle Meşguldur?”, 15.5.1944, *Yeni Adana*

¹⁰⁶¹ “Çukurova’da Sıtma Salgını,” 7.7.1943, *Yeni Adana*

In September 1943, in İstanbul, there was an outbreak of malaria. Such a great outbreak of malaria has been never seen before reportedly.¹⁰⁶² After his investigations in Terkos and Kartal, Ziya Karamürsel wrote in his report that the malaria dominated in these districts.¹⁰⁶³ In addition, because the malaria struggle in İstanbul did not include many districts, it was not possible to prevent the epidemic invasion. As of 1944, it was stated that the malaria still dominated in İstanbul.

The main causes of this outbreak were the insufficient financial sources which were allotted by the government and insufficient skilled personnel in the war against malaria. For instance, in spite of the malarian invasion in autumn of 1943, the municipality did not have sufficient financial sources for the struggle against malaria.¹⁰⁶⁴ According to a report of the deputies on İstanbul, there were not the necessary money and personnel for the malaria struggle.

We think that it is not possible to extend the war against malaria all of the districts of İstanbul owing to the financial restrictions. But even if these financial restrictions are removed, it is not possible to find the necessary doctors and health officials for the war against malaria today.¹⁰⁶⁵

Another problem in this regard was the unsystematic work, negligence and incapacity of the personnel and the lack of equipment employed in war against malaria. For example, one of the most important preventive measures against malaria was the drying of bogs where mosquitoes nested, near the centers of population. But, the insufficiency of the financial resources allotted by the government ruled out the work of drying the bogs.¹⁰⁶⁶

The state lacked necessary personnel and equipment in the anti-malaria campaign. The Minister of Health and Social Aid confessed that they could not provide the necessary equipment and financial resources for the health officials who carried out the war against

¹⁰⁶² “Belediyenin Sıtma Mücadelesi İçin Tahsisat Kalmamış,” 10.9.1943, Vatan

¹⁰⁶³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 662.218.2, (7.9.1943)]

¹⁰⁶⁴ “Belediyenin sıtma mücadelesi için tahsisat kalmamış,” 10.9.1943, Vatan

¹⁰⁶⁵ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 663.219.1, (1944)]

¹⁰⁶⁶ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 509.2043.1]. In addition, see The Minutes of the GNAT, 5.1.1944, p.20

malaria, especially in the rural areas. For example, the health officials and doctors who were sent to the village had to travel village by village for 20 or 25 days. The financial sources which were allotted to compensate for their travel costs such as the payment for food of their animals did not satisfy the needs of these officials. Additionally, in some cases these health officials were not able to find any animals or food for their animals:

We cannot give salary bonuses to the health officials because of legal restrictions. We are not able to give food for their animals in kind. The payment of food of 15 liras which we give them is not sufficient. Those health officials and doctors who are guaranteed to earn much more money in different workplaces and jobs other than the Ministry, leave our organization. Thus in order to fill the gap in the amount of health officials, we have to decrease the skills requirements of the people who are accepted to the health official courses.¹⁰⁶⁷

According to another source, the government had to suspend the health official courses in 1944 and 1945 because of the financial effects of the war.¹⁰⁶⁸ As a result, the government was deprived of the necessary health officials. In a discussion in the National Assembly, Abidin Binkaya also emphasized that although the government needed the health officials desperately, it could not find these health officials in sufficient amount.¹⁰⁶⁹

Consequently, many places which were afflicted with the malaria were left out of the malaria struggle efforts of the government. They complained about the lack of the malaria struggle and requested quinine, health official and to be protected by the state against the disease. Again, the shortcomings and insufficiencies of the malaria struggle caused complaints among the people who lived in the places even included in the scope of the struggle against malaria.

According to a complaint came from Alanya to *Tan*, it was stated that there was only one health official for struggle against malaria in Alanya, where 40 percent of the population of 43,000 was malarial. What was more interesting was that the head official of

¹⁰⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.18

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Devlet Yılığı 1944-1945*, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basım ve Yayın Umum Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 1945), p.216

¹⁰⁶⁹ The Minutes of the GNAT, 15.6.1942, p.187

the district charged him with task of registering cereals in the tax collection work. Therefore, the struggle against the malaria left half finished in Alanya.¹⁰⁷⁰

While complaints were coming in from the areas included in the malaria struggle, no doubt complaints from areas left out of the malaria struggle. In many districts of Anatolia that were not included in the malaria struggle, the malaria was widespread and devastating for the people. During the investigations of the deputies in their election districts in Anatolia, one of the most important problems which were stated by the people was malaria and the lack of preventive measures against it.¹⁰⁷¹

A Summary of Demands of the Provincial Congress of the RPP Presented to the Sixth Great Congress of the RPP (CHP Altıncı Büyük Kurultayına Sunulan Vilayet Kongreleri Dilekleri Hılasası) is another valuable source to see the incapacities of the government in the war against malaria, and the exclusion of some malarial districts from the anti-malaria efforts of the government, in spite of widespread malaria throughout the country. Looked at the demands of the of the Provincial Congress of the RPP, there were so many requests for organizations against malaria, health officials and quinine that it was understood that many city centers and districts were deprived of preventive measures provided by the government.¹⁰⁷²

Ahmet Emin Yalman, in his book, *Travel to the Turkey of Tomorrow* (Yarının Türkiye'sine Seyahat) written in 1944, underscored the inadequacy of the preventive measures in order to diminish the devastating effects of malaria on the population. He

¹⁰⁷⁰ "Bir İşi Yaparken Diğerini İhmal Etmemek Lazımdır!", 27.8.1943, Tan

¹⁰⁷¹ For example, as reporters wrote, because malaria was widespread in the villages of Erzurum epidemically, peasants requested two health officials. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 650.162.1, (1943)]. In Burdur, deputies reported that because malaria was widespread in all districts as well as in the city center, the districts should be involved in the war against malaria. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 508.2040.4, (2.12.1942)]. In their report, Mebrure Gönenç and Hayri Gerçel, representatives of Afyon, confessed that in spite of the needs, it was not possible to extend the scope of the war against malaria in all of Afyon because of the lack of personnel and of financial resources. But, they reported that quinine was an urgent necessity for the region. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 613.3.1, (6.11.1942)]. M. Emin Erişirgil, who made investigations in the villages of Konya, described how the epidemic had reached alarming dimensions and that the peasants requested health officials for the war against malaria. PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 511.2053.1, (1.7.1944)].

¹⁰⁷² See *A Summary of The Demands of the Provincial Congress of the RPP Presented to the Sixth Great Congress of the RPP*, (Ankara: CHP Genel Sekreterlik Neşriyatı, 1943), p. 55-57

argued that there was a contradiction between the pronatalist population policy and characteristics of the war against malaria, as follows:

We say repeatedly that we must increase our population. But I wonder whether we have mobilized for a war against malaria which halved the energy of our population and exterminated the majority of 18 millions Turks. Is the existing organization of war against malaria which has been continued for years, in real touch with the enemy?¹⁰⁷³

Briefly, although the rate of the malarial population had decreased considerably before the war, it increased once again because of the world war. As the government did not allot the necessary financial resources and equipment for the war with malaria and lacked sufficient personnel, many preventive measures remained on paper. In addition, many districts or cities that suffered from malaria were left out of the scope of the anti-malaria campaign. The people demanded to be involved in the malaria struggle and much more effective measures from the government against malaria. However, the government's war with the malaria did not meet these needs of the people.

The Breakup of the Family, The Increase in Divorces and The Child Question

Impact of the War on Women and Children

Children made up one of the social groups affected maybe most adversely by the Second World War in Turkey. They suffered from malnutrition and hunger because of the high cost of living and poverty. Therefore, because their bodies became much weaker, they had a greater inclination to become ill. Infant mortality increased in this period. The family was affected negatively by the war. The highest rates of increase in divorces in the history of Turkey until that time were recorded in the Second World War years. Therefore, many children were deprived of family care and protection. Because of the high cost of living and conscription of the heads of families, many more children and women had to work to

earn their living. Thus the education of the children was interrupted. Some poor women had to resort to abandoning their children or to abortion because of poverty. Some of them killed their children as soon as they were born, as well. Homeless, neglected children and child vagrants became much more apparent in the public spaces. In addition, crimes among the children increased. The proportion of juvenile crimes to overall crimes increased with the first years of the war.

All these were problems not only for poor masses, but also for the state as a threat to the pronatalist population policy. Thus this alarming condition of the children stimulated the measures and intervention of the state and the Children's Protection Society (Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu, the CPS hereafter) in the question. In this period many writers in the newspapers underlined the importance of the child question and wrote that the state should protect the children. However, the efforts to improve the conditions of mothers and children remained limited during the war period. The child, of course the poor one, was one of the victims of the Second World War.

The first reflection of the war period on the child question was the increase in infant mortality. Because of poverty, malnutrition and food scarcities, the newborn children did not receive the necessary nutriment. As Grigg stated, malnutrition may also be directly or indirectly responsible for the deaths of children under five.¹⁰⁷⁴ Modern nutritional experts believe that protein calorie deficiency is a major cause of child mortality, that is, the death rate of children aged one to five.¹⁰⁷⁵ In this respect, according to the statistics cited by Sezai Bedrettin Tümay, infant mortality in Ankara increased approximately 25 percent

¹⁰⁷³ A.E. Yalman, *Yarının Türkiye'sine Seyahat*, (İstanbul: Vatan Matbaası, 1944), p.96

¹⁰⁷⁴ David Grigg, *The World Food Problem, 1950-1980*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.14

¹⁰⁷⁵ However, the close interrelationship between infection and malnutrition makes authoritative pronouncements on this difficult, and certainly a decline in the child mortality rate may reflect improvements in sanitation and water supplies as much as improvements in nutritional status. David Grigg, *The World Food Problem, 1950-1980*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.41

after the war broke out.¹⁰⁷⁶ Tümay proposed that there was a connection between this great rise in infant mortality and the economic depression caused by the war.¹⁰⁷⁷

Table 21- The Number of Infant Mortality (1937-1941)¹⁰⁷⁸

Year	Number of Deaths
1937	2013
1938	2091
1939	2010
1940	2349
1941	2506

In addition, the number of children who were left by their families and who were homeless, vagrant and beggars increased during the world war. Many articles and news pointed out that the streets were full of these children and attracted attention to the increase in their numbers.¹⁰⁷⁹

One of the most important causes of the deterioration of the living conditions of children was the upset in the family. Because of the social and economic effects of the war in the family, divorces increased rapidly. This increase in divorce became a matter of discussion in the National Assembly and the newspapers. For example, on 2 June 1942, Nevzat Ayas asked to the minister of justice about the causes of the increase in divorces.¹⁰⁸⁰ In *Tan* dated 2 June 1942, in an article titled *Cases of Divorce Proliferate?* (Boşanmalar Fazlalaşıyor) it was reported that the cases of divorce had proliferated fairly in recent years, because of the high cost of living and other related factors.¹⁰⁸¹

Indeed, according to the statistics, the rate of increase in divorce from 1941 to 1942 was the highest in Republican history until that time. As can be seen from the statistics

¹⁰⁷⁶ Sezai Bedrettin Tümay, “Çocuk Ölümü ve Önleme Yolları,” 4. *Üniversite Haftası*, Samsun (14.9.1943-20.9.1943), (İstanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943), p.139

¹⁰⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.141

¹⁰⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.139

¹⁰⁷⁹ “Serseri Çocuklarla Mücadele,” 21.11.1941, *Tan*; F.Ş.Yersel, “Çalışan Çocuklar,” 27.3.1943, *Kocatepe*; “Fuat Umay diyor ki: Her Vilayette En Az 200-300 Yataklı Birer Çocuk Yuvası Açmak Zarureti Vardır,” 19.7.1943, *Tan*; Prof.Dr. Fahri Arel, “İstanbul’un Kimsesiz ve Serseri Çocukları,” 12.3.1943, *Vatan*; “İzmir’deki Serseri Çocuklar Şehirden Çıkarılıyor,” 23.1.1944, *Tan*; Niyazi Berkes, “Başı Boş Çocuklar,” 11.8.1944, *Tan*; Ali Rauf, “Gören ve Duyan Yok mu?” 20.6.1944, *Tan*; Said Kesler, “Sokaklardaki Çocuklarla Savaşma Usulleri,” 2.4.1943, *Tan*; “Çocuk Yuvaları Çoğalıyor,” 8.5.1944, *Tan*; “Serseri Çocuklar İçin Yeni Bir Yurt Açılıyor,” 6.7.1944, *Tan*; “Kimsesiz Çocuklar: Hükümet Bir Milyon Lira Tahsisine Karar Verdi,” 2.1.1944.

¹⁰⁸⁰ See Karabekir (2000), p.417

below, the rate of increase in divorce in the period between 1941 and 1942 in which the economic impact of the war was felt by the people was approximately 28.3 %. This was the highest rate recorded until this date. In other years of the war period, this rate became higher than in the pre-war period comparatively. In addition, as a cause of divorce, a rise in adultery can also be seen an indicator of social problems and moral depression during the period.

Table 22-The Number of Divorces (1940-1945) ¹⁰⁸²

Years	Number of Divorces	Adultery as a Cause of Divorce
1940	4027	904
1941	4028	935
1942	5170	1431
1943	5427	1326
1944	6023	1535
1945	6187	1670

The main cause of the increase in divorces was poverty and the high cost of living. In an article titled *Why Do Divorces Increase?* (Boşanmalar Neden Artıyor?) in *the Periodicals of Administration of Justice* (Adliye Ceridesi), Münir Erkoyuncu, a jurist, propounded that the poverty and high cost of living caused the devastation of the families and caused the divorces.¹⁰⁸³

It is possible to estimate that this high rate of divorces played a role in the increase in the number of vagrant, homeless and criminal children in this period. In addition to the divorces, the conscription of men by the army, poverty and adultery pushed the women to child abandonment and sometimes the murder the newborn babies. In order to understand the causes of the child abandonment and even infanticide during the wartime in Turkey, explanations of Carolyn Sargent and Michael Harris should be taken into account. According to them, “child abandonment as a last resort for parents isolated from social

¹⁰⁸¹ “Boşanmalar Fazlalaşıyor,” 2.6. 1942, Tan

¹⁰⁸² I summarized the statistics. For the original text see *T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, İstatistiklerde Kadın* (1927-1990), (Ankara, 1992), pp.63-69

¹⁰⁸³ Münir Erkoyuncu, “Boşanmalar Neden Artıyor?”, *Adliye Ceridesi*, Adliye Vekilliği, no.8, 1942, p.953

support and trapped in a precarious economic situation.”¹⁰⁸⁴ Indeed, women resorted to child abandonment and sometime infanticide as a response to the difficult living conditions and the lack of social and economic support.

It is possible to see the stories of women who killed or left their children in the newspapers of the period. One example, the story of Behiye may represent condition of women who were in the same situation. Behiye, a 25 years old woman, remained penniless after her husband went to Anatolia. Although she began to work as a maidservant, she was not able to earn enough money to feed her children. Behiye asked help from her relatives but she did not get any response. Upon this, she was depressed and killed her child, who was crying continuously from hunger.¹⁰⁸⁵

Another woman left her child on the street on a cold winter night. Upon the arrest of the woman by the police, she blamed it on the high cost of living and poverty. Similar to Behiye, she stated that because she was unable to feed her child, she felt she had to abandon him.¹⁰⁸⁶ There were not only women, but also men who killed their children. For example, a poor man named Halil İbrahim killed his child because he was unable to feed him.¹⁰⁸⁷

In addition, many women resorted to abortion in spite of the prohibition. As Fahri Arel reported, “the killing of the child fetus continues frequently, although it is severely punished by the legal system.”¹⁰⁸⁸

The most important cause of these cases was the poverty and adultery. As stated in *The Report Presented to the Ministry of Justice About the Illegal Sexual Relations and Illegitimate Children* (Kanun Dışı Birleşmeler ve Nesebi Sahih Olmayan Çocuklar

¹⁰⁸⁴ See “Bad Boys and Good Girls”, in *Small Wars: The Cultural Politics of Childhood*, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Carolyn Sargent (ed.), (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), p.214

¹⁰⁸⁵ “Çocuğunu Öldüren Ananın Muhakemesi,” 21.2.1944, Vatan

¹⁰⁸⁶ “Yavrusunu Karlı Bir Gecede Sokağa Atmış,” 18.4.1943, Vatan,

¹⁰⁸⁷ Minutes of the GNAT, 17.5.1943, p.97

¹⁰⁸⁸ Prof. Dr. Fahri Arel, “İstanbul’un Kimsesiz ve Serseri Çocukları,” 12.3.1943, Vatan. One can see many articles in the newspaper about the death of young women because of abortion. “Bir genç kız daha kürtaja kurban gitti” 25.8.1943, Vatan; “Çocuğunu Düşüren Ana Öldü”, 13.8.1943, Vatan; Çocuğunu Düşüren Bir Ana Öldü”, 6.8.1943, Vatan.

Hakkında Adliye Vekaletine Sunulan Rapor), “the fear from the burden of a marriage and setting up a family because of the high cost of living in cities, ruled out the marriage and caused illegal sexual relations.”¹⁰⁸⁹

Moreover, according to Mediha Berkes, the conscription of the men into the army also contributed to the poverty of the family. In this case, the poor women who were not able to earn their living sometimes had sexual relations with other men. The children who were born as a result of these illegal relations were left destitute and homeless.¹⁰⁹⁰ In these cases, the women sometimes resorted to killing their illegitimate children.¹⁰⁹¹

Fahri Arel also underlined the increase in the number of women who killed or abandon their children during the wartime. He argued that the adverse economic conditions incited poor women to resort these kinds of ways.

A woman kills her child or abandons him on the street for two main reasons: Social and economic. The high cost of living of today compels women to work together with men. This near relationships in workplaces causes illegitimate events...Women resort to various ways to conceal illegitimate children stemmed from the illegitimate behaviors...She kills her child because society calls him a bastard and her a prostitute.¹⁰⁹²

As a female member of the parliament, Belkıs Baykan also underscored the connection between the illegitimate, homeless and vagrant children and the participation of the women in the workforce because of the high cost of living in last years.

That the women have to work outside their homes is the main cause of this [child question]. The increase in the high cost of living day by day is felt in the big cities. Therefore, the women have to work in order to contribute to the living of her family financially.¹⁰⁹³

Indeed, as mentioned before, during the war period many women had to work to earn their living. Their share in the workforce increased about 12 percent from 1937 to

¹⁰⁸⁹ Report Presented to the Ministry of Justice About the Illegal Sexual Relations and Illegitimate Children (Kanun Dışı Birleşmeler ve Nesebi Sahih Olmayan Çocuklar Hakkında Adliye Vekaletine Sunulan Rapor), *Adliye Ceridesi*, T.C. Adliye Vekilliği, no.12, 1942, p.1339

¹⁰⁹⁰ Mediha Berkes, “Şehirlerde Nesebi Gayri Sahih Çocuklar,” 4.8.1944, Tan

¹⁰⁹¹ “Çocuklarını Öldüren Analar,” 5.4.1944, Tan. For example, Hatice, a young woman, killed his illegitimate child as soon as he was born. The story of Neriman was similar.

¹⁰⁹² Prof.Dr. Fahri Arel, “İstanbul’un Kimsesiz ve Serseri Çocukları,” 12.3.1943, Vatan

¹⁰⁹³ The Minutes of the GNAT, 1942, p.311

1943.¹⁰⁹⁴ For instance, in Bakırköy in 1942 the proportion of the women workers to all workers exceeded 85 percent. In Kayseri, this proportion had been approximately 5-7 percent in pre-war period, this reached to 20 percent in the war years. For example, the numbers of women workers employed in factories of the Sümerbank reveal a considerable increase. Indeed, whereas this number is 1820 in 1939, it climbed to 5911 in 1944 and become 5503 in 1945.¹⁰⁹⁵

This trend affected children adversely. Many more children started to be deprived of emotional support and disciplination of their family and especially of their mother. In addition, there were not enough day nurseries and day care houses for the children of working women. A tobacco worker, whose wife was also a worker, pointed out the matter in a letter to Aziz Nesin. He said that because his wife had to work, their children remained without family care. Therefore, they remained neglected and undisciplined

We can buy hardly the ration bread with our wages. In order to eat bread with olive oil once or twice a week, we send our wives to the tobacco depots to work. Thus our children become miserable. They wait for us in the streets in the dust with empty stomachs. The children, who you saw under the bridges and near the ruins, are our children. Forty thousand tobacco workers are bringing up vagrant children for you. We are in need of day-care centers.¹⁰⁹⁶

Indeed, in many slums, uncontrolled children spend their time in the street, in dirty water and mud, and without food.¹⁰⁹⁷ During the period, the uncontrolled, homeless, miserable and vagrant children increased. According to a report, dated 1944, there were 5000 homeless, indigent and vagrant children in İstanbul. These children lived miserably in construction sites, under bridges and ruins.¹⁰⁹⁸ In an article on the problem, Ali Rauf described these children and complained of the lack of any measures about them.

¹⁰⁹⁴ See Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye’de Tek Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri: 1920-1946*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1999), p.309.

In addition, for the place of women in workforce in these years see Mine Taş, *Kadın, Ekonomik Yaşamı ve Eğitimi*, (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1979), p.93

¹⁰⁹⁵ Cemil Koçak, “Sayılarla Sosyal Politika Tarihi,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, no.92, (August 1991), p.121

¹⁰⁹⁶ Aziz Nesin, “Çalışma Bakanına Açık Mektup I,” 4.8.1945, Tan.

¹⁰⁹⁷ “Çocuk Davasının Ana Meseleleri,” 23.7.1945, Tan

¹⁰⁹⁸ “Serseri Çocuklar İçin Yeni Bir Yurt Açılıyor,” 6.7.1944, Tan

For a long time there have been poor children who have lost their bearings and walk in the street swaying from side to side on the sidewalks. Although their number has increased in recent times, there is no any help for them.¹⁰⁹⁹

In *Vatan* dated 4 June 1944, it was stated that the streets of İstanbul were full of miserable children whose clothes were in rags. After it was emphasized that the number of these children was increasing over time, the lack of any measures about these children was implied by asking what their end would be.¹¹⁰⁰

Niyazi Berkes also wrote a series of articles about the child question in this period.¹¹⁰¹ In one of his articles dated 11 August 1944, he argued that the indigent and vagrant children had increased in recent years not only in İstanbul, but also in Anatolia.

The years of economic depression and scarcities we have experienced make the problem much more serious. It is necessary to solve the problem because the social groups which have become impoverished over time have to throw their children out onto the street.¹¹⁰²

Indeed, poor families forced their children to work and to earn money. According to Makal, the employment of children and young people increased two and half times from 1937 to 1943.¹¹⁰³ This condition of the children is reflected in the memories of the people who experienced the period. Adnan Binyazar is one of them. In his memoirs, *The Giant Who Lost Its Tale* (Masalını Yitiren Dev), he wrote that his father forced him and his brother to work as porters. Adnan's father did not support his going to school although he had reached school age.¹¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ali Rauf, "Gören ve Duyan Yok mu?", 20.6.1944, Tan

¹¹⁰⁰ "Soruyoruz," 4.6.1943, Vatan

¹¹⁰¹ Niyazi Berkes, "Başı Boş Çocuklar I," 11.8.1944, Tan ; "Başı Boş Çocuklar II," 12.8.1944, Tan;

¹¹⁰² Niyazi Berkes, "Başı Boş Çocuklar I," 11.8.1944 Tan

¹¹⁰³ See Makal (1999), p.309.

According to Şehmus Güzel, the percentage of children in workforce had declined from 15 percent in 1927 to 3 percent in 1934. With the onset of war, the number of adult male workers between 1937 and 1943 declined from 191.863 (78 percent) to 166.275 (61 percent), while that of children (between ages of 12 and 18) increased from 23.347 (8 percent) to 51.871 (19 percent). That is, the number of children employed by industry had more than doubled. This same scenario holds for women workers: their numbers increased from 50.131 (15 percent) in 1937 to 56.231 (20 percent) in 1943. Şehmus Güzel, "Capital and Labor During World War II," in *Workers and The Working Class in The Ottoman Empire and The Turkish Republic (1839-1950)*, (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1995), p.137

¹¹⁰⁴ Binyazar, p.84

This case was not peculiar to Binyazar. His situation was a part of the general picture.¹¹⁰⁵ Indeed, from what Sıtkı Yırcalı said, in the villages and cities among the children of lower income social groups whose their livelihood were dependent on the working of all members of the family, truancy and absenteeism in school had become much more widespread.¹¹⁰⁶ As F.Ş.Yersel reported from Eskişehir, an important economic center of Anatolia, the situation of the working children was miserable. Yersel proposed that they should be protected by the state.¹¹⁰⁷

In addition to the interruption of the education process of these poor children who had to work, they exposed very harsh and devastating conditions outside the school. The story of Adnan Binyazar is very striking in this respect. Because he was born in 1934, it was understood that in the year of 1943, when he was forced to work by his father, he was about 8 or 9 years old. When they were working, he and his brother had to sleep on public benches under the open air, in public baths and old cinemas as many other children did. They fought with cockroaches, louse and the police many times.¹¹⁰⁸ Because of hunger and lack of parental care, he looked for food in dustbins in the streets.¹¹⁰⁹

The war interrupted the attendance of children in schools by forcing them to work in order to survive and support their poor families financially because of the rising of poverty and the high cost of living. According to a middle-school director, the children had to work in order to support their families in these bad economic circumstances. Therefore, only 140 students of 440 students in the school were able to attend the classes. The others had to work to support their families. He also complained of lack of an institution to make aid to these children.¹¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰⁵ “İlk Tahsil Çağındaki Çocuklar,” 24.9.1944, Cumhuriyet. According to the news, in Beyoğlu, of 27.000 who was in school age, 7.000 children did not go to the school.

¹¹⁰⁶ Sıtkı Yırcalı, “Nikahsız Birleşmeler ve Çocukların Mektebe Devam Meseleleri,” 14.6.1944, Tan

¹¹⁰⁷ F.Ş.Yersel, “Çalışan Çocuklar,” Kocatepe, 27.3.1943

¹¹⁰⁸ See Binyazar, pp.98-99,106

¹¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p.94

¹¹¹⁰ Said Kesler, “Mekteplerdeki Yoksul Talebeler,” 25.4.1943, Tan

This situation of the children was reflected a poem by Rıfat Ilgaz, a teacher and poet who was inspired by the social realities of the period in his poems. From one of his poems, *Çocuklarım* (My Children) dated 1944, the social situation of the children in the war years can be understood. He expressed in this poem that the children in school age were very poor and suffered from hunger in the war years. Therefore, these children had to cut the lessons and work to survive.¹¹¹¹

Çocuklarım

Yoklama defterinden öğrenmedim sizi
Benim haylaz çocuklarım!
Sınıfın en devamsızını
Bir sinema dönüşü tanıdım
Koltuğunda satılmamış gazeteler...

Dumanlı bir salonda
Kendime göre karşılarken akşamı,
Nane şekeri uzattı en tembeliniz...
Götürmek istedi küfesinde
Elimdeki ıspanak demetini
En dalgını sınıfın!

İsterken adam olmanızı
Çoğunuz semtine uğramaz oldu mektebin
Palto, ayakkabı yüzünden

Kiminiz limon satar balıkpazarında
Kiminiz Tahtakalede çaycılık eder
Biz inceleye duralım aç tavuk hesabı
Tereyağındaki vitamini
Ve kalorisini taze yumurtanın

Karşılıklı neler öğrenmedik sınıfta,
Çevresini ölçtük dünyanın
Hesapladık yıldızların uzaklığını
Orta Asya'dan konuştuk lâf kıtlığında

Neler düşünmedik beraberce
Burnumuzun dibindekini görmeden
Bulutlara mı karışmadık
“Hazan rüzgarı”nda dökülmüş
“Hasta yapraklar”a mı üzülmedik
Serçelere mi acımadık kış günlerinde
Kendimizi unutarak!

Indeed, the frequency of truancy in primary schools was so high that president İsmet İnönü wrote an article about the problem in *Ülkü* (Ideal) journal. He complained of that the number of the children who were graduated from the primary schools was only 75.000, which was under the target level of 200.000 in the 1943-1944. He described this situation as the passive resistance of the people. He also made a self-criticism by saying that the state was unsuccessful in teaching the value and importance of education to the citizens. Therefore, many girls were not sent to school; village children helped their families in agricultural works; and poor children started to work at an early age. İnönü regarded the truancy problem in primary schools as the most important front of the

¹¹¹¹ See Rıfat Ilgaz, *Sınıf*, (İstanbul: Çınar Yayınları, 1993), p.35-36.

education question.¹¹¹² However, the problem was not related the ignorance of the people, but the social and economic circumstances of the people.

School children who were able to continue to attend in the school were not without problems and difficulties. They were deprived of food, educational materials and equipment, and comfortable classrooms.¹¹¹³ In many schools teachers and students suffered from the lack of heating. According to the memoirs of Eser Tutel, because of heating problems and of lack of firewood in the classrooms during the severe cold in the 1942 winter, many students in the schools were infected by pneumonia and influenza.¹¹¹⁴

The poverty, hunger, malnutrition and lack of parental care brought by the war caused health problems among the children. Zehra Kosova said in her memoirs that because they were not able to get the necessary nourishment, her daughter's bones had become weaker and ill.¹¹¹⁵

Again, as mentioned in the section about tuberculosis, according to Said Kesler's inquiries, the rate of children with tuberculosis increased approximately 30 percent because of the poverty and malnutrition.¹¹¹⁶

The effects of malnutrition and hunger are reflected in the literature of the era. For example, in the story of *Creamy Chicken Breast Pudding* (Kaymaklı Tavukgöğsü) by Kemal Binbaşar, it was described the tragedy of a poor man whose child was ill. The child, named Engin, was at the beginning of tuberculosis because of malnutrition. The writer described the feelings of the man as follows.

Was it the time for this cursed war? If the war had not broken out, would this child be like this now? If he fed his son with 250 grams of milk before he went to bed,

¹¹¹² See İsmet İnönü, "İlk Öğretim Davamız," *Ülkü*, no.71, 1944, p.3-4

¹¹¹³ During the war period, the education tools and means became much poorer in quality. The pencils cut and tore the paper. The books were full of shortcomings and mistakes. Indeed, if Altan Öymen who was a child of a representative, suffered from the poor quality of educational means such as pencil, book, paper and so on, the children of the lower income people had much more difficulties. See Altan Öymen, *Bir Dönem Bir Çocuk*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2002), pp.216-217.

¹¹¹⁴ Eser Tutel, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Beyoğlu," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no.133, (January 1995), p.30

¹¹¹⁵ Kosova, p.121

¹¹¹⁶ Sait Kesler, "Verem Nispeti Çocuklarda Yüzde 30 Arttı," 31.12.1943, Tan

and gave him butter, jam and eggs for breakfast, would his cheeks be so pale?
Those who started this war should go blind.¹¹¹⁷

In conclusion, the children and women were adversely affected by the war. The situation of homeless children was reflected in the poems, as can be seen from this quatrain written by Celal Sılay below, in 1943.¹¹¹⁸

*İhtimal ki bu mahallenin bir sokağında
Kaldırma bir çocuk serilmiştir
Felaketini taşlar duyar bu çocuğun
Düşündüklerini ben duyarım*

In parallel to this process, during the war years, the proportion of the number of juvenile crimes to the total number of crimes also increased. As Sulhi Dönmezer explored, “Although the total number of juvenile crimes in 1935 was approximately two times that of 1941, and from 1935 to 1939, the proportion of the number of juvenile crimes to total number of crimes was the same, this proportion increased considerably between 1940 and 1941.”¹¹¹⁹ The proportion of the number of crimes of young people under 21 years old to the total number of crime was 16 % in 1938, 15 % in 1939, and 20.7 % in 1940. This proportion for the young people under 18 years old was 8 % in 1935 and 12 % in 1941.¹¹²⁰ Sulhi Dönmezer explained this increase in the proportion of crimes among the children with refer to the social and economic impact of the war.¹¹²¹ More proof of the increase in the proportion of juvenile crime to overall crimes was that the Ministry of Justice put the establishment of Juvenile Courts in 1943 on the agenda.¹¹²²

Kamil Sangüllü’s article titled *Child and Crime* (Çocuk ve Suç) sheds light on the causes and kinds of these crimes committed by children in this period. According to Sangüllü, in Turkey, the children had a tendency to commit crimes under certain social and

¹¹¹⁷ Çılgin, p.35

¹¹¹⁸ Celal Sılay, 14.2. 1943, Vatan

¹¹¹⁹ Sulhi Dönmezer, “Garp Medeniyeti’nde ve Memleketimizde Çocuk Suçluluğunun Umumi İnkişafı,” *İş*, no.34, 1943, p.102

¹¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p.103

¹¹²¹ *ibid.*, p.103.

¹¹²² “Çocuk Mahkemeleri Kurulacak,” 27.10.1943, Vatan

economic conditions. One of the most important of these conditions was the rising of the poverty.¹¹²³

For Sangüllü, the most common crime committed by children in Turkey was theft, which was committed in big cities, and because of poverty and hunger.¹¹²⁴ Indeed, from the newspapers, it is possible to see that the many children were involved in thieving and pilfering in this period.¹¹²⁵ According to an article in *Tan*, the news about the police cases in the newspapers were full of the news telling the stories of the thief children.¹¹²⁶ Briefly, children committed crimes which were in the category of property-crime. It was understood that the children under the pressure of the extreme poverty and the difficult living conditions during the war period resorted thieving in order to survive.

Social Measures about the Child Question

The government and some associations intervened in the child question in various ways in this period. First of all, in the first years of the war, the government started to aid to the families and children of men who had been conscripted by the army. In 1941, it was decided that the CPS would take care the indigent children of soldiers.¹¹²⁷ In addition, the government decided to give aid to officials and mothers with many children. The payment of child for lower income officials was increased as mentioned before. However, there were some financial limitations to this aid. Indeed, although the government had decided to make similar aid in the 1930s, it had been unable to implement even this aid for years.¹¹²⁸

¹¹²³Saim Kamil Sangüllü, “Çocuk ve Suç,” 11.11.1943, Vatan

¹¹²⁴ibid.

¹¹²⁵ “12 Yaşında Bir Sabıkalı,” “Açlıktan Hırsızlık Yapan Bir Çocuk,” 20.4.1943, Vatan; “Tramvayda Şapka Kapan Çocuklar,” 3.1.1943, Tan. Tan reported that in recent times some children started to steal hats of the people in İstanbul trams. “Üç Hırsız Çocuk Yakalandı,” 26.1.1942 Tan; “İki Küçük Hırsızın İbretine Değer Muhakemesi,” 10.3.1943, Vatan. According to this news, two children were arrested by the policy while stealing coal. In the court, the one of them said as follows: “I coughed for days. I stole to be warming.

¹¹²⁶ 22.7.45, Tan

¹¹²⁷ “Askerde Olanların Kimsesiz Çocukları Himaye Edilecek,” 17.11.1941, Tan

¹¹²⁸ The Minutes of the GNAT, 27.5.1941, p.198.

By 1943, the child question had become much more urgent. The question was discussed in the parliamentary group of the RPP in this year and it was decided that some measures would be taken.¹¹²⁹ One of them was the establishment of a Home for Poor Children (Yoksul Çocuklar Yurdu) by the RPP, the Charitable Association of Turkey and the CPS. They decided to make the building which had been assigned by the İstanbul Municipality, a care-house for poor, neglected children and orphans.¹¹³⁰

In 23 April 1943, the CPS opened three care-houses for poor and diseased children in İstanbul. One of them was a day-care house in Kasımpaşa, the others were dispensaries for children in Sarıyer and Beşiktaş. In the news, it was stated that the CPS started to make much more effort in comparison with its former efforts before the war.¹¹³¹

Again, it is meaningful that the year of 1944 was declared by the CPS as the year of the child.¹¹³² This indicates that the child question had gained great importance in this period. By this declaration, the CPS aimed to increase its efforts, charitable activities and general public concern about the child question. Indeed, 1944 became the most active year with respect to social measures about the child question. In the first month of 1944, the CPS initiated new projects in 22 provinces for homeless and poor children.¹¹³³ In addition, the homes for poor and homeless children proliferated throughout the country in this year.¹¹³⁴ Again, the *medrese* in the courtyard of the Nuruosmaniye Mosque was assigned as a home for homeless and poor children.¹¹³⁵

Another measure taken by the government in 1944 was to employ homeless children on certain state farms. For this project, the government allotted 1.000.000 TL. The children who were sent to the farms in Muş, Urfa and Ağrı would be trained as farmers.¹¹³⁶

¹¹²⁹ Prof.Dr. Fahri Arel, "İstanbul'un Kimsesiz ve Serseri Çocukları," 12.3.1943, Vatan

¹¹³⁰ "Yoksul Çocuklar Yurdu," 2.3.1943, Tan

¹¹³¹ "Çocuklar İçin 3 Sıhhat Yurdu Daha Açıldı," 24.4.1943, Tan

¹¹³² "Çocuk Senesi," 21.11.1943, Cumhuriyet

¹¹³³ 1.1.1944, Tan

¹¹³⁴ "Çocuk Yuvaları Çoğalıyor," 8.5.1944, Tan

¹¹³⁵ "Serseri Çocuklar İçin Yeni Bir Yurt Açılıyor," 6.7.1944, Tan

¹¹³⁶ "Kimsesiz Çocuklar: Hükümet Bir Milyon Lira Tahsisine Karar Verdi," 2.1.1944, Cumhuriyet

Thus they would be removed from İstanbul and would contribute to the production process.

The difficulties the poor students encountered, and the higher rates of truancy and absenteeism in the schools, gave rise to associations which aimed to help to poor students in the primary schools. Other associations also increased their aid to poor students. In 1940, there were many associations such as the Association for Aid to Poor Students in Primary Schools in Beyoğlu, the Association for Aid to Poor Students in Primary Schools in Bakırköy and similar associations in other districts were founded by members of the RPP, bureaucrats and bourgeoisie under the framework of the Association for Aid to Poor Students in Schools in İstanbul. This Association supported indigent students and mobilized the public to aid them. The Association made monetary help of 135 TL monthly to 35 hard-working poor students. Again, for example, it distributed 650 overcoats and 350 women's coats to indigent students.¹¹³⁷

Red Crescent also offered one hot meal a day to poor students. In 1944 Red Crescent started to deliver free meal once a day to indigent school children. In November 1945, Red Crescent provided lunch ever day to 12,000 poor students since 1944.¹¹³⁸ The CPS also distributed some food some poor students in schools.¹¹³⁹

When looked at financial help for the lower income people and mothers who had many children, these financial helps were not effective. For instance, according to a representative, the payment assigned as social aid to the judges who had many children was not sufficient and effective.¹¹⁴⁰

On the paper, the Ministry of Health had given 50 TL to women with more than five children since the 1930s. The amount of this stipend was increased to 150 TL in 1943.

¹¹³⁷ "Yoksul Çocuklara Yardım," 28.11.1943, Vatan,

¹¹³⁸ "Kızılay 12 Bin Talebeye Yemek Veriyor," 18.11.1945, Tan. According to this news, Kızılay gave a meal to the poor students since 1944.

¹¹³⁹ See "Yoksul Talebeye Yardım Cemiyetleri," 14.2.1943, Cumhuriyet; "Yoksul Talebeye Yardım," 4.1.1944, Vatan

¹¹⁴⁰ *AT*, no. 90, (1-31 May 1941), p.46

However, many women with more than five children who applied to the Ministry of Health three or four years ago in order to receive such stipend did not receive any money.¹¹⁴¹

More than that, in the discussion of the general budget in the National Assembly, a representative confessed that the government was not able to response to applications for financial aid which was made even in 1934 by the mothers with many children. In order to meet all these applications, it required 2,000,000 TL and it was not possible to appropriate such an amount of money for this aid in the uneasy financial of the era.¹¹⁴²

The Darülaceze, one of the most important charitable organizations for the orphans, homeless and vagrant children, was not sufficient for solving the homeless, orphan and vagrant children problem. It had a limited function in the social control over these children. The hostel of the Darülaceze was small and unfunctional. In spite of the 100 beds in its dormitory, there were 138 and sometime 160 children staying at the dormitory. Some children in the orphanage, who were left by their families, were reverted to their families.¹¹⁴³ As Said Kesler said, although this place was devised for the all orphans in Turkey, it did not suffice the needs of İstanbul. Sometime, there were two or three children in one cradle together.¹¹⁴⁴

In the struggle of the government against vagrancy, the lack of sufficient housing and protection capacity of the Darülaceze was often emphasized.¹¹⁴⁵ The Darülaceze was not able to separate the children from their former lives and morality. Its social control over the children was very limited. Many vagrant children who were sent to the Darülaceze and other places looked for ways to return back to their former lives and vagrancy, and

¹¹⁴¹ Burhan Cavid, "Sokak Çocukları Devletin Malı Olmalıdır," 17.4.1943, Son Posta

¹¹⁴² The Minutes of the GNAT, 27.5.1941, p.198

¹¹⁴³ "Çocuk Yuvası," 8.4.1941, Tan

¹¹⁴⁴ Said Kesler, "Kreşte Yetişenleri Darülaceze'den Hemen Kurtarmalıyız," 17.3.1943, Tan

¹¹⁴⁵ "Serseri Çocuklarla Mücadele," 21.11.1941, Tan

In addition, the social and economic impact of the war so much depressed the Darülaceze that an Association for Aid to the Darülaceze was established by the wealthier people in order to increase the financial sources of the organization and to widen its services. See Nuran Yıldırım, *100 Yılında Darülaceze Müessesesi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Darülaceze Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), p.200

many of them escaped from Darülaceze.¹¹⁴⁶ In addition, because the capacity of Darülaceze and of other organization was not sufficient to accept all the homeless children and orphans, many of them were gathered by the police in public baths which, were rented by the municipality. This did not mean social control, but was meant to keep them away from public places.

Again, although the women started to participate much more in the workplace in this period, there were no sufficient day-care facilities for the children whose mother worked outside the home. The existing day-care houses accepted only very poor orphans because of their limited capacity, as the Darülaceze did.¹¹⁴⁷ The situation was the same in the Anatolia. For example, in *Kocatepe* newspaper, F.Ş.Yersel said that day-care houses were necessary for the children whose mothers worked. He added that the state should take care of the children of the working women.¹¹⁴⁸

So far as Said Kesler described, the Home for Saving the Children (Çocukları Kurtarma Yurdu) in İstanbul was also unfunctional. It was not a hygienic and healthy place for children. There were many children even without shoes. The room in which they lived was in ruins, unhygienic and freezing.¹¹⁴⁹

As for the CPS, the most important organization in child welfare, it was no exception to the general picture. The insufficient capacity of the CPS in the war period can be understood from the criticisms of the CPS. For example, Dr. Fuat Umay, one of the founders of the CPS, said that the CPS hostel in Keçiören was the only one that accepted all infants who were suckling. Therefore, continued Dr.Umay, it was not possible to accept all applications. According to information given by Umay, this hostel had only 300 beds.

¹¹⁴⁶ Said Kesler, "Sokaklardaki Çocuklarla Savaşma Usulleri," 2.4.1943, Tan

¹¹⁴⁷ "İstanbul'un Başta Gelen İhtiyaçlarından Biri de Kreştir," 4.3.1943, Tan.

¹¹⁴⁸ F.Ş.Yersel, "Çalışan Çocuklar," 27.3.1943, Kocatepe

¹¹⁴⁹ Said Kesler, "Çocukları Kurtarma Yurdu Nasıl Islah Edilir?," 24.5.1943, Tan

And even though the amount of beds rose up to 1000, they would be filled immediately and the hostel could not meet the needs.¹¹⁵⁰

During the war period, although the CPS endeavored to accelerate its activities, it had to postpone its activities and make the applicants wait because it lacked the necessary financial resources and personnel to fulfill its duties as needed. As a result, its activities and aid were palliative in character rather than long-lasting.¹¹⁵¹

The incapacity of the CPS became a subject of self-criticisms in the National Assembly. The insufficient financial resources and applications of the families of soldiers to the CPS increased its burden. A representative from Erzurum described the depressed situation in which the Society was as follows:

The budget of the Childrens' Protection Society is 700,000 TL. This cannot meet today's needs. We gathered all of the sources that we had and added it to the budget of the Society in this year... But the Society cannot meet the needs of the country. Many citizens are under arms for their national duty. From their families, those who have to work outside the home applied first to the Children's Protection Society.¹¹⁵²

Remzi Oğuz Arık, in a book dated 1943, *Women of the Village* (Köy Kadını), also stressed the capacity problems of the CPS and suggested that this Society should be made much more functional:

I think that it is necessary to invite the Childrens' Protection Society to its rightful place in society. As a child of this country and a head of family who has scrutinized the publications of the Society, I can easily argue that this organization is not able to fulfill its duties.¹¹⁵³

Ulunay also pointed out the inefficiency of the CPS and of voluntary associations in addressing the child question. By proposing that these kinds of social activities become obligatory rather than the philanthropic activities, he implied that the state should intervene in the child question effectively:

In spite of all of the efforts of the philanthropic associations, the outcomes obtained by them are a drop in the ocean in comparison with the misery of the

¹¹⁵⁰ "Fuat Umay diyor ki: Her Vilayette En Az 200-300 Yataklı Birer Çocuk Yuvası Açmak Zarureti Vardır," 19.7.1943, Tan

¹¹⁵¹ M.C. Duru, "Halkevleri ve Sosyal Yardım," *Ülkü*, February 1940, p.554

¹¹⁵² The Minutes of the GNAT, 25.5.1942, p.281

¹¹⁵³ Remzi Oğuz Arık, *Köy Kadını*, (Ankara: Ulusal Matbaası, 1943), p.82

children. The protection of the children should be an obligation instead of charity.¹¹⁵⁴

As a result of these problems and the incapacities the CPS experienced, many poor families wrote letters to the newspapers and said that they were not able to maintain and take care of their own children. They demanded help from the state and related organizations. For example, a woman whose husband had died wrote that she remained alone with her three children and did not have any source of income in her letter to the *Son Posta*. She said that she could not look after her children while working outside the home. So she applied to the CPS to take care of her children during work hours. But her application remained without a response.¹¹⁵⁵

Another letter sent to *Son Posta* was also a clear indicator of the lack of protection of the poor mothers and their infants, and of their helplessness of them:

I have been left alone in this life with my three year old baby. We do not have any source of income. We have been suffering for days half full, half starved. I want to give my child up for adoption so that he will not suffer privation and live in misery. If one wants to accept him, I can give him on the condition that I will see him occasionally. If one wants, I can enter the home as a maidservant, with my child. I will endlessly be grateful to the person who wants my children or employs me, because he would save me and my children from misery.¹¹⁵⁶

When taken the rising of the poverty and the lack of social insurance or effective social aid to the needy mothers with children into consideration, it can be understood the increase in the child abandonment, infanticide and illegal abortions. Again it can be established a link between the insufficiency of the social measures about the child question and child vagrancy, the increase in the proportion of juvenile crimes to overall crimes.

Indeed, in this period the number of child vagrants and thieves increased and became much more apparent in public places. The government tried to struggle against them with forcible methods. This originated in the incapacity of the state in the betterment and improvement of the vagrants by means of education, reformatories or working.

¹¹⁵⁴ Ulunay, "İçtimai Sigorta," 4.2.1944, Tan

¹¹⁵⁵ "Üç Çocuklu Bedbaht Bir Ananın Dileği," 6.3.1943, *Son Posta*

¹¹⁵⁶ "Zavallı Bir Ananın Hamiyetli Vatandaşlardan Dileği," 5.4.1943, *Son Posta*

As Özbek notes, the methods of the struggle against vagrancy are related to the financial and social control capacity of the state. States with a strong capacity of social control use the work for the improvement of the vagrants. But states with a lower capacity of social control resort to exile, forced working in railways, mines, and other forcible methods.¹¹⁵⁷

In this framework, during the war period the government resorted to forcible methods because of its lower capacity of social control. For example, in İzmir, the child vagrants were caught by the police and exiled to the outside the city.¹¹⁵⁸ Again, in January 1944, the police in İstanbul started to struggle against the child vagrants and beggars and caught many children every day. These children were collected in the *Medrese of Süleymaniye*. After that, the children who came from Anatolia were sent back to their towns.¹¹⁵⁹ Some of them were forced to live in designated public baths under the control of the local government.¹¹⁶⁰

But this effort of the government was challenged by these children and the capacity problems of the state. First of all, the number of children who were caught by the police was very low in comparison with the children who could not be caught. According to Said Kesler, even though 400 child vagrants were under surveillance in the public baths, stealing and pick pocketing continued in various part of the city and thousands of these children caused trouble for the police. Those who were sent to Anatolia returned to İstanbul and continued their activities in the streets as soon as possible.¹¹⁶¹ Said Kesler who observed the matter critically, underscored the inefficiency of these forced measures and proposed their improvement and disciplination by means of systematic work policy:

Those vagrants who are sent to their hometowns, or those who are delivered to their families, and those who are released to their mothers or fathers on bail, return

¹¹⁵⁷ See Nadir Özbek, "II. Meşrutiyet İstanbul'unda Dilenciler ve Serseriler," *Toplumsal Tarih*, April 1999, p.35

¹¹⁵⁸ "İzmir'deki Serseri Çocuklar Şehirden Çıkarılıyor," 23.1.1944, Tan.

¹¹⁵⁹ "Dilenci ve Serseri Çocuklarla Şiddetli Mücadele Ediliyor," 30.1.1944, Tan

¹¹⁶⁰ Said Kesler, "Sokaklardaki Çocuklarla Savaşma Usulleri," 2.4.1943, Tan

¹¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

to İstanbul. Those who are sent to the workplaces escape from there and start to disturb the people on the sidewalks of the streets... According to me, the vagrants who are caught should be subjected to the much more principal purification... Those who are able to work should be worked compulsorily and the practice of delivering them to their hometown or families should be abandoned. Unless the current method is not abandoned, the cycle of these vagrants will continue.”¹¹⁶²

Niyazi Berkes also criticized the forced measures taken by the police instead of social measures to solve the neglected and vagrant child question. He linked the child question with the poverty. And he argued that the main solution of the child question required the social and economic betterment of the people, but not police force.

The problem cannot solve by chasing, catching or a ban on the working of these children, because these children were turned out into the streets by some needs and necessities for living. Unless the social conditions which caused the problem are wiped out or relieved a little bit, forcible measures will continue to be vain. That is to say that the problem was related the betterment of the social and economic conditions of the masses as well.¹¹⁶³

As a matter of fact, the forcible measures were an indicator of the weakness, rather than an indicator of a strong state. The government resorted to police force because it did not have the necessary modern institutions, organizations for social control and financial sources for them. This situation was the failure of the population policy of the government as well because it was not able to protect the backbone of the population policy, the child. In this respect, Cavit Oral made a self-criticisizm about the gap between the theory and practice in the population policy:

We have to increase our population and the number of births... We have to encourage the citizens to marry and to tell them continuously that marriage is a national duty. After that, it is necessary to take measures in order to make the marriage much easier. It is necessary to increase the number of maternity hospitals in all parts of the country in order to reduce infant mortality. We have to give premiums to couples who marry, as is practiced in Italy and Germany... No doubt, our government has taken some measures. However, these measures have not been able to increase the population as rapidly as we had aimed.¹¹⁶⁴

Indeed, in contrast to the population policy of the government, the increase in population slowed down during the war period. Marriage which was strongly encouraged

¹¹⁶² Said Kesler, “Dilenci ve Serserilerle Nasıl Mücadele Ediliyor? II,” 16.10.1943, Tan

¹¹⁶³ Niyazi Berkes, “Başı Boş Çocuklar,” 11.8.1944, Tan

by the ruling elite decreased because of the military conscription of the great amount of the men and the high cost of living.¹¹⁶⁵

As can be seen from the numerical data below, the proportion of the number of married people to the number of people and the population increase decreased during the war period. The number of people in Turkey in 1940 has been recorded at 17.821.000. Since the annual rate of increase then approximated 1.9 %, this would imply a population of about 17.790.000 in 1939. By 1945, the number of people reached 18.790.000, thereby implying average annual rates of increase of 1.1 % during the five year interval.¹¹⁶⁶

Table 23-Number of Married People and The Proportion of Married People to the Population¹¹⁶⁷

Years	Total (1000)	The Proportion of Married People to the Population (%)
1940	6.850	66.4
1945	7.481	65.8

Table 24-Average Annual Rates of Population Growth¹¹⁶⁸

Period	Total	Urban	Rural
1927-35	3.4	2.9	3.6
1935-40	2.0	2.7	1.7
1940-45	1.1	1.5	0.9
1945-50	2.2	2.3	2.2
1950-55	2.8	5.7	1.8

Consequently, bureaucrats and intellectuals criticized the insufficiency of the social measures regarding the children in Turkey by making a comparison with the other countries. According to *Tan* newspaper,

Whereas in many developed countries there were associations, organizations, special courts and specific laws about children, it is an unexcusable mistake to leave our children uncontrolled in every respect... The system of child-care in our country was inherited from our grandmothers. The mother is so much poorer that she cannot nourish them sufficiently. She has to leave her child at home to work...We should solve the milk problem in order to supply the necessary milk to

¹¹⁶⁴ Cavit Oral, "Nüfus Politikamız", *AT* quoted from *Bugün* dated 24.8.1940. *AT*, no. 81, (1-31 August 1940), p.276

¹¹⁶⁵ For example, as said in her memoirs, because of the war, Yavuz Abadan and Nemin Abadan-Unat postponed their marriage to the end of the war. Unat, p.133

¹¹⁶⁶ Moris Singer, p.18

¹¹⁶⁷ *DİE, İstatistik Yıllıkları*

¹¹⁶⁸ Hershlag, p.329

sucklings. Women who work in a job should receive a mothership stipend and maternity permissions.¹¹⁶⁹

The following statement by Nadir Nadi also pointed out the gap between the state aims, worries and performance about the population policy and child question.

Although nobody all over the world suspects our national sovereignty, unfortunately we cannot increase as much as we want because we can not protect the children as needed, and we can not aid to the poor families with many children properly. By declaring April 23 which is the symbol of the national sovereignty as Children's Day (*Çocuk Bayramı*), we proved to what degree we attached importance to this question. But there is a difference between understanding the importance of a question and solving this question.¹¹⁷⁰

In addition, there were no special prisons for the juvenile criminal. They were put in jail with adults, which destroyed them morally and physically. As Mehmet Ali Sebük stated, the conducts of the criminal children were not improved in prison. Moreover, their existing moral values also were lost there.¹¹⁷¹

Briefly, the war affected women and children adversely. They had to work outside the home in order to survive. So the education of the children was interrupted. They also suffered from malnutrition and hunger. With the economic impact of the war, divorce increased rapidly. In this process, the government and related organizations were not able to take the necessary measures because of insufficient financial resources and infrastructure. The financial aid of the government to mothers with many children did not meet their needs. As a result, many women resorted to illegal ways such as abandoning or killing their children as a response to the bad living conditions. The number of neglected children and child vagrants increased. The rate of juvenile crime in the overall crime rate also rose. Because of the lack of reformatories and systematic relief programs, the government struggled against them with forcible methods and resorted to imposing exile. In short, the gap between the aims and plans of the state and its performance became much

¹¹⁶⁹ "Çocuk Davasının Ana Meseleleri," 23.7.1945, Tan

¹¹⁷⁰ 25.4.1943, Cumhuriyet

¹¹⁷¹ Şaban Öztürk quoted from Mehmet Ali Sebük's book, *Cezaevinde İşlenen Cürümler ve Firar Hadiseleri* (İstanbul: Ahmet Sait Matbaası, 1945, p.40-41). See Şaban Öztürk, *Türk Solu'nun Hapishane Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Yar Yayınları, 2004), p.266

more apparent. Therefore, many writers, intellectuals and bureaucrats criticized the insufficient social measures and social policies regarding the child question.

Concluding Remarks

As stated in the former pages, the government was not successful at keeping prices at modest level and diminishing the high rate of inflation. So the high cost of living affected the poor and lower income people adversely. Therefore some social problems increased and new ones emerged. The government initiated some social welfare campaigns and policies in order to diminish the social impact of the war and prevent the social problems. For this aim, it also encouraged charitable associations and cooperated with them. The some associations and societies contributed to the social welfare policies of the government. But both the state and charitable associations encountered many infrastructural obstacles, incapacity, insufficient equipment, organization and financial limitations. The government was not able to appropriate sufficient financial resources to social policies because of the increase in the national defense expenditures. Consequently, the social measures of the government and the associations fell short of diminishing the social impact of the war.

The social aid programs were not able to diminish the poverty and economic difficulties the masses encountered. First of all, they excluded many lower income people and poor. Many excluded people complained of this situation. Second, an important part of the aid programs focused on state officials. This produced an illusion that the state officials were privileged by the government and that they were comfortable.

However, the argument that “state officials were in abundance”¹¹⁷² during the period was at odds with reality. It is not possible to understand the reality by looking at

only the social aid program declared by Saraçoğlu in 1943. The practices of this social aid should be taken into account. First of all, the state personnel encountered many obstacles, problems and difficulties in obtaining this social aid. Thus the social aid program of the government did not meet their needs. Second, the experiences of the people in the distributions of the governmental aid were heartbreaking rather than pleasing. So it can be argued hypothetically that they felt their poverty more because of the social aid. Finally, this governmental social aid indicates that the state personnel were impoverished and became needy rather than being privileged, protected and well-off.

From the press, their letters to the newspapers and petitions to the RPP and their meetings with the representatives who investigate their districts of election, it is possible to see the public opinion about the governmental social aid. According to the touch of the parliamentarians with the people in İstanbul, for example, the people complained of the high cost of living and the insignificance of the governmental aid. In the reports of the parliamentarians, it was stated that in spite of the social aid of the state, the people were not pleased.

In all of the districts of İstanbul, the people complain of the expensiveness of food and clothes which was not bearable, and of the black-market. Even though the lower income people received some social aid from our compassionate state, the people say that because this aid of the state is not effective, their earnings do not meet to take necessary calories. They say that because especially the health of their children and the new generations are under the threat, this terrible situation should be remedied immediately.¹¹⁷³

The main cause of this situation was that the government did not establish a sufficient infrastructure to carry out the social aid. It was not able to inspect and control the practices of the social aid. During the distribution of the social aid goods, there were many instance of favourism, bribery, embezzlements, pilfering and bad treatments made by the officials who were employed in the distribution of social aid.¹¹⁷⁴ In addition to this, the

¹¹⁷² See Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1996), p.120

¹¹⁷³ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 490.1.663.219.1, (1945)]

¹¹⁷⁴ In addition, for a brief information about this events see İlhan Tekeli-Selim İlkin, “Savaşmayan Ülkenin Savaş Ekonomisi: Üretimden Tüketime Pamuklu Dokuma,” *ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi*, 14 (1), 1987, p.38

state was able to neither collect the agricultural taxes nor purchase the agricultural products at lower prices properly because of incapacity of the Soil Product Office and the resistance of the peasants. Moreover there were one million soldiers provisioned by the state. Therefore, the state was not able to appropriate sufficient resource to the social aid.

In this process, many associations and organizations contributed to the social welfare policy and aims of the state. Because of insufficient financial resources of the state, many social welfare measures were left to the associations. However, they failed to implement effective social welfare programs and social aid. Their attempts at social welfare accomplished little. What is more important is that their activities were palliative, small and local in comparison with the poverty and social problems emerged in the war period.

Consequently, the state was invited by the intellectuals and press to implement social policies much more effectively and sufficiently. For example, in *Cumhuriyet*, it was reported that the charitable associations did not function properly due to the lack of organization and financial sources. The writer said that the charitable organizations should be much more charitable.¹¹⁷⁵ In *Tan*, Sabiha Sertel stressed the weakness and insufficiencies of the charitable associations and the necessity of the state intervention in the social welfare field. She also implied that the state did not appropriate sufficient financial source for the social policies.

Because the social welfare is primitive and the social welfare activities of the private organizations are limited in our country, social welfare activities should be carried out by the state. But, *with the money appropriated for these activities*, it will take many years to accomplish these social welfare activities.¹¹⁷⁶

Ahmet Emin Yalman, also underscored that the charitable associations did not implement adequate social welfare measures. He also stated that the social policies and

¹¹⁷⁵ D.N., “Hayır Cemiyetlerini İyi Kurup İşletemiyoruz,” 10.3.1944, *Cumhuriyet*; D.N., “Hayır Cemiyetlerinin Daha Hayırlı Olmalarının Dört Şartı,” 11.3.1944

¹¹⁷⁶ Sabiha Sertel, “İçtimai Mukavemet Ne Demektir,” 15.2.1939, *Tan*

social aid should be carried out by the state. Yalman proposed that the social welfare activities and social polices in Turkey should be organized under a ministry specifically.

The social security question is regarded as protection of the population, social health, social welfare and social happiness, not as aid to the individuals and charity. The enforcement of our social security system is dependent on the proliferation of the private enterprises such as Doğan Insurance Company and on the increase in the social welfare activities of the state. The concept of Social Aid, which was added before the name of the Ministry of Health, (Ministry of Health and Social Aid) is empty in reality. Thus we will need a Ministry of Social Aid in order to carry out all social questions seriously tomorrow.¹¹⁷⁷

Yalman, in another article, complained of the lack of development in the social welfare system, although the country needed a planned and systematic social welfare.¹¹⁷⁸

Bureaucrats such as Vedat Dicleli also underlined the ineffectual efforts of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and charitable associations to diminish the social problems, poverty and to provide social welfare. He also stressed that the state left the social policy field to the associations due to lack of financial sources.

In spite of all means, the social aid made by the charitable associations is limited, because of their limited financial resources. Because some citizens prefer to aid to the poor directly, but not by means of charitable associations, the charities and aid which were given to the charitable associations fall short.¹¹⁷⁹

The front of the social welfare of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has not shown its presence as much as desired. To run a few hospitals and dispensaries of the ministry and to inspect some workplaces of private enterprises and municipalities does not mean that the social welfare works is implemented as it should be... Because it is not possible to appropriate the necessary financial resources in the state budget, the state make the social aid a work which is carried out locally.¹¹⁸⁰

Sabri Aysal, the mayor of Manisa, in a letter to President İsmet İnönü, emphasized the insufficient and unsystematic social aid. According to Aysal, especially the social welfare activities of the charitable associations did not meet the needs. He also argued that

¹¹⁷⁷ A. E. Yalman, "İçtimai Emniyet," 12.3.1943 Vatan.

¹¹⁷⁸ A. E. Yalman, "Planlı ve Esaslı Bir İçtimai Yardım Havası Bir Türü Gelişmiyor," 20.10.1943, Vatan

¹¹⁷⁹ Vedat Dicleli, "Yoksulluk ve Sosyal Yardım Şekilleri," *Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, no.1, 1946, p.119

¹¹⁸⁰ *ibid.* p.121

the social policy which was carried out by local organizations and association were not effective and successful.¹¹⁸¹

M.C. Duru also wrote that because the charitable associations were not able to carry out the social welfare measures and social aid programs, effective state intervention in the matter was necessary. According to him, it was wrong to expect from a charitable organization which focused on a certain and limited problem or matter to carry out all social aid works. Turkey needed many more associations, foundations and organizations. But, in Duru's words, "above all, we need the state authority and state power."¹¹⁸²

Briefly, the government, which was successful in foreign policy during the Second World War was not successful on the field of social policy and social welfare. Poverty increased steadily. Epidemics such as tuberculosis, typhus and malaria became widespread and were not dealt with effectively by the government. The social effects of the war harmed the children, who were regarded as the future of the nation and the source of the state power. Infant mortality and tuberculosis among the children advanced considerably. They were abandoned in the streets by their families. Because of high cost of living, the people avoided from the marriage, in contrast to the population policy. Even though there were certain laws and regulations aiming the social welfare, in practice these were not effective. As Alaaddin Cemil pointed out briefly,

Although in our laws contain the aims of increasing and making easy the births, decreasing the deaths, which are the basic principles on which the population policy of the all countries is based, these principles cannot be applied completely.¹¹⁸³

One conclusion to be drawn from this picture is that the social conditions produced by the war and the response of the state to them with the social policy exposed the baselessness of the populism and etatism of the RPP. The RPP was not able to appropriate the necessary resources and equipment to the social welfare. In short, the populism and

¹¹⁸¹ PMRA CARPP [490.01 / 50.199.3, (14.3.1945)]

¹¹⁸² M.C. Duru, "Sosyal Yardımlar Hakkında," *Konuşmalar, Broşür: 2*, CHP Halkevleri Neşriyatı, (Ankara: Zerbamat Basımevi, 1941), p.160

¹¹⁸³ Alâettin Cemil, "Kanunlarımızda Nüfusumuzu Teşvik Eden Hükümler," 15.2.1941, Tan

etatism at discourse level was not reflected in the practice. It can be argued that the insufficiency of social welfare measures and the inefficiency of the state in the social matters and problems during the Second World War caused the loss of the people's confidence in state and the principles such as etatism and populism. This can partly explain the interest of the masses in the criticism of the etatism made by the opposition in the post-war period.

Another conclusion which can be drawn from this chapter is that some of the initiatives and enactments about social policies after the Second World War were related not only to the external and diplomatic factors.¹¹⁸⁴ On the contrary, it is possible to trace the post-war developments in the social policy organization of the state and laws about the social policy back to the Second World War years. Indeed, many writers, elite bureaucrats emphasized the lack of effective, systematic and organizational social welfare and social policy system during the war period. They criticized the insufficient social aid activities made by the charitable organization and underlined the importance of state organization and intervention in social field. In addition they stressed the importance of the social policy and social welfare for economic productivity, social order and population policy. The people also complained of the bad practices of social measures of the state and of the insufficient social security, social welfare and social policies. Sometimes they wrote letters to the newspapers, sometimes they sent their petitions to the RPP and the National Assembly.

In this respect, Turkish society and state needed social welfare and social policy much more than ever before because of the social and economic problems experienced during the war. In this process, even though they fell short in practice, that the government

¹¹⁸⁴ Some writers explained the social policy developments and regulation in post-war era with effects of the foreign policy and international context. For these works see Orhan Tuna, "Türkiye'de Sendikacılık ve Sendikalarımız" İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları, 20. Kitap, 1969, s.256; Cemil Koçak, "1940'ların İkinci Yarısında Sosyal Politika, Devlet, Sınıflar, Partiler ve Dayanışmacı/Vesayetçi İdeoloji," *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyete Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar, I.Uluslararası Tarih Kongresi*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), p.230

initiated social welfare campaigns and took some social measures in order to make much more bearable the high cost of living and to prevent social problems during the war years indicates that it also needed some social welfare measures. All these can be regarded as the first and primary indicators of which the regulations and enactments about the social policy that would be initiated in the post-war period. Therefore, it seems to be much more reasonable to argue that rather than the external and diplomatic factors or modernizing inspiration of the RPP, the social needs, local and subjective interests of the state and the pressure of the social problems paved the way for the social policy process in the post-war era.

Last but not least, one of two points I wish to make in this chapter is that the social policy measures and initiatives show that the early republican state was not a strong state. Indeed, if we take the criterion of power for the modern state into consideration, as described in Chapter One, the early republican state does not seem to be a powerful state. Indeed, its social policy capacity and ability of intervention in social field which are the most important criterion of power for the modern state, was very limited, as can be seen throughout this chapter.

Second, the people who were subjected to the state policies were not passive and masses with no voice. They sometime resisted the state plans and regulations. They transmitted their demands, complaints and feelings by means of petitions, letters and sometimes rumors. In this context, the popular opinion, problems, complaints and demand of the people were transferred to the power elite in many ways. So while the analyzing the post-war developments of social policy regulations and liberalization of the regime, the role of the popular opinion should be taken into account.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Before I chose this subject for my master thesis, I had some questions about this time span of the early Republican era. First of all, in a world which had become much more integrated globally, did the Second World War not affect Turkey or, to be more specific, the Turkish people? Indeed, there is much more information on and interpretation of the political, administrative, macro-economic and diplomatic effects of the war in comparison with its social impact, especially its impact on lower income people, the working class and small peasants. Turkey did not participate in the Second World War, but did this mean necessarily that it escaped the effects of the war?

Second, if the war affected Turkish society, did the people remain passive before its social effects? We know that they did not have a political party, organizational movement or ideological stance before the government and that they did not struggle in the domain of legal-political relations. But does this mean necessarily they were passive, silent and ignorant masses under the state hegemony and control?

Indeed, the war period witnessed a regime which aimed to become much more interventionist in social and economic life because of the war. It passed the National

Security Law, many regulations in economic, social and political life on the basis of this law such as rationing, price controls, the struggle against the black-market, compulsory work, and the banning of leaving the workplace. It tried to take in much more tax revenues by means of the forced purchase of agricultural productions, the Wealth Tax, and the Soil Product Tax. Many writers call the regime in this time span as National Chief Regime, as well. Well, did not the people under the “National Chief” regime and under the social impact of the war resist these state policies brought by the effects of the war?

According to the official historiography of Turkey, which is highly elitist and considers the people passive and pays no attention to them, and the elitist and intuitionist characteristics of the traditional working class and peasant studies as well, this period was very calm and without any struggle and resistance by the people. At this point, the post-war liberalization movements and social policy developments are explained with only the external dynamics, elite ideals and conflicts dependent from the social field. The people factor in the post-war developments is overlooked and underestimated. At this point, I asked whether or not the ordinary people’s resistance and needs of the society did not affect the post-war political liberalization process and developments in social policies. Did this post-war period come after a calm and stable period without any popular resistance or struggle?

This question was linked to another one: to what extent did the state and elite have the capacity and strength to implement their policies and plans properly and to control the people during the war period? Indeed, the early Republican state has been classified as strong, omnipotent and omnipresent. This classification also functions as a factor to make it easy to characterize the people as passive, silent and ignorant masses and the state as the unique subject of the early Republican history was fully free from society. Therefore the historiography of Republic does not pay attention to the social field, the lower classes and their experiences. So throughout this thesis, not only was the social impact of the war

described, but also other questions about the state and society relations, the role of the people in republican history were reevaluated in the context of the social impact of the war.

Indeed, the war showed its effects on the economy of the country. Because of the decrease in the importation, the effects of the military mobilization on industry and agriculture, the increase in national security expenditures and the state financial policies such as increases in taxes and printing money to compensate the state expenditures caused high rate inflation. Prices increased approximately 450 percent during the war, which was a rate higher than even those in combatant countries. While the general prices soared, real wages decreased steadily and lower income people became increasingly impoverished during the war period. The black market emerged within a short time after the war broke out. The bread shortage, malnutrition and sometimes hunger became the everyday realities of the people.

In this setting, many social problems increased. The high cost of living brought unhygienic conditions and health problems. Health problems, epidemics such as tuberculosis, typhus and malaria, along with cardiac problems and intestinal problems proliferated among the lower income working people. Because of the harsh working conditions, the long working hours and lack of any protection, work-related accidents and diseases also increased. The lower income people suffered from the lack of health facilities and medical treatment. There was no social insurance or compensation system for them. Because of poverty, squatter's house emerged first in this period. Some people had to sell their household belongings in order to survive. Property crimes, like theft, increased.

The war affected the family, too. With the conscription of the men and the high cost of living, women and children started to work in order to support themselves. Among the children, truancy from school became widespread because they had to work. The highest rate of increase in the divorces was recorded in the war period. In some cases, women had

to abandon or kill their infants because of the difficult living conditions. In addition, child homelessness and vagrancy became a common grievance of the public in these years.

In spite of dramatic decline in real wage, in many workplaces the leaving of the workplace was banned by the state. Overtime work in bad and heavy working conditions became the main problems for the working class. The workers encountered harsh working conditions without meals, social insurance, compensation, leave, or health facilities. In addition, many workers and peasants were subjected to compulsory work in the mines in desperate conditions. Many of them suffered from the unequal and harsh treatment of state officials and the gendarme.

Mostly, the difficulties the small peasants encountered in this period have not received deserved attention by historians or social scientist in this period. Indeed, they faced difficult living conditions and were disturbed by the state policies during the war period. The state tried to put the burden of the expenditures of the war on the peasants by means of the forced purchases of the agricultural products at lower prices and the Soil Product Tax. Thus, especially, the small peasants encountered great difficulties in paying the tax. The social services of the state and health facilities were almost nonexistent in rural areas. In a nutshell, both in urban and rural settings, lower income people, women and children, suffered from the effects of the war.

However, the working people and peasants did not remain passive in the face of these conditions. First, they transmitted their complaints by writing letters and petitions to the newspapers, the Republican People's Party and the National Assembly. They requested that the government and authorities solve their problems. Sometimes in a village a group of people sent a petition together in order to ask the government suspend or clear their debts from the Soil Product Tax. They sometimes complained of the illegitimate actions of the state officials, *subaşı*s and gendarme. They also demanded some goods, foodstuffs and social services by means of petitions. Retired people, poor people, widows, wives and the

families of soldiers and of men who died in work accidents requested salary increases, compensations and financial support from the state.

They sometimes expressed their complaints and dissatisfaction with the state policies by means of rumors, folk songs, poems, jokes and some symbolic actions, as shown throughout this thesis. In one example not given above, for instance, there was a lot of paper money in circulation on which the photo of İsmet İnönü had been bored through by cigarettes.¹¹⁸⁵ As stated above, the rumor among the peasants about the inequalities and evasions experienced in the practice of the forced purchases and taxes functioned as a communication means between the peasants who resisted the taxes and then the resistance gained a collectivity. This also indicates that the peasants possessed an autonomous and critical reasoning about the state policies.

In addition, they resisted the hard living conditions and such state policies as forced purchases, the Soil Product Tax, the ban on the leaving of workplace and compulsory work. The lack of their own political organizational movements, open rebellions and public demonstrations does not mean that they did not resist the state policies or the difficulties with which they were faced. They displayed various everyday forms of resistance. For instance, the peasants resisted the forced purchases and the SPT in many ways, managing to diminish the real amount of the state share. This raised difficulties for the state, which tried to find resources for its rising expenditures for defense, the provisioning of the cities and social welfare programs in 1943 which had critical importance for the maintenance of its legitimacy.

The compulsory work and ban on leaving the workplace also encountered the resistance of the workers. Even though the working class did not participate in the determination of the laws and regulations about themselves in the domain of legal political life, they challenged their practices in everyday life. Although they did not determine their wages and working conditions, they sometime pilfered goods from the workplace. The

highest labor turnover rates were recorded in the war years. At times they resorted to what was called an Italian Strike, by slowing down their work and procrastinating. Sometime they resorted to absenteeism, even if they did not have the right of weekend leave. Even in places where the National Security Law banned the leaving of the job site, they left the workplace. In this situation, according to the law, they were caught and forced to return to their jobs by the police. Because these people did not work productively and caused losses for the factory, some workplaces did not inform the police about workers who left in spite of the ban.

In a similar vein, the compulsory workers escaped from the mines and confronted and clashed with the gendarme. Those who did not try to escape also practiced slowdowns and procrastinated at work, sometimes injuring themselves and obtaining doctors' reports. These challenges of the workers and their bad living conditions increased the costs of employers and deprived them of skilled and productive workers. Thus, some employers, bureaucrats and intellectuals started to understand the importance of social measures to raise productivity and prevent the high turnover rates which caused the losses for the firms. This contributed to the post-war social policy regulations and reformations.

In addition, in order to solve their housing problem, the working people built squatter's houses on state land. Sometimes they forced their children to leave school and go to work in order for the family to survive. They sometimes resorted to fraud to obtain more ration bread, thereby resisting the limitations of their bread consumption. They manipulated the bread rationing system according to their interests.

Similarly, the lower income state employees also resorted some illegitimate ways to survive, which can be classified as resistance to the difficult living conditions and high cost of living. In this process, taking advantage of their positions and rights, they resorted to pilfering, stealing state materials, embezzlement and bribery. These actions were so widespread that the RPP established a commission to research them. Many writers

¹¹⁸⁵ Nadir Nadi Abalıoğlu, *Perde Aralığından*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Yayınları, 1964), p.183

described the problem and proposed social policies and aid for the prevention of these kinds of actions by state personnel. This became an important cause of the social aid campaigns of the state for the officials.

Indeed, the social resistance and challenge were not limited to the lower class. Small traders and shopkeepers also resisted the state economic policies, such as fixed prices and price controls. In spite of the fixed price policy of the government, they demanded price increases because of the increase in their costs and the general high cost of living. When their demands were refused, they resorted to lowering the costs, quality and quantity of their goods. They manipulated or disregarded the receipt system in some ways as well. Bakers, for instance, forced the state to increase bread prices by creating a bread crisis and problems.

The marginal segments of the population such as homeless children and vagrants also challenged the state measures of public hygiene. In addition, upon the increase in epidemics and diseases and increase in beggars, vagrants and homeless children the state decided to bring them under control for the good of public hygiene. Some of them who were caught and sent to Anatolia returned to the cities.

Indeed, these actions of the peasants, working class, small traders, and marginal segments of the population proved that they were subjects who acted according to their living conditions and self-interests in their own terms rather than as passive objects of the ruling elite. In their behavior, they were not inspired by the principles or moral values imposed by the rulers, but according to their own terms. In the political conditions of the day, open and organizational political movement had many risks, which meant that the people had to resort to the everyday forms of resistance with which they were familiar. In this respect, that there was not a party-politics did not mean that they did not challenge and resist the state or that there was no class struggle in everyday life.

Another finding of this thesis is that the early Republican state, even under the “National Chief” regime, was not as powerful as assumed by many social scientists and historians when the state response to the social and economic effects of the era are examined. Indeed, the state, the state power and state-society relations have been generally examined from the point of view of the elite discourse, laws, plans and the domain of high politics. But if the power of the modern state relies on the infrastructure, capacity, and some apparatus which are diffused into the capillary of society takes into account, the picture is very different.

Within this framework, despite the great importance devoted to the economic and social policies, the state ran into infrastructural insufficiencies and capacity problems along with social resistance during the implementation of its economic and social policies during the wartime. The more the state became interventionist in economic and social life, the greater the gap grew between its aims and achievements became and the more it became apparent that it had limited strength. Indeed, the state did not possess the necessary capacity to carry out its policies properly.

During the war period, the state attached great importance to provisioning the cities. Hunger, as mentioned above, was seen as a source of economic, social and political threat for the Kemalist elite. In addition, malnutrition and hunger threatened to devastate the bodies of the people and the state’s population policy. So, the state took some measures such as price control, rationing and receipt system in order to solve the food problems in the cities. In order to feed the cities, the state also resorted to the forced purchasing of crops and levied the taxes on agriculture.

But the state’s attempt at the solving the provisioning problems ran into many obstacles that originated from the weakness of the state apparatus. The state was not able to fix prices properly because it did not have detailed knowledge about the economy and statistical organization. That it was not able to establish a balance between the prices

decreased the level of the compliance of the people and traders with the fixed prices. In addition, the state did not have a sufficient well-equipped or well-organized price control organization or skilled personnel in sufficient numbers. Therefore, it was unable to control the prices as needed.

As for the rationing policy, for similar reasons, the state was unable to carry that out as well. The organizational criterion of a successful rationing police was not provided by the state. Many poor people were excluded from the system. The people doubted the egalitarian claims of the rationing policy because wealthier people were able to find white bread easily in quantity whenever they wanted. So the rationing policy did not function properly in the prevention of the social discontent which originated from the high cost of living, malnutrition and hunger. Bakers also resisted the state's bread policy and rationing.

In the food question, to be more specific, the bread question, maybe the most important factor was the insufficiency of the Soil Product Office and the weakness of the state in the proper extraction and distribution of agricultural surplus. Indeed, the Office did not possess sufficient storage for all of the crops that were collected as part of the forced purchasing program and the Soil Product Tax. In addition, it was not able to function properly due mostly to the lack of sufficient, qualified personnel and means to transport the crops from the collection places to the other places where the cereals were needed. So in some places, piles of cereal crops which had been collected by the Office spoiled in the open air and in the rain. In some Office storage facilities there was widespread theft and embezzlement. The Office personnel accepted bribes and sometimes underestimated the crops in cooperation with the peasants.

Similar problems were valid for the social policies of the state in this period. Parallel to the increasing cost of living and social problems, the state initiated social welfare programs and social policy measures. It gave great importance to them for its power, legitimation, and economic productivity. As stated above, since their successful

implementation entailed financial resources and a certain capacity, the compliance of the people and the proper functioning of its personnel, briefly a strong state, the state was not successful in their implementation.

As stated in Chapter Four, with the rise of poverty, the social aid campaign of the state initiated in 1943 was not satisfactory to the recipients because of the many problems experienced in the distribution process. Leaving aside these problems, the distribution of the aid was problematic and heartbreaking for its recipients. Because of insufficient infrastructure for distributions, the lack of inspections, there was bribery, favoritisms and bad treatment by the officials during the distribution periods. It is reasonable to think that they felt their poverty and lower-class status much more acutely because of the social aid. In addition, the social aid caused complaints among the people because the state excluded many poor people from the campaign

When the fact that the enemies of the modern political power are not only foreign states and revolutionary movements, but also diseases which destroy the human body and the strength of the population on which the political power is constructed is taken into account, the state struggle against disease and epidemics, which are closely linked to the social and economic effects of the war, were of utmost importance to the Turkish state. However, the healthcare facilities were not enough in comparison with the increase in health problems and in epidemics such as typhus, tuberculosis and malaria. In all these struggles the state ran into many difficulties and shortcomings. Because the state had financial limitations, it was unable to allot sufficient financial resource to its health policy. In addition, many doctors were conscripted into the military. The numbers of midwives, health officials, hospitals, beds in hospitals and sanatoriums were limited during this period.

The war affected children the most. In the child question, the state remained ineffective once more. In spite of the fact that the elite attached great importance to the

child question in this period, children were exposed directly to the negative effects of the war. The war interrupted their attendance in school because they had to work to support their families. Again, increase in divorce and poverty gave rise to homeless, neglected and vagrant children. Infant mortality increased. The lack of sufficient daycare houses, orphanages and homes for neglected children caused the enlargement of the problem. The children question became so great that the Children's Protection Society declared the year of 1944 as the year of child. The most important associations about the child question, the CPS and the *Darülaceze* did not have sufficient capacity for all of the neglected children. Indigent children became much more apparent in public places. Accordingly, the proportion of juvenile crimes to overall crimes rose considerably.

Therefore, many intellectuals and bureaucrats criticized the state because it left the social welfare and social policies to charitable associations and proposed that the state undertake social welfare measures. They criticized the shortcomings of the state in social policy and underlined that the state should enforce and organize the social policy and be much more effective. In this process, as mentioned above, the people were not silent. They wrote and sent petitions to the RPP and the National Assembly. They requested more and better social services. In this process, the state, some employers and enterprises also understood and resorted to social measures, however limited, for the increase in productivity, the prevention of high turnover rates, leaving the workplace, escapes, and the prevention of bribery, pilfering, and embezzlement.

Accordingly, another finding of this thesis is that the social background and local social needs must be taken into consideration in explaining that the causes and factors of the post-war social policy measures and regulations was other than the elites' response to the international climate and diplomacy factor. Instead, because the state left some of the social measures to the associations and decreased social expenditures, it seems to have been a neoliberal state.

In addition, the criticism about the lack of sufficient social measures and policies and the proposals about increase in the state undertakings of the social policies systematically instead of charitable associations, indicates the existence of a gap between the state's principle of populism and the practice.

Many social scientists and historian argue that there was a dichotomy between the civil society and state in Turkey in the early Republican era, which had been inherited from the Ottoman Empire. This thesis shows that maybe the most restrictive government of the Republic cooperated with the civil society and encouraged it in many ways in social welfare and charity during the war period. Associations such as the Charitable Association of Turkey, the Red Crescent, and the Associations for Aid to Students in İstanbul were encouraged and supported by the state because the state aimed to diminish its social expenditures and to enforce the social control process. These associations constituted by elites, bourgeoisie and bureaucrats served the legitimacy of the government by contributing to the social welfare process during the world war.

As can be seen throughout this thesis, the war affected society, especially the lower income people, working class, and small peasants negatively. The existing social problems increased and new ones emerged. The people did not remain passive or silent in this process. They resisted the hard living, working conditions, and the state policies. The state was involved in a struggle not only in diplomacy, but also in the social field. In spite of its success in foreign policy, it fell short in intervention in the social and economic field and in the prevention of the social problems. Even though Turkey did not participate in the war, the people and state made their own wars outside the war.

And as a final point, the social impact of the Second World War on Turkey proved that the war is a problem not only for the combatant countries but also the neutral societies.

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İktisadi Yürüyüş

İstanbul Belediye Mecmuası

İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası

İstanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası Mecmuası

İş

Karikatür

Kızılay

Köye Doğru

Siyasi İlimler Mecmuası

Türkiye Ekonomisi

Ülkü

Yedigün

Yeni Ses

Yurt ve Dünya

Newspapers

Tan

Vatan

Cumhuriyet

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