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FRAGILE HEGEMONY, FLEXIBLE
AUTHORITARIANISM, AND GOVERNING
FROM BELOW: POLITICIANS' REPORTS
IN EARLY REPUBLICAN TURKEY

Abstract

This article scrutinizes election district and inspection district reports written by the deputies of the Turkish single-party government and the role of these reports in state decision making. Underscoring social discontent and the fragile hegemony of the new regime—both of which motivated the republican elite to monitor state and party administrations and public opinion—the article argues that the practice of reporting was neither a project of social engineering nor a practice peculiar to the Turkish state but rather a requirement of a polity concerned with the opinion of its citizens. In the absence of direct political participation of the people in government, the reports mediated between the state and society. Contrary to conventional accounts of the single-party period, the article argues that the republican elite did not govern the country through top-down decrees but instead sought to ascertain public opinion and its own administrative defects so as to consolidate its fragile hegemony. Based on these findings, I propose that we redefine the early republican state as a flexible authoritarian regime that was not detached from the society.

On 25 September 1943—during the most authoritarian years of the single-party period in Turkey, under İsmet İnönü's presidency—Şevket Torgut, deputy of Kırşehir, a central Anatolian province, and party inspector of Zonguldak, a western Black Sea province, reported on his in-depth investigations into peasant grievances regarding the livestock theft plaguing Zonguldak, especially in the subdistrict of Çaycuma. He wrote that the peasants had accused the subdistrict director (*nahiye müdürü*) of ignoring the problem and even of collaborating with the thieves. Torgut strongly recommended that the secretary general of the Republican People's Party (RPP) dismiss the subdistrict director immediately. This part of the report circulated among the secretary general, several RPP bureaus, and the minister of internal affairs and was evaluated thoroughly by all of them. Finally, the government, finding the peasants' complaints well grounded, dismissed the subdistrict director. The secretary general, Nafi Atif Kansu, also kindly requested that the minister of internal affairs remove the gendarme commander of the region in order to further alleviate the public's grievance.¹

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Reports containing detailed information about society, public opinion, local governments, and RPP organizations inundated the Kemalist leadership during the early republican era. Circulated among cabinet ministers, RPP bureaus, and the RPP secretary general, the reports brought the voices of society into the decision-making process of the government. The example given previously is just one of many that illustrate this bottom-up decision-making practice.

In spite of this complicated mechanism linking the government to the society, the Turkish single-party state is usually assumed to have been a coercive, callous, and bureaucratic polity, a continuation of the so-called Asiatic-despotic and transcendental Ottoman state tradition. Frequently compared to contemporary authoritarian regimes, it is believed to have been isolated from society, governed by the rigid command of a few high authorities closed to social inputs. Notwithstanding the diversity of scholarly positions, both nationalist and critical approaches have often focused on the ruling elites and on legal and institutional politics dominated by the RPP and have portrayed the state as a strong and independent structure, be it “good” or “bad.”² The hegemony of the elite-centered political-history approach has gone hand in hand with a belief in the scarcity of sources on state–society interactions.³ Therefore, a shift of focus—which is under way in recent studies—toward exploring a more nuanced and complex history of state–society interactions in daily life requires not only a methodological and paradigmatic shift but also the exploration of new sources that depict the junctions between the state and society.⁴

Reports written by RPP deputies about their election and inspection districts during the early republican period—which are stored in the Republican Archives and have recently been made available to researchers—call into question widely accepted arguments about the single-party state. Written annually or biennially by the deputies after investigating their districts, then circulated among and evaluated by both the top party leaders and government bureaucrats, these previously unexamined records represent important points of contact between the state and society and include extensive information on social, economic, cultural, and political life in various localities. An in-depth examination of both the reports and the inspection mechanism that generated them is thus of great importance for understanding the early republican regime and Kemalism. The main question this paper seeks to address is what role the reports played in the functioning of the government during the early republican regime. It explores the social dynamics and underlying aims that motivated the state to set up the report mechanism. My conclusion is that the inspection and reporting system was a response of the state to social pressures and needs rather than part of a social-engineering project. A close look at the motives behind the construction of the system shows that, contrary to what is commonly believed, the early republican state did not disregard the society and public opinion.

The article also examines how the inspection and reporting mechanism functioned in the decision-making process of government and party administrations. I propose that the reports played a crucial role as a communication channel joining the political elites to local communities rather than functioning as a unidirectional mechanism of control. A variety of information on public opinion, the population, and administrative processes gathered in the reports ultimately influenced the state’s decisions. The reports enabled the society to communicate with political power-holders, even if indirectly, and thus constituted a bridge—albeit not an ideal, seamless, or flawless one—between the state and society that made authorities more sensitive to the populace and more adaptable to

public opinion. In examining this practice, the article complicates conventional accounts that replicate an image—created by the Kemalist elite—of the state as a detached, independent, and powerful entity. The Kemalist elite's motives for establishing the report mechanism, and its systematic treatment of the reports that were generated, illustrate how the early republican state was neither isolated from social inputs nor maintained a rigid structure in the face of popular sentiment.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE REPORTS

The first attempt to establish an inspection and report mechanism in the new republican era was made in 1925, when the country was divided into fourteen inspectorate regions and an inspector deputy appointed to each region. The RPP Regulations of 1927 obliged a limited number of prominent deputies in the RPP General Executive Committee (Umumî İdare Heyeti) to carry out annual inspections in their inspection regions. After the Third Congress of the RPP in 1931, according to Article 42 of the RPP Regulations drawn up in that congress, party deputies were expected to tour their election districts or other regions to which they were appointed as inspectors, write up their observations and investigations, and submit these reports biennially to the secretary general of the party.⁵

There are two such kinds of reports in the archives. The first type comprises election district reports by party deputies on the regions they represented; these reports were required of all party deputies. The second type, classified as inspection district reports, were submitted by party deputies charged specifically by the secretary general with inspecting local party branches and state–society relations in a particular inspection district, made up of three or four provinces, which were different from their election districts.⁶ For example, Bekir Kaleli, who was the deputy of Gaziantep, a province located in Southeastern Anatolia, was at the same time the inspector of the Aydın district, which included four western provinces neighboring each other, Aydın, Muğla, Burdur, and Isparta.⁷ The main logic behind the dual-system inspection mechanism was probably the reciprocal control of the deputies in order to minimize the likelihood of incorrect or exaggerated information.⁸

As for the content, no considerable differences exist between election district reports and inspection district reports, though inspector deputies showed a bit more concern for party organizations. Both types of reports focus on the work of state and party functionaries; the wrongdoings of the local bureaucracy; social and economic conditions; the people's needs, demands, and complaints; and public opinion. Fortunately, there are myriad reports from the beginning of the single-party period to 1950, when the Democratic Party came to power in free elections and the RPP, as the opposition party, discontinued its comprehensive inspection and reporting mechanism.⁹ Each report, whether of an election district or an inspection district, is preserved in a file with many related documents, including thematic report summaries submitted to the ministries, answers from the ministers to the issues raised in the summaries, special reports on measures taken by the ministries in response to these issues, and notes from the secretary general to the ministers on urgent matters identified by the report authors. These documents indicate that such reports did not sit unread on the dusty shelves of bureaucratic agencies but played an active role in the governing of the country.

REPORTS FROM THE EMPIRE TO THE REPUBLIC:
A SHORT HISTORY

Inspection systems and the practice of writing reports on local bureaucracies, socioeconomic conditions, and popular opinions were not, to be sure, peculiar to early republican Turkey. With the development of the modern state in the 19th and especially the 20th century, many European governments developed surveillance, social control, and self-monitoring mechanisms as indispensable components of a centralized administration that could adjust to economic, social, and political trends.¹⁰ The emergence of a public sphere mediating between the state and society, and the increasing influence of society on politics, prompted modern governments to monitor public opinion. The reporting system in early republican Turkey thus cannot be interpreted as an exceptional characteristic of a rigid, bureaucratic, and centralist state tradition nor as a peculiarity of the Turkish single-party regime.¹¹ Compared to a multi-party regime, the single-party state undoubtedly had more need of such inspection and report mechanisms to compensate for the weaknesses of other communication channels linking the state with society. Nevertheless, the origins of these mechanisms in Turkey can be traced back to the liberalization and modernization reforms initiated by the Ottoman state.

Early intelligence efforts of the Ottoman government to employ *hafiyes* (spies) emerged during the social upheavals of the 17th and 18th centuries.¹² Regular inspection and report-writing systems, however, only gained a foothold in the mid-19th century in the context of integration into the world economy, the gradual liberalization of the political system, and the emergence of an educated middle class and of nationalist movements, all of which motivated Ottoman rulers to take the “social domain” more seriously.¹³ The Tanzimat era was marked by a new kind of governmentality based on maintaining social control and legitimacy through systematic information gathering, which replaced an older method of rule characterized by the repression of divergent political opinions and behaviors.¹⁴ Tanzimat reforms—including changes to the tax system, equality between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, and the establishment of a modern administrative structure and centralized bureaucracy—encountered deep social resistance and dissent within local communities. The reforms’ adverse effects on vested interests, the wrongdoings of state employees who were posted to the provinces to carry them out, and general discontent with the new taxes and rules compelled Ottoman rulers to institute more developed inspection systems.¹⁵

The first move of the government, in 1840, was to post inspectors to the provinces in order to oversee the implementations of the Tanzimat reforms and to detect obstacles blocking the proper functioning of local administrations.¹⁶ The main motive of the inspection system for the Ottoman government was to ascertain the wrongdoings of state employees tasked with putting the reforms into effect, and thus to control local bureaucracies. Reports written by inspectors were employed by the central government to take measures against cruel and corrupt state employees whose actions spurred public opposition.¹⁷ After these first inspection attempts failed to prevent or even minimize the mismanagement of reforms, abuses by local authorities, and the growth of social discontent, the Sublime Porte decided in 1845 to invite two local notables from each province to Istanbul as representatives to report on problems in their region.¹⁸ With the arrival of these representatives in the Ottoman capital the same year, the government

established Public Improvement Councils (Mecalis-i İ'mariyye) in all provinces. The members of these councils toured their provinces and reported to the High Council (Meclis-i Vala) about defects in local administrations and the needs and grievances of the people. These reports received close attention from the High Council.¹⁹

In 1851, the government, still lacking adequate information about popular opinions and the conduct of state affairs in remote parts of the empire, decided to appoint new inspectors to the provinces. The High Council detailed the inspection methods and procedures in an instruction book (*teftiş talimatnamesi*), according to which all governors and other administrators were to be investigated and assessed regularly. A main duty of the inspectors was to report on the faults and achievements of local officials. Other tasks were to prevent the bribery of state officials and other activities contrary to the spirit of the Tanzimat reforms and to make the collection of taxes more efficient and fair. The inspectors drew up reports on their observations and sent them to Istanbul periodically.²⁰

From the mid-19th century on, the growing political influence of the new educated middle class—especially the constitutionalist and reformist intellectuals known as the Young Ottomans—and of the social and nationalist movements emerging across the empire intensified the need for special and highly qualified inspectors. The government's focus shifted even further from the political and administrative spheres to the social domain. Besides the 1845 establishment of a designated police institution,²¹ in 1864 the state appointed special inspectors similar to highly authorized civil police officers to gather information on every subject in which the government was interested, ranging from political and economic trends to the activities of suspicious people. These inspectors had the right to take legal action when necessary by prosecuting those who violated the law and the public order.²²

During the second half of the 19th century, the government resorted more frequently to employing *hafiyes* to report on people's opinions of the sultan and of state policies. The *hafiyes* kept their fingers on the pulse of public opinion by attentively listening to and talking with people in mosques, coffeehouses, bathhouses, markets, and other public places. They related their conversations and other word-of-mouth information to scribes (*katips*) who wrote them down. The type of report in which these observations were recorded came to be called a *jurnal* by the government, and the word in its meaning of "report" or "intelligence" thereby entered Ottoman Turkish.²³ The Ottoman *hafiyes* were important elements of a process in which the form of state rule underwent a transformation from a despotic and arbitrary kind of governmentality to a modern one; increasingly, social control aimed not to punish and repress but rather to take public opinion into account in order to govern society properly, maintain the consent of the governed, and prevent the emergence of opposition forces and social upheavals.²⁴

By the fourth quarter of the century, the Hamidian regime used these reports extensively as an information-gathering technique that came to be called *jurnalizm*. Contrary to widely held assumptions, Abdülhamit II (r. 1876–1909) did not invent Ottoman inspection and reporting practices, but he did make them part and parcel of state rule.²⁵ Starting in the first years of his rule he also obliged local governors to send general situation reports (*layiha*) on their regions to the central government. Finally, through the establishment of Inspection Commissions (Heyet-i Teftişiyeler) in 1879, which were devised to monitor and control the organization of provincial government institutions and the mood of the people, Abdülhamit II reinforced the surveillance mechanism.²⁶

In the Second Constitutional Era, the Committee of Union and Progress set up its own inspection system, which had similar aims.²⁷ The republican regime modernized and extended this legacy through a wider and more systematic application of the reporting system.

THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BASE OF REPORTING IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

In conjunction with the political consolidation and state-building efforts of the republican regime in the 1920s and 1930s, the Kemalist elite established a procedural, legal, and institutional base for interrelated systems of inspection, information gathering, and reporting. The Nine Principles (*Dokuz Umde*) of 1923, which delineated the main aims and principles of the new government; the Regulations of the RPP (*CHF Nizamnamesi*), especially those of 1927 and 1931; and the instruction books for inspection (*teftiş talimatnameleri*) that were systematically published by the party all introduced specific principles, procedures, and methods for self-control of the state and party organizations and for the assessment of public opinion. These documents reveal the importance attached by the government to events in the social realm and to administrative performance in its effort to maintain its own legitimacy.

One of the Nine Principles stated that the people's affinity for the party was dependent upon the employment of capable and fair state employees; all state organizations would need to be inspected regularly if the regime was to attract popular support.²⁸ Accordingly, the new RPP regulations of 1927 and especially those of 1931 established a regular and comprehensive inspection system that would be implemented by party deputies in their election districts. According to Article 111 of the 1931 regulations, the deputies, who would be appointed by the RPP General Executive Committee, were to make thorough visits of their election districts twice during each electoral term.²⁹

The General Executive Committee published instruction manuals delineating how such inspections were to be carried out and how reports were to be prepared and submitted to the secretary general of the party. Since these manuals determined the subjects to be covered during the inspection, they roughly shaped the content of the reports. For this reason, an examination of party instructional materials enables a better understanding of reporting practices. In 1935, Secretary General Recep Peker sent an inspection plan and instruction manual to RPP deputies who had been appointed as party inspectors. These documents outlined the districts to be inspected and the tasks and responsibilities of the deputies. According to the plan, the inspectors were to visit all of the counties and villages in their region within one year in order to examine the work conducted by party branches, determine the economic needs and problems of district residents, and investigate popular opinion. They were also expected to disseminate party principles wherever they went.³⁰

In 1943, the RPP issued a new instruction book that was much more inclusive than earlier versions. It consisted of two chapters, "The Tasks of the Inspectors" and "Reports." According to the first chapter, the primary responsibility of the inspectors was to disseminate party principles; the second was to ascertain the general needs and demands of the people. Inspectors were tasked with investigating the local party administrations and

their relationships to provincial government agencies, identifying potential obstacles to the implementation of laws and reforms, and monitoring the functioning of the People's Houses (Halkevleri), the most important ideological apparatus of the RPP.³¹ Inspectors were to inform the secretary general immediately if they encountered any abuses of state authority by party members, and they were responsible for identifying any covert or open oppositional elements, subversive attacks on the party, political tendencies among ethnic and religious minorities, or feelings of popular dissatisfaction. Finally, inspectors were strongly encouraged to submit proposals on how to remedy these problems.³² Article 4 of the chapter regulated the methods used by inspectors to carry out their tasks. Inspectors were advised to have sincere talks with (*samimî görüşmeler yaparak*) party members and administrators; be familiar with the region's public and private institutions and places of work; and talk to members of various professions and to young people, whether one by one or in groups. The instructions in this chapter stated that the inspectors should visit public places where district residents routinely gathered, listen to everybody calmly (*soğukkanlılıkla*), and show respect and love for each citizen who did not have a subversive agenda.³³

The second chapter of the instruction book detailed how the actual inspection reports were to be prepared. Article 12 listed the main questions that the inspectors were to answer in their reports. They were to evaluate the degree to which local party branches had succeeded in disseminating party principles; defects and loopholes in existing laws and local bureaucracies; any conflicts between the laws and local customs or traditions; how the administrative boards of party branches in the provinces, districts, and subdistricts performed their duties; whether local bureaucracies worked in accordance with the programs and regulations of the RPP; and whether party directors abused their authority. They were also to identify people who expressed oppositional political beliefs as well as the causes of their opposition and to assess the economic conditions, living standards, and opinions of workers, traders, artisans, farmers, and ethnic minorities. Finally, inspectors were expected to note the presence of poor people, observe whether local party organizations were sufficiently interested in social welfare work, and recommend types of social aid the government could provide in order to reduce poverty.³⁴

THE MOTIVES BEHIND THE REPORTING SYSTEM

Monitoring Society

Several overlapping forces drove the Kemalist elite to turn to inspection and information gathering through reports. These included the emergence of widespread social unrest in response to the secularizing reforms; the agricultural droughts of 1927, 1928, and 1935; the Great Depression that haunted the entire 1930s and ushered in statist economic policies; and bureaucratic malfunctioning and corruption.³⁵ Turkish nationalism and state-building efforts were confronted with numerous uprisings and religious backlash in this period, including the recurrent rebellions of Kurdish tribes from 1924 to 1938, and with the unexpectedly rapid growth of an opposition movement led by the Free Republican Party (Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası [FRP]).³⁶ These challenges culminated in a legitimacy crisis that compelled the Kemalist elite to keep a close watch on both the

population and local bureaucracies. By monitoring popular opinion and ameliorating the people's grievances as far as possible, the RPP sought to reinforce its fragile hegemony. A speech by Mustafa Kemal, given after he had completed a tour of the nation in 1930 and 1931, sheds light on the factors that contributed to the erosion of the regime's legitimacy: "One of the main things weakening the party and the government is the ignorance of the demands and complaints of the people and the local party administrations. The demands and complaints of the people must be absolutely taken into account by the state administration."³⁷

A primary concern behind the establishment of a monitoring mechanism was the lack of communication channels between the Kemalist state and its citizens. This was not peculiar to early republican Turkey. Two contemporary authoritarian states, Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, located at extreme ends of the political spectrum, also needed to keep track of emerging social trends, public opinion, and the functioning of state bureaucracies. Toward this end, they exploited two mechanisms: reporting systems and the monitoring of citizens' letters and petitions. Sheila Fitzpatrick, historian of the early Soviet Union, notes that the *raison d'être* of reporting systems in authoritarian regimes was to gather information about a society whose voices were otherwise silenced in the political domain.³⁸ In addition, citizens' letters and petitions were often evaluated for information on both popular opinion and incidents of bureaucratic malfunctioning.³⁹ However, letters and petitions may have reflected particular subjective views and often functioned as a deliberate subaltern strategy, as authorities well knew.⁴⁰ The Soviet leadership thus relied heavily on reports written by politicians, the secret police, the OGPU (*Obyedinyonnoye Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravleniye* or Joint State Political Directorate), and, later, the NKVD (*Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* or the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs).⁴¹ In a similar vein, the Nazi regime often encouraged its citizens to write petitions and letters to the government; in particular, it encouraged citizens to report on civil servants suspected of bureaucratic malfeasance and on people with seditious views.⁴² However, as Aryeh Unger has documented, rather than relying solely upon the self-interested content of letters and petitions, Nazi leaders, like those of the Soviet Union, relied predominantly on reports prepared by politicians and the secret police.⁴³

Similar to the two cases above, in the early Turkish republic there were few channels through which local society could communicate with the government because of the lack of free elections, free press, and free associational life. Although the government had designed a system of indirect elections to signal its commitment to the will of the nation, Atatürk himself nominated the candidates and thus elections did not yield accurate information about public opinion. As for the press, it was under censorship and could expose neither malpractices of high officials nor the mood of the public.⁴⁴

In addition, although Kemalists considered knowledge of the population indispensable to good governance, they lacked both statistical and sociological sources of information. The republican state did not have an effective institution producing precise statistical data.⁴⁵ Sociological studies were also far from satisfactory from the government's perspective. The modernizing intellectuals of the empire who preceded the Kemalists had been interested in the theoretical aspects of sociology since the beginning of the 20th century, but they had only developed a modicum of interest in studies grounded in field-work, observation, data gathering, and statistical analysis.⁴⁶ The reporting mechanism

was therefore of great importance to the government for yielding needed information about Turkish society.

As for citizens' letters as information sources, the practice in Turkey dates back to the earliest period of the Ottoman Empire; letter-writing was used by the sultanic authority to construct its legitimacy and by the people to advance their own interests.⁴⁷ Ordinary people often used letters and petitions as a subaltern strategy to effect the decisions of rulers.⁴⁸ Although the republican government also took the letters and petitions of its citizens seriously, it could not always take the information presented in them for granted, either because it was inconvenient or because it masked the writers' subjective interests.⁴⁹ For instance, the Ministry of Justice dismissed a large number of letters that accused individuals of insulting the government and Atatürk after finding such accusations to be unfounded.⁵⁰ Like contemporary single-party regimes in Europe, the Turkish government opted to rely more frequently on its deputies' reports, which were considered to be more refined and objective. These reports also enabled the authorities to cross-check the reliability of demands and complaints made in the petitions.⁵¹

Monitoring Local Party and State Organizations

The instruction books and party regulations described earlier illustrate that one of the driving forces behind the reporting system, in the absence of democratic practices that would reveal bureaucratic malfeasance, was to identify administrative defects, party wrongdoings, and improper implementations of the laws in remote parts of the country. As Unger argues in the context of the Third Reich, one of the major concerns of such inspection reports was to expose bureaucratic malpractices that demoralized society.⁵² This kind of reporting system, as J. Malcolm Smith and Cornelius P. Cotter point out, was a clear reflection of "a desire to maintain a continuous check upon the administration."⁵³

The importance that the Kemalist leadership attached to an efficient and fair administration is amply illustrated in its official discourse.⁵⁴ However, during the second half of the 1920s, both the National Assembly and the party leadership were not able to investigate effectively the actions of government agencies since the ruling RPP government wielded unrivaled political power, especially after the promulgation of the Law for the Maintenance of Order (Takrir-î Sükûn Kanunu) and the subsequent closure of the Progressive Republican Party (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası), the first opposition party, in 1925.⁵⁵ The party's rapid elevation to this powerful status during the 1920s predisposed its officials to abuse party authority for their own interests. The widespread corruption of party officials and state bureaucrats posed a serious problem for those in charge of the party's central bureaucracy because such corruption might have further reduced the party's fragile legitimacy. As noted by Hilmi Uran, a party inspector and prominent figure within the ruling circle, the behavior of state officials was a major source of public dissatisfaction in the interwar period. Especially in the late 1920s, the executors and controllers of the local party organizations—known as *mutemet*—caused such widespread discontent that the people began to call all unfair, corrupt, or rude state employees "*mutemet*." Indeed, the state did suffer from a shortage of qualified and well-educated bureaucrats. Moreover, the salaries paid to lower-level state employees were inadequate for meeting their basic needs. In an effort to supplement their income, many state and party officials abused their power and became involved in corruption,

which exacerbated popular discontent with the government.⁵⁶ According to a well-known anecdote, during public demonstrations led by the second short-lived opposition party FRP in Izmir on 5 September 1930, a party supporter threw the corpse of his son, who had been killed by the police, in front of FRP chairman Fethi Okyar and cried out: "Here! Here it is, a sacrifice! We are willing to sacrifice someone else among us if you rescue us from the RPP. Please, rescue us from the hands of these *mutemets*."⁵⁷

During the Third Congress of the RPP in 1931, after the FRP was shut down, Secretary General Recep Peker warned the party's provincial directors and all government officials not to commit wrongdoings or show indifference to the law and to the needs of the citizens.⁵⁸ In a speech at the congress, Atatürk stressed the value of fair public criticism of the government for the consolidation of the political order. In other words, the government's indifference to criticism by opposition forces had fostered the malfunctioning of the entire state bureaucracy.⁵⁹ This lack of administrative discipline motivated the Kemalist elite to keep a close watch on local government agencies during the 1930s. As Uran explained, "One of the main thrusts behind the inspections and reports by deputies was to monitor the local party organization for the proper implementation of government works and select skilled and respected persons in their districts as party bureaucrats."⁶⁰

According to the RPP's regulations, provincial party administrations had to submit biannual working reports (*vilayet idare kurulu altı aylık çalışma raporu*) to the RPP general secretariat. The secretary general sent special notebooks to each province listing the questions party officials were to address. These ranged from how local party branches were functioning to how people felt about the party and government. However, these reports were most likely not reliable from the perspective of party authorities because most of the provincial party chiefs provided superficially positive assessments, such as "Everything is okay," "The local party organization and the government work effectively and in harmony with the people," and "All citizens were content with their life."⁶¹

The deputy reports thus had another function: they could be cross-checked against these working reports of the provincial administrations in order to test the validity of the latter. For instance, alarmed by reports produced by the deputies and party inspectors of the province of Çanakkale, Secretary General Peker issued a warning letter in 1936 to the province's party chair, noting the discrepancies between the working reports written by the provincial party administration and those produced by the deputies. Contrary to the working reports, which affirmed that the party was functioning in an orderly fashion, the inspection and election district reports revealed malpractices and disorganization. Pointing to the allegations made in the deputy reports, Peker sent a warning to the provincial party chair stating that he would be watching party operations in Çanakkale closely.⁶² This warning letter was just one of many that inundated provincial party administrations.

Control of the Deputies

The reports functioned as a surveillance mechanism not only over local society and provincial bureaucracies but also over the deputies themselves. By means of the reporting system, the top leaders in Ankara sought to encourage deputies to work and to show

an interest in their election or inspection districts. Before the 1930s, the indifference of the deputies to local party activities and to the citizens whom they represented was a common public criticism. Before the Second Congress of the RPP in 1927, the majority of deputies seemed so indifferent to the activities of the government that many of them did not even participate in important sessions held by the National Assembly and the Party Congress.⁶³ Such laxity on the part of the deputies forced the RPP leadership to attach greater importance to party discipline.⁶⁴

This indifference and abuse of power and authority caused not only ordinary citizens but also some prominent Kemalist politicians to lose faith in the party.⁶⁵ Atatürk frequently complained in his addresses to party bureaucrats about transgressions perpetrated by party politicians and ordered the government to curtail the proliferation of this behavior.⁶⁶ Atatürk nominated the deputies personally, and thus any corrupt practices or other indications that they lacked a sense of responsibility to society threatened to damage the populist image promoted by the party, which depicted the state as the benevolent father of the nation and the nation itself as “a coherent mass that is classless and without privileged groups” (*sınıfsız, imtiyazsız, kaynaşmış kitle*).⁶⁷ For these reasons, party leaders pushed deputies to become familiar with their so-called “electors,” and the report mechanisms required politicians to visit the remotest parts of the country. As noted by a contemporary observer, before the implementation of these mandatory annual visits to the provinces, the people imagined the deputies to be distant and alien creatures who took no interest in them.⁶⁸ The Kemalist elite assumed that if deputies appeared in public places and listened to the people’s requests and grievances, the populist image of the party would be strengthened. In this regard, the activity of “listening to the people patiently by the deputies who came from the seat of government” had a symbolic meaning.⁶⁹

For the RPP leadership, the duty of a party deputy was not only to keep the government abreast of local developments but also to disseminate party principles in the election and inspection districts.⁷⁰ The reports are replete with vivid descriptions of such propagandistic activities. In this respect, they operated as an instrument by which the deputies could recount their own activities, such as giving public lectures, on behalf of the party.⁷¹ The deputy of Izmir, Benal Nevzat Arman, wrote in his report that he had traveled to his election district to disseminate “the high principles of the party” and to determine what his electors expected of him and of the government.⁷² Another deputy of Izmir, Kamil Dursun, described his propaganda activities for the party during an election district tour in this way:

In my election district, I reminded our peasants of the suspension of their debts to the Agricultural Bank and the precious efforts of our party to provide all of the people with a comfortable life. Giving example of the decrease in the prices of sugar and salt, I declared that our party exerts a great effort to satisfy the people’s needs.⁷³

Lastly, this dual inspection and reporting system—in which each province was inspected first by the deputies of the province and then by inspectors from another region—enabled the Kemalist leadership to check the veracity of the reports and provided an auto-control mechanism among the deputies, motivating them to conduct their inspections efficiently and compose their reports accurately.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE REPORTS ON DECISION MAKING

As Peter Holquist points out in the context of the Soviet Union during the interwar period, the process of gathering information through reports was not unidirectional; rather, it was an interactive process in which the government acted on the information collected.⁷⁴ The government sought to use this information to respond to public demands and needs, correct the misconduct of its officials, and thereby consolidate its legitimacy. In Nazi Germany as well, as Unger writes, “what the people thought and their worries and needs were clearly of some importance to the regime, because this information could assist the regime in adapting its propaganda and its social policies accordingly.”⁷⁵ While this mechanism has been very important to single-party regimes, it is not particular to them. The common purpose of such reports in all modern administrations, whether liberal or authoritarian, is to provide decision makers with information on public opinion and administrative performance. In other words, “reporting was, in fact, a species of consultation prior to taking action.”⁷⁶ However, for an authoritarian single-party regime in which most other channels of communication to the authorities are blocked, the information collected in this manner is more vital than for other regimes.

The reports thus played a key role in the decision-making process of the Turkish single-party government. The government’s interest in compiling comprehensive information on society and local administrations was not only to monitor them but also to put the information to use so as to consolidate its own legitimacy by redressing the people’s grievances, rectifying wrongdoings, modifying state policies, and promoting social welfare. The Kemalist leadership governed the country not only through arbitrary decrees and repressive measures but also by assessing local conditions, needs, and complaints. From the notes written in the margins of the reports by both central party and state officials who read them, and the use to which they were later put, it is evident that the reports indirectly but extensively affected government policymaking.

Writing a report was the first step in social and administrative monitoring. Typically, the reports were then meticulously evaluated and investigated before being transformed into government action. In the evaluation stage, the reports were read closely and then their important points were summarized and sent to the most relevant of the thirteen RPP bureaus that had been established by the party in 1931 to deal with matters ranging from administration, economy, labor, and social policies to sports, culture, the press, associations, and propaganda. Each bureau was directed by a prominent politician and reported to the General Secretariat.⁷⁷

In the first stage of the evaluation process, reports were sent to the Fourth Bureau, which was in charge of inspections. Officials in this bureau examined and summarized the reports, then categorized the issues they raised and forwarded them to other relevant party bureaus, which often operated as a conduit for the reports between the government ministers and the secretary general. Based on notes in the margins of the reports and documents attached to them, the Fourth Bureau frequently referred matters in the reports to the secretary general and government ministers directly. Before returning their evaluations to the bureaus and the secretary general, the ministries studied the reports in detail and frequently investigated their claims before taking any action. They then often either put the matter on the agenda of a parliamentary session or ordered local administrators to take measures addressing the problems raised in the report. In the last

stage of the process, the ministers informed the secretary general, the Fourth Bureau, or the other bureaus of the results of their investigation and of the measures that had been or would be taken, or the reasons that no measures would be taken. The examples that follow illustrate this evaluation process and its role in government decision making.⁷⁸

In 1942, the deputies of Hatay investigated and reported on the main problems and needs of their election district. Recounting specific complaints of city residents, the deputies strongly recommended that an effective institution be established in the region to fight malaria and that physicians be appointed to the province. After the report was evaluated and measures implemented in response to it, the minister of health and social assistance concluded that the demands of the report had been partially met: "Upon investigation of the region, since it is understood that malaria ruled in the region, the ministry established a strong organization for the fight against malaria and assigned a physician there."⁷⁹ Another report from the same province noted that the people had demanded that the large bogs that were causing malaria be drained as soon as possible.⁸⁰ This part of the report was forwarded to the Ministry of Public Works. A few months later, the minister, in his memo to the secretary general, stated that the ministry had drained all of the large bogs that the municipality had not been able to drain.⁸¹

In a similar case, the party inspectors assigned to Kastamonu and Sivas informed the secretary general that very poor health conditions in these cities were causing widespread discontent and that the appointment of more doctors to the region was essential in order to ease people's suffering. In response, the Ministry of Health appointed many health officers and three doctors to the two cities.⁸² In another case, reports written by the deputies of Izmir noted that inhabitants were suffering from epidemics and emphasized the people's demands that bogs be drained and a sufficient number of doctors be appointed to the hospitals. These reports also recounted the difficult conditions in which the Muslim refugees from Greece, who had arrived in Turkey following the population exchange, were living and asked that measures be implemented to relieve their suffering. The minister of health and social assistance responded to this report by providing the immigrants with relief in the form of housing, land, agricultural equipment, and wheat seed. Among other items, 719 kilograms of free quinine and other medicines were allocated to the counties of Izmir.⁸³

In the early years of the republic, peasants constituted about 80 percent of the population. The reports thus frequently recounted demands for agricultural items such as plows, sickles, sacks, draft animals, and wheat seed. In the early 1930s, report writers noted that the peasants suffered from inadequate agricultural inputs and declining prices caused by the economic crisis of 1929. Transmitting the demands of the peasants to the government, the reports often called for an improvement in agricultural methods and supportive financial measures for producers.⁸⁴ In the 1930s, demands for the construction of barns and storage facilities for crops were prominent.⁸⁵ The reports also described peasants who had difficulties discharging their debts to the Agricultural Bank and who demanded debt relief and a reduction of the livestock tax, the land tax, and the road tax, all of which weighed heavily on the peasantry.⁸⁶ For instance, according to a report by RPP deputy Ali Cenani, who investigated some central, western, and northern Anatolian towns in 1930, farmers throughout these areas complained about the land tax and especially about extremely high tax assessments. In the province of Samsun, for instance, some small farmers complained that government officials had estimated

the value of lands worth twenty Turkish lira at eighty Turkish lira.⁸⁷ RPP deputies of the three central Anatolian provinces of Yozgat, Çorum, and Kırşehir similarly reported widespread complaints about the high and inaccurate assessments of land taxes.⁸⁸

Criticism of the livestock tax was also frequently recorded in reports from Anatolia. In 1930, an RPP deputy noted in his report that livestock owners throughout Anatolia complained of very high rates of livestock tax despite the sharp decline in the value of livestock during the economic crisis.⁸⁹ The deputies of Eskişehir also noted widespread discontent with the soaring tax rates on livestock.⁹⁰ The deputy of Edirne recorded in his election district reports that the peasants' frustration with the livestock tax had caused widespread discontent.⁹¹ The deputies of southern Anatolia, Mersin, and Cebeliberet (Osmaniye) likewise reported that the high tax rate on livestock was a major source of dissatisfaction.⁹²

Most of the deputy reports stated that the road tax was another cause of widespread public criticism. Ali Cenani reported in 1930 that he had heard complaints about the road tax everywhere he visited. Reports written by the deputies of Konya and Aksaray in 1931 also noted that the road tax was causing outcry among peasants, especially because of the compulsory labor requirements imposed on those unable to pay. A 1931 report written by the deputy of Edirne and a 1934 report written by the deputy of Eskişehir similarly highlighted the complaints made against this tax. In 1931, the RPP deputies of Tokat, Çorum, Yozgat, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Kırşehir, and Sivas also reported that the citizens were aggrieved by the road tax. In the same year, deputy Mustafa Kazım reported that in Denizli the people were unhappy with the tax.⁹³

In the mid-1930s, partly in response to these complaints and demands, which had few ways of reaching the RPP other than through the reports, the government began to revise some of the policies that were producing discontent. For example, it supported the petty and middle producers through an agricultural assistance program, specifically agricultural purchases at prices above market levels, which were initiated in 1932, despite some infrastructural limitations of the program and of the Agricultural Bank that was entrusted with carrying out the purchases.⁹⁴ As a result of the social pressure to build new storage facilities and barns, the government began to construct new granaries. In 1938, the Soil Products Office was established with the mandate to build new storage facilities and to help the Agricultural Bank make purchases devised to prevent a radical decline in prices.⁹⁵ In 1935, the government decided to ease the debt burden of the farmers by reducing high interest rates on agricultural loans and postponing debt payments by fifteen years. This was done by allowing peasants to repay their debts to the Agricultural Bank in installments.⁹⁶ The government also reduced the livestock tax by considerable amounts in 1931, 1932, and 1936. In 1932, the total tax reduction was between 15 and 32 percent. In January 1936, the government once again cut the tax rate on livestock by an average of 41.5 percent. The road tax rates and related labor obligations were also reduced by 50 to 60 percent in 1931.⁹⁷ In addition to these changes, the government forgave half of the accrued agricultural taxes in 1934.⁹⁸

Another problem addressed in the reports was peasant complaints about the Forestry Organization, which implemented the laws and regulations protecting the forests very strictly and sometimes unjustly, thereby depriving the peasants of forest resources. The government insisted on maintaining its strict forest laws yet bended the rules in practice. On 22 February 1936, for example, Recep Peker forwarded sections of the 1936 election

district reports concerning the requests of peasants to the minister of agriculture and asked the minister to assist the peasants in obtaining timber for woodworking and firewood, which the reports had found were needed.⁹⁹ Six months later, the minister notified the new secretary general, Şükrü Kaya, of several measures taken by the ministry. Temporarily relaxing the rules that limited public rights to the forests, the ministry had improved peasant access to wood and other forest products. Apart from this, based on election district reports in 1935 and 1936 that described the suffering of peasants from the drought in central Anatolia, the Ministry of Agriculture provided assistance in the form of agricultural equipment, wheat, and seed.¹⁰⁰

The reports also called attention to requests made by urban laborers for relief from the high cost of living and poor working conditions. Upon receiving the report of a party inspector that described the arduous and unsanitary conditions under which women and children were working at the carpet looms in Isparta in 1936, Recep Peker urged both the governor of Isparta and the minister of economy, Celal Bayar, to look into the problem and demanded that working conditions be improved as soon as possible.¹⁰¹ The secretary general also informed the minister of public works about the dire working and living conditions of railway workers in Sivas, which had been poignantly described in both party and deputy reports; Peker urged the ministry to take an interest in the problem.¹⁰²

Working-class demands for a labor code were also noted in the reports. On 20 March 1933, deputies of Balıkesir investigating their election district had long conversations with workers who insistently demanded the enactment of a labor code. One prominent deputy, Hacim Muhiddin (Çarıklı), reported the complaints of the workers—including low wages, grueling work hours, and a lack of workplace safety and of free medical treatment—to the RPP secretary general. The deputy wrote, “The workers’ most urgent request from the party is immediate adoption of a labor code.” He recommended that the government pass a labor code as soon as possible.¹⁰³ An analysis of the proposed code and of how far the government responded to all of the worker’s demands is beyond the scope of this article. However, it seems clear that the voices of laboring people reached the ruling elite through these reports, albeit indirectly, and that they affected policymakers’ discussions and decisions. The flow of information about working conditions via the reports must have contributed, along with other factors, to bringing labor questions into policymaking circles. In the absence of a significant organized labor movement, accounts of working conditions and the demands of laborers were transmitted through the reports to policymakers and stimulated the efforts of the government to enact protective labor legislation during the first two decades of the republic. These efforts ended with the passage of a labor law in 1936, which was protective of a considerable part of the working class in many respects, in spite of its restrictive provisions such as a ban on strikes and labor unions.¹⁰⁴

Another important matter on which the RPP deputies focused was public opinion about prices and the high cost of living. Especially during World War II, which resulted in an economic slump and consequent public misery, party deputies of Istanbul frequently toured the city to talk with citizens in the streets and coffeehouses face to face. Report authors evaluated public opinion about the economy and provided detailed surveys of the conditions of the market and its impact on consumers and merchants. According to these reports, people complained about inflation in the prices of foodstuffs and consumer goods, the rampant black market, and high rents.¹⁰⁵ Such public discontent, which was

related to the authorities through the reports as well as through the press and citizens' petitions, led the government to fight, or sometimes to pretend to fight, the high cost of living and the widespread profiteering on which it was often blamed by the people.¹⁰⁶

CONCLUSION

Election and inspection district reports written by RPP deputies during the single-party era provide an opportunity to open new perspectives on state–society relations in Turkish historiography. Early republican Turkey has conventionally been seen through the prism of political and intellectual history. The modernization project under the Kemalist single-party regime has created the illusion that the state was isolated from the population and was an autonomous and rigid bureaucratic entity. In contrast, this paper has argued that the single-party state not only governed the country from above but also paid attention to social conditions, popular opinion, and the practices of local bureaucracies. Despite its authoritarian characteristics, the early republican government seems to have relied on modern techniques of social control that were responsive to people's demands and complaints and to have displayed flexibility in adapting to social circumstances and public opinion. Perhaps the smooth transition from a single-party regime to a multi-party system in the second half of the 1940s, which took place without a bloody or revolutionary social movement, owes a great deal, among other factors, to the flexible characteristics of the single-party state and the self-awareness of its fragile hegemony.

NOTES

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¹From Kırşehir Deputy and Inspector of Zonguldak Region to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prime Ministry Republican Archive-Catalogue of Republican People's Party (hereafter PMRA-CRPP), 490.1/723.432.1 (7 October 1943).

²Şerif Mardin argues that the Ottoman Empire epitomized oriental despotism and the strong centralized state. This state tradition was passed on to Kemalism and the republican regime. Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset, Makaleler 1* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 24, 59, 104. For other examples of this approach, see Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Beverly, U.K.: Eothen Press, 1985); Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması, 1923–1932* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1981); and Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (New York: Verso, 1987). Another version of the state- and elite-centrist approach to Turkish history emphasizes the struggle of the nationalist, progressive, and idealist leadership against internal and external enemies and backwardness. See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); and Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

³Yüksel Akkaya, "Türkiye'de Emek Tarihinin Sefaleti Üzerine Bazı Notlar," *Toplum ve Bilim* 91 (2001–2002): 288–89. In some cases, sources that describe the intentions or plans of the state have been taken as descriptions of what the state actually did. Since the divergence between what the state planned and what it implemented is often not taken into account, as pointed out by Joel Migdal, the single-party state has been seen as a very strong and monolithic entity. In other words, the image presented by the state has been seen as the reality. For a theoretical discussion of this problem, see Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and idem, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State–Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁴For examples of these recent studies drawing on new sources and approaches, see Murat Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye: Savaş ve Gündelik Yaşam* (Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2007); Yiğit Akin, "Reconsidering State, Party, and Society in Early Republican Turkey: Politics of Petitioning," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39 (2007): 435–57; and Senem Aslan, "Everyday Forms of State Power and the Kurds in the Early Turkish Republic," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011): 75–93.

⁵For the 1931 RPP Regulations and Program, see Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, 457.

⁶Circular about Inspection Districts and Inspectors, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/5.23.1 (22 August 1940).

⁷Report of Bekir Kaleli, Party Inspector of Aydın District and Deputy of Gaziantep, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/620.36.1 (20 November 1935).

⁸It should be noted that RPP inspector deputies were not the same as general inspectors, whose primary goal was national security in strategic locations, especially the Kurdish-populated regions. On the general inspectors see Cemil Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler (1927–1952)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

⁹See The Submission of the Proposal Concerning the Abolition of the Inspection Organization to the RPP Council, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/456.1877.2 (25 May 1950).

¹⁰Jean-Jaques Becker, *The Great War and the French People* (New York: Berg Publishers, 1985), 217–18; P. J. Flood, *France, 1914–1918: Public Opinion and the War Effort* (New York and Oxford: MacMillan, 1990), 146, 200; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 164–75; Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich, Bavaria 1933–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 6–9; and Aryeh Unger, "Public Opinion Reports in Nazi Germany," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 29 (1965): 565–82.

¹¹Koçak, for example, takes for granted that the reports and inspection practices of the general inspectors are evidence of the continuation in republican Turkey of the centralist and interventionist Ottoman state tradition. Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler*, 293.

¹²Cengiz Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu: Osmanlı Modernleşme Sürecinde "Havadis Jurnalleri" (1840–1844)* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), 23.

¹³Halil İnalçık, "Tanzimatın Uygulanışı ve Doğurduğu Tepkiler," *Belleten* 28 (132): 687–90; Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), 197; Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 24–25; İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003); and Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976–77).

¹⁴See Cengiz Kırılı, "Kahvehaneler ve Hafiyeler: 19. Yüzyıl Ortalarında Osmanlı'da Sosyal Kontrol," *Toplum ve Bilim* 83 (1999–2000): 58–77; and Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyal Devlet: Siyaset, İktidar, Meşruiyet* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 16.

¹⁵See Halil İnalçık, "Tanzimatın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler," *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu: Toplum ve Ekonomi* (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1993); and Ahmet Üzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler (1841): Niş İsyanı Üzerine Ayrıntılı Bir İnceleme* (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2002), 11–12.

¹⁶Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde*, 197.

¹⁷Halil İnalçık, "Tanzimatın Uygulanışı ve Doğurduğu Tepkiler," 687–90.

¹⁸Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde*, 200.

¹⁹Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, "Tanzimat Dönemi İmâr Meclisleri," *OTAM* 3 (1992): 323–32.

²⁰Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde*, 198.

²¹For a concise history of the Ottoman-Turkish police, see Ferdan Ergut, *Modern Devlet ve Polis: Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Toplumsal Denetimin Diyalektiği* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004). See also Glen Swanson, "The Ottoman Police," *Journal of Contemporary History* 7 (1972); and Mehmet Salkımlı-Yılmaz Örsel, *Osmanlı Devleti Emniyet-i Umumiye* (Istanbul: Gökso Ofset Matbaacılık, 1990).

²²Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde*, 321–22.

²³There are other kinds of *journals*, including *nüfus jurnalleri* (population reports), *tahaffuz jurnalleri* (quarantine reports), and *istatistik jurnalleri* (statistics reports) in the Ottoman archive. Kırılı, "Kahvehaneler ve Hafiyeler," 59–61.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 70–72.

²⁵Süleyman Kâni İrtəm, *Abdülhamid Devrinde Hafiyelik ve Sansür: Abdülhamid'e Verilen Jurnaller* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları 1999).

²⁶Musa Çadırcı, "II. Abdülhamid'e Sunulan 'Heyet-i Teftişîye'nin Geştü Güzâr Eylemiş Olduğu Mahalalen Ahvâliyle Heyeti Mezkûrun Harekâtı' Başlıklı Lâyihâ," *OTAM* 3 (1992): 413–85.

²⁷Cemil Koçak, "Tek Parti Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nde Parti Müfettişliği," *Tarık Zafer Tunaya'ya Armağan* (Istanbul: İstanbul Barosu Yayınları, 1992).

²⁸Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, 356.

²⁹*CHF Nizamnamesi ve Programı 1931* (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1931), 19.

³⁰The RPP Inspection Regions and Inspection Plan, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/620.36.1 (2 June 1935).

³¹For the main motives behind the establishment of the People's Houses, see M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey," in *Turkey Before and After Atatürk*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank and Cass, 1999).

³²*CHP Teftiş Talimatnamesi* (Ankara: Sümer Matbaası, 1943), 3–7.

³³*Ibid.*, 6–7.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 10–12.

³⁵On the secular reforms, see Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*; see also Namık Sinan Turan, *Hilafetin Tarihsel Gelişimi ve Kaldırılması* (Istanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 2004). For contemporary accounts of the impact of the Great Depression on Turkey, see Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu, *Türkiye'de Ziraat Buhranı* (Ankara: Yüksek Ziraat Enstitüsü, 1936); and Yorgaki Effimianidis, *Cihan İktisadî Buhranı Önünde Türkiye*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Kaatçılık ve Matbaacılık A.Ş., 1935–36). For a recent account, see Elif Akçetin, "Anatolian Peasants in the Great Depression, 1929–1933," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 79–102. For the widespread corruption of the Kemalist politicians and the rumors about them circulating among the people, see Mete Tunçay, ed., *Arif Oruç'un Yarın'ı (1933): Tek-Parti Yönetimine Yurtdışından Muhalefet Eden Bir Yayın Organı* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991). For a recent study on urban and rural unrest in the face of Kemalist policies and on daily interactions of the state with the peasantry and the working class, see Murat Metinsoy, "Everyday Politics of Ordinary People: Public Opinion, Dissent, and Resistance in Early Republican Turkey" (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2010).

³⁶On social reactions to Kemalist reforms, see, for example, Nurşen Mazıcı, "Menemen Olayının Sosyo-Kültürel Analizi," *Toplum ve Bilim* 90 (2001): 131–46; and Gavin D. Brockett, "Collective Action and Turkish Revolution: Toward a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923–1938," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34 (1998): 44–66. On Kurdish resistance in Turkey during the interwar period, see David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 191–212; Nicole Watts, "Relocating Dersim: Turkish State-Building and Kurdish Resistance, 1931–1938," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 5–30; and T. C. Genelkurmay Harp Tarihi Başkanlığı Resmi Yayınları, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Ayaklanmalar (1924–1938)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1972). On the FRP opposition, see Cem Emrence, *99 Günlük Muhalefet: Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006).

³⁷Gürbüz Tüfekçi, ed., *Atatürk'ün Seyahat Notları 1930–1931* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1998), 48–49.

³⁸See Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 164.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 165.

⁴⁰Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 16.

⁴¹Peter Holquist, "Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work: Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context," *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 614. See also Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.

⁴²Robert Gellataly, "Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany: Aspects of Self-Policing in the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic," in *Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789–1989*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellataly (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁴³See Unger, "Public Opinion Reports in Nazi Germany," 572–78.

⁴⁴Mustafa Yılmaz and Yasemin Doğaner, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Sansür (1923–1973)* (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 2007).

⁴⁵Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam: İsmet İnönü, 1938–1950*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2000), 215–16.

⁴⁶See Zafer Toprak, "Türkiye'de Toplum Bilimlerinin Doğuşu," in *Türk Toplum Bilimcileri*, ed. Emre Kongar (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1996), 29; and Muzaffer Sencer, "Mehmet Ali Şevki," in *Türk Toplum Bilimcileri*, 405.

⁴⁷Suraiya Faroqhi, "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanate Legitimation (1570–1650)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 35 (1992): 1–39; idem, "Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire," in

Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte: In Memoriam Vanco Boskov, ed. Hans Georg Majer (Wiesbaden, Germany: O. Harrassowitz, 1986).

⁴⁸For the petitions sent by ordinary people to the RPP, see Esat Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım* (Ankara: Gündoğan, 1992), 166–69; and Akin, “Reconsidering State, Party, and Society in Early Republican Turkey,” 435–57.

⁴⁹Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, 189–90.

⁵⁰Prime Ministry Republican Archive-Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions (hereafter PMRA-CGDT), 30.10/44.283.6 (13 May 1938).

⁵¹Since there are a number of procedural obstacles limiting researchers’ access to police archives, little is known about how the secret police reports functioned in this system. However, we have some clues about the existence of a large number of police reports on public opinion in the police archive. See Ömer Türkoğlu, “Hüseyin Sami Bey’in Hayatı ve Ankara’daki Ajanlık Yılları,” *Kebikeç* 4 (1996).

⁵²Unger, “Public Opinion Reports in Nazi Germany,” 567.

⁵³J. Malcolm Smith and Cornelius P. Cotter, “Administrative Accountability: Reporting to Congress,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 10 (1957): 411.

⁵⁴Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, 356.

⁵⁵Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, 103.

⁵⁶Hilmi Uran, *Hatıralarım* (Ankara: n.p., 1959), 231–32.

⁵⁷Ahmet Ağaoglu, *Serbest Fırka Hatıraları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), 63.

⁵⁸*CHF Büyük Kongre Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), 79.

⁵⁹Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Tek Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması*, 304.

⁶⁰Uran, *Hatıralarım*, 206–207.

⁶¹See, for example, Working Report of the Aydın Provincial Administrative Board of the RPP, 1936, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/620.36.1 (31 December 1936); and *Üsküdar Kazası İdare Heyeti Raporu* (İstanbul: Vakıf Matbaası, 1942).

⁶²From the RPP Secretary General to the Çanakkale Provincial Administrative Board of the RPP, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/633.88.1 (23 January 1936).

⁶³Mahmut Goloğlu, *Devrimler ve Tepkileri (1924–1930)* (Ankara: Başnur Matbaası, 1972), 221–23.

⁶⁴In 1927, the Second Congress of the RPP introduced a more centralized party organization. See Öz, *Tek Parti Yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım*, 221–22.

⁶⁵Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu is a good example of a prominent Kemalist politician and intellectual who was at odds with the widespread corruption among the high bureaucracy. As a keen observer of his time, he vividly portrayed corrupt politicians in his famous novel *Ankara*. See Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Ankara* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 105–106, 151.

⁶⁶M. Kemal Atatürk, *Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri 1917–1938* (Ankara: TİTE, 1964), 529–33.

⁶⁷See İsmail Beşikçi, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasının Tüzüğü (1927) ve Kürt Sorunu* (İstanbul: Komal Yayınları, 1978), 171. On the populist discourse of the Kemalist elite, see Karaömerlioğlu, “The People’s Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey.”

⁶⁸Yalçın Dağlar, *Köylerimizden Örnekler: Köylerimiz Hakkında Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Kader Basımevi, 1951), 108.

⁶⁹See *CHP Teftiş Talimatnamesi*, 7. The same directives can be seen in Article 111 of the RPP Regulations and Programme of 1931. *CHP Nizamnamesi ve Programı 1931* (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1931), 19. Some of the deputies’ inspection travels and contacts with the people were praised in national newspapers. See “Halkın Dilekleri,” *Cumhuriyet* (7 September 1929); and “İstanbul Sayıtlarının Temasları: Dün de Beyoğlu’nda Dilekleri Tespit Etiler,” *Son Posta* (14 August 1935).

⁷⁰The RPP Inspection Regions and Inspection Plan, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/620.36.1 (2 June 1935).

⁷¹1935 Report of Izmir Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/664.224.1 (14 July 1936); Report of Zonguldak Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/722.470.1 (3 December 1942). One inspector even wrote a book about his journey to the region he inspected; see Asım Us, *İstanbul’dan Çoruh’a* (İstanbul: Vakıf Matbaası, 1948).

⁷²1935 Report of Benal Nevzat Arman, Izmir Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/664.224.1 (14 July 1936).

⁷³Report of Kamil Dursun, Izmir Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/664.224.1 (1 November 1935).

⁷⁴Holquist, “Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work,” 449.

⁷⁵Unger, “Public Opinion Reports in Nazi Germany,” 567.

⁷⁶Smith and Cotter, “Administrative Accountability,” 405.

⁷⁷As of 1932, there were fourteen bureaus within the RPP General Executive Committee (Parti Umumi İdare Heyeti), with the following mandates: Organization, Elections, Congress (First Bureau); General Requests (Second Bureau); Investigations into Associations and Parties (Third Bureau); Inspection (Fourth Bureau); National Culture, Scientific Movements, and Publications (Fifth Bureau); Sports and Youth (Sixth Bureau); Courses for the People, Literacy, People's Orators (Seventh Bureau); The Press, Publications of the Party, Dissemination of the Party Program, and Propaganda (Eight Bureau); Labor and Associations of Traders (Ninth Bureau); Investigation and Economic Research (Tenth Bureau); Social Aid Organization (Eleventh Bureau); Harmony between the Practices of the Party Actions and Laws (Twelfth Bureau); Budget, Donations, Membership Fees, and Other Accounts (The Thirteenth Bureau); and Preservation of the Historical Treasures (Fourteenth Bureau). *CHF Kâtib-i Umumiliği'nin Fırka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Hâkimiyet-i Milliye Matbaası, 1933), 18–19.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 19.

⁷⁹From the Minister of Health and Social Assistance, Hulusi Alataş to the RPP Secretary General, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/510.2048.1 (3 April 1943).

⁸⁰Summaries of the Report by Fahrettin Tiritöğlü, Inspector of Gaziantep District and Deputy of Balıkesir, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/510.2048.1 (10 February 1943).

⁸¹From the Minister of Public Works, Sırrı Day, to the RPP Secretary General, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/510.2048.1 (25 May 1943).

⁸²From The Second Bureau to The Fourth Bureau, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/510.2059.1 (11 March 1940).

⁸³From the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance to the RPP General Secretariat, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/510.2050.1 (3 February 1942).

⁸⁴On the demands of plows, seeds, and other agricultural equipments and financial aid, see Summaries of Reports, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/726.485.1 (10 February 1936); Requests in Inspection Reports, 490.1/514.2062.1 (9 February 1939); Report of Sivas Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/10.2059.1 (1941); Report of Inspector of Zonguldak, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/732.472.1 (3 August 1944); 1940 Reports of Eskişehir Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/651.167.1 (27 February 1942); Report of Inspector of Gaziantep, 1942, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/510.2048.1; and Report of Eskişehir Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/652.169.1 (26 November 1943).

⁸⁵Reports of Tokat, Sivas and Kayseri Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/724.477.1 (7 February 1931); Report of Edirne Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/724.478.1 (16 March 1931); Report of Mersin Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/724.478.1 (16 March 1931); 1934 Reports of Eskişehir Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/651.165.1 (5 August 1936); Report of Erzurum Deputy (1936), PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/648.151.1; Summaries of Reports, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/726.485.1 (10 February 1936); Report of Izmir Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/664.225.1 (7 December 1938); Requests in Inspection Reports, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/514.2062.1 (9 February 1939); Report of Sivas Deputies, 1941, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/510.2059.1; and Report of Eskişehir Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/652.169.1 (26 November 1943).

⁸⁶Summaries of Reports, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/726.485.1 (10 February 1936); Requests in Inspection Reports, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/514.2062.1 (9 February 1939); Summaries of 1935 Reports, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/725.481.1; Reports of Eskişehir Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/651.165.1 (20 November 1934); Reports of Party Inspectors of Giresun, Ordu and Zonguldak, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/655.182.1 (14 September 1931); Report of Aydın Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/620.36.1 (1 December 1935).

⁸⁷1930 Journey Report of Gaziantep Deputy Ali Cenani, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/1454.34.3.

⁸⁸Reports about the Situation of the RPP Organizations in Some Provinces and about Their Reorganization and Enlargement, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/724.477.1 (7 February 1931).

⁸⁹1930 Journey Report of Gaziantep Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/1454.34.3.

⁹⁰Eskişehir Election District Reports, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/651.165.1 (20 November 1934).

⁹¹For RPP Edirne Deputy Mehmet Faik's Report about the RPP Organizational Structure in Edirne dated 20.01.1931, see Reports about the Situation of the RPP Organizations in Certain Provinces and about Their Reorganization and Enlargement, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/729.478.1 (16 March 1931).

⁹²See Reports about the Situation of the RPP, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/729.478.1 (16 March 1931).

⁹³1930 Journey Report of Gaziantep Deputy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/1454.34.3; Report of RPP Gümüşhane Deputy Hasan Necmi, Konya Deputy Ahmet Kemal, and Aksaray Deputy Musa about the Organization and Enlargement of the RPP Branches in Konya and Aksaray Provinces, PMRA-CRPP, 30.10/79.520.3 (5 January 1931); RPP Edirne Deputy Mehmet Faik's Report, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/729.478.1 (20 January 1931); Reports of Eskişehir Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/651.165.1 (20 November 1934); Reports about the Situation of the

RPP, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/724.477.1 (7 February 1931); for Report of RPP Denizli Deputy dated 26 February 1931, see Reports about the Situation of the RPP, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/729.478.1 (16 March 1931).

⁹⁴Faruk Birtek and Çağlar Keyder, "Agriculture and the State: An Inquiry into Agricultural Differentiation and Political Alliances: The Case of Turkey," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 2 (1975): 446–67.

⁹⁵Niyazi Acun, *Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi ve Kuruluş Gayeleri* (Istanbul: Sinan Matbaası, 1947).

⁹⁶"Türkiye Ziraat Bankasının İpotekli ve Müteselsil Kefaletli Ziraat Alacaklarının Taksitlendirilmesine Dair Kanun" (The Law on the Installment of Joint Debts with Mortgage to the Agricultural Bank of Turkey), Law No. 2814. See *Resmi Gazete* (Official Gazette) 3036 (24 June 1935): 5394–395. See also Yusuf Zaim Atasagun, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Ziraat Bankası, 1888–1939* (Istanbul: Kenan Basımevi ve Klişe Fabrikası, 1939), 290, 293–96.

⁹⁷Kemal Turan, *Yeni Vergi Kanunları'nın Tatbiki Mahiyeti ve Tediye Kabiliyeti Hakkında Tahliller* (Izmir: Hafız Ali Matbaası, 1931), 82–84; For the reduction in the livestock tax rates in 1936, see "Hayvan Vergisi Kanunu" (Livestock Tax Law), Law No. 2897, *Resmi Gazete* 3218 (29 January 1936): 6005–6008.

⁹⁸"Vergi Bakayasının Tasfiyesine Dair Kanun" (The Law on the Discharge of the Arrears of Taxes), 4 July 1934, Law No. 2566. *Resmi Gazete* 2750 (12 July 1934): 4126–128. According to this law, half of the peasants' debts to the Agricultural Bank was to be forgiven on the condition of payment of the remaining half.

⁹⁹From the RPP Secretary General to the Minister of Agriculture, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/726.485.1 (22 February 1936).

¹⁰⁰From the Minister of Agriculture to the RPP Secretary General, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/726.485.1 (14 August 1936).

¹⁰¹From the RPP Secretary General to the Provincial Chief of the RPP and to the Ministry of Economy, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/726.485.1 (1 January 1936).

¹⁰²From the Secretary General to the Minister of Public Works, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/726.485.1 (15 January 1936).

¹⁰³From Balıkesir Deputy Hacim Muhiddin to the RPP Secretary General, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/1438.3.2 (20 March 1933).

¹⁰⁴For the protective albeit limited legal regulations regarding labor, see Ahmet Makal, *Türkiye'de Tek Partili Dönemde Çalışma İlişkileri, 1920–1946* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1999), 419–30.

¹⁰⁵Report of Istanbul Deputies, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/662.218.2 (6 November 1942 and 7 September 1943); Reports of Istanbul Deputies Submitted to the RPP General Secretariat, PMRA-CRPP, 490.1/663.219.1 (5 November 1945).

¹⁰⁶Metinsoy, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye*, 66–132.