

# Bourgeois revolution in Turkey (1908-1923)

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*There was a revolution in Turkey: The bourgeois revolution.  
This revolution was a step forward in the course of  
Turkey's historical development, but it was not the last step.<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction

There has been a bourgeois revolution in Turkey; 1908 was the first and 1923 the final stage of this revolution. However, the revolution is a product of class struggles that spread over an even longer period of time, and emerged in the process of the development of capitalism.<sup>2</sup> In this article we will discuss the main stages of these struggles and the making of the bourgeois revolutions of 1908 and 1923. There are some very competent studies on the question of the bourgeois revolution in Turkey and the revolutions of 1908 and 1923.<sup>3</sup> We will proceed through the framework

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1 Nazım Hikmet, “Türkiye’de Amele Sınıfı ve Amele Meselesi”, *Yazılar [Articles] (1924-1934), Yazılar 2*, İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 2001 [1991], pp. 9-12.

2 E.P. Thompson, in his intervention in the debate on the bourgeois revolution in Britain in the 1960s, sees the bourgeois revolution as a long-term process interwoven with class struggles (“pieces of that great arch which in fact, in the epochal sense, make up the bourgeois revolution”), E.P. Thompson, “The Peculiarities of the English”, *The Socialist Register*, vol. 2, 1965, p. 321. In this sense, our analysis follows Thompson’s perspective.

3 Sungur Savran, *Türkiye’de Sınıf Mücadeleleri, Vol I: 1908-1980*, İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2016

laid out by these studies, but unlike them, we will pay more attention to the making of the bourgeoisie, intra-class and inter-class conflicts, and especially to the legal regulations that these conflicts have produced; in other words, we will discuss the making of the bourgeois revolution through the making of bourgeois law. Focusing on the making of bourgeois law will allow us to reveal the struggles within the bourgeois class as well as the struggles between classes, and in this way we hope to develop a different perspective on Turkey's long bourgeois revolution.

### **The making of the bourgeoisie in the Ottoman Empire<sup>4</sup>**

As in other parts of the world, developments of a capitalist nature began to emerge in the Ottoman geography in the eighteenth century (before Britain began to dominate the world economy), albeit with different rhythms.<sup>5</sup> The underlying dynamics here emerged through domestic trade in the context of the provisioning of Istanbul and other cities, and through foreign trade developing in response to the dynamism in the European market; however, it is also necessary to take into account the dynamics triggered by the transformations in the Ottoman public finance that made the tax-farming system dominant, covering economic activities in agriculture, craftsmanship, manufacturing industry, mining and trade, and even to underline that the capitalist development specific to the Ottoman geography was a development dependent on the financial sector operating through the public finance. The literature on Ottoman economic history agrees that a new "entrepreneurial" class emerged in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century within such a context.<sup>6</sup> However, entrepreneurship was not something new in the Ottoman geography; what was new in the eighteenth century was the change in the nature/structure of the entrepreneur: The new "entrepreneurial" class, coming from among the local notables and fed by the tax-farming system, began to overtake the old entrepreneurial class, which in the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries consisted of the ruling classes associated with the central bureaucracy.<sup>7</sup> These old and new entrepreneurs did not develop

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(1992), pp. 51-166; Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, *Yol Kitap 2: Yakın Tarihten Birkaç Madde*, İstanbul: Sosyal İnsan Yayınları, 2009; Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, *Türkiye'de Kapitalizmin Gelişimi*, İstanbul: Sosyal İnsan Yayınları, 2007 [1965].

4 In this section we follow the framework we developed in our previous article, see Alp Yücel Kaya, "Balkanlar ve Batı Anadolu'da İlk Birikimin Gelişimi (1839-1914)", *Devrimci Marksizm*, no 45-46, 2021, pp. 11-66.

5 Elena Frangakis Syrett, *Trade and Money: the Ottoman Economy in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, İstanbul: Isis Press, 2007; Elena Frangakis Syrett, *The Port-City in the Ottoman Middle East at the Age of Imperialism*, İstanbul: Isis Press, 2017; Özer Ergenç, *Osmanlı Tarihi Yazıları: Şehir, Toplum, Devlet*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2013.

6 Gilles Veinstein, "Çiftlik Tartışması Üzerine", *Osmanlı Toprak Mülkiyeti ve Ticari Tarım*, Çağlar Keyder and Faruk Tabak (Eds.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998, pp. 36-38; Özer Ergenç, "18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Taşrasında Yerel İlişkilerin Yeniden Şekillenmesi" (unpublished paper), 21. CIEPO Symposium, Budapest 7-11 October 2014.

7 Halil İncalcık, "Çiftliklerin Doğuşu: Devlet, Toprak Sahipleri ve Kiracılar", *Osmanlı Toprak Mülkiyeti ve Ticari Tarım*, Çağlar Keyder and Faruk Tabak (Eds.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998, p. 21; Halil İncalcık, "Centralization and Decentralization in the Ottoman Administration",

independently of each other; what tied them together, especially the latter, was the proliferation of the tax-farming system and the *malikâne* system that emerged when some *mukataas* (tax units) began to be farmed out on a lifetime basis. “The *malikâne* owners were a group of bureaucrats, soldiers and ulemas, the majority of whom resided in Istanbul, numbering around 1,000, and whose connection with the central authority was close to the point of identity”.<sup>8</sup> However, the owners of the *malikâne* did not undertake the management of the *mukataa* themselves, but farming them out; in this way, the tax-farmers involved in the system consisted of the notables of the provinces in the *mukataa* region, thus constituting a multi-layered subcontracting relationship and networks. One pole of this relationship is composed of a capitalist class, which we call bourgeois-bureaucrats (composed of pashas depending on the central bureaucracy and being in office either in the center or in the provinces), whose “connection with the central authority was close to the degree of identity”, and the other pole is composed of a capitalist class, which we call the provincial bourgeoisie (composed of local notables coming from local dynasties or parvenus), which develops as a “new type of entrepreneur” in the provinces.<sup>9</sup> In sum, the tax-farming system played a decisive role in the transformation of the entrepreneurial classes and the emergence of the bourgeoisie in the Ottoman geography, which conditioned the bourgeoisie’s dominance in finance and trade as well as the organization of production. On the other hand, this system, which made capitalist development possible, also harbored intra-class conflict dynamics within the capitalist class.<sup>10</sup> The dynamics of the conflict and struggle between them are quite clearly revealed by Mehmet Genç:

As a highly integrated social group identified with the central authority and capable of acting jointly in terms of unity of interests, communication and solidarity, the owners of the *malikâne*, as a highly integrated social group, determined their proportional share of the tax revenue at the end of a struggle with the tax farmer notables, another group that had influence in local social relations and made extensive use of this influence in terms of efficiency in taxation, such as knowing the region, receiving information and being able to use appropriate personnel cheaply...<sup>11</sup>

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*Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Eds.), Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977, p. 41, 366; Halil İnalçık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700”, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, no 6, 1980, p. 329.

8 Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, First Edition, Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2000, p. 167.

9 According to estimates based on tax-farms, the number of Istanbul-based entrepreneurs during the 18th century ranged between 1,000 and 2,000, while the number of provincial entrepreneurs with all their elements ranged between 5,000 and 10,000, see Ariel Salzmann, “An Ancien Régime Revisited: ‘Privatisation’ and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire”, *Politics and Society*, vol. 21, no 4, 1993, p. 402.

10 Rifa’at Ali Abou-el-Haj, *Modern Devletin Doğası, 16. Yüzyıldan 18. Yüzyıla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, trans. by Oktay Özel and Canay Şahin, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2000, p. 121.

11 Genç, *The Ottoman Empire...*, p. 168.

Confiscations observed regularly during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be read as a reflection of the bourgeois-bureaucrats' political power and a practice they resorted to when the balance in this struggle tipped against them.<sup>12</sup> The first effective intervention of the bourgeois-bureaucrats to regain the economic and political power that was slipping out of their hands was the reforms introduced under the heading of *Nizam-ı Cedid* (New Regime) at the end of the eighteenth century. In this period, large and highly profitable *mukataas* were removed from the *malikâne* system, and at the same time, second-hand farming out of *mukataas* was tried to be prevented. It should also be underlined that the number of landed estates (*çiftlik*s) gradually began to increase among the *mukataas* that were seized and administered by the Imperial Treasury in the 1780s.<sup>13</sup> In this way, both the economic resources of the provincial bourgeoisie began to shrink and a new investment portfolio for the bourgeois-bureaucrats began to emerge, a development that would ensure that the investments of the bourgeois-bureaucrats in landed estates would be especially significant in the *Tanzimat* (Reforms) period starting from 1839 onwards. These and similar unsettling interventions resulted in the mobilization of the provincial bourgeoisie and the signature of a settlement called the *Sened-i İttifak* (Charter of Alliance) in 1808, which emphasized their partnership with the central power. This power partnership was short-lived as Bayraktar Mustafa Pasha, who served as the grand vizier and was the representative of local forces, was killed in the uprising that broke out in the same year. Afterwards, the interventions of bourgeois-bureaucrats became more dominant.<sup>14</sup>

In this context, mentioning Katipzade Mehmed Efendi, the voivode of Izmir, will be useful to illustrate the economic and political dynamics of the period as well as the intensity of the intra-class struggle. Despite all the prohibitions imposed by the Ottoman central administration during the war with Britain (1807-1809), Katipzade continued to be in close contact with the Levant Company, which monopolized British trade with the Ottoman Empire. In response to the order from the capital to identify and confiscate all British goods in Izmir, voivode Katipzade not only reported that "no British goods or the like were detected in Izmir", but also protected British goods and sent them to their owners on his own chartered ships. Later, at Katipzade's request, he was even granted permission by the British government to export cotton from Izmir to Trieste in exchange for this cooperation. There is evidence that Katipzade also cooperated with American merchants. As evidenced

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12 Yuzo Nagata, *Tarihte Ayanlar, Karaosmanoğulları Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1997, pp. 26-33.

13 Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi (XVIII. yüzyıldan Tanzimat'a Mali Tarih)*, İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986, pp. 102-103.

14 Although we cannot go into detail here, we should note that the artisan classes (intertwined with the Janissary Corps), which had begun to dissolve due to competition from European manufactured goods, also became a hindrance to the bourgeois-bureaucrats who took it upon themselves to remove the obstacles to marketization; the liquidation of these classes, which emerged as a strong focus of opposition within the context of the events of 1808, was to take place with the dissolution of the Janissary Corps in 1826.

by the drowning of Katipzade by the Admiral in chief Koca Hüsrev Pasha on a ship in the gulf of Izmir in 1816, the bourgeois-bureaucrats did not tolerate such self-interested initiatives of the provincial bourgeoisie, which were not very sharing.<sup>15</sup>

The real blow to the notables in the provinces came with the granting of *mukataas* to bourgeois-bureaucrats. The *mukataas*, the control of which was transferred to the central treasury, began to be granted to centrally appointed governors, trustees, and voivodes from 1811 to 1839.<sup>16</sup> In the meantime, the process that began with *Nizam-ı Cedid* should also be seen as the bourgeois-bureaucrats changing their shells (we must also think about an intra-class struggle centered in Istanbul): In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the entrepreneurial bourgeois-bureaucrats depending on the “households” of viziers and pashas who rose through the ownership of *malikâne* were replaced by individual bourgeois-bureaucrats who rose through farming out *mukataas*.<sup>17</sup> As a result of this process, “the central state and those acting on its behalf, which became the sole distributor of all tax-farms in the first half of the nineteenth century, succeeded in controlling to a great extent the rents previously received by the *malikâne* owners and provincial notables”.<sup>18</sup> However, the fact that this control was not fully achieved is evident from the fact that the bourgeois-bureaucrats declared (with the Edict of Gülhane proclaiming the reforms in 1839) that the system of tax-farming was “nothing but injustice and cruelty ... for those who look after their own interests”.<sup>19</sup> In this case, by abolishing the system in 1839, they would even attempt to cut the branch they themselves were riding on. Of course, the financial crisis of 1840-1842 led to a compromise with the political crisis, and tax-farming was reintroduced in 1842, again under the reins of the bourgeois-bureaucrats.<sup>20</sup>

15 Gülay Tulaşoğlu’s research from US and British archival sources is very important in terms of revealing Katipzade’s activities that do not appear in the Ottoman archives, see Gülay Tulaşoğlu, “Merkezi Kısıtlamalar Yerel Özgürlükler: İzmir Voyvodası Katipzade Mehmed Efendi” *İzmir Belediyesi’nin 150. Kuruluş Yıldönümünde Uluslararası Yerel Yönetimler Demokrasi ve İzmir Sempozyumu, 15-16-17 Kasım 2018, Bildiriler*, Izmir: İzmir Akdeniz Akademisi, 2019.

16 Mehmet Genç, “İltizam”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (TDV) İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 22, Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2000, p. 157. It should also be noted that the centralization of the administration of pious foundations under the *Nezaret-i Evkaf-ı Hümayun* (Ministry of Imperial Waqfs), established in 1826, was a development in the same direction.

17 We will not go into detail here, but it must be said that this transformation is very important for discussing the making of the bourgeois-bureaucrats. The pioneering work on the vizier and pasha households is by Rifa’at Ali Abou-el-Haj: “The Ottoman Vezir and Pasa Households 1683-1703: A Preliminary Report”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 89, no. 3, 1974, pp. 467-475. For an important study of the transition to the dominance of households in Ottoman society under the title of *Second Empire*, see Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. On the shell change that we briefly mentioned, see also Fatma Eda Çelik, *Kişisel İktidardan Millet Meclisine Saltanattan Cumhuriyete*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2022, pp. 248-251, 256.

18 Genç, “İltizam”, p. 157.

19 “Tanzimat Fermanı (3 Kasım 1839)”, *Tanzimat (Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu)*, Halil İnalçık and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu (Eds.), Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2006, p. 2.

20 Alp Yücel Kaya, “In the Hinterland of Izmir: Mid-Nineteenth Century Traders Facing a New

As we mentioned above, capitalist development specific to the Ottoman geography was dependent on the financial sector through public finance. In this framework, we should not forget the banker-merchants<sup>21</sup> who played a key role in the tax-farming system and financed the investments of bourgeois factions.<sup>22</sup> However, the banker-merchants representing the financial bourgeoisie remained in the shadow of other bourgeois factions. The struggle is primarily between the bourgeois-bureaucrats and the provincial bourgeoisie, and the fate of the banker-merchants depends on who they cooperate with in the struggle for power. It can be easily generalized that the bourgeois-bureaucrats were closely aligned with *haute finance* (Galata bankers) and the provincial bourgeoisie with *petite finance*. Although the tax-farming system was abolished between 1839 and 1842, the banker-merchants in collaboration with the bourgeois-bureaucrats continued to play an important role in the public finance and financial system through the issuance of bills of exchange;<sup>23</sup> and thanks to the continuing collaboration they succeeded in managing the tax-farming system between 1842 and 1852 with the Anatolia and Rumeli Companies they established.<sup>24</sup> When the central governments started to auction the tithes (*öşür*) revenues after 1842, the bourgeois-bureaucrats squeezed the provincial bourgeoisie through the banker-merchants; such an offensive even led to investments in landed estates among the banker-merchants.<sup>25</sup> The other intervention of the bourgeois-bureaucrats and the banker-merchants, both in collaboration against the provincial bourgeoisie, was through the usury bylaws (dated 1848, 1852, and 1864) regulating the local credit markets. These bylaws not only aimed at disintegrating the local power network on which the provincial bourgeoisie was based, but also at redirecting local borrowing from the provincial

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Type of Fiscal Practice”, *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, Suraiya Faroqhi and Gilles Veinstein (Ed.), Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

21 Our definition of banker-merchant is reminiscent of Hikmet Kıvılcımlı’s definition of “*tefecibezirgan*” (“usurer-merchant”), which has an important place in his theoretical framework, and we would like to point out that the class we define in this way represents a more limited circle, a subcategory of usurer-merchant.

22 At this point, it would be useful to emphasize the intertwining of the tax-farming system with financial markets and trade. In the tax-farming system, the entrepreneur (tax-farmer) who receives the tender for a tax unit in Istanbul makes this investment with a loan from the banker (*sarrafs*); while he pays the tender amount to the Treasury, he himself returns to the tax source for tax collection, as the nature of the business (profitability) requires him to collect more than he gives; in the tax-farming system, taxes are collected (most of the time) in kind in villages/landed estates by the tax-farmers and then stored and transported by merchants. Thus, tax-farming was realized through the intertwined activities of the banker, tax-farmer and merchant.

23 Alp Yücel Kaya, “Les racines agraires d’un entrepreneuriat capitaliste, Les domaines fonciers de la famille Baltazzi à l’arrière-pays d’Izmir au XIXe siècle”, *Rives méditerranéennes*, no 59, 2019, p. 122.

24 For the Anatolia and Rumeli Companies, see Araks Şahiner, *The Sarrafs of Istanbul: Financiers of the Empire* (unpublished MA thesis), Boğaziçi University, 1985, p. 84. Also see Onnik Jamgoçyan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sarraflık: Rumlar, Museviler, Frenkler, Ermeniler (1650-1850)* (trans. by Erol Üyepazarcı), Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2017.

25 Kaya, “Balkanlar ve Batı Anadolu’da...”, pp. 24-29.

bourgeoisie to finance capital (i.e. banks) based in Istanbul.

Among these bourgeois classes in competition and conflict, it is necessary to add the commercial bourgeoisie, which developed through foreign trade, especially through the ties they established with European markets. As of the end of the eighteenth century, this class was not satisfied with the domestic market and the intermediation role played between domestic and foreign markets and raised demands for liberalization (“*laissez-nous passer*”) towards foreign markets, and these demands began to find an echo in the central administration under the bourgeois-bureaucrats from the very beginning of the 1800s. By obtaining trade certificates and being called “European Merchant” (non-Muslims) and “Hayriye Merchant” (Muslims), they were able to gain ease in travel, trade and taxation, and began to carve out a place for themselves in the traditional division of labor of foreign trade led by foreign merchants.<sup>26</sup> To this group should be added the merchants of European origin (later to be called Levantines) who began to settle in the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean from the nineteenth century onwards and whose foreignness remained almost on paper.<sup>27</sup> The 1838 Anglo-Turkish Convention (and other successive conventions), which abolished the ban on exports, the monopolies, and the certificate procedure for the transportation of goods, as well as adjusting customs duties to facilitate the trade of foreign merchants, further privileged the latter group; within the framework of the privileges and exemptions that these merchants enjoyed, oscillating between foreignness and localness, the Europeans in port cities such as Izmir and Salonica became more localized and the locals became more Europeanized. In this process, the rising commercial bourgeoisie almost eliminated the old intermediary classes, including the provincial bourgeoisie, and became active in foreign trade, from the producer to sales at the port, on the one hand, and in domestic trade, both wholesale and retail, on the other.<sup>28</sup> As of the mid-nineteenth century, this class, which emerged as the other rival of the provincial bourgeoisie, diversified its investments, especially in port-cities<sup>29</sup> where the volume of trade increased exponentially, and began to gain the characteristics of finance

26 Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri, cilt I 1580-1850*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1974, pp. 71-73; Musa Çadircı, “II. Mahmud Döneminde (1808-1839) Avrupa ve Hayriye Tüccarları”, *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi (1071-1920)*, Halil İnalçık and Osman Okyar (Eds.), Ankara: Meteksan, 1980, pp. 237-241; Ali İhsan Bağış, *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayri Müslimler*, Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1983, pp. 87-100; M. Macit Kenanoğlu, *Ticaret Kanunnamesi ve Mecelle Işığında Osmanlı Ticaret Hukuku*, Ankara: Lotus Yayınevi, 2005, pp. 22-23.

27 Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une société hors de soi: identités et relations sociales à Smyrne au XVIIIe et XIXe siècles*, Paris: Peeters, 2005.

28 Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, “Tanzimat Devrinde Yabancıların İktisadi Faaliyetleri”, *150. yılında Tanzimat*, Hakkı Dursun Yıldız (Ed.), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992; Elena Frangakis-Syrett, “Implementation of the 1838 Anglo-Turkish Convention on Izmir's Trade: European and Minority Merchants”, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no 7, 1992, pp. 91-112.

29 Between 1840 and 1910, Izmir became the largest export port in the Eastern Mediterranean, with exports increasing 3.4 times (in monetary terms) and imports 5 times, see Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey 1800-1914*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. 82.

capital, which was also prominent in shipping, insurance, tax-farming, banking, mining and large-scale manufacturing industries.<sup>30</sup> While Levantines and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects dominated this class, it should be underlined that there was also a growing number of Muslim capitalists.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, when talking about diversifying investments, it would be remiss not to mention the company *Şirket-i Hayriye* (Auspicious Company) founded by bourgeois-bureaucrats in 1850 to operate ferries on the Bosphorus. The idea of establishing the Company originated with Fuad Efendi (chief in the office of correspondence of the Imperial Council) and Cevdet Efendi (member of the Council of Education), both of whom would later become grand viziers and ministers, and whose capital, consisted of shares of, aside from the sultan and the mother-sultan, high-ranking bureaucrats (the chief commandant of the army, the chief of artillery, the admiral in chief, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, the governors, etc.), including the grand-vizir Mustafa Reşid Pasha, and bankers.<sup>32</sup>

Within this context defined by the dynamics of uneven and combined development, we see that two different factions emerged within the developing capitalist class, both of which pursued different paths to building their own power. While the bourgeois-bureaucrats, the financial bourgeoisie (banker-merchants) and the commercial bourgeoisie in collaboration with them were in search of a general and universal law, the provincial bourgeoisie relied on the customary law of the countryside and tried to protect it.<sup>33</sup> While the first class had revolutionary characteristics in their quest to break away from feudal ties, the second class showed a development that could not break away from feudal ties in order to maintain their

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30 Kütükoğlu, “Tanzimat Devrinde Yabancıların...”, pp. 97-99; Elena Frangakis-Syrett, “Western and Local Entrepreneurs in Izmir in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries”, *Son Yüzyıllarda İzmir ve Batı Anadolu*, Tuncer Baykara (Ed.), Akademi Yayınevi, Izmir, 1994, pp. 83-84; Reşat Kasaba, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Dünya Ekonomisi*, Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1993, pp. 62-66.

31 Of the 52 people whose wealth was determined to be above 50,000 kuruş in the Izmir kadi court between 1851 and 1896, 36 were Muslims, and an analysis of their economic status shows that, assuming prices are constant, the person with the lowest wealth among them could buy two shops in the Istanbul Grand Bazaar, and the person with the highest wealth could buy a hundred shops in the same place. Abdullah Martal, *Belgelerle Osmanlı Döneminde İzmir*, Ankara: Yazıt Yayıncılık, 2007, pp. 78-79; the average value of the shops in the Istanbul Grand Bazaar, as determined by the authorities of the Ministry of Finance in 1874, was 24,000 kuruş, see BOA, ML.VRD. 3812. The Izmir Chamber of Commerce, established in 1885, and the Izmir Commodity Exchange, established in 1892, were both initiated by Muslim as well as non-Muslim capitalists who were prominent in the city’s economy. In 1884, the 15-member committee preparing to establish the Izmir Chamber of Commerce consisted of 8 Muslims and 7 non-Muslims, see Erkan Serçe, Feriâl Örs and Mehmet Şakir Örs, *19. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla İzmir Ticaret Odası Tarihi*, Izmir: İzmir Ticaret Odası, 2002, pp. 33-34.

32 Haydar Kazgan, *Galata Bankerleri, vol. 1*, Istanbul: Orion Yayınevi, p. 33. The establishment of *Şirket-i Hayriye* is a topic that Hikmet Kıvılcımlı focuses on in his discussion on the development of capitalism in Turkey, see Kıvılcımlı, *Türkiye’de...*, p. 28-29.

33 Christoph Kletzer, “Custom and Positivity: An Examination of the Philosophic Ground of the Hegel-Savigny Controversy”, *The Nature of Customary Law*, Amanda Perreau-Saussine and James Bernard Murphy (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2007.



position in the provinces and in intra-class competition. In this context, we see the first *Nizam-ı Cedid* period and reforms in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the eighteenth century and then the *Tanzimat* period and reforms in 1839 not as centralization, modernization or westernization processes and efforts in line with the reigning evaluations in the literature, but as a reflection of class conflict. After 1839, the *Tanzimat* period emerged as a period in which the competition within the bourgeoisie increased in intensity and the bourgeois-bureaucrats, financial and commercial bourgeoisie attempted to suppress the competing bourgeois faction in the provinces with the construction of a general and universal legal order.

### Law in the intra-bourgeois struggle

In the nineteenth century, the expansion of commodity production compelled the constitution of a property law based on private property rights. In this framework, the *Tanzimat* Edict, which prioritized the establishment of the security of life, wealth and property, projected a comprehensive codification movement by the legislative assemblies, and the codification of codes containing general and universal rules and regulations reflecting the liberal atmosphere of the period (Penal Codes of 1840, 1851, 1858; Code of Commerce of 1850; Code of Maritime Commerce of 1863; Land Registry Regulations of 1847 and 1860; Land Code of 1858; *Mecelle* -Civil Code- of 1876; even the Constitution of 1876, etc. marked the post-1839 period). Among these, the Code of Commerce of 1850, the Penal Code of 1858, and the Code of Maritime Commerce of 1863, which were borrowed from French laws, are legal regulations that emerged by drawing a line to the past as a result of the demands of an alliance composed of bourgeois-bureaucrats, financial and commercial bourgeoisie.<sup>34</sup> The others are more reflective of the class struggles that emerged. Despite all these general and universal regulations, it is also observed that local commissions were established to regulate and codify social and economic relations in general, and property relations and forms of labor in particular, within the context of the conflicts and tensions that emerged, especially in regions where landed estates (*çiftlik*s) were concentrated.<sup>35</sup> These commissions, chaired by a representative of the central government, brought together social groups with varying and conflicting interests in the region. The commissions produced regional regulations by rewriting the local sharecropping regulations defined by customary law in line with the interests of the landed estate owners; they did not transform the social hierarchy but they redefined it within the context of contemporary conflicts. These were approved by the central government to be implemented on a regional scale, while at the same time leaving their mark on the social history of the region to which they belonged (at least in the Balkans, where they found more application,

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34 Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, “Kanunlaştırma Hareketleri ve Tanzimat”, *Tanzimat I*, İstanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1940; Gülnihâl Bozkurt, *Batı Hukukunun Türkiye’de Benimsenmesi: Osmanlı Devleti’nden Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’ne Resepsiyon Süreci, 1839-1939*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1996.

35 For a detailed analysis on this subject, see Kaya, “Balkanlar ve Batı Anadolu’da...”, pp. 17-24.

at least until the land reforms after World War I). Such commissions convened in 1862 in Thessaly, in 1842, 1849 and 1859 in Bosnia, in 1847 in Ioannina, in 1850 in Vidin, in 1855 in Canik, in 1859 in Niş and Leskofça, in 1865 in Karaferye (Veria), and in 1875 in Parga, and region-specific “landed estate bylaws” (*çiftlikat nizamnameleri*) were prepared. The bourgeois-bureaucrat class of the *Tanzimat* period, which came to the forefront with its investments in landed estates, sought to expand its own sphere of action, as reflected in the laws and regulations that set forth general rules and regulations; but the provincial bourgeoisie also sought to preserve its privileged position based on customary law. What is seen with the landed estate bylaws is nothing other than the imposition of reign of all landed estate-owning classes by means of conserving the privileges of all of them against the laboring classes working on the landed estates. The provincial bourgeoisie accepted to act collectively with bourgeois-bureaucrats only in exchange for the conservation of their privileges; the bourgeois-bureaucrats coming from outside did not raise their voices against the privileges that the provincial bourgeoisie used to benefit vis-à-vis the working classes for centuries, they pushed even for the limitation of laborers’ subsistence rights in favor of landed estate owners, and they did not hesitate to show their class alliance in this field.<sup>36</sup>

In this context, it should be noted that the Land Code of 1858, to which the literature attributes importance within the codification movement, did not say anything of substance on landed estates (except for Article 99, which stipulated that the pastures on landed estates were completely under the control of the landed estate owner), so much so that Ömer Lütfi Barkan regretted this silence: “It is regrettable that the Land Code does not mention the relations of the peasants working on the land of these landed estates with the landowner”.<sup>37</sup> In fact, there is not much to regret; the ruling classes of the period, who owned large property or were in alliance with these classes, had, in line with their own interests, only regulated with the Land Code the land in the possession of small peasants, leaving the room for maneuver in the landed estates flexible. It was only when tensions over the landed estates escalated (when intra-class conflicts between landed estate owners flared up) that regulations in the form of provincial bylaws came to the fore.<sup>38</sup> As Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (the architect of the Land Code), who was already in close contact with the landed estate owning class, admitted in the context of the Parga Landed Estate Bylaw, “Rumelia would be turned upside down if the execution of precepts of the general laws and regulations were to be carried out on these landed estates”.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the silence of the Land Code on landed estates, or the absence of any other general regulation on the agenda, was meant to prevent landed estate owners from becoming restless and Rumelia, and of course Anatolia, from being turned

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36 For the details of this process, see Kaya, “Balkanlar ve Batı Anadolu’da...”.

37 Ömer Lütfü Barkan, “Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi”, *Türkiye’de Toprak Meselesi, Toplu Eserler 1*, İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980, p. 369.

38 Kaya, “Balkanlar ve Batı Anadolu’da...”, pp. 13-31.

39 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tezahir, 40-Tetimme*, Cavid Baysun (Ed.), Ankara: TTK, 1991, p. 143.

upside down.<sup>40</sup>

Along with this fierce struggle waged by the provincial bourgeoisie in the pursuit of its economic interests, it is also important not to overlook the law constituted by its other rivals, the financial and commercial bourgeoisie, working in cooperation with foreign capital: The 1850 Code of Commerce, the 1860 Addendum to the Code, the 1861 Code of Commercial Judicial System, the 1863 Code of Maritime Commerce, the 1879 Law on the Organization of Courts, and the 1879 Regulation on Notary Public all emerged in succession to establish a bourgeois order in the world of capitalist exchange that the country was rapidly entering.<sup>41</sup> In this framework, it is important to underline that while the provincial bourgeoisie followed a line based on customary law through their reign on land ownership and relations of production on land, it also began to intertwine with the line based on universal law, as it was connected to commercial networks through the tax-farming system. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the “Regulation on the appropriation of property by foreign subjects” dated June 10, 1867, which paved the way for the property dispositions of foreign capitalists and incorporated the already *de facto* dispositions of the Levantines into the legal framework, opened an important hole in the law that the provincial bourgeoisie was trying to build.

So, while the world of exchange is organized in such a way, how will the lack of a civil code that defines the active companies in this world and the contracts that set out the relations between them and regulates them in the bourgeois world be remedied?<sup>42</sup> The preparation of the civil code in the Ottoman Empire was very controversial, reflecting the dual structure of both the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy. While the commercial bourgeoisie, financial bourgeoisie and bourgeois-bureaucrats were committed to the adoption of the French Civil Code, the provincial bourgeoisie and their representatives in the bureaucracy were successful in codifying and enacting (1876) the civil code (*Mecelle*) based on Islamic law that would cover the law of transactions. Of course, such a codification was incompatible with the Commercial Code, which had been imported, and exacerbated the intra-class struggle in the market sphere. To summarize, it can be said that the intra-bourgeoisie struggle,

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40 Therefore, we argue that focusing on the Land Code, which limited itself to regulating small peasants' land holdings, offers a limited perspective for understanding the social conflicts and developments in the nineteenth century; as Oya Köymen warns, focusing on large property and landed estate, which were the main determinants of social transformations, will give us a broader perspective (Oya Köymen “Bahattin Akşit, Çelik Aruoba ve Nükhet Sirman-Eralp’in Tebliğlerine İlişkin Yorum”, *Türkiye’de Tarımsal Yapılar (1923-2000) (Türk Sosyal Bilimler Derneği Kongresi, 28-29 Nisan 1987, Ankara)*, Şevket Pamuk and Zafer Toprak (Ed.) Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1988). For a similar approach (as well as a comprehensive discussion) on the Land Code, see E. Attila AYTEKİN, “Agrarian Relations, Property and Law: An Analysis of the Land Code of 1858 in the Ottoman Empire”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 45, no 6, 2009, pp. 943-4.

41 Kenanoğlu, *Ticaret Kanunnamesi...*; Fatmagül Demirel, *Adliye Nezareti, Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri (1876-1914)*, İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2007.

42 Seven Ağır ve Cihan Artunç, “Set and Forget? The Evolution of Business Law in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey”, *Business History Review*, vol. 95, no 4, 2021, p. 713. See also Kenanoğlu, *Ticaret Kanunnamesi*, pp. 132-139.

which is fed by the dynamics of uneven and combined development, gives rise to a conflict in the field of law, and this conflict further exacerbates the dynamics of uneven and combined development.<sup>43</sup>

It would be useful to underline an observation of Niyazi Berkes regarding the codification movement of the *Tanzimat* period that has not been taken into consideration by the literature until now:

The conflict between the proponents of adopting the French Civil Code and those of Cevdet Pasha's opinion on the question of codification of civil law reminds us of a famous debate that took place half a century before that time on the issue of civil code in Germany. In response to an article written in 1814 by Anthon Thibaut (1722-1840) on the "Necessity of a Civil Code for Germany", Friedrich Karl von Savigny (1779-1861), who had taken up the question of a German civil code following the groundbreaking of the Napoleonic Code (Code Napoléon) in Europe, had argued that the law of a nation does not arise, for example, by establishing rational rules based on the philosophy of natural rights. For him, the law was not the product of the judgment of lawmakers. The law was born out of folk beliefs, established by folk customs, and solidified by the practice of justice. Law is the manifestation of the national self (Volksgeist), which lives silently in the life of a nation, which is itself the national self. The making of civil laws could be nothing more than giving them only a formal appearance, provided that they conformed to the practices that lived in the national self. In other words, for Savigny, law reflects what is and what lives, not what ought to be according to reason. In this Thibaut-Savigny debate, the rational or revolutionary view of law clashed with the romantic and traditionalist view of law. Half a century later, Cevdet Pasha's view was similar to that of Savigny's.<sup>44</sup>

In accordance with Berkes' observation here, we can easily say that the bourgeois-bureaucrats, who were among the classes in competition and conflict, followed a Thibautian (essentially Hegelian) path, while the provincial bourgeoisie followed a Savignyian path. However, it should be emphasized that the codification movement, which emerged in the clash of the two factions of the bourgeoisie as capitalism

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43 Here it is worth recalling Trotsky's explanation of uneven and combined: "Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity, their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of combined development—by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of the separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms." Leon Trotsky, *History of Russian Revolution* (trans. by Max Eastman) London: Penguin, 2017 [1931-1933], pp. 24-25.

44 Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, (Ed. by Ahmet Kuyaş), Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2012 (1973), p. 225. Interestingly, there is no reference to the Thibaut-Savigny debate in his *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press), published in 1964, on which this book is based.

developed, remained more faithful to the Savignyian path in the codification of both general and local regulations.<sup>45</sup> Although the bourgeois-bureaucrats began to rule in 1839, their supremacy was mainly limited to the political and economic spheres; in the legal field, they had to make concessions to the provincial bourgeoisie and accept the Savignyian path under certain conditions. Cevdet Pasha was the most characteristic statesman of this period and the bourgeoisie. This is also an observation of Niyazi Berkes:

Cevdet Pasha is perhaps the greatest statesman of the *Tanzimat* period, as well as the true symbol of the duality of that regime. This open-minded man, who understood Islamic sciences and, by the way, jurisprudence, not as a technician, but as one who grasped it, knew its essence and scope, and understood the march of the history of modernization, appears from our present perspective as a progressive compared to the followers of Sharia, and as a traditionalist compared to the supporters of unrestricted westernization (more precisely, Frenchification). As he tried to show in many parts of his History [his book on Ottoman history, *Tarih-i Cevdet*], Cevdet Pasha was a man who believed that both of these two attitudes were extreme and dogmatic. For this reason, he was not willing to let the field of Sharia law go unattended in the hands of the ulema and kadis, nor was he willing to accept (as Minister of Trade Kabulî Pasha did) the translation of the French Civil Code as it was, under the pressure of the French ambassador.<sup>46</sup>

### **Savigny and Hegel in the constitution of nineteenth century bourgeois law**

In this part of the article, it would be useful to step away from the Ottoman geography and think about the bourgeois revolutions in general and the making of bourgeois law in particular. In the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie's efforts to expand its sphere of action were also aimed at ensuring absolute dominance in the disposal of economic resources. In the field of law, this situation brought about a process of codification in which, on the one hand, common and hybrid property structures were dissolved and evolved into private property structures, and on the

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45 In his interpretation of the 1858 Land Code, Ömer Lütfi Barkan does not refer to Savigny's understanding of codification as Berkes does, but he offers an explanation that evokes it and implicitly criticizes Hegel's understanding of codification: "In this respect, the first point we observe is that the actions of this period [Tanzimat] attempted to produce a uniform Land Code based on an original legal system with a tradition in this field and not a work of imitation... In this way, the Land Code of 1274 [1858], which is a remarkable work of the *Tanzimat*, emerged as a reasonable and moderate act of enactment that strictly adhered to the traditions of land law."; "As a matter of fact, this code can in no way be considered to have carried an energetic and revolutionary spirit that consciously systematized all its provisions according to specific objectives under the command of an ideology that clearly defined its objectives and wanted to impose a new order of its own on events. Custom and tradition completely dominated this code", Barkan, "Türk Toprak Hukuku...", p. 372, 374.

46 Berkes, *Türkiye'de...*, p. 224.

other hand, justice mechanisms gradually became centralized and decentralized customary legal regulations with particular and local characteristics were replaced by general and universal regulations to the extent that the market domain expanded and deepened.<sup>47</sup>

In this context, the dynamics of uneven and combined development brought about by capitalism rendered debatable two paths for the making of bourgeois law in nineteenth century Prussia: The historical conception of law (the Historical School of Law), led by Friedrich Karl von Savigny, which finds its origins in the historical development of societies, customs, traditions and beliefs, attributes a special importance to Roman law, underlines historical and social continuities, and therefore is based on the construction of a law that will regulate person-to-person relations. The idealist conception of law represented by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and his follower Anton Friedrich Justus Thibaut, which, based on the theory of natural law, underlines historical and social ruptures in the example of the French Civil Code of 1804, and is based on universal and rational codification in regulating person-thing relations. It is useful to explain the bases of these two approaches.<sup>48</sup>

In the nineteenth century property debates, Savigny's book on possession occupies an important place.<sup>49</sup> In this book, Savigny distinguishes between interpreters and systematists, discusses the decisions and interpretations of ancient and contemporary legal authorities, especially the Pandects, and then elaborates on his own interpretation. He focuses on the rights that possession gives rise to (differentiating form and content) rather than the rights that give rise to possession (the path from content to form). In other words, possession is discussed in the context of the relationship of persons to persons, rather than the relationship of persons to things. Such discussion is based on an analysis of legal concepts of Roman property law such as civil possession, possession and natural possession, and acquisition by prescription (*usucapio*) and interdiction, i.e., the protection of possession.<sup>50</sup> In fact, such a study aims to directly intervene in the property question of the period by preserving the existing structure of property disposition. Because the property-based conflicts that emerged in the process of the establishment and legitimization of a new property regime and the concepts of possession and prescription that transfer possession to ownership were quite actual and came to the fore in the problematic constitution of private property. At this point, Savigny differs from other jurists in that, although he ultimately legitimizes the given structure of

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47 Peter A.J. van den Berg, *The Politics of European Codification, A History of the Unification of Law in France, Prussia, the Austrian Monarchy and the Netherlands*, Groningen: Europa Law Publishing, 2006.

48 See also Alp Yücel Kaya, "Genç Marx ve 'Odun Hırsızlığı Kanunu Tartışmaları'", *İktisatta Bir Hayalet: Karl Marx*, Sevinç Orhan, Serhat Koloğlugil ve Altuğ Yalçıntaş (der.), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012.

49 Friedrich Karl von Savigny, *Traité de la possession d'après les principes du droit romain*, (trans. from German by Jules Beving) Brussels: Société belge de librairie Hauman et comp., 1840 [1803].

50 Donald R. Kelley, "The Metaphysics of Law: An Essay on the Very Young Marx", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 83, no 2, 1978, p. 357.

property disposition through possession, he sees possession as both fact and law against the common liberal interpretation that property begins with possession, and denies the property-possession nexus.<sup>51</sup> In other words, while protecting the possession of the large landowner on the one hand, it also recognizes the rights of poor peasants arising from possession on the other. However, within the framework of liberal understanding, society is defined by private property. Either the individual is a property owner, or he is not, which means that poor peasants are deprived of the resources they save through possession.

Savigny's work on possession, which was translated into French in 1840, was the subject of a public debate in 1839 with Eduard Gans, a follower of Hegel, a proponent of idealist codification, and one of the main critics of the Historical School of Law. In his work in defense of an idealist codification,<sup>52</sup> Gans argued that possession was a fact, not a right, and completely rejected Savigny's empiricist and historicist view of the possessor's entitlement by virtue of possession. By defining possession in terms of interdiction and acquisition by prescription (*usucapio*), he said that the question had been taken out of philosophy (which was the basis and purpose of the legal profession in his time) and that theory had nothing to say about it.<sup>53</sup> In line with Hegelian legal analysis,<sup>54</sup> possession should be defined in terms of the relation of persons to things, because his/her relation to things, that is, property, is what makes a person a person: "[t]he rational aspect of property is to be found not in the satisfaction of needs but in the superseding of mere subjectivity of personality. Not until he has property does the person exist as reason."<sup>55</sup>

The debate here is locked in the problematic of the bourgeois revolution as much as the constitution of bourgeois law; the new law that the French Revolution gave birth to is directly related to the new class configuration and class domination: Hegel defends the codification of private law that emerged with the French Revolution, Savigny defends the continuity of customary law against such revolutionary regulations; thus, while Hegel demands the consolidation of the rule of the bourgeois class and the preservation of the revolution, Savigny demands a conservative revolution with the restoration of the pre-revolutionary class order.<sup>56</sup> But it should be noted that when it comes to Prussia or the Kingdom of Württemberg, things change, if not for Savigny, then for Hegel. In the post-Napoleonic "*Tanzimat*" period of the German states, Hegel would favor the preservation of the political order (under the

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51 Donald R. Kelley, *Historians and the Law in Post-Revolutionary France*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 214, 219-220.

52 Eduard Gans, *Ueber die Grundlage des Besitzes*, Berlin: Eine Duplik, 1839.

53 Kelley, "The Metaphysics...", pp. 357-358; Kelley, *Historians...*, p. 214; Olivier Jouanjan, *Une histoire de la pensée juridique en Allemagne (1800-1918), Idéalisme et conceptualisme chez les juristes allemands du XIXe siècle*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2005, pp. 55-63.

54 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Ed. by Allen W. Wood; trans. by H. B. Nisbet), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 [1821].

55 Hegel, *Elements...*, p. 73 (§ 41).

56 Kletzer, "Custom and Positivity...", p. 147.

kingdom and its institutions) while maintaining his revolutionary position in law.<sup>57</sup>

## Intra-bourgeoisie struggle in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire

The conflict among the bourgeoisie intensified between 1839 and 1871, the bourgeois-bureaucrats together with merchants and banker-merchants being part of their inner circle (example par excellence is the Baltazzi family) left their mark on the period and shaped the law in line with their economic interests. The tax-farming system still played a key role at this point, but the important factor that facilitated the investments of this class in the provinces was that the central administration started to seize by the end of the eighteenth century the landed estates held by the notables. These landed estates, called “imperial landed estates” (*çiftlikât-ı hümayun*), which were auctioned or sold to suitors by the Ministry of Finance, began to constitute an important investment portfolio, especially with the seizure of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha’s landed estates in the 1820s. The landed estates in Thessaly, Ioannina, Karaferye and Parga, which were subject to the bourgeois-bureaucrat involved landed estate bylaws, were under the control of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha before 1820. Therefore, when periodizing the intra-bourgeoisie struggle, it would be more consistent to extend the period from the 1820s to 1876, considering the Parga Bylaw of 1875. The decisiveness of 1876 is more evident at the beginning of Abdülhamid II’s rule than the beginning of the First Constitutional Monarchy. The Sultan took the landed estates, which were usually controlled by the bourgeois-bureaucrats, under his own control by means of the Ministry of Sultan’s Treasury (*Hazine-i Hassa Nezareti*). The Ministry no longer tendered the landed estates as it had done in the past, but began to operate them under its own management, removing them from being a source of income for bourgeois-bureaucrats. However, the Ministry was not content with this and expanded its landed estate portfolio by adding new ones. Let us underline in this context that the Sultan’s Treasury seized in the 1880s many of the landed estates of the Baltazzi family which had close relationships with bourgeois-bureaucrats. The reasons behind Abdülhamid II’s policy of taking the landed estates under his control and expanding them are miscellaneous in the literature,<sup>58</sup> but cutting off the economic leg of a possible political rival plays a key role. Furthermore, in the period after the 1870s, the Ministry of Finance started to farm out of the tithe revenues to smaller units and local tax-farmers.<sup>59</sup> Such a change in the direction of tax-farming dealt a blow to the

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57 Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel’s Theory of the Modern State*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1994 (1972), pp. 72-80; Daniel Lee, “The Legacy of Medieval Constitutionalism In the “Philosophy of Right””: Hegel and the Prussian Reform Movement”, *History of Political Thought*, vol. 29, no 4, 2008, pp. 601-634.

58 François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, (trans. Ali Berktaş) Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2006, pp. 189-195.

59 Nadir Özbek, *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Aşar Vergisi ve Tahsilatı Ekseninde Toplum ve Siyaset, 1839-1925*, TÜBİTAK Proje No: 113K142, 2016, pp. 113-138.



financial bourgeoisie (banker-merchants) and the bourgeois-bureaucrats allied with them. Thus, the economic base of the pashas, both through the Sultan's Treasury and the tax-farming of tithe revenues, was almost dried up. In other words, 1876 is the date of limiting the investments of the bourgeois-bureaucrats. The dominance of the financial bourgeoisie, which was in collaboration with the bourgeois-bureaucrats, was extinguished with the establishment of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration in 1881 (when foreign capital began to control domestic and foreign borrowing in Ottoman public finance following the debt default in 1875). Thus, an era in the intra-class struggle was completely closed. In the alliance of bourgeois-bureaucrats, the financial and commercial bourgeoisie, it was only the commercial bourgeoisie that was able to resist the developments we have listed and survive.

On the other hand, as the Sultan's landed estates expanded after 1876 and the tenders for the tax-farms changed addresses, the provincial bourgeoisie began to gain relative strength as a result of the elimination of their competitors and the opening up of a new investment area for themselves, and their ranks tightened with the inclusion of the newly emerging ones among them. In the period after 1876, the landowning groups were joined by those who flourished within the commercial bourgeoisie and foreign capitalists seeking investment opportunities in different geographies. Both capitalist groups carved out an important place for themselves, especially with the increasing agricultural investments in Western Anatolia.<sup>60</sup>

Another actor that emerged as part of the landowning class, and it is appropriate to consider it under the heading of foreign capital, was the Ottoman Public Debt Administration and the *Régie (Société de la régie cointéressée des tabacs de l'Empire ottoman)*, which began to control silk and tobacco production (operated mainly by small peasant producers) under a kind of contractual production discipline.

Although these three landowning actors (the Sultan, the provincial bourgeoisie, the commercial bourgeoisie/foreign capital) shared common demands in their exploitation of the peasant farmers and their gradual dispossession, their relationship was clearly in conflict.<sup>61</sup> The fact that the Ottoman Public Debt Administration monopolized the collection of silk and tobacco tithes alone is enough; the provincial bourgeoisie, which was engaged in their production and trade, was almost handcuffed. It is clear that the Sultan and the government were helpless in the face of this situation; indeed during the negotiations held between 1881-1907, in the 26 years, Ottoman governments under the pressure of the Great Powers could not even succeed in raising customs duties.<sup>62</sup> In 1901, the Sultan expressed his helplessness

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60 Orhan Kurmuş, *Emperyalizmin Türkiye'ye Girişi*, İstanbul: Yordam Yayınları, 2007 (1974).

61 To give a few examples from the Ottoman Archives of the Presidency of State Archives (BOA), Mısırlıoğlu Edvard Bey over the use of commons in his landed estate of Gülbahçe, in Urla District (BEO 3187/239019/13.10.1325), Haleblizade Hüseyin Agha over the tobacco production in his landed estate in Alaşehir District (ŞD 2920/38/17.03.1304), Ibrahim Agha, a merchant in Izmir, over tobacco production and trade (ŞD 1383/12/06.05.1305), and Atanas son of Yorgi from Bayındır, a merchant in Izmir, over tobacco trade (ŞD 3007/3/25.12.1318) were all in disagreement and conflict with the Ottoman Public Debt Administration.

62 Engin Deniz Akarlı, *The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggle and Budgetary Defi-*

as follows:

What a horrible injustice this is! The Europeans deny to us the rights that they so easily acknowledge among themselves. We have to improve our financial situation fast. We want to raise the import duties from 6% to 11%. This is our manifest right! Nobody can argue against it. Yet the Ambassadors oppose. We must blush for having been subjected to this kind of injustice! Who operates the very vague mechanism of our state?<sup>63</sup>

Again, within the framework of administrative transformation brought about by the Anatolian Reforms (1895) and Rumelia Reforms (1902), which came to the fore with the pressure of the Great Powers, foreign capital put the provincial bourgeoisie in a tight spot.<sup>64</sup> But the provincial bourgeoisie was not about to give up. Especially, the 1904 Gendarmerie Statute, which was to replace the 1869 Gendarmerie Statute by borrowing from the French gendarmerie statute after the 1903 Mürzsteg Agreement (signed between the Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire following the Ilinden uprising in Macedonia), shows the fierce struggle here very clearly. Although it was thought that the Hegelian path would prevail as a result of the legal transplantation, the provincial bourgeoisie and the Savigny path maintained their dominance with two articles that infiltrated the Statute and determined its spirit: gendarmerie forces would remain subordinate to local councils in the hierarchy of duties as before; gendarmerie forces would act under the authority of local councils, not judicial units, in the search of dwellings.<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, the period between 1876 and 1914 was also a period in which transportation networks were developed to facilitate the circulation of commodities in the Ottoman Empire, and the construction of highways, railways and docks accelerated. These investments pioneered by foreign capital also led to the institutionalization of insurance and banking operations.<sup>66</sup> The foreign

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*cits in Ottoman Politics Under Abdulhamid II (1876-1909): Origins and Solutions*, (unpublished PhD Dissertation) Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 178.

63 Akarlı, *The Problems of External Pressures...*, p. 178. The original text is in French: *Avant la débâcle de la Turquie, Pensées et souvenirs de l'ex-sultan Abdul-Hamid recueillis par Ali Vahbi Bey*, Neuchâtel: Attinger Frères, 1914.

64 Nadir Özbek “‘Anadolu Islahatı’, ‘Ermeni Sorunu’ ve Vergi Tahsildarlığı, 1895-1908”, *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, no 9, 2009, pp. 59-85; Gül Tokay, “Makedonya Reformları ve Güvenlik Güçleri”, *Türkiye’de Ordu, Devlet ve Güvenlik Siyaseti*, Evren Balta Paker and İsmet Akça (Eds.), İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010, pp. 124-146.

65 Kaya, “Balkanlar ve Batı Anadolu’da...”, pp. 57-59; see also Alp Yücel Kaya, “Les enjeux de l’institutionnalisation de la Jandarma ottomane face aux conflits agraires au début du XXe siècle”, *Les gendarmeries dans le monde de la Révolution française à nos jours*, J.-N. Luc and A.-D. Houte (Eds.), Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2016.

66 Elena Frangakis-Syrett, “The Role of European Banks in the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the Nineteenth and in the Early Twentieth Centuries”, *Banking, Trade and Industry in Europe*, A. Teichova, G. Kurgan van Hentenryk, D. Ziegler (Eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

trade surplus that emerged as a part of these developments created resources for local capital accumulation, and both investments in urban infrastructure and the production of urban consumer goods came to the fore in an increasingly urbanized economic structure.<sup>67</sup> The production of capital goods developed, although not to the extent of the production of consumer goods.<sup>68</sup> The activities of iron factories and foundries, which would create backward and forward linkages to the established industrial structure, developed together with other industries. On the other hand, investments in the textile industry gained momentum with the growing domestic demand, as well as with the growth in cotton cultivation during the raw material shortage that emerged during the American Civil War.<sup>69</sup> These developments considerably expanded the scope of the commercial bourgeoisie composed of local and foreign capitalists. In fact, with the industrial investments that gained momentum towards the end of the nineteenth century, it became possible to talk about the emergence of an industrial bourgeoisie. However, this process is not only an industrialization process created by commercial capital, it is an industrialization process in which productive capital is also involved. In other words, this process was not only driven by the commercial bourgeoisie, but also by the provincial bourgeoisie, which controlled the sphere of production (either directly or through the tax-farming system). In this context, the development of spinning, serging and weaving investments in Karaferye (Veria in the Balkans) and Uşak (in Western Anatolia) is quite striking.<sup>70</sup> Of course, these capitalists, fed by different channels, were engaged in intense economic competition. Although the provincial bourgeoisie once again began to engage with the Hegelian path through industrial investments (in addition to its connection to the trade networks highly associated with tax-farming), the rivalry between Savignyian and Hegelian paths also manifested itself in this field. As a result of the escalation of the rivalry, the provincial bourgeoisie would take a revolutionary position in 1908 by allying with the working classes

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67 Eyüp Özveren, “Büyük Buhanda Bir Liman Kenti: İzmir, 1929-1932”, *İzmir Kent Kültürü Dergisi*, no 6, 2003, pp. 264-272; A. Gündüz Ökçün, “XIX. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında İmalat Sanayii Alanında Verilen Ruhsat ve İmtiyazların Ana Çizgileri”, *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, vol. 27, no 1, 1972, pp. 135-166; Salih Başkutlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Değirmencilik Endüstrisi ve Buhar Değirmenleri*, İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2022; Ruhat Alp, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Bir Endüstri Hamlesi: Modern Konserve Sektörünün Doğuşu (XIX. Yüzyılın Son Çeyreğinden XX. Yüzyıla)*, İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2022; Ruhat Alp, *Bakraçtan Şirkete Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Süt ile İmtihanı (XIX. Yüzyılın Son Çeyreğinden XX. Yüzyıla)*, İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2021.

68 A. Gündüz Ökçün (Ed.), *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913, 1915 Yılları Sanayi İstatistiki*, T. C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, Ankara, 1997, pp. 179-180.

69 Kurmuş, *Emperyalizmin Türkiye'ye...*, pp. 181-186. Abdullah Martal, *19. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında İzmir ve Çevresinde Sanayi ve Ticaret*, (PhD Dissertation), İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, 1992, pp. 123-133.

70 Pinar Çakıroğlu-Bournous and Costas Lapavitsas, *Capitalism in the Ottoman Balkans: Industrialisation and Modernity in Macedonia*, Londra: I.B. Tauris, 2019; Biray Çakmak, “XX. Yüzyıl Başında Uşak'ta Kurulan İplik Fabrikaları”, *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no 1/2, 2008, pp. 41-58; Donald Quataert, “Machine Breaking and the Changing Carpet Industry of Western Anatolia, 1860–1908”, *Journal of Social History*, vol. 19, no 3, 1986, pp. 473–489.

against the Sultan, who was unable to protect its interests against the commercial bourgeoisie and foreign capital.<sup>71</sup> The commercial bourgeoisie and the developing industrial bourgeoisie, on the other hand, would support the revolution on the way to overcoming the limits set to them by the Savignyian path.

### The 1908 Revolution of Liberty

The bourgeois law that emerged as the divisions and struggles between the bourgeois classes developed in this way and tended towards the Savignyian path determined the dynamics of primitive accumulation in the Ottoman geography: Between 1839 and 1876, landed estate owners either tried to bound sharecroppers on land, as in the Balkans, or resorted to slave labor, as in Western Anatolia; between 1876 and 1914, while they continued to use slave labor in Western Anatolia, they also sought the bondage of dispossessed laborers along with sharecroppers in both regions. In both periods, the landed estate owners in the Balkans created the conditions for bondage to the soil through the landed estate bylaws, while those in Western Anatolia created the conditions for bondage to the soil through debt services. What really marked the second phase of primitive accumulation between 1876 and 1914 was the attack of the landed estate owners on the peasantry's subsistence rights and the commons peasantry was benefiting. In other words, in the first phase, landowners searched for labor discipline on the reserve land on the landed estate, and in the second phase, they searched for the expansion of the reserve land (at the expense of other lands where subsistence rights were defined) as well as labor discipline. The reflection of both phases on the commons was also different; in the first phase, landowners restricted the use of the commons under land tenure conditions, while in the second phase, landowners searched for the elimination of the commons. Under these conditions, peasants who were expelled from their landed estates, as many documents of the period use the term, became miserable in the "inn corners" of Salonica or Izmir, in other words, they became proletarianized.<sup>72</sup> Based on our research, albeit not as in-depth as in the Balkans and Western Anatolia, we can safely say that similar dynamics were valid for the laboring classes of Eastern Anatolia. In fact, we think that the conditions of rural laborers in the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia are quite parallel to each other.

It is important to underline that the emergence of primitive accumulation and the development of agrarian capitalism in the Ottoman Empire were determined as much by the struggle and competition between the landed estate owning classes as by the acceleration of the mobilizing power of foreign markets in the nineteenth century. The struggle between the provincial bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-bureaucrats came to a head with the *Tanzimat*, and the ignition of this struggle was the farming out of the tithe revenues by the central bureaucracy. The struggle on the upper level

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71 For an interpretation in this direction, see Donald Quataert, "The Commercialisation of Agriculture in Ottoman Turkey, 1800-1914", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 1, no 2, 1990, p. 53.

72 For example, the inhabitants of Istavroz and Viraste landed estates in Langaza District of Salonica Province, BOA, TFR.I.SL 115/11479/15 C 1324.

was between the landed estate owners and the banker-merchants. At the lower level, it was between the landed estate owners and the sharecroppers who were under heavy obligations. The latter conflict was exacerbated during this period, as the distribution of shares and obligations to be imposed after the deduction of one-tenth (the tithe) from the produce constituted the crux of the tension and brought a new labor discipline to the agenda. The provincial bourgeoisie, who used to receive tax-farms of the tithe revenues on their own landed estates, lost this resource to financial capital (banker-merchants) and found nothing but as a solution to recover their losses in increasing the exploitation of laborers. This resulted in the aggravation of obligations already defined in the customary law and unfree forms of labor (such as bondage to the soil and debt bondage). Thus, the labor discipline created within the competition between the provincial bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-bureaucrats between 1839 and 1876 brought about a capitalist structuring in the landed estates that would go beyond the compensation for the loss of income from farming out tithe revenues. This capitalist structuring gained a new momentum after 1876 when foreign capitalists replaced the bourgeois-bureaucrats in the field of competition and gained a new depth with domestic and foreign market traction. In this framework, in addition to labor discipline, the enlargement of the reserve lands in the landed estates at the expense of peasant's subsistence lands and commons came to the agenda and the proletarianization of sharecroppers accelerated.

These developments of different rhythms which were caused by the struggle among landed estate owners, were mere reflections of uneven and combined development in Turkey. Evaluating this gradual process of primitive accumulation within the framework of the long waves of world capitalism provides another opportunity to reveal the specificity of the geography we are dealing with. In 1848-1873 and 1896-1914, when capitalism gained momentum and profit rates increased, it is seen that landed estate owners increased the production pressure on the land, and especially emphasized labor discipline through bondage to the soil and/or debt bondage. The expansion of 1896-1914 led to deproletarization<sup>73</sup> along with proletarianization. Of course, as a result of such an orientation, social restlessness in the Balkans and Anatolia was marked by revolts and uprisings in both waves of expansion.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) was founded in 1893 with the agrarian question as well as the national question fanned by social dynamics and conflicts on landed estates in the Balkans, and the uprising organized by the Organization in 1903 had a great impact

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<sup>73</sup> Deproletarization is the subordination of free workers to unfree forms of labor, or the substitution of the latter for the former. It is capital's "struggle from above" to discipline the working class. The organized power and consciousness of the working class are dismantled in order to drive down labor costs. For the concept, see Tom Brass, *Labour Regime Change in the Twenty-First Century: Unfreedom, Capitalism and Primitive Accumulation*, Leiden: Brill, 2012. For a detailed discussion on unfree labor and deproletarization, see Özdeniz Pektaş, "Emek Tarihi: Özgür Olmayan Emek Tartışmaları", Ulaş Karakoç ve Alp Yücel Kaya (Eds.), *İktisat Tarihinin Dönüşü: Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Yeni Yaklaşımlar ve Araştırmalar*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2021.

around the city of Bitola, mobilizing approximately 30,000 people in the uprising.<sup>74</sup> In Eastern Anatolia, where almost the same social dynamics and conflicts were observed, the Sason Rebellion of 1894 broke out after the uprising of Armenian peasants, who were under obligations that went beyond bondage to the soil, with the involvement of the Hunchaks, against Kurdish landlords (aghas and beys); with the massacres committed by the Hamidiye Regiments, the events spread to a wider geography in the region and lasted until 1897.<sup>75</sup> Although there were no similar uprisings in Western Anatolia in the same period, it was social banditry that came to the forefront as a reflection of the social question faced by the agricultural laborers in the region (Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe being the first name that comes to mind as a symbol of such a social bandit).<sup>76</sup> This social restlessness became widespread throughout the Empire in the early 1900s with tax revolts that took on the character of a popular uprising.<sup>77</sup> Again, the strikes that gained momentum in the cities (especially in port cities that were intertwined with foreign markets), which became more and more dominated by capitalist forces after 1900,<sup>78</sup> show the extent of the social shaking coming from below. The spring of 1908 was quite heated: In March 1908, the workers of the Imperial Shipyard not only went on strike for 2 months, but also wanted to march to the Imperial Palace to voice their demands;<sup>79</sup> again in March 1908, in Uşak (in Western Anatolia), up to 1500 carpet yarn laborers (consisting of mostly women and children) not only attacked the Tiridzade, Bıçakzade and Yılcıncıade spinning mills that had left them unemployed, but also broke the machines and rendered the mills inoperable.<sup>80</sup> With the military revolts<sup>81</sup> that began to erupt in 1907, the Ottoman geography was already in the throes of revolution.<sup>82</sup>

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74 İlhan Tekeli, "Makedonya İç Devrimci Örgütü ve 1903 İlinden Ayaklanması", *Birlikte Yazılan ve Öğrenilen Bir Tarihe Doğru*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2007, pp. 68-69, 76; Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908, from Western Sources*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 130.

75 Mehmet Polatel, "The Complete Ruin of a District: The Sasun Massacre of 1894", *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century, Societies, Identities and Politics*, Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi (Eds.), Londra: I.B. Tauris, 2016.

76 Sabri Yetkin, *Ege'de Eşkiyalar*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996.

77 Aykut Kansu, *1908 Devrimi*, (trans. by Ayda Erbal), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001.

78 Can Nacar, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Emek ve İktidar, Tütün İşçileri, İşyeri Yöneticileri ve Devlet, 1872-1912*, İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2022, pp. 83-106; Kadir Yıldırım, *Osmanlı'da İşçiler (1870-1922), Çalışma Hayatı, Örgütler, Grevler*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınevi, 2013, pp. 218-230.

79 Yıldırım, *Osmanlı'da İşçiler...*, p. 223.

80 Quataert, "Machine Breaking...".

81 H. Zafer Kars, *1908 Devriminin Halk Dinamiği*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1997 (1984), pp. 53-57.

82 The worsening economic crisis and the high inflation and decline in purchasing power faced by the population must also be taken into account, see Donald Quataert, "The Economic Climate of the 'Young Turk Revolution' in 1908", *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 51, no. 3, 1979), pp. D1147-D1161; Carter Vaughn Findley, "Economic Bases of Revolution and Repression in the Late Ottoman Empire", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1986, pp. 81-106.

In this revolutionary situation, the provincial bourgeoisie, which did not feel safe in the face of the commercial bourgeoisie and foreign capital, turned its back on Abdülhamid II's despotic regime (*İstibdat*) and took a revolutionary position. The commercial and developing industrial capital, which was stuck on the Savignyan path, also supported the revolution for a Hegelian transformation. The leading force of the revolution was the Committee of Union and Progress, which, under the influence of these classes, was in close contact with and in cooperation with Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, and Armenian political organizations, especially the IMRO, Dashnaks and Hunchaks.<sup>83</sup> With the participation of rural and urban working masses of all nationalities in the movement, the revolution took on the character of a people's revolution, and was called the Revolution of Liberty, in the sense of breaking away from despotism (*İstibdat*).

According to recent archival research, urban laborers, who had gone on strike 44 times between 1870 and 1900, went on strike 38 times between 1900 and June 1908 alone; in 1908, following the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, this number jumped to 143 strikes; in such an environment where reactions against the despotic regime and capital surfaced in almost every business sector, 59 of the strikes were in Istanbul, 37 in Salonica, 10 in Izmir, and others spread from Skopje to Beirut.<sup>84</sup> It is obvious that the bourgeois factions did not delay in reacting to this rise in social fervor. Even before the first month of the revolution, *Ahenk*, one of the Izmir newspapers, characterized all laborers, especially porters and shipment workers, who raised their demands for better working conditions as "rabble violating public freedom";<sup>85</sup> and on October 8, 1908, about 2.5 months after the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy, the Ad-Hoc Law on Strikes was enacted, which severely restricted strikes and the formation of trade unions. Although the number of strikes decreased and the organization of the working classes slowed down as a result of the construction of a regime of oppression against the working classes, it is quite clear that the genie was out of the bottle.

After 1908, the bourgeoisie showed its pressure on the working classes, and especially after 1913, under the National Economy policies of Ottoman governments, it became burning with the fire of investment and competition. In this period, the number of joint-stock companies in particular amplified. Of the 129 joint stock companies active in 1918, only 9 of which were established before 1908, 42 were operating in commerce, 41 in industry, 16 in finance, 15 in construction and

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83 Özer Özbozdağlı ve Nizam Önen, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin 1908 Siyasi Programı, İmparatorluk Nasıl Kurtulur?*, Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık, 2020.

84 Yıldırım, *Osmanlı'da İşçiler ...*, pp. 226-227, 264-265, 357-367. Cevdet Kırpık's research gives similar figures (1976-1900: 33 strikes; 1900-1908: 33 strikes; July-December 1908: 119 strikes), see Cevdet Kırpık, *Osmanlı Devletinde İşçiler ve İşçi Hareketleri: 1876-1914*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), Isparta: Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, 2004, pp. 250-253, 256-263 (I am grateful to Can Nacar for informing me about this study). In his new book, Zafer Toprak confirms the acceleration in strikes but identifies fewer strikes (54) in 1908 after the Revolution, Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de İşçi Sınıfı, 1908-1946*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2016, pp. 15-18.

85 *Ahenk*, 14 and 15 August 1908.

transportation, 9 in insurance, and 6 in agriculture.<sup>86</sup> These include the Izmir Cotton Manufacturing Ottoman Joint Stock Company and Cotton Textile Factory, founded in 1910 in Izmir by the Giraud family of Levantine origin from the commercial bourgeoisie, and the cotton and flour factories founded in Adana in 1918 by Subhi Pasha, the Mayor of Adana before 1908 from the provincial bourgeoisie (whose family, Ramazanoğulları roots go back to the Middle Ages), then Adana MP, are striking examples of the different adventures of the bourgeoisie.<sup>87</sup>

While the provincial bourgeoisie continued its struggle against the commercial bourgeoisie and foreign capital, it intensified its investments in trade and industry by the end of the nineteenth century. As a result, intra-class rivalry intensified during the National Economy period, but it transcended the provincial and commercial divisions and intensified in a different dimension through the distinctions between local and foreign, Muslim and non-Muslim. While domestic capitalist groups struggled against foreign capital, the Muslim bourgeoisie launched a fierce offensive against non-Muslims in the struggle within domestic capitalist groups. We can exemplify the dynamics of the first struggle through the developments in Izmir and its hinterland: In 1912, Smyrna Fig Packers Ltd. and *Société anonyme de figues*, two companies prominent in the fig market in and around Smyrna, established a company (in fact a trust) called “Fig Syndicate”. Their aim was to become the sole buyer (monopsony) in the growing fig market and set the price. Against such organizations of exporters, merchants and middlemen, cooperatives played an important role within the framework of the National Economy policies, and the organizations of producers were supported by the Union and Progress governments. In such an environment, the producers organized under the leadership of local capitalists (Nazmi Topçuoğlu, Kazım Nuri Çörüş and Ahmet Sarı), consisting of large landowner producers and merchants, against the Trust in order to secure a high price for the figs they produced, first establishing the “Osmanlı Anonim Aydın İncir ve Himaye-i Zürra Şirketi” (Ottoman Joint-Stock Company of Aydın Fig and Protection of Cultivators) in 1912, the “Millî Aydın Bankası” (National Aydın Bank) two years later and finally the “Kooperatif Aydın İncir Müstahsilleri Anonim Şirketi” (Joint-Stock Company of Cooperative of Aydın Fig Producers) in 1915. The same process was also experienced by raisin (namely sultana) producers who faced another trust, the “Raisin Syndicate”. Again, under the leadership of local capitalists, the “Manisa Bağcılar Bankası” (Manisa Viticulturalist Bank) was established in 1917 to sell the raisin growers’ goods, provide loans at low interest rates and find new markets in foreign trade.<sup>88</sup> The establishment of this kind of

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86 Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye’de Ekonomi ve Toplum (1908-1950)*, Milli İktisat-Milli Burjuvazi, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995, pp. 117-118.

87 Both factories were owned and operated by the same owner-managers during the Republican period. Melih Gürsoy, *Tarihi, Ekonomisi ve İnsanları ile Bizim İzmirimiz*, İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 1993, p. 267; Bülent Varlık, Kudret Emiroğlu and Ömer Türkoğlu, *Adana Sanayi Tarihi*, Adana: Adana Sanayi Odası, 2008, p. 76.

88 *Tariş Tarihi: İncir, Üzüm, Pamuk, Zeytin-Zeytinyağı Tarım Satış Kooperatifleri Birlikleri*, İzmir: Türkiye Toplumsal ve Ekonomik Tarih Vakfı. 1993, pp. 26-65; Zafer Toprak, *Milli İktisat-Milli*



incorporations/joint-stock companies was a reaction of the provincial bourgeoisie (agricultural and commercial capital), which was in a weaker position compared to organized foreign capital. Among the founders of Ottoman Joint-Stock Company of Aydın Fig and Protection of Cultivators and the National Aydın Bank were large fig orchard and olive grove owners and merchants. Among the founders of Manisa Viticulturalist Bank, landed estate owners and merchants such as Halid Pasha of Karaosmanoğulları and İbrahim Efendi of Katipzades were the par excellence representatives of the historical provincial bourgeoisie in Western Anatolia.<sup>89</sup> It can be seen that it is possible to diversify investments on land with industrial investments like Subhi Pasha, and commercial activity with industrial investments like the Girauds, as well as diversifying investments on land with trade and banking.

In the intra-bourgeoisie rivalry, the second struggle of the domestic capitalist groups took place within itself. The Muslim bourgeoisie launched a major offensive against the non-Muslim bourgeoisie, especially the Armenian bourgeoisie, even going as far as confiscating their property. The testimonies of Emin (Sazak) Bey (also an ardent defender of the “Constitutional Revolution”, a member of the local court and administrative council in Mihaliçcik -of Eskişehir- the Committee of Union and Progress, and the president of the Mihaliçcik Chamber of Commerce after 1908), who was a member of the provincial bourgeoisie that had grown from landowning to tax-farming and commerce, written in 1918, reveal the intensity of the intra-class conflict in a striking way:

My father was always in debt to the Armenians Tonisyan, Hacı Ohannes and Karabetler. The Armenians would never get him out of debt because he didn't keep accounts himself.

If Armenians do business with an agha, they turn him into an empty shell. First, they become partners in his cattle, increase his debt to a level that his entire gen-

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*Burjuvazi...*, pp. 132-144.

89 At the beginning of this article, we mentioned Katipzade Mehmet Efendi's struggle with bourgeois-bureaucrats, which ended in his death in 1816. For the social basis of these companies and banks, see A. Gündüz Ökçün, “1909-1930 Yılları Arasında Anonim Şirket Olarak Kurulan Bankalar”, *İktisat Tarihi Yazıları*, Ankara: Sermaye Piyasası Kurulu, 1997, pp. 228-230, 236-239. 228-230, 236-239. See also Feroz Ahmad, “The Agrarian Policy of the Young Turks 1908-1918”, *Economie et Société dans l'Empire Ottoman (fin du XVIIIe-début du XXe siècle)*, Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Paul Dumont (Eds.), Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1983. The contradiction of the cooperative(s) organized as the Joint-Stock Company of the Cooperative of Aydın Fig Producers is expressed by the Board of Directors of this cooperative in 1929-1930 as follows: “In general, it is necessary to divide our members into two groups: the producers who are also engaged in the trade of figs and those who have nothing to do with this trade. ... It is impossible to reconcile the interests of a merchant and a cooperative member. Among our members, this conflict of interests is manifested in the fact that those who are engaged in the fig trade have one eye on the market and the other on the market.” İlhan Tekeli ve Selim İlkin, “Türkiye’de Devletçi İktisat Politikasına Geçişin Ekonomik Nedenleri: Devletçi Deneyimin Ege Bölgesine Çeşitlenmesi”, *1885-1985 Türkiye Ekonomisinin 100 Yılı ve İzmir ve İzmir Ticaret Odası Sempozyumu*, İzmir: İzmir Ticaret Odası Yayını, 1986, p. 197.

eration cannot pay, and then dispossess him of his land and property.<sup>90</sup>

I had seen the sons of Hacı Halit Agha and Hacı Mehmet Agha and others herding away their cattle with their shepherds and dogs. I was afraid that our cattle would also belong to the Armenians. Getting rid of the debt, or more precisely, getting rid of the Armenians, was on my mind day and night.<sup>91</sup>

At one point, we were going to have a wedding (in 1904). We needed money for the wedding. And we were owing Tonisyan 230 liras. He [my father] asked Tonisyan to help him with 200-300 liras for the wedding expenses. When Tonisyan told my father that the debt would be too big and offered him to put up some of the cattle, I lost my mind. I immediately fired Tonisyan with all kinds of insults and told him that if he did business with my father again, I would do all kinds of evil to him, so my father was forced to leave. Thank God, we paid the debts and were saved.<sup>92</sup>

Although Emin Sazak does not give a date for the payment of debts, he implies that 1908 was the turning point: “Until the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, very few Turks were interested in trade. And those who did trade were violent and vicious”.<sup>93</sup> After 1908, it is clear from Emin Bey’s narrative (written between February 28 and March 4, 1918) that the bourgeoisie went on the offensive as the hierarchy of relations with Armenians based on indebtedness changed:

Tonisyan Matyos was a clerk for us in Ankara, and his brother was buying fleece and grain for us in Çankırı... One day suddenly, together with Kigıms and Kalpa-kdjian, they gathered Armenians from Sivrihisar and Mihalıçcik and imprisoned them. Then we understood the matter... The next day the matter was understood. Now the incident had widened. They rounded up all the Armenians...

Matyos and his brother were very dangerous for us. God forbid, there was a danger of a Russian invasion in our country. There was no doubt that Armenians would do a lot of evil at such a time. Matyos and Kams were the worst enemies. Because I had broken their ruling supremacy in Yazır and started to dominate Yazır.

In 1904, they did not consent to my building a highland house in Yazır and had it demolished. After the Constitutional Monarchy, we built a house, haystack and barn. For twenty years the animals of Sazak Village could not be grazed in Yazır. When I built houses and barns, they became enemies of mine.

I was also disrupting the Armenians’ trade. I was not deceiving myself, I was deceiving, and since I encouraged the people to deceive, all Armenians became enemies. When the villages of Sazak and Ahur, which the Tonisyans considered as their landed estates, were also lost and their wealth disappeared, of course Matyos and Kams became even more hostile.

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90 M. Emin Sazak, *Emin Bey’in Defteri, Hatıralar*, İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz Yayınları, 2009 (2007), p. 67.

91 Ibid, p. 67.

92 Ibid, p. 69.

93 Ibid, p. 71.

Necessity had forced Matyos to become a clerk and his brother to work in our business. Their presence was very harmful to us and we had made up our minds to kill Matyos and Kams immediately if, God forbid, the country suffered an evil. But they were eliminated without our knowledge, and we suffered a loss.

Meanwhile, Çaputlu Hüseyin Ağa, who was in Ankara, told us to help remove the Armenians from our region. I accepted it as a patriotic service. I left my important work in Ankara and came to Mihaliçcik. On the second day of Eid, I was in the center of Mihaliçcik. The Armenians are unaware. There is no movement from the authorities yet. The district governor was a Greek named Yovanaki. We told him about Ankara.

Since the district governor was a Christian, he took into account our every application in order to show that he was loyal to the government's policy and to rob the Armenians.

There were no Muslim shopkeepers/craftsmen in the country. If the Armenians left, their shops would be completely closed. In order to prevent the closure of the shops, I decided to distribute the Armenian textiles, hardware and herbal goods to the shopkeepers and to buy a shop myself. Hacı Hüseyin Ağa was very happy about this situation. I was sitting in the inn room and he was always at my disposal. Anyway, I would call the Armenians and mediate the negotiations. Whoever wanted to buy or give what to whom, I would call them and find them, and I would take care of everyone's business.

At that time, no one had any money except me. If I wanted to, I could have taken all the Armenian shops. If it is up to the government, let the government lose two thousand liras. If we train three or five tradesmen/craftsmen, the country will be saved from a completely dull state. I calculated this, and so we bought all the Armenian shops, cheap and expensive. Hacı Hüseyin and I bought two shops together. Actually, I didn't buy them, Hacı Hüseyin did, he said, "We are partners." Our main idea was this: If the government pardoned the Armenians, so that they should not come back, we decided therefore to buy their houses and we had the title deed procedures done. We will write more later, God willing.<sup>94</sup>

As Emin Bey himself relates, with the Armenian deportation in 1915, the provincial bourgeoisie usurped Armenian property. This *de facto* usurpation took on a legal dimension with the "Ad-Hoc Law on the Abandoned Properties, Debts

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94 Ibid., pp. 113-114. Sazak continues his words as follows: "Let's see how the generations and grandchildren who will come after me will judge our actions. If it were possible, I would listen to their evaluations. I regret it now, because I don't see it as a fair behavior. Let the government do it, but I shouldn't have interfered with their property and so on (...) For three or five years, I did not want to and did not intentionally violate anyone's law. I was known in the country as someone who knew the right and the law. If an Armenian right amounting of a thousand liras was passed on to me, then we gave five hundred liras to the State, we paid the tax of one thousand five hundred liras from the deficiency of fleece. I suffered losses in my business. I lost a lot, but unfortunately, I was considered as a thief in the eyes of the public and suffered from remorse of conscience. I was the target of accusatory thoughts of the state administrators such as 'He established a sultanate, organized a Court of Appeals, beat up the district governor, and did things by force...'" Ibid., p. 115.

and Claims of the Persons Transferred to Other Places” dated September 26, 1915, briefly known as the Abandoned Properties Law. Emin Bey describes this process as follows:

When Armenians petitioned the Abandoned Properties Commission, claiming that the buildings were not paid for as a result of the transfer process, we paid the commission one hundred and fifty liras for the buildings and one hundred liras for the shops.

In any case, I am not satisfied with my behavior now. Naturally, the houses would have been destroyed. Thank God the chances of them coming back have diminished.<sup>95</sup>

This kind of *de facto* and *de jure* usurpation, as Sungur Savran stresses, represents a process of primitive accumulation that emerged predominantly in the urban area as a result of intra-class struggle.<sup>96</sup> It is also obvious that a similar process of primitive accumulation emerged in the rural areas as a result of an inter-class struggle, especially in Eastern Anatolia, where poor Armenian peasants who were under heavy obligations to Kurdish aghas and beys were dispossessed after the deportation. However, unlike the dispossession in urban areas, dispossession in rural areas developed through legal regulations codified long before the Abandoned Properties regulations (and beyond the actual social conflicts). In this context stands out the legislation on the resolution of property disputes introducing decisions of “administrative prohibition” (*idareten men*) to be taken by local councils.<sup>97</sup> Developments in this regard date back to pre-1908. With the increase in property conflicts across the country, real estate and land disputes, on the basis of the resolution of the Council of State (*Şura-ı Devlet*) in 1902 and 1906, and coppice forest and pasture disputes, on the basis of the resolution of the Grand Vizier’s Office in 1903, were resolved by “administrative prohibition” decisions of local administrative councils. In the same direction, the governments of the Second Constitutional Monarchy issued an ordinance on August 7, 1909 (on the “administrative settlement” of disputes arising from the disposition of real estates and lands) and an instruction for that ordinance on April 20, 1910. Accordingly, in the occurrence of any interference or encroachment on real estate and land disposed of with an “imperial deed”, the administrative councils would issue a decision of “administrative prohibition” and expel the perpetrators of the interference or encroachment from the real estate or land; the control of deeds and the determination of possession on the basis of the deed would be essential; if only one of the parties

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95 Ibid, p. 116.

96 Sungur Savran, “Sınıf Mücadelesi Olarak Ermeni Soykırımı”, *Devrimci Marksizm*, no 23, 2015, p. 78.

97 Kaya, “Balkanlar ve Batı Anadolu’da...”, p. 59-63; Alp Yücel Kaya, “Beylik Arazi Köylü Arzisini ve Ortak Alanları Nasıl Yuttu? 20. Yüzyıl Başında Balkanlar’da İlk Birikim ve Mülksüzleştirme”, *Mülkiyeti Yeniden Düşünmek: Türkiye’de Özel Mülkiyetin İnşası, İcrası ve İhlali*, Begüm Özden Fırat ve Fırat Genç (der.), İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi (to be published in 2023).

is the holder of a deed, he/she is the owner; if both parties have a deed, the owner of the old dated deed is the owner; if both parties do not have a deed, the owner is the one who pays the tax on the property and land; if the dispute still persists, the parties will carry their cases through the relevant levels of the regular courts, from the first instance to the appeal, and then to the appeal. In 1912, the Ministry of Internal Affairs noted that the term “immovable properties” (*emval-i gayrimenkule*) in the Ordinance of 1909 and the Instruction of 1910 included pastures and coppice forests, and therefore, administrative prohibition decisions would also apply to disputes over such properties that could be classified as commons. In 1913, the legal regulations based on the administrative prohibition decisions in the resolution of disputes on real estate and land resulted in a more general codification, and laws on immovable properties were prepared under different headings. The introduction and implementation of the “administrative prohibition” decision increased the power of administrative councils in the Ottoman provinces, especially in the Balkans, and made them dominant in disputes over real estate and land. The fact that both the administration of title deeds and the related judiciary regarding the disposition of real estate and land were embodied in the administrative councils rendered the regular courts ineffective in cases arising from real estate and land disputes, and made the large landowners who dominated the administrative councils (“whose members were able to distinguish between good and bad, and persons of good reputation and payers of a considerable amount of direct taxes”)<sup>98</sup> absolute power holders.

As of 1909, the Ottoman countryside returned to its pre-1908 atmosphere full of social conflicts, despite all the expectations created by the 1908 Revolution among the working and poor people. In the petition dated May 29, 1909 of the Polina peasants, victims of the administrative prohibition decision in Görice Sanjak in the Province of Bitola, the expression of their disappointment after the Revolution of Liberty is clear: The gentlemen (*beys*) of the Polina landed estate had “usurped” the land in their village “during the time of the despotism, or rather plunder”, and nothing had changed “after the proclamation of liberty”; they complained about “the behavior and cruelty of the gentlemen, which continued in one form or another every day, since we could not benefit in any way from the equality and liberty and other things that the constitutional administration had granted...”<sup>99</sup>

Similarly, the inhabitants of the village of Kalyon in Kozana District of the Province of Bitola, in the petition sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on December 13, 1911, stated that they were expelled from their households and

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98 According to “Vilayetlerin İdare-i Mahsusası ve Nizamınının Suver-i İcraiyyesi Hakkında Talimat-ı Umumiyye” (Public Instructions on the Administration of Provinces and the Forms of Application of the Regulations) of June 21, 1867 (18 Safer 1284), the requirements for being elected as a member of the provincial administrative council were being a subject of the Ottoman state, being able to distinguish between good and bad, being a person of good reputation, paying at least 500 kuruş in direct taxes and being literate (*Düstur*, 1<sup>st</sup> Collection, 1<sup>st</sup> Volume, 1872, p. 623). In the Ottoman provinces, these conditions were mainly met by large landowners.

99 BOA, DH.MKT 2843/20/25 Ca 1327; DH.MKT 2672/42/7 Za 1326.

villages by Kani Pasha with an administrative prohibition decision:

Last year, 8-10 families were thrown out on the streets in the wintertime by the decision of the district's administrative council. Today, with the decision of the council, all of us were thrown out on the streets again and today the gendarmerie commander of Kozana came to our village with 15-20 gendarmes and 15 or so unruly villagers (bashibazouk) and 15 or so Albanians. They immediately found the village headman, tied him to a tree with his sash and entered our houses so to say in his presence, did not free any of us, threw our belongings on the roads, hit our screaming women and children and hit us all together with rifle butts and whips, leaving us all covered in blood and bruises. Finally, they drove us out of the houses where we had been living for thousands of years. When we went to the Kozana government to ask for protection, we found the same treatment, and tonight about four hundred of us, women, and small children, were left on the streets of Kozana, and we do not know where we will stay from now on. The reason for our expulsion from the houses was supposedly because it [the village] was a landed estate [çiftlik], there are many other landed estates, why are they not treated the same way and if they are landed estates, do we not have the same dignity as other animals?<sup>100</sup>

Dispossession was not limited to the Balkans; in their petition dated March 26, 1909, the inhabitants of Avranderesi, Çileme and Zeytun villages in Seydiköy, Izmir, also demanded the annulment of the decision of administrative prohibition issued by the administrative council working in collaboration with Madame Adamopoulo, a Levantine descendant having U.S. citizenship: "With the force of the gendarmerie, she has removed us from our houses for which we were paying our taxes, and not content with this transfer, she has also destroyed our houses in this important rain, leaving us destitute and homeless, and this encroachment on our agriculture and residence, which is our livelihood, by the government should be immediately refused..."<sup>101</sup>

The petition of the peasants of Çakırbeyli village in the Sanjak of Aydın, dated December 18, 1909, sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, states that they suffered from a similar process regarding the pasture dispute they had with Adnan [Menderes] Bey, the owner of the landed estate having the same name as the village, and expresses their victimization and demands justice:

Although the pasture with known boundaries and belonging to our village of four hundred inhabitants based on judgment with the official document reserved in our possession, was to be delivered to our village; in violation of this adjudication, on the basis of the decision of the administrative council it was delivered to Adnan Bey, the owner of the landed estate in the vicinity of our village; he did cultivate it by force by means of a gendarmerie detachment dispatched to the village by the decision of the administrative council of the province. It is known to all of you

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100 BOA, DH.H 25/52.

101 BOA, ŞD 2791/30.

that it is not legally permissible at this time of Constitution[al Monarchy] that the issues adjudicated by the courts were to be dealt with and seen by the administrative council. Our livestock are in the open air and our agriculture has failed, we have no other pasture or place allocated for our livestock, we ask for your mercy and expect justice...<sup>102</sup>

The provincial bourgeoisie is not pleased with this quest for justice by the rural laborers. In a petition dated December 29, 1910 sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kani Pasha talks about the injustices he had suffered and emphasizes his disappointment with the [Second] Constitutional Monarchy: "One of the guarantees of law promised by our revolution was the complete protection of the right of [property] disposition. However, an incident I will present in the following ... is a clear proof that there have sometimes been blatant injustices in this regard." According to him, "with the encouragement of extremist socialists and at the same time with the encouragement of extremist nationalists" the peasants demanded "division of land based on an unreasonable and unfair theory". Such a practice would result in "no landed estate owner being able to dispose of his property anymore", "he would abandon it to the Christian people who have been working as sharecroppers and farmers for a long time," and such an attempt must be prevented.<sup>103</sup>

The landed estate owner class was one of the leading classes of the 1908 Revolution. As we have seen in the examples above, although their demands were met by the government before 1908, it was only after 1908 that they began to steer the Constitutionalist governments, moving forward like a truck with the brakes off. The story of the codification of the administrative prohibition decision, which started in 1902 and gained momentum between 1909 and 1913, is a clear expression of this process. But the landed estate owners were not content with dispossessing the landed estate laborers, they also brought the Laborer Regulation (*Amele Nizamnamesi*), which they prepared to discipline those who were already dispossessed and turned into workers on the landed estates (under unfree labor conditions), to the Parliament in 1909 and 1912. The report sent by the Governor of Aydın on the subject provides a clear expression of how the working classes were viewed by the Administration:

The majority of the laborers engaged in agriculture in villages and landed estates in this province are vagabonds, who work as laborers in the summer and, when they have the opportunity, commit all kinds of outrages such as extortion, robbery, theft and so on. Therefore, in order to keep them under surveillance continuously, was requested from the owners of the landed estates in the province a book containing the names and, as far as possible, the identities of the laborers employed, and was ordered to inform the government of any changes that might occur after these books were given.<sup>104</sup>

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102 BOA, DH.MUI 47/41.

103 BOA, DH.H 52/9.

104 BOA, DH.MUI 72/74/1326.

The concern over the transformation of the “laborious classes” into “dangerous classes” in this way was not limited to the governor. In April-August 1912, Tekfurdağı Deputy Bedreddin Bey and his colleagues proposed that the draft law, the “Laborer Regulation”, which the Council of State had disapproved in 1909, be immediately brought to the Assembly for enactment:

In spite of the fact that it has been repeatedly observed that people with unknown identities are brought in under the name of servitude, and that they often leave the service suddenly after receiving their wages and salaries and/or after serving for 3-5 days, the government is neither able to take administrative action due to the lack of a law, regulation and instruction, nor can the judiciary take criminal action against such an act, which can easily take the form of fraud; the complainant and the defendant are referred to the court of law. Since this abandonment of service coincides with the time when the farmer [landowner] is at work, the farmer [landowner] has neither the time nor the cash to deal with the courts for a long time. Even if he could, it is unlikely that he gets his rights from a poor foreign man. If the following is nothing more than a reiteration of a need that is no doubt known to their delegation, the approach of the harvest season and the fact that we have been informed that the situation we have presented is becoming more and more bizarre, therefore, it is necessary to provide mutual guarantees to the farmers [landowners] and servants. We hereby request and propose that it be decided that the draft law, which was prepared by the Ministry of Interior and is currently in the Council of State, be immediately completed and submitted to the National Assembly.<sup>105</sup>

The class hatred of Bedreddin Bey and his friends is evident; unidentified people receive high wages working as servants, then abandon and defraud the landed estate owners by running away in the middle of work. The draft law pending in the Council of State should be sent to the Assembly and enacted as soon as possible. However, the Balkan Wars that broke out in the fall of 1912 would completely prevent this.

Transcending the struggle between the provincial bourgeoisie and the commercial bourgeoisie and foreign capital, the struggle that intensified over the distinction between local and foreign, but mostly Muslim and non-Muslim, marked the post-1913 period, and the Savignyite vein of Muslim capitalists within the provincial bourgeoisie swelled like never before. As a result, both non-Muslim capitalists and rural Muslim and non-Muslim laborers (without distinction) were dispossessed (most of them subjected to unfree labor categories). If we make a balance sheet assessment, Muslim representatives of the provincial bourgeoisie, who were increasingly inclined towards commercial and industrial investments over time, became part of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie by appropriating the abandoned properties; Muslim representatives of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie expanded their portfolios by taking advantage of either the National Economy policies or the abandoned properties; Jews and some of the Levantines who were part of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie also resisted and

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105 BOA, BEO 4053/303938/4 B 1330.



survived this process; foreign capital, on the other hand, was battered in this process, but it clearly prevailed until the new economic context that would emerge after the Great Depression of 1929.

### The Revolution of 1923

The Ottoman government and the Allied Powers of World War I signed on October 30, 1918 the Armistice of Mudros. Accordingly, the Allies were to occupy the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, would occupy Ottoman territories in case of disorder and a threat to Allied security; the Ottoman army was demobilized; ports, railways and strategic points were made available for use by the Allies. The occupation of Istanbul in 1918 was followed by that of Izmir in 1919. Feeling highly threatened, the bourgeoisie (no matter its faction) started to organize itself in the form of societies and/or committees for the defense of rights (*müdafaai hukuk*) and/or the refusal of occupation (*redd-i ilhak*). These organizations formed the basis of the National Struggle (*Milli Mücadele*) starting from 1918 onwards; they also prepared the way for the foundation of the National Assembly on April 23, 1920, in Ankara challenging the Ottoman government in occupied Istanbul. After this brief historical review, let us return to the dynamics of class struggle during the period of the National Struggle.

Until 1876, the provincial bourgeoisie tried to maintain and even aggravate the unfree forms of labor defined by bondage to the soil and debt bondage by relying on customary law. After 1876, however, as seen especially in the draft “Labor Regulation”, it was eager to construct a new law by departing from customary law. The provincial bourgeoisie’s search for a new law again pursues unfree forms of labor, but in a period when the class struggle intensified and led to deportations and genocide, it aims to transform free forms of labor by pushing its limits even further. It was in such a period that “laborers”, “most of whom were vagabonds”, took to the mountains and took on the role of social banditry as “efe” and “zeybek”.<sup>106</sup> As another actor of the social question caused by the class struggle in Anatolia, we should not forget another group, the deserters, who were devastated by the war years of the 1910s and turned into social bandits.<sup>107</sup> To these should be added the small producers who carried out contract farming under the pressure and control of the *Régie* (in a way, they became workers of the *Régie*), and who had no choice but to smuggle tobacco, risking fighting with the *Régie*’s guards in order to make a living.<sup>108</sup>

In such a context, the impact of the 1917 October Revolution and Bolshevism

106 Yetkin, *Ege’de Eşkiyalık*.

107 Masayuki Yama’uchi, “Reflections on the Social Movements during the National Liberation War of Turkey: A Tentative Analysis of Partisan Activities in Western Anatolia”, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, no 15, 1978, pp. 15-50; Sungur Savran, “Bir İhtilal Olarak Millî Mücadele 2: Anadolu’da Sürekli Devrim Dinamikleri”, *Devrimci Marksizm*, no 44, 2020, pp. 31-89.

108 Donald Quataert, “Reji, Kaçakçılar ve Hükümet”, *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Avrupa İktisadi Yayılımı ve Direniş (1881-1908)*, Yurt Yayınları, Ankara, 1987, pp. 23-43.

in Anatolia was quite strong.<sup>109</sup> The 1920 Declaration of the Green Army Society, which was very active in Anatolia, as did the Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Party of Turkey and the People's Workers' Party of Turkey,<sup>110</sup> directly addresses the social question we have tried to put forward above and calls the working classes to struggle by citing the "New World" established in Russia after the October Revolution as an example:

What is the old world? What is happening in the new world? The old world is nothing but a few rich people making millions of people work like slaves, providing for their own comfort at the expense of the hunger and misery of these millions of people.

Peasants, farmers, viculturists, gardeners, shoemakers, headscarf makers, bricklayers, carpenters, carriage drivers, in short, all workers who work with their feet and arms, workday and night, strive, and they can barely fill their stomachs with great difficulty with dry bread. They fall ill, go hungry and go without medicine. There is no one to give them bread, medicine, and no one to bring them a doctor. Everything that is eaten and worn in the world is created by the poor. Houses, mansions, and palaces are built by laborers. But he himself is hungry, naked, miserable, roofless, and homeless. They take it as tithe, they take it as aid. The poor peasant endures all kinds of taxes. Neither his roads are built, nor his countryside repaired, nor his children educated.

Nothing is done for the poor. No one will take up his cause, nor will anyone look at him as a human being. It is as if God created the peasant, the laborer, the poor to be servants of the rich.

O peasants, poor people, hard-working farmers, honest laborers, and workers, open your eyes, look carefully around you! Do you know who are the beys, pashas, and aghas around you? They are human beings like you. There is no difference between you in the sight of Allah. Allah has created all people equal. To get rid of the evil of these cruel men who have made you poor and ignorant, raise your head a little, raise your voice, do not be afraid of them! They cannot do anything to you if they are left to themselves. From the news coming from Russia, everyone is gradually learning about the work of farmers and soldiers in Russia and Azerbaijan. They are building a new world. They have completely changed the old administrations and governments. They are establishing new administrations, new governments. The new world is completely different. In the new world,

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109 For a detailed analysis of this process, see Savran, "Bir İhtilal Olarak Millî Mücadele 2...", p. 68 and the following pages. On the leftist movements during the National Struggle, see also Erol Ülker, "Millî Mücadele'de Sol Akımlar Üzerine Genel Bir Değerlendirme", *100. Yılında Millî Mücadele'de Eskişehir'de Sol*, Mehmet Ö. Alkan (Ed.), Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2022.

110 Paul Dumont underlines that *Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası* (the People's Socialist Party of Turkey) privileged the participation of the peasant population in the revolution in line with the framework outlined by the Comintern at its Congresses in 1920, see Paul Dumont, "Le mouvement communiste anatolien en 1922", *Du socialisme ottoman à l'internationalisme anatolien*, Istanbul: the ISIS Press, pp. 361-362.

the government is always in the hands of the poor. The poor choose the men of government. Governors, sanjak governors, district governors have all disappeared. Rich, poor, big, small, bey, pasha have all become equal. Ranks have always been abolished.

Since it was forbidden to own property, bribery, illicit profit, theft, lying, fraud were completely eliminated. Everyone understood humanity, everyone was equal to each other. This is what we will do, this is what we will be. We are also walking on this path.<sup>111</sup>

In this context, the following articles found in the Green Army's Regulations regarding the new law of the new world to be established are noteworthy:

3. The Green Army strives to ensure that all people benefit from land and public wealth only in proportion to their personal, material and spiritual capabilities.
4. It considers the state administration of land, which is considered to be one of the vital benefits such as water, air, light and heat, and which is public, and leaving it to the free common labor of the people, as one of the fundamental reforms.
5. It is in favor of the state's involvement in the whole economic life in order to ensure that the benefits arising from movable and wealth-generating capitals are distributed among all citizens and not to some individuals and some families.<sup>112</sup>

Here, it would be useful to recall what Çerkez [the Circassian] Ethem, the prominent leader of the National Struggle who would be also part of the Green Army in 1920, who visited Karacabey in April 1920, said to Albanian Galip Pasha, who did not contribute to the aid money collected by the Balıkesir Central Committee to the best of his ability:

At a time like this, everyone must sacrifice their wealth for the salvation of the homeland. You, on the other hand, I see with regret that you continue and insist on being a bad example for those who are far inferior to you in terms of wealth. Moreover, I know your past and you very well. You are a man who bribed tens of thousands of liras to win an unjust case. You are an extravagant person who spent as little as [1]50 liras in Istanbul beer houses and Bursa in one night. Isn't your stinginess for the sake of the homeland astonishing and hateful?<sup>113</sup>

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111 Quoted by Dimitir Şişmanov, *Türkiye İşçi ve Sosyalist Hareketi*, (Eds. Ayşe and Ragıp Zarakolu), Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1990 (1978), pp. 75-76 from *Yakın Tarihimiz Dergisi*, vol. 1, 1962, p. 71.

112 Quoted by Şişmanov, *Türkiye İşçi...*, p. 76 from *Yakın Tarihimiz Dergisi*, vol. 1, 1962, p. 107.

113 Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*, (edition in Modern Turkish), Istanbul: Berfin Yayınevi, 1993 (1962), pp. 26-27. The archival documents on Galip Pasha's land dispute with the villagers and the Sultan's Treasury (in the context of the Çamandıra landed estate he owned) and the related lawsuit are voluminous, and although we have not yet made a detailed analysis, it would not be surprising if Galip Pasha, in the context of this or other lawsuits, like the landowners we have seen above, manipulated everyone and everything in line with his own interests (cf. BOA, DH.MKT 1149/2/20.06.1325;

Galip Pasha said, “Sir, this is help. And help depends on desire and demand. And I cannot give more than that”; he was then arrested and spent the night in prison. He was released only after one of his men delivered 5,000 liras on behalf of the Pasha.<sup>114</sup> Galip Pasha, who had increased his aid from 150 liras to 5,000 liras, must have been very uneasy.

The mobilization of the popular masses in the 1920s made not only Galip Pasha but also the entire provincial bourgeoisie uneasy. The uneasiness of the bourgeoisie was of course also reflected in Mustafa Kemal, the President of the Grand National Assembly. On September 16, 1920, in an encrypted telegram he sent to Ali Fuat Pasha, the Commander of the Western Front, he drew attention to the “reforms” that the government should make in order to “protect the country”:

At the same time, the Bolsheviks have started extraordinary activities to create a Bolshevik organization in our country. (...) Their aim is to bring about a social revolution in the country. (...) The men of our country who are supporters of ideas and revolutions or who pursue various purposes under this veil are facilitating the Bolshevik organization without realizing these dangers. In these circumstances, we must first and foremost preserve the country in our hands and prevent Russian subordination through anarchy and revolution by making whatever reforms are necessary through the government.<sup>115</sup>

Exactly 18 days later, on October 4, 1920, the draft Law on Village Coppice forests, which came to the agenda of the Parliament session, is an excellent example of the “reforms” to be made in order to “protect the country”. The bill was presented to the Parliament directly by the President of the National Assembly:<sup>116</sup>

To the Presidency of the Grand National Assembly  
In order to give the peasants the opportunity to benefit more freely from their legal rights and to ensure the protection and orderliness of the hereditary forests, the draft law on the allocation and delimitation of coppice forest to neighboring villages and villages whose inhabitants are engaged in woodcutting and charcoal making and its justification was approved by the Committee of Deputies in its meeting held on 22.9.1336 and is attached herewith and I kindly request the necessary action to be taken.

President of the Grand National Assembly M. Kemal<sup>117</sup>

The Parliament could not remain silent in the face of the social pressure it faced

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DH.MKT 1168/88/14.04.1325; DH.MUİ. 6/2/24.01.1328).

114 Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*, pp. 26-27.

115 Quoted by Savran, “Bir İhtilal Olarak Millî Mücadele 2...”, p. 78 from Ahmet Efe, *Çerkes Ethem* (Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), İstanbul: Bengi Kitap Yayın, 2007, pp. 102-103.

116 The moderator of the session is Mr. Hasan Fehmi (Ataç), second deputy chairman.

117 *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1<sup>st</sup> Period, 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Year, vol. 4, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1981, p. 518.

and enacted the Coppice Forest Law No. 39 on October 14, 1920.<sup>118</sup> The law was not a top-down concession, but an achievement forced from the bottom up, reflecting class conflicts and social unrests in Anatolia during the period of the National Struggle<sup>119</sup> when the dynamics of revolution were constantly in motion.<sup>120</sup> While *de facto* dispossession that was rapidly taking place in rural areas had been legalized through the resolution of property disputes with decisions of “administrative prohibition” since 1902 and with the Law on Abandoned Properties in 1915, the Coppice Forest Law promised almost a land reform to the poor peasants:

ARTICLE ONE – To villages that are engaged in lumbering, charcoaling and timbering and that are either adjacent to or within a maximum distance of twenty kilometers from large forests, by the work of a committee consisting of the local engineer, land registry officers and two members from the village council elders, as of maximum of eighteen old *dönüms* (decare) per household, the coppice forest is allocated and the existing coppices are re-delimited by expanding to this proportion and the official registration is carried out free of charge in the name of the village; the proper conservation and utilization of these coppice forests shall belong to the people of the village under the supervision and responsibility of the council of elders. All waqf forests without discrimination are exempt.

ARTICLE TWO - If it is not possible to allocate coppice forest from the state lands in the amount specified in the first article due to the fact that the forests in the vicinity of the village are under individual ownership, on the basis of the value to be evaluated by a total of three judges (the forest officer -acting as supervisor-, two persons to be elected among the villagers and the forest owners

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118 Yalçın Küçük also drew attention to this law and its social and political dimension in the first pages of his *Türkiye Üzerine Tezler (1908-1978)*, Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1980 (1978), pp. 17-26.

119 Savran, “Bir İhtilal Olarak Milli Mücadele 2...”, p. 34 and following pages.

120 It should be emphasized that the Law was not just ostensible; the statements of Mahmud Celal (Bayar) Bey, the Minister of Economy, indicate that it was thought through and studied in detail: “I am convinced that forests belong directly to the nation. That poor nation, which today has not been able to obtain in any way its right to benefit (Bravo voices). After calculations we have decided on these two hectares, which is twenty new *dönüm* (decare). We calculated each villager’s share in benefit in seven years, calculating the natural cycle of the forest in three years, calculating that an oak forest would grow in every (7) years, taking into account that each household would have three *dönüms*, we estimated that each villager would receive about ten thousand kilos of wood or coal per year, and in this respect, the villagers would receive enough money to live on compared to the current market. At the same time, while setting this amount, we wanted to leave the villagers in a saturated state so that they would no longer enter the state forests. As you may know, preserving the state forests is an important issue that is strongly related to the health and economy of the country today. If we do not leave the peasants in a difficult situation in terms of the wood and coal they need to transport in order to provide their own tools and equipment for agriculture, to procure easily what they will burn themselves, to ensure their own economy and to provide for the maintenance of their children, we will not only serve the well-being of the peasants, but we will also save the remaining state forests from destruction.” *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1<sup>st</sup> Period, 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Year 1, vol. 4, (3rd Edition), Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1981, p. 523.

with the consent of both parties, if there is no consent, they are to be appointed by the forest officer in an impartial manner), the coppice forest is registered in the name of the village after the cash payment of the amount of expropriation by the villager. If the villager is unable to pay the price in cash, it shall be repaid by means of loans to be made from the Agricultural Bank by means of the Ministry of Economy.

If the parties do not agree with the value, they can only apply to the court for an increase or reduction of the value. But this application cannot prevent the enforcement of the decision.

On October 4, 1920 (1st period, 1st meeting year, 28th session), Hamdi Namık (Gör) Bey, Member of Parliament for Izmit, who took the floor in the Assembly during the discussions on the law, clearly reveals the spirit of the law:

HAMDİ NAMIK BEY (Izmit) - Sir, today is one of our happiest days. Because today, with this law, I realize that there is a government that wants to go towards the people. Until now, no law has been drafted for the benefit of the people to this extent. Therefore, I congratulate the honorable deputy of the Ministry of Economy, and then the Committee of Deputies. I do not want to occupy your Committee with more words. I request that the Committee accept this law.<sup>121</sup>

Mr. Tevfik Rüştü (Aras), the Member of Parliament for Menteşe (Muğla), provides an excellent detail of the law's impact on the field:

TEVFİK RÜŞTÜ BEY (Menteşe) - In my opinion, one of the most soulful articles of the law is the second article. Because we know that in many places the state forests are very remote and the state coppice forests of the village have been destroyed. Now it is necessary to give them a forest. Especially because of that particular black stone<sup>122</sup> question, it has come under the noses of the villages and has become everyone's personal forest, I know them very closely. For example, the district of Marmaris is like this. A whole district center has absolutely no forest. Because Şerif Efendi, one of the notables, has moved that black stone further and further and he has become the owner of everything there is in the name of trees. Now, if we do not give the people the right of expropriation as such, at least as the Government thinks, it will mean that you will die of cold and suffer from lack of firewood. Therefore, I find the second article very favorable and ask for its acceptance.<sup>123</sup>

Indeed, Article 2 of the Coppice Forest Law is a fundamental article, which envisages the expropriation of the land of the provincial bourgeoisie consisting

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121 Ibid, p. 522.

122 Here, Tevfik Rüştü Bey refers to "black stones" as boundary stones (whether cadastral or not) that mark land boundaries (as well as local power struggles).

123 Ibid., p. 525.

of aghas and beys and its distribution to the working classes. The introduction of a piece of legislation that threw out the administrative prohibition decisions that dispossessed the rural laborers and turned them into subsistence producers is a concrete example of the dynamics of the permanent revolution of the period in actuality. Throughout the history of the Republic, no other law “in the interest of the rural people” would be enacted to such an extent. Article 2 of the Coppice Forest Law brings a regulation in the interest of the people even beyond the famous Article 17 of the Farmers’ Land Law No. 4753, which was enacted in 1945 despite hot debates, but could not be implemented due to the great opposition of the bourgeoisie.<sup>124</sup>

It was in this uncertain, worrisome atmosphere for the provincial bourgeoisie that Emin Bey wrote the following notes in his notebook in 1920:

In the meantime, the question of Bolshevism arose. We have been inclined towards the Bolsheviks for a long time. The reason is that they are enemies of the British and the French. After all, we say, our enemies are one. But now there are more people who will follow and implement Bolshevik principles. They are almost in control of the Parliament and they have all the power in their hands. These men are in favor of practicing the destructive form of Bolshevism, as in Russia, and they are organized accordingly. Even if the Greeks invade the country, they want to establish Bolshevism in the country at any cost. They want to completely destroy the rich, the village aghas, the more or less well-off, the religious, especially the hodjas, who would resist this. They want to do this - may Allah the Almighty protect them - right now.<sup>125</sup>

Naturally, Emin Bey, like the rest of the provincial bourgeoisie, is anxious about his own property and possessions: “I do not favor the abolition of property rights, because I would personally suffer losses. My known land and property at hand were acquired through our own work and labor”.<sup>126</sup> Despite this uneasiness, Emin Bey (as other representatives of the bourgeois class) did not take the floor during the debates on the Coppice Forest Law and did not respond to the speeches of Hamdi Namık and Tevfik Rüştü in support of the law. However, a few months after the Coppice

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124 Article 17 of the Law reads as follows: “Land cultivated by landless or landless sharecroppers, tenants or agricultural workers may be expropriated to distribute to the above-mentioned farmers and workers, provided that three times the amount taken as the basis for distribution in accordance with Article 39 in that region is to be given to the owner in the place of his choice. The land to be left to the owner shall not be less than 50 *dönüm* (decare). The provisions of Articles 15 and 16 shall not apply in the implementation of this article. This provision shall not apply to temporary seasonal workers. The Ministry of Agriculture shall determine whether the worker is a temporary seasonal worker or not.”

125 Sazak, *Emin Bey'in Defteri...*, p. 161. In the same period, Emin Bey’s hometown Eskişehir was very open to Bolshevik movements; for a new compilation book on this subject, including rich archival material, see Mehmet Ö. Alkan (Ed.), *100. Yılında Millî Mücadele'de Eskişehir'de Sol*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2022.

126 Sazak, *Emin Beyin Defteri...*, p. 162.

Forest Law, on April 18, 1921 (1st period, 2nd meeting year, 22<sup>nd</sup> session), he did not hesitate to reveal his class position as an enemy of the working classes during the debates on the law “on the sale of coal dust from the Zonguldak and Ereğli basins for the benefit of the workers” (Law no. 114, which was enacted into law on April 28, 1921). The law, in line with the description in its draft, envisages the sale of coal dust to generate income for the laborers, which “was deemed essential as it would help the poor laborers, who had been left unprotected until now, to lead a humane life”. In line with the content of the law, the wind continues to blow in favor of the working classes in the Parliament, but the following discussion during the debate on the law is striking to see the heated atmosphere of the period as well as the opposition of Emin Bey, the par excellence representative of the bourgeoisie, who emphasizes bourgeois law based on private property:

EMİN B. (Eskisehir) - Sir, this issue should be analyzed in detail. First of all, does the government have the right to leave the dust to the workers in these mines? Is there such a record in the [mine] concession? Or do these dusts belong directly to the owners of the mines? Secondly, who is most in need of assistance in our country? Is it only the laborers in Zonguldak? Or is it the fifteen million Turkish people? Today, I know very well that after two months - even including your Assembly - no one will receive any money.

ABDÜLKADİR KEMALİ B. (Kastamonu) - How do you know this?

EMİN B. (Continued) - Look, I know why: In Eskisehir, the people are being pressured for the sheep tax, and they are selling yearling lamb for one lira. Let the remedy for this be considered. I am not saying that we should hide these problems, please, did I not say that? Should the law not be respected? First of all, there is the law. Sir, let us think carefully. If Bolshevism is really going to save this nation, the paths taken by the Mr. Minister of Economy are very correct. If not...

Minister of Economy MAHMUT CELAL B. (Saruhan) - What kind of language is this, Mr. President? Please, I did not mean it and I did not say it.

EMİN B. (Continued) - If not, according to the capability of this country, I am not in favor of keeping the old government and I would never want that...

TUNALI HİLMİ B. (Bolu) - He is only an apostate.

EMİN B. (Continued) - I am a person who is interested in my country, I am not a vagabond. If we are going to do something according to the ability of the country, such economic issues cannot be a toy. Let us not make laws blindly without estimating the percentage of this dust. This is the Assembly and it holds the destiny of the nation in its hands. We cannot make laws in a haphazard manner.

MINISTER OF ECONOMY MAHMUT CELAL B. (Saruhan) - No one touches the law and rights acquis.

TUNALI HİLMİ B. (Bolu) - I do not make laws blindly. Please, Mr. President, this is a scientific issue (noises).

EMİN B. (Continued) - I came with the seal of the council of elders. I came with the will of the nation.

TUNALI HİLMİ B. (Bolu) - I reject the term blindly.

EMİN B. (Continued) - The economy of the country is so shaken that we think of



nothing but the defense of the country. “This is a gift from my Lord”. Our enemies have also appreciated this.

Today the economy of the country is shaken. This, gentlemen, is the only thing our enemies are watching, and there is of course a remedy for this. Let us think about that too. Let us not play with the economy like this. (What is the remedy? voices) There is a remedy, gentlemen. The laws of the economy must be respected and the people must be safe. Therefore, I propose that this be rejected.<sup>127</sup>

We said that there were a few months between the two laws, from October 14, 1920 to April 28, 1921, it was the elimination of Çerkes Ethem and his forces in January 1921, but mainly what happened on the night of 28 Kanunusani 1337 (January 28, 1921) that left Emin Bey silent in October and revealed his class hatred in April when defending bourgeois law...<sup>128</sup> As Nazım Hikmet said (in his poem) “28 Kanunusani” (January 28), history is the struggle of classes, 28 Kanunusani is the history of the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the laborers:

ta ata aa ta ta ta ha ta tta ta

History

is the struggle  
of classes

1921

January 28  
black sea  
bourgeoisie  
us

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127 *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting Year, vol. 10, Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1958, p. 29. Emin Bey was not alone in his rejection of the law, there were several other MPs who began to raise their voices in the Parliament after 28 Kanunusani, among them Vehbi Efendi, MP for Konya (in the same session), another rising voice of the bourgeoisie: “VEHBÎ Efendi (Konya) - Sir, we will exempt the laborers working in Zonguldak from military service. I can understand that. Because it encourages and incentivizes the laborers there. Then we gave an allocation to build a hospital to protect the health of the laborers there. A hospital can be built. I can understand that too. But since I do not know the wisdom of providing an additional benefit from coal dust for Zonguldak laborers who work and earn a daily wage, I propose that both the Minister of Economy and the author of the report give explanations about this. The laborer is willing to work with a daily wage, he works. Then their comfort in other matters is also considered. What is the reason for allocating this coal dust for their benefit?”, *ibid.*, p. 26.

128 For a detailed analysis of the events see Savran, “Bir İhtilal Olarak Millî Mücadele 2...” ve Sungur Savran, “Bir İhtilal Olarak Millî Mücadele 3: Mustafa Suphi’leri Kim Öldürdü?”, *Devrimci Marksizm*, sayı 45-46, 2021, s. 67-135.

## Revolutionary Marxism 2023

dangling on fifteen butcher's hooks  
fifteen severed heads  
comrade

of these you

don't remember their names

but

Remember the 28th of January!

"black night

"white snow

"wind

"wind".

Shoving off a motor from trabzon

Crowd-on-the-shore!

they stone the motor

they're starting the final act!

the bourgeois riding on the shoulder of kemal

went kemal into commandant's lanyard

the commander into the butler's pocket

the butler into men's underpants

howling

hav... hav... hak... tü

Comrade, don't forget, bourgeoisie

whenever he deceives us

that's how he cries out:

- hav...hav...hak...tü

The conditions that required reforms for the preservation of the country were thus softened, and the social and political atmosphere in favor of the working classes changed rapidly after "28 Kanunusani".<sup>129</sup> Especially after September 9,

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129 The "Law No. 151 dated September 10, 1921 on the law of the mining workers of the Ereğli basin", which brought improvements in the working conditions of the miners of the Ereğli basin, shows that the atmosphere in favor of the working classes partially continued. However, during the 28<sup>th</sup> session on May 2, 1921, when this law was discussed, the following words of Mr. Mazhar Müfit (Kansu), MP for Hakkâri, reflect the changing atmosphere in the parliament well: "Now, sir, is such a labor union inspectorate necessary or not? Some people say: Why should we make

1922 (the Turkish Army entered Izmir, occupied since 1919 by the Greek Army), the bourgeoisie seems to have declared its dominance. Exactly 10 days after September 9, on September 19, 1922, an entrepreneurial group consisting of 55 parliamentarians and 37 merchants (mostly engaged in trade, such as Yunus Nadi and Tunalı Hilmi) founded the Turkish National Import and Export Corporation.<sup>130</sup> From the Parliamentary minutes of November 27, 1922, Minister of Finance Hasan Fehmi (Ataç) Bey's report on the situation of regions of production after his visit to Izmir reveals the new property order and class hierarchy determined by the abandoned properties after the National Struggle and the migration of the Greeks:

They are talking about a fig issue in Aydın. A man became the temporary deputy governor, another man became the gendarmerie commander, the first officer there, and both of them said that the season of these unclaimed figs was passing, they would be ruined. They found five contractors. They negotiated with these contractors, and they said that they would collect the fig crops, sixty percent of which would belong to the warehouses of the abandoned property - the Government - and forty percent to themselves, and that they would also appoint an officer, and that sixty percent of the figs collected would belong to the Government and forty percent to these contractors, and they made such a transaction. After a little while, the people realized that there was a great profit, a great benefit. There was a complaint, this complaint came when I was here. I asked about this complaint of Aydın and I had not received an answer yet. When I went to Izmir, I called the accountant of Aydın and the inspector there to Izmir. They divided the fig orchards that were left unclaimed into five or six parts. It was announced that sixty percent of the fig orchards would be collected and upon this announcement, two parts were taken and collected directly by the people and villagers in

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such a law when we don't have such an organization yet? I would like to answer that: Indeed, we do not have a labor organization and if we leave the laborers like this - as you can see - they will be crushed under the oppression of the so-called bosses. The laborers need such a guidance, sir... But if we make such a record in the law, that is, from the point of view of creating unity among the laborers, I find it very favorable. There is only one thing: Some people here are heroes of the laborers: For example, Mr. Refik, Mr. Tunalı Hilmi, and even the secretary of the committee. As soon as we objected, words like fear of the laborers, worry of the laborers, suspicion of the laborers, and so on... There are words like that. I ask you not to be afraid of the laborers. Sirs: All of us here, all of us, all of us know the situation of the laborers today; we all know how much they are persecuted by certain officials and - in order to fill the pockets of their superiors - how much they are persecuted. All we are, we want the welfare and comfort of the laborers, all the people, all of them; why should we be afraid of the laborers?... Therefore, I would like to ask Refik Bey and the other members of the group, when they come up here and often address the right: (laughs) There is no need for them to say fear of the laborers, anxiety of the laborers. I return this to you, we have no fear (Applause)." *T.B.M.M. Zabut Ceridesi*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting Year, vol. 10, Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1958, p. 212.

130 Selim İlkin, "Türkiye Milli İthalat ve İhracat Anonim Şirketi", *METU Studies in Development*, no 2, 1971, pp. 229-230. For a discussion on the company, see also Küçük, *Türkiye Üzerine Tezler...*, pp. 60-73.

the neighborhood of those orchards, sixty percent was brought to the government and forty percent was eaten by them. (O, may it be halâl, voices) The other part was collected by us - by having the people collect it - in accordance with the decision.

HAFIZ HAMDI B. (Biga) - Again the people are becoming laborers, Hasan Bey.

As before, landowners and contractors seized property and assets, while the people continued to work as laborers. In such a context, the bourgeoisie declared its republic (power) on October 29, 1923. It was in this environment that the masses of people lost the gains they had previously made. With Law No. 484 dated April 15, 1924 on the “Law on the Right of Peasants to Benefit from State Forests”, the Coppice Forest Law of 1920 was repealed. According to the new law, those in need could benefit from the state forests (with a license to be given according to scientific endurance), but the distribution of forests from the state forests to villages and the expropriation of land/forest owners’ land, as envisaged in the old law, were completely off the agenda. The provincial bourgeoisie thus breathed a sigh of relief. On the other hand, unlike the Coppice Forest Law, which prioritized the needs and interests of the poor people, the new law put commercial interests on the agenda, so much so that it was as if it was addressed to timber merchants and winked at the commercial bourgeoisie:

ARTICLE THREE - Each of the inhabitants of the villages within and around the forests who will produce timber for commerce shall be granted a license for a period of one year, without auction and with a tariff price, in the amount that he can process from the nearest State forests that are scientifically tolerable. However, in matters other than auctions, they are subject to the same rules and conditions as merchants. These timbers are free to be exported anywhere and their price is paid in installments. When forests in the vicinity of villages engaged in lumbering are sold to merchants through auctions, it is obligatory to allocate the amount needed by the villagers.

However, the provincial bourgeoisie gained the main guarantee against possible land reform concerns with Article 74 of the 1924 Constitution:

Article 74.- No person’s [movable and immovable] property shall be expropriated unless its necessity for the public good has been duly established and its value has been paid in advance in accordance with the law.

No person shall be compelled to make any sacrifice, except for the obligations in cash, in kind and in labor to be imposed by law in extraordinary circumstances.<sup>131</sup>

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131 The obstacle imposed by Article 74 in the way of land reform would only be overcome with the addition made to this article by Law No. 3115/ Art. 7 on February 5, 1937: “No one’s [movable and immovable] property may be expropriated unless it is duly recognized as necessary for the public interest and unless the value of the property is paid in advance in accordance with a special law. The expropriation values of land and forests to be expropriated in order to make farmers landowners and

Nevertheless, for those who think of resisting the trend against the working classes, Article 1 of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* Law (The Maintenance of Order Law) of March 4, 1925 offers a warning to suppress the working classes (which in practice may include measures such as the prevention of strikes and union activities and the arrest of trade unionists) in addition to reactionism and rebellion:

ARTICLE ONE - The Government, with the approval of the President of the Republic, is authorized to prohibit, ex officio and administratively, all organizations, incitement, attempts and publications that may lead to insurrection and rebellion and violate the order of society, peace and tranquility, security and public order of the country. The Government may refer the perpetrators of these acts to the Independence Court.

Of course, it is important to underline here the concept of “administrative prohibition”, which was the engine of dispossession before and after 1908, which the working people in rural Anatolia will remember well. On the other hand, property law, which had been defined since the pre-1908 period within the framework of administrative prohibition decisions that were “excessively individualistic”, that “favored individual interests to the detriment of the public interest”, and that overlooked the fact that “in the conflict between two interests, the interest of society must always prevail over the interest of the individual”, was codified from scratch with the Civil Code in 1926.<sup>132</sup> The Civil Code, borrowed from the Swiss Civil Code, completely abolished the legislation based on customary law. Moreover, with the simultaneous entry into force of the Commercial Code No. 865 with the Civil Code, the incompatible legal framework in which the bourgeois world had been operating since the Tanzimat period also disappeared. Thus, as Niyazi Berkes underlines, Turkey was freed from the oscillations between Savignyian and Hegelian paths that had been going on since the Tanzimat period.<sup>133</sup> In the preamble of the Civil Code, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt summarizes the Hegelian path that Turkey had reached as follows:

There are no fundamental differences between the needs of nations belonging to the family of modern civilization. Continuous social and economic relations have united a great mass of civilization into a family. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish nation has decided to accept modern civilization and its living principles as they are... The Turkish nation, marching with a firm decision to join modern civilization and to adopt it, must not adapt itself to modern civilization, but must

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forests to be managed by the State, and the method of payment of these values shall be determined by special laws. No person shall be compelled to make any sacrifice, except for the obligations of money, property and labor to be imposed by law in extraordinary circumstances.”

132 Choukri Cardahi, “La possession en droit ottoman, son caractère, ses effets et les actions possessoires (avec un aperçu de Droit comparé)”, *Revue critique de législation et de jurisprudence*, (new series) vol. 46, 1926, pp. 261-262.

133 Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 531.

adapt itself to the requirements of that civilization at all costs. The purpose of this law is not to preserve the rules of religion or customary traditions, but to guarantee all political, social, economic and national actions.<sup>134</sup>

According to Berkes, with the Civil Code of 1926, a new political law was constructed, and this is where the revolutionary nature of the Code lies:

We see that the aim of the Civil Code was not to regulate the civil relations of the people in accordance with traditions, habits and religious rules, but on the contrary, to reorganize these relations according to what they should be. This is the revolutionary character of the law. Cevdet Pasha considered civil law as the basis of political law; now civil law has been codified with the obligation to comply with the requirements of a new political law.<sup>135</sup>

Berkes refrains from saying it, but the process that resulted in the Civil Code is the process of the bourgeois revolution in Turkey. The nineteenth century witnessed the struggle between the provincial bourgeoisie and the alliance of bourgeois-bureaucrats, financial and commercial bourgeoisie; over time, while the bourgeois-bureaucrats were politically eliminated and the financial bourgeoisie weakened with the establishment of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, the commercial bourgeoisie made a leap in the context of its relationship with the developing capitalist world and started to pursue trade and industry together. Together with the intensifying competition after the 1908 revolution, the National Economy policies made it possible for the provincial bourgeoisie to evolve into a commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and this emerging class did its best to outplay the existing non-Muslim-dominated commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. After the October Revolution of 1917, the old provincial, new commercial and industrial bourgeoisie feared the overthrow of its dominant order under the fear of the popular movement and communism, and switched from the Savignyist path, which it had already become unable to fit into its mold, to the Hegelian path that would facilitate its relations with the capitalist world. The force in land law rooted in customary law has now become defined in the private property regime constituted by the Civil Code of 1926 and protecting the bourgeoisie.<sup>136</sup>

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134 Ibid., p. 531.

135 Ibid., p. 531.

136 Law No. 552 dated February 17, 1925, "Law on the abolition of the tithe and the tax to be substituted for it" abolished not only the tithe [aşar] but also the collection mechanism of the tithe, the tax-farming. This had two consequences for the provincial bourgeoisie: Large landowners were freed from the burden of the tithe, even though they were subject to a new (not very long-lasting) tax on agricultural production instead of the tithe; the abolition of the tax-farming eliminated a field of investment that was completely under their control, and as a result, some of them accelerated the commercial and industrial investments that they had begun to privilege after 1908, while others found the solution in switching from being a tax-farmer (which was not much different) to a business contractor. The new class configuration that emerged as a result of the abolition of tax-farming brought about the mutual feeding of the provincial bourgeoisie with the Hegelian path and

On the other hand, the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, which was already following the Hegelian path, seems to have thrown up bile with the erasure of the Savignyan path. Süleyman Ferit (Eczacıbaşı) Bey, who was appointed as the pharmacist of the hospital of the Muslim poor (Guraba-ı Müslimin) in 1903, bought Eczane-i Umumiye (Public Pharmacy) in 1909 and Şifa Eczanesi (Cure Pharmacy) in 1911, was a member of İzmir Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Osmaniye Cemiyeti (Society for the Defense of Ottoman Rights) in 1919,<sup>137</sup> participated in the Izmir Economy Congress Exhibition in 1923 with medical and cosmetic products of his own production, and served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Izmir Chamber of Commerce between 1926 and 1933.<sup>138</sup> Yılcıncıadeler, whose factories were destroyed by the carpet yarn laborers in March 1908, were active in the political organization of the Revolution of Liberty, the Committee of Union and Progress, and not only took part in the *Uşak Merkez-i Heyetiyesi* (Uşak Central Committee) during the National Struggle,<sup>139</sup> but also had their factories weave serge for use at the front.<sup>140</sup> After the Kemalist revolution, they opened a branch in London and became one of the leading businesses in Izmir. In 1927, they became founding members of the Izmir Industrial Union (the predecessor of today's Aegean Region Chamber of Industry).<sup>141</sup>

Of course, the triumph of the Hegelian path did not prevent the repression caused by the Maintenance of Order Law (*Takrir-i Sükûn*) and the subsequent assault on the rights of the working masses. Nevertheless, it is obvious that things were not so easy for the bourgeoisie, and that the working masses did not leave the field empty, as in 1908 they broke the machines, in 1926 they grabbed the bosses by the collar when necessary:

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the Hegelian path with the provincial bourgeoisie. While making these preliminary assessments on Law No. 552, we would like to underline the need for more in-depth research on the abolition of tithe and tax-farming. For an instructive study on the subject based on a rare source, see Sadık Sarısamancıoğlu, "Mahkeme Kayıtlarına Göre Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında İltizam Problemi: Afyonkarahisar Örneği", *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 6, no 2, 2004, pp. 122-130.

137 The organization of the bourgeoisie during the period of the National Struggle was based on congresses and associations, for a detailed discussion on this issue see Sungur Savran, "Bir İhtilal Olarak Millî Mücadele 1: Burjuvazinin Güçleri", *Devrimci Marksizm*, no 41-42, 2020, pp. 62-70.

138 Gürsoy, *Tarihi, Ekonomisi ve İnsanları...*, pp. 202, 282-283; Mustafa Albayrak, *Millî Mücadele Döneminde Batı Anadolu Kongreleri, (17 Mart 1919-2 Ağustos 1920)*, Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1998, pp. 30-31; "Süleyman Ferit Eczacıbaşı Şifa Eczanesi", [https://eczacilik.ege.edu.tr/tr-3090/suleyman\\_ferit\\_eczacibasi\\_sifa\\_eczanesi.html](https://eczacilik.ege.edu.tr/tr-3090/suleyman_ferit_eczacibasi_sifa_eczanesi.html) (date of access 25.03.2023).

139 *Uşak Merkez-i Heyetiyesi* was one of the leading organizations of the bourgeoisie during the period of the National Struggle, just like the *İzmir Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Osmaniye Cemiyeti*, see Savran, "Bir İhtilal Olarak Millî Mücadele 1...", pp. 62-70.

140 İlhan Tekeli ve Selim İlkin, *Ege'deki Sivil Direnişten Kurtuluş Savaşı'na Geçerken Uşak Heyet-i Merkeziyesi ve İbrahim (Tahtakılıç) Bey*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989, pp. 254-255, 344.

141 Gürsoy, *Tarihi, Ekonomisi ve İnsanları...*, pp. 203, 292-293; R. Funda Barbaros, *1830-1930 Döneminde Sosyo-Ekonomik Çözüm Arayışları Çerçevesinde İzmir'de Sanayileşme*, İzmir: Ege Bölgesi Sanayi Odası Yayını, 1995, pp. 87-90.

This factory, located in a damp and dirty neighborhood of Halkapınar, surrounded by high walls and with a sign above its door (Şark Halı Kumpanyası- Oriental Carpet Manufacturers Limited),<sup>142</sup> 95 % of the producers are women and children; it has been operating twenty-four hours a day since August 1926, in response to recent orders for blankets, rags, etc. from military purchases. By increasing the number of workers to six hundred, the factory raised the duration of working hours to twelve hours and at the same time closed the factory doors to fifty poor people who refused to work twelve hours. The legitimate complaints of these abandoned poor people to the government of the country and the Chamber of Commerce were not taken into consideration. One day, five women and two men workers attacked the factory director's automobile and demanded their rights, which resulted in their imprisonment for three months each.<sup>143</sup>

In this context, the laboring classes, the drivers of the 1908 Revolution of Freedom, could not be the drivers of the 1923 Revolution as they were defeated during the National Struggle; but they were able to build their own law in 1923, albeit limited, through the bourgeoisie, in contrast to their failure in 1908. This is why “[t]his revolution was a step forward in the course of Turkey's historical development, but it was not the last step”.

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142 The company was founded in London in 1907 but is a foreign-owned company with its administrative headquarters in Izmir. In addition to its factory in Izmir, it controlled an extensive production network spread across Western Anatolia. In March 1908, yarn manufacturers in Uşak attacked the factories, which was attributed to the increasing pressure on laborers as a result of the company's intra-capitalist competition. See Elena Frangakis-Syrett, “Modernity from Below: The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers Ltd. of Izmir, 1907-1922”, *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, no 14, 2015, pp. 413-429; Emrah Yılmaz, “Weaving Carpets in Anatolia Once Upon a Time: The Oriental Carpet Manufacturers Limited and its Importance in Ottoman Carpet Weaving (1907-1914)”, *Eskişehir Osmangazi University Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 21, no 2, 2020, pp. 291-333; Quataert, “Machine Breaking...”.

143 For the TKP Izmir Provincial Committee's report on the subject, see Erden Akbulut and Erol Ülker, *Türkiye Komünist Partisi'nin Bolşevikleşmesi 1925-1928*, Istanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2021, p. 367.