

DECENTRALISM VERSUS CENTRALISM
IN OTTOMAN ANATOLIA, 1919-1922

by

Fatih Gümüş

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ABSTRACT

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Title: DECENTRALISM VERSUS CENTRALISM IN OTTOMAN ANATOLIA, 1919-1922

The last few years of the Ottoman Empire saw the rise of a de-centralist/localist movement and approach in the country. The movement included some features which were very different from those of the traditional political approach of the Empire. It sought the foundation of an anti-bureaucratic and de-centralist administration in the country and demanded the establishment of local councils in local units such as the provinces (*vilayets*) and districts (*nahiyes*). This movement created tensions not only with the traditional power center in İstanbul, but also with the movement of a new political centralization, called here the “Mustafa Kemal-led Political (National) Movement.” The Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement tried to establish a new political center in Anatolia, and in this process came into conflict with the local organizations or units.

The Grand National Assembly was an arena in which these two diverse approaches came together, and within which the de-centralist/localist approach could openly show itself. The de-centralist/localist approach had the potential to radically reform the political structure of the Empire. To this aim, it offered some foundational laws. However, these offers were partly and unwillingly supported by the power group. In the end the supporters, of the de-centralist/localist approach were taken out of the GNA and the laws, or the articles of laws, and the drafts for laws which represented the de-centralist/localist approach were eradicated by the power group.

ÖZET

Osmanlı imparatorluğunun son birkaç yılı adem-i merkezîyetçi/yerelci bir hareket ve anlayışa tanıklık etti. Bu hareket imparatorluğun geleneksel siyasal kültüründen çok farklı bazı özelliklere sahipti. Her şeyden önce o, ülkede anti-bürokratik ve adem-i merkezîyetçi bir yönetimin kurulmasını öneriyordu. Ayrıca, bu amaca yönelik olarak, yerel birimlerde, özellikle vilayet ve nahiyelerde, yerel meclislerin kurulmasını önerdi ve talep etti. Bu hareket, İstanbul'daki geleneksel iktidar merkezinden çok, Anadolu'daki yeni siyasal merkezleşme hareketi ile, yani Mustafa Kemal'in yönlendirdiği siyasal (millî) hareket ile çatıştı. Mustafa Kemal'in yönlendirdiği siyasal hareket yeni bir siyasal merkez oluşturma sürecinde yerel örgütlerle veya yerel birimlerle sürekli bir gerilim içindeydi.

Büyük Millet Meclisi bu iki farklı anlayışın bir araya geldiği ve adem-i merkezîyetçi/yerelci anlayışın kendisini somut olarak ortaya koyabildiği bir platform olmuştu. Adem-i merkezîyetçi/yerelci anlayış gerçekten imparatorluğun siyasal yapısını radikal bir şekilde reform etme potansiyeline sahipti. Bu amaca yönelik olarak, gerek anayasa düzeyinde bir kanunun çıkmasına önemli katkı sundu, gerekse de bazı temel kanunların çıkarılmasına veya taslakların oluşturulmasına yardımcı oldu. Ancak onun önerileri iktidar grubu tarafından kerhen desteklendi. Sonunda bu anlayışın meclisteki destekçileri tasfiye edildi, ve onların desteğiyle çıkarılmış olan kanunlar, veya bu kanunların bazı maddeleri merkezleşme sürecinin gereklerine göre ya ortadan kaldırıldı ya da yeniden düzenlendi.

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PREFACE

This thesis deals with the period between 1919-1923. It can easily be said that this was a catastrophic era, although, for the people who lived in the narrowing political geography of Ottoman society at the time, the catastrophe went back even further, to the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. Consequently, this thesis, more specifically, deals with the second part of the catastrophic era in which a society had consumed almost all of its moral and material sources.

It can be seen that the over-emphasis given by the historiography of the Republican era to the catastrophic aspect of the National Struggle years was a part of the ideological legitimization of the regime. However, although there is much that is exaggerated, the extent of the catastrophe really was enormous. What is interesting is that the economic and social aspects of this catastrophe have not been studied, neither in the early period of the Republic nor since.¹ Most the works focusing on this period consist of political studies. But, as intended in thesis, political studies on this period must be aware of the societal factors which affected and sometimes directed the political change. For this reason, it is necessary to re-write the political history or political "histories" of the era under the light of studies involving interdisciplinary research on subjects such as

¹ In the next chapter, further attention will be given works about this subject.

population, migration, economy, poverty and diseases in the National Struggle era and even in the preceding six years.

Moreover, studies on political culture are indispensable for understanding the political history of this period. For a historian who studies the political history of this period, the discussions of how, or in what kind of value system, the political actors perceived humanity, society, the world, themselves, others, and what kind of meanings they gave to these notions, is necessary. Studies which concentrate on the political elite and on the state archives, how they perceived basic notions such as motherland, nation, state, solidarity, individual, and loyalty are very significant. Some notions and values, which have very different meanings today, have been used as if they had had the same meaning as in the past because almost no studies of political culture have been conducted.

The “true” usage of these notions is determinant in the construction of a real relation between historical study and “historical reality”. Naturally, notions which are preferred in any study always run the risk of not identifying with “historical fact”. For example, in changing meanings of the concepts such as “democracy,” “modern,” “modernization,” and “liberty,” in a certain time and in a certain geography should be explained. On the other hand, getting the meaning of the relative notions restricts a construction of common language and the text in which the notions take place. However, the problem is not limited to this. Some notions bring together some perspectives and theories from which they are epistemologically originated and derived. For instance, in this thesis, the term “localist-populist approach” is used to describe as “defending a participatory, down-to-up political model”. This description can evoke notions of “representative democracy” or just “democracy”, meaning that, in the background, a historical progressive approach, or a linear model, is accepted. Or they can evoke an idea

that the study was based on a modernization perspective. My approach to these kinds of approaches is cautious.

The matter of conceptualization is connected to the construction of a certain model. In this thesis, some political features are given to the notion of the “Mustafa Kemal-led National(or Political) Movement”, and to the notion “decentralist-localist approach”. Thus, a specific model valid for this thesis and based on a duality was constructed. In other words, a categorization or an abstraction was made toward the understanding of the subject of the thesis. The relation between the “Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement” and “decentralist-localist movement”, or “decentralist-localist approach”, is antagonistically defined. This antagonism can be seen throughout the thesis.

Undoubtedly, it is not possible that the historical “reality” exactly identifies with this antagonism. However, for a study in the social sciences or more particularly in the field of history, somehow a model or an abstract framework is inevitable. The duality, as a model of this thesis, was used because it made the understanding of the political history of that period clearer in the mind of the author. On the other hand, to exceed the problem of the abstraction of the antagonistic model from the historical facts, or of its not identifying with historical “reality”, it is argued that the story of the conflict can be also read as a relation of compromise, and that it sat on a balance of power and included very different dimensions on the various phases of the period. For this reason, emphasis is given to the decisions and activities of the political and social actors of the period toward compromise.

In the general historiography of this study, this model is used, at a bit more abstract level, as the model between center and periphery.² It is difficult to say that the notions of center or periphery are conceptually clear. Both notions are used in different

² Peter Burke, *Tarih ve Toplumsal Kuram* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994), pp. 77-82.

meanings in literature. The “center” is more evident than “periphery”, or at least it is used in a less conflicting way than the latter.³ In Turkey, some studies have been made by applying the model of center-periphery.⁴ The notion “periphery” is more used and translated as *çevre* which has a geographical meaning⁵ and an influential or determinant meaning by the authors.

In addition “periphery” was also used in Turkish as *kenar*, which has more passive meaning or at least does not indicate the meaning of interaction, while *çevre* has the meaning of interaction.⁶ Although the model of center-periphery has been protected, there is a more critical usage of this model, and of both notions, in Turkish historiography.⁷ In this approach, over the notion of *çevre*, which is determinant and active, and over the notion *kenar*, which is passive, the notion *taşra* has been preferred as a notion which is both a part of the center and a power which can affect the center. While Metin Heper and Şerif Mardin view the relation of center-periphery as a conflict and two structures as being contradictory, Cenk Reyhan criticizes this approach which accepts that there was a clash between the state/bureaucracy and the people/society. He argues that the definition of the relation between center and periphery in Ottoman and Turkish political life is as one of a relation of compromise. Reyhan’s argument is accepted as more likely, that there

³ Here, the notion of center was not only perceived as a political and institutional structure, but also as a “central value system”, namely together with its ideological and cultural content. For the notion of “Central Value System,” see Edward Shils. *Center and Periphery* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975). Likewise, many local, professional, economic, ethnic and religious groups that are outside of the center, especially in pre-modern society, have their own value systems, but the relations between their value systems and the central value system differ from society to society.

⁴ The first time a classical usage of the model was seen in a study of Şerif Mardin published in 1973 in *Daedalus*. See Şerif Mardin, “Türk Siyasetini Anlayacak Bir Anahtar: Merkez-Çevre İlişkileri,” in *Türkiye’de Toplum ve Siyaset* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), p. 30.

⁵ For the explanation of Mete Tunçay, see Burke, p. 77.

⁶ Metin Heper, “Osmanlı Siyasal Hayatında Merkez-Kenar İlişkisi” *Toplum ve Bilim*, nos. 9-10 (Bahar-Yaz 1990), pp. 3-35

⁷ Cenk Reyhan, “Taşranın Osmanlı-Türk Siyasal Hayatına Etkisi: Bir Açıklama Modeli”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 (Kış-2000) p. 269.

was neither a center nor a periphery in Ottoman-Turkish society which had a homogenous integrity with a common outlook and a consistent structure.

To be fair, Mardin does mention this compromising relation and a balance between them. He even uses the phrase “notables as the fellows of the center” to show this compromising relation. In addition, he states that being an official of the state included some legality, but that sometimes the periphery having an autonomous situation depended on having the power to challenge to the state. Moreover, when notables had autonomous power, they could be as cruel and merciless to the villagers as the state. In this way he shows the non-homogenous and clashing features of the periphery within itself.⁸

Reyhan’s approach is based on Karen Barkey’s study, which asserts that the relation between the state and the villagers rather consisted of features like compromise, protectionism and loyalty than competition and conflict, and that this was a political model in which the “periphery” tried to integrate with the center. Barkey uses this dual model in discussing a confrontation between the central powers and the peripheral powers. The rule of the relation between these two sides was toward compromise, rarely did it turn into a clash.⁹

This thesis, too, is based on Barkey’s idea that the relation between the center and periphery was mostly one of a compromise, and only sometimes a relation of conflict. Barkey asserts another important point, that, the Ottoman power center continued its relations with the periphery and with the other groups of society, within the air of compromise. With using compromise, it was able to increase its power and obtain its legitimacy. In other words, this relation of compromise and patronage served a state-

⁸ Mardin, pp. 38-39.

⁹ Karen Barkey, *Eşkiyalar ve Devlet-Osmanlı Tarzı Devlet Merkezileşmesi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999) pp. 1-2.

oriented politics, and because all societal and local powers derived their interests through the state and were engaged to it, a strong statist-bureaucratic tradition developed.¹⁰

In this study it is accepted that the Ottoman-Turkish political tradition, or the Ottoman-Turkish political structure, was “statist”-bureaucratic, and consequently had a centralist mentality. This tradition also can be described as “a state tradition which is centralist, authoritarian and quite uneasy at every kind of opposition.”¹¹

Here, the definition “bureaucratic, centralist and statist political mentality or political structure” is used not only for a theoretical preference, but also because the political elite of this period also used these adjectives in their writings and speeches, and constantly indicated that “this structure” had to be reformed and changed. For example, when the minutes of the First Assembly are examined and the speech of the deputies studied, it can be seen that they criticized and wanted to change the “centralist, bureaucratic and statist political structure or mentality”. And their solution is clear: decentralization in administration and the acceptance of a decentralist-localist approach. As a result of the contradiction of the centralist, bureaucratic, statist and decentralist-localist approaches which appear in the minutes of the Grand National Assembly, the antagonistic model is used here.

¹⁰ Barkey takes up banditry against the Ottoman state in the sixteenth century in the same way. Barkey sees banditry as a social institution which served the centralization of the state and its re-powerization, even though it seemed to be a clash between bandits and the state and a part of the society and the state. This was also a process which had peculiar features different from European states, which were becoming centralization in that period. The Ottoman state was in negotiation with the bandits constantly. It could control the villagers through them and they also were desired, even missed, by the villagers to protect them. The state maintained its legitimacy in this way. On the other hand, because this relation of bargaining was carried out on the terms which the state determined, the awards, privileges, and patronage which the state presented at the end of the agreement created a dependency for every part of society, from the local elite to the leaders of the bandits, to the state, and so it served the spread of a state-oriented culture. Barkey, pp. 10-19.

¹¹ Ahmet İnel, *Türkiye Toplumunun Bunalımı* (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları.1995), p. 84. Artun Ünsal emphasizes almost the same opinion. According to him, a statist tradition, which is strong and suppressive, and does not give social groups and bodies the right to exist and to be influential in political life, is basic in Turkish political life. Artun Ünsal “Yurttaşlık Zor Zanaat” in *75 Yılda Tebaa'dan Yurrttaş'a Doğru* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları. 1998), pp. 2-3.

The Unionists, who were intolerant toward opposition¹² and focused on the rescue of the state,¹³ followed the Ottoman centralist, bureaucratic tradition, even though they had a discourse of revolution. Likewise, this tradition can be seen in the Kemalists. However, the Kemalists were different in that they sought to dominate the periphery and manipulate its opposition much more than in the previous periods as other nation states did.¹⁴ The relative freedom of the local, ethnic and religious communities which the Empire had tolerated, was out of question for those who objected to the founding of a nation-state in its place. It meant that the center would strongly control the periphery.

The period of the National Struggle, during which the Kemalist power was still in the process of formation, indicated a passing era in which traditional politics almost completely collapsed and its institutions and mentality were upended. It was under these circumstances, with the existence of the central power in question, that the peripheral powers emerged. The most important characteristic of these organizational bodies and their mentality was that they were decentralist and localist. How is the content of “decentralist and localist” described? First of all, the word of “decentralist” is used for the word *adem-i merkeziyetçi*. The word “localist” is used for the word *yerelci*. Second, the content of these two notions was ideally formed, as it was supposed that it would be more possible to categorize and abstract the events and facts of the research and to set them into the story of the thesis, making it easier to understand the history of the period. In addition, the qualities of these two notions, which will be presented below, are the results of reading about the discussions in that period. The two meanings of “decentralist” and “localist” were perceived and described as follows:

¹² Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye 'de Siyasal Partiler*, vol 3 (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989) p. 610.

¹³ Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), p. 222.

¹⁴ İnşel, p. 25.

The subject who defends a decentralist-localist approach is involved in a power struggle with the central political structure because he aims to participate in the mechanism of the politics and even, if it is possible, to be influential within this mechanism. The motivation for this behaviour might be the conflict between the economic interests of the periphery and that of the center; for example, the transfer of economic surplus to the center. Or the center disregards the problems of the local arena. It is sprung from the fact that the center does not have enough motivation or care to solve the problem and that sometimes the solution of the problem requires the participation of the local subjects in politics.

Consequently, in the situation in which the people who represent the local interests come together with the people who represent the interests of the center, in other words in a situation of collaboration, the local actors are necessarily set against hierarchical, bureaucratic, "undemocratic" and non-electoral politics, at least in their relation with the center.

Decentralists and localists are against hierarchy: The center makes its demand hierarchically, without paying attention to the needs and the conditions and demands of the local inhabitants. This also includes, if the demand is not met, a threat which could involve violence.

Decentralists and localists are against all that is bureaucratic: The bureaucratic mechanism is a body which is organized to protect the interests of the center before those of the country. Theoretically, it has a function to perform public service. This is also a source of its legitimacy. However, for the local elements, the bureaucratic mechanism is a symbol of the indifference of the center to their own problems, of the neglect of these problem, of the slipshod and unproductive motions of the center, and of the insensitivity to the periphery and local units.

Decentralists-localists are also against a political system that is non-democratic. The democratic process is an effective way for the localist to share the political power. In times when the center is not strong, the local enjoys relative freedom. Sometimes the central structure is quite strong and does not allow the local actors to participate in politics, or even bars them from politics. For example, in the elections in April 1923 in Turkey (also in the later elections), the candidates for representative deputies were determined by the government or the head of the government. In this case, the participation of the local actors depended on the democratic arrangement of the politics. Otherwise, they would not have had access to power and would have to leave their economic and societal interests to the will of the center.

Decentralists and localists are for broad political participation. For the localist this is necessary against the traditional methods of appointment, which are hierarchical and determined by a few people in the center.

Decentralists and localists are against non-participation. The localists derive their power from the participatory mentality against the center. While the center has institutions like the state, the bureaucracy, and the army, the local necessarily leans on the people, the masses and local institutions. The participation of the people in politics is the most important source of localist legitimacy. This idea is more valid for modern society because the idea of “national sovereignty” or of “the sovereignty of the people” is the principle which is also praised by the cadre of the center. For the local elite to be close to the people is a big advantage.

These characteristics can be found in the local organizations in the Turkish National Struggle era and formed the dominant mentality in these bodies. But these characteristics can also be found in the Grand National Assembly. For example, in the Law of the Fundamental Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kamunu*), the most important

product of the Assembly, and in the draft to the Law of the Administration of Villages and the Districts (*İdare-i Kur'a ve Nevahi Kanunu*), had features that were anti-bureaucratic, participatory, and “democratic”. The LFO is especially important because it shows the political-judicial philosophy of the Assembly. Looking at its text, it becomes clear that the text involved a conflict, or, at the very least, a compromise between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement (and its mentality) and the decentralist-localist mentality and its exponents who defended the above features.

The story of the conflict and the compromise starts with the rise of the Mustafa Kemal-led National (or Political) Movement. This was “a new political center”. Undoubtedly, before the new political center, there had been the center of the Empire. During the previous ten years, while the Empire lost an important part of its lands and its population in the wars, and the most productive part of its population migrated, the partition plans had been made to eradicate the Ottoman Empire. The secret treaties among the Entente States made during the First World War showed the real intentions of the European powers. It was obvious that these treaties together would be a reference point for the treaty which would be signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Entente after the war. The possibility of a struggle by the Empire against the danger of complete destruction was so weak because the power of the Ottoman army had been enormously reduced by the Armistice of Mudros. The peripheral powers, or the local societal units, recognized the weakness of the center and began to organize on their own.

The reasons for the emergence of the local organizations can be summed up as follows: These organizations, above all, aimed to perform the activities of propaganda to affect the negotiations about the treaty for the Ottoman Empire. They felt that the Wilson Principles, which were popular as a source of reference in the international arena, would help their aims. The activities of propaganda objected that the places where the local

organizations lived belonged to the Muslim-Turk majority. These activities of propaganda were carried out through the press, like newspaper, or through sending delegations to the Entente states, as seen in the example of the Society for the Defense of the Ottoman Rights of İzmir (*İzmir Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Osmaniye Cemiyeti*).

Moreover, these bodies were organizations of self-defense because the state was no longer able to perform its security function, one of its most basic duties. In the secret treaties and in the public opinion of the western countries, it was being said that some regions of the Empire would be left to certain ethnic groups. This meant a new wave of migration in the reverse direct, into the Empire, and a threat for both the property and lives of the Muslim-Turk population. This threat was greatest in the places under threat of Armenian or Greek occupation.

When the rise of these local organizations came as a direct Greek occupation in the Aegean region, these local organizations emerged and became empowered. What is interesting, as Tanör notes, is that these bodies which began to obtain power avoided clashing with the central power in İstanbul, namely the old central power, and avoided making demands on the central power. On the other hand, the old center of power, which was very weak at that time, at least in the beginning, did not think that these organizations posed a threat to itself, and even approved of them forming societies, granting the permission through its administrative centers in the provinces. However, when the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement started to manipulate these organizations within its own organizational body and used them for its own political interests, the central power in İstanbul began to see that these local societies were harmful, but it stated its opinion very cautiously. Sometimes it even tried to draw these organizations to its side against the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. Actually these organizations had a real tendency to collaborate with İstanbul. It could be thought that the governments of

Damat Ferit Pasha was as a problem for these organizations but even in the era of his governments some local organizations communicated and met with representatives of both the palace and the government.

The real conflict for these organizations was with the Mustafa Kemal-led National [political] Movement which tried to get them under its own control, made some demands toward the central power, and would become "a political center" later. This movement, which announced its presence with the Declaration of Amasya on June 21 1919, made some demands, one of which was the opening of the Ottoman Parliament. The other was the resignation of the Damat Pasha government, which was not seen as legitimate. Mustafa Kemal, who had tried many ways to enter the government or to take part in the formation of a new government during his time in İstanbul, had made demands, which were declared later in Anatolia, on the basic organs of power, like parliament and government. With the acceptance of these demands, he and his group would be very influential both in the formation of power and its implementation. For example, the demand for the opening of the Ottoman Parliament was a very important political instrument for the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement, which then could easily affect the election of its deputies. As a matter of fact, the influence of Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement on the election in November 1919 was pronounced.

Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues also sought to determine the Ottoman delegation which would be sent to Paris for the negotiations on the treaty, for positively affecting the destiny of the country, and had a constitutional motive for the re-opening of the Ottoman Parliament, which had been closed in violation of the Constitution.

The Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement not only sought to melt the local movements in its pot, but also adopted a line of action which neglected, from time to time, İstanbul as the traditional centre of power, and used some of its rights and

defined:

In this thesis, the term “Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement” is defined as such: it was a new political centre and a new organization which interacted, and sought to cooperate with the local organizations, and at first did not exclude the new local, civilian and popular political understanding, but put a bureaucratic, centralist, authoritarian model of political model into effect. It was also a part of the old political centre, a part which distinguished itself from the old centre, clashed with it, and during the interregnum, tried to replace it. In other words, the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement was a candidate to fulfil the functions of a political centre, which the old centre had already ceased to fulfill.

It may look as if the focus in this thesis is Mustafa Kemal as a person, as in the traditional Turkish historiography, but, here, Mustafa Kemal, as an important actor of the period, is considered both as the leader and as a part of the movement. Although a conceptualization such as the “Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement” emphasizes the very personality of Mustafa Kemal, the movement led by him was only one of the national movements. Furthermore, a categorization like this does not mean to say that the National Struggle movements were non-existent before Mustafa Kemal entered the scene.

The Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement clashed with organizations in the east, including those in Trabzon and Erzurum, which supported the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement in the beginning, and with the organizations in west. It is very difficult to say that the relation of conflict or compromise linearly developed in the favor of the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. The action regarding the severing of communications between Anatolia and the central government, which went on for almost one month and was risky, resulted in the victory of Mustafa Kemal in October 1919.

Thus, both İstanbul and the local movements began to think that the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement was more important. After the success of the action, the local organizations began to submit to Mustafa Kemal's control, but some back steps happened. The opening of the Ottoman Parliament decreased the dependence of the local organizations on the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. However, the occupation of İstanbul and the closing of the Ottoman Parliament and the opening of the Grand National Assembly led to the local organizations being pushed to put themselves under the control of "the new political center". On the other hand, their integration with Mustafa Kemal-led National movement was just formal. In fact, the local societal units tried to maintain their autonomy. The new political center was more strict and disciplined and as such posed a serious threat to the local bodies. But as a result of the interregnum, the local units had developed decentralist views and had been transformed by this experience. After the opening of the GNA this effect can be followed in the opposition of some local units against Ankara.

Later, this experience of the local organizations and congresses carried the conflict into the GNA. Some deputies continued the struggle of the local organizations against the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. This conflict, in the Turkish historiography, is sometimes described as "the conflict between the group of power and the group in opposition". The group in power, called here the "Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement", took on a more concrete, judicial and organizational framework under the name of "First Group" and, in the end, it took the form of a party with establishing The people's Party (*Halk Fırkası*). The decentralist-localist approach is referred to as "the group in opposition", and later was organized under the name of "the Second Group".

When the GNA opened on 23 April 1920, it did not define itself as a continuous assembly. The temporary characteristic of the Assembly can clearly be seen in the phrase

“it would be convened until the realization of the object” of article of the Code of Quorum of Deliberations (*Nisabi Müzakere Kanunu*), dated 5 September 1920. This is a striking mark of how the deputies perceived their activities in Ankara, or to what extent they experienced a revolution. It also shows that the new political center, which Mustafa Kemal sought, had not been instituted yet. The Assembly’s view of itself as a continuous assembly would appear later, only after a degree of success in politics and war had been won.

Another important point was its acceptance of the System of Assembly Government (*Meclis Hükümeti Sistemi*) as the result of a decentralist-civil-populist approach that came from the local organizations and congresses. This meant that all the authority of the power was used by the representatives of the people. The decentralist-localist-populist approach made it a basic principle. The LFO, mentioned above, was formed by this approach. However, with time, the System of Assembly Government was used by the group in power, later the First Group, as an instrument to limit the authority of the deputies. For this reason, the opposition began to defend the System of Parliamentary Government instead of the System of Assembly Government. Thus, it was supposed to that the System of Parliamentary Government would control the power group and prevent its domination in the Assembly.

The Assembly system was used by the First Group, especially by Mustafa Kemal, until the Constitution of 1924. 1924 marked the end of the decentralist-localist and populist approach. This had been concretized in the Law of Fundamental Organization. It also can be seen in the debates on some laws or drafts of laws. This approach received support from the opposition group, even from some members of the First Group. They stated this mentality in their criticism of “old political structure” or of “the bureaucratic and centralist political tradition”. And they demanded the realization of a “local

democracy” in the local units like villages, districts and provinces. These examples of this approach were taken from speeches made in the Assembly. The exponents of this approach both within the opposition group and within the First Group were taken out by the election of 1923. The traces of this mentality were finally deleted by the new Constitution.

Sources for this study included the regulations of the societies, the minutes of the various committees of these societies, the decisions, communiques and declarations of the societies. In addition, correspondence were used, especially telegraphs. In the chapter which focuses on the First Assembly, the minutes of that assembly were examined.

The secondary sources used in this thesis related with the National Struggle era can be divided into two main groups. The first are the works like memoirs, diaries and autobiographies. The second are the works written as part of research, academic or non-academic. It should be stated that the amount of secondary sources available on the Turkish National Struggle is great. However, except for a few of them, each is a repetition of the others, both in the sort of memory and in the sort of research, written within the framework of Mustafa Kemal’s approach set up in *Nutuk*.

Within the research studies, one of the most important works is Sabahattin Selek’s *Anadolu İhtilali*. Written in the style of journalism, the book uses a non-academic format and stands outside of the classical narration of the Turkish National Struggle. Selek questions stereotypes about the National Struggle era, and overall manages to maintain a impartial position as far as possible.

Another important source was Sina Akşin’s *İstanbul Hükümetleri ve Milli Mücadele*, which can be said to be an example of a classical academic study. Akşin made a study of the micro-history of 1918 and 1920 by reading newspapers and researching archives in detail. However, it is difficult to say that he avoided the Kemalist line

altogether. Even though his book includes enormous knowledge about the events of the era, the perspective which holds that the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement had “national” and “democratic” historical mission, is ever present in this narration. According to this approach, the last phase of this history was a national phase and democratic one. The movement of which Mustafa Kemal was the leader; the “hero” of the story. The villains are the İstanbul governments, the palace and the British. The incredible colour, variety and complexity of a factual study is abandoned for a narration which only has room for “black” and “white”. There are no gray tones in this story. According to him, the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement was the antithesis of the thesis, meaning, an antithesis of both the system in the country and also the international system of that period.

This thesis especially makes use of works published after 1980. The first of them is Eric Jan Zürcher’s *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish Nationalist Movement (1905-1926)*, published in 1984. According to Zürcher,¹⁵ all of the organizations were Unionist organizations. Mustafa Kemal was appointed as the leader of the National Struggle by the Unionists, but, later, he captured the movement and adjoined it to himself. To prove his thesis, Zürcher tries to show a common past, even the same past, between the Unionist cadre and Kemalist cadre. He thinks that *patronage* had a very important place in Ottoman-Turk politics. Here, undoubtedly, it is accepted that the Unionists and Kemalists came from a common environment, and that the Unionists had a very important role in the organization of the National Struggle. The thesis that the Unionists and Kemalists shared almost the same mentality and the importance of *patronage* in their relations is also accepted. In other words, I support the thesis that “democracy”, or democratic demands, were not the aim

¹⁵ Zürcher’s approach was also argued by Mete Tunçay. For Tunçay’s approach, see the first part of his book, *T.C. ’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi., 1989).

for the Unionists or for the Kemalists: they were just “an instrument on the way to modernize the society and to strengthen the state.”¹⁶

However, Zürcher is unable to prove the relationship between the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and the Unionists, and so with the local organizations. Even though most of the Kemalists had been Unionist and shared the same mentality, there were some differences between the Unionists and the Kemalists. First, the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement rose as a different movement and eventually took on a party form. Second, although the Unionists took part in the organizations and congresses of the National Struggle, these bodies rose within the very peculiar conditions of the period and consequently had very different features from those of the Unionists. Third, the Unionists were in a state of constant change in this period. While some of them preferred to follow their old leaders and to be among the opposition in Ankara, some preferred to join the Kemalists. These two groups, most probably, had very similar political approaches. But the third part of the Unionists who joined in the local movements shared a more decentralist-localist and populist approach, even defending “local democracy”, and they were assimilated into the local movements.

Zürcher’s stress, also, historiographically, on the thesis of continuity and a new periodization of the first half of the twentieth century of the Ottoman-Turkish history draws attention.

For a thesis opposite to Zürcher’s work, Bülent Tanör’s *Türkiye’de Kongre İktidarları (191-1920)* can be given. Although Tanör, to some extent, accepts the influence of the Unionists on the organizations of the National Struggle, he asserts that the Unionists’ features were very different from the basic features of the local organizations which were “democratic” bodies and secured the power in their regions. According to Tanör, similar to Akşin’s political philosophy, the actors of the story of the

¹⁶ Zürcher, p. 10. This last idea was stated before by Kemal Karpat and Şerif Mardin.

era were as follow: On one side, there was imperialist England, or the Entente, which wanted to colonize the Ottoman Empire and to keep it backward as a villager state. On the other side, there were “the environments of Ottoman governance”, like the palace and the Ottoman Governments, which had a feudal, autocratic and religious approach. Against these two “archaic” groups, who had to lose historically, there were “democratic” local organizations and congresses. However, because they had local or regional perspective, they were lacking or insufficient in some ways. Their insufficiency would be made up by the movement led by Mustafa Kemal. The main object of the movement of Mustafa Kemal was to reach “national liberty”. The realization of national liberty was obtained by this movement, which had a democratic essence as did the local movements, and by democracy. In other words, this was a “national democratic revolution.” The representative of the thesis of the national democratic revolution was the Anatolian movement. It struggled against imperialism, the palace and the successive Ottoman governments. Thus Tanör also, anachronistically, implies that this struggle was a fight between Absolutism and Republicanism.

I used and benefited from Tanör’s opinions which argued that the local societies and congresses were decentralist-local and had a “democratic essence” or democratic features. However, I think that there was neither a sameness nor an identification between the local organizations and the Mustafa Kemal-led National movement as he asserts, but that there was conflict, diversity and difference between them.

Another important work which should be discussed here is İlhan Tekeli ve Selim İlkin’s *Ege’deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı’na Geçerken Uşak Heyet-i Merkeziyesi ve İbrahim (Tahtakılıç) Bey.*¹⁷ Although the work specifically discusses the Aegean

¹⁷ They have also published some articles on this subject, which will be discussed below. About this subject, for a short assessment of their studies, see İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin “Yumağı Bir Başka Uçtan Çözmek ya da Ege’de Direnişin Önemi Üzerine” in *Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e-Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999).

region, it also includes some general interpretations about the Turkish National Struggle. According to them, a local, civil movement was able to rise in the Aegean region due to “the weakening of the central authority and its inability to protect the interests of the people of the region.” This movement was organized by the local cadre, which had “to lean on the will of the people or to create an image which leaned on the will of the people” in order to meet the needs of the struggle and its success. The decisions made and practices implemented to provide the finances and human power for the struggle were managed according to “egalitarian and anonymous principles”, and arbitrariness was limited as much as possible.¹⁸ This also brought the undertaking of some of the functions of the state, which Tanör referred to as “powerization”, and meant the establishment of a new base of legitimacy.

Another important aspect of the work of Tekeli and İlkin for this thesis is that they put the relation between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement, which aimed to build up a nation-state, and the local movements as a conflicting relation. They stated that the new political center which Mustafa Kemal tried to construct, tried to subsume these local organizations within its own pot. Consequently this led to a clash. This framework is almost the same as the framework which I set up here. However, two points should be stated: First; I try to examine the conflict between “the new political center” and the local organizations throughout the country and until the closing of the First Assembly. Second, Tekeli and İlhan do not think of the relation between the mentality of the Unionists and the dominant mentality in the local organizations and congresses as a conflicting relation. This springs from their position that the Unionists belonged to the pe-

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 330-331.

riphery.¹⁹ On the other hand, they also show that they are aware of the preservation of the Unionists' political identities within the local movements. For this reason they state that the problem for the Unionists was "to try not to melt" within the local movements.²⁰ However, the important part of Unionists would be melted both into the local movements and into the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement. Another group would maintain their presence until "purged" by the Kemalists in 1926.

Among the memoirs studied for this paper, first and foremost comes Kazım Karabekir's *İstiklal Harbimiz*. It was written in response to *Nutuk* and so is differentiated from the "orthodox" and "official" approach.²¹ As Zürcher states, *İstiklal Harbimiz* includes some theses which conflict with the traditional narration of the Turkish National Struggle, such as: Mustafa Kemal's unwillingness to participate in the National Struggle and staying in İstanbul; Kazım Karabekir's effort to dissuade Mustafa Kemal from convening the Sivas Congress on the date which was the same as the date of the Erzurum Congress; Mustafa Kemal's reputation as a negative individual within the civil-military bureaucracy and among his colleagues; and Mustafa Kemal's sympathetic attitude toward the Bolsheviks.

¹⁹ The authors set a close relation between the Committee for Union and Progress and local units. These two elements are even identified with each other. They describe how the Unionists contributed to the emergence of the Civil-Local Movement as follows: The Committee for Union and Progress was not a movement which emerged at the center. Rather it was able to come to the power with the support of the social powers in the big cities in the periphery. When it lost power, it regained it with this support. İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken Uşak Heyet-i Merkeziyesi ve İbrahim (Tahtakılıç) Bey* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Y., 1989) pp. 51-52. While it is clear that the Unionists had organizations in the periphery and took support from the local social units when they lost power, this does not mean the civil-local approach shared the same mentality as the Unionists, the authors acknowledge. It would be more useful to assess the contribution of the Unionists to the Civil-Local Movements just as advantages which the Unionist organization and practice of ten years presented.

²⁰ Tekeli and İlkin, "Yumağı Bir Baka Uçtan Çözmek ya da Ege'de Direnişin Önemi Üzerine," p. 324

²¹ Kazım Karabekir wanted to a shorter version of the memoir publish in 1933 first, but all copies were seized and burned. For an assessment of *İstiklal Harbimiz* of Kazım Karabekir, (Ankara: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1969), see Eric Jan Zürcher, "Young Turk Memoirs as as Historical Source," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22, no.4 (1986); and Eric Jan Zürcher "Kazım Karabekir ve İstiklal Harbimiz Kitabı," *Tarih ve Toplum*, 38 (1986).

Further, for my thesis, *İstiklal Harbimiz* offers some interesting points which the orthodox approach has disregarded. First, the book has very important information about the activities in the local societies of Erzurum and Trabzon which conflicted with the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. Some important cues can be found about the reason for the clash between the members of the Society for the Protection of the Rights of Trabzon (*Trabzon Muhafaza-i Hukuk Cemiyet-i*) and Mustafa Kemal, which he only briefly mentions in *Nutuk*. Above all, even though Kazım Karabekir participated in the same movement with Mustafa Kemal and supported him, he did not want to leave the control to Mustafa Kemal, so he condoned the opposition in Erzurum and Trabzon and forced Mustafa Kemal to step back. This book reproduces some telegraphs regarding the reactions of Erzurum and Trabzon to the activities of Mustafa Kemal in Sivas and Ankara.

Despite the fact that the book was written after Karabekir's departure from Mustafa Kemal's group in 1923, he gives clear depictions of the existence of the Mustafa Kemal-led National/Political Movement and its dimensions, and how they collaborated. Actually it can easily be observed that there were no important mentality differences between Mustafa Kemal and Kazım Karabekir. The problem between them was personal and was related to the sharing the power. For example, when the rebellion of Erzurum in the summer of 1920 occurred, in the beginnings Karabekir thought that he could benefit from this opposition against Ankara. But later, when he saw that the opposition which depicted that decentralist demands and criticized the civil-military bureaucracy, and that they targeted Ankara and himself, he changed his position and began to act together with Mustafa Kemal to suppress the opposition in Erzurum.

Two other memoirs deserve mention. One is the memoirs of Süleyman Necati (Güneri). This book is especially important for understanding the activities of the

Unionists and their change in the National Struggle era. For a long time, the main reference book for the local organization in Erzurum has been Cevat Dursunoğlu's *Milli Mücadele'de Erzurum*. After the publication of Süleyman Necati (Güneri)'s memoirs, Cevat Dursunoğlu's book needs to be read under the information of Süleyman Necati (Güneri)' memoirs.

Another important memoir for the National Struggle Era is Hacim Muhittin (Çarıklı)'s *Balıkesir ve Alaşehir Kongreleri ve Hacim Muhittin Çarıklı'nın Kuva-yı Milliye Hatıraları (1919-1921)* which was written as a diary and later published under the present name. Even though his memoirs were "summarized" by the publisher, the *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (The Institution for the Turkish History), it remains a basic source for the local organizations in the Aegean region. Among other things, it contains valuable information about the relation between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and the local organizations in the that region.

Consequently, in the historiography of the Turkish National Struggle, there are two basic approaches. On one side is the Zürcher-Tunçay approach; on the other the Tekeli and İlkin-Tanör approaches, although they had some important differences. I try to make a kind of synthesis to overcome the contradictions between them which spring from the question of what the Unionists' role in the Turkish National Struggle was.

Thus, I examine how the basic characteristics of the local organizations were contrary to the traditional characteristics of Ottoman politics, or were different from it. For this reason, a model of antagonism is sought. On one side of the conflict was the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement, which represented the traditional politics, and defined its features as centralist, bureaucratic and statist even though it had a "populist" discourse and appeared to be similar to the local congresses. On the other side, it will be argued, were the local organizations, even though they were dispersed and temporary. In

this thesis, I will attempt to show that the conflict between these different mentalities existed during the National Struggle era. As different from Tekeli and İlkin, who emphasized this conflict between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and the local organizations only up to the opening of the GNA, this thesis examines its different dimensions throughout the era. It will be asserted that a decentralist-localist and populist approach developed and that this approach was dominant during the era of the National Struggle. I will also discuss how it was a source of legitimization for the political actors of that period. I see that the conflict was also a clash between two different mentalities, which sometimes resulted in compromise in the period under discussion.

How the intensity of this conflict was maintained within the GNA, and the relation of these different approaches with the system which the Assembly accepted will be examined, especially the meaning system of assembly government for the two approaches. As stated in constitution theory, the System of Assembly Government had two aspects in the GNA, one of which reflected the decentralist and populist approach. The other reflected and served the movement which was centralist, based on a chief system. This system gave the opportunity for the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement to develop itself. However, when it began to gain in confidence in itself it abandoned compromise with the other approach and sought to eradicate all the trace of the dominant political approach of the National Struggle era.

In short, this paper presents a narration of the conflict between the local organizations and the Mustafa Kemal-led National (Political) Movement during the Turkish National Struggle era. It deals with some important issues of the peirod, such as the characteristics of the Turkish National Struggle, the role of the Unionists, and the meaning of the political-judicial system of the GNA. These issues are studied within the

framework of the conflict between the two different approaches and of the emergence of a new political center and its development.

The organizations of the chapters of this paper are as follows: in the first chapter, the basic characteristics of the Turkish National Struggle and its background are discussed. Within this framework, the political composition, population movement, the perception of “political identity” in the National Struggle era, the main actors of the era and their relation with the National Struggle are described. The chapter focuses particularly on the main characteristics of the Turkish National Struggle. Here it is asserted that, because of the hypothesis that there was a conflict between the basic political features of the Unionists and the basic features of the local organizations, the thesis which contends that the Turkish National Struggle was a Unionists movement, is insufficient. A synthesis is sought between the thesis that the Turkish National Struggle was a Unionists movement and the thesis of that it was a Civil-Local Movement. For this reason, Erzurum is taken as an example to illustrate this hypothesis, as in Erzurum, the Unionists who were in the local organization there underwent a change in political identity. With time they even faced off against the “Unionists” and began to defend the dominant approach of the era, the decentralist-localist and populist approach.

In Chapter Two, the rise of the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement, its efforts to unite and to control all of the local organizations or movements, the conflict that ensued between them, and the transition of the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement into a “new political center” are discussed. In addition, some examples of the conflict between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and local organizations and congresses leading up to the opening of the Grand National Assembly receive attention.

Chapter Three follows the continuing conflict between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and the local movements continued in the Grand National Assembly,

how this conflict was one of mentality, and the fact that they also were in conflict and had some serious differences with groups with identical discourses. An attempt is made to show that this distinction reveals how these two different mentalities distinctly perceived and used the political and judicial system of the Grand National Assembly. Moreover the presence of the decentralist-localist and populist approach in the GNA, especially in the framework of the debates on the Law of Fundamental Organization and of the Draft for the Code of Administrations of Villages and Districts is argued. I prove that the real exponent of this approach in the GNA was the opposition group, the power group representing a different approach. Even though the power group had some diverse ideas, its mentality reflected on the logic of its organization within the First Group; and in the end, when the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement achieved complete control of power and because it no longer needed compromised, it changed, actually eradicating the constitution which featured the decentralist-localist and populist approach and refused permission for the drafting of a number of laws supported by the proponents of the decentralist-localist populist approach. In short, this section describes how the group in power conducted a purge of the decentralist-localist and populist approach, its exponents and products from the political life of the country.

Now, in Chapter One, the main characteristics of the Turkish National Struggle, the Unionists' role and different positions in the Struggle and the existence of a decentralist-localist and populist movement and approach will be discussed.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND AND THE CONTENT OF THE TURKISH “NATIONAL” STRUGGLE, AND THE EXAMPLE OF ERZURUM

In this chapter the background and the content of the Turkish “National” Struggle will be evaluated. Particularly, focus will be put on such potential political actors as parties, social groups, sections and persons in the context of their impact on the emergence and the rise of Civil-Local Movement. This will help us draw the general panorama of the period.

In order to understand the real content of the Turkish “National” Struggle two crucial problems should be investigated. One of them concerns the participation in the National Struggle by the people, more specifically, by the Muslim-Turk population in Anatolia. The other concerns how the Civil-Local Movements, which appeared between 1918-20, and moreover exerted influence throughout the National Struggle period, emerged in this era. This investigation seeks to identify the significant factors which determined the emergence and organisation of the Civilian-Local Movements. Consequently, the latter also seeks to what extent the Unionists influenced the

organization of the Civil-Local Movements, and to what extent the civilian and local elements had the determinant influence on their organization.

The problem of the participation of the people in the National Struggle Movement seems to be related with “mobility”, which is a striking feature of this era. This means not only geographical mobility, but also political mobility. Actually these cannot be separated from each other because they interacted with each other. Sometimes political mobility led to the geographical mobility of people who lived in a certain region. But also under some conditions, geographical mobility, namely, migration, led to political mobility in Ottoman society. In this period, the activation of the civil elements within the political and public spheres increased enormously. In comparison with other periods of Ottoman-Turkish history, this period was exceptional in the mobility of the people or some strata of “society”. This mobility had results which affected the construction of the identities of the people.

This study postulates that the average Muslim or Muslim-Turk of the era did not have an ethnic nationalist²² consciousness, but rather defined himself/herself by a local identity. This local identity sometimes included religious characteristics, sometimes ethnic characteristics, but these ethnic characteristics were very different from the ethnic characteristics on which a nation-state was based or were not the basic elements of an idealised community at which a nation-state might aim. Mostly these characteristics were used to show natural affiliations. For this reason, here, as a hypothesis, it is argued that

²² In this thesis, the word *Milli* (national) is used on the base that it referred to a certain religious community, and did not refer to an ethnic community. The word *Milli* in the phrase of *Milli Mücadele Hareketi* came to mean something mostly related with “Muslim population” or sometimes “Muslim-Turk population” in the historical context. See for the religious meaning of the concept, Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 335-337; Feroz Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1995), p. 73; and Eric Jan Zürcher, “Muslim Nationalism-The Missing Link between Empire and Republic”, in *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, ? (1997); or Eric Jan Zürcher, “The Vocabulary of Muslim Nationalism,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Science*, 137 (1999), pp. 81-92. See for the concept’s including both religious (*dini*) and “national” (*ulusal*) meaning, Ahmet Yıldız, “‘Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene’- Türk ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)” (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), p. 91.

this peasant mass did not understand the “nationalist” elites or their ideological-political discourses. Consequently, the intellectual-bureaucratic elites who urged the people to participate in the National Struggle experienced some difficulties in receiving support from the people in some areas. Even in the Aegean region, some opposition to, or apathy towards the National Struggle was shown.²³

On the other hand, it can be stated that in some regions, people supported the National Struggle, taking part in political mobility toward the emergence of a more national attitude. The organization that started in the Aegean region and the armed struggle related to this organization shows that the nationalists provided, though partly, for the participation of the people in the National Struggle. However, this is a common thesis which includes some deficiencies, and is insufficient to explain the political mobility, as said above, both at the practical and at the consciousness level.

At this point, it should be restated that the phenomenon of immigration had a profound influence on the people who entered into Anatolia, and determined the process of belonging or not to a certain identity. This had an undeniable impact on the rates of the participation in the National Struggle. With the Balkan Wars, a huge influx of Muslim-Turks entered Anatolia, an event with tragic results. It can be said easily that these Balkan immigrants had an image of the “other”. This led later to their support of the National Struggle, especially in the Aegean region, because they knew how it was to be the “other”, and no longer had any place to which they could go but Anatolia.

After World War I, many Greek people in the Aegean region who had been forced to emigrate by the Unionists at the beginning of the War began to return to their homes,

²³ Even in the literature, this issue was handled by some authors. For example, the irrelevance of the peasant masses to the National Struggle was stated in the novel *Yaban* by Yakup Kadri, who observed the people’s interest in the National Struggle in those years. Likewise, the sympathetic attitude displayed by the people of a certain region toward the Greek army is an important feature in Kemal Tahir’s novel, *Yorgun Savaşçı*. Even though these are fictional works, they reflect some aspects of the “historical reality”. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983); Kemal Tahir, *Yorgun Savaşçı* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1968), pp. 334-336.

which had been appropriated by Muslims.²⁴ With the occupation of İzmir on 15 May 1919 and especially with the movement of the invading Greek army to the east after receiving the go-ahead from their government to pass the Milne Line,²⁵ the local Muslim-Turk population fled to central Anatolia.²⁶

Similar to these events, some of the Armenians, who had had been deported in 1915, began to return to their homes with the support of the Entente States.²⁷ This situation led to tensions between the Muslims and the Armenians and its effects among the Muslim population were seen as political activation, and organization in their regions.

In this process, it was very natural that these migrants, whatever their ethnic origins are, began to have an idea of the “other” who was responsible for their starvation, illness, misery. This “other” was the Greeks for the Muslim Aegean people.

Therefore, the consciousness of the people in Anatolia about the National Struggle had differed from place to place. That is to say, in some places of Anatolia, the National Struggle gained support easily, but in other places, it did not. Surely many other social factors, such as religion, the ethnic structure of a particular region, whether a region had a large number of refugees, or whether there was migration or not in that region need to be understood. In short, the people who experienced migration between 1913 and 1918 underwent an identity change. This change continued even after 1918. In the end, this si-

²⁴ Nurdoğan Taçalan, *Ege'de Kurtuluş Savaşı Başlarken* (İstanbul: Aksoy Yayıncılık, 1998), pp. 51-53, 130, 131.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

²⁶ Bezmi Nusret Kaygusuz, *Bir Roman Gibi* (İzmir: İhsan Gümüştayak Matbaası, 1955), pp.208-212. Bezmi Nusret (Kaygusuz) was the head official of Alaşehir from 9 May 1919 and until the Greek occupation of that place. The number of these refugees is not certain but roughly it is guessed that 80, 000 people moved towards the east after the Greek occupation. Kemal Arı, *Büyük Mücadele-Türkiye'ye Zorunlu Göç (1923-1925)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), pp. 9.

²⁷ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (İstanbul: Sabah Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 191-192.

tuation led to political mobilisation among the Muslim population.²⁸

The other question is the Unionist's influence on the National Struggle organisations. To what extent did the Unionists play an important role in the emergence of the Civil-Local Movements? What were the roles of the civil-local elements in the emergence of the Civil-Local Movements? There are two theses about the reasons for the emergence of the Association of Defence of the Rights and of the Congresses: one is that these associations and congresses were institutions managed and directed by the Unionist cadres and military-administrative bureaucracy.²⁹ The second is that, even though to some extent the Unionists affected them, these organisations had completely civil-local origins and civil-local characteristics.³⁰ This study especially focuses on the second theory and emphasises the localist mentality and practices which appeared in the local congress powers which, as Tekeli and İlkin write, were developed against the centralist mentality and practices.³¹

A problem appears in the description of the Unionists. In this thesis, the essential characteristics of the Unionists, at least before 1919, are interpreted in a light different from the opinions of Tekeli and İlkin, and Zürcher. Serious differences existed between the methods of the Unionists and those of the civil-local organisations. The Unionists had

²⁸ Above all, the attitude of the *eşraf* and the prominent people in a certain region had determining effects on whether the local peasantry participated in the National Struggle or not. The activation of the *eşraf* and prominent people in local units is also enough to show the presence of Civil-Local Movements.

²⁹ Erich Jan Zürcher asserts this idea. See Eric Jan Zürcher, *Milli Mücadele 'de İttihatçılık* (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1995). See Tunçay.

³⁰ İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*. Even though there are some important differences, Bülent Tanör asserts that a local movement, which included "democratic" characteristics, existed. Bülent Tanör, *Türkiye'de Kongre İktidarları* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998).

³¹ Tekeli and İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, pp. 225-232. Tanör moreover draws attention to the process of centralization within the National Struggle Movement. Tanör, *Türkiye'de Kongre İktidarları*, pp. 230-232. Here Tanör shows two decisions of the Representative Committee which included efforts to control and centralise the associations of Defense of Rights and of other associations of this kind. However, Tanör does not put the problem as the relation between the centralist movement and the organizations which were being centralized.

a centralist organisation. The centralist unit managed the other units of the organisation. Their approach toward this early organisation was also valid to their approach about the political-judicial organisation of the state.³²

Tanör supports this interpretation. Although he accepts that the Unionists had an effect on the organisation of the National Struggle movements, he thinks that there were crucial differences between the Unionist mentality and the models of organisation and the overall perspective and the philosophy of the organisation in the local movements. First, the organisation in the form of a congress was “a new and original model”; second, the method in the local organisations exhibited a normative, open perspective of organisation and functioning distinct from the Unionist way, which was conspiratorial and closed.³³

Together with sharing this interpretation, this includes some flaws such as the ignorance of the fact that the Unionists began to move to a more “populist” and “leftist” approach. Both in political discourse and in political practice the Unionists began to prepare the programs and began to offer the same approach which was seen in the local movements. In other words, the Unionists did not exactly continue their old perspective; at least they were differentiated, even in discourse.

Timur accepts that the Unionists were in the process of changing identity in this period. He argues that even though many old Unionists and their sympathizers attended the local congress and organizations, they were harshly criticized and rejected. This did not spring from political opportunism, according to Timur, but from the identity change of the Unionists.³⁴

³² Yıldızhan Yayla, *Anayasalarımızda Yönetim İlkeleri Tevsi-i Mezuniyet ve Tefrik-i Vezaiif* (İstanbul: İ.Ü. Siyasal Bilimler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1982), pp. 64-65.

³³ Tanör, pp. 137-139.

³⁴ Taner Timur, *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1993), p. 30.

On the other hand, identification should not be made between the Unionists and the civil-military bureaucracy. It is very difficult to say they were the same. However, it can be seen clearly that they had the same responsibility as the central bureaucracy at the end of World War I. At the end of the war, the defeat of the Ottoman Empire also marked the collapse of the centralist and bureaucratic political tradition.³⁵ In an era and in the conditions in which the Empire faced destruction, the economy all but collapsed, the most productive parts of the population were lost, starvation, misery, epidemics increased³⁶, a significant part of the Muslim-Turk population came face to face with the threat of Greek and Armenian against their property and lives, and the centralist and bureaucratic structure was held responsible for all of these things.³⁷

Consequently, it can be asserted that the Unionists' taking part in the local National Struggle movements could have prevented the development of a movement based on civil elements because the Unionists, who were seen as responsible for all of the disasters, had lost prestige. However, the events did not develop in this direction, conditions even began to change in favour of the Unionists. Even though the Unionist politics collapsed, the movement continued its influence on certain elite groups, and bound these people together in practice, making organisation possible.

³⁵ The collapse of the Unionists also meant the collapse of centralism. See for how the Unionists managed centralist politics, Orhan Kolođlu, *Aydınlarmızın Bunalım Yılı: 1918* (İstanbul: Boyut Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 256.

³⁶ About these subjects there are few works. Alptekin Müderrisođlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşının Mali Kaynakları* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1990), pp. 24-25; Sabri Sürgevil, "Milli Mücadele Yıllarında Yerel Yönetimler", *Uluslararası İkinci Atatürk Sempozyumu* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1996), pp. 354, 367, 368; Bilge Criss, *İşgal Altında İstanbul* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), pp. 57-59; Tefvik Çavdar, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken Sayılarla "...Vaziyet ve Manzara-i Umumiye"* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1971), pp. 114-124; Cevat Dursunođlu, *Milli Mücadele'de Erzurum* (Ankara: T.C. Ziraat Bankası Matbaası, 1946), pp. 24-25; Sabahattin Özel, *Milli Mücadelede Trabzon* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), pp. 17-23, 75-76.

³⁷ After the opening of the Grand National Assembly, the deputies declared the old centralist, bureaucratic structure responsible for all the catastrophe. In Chapter three, the opinions of the deputies are given place.

Especially, after the occupation of İzmir, it was understood that the partition of the Empire would be realised by the Entente.³⁸ Thus, the sympathy of public opinion toward patriotic and nationalist groups began to increase, naturally toward the Unionists who were the most patriotic and nationalist part of the society.³⁹ The occupation of İzmir marks the rise of the nationalist attitude.⁴⁰ Even parts of society which had not been Unionist began to support the nationalist struggle. For instance, Hasan Tahsin, who did not like the Unionists and criticised them in his newspaper *Hukuk-u Beşer*, attacked the Greek soldiers with a weapon.⁴¹

³⁸ During the First World War, the Entente States made some secret agreements among themselves. The most important of these were the London Agreement, the Constantinople Agreement, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and the Saint-Jean de Maurienne Agreement. According to these agreements, the Ottoman Empire would be partitioned by the Entente States. However, the partition plans were deciphered by the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Revolution. Thus the Ottoman public gained information about the plans. Nevertheless the optimism was the preponderant mood of the Ottoman public when the First World War ended. This mood lasted until the occupation of İzmir. Paul C. Helmreich, *From Paris to Sevres: The Partition of the Ottoman Empire at the Peace Conference of 1919-1920* (Columbus: The Ohio University Press, 1974), pp. 5-7; Fulton Bruce, "France and the End of the Ottoman Empire" in Marian Kent (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London, Portland Or.: Frank Cass, 1996) pp. 163-165; Marian Kent, "Great Britain and the End of the Ottoman Empire" in Marian Kent (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London, Portland Or.: Frank Cass, 1996, pp. 186-188; Eric Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), pp. 209-212.

³⁹ However, it should be noted that thinking that some people who had been part of the Union and Progress or within the Special Organization (*Teşkilatı Mahsusa*) would automatically take part in the National Movement can be misleading. When the memoirs of Hüsamettin Ertürk are studied, it is seen that while he gives the names of many who were in practice against the National Struggle, some of them, around 25, later took part in the Special Organization, and they in the Security Powers (*Kuvay-ı İnzibatiye*), and fought with the National Powers (*Kuvay-ı Milliye*), or had various activities against the National Struggle. Hüsamettin Ertürk, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, prepared by Samih Nafiz Tansu (İstanbul: Ararat Yayınları, 1969), pp 383-387.

⁴⁰ For example, after the occupation, apart from Anatolian cities, only in İstanbul, many demonstrations were held to protest the occupation in Fatih, Üsküdar, Kadıköy, ve Sultanahmet. Kemal Arıburnu, *Milli Mücadelede İstanbul Mitingleri* (Ankara: Yeni Desen Matbaası, 1975). Falih Rıfki (Atay) states that the determinant reason of the arising of a "national" reaction was the occupation of İzmir, and later the occupation of İstanbul led to the same effect on Muslim public opinion. Falih Rıfki Atay, *Çankaya* (İstanbul: Doğan kardeş Matbacılık, 1968), pp. 166-168, 199.

⁴¹ See for the writings of Hasan Tahsin opposed to the Unionists in the newspaper of *Hukuk-u Beşer*, Zeki Arıkan, *Mütareke ve İşgal Dönemi İzmir Basını* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Kurumu, 1989), pp. 11-12. For the story of political life of Hasan Tahsin, see Nurdoğan Taçalan, *Ege'de Kurtuluş Savaşı Başlarken*, pp. 89-90. Moreover, Ahmet Emin Yalman, who was an exile in Kütahya in that period, stated that a "national" attitude began to rise and the fight between the Unionist and the *İtilafçı* stopped for a while, that even the Government encouraged armed struggle to some extent and allowed the demonstrations against the occupation of İzmir. Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim* (İstanbul: Pera Turizm ve Ticaret A.Ş., 1997), p. 434-435.

Likewise, it is a reality that some members of the Liberal Union Party (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*) in various regions of Anatolia both supported and participated in the National Struggle. For example, after the Occupation of İzmir, the prominent people of Aydın, most of whom were members of the Liberal Union, convened at the Club of Liberal Union and talked over whether the struggle against the Greeks would be with arms or not. In the end, even though they decided for armed struggle against the Greeks, they were unable to find a solution to how they would finance the struggle.⁴² Further, the head of the Aydın branch of the Society for the Defense of the Ottoman Rights of İzmir, which had been the first established and the most widespread enterprise for the organization in the Aegean region, was Fuat (Erlaçın) Bey, the head of Aydın branch of the Liberal Union Party.⁴³

A similar situation can be seen in Muğla. Both Unionists and the members of the Liberal Union took part in the organization of the National Struggle. For instance, Sadettin Bey, who was the head of the Muğla branch of the Liberal Union, helped in the organization of the National Struggle, then adopted an attitude in favour of Mustafa Kemal, eventually becoming a deputy in the First Grand National Assembly.⁴⁴

Moreover, Nazilli, a city which had been under the control of the people in the Liberal Union Party for a long time, gave support to the organization of the National Struggle. The headquarter of Demirci Mehmet Efe was in Nazilli and his counselor, İlhami Bey, was known as a prominent person in the Liberal Union Party in the region.⁴⁵ What is more interesting is that some people in the Liberal Union Party went to Sivas to

⁴² Asaf Gökbel, *Milli Mücadele'de Aydın* (Aydın: Çoskun Matbaası, 1964), pp. 106-108, 11-113.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

⁴⁴ Ünal Türkeş, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Muğla* (İstanbul: Yelken Matbaası, 1973), pp. 81-82, 345-346, 362-363.

⁴⁵ İlhan Tckeli and Selim İkin, "Aydın Cenub Mıntıkası Heyet'i Merkeziyesinin Kongre Mukarreratıyla Nizamnamelerini Mübeyyin Risale", *Uluslararası İkinci Atatürk Sempozyumu* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1996), p. 179.

meet with Mustafa Kemal. One of them was Hoca Süleyman Efendi, who was a member of the Central Committee in Nazilli who had supported the National Struggle from the beginning. The other was Serficeli Hilmi, a head official (*mutasarrıf*) of Muğla. They met with Mustafa Kemal and stayed in Sivas between November 13-25 1919.⁴⁶ Their connection with the leading people of the National Struggle shows that various societal and political spheres of the society were in support of the national movement.

In short, patriotic resistance against the occupation gained prestige. This attitude belonged not only to the Unionists, even though they were the most patriotic part of the society, but also to some people who were members of other political groups or parties, even of the Liberal Union Party, in general known to oppose the National Struggle. Later, after the occupation of İstanbul, the support for the National Struggle increased dramatically. The occupation of İstanbul made it clear that only armed struggle would succeed.

Before discussing the effects of the Unionists on the emergence of the Civil-Local Movements, two points should be again underlined. First, the Unionists began to change after 1918. As such, it is very difficult to talk about homogeneous Unionist politics or political practices⁴⁷. Second, the development of the civil-local practice, which had some characteristics different from those of the Unionists. These two points are partly in

⁴⁶ Celal Bayar, *Bende Yazdım*, vol. 7 (İstanbul: Sabah Kitapçılık, 1997), pp. Timur, p. 30. 99-100,146; Gökbel, pp. 183, 392. For another example of the support of some people within the Liberal and Union Party for the National Struggle, see Böcüzade Süleyman Sami, *Kuruluşundan Bugüne Kadar İsparta Tarihi*, edited by Suat Eren, vol. 2 (İstanbul : Serenler Yayıncılık, 1983).

⁴⁷ Celal Bayar, in a letter dated 7 November 1919, even for only the Aegean Region, complained that the Unionists could not be controlled from one center and the secondary selectors, the majority of whom were Unionists, behaved according to their own whims. Tekeli and İkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, p. 573. However, the Unionists did not neglect to establish some organizations in order to facilitate managing the Unionists throughout the country and to protect them from the attacks which would be launched by their opponents. One of the organizations was the *Karakol Cemiyeti*. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that this organization took effectual management on the Unionists in the provinces, as Bayar pointed out. Its influence, largely, was restricted within İstanbul. Fethi Tcvetoğlu, *Milli Mücadele Yıllarındaki Kuruluşlar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), p. 3, 7-9.

contradiction with each other. Therefore the problematic relation between these two different political approaches should be explained. This study makes the synthesis as

follows:

For the National Struggle era, the Unionist politics had two dimensions. One of them was that they had very close relations with the civil and especially military bureaucracy. They had the same mentality as the centralist and bureaucratic tradition or old political tradition. On the other side, the Unionist movement began to defend populist, localist and anti-bureaucratic politics, especially after 1919,⁴⁸ for two reasons. First, after high ranking Unionists went abroad, they established close relations with the Bolsheviks. Particularly Enver and his companies entered into a very close dialogue with them.⁴⁹ They began to defend more populist (*halkçı*) and localist politics, and the principle of the participation of the people in politics, based on councils. To prove this thesis it would be enough to look at the programs of the Party of the Public Councils (*Halk Şuraları Fırkası*)

⁴⁸ It is possible to group, generally, the populist, decentralist-localist, and anti-bureaucratic perspective under the catch-all of populism. Further, in this era, it is known that the system of the Representation of Profession took support from different groups. Both the populism and the idea of the Representation of Profession of the National Struggle era included more "leftist" content. This situation sprang from the Bolshevik Revolution. The ideas of populism and the Representation of Profession, which were seen especially among the Unionists, had been first defended in the era of the Union and Progress by some authors like Ziya Gökalp. See for a study of populism in various eras, İlhan Tekeli and Gencay Şaylan, "Türkiye'de Halkçılık İdeolojisinin Evrimi", *Toplum ve Bilim*, nos. 6-7 (Summer-Fall 1978). Zafer Toprak, "Halkçılık İdeolojisinin Oluşumu", *Atatürk Döneminin Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Sorunları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Yüksek İktisat ve Ticaret Mektebi Mezunları Derneği Yayınları, 1977). Likewise, together with the defense of the idea of the Representation of Profession having more radical content in 1920, it had been defended since 1912 by Kör Ali İhsan Bey, and by some authors like Ziya Gökalp. In that era, it was even prepared as a program and presented to the General Center of the Union and Progress, but was not given sufficient importance. Like populism, this idea has also included different meanings in different eras, as stated by Tekeli and İlkin. The authors have identified four periods. The features of the period between 1921-1924 are especially relevant to this study: the anti-bureaucratic attitude, and the election of officials by the people can be shown as examples; giving the crucial authority to local governments, namely decentralization; the adoption of a council system. These points are emphasized as the common points between the programs of "*Mesai*" and "*Mesleki Temsil*" by the authors. İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, "(Kör) Ali İhsan Bey (İloğlu) Bey ve Temsil-i Mesleki Programı," *Atatürk Döneminin Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Sorunları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Yüksek İktisat ve Ticaret Mektebi Mezunları Derneği Yayınları, 1977), pp. 293-294, 323-324, 341-344.

⁴⁹ For a brief account of Enver Pasha with the Bolsheviks, see Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, "Fellow Travellers: Enver Pasha and the Bolshevik Government 1918-1920" *Asian Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1982). Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Makedonya'dan Orta Asya'ya Enver Paşa*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1972), pp. 505-618.

established by Enver and his colleagues, and of the group which was established in Ankara by the Unionists.

When the program of the Party of the Public Councils is examined, a decentralist, anti-bureaucratic, localist and civil perspective draws attention. For example, the local administrations in villages, districts (*nevahi*), counties (*kazas*) and provinces (*vilayat*) were to be transferred to local councils; even the reorganization of the central administrative system was at base a council system; and the abolition of the bureaucracy and the election of all officials because police, gendarme and other officials established class domination on the people.⁵⁰ Further, in the summer of 1920, a Unionist group called *Halk Zümresi Grubu* (the Populist Group) emerged in the Grand National Assembly. Muhittin (Birgen) Bey and Kör Ali İhsan Bey, as mentioned above, had influence on the constitution of the ideas of this group.⁵¹ Ali İhsan Bey, in a statement in the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, dated November 7, 1920, clearly stated that the program, which he had written, was not a product of himself alone, and that the program belonged to the Central Committee for the Union and Progress in İstanbul.⁵²

⁵⁰ See particularly the 7th, 8th, 14th and 15th articles of the program of the Party of the Public Councils. Mete Tunçay, "Mesai 1920- Halk Şurular Fırkası Programı" (Ankara: Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1972), pp. 87-90. This party is thought to have been established in the beginning of April of 1920 or sometime earlier. According to Tunçay, after the Unionists who supported Enver abandoned the program of *Mesai*, they began to prepare a program for *Halk Şurular Fırkası* (the Party of Public Councils). The name of *Halk Şurular Fırkası* was first used in a letter from Halil Pasha to Enver Pasha on 12 April 1921. Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar-1 (1908-1925)* (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1991), pp. 77-78.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 90. Muhittin (Birgen) Bey was, during the First World War, the editor of the newspaper *Tanın*, which was published in the line of the Union and Progress, and later was brought to the deputy of Çorum by the General Center of the Union and Progress. After the war, his ideas underwent a rapid shift toward Bolshevism. He supported the idea of *Mesleki Temsil*, and stated that (Kör) Ali İhsan Bey had a function or a mission in Ottoman History, like Karl Marx had had on for the history of the world. Zeki Arıkan, *Tarihimiz ve Cumhuriyet-Muhittin Birgen (1885-1951)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), pp. 4-9, 23-33. Later, he, in a letter to Kazım (Karabekir) Pasha, dated 24 October 1921, severely criticized the political atmosphere in Ankara and the people who unfairly attacked Enver Pasha. He wrote that Enver Pasha and his companies defended social revolution, and the Party of the Public Councils based on social revolution. In short, he defended Enver Pasha to Kazım Pasha in this letter. Kazım Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimizde Enver Paşa ve İttihat ve Terakki Erkanı* (Ankara: Tckin Yayınevi, 1990) pp. 176-189.

⁵² Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar-1 (1908-1925)*, p. 130. Tunçay states that this program was quite influential on the leftist movements of that period.

The second reason for the change of the Unionists was a result of internal conditions. From the aspect of the domestic politics, together with populist politics, local politics began to be very important for the Unionists. In that era, they preferred that the local units remain relatively independent from the center. One of the reasons for this preference was that they had lost their power and control in the center. The other is that they felt able to trust their power in the local social units. They planned to go to the center from the local units. In Trabzon, one of the places where the Unionists had the most influence, the slogan “Trabzon belongs to Trabzon’s people” (“*Trabzon Trabzonhulara aittir*”) was very popular. Feridun (Kandemir) Bey, who was sent to the Administration of Trabzon Information as administrator, was met with the slogans “Ankara’s sending an administrator here is not necessary because Trabzon has young people” and “Trabzon belongs to Trabzon’s people”. Even Kandemir says that Kahya Yahya, a Unionist, told him to return to Ankara and he repeated the same slogan to him.⁵³ Similar slogans were seen in Erzurum, which was also under the influence of the Unionists until the spring of 1920: “Erzurum belongs to Erzurum’s people”. This propaganda was made by the Unionists, says Kazım (Karabekir) Pasha.⁵⁴

The Unionists tried to manipulate the local units to go the center, which at that time was accepted as İstanbul. However, later this center was shifted to Ankara. Even though most of the people in Ankara can be said to have been Unionist, here a Kemalist

⁵³ “*Trabzonlu gençlerimiz varken, Ankara’nın buraya müdür göndermesine gerek yoktur.*” Kahya Yahya’s statement: “*İçimizde hafıye istemiyoruz. İstihbarat Müdürü ne demekmiş? Lüzumu yok burada böyle işin. Gizli kapaklı işlerimiz varsa onlar bizim işlerimizdir. Ankara’ya değil ya, istersen Allah’a yaz. Trabzon Trabzonlularındır.*” Özel, pp. 181-182.

⁵⁴ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimizde Enver Paşa ve İttihat ve Terakki Erkanı*, p. 206. Goloğlu claims that especially after 1920, the idea of self-government and of decentralization (*adem-i merkezîyetçilik*) in the provinces in Eastern Anatolia was very common. He also asserts that an anti-Unionist reaction appeared in the region. This last point needs to be proved, because the presence of this reaction changes from the city to city, and from time to time, as will be discussed on below. Mahmut Goloğlu, *Erzurum Kongresi* (Ankara: Nüve Matbaası, 1968), pp. 135-137.

group began to differentiate itself from the others, and took control of the power center. The Unionists group, apart from the Kemalist group, which also included some Unionists, wanted to follow Enver Pasha and his leadership. This group was already in opposition, for this reason, would take its place within the Second Group in the GNA.⁵⁵ Moreover, because the Unionists could not be controlled from one center, the Unionists in different local units moved along different political lines.

A final reason is that for the Unionists, the struggle was the solution, and for the struggle they needed the support of the people and local units. Thus they felt compelled to change their discourse more radically than it had been in 1908.

In this framework, as a result, the emergence of the Civil-Local Movements occurred in the conditions in which the state was no longer able to carry out its duties. It was a spontaneous movement organized by the people themselves. However, it was also a movement which the Unionists, who had lost their power in the center, supported to. Naturally, it should be restated that this generalisation partly could change from region to region, where different exceptions were seen. With this kind of explanation can be integrated the studies of Tanör and of İlkin and Tekeli, which emphasize the importance of the Civil-Local Movement, with Zürcher's study, which emphasises the effects of the Unionist on these local movements.

A Significant Example: for the Understanding of the Relation between the Unionists and Civil-Local Movement : Erzurum

The organization and appearance of the local movements in each region were unique. For this reason, instead of making generalizations valid for all regions, it is

⁵⁵ Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Mecliste Muhalefet (İkinci Grup)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), pp. 11-12.

necessary to look at the characteristic of each region. The real reason for the examination of the example of Erzurum is both to test the hypothesis on the relation between the Unionists and the Civil-Local Movement, made above, and to find how it differed from other regions.

First, one of the most important characteristics of eastern Anatolia was that the army was the most active and strongest institution because it had sufficient numbers of soldiers and arms. The main aim of the army was to provide legitimacy for its military operations rather than to obtain economic resources from the people.⁵⁶ For this reason they tried to make it appear that the people had organized the armed struggle. Moreover, the National Movement in eastern Anatolia, which included the Erzurum and the Sivas Congresses, made some constitutional demands on the political power, including the opening of the Ottoman Parliament, which can be identified with the aim of maintaining the legitimacy of the Army. It should be mentioned here that the emphasis on the army's being strong in the east does not mean there was no Civil-Local Movement in the east. The local social unit had its own organisation apart from the army. However, in eastern Anatolia, and particularly in Erzurum, estimating the dimensions of the Unionist influence within the Civil-Local organisation is very difficult.⁵⁷ It is known that Erzurum

⁵⁶ Surely they needed economic aid. In a meeting of the Commanders in November 1919, it was openly stated that they had serious economic problems. Uluğ İğdemir (ed.), *Heyet-i Temsiliye Tutanakları*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Y.,1989), pp. 113-118.

⁵⁷ This problem was also valid for Trabzon. Primarily, there was a lack of information about the local organisation in Trabzon. The Unionists had the control of the National Struggle organisation. It is not exactly known if there was any organisation except that of the Unionists nor what its strength were, or whether there was opposition to the Unionists. However, the Unionist organisation was widespread among the people, and further, the localist attitude was widespread in Trabzon. Ebubekir Hazım Tepeyran, *Belgelerle Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları* (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1982), pp. 94-98, 106-114. In addition, see Sami Sabit Karaman, *İstiklal Mücadelesi ve Enver Paşa* (İzmir: Selülöz matbaası, 1947) Even though it is known that there was an organization in Trabzon like the *İstihlası Vatan Cemiyeti* in Erzurum, who participated in it or what its dimensions in Trabzon are unknown. Özel, pp. 51-53. An important part of notables in Trabzon were under the influence of the Unionists. Although it is known that there were some political disputes among the notables, it is not clear what the real reason of these disputes was. For example, Abonozzade Hüseyin, who was in the Society for the Protection of National Rights of Trabzon and would be one the delegates of Trabzon at the Erzurum Congress (*Trabzon Muhafaza-i Hukuk-u Milliye Cemiyeti*) [his family is stated as unionist. See İzzet Öztoprak, "Trabzon Muhafaza-i Hukuk-u Milliye Cemiyeti" *Birinci Tarih Boyunca Karadeniz Kongresi Bildirileri*, 13-17 Ekim 1986 (Samsun: 19 Mayıs Üniv.

and Trabzon were under Unionist influence. The threat of a probable Armenian invasion in Erzurum and the danger of a probable Greek occupation in Trabzon pushed the local public to participate in the National Struggle organisations. In other words, there was a civil organisation in Erzurum and Trabzon apart from the soldiers. However, for example in the Aegean region, while the soldiers completely depended on civil elements for such things as financial and human power, in the east the relation between the army and Civil-Local Movement was different.⁵⁸ Both in Trabzon and in Erzurum the army theoretically could suppress the Civil-Local Movement,⁵⁹ although this was a very weak probability. First, they were in an activity the aims of which the soldiers shared, so they had common goals. Moreover, the structure of the public organisation was also harmonious with the constitutional demands of the officers in the Army toward the opening of the Ottoman Parliament. On the other hand, it should also be stated that sometimes clashes between the

Yayınları, 1988), p. 339; Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, *Bütünüyle Erzurum Kongresi*, vol. 3 (Ankara: T.C. Ziraat Bankası Yayınları, 1993) p. 186] and Kazazade Hüseyin were the candidates for the election of the Local Government against the candidate put up by the society. Öztoprak, p. 340. Furthermore, the greater part of the members of the Assembly of the Municipality consisted of people whom this opposition group supported, and for the peresidency of Municipality, Kazazade Hüseyin was elected. See Rahmi Çiçek, *Milli Mücadele ve Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Trabzon'da Yerel Yönetim* (Trabzon: Trabzon Valiliği İl Kültür Müdürlüğü Y., 1998), p. 35. Therefore, even though the Unionist influence on the notables in Trabzon seems to have been preponderant, there was also an opponent group in Trabzon and it received the support of the majority. But the political reason of this opposition is uncertain. It is certain, however, that both the Unionist group and the opposition group were localist. Moreover, it should be stated that both Trabzon and Erzurum were under the influence of Bolshevism in that period. This is one of the sources of the tendency of the Unionists or the other groups to establish populist-localist, and civilian government in these cities.

⁵⁸ Şerafettin Turan states that the local organizations and congresses in the Aegean region were not open to soldiers. Evidence of this can be seen in the minutes of the Congress, which include items such as a decision not to allow uniformed and ranked people to enter the hall of Congress. Şerafettin Turan, "Kurtuluş Savaşında Kongreler", *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yıl Semineri* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1975), p. 154. Colonel Şefik Bey, stationed in the Aegean region, also mentions that, in general, the people were furious with soldiers and especially with officers in that period. Sıtkı Aydın, *Güneybatı Anadolu'da Kuvay-ı Milliye Harekatı* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), p. 62. The best known example of this atmosphere was the reaction of the members of the Erzurum Congress to Mustafa Kemal when he entered the hall of the Congress in his uniform. They demanded that Mustafa Kemal changed his uniform and attend the Congress in civil clothes. Goloğlu, p. 162.

⁵⁹ Mustafa Kemal's statement, to Kazım (Karabekir) Pasha in a telegraph dated 6 June.1919, "The Congress of the Eastern Provinces is under your control and effect" shows the effect of the Army on the civil movement. *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), p. 45. But this effect was not a relation which was one dimensional, as will be seen below.

Civil-Local Movement and the Army did occur. In this process, although the army intervened in the Civil-Local Movement, the movement with time began to grow increasingly confident, and could pursue activities which the army was against.⁶⁰

The examples of the Civil-Local Movement clearly can be seen in Erzurum. However, in the beginning it did not appear as an attitude against the military and civil bureaucracy or the centralist-bureaucratic tradition. Actually the clash included very different dimensions; it was quite complicated. One of the most important reasons for this complex situation was the Unionist factor, as stated above. The Unionists' having an important role in this process made uncertain the relations between the Civil-Local Movement and the bureaucracy. Because the Unionists were active in the civil and military cadres of the bureaucracy, it was difficult to determine the limits of the bureaucracy, or where it started and where it finished. In other words, because the Unionists had positions both in the Civil-Local Movement and in military and civil bureaucracy, the definition of the relations between the Civil-Local Movement and military-civil bureaucracy was difficult.

⁶⁰ The decision of the Representative Committee, dated 11 September 1919, regarding the severing of communication between Anatolia and İstanbul, was not carried out in Trabzon for a long time. See Kazım Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 228-235. For the tension between Sivas and Trabzon, see Özel, pp. 87-91. See, for the decision of the Representative Committee, İğdemir (ed.), p. 2. The conflict between the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement, which consisted of the commanders of the Army, and Trabzon first began at the Erzurum Congress. The leader of the young opponent group, Ömer Fevzi Bey, began to publish the newspaper *Selamet* when he returned to Trabzon, and wrote articles contrary to the Sivas Congress, Mustafa Kemal Pasha and Rauf Bey in an attempt to influence public opinion against the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. Mete Tunçay, "Önce 'Bolşevik' Sonra 'Mürteci' Bir yazar Kürt Sorununa Nasıl Bakıyor?" *Toplumsal Tarih* (September, 1996), p. 15. However, even though, except for the young delegates of Trabzon, the others did not show open opposition to Mustafa Kemal at the Erzurum Congress. After the delegates of Trabzon returned to Trabzon, and particularly after the Sivas Congress, the other delegates of Trabzon began to show reaction against Mustafa Kemal. This situation, which would escalate into a serious clash between Trabzon and Ankara later, will be discussed in the next part. Goloğlu, pp. 157-162. This tension and clash continued throughout the era of the National Struggle. Until the opening of the GNA, Mustafa Kemal tried to control the reaction and opposition of Trabzon through Kazım Karabekir, who was the Commander of the 15th Army Corps. After the opening of the GNA, this tension sometimes broke out in armed clashes between soldiers and the local armed forces. This point can be seen in Halil Pasha's exile, and the event of Kahya Yahya. Özel, pp. 150-165. In Erzurum, similar events happened. The clash between Ankara and Erzurum, which culminated in an attempt to establish a public government in Erzurum, will be discussed below.

In Erzurum, before the opening of the Branch of the Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Eastern Provinces, Unionist group had begun to organize. The methods of this Unionist group gives us some cues about Unionist politics. One of them was that they received important support from the army, especially from the officers. Second, they preferred secret organisation instead of open organisation. Third, the organisation was centralist and hierarchical, that is to say, a small group in the organisation made all of the decisions.

An organization in Erzurum was Independence of the Patriot (*İstihlas-ı Vatan*). Süleyman Necati Bey,⁶¹ who participated in the organisation from the beginning, after WWI, went to İstanbul from Konya with orders from Filibeli Hilmi,⁶² a member of the General Center of the Union and Progress. Later, he went to Erzurum on orders from the General Center of the Union and Progress, and started to initiate organization activities.⁶³ Moreover, one of the duties of Süleyman Necati was to issue a newspaper. The prominent newspaper *Albayrak* thus came to be issued on the decision of the General Center of the Union and Progress.⁶⁴

This secret organization had among its members Nalbanzade İsmail Hakkı; Küçük Kazım; who had been in the clashes with the Armenians in World War I and enjoyed great prestige among the people in Erzurum; Halid Bey, who was the commander of a

⁶¹ He joined the GNA as deputy from Erzurum. He was one of the prominent people of the Second Group.

⁶² He was the Ardahan deputy in the GNA. He was hung after being tried in Ankara in 1926. Zürcher, *Milli Mücadele'de İttihatçılık*, p. 186.

⁶³ Ali Birinci states, in the preface of the Memoirs of Süleyman Necati, that he was sent to create an organisation in Erzurum. Süleyman Necati Güneri, *Hatıra Defteri*, prepared by Ali Birinci (İstanbul: Erzurum Kitaplığı, 1999), p. 14. Süleyman Necati also states this. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁶⁴ Not only *Albayrak*, but also the newspapers *İstikbal* in Trabzon and *Sada-yı Millet* in Batum went into publication with the same decision. Filibeli Hilmi and Ebulhindili Cafer, who was originally from Erzurum, travelled to Trabzon and Erzurum and participated in the activities of organisation and the issuing of newspapers. *Ibid.*, p.17. Moreover, see Ertürk, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası* (İstanbul: Sebil Yayınları, 1996), pp. 197-198.

division in the 15th Army Corps; and Rüştü Bey, who was also a commander of a division in the 15th Army Corps.⁶⁵

In a meeting in which Halit Bey, Rüştü Bey, Küçük Kazım, Nalbanzade İsmail Hakkı and Süleyman Necati participated, they made the decisions about what to do if it was necessary to establish a temporary government; the determination of the commanders to declare mobilisation; the election of head officials of the districts by the public; and holding a meeting with Kazım Karabekir. According to the last decision, they would give information to Karabekir, who was appointed as the Commander of the 15th Army Corps, about the secret organisation, and if he agreed to participate in the organization, they would give permission for him to stay in Erzurum. Otherwise, he would be sent back to İstanbul by them.⁶⁶ In this secret organisation, Halid Bey was one of the most interesting persons and had surprising relations. He met with Mustafa Kemal in Erzurum and took some orders from him. It is also known that Mustafa Kemal gave some orders to Ebulhindili Cafer, who had close relations with Halid Bey.⁶⁷

Here, what is important is to explain the relation between this secret Unionist organisation and the Society of the Defense of Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk*). Although Süleyman Necati was within the organisation of the Defense of Rights, it can be said that

⁶⁵ Güneri, p. 30. For more on this organisation and Filibeli Hilmi, Halit Bey and Ebulhindili Cafer, see Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Tekin Yayıncılık, 1986) pp. 1183-1186. Three of them, in the secret organisation, also took part in the Committee which was constituted in the Ardahan Congress which was met between 3 and 4 January 1919. Halit Bey played an important role in the meeting of the Ardahan Congress and also served as the president of the Congress. Filibeli Hilmi and Ebulhindili Cafer took part in the Committee, which consisted of 8 persons. Ahmet Ender Gökdemir, *Cenub-i Garbi Kafkas Hükümeti* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Geliştirme Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1989), p. 79.

⁶⁶ Güneri, p. 34

⁶⁷ According to the confession of Halit Bey in 1926 to Kazım Karabekir, M. Kemal had told Halit Bey not to trust Kazım Karabekir, and collaborated with himself. Moreover, M. Kemal gave Halit Bey a private cipher so that they could correspond with each other and said that he would inform Halit Bey about the works which he would assign. Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 82, 358. This confession actually explains the close relation between M. Kemal and Halid Bey, which is seen later. M. Kemal ordered, through Halid Bey, Ebulhindili Cafer to remove Ali Galip Bey, who was the governor of Elaziz. However, Kazım Karabekir learned of this plan and ordered Ebulhindili Cafer and his companies to return without the realization of their plan. *Ibid.*, p. 83 and 411. See also, Güneri, pp. 73-76.

the organisation of the Defense of Rights acted independently from the Unionist organisation. Cevat Dursunođlu, in his memoirs, says that even though they, meaning members of the Society of Defense of Rights, had things in common with Süleyman Necati and *Albayrak* in thought or in perspective, they did not have close relations with each other in practice. Dursunođlu, even uses the word “us”, and so separates himself and his friends from the Unionist group.⁶⁸ Moreover, he complains that they did not communicate with the people from the Army.⁶⁹ This is a very important difference between them and the Unionists because some of the Unionist groups, namely some in the organization of *İstihlasi Vatan*, were already soldiers.

On the other side, Süleyman Necati says that in the beginning they had thought that it would be better to stay out of the Society of the Defence of Rights, but later they sent some people to the Society to continue to control it. Two of these people draw attention: Raif Efendi and Hüseyin Avni Ulaş Bey.⁷⁰

The effect of the Unionist Group on the Society of Defense of Rights quickly increased after Küçük Kazım’s return to Erzurum from Trabzon. This person, who was loved and respected in Erzurum, brought together all off the educated people in Erzurum and brought liveliness to the Society. After the new election in the Society, three people from the Unionist group entered the Central Committee (*Heyet-i merkeziye*) of the Society of the Defense of Rights: Süleyman Necati (member), Küçük Kazım (member),

⁶⁸ Dursunođlu, p. 37.

⁶⁹ Dursunođlu states that, after the establishment of the Society for the Defence of the National Rights of the Eastern Provinces (*Vilayat-ı Şarki Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*), they prepared a list of obligations. Article 4 includes the phrase “to do everything to have the army join in the activity (of the society)”. Dursunođlu, p. 51. It implies that the society was based on civilians.

⁷⁰ Güneri, p. 33. Even Süleyman Necati complained that they had sent Raif Efendi to lead the Society, but that he had had forgotten his duty. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

and Raif Efendi (president).⁷¹ After the election, the newspaper *Albayrak* was used as the propaganda organ of the society.⁷² Around this time the Society began to attract the interest of the people. The local government, trade associations, members of various societies, headmen (*muhtars*), and tradesmen held meetings and discussions about the organisation of the Defense of Rights, and committees were established in every district of the province.⁷³ These developments mean that the Civil-Local Movement began to grow at the grass roots level, but also that the Unionists had a determining position within the Civil-Local Movement and supported this movement.

At this point, it would be wrong to think that the political position of the Unionists in Erzurum stayed the same. To what extent did the people who had begun to organize on the orders of the General Center of the Union and Progress continue to be loyal their center or leaders, for example, to Enver Pasha? As stated above, the Unionists moved into a more leftist position and began to defend a populist and localist line, and this had some internal and external reasons. As an example, the offer of the organisation of *İstihlas-ı Vatan* regarding the election of the head official of the districts by the public can be given.⁷⁴ The change of the political position of the Unionists also reduced their loyalty to their leader. Surely this change would lead to results in favour of the Civil-Local Movement.

The newspaper *Albayrak*, which had begun to be issued on the decision of the Unionist in the Center, or the relation of the people at *Alabayrak* broke relations with

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 41-44. For Küçük Kazım' organizing ability and influence on the Erzurum people, and the new election of the Central Committee, see Dursunoğlu, pp. 37-39.

⁷² It should be stated here that Dursunoğlu asserts that after the selection, they negotiated with Küçük Kazım and Süleyman Necati, and they decided to end the organisation of *İstihlas-ı Vatan* (Rescue of Motherland).. They worked together under the Society of the Defense of Rights. Ibid., pp.57-60.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 39-40.

⁷⁴ Güneri, p. 34.

Enver and his companies after the spring of 1920. The main reason for this break was that *Albayrak* had become Bolshevik.

Four names were important at the newspaper *Albayrak*: Süleyman Necati, who had already established the newspaper in Erzurum; his elder brother, Mithat Bey; Cevad (Dursunuoğlu) Bey, who had had a place in the Society of the Defense of Rights from the beginning; and his elder brother, Sitki Bey.⁷⁵ Cevad Bey among them had more active relations with the communists. He first participated in the Congress of the Eastern Publics⁷⁶, and later made contact with the the Turkish Communist Party. He even attended the First Congress of the Party and was elected as a member for the Committee of Presidency.⁷⁷ Relations between Mustafa Suphi and Enver Pasha began to break down. The clashes between two groups also affected the people at *Albayrak*. They criticized the coming of Küçük Talat Bey and Nail Bey, who were Enver's close friends, to Erzurum, they even wrote anti-Unionist and anti-Enver articles in the newspaper. Because of this opposition to the Unionists, Küçük Talat Bey and Nail Bey were forced to leave Erzurum.⁷⁸

During the 1919 elections for the last Ottoman Parliament, the opposition between the members of *Albayrak*, with the Society for the Defense of Rights, against the Unionists became clear. *Albayrak* started a campaign against the candidates outside the Society, especially the Unionists. In articles the newspaper claimed that the Unionists had put the country in a miserable condition, that they had a money- oriented perspective, and

⁷⁵ Tunçay, *Türkiye 'de Sol Akımlar-1 (1908-1925)*, p. 140

⁷⁶ Many people participated in the Congress from Erzurum. See Haluk Selvi, *Milli Mücadele'de Erzurum(1918-1922)* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2000), p. 299.

⁷⁷ Tunçay, *Eski Sol Üstüne Yeni Bilgiler*, p. 62. See also Selvi, pp. 300-301.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

asked where they had been when Damat Ferit Paşa was planning to give eastern Anatolia to the Armenians?⁷⁹

In addition to this, articles appeared against the army and the bureaucracy. For example, they defended the withdrawal of soldiers from the public administration, and supported the idea that in order to govern the district, the General Committee of the Province (*Vilayet Meclis-i Umumisi*) should be convened.⁸⁰ Also Mithat Bey defended the idea that all public civil servant positions should be given to Erzurum people.⁸¹

Later on, a proposal about local governments taken by Hüseyin Avni Bey and Süleyman Necati Bey in the First Assembly containing decentralist-localist, and populist (*halkçı*) ideas about local government, was reported in *Albayrak* in December 1920:

The existence of the our nation will be represented by the General Assembly which is elected by the general votes; our province will be autonomously governed through by the councils of the people; the fundamental subjects like war and peace, the protection of the borders, the general taxes, justice, moreover the general matters like education, health services, economy, agriculture, public works will be within the authorities of the councils of the province.⁸²

Even though it is debated whether *Albayrak* had communist and Bolshevik content or not, it can be said that the paper supported “democratization in the administration” and

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 227.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 319-320.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 337

⁸² “Mevcudiyet-i milliyetimizi ara-yı umumiye ile müntehib meclis-i umumimiz temsil edecek, vilayetimiz muhtariyet-i tamme ile halk şuraları marifetiyle idare olunacak, harp ve sulh, muhafaza-i hudud, tekalif-i umumiye, tevzi-i adalet esasat-ı umumiyesinden başka bilcümle maarif, nafi-a, sıhhiye, iktisadiyat, ziraat, muavemet-i içtimaiye mesail-i umumiyesi tam bir adem-i merkeziyet ile vilayet şuralarının selahiyeti dahilinde bulunacaktır” Ibid., p. 320

followed a decentralist and populist line.⁸³

As a result, it is necessary to investigate the role of the Unionists and the participation problem in the National Struggle in order to understand the basic characteristics of the local congresses and organisations. It is hard to give a general answer to both problems. Because of the dissolution of the central government it is possible to see many different and genuine examples. In this chapter, and actually in the whole thesis, the pre-1918 mentality of the Unionists was generalised and this mentality accepted as very different from that of the local organizations. It is even accepted that they were on the side of opposition. No doubt that this generalisation has some lack within itself.

On the other hand, in the National Struggle period the Unionists made a change which was close to the idea of local organisations and this helped them to create close contacts with the local people. However, as is clearly seen in the Erzurum case, the position of the Unionists within the local movements did not continue the same. Some of them left their Unionist identities and participated in the local movements. The local movement in Erzurum, despite of all the resemblances between their and Unionists discourses, put a distance between themselves and the Unionists. The local organization in Erzurum did not appreciate any external intervention. This perspective led them to reshape the state's local institutions, too. The posts of governor, education director and many of public administration were planned to be filled by locals. Ankara prevented some attempts about this issue, but Erzurum had the trust of the localist-populist section in the First Assembly and hoped that their work in the Assembly would lead some legal changes about this issue. During the developing process, however, Erzurum lost the power it had enjoyed in 1919-1920; more accurately, it couldn't resist the power of the newly emerged

⁸³ Tunçay, *Türkiye 'de Sol Akımlar-1 (1908-1925)*, pp. 98,141.

central government. In the 1923 election, Erzurum couldn't manage to elect representatives who would support their local perspective.⁸⁴

In the next chapter, how the new centre emerged during the National Struggle and its disputable relations with the local organizations will be discussed.

⁸⁴ The developments of the movement in Erzurum will be dwelled on in the next chapter

CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW POLITICAL CENTER IN ANATOLIA AND ITS CONFLICT WITH THE LOCAL-CIVILIAN MOVEMENTS

The story of the the emergence of a new political center in Anatolia is the story of the Mustafa Kemal-led National (or Political) Movement. In the introduction part, the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement was defined, so here it will not be repeated.

The Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement asserted itself with the Amasya Declaration. Actually, even before that, Mustafa Kemal had underlined the necessity of a building up of a widespread organization throughout the country.⁸⁵ In a telegram sent to Kazım Karabekir on 19 June 1919, he expressed the desire to extend the organization of the Defence of National Rights (*Müdafa-i Hukuku Milliye Teşkilatı*) as far as the districts (*nahiyeler*), to unite the whole nation, and to show this united body to the whole world. He also wrote of the necessity for the Defence of National Rights societies in Edirne and İstanbul to work together to achieve this objective.⁸⁶ A week earlier, in a telegram sent to Bekir Sami Bey on 13 June, 1919, Mustafa Kemal had announced that in seeking to unite

⁸⁵ See the telegraph of Mustafa Kemal to Colonel Bekir Sami Bey, Commander of 17th Army Corps, dated 9 June, 1919. *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri*, p. 29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36-37.

all the societies under one roof, he and his friends planned to convene a congress in Sivas.⁸⁷ It obviously was natural for a high ranking military officer to act as such, for Mustafa Kemal was anxious about the situation the country faced. Just like many other commanders in the army, Mustafa Kemal viewed the Defence of National Rights societies as necessary for the future and the well-being of the state and the country.

In other words, Mustafa Kemal aimed at uniting the independent organizations established among the population under one roof. Still, it should be remembered that Mustafa Kemal was a high ranking commander in the traditional centre of power. With the Amasya Declaration, his relations with the “traditional centre of power” would deteriorate and he would persevere in his endeavours to unify the National Movement as one of the leaders of the National Struggle Movement. However, even after his resignation from the military, the commanders of the army corps did not withdraw their support of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. The Erzurum Congress, convened as an initiative of the east Anatolian people, would also play an important role in giving the movement a certain civilian status, and integrating the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement with its popular base.⁸⁸ Mustafa Kemal managed to become the President of the Representative Committee, which was elected by the General Committee of the Erzurum Congress,⁸⁹ where from the Committee he would proceed to Sivas to unite the Defence of National Rights societies.

⁸⁷ Bekir Sami Günsav, *Miralay Bekir Sami Günsav'ın Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları*, prepared by Muhittin Önal (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1994), p. 129. It is the earliest document regarding the prospective convention of the Sivas Congress.

⁸⁸ Bülent Tanör states that the central leadership, formed in Amasya as a military committee, acquired a civilian base with the Erzurum Congress. Tanör, p. 224.

⁸⁹ The issue of how voluntarily the presidency was given to Mustafa Kemal by the members of the congress is a matter of debate. It is understood that the local members had discussed who the president would be, prior to the convention of the Congress, from July 8 to 22, and in the end they had to elect Mustafa Kemal. Güneri, pp. 64-65.

There were several reasons why Mustafa Kemal wanted to proceed to Sivas. First, he wanted to convene the Sivas Congress himself, as planned earlier.⁹⁰ Second, having recently resigned from the military, Mustafa Kemal might not have wanted to remain in Erzurum, which was under the command of Kazım Karabekir, the highest ranking official of the eastern Anatolian region. Third, it would have been difficult for Mustafa Kemal to maintain his degree of influence in the National Struggle Movement in a city like Erzurum, where the civilian organizations were very strong. Yet another reason might have been that Mustafa Kemal took Sivas as a geo-politically more appropriate centre from which to intervene into the other parts of the country and to actualize the organization.

Sivas would be the “new political centre” from then, until late December, 1919. In this thesis, it is argued that the relations between this new political centre,⁹¹ and the societies organized and the congresses convened elsewhere in the country were full of tension and conflict. The centralising power of the new political centre in Anatolia would develop in two directions: the first was toward taking the Defence of Rights and similar organizations under control; the second was toward adjoining the civilian and military bureaucracy to the new political centre via interventions.

⁹⁰ During the Erzurum Congress, Mustafa Kemal mentioned the convention of a congress in Sivas. The attitude of the general assembly (*genel kurul*) towards such an event was discussed. With a decision taken at the Erzurum Congress, the right to elect a delegation to be sent to the Sivas Congress was given to the Representative Committee. This deputation would announce and defend the decisions of the Erzurum Congress in Sivas. Kırzioğlu, *Bütünüyle Erzurum Kongresi*, vol. 2, (Ankara: T.C. Ziraat Bankası Yayınları, 1993) pp. 227-230. It should be mentioned that the Representative Committee was endowed with limited power. It did not, for example, have the power to dissolve the Society for the Defence of the National Rights of the Eastern Anatolia (*Şarki Anadolu Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*), which represented the eastern provinces, and unite them under the roof of a higher level organization. Dursunoğlu, pp. 166-167.

⁹¹ Tekeli and İlkin also take what is called the “Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement” in this thesis as a separate centre of political power, and elaborate its relations with its periphery and the old centre. They use the model of center-periphery. In one article, they examine the relations between the new political center and its periphery, or new political center and old political center. See İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, “Bölgesel Kurtuluş Savaşından Ulusal Kurtuluş Savaşına” in *Atatürk'ün Düşünce ve Uygulamalarının Evrensel Boyutları, 2-6 Kasım 981 Uluslararası Sempozyum* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1983).

The Representative Committee intervened into the civilian and military bureaucracy, in its attempt to bring them to them under its control. For example, among other things, the Representative Committee gave decisions for the arrest of a *mutasarrıf* or a governor, the reinstatement of a governor; or the return a pasha appointed as commander of an Army Corps to Istanbul. The Committee also granted the permission to receive office for a governor who would be beneficial to the National Struggle the arrest of the Commander of the Gendarmerie the appointment of the head of the financial department (*defterdar*) as the sub-governor, and the re-appointment of a *mutasarrıf* that was dismissed by the Istanbul government.⁹²

The new political centre in Sivas, that is, the Representative Committee, the president of which was Mustafa Kemal, increased its pressure over the local societies in time, and started pronouncing certain demands. Mustafa Kemal frequently demanded from the representative committees of the societies in the provinces that the decisions made or that would be made by the Representative Committee had to be announced even to the smallest executive boards depending on their degrees of relation and importance.⁹³ Such intervention was intensified after the fall of the Damat Ferid Pasha government on 30 September 1919. It was demanded the provincial centres provide information to Sivas regarding the existing situation, changes in any subordinate organizations, the locations of their central committees and executive boards, and who made up their leadership.⁹⁴

Proceeding to Sivas, Mustafa Kemal had the idea of setting up a center and an organization under his own initiative. Hence, he was persistent in convening the Sivas

⁹² Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, ed., *Heyet-i Temsiliye Kararları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989), pp. 3-6. The Representative Committee had made many decisions in a similar context. See *ibid.*, pp. 9, 10, 11, 13, 31, 39, and 48.

⁹³ See telegram dated 16 September 1919, in *Atatürk'ün Tamim Telgraf ve Beyannameleri*, p. 72.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125. Indeed, the Representative Committee demanded payments from the Central Committees as fees. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

Congress. Actually, the date for the Sivas Congress had been decided in advance and had already been stated in the Amasya Declaration, in Article 2 of which stated that there would be a Congress in Erzurum on July 10, 1919; until then the delegates would proceed to the Sivas Congress, where they would be joined by the delegates of the Erzurum Congress.⁹⁵ But when Mustafa Kemal arrived in Sivas, he was forced to postpone the opening of the Congress due to the absence of delegates. A day later, he decided to attend the Erzurum Congress.⁹⁶

This means that although Mustafa Kemal had had prior information regarding the convention of the Erzurum Congress⁹⁷, he had decided to convene another congress in Sivas on the same date. What Mustafa Kemal's attempt to convene another congress involving cities which had already chosen delegations and had already begun dispatching them to the Erzurum Congress might indicate is that he preferred a congress in Sivas

⁹⁵ See Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1970), p. 916. This issue was mentioned in the opening speech of Mustafa Kemal at the Sivas Congress as well. Uluğ İğdemir, ed., *Sivas Kongresi Tutanakları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), pp. 109-110. Yet, in a telegram sent to the Command of the 17th Army Corps at Kula on June 13, 1919, nine days prior to the Amasya Declaration, it was declared that a congress would be convened in Sivas and that all of the societies in Thrace and Anatolia would be united under the title of the "Society for the Defence of the National Rights and the Rejection of Annexation of Anatolia and Rumelia" (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Milliye ve Redd-i İlhak Cemiyeti*). Hence, it is clear that the convention of the Sivas Congress was decided upon even prior to the Amasya Declaration. Günsav, p. 129. Furthermore, Mustafa Kemal expressed his intention to unite all the societies under one roof in a telegram sent to Kazım Karabekir on June 17, 1919. Kazım Karabekir commented on this action of Mustafa Kemal's, saying "I understood that something else was happening there." Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 48-49.

Ali Fuat [Cebesoy] mentions this conflict between Mustafa Kemal and Kazım Karabekir, yet he does not explain why Kazım Karabekir had invited Mustafa Kemal and Rauf Bey to the congress to be convened in Erzurum, and why they both accepted, though it was stated in the Amasya Declaration that the delegates who would participate in the Erzurum Congress were expected to proceed to Sivas to join the Congress to be held there, on more or less the same dates. Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Milli Mücadele Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Vatan Yayınları, 1953), pp. 72-73.

In the above-mentioned telegram, it is clear that Mustafa Kemal preferred the name "Society for the Defence of the National Rights and the Rejection of Annexation of Anatolia and Rumelia" (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Milliye ve Redd-i İlhak Cemiyeti*). It seems possible that this was the influence of the Erzurum Congress, which made him use the name "Society for the Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia" (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) instead. Later on, the names of the organizations would have an important role as "Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement" vied to obtain control of the National Movement and become a power centre.

⁹⁶ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Sivas Kongresi* (Ankara: Başnur Matbaası, 1969), pp. 7-13.

⁹⁷ The societies in Trabzon and Erzurum came to an understanding on May 30, 1919. See telegrams dated May 30, 1919, in Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 39-41.

under his own control to a congress in Erzurum, organized by the civil-localian movement, and under the possible control of Kazım Karabekir.⁹⁸

Mustafa Kemal declared the convention of a congress in Sivas following a military-hierarchical logic: without asking for the advice or the consent of the local societies, and disregarding the already announced convention of the Erzurum Congress. Goloğlu notes the same thing, writing that contrary to the Erzurum Congress, which had been convened following the decision of the people, the Sivas Congress adopted a top-down approach. It was entirely personal, and hence did not attract the attention of the people. No delegates were elected or sent to Sivas.⁹⁹ Likewise, Tanör states that the convening of the Sivas Congress, the result of a top-down process, was the product of a bureaucratic-military initiative, and hence the number of delegates was very limited and the Congress did not have much representative power.¹⁰⁰ This incident became the first indicator of the tension between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and the other societies for National Struggle.

Although the Sivas Congress claimed to represent the whole country, only thirty delegates attended.¹⁰¹ It is also known that most of these delegates were chosen neither as the representatives of the local societies nor of the congresses.¹⁰² Consistent with a centralist manner of conducting politics, the delegates had been appointed. With the

⁹⁸ It should also be remembered that Refet Bey, appointed as Commander of the Third Army Corps at Sivas, had been with Mustafa Kemal as they had proceeded to Anatolia. Fahri Belen, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1983), pp. 66-67.

⁹⁹ Goloğlu, *Sivas Kongresi*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁰ Tanör, *Türkiye 'de Kongre İktidarları*, pp. 228-229. For a similar comment, see Belen, p. 119.

¹⁰¹ It must have been understood by Mustafa Kemal that the convention of a congress in Sivas was a failure; hence, he, after the Sivas Congress, brought up the convention of a "General Anatolian Congress". For "General Anatolian Congress", see Şerafettin Turan, ed., *Balıkesir ve Alaşehir Kongreleri ve Hacim Muhittin Çarıkılı'nın Kuva-yı Milliye Hatıraları (1919-1921)* (Ankara: Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1967), pp. 61-64.

¹⁰² Goloğlu, *Sivas Kongresi*, pp. 66-67.

horization of the Representative Committee of the Society for the Defence of Rights of Eastern Anatolia (*Şarki Anadolu Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*), which was the only authoritative committee in the east, Mustafa Kemal had elected a delegation of five to represent the eastern provinces at the Sivas Congress; he had assured this with a document, and sealed it. As mentioned before, this representative power was restricted in nature. In a contradictory fashion, Mustafa Kemal said that the authorization of members of the Erzurum Congress was restricted to the eastern provinces and that their authorization was not adequate for a general congress, like the Sivas Congress. Yet he elected the delegation for the Sivas Congress and he himself proceeded to Sivas, with the authorization of these members. Furthermore, he found in himself, and in the delegation elected for the Sivas Congress by the Representative Committee, the right to make the decision to abolish the Society for the Defence of Rights of the Eastern Anatolia.¹⁰³

This very point would become the centre of grave problems between Sivas and the local organizations. First of all, before the convention of the Sivas Congress, İzzet and Servet Beys, the delegates from Trabzon for the Representative Committee the Erzurum Congress, had declined Mustafa Kemal's offer to join the Representative Committee to be set up in Sivas. Moreover, it had been declared that Trabzon would not send any delegates to the Sivas Congress.¹⁰⁴ In the same period, the governor of Trabzon had declared that the people of Trabzon were not interested in the "Mustafa Kemal organization."¹⁰⁵ The tension and conflict between Mustafa Kemal and Trabzon had indeed surfaced earlier in the days of the Erzurum Congress.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 20.; Atatürk, vol. I, p. 83.

¹⁰⁴ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, p. 139. In fact, Servet Bey, a member of the Representative Committee from Trabzon, had accepted during the Erzurum Congress that a delegation be sent to Sivas to announce the decisions of Erzurum. However, later he seems to have acquiesced to the opinion of the other delegates from Trabzon. Kırzioğlu, vol. 2, p. 227.

¹⁰⁵ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, p. 140. This explanation shows that there was a Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement.

During the Erzurum Congress, the members of the Trabzon delegation, especially the younger ones, reacted against Mustafa Kemal's role as president over the Congress. İbrahim Hamdi Bey, the Trabzon delegate from Giresun and a member of this opposition group, stated that he and his friends had desired that it be a neutral congress, risen from the heart of the nation and based on the civilian principles, but when they arrived in Erzurum, they learnt that the decision to elect Mustafa Kemal Pasha as the President of the Congress had already been made. He went on to describe how the delegates had been contacted via private conversations; and that they had criticised Mustafa Kemal for appearing in his imperial aide-de-camp uniform at a national and civilian congress although he had resigned from the military. Thus opposition to him had come into being.¹⁰⁶

Another member of this opposition group, Dr. Ali Naci [Duyduk], also said that he and his friends had not wanted Mustafa Kemal to head the popular movement, and had argued that political decisions be made in public bodies like the Congress, or the Chamber. They also opposed governors and *kaymakam* (the head of county) becoming presidents of the Defence of Rights and similar organizations in the provinces and the counties.¹⁰⁷ This very point raised the tension of the discussions in the Congress. Along with the Trabzon delegates, the most active members of the Erzurum delegation opposed this arrangement, for it was contradictory to the essence of the organization: it was an organization of the people, and such arrangements would wrench it from its popular base and leave it in the hands of the state.

According to a proposal by Mustafa Kemal and his circle, in the provinces, the governors would act as the presidents of the Defence of Rights Societies; the heads of the

¹⁰⁶ Goloğlu, *Erzurum Kongresi*, pp. 162-163.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-159.

conscription offices (*ahzi asker daire reisleri*) would be their vice-presidents; in the counties, the *kaymakams* would be the presidents of the societies; and the heads of the branches of the conscription office (*askerlik şube reisi*) would be the vice-presidents of the societies.¹⁰⁸ It should be stated that one-third of the congress members were military and civilian officers, the rest were local notables and groups closely involved with them. The problem regarding the presidency of the organizations in the provinces and counties is an indicator of the conflict between the officers and the notables.¹⁰⁹

The opposition group led by Ömer Fevzi Bey presented a program to the Congress. In articles 12, 13 and 14 of this program, citing centralism as the reason for the backwardness of the eastern regions, the group suggested putting decentralisation (*adem-i merkeziyetçilik*) into effect, to render the municipalities independent, and to leave the pious foundations to the Islamic communities.¹¹⁰

The opposition of the Trabzon delegation which had started during the Erzurum Congress reached its peak as the decision to unite the Defence of National Rights societies under one roof was taken at the Sivas Congress, which actually had very limited

¹⁰⁸ Dursunoğlu, pp. 113-114.

¹⁰⁹ Tekeli and İlkin, "Bölgesel Kurtuluş Savaşından Ulusal Kurtuluş Savaşına", pp. 288-289. For the social backgrounds of the delegates, see also Sabahattin Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: İstanbul Matbaası, 1965), p. 244.

¹¹⁰ Goloğlu, *Erzurum Kongresi*, p. 93. Goloğlu states that this group was in favour of decentralization and opposed the Committee for Union and Progress. Ibid., p. 137. As Ömer Fevzi Bey was in favour of organizing a militia rather than an army, Mustafa Kemal later called him the "Bolshevik of the Erzurum Congress." Mete Tunçay, "Erzurum Kongresi'nin Bolşeviği'nden Gazi'ye Açık Mektup", *Toplumsal Tarih* (August, 1996), p. 11. Ömer Fevzi Bey, a member of the Eyüboğlu family, one of the most powerful families in Trabzon, was also the son-in-law of Abonozzade Hüseyin Bey, who opposed the dominant group in the Society for the Protection of National Rights of Trabzon (*Trabzon Muhafaza-i Hukuk-u Milliye Cemiyeti*) and managed to gain a majority in the Municipal Council. Kadir Mısırlıoğlu, *Ali Şükrü Bey-Trabzon Meh'usu Şehid-i Muazzez Ali Şükrü Bey* (İstanbul: Sebil Yayınevi, 1996), p. 160. Both Ömer Fevzi Bey and Abonozzade Hüseyin Bey abstained from signing the Congress Declaration prepared by the Erzurum Congress. Ali Akbulut, "Erzurum Kongresi'nin Son Günü", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Dergisi* (May, 1989), pp. 49-50.

power to represent the country.¹¹¹ Servet and İzzet Beys argued that the Sivas Congress did not have the right to change, or to nullify the decisions made at the Erzurum Congress, nor to elect additional members to the Representative Committee already set there.¹¹² In the same stance, in a telegram sent to Mustafa Kemal on September 20 in the name of the Trabzon Center of the Committee of the Defense of Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk Heyet-i Trabzon Merkezi*), it was declared that no decisions, except from those made at the Erzurum Congress, were accepted.¹¹³

Mustafa Kemal's anger towards Servet and İzzet Beys was not much diminished, even by November 1919. In an order he gave to Halit Bey, Commander of 15th Army Corps, he suggested preventing their election to the Chamber of Deputies. Halit Bey responded that he would work to get Mustafa Kemal's candidates elected and that he was hopeful that he would succeed.¹¹⁴

Kazım Karabekir tried to alleviate this escalation of tension between Mustafa Kemal and Trabzon. He announced to Trabzon that he accepted that the Representative Committee elected by the Society for the Defence of Rights of Eastern Anatolia could not be abolished by the Sivas Congress, and that the Representative Committee of the Erzurum Congress would continue its particular existence.¹¹⁵ Yet in a telegram sent to Kazım Karabekir on September 15, 1919, Mustafa Kemal stated that as two separate committees like the Representative Committee of Society for the Defence of Rights of

¹¹¹ See the telegraph dated September 11, 1919, *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri*, pp. 67-68. Also, for the decision of the Sivas Congress with respect to the unification of all national organizations, see Uluğ İğdemir, ed, *Sivas Kongresi Tutanakları*, p. 115.

¹¹² See the telegraph dated September 16, 1919 in Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 240-241. A similar telegraph was sent to Mustafa Kemal Pasha on the same date. Selvi, p. 186.

¹¹³ Atatürk, vol. 3, p. 997.

¹¹⁴ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, p. 374. It could be said that Mustafa Kemal gave such an order to Halit Bey, and that it was Hüseyin Bey that he wanted to get elected as the deputy from Maçka. Baykal, p. 31.

¹¹⁵ See the telegram dated September 14, 1919, in Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 229-231.

Eastern Anatolia and the Representative Committee of Society for the Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) could not exist, the former, as it had been joined in the latter, had been abolished.¹¹⁶

The resulting fury of Trabzon and Erzurum and Kazım Karabekir's allusions in his telegrams that Erzurum and Trabzon were right in being furious at Sivas, made Mustafa Kemal take a step back. In a telegram sent to Kazım Karabekir on September 20, 1919, Mustafa Kemal stated that the abolition of the Representative Committee of the Society for the Defence of Rights of Eastern Anatolia was out of the question. He added quite ambiguously, that there were not two separate representative committees, and that the Representative Committee elected by the Sivas Congress was not different from the Representative Committee elected by the Erzurum Congress.¹¹⁷

On the other hand, the members of the Defence of National Rights societies in Erzurum were not very comfortable with the decisions taken at the Sivas Congress. The members of the Society for the Defence of Rights in Erzurum repeatedly told Kazım Karabekir that they were against Mustafa Kemal's nullification of the declarations and decisions of the Erzurum Congress by the Sivas Congress, and his transformation of the Representative Committee of the Society for Defence of Rights of Eastern Anatolia into the Representative Committee of the Society for Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia.¹¹⁸ In a decision taken by the Central Committee of the Defence of National Rights Society of Erzurum, the delegation chosen by the Representative Committee would only announce and defend the decisions taken at the Erzurum Congress. And if a

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 239.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 259.

¹¹⁸ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 234, 256, 273-274.

regulatory change were to be made, an Eastern Anatolian Congress would have to be convened once again.¹¹⁹

In addition to this, Raif Efendi of Erzurum, a member of the Representative Committee who had travelled to Sivas with Mustafa Kemal, opposed the change made to Article 3 of the declaration made at the Erzurum Congress. Article 3 suggested that a temporary government for the Eastern provinces would be established if the central government were to leave or neglect the region; in the Sivas Congress, the risk was redefined to cover the entire country. Raif Efendi also argued that the Representative Committee elected by the Society for the Defence of Rights of Eastern Anatolia should remain in existence as the discussions for how to elect a new Representative Committee at the Sivas Congress were still being held.¹²⁰

Erzurum's reaction towards Mustafa Kemal's performance can be said to have been quite severe as early as January 1920. The Central Committee of Erzurum, with a decision taken on January 8, 1920, stated that the Representative Committee had deviated from the basic principles of the Erzurum Congress when it had reached Sivas: They did not take the numerous warnings that the eastern regions faced a discrete and special danger into consideration. They did not even make a conciliatory response. They preferred communication via government officials to establishing direct communications with the Central Committee of Erzurum. The Committee further stated that the sincerity among the organs had been ruptured and the course of events was a big example of disloyalty; and that issues such as who the new members of the new Representative

¹¹⁹ Selvi, p. 188. In his memoirs, Süleyman Necati writes that "Mustafa Kemal Pasha started to behave unfaithfully as soon as he had returned from Sivas, he wanted to change the decisions of the Erzurum Congress, and attempted to show these decisions as having been made at the Sivas Congress." Güneri, *Hatıra Defteri*, p. 94.

¹²⁰ Uluğ İğdemir (ed.), *Sivas Kongresi Tutanakları*, pp. 36-38, 40-41.

Committee would be, how they would be elected and from where, had not yet been declared to the Central Committee of Erzurum.¹²¹

Around this time, the Central Committee of Erzurum told Kazım Karabekir that Ebulhindili Cafer and his friends, who claimed to be the *fedais* (bodyguards) of the Representative Committee, oppressed them and Mustafa Kemal Pasha had to be warned regarding this issue.¹²²

In Erzurum, by September 1920, the decentralist and populist sentiments, both in the circles of the newspaper *Albayrak* and among those in the Society for the Defence of Rights, became so intense that an attempt was made to establish a popular government (*halk hükümeti*) in Erzurum. The Civilian-Local Movement in Erzurum, to put the opinion to choose government officials and military commanders from among the local population into effect, came into action against Ankara. This was initiated as the vice president of the Grand National Assembly and deputy from Erzurum Celalettin Arif Bey and deputy from Erzurum Hüseyin Avni Bey, who had been invited to Erzurum, reached Erzurum.¹²³ Celalettin Arif Bey, arguing that Kazım Karabekir's position would be changed by Ankara, managed to win Karabekir to their side. Then, through the agency of

¹²¹ Selvi, pp. 190-191.

¹²² Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, pp. 411-412. It could be said that Mustafa Kemal was in close touch with Ebulhindili Cafer and his circle, which had relations with Halit Bey, the Commander of the 15th Army Corps. It is known that Mustafa Kemal and Halit Bey were communicating, keeping this fact from Kazım Karabekir. In fact, Halit Bey, in a telegram dated August 4, 1919, stated that he was ready to obey Mustafa Kemal's orders, even while the Erzurum Congress was in convention. Cihat Akçakayalıoğlu, "Türk İstiklâl Harbi ve İnkılap (Devrim) Dönemlerinde Atatürk-General Kazım Karabekir İlişkileri", *Uluslararası İkinci Atatürk Sempozyumu, 9-11 Eylül 1991* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1996), pp. 493-494. Later, Kazım Karabekir would discover these telegrams in a file presented to him when he was in Sivas for a meeting of commanders in November, and would tell Mustafa Kemal Pasha, via Rauf Bey, that he did not want secret communication with the officials under his command. Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, pp. 358, 375; Atay, p. 188. It was previously mentioned that Halit Bey, Ebulhindili Cafer, along with Süleyman Necati, were involved in the Society for the Emancipation of the Motherland (*İstihlas-ı Vatan Cemiyeti*). Yet, it seems possible that, in the meantime, the relations between them and Süleyman Necati, who was in the Defence of Rights Society, had deteriorated.

¹²³ Haluk Selvi states that the *Albayrak* circle, realizing that Kazım Karabekir would not help, and might even obstruct the implementation of their ideas, started communicating with Celalettin Arif Bey and Hüseyin Avni Bey. Selvi, p. 324.

Kazım Karabekir, Celalettin Arif Bey demanded from the Ankara government that he himself be appointed as the governor general of the eastern provinces.¹²⁴

Meanwhile, in a telegram sent to Mustafa Kemal, Celalettin Arif Bey stated that the people of Erzurum wanted to elect their own governor, and that their nominee was Nazım Bey, the former governor of Adana, who was from Erzurum by origin. He also reported that the political atmosphere in Erzurum necessitated a governor proxy being elected by the people until the arrival of Nazım Bey.¹²⁵

As Celalettin Arif Bey, backed by Civilian-Local Movement in Erzurum, was waiting for the response of Ankara, he did not restrain himself from complaining to Ankara about Kazım Karabekir in an effort to lower Karabekir's prestige and perhaps even to have him banished from the region. But, as Mustafa Kemal had re-sent the telegrams to Kazım Karabekir, the attitude of the latter would change. The relations between Kazım Karabekir, Celalettin Arif Bey, the *Albayrak* circle, and the members of the Society for the Defence of Rights started to deteriorate.¹²⁶ In the meantime, Celalettin Arif Bey, who had not yet received a response from Ankara, sent a harshly worded telegram to the presidency of the Grand National Assembly, stating that the people of Erzurum had chosen Hüseyin Avni Bey as the sub-governor and all but demanded his appointment.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 827-828.

¹²⁵ Ali Akbulut, "Şark Harekatı öncesi Celaleddin Arif Bey'in Erzurum'a Gelişi ve Erzurum'da bazı Hadiseler", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Dergisi* (May, 1989), pp. 71-72.

¹²⁶ Kazım Karabekir seems to have been in a difficult position. Mustafa Kemal, who had learned that Celalettin Arif Bey, after leaving Ankara, would be involved in some political activities, communicated with Halit Bey, before the latter reached Erzurum, and requested that he upset the relations between Kazım Karabekir and Celalettin Arif Bey. Following Süleyman Necati's allegations, Mustafa Kemal even wanted Halit Bey to assassinate Kazım Karabekir. However, Kazım Karabekir learned of the plot when an official in Halit Bey's headquarters passed the cipher to him. Güneri, pp. 54-55.

¹²⁷ See document 258 in Atatürk, vol. 3, p. 1234.

In the end, a telegram, signed by fifty members of the local movement in Erzurum was sent to Ankara. In the telegram, both Mustafa Kemal and Kazım Karabekir were strongly criticised: “The future of Erzurum, which has convened congresses on its own to decide upon its fate, and included you into it, could be entrusted neither to Kazım Pasha, nor to your highness. The fate of the country can only be left to the possession of the Grand National Assembly over which you preside, and that is made up of conscientious and knowledgeable people of the country.”¹²⁸

In response, Mustafa Kemal ordered Karabekir to arrest those who had signed the telegram.¹²⁹ Kazım Karabekir, knowing that those who had signed the telegram represented all of Erzurum, acted cautiously, and declared that he would find a solution to the problem.¹³⁰ He demanded that all those who had signed the telegram resign, and told Celalettin Arif Bey that the confidence of Ankara would only then be regained. The Society for Defence of Rights of Erzurum collectively resigned.¹³¹

The Ankara Government and Kazım Karabekir, as a result of such like incidents like these, started taking measures against attempts under “Bolshevik” influence, such as setting up a “popular government”. First, Hamid Bey, whom Mustafa Kemal entrusted, was appointed as the Governor of Erzurum. Next, the Society for the Defence of Rights in Erzurum was reorganized under the name of the “Society for the Defence of Rights

¹²⁸ “Yalnız başına kongreler toplayarak kaderini tespit eden ve sizi de içine alan Erzurum’un mukadderatı ne Kazım Paşa’ya ne de de zatı devletlerine mevdudur. Mukadderat-ı memleket ancak ve ancak riyaset buyurduğunuz yurdun şuurlu, bilgili insanlarından mürekkebe Büyük Millet Meclisi’nin yed-i emanetine verilmiştir.” Selvi, p. 334. For a similar text, see Güneri, *Hatıra Defteri*, p. 56.

¹²⁹ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 832-834.

¹³⁰ Güneri, p. 56.

¹³¹ Selvi, pp. 339-340.

and the Protection of Sanctity (*Muhafaza-i Mukaddesat ve Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*).¹³²

Hence, the opposition in Erzurum came under the control of Ankara.

In western Anatolia, the relations between the societies formed and congresses convened and the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement were different than those in eastern Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal's ability, using first his position in the military and then his personal influence in order to intervene in the societies of western Anatolia, was very limited compared to the East. His first intervention into the organizations of the National Movement in western Anatolia was with a telegram he sent on July 13, 1919 while he was the Inspector of the Third Army at Amasya. In this telegram, the Seventeenth Army Corps was informed that a congress would be convened in order to unite the Societies for the Defence of Rights under one roof, and to whom the delegates would apply.¹³³ After the Amasya Declaration, in a telegram dated June 23, 1919, reference was made to the previous telegram, and then it was demanded that Rauf Bey be chosen as the delegate for Aydın, a written proxy be taken, and the signatures in the proxy be sent in an encoded telegram.¹³⁴

According to Bekir Sami [Günsav]'s memoirs, until Ali Fuat Pasha announced the convention of the Sivas Congress to Bekir Sami Bey, there were no telegrams sent from Bekir Sami Bey to Mustafa Kemal regarding the outcomes of the election of delegates. Only two telegrams from Ali Fuat Pasha were mentioned. One is dated July 21, 1919 and demands that Bekir Sami Bey bring the election of delegates for the Sivas Congress to an end; the other, dated July 31, 1919, asks for the results of the election of

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 338-341.

¹³³ It was understood that the above-mentioned telegram had reached the 17th Army Corps on June, 16, 1919. Günsav, p. 129.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p 142. It is also worth mentioning that in the memoirs of Bekir Sami [Günsav], September, which was an intense month in terms of politics, was only mentioned in a single telegram.

delegates.¹³⁵ Either Bekir Sami Bey did not pay enough attention to the election or there was not enough attention paid to the event itself. By and large, it could be said that in that period, the high ranking commanders had a commonly shared opinion about the societies and the national defence movement; furthermore, the Ministry of War, the General Staff, and the high ranking commanders in Anatolia were almost in consensus. Hence, it is possible that in Bekir Sami Bey's region, due to the indifference to the Sivas Congress, he could not manage to get two delegates from each sub-province. Also the impression from Hacı Muhittin [Çarıklı] Bey and Kazım [Özalp] Bey's memoirs, which are amongst the most important works regarding the Defence of Rights Societies and the congresses in western Anatolia, Mustafa Kemal did not or could not intervene in the organizations in western Anatolia until mid-August.¹³⁶

With respect to the congresses held in western Anatolia, until the Alaşehir Congress was convened on August 16, 1919, sending a delegation to the Sivas Congress was not on the agendas of the First¹³⁷ and Second Balıkesir Congresses¹³⁸, or the First Nazilli Congress¹³⁹. Even including the Alaşehir Congress, in all the above-mentioned congresses, a rising tide of civilian organization was apparent. In the congresses that followed, western Anatolia would slowly lose its autonomy against Sivas, and then

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 150, 154.

¹³⁶ Şerafettin Turan (ed.), *Balıkesir ve Alaşehir Kongreleri ve Hacı Muhittin Çarıklı'nın Kuva-yı Milliye Hatıraları (1919-1921)*; Kazım Özalp, *Milli Mücadele 1919-1921*, vol.1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988).

¹³⁷ Özalp, pp. 38-39.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 43-49. Also see Ahmet Aydın Bolak, "Alaşehir Kongresi'nin 66'ncı Yıldönümü Vesilesiyle Milli Mücadelede Balıkesir Kongreleri İle İlgili Kısa Tebliğ", *Milli Mücadele'de Balıkesir* (İstanbul: Türkpetrol Vakfı Yayını., 1986) pp. 125-127. Here, Bolak refers to the First Balıkesir Congress only by citing the dates for it, but mentions the decisions made at the Second Balıkesir Congress in brief. Ibid., pp. 125-127.

¹³⁹ For the decisions of the First Nazilli Congress, see Gökbel, pp. 372-375.

Ankara.¹⁴⁰ Yet, for the Alaşehir Congress, which aimed at unifying the organizations in the region at a higher level, although sending a delegation to the Sivas Congress was mentioned, the Congress refused this idea.¹⁴¹ In the congress discussions, the Sivas Congress was seen as a local congress to which sending delegates was not necessary.¹⁴² Hacim Muhittin Bey's response to Mustafa Kemal's telegram, which was received two days after the end of the congress, was written in a modest but egalitarian and independent mode.¹⁴³

It is especially remarkable that the decisions at the Sivas Congress were made despite those made at the Alaşehir Congress. For example, although Colonel Kara Vasıf Bey was appointed as the Commander General of the Fronts (*Umum Cephe Kumandanı*) at the Alaşehir Congress¹⁴⁴, the Sivas Congress, at the convention dated September 9, appointed Fuad Pasha General Commander of All National Powers of Western Anatolia (*Garbi Anadolu Umum Kuvayı Milliye Başkumandanı*).¹⁴⁵

Moreover, the Sivas Congress announced that all societies for National Struggle were united under the name of the Society for the Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) with a decision. As will be explained below, the societies in eastern Anatolia would seriously oppose the decision for the change of names and then the numerous interventions of Mustafa Kemal.

The relations between Sivas, or the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement, and

¹⁴⁰ Tekeli and İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, p. 170.

¹⁴¹ Turan, p. 43.

¹⁴² Tekeli and İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, p. 207.

¹⁴³ Turan, pp. 47-48.

¹⁴⁴ Tekeli and İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, p. 200.

¹⁴⁵ İğdemir, *Sivas Kongresi Tutanakları*, p. 78. Also, for the Representative Committee decision dated September 9, 1919, see Baykal, p. 1-2.

the local organizations in western Anatolia became even more tense with the decision of the Representative Committee to sever all communication between Istanbul and Anatolia on September 11, 1919.¹⁴⁶ Sivas demanded that all national defense societies and local units sever communication with Istanbul and hence become entirely politicised. But this was what the local organizations deliberately had sought to avoid. Although it could be said that the practices of the local organizations indicated that they were becoming centres of power, they did not articulate what they demanded from the political authority, or challenge the government.

The decision to sever all formal communication between Istanbul and Ankara, along with being an indicator of the tension between a new centre of power trying to position itself against the traditional centre of power, and the periphery, had important consequences. The fact that this decision was not followed or opposed in many Anatolian provinces reveals the limits of the power the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement possessed as a political centre. The power and legitimacy of the new political centre at Sivas was definitely limited because the Congress there had very limited representative power. It should also be accepted that, despite the limited support given to and the hinderances to the decision to sever all relations between Istanbul and Anatolia, this decision was successful as an action. By October 2, as a result of this decision, the Damat Ferid Pasha government was forced to resign, and its successor had to accept meeting Mustafa Kemal at Amasya to learn what the demands of Sivas were. Hence, it could be said that, despite the limited representative power, and therefore the limited political power, the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement gained considerable reputation

¹⁴⁶ Baykal, p. 2. It could be understood that the decision to sever all relations with Istanbul was taken by Mustafa Kemal and the other commanders prior to the Sivas Congress. In a telegram sent to the 17th Army Corps by Ali Fuat [Cebesoy] Pasha on August 25, 1919, it was demanded that a general strike on communication should begin and that it would acquire the characteristics of a popular strike with the protest of the people and the societies of national power. Günsav, p. 156.

making this decision. Thus, the newly developing political power in Sivas had started becoming a more important political actor determining the agenda of the country. The fall of the government and the call for general elections were the result of the decisions made and the actions carried out in Sivas.

Especially after the occupation of Izmir, the Damat Ferit Pasha government, both because it abstained from taking responsibility for the occupation, and after receiving the news of it, obstructed the convention of a national congress in Anatolia, started speaking of the necessity of holding general elections. On July 30, 1919, the decision to hold general elections was taken by the İstanbul government.¹⁴⁷ But, as the government knew that the new chamber to be formed after the elections would have a Unionist majority, it abstained from taking the decision for elections for a long time. Sultan Vahdettin too was afraid of and hesitant about the Unionist's increasing their influence, although he expressed the necessity for a national chamber to approve the decisions of a prospective peace agreement.¹⁴⁸ In the end, the action of Mustafa Kemal put an end to the hesitation of İstanbul.

After the Sivas Congress, although the western Anatolian congresses were unhappy about the decision to sever relations with İstanbul, they fell into this new political center's sphere of influence. Yet this interest in Sivas could be easily taken as having been limited and involuntary. For example, at the Third Balıkesir Congress convened from September 16 to 22, 1919, the issue to send a delegation to the General Anatolian Congress which was supposed to include all of Anatolia and was designed to

¹⁴⁷ Sina Akşin, *İstanbul Hükümetleri ve Milli Mücadele*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992), pp. 443-444.

¹⁴⁸ Ali Fuad Türkgeldi, *Görüp İşittiklerim* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1984), pp. 222-23. Indeed, the amendment to Article 7 of the 1876 Constitution made Parliamentary approval of the international agreements obligatory. Hence, Sultan Vahdettin, according to the Constitution, beyond the Senate, needed a Chamber of Deputies for the approval agreements to be made. Suna Kili ve Şeref Gözübüyük, *Türk Anayasa Metinleri* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, n.d.), p. 75.

convene to make up for the lack of interest in the Sivas Congress, was discussed. There was serious divergence in the opinions of the delegates. The end result was that the decision to send a delegation to the General Anatolian Congress was made primarily under the personal influence of Hacı Muhittin Bey, who was one of the most influential people at the Balıkesir Congresses.¹⁴⁹ However, two days after the Congress came to an end, in a decision made at a meeting of the Central Committee of the National Movement and the Rejection of Annexation (*Balıkesir Balıkesir Hareket-i Milliye ve Redd-i İlhak Heyet-i Merkeziyesi*), the congress abandoned the plan to send delegates to the Congress.

Furthermore, the Balıkesir Central Committee, in a meeting on September 14, 1919, elected a delegation of two to meet with the Istanbul government. Balıkesir's attempt to get in touch with Istanbul, let alone severing relations with it, meant the sabotage of the decision of Sivas rather than merely remaining neutral towards it. Until the fall of the Damat Ferid Pasha Cabinet on October 2, 1919, not a single decision was made by the Balıkesir Central Committee to sever relations with Istanbul.¹⁵⁰

A similar reaction to Sivas can be seen in Uşak's situation. In a response to Sivas dated November 10, 1919, which had asked whether the organization in Uşak was annexed to the Society for the Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia, it was stated that although the decisions made at the Sivas Congress had been accepted, the committees constituted at the Alaşehir Congress were left to function as Uşak province was in a state

¹⁴⁹ Turan, pp. 61-64.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 72. Hacı Muhiddin Bey, in the entry dated September 30, 1919 of his memoirs, which were written as a journal, states that Salihli and Alaşehir severed their relations with Istanbul, and that their turn was coming. Yet there is no indication that they severed their relations with Istanbul until the fall of the government. Ibid., p. 77. It is known that some of the province, sub-provinces (*livas*) and counties (*kazas*) in western Anatolia severed their relations with Istanbul. Among the places which did so prior to the fall of the Damat Ferid Pasha Cabinet were Isparta, Burdur, Denizli, Uşak, Alaşehir, and Söke. Nazilli severed its relations with Istanbul in the first week of October. Gökbel, p. 379.

of war. Uşak remained independent from Sivas.¹⁵¹

With respect to the relations with Sivas, another congress to be taken into consideration was the Second Nazilli Congress, which convened on September 19 (or 23) and lasted two days. This congress included the sub-provinces (*livas*) of Izmir, Aydın, Saruhan, Denizli, Afyon, Isparta, Burdur, and Antalya. It had a greater representative power than the Alaşehir Congress, which aimed at uniting the Aegean Region under one roof.¹⁵² The Second Nazilli Congress did not adopt a clear attitude towards the Sivas Congress' decision to sever all relations with Istanbul and preferred to remain in abstention. Following Article 7 of the decisions made at the Second Nazilli Congress, the Congress Committee was to send a telegram to Sivas, to demand detailed information regarding the reason why the Sivas Congress had been convened.¹⁵³ As a result, the Political Commission stated that because they did not have adequate information, they would not propose a decision be made concerning the decisions taken at the Sivas Congress.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ For this interpretation, see Tekeli and İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, p. 231. For the telegram, see *ibid.*, p. 397. Likewise, in Thrace, the Ottoman Committee for the Defense of Thrace and Pasha-Eli (*Trakya-Paşaeli Müdafaa Heyeti Osmaniyesi*) changed its name to the Society for the Defense of the Rights of Thrace and Pasha-Eli (*Trakya-Paşaeli Müdafaa Hukuk Cemiyeti*). But the committee continued its activities under the old name and used its two seals in its correspondences. Tefik Bıyıklıoğlu, *Trakya'da Milli Mücadele* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Matbaası, 1955), p.135. Also, this society convened a Grand Edirne Congress between May 9 and 13 1920, after the opening of the Grand National Assembly and constituted a delegation to work with the Ottoman delegation and defend the union of Thrace in the Paris negotiations, although Mustafa Kemal opposed this decision. In other words, the Ottoman Committee for the Defense of Thrace and Pasha-Eli collaborated with Istanbul despite Ankara. *Ibid.*, pp. 288-291.

¹⁵² İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, “Aydın Cenub Mıntıkası Heyet-i Merkeziyyesinin Kongre Mukerreratıyla Nizamnamelerini Mübeyyin Risale' Üzerine”, in *Uluslararası İkinci Atatürk Sempozyumu, 9-11 Eylül*. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1996) p. 178.

¹⁵³ See Tekeli and İlkin “Aydın Cenub Mıntıkası Heyet'i Merkeziyyesinin Kongre Mukerreratıyla Nizamnamelerini Mübeyyin Risale”. This pamphlet was printed by İkaz Printing House in Karahisar in 1336 (1920). The transcription of this pamphlet is given in the appendix of the article. Congress decisions and the decisions made later by the Central Committee of the Congress are included in this pamphlet. For Article 7 of the congress decisions, see *ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Despite the fact that the Representative Committee in Sivas played a major role in the fall of the Damat Ferid Pasha Cabinet and had become a political actor involved with the country's agenda by October 1919, the Central Committee elected by the Nazilli Congress decided to accept, on its own account and as a representative of its subordinate National Committees, the decisions of the Sivas Congress, only on January 3, 1920.¹⁵⁵

However, not every society in Western Anatolia was connected to the political centre in Sivas during the same period. Although these societies announced that they were connected to the Representative Committee at Sivas, they had a tendency to continue functioning as autonomous bodies. The resistance of the civilian-local movement in western Anatolia against the pressure from above towards their changing organization, despite the Greek occupation proceeding eastwards, continued after the opening of the Grand National Assembly. Still, the fact that these organizations had undergone a change of name under the pressure of Sivas and later from Ankara, would not necessarily mean that they had easily lost their civilian-localist characteristics. However, Mustafa Kemal's intervention into the societies in western Anatolia towards their names changing into the Society for the Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia is an important indicator of the extent to which Sivas had managed to establish its own control.

With respect to the organizations in the relatively important provinces and sub-provinces, the change of names undergone following the demands of Sivas were as such: the Denizli National Committee, despite the fact that it had elected and sent a delegation to the Sivas Congress following the decision of Mustafa Kemal¹⁵⁶, continued to operate, issue proclamations and make decisions under its original name until August 1920.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 230.

¹⁵⁶ Denizli elected three delegates to send to the Sivas Congress. See Hikmet Denizli, *Sivas Kongresi ve Delegeleri ve Heyet-i temsiliye Üyeleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1996), pp. 109-113.

¹⁵⁷ Nuri Köstüklü, *Milli Mücadele'de Denizli, Isparta ve Burdur Sancakları* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1999), p. 71.

Following the convention of the First Assembly in the Çal district of Denizli, the National Committee of Çivril county, changed its name to the Defence of Rights in October (or November) 1920. The Buldan county of Denizli did not go through a change of name until it was invaded by the Greek army on July 5, 1920.¹⁵⁸

The Society for the Defence of Rights name was adopted the Eğridir county of Isparta in February 1920, in the Keçiborlu county in October 1920, and in Yalvaç district in January 1920.¹⁵⁹

Burdur was one of provinces the most resistant to name change. In the beginning, the society in Burdur operated under the name of the Burdur National Committee. By September 29, 1920, it had changed its name to the Burdur Central Committee of National Defence; only by January 1921 did it adopt "the Society for the Defence of Rights".¹⁶⁰

In Balıkesir, the attempt of Balıkesir Central Committee to convene a fourth congress in October 1919 was met with a serious reaction from Sivas. Mustafa Kemal, in a telegram sent on October 14, 1919, opposed the convention of a congress in Balıkesir,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 73-77.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 85-90.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 92-96. It should be mentioned again that the names of the societies were changed as a consequence of Mustafa Kemal's intervention, but that after this, in some places, these societies re-organized, re-elected their presidents, central committees, and executive boards. Despite these changes, the civil-localian elements did not lose much of their influence. It seems as if there was a parallelism between local societies' subordination to the centre and the National Struggle's subordination to the regular army. It should be remembered that later Çerkez Ethem's forces and the regular army would come into conflict in January 1921, and that the conflict would be resolved in favour of the latter. Furthermore, the subordination of the National Struggle bands to a regular army organized by a central power is another dimension of subordinating the local societies organized to the extent of a power centre, to a central authority. National Struggle bands indicate that the people themselves were armed in an environment in which the state could not fulfill the basic functions of internal and external security. Here, armed bands were organized in a more flexible manner, compared to the army as an institution. Such an organization, different from the army which was the security unit of the state, was more dispersed, more flexible, less disciplined, less hierarchical, and more dependent on the local power, that is, the people. Some of these characteristics were similar to those of the local organizations, and so was their process of subordination to the centre. Especially in the sub-provinces and districts, executive committees which overtook the public activities, operating under names such as the National Committee, with the decision of the Ankara Government, would leave their places to persons or institutions like the heads of counties, who were appointed by the centre and were more appropriate to the organizational structure of it.

stating that it was not the time for congresses, and reminding them that all societies had been united under the same name by the Sivas Congress. He demanded a name change from the Balıkesir Central Committee.¹⁶¹ The Balıkesir Central Committee then gave up the decision to convene a congress and even leaned towards changing its name to “Defence of Rights”, but a decision to undertake such a name change was never made. Moreover, it was decided that a representative be sent with a letter to Sivas to meet Mustafa Kemal.¹⁶² However, at the Fourth Balıkesir Congress, which convened on November 19, 1919 and continued for three days, it was announced that the organization would henceforth use the name “the Defence of Rights”.¹⁶³ This could be understood to mean that Sivas had succeeded in making Balıkesir accept its authority.

Yet the political developments in the aftermath of the convention of the newly elected Chamber of Deputies indicate that Mustafa Kemal had not acquired enough power to determine the political agenda. The loss of power of Sivas can first be observed through the fact that Balıkesir, which was seemingly under the authority of Sivas, convened a Fifth Balıkesir Congress by mid-March of 1920.¹⁶⁴ Although this congress accepted the political aims which had been set in Sivas, it tried to continue its ties with its formal political base.¹⁶⁵ The congress enlarged its area of control to include Bursa and Bilecik. The decisions taken at the congress qualified as the articles of a new regulation. For example, it mentioned the Central Committee of the North Zone of Izmir (*İzmir Şimal*

¹⁶¹ Atatürk, vol. 3, p. 1099. The telegram was transmitted to the Central Committee of Balıkesir (*Balıkesir Heyet-i Merkeziyesi*), via Kazım [Özalp] Bey, the Second Commander of the 14th Army Corps.

¹⁶² Turan, p. 90. In fact, before the telegram reached to Sivas, a decision was made to send a delegate to Sivas and to announce that it was necessary to adopt an independent attitude. But the reaction of Hacim Muhittin Bey forced a change in this decision, and probably because of the above-mentioned telegram, the decision to send a delegate was taken again. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁶³ Özalp, p. 75.

¹⁶⁴ Tekeli and İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, p. 238.

¹⁶⁵ For the full text of the proceedings of Fifth Balıkesir Congress, see Mücteba İlgürel, *Milli Mücadele'de Balıkesir Kongreleri* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1999), p. 276.

Mıntıkası Heyet-i Merkeziyesi), which indicates that an attempt was being made to establish a new organization.¹⁶⁶

In addition, Mustafa Kemal never gave up his attempts to control the Defence of Rights Societies even after First Assembly was convened. After the opening of the Grand National Assembly, Mustafa Kemal announced to all Central Committees that the communications would henceforth be addressed to the Presidency of the Assembly, and that the power of the Assembly was equivalent to that of the Societies for the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa- Hukuk Cemiyetleri*).¹⁶⁷ After the establishment of the First Group, Mustafa Kemal seems to have given up on the Assembly's characteristic of being the general congress of the Society for the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia. In Article 4 of the "internal regulation" prepared for the First Group, it was stated that the executive committee the First Group would be the central administration (*idare-i merkeziye*) of the Societies for the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia until the convention of its general congress.¹⁶⁸

The decision to restrict the local and civilian characteristics of Societies for the Defence of Rights was taken on July 1920. With this decision, it was announced that the central committees and executive boards of the Societies for the Defence of the Rights were subordinated to the control of the highest government executive of the locality.¹⁶⁹ Hence, the local organizations were left to the control of the bureaucracy and the state, and their localist and civilian characteristics would be badly damaged. Without doubt,

¹⁶⁶ Tekeli and İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken*, pp. 238-241. In reference to the the Balıkesir Congress, Müctebe İlgürel Beşinci uses the term "İzmir Şimal Mıntıkası Kongresi". İlgürel, p. 216.

¹⁶⁷ See the telegram dated June 29, 1920, in *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri*, p. 356.

¹⁶⁸ Faik Reşit Unat, "Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinin Birinci Devresinde Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Grubunun Kuruluşuna ve Çalışmalarına Ait Bazı Vesikalar," *Tarih Vesikaları Dergisi*, 3; no. 13 (August, 1944), p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ See the telegram dated July 28, 1920, in: *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri*, p. 361.

some localities would continue to resist the new political centre, and complete annexation to it would be actualized much later.¹⁷⁰

Although the local organizations which then took the name "Defence of Rights" transferred their authorities and functions to the government officials, they remained the main source of accruing finances. Although the political power might have undergone a certain degree of centralization, under the conditions of war, the new political power was not institutionalized. As the economic activities were not carried out as in normal conditions, the state could not maintain a regular inflow of funds. After all, it was a time question. Hence, it is highly probable that these organizations continued to function till the National Struggle came to an end.¹⁷¹ It is a fact that these local organizations, with several exceptions, were presided over by people that the centre had demanded or had agreed upon. Furthermore, this period could be seen as favourable for developing relations of mutual interest between newly formed groups such as the new leaders and the notables and the central authority. In other words, the components of political hegemony seem to have changed. Naturally, the conditions gave rise to a different political struggle, which brought its own discourse, as the basis of legitimacy had been altered.

¹⁷⁰ For example, the Pozantı Congress, which convened on 5 August 1920, declared that Pozantı was the center of Province and elected the governor and other administrative officials. Later, the Ankara government approved this decision. Tanör, p. 183

¹⁷¹ Naturally, with the procession of the Greek Army into Asia Minor, the societies in the provinces under occupation ceased to remain in action.

CHAPTER III

CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE WITHIN THE GNA

In the previous chapter, how the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement tried to gather the autonomous local organizations under its own center was discussed. After the opening of Grand National Assembly (GNA), the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement regained prestige. As stated above, in spite of his influence in the re-opening of the Ottoman Parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*), Mustafa Kemal had been unable to maintain the prestige he had enjoyed between October and November 1919, due to public focus on the Ottoman Parliament in İstanbul. However, with the occupation of İstanbul on March 16, 1920, the Ottoman Parliament was obliged to postponed its work and this presented an opportunity for Mustafa Kemal to call a national assembly in Ankara. During this process, it was planned that the members of the last Ottoman Parliament, previously elected at the end of 1919, were to be called along with the newly elected members to Ankara in order to open a new parliament.

As stated before, while the local societies harmonized their actions with those of the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement, at the same time they had a tendency to maintain their independence. On the other hand, while these societies slowly but gradually participated in the newly formed center, and despite its interference in their policies, their independence tendency, most probably, continued for a long time. A great

part of the members of the Grand National Assembly consisted of people from the local societies and congresses.¹⁷² For this reason, the First Assembly became a platform of two different perspectives. In this platform, at first, the local-based, anti-bureaucratic political perspective gained power but after a while it lost that power, or, more correctly, was forced to relinquish it. On the other hand, the centralist, bureaucratic and statist line emerged from the opening of the GNA as an alternative center of power and while sometimes compromising with the other group, it managed to apply its policies within the parliament. This perspective soon managed to gain absolute control over the other perspective.

The adventures of these two different political perspectives within the First Assembly are investigated in three sections below. One examines the GNA's political-judiciary organization and its relation to the decentralist-localist populist approach and that of the other. The second discusses the existence of the decentralist-localist and the populist approach in the example of Law of Fundamental Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu*). The third section focuses on the position of the groups in the GNA on the

¹⁷² Ozan Erözden conducted a study about the participants of a congresses held in the Aegean region during March 1919 and April 1920, and their reflection ratios in the First Assembly. The study shows that this reflection was very low. Naturally this conclusion cannot be determined exactly. The first reason is that the identities of the delegates who participated in the Aegean congresses cannot be accurately determined. Only 57 per cent of the participants' identities have been determined. In this determined number (that means a total of 380 delegates, 60 of whom were reiterated) only 13 were elected as members of parliaments. Erözden hypothetically assumes that another 13 members of parliament were elected among the non-determined delegates, which makes a total number of 26, and this is still a very low number, only 30 % of the total Aegean members of parliaments (75 people). Balıkesir was an exception. Five members out of six were active participants in the congress activities. The sixth was Kazım Özalp. However, according to the study, none of the elected member of parliaments in the Antalya, Burdur, Bursa, and Karahisar-ı Sahip regions were participants or delegates of the congresses, and the other regions averaged one deputy as the delegate of the congresses. Ozan Erözden, "Mart 1919-Nisan 1920 Tarihleri Arasında Düzenlenen Kongrelere Katılanların Birinci BMM'ye Katılma Oranları" *Tarık Zafer Tunaya'ya Armağan* (Istanbul: Istanbul Barosu Yayınları, 1992), p 445. It should be mentioned that Erözden's study only covers the congresses. There were many people who did not attend the congresses as delegates but were members of societies of provinces, districts or subdivisions of provinces (*kaza*). For this reason this study cannot contain reliable data about the active participants of the local societies and their reflection in the GNA. Many examples can be found for the determinant role of the societies over the election of deputies and so the ratio of the members of the societies reflection in parliament should be quite high. According to Ahmet Demirel's research, the members of the Parliament who represented their homelands was 60.9 % in the First Group, and 73% in the Second Group. Demirel, p.141.

duality of decentralism and centralism and their roles in the destiny of the Draft for the Law of the Governance of Villages and Districts (*İdare-i Kura ve Nevahi Kamun Tasarısı*). Relying on these three points, the above-mentioned political perspectives, and the relations between them, will be examined.

At the outset it should be stated that the groups in the First Assembly, especially during the very first period, underwent various groupings. As known, these groupings later crystallized into the two main groups, called the “First Group” and the “Second Group.” Although this differentiation existed, it is difficult to study these two different political understandings according to it. In the First Group, although the majority were centralist, bureaucratic, and less base-oriented, there were some people who supported decentralist, anti-bureaucratic, base-oriented politics and policies. In addition to this, local-oriented politics completely owed its influence and continuity to the existence of the Second Group within the GNA.

The Politico-Judiciary Structure of the Grand National Assembly And Its Meaning for the Two Opposite Political Perspectives

In Turkish historiography, generally speaking, a revolutionary characteristic is attributed to the GNA, and it is held that this revolutionary quality was maintained from the opening day, 23 April 1920 to the last meeting on 15 April 1923. It was mentioned above that the First Assembly was formed by members of parliaments elected in two different elections (9 October 1919, and 19 March 1920). This feature of the First Assembly is meaningful in that it displays both revolutionary and non-revolutionary aspects. The continuity between the Ottoman Parliament, which had been formed within the old constitutional framework, and the GNA can be seen in the participation of some of

the members of the former in the latter. Also the declaration of the National Oath by the members of the Ottoman Parliament can be considered to be another aspect of the political continuity between the two parliaments.¹⁷³

At the same time the majority of the members of the parliament had been elected in the 19 March 1920 elections and this election had leaned toward a “revolutionary” will. After the occupation of Istanbul, on 19 March 1920, Mustafa Kemal declared by a telegram that an assembly was going to be formed in Ankara which would have “extraordinary authorities”, and for this reason it was imperative that a new election be held and that the elected members meet in Ankara.¹⁷⁴ Even though Mustafa Kemal a few days earlier had used the word “constitutional assembly” for the new parliament, he backed down from this term on Kazım Karabekir’s objection.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless the declaration on 19 March was “radical” enough and contained “revolutionary” content to some extent. First of all, Mustafa Kemal used an authority¹⁷⁶ that had been given to the Sultan by the constitution and this point by itself indicates a serious radicalism within the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement. Although the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement, through the Amasya Declaration (it should be kept in mind that the movement was only a formation constituted by high ranking soldiers) had stated that it would choose separate political acts against the legal government’s unaccepted policies and orders, it

¹⁷³ Also, one of the last items on the agendas of the Ottoman Parliament, a bill called the Tribute Tax, which was become a law in the GNA later, is another example of the continuity between the two parliaments. These examples of the continuity between the two parliaments can be extended.

¹⁷⁴ Atatürk, vol I, pp. 421-422.

¹⁷⁵ Kazım Karabekir had in mind a “national council” (*milli şura*), which had no legislative authority, rather than an assembly. Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, p.516.

¹⁷⁶ For the authority of Sultan in regard to opening and closing the parliament, see the seventh article of the 1876 constitution. Kili and Gözübüyük, *Türk Anayasa Metinleri*, pp. 31-32. The 7th article was change four times, in 1909, 1915, 1916, and 1918. In these changes, the authority of the Sultan to open and close the Assembly and to invite the Assembly to convene was preserved. Additionally, with the abolition of the 35th article of the 1876 Constitution, the implementation of the authority of the Sultan to close the Assembly was facilitated. *Ibid.*, pp.74-82. For a short comment on Article 7, see Mete Tunçay, “Kanunu Esasinin Son Tadilleri” *Armağan-Kanun-u Esasi'nin 100. Yılı* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1978), pp. 253-254.

still defined its *raison d'être* and historical function within the Ottoman constitutional and political framework. This can be stated as being loyalty to the 1876 Constitution, the avoidance of the declaration of a “temporary government” and principally acceptance of the legitimacy of the existing government. This movement saw its historical function as limited and temporary: its goal was to reach a dignified peace treaty through the use of constitutional and political institutions of the state.¹⁷⁷

The occupation of Istanbul indicates a turning point. After this date, the Mustafa Kemal-led Movement started to shift away from the Ottoman constitutional framework. But it should be noted that to be radical does not mean to be revolutionary in every case. It is true that the Mustafa Kemal-led National (or Political) Movement became increasingly radical with time, but the “revolutionary” content of the era should be sought in the GNA.

The “revolutionary” aspect of the formation process of the First Assembly is reflected in the important differentiation from the Ottoman politico-constitutional system.¹⁷⁸ The Assembly had a tendency not only to make decisions about political and judiciary issues but also to control their implementation processes. The elected members carefully avoided the transfer of their authorities to other institutions. It could easily be claimed that this particular attention of the members of parliaments was transferred from their experience in the local societies and congresses. As a matter of fact, the Assembly Government System (*Meclis Hükümeti Sistemi*) accepted by the First Assembly can be thought of as a continuum of this perspective implemented in the local societies.

¹⁷⁷ Bülent Tanör, pp. 305-310.

¹⁷⁸ According to Tark Zafer Tunaya, in the GNA, there was no clear idea regarding whether the GNA was a “constitutional assembly” or not. Tark Zafer Tunaya, “TBMM Hükümetinin 50. Yıldönümünde” , *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi*, no. 31 (April, 1970), p.37.

In the Assembly Government System¹⁷⁹ the parliament contains all of the authorities of the executive, legislative and judiciary powers, and implements them directly. The discussions in the GNA about the formation process of the executive body are good examples in order to see the Assembly's attitude towards on this issue. The GNA abstained from forming a cabinet system. The members of the GNA were so sensitive about the transfer of their authority that some of them even rejected the idea of forming an executive committee (cabinet), or them thought that it was not necessary.¹⁸⁰ In the end, the Assembly decided to form "The Committee of Executive Agents (or Commissars¹⁸¹)". In this system, the Assembly views the members of the Committee of the Executive Commissars as its "civil servants" or "agents".

It is important to see that in this system the election procedure of the members of the Committee of Executive Commissars determines how the system resembles an Assembly Government System. The election procedure for the members of the Committee of Executive Commissars created a political platform where the above mentioned two different political perspectives crystallized one of their disputes. The

¹⁷⁹ It should be mentioned that the "Assembly Government" system has problematic aspects according to Constitutional Law Theory. The problem specifically arises from the definition of the concept. The line between Assembly Government and Parliamentary Government is indefinite. But it still is possible to speak of the spirit of Assembly Government. Paul Bestid, cited by Ergun Özbudun, *1921 Anayasası* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1992), p.56. As a matter of fact, even though the GNA in general seemed to be the same as the Assembly Government System, a tendency against Assembly Government would show itself within the Assembly on some of the foundational laws or even some implementation of the laws, as will be seen below.

¹⁸⁰ For example, Nazım Bey, who was the deputy from Tokat, and his colleagues asserted that a temporary government or this kind of "structure" should not be mentioned. They proposed that the Assembly implement its executive functions through some commissions formed within the Assembly. Samet Ağaoğlu, *Kuvay-ı Milliye Ruhu* (İstanbul: Bahat Matbaası, 1973), p. 72.

¹⁸¹ "Commissar" is used for the Turkish word *Vekil*. Actually it would be more correct to use the word "commissary". It also shows the Soviet influence on the Ankara Government because the the Committee of the Executive Commissars (*İcra Vekilleri Heyet-i*) was almost a direct translation of "committee of executive commissars", the name of the Bolshevik government. Andrew Mango, "Atatürk and the Kurds" *Middle Eastern Studies*, 35 (October, 1999); Bernard Lewis prefers to use the term "Committee of Executive Delegates" for *İcra Vekilleri Heyeti*. Lewis, pp. 365-366.

Assembly in the beginning made a law called the Law for the Formation of the Election of Executive Commissars (*İcra Vekillerinin Suret-i İntihabatına Dair Kanun*) and declared that the members of the Committee of the Executive Commissars could be elected by the members of parliament within the Assembly without any restrictions.¹⁸² However, approximately six months later, the Assembly made an amendment to the second article of the law to the effect that the Assembly could only choose from among the candidates who had been decided upon previously by the president of the Assembly.¹⁸³ This policy both removed the assembly from the idea of assembly government and it was an arrangement against the populist (*Halkçı*) character of the Assembly. As a matter of fact, some members of the parliament opposed this arrangement on the grounds that the national sovereignty and the populist characteristics of the Assembly were being violated.¹⁸⁴

The reason for this arrangement, it seems, was the election of Nazım Bey to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Dahiliye Vekaleti*), and Abdülkadir Kemali Bey to the Ministry of Justice (*Adliye Vekaleti*), in spite of Mustafa Kemal's clear opposition.¹⁸⁵ The ministers were forced to resign from their positions, which indicates that the will of the

¹⁸² Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 88. According to Article 3 of the Law, the executive agents would carry out their duties through consultation with the commissions in the Assembly. Even though the Assembly did not oblige the executive department to consult with the commission, this arrangement was quite convenient for the Assembly Government System. But this was only in theory or in law; in practice, the executive committee followed a different line.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁸⁴ For example, Hasan Basri Bey said that "populism (*halkçılık*) means that the nation has the sovereignty directly and in fact. The election is the first step of this right....Presenting candidate means to break up the rights of the assembly which unconditionally has....If the assembly and the government are the same now, there is no need for the this kind of list of candidates". *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol.5, 4 November, 1920. pp. 264-265.

"*Halkçılık demek, milletin hakimiyetine doğrudan doğruya ve bilfiil hakim olması demektir. İntihap bu hakimiyetin ilk tecellisidir...Namzet göstermek demek, Meclisin bila kayd-ı şart haiz olduğu hukuku tecziyeye uğratmak demektir...Madem ki, Meclisle Hükümet birdir, binanenaleyh böyle namzetler için liste sunmaya hacet yoktur.*" *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, 4 November, 1920, pp. 264-265.

¹⁸⁵ Mustafa Kemal clearly states that he forced Nazım Bey to resign from his position. He claimed that Nazım Bey was a spy. Atatürk, vol. 2, pp. 500-501. Abdülkadir Kemali Bey, who had been elected to the Ministry of Justice, resigned for health reasons, or was forced to resign. Demirel, p. 182.

GNA was restricted by Mustafa Kemal in his drive to implement his own political projects. These incidents reveal the mentality difference and degree of dispute between the centralist, hierarchical Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement, and the members of parliament who had local congress experiences, who had had the rights given to them by being elected and who opposed interference into their free will, and who, in the real sense, supported "national sovereignty".

Even though the Assembly Government System means that the state's fundamental functional bodies are gathered in the authority of the legislative body, and thus the representatives of the people effectively influence the system, as is stated in constitutional law theories, in the actual implementations of this system had contradicted theory. Generally it may turn into the authoritarian governance of a single person or a small group.¹⁸⁶ In the First Assembly, the executive body, besides its legal advantages, in the actual implementations had great influence.¹⁸⁷ After the procedural change regarding the election of the Committee of Executive Commissars, Mustafa Kemal's influence upon the Executive department increased markedly.

Another change in the Fundamental Law of Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kamunu*) related to the Committee of Executive Commissars (Article 9) shows his increasing influence and power. According to the article, the Committee of Executive Commissars was to have two presidents. The Committee was to elect one of its member as one the president, and the other was to be the president of the GNA. According to the arrangement, the president of the GNA, namely Mustafa Kemal, was both to have the authority to approve the decisions of the Committee of Executive Commissars, and at the

¹⁸⁶ Özbudun, pp. 56-57. Özbudun gives a place to the ideas of Cadart and Başgil. Both Cadart and Başgil think that the Assembly Government System easily can turn into its opposition. Ibid., pp.56-57. For the idea that the assembly system includes both a centralist and also decentralist tendency, see Atilla Nalbant, *Üniter Devlet-Bölgeselleşmeden Küreselleşmeye* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1997), p. 163.

¹⁸⁷ Rıdvan Akın, *TBMM Devleti (1920-1923)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), p. 226.

same time was accepted as the natural president of the Committee of Executive Commissars. Additionally, as president of the GNA, he had the right to sign certain treaties in the name of the GNA and also the approval of the Committee of Executive Commissars.¹⁸⁸

Here the interesting point is that in the actual situation, the relations between the executive and legislative department formed a system close to that a parliamentary government and the executive department tried to be more independent from the legislative department. But as a judiciary system, Mustafa Kemal defended the Assembly Government System, in other words, the concentration of forces or the union of forces.¹⁸⁹ If the amendment regarding the ninth article and the above-mentioned authorities that were given to the president of GNA are taken into consideration, it is clear that the absolute authority of the assembly formed by the representatives of the people could completely be reversed and changed to a system in which a person or a certain group could gain total control. Thus, here the case was that "the concentration of authority was no longer in the legislative body (in the assembly), but in the hands of the head of the legislative body (in the person)."¹⁹⁰

Meanwhile in the seventh article of the Fundamental Law of Organization it is written that the function and the authorities of the executive body would be arranged by a specific

¹⁸⁸ For article 9, see Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 92.

¹⁸⁹ Demirel, p. 241.

¹⁹⁰ "yetki toplulaşmasının yasama organının bütününde (Mecliste) değil, yasama organın başında (şahısta) olması." See Taha Parla, "Cumhuriyet Anayasalarında Yasama-Yürütme-Yargı İlişkileri", *Toplum ve Bilim*, nos. 15-16 (Fall, 1981- Winter 1982), p. 78. Parla states that a chief who has both an authority to sign in the name of the "Cabinet" and to approve its decisions is not suitable for nor a "principle of parliamentary legacy-superiority of parliament" or the Assembly Government System. It is only suitable for a "chief system" or systems based on the superiority of the executive department, p. 78. In the GNA, Mustafa Kemal-led group supported those codes which would constitute the superiority of the executive department (namely, of Mustafa Kemal's personality as a chief who was determinant on the formation and activity of the government) rather than to make a choice between the Assembly Government System and the parliamentary system.

law. Accordingly, in February 1921, Hüseyin Avni (Ulaş) Bey and Salahattin (Köseoğlu) Bey, important members of the opposition, attended to the formation of a specific commission which would establish the arrangements.¹⁹¹ The commission prepared a proposal and submitted it to the GNA on November 24, 1921. In order to break the System of Assembly Government, the proposal contained the separation of legislative and executive forces rather than the concentration of forces, a point on which as Mustafa Kemal was insisting. The proposal called for the election of the president of the Committee of Executive Commissars and the other members by the Assembly itself, and that a vote of confidence (*güvenoyu*) be taken. Moreover, the role of the president of the Assembly was to be closer to that of the position of president of State in a parliamentary government, with more limited authority.¹⁹² Thus in the proposal the authority and functions of the executive department were limited and principles of responsibility given. At the same time, the President's authority over the formation and functions on the executive department in the GNA was restricted.

This proposal was rejected by the majority of the First Group. However, later Hüseyin Avni (Ulaş) Bey presented another proposal, which was sent to the commission.¹⁹³ This time, the proposal was approved, on July 8 1922, and the elections of the Committee of Executive Commissars and its president were rearranged. According to the new law, the Executive Commissars and the president of the Committee of the

¹⁹¹ Demirel, p. 234

¹⁹² Salahattin Bey, who was the deputy from Mersin, defended the demarcations of powers of the forces and spoke of the risks of the union of the forces: "The greatest soul of the union of the forces is absolutism and despotism. Whatever the chief wants, the official have to do it...Constitutional monarchy (*meşrutiyet*) is not the union of the forces. Constitutional monarchy is the distinguishing of the forces."

"*Tevhidi kuvvanın en büyük ruhu mutlakiyetle istipdattır. Ne isterse baştaki amir onu yaptırır...Tevhidi kuvva meşrutiyet değildir. Meşrutiyet tefriki kuvvadır.*" TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 14, 24 November, 1921, p. 328.

¹⁹³ Demirel, pp. 242-243.

Executive Commissars would be elected directly by the Assembly itself.¹⁹⁴ Through this rearrangement, the Assembly gained the absolute right over the formation of the executive department, rather than one-man determination. In this way, the principle of the superiority of the legislative over the executive was re-established. The application was reinstated before November 4, 1920.¹⁹⁵

The formation of the judicial and political organization of the GNA involved political clashes as well. The Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement tried to control political activities with a centralist and hierarchical approach, and tried to collect all authority under its leader's own personality. The opposition side of the clash argued that the deputies ought to have all of the authority within the Assembly. For this reason, they supported the establishment of the Assembly Government System, but after the abuse of the system by the other group, they began to argue for the Parliament System, demanding that the deputies have a greater determining role in politics.

The Decentralist, Localist and Populist Approach and the Law of Foundational Organization

Although the judicial and political organization of the GNA had a “revolutionary” or in more accurate terms, a radical aspect, the real revolutionary aspect of the GNA can be found in the articles of the Law of the Fundamental Organization. Often there is

¹⁹⁴ Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 94.

¹⁹⁵ The system of the election of the commissars from among the candidates offered by the President of the assembly continued for around 20 months. Meanwhile, the president Mustafa Kemal made some non-judicial applications without receiving the approval of the Assembly or giving information to it, most important of which were the subjects of both the election of the commissars and the election of the proxies of the commissars. For a list of the applications of Mustafa Kemal related with this subject, see Demirel, pp. 303-310. About the discussion related to the subjects on the authority and obligation of the Executive Commissars and on the authority of the Assembly, the “government” or the “group of the power” had an attitude to extricate itself from the control of the Assembly as much as it could. Aykut Kansu, “Kemalist ‘Yeni Düzen’ Projesine Direniş”, *Birinci Meclis* (İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1998) p. 143.

reference to the Law of the Foundational Organization, especially its first article which says "the sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the people". Even though this article contains a certain break from the Ottoman-Turkish constitutional tradition, it, within itself, contains no meaning at all. The real revolutionary aspect of the Foundational Law for Organizations should be sought in the articles related to arrangements for the provinces and districts. Since the Second Constitutional period, the idea of the sovereignty of people had been widespread among the revolutionary generation of that period.¹⁹⁶ But the arrangements for local governance in the Law of Fundamental Organizations were completely different from those of the centralist politico-judiciary perspective of the Second Constitutional period¹⁹⁷ and represented a real breakthrough in

¹⁹⁶ At beginning of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, the concept of national sovereignty (*Milli Egemenlik*) was used both in the Ottoman Assembly and in the Assembly of Notable. For example, Ahmet Rıza, who was also the chairman of the Ottoman Assembly, praised the principle of national sovereignty in his speech in the Ottoman Assembly. See Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2000), pp. 184-185.

¹⁹⁷ At this point, for the subject of this thesis, it will be useful to discuss whether the Unionists and the Kemalists were really revolutionary or not. If the continuity between the Ottoman political tradition and the Unionists and Kemalists is accepted, we meet a logical result in which the group, which clashed with the centralist approach and was much closer to the decentralist perspective, represented the real revolutionary character. Two points should be noted: The practice and discourse of the Unionists before the "1908 Revolution" was revolutionist. On the other hand, in the period of their reign, even though they stated that they wanted a regime based on constitution, liberty and national sovereignty (for them, *meşrutiyet*), they violated the constitution with ease, and inserted some arrangements into the constitution against the principle of national sovereignty and liberty in the name of the interests of the state or retaining their power. Mardin states that the Young Turks, so the Unionists, did not have any feature but to rescue the state, "not to be annihilated of the state", or "to rescue motherland". He states that they can best be described by the phrase "bureaucratic conservatism". Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), p. 222. Tarık Zafer Tunaya also states that the Unionists easily forgot the concepts "liberties, elections, assemblies, oppositions, and everything related with these concepts". Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989) p. 610. For the "anti-democratic" characteristics of the Unionists, see also *ibid.*, pp. 609-611, 612. The Kemalist movement also had a revolutionary organizational practice in its emergence stage. Its practices sometimes were something beyond the scope of the Ottoman judicial system. But it is difficult to say its discourse still had revolutionist content after the process of the 1908 Revolution because the Unionists had defended these principles and used them in their discourse, for example, emphasizing the will of the nation and constitutional bodies. Perhaps it can be said that the Kemalist group exhibited a more concentrated populism. However, as the concepts constitution, liberty and national sovereignty had an instrumental meaning for the Unionists, likewise, populism for the Kemalists had an instrumental meaning because it gave ideological power to them both in the process of the establishment of their own power and after the establishment of their power. But in that period there were different populism perspectives. The more revolutionary version of populism can be seen in the more localist approach or group, namely in the Second Group. Perhaps it would be possible to radically change the political structure by this approach. Meanwhile, there were also some people within the First Group who perceived populism as a radical change of the traditional mentality and structure, and as a beginning of the establishment of a new societal and political

Turkish political tradition. So, if a break with the Turkish political tradition or an attempt at a radical reformation of political structure is to be asserted, it requires a look at the Law of Fundamental Organization, or more specifically, at its articles related to local governance.¹⁹⁸

The arrangements in the Law of Fundamental Organization related to provinces (*vilayat*), districts (*nevahi*) and villages (*köyler*) are as important as the declaration of the Republic even though they were not put into practice afterwards. Both the declaration of the Republic and the articles in the LFO related to local administrations indicate at least a judicial “revolution”. The problem of whether they were realized or not is valid for both of them. Actually there was a reciprocal relation between them. It would be more possible to establish a real republic or the realization a public governance (*halk yönetimi*) with the development of the local administrations, hence the articles in LFO which include revolutionary content. The realization of the articles in the Law of Fundamental Organization that included local administrations depended on other laws which would later be enacted. However, the law was never passed although serious work continued on it for two years and it received the support of the majority in the GNA.

Before dealing with the Law of Fundamental Organization, it should be noted that one of the inseparable characteristics of the approach of populism (*halkçılık*) (and also of national sovereignty [*hakimiyet-i milliye*]), which was dominant in the GNA, was

order. As discussed below, a distinction should be made between the people within the First Group, as the ruler group, consisting of Mustafa Kemal and his circle, and the sub-group which obeyed the decisions of the ruler group. It should be stated that some deputies in the First Group believed in a populist approach which is really revolutionary and supported the practices and decisions for its realization.

¹⁹⁸ I agree with the comment of Rıdvan Akın that the Law of Fundamental Organization was “based on a philosophy which was very different from the tradition of Turkish governance, in the aspect of its encouragement of an organization down-to-up, and the law was enacted as a reflection of the reaction of Anatolia to the center (or of the periphery to the center).” “*aşağıdan yukarıya örgütlenmeyi teşvik etmesi bakımından Türk idare geleneğinden çok farklı bir siyasal felsefeye dayanmış, Anadolu'nun merkeze duyduğu (periferinin siyasal merkeze) tepkinin bir yansıması olarak yasalaşmıştır.*” Akın, p. 216.

localism or decentralism (*adem-i merkeziyetçilik*).¹⁹⁹ A correct understanding of the approach of populism and national sovereignty of that period can be attained by paying attention to the localist (or decentralist) aspect. Local participation and local democracy were accepted in principle in the Law of Fundamental Organization which decrees that “decentralism (*adem-i merkeziyetçilik*) is basic and general” and centralism is “limited and exceptional.”²⁰⁰ It is obvious that the experience in the local congresses and local organizations was influential in the enactment this law.

The articles in the Law of Fundamental Organization were not very different from the articles in the bill of the group in power, namely of the Mustafa Kemal-led political group, which was called the bill of government (*hükümet tasarısı*). So, why the Mustafa Kemal-led power group accepted a bill which granted such broad authority to the local administrations is a matter of debate. Actually the answer seems obvious: it is very difficult to follow a different way in an assembly which is trying to restrict the power of the central bureaucrats and to establish a local-based democracy in the country. That the Law of Fundamental Organization included some articles in favour of the Mustafa Kemal-led political group should not be forgotten. For example, in some articles the authority of the president of the assembly was increased. Consequently, the governing group in the GNA (namely the Mustafa Kemal-led group) profited from the enactment of the Law of Fundamental Organization because it was so easy to use the articles regarding the authority of the president of the assembly and executive department which were in favour of Mustafa Kemal and his group.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., p. 215.

²⁰⁰ Yayla, p. 130. Yayla states that the principle of decentralism to be basic and general was strengthened with some elements of the Law. According to him, they consisted of a “juristic personality which was formed from bodies based on the election” (*seçime dayalı organlardan oluşan tüzel kişilik*), “the power to take executive decisions and executions” (*icrai karar alma ve uygulama yetkisi*) “an autonomy which is almost strong” (*güçlü sayılabilecek bir muhtariyet*). Yayla, p. 130.

On the other hand, the results or benefits of the articles related to local administrations and based on democratic content, could be realized within time. To get the results of the articles related to local administrations in the Law of Fundamental Organization would require the enactment of a special law which would arrange more practical or concrete institutions. After this kind of special law, the Assembly would reach its aim of establishing a democratic organization or administration in the provinces or in the districts. So it would be necessary to follow the preparation of this special law seriously.

Mustafa Kemal, as the president of the Assembly, immediately began to use the rights which the LFO presented him, and managed the activity of the government within the framework of the LFO. He benefited from a judicial loophole in the seventh article of the LFO which stated that the duty and authority of the Committee of Commissars would be arranged through a special law, as discussed above. The efforts of the opposition group in the Assembly to enact this special law continued for almost one and half years. At last, in July 1922, the control of the formation of the executive department passed back into the hands of the Assembly.

Actually the petition for the Law of Fundamental Organization which Mustafa Kemal presented as the bill of government (*hükümet tasarısı*), was a part of the struggle between these two different groups. Even though Mustafa Kemal later claimed that the Program of Populism (*Halkçılık Programı*), given as the petition of the LFO, was his own work, in fact the program was almost the same as one that had been published at an earlier date by the Populist Group (*Halk Zümresi*). If a comparison between the two programs is made, the similarities are clear, but Mustafa Kemal's program was the shorter

of the two.²⁰¹ Mustafa Kemal, who was suspicious of this group which defended professional representation (*mesleki temsil*) “as a democratic precaution against bureaucracy” and had Islamic-socialist content, would gain dominance in the Assembly, first adopted the opinions of the group and then divided the group by allowing some of its prominent members to attend the Communist Party of Turkey, which was established by his order.²⁰²

Before establishing the Communist Party of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal had already begun to make operations against the Populist Group. First, he forced Nazım Bey, who was the Interior Minister and had been elected with the support of the Populist Group on September 4, 1920, to resign from his position.²⁰³ Then, instead of Nazım Bey, he arranged for Refet Bey to be elected as Interior Minister. Almost one week after this election, on September 13, 1920, he presented the Program of Populism to the Assembly. In other words, while he obviously was in conflict with the opponent group, he adopted their program, and in doing so, facilitated the division of the opponent group and the ideological manipulation of the Assembly. Finally, he convinced some people in the opponent group to participate in the official Communist Party of Turkey. He further broadened his position with a change in the Code for the election of Executive Commissars, which was re-arranged in favour of the president of the Assembly, himself.

When the deliberations on the Petition of the Law of Fundamental Organization, which was prepared by the constitutional commission, started on December 14, 1920, the

²⁰¹ Mete Tunçay also notes this situation. According to him, the Populist Group (*Halk Zümresi*) was not inspired by Mustafa Kemal's program of populism. On the contrary, Mustafa Kemal's program was inspired by the program of the Populist Group and adopted its platform. Tunçay, *Türkiyede Sol Akımlar*, p. 131.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 132.

²⁰³ The people who were elected to the Interior Ministry from the opening of the GNA until September 6, 1920, were leftist or had leftist tendencies: Cami Bey, Hakkı Behiç Bey ve Nazım Bey. Tunçay, *Türkiyede Sol Akımlar*, p. 129.

Assembly was in almost unanimous agreement on the points in the program of the Populist Group, except for the issue of professional representation (*meslek-i temsil*).

The arrangements of the Law of Fundamental Organization from Article 11 to Article 22 were directly related to the local administrations. In an era in which the center had collapsed, these arrangements give evidence of the success of the periphery. The Articles 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the LFO were about the provinces (*vilayetler*). The Article 11 accepted that the provinces were autonomous and were considered legal entities (*tüzel kişilik*). The councils of the provinces were given the right to administer pious foundations, educational and health services, public works, agricultural, and economic affairs generally, while the center was given to the right to administer domestic and foreign affairs, religious, judicial and military affairs and international economic relations.²⁰⁴ The Assembly behaved jealously regarding the restrictions on the authorities of the local administrations, seeking to restrict the authority of the National Assembly as much as it could, in favour of local units. For example, Tahsin Bey, deputy from Aydın, stated that security affairs should be given to the provincial council, that the police and gendarme should be placed under the control of provincial council because he thought that the cruelty and oppression of the police and gendarme derived from the central government's having this authority. He argued that they could only solve this problem with the authorization of the local councils on this subject, and if they did not enact this change in favour of the local administrations, the people would continue to hate the government and their complaints would never cease.²⁰⁵

Zekai Bey, deputy from Adana, saw the question of authority as the basic point of the decentralist (*adem-i merkeziyetçi*) organization, and stated his idea as follows:

²⁰⁴ Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 92.

²⁰⁵ *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol. 6, 14 December, 1920, p. 370.

If the government, namely the central government, collects all authorities in its own body and represents and administers the government by its representatives, that is a kind of centralism. It will not be important whether they (the local administrations) are given broad authority or not. Most probably the heart of the question is at this point, at the question of the authority to be given to the local administrations.²⁰⁶

The dimensions of the anti-centralist mentality can be seen in the objection to a phrase of the Article 11 which declared that the authorities of the provincial council would be used according to the laws which would be enacted in the GNA. It was thought that the Assembly would ignore the needs of a certain local unit, and that the laws regarding public and social affairs should be enacted in the local councils. Centralism (*merkeziyetçilik*) was seen as an obstacle to the realization of national sovereignty. Zekai Bey stated his objection as follows:

Consequently if (the local councils) administer within the framework of the laws which would be enacted by the GNA, not much more would be done than has been done for the local councils until now. For that reason, let us write here “the laws which would be enacted by the GNA would indicate the general limits”, so after the determination of the general limits, let the implementation of the laws, according to their local ability, requirements, needs, tendencies and mental needs, belong to the local councils.²⁰⁷

Even if the interests (of a certain region) include two or three provinces, that interest is local. If it is accepted that it belongs to a local unit, it can not be administered by the center. The bond of the local interests to the center means directly to accept the administrative control (*vesayet-i idariye*). If this control is accepted, nevertheless, it should be implemented by the representatives who elected by the people. If it is accepted it is local interest. Even though it belongs to the sixty-two provinces, it is a question which only the provinces can solve among

²⁰⁶ “Hükümet yani hükümeti merkeziye bütün salahiyeti kendinde cem eder ve mümessilleri vasıtasıyla hükümeti temsil ve tedvir ederse –ki bu bir nevi merkeziyettir- onlara (mahalli birimlere. F.G) vasi miktarda salahiyet versin, vermesin farksızdır. Herhalde meselenin bilhassa ruhu bu noktadadır. İdarei mahalliyeye verilecek salahiyet meselesindedir.” TBMMZC, vol. 6, 14 December, 1920, p. 364

²⁰⁷ “Binaenaleyh Büyük Millet Meclisinin vazedeceği kanunlar dairesinde idare ederse, mahalli meclisleri şimdîye kadar yapılmış olan şeyden, fazla bir şey yapmış olmayacaklardır. Onun için buraya (Büyük Millet Meclisince vazedilecek hututu umumiyeyi gösterir kanunlar) diyelim ki hututu umumiyeye tayin olunduktan sonra her mahallin kabiliyetine, muktaziyet ve icabatına, temayülâtına ve ihtiyacı ruhisine tevfikân o kanunlarda gösterilen esasları tatbik etmek, mahalli meclislerine ait olsun.” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 6, 14 December, 1920, p. 374.

themselves. The extension of the right of the center to intervene in the local is incompatible with autonomy.²⁰⁸

Article 12 includes points addressing such issues as to how the provincial councils were elected and how long they would continue to convene. The controversial point about this article was whether the elections of councils of the provinces would be through single-staged election or not. Article 12 did not use the term “single-staged election.”²⁰⁹ The article was criticized and the disadvantages of the system of two-stage elections were discussed. What is interesting is that these criticisms were made in connection with the question of centralism. For example, Tahsin Bey, while arguing that “the elections should be directly held”, criticized the intervention of the central power in the elections. According to him:

If the term “the members who were elected by the people of the provinces” is used, it is necessary to use the term “the member who was directly elected by the people of the provinces”. Gentlemen, we have not been able to escape from influence since the beginning of the Constitution at all. We have not been able escape from the election of deputies under the influence of the order which was issued by the center. If you really want to collect deputies who will really represent this people and this “nation”, it is absolutely necessary to accept that the principle of the elections that are directly held for both the councils of provinces and the assembly of deputies.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ “*menafii isterse birkaç vilayata şamil olsun, o menafii mahalliyedir. Madem ki, mahalline aittir, merkezce idare edilemez. Menafii mahalliyeinin merekeze raptı, doğrudan doğruya vesayeti idariye tanımak demektir. Bu vesayet kabul edilirse yine ahali tarafından müntehap mümessiller marifetiyle icra ettirilmelidir. Mademki menafii mahalliyedir, İsterse 62 vilayata ait olsun, o kendi vilayatları arasında halledilecek bir meseledir, merkezin oraya hakkı müdahalesini tecviz etmek muhtariyetle kabili telif değildir.*” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol; 14.12.1920, p. 379.

²⁰⁹ Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 92.

²¹⁰ “*(Vilayetler halkınca müntahap azalar) denince (Vilayetler halkınca doğrudan doğruya müntahap aza)...demek zaruridir. Efendiler Meşrutiyetin iptidasından beri hiçbir vakit tesirden kurtulamadık. Merkezden verilen emrin tahtı tesirinde olarak mebus intihabından kurtulamadık. Eğer siz hakikaten bu milleti, bu ahaliyi temsil edecek mebus toplamak istiyorsanız, vilayet meclisleri için olsun, meclisi mebusan için, behemehal intihabatın doğrudan doğruya yapılması esasını kabul etmek lazım gelir.*” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol 6, 20 December, 1920, pp. 451-452.

Likewise, Musa Kazım Efendi, deputy from Konya, also saw that it was a question between centralism and decentralism. He thought that the reforms toward decentralization which had been introduced by the LFO were insufficient, and the reformation of the local organization toward decentralism in fact would require a change of organization of the entire government and of its fundamental functions and authorities; and that consequently they were on the threshold of a fundamental structural change. He stated his ideas as follows:

This article (article 12) is a step toward decentralism (*adem-i merkeziyet*). A step which would be taken by the Codes which would be enacted on the basis of this article should be precise and complete. Therefore it cannot be said that decentralism (*adem-i merkeziyet*), was established by alone this law. This (the Law of Fundamental Organization) is a guide. Whether we go toward centralism or toward decentralism with this law will be determined only by the code which after now will be enacted. However, even though the principles of the local codes are not presented by this law, the principles of the whole organization of the government, like interior, foreign, judicial, and health principles, were presented.”²¹¹

Article 13 stipulated that the members and the president of the executive committee of the council of the provinces would be determined only by election. The

²¹¹ “*Bu madde ademi merkeziyete doğru atılmış bir hatveden ibarettir. Bu madde üzerinde tanzim edilecek kavanin ile atılan hatvenin tam veya nakıs olmaması lazım gelir. (?) Binaenaleyh, şu kanunla doğrudan doğruya mahalli ademi merkeziyet temin edilmiş denemez. Bu bir rehber oluyor. Bu kanunla merkeziyete doğru veya ademi merkeziyete doğru gidildiği bundan sonra tanzim edilecek kanunla anlaşılacaktır. Yalnız kavanini mahalliye nin esaslarını şu kanunla vaz etmemiş olmamıza nazaran bilcümle teşkilatı hükümet esasında dahili, harici, adli, sıhhi esaslar vaz edilmiş oluyor.*” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 6, 14 December, 1920, p. 368.

Tunah Hilme Bey was of the opinion that decentralism was the only solution:

“Your friend, (he) who took the seed of decentralism with the reading the Sam letter of Mithat Pasha who was famous and known, and deserving of heaven, in the school desks, by chance went to Switzerland, which has been the center of decentralism for many centuries. As the result of my investigations and observations in practice there, what I reach, with my soul which is sensitive for my country, is that decentralism is the most influential, necessary, and useful solution for our country. However, the application of decentralism requires strict attention to the characteristics and natural talents of every country, local unity and people,and the other social aspects.”

“*cennetmekan Mithat Paşanın maruf ve meşhur olmuş olan Sam mektubunu mektep sıralarında okumakla bir ademi merkeziyet tohumu alan bu arkadaşınız tesadüfatı garibeden olmak üzere nice asırlık ademi merkeziyet merkezi olan İsviçre'ye düştü. Orada bilamel, bilfiil vaki tettebbüatın neticesi vasıl olduğum şey, memleketimin üzerine titreyen ruhumla akibet o neticeye vardım ki ademi merkeziyet: Bizim memleketimize en lazım ve en nafi, en keskin bir dermandır. Lakin bunun süveri tatbikiyesinide elbette her memleketin, her mahallin, her halkın temayülâtı ruhiyesi ve onun istidadı tabiiye, ..?. içtimaiye vesairesi düşünölmek icap eder.*” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 6, 22 December, 1920, p.485.

appointments of the officials of the provinces, decided by the center, were completely left to the will of the local people. For this reason, the article includes anti-bureaucratic meaning. It is also anti-centralist. This was the result of the common reaction against the bureaucratic and statist mentality of that period.

This reaction could be seen in the deliberations on the Law of Fundamental Organization. The deputies discussed ideas such as the establishment of the organization from the bottom-up, the establishment of the organization of the nation or the people instead of the organization of the state. For example, Vehbi Bey, the deputy from Karesi, stated these points in a speech:

The people do not have the power or a right to administer the country, not country, not even their own villages. For this reason, this great disorder which we see now has arisen...Even though the people, who try to constitute the state, try to establish an enormous building as much as it could, it was absolutely destroyed because they ignored the base. Instead of giving welfare and power to the villagers, putting in order of their administration and establishing an administration from the bottom-up with a strange mentality, we always started from the top. The organization in Istanbul, the organization in the centers, in the best possibility the organization, was made in the center of the big provinces. But all is state organization... there is absolutely no organization of the people or nation.²¹²

Necip Bey, deputy from Ertuğrul, too, criticized the old mentality of the administration and demanded that the interior affairs be given to the municipal governments. According to him:

The old style of administration.. sucking, oppressive, ramshackle, only takes but does not give anything to the people. It collects taxes, but does not give anything to the people, and even cannot provide internal and external security. I am fiercely in favour of the quick abolition of this old administration. God willing, we will put a better one in its place.

²¹² "Halk memleketin idaresi hususunda, memleketin değil, kendi köyünün idaresi hususunda dahi bir hak sahibi, bir söz sahibi değildir. Bunun için gördüğümüz keşmekeş meydana gelmiştir...Bu devleti tesis etmeğe uğraşanlar temeli ihmal ettikleri içindir ki ne kadar muazzam bir bina kurmağa çalışmışlarsa mutlaka yıkılmıştır. Evvela köylüleri terfih ve ikdar edipte, onların idaresini tanzim edipte aşağıdan yukarıya doğru idare yapacağımıza, tuhaf bir zihniyetle, daima yukardan başlamışız. İstanbul'da teşkilat merkezlerde teşkilat ve en çok olabilse olabilse büyük vilayat merkezinde yapılmış teşkilattır. Fakat hep devlet teşkilatı...Katiyen halk ve millet teşkilatı yok." TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 6, 14 December, 1920, p. 359.

However, even if we do not create a better one, we will not have any injury due to its abolition in general. Even if the phrase that “the interior administration belongs to the municipal governments” is used, it will be rather useful.²¹³

Article 14 of the FLO describes the duties of the position of governor, who is “the proxy and representative of the GNA”. This article also received criticism for furthering the intervention of the center to the local administrations. But if this article is assessed within the general context of the articles related to the provinces, it will be seen that the power of the governor and his position within the executive boards of the council of the province was limited and remained weak.²¹⁴

Article 15 arranged the counties (*kazas*) as a unit with only administrative and security functions. The article did not bestow a legal entity to counties.²¹⁵

Articles 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 of the Law of Fundamental Organization, all related to districts (*nahiyes*), describe districts as legal entities (*tüzel kişilikler*) with autonomy. The formation of the councils of the districts, the elections of executive committees and administrators of the districts were arranged as in the articles regarding provinces. But in one point there was a difference between them. Even though the Law of Fundamental Organization did not accept that the members of the council of provinces were to be “directly” elected, for the districts it decreed “the system of directly election”

²¹³ “Eski tarzı idare...Emici, ezici, köhne...yalnız alır, halka bir şey vermez. Vergi alır, fakat bir şey vermez, emniyeti dahiliye ve hariciyeyi bile temin edemez,... Bendeniz bu eski idarenin o kadar süratle kaldırılması taraftarıyım. İnşallah bunun yerine daha iyisini koyacağız Fakat komasam bile bunu alelülak kaldırmakla hiçbir zarar elde etmeyiz. Bilfarz “idarei dahiliye belediyelere aittir” denilse bundan daha iyi, daha ziyade idari olur.” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 6,14 December, 1920, p.362.

²¹⁴ Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 92. Tunalı Hilmi Bey makes an interpretation which refers to article 14, “this article establishes the decentralization in our country” and adds that “I am a person who has yearned for 25 years, perhaps 30 years. Thank God, at this moment I have reached my aim. I congratulate the Committee of Commissars, your esteemed assembly and also my nation.” “bu madde memleketimizde bir ademi merkezîyet tesis ediyor” “Ademi merkezîyete de yirmi beş, belki otuz senelik bir hasretzedeyim. Allahıma hamdül senalar ederim ki bu dakikada o hasretzedeye ve aynı zamanda o emelime kavuşuyorum. Heyeti Vekileyi, Meclisi Alinizi ve aynı zamanda milletimi tebrik ederim.”, TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 6, 22 December, 1920, p. 484

²¹⁵ Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 93

and used the phrase “ the council of the district consists of members who were ‘directly’ elected by the people of the district”. This system provides for the representation of the will of the people in the elected committees or in the elected bodies.²¹⁶ This approach reflected the opinion of the majority of the Assembly.

Moreover, differing from the articles regarding provinces, in Article 20, the Assembly gave the right to judge to districts, apart from the economic and financial powers.²¹⁷

Regarding who or which part of the Assembly supported this Law which aimed radically to reform the basic relation between the state and society, the Mustafa Kemal-led governing group was indifferent to the debates on the Law of Fundamental Organization. The indifference of the Committee of Executive Commissars was often criticized by the deputies who demanded their attendance at deliberations. For example, Hasan Basri Bey expressed this situation:

I see, and hopefully they will forgive me, that the Committee of Executive Commissars, which brought the Law of Fundamental Organization and Administration, is so little concerned with this law. Why does the Committee of Commissars not earnestly follow this law?...Why does the Committee of Commissars not show its intentions? So the committee makes the Law an orphan. Consequently, let us openly and persistently force the Committee of the Commissars to state their intentions and the points on which they have misgivings and hesitations.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 93.

²¹⁷ For Article 20, see Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 93. On the other hand, Article 13, which arrange the powers of the provinces, declared that the power to judge belonged to the central government.

²¹⁸ “Teşkilatı Esasiye ve idariye kanunun bize getiren Heyet-i Vekileyi -affederler- bu kanun ile pek az alakadar görüyorum. Ne için Heyet-i Vekile bu kanunun kemali ehemmiyetle takip etmiyor?...ne için Heyet-i Vekile fazla ehemmiyet vermek suretiyle maksatlarını meclisi aliye ızhar etmek lütfunda bulunmuyor? Bu kanun da meydan da yetim kalıyor. Binanenaleyh maksatları ne ise şüphe ve tereddüt edilen noktalar hakkında daima ızahatta bulunmak üzere Heyet-i Vekileyi tazyik edelim, gelsin, daima maksatlarını vazih olmak üzere söylesin” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 6, 22 December 1920, pp. 489-490.

The Position of the Groups in the GNA on Decentralism Versus Centralism

The draft law of the Governance of Villages and Districts (*Idare-i Kura ve Nevahi Kamun Tasarısı*) was prepared within the framework discussed above. Immediately following the Battle of Sakarya, it came onto the agenda of the GNA and became the subject of debate. Naturally, the debates on the articles of the draft law concentrated on technical details, which were different from the debates on the articles of the LFO related to local administrations. For this reason, the opportunity to give more information about decentralism is more limited to a great degree than above. Consequently, in this section, discussion will be limited to only the meaning of the draft law of the Governance of Villages and Districts for the two opposite approaches or mentalities observed in the ten to eleven months before the opening of the GNA and which continued to exist within the GNA later and the dominant position of the localist-populist approach on the debates regarding this draft law.

The approach which had localist and anti-bureaucratic, participatory features and defended bottom-to-top politics, after the opening of the GNA, came face to face with the centralist and bureaucratic political approach under. The former approach began to be more organized against the latter beginning in September 1921, the date the debate began on the draft law. Meanwhile, the governing group had been organized under the name the First Group (*Birinci Grup*) since May 10, 1921. The opponent group would declare it would manage its struggle against the governing group under the name of the Second Group (*Ikinci Grup*) only in the summer of 1922. Although there were two main, separate the groups in the GNA, it is difficult to claim that the ideological and mental differentiation between groups was clear. Some political adjectives attributed to these

groups might not be shared by some of people who took part in one or the other of the groups. This was especially true for the First Group.

When the debates on both the LFO and the draft law of the Governance of Villages and Districts are examined, it is seen that some of the deputies in the governing or Mustafa Kemal-led political group, and later in the First Group, expressed opinions in favour of the localist-populist approach and so of the LFO and the draft law the Governance of Villages and Districts as often as the opponent group did. This is some of the most significant evidence of the dominance of the localist, anti-bureaucratic, participatory and populist mentality in the GNA.

At this point, a description of the internal organization and structure of the First Group should be given. The First Group was organized under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. The common opinions of the First Group were directed by Mustafa Kemal. But it is quite possible that the deputies in the group did not have the same perspective or mentality about the local administrations as the leading cadres and especially as the leader of the group. However, it is clear that insistence on a different opinion could lead to dismissal from the group. The governing cadre and Mustafa Kemal did not enjoy the restrictions placed on the authority of the central power or the government, within which they operated, by the real exponents of the localist-populist discourse. Furthermore, it is useful to remember that after the Battle of Sakarya, the Mustafa Kemal-led political group's staying in power became inevitable.

On the other hand, the power of the Mustafa Kemal-led governing group was limited. This compelled Mustafa Kemal to act tolerantly and to compromise with both the opponent group and the deputies in the First Group who had almost the same mentality as the opponent group. Mustafa Kemal's taking a hard-line attitude towards these deputies

within the First Group have led to some of the deputies' leaving the group and a decrease in power of the First Group. Consequently he had to maintain his attitude of compromise.

Despite the compromises made, with time Mustafa Kemal was unable to prevent the resignation of some of the deputies from the First Group, perhaps due to the inadequacy of the dosage of his compromises or the deputies' recognition of his approach, which has not in harmony with the approach of the majority of the GNA. Toward the end of the National Struggle, the support of the deputies who were both in the First Group and in the Group of the Independents²¹⁹ for the opponent group (or later, the Second Group) increased. With time, the preferences of the Second Group, which neither had the power nor could direct the army, which was a determinant matter, can only be explained by the sharing of its political approach with an increasing number of deputies within the First Group. In short, the dominant political approach of that period was based on a localist-populist approach and for this reason, the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement had to be reconciled with the deputies both in the opponent group (later the Second Group) and in the First Group who defended this approach.

It is clear that the aim of Mustafa Kemal in establishing the First Group was to manipulate the influence of the opponents in the GNA. Furthermore, this control would include not only the opponent deputies but also the deputies within the First Group. This aim can be seen clearly in the Internal Regulations of the the Group for the Defense of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Grubu Dahili Nizamnamesi*), Article 5 of which declared that if the deputies of the First Group wanted to introduce a motion to the Assembly, they had to present this motion to the executive board (*heyet-i idare*) of the Group first. If the executive board approved the motion, it would be brought, together with the necessary information, onto the agenda of the general

²¹⁹ The deputies within the group of Independents had important numbers, around 90. Demirel, p. 128.

meeting of the First Group.²²⁰ Consequently, whether a motion was presented to the Assembly or not would be decided in the general meeting, even though this is not openly stated in the article.

In practical terms, this procedure meant that the deputies in the First Group could not present their motions without applying for the approval of the leadership cadre, or even the approval of the leader of the First Group. Therefore, if the arrangements in favour of Mustafa Kemal, both in the fundamental laws regarding the Assembly and in the LFO, and his dominance over the deputies, which was established through the First Group, are assessed together, how far the Assembly deviated from the System of the Dominance of the Assembly (*Meclis Üstünlüğü Sistemi*) is clearly seen.²²¹

Apart from the debate on whether the GNA was based on the System of the Dominance of Assembly or on the Dominance of Executive Department, it can be asserted that this arrangement in the internal regulation of the First Group was similar to the role of parties in political life and performed a function which made the activities of the assembly more efficient and organized, like parties. However, the same article, with an exception accorded for urgent situations, prevented the members of the First Group

²²⁰ For the article 5, see Unat, p. 14. A speech by Şerif Bey, the deputy of Edirne, who was a member of the executive committee of the First Group and responded to the criticisms of Hüseyin Avni Bey that stated the inheritance of the Defense of Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk*) belonged not only to the First Group, showed that the First Group was based on personal dominance or on leader dominance: "A focus which emerged from the genius of the whole nation joins the pure soul of Mustafa Kemal...Gentlemen, you misunderstand. There is no matter of Mustafa Kemal's presenting his personality. Only the Turkish nation has convened around him and this situation has arisen".

"*Ve bütün milletin dehasından doğan bir mihrak Mustafa Kemal Paşanın ruhu pakine iltihak etti...efendiler yanlış anlıyorsunuz. Mustafa Kemal'in vaz'ı şahsiyetinde hiçbir şey yok. Yalnız Türk milleti onun etrafında toplandı ve işte bu vaziyet meydana geldi*" TBMM Vakfı, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi* (Ankara: TBMM Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), pp. 295-296.

²²¹ T.B. Balta also states that the establishment of the First Group facilitated the efforts of the Mustafa Kemal-led group toward providing the dominance of the executive power over the Assembly: "Although the First Grand National Assembly consisted of very different elements, the influence and stability of the executive department was provided due to this group (the First Group) in the Assembly.

"*Birinci Büyük Millet Meclisinin pek tecanüssüz olan terekübüne rağmen, yürütme organının istikrar ve müessirliği, Meclisteki bu gruplaşma sayesinde temin edilmiştir.*" T.B. Balta, "Türkiye'de Yasama Yürütme Münasebeti", *İncelemeler* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1960), p. 3,

directly from presenting motions at their own general meetings. The article required that the members of the group must first present their motions to the executive committee of the First Group.²²² As seen, the direct expression of the deputies of the First Group within the group depended on the approval of the executive board.²²³

Moreover, Article 8 of the internal regulation specifies that under some conditions, the will or vote of the deputies of the group was unnecessary. According to the article, if urgent issues which were had not been discussed in the general meeting of the group were brought onto the agenda of the GNA to be put to the vote, the members of the group would obey the decision taken by the executive committee took, with no objection.²²⁴ If it is taken into consideration that the urgent situations being frequently brought onto the agenda of the GNA, which was very busy, was a strong possibility, it can be seen that the will of deputies was quite restricted, at least theoretically. On the other hand, it was a fact that after the rise of the opposition against the First Group, especially after the establishment of the Second Group, some deputies voted in favour of the Second Group.²²⁵

²²² Unat, p. 14.

²²³ Here, it should be stated that the decisions of the executive committee of the board were determined by Mustafa Kemal as the president of the executive committee. After a while, Mustafa Kemal constituted the "natural presidency" of the group. TBMM Vakfı, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi*, p. 299. In this situation, there were two presidencies in the organization of the group. "The Natural Presidency of Mustafa Kemal" cannot be discussed and does not need to be elected because of its natural status. The normal president of the group was determined by election. This system interestingly makes one recall the later one-party system in which Mustafa Kemal was the "Unchanged General President" (or *Ebedi Şef*) of the Republican People's Party.

²²⁴ For Article 8, see Unat, p. 14.

²²⁵ For example, they supported laws like one which included an amendment regarding the Law Regarding the Form of the Election of the Executive Commissars (*İcra Vekillerinin Suret-i İntihabatına Dair Kanun*) and was enacted in July 1922, or the Law for the Fundamental Rights and Personal Liberty (*Temel Haklar ve Hürriyet-i Şahsiye Kanunu*). These laws granted the control of legislative power to the executive power and the extension of the individual rights and was fiercely opposed by Mustafa Kemal and the First Group. Demirel, pp. 418 and 47. Deputies who supported the Second Group had a common approach in other issues with the Second Group as well. The opportunity for intervention of the leadership cadre of the First Group into these deputies was not great. The governing people, and especially Mustafa Kemal sought to avoid the loss of the support of these members of the Group. On the other hand, they tried to keep their members under the control. Since the increase of the opposition to the First Group in May 1922, some people who were close to Mustafa Kemal, like Ali (Çetıkaya) Bey established a secret committee under the

The basic features of the First Group within the framework of the activities of its leader cadre can be summarized as “to adopt a statist and bureaucratic tradition” and “to be the exponent of the extension of the authority of the state as much as possible”.²²⁶ Consequently, the logic of the regulations of the group was the product of this approach. The logic of the regulations of the group were also in harmony with the approach which was shown in the meetings of the Assembly by the leadership cadre of the group.

As a result, the First Group was a group which was organized with a person at the center, and was established to control the agenda of the Assembly. For this reason, it had a hard centralist organization within itself, but it could not realize this control both in the Assembly and within the group. The support of some of the members of the First Group for the Draft Law for the Administration of Villages and Districts, despite the opposition of the leadership cadre, is the most striking and meaningful evidence of this failure.

The realization of the Draft Law for the Administration of Villages and Districts and also of the articles of the FLO related to local administration depended on the existence of the Second Group in the GNA. Even though the governing group (the Mustafa Kemal-led group, later the First Group) played as an important role in the preparation of the LFO and also the draft law as the Second Group had, the members of the First Group could not help the draft law come onto the agenda of the Second Assembly. Likewise, the articles of the FLO related with local administrations which

name of the Liberation of the Whole Nation (*Selameti Umumiye*) in order to manipulate the members of the First Group. A letter which Rauf (Orbay) Bey sent to the Presidency of the GNA in 1926 stated that this committee existed and that Ali (Çetinkaya) Bey took place within it. Rauf Bey stated that this committee “abused the good will and trust of other members in the group (the First Group) and aimed to influence the decisions of the group through the dominance of minority. Demirel, p. 382. See also Ihsan Güneş, *Birinci TBMM'nin Düşünce Yapısı (1920-1923)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1997), pp. 178-179.

²²⁶ The phrases used in the quotation above belong to Kemal Karpat. Kemal Karpat, “Türkler (Cumhuriyet Devri)”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Eskişehir: MEB Devlet Kitapları, 1997), vol. 12/2, p. 394. In addition to Karpat's statement, it can be said that the First Group had a centralist and hierarchical approach.

were enacted by the members of the governing group and opponent group were abolished, within as little as one year after the closing of the First Assembly and after the eradication of the Second Group, by means of a constitutional amendment made by the second assembly which mostly consisted of the members of the First Group, and almost no members of the Second Group took place within.

Therefore the real supporters of the FLO and the Draft Law for the Administration of Villages and Districts, which was seen as the most revolutionary product of the Assembly, and of the localist-populist approach, was the Second Group.²²⁷ This point can be seen in the activities of the Second Group. With the amendment to the Law Regarding the Form of the Election of Executive Commissars, passed on July 8, 1922, the Assembly put an end to the previous system, in which the president of the Assembly had had a determinant role in the selection of the commissars, and adopted a system dominated by the will of the Assembly. This amendment was passed with the support of the Second Group.²²⁸

Likewise, the activities of the opponent deputies for the restriction of the dominance of one person upon the Assembly were carried out against the law of the Commander-in-Chief (*Başkumandanlık*). This law, which gave the right to use all of the authorities belonging to the Assembly to the president, had been granted by a large majority of the Assembly but the time of the validity of the law had been restricted to three months. Afterwards, the proposals for the protraction of the time frame of the law led to serious debates between the governing group and the opponent groups (later, the Second Group). Despite the debates, the law was protracted on November 5, 1921;

²²⁷ Şerif Mardin's interpretation is the same. Mardin assesses the Second Group as a movement which aimed to rescue from centralism and was supported by the notables (*eşraf*). For this reason, it was in conflict with the Kemalist Group. Mardin, "Türk Siyasetini Anlayacak Bir Anahtar: Merkez-Çevre İlişkileri," pp. 48-49.

²²⁸ Demirel, pp. 410-418

February 5, 1922; and May 4, 1922. But the decision for the last protraction was passed with great difficulty by the Assembly. In the end, the opponent group succeeded in amending the article of the law which gave these extraordinary authorities to Mustafa Kemal, on July 22, 1922.²²⁹

The Draft Law of the Administration of Villages and the Districts which was based on the articles of the LFO related to the administrations and was supported by the opponent deputies and the some deputies within the First Group, took place on the agenda of the Assembly as a vital issue, especially after the establishment of the Second Group. The support of the Second Group of the Draft Law is quite understandable because the Second Group had some characteristics in harmony with the basic principles of the draft law. The Second Group defended its goals, which Karpat gives as “to reform the bureaucracy radically and so to bring it into more practical and useful form”, “to eradicate some administrative troubles which affects the daily life of the people and so to constitute the conditions which will provide the people to develop itself mentally and physically”, and “to integrate the people and governance and to take decision according to the demands and needs of the people”.²³⁰

Actually the enactment of the draft law was necessary for the Assembly, which accepted the articles of the LFO in principle. Halil Ibrahim Bey, who had been a member of the First Group, but later passed to the Second Group, wrote that: “This law was already granted as a necessity of the LFO. Not to grant this draft law means to amend the first article of the LFO, which declares that sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the

²²⁹ Ibid., pp. 261-302; 432-435.

²³⁰ Kemal Karpat states that there are two different approaches of populism and accepts that the features given above within quotation marks were the basic features of the Second Group. Moreover, Karpat adds that the Second Group defended the dominance of Assembly against a dictatorial regime and the separation of the president of the GNA and the president of the government. Karpat, p. 394 .

nation.”²³¹

The approach which had been dominant in the preparation of the LFO continued during the debates on the draft law. Principles such as the restriction of the center as far as possible, the restriction of limit on the will of the people, extending the authority of the committees or organ which the people elected as far as possible were fundamental. On the debates on the draft law, which included 230 articles, these principles were defended and the articles of the draft law were interpreted within this framework.

In the deliberations on the draft law, the concepts which were most often voiced were “center” “central administration or government” “centralism”, “bureaucracy” “the class of officials”, and a negative meaning was attributed to these words. For instance, the debate on whether the authority of the districts to make regulations belonged to the districts or to the central government was concluded in favour of the districts, indicating that the deputies had an anti-centralist perspective. For example, Mazhar Bey, deputy from Aydın, asserted that not giving the authority to make regulations to the districts would only increase centralism. According to him:

Not giving the authority to administer themselves to the people with the formation of the Law of Districts could be thought of as putting them completely under the dominance of the center...the people of the districts should solve their problems, which are far away from the eyes of the general administrators, within their own regions, so they can really deserve prosperity and happiness...This is nothing but the biggest centralism and so it will lead to the bringing of many details into the Assembly...If that big power that we want to give to the councils of districts and sub-provinces and call it the “autonomy”, does not have the authority to make the regulation, it will lose all its power.²³²

²³¹ “bu kanun; TE Kanunu mucibince zaten kabul edilmiş demektir. Bunu kabul etmemek demek TE Kanunun birinci maddesini, hakimiyet bila kaydü şart milletindir, dediğine göre şu halde bu kanunu tadil etmek demektir” *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol.13, 24 September, 1921, p.9. Emir Pasha who was the deputy from Sivas, stated that the aim of the preparation of the Law is “to rescue the people from bullying and oppression.” *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol 14, 21 November, 1921, p. 282.

²³² “Teşkili Nevahi Kanunu ile ahaliye kendi haklarını kendileri rüyet etmek salahiyetini vermemek, onları tamamen merkeze raptetmek mahiyetinde telakki edilebilir. Merkeze kadar gelmeyen ve merkezlerindeki müdiranı umurun gözlerinden uzak olan bir çok işlerini nahiyeye halkı kendi muntakaları dahilinde halledebilmelidir ki hakikaten refah ve saadete mazhar olabilsinler...” “Bunun en büyük merkezîyetten başka bir şey olmayacağını ve pek çok teferruatın kamilen meclisten geçmesini intac edecektir.”

In the practices of the Assembly it can be seen that the Assembly had a tendency to protect the local units, especially smaller ones. Thus it was supposed to go far beyond the mentality of centralism. In the First Assembly, anti-centralism, or in other words, localism, was given priority over its other principles. For instance, one of the dominant principles was organs, the members of which were elected by the people, having complete authority. The Assembly had the tendency to give the fundamental authority to the unit which was lower, not the higher one, and preferred that the lower unit be limited by the upper as little as possible. For instance, the Assembly preferred that the authority of the provincial council (*vilayet meclisleri*) over the administration of villages, although the council consisted of people elected by the councils of the districts and villages, be limited on the grounds that the provincial council would not pay attention to the interests of the people of the villages.²³³

The same approach can be observed in the criticism of the articles regarding the inspection of the election of districts by the provincial councils. Müfid Bey, deputy from Kırşehir, criticized the inspection of the elections of the districts by the provincial councils and stated that such a inspection meant “going toward centralism, not to going toward the people.”²³⁴

In such a political atmosphere, every proposal, including an intervention of the organs belonging to the central power into the districts, was fiercely opposed. Emin Bey,

“Nahiyelere, livaların şuralarına vermek istediğimiz ve muhtariyet kelimesiyle ifade ettiğimiz o büyük nüfuz; nizamname yapacak kadar bir salahiyyete haiz olmazsa sıfıra müncer olmuştur.” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 13, 29 September 1921, pp. 59-60

²³³ Hakkı Hami Bey, deputy from Sinop, while debates on Article 4 of the draft law continued, stated his opinion on this subject: “the council of the province don’t have any opinion about the interests of any village at all. That opinion can not perceive the interests of that village, because only the people of that village can understand and assess the interest and detriment of the village.”

“vilayat şurası herhangi bir köyün menafii hakkında hiçbir zaman bir kanat yoktur. O kanaat o köyün menfaatine medar olamaz. Çünkü köyün menfaat ve mazarratını anlayacak ve takdir edecek ancak köyün ahalisidir.” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol.13, 6 October, 1921, p. 105.

²³⁴ TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 14, 21 November, 1921, pp. 280-281.

who later participated in the Second Group, objected to Article 51 of the draft law, and described the situation of an officials, who was assigned by the head official of a county (*Kaymakam*), presiding over the elections, as *hükümetçilik*.²³⁵ Likewise, Article 62 of the draft law, related to the attendance of the head official of the county (*Kaymakam*), or an official assigned by him, to the debates in the councils of the district, received criticisms from the deputies. Tunalı Hilmi Bey said that, “the *Kaymakam* should not be among the people who have become wearied by the government.” Hasan Basri Bey also said that, “if *kaymakams* take part in the deliberations of the district councils, I think these deliberations will not proceed impartially.” Zülfü Bey, raised an objection to the article: “we say ‘council’ on one side. On the other side, we bring *kaymakams* and integrate them together. This cannot be accepted.” After the objections, the abolition of the article was suggested and it was immediately abolished.²³⁶

Another striking example can be seen in the objection to Article 75 of the draft law, which included the sentence “if the governor thinks it is necessary, he can close the council temporarily.” Hüseyin Avni Bey found this objectionable: “while we try to provide for the council to dominate, we say ‘if the governor thinks it is necessary’. He every time will think it is necessary. What a strange thing is this? We certainly will not permit this article.” Hasan Basri Bey also criticized the article, saying: “consequently it is wrong to give this authority to the governors and in this way no district council can perform its duty. A district council which wants to criticize the government will

²³⁵ *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol. 18, 7 March, 1922, p. 87.

²³⁶ Tunalı Hilmi Bey’s statement: “*hükümetten yılmış bir halk içinde kaymakam bulunmamalıdır.*” Hasan Basri Bey’s statement: “*kaymakamlar nahiye şuraları müzakeratında bulunacak olurlarsa zannederim ki, bu müzakerat bitaraf bir halde cereyan edemez.*” Zülfü Bey’s statement: “*bir taraftan şura diyoruz. Diğer taraftan kaymakamları getirip şura ile tevhid ediyoruz. Bu katiyen caiz değildir.*” *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol.18, 21.3.1922, p.326. Later, Article 115, which arranged the intervention of *kaymakams* to the districts, was criticized within the same framework. *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol. 24, 26 October, 1338, pp.201-204.

immediately be dissolved and abolished (by the government).” The article was modified according to the proposal of Hüseyin Avni Bey.²³⁷

The anti-bureaucratic content of the draft law and its aim to eradicate all of the privileges of the bureaucracy was clearly stated in Article 84 of the draft law. Tahsin Bey expressed the aim of the draft law: “Actually the aim of the preparation of this draft law is completely to rescue the local affairs from the intervention of the officials of the center.”²³⁸ Mehmet Şükrü Bey asserted that all structures based on the bureaucracy should be destroyed. According to him: “After the enactment of the law of districts there will no longer be any need for today’s broad organization of the government. All affairs will be performed in the districts. There will be no affairs of provinces like today. Surely the organizations, which swallowed millions and were built on today’s bureaucracy, will be destroyed and have to be destroyed.”²³⁹

²³⁷ Hüseyin Avni Bey’s statement: “Efendim biz şurayı hakim kılmaya çalışırken (Vali lüzum görürse..) diyoruz. Her zaman vali lüzum görür. Bu nasıl şey? Katiyen bunu bırakmayız.”

Hasan Basri Bey’s statement: “Bineanaleyh bu salahiyeti valilere vermek hatadır ve bu suretle hiçbir nahiye şurası vazifesini ifa edemez. Hükümeti tenkit etmek isteyen bir nahiye şurası derhal feshedilir, dağıtılır.” *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol 20, 14 June, 1922, pp. 425-426.

The First Assembly tried to prevent any kind of intervention of the state apparatus or of the government into the provinces and districts. Another example is the debate on the intervention of attorneys into non-judicial elections. The problem was whether an attorney directly (without any complaint) could start an investigation in a non-judicial election or whether he needed a complaint at the beginning of his investigation. The deputies objected to the article with the argument that the investigation of an attorney without any complaint could lead to the intervention of government into any elections with which the government was not pleased. *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol 20, 14 June, 1922, pp. 413-414.

²³⁸ “Halbuki bu kanunu tanzimden maksat ahalinin mahalli hususatını tamamıyla memurini merkeziyenin müdahalesinden kurtarmaktır” *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol. 21, 28 June, 1922, p.112.

²³⁹ “Zaten Nahiye Kanunu ikmal edildikten sonra Hükümetin bugünkü vasi teşkilatına lüzum kalmayacaktır. Bütün işler nahiyelerde görülecektir. Vilayetlerin işi de bugünkü gibi olmayacaktır. Elbette milyonları yutan, bugünkü bürokrasi üzerine bina edilmiş olan teşkilatlar yıkılacaktır ve yıkılmak lazımdır” *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol. 25, 23 November, 1922, p.50. Besim Atalay, deputy from Kütahya, made an explanation in this framework: “Every governance which does not give importance and legal entity to villages, undoubtedly is groundless, unnatural and non-administrative. Consequently, the power of administration and the sovereignty of villagers will be provided in this way, namely by accepting their right to administer and by giving them legal entity. Until now, there has been so much injury because we have not given permission to the people to govern themselves. Friends! Two public classes have emerged. One of them is the peasant, the other is officials. The officials have plagued to the people, passed their time in taking the wealth of the people from their hands, and did not adopt the country. So today we present the duty of the administration to the peasant by leaving the peasant on his own, making the habit for the peasants to administer themselves.

“Köylere bir kaymet, köylülere bir şahsiyeti maneviye vermiyen her idare şüphesiz ki, esassızdır, gayriidari, gayritabiidir. Binaenaleyh, bu suretle köylünün idare hakkını tanımakla onlara şahsiyeti maneviye vermek,

Some deputies argued that this draft law had revolutionary content. Necip Bey saw that the LFO and the draft law were the pre-conditions of a social revolution. According to him:

We did not come here for only military struggle. We came to make social revolution, and if the social revolution does not happen, the military revolution or military struggle cannot be prevented. Today it may finish, but tomorrow it will appear again. Its roots stand. We have to make social revolution in order to put an end to the military struggles. The law of districts will realize this aim. The law of election will realize it...If we go without enacting the law of districts and the law of election, we will not have any work in our hand, which will prove that we understood the mental and material needs of the country.²⁴⁰

The deputies frequently stated that the draft law would be the most important law to protect the interests of the people. At times they also stated that the draft law should be enacted before finishing the time of the meeting of the first Assembly. However, the draft law, for which the governing group did not care, could not be enacted within the period of the First Assembly.²⁴¹

Toward the end of the period of the First Assembly, the Second Group brought a motion onto the agenda of the Assembly with the aim of preventing the intervention of the Mustafa Kemal-led group, namely the governing group, into the election for the GNA

onların idare ve hakimiyet kuvvetini temin etmektir. Şimdiye kadar bizde halkı kendi kendine idareye bırakmamakla yaptığımız zararlar pek büyüktür. Arkadaşlar! İki sınıf halk hasıl olmuştu. Birisi köylü, diğeri memurin. Memurin, halkın üzerine musallat olmakla, onların servetini ellerinden almakla vakit geçiriyorlar, memleketi benimsemiyorlar, köylüyü bugün kendi haline bırakmakla, kendi kendilerini idare etmeye köylüyü alıştırmakla vazifei idariyeyi köylüye tevdi etmiş oluyoruz.” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 13, 24 September, 1921, p. 17.

²⁴⁰ *”Biz buraya yalnız askeri mücadele etmeye gelmedik. İnkılabı içtima i yapmaya geldik, inkılabı içtimai olmazsa inkılabı askerinin ve askeri mücadelenin arkası kesilmez. Bugün biter, yarın yine çıkar. Kökü duruyor. Askeri mücadelelere nihayet vermek için inkılabı içtimai yapmaya mecburuz. Bunu da ancak nevahi kanunu yapacaktır. İntihab Kanununun yapacaktır... Eğer biz Nevahi Kanununu ve İntihap Kanununu çıkarmadan gidersek elimizde, memleketin maddi ve manevi ihtiyaçlarını anladığımızı ispat edecek bir eserimiz bulunmayacaktır.” TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 25, 23 November, 1922, p. 55.*

²⁴¹ The indifference of the government to the draft law was depicted by Refik Bey: “This law is such an unlucky law that even though it is related to the future of the nation and it is concerns all of the members of the Committee of Commissars (*Heyet-i Vekile*), none of the members of it is present. For example, this article is concern with the administration of justice. Moreover there are examples concerned with interior administration. Is there a commissar? Have they come? Did they even send any of their undersecretaries (*müsteşars*) TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 26, 15 January, 1923, p. 374.

through the civilian and military bureaucracy. It aimed to modify the Law of Election.²⁴² However, after some important articles of the motion were amended, the motion was passed. The motion stipulated that unless officials (with the exception of teachers), officers, attorneys and judges resigned from their official duties fifteen days before any election in which they sought to participate, they would not have the right to vote or to be elected. With the efforts of the First Group, this article was modified. According to it, officials and officers had the right to vote and to be elected, even if they had not resigned from their official duties.²⁴³ Moreover, the motion suggested that the execution of the Law of the Election would be made by the Assembly in order to hinder the manipulation of the government. But, with the objection of some deputies of the First Group, it was granted that the duty of the execution of the law would belong to the Executive Commissars, namely the government.²⁴⁴

The most striking action by the governing group was realized with an amendment to the Law of Treason (*Hıyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu*). The amendment made it almost impossible for political groups and organizations outside of the First Group to continue their activities and for them to participate in the elections as rivals to the First Group²⁴⁵ Therefore, the Second Group took a decision not to participate in the elections in order to protest the governing group. In the end, only one person, and he was an independent candidate in the elections, was able to enter into the Second Assembly. 114 deputies who had been the members of the First Group were re-elected. Thus some deputies of the First

²⁴² The motion aimed to modify the Temporary Law for the Election of the Deputies (*İntihabı Mebusan Kanunu Muvakkatı*) and consisted of 18 articles. It was proposed by Süleyman Necati (Erzurum) Salahaddin (Mersin) ve Emin (Canik) Beys, who were the leaders of the Second Group. *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol 28, 3 April, 1922, pp. 322-324.

²⁴³ *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol. 28, 3 April, 1922, pp. 324-327.

²⁴⁴ *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, vol 28, 3 April, 1922, p. 348

²⁴⁵ Ahmet Demirel, *Ali Şükrü Bey'in Tan Gazetesi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), p. 29.

Group, who most probably were those who had sometimes supported the Second Group, were purged.²⁴⁶

The purging of the Second Group meant that all of the efforts for the decentralist, localist and populist governance were put aside. This was first seen in the forgetting of the Draft for the Law of the Administration of the Villages and Districts. The Draft was not brought onto the agenda of the Second Assembly.

Second, the articles of the LFO related to local administration were abolished by the Second Assembly. The provincial and district councils were not given a place in the new constitution, which was ratified on April 4, 1924. The Constitution of 1924 only had three articles concerned with the local administrations. One of them was Article 90. Even though both Article 90 declared that the provinces, cities, counties and villages were legal entities and another Article 91, declared that the affairs of the provinces would be governed according to the principle of extending (delegated) powers (*tevsi mezuniyet*) and distinguishing between functions (*tefrik-i vezâif*), which seemed sympathetic to decentralism. These were just a formality and indicated that the center completely ignored the local administrations.²⁴⁷

The Constitution of 1924 is a significant sign of the ending of the local-populist approach, which had been transferred from the experience of the local congresses and

²⁴⁶ Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet*, p. 571-574. None of the members of the Second Group were able to enter the Second Assembly. *Ibid.*, p. 591. The people who were re-elected to the Second Assembly were mostly those preferred from the soldiers. *Ibid.*, p. 595. Demirel, *Ali Şükrü Bey'in Tan Gazetesi*, pp. 29-30. Hıfzı Veldet (Velidedeoğlu) states that even though it seemed that in every province the election had been held, the election in April 1923 had been only a formality; the candidates of the deputies had been determined by the center, and these candidates had not been presented for the election by the people, but just for the approval of the people. Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *İlk Meclis-Milli Mücadele'de Anadolu* (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1990), p. 246.

²⁴⁷ For the three articles, see Kili and Gözübüyük, p. 128.

organizations and had been the dominant mentality in the First Assembly from the opening of the GNA.²⁴⁸

In short, the GNA was an arena of conflict between the decentralist-localist and populist approach, which showed itself in the establishment of the judicial-political system of the GNA and in the some foundational laws. The Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement, which was centralist, tried to impose its own authority on the country.

²⁴⁸ Attila Nalbant asserts that the approach of Ottoman governance was maintained on by the Constitution of 1924 and this point can be especially seen in the articles related to the separation of function and municipality. Nalbant, p. 165.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, it was asserted that there was conflict between the local organizations and the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement, which would become the new political center of the country at the era of Turkish National Struggle. It was claimed that the conflict between a new center and the bodies which existed in its periphery, at the same time was a conflict of approach or of mentality, and the presence of this conflict of mentality was examined. In other words, the local organizations or societies had a decentralist-localist and populist approach, and occupied a position against the mentality of the Ottoman political tradition, which was centralist, bureaucratic and statist, even though they obviously did not react against the Ottoman central power. But their practices and their proposals to realize a decentralist-localist and populist approach included an approach of local democracy. For this aim, they demanded that the local councils and electoral mechanisms be realized. However that these demands and mentalities' included some "democratic" elements is not to say that the people who took part in these local organizations were democratic. Looking for democrats in that period from the perspective of today would be wrong or anachronistic. Yet their struggle to rescue their society and to bring an end to the catastrophes of the country remain impressive and attractive even to people today.

The Mustafa Kemal-led National (or Political) Movement, however, even though it shared the same discourse with the local organizations, had a very different approach from that of the local organizations. It represented the mentality of the traditional power center even though it was in opposition against that center. This difference can be seen in its practices and the decisions which were taken and implemented. The conflict between these two approaches ended with the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement's establishing its own authority. In the end, the decentralist-localist and populist approach was "purged".

While studying the story of the conflict, two main theses about the history of the Turkish National Struggle were discussed. One of these theses, in detail, showed the existence of the local organizations and societies, and defined their approach. The other asserts that these organizations were Unionist organizations, although no difference was found between the approach of these organizations and that of the Unionists. In this paper, contrary to this theory, it is asserted that the political approach in the local organizations and congresses was not the same as or similar to, and even conflicted with, that, of the Unionists. It was found that the approach of the Unionists was similar to that of the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement.

However, because the presence of the Unionists in the local organizations was an undeniable reality, how these two different approaches coexisted has to be explained. Moreover, how the decentralist-localist and populist approach spread throughout the era and stamped itself on the Grand National Assembly has to be explained. For this reason, in this paper, a synthesis of the two different theories was undertaken. According to my findings, some of the Unionists, even though they argued for the decentralist-localist and populist approach, indeed, maintained their old mentality, like Enverian group. Another part of the Unionists seemed to adopt the decentralist-localist and populist approach, at

least in discourse. They took part in the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement which would establish its own power. Other Unionists took part in local movements and showed opposition against the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and Enverian group.

The first part of the thesis strove to prove this point, taking Erzurum as an example, and discussed how the Unionists in Erzurum changed and began to argue the decentralist-localist and populist approach, and managed a movement of opposition against both the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and the Enverians.

Actually, the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement did not experience reaction only from Erzurum. Reactions were seen in other Anatolian provinces, especially in Trabzon. In the second chapter, it was shown that while the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement dealt with forming a new political center in Anatolia, the local organizations in the periphery reacted against the alternative political center. The reactions against the Mustafa Kemal-led National movement did not increase (or decrease) linearly; most changed according to the successes or the failures of the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. However, they, always, had the tendency to maintain their autonomy. When the pressure of the new center increased, they compromised. But it should be stronger ones did not avoid entering into obvious conflict.

To see this conflict more clearly, the era of the GNA is significant. The opening of the GNA was an important step for the establishment of the authority of the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement. On the other hand, the GNA was also a place in which the local representatives were powerful. With the support of the local representatives, the GNA adopted the decentralist-localist and populist approach and enacted a foundational law which had been prepared with this approach. It should be also remembered that, in the same period, an attempt in Erzurum to establish a People's Government with the support of the Erzurum deputies was made.

In other words, the First Assembly was an arena in which two different mentalities struggled with each other. The government system of the First Assembly was the System of Assembly Government (*Meclis Hükümeti Sistemi*), which many law theoreticians accepted. In general, the System of the Assembly Government has been praised by historians and the constitution theoreticians because it was a product of the revolutionary period and gave the opportunity of the representatives of the people to use all of the authorities of the power. In general, all the features of the Assembly, like “revolutionary, populist, and democratic”, have been attributed to the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and its power. However, in this thesis it was asserted that this characteristic of the First Assembly was the product of the local Representatives and of the mentality that originated in the local organizations and congresses, which had been in conflict with the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and pursued that conflict under the roof of the GNA. Furthermore, although the System of the Assembly Government was the product of the decentralist-localist and populist approach, it served the power group or was used by it. Here, it is emphasized that this system empowered the authority of the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement and the personal authority of Mustafa Kemal, and for this reason, the opposition group began to argue for the System of Parliamentary Government instead of the Assembly Government System.

The Law of Foundational Organization (LFO) here is very crucial to understanding the dimensions of the conflict between these two mentalities. I ascertained that the LFO was an important sign of these conflicting mentalities. The first ten articles of the LFO include the authority of the Assembly, of the president of the GNA and of the Committee of Commissars. As a result of the System of the Assembly Government, it was seen that all these articles increased enormously the authority of one person, namely the president of the Assembly. The president of the Assembly was empowered by the

authority belonging to the Assembly and it was that authority, which gave him the opportunity to determine the formation of the execution department.

The other articles of the LFO were related with the local administrations. These articles offered the realization of the local councils in the districts and the provinces. Consequently they were aimed at the administration in the local units to be managed through the electoral mechanisms or ways. However, there was a difference in the articles which were useful for the power group and those that the opposition group supported. The first ten articles were put into in practice immediately and helped the power group. Other articles, from 11 to 22, which were supported by opposition group and by the deputies in the Assembly who had adopted the decentralist-localist and populist approach, were only realized in the enactment of the laws related to villages, districts and province within time. These articles were just criteria for the activities of the Assembly in future. This point was emphasized in particular in the third chapter of the thesis.

The Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement was organized well within the process of the GNA. The establishment of the First Group was a significant phase in the development of the Movement. Its significance springs not only from controlling the deputies in the Assembly but also from its showing the real political mentality of the Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement. The structure of the organization of the First Group foreshadowed the People's Party in the 1930s. For this reason, the internal structure of the First Group was discussed in the second chapter, arguing that the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement was not the same, or even similar to, the decentralist-localist and populist approach. The Movement rose in the period when the country was experiencing a decentralization process. The Mustafa Kemal-led Political Movement was a candidate for the new centralization process in the country. It carried out its role with success until the establishment of the First Group. And in the long term, it was not

possible for the Group to agree with the exponents of the decentralist-localist and populist approach which demanded the establishment of the local councils in local units. In the end, the process was completed to the disadvantage of the decentralist-localist, populist approach.

In short, here, I tried to show and to prove that there was a conflict between this centralist, bureaucratic body (or organization) and the bodies (or organizations) which were decentralist, localist and populist in the Turkish National Struggle era.

Clearly, more detailed study on the dimensions of the decentralist-localist and populist approach, and the changing identity of the Unionists, concentrating on the local units in the period under question is needed. This kind of study will require a thorough examination of the newspapers in peripheral regions, like *Albayrak* and *İstikbal*, of the era. Even the newspapers in İstanbul can offer significant information about this subject.

Nevertheless, I feel that I have shown how the identity of the Unionists changed over time and in response to circumstances, and that the degree of conflict within the National Struggle Movement has been revealed. In particular, I tried to prove that the conflict within the National Struggle Movement was a conflict between different mentalities. In the history of the Turkish National Struggle, only a few historians put emphasis on the decentralist-localist populist approach. A part of them see that this approach was shared by all of National Struggle movements in that period. Only Tekeli and İkin discuss the subject as a conflict between the Mustafa Kemal-led National Movement and the local organizations. In this paper, this conflict was examined this conflict throughout the era of the Turkish National Struggle, and especially its effects on the GNA. Thus a picture was given of the increasing process of centralization, which would reach its height in the Republican era.

The stress on this conflict also shows that an alternative political approach, which almost opposed the traditional political approach, and was so exceptional for Turkish political tradition, was insisted upon by the people of this country at one point in its history. It is obvious that some features of this decentralist-localist and populist approach are, still, very desirable and valid for the people of today.

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